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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Archaeology

**Looting *deconstructed*: a study of non-professional engagements with the material past in Kozani, Greece.**

**by**

Ioanna Antoniadou

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2014



*Στους γονείς μου για τη δυνατότητα*

*Στον Νικόλα για την καρτερική αναμονή*

*Στον Γιάννη για την αδιάκοπη στήριξη του*



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Archaeology

LOOTING DECONSTRUCTED: A STUDY OF NON-  
PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE  
MATERIAL PAST IN KOZANI, GREECE

by Ioanna Antoniadou

In dominant archaeological discourse, looting has been primarily discussed in connection with its assumed profit-related motives and the destruction it causes to the archaeological context of antiquities. Such ways of thinking, however valid they may be in some instances, result in an inadequate representation and understanding of looting, which conflates diverse forms of non-professional digging and search for antiquities, ignores the socio-cultural contexts they are embedded within, and undermines or disregards the objectives or perspectives of those perceived as ‘looters’. This thesis addresses these problems and attempts to deconstruct the blanket conceptualisation of looting that assimilates and denounces a range of acts, from a failure to register an antiquity, the unauthorised possession of an artefact, to an object’s sale for subsistence purposes. In light of this, I present and interpret cases of non-professional digging and collection (but not sale) of relics gathered from ethnographic research amongst local communities in Kozani in north-western Greece.

The results of the ethnographic research, interwoven with the critically analysed impact of official archaeology’s epistemology and practice (applied in Greece and elsewhere), offers a multi-layered understanding of looting, which goes beyond professionalised notions and ethics. I contend that rather than being inspired by economic objectives, looting phenomena often involve an array of diverse, complex and ambiguous social activities, embedded in daily practices. This study of looting is essentially a study of non-professionals, who physically engage with the material past, in order to control the past’s materiality and symbolic meaning and eventually construct social power for themselves. On one level, it attempts to scrutinize the complex forms of reaction and resistance of ordinary people towards official archaeology. On a deeper level, it hopes to reveal the hybrid character of seemingly opposing practices. The control over antiquities and the desire for the symbolic and social power it generates, transcend professional and non-professional behaviours towards the material past.



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# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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I, Ioanna Antoniadou, declare that the thesis entitled ‘Looting *deconstructed*: A study of non-professional engagements with the material past in Kozani, Greece’, and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

none of this work has been published before submission

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....





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K., Panagiotis, Triantafyllos, Kostas, Nikos P., Simeon, and *especially* Ilias, thank you for all your trust and warm encounters.

# ABBREVIATIONS

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AD	Arhaiologiko Deltio
AEMTH	Arhaiologiko Ergo sti Makedonia kai ti Thraki
AIA	Archaeological Institute of America
EAA	European Association of Archaeologists
EPKA	Ephoreia Proistorikon kai Klasikon Arhaiotiton
IARC	Illicit Antiquities Research Centre
ICOM	International Council of Museums
KAS	Kendriko Arhaiologiko Symvoulío
SAA	Society for American Archaeology
SEKA	Syllogos Ektakton Arhaiologon
SAFE	Saving Antiquities For Everyone
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIDROIT	International Institute for the Unification of Private Law



# NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

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The system that I am adopting here for the transliteration from the Greek to the Latin alphabet is the one adopted by Yannis Hamilakis (2007a). I make exceptions with regards to authors' names and place names that are transliterated in a different way elsewhere (e.g. Karamitrou-Mentesidi, Megali *Rachi*).

Αα: a

Ββ: v

Γγ: g

Δδ: d

Εε: e

Ζζ: z

Ηη: i

Θθ: th

Ιι: i

Κκ: k

Λλ: l

Μμ: m

Νν: n

Ξξ: x

Οο: o

Ππ: p

Ρρ: r

Σς: s

Ττ: t

Υυ: y

Φφ: ph

Χχ: h

Ψψ: ps

Ωω: o

αι: ai

αυ: af/av, ef/ev

ει: ei

οι: oi

ου: ou

γκ,γγ: g (initial), ng (medial)

μπ: b (initial), mb (medial)

ντ: d (initial), nd (medial)

# NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND CITATION

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All translations of Greek passages are mine unless stated otherwise.

All citations in the main text and reference list follow the guide to citation in the Harvard style by the Bournemouth University (Bournemouth University 2011).





# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter schematically addresses the problems that arise from dominant attitudes in archaeological discourse. It also includes a critical treatment of anthropological perspectives on the matter. It then introduces my research questions and approach towards looting. At the end of this introduction a chapter outline of the thesis is provided.

### 1.2 Two kinds of approaches to looting

Over the years, archaeology specialists and advocates have been greatly concerned with what they view as the destruction of archaeological contexts, objects and sites caused by undocumented and unauthorised digging (for some early examples see Coggins 1969; Meyer 1973). This concern has gradually grown since the drafting of the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, which was adopted by UNESCO in 1970 (hereafter the UNESCO Convention), because phenomena of undocumented digging seem to have manifested themselves with increased intensity (Brodie 2002; Brodie and Renfrew 2005). Three decades after the drafting, Neil Brodie, the former research director of the IARC at the University of Cambridge, asserted that “the situation has grown out of all control” (Brodie 2002, p.1). In more recent times, a development that came to significantly add to the urgency of this concern and trigger a series of academic and popular writing, was the unauthorised removal of artefacts from the National Museum in Baghdad as well as from Iraq’s known archaeological sites, following the US-led Iraq invasion in 2003 (see Brodie 2008; Bogdanos 2006; Emberling and Hanson 2008; Fisk 2008; Polk and Schuster 2005; Rothfield 2008; 2009; Stone and Bajjaly 2008).

In the context of this so-called ‘destruction’ of the past, the nature and scale of the diggers’ interconnections (diverse and multi-sited social networks) as well as their technological means (methods of digging) have changed over time (Brodie 2002, p.1). Equally, the techniques by which archaeologists monitor this kind of destruction have also evolved, with the use of satellite imagery being one of the latest developments (see Contreras 2010; Contreras and Brodie 2010; Stone 2008). The things that appear to have remained consistent however, are the foci of academic enquiry in relation to this phenomenon, concentrating interest on its commercial causes (see Boone 1993; Byrne 1999; Chippindale et al. 2001; Fiskesjö 2004; Petkova 2004; Rousevelt 2006; Tubb 1995; Udvardy et al. 2003; Watson and Todeschini 2006), its material consequences upon archaeological sites and objects (see papers in Brodie et al. 2001; Gill and Chippindale 1993), and methods for its prevention (see Brodie and Renfrew 2005; Kersel 2006). One idea that has remained central and consensually accepted is that the condition underlying undocumented removals of objects from archaeological contexts is economic profit. These economic motives and the associated destruction of archaeological context constitute what archaeological discourse generally describes as ‘looting’ (see Elia 1997; Renfrew 2000).

To grasp the magnitude of the problem that looting causes for archaeologists, one needs to understand the centrality of context to archaeological research. Context is considered by some as the ‘essence of archaeology’. That is “where an artefact is found and what is found with it [...] the set of relationships among artefacts and between artefacts and their surrounding structures” (Brodie 2006a, p.52). Archaeologists maintain that coherent historical information comes about only through the systematic study of context (Renfrew 2000). It is thought that objects, in their context of discovery, can provide insight into past cultures; objects which seem insignificant on their own, may acquire great informational value if found next to other objects or far removed from their usual area of distribution (Brodie et al. 2000, pp.10-11).

Accordingly, when undocumented and unauthorised digging and removal of antiquities occurs, archaeological context is believed to be destroyed and historical information lost (Brodie 2006a, p.52). Archaeologists maintain that antiquities wrenched out of their context of discovery add very little to the knowledge of the past (Renfrew 2000; Prott 1995, p.57). From archaeologists’ viewpoint, looted antiquities are considered worthless

(Brodie et al. 2000, p.11). In the strong words of Tubb and Brodie, “[a]rtefacts divested of contextual information are pitifully dispossessed, impoverished of meaning and, as such, are an anathema” (Tubb and Brodie 2001, p.105).

As such, archaeologists collectively understand the phenomenon of looting as the undocumented and unauthorised digging of archaeological sites and they simultaneously identify the market for antiquities – fuelled by the demands of museums and collectors – as its profound motive. Accordingly, in a large number of studies of undocumented digging, as much attention is concentrated upon the extent and commercial nature of the destruction of contextual information, as on the circulation and trade of unprovenanced antiquities (see papers in Brodie et al. 2000; Brodie et al. 2001; Brodie and Tubb 2002; Brodie et al. 2006).

The issues that are overshadowed, or completely ignored however from archaeological discussion are the ‘on the ground’ social, cultural and political contexts within which this so-called destructive removal of objects occurs (for exceptions see Early 1989; Hollowell 2006a; Pendergast and Graham 1989; Politis 2002; Roosevelt and Luke 2006b). I therefore contend that the dominant discourse on looting results in an inadequate and thus problematic representation of events in relation to the phenomenon of unauthorised and undocumented digging and collection of objects. I also contend that the fact that it prevents any profound understanding of such digging phenomena at the margins of official archaeological practice, springs from the privileging of professionalised approaches towards the material past, contributing at the same time to their perpetuation. In what follows, I address these problems in greater detail, and then I sketch my approach and contribution to a fuller understanding of looting.

### **1.3 Dominant approaches to looting**

Looting is considered as one of the most common threats to the preservation of the archaeological past, on a par with major natural catastrophes, agricultural development and warfare. A typical expression of this is encapsulated in the following statement: “This heritage – that is to say, the material remains of past human activities – is being destroyed at an undiminished pace [...] distressingly a *significant* proportion of the ongoing destruction is brought about by looters, acting from commercial motives”

(Brodie and Renfrew 2005, p.344; emphasis added). Elsewhere, the same idea is expressed in an emotive tone this time: “[t]he destruction of archaeological resources by looters is *an international crisis* and threatens to obliterate the world's cultural heritage and our ability to understand past cultures” (Elia 1997, p.85; emphasis added).

Economically driven motives, however, are not considered to be limited to those who unofficially remove objects from archaeological contexts. Some archaeologists have argued that in reality, commercial profiteering implicates those who comprise the wider social network involved in the multilevel economic system of the antiquities market (see Elia 1993; Brodie 1998). So, on the one hand, there is the recognition that “the looter and the collector are so intertwined that neither could exist without the other” (Chase et al. 2006, p.20). But, on the other hand, it is sometimes acknowledged that the real blame for the destruction of archaeology should be placed not on the undocumented digging itself, but the underlying demands of the market in antiquities, which brings significant amounts of economic profit (and cultural capital) to collectors, auction houses and traffickers. It was in this context that Elia asserted that “collectors are the real looters” (Elia 1993, p. 17).

This perception of ‘looting’ relies on a strong ethical position to which academics and professionals working in museums and archaeology subscribe, which is codified in various statuses and codes of practice and ethics of professional organisations (see AIA 1997; EAA 2009; SAA 1996). As an act of moral leadership, advocates of the ‘archaeological context’ refuse to study, preserve or acquire ‘looted’ antiquities (that is antiquities without contextual information), because *any* such act is viewed as a failure of the fundamental ethical duty to preserve and protect the past, as it would reward the looters and private collectors, and thus, directly condone the on-going process of undocumented digging and destruction of the past.

Such strong ethical consensus explains why (most) archaeologists, when they state their concern with regard to looting, appear to be stating a collective opinion. Here is an illustrative example of this: “We in the academic community, and in particular archaeologists and other serious students of the human past, are failing in our responsibility to conserve and to persuade others to conserve the world’s archaeological heritage” (Brodie and Renfrew 2005, p.344; emphasis added) and wondering with collective astonishment, “[y]et somehow *the voice of professional archaeology*,

effectively and authoritatively expressed in this way, has not yet prevailed [...] something is wrong somewhere. How is it that the professional view has not prevailed? How is it that a group of art museum directors, supported by a number of wealthy collectors, can work against the evident long-term interest of the world's archaeological heritage in this way?' (Brodie and Renfrew 2005, p.357; emphasis added).

## **1.4 'On the ground' approaches to looting**

So far, I have discussed the dominant archaeological response to looting, one which emphasises its profit-related motives and the resulting scale of archaeological destruction, and attempts at the same time to pursue its prevention. Such a way of thinking, however valid it may be in some instances, perpetuates an inadequate representation and understanding of looting. This in turn conflates diverse forms of undocumented digging and engagement with the material past, ignores the socio-cultural contexts they are embedded within, and undermines or disregards the objectives or perspectives of those perceived as 'looters'. In light of this I ask, do rare acknowledgements that 'collectors are the real looters' really compensate for the inadequate coverage of 'on the ground' looting contexts? Despite all these studies measuring the destruction of commercial looting and the trade of looted antiquities, how much do we actually know about the very places where looting occurs?

One could argue that the privileging of the professionalised ethic to protect the archaeological 'record' maintains the reluctance to consider or understand unofficial engagements with the material past (see Chapter 3). This begs a question however: does this reluctance reflect archaeology's lack and denial of self-awareness? If ordinary people undertake undocumented digging, should this not make professionals wonder why their priorities fail to appeal to wider audiences? Indeed Brodie (see above) is correct, 'something *is* wrong somewhere'. What if, instead of promoting stricter moral opposition to undocumented digging, archaeologists seek to understand first the actual impact and value of their doctrine and practice? In order to elaborate on these issues, I reiterate some central and consensually accepted propositions and then I offer alternative (primarily ethnographic) accounts that challenge their inadequate view.

### **1.4.1 Looters ‘destroy’ their past.**

An archaeologist once claimed that “the looting is an organized response to a market, not the other way around” (Brodie 2009, p.11). Nevertheless, the scale of the ongoing looting begs the question: what are the ‘on the ground’ socio-political circumstances that render undocumented digging and selling of objects a viable option, a choice for people? Studies that have concentrated attention upon these ‘on the ground’ contexts, have shown that the conditions that allow or even promote such looting-phenomena are by no means restricted to forces exerted by the art-trade. People sell antiquities for money, but the real issue here is *why* people choose to make money through such means. All ‘looting’ acts are embedded within particular historical and socio-political contexts that cannot be simply ignored.

In Cambodia, undocumented digging is undeniably linked to the “voracious international demand for Khmer antiquities”, but, it is also fundamentally conditioned in the existence of “[g]rinding poverty, corrupt governmental officials, a poorly compensated military” (Stark & Griffin 2004: 137). In Jordan, the “pillaging by tomb-robbers” indeed obliterates “the remnants of history”, but such unauthorised activities also “simultaneously provide a source of income for one of the world’s poorest communities” (Politis 2002, p.257). In Latin America undocumented digging is often a response to civil violence and economic despair (Matsuda 1998, p.91). Evidently, whilst living under harsh economic realities, it is primarily the need for subsistence and survival (ahead of collectors’ needs) that people respond to through their undocumented digging (see also Hollowell 2006a; Staley 1993).

At the same time, however, looting signifies much more besides economic reward. In Israel, for example, it can be a form of resistance, as “looters make a conscious decision to prioritise the destruction of the Jewish/Israeli past over the preservation of the Palestinian heritage” (Kersel 2007, p.92). Abu El-Haj (2001, p.255), in her treatment of looting in Israel and Palestine, suggests that looting “could well be analysed as a form of resistance to the Israeli state”. Palestinians who conduct undocumented digging of archaeological sites, which they associate with a Jewish claim to the land, “feel they are erasing the association” (Kersel 2007, p.91).

Furthermore, in Israel, the “Bedouin often view looting as a traditional activity, one that runs in families” (Kersel 2007, p.90). Similar patterns have also been studied in Peru, as discussed by Smith (2005), and in Alaska as discussed by Hollowell (2006a). In Italy, tomb-robbing is also considered a cultural tradition (Migliore 1991; Thoden van Velzen 1996). In Tuscany, tomb-robbers assert that “financial gain is not the main motivation behind their work, but that they are driven by an affinity with their forebears which develops during their nocturnal excavations” (Thoden van Velzen 1996, p.124). They also claim that they can communicate directly with their Etruscan ancestors, and, interestingly, the rest of the population employs such stories “as a confirmation of their identity” (Thoden van Velzen 1996, p.118).

#### ***1.4.2 Undocumented digging is linked to the sale of objects.***

Archaeologist Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2004, pp.574-575), in his study of collecting in the San Pedro Valley of Arizona, argued that, “not every occasion of collecting is so dramatic or destructive. In the midst of such excessive activities are those people who collect only the occasional artefact on a stroll along the riverbed, or perhaps a Sunday picnic in the foothills of a nearby mountain. Such people tend to not dig into sites, and they do not seek monetary gains. Their collections are small, personal. And yet they are cherished”. Nevertheless he felt that he had to underline the distinction between looting and such activities of surface-collecting (also see Labelle 2003), asserting that they “are so unlike those archaeologists most typically describe and vilify”. He goes on to say that “[t]hey cannot be reduced to such simple terms as looting and colonialism” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004, p.594).

Such clarification is in line with Hollowell’s (2006b, p.70) argument, that it is “important to distinguish among different kinds of looting because, although there are overlaps among these situations, they represent different problems and are likely to call for different approaches”. Of course, in the Arizona example, the distinction from looting should not have been required given the lack of economic transaction (or absence of actual digging). It is evidently the given of the equation between undocumented digging and profit, which, unwillingly perhaps, allows the conflation of different forms of unauthorised engagements with the material past.



In Guatemala (see Mauri 1996), although selling for profit is very important, some Pre-Columbian objects are used instead of being sold. The most common re-utilization of antiquities is the use of ceramics. “Vessels that haven’t been sold, start a new life in the chiclero camps as containers of all sorts of things, from ballpoint pens to rubber bands. But those who benefit most from the abandoned ceramics are women, who use them frequently in their kitchens to contain flour, eggs, salt, dried soups, spices, chillies, and corn dough for traditional foods” (Mauri 1996).

### ***1.4.3 Looting impinges on the professionalised ethic of antiquities’ protection.***

In studies of undocumented digging, it becomes apparent that many of the participants in looting or the antiquities trade do not understand the rationale behind archaeological practice (Hollowell 2006a; 2006b; Kersel 2007; Migliore 1991; Smith 2005; Thoden van Velzen 1996). Often, it is the so-called looters who view archaeologists as looters themselves. In Peru for example, many people consider archaeology as “the public face of looting” (Smith 2005, p.165). Migliore (1991) and Thoden van Velzen (1996) witnessed similar responses in Italy, where local looters questioned the motives of archaeologists. The tomb robbers in Tuscany asserted that “[a]rtefacts represent money and power to archaeologists and art historians” and “that is how they make their upper-class living” (Thoden van Velzen 1996).

Evidently, ‘who is the looter’ often proves to be is a matter of dispute. Equally ambiguous is the perception of looting as a form of ‘destruction’. There are cases where undocumented digging and sale of objects are free of negative connotations and are embraced by whole communities (see Hollowell 2006a; Migliore 1991; Thoden van Velzen 1996). In Migliore’s (1991) examination of looting in Sicily, it is shown that local communities regard treasure hunting as an acceptable way of improving their financial status; they do not identify treasure hunters as criminals.

In the same light, Hollowell (2006a; 2006b) argues that those who pursue undocumented digging in the St. Lawrence Island of Alaska do not think of themselves as ‘looters’, but as subsistence diggers of *old things*. Hollowell (2006a, p.98) points out that in this context, this form of subsistence-digging, which entails not only the removal of objects from the ground but their sale as well, is in fact a legitimate activity and part of a legal

trade in antiquities. The two Alaska Native corporations that own St. Lawrence Island, manage their archaeological resources as a form of economic capital, allowing their indigenous shareholders to excavate for old marine mammal bone, walrus ivory, and artefacts to sell (Hollowell 2006a).

## **1.5 An ethnography of looting in Greece**

As shown so far, a collective professionalised archaeological response to the study of looting, presupposes a dependency on the antiquities trade and thus concentrates on measuring and finding the means to reduce the scale of archaeological. Simultaneously however, dominant literature on the matter usually dismisses some less ordinary, yet immensely insightful and valuable approaches to looting, which shed light upon social, cultural and political circumstances underlying the so-called looting contexts. Such studies presuppose that looting responds to various ‘on the ground’ conditions that extend from government corruption (Stark and Griffin 2004) to grassroots resistance (Kersel 2007). They concentrate on diverse motivations and interests, such as subsistence-digging (Matsuda 1998) or connection to place (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004; LaBelle 2003), and more importantly, they explore cases where undocumented digging is legal (Hollowell 2006a) or is treated as socially acceptable and justified (Migliore 1991).

Despite the insights that these studies offer, what prevails in archaeological literature is the suggestion that undocumented physical engagement with the material past ‘destroys’ the archaeological context and coincides with commercial profit. This is the intellectual background that the dominant discourse on looting is embedded within, because the professionalised ideal of protecting the ‘archaeological context’ is commonly prioritised by professional archaeologists (Hollowell 2006b). In Greece, where the creation of its nation went together with the establishment of state ‘protection’ of antiquities, the discourse on looting follows the same dominant trend as the one seen so far. It is embedded within an ideology of *state* archaeology, which prioritises the protection of the *national* archaeological record. The dominant response towards undocumented and unauthorised digging and collecting is to treat such acts as illegal (because they are thought to ‘destroy’ the archaeological record and impinge on archaeological authority)

and unethical (because they are thought to prioritise self-serving interests) (Komvou 2000). Here, as in archaeological discourse in general, the inadequate consideration of the contexts of undocumented digging perpetuates the misconception that any form of undocumented digging is an act of looting or treasure-hunting (cf. Lekakis 2006; for an insightful exception see Papakonstandinou 2003).

According to a recent newspaper article, half of the country is addicted to treasure-hunting (Tsinganas 2007). In Kozani however, in the north-west of Greece where I come from, I have encountered individuals who dig and collect artefacts, but *not* for monetary gain. In light of this, I felt the need to address their misrepresentation as looters, by looking closer into these individual cases. Equally, I felt that through them, I would address the gap between professionalised epistemology and ethics on the one hand, and the variety of beliefs, experiences and rationales underlying non-professional engagement with the material past on the other.

As a response to these personal feelings and intellectual inquiries, I embarked on an ethnographic research amongst local communities in Kozani, seeking to approach these people and sense *their* viewpoint. This thesis is the result of this ethnographic journey, which was inspired by all the aforementioned ‘on the ground’ studies of looting (although I elaborate on my subtle divergence from their intellectual approach in Chapters 2 and 3). The ethnography included observation of what I prefer to denote as non-professional engagements with the material past. It also involved informal, semi-structured interviews with non-professional diggers, as well as structured interviews with official archaeologists (more details in Chapter 3). Throughout the thesis I refer to various events that I witnessed, although I analyse in depth three case-studies (one chapter for each case-study), based on three individuals’ non-professional engagements with the material past: George, Nikos and Ilias (for justification of this, see Chapter 3).

By non-professional engagements, I refer to any form of physical interaction with the material past (site-digging, object-collecting, or surface collecting but *not* selling antiquities, unless stated otherwise) by individuals who are *not* specialists in professional archaeology. Non-professional engagements generally occur outside officially accepted contexts and behaviours, such as professionally conducted excavations, with the exception of Chapter 8. That is concerned with Ilias, an individual who worked in archaeological excavations but, as I will show, in a manner that was entirely imbued with

his formed treasure-hunting experiences. Needless to say, the fact that the sale of antiquities does not actually occur should render the distinction of such non-professional engagements from looting obvious. However, as was mentioned earlier, they are still categorised as looting by local archaeologists, for they are considered to impinge on professional archaeological authority and ‘destroy’ antiquities’ informational context (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

The questions that I aspired to explore in relation to the role of official archaeology are: How and on what basis does official archaeology define unofficial engagements with the material past? What are the ideological and ethical positions from which such definitions are constructed? As far as non-professionals’ engagements are concerned, I wanted to know: What do they involve? How do non-professionals define their engagements with the material past? What are their incentives? Is the dominant ideology of archaeology implicated in the development of their engagement with the past? What do non-professional diggers achieve through their interaction with the material past? These questions form valuable vantage points from which, non-professional digging – that is dominantly perceived as looting – can be approached and deconstructed.

By deconstructing looting, I reduce it to the distinct forms of non-professional engagements, which I then reduce to their constituent parts – form(s), incentive(s), objective(s), consequence(s) – and finally attempt to understand them. In attempting to understand such engagements, I highlight the diversity of non-professional interactions with the material past, and I describe them in the terms of those who pursue them, whilst being detached from professionalised labels and ethical preconceptions. Of course, a process that is required for this detachment to occur, is to first get to the core of archaeological epistemology and practice, and then to understand the basis upon which these engagements with the past are pejoratively defined and morally condemned.

## **1.6 Looting: a mirror facing archaeology?**

According to the perspective of official archaeology, all three individuals comprising the main case-studies of this thesis (see Chapters 6 to 8), are (or have been in the past) considered to have ‘violated’ or resisted official archaeological discourse. At the same time however, all three cases were ‘legitimate’ in their own terms. In Chapter 6, George

pursued unsupervised digging and collecting of objects, yet, he managed to ‘document’ and ‘protect’ the past for the benefit of his local community. In Chapter 7, Nikos removes objects from archaeological contexts and for a while keeps them in his unauthorised possession, yet, he does this for the purposes of ‘preserving’ and ‘saving’ a past that is meaningful. And, in Chapter 8, Ilias – a former treasure-hunter – participated in archaeological excavations, yet, on a closer look, he was ‘treasure-hunting’ under official supervision. Without doubt, there are ambiguities and paradoxes to consider, but this is the stimulating part. My point is to challenge what appears obvious and well defined, and to embrace the idea that the consent or resistance to professionalised archaeological practice is not necessarily self-evident or marked out.

To my understanding, in the absence of overt objection, the seemingly normative, unobstructed disciplined and sanctioned treatment of the past should not presume ‘harmonious consent’ to the presumptions of official archaeology. Or to delve into deep-seated assumptions even more, cases of resistance to official archaeological practice, when looked closely, may appear to entail a covert consent. What I am trying to convey here, is that the way in which people subscribe to or oppose official discourse is not necessarily articulated through an explicit adherence or opposition to professionalised guidelines. Subtle gestures, behaviours, and expressions of opinion are equally telling, and may overturn the ‘obvious’, by revealing *the consent in the conflict*, or *the coercion in the consent*. Ultimately, the divide between accepted versus unaccepted and ethical versus unethical treatments of the past is indeed dominant, *but their oppositional status may be more apparent than real*.

Whilst ‘deconstructing’ looting in this way, which is intriguing in its own right, a profound issue for official archaeology is also being addressed: its own impact. The endeavour to understand alternative perceptions and treatments towards the past, inevitably led me inside a room where my participants’ hands were holding a mirror in front of archaeology’s face. And there I was, observing from a distance. To relate this to the example mentioned earlier, if non-professional digging entails an act of ‘resistance’ or – implicitly – an act of ‘consent’, the mirror allowed me to recognise that in either case, it always embodies a response to the impact of official archaeological discourse. As such, my position in the room enabled me to see beyond the mirror’s reflection and inside this inter-reaction.

Thus, a parallel endeavour to the process of identifying behaviours and characteristics of professional archaeologists and ordinary people alike, is the process of interpreting how different social groups transmit, internalise, materialise or project ideas, attitudes and behaviours amongst each other and in relation to the material past. Succinctly, in this thesis I attempt to

*-define non-professional physical engagements with the material past in their own terms*

*-understand their form, instigation, purpose and consequence*

*-identify the larger, dominant discourses (ideas, behaviours) that they are imbued with.*

The underlying advantage that is pursued here is that the collection of many such non-professional accounts about encounters with the past can highlight what an ‘ethnographic’ archaeology can offer and what dominant, professionalised archaeological discourse misses.

## **1.7 The flow of thesis**

Chapter 2 provides a critical review of the archaeological and anthropological literature on perceptions and treatments of looting. It identifies dominant and less common trends, and it delves into the ideological backgrounds that determine them. Chapter 3 presents the intellectual context and methodology of my ethnographic project, and explains the adherence to, and divergence from the approaches examined in the previous chapter. Chapter 4 introduces the establishment of archaeology in Greece. Instead of an exhaustive account, it focuses on particular social and political conditions that determined the prevalent ideology of the state’s control over the materiality and meaning of the past. Chapter 5 introduces archaeology in Kozani and explores the ways in which the local archaeological service articulates a national symbolic capital. Chapters 6 to 8 present and interpret unofficial engagements with the material past in Kozani. Chapter 9 concludes the thesis.



# CHAPTER 2

## DISCOURSE ON LOOTING: A CRITICAL VIEW

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically examines how looting has been primarily discussed and treated in archaeological and anthropological discourses. The first part looks into dominant notions and ideas that permeate professionalised archaeological discourse on looting, ‘looters’ and their underlying ethical standpoints and discursive implications. In the second part of the chapter, I probe into ethnographic approaches towards looting phenomena, which problematize ethical priorities in archaeology by questioning their universality and bias. Such ‘alternative’ discussions however do not share the same objectives and certainly do not come without their own problems. I therefore critically reflect on their distinct objectives and implications. On the whole, this chapter sets the intellectual context for my ideas, ethics and practice, which is the subject matter of Chapter 3.

### 2.2 Dominant representations of *looting* and *looters* in archaeological texts

Archaeological writing regarding ‘looting’ is circulated in print publications (edited volumes and journals), and dozens of web-blogs, all attempting to keep a record of its scale, structure and intellectual/material impact. In just the last decade, numerous volumes were co-edited by Neil Brodie (Brodie et al. 2000; Brodie et al. 2001; Brodie and Tubb 2002; Brodie and Renfrew 2005; Brodie et al. 2006). Information is also available in the *Antiquities Market* section of the *Journal of Field Archaeology*, which ran from 1974 to 1993 and has recently been restarted. Furthermore, information on looting incidents used to be disseminated in the biannual newsletter *Culture Without Context* (1997-2006) of the Illicit Antiquities Research Centre (IARC 2006a) at the



McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge. The IARC was established in 1996 but it closed in 2007.

Online resources include David Gill's (2012) blog *Looting Matters*, the blog by SAFE (2012), the websites of IARC (2006b), Heritage Watch (2012), and Tay Project (2009) with its *Destruction Report*. ICOM (2012) has acted for the international museums' community in developing an ethical disposition towards the antiquities market, and highlights the destruction of cultural objects with their series of *100 Missing Objects* and *Red Lists*.

### **2.2.1 Definition(s) of looting**

The literature regarding looting is evidently vast. Interestingly however, no single definition of 'looting' can apply to all cases. Some studies do not even provide a definition, as if there is some single presupposed meaning. Julie Hollowell (2003, p.45), a cultural anthropologist very much concerned with the ambiguity of the term, noted that looting "covers everything from undocumented excavation of archaeological sites to cases of art theft from museums and illegal export of cultural property across national borders, not to mention the actions of armies or rioters". Indeed, just by looking at the terms and phrases with which 'looting' is interchanged, its breadth of (normally negative) meanings manifests itself; consider for example, 'theft' and 'extinction' of archaeology (Brodie and Tubb 2002), 'trade in illicit antiquities' (Brodie et al. 2001) and 'destruction of heritage' (Brodie et al. 2001; Stone and Bajjaly 2008), 'stealing history' (Atwood 2004; Brodie et al. 2000), 'plunder' of the past (Meyer 1973; Schmidt and McIntosh 1996), even 'rape' (Rothfield 2009).

Then again, no matter how looting is described, it is normally deemed to be in opposition to the interests of official archaeology. In archaeological literature, the primary act of undocumented excavation is considered so "upsetting", that looting can apply to "whenever archaeological materials are removed from their context without proper scientific documentation" (Hollowell-Zimmer 2003, p.46), regardless of whether the undocumented excavation is done legally or illegally, for commercial purposes or not. Therefore, whatever the case may be, what commonly matters to archaeologists is that the removal of antiquities is *undocumented*. In light of this, looting – in its most primary

act – is believed to disturb the physical integrity of the ‘archaeological record’, spoil the ‘universal’ value of its information and hence violate professionalised archaeological authority and moral code. The thesis that is implied here is that undocumented digging denotes ‘destruction’ of archaeological sites and contexts.

It has to be noted, however, that not all undocumented digging is illegal, as the case of St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Strait of Alaska indicates (see Hollowell 2004; 2006a; Staley 1993). In light of such exceptional cases, some archaeologists, in order to avoid confusion with ‘legal’ practices, or to remind readers that “not everyone who illegally or destructively digs up an archaeological site is a subsistence digger” (Brodie 2006b, p.5), qualify the ‘destruction’ they are concerned with. For example, when Colin Renfrew (2000, p.15) describes looting, he provides the following definition: “the illicit, unrecorded and unpublished excavation of ancient sites to provide antiquities for commercial profit”. Renfrew is specific about the centrality of the *commercial intent* in an *illicit* undocumented excavation. This definition applies to a wide range of accounts of ‘looting’.

Renfrew’s definition of looting, and all the studies that are referred below, which presuppose the same definition, concern therefore a particular form of looting, one which is undocumented, but is also illicit and extends to the market of illicit antiquities. Consider, for example, a report from China: “the permanent destruction of cultural sites through looting erases historical information, which is lost for ever for the sake of quick profits to looters, smugglers and dealers, and in pursuit of prestige for individual donors and the museums which eventually receive these stolen objects for storage and display” (Fiskesjö 2006, p.112). Another study, from Honduras, reaches similar conclusions; “The destruction...is symptomatic of a much larger, indeed global, problem of commercially motivated archaeological destruction” (Luke and Henderson 2006, p.147).

### ***2.2.2 Directions in dominant archaeological discourse on looting***

One direction of inquiry with regards to the research on looting involves monitoring and quantifying ‘looted’ sites/contexts/objects. Quantitative information about the destruction of archaeological sites and monuments ‘on the ground’ has been provided by archaeological surveys of regions and individual sites. In 1983, one study showed that

58.6% of all Mayan sites in Belize had been damaged by looters (Gutchen 1983). Between 1989 and 1991 a regional survey in Mali discovered 830 archaeological sites, but 45% had already been damaged, 17% badly. In 1996 a sample of 80 were revisited and the incidence of looting had increased by 20% (Bedaux and Rowlands 2001, p.872). A survey in a district of northern Pakistan showed that nearly half the Buddhist shrines, stupas and monasteries had been badly damaged or destroyed by illegal excavations (Ali and Coningham 1998). In Andalusia, Spain, 14% of known archaeological sites have been damaged by illicit excavation (Fernandez Cacho and Sanjuán 2000). Between 1940 and 1968, it is estimated that something like 100,000 holes were dug into the Peruvian site of Batán Grande, and that in 1965 the looting of a single tomb produced something like 40 kg of gold jewellery, which accounts for about 90% of the Peruvian gold now found in collections around the world (Alva 2001, p. 91).

Some information about the material scale of the illegal trade is derived from official police statistics. In Greece for example, police reported that between 1987 and 2001 they recovered 23,007 artefacts (Doole 2001, p.19). From 1969 to 1999 the Italian Carabinieri seized 326,000 artefacts from illegal excavations, of which nearly 100,000 were recovered between 1994 and 1999 (Pastore 2001, p.159). In one year, 1997, German police in Munich recovered 50–60 crates containing 139 icons, 61 frescoes, and 4 mosaics that had been torn from the walls of north Cypriot churches; Swiss police seized something like 10,000 antiquities from four warehouses in Geneva Freeport that belonged to an Italian antiquities dealer (Watson 1998, p.11); and Italian police arrested a dealer who was found to be in illegal possession of between 10,000–30,000 antiquities (Doole 1999, p.11).

Quantitative information about the commodification of archaeological objects “at the high end” has been provided by companion studies of exhibition and sales catalogues. These have shown that more than 70% of archaeological objects that come onto the market or that are contained in recently assembled collections are without any indication of provenance (Chippindale and Gill 2000; Elia 2001; Gilgan 2001; Nørskov 2002). The implication of these studies is that antiquities only recently entered circulation and are probably stolen, looted, or fake.

Another direction of inquiry with regards to the research on looting involves analysing the structure of 'looting'. There are studies that discuss the economic system and the social network that 'looting' is embedded in. This approach studies the routes of illicit traffic, namely the circulation of 'looted' objects (see Alder 2001; Blake 1998; Gill and Chippindale 2002; Kersel 2006; Mackenzie 2002; Schuster 1996) The roles that various agents such as, looters, dealers, middlemen, government officials, private collectors, museum curators, auction houses and cyberspace trafficking play in promoting and maintaining the market for antiquities (see Fiskesjö 2004; Chippindale et al. 2001; Watson and Todeschini 2006).

Needless to say, it is because of looting's dominant definition as a form of 'destruction' that the literature focuses on the quantification and analysis of that destruction. It highlights the lack of authority and morality involved in the act of the undocumented removal of objects. Also, it encapsulates – at least for those who use the term – a double-meaning of 'destruction': the one caused by the objects' undocumented removal (affecting archaeological sites and contexts), and the one caused by the objects' subsequent transformation into commodities (affecting the objects). In this respect, a key term in archaeological literature on looting is 'illicit antiquities' for it refers to antiquities, which are believed to have been illegally removed and subsequently circulated within local or international markets.

### ***2.2.3 Illicit antiquities***

Archaeologists who use the term 'illicit antiquities' are concerned with "the illegal excavation and export of archaeological material and the destruction caused" (Brodie and Doole 2001, p.2). In other words, archaeological objects "which have been torn from monuments, stolen from museums or illegally excavated and/or exported, have been christened 'illicit antiquities'" (Brodie 2002, p. 2). As they further note, "this is not a legal term but has been coined by archaeologists to highlight a unique characteristic of the trade in such material, which is that although in most countries of the world (exceptions such as the US and UK) archaeological heritage has been taken into public ownership, so that its unlicensed excavation or export is illegal, its ultimate sale in a country other than that of its origin may not be" (Brodie 2002, p. 2).

However, not all antiquities appearing on the market are necessarily illicit. In such cases, one outlook that is upheld – by the same archaeologists who endorse the above definition of illicit antiquities – is that “[i]n the absence of provenance ... [t]he only cautious response is to regard all unprovenanced material illicit” (Brodie 2002, p. 3). Given the illicit antiquities’ lack of archaeological context, it is then argued that antiquities shift from a sphere of information to a commodities’ sphere, and in turn, are categorised only on the basis of monetary value (Elia 1995; Tubb 1995). It is also believed that illicit objects “continue to circulate for years, even centuries perhaps, and to generate money in transaction after transaction” (Brodie et al. 2000, p.14). The amount of illicit material that emerges in the antiquities’ market on an everyday basis is considered to be inconceivable (see Brodie 1999; Brodie 2003; Leyten 1995; Renfrew 2000; Tubb 1995). The money generated is, therefore, impossible to estimate. In the face of the loss of archaeological context and the commodification of antiquities, a broad consensus prevails that archaeological objects are becoming ‘extinct’ (Brodie and Tubb 2002).

Those who criticise the commodification of illicit antiquities on archaeological moral grounds frequently do so by contrasting the decontextualized, anonymous although highly ‘priced’ works of art at the one pole, against the information-endowed, archaeological objects at the other pole. Ultimately, commodification of illicit antiquities is treated as a dirty concept, involving – in Elia’s (1991) words – ‘dirty money’. Furthermore, what is believed to distinguish the art market from other illegal markets (comparisons have been made with the international trade in guns and drugs) is its transformation into a ‘legal’ trade (see Brodie 2006b). This transformation is founded upon the belief that the trade converts “looted artefact into legal art”, based on the argument that once objects are illegally acquired and transported from one country “end up being offered for public sale by legal businesses in another” (Elia 1995, p.245).

Due to the lack of efficient national patrimony laws, or due to the incompatibility between different State laws regarding the protection of cultural heritage, archaeologists often stress that it is common for an illicit antiquity when transferred across territorial boundaries to be recognised as legal outside its country of origin. Eventually, an illicit object is granted legal status, provided that there is appropriate paperwork that proves a ‘legitimate’ title to the object, “that the assumed owner is the owner and has full rights of ownership” (Carman 2005, p.19); or, so long as it is “published in an academic paper or

exhibition catalogue or even sale catalogue”, it acquires “a new respectable pedigree as an object of scholarly interest or of esteem” the object’s illicit origin is “quietly forgotten” (Brodie 2002, p.2).

As mentioned before, although not all antiquities entering the antiquities market or private collections are the products of illegal excavations, when it comes to vague and ambiguous descriptions of provenance, archaeologists are inclined to believe that they refer to illicit objects (Brodie et al. 2000). Such a definition of illicitness however, clashes with other interests outside the archaeological community, (i.e. collectors, antiquities dealers, and museum curators) who often overlook the issue of provenance, because they tend to value objects despite their potential illicitness (see Chesterman 1991; Cook 1991). As such, attempts to prevent the looting and collecting of illicit antiquities often entail combating the interests of those, who, despite the uncertainty of the objects’ legality, support the antiquities’ trade. In the words of some archaeologists, “to consider the trade in isolation, apart from the culture it serves, is perhaps to diminish or misrepresent the problem. The trade exists, after all, to create and satisfy a demand: collectors are its *sine qua non*” (Brodie and Doole 2001, p.2; emphasis in the original). In light of this, to refuse to engage with antiquities of ambiguous origins (through their study, authentication, conservation, or publication) is seen as the only effective and ethical option in order to battle with the collectors’ interests (Brodie et al. 2000; Renfrew 2000).

The motivation of such approaches is to prevent the elevation of illicit objects’ esteem and their transformation into collectible objects (see Elia 1995; Lunden 2004). For instance, Elia (1995, p.244; also see De Varine 2001; Tubb 1995), who examined the role of conservators that offer professional services regarding illicit antiquities, argued that “by conserving, cleaning and restoring unprovenanced objects, the conservator enhances their market value and in some cases authenticates them”. Conservation therefore appeared crucial in transforming illicit antiquities into art-commodities, considering that “objects go in dirty, corroded and broken and come out clean, shiny and whole” (Elia 1995, p.248). As a result, the provision of professional services in that context is viewed as an indirect endorsement of looting, and adherence to the marketability of illicit objects. Parenthetically, I should mention that this ethical turn, with regards to illicit material, gained immense attention when Ricardo Elia reviewed Renfrew’s (1991) book –

catalogue on Cycladic figurines – called *The Cycladic Spirit. Masterpieces from the Nicholas P. Goulandris Collection*. Elia's (cited Renfrew 1993, p.17) words were:

“I found *The Cycladic Spirit* offensive because it seemed to promote esteem for looted antiquities as art-objects, regardless of the disgraceful manner of their acquisition. I was especially troubled by the fact that Renfrew ignored the possibility that forgeries exist in the Goulandris collection. The problem of forgeries is critical because their presence corrupts any art historical inquiry. By not addressing the issue, Renfrew is doing exactly what art dealers do out of financial self-interest- assume that everything is genuine”.

Following this critical review and the dialogue which followed, Renfrew not only reconsidered his position (see Renfrew 1993), but he also engaged in an archaeological campaign in raising awareness on the negative effects of looting on archaeology (see IARC 2006c). Since then, Renfrew compellingly asserts that any association with illicit material (conservation, study, authentication, display) indirectly corroborates the illicit trade of antiquities (Renfrew 2000). A look though the ethical codes of leading archaeological and heritage organisations testifies that Renfrew's approach is in fact a dominant one, endorsed by a large majority of professional stewards of the archaeological past.

## ***2.2.4 Ethics and the destruction of 'looting'***

The persistence of the discussion in antiquities trade and their on-going 'destruction' has, over the years, led to the formulation of a number of ethical statements by archaeologists. The importance that these ethical commitments afford (and have afforded for many years now) is indicated by the fact that most leading archaeological associations subscribe to them.

The EAA (2009) states that archaeologists are “the interpreters and stewards of the archaeological heritage”. In their Code, it is stated that “It is the duty of every archaeologist to ensure the preservation of the archaeological heritage by every legal means” (Article 1.2). Furthermore, it is stated that “Archaeologists will not engage in, or allow their names to be associated with, any form of activity relating to the illicit trade in antiquities and works of art” (Article 1.6) or “any activity that impacts the archaeological heritage which is carried out for commercial profit” (Article 1.7).

In the United States, the Society for American Archaeology (1996) describes their first Principle of “stewardship” as follows: “The archaeological record, that is, in situ archaeological material and sites, archaeological collections, records and reports, is irreplaceable. It is the responsibility of all archaeologists to work for the long-term conservation and protection of the archaeological record by practicing and promoting stewardship of the archaeological record”. Their second Principle regarding the “commercialization of archaeological objects” which is described as “their use as commodities to be exploited for personal enjoyment or profit” that “results in the destruction of archaeological sites and of contextual information”, states that archaeologists should “carefully weigh the benefits to scholarship of a project against the costs of potentially enhancing the commercial value of archaeological objects. Whenever possible they should discourage, and should themselves avoid, activities that enhance the commercial value of archaeological objects, especially objects that are not curated in public institutions, or readily available for scientific study, public interpretation, and display”.

Equally, the Archaeological Institute of America (1997), another archaeological organisation in the United States, which claims to be “dedicated to the greater understanding of archaeology, to the protection and preservation of the world's archaeological resources and the information they contain”, states in its second ethic that archaeologists should “Refuse to participate in the trade in undocumented antiquities and refrain from activities that enhance the commercial value of such objects”.

The concern with the trade in unprovenanced antiquities and its effect upon of archaeological sites has also produced an international response, as the UNESCO (1970) and UNIDROIT (1995) Conventions indicate.<sup>1</sup> Both conventions support anti-looting measures by promoting legal and educational remedies, and address and facilitate the restitution and return of illegally removed and trafficked cultural objects. Lastly, ICOM (2010) promotes an ethical approach which condemns the illicit trade in cultural objects by stating that “[m]useums should not acquire objects where there is reasonable cause to believe their recovery involved the unauthorised, unscientific, or intentional destruction

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<sup>1</sup> A renewed interest in the 1970 UNESCO Convention is indicated by the fact that Japan, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland have recently provided their signatories.



or damage of monuments, archaeological or geological sites, or species and natural habitats. In the same way, acquisition should not occur if there has been a failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land, or to the proper legal or governmental authorities” (Article 2.4).

Clearly, the notion of ‘protection’ is shared amongst professional advocates of the archaeological ‘record’ (notion explained on page 26). Clemency Coggins (1991, p.389) once observed that “[a]ll participants in the debate over cultural property agree with archaeologists that the destruction of archaeological context is fundamentally wrong. The point of contention concerns subsequent treatment of unscientifically removed objects”. The idea of refusing any professional association with illicit material has attracted criticism from archaeologists and other professionals and interest groups (for some recent archaeological research conducted on looted objects and sites see Argyropoulos et al. 2011; Gerdau-Radonic and Herrera 2010).

On the other hand, Alison Wylie (1996) – a philosopher concerned with archaeology – asserted that the decision to engage or not with looted material does necessarily reflect a moral standpoint (see also Elia 1992). Instead, such a decision should depend on the degree to which “the analysis and publication of looted data” serves archaeological objectives or affects “the commercial market responsible for the looting” (Wylie 1996, p.178). Wylie’s suggestion (1996, p.187) is that the complex dynamics between commercialisation and professional archaeology cannot be confined to rigid professional codes of conduct. Therefore, she concluded, in order to determine so-called ‘ethical’ questions what is needed is a situational frame of attitude, defined on empirical grounds.

John Boardman (2006) – a former professor of Classical Archaeology and Art – argued for the importance of studying objects without provenance, opting for a pragmatic rather than a moral treatment of the subject.<sup>2</sup> He asserted that “[o]ur museums are full of objects that speak for themselves, to the public and to scholars, without knowledge of their exact provenance. To hold that an object without context is worthless is pure

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<sup>2</sup> John Boardman can be described more as art historian, which explains his interest in archaeological objects even when they lack informational context. He was also linked to The Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art at the University of Oxford, which was condemned in the early 1990s for using thermoluminescence dating to authenticate illicit Malian ceramics (Brodie et al. 2000, p. 18).

nonsense” (Boardman 2006, p.39). He supported Colin Renfrew’s initial entanglement with illicit antiquities, as he interpreted the latter’s actions as “the result of a natural scholarly reaction to a body of material which seemed to deserve to be better known to scholars” (Boardman 2006, p.38). Boardman viewed the “anti-collecting propaganda” as a “holy crusade” which was “moved by some sort of misplaced compassion” (Boardman 2006, p.39), that endorsed “the censorship of scholarship” (Boardman 2006, p.44) and attacked “a very natural human interest in collecting, by individuals or museums” (Boardman 2006, p.37). Boardman’s criticism interrogated the apparent rigidity and dominance of professionalised attitudes towards antiquities that lack informational context.

My concern in this thesis is not to argue for the engagement with illicit objects over non-engagement. Rather, I want to highlight how the protection of the ‘archaeological record’ is so strongly tied with a firm ethical duty to prevent the record’s destruction, that, once one is committed to act as a ‘steward’ of the past, the ‘crusade’ against looting and illicit trade is almost inevitable. As I have shown, archaeological codes of ethics clearly state both how one ‘protects’ archaeology and simultaneously, how one acts against its ‘destruction’. To reiterate some examples from the ethical definitions cited earlier: archaeologists are the “stewards of the archaeological heritage”, “protectors of the archaeological record” or “protectors of the world’s archaeological resources”; they, therefore, “will not engage in” or “not be associated with”, or, “should discourage”, “should themselves avoid”, “refuse to participate” to some action relating to what is referred to as the “illicit trade in antiquities”, “destruction of archaeological sites”, or “commercial profit”. At the same time, archaeological literature on looting discusses the scale, structure and impact of looting’s destruction, as it occurs in the absence of effective archaeological protection.

One could argue that this whole discourse around protection and destruction simply aims to provide thorough instructions for professional behaviour, or thorough accounts of what archaeologists are up against. This is indeed the case, but is it merely for drawing the line between accepted and unaccepted behaviours and material outcomes, or is there something more involved? I believe that the notion of protection alongside the notion of destruction forms a discourse that *preserves* the line between attitudes – and therefore the supremacy of official notions.

## **2.3 ‘Protection’ vs. ‘destruction’: A discursive opposition**

From what has been shown so far, a dominant trend in archaeological discourse over looting manifests itself. A trend wherein, certain official notions entail, almost by default, an opposition – a ‘crusade’ – against certain actions and objects (e.g. looting/trade, illicit antiquities), as they (are represented to) lack authority, legality and moral standing. For instance, archaeological literature on looting defines excavation as a controlled, documented and professional ‘destruction’, as opposed to one that is uncontrolled, undocumented and thus, an act of looting (Renfrew 2000). In the same spirit, archaeological ethics define the ‘archaeological record’ and simultaneously proclaim what the archaeological record is not (e.g. illicit antiquity). This recalls identity politics which is always and necessarily a politics of creating difference. Almost every search for identity includes differentiating oneself from what one is not. So, if we are dealing with a construction of a professionalised archaeology here, then this divisive discourse does not merely involve differentiation, but a positive self-presentation of official norms (e.g. protection) and material outcomes (e.g. archaeological record) alongside a negative ‘other’-presentation of practices and objects that the first are contrasted to.

Interestingly, the notion of protection is always defined against that of destruction. This requires some explanation and perhaps the best place to begin is by returning to the most fundamental premise in official archaeological discourse: the archaeological ‘record’. The archaeological record, put simply, is the physical remains of the past upon which official archaeological ‘knowledge’ is based. The problem however is that such ‘record’, although produced by archaeologists, is taken as given. With the rise of moral universalism and rational thought, the significance of the archaeological record was afforded special prominence, because the material past was not merely seen to represent some meaning that was important to some people, but a ‘universal’ meaning that was for the benefit of ‘all people’.

This gradually led to the rise of the ‘duty’ to protect the past, for all the (assumed) significance that it came to afford. The ‘duty’ to protect was becoming more and more intelligible the more it was standing out from a background of ‘destruction’ – which was also being defined and represented (antiquarianism, amateurism, indigenous treatments). Eventually, it became an established right that signified crucial implications for the

professionalization of official archaeology. The right that I am referring to here is the ‘ethic of stewardship’. It was this which placed scientific experts as the most able to take on the role of ‘protecting’ the material remains and the knowledge, which they elicited (and employed in all kinds of ways) for the benefit of ‘all people’. Although both the ‘archaeological record’ and ‘stewardship’ carry their baggage of disputes (for an insightful critique see Hamilakis 2007b), they are both considered by the dominant discourse as the most fundamental and given notions underlying official, professionalised archaeology.

Just to illustrate a recent example of how the proclamation of protection arose against a background of ‘destruction’, consider the first adoption of the ethic of stewardship by the SAA. As Hamilakis (2007b, p.26) noted, amongst many other things, the ethic of stewardship was the response to “the increasing commercialisation of the past that took various forms: from the vast sums of money circulated in the market of looted artefacts (sustained by powerful, wealthy collectors and museums) to the pressure of land owners and developers who were (and are) keen to maximise profits and who treat attempts to rescue antiquities as an obstacle”. In fact, the idea of protecting the past, as a means to regulate its ‘destruction’ through looting, goes back to the 1960s, when non-western states started to be concerned about the looting of their antiquities and paved the way for the establishment of the UNESCO Convention (Efrat 2009, p.17).

The point that I want to underline here is the decisive role played by the formation of a *discourse of destruction*. As Efrat (2009, p.24; emphasis added) observed, “American archaeologists considered the uncontrolled trade in antiquities to be a major cause for looting of antiquities and loss of historical knowledge. They used their *knowledge* and *expertise* to urge the US government to curb the harmful trade”. An exemplary case of such construction of knowledge was the work of archaeologist Clemency Coggins (1969). She instigated the initial US interest in antiquities regulation, through presenting her scholarly expertise on “the magnitude of the looting problem, its implications, and – most importantly – the role placed by American museums in fuelling the destruction of archaeology” (Efrat 2009, p.24).

As Paul Bator argued (1983 cited Efrat 2009, p.25), the article that Coggins wrote in 1969 was an “important milestone” and “played an important role in giving credibility to

the contention that the illegal traffic in art treasures is a problem that has to be taken seriously”. Although Coggins “did not expect the article to have political impact” (Efrat 2009, p.25), her article resonated strongly well beyond the museum community. This was because she managed to articulate, delineate, and interpret the face of ‘destruction’; its ‘harmful’ cause and impact and the acts and actors involved. The destruction of looting was not referred to as some vague force, but as a structured phenomenon. It was cast in concrete and tangible terms. Undoubtedly, “[i]t is one thing to hear about looting in the abstract and quite another to read a painstakingly detailed account of the breaking into pieces and sawing off of important monuments” (Efrat 2009, p.25).

Coggins’ later publications, combined with several highly-publicized scandals involving museums and collectors, raised concerns about the questionable conduct of such institutions and the museums’ and collectors’ involvement with stolen art. Although her discourse was questioned for its selective portrayal of facts (see Coe 1993 and Matsuda 1998) she succeeded in drawing a distinction between a scientific and morally correct archaeology, and a range of unacceptable practices involving the material past. This triggered further journalistic investigations into the so-called looting and destruction of archaeology. Especially prominent was the book by Karl Meyer (1973) *The Plundered Past*. It was a disclosure of the American art world and its involvement in “one of the world’s sadder problems, the destruction and theft of the remains of the human past” (Meyer 1973, p.xiii). It examined the structure of the trade: the looters, the conduct of certain dealers, the complicity of museums and collectors in acquiring ‘plundered’ material.

On the whole, these developments indicate some crucial points that are going to concern us in the context of this thesis. The first implication is that the action of protection, or rather, the reaction to the destruction of looting, facilitated the professionalization and ethical perspective of official archaeology. The second implication is that, the more negative the representation of destruction, the more legitimate and moral the discourse of official archaeology became. Similarly, the greater and the more disreputable the representation of ‘destruction’ was, the more established and ‘worthier’ the official norms became. Both these implications therefore indicate that a notion of ‘destruction’ not only *defines*, but also *elevates* official archaeological notions. They also address a more profound implication: that the notion of professionalised protection came into being

and will remain for as long as there is a notion of destruction; or at least, for as long as the articulation of destruction is proclaimed by those who adhere to the professionalised notion of the ‘archaeological record’. In practical terms, this means that the existence of a constant ‘threat’ *justifies and preserves* the call for a reactive and proactive response to it.

Having said that, it is crucial to point out that it would be inadequate to maintain that the official notion of destruction professionalises archaeology, without also considering what it does to those proclaimed as the agents of destruction. It is important that we see how the official theorisation of looting represents looters (or rather, misrepresents them). For example, ‘looting’, as the contrast to professionalised practice, is referred to as a form of destruction that is *il*-legitimate, *il*-legal, *un*-licensed, *un*-authorised, *un*-documented, *un*-controlled, *un*-professional, *un*-ethical, *un*-official. So, I ask: what happens to the ‘looters’ when official discourse *il*-legitimizes or *ex*-cludes their behaviours? I believe that the official notion of destruction not only shapes and privileges professionalised notions and behaviour towards the past, but more importantly, formulates the ‘otherness’ / ‘outsiderhood’ of agents by de-legitimising their alternative engagements with the past.

### ***2.3.1 Implications of representing looting as ‘destruction’***

So far, we have seen that the discourse on looting focuses on the quantification and analysis of the destruction caused, because acts of looting are viewed and represented as acts that ‘destroy’ the archaeological context and objects by allowing their transformation into commodities. As a result, the majority of archaeological literature on looting refers to the destruction either ‘on the ground’ or at ‘the high-end’. One comes to wonder however, what happens when these are the *only* aspects of undocumented digging being highlighted?

Illegality is a central issue, but is all that is categorised as looting, actually illegal and commercial? Although looting commonly refers to illegitimate and commercial acts of digging, other forms of undocumented interventions on relics of the past are also decreased to the category of looting. Illustrative examples of this include the legal undocumented digging, in St. Lawrence Island in Alaska (Hollowell 2006a), and the undocumented surface-collecting of objects in San Pedro Valley in Arizona (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004) or in the Great Plains in Colorado (LaBelle 2003). The fact is that

these cases are at times (unintentionally, but inevitably) consumed by the generic label of looting, because the only characteristics that are *consistently* and *solely* assumed in accounts of undocumented digging, are their ‘destructive’, illegitimate and commercial aspects, as if there is nothing else that undocumented digging could possibly involve or mean.

But even when undocumented digging is illegal and is conducted with the sale of the resulting artefacts in mind, is economic profit the ultimate goal? Let me put it in another way. Let us assume that looting is destructive, and that it is commercial, but still, why do people do it for the money? What are the social, political, cultural on-the-ground circumstances that surround undocumented digging? Take those defined as ‘looters’ for example. Who are they? What purpose do looting activities serve for them? Unsurprisingly, archaeological discourse rarely deals with such concerns (although some exceptions are explored later). But even when it does, archaeologists normally treat ‘looters’ as if they comprise a uniform problem (see Brodie et al. 2001), calling for standard-countermeasures (see Hicks 2006). An illustrative example of this is a study of looting in western Turkey, which refers to those involved as “career looters” and their activities are categorised within a “looting culture”. Looters are referred to as “generally members of rural agricultural communities who supplement the routine of their more relaxed winter schedules with the occupation of treasure hunting” and possess “clear knowledge of the lucrative nature of the antiquities market even in the most remote rural areas” (Roosevelt and Luke 2006a, pp.180-182; see also Roosevelt and Luke 2006b; Early 1989).

Interestingly, while it is often noted that looters ‘know’ market trends or prices for objects (see also Luke and Henderson 2006, p.148), it is frequently assumed that they do not realise the destruction they cause to their cultural heritage. A case study from India, claims that “[t]he smuggling of works of art and antiquities is essentially a white-collar crime as it involves a certain amount of sophistication and expertise in assessing the value of the object to be illegally transported and sold [...] *Poor and innocent villagers* are often enticed to help white-collar criminals in their illicit operations without realising the irreparable loss that they cause” (Pachauri 2002, pp.276-277; emphasis added). Or consider a similar suggestion about looters in Mali: “[t]hese criminal activities are sustained by a chain of actors, which includes, at one end, *the poor illiterate Sahelian*

*peasants* who deface numerous archaeological sites (with long and deep trenches) and receive about US\$30 for the best find, and, on the other end – in Europe and the US – the international art smuggler who can sell the same piece for US\$175,000 to US\$250,000” (Togola 2002, p.253; emphasis added). Such discourse incorporates the assumption mentioned earlier, that the ‘destruction’ that non-Western looters cause is less conscious because they lack education (see also Kersel et al. 2008). Although this view aims to defend the priority of social needs of subsistence in the context of harsh social realities, it also inappropriately perpetuates a blanket categorisation of diggers as “being poor, ignorant, greedy, uneducated, and blind to the consequences of their actions” (Hollowell-Zimmer 2003, p. 49).

Furthermore, a distinction between Western (usually urban) looters and non-Western (usually rural) looters prevails in archaeological accounts regarding looter communities (see also Smith 2005 for analogous distinction between ‘city-dwelling’ commercial looters and local traditional *huaqueros*). In this context it is assumed that non-Western looters are ‘victims’ of economic and political corruption (see Matsuda 1998; Paredes-Maury 1996), whereas western looters are believed to be educated citizens of the Western world (e.g. Lazrus 2002). Archaeologists who encounter looters’ activities within Western contexts point out that they do not necessarily deal with ‘poor and illiterate peasants’. In Italy for example, it was reported that “[t]hose individuals engaged in the illicit trade in antiquities are neither impoverished nor lacking in a basic education – the qualities that are often cited as the motivation for tomb robbing and trafficking in other countries” (Lazrus 2002, p.41).

As a consequence, cultural stereotypes such as “the Third World peasant, supposedly ignorant of the value of heritage and exploited to supply the market” are represented as the “blind victims of the desire of collectors, threatening dealers, or supply and demand” (ibid.). These stereotypes become common in dominant archaeological literature that encompasses discussion of looters. It is equally common that, with regards to Western looters, profit is suggested as the primary motivation (e.g. Brodie 1998). Do the so-called looters actually see themselves as victims or profit-seekers however? Or are these mere representations of archaeological interpretation? Furthermore, do they even see their actions as destructive?



Archaeological literature generally lacks interpretation of the so-called looters even though it deals with 'looting'. There are some exceptions however, as there are some sporadic archaeological accounts and, together with the anthropological literature on looting, they will be explored in the remainder of this chapter. Although they do not all justify or encourage looting, they all succeed nevertheless in elaborating on the complexity of the circumstances of the looters. Thus, a discussion of these sporadic accounts is necessary in order to show that undocumented digging and collecting of objects, even when defined as illegal and commercial, is not determined or surrounded by illegality and commerciality alone. In some cases, it is not even considered destructive. And yet, as it was shown, dominant archaeological discourse on looting creates a partial and inadequate understanding of looting, since it is portrayed as if it only consists of the components and the connotations that archaeologists define.

Having said all this, it is fair to conclude that dominant archaeological discourse fails to acknowledge or represent the whole spectrum of circumstances surrounding contexts of undocumented digging, such as 'on-the-ground' socio-political conditions. Such failure stems from privileging concern with the archaeological 'record' and its protection. When the interest lies within what or how much the 'destruction' is or how destruction is going to be prevented, there is no space to see what else happens on-the-ground. Furthermore, dominant archaeological discourse fails also to recognise the awareness of, or the thinking behind unofficial treatments of the past. This becomes particularly evident in the blanket use of the term 'looters' which fails to acknowledge the conscious decisions underlying unofficial behaviour towards material remains. It also ignores the conscious struggle and power that people materialise through the enactment of unofficial practices, in the context of social inequalities, or in the context of an imbalanced production of the past. Equally, it fails to recognise whether the label 'victim' or 'looter' is actually upheld by those who are being represented as such.

## **2.4 Alternative accounts on looting**

Here I intend to discuss the contributions which directly relate to the issues that were raised above; issues to do with the way in which 'destruction' is viewed and represented

as, and also the way in which looters' identity and behaviour is theorised in anthropological accounts.

#### ***2.4.1 Revealing the socio-political surroundings of looting***

The conception of 'subsistence-digging' constituted an important turn in the treatment of looting. It was first used by archaeologist David Staley (1993) in order to describe the undocumented and commercial digging that was carried out for subsistence purposes by the community of Gambell in the St. Lawrence Island (Bering Strait, Alaska). As the author specified, the term 'subsistence-digger' was adopted because it did not have the negative connotations that the terms 'looter' or 'pot-hunter' had. He also argued that it was the appropriate term to describe what was going on, because it defined the person who used "the proceeds from artefact sales to support his or her traditional subsistence lifestyle" (Staley 1993, p.348). The use of such an alternative word was not a mere change in the terminology, but was designed to imply a different approach towards looting. For the first time, undocumented and commercial digging was portrayed not as the result of people's greed, but as a viable route for economic survival. Since that article was written, a number of sporadic, yet important (archaeological and anthropological) accounts on looting have emerged, focusing attention of the socio-political circumstances that surround unofficial diggers in both Western and non-Western contexts.

One seminal contribution in that respect was the work of social anthropologist David Matsuda. Especially pioneering was his article *The Ethics of Archaeology, Subsistence Digging and Artefact Looting in Latin America: Point, Muted Counterpoint* (Matsuda 1998), which is perhaps one of the most cited articles in subsistence-digging accounts. It not only defended people who looted for subsistence, but it also asserted how archaeologists ought to treat the matter. The tone and language that permeated the article reflected a deeply felt revulsion against professionalised attitudes, a personal and evocative account that raised hitherto unexplored issues. It is worth reiterating some of its points here. Matsuda emphasised the patronising behaviour of archaeologists working in Latin America, indicated by their "closeted sympathy for the poor indigenous people" whilst hiring locals "to work as camp help and grunt labourers, often at less than a living wage" (Matsuda 1998, p.89). He also argued for the hypocrisy of archaeologists, who, despite their historical association with collectors and dealers, they now "see themselves

and their chosen profession as the standard-bearers of enlightened science and keepers of the moral high ground” (ibid.).

Furthermore, he stressed archaeologists’ ignorance of the socio-political circumstances surrounding those who ‘loot’, and asserted that they “must confront the fact that there are indigenous peoples among them – oppressed by land speculation and resource-hungry militaries, constrained from extra-local commerce, and lacking political power – who dig their ancestors’ remains to put food on the table” (1998: 90).<sup>3</sup> In describing some facts about the subsistence-digging process, he attempts to break with the “selective portrait of artefact looters and subsistence diggers as either ignorant or villainous” whilst highlighting that “participation in cash economies like subsistence-digging are motivated not by the attractiveness of wage labour, but by the severe economic realities under which subsistence producers operate” (Matsuda 1998, p.93). As he otherwise put it, “artefact looting is [...] a way of life practiced for subsistence”, which he also interpreted – based on diggers’ perspective – as “class warfare”: “The artefacts represent money and power to archaeologists and art historians. That is how they make their upper class living. To us, these gifts from the ancestors mean seed corn, food, clothes, medicine, and security. That is how we live our lower-class lives” (Matsuda 1998, p.93).

Matsuda’s legacy is reflected in the work of anthropologists and archaeologists who dealt with the socio-cultural conditions surrounding subsistence-diggers (see Hollowell 2006a; Kersel 2007; Paredes-Maury 1996; Politis 2002; Smith 2005). One indicative example was Paredes-Maury’s work (1996). She carried out ethnographic research studying the process of *huechería* – namely, the looting and dealing – of Pre-columbian artefacts in the rural villagers of El Petén in Guatemala (Paredes-Maury 1996, p.12). Her intention was to investigate why and how forest workers, especially gum gatherers or *chicleros* “are moved to participate in this illegal activity to obtain additional socio-economic

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<sup>3</sup> It has to be noted that the author interrogating the ‘power’ of archaeology in this article was employed in 2008 by the US military’s ‘Human Terrain Team’ (HTT) program, which “embeds anthropologists with combat brigades in Iraq and Afghanistan in the hope of helping tactical commanders in the field understand local cultures” (see ABC News 2008). Allegedly, the American Anthropological Association “denounced the program...saying it could lead to ethics being compromised, the profession’s reputation damaged, and worst of all, research subjects becoming military targets” to which Professor Matsuda replied that “the concern is based on a misunderstanding of what he has signed on to do” (ibid.).

benefits, which are not possible through other ‘legal’ channels” (Paredes-Maury 1996, p.4). Like Matsuda, the author explained features of the looting process; she also provided details regarding looters’ socio-economic background. Furthermore, she thoroughly explained aspects of their oral tradition that linked to the illegal practice of looting. She interpreted such aspects as a “local culture” that facilitates “an activity that *destroys* other aspects of culture, such as archaeological remains” (Paredes-Maury 1996, p.24; emphasis added).

In both accounts the verb ‘destroy’ is emphasized in order to indicate the anti-looting perspective from which this article was written. In the same spirit, the author mentions elsewhere: “[l]ooting activities destroy the information that could be available about the function of the objects and their cultural context and perhaps provide new insights into Maya history and the development of technology” (Paredes-Maury 1996, p.39). Accordingly, it would be fair to argue that although this study elaborated on the magic and folktales, on the vocabulary, local knowledge and practice relating to looting, the underlying aim was to facilitate archaeological knowledge and defend the notion of archaeological protection (see Paredes-Maury 1996, pp.43-49).

However, if one reads this article without moral judgement of what the author treats as a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ treatment of the material past, then one may go beyond the protection-destruction distinction and treat these attitudes as a spectrum of official and unofficial values and interests regarding the past. What was witnessed and represented as ‘destruction’ was merely perhaps *an alternative treatment of the past*. Take, for example, the following statement by the author: “These people, as their ancestors did, exploit the natural environment. According to their world-view, the rainforest and its surroundings include not only water sources, plants, and animals, but also the ground. Archaeological mounds are, by and large, considered part of the forest’s soil. For that reason, when the looter has a main occupation, looting can take place incidentally during his or her work” (Paredes-Maury 1996, p.13). Here it is shown that anything that these people obtained from the rainforest was considered valuable. It is also shown that the ancient remains that these people ‘loot’ are not ‘destroyed’ but gain a new importance when embedded within new contexts. As Paredes-Maury (1996, p.39) mentioned: “The objects and their functions are categorized according to the way they are perceived, on the cultural setting of the present-day people and the similarity of shape between [...] Vessels that haven’t

been sold, start a new life in the chiclero camps as containers of all sorts of things, from ballpoint pens to rubber bands”.

This article, besides deconstructing the conditions that surround those who are perceived as ‘looters’, also succeeds, unintentionally perhaps, in demonstrating how the material past was uniquely integrated in the forest workers’ every-day life. Looting was not simply a means to survive, but a way of life and perception of a world which existed long before official notions of ‘destruction’ – Western, professionalised notions of cultural protection– were established (for details see Paredes-Maury 1996, p.43). Consequently, one cannot disregard the fact that other values and perceptions of the past do exist despite their morally-situated representation, within a professionalised, anti-destruction framework. At the same time however, one cannot underestimate the effect of political upheaval or the experience of poverty, which so often link to the development of unofficial digging.

Accounts of the socio-economic circumstances surrounding looting are indeed important for they recall Matsuda’s warning to realise and acknowledge the broader conditions (e.g. capitalism and colonialism) within which undocumented digging is embedded. Consider for example Stark and Griffin (2004, p.137) and their exploration of the conditions that contribute to the continued looting of Cambodia’s material past, such as grinding poverty, corrupt government officials, a poorly compensated military and the voracious international demand for Khmer antiquities. Consider also the study by Politis (2002) which exposed the conditions that triggered and sustained the looting and illegal and mass exporting of Ghor es-Safi antiquities in Jordan. These include the effects of war, the poverty-stricken devastation of local population, rapid economic development imposed through foreign construction companies and the government’s neglect of cultural protection.

On the other hand, the emphasis on the victimisation as the effect of those conditions, and the adherence to the idea that people without realising ‘destroy’ their heritage because they lack ‘cultural’ education, corroborate (rather than question) the legitimacy of the main tenets of dominant archaeological discourse. So although Politis (2002) and Stark and Griffin (2004) insightfully address the socio-cultural conditions behind looting, they ignore its underlying logic, as well as ignore the people labelled as ‘victims’.

Although Paredes-Maury (1996) reveals the alternative perception and treatment of the past, she discounts it as illegitimate by presenting it through an anti-destruction prism. Furthermore, none of these three studies inquired whether the so-called looters concurred with their imposed interpretations as ‘victims’ or agents of ‘destruction’. As Julie Hollowell (2006b, p.76) rightly asserted: “[t]here are probably more situations than we would like to think where entire communities see the looting of sites as a legitimate route to financial gain and an act of social justice, in open defiance of laws that are perceived as indifferent and unresponsive to local concerns”. Let us see then, what some studies have demonstrated about the contexts, the people, and the unofficial claims over the material past.

### ***2.4.2 Revealing the resistance to power***

Archaeologist Morag Kersel has immensely contributed towards our understanding of looting. Her work generally focuses on how considerations of cultural heritage and the interpretation of the past among indigenous populations are understood vis-à-vis archaeological tourism, the looting of archaeological sites, and the daily interaction between local populations and archaeologists. A central part of her work focuses on the market of antiquities in Israel-Palestine, which, although legal, it thought to have a direct link to the looting of archaeological sites. Furthermore, Kersel has been concerned with the ramifications of cultural heritage law, based in the same region (see Kersel 2008). Here, I will limit discussion on her contribution to the ‘people’ behind the looting in Palestine. The following comparison of two of her articles intends to serve this purpose.

In the article *From the ground to the buyer*, Kersel (2006) discussed a model for the trade in antiquities, one which addressed the stage of illegal excavation in an archaeological rich country, the various transit points and their eventual exportation and sale in a destination country. She then focused on a case-study where she traced the route of illicit objects from when they were unearthed, to the moment they reached legal antiquities market. In particular, it involved the path of illegal coins from the backyards of village women in Hebron, passing through the disputed borders in Jerusalem, into the licensed antiquities shop in West Jerusalem and ending up in the hands of a New York tourist. There is no doubt that such investigation of the ‘artefact pathway’ was a thorough representation of how illegal objects come to gradually become legal possessions.

On the other hand, the article seemed to lack reference to deep-seated issues pervading archaeology in Palestine (see Abu El-Haj 2003), and omitted discussion on the political and economic struggles existing in Palestine today (see Sacco 2003; Said 1994). Thus, the suggestions of “appropriate countermeasures” for combating illegal trade (Kersel 2006, p.198), such as monitoring ‘looting’ and dealer inventories through “[e]nhanced training of police, park rangers and customs and borders officials in the archaeologically rich transit and destination markets...” ignored a fundamental concern: why do Palestinians loot? How is it that they ‘destroy’ a past that is supposedly their ‘own’?

A shift of focus from the artefacts to the people, becomes manifest in her following article *Transcending Borders: Objects on the Move* (Kersel 2007; see also Kersel et al. 2008). There, she explored the socio-political conditions on a deeper level, in an attempt to understand the complexity of looting in Israel. Eventually, she concluded that while consumer demand may be at the heart of the antiquities trade, the nature and driving forces behind looting were far more complex, as they involved notions of nationalism, the forces of globalism, conflicting preservation and management plans, colonialism and long-entrenched traditional practices. But what is important to emphasize, is that in the midst of demonstrating all these conditions, Kersel succeeded in elucidating the ‘choice’ behind the action, the person behind the ‘looter’.

Aside from looting as a profession, Kersel (2006, pp.89-90) explored the connotations of looting as a leisure activity, stating that “[l]ooters share knowledge and expertise, which strengthens their sense of community”. Then, in exploring how looting survived as a tradition, she called attention to the Bedouin, “[t]raditionally a pastoral nomadic group” who discovered archaeological material and facilitated its movement across borders in Israel and the Palestinian Authority (Kersel 2007, p.90). The Bedouins, Kersel stated, “often view looting as a traditional activity, one that runs in families. Younger tribal members are trained in an apprenticeship-type setting by other family members through a process of shared knowledge” (Kersel 2007, p.90). The author also mentioned that “many of the participants in the antiquities trade do not understand the rationale behind archaeological practice” and therefore “looters come to view archaeologists as looters themselves, but looters who operate above the law” (Kersel 2007, pp.90-91).

In addition, Kersel stressed the meaning of looting as an everyday form of resistance. Whilst explaining that the Palestinians were frustrated by the situation in the PA – the economic conditions and the construction of the separation wall – she argued that they have turned to the looting of archaeological sites “as a form of struggle” (Kersel 2007, p.92). More significantly, she added that the Palestinian looters “make a conscious decision to prioritise the destruction of the Jewish/Israeli past over the preservation of the Palestinian heritage” (Kersel 2007, pp.91-92). She described that “Palestinian looters feel they are erasing the association” by destroying archaeological sites that are thought to be associated with a Jewish claim to the land (Kersel 2007, p.92). In light of the above, it is evident that Kersel drew significant attention to hitherto unexplored connotations of ‘destruction’ of sites with Israeli (Jewish) associations, as she showed how such practices bolstered “local perceptions of Palestinian self-determination” and eradicated a past with which Palestinians did not identify (Kersel 2007, p. 92).

#### ***2.4.3 Revealing the reception of and resistance to archaeological discourse***

Sam Migliore (1991) made a significant contribution to our understanding of treasure hunting in Sicily. In the article *Treasure hunting and pillaging in Sicily: Acquiring a deviant identity*, the author referred to the history of the place, and asserted that reticence had become an ingrained behavioural trait of locals, thanks to the severe social and economic problems caused by long-term formations of domination and exploitation. In light of this, Migliore explained that Sicilians do not trust the official system and the people who run it, because of the common belief that people in positions of power manipulate their position in order to maintain the status quo. So the author asserted that “in order to get by, Sicilians have learned to rely on the unofficial systems of economic and political patronage” (Migliore 1991, p.164). Citing an informant, Migliore claimed that “the local people ... have devised their own rationale to justify their decision not to abide by those laws. The government is portrayed not as the protector of archaeological materials, but rather as a *political force* that is attempting to redirect local wealth to foreigners” (Migliore 1991, p.165; emphasis in the original).

For rural Sicilians, then, Migliore demonstrated that treasure hunting is “an acceptable means”, “a legitimate, although potentially dangerous, profession” that individuals



employ in order to improve their financial status in the community (1991). Mistrust of government, the presence of a well-developed treasure lore, social and economic problems, and a variety of other factors, have led rural Sicilians to place a 'positive' value on the role of 'treasure-hunter' (Migliore 1991, pp.165-166). At the same time, the author addressed the negative ramifications, when treasure-hunters fail to meet local expectations (Migliore 1991, p.167). He delved into a case-study where it was demonstrated that certain types of social behaviour (e.g. avoidance of treasure-hunters in the context of ritual drinking) were employed in order to "shame" the treasure hunters who were deemed "deviant" by the local communities, when they had pursued financial profit at the expense of others.

Diura Thoden van Velzen (1996) has contributed immensely to our understanding of tomb-robbing in Tuscany. In the article *The world of Tuscan tomb robbers: living with the local community and the ancestors*, the author explored the deeper meanings underlying tomb robbing, through examining the identity of the *tombaroli* (tomb-robbers), their backgrounds, motivations and attempts to legitimate their actions. As she stated, the purpose of the study was to "evoke the image they present of themselves and interpret it in relation to responses from other members of the Tuscan population" (Thoden van Velzen 1996, p.112). Whilst explaining that looting Etruscan tombs has a long history thanks to the intensified agricultural production and, the long public interest in Etruscan culture, the author asserted that it was not until the 1960s that illegal digging became an institutionalised part of community life.

By referring to the biographies of two prominent tomb-robbers and whilst supporting it with information gathered from her own fieldwork, Thoden van Velzen demonstrated the tremendous appeal that the Etruscan past exercised on local Tuscans, as it was invested with symbolic meaning and played a prominent role in their imagination. Grave-robbers, she explained, created an active bond with their past and even claimed to communicate directly with their Etruscan ancestors. Financial gain was not the main motivation behind their work, but they appeared to be driven by an affinity with their forebears, which developed during their nocturnal excavations. As she further explained, they found confirmation for such a close ancestral link in their own bodily features "such as noses or fingers" or in cultural attributes, such as language which was thought to be pronounced

with an Etruscan accent (Thoden van Velzen 1996, p.118). “Tombaroli are part of this cultural tradition and actively manipulate it” (Thoden van Velzen 1996, p.118).

The author demonstrated all these aspects of tomb-robbing, whilst stressing its connection to Tuscany’s economic and political shifts. Tuscany had gradually become part of a larger cultural and economic unit, in which their cultural heritage was seen as a valuable commodity. Archaeological research, tourism and especially trade in art were instrumental in subjecting Etruscan antiquities to wider processes of commodification. Interestingly, as the author revealed, the reaction of the local population to these developments was ambivalent, considering that they contributed to this commodification by selling their antiquities, whilst at the same time they perceived these objects as their exclusive property and the basis of their cultural identity. Another important aspect covered by the author, was the difficult, or rather, non-existent communication between local groups and professional archaeologists. Apparently, many Tuscans regarded archaeologists as total outsiders “portrayed as people in fur coats” with little concern for their local heritage, which, as the author underlined, was particularly “damaging in an area where a regional identity is vital and generates feelings of pride and self-esteem” (Thoden van Velzen 1996, p.117).

Kimbra L. Smith (2005) in her article, *Looting and the politics of archaeological knowledge in northern Peru*, focused on *huaqueros*, who, she explained, were members of a smaller rural community, possessed a specialised knowledge on archaeology and had direct access to archaeological sites (2005, p.150). Amongst the few categories of *huaqueros* that existed, the author particularly focused on the ‘traditional *huaqueros*’, who were the “local experts on the local past and the local landscape” rather than the city-dwelling clandestine excavators, whose only goal was the resale of archaeological objects (Smith 2005, p.151). This category of specialists, the author added, “consider the lifelong process of knowledge collection and transmission to be their vocation” (ibid.). In addition, “they feel a certain responsibility toward the local past, voicing concerns about the careless destruction of sites through agricultural expansion or the rampant amateur looting ... refusing to sell unique local artefacts, and teaching their apprentices to excavate with care” (ibid.).

Since this was a vocation which often ran in the family and involved close ties with apprentices, the author suggested that “the processes of sharing expertise and of both imparting and acquiring knowledge” was crucial, for it generated a strong sense of loyalty and community among the *huaqueros* (Smith 2005, p.152). As the author further underlined, it was this creation of bonds through the sharing of knowledge that enabled the *huaqueros* to enhance their local status. Furthermore, the author contrasted this to the processes of transmission of scientific knowledge, which was claimed to be generating power and authority, whilst it was created and maintained through social and economic divisions. In effect, it was shown how the power inherent in the expertise of *huaqueros*, which had “no wider authority” (Smith 2005, p.159) worked to create a community, whereas for archaeologists, it created divisions. Apparently, archaeological authority depended on the de-legitimization of local expertise, when archaeologists employed the knowledge of *huaqueros* and concurrently devalued it (Smith 2005, p. 156).

For the author, the act of archaeologists requesting information from *huaqueros* resembled local *machista* attitudes and the public treatment of women. She elicited a structural similarity, which, although not consciously acknowledged by any of the participants, suggested that archaeologists construed *huaqueros* “as symbolic females” (Smith 2005, p.163). As such, the exchange of information “acts to enhance the authority of the archaeologist – not only because he acquires knowledge in the process, but because the terms of exchange position archaeologists and *huaqueros* within an existing social structure that values the male over the female, especially in public contexts” (Smith 2005: 163).

The author also explored the way in which *huaqueros* reacted to this discursively articulated authority of archaeologists. In particular, she explained that *huaqueros* protested the resultant hierarchization, but did not argue directly with archaeologists. When archaeologists contradicted a *huaquero*’s opinions, the *huaquero* usually “remained silent rather than challenging the ‘experts’ openly” (Smith 2005, p.160). If the matter arose again among archaeologists, the *huaquero* would generally “revise his stated opinions to coincide with the official interpretation” (ibid.). Among the workers, however, he would “almost invariably maintain his original evaluation” (ibid.). In light of these observations then, the author claimed that while *huaqueros* did not question their

own expertise, they were aware of the differences in power and perceived authority that granted archaeologists' opinions legitimacy (ibid).

#### ***2.4.4 Revealing the other side of 'destruction'***

In terms of alternative connotations of undocumented digging, the work of Julie Hollowell (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006a; 2006b) is enormously significant. She is a cultural anthropologist, whose research interest includes art and artefact markets, artefact diggers, and the nature of the relationships between indigenous communities and archaeological objects and discourse (Hollowell-Zimmer 2003). The majority of her work is based on her long-term exploration of the legal market for archaeological materials that originates in the St. Lawrence Island from the Bering Strait region of Alaska. There, the two Alaska Native Corporations who own the island manage the archaeological resources as a form of economic capital, allowing their indigenous shareholders to excavate sites for old marine mammal bone, walrus ivory and artefacts to sell (Hollowell 2006a). So, in contrast to the antiquities market in Morag Kersel's work, the one in Julie Hollowell's research concerns *legal* undocumented digging of artefacts.

On the other hand, it is notable that "few museums today will purchase Bering Strait archaeological ivories, and several even refuse or restrict their donation" due to rising ethical concerns about the relationship between the market and site 'destruction' (Hollowell 2006a, p.122). Archaeological press has also over the years referred to the undocumented digging of St. Lawrence as "cultural cannibalism" (for references see Hollowell 2006a). Such reactions show that this 'alternative' engagement of the past has obviously endured exclusion and underestimation, thanks to the prevalence of the professionalised discourse of 'destruction'. Hollowell's work affords particular significance here, because her 'alternative' treatment of the matter allowed for the valorisation of unconventional indigenous values. To put it differently, it is important to recognise that because of Hollowell's representation of the situation in St. Lawrence Island we were able to see an unconventional theorisation of 'destruction', one which defended and embraced a form of undocumented digging, even though it remained largely unaccepted by professionalised advocates of the 'archaeological record'.

Since the undocumented digging and the market in St. Lawrence is legal, Hollowell gathered enough evidence to build strong arguments against some prevalent preconceptions in archaeological discourse regarding looting. One of her most stimulating points is the notion that subsistence diggers are *not* the “victims of a global market, exploited by the demands and desires of dealers and collectors, who are the real villains” (Hollowell 2006b, p.78). In particular, she countered the so-called victims’ presumed passivity by showing that peoples’ decision to dig and sell the material past, and their concurrent embrace of subsistence-digging is an integral part of their social life, tradition and cultural identity.

Hollowell demonstrated that St. Lawrence Islanders were very aware of the capitalist and global structures that surrounded their community, which they reworked through their undocumented digging so they would suit their local needs (2004; 2006). Accordingly, she asserted that these people “are not blind victims of the desires of collectors, overpowering dealers, or supply and demand. They need ways to participate in the global economy and procure desired goods, and selling artefacts is one of the best options they have” (Hollowell 2006b, p.79). In light of this, Hollowell represented the practice of digging for antiquities markets as a decision that was upheld by the islanders, whilst it was seen as a stable and reliable economic alternative.

Such decision, Hollowell argued, was founded in an unconventional perception of the past, according to which material remains were seen as “alienable ‘gifts from ancestors’ that help St. Lawrence Islanders survive in the present” (Hollowell 2006a, p.123). In light of this, she explained that “perhaps a western notion that venerates material culture as heritage is somewhat foreign to people who experience heritage as something inalienable, performed in daily practices like speaking Yupik, hunting, eating walrus meat, or drum-dancing (without tourists), in a place where people recognise their elders – rather than objects in a museum – as the real cultural treasures” (Hollowell 2006a, p.124). In qualifying the alternative perception of the past further, she pointed out that “diggers on St. Lawrence Island see little difference between what they do and how others extract non-renewable resources like diamonds or oil or make a withdrawal from an inheritance or bank account” (Hollowell 2006a, p.123).

Whilst arguing that St. Lawrence Islanders rejected all offers from outsiders to lease, mine, or develop their natural resources, Hollowell emphasized locals' insistence on retaining their control over their land and resources. As she asserted, that is what would maintain their independence and autonomy within the broad arenas of the Alaska Native community and the circumpolar region. Also, that was why other indigenous groups supported the choices of the St. Lawrence Islanders, even though they ascribed very different (non-economic) values to archaeological materials. It is worth citing one of her arguments here: "A person's worth is often judged by his or her skill in providing Native foods to the family or village. The right to continue to practice subsistence lifestyle occupies a focal place in the ongoing struggles for Native sovereignty" (Hollowell 2006a, p.104). In light of these accounts, Hollowell therefore stressed that the practice of subsistence-digging was not merely for survival, but invoked "a discourse of self-determination and economic justice, one that is associated today with struggles of peoples all over the world to maintain access to resources important to local livelihoods" (Hollowell 2006b, p.72). In addition, she placed the practice of undocumented digging for ivory and artefacts within the broader subsistence-led lives of St. Lawrence Islanders, whilst explaining how it fits with the local ideology of subsistence in general (Hollowell 2006a, p.104). Lastly, Hollowell illustrated the whole spectrum of the meaningful ways in which subsistence-digging became part of every-day social life, through being integrated into a family tradition.

Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2004) article, *Those obscure objects of desire*, constitutes an evocative demonstration of the every-day connections that people make with the past when they surface-collect objects in the San Pedro Valley in Arizona. Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2004, p.574), whilst being "less concerned with the large-scale certainties or universal truths typical of an encyclopedic ethnography than evoking the lived experience of actual people" he delved into the practices of those "who collect only the occasional artefact on a stroll along the riverbed, or perhaps a Sunday picnic in the foothills of a nearby mountain" and who "tend to not dig into sites", or "seek monetary gains" (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004, p.574).

He demonstrated cases of people who maintained a strong interest in the history of native peoples, sought connections and felt affinity to them, as they created "small, personal" and "cherished" collections (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004, p.573) comprised of pieces of

the Native American past. In the words of Barbara, which the author cites, “Because I’m white doesn’t matter. Brown, purple, or green – it’s a sense-of-place thing. I’m not disrespecting Indians, but its honouring a place and the people who’ve gone before” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004, p.587). He also demonstrated cases where people collected objects because these gave their own struggles a deep kind of history and personal resonance. The author finally concluded that genuine experiences such as those could not be reduced to simple terms as looting, and were not linked to avarice. By emphasizing the extent to which these people carried a deep interest in the past in their hope to find some kind of meaning locked into ancient materials, Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2004, p.595) emotively illustrated how “the past does not serve one purpose or only one group of stakeholders”.

## **2.5 Synopsis**

This chapter opened with a prevalent perception of looting that views it as a homogeneous and universal phenomenon comprised of undocumented digging, which is caused by its dependence on the antiquities’ market, causes the destruction of archaeological context, and defies archaeological ethics and authority. Such views stem from professionalised archaeological ethics, such as the notion of the ‘archaeological record’ and the co-dependent need to ‘protect’ and ‘preserve’ it through archaeological ‘stewardship’. Such tightly-defined perceptions of the material past however, fail to consider the complexities, social realities, power inequalities and the diverse moral codes or priorities that surround undocumented digging. This is where ethnographic approaches towards ‘looting’ are crucial for they provide alternative angles of perception.

All ‘looting’ acts are in fact embedded within particular historical and socio-political contexts that cannot simply be ignored (see Hollowell 2006a; Politis 2002). Furthermore, they are often instigated by motives that are considered justified by the perpetrators (see Paredes-Maury 1996; Thoden van Velzen 1996). Although it is difficult for most professional archaeologists to accept these facts, strong scholarly arguments in their support have been put forward — primarily by anthropologists from Central and North America — based on the grounds that these acts are rational and set within conditions

that pursue ethical priorities different from the ones that traditional archaeology adheres to.

While the production of quantitative analyses of scales of destruction is rapidly developing (see Bell 2002; Brodie 1999; Chippindale et al. 2001; Elia 2001; Gilgan 2001; Nørskov 2002; Petkova 2004), ethnographic studies of 'looting' go beyond that. They take away the emphasis from 'high-end' products – auctioned illicit antiquities – and instead concentrate upon the contexts in which 'looting' activities occur. In this way, ethnographers of 'looting' interact with diverse environments and witness various ways of understanding and treating the past and its remains. Consequently, they show that archaeological concepts are contingent and therefore the notion of 'looting' is not a universal conception (Layton and Thomas 2001; Holtorf 2006). Furthermore, such ethnographic accounts offer moral arguments supportive of the idea that the 'production' and 'consumption' of the past should not be restricted to official constructions (Labelle 2003; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004). Finally, they demonstrate that diverse social actors play their own distinctive role within a phenomenon, the blame for which has been placed primarily (if not exclusively) on the art trade (Udvardy et al. 2003). All such advances in the understanding of 'looting' would not have been accomplished, if it were not for the insights that ethnography has provided us with. Matsuda (1998), Maury (1996), Hollowell (2006a; 2006b), and Smith (2005) are key figures within a growing spectrum of anthropological approaches to the question of 'looting'. To my understanding, only ethnography can enable such a contextual approach to phenomena that are viewed as looting, and it is the most appropriate direction to take in any endeavour to understand them.





# CHAPTER 3

## A 'PERSON-CENTRED' ETHNOGRAPHY: THEORY AND METHOD

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### 3.1 Introduction

As a researcher in the archaeological discipline with intellectual and methodological ties to ethnography, I include this chapter in order to demonstrate the diverse concerns and methods that were brought together in my attempt to deconstruct 'looting'. It describes my first contact with participants and illustrates the presentation and reception of my research objectives. It outlines the general characteristics of all the non-professional diggers whom I communicated with during my ethnography and explains the reasons for which I decided for only three of them to comprise the main subjects of this thesis. It then presents how my participants' narratives are analysed in pursuit of the theoretical directions and arguments suggested later in the thesis. Prior to entering the field, I was limited by certain predispositions, which, as I explain, were adjusted or abandoned in order to fit the diverse notions and practices I was witnessing during my ethnography. I close with a short discussion on ethics.

### 3.2 Fieldwork

The place where I conducted the largest part of my fieldwork was the prefecture of Kozani, in north-western Greece (named after the capital city). Such a decision was not accidental. Even though I live in Thessaloniki (Figure 3.1), I originate from the village of Xirolimni, situated about 18km away from the capital of Kozani's prefecture (one of my participants also originates from Xirolimni; see Chapter 7). I thought that conducting ethnographic research in a 'local' field would facilitate my access to non-professional actors physically engaging with the material past. The conception of the project took the

form of a research proposal in May 2005. The fieldwork began in July 2006, and it lasted fourteen months.

It revolved around two groups of participants: official state archaeologists and non-professional diggers – ‘looters’ by archaeologists’ standards. In what follows, I explain the process of locating, preparing and accessing participants during fieldwork, and I also focus on the ways in which they perceived my role, authority and research-objectives. The insights and examples illustrated in this chapter are based on my experiences with everyone whom I encountered during my ethnography, although the detailed ethnography presented in chapters six, seven and eight is based on a selection of three individual cases.



**Figure 3.1** Kozani and Thessaloniki (Google Maps Engine 2014a).

### 3.2.1 Locating the so-called looters

For the purposes of my fieldwork I had to search for non-professional diggers, the central subjects of my inquiry on physical interaction with the material past that is dominantly viewed as looting by archaeologists. The first place searched was the *Arhaiologiko Deltio*, which is the official annual bulletin of archaeological activity in Greece. It also includes a separate section on antiquities handed over to authorities, as well as reports of previously unknown archaeological sites the locations of which are indicated to archaeologists by members of the public. In both these sections I sought for the names of repeatedly mentioned individuals. To my understanding, such pattern of repetition suggested a frequency of interaction and familiarity with the material past, and one that could also involve slippage from accepted, disciplined behaviour (once I looked closer into it that is).

I also searched for potential participants after discussing with the directors (hereafter, the Ephors) of the *Ephoreia Proistorikon kai Klasikon Arhaiotiton*, namely, the centre of Prehistoric and Classical Archaeology (hereafter EPKA or ephoreia). At the time of my ethnography Karamitrou-Mentesidi was the Ephor of the ephoreia in Kozani, namely, the L' EPKA (30<sup>th</sup> EPKA).<sup>4</sup> On my first visit, she discussed the frequency of what she described as looting phenomena (*arhaiokapilia*) in the region. We also discussed individual cases that had particularly concerned her. Lastly, I did my own personal search for participants by word of mouth. Starting from my village, I approached relatives and friends, and went round local cafés (*kapheneia*) and central petrol stations – all good sources when seeking ‘local’ information – asking whether anyone knew anybody that was concerned with ‘ancient things’ (*arhaia*).

All three search-routes allowed me to discover potential participants for my fieldwork, and provided me with useful information in establishing communication and striking an initial conversation. Backed with my ‘local’ identity and enough background information, I then approached them by saying, “my x friend or relative [whom we both knew] said that you are concerned with ancient things” or “according to official records, I see that you have assisted the work of archaeology by handing over such and such

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<sup>4</sup> Karamitrou-Mentesidi was the director of the L' EPKA at the time of my ethnography but in 2011 she was replaced by Ziota.

objects”. The way my objectives of research were presented and how potential participants responded are both explained in this chapter.

### **3.2.2 *The participants***

At first I would approach anyone who was known to be concerned with ‘ancient things’, which, often, led me in directions that did not really ‘fit’ what I was looking for. Characteristic negative cases for example, were those who dug for artefacts only to financially gain from the sale of objects, as the owner of a local brothel searching for “a skull with golden teeth”, or a manual worker engaged in illegal digging strictly for subsistence-purposes. In any case, after the first or second meeting with each person, I knew whether I’d pursue a more-in-depth and frequent communication. By the end of the fieldwork season, I had selected and focused on twelve male participants (I encountered no women who dug for artefacts) who were former or current non-professional diggers, whose actions were/are defined as ‘looting’ by professional archaeologists. They dug/dig for remains of the past on a frequent basis, and shared/share a real passion for what they were/are doing. The elements that they were passionate about were of course diverse, linked either to the physical interaction with the earth or landscape where ancient things lay, or to the beneficial implications of digging itself. The sale of the objects they discovered (if they discovered any) was not the primary concern for any of the participants I was concerned with.

### **3.2.3 *A ‘person-centred’ ethnography***

Ethnographers for years have asked: if one takes ‘culture’ to be the central orientating concept in ethnography, how heavily should they invest in one person for revealing it? Surely, each ethnography is unique and certainly my case was different from other fieldworkers who have studied looting (cf. Hollowell 2004; 2006a). In my ethnography of ‘looting’ however I asked: how could I defend an insight that was formulated primarily by the experiences and perspectives of *three* participants? I should first say that my decision to focus my study on certain individuals was taken during the process of fieldwork, not during the initial research design. Although I always knew that a lot of people physically engage with the material past in places and moments they are not supposed to, I was not exactly prepared for the fact that many of them act individually, as in, not necessarily in the context of a group. That I only realised when I began my

fieldwork and after speaking to many such individuals. Therefore, I eventually decided to embrace the appeal that *certain* stories and experiences had on me, even though all my ethnographic encounters were fundamental in shaping my own thinking. Concurrently, I recognised that I do not need to defend my person-centred approach in ethnography any more or any less than any other culture or community-centred ethnography of looting. I concurred with what one ethnographer said in defence of person-centred ethnographies: “the extent of the influence of one or at most a handful of individuals is far greater than most fieldworkers themselves realise” (Wolcott 1999, p.157).

As such, the three person-centred ethnographies presented in this thesis, had in actual fact presented themselves to me, and they *in particular* had been responsible, either directly or indirectly, for so much of what had excited me in the looting question. The aim is not to generalise from these cases however. I draw on them particularly, because they are intrinsically interesting. At the same time, I suspect that they are interesting because they illuminate themes with which the reader can identify in other contexts (cf. O’Reilly 2009, p.25). Although I attempt to understand how people experience their relationship with the material past in a particular time and place, at the same time these people cannot be understood simply in their local contexts. Even though these case studies were selected for their intrinsic interest, they extend to political, social and cultural links to larger processes (power, identity) that are also addressed in the thesis.

### ***3.2.4 Maintaining communication***

Being a ‘local’ enabled me to get my foot through the participants’ doors. Nonetheless that ‘insider’ status was not enough to maintain communication with the people I wanted to approach. Crucial in that respect was the way in which I prepared my participants of what was to follow if they agreed to participate in my research. I offered spoken explanations so they realised that they would be taking part in something that I – the researcher – felt worthwhile. It was important that I presented this explanation in a way participants could understand; that is the language that they were familiar with. In particular, I said that “for the PhD I have to produce a lengthy paper on a subject that was concerned with peoples’ perceptions of archaeology or their engagements with ancient things”. Although I emphasised the value and relevance of my research, I simultaneously underlined that I would not proceed without having their full consent. I therefore ascertained that they first fully agreed to share their experiences with me. Second, I told

them that I would produce interpretations based on their experiences, and disseminate the information in academic writing. I also clarified that I would use a voice-recorder only if they agreed. Of course, preparing them in that way and gaining their consent did not necessarily produce an entirely overt or authority-equal ethnographic relationship and that is what I explore in the following two sections.

### **3.2.5 Overt / covert**

A crucial decision was the extent to which I was overt or covert about certain issues, and in some cases, I ended up juggling and balancing between the two. I began with a semi-overt manner and gradually became more overt the longer I was talking to and the more involved I became with the participants. One such case in point sprung from my reluctance to be forthright to my non-professional participants about what had directed me towards them in the first place, because I was afraid they would hesitate to talk to me. As mentioned before, my first approach involved saying that I was interested in their engagement with ancient things, which although it was an honest statement, it concealed my knowledge that official archaeologists consider them looters – which was why I sought for them in the first place.

Let me illustrate this further through an example. P. was known amongst local archaeologists for being a “great mafia” (*megali maphia*) as he was believed to illegally dig, collect and possibly sell ancient objects. He once made the suggestion that a sign should be placed at one severely looted archaeological site we had visited that day. He said that such action would prevent potential ‘looters’ from approaching it again, because “signage suggests that archaeological sites are registered and thus guarded”. What his words showed is that whilst he was speaking in a very derogative way about the “looters” destroying the site, he clearly set himself apart, as the one caring for its protection. In that case, had I approached P. by revealing my knowledge of archaeologists’ perception of him as a looter, not only would I have risked offending him, but I would have also lost any chance of interviewing him and finding out *his* thoughts. Other participants, like P., did not consider themselves looters and were not necessarily aware that official archaeology considers them as such. Thus, mentioning the word looting (especially during first meetings) would have most likely implied that I sided with official archaeologists and that I too associated participants with illegal excavation and sale of objects, which would have subsequently diverted them from my genuine intention. For

all these reasons, I believed that although I was covert about the broader context of my study – a deconstruction of a dominant, official conception of looting – I was overt in terms of its profound objective: hearing and understanding the so-called looters’ story.

### **3.3 Ethnographic material**

My ethnography involved regular and sometimes digitally-recorded semi-structured or unstructured conversations with non-professional diggers, as well as structured interviews with Ephors of the EPKA in the prefectures of Kozani, Florina, Kastoria, Pella (Figure 3.1). In addition, part of the fieldwork was collecting documents and archival materials from local and national libraries (Kozani, Thessaloniki, Athens) and taking photographs of my participants’ collections of objects (that is when they possessed such collections) and unofficially-dug sites. Voice-recording and photography (both digital) were undertaken only when I had the consent of my participants. This ethnography, which involved direct and sustained contact with people, took place within their home environment, local cafés, and (known and unknown) archaeological sites.

#### ***3.3.1 Asking questions***

Interviews with professional archaeologists were structured, taking place in the premises of the archaeological ephoreia and only after arranged meetings by appointment. Instead, in semi-structured conversations with regard to non-professional diggers, my questions began with open-ended topics and became more directed and focused over time. Effectively, different people were asked different questions depending on the emergent direction of discussion and subsequent analysis, and topics were included or excluded as conversations developed with each of my participants. Moreover, the fourteen months spent in the field were crucial, because they provided the semi-structured conversations with duration and frequency, which allowed for an evolving quality of insight and a deeper understanding of what was being communicated to me. As my respondents became familiar with my presence (and my questioning about their engagement with the past) I could sensitively ask more in-depth and meaningful questions, and gradually, they produced narratives that really ‘talked about’ their experiences. Discussing intimate details and remembering historical events, I believe, would not have been possible in other circumstances, such as single meetings or structured interviews.



Attention was drawn not only on what people said, but how they said it, and most importantly, on what they failed to say or avoided to talk about. I also tried to identify the projections and expectations that underpinned my participants' narratives. These things were only gleaned through long-term observation and by fieldwork based upon long-in-depth and semi-structured conversations. Time and open-endedness were therefore crucial in the process of ethnographic questioning, because they allowed me to delve more deeply into the details and ambivalences underlying participants' narratives and performances as they expressed their feelings, reflected on events and beliefs, or as they physically engaged with material remains in my presence. Equally important were our unstructured conversations and unpredictable moments arising every time some participants showed or told me things that I was not prepared for.

### **3.3.2 Narratives**

Both the spoken and written accounts collected and analysed throughout this research were viewed and treated as narratives. As is common in ethnography, when one analyses or speaks of a narrative, one does not just refer to it as a text or a product, but as a social process or a performance in action as well (Cortazzi 2001, p.384). Concurrently, I kept in mind that these narratives were not simply answers, pre-packaged inside the person of the respondent, waiting to be expressed in response to the eliciting stimulus of a question (Cortazzi 2001). Instead, they were treated as interactive co-productions (Cortazzi 2001), articulated by myself and concurrent with their questions and answers, expectations and preconceptions, projections and misunderstandings, comfortable moments and silences. Attention was called upon the events and the background information described and recounted in the narrative, the speaker's perspective on the recounted events, the purpose and creative effect of the narrative, the contexts within which it occurred, and, its performative aspects.

I would later discern from the informational content of the narratives the *notions* that the participants had assumed, spoken, written or established in texts, the *practices* through which they articulated and enacted them and, the *spaces* or *objects* that they then created from these practices. So, for example, I discuss the 'archaeological record' as a notion that links to further assumptions such as the ethic of stewardship, and as a group of objects and spaces (e.g. museum, archaeological site, archaeological artefact, national

symbolic capital) all of which created or were created by particular actions, such as excavation, demarcation of sites and so on.

### **3.4 Theoretical analysis**

I was already influenced by some broad theory and assumptions regarding the question of looting (see Chapter 2) prior to entering the ethnographic field. After fourteen months of ethnography, I reached a stage where I felt I had collected enough information to say something significant about my findings. I felt I had sufficiently explored the broad issues that had grounded and excited my initial interest in deconstructing looting. For example, I had enough evidence to defend that non-professional digging was not driven by profit, that it was conditioned by socio-historic circumstances, and served objectives or evoked meanings that begged to be understood in their own terms. However, this did not imply that hypothesising, gathering information, organising information, testing hypotheses, and building stocks of detailed knowledge were any distinct stages.

I revisited the collected ethnographic material when writing-up an already rehearsed analysis. I analysed whilst collecting information, and subsequently negotiated or changed initial, pre-fieldwork hypotheses, preconceptions or theories, which often led me to unforeseen directions of enquiry. Here is an example: one of my initial assumptions, prior to entering the field, was that non-professional and non-commercial engagements with the past signify ‘resistance’ to the ‘system’ of archaeology. The inquiry that this led to and one which I went on to collect information on when I entered the field, was ‘how do people resist the authority of archaeology’. In the field, however, I discovered that whilst some people referred to the ways in which they sensed the authority of archaeology and their exclusion by it, there were others who asserted that they pursued their actions (especially treasure-hunters), without necessarily reacting against some kind of oppression or exclusion.

Ultimately, I had to move beyond preconceived associations between official authority and resistance in order to recognise each of my participants’ unique response to archaeological discourse. I maintained an open mind during conversations with participants that often seemed to challenge such expectations or preconceptions. For example, I would ask “What is your opinion about official archaeology?” rather than, “In

what ways do you sense the authority of archaeology?” In effect, initial notions about ‘resistance’ and ‘oppression’ were either tailored to the circumstances I observed during fieldwork, or completely dismissed.

Any straightforward progression from initial interest, recording, analysis, and writing up, was certainly not the case for me, as I would turn back on myself, retrace my steps and mix one stage with another. Clifford Geertz (2000, p.v-vi) observes in a brief new preface to a reissue of *The Interpretation of Cultures*,

“This backward order of things – first you write and then you figure out what you are writing about – may seem off, or even perverse, but it is, I think, at least most of the time, standard procedure in cultural anthropology [...] [W]e do not start out with well-formed ideas we carry off to distant places [...] The writing ...is...exploratory, self-questioning, and shaped more by the occasions of its production than its post hoc organization into chaptered books and thematic monographs might suggest”.

For me, “this backward order” was the only way forward when discovering far more diverse and complex situations than I had initially expected or prepared for. It permitted a constant reformulation, adjustment and development of insight, whilst experiencing, observing and theorising, during and after fieldwork.

### **3.5 On ethics and archaeological ethnography**

Writing about ethics always seemed very difficult, because, to me, ethical perspectives were more felt than thought (so how do I explain something that just feels right or wrong?). It also seemed overwhelming, because I could not separate ethics from politics and intellectual agenda/background, and thus, the task to write about them (especially as part of a methodology chapter) felt like trying to pull out and assemble something that was everywhere. Questions about the ‘right’ way to treat my participants within a research relationship were not wholly distinct from questions about the interests, values, or responsibilities which I prioritised in research within archaeology. During this ethnography, ethical issues were tied up with views about the ontological and epistemological foundations of my study. Assumptions about the nature of reality, the possible knowledge of that reality, the status of knowledge claims and so on, all had

significant implications for the judgements of responsibilities that I made as an ethnographer and as an archaeologist.

Inspired by Hamilakis' writings (2007a; 2007b; 2008) and others' (Thomas 2004) I too adhered to the thought that archaeological narratives are filtered through our own experiences and agendas. Such a premise directed me to situate my study of looting within the intersection of archaeology and ethnography which, as Castañeda (2008, p.5) put it, promotes "archaeology as a reflexive social science through the investigation of and engagement with the socio-political and economic dimensions of its own enterprise". In light of this, when I started this PhD and embarked on my fieldwork, I was inclined to pursue an 'archaeological ethnography' (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009) which promoted archaeological reflexivity (in terms of archaeology's social effect and political dimension; c.f. Hamilakis 2007b), and would allow me to counter the power inequalities in the production of the past and to contribute towards the inclusion of disempowered voices (c.f. Hollowell and Nicholas 2008).

However, these research objectives – simultaneously and perhaps inevitably – linked to ethical concerns regarding my position as an observer/interviewer and instigated an interrogation/reflexivity of the *narratives* I was constructing as an ethnographer (concern with control and representation of information) and my *relationship* to participants (concern with power inequality). A 'problem' had gradually emerged there. As an archaeologist, I wanted to expose and interrogate the essentialisms that prevail in archaeological narratives and the given authority that professionalised archaeology affords because of them. As an ethnographer, however, who observed and documented the implications of professionalised archaeology, I was not entirely embracing the directions that a reflexive archaeological ethnography endorsed for the following reasons.

If the 'truth' of archaeological narratives was questionable, how could I represent what was happening in the world that I studied and was part of (c.f. Hammersley and Atkinson 1995)? Could I speak of looting without discussing its phenomenon in an essentialist language? Was it hypocritical that I attempted to deconstruct the oppressive authority of official state archaeology in Greece from a position of institutional power (affiliation with western European academia)? What should I do when my participants presume or

sense an oppressive authority in terms of my role and agenda, even when I tried to underplay or deflate our authority-inequality?

So, in light of these central concerns, the only, profound ethical (and concurrently political) priority that I consistently maintained with regards to my research and researcher position, was *identifying and acknowledging the conditions and complexities that my research questions and methods, values and aspirations were embedded within*. The same cannot be said about being open about them (see 3.2.5), because, although I attempted to do that here, I simultaneously compensated for all the times that openness had been compromised whilst being in the field.

Effectively, although this research attempts to illustrate the essentialist overtones of professionalised state archaeology in Greece, in the meantime, I had to be cautious of not falling into essentialist traps in my narratives – e.g. homogenising or uncritically accepting non-professional engagement with the past, whilst overlooking inconsistencies or potential nationalist or oppressive elements in its discourse. Furthermore, although this research endeavours to unfold the exclusionary agenda of official archaeology, I had to recognise that covert and illegal physical engagement with the past could not have been researched through a fully overt agenda. Effectively, the disclosure of the broader intellectual context (i.e. the study of looting) to some of my participants could only have been partial (see 3.2.5). Lastly, even though this research tries to challenge the unquestioned grounds upon which the inequality of the production of the past rests in Greece, in actual fact I also was seen as an authoritative figure by my informants. After all, I did use their words to suit the purposes of my own research, not in support of some ‘truth’ (i.e. looting is this or that), but, to explore the different and complex dynamics in which the diverse and unique ‘truths’ I encountered were embedded.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter I endeavoured to present the diverse concerns and methods that were brought together in the context of an archaeological ethnography of looting. Conducting fieldwork amongst the local communities of – the familiar to me – Kozani, allowed me to delve into the physical experiences of non-professional diggers with the material past. Some of those experiences had been directly observed, whereas others had been recalled

by my participants in the form of narratives. These were the result of semi-structured and unstructured, regular and in-depth conversations that I shared with my participants and they comprise the groundwork upon which the following deconstruction of 'looting' is based. Even though I had maintained contact with many individuals during this ethnography, in the end, three of them were chosen as the main subjects of this thesis. It was a choice that surfaced and was materialised in the course of writing and revisiting the ethnographic material. During the same process, I also reflected and interrogated many theoretical and ethical predispositions that had been constructed prior to entering the field. Some were adjusted, others were abandoned in view of the diverse and unexpected notions and practices that I witnessed during my ethnography.



# CHAPTER 4

## DIMENSIONS OF OFFICIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE

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### 4.1 Introduction

In the western world, a common reaction in the sight of *in situ* ancient remains, separated by fence from their ‘modern’ surroundings, would be to assume that scientists ‘are just doing their job’. What essentially lies behind this reaction, is a particular conception of archaeological sites, in which the image of a fenced site is something that – if not what should be done – what is ‘normally’ done to places with relics of the past. In this seemingly normal situation however, we often *forget* that this particular fashion of treating sites with relics, is neither universal, nor, timeless. In fact, in most other parts of the world ‘archaeological artefacts’ are not necessarily appreciated for their scientific affordance to indicate life in the past (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004; Hollowell 2006a, 2006b; Matsuda 1998; Maury 1996).

Yet official archaeological discourse treats the ancient past as if it specifies, in itself, that it is to be used and perceived in the way that the fenced site represents. Clearly, certain agendas are so dominant and effective, that, the majority of lay onlookers seem to ‘accept’ the fence (if accepting means showing no obvious resistance). If for the moment we think of the fence as a consequence, however, what are the conventions underlying it? What are the conditions and who are the agents that determine the notional paradigms leading up to this consequence?

This chapter concerns some of the factors that prompt, establish and maintain the (normalised) physical control over the past that is expressed through the fence and is denoted as a practice of ‘protection’. I attempt to delineate a particular conception and valorisation of the material past that calls for and allows that exercise of control to take place. That is its conception as ‘sacred’ (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999) which was



founded in the antiquities' embodiment of powerful symbolic value within the context of Greece's national 'imagination' (Anderson 1991; Gourgouris 1996). I explore the implications of this in relation to official archaeological discourse. Attention is placed upon the role of archaeological interventions (articulations of 'protection') in the formation of the professionalised archaeological self (archaeology as institution), the national symbolic capital (official meanings and objects) and, the disciplined behaviour towards the material past (indigenous vs. modernist attitudes). The objective is to present the discursive outline that defined official archaeology in Greece, before I move onto the next chapter (Chapter 5) where I investigate why, how and with what implications modern archaeology in Kozani actively encapsulates and corroborates it today.

## **4.2 Assuming a particular value for antiquities<sup>5</sup>**

In an endeavour to establish the 'roots' of European 'civilisation', western intellectuals reflected European Enlightenment and French Revolution ideas upon the classical past. This created a turning point for antiquity in Greece, which, whilst being under Ottoman occupation, inspired a model of free thought and European 'uniqueness' that was opposed to the 'orient'. Crucial in this respect was the work of J.J. Winckelman (1717-1768), who related issues of political liberty with artistic achievement, as he associated stylistic phases of classical Greek art, with stages in the cultural and political development of ancient Greece. This appropriation of classical tradition elevated classical antiquity into a Western value. It fitted the needs of European nationalism, which entailed the self-proclamation of Europe as the fount of history and composed a grand narrative about the superiority of the European 'self' versus the non-European 'other'.

The glorification of the ancient Greek classical past lent immense support to the foundation of Greek nationalism, while concurrently, it intertwined with material colonisation (Simopoulos 1993) of Greece. Western construction of the classical past suited however the interests of Greek merchants and intellectuals, who viewed the Ottoman occupation as an obstacle in their intellectual and financial development

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of dates and events mentioned in this section.

(Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996). A social class (emerged in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century) gradually shifted such ideas towards the populations that resided in the occupied territories (Friedman 1992, p.195).

It was a Greek middle class – residing mainly abroad and to a lesser extent in the occupied territories – who, equipped with the financial resources, took on opportunities of travel and education, and circulated throughout Europe not only material goods, but also ideologies that praised notions of independence and liberalism (Kyrtatas 2002). As Hamilakis (2009, p.22) put it, these Greeks imported “the symbolic capital of Hellenism, and dreamed of the new imagined community of the Hellenic Nation as the resurrected Hellas of classical times”. The premises of the upcoming national state were outlined: “a community based on ethnic self-identification and on ancestral glory, a homogenized national community, in place of the multi-ethnic and multilingual communities structured around religious faith. The fighters of the War of Independence now started calling themselves Hellenes” (ibid.).

By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the significance of the classical past and its link to Enlightenment reached the Greek intelligentsia and the ‘Neo-Hellenic enlightenment’ started developing in the occupied areas (Kokkou 1977). Gradually, the Hellenic national narrative, while inspired by western circles, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was adjusted by indigenous populations (Hamilakis 2007a, pp. 57-124). As such, what had been imported as the western construction of the classical past (western Hellenism) was transformed into an ‘indigenous Hellenism’ (Hamilakis 2009), which, as a process, it suggests that the complex formation of Greece’s ‘hybrid modernity’ (Hamilakis 2007a; 2007b) involved more than “conventional labels and categories” or “the simplistic binarism of colonizer and colonized/conqueror and subject” (Hamilakis 2008, p.275) characteristic of the post-colonial critique (c.f. Gourgouris 1996; Herzfeld 2002).

Greek nationalism heavily and insistently rested on the celebration of a ‘glorious’ past, in pursuit of a homogeneous national identity. Classical antiquities became the tangible proof of an unbroken tradition and the indigenous intelligentsia rendered the Greek nation the authentic successor of classical antiquities and ideals (Hamilakis 2003; 2007a; Kokkinidou 2005, p.34). This way, they claimed the right to a national ‘rebirth’ and re-acquisition of their past independence, whilst considering their multiethnic context as a

reflection of suppression (Kyrtatas 2002, p.130). Adopting a classical profile was believed to ultimately convert them worthy of their ancient past and hence, their freedom. Once Greece achieved its independence, new types of desired political organisation – distinct from the Ottoman experience and based on the Western European models of government – could be established.

The formation of a national movement for independence materialised into an armed conflict with forces of the Ottoman Empire in 1821. Although battles continued for a decade after the war, the First National Assembly proclaimed the country's independence in the First Constitution of Greece in 1822. The unifying mechanism of the national project was centred on the alleged integrity of an unbroken national identity that was supposed to be genealogically linked to the ancient Hellenic past. In constructing this direct link, the administration of Greece greatly invested upon the materiality of classical antiquity. The material remains of such ancestral 'glory' "provided a direct, physical, visible, and touchable proof of continuity between past and present" and "linked contemporary people with the earth and territory" (Hamilakis 2009, p.23). As such, classical antiquity was elevated into a sacred entity (Hamilakis 2007a; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999). Interventions upon its materiality gradually led to the proclamation of laws and the formation of the institution of archaeology.

The establishment of the continuity of the national past did not come without its challenges, however. One challenge was the problematic absorption of the Byzantine era, for it did not comply with the classical ideals (for the reasons behind the conflict see Hamilakis 2007a, pp. 112-119; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996; Politis 1993). The most decisive factor for its eventual integration within the national narrative was the confrontation with Fallmerayer's argument for the impurity of modern Greek society after losing all its ancient Greek elements (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999, p.129). Fallmerayer (1790-1861), a historian, negated modern Greeks' link to the ancient Greeks by juxtaposing the glorious ancient past to the miserable contemporary conditions. He published in 1830 a study on the History of the Morea Peninsula during the Middle Ages (*Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters*), where he claimed that modern Greeks were descendants of Slavic intermarriages, following the invasion of the area from the Slavs and Albanians in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. A.D. The Fallmerayan dispute over the descent of Greeks equated to a dispute over the rationale for creating a Greek state,

which in turn challenged Greece's potential integration within Europe. This was catalytic, because it required an intellectual argumentation that facilitated the fusion between Orthodox and Hellenic identity as well (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999).

This dispute instigated and enforced the role of historiography in consolidating the national narrative and reconstructing Neo-Hellenic consciousness (Kyrtatas 2002). The *History of the Greek Nation*, written by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (published between 1860 and 1874) was seminal in this regard. In this "synthesis to unify the national narrative" (Hamilakis 2007a, p.116) he emphasized "the cultural, not the biological, ties with ancient Greeks, focusing on what he saw as the ability of indigenous Hellenism (Ellinismos) to absorb and transform foreign elements" (Hamilakis 2009, p.26). He ultimately invented "a scheme that bridged the chronological gap between classical and modern Greeks, by inventing multiple Hellenisms: in addition to the ancient, there were Macedonian, medieval, and modern Hellenisms" (ibid.). As such, the ancient Macedonian and Byzantine past were integrated into the national narrative and continuity. Underpinning this rehabilitation of the national past was the idea of "spiritual rather than racial continuity", which had resulted from the appropriation of Droysen's writings (Hamilakis 2009, p.26). As such, indigenous Hellenism coincided with the "Hellenization" of 'foreign' elements (Hamilakis 2009, p.27).

The relationship between the nation and the Byzantium had largely been determined by the stance of the Greek Orthodox Church towards the national project. The first years of the War of Independence marked a conflict "between the Church leadership and the nationalist intellectuals and the 'enlightened' clergy, who sided with the 'new religion'" (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999, p.128). The Church, because it held an advantageous position within the Ottoman Empire, feared certain ideological aspects of nationalist agendas that favoured the 'new' imagined community of Hellenism, as opposed to the 'multi-ethnic' one of Orthodoxy. Eventually the Church was made to accept the authority of the new nation state, and from that point on, the construction of the Greek nation witnessed a tense integration between religion and national ideology (see Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999, p.129; Hamilakis 2007a, pp.56-123), where the latter however did not replace the former but it was "grafted onto" it (Hamilakis 2009, p. 25).

The ‘hybridity’ that characterised the Greek national project characterised the treatment towards antiquities as well, since both had been involved in a “process of mutual constitution” where, antiquities “helped shape the nation but at the same time they were shaped by it, becoming a purified and re-created national material record through the modernist device of archaeology” (Hamilakis 2009, p.25). The merging of Christian Orthodox worship with the sacralization of the classical material past resulted in the national semi-religious worship of classical antiquities (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999; Hamilakis 2007a; 2008; 2009).

Pre-modern attitudes towards antiquities were transformed into ‘ancestor worship’, although, as Hamilakis (2009, p.24) noted, this transformation was “less radical than it seems”. Ancient classical things maintained their agency and power, not simply as national objects but as “fellow national subjects”, and, as before the establishment of the nation-state, they were “invested with emotive properties and human feelings” (Hamilakis 2009, p.24). Concurrently however, antiquities acted as the most important currency in the symbolic capital of the new nation (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996; Hamilakis 2007a, p.122), as well as became the national archaeological record that structured and defined the national territory. They were “separated from the web of daily life” so that the nation’s material truths were purified and cleansed, re-created, demarcated and exhibited (Hamilakis 2007a, p.122).

### **4.3 Antiquities before they were assumed as sacred**

Before the establishment of the Greek nation state, classical antiquity was for ordinary people “a material and physical presence, a visible and touchable reality, in the shape of ruined buildings, scattered objects, shattered fragments of pottery and stone; and in some cases, and more poignantly, in the shape of human bodies, either skeletons emerging out of the ground while ploughing the fields, or men and women made of marble or bronze, most naked, some with their heads or limbs missing, some complete, some so real and alive that you ‘could see their veins’, as Makrygiannis, the enigmatic nineteenth-century author and fighter of the Greek War of Independence put it” (Hamilakis 2009, p.21; see also Hamilakis 2007a; 2008).

For them, “these were the feats of people who were there before them, different from themselves, other people, not their ancestors, but still admirable in their abilities to construct large and elaborate buildings and works of immense beauty” (Hamilakis 2009, p.21; see also Hamilakis 2003). Folk stories from the nineteenth century, reflect local attitudes before ideas of nationhood became widespread. The people that indigenous communities saw behind the scattered objects were the Hellenes (Kakridis 1989 cited Hamilakis 2008; 2009). Other stories indicate that “some of these Hellenes are still alive, and they often engage with contemporary people in contestations of physical strength” (Hamilakis 2009, p.21). Times past and times present, therefore, seemed to coexist in the folk imagination, prior to the establishment of western modernist temporality (Hamilakis 2008; 2009; 2011).

Moreover, in some of the stories about Hellenes, “it becomes clear that the marble statues themselves are the Hellenes, not just the feats of past people” (Hamilakis 2009, p.21). The statues “had become entities with animate properties, human beings that even without heads could walk, and even without eyes (when marble statues were missing their painted eyes) could see” (ibid.). Stories of travelers talk about the practices they witnessed involving antiquities (see Hamilakis 2008; 2011), and other stories, “such as those that attribute emotive reactions to ancient, especially anthropomorphic objects” (Hamilakis 2009, p.21). Such descriptions reveal an intimate relation with the material past such as “the practice of reusing ancient architectural parts and objects such as reliefs and inscriptions in contemporary buildings, be it churches or houses (the tradition of spolia), often in places of prominence, such as the outer walls of churches or above the entrances of houses” (Hamilakis 2009, p.21).

#### **4.4 Consolidating the value of antiquities through physical interventions and laws<sup>6</sup>**

Indigenous perceptions and attitudes towards antiquities were changing, however, as Greece was becoming a nation state, it “was incorporated into the western European world-system” (Hamilakis 2007a; 2009). Given the potential significance that ancient

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of dates and events mentioned in this section.

remains had for the nation in the years before Greece's independence, it did not take long until their protection was pursued. Crucial in this respect was the *Philomousos Etaireia*, namely, a Society of 'Friends of the Arts', founded in 1813 in Athens. Its goals were educational as well as archaeological, involving the discovery, collection, and preservation of antiquities (Athanassopoulou 2002, p.286). The Society aimed to disseminate knowledge "based on Europeans models of classical education" (ibid.). Several of its members were individuals of the Athenian elite, as well as many Philhellenes and travellers who visited Athens in 1813–1814 (ibid.). Part of the activities was to organize "guided tours of the Athenian monuments for interested European visitors" (Athanassopoulou 2002, p.287). The establishment of the Society illustrates the significance attributed to the protection of classical antiquities by intellectuals both in Greece and abroad at the time (ibid.). Nevertheless, an interesting contradiction characterised the activities of members of the Society, given that some were well-known collectors of antiquities. This did not entirely oppose the goals of the society though, since these collectors seemed to believe that "the removal of classical antiquities from their original context was the only way to protect and save them" (Athanassopoulou 2002, p.288).

Evidently, before the war of Independence, the Athenian elite had started to adopt European ideals about the classical past through its participation in the Society. They saw themselves as the successors of the ancient past. During the war, when Athens was controlled by the Temporary Government of Greece, an announcement of the Society in 1824, re-introduced and established the "main goal and only goal" to "collect the Old, caring also for the protection of the antiquities being discovered (Ephimeris ton Athinon 1824 cited Athanassopoulou 2002, p.290). Illustrative of what such intentions entailed, was a proposal submitted to the Temporary Government by the Ephors of the Society (the official authorities who acted as stewards the material past). It discussed plans for removing modern structures in the vicinity of the Library of Hadrian in order to improve the condition of the Athenian monuments, as they compromised their appearance (Athanassopoulou 2002). Modern buildings had to be removed from ancient structures. Any 'offending' building, even churches could be taken down for that purpose, such as the church that disrupted the view of the colonnade of the Library of Hadrian (Protopsaltis 1967, p.26 cited Athanassopoulou 2002, pp.290-291). Post-classical

structures were linked with ‘inferiority’ and ‘barbarism’ and were considered to spoil the ‘purity’ of classical antiquity.

Hamilakis (2007a) called these practices of demolition ‘ritual purification’. He also outlined the groups of further practices that gradually established the national symbolic capital: “practices of rebuilding and recreation, by attempting to reconstruct a number of classical buildings, especially temples, and restore them to their supposed original state in the fifth century BCE”, “practices of demarcation, by fencing-off sites and thereby divorcing them from the fabric of daily life” and “practices of exhibition, by framing buildings and objects as exhibits to be admired primarily through vision, in specially assigned monumental sites and in museums” (Hamilakis 2009, p.23).

The prohibition of the sale and transfer of antiquities outside Greece was introduced in 1827, by the Resolution of the Third National Assembly of Troezen (‘On the organisation of the Administration of the Greek State’). Its 18<sup>th</sup> article defined that “it shall be the duty of the Governor to take care that Antiquities shall not be sold or conveyed outside the Greek State” (Protopsaltis 1967 cited Voudouri 2008, p.126). The first Governor, Ioannis Kapodistrias, issued an Order (no. 2400/12.5.1828) that prohibited the export of antiquities and in 1829 he established the first national museum in Aegina. In the same year, the first Ephor of the museum, Andreas Moustoxydis, distributed a Circular (no. 953/23.6.1829) concerning antiquities, which constituted a preliminary draft of an archaeological law. These actions indicate that the interest for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of ancient monuments started to formulate a particular agenda, generated from the valorisation of the past for its national symbolism.

All these steps comprised the gradual transformation of the concept of antiquity. Greece had to meet and sustain its image as the birthplace of the European spirit and western civilization. By this time, Greek members of the Society appeared to have fully adopted the prevailing European idea, accordingly to which “antiquity should be studied out of its present context, disengaged from its surroundings” (Athanassopoulou 2002, pp.291-292). In light of this, purification strategies became fundamental processes. They gradually replaced and dominated over the previously described indigenous treatments of the past. The significance that the past was made to carry for the nation rendered the prioritisation and authority of official actions. The past had started to operate, even before the



formation of the Greek state, as symbolic capital, exchanged for national legitimacy (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999, p.26). It became part of an ideological framework loaded with religious connotations (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999). Classical antiquities, especially the Acropolis, were rendered “sacred” landscapes, symbols of the imminent “resurrection” of the Greek nation (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999).

The first systematic efforts for the protection of antiquities and monuments commenced with the election of the Bavarian prince Otto of Wittelsbach as King of Greece (Clogg 1992). In 1833 the Archaeological Service was founded as part of the Ministry of Education by Royal Decree. The planning process of the new capital of Athens and, the formal measures for the protection of antiquity elevated the status of antiquity. Leo von Klenze (a German architect who came to Greece to assist in the planning process in 1834) represented the purist classical perspective (Athanasopoulou 2002, p.294). In line with the sentiment of the time (the desire to cleanse the past from its post-classical features), he recommended the removal of most post-classical structures from the Acropolis and proposed demolitions of Byzantine monuments in the lower town (Athanasopoulou 2002, p.294).

The most sacred icon of the secular religion of the nation, the Athenian Acropolis, was “transformed into a monumentalized landscape, a landscape of oblivion, a locale where re-created classical glory obliterated all other phases of its life, be it medieval, Ottoman, or other” (Hamilakis 2009, p.23). Since the emphasis in the first decades of the state was primarily on classical antiquity, other phases were excluded, such as the ancient Macedonians, the Romans, and the Byzantines, whose theocratic state, as it was discussed earlier in this chapter, “was seen as against the democratic ideals of classical antiquity, and as responsible for the death of classical civilization” (Hamilakis 2009, pp.23-24).

The first archaeological law of Greece ‘On scientific and technological collections, on the discovery and conservation of antiquities and the use thereof’ was instituted a year later, in 1834. It was the work of G.L. von Maurer, the regent of King Otto (Petrakos 1987, pp.55-56). This law declared that ‘all antiquities within Greece, as works of the ancestors of the Greek people, shall be regarded as national property of all the Greeks in general’ (Article 61 cited Voudouri 2008, p.126). This construed that full and absolute

ownership of antiquities existing in public land is recognised on the part of the state (although with a restricted authority regarding private collections)<sup>7</sup> (Voudouri 2003, p.22; Voudouri 2008, p.126). Moreover, a ban and penal sanctions were established on exporting antiquities without a permit (Voudouri 2008, p.126). An export licence was to be granted only in the case of objects which were ‘duplicates’ of those in museums, of objects legally imported from abroad, or of objects declared to be ‘insignificant’ or ‘surplus’ (Voudouri 2008, p.126).

Provision is made for the legal obligation to report the discovery or sale of antiquities. Provision is also made for the prohibition of excavation or export of antiquities without official authorization, as well as for the application of penalty in case of violation of these conditions and destruction or unofficial sale of antiquities (Voudouri 2003, p.22). The General Ephor is assigned responsibility for the management of the museums and collections of antiquities and, Ephors are placed in every museum and collection (Voudouri 2003, p.21). It is worth noting moreover that at the time, Byzantine remains, as well as Venetian, Ottoman or other post-classical monuments, “were not only neglected but often even destroyed in the interests of ‘purifying’ the material evidence of the ancient Greek past, in spite of an explicit mention in the law of 1834 and in a royal decree of 1837 of the protection of medieval remains as well” (Voudouri 2008, p.127).

The Archaeological Service was established under this law. Moreover, the Archaeological Committee (*Arhaiologiki Epitropi*) – the predecessor of the Central Archaeological Council (*Kendriko Arhaiologiko Symvoulío*) – was established in 1836. The Archaeological Society (*Arhaiologiki Etaireia*) was established in 1837, which was a society of highly influential members, including even the King himself that served a complementary role to the state archaeological management (Petrakos 1987, pp.57-58).

The law of 1834 remained in force until 1899, when a new Law 2646/1899 (Law ΒΧΜΣΤ’) was voted. Unlike the previous one, this law established an exclusive right of ownership of the state over all antiquities – movable and immovable, within both private

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<sup>7</sup> More specifically, those who owned a private collection of antiquities before the Law of 1834 was enacted, they maintained the right of full ownership over their antiquities. Additionally, those who came to own private land and discover antiquities after the law was enacted, they were granted half the ownership over the antiquities, whilst the other half was granted to the state (Voudouri 2003).

and public land, anywhere in Greece (Voudouri 2008, p.126). Another main innovation was the inclusion within its field of application, objects of ‘medieval Hellenism’, a term which suggests the adoption of the scheme of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos mentioned earlier, and “of the new concept of the unbroken continuity of Hellenism from antiquity to the present, with Byzantium, rehabilitated and ‘Hellenized’ as the mediating link” (Voudouri 2008, p.127).

A right of possession, disposal and sale by individuals of antiquities which had been characterised as ‘redundant’ or ‘surplus’ to the requirements of the state museums had been laid down (Voudouri 2008, p.127). The exporting of antiquities remained possible as long as they were considered ‘redundant’, “while at the same time a tax was imposed on their value” (Voudouri 2008, p.127). Legally imported objects were no longer permitted to be re-exported “except following certification of their identity and the issuing of a licence” (Voudouri 2008, p.127). There was provision for the exchange of state museum held objects with foreign museum objects or academic institutions “on condition that they had been declared ‘surplus’” (Voudouri 2008, p.127).

Pivotal was the next step when this law was merged with additional legal provisions and in 1932, Law 5351/32 ‘On antiquities’ (*peri arhaiotiton*) was established, remaining in force for 70 years. The basic provisions of the Law 1899 remained but changes in the archaeological legislation occurred, prompted by the implications of having a total ban on the possession and sale of antiquities by individuals (Voudouri 2008). It was suggested that the conditions of state archaeological museums being overfilled with ancient objects, eventually gave rise to “serious problems as regards to conservation and display” (Voudouri 2008, p.127). In addition, “it deprived the state of valuable assistants in the safeguarding and preservation of antiquities in the state, such as genuine antiquarian collectors” (ibid.). Hence this law introduced “the right of private persons to possess even important movable antiquities and a special regime for private collectors of and dealers in antiquities” (ibid.)

Finally, in 2002 the 3028/2002 Law “On the protection of antiquities and cultural heritage in general” (*gia tin prostasia ton Arhaiotiton kai en genei tis Politistikis Klironomias*) is established (Ministry of Culture 2002a; for English translation see Ministry of Culture 2002b). This law retains the principle of state ownership of

antiquities dating up to 1453, while it provides a stricter regime than that of 1932 legislation regarding their possession by private persons. Article 1(c) of this law states that ‘Within the framework of international law, the Greek State shall care for the protection of cultural objects originating from Greek territory whenever they have been removed from it. The Greek State shall also care, within the context of international law, for the protection of cultural objects, which are connected historically with Greece wherever they are located’.

According to article 2(a), cultural objects are ‘testimonies of the existence and the individual and collective creativity of human kind’. Sub-paragraph (b) defines as monuments ‘cultural objects which constitute material testimonies belonging to the cultural heritage of the country and which deserve special attention’.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, ‘movable objects’ dating up to 1453 and finds from excavations or other archaeological research, regardless of date, belong to the State in terms of ownership (*kata kyriotita*) and possession (*nomi*). They cannot be alienated by sale or adverse possession. No provision for disposal then is allowed, apart from exchange for cultural objects of foreign origin, and that under certain terms and conditions, most important being “that they are not of particular significance for the country’s cultural heritage, that they are not needed for the completion of collections of other museums in the country and that the unity of important collections is not affected in return for cultural objects of equal importance” (Voudouri 2008, p.128).

#### ***4.4.1 Possession and ownership of antiquities***

According to article 23 a permit for the possession (*adeia katohis*) of an ancient movable monument the ownership of which belongs to the State, may be granted to a natural or legal person, with the exception if:

- a) the antiquity is of particularly great scientific or artistic significance.

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<sup>8</sup> The same sub-paragraph subdivides the category of Monuments as: ancient or recent, and immovable and movable objects.

b) the applicant does not possess the credentials for compliance with the duties of the holder (*katochos*), particularly if he/she has been sentenced irrevocably for a violation of legislation for the protection of cultural heritage.

When the holder of an antiquity dating up to 1453 dies, a permit of “possession” can be granted to his/her heir on submission of an application, unless it conflicts with the above mentioned conditions. This permit may be revoked by decision of the Ministry of Culture if the conditions of its issuance have ceased to exist. In the case of a movable object of very small scientific and commercial value, it is catalogued by the Archaeological Service and left in the hands of the “holder” by decision of the Minister of Culture after an opinion by the Council.

The right of ownership for imported antiquities dating up to 1453 and for those dating after 1453 can be exercised under specific terms and conditions. Article 33 of Law 3028/2002 regulates the provisions for ownership of imported antiquities, according to which the right of ownership of legally imported antiquities dated up to 1453 is maintained unless

a) they had been exported from Greek territory during the last 50 years before the importation and

b) they have been illegally removed from a monument, an archaeological site, church, public collection, collection of religious monuments, storage places of archaeological finds from excavations or other similar places or are product of illegal excavations.

If the Archaeological Service considers that they had been exported from Greece during the last 50 years or that they are products of illegal activities, the interested person has to provide evidence of the antiquity’s acquisition or import and has to prove its origin. If the interested person fails to prove their origin, a permit of possession (not ownership) will be granted unless the applicant does not provide the necessary safeguards of compliance.

Article 29 of Law 3028/2002 defines the duties of holders and owners of movable monuments, which are:

a) being responsible for its safety and preservation

- b) being obliged to notify the Archaeological Service of the exact location for its safeguarding; any intention to remove it; any eventual loss or damage.
- c) allowing periodic or ad hoc inspection by the Service following notification in writing
- d) facilitating photography and study by specialists who have been granted the relevant permit by the Service.
- e) making the antiquity available to the Service for a reasonable time, if so requested, for exhibition to the public within or outside Greek territory.

Article 31 of law 3028/2002 defines the collector as the legal holder or owner of movable antiquities upon application by a decision of the Minister of Culture after an opinion by the *Kendriko Arhaiologiko Symvoulío* (I explain this on page 76). Generally speaking, the collector has the same right and duties as the holder or owner of antiquities, but with some additional rights and obligations. The legal obligations of the collector involve:

- a) keeping a register with a full description and photographs of the objects of the collection and shall submit a copy of this register to the Service.
- b) facilitating the photography and study of these objects by specialists who have been granted a relevant permit by the Service.
- c) facilitating visits to a collection, considered to be important by the Service.
- d) being responsible for the unity of a collection. The collection may be dispersed upon permit granted by the Minister of Culture following an opinion of the Central Archaeological Council.

The KAS gives its opinion after assessing the character and the importance of the collection and on condition that the applicant provides the necessary guarantees for the protection, safeguarding and preservation of the objects forming part of the collections and provides the necessary guarantees for compliance with the other duties of the collector. The application for recognition will be rejected if:

- a) specific convictions or pending criminal procedures against the applicant

b) it concerns a natural person, whose occupation is related or was related to the protection of monuments, or is an antique dealer, or an employee or partner of a natural or legal person with a similar business, cannot be recognised as a collector of antiquities. The decision on recognition may be revoked temporarily or permanently if the collector ceases to satisfy one or more of the requirements on the basis of which this identity was recognised or if there has been a violation of specific legal provisions. Recognition shall be revoked automatically if the collector has been irrevocably sentenced for any of the offences referred to in article 31 of law 3028/02. In such case the antiquities in his possession shall be taken by the State. If recognition is revoked for another reason, possession may be retained.

Lastly, it has to be noted that collectors have some additional rights to those granted to holders or owners of antiquities, whereby the former are entitled to:

- a) reproduce and dispose of photographs or other representations of their monuments.
- b) make casts or other reproductions following approval by the Service and accordance with its instructions to dispose them.
- c) assign the right of first publication of any newly appearing antiquity in their collection for three (3) years, following notification to the Service.

## **4.5 The archaeological self**

Today, the Archaeological Service is the official state body with exclusive responsibility for all matters of archaeological activity; i.e. the excavation, preservation and display of the archaeological heritage in Greece. As mentioned before, its administrative structure dates back to 1834. Its current location is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports (2012a). The permit concerning any archaeological activity is provided by the *Kendriko Arhaiologiko Symvoulío* (KAS), namely the Central Archaeological Council, which is the “supreme body which advises and submits proposals to the Minister of Culture on all issues to do with heritage” (Hamilakis 2007a, p.35; see also Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports 2012b).

The state Archaeological Service is divided into Central Services, Regional Services (comprised of 28 regional ephoreias) and Special Services (some of which are: Ephoreia of Antique Shops and Private Archaeological Collections, Ephoreia of Paleoanthropology and Speleology, Ephoreia of Underwater Archaeology; see Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports 2012a) It is worth noting that the chronological confines of the regional services (e.g. Ephoreia of Prehistoric and Classical and Ephoreia of Byzantine and post-Byzantine antiquities) preserve the sequence of Greek history, as that was set in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the national historiography of Paparrigopoulos.

Excavations are carried out by the regional ephoreias. There are also other bodies responsible for archaeological excavation such as the Foreign Schools, the universities, or the Athens Archaeological Society, nonetheless ‘permits for this activity should be approved by the State (through its various archaeological councils, such as the Central Archaeological Council and under the strict supervision of the State Archaeological Service’ (Hamilakis 2007a, p.36). There are less than a thousand permanent archaeology posts in the State Archaeological Service (appointed by the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports), while the rest of the archaeologists work is conducted on temporary contracts.<sup>9</sup>

## 4.6 Conclusion

Neni Panourgia (2004, p.174) noted with regards to the Greek State after its War of Independence that it “caught a glimpse of the modern reality of Europe [...] All it needed was a vestige that would convince the European benefactors that this new country, by this time renamed Hellas, was indeed part of the collective European past and part of its collective present; part of its history and part of its lack of history [...] Greek intellectuals understood only too well that in order for them to be considered European they first had to prove that they were as “Greek” as the rest of Europe [...] What needed

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<sup>9</sup> An estimate for the number of archaeologists with no permanent posts can be drawn from membership figures in the *Syllogos Ektakton Archaialogon* (S.EK.A.), or Association of Archaeologists on Temporary Contracts, which in 2009 included 935 members (see SEKA 2002).



to be proven, in the first place, was their modernity, and the only way of proving that was through the proof of their ancient pedigree". These words summarise what has been attempted so far: to emphasize that the most significant contribution of Greece's ancient past occurred the moment it sat on an "unreachable pedestal" (Bastea 2000, p.13) because it became the vehicle to national construction. In a context of national imagination, antiquities were invested with sacredness (Hamilakis 2007a) because they suited the ideals that the Hellenic nation was predicated on.

Ultimately, the eminence of antiquities, which they still corroborate today, had largely been determined by the crucial assumption that they were sacred. Out of this assumption and in pursuit of its installation arose the urgency to protect the objects that had been deemed as sacred. Gradually, the defence of antiquities' protection called for and justified the perpetual requirement for archaeological interventions upon the material past. Official actors pursued the demarcation and stewardship of select objects because (and for as long as) they suited select ideals. Gradually, archaeological interventions determined and consolidated the archaeological self as well as established the spatial and conceptual formula of its symbolic capital. As such, archaeology was systematised (i.e. archaeological discipline/institution), its objectives and methods were secured (i.e. archaeological law) and the outlines of its object and value (i.e. national symbolic capital) were shaped. As far as the modern national symbolic capital is concerned, the selectivity of its meaning and materiality as well as, the exclusivity of its installation and control not only remain, but have almost been 'normalised'.

Effectively, the construction of 'sacredness' besides being a means to control the past, it also operated a means of social control (c.f. Herzfeld 2006, p.133), as it coerced a particular social experience and understanding of 'sacred' objects. It constructed a concept and an object of value that the public was enforced to accommodate / consume. It also constructed a model of archaeological authority that the public ought to comply with. In view of that, I hope that the 'normality' of the fence mentioned in the introduction is now explained.

However, even when archaeological signs of authority are (seemingly) normalised and archaeological artefacts are established as sacred for the nation, their reception by ordinary people is not always passive or straightforward. After all, if western modernity

and archaeology was uniquely received and adjusted by indigenous Hellenism, why should we expect anything different from local communities in their response to official archaeological discourse today? If Greece's national symbolic capital due to its 'indigenous' construction encapsulates multiple and paradoxical roles, functioning as both sacralized and commodified, within both national and global settings (Hamilakis 2007a, pp.56-123), how is it possible to avoid equally paradoxical 'local' constructions of the material past? I will deal with this issue in Chapters 6 to 8 but first the role and impact of official archaeology in the area of Kozani needs to be examined. This is what the next chapter is about.



# CHAPTER 5

## OFFICIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN KOZANI

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### 5.1 Introduction

In chapter four, I explored a number of implications that emerged from the material past's assumption and embodiment of sacredness in the context of Greece's nation-building. I specifically referred to the effect of venerating ancient relics on the assumption that they materially manifest the nation's unique and continuous culture as they (were assumed to) embody constructs such as ethnic uniqueness and rootedness. The material implications (interventions) that followed were crucial for the development of some dominant features (e.g. symbolic capital, archaeological self, disciplined behaviour) and character (e.g. exclusive, selective) of official archaeology.

The aim of this chapter is to explore these features at a local level, through the case of Kozani's archaeological ephoreia. The study of the symbolic capital of Kozani's heritage, its components and the way in which it is constructed as well as inscribed into public imagination, comprise a crucial part for the purposes of this thesis. It reveals how the practice and object of official archaeology define ordered/sanctioned/acceptable behaviours towards the material past, and accordingly singles out those that do not comply. As such, this chapter intends to discuss the features in relation to which my non-professional participants sensed archaeological discourse and of course, uniquely responded to.

### 5.2 Regional and historical background of Kozani<sup>10</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century and after Greece's War of Independence, the region of what is now known as Greek Macedonia was still part of the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of dates and events mentioned in this section.

Rediscovered by nationalist, irredentist pursuits, this northern region and its inhabitants, bore intense assimilating processes (see Carabott 1997; Karakasidou 1997; Koliopoulos 1997) that aimed at defining a discreet territory, premised on the idea of a uniform Greek identity. Following a succession of conflicts amongst diverse nationalist claimants, it was annexed by the Greek state in 1912-1913. What eventually came to be asserted as modern or ‘geographical’ Macedonia was a country with boundaries, notably its northern ones, referenced somehow to the reaches of what was assumed to be ancient Macedonia.

In administrative terms, Macedonia denotes the northern geographical region of Greece, which, in its western part, consists of the periphery of western Macedonia. Kozani’s prefecture is part of this periphery and Kozani is also the name of its capital city (Figure 5.1). In archaeological writings, parts of Kozani are often referred to as the Upper Macedonian kingdoms to which they were once linked in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1996).

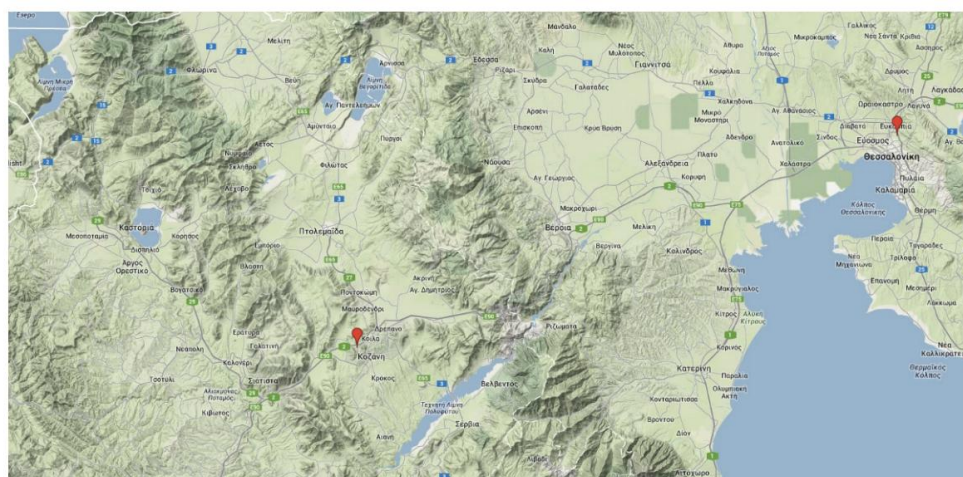


**Figure 5.1** Periphery of western Macedonia and the prefecture of **Kozani** (Wikipedia 2012).

Kozani was established as a prefecture in 1915 (FEK A', 120/1915). Until very recently, it was comprised of sixteen municipalities and three communities. This radically changed however after the implementation of the *Kallikratis* Scheme – a law on the reformation of the administrative division regarding the entire Greek state. Since November 2010, its municipalities have been reformed into three larger ones. Currently its designated historical seat (administrative category) is Aiani. Today, the prefecture of Kozani is the place of residence for a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants (census in 2001, see

Kalogeropoulou 2004) and its land covers about three and a half thousand square kilometres.

Its land is bounded by high mountains on all sides, such as, Mts Pindus in the west, Mt Voio in the northwest, Mt Verno (Vitsi) in the north, Mt Vermion in the east, and, Mts Pieria (Olympus) and Kamvunia in the south. The mountain range extending southwards from Mt Verno includes the mountains of Askio (Siniatsikon), Vourino and Phlambouro. This range runs parallel to Mt Pindus in the west and Mt Vermion in the east in a north-west to south-east direction. Equally, the Aliakmon river exercises a great influence to the physical configuration of the environment, creating major routes into and beyond Macedonia. The Aliakmon rises in the Voio mountain and its eastern course to the sea covers the long distance of 297 km. The mountain extensions described here, naturally form three parallel highland belts, interfered by the two, parallel lowland belts sandwiched between them (Figure 5.2). The most westerly lowland belt borders the Pindus range and is formed by the basin of the upper part of the Aliakmon river. Then, there is the middle highland belt, which is followed by the easterly lowland belt that consists of the basin of the middle part of the Aliakmon river in its south, and of the plain of the *Kitrini Limni* (Yellow Lake, or Lake *Sarighiol* in Turkish) in its north. This easterly lowland belt includes the villages where I conducted a large part of my ethnography (Figure 5.3). The rest of my ethnography was conducted outside the prefecture of Kozani (Figure 5.4).



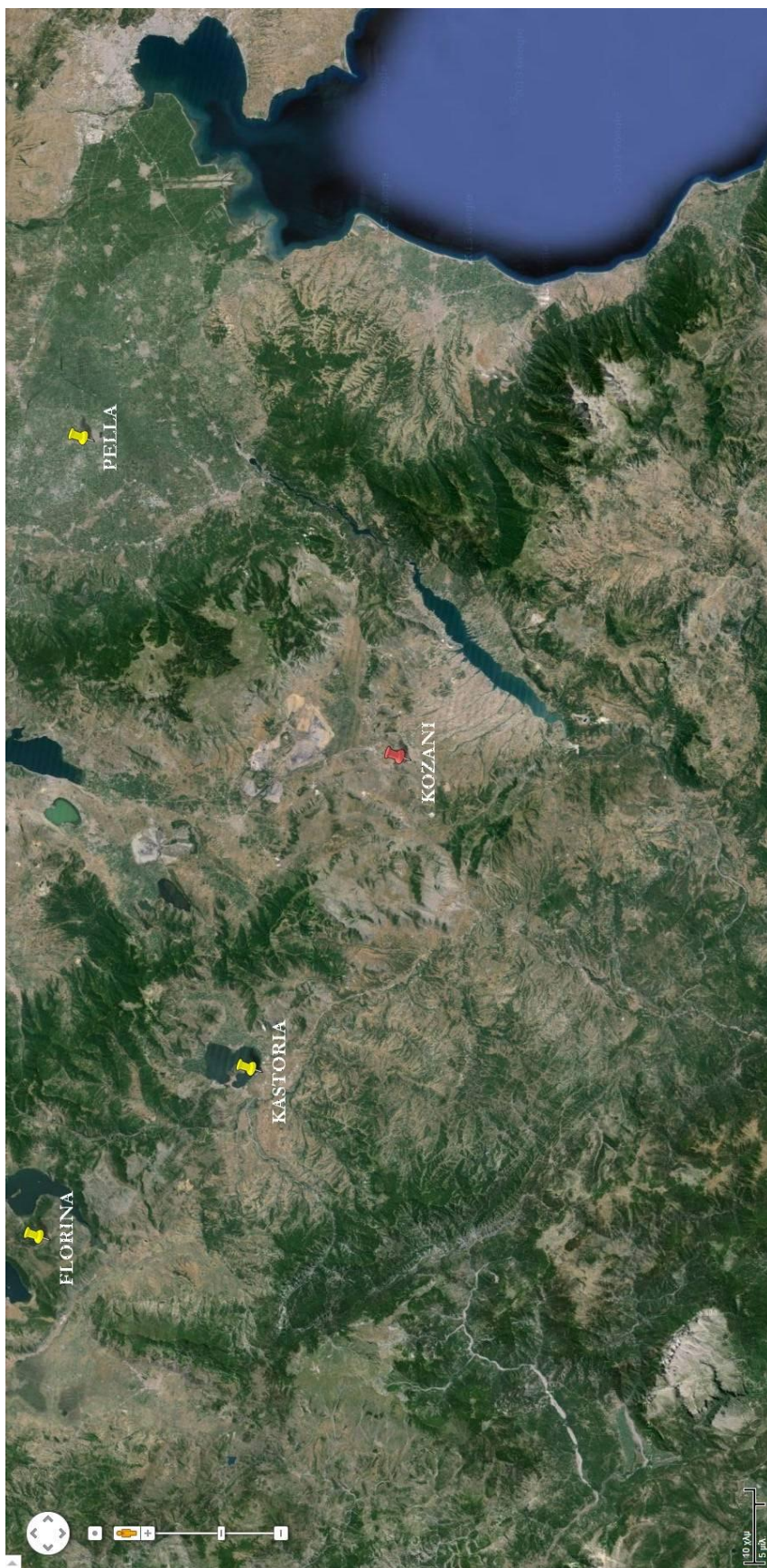
**Figure 5.2** The rugged terrain of Kozani (Google Maps 2014).





**Figure 5.3** Locations of ethnography inside the prefecture of Kozani (Google Maps Engine 2014b).





**Figure 5.4** Locations of ethnography outside the prefecture of Kozani (Google Maps Engine 2014c).



All in all, it is a rugged physical terrain (Figure 5.2) that has, since antiquity, deeply shaped and been shaped by societal life and economy (see Thomas 2010). The Aliakmon River always signified a natural horizontal border that separated the south of Macedonia from Thessaly. During medieval times, the construction of fortified settlements developed along the length of its route (i.e. the forts of Kteni, Palaiokastro, Megali Rachi, Servia) due to its function as a natural stronghold. However, following the Ottomans' capture of that region in the 1380s, forts gradually lost their centrality as strategic locations (Hatzioannou 1995; 2004; Nerantzi-Varmazi 2004). Concurrently, local communities started to shift locations (Hatzioannou 2004).

The city of Kozani was created in the 1500s by settlers from Epirus and shepherds from surrounding villages (Hatzioannou 2004).<sup>11</sup> The significant concentration of Christian inhabitants in Kozani and elsewhere in this region outnumbered other religious groups (Hatzioannou 2004). Moreover, the Christian orthodox population of Kozani, in the second half of the seventeenth century, was exempt from certain tax payments (Papastathis 2004). This facilitated Kozani's economic growth, and with the development of craft associations, the city started to grow into an important economic centre (Hatzioannou 1995). Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the intensity of craft-production led to the operation of a full-fledged market that offered a diversity of products yielded by the labour of furriers, tailors, shoemakers, tanners, bakers, butchers, greengrocers and many more. The growth of production necessitated the search for ways and routes to expand the market. Waves of emigration led to the expansion of overland trade, and market centres were established throughout the northern Balkans and central Europe. Kozani and a few other cities attracted the financial capital that was being produced by stock- and agricultural-farming, and eventually, it became an important centre of trade. City folks were occupied with trade and inhabitants of rural villages were busy with agriculture and animal husbandry (Karanasios 2004).

Towards the end of the seventeenth century and mostly in the eighteenth century, cities like Kozani, Servia, Velvendo, Aiani, and others witnessed the establishment and operation of schools and libraries, which came to be known as the blanket term of *Sholi*

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<sup>11</sup> The name Kozani is believed to be derived from the term *koza*, which means goat in Slavic (Hatzioannou 2004).

*tis Kozanis*, or Academy of Kozani (see Karanasios 2004). Concurrently, the economic relations with central and north-eastern European cities facilitated and encouraged the undertaking of higher education studies abroad. This way, scholars came to familiarise themselves with western political and intellectual circles, and the liberal ideas of the French Revolution (Avgerinou-Kolonia 1995). More importantly, in their return to homeland, they contributed to the enlightenment of native populations and participated in political activities in support of the independence of Greece (Karanasios 2004). The impact of such ideas was nevertheless restrained by the conservative ideology of the Church, with which most local teachers – who were priests – were aligned (Karanasios 2004).

In the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century the pursuit for Macedonia's independence became more intensified, and external nationalist mechanisms started to define populations in terms of national categories such as Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians and Turks. It was the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 (an independent Bulgarian Church), with its open opposition to Hellenism, that particularly intensified the antagonism in national education amongst areas that included different ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. Orthodox communities in Macedonia were coerced into affiliating with either the Greek or the Bulgarian national Church. This intensified the conflict –known as the 'Macedonian Question' – over who controlled the people and the territory of Macedonia. By the 1890s, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece were each "fielding irregular bands of guerrilla fighters who attacked the Turks, fought each other, and terrorized the local population" (Danforth 1993, p. 4).

The prospect of taking possession of the lands of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire progressively encouraged the antagonism between assimilating policies. Through the construction of churches and schools and the assignment of priests and teachers "each state was conducting an intense propaganda campaign, whose goal was to instil the 'proper' sense of national identity among the Orthodox Christians of Macedonia" (Danforth 1993, p.4).<sup>12</sup> For the Greek educators and priests, religious affiliation (allegiance to the Greek Patriarchate), participation in the Greek educational system, and

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<sup>12</sup> Consider for example that in 1902 in the area of what is today modern western Macedonia and modern FYROM, there were 481 Greek schools in operation with 27,654 students, whereas at the same time, there were 273 Bulgarian schools with 15,200 students (see Kalogeropoulos 2004).

knowledge of Greek were the defining indices of national consciousness or ‘Greekness’ (Karakasidou 2002, p.124). The Macedonian Question reached a climax in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, which ended with the partitioning of Macedonia among the three Balkan states – Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria.

Categories of people were classified on the basis of their national and religious commitment (or propensity to show such commitment). According to records of the Greek consulate in the province of Servia in 1904 (Spanos 2004, pp.509-521) in the provinces of what corresponds to the modern prefectures of Kozani and Grevena (with the exception of the municipality of Deskati) – more than the half of the population was aligned with the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Spanos 2004, p.509). Thus, more than half of the population was categorised as Greek, as in, aligned with Christian Orthodox religion, which, in its majority included monolingual Greek speakers, alongside a small part that spoke Vlach and Slavic. A bit less than half of the population was Muslim, of whom the majority spoke Turkish and a part who spoke Greek. There were also about one thousand and three hundred people who were *Shismatikoi*, as in, followed the Bulgarian Exarchate and possessed overt Bulgarian leanings. Lastly, there were about a thousand people who were counted as *Rumanizondes Vlachs*, namely, Vlachs with Romanian national sentiment (Karakasidou 2002, p.140).

Although state policies recorded national inclination, many of the peoples inhabiting Macedonia, “identified themselves more readily ‘regionally’ than ‘ethnically’” (Kontogiorgi 2006, p.3). For the indigenous Greeks, it was relatively easier to identify themselves with national identity, due in no small part to the efforts of Greek educators and priests. But amongst “the simple, illiterate peasant populations, who comprised the majority” Greek national consciousness took much longer to develop and achieve roots (Kontogiorgi 2006, p.3). State policy was determined to achieve national homogeneity, to which end ethnic minorities were coerced into expulsion, and refugees were coerced to replace them.

Thus, after the Greek state annexed Macedonia, the demographic picture described above was radically changed, as it changed in the whole of Macedonia in general (see Kontogiorgi 2006). This was caused by the non-compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Bulgaria after the Treaty of Neuilly (27/11/1919) and the coerced

exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey after the Treaty of Lausanne (30/1/1923). From the area of what today is the prefecture of Kozani and most of the prefecture of Grevena, it was recorded that in the years between 1920 and 1928, a total of almost seventy thousand Turkish and Bulgarians departed and fifty-three thousand refugees from Asia Minor arrived, whereas the *dopioi* (indigenous Greeks and others) that remained there, were counted to be almost a hundred and fourteen thousand (Pelagidis 2004, p.223).<sup>13</sup> As such, all non-Christian communities were replaced by resettled Anatolian and Pontic communities, a process which rendered the population (almost entirely) Christian and Greek speaking.

Refugee settlement in Greek Macedonian countryside was implemented by the state in order to establish a homogeneous ‘Greek’ presence in the area, following the annexation of Macedonia by the Greek state in 1913. The targets of state policies were the integration of refugees and the assimilation of the population, designed on the concept of nationality (Danforth 1995; Karakasidou 1997; Mackridge and Yannakakis 1997).

### **5.3 Archaeology in Kozani before 1983<sup>14</sup>**

In Chapter Four I discussed the conceptualisation /assumption of the material past as inherently sacred and its relation with the consequential pursuit of archaeological protection. However, archaeological attention remained largely limited (if not totally absent) in many regions in Greece. Great Bronze Age and Classical sites such as Knossos, Mycenae, Athens, Olympia, Delphi, Delos had traditionally received much more, if not the exclusive archaeological investment and attention, in comparison to the peripheral parts of Greece, such as Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia.

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<sup>13</sup> The Slavic inhabitants who left from the district of Kozani in the 1920s comprised only the 2% of the total Slavic population that had departed from the whole of Greece, as it was only a small number of them that were settled there in the first place (see Kontogiorgi 1994). Evidently, for the district of Kozani, it was especially the last treaty that had caused the tremendous shifts in its population, given that more than half of its inhabitants were Muslim.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of dates and events mentioned in this section.

In Kozani, even in areas that had been officially declared as archaeological sites, ‘protection’ was never implemented. Modern archaeological reviews stress that archaeological investigations were infrequent and unsystematic all through to the 1980s (see Andreou et al. 1996, pp.560-576; Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1999, pp.36-39) even though designations of areas as “archaeological sites” were established from as early as the 1930s (see Listed Archaeological Sites and Monuments of Greece 1993-2012 compiled and published by the Directorate of the National Archive of Monuments of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism). Clearly, the assumption of the past’s sacredness was not enough to instigate archaeological attention and investment, especially when Kozani’s material past was assumed to lack national importance (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1999). Equally absent was the archaeological attention towards prehistoric remains in Macedonia, with the exception of anything which could be considered as a prelude to classical civilisation. Prehistory, for long after Macedonia’s annexation to the Greek state, was viewed as the ‘other’ to the classical past (this issue has been treated in detail, see Fotiadis 2001; see also Kotsakis 1991).

Reasoning for Macedonia’s otherness was ascribed to its assumed cultural or environmental deficiencies, such as the ‘race’ of its inhabitants, their ‘peasant’ state, the lack of ‘civilised’ neighbours, the lack of ‘ethnic purity’, the distance from the sea (see Fotiadis 2001, p.125), or even “the discharge pattern of its rivers” (Andreou et al. 1996, p.561). Often Macedonia was understood as “a passage, or a highway, between the lands of obvious importance, Europe and Old Greece or Anatolia, and archaeologists from Rey to Rodden would invoke that condition as a justification for excavating Macedonia” (Andreou et al. 1996, p.560). Macedonia was therefore construed as a stepping stone to ‘glorified’ ancient civilisations, rather than an achievement of civilisation in itself (see Andreou et al. 1996). It “was claimed to be the ancestral Bronze Age homeland of the legendary Dorians, yet, as everyone knew, only upon leaving that home did the Dorians shed their primitive habits and achieve distinction” (Andreou et al. 1996, p.560). Evidently, one could argue that what seems to have been a dominant research topic, was everything that Macedonia had not been (Andreou et al. 1996, p.560) or its “absence of traits” (Kotsakis 1998, p.47), rather than its link with the classical Greek past.

These accounts are particularly enlightening, for they exemplify the following: at the dawn of the twentieth century and for many decades after, although the idea of the

nation's historical continuity from ancient times to the present was advocated following Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos's seminal work *History of the Hellenic nation*, in practice, the Greek past was comprised of selected assemblages of material culture, following selective archaeological interventions (i.e. protection). Only a discovery from the celebrated world of Alexander the Great – a recently rehabilitated and promising chapter of the nation's past – was likely to offer the chance of archaeological investment/attention in Macedonia.

It was not until 1977 when Manolis Andronikos discovered Vergina, (70 km east of Kozani) that the course of archaeological developments in Macedonia started to change. He unearthed the royal cemetery in Vergina, which was and still is believed by many to include the tomb of the father of Alexander the Great, 'Phillip II' (359-336 B.C). His discoveries were invested with complex symbolism, signalling a new era for the development of archaeology in Macedonia. The excavations gave a tangible dimension to the royal Hellenistic kingdom and immediately afterwards, Vergina became a celebrated archaeological locus in national imagination – largely due to Andronikos' idiosyncratic personality and role as an archaeologist (see Hamilakis 2007a; Mouliou 2008). The antiquities from Vergina became the symbols of national imagery and identity, and they received immense publicity as being *the* evidence of the 'Greekness' of Macedonia during a highly politicised climate in view of the Macedonian Question. Following these archaeological developments, systematic and rescue excavations intensified in Macedonia.

In Kozani, hopes for the elevation of its heritage had for long been invested upon its own reference to the Hellenistic world of Alexander the Great: the kingdom of *Elimeia*, which was also referred to as *Elimeiotis*. As with most places that were anticipated to be discovered, a lot of controversy was centred upon the identification of its exact location. Elimeia was considered an important reference in the ancient topography of western Macedonia, because it referred to one of the districts of Upper Macedonia that predated the formulation of the Macedonian Kingdom under Phillip II. References to Elimeia in the ancient literary sources of Livy, Claudio Ptolemy, and Stephano Byzantio (for full references see Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1999; Megas 1976) had stimulated scholars' interest in discovering its exact location from as early as the 1900s (Kanatsoulis 1976). However, those interested could only speculate whether such place-name referred only to

the name of the eparchy (kingdom) or to the name of its capital city as well. The haziness of historical information and the lack of material evidence caused uncertainty and controversy amongst scholarly opinions, all of which sprung from the same question: if there was a city of Elimeia, *where was it?*

In the meantime, the ancient city of Aiani had already been identified with that of its modern town, when in 1861 L. Heuzey discovered two inscriptions bearing the name Aiani. In light of this, scholars tended to rule out the likelihood that ancient Elimeia was located in the same vicinity (Kanatsooulis 1976; Megas 1976, p.14). For the most part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the anticipation of discovering material evidence that related to historic cities and especially those of the ‘kingdom of Elimeia’ lingered on in the minds of many. Not only historians and archaeologists, but local teachers (see Adamidis 1976, p. 41; Siambanopoulos 1995) as well – who often were responsible for the stewardship of antiquities – shared similar aspirations for the elevation of Kozani’s material past (for a description of local collections in Kozani, during the twentieth century see Skouteri-Didaskalou 2004). After all, during the 1960s and the 1970s, it was mostly local teachers who systematically ‘cared’ for the stewardship of antiquities in local communities in Kozani. They were often assigned the official role of Stewards of Antiquities (Ephors) and stored collections of local finds in school premises or local community centres (Siambanopoulos 1993; Skouteri-Didaskalou 2004). Archaeological investigations however were generally scarce and unsystematic.

Interesting in this respect was the explanation of archaeologist Fotios Petsas (1979, pp.24-31) as to why archaeological research on western Macedonian antiquity was so scarce. His reasoning at the time was founded on Macedonia’s general lack of preserved relics – namely, “temples, theatres, stadiums”, which failed to “draw the Greek and foreign archaeologists’ attention” and “stimulate excavations” (Petsas 1979, p.28). He argued that although it was “a Greek ethnic group (*ethnos*) of course” (Petsas 1979, p.27) residing in the mountains of Pindus, its relics nevertheless did not resemble the ones found in places, “such as Attica for example, or, the Aegean islands, or even in less «civilized» regions such as Epirus or Akarnania” (Petsas 1979, p.28). He concluded by noting that archaeologists “in western Macedonia” anticipate to discover “monumental «Macedonian» tombs”, as well as “acropoleis, sanctuaries, public buildings with mosaic or other decorations” (Petsas 1979, p.30).

Once again, accounts such as the above confirm that despite the proclamation of all material past existing within state territorial boundaries (from the smallest artefact to the largest monument) as national property, certain sites represent or are the nation – such as the Acropolis (see Yalouri 2001) or the tomb of Phillip II (see Hamilakis 2003) whilst others are excluded from the national symbolic capital (see Dimitriou 2010, Hamilakis 2006; 2008). As modern critical studies stress (see Hamilakis and Duke 2007; Kokkinidou 2005; Papakontsantinou 2003; Zois 1990) the Archaeological Service embodies a top-down model not only in its bureaucratic structure, but also, in its commanding ideological agenda, which maintains the emphasis on nationalist ideals and in turn, on particular objects and sites. As such, the pursuit of the past's protection remains selective and discriminatory and, accordingly, the national past denotes a select symbolic capital alone. This creates a sort of “Achilles heel” for official archaeological authority, because, although the institution of archaeology carries the exclusive right to physically engage with the past, its mark on the national symbolic capital remains to be accomplished.

Therefore, in order to build the symbolic capital of Kozani, archaeologists first had to find the suitable categories of material past – like the ones described by Petsas – that were capable of embodying the national narrative. Four years after Petsas' speculations, the site on the hill of *Megali Rachi*, or Big Hill was discovered one and a half kilometres north-eastern of the modern town of Aiani. The city lying on that hill was claimed to be the exact location where ancient Aiani had laid, and more importantly, due to its “archaeological wealth” it was eventually identified as *the* Elimeia, the ancient capital of the kingdom of Elimeia or Elimiotis (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1989; 1993; 1996). As the director of excavations said, “[s]uddenly, another dimension of historical truth was revealed and amazed even the most simple of people” (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). The anticipated ‘rich antiquities’ and ‘definite answers’ were finally found:

“We hope that archaeological and historical research will be intensified through the excavation, protection, conservation and promotion of the *rich* antiquities found in the Kozani district and Upper Macedonia in general [...] the archaeological finds (the «voice of the earth») have offered us certain and *definite* answers”.

(Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1993, p.10, emphasis added)



## 5.4 Archaeology in Kozani after 1983<sup>15</sup>

Instigated by the need to deal with certain ‘threats’ that were for long affecting the material past in the region of Kozani, rescue excavations began in 1983. One threatening factor was the Public Electricity Corporation (DEI), whose lignite mining was viewed as the most consistent source of “destruction of archaeology after the 1950s” (L’ EPKA 2004, p.620). The work of DEI was particularly affecting the Ptolemaida basin, where 70-80% of the country’s electrical power was and still is produced. The Ptolemaida plain lies 650-750m above sea level. It is known as the Kitrini Limni (Yellow Lake) because of its marshes which were drained in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Dozens of sites in a dense complex of habitations dating in the Neolithic period were claimed to be imminently threatened. A few years later, the director of the excavations stressed the contribution of archaeology: “Sacred sites, cemeteries, settlements of historic and prehistoric periods and paleontological finds have been wiped out; though thanks to our efforts, since the early 1980s seven prehistoric settlements in the compact group of twenty or more sites on the Lake of Kitrini Limni plain south of Ptolemaida have been saved from the expansion of DEI’s lignite mines” (L’ EPKA 2004, p.620).

Moreover, a further and more recent condition was posing imminent ‘threat’ to the cultural heritage of Kozani. That was the 1973 construction of the Polyphytou artificial lake and dam, operating in the middle reach of the Aliakmon river, affecting mostly the archaeological sites, extending from Aiani to Velvendo (L’ EPKA 2004, p.620). Against these pressures for preservation, the requirement for archaeology’s immediate action was particularly stressed – a plea that would persist for years as the following statement confirms: “What we as an archaeological service must do is protect and save the antiquities by such actions as locating them with systematic surface investigations and trial trenches and excavating with all possible forms of documentation given that we are facing the irreversible loss of the cultural identity of the middle stretch of the Aliakmon, where the Polyphytou dam has already destroyed dozens of archaeological sites” (L’ EPKA 2004, p.620).

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of dates and events mentioned in this section.

Another factor that the Ephor consistently emphasized when defending the urgency of archaeological excavations, was the ‘threat’ to national security (she implicitly refers here to the Macedonian conflict). Consider for example the following:

“The Archaeological Guide to Kozani is making a very timely appearance, since the need for archaeological, historical and national self-knowledge is more acute today than ever before [...] This region is now scientifically and culturally marginalised and isolated due to various wrong-headed ideas and disastrous strategies; a situation which must end as soon as possible with the help of all the citizens, agencies and authorities. Let me say again that we must reconsider and rewrite the history of our region because the archaeological finds (the “voice of the earth”) have offered us certain and definite answers. We must also protect and promote the material remains of what we call ‘our glorious past’, in order to claim our rightful place in the Greek and international cultural community [...] We believe that our region’s history and finds deserve a large new Archaeological Museum, which should be built in the city of Kozani and contain the rich antiquities from all over the Kozani region, with the exception of the Aiani finds. This is a matter of high priority and great national importance”.

(Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1993, pp.10- 11; translation by Karamitrou-Mentesidi)

The emphasis on these ‘threats’ instigates and maintains the need for archaeological interventions (see Chapter 2). Furthermore, the discourse that stresses the threatening potency of political instability (as if the enemy is just round the corner and the threat is imminent) preserves the support and prioritisation of a past that embodies nationalist ideals. With that, it also preserves the hierarchy of symbolic value (emphasis on select notions), which in turn feeds the desire for producing a select, less inclusive symbolic capital. This, as it will be explained later, worked at the expense of sites and objects that remained at the margins of archaeological attention and investment. Although various practical considerations may have been responsible for the exclusion of certain material traces from the symbolic capital (limited time, lack of funds, lack of space, and so on) one could argue that the underlying motive was to maintain the symbolic investment upon specific objects alone; objects that were sacred and fit the nationalist ideals.

It was in this context that systematic, official archaeological research was first conducted in the region of Kozani. A selection of sites – considered to be under imminent threat – became the foci of rescue excavations. The environs of the town of Aiani (situated twenty-three kilometres south of the city of Kozani) was one of the first places to draw immediate attention. Such was the case, not only because Aiani was within the area that

was most affected by the Polyphytos Dam but also because archaeologists were aware of its archaeological 'potential'. Besides, the broader area of Megali Rachi was a declared archaeological site since 1930 (Listed Monuments). Furthermore, a teacher and antiquities' steward named Kostas Siambanopoulos had created a collection of local antiquities (see Siambanopoulos 1995) which included a vast range of archaeological objects. Aside from the archaeological collection, which was comprised mostly of finds that the locals had discovered in their fields, Siambanopoulos had also written a book on the history of Aiani (see Siambanopoulos 1995) where he included information regarding the provenance of all the relics in the collection (302 objects in total). His work was considered to have created an "archaeological consciousness" amongst the local community (Kamariadis 2007, p.42). Archaeologists initially used his book as the region's "archaeological map" (Kamariadis 2007, p.42). It was there that the site of Megali Rachi had first been discussed as a potentially significant archaeological site, and so when the archaeological team arrived in Aiani they knew where to start the excavations from.

Soon after, a series of archaeological discoveries followed, comprised of large architectural remains of buildings and an array of small finds, dating from the Prehistoric to the Late Hellenistic period. Archaeologists were tempted to allege that Megali Rachi was where the city of ancient Aiani laid (IZ' EPKA 1988). Equally appealing seemed the idea that the ancient city of Aiani was the capital of 'the state of Elimians'. Archaeologists worked at the site of Megali Rachi for three succeeding years, whereas in the years between 1985 and 1987 they made two further discoveries. They discovered the Hellenistic cemetery and the royal Necropolis, which revealed chamber-tombs and smaller cist-graves and numerous pit graves dating from the archaic and classical times (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1996). In view of all these discoveries, by the end of the 1980s, the early hunch had become an established fact: the archaeological remains in Aiani belonged not to any ancient city, but to the capital of Elimeia itself (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1996).

Evidently, one of the factors that had instigated archaeological attention towards Kozani was the urgency to preserve a 'threatened' cultural heritage. More importantly however, it was the quality of Kozani's discoveries, which, similarly to those in Vergina, were assumed to evoke immense symbolic and ideological potential, whilst suiting the

contemporaneous political atmosphere that revolved around the ‘Greekness’ of Macedonia. The political scene of the 80s and 90s was after all highly concerned with that matter. In light of this, soon after the discoveries, the finds’ evocation of Hellenism’s unity and continuity found expression in the local and regional press. Consider for example the following:

“Mrs Karamitrou referring to the various movable finds, the objects from the tombs, said that they prove not only the high-cultural standards of the people but also the economic and cultural exchanges and connections that they shared with other ancient populations”.

(Papanaoum 1987)

A further indicative commentary:

“The building structures as well as the movable objects from the cemetery indicate the existence and the prosperity of an organised Greek ancient city with high-cultural standards and direct connection with the rest of Hellenism”.

(Stambolidou 1988)

The culture-history paradigm which clearly underlies these popular accounts did not simply surface in a vacuum but it was strongly advocated in the official archaeological discourse of Kozani’s ephoreia as well (I explore this later). Links were drawn with ‘the rest of Hellenism’ which were often ascribed to the artistic, aesthetic resemblance between the material objects excavated from Aiani, and eminent, celebrated discoveries such as those from Vergina.

“The finds are similar to the ones found in the Archaic tombs of Sindos and the tomb in Vergina that was excavated this year. The conclusions drawn in terms of the remarkable finds from the archaeological sites of Aiani and Upper Macedonia in general, indicate cultural homogeneity given the resemblance in their artistic expression with that of southern Greece”.

(Papanaoum 1988)

In a newspaper article in 1997, Aiani was even alluded to as “[t]he Vergina of Upper Macedonia” (Tiverios 1997). The finds from the sites of Megali Rachi and Necropolis fitted just perfectly the ethnocentric ideological edifice, rendering its power and self-sufficiency even stronger. Unsurprisingly then, in the context of a highly politicised climate in which FYROM claimed the name ‘Macedonia’, the place and ‘symbol’ of

Aiani started to appeal to state interests. Papathemelis, the Minister of Macedonia and Thrace, who, in an archaeological meeting in 1987 had emphasised the political dimension of Vergina's discoveries, only a year later echoed the same political message with regards to Aiani. Here are the two statements about Vergina in 1987 and about Aiani in 1988:

"I need not repeat that we will continue to support your work steadily, both morally and materially. We believe that beyond their value as a means of aesthetic and spiritual culture of our people... [your finds are] the most prestigious interpreter of the essence and the uniqueness of Greek history....We need this historical function of art now more than in any other time in order to answer to the attempted, on an international scale, falsification of our history".

(Papathemelis 1987, p.xvi cited Kotsakis 1998, p.53; translation by Kotsakis 1998)

"A unique emotion is evoked from the discoveries in Aiani. They are a treasure of an unparalleled artistic concept and creation, prior to the early Macedonian Hellenism of Phillip and Alexander. They are linked with the cultural features of the rest of Hellenism. The history of ancient Greece is inevitably rewritten and restored"

(Papathemelis cited Papanou 1988)

Clearly, the discoveries suited the dominant nationalist ideals. The creation of Kozani's symbolic capital, however, required more than a mere discovery of suitable objects. It required interventions that would incorporate the nationalist ideals by inscribing them into the antiquities. It is these interventions and their implications that I explore in the following section.

#### ***5.4.1 Excavations, the museum and the Ephoreia***

Archaeological discoveries multiplied by the year. Reports and interpretations of the discoveries were disseminated in archaeological bulletins (IZ' EKPA 1988; 1989; 1990; 1993; 1998; 1999), archaeological guides (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1989; 1993; 1996) and books (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1999). The years following 2000 were the busiest and the most economically prosperous for the ephoreia (three popular sites are depicted in Figure 5.5). From the years between 2005 and 2007 rescue excavations were conducted in twelve archaeological sites, covering lands of thousands of square metres in total (Figures 5.6-5.8). At the time, more than four hundred staff members were hired by the ephoreia, out of whom, only two archaeologists besides the director (archaeologists Ziota

and Hondrogianni-Metoki) possessed permanent positions (Kamariadis 2007, p.43). In 2008, the number of rescue excavations undertaken had reached the unprecedented number of twenty-one, employing around six hundred people this time (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2009). The following year, the Ephor stated that not even she “could have imagined that in 2009 there would be *seven hundred and fifty-eight people* distributed amongst thirteen main archaeological sites, simultaneously conducting fieldwork for more than eight and a half months” (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2009, emphasis added). In total, more than three hundred archaeological sites have been identified by the archaeological ephoreia (L’ EPKA 2005).



**Figure 5.5** Locations of Mavropigi, Kleitos, Polymylos in Kozani (Google Maps Engine 2014d).





**Figure 5.6** Rescue excavations at Kleitos, Kozani (Municipality of Kozani 2014).



**Figure 5.7** Rescue excavations at Mavropigi, Kozani (Mimis 2011).



**Figure 5.8** Rescue excavations at Polymylos, Kozani (Egnatia Odos 2014).

Given “the archaeological wealth” of Aiani, the construction of its museum began in 1992. Today the museum is housed in a two-storey building of a total surface area of 4,500 square metres. Besides the exhibition rooms, it consists of conservation laboratories for metal and terracotta objects, offices, a library, a drawing studio, a multi-purpose exhibition/lecture hall, and a guesthouse. The museum was nominated for the award of the European Museum of the Year 2011.<sup>16</sup>

The director of all excavations in Kozani – who later became the director of the ephoreia established in Aiani – was initially working for the IZ’ EPKA, namely, the 17<sup>th</sup> centre of Prehistoric and Classical Archaeology based in Edessa, which was the ephoreia that had also been undertaking excavations in the acclaimed sites of Vergina since the late 1970s. As part of the re-organisation of the Archaeological Service, the L’ EPKA (30<sup>th</sup> EPKA)

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<sup>16</sup> The European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA) was established in 1977 and on its webpage it is described as the “most prestigious of its kind in Europe”. Each year it is presented by the European Museum Forum, under the Council of Europe (European Museum Forum 2012a). In 2011 it was awarded to the Gallo-Roman Museum in Tongeren, Belgium (European Museum Forum 2012b).



was officially established in 2004. Today it is responsible for the archaeological heritage of the prefectures of Kozani and Grevena.

#### **5.4.2 The construction of Aiani's symbolic capital: the concepts**

The archaeological interventions which were pursued alluded to Hellenism's antiquity, homogeneity, rootedness and golden age, ideas which were discussed prominently in the ephoreia's publications and presentations, and they were also materially represented in the context of Aiani's museum. In this section, I reflect on the written discourse that the ephoreia regularly produced and disseminated over the past two decades (for the full article on which the following discussion is based see Appendix 2).

While recent historical and archaeological scholarship has amply shown that inscriptions or numismatic evidence rarely add to the knowledge about Macedonian or ethnic identity in general (Dahmen 2010; Rhodes 2010), the Ephor often insisted upon the significance of epigraphic evidence as the ultimate representation of historical facts, especially with regards to the 'national' identity of people during ancient times.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, passages in the works of ancient writers (i.e. Herodotus, Hesiod, Hellanicus) concerning tribal origins or genealogies of kings were conceived as reflections of objective historical events, and were interpreted as accounts for peoples' genuine migrations, or kinships royal members. The content of the inscribed text, namely, place-names, personal names, administrative arrangements, but also the Greek alphabet and language itself comprised the "tangible testimonies" to the 'national' identity of Macedonians (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1993). They were taken as absolute and objective evidence for the 'national' homogeneity that characterised the people whom the inscriptions referred to.

As such, this approach disregarded recent observations that the constructions of cultural or ethnic identity were highly complex and evolving phenomena in antiquity, conditional

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<sup>17</sup> Translations of archaeological writings in English by the L' EPKA use the word 'national' (instead of ethnic for example) for the translation of the Greek term *ethnikos*. It should be noted that I found this confusing because, even though the term 'national' denotes a modern construct, it is used by the L' EPKA to refer to and describe circumstances in antiquity (see Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1993, pp.34-35). Also, the L' EPKA uses the term 'nation' (instead of ethnic community) for the translation of the Greek word *ethnos* (ibid.).

on political ascriptions to city-states, tribal affiliations, linguistic and ancestral differences (for an overview see Anson 2010). Instead, what was dominantly adhered by the Ephor was the idea that a panhellenic ‘national’ identity existed, and it remained constant and homogeneous, from the Dorians’ descent in the second millennium BC until the Roman times. Poignantly, what could have been in antiquity a sign of tribal or ethnic diversity or local culture, immediately became a regional variation within a culturally united community, the shared ‘national’ consciousness of which was assumed as certain and definite. This confirms what ethnography observes with regards to the construction of national identity today: that blanket amalgamation of ethnic differences transforms local and diverse identities, and replaces them with a “newly created and propagated national consciousness” (Karakasidou 1993, p.4).

Ultimately, even though epigraphic evidence is best regarded in conjunction with other archaeological evidence, according to Kozani’s ephoreia it was considered – alongside classical texts – as a distinct material culture that ‘spoke’ enough facts on its own. ‘National’ identity and common descent – the ultimate historical ‘facts’ – were believed to be the basis of common culture. The use of the culture-history approach was dominant, an approach which described how the “koine” (common) culture and by extension, common ‘nationality’ and descent were all manifested today through ancient remains. The culture-history approach was a system of thought, partly derived from nationalist modes of understanding, and from the widespread conflation of language and culture with ethnicity, and later with race (see Diaz-Andreu 1996; Hall 1997, pp.1-16). According to culture-history, material culture was assumed to express a pre-existing linguistic formation and civilisation (Morris 2010). In archaeology, this approach has found expression in the identification of archaeological assemblages to homogeneous ‘cultures’. A site therefore that contains assemblages of recurring features (be they funerary monuments, domestic buildings, ceramic forms, decoration, etc.) is equated with a bounded homogeneous culture, and then, it is correlated with particular peoples, ethnic groups, tribes or races (Jones 1996; 1997)

In Kozani, the ephoreia’s accounts were dominantly written from a culture-history approach, despite scholarly reservations and arguments against it (see Asivartham 2010; Engels 2010; Hall 1997; 2002; Jones 1997). Observations about equations of groups of material objects with (racially and nationally homogeneous) people were not only

dominant, but baldly self-evident. Most prominent was the discussion about ‘matt-painted pottery’, which – always according to the Ephor – was believed to materially express a single cultural, tribal and concurrently ‘national’ identity for those who had ‘carried’ it – namely, the ‘Dorians’ or ‘Macedonians’ (see also Iordanidis et al. 2007). As such, locations of recurring assemblages of objects were taken to indicate settlements or movements of people.

To sum up, the ephoreia employed the epigraphic and literary evidence in order to corroborate the veracity of settlements, momentous events, kingdoms, kinships of tribes and kings. It used the culture history-approach to suggest that the homogeneity and continuity of material culture reflected the homogeneity and continuity of the ‘national’ identity existent in antiquity. Besides boasting a culturally and ‘nationally’ homogeneous past, the ephoreia also corroborated the link between the modern nation and this glorified past. It often referred to the continuity of a selection of cultural features from antiquity to modern day, such as the Greek alphabet and language, place-names, or even, practices such as migration. One example of this is the comparison that the ephoreia would draw between the migrations of ancient Macedonians and the movements of the *Sarakatsani* or *Vlach* nomads, who grazed their flocks across Macedonia in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> c. (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1993).

#### ***5.4.3 The construction of Aiani’s symbolic capital: the museum***

The nationalist ideology that permeated the value of antiquity, affected the morphology of Kozani’s symbolic capital by limiting it to select concepts and select material forms. As such, even though thousands of objects had been archaeologically excavated from across the region of Kozani, attention was mainly invested upon artefacts from the sites of Aiani, dated to particular historical periods and indicated high aesthetic/technological quality. Aiani’s museum facilitated this selection of concepts and materiality, as one of its official websites indicates:

“[the museum] presents the history of ancient Aiani capital of Elimiotis, one of the most important kingdoms of Upper Macedonia, and its region from prehistory to Roman times. The museum’s collections include important finds of the Late Bronze Age (fifteenth-twelfth centuries BC) and the of the Archaic and Classical periods (sixth-fifth centuries BC), which illustrate the formation

of the Doric-Macedonian peoples in the region and the urban and political development of Aiani, which begins in the sixth century BC”.

(Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2007)

Features such as the out-of-context display of objects, accentuated a self-evident uniqueness and artistic significance. Consider for example the following:

“The decision to place the marble statue of Nike in a freestanding case immediately visible from the entrance to the room was dictated by the beauty of the find, which dates from the Classical era and once served as an acroterion on one of the city’s buildings”.

(Museum of Aiani 2009)

In this way exhibitions detached the object from its context in time and in space and offered it to the visitor as objectified value (Mouliou 1994). The emphasis on the aesthetics of the objects evoked a sense of timelessness and indisputable status. Exhibitions of this type, as Pearce (1990: 157) observed, are premised on the idea that objects embody a particular kind of symbolic power with universal aesthetic appeal, which is why this is offered to the visitor not as an interpretation but as a “matter of faith”. It is as if the symbolic quality of antiquities as national emblems is a given, so no further interpretation is required. Objects’ display as self-evident and their presentation as the “historical discourse” (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2008) requiring no further interpretation, evokes Hamilakis’ (2007a, pp. 79, 122) insights: it was exactly the materiality and the physicality of antiquities, their tangible nature and aura of authenticity which endowed them with enormous symbolic power and elevated them to the status of “material truths” of the nation.

The emphasis on select material forms for the purposes of the symbolic capital’s construction has had an immense impact upon peoples’ conception of the value of the past. Karamitrou-Mentesidi (personal communication, 2007) gave an evocative illustration of this, centred on the discovery and excavation of the marble lion from Aiani’s necropolis.

[the lion] is not very big. But it is a lion! Made of marble. It is a statue. Later [that day] we also found more statues. The *kore* and the *kouro*; his legs that is. But from the lion, it was only its front legs missing. It was almost intact, whole, and it was not some golden, or terracotta vessel broken into pieces. It was a lion! And they were shouting ‘The lion has come to Aiani! The lion of Aiani!

The lion! The lion!’ I never told them to put in the truck. But we had to put it somewhere in order to move it [...] And of course, they had to take it for a ride (*volta*)! It was to be expected.

(Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007)

After the lion was excavated (Figure 5.9), a worker from the excavation placed it on the open trunk of a truck, which he then drove repeatedly around Aiani’s central square. The exact same ride was repeated when the ephoreia had to return the statue from the ephoreia’s premises to the archaeological site for the purposes of a documentary. Interestingly, the Ephor (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007) recalled whilst laughing that “locals showed the same excitement!” even though “it didn’t seem to matter to anyone whether the lion was new or old”.



**Figure 5.9** The marble lion of Aiani, 5th century BC (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2008, p.64).

This incident illustrates the power and impact of the symbolic capital, which explains why the unawareness of the lion’s antiquity was treated as an amusing (rather than problematic) issue. To my understanding, it reflected that one crucial mission of archaeology was accomplished: in the view of a lion, people spontaneously celebrated its

importance even though they were unaware of its antiquity. They instinctively approved official archaeology's choice of spectacles (especially when these were made of marble), and knew that it belonged to *their* community – it was 'of Aiani'.

Not surprisingly then, this kind of behaviour fit with the official notion of "archaeological consciousness" that the Ephor so insistently pursued and defined as something that one "acquires" when one has been educated to recognise that the objects one discovers inside the earth "are of value" (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007; I explore this further below). Indeed, those who celebrated about the lion did so because they possessed this sense of 'archaeological consciousness'. Yet, a question remained: how was it created? Archaeological interventions, such as excavating, distinguishing/classifying and exhibiting select objects, have the power to determine and establish what is and should be valued in the past. But I needed to explore in what ways such value was incorporated into people's behaviour towards the past.

#### ***5.4.4 Constructing the conscious response towards the past***

So far I have discussed the basic elements of the symbolic capital: its materiality and its discourse. However, the inscription of the symbolic capital into people's imagination required embodied and interactive engagements with, if not the material past itself, at least with the notion of an authentic past. One of the ways in which the ephoreia articulated such kind of engagement was through a series of educational and cultural events, which were aimed at both adults and children and pursued the embodiment of bodily, sensorial interactions.

The educational course involved oral presentations on the daily diet of the ancient Greeks, the history of foods and local products, and the link between ancient and modern Greek cooking (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2005b; 2005c). In that context, tours were also undertaken within the premises of the museum, where children have a hands-on experience with authentic ancient cooking utensils. A 'cookery' space was particularly designed for the preparation of bread in the 'ancient' manner. Children ground the wheat in a replica of an 'ancient' hand-mill, and cooked it in a replica of an 'ancient' hearth. The aim was to create an embodied and interactive familiarization with the notion of an 'authentic' past. It attempted to awaken the senses and create memories, which,

according to the Ephor, was intended to develop an “archaeological consciousness” (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007):

“It is obvious that the education is inevitably linked to an atmosphere of fun and game. It is particularly asserted that the aim is to awaken the senses in order to establish memories regarding activities that do not occur in modern day and are no-longer that important for modern generations”.

(Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2005c, p.35)

“Practically speaking, in order to promote the educational aspect of archaeological material and in order to transform archaeology from merely being objects of passive observation into an act of education and action, we have to relate data to myths and games. It is vital that we approach history through pleasant and creative experiences [...] This way, our children are able to role-play the life of children in the past, and thus learn history through playing with history”.

(Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2005a, p.6)

Cooking events were also organised for adults, although it was dominantly women who participated. In the dress of traditional costumes, they cooked a vast variety of foods according to ‘ancient’ recipes, which they then provided to all kinds of local and non-local guests, including state-representatives and famous people in a feast-like atmosphere and setting. The act of cooking and eating was, as Hamilakis has argued (2002, p.127) “stored into the body, generating bodily memory, which can be recalled and re-activated by similar experiences and sensory processes”. This kind of education created a ‘sensuous scholarship’ (Stoller 1997) whereby the act of cooking not only educated participants but also provided them with a taste of ‘authentic’ food.

This notion of ‘authentic’ experience of the past, was also promoted in another cultural event, the Sculpture Workshop – Symposium. Participants, who were professional sculptors, were required to create diverse pieces of art, which were eventually kept and exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Aiani. The Symposium’s objective, as it was described on the museum’s webpage, was

“the exploration of all the qualities of the local marbles (Tranovaltos – Kozani) which, as already proved by the scientific research, were used during antiquity for the construction of sculptures” (Museum of Aiani 2009).

A further cultural event organised every summer in Aiani was the “Track of Apollodoros”. It is a running competition for children and adults. Participants are required to follow the path that Apollodoros, an ‘indigenous’ from ancient western Macedonia, had participated in during the Olympic Games. All participants wear particularly designed t-shirts carrying a prominent figure from ancient Aiani (Figure 5.10). Olive branches are given to the winners of the competitions. At the end, speeches are given by the Ephor and representatives of the local/regional administration. The purpose of this event is to raise archaeological and environmental awareness (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2005a).



**Figure 5.10** Terracotta female figure pictured on the t-shirts of the Riding Track competition (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2008, p.74).

Another event was the “Riding Track”, which involves a three-four day horse-riding trip commencing from the Aiani and terminating at Dion, another archaeologically prominent ancient city in Greek Macedonia (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2005a). This event ‘commemorated’ the path that Alexander the Great was believed to have taken with his army from Pelion (Orestiada) to Thebes in 335 B.C. Participants are required to stop at various cities along the way, where local communities await to greet and congratulate them in their arrival. In some cases it has been noted that locals became emotional and cried (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). Olive branches are given to the riders as an indication of their achievement. Here as well, representatives of the



local administration give speeches that welcome the riders and officially express their gratitude for their participation.

#### ***5.4.5 Classifying behaviour towards the past***

The above annual events created the accepted behaviour towards the past, driven by an ‘archaeological consciousness’ that official archaeology insistently promoted. Two of its descriptions are provided below:

I believe that archaeological consciousness is something that is built, learnt; it is a matter of education, which is something that I have done all these years, starting of course with the children. Our practical course, in the form of educational programmes, aims at young people and children, and provides them with an experiential and emotional approach. You must know very well that here we have 15 educational programmes following the motto ‘what one learns when young, he does not forget when old’. You thus develop archaeological awareness in young people and children (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

It is something that one acquires [...] My experience from the villages of Kozani’s prefecture tells me that archaeological consciousness comes from knowledge. With regards to certain social groups, you explain that these objects should not be destroyed and that they could not bring profit to farmers for example, who, plough their fields more than 20-30 cm and pull out arhaia [from the earth] and then have their fields confiscated [by authorities]. Thus, with common sense and basic logic, actions are restrained, antiquities are kept and farmers get to keep their land. But this makes a person immediately feel better, and this we have seen in many villages and in many excavations where they feel that they can personally contribute and learn something new. That is why in some villages where there are antiquities people are relatively informed and they are more aware in comparison to others. This reflects the [archaeological education’s] social impact. Locals in villages that have antiquities feel superior and the neighbouring village feels inferior. Haha! Indeed, indeed, indeed. They say for example ‘you are from Aiani’. We experienced this in the 80s and 90s. ‘You are from Aiani, the place that’s got arhaia’. Of course, there are antiquities in every village [...] (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

Consciousness was also linked to indigeneity; as the Ephor explained:

especially when the locals share a continuity – when they are neither immigrants nor refugees – I assumed that it would have concerned them more deeply to know what their ancestors were doing here (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

However, she was positively surprised when she recognised that refugee communities from the Black Sea, Minor Asia and Thrace

showed the same response [as with the indigenous], as they too embraced antiquities and treated them as their own (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

Concurrently, the Ephor fully subscribed to the idea that both indigenous and refugees share a common national identity:

Greeks have a common national identity because Greek consciousness exists in both refugees and the locals with a continuous presence (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

According to the Ephor, there are also those who do not comply with the accepted behaviour, because they clearly have not felt the past as their own and are driven instead by other motives:

Looting is an illegal practice. Then there are the motives. Looting is the illegal possession of antiquities [...] Looters are the people who purposely, intentionally and consciously acquire antiquities illegally, half of which, they destroy (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

The looter's objective is profit, making money from ancient finds. This is what their practice usually consists of (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

At the same time, however, she argued that those who discover and dig up antiquities are not necessarily the ones who gain the big profits. Those with the big profits comprise an organised network which acts as a mediator between the diggers and the collectors or museums – the final recipients of objects. With regards to those who obtain antiquities but do not sell them (such as the main subjects of this thesis), Karamitrou-Mentesidi (personal communication, 2007) said that

[f]rom the moment that one keeps the antiquities, he pursues an illegal possession. As time passes, he does not reveal the antiquities to anyone, because he will get into trouble considering that he possesses them illegally. Then, this becomes a psychosis [...] The person who buys an antiquity, holds it, tells lies and claims that it was once found in his farming field.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

After many decades of anticipating archaeological investment in the region of Kozani, excavations began in 1983. These were instigated by the 'destruction' that various (ideological and material) threats were causing to its archaeological heritage. The

excavated sites at Aiani yielded objects that were made to embody nationalist ideology in its fullest sense. Specimens of certain golden epochs were instilled with notions regarding the continuity, homogeneity and rootedness of Hellenism. Ultimately, once the suitable kind of material past was discovered in Kozani, archaeologists began shaping the national symbolic capital. This was facilitated by the way in which select objects were discussed in archaeological narratives and displayed in the museum of Aiani.

Simultaneously, the ephoreia invested on creating an ‘archaeological consciousness’ amongst locals, by constructing a particular behaviour towards the past and inscribing a particular symbolic value of antiquity. A series of educational programmes comprised of physical engagements with the notion of ‘authentic’ experiences from the past, educated children and adults that the material past is important because it is part of their national identity, and locality. Those who did not respond to official guidelines and thus physically engaged with the material past ‘illegally’ were conceived as ignorant and dangerous, because they destroyed the past through illegal excavations and illegal possessions of antiquities, either because they were driven by financial profit or because they selfishly retained objects for the purposes of personal consumption.

# CHAPTER 6

## AN ANTAGONISTIC SYMBOLIC CAPITAL

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### 6.1 Introduction

The following chapter is centred on George<sup>18</sup>, a retired architect who is a strong advocate of his indigenous link to the place where he was born, raised and currently resides in. The primary objective is to study his non-professional engagement with the material past of his locality. The fact that such engagement coincided with the establishment of the Archaeological Ephoreia in Kozani in the early 1980s renders George's pursuit a case of confrontation with archaeologists' exclusive right to physically control the past. Simultaneously however, I attempt to explore the deeper implications of this seeming resistance to archaeological authority and try to decipher the inter-relation between his creation of a local symbolic capital with the national symbolic capital of Aiani. The relevance of George's case to the deconstruction of looting lies in its capacity to demonstrate that even though official archaeological discourse exclusively controls, constructs and disseminates a very particular value and form of antiquity, it may instigate antagonistic formations of symbolic capital, which, paradoxically, can share fundamental ideological and practical dimensions with.

### 6.2 The 'looter', the archaeologists, and I

George was born in 1944 in the rural town of V. V. lies east of the city of Kozani and used to be the capital of its homonym municipality, until the reformation of the administrative division of Kozani in 2010 (see Chapter 4). George left Kozani for the first time when he went to the city of Thessaloniki to study architecture in the Aristoteleion University. Afterwards, he spent a year in Athens, because he wanted to "get away" from his hometown. In the meantime, he travelled extensively across Greece

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<sup>18</sup> George is a code name used for the protection of the participant's anonymity.

and the Balkans, Russia, and Turkey, where he was drawn more by “the archaeological things of those places rather than their architecture”. He anticipated getting a job in public service. On his return to western Greece, he was first allocated a job in Kastoria, and then in Kozani, where he worked as an architect for the district offices until he retired.

George was entering his forties when, for the first time, he discovered what lay across the landscape of his hometown. In his own words, he “had no clue” about the existence of ruins, until as he said “an inscription fell into my hands, an ancient one”. At the time, George was experiencing a lack of fulfilment in his day-to-day work, which, following this chance discovery, influenced his decision to establish a regular interaction with the material past. As he wrote in a letter he sent to the Minister of Culture in July 1992,

“I declare that before my engagement with the archaeology [...] and history (*istoria*) of our land (*tou topou mas*) I went through a period of self-reflection (*syneidisiakos provlimatisnos*). I am an architect working as a civil servant in the district offices of Kozani and my decision for such action was decisively encouraged by associates who view it as a duty (*kathikon*). I studied architecture in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Thirteen years ago, I got a job as a civil servant in urban-planning in Kozani, and initially, in order to deal with the tediousness (*plixi*) of rural life I engaged with the history and, within the confines of law, the archaeology of my region”.

As he further explained to me once:

To tell you the honest truth, I will confess to you something. When I studied at the University, I was devoted, and studied incredible things in architecture. And when I finished and got a job, I dealt with dreary tasks that had nothing to do with the things I had studied at university. And what did I do? My main job – amongst others – was concerned with legislation, which was a dreary task (*typhlosourtis*)! I was given house-plans and checked whether they were legal, whether there was any corner missing, whether it was too narrow or too wide according to the legislation. That was my job. It was a routine.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

So he said that time, whilst emphasizing however that:

I did not get disappointed. I did the job, but it was a routine. I always did it. I was punctual. I was not negligent of my duties. But because it was a routine, I found a way out. And so I studied archaeology and history on my own – both at the same time – more than I had studied

architecture. In fact, I would go on trips to Athens and Thessaloniki. I went a lot to Thessaloniki. I went to the library and collected bibliography. But I also went to Athens, to the National Hellenic Research Foundation, to inquire about particular questions [...] and somewhat later, I began searching for ancient things (*arhaia*). I had free time during my afternoons at first. I dug in fact.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

Later on, he provided details as to what kind of digging he was referring to:

Mind you, I dug but it was not excavations what I was doing [...] They were building an irrigation-system across half of the lowlands region of V. And they dug channels, very wide ones, and removed the soil from there [...] I don't know now when that was. But they would remove the soil from there and would place pipes in its place. And amongst that soil I would see two-three pieces of *arhaia*. So I bought a hoe (*tsapa*), and let's say, I would pass by and comb the entire soil and gather all these small pieces; I glued them together and I made entire pots. I have a few pots; pots that had been put together piece by piece [...] Mind you, this thing is not excavation. The soil that was removed from there was debris (*baza*).

(George, personal communication, 2007)

During that conversation he stressed the following whilst pointing towards the centre of the café area where we sat,

I could have brought that debris in here and search into it. That wouldn't have been an excavation! Excavation is to dig inside the earth. That I did not do.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

When George started exploring the archaeological landscape of V., large-scale public works were indeed affecting the whole municipality. They had commenced in 1970 with the construction of a dam, which, when completed in 1975, transformed a section of the Aliakmon river into an artificial lake. At the same time, a hydroelectric station was constructed at the lake. In addition, an underground irrigation-system started to be constructed for the irrigation requirements of surrounding agricultural land, known for its production of beans and peaches. An agricultural cooperative organisation named the Water Network Local Organization (*Topikos Organismos Engeion Veltioseon*) under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture has managed the irrigation-system's construction since the 1970s. It was still in progress when I conducted my ethnography.

In addition, a significant cultural development took place in V in the late 1970s. The Reformative Club (*anamorphotikos omilos*) of V., which had first been established in 1930, was re-launched as a Cultural Club (*morphotikos omilos*) and then founded its collection of folkloric objects. Today, the collection is displayed in the Folkloric Museum of V., inside a neoclassical building in the town centre. As for the Cultural Club, it oversees the public library, the publication of a local newspaper, and manages the local theatrical group, band and athletic club. Furthermore, it organises numerous cultural festivities and focuses on the development of tourism in V., promoting its cultural and natural heritage. George was a member of the Cultural Club when he commenced his digging and collecting of antiquities in the early 1980s, a fact to which he often points out when referring to the socio-temporal framework of his actions.

However, neither the act of digging on behalf of a community organisation, nor its claimed distinction from excavation in the context of the area's industrial development was of any consequence to archaeologists' assessment of the matter. They considered George's actions to be illegal excavations and, even though George had never sold the objects he dug for, archaeologists interpreted his actions as looting (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). In fact, the first time I heard about George was from Karamitrou-Mentesidi, the former Ephor of the L' EPK A at the time of my ethnography. She had first dealt with his 'illegal' excavations in the beginning of the 1980s, whilst directing systematic archaeological excavations in the prefecture of Kozani under the employment of the IZ' EPKA in Edessa.

The archival resources of the L' EPKA included information concerning this matter. Two files, which I was allowed to examine, contained newspaper articles about looting, alongside one folder which was exclusively concerned with George's case. That included photographs of 'illicit' antiquities and a number of his articles that had been published in the local press, as well as the letter that George had sent to the Minister of Culture (part of which was quoted earlier). Additionally, it included correspondence in the form of four letters, sent between 1986 and 1992 from the IZ' EPKA to the Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, the Museums Department (Ministry of Culture) and the District Attorney of Misdemeanour Courts in Kozani. They all appealed for the termination of George's activities. As I was later told by the Ephor, criminal proceedings were brought against George after the ephoreia made allegations that George had

conducted illegal excavation and unauthorised collecting of antiquities (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). Just to give an idea of how these appeals were articulated, here are two excerpts from the letters:

“[...] extensive collection of ancient finds, resulting from excavations of designated archaeological sites at V., in violation of the articles 5 and 46 of the Archaeological Law K.N.5351/32. He has placed the objects in a store-room inside the centre of the Cultural Club of V., in an attempt to establish an archaeological collection, for which however, he did not have the official authorization by the Ministry of Culture [...] It should be noted that he alone holds the keys to the store-room, and his manner towards the employees of the Archaeological Service is hostile and threatening. In light of the above, we are appealing for your immediate actions, so that the collected antiquities are confiscated, considering that the actions of Mr George, and in particular, his excavating for collecting antiquities – bibelot collecting – lead to the total destruction and extinction of historical information, which can only be gained through systematic archaeological research. Lastly, we note that his behaviour can possibly generate imitators, considering that he presents himself as a friend of archaeology [archaeophile], which may mislead further residents of V”.

(IZ' EPKA, no date).

“[...] Just because members of the Cultural Club of V., inspired by sterile parochialism, attempt to substitute the archaeological service in areas that by law are under the service's jurisdiction, and under the lead of Mr George create an array of problems to the task of the Ephoreia, we plead that you take immediate action in order to end this disgraceful situation and pursue the confiscation of antiquities, because they were not registered with the official authority”.

(IZ' EPKA, March 1986)

The dating of the letters (1986 - 1992) shows that the archaeologists' allegations began only three years after systematic archaeological excavations started in the prefecture of Kozani. As shown in the first excerpt, the administration of the archaeological team referring to the archaeological law K.N.5351/32, argued that George had failed to register to the nearest archaeological authority the antiquities he had found and held (article 5) and he was, therefore, considered to have conducted illegal excavations, for which he should be penalized (article 46). Eventually, George was taken to court (George, personal communication, 2007). Important to note is that no relevant court-records exist, since all municipal court-records from 1988 to 1994 were lost in a fire. In the end, George was found innocent (George, personal communication, 2007), which



was also confirmed by the former Ephor in Kozani (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). What all this resulted in can be demonstrated from an official document by the Ministry of Culture:

“On 22 June in 1993, the Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (Department of Museums) awarded the Cultural Club of V. the licence to hold (*horigisi adeias katohis arhaion*) the antiquities George had collected on its behalf. According to the official record of this award, the antiquities would remain under the supervision of the IZ’ EPKA, which, together with the local council, would stipulate the terms for the antiquities’ preservation, safety and manner of display. According to the archaeological law that was in effect at the time (article 12 of law K.N. 5351/32 “peri arhaiotiton”), the Cultural Club of V. was obliged to comply with the above terms. It was also obliged to report to the Ephoreia any case of transmission of holder’s rights to another party (article 13), as well as any case of undertaking of photography (article 27), creation of replicas (article 28) or displacement (article 33) of the antiquities it held”.

(Dimopoulos 1998, p.189)

The Cultural Club of V. emphasised the value of such achievement, as it stated on its official website the following:

“The Cultural Club of V. is one of the few Greek Bodies that has an archaeological collection recognised by the Ministry of Culture. The collection includes prehistoric and historic (classical, Hellenistic and Byzantine) artefacts found in the greater area around V. For the time being, the collection is not open to the public, but it is to be placed in the Archaeological - Byzantine Museum which is currently being restored”.

(Municipality of V. 2007a)

### **6.2.1 The choice to do ethnography on George**

Prior to the Cultural Club’s official status as the legal holder of antiquities, the IZ’ EPKA in Edessa maintained that George’s excavations and collecting were illegal activities that impinged on archaeological authority and practice. To reiterate, the administration of the archaeological team saw a “sterile parochialism” that attempted to “substitute” official archaeology. It viewed George’s activities as a “disgrace” and highly dangerous for producing “imitators”, that, as it was stated in another letter, “pose danger” to “our national issues” (IZ’ EPKA, September 1992). Yet, even after the Cultural Club’s designation as the legal holder, the same opinion remained amongst the administration of the L’ EPKA in Kozani when I conducted my ethnography. George was said to be *the*

exemplar of a looter, even though he had been found innocent by the court of law (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). In fact, the Ephor asserted to me that the only reason for which he had been ‘excused’ for his actions was because of some mental illness (manic depressive psychosis) which he had pretended to have (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007).

This was the official perspective towards his engagement with the material past and needless to say, it was the only outlook I had been exposed to prior to meeting George. On the other hand, I felt a strong urge to approach George and engage with his thoughts and experiences for the purposes of my ethnography. According to the material collected from documents from the L’ EPKA, there was no indication that George had sold or intended to sell the objects he had dug. Instead, it seemed that the antiquities he was collecting were kept in a room inside the communal cultural centre of V., where they still remain until they are transferred to the museum. Secondly, according to George’s articles, it appeared that he had produced and disseminated his own interpretations regarding the material remains he collected. As such, I wondered: could he have been a case of resistance against the discourse of official archaeology? Lastly, insofar as the alleged mental illness was concerned, initially it raised some methodological and ethical concerns: how do I discern the ‘genuineness’ of his mental illness? How do I approach a psychological state in a socio-cultural research? Do I tell George that I was told of such assessment?

Eventually, I recognised that neither I nor the Ephor of the L’ EPKA could ever assess the genuineness of George’s psychological issue, or the extent of its implication in his engagement with antiquities. Furthermore, I realised that my knowledge of a participant’s potential association with some form of mental illness did not require that my general attitude and questions are any different from the ones I had hitherto posed to other participants. As such, the most appropriate step at the time was first to meet him, and see *if* and how *he* discusses the connection between his psychological state and his engagement with the past.

And so I did, although at first I was slightly reluctant to call, as I had been told that George refused to meet archaeologists (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). Decisive however were the words of someone who knew George, telling me that he was an approachable person and that he would talk about the archaeological collection

of V., as long as I mentioned that I am *not* an archaeologist working in Aiani. So, when I called, I introduced myself, whilst particularly emphasising my link to the village of Xirolimni and thus my ‘local’ identity (see Chapter 3). I then said that I was a researcher in archaeology in England (a long way off Aiani I thought!).

He enquired about the reason for my call. I explained that I was interested in public archaeology; that the purpose of my research was concerned with locals’ relationship with the ancient past and archaeology. And then I added that I was particularly keen to meet him because he had established an archaeological collection in his village. Up to that point I knew that I was talking in a monologue, nonetheless I was reluctant to pause. I was nervous about his reaction, and I wanted to demonstrate that I had no intention to be critical toward his engagement with the material past. He then proposed that we meet one afternoon in the local café of the local cultural centre for our first meeting. The small objects of the collection were temporarily kept in the store-room of the centre, whereas the larger objects were kept at the backyard of the local school.



**Figure 6.1** George pointing and explaining objects at the backyard of the school  
(photo by author).

When I met George, he seemed like a very private, yet gentle, person. That afternoon, the closest I managed to get to a conversation on psychological states, was when, as iterated at the outset of this chapter, he confided that his engagement with antiquities was a response to the “dullness” of an unfulfilling job. The topics George focused upon instead, were, the form and implications of that response, alongside his thoughts and experiences regarding state archaeology and his conflict with it. Depression was not discussed during that afternoon, or in any of our subsequent meetings (Figure 6.1).

### 6.3 George taking archaeology into his hands

George’s physical exploration of the material past started taking place in the early 1980s, or as George generically put it, “Everything I did took place in my forties”, which was the most specific he ever was about points in time. Whenever I asked for more detailed time references (e.g. when did you start digging? when did the conflict with archaeology take place?) he normally responded,

It is all written down. I do not remember now. It is all written in the other book with all the archaeological finds (*arhaiologika evrimata*). It has the date of the very first archaeological find and the last.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

This ‘other book’, which looked like a large photo album, was a logbook where George had handwritten information on every find or group finds (e.g. coins, pottery) included in the collection. The objects were retrieved from various locations across the municipality of V.; most of them had been collected by George himself and the rest had been handed over to him by fellow villagers. According to this logbook, the collecting of antiquities was noted to have started in 1983 and went on until 1999, with some sporadic entries during the 2000s. Each page was divided into different columns that included different kinds of information. The first one marked the numbering of the finds (1 to 167), and then followed a column that included a photo of the find with a brief description and the date it was found by George or was handed over to him by fellow locals. Another column included an interpretation of the find’s function, a further one was where the place of

discovery was noted – usually involving a landowner's name. Another one included the name of the person handing the find over and the last one included general comments.

I only examined the logbook once, when I met George for the first time. I remember that during our whole conversation, rather than resting it on the table, he held it on his lap except for the time I viewed it, during which he seemed anxious for its return. Maybe this had all been part of the awkwardness of the first meeting (or was part of George's suspicion over my intentions?). In any case, I did not want to spoil the promising start of our relationship, despite this understated, yet typical for first-time-meeting, awkwardness. Thus I did not ask to see the logbook again, and neither did George bring it back to any of our subsequent meetings.

Luckily for me, this was not the only place where his narratives had been written. George wrote several newspaper articles published in the local newspapers of V. and Kozani between the years of 1986 and 1989<sup>19</sup> and, most importantly, wrote a book, which was published in 1995.

The extent of George's engagement with the past was evident: field-walking, digging and collecting, as well as researching and producing interpretations. Of course, had George engaged only in the last two, archaeologists' response would have been more lenient. George was well aware of that; in his own words:

You see...She [i.e. Karamitrou-Mentesidi] explained to me that I can write as many books as I want, but I should not dare create an archaeological collection [...] But I wanted to create an archaeological collection. I wanted to create an archaeological collection! And although she sent me to court three times, I won and the collection stayed here.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

George was clearly aware that it was the *physical* dimension of his engagement with the material past, with the objects, that was considered problematical and overstepping for archaeologists. Yet, these words also showed that archaeologists' warning failed to compromise his desire to pursue the creation of a collection. As such, and as paradoxical

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<sup>19</sup> Both newspapers cover issues concerned with culture, entertainment, politics, and local news. The first (1964- ) is a monthly newspaper and the second (1980- ) appears daily. Both newspapers have hundreds of subscribers in and outside Greece.

as it may have seemed coming from a person concerned with legislative compliance during his entire career, George defended something that he ‘wanted’, for which he was not legally entitled to do. Here one may argue that such desire was facilitated by the sense of ownership that he felt - as a local - over the land of his village. Consider for example the following:

I worked for this land (*topo*) here at the same time as Karamitrou did. Till then and right when I started, she had been in Edessa. And I brought her here. My work instigated the establishment of the Ephoreia in Kozani. These people thought ‘Look! Ordinary (*aplos*) local (*dopios*) people took archaeology in their hands! We have to create an Archaeological Ephoreia there’.

*So when you started, there was no Ephoreia in Kozani, but one in Edessa?*

(George nodded his head in agreement)

*When you started finding objects, did you inform the Ephoreia?*

Certainly. I went to Edessa and I found her [Karamitrou-Mentesidi]. And she treated me...err...with absolute arrogance. It was as if she thought “Who are you to be engaging [with antiquities] in my place (*topo mou*)?” Yet I did engage in it. And I went three times to court for that.

*But what saved you was the fact that you had not done excavations?*

I said all this at court. But she thought I will exhaust (*kouraso*) him, but she didn’t. And so another court, and another.

*But because the finds had come from the debris, it was shown that you had not excavated?*

You could take this debris and bring it here and dig inside it in here. You do not dig inside the earth in that case. To excavate means to dig inside the earth!

(George, personal communication, 2007)

One point that emerged from the above conversation was George’s contention that he had attempted a lawful way to pursue digging and collecting by notifying the authorities. Such point was frequently mentioned, and it was stated in the letter George sent to the Minister of Culture (see Appendix 3). Furthermore, George once again insisted that he had not acted against the law, by reiterating the distinction between digging ‘in the debris’ and excavating ‘inside the earth’. Aside from these two points however, George evoked a crucial aspect behind his actions: the presentation of himself as one of the

‘local’ and ‘ordinary’ people taking archaeology into ‘their hands’. Such wording reflects here an underlying sense of ownership, one that springs from a powerful sense of locality that grounded in the belief that a continuous, unspoiled and indigenous identity exists.

For George, the land, and with it, the archaeology of V. belonged to his ancestors. He once said whilst pointing towards a picture of an ancient pot he had unearthed, “our grandfathers used to drink from this cup”. Such conviction aligns with the observation made by anthropologist Lucy Rushton (1983, p.34) that in the community of V. there was a strong notion of an unspoiled Greekness since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As she noted, this notion had been accentuated by the fact that demographic changes in V. were not significant, in contrast with other villages in Kozani where the influx of refugees construed almost a complete replacement of population. Education and cultural clubs in V. fuelled the urge to preserve the past and to participate fully in the activities of the national culture.

Vasilis Dimopoulos (1998, p.156), a teacher in V., whilst attesting to the significance of such cultural committees, asserted that

“[t]he nation creates – via institutions of education and the church, etc. – cosmopolitan Neohellenes, who despite their loyalty to the Greek cultural values, are open to new experiences of modern life. The knowledge, the preservation and the cultivation of our cultural values and cultural heritage, are not only necessary but obligatory, if we want to stay Greek in this multi-ethnic society we live in”.

George was a member of the cultural Club and he felt a strong connection to the land of V., which, due to its community’s perceived historical continuity, homogeneity and indigeneity, rendered the notion of ownership significant. One may argue that the acts of digging and collecting were the physical expressions of that connection with the place and the land, which brings to mind Connerton’s (2009, p. 32) thoughts: “[t]he concept that a person has of an urban artefact will always differ from the concept of someone who ‘lives’ that same urban artefact. For there is a type of experience recognisable only to those who have walked through particular building or street or district. Only they have lived it. To ‘live’ an artefact is to appropriate it, to make it one’s own. This does not mean, of course, that it becomes one’s own possession, one’s property, but that one makes it one’s own by making it one with, ingredient in, one’s continuing life”.

Accordingly, if George was not to be allowed his way around, it would cause a defamiliarisation that would shake his being.

However, that still leaves unexplained the defensive, coercive undertone in George's reference to those acts as 'local people taking archaeology into their hands': local people instead of whom? State archaeology? If state archaeology cared for the stewardship of the past, why did George take 'archaeological' matters in his hands? One could argue that the words 'locals taking archaeology into their hands' resonate a tension between the local (e.g. locals, local past) and the national level (state archaeology, national symbolic capital). Let's see what his perceptions of state archaeology and his own archaeology have to suggest about this resonance.

#### **6.4 George on official state archaeology**

As it was explained in Chapter 5, in the prefecture of Kozani before the 1980s, the protection and collecting of antiquities were undertaken by local intellectuals, most commonly teachers and librarians who systematically 'cared' for the stewardship of antiquities. Some were assigned the official role of Stewards of Antiquities and stored collections of local finds in school premises or local community centres (Siambanopoulos 1993; Skouteri 2004), while archaeological investigations were generally scarce and unsystematic. After 1983 however, modern systematic archaeological excavations began in the municipality of Kozani, and significant discoveries were being made whilst the site of *Megali Rachi* in Aiani was on its way of becoming identified with ancient Elimeia. These sudden and intense archaeological developments in the region of Kozani and the imminent establishment of a museum and Ephoreia in the area signalled that the material past's official protection was becoming systematic and selective.

Whilst George recognised and internalised all these developments, he concurrently persisted in his desire to "contribute to my land (*topo mou*)", as he claimed, even though 'local' and 'ordinary' peoples' encounters with the material past were not allowed outside state archaeology's oversight. He mentioned to me once that state archaeology wanted to "stop the very source of this activity" when he was persecuted for alleged illegal activities, "so that this project does not prove greater than that of the



archaeological service”. He believed that such was the case, because his project had been “an autonomous job” within a region where “only the archaeological service is allowed to undertake such jobs”. In the end, as he said, “Gods and demons went after me but I pursued my work with great enthusiasm”. And although, he “wanted collaboration” with archaeologists and “did go” to them, it was “they” who “did not want any”.

Evidently, these words reflect George’s impression of state archaeology as being selfish and exclusionary, which was also echoed in a comment written in his logbook, saying: “Karamitrou took (*pire*) the coins”. The place where his opinion regarding state archaeology in Kozani was best articulated was in a letter George sent to the Minister of Culture in 1992 (see Appendix 3). Its main point was to assert the “deceit” that the archaeological Ephoreia had at the time committed in Kozani. Starting with the claim that neither he, nor Siambanopoulos, the former Steward of Antiquities in Aiani (see Chapter 5), had ever discovered decorated vessels, he stressed that the objects that are supposedly being discovered through archaeological excavations in Aiani were brought from other prefectures, such as Pieria, Imathia and Pella. To his understanding, the factor that underlay such deception was the economic and touristic elevation of the single region of Aiani at the expense of other archaeological sites. In light of this deceit and the subsequent “publicity” that Aiani gained, he then asserted that “archaeologists are mysterious people” and that they should “start demystifying themselves”. In the end, he wrote that even the least “flashy” material remains of V. can “successfully demonstrate the Greekness of our ancestors”, implying the injustice rendered by the selective and crafted promotion of “golden” archaeological sites, meaning presumably Aiani.

George (1995, p. 103) elaborated on this position in his book *A.M.*, which was published three years after posting that letter:

“the finds of Ano Makedonia were poor (*phthohika*) in comparison to the ones found in Kato Makedonia. Vessels were generally undecorated, lacking the painted representations of the vessels from Kato Makedonia. Roman sculpture in Ano Makedonia, and especially inscribed material, was primitive and simplistic. This is the sculptural art of people who are for the first time introduced to marble, who have had absolutely no background in sculptural art and no association with artists from neighbouring lands”.

As such, one could argue that George had foreseen the marginalisation of his village’s past, while he observed – through his experience of Aiani’s museum – the tendency of

state archaeology to only promote ‘flashy’ material remains to demonstrate Greek identity and instigate touristic attraction. When I met George, the same impression of state archaeology still prevailed. He told me that “archaeologists tried to take our finds” and “enclose them in their cells (*bundrumia*)”. He also referred to official archaeology as “the Vatican, because no one ever knows what goes on in there”. On another occasion, he described “these scientists, these archaeologists” as “a ghetto”, “a certain caste”. At the same time however, it was long since George had last dealt with these issues, because as he said to me, “I have retired”. When I asked him if it was because he was tired, he replied,

I don’t want it any more... I got tired. I got tired of these frictions and stuff. Don’t think that any of this did not come without its frictions and troubles [...] But local chiefs no longer wanted any of this. They thought it was unreasonable that we stood up against the archaeological service [...] It is hard to stand against these services... how can I say this now... let’s say it is an isolated science. No-one gets in and no-one gets out from there.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

## **6.5 George on his perception of archaeology and treatment of archaeological finds**

George believed that “the role of a good archaeologist” as he said, was “to do a job that is unique”. By “unique” George referred to the production of unique archaeological interpretations that arise when archaeologists do “not to regurgitate (*anamasoun*) things that others had said before”. George nevertheless believed that archaeologists repeat interpretations, as “they go to conferences and say what some other [archaeologist] had said, and recall a few words from another one, and then another one comes and he says a few words [...]”. When I asked him however if he had been to many conferences, he replied that he had attended one in Athens “before I started the research” as he said, which was concerned with “how museums should be. How archaeologists should do their job [...] Ways of exhibiting. How a museum should be in order to attract people [...]”. He then characteristically added, “It was about the form of museums. It did not involve projects (*ergasies*). I did a project”.

As shown before, George was not convinced about the genuineness of Aiani's project. Furthermore, George saw bureaucracy as a factor that compromised the archaeological profession, as it was turning it into an automated job. Influenced by his own experience of having studied "incredible things" in architecture but subsequently undertaking "dreary tasks" when employed as an architect, George argued that day-to-day work in archaeology slips archaeologists "into a groove (*louki*)" as well, and then everyone works "according to the line". On the other hand, George thought of himself as having been outside 'lines' or 'grooves'. The process that had allowed his freedom of movement, was that his practice was, as he said, a "hobby", which he believed was what had distinguished it from official archaeology's practice: "You study archaeology and you enter an office and you write one page, one page every week let's say like the stuff you read in the books that are around; but that is not archaeology".

This impression of archaeology's mundane, bureaucratic duties powerfully echoed George's former duties when working as an architect. George was in fact so convinced by this analogy, which explained the reason for which he claimed to me once that he would have not chosen to be an archaeologist had he been able to "turn back the clock". In particular, he said,

Had I been cast in an archaeologist's mould, I would have probably been like most archaeologists. This way however, I am a different 'archaeologist', because it is a hobby for me. It is not a science with duties and stuff... duties such as giving a conference talk once a month [...] As was the case with me in architecture, working on legislative matters – a fully automated process (*typhlosourti*) – where I used to check whether residences complied with the law. And this was an automated process all the time. I would have been of an entirely different quality had I studied archaeology. I would be... the same as when I was an architect. Nobody ever said 'What a good architect George is!' or 'What a mark has George made as an architect'. The same would have happened had I been an archaeologist. I don't know... that is my opinion. You might think that I am wrong. But I feel that way.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

A further characteristic of state archaeology that George formulated and which he believed was the effect of conducting archaeology in an automated manner was its biased attention to objects and failure to convey appropriate explanations:

Out of tons of soil, they [i.e. archaeologists] pick out through sieving (*koskinizoun*) potsherds *that* small [said whilst indicating with his fingers a ‘small’ size]. And they assemble the potsherds, and what do they do with them? Nothing. I dug... But I had never dug systematically up until I was 40 years old, as I come from a middle class family even though I am from V. And I bought a hoe (*tsapa*) for the first time when I was 40 years old. And with that hoe I made (*ephtiasa*) many pots from digging in the debris (*baza*). What I am trying to say is that...it is not about digging for the sake of digging. I have these pots. I assembled them (*ta mazepsa*). Er, I should tell you that I once found an already-made (*etoimo*) one, one which they [i.e. archaeologists] do not pay attention to when they dig with their bulldozers.

Inside the tombs of that region of V. [said whilst pointing out somewhere], in the fields over that side, they used to put two pots next to the dead. One was for the water and the other was for the food. For the dead to eat and drink in his future life. This pair of pots were sometimes small and other times large, but they were always there. One was for the water and the other one for the food. One for water and the other one for food. This was perhaps a local custom. I write about it in the book [i.e. records-manuscript]. I assume that... I do not know if let’s say this occurred in other places as well. I assume that this thing probably happened here. Err... what I want is... Not to separate the two when they go into the archaeological museum... they have to go together. They should not categorise them according to size, according to...[...] They should go as a pair. And another one together, and another one [...] Exactly like I found them [...] In the museums they pile up the matching ones together. All the matching ones together.

*And you don’t understand anything of the context?*

Nothing. It is as if you stack all your ties together, or your shirts, or the trousers...

(George, personal communication, 2007)

In light of the above, one could argue that George’s idea of proper attention to artefacts was linked to the process of a proper display. However, the objects that he had collected were stored in the cultural centre, waiting to be displayed in the new museum, and so he never got the chance to materialise his own idea of display described above. On the other hand, his perception of and his emphasis on ‘contextual’ information were often elaborated in his written work. One good case in point was elaborated in one of his newspaper articles called *Ena taphiko ethimo apo tin Elimeia* (One burial custom from Elimeia):

“[A] characteristic and usual example of a tomb in Elimeia included only two vessels (*aggeia*) without anything else, one for the water and one for the food, placed near the elbows of the dead and in the same line so that the dead would continue to eat and drink in his after-life. The

terracotta food vessel, which was slightly but not necessarily different in shape from that of the water, had the shape of a porringer (*gavatha*) we would say [...] They were both placed at the same place near the arms, slightly above the elbows. The customary burial with these two and only pieces was simple (*litos*) and unadorned (*aperittos*), or, Doric in other words. The odds of finding more funeral gifts were so scarce that sometimes, for example, we would find only a worthless piece from a larger jar alongside the water vessel. Another time, we happened to find a makeshift (*proheiros*) burial where there was only one food vessel, without a water vessel”.

(George 1986a, p.6).

Furthermore he noted that the dead lay on his back and that the burial was purposefully filled up to the surface with soil. He based such inference on the observation that the soil could not have fallen inside due to natural causes, since its composition and colour outside the burial was different. He mentioned that this burial custom of filling the entire tomb with soil was termed “the fear of the void”, which, as he suggested, was probably based on ancient beliefs, and “perhaps the fear that some spirit or demon would enter the burial and spoil the dead’s peace and quiet”.

## **6.6 George’s interpretations on Ano Macedonia and Elimeia**

Constructing interpretations about the material past from ‘contextual’ observation was as important to George as disseminating them to the public. As he mentioned to me once,

I was planning to create a little book about what I was discovering about Elimeia, and have it offered in the archaeological museum, so that anyone who walks in and views the archaeological finds can give 5 Euros for the little book and read about the finds.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

The museum has not yet been constructed, but the book was written. *A.M.* is a small-sized book of 130 pages. It consists of eight chapters and includes three maps of the broader region of V. depicting the locations of sites mentioned throughout the text. The book can be ordered online or purchased directly from the publishers.

I started collecting finds, at the same time I was searching into libraries and bibliographies in order to prove that Elimeia was where V. is. I already knew that [idea] was possible, but I wanted to prove it. Whilst searching to find it however, I found something more precious; the testimony

of Macedonians' Greekness. And I wrote this thing about the Greekness of Macedonians and also a small chapter on Elimeia.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

“Elimeia” and the “Greekness of Macedonians” represent the central foci of the book’s objectives, which were concerned with the identification of ancient settlements, the lineage and movements of tribes. George formulated his interpretations based on literary information that he had drawn from ancient historiography or academic writing. George would draw information from ancient historic references, ranging from Homer’s Iliad to Stephanos Byzantius (who was also heavily employed by Karamitrou as well). He generally believed that the Iliad had “historical foundations (*ypostasi*)” and he placed a lot of attention upon descriptions of “genealogies of kings” and “toponyms”, which he considered valid. He would then link pieces of such “ancient information” with interpretations of nineteenth century scholars, such as those of A. J. B. Wace and Dimitzas. The most recent references he included, were writings by Hammond, Papazoglou, Sakellariou and Tzinikou-Kakouli (1992[1976])). He also grounded his interpretations on personal observations of ‘excavated’ artefacts and their arrangement.

The fashion in which George combined different sources to support his own conclusions can be illustrated through the following example. Following the introduction of the book, George begins his first chapter with a reference to Macedonians as an “autonomous tribe, formed in 800 B.C.” that originated from the “proto-aiolic” tribe of “Lapithes” in Thessaly (George 1995, p. 11). He based the suggestion that Macedonians were ‘Aiolic’ or “Aioleis” on Hesiod’s (eighth century B.C.) “ancient information”, according to which, Makedonas was the brother of Magnitos, who, according to Apollodoros (second century B.C.), was the son of Aiolos. Then, following Sakellariou’s interpretation that Thessaly was “the centre (*koitida*) of all Aioleis”, George inferred that, since Macedonians were Aioleis, then Thessaly was their origin (George 1995, p.12). In terms of the Macedonians’ tribe, George elicited information from Homer’s description of “Lapithes”, who, “lived from 1900 B.C. onwards in the north and west Thessaly” and “spoke an Aiolic dialect” (George 1995, pp.11-30). For George, such information suggested that Lapithes had been the ancestors of Macedonians from whom they “broke loose” towards the end of the ninth century BC (George 1995, pp.11-30).

This manner of linking one deduction to another through combining various historiographical and mythological information and eventually creating a seemingly coherent narrative, characterises discussion in the first six chapters of the book. The remaining two discussions on the “the passage” from Elimeia to Aiges (George 1995, pp.53-89) and “the dispersed city” of Elimeia (George 1995, pp.91-113) were formulated in a slightly different manner of argumentation as they involved “personal archaeological observations derived from field-survey” (George 1995: 10).

George described Aiges as the ancient Macedonian city of Kato Makedonia, where Andronikos had discovered the site of Vergina. Amongst a number of potential routes to Aiges, George discussed the one originating from the city of Elimeia, because he thought it was the most efficient route and it was also linked with his argument about Kato Makedonia having expanded from Elimeia. According to his interpretation, the passage linking Elimeia to Aiges was a 50 km long pathway, which remained in use for the animal-powered movement of people (*zoikos dromos*) “until the arrival of cars” (George 1995, pp.53-89). As George pointed out in the book, he had followed that route by foot, and was led to locations of ancient settlements and tomb sites according to the guidance of local-villagers. This engagement with the archaeological landscape through walking, recalls Connerton’s (2009, p.115) analysis on a pedestrian’s “process of appropriation of the topographic system”, which he describes as a spatial realisation of the site involving relationships among distant positions in the form of movements. To my understanding, this facilitated the sense of ownership that George developed towards his locality.

In the end, he located eight “acropoleis” that “fortified” its path, which he also indicated in one of the maps in the book (George 1995, pp.93, 105). To his understanding, the existence of fortification indicated that the road had not been opened simply for communication but for guarding different sectors of the pathway (George 1995, pp.53-89). He mentioned that this pathway was created in the seventh century B.C. and it was followed by the people and the army on their way to establish Aiges, which was how he interpreted the establishment of Kato Makedonia from Ano Macedonian people (George 1995, pp.91-113).

As George explained and in contradiction to official archaeological discourse, ancient Elimeia, the “rear-guard” of Aiges, was located at the opposite end or rather at the start of this long route (George 1995, p. 53). George explained that Elimeia, which was

located south of the modern town of V., had first been located by “the great archaeologist” A. J. B. Wace in 1911 (George 1995, p. 92). It was Wace who had discovered a Roman inscription referring to “Elimeiotēs” (the people of Elimeia), and subsequently suggested V.’s identification with ancient Elimeia (George 1995, pp. 91-113). But, as George added later, “we found further evidence and its location is now confirmed” (ibid.).

After quoting and translating the text from Wace’s inscription and another one from Livy (first century B.C. - first century A.D.) mentioning “Elimeia”, George argued that Elimeia was the name for a city rather than an eparchy (George 1995, p. 96; see also George 1986b). He then asserted his agreement with Wace’s suggestion that Elimeia’s location was indeed the location of the inscription’s discovery. As he argued later in his book, Elimeia had the most fertile land in the region, which was why Macedonians had chosen to build such an important city there. He then added that the only permanent structures in the cities of Ano Makedonia were their acropolises. Acropolises were “many and huge” (George 1995, p. 99) as he said, an example of which was the acropolis in V., which covered a land of 47.5 *stremmata* (c. 4.75 hectares). By using ‘contextual’ observations to form his interpretations, he argued:

“They selected a hill with a natural fortification and, if possible, a flat surface for their acropolis. A permanent and essential condition was to have a spring or running water near the hill. On its surface, the area was fortified with walls made from disordered stonework (*argolithodomi*) which was always two metres wide leading us to the conclusion (we climbed 25 acropolises) that they used the ancient Greek cubic foot = 1.83m. For fear of water-shortages, they always buried large pointed-bottom vessels with water (*oxypythmena pytharia*). In the acropolis of V., the formerly entrenched land of which is used today as agricultural-fields, we located one [field] with a large number of such vessels [...] When the acropolis was rocky, vessels were laid on their sides and were covered with stones for protection.

In the acropolis of V. there were traces of a marble temple which was perhaps in the exact same spot where the remains of a Byzantine church lay. Marble was used in pre-Roman times, but it was only for a short period. We do not know if architectural remains dating after the Roman times had first been used in pre-Roman times and then used again. The area outside the acropolis was used for habitation only; all the rest happened in the acropolis. The agora (we found more than 150 coins) was situated in the acropolis, as was the case in others places as well. It was certainly there that the civil assemblies with the king took place. Some special craft persons must have had their workshops in the king’s area (one metallic seal was found but it was Roman, in addition to



remains of melted iron). The temple of the acropolis seemed to have been the only temple in town”.

(George 1995, pp.99-100)

## 6.7 George on his contribution to the community

George recognised that understanding archaeology was a difficult task. Whilst drawing from his own experience, he said: “only a small proportion of people is, let’s say interested and appreciative. They can generally appreciate it, but without knowing what it is exactly”, which suggested that, to his understanding, this happened almost by default, because when I asked him why that seemed to be the case, he replied, “Err... They cannot comprehend...they are not educated”. I then mentioned whether an appropriate education would transform things to which he responded:

No, no, no... Look. First of all this is specialised knowledge, it is not, let’s say, folklore... like writing songs, which everybody can comprehend. It is specialised knowledge which only a few can understand.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

Later, he added:

Let’s say that there are these tourists. Ten per cent of them visit the museum and the rest go shopping. The museum does not attract people. It is all about dead people; about the kind of stuff... that don’t make sense (*akatalavistika pragmata*). And I say these things are small print (*psila pragmata*). They do not understand these things. [They say:] ‘Let’s go shopping!’ I do not know if that can change. Now, how can you make others learn archaeology? You can’t.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

At the same time however, he also recognised that although one may lack the understanding and interest in the informational value of antiquities, one can still acknowledge the value of antiquities. By way of example, George mentioned that people take antiquities “and rest them like bibelot on top of radiators. There are such cases. We had bibelot resting on radiators. Like this Aegean pot; a perfume-container”. For that reason, the act of giving to a local community the chance to have its local past displayed

in its own locality was where George identified his own contribution, for which he felt he received a level of gratitude.

The appreciation I receive from this small group, spreads amongst others, even though they do not know what exactly it was that I had done. At least they know that I have done something important.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

Furthermore, he aspired to get the official approval from the KAS so that his community can hold a collection that can be officially linked to the “Ancient City of Elimeia”. When I asked him why that had mattered to him, he told me:

If the inscription for our collection simply says ‘Archaeological Collection’ then it is like a child of an unknown father. But if it states the place where these antiquities came from, then it makes a huge difference”. When we visited the premises where the collection was going to be transferred to (the old school at the church’s front-yard), he pointed towards the sign of their street, which indicated “Archaeological Museum Street.

(George, personal communication, 2007)

I was not surprised by his smile that followed; he seemed proud for what he had created.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

Since the beginning of archaeological excavations in Kozani, the region’s material past has been increasingly establishing itself within the ‘national narrative’ (see Chapter 5). A turning point was when Aiani became a concrete symbolic and physical space in the Greek national narrative. Archaeological narratives about Aiani established it as a seminal reference point for the region’s past and for Greek Macedonian identity. It became a significant archaeological site and tourist attraction on a national and international level. Evidently, the infusion of the material past with national symbolic power and the consequent operation of antiquity as a symbolic capital are conditions very prevalent in Kozani. One comes to speculate though: does that leave any room for other

localities to participate into the national narrative (c.f. Appadurai 1995; Hamilakis 2006; Herzfeld 2003)?

The appeal of narratives about collective, imagined communities lies in their capacity to provide each person an assurance that a design exists, that a collective present and past unites each one of us. At the same time however, as an anthropologist eloquently once put it, “the national project remains irreparably paradoxical in the way it treats the relation between identity and memory collectively: it strengthens the hope for meaning yet mortifies the hope for a single meaning to each person” (Vereni 2000, p.48). This certainly holds true for national imagination in Greece, and, in spite of the incompatible narratives fighting out for decades (not only between nations, but also between groups within the nation), the conviction that there is a ‘true’ version has actually been reinforced rather than undermined.

Since official state archaeology commenced its active contribution to the national ideal, national ‘truths’ become materially established and nations’ existence is founded upon narratives as well as upon ruins (Hamilakis 2007). As such, the discourse produced by national archaeology is endowed with prestige, and any discourse of local or personal identity takes the official version as a reference point. However what happens when one’s narratives do not comply with the official version? When individuality fails to equate with its “privileged dimension” (Vereni 2000, p.47)?

As I have shown so far, George, thirty years ago, started his engagement with the material past in V. through the act of digging and publicly displaying the antiquities he deposited in the local community centre. He wrote and published a book on his interpretations of the ancient history of V., where, to his own understanding, he demonstrated, contrary to official claims, that the location of the capital of the ancient kingdom of ‘Elimeia’ was not Aiani, but his hometown. When I met him, his aspiration was to convince the Ministry of Culture to allow him to legitimately name the archaeological collection as that of the capital of ‘Elimeia’, because, to his understanding, that would bring further benefits to his community.

So what does this all indicate? To my understanding, George attempted to inscribe the story of a locality within that of ‘the nation’. He inserted his account within the national ideology, in the hope of guaranteeing a place for his locality in the national narrative, and

claiming part of its symbolic capital. He traced the past of V. in a journey toward Greekness and thus demonstrated his compliance to a narrative that, he had been assured, is important. Within the confines of national ideology, the past of V. became a meaningful story with a recognisable design. Yet this was where the irony in official archaeological discourse reveals itself.

To my understanding, the archaeological Ephoreia in Kozani proposes a collective plot (events, places, eminent persons, common identity, high culture) which each person is to embody on an individual level. Accordingly, an alternative personal narrative stemming from a non-professional's control over the material past, unfolded contradictory stories, frustrated the rigid story proposed by official story-tellers and disrupted the exclusivity over the symbolic power of antiquity. Unsurprisingly, legal battles followed. And, despite George's acquittal and the collection's legal approval, the archaeological Ephoreia asserted that George – through his undocumented digging and unauthorised collecting – jeopardized the safety of the material past, pursued self-serving interests and ultimately opposed official archaeological authority (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, August 2007).

The need to dig deeper than this perception of disobedience was crucial however. Dominant notions and methods that lie at the foundations of official archaeological practice – such as the idea that the past incorporates symbolic power and its control leads to further ideological or other profit – permeate non-professional engagements to such a degree, that one should perhaps query whether these engagements are indeed cases of obvious conflict with official agenda. For both state archaeologists and non-professional agents, the past embodies symbolic power and, in realising the advantages it can link to, the aspiration to wield that power becomes crucial for both as well. Ultimately, I hope to have demonstrated that the issue here is not that George opposed official discourse as a whole, since to a significant degree he rather complied with its most basic ideological foundations. His alleged misbehaviour did not aspire to prevent the stewardship or the protection of the past; instead, what was actually confronted, was the exclusivity of such executions. What was challenged was the unquestioned privilege that the official mechanism indulges on, when it monopolises the advantages and capacities that emanate from that ideological foundation. In light of this, it is fair to conclude that a contextual approach towards George's engagements with the past was fundamental, because it

allowed me to move beneath the surface of acts that are religiously condemned as unethical.

The fact that George pursued 'disobedience' in the manner that he did, signals not only the failure of official agenda to integrate non-professional engagements with the past, but simultaneously the crisis of the model of integration into symbolic capital, with its inherently marginalising normativity. Within the officially established symbolic capital, the term 'sacred' is opposed to ordinary, and suggests an insignificant part of the national heritage, not good enough to deserve a space. This is why non-professionals' clash with the official discourse also implies a rejection of the very framework through which recognition takes place. It is a call for an alternative framework for constructing a symbolic capital, where less 'grand' objects and less authoritative voices are allowed a space within the perceptions and embodiments of symbolic power.

# CHAPTER 7

## WHEN INTIMATE HISTORIES ARE THREATENED

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### 7.1 Introduction

The main subject of this chapter is Nikos – a retired architect and son of Pontic refugees who lives in a village of Kozani. The primary objective is to explore the form and implications of his physical engagement with the material past, both prior to and after the establishment of the Archaeological Ephoreia in Kozani. The ethnographic sources that were used for the purposes of this include our conversations, as well as my record and observation of his physical engagement with ancient materiality, one that had developed either with regards to his own, house-based collections of objects, or whilst being in the field exploring the archaeological landscape. The relevance of Nikos' case to the deconstruction of looting lies in the fact that even though official archaeological discourse exclusively controls, constructs and educates a very particular value and form of antiquity (national symbolic capital), Nikos advocated a deeply personal perception of the past, and created a physical and temporal space in which he maintained a physical engagement with objects that were of marginal symbolic value for the nation.

### 7.2 About Nikos

Nikos is from Xirolimni, a small village on the foothills of Askio Mountain, thirteen kilometres west of the city of Kozani. In Greek, its name means 'dry lake', chosen on the assumption that a lake once existed in the area. Others believe that the toponym was brought from the Black Sea, along with the people who once migrated from there. It was between the years of 1922 and 1924 that a few hundred *Pontic* Greek-speaking and Christian Orthodox immigrant populations from the Black Sea coastal region settled in the village of Xirolimni, after their forced migration. Amongst them were Nikos' father and mother, who at the time were eighteen and eleven years old respectively. Together they had seven children of which Nikos was the third, born in 1936.

With the arrival of the *Pontic* refugees in 1922, a few hundred Turkish-speaking inhabitants that lived in that same settlement – then called *Sahinlar* – migrated to Turkey. The homes they left behind were re-modelled and used by the new settlers, whilst the two mosques that once existed were turned into Christian Orthodox churches. By the early 1930s, all newcomers had been given land and established their subsistence based on agriculture and stock-farming.

Nikos is a distant kin of my father's and Xirolimni is the village where my father was also born and raised. For that reason, I was privileged to have seen about fifteen years ago some of the homes of the refugees of the village. I vividly remember my great-grandmother's home. I will never forget the cool air that as children we desperately sought inside her stone-built house during hot summer days. Or the fresh running water from her stone-built kitchen faucet, which stood much lower in height in comparison to a 'modern' one. In fact it was so low that it suited just right the size of those great-grandpersons, who had always appeared to be 'shrivelled' in my eyes from the hardship of war and migration, two of the most powerful discourses featuring *Pontic* history and identity.

When Nikos finished school, he went to Turkey in Istanbul for university studies. He took such a decision in order to avoid being recruited in the Greek army, had he failed the University entry examinations in Greece. He initially studied Physics and Maths, but later changed to architecture. He once, half-jokingly, told me that it was his close circle of friends that had convinced him to do so, telling him that "you can do better than simply become a school teacher in Maths". Architecture, compared to a degree in Maths, was considered more prestigious and was open to diverse career options.

Nikos stayed in Istanbul for only a couple of years though, until he became seriously ill from appendicitis. This condition led to his return to Greece and he continued his studies at the University of Thessaloniki. He completed his studies in the mid-1970s and then moved to Kozani where he opened a private office, and worked as a free-lance architect. In the 1990s, he secured a permanent post as the Head of the municipal department of urban-planning in Kozani. He worked there for about 15 years until he reached retirement. Currently, he owns his own apartment in the city of Kozani, where he spends his winters. During summers, he resides in his parental home where he grew up in Xirolimni. At the time of my ethnography, Nikos aspired to write a book about Xirolimni. He frequently publishes articles in the quarterly publication of the *Efxinos*

*Leshi* (Club of the Black Sea Pontics) of Kozani. Concurrently, he has created a huge collection of paintings, drawn on the surface of rocks, stones and animal bones (Figure 7.1). He also creates sculptures made from wood, plaster and marble.



**Figure 7.1** Nikos and his artworks in his house in the village (photo by author).

### **7.3 Nikos and his association with official archaeology**

When I asked Nikos about his first encounter with the material past, he recounted a childhood memory. It concerned his grandfather and his Byzantine coin depicting an Emperor. Nikos explained that the coin was his grandfather's share, after he and some others dug the pot that had contained it amongst others. His grandfather believed that the coin was blessed, because when he placed it inside the dough of bread, the dough would rise very quickly. Nikos said that it was perhaps the oxidization of the copper that somehow caused the dough to rise and noted since then, he has remained curious as to



how no one was never harmed from it. To me, this anecdote reveals a unique indigenous appreciation and treatment of a relic from the past. I enquired whether his grandfather was aware of its antiquity at the time, but Nikos was not aware of the answer. Interestingly, he explained that as a child he was not aware of the antiquity of the ruins either. He did not know how old they were or what they were about.

It was their distinct appearance that had puzzled him in terms of their nature and purpose. It began when, as Nikos described, “I was a boy” and “would go up there with the elderly and we would herd the cows”. “I remember that when I was a child I would sit on top of the ruins of the fort and then...after years of struggling (*agona*) to reconstruct them (*anadeikso*) and fix (*ftiaso*) things, I brought Karamitrou up here”. For many years though, Nikos said he “would go and sit there on the walls and think why people had built such a thing [...]”. He did not know that those walls used to be a fort as he “could not explain the wall’s two metres thickness” because he “did not have the knowledge”.

Nikos believed that what had triggered his attentiveness towards unintelligible and unfamiliar material remains was his “inherent” inclination of seeing things from an artistic perspective, which, as he said, he carried from childhood. He would recall how he used to “see the world and its surroundings” differently from others, because of his capacity to see shapes amongst natural features that “everyone else would fail to see”. Interestingly, this insight corroborates Gell’s (1998) argument that captivation by an object is directly linked to one’s lack of comprehension of the object in question. Nikos also viewed certain unfamiliar objects as art because he had been captivated by them (*ibid.*). However, treating the walls as simple objects of aesthetic contemplation could not fully satisfy Nikos’ curiosity. He needed to understand their ‘history’, which, as I will show later, denoted a particular experiential need, which provided the connecting narrative between him and the objects.

When he studied architecture in the university he found some of the answers he was looking for. He was particularly influenced by Professor Andronikos (see Chapter 5), who had taught him history of art. Nikos held fond memories of him, as he would often ask his permission to study in his office, where a glass-case of artefacts was kept. He said he “admired” his office and liked studying there, as he would “gaze at the collection and unwind”. Nikos believed he was a “great teacher” and so it was “only natural” for him to

love archaeology. Since his engagement with Andronikos' teaching, the ruins on the foothills of the herding mountain were no longer unintelligible:

The first time I heard about forts was when I was taught about art forms at University and there was one chapter about forts, on where and how they were built [...] That was the first time I had really understood them. By looking at the morphology of the natural landscape, where rocks lay on the one side and hilltops on the other, and so on, I came to understand that this was indeed a fort.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Nikos' university studies were decisive in terms of his engagement with the material past, because they gave him the official knowledge that he had hitherto lacked regarding the making and purpose of ruins in Xirolimni. In his own words,

[W]hen you are taught a subject, you live it (*to zeis*), you understand it (*to gnorizeis*). I already had a natural inclination towards art, and so I became a devotee towards this significant and unknown element (*stoiheio*) [i.e. material past]; unknown because it remains unknown until archaeologists investigate it. I can't imagine the joy when one takes it out (*vgazei*) from darkness (*skotadi*), when one brings to light these things of gone civilisations that humans once created and now remain in the dark and the unknown! The happiness that he [i.e. the archaeologist] must feel must be great. I very much wanted to study archaeology after technical university, but my financial situation could not allow me a second degree.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Nikos went straight into "making a living" after university and maintained the interaction with the material past, although, this time he was not simply visiting archaeological sites but started to collect objects as well. As he explained whilst referring to the area south of his village,

Here in Bougazi, I got the chance to think about the natural setting of the place and...I suspected that it was a passage where battles took place... and I was prone to believe that combats had taken place there. And instead of finding weaponry, we found this prehistoric settlement... we would go to the excavations. I used to assume that antiquity concealed the battles that had taken place there, considering that it was a unique passage. But, unfortunately, something different from what I had expected was found. And so I found these figurines [...] I kept them from about '78 to '80 until around 1995.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Nikos had discovered Neolithic potsherds and clay figurines whilst conducting a land survey for the granting of a building permit. Since “there was no archaeology” as he said – denoting the absence of archaeological activity in the region of Kozani – he decided to “watch over them” (*ta phylaxa*) “until the right moment arrived”. However, the ‘right moment’ took long to arrive and in the meantime, Nikos would casually take care of the finds:

I would keep them and they would disappear...and then I would find them again [...] inside the house. They [i.e. his family] would change their place and I would lose them...They were in plastic bags...hanging from there [said whilst pointing towards some nails on the wall]. And then again we’d find them.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

The first time he indicated to the authorities the sites where the objects had come from was in 1984, a year after systematic archaeological excavations began in Aiani. He wanted to attract archaeologists’ attention towards prospective archaeological sites, so that

signposts are placed in the archaeological sites to indicate that we have something really important here.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

But it was not until 1993, almost a decade later, when he handed the objects over to the archaeologists and indicated the same sites again, reminding them of their existence and prospective importance. He also handed over two hundred copper Hellenistic/Roman coins which he had additionally collected from the same area. He encouraged other locals to hand over their chance discoveries too, involving a statue of a male, the upper part of a small pediment stele depicting Cytharoedus Apollo and an inscribed stele of the first to second centuries AD (IZ’ EPKA 1998, p.671). The year that Nikos indicated the sites and handed over the objects, he was referred in the archaeological report as an *arhaiophilos*, as in, a devotee of archaeology (IZ’ EPKA 1993).

The emergence of all these relics affirmed Nikos’ assertion that archaeological sites exist in Xirolimni and needed to be investigated (IZ’ EPKA 1993). A few more years passed, however, until archaeologists excavated the sites Nikos had located. In the meantime, he

felt the neglect of the ephoreia towards his village, as “they were too busy” with projects undertaken elsewhere. I can still recall how pleased he seemed when in 1997 I announced to him that I would pursue a higher education in archaeology. The fact that I, “one of our girls” (*diko mas koritsi*) as Nikos said, was going to follow the archaeological profession was very crucial to him because it implied – in his mind – that I, a local, would eventually elevate the village’s material past from its previous obscurity. The archaeological Ephoreia got there before me however, when rescue excavations commenced a year later. Financial resources were found through a company that constructed the central motorway of *Egnatia*.

Due to Egnatia’s construction, rescue excavations needed to be conducted in all archaeological sites existing along the route’s length. This development affected the village of Xirolimni, because it is located alongside a road parallel to and 700m north of the Egnatia motorway. Today, both old and new roads are in use, and both follow the one and only route linking central Macedonia with either the west or the east of Greece, as it passes right through the only natural opening between the two mountains vertically-positioned to the roads, Askio and Vourino. Locals refer to the area near Xirolimni as *Porta*, or *Bougazi* (as mentioned in Nikos’ quote earlier).

Archaeological investigation at the sites that Nikos had indicated was undertaken in three seasons from 1998 to 2000 (see IZ’ EPKA 1998; 1999; 2000). Initially, based on the finds that had been handed over and following a test-pit survey, archaeologists suggested that a sanctuary dedicated to Apollo and a prehistoric settlement dating from the early Neolithic period to the Bronze Age had existed in the area. Nikos was there to witness and record this development:

When Egnatia was being constructed, they [the archaeologists] did some test pits and we found about 100 m width of the passage that existed in the past. But I wanted to videotape the whole excavation because the finds were to be taken and displayed somewhere else. So from the start, until they got to 3 metres of depth, I recorded the whole thing. I gave a copy to the archaeologists. She had asked me for one; they had not recorded it themselves [...]

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

The areas where the sanctuary and the prehistoric settlement were found were within what became known as the archaeological site of *Porta*. *Porta*, which means ‘door’ in Greek, was, as mentioned earlier, the toponym that locals use for that area, denoting the

entry/exit point to/from the village of Xirolimni. In the following season, excavations were conducted in these two areas, in addition to a third one that was located 2,2 km to their west, where a late Roman cemetery had been discovered. That was registered as the archaeological site of Agona (IZ' EPKA 1999). In the third and last season, excavations were continued only in the prehistoric settlement. Nikos attended all excavation periods. Since then, he has also located and reported more than a dozen archaeological sites across the prefecture of Kozani and many of them were subsequently rescue-excavated by the archaeological ephoreia. At the time of my ethnography, Nikos still continued to hand over finds he discovered and collected to the archaeological ephoreia.

### ***7.3.1 Nikos and his engagement with antiquities***

For many years now, Nikos has been searching for antiquities in agricultural fields especially following their tillage, on the sides of dirt roads especially after their construction, on top of hills and mountains and at the banks of the Aliakmon River. The only time he breaks from this habit is during winter months, with their heavy snow-falls, or during the summer, when crops are too grown and dense to allow any objects to be spotted and when too many vipers wander around the countryside. Otherwise, on any sunny day or right after a rainstorm – which, according to Nikos, was “the best time to look for finds” – he would drive to spots where he assumed objects lay “buried”. September in particular was considered a “good month” because farmers plough their fields and antiquities reveal themselves.

Nikos, after he stocked himself with plastic bags for prospective finds, he set off by foot with his walking stick searching for them. He would gather surface-items which he considered in need of rescue from the immediate damage that, as he said, were caused by traffic, construction, agricultural intervention, or looters. He never dug in depth, but, he used a trowel to remove objects, parts of which “partially extend from the soil anyway” as he said. He would then bring the objects to his house in Xirolimni and keep them in the storeroom for a variable while, until he decided to hand them over to the archaeological ephoreia in Kozani.

The ephoreia was aware of Nikos' surface collecting activities as it frequently received finds from him. However, even though in the past it had officially acknowledged his underlying devotion towards antiquities, when I conducted my ethnographic research its

Ephor regarded his activities considerably harmful (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). It was believed that he caused irreparable damage to the archaeological context of antiquities (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). He has often been warned to cease to remove artefacts from their context and was advised to simply indicate the sites he discovers, if he was to appropriately assist official practice (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007). These instructions however failed to prevent Nikos, who, on the contrary, considered himself as someone who actively assisted state archaeology's work by protecting the material past from threats, such as natural causes, rural developments or indifferent locals.

We do not dig or destroy. We save something that is in danger of destruction! From walking, from animals...from farmers' machinery that carry iron-cutters.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Nikos asserted to me that he collected the objects only "to do the right thing" by handing them over to archaeologists. Simultaneously though, he often acknowledged that his casual caretaking of the objects – for the time he held them before he handed them over – could not satisfy the ideal preservation they deserved. He mentioned that

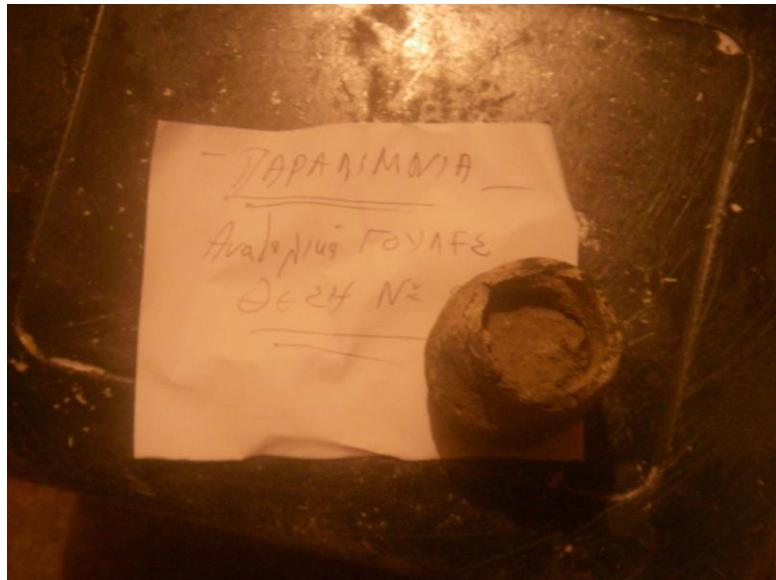
It would be wrong to keep them in my storeroom as I possess neither the scientific knowledge for their preservation nor the technical tools and environment.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Yet, for a variable period of time, he managed to indulge in a physical engagement with the objects he found. This involved the removing of the objects from the soil and the transfer to his home, the austere, yet intimate cleaning, and the classification and display of some of the objects inside the storeroom. Effectively, one could argue that rather than indicating the sites or handing the finds over to the authorities straight after they were removed from the ground, Nikos, even for a little while, created and held on to a collection, or, what Stewart (1993) once designated as a 'little world'. In what follows, once again, the questions concern the form of the interaction with the material past, its instigations, purposes and implications.

At the time of my ethnography, Nikos was collecting Neolithic potsherds and loom weights from the area of *Kitrini Limni*, which he kept in his storeroom. The potsherds

and the loom weights – categorised by the area they had come from – were hanging from the wall in plastic bags. When I asked to view them, Nikos presented one group of artefacts at a time, after carefully placing it on top of a chair (Figures 7.2 and 7.3). When I asked to photograph the objects, each time he would put next to the objects the label indicating the area they had come from. Furthermore, he kept a collection of Ottoman tombstones which he found at his village.



**Figure 7.2** Neolithic pot from Nikos' collection (photo by author).



**Figure 7.3** Loom weights from Nikos' collection (photo by author).

## 7.4 Perspectives towards official discourse

Nikos' collaboration with official archaeology presupposed and represented a significant level of agreement with certain aspects of official archaeological practice. This became evident to me through statements such as the following:

[I]t is a great joy to bring out [things] from the darkness, from the ground or from caves...objects from a culture are brought to light...things that humans created once, and which have since remained dark and unknown. I believe that the joy and the devotion that the archaeologist feels are great.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Another time, he argued that archaeology

[B]rings out and pushes forward what remains hidden; how those who have passed, lived and created their culture. These have to be unearthed; they cannot be left to rot.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Simultaneously however, his interpretations of archaeological objects and sites often diverged from the ones presented by official archaeology:

[Y]ou should see that huge statue (*agalma*) that I found.

*That funerary inscription?*

Did you see it broken? In pieces? It was a stele, a big one, with two figures that were broken. But people...committing such crimes [i.e. damaging the archaeological past].

*Archaeologists said that it was debris, the context where you found it.*

She [i.e. Karamitrou-Mentesidi] argues such thing. No it was not debris, if you ask me. She is many times wrong. These tombs that I found she says that they were already known, because of some objects that were once handed over from there. But she wasn't here at the time. It was Kitsa the teacher who was retired here. And I know that the objects that had been handed over were not from the tombs I reported. They were from another site –on the way to Dodeka Apostolous, to the right side. She insists, however, that these tombs were known. How was that known? Do you know where the other objects actually came from? Those tombs were completely unknown. [...] Where did you write down the name of the owner of the field with those tombs? If indeed that field had those tombs. Because the tombs where these objects had come from are situated between



the vineyards, on the way to Dodeka Apostolous. On the right where they have vineyards. There, in the fields it is where the objects had been found before they were handed over.

*And this place has no connection to the site that you found and indicated?*

Absolutely no connection. The other one is so far away. Way up there. These ones are down here. Nevertheless they insist on it and it frustrates me. And now they say that this is debris. But there are ancient baths here. I discovered them for her. Outside that entrance, there are ancient Roman baths. I found the pillars underneath which they burned the...the coal, which kept warm and they bathed on top of them. They created steam. They had a fireplace. So if there were ancient baths here, I say that there was Roman stuff here. There were riches here...there were constructions, temples, and so these cannot be debris. Otherwise, where did they bring that debris from? Because if someone had indeed unearthed these, he would know that they were of value. He would sell them. He wouldn't leave them buried there, but he would preserve them. How can that be debris? [...] By looking at the Roman baths and given that Romans were smart people, and that there was a plenty of water here [i.e. water springs], they settled here and created these statues and that kind of stuff. It was a rich place here. It had water and valleys. Why wouldn't they have developed such things? The Romans established their settlement wherever they could find. They took their families with them. They wouldn't have overlooked such place and this was a good place .

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

## **7.5 The appeal of 'unfamiliar' artefacts**

Nikos once told me about a man in the village of Metamorphosi in Kozani who accidentally unearthed a small marble figurine from his vineyard. As Nikos said, "It was a statue of an ancient goddess, possibly Aphrodite or Artemis. Her body was nude, partly covered by a gossamer fabric". The man brought the figurine home, cleaned it and placed it on the table. He then left the house for a few hours and when he returned, he didn't see the figurine on the table. He asked his wife where she put it, and as Nikos recalled, she responded: "You should be ashamed of yourself! Putting a naked woman there! I broke it! Aren't you ashamed for putting it up there?". Nikos explained that it was forty years ago when this man had found and lost that figurine, and yet, he still recounted this man's story because it was one of those unique but lost opportunities/discoveries, thanks to what he understood as the result of ignorance and lack of knowledge, stemming from a lack of education. As Nikos said, how is it possible that "a man finds it in his field and the old lady breaks it! A statuette (*agalmataki*)!".

Apart from such single cases of destruction of artefacts however, Nikos also talked about systematic damage towards the past, mainly caused by “looting” (*arhaiokapilia*). Its development, he believed, was caused and maintained by “poverty” in addition to the “lack of education”.

[M]any want to become rich from this. There is looting. People who destroy and do things. And many valuable artefacts (*erga axias*) are gone and lost from our region and our place. This is a plague (*mastiga*).

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

In relation to this, Nikos told me a story about this farmer who had discovered an ancient helmet from Illyria. At first the farmer used it as a food container to feed his chickens, but when he discovered that “it was of value”, he decided to sell it. Nikos said that “even a policeman was involved in the arrangement”, but, the man eventually got caught, although he was later released after his lawyer convinced everyone that the man “had been unaware of its [archaeological] worth”.

For Nikos, education was important; the solution he argued, was

Seminars. Teachers giving them at schools. They should start informing (*enimeronoun*) the children. ‘No’ to their development into looters and sellers of history; they [i.e. the children] should start aching (*ponane*) for this place (*topos*) which conceals (*kryvei*) a civilisation (*politismo*) that gave light to the whole world, and which partakes in a continuity (*syneheia*). Everyone contributed (*balan*) one’s own little stone (*litharaki*) to civilisation. And so we arrive and the world (*kosmos*) and humanity continues to emerge (*na bgainoun*) and so art becomes higher. It cannot be that only a few of us love [archaeology] and contribute (*agapame kai dinoume*) [to it] while people remain uninformed (*animerotos*) [about it].

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Evidently, education for Nikos was about gaining information regarding the past, as much as it was about finding out how the past was part of a larger composition (civilisation) to which everyone (humanity/world) continuously contributed. As such, Nikos believed that the essence of educated knowledge lay in its capacity to render a distant or unfamiliar past intimate, which in turn triggered – within the person who encountered the material past – an embodied reaction towards it. A person then “loved” and “ached” for the past, and thus was eventually directed to care for and protect it rather

than disregard or destroy it. This is what had happened to Nikos himself. May I reiterate what he said: “when you are taught a subject, you experience it (*to zeis*), you understand it”. If the ‘subject’ was the archaeological past, then by ‘experiencing’ it Nikos alluded to becoming familiar with it, but also to feeling for it (through emotions of ache and love).

Nikos linked the process of feeling for and protecting the material past to the impact of further factors besides that of education. Illustrative of this was the case of this other man who, as Nikos said, “was a fisherman and yet he refused to give it away despite the millions that they [i.e. looters] were offering him!”. As Nikos described, that fisherman discovered

[A] whole statue of a *kore*. It was incredible. A few years ago it was shown two and three times on television. Even though he owed huge debts! His house and boat were to be confiscated! And he caught an incredible *kore* in his nets. A bronze one.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Nikos related such response towards the past a the patriotic kind of love:

[L]et’s say he was a fanatic patriot. He had it in his boat and wouldn’t move it from there. And they were offering him millions then! Gangs (*speira*) that had realised its worth. He didn’t want anything. He gave it to his country (*patrida*). And his country returned him 140 million [drachma] back then. It had been estimated to cost somewhere around 350 million [drachma]. A *kore*. You should have seen it after it had been cleaned. It shone! It was huge and intact. Nothing had happened to it. Isn’t that how Nike of Samothrace was found?

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Clearly, Nikos’ tertiary education was instrumental in his thinking, as it became evident from many of his accounts on the significance of archaeology and knowledge about the past. At the same time, as with the fisherman, I also discerned that in Nikos’ encounter with the material past, the love and pain that he felt towards the past also emanated from the love he felt towards his locality. This intimate and almost spontaneous reaction towards the past directed me to explore the development of feelings of intimacy and temporal proximity with the past, independently of official education’s input; in other words, when experiencing and understanding the archaeological past is driven by factors besides education. Unsurprisingly, this is the case when Nikos encounters ‘familiar’ objects. Here, it is the memories and first and second hand experiences rather than formal

education and knowledge that construct artefacts' temporal proximity, define their meaning and trigger the love and protection that Nikos felt towards the objects.

## 7.6 The appeal of 'familiar' artefacts

Nikos often alluded to the material past's capacity to evoke continuity, but not in the sense of its materiality's durability, but, through its recurrence in social life; through its stable presence and participation in social life at different points in time. The following account illustrates this eloquently:

[I]f you see Alexander the Great's colander from Vergina, you'll see that it is the modern colander we use today. And that is so impressive that it makes you realise that, all these tools, dentistry tools, craftsman's tools, the hammer and all these things...the [modern] hammer is the Prehistoric hammer...The moment they made that hole, they created the hammer we still use today.

*So it is the close resemblance that strikes you?*

For instance it is all these things that were never put out of use. In reality, what we use today is what they had created then. However a lot of people think that all contemporary things are from today. I found this dish that had been slightly broken from the ditcher, inside this tomb at a field in Metamorphosis; the one where they excavated twenty tombs. The dish supported a bowl on its top. It had a concave on its top surface where you'd place the bowl. In archaeology there is a term for this, but I call it 'bowl'. Underneath the dish was a little base that would hold the whole piece higher. I found a very similar one made from glass at Raphailidis [i.e. a modern glassware shop]; it was made of glass, like crystal, which I regrettably did not buy at the time. It was exactly the same, only of different material. That was ceramic, this was crystal. It even had the bowl in the middle...resting on top of this little concave. It was the same...I was astonished. I thought, is that possible? How many thousands of years old are these? It's been two thousand years since Alexander the Great! The tombs date in the Hellenistic period.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

In addition to Nikos' observation of an artefact's recurrent distribution across time, equally manifest was his regular concern with the behavioural and performative aspects that he associated with that artefact. Such point was especially evoked amongst accounts regarding intimate and local 'uses' of artefacts. Illuminating in this respect was what Nikos described when I encountered him holding a bag filled with animal bones:

These were children's toys. We used to play with these, and so did the ancients!

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

In both the colander and the bones example, Nikos employed two forms of artefacts to indicate cultural consensus across time. The second example is of special significance, however: "playing" with bones evokes a fuller sensuous/bodily and emotive experience with an object than "using" a colander does. In addition, it illustrates that the key indicator of the notion of continuity is not so much the material object itself in its recurrence, but the recurrent behavioural feature and social act that the object's recurring presence relate to. Nikos' insight regarding the material past involved a concern that not only observed its recurrent material presence in social life, but also attended to one of its deeper factors: the possibility of experiential consistence across time and individuals. Ultimately, I discerned that Nikos' framework of analysis focused on the continuity of behaviors and social acts that precondition and underpin the stable presence of the relevant artefacts.

Acknowledging Nikos' concern with the behaviours surrounding artefacts directed me to also recognise the prominence of the cognitive and intellectual drives (e.g. moral values) that Nikos often observed in connection to them. Illuminating in this respect was Nikos' interpretation of the copper coins he had discovered at the site of Porta in Xirolimni:

[M]any [locals] tell me 'Nikos why are you giving them away [i.e. handing objects over to archaeologists]? You should keep a coin for yourself' and I tell them 'No!' Two hundred coins [I found] and I could not keep any for myself. None of the coins was double for me to keep the one. Every single one has its own history...Why would I want to keep one? Each one is unique! It is different from all else. On one coin it was written 'Epirus', another said 'Amphipolis', another said 'Thessaly'. They were brought from distant places...from I don't know where! And there were another four and a half thousand coins found like mine! And there was one found from Sinope in the Black Sea, which was left from a passer-by, who lit a candle, made a libation (*ekane spondi*) and placed his mite (*ovolo*) in whatever they had there. But archaeologists argue that this was a treasury at Apollo's sanctuary. That there was treasure kept there; that it was a treasury. But how could this be a treasury when no golden or even silver coins were ever found? I believe that people, for thousands of years, would leave coins there as offerings. I found the pots with which they made libations and reached God. They [i.e. the ancients] would leave their mite, in the same way people still do today, when they light a candle and leave a small coin. And back then, when they made a libation, they also offered wine...there were more expenses involved. They would leave their mite...Of course there were also the poor, cheap offerings. They did not leave gold or

anything like that! I found only...one silver coin and they [i.e. archaeologists] found another two-three. How is it possible then that this was a treasury if only brass, copper coins were found? [...] Archaeologists believe that there was a treasury there, but I believe that it was a place for offerings. All these coins were there from all the mites that people had left. But then again, could all these thousands – four thousand coins – be mites? Well the sanctuary is many thousands years old!

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

The object (coin), the social act (offering) and spiritual concern (reaching god) come together in the above anecdote indicating the connecting threads that Nikos saw between people and things across time. The notions of continuity and universality were once again prominent concern in Nikos' narratives about ancient materiality.

To my understanding, a fundamental factor behind the search for continuities across time and commonalities across space was the impact of immigrant experience. Even though today *Pontic* Greeks would define themselves as Greeks and would comfortably connect to the conventional, nationally instituted version of Greek ethnic identity, during the first half of the twentieth century the settlement and assimilation of *Pontic* refugees in Greek society was far from smooth (Kontogiorgi 2006). Being the son of refugees who still hoped for the return to their homeland and simultaneously struggled with their settlement into the new land, it could then be argued that Nikos needed to establish the connections with his present as well with his past.

This is a common need amongst immigrant communities growing up in pioneer lands, who, as it has been pointed (Lowenthal 1985, p.42), when “cut off from their roots remain dislocated” and therefore are impelled to “exaggerate attachments to romanticized homelands or stridently to assert an adoptive belonging [...] Portable emblems of the past can lend continuity in new homes”. As I will shortly explain, Nikos, engaged with objects from the Black Sea, as much as he engaged with objects that belonged to the ancient past of the place he had been born and raised in. As such, he engaged with his ancestral past, whilst at the same time he was establishing his connection with another past; that of the new homeland. This once again confirms another point by Lowenthal (1985, p.43) “[t]o have a piece of tangible history links one with its original maker and with intervening owners”.

At the same time, however, a further key point emanates here: it was Nikos' own memories rather than official knowledge that directed him to the meanings of ancient objects. Given the close association between ancient materiality and personal experience, I turned to the larger question of local perceptions of history and local construction of memories in order to understand the context, the process and impact of this association.

### **7.6.1 Recalling past experience from objects: how and why**

Nikos wrote articles for the Pontic magazine *To Pontiako Vima* and contributed his own memories relating to life in the Black Sea. One article about his grandmother's *lanari* (an object with which women traditionally scraped the wool) and its "great history" (*tranon istorian*) pointed to possible directions for deconstructing the object-experience association in his interpretation of the finds he collected. The article was written according to second-hand memory and it referred to Nikos' mother's local community in the coast of the Black Sea, which, in the spring of 1924 she was forced to leave and move to Greece. At the time, no one had believed that their stay in Greece would be permanent. As Nikos wrote

It was impossible for them to believe that they were permanently leaving the place (*topos*) where they and their parents were born and lived and where their grandfathers were laid buried!

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

Nonetheless, the preparation for the long journey started and Nikos described that amongst the few things that his family had packed was the *lanari*, which, his mother – at the age of eleven at the time – carried on her shoulder all the way to Greece, because it couldn't fit on the horse's carriage.

This is what my mother told me and took the *lanari* in her lap and gave it a stroke as if it was a little child. Afterwards when I took it I applied oil on its metal nails so they don't get rusty (*na mi zangountan*) and another oil onto its timber so that it doesn't rot and go to waste (*na mi sepetai kai hatai*) and so we can look at it and always remember (*thymoumes*) its history (*istorian*). I put it on top of the table in the living room. From when I was a child I remember that my grandmother and mother scraped (*exainan*) the sheep wool with this *lanari* [...] Many years have passed since then and nobody seeks the *lanari* any more. Women do not scrape the wool and do not make sweaters (*phanellas*) any more. Everything they buy [now] is readymade (*etoima*) [...] One by one our elderly people (*oi palaioi emoun*) left, and recently my mother followed them, but the *lanari* remained (*epem'nen*). It remained and it will remain at the village inside the house in the living

room, and every time we look at it (*teroum'ato*) – those of us who are still alive and those who came after us – it tells its story (*leei mas tin istorian*) about the many generations of women who, in the Black Sea and in Greece, for years and years held it in their embrace and whilst holding it between their legs they scraped the wool with its iron teeth. Bless their souls.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

The above account illustrates that recalling memories was crucial to Nikos, as it has been crucial for Pontic refugee communities elsewhere (Hirschon-Philippaki 1993). The totality of the experiences that the objects were linked with comprised the history of objects. As Nikos mentioned:

They [his family] knew that I collect antiques and old things ...whatever I would find...tools, bells...no matter how rusty they were. I would bring them in the house...anything that was old...I had a predilection for anything that was old...that has been used and has its own history. I am deeply touched by these things. An old loom, which you might even want to throw away, is considered an antique if you've used it for fifty, sixty, a hundred years. These things have their history. Everything will have its own history by tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. You see there is continuity in history.

(Nikos, personal communication, 2007)

As such, when Nikos said that the *lanari* 'tells' its story, he means that it essentially tells its history, which is the history of people (c.f. Hirschon-Philippaki 1993). Concurrently however and although meaning is constructed through discourse (Hirschon-Philippaki 1993), objects do not convey codified information (c.f. Jones 2007) and surely the *lanari* was not constructed to 'tell' particular stories about life in the Black Sea.

In a recent study (Jones 2007) it was argued that it is the process of remembrance that explains how an object 'tells' its story. From this perspective, the *lanari* wouldn't have succeeded in 'telling' its story if it hadn't been for the processes of 'looking' at the *lanari* and 'remembering'. Furthermore, it could also be argued that the *lanari* worked as an index of the women who scraped the wool, or an index of the scraped wool itself (see Jones 2007). The *lanari* did not simply represent past events directly; rather, past activities of production, construction, and wear were transformed in physical form. However, these past events (i.e. women scraping the wool, mother stroking the *lanari*) were recalled not through a process of information retrieval but through a process of sensory experience (e.g. Nikos applying the oil onto the *lanari*). The key point here is



that due to the physicality of material culture, this object acted as a means of presenting past events to the senses. It was in Nikos' physical encounter with the *lanari* that the *lanari* had the capacity to evoke remembrance. Remembrance was a process that occurred in the bodily encounter between him and the object. Accordingly, the way in which Nikos elicited the story of the bones and the colander once again involved a physical encounter and the inspiration from personal life experiences and memories.

The need to recall past experience has been noted to be a characteristic of second and third generations of Pontic refugees (see Hirschon-Philippaki 1993). With regards to Nikos however, the compensation of such process on a deeper, personal level couldn't be missed. As the narrative about the *lanari* showed us, it was the simplicity and quality of rural life that Nikos emphasized in relation to the traditional objects that he collected. Even objects such as the loom weights, the Neolithic pots, the coins and the bones projected the same meanings, which, to Nikos' understanding, existed in ancient times; times that preceded his own memories and experiences. It was the simplicity of the objects' form and function that pointed to social/human experiences (and values) of a simpler and hence, better life.

Traditional objects were connected to antiquities by this unique perception. The connection was also visually manifested since traditional objects co-existed with the antiquities that Nikos collected in the same space. Interestingly, they were also interspersed with his own artworks (Figures 7.4 and 7.5). One could argue that this store-room was filled with collections of objects that either embodied (in the case of traditional objects and antiquities) or projected (in the case of artworks) this 'better life' that Nikos was nostalgic of (Figures 7.6 - 7.8).



**Figure 7.4** The storeroom (photo by author).



**Figure 7.5** Antiquities, traditional objects and artworks interspersed (photo by author).



**Figure 7.6** The life of peasants (Xirolimni 2009).



**Figure 7.7** The life of peasants (Xirolimni 2009).





**Figure 7.8** Old and young generations discussing (Xirolimni 2009).

### **7.7 Why keep the objects?**

The fact that Nikos removed objects from their original context presupposed one basic thought: the intention to protect them from the destruction caused by rural interventions and indifferent locals. Yet, Nikos' concern about their preservation remained even when objects lay buried in the ground, because, whilst they remained unnoticed by official archaeological intervention, their significance remained in 'darkness'. But even when archaeological excavations were conducted, Nikos distinguished cases where objects were absorbed by obscurity, since no public view or access was allowed whilst they were retained for lengthy periods inside scientific labs. The prolonged wait for available archaeological investment and the prohibition of public access to non-displayed objects made Nikos aware of what he considered as one of the downsides of official archaeology: the hierarchical value of antiquity. Objects from Xirolimni remained in obscurity, when objects from Aiani were treated as artworks that by virtue of their successful embodiment of complex emotions of great importance enjoyed high visibility.

As he explained to me, he once took a friend with him and together they visited the museum of Aiani so that he could show him the stele – or “that huge statue” as he often called it – which he had discovered and handed over to the archaeological ephoreia. The archaeologists, however, responded that Nikos and his friend were not allowed to see it. Nikos felt disappointed even though he knew that the object was not ready to be shown to the public. He was let down by the fact that he was treated as some random visitor to the museum, and not as the supplier of the object requested.

In light of this awareness, Nikos pursued the removal and retention of objects inside his own home so that objects were kept safe and accessible. The possibility of a frequent physical interaction with objects allowed the evocation of meanings (i.e. first hand memories, past experiences) but it also rendered their liveliness: Nikos could keep the memories and narratives of his family and ancestors alive. Objects and meanings were therefore secured in space; a space to which Nikos had the access and in which he enjoyed the constant possibility of meaning retrieval through treating, arranging, observing, or displaying objects to others.

As mentioned earlier, their spatial arrangement in the storeroom reflected Nikos’ idiosyncratic understanding of how the ancient past related to tradition and the present: ancient artefacts embodied projections of how life must have been and traditional objects as well as artworks embodied life as Nikos remembered it. The possibility of viewing and closely observing this coexistence in the space of his storeroom allowed Nikos to detect the universality and continuity of material forms and effectively understand the connections between people across time and space. His observations on the universality and stability in behaviour and knowledge, was the confirmation that the certain social activities and values were essential, timeless and therefore worth preserving.

Inspired by Yi Fu Tuan (1974; 1977) one could argue that the retention of objects and meanings within the space of his storeroom, oriented Nikos in the present and facilitated him to survive in it, since every one encounter with the objects he had collected, had the power to recreate in him, vivid sensations of an earlier self, or of better times. In light of this, the collections of objects could be denoted as a form of architecture of control in the space of the modern world, of the present, in which Nikos often found himself struggling to fit. A world, which, as Nikos often said, was fast changing.

The fact that he was the only family member that had shown interest in keeping the *lanari* or generally in collecting ancient or traditional objects, was a powerful confirmation that he was different from “others who were married and had children and family responsibilities” and did not share his interest in material things and knowledge from the past as Nikos noted. So with sadness, Nikos would often note that meanings and values that seemed universal and timeless were losing their importance, especially amongst modern generations. He believed that modernity and the decline of tradition threatened the stability of meaningful lifeways and knowledge. He therefore recognised that he was often alone in his pursuit to hold on to things and values that he recognised as historically stable in a context of a fast changing world. He held on to the handmade world, before the age of mechanical reproduction where all things, as he said, are made in a standardised, automated manner. Ultimately, the retention of objects in the context of his home environment signified connotations that went beyond the urge to protect objects or to make them visible. It enabled a form of engagement with a compensation that was more enduring than the one he would have had, had he only discovered the objects and immediately handed them over to the archaeological ephoreia.

Furthermore, Nikos’ home collection gave rise to social interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds, who shared nevertheless an attachment to particular objects from Nikos’ collections. An exemplary case centred on a few Ottoman tombstones that Nikos collected from his village. At the time of my ethnography, they were placed on the floor in an upright position against the wall, by the entrance of his storeroom (Figure 7.9).

They were the outcome of his interest in the Ottoman history of his village, which had gradually grown after studying and travelling to Turkey and maintaining real contact with its people. Such experiences transformed his childhood attitude towards “Turks and Turkey”. As he explained to me, he was about eighteen years old when he first thought differently about “the Turks”. He was travelling by train across north-eastern Greece, when in one of the stops he saw a group of Turkish children “walking home from school”. He took a good look of them and thought to himself

[t]hese Turks are not our enemies. These Turks are not the ones that I always hear about. These Turkish children are innocent and are not accountable for the crimes that had taken place. After all, it was the politicians and not these people. These people are like us.



**Figure 7.9** Ottoman tombstones from Nikos' collection (photo by author).

It was this simple incident that challenged the stereotypically negative outlook towards Turkish people. Since then, he grew willing to engage critically with his own preconceived ideas and childhood prejudices. In the last decade, Nikos travelled extensively to towns and villages in Turkey (especially in the area of Trabzon) where his family had originated from. There, he developed relationships with the indigenous (Pontic speaking) Muslims as well as with the Muslims whose families had once replaced the evacuated Greek-speaking communities back in the 1920s. He still maintains communication with them and often invites them back to Kozani. On their arrival, Nikos indicates the places that their families had left behind after the exchange. The tombstones have a particular role to play in this case, as they actively precipitated remembrance and the revival of such experiences (c.f. Casey 1987) when shown to the relatives of those mentioned on their surface. Once again, remembering operates not a state of mind but as an activity during which individuals interact with things.

This cultural interaction has a lot to reveal in terms of the unfolding of nationalist discourse at the local level, and the resilience of nationalist versions of history. Immigrant discourse and national education had contributed greatly to the negative

opinion about Turkish people, but Nikos acquired other, additional experiences and values to rely upon; experiences that emphasised what he considered common to all humankind.

Lastly, one significant implication of the creation of collections of objects and their retention within the confinement of his home environment was that it constituted the physical manifestation, the material proof of his fascination and pursuit. As Yi Fu Tuan (1980, p.466) argued once, “a thing is seldom able to speak unambiguously for itself. Its significance relies at least in part on the support of words and gestures. Thus, after putting the final polish on a jar that we have made and feel proud of, we call on persons present to admire it and place it almost reverently on the mantelpiece”. The display of these objects was an important part of Nikos’ collecting experience. It should be reminded however that the retention of ancient objects was not necessarily permanent. In the next section I attempt to explain the conditions underlying the process of giving away certain categories of objects.

## **7.8 Why give the objects away?**

Russel Belk (1995, p.66) argued that “[c]ollecting differs from most other types of consumption because it involves forming what is seen to be a set of things – the collection. In order for these things to be perceived as comprising a set there must be boundaries distinguishing what is and is not appropriate for inclusion in the collection. These boundaries can either be conceptual or perceptual”. According to this conception of collecting, boundaries appear to be a crucial aspect. Boundaries establish selectivity, and selectivity separates collecting from all other possessing, acquiring or accumulating behaviours (see Belk 1995, pp.67-68).

Danet and Katriel (1994b, p.229) suggested that what particularly attracts people in collecting is the possibility it offers for the pursuit of closure. Effectively, collectors strive for closure, namely, they pursue the completion of a coherent, almost perfect collection of objects (Danet and Katriel 1994b, p.230). Closure and boundaries are ultimately inter-related, since the existence of the former entails the existence of the latter and vice versa. The strategy for pursuing closure, or if you like, the boundaries that one



constructs for a collection, are susceptible to subjective preference (see Danet and Katriel 1994b).

In Nikos' case, although he revisits, time and time again the same sites – a process which resembles an attempt to reach some level of closure – he always chooses to part with some of the collections he creates, before he even manages to 'complete' them. Whilst he yearns to return to and consistently collect more objects from the same sites, he then often gives them to the archaeologists. In reference to the connotations of closure and boundaries mentioned above, this behaviour seems paradoxical for it appears to maintain a constant open-endedness to collections. This was a distinctive feature of a collecting behaviour, because it appeared as if no closure was strived for. When this is considered from Nikos' perspective however, it is important to understand that closure may never be possible when it comes to the discovery of humanity's past. For as long as meaningful objects were used and then neglected, the pursuit of their collection in a safe place may be ongoing, and therefore, boundaries are constantly open. Furthermore, the very notion that 'humanity' was the rightful owner of cultural heritage was the factor instigating Nikos to hand the antiquities over to the archaeological ephoreia after he collected them. The only objects that Nikos never handed over to archaeologists were the tombstones. He said that archaeology was not interested in them.

## **7.9 Conclusion**

A close look at Nikos' emphasis on protecting the past explains his pursuit of open-ended collections. The act of giving the objects that he collects is driven by the incessant need to 'save' another specimen. Such an ideological standpoint facilitated Nikos' persistence in pursuing a unique engagement with the material past, as articulated by the open-endedness of his collections. The constant need to add to and save the collection of humanity's heritage, led him to search for objects, collect them, give up his collections, and then to start all over again; it established the purpose of and most importantly, maintained the devotion to his collecting activity.

Nevertheless, before the moment Nikos handed the antiquities over to archaeologists, a unique engagement with the past developed. The uniqueness of engagement lay in the ephemeral aspect of his collections, the 'open-endedness' of the collecting process, as

articulated both in the sense of a collection's incompleteness (c.f. Danet and Katriel 1994a, p.31), and in the sense of an incomplete physical control over the collection. To my understanding, Nikos' ephemeral control over antiquities represented one unique form of unofficial, physical engagement with the past, because it appeared to involve an ambivalent position towards official archaeology, and a complex perception of the past. I was intrigued to search for the conditions behind and the connotations of his approach.

I argued that a process of place attachment was generated and reinforced through creating collections of objects. Nikos established a personal and thus unique sense of place through combining the material past with personal experiences and memories. He thus created his own 'little world' (Stewart 1993), constituted by the collection as much as the collecting process, and through it he maintained, protected and reflected his self-identity. The ultimate compensation that came along related to emotional, moral and social benefits from creating a feeling of belonging and a secure space of tangible memories, which provided him a sheltered way of confronting alienation and 'change' in society.



# CHAPTER 8

## TREASURE-HUNTING IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

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### 8.1 Introduction

The main subject of this chapter is Ilias – a native of Aiani, a former treasure-hunter and a retired worker in archaeological excavations. The primary objective is to explore the interrelation between his personal background and the official discourse, regarding his perception of and treatment towards the material past. I use three ethnographic sources for the purposes of this: a memoir on Ilias’ personal experiences in the archaeological excavations in Aiani, maps of archaeological sites that he drew and our conversations, some of which were digitally recorded. The relevance of Ilias’ case to the deconstruction of looting lies in its capacity to demonstrate that even inside the professionalised context of archaeological excavations, Ilias maintained, advocated and articulated a deeply personal, unique perception and physical engagement with the material past, one that had been formed through his earlier treasure-hunting experiences.

### 8.2 Meeting Ilias

He is an ex-treasure-hunter, who changed his attitude when he began working at the excavations in Kozani in 1983.

(Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, 2007)

Those were the few words that the former Ephor of the L’ EPKA said about Ilias. She suggested that I meet him since I was exploring the topic of ‘looting’. I soon found out that he was a local to Aiani – the starting point and the centre stage of official archaeology in Kozani. He was one of the first people in the archaeological team to be involved in the excavations that were first conducted by the Archaeological Ephoreia in

the region. Damianos – one conservator working for the Archaeological Ephoreia of Kozani – offered to introduce him to me. He told me that he knew Ilias very well and that he was willing to introduce him to me. He believed that Ilias would not open up if I was to go on my own. He thus suggested that we visit him together and unannounced a few days later. I asked Damianos if that was appropriate, but he insisted that “that was the way to do it”; no need for further introductions between ‘old’ friends. Indeed, a few days later we set off to visit Ilias (Figure 8.1).



**Figure 8.1** Ilias (photo by author).

The house laid just a few steps away from the central square – the landmark of the village. It was a petit and welcoming house – in retrospect I think of it as a signifier for the qualities of the old couple that lived inside it. It was summer and the windows were open. Damianos shouted *barmba-Liako!* (old-Liako) and we soon heard him coming. He seemed very excited to see Damianos. He also seemed pleased to know that a young archaeologist was there to meet him. Damianos told him that I was keen to learn about his experiences with archaeology, and especially the stories before he came to work in the ephoreia. Judging from the tone of Damianos’ language it became obvious that he

referred to the man's 'scandalous' past of hunting for golden coins, which I soon found out that it had started when he was 15 years old and stopped when he was hired as a worker in the archaeological excavations in Aiani. This is what he told me about the time 'before archaeology', namely, before the establishment of the local archaeological ephoreia:

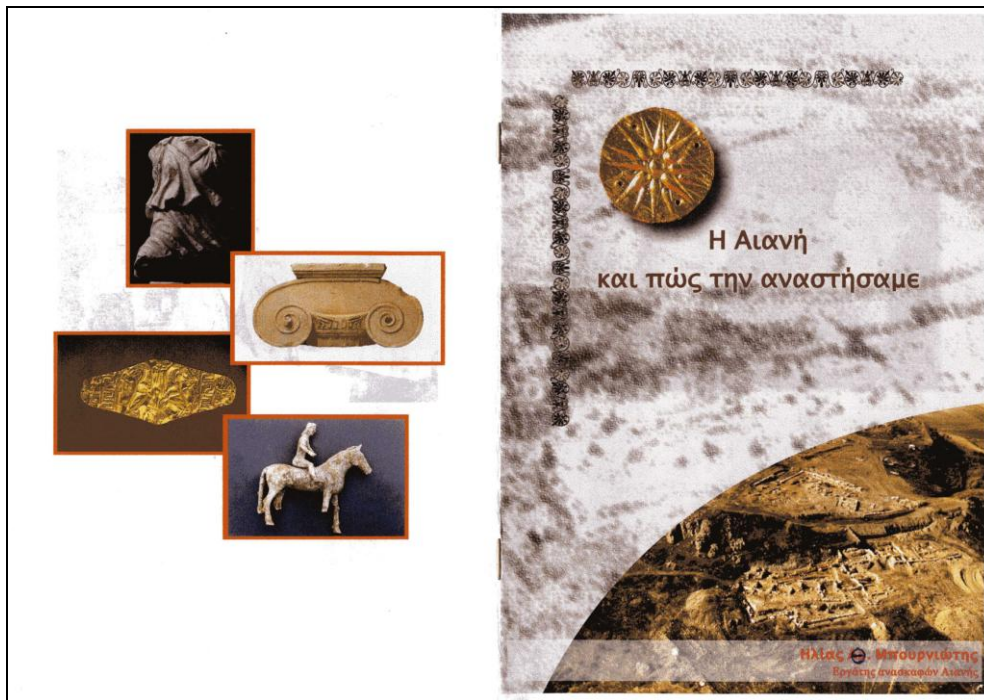
Before archaeology arrived, we searched for coins and from time to time we would find some; these peculiar things [antiquities] but we did not know that they were essential. That they were ancient. And because we dug, we opened a lot of graves, in order to find the sovereign coins, but we did not care about the ancient stuff. We were looking for sovereign coins. We would search for the whole night, and day, and when I went to work for archaeology, the things we dug up [in the past], the pots, the tombs, and the bones even, I paid a lot of attention to them. They were not trivial [any more]. I paid a lot of attention.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

Ilias' encounters with ancient materiality began with his treasure-hunting digs, like many others whom I had met during my ethnography. In fact, the frequency of encountering ancient objects in the search for sovereign coins was so extensive to treasure-hunters that most of them eventually swapped interests from treasure to relic-hunting. This was partly due to the vast presence of antiquities (in contrast to the scarcity of sovereign coins), and also due to the public's gradual awareness of their economic value and potential marketability. As a result, the frequency of Ilias' encounters with ancient materiality was immense. At that time, he was not interested in the artefacts, because he was not aware of their potential value as it was clearly shown from the above extract. The impetus that made him view these peculiar things as "pots" and "bones" that were worth the attention, was his involvement in the ephoreia in 1983 as an excavation worker. His changed perception of the material past was manifested both in our conversations and equally, in the memoir he wrote in 1991 entitled *I Aiani kai pos tin anastisame* (Aiani and how we resurrected her) (Figure 8.2).

This memoir is a fourteen page booklet on Ilias' perceptions of and engagement with archaeology. It is a narrative that he wrote himself, and it includes nineteen photos of Ilias with family members, friends or co-workers from archaeology. It is dedicated to his eight grandchildren, although his intended readers were located far beyond the circle of his family; the "whole world" as he wrote. Briefly, it touches upon methodological

approaches with regards to discovering objects, embodied experiences with the archaeological landscape, emotional journeys, inter-personal relationships (with official archaeologists and fellow team members), and it includes statements about the importance of the past. In addition, a few years later in 1999, Ilias drew eight maps (Figures 8.4 and 8.5), which were two-dimensional, non-accurate plans of rural regions that indicated archaeological sites in areas around Aiani.



**Figure 8.2** The memoir (Bourniotis ca. 1991).

### 8.3 The internalisation of official discourse by local experience

Ilias never had any sufficient school education. As he said to me:

I learned how to write at my grandfather's shop [whilst pointing out to a few blocks away], where we used to write down peoples' debts [...] If I was to put together all the days that I went to school, they would make two months in total.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

In his 60s, however, Ilias managed to write a memoir in order to communicate his experience with archaeology. One could argue, that such decision to resort to the written word, despite the lack of education, indicates some level of influence of official archaeological discourse. The memoir could have been the effect of a system that places so much ‘authority’ on writing (c.f. Vereni 2000, p.49). Even its title which includes the word ‘resurrected’, could be argued to indicate influences from the official archaeological discourse, as it evoked an official language that so insistently pursued the ‘rebirth’ of a neglected ‘ancestral’ history (see Chapter 5). Furthermore, Ilias at points stressed the need to disseminate knowledge about the past, and again one could argue that he partially complied with another model that official discourse assured was important. Consider for example the following passage that opens the memoir:

I write so that my fellow-villagers and the whole world learn the story of Aiani and of the excavation. Today, we look at ancient things (*arhaia*) but we forget how we had started off for just 150,000 drachma [the equivalent of 440 Euros salary], going everywhere on foot. Those were *hard years, full of struggles and strain, but big excitements as well.*

(Bourniotis 1991, p.4, emphasis added)

Consider also a passage from the first chapter of the memoir:

We all have to show an interest, to stop twiddling our thumbs and to deal with the history of our ancestors and to stop expecting everything from the few but to follow their actions. This is a heavy burden but we should try to lift it all together. Everyone should buy the Guide of Aiani from the Museum, the one that Georgia [i.e. Karamitrou-Mentesidi] wrote but also the earlier book that Mr Siambanopoulos wrote and to read them and to tell their children now that they are still young the history of our ancestors, so we are aware of our duty for the future and the commitment that we are entrusted with. Teachers have to invest more time in the teaching of the history of our village.

These few things that I mention here about Archaeology need a lot of zest, zeal and time. I write these things for the love that I have for my village and the history of this place.

(Bourniotis 1991, pp.6-7; see also Appendix 4 extract 1)

And a part from the epilogue:

Today we look at ancient things (*arhaia*) but we forget how we had started off for just 150,000 drachma, going everywhere on foot. We worked for many years so that we don’t lose our ancestors, so that we learn how they lived, what they were occupied in, what their art and houses



were like. Today, after a lot of years of work and experience, it was proven that Aiani was a big centre, and that we Aianiotes had our own civilisation that we did not take from others, instead, we gave light to others.

In our village, in Aiani, the archaeologist Mrs. Karamitrou writes about the many ancient things (*arhaia*) that exist in the whole of this region. I write these things here with all the zeal and the concern that I shared with the archaeologist. We went through tough days, struggles and agonies so that we enjoy what was found today.

We have to keep on with greater appetite and zeal and to not regret for the long hours [of working], otherwise history will be reburied for years to come or forever.

(Bourniotis 1991, p.14; see also Appendix 4, extract 9)

Indeed, the influence of official discourse could not be denied. After all, he had already completed eight years of working experience in the Archaeological Ephoreia by the time he wrote the memoir. There he familiarised with official narratives about the past, related to notions about common national identity, continuity, and homogeneity of ‘the one Hellenism’ (see Chapter 5). The influence must have been even more powerful considering that many of the finds he discovered were being presented as embodying these kinds of notions.

On the other hand, the memoir’s evocation of an official language should not be construed as a passive acceptance of the official and deeply nationalist discourse. In fact, it entailed a fundamental distinction between the ‘history’ that official archaeology promoted for Aiani and the ‘story’ that Ilias had experienced and communicated. Although he repeatedly talked about his discoveries both prior to and after his involvement with archaeology (as a treasure-hunter and as an excavation worker), he never focused that much on the antiquities *per se*. For example, he often omitted to describe even the most basic characteristics of the objects he had discovered, as in their size, colour, shape, and so on. The lack of object-oriented narratives appeared ironic, especially considering his background in treasure-hunting, and considering that he experienced some of the most momentous discoveries during the excavation in Aiani. Consider for example the following conversation between Ilias and his wife Stergiani:

I went to do archaeology for nothing [i.e. without getting paid]. I went on Saturdays to work, and on Sundays. That is how I used to do it. And I would search everywhere and never sit down. I was searching everywhere. The things I used to find I gave to the archaeologists. Some golden things I

found once, over there at the tombs...they [the archaeologists] were at the Pnevmatiko, and I would go up there! I had found four- five of them. They were small like... gold...and then I found a big one...like...they call it the sun. And then I wonder...I have one query. I used to always walk around and find things. That was outside working-hours. However the workers who were getting paid to work there, I wonder, how could they have never found any of them?

*They would keep them [the finds]!*

Ha! They did keep them! I would not even bring them inside my house! Whenever I left them outside, she [Stergiani] would go ‘take it! take it from there and leave!’ So every time I found one I would take it to them [the archaeologists]. She used to say ‘They belong to dead people’...You are right! (Iliia addressed to Stergiani)

*Some earrings...they were dark colour...they were golden skins...like small pieces of skin. From dead people!*

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)



**Figure 8.3** The “golden things” (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2008).

The ‘gold things’ that Ilias referred to here, were some of the most projected ‘newsworthy’ material remains from Aiani (Figure 8.3). As the archaeologists described them, they were gold sheets with a sixteen-petal rosette stamped on them –the well known Macedonian star – which was found in this form only in Aiani and Vergina (L’ EPKA 2008, p. 51). By recalling that they were golden and that ‘they call it the sun’ Ilias pointed at the high quality and significance of these objects. However, the main purpose of his narrative was to emphasize that it was *him* who had achieved their discovery. The emphasis on the materiality and meaning of the finds that permeated the narrative of his memoir was therefore secondary. It was remarkable that the only physical characteristics

that he mentioned with regards to the archaeological objects he encountered were the functionality of an object (i.e. potsherd, bone, tub, tool, etc.) or group of objects (i.e. tomb, house) and the location of the archaeological site that they came from.

Following on from this observation, it could be argued that the fact that he normally neglected to mention or in some cases did not recall at all the symbolic or aesthetic significance of finds, carried important ramifications. It revealed an assessment of the past that in many ways did not fit in with the official discourse involving rigid notions and values of the past. As such, ‘the story of Aiani’ that Ilias narrated, identified with and ultimately wanted to ‘resurrect’, encapsulated a personal meaning and value of the past that went beyond fixed nationalistic feelings.

May I remind that the first paragraph of the memoir emphasized the low economic rewards and the harsh conditions when working in archaeology. Such words prepared the reader from the start that the ‘story’ that Ilias intended to unfold did not concern the physical properties or the symbolic (for the nation) traits of ancient materiality. Instead, it concerned the social conditions that surrounded his engagement with it. Evidently, it was the context of association with the material past that would comprise one of the memoir’s central themes; the “hard years” the “struggles and strain” the “big excitements”.

This was where the contradiction with official discourse is most evident: the memoir he wrote as well as the maps he produced reveal an ambiguous and complex fusion between the discourse of official archaeology and his self-identification with the past. Effectively, to contend that Ilias fully adhered to professionalised models would be inadequate. In this chapter, I examine Ilias’ personal conception of ancient materiality and his unique internalisation of official discourse through our conversations, as well as through the textual (maps and memoir) sources of ethnographic material.

## **8.4 Before archaeology**

The first day I visited Ilias with Damianos he seemed very excited to have an old friend around and talk about the times they once shared together. It had been very long since Damianos last visited him, and Ilias complained that they did not see each other as often

any more. He fetched a packet of Marlborough cigarettes to celebrate. He told me that a few years ago he suffered from a stroke and warned me that he could remember things the way he used to. He said that he would try his best for me, even though, as it proved in time, he was always reluctant to specify dates in terms of when things happened. He always told me that I should not ask him ‘when’ this or that had happened because he was too old to remember.

We spent that first afternoon we met on the little balcony of his one-storey home (Figure 8.1), which protruded only half a metre above a busy road. Passing locals on their way to the central square would continuously stop and warmly greet barmba-Liako. After that initial introduction and for many years after my ethnography was completed, I continued visiting Ilias. We shared long conversations on that same little balcony on sunny summer-days, or next to the stove during winter, inside the small and austere living room. He would talk to me about old times, when he could not afford the luxury of driving, and instead walked for hours just to reach his workplace; about modernisation’s effect as reflected through the growing absence of family bonding; about recent years and youngsters’ financial insecurity as experienced by members of his family, especially his grand and great-grandchildren; and above all else, about archaeology which represented such an important chapter in his life for reasons and in ways that I examine here.

Equally central was the kind and delicate presence of Ilias’ wife – Stergiani. If she was not distracted by house-work, she would often sit with us and tactfully contribute to the conversation. When I first met her I asked her if she felt the same devotion towards archaeology, and she responded that she was not educated (*ego den ksero grammata*). Ilias then added,

She does not care about it [archaeology]...there were some potsherds (*kerammides*) around., nothing important, and she would kick them away!

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

Ilias was born in 1930 in Aiani and – from what he remembered – he began to treasure-hunt when he was 15 years old. That was a time when Greece was experiencing the aftermath of the second-world war (1939-1945) and civil war (1946-1949) was underway. It was also a time that triggered stories – acquiring by now the status of ‘urban legends’ – about the existence of hidden treasures. According to public belief one story held that

when the Greek resistance was taking place against the Axis occupation of Greece during the second-world war, the British would send to the members of the Greek Peoples' Liberation Army (ELAS) golden sovereign coins in support of their war against the Axis. These coins would then be hidden within secret locales, which were marked with secret codes and identified only by the guerrilla fighters.

Ilias, like so many others living amongst the rural regions where the guerrilla fighting had taken place, set out to become avid treasure-hunters, in pursuit of deciphering the guerrilla codes and finding this gold. Needless to say, the existence of harsh economic conditions and poverty became the constant drives behind the pursuit of such treasure-hunting. Ilias claimed that harsh economic conditions endured even later in his life, where as an adult he frequently provided his labour "for free" as he wouldn't get paid for months. He would frequently change jobs depending on availability, spanning from stone-quarrying (lime, marble) to construction labour; he "went everywhere" (*paena pantou*). He called those years of hard work as "cruel" (*tyrranistika polu*).

In 1950 he married Stergiani, with whom he raised a family of four kids. The difficulty of responding to the persistent financial demands preserved his hope to find a piece of treasure that would change his life, and make it more financially secure. Unusual stories of luckier villagers who "erected blocks of flats in a matter of days" after discovering golden coins, continued to enchant the less fortunate ones like Ilias. In fact, "everybody was doing it" back then:

Groups after groups of two to three people would set off at night to search for the sovereign coins.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

He used to describe to me how they used to treasure-hunt when it was windy, so the sound of the hammers' digging would be concealed; how he paid attention to the smallest detail to spot the antiquity:

I would bend down on my knees and look at the colour of the earth that the ants carried coming out of holes in the ground. If it is terracotta then there are tombs underneath. You should know that.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

Ilias also mentioned other diggers who were equipped with ‘unique’ methods of spotting tombs, as some would often dream about potential treasure-spots, and set off to find them the following day. But he claimed that he never had any such dreams and he would often tease his digging mates who had dreamt of such treasure-hoards. In the end, Ilias never made any important discovery.

Someone came once to me and told me so and so... [about a grave that possibly had sovereign coins buried inside it]. There was no public transport then...So we set off [by foot] in the night with a torch to find it. We dug...and through the hole we stuck our heads inside and we pulled the earth from its interior to see what is there; we found two pots...rubbish (*kolokythia*). We were searching for sovereign coins. We cleared the pots...there was nothing there...what a poor guy (*talaiporos*) he [the dead] must have been.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

He would often mention incidents like the above, where nothing of economic value was ever discovered amongst the ruins. “They had nothing” he would argue. However, he never contemplated his treasure-hunting expeditions in a negative way; instead he would laugh about the sort of futility that characterised them. The humour with which he described aspects of similar expeditions, such as, the vain competition amongst unlucky ‘hunters’, the daftness that characterised many of the schemes that people came up with, turned the lack of discovery a trivial matter in the process of treasure-hunting.

## 8.5 Knowledge as property

It was in 1983 when the archaeological ephoreia was established in Kozani (see Chapter 5). Ilias got a job as an excavation worker and worked under a contract for a few years until he achieved retirement on a pension. Even when the contract ended though, he continued to actively participate in the excavations for long after his retirement. It was only when he suffered from health problems that he stopped. It was his heart condition, which prevented him from engaging in archaeological activities. When I met him in 2007 it had already been a few years that he was physically unable to move even beyond the walls of his own house. The one thing that Ilias seemed immensely upset about was that he could not take me to the places he spoke about. He would get even more upset about

the fact that he could no longer go out in the field and “find things”. He would often sigh with nostalgia for the old days when he was strong and efficient and say

If I could only walk again! I would find everything there is to find out there!

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

He genuinely believed that the only thing that restrained him was his powerless body, whilst his spirit was still permeated by the yearning to go ‘out there’ and discover. The thought that underpinned this lament was that he was unable to perform his ‘knowledge’ of the place – an ability in which he invested greatly.

The most important thing is to know your place of origin (*topos*). I know this place. If you know the place, you know the ground. That is the most crucial thing; and to be attentive. Girl, you need to be attentive.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

He knew where antiquity laid, because he had either searched the place during his treasure-hunting expeditions, or he knew how to identify new spots that had never been previously discovered. So, despite the fact that treasure hunting never brought him financial gain, it had vested in him this exclusive knowledge, his strong familiarity with the ‘ground’ (awareness of ground patterns) and with the landscape / topography of the region.

Years later, when Ilias drew the maps, he managed to record parts of it, so it survived for future generations. As he said, they were for his grandson “so he knows what is out there”. It could be argued that the fact that Ilias was planning to give these maps to his grandson, reflected a case of one special kind of endowment, a unique property, considering that its materiality embodied an exclusive collection of knowledge that only Ilias possessed. As he told me once, not all the sites in the maps had been visited by archaeologists, even though they were aware of their existence.

The conditions under which he employed and applied this knowledge as a treasure-hunter and as an excavation worker were certainly different. Of course when he spoke about it to me, he spoke from the standpoint of someone who had worked in official archaeology. Nevertheless, I couldn’t help but recognise a treasure-hunting resonance; dimensions of

treasure-hunting seemed to permeate his narratives about his interaction with the material past even when that referred to official contexts. So, I called attention upon the nature, formation and representation of his knowledge, and explored knowing the ‘place’ really meant and what the conditions underpinning its formation were. How was Ilias’ knowledge affected by and how did it affect official archaeology?

## **8.6 Implications of a vertical and visual representation**

My attempt to explore Ilias’ knowledge about the past started from his maps (Figures 8.4 and 8.5). They were non-accurate, two dimensional plans of regions surrounding his home-town of Aiani. They depicted a ‘vertical’ (in the sense of a plan) view of archaeological sites positioned amongst constructed (e.g. roads, private fields) and natural features (e.g. trees). The term ‘vertical’ is meant here in the sense that modern cartographers as well as cognitive mapping theorists use it where, “local particulars obtained by observation on the ground are fitted within an abstract conception of space so as to form a representation of the world as though one were looking down upon it from ‘up above’” (Ingold 2000: 227). Ilias claimed that he knew these places so well that he drew them all from memory:

I did it all inside this living-room.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

Throughout these vertical representations of geographic regions, Ilias also provided certain details, such as the owners of the fields where archaeological remains had been found or are waiting to be discovered. All maps were possibly connected with each other because when I examined them, a number of them seemed to cover regions of interconnected sites. Ilias also provided out-dated (pre- 1920s-30s) and in some cases contemporary toponyms. He included basic drawings of tombs (rectangular shapes) or drawings of circles to indicate archaeological remains. He rarely included any orientation (with the exception of some maps that had the N-S orientation) and neither did he include a scale. Evidently, these personal ‘topographic’ records of archaeological sites lacked even the most basic characteristics of modern, geographical mapping (which rendered me unable to confirm the veracity of the information depicted). Also, as in the most precise



cartographic examples, the congruence between the world and its representation was approximate as Ilias excluded many aspects of the landscape with which he had interacted, such as textures for example, or variegated surfaces, animal life and so on (cf. Ingold 2000, p.242).

Notwithstanding however all these cartographic limitations, I directed my attention towards the form in which Ilias had represented his knowledge, because it could lead me towards important aspects of his perception and knowledge of the material past. I therefore focused on matters such as the implications of his visualisation of places as well as the instigation and purpose behind its creation: why did he represent archaeology in a 'vertical' and visual way and what could that demonstrate about Ilias' perception of the past? Could these 'modes' of representation entail any implications of Ilias' encounter with official archaeology?

Bradley (2003) argued that the possibilities and constraints involved in field survey are different from those of excavation and hence the ways in which these methods define the treatment and interpretation of the material past are distinct. In particular, he argued that excavation "follows a geological metaphor and is based on the premise that time can be measured through the progressive superimposition of deposits" whereas field survey "works on the premise that the remains of past activity are still visible on the surface, even though they may have been created at different times from one another" (Bradley 2003, p.154). In effect he claimed that these two methods, if considered independently, could lead to misguided interpretations of the material past (for 'partiality' amongst phenomenological approaches in archaeological theory see Tilley 1994; 2004; for criticism of 'biased' phenomenological approaches see Hamilakis 2002).

When it comes to approaching archaeological sites (see Bradley 2003; Chadwick 1997; Hodder 1997; 2003), there are evidently constraints of specific methodological applications or cognitive presumptions. Such observation advocates the growing realisation within archaeological discourse that the way in which we know things, is bound by how we've learned to know them (Turnbull 1993). It was this recognition that drew my attention towards Ilias' treasure-hunting background in my attempt to explain his vertical approach to the material past.

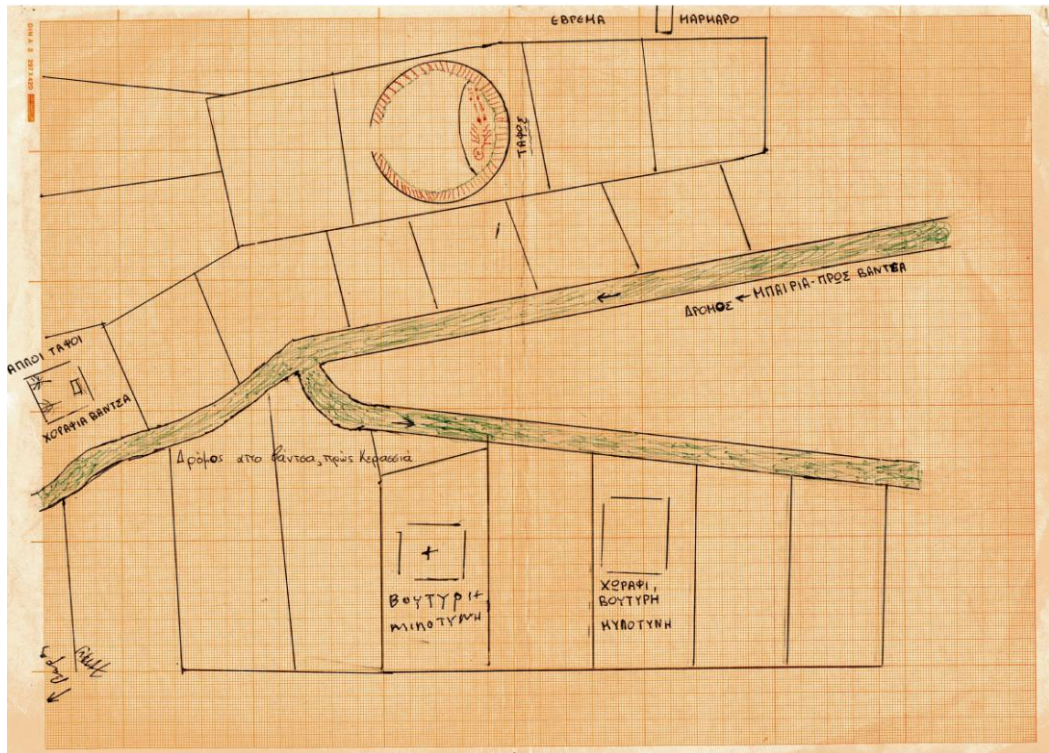


Figure 8.4 Map (Bourniotis 1999).

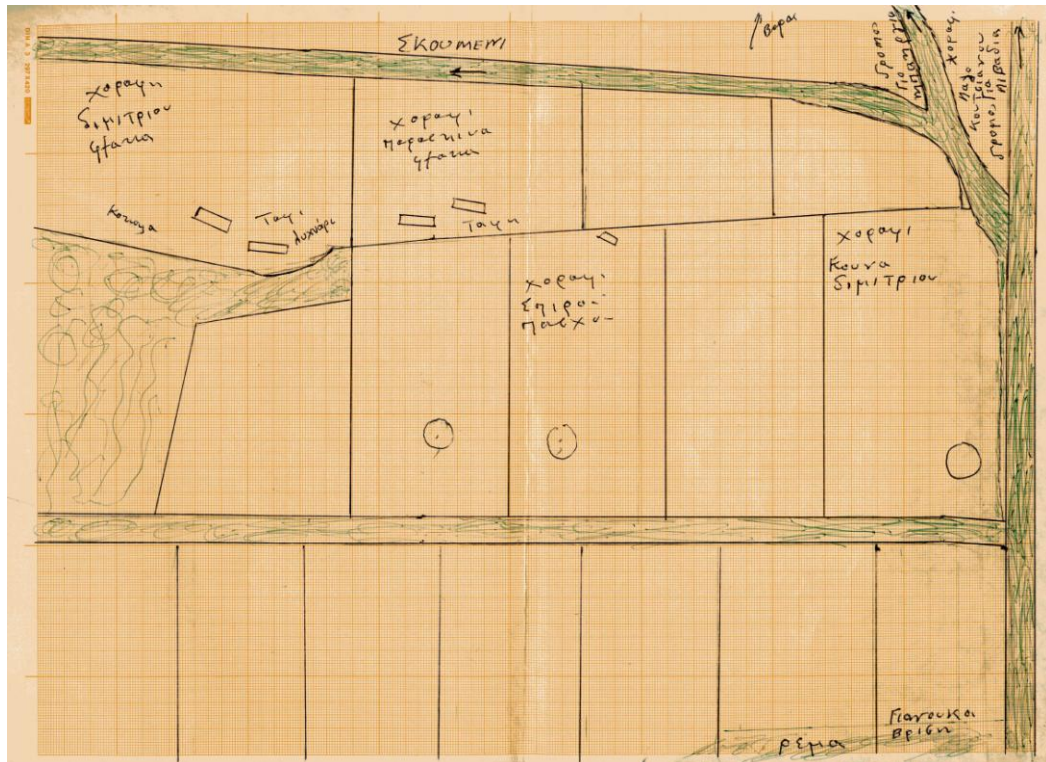


Figure 8.5 Map (Bourniotis 1999).

As mentioned earlier, Ilias' experience in treasure-hunting was pursued in the hope of discovering a way out of economic struggle. Eventually, he grew extremely competent in his knowledge where "strange-things" lay, namely, the visible locations of antiquities on the surface of the earth. However, even though he possessed this visual knowledge, it never brought him any actual economic advantages because none of the objects he had this way discovered ever managed to financially compensate him. However, when he joined the archaeological ephoreia and worked as an excavation worker, the value of this knowledge was reassessed, because in the context of archaeological excavations, any ability to recognise potential sites with antiquities was crucial – especially when excavations began in 1983.

I wanted to find things. I would then give it to Georgia [i.e. the Ephor] and she could do anything she wanted with it afterwards.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

Ilias became familiar with the official archaeological discourse which advocated a different value in antiquities in light of their historical and national importance. All 'strange things' therefore were rendered significant in the face of a common denominator: they comprised the 'archaeological record' that needed to be saved. As such, Ilias started to invest in his skill in spotting locations with antiquities and gradually capitalised on this visual knowledge of the landscape, because that led to important implications, because it established his role and efficiency as someone who uniquely contributed to the team because of that knowledge.

I had a mania in going and discovering. That's all. To have something to contribute.

(Ilias, personal communication, 2007)

Locations on the surface of a map and by implication on the landscape, respond to the question, where does one *see* antiquities and thus indicate a powerful visual metaphor. But was vision the predominant way in which Ilias had experienced his interaction with the landscape as a treasure-hunter and later as an excavation worker?

## 8.7 The past as seen

The visual knowledge obviously dominates the information presented on the maps. A visual figure of speech also imbues the first chapter in Ilias' memoir (see Appendix 4, extract 1). Besides stressing the awareness of 'our ancestors' history' (an official archaeological narrative), the chapter provides his own personal account of field survey methods. Ilias suggested various means for spotting archaeological sites. He talked of "observing", "seeing" and "watching out for patterns in the ground", as when he referred to its differences in the colour (levels of darkness) but even when he referred to its texture (softness, hardness). He also underlined the need to 'see' whether there one could spot antiquities in ditches or in caves, at lakes or near the rivers, at cultivated fields or near constructed roads, after rainfall or after a tide. Such language appeared visual in orientation whilst other sensory modalities were not elaborated upon. The visual language of his writing resembled the visualisation depicted in the maps. Consider the following passage:

In order to discover (*anakalypsoume*) tombs, we *watch out for* (*deihnoume pio polli prosohi*) bones and small potsherds that are of a very delicate size. The place where there is definitely a tomb, we *watch out for* (*prosehoume*) the differences in the colour of the ground. At the same time, we *closely examine* (*periergazomaste*) the potsherds in case they have any letters inscribed on them or seals. Also, we *observe* (*paratiroume*) whether there is any painting or anything odd-looking on top of pieces of marble or stones. In addition to the potsherds, we also encounter (*synantame*) stone tools in archaeological sites, such as whetstones or stone-mills and we often see chips of stone or marble. We do not disregard any of the potsherds or stone pieces we find, but we deliver them to the museum and make a record of it.

One way to discover ancient things (*arhaia*) is where streamlets are; we stand at the end of the streamlet and we *look very attentively* (*koitame me polli prosohi*). Also, we *observe* (*paratiroume*) the banks of the streamlet in case we find something there too. Archaeological sites are always close to places where there is water.

We also *look at* (*koitame*) the dirt-roads especially when it rains. When it rains, the following day we set off to search around before any trucks come and destroy the patterns on the ground.

Where there are bedrocks, we search whether there is any human figure revealed or some other rock-carvings and shapes. At the lake where the level of water rises or goes down, we can *see* how the waves break the earth and exposures are made. Bores can also expose a lot of things, such as pottery and other objects. Also, we *observe* the streamlines created by the irrigation systems in the

fields. There, a lot of things are *shown* [...] When we hear that someone is building a well, we go there and we *look at* the ground and we also *observe* the areas where there have been land clearings.

(Bourniotis 1991, pp. 4-5, emphasis added; see also Appendix 4, extract 1)

Considering both representations of Ilias' experience (maps, and first chapter of memoir), one could argue that Ilias depicted ancient materiality as if the only of its dimensions that were of matter was its location, which one 'sees' and identifies on the surface of the map or the earth. So I asked, was the sensory bias that was represented in the maps the way in which Ilias experienced the archaeological landscape as well? In other words, did the representation of the material past entailed for him a strictly visual experience?

The anthropology of the senses – as presented in the work of Howes (1991) and Classen (1993) – claims that the differences between perceptions of the world are attributable to the cultural differentiation in levels of emphasis upon the senses. It is therefore assumed that in a society where one sense predominates at the expense of other senses, people will apprehend the world differently from another context where another sense predominates. This approach is exemplified in the work of David Howes – a key figure in the anthropology of senses – who is concerned with how such cultural varieties of sensory experience lead to different perceptions of the world (1991). One fundamental thought that exemplifies this bias in the senses and consequent difference of perception is that the western tradition predominantly emphasizes the sense of vision and supports the visual aesthetic (Howes 1991). This has been a central argument for the instigation of anthropological studies on cultures and societies that favour auditory or olfactory senses and hence perceive the world differently (for a review of the anthropology of senses see Herzfeld 2006).

Despite the constructive insight of this field of anthropology into human perception, some of its suggestions raise controversy. One such criticism speaks of their evident treatment of human nature as a product of social conditioning since they place immense emphasis on 'making sense' of the world through cultural constructions of reality (cf. Ingold 2000, pp.243-287). A critique of the anthropology of the senses is not intended here, and neither is any overview of the distinction between physical and cultural perceptions of knowledge (the former concerning the registration of sensations by the



body and brain, the latter regarding the construction of representations in the mind). The body of literature is too extensive, surrounded by enough controversy to discourage any attempt for overview at this time and place. Suffice it to say that whilst having in mind the dangers of committing to a version of Cartesian mind/body dualism, I searched for other forms of sensory experience underpinning Ilias' experience with the landscape, which were not necessarily visible in their written metaphor.

In the maps that Ilias created and the language that he employed in the first chapter of his memoir, just because vision was singled out as a vehicle for the symbolic elaboration of the archaeological landscape, it did not mean that he neglected / undermined the sense of touch or smell, when he was there 'experiencing' it in the first place. After all, when Ilias was interacting with the archaeological landscape he was not employing only the sense of sight. He had to crawl into a cave to be able to 'see' the rock-carvings, or had to touch the ground to 'see' whether it is soft or hard, to dig deep with his hands to 'see' that there is archaeology underneath. Ultimately, he incorporated his whole body into the landscape in order to 'see' the material past in it (Figure 8.6).



**Figure 8.6** Ilias at excavations in Aiani (Bourniotis ca.1991).

Ilias' drawings manifested one domain of sensory experience, but not because he was sensing the material past through vision alone. To my understanding, he emphasized and

communicated the visual aspect of his knowledge of interaction with the material past because it was the kind of information that had mattered in the context of archaeological excavations. As was mentioned earlier, Ilias had fundamentally and for a very long time invested in his 'vertical' and visual knowledge of the landscape. Whilst being a treasure-hunter and later, an excavation worker, what had mattered was "where things lay". Ilias invested on and articulated the experience of 'seeing' the material past and by implication, of locating, spotting it. Evidently, the verbal convention that Ilias consistently used was the one that allowed him to be useful and productive.

## **8.8 The past as felt**

Ingold (2000, p.219) suggested that "places do not have locations but histories", because one gets to know a place by situating his/her current position not within the space of journeys but, within their historical context. So far I have argued that Ilias paid attention to 'locations' of the material past, because this form of knowledge led to advantageous implications for him in the contexts of both treasure-hunting and professional archaeology. In the memoir however, Ilias illustrated the stories that underpinned his memory inscription of locations of ancient materiality and that was where his emotions and senses were expressed.

The idea that materiality embodied human action was a familiar notion to Ilias. Being an indigenous of Aiani and having descended from a line of family that was also indigenous to the broader region of Aiani, facilitated the direct impact of the physical landscape upon his perception of family history. He would often point his finger and indicate places (mountains, rivers / villages, houses, etc.), as if with a simple turn of my head I'd be able to see them right in front of me; places where his great-grandfathers came from, or places where he worked hard, or treasure-hunted in the night, or walked bare-foot, drank cold water on a hot day, rested under a tree, etc. These places were not some mere physical surroundings; they comprised the history of the landscape, created through an embodied and sensorial interaction.

This was also the case in reference to the material past as well. As a treasure-hunter, he conceived of the past's materiality as a means to an economic end. It was comprised of

“strange things”, of dead people whom he never met; of people who were “poor” and whose material world never managed to change Ilias’ struggle in life. He never told me anything more about these ‘dead’ people, or about their ‘things’ because they were not central to the places he remembered. Instead, it was the feeling and the tangibility of engagement that instigated the story of the places where he treasure-hunted. This is manifest in his story of Aiani.

Just to illustrate an example, consider the following passage:

The *anxiety and the passion* that we had with the archaeologist Mrs Karamitrou-Mentesidi and Damianos Penoglidis and the rest of the guys, all of whom worked without the necessary tools or methods. Nothing was found in the first day, a few stones unfit for construction and a few potsherds. The second day we started work *whilst feeling passion and desperation*. As we were working, around the afternoon I *was lucky* enough to find a large tub. I called immediately for the archaeologist, Mrs Karamitrou, and *with tears of joy* she saw it and we immediately cleaned it from inside and outside and we found more of them nearby, and then she took a photo of me and the tubs. The next day we started from the foundation of the houses and proper work began. We *were anxious*, and *the weather was against us, rain, lightning and fogs*. But we *did not have a roof to protect our heads*; there was a hole in the caves but we *were scared of the lightning*. One day it was raining a lot and we had to leave. We set off on foot [...] it *was flooded* and we could not cross over. We *got drenched* and the place was flooded because of the rain. We went through the *swampy fields*, holding only our shoes in our hands in order to cross over from the bridge at Koutsira the Viro, on the road from Kozani to Aiani. We carried a *heavy load* and we *struggled for an hour* in order to get to the village. There I understood that the *weight that Georgia was carrying* with the photographic cameras and the books, whilst we only *carried our food*; she would only *eat some dry bread with tomatoes*.

(Bourniotis 1991, p. 7, emphasis added; see also Appendix 4, extract 2)

The features that he repeatedly emphasized about the places he went to did not concern the material past itself, but the emotional and physical, embodied encounters with objects, the landscape and people (Figure 8.7). He invested in the sensory and affective memory of the place, which provided the ground upon which new meanings were layered. He performed in the present the pleasures (emotions of happiness, excitement) and the pain (harsh, physical conditions) from encountering the material past. As a member of the archaeological team, he evidently never passively internalised official discourse (e.g. the national significance of the past). Instead, his interaction with ‘the past’ was embodied, sensory and emotional, and constructed a meaning of the past that was not fixed, but



inherently adaptable and open-ended. Ilias, therefore, constructed a connection to the material past not by evoking a passive adoption of official codes, but through performing somatic orientations and affective assessments of the material past, directed by his personal experience with the archaeological landscape.

Emotions	Sensuous and physical conditions
<p> <i>anxiety</i>  <i>passion (x2)</i>  <i>desperation</i>  <i>lucky with tears of joy</i>  <i>anxious</i>  <i>scared of the lightning</i>  <i>struggled for an hour</i>  <i>very upset about Georgia</i>  <i>too stressed</i>  <i>felt sorry</i>  <i>the heat will kill us</i>  <i>full of zeal and enthusiasm</i>  <i>burst into laughing</i>  <i>went crazy from joy</i>  <i>cried</i>  <i>felt so deeply affected that if we had wings</i>  <i>we would fly whilst sounding the horn and screaming!</i>  <i>fellow villagers stood by us</i>  <i>enthusiasm and time</i>  <i>joy</i>  <i>strength to walk</i> </p>	<p> <i>without the necessary tools</i>  <i>weather was against us</i>  <i>rain</i>  <i>lightning</i>  <i>fogs</i>  <i>did not have a roof to protect our heads</i>  <i>raining a lot</i>  <i>on foot</i>  <i>it was flooded and we could not cross over</i>  <i>got drenched</i>  <i>place was flooded</i>  <i>through the swampy fields</i>  <i>holding only our shoes in our hands</i>  <i>heavily loaded</i>  <i>the weight that Georgia was carrying</i>  <i>eat some dry bread with tomatoes</i>  <i>incredible heat (x2)</i>  <i>would not eat any bread</i>  <i>lost track of time</i>  <i>it was noon and we were getting ready to leave</i>  <i>took my shirt off</i>  <i>getting close to leaving</i>  <i>after ploughing the field</i>  <i>extreme heat</i>  <i>amongst the trees and the snakes</i>  <i>every-day brought us food and pie and coffees</i>  <i>one morning</i>  <i>next to the river, on top of abrupt rocks</i>  <i>wonderful landscape</i>  <i>die on top of Megali Rachi</i>  <i>felt dizzy</i> </p>

**Figure 8.7** Ilias' emotions and embodied encounters (Bourniotis ca.1991).

## 8.9 Conclusion

After the establishment of the Archaeological Ephoreia in Kozani in 1983, Ilias' involvement in archaeological excavations rendered a re-organisation of his perception of 'ancient things' (*arhaia*) as he called them. He invested in the visual and vertical knowledge because it facilitated him to discover archaeological sites. I argued that such knowledge acted as a means through which Ilias was distinguished amongst the archaeological team. The form of engagement that he continued to perform, however, was powerfully infused with personal characteristics, stemming from his every-day life and previous fields of practice. Whilst treasure-hunting, Ilias had formulated a sense of ancient materiality that was determined by an emotional, embodied intimacy with the earth and landscape. This emotional and sensory engagement and perception remained the only way in which he drew insight and meaning into the material past.

The narratives that Ilias constructed in relation to the material past, instead of conventional stories about national symbols and cultural continuities, were comprised of embodied experiences and emotional journeys, personal memories and conceptions. Ultimately, the close look at the content of the narrative itself revealed much more than obedience to official agendas, as it illustrated a unique fusion between official and local apparatuses.

In the maps and the first chapter of his memoir, Ilias visualised the material past, yet in the rest of the memoir he adopted a multi-sensorial approach in his engagement with it. So the fact that locations and sights of the material past were juxtaposed to emotional and physical engagements constituted an important dimension of his experience. To my understanding, this double emphasis on the senses suggested a distinction between two genres of knowledge and meanings regarding the past: one linked to the past's materiality and the other to the materiality of the engagement with it. Isolated vision appeared to express the knowledge of where the material remains were (material remains emphasized primarily for their location), whereas multi-sensory experience and the emotions expressed what they meant to him (material remains as a platform for a sensuous engagement).



# CHAPTER 9

## CONCLUSION

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### 9.1 Reflection

I always feared the task of reducing the ‘irreducibility of human experience’ and even after the completion of this thesis I am reluctant to say that I did justice to phenomenon that I set out to observe, record, deconstruct and discuss. On the other hand, this thesis embodies a sincere effort to represent the world that I wished to learn about, and which I and my research participants lived in, experienced, felt constrained by, and simultaneously created. For the sake of that sincerity, it is important to outline as well as reflect upon some basic arguments that were put forward in this thesis.

### 9.2 Looking for the ‘looting’ to deconstruct

Before embarking on the fieldwork, I was prepared for the discrepancy between established, official views and diverging, non-professional attitudes and practices – after all, that was what I had been exposed to when studying the literature on looting. On one hand, professionalised codes of ethics and practice established a dominant definition of and treatment towards behaviours not complying with archaeological norms. On the other hand, sporadic ethnographic approaches drew attention upon practices, settings and meanings of behaviours that were excluded by dominant discourse (e.g. Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004, Matsuda 1998, Paredes-Mauri 1996). As such, prior to entering the field, the fundamental objective that I had in mind was to deconstruct a solid and monolithic concept of ‘looting’ by delving into the perspectives and practices of the so-called looters.

However during fieldwork, a crucial realisation, one that in fact reiterated itself during the whole course of my research, was the idea that practices towards the past do not fit inside neat categories. Here I do not only refer to non-professional engagements with the

past that the law or official archaeology evaluates as illegal whilst the non-professional thinks otherwise (such as the examples seen in the literature review). I also refer to when official archaeologists approach engagements in an ambiguous manner and simultaneously, when the engagements do not evoke a singular, clear message. In other words, when official archaeology neither fully sanctions nor fully condemns a non-professional engagement, and when, non-professional diggers neither fully adhere to nor fully resist professionalised norms and practices. The uniqueness and diversity of the forms of and approaches to non-professional engagements that I encountered during fieldwork were creating an uncomfortable position that I was (naively) not prepared for.

This led me to a series of questions: what was the subject of my inquiry, when the non-professional engagements I was observing reflected unclear messages, or when, the archaeologists' response towards them seemed ambiguous? Was I missing the unified concept, the categorical basis I was seeking to deconstruct? Where was the looting that archaeologists defined, established and fought against? More crucially, was I missing the neat categories of resistance (non-professional actors) and oppression (professional archaeology) that I set out to explore? Ultimately, a central issue that deeply concerned me was the theorisation and definition of the practices that I eventually witnessed, especially when these carried diverse and often conflicting meanings, depending on the person asked.

In time, these issues proved crucial in helping me adjust the direction of my inquiry and deal with the rather ambiguous 'looting' cases I was encountering. As mentioned in previous chapters, I spoke to many people before selecting certain individuals for a more in-depth and frequent interaction. Those selected were non-professional diggers, whose actions were/are defined as 'looting' (although not necessarily treated as such) by professional archaeologists. They passionately searched for (in the past or at present) and collected material remains on a frequent basis, however, without the sale of objects being their primary concern.

As such, the forms of digging that I eventually included in this thesis could not have been referred to as 'looting' in my terminology. In George's case, archaeologists perceived him as a looter, but that did not necessarily accord with what another authority claimed, namely, the Ministry of Culture, when his collection became officially recognised. They

also defined his digging as ‘undocumented’, even though he documented his excavations in his own way. In fact, the narratives he constructed often adhered to archaeological norms, and pursued some level of scholarly authority. In the case of Nikos, even though archaeologists viewed his activities as a borderline case of looting, he never bore the full consequences of such identification and more importantly, he did not think of himself as a looter. In Ilias’ case, even though he operated inside a professional archaeological field, he never let go of his treasure-hunting instincts. Also, even though he produced his own manual of archaeology, he simultaneously ignored basic archaeological norms. In effect, my attempt to theorise and define my main participants’ forms of digging was constantly complicated by the fact that their discourse evoked simultaneous adherence and resistance to the discourse of official archaeology.

So, if there was one way to refer to the regular, physical, and yet, non-commercial engagements with the material past that I studied during fieldwork and presented in this thesis, it was simply ‘non-professional’. Words such as unofficial or undocumented could not characterise all cases at once, and also would not make clear the vantage point from which such classifications were claimed – that of the law, the official archaeologists, or the non-professional diggers themselves? Viewing engagements as non-professional, allowed me to move beyond singular or essentialising concepts that are so often presented with regards to the form, instigation, purpose, or meaning underlying non-professional engagements with material remains (Roosevelt and Luke 2006a, pp.180-182; see also Roosevelt and Luke 2006b). It also allowed me to disentangle my approach from dualities such as archaeology versus looting, ethical engagement versus unethical engagement, hegemony versus resistance, nationalist versus indigenous. Instead, I called attention upon *the process of physical interaction with the material past*. Naturally, I was embroiled into observing not what things were but how they were created, and how they interacted with each other. Effectively, in this thesis I attempted to discuss the (politics of) *physical control over the material past* and delved into:

- The reasons and ways underpinning agents’ physical control of and interference with the material past
- The creative effects and meanings generated from this control: the constitution of knowledge about the past, and the construction of power and identity.

As such, I did not offer a theory of ‘what looting is’. Rather, I suggested ways of approaching physical interactions with the material past, based on the experiences of three ordinary people and their links to the institution of official archaeology in Kozani. In what follows, I summarise my basic arguments in relation to why and how agents physically interfered with the material past, and what were the implications of such practices.

### **9.3 Official archaeology: assumptions and material implications**

The anticipation of an authoritative disclosure of meaning is the means by which that authority is attributed and installed: the anticipation conjures its object.

Judith Butler

In my thesis, I have attempted to approach certain archaeological ‘truths’ and essentialisms, which, when considered according to Butler’s approach, could otherwise be interpreted as assumptions that ended up producing the phenomena that they anticipated. Three of those crucial assumptions/anticipations, at a time when both nationalism and archaeology were first being conceived and established, concerned the:

1. sacredness of antiquity: the idea that ancient materiality embodied nationalist ideals
2. archaeological protection: the idea that the official preservation and study of ‘sacred’ antiquities is essential because it benefits society
3. archaeological interventions: the idea that officially driven physical interventions upon the material past comprise the only scientific and ethical treatment of antiquity

The means that were used for the installation of these archaeological “truths” involved the materialisation/pursuit of antiquities’ protection in the form of physical interventions, as if antiquity indeed was the body of the nation (Hamilakis 2007). Physical interventions involved meaningful actions and performances, such as demarcation of sites and objects through processes of purification, preservation, and collection. Simultaneously, as the

notion of antiquity's protection was establishing itself, its 'other' was also being defined and reproduced. Here I refer to the distinction between protection versus destruction (or, modernist versus indigenous approaches to the past), which denoted a distinction between a notion of ethical engagement towards ancient materiality against categories of immoral treatments.

The material and ideological effects that were gradually born out of and simultaneously facilitated the preservation of these assumptions, were the:

1. archaeological record: sacred archaeological artefacts (national symbolic capital) and official archaeological knowledge
2. professionalised archaeological self: archaeological institution
3. archaeological consciousness, laws and ethics

So, from what has been discussed in the thesis, if I was to outline the advantages of archaeological "truths" and the motives underpinning their promotion and facilitation, I would argue that they construct and most importantly, preserve professionalised archaeology's

1. exclusive authority: centralised control over the physical and symbolic dimension of antiquity
2. hierarchy of antiquity's value: concentration of symbolic value in select objects and sites (i.e. select material and conceptual components of national symbolic capital) that suit the ideals of society (e.g. nationalist ideals)
3. exclusive social and ideological power
4. 'otherness' (e.g. notions of destruction/looting) and its distinction from sanctioned/disciplined behaviour towards the material past



### ***9.3.1 National symbolic capital***

In Chapters 4 and 5 it was shown how archaeological interventions upon the material past, enabled the coupling of the material form (remains) with potent symbolism (dominant national rhetoric and meanings); i.e. the transformation of the material remains into symbolic capital. As such, it was shown that the production of symbolic capital is inherently colonising (cf. Appadurai 1995), in the sense that it involves the assertion of socially and ideologically organised control over ancient materiality, which is often exclusively performed by official authority. For example, when the Greek state was in the process of establishing its symbolic capital, the social and ideological enforcement of the official producers' control over the material past was a crucial stage. Therefore, deliberate actions towards ancient materiality were executed, and more importantly, they were executed exclusively by official agents assigned by the State. Such actions involved the separation of antiquities 'from the web of daily life' and their "ordered and organised, material transformation [...] into national monuments, into material landmarks and signifiers of the national locality; in other words the production of a new, national monumental landscape" (Hamilakis 2007a, pp.122, 86).

This control over ancient materiality was an ideologically and socially organised power, because it was the ideological conception of the past as a 'sacred' resource ('archaeological record') that foregrounded the social organisation of official agents (the professional archaeologists) who controlled the past. This is still true today. In fact, it might be fair to say that this power to produce the past, which has been dominant and exclusive since the creation of the Greek State, has disguised its colonising effect under the ethical facade of 'stewardship'; effectively this official assertiveness is viewed as rather a routine, rested on the hands of a 'responsible' and 'ethical' few yet, ironically, in pursuit of a 'common good'.

Another important aspect that was emphasized in this thesis was that the creation of a national symbolic capital largely affects the potential of the construction of other symbolic capitals of the nation. It was shown how the creation of a national symbolic capital is often coupled with the 'marginalisation' of physical spaces from the symbolic repertoire of the nation, since this process creates symbolic and conceptual standards, which antiquities have to meet in order to become national symbols (Chapter 6). The

symbolism that classical relics carried when they were established as the symbolic capital of the nation, immediately established ideological and symbolic requirements (the classical profile, features of glory and richness, unified and homogeneous identity), which other relics had to be measured up against, if they were to embody equal symbolic significance. As such, it was shown that the symbolic capital's inherent colonising effect does not only assert organised control over physical spaces, but, it imposes the dominance of ideological preferences and agendas, which physical spaces have to follow if they want to become elevated into national symbols. The symbolic marginalisation of sites, which had clearly affected the belated construction of Kozani's national symbolic capital, created a sort of Achilles heel for official authority: although archaeologists have instituted the exclusive right to physically engage with the past, their mark on the national symbolic capital remains to be accomplished.

### ***9.3.2 Construction of self and other***

Since every search for identity includes differentiating oneself from what one is not, identity politics is always and necessarily a politics of the creation of difference (Chapter 2). One such thing is the 'archaeological record' at the degree to which one is not an 'art object' or an 'unprovenanced' antiquity. A certain practice is defined as archaeology at the degree to which it is not 'uncontrolled' destruction. This discourse is obviously divisive, ultimately sustaining a tension between the interests of the archaeologist and others.

The professionalised matrix requires something to negate or overcome. The legal or the ethical code which prohibits and condemns 'destruction' (unlicensed engagements) simultaneously invents and invites it in order to establish its own coherence and superiority. If the 'record'/excavation regulates the production of discrete symbolic capitals and if that production requires the prohibition and sanction of alternative entities/engagements, then the latter emerge as a culture or social action which must be produced in order to remain repressed. In other words, for the record to distinguish as a distinct symbolic capital or for the archaeologist to stand out as the professionalised self, an intelligible form of 'other' is required.

Looting is therefore critical in this respect. In this thesis I hope to have shown that it provides the platform where archaeological discourse delineates and empowers (at its best) its distinct professionalised norms and role. It is as if this form of destruction forms the constant incentive for the professionalised self to establish and define itself. When professionalised archaeology was being constructed (codified, institutionalised), so was 'destruction'. Inevitably, 'destruction' became and still exists as the contrast to professionalised practice (illegitimate, illegal, unlicensed, unauthorised, undocumented, uncontrolled, unprofessional, unethical, unofficial, senseless, etc.); the constant 'threat' that maintains the purpose and the form of professionalised action.

#### **9.4 Non-professional actors and their response to official discourse**

Some of the questions that were explored in terms of the interaction between official archaeological discourse and local, non-professional physical engagements with the material past were: Was official discourse always underpinning non-professional engagement with the material past? What was the extent of its involvement/impact before the establishment of the Archaeological Ephoreia in Kozani? What changed in peoples' engagements with the material past after the establishment of Kozani's archaeological ephoreia?

My participants' engagement with ancient materiality, even before the 1980s, was to some extent influenced by the awareness of objects' antiquity and sacredness. For George and Nikos their tertiary education was crucial. Also significant were the archaeological developments that elevated Vergina into a prominent symbol of the nation. For Ilias, it was his awareness of antiquities' rarity and symbolic value that instigated him to invest in treasure-hunting for financial gain. As such, certain aspects of dominant archaeological discourse had to some extent influenced the perceptions and practices of my participants before the establishment of the ephoreia in Kozani.

Of course George, Nikos and Ilias valued the past for different reasons and in different ways. Equally, their behaviour towards its material dimension was diverse. There was diversity in the treatment towards antiquities, but most importantly, there was a space

that allowed that diversity to occur. This was created by the absence of the regulation of non-professional behaviour. Non-professional engagement with the material past was felt as a 'right' and it was facilitated by the sense of 'ownership'. Local surroundings, the landscape and its earth were considered as their own, because they were ingredients in their continuing lives (Connerton 2009).

After the establishment of the ephoreia however, certain behaviours towards ancient materiality were modified or adjusted. Thus far, the way through which my participants encountered the official agenda was through education and the media. Afterwards it was through experiencing the official discourse's interventions and products directly. Excavations in Kozani and the presence of the ephoreia marked a sudden and forceful articulation of a physical and direct expression of official archaeological discourse, one that took place inside my informants' local environments. Witnessing official archaeology's physical interactions and outcomes gave my participants a direct sense of official discourse. Embodiments of physical interventions that inscribed sacredness and authority profoundly communicated official discourse, and it did not take long until it also inspired/instigated or influenced a social response.

Education of 'archaeological consciousness' and more importantly, restriction or exclusion of non-professional interventions created an embodied sense of official discourse. Moreover, as Aiani was being elevated into a national symbolic capital, my participants were simultaneously witnessing how the 'protection' of the past was not actually serving 'their benefit', since their meanings and values were not amongst the ones defended.

To my participants' understanding, archaeology failed to protect the meanings for which the past had been valued for them and prevented them from projecting and communicating these meanings themselves. My participants were also witnessing how that protection linked to the exclusive control over the past as the enactment of the professionalised self, was gradually leading to the prevention of their engagement. Their attitudes and engagements towards ancient materiality were categorised as an unaccepted behaviour or destruction. On behalf of the local archaeological ephoreia, it was argued that these individuals – through their undocumented digging and unauthorised collecting – prevent the safety of the material past, pursue self-serving interests, and ultimately

oppose official archaeological authority and ethics (Karamitrou-Mentesidi, personal communication, August 2007). The behaviour that official archaeology allowed around antiquities was very specific and some of the implications were the following: George's practice to be openly opposed as illegal Nikos' engagement to be warned to be dangerous and Ilias' practice to be relocated into an observed and professionally directed context (archaeological excavations).

Official archaeology in Kozani therefore, did not introduce a new perception (i.e. national symbolic capital), or behaviour (ethical, legal) with regards to the material past, but it rendered them intelligible and it enacted their exclusivity. It was the formation of professionalised identity, and the differentiation of the 'other', coinciding with the loss of 'rights', the interruption, or restriction of pre-existing behaviours and perceptions. Professionalised control over the past and official knowledge comprised the only intelligible behaviour and perception, whilst my participants became excluded and 'othered'. Although official archaeology to some extent tolerated their unaccepted behaviours, my participants were far from behaving in the way that official archaeology commanded. Local backgrounds and contexts had instigated and nourished perceptions and manners that couldn't have been fully embraced or sanctioned by official archaeology.

George especially found himself 'on the other side of the line', categorised as the one that official archaeology was 'against' and so the establishment of official discourse coincided with George's antagonistic behaviour. Nikos adjusted his engagement with the past, establishing a unique relationship with archaeology's authority, as he would hold antiquities, but only for restricted periods of time. For Ilias, official discourse allowed his treasure-hunting skills to flourish in a professionalised context, giving him the same perhaps advantages (the thrill of the hunt and pursuit of status) but without the danger of illegitimacy.

As such, in George's case official archaeology's physical interventions were uniquely adopted, since he appropriated a state-sanctioned desire for the creation of symbolic capital, which he materialised however in a way that suited local objectives and interests. In the cases of Nikos and Ilias, there was an idiosyncratic adjustment of their physical interventions after the establishment of Kozani's ephoreia. In any case, however, there

was never a passive or full incorporation of official discourse. Instead, each case involved a unique internalization, forming idiosyncratic symbolic places that were based on objects and concepts which were not necessarily part of official embodiments and definitions of sacredness.

Physical engagement with ancient materiality offered not only a connection with the official notion of 'sacredness' that was assumed of antiquity, but more importantly, the chance to wield its symbolic potential, and to adjust it in producing an idiosyncratic meaning. So it was as much about manoeuvring an assumption or embodiment of 'sacredness' as it was about asserting the capacity to create new symbolic meaning. However, since antiquity was vested with 'sacredness' due to its key position within national imagination, physical access to relics was officially controlled and as such, the capacity to wield symbolic meaning remained exclusive. As a result, all non-professional physical control over antiquity that evoked alternative symbolic meaning could only have only developed outside the legal and ethically accepted standards of behaviour.

In this thesis I argued that these actions evoked unique responses and adaptations in relation to official agenda, centred upon the latter's exclusive physical control over the material past and the symbolic meaning that it linked to. At the same time however, I illustrated that these dynamics shared some ideological ground with official agenda, because both official and unofficial agents endorsed and defended the same profound objective: the control over the materiality and symbolic value of antiquity.

## **9.5 Identifying 'culture' in looting phenomena**

The actors responsible for the non-professional physical engagements with the material past explored in this thesis did not passively subscribe to official discourse. Simultaneously however, they neither fully opposed archaeological discourse. Perhaps this mirrors the paradox/complexities of modernist archaeology as argued by Hamilakis (2007). If official archaeology in Greece embodied pre-modernist traditions, why should one expect non-professional interaction with the past to suddenly break free from prior local/idiosyncratic impulses, fully absorb official discourse and, become ordered, disciplined and controlled? When we are dealing with people whose relationship with

their surroundings forms a powerful, crucial part of their every-day life, then, their pre-existing forms and meanings of engagement with antiquities can only operate as a filter through which official orders are received. Are they examples, therefore, of destruction of the past and resistance to official discourse? Perhaps most obviously this could stand for George's case, since the visibility and impact of his 'other' (official archaeology) was the factor that had encouraged his open antagonism with aspects of official discourse. Nikos on the other hand did not pursue an open antagonism with official archaeology but he created a 'safe' space that allowed him to operate in his own unique way. And Ilias, even inside a disciplined context, he still managed to uphold and pursue digging in a treasure-hunting way.

Surely these people acted within particular socio-cultural contexts, but, their practices could not comprise a bounded category in themselves, namely, a culture of looting, destruction, resistance or whatever. Here, it is perhaps appropriate to refer to the answer I gave to Yvonne Marshall in response to the following question during my upgrade examination "Why do you situate these kinds of engagements within a discussion of looting? Would it not be better had you discussed them as examples of 'indigenous' archaeology in Greece?" Even though there were grounds to view the non-professional engagements I was encountering as 'archaeology' (in its pre-modernist sense as argued by Hamilakis 2008), it still seemed inappropriate to discuss them (or looting for that matter) as an 'indigenous archaeology' in Greece. This was mainly because I was dealing with individual cases of interaction with the material past that were not necessarily condoned by entire local communities, and, more importantly, could not be classified as part of a local 'culture' or behaviour.

To recall what was mentioned earlier in this chapter, these physical engagements did not fit into neat categories, and thus, treating them as 'indigenous' or 'archaeology', even in the widest sense of the terms, would have perhaps prevented me from embracing the uniqueness of each individual case or from eliciting the diversity and versatility of interaction with material remains. This does not mean that there were no correspondences between them, or that it was not the same larger processes (nationalism, dominance of official archaeology, and so on) each time, playing their part. Indeed, I was very much drawn by the wider questions of who, under what conditions, on what grounds and, with what implications does one establish the treatment of the past? It was under this

light that in the chapters that preceded, non-professional engagements with the past were viewed as practices whose form, instigation, meaning, and purpose transcended the individual, and inter-linked with local and wider processes, most important being the discursive fields of identity and power.

Ultimately, with regards to the question whether ‘looting’ responds to a cultural category, I argue that it does. However, by saying this I *do not* mean a culture of destruction, profit and folklore. Instead, I allude to a wider, global culture of categorising (professional vs. unprofessional), including, excluding (accepted vs. unaccepted behaviours), and ranking (national symbolic capital vs. marginalised capitals). Therefore the notion of looting as a ‘culture of destruction and profit’ could only act as a screen to camouflage the larger, global, more pressing and fundamental structures of power inequality that pervades all contemporary social life. In view of that, what defined my so-called looters’ behaviour was not the desire to make profit, but the desire to be involved in the construction of their past’s national symbolic capital and to be accepted and recognised by their communities and official authorities.





# APPENDICES

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## Appendix 1

Lists of dates and events mentioned in thesis.

### Greek Nationalism and Archaeology

Late 17 <sup>th</sup> c.	<i>Social middle class circulates ideologies that praised notions of independence and liberalism.</i>
18 <sup>th</sup> c.	<i>Neo-Hellenic enlightenment develops.</i>
1813	<i>The Society of Friends of the Arts (Philomousos Etaireia) is founded.</i>
1821	<i>The Greek War of Independence against Ottoman rule breaks out.</i>
1822	<i>The first constitution for an independent Greece is drafted.</i>
1824	<i>Ritual purification of Athens.</i>
1827	<i>Prohibition of the sale and transfer of antiquities outside Greece by Resolution of the Third National Assembly of Troezen.</i>
1828	<i>Count Ioannis Kapodistrias arrives in Greece as its first president.</i>
1829	<i>Ioannis Kapodistrias establishes the first National Museum in Aegina and Andreas Moustoxydis</i>

	<i>constitutes a preliminary draft of an archaeological law.</i>
1830	<i>The Fallmerrayan dispute over the descent of Greeks arises.</i>
1832	<i>The Treaty of Constantinople between Britain, France, Russia and the Ottoman Empire modifies Greece's boundaries.</i>
1833	<i>Arrival of Bavarian Prince Otto of Wittelsbach in Greece as its first king. The affairs of state were managed by a Bavarian regency because he was a minor.</i>
	<i>The Archaeological Service is founded as part of the Ministry of Education by Royal Decree.</i>
1834	<i>Athens becomes the capital of Greece and Leo von Klenze assists in the planning process.</i>
	<i>The first Archaeological Law of Greece is instituted 'On scientific and technological collection, on the discovery and conservation of antiquities and the use thereof'.</i>
1836	<i>The Archaeological Committee (Arhaiologiki Epitropi) is founded.</i>
1837	<i>The Archaeological Society is founded.</i>
end of 19 <sup>th</sup> c.	<i>Indigenous Hellenism develops.</i>
1860 -1874	<i>Paparrigopoulos publishes the History of the Greek Nation.</i>
1899	<i>Archaeological Law 2646/1899 (BMXΣΤ') is instituted.</i>

1932	<i>Archaeological Law 5351/32 'On antiquities' ('peri arhaiotiton') is instituted.</i>
2002	<i>Archaeological Law 'On the protection of antiquities and cultural heritage in general' ('gia tin prostasia ton arhaiotiton kai en genei tis politistikis klironomias') is instituted.</i>

### **Greek Macedonia and Kozani.**

1380s	<i>Ottoman occupation of what is now known as Greek Macedonia.</i>
1903	<i>A 'Macedonian Committee' founded by Greek officers to counter Bulgarian claims in Macedonia.</i>
1912	<i>Greece and its allies Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro defeat the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War.</i>
1913	<i>The Second Balkan War fought between former allies – Bulgaria against Greece and Serbia; Bulgaria defeated.</i>
	<i>Greece was granted significant territorial gains (Crete, Macedonia, Ioannina and the islands of the Aegean) in the Treaty of London and the Peace of Bucharest.</i>
1919	<i>As victor of the First World War, Greece expands the national territory through the Paris peace conference.</i>
	<i>The Treaty of Neuilly includes Bulgaria's renunciation of all rights to western Thrace, which is awarded to</i>

	<i>Greece. Exchange of populations between Greece and Bulgaria follows.</i>
1923	<i>The Treaty of Lausanne fixes the boundaries between Greece and Turkey and coerces an exchange of populations. Almost 1.5 million refugees arrive in a country of nearly 5 million inhabitants.</i>
1920-1928	<i>In reference to the broader area of Kozani, close to 70 thousand Turkish and Bulgarian inhabitants departed and 53 thousand refugees from Minor Asia arrived in a land of nearly 114 thousand ‘dopioi’.</i>

### **Archaeology in Kozani**

1861	<i>L. Heuzey discovers two inscriptions bearing the name ‘Aiani’.</i>
1915	<i>Kozani is established as a prefecture.</i>
1930s	<i>First designations of areas as “archaeological sites”; Megali Rachi in Aiani is amongst them.</i>
1960s-1970s	<i>Local teachers are often assigned the role of Stewards of Antiquities.</i>
1983	<i>The site of Megali Rachi is excavated and soon after is identified with ancient Elimeia.</i>
1985-1987	<i>Discovery of Hellenistic cemetery and Royal Necropolis in Aiani.</i>
1992	<i>The archaeological museum of Aiani begins to be constructed.</i>

1996	<i>The first Horse Ride event.</i>
2004	<i>The 30<sup>th</sup> EPKA is established.</i>
2006	<i>The first Apollodoros Track event.</i>
2008	<i>The first Sculpture Symposium.</i>
2011	<i>The archaeological museum of Aiani is nominated for the award of the European Museum of the Year.</i>

## Appendix 2

Passages from *I Aiani kai i symvoli tis sti diamorphosi tis neas istorikis physiognomias tis Ano Makedonias* (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2008).

The large dimensions of the tombs and the grave monuments [...] render the uniqueness of the Necropolis of Aiani in northern Greece [...] The link between the monumental built tombs with eminent deceased persons is indisputable. The structures surrounding or built on top of them indicate worship of the dead and render objective grounds for the classification of the tombs as royal. The identification however of the kings, of the members of the royal family or of the eminent citizens from the monumental tombs, is not an easy task [...] The finds are very important because they attest a high standard of living and culture and bear testimony to the interconnection between the Hellenism of Upper Macedonia with the art and the culture of the rest of Hellenism, especially during early periods such as the 6th and 5th centuries BC. After all, the finds, in addition to their value as exhibits of art, bear testimony to the history of the region. The homogeneity between the pit-graves in Aiani, which belonged to common citizens and included rich finds, with the discoveries from other archaic-classical tombs from necropoleis elsewhere in Macedonia (Kozani, Vergina, Sindos, Achrida, etc.) on one hand challenges the views about isolated commercial routes of communication, and on the other hand it attests that the 6th and the 5th centuries BC were periods of acme and prosperity. As far as the funerary customs are concerned, one concludes that the practices are common amongst the ancient Greek world, and their homogeneity, despite local idiosyncrasies, stems from, as Herodotus asserted, the common religious beliefs [...] Important historical

periods for the Hellenism of Upper Macedonia – that were unknown before the excavations in Aiani – as well as new evidence are inscribed in the finds:

1. The establishment of proto-doric, namely macedonian tribes, during the 2nd millennium BC. During the Late Bronze Age Aiani was a significant centre for production of the so-called macedonian or doric matt-painted pottery. It stemmed from the mid-helladic (1900-1600 BC) prototypes of southern Greece and its carriers are considered the north-western Greek tribes, to which Macedonians belonged. According to Herodotus these Macedonians shifted from Pindus to Dryopida and the Peloponnese, where they were named Dorian. Archaeology is the tangible side of history, since it provides indisputable testimonies. The finds from Aiani provide indisputable indication that there was no «descent of the Dorians», namely, that no «barbaric» or «extra-tribal or extra-racial» (*allophylo*) Macedonians had destroyed the Mycenaean, Achaeans and Greeks. There is no dispute that the Macedonian matt-painted pottery was brought from people from the south, who would return to the north, north-west (in the 15th century BC in Aiani) after their initial descent (around 2000 BC), or after continuous ascents and descents due to their stock-farming subsistence and nomadic way of life; these were no others than the Macedonians of the historic times, whom philological traditions directly link with the Dorians [...]

2. The borders of the Mycenaean world (1600-1100 BC) shifts further from the north of Thessaly towards Macedonia, since the finds attest some form of establishment of Mycenaeans and rich interaction [...]

3. There was prosperity during the archaic and classical years and organised cities with public building existed, more than hundred years before Phillip II, to whom historians ascribed the establishment of the first cities – urban centres of Upper Macedonia [...] The regrettably former ideas about cultural and social isolation of Upper Macedonia are now (after the discoveries at Aiani) considered wrong and outdated [...] the voice of the earth and especially that of Aiani was revealing and irrefutable. The archaeological finds provide a new dimension of the history of Macedonia and compensate for the lack of written sources [...]

4. The high living and cultural standard are vividly reflected through the archaeological finds, which become the historical discourse (*istoriko logo*) and

incorporate the region into the cultural «koine» of the rest of Hellenism, which has been diachronic from the late Bronze Age (around 1500 BC) down to the Roman times. Concurrently, the existence of late-archaic and classical inscriptions (the earliest inscriptions found anywhere in Macedonia) confirms that their hitherto lack was the result of the limited and unsystematic archaeological research. Let's not forget that inscriptions are tangible testimonies to the national identity of Macedonians [...] The cultural homogeneity stems from common values and aesthetic principles, which are rendered by common descent and common national identity. The new historical physiognomy of Upper Macedonia or Macedonia in general, owes a great deal, if not all of it, to Aiani, and such view is in accordance with the Greek and foreign scientific community. A region's archaeological finds enrich and defend its history, especially when no ancient inscriptions survive. It is well known that Upper Macedonia was the origin, the starting point of the migrations of the north-western Greek tribes, which, according to Herodotus, in the north they were referred to as Macedonian and in the south as Doric. According to Hesiod (8th century BC) Macedon was the brother of Magnes, both sons of Zeus and Thyia, who was the daughter of Deukalion and the sister of Hellen. According to Hellanicus, writer of the 5th century BC, Makedon was the son of Aeolus and the grandson of Hellen. The significance of these and other written sources is immense for they indicate that the southern Greeks already by Homeric times were aware of the unity of the Greek nation, to which the Macedonians belonged – let's not forget that the gods lived in Olympus (Karamitrou 2008:, pp.36-42, emphasis added).

### **Appendix 3**

Passages from *A.M.* (George 1995).

[...] Initially, as you will see in my book that I enclose, I demonstrated that the provincial capital of Macedonians – Elimeia – was situated near my special homeland (*patrida*), V. At the same time I was concentrating all finds from across the plain of V. and I created an archaeological collection for the Cultural Organisation of V. Before anything was pursued, together with the mayor of V. and the president of the Cultural Club of V., we asked for authorization by the Ministry of Culture. Gradually, history and archaeology became part of my way of life (*tropos zois*), something that you will detect by reading



my work with the title “A.M.” [...] It is something that our land has a great need of, especially lately, but, I am sending this to you now, mainly because it entails the greatest part of my argument regarding the deception that I discovered, going on in Aiani for all these years [...] The archaeological ephoreia of Edessa, treated me from the beginning as a competitor, but I was not competing with anyone [...] Before I discuss the date of the city of Aiani, I should raise a point that not only an architect or archaeologist but a simple farmer with primary education can understand. Kozani today has thirty thousand inhabitants, Larisa and Volos three hundred thousand, and Thessaloniki almost one million. How is it possible that Aiani, the Kozani of antiquity, had a civilisation worthy of a museum costing four hundred million drachma, when seaside Dion, had a civilisation worthy for a museum costing hundred million drachma [1,037,000 GBP]? Is this NOT an inconsistency? [...] Long before Mrs Karamitrou, I in V. and Mr Siambanopoulos in Aiani had never encountered a decorated vessel of classical period; they are all undecorated. And for both of us, our findings were of the same type and of the same quality. Otherwise, wouldn't Siambanopoulos have discovered a single even potsherd that was decorated? [...] So far, no such finds [decorated vessels] from the entire Upper Macedonia have been mentioned by scientists in Thessaloniki. The golden mouthpieces, according to N.G.L. Hammond were put on the faces of Thracian officers. I cannot understand then how it is possible that mouthpieces with the Macedonian star were found [in Aiani][...] Many of the finds from Aiani are kept in various museums across Macedonia. Are the storage-rooms of museums connecting vessels (*syngoinonounta doheia*)? [...] Mr Siambanopoulos mentions in his book that previous researchers, based on evidence from potsherds, considered Kteni as the location of Megali Rachi. This is also confirmed by my own opinion, since Kteni was Aiani before Roman times (167 BC). Karamitrou on the other hand, barely mentions Kteni [...] When one reads Mrs Karamitrou, one is lost in the terminology about odds and ends and misses the essential (*ousiodi*). Why do you think the memorable Andronikos never in his articles used such terminology? Also, she fails to reach any conclusion or provide any thought. Furthermore, one has to call attention upon the immense efforts they expend on publicity. Every now and again, Kozani had posters about Aiani. When I read about the linear script of Aiani, I was troubled about the personality of Mrs Karamitrou. Generally, archaeologists are mysterious people, they possess something that other scientists do not, and it would be for their own sake to start demystifying themselves. An unknown ancient

city near Kozani and that of Aiani, both became golden like Mycenae and Aigai had. Shouldn't Kozanites [locals from Kozani] love us too? [...] Surely it is a tenable argument to request something that anyone like me would have asked, that is, the two small Museums (archaeological collections) of Kozani and Aiani sort out which finds came from the prefectures of Pieria, Imathia, and Pella. The finds from my land alone, even though they are not flashy, successfully demonstrate the Greekness of our ancestors [...]

## **Appendix 4**

Passages from *I Aiani kai pos tin anastisame* (Bourniotis 1991).

### ***Extract 1***

How we spot antiquities.

You can spot archaeological stones or potsherds after a field has been cultivated. You can especially spot them after tillage. We can also distinguish different layers in the ground, some darker, some softer, which could indicate burning from house kilns [...] Now when we find a lot of archaeological finds then it is certain that there is an archaeological site there[...]

In order to discover tombs, we watch out for bones and small potsherds that are of a very delicate size. The place where there is definitely a tomb, we watch out for the differences in the colour of the ground. At the same time, we look at the potsherds in case they have any letters inscribed on them or seals. Also, we observe whether there is any painting or anything odd-looking on top of pieces of marble or stones. In addition to the potsherds, we also encounter stone tools in archaeological sites, such as whetstones or quern stones and we often see chips of stone or marble. We do not disregard any of the potsherds or stone pieces we find, but we deliver them to the museum and make a record of it. One way to spot antiquities is where streamlets are; we stand at the end of the streamlet and we observe with a lot of attention.

Also, we look at the banks of the streamlet in case we find something there too. Archaeological sites are always close to places where there is water. We also look at the

dirt-roads especially when it rains. When it rains, the following day we set off to search around before any trucks come and destroy the patterns on the ground.

Where there are bedrocks, we also look there and we see whether there is any human figure revealed or some other rock-carvings and shapes. At the lake, where the level of water rises or goes down, we can see how the waves break the earth and exposures are made. Bores can also expose a lot of things, such as pottery and other objects. Also, we observe the streamlines created by the irrigation systems in the fields. When we go there and we can find a lot of things...When we hear that someone is building a well, we go there and we search the ground and we also observe the areas where there have been land clearings [...]

When we find any of these [objects] we note where we found it or of the owner of the field, because if we don't then all efforts become a waste of time. A lot of caution is needed for all the things that I am writing here, because they require a lot of patience and hard work and a lot of searching throughout the whole region of our village. We always keep up with the conversations that develop in the cafes and elsewhere about antiquities, and we always inquire whether anyone saw anything and find out about where it is found, in order to go and to locate it. We also ask our archaeologist for her opinion and that way we learn about many things that can help us in the future.

We all have to show an interest, to stop twiddling our thumbs and to deal with the history of our ancestors and to stop expecting everything from the few but to follow their actions. This is a heavy burden but we should try to lift it all together. Everyone should buy the Guide of Aiani from the Museum, the one that Georgia [i.e. Karamitrou-Mentesidi] wrote but also the earlier book that Mr Siambanopoulos wrote and to read them and to tell their children now that they are still young the history of our ancestors, so we are aware of our duty for the future and the commitment that we are entrusted with. Teachers have to invest more time in the teaching of the history of our village.

These few things that I mention here about Archaeology need a lot of zest, zeal and time. I write these things for the love that I have for my village and the history of this place.

## ***Extract 2***

The anxiety and the passion that we had with the archaeologist Mrs Karamitrou-Mentesidi and Damianos Penoglidis and the rest of the guys, all of whom worked without the necessary tools and the means that were crucial to have. Nothing was found in the first day, a few stones unfit for construction and a few potsherds. The second day we started work whilst feeling passion and desperation. As we were working, around the afternoon I was lucky enough to find a large tub. I called immediately for the archaeologist, Mrs Karamitrou, and with tears of joy she saw it and we immediately cleaned it from inside and outside and we found more of them nearby, and then she took a photo of me and the tubs. The next day we started from the foundation of the houses and proper work began. We were anxious, and the weather was against us, rain, lightning and fogs. But we did not have a roof to protect our heads; there was a hole in the caves but we were scared of the lightning. One day it was raining a lot and we had to leave. We set off on foot, the rest of the workers from the bridge of Hadakas but me, Damianos, Georgia and Areti H. we went from Yannouka Vrisi where it was flooded and we could not cross over. We got drenched and the place was flooded by the rain. We went through the swampy fields, holding only our shoes in our hands in order to cross over from the bridge at Koutsiaira the Viro, on the road from Kozani to Aiani. We carried a heavy load and we struggled for an hour in order to get to the village. There I understood that the weight that Georgia was carrying with the photographic cameras and the books and we only had our food; she would only eat some dry bread with tomatoes. The excavation however went on the next day as normal. The first year we cleaned enough room, where there were the ancient houses, various coins, potsherds. The next year we found homes again and the first workshop and the next years we discovered a water basin (*dexameni*), the House with the Steps, the Large Roads, the House with [...]

## ***Extract 3***

I would get very upset about Georgia who would go around in the incredible heat and would not eat any bread because she was too stressed. It's not easy to describe what we went through. Once I had discovered some plain tombs and she wanted to clean one of them. The heat was incredible, we lost track of time and because I felt sorry for her I told her 'Georgia let's leave it for tomorrow, the heat will kill us if we don't drink any water

or eat any bread'. The answer I received was 'Liako we will die here together. But first we have to finish and then leave'.

#### ***Extract 4***

Moments that I remember the most

The cistern

Once we cleared the top of Megali Rachi a few stones appeared. It was noon and we were getting ready to leave...Then I noticed that stones covered the whole surface with the exception of one piece. I cleaned it a bit and pink plaster appeared, and I immediately took my shirt off and I cleaned the concavity that looked like a pan [...] Then a ditch appeared, part of which I cleaned and then an earthen bulge appeared, surrounded by a rock. More workers approached and then we saw the ring of the tank! The next day we arrived, full of zeal and enthusiasm, and we dug one and a half metres deep. We needed the help of Kyrinos' son – Thodoros –, who had a mechanical digger but, there was no open path through which he could get to the tank; so when he finally managed to reach it, he said 'I had no choice, since he is my mother's brother and he is my uncle'. The next year, the guys constructed an engine that would lift the wheelbarrow with which we cleared the ground.

#### ***Extract 5***

The Lion

We were at Leivadia and it was getting close to leaving when we were digging into some dark-coloured ground. We hit some kind of marble and we started cleaning it with the shovel. Georgia told us that it was a lion and she was constantly taking photos. She told us that we have to wrap our tools with cloth so that we don't damage it; and that we have to dig with our hands, and then I burst into laughing. When it came out we went crazy from joy, we cried, we felt so deeply affected that if we had wings we would fly! All together we brought it to the village on the boat truck whilst sounding the horn and screaming!

#### ***Extract 6***

Rymnio

[...] Fotis Z. found a mycenaean lamp after ploughing the field. He brought it to the Museum. The next year we went there and we conducted research and a few excavations, and we worked in the extreme heat, amongst the trees and the snakes, and we found a few tombs, we cleaned them and the next year we went again, near the houses at Ofano and we conducted an excavation and we found some important tombs of the mycenaean period. Many fellow villagers stood by us, the President and Stella Z., who every-day brought us food and pie and coffees.

### ***Extract 7***

Lariou (The Monastery of Iliariona)

A business from the Electrical Company of Greece came to Lariou for the construction of the dam near Grevena. One morning we visited the place with the Archaeological Service in order to observe damages and to inform them in terms of the archaeological site that was there. We found them and we told them to watch out [for the site]...The site was unsafe as it was situated next to the river, on top of abrupt rocks, yet we had to take photos and videos of the place because these would soon be lost. The new generation will see the pictures and the wonderful landscape that was once there before it got lost forever. This is the photo that we will be showing our grandchildren.

It was this landscape and these antiquities what provided me the joy and the strength to walk and to assist the Archaeological Service. The only thing that is required is a little enthusiasm and time. I do not want to die in bed, I want to die on top of Megali Rachi.

### ***Extract 8***

The radio

One day we went with Vaggelis P. at Hantaka at Megali Rachi. I took a knife and a radio with me, and at some point I felt dizzy so I lied down to recover my strength. I stuck the knife in the ground and I put the radio next to it. Vaggelis saw this and cunningly thought whether that was a technique to discover antiquities and said: ‘What are you doing there? Something is going on there...That is not a radio, it is something else!’ So I told him: ‘No, Vagelli this is nothing! It is just a radio!’

## ***Extract 9***

### Epilogue

Everyone should read about these things that I am writing about here. I write so that the village and the whole world learns about the story of Aiani.

Today we look at antiquities but we forget how we had started off for just 150,000 drachma, going everywhere on foot. We worked for many years so that we don't lose our ancestors, so that we learn how they lived, what they were occupied in, what their art and houses were like. Today, after a lot of years of work and experience, it was proved that Aiani was a big centre, and that we Aianiotes had our own civilisation that we did not take from others, instead, we gave light to others.

In our village, in Aiani, the archaeologist Mrs. Karamitrou writes about the many antiquities that exist in the whole of this region. I write these things here with all the zeal and the concern that I shared with the archaeologist. We went through tough days, struggles and agonies so that we enjoy what was found today.

We have to keep on with greater appetite and zeal and, to not regret for the long hours [of working] otherwise history will be reburied for years to come or forever.

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