Archaeology, Nation, and Race

Confronting the Past, Decolonizing the Future in Greece and Israel

RAPHAEL GREENBERG

Tel Aviv University

YANNIS HAMILAKIS

Brown University

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Published online by Cambridge University Press

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In which we each present a brief intellectual autobiography and the path that led us to this dialog.

YH: I propose we start with a brief word about our respective standpoints, then move on to explore the origins of the two national projects and the links to archaeology. From there we will proceed to the other themes we have selected for a sustained discussion: The notions of the crypto-colony and crypto-colonization, the idea of purification and its expression in the fields of material heritage and archaeology, the logic of race and its entanglement with the emergence of archaeogenetics, and finally, our struggles for decolonization. Rather than opting for a generic comparison, we have decided to focus instead on specific phenomena, at play in both national contexts. Do you want to start?

RG: I came to archaeology, as a boy, in an entirely physical way, joining an excavation in the Old City of Jerusalem in the autumn of 1970. As a child of Jewish-American immigrants, I suppose digging was a way of connecting with my new surroundings. When I eventually returned to archaeology as a graduate student (after completing a degree in literature), I discovered that there were many recent immigrants studying alongside me. This is something I've noticed ever since: Many of the students that I studied with, and many of the students currently in my classes, were not born in Israel. Clearly, archaeology offers an outsider a way of bonding with a new place: There is something about the physicality, the camaraderie,

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

being out in the sun and dirt, that answers a need – perhaps for rebirth. At the same time, there's something equivocal about this connection; it is mediated and evades direct interaction with contemporary people. That's probably my starting point, apart from the things that I guess most archaeologists share – being attracted to old stuff and a little bit romantic about the past.

Archaeology in Israel in the late 1970s and early 1980s was more of a craft and a vocation than an independent intellectual discipline; you might call it "applied history." Our studies were focused on the accumulation of expertise and on method, and we were measured by our endurance and our initiative, blending the German tradition of acquisition and systemization of data with the British tradition of enterprise. We took pride in our impassive scientific gaze, and although I was politically active as a student, sensitive to the political contexts in which excavations took place, I was certain that archaeology transcended all that. As I have mentioned to you on several occasions, introspection was never the strong suit of Israeli archaeology; we were simply enjoined to "dig the right way." Even if I was aware of political dissonance at an excavation, I did not see where it intersected with practice. This came about later, after I was already doing my own research and running my own excavations, especially when I started working for the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA).

IAA excavations are conducted in the public domain, far away from the sequestered academic framework: They're out in the world, in communities, in people's yards – and it is there that you face the most fundamental questions: Who owns the past? What is the archaeologist's claim to it and what is the source of their authority? Working in salvage archaeology, that is, on excavations made necessary by infrastructure and construction projects, forced me to question and confront the structures of authority and coercion within which I worked, and the values embedded in interpretation. Issues of conscience that might have been obscured by the façade of academic respectability while I was a student, presented themselves in a very stark way. And as I became more independent as a scholar, I realized that my convictions had to be backed up by action, within my organization and outside of it. If, as a student, I clung to the belief that science should be kept free of politics, archaeological praxis

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

taught me that science was structured by the social and political context – whether it was the structural violence of military occupation, the agendas of those who funded our work, or the identity and status of the archaeologists themselves.[1] This was my route to thinking about the impact and the deployment of archaeology in society, beyond academic questions, and, as a critical position, it has often led me to uncomfortable confrontations with colleagues and governmental bodies, both during my time in the IAA and in my academic career in a public university.

More recently, after becoming involved in the Rogem Ganim community project in my own, West Jerusalem, neighborhood, after initiating the creation of the "alternate archaeology" group (now called Emek Shaveh) in Silwan, and after participating in the discussions on decolonizing archaeology across the discipline and around the globe, I found myself increasingly intrigued by the deep roots of archaeology in colonialism and racism, and by the demand to rebuild archaeology on entirely new foundations.[2] This is one of the things that brought me to Brown, to our joint project of examining the context of archaeology in the two regions that can be viewed as "ground zero" for the development of the discipline in the context of Western modernity and nationalism. Spending 2019–2020 in the US, the year of covid, the murder of George Floyd, and the political entrenchment of white nationalism, provided an extraordinary background to our discussion, bringing home its importance and encouraging me to educate myself on the nature of systemic racism and inequality.

What about you?

YH: My way into archaeology was similar to yours, in some respects. I was born and raised in Crete, surrounded by Bronze Age ("Minoan") ruins, so archaeology was very much present in my life. My father, who passed away as we were completing this book, also used to be an amateur archaeophile, and although neither he nor my mother had any formal education beyond primary school, he was an avid reader and admired learning. The very few books that we had at home were often about archaeology, especially local archaeology. I remember, for example, the copy of Paul Faure's *Everyday Life in Minoan Crete*. But I was reading much literature at the time, both

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Greek and world literature, and I wanted to study it at the University, but did not get the grades for it. So, I ended up in archaeology, which had lower entry requirements compared to literature, by accident. Yet, I decided to give it a serious go, especially in the later years of my undergraduate degree. At first, I found it difficult to see its relevance: Archaeology was then, in early-mid 1980s and in that context, mostly classical archaeology; the rest was prehistory or Byzantine art, and, therefore, of much less significance to the national imagination and Greek academic culture. We were told that the founder of archaeology was Winckelmann, the iconic 18th-century, German Hellenist and art historian who, ironically, never set foot in Greece but who established a framework for appreciating and studying ancient Greek art. This was a framework based on biological/organic principles of birth, maturity and decline, on geographical and environmental determinism and on cultural hierarchies, a scheme still venerated by many scholars. There was no debate on the complex nature of his work nor on its problematic facets.[3] The permanent positions in archaeology (this was at the University of Crete) had been occupied mostly by classical archaeologists, trained in the German tradition. At that time, like you I was already politicized, and I could not really see any direct relevance to what was happening in the world or to what interested me as a political being. I was also disheartened by the lack of any explicit theoretical reflection or critique on the epistemology and politics of archaeology.[4]

It was only in the last two years of my undergraduate studies that I started seeing some connection because it happened that I attended some broader and more theoretical courses, mostly to do with what we call prehistory, which were exploring other facets of human experience beyond conventional and formalistic art history, such as economy and society. These were courses offered mostly by younger, female professors often on precarious contracts, and I was incredibly lucky to have had the chance to learn and get inspired by them. That's why I decided to give it a go, and then got seriously into it. The practical, physical aspect of it, however, was there from the beginning, and it always fascinated and attracted me, and I was taking part in archaeological surveys and excavations from the first year.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

So, the interest in the political dimensions of archaeology was there, but academically it was not, at the beginning, a very important part of my research.[5] It gradually became so, and it helped that the degrees in Greece were broad, allowing you and, in fact, requiring you to take courses outside archaeology and outside ancient studies, including courses on modern and contemporary history. And I was always fascinated by anthropology, although I had no formal training in it. The unconventional courses I referred to, taught by people such as Katerina Kopaka or Antikleia Moudrea-Agrafioti at the University of Crete and several people at the University of Sheffield (during my postgraduate studies), nurtured this fascination. My work on the politics of archaeology started as a kind of sideline, a secondary interest or a kind of an activity you do in your free time, alongside your mainstream study and research. But it progressively became more and more important, and I realized early on that it cannot really continue being an add-on, it needed to become central. So, I eventually did the work on nationalism and more recently on other, related matters, on colonialism and colonization. The warm reception of *The Nation and its Ruins*, which was published in 2007, encouraged me to continue.[6] Ethnographic work was also important for me from early on, and while at the beginning it was mostly in the tradition of ethnoarchaeology, I eventually developed it into what we now call archaeological ethnography, defined as a shared space of multiple encounters, an explicitly political enterprise.[7] My graduate studies and work abroad helped me in some ways to take some distance from the habitual routines of nationhood, develop critical, personal and intellectual reflexivity, and articulate more clearly the conditions of coloniality for archaeology and for society more broadly. It eventually led me into redefining the archaeological as a transdisciplinary field in which the epistemic and the philosophical, the aesthetic and the sensorial, and the social and the political are all prominent.

Even the work that had to do with seemingly "non-political" topics, such as the archaeology of the Bronze Age for example, had to confront the critical history and the entrenched traditions of scholarship, in other words the epistemology and the political

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

economy of archaeological practice. To give just one example, how could I have studied the Bronze Age of Crete (the "Minoan" period, the focus of my doctoral dissertation) without interrogating and historicizing terms and schemes such as palaces, kings and queens or the assumed naval supremacy of the "Minoans" in the writings of people such as Arthur Evans? Or without examining their link with British imperial and colonial history, monarchical politics, and European modernity?[8] So again I was led, through another route, back to the politics of archaeology. I came to realize early on that whatever you do in archaeology is political, whether you accept it or not.

As for my interest in Israel and Palestine and the politics of archaeology there, it stemmed from a comparative impulse, trying to situate the Greek case in a broader context: So I came across books such as the ones by Neil Silberman and Nadia Abu El-Haj, and later your own articles and those by Palestinian colleagues.[9] But it was also a contemporary political impulse in terms of what was happening in that region, and a theoretical impulse because I saw that some of the thoughts and ideas, for example on the links between national ideologies and religion, were already developing within the discussion of Israeli archaeology. I realized that such thoughts had wider applicability, beyond the case of Israel and Palestine. That is why I started following these discussions and continue to do so, and that's why I embarked with great enthusiasm into our teaching and writing collaboration.

RG: Well, there are some curious similarities in our paths (like our shared beginnings in literature), but also differences in context, in training, and in our intellectual predilections; it will be interesting to see how they play out. Let's move on to the first part of our discussion, on the origins and trajectories of our respective national archaeologies.

Notes

1 Greenberg 2015.
2 See, e.g., Bruchac 2014; Lydon and Rizvi 2010; Mignolo 2011.
3 Winckelmann's work is much more interesting and complex than it is usually assumed, and its mechanistic use within traditional archaeology does not do justice to it. See, amongst others, Harloe 2013; Potts 2000.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

4 See for a short critique, Hamilakis 2000.
5 A key early article was the one published in collaboration with Eleana Yalouri: Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996.
6 Hamilakis 2007; the Greek translation appeared in 2012, the Turkish in 2020, and the Macedonian in 2021.
7 Hamilakis 2011a. Initial writings on archaeological ethnography were developed in collaboration with Aris Anagnostopoulos: Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009.
8 See Hamilakis and Momigliano 2006 and Papadopoulos 2005, Varouchakis 2017, amongst other writings.
9 Abu El-Haj 2001; Silberman 1990; Yahya 2005, amongst others.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

CHAPTER 2

The Colonial Origins of National Archaeologies

In this chapter we discuss the origins of Greek and Israeli archaeology in 19th-century concerns that accompanied European colonialism, the relation of archaeology to emerging Hellenic and Zionist nationalisms, and the enduring impact of imperial structures in 20th-century national archaeologies. We conclude with a brief consideration of the place of archaeology in the long history of Jewish–Hellenic entanglement, especially with respect to concepts of the idealized body.

YH: In terms of origins, we might start by exploring to what extent these two national projects are different or similar, given their chronological asymmetry, with Greece being a case of early nationalism that emerged mostly in the 18th and early 19th centuries, and Israel being a later phenomenon that led to the formation of a nation-state in the middle of the 20th century. Yet, the shared heritage of the Ottoman Empire is an echo that can be still heard in both areas. What are your thoughts on that?

RG: It might be surprising to realize that these two cases had such different starting points, considering how they appear to converge with time. If I backtrack for a moment, I proposed our course to you when I visited Brown a few years ago because when I first read *The Nation and Its Ruins*[1] I was struck by certain analogies with Israel, whether in the obvious attempt by the modern nation-state to forge links with antiquity or in the remarkable similarity in the public

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

standing of leading archaeological figures such as Manolis Andronikos and Yigael Yadin, and I thought, "that's strange, nobody has said much about this before." Then this year, once we started looking at the origins of the two national archaeological projects, I began to hesitate: Perhaps they did not take the same route after all? Greek national sentiment preceded political Zionism by many decades, and while archaeology was a prominent part of Greek nationhood, Zionism was slow to enlist antiquities to its nation-building project. And yet, somehow, the integration of archaeology into statist projects of the 19th and 20th centuries did ultimately bring the two cases into convergence, or homogenized them, in a way that is probably worth figuring out.

If we go back to the early 19th century, Greek nationalism was already well in the making, but the emergence of modern Zionism, much less the idea of its fulfilment in Palestine, was still distant. As many scholars have discussed, the original, early interest in the archaeology of the Holy Land or Palestine came from the West, from Christianity, from Britain and Germany and France, and it was very closely aligned with 19th-century imperialism, colonialism, orientalism, and mid-19th-century concerns about the survival of canonical cultural and religious texts in the face of the onslaught of modernity.[2] And although some of the same people who promoted archaeology in the 19th century were inserting the Jews into the colonial equation, as possible agents of a modern revival of a land seen widely as desolate, political Zionism did not yet exist; European Jews had not yet crystallized their own approach either to the land or to the nation, and certainly not to archaeology. The Jews of central and western Europe had only just been invited – or invited themselves – to the project of Western modernity, and the project of fulfilling that modern destiny in Palestine was only a blip on the horizon. The national idea took root much later, and that may be quite different from the Greek experience.

Another issue is the significantly different starting point of archaeology itself in the two countries. The antiquities of Greece were there to be seen, as ruins and works of art, prominent and marked. Sometimes they were obscured by later structures, and we will talk about that later, but they were nonetheless visible. In Palestine, in the

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Holy Land, the sites that had been so vividly imagined by millions, constantly depicted in European art, and attested in Jewish texts barely had a presence in the countryside. For a new class of mainly Protestant travelers and scholars, the very map of the country had been distorted by clerical ignorance. Authentic antiquities were obscured by centuries of conflict and ruination (even living villages were perceived as ruins), and they were disappointing when they were occasionally "recovered." I would like to read a passage by George Adam Smith, a historical geographer who wrote an important study on Jerusalem around the turn of the 20th century. It is about reimagining ancient Jerusalem:

> He who would raise again the Essential City must wait for the night, when Jerusalem hides her decay, throws off every modern intrusion, feels her valleys deepen about her, and rising to her proper outline, resumes something of her ancient spell. At night, too, or early in the morning, the humblest and most permanent habits of her life may be observed, unconfused by the western energies which are so quickly transforming and disguising her.[3]

Here is a romantic striving for an essence that cannot be seen but can only be sensed. You have to turn off the lights. You have to wait till darkness for this city of the imagination to emerge again. The effect of centuries of decay was a common trope in the early archaeology of Palestine: The past is not going to give up its secrets easily, and when it does, there will not be much to look at; it will have to be largely recreated in the mind.

That said, it has become increasingly clear to me that 19th-century colonialist archaeology in Palestine, limited as it was, made cardinal contributions to the later emergence of the Jewish national project and its archaeology. First, the modern, dispassionate archaeological gaze of the philologist, the surveyor, or the excavator led to a complete reconceptualization of Palestine: It was no longer merely a destination for pilgrims but a potential resource that was to be studied, rehabilitated, and eventually incorporated in empire. Under archaeology's gaze – as elsewhere in the Near East – the past became the most important asset the land had to offer, while the present (including both Ottoman rulers and Muslim, Christian, and

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Jewish subjects) was relegated to the status of an encumbrance. Second, archaeology provided a telos, a direction to time, and a promise of progress; the sense that the land was awaiting its destiny under worthy proprietors. Third, the Bible could safely be retained in modernity as the core of a shared Western "Judeo-Christian" tradition: The great discoveries in Mesopotamia and Egypt had, by and large, validated biblical history, while nothing discovered in Palestine contradicted it.[4] These three contributions, representing knowledge, progress, and historical justification, remain at the heart of the archaeological project in modern Israel.

YH: This is all very interesting, for many reasons. First, because of the implied link with colonialism. You said that, well before nationalist ideology in Israel became a cultural and political force, the antiquities of Palestine were of interest to Western travelers, antiquarians, and scholars, primarily because of the Biblical legacy and the idea of the "Holy Land." The sense of colonial entanglement actually unites the two cases. Something that has not been widely discussed among scholars of Greece is the fact that Greek nationhood developed at the intersection of colonialism and nationalism. In fact, in my work I follow the scholars who consider nationalism as a derivative discourse and as imaginary, as something that emerged within the colonial frame of thinking and practice, despite its anticolonial efficacy and expediency in certain contexts.[5] Western Hellenism was the form that colonization took in the case of Greece, at first a colonization of the ideal, and the vehicle that allowed the incorporation of that land and its people into the Western sphere of influence. Western Hellenism can be defined as the construction of a certain version of Hellas (which had only a tenuous connection to the social realities of Ancient Greece, as an eastern Mediterranean phenomenon) and its designation as the originary moment of Western civilization. So in that sense, Western interest was present in both cases, and the process of colonization constitutes the first common thread of the two national projects and nation-states.

The other points of interest for me in your opening remarks are the notion of visibility, and the Western reactions to the modern state of the land, the contrast between past and present, the sense of "decay"

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in George Adam Smith's passage. You're saying that Greek monuments were visible, whereas the ones in Palestine were not. I agree, and that provides an interesting contrast for us to think through. On the other hand, the sense of disappointment we see in the passage above was also experienced in the Western encounter with the monumental landscape of Greece. There are many examples of Western travelers from the 17th to the 19th century who were disappointed at the state of the land called Greece. They were disappointed for two reasons. One was the ruinous state of the ancient Hellas – the few remnants that testified to the Glory that *was* Greece. "Athens . . . a city now reduced to near the lowest ebb of fortune," says the English traveler George Wheler, describing his impression of the city that he visited in the late 17th century.[6]

The ruination and decay they experienced, in other words the clash between dream and material reality, was only one reason for the disappointment. The other reasons were the material "intrusions" of intervening periods, the accretions of contemporary life, the reuses of ancient buildings and architecture, and the remodeling of ancient temples as mosques or other places of worship. Here too, as in the case of Jerusalem, one had to imagine antiquity. But there was help at hand: The ancients had provided guidebooks, or so it was thought, with Pausanias as perhaps the most prominent.[7] These Western travelers and scholars were often seeing ancient ruins through the eyes of Pausanias, not theirs, or rather through their own interpretations of ancient authors. Their accounts were often the retracing and mostly the illustration of these early journeys and these early texts. For example, while George Wheler, in 1675, could not ignore that the Parthenon was a mosque at the time of his visit, his drawing of it is an imagined rendering of the temple in classical times (Fig. 2.1), not a realistic depiction, although in other drawings he could not ignore the minaret and others, especially in the 18th century, would record the postclassical buildings. Interestingly, more or less at the same time (in 1667), the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi would visit the site, would be awestruck by it, would connect the Parthenon to King Solomon, and would describe it as the most attractive mosque in the world.[8]

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

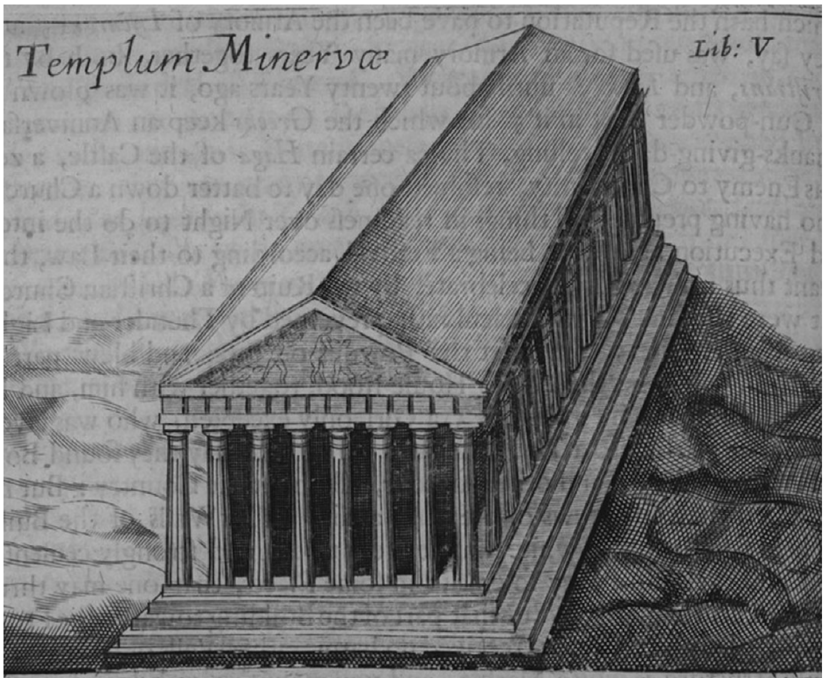

FIGURE 2.1. The Parthenon as drawn by George Wheler (Wheler 1682).

Finally, there was disappointment because, in the Western visitors' views, the living people of the land, with a few exceptions, had little knowledge and appreciation of ancient Hellas and its glory. They were often speaking different languages, and to some travelers they were barbarians who could not appreciate the grandeur and the value of ancient Greece. In doing so, most Westerners failed to recognize and understand the local modes of relating to ruins, and failed to appreciate their distinctive, indigenous archaeology, which we will have the chance to discuss later.

So, there was disappointment in both cases, it seems, although expressed in different ways. At the same time, the end of the 17th century marked the Western "rediscovery" of Greece or rather the construction of a new country out of the ancient Hellas. The material

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

remnants of ancient Hellas were the topographic landmarks of this new territory. Athens was now emerging as a city on a par with, if not more important than, Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Despite the feelings of disappointment thus, there were enough visible material remnants to justify a positive evaluation. Western Hellenism was fast becoming a major ideological force, as Europe was constructing itself as a center of civilization in opposition to the savages in the colonies or colonies to be, and with ancient Greeks as its ancestors.[9]

In both contexts it is important to understand that in the archaeologization of the land, in the construction of its imagined and imaginary topos, living, contemporary people constituted a problem that needed to be resolved, and the attempt to find solutions took on different forms. One was to ignore them, to erase them from view, to leave them out of the picture, literally, as you were drawing your picturesque landscape, shaped by ruins and absence. So, the quotation you cited above about Jerusalem becoming alive at night is very interesting because it speaks to that sense of erasure, through an act of imagination that can be activated with the help of darkness. You could get transported "back to the past," you could go into a reverie, ignoring material reality on the ground and, of course, the people who were there at the time. Wishing people away, wishing that contemporary people disappeared is a trope you see being expressed iconographically in the case of Greece.

Another solution was to treat contemporary people as features of the landscape, remnants themselves of another time, not active social beings engaging with the world around them. The picture is diverse, of course, but most Western travelers and antiquarians who would produce engravings or other representations of monuments would very rarely depict contemporary signs of life. Empty landscapes filled with ruins was the norm, and when humans were present, they would be monumentalized themselves to provide additional folkloristic and picturesque value: A shepherd with sheep next to a standing or fallen classical column; a woman in an exotic costume; absence or museification. By contrast, Eastern narratives such as the one by Evliya Çelebi were incorporating human presence as well as local stories and interpretations of antiquities, attributing to them authority

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and value, in a multisensorial, syncretic mélange of paganism and monotheism, mythology, and empirical reality.[10] In another, recently discovered, early 18th-century account, the only surviving Ottoman history of Athens by one Mahmud Efendi who was a local Muslim scholar, Athens as "a city of sages" is presented as an Ottoman heritage too. In that account, the Parthenon is described as the magnificent temple built by Pericles because the Temple at Jerusalem was too far for the pilgrims of Athens to visit.[11] These accounts remind us that there is also an Eastern scholarly antiquarianism (as far back as the 8th–10th century Arabic reception of classical antiquity and the associated translation movement) that has been overshadowed by Western colonization and Eurocentrism.

RG: The "solutions" you mentioned to the presence of living inhabitants – somehow looking past them as if they weren't there – were certainly shared by Western observers across the Mediterranean. How would you characterize their political implications?

YH: The monumentalization of the territory, its construction as dreamed, imaginary topos not as material and social reality entering modernity; in other words, the allochronization of the region and its people as a place of another time, a chrono-political gesture and effect that lasts to the present day.[12] Or the construction of a *terra nullius*, a land empty of people, and thus fair game for conquest and colonization. Or the erasure of any local contemporary, living competitors who would claim the heritage of Hellas, constructed as a quintessential Western symbolic capital. These tropes will coexist and shape the future of the land and its people for the centuries to come.

There are of course variations to this picture, chronologically as well as by case, and by specific groups and individuals. For example, and to come back to notions of visibility and the politics of the gaze, it has been suggested that early travelers were guided primarily by a literary gaze, given their reliance on the ancient texts and their imaginary way of approaching ruins.[13] Later ones, especially the proto-scientific antiquarians, would be guided by an archaeological gaze, wanting to produce a more technically accurate account of monuments. They would also carry out excavations (or other forms of extracting and recording antiquities) that would employ local people,

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and they would often clash with them when Western antiquarians would attempt to pillage and appropriate antiquities. In these cases, the local stakes in the material heritage of Hellas could no longer be ignored and erased, and local people who resisted would be demonized instead as ignorant or greedy.[14]

RG: Where would you place the Greek nationalists of the same time, and what is their relationship to this discourse on the part of the West? Did they try to adopt the colonial point of view, at least a political strategy?

YH: Well, Greek nationalism is the work of many diverse groups and individuals, and it was shaped by several ideological traditions as well as socioeconomic and political developments. Depending on their specific geographical and social and political grounding, these groups would have received different influences and would develop a different sense of what nationhood is. You have the emergence of new social and economic strata, highly mobile Balkan merchants and eastern Mediterranean shipowners who could no longer operate within the structures of the Ottoman Empire – the economy of which, at least in its earlier centuries, was rooted in land. They would often use a form of Greek as the lingua franca in their transactions. You also had many scholars, and many military people and administrators, serving different political regimes, from the Sultan in Constantinople to the Russian Empire. Many of them would combine different roles, such as the merchant and the intellectual, or the scholar and the administrator. Several of them were working in the centers of Western Hellenism, so they would come into contact with the texts of ancient Greece and its mythologization and valorization by Western elites that they would then import into Greece. They would also support schools, translate ancient texts, propose the Hellenization of personal names as well as toponyms, even the names of ships. They would found printing houses in places like Venice and Vienna to print books from ancient texts to Enlightenment treatises, reminding us of Anderson's emphasis on typography in the nationalization process.[15] In other words, they would promote Hellenism as a key symbolic resource, as the heritage that needed to be rediscovered and reclaimed by the Orthodox Christians who were now called Hellenes.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Among other things, they would engage in the formation of a number of secret societies, founded mostly in cities such as Odessa, Vienna and Paris, and even Athens, promoting the national cause and at the same time advancing learning about ancient Hellenic heritage.[16] The most famous secret society with directly political–national aims was the Society of Friends (*Filiki Etaireia*), which was founded in Odessa, in 1814. It soon became the vehicle for the alliance between mobile Greek-speaking merchants and intellectuals and disenfranchised local elites who were left out of the increasingly monetized economy.[17] The one more directly linked to antiquity was the Society for the Friends of the Arts (*Filomousos Etaireia*) which was founded in Athens in 1813, with a sister organization being founded in Vienna. It included Western antiquarians in its membership and promoted a new modernist discourse on ancient things that advocated their separation from the web of the daily life and their valorization as national and aesthetic values belonging in a museum (or a private collection – some of its members were known for pillaging antiquities). In effect, it acted as a proto-archaeological service until new official state structures were established.[18]

So, a new economic reality, in some senses the emergence of new forces of capital based on trade and maritime activity, converged with the discovery of the ideals of Western Hellenism. Many of the people who would become national intellectuals were also serving the Ottoman administration, because of their linguistic skills, their education, and their ability to communicate with different populations and bridge different worlds. Some others were working in the Balkans; they were coming into contact with the Russian world and the Russian elites and they were implicated in the tensions between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. And they saw Russia as a potential major ally in liberating Greece from the Ottoman Empire. All these diverse groups of people converged on the idea of resurrection, the idea of rebirth, the rebirth of Hellas. According to this notion, Hellas was "enslaved" by the Ottomans, the latest in a long line of conquerors and oppressors, starting with the Ancient Macedonians. The nation that Hellas embodied was sleeping or had died but it could and must be resurrected. You could see here the emergence of a political theology that will shape Greek nationalism for the centuries to come.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The Greek War of Independence that followed was a global, transnational affair and it was fought on political, diplomatic, cultural, economic and military grounds. But it was also partly a religious war;[19] it was fought by the Christians revolting against the infidels, the Muslims, although the Orthodox Patriarchate (and some of its prominent scholars) based in Istanbul, at the seat of the Ottoman Empire, was officially against it.[20] As a pan-European and international event, it was war fought for Christianity. As Kotsonis has noted, the majority of non-prominent westerners who fought in the War were "Christians who fought for a clearly Christian Europe and an Orthodox Christian Greece, which in reality meant, non-Muslim."[21] Eventually, the High Porte in Istanbul also conceived of this as an all-out battle between Islam and Christianity and attempted to mount a counter-crusade.[22] As far as the Greek-speaking national intellectuals were concerned, it was also a matter of destiny and, and for some of them, and many more ordinary people, a matter of divine providence, not a matter of history: Pre-modern ideas merged with modernist concepts of liberation.[23]

We will explore the implications of this later on, but for the moment, I will only note that the national intellectuals adopted the monumentalization and archaeologization of the country produced by the Western elites, but they differed from many of them in extending political agency to the Christian populations of the land, whom they proclaimed as descendants of ancient Greeks. They believed that Hellas could be reborn, resurrected as a new political reality. In other words, they refused to see Hellenism as simply a legacy and a heritage owned and managed primarily by the West. In so doing they set the stage for the shaping of an indigenous form of Hellenism, juxtaposed to Western Hellenism.[24]

RG: Well, as we have said, the developments in Greece and Palestine are not synchronous, nor were the majority Muslim inhabitants of Palestine ever offered European support on a path to national liberation. Yet there are parallels to what was brewing in Palestine in the 19th century, not only because the fate of the country, though still under Ottoman rule, was being discussed in the Western capitals, but also because the self-fashioning of Jewish national aspirations was based on European models (albeit on the

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

failure of those models to accommodate Jews) and on the need for Jews to realize those aspirations in a land of their own, with European support. There was some chatter in Britain and Germany – mainly among millennialists (some of whom had considerable political clout) – that the Jews could revitalize Palestine: They could bring their capital, their entrepreneurial abilities, their energy, and regenerate this decrepit part of the Ottoman East.[25] While these ideas didn't get much traction in Jewish circles, radical thinkers like Moses Hess were talking about Jewish national regeneration in secular terms, clearly inspired by the success of national struggles in Italy and Greece.[26] As for the 19th-century population of Palestine itself, there was a mix similar to what you described earlier of merchants, bureaucrats, and intellectuals of various ethnicities and religions in the increasingly cosmopolitan Ottoman cities like Jaffa and Jerusalem, but it was far less developed and self-conscious as a political class. Most of the inhabitants of Palestine were still Muslim farmers, and it is these villagers who were objectified by the Western touristic and archaeological gaze. It tended to see them as a residual population with no historical horizon, people who were virtually frozen in time and who could – when not seen as downright savages – at best offer an illustration of life in the Holy Land during biblical times.

YH: This is very interesting. When I was working on 19th century photographic renderings of monuments in Greece, I had examined the work of various commercial photographers such as the Beirut-based, French, Félix Bonfils who was active in the Middle East, Egypt and Greece, in the 1860s and 1870s.[27] It was instructive to compare the photographic canon and the gaze embodied in such works, depending on the place in which he was working. His photos of Greek monuments and sites, especially of Athens, were monumentalizing (the result of the combination of the literary and the archaeological gaze), and mostly empty of people. He was choosing the time of day to photograph these monuments when there would be minimal human presence, and he would even move the camera in such an angle as to not include buildings such as modern churches or other contemporary works. This was the late 19th century, when Athens was already a buzzing capital, but you wouldn't

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

get that sense from his photos. In contrast to that, if you see his photos of various Middle Eastern cities including Jerusalem and Beirut, you'll see much human presence and the buzz of urban life. The scene of the bazaar, for example, was for him, central. His Greek photos, especially from Athens, were monumental and archaeological, his Middle East ones were folkloristic and ethnographic. Both sets of photos would be sold in albums entitled *Souvenirs of the Orient*. As a commercial photographer, he was responding to the demands of Western markets, and their prior perceptions and stereotypes of the various localities of the eastern Mediterranean.[28]

RG: And while you had these living ethnographic communities, so to speak, there was also a sense that they were somehow extraneous, that they were impostors, ignorant of the value of the place that they lived in and of its history, and that they should be moved aside to allow others to truly appreciate the land. These conflicting visions alternate: The same people will be one thing at night and another the next day. George Adam Smith brings that out clearly when he says, first, "wait for the night," when the city disappears and then you can really feel the city beneath the city; but then, in early morning, when people are just going about their business, only half awake, not yet conscious of what they're doing, they – the living people – will help you understand "the humblest and most permanent habits" of life, as it has always been lived, since time immemorial, in this place. The scholars had that ambivalent attitude to the local people; they were attracted and repelled at the same time. As for the Ottoman Turks – their presence was an imposition that obscured the true nature of the land and prevented it from achieving its destiny; they were to be outwitted, manipulated, and eventually replaced.[29]

YH: So, I guess it's fair to say that, in both projects, there was a strong orientalist foundation. This is clear in the many invocations of the Orient by Western travelers who came to Greece, as well as by the group of people who would be called *Philhellenes*, a highly problematic label and at the same time a troubling phenomenon that describes a very diverse group of social actors.[30] Many of them traveled to Greece in the early 19th century and some even took part in the War of Independence, siding with the Christians, now very often seen and portrayed as the descendants of ancient Greek

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

warriors. Writing from that point of view of the Westerner who is aligned with people who are now called Hellenes and who were now rediscovering their destiny fighting against the Oriental despot, an analogical connection was made that was then adopted also by Greek national intellectuals, a connection between ancient Persians and Ottomans.[31] Ottoman Muslims were the new "Oriental Other," not only of Greece but of the West as a whole. This was a monumentalized and archaeologized war, in a monumentalized and archaeologized country. And the battles were the same: Oriental barbarian invaders versus Western/Christian/civilized Hellenes/Europeans.

To return to the issue of new forms of capital and proto-capitalist economy, the Ottomans were seen as the despots who would not allow free enterprise to develop. Furthermore, Western orientalist travelers and scholars would establish a dichotomy between verticality and horizontality not only as bodily postures but also as metaphors for activity and enterprise on the one hand, and indolence and passivity on the other. Chateaubriand, the French orientalist and Philhellene would draw such a distinction: The mobile energetic Frenchman versus the immobile Turk sitting or reclining on sofas.[32]

RG: The divan, right?

YH: Exactly. So, orientalism here meets the spirit of capitalism as a Western ideal of vitality, mobility, and enterprise.

While we're on the theme of origins, we may want to take a closer look at the processes and the events that led to the formation of the two states, and how these formative years shaped archaeology. In the case of Greece, it is worth pointing out that the formation of the modern state, starting with the 1830s, was a project that was shared between many different European powers, or Great Powers, as they were called then. It wasn't just that the state of Greece was forming itself, it was that these European powers and their elites, mostly Britain, France, and Russia (but also German elites and royal houses) were coming together to form a new state. There were even competing Greek political parties, named the French, the British, and the Russian party, siding with the policies of the respective powers. As a result, the key intellectuals and administrators who shaped modernist archaeology in Greece were coming from different European countries, and mostly from Bavaria or other German territories, as the first

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

monarch of the country, King Otto, was from Bavaria, the son of the king of Bavaria. Munich, of course, was already the center of German neo-classicism, and important archaeologists and architects who were instrumental in the neo-classical shaping of that city and the movement of Greek Revival became Otto's entourage, and started shaping the archaeological structures of the new country.[33] So, the first director of antiquities, the first professor of archaeology, the compiler of the first archaeological law, and the architect who undertook the project of remodeling the Athenian Acropolis into the most important, national archaeological site of the country (Leo von Klenze), all came from Bavaria and other German lands. Their influence and impact in the construction of the institutions of archaeology have been fundamental. In fact, you can see their influence all the way to the present day. At the same time, you could see the tensions and the clashes with other intellectuals and scholars who were not part of the entourage of Otto, and who were educated in different environments, some of them in communication with what I have called indigenous archaeology in Greece. The first native Greek to be employed in the archaeological service, and a fighter in the War of Independence, Kyriakos Pittakis, is a case in point.[34]

But this was not just a process of shaping archaeology as an institution; it was rather a process of shaping Athens as the capital city, selected because of its classical legacy and symbolic weight, a capital that became an "appendix to the Acropolis," a city denying and mostly erasing its own Ottoman history, a "city foreign to itself."[35] It was also a process of establishing a new, archaeologized but still modern country, a "model kingdom" shaped by European modernity. Neo-classicism, not just in architecture and urban planning but also in remaking archaeological sites and shaping culture in general, became the colonial technology which was transplanted from Munich, Berlin, and Paris,[36] a technology that merged monumentalization with capitalist modernization.

One could claim, however, that the state in its current form was shaped only in the first decades of the 20th century, following the defeat in the Greco-Turkish war, the collapse of the Great Idea of expanding the nation-state and making Constantinople the capital of modern Hellenism, and of course the influx of Greek-speaking,

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Christian refugees. Their resettlement, especially in the north which had become part of the Greek state recently (in 1913), would contribute to the project of Hellenization and national homogenization of the whole country. These processes went hand in hand with the continuous archaeologization of the country, now especially the new lands of the north but also major islands such as Crete. This archaeologization was expressed through unearthing ancient classical ruins, renaming the land using ancient Greek toponyms,[37] and investing it with ancient Greek mythological connections and associations. Ancient Macedonians were transformed, in the Greek national narrative, from archenemies of ancient Greece and of Hellenism to some of its most celebrated figures, especially Philip II and, of course, Alexander the Great. This process was linked to the reshaping of the national historical narrative, which started in the middle of the 19th century and aimed to bridge the historical gap from the Golden Age of ancient Hellas to the contemporary Greek nation. Certain historical episodes needed to be recast and restituted, to establish a temporality of continuity; ancient Macedonians but also Byzantium (now cast as Byzantine Hellenism, to complement Ancient Hellenism and modern Hellenism in a tripartite scheme) are cases in point. Byzantium in particular was recast as a Greek, or rather Helleno-Christian Empire, a convenient scheme which would provide support, along with the Alexandrian legacy, to the Greek imperial and colonial aspirations, especially in Anatolia, in the early 20th century.

Manolis Andronikos's widely publicized and celebrated excavations at Vergina in the late 1970s completed this transformation, and managed to restitute the north of the country but also the 4th century BCE as crucial geographical and chronological topoi of the Hellenic national imagination. Now the so-called Vergina star, a decorative motif widely seen in Ancient Macedonia, has become almost a national symbol and is often seen celebrated widely. The perceived national threat from the north linked to the long dispute with the Republic of North Macedonia, which ended only in 2019, contributed to this reshaping of the national narrative. The charisma and the public profile of Andronikos, whom I have called the shaman of the nation, a mediator between the dead and the living,[38] were also instrumental.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The latest chapter in this saga has been played out since 2013 at the excavation in Amphipolis, also in Greek Macedonia, an excavation which is, however, fascinating for many other reasons, including its investment with an economy of hope, an economy of the occult, especially for a nation struggling with a huge financial crisis. Early on in the excavation process, various scenarios circulated by some archaeologists – but also by the media, both the established and new social media – insinuated that the tomb could be a famous Macedonian royal, perhaps even Alexander the Great or a member of his family. The ruling politicians embraced such scenarios, investing politically in them and fueling further the huge public excitement: Will the "secrets of Amphipolis," the unearthing of the body of a glorious personage and his riches, bring about salvation?[39] To return to my main point, the national making and remaking of the country through its archaeologization is an on-going process, not an old and nearly forgotten story.[40]

Now, what's the situation in Israel vis-à-vis the various archaeological institutions, and how did the dominant Western national ideologies shape the archaeological realities?

RG: I think it took a tortuous track. To begin with, archaeology was subservient to British and other European colonial and imperial interests in Palestine. Eventually the British become the main actors; on the one hand, the main protectors of the Jews in Palestine, and on the other hand the European power most invested in systematic study of the land. They were already counting it as part of their future empire in the second half of the 19th century. Archaeology was somehow an intimate need, part of their own conception of their role in the world.[41] And while Christian restorationists did foresee a space or a special role for Jews within the British sphere of influence, they did not make a specific connection to archaeology at all (not even Charles Warren, one of the first archaeologists in Palestine, who envisioned the revitalization of the land by the settlement of Jewish farmers from North Africa).[42] The connection to archaeology was not immediately obvious, except insofar as archaeology was part of the project of acquiring the land through studying it, mapping it and quantifying it, as I mentioned earlier.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Things took a dramatic turn after the Balfour declaration of 1917 and Allenby's conquest of Palestine. The Zionists now had a territorial foothold and the prospect of statehood. Again, it is difficult to say that archaeology was central to Jewish state-building, except as a corollary to the British project of modernization. But when the British mandate began in the early 1920s, archaeology was a central plank in their platform of making Palestine modern and giving science a prominent role in its administration. Officially, the mandate was supposed to give the British time to mentor the Jews, and later the Palestinian Arabs (in response to their sustained resistance to the Balfour declaration) into nationhood. Part of that mentoring would have been defining antiquities as a *corpus separatum*; something that has to be both rationalized and sanctified, protected, fenced off, relieved of the overburden of modernity.[43] But this was very much a British bureaucratic project (one that, by the way, was built on antiquities laws that were already put in place, under Western pressure, by the Ottomans).[44] Archaeology was a part of modernization, but it wasn't closely connected to the Jewish national project.[45] In fact, there was an ambivalent attitude to archaeology in the leading labor-Zionist wing of the Zionist movement, which was much more interested in the future than in a past that weighed down on the national movement. Yes, there was a vision of recovering ancient grandeur, connecting the modern and ancient national movements by evoking the ancient Hasmonaean state or conjuring up the times of the great rebellions against the Romans. But this vision relied more on selective historical memory and geography (with the histories of Josephus as the filter through which the countryside was to be viewed) and on the appropriation of the landscape through intimate knowledge of it, than on physical archaeological remains. This was perhaps because of what I said before: There weren't enough monuments to hang your hat on. There wasn't an Acropolis that you could point to and say, "This is us when we were something." In fact, most of the outstanding monuments and ruins were emphatically *not* Jewish – Crusader fortresses, Ottoman city walls, churches, monasteries and large tells that testified to a history that began before Joshua's conquest and ended well after the Jewish dispersal.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Archaeology was thus not a prominent part of the national platform until the state was established. But the moment the state was created, the moment there was a territory with more or less fixed borders, then all the trappings of a national archaeology came into view.[46] It instantly became Israel's "national pastime."[47] It is then that you begin to see the "filling in" of the national borders with relevant *antiquities*, establishing a congruence between current and former Jewish presence in a manner that parallels what you have described for early 20th-century Greece. This takes several forms. My late colleague Michael Feige has described the annual meetings of the Israel Exploration Society, held each year at a different location on one of Israel's frontiers.[48] These meetings were designed as a pilgrimage of the learned elites to towns newly populated with immigrants, with the intent of establishing or confirming the continuity of Jewish presence at each of these sites. Israel's first celebrity archaeologist, Yigael Yadin – who, like Andronikos, was perceived as possessed of an uncanny ability to communicate with the leading figures of Israel's past[49] – also excavated at the extremities of the state, at Hazor, where he reaffirmed the biblical narratives of Joshua's conquest and territorial control of the northern reaches of the Jordan valley, and in the Judean Desert caves and Masada, where he was able to confirm the almost stone-by-stone veracity of Josephus' chronicle of the siege of Masada and conjure up an intimate communication with the Jewish rebels of 135 CE(Fig. 2.2). Each of Israel's wars of expansion was accompanied, sometimes within days, by archaeological reconnaissance, as were its settlement projects in the West Bank.[50] Here too, it is an ongoing project.

Summing up the trajectory of archaeology in the national project, I see it as uneven and sometimes indirect: The colonial and mandate years provided a rational framework for managing antiquities in an ideological way, but it wasn't a high priority for the Jewish community. As soon as the state came into existence, something snapped into place; archaeology was quickly linked to the creation of the national mythology and the imagined unity of the Jewish people. Archaeology gave them something to latch onto, something material and physical: Places to be in and landscapes populated with

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

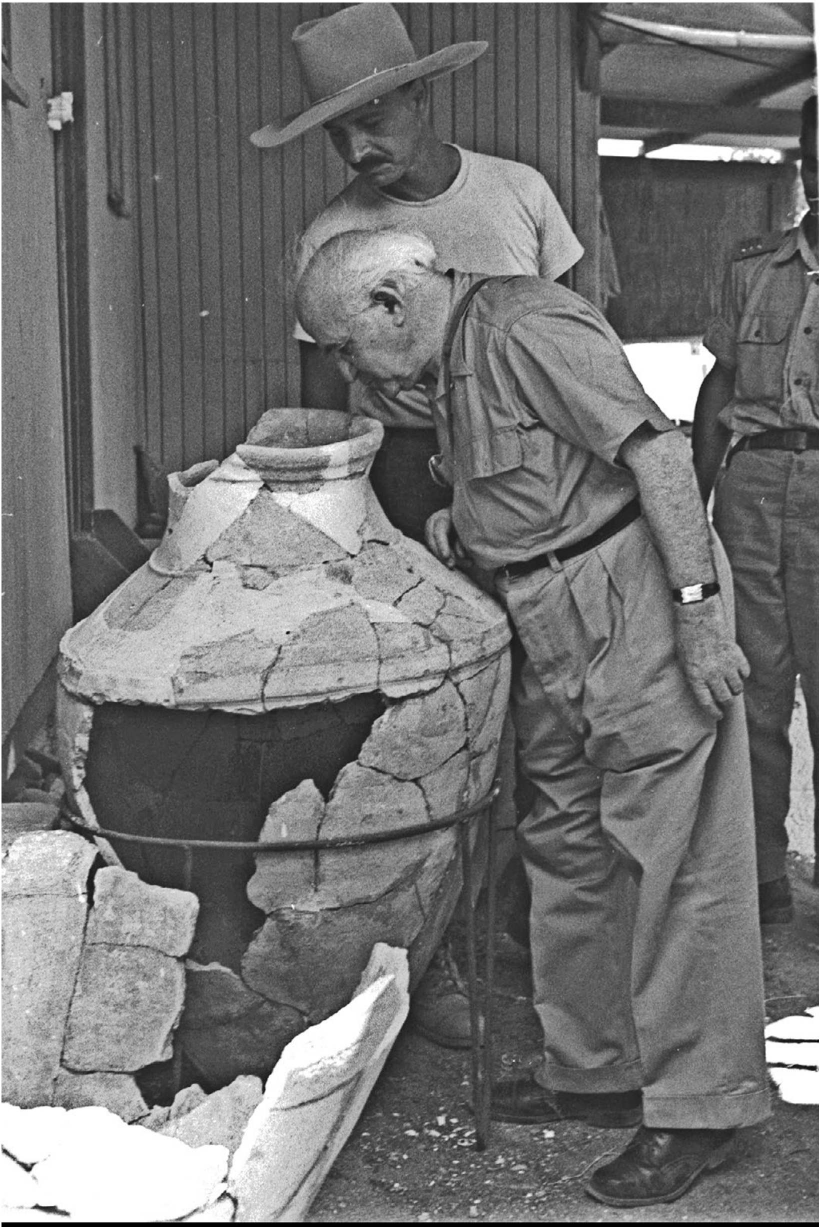

FIGURE 2.2. Yigael Yadin and Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, peer into a storage pithos from Canaanite Hazor, presumed to have been destroyed by the first Israelite settlers c. 1200 BCE. Photo, Moshe Pridan, Government Press Office.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

buildings, agricultural installations, water conduits and much more, in which to evoke this glorious past.

YH: I see parallel developments with regards to colonization as modernization: I referred to Bavarians and other western Europeans. You referred to the British. In Greece, modernization and nationalization went hand in hand. Very often, modernization also meant commodification. Antiquities were transformed into national landmarks and sacred locales, but this did not prevent them from being marketed as commercialized tourist sites at the same time, symbolic capital that can be converted into financial capital. The moment that the Athenian Acropolis changed status – and from a fortress it became an organized archaeological site thanks to the efforts of Leo von Klenze – that is 1834, was also the moment when an entrance fee was introduced.[51] But I think we should stay a little longer on these early years. I recall you mentioning that under the British Mandate there were special provisions for archaeology. Could you remind us what these were?

RG: Those were the articles of the Mandate, which have formed the basis for all subsequent legislation.[52] Article 21 is by far the longest and most comprehensive of the twenty-eight articles in the 1922 Mandate, with a specific requirement to enact a Law of Antiquities and detailed provisions for the content of that law, which would ensure the protection of antiquities and regulate their excavation and management. Billie Melman, who has delved deeply into the workings of the interwar mandatory bureaucracies, talks about the centrality of antiquities legislation to the mandatory concept of "mentorship."[53] I have also spent some time in the archives trying to get to the root of the detailed effort expended on Article 21, but many questions remain. As I see it, the mandatory power assumed stewardship of both the antiquities and of the "timeless" people living among them. Both had to be coaxed into a productive relationship with modernity and with the modern economy.

YH: This is very telling in terms of Britain's own colonial archaeological aspirations, their desire to continue having a serious say on matters of archaeology. So whatever else was going to happen in the area, archaeology was something over which they would exercise control.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

RG: And yet they wanted archaeology in Palestine to be open to all the members of the League of Nations. This was going to be a place that would welcome scientists from all over the world to come and do their work.

YH: Now that's very interesting in terms of our comparison, because in Greece a key feature throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, I would say all the way to the present, is competition among Western powers over archaeology, despite opportunistic alliances. This is competition between the different nation-states which shaped the fortunes of Greece. So major sites in Greece, major classical sites mostly, but also Late Bronze Age ("Minoan" or "Mycenaean") sites became the apples of discord, the bones of contention among the Great Powers, which were also major, global archaeological powers. Who is going to excavate which site? Who is going to secure the long term, almost eternal claims over certain, coveted celebrated locales? Which foreign archaeological school? The British? The French? The Germans? The Italians? The Americans? Greek archaeological bodies, especially the semi-private Athens Archaeological Society, would try to compete too, but they were often outbid. Sites such as Delphi, Olympia in the 19th century, Knossos at the turn of the century or the Athenian Agora in the early-mid-20th century became major flash points. Covert political and diplomatic maneuvering, often at the highest government levels, would at times tip the balance.[54] So, what you're saying in relation to Palestine is that these Mandate provisions were trying, in many ways, to share that resource, trying to guarantee that it would be accessible to all western European powers.

RG: So that they could compete! But I suspect that they also understood that the British public would not support large excavations on its dime; they almost certainly hoped to get Americans, and American money, involved. Perhaps I should mention that the 1928 Antiquities Law provided for a division of finds between the excavator and the Government of Palestine: Up to one half of the finds could be exported, and many were distributed across the globe. The revered ancestor of stratigraphic archaeology, Flinders Petrie, sold items from his Palestinian collection during his lifetime, and as late as 1990 the Institute of Archaeology at UCL considered selling

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

part of it to the British Museum.[55] This was quite an incentive for foreign stakeholders.

YH: Right, exactly. But I would imagine that these provisions took into account the long history of competition and clashes over antiquities in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and perhaps places like Greece would have been in the minds of the people who drafted them. So, getting back to your description of a progressive incorporation of archaeology by the national imagination, if we were to think in terms of the Golden Ages of different nation states, if we were to accept that every nation "chooses" its own Golden Age, and Greece having the classical era, broadly defined, as its own Golden Age, would you say that there is a Golden Age for Israeli nationalism in the 20th century?

RG: In the pre-state phase, the Hasmonaean Kingdom was generally seen as the Golden Age. That has shifted as nowadays people talk about King David and ancient (biblical) Israel, but I should think that, in times of early nationalism, they were looking at well-documented eras described by Roman historians, especially Josephus, and at the state that they could identify as a precursor of Israel: the Hasmonean Kingdom.

YH: And the associations with sacrifices and resistance to the Romans?

RG: Well, that's a celebrated heroic failure. But as a successful precursor state, they were looking to an entity that was warlike, that had expanding borders, that was independent, that fought off great powers – first the Hellenistic empires, and then the Romans – and that has palpable remains. As so few Hasmonean sites had been excavated, those palpable remains would most likely have been coins minted by Hellenistic and Roman-era rulers. Here one could actually see and touch these symbols of independence, and in due course these coins became models for the first Israeli coins and postage stamps, which all carry motifs taken from the Hasmonean Kingdom, the last independent Kingdom, or from the great rebellions – the Jewish war of 66–70 CE, or the Bar Kokhba rebellion of 132–135 CE.[56] But what is interesting is that the rebellions were traumatically unsuccessful and caused tremendous suffering, dispersal, and death, and nonetheless they were glorified; especially the Bar

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Kokhba rebellion, for those three or four years of independence, of minting coins, of fierce resistance, of armed struggle.[57] So, I would say that the first archaeological connection, the first way of connecting with the past during the state-building years, would have been through those episodes – one of successful regeneration and the others of heroic defeat – and of course that characterizes the early years of the Israeli state as well.

YH: You also said that there was no Acropolis in Israel, no equivalent to the Athenian Acropolis. Would you not say then that the iconic site, the fortress of Masada, became, at some stage, the Acropolis for Israel?

RG: And then in what way is it the Acropolis?

YH: I was thinking in terms of its symbolic significance, its presence in contemporary, national iconography, and its sacralization. The fact, for example, that the military held swearing-in ceremonies there or the huge legacy and impact of Yadin's excavations; finally, the national–mythological associations with death as a sacrificial choice in the prospect of defeat and subjugation. What do you think?

RG: Yes, that's something to consider, because you might think of "Athens and the Acropolis" being equivalent to "Jerusalem and the Temple Mount." But Jerusalem and the Temple Mount were not a Zionist focus of interest at all. Nowadays they seem to be the very heart of both the national imagination and the conflict with the Palestinians, but in the formative years, the Temple Mount was out of bounds, and Jerusalem itself was largely the city of the "Old Settlement," the non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox Jews. It wasn't a bastion of the modern state-in-the-making, whose metropolis was Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv has no antiquities to speak of, so maybe Masada functioned – at least in the early years of the state – as that focus of symbolism that is free of the baggage of intervening centuries and replaces ritual animal sacrifices (which you don't really want to play up in any case) with self-sacrifice (a death wish, if you will). It has that halo around it, of stirring the nation's soul. But if it is to be seen as a "displaced" Acropolis, it is a rather dark one, as if the moment of national regeneration and rebirth is inextricable from that of catastrophic failure and death. As if only the willingness to destroy everything can summon forth the power to create. After the two world wars, the

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Shoah, and the events of 1948, history presented itself as a series of zero-sum conflicts ending in the vindication of the strong and the annihilation of the weak; mid-20th-century archaeology confirmed this perception by its fascination with invasions and destruction.

YH. What's the position of classical archaeology, broadly defined, in Israel? Is there a thriving field? I know there are classicists and a strong literary tradition but how about classical archaeology itself, Greek and Roman classical archaeology?

RG: It started out as the core of Jewish archaeology, partly because of the strong central European influence on the Jewish academy, but mainly because archaeology was conceived as a historical discipline, and there's an enormous body of literary and historical information on the classical period in general and on Jewish life and history in particular. Biblical history and archaeology were meager by comparison. If you wished to establish a national archaeology, you would do well to begin with the periods of Jewish independence and rebellion, so richly documented by Flavius Josephus, by traditional Jewish sources, and, from the mid-20th century, by troves of ancient documents and scrolls. In practice, however, most of the classical remains excavated in Palestine were of the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, including many, many churches and synagogues. The period when Palestine was most densely occupied until modern times was the Byzantine period, the 5th and 6th centuries CE. A discourse, therefore, sprang up around the Byzantine period as one that proves that Palestine – and particularly the Negev desert – can be made to flourish. If the desert could be settled, then Palestine could support many millions of inhabitants. The classical scholar and archaeologist Michael Avi-Yonah was specifically recruited to write a memorandum for the commissions that discussed the partition of Palestine, proving that Palestine could support millions of people and thus support large-scale Jewish immigration.[58] In recent years I sense a decline of interest in that period, as biblical periods have become much more prominent both in academia and in the public view. I believe this shift is related to the current wave of heightened nationalism; an ethnocentric-religious nationalism that has taken the hill-regions of Palestine and the Temple Mount itself, avoided by the early Zionists, and has made them the focus both of desire and of a

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

willingness to provoke deadly conflict. This has fused seamlessly with the evangelical Christian focus on biblical history and end days – seemingly bringing us full circle back to the 19th century. The new national mythology – that which privileges King David and the Israelite kingdoms and the Temple Mount – is reflected in an intense archaeological discourse, whereas the previous affinity to the Hasmonaeans and Bar Kokhba has receded. That's a shift that's related to current politics.[59]

YH: So you could see a direct mirroring effect here between the broader political scene, and the archaeological predicament. In that scheme of things, what's the role of earlier periods such as early prehistory, given the key role of the region in the global discourses on origins, especially the origins of agriculture? Because if we were to compare, for a moment, Israel not with Greece but with Turkey, we can recall how in that country the early history and archaeology of farming was central in Turkish, Kemalist nationalism that imagined the country as a land of origins and "firsts," with an at least 10,000-year-old history.[60] Are these periods and themes completely separate from the national archaeological discourse in Israel?

RG: Prehistorians would like to think so, as they have always positioned themselves above the fray, denying the value-laden nature of their science; moreover – perhaps out of deference to Jewish orthodoxy – the major discoveries of Paleolithic and Neolithic eras have not been appropriated by the state machine. But between prehistory and the Israelite kingdoms there lies a rich archive of "Ancient Near Eastern" mythology and art that was mined by individuals and small ideological groups to conjure up an autochthonous, pre-Israelite (and hence pagan) "Canaanite" or "Hebrew" cultural expanse.[61] In its most rarified form, as expressed by a small group of artists, writers, and historians in the mid-20th century, this was a radical nationalist movement, intent on separating the nation both from traditional Judaism and from the Arab world by positing a continuity of modern Hebrew-speaking settlers with a pre-Semitic Canaanism that could be shared with other minority groups in the region, such as self-identifying Lebanese "Phoenicians." More widely shared in the first half of the 20th century was a concept of "Hebrewness" that, among other things, assigned a primordial, Nietszchean

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

FIGURE 2.3. *Gehazi* (1940s), a now-lost sculpture by Yechiel Shemi (1922–2003), created in a Near Eastern idiom that characterized the "Canaanite" movement in mid-20th-century Israel.

vitality to Eastern pagan religion and culture (Fig. 2.3).[62] This version of regenerated indigeneity, divorced from any sense of traditional Judaism, is prominent, for example, in Moshe Dayan's patriotic passion for antiquities, which led him to use his military and political authority to amass a huge private collection that evoked, for him, what the writer Amos Elon has called "a pagan Bible of wild barbaric tribes, sweeping out of the desert to conquer the land of Canaan."[63]

YH: Since you have brought up paganism, I thought we might engage with a study that we have both read by Leoussi and Aberbach, structured around Hellenism and Judaism as concepts with long pedigrees.[64] Starting from ancient, Hellenistic times or earlier, the

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

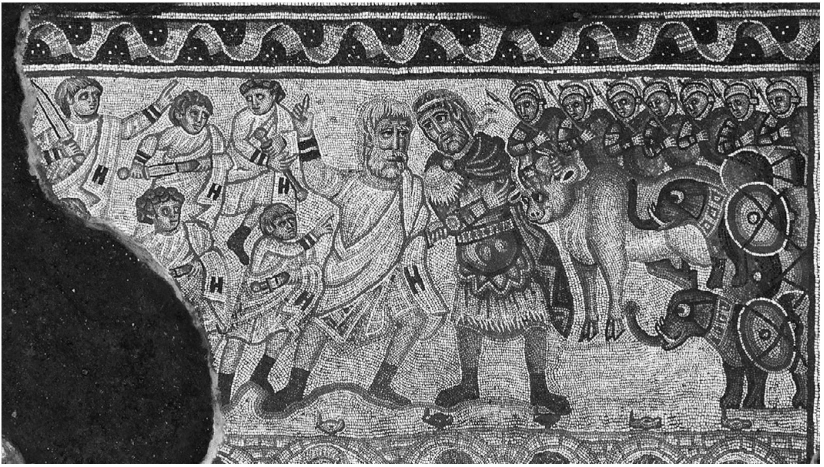

FIGURE 2.4. Upper register of the "elephant mosaic" from the Huqoq synagogue, 5th–6th centuries CE. Reproduced with permission of Jodi Magness; photo, Jim Haberman.

authors suggest that the two forces, and I guess the social agents who were actually carriers and propagators of these two forces, were ambivalent toward each other, or they were seeing themselves, at certain points as competitors. And yet, in the thinking of many modern, Western intellectuals they eventually became reconciled, they became synthesized in some way. What are your views on this?

RG: Well, they are alluding to a long and complex history of entanglement and mutual aversion, usually expressed in the form of the Jerusalem/Athens dyad.[65] Do you remember the image I used to advertise our course (Fig. 2.4)? It was of the mosaic floor from the 5th-century Huqoq synagogue in Galilee, which has a unique scene of an encounter between what seems to be a Greek or Roman general, with soldiers behind him, and a Jewish priest or religious figure, accompanied by a group of sword-bearing men (warrior-priests?). It has been said to represent an apocryphal meeting between Alexander the Great and the High Priest in Jerusalem, when the Greeks first conquered Palestine, but in the context of Byzantine Palestine it must have resonated with contemporary concerns. It's a striking figurative scene, in a surprising context, that seems to reproduce the tension of the Jewish–Greek (and by implication, the

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Jewish–Byzantine) encounter.[66] So, this entanglement has been there, spawning a huge body of scholarship about what Judaism was in those first centuries of our era, about its interaction with the Greek-speaking pagan and Christian worlds, and about the way the Jewish–Greek antinomy has played out over the centuries (possibly including our own dialog!).

Leoussi and Aberbach take this all the way down to the 19th century, showing that the awakening of modernism and nationalist thought among the Jews also meant a resurrecting of the Jewish body; one that is no longer the feeble Jewish body of the ghetto, of the Yeshivot (religious academies), of the synagogues. The virile, masculine body is no longer denied, but affirmed, on the basis of a Romantic vision of beauty and the philhellenic appreciation of classical sculpture.[67] They mention the phrase "let the chief beauty of Japheth be in the tents of Shem," – from a 3rd-century CE homily on the Biblical text (Gen. 9:27) referring to the translation of the Jewish Bible into Greek. This homily was reinterpreted by later Jewish writers as a reference to beauty in general (Japheth [*yefet*], the name of the mythical progenitor of the Greeks, was associated with beauty, due to its similarity to *yafeh*, "beautiful"), implying a possible reconciliation of Judaism with a pagan aesthetic. This move toward secularization, alongside expectations for political/legal emancipation and equality in western Europe, preceded Zionism and is considered part of its groundwork, but if we stick to the perception of the Jewish or Hebrew body and its regeneration, the relation to the Hellenic ideal is not straightforward, not only because of the long history of its disparagement among Jews, but also because Semitic antecedents – Canaanite or Phoenician – were also part of the discussion of Hebrew regeneration, right up to the middle of the 20th century.[68]

YH: One of the things I actually found enlightening in this article is the emphasis on the body, and one of the authors, Athena Leoussi, has written extensively about the cult of the body in recent European thought, and the links to the Hellenic ideas of the body.[69] And I found it interesting because it can shape some of our discussions here, including in relation to notions of purification which we will be exploring later on. A key attitude that they're investigating is the one

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

which articulates the body as beauty, but also as sinful, the body as something that is polluting and polluted. And then, of course, the other interesting thing in the article is the links they trace between such attitudes and certain trends within recent, 19th- and 20th-century CE thought, when racism becomes a major force in European thinking, and leading all the way up to the fascist and Nazi regimes in the 20th century. As we know, such regimes were drawing on Hellenism in many ways. They were drawing on the ideas of the body, foregrounding a cult of the body which became the fascist body of perfection, regimentation, and war.[70]

An interesting detail in this study is their discussion of athleticism and sport as one way in which the Jewish body was thought to become a powerful body. The authors mention certain examples such as the formation of the first athletic association among Jewish communities, which happened in Istanbul, in 1895. That's a very interesting year, because that's one year before the modern Olympics, which took place in Athens in 1896. We know that modern Olympics were part and parcel of the promotion of the ideas of Hellenism, but also the ideas of race.[71] We know that the third modern Olympics, held in Saint Louis, USA in 1904, became a celebration not only of American Imperialism but also of racism and white supremacy.[72] We know how keen the Third Reich was on Olympics. We know how Hitler showed a keen interest in the German excavations of Olympia, drawing on the cult of the strong, athletic body. We know that the elite academies, schools and gymnasia in Nazi Germany were drawing on classical education, especially the legacy of Sparta, promoting at the same time athleticism and the cult of the body, in their attempt to construct a new German or rather Aryan body, and the new German self.[73] Ancient Olympics, and the modern Olympics movement meet the biopolitics of race, and the thanatopolitics that shaped the racialized national order and imagination, especially in the 20th century. Were the late-19th-century diasporic Jewish communities caught up in the early biopolitical imaginings around the strong body, crucial for the religious-political community?

RG: They certainly were. The need to be reborn as a complete person was a significant feature of European 19th-century

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

nationalism, so it is not surprising that it was adopted by Jews, especially in view of the antisemitic stereotypes current at the time. Also, the gymnasia were pivotal in the emancipation and secularization of the Jews in Europe, and then as part of the Zionist educational project in Europe and in Palestine, while the Spartan concept is often linked to Jewish pioneering and survival in hostile surroundings. There's a whole world of associations there. This is part of what Daniel Boyarin calls (after Homi Bhabha) "colonial mimicry," and in his fascinating study of the "muscle-Jew," Todd Presner shows how Zionist concern with the Jewish masculine body resonated with broader, fin de siècle anxieties over "degeneration."[74]

The rise of gymnastic associations in 19th-century Germany, followed by England and France, must have absorbed concepts of

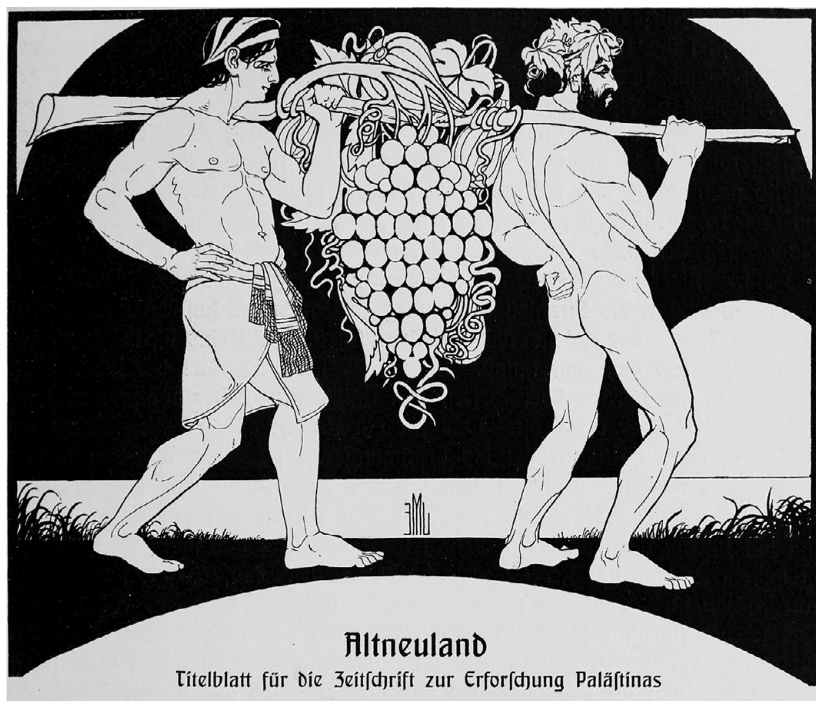

FIGURE 2.5. Moses Lilien's masthead for the journal *Altneuland* (1904).

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the ideal body from philhellenism, and Jews (who were barred from most of these organizations) followed suit (the connection you noted between the first German–Jewish gymnastic association in Constantinople in 1895 and the 1896 Olympic games seems obvious). But Presner shows that while Zionist artists like Moses Lilien grafted the classical sculptured body onto ancient Jewish heroes like the Maccabees, Bar Kokhba, and even the ancient Israelite spies to Canaan, they added – as in the canonical tableau of the two figures carrying a huge bunch of grapes (Fig. 2.5) – components of fertility and homoeroticism that go beyond classicism to address late 19th-century concerns with vitality and regeneration, not so much of the individual, but of the nation and of the soil. Boyarin goes even further, stating that – at least in Theodore Herzl's vision of *Altneuland*, the ideal Jewish state – it was "whiteness" that the Zionists were striving for. But these are matters that we want to talk about later, when we get to race and indigeneity.[75]

Notes

1 Hamilakis 2007.
2 Díaz-Andreu 2007; McGeough 2015; Silberman 1982.
3 Smith 1907: 25.
4 Hilprecht 1896.
5 Cf. Chatterjee 1986.
6 Even Theodor Herzl, who is considered "the father of political Zionism," expressed such a disappointment when he visited Greece in 1898 and was photographed on the Acropolis, on his way to Palestine (Fleming 2010); for the photo, see cover illustration.
7 Yakovaki 2006: 271.
8 Fowden 2019.
9 See Yakovaki 2006 for the most comprehensive and important discussion on this process.
10 See studies in Georgopoulou and Thanasakis 2019, especially by Fowden.
11 Fowden 2019; Tunali 2019.
12 Cf. Fabian 1983.
13 Kaplan 2010.
14 Cf. Hamilakis 2011b.
15 Anderson 1991.
16 Cf. Papanikolopoulos 2021: 87.
17 Papanikolopoulos 2021: 47.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

18 Hamilakis 2007: 79–81; Velianitis 1993.
19 Cf. Karakatsoulis 2016: 65; Kotsonis 2020: 28–29; Koulouri 2020: 48–49.
20 As it was an Ottoman institution aimed at keeping the peace among Orthodox Christians and guaranteeing their acquiescence in exchange of certain privileges, the Patriarchate declared the insurrection as sinful; see Anagnostopoulou 2021 and Matalas 2002.
21 Kotsonis 2020: 28.
22 Kolovos et al. 2021: 99; Moiras 2020: 144; at the same time, the Porte realized the hugely important symbolic role that the ancient Hellas played in the insurrection, and in fact, when it eventually recognized the new political entity that emerged, it called it *Yunanistan* and its citizens *Yunan*, name that it had previously reserved for ancient Greeks; the rest of the Orthodox Christians would continue to be called by the Ottomans *Rum*, a name that previously included the people who were now called *Yunan* (Moiras 2020: 166).
23 Cf. Theotokas 1992, 2021.
24 Hamilakis 2007.
25 Bar-Yosef 2003; Crome 2018.
26 Avineri 1985.
27 Hamilakis 2001; Szegedy-Maszak 2001.
28 On Greece and photography in relation to this and more broadly, see Carabott et al. 2015.
29 Conder 1878; Warren 1875.
30 Cf. Gourgouris 1996; Karakatsoulis 2016; see also for rich but more conventional accounts, Hering 1994; St Clair 2008; and an interesting historiographic overview Tolias 2016.
31 Cf. Koulouri 2020: 48.
32 Dobie 2001: 124.
33 Petrakos 2013: 85–104.
34 Petrakos 2013: 103.
35 Tsiomis 2021: 212 and *passim*.
36 Ibid. 264.
37 Cf. Kyramargiou et al. 2020, esp. 208, 224–228.
38 Hamilakis 2007.
39 Hamilakis 2016; on other treatments of the Amphipolis saga see Fouseki and Dragouni 2017; Plantzos 2016; Vournelis 2016.
40 For various 20th century studies on archaeology and national imagination see also Damaskos and Plantzos 2008, and on challenges and contestations "from below," Solomon 2021.
41 Bar-Yosef 2005.
42 Warren 1875.
43 Abu El-Haj 2002.
44 Kersel 2010.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

45 Shavit 1997b.
46 Kletter 2006.
47 Elon 1971.
48 Feige 2001.
49 Silberman 1993.
50 Feige 2007.
51 Petrakos 2013: 94.
52 League of Nations 1922.
53 Melman 2020: 36.
54 See Bohotis 2015; Hamilakis 2013a; Kalpaxis 1990, 1993; Sakka 2008, for examples.
55 Ucko 1998: 367.
56 Zahavi 2009.
57 Zerubavel 1995; Ohana 2017.
58 Vaad Leumi 1947.
59 Gorenberg 2002; Hummel 2019.
60 For critical studies see, for example, Gur 2010.
61 Shavit 1987.
62 Zalmona and Manor-Friedman 1998.
63 Elon 1979.
64 Leoussi and Aberbach 2002; the classic study on the links between Hellenism and Judaism in modern European, especially literary and cultural, thought is Lambropoulos 1993.
65 Shavit 1997a.
66 Magness et al. 2018.
67 Presner 2007.
68 Schulte 2013.
69 E.g. Leoussi 1998.
70 Cf. Chapoutot 2016; Mosse 1995.
71 Yalouri 2004; on the political dimensions and meanings of contemporary Olympics, especially the Athens 2004 ones, see Hamilakis 2007: 1–5, and Plantzos 2016.
72 Cf. Brownell 2008.
73 Cf. Roche 2013.
74 Boyarin 1997; Nordau 1898; Presner 2007; Tosh 2005.
75 Boyarin 1997; also Stähler 2013.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009160247.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press