

## FEMINISM AND GREEK ARCHAEOLOGY: AN ENCOUNTER LONG OVER-DUE\*

### Archaeology, feminism, and innovation

The second wave of feminism in the 1970s had an important impact on the academic community in North America and Western Europe, resulting in new research avenues and more professional opportunities for women. Archaeology was, however, late to embrace feminist interests. This reluctance can be explained in terms of the following developments:

- dominance of processualism in anthropological archaeology, since the 1960s, which promoted normative explanations of human behaviour as a mere reflection of environmental adaptation and socio-economic structure<sup>1</sup>

- a strong historical-philological tradition in classical archaeology, which often placed uncritical faith on textual evidence without considering the prejudices of ancient writers<sup>2</sup>

- under-representation of women in the profession, especially in the higher ranks.<sup>3</sup>

Since the 1980s, many archaeologists became dissatisfied with the ways the past was portrayed in previous approaches. A broader intellectual climate of critical awareness has favoured the development of post-processual archaeologies which shifted emphasis to human agency and historical contingency; acknowledged archaeology's relations to political authority and the impact of modern experience on scholarly constructs about the past; exposed the ways in which the past is perceived differentially by individuals and/or social groups; and recognised the needs and experiences of the recipients of archaeological knowledge, who may eventually also become producers of new interpretations. Shaking the previous confidence in "testable objectivity," these new perspectives strive to understand the culturally-specific manifestations of identity and "otherness," and explore new possibilities of rethinking about the past and present.

A growing validation of pluralism has encouraged feminist responsiveness in archaeology in many international contexts (USA, Britain, Norway, Germany, Spain, Australia, and elsewhere). The last two decades have witnessed an explosion of related publications, the incorporation of the subject into academic curricula, and an increase of female representation at all levels of the profession.<sup>4</sup> Despite these advances, summarised

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1 "Gender theory."

2 "Feminist research in archaeology"; S. BROWN, "'Ways of seeing' women in antiquity: an introduction to feminism in classical archaeology and ancient history," in *Naked Truths* 12-42; S.M. SPENCER-WOOD, "Feminist gender research in classical archaeology," in S.M. NELSON (ed.), *Handbook of Gender in Archaeology* (2006) 295-329.

3 M.C. NELSON, S.M. NELSON and A. WYLIE (eds), *Equity Issues for Women in Archaeology*, *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 5 (1994); *Excavating Women*; T. CULLEN, "A profile of Aegean prehistorians, 1984-2003," in *Prehistorians Round the Pond* 43-72.

4 For references, see e.g. M.W. CONKEY and J.M. GERO, "Programme to practice: gender and feminism in archaeology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26 (1997) 411-37; *Reader in Gender Archaeology*; K. HAYS-GILPIN and S.C. ROBERTS (eds), *Gender Archaeology: A Bibliography*, Northern Arizona University (2001) <<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/gender2000/biblio/bibintro2.htm>>; M.W. CONKEY, "Has feminism changed archaeology?" *Signs* 28.3 (2003) 867-80; *Arqueología y género*; *Arqueología de las mujeres* 163-282; A. WYLIE (ed.), "Doing archaeology as a feminist," *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* Special Issue 14.3 (2007); NELSON (*supra* n. 2). This literature originally appeared, in large part, in conference proceedings. According to Cheryl Claassen's estimates, over 500 conference papers authored by over 400 individuals had been presented on gender between 1988 and 1997, and over 10 conferences on gender and

perhaps too optimistically in Lauren Talalay's statement that "Gender is now generally regarded as a legitimate conceptual and analytical category of archaeology,"<sup>5</sup> there still remain major challenges to be met. In her 2003 review of what had by then been accomplished and what still needed to be done, Margaret Conkey resents the fact that gender research remains a woman's affair, confined to a balancing or remedial effect against androcentrism. Indeed, it yet has to develop a solid theoretical framework for exploring gender, social class, and ethnicity beyond the experiences of mainstream academic feminism, that is, of white, middle class, heterosexual scholars.<sup>6</sup> In another recent review, Ericka Engelstad has argued that "the relationship between feminism and gender archaeology is now being pushed even further into the background. Much feminist critique has given way to an emphasis on gender as an interesting analytic category; this is simply a cosmetic change in relation to traditional archaeology and very much still a process of adding women, and to a certain extent children, to our interpretations of past societies. In the process, gender archaeology appears to have become a sub-discipline comparable to other sub-disciplines such as ecological-, evolutionary-, symbolic-, behavioural-, processual-, post-processual archaeologies. Despite the significant gains in engendering research and practice, gender archaeology is at risk of becoming a narrow specialty with little left of its initial critical feminist and theoretical edge. Why? The answer to this simple question is complex but this tendency can be attributed to a dwindling understanding of what it is to do archaeology as a feminist as well as to institutional contexts and a discipline that 'still rewards androcentrism in so many ways'".<sup>7</sup> Bias will be pending as long as gender remains a "special interest" topic in the margins of "hard" archaeology, added or omitted optionally, as if it were a trendy seasoning touch.<sup>8</sup> Only when gender is recognised as a major structuring principle of social life, including the very practice of the archaeological profession, can feminist research have a widely constructive impact.

It goes without saying that the above broad directions acquire different validity across countries, especially those in the periphery of the dominant (Anglo-American) archaeological discourse. In this paper, we present the case study of Greek archaeology as an indigenous

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archaeology had been held in the same period (cited in CONKEY and GERO *op.cit.* 414). At the same time, most major English language archaeological and anthropological journals published at least one article on the archaeology of gender (*ibid.* 413-14; cf. also R. WHITEHOUSE, "Gender archaeology in Europe," in NELSON *op. cit.* 734-35). Monographs devoted to the subject include: J.D. SPECTOR, with contributions by C.C. CAVENDER, D.M. STOLEN, M.K. WHELAN and R.M. WITHDRAW, *What This Owl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village* (1993); *Archaeology of Religious Women*; R. GILCHRIST, *Gender and Archaeology: Contesting the Past* (1999); *Gender Archaeology*; M.E. SANAHUJA YLL, *Cuerpos sexuados, objetos y prehistoria* (2002); R. FALCÓ MARTÍ, *La Arqueología del Género: Espacios de Mujeres, Mujeres con Espacio, Cuadernos de Trabajos de Investigación del Centro de Estudios sobre la Mujer de la Universidad de Alicante* 6 (2003) <<http://www.ua.es/cem/publicaciones/trabajo6.pdf>>; *Gender in Archaeology*.

5 "Gendered sea" 130.

6 CONKEY (*supra* n. 4) 869, 875-76. See, however, some recent archaeological contributions to a broader understanding of sexuality and ethnicity: T.A. DOWSON, "Homosexualitat, teoria *queer* i arqueologia," *Cota Zero* 14 (1998) 81-7; ID., "Homosexuality, queer theory, and archaeology," in J. THOMAS (ed.), *Interpretative Archaeology: A Reader* (2001) 283-89; ID., "Queer theory and feminist theory: towards a sociology of sexual politics in rock art research," in K. HELSKOG (ed.), *Theoretical Perspectives in Rock Art Research* (2001) 312-29; ID. (ed.), "Queer Archaeologies," *World Archaeology* Special Issue 32.2 (2000); ID. (ed.), "Debates in World Archaeology," *World Archaeology* Special Issue 37.4 (2005); ID., "Archaeologists, feminists, and queers: sexual politics in the construction of the past," in P.L. GELLER and M.K. STOCKERT (eds), *Feminist Anthropology: Past, Present, and Future* (2007) 89-101; R.A. SCHMIDT and B.L. VOSS (eds), *Archaeologies of Sexuality* (2000); *Among Women*; M. FRANKLIN, "A black feminist-inspired archaeology?" *JSA* 1.1 (2001) 108-25; M.W. CONKEY, "Dwelling at the margins, action at the intersection? Feminist and indigenous archaeologies," *Archaeologies* 1.1 (2005) 9-59; NELSON (*supra* n. 2) part II.

7 E. ENGELSTAD, "Much more than gender," in WYLIE (*supra* n. 4) 219.

8 For example, there is no chapter devoted to gender in a recent edited volume on Mediterranean archaeology; even contributors with a record of related scholarship chose to report on other subjects (J.K. PAPADOPOULOS and R.M. LEVENTHAL [eds], *Theory and Practice in Mediterranean Archaeology: Old World and New World Perspectives, Cotsen Advanced Seminars* 1 [2003]). On the contrary, a review of gender research has been included in another recent book on Mediterranean prehistory ("Gendered sea" 130-55).

enterprise, practiced by state-employed professionals. Our aim is to show how the idiosyncratic character of the discipline as regards feminist theory and practice, or rather the absence thereof, can only be understood with reference to the specificity of national history.

Archaeology in Greece features a striking paradox: on the one hand, women make up the overwhelming majority of archaeologists, and occupy most high-ranking positions in both academia (Table I)<sup>9</sup> and the Archaeological Service (Table II); on the other hand, feminist-inspired or, at least, gender-orientated work by local scholars has so far been limited to isolated exceptions.<sup>10</sup> The extremely prolonged feminist (and hence political) “innocence” of Greek archaeology can be ascribed to the following factors:

- close entanglement of scholarship with the ideology of the nation-state
- belated response of local institutions to international trends
- most importantly, absence of an influential feminist movement and, therefore, of feminist theory.

These phenomena will be discussed below.

### The ideology of nationalism

Archaeology can be described as a formation process of identity and otherness, the “other” being manipulated in order to invent the superiority of the “self.” Since the early days of the discipline, a dominant discourse was articulated around the self-proclamation of colonialist Europe as the cradle of history, composing a grand narrative about the superiority of the European “self” versus the non-European “other.” Greek archaeology, in particular, can be labelled nationalist as an indigenous endeavour, whereas its international perspective carries the aura of colonialism and imperialism, in that it has elevated classical antiquity into a global (Western) value.<sup>11</sup> The appropriation of classical tradition by the Europeans lent the newly-founded, powerless Greek state ideological support. Nonetheless, modern Greece was seen as neither genuinely occidental nor oriental, but rather occupying a “liminal” zone between the “familiar” and the “exotic”: a contradictory mixture of an illustrious past (expropriated physically and symbolically by powerful “protectors”) and an unimpressive present. Under the burden of this uncomfortable dichotomy, Greek nationalism resorted to the symbolic capital of the past, proclaiming itself the sole authentic heir to “ancestral glory” and rightful recipient of humanity’s intellectual debt to classical antiquity.<sup>12</sup>

9 The high numerical representation of women in archaeological faculty is, nevertheless, exceptional to the general pattern of male dominance in Greek academia; only in the humanities there is a more equal gender representation (*Συμπεράσματα από το Συνέδριο “Η θέση των γυναικών στην ακαδημαϊκή κοινότητα και οι πολιτικές φύλου στα πανεπιστήμια,” Δημοσίευση του Προπτυχιακού Προγράμματος Σπουδών σε Θέματα Φύλου και Ισότητας 2, 20-12-2004, Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών* <[www.isotita.uoa.gr](http://www.isotita.uoa.gr)>).

10 Δ. ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ και Μ. ΝΙΚΟΛΑΪΔΟΥ, “Η γυναικεία οπτική στην αρχαιολογία,” *Τομή 301: Έκδοση Μεταπτυχιακών Φοιτητών και Αποφοίτων του Αρχαιολογικού Τμήματος της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 2 (1990), 21-28; ID., “Η γυναικεία οπτική στην αρχαιολογία II: εφαρμογές στην ελλαδική προϊστορία,” *Τομή 301: Έκδοση Μεταπτυχιακών Φοιτητών και Αποφοίτων του Αρχαιολογικού Τμήματος της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 4 (1992) 23-39; ID., “Η γυναικεία οπτική στην αρχαιολογία III: εφαρμογές στην ελλαδική προϊστορία,” *Τομή 301: Έκδοση Μεταπτυχιακών Φοιτητών και Αποφοίτων του Αρχαιολογικού Τμήματος της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 5 (1992) 67-96; *Αρχαιολογία και κοινωνική ταυτότητα του φύλου; Gender Symbolism in Glyptic Art*; “Body imagery, Aegean Neolithic”; D. ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ and Μ. ΝΙΚΟΛΑΪΔΟΥ, “A sexist present, a human-less past: Museum archaeology in Greece,” in *Gender and Material Culture* 33-55; “Women’s arts – Men’s crafts?”; Μ. ΝΙΚΟΛΑΪΔΟΥ and Δ. ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ, “The symbolism of violence in Late Bronze Age palatial societies of the Aegean: a gender approach,” in J. CARMAN (ed.), *Material Harm: Archaeological Studies of War and Violence* (1997) 174-97; “Greek women in archaeology”; *Υφαντική και υφάντρες*; I. ΤΖΑΧΙΛΗ, “Πώς έχασα το ιστορικό υποκείμενο: σκέψεις μετά από μια διατριβή,” *Δίνη* 9 (1997) 96-104; Μ. ΝΙΚΟΛΑΪΔΟΥ, “Palaces with faces in Protopalatial Crete: looking for the people in the first Minoan states,” in *Labyrinth Revisited* 74-97.

11 According to Bruce Trigger’s classification of the different social contexts in which distinctive types of archaeology are produced (B.G. TRIGGER, “Alternative archaeologies: nationalist, colonialist, imperialist,” *Man* 19.3 [1984] 355-70).

12 Y. HAMILAKIS and E. YALOURI, “Antiquities as symbolic capital in modern Greek society,” *Antiquity* 70.266 (1996) 117-29.

The unifying mechanism of the national project was centred on the alleged integrity of “Hellenism,” a term used to denote the national self as an unbroken unity through time and space, beginning with prehistory, proceeding into antiquity, continuing into Byzantium, and culminating with the War of Independence in the 1820s. As has aptly been remarked, nationalism has not merely provided the socio-historic context in which Greek archaeology was shaped and operated, it “was located at the very heart of disciplinary practices ... served as an *epistemic* system: a system of culturally embedded presuppositions and questions geared to the production of true and false” in archaeological knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Corroborated by the archaeological quest for “truth,” the past was sacralised in collective consciousness as an entity transcending historical and social differentiation, and was thus elevated to the status of supreme moral measure for the present.

History was reconstructed in terms of heroism and masculinity, whereas women were either ignored or valued only as mothers, daughters, and wives of “heroes,” or “heroines” who were assigned masculine traits. Following the stereotypes of ancient patriarchal myths, femaleness was invested with ambiguous, if not negative, qualities, identified with a dangerous matriarchy or the effeminate ethos of “the barbarous enemies of Hellenism.”<sup>14</sup> In both scholarly discourse and publications addressing a wider audience, “our” past has been gendered (and unchallenged) androcentric. Gender dynamics have not been considered worthy of attention even in theoretically informed overviews of Greek archaeology.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the story of Greek women archaeologists still remains to be properly written,<sup>16</sup> contrary to the increasing interest in biographies of their foreign peers and gender-sensitive approaches to the historiography and sociology of the field.<sup>17</sup>

The few female pioneers, who joined the Archaeological Service between the mid- and post-war years,<sup>18</sup> belonged to an era in which even the most educated or privileged women had to strive extremely hard for recognition.<sup>19</sup> Social transformations since the 1960s have led not only to the strong numerical preponderance of women in the archaeological profession but also to their rise in positions of political power: since the 1980s, the Ministry of Culture has been more often than not headed by women.<sup>20</sup> Readers do not need to be reminded that female authority will not guarantee any true change when adopting patriarchal values. Suffice to say that it was a woman, the Minister of Culture Melina Merkouri, who launched the (ongoing) nationalist campaign for the restitution of the famous Parthenon marbles from the British Museum to Athens. Far from endorsing the violent removal of the sculptures by Elgin within the context of nineteenth century British imperialism, one may speak of Greece’s new

13 M. FOTIADIS, “Imagining Macedonia in Prehistory, ca. 1900-1930,” *JMA* 14.2 (2001) 117 (emphasis in the original).

14 D. KOKKINIDOU and M. NIKOLAIDOU, “On the stage and behind the scenes: Greek archaeology in times of Dictatorship,” in M.L. GALATY and C. WATKINSON (eds), *Archaeology under Dictatorship* (2004) 164-65.

15 K. KOTSAKIS, “The powerful past: theoretical trends in Greek archaeology,” in I. HODDER (ed.), *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades* (1991) 65-90; I. MORRIS, “Archaeologies of Greece,” in ID. (ed.), *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies* (1994) 8-47; S. ANDREOU, “The landscapes of modern Greek Prehistory,” in *Prehistorians Round the Pond* 73-92.

16 But see “Greek women in archaeology.”

17 *Supra* n. 3. Further works include: *Women in Archaeology; Breaking Ground; Archeologia al femminile*; J.L. BÉNESS and T.W. HILLARD, “Ancient history, archaeology, and classical studies,” in M. SPONGBERG, A. CURTHOYS and B. CAINE (eds), *Companion to Women’s Historical Writing* (2005) 5-15; S. HAMILTON, R.D. WHITEHOUSE and K.I. WRIGHT (eds), *Archaeology and Women: Ancient and Modern Issues Part II* (2007); and ALLEN and D’AGATA in this volume.

18 There were 22 women out of a total of 115 Curators of Antiquities appointed in the Archaeological Service from its foundation in the 1830s to 1960 (B.X. ΠΕΤΡΑΚΟΣ, *Δοκίμιο για την Αρχαιολογική Νομοθεσία, Δημοσιεύματα του Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου* 29 [1982] 98-101).

19 “Greek women in archaeology.”

20 This fact has sometimes been uncritically hailed as “female dominance” in the domain of culture (Π. ΚΑΘΜΕΠΤΖΗ, “Γυναικεία παράδοση,” *Τα Νέα* 19-2-1999; ID., “Αρχαιολόγος Γενική Γραμματέας,” *Τα Νέα* 17-3-1999).

“Great Idea,”<sup>21</sup> the “Elgin syndrome,”<sup>22</sup> a major “National Issue,”<sup>23</sup> indeed a cultural crusade to restore “Hellenism’s national rights.” This pursuit has regrettably overshadowed other, more pressing issues in heritage policies, such as the understaffing of the Archaeological Service, the lack of care for “second rank” monuments, a thriving trade of looted antiquities, and the unemployment of archaeology graduates, to name but a few. One is tempted to connect the “splendour and glamour” of Merkouri, the pioneer crusader, with the illustrious character of the sculptures claimed by the crusade. It is perhaps not accidental that the campaign was inaugurated by a populist government, although it has since been joined by all sides of the political spectrum, mainly for internal consumption (but with poor realistic prospects of success).<sup>24</sup>

Nationalist agendas have always been actively promoted by the Greek archaeological “orthodoxy,” women included. For the purposes of this paper, we will limit ourselves to the statements of a female professor, who feels threatened by those “modern trends” (feminist theory and social archaeology) that “set dynamite to the foundations of traditional archaeology,” and is shocked that ancient Greece is degraded by comparison with “even illiterate societies”! She further attacks feminism for creating myths that lend support to contemporary social movements, such as the African American one, and women’s rights movements.<sup>25</sup> Needless to say, she fails to explain why nationalism is innocent of fabricating myths.

### An enduring “innocence”

In Greek archaeology perhaps the most powerful myth that nationalism has generated is a mentality of self-sufficiency, even self-complacency, responsible for the indifference or suspicion towards broader international orientations. Strong preoccupation with indigenous ideological needs, coupled with the overall slow response of Greek society to innovations from abroad, has hardly allowed space for alternative perspectives until very recently.<sup>26</sup> To give a characteristic example, it was not until the 1980s that Greek archaeologists (more accurately, prehistorians) began to take notice of the New Archaeology,<sup>27</sup> twenty years after its programmatic statement,<sup>28</sup> when post-processual paradigms were already on the rise. Albeit with delay, Greek archaeology has finally begun to redefine its theory and practice, mainly under the influence of processualism. The most significant developments concern the application of multi-disciplinary strategies in fieldwork and analysis, certain interest in “non-impressive” monuments, historiographical accounts, critiques of nationalism, museum studies, and public outreach programmes.<sup>29</sup> These advances, however, have not yet been equally felt in all realms of the discipline; classical archaeology, in particular, is still dominated by traditional wisdom.<sup>30</sup>

21 B.X. ΠΕΤΡΑΚΟΣ, “Τα πρώτα χρόνια της ελληνικής αρχαιολογίας,” *Αρχαιολογία* 26 (1988) 96; Ο ΙΟΣ, “Το νέο ‘τάμα’ του έθνους,” *Κυριακάτικη Ελευθεροτυπία*, 10-3-2002.

22 A.A. ΖΩΗΣ, *Η Αρχαιολογία στην Ελλάδα: Πραγματικότητες και Προοπτικές* (1990) 47.

23 Y. HAMILAKIS, “Stories from exile: fragments from the cultural biography of the Parthenon (or ‘Elgin’) Marbles,” *World Archaeology* 31.2 (1999) 310.

24 Δ. ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ, *Παρελθόν και Εξουσία: Όψεις της Αρχαιολογίας στην Ελληνική Κοινωνία και Εκπαίδευση* (2005) 64-70; ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ and ΝΙΚΟΛΑΙΔΟΥ (*supra* n. 14) 181.

25 Ο. ΠΑΛΑΓΓΙΑ, “Η διδασκαλία της κλασικής αρχαιολογίας: εκπαίδευση και μετεκπαίδευση. Ιδεολογία και πράξη,” στο *Το μέλλον του Παρελθόντος μας: Ανιχνεύοντας τις Προοπτικές της Αρχαιολογικής Υπηρεσίας και της Ελληνικής Αρχαιολογίας, Δ’ Συνέδριο Συλλόγου Ελλήνων Αρχαιολόγων, Αθήνα, 24/26-11-2000* (2002) 94-97.

26 D. ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ, “Past and present in Greek Archaeology: an overview,” *Journal of the Modern Greek Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand* 5/7 (1997-99) 197-213; ANDREOU (*supra* n. 15); ΚΟΤΣΑΚΗΣ (*supra* n. 15).

27 ΚΟΤΣΑΚΗΣ *op.cit.* 76-80.

28 L.R. BINFORD, “Archaeology as Anthropology,” *American Antiquity* 28.2 (1962) 217-25.

29 For references, see ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ (*supra* n. 24).

30 ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ (*supra* n. 26) 205; ΚΟΚΚΙΝΙΔΟΥ (*supra* n. 24) 177-78.

If Greek prehistory, at least, has at long last come of age,<sup>31</sup> it yet has to lift the veil of “innocence” as regards peopling and gendering the past. Normative models, albeit proven inadequate to account for the plurality of human behaviour, still retain an aura of dogma. By contrast, social relations and symbolic dynamics, including gender constructs, are dismissed by many as inaccessible to investigation, unimportant to “real” archaeology (the well-known “cowboy archaeologist” syndrome) and, by extension, uninteresting for the public. Feminist “deviating” thinking has either been tolerated as “picturesque” in the margin of official discourse, or ignored, if not intimidated; or those few of dissenting opinion make haste to conform and invest their voice with the authority of “science,” impersonal quantification, and faceless processes of production and power. Lack of epistemological empathy brings multiple alienation: we become estranged from the human subject by fetishising the object, the material “evidence”, the “record;” we alienate the people of the past from the products of their labour, dissecting the latter as “raw data” for data’s sake; ultimately, we distance ourselves from present realities, choosing a convenient, scholarly “neutrality” towards acute socio-political problems, whereas fervently idolising the past, or else “objectifying” it.<sup>32</sup>

### A “difficult feminism”<sup>33</sup>

Since its emergence back to the late 19th century, feminism in Greece has operated with an idiosyncratic profile shaped by the national troubled history and contradictory socio-political formation, which combines traits of both developed and less developed countries. Moreover, manipulation by political parties has undermined feminist autonomy and eventually the presence of an enduring feminist culture. Thus, Greek feminism remained rather a reformist than a ground-breaking enterprise, which was successful in legal gains but not in the promotion of a radical agenda.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, any policies in support of female emancipation were a product of European Union requirements to which the country has to conform, insofar as they do not seriously threaten the existing *status quo*. A most characteristic case concerns the legislative reform establishing sex equality in the 1980s. In a rare manifestation of consensus and unprecedented exhibition of remorse for ages of patriarchal obscurantism, all sides of the political spectrum and the press saluted the new legislation as a major step towards modernisation and, at the same time, as a natural

31 See e.g. reviews by T. CULLEN (ed.) *Aegean Prehistory: A Review*, *AJA Suppl.* 1 (2001); M. NIKOLAIDOU and D. KOKKINIDOU, “Epos, History, Metahistory in Aegean Bronze Age Studies,” in *EPOS* 35-48; ANDREOU (*supra* n. 15).

32 The most deplorable symptom of this alienation is that the social sensitivities of archaeologists are stirred only when monuments are destroyed, but remain silent in front of human dramas such as those caused by the Gulf and Iraq Wars. For some exceptions, see S. POLLOCK and C. LUTZ, “Archaeology deployed for the Gulf War,” *Critique of Anthropology* 14.3 (1994) 280; Y. HAMILAKIS, “Iraq, stewardship, and the ‘record’: an ethical crisis for Archaeology,” *Public Archaeology* 3.2 (2003) 104-11; K. ΚΟΠΑΚΑ, “Σκηνές πολέμου στη Μεσοποταμία: η Βαβυλώνα του χθες, η Βαγδάτη του σήμερα,” *Avri* 796 (2003) 23-32; M. SEYMOUR, “Ancient Mesopotamia and modern Iraq in the British press, 1980-2003,” *Current Anthropology* 45.3 (2004) 360; M. FOTIADIS, “On our political relevance?” in *Prehistorians Round the Pond* 161-68. On the Iraq War, the Union of Greek Archaeologists issued a “neutral” (to put it mildly) statement, expressing strong concerns for the safety of the country’s monuments, but only vaguely referring to “the loss of human life and dignity” because of the “world’s powerful,” without openly denouncing the culprits of the invasion, that is the USA and British governments. For the statement, see “Οι πρώτες απώλειες,” *Ριζοσπάστης*, 29-3-2003 and “Αρχαιολόγοι κατά του πολέμου,” *Ελευθεροτυπία* 1-4-2003.

33 After E. ΒΑΡΙΚΑ, “Αντιμέτωπος με τον εκσυγχρονισμό των θεσμών: ένας δύσκολος φεμινισμός,” στο Ε. ΛΕΟΝΤΙΔΟΥ και S.R. AMMER (επιμ.), *Η Ελλάδα των Γυναϊκών: Διαδρομές στο Χώρο και το Χρόνο, Γαΐα* 1 (1992) 67-80.

34 For overviews, see ΒΑΡΙΚΑ *op.cit.*; E. STAMIRIS, “The women’s movement in Greece,” *New Left Review* 158 (1986) 98-112; G. LAZARIDIS, “The feminist movement in Greece: an overview,” *Journal of Gender Studies* 3.2 (1994) 205-09; on a bibliographical survey of related historical research, see Έ. ΑΒΔΕΛΑ, “Η ιστορία του φύλου στην Ελλάδα: από τη διαταραχή στην ενσωμάτωση,” in *Το Φύλο, Τόπος Συνάντησης των Επιστημών: Ένας Πρώτος Απολογισμός, Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου του Προγράμματος Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών “Γυναίκες και Φύλο: Ανθρωπολογικές και Ιστορικές Προσεγγίσεις,” Πανεπιστήμιο Αιγαίου, Μυτιλήνη, 11/12-3-2003* <<http://www.aegean.gr/gender-postgraduate/synedrio.htm>>.

development of Greek traditions.<sup>35</sup> More than two decades later, true equality remains an unachieved goal in everyday negotiation of mentalities that are still so firmly entrenched in Greek society as to be taken for granted.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the fact that the pioneering female archaeologists were sympathetic to the woman's cause, feminism and archaeology in Greece have led unconnected lives.<sup>37</sup> The current over-presentation of women in the profession does not mean that they have moved beyond dominant intellectual concerns by questioning their own gender roles in contemporary society.<sup>38</sup> Although feminist thinking had been voiced in other disciplines well before the introduction of "Programmes on Gender and Equality Issues" (as the Ministry of Education chose to call them) into Greek universities in the early 2000s,<sup>39</sup> the archaeological landscape remained devoid of similar developments.<sup>40</sup>

It was thanks to European Union directives that gender awareness was at long last "legitimised" in Greek academia. The Community Support Framework for 2000-2006 included for the first time the obligation to design and implement specific actions in the areas of employment, education, and research, with the aim of increasing women's

35 BAPIKA (*supra* n. 33) 76.

36 On the popular end of the archaeologists' public image, women are still treated as extraordinary exceptions to male rule, sometimes described in catchy terms as "show women" and "juicy" creatures "with an unexpectedly iron grip" – see e.g. the journalist's comments in A. KOTTAPIΔΗ, "Ο αρχαιολόγος είναι το μέντιουμ ανάμεσα στους δύο κόσμους", interviewed by Π. KATHMEPTZH, *Ta Néa*, 10-6-2000. Archaeological response does not always help to temper such portrayal. Thus, in the same interview, the archaeologist questioned defines her professional identity "as a medium between the worlds of the dead and living."

37 "Greek women in archaeology" 241, 247.

38 As Margarita Díaz-Andreu has pointed out in the case of Spanish archaeology, alliances and patronage by powerful scholars, rather than gender or social class, are the key factors of professional success (M. DÍAZ-ANDREU, "Spanish women in a changing world: strategies in the search for self-fulfilment through antiquities," in *Excavating Women* 139; ID., *Historia de la Arqueología en España: Estudios* [2002] 65-66). Her remarks sound all too relevant to Greek reality.

39 The question of the relationship between knowledge and power from a gender point of view was first raised in Greece by autonomous feminists in the late 1970s–early 1980s. In common with early feminist research in other countries, the primary concern of Greek scholars was to make women in the past visible, against the odds of prevailing male prejudices. The articles published in the journal *Skoupa* (1979-81) and the books of the Women's Publishing Group (1979-81) aimed at reconstructing the historical memory of women's struggles as a source of empowerment for the present (E. AVDELA, "The 'History of Women' in Greece," in K. OFFEN, R.R. PIERSON and J. RENDALL [eds], *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives* [1991] 424).

The Women's Studies Group of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki was created in 1983 by a number of feminist teachers from different faculties (Humanities, Education, Law, Architecture) – the only initiative of its kind that existed at any Greek university. The appearance of the journals *Dini* (1986-97) and *Katina* (1987-92) further contributed to feminist dialogue attuned to international debates. The Thessaloniki Group offered elective courses to students and extramural ones to working women, organised public lectures, seminars, and conferences, and participated in a number of European projects. In 1988, it was recognised by the University as an Interdepartmental Research Programme but received no financial or other support – and various efforts made to obtain official accreditation were all rejected. During this period, only a few more courses on women studies were offered at other universities around the country, initiated by individual members of staff. Also a number of research projects were undertaken in the form of doctoral dissertations, mostly at universities abroad; and sporadic studies were produced by independent scholars who were not connected to any academic institution. Finally, the government agency in charge of research on equality issues (Research Centre for Equality Issues) remained practically inactive until the mid-1990s due to lack of funding.

On the development of feminist scholarship in Greece, see: S. LADA, "Women's studies in Greece," in N. LYKKE, C. MICHEL and M. PUIG DE LA BELLACASA (eds), *Women's Studies: From Institutional Innovations to New Job Qualifications, Report from ATHENA Panel of Experts 1.a* (2001) I.91-6 <[http://www.ecd.let.uu.nl/womens\\_studies/athena/whole\\_document.pdf](http://www.ecd.let.uu.nl/womens_studies/athena/whole_document.pdf)>; Θ.-Σ. ΠΑΥΛΙΔΟΥ (εκδ.), *Σπουδές φύλου: τάσεις/εντάσεις στην Ελλάδα και σε άλλες ευρωπαϊκές χώρες I* (2006); *Το φύλο, τόπος συνάντησης των επιστημών* (*supra* n. 34).

On the feminist journals, see Μ.Γ. ΒΑΓΙΩΝΑΚΗ, *Τα φεμινιστικά και τα γυναικεία έντυπα στην Ελλάδα (1975-2000): θεματολογία, ιδεολογικοί προβληματισμοί και εκπαιδευτικές ανατακλάσεις*, postgraduate dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2006).

40 With isolated exceptions (see *supra* n. 10).

professional outlets. As concomitant funding was already ear-marked by the European Commission, the Greek authorities had no choice but allocate it towards the above purpose.<sup>41</sup> In other words, curriculum innovations did not emerge as an independent disciplinary development, much less as an achievement of the feminist movement – such a movement having never acquired enough intellectual relevance in Greece. Where the programmes in question had been preceded by feminist campaigning, this was also determining in course content and course quality. In other, unfortunate cases, gender was discovered as if by magic, in order to make use of unexpectedly available funding. Prophetically, in 1991 the journal *Dini* had expressed scepticism about institutionalisation in a unified format at a national level, regardless of research background and feminist commitment of the scholars involved.<sup>42</sup> Fifteen years later, the use of “gender” as a buzz word, an acceptable and diluted replacement of radical feminism, comes as a “perverse effect” of late modernisation.<sup>43</sup> Based on a liberal view of the world, in which social differences are left unchallenged and diversity is concealed, gender mainstreaming is used to substitute feminism with affirmative action policies. By leaving untouched the very core of those structures and institutions responsible for the unequal distribution of power between the sexes, gender mainstreaming encourages assimilation by asking feminists to compromise with equality of treatment rather than demand equality of outcomes. As a result, gender studies do not necessarily involve social challenge; indeed, more often than not they simply describe inequality or even serve as an umbrella term for work that is not informed by feminism.

On the few occasions that gender *has* been admitted into the academic sanctum of Greek archaeology,<sup>44</sup> little has been achieved beyond a “harmless” representation: women have simply been “added and stirred”<sup>45</sup> into the traditional recipes of the discipline,<sup>46</sup> when not deconstructed out of existence through “fashionable” exercises in theory.<sup>47</sup>

#### After innovation – what?

In Greek archaeology theory and practice have rarely found collective expression beyond “national priorities” or narrowly defined professional interests. This phenomenon illustrates a broader shortcoming of Greek civic life, that is, a focus on individuals rather than

41 Programmes on “Gender and Equality Issues” are currently operating at the: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki <<http://web.auth.gr/genderstudies/index.htm>>, <<http://web.auth.gr/pg.gender>>; National and Capodistrian University of Athens <[www.isotita.uoa.gr/home/index.html](http://www.isotita.uoa.gr/home/index.html)>, <<http://www.fylo.theol.uoa.gr>>; National Technical University of Athens <<http://www.arch.ntua.gr/gs/menu.aspx?page2=mainhome.asp>>; Panteion University <<http://www.genderpanteion.gr>>; University of the Aegean, <<http://www.rhodes.aegean.gr/genderstudies/graduate>>, <<http://www.aegean.gr/gender-postgraduate>>; University of Crete, <<http://www.soc.uoc.gr/gender>>; University of Piraeus, <<http://www.lib.unipi.gr/epeaekIsotitaFulon/stuff.html>>; and University of Thessaly <http://gender.uth.gr> (Accessed in February 2008). On their background and current state, see *Οι σπουδές του φύλου στο πανεπιστήμιο, Σύγχρονα Θέματα* Special Issue 94 (2006); ΠΑΥΛΙΔΟΥ (*supra* n. 39) part I.

42 “Θεσμοθέτηση των ‘γυναικείων σπουδών,’” *Δίνη* 6 (1993) 302-06 (originally presented by the journal’s editorial board at the Meeting on the *Institutionalization of Women’s Studies in Universities, Athens, June 1991*, organised by the General Secretariat of Equality and the University of Thessaloniki Women’s Studies Group).

43 Χ. ΠΤΛΕΣΗ, “Ψυχολογία και φύλο στην Ελλάδα: το απόν αντικείμενο της επιθυμίας,” in *Το Φύλο, Τόπος Συνάντησης των Επιστημών* (*supra* n. 34) 8-9.

44 Courses on gender archaeology are offered by the Universities of Crete, Thessaloniki, and Thessaly.

45 Cf. M.W. CONKEY with S.H. WILLIAMS, “Original narratives: the political economy of gender in archaeology,” in M. DI LEONARDO (ed.), *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Post-Modern Era* (1991) 124.

46 See course information (*supra* n. 41).

47 Σ. ΝΑΝΟΓΛΟΥ, *Υποκείμενα και Υλικός Πολιτισμός στη Νεολιθική της Βόρειας Ελλάδας: το Παράδειγμα της Ανθρωπόμορφης Ειδωλοπλαστικής της Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας και της Θεσσαλίας*, doctoral dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2004); S. NANOGLU, “Subjectivity and material culture in Thessaly, Greece: the case of Neolithic anthropomorphic imagery,” *CAJ* 15.2 (2005) 141-56; ID., “Regional perspectives on the Neolithic anthropomorphic imagery of Northern Greece,” *JMA* 19.2 (2006) 155-76.

institutions, clientele relations, and syndromes of the “great moment”.<sup>48</sup> In such a climate, it is hardly surprising that the call by a few women for a gender-aware archaeology during the past decade received no real response, especially since it was voiced outside the academic establishment. As we stand now, the endeavour should avoid the pitfalls of simply restoring women from the limbo of history, or turning the gender perspective into yet another “fashionable” subject, which depoliticises the relations between the sexes, and undermines feminist archaeology as a field of study before it is even established.<sup>49</sup> Instead, we are faced with the challenge to demonstrate the historicity of gender asymmetry and the multiplicity of human identities, contextualise research, and take responsibility for its social implications.

But is the quest for a feminist discourse in Greek archaeology feasible or just a utopia in a difficult, globalised world, marked by the recession in grassroots activism and with almost no mechanisms for promoting feminist demands independent of the state? Although feminism may not be expressed as a social movement in Greece in the 2000s (as indeed elsewhere), there exist a number of opportunities that were previously unavailable. First, the importance of European Union standards in policies for sex equality cannot be too strongly stressed, provided that feminists are aware of the tensions between the goals of integrating feminism into the mainstream and of changing the mainstream – that is, they remain motivated by the desire to transform the system rather than simply improve it. Second, women’s issues seem to concern a wider audience than the actual strength of respective organisations indicates. It yet remains to be seen, however, how strongly this new reality will influence the maturing of younger generations and, by extent, the degree of structural discrimination in Greek society.

Under these circumstances, we believe that the answer to the question “What are the prospects for a Greek feminist archaeology?” must come as an epistemological and ethical choice: either archaeologists will conveniently prolong their “innocence” and condone the fabrication of a-historical past; or they will opt for a critical stance and engage in a respectful dialogue with, both, the people of the past and the society of the present. Ultimately, the challenge concerns a new disciplinary ethos, committed to exploring the ways people have managed their existence in the past and the contemporary ramifications of such knowledge. Therefore, we are not simply broadening archaeology’s range of topics to include gender and “stir,” but choose to redefine its very subject. It is time to admit openly that archaeology has always been tied to the marginalisation of “silent majorities.” Although this realisation does not by itself solve the moral dilemmas of archaeologists, it is, nevertheless, a starting point for developing strategies of inclusion and responsibility. An ethical archaeology has to expose the “stratigraphy” of its own political and ideological dependence – a dialectic shaped by the official discourse on the “stage” and its refuting “behind the scenes.”<sup>50</sup>

As long as archaeology does not view critically those conditions which at the same time enable and limit its existence and scope, it ends up as an affectation of science. If, on the contrary, we “excavate” archaeology as an institution and narrative, then the discipline emerges as a historically defined process, whereby the agenda has too often been prescribed from outside and from above. If archaeologists are to put forward innovative paradigms, they need to reconsider the established fields of research and investigate new ones. We suggest that Greek archaeology could be enriched with the integration of perspectives, such as:

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48 Such mentality of “grandness” needs idols like Melina Merkouri, who was proclaimed Greece’s “cultural ambassador” by virtue of her personal “glamour” (KOKKINIDOU and NIKOLAIDOU [*supra* n. 14] 181, and KOKKINIΔΟΥ [*supra* n. 24] 64-65), or Manolis Andronikos, who was elevated into the status of “national intellectual” because of the politically “good timing” of his “grand discovery” at Vergina (Y. HAMILAKIS, “La trahison des archéologues? Archaeological practice as intellectual activity in postmodernity,” *JMA* 12.1 [1999] 62-63).

49 Disengagement from feminist scholarship and politics constitutes a general characteristic of archaeological research in the “gender genre” (CONKEY and GERO [*supra* n. 4] 427-31; CONKEY [*supra* n. 4] 875-77; A. WYLIE, “Doing Archaeology as a feminist: introduction,” in WYLIE [*supra* n. 4] 209-16).

50 KOKKINIDOU and NIKOLAIDOU (*supra* n. 14).

- gender as a variable in professional identity, research choice, field practice, and educational strategy
- a critical analysis of the discipline's development, within the framework of European imperialism and Greek nationalism, and the examination of how archaeology functions today (participation in relations of production and social reproduction, intellectual resources, and motives of funding)
- coming to terms with the "identity crisis," by realising that the ecumenical value of classical antiquity has decreased as new, multicultural landscapes are emerging, following the end of the Cold War and subsequent globalisation
- examining how material remains are perceived and given meaning by different social and ethnic groups, and, thus, how these remains play a role in the construction of identities within the recent transformation of Greek society, caused by the presence of a sizeable immigrant population
- replacing "authority" by critical awareness, which enables the recipients of archaeological knowledge to relate this knowledge to their own experiences and subsequently transform it
- adopting a simple and clear, but not simplistic, style of narrative for the wider public and encouraging non-specialists to contribute to the production of archaeological discourse through educational outreach.

Then we will, hopefully, be in a position to reconsider dominant convictions, "our own" and those of "others", and construct multivocal narratives about the past and about ourselves.

Dimitra KOKKINIDOU and Marianna NIKOLAIDOU

**Table I. Archaeological faculty in Greek Universities**

	Professors	Associate professors	Assistant professors	Lecturers	Overall	
F	20	14	13	11	58	62%
M	18	6	6	6	36	38%

94

Key. F=female M=male

Source. Departments offering a specialisation in archaeology (Accessed in February 2008):

Department of History and Archaeology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

<<http://history.arch.uoa.gr>>; Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of

Thessaloniki <<http://web.auth.gr/hist/tomeis/archaeology/staff/didaktiko.htm>>; Department of

History and Archaeology, University of Ioannina

<[http://www.uoi.gr/schools/human/hist\\_arch/melh\\_dep.html](http://www.uoi.gr/schools/human/hist_arch/melh_dep.html)>; Department of History and

Archaeology, University of Crete <<http://www.history-archaeology.uoc.gr>>; Department of History,

Archaeology, and Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly,

<<http://www.ha.uth.gr/gr/teachers.asp>>; Department of History, Archaeology, and Cultural

Resources Management, University of the Peloponnese <<http://kalamata.uop.gr/~hamccd>>;

Department of Mediterranean Studies, University of the Aegean

<<http://www.aegean.gr/aegean/greek/rodos.htm>>.

Departments offering archaeology as a supplementary subject: Department of History, Ionian

University <<http://www.ionio.gr/history>>; Department of History and Ethnology

<<http://www.he.duth.gr/index.php?rm=1&pm=80&sm=88>> and Department of Languages,

Literature, and Culture of the Black Sea Countries

<<http://www.bscc.duth.gr/index.php?rm=1&pm=80&sm=88>>, Democritus University of Thrace;

Department of Cultural Heritage Management and New Technologies, University of Ioannina

<<http://www.culture.uoi.gr/proswpiko/didaskontes.htm>>; Department of Cultural Technology and

Communication, University of the Aegean <<http://www.aegean.gr/culturaltec/akadimaiko.htm>>

**Table II. High-ranking positions in the Greek Archaeological Service**

## DIRECTORS OF CENTRAL SERVICES:

General Direction of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage	F
Direction of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities	F
Direction of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities	F
Direction of Museums, Exhibitions, and Educational Programmes	F
Direction of National Archive of Monuments	F
Direction of Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments	M
Direction of Expropriations and Real Estate	M
Stone Centre	F
Secretariat of the Central Archaeological Council	F

## DIRECTORS OF MAJOR MUSEUMS:

National Archaeological Museum	M
Byzantine and Christian Museum	M
Numismatic Museum	F
Epigraphical Museum	F
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki	F
Museum of Byzantine Culture of Thessaloniki	F
Archaeological Museum of Herakleion	F

## DIRECTORS OF REGIONAL SERVICES:

## Ephorates of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities

1st	M
2nd	F
3rd	F
4th	F
5th	F
6th	F
7th	F
8th	F
9th	M
10th	F
11th	F
12th	M
13th	F
14th	F
15th	F
16th	F
17th	F
18th	M
19th	F
20th	F
21st	F
22nd	F
23rd	F
24th	F
25th	F
26th	F
27th	F
28th	F
29th	M
30th	F
31st	*
32nd	F

33rd	M
34th	M
35th	M
36th	F
37th	M
38th	F
39th	M

## Ephorates of Byzantine Antiquities

1st	F
2nd	F
3rd	F
4th	F
5th	F
6th	F
7th	F
8th	F
9th	M
10th	M
11th	M
12th	M
13th	M
14th	F
15th	F
16th	F
17th	F
18th	F
19th	F
20th	F
21st	F
22nd	F
23rd	F
24th	F
25th	M
26th	F
27th	*
28th	M

Ephorate of Private Archaeological Collections	M
Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities	F
Ephorate of Palaeoanthropology and Speleology of Southern Greece	F
Ephorate of Palaeoanthropology and Speleology of Northern Greece	M
Archaeological Institute of Macedonian and Thracian Studies	F
Archaeological Institute of Thessalian Studies	F
Archaeological Institute of Peloponnesian Studies	F
Archaeological Institute of Epirote Studies	F
Archaeological Institute of Cretan Studies	F
Archaeological Institute of Aegean Studies	F

OVERALL 91

F	68	75%
M	23	25%

Key. F = female M = male.

\* No information provided

Source. Ministry of Culture <[http://www.yppo.gr/1/g1540.jsp?obj\\_id=11](http://www.yppo.gr/1/g1540.jsp?obj_id=11)>  
(Accessed in February 2008).