



PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGY AND ITS INTERRELATION WITH MUSEUMS: A CASE STUDY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS IN ATHENS, GREECE

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ABSTRACT

It is a fact that antiquities are ubiquitous in Greece, both as a source of inspiration for creators producing culture and as a transmitter of messages in day-to-day communication. The present study is an attempt to engage in discourse on the discipline of archaeology -the discipline that studies antiquities- and its interrelation with museums –as one of the principal means by which people gain access to them. The conclusions of the study aim at shedding light on questions pertaining to the public’s perceptions about the field of archeology in Greece, the way this relation affects the visiting pattern in archaeological museums, as well as the ways the museums themselves produce images and shape the Greeks’ perceptions of the past. The study focused on archaeological museums, with emphasis on archaeological museums of Athens, because a large, if not the largest, percentage of museums in Greece are subsumed within this category. The systematic mapping of the different perceptions of the Greek public about the aforementioned issues was realized through quantitative research on a sample of 434 people.

Key words: Archaeology, Greek archaeological museums, visitors, non visitor, public, research

INTRODUCTION

The limited number of studies that have been conducted in Greece is indicative of the relatively late interest in matters pertaining to archaeology and museum visitors. However, within the framework of modern discussions on archaeology and museology, the necessity has been strongly emphasized for an in-depth study of the body politic’s perceptions about the distant past and the field of study that explores it i.e..archaeology, as well as about museums, one of the principal means by which people gain access to the past.

The present study is a first attempt to engage in discourse on the discipline of archaeology and its interrelation with museums. Such a discussion is deemed particularly necessary, since various studies conducted over the years (Griggs, and Hays-Jackson, 1983; Prince, and Schadla-Hall, 1985; Merriman, 1991) have come to the conclusion that, in their quest for a wider public engagement, archaeological museums face a dual obstacle. The first is that museums in general are cast in a negative light by that part of the population who do not visit them. The second obstacle is that archaeology itself is perceived in a negative way.

The conclusions of the study in question aim at providing answers to questions pertaining to the public’s perceptions about the field of archeology in Greece, the way this relation affects the visiting pattern in archaeological museums, as well as the ways the museums themselves produce images and shape the Greeks’ perceptions of the past. The study focused on archaeological museums, as opposed to all museums in general, because a large, if not the largest, percentage of museums in Greece are subsumed within this category. The closely intertwined identification of the archaeological museum with museums in general constitutes an added reason for this particular choice.

METHODS

The methodology chosen for studying the aforementioned issues was a quantitative public opinion survey, conducted on a sample of the population of Attica. Data collection took place by holding structured interviews in various locations around Athens.

Research Settings

The bulk of the interviews were held in various central venues of Athens. A total of 434 interviews were conducted. Choosing Athens as the geographical focal point of the study came about because of the great density of archaeological museums¹. Finally, the population of Athens consists of a variety of social groups, the characteristics of each of which are studied in conjunction with their relation vis-à-vis archaeology and the museum.

The interviews took place between January 4 and April 30, 2008. A pilot survey took place in November 2007 and a shorter version of the preliminary questionnaire was finally adopted and used throughout the survey.

Sampling and Data Collection Procedures

The study population referred to Greek² adults in transit through the points where the survey took place, which were within the confines of the wider region of Attica.

The method used for sampling the target population was that of quota sampling, which aims at representing specific traits, in ratios similar to those that may be found in the wider population. The sample size of each stratum necessary for a proportionate allocation was determined on the basis of the total size of the strata within the population of Attica³.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGY

Interest in Archaeology

The first question to be asked is whether the archaeologists' interest in the past is readily accepted by Greek society in general. Few would disagree that the distant past is a source of fascination for the wider public (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 36; Fowler, 1992, p. 27). For this reason, the public's interest in archaeology is often taken for granted by archaeologists, and more often than not this is incorporated in the arguments in favor of archaeology being the foundation on which the preservation of our cultural heritage rests.

Nevertheless, according to the results of the study, archaeology in Greece does not prove to be very popular: statistical data show a low-to-medium index of interest in this particular scholarly field ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.44$)⁴ (see Table 1). We should note that this trait is not exclusively peculiar to Greece. On the contrary, similar finds have been confirmed by other related studies, indicating that this might be linked to the perception of archaeology by the wider public as an elitist, purely academic field of study (Hodder, 1984; Prince, 1985).

Table 1. Attitudes to the interest in archaeology.

Interest in Archaeology	N	%
Not interested at all	33	7.6
Fairly interested	56	12.9
Somewhat interested	82	18.9
Neutral	135	31.1
Interested	79	18.2
Very interested	39	9
Strongly interested	10	2.3
Total	434	100.0

¹ The total number of archaeological museums located in the city of Athens is eleven (11).

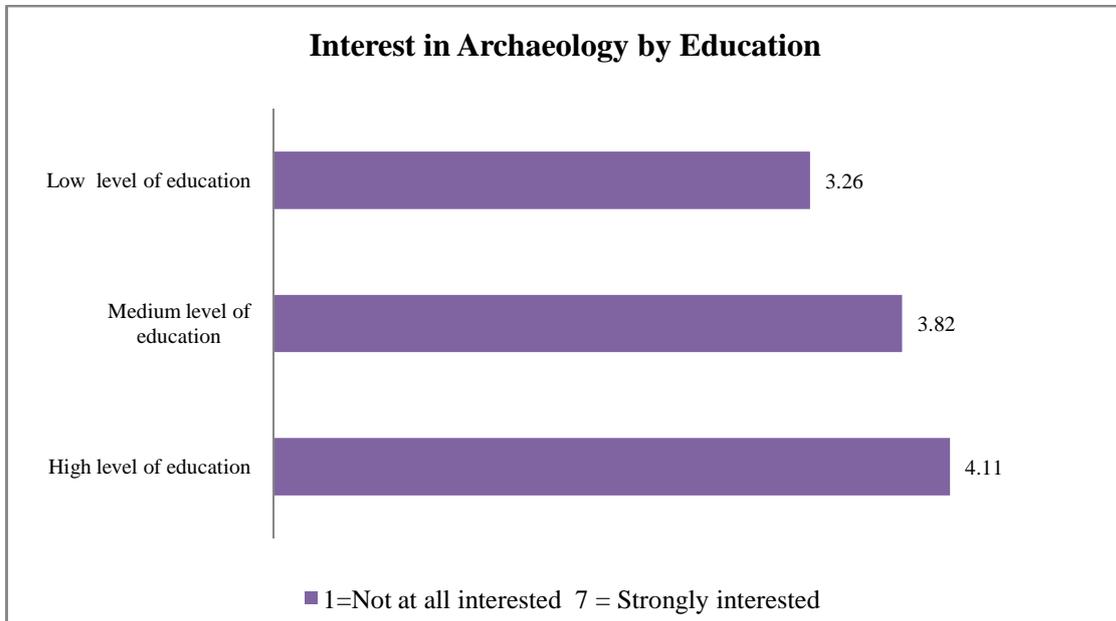
² It is essential to note at this point that the study made no distinction based on nationality. The survey included everyone who spoke Greek.

³ The evidence used in the apportionment of the population of Attica based on gender, education background and age was drawn from the records of the Hellenic Statistical Authority, as configured on the basis of the latest General Population Census (that of April 2001).

⁴ The question was rated on a 7-point scale from 1=Not Interested at all to 7=Strongly Interested

The finds have shown that educational background is a strong determinant of the degree of interest in archaeology⁵. More specifically, people with a low level of education feel that an acquaintance with Greece’s archaeological past does not really concern them ($M = 3.26$), whereas highly-educated individuals, and in particular people who have successfully completed university training, manifest a more pronounced interest in archaeology ($M = 4.11$) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Attitudes to the interest in archaeology by education.

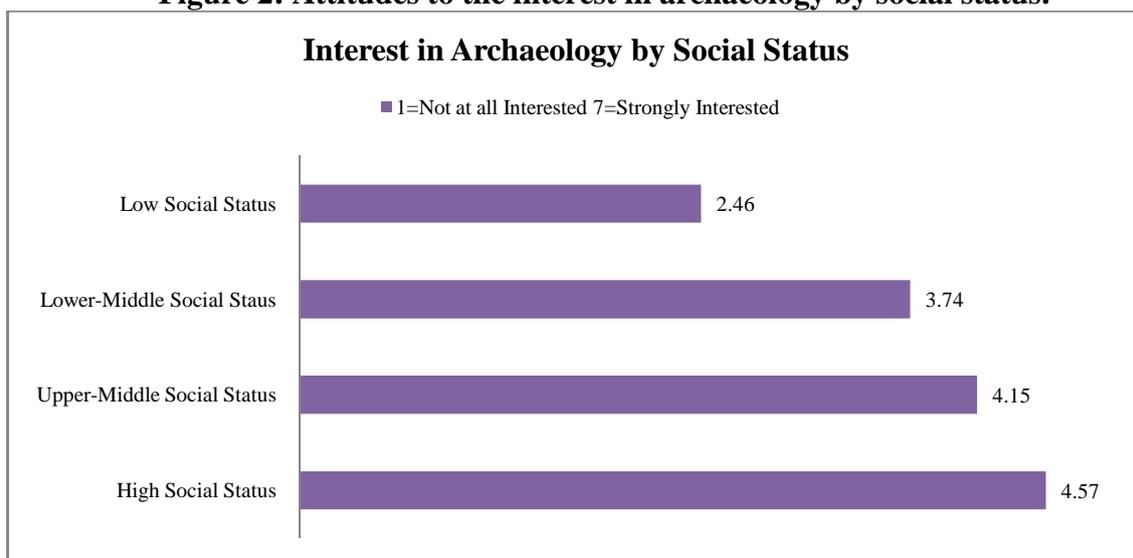


However, while analyzing the results produced by the questionnaire it becomes clear through the correlations that interest in archaeology is influenced by an individual’s social status⁶. According to the main finds, individuals with a high social status exhibit a more pronounced interest in archaeology ($M = 4.57$) when compared to individuals with a low social status ($M = 2.46$) or even people from the bottom rungs of a medium social status ($M = 3.74$) (see Figure 2). This evidence –despite the fact that the wider public’s interest in archaeology does not appear to be high– tend to confirm or even reinforce the position of I. Hodder (1984) and D. Prince and T. Schadla-Hall (1987), who note the inability of archaeology to relate to the wider public. Although in the case of Greece one would expect archaeology to be potentially more appealing to the public, since historically a particular level of importance has been placed on that field of knowledge, and antiquities form an integral part of Greek urban landscape, it turns out that to a great extent this is not the case. A. Zois characteristically refers to archaeology in Greece as an “archaeology of monologues”. The archaeological narrative is produced by specialists after an academic fashion, unable to provoke any sort of cultural fermentation or incorporate itself in a wider context of social discourse (Zois 1990, p. 59).

⁵ According to Kruskal-Wallis test $\chi^2(9)=38.667$, $p<0.001$, and specifically running a Mann-Whitney U test between groups, with a Bonferroni adjustment ($\alpha=0.05/10=0.005$)

⁶ According to One Way ANOVA test $F(3,433)=3.635$, $p<0.001$.

Figure 2: Attitudes to the interest in archaeology by social status.



Preferred Source of Information on Archaeology

The public's interest in, as well as attitude towards, the past and archaeology in particular is usually fuelled by television, books, lectures, museum visits etc.

According to the results of the survey, visiting an archaeological museum or an archaeological site is the most popular source of information on archaeological issues for the public (30%), while television is a close second (27%). What this particular question demonstrates first and foremost is the close connection, in the minds of the members of Greek society, between archaeological museums and the discipline of archaeology, a connection which dates back to the origins of the establishment of the Modern Greek state. Similar finds are not detected in related surveys conducted abroad, since in many of them the archaeological museum is simply not mentioned as a source of information on archaeology (Hodder, 1984; Ramos, and Duganne, 2000) or, when mentioned, scores rather poor ratings⁷.

It is clear that the majority of individuals with a university degree prefer visiting a museum (33%) as their main means of information on archaeology, followed by books (29%), while television is ranked third (19%). On the contrary, people from a poor educational background prefer television (45%), with visits to museums or archaeological sites a distant second (27%), while books enjoy a rather low rating (13%). It is obvious that individuals with a low level of education are more comfortable with receiving information on archaeology from activities that take place at their own homes (for instance television), whereas the more educated, those with the necessary "cultural capital" and, consequently, a greater degree of self-confidence, prefer to be informed through activities that take place outside their familiar surroundings, and this is the reason behind their choosing to visit museums⁸.

Therefore, in the eyes of the Greeks, museums are considered a primary source of knowledge on archaeology. Despite the fact that, *prima facie*, this would seem encouraging for archaeological museums, a more careful analysis of this phenomenon might offer us indirect evidence regarding archaeology and the image of the discipline that the museums project in the Greek collective mindset. A correlation of the medium indicator of interest in archaeology on the part of the Greek body politic with the fact that museums are the preferred source of information on it could help us reach the conclusion that the diminished interest in this

⁷ In a similar question in the study of N. Merriman (1991, p. 120), examining the preferred mode of learning local history, a mere 7% chose museums.

⁸ N. Merriman (1991) comes to a similar conclusion regarding the nature of activities through which people prefer to learn about the past. According to the results of his study, highly-educated individuals prefer to learn about the past through outdoor activities, as opposed to individuals from lower levels of education.

particular field of study may possibly be due to the way the archaeological material is displayed and to the static images of archaeological activities that these museums promote. Based on the aforementioned rationale, it seems that the image of archaeology as promoted by archaeological museums is not capable of attracting the public's interest to a significant degree.

Scientific View of Archaeology

Now and again archaeology has been a prime target of attempts at misinformation and prejudicial treatment on the part of mass media, television, and the film industry.

Many studies conducted abroad (Ascher, 1960; Feder, 1984; Stone, 1994) have demonstrated that the public is captivated mainly by extreme and often false archaeological theories that deal with a wide spectrum of issues and interpret archaeological testimonies at will. These are usually promoted through television and movies. The studies in question have stressed the fact that even academic institutions, such as universities, show an inability to refute mental models stemming from popular archaeological pseudo-theories (e.g. that of the Lost Continent of Atlantis) that have been embedded in the mindset of the public, even one as specialized as university students (Feder, 1984; Gray, 1987, p. 34-48).

This seductive image we often have of archaeology is a far cry from scientific reality and the purpose this particular field of study is called upon to serve, thus frequently drawing severe criticism on the part of the academic community (McManamon, 2000). In the scientific image of archaeological activities, emphasis is placed not so much on the discovery of "important" relics, but on the study and interpretation of the material remains of the past (Kotsakis, 1986, p. 52), the goal being a better understanding of ancient civilizations and societies.

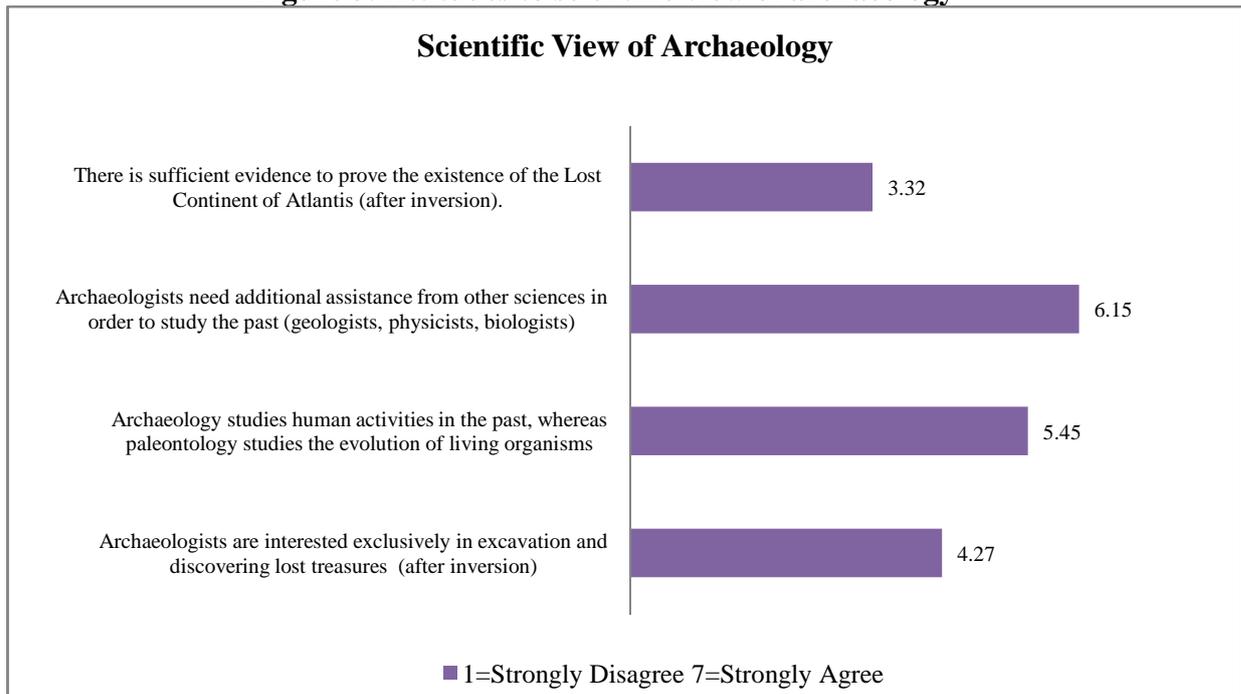
The present survey made an effort to study the impact of various popular claims on Greek society, in order to make a comprehensive examination of the scientific view of archaeology as it has been imprinted on public perception. With this in mind we created a new variable, termed **scientific view** of archaeology⁹, in order to ascertain how clear the public's perception of the purpose and nature of archaeological activities is. The degree of scientificity for archaeology appears on the whole to be satisfactory ($M = 4.88$) when compared to other studies conducted abroad (Feder, 1984; Pokotylo, and Mason, 1991; Pokotylo, and Guppy, 1999). At first blush, the relatively high knowledge-about-archaeology index runs contrary to the moderately average index showing the public's interest in archaeology ($M = 3.76$).

The relatively high indicator of scientific view of archaeology may be pinpointed mainly on issues regarding the need for interdisciplinary collaboration between archaeology and other fields of study ($M = 6.15$), but also in the not-so-widespread "treasure-hunting" perception of archaeological work ($M = 4.27$) by Greek society (see Figure 3). Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the awkwardness in approaching more specialized issues that pertain to the purpose of archaeological endeavors and the validity of specific alternative archaeological approaches; these phenomena are products of the times in which we live, and at the same time reveal a lack of trust, as well as a dislike towards it. One may note, therefore, a generalized scientific view of archaeology, which however still consists of a hodgepodge of images mainly attributed to the educational process. This trend is not an exclusively Greek phenomenon, since similar finds have been reached by other studies conducted abroad (Pokotylo, and Mason, 1991; Pokotylo, and Guppy, 1999). The results for Greek society appear to be more encouraging with regard to the Greek public's ability to approach archaeological activities in a "scientific way". Greeks are not quick to fall back on patterns promoted through movies with archaeological themes

⁹ This variable concept was operationalized in the form of a compound variable consisting of four individual variables measured on a 7-point rating scale. In each question, the new variable results from a response of each individual participant to a series of associated questions. Statistical processing provides the final, prevailing mode, which constitutes, through the answers of the majority of respondents, the representative answer to the question. The questions that were combined in order to produce this particular variable are: i) "Archaeologists are interested exclusively in excavation and discovering lost treasures" (after inversion), ii) "Archaeology studies human activities in the past, whereas paleontology studies the evolution of living organisms", iii) "Archaeologists need additional assistance from other sciences in order to study the past (geologists, physicists, biologists)", iv) "There is sufficient evidence to prove the existence of the Lost Continent of Atlantis" (after inversion).

(such as the well-known *Indiana Jones* and *Tomb Raider* Hollywood film franchises), but this does not mean that they are not influenced by them.

Figure 3. Attitudes to scientific view of archaeology



Notwithstanding all this, individuals with a lower level of education and social status, the unemployed or those employed part-time, have an unclear view as to the subject matter of archaeology, demonstrating a notable inability to respond to questions related to specialized issues pertaining to the purpose and nature of this particular discipline¹⁰. However, we should not overlook the fact that the study has made it clear that the scientific approach to archaeology posed difficulties even to groups not excluded from the educational process, such as individuals who have completed university training and demonstrate a rather high degree of acceptance of alternative archaeological viewpoints or, better yet, are not in a position to refute them. This is also proven by the distribution of the percentage of individuals who responded “*I don’t know*” to the question on the survival of sufficient evidence to prove the existence of the Lost Continent of Atlantis (a total of 43% of respondents) per level of education. Of these people, 31% belonged to a high level of education, 33% to a medium level, and 36% to a low level of education, thus allowing us to conclude that the deviation between levels of education is minute.

Political Perception of Archaeology

According to Silberman (1995, p. 249), archaeology has an inescapably political dimension. One of its many possible manifestations is nationalism¹¹, which can be related to numerous archaeological traditions. As early as the Renaissance, the study of the past went hand-in-glove with a support for national and symbolic ideologies. More specifically, throughout history archaeological finds were taken advantage of so as to give credence to political ideas. Often enough, forged interpretations of archaeological testimonies were created

¹⁰ According to Kruskal-Wallis test $H(2)=48.628$, $p<0.001$ (for education), to Kruskal-Wallis $H(3)=31.369$, $p<0.001$ (for social status), to One Way Anova $F(5.185)=5.716$, $p<0.001$ (for activity status).

¹¹ The political dimension of archaeology attracted the interest of scholars to such a degree that in a paper published in 1984 archaeologist B. Trigger defined three basic types of archaeology: nationalist, imperialist, and colonialist (Trigger, 1984). Even today, there are numerous studies that correlate archaeology with nationalism demonstrating the frequent prevalence of the nationalist type of archaeology (Kohl, and Fawcett, 1995; Diaz-Andreu, and Champion, 1996; Meskell, 1998; Galaty, and Watkinson, 2004).

in order to strengthen national claims and uphold ethnic, racial, and cultural revisionism and conflicts¹².

More specifically in the case of Greece, from the beginning archaeology was called upon to validate the way in which Greeks perceive the world, as well as their role in it¹³ (Plantzos, 2008b, p. 253). Often, in fact, the intense national use of the Greek past has led a number of archaeologists to attribute the flourishing of archaeology in Greece solely to reasons of legitimizing the past, in other words as an ethnic ingredient of the modern nation (Hamilakis, 2001)¹⁴. Of course, we should not overlook the fact that from the beginning archaeological relics (whether as museum exhibits, research documents, or supplementary historical narratives) were treated as evidentiary documentation of historical narrative and were required to serve the national mission, while even today archaeology is called upon to serve the same goal in some cases¹⁵.

Numerous examples (such as the illustrations in the new passport booklets¹⁶, in other words our international “calling cards”) demonstrate how closely connected archaeology and politics are in Greek everyday life, even today. In many instances, examples of this kind frame every official state pronouncement of Greekness. Thus, in more than a few occasions the Greek state drags up the old ideological constructs, particularly that of classical Athens, as symbols of the ideological recognition and individuality of the identity of “Hellenism”, with consequences that may be positive at one time or negative at another. We could argue that this transcendental role of archaeology is often the answer to whatever phobias cultural globalization may cause with regard to the loss of this distinct identity.

In light of the above, it was deemed necessary to examine the scale of the political dimension of archaeology as perceived by the Greek body politic, involving national and potentially nationalist dimensions. Therefore, in order to pinpoint the moral value stereotypes with regard to the structuring of political viewing vis-à-vis archaeology, a proper starting point was considered to be the combination of three questions¹⁷, which formed a new variable termed **political perception**. Through these questions one may discern the treatment of archaeological finds as inextricable elements of Greek identity, which are used in order for the latter to be defined and differentiated in relation to the otherness of non-Greek cultures. At the same time, the aforementioned questions bespeak the need to confirm the existence of the nation, its historical continuity, through archaeological testimonies.

This analysis makes clear the evaluation of archaeology through the prism of a national patriotism. The political perception of archaeology is particularly noticeable in the entire sample surveyed ($M = 5.9$, $S.D = 0.99$), a fact that reveals its deeply-rooted political character in the respondents’ viewpoint. Judging by the variables that compose the political character of

¹² A characteristic example is the way in which German archaeology was used by Germany’s National Socialist party (Arnold, 1992; Arnold, and Hassmann, 1995).

¹³ The projection of the past in the present takes pride of place in the formulation of Greek national identity, so much so that it is often studied for its own sake (Lowenthal, 1990, p. 307-308) and as a characteristic example of the political use of the past acquiring national importance, while trace elements of a latent, yet substantive influence stemming from nationalist beliefs are occasionally detected.

¹⁴ P. Kohl and C. Fawcett (1995) hold a similar position: they believe that the development of archaeology as a branch of science during the nineteenth century can be interpreted only as forming part of the creation of a national history.

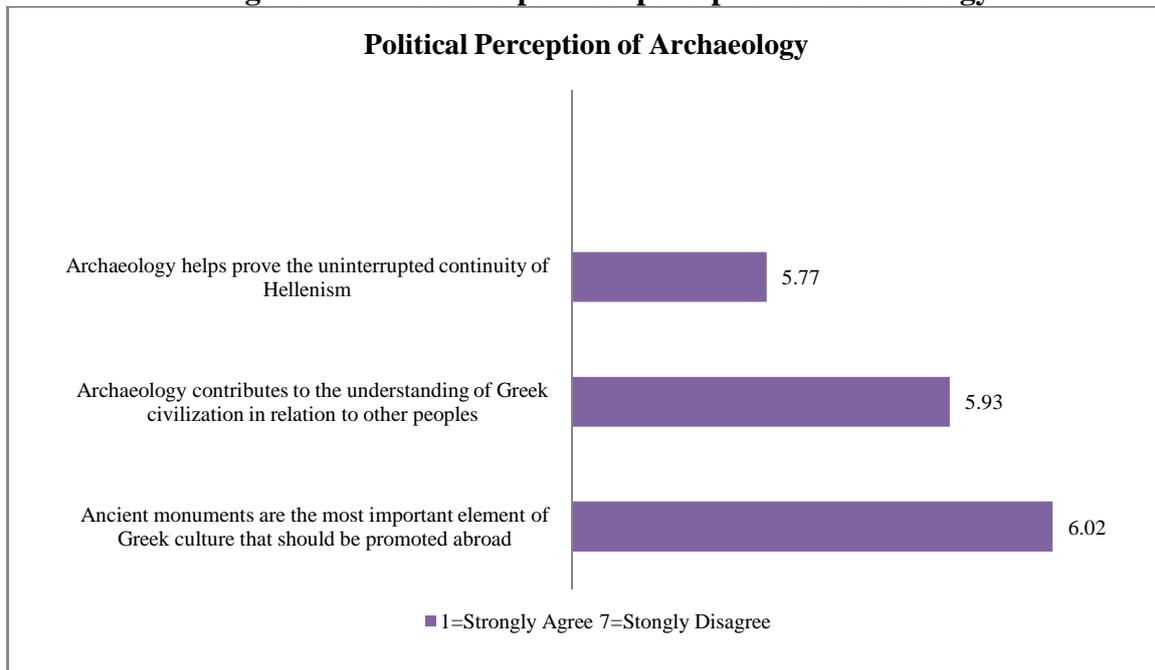
¹⁵ As part of the modern discourse on archaeology in the service of the nation we could mention the case of the Macedonian Question, where one notes the vehement opposition to the use of the Greek past by other nationalist circles (see Kotsakis, 1998). Another characteristic example of antiquities entering politics is the campaign for the return of the Parthenon Marbles (see Lambrinouidakis, 2009, p. 21-22; Plantzos, 2009).

¹⁶ It should be mentioned at this point that the illustrations in the new passport booklets reaches all the way to modern times, with a depiction of the seventeenth-century Ottoman bridge of Arta. However, of the thirteen images contained in the passports, ten depict monuments of antiquity, two are illustrations of byzantine monuments and only one is a representative sample of traditional folk architecture, thus making it clear that Antiquity continues to reign supreme.

¹⁷ This variable concept was measured on a 7-point rating scale. The questions that constituted this particular variable were the following: i) “Ancient monuments are the most important element of Greek culture that should be promoted abroad”, ii) “Archaeology contributes to the understanding of Greek civilization in relation to other peoples” and iii) “Archaeology helps prove the uninterrupted continuity of Hellenism”.

archaeology, most responses to the questions demonstrate a high percentage of agreement (either total or partial). Respondents show an almost absolute degree of convergence when stating the perception that ancient monuments are the most important piece of Greek culture that should be promoted abroad ($M = 6.02$). This unequivocally documents the pronounced role attributed, not just by government agencies, but also by the wider public, to antique relics as the official proof of Greek identity before a global audience (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Attitudes to political perception of archaeology



There is no correlation between the political perception of archaeology and the respondents' level of education¹⁸. This fact provides indirect evidence for the way the past is presented through school textbooks on all levels of education (Kasvikis, 2008, p. 165-184), an aftereffect of the fact that the theoretical foundations of public school historiography are laid in a romantic-national perception of history¹⁹ (cultural and linguistic homogeneity, an indissoluble historical continuity from Antiquity to modern times, the past as guide to the present, the grandeur of yore). These guidelines seem to run through even the ranks of tertiary education, and that is the reason behind individuals of varying levels of education showing little differentiation in the political perception of archaeology.

It is worth noting that the political perception of archaeology has percolated through every social stratum, with no noticeable statistically significant variations²⁰.

The political-perception-of-archaeology indicator is affected by the preferred mode of acquiring information on that particular discipline²¹. Individuals who state museum visits as their method of choice evince stronger national feelings towards archaeology ($M = 6.08$) when compared to individuals who seem to prefer other sources of information on it, mainly television ($M = 5.77$) and the internet ($M = 5.4$). It is worth noting that individuals who prefer to be informed on matters of archaeology through books ($M = 5.98$) and lectures ($M = 5.82$) also score high on the political perceptions indicator. It is once again concluded that archaeological museums and the way their exhibitions are presented follow a more traditional pattern, which heightens national sentiments towards archaeology. What is paradoxical is that books and lectures exert a similar influence. We could argue, therefore, that in the case of Greek society the more "official" sources of archaeological narrative expression (museums,

¹⁸ According to Kruskal-Wallis test $H(9)=8.943$, $p>0.05$.

¹⁹ We refer to history classes mainly because it is through this subject that any archaeological data is presented.

²⁰ According to One Way ANOVA test $F(3.405)=0.939$ $p>0.05$.

²¹ According to One Way ANOVA test $F(5.403)=2.286$ $p<0.05$.

lectures, books²²) arouse more intense national sentiments when compared to more “plebian” mediums, such as television and the Internet.

The political role of archaeology in the perception of the Greek body politic forms an integral part of the discipline. One of the key aims of archaeology in the minds of the Greeks is to benefit them through the past, so that they may ensure their rights in the present. We could argue that the political perception of archaeology is almost universal; it permeates even the lower classes, who, though they might not manifest an intense interest in that particular scholarly field, yet they understand its value with regard to the determination of Greek identity. This, of course, is not a paradox. Indeed, even today archaeology plays a pronounced political role in official state policy, when Antiquity is being used to promote Greece at the international level through major events, such as the 2004 Summer Olympics opening ceremony (Hamilakis, 2007, p. 1-6; Plantzos, 2008a, p. 11-12). It is obvious, therefore, that the constitution of Greek national identity is dominated by cultural elements²³, accompanied mainly by ethnocentric tendencies (Charalambis et al., 2000, p. 182). This perception cannot be isolated from the course of archaeological narrative through Greek society, a narrative which has clearly been influenced by the historical circumstances in which it was created, and in turn influenced to a great degree the way archaeological museums are structured (see Gazi, 1993; Mouliou, 1997).

Evaluation of the Three Periods of Archaeology

Prehistoric, classical, and byzantine archaeology constitute distinct branches of the discipline, based on simple subdivisions of historical time. Respondents were asked to evaluate the significance of two objects from each period, in order to ascertain any possible differences in their perceptions. Examination of the perception of each of the aforementioned periods was done by combining two questions²⁴, which formed a variable for each separate period, resulting in the creation of three separate variables. It should be noted that senior citizens were noticeably unable to respond to this specific question, particularly those with a low level of education, who were not in a position to evaluate the objects selected, since they were unfamiliar with most of them. The fact that the highest percentage of “*I don't know*” responses was recorded during questions on prehistoric archaeology is particularly impressive (14.5% for Neolithic tools and 12.9% for Cycladic figurines). Questions on classical archaeology came in second, while on the contrary the percentage of individuals who pleaded ignorance with regard to objects of byzantine archaeology, demonstrating that objects which are later in time, and have survived as relics even today, are possibly more familiar to the interviewees (see Table 2).

²² One may draw the same conclusion from an analysis of the image of the archaeologist in Modern Greek literature. M. Diamandi notes that especially in early twentieth-century novels there is a rather close link between archaeologists, irredentist claims, and the borders of the Greek state (Diamandi, 2008 p. 383-392).

²³ National identity comprises both cultural elements (such as ideas, images, myths, based on which the members of a community organize their lives) and political ones (such as a statutory set of rules that defines social structure). The results of a survey conducted by the National Center for Social Research () have shown that, when political elements take precedence over cultural ones in the mindset of a nation's citizens, there is a greater degree of acceptance of diversity (Charalambis et al, 2000, p. 182).

²⁴ With regard to classical archaeology, they responded to a 7-point rated scale question “*How important do you think it would be to include in an archaeological exhibition i) Sculptures from the Parthenon ii) The statue of Hermes of Praxiteles*”, with regard to prehistoric archaeology “*How important do you think it would be to include in an archaeological exhibition i) Tools from the Neolithic man's everyday life ii) Cycladic figurines*, and with regard to byzantine archaeology “*How important do you think it would be to include in an archaeological exhibition i) Byzantine manuscripts ii) Byzantine icons*”.

Table 2. Frequencies to the question “How important do you think it would be to include in an archaeological exhibition....”?

	Parthenon Marbles	The statue of Hermes of Praxiteles	Tools from the Neolithic man’s everyday life	Cycladic figurines	Byzantine manuscripts	Byzantine icons
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Not at all Important			1.4	0.7	2.5	2.1
Fairly Important			2.8	1.6	3.2	3.5
Somewhat Important	0.2	0.5	5.8	4.6	8.5	8.5
Moderately Important	2.3	5.1	17.5	11.5	12.2	17.7
Important	24	19.8	27	30	28.1	28.1
Very Important	22.6	25.1	14.7	16.8	21.7	16.6
Extremely Important	48.6	38.5	16.4	21.9	21.9	17.7
Total	97.7	88.9	85.5	87.1	98.2	94.2
I don’t know	2.3	11.1	14.5	12.9	1.8	5.8

To begin with, a rather high evaluation of all three periods of archaeology is observed, with the artefacts from each period adjudged from *very important* to *extremely important*. Detailed analysis has shown a clear precedence given to classical archaeology ($M = 6.17$) in relation to prehistoric ($M = 5.22$) and byzantine archaeology ($M = 5.07$). The emphasis placed on classical archaeology was to be expected, and is linked both to the historical evolution of archaeology as a field of study and to the particular semantic load with which it has been burdened. Classical antiquity constitutes a “golden age” in Greek national history (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 23-25 and p. 54-57), and it appears that it is also in this guise that it has imprinted itself on the perception of modern citizens.

The high evaluation the Parthenon Marbles received in the questionnaire (see Table 3) was to be expected, thus validating their role as a “symbolic capital” of Greek society²⁵, as early as the nineteenth century, and, moreover, through the interplay of contemporary Greek intellectuals and Western travelers to Greece (Hamilakis, and Yalouri, 1996; Hamilakis, 2001; Athanasopoulou, 2002, p. 273-305).

We would be so bold as to argue that this prioritization of the three major periods of archaeology on the part of the public goes hand in hand with the preference and promotion awarded these periods by the state itself, characterized by K. Kotsakis as an ideological bias, tracing back to the particular circumstances that gave birth to Greek archaeology (Kotsakis, 1998, p. 49-52). As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, the classical past took precedence in the studies that determined the future course of Greek archaeology, since it had the potential to formulate a discourse that as a rule was acceptable to an international audience, promoting the high culture of the ancient Greeks. After all, the obsession with that particular historical period resulted in many cases in the development of other branches of archaeology to be dictated by evolutionary influences to study the substratum of the classical past (Hamilakis, 1993, p. 49). Thus, with the classical past as a reference point, the prehistoric period was studied under the prism of looking for its beginnings, while the byzantine period served as the necessary link between it and modern times (Skopetea, 1988, p. 177-179; Kotsakis, 1991, p. 67-69). Consequently, there was a lesser degree of emphasis bestowed upon the prehistoric period, since the political discourse of Greek archaeology was unable to make extensive use of

²⁵ The political and national use of the Parthenon Marbles was stressed in the speech of the then Minister of Culture, A. Samaras (http://www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj_id=32330), during the opening ceremony for the New Acropolis Museum (20/06/2009), when the Marbles were used as symbols not only of national heritage, but also of a diachronic global one. Specifically, he stated that they “*are the apogee of the Hellenic Spirit, which through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment permeated the entire culture of the West. And today they form the basis of the entire human civilization...*”. The claim that the Marbles be repatriated is one of the key stated missions of the New Museum. For a particular commentary on the Museum as leverage to promote claims on national significance, see Plantzos, 2009, and on the question of the Marbles and their symbolism in the collective imagination, see Hamilakis, 2007, p. 243-286.

the prehistoric past, with the exception of Minoan²⁶ and Mycenaean studies (Kotsakis, 1998, p. 54). Nevertheless, classical archaeology never ceased to be given pride of place. A typical example of this emphasis is the differentiation between local Ephorates of Archaeology that has even found its way into the classification of archaeological museums as done by the Ministry of Culture and Sports itself. State museums, as well as Ephorates of Archaeology, are divided into Prehistoric – Classical, thus falling within the jurisdiction of the same agency, and Byzantine, which are treated separately. This difference in attitude on the part of the state itself reflects the two distinct parts of the “symbolic capital” into which, according to K. Kotsakis, Greek archaeology is divided (Kotsakis, 1998, p. 55) and whose roots go back once again to the nineteenth century: the “extrovert” one, addressed to an international public, and the “introvert” one, meant for domestic consumption by a Greek Orthodox public. The “extrovert” part of the symbolic archaeological capital is based on classical legacy and is a response to a challenge that took shape within the wider ideological cultural background of nineteenth-century Europe. On the other hand, the “introvert” capital formed the basis of the “Great Idea” and was used to support the unification of Orthodox populations; it was clearly of a much smaller caliber than the former.

In fact, even archaeologists themselves often tend to refer to museums housing objects from the prehistoric and classical periods as “archaeological” museums, while using the term “byzantine” for museums exhibiting objects from the byzantine period, in a sense annulling the byzantine museum’s “archaeological quality”. We cannot argue that this differentiation, which means in a nutshell that byzantine remains are not perceived by Greeks as holding a significant position, may be directly deduced from the quantitative data of the survey. On the contrary, their evaluation has received relatively high ratings. However, the fact that byzantine remains were ranked third in importance in an archaeological exhibition demonstrates the recognition of classical and prehistoric remains as being the more significant element of archaeological documentation. The public’s preference for classical archaeology may potentially be linked to the way it was formulated and applied, contributing to the marginalization of other archaeological periods. We might argue that this choice, which is construed as an expression of ideological bias on the part of the state, also manifests an indirect ideological bias on the part of the public²⁷, who have been reared on a diet of political archaeology. In fact, over the past years many scholars (Kotsakis, 1993; Hamilakis, 1993) have criticized the fragmentation of the subject matter of archaeology into chronologically-defined categories, since this categorization adversely affects both the interpretative framework of material remains and issues of methodology pertaining to the practical application of archaeology.

VISITING PATTERNS OF THE ATHENIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS

Athens is a city that offers numerous opportunities for visiting archaeological museums. Its city center is home to eleven (11) very important archaeological museums, and data pertaining to them was the focus of a more detailed examination.

The classification of visitors of Athenian archaeological museums was done in two ways. They were originally classified into:

Individuals with recent experience of Athenian archaeological museums, including people who have visited an archaeological museum in the last five (5) years,

Individuals with distant experience of Athenian archaeological museums, including people who have more than five (5) years to visit an Athenian archaeological museum,

Non visitors of Athenian archaeological museums, a category including individuals who have never visited an Athenian archaeological museum.

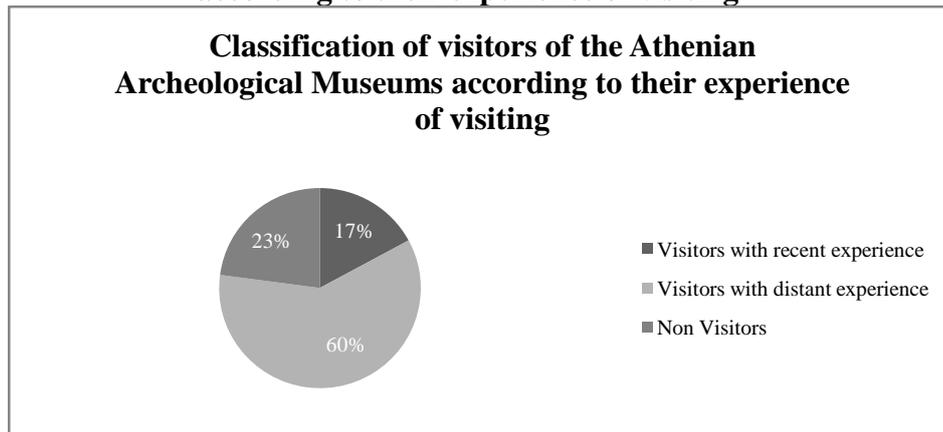
More specifically, it is observed that the majority of respondents belong to the category of individuals with *distant visiting experience*, with a rating approaching 60%. The category of

²⁶ On the use of the Minoan past within the framework of Greek political discourse regarding archaeology, see Papadopoulou, 2005; Hamilakis, 2006; Duke, 2007.

²⁷ The way the most oft-quoted reason for visiting an archaeological museum is worded in the survey is typical of this perception: the majority of respondents answered “*Because I like ancient Greece*” (for details see Doxanaki, 2011).

non visitors takes second place, scoring 23%, while the category of people with *recent experience* receives the lowest percentage (17%) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Classification of the visitors of the Athenian archaeological museums according to their experience of visiting



Simultaneously, a second classification was put in place to measure the extent of engagement with Athenian archaeological museums, and an enthusiasm indicator was created in accordance with the methodology of R. Prentice (1994). The enthusiasm indicator resulted from the combination of two variables: the number of Athenian archaeological museums the respondents had visited, in conjunction with how recent the experience of visiting them was (in other words, the mean average of the time that had elapsed since the responded last visited an Athenian archaeological museum)²⁸.

As is to be expected, non enthusiasts match non visitors of Athenian archaeological museums, the percentage of which is almost 23%. However, it is essential to note that the vast majority of the sample surveyed belongs to the category of individuals with a *low enthusiasm indicator* (55.7%), while the percentage of people with a *high enthusiasm indicator* towards Athenian archaeological museums is very low, barely registering 4.6% (see Table 3).

Table 3. Classification of visitors of the Athenian archaeological museums according to enthusiasm indicator

Enthusiasm Indicator	N	%
Non enthusiasts	100	22.9
Visitors with a low enthusiasm indicator	241	55.7
Visitors with a medium enthusiasm indicator	73	16.9
Visitors with a high enthusiasm indicator	20	4.6
Total	434	100

It would appear that Athenian archaeological museums are important cultural landmarks in the preferences of visitors of archaeological museums in general. Nevertheless, they are not destinations that the public visit often or repeatedly. As the data clearly shows, most Greeks

²⁸ To go into more detail, respondents who had never visited an Athenian archaeological museum were awarded an indicator of **0**, respondents with distant visiting experience (i.e. those whose last visit to an Athenian archaeological museum was more than five years ago) were given an indicator of **1**, and, finally, interviewees with recent visiting experience received an indicator of **2**. These indicators were multiplied by the number of Athenian archaeological museums each participant had visited. The number resulting from this multiplication was the enthusiasm indicator for Athenian archaeological museums. The maximum enthusiasm indicator one could attain was 22 (11*2), if, that is, one had visited all 11 Athenian archaeological museums within the last five years, while the lowest enthusiasm indicator is 0 (0*0), awarded to someone who had never visited a single Athenian archaeological museum. Consequently, respondents who scored an enthusiasm indicator of between 1 and 5 were classified as individuals with a low enthusiasm indicator, those who scored an enthusiasm indicator of between 6 and 10 were classified as individuals with a medium enthusiasm indicator, while those who scored an enthusiasm indicator of between 11 and 22 were classified as individuals with a high enthusiasm indicator. Finally, non enthusiasts are identified as non visitors of Athenian archaeological museums.

have visited at least one Athenian archaeological museum at some point, but instances of people who have visited every single one are much rarer²⁹.

Visitors' and Non Visitors' profile

After examining the numbers behind the visiting pattern of archaeological museums, the question that arises is what the characteristics of the different subgroups –the variety of which is often subsumed under the term “museum audience”– are.

According to L. Kelly (2001, p. 3), museum visitations are not equally distributed among the population. Thus, quantitative data from the present survey show that the degree of participation in museum visitations varies sharply based on the socio-demographic data of the population.

An analysis of the categories of visitors of Athenian archaeological museums reveals, in this case as well, that both genders are almost equally represented in them³⁰ (see Table 4).

Table 4. Enthusiasm indicator of visitors of the Athenian archaeological museums by gender

Enthusiasm indicator of visitors of the Athenian archaeological museums by gender						
		Enthusiasm Indicator				
		Non enthusiasts	Low enthusiasm indicator	Medium enthusiasm indicator	High enthusiasm indicator	Total
Men	<i>% within gender</i>	23.2	56.9	17.1	2.8	100
Female	<i>% within gender</i>	22.5	54.5	16.7	6.3	100

However, the enthusiasm indicator appears diversified in relation to age³¹. It is obvious that the highest enthusiasm indicator includes mostly people between the ages of 18 and 34 and 55-65+, while most members of the 55-65+ age-group belong to the non-enthusiasts category (see Table 5).

Table 5. Enthusiasm indicator of visitors of the Athenian archaeological museums by age

Enthusiasm indicator of visitors of the Athenian archaeological museums by age						
		Enthusiasm Indicator				
		Non enthusiasts	Low enthusiasm indicator	Medium enthusiasm indicator	High enthusiasm indicator	Total
55-65+	<i>% within enthusiasm indicator</i>	51.5	27	31.5	40	33.9
35-54	<i>% within enthusiasm indicator</i>	35.4	35.7	37	20	35.1
18-34	<i>% within enthusiasm indicator</i>	13.1	37.3	31.5	40	30.9
Total		100	100	100	100	100

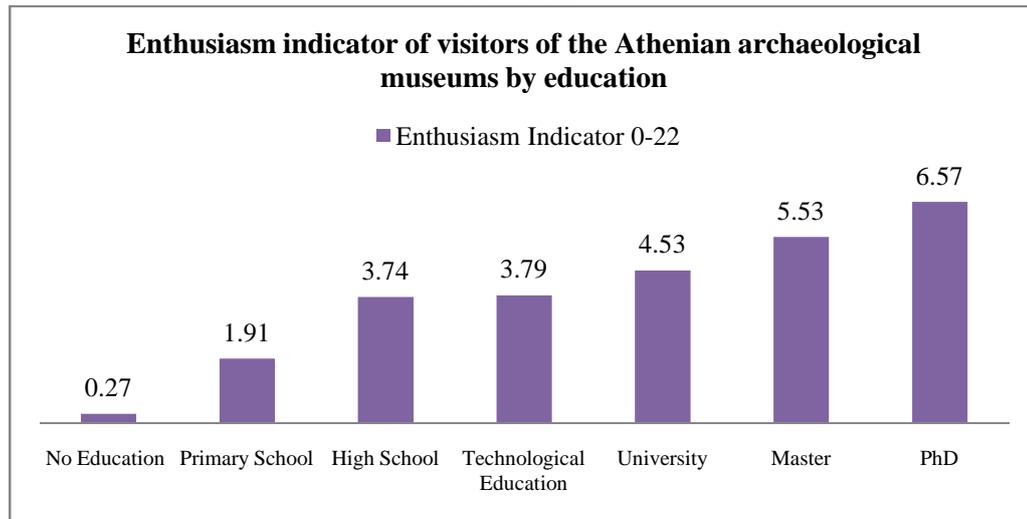
²⁹ It is worth noting that none of the 434 interviewees stated that they have visited all eleven (11) Athenian archaeological museums under consideration, while only three individuals (0.7% of the sample) stated that they have visited ten (10) out of eleven (11).

³⁰ According to t-test $t(431)=1.079$, $p>0.05$.

³¹ According to One Way ANOVA test $F(2.430)=3.280$, $p<0.05$.

PhD graduates display the highest enthusiasm indicator ($M = 6.57$), as opposed to individuals with no education, whose enthusiasm indicator is almost nil ($M = 0.27$) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Enthusiasm indicator of visitors of the Athenian archaeological museums by education



A high enthusiasm indicator is recorded for individuals with a *high social status* ($M = 5.58$), as well as for individuals with a *upper middle social status* ($M = 4.79$)³², while the highest enthusiasm indicator is found among the categories of *full-time employed* ($M = 4.09$). On the contrary, the *unemployed* ($M = 2.15$), *homemakers* ($M = 2.82$) and *retirees* ($M = 2.15$)³³ score the lowest enthusiasm indicators. Family status also appears as a factor affecting the classification of visitors of Athenian archaeological museums³⁴. In this case as well, those *married with underage children* display the highest enthusiasm indicator ($M = 3.93$), while a low enthusiasm indicator is found in the category of *widowers/divorced* ($M = 1.88$) (see Table 6).

Table 6: Trends of visitors of the Athenian archaeological museums

High Enthusiasm Indicator	Medium Enthusiasm Indicator	Low Enthusiasm Indicator	Non Enthusiasts
Age 25-34	Age 35-44	Age 25-34	Age 65+
University Graduate/Post Graduate	High School Graduate	High School Graduate	Primary School Graduate
High Social Status	Upper Middle Social Status	Lower Middle Social Status	Lower Middle Social Status
Full-time employed	Full-time employed	Full-time employed	Retired-Unemployed
Married with underage children	Single	Single	Married with adult children
Resident of Southern or Northern Suburbs	Resident of Athens city center	Resident of Western Suburbs	Resident of Athens city center

INTERRELATION BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERCEPTIONS AND VISITING PATTERNS OF THE ATHENIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS

The perceptions of Greeks regarding archaeology seem to exercise, among others³⁵, a significant degree of influence in the visiting pattern of archaeological museums.

³² According to Kruskal-Wallis $\chi^2(3)=76.820, p<0.001$

³³ According to Kruskal-Wallis $H(5)=29.206, p<0.001$.

³⁴ According One Way ANOVA $F(4.428)=3.490, p<0.01$.

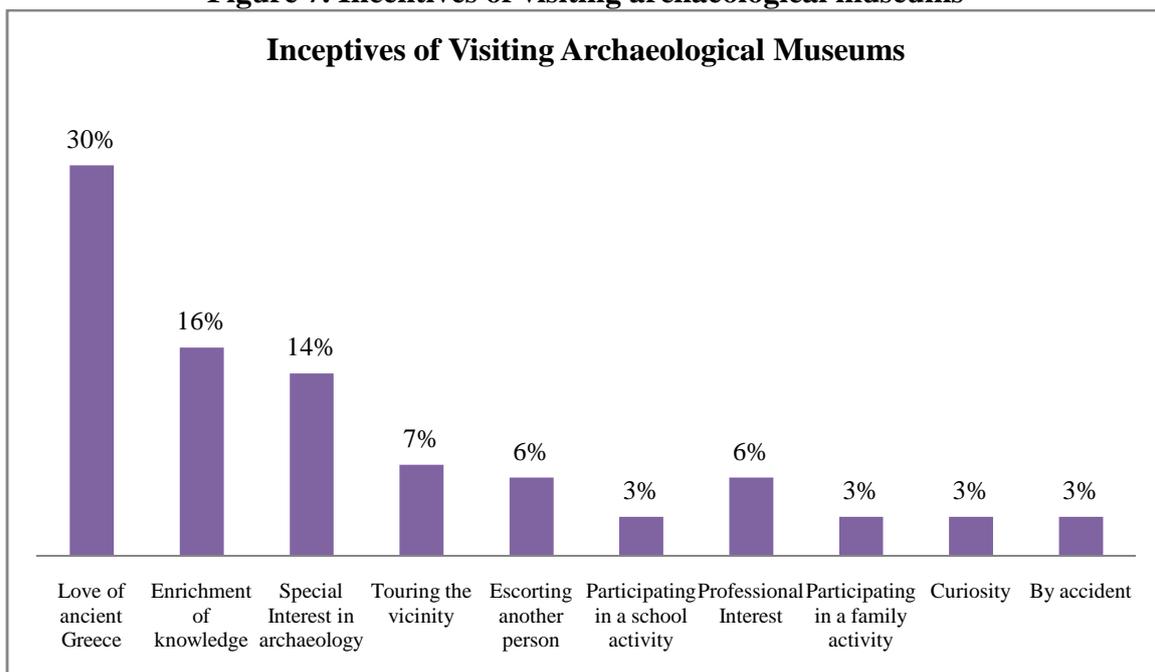
³⁵ Perceptions of archaeology are not the only incentives or deterrents of visiting archaeological museums. Their influence, however, is of cardinal importance. For an analytical description of the visiting pattern in Greek archaeological museums and the influence of other factors see Doxanaki, 2011, p. 323-377.

Incentives of Visiting Archaeological Museums

A variety of responses was noted in the open-ended question regarding the most important reason for visiting an archaeological museum. It should be noted that “*love of ancient Greece*” (33%) is stated as the most important motive to visit an archaeological museum. Here we should stress the fact that the use of the term “*ancient Greece*” in the responses possibly denotes the identification of the archaeological museum with the time period of ancient Greek civilization and, by extension, shows that byzantine culture is excluded from the public’s already formed perception. Consequently, this also validates what A. Chourmouziadi (2006, p. 310) has already commented on, that for Greeks “*a visit to an archaeological museum is an act of paying homage to those to whom we owe our modern national existence*”, the Ancient Greeks. Once again, the role of the classical past as a reference point for modern Greece is confirmed.

The *enrichment of knowledge* comes in second as an incentive of visiting an archaeological museum (18%), closely followed by the response *special interest in archaeology* or in particular exhibits (15%). At the same time, the incentives of visiting archaeological museums also show a social character that may be ascertained through those responses stating *touring the vicinity* (8%), *escorting another person* (7%), *professional interest* (7%), *participating in a school activity* (3%) and *participating in a family activity* (3%) as primary reasons for visiting an archaeological museum (see Figure 7). Nevertheless, by observing the quantitative distribution of responses we conclude that the social character of museum visits appears weakened in comparison to other studies (Merriman, 1991), a fact that might be attributed to the content of archaeological museums, which, much like art museums (Heady, 1984), seem to attract a greater number of solitary visitors.

Figure 7. Incentives of visiting archaeological museums

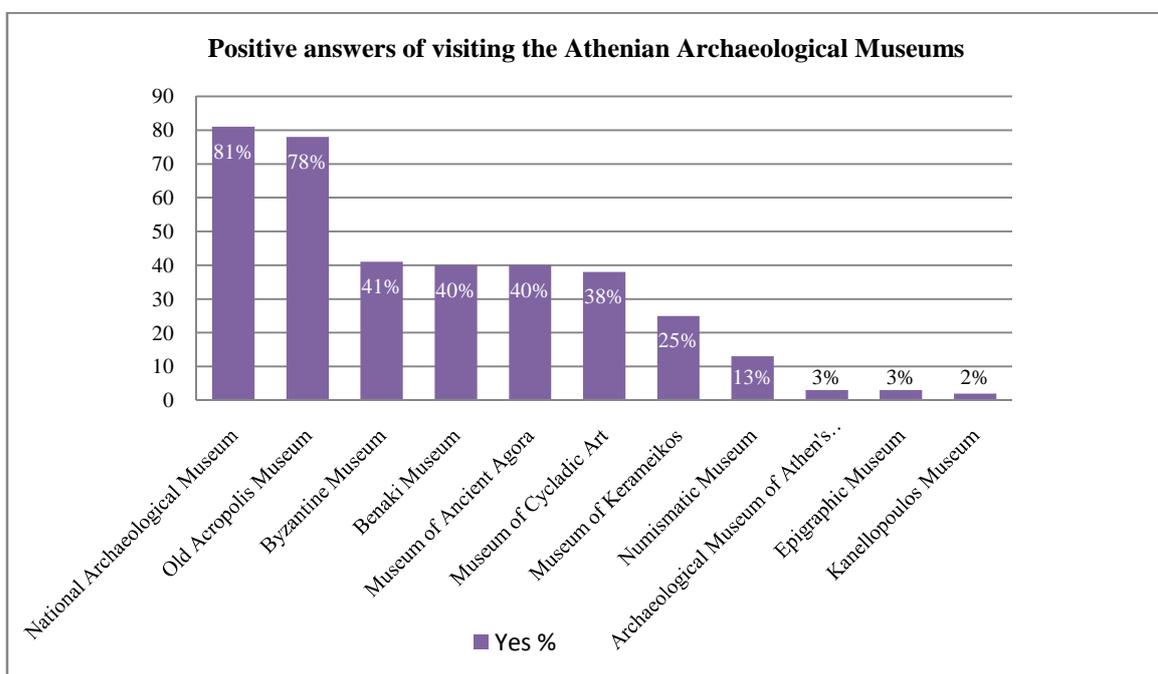


Deterrents of Visiting Athenian Archaeological Museums

An important deterrent that was determined specifically for Athenian archaeological museums is a lack of awareness of the existence of those museums. In other words, it was ascertained that a very large percentage of respondents are not aware of the existence of many of the archaeological museums in Athens. The most popular museums are the two major

national museums, the old Acropolis Museum³⁶ with which 92% of the sample was familiar, followed by the National Archaeological Museum, with almost the same percentage (91%). The Benaki Museum ranks third in the list of best-known museums, with 66% of respondents stating that they are aware of its existence. The Museum of Cycladic Art (63%) and the Byzantine and Christian Museum (63%) follow close behind. Consequently, one may observe that the three museums along the axis of Vasilissis Sofias Avenue score similar ratings with regard to visibility on the part of respondents. The awareness ratings for the Museum of Kerameikos (52%) and the Numismatic Museum (47%) are lower, while the percentage of respondents who state that they are aware of the Archaeological Museum of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (22%), the Epigraphic Museum (14%) and finally the Kanellopoulos Museum (10%) are disappointing; these museums also score very poorly on visitor traffic (see Figure 8). It should be noted that museums in the heart of Athens, housed in historical buildings, such as the Numismatic Museum, are ignored by the majority of the city's denizens. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the point that lack of awareness of a museum's existence constitutes an insurmountable obstacle for many potential visitors.

Figure 8. Visits to the Athenian Archaeological Museums



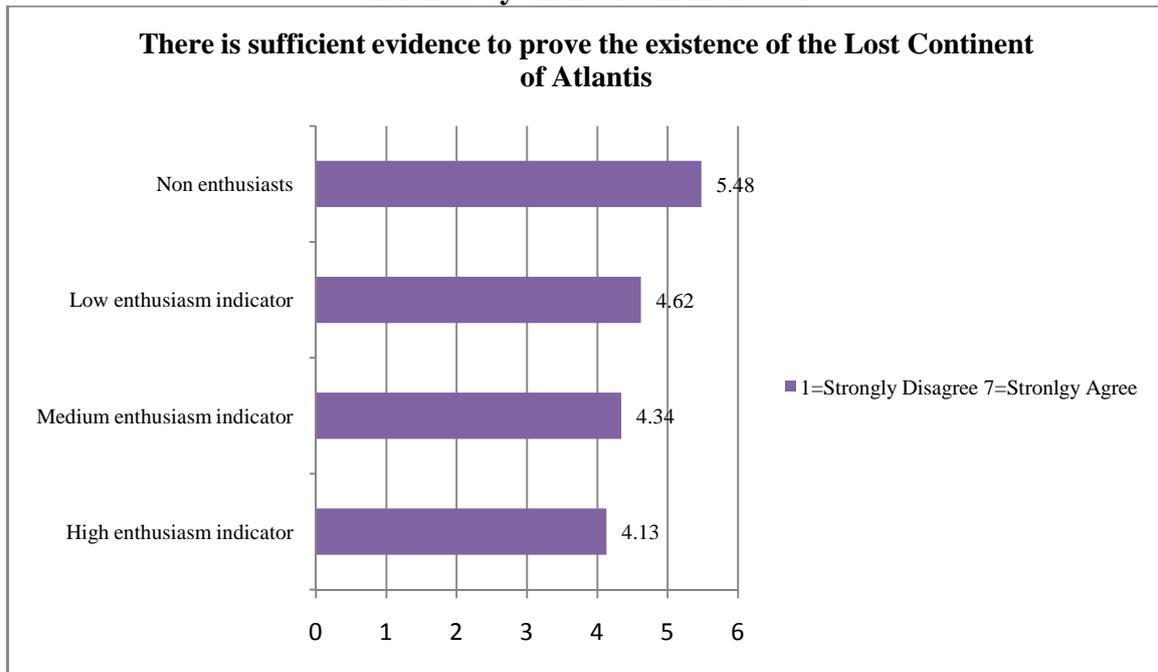
As it has been determined during the course of this survey, an added deterrent affecting the degree of engagement with archaeological museums is the non-scientific perception of archaeological discipline. A strong statistically significant positive correlation between the scientific view of archaeology and visitors' traffic is observed³⁷. Individuals with a high enthusiasm indicator express a rather scientific perception of archaeology ($M = 5.47$). On the contrary, it is noticed that individuals with a low enthusiasm indicator ($M = 4.5$) and non enthusiasts ($M = 3.9$) have a not so clear view of the purpose and subject matter of archaeological activities.

Further evidence regarding the skewed viewpoint of individuals who rarely visit museums, or even those who have never visited one, is provided by the responses to the question regarding the existence of the Lost Continent of Atlantis (see Figure 9).

³⁶ At the time of the survey, the New Acropolis Museum had yet to open its doors. Today, however, it is the most visited museum in Greece.

³⁷ According to Pearson criterion $R, r=0.290, p<0.01$.

Figure 9. Attitudes to the question regarding the existence of the Lost Continent of Atlantis by enthusiasm indicator



In this case also, non enthusiasts express their strong agreement with the aforementioned pseudo-theory ($M = 5.48$). On the contrary, individuals with a high and medium enthusiasm indicator are more cautious in their responses ($M = 4.13$ and $M = 4.34$ respectively), without, however, being in a position to positively refute the theory in question. In other words, it is observed that even a part of the public that visits museums ignores the conventional interpretation the latter offer and prefers a non academic, alternative approach which is possibly related to the search for and existence of mystery elements in the past (Merriman, 1991, p. 115).

Consequently, one may discern an estrangement from the discipline of archaeology particularly in people who rarely visit Athenian archaeological museums or have never visited an archaeological museum. The latter is viewed by these categories of individuals as an awe-inspiring place, as they are not properly equipped to come to grips with it, since it deals in matters that are unknown to them.

HIERARCHICAL CATEGORIZATION OF DETERRENENTS TO VISITING ATHENIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS

An examination of the deterrents that arise in relation to the visiting pattern in archaeological museums -using Multiple Regression with a Stepwise Method- confirms the specialized interest of individuals visiting Athenian archaeological museums, since it is established that the most important factor is a *scientific view* of archaeology (see Table 7).

Table 7: Hierarchical categorization of deterrents to visiting by enthusiasm indicator for Athenian archaeological museums, using Multiple Regression with a Stepwise Method

MULTIPLE REGRESSION USING A STEPWISE METHOD		
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: ENTHUSIASM INDICATOR OF VISITORS OF ATHENIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS		
VARIABLE	Beta	Sig
Scientific view of archaeology	0.224	0.002
Attitude towards Museums	0.162	0.035
Interest in the study of archaeology	0.161	0.039

The third most important factor is *interest in archaeology*. We could argue that these two factors related to archaeology are possibly a prerequisite for visiting archaeological museums. In other words, those who are not interested in archaeology and have no clear opinion and knowledge of its purpose and role are those who do not visit archaeological museums. On the other hand, individuals who might be interested in archaeology and have a more scientific view of it may be deterred from visiting museums by other potential causes. Thus, we have verification of the fact that the citizens of the Greek capital who show a high degree of enthusiasm in the city's archaeological museums are individuals who are up to date on the discipline of archaeology and have a high level of interest in it. Of course, the significance of the attitude towards archaeological museums as an enthusiasm-indicator deterrent should also not be overlooked. Their image as venues belonging exclusively to specialist scholars, where the jargon is impenetrable and the ambience unpleasant and unfamiliar, affects the degree of engagement with them, suggesting that even a single less-than-pleasant experience in an archaeological museum might have potentially adverse effects, leading to its total rejection (see Doxanaki, 2011, p. 361).

CONCLUSION

It is a fact that antiquities are ubiquitous in Greek life, both as a source of inspiration for creators producing culture (theater, literature, art, science, music) and as a transmitter of messages in day-to-day communication (Lambrinouidakis, 2009, p. 17-20). The issue at stake, however, is for ancient relics to acquire an active role in modern life and not to be looked upon as indifferent or many times even as inimical to contemporary reality. Perhaps the path leading to the link between archaeology and modern society goes through the disentanglement of the former from a series of preconceived notions regarding the past, stemming from its national idolization. As has been pointed out time and time again, the educational process is by far the most significant medium through which the ideological use of the past is established and perpetuated (Touloumis, 2004, p. 14; Kasvikis, 2008). Further evidence in support of this thesis may be adduced from the finds of the study at hand, which shed light on the close link between education and the ideological use of the past and, furthermore, of archaeology, a link which seems to manifest itself at every level of education even in this day and age (Frangoudaki, and Dragona, 1997, p. 15). Besides, looking at archaeology from a political point of view is a trait evident in individuals from all levels of education. The ideological use of the past does not necessarily mean that its effects are always negative, causing nothing but polarization and excess. The answers to the questions regarding archaeology bespeak a sense of patriotism encapsulating the recognition that the history and continuity of Hellenism are very important parameters for Greek national identity. It is just that the highly visible cloak of politics and iconic status with which antiquities have been clothed "sanctifies" them, thus alienating them from the social role they could play.

We might argue that the Greeks' relationship with archaeology, despite the fact that it contains typical characteristics when compared to other studies conducted abroad, at the same time also demonstrates some peculiarities. In the case of Greece, it is not only the official state-sanctioned practice, but the wider public as well that perceives archaeology within an strong political and national dimension; in other words, as an archaeology that, apart from the dynamic value of the past, includes among its aims the manifestation of the modern state's unity by putting an emphasis on material relics. One may conclude, therefore, that in the collective consciousness of the Greek body politic archaeology functions as a bridge to the past and to an individual's origins, as well as a confirmation of national self-determination and of a communion with one's heritage. These perceptions signify the socially determined character of knowledge and of the way the past is received, while simultaneously contributing in a decisive manner to the self-determination of social groups and facilitating recognition of their existence in the present.

Despite the fact that interest in archaeology on the part of the Greek body politic is moderate at best, it is obvious that recognition of its value is already embedded in the wider public's perception. A contributing factor is the omnipresence of items of material culture in

institutional planning, in scholastic knowledge as disseminated through the official curriculum, even in everyday Greek life.

The scientific view of archaeological activities is at a satisfactory level; nevertheless, one should not overlook the difficulty in expressing its individual goals.

At the same time, the analysis of the results has demonstrated the close connection between the Greek public's perceptions of the scholarly field of archaeology and the latter's direct link to the visiting pattern in archaeological museums. A comparative examination of the factors that promote or inhibit museum visits shows that a specialized interest in archaeology is a key determinant of visiting pattern. The results of the study reveal that visitors are motivated by a special interest to visit an archaeological museum, even if this interest is often expressed in a non-specific manner (e.g. love of ancient Greece). At the end of the day, a key incentive to visit an archaeological museum is the notion of coming in contact with the past, not so much a personal past as a national one, which, despite the fact that it is deemed important by the majority of the Greeks, nevertheless still fails to move more than a small part of the public.

Socio-demographic data can be used as tacit supplementary factors that help explain the reasons of non-visitation. Consequently, we may claim that the factors that attract one to an archaeological museum are related to the Greeks' educational and cultural background, both elements necessary for creating a special interest in archaeology.

In conclusion, one notes the paradoxical coexistence of two perceptions that are polar opposites, highlighting a dual stance towards archaeology or, more properly, two different perceptions of it. The first is permeated by a sense of duty towards archaeology and the recognition of its significance, while the second is marked by a lack of strong interest in it, which also affects the frequency of museum visits, since museums appear to be archaeology's official exponent as far as the body politic is concerned. Archaeology is registered in the collective consciousness of the respondents as an established value, as a guarantor of national unity, but with little trace of personal involvement on their part. Ultimately, what becomes clear with regard to the relation between archaeology and the public is what R. Kautantzoglou (2001, p. 115-116) describes as the binary juxtaposition of the monumental with the social. In other words, while we may discern a common acceptance of the value of archaeology and its placement upon a "national science" pedestal, both by the people who manage cultural heritage and by the wider public, at the same time this "top-down" perception of archaeology leads to the latter becoming entrenched in its position, thus holding the body politic at arm's length.

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