“They Ought To Know The Achievements Of The Ancient Greeks”: The Views Of Greek Prospective Teachers On The Educational Role Of Archaeology

Kostas Kasvikis, Department of Primary Education,
University of Western Macedonia, Florina, Greece

International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research [IJHLTR],
Volume 15, Number 1 – Autumn/Winter 2017

Historical Association of Great Britain
www.history.org.uk

ISSN: 14472-9474

Abstract:

This paper focus on the role of archaeology and material culture in supporting national narratives for younger generations, examining the ideas and perceptions of prospective teachers of Greek Primary Education. Firstly, the contribution of archaeology to Greek society and its impact on Greek formal and informal education will be discussed briefly. Then, the quantitative and qualitative results of a research based on a detailed and extended questionnaire will be presented. The sample includes the opinions of 530 pre-graduate students attending Departments of Primary Education in Greece and focuses on their: perceptions about the meanings of archaeology to Greek society;

- *background concerning the consumption of archaeological knowledge;*
- *ideas about the role of material culture on their national, local and supranational identity;*
- *attitudes towards presenting archaeology in Primary School;*
- *mythical and distorted perceptions of various aspects of the past dealing with material culture.*

The research intends to provide evidentially based insights on the role of material culture as an important source of historical knowledge for young people, as a medium for constructing their narratives about the past and as appropriate knowledge to be taught at school. The study is part of a broader survey on the role of archaeology in Greek education conducted in the framework of the European funded project NEARCH (New scenarios for a community involved archaeology).

Keywords:

Archaeology, Greece,History Education, Material Culture,
NEARCH project – New Scenarios for a Community Involved Archaeology
Research – Quanitative and Qualitative, Higher Education Students

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH
Vol. 15.1

"THEY OUGHT TO KNOW THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS": THE VIEWS OF GREEK PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS ON THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Kostas Kasvikis, Department of Primary Education, Florina**,** University of Western Macedonia**,** Greece

Abstract

This paper focus on the role of archaeology and material culture in supporting national narratives for younger generations, examining the ideas and perceptions of prospective teachers of Greek Primary Education. Firstly, the contribution of archaeology to Greek society and its impact on Greek formal and informal education will be discussed briefly. Then, the quantitative and qualitative results of a research based on a detailed and extended questionnaire will be presented. The sample includes the opinions of 530 pre-graduate students attending Departments of Primary Education in Greece and focuses on their: perceptions about:

- *the meanings of archaeology to Greek society;*
- *background concerning the consumption of archaeological knowledge;*
- *ideas about the role of material culture on their national, local and supranational identity;*
- *attitudes towards presenting archaeology in Primary School;*
- *mythical and distorted perceptions of various aspects of the past dealing with material culture.*

The research intends to provide evidentially based insights on the role of material culture as an important source of historical knowledge for young people, as a medium for constructing their narratives about the past and as appropriate knowledge to be taught at school. The study is part of a broader survey on the role of archaeology in Greek education conducted in the framework of the European funded project NEARCH (New scenarios for a community involved archaeology).

Keywords:

Archaeology, Greece, History Education, Material Culture, NEARCH project – New Scenarios for a Community Involved Archaeology, Research – Quanitative and Qualitative University, Higher Education Students

Introduction

In the field of academics, the division between history and archaeology as two distinct disciplines of the past is well established. Historians conduct their research and study the past mainly through the investigation of primary sources, predominantly written records, in order to create historical accounts, their interpretations. On the other hand, archaeology contributes to knowledge about the past through providing far-reaching access to the history of mankind from prehistory – where no written sources are available – to the present using material culture as the main source of evidence and interpretation. Nevertheless, the dominant epistemological framework that delineates a division between archaeology, as the study of artefacts, and history, as the inquiry of texts, is being challenged both on a theoretical and research level, such as in Classical Studies (Isaev, 2006; Sauer, 2004). Scholars are underlining the intersections, affinities and research traditions between history and archaeology and the need for intercommunication to derive greater knowledge about the past. At the school level, the knowledge obtained by historians and

archaeologists appears in a more unified manner in the context of the historical courses provided in formal education. It is incorporated into curricula and teaching programmes, being described as "Social Studies", "Civics" and "History" itself. In addition, textbooks – and other types of teaching material – provide all sorts of historical evidence, including artefacts, monuments, archaeological sites and museums.

However, there are also other common grounds for history and archaeology in terms of the political and ideological use and abuse of knowledge about the past. It is well known that since the late 18th century history-writing has contributed effectively to the process of nation building, a task that remains active under in various situations (e.g. after the collapse of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Balkans). National historiographies as a genre convincingly demonstrated the uniqueness and superiority of each nation and impressed upon the members of a state a common ethnic identity and sense of belonging (Burger, Donovan & Passmore 1999; Burger & Lorenz 2010. Correspondingly, and symbiotically, school history was also instrumentalized to fulfil the same task of promoting students' collective memory (Carretero *et al*, 2013). Just like historiography, archaeology has also been exploited for political purposes and archaeological evidence of the remote past, though not just that, was manipulated to invent a shared past based on material culture and to construct national, regional and post-imperial ethnic identities in Europe and beyond (Atkinson, Banks & O'Sullivan, 1996; Diaz-Andreu & Champion, 1996; Graves-Brown, Jones & Gamble, 1996; Jones, 1997; Kohl & Fawcett, 1995; Ó Ríagáin & Popa, 2012). The Greek case is quite interesting as both history and archaeology served in the process of creating a homogenous national identity, with history education being utilized from the very beginning to strengthen students' national consciousness (Avdela, 2000).

Archaeology as a national discipline: identity and education

Over the last 25 years the impact of archaeology on Greek society has received increasing academic attention and the use of material culture as symbolic capital, fundamental to the reinforcement of national imaginary and the construction of collective identity, has been examined to reveal the values and meanings that Greek society has invested in the material remains of the past over the last two centuries (Hamilakis & Yalouri, 1996; Hamilakis, 2007; Kotsakis, 1991, 1998, Voutsaki, 2003; chapters in Damaskos & Plantzos, 2008 and Voutsaki & Cartledge in press). It is well known that archaeology in Greece, even earlier than historiography, was employed to contribute to the construction of national identity, providing material evidence to support the grand National narrative. Firstly, archaeology provided the citizens of the newly founded Greek State with a direct link to the glorious classical antiquity and later on, after the mid-19th century, it successfully contributed to the filling of temporal discontinuities by documenting the unbroken continuity of the national self, from antiquity to the present through the Hellenized Byzantium (Kotsakis, 1991; Hamilakis, 2007, pp. 57-123; Plantzos, 2008; Skopetea, 1988, pp. 190-204).

Very soon, antiquities, apart from the meanings with which they were invested as signifiers of Greek identity and as tangible evidence of the long-term existence of the nation, also acquired educational values which were evident through specific measures which were already being taken by the Greek State from the time of the 1821 Greek Revolution (Kokkou, 1977, pp. 54-57, 105-106) and reflected in the discourse of intellectuals and archaeologists from the late 19th century onwards (Kasvikis, 2005). However, when in 1880 history was introduced as an obligatory and autonomous school subject in Greek education, archaeology remained on the margins of the curriculum. Nevertheless, before and after 1880 archaeological knowledge was introduced informally through occasional visits to archaeological sites, museums and monuments. Later on, in the course of 20th century, archaeological information and interpretations about the past based on material evidence were gradually incorporated into history curricula and the related textbooks,

FIGURE 1

primarily presented as a history of Classical and Byzantine art and as visual documentation of the ancient historians and literature (mostly Homer).

Nowadays archaeology occupies a considerable place in formal and informal education. Despite the fact that archaeology is not an integral component of the Greek curriculum, students are exposed to various official, alternative or controversial narratives and experiences concerning archaeology and material culture. These are provided through school textbooks, education and the outreach programmes of archaeological sites and museums, children's illustrated books and digital applications (Kasvikis, 2015a). For example, archaeological information is incorporated into the textbooks of several school subjects (History, Language, Religion, Environmental Studies, Geography, etc.), both in Primary and Secondary Education, acquiring different and sometimes conflicting meanings, and producing specific representations of the past (Kasvikis, 2004, 2012). Despite the considerable impact of archaeology on Greek society and education, the perceptions and attitudes of teachers and students concerning archaeology as a particular form of knowledge about the past have been hardly explored. This is especially the case for Primary Education, where no data exists concerning ideas on the social significance and teaching potential of material culture.

The aim of this paper is to examine the role and meanings of archaeology in Greek formal education, focusing on future teachers for Primary education schools in Greece and the ways that they perceive and appreciate the societal and educational values of archaeological knowledge.

The research presented here is being performed in the context of the NEARCH project (2013–2018), which is supported by the European Commission in the framework of the Culture programme. It is assumed that pre-graduate students carry ideas and attitudes concerning material culture which have been mostly influenced, if not completely constructed, through their experience of participating in the Greek educational system for 12 years and their exposure to information and perceptions about archaeology in the public sphere. Thus, as future teachers in Primary Education, they will have a significant influence on how students appreciate the role of archaeology for understanding the past.

Aims, research methodology and sample profile

Based on the above consideration an extensive research was conducted on students attending a Department of Primary Education in Greece. It was a three year survey (2013–2016) with the scope to identify knowledge and sources of archaeological information; cultural preferences in relation to archaeological resources; epistemological perceptions and attitudes towards archaeology and history; ideas about material culture and the role of archaeology in forming multiple identities; and opinions on the role and significance of archaeological knowledge in education held by sample students.

The research was quantitative and based on an extended and detailed questionnaire which was widely distributed and answered by 530 pre-graduate students. It included 39 questions, both open and closed-ended, with the latter being either single-choice or multiple-choice. A number of questions were divided into sub-questions, many of which utilized a 5-point Likert scale. The majority of the respondents, 368 out of 530 (69.5%), were female, while 162 of them were male (30.5%). The female-male ratio is representative of the overall current ratio in Greek Primary education and of student' attending Departments of Primary Education. Their ages did not vary significantly as the majority of them were between 18-24 years old (89.8%). All students were training for four years in a regional Department of Primary Education in Greece in order to become teachers of Primary Education (6-12 years old). During their study, they attended a number of courses related to history and history education, among which were "History Didactics", "Issues of History Education" and "Ancient and Medieval History". The future teachers of our sample responded to the questionnaire at the beginning of one of these courses and due to that they weren't notably influenced by their training or the theoretical or practical knowledge provided to them.

Due to the extent of the research questionnaire, in the present paper I will try to analyse, synthesize and discuss some of the basic outcomes of the research concerning prospective teachers' professed ideas, opinions, stereotypes and attitudes concerning the material culture of the past. The same research was also implemented with Primary Education teachers already in service (Kasvikis, 2015b) and the available comparative data will be cross-fertilized.

Results

Attitudes towards archaeological information

According to their answers, sample student teachers indicated that their schooling (Primary and Secondary), visits to museums and archaeological sites and university training are their foremost basic sources of knowledge about archaeology, followed by other public representations that include mass media (TV, newspapers and internet), alongside books and movies with relative content. When prospective teachers were asked to define which, in their opinion, are the most reliable sources of archaeological information, the majority of them reported archaeological sites,

museums and virtual tours (on the websites of museums and other cultural institutions) as the most trustworthy. A variety of other types of archaeological presentations coming from academic publications and lectures, archaeological websites and Wikipedia, TV and newspapers were also indicated as being quite valid, but to a lesser degree.

Finally, the respondents of the questionnaire reported that they visit archaeological sites and archaeological museums reasonably regularly: more than three-quarters of them visit an archaeological site 1-2 times per year (76%) and 8.5% do so 3 or more times per year. For archaeological museums, 77.7% of them go 1-2 times per year and 8.3% go 3 or more times per year. As for the social context of those visits, participants were permitted to give more than one answer and their responses indicate that vacation and leisure time were much more often the circumstances of visitation both to archaeological sites and museums than attending them as part of their university studies. Furthermore, future teachers, according to their answers, despite visiting archaeological sites and museums when they were at school, have little experience with participating in museum outreach activities. This might be explained by the fact that a large number of respondents come from provincial and smaller towns where little opportunities to participate in museum education programmes are provided, in comparison with Athens or Thessaloniki, the two biggest cities in the country. The research data also suggests that the reading of archaeological fiction and non-fiction literature for children is quite rare and that respondents more occasionally encounter archaeological knowledge through TV documentaries and other programmes.

It is very important to stress that prospective teachers stated in high percentages their interest in history and the past (31.2% “A lot” and 40.8% “Quite a bit”), and even more their enthusiasm for culture (31.7% “A lot” and 45.7%). In both cases their interest appears slightly lower in comparison to teachers currently in service (“A lot” and “Quite a bit” totalled 80.3% and 84.8% respectively – Kasvikis, 2015b). On the other hand, 87.4% of the sample consider historians and archaeologists are equally “the most capable” for studying and interpreting the past, with 9.6% stating that historians are most appropriate for this scientific endeavour, exceeding the respective views of Primary education teachers who are slightly more in favour of the relevance of historians (“both historians and archaeologists” 78.7%, “mostly historians” 14%, “exclusively historians” 5.3% – Kasvikis, 2015b).

When teachers were asked to evaluate which aspects of archaeological information they were taught at school that they found to be significant, they focused on issues concerning important prehistoric and classical antiquities (Minoan palaces, Mycenaean citadels, the Parthenon), great archaeological discoveries (Vergina), ancient and Byzantine art (Dorian and Ionic rhythm, Black- and Red-figured pottery, Agia Sophia), undervaluing aspects of world prehistory and the distant past. Nevertheless, it was revealed that future teachers carry misconceptions and outdated interpretations on several issues concerning archaeology and the material culture of the past. This includes stereotypes of how life was in the Paleolithic Era, the veracity of the Homeric epics as accurate depictions of historical events of the Mycenaean era or the characteristics of Aegean prehistoric societies.

Material culture and identity: future teachers’ perceptions and values

The research yielded significant evidence concerning the opinions of future teachers on the social values of archaeological resources. The results suggest that the sample students have a strong appreciation of the role of archaeology and material culture in contemporary society, as is evident from the fact that the majority of them “Strongly disagree” (78.9%) or “Disagree” (2.8%) with the statement that “Archaeological sites and monuments have no particular value for us in the present”. On the contrary they appear to robustly adopt a range of different perceptions concerning the values of archaeology for today’s society. A large majority of them “Strongly agree”

and “Agree” that “Antiquities are important evidence of their national identity” (54% and 31.9% respectively), though slightly lower than teachers currently in service (who “Strongly agree” 68.7% and “Agree” 31,9% – Kasvikis, 2015b). They also consider that “Ancient artefacts and monuments are important works of art for us in the present and have aesthetic value” (45.1% and 42.8% respectively), which is also a strong public perception held by Greek society in general, and that “archaeological sites, monuments and artefacts carry important information about people and past societies” (55.8% and 36.6% respectively). Finally, the respondents also recognized that ancient monuments and artefacts have a symbolic value for modern people but this viewpoint received less support compared with those mentioned above (“Strongly agree” 29.8%, “Agree” 41.9 %). Some of these trends were also identified throughout other parts of the research questionnaire and will be further discussed.

The available data indicates that archaeology and knowledge derived from material culture of the past is a powerful tool for future teachers to define national and other identities. For example, in a number of questions, with pre-defined and open-ended answers, that asked teachers to choose which archaeological museums, sites and monuments, both national and abroad, are important for their multiple identities (personal, ethnic, regional and religious ones), high percentages of appreciation were indicated for those sites and museums which under certain social and ideological conditions have been proclaimed as the landmarks of Greek history, displaying similarities with teachers in service (Kasvikis, 2015b). More concretely, out of 45 national archaeological sites proposed by the research questionnaire – with an ability to choose up to 10 – more than half of the sample student teachers ranked as important for their identity the most prominent prehistoric and classical archaeological sites of Greece: Acropolis (77.9%), Vergina (66.9%), Delphi (65.50%), Knossos (64.5%), Epidaurus (56%) and Olympia (54.3%).

In the same manner, out of the 15 archaeological museums of the country proposed by the questionnaire – with the option to choose up to three – future teachers highlighted as important for their multiple identities the New Acropolis Museum (62.8%), the National Archaeological Museum (46.6%) and the museum of Vergina (36.4%), all of which, through their exhibitions functioned, though in different historical and cultural contexts, as visual manifestations of the Greek classical past and contributed to the national imaginary from the 19th to 21st century (Gazi, 2011, 2012; Hamilakis 2007, pp. 125-167; Plantzos, 2011). Finally, the close relationship between Greek national identity and Orthodox Christianity was certified through the large-scale selection of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (90.4%) and the Panagia Soumela Monastery in Eastern Turkey (52.6%) as the most important archaeological sites and monuments outside of Greece that contribute to their identity. In addition, according to the teachers’ selections, the Monasteries of Mount Athos ranked 7th (44.5%) after the archaeological sites mentioned above

A number of responses to the questionnaire demonstrate a strong ethnocentric perception concerning the knowledge derived from material culture according to our sample. For example, university students “Strongly agree” (45.7%) and “Agree” (41.1%) when questioned whether they feel proud of their Greek identity because “the royal tombs at Vergina prove the Greekness of Macedonia” while the majority of them feel personally prouder because “the ancient Greeks created great monuments like the Parthenon” (“Strongly agree” 62.8% and “Agree” 32.6%). Teachers in service yielded similar total numbers of “Strongly agree” and “Agree” answers to the same questions but with an even higher proportion of strongest agreement (69.3% and 62.8% respectively, Kasvikis, 2015).

Inherent to an ethnocentric perception of archaeological information, and in a sense an important component of that, is the evaluation of monuments and artefacts, mainly those of classical antiquity, as sublime works of art. Future teachers appear to strongly embrace the stance that

"The ancient Greeks manufactured sculptural masterpieces (e.g. kouroi, kores)" ("Strongly agree" 42.3%, "Agree" 31.5 %). This aesthetic conceptualization of material culture of the past is often accompanied by stereotypical – but outdated – scientific perceptions, such as when prospective teachers appear to agree that "ancient Greece bequeathed to us the perfection of all-white sculpture (statues, columns, headstones)" with high percentages (38.8% "Strongly agree" and 34.9% "Agree"). As a matter of fact, that essentialist perception of the timeless aesthetic qualities inherent in material culture, mainly of the classical period, has influenced archaeology since its disciplinary establishment in the late 18th century and sought to ascribe significance to artefacts and monuments based on their external form and development of style (Shanks, 1996, pp. 22-43; Morris, 1994, pp. 27-28). For these reasons, classical monuments in particular enjoy unanimous approval from the prospective teachers, as can be observed from the finding that they nominated the Parthenon as the most important monument in the world (80.3%), in a repeat of an online poll searching for the 21 Modern Wonders of the World, which was included in the questionnaire. The Acropolis in general and the Parthenon in particular, being the most emblematic monument of antiquity, acquired a variety of meanings in modern Greece and constitutes the imaginary ideal for national and other identities (Yalouri, 2001).

The close attachment with classical antiquity is even more evident when the university students were asked to indicate what they believed to be the most important era, and the three most important specific sub-periods of Greek history in relation to monuments, archaeological sites and artefacts that had been inherited by the modern country. Antiquity and the classical period (5th – 4th century B.C.) dominated their answers (62.6% and 60.2% respectively). When they were asked to justify these selections in an open question, the future teachers put forward arguments stressing the creation of important constructions and monuments (like the Acropolis and the Parthenon) and beautiful sculpture (like the ancient statues); the fact that classical material culture is famous around the world; the influence on modern culture in Greece and worldwide; that the majority of museums focus on those periods; that monuments and artefacts of these periods are impressive in terms of art and technology, pioneering in their conception, durable over time and still visible in the present, and an inheritance for them. Even more demonstratively they stressed that:

> Antiquity and classicism have been the basis of culture for the whole world and still hold resonance for today though many are trying to lessen their value.
>
> Antiquity is a great historical period for us, the Greeks, and the one we call on again and again to support our historical continuity.
>
> Because in ancient Greece lies the pure core of Hellenism.

On the contrary, historical periods or situations of the past that are not easily incorporated into the canon of Greek history, such as prehistory, basically the Paleolithic and Neolithic, or that are considered as derogatory to national identity, like the Ottoman period, are perceived stereotypically and regarded as inferior in terms of the material culture bequeathed to modern Greece. These ideas and perceptions have been effectively constructed by the national historiography, reflected in the cultural heritage management and disseminated through school history, imposing an ideological arrangement and hierarchy of national time (Liakos, 2002). Finally, it is important to note that the prospective teachers – similar to the teachers in service – appeared quite reserved when asked to recognize the values of archaeological remnants in Greek territory but related to "other" ethnic groups, especially the Venetians and Ottomans, in questions concerning the contribution of monuments and archaeological sites to their multiple identities and the management of cultural heritage. On the other hand many of the respondents, for example future teachers originating from Epirus, Thessaloniki and the Peloponnese, confined their choice of important monuments,

archaeological sites and museums largely to those existing in their place of origin, indicating a local perspective of the contribution of archaeology to their multiple identities.

The educational values of archaeology

Coming to the core issue of the role of archaeology in education, Greek university students appear to laud its importance for education and as a teaching topic, but not to the extent that teachers in service value the significance of archaeological knowledge for their students (Kasvikis, 2015b). Nearly half of future teachers (46.8%) "Strongly agree" and 37% "Agree" that archaeology is significant in education, amounting to almost 84%, while the corresponding numbers for history came to a total of 98.3%. Also, in an open-ended question to justify why archaeology should be taught in primary education, those that responded expressed varying, and interesting, opinions arguing that archaeological knowledge: contributes to greater affinity with ancestors and to a comprehensive view of the development of Greek people over time; preserves national identity; enables students to understand how civilization started, to connect it with the present, to recognize aspects of local history and respect monuments; provides knowledge of technology and the history of culture; favours more practical and experiential education; and promotes critical thinking, for example to be critical against media and propaganda (a motto that, when related to archaeology, reflects the so-called "Macedonia Issue" and the conflict between Greece and FYRoM concerning ancient Macedonian heritage). In their own words:

> Knowledge of ancient monuments, sites and statues can enhance patriotism and the ideals that characterize us.
>
> Students ought to know the achievements of the ancient Greeks.
>
> Through archaeological knowledge (students) will understand the reasons why Greek culture is so valuable and recognizable.

Nevertheless, other future teachers view archaeology as supplementary and auxiliary to history, providing a better understanding and consolidation of historical knowledge:

> Archaeological knowledge simply adds some specific information to historical knowledge.
>
> Archaeological knowledge helps the knowledge of history a great deal.

Those that didn't notably support the educational significance of archaeology stressed that it is too difficult for primary school students; it demands more specialized and expert knowledge; it includes obscure concepts for primary students; it is restricted to certain historical periods and that history is more important for education. This finding reflects a strong epistemological tradition in Greece concerning the constitution of archaeology, which, although it is not exactly perceived as subsidiary to history, is considered more appropriate for providing supplementary evidence to history and as a repository of raw material for historical syntheses (Kotsakis, 1991, pp. 65-67; Morris, 1994, p. 15; Shanks, 1996, pp. 151-152).

When respondents were asked to define the ways in which archaeological knowledge should be presented to students, they appeared rather ambivalent to the idea of a new and autonomous teaching subject in Primary education, as the largest cohort of them were "neutral" (36.4%) about the introduction of archaeology into the Greek curriculum, 36.4% said they "agree" or "strongly agree" and 27.2% "disagree" or "strongly disagree". This stood in stark contrast to teachers in service that participated in the same research and appear more negative as more than half of them strongly rejected the introduction of archaeology as a curriculum subject ("Strongly disagree"

26.60%, “Disagree” 27.30%, Kasvikis, 2015b). Future teachers’ enthusiasm and lack of practical experience, on the one hand, and the concerns of teachers in service about overcrowded curricula, on the other, might explain this deviation in opinions. More overtly, university students replied that they would prefer archaeological knowledge, either to be incorporated inter-disciplinarily into the existing school subjects (“Strongly agree” 38.3%, “Agree” 39.6%), as already happens to a certain degree, or to be presented through school projects implemented by teachers (“Strongly agree” 47.2%, “Agree” 40.8%). They also suggested archaeology could be introduced in the context of education and outreach programmes provided by museums (“Strongly agree” 49.9%, “Agree” 43.2%), even by simple visits and tours to archaeological sites and museums (“Strongly agree” 48.8%, “Agree” 35.5%), without being concerned that the latter do not represent a sufficient medium for a substantive presentation of archaeological knowledge to students.

The responses to the question to define the goals of presenting archaeology in education are also noteworthy. It would seem that the majority of the future teachers hold predictable but rather contradictory attitudes and beliefs towards the educational use of material culture. On the one hand, they strongly support the idea that archaeological knowledge in school should be used as an argument for enhancing students’ national identity (“Strongly agree” 26.6% and “Agree” 42.5%); as a tool to provide historical documentation for crucial national issues (“Strongly agree” 37.5% and “Agree” 45.8%); for admiring our ancestors’ past glories (“Strongly agree” 40.2% and “Agree” 34%); and as an opportunity for cultivating aesthetics and taste (“Strongly agree” 16.4%, “Agree”, 38.1%, “Neutral” 30%), though with lower percentages in comparison to teachers currently in service (Kasvikis, 2015b). The above perceptions and priorities are in line with their broader nation-centred and aesthetic-orientated perceptions identified in their already presented answers concerning the values of archaeology. On the other hand, the sample university students believe quite intensely that archaeology enables students’ broader historical understanding that also involves the comprehension of history as the history of culture (“Strongly agree” 65.5% and “Agree” 31%) and their awareness of materiality as a human condition in the past and present (“Strongly agree” 31.9% and “Agree” 42.6%), which is a more optimistic perspective on the role of archaeology in education.

Conclusions

Nowadays, Greek society continues to strongly identify with its heritage and, in a way, is obsessed with its past. Archaeology plays a fundamental role in defining current identities and archaeological knowledge and practice is very often exploited, or even manipulated, to serve political endeavours and to support national claims. The rich findings of an un-looted grave at Vergina attributed to King Phillip II, the crusade for the return of the detached Parthenon marbles to Greece, and more recently the impressive discoveries of the Amphipolis tomb, fascinate and impassion the Greek public and are included in the official political agenda. In this paper I explored the ideas, perceptions and attitudes of future Greek Primary teachers concerning the social and educational values of archaeological knowledge, based on the rationale that their role is crucial, especially with regard to their contribution as cultural transmitters and agents of authoritative knowledge in schools. I also considered that archaeology in formal and informal learning contexts is fundamental for developing historical thinking and promoting a deeper and broader understanding of the past (Bender & Smith, 2000; Corbishley, 2011; Smardz & Smith, 2000; Levstik, Henderson & Schlarb, 2005) and that the antinomies between history and archaeology, literally between objects and texts, are of no value in the context of history teaching, learning and understanding.

The research indicates that future teachers have formed positive ideas and are aware of archaeology, both as a social endeavour and as a teaching subject. They also appear to endorse and replicate the dominant political and symbolic values of material culture concerning the Greek

past and to appreciate archaeological knowledge in their lives. Concerning the meanings of material culture, one of the basic outcomes of our survey is that future teachers are holders of ethnocentric, aesthetic and stereotypical perceptions of archaeological information. These conceptions are of particular interest as they are being produced and reproduced constantly in various contexts, including the public sphere and formal education. As a result, prospective teachers are both receivers and future transmitters of specific representations of archaeology that are, for example, identified in the textual and visual archaeological narratives of Primary education textbooks of history and other school subjects (Kasvikis, 2004, 2012). According to their answers, the social significance of archaeological knowledge is based on the potential of material culture to document and symbolize both their national and religious identity (Orthodoxy), to display the great aesthetic standards of the past, and to a certain degree to visualize aspects of local history.

In terms of education, future teachers view the teaching of archaeology as necessary, but do not see it as a new and autonomous teaching subject. They rather believe that archaeological knowledge should be provided mainly by integrating it into the already existing teaching subjects of primary school, through projects designed by teachers and in the context of informal and non-formal museum education. In parallel they expressed a strong appreciation for the role of archaeology in strengthening national identity and for historical documentation of important national issues. Nevertheless, in contrast to teachers currently in service, future teachers put greater value on the role of archaeological knowledge for building a broader historical understanding that will highlight the history of culture and the materiality of the past.

To sum up, the development and constitution of Greek archaeology in the 19th century seems to influence, if not to define, the current social and educational meanings and values that future teachers attribute to archaeological knowledge in the 21st century. As an outcome, the symbolization of national identity through the unification of historical time and the honouring of the sacred relics of the nation, an uncritical veneration of – almost an obsession with – classical antiquity, a fetishistic perception of artefacts as manifestations of eternal beauty and the projection of Greek Orthodox ideology are the basic elements of an imaginary vision of the Greek past that university students infer from archaeological resources and will presumably influence their history teaching in the future.

Correspondence

Kostas Kasvikis
kkasvikis@uowm.gr

References

Atkinson, S. A., Banks, I. & O'Sullivan, J. eds. (1996). *Nationalism and Archaeology*. Glasgow: Cruithne Press.

Avdela, E. (2000). 'The teaching of history in Greece'. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 18, pp. 239-253.

Bender, S. J. & Smith G. eds. (2000). *Teaching archaeology in the Twenty-first century*. Washington, DC: Society for American Archaeology.

Burger, St. & *Lorenz*, Ch. eds. (2010). *Nationalizing the past. Historians as nation builders in modern Europe*. New York: Pelgrave.

Burger, St., Donovan, M. & Passmore K. eds. (1999). *Writing national histories. Western Europe since 1800.* London and New York: Routledge.

Carretero, M., Asensio, M. & Rodriguez-Moneo, M. eds. (2013). *History education and the construction of national identities*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Corbishley, M. (2011). *Pinning down the past. Archaeology, Heritage and Education today*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.

Damaskos, D. & Plantzos, D. eds. (2008). *A singular Antiquity. Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in twentieth-century* Greece. Athens: Mouseio Benaki.

Diaz-Andreu, M. & Champion, T. eds. (1996). *Nationalism and archaeology in Europe*. London: UCL Press.

Gazi, A. (2012). 'Εθνικά μουσεία στην Ελλάδα: όψεις του εθνικού αφηγήματος› [National museums in Greece: aspects of the national narrative] in A. Bounia & A. Gazi (eds.) Εθνικά μουσεία στη Νότια Ευρώπη. Ιστορία και προοπτικές [*National Museums in Southern Europe. History and perspectives*]. Athens: Kaleidoskopio, pp. 36-71.

Gazi, A. (2011). 'National museums in Greece: History, Ideology, Narratives' in P. Aronsson & G. Elgenius (eds.) *Building National Museums in Europe 1750–2010.* Conference proceedings, Linköping University, pp. 363-399, available in http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp_home/index.en.aspx?issue=064.

Graves-Brown, P., Jones, S. & Gamble, C. eds. (1996). *Cultural identity and archaeology. The construction of European communities*. London and New York: Routledge.

Hamilakis, Y. & Yalouri, E. (1996). 'Antiquities as symbolic capital in modern Greek society', *Antiquity,* 70, pp. 117-129.

Hamilakis, Y. (2007). *The nation and its ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology and National Imagination in Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jones, S. (1997). *The archaeology of ethnicity. Constructing identities in the past and the present*. London and New York: Routledge.

Isayev, E. (2006). 'Archaeology ≠ object as history ≠ text: nudging the special relationship into the post-ironic'. *World archaeology,* Vol. 38 (4), pp. 599-610.

Kasvikis, K. (2004). Αρχαιολογικές αφηγήσεις και εκπαίδευση. Ανάλυση περιεχομένου και εικονογράφησης στα σχολικά εγχειρίδια του Δημοτικού Σχολείου [*Archaeological narratives and education. Content and illustration analysis in Primary Education textbooks*]. Unpublished *Dissertation*, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki.

Kasvikis, K. (2005). 'Κάτω από τη σκιά του ένδοξου ελληνικού παρελθόντος: η αρχαιολογική γνώση ως μορφωτικό αγαθό στον 19ο και στον 20ο αιώνα' ['Under the shade of the glorious Greek past: archaeological knowledge as an educational asset in 19th and 20th century'] in A.P. Andreou & S. Iliadou-Tachou (eds.) Η ελληνική παιδεία από τον 18ο έως τον 20ο αιώνα. Ερευνητικές συνιστώσες [*The Greek education from 18th to 20th century. Research components*]. Thessaloniki: Gesopoulos Publications, pp. 413-429.

Kasvikis, K. (2012). 'Prehistory in Greek Primary education 1975–2012: Representations of a mythic and Hellenized past' in N. Schùcker (ed.) *Integrating Archaeology: Science, Wish, Reality,* International Conference Proceedings. Frankfurt a. M.: Römisch-Germanische Kommission, pp. 121-126.

Kasvikis, K. (2015a). 'Το "άλλο" παρελθόν: Δημόσιες χρήσεις της αρχαιολογίας στην τυπική και άτυπη εκπαίδευση'['The "other" past: Public uses of archeology in formal and informal education'] in A. Andreou, Sp. Kakouriotis, G. Kokkinos, E. Lemonidou, Z. Papandreou, E. Paschaloudi (eds.) Η δημόσια ιστορία στην Ελλάδα. Χρήσεις και καταχρήσεις της ιστορίας [Public history in Greece. Uses and abuses of history]. Thessaloniki: Epikentro, pp. 331-352.

Kasvikis, K. (2015b). '"It is our past that matters": Greek primary teachers' attitudes and perceptions about archaeology', 21st Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), Glasgow, 2-5 September.

Kohl, P. & Fawcett, C. eds. (1995). *Nationalism, politics, and the practice of Archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kokkou, A. (1977). Η μέριμνα για τις αρχαιότητες στην Ελλάδα και τα πρώτα μουσεία [*The care for antiquities in Greece and the first museums*]. Athens: Hermis.

Kotsakis, K. (1991). 'The powerful past: Theoretical trends in Greek archaeology' in I. Hodder (ed.) *Archaeological theory in Europe*, London: Routledge, pp. 65-90.

Kotsakis, K. (1998). 'The past is ours: images of Greek Macedonia' in L. Meskell (ed.) *Archaeology under fire*. London: Routledge, pp. 44-67.

Liakos, A. (2002). 'The making of Greek history. The construction of national time' in J. Revel & G. Levi (eds.) *Political uses of the past. The recent Mediterranean experience*, London, Portland Or: Frank Cass, pp. 27-42.

Levstik, L. S., Henderson, A. G. & Schlarb, J. S. (2005). 'Digging for clues: an archaeological exploration of historical cognition' in R. Ashby, P. Gordon & P. Lee (eds.) *Understanding history. International Review of History Education, vol. 4.* London and New York: Routledge, Falmer, pp. 34-48.

Morris, I. (1994). 'Archaeologies of Greece' in I. Morris (ed.) *Classical Greece: ancient histories and modern archaeologies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 8-47.

Plantzos, D. (2008). 'Archaeology and Hellenic identity, 1896-2004: the frustrated vision' in D. Damaskos & D. Plantzos (eds.) *A singular Antiquity. Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in twentieth-century Greece.* Athens: Mouseio Benaki, pp. 11-30.

Plantzos, D. (2011). 'Behold the raking geison: the new Acropolis Museum and its context-free archaeologies', *Antiquity*, 85, pp. 613-625

Ó Ríagáin, Russell & Popa, C. N. eds. (2012). 'Archaeology and the (De)Construction of National and Supra-National Polities', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, vol. 27.2.

Sauer, W. ed. (2004). *Archaeology and ancient history: Breaking down the boundaries*. London: Routledge.

Shanks, M. (1996). *Classical archaeology of Greece.* London: Routledge.

Skopetea, E. (1988). Το πρότυπο Βασίλειο και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα*:* όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα *(1830–1880)* [The model Kingdom and the Great Idea: aspects of the national problem in Greece (1830–1880)]. Athens: Polytypo.

Smardz, K. & Smith, Sh. J. eds. (2000). *The archaeology education handbook. Sharing the past with kids*. Walnot Creek, CA.: Society for American Archaeology, Altamira Press.

Voutsaki, S. (2003). 'Archaeology and the construction of the past 19th century Greece' in H. Hokwerda (ed.) *Constructions of Greek past. Identity and Historical Consciousness from Antiquity to the Present*. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, pp. 231-255.

Voutsaki, S. & Cartledge, P. eds. (in press). *Ancient monuments and modern identities. A critical history of archaeology in 19th and 20th century Greece*. London & New York: Routledge.

Yalouri, E. (2001). *The Acropolis. Global Fame, local claim.* Oxford and New York: Berg.