

## WORKING DRAFT

### Dreams, Excavation, and the Archaeology of Christian Greece

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Delivered November 14, 2008  
North Dakota State University  
Fargo, North Dakota

#### *Introduction*

Scholars rarely regard dreams as playing a key role in serious archaeological inquiry. This attitude, however, is a particular characteristic of modern, western archaeological practice. From antiquity until recent times dreams have occupied an important place in the archaeological imagination of the Eastern Mediterranean. The Christianization of the Mediterranean during Late Antiquity made room for Dreams within the emerging Christian discourse, and Dreams play an important role in archaeological practices common to the Byzantine Empire. This paper will extend a discussion of Dream Archaeology later still into the context of 19th and 20th century Greece where an archaeology of dreaming has contributed to the production of national religious landscapes on the local level.

From Roman times, if not earlier, dreams of divine personages or saints have guided the hands of numerous excavators and formed a vital context for the material traces of the past in the Greek landscape. Following divine guidance provided by sleeping or even waking visions, Dream Archaeologists uncovered sacred relics, lost icons, long-vanished churches and even occasionally treasure. Both the objects and performance of a Dream Archaeology served to forge a tangible link between the will of the divine, past human activities, and the present occupants of a particular place. In many cases, hagiographic texts (saint's lives) immortalized not only the object discovered, but also the dreamer and the miraculous act of discovery as well as. These stories mark the excavator as a mediator between obscure knowledge and public knowledge and establish the act of excavation as an anamnestic (commemorative) performance by

placing the excavator in a long tradition of divinely inspired dream archaeologists.

Reading Dream Archaeology in a performative context provides an explanation for how these practices continued into modern times without falling back on tired arguments postulating the ultimate stability of a so-called "peasant culture". Moreover, it shifts the emphasis from the discovery of some fragment of the past with supposed "intrinsic value" to the narrative context of the action of discovery which reveals the importance of the archaeologist in their distinct role as mediator between the divine messenger and the community. This is particularly significant in modern times as the tradition of Dream Archaeology in a Greek context has surely contributed to the notion that archaeological field work has a close relationships with religious duty. Y. Himilakis has pointed out, for example, that archaeological work is sometimes described as "leitourgima", which is also used to describe the liturgy at the church.<sup>1</sup> The religious context for at least some archaeological practices both depends upon and reinforces the status of certain archaeological objects are sacred and their protection and preservation as sacred callings.<sup>2</sup>

The close tie between archaeology and religion is particularly salient for Greece where scholars have argued that the religious status of the archaeological process and the objects discovered complemented the religious aspects nationalism.<sup>3</sup> These scholars, however, has not fully recognized the long history of Dream Archaeology in a Greek context nor have they connected how this tradition informs the performative aspect of archaeological practice. Understanding how the performative aspects of archaeological practice serve to create meaning both in the objects of study as well as in the broader of project of archaeology as a discipline is central to recent work on unpacking archaeological epistemology. Dream Archaeology encapsulates the crucial link between the scientific principles that have come to shape archaeological method and the romantic associations that continue to inform the goals, physical objects, and results of archaeological inquiry.<sup>4</sup> Investigating the intersection between

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<sup>1</sup> Y. Himilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece*. (Oxford 2007), 39-40.

<sup>2</sup> Y. Himilakis and E. Yalouri, "Sacralizing the past: the cults of archaeology in modern Greece," *Archaeological Dialogues* 6.2 (1999), 115-135.

<sup>3</sup> Himilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. M. Shanks and R. H. McGuire, "The Craft of Archaeology," *American Antiquity* 61 (1996), 75-88.

archaeological objects, methods, and patterns of practices serves to reveal meaningful landscapes of the Greek past.

### *Dream Archaeology and Scientific Excavation*

M. Herzfeld, R. Peckham, Y. Hamilakis and others have done most of the basic work in establishing the close tie between archaeological practice, ethnography, and nation-building in the Greek state, and this paper sees no value in covering this ground anew.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, this paper does not seek to produce a comprehensive catalogue of Dream Archaeology in either antiquity or the modern period. What this paper will do, however, offer a more refined historical context for several episodes of religiously motivated excavation. In particular, I will argue that it was not simply the object discovered or even the revelatory dream that provided a spiritual element to the connection between the past and present in the Greek landscape, but as in the Byzantine liturgy, the re-performance of a sacred narrative derived from numerous Early Christian, Byzantine, and Post-Byzantine texts broadly familiar to the population of Greece.

This perspective seeks to explore the deep interpenetration of scientific archaeology and other traditions of archaeological practice. In this way, I openly contradict the traditional histories of archaeological theory and practice which finds the roots of archaeology as a discipline in the scientific standards of thought encouraged by the Enlightenment and codified in the positivism of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In these narratives, the birth of a modern archaeology, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean, required the rejection and suppression of pre-modern modes of archaeological practice. For example, S. Dyson's very recent monograph on the history of Classical Archaeology begins with Winkelmann in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and links the emergence of the discipline closely to the rise of "Classical" antiquity at the same time.<sup>6</sup> W.H.C. Frend's survey of the archaeology of Early Christianity summarized the entire history of

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<sup>5</sup> M. Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece*. (Austin 1982); R. Peckham, *Natural Histories, Natural States: Nationalism and the Politics of Place in Greece*. (London 2001); Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*.

<sup>6</sup> S. Dyson, *In Pursuit of Ancient Pasts: A History of Classical Archaeology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. (New Haven 2006).

archaeology before the Renaissance in less than ten pages.<sup>7</sup>

The tendency to overlook archaeological endeavors prior to the late 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century is understandable in treatments that emphasized the definition and development of archaeology as a discipline and sought to place it within the expanding list of academic fields that emerged over the course of 19<sup>th</sup> century modernism. The last half century, however, has seen a growing awareness of the limitations of a scientifically defined archaeology. Even in the conservative citadel of Classical archaeology, a whole cadre of post-processual methodologies ranging from phenomenological practices to the performative has broadened the purview of archaeology to include a wide array of engagements with the material culture of the past.<sup>8</sup> This is not to suggest that the post-processualism critique of modernist archaeology has involved a complete rejection of the accomplishments or methods of the previous generation of scholars. In fact, one of the results of the emergence of the post-processual critique is a marked increase in the permeability of traditional archaeological practices to new approaches and methods that seek to recontextualize rather than to reject completely traditional archaeological knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

The post-processual interest in recognizing the myriad overlapping contexts for scientifically gained knowledge, in particular, breaks down the modernist, linear narrative of progress in the archaeological discourse and makes it possible to explore alternative ways of reading the archaeological process. In some instances, the recursive, overlapping, and intermingled landscapes produced by different modes of engagement can be juxtaposed profitably with those developed through the modernist and positivist regimes of 20<sup>th</sup> century archaeology. This method can not only revise readings of the landscape that have produced schematic, universalizing, and simplistic views of the past, but also recontextualize our own view of the past landscapes in a way that challenges the supremacy of traditional archaeological practices with their ideological and political burdens.

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<sup>7</sup> W. H. C. Frend, *The Archaeology of Early Christianity*. (Minneapolis 1996). 1-7.

<sup>8</sup> C. Tilley and M. Shanks, *Reconstructing Archaeology: Theory and Practice*. (London 1993); M. Shanks, "Three Rooms: Archaeology and Performance," *JSA* 4.2 (2004), 147-180; M. Shanks and M. Pearson, *Theatre/ Archaeology*. (London 2001).

<sup>9</sup> B. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*. (Cambridge 2006), 444ff.

### *Dream Archaeology*

Dream Archaeology offers a useful perspective on the interplay between scientific archaeology and other archaeological methods for understanding the past. Dream Archaeology, in this paper, refers to any archaeological activity initiated by a dream or vision. This broad reading of dreams to include both waking and sleeping visions emphasizes the similarities between the two kinds of visions in the Ancient and Byzantine authors who regarded both phenomena as a means of bridging the gap between the sacred and the profane.<sup>10</sup> The figures who appear in the dreams that are the focus of this paper typically demanded or inspired direct actions, as opposed to communicating in abstract, metaphorical, or allegorical language or images, and in this way were largely identical to the experiences of waking visions which similarly did not require distinct acts of interpretation. Artemidorus, the most sophisticated of the ancient dream interpreters, referred to such literal dreams as *theorematikoi*, and saw them as coming “true just as they are seen”. He contrasted these to more symbolic or metaphorical dreams which he called *allegorikoi*.<sup>11</sup> During the Byzantine period and later the most common type of work dedicated to dreams, which made up a genre called Dream Books, focused on the interpretation of allegorical (*allegorikoi*) dreams. In fact, the tendency for viewers to be confused by such dreams confirmed the need for subsequent interpretation.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, the dreams and visions that inspired archaeological activity almost always involve an easily recognizable holy person, and they generally did not require elaborate interpretive guides such as that provided by Artemidorus. Moreover, the veracity of the images in dreams made them

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<sup>10</sup> J. S. Hanson, “Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity,” *ANRW II* 23.2 (1980): 1396-1400.

<sup>11</sup> S. Oberhelman, “Popular Dream-Interpretation in Ancient Greece and Freudian Psychoanalysis,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 11 (December 1977): 685-686; P. C. Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton University Press, 1994), 82.

<sup>12</sup> S. Oberhelman, *The oneirocritic literature of the late Roman and Byzantine eras of Greece : manuscript studies, translations and commentaries to the dream-books of Greece during the first millennium A.D., with Greek*, (Minneapolis 1983); M. Mavroudi, *A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation: The Oneirocriticon of Achmet and Its Arabic Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); A. Kazhdan and H. Maguire, “Byzantine Hagiographical Texts as Sources on Art,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 1-22.

virtually interchangeable with the experience of visions both in antiquity and through later Byzantine and even early Modern times. Thus, for the purposes of this study, dreams and visions of the archaeological variety form a single basis for the analysis of Dream Archaeological in a Greek context.

### *Some Case Studies of Dream Archaeology*

Ancient Dream critics, then, had a clear understanding that there were different kinds of dreams and the straightforward dreams in which sacred visions make clear demands on the dreamer appear in an archaeological context. The 2nd century A.D. Roman traveller Pausanias, for example, showed particular interest in Dream Archaeology. In book four of his *Description of Greece*, he described the founding of the city of Messene. A dream prompted the Argive general Epiteles to excavated at a particular spot on Mt. Ithome, which was sacred to the Messenians. The dream told him: "wherever he found yew and myrtle growing on Ithome, to dig between them and recover the old woman, for, shut in her brazen chamber, she was overcome and well-nigh fainting."<sup>13</sup> (Paus. 4.26.7). His excavations revealed a brazen urn which Epiteles took to the Theban general Epaminondas. In the urn was a piece of rolled tin which the great Messenean general and hero Aristomenes had buried on Mt. Ithome some 300 years previous. Inscribed on this thin sheet of tin were the rites of the Sacred Mysteries (of Andania) which would protect the Messenians from future danger. The discovery of this urn by Epaminondas and Epiteles prompted the (re)founding of the city of Messene and, according to Pausanias, inspired the mysteries conducted at Andania well into Roman times.

In the Early Christian era, the most famous episodes of Dream Archaeology center around the phenomenon of *inventio* or the rediscovery of a lost object. In his survey of the history of Early Christian archaeology, Frend offered a brief introduction to some of the best-known instances *inventio* in the Early Christian period. As a genre of literature, *inventio* continued to be

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<sup>13</sup> Paus. 4.26.7.

popular throughout the Byzantine and Early Modern period, and in many cases dreams or visions provided the impetus for the discovery of the lost sacred object. Such stories of dream inspired excavation circulated as either individual tracts or in the context of devotional literature like hagiography. The best-known, and most-influential example of Dream Archaeology, at least in a Christian context, derives from stories surrounding St. Helena's discovery of the true cross. According to one major versions of the event, Helena, the emperor Constantine's mother, was guided by a dream or vision to excavate the location of Christ's true cross.<sup>14</sup> She dutifully followed the dream's instructions, set a corps of soldiers to dig, and in time discovered the three crosses set up on Calvary as well as some supporting evidence like the trilingual sign that Pontius Pilate had set up above Christ reading "King of the Jews". Helena dispelled any doubts about the verity of the relic and demonstrated its sacred power by using it to resurrect a recently deceased man. The discovery of the True Cross became closely associated with Helena both in literary sources and in her depiction in Byzantine iconography where she is often shown holding a spade.<sup>15</sup>

A similar and well-known story concerns the inventio (or relevatio) of the relics of St. Stephen, the first martyr. In this story, the priest Lucianus had a dream while he slept in the reliquary of his church. The Rabbi Gamaliel appeared to Lucianus and told him to go and talk to the Bishop John of Jerusalem and tell him to excavate the body of St. Stephen which had been lost. Lucianus made the trip to Jerusalem where the Bishop told him to find the place of St. Stephen's burial. While looking for the relics, Gamaliel reappeared to him in the guise of a local monk and directed Lucianus and the local villagers to the proper place to dig. When they excavated there, they discovered not only the relics of St. Stephen, but also those of Gamaliel and Nicodemus who with Joseph of Arimathea helped to bury Jesus's body after the Crucifixion.

Relics and the stories surrounding their discovery played a key role in the creation of a sacred landscape in an Early Christian context. The ability of the Late Antique individual to have access to the divine power and to holy relics contributed to the proliferation of the cult of the

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<sup>14</sup> Soz. Hist. Eccl. 2.1-2; Soc. Hist. Eccl. 1.17

<sup>15</sup> Frend, *Archaeology of Early Christianity*, 6.

saints across the entire Mediterranean. While this paper will largely focus on the East, it is worth noting that Dream Archaeology appears to have informed the cult of the saints in the West as well. St. Ambrose, for example, preached the earliest known version of St. Helena's discovery of the True Cross which the Holy Spirit revealed to her. Ambrose also deployed prophetic visions to explain his own archaeological ardor.<sup>16</sup> For example, the discovery of the bodies of St. Gervasius and Protasius derived from a vision experienced by Ambrose and led to their interment in one of his newly constructed churches in Milan.<sup>17</sup> Not all Early Christian leaders welcomed the close relationship between dreams and martyrs, however. St. Augustine, in particular, associated lay-visions with the mystical heresies of Montanism and Donatism in the West.<sup>18</sup> This link seems to have influenced his inclusion of the 14th Canon in the Council of Carthage which specifically opposed altars set up to commemorate the bones of martyrs revealed through dreams.<sup>19</sup> While my work at present has not explored this phenomena in a Western context, it seems that over the course of the 5th and later centuries in the West, the clergy sought increasingly to gain control over dreams and the martyrs that they revealed. In the East, however, it seems that clerical authority remained less potent and, consequently, dream inspired excavations continued to appear in the high-localized world of saints lives, on the fragmented periphery of the empire, in the occasional anti-clericalism of monastic literature, and, of course, in various instances when imperial goals superseded ecclesiastical power.

Thus, accounts of Dream Archaeology continue throughout Late Antique and Byzantine literature in the East. Perhaps the most famous of these are the two anecdotes relating to the discovery of the bones of the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste. Initially the bones of these relics were rediscovered in the early 5th century by the Empress Pulchra who received a vision of the martyr Thyrsos. He informed her of the existence of these relics in the neighborhood of his

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<sup>16</sup>Ambrose, *De Ob. Theod.* 40-49; J. W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine and the Legend of Her Finding the True Cross.* (Leiden 1992)

<sup>17</sup>Ambrose, *Epist.*, 22.

<sup>18</sup>J. LeGoff, *The Medieval Imagination.* trans. by Arthur Goldhammer. (Chicago 1985), 217-218. For a general treatment see: G. G. Stroumsa, "Dreams and Visions in Early Christian Discourse," in *Dream Cultures: Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming.* D. Shulman and G. G. Stroumsa eds. (New York 1999), 189-212.

<sup>19</sup> Mansi, 3. 971 (cannon 14) LeGoff, *Medieval Imagination*, 223.

church in Constantinople and their need to be honored. Lest there be any confusion, the 40 martyrs themselves appeared in her dream seemingly to validate the authenticity of St. Thyrsos's information. The martyrs, however, could only tell the Empress the general area of their remains, not the specific location, and this precipitated a rather lengthy search for an individual who might remember the precise location of the now-lost martyrs' tomb. The location of their relics was eventually discovered under the floor of a standing church. The early fifth century ecclesiastical historian Sozomen provides a fairly lengthy (if somewhat hard to follow) discussion of the archaeological features found in their immediate vicinity which included the tombs of other saints, a small oratory, and architectural details.<sup>20</sup> These same relics re-appear over 100 years later, after apparently being lost again, during the reign of Justinian in the 6th century albeit without any prompting by a dream. According to Procopius' *Buildings*, the newly-rediscovered relics cured the emperor of a dangerous knee ailment.<sup>21</sup>

John Moschos, in his 7th century *Pratum Spirituale*, continues the tradition of Dream Archaeology.<sup>22</sup> In the second part of tale 92, Moschos described how Abba George began to construct a church for St. Kerykos near Phasaelis in Palestine. A group of monks had dug the foundations for the church when a monk appeared in a dream to Abba George and asked him "Abba George, did it seem just to you sir, that after so many labors and so much endurance, I should be left outside the church you are building?"<sup>23</sup> Abba George quite naturally responded "no" and the monk in his dream announced that he was none other than St. Peter the Grazer. Abba George then enlarged the church and as he dug the new foundation he found the body of St. Peter and created a shrine in the aisle to mark the spot of his burial.

The presence of a ruined church or a lost tomb characterized many stories of the Byzantine period and later which clearly evoked the long-standing character of the Christianized landscape around the Mediterranean World. A good example derives from the Life of St. Autonomous analyzed recently by C. Foss which despite its Metaphrastic redaction nevertheless shows heavy

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<sup>20</sup>Soz. Hist. Eccl. 9.2.

<sup>21</sup>Procop. Aed. 1.7.2-10.

<sup>22</sup> John Moschos, Prat. Sp. 92b.

<sup>23</sup> John Moschos, Prat. Sp. 92b.

dependence on earlier material.<sup>24</sup> According to the Life, the original location of Saint Autonomous's tomb fell into obscurity when the church that marked it was abandoned for a chapel at another location. It was only rediscovered when a voice told an imperial official named John to pitch his tent at the spot and share the place as his neighbor. After John lived at this spot for some time, the martyr, St. Autonomous, appeared to him in a dream and told him that his bones were directly under the tent. John ultimately reported this account to the Emperor Anastasius who erected a church on that spot. While the story omits a specific reference to excavation, the knowledge of a ruined church dedicated to a martyr clearly connects localized subsurface remains to later commemorative and devotional practices.

Such stories continued to appear in literature throughout the Byzantine period. As I have noted contemporary oneirocritical literature devotes relatively little time to these kinds of stories which were generally assumed to be sufficiently self-evident as to not require complex interpretation. Hagiographic literature, with its intent upon demonstrating the power of sanctity in a mundane context, featured dreams and visions so extensively that it would be pedantic even to attempt to note all the examples from this vast corpus of material. Several examples will suffice, however, to convey a general sense of the material available in this genre.

A story in the the 12th century Life of St. Nikon, a 10th century saint, provides a particularly rich example. St. Nikon took a break from a journey on the island of Crete where he was active urging local Christians to repent to stay the night in the ruins of an earlier church. The archaeologically-savvy saint was able to identify the church on the basis of visible architectural fragments (particularly the geisons). While sleeping, St. Photeine appeared to the saint in a dream. She asked Nikon to rebuild the ruined church or she would not allow him to leave the island.<sup>25</sup> At first, Nikon ignored the saintly vision and continued on his way, but he was soon struck blind. His sight was restored only when he committed to rebuilding the ruined church. Regaining his sight, Nikon returned to the church but lacked a spade (gr. skapani) or a shovel (gr.

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<sup>24</sup> PG 115: 692-698; C. Foss, "St. Autonomus and His Church in Bithynia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987): 187-198.

<sup>25</sup> *Bios Nikon*, 21.

ptuon) necessary to complete the task. The need for such a tool clearly implied that the restoration of the church would involve excavation. At this point, God sent a column of fire and this attracted the attention of those living in the area who soon arrived with tools to help the saint. St. Nikon with help from the local community completed the work on the church in a mere two years.

The appearance of St. Photeine in the dream of St. Nikon conspicuously invokes the stories surrounding the discovery of her relics in 10th century Constantinople.<sup>26</sup> In those days, an epidemic of blindness swept through the city of Constantinople and a man called Abraham (Abraamios) was distraught having lost his sight. He called out to God to restore his vision, and God sent to him a dream in his sleep. In the dream St. Photeine appeared, touched his eyes with a large candle, and told him "A thickly wooded and dark cave holds my <remains> in its depths, and if you dig you will find me and light will shine on you and all your household and everyone who calls on my name through Jesus Christ." Abraham ran to the site that the the Saint had revealed, promptly excavated her relics, was immediately healed. Abraham and local onlookers who had gathered to watch his excavation erected a church to the Saint on the spot and the saint's relics continued to heal the blind for many years. The story of St. Nikon and St. Phoneine are linked not only in the important role played by blindness, but in the redemption of a lost scared place by excavation.

A similar kind of tale characterizes the autobiographical life another Cretan saint, St. John Xenos.<sup>27</sup> The saint recorded in his own words his work to rebuild neglected, abandoned, or lost churches across the island of Crete in the aftermath of the 10th century Byzantine reconquest. Like a modern survey archaeologist, St. John ventured into the mountains and discovered neglected sites. He first discovered in a cave in the mountains two neglected monuments. Pondering this site, a voice called out to him "John, John, John, what you see here are the two monuments of Eutuxios and Eutuxianos, and you ought to build in this place a Holy and Sacred Church in their name." In another telling example, the saint discovered a massive "Greek"

<sup>26</sup>A. M. Talbot, "The Posthumous Miracles of St. Photeini," *Analecta bollandiana* 112 (1994): 85-104.

<sup>27</sup>N. B. Tomadakis, "Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ό Ξένος και διαθήκη αὐτοῦ" *KrChron* (1948), 47-72.

building at a site called Myriocephalos. While spending the winter in this building, he was struck blind and praying to God he was told in a vision to build a church to the Theotokos. The similarities between this story and the story in the later Life of St. Nikon are clear. Both anecdotes relate how dreams and visions led the saints to build, expand, or renovated neglected or ruined church buildings on the island of Crete. Like the discovery of lost icons, the discovery and rehabilitation of ruined and lost churches often involved a revelation in a dream or vision which prompted the recognition of a previously neglected site.

Late Antique and Byzantine hagiographic narratives such as these would have been sufficiently well-known to cast a long shadow over the archaeological imagination of post-Byzantine Greece. The most notable of these Post-Byzantine *inventio* stories is probably that associated with the discovery of the icon of the Panayia on the island of Tinos in 1823. A dream of the Virgin directed the nun Pelagia to excavate at a particular spot. This work ultimately led to the discovery an important icon.<sup>28</sup> The icon depicted the Annunciation which had particular significance in that a year earlier on the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25<sup>th</sup>) the Greeks had raised the flag of rebellion from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>29</sup> C. Stewart reported a similar story from the island of Naxos in the 1830s which he attributed at least partially to the inspiration of the story from Tinos.<sup>30</sup> Similar stories, of course, come from all over Greece. John Cuthbert Lawson, for example, with his early 20th century tone of condescension, relates the story of a schoolmaster who sought a week off so that he and some villagers could excavate at a particular spot in order to find an icon that had appeared to him in a dream. H. Forbes, in his recent “archaeological ethnography” of Methana documented a similar story dating evidently to the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century surrounding the discovery of the bones of St. Barbara and St. Juliana.<sup>31</sup>

A slight variant of the tradition *inventio* story, comes from an interview in the early years of

<sup>28</sup> J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 301-302; Jill Dubisch, *In a different place : pilgrimage, gender, and politics at a Greek island shrine*, Princeton modern Greek studies (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995);

<sup>29</sup> Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore*, 301.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Stewart, “Dreams of Treasure: Temporality, Historicization and the Unconscious,” *Anthropological Theory* 3.4 (2003): 490.

<sup>31</sup> Hamish Forbes, *Meaning and Identity in a Greek Landscape: An Archaeological Ethnography* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 359-365.

the 21<sup>st</sup> century conducted over the course of fieldwork with the Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey (EKAS). The informant revealed that a church dedicated to Ay. Aikaterini in an upcountry hollow had been in ruins with old wall-painting still visible on the walls.<sup>32</sup> In a dream, St. Katherine herself appeared to a woman in a nearby village and asked that “old saddle be removed and a new one put on her”. As a result of this dream, the old church was “lifted” and a new church was built in its place. It is interesting to note that the informant associated the older church with an abandoned settlement in the area. Less than 20 kilometers away, the villagers tell a similar story regarding the discovery of an Early Christian basilica style church and an icon on the Evangelistria Hill near the site of Ancient Nemea.<sup>33</sup> Around the turn of the century, a woman who wanted to become a nun had a dream in which the Virgin told her that she should go and dig on the Evangelistria hill, and she would find an icon there. Her brother prevented her from seeking out the icon or becoming a nun until he too had a dream of the Virgin. He then went with his sister to the hill, excavated the spot revealed in the dream, and ultimately found the icon and the foundations of the earlier church. The sister became a nun and lived on the hill for many years tending to the miraculous icon.

### *Discussion*

The wide range of material available from Late Antiquity, the Byzantine period, and contemporary Greek history has emphasized the importance of dreams and visions in creating an understandable historical and archaeological landscape. These stories suggest that Dream Archaeology stands at the intersection of a number of crucial strands in the development of the Greek landscape. The practice of Dream Archaeology, the objects discovered, and the commemoration of the discovery all worked to connect communities to their environment as well as to validate methods of inquiry that were crucial to the formation of identity in both ancient and modern times. In antiquity, Dream Archaeology reinforced the autochthonous

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<sup>32</sup>Interview by Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory, "Interview with Mihalis Perras at the site of Agia Aikaterini (Lakka Skoutara) in the Sophiko District: June 10, 2002," Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey Unpublished Report.

<sup>33</sup>Jeannette Marchand, Pers. Comm. Oct. 2008.

character of local communities as well as the irrepressible continuity of the Christian experience. In the modern period, Dream Archaeology found a place in the unapologetically modernist narratives emerging in the fields of psychoanalysis, folklore studies and ethnography, and, of course archaeology itself, despite or perhaps because of its overly religious and even mystical character. Dreams encouraged the professional or amateur archaeologist to dig deeper into the visible characteristics of the present to disclose a more foundational (both symbolically and in many cases literally) reality which forged a sense of local and ultimately national identity.

Scholars have noted the role of Dream Archaeology in restoring lost or obscured continuity through appeals to the literally autochthonous nature of various groups. In S. Alcock's study of Messenian history in book four of Pausanias, for example, she noted that Dream Archaeology and the rediscovery of the Messenian "secret thing" bridged the gap between pre-Spartan Messene and the re-foundation of the Messenian state by Epaminondas in the Hellenistic period.<sup>34</sup> The buried state of the "secret thing" showed the irrepressible persistence of Messenian identity on the slopes of Mt. Ithome and reiterated Pausanias's belief in a indissoluble connection between a people and the soil.<sup>35</sup>

In a Christian context, Dream Archaeology functioned in a similar, if not identical way. It reinforced the continuity of sacred space in the Holy Land, played a key role in the construction of a sacred landscape in Constantinople, and reinforced the continuity of Christian and Byzantine authority on Crete in the 10th century. The stories relating the discovery of the True Cross and the relics of St. Stephen, for example, both promoted the sanctity of relics, places, and the act of discovery. In fact, the popularity and importance of the True Cross and relics of St. Stephen may have contributed to the wide distribution of such stories and the role of dreams in establishing sacred landscapes. This would, in part, explain the some key features in the production of a sacred landscape in the new capital city of Constantinople which relied not only on the relics of

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<sup>34</sup> S. Alcock, "The Peculiar Book IV and the Problem of the Messenian Past," in Susan E. Alcock, John F. Cherry, and Jas Elsner, *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2003), 142-153.

<sup>35</sup> J. Elsner, "Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in a Roman world," *Past and Present* 135 (1992), 3-29.

the True Cross and the Protomartyr, but on at least a few episodes of Dream Archaeology as well. The rediscovery of the relics of the 40 Martyrs and later the relics of St. Phoneine provide just two examples of how Dream Archaeology created a sacred landscape in a city with only limited Christian credentials. In fact, by the Middle Byzantine period Constantinople had become a city of relics and miracles preserved within a dense network of holy objects, places, stories, and rituals. Considering the tactics at play in the Byzantine capital it is not surprising to see a similar technique for the creation of a sacred landscape in the context of Crete in the 10th and 11th century where a small cluster of examples of Dream Archaeology coincided with the re-establishment of Byzantine authority on the island after the Byzantine reconquest in 961. The dreams and visions of St. Nikon and St. John Xenos linked the restored Byzantine authority on the island with Christian landmarks dating to before the Muslim invasion. The commands of dreams and visions to excavate or restore neglected buildings both reinforced the persistent sanctity of the landscape and added historical and religious continuity to the resurgent imperial administration.

Despite the apparent tie between Dream Archaeology and imperial, political goals, the practice did not exist exclusively in an elite context. The appearance of Dream Archaeology in saints' lives provides a distinctive, popular context for its practice and methods. The dreams contained in these lives must have evoked something of the practice of dream interpretation found in Byzantine dream-books, which had wide-spread currency in both elite and popular contexts. The relative clarity of hagiographic dreams, however, suggests that Dream Archaeology also represented a separate tradition. In contrast to the mystical, punning, or even whimsical associations that structured the predictive power of symbolic dreams, hagiographic dreams are characterized by recognizable personages making fairly straightforward demands on the dreamer. It seems probable that the more direct nature of the hagiographic visions fit well the liturgical and public nature of saints' lives and stood in contrast to the private and personal search for meaning that formed the context for most dream-books. It likewise seems plausible to suppose that the performative context of hagiography in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine society

emphasized the performative component of Dream Archaeology. Hagiographic texts often evoked local landmarks and holy people in the liturgical and communal context of celebrations which occurred annually according to a predictable calendrical rhythm further. Thus Dreams Archaeology may well represent another aspect of the performative discourse of the Byzantine world, which like liturgically tinged public rites, emerged as a method for mediating between the timeless and intangible sacred realm and the historical and tangible world of lived space and experience.

The performative aspect of Dream Archaeology appears clearly in a more recent Greek context where it contributed to the transformation of the Greek landscape in the decades surrounding Greek independence in 1832. The most obvious example is the pilgrimage church of the Annunciation on Tinos whose the twin holy days of July 23rd, commemorating Pelayia's vision of the Virgin and August 15th, the feast of the Virgin celebrated across the entire nation of Greece, formed the high point of the annual pilgrimage to the shrine. The fame of Tinos as a pilgrimage site spread to most parts of Greece over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Even today it is perhaps the most significant pilgrimage site in Greece, and it is not unusual to find votive objects associated with a pilgrimage to Tinos in even rural churches. The fame and importance of the Tinos' pilgrimage shrine and the narrative associated with it resonated with long-known examples of Dream Archaeology in popular hagiographic literature and inspired episodes of Dream Archaeology in modern times. C. Stewart has argued as much for a similar episode associated with the less well-known pilgrimage site on the island of Naxos. It is worth noting that on Naxos, a dream predicted the discovery of two icons, but the villagers only ever discovered one. The local villagers nevertheless excavated a considerable quantity of earth in search of the second icon and even today some of the sanctity of the place derives from the prospect of finding another icon as much as the one icon discovered. The effort exerted to find these sacred object emphasized both the act of discovering of sacred objects as well as the actual sacred objects themselves, whether they are icons or the remains of an earlier church. The act and the object forged the tangible link between the world of the present with a distant, obscure,

or, in many cases, completely hidden but nevertheless persistent world of the sacred.

In most modern treatments of archaeology, Dream Archaeology receives little attention despite its deep resonance with the larger project of uncovering the links between the present and the past across a whole range of discipline and projects. In fact, archaeological metaphors, particularly the metaphor of uncovering the hidden or obscured, occupy an important place within the larger discourse of modernism. The most obvious example of this is in the work of Sigmund Freud. Freud explicitly associates archaeology and the methods of the analyst in exploring the organization and content of the unconscious.<sup>36</sup> By digging down through the strata of repressed and displaced thoughts, psychoanalysis reveals the long-obscured, primordial individual. In Freud's later thought, buried tensions that characterized the primordial life of the individual ultimately shed light on the origins of all human society. The *Interpretation of Dreams* provided particularly fertile ground for Freud's archaeology of human consciousness.<sup>37</sup> The revelations of Dreams provided access to the buried yet familiar desires of the unconscious mind. While this is not the place to examine in depth the extent of the archaeological metaphor in Freud's work, it is worth noting that Freud was aware of the close relationship between his study of the primordial mind and the work in the emerging discipline of archaeology. Freud followed closely the achievements of Heinrich Schliemann at Troy and accumulated an impressive collection of antiquities during his lifetime.<sup>38</sup>

While Freud's work represents the metaphorical or even symbolic resonance between modernist interest in dreams and archaeology, the phenomenon of Dream Archaeology had a more specific impact in a Greek context where the modernist project became deeply intertwined with the emergence of a Greek nationalism over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Contemporary with Freud's work on the archaeology of the human consciousness, the study of

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<sup>36</sup>R. H. Armstrong, *A Compulsion for Antiquity*. (Ithaca 2005), 109-112, 183-200.

<sup>37</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The interpretation of dreams*. trans. Joyce. Crick (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>38</sup> Armstrong, *A Compulsion for Antiquity*, 114-117; L. Gamwell and R. Wells, *Sigmund Freud and Art: His Personal Collection of Antiquities* (Binghamton: State University of New York, 1989).

ethnography or, in a Greek context, laography, had begun to take shape. In the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century, Nikolaos Politis almost single-handedly forged the study of folk tales and customs into a proper, modern discipline in a Greek context.<sup>39</sup> As Michael Herzfeld has noted, Politis drew upon archaeological metaphors when he described his goals of excavating the historical strata of Greek folk tales. For this approach, Politis drew particular inspiration from the ideas of Edward Tylor who sought to study the distant past by documenting cultural survivals present in so-called primitive societies. In Greece, this practice translated to an understanding that an exacting analysis and documentation of modern folk tales could reveal aspects of Ancient Greek culture left obscure by the ancient sources. In this regard, the metaphorical parallel between ethnography and archaeology found a parallel in the goals of both fields. Archaeology in Greece sought to produce a visual link between the achievements of the ancient Greeks and the aspirations and potential of the modern nation-state.

Thus like archaeology, the study of folklore in a Greek context served to advance national goals. The work of Politis and his colleagues sought explicitly to establish continuity between modern Greek folk practices and those of antiquity. In particular they sought to deploy evidence gathered from folk practices in the long struggle against the work of the German scholar Jakob Fallmerayer, who in a series of articles published in the middle years of the 19th century challenged the view that the modern Greeks were descendants of the Ancient Greeks. This argument was particularly threatening in a Greek context as Greek identity and prestige on the world stage owed much to the perceived link between the modern nation-state and the achievements of antiquity. Politis and other Greeks hoped to undermine the credibility of Fallmerayer's work and bolster the evidence for continuity by employing the same modern methods in the study of folktales as had become central to the contemporary study of archaeology and other modernist disciplines in social sciences.<sup>40</sup> The similarities between these disciplines were not lost on Greek archaeologists; the preeminent archaeologist Anastasios Orlandos speaking at the 50th Anniversary of the Folklore Research Center of the Academy of

<sup>39</sup>Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 97-122.

<sup>40</sup>Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 75-96.

Athens remarked that ethnographic research in Greece embraced from its early days a literary as well as a "patriotic or archaeological" component.<sup>41</sup>

It is notable that Politis' work came to influence contemporary scholars outside of Greece, in part, through Lawson's well-known work of the early 20th century, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*.<sup>42</sup> Following the practices of Politis and his predecessors, Lawson documented how the activities and beliefs of the Greek "peasant" were understood to preserve practices surviving from antiquity. In particular, Lawson regarded the obedience to religious dreams as a pagan survival in Modern Greek religion. In fact, he recognized the "archaeological" discovery of the icon of the Virgin on Tinos with its patriotic as well as religious overtones as an inspiration for similar stories from throughout Greece. Thus the short term "formation process" revealed by the proliferation of stories and activities based on the events at Tinos reinforced the author's larger argument for the persistence of ancient practices among credulous Modern Greek peasants.<sup>43</sup> More recently, Frank Trombley and Timothy Gregory, for example, note the significance of Lawson in their works which emphasize, albeit with a more subtle and critical eye, the continuities between the pagan and Christian past in Greece.<sup>44</sup> In the work of Politis and his successors both inside Greece and abroad, Dream Archaeology acquired a place within the modernist ethnographical and national discourse which recognized the continuity in folk practices both geographically across the territorial extent of the Greek nation as well as chronologically with precedents in ancient practices. Moreover, the techniques employed by these scholars relied upon archaeological metaphors and qualified the study of folk practices as inseparable from the study of the Greek past.

This unusual, if productive parallel between modernist methods and goals in a national context and the long-standing practices of Dream Archaeology may account for its occasional

<sup>41</sup> A. Orlandos, "Το Έγρον του Κέντρου του Έρεύνης της Έλληνικης Λαογραφίας κατά την Πεντηκονταετία από της Ίδρύσεως αυτού" Έπετερίς του Κέντρου του Έρεύνης της Έλληνικης Λαογραφίας 20.1 (1969), 5-14.

<sup>42</sup> Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 103; Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore*.

<sup>43</sup> Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore*, 301-302.

<sup>44</sup> T. E. Gregory, "The Survival of Paganism in Christian Greece: A Critical Essay," *AJP* 107 (1986): 229; F. R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization*: C. 370-529 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 1.98-99.

coincidence in an academic context in Greece. Here, we can return profitably the point of departure for this paper. In 1929, Anastasios Orlandos reported on the excavations at a basilica at Daphnousia in Locris in Greece.<sup>45</sup> The report to the Athenian Academy included a brief note on the basilica's discovery. Apparently a village woman had a dream that an icon would be found at the spot where the basilica was discovered, and she assembled a group of villagers to search for it. In the processes of their search for this icon they uncovered the remains of a substantial Early Christian church. Orlandos arrived later to conduct systematic excavations and complete the work begun by the villagers. The existence of this story in an otherwise scientific report to the Academy represents the integration of episodes of Dream Archaeology into the formal modernist discourse of early 20th century archaeology in Greece. Orlandos' willingness to include without qualification an episode of Dream Archaeology in an otherwise academic report resonates with the willingness of M. Andronikos' to incorporate a number of dreams narratives into his description of the discovery of royal Macedonian tombs at Vergina.<sup>46</sup> These unbelievably wealthy burials that likely contain members of Alexander the Great's family continue to play a central role in arguments for the Greek identity of Alexander's Macedonian dynasty and form a visual response to rival claims from the F.Y.R.O.M. (Macedonia). After the discovery of these tombs, Andronikos rose to national prominence and repeatedly asserted the role of Dreams in the discovery and identification of these tombs. Y. Hamilakis and Stewart have both noted that the stories of Andronikos and other Dream Archaeologists served to produce a sacred landscape in Greece that encompassed the material remains of their Classical past. In this context, Dream Archaeology reinforces the perception of archaeological work as religious duty. My key point of departure from the work of these scholars is that Dream Archaeology is not simply the link between a sacred person in a dream and the experiences of an archaeologist, but the re-performance in the archaeological act both of the modernist craft of uncovering and of the long-standing tradition of sacred revelation.

<sup>45</sup> A. Orlandos, PAA 4 (1929), 226-230.

<sup>46</sup> Himilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 139-142. C. Stewart, "Dreams of Treasure," 487; Y. Himilakis and E. Yalouri, "Sacralizing the past," 117.

## **Conclusion**

The concept of Dream Archaeology sits astride a number of vital currents in the analysis of the archaeology of Greece. On the one hand, it reflects a genuine mode of engaging the archaeological landscape in Greece from Late Antiquity until the 20<sup>th</sup> century and speaks to how Greeks have understood the relationship between “irrational” states like dreaming and religious rituals, and the material remains of the past. In this context, Dream Archaeology emphasizes the performative aspect of the archaeological process in embedding a meaningful past within a lived landscape. On the other hand, Dream Archaeology intersects with the strictly modernist disciplines of ethnography (laography) and archaeology in a Greek context. In some ways, it pulls apart modern methods for validating Greek nationalism and at the same time engages familiar narratives whereby nationalist ideologies could metastasize into the public consciousness. In other ways, Dream Archaeology represents a procedure for revealing reality that has oblique resonances with the core methods of the ethnographic and archaeological discourse not to mention essential parallels with such fields as Freudian psychoanalysis. Thus, it would be imprudent to reduce Dream Archaeology to simply a phase from which the discipline of “scientific” archaeology developed. Likewise it did not necessarily represent a subversive or “subaltern” view of the archaeological past. Instead Dream Archaeology foregrounds the essential interaction between modernist, rational readings of the archaeological landscape and the role of archaeological performance in imparting meaning and validating the reality of the material culture.