



Excavating the Nation: European Popular Nationalism and the Excavations of Delphi and Knossos, 1890–1914

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ABSTRACT

Greek archaeology at the turn of the twentieth century existed at the intersection of a modern positivistic practice of scientific study and a longer-standing European fascination with the ancient world. As the continent's masses increasingly engaged with popular *fin-de-siècle* nationalisms, they also sought knowledge of the cultured refinement historically associated with the ancient world through empirically supported studies of the ancient past's material remnants. This paper assesses the extent to which popular national identities conditioned European public perceptions of Greek archaeology in the decades the leading up to the First World War (1890–1914). Examining news-media coverage of the French excavation of Delphi and the British excavation of Knossos from nationally-prominent publications, this article identifies the influence which paradigms of national identity exerted over public perceptions of Europe's ancient past. Concluding that these two excavations were exalted as evidential of national genius, this also posits that the particular finds associated with these sites were strongly coloured by the lens of national identity in popular periodical publications. Diffuse understandings of national heritage stretching back to the distant reaches of Europe's ancient past thereby influenced popular perceptions of Greek archaeology as a discipline inherently linked to turn-of-the-century nationalist projects, with the archaeologist being increasingly relied upon to empirically entrench and legitimize the modern nation-state in a civilizational pedigree, coinciding with the national institutionalization of archaeological study.

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'The world of 1914 was one in which, especially for the middling and upper classes, classical antiquity was essentially part of the furniture of the mind' remarked archaeological historian Suzanne Marchand in a lecture commemorating the centenary of the First World War, 'and like other domesticated furnishings, these forms of everyday classicism... were, for their users, either comfortable and respectable, or despised but indispensable hand-me-downs'.¹ The ancient world permeated turn-of-the-century European life: for architecture and the arts, politics and philosophy, ancient Greece was a source of multifaceted inspiration for modern Europe. This widespread fixation with the continent's distant past and the search for simple historical truths about earlier civilizations were inextricably linked to the historical setting of turn-of-the-century Europe. The advent of the twentieth century was defined by change; traditional political paradigms were challenged by modern popular nationalisms, which espoused national exceptionalism at the expense of continental stability. In this uncomfortably fluid environment, studies of the ancient past promised to root the modern nations of the continent in a comforting lineage. In Europe's late-nineteenth century mentality, 'civilization' was defined by the worlds of Aristotle, Plato, and Thucydides. Thus, modern nations seeking to assert their cultural and political validation sought to associate themselves with classical antiquity to heighten their prestige and entrench the legitimacy of newly-established ideological constructs within a historical narrative.² This insatiable appetite for the ancient Hellenic world extended into multifarious aspects of nineteenth century public life; the architecture of public buildings and monuments reflected classical Greek styles, in efforts to cast modern European societies as legitimate civilizational successors to a (largely imagined) ancient patrimony.

The looming Great War seemed irreconcilable with societies seemingly obsessed with progress; however, the same energies which pushed Europe into cataclysmic conflict also drove the scientific study of ancient cultures, as an increased emphasis on intense nationally-motivated competition came to find expression in the excavation of the material culture of humanity's ancient past. Within *fin-de-siècle* nationalist paradigms, the national consciousness was not limited in scope to purely ideological matters. Rather, the totality of these national identities conditioned all social phenomena, including the development of scientific fields and public understandings thereof. Archaeology is particularly illustrative of this relationship between late-nineteenth century popular nationalisms and ostensibly apolitical scientific activity. The burgeoning field of study, which grew to be increasingly professionalized and institutionalised over the course of the nineteenth century, was a natural subject for the attention of those concerned with furthering national narratives. Simply put, archaeology acted as a tool to help validate national identities (a trend hardly limited to this period), providing a gilding of legitimacy, while also allowing the national genius to be conspicuously demonstrated through the work of excavators, who gained substantial status in their respective national communities as public intellectuals.

The classical world and its inhabitants were seen to be relevant to late-century nation building not only through claims of cultural inheritance, but also through positivist assertions of national racial lineage linking modern populations to ancient Hellenes.³ The capacity to empirically demonstrate past cultural sophistication presented political value to nationalist agendas, which sought to assert national exceptionalism as a longstanding historical trend rather than merely a recent development. This assertion of continuity was essential in presenting the nation as an organic and historically-rooted entity, a task to which archaeology's affirmation of ethnically distinctive cultures proved ideally suited, substantiating and legitimizing national identities and their associated chauvinistic politics.⁴ The widely-perceived positivism of archaeology, as a science seen to be rooted in objective study, provided seemingly undisputable evidence of the modern European nation's ancient origins. As European states faced increased internal and

1 Suzanne Marchand, "The Great War and the Classical World" (GSA Presidential Address, Kansas City, MO, November 11, 2014), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7rVM2MXqbk>.

2 Pim Den Boers, "Europe to 1914: The Making of an Idea," in *The History of the Idea of Europe*, ed. Jan Van der Dussen and Kevin Wilson (Florence, United States: Taylor & Francis Group, 1995), 45.

3 Athena S. Leoussi, "Nationalism and Racial Hellenism in Nineteenth-century England and France," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20, no. 1 (1997): 42-68.

4 Anthony D. Smith, "Authenticity, Antiquity and Archaeology," *Nations & Nationalism* 7, no. 4 (October 2001): 441, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8219.00026>.

external pressures at the close of the nineteenth century, projecting civilizational continuity with ancient cultures brought a measure of comfort to highly anxious populaces, while also providing an opportunity for the nation's scientific prowess to be conspicuously demonstrated through the work of excavators.

This article posits that turn-of-the-century Greek archaeology held ideological significance in this era of new nationalisms not solely for the construction of a Hellenic nation-state, but also in the wider ideological landscape as evidence of the antiquity and sophistication of European national communities. The archaeology of the West's progenitor cultures was thus brought to bear on contemporary national projects, as an emphasis on commonalities and continuities furnished *fin-de-siècle* national projects with popular legitimacy by rooting the modern nation within an ancient pedigree in popular discourse. Proponents of the new nationalisms which swept Europe at the turn of the century saw in archaeology an empirical means by which to historically root their respective nations. The emerging scientific practice reciprocally benefitted greatly from popular and state interest in the undertaking of archaeological digs perceived to be related to the past of their respective national communities. Beginning with a brief historical overview and literature review of pertinent works, this position is examined through respective discourse analyses of British and French news-media coverage of the Knossos and Delphi excavations. These are followed by a consideration of the common trends and particular narratives present in media coverage of the excavations, and the relationship between the public presentation of archaeology and contemporary national identities.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The historic relationship between national identity and the practice of archaeology is something of a recent development as an academic subfield, as studies on the subject proliferated greatly from the 1980s onwards, with the expiration of the Cold War global system and the reprise of nations as the central objects of political-ideological allegiance – and the corresponding rise in ethnic tensions in the 1990s.⁵ The political dimensions of archaeology are well accounted for by archaeologists and historians of archaeology alike. Within this field, the relationship between nationalisms and domestic archaeology in particular (i.e. archaeology conducted on a territory associated with the nation) has been well surveyed; scholars of nationalism as notable as Anthony D. Smith have remarked upon the physical strata studied by archaeologists provides empirical grounding for nationally-informed historical narratives espoused by nationalist proponents.⁶ Bruce Trigger's foundational 1984 article "Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist" outlines three titular motivational factors that have driven and continue to drive archaeological traditions to vary internationally in line with political and ideological conditions.⁷ Further, his influential monograph *A History of Archaeological Thought* provides an excellent overview of the historical influence of the politics of the nation on the development of archaeological practice and theory.⁸ Of particular relevance to this paper, Trigger identifies the effect of the marked rightward and popular shift in European nationalisms at the close of the nineteenth century on the conduct of archaeological study in an effort to establish distinguished and long-reaching national patrimonies, reflected in the increased prevalence of the culture-history approach.

Stephen Dyson's *In Pursuit of Ancient Past*s underlines the shifting nature of Europe's fascination with the classical world, as the enlightenment obsession with Hellenism of well-heeled elites broadened into a popular cultural interest.⁹ This fixation with the West's ancient past, fuelled in part by *fin-de-siècle* populist national projects, came to be transmitted to European national

5 Philip L Kohl, "Nationalism and Archaeology: On the Constructions of Nations and the Reconstructions of the Remote Past," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998): 223–46.

6 Smith, "Authenticity, Antiquity and Archaeology," 441.

7 Bruce G Trigger, "Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist," *Man* 19, no. 3 (1984): 355–70.

8 Bruce G Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813016>.

9 Stephen L. Dyson, *In Pursuit of Ancient Past*s: A History of Classical Archaeology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.12987/yale/9780300110975.001.0001>.

populaces through emerging forms of mass media, as the coinciding institutional maturation of Europe's nation-states fostered mass literacy through nationally standardized mandatory education. The second industrial revolution's advances in likewise fulfilled the technological conditions necessary for mass print cultures to emerge on a national scale, prompting the ubiquity of periodical publications, and thereby allowing western public discourses to become truly popular i.e., driven by and accessible to a majority of individuals) in scope.¹⁰ As these popular discursive cultures developed, Greek archaeology became a point of particular public interest, with the traditional philhellenism of Europe's elites coming to be readily adopted by expanding middle classes as a means of advancing their social standing, while also promoting a scientific understanding of humanity's ancient past that conformed to positivist attitudes. However, the appreciation of the nationalist dimensions of the practice to extraterritorial archaeologies (i.e., conducted beyond national boundaries) is substantially narrower, and focuses primarily on the reproduction of colonial and imperial patterns of domination through archaeological study.¹¹

The representation of archaeology in print culture is an increasingly developing subfield which illuminates popular relationships with archaeology while also revealing how the publicization of archaeological study has itself influenced the historic development of the field's practice and underlying theory. Amara Thornton has been a leading figure in this emerging direction of inquiry, particularly in her 2018 publication *Archaeologists in Print*, which examines the intimate relationship between European archaeology and popular print media. Emphasizing the distinctly public orientation of early twentieth-century archaeology, Thornton notes the dependence of the field on popular interest – and funding – to sustain excavations.¹² Similar studies of famed excavator Heinrich Schliemann reveal an early exponent of mediated archaeology, who capitalized upon popular romanticization of the ancient Greek past to garner widespread fascination with his finds (which he shrewdly calculated would recoup the costs of his excavations) through news stories, which made the world of Greek myth uncovered at Hissarlik and Mycenae accessible to Europe's masses.¹³ Popular print media representation (or a lack thereof) was a constant concern for turn-of-the-century archaeologists, who depended upon garnering popular interest in some form to further their studies. What we may call 'private' archaeologists relied upon public subscriptions and attendance at lectures and exhibitions, while state-funded excavators likewise went to great lengths to represent their work as invaluable to national interest, linking their finds to prominent political discourses. This preoccupation with public image demonstrated in the immense collection of news-clippings detailing Minoan Knossos which Arthur Evans amassed in his personal collection currently held at the Ashmolean Museum. Susan Sherratt's 2009 *Creta Antica* article examining this subset of news-media provides an overview of the British and foreign coverage of Knossos spanning from 1900 to 1930, concluding that Evans' excavations were able to remarkably sustain significant interest throughout the period.¹⁴ In contrast, the following examination of the British news-media's coverage of Knossos seeks to be more narrowly focused and systematic in its sampling, with particular orientation towards the penetration of nationalist discourses in British journalism specifically. Further, this study seeks to juxtapose Knossos' public image with the contemporary French-led Delphic excavations, to better illustrate the pervasiveness of ideological paradigms in public reception of Greek archaeology at the close of the nineteenth century.

For this study, four British (*The London Illustrated News*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Morning Post*, and *The Times*) and four French (*La Dépêche*, *L'Humanité*, *Le Petit Parisien*, and *Le Temps*) newspapers were selected to examine news-media coverage of the archaeological excavations at Knossos and Delphi, respectively. These periodicals had substantial circulations and are representative of a broad range of social and political attitudes of the period. Selected

10 Martin Conboy, *The Press and Popular Culture* (London: Sage, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446219898>.

11 Margarita Díaz-Andreu, *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology: Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

12 Amara Thornton, *Archaeologists in Print: Publishing for the People* (London: University College London Press, 2018).

13 Kathrin Maurer, "Archeology as Spectacle: Heinrich Schliemann's Media of Excavation," *German Studies Review* 32, no. 2 (2009): 303–17.

14 Susan Sherratt, "Representations of Knossos and Minoan Crete in the British, American, and Continental Press 1900–c.1930," *Creta Antica* 10, no. 2 (2009): 619–49.

publications included both traditionally conservative (*Land* and *The Times*) and left-wing (*L'Humanité* and *The Manchester Guardian*) papers to present a relatively politically balanced understanding of late-nineteenth-century national print cultures. Both samples also included one major non-capital paper for each respective case study to produce a more geographically representative sample. Foreign correspondents were beyond the modest means of publications, which relied on international news agencies or article reprints from major dailies to provide international coverage.¹⁵ Larger metropolitan newspapers thus provide the best means of examining the substantive coverage of foreign archaeological news, and accordingly this sample excludes minor publications. The archives of the selected publications were searched for excavation site names (and variations – e.g., Knossos, Cnossos, Gnossus) and the names of associated personalities for articles mentioning these digs. Searches were limited to the date range relevant to each excavation including a five-year period following the conclusion of excavations. Relevant articles were examined for references to national identity, such as allusions to national grandeur and intimations of continuity between the examined ancient cultures and national societies of the *fin-de-siècle*. Articles were further examined for qualitative descriptions of excavations and excavators; as scholarly explorers of the ancient past, archaeologists served as potent personifications of national genius. The sample was also surveyed for suggestions of the nation (or attributes thereof) as originating in these ancient excavated cultures, thereby according a sense of continuity to modern national identities.

LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY EUROPE

Europe in the late nineteenth century was a continent deeply at unease with itself. Despite overt exhibitions of progress and triumphalism throughout European societies, rapid and seismic changes in social, political, and economic conditions challenged the very basis of the continent's stability and prosperity. The leadup to the First World War was a time of elevated tension among the nations of Europe across all fields, each struggling to assert its status by obtaining further territory, resources, and prestige to shore up lofty self-perceptions. Membership within the nation was reinforced through ideological underpinnings which accompanied turn-of-the-century social life, as the nationalist ethic of competition pushed European societies to assert their superiority over their peers. This ubiquitous intense competitiveness encouraged international rivalry within emergent areas of public interest, and in combination with internal social shifts exerted immense strains on the state, which came under increased popular pressure to respond to political situations identified with national status. The French Third Republic, for instance, saw sixty governments between its foundation in 1870 and the outbreak of war in August 1914, suffering from a perpetually weak and divided *assemblée nationale*.¹⁶ This was partially a function of the political scandals which rocked the republic's democratic institutions, of which three cases – the Boulanger (1885–89), Panama (1889–93) and Dreyfus (1895) Affairs – in particular shook public trust in the French state, making for divisive and ferocious politics and undermining ambitions to form a singular, united national community.¹⁷ French political instability was aggravated by the lack of national uniformity, a sore point for ardent nationalists; approximately one quarter of French adults at the turn of the century were raised speaking a language other than metropolitan French, frustrating attempts to unite the nation around a common linguistic tradition.¹⁸ France's foreign ambitions were similarly troubled: the unremitting threat of the recently-unified German Reich menaced not only the eastern border, but also acted as a brake on overseas French colonial ambitions.

Britain likewise faced great pressures at the turn of the century. The 1901 death of Queen Victoria seemed to confirm the advent of an uncharted and not entirely comfortable era. As the self-assuredness of late-Victorianism gave way to a less confident Edwardian nation, the British monarchy became an important symbol of conservative British stability. The Crown was a central pillar in the national character, a symbol of steadiness and prosperity for Britain. Looking

¹⁵ Terhi Rantanen, "The Globalization of Electronic News in the 19th Century," *Media, Culture & Society* 19, no. 4 (October 1, 1997): 609, <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344397019004006>.

¹⁶ R.D. Anderson, *France 1870–1914: Politics and Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 5.

¹⁷ Charles Sowerwine, *France since 1870: Culture, Politics and Society* (Basingstoke: New York: Palgrave, 2000), 65–69.

¹⁸ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976), 67.

back on Victoria's era-defining reign, Prime Minister Lord Salisbury opined such sentiments in a parliamentary address: 'we owe all these blessings to the tact, wisdom, the passionate patriotism, and the incomparable judgement of the Sovereign whom we deplore'.¹⁹ The rise of political and social movements which challenged conservative conceptions of Britishness, from suffragism to socialism, further perturbed traditionalists. Britain simultaneously faced international challenges from the rapidly ascending United States and Germany, engaging with the latter in a naval arms race as both struggled to outdo the other in constructing the new class of battleship, casting doubt onto Britain's international hegemonic status, which had historically been tied to the ability of the Royal Navy to project British power on the high seas. The Dreadnought Race contributed to widespread anxiety among the British populace over the 'national defence question' in the years prior to the Great War, fuelled by fears of national decline, which Britain's conservative establishment equated with the general national decline. This decline was seen to be produced by excessive modernization and the abandonment of classical values surrounding bodily and moral fitness, and in an effort to redress such national deterioration, Greek physical ideals were pursued through compulsory physical education curricula and social athletics clubs.²⁰

The conditions faced by Britain and France in the late-nineteenth century saw another trend central in the rise of popular nationalisms: the expansion of news-media print cultures. This communications revolution was partially sparked by growing literacy rates: state-run education produced educated and literate citizenries, while the rising fortunes of Europe's growing middle classes produced large readerships with disposable income, leisurely time, and an insatiable appetite for self-betterment. These changing socio-economic conditions gave rise to the modern newspaper, which was rendered affordable due to advances in communications, transportation, and printing technology. The expanded foreign dimension of European news-media was facilitated by the increasing ubiquity of the telegraph and the steamship, which allowed for reports to cross seas and continents in mere days. Newspapers informed, substantiated, and influenced European social life in the late-nineteenth century, as both mediums of communication and as ideological actors in their own right.²¹ Periodicals were not unbiased conduits of information, but rather inextricably enmeshed within their historical and political environments. News-media reinforced self-identification readerships, as periodical publications allowed consumers to identify with imagined national communities on a regular basis, conditioning readers to think of themselves and others in a common light, and thereby constructing collective perceptions of the nation.²² This proliferation of news-media and popular national identities in late-nineteenth-century Europe was due in no small part to the rise of the middle class, who enjoyed ever-greater disposable income and leisurely time to fill with the consumption of accessible news-print.

LA GRANDE FOUILLE DE DELPHES, C. 1891–1901

The Pythian sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, located at the foot of Mount Parnassus in the north-central Greek mainland, was host to one of the better publicized archaeological excavations in history, the type of which are rare in modern practice. The site had been home to the Delphic Oracle, a sacred Panhellenic sanctuary represented prominently in myth, and was thus understood by its excavators to be a sort of repository for the entirety of ancient Greek culture. The sanctuary was most intensively excavated between 1891 and 1901 (although excavations continued throughout the subsequent decade) by the *École Française d'Athènes* (ÉfA) under the direction of Théophile Homolle in what came to be known as *La Grande Fouille*. This was the principal prewar French excavation, attracting significant interest at home and internationally given the wealth of artifacts and significance of the site as a Panhellenic sanctuary. From the

19 Samuel Hayes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), 16.

20 Athena S. Leoussi, *Nationalism and Classicism: The Classical Body as National Symbol in Nineteenth-Century England and France*, University of Reading European and International Studies (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1998), 55–56, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230372689>.

21 Stephen Vella, "Ch. 11: Newspapers," in *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History*, by Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann, Routledge Guides to Using Historical Sources (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, Routledge, 2020), 193.

22 Aled Gruffydd Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 85.

outset, *La Grande Fouille* was connected to the French state: the dig was underwritten to the tune of 500,000F by the *Assemblée* and was conspicuously supported by the ministry of public education and fine arts – a link which was stressed in news-coverage of the excavation.²³

Throughout the course of this excavation, news-reports constantly compared its progress to similar European excavations, primarily the German excavation of Olympia – another Panhellenic sanctuary. This archaeological competition, expressed in regular media coverage, served to catalyze public interest in the excavations by transforming the nascent science into an arena in which the Franco-German rivalry could manifest. The threat of foreign competition to French archaeology was a major theme throughout news-coverage of *La Grande Fouille*, typically juxtaposing German (although occasionally American and British) excavations to the efforts of the ÉfA, which were suggested to be nobler and of higher scholarly merit. Comparisons either contained glowing praise for unsurpassed French discoveries or warned of the presence of national competitors waiting in the wings to overtake French archaeology if its heroic excavators were not supported. The latter case was apparent in an 1891 *Le Temps* article detailing parliamentary debates regarding the excavation's financing. Opponents to state funding proposed that funds instead be dedicated to the restoration of French monuments; such arguments were countered by deputies who feared that failing to excavate would 'laisser aux compariotes de Mac Kinley la gloire de remettre au jour ce qui reste du temple d'Appolon,' emphasizing that archaeology was a suitable avenue for the pursuit of national greatness.²⁴

The same article noted the glory which Henrich Schliemann's famed excavation of Troy-Hissarlik had won for Germany, and suggested that unearthing Delphi would have a similar effect on France's national prestige, as *La Grande Fouille* promised to demonstrate the intellectual maturity of the nation. Archaeology thus served as a proving-ground for academic competition wherein the French could contend with their national opponents, which gave rise to fears that if France did not support an excavation of Delphi, American or German archaeologists would win the glory of uncovering the ancient European site. The excavations of Delphi were 'une des plus belles victoires de l'archéologie française,' a rallying point around which the nation could take pride in its archaeological prowess.²⁵ Such militaristic descriptions were prevalent throughout media-coverage of the dig; the seasonal excavations were described as 'campagnes'.²⁶ *La Dépêche* further noted that the Olympia and Delphi excavations exemplified 'une rivalité entre deux nations qui également prétendent à la maîtrise scientifique. Ce fut une réplique d'Hellénisants à Hellénisants'.²⁷ This vying for an authoritative archaeological position reflected French and German ambitions to achieve national dominance on the European continent intellectually as well as geopolitically.

Visits by ministers and national dignitaries to Delphi and the substantial political attention dedicated to the excavation further reinforced the link between the French state and the ancient Hellenic world. Then-minister of education and fine arts (and future wartime president) Raymond Poincaré advocated for the extension of 150,000F for the ÉfA's endeavours for the 1895 excavation season.²⁸ In this regard, Poincaré and his long-time political rival Georges Clemenceau were in accord; the latter penned an article in *La Dépêche* which assessed the value of the excavations to the nation: 'quelques milliers de francs dépensés au pied du Parnasse pour l'histoire de l'humanité seront plus glorieux pour la France que les millions destinés au massacre des nègres de Madagascar'.²⁹ The consensus around the importance of Delphi to French national prestige – an 1894 parliamentary vote saw a majority of 420 deputies to 24 approve the extension of further funding for the excavation – is reflective of the privileged position which *La Grande Fouille* held in the French national imagination.³⁰

23 "Dernières Nouvelles," *Le Temps*, February 17, 1891, 4.

24 "Dernières Nouvelles," 4.

25 "Nouvelles Du Jour," *Le Temps*, March 15, 1903, 3.

26 "Au jour le jour," *Le Temps*, June 6, 1896, 3.

27 Edouard Conte, "Causeries: Une Affaire de Bronzes," *La Dépêche*, February 13, 1905, 2.

28 "Les Fouilles de Delphes," *Le Petit Parisien*, February 7, 1895, 1.

29 Georges Clemenceau, "Chronique: Delphes," *La Dépêche*, December 13, 1894, 1.

30 "Chambre des Députés," *Le Petit Parisien*, July 11, 1894, 2.

A further trend in the excavation's coverage was the implication of continuity between Europe's ostensible cultural and political civilizational progenitor – ancient Greece – and *fin-de-siècle* France. Excavating Delphi was portrayed as a matter of French national responsibility as the inheritor of classical Greece's status in leading European culture, arts, politics, and science. Reports intimated France's inheritance of the mantle of 'leader of European civilization' – a status seemingly confirmed by the dedication of substantial resources and national attention to Delphi's excavation. National interest in *La Grande Fouille* manifested beyond accounts of the ongoing excavations, also feeding pre-existent and prevalent Philhellenism, resulting in a great interest in ancient Hellenic culture as the genesis of French civilized mores. *Le Temps* detailed the Louvre's establishment of *La Salle des Moulages de Delphes*, which exhibited plaster replicas of the statues excavated at Delphi, noting that the opening of the exhibit was led by the minister of public education, the director of *beaux-arts*, and Homolle himself. The minister was noted to have 'chaudement félicité M. Homolle du résultat, si glorieux pour la France, de ses patients recherches,' palpably illustrating the personification of French national values in the excavator.³¹

The imagined continuity between classical Greek world and contemporary France was also reflected in French popular interest in ancient Hellenic theatre as productions of Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides abounded across Paris, reviews of which often referenced the ongoing Delphi excavation and noted the prescience of the dramatic performances to the efforts of the ÉfA. The French national consciousness took great interest in the art and culture of classical antiquity, an appreciation for which was understood to be a hallmark of national maturity and civilizational leadership. Theatre critics noted the similarities between the ancient Hellenic and contemporary French cultural tastes, as exemplified by one 1896 *Le Temps* article:

Si les souvenirs du théâtre français se mêlent continuellement à ceux du théâtre grec, c'est que le théâtre a des lois permanentes. C'est aussi par une analogie essentielle entre l'esprit grec et l'esprit français... Ce qui vaut mieux, c'est que nous aimons comme les Grecs les constructions logiques et les moyens simples; comme eux, nous préférons le spectacle des passions agissantes aux trompe-l'œil du décor.³²

The excavation of Delphi was specifically referenced in a number of theatre reviews, portraying the site as a physical link between the modern age and the period portrayed by theatrical performances.³³ A 1905 production of *Antigone* by *La Société Archéologique* opened with remarks from Homolle on the ongoing excavations, linking the ÉfA, theatrical works, and the French national consciousness.³⁴ Further, Parisian dramatic productions leveraged public interest in Delphi, linking contemporary French cultural refinement to that of classical antiquity.

Such assertions of artistic continuity abounded in French news-media, which detailed the cultural insights into antiquity gained by the Delphi excavations. One of the most widely-publicized artifacts unearthed in the excavation was the Hymn of Apollo, an engraving discovered in the Athenian Treasury in the spring of 1893 purported to be the oldest piece of European music.³⁵ Following this discovery, the inscription was transliterated by antiquarian Théodore Reinach into modern musical notation and subsequently performed in concert at *L'École des Beaux-Arts* the following year at a national conference on ancient Hellenic culture.³⁶ In a subsequent performance at the ÉfA campus, the hymn was performed with musical backing in duplicate: first in French, and subsequently in the original Greek.³⁷

La Grande Fouille served in one further capacity vis-à-vis French national aspirations: as a symbol of French influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. The ÉfA acted as a cultural consulate of sorts, projecting France's presence in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean region more generally. Political and cultural institutions were inherently interwoven within the French state-centred national identity; these institutions were funded by the French state and staffed by

31 "La Salle Des Moulages de Delphes," *Le Temps*, October 20, 1896, 4.

32 Gustave Larroumet, "Au théâtre de Bacchus," *Le Temps*, October 25, 1896, sec. Supplement, 1.

33 "Chronique théâtrale," *Le Temps*, September 4, 1899, 1.

34 Marcel Ray, "Lettre d'Athènes," *L'Humanité*, April 17, 1905, 3.

35 "Les Fragments Musicaux Découverts à Delphes," *Le Temps*, January 28, 1894, 3.

36 J. Weber, "Critique musicale," *Le Temps*, April 16, 1894, 3.

37 "Au jour le jour," 3.

publicly employed academics, and their discoveries became inextricably associated with the nineteenth-century French scientific genius. Delphi's contributions to the national prestige were also understood as providing tangible and immediate benefits to France's international standing by contributing to France's geopolitical influence in the eastern Mediterranean, an area of particular importance at the *fin de siècle* as Paris sought to establish itself firmly as a Mediterranean power. An 1888 *Le Petit Parisien* column projected that the coming excavations would have a substantial political effect, enhancing the nation's general global prestige, and more specifically its influence in Greece and the Near East.³⁸ Meanwhile, an 1896 *Le Temps* article described Greek workmen at Delphi crying 'zitô I Gallia!' ('*vive la France*') upon discovery of the Charioteer of Delphi.³⁹ That same year, Gustav Larroumet, an official in the French Ministry of Education, reported that Greek peasants displayed French flags from the windows of their homes along the route to Delphi.⁴⁰ While the veracity of such reports is ambiguous, the sense that the excavations would improve Paris' relations with the Hellenic Kingdom are telling of the political weight which *La Grande Fouille* was perceived to hold.

THE EXCAVATION OF KNOSSOS, C. 1900–1908

From the outset of the excavation of Knossos, Arthur Evans was concerned with locating the oldest European culture. Evans had traced seal-stones in the Ashmolean Museum's collection to Crete, where in 1900 he personally purchased the land on which he would excavate Knossos with the assistance of the British School at Athens (BSA). The work proceeded quickly, building off previous local excavations, and yielded the site's most famous structure within the first season: the palace complex. Subsequent seasons uncovered the remnants of a culture much older than that of Mycenae, which had previously been regarded as the oldest archaeologically-known European civilization. The concept of Knossos being the progenitor 'European civilization' was central for Evans; uncovering the font of European civilization would elevate his own status, and that of British archaeology more generally. Gaining a better understanding of Europe's past was a widespread interest, and Knossos' excavation garnered significant attention through the pages of Britain's newspapers, often in articles penned by BSA director D.G. Hogarth or Evans (both of whom had worked as journalists prior to their archaeological careers). News coverage of the Knossos excavations emphasized the site's representation of the earliest known western civilization, being the forerunner of all European cultures. Evans and Hogarth identified the Minoans as 'almost classically Greek, certainly non-Semitic,' based on artistic self-depictions in the well-preserved frescoes which adorned the walls of 'Minos' palace'.⁴¹ Likewise, a 1900 *Morning Post* article described Knossos as the 'fountainhead of our own civilization,' employing language of civilizational descent to promote public interest by framing the excavation as having a direct bearing on the British nation.⁴²

Within British press coverage of this ancient European culture, the supposed Minoan monarchy was a subject of particular fixation. The central importance of the site's palatial complex as conceived by Evans was reflected in news coverage, which closely followed new discoveries regarding the ancient Cretan culture and its political and religious character. Upon the discovery of an alabaster throne in one of the palace's central rooms, Evans quickly dubbed the artifact the 'Throne of Minos' and commissioned a plaster replica for display at the British Museum to enable the British populace to appreciate the fruits of the excavation.⁴³ The structure, seemingly constructed around a central court and throne room, left little doubt in the minds of British readers as to the veracity of the myth of Minos and the Minoan monarchy. Evans, describing a haut-relief sculpture depicting a crowned male in Knossos' throne room in a 1901 *Times* article, noted:

38 "Conseil Des Ministres," *Le Petit Parisien*, December 13, 1888, 1.

39 "Au jour le jour," 3.

40 Gustave Larroumet, "Quinze Jours En Grèce: Delphes," *Le Temps*, April 14, 1896, 3.

41 A. J. Evans and D. G. Hogarth, "Exploration in Crete," *The Manchester Guardian (1828–1900)*, October 31, 1900, 10.

42 "Prehistoric Treasures," *Morning Post*, October 31, 1900, 2, British Library Newspapers.

43 "Article 6–No Title," *The Manchester Guardian (1901–1959)*, July 20, 1903, 6.

That the *fleur-de-lis* of our Edwards and Henrys should find a prototype in prehistoric Greece is a startling revelation; but it was perhaps fitting that, as last year's excavations in Knossos brought to light the "oldest throne in Europe," so the more recent researches should produce its most ancient crown.⁴⁴

This depiction of a *fleur-de-lis* coronet featured heavily in further reports, serving as a symbol of the ancient Minoan monarchy, and was associated closely with other royal artifacts unearthed at Knossos.⁴⁵ In producing a commonly appreciable symbolism that aligned with British national self-perceptions, news coverage of the Knossos excavations identified the site with contemporary ideological discourses which appealed to the interests of the average British reader.

British coverage of the Knossos excavation reflected an obsession with the history of European maritime power. In recounting the variety of non-Minoan artifacts found in Knossos, newspaper accounts based on archaeological conclusions detailed a highly interconnected maritime trade network centred around the island of Crete in the early second millennium BCE.⁴⁶ The discovery of 'Minos' Sea Empire' as described by Evans in a 1900 *Manchester Guardian* article seemed to confirm the correlation between maritime dominance and civilizational supremacy.⁴⁷ This perceived maritime character was furthered by the discovery of marine artwork motifs in the palace complex, firmly establishing the Knossos' nautical character, not unlike the seafaring British nation, in news-coverage of the excavation.⁴⁸ Reinforcing this maritime parallel was the presence of the Royal Naval vessels and sailors which had been on deployment to Crete as a part of the International Squadron since 1897, a fact which would not have been lost on the British reading public. That British warships could be easily observed anchored off the Cretan coast from the site of Evans' excavations provided an obvious demonstration of Britain's modern succession of ancient Minoan naval supremacy.

The archaeologist held a venerated position in the British consciousness, being an adventurer uncovering the secrets of the distant past. Knossos' excavation entailed the heroization of Arthur Evans and D.G. Hogarth as personifying the new Edwardian Britain – dynamic middle-class scholars, representative of the nation lifting's itself to new intellectual heights. Evans' 1911 knighting canonized the archaeologist within a pantheon of national heroes and entrenched him as exemplifying Britishness, transforming the man into an icon of Britain's modern, twentieth-century national identity. The unearthing of Knossos was also understood to have contributed directly to the nation's international prestige. A 1906 *Times* report proclaimed that:

The results attained, even at an early period of the operations, have attracted the notice of foreign archaeologists, by whom their significance has been fully recognized. Research in Crete will occupy scholars of all nations in the immediate future, and it is to be hoped that England will maintain the lead which she has so happily secured.⁴⁹

Throughout newspaper coverage of the excavations, other European-led excavations were regularly referenced, quantifying the achievements of Evans and Hogarth via comparison with contemporary archaeology. This language of nationalism was invoked throughout articles detailing the excavation, in an effort to pressure Westminster into granting funds to support the costly excavation, which was ultimately primarily bankrolled by the Evans family fortune. A 1911 *Guardian* article, describing the BSA's involvement in the excavation, asserted that 'no institution of research is a more legitimate object of pride in our country and none is more

⁴⁴ Arthur J. Evans, "Fresh Discoveries in the Palace of Knossos," *The Times*, May 28, 1901, 4, Gale Primary Sources.

⁴⁵ "Dr. Evans On His Work At Knossos," *The Times*, November 2, 1904, 12, Gale Primary Sources; "Excavation Of Prehistoric Knossos," *The Times*, August 10, 1900, 10, The Times Digital Archive; "Exploration In Crete," *The Times*, December 4, 1901, 7, Gale Primary Sources.

⁴⁶ "Exploration In Crete," 7.

⁴⁷ Arthur J. Evans, "Discovery of the Palace of Knossos and Its Prehistoric Archives," *The Manchester Guardian* (1828-1900), August 4, 1900, 9.

⁴⁸ D.G. Hogarth, "The Recent Wonderful Discoveries in Crete," *The Illustrated London News*, September 22, 1906, 409.

⁴⁹ "Excavation Of Prehistoric Knossos," 10.

worthy of recognition and support.⁵⁰ The elevation of the BSA to prominence in the national imagination as the encapsulation of British scientific exceptionalism enabled the excavation to be perceived as internationally representative of British intellectual superiority. This casting of Knossos' discovery as symbolic of Britain's national genius was reciprocally employed to lobby for greater state funding:

It is disappointing to find that, after all the good work which the School has done during the past five years, the Government will not increase the annual grant, which is pitifully small when compared to the thousands of pounds that France and Germany gladly bestowed upon their schools at Athens for many years past... If the remarkable discoveries had been made by a French or German scholar, he would have received prompt and liberal assistance from his Government.⁵¹

The juxtaposition of British archeological efforts to the state-backed excavations of European rivals underlined the competitive nature of early-twentieth-century archaeology as a nationally informed activity, shaping news-media coverage, simultaneously providing an opportunity for the instrumentalization of the British national consciousness to elicit support for the excavations. These appeals for funding in British news-coverage of the Knossos excavation, also noted by Sherratt, are indicative of the symbiotic relationship which existed between archaeologists and the popular press in the nineteenth century, while periodicals appealed to broad public interest in ongoing investigations of humanity's distant past, archaeologists found both a medium for the broad dissemination of their work, as well as a platform from which to issue calls for donations to sustain their studies.⁵² For both parties, appealing to British nationalist sentiments by engaging in ideological media framing furthered the impact of such news-coverage, and thus was an invaluable strategy in promoting popular engagement with the archaeology of ancient Crete.

DISCUSSION

News-media discourses on the Delphi and Knossos excavations were conditioned by dominant ideological paradigms: the popular nationalisms of France and Britain. This nationally-informed news coverage was primarily manifested in two ways:

- The particular finds uncovered in the excavations provided historical legitimation for the nation, national policies, and perceived national values.
- Archaeology in and of itself served as a venue for international competition – i.e., a field in which to assert the national genius in competition with other nations.

Some of the same general trends can be parsed from media coverage of both sites, however the ways in which each excavation was understood was determined by the respective characteristics of the British and French national identities. Certain features, such as the glorification of the archaeologist as a figure emblematic of the national genius, were common to both French and British coverage of foreign archaeological excavations. However, the findings of both Evans and Homolle were also identified with particular themes respectively associated with British and French popular nationalisms.

A 1905 edition of *Nature* magazine surmised popular understandings of Greek archaeology's significance for the contemporary nations of modern Europe: 'Greek archaeological discovery must always be of especial interest, since it tells us of the origins of that early civilization of the Mediterranean basin from which our present-day culture is derived.'⁵³ Sites like Delphi and Knossos held particular importance as physical manifestations of Europe's progenitor cultures, and were therefore of great symbolic value to the nations of the late nineteenth century which sought to entrench their civilizational pedigrees. Excavations permitted the creation of definitive narratives and interpretation of the unearthed sites and artifacts through seemingly

⁵⁰ "The British School at Athens," *The Manchester Guardian* (1901–1959), November 16, 1911, 8.

⁵¹ "Editorial Article No. 5," *The Manchester Guardian* (1828–1900), October 31, 1900, 5.

⁵² Sherratt, "Representations of Knossos and Minoan Crete in the British, American, and Continental Press 1900–c.1930."

⁵³ H.R. Hall, "Greek Archaeology," *Nature Magazine*, October 5, 1905, 558.

empirical, authoritative methods. The excavation of ancient sites allowed for Europe's masses to explore the world that had produced the classical literature which had been the backbone of European education for centuries, and to imagine themselves as the modern successors of these civilizational predecessors. The confluence of wider-reaching public education, the advancement of scientific archaeological methods, and the development of popular print cultures in the late-nineteenth century allowed for this world to be explored more widely and intensely than in previous periods.

Throughout French media-coverage of *La Grande Fouille*, Delphi was understood to be a microcosm of the broader ancient Greek world of classical antiquity. The sanctuary's pan-Hellenic character, being a site which hosted monuments erected by major and minor *poleis* alike, reinforced the notion that Delphi was a distillation of the imagined 'ancient Greek' world as understood by the French collective consciousness. An 1894 *La Dépêche* article framed the significance of Delphi accordingly: 'tous les peuple de l'Hellade sont représentés là. Point de récit, point de geste des Grecs qui ne soit attesté par quelque monument. C'est la musée de le nation tout entière.'⁵⁴ This convenient distillation of classical Greece was instrumentalized to portray a particular image of classical antiquity which conveniently aligned with French ideologically-tinged perceptions of the ancient Hellenic world which privileged a democratic tradition and cultural sophistication, traits seen to be shared by the modern French nation. The substantial attention dedicated to the Athenian Treasury in particular indicates the association of French liberal-democracy, a central characteristic of the French national political identity, with the legacy of ancient Athenian democracy. One article commented on the inscription on the recently-uncovered Athenian treasury's edifice: 'la liberté, la loi, la paix: ces trois mots furent imprimés par les Grecs sur les portes du temple de Delphes; vous les imprimerez sur le sol entier de la France!'⁵⁵ This identification of perceived ancient Greek social-political values aligning with those of France suggested a long-reaching liberal-democratic pedigree for the Third Republic, validating French claims to inheritance of the status of 'leading European civilization.' Thus, the excavation of Delphi allowed contemporary France to be linked to the idea of the ancient Hellenic world, substantiating French national claims to being the successor of ancient Greek civilization – a link which seemingly confirmed the self-perceived status of France being Europe's leader in culture, science, and politics.

The centrality of ancient Hellenic culture in coverage of the excavations – seen in the accompanying recreation of the Hymn of Apollo and the staging of Greek theatrical productions – coincided with popular French Philhellenist attitudes. The opening of the *Salon des Moulages* in the Louvre doubly provided a link between the ancient Hellenic and contemporary French cultures in that the featured artifact reproductions were uncovered by the trowel of French excavators and thus trophies of French scientific achievement, and in that these sculptures were displayed in a cathedral of French culture. In recreating and displaying cultural artifacts from classical antiquity, continuity between the progenitor ancient European civilization and the Third Republic were intimated. The importance of Delphi as a Panhellenic sanctuary, a site thought to be representative of broader ancient Greek culture, buffered this reputation by adding empirical backing to French Philhellenism, yielding substantial knowledge of the ancient world to the existent interest in ancient European cultures. Clemenceau posited that an appreciation of classical antiquity was an inherent aspect of the French national identity: 'il me semble qu'on ne peut pas être bon Français si l'on ne sent pas le génie de la Grèce antique. Quant à moi, la Grèce me fait aimer la France, et tous ce qui me révéleront quelque chose de l'Hellade ne feront que me fortifier dans l'amour de mon pays.'⁵⁶

The privileged position of Greek antiquity within the French national imagination was further realized in the according of honours to those involved in the excavation: the chief architect who oversaw the restoration of the Delphic sanctuaries received the 1901 architectural *médaille d'honneur*, while Homolle was granted directorship of the Louvre (a position from which he was later relieved in 1911 following the Mona Lisa's theft).⁵⁷ The excavations linked France to a perceived golden age of European civilization in ancient Greece, reassuring the troubled

54 Clemenceau, "La Dépêche," 1.

55 "La Grande Séance," *Le Petit Parisien*, September 22, 1900, 1.

56 Clemenceau, "La Dépêche," 1.

57 "Hors region," *La Dépêche*, May 1, 1901, 3.

French nation. This harkening to a utopic (if misremembered) era of European history about which new information was being brought to light by the diligent work of cutting-edge French archaeology, was a comfort for the perturbed Third Republic. The knowledge that France stood as the inheritor of the ancient Greek world provided solace to the troubled French nation, which faced both endogenous and exogenous national challenges at the turn of the century.

Throughout British news coverage of the Knossos dig, a close association of the site with the notion of thalassocracy was apparent, providing a convenient forebearer for British sea power in the Edwardian age. British national identity was intertwined with naval prowess – the Royal Navy was something of a national cornerstone, providing security to the nation and allowing it to flourish culturally and politically behind the iron walls of the fleet. Britain's Navy crucially provided a link between the metropole and the wider empire, a major source of national pride at the turn of the century which substantiated sentiments of British national exceptionalism. The Navy was not seen merely as the protector of British liberties and customs, but also as the literal and figurative link between the metropole and empire. Admiral John Fischer's remark that "the Empire floats on the Royal Navy" succinctly reflected British perceptions of the national maritime culture, as well as the realm's strategic priorities.⁵⁸ The Royal Navy was thus understood to be the guarantor of the ancient liberties and customs of the British people, much as the archaic Minoan proto-nation was seen to be secured by the expansive navy of the ancient monarchy. The importance of the navy as a fundamental tenet of the British national identity, and a symbol of British national power, underpinned news-media coverage of the Knossos excavation which highlighted the significance of maritime power to the Minoan nation's greatness, thereby linking the principle of naval power to the notion of European civilizational greatness in no unclear terms.

In the turbulent Edwardian period, great importance was placed on Britain's monarchy in appreciating the nation – the Crown was central in the national consciousness, and served as a symbol of British social-political traditions generally. In the leadup to 1914, the British nationalist self-conceptualization was definitively royalist and conservative, values which were celebrated in Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee and 1901 funeral, Edward VII's 1902 coronation, and George V's 1911 coronation – events which permitted the national consciousness to be publicly exercised.⁵⁹ News-coverage of the Knossos excavation, centring around the palatial complex which was understood to be the historic seat of the famed Minoan monarchy, entrenched these ceremonial practises in a five-millennia legacy of monarchical tradition. The discovery of the 'Throne of Minos,' purportedly the oldest European seat of regal authority, and depictions of a Minoan *fleur-de-lis* crown, implied four millennia of royal rule in Europe, demonstrating the pedigree of monarchical structures, and by extension British political traditions. These emblems of Minoan royalty were presented not only as a historical basis of legitimacy for Britain's modern monarchical society (which was under increased pressure in the period), but also suggested a specific progenitor for the national identity given a continuity in the symbolism used to represent royal authority. This establishment of a tradition of European monarchy through Evans' spadework lent credence to the position of royalism and to political traditionalism in the British national consciousness, at a time when such institutions were under increased pressure.

As was the case in Delphi's excavation, British news-media bestowed particular importance upon the work of the Ashmolean's keeper on Crete. A *London Illustrated News* article on Knossos' excavation noted that among American, Italian, and British excavations on the island, '[Knossos] stands first in time and significance.'⁶⁰ Imagining archaeology as a field of national competition between archaeological teams of varying nationality was common in articles detailing the excavation of Knossos, as contrasting the achievements of British digs to those undertaken by rival nations provided a measure of comparison to underline the achievements of British archaeology, and by extension the nation's intellectual robustness. Anything less than ascendancy within the new scientific field would not only demonstrate national weakness,

58 Jan Rüger, "Nation, Empire and Navy: Identity Politics in the United Kingdom 1887–1914," *Past & Present*, no. 185 (2004): 162.

59 Hugh Cunningham, "The Language of Patriotism," in *Routledge Revivals: Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, by Raphael Samuel, vol. I (London, UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 1989), 78, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/londonschoolecons/detail.action?docID=4709926>.

60 Hogarth, "The Recent Wonderful Discoveries in Crete," 409.

but also allow rival nations to fill this gap and seize greater international prestige through competitive spadework in the eastern Mediterranean. In such an environment, archaeologists wore multiple hats, being not only scholars but also national heroes, embodying the genius and intellectual vigour of their national community.

While archaeological activity at Knossos shored up the British national identity, the relationship between the two phenomena was not unidirectional. The British national consciousness was instrumentalized by proponents of the excavation to elicit public support and call upon the state to provide funding to the excavation: '[i]f they were carried on by the energies of a German, a Frenchman, an Italian, or an American, would the government of either of these countries keep tight their purse strings?'⁶¹ Appeals for state funding was a constant trend throughout articles on the Knossos excavations, which would typically be found at the conclusion of the texts, advertising subscriptions to the perpetually deficient Cretan Exploration Fund. Such associations served to strengthen the image of archaeological activity as an inherently national (and by extension, competitive) activity. In such a symbiotic relationship, both archaeology and nationalist discourses supported one another; the former was furnished with vital funds and public interest, whereas the latter projected greater legitimacy in the eyes of its populace through the well-publicized spadework of the nation's excavators. This interdependent relationship between the novel scientific discipline and national consciousness manifested in print media, where readers could explore recent scientific discoveries of Europe's ancient past while simultaneously consuming popular nationalist material, sustaining the great interest which turn-of-the-century European societies held for both. The juxtaposition of the nation's archaeological efforts to international efforts was a means of demonstrating the national genius, with novel discoveries evidencing of British and French scientific mastery. Intensely detailed descriptions of site topography, archaeological techniques, and interpretations of artifacts and features provided readers with an in-depth appreciation of the sites which was continuously updated through regular reporting. The intensely competitive, nation-oriented Europe of the late-nineteenth century ensured that readerships followed ongoing excavations almost as if following the national rugby squad's performance at an international tournament, constantly comparing such progress to the efforts of rival European nations.

CONCLUSION

Archaeological study was framed by and understood through nationalist ideological paradigms, both in the particular finds of turn-of-the-century excavation as well as in the broader implications of national greatness derived from excavation. Examining news coverage of the excavations of these sites indicates that archaeology was not merely a barometer of popular nationalist sentiments in *fin-de-siècle* Europe. Rather, this scientific field and public perceptions thereof engaged directly with such ideologies by providing an arena for national competition, and in substantiating features of the national identity. *La Grande Fouille* reinforced the concept of French civilizational inheritance from classical antiquity, thereby reinforcing Gallic superiority. This rediscovery of ancient European artifacts and institutions provided a welcome sense of security to a country which had been shaken by repeated political scandals. Conversely, Knossos' excavation provided legitimacy for faltering traditional British political institutions, and reinforced British notions of national superiority within Europe and the exceptionalism of British scholarship. The structures and values of the ancient world served as comforting precedents for late nineteenth century Europeans, legitimizing attitudes of national superiority and providing seemingly empirical historical precedents for popular nationalist ideologies. Framing the nation as eternal and inexorable through the construction of historical narratives and therefore as the ultimate object of loyalty contributed to Europe's acquiescence to international war in 1914. Archaeology, both in the substance of discoveries and as demonstrations of national genius, contributed to the priming of European societies for the total war which would envelop the continent, and shape national cultures in the new century.

The popular upswing of nationalist sentiment entailed a shift in the focus of national print cultures to explain the news through particularly popular paradigms. Thus, reflecting the national identity within the pages of daily and weekly newspapers allowed readerships to

61 W. B. Richmond, "The Excavations At Knossos," *The Times*, June 17, 1903, 6.

both keep themselves informed on current affairs, and simultaneously engage with popular nationalist ideology. Nationalism was so dangerous in the prewar period because it was pervasive conditioning in thought and activity of all aspects of public life to the point where the nation became the base point of reference in defining an individual's identity. At Delphi and Knossos, the products of the excavation and the progress of archaeological study itself were constantly related to the national consciousness. The emphasis placed on the nationalist implications of these archaeological excavations underlines the permeating nature of *fin-de-siècle* European nationalisms, and how such ideologies affected public understandings of emergent scientific disciplines.

Today, just as in prewar Europe, archaeology plays a pivotal role in shaping understandings of the past and affects how societies dialectically construct identities around shared understandings of the distant past. Consequently, it is of central importance that we interrogate and examine popular understandings of archaeological findings and consider how the past can be abstracted to meet political ends and provide the appearance of legitimacy to potentially harmful, disruptive ideologies. Assuming archaeology's impartiality overlooks the origins of the field and ignores the pervasive effect which nationalism can impose on interpretations of the past, appeals to which are among the most potent arguments in support of national identity.

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