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HESPERIA

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AEGEAN PREHISTORY WITHOUT SCHLIEMANN

ABSTRACT

When Heinrich Schliemann appeared in the Aegean in the 1870s, prehistoric archaeology in Greece was headed for a future very different from the one that subsequently materialized. The discoveries at Hisarlik and Mycenae changed the course of that trajectory. I concentrate on the emergent field of prehistoric archaeology in Greece as it was before those discoveries, and I discuss briefly their effects on the field. The radical reorientation of the field in the last quarter of the 19th century provides the opportunity to reflect on the components of archaeological significance that shaped the development of prehistoric archaeology in Greece.

INTRODUCTION

It is not without justification that Schliemann is counted among the founding figures of the discipline of Aegean archaeology. His discoveries transformed forever the field of prehistoric research around the Aegean. Given that those discoveries were the fruits of Schliemann's own initiatives—personal achievements fueled by his own passion (and paid for by his business profits)—an intricate question arises: what if Schliemann had not been born, and “Troy” and the “Royal Tombs” of Mycenae had not been discovered in the 1870s but considerably later, say, in the 1920s or the 1950s? Would the prehistoric archaeology of Greece still have developed along the same course? Or would it have followed, for part or all of its history, a different direction?¹

Questions of this sort provide food for thought. They are not to be understood literally and explored according to that understanding, or they would prove intractable: any attempt to answer them would soon defy logic or become difficult to justify. Historians have circumvented this problem by developing a genre of explicitly speculative narrative, known for some time as “counterfactual history.”² I have been inspired by that genre, but my approach in the present article has little in common with it. I devote no more than a paragraph to speculating about the “what if” question,

1. I thank two anonymous reviewers and Tracey Cullen, former editor of *Hesperia*, whose comments gave me the opportunity to rethink and improve upon many parts of this essay. I also thank Susan Lupack and the *Hesperia* staff for the countless improvements they brought to the final draft. All translations into English are my own.

2. Prominent examples of this genre are Arnold Toynbee's essays (1969, pp. 427–486) “If Ochus and Philip had lived on” and “If Alexander the Great had lived on.”

then I offer an ordinary historical account. In a nutshell: in order to form an idea of the course Aegean prehistory *might* (not necessarily would) have taken without Schliemann, I turn to the years before his discoveries and examine the texture of prehistoric archaeology in Greece during that period. The examination shows that, at the time Schliemann appeared on the scene, an alternative course for the future of prehistoric archaeology in Greece—one that was radically different from the course that subsequently materialized—could still be, and indeed was, imagined. That alternative course was cut short in the wake of Schliemann’s discoveries, as the scholarly world turned its attention to the new finds and the emerging Mycenaean culture.

The largest portion of the article, comprising the next five sections, is devoted to the years before Schliemann’s discoveries became so well known, especially the 1860s and the early 1870s. It addresses the practices and thinking, both scholarly and lay, that were characteristic of the period, for example, the collecting of artifacts, negotiating the scientific and, at the same time, the monetary value of stone tools, reporting about finds and their significance in learned journals, and envisioning the future shape of prehistoric archaeology in Greece. I am concerned with attitudes toward artifacts from eras that, because of their remote antiquity, left no trace in the literary tradition. Excluded from this consideration are the practices and wisdom related to the ruins of Cyclopean monuments, which had exercised curious and erudite Europeans for centuries, and which count as pre- (or proto-) historic today, but were thought of in entirely different terms until ca. 1880.³ I will also highlight the emphasis of the period on Stone Age finds (many of them putative) and conclude with remarks on the curious—from our point of view—ways in which scholarly agency penetrated published works, and the procedures whereby artifacts claimed by their finders to be prehistoric were declared authentic or specious. Next, I will attend to the nature of the transformation brought about by Schliemann’s discoveries and their reception, as that transformation is recorded in the scholarship of the last quarter of the 19th century. In that same section, I will also address the “what if” question that initiated this inquiry, in an effort to identify possibilities for the future of Greek prehistory that were foreclosed by Schliemann’s discoveries. In the final section, I will consider how later archaeologists perceived the prehistoric research of the 1860s and 1870s, and I will also reflect on the transitory nature of the significance of archaeological periods and finds.

Schliemann first set spade in sites around the Aegean in 1869–1870. His excavations did not, however, attract attention until 1873, when he

3. Cyclopean constructions, especially those of Mycenae, have attracted the attention of erudite travelers to Greece ever since the Renaissance, and from the 18th century on they were depicted, measured, and commented upon with increasing frequency. For summaries regarding Mycenae, see

Lavery and French 2003; Buscemi 2010; Blakolmer 2010. They were as a rule thought to be the work of the legendary Pelasgians (e.g., Dodwell 1834; Müller 1852). In the 1860s and early 1870s they were not yet thought of as “prehistoric” (see also n. 130, below). The latter word was at the time

reserved for epochs and artifacts that were, in Albert Dumont’s succinct locution (1867b, p. 141), “earlier than legend and earlier than history.” It is this sense of “prehistory,” clearly different from our own today, which I investigate in this essay.

discovered (and, to a large extent, fabricated) “King Priam’s Treasure” at Hisarlik. Furthermore, he would probably not have become the founding father of a modern discipline had he not three years later unearthed the “Royal Tombs” at Mycenae. That is to say, the crucial turning point that is of concern here must be placed in the mid-1870s, certainly not before 1873.⁴

COLLECTING PREHISTORIC ARTIFACTS IN THE ERA BEFORE SCHLIEMANN

I concentrate in this and the next section on practices in which prehistoric artifacts came to play an important role, even though they were not the main focus of those practices. Nor were they always thought of as vestiges of an era that fell outside of historical memory. In fact, with some exceptions, they were identified as “prehistoric” only in the 1860s. Thus, my category “prehistoric artifacts” stands at the brink of anachronism. But let us proceed before deciding on the weight of that anachronism. I start with the practice of collecting.⁵

The history of collecting prehistoric antiquities around the Aegean is imperfectly known. As elsewhere in the world, people collected stone celts, and did so from at least Roman times.⁶ Since the Middle Ages they had called those stones *astropeleкия*⁷ (a word equivalent to the *ceraunia* of the Early Modern period) and vested them with healing and talismanic powers. But the scholars who recounted such practices in the 1860s and 1870s divulge few details; in the matter of beliefs in particular, some reports have the ring of stereotypes rather than of firsthand accounts.⁸ I therefore wonder, did the 19th-century scholars sometimes fabricate the story, thinking perhaps that all rural people, regardless of where they lived, *had* to be superstitious and backward?⁹ I briefly revisit the issue of such stereotypes below, but one point should now be made clear: no matter what magical powers some people attributed to *astropeleкия*, others were not deterred from collecting celts and other stone tools as archaeological specimens. In the 1860s many Greeks—especially people of science and letters, among them physicians, engineers, and educators—had in their possession stone tools, such as celts, obsidian cores, blades, and arrowheads.¹⁰ I believe that this was the case in the Ottoman

4. See also Hogarth 1899, p. 222: “But the year 1873 was to bring promise of greater things. . . .” For questions regarding the authenticity of the discovery of “Priam’s Treasure,” see esp. Traill 1993, pp. 127–153, 199–203. See also Dyck 1990, p. 323: “no statement by Schliemann can be taken at face value.”

5. This and the next section expand on Fotiadis 2006, pp. 10–13.

6. See, e.g., Dumont 1892a, p. 18, for a discussion of a stone celt bearing an inscription and a pictorial scene that

indicate a Late Roman date. The piece has been illustrated elsewhere, e.g., in Perrot and Chipiez 1894, p. 119, fig. 5. On Dumont (1842–1884), director of the French School of Athens (1876–1878) and an important figure in the early years of the French School of Rome, see Amandry 1976.

7. See Cartailhac 1877, p. 31.

8. See esp. Dumont 1867a, p. 358; also von Heldreich’s report, cited in Virchow 1873, p. 111. For a well-documented report on folk beliefs associated

with celts in the late 19th century in Estonia, see Johanson 2009. For the history of *ceraunia*, see Goodrum 2002; 2008.

9. See Lubbock 1872, p. xcvi: “We know that [stone celts] are regarded as thunderbolts from Western Europe to Eastern Hindostan [sic], and now we find the same idea in Western Africa, among a totally different race of men.”

10. Many examples are mentioned in Lenormant 1867a and a few more in Dumont 1867a, 1867b.

provinces of the Aegean as well.¹¹ Several stone tool collections existed in Athens. The Physiographical Museum (*Physiographikon Mouseion*) at the University of Athens acquired its first stone celts in 1863.¹² Around 1870, the collection of Grigorios Bournias, a notary public established on Adrianou Street in Athens, included thousands of stone tools, especially pieces of obsidian. Deemed to be of exceptional significance, the collection was purchased by the Greek state in 1873 and was later deposited in the Physiographical Museum.¹³ Athanasios Rhusopoulos, professor of archaeology at the University of Athens, collector and also licensed dealer of antiquities, had by the early 1870s, according to his own testimony, collected 3,000 stone tools. These included an unspecified number of polished stone celts, all of them in fragments except for two complete perforated axes derived from the Peloponnese. In 1873–1874, Rhusopoulos hoped to sell the entire collection to George Rolleston, professor of anatomy and physiology in Oxford, for £120; if sold separately, the perforated axes would have fetched about £1 each.¹⁴

In addition to the above institutional and private collectors, and to George Finlay, whose substantial collection of stone tools will be given proper attention below, Edward Erskine, the British ambassador to Greece (1864–1872), is said to have owned a collection of stone tools.¹⁵ Beyond Athens, in the small towns and villages of Attica and the Peloponnese, not only engineers and physicians, but also peasants appear to have regularly collected stone tools.¹⁶

In the Cyclades, people excavated graves and collected the goods, both ceramic pots and stone artifacts, such as marble figurines, utensils, and obsidian blades. This had been common practice at least since the 1830s, when Ludwig Ross saw such objects in the possession of the islanders.¹⁷ Substantial collections of antiquities existed by the 1860s in Santorini. One of the oldest, begun in 1839, belonged to Nikolaos Delenda. It included pots that would later be recognized as prehistoric, as well as a headless marble figurine. At least one more collection in Santorini included prehistoric pots excavated by the collector, Nikolaos Nomikos, before 1866.¹⁸ In 1867 the collection of Dimitrios Prasinios, a cleric in Amorgos, included “crude” stone tools retrieved from graves at Arkesine; Dumont compared those tools to artifacts in southwestern France and suggested that they probably belonged to the Neolithic period.¹⁹ In Amorgos, Emmanuel Ioannidis, a

11. Dumont (1867a, p. 357) indicates that the prehistoric collection of Frank Calvert (1828–1908) in the Dardanelles consisted “exclusively of small pieces of hard stones shaped into points and similar to arrowheads” derived from a mound in Calvert’s estate. According to Dumont, by 1866 this collection had been moved to England. For Calvert’s collection in general see Allen 1996, 1999 (where little is said, however, about the prehistoric component).

12. Dumont 1867a, p. 358; Virchow 1873, p. 111. The eminent botanist Theodor von Heldreich (1822–1902) was a key figure in the founding of the Physiographical Museum (1858) and,

until 1883, its keeper.

13. Kokkou 1977, p. 198; Galanakis and Nowak-Kemp 2013, p. 14, n. 44; see also Virchow 1873, p. 111.

14. Rhusopoulos sold stone tools regularly, and J. J. Worsae of Copenhagen was among his clients. For Rhusopoulos, his collection and its reputation, and his dealings, see Galanakis and Nowak-Kemp 2013, including appendix II in the supplementary online data.

15. Dumont 1867a, p. 357.

16. Dumont 1867b; Lenormant 1867a. “Peasants” is my translation of Dumont’s *homme de campagne* and Lenormant’s *paysan*.

17. Ross 1840, pp. 160–161, 181;

1855, p. 53. On Ross (1806–1859), head of the Greek Archaeological Service (1834–1836) and professor of archaeology at the University of Athens in its early days (1837–1843), see Goette and Palagia 2005.

18. Ross 1845, p. 27 (for the Delenda collection); Tzachili 2006a, pp. 56, 63 (for the Delenda and Nomikos collections). For the Thera collectors in general, see Tzachili 2005, pp. 241–242.

19. Dumont 1867b, p. 143. Prasinios was a familiar figure to archaeologists and other visitors to Amorgos in the second half of the 19th century. See Galanakis 2013, esp. pp. 190–193.

school principal and scholar, was probably forming his collection at this time. Among the holdings were obsidian tools, stone pestles, spindle whorls, the head of a marble figurine, and the base of a ceramic pot with a leaf impression on the bottom.²⁰

The inventory of the National Museum instituted by Governor Ioannis Capodistrias in Aigina, spanning 1829–1832, also deserves mention. By the end of that period the museum’s collection consisted of more than 1,000 objects. Their identification today is difficult, for the entries are laconic, hardly longer than three words each. None of the holdings seems to have been a marble figurine, and only a few entries may pertain to prehistoric artifacts. The inventory does mention, however, fossils and minerals, including what must have been a collection of 48 specimens offered to the museum in 1831 by Leon Typographos (Leo “the Printer,” if his last name is indicative of his profession).²¹

A word is also essential about gemstones. Clearly they had been collected before the 1870s,²² but their trails are difficult to trace until later in the 19th century, when scores of them found their way into institutional collections in Athens, London, Paris, and Berlin. At the time, they were called “island stones,” even though, as Milchhöfer observed, they came from all corners of the Aegean region.²³

Were collections of stone tools, marble figurines, “crude” vessels, and the like displayed in cabinets? Were they kept in chests? Were the objects hidden away, stored in damp places such as pigeon houses or animal pens? We hear next to nothing about such matters. Peasants, Dumont claimed, would not admit that they had knowledge of stone celts, much less that they possessed any. Yet Dumont was shown such artifacts while visiting small villages, and he also learned in the course of such encounters that stone celts were passed from father to son “like precious heritage.”²⁴ Ross had also been shown the contents of Cycladic graves and had repeatedly been informed about the contexts of the finds.²⁵ The Delenda collection on Thera was shown to distinguished visitors like Ross, Fredrika Bremer, and Adolf Michaelis.²⁶ Disparate pieces of information of this sort are intriguing; sometimes concealed from public view, sometimes displayed, depending on the circumstances, celts and other prehistoric objects appear to have functioned as bargaining chips in plays of power. But in the absence of detailed accounts, the nuances of such displays shall remain unknown. Adding to the complexity of the issue was the fact that in Greece, antiquities had already been designated as part of Greece’s heritage during the War of Independence, and had thus become inalienable national wealth.²⁷

Prehistoric artifacts were bought and sold. This was especially the case with Cycladic pots, marble vessels, and figurines, but by the 1860s a market also existed for stone tools. The Physiological Museum in Athens had

20. Marangou 1985, pp. 199–200. Several instances of Cycladic figurines and other prehistoric objects “in private possession” in Athens and Melos are mentioned in Dümmler 1886, pp. 20–21, 23–24, 29, but it cannot be shown that the acquisitions predate Schliemann’s discoveries of the 1870s.
21. Kavvadias 1890–1892, p. 37.

Kavvadias (p. 21) also indicates that the Aigina collection was moved to Athens in 1832, except for “a few useless pots and architectural members.”
22. See Ross 1845, p. 22, and the unnumbered plate between pp. 21 and 22.
23. Milchhöfer 1883, pp. 39–90, esp. pp. 39–41.
24. Dumont 1867a, p. 358; cf.

Dumont 1867b, p. 142.
25. Ross 1855, p. 53.
26. Ross 1845, p. 27. For Bremer’s and Michaelis’s visits to Delenda ca. 1860, see Tzachili 2006a, p. 56.
27. For the “nationalization” of antiquities in Greece in the 1820s and its possible range of meanings, see Fotiadis 2004, pp. 84–88.

bought its celts, 10 in number, from a German attached to the mines of Kyme in Euboea. According to Dumont, the nationality of the original owner was important: being superstitious about celts, a Greek would hide them rather than offer them for sale, whereas a German “does not have the Greek prejudices”—so Dumont surmised, thus surrendering to the power of stereotypes.²⁸ Yet a contemporary report by François Lenormant (1837–1883) mentions several instances in which its author purchased stone tools from Greeks in villages and small towns, or bargained with villagers about stone tool prices. From the same report we learn that in 1863 a dealer of antiquities in Athens displayed “a magnificent projectile point made of brown silex,” an artifact bought from an Englishman who brought it from the Holy Land.²⁹ Furthermore, stone tools circulated internationally as gifts. Rhousopoulos, for example, brought tools from Greece to acquaintances in England, and may have done the same for potential clients in other countries.³⁰ The Archaeological Society of Athens received collections from sister societies in Denmark and Switzerland,³¹ while a collection of celts and obsidian tools from Greece was sent to the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie, und Urgeschichte in the early 1870s. For the latter gift Rudolf Virchow, then president of the Gesellschaft, thanked Theodor von Heldreich.³²

SCHOLARSHIP ON PRIMITIVE FIGURINES AND STONE TOOLS BEFORE THE MID-1870s

In short, stone tools, marble figurines, and other primitive artifacts were widely collected around the Aegean region before the mid-1870s. Did, however, such collecting lead to questions of an archaeological nature, as the case had been in Europe since the 16th century? Did the people who engaged in collecting, that is, ever speculate about who the makers of those artifacts were, how they lived, or how long ago? Did they attempt to compare the artifacts in their possession with artifacts elsewhere in order to obtain answers, however tentative (or plainly strange for us)? Two kinds of objects became focal points of such questioning before the 1870s: marble figurines from the Cyclades and stone tools. “Primitive” pottery was also touched upon in these discourses but was not their main focus.³³ I stress in advance that, until the late 1870s, Greek scholars contributed next to nothing to these discourses.³⁴ I will turn first to the questions about the figurines.

28. Dumont 1867a, p. 358.

29. Lenormant 1867a, pp. 17–18. For Schliemann’s purchase of stone tools in Thera (1870), see n. 69, below.

30. Galanakis and Nowak-Kemp 2013, p. 6, and appendix 2, letter no. 6 (1873) in the supplementary online data; see also letter no. 2 (1872) for a fossil tooth from Megalopolis that Rhousopoulos presented to a collector in England. For a marble figurine from

the Cyclades presented by Ross to the Crown Prince of Denmark in 1838, see Galanakis 2013, p. 181, n. 1.

31. Finlay 1869, pp. 5–6; Runnels 2008, p. 16. Finlay indicated that he was instrumental in the Society’s acquisition of the Swiss collection and mentions the sites from which the pieces came.

32. For von Heldreich, see n. 12, above. On the gift, see Virchow 1873, p. 110.

33. See, however, Fouqué 1867, pp. 243–247, of which more will be said below (see pp. 103–104).

34. The discussion in the late 1870s pertained to “very ancient” (παναρχαῖοι) tombs that had been recently explored by the Archaeological Society of Athens. It was carried mainly in the pages of the periodical *Αθήναιοι* (1877, 1878, and 1879); see Petrakos 1987, pp. 80, 374–375. See also Stamatakis 1878.

Marble figurines had been noted and, most likely, acquired by Count Heinrich Leonhard Pasch van Krienen in 1771, when he accompanied the Russian fleet in the Aegean during the Orlov Revolt.³⁵ In the first half of the 19th century marble figurines as well as marble vessels from the Cyclades reached collectors in London, some of whom subsequently donated them or bequeathed them to the British Museum. In the same period, figurines were also acquired by the museums of Dresden and Karlsruhe.³⁶ Early 19th-century antiquarians in Europe theorized about the identity and chronology of these objects, which they often treated among the *sigillaria* of Roman antiquity. Reverend Robert Walpole (1781–1856) in 1817 illustrated and commented upon such a figurine, “found by the Earl of Aberdeen in a tomb in Attica.” Impressed by “its stiff and inexpressive form,” Walpole considered the piece “remarkable for its great antiquity,” and reckoned that it belonged “to an æra preceding the time of Dædalus of Sicyon, who is said to have lived in the interval between 700 and 600 B.C.” The figure’s crossed arms, moreover, made it plain for him that it was “a representation of some deity,” in the manner “the Agathodæmon, and other Egyptian idols were depicted and sculptured.” Perhaps, the Reverend concluded, the piece was a representation of the goddess Aphrodite.³⁷

In the 1830s, illustrations of marble figurines appeared in the works of Friedrich Thiersch (1784–1860) and the geologist Karl Gustav Fiedler (1791–1853), who accompanied King Otto of Greece in his travels through the kingdom. Thiersch acquired two of them in Paros, “of an entirely peculiar, barbaric form, one male and one female,” and suggested that such figurines were pre-Hellenic, in fact Carian. He also thought Walpole’s hypotheses were untenable. For Fiedler, on the other hand, the figurines were mummy-like and ought to belong to the beginnings of art; they might well be representations of Isis.³⁸ Mid-century editions of Karl Otfried Müller’s manual on ancient art vaguely associated such figurines with “shapeless clay figures [of gods] from Athens and Samos” and those made by “the Carians and other anti-Hellenic [sic] inhabitants” or perhaps with those of the Phoenicians.³⁹ Ross was more circumspect; taking into account Pasch van Krienen’s claims that figurines were found in graves alongside Greek inscriptions, lamps, and even Roman medals, he thought that the “female figurines (Astarte? Aphrodite?)” and their funerary contexts might belong to a late period. At other times, however, Ross considered such figurines (one of which he owned) to be Carian and pre-Hellenic, for—as he had been told “by the farmers who excavate them as well as by more discerning inhabitants”—they were always found in the company of obsidian blades.⁴⁰

By the mid-1860s, however, obsidian blades (and stone tools in general) were regarded by scholars working in Greece as unmistakable indicators of a yet older time, the “Stone Age” (see p. 100, below). So Lenormant dismissed Ross’s claims that marble figurines were found in the company of obsidian tools, for they certainly belonged to a time *after* the Stone Age. Nor could they be Carian: “Their perfect identity with certain figures of the Asiatic Astarte” and other indications made it clear to him that they were works of the Phoenicians, the first colonists of the southern Cyclades. For Lenormant, these figurines were indeed as much non-Hellenic as pre-Hellenic, artifacts “equally crude and of an equally strange form as the Sardic idols, recalling

35. Pasch van Krienen 1773, pp. 27, 40–41, 46, 80.

36. Pryce (1928, pp. 8–12) records several acquisitions by the British Museum in the mid-19th century (including gifts), the earliest instance being dated to 1840. See also Fitton 1984. For the German museums see Gill and Chippindale 1993, pp. 605, 616, table 6. For an instance of large-scale looting of graves in Melos during the Greek War of Independence, see Dümmler 1886, p. 30. According to Dümmler, most of the looted artifacts went to France.

37. Walpole 1818, pp. 541–542.

38. Thiersch 1835, pp. 585–586, pls. A, B; Fiedler 1841, pp. 314–315, pl. V.

39. Müller 1852, pp. 40–41. Note the expression “anti-Hellenic” in lieu of “ante-” or “non-Hellenic.”

40. Pasch van Krienen 1773, e.g., pp. 27, 41, 43, 46; Ross 1855, pp. 53–54 (section entitled “vorgriechischer Gräber?”); 1861, pp. 492–493. See also Ross 1840, p. 161, n. 15.

the image of the Asiatic Venus, nude and with the arms crossed, such as we find it equally in Phoenicia, Aramaea, and Babylonia. These figurines,” Lenormant concluded, “certainly are not of Greek origin.”⁴¹ Later scholars, after the mid-1870s, would notice certain oddities and mistakes in the claims of Lenormant, Ross, Müller, and Walpole. They would call attention, for example, to the fact that no figurines had been found outside the Cyclades since the piece described by Walpole. Nor did figurines ever appear to be made of lead (as Ross had thought) or of clay (as Ross again had wondered, following Müller, who may have been misled by Walpole).⁴² From the 1830s to the 1860s, however, bizarre speculations like those I summarize above, dominated scholarly debate.

The discourse around stone tools has Finlay as its central figure. Finlay (1799–1875) purchased his first obsidian blade on Ios in 1837, having earlier wondered about bits of obsidian he picked up at the tumulus of Marathon. Three decades later, the collection, housed in Finlay’s home in Attica, had grown to hundreds of pieces⁴³ and had come to include a variety of stone artifacts, in addition to an axe made of pure copper derived from Euboea. Finlay’s collection became the focus of much scholarly interest, which I discuss further below.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries bits of obsidian were frequently noticed in ancient sites around the Aegean. The material was not, however, always recognized as obsidian. Pasch van Krienen, for instance, mentioned blades from a hard, black-colored material, but it was two-thirds of a century later when Ross identified this material as obsidian.⁴⁴ Nor were such pieces thought to be vestiges of an era that preceded history.⁴⁵ In 1839, Finlay exposed as ludicrous the belief, which had held sway until then, that the blades “found in considerable quantity in the tumulus of Marathon [were] Persian arrow-heads.”⁴⁶ Finlay rejected this theory on historical grounds—he had found similar pieces in places untouched by the Persians, and Colonel William Martin Leake had informed him that such artifacts occur elsewhere in the world as well, “particularly in Egypt and in Ireland.” Finlay was told by “[a]n accomplished nobleman passing through Athens . . . that they exist in great number at Elsdon in Northumberland, and the finest collection of them can be seen in the museum of Copenhagen, amongst Scandinavian antiquities.” In Greece, Finlay concluded, obsidian artifacts appear to have been “parts of the weapons and instruments of domestic economy used by the inhabitants of the country who preceded the Hellenes and Pelasgi.” On another occasion Finlay also suggested

41. Lenormant 1866a, pp. 272–273; 1867a, p. 19.

42. See, e.g., Köhler 1878, p. 7; 1884, p. 161; Wolters 1891, p. 55.

43. Dumont 1892b, p. 21: “plus de quatre cents échantillons”; Runnels 2008, p. 12: “730 items.”

44. Pasch van Krienen 1773, e.g., pp. 27, 41, 43, 46; Ross 1840, p. 161, n. 15; 1855, p. 54, n. 6.

45. Keep in mind that in the 1830s

only Scandinavian scholars possessed a concept of “prehistory” and a word for it; see Rowley-Conwy 2006. Some French naturalists who excavated caves had a somewhat comparable concept. For example, Marcel de Serres (1780–1862) divided the human past into an “ante-diluvian” and a “post-diluvian, or historical period”; see Cohen 1999, pp. 44, 257, n. 26; also Schnapp 1997, pp. 293–294. In English, the concept

and the word “prehistory” were introduced by Daniel Wilson in 1851; see Kehoe 1991; Rowley-Conwy 2006. They did not acquire wide currency, however, until the late 1860s, following the publication of John Lubbock’s first edition of *Pre-historic Times* in 1865.

46. Finlay 1839, p. 392. For specific references to the “Persian arrowheads” theory, see Finlay 1869, pp. 7–8; Runnels 2008, pp. 16–17.

that such pieces might have formed the armature of threshing sledges, “as the case still is in some places in Asia.”⁴⁷ What of their presence in the fill of the Marathon tumulus? The pieces “were mixed with the soil when it was heaped up by the soldiers of Aristides.” The natural source of the material—flint or obsidian, Finlay was uncertain at the time⁴⁸—remained a mystery until the 1860s.

Thus, in his one-page “Note” of 1839, which was appended to a long article “On the Battle of Marathon,” Finlay at once developed an archaeological hypothesis (the mixing of deposits from different eras) and acknowledged that human presence in Greece had a deep past, predating the Greeks and even the legendary Pelasgians. Or so an optimistic historian of scientific practices would assert today, and he might even add that the 1830s were a “seminal” decade for the developing field of prehistory in general, since the period witnessed the publication of such groundbreaking works as Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology* (1830–1833) and Christian Jurgensen Thomsen’s contribution to the *Ledetraad* (1836),⁴⁹ as well as a growing sense that time could be divided into two epochs, a “historical” one and a much longer one that preceded history.⁵⁰ Finlay’s “Note” has the ring, indeed the economy, of a mid-20th-century archaeological argument: a problem is identified, background knowledge and field observations follow, and multifarious threads of material evidence are brought together to produce a novel claim about a remote, prehistorical past. No one before Finlay appears to have done this for Greece. Even in the 1850s, for example, Müller’s manual (first published in German in 1830, and posthumously improved), began with a brief consideration of the Cyclopean works of the country, which Müller regarded “as the oldest works of Greek hands . . . for the most part erected by the Pelasgians, the aboriginal but afterwards subjugated inhabitants.”⁵¹ Finlay’s “Note” is a “first” indeed.

The pursuit of “firsts,” however, is only a step away from history in its whiggish mode. It belongs to an idiom of historical narrative all too eager to celebrate “likenesses between past and present, instead of being vigilant for unlikenesses.”⁵² It produces orderly, linear continuities between the past and the present and it overlooks discontinuities, circularities, and disorder, all of which have been the norm. It is, of course, the favorite idiom of the archaeologist-now-turned-historian. The fact is that Finlay’s “Note” had no sequel. For about three decades after its publication, no one paid attention to the claim about a deep, pre-Hellenic and pre-Pelasgian (in Finlay’s terms) past in the Aegean region. Archaeological discoveries made during those decades were accommodated, as a rule, within the prevailing

47. Finlay’s suggestion about the use of stone blades in threshing sledges is preserved in Ross 1855, p. 54.

48. Finlay corrected himself on this matter three decades later; see Finlay 1869, p. 16.

49. Thomsen 1836; the system of the “Three Ages” is described on pp. 57–63. Note that the English translation of this work (Thomsen

1848) deviated in many points from the Danish original; see Rowley-Conwy 2004.

50. See, e.g., Schnapp 1997, pp. 293–295; Cohen 1999, pp. 44–45.

51. Müller 1852, pp. 20–21.

52. Butterfield 1931, p. 12; see also p. 29: “By seizing upon those personages and parties in the past whose ideas seem the more analogous to our own,

and by setting all these out in contrast with the rest of the stuff of history, [the whig historian] has his organization and abridgement of history ready-made and has a clean path through the complexity [of the past].” For the collocation “whig(gish) history” and its discontents, see Jardine 2003, pp. 125–128.

chronological and historical framework. For instance, in 1862 an article on the cemetery of Chalandriani, on the Cycladic island of Syros, concluded that the excavated graves belonged to political exiles of the Romans, people who “died eighteen centuries ago, martyrs for their national freedom.”⁵³ In 1867, Lenormant once more pondered the old theory that the obsidian pieces seen at Marathon were arrowheads of the Persians.⁵⁴ Finally, Alfred Biliotti and August Salzmänn’s finds from their excavations at Ialysos, Rhodes (1868–1871), were registered by the British Museum as “Greco-Phoenician.”⁵⁵

PROMISES OF A “STONE AGE”

The stage was transformed, however, in the course of the 1860s, especially after the middle of the decade. Articles that appeared in 1867 began by promising the reader the existence of a prehistoric period in Greece, a “Stone Age” indeed. Lenormant, for instance, was convinced that remains of the Stone Age “will soon be found in great quantity . . . the moment the attention of the travelers traversing Greece, and of the antiquarians residing there, will be drawn to this kind of research.”⁵⁶ Dumont echoed the same conviction: “The Orient too had its Stone Age, still awaiting curious intellects to study it.”⁵⁷ Lenormant had already found in the countryside, and had bought from antiquities dealers several stone weapons and tools. These included flint blades and triangular spear points from Mt. Hymettos in Attica and from Patras; a flint blade from the plain of Megara; part of an axe from Gythion; an almond-shaped flint axe said to come from deposits of Quaternary sands near Megalopolis (“worked exactly like those of diluvian age from the vicinity of Abbeville”); and another fragmentary piece, “a form fairly common amid the stone axes of the island of Java, but encountered very rarely in other countries.”⁵⁸ In Ios Lenormant bought from an islander a core of obsidian (“the most curious discovery I made on Ios”), compared it to cores from Mexico he had just seen in Paris, wondered about the source of the raw material (Melos or Santorini?), and mentioned his acquisition in his report to the Emperor, Napoleon III, on the French scientific mission that attended the eruption of the Santorini volcano in 1866.⁵⁹ Dumont reported on comparable discoveries. Suddenly, Greece emerged replete with vestiges of a past “earlier than legend and earlier than history.”⁶⁰

For the French scholars in Greece in the 1860s and early 1870s, stone tools were unmistakable vestiges of the Stone Age. What of the Bronze Age, however? In the publications of the period one finds almost no mention of the Bronze Age. The reason is simple: in order to claim the existence of a Bronze Age in the Aegean region, scholars thought they had to find bronze (or at least copper) artifacts, and those had not yet been found. In 1867, Dumont knew of only one such piece, the axe made of pure copper in Finlay’s collection.⁶¹ Three years later a second tool made of pure copper was found, this time in Santorini, in a context that until then had yielded only stone tools and was, therefore, firmly believed to date to the Stone Age (for details, see p. 102, below).

53. See Pappadopoulos 1862, pp. 227–228.

54. See Lenormant 1867b.

55. Myres 1933, p. 272. See also Fitton 1996, p. 31.

56. Lenormant 1867a, p. 16.

57. Dumont 1867a, p. 356.

58. Lenormant 1867a, pp. 17–18.

59. Lenormant 1866a, p. 282; 1867a, pp. 18–19. The obsidian sources of Melos had entered scholarly consciousness with the publications of Théodore Virlet (1800–1894) and Fiedler about their explorations of the Cyclades; see Puillon de Boblaye and Virlet 1833, p. 290; Fiedler 1841, pp. 389–390. Both Virlet and Fiedler had found obsidian in Santorini as well: Puillon de Boblaye and Virlet 1833, pp. 261–263, 270–272, 284; Fiedler 1841, esp. pp. 466 and 573–574, where the superior qualities of the Melian material are also acknowledged. See also p. 103, below.

60. Dumont 1867b, p. 141.

61. Dumont (1867b, p. 146) discussed Finlay’s copper axe in a section headed “Bronze Age.” He suggested, however, that “this precious object” should date to the end of the Neolithic period.

In his report to Napoleon III on the mission to Santorini, published in August 1866, Lenormant emphatically dismissed the view that ancient buildings on the island had been found buried under the layers of tephra:⁶²

It is not under the layer of the pumice-like tuff, in places more than 50 meters thick, but on the surface of that layer that we find the objects we can attribute to the civilization of the Canaanites, the first occupants of the soil of Calliste. . . . Tombs [entirely different from those of the Hellenic period, and] reproducing, on the contrary, the sepulchral customs habitual in the Syrian necropolises are dug into the very body of the tuff.⁶³

In other words, he believed that Santorini could not have been inhabited before the 15th century B.C., when Canaanites had established themselves on the island. Within months, however, Lenormant retracted those assertions, as we shall see.

In the company of the geologists and other scientists who came to Santorini to study the volcano in the wake of the 1866 eruption, some of the island's collectors and intellectuals—the mayor of Oia, Sigouras Alafouzos, and doctors Iossif Dekigallas (De Cigalla) and Nikolaos Nomikos—were rapidly transformed into archaeologists. They excavated a complex of buildings in Therasia in early fall 1866, kept records of the finds and described their contexts, drew a stratigraphic section and plans of the buildings, collected potsherds and organic residues, and sent samples to Paris. They also communicated the results of their work to the Academy of Athens and, through Lenormant, to the Académie des Inscriptions and the Académie des Sciences in Paris and to the journal *Revue Archéologique*. They also debated the nature of the buildings (tombs or houses?) and their stratigraphic position (did they lie under the tephra of the great eruption, or had they been built into it?), and wavered for some time (“how can one, on the simple testimony of workmen, accept a fact that does not accord with history?”).⁶⁴ By the end of October 1866, however, after a second round of excavations, the doubts had been put to rest: the buildings had clearly been buried by the tephra of the volcanic eruption, and Dekigallas concluded his new report by speculating that the burial occurred “at the latest in Abraham’s times. Therefore, the buildings in question are among the most ancient monuments preserved in the entire world.”⁶⁵

62. I give below an abbreviated account of the discoveries in Santorini following the 1866 volcanic eruption, for the subject has been thoroughly treated by Iris Tzachili (2006a, esp. pp. 47–81). See also Tzachili 2005; 2006b. For a brief yet informative summary, see Treuil 1996, pp. 408–409.

63. Lenormant 1866a, pp. 270–271. According to Lenormant (1866a, p. 270), the claims dismissed in the passage I quoted had been made by Jean B.

Bory de Saint-Vincent some three decades earlier. See also Dumont 1867b, p. 147. But where and when Bory de Saint-Vincent (1778–1846) made those claims remains an elusive matter for me as much as it has been for Tzachili (see esp. Tzachili 2006a, p. 205, n. 161). For questions regarding Bory de Saint-Vincent’s activities in Santorini in 1829, see Tzachili 2005, pp. 234–235; 2006a, pp. 33–35.

64. De Cigalla 1866, p. 643. The

structures were first exposed by workmen quarrying pozzolana from a source in the Alafouzos estates; see the communication of Nomikos to the Academy of Athens, reproduced in Tzachili 2006a, p. 192.

65. See Tzachili 2006a, pp. 196–198, for a reprint of Dekigallas from *Πανδώρα* no. 399, 1866. The venture of the Thera antiquities dealers is documented in detail in Tzachili 2006a, pp. 63–64, 111–112.

And so, before year's end, Lenormant announced the "discovery of ante-historic constructions in the island of Therasia." Quoting in translation large sections of the reports of Nomikos and Dekigallas, he elegantly admitted his earlier blunder, "for the duty of every savant is, when new facts make him see that he was misled on a point, to confess so aloud and proclaim above all the truth."⁶⁶ The buildings in Therasia were older than the Phoenician colonization in the 15th century B.C., and this made them "the most ancient vestiges of primitive humanity yet found on the soil of Greece, apart from some stone weapons, a small number, which one could not assign even to an approximate epoch." Lenormant, moreover, was impressed by the cultural advancement of these settlers: "we are not witnessing pure savages, like the first inhabitants of our Gaul, who left remains inside caves," he observed. Even though they lived in the Stone Age (for no metal tools or weapons had been found in the excavations), these people had a ceramic industry, permanent and regularly constructed houses, domestic stock, and fields of wheat and barley. Moreover, they were accomplished mariners well in advance of the Phoenicians. It is to peoples of that age, Lenormant concluded, that the ancient legend of the Argonauts must be related.⁶⁷

The view that the buildings discovered under the tephra at Therasia belonged to the Stone Age held sway for some time. It was adopted by Ferdinand Fouqué, who expanded the excavation in 1867 and confirmed with authoritative observations the stratigraphic position of the structures that had been unearthed by the Theran antiquarians.⁶⁸ When Schliemann visited Therasia in 1870, he too was led to believe that those structures—which had by then mysteriously disappeared—dated to the Stone Age.⁶⁹ But that conclusion would be challenged. New excavations by the French School of Athens in the south of Thera, in the area of Akrotiri, revealed another building in a preeruption stratigraphic context, and from the fill of that building the excavators, Claude-Henri Gorceix and Henri Mamet, retrieved, along with two obsidian blades, a copper saw. In view of this "most curious discovery, made under the eyes of one of us," Gorceix noted, Fouqué's chronological conclusions are in need of revision and further research may thus be required.⁷⁰ Some time later, Fouqué experimented with the saw and determined that it was made of pure copper. In his monumental *Santorin et ses éruptions* (1879), he no longer spoke of a Stone Age. The ruins excavated near Akrotiri, he admitted, must belong to the age of copper, albeit to a time when metallurgy was still in its infancy. He still was skeptical about the significance one could attach to a single metallic find.⁷¹

Fouqué also had been to Akrotiri, where in the spring of 1867 he explored the area "foot by foot" and even excavated a little, following exposed walls along ravine scarps. He collected the artifacts from these investigations, mainly obsidian pieces and pottery. Once more, no metal was found, except for two tiny gold ringlets that Fouqué's Theran guide handed to him. The report of these explorations is remarkably detailed and contains much more than stratigraphic observations. Fouqué illustrated, in lithographed photographs, a dozen stone tools (Fig. 1) and a larger number

66. Lenormant 1866b, pp. 423, 425. See also Anon. 1867.

67. Lenormant 1866b, pp. 431–432.

68. Fouqué 1867, esp. pp. 230–241, 245. See also Fouqué 1869, pp. 928–929.

69. Tzachili 2006a, pp. 70–71, where Schliemann's purchases of curiosities, including stone tools, from Alafouzos are also itemized. For the disappearance of the Therasia prehistoric structures by 1870, see Tzachili 2005, pp. 249–250.

70. Gorceix 1870, pp. 201–202. The results of Gorceix and Mamet's excavations were published by Fouqué (1879, pp. 108–123). For the presentation of the 1866–1870 excavations in Santorini in the Greek press of the time, see Sophronidou 2006, pp. 211–217.

71. Fouqué 1879, pp. 121, 124.

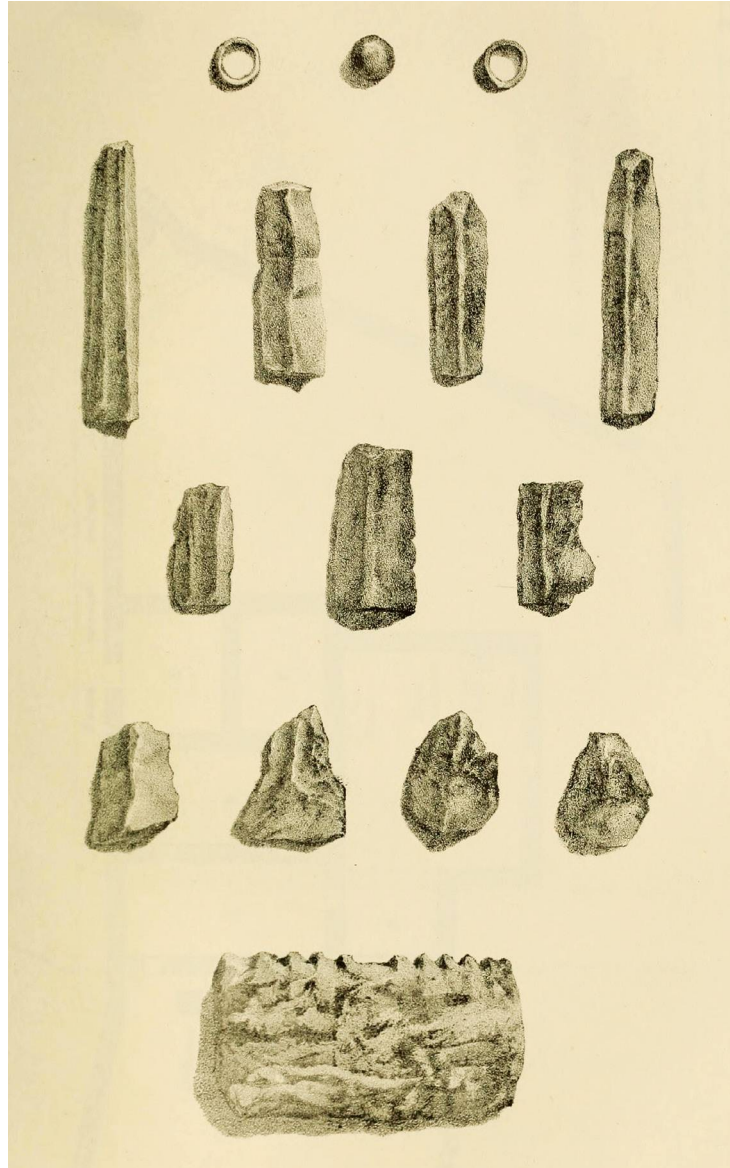


Figure 1. Fouqué’s illustration of gold objects and stone tools from Thera. Fouqué 1867, p. 242

of prehistoric pots and sherds. Having searched for vitreous rocks in the lava deposits of Santorini, he concluded that none matched the quality of the material from which the tools were made: “One must go to Melos to find a volcanic rock that could furnish the obsidian of the knives and arrowheads of Akrotiri.”⁷² Nor did sources of other siliceous rocks exist on the island. All flaked stone tools, therefore, came to Santorini from across the sea, perhaps from Melos.⁷³ Moreover, such tools had been fashioned with much greater skill than their French counterparts: “the only tools of their kind [the Santorini tools] could be compared with are those discovered in Mexico, which were still manufactured at the time of the Spanish conquest.”⁷⁴ Fouqué also described the gold ringlets and their method of manufacture, and concluded that they constituted evidence for “relations with the nearby continents, probably with Asia Minor.”⁷⁵ When he analyzed

72. Fouqué 1867, pp. 247–248.

73. See n. 59, above.

74. Fouqué 1867, pp. 245–246.

75. Fouqué 1867, pp. 242, 247.

the pottery, he did what was sensible for a geologist (and had never before been tried on pottery from Greece): he distinguished five categories, plus a few oddities, according to the composition of the ceramic pastes, and he discussed specific pieces in terms of those categories. Because, moreover, he found no clays of suitable plasticity in Santorini, he concluded that the majority of the pottery had to have come from elsewhere (he was later to correct himself on this matter).⁷⁶ Finally, bringing together diverse observations on the geomorphology of Santorini, Fouqué cautiously suggested that the great eruption should have occurred about 2000 B.C., and certainly before the Phoenician colonization in the 15th century B.C.⁷⁷

Work on Santorini was suspended after June 1870. A few years later, while on a geological expedition to Thessaly, Gorceix searched once again for polished stone axes. He acquired five pieces, described their properties, sent one of them and casts of two others to France, and speculated that, when such artifacts were in use, the floor of the Thessalian plain was still inundated.⁷⁸ Indeed, a great deal of attention had, since 1860, focused on stone tools and weapons. Dumont adopted John Lubbock's terminology in 1867 and suggested that some of the Greek pieces should be reclassified as belonging to the Palaeolithic epoch.⁷⁹ Gorceix, as well as Fouqué, determined that the obsidian found in Greek sites originated in Melos. But scholars continued to search for other sources. Several years later, Virchow, who was based in Berlin, urged geologists to switch their focus to continental Greece.⁸⁰ Obsidian—"a magnificent block of that substance"—was displayed at the Exhibition of Industry in Athens in 1870.⁸¹ Attention was also drawn to contemporary uses of obsidian and other siliceous stones for tools; Émile Burnouf, for example, supplied evidence about threshing sledges equipped with such stones rather than steel blades.⁸²

Stone tools were delivered to European museums and learned societies, and expert judgment on their authenticity was sought. For example, Lenormant in the 1860s thought he found an entire workshop of flint axes near Orchomenos in Boiotia. He deposited a sample at the Musée des Antiquités Nationales (which was about to be inaugurated at Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris), where Gabriel de Mortillet, curator of the museum, later declared it was not authentic.⁸³ From the other side of the Aegean, Calvert sent Lubbock drawings of *Dinotherium* fossil bones along with "conclusive proofs of the existence of man during the Miocene period." The proofs were dismissed in a session of the Anthropological Institute a few months later.⁸⁴ Authentication of a specimen routinely entailed its presentation at a gathering of a learned society. For instance, at the end of a meeting of the Anthropological Institute in 1871 "the President [John Lubbock] exhibited some stone polished implements of rare beauty from Greece."⁸⁵ Blunders such as Lenormant's and Calvert's were frequently detected at the Royal Institute's meetings, as the following reveals. In presenting to the assembly a series of celts from the colonies, Colonel Augustus Lane Fox also mentioned a piece of "a purely natural form. This, Colonel Fox observed, was the second natural pebble he had received within the week from distant countries; one from India and the other from Greece, both forwarded by intelligent observers."⁸⁶

76. Fouqué 1867, pp. 243–246. After examining the thin sections, Fouqué came to the opposite conclusion, that all the prehistoric pottery on Santorini was manufactured on the island; Fouqué 1879, pp. 125–126, pls. 43–45.

77. Fouqué 1867, pp. 250–251.

78. Gorceix 1873. The superstitions of Thessaly's populations about stone celts, Gorceix also noted, made it difficult for him to acquire a larger sample of such celts.

79. Dumont 1867b, pp. 142–143.

80. See Voss 1876.

81. Burnouf 1872, p. 49.

82. Burnouf 1872. Burnouf (1821–1907) was director of the French School of Athens from 1867 to 1875. For 19th-century threshing sledges armed with siliceous stones, see also Dumont 1892b, p. 24.

83. Lenormant 1866a, p. 273; Mortillet 1883, pp. 175–176.

84. Calvert 1874, p. 127. For the dismissal, see Busk 1874, p. 513.

85. *JRAI* 1, 1872, p. 348.

86. Lane Fox 1873, pp. 348–349.

“LAKE-DWELLING FEVER”

Suddenly, in the late 1860s, Finlay’s collection became an important point of reference for archaeologists. Dumont described briefly the collection’s principal holdings in 1869 and, at greater length, in 1872.⁸⁷ Dumont and others frequently invoked the collection and paid dues to Finlay’s foresight. The historian himself, at age 70, published in Greek *Observations on Prehistoric Archaeology in Switzerland and Greece*, a 32-page booklet intended for distribution among Greek speakers, especially schoolmasters, throughout the eastern Mediterranean.⁸⁸ There, he illustrated a dozen or so pieces from his collection (chiefly stone celts and obsidian blades, but also his axe of pure copper) and noted where he collected or purchased them, or who gave them to him. As the title of the booklet suggests, however, the main point was different, and one that deserves consideration here.

The reports by Ferdinand Keller and his colleagues on the excavations of the Swiss lake dwellings had been published regularly since 1854, but it was not until 1866 that a condensed, up-to-date account in English circulated in book form.⁸⁹ Between 1860 and 1870 many other books appeared that were wholly devoted to, or contained lengthy chapters on, the lake dwellers of Switzerland and other countries. These included the third edition of Lyell’s *Antiquity of Man* (1863), Lubbock’s *Pre-Historic Times* (1865; substantially revised in 1869), and Henri Le Hon’s *L’homme fossile en Europe* (1867). Such publicity is indicative of the sensation caused in Europe by the discovery of “aquatic” populations in the continent’s own past, and that sensation (now known as “lake-dwelling fever” or *Pfahlbaufieber*) is, no doubt, what prompted archaeologists working in Greece to suddenly turn to stone tools and weapons. In 1867, Dumont virtually admitted as much when he wrote of “the great impulse given in these last years to the research of monuments of the Stone Age in France, Switzerland and Germany,” and of the fact that “a new science has rapidly been constituted.” It was now time for the Orient to have its own Stone Age, and even its own lake dwellers. Dumont was confident indeed that the study of the Greek Stone Age would be met with success if Lake Copais in Boiotia were to be drained.⁹⁰

Enter Herodotos and his Lake Prasias story (5.16), which was now celebrated by being repeated from one book and article on “pre-history” to the next.⁹¹ Gustave Deville (1835–1867), a member of the French School of Athens, who undertook an exploration of Aegean Thrace in 1861, was said to have seen pile-dwellings in that area. They were still thought to be in use

87. Reprinted in Dumont 1892a, 1892b.

88. Finlay 1869. The information regarding the booklet’s intended audience appeared in Dumont 1892b, p. 20, and has been confirmed by Runnels (2008, p. 14). In short, Finlay never meant the booklet to be a scientific contribution, or he would have published his *Observations* in a western

language in a European periodical. Runnels published the English manuscript of Finlay’s *Observations* (Runnels 2008), and did so for a good reason: the Greek booklet is difficult to access. I thank Maria Georgopoulou for helping me to locate and reproduce Yale University’s copy in 2001. In quoting in English brief excerpts from the booklet, I resort to Runnels’s transcription of

the English manuscript. For Finlay’s discovery of the Pikermi (Attica) fossil-bearing beds in 1836, see Finlay 1869, pp. 15–16; Runnels 2008, p. 21.

89. Keller 1866.

90. Dumont 1867a, pp. 356, 359.

91. For Finlay’s own English translation of Herodotos’s Prasias story, see Runnels 2008, p. 22.

or perhaps derelict—the fact that few people ever managed to read Deville’s unpublished thesis of his Thracian exploration allowed for hearsay.⁹² In turn, this encouraged rather than hampered speculation about prehistoric pile villages in Lake Prasias and elsewhere, thus giving rise to a potent mirage. Dumont contributed to the fantasy by mentioning the existence of huts built on piles in the middle of Lake Bibeis in Thessaly. They were “still inhabited today”; furthermore, “in Thucydides’ words, the present instructs us about the past. The parts of Greece that preserve the practice show that in the past that practice was widespread.”⁹³ In these circumstances, the Swiss archaeologist Adolph Morlot (1820–1867) determined to resolve once and for all the matter of Lake Prasias and of Herodotos’s veracity. “With the aid of Sir John Lubbock, and others interested in such inquiries, M. Morlot was in the midst of arranging an expedition into Roumelia to dredge in Lake Prasias, when he died . . . an undertaking so unhappily interrupted.”⁹⁴ The hope was then expressed that someone else would carry out the project. Although no such project was actually undertaken, one could still assert in 1870 that “the fishermen of Lake Prasias still inhabit wooden cottages built over the water as in the time of Herodotus.”⁹⁵

That is also to say, when Finlay published his *Observations*, there had been “sightings” of prehistoric lake dwellers still surviving in the backyard of Greece. Finlay appears to have thought little of such “sightings.” “The prehistoric period in Greece is that to which I particularly desire to direct attention,” he wrote, noting also that the appeal of the country’s Classical remains had prevented research into earlier times: “when we contemplate the archaiological riches of Greece in historic times . . . it is not surprising that little attention has been hitherto bestowed on prehistoric remains.”⁹⁶ The main part of Finlay’s booklet was devoted to the finds from one of the Swiss lake settlements, Robenhausen,⁹⁷ which was systematically described stratum by stratum. Stone tools in collections and their folklore provided another focus. With Herodotos as his compass, Finlay also argued that the swamps and lakes of Greece must have abounded in pile dwellers during the Stone and Bronze Ages. He named a dozen estuaries, lagoons, marshes, and lakes around the country, from Boiotia to Akarnania to the Peloponnese, and urged that they should be examined by experienced observers.⁹⁸ He did not invoke “sightings” of still living lake dwellers, but the effect was the same; one now expected lacustrine populations to appear in practically every dampish place.

Whence the *Pfahlbaufieber*, the “fever” about lake dwellers? Why were Europeans from the later 1850s on so fascinated by them? I will offer some suggestions. The circumstances of discovery in Switzerland, first of all, were wondrous, “a very unusual phenomenon in the Alpine districts”: a sequence of accidents containing all the elements requisite of a suspenseful story.⁹⁹ Second, the coincidence with the strange story told by Herodotos was astonishing.¹⁰⁰ Third, thanks to their exceptional state of preservation, the materials retrieved from the Alpine lake bottoms had an extraordinary presence, capturing prehistoric everyday life again for archaeologists and the public alike.¹⁰¹ Fourth, the figure of houses built on wooden platforms surrounded by water (for that is how the matter of proximity to lakeshores had been decided in the 1860s) called to mind many an explorer’s tale of

92. Egger 1862, p. 129; Dumont 1867a, p. 359; see also Dumont 1867b, pp. 144–145; Radet 1901, p. 325.

93. Dumont 1892a, pp. 15–16: “servent encore aux bergers de nos jours”; 1867b, pp. 144–145: “Selon le mot de Thucydide, le présent nous instruit du passé. Les parties de la Grèce qui conservent cet usage nous indiquent qu’autrefois il fut très-répandu.”

94. Stevens 1870, p. 121, repeating virtually verbatim Tylor 1868, pp. 420–421.

95. Stevens 1870, p. 122.

96. Finlay 1869, p. 15; Runnels 2008, p. 20.

97. Located in Lake Pfäffikon, near Zürich, Robenhausen was first excavated in 1857. The finds were described and illustrated in Keller 1866, pp. 37–58, pls. 8–14.

98. Finlay 1869, pp. 17–20; Runnels 2008, pp. 22–23.

99. The circumstances of discovery were described and redescribed, indeed often repeated verbatim, in contemporary treatments of the lake dwellings. See, e.g., Lubbock 1869, p. 166. It is worth reading Keller’s account of 1854, p. 68, or Keller 1866, pp. 11–12, from which my quotation derives.

100. See Tylor 1868, pp. 418–420.

101. Keller 1866, p. 37: “Wonderful to relate, we can walk over the very flooring of these dwellings, abandoned thousands of years ago. We see before us their hearths and their household utensils.”

entire cities built over water by contemporary “savages” in faraway European colonies.¹⁰² Fifth, no doubt, that figure resonated with the biblical imagery of the Great Flood.¹⁰³ Sixth, there was the oddity itself of human beings living over water, an oddity sufficient perhaps to generate expectations that the lake dwellers might be creatures of a distinct variety, even species, rather different from ordinary people. I do not mean that anyone seriously maintained that they *were* a distinct species. Still, I think the European fascination with them presupposes contiguity with such ideas. Consider, for example, the following story, which relates events surrounding the Fifth International Congress of Anthropology and Prehistoric Archaeology in Bologna (1871). The members of the congress visited recently excavated sites of “terremare”—that is, remains of pile dwellings in central Italy, which also were thought at the time to be the work of lacustrine peoples:¹⁰⁴

The members of the Congress were able to study the *terremare* with their own eyes and their own hands, for three large excavations had been suitably prepared, and everyone, armed with a pick or a spade could have the pleasure of excavating from the earth a handful of prehistoric ashes, a potsherd . . . a brooch of bronze . . . Even the ladies . . . could scratch the *terremare* with their little rosy hands.¹⁰⁵

The *terremare* of such a story are hardly anything more than quaint curiosities, leftovers of the dwellings of harmless elves, rather than of a human settlement.

To clarify the issue: despite the swell of polygenist theories¹⁰⁶ around the middle of the 19th century, the Alpine lake dwellers were not, to my knowledge, discussed in polygenist terms. Most of the time, they were framed in the context of social evolutionist ideas. They were thought to belong to a low grade of civilization and were routinely compared to “savages” and “semisavages” in the 19th-century European colonies. Keller also thought that they were “a branch of the Celtic population of Switzerland,” ancestors of the Celts of history (he had already upheld this interpretation in his first report on the lake dwellings).¹⁰⁷ As for the few skulls raised from the muddy lake bottoms, they were “not shown to be different from those of the present inhabitants of the country.”¹⁰⁸ Still, people who lived over water would seem so odd and deviant in their disposition that they might also

102. See, e.g., Stevens 1870, p. 122; see also Keller 1854, pp. 84–85, no. 8211, quoting at length from Captain James Cook’s description of the tools and implements he encountered among the inhabitants of New Zealand in 1769.

103. Creationist scholars at the time (e.g., Southall 1875) argued, however, in favor of a more recent date for the lake dwellings than for Noah’s Ark.

104. See, e.g., Gastaldi 1865; Figuier 1870. The confusion surrounding the term “*terremare*” (or “*terramare*”) was proverbial already in the

1860s: see Gastaldi 1865, pp. vii–viii (“Hence the meaning appears to be ‘soft, marrow-like earth’”), note on p. 23, and *passim*. See also Keller 1878, pp. 370, 390, 397–400. By the early 20th century, if not before, “*terremare*” had become virtually an ethnic label; see Fotiadis 2001, pp. 126, 132, n. 4.

105. See the cited passage from Paolo Mantegazza 1871, in Morigi Govi 1994, p. 41.

106. “Polygenism” is impossible to define in sharp terms even for a limited time period such as the 1860s. Fundamental to it in the mid-19th century

were the premises that different human races descended from different animal genera or that they were created (in the scriptural sense) as separate races. The term “polygenism” was coined ca. 1860, but comparable theories had been rehearsed since the 17th century. For an informative summary of scholarly views, see Cohen 1999, pp. 152–162.

107. Keller 1854, p. 85; 1866, p. 313. But see also the translator’s note on Keller 1866, p. 2, and the discussion in Tylor 1868, pp. 436–437.

108. Tylor 1868, p. 437.

be suspected of descending from an ancestral quasi-aquatic species. Some 18th-century scholars, polygenists *avant la lettre*, had elaborate theories about comparable matters;¹⁰⁹ the figure of the Swiss lake dwellers came to resonate with those theories.

In Europe, the interest—scholarly and public—in lakeside settlements has been kept alive to this day.¹¹⁰ Indeed, few other 19th-century archaeological discoveries appear to have had such lasting effects on the development of prehistoric archaeology as a distinct field of inquiry. In Greece, on the other hand, after the 1860s the lake dwellers commanded little attention.¹¹¹ True, Christos Tsountas (1857–1934) devoted many pages of his book on Mycenaean civilization to tracing vestiges of a former lacustrine way of life among the Mycenaeans. Such vestiges, he argued, constituted evidence that the Mycenaeans descended from the central European lake dwellers.¹¹² Tsountas did not, however, suggest that prehistoric settlements of lake dwellings might still lie undiscovered in the Greek marshlands (even though he may have been exercised about this issue until 1900).¹¹³ As for the “sightings” of the 1860s, they were later dismissed as belonging to modern times, having no ancient pedigree.¹¹⁴

A huge textbook of the early 20th century, developed by Panayiotis Kavvadias for students of the University of Athens, made no mention of lacustrine habitations in Greece, only of those around the Alps. The latter were extensively discussed along with the *terremare* of the Po valley, and were also celebrated in the frontispiece of the book: a photographic reproduction of a model of a lake settlement displayed in the Zurich museum.¹¹⁵ By the 1900s such primitive dispositions had, however, become virtually unthinkable for the origins of Greece. Five decades would pass from the date of Finlay’s publication before anyone would claim to have found remains of lacustrine habitations in an excavation. That the claim came from a scholar, Léon Rey (1887–1954), who, in my view, was intellectually closer to 1869 than to 1919, is perhaps a coincidence. But the fact that the setting for the find was one of the Macedonian marshes—a place, that is, *far away from the core area of Greek prehistory*—is, I suggest, no accident. What by ca. 1920 was unimaginable for the core area was entirely plausible for its primitive periphery.¹¹⁶ And so, despite the poor documentation of the claim (was it perhaps another “sighting”?), lake dwellers and their alleged first cousins, the *terremare*, would flourish for a few years thereafter in the archaeological literature about Macedonia. They would also be remembered on and off during the remainder of the 20th century, and even in the present decade.¹¹⁷ But that story will not be told in the present article.

109. See Cohen 1999, pp. 122–126.

110. For celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the discovery of the Swiss lakeside settlements, see Kaeser 2005. For the incorporation of the lake dwellers in the Swiss national imagery of the 19th century through painting, literature, international exhibitions, and other means, see Arburg 2010.

111. The same holds true for central Europe, where initial excitement and

hopes for discovering lake dwellings gave way to disappointment and oblivion; see Sklenář 1983, p. 74.

112. Tsountas 1893, esp. pp. 185, 197–199, 204–205, 222–226; see also Tsountas and Manatt 1897, pp. 232–233, 250–251, 259–260, 327–334.

113. See Sophronidou 2008, pp. 10–11.

114. E.g., Perrot and Chipiez 1894, p. 114.

115. Kavvadias 1909, pp. 65–70. For alleged models of lake dwellings from the Cyclades see Kavvadias 1909, p. 602, and figs. on pp. 481–482. For Kavvadias (1849–1928), reformer of the Greek archaeological service and professor of archaeology in Athens (1904–1922), see Petrakos 1987, pp. 282–284.

116. See Fotiadis 2001, pp. 123, 126–127.

117. See Karkanis et al. 2011.

WAYS OF AUTHENTICATING SCHOLARSHIP AND ARTIFACTS

Let me turn to an issue of a different kind, one that impressed me as I read the 19th-century archaeological accounts, and, to my knowledge, remains uncommented upon in the historiography of our discipline. In the later 19th century, scholarly agency and authority often assumed the form of a collectivity. At least, that is how scholars frequently represented themselves in their published work. I will illustrate this point with an excerpt drawn from the *Comptes Rendus* of the Académie des Inscriptions of 1872:

M. de Longpérier, reminding the Academy that in the previous meeting he had presented a letter of M. Émile Burnouf related to the agricultural instrument called *alonistra*, which in Greece serves for threshing wheat, adds that Dr. Roulin had, on December 28, 1868, read to the Académie des Sciences a memoir in which he described, after Wilkinson, the sledge now in use among the fellahs of Egypt for thrashing grain. This sledge is armed in its lower side with iron blades, and, according to the opinion of that learned scholar, it could have been equipped with flints in an older period. That which is certain, said M. Roulin, is that in Italy, a little before the beginning of the Christian Era, and probably long after, they used in some provinces a very similar device called *tribulum*, which Varro defined in these terms: “Id fit e tabula lapidibus aut ferro asperata.”¹¹⁸

Who is the author of this account? That is, from whom does the knowledge recorded here originate, and from whom does it derive its authority as scientific knowledge? Is it de Longpérier, Dr. Roulin, Wilkinson, Burnouf, the (unsigned) secretary recording the minutes of the session, all of the above, or perhaps the listening assembly of the Académie?¹¹⁹ Another possibility might be francophone scholars in general. Authorial agency is here dispersed; it is distributed through a society that includes at once named individuals (several of them) and corporate bodies, speakers and audiences, those present at the session, and others who are away. The difficulty one has today in citing this page-long article according to our standard system of citations (author, title, etc.), and the frequently recommended solution, to cite it under the serial title, further underscore that dispersion. To insist on specific authors, whether individuals or corporate bodies, for this and for countless other 19th-century scholarly texts, would be to misread the conversational conditions of their production. It appears instead that scholarly knowledge often acquired scientific status *in circulation* and *while circulating*. Scholars adopted one another’s statements and repeated them, often verbatim and without quotation marks around them and, equally often, without acknowledging, or being concerned about, an “original” source. Moreover, this was the case with articles as much as with books, where long parts of letters, as well as excerpts from other books and articles, were frequently grafted onto the body of the narrative.¹²⁰ The authority of scientific knowledge emerged in the enfolding of this practice, as value accrued instantly to the bits of knowledge that circulated and to the assembly of scholars among whom they circulated. Moreover, the practice

118. *CRAI* 3rd series, vol. 1, 1872, pp. 60–61.

119. A General Loysel is also mentioned a few lines after the passage I quoted as contributing bits of information to the same account.

120. See any of the books cited in the last few pages, e.g., Gastaldi 1865, Lubbock 1869, or, for that matter, Schliemann 1881; see also nn. 94, 99, above.

had its counterpart in the circulation of the prehistoric artifacts themselves, and of fossils, minerals, botanical specimens, and the like. Stone celts and other objects changed ownership through sale but also, especially, through gift exchange, forging scholarly relationships in their wake, and also being declared authentic or inauthentic—true or false, good gifts or treacherous gifts—along the way.

A RADICAL CHANGE OF SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

I began this essay with questions about the field of prehistoric archaeology in Greece before Schliemann, and about the possibility that, had it not been for his discoveries in the Troad and the Argolid, that archaeology might have evolved along a different path. It should be clear now that there was a time—let us provisionally call it a “phase”—in the history of the prehistoric archaeology of Greece, before the appearance of Schliemann, when investigative practices and the knowledge they gave rise to were distinctly different from their subsequent forms. That “phase” began in the first half of the 19th century, but research was concentrated in a short period of about 15 years: a period that lasted from the early 1860s, when the rumor about lake dwellings in Thrace began to spread, to the mid-1870s, when “King Priam’s Treasure” and the “Royal Tombs” of Mycenae were discovered. In the wake of these discoveries, scholarly as well as public interest worldwide took a radical turn. I will briefly discuss salient features of that turn below, but first I will summarize some characteristics of the “phase” before the mid-1870s, and I also address my “what if” question.

Collectors of prehistoric stone artifacts, of fossils and minerals, and of pottery already existed around the Aegean before 1850. Yet, with the exception of Walpole, Finlay, and the scholars associated with King Otto, collectors did not record their thoughts on the nature or age of such objects. It took decades for one scholar to respond to another’s speculations. The Archaeological Society of Athens (established in 1837) hardly took notice of such “non-Hellenic” oddities as primitive stone figurines, tools, and gems; it directed its energies instead to the care of the monuments of Classical Athens.¹²¹ But, starting in the 1860s, a small number of French scholars, most of them associated with the French School of Athens (Burnouf, Deville, Dumont, Gorceix, and Mamet), became interested in prehistoric antiquities in Greece. The French School (created in 1846) was at the time the only European archaeological institution in the Mediterranean east of Rome.¹²² Excavations were not considered a crucial part of its mission, as reports make clear. Historical and geographical research gained importance alongside philological and epigraphical investigations, and they required travel and exploration of expansive, ever more remote areas. Such explorations were of scientific value and also suited the mission of the French School “as an advanced sentinel of French spirit and French civilization in the cradle of European civilization and at the doorstep of the Orient.”¹²³ And so the scholars who attended to prehistory did not as a rule undertake excavations, the work of Gorceix and Mamet in Santorini having been conducted primarily in the name of geology by the French

121. See Petrakos 1987, pp. 23–42.

122. For the politics surrounding the creation of the French School of Athens and its life in the 19th century, see Radet 1901; see also Valenti 2001.

123. Memorandum dated 1858, quoted in Radet 1901, p. 127; for other relevant memoranda from the period, see pp. 126–128.

School's short-lived "section des sciences."¹²⁴ These scholars went on trips and solitary expeditions, they collected, they shipped specimens to each other and to museums at home, and they communicated their findings at the sessions of the Académies, usually through correspondence. They wrote with fervor about primitive pots, polished stone axes, obsidian blades, and arrowheads, pointing out their beauty and degree of technical perfection. Having adopted the view that in the origins of each people one encounters the same primitive manners, they provocatively theorized that the Greeks could not be different in this from other peoples.¹²⁵

Other Europeans in Greece besides the French had already engaged in collecting stone artifacts and in asking questions about them (e.g., Finlay, Ross, Fiedler). They all reflected on the similarities between the prehistoric antiquities of Greece and those of other countries—Switzerland, France, the British Isles, Scandinavia, Egypt, Java, Mexico. They also determined that the obsidian found in Greek archaeological sites came from Melos; island-hopping in the prehistoric Aegean, they concluded, was a common practice well before Phoenician traders established themselves in the archipelago. Still other Europeans, e.g., in Paris, London, Berlin, and Zurich, kept abreast of discoveries and prospects in the Aegean region, and some of them (like Morlot and Lubbock) planned to dredge up pile dwellings from the bottom of Greek lakes. There were appeals for closely examining all Greek marshlands (Finlay), for expanding the search for obsidian sources (Virchow), for uncovering the secrets of stone blade manufacture (Burnouf). All this, moreover, was in step with contemporary developments in western Europe, following the discoveries in the Swiss lakes, the excavation at Brixham Cave in southwestern England, the reevaluation of Jacques Boucher de Perthes's finds in the Somme Valley (northern France) and, lest we forget, the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859.¹²⁶

Around 1870, then, scholars envisioned, indeed had embarked on, a future for prehistoric archaeology of Greece that differed substantially from the path it eventually followed. Upon the discoveries of "Priam's Troy" and "Agamemnon's Mycenae" in the mid-1870s, that vision rapidly faded and plans for its realization were forgotten. Does this mean that without Schliemann's discoveries at Hisarlik and Mycenae, prehistoric archaeology of Greece might have followed a different course? Does it mean, for instance, that systematic research on the Stone Age and the secrets of stone technology would have been undertaken in the last quarter of the 19th century, that significant advances might have been made by 1900, that Stone Age archaeology in 20th-century Greece might have flourished and that it might have shared in the prestige accorded to the exploration of Bronze Age sites? Does it mean, further, that the discipline of Aegean prehistory, in the long run (especially during the 20th century), would have been less captivated by the splendor of its Bronze Age palatial societies? That it would closely depend on wisdom gained from research well beyond the Aegean region and that it would interpret its findings in the light of that wisdom? Does it mean, finally, that the prehistory of the Aegean region would be prized for its own unique features, including its great antiquity, rather than for being the "ancestor" of Classical Greece?

124. For the French School's "section des sciences," see Radet 1901, p. 157.

125. The most succinct expression of this is found in Dumont 1867a, p. 356.

126. The Anglophone bibliography on the last three matters is extensive. See Meltzer 2005, pp. 442–450, for a summary and sources. For Boucher de Perthes, see Cohen and Hublin 1989; for the momentous visit of John Evans and Joseph Prestwich to St. Acheul in 1859, see the superb essay by Gamble and Kruszinski (2009); see also Gamble and Moutsiou 2011, esp. pp. 43–52.

Such questions have no answers. Their true merit is that they identify possibilities that were precluded by the celebrity of Schliemann's discoveries in the scholarly world, and they thus make us think about what we routinely take for granted. Such questions suggest that the prehistoric archaeology of Greece was not destined to develop along the path that it followed from the mid-1870s on. Whether this development enhanced or confined the field is not the point; it could have been influenced, in part or in whole, by different queries and priorities and by different understandings of what is archaeologically significant.

That said, I turn now to the new prospects created by Schliemann's discoveries. In the wake of those discoveries, scholarly work shifted onto questions about the chronology, origin, and ethnological affinities of the Trojan and Mycenaean finds, and about their relevance to the Homeric epic and Greece's "heroic age." Such issues stimulated research until the end of the 19th century.¹²⁷ More important is another shift: prehistoric research in Greece became significant not only for the history of Greece, but also for the foundation it provided for the history of Europe. Exactly how this shift occurred, I do not claim to know and, certainly, cannot systematically explore here. The matter requires treatment by historians thoroughly familiar with 19th-century European society, ideologies, and political agendas. What follows is a limited descriptive outline, with little attempt at interpretation.

Schliemann discovered the "Royal Tombs" of Mycenae in 1876. In the next two decades excavations at Mycenae expanded and those at sites yielding analogous material (mainly comparable pottery, sealstones, and ornaments, but also tombs) multiplied; by the 1880s German archaeologists had conceived of a "Mycenaean culture."¹²⁸ By the 1880s, too, most scholars had conceded that Mycenae and related sites predated by some centuries what had been considered as the earliest Greek art. Furthermore, a few scholars argued for a cultural sequence, with Troy representing the earliest, "entirely primitive" stage, followed by that of Santorini and the Cyclades, and culminating with the Mycenaean culture.¹²⁹ In the terms of 1880s scholarship, the latter was "pre-Hellenic," "pre-Homeric," and, occasionally, "prehistoric."¹³⁰ Nevertheless, its palaces, its warriors, and their heroic ethos were *re-membered* in the historical period. It was a culture, therefore, about which classical philology had much to say, especially after the palace in Tiryns came to light (1884).¹³¹ Now, philology was at that

127. For Troy see, e.g., the letter from Virchow in Schliemann 1881, pp. 510–512; Blind 1884, pp. 357–360; Sayce 1884, pp. x, xii; Clarke 1885; Collignon 1892, pp. 11–16. For Mycenae, see the summary by Myres (1933, pp. 278–287); also Ridgeway 1896, esp. p. 80: "What people produced the Mycenaean civilization is the most important problem in archaic Greek history."

128. Furtwängler and Loeschcke 1886, p. 48; Dümmler and Studniczka 1887.

129. Dümmler 1886, esp. pp. 36–37; also Dumont and Chaplain 1888, pp. 69–70. "Entirely primitive" is my translation of Dumont's *toute primitive* (Dumont and Chaplain 1888, p. 69). Biliotti and Salzman's finds from Ialysos, Rhodes, also found a place in the emerging cultural sequence; see Furtwängler and Loeschcke 1886, pp. 1–18; Dumont and Chaplain 1888, pp. 43–46.

130. "Præ-Dædalian" was another name for what we know as "Mycenaean"; see Newton 1880, pp. 292–293. Schol-

ars in general avoided the term "prehistoric" when writing about Mycenaean culture. Among the exceptions, most notable are Schliemann's, especially his publication of Tiryns (1885). See also Gardner 1880, p. 97.

131. For Tiryns and its immediate affect on philological wisdom, see Myres 1933, pp. 274–275. As Myres stressed, the ruins of the palace offered scope for comparisons with Homer's "House of Odysseus."

time a discipline of great rigor and authority, a paragon of scientific practice; besides, its work bore directly—so late 19th-century wisdom had it—on the origin of latter-day European civilization. And so, when philologists turned their attention to Mycenaean archaeology, the latter became a serious subject. It, too, now appeared to be relevant to the issue of European origins, insofar as it would supply bits of evidence pertinent to that issue.¹³²

In short, between ca. 1880 and the end of the 19th century, Mycenaean culture acquired the status of the “substratum” upon which Classical Greece grew. Thus, archaeological research pertaining to Mycenae and related sites gained significant scholarly prestige. I find it relevant to the rise of such prestige that the results of this research were now, for the first time, sanctioned by associations of specialists (some of them sponsored by powerful states); they were published in newly created specialized periodicals issued by those associations and addressing a new world of professional philologists, historians, and archaeologists dedicated to the study of ancient Greece.¹³³

What of the earlier stages? The Cycladic culture remained in focus; Ferdinand Dümmler, Ulrich Köhler, Theodore Bent, Paul Wolters, Tsountas, and others published work pertinent to it between 1880 and 1900. Others, such as, Arthur Evans, contended that the culture of the Cyclades was ancestral to the Mycenaean, and was, therefore, also relevant to the vital question of European origins.¹³⁴ Interest in Minos and Crete became significant as well.¹³⁵ But no one seemed to have cared anymore about the Stone Age that had so much exercised scholars before the discoveries at Hisarlik and Mycenae; no one, that is, until Tsountas, who in 1900 published a group of stone celts that had eroded out of a slope near Megalopolis in the Peloponnese.¹³⁶ By that time, however, world interest had turned to Bronze Age Crete.

THE IMPERMANENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The knowledge of the prehistory of Greece produced during the 1860s and early 1870s became obsolete, and the “phase” of prehistoric research considered in this article was forgotten over time. Sir John Linton Myres, in his “Retrospect,” dedicated one paragraph to all that happened before Schliemann, implying that it belonged to a kind of “prehistory” of the discipline: “There had indeed been a few isolated discoveries, before 1871, of

132. David Hogarth identified the relevance of Mycenaean archaeology to the issue of Europe’s origins with the greatest clarity. Questions about the career of the Mycenaean civilization, he observed, “concern the world at large; for they bear in general on the mysterious origins of our civilization in Europe, and in particular on that seeming miracle of spontaneous growth, the

art and culture of the Hellenes”; Hogarth 1899, p. 243.

133. These periodicals were the *Mitteilungen* of the German Archaeological Institute, Athens Section (first issued in 1876), the *Bulletin* of the French School of Athens (1877), the *Journal of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies* (1880), and the (improved and significantly augmented)

Ephemeris of the Archaeological Society of Athens (1883).

134. Evans 1896, pp. 915–917.

135. For a summary of late 19th-century explorations in Crete, see Treuil 1996, pp. 411–412; see also Evans 1896.

136. Tsountas 1901, including a plate with photographs of the celts (probably printed with the halftone technique in its early stages).

prehistoric antiquity in Greece.¹³⁷ He briefly mentioned Finlay's booklet and collection, and dispensed with Santorini in a single sentence.¹³⁸ Georges Perrot was among the last scholars to summarize the achievements of the period, including the finds of Santorini, and to point out the blunders.¹³⁹ But, in sharp contrast with scholars of the 1860s, Perrot was pessimistic about the prospects of Stone Age research in Greece. By comparison with other countries, such as Mexico or Scandinavia, he wrote,

the objects of this kind are not very numerous here, they are so few indeed that until these recent times one did not even know where to search for them. We cannot go looking for them in megalithic monuments. Greece and the littoral of Asia Minor have neither menhirs nor cromlechs, nor do they have dolmens. As for the villages of pile dwellings . . . they belong to the present epoch.¹⁴⁰

The paucity of early prehistoric finds in Greece, in other words, was no longer thought to be illusory or transitory, a side effect of the immense fascination with Classical antiquity. It was given instead the aura of enduring, scientific fact. Or, as Perrot argued, the Greek Stone Age did not last long, because the Greeks learned quickly the utility of metals from their civilized neighbors, the Syro-Cappadocians and the Phoenicians, and progressed accordingly. It did not seem likely, therefore, that prehistoric investigations in Greece would “ever have a chance of being as productive as they have been in the Occident” or that the museum in Athens would ever display a “series of primitive monuments comparable in extent and richness to those, for example, that the museum of Saint-Germain offers to our curiosity.”¹⁴¹ Scholars in the 1890s were negotiating the future shape of archaeology, not just the prehistoric past. In this, of course, they hardly differed from scholars in the 1860s.

One last point: in the 1860s the concepts of “prehistory” and “Stone Age”—indeed the idea that humans had existed on earth a great deal longer than one had hitherto thought—were exciting novelties in the process of becoming tangible realities.¹⁴² It was, I suggested, this momentous circumstance that prompted scholars working in Greece to seek vestiges of prehistoric times, especially of the Stone Age. The significance such remains came to command at the time was, in other words, to a crucial degree exogenous: it originated in, and was largely sustained by, modern circumstances unrelated to the objects themselves. Equally exogenous, however, was the loss of that significance a decade or so later, when research interests and priorities shifted to the new finds in the Troad and the Argolid. The brief 19th-century career of Greece's Stone Age and its material remains thus

137. Myres 1933, p. 271.

138. Myres 1933, p. 272. Finlay's collection was remembered past the 1870s (e.g., in Dumont and Chaplain 1888, pp. 14–15), and Perrot and Chipiez (1894, pp. 116–123) reillustrated some of its holdings. For further early nods to Finlay, but also for notable failures to acknowledge his foresight, see

Runnels 2008, p. 13. For the progressive abandonment of Thera after 1870, see Tzachili 2006a, pp. 82–86, 93–94.

139. Perrot and Chipiez 1894; Santorini is discussed in passages throughout the volume.

140. Perrot and Chipiez 1894, p. 114.

141. Perrot and Chipiez 1894, p. 108. Just before, however (p. 107), Perrot, too, acknowledged the fascination with Classical antiquity as a factor contributing to the dearth of Stone Age finds from Greece.

142. See above p. 111, and works cited in n. 126.

brings home an important point, namely, that significance does not inhere in archaeology's artifacts but it is to a great measure an effect of contextual adhesions external to those artifacts. Yet the emphasis on the Bronze Age, especially on its palatial societies—which has characterized our research and, even more, our teaching and outreach in Aegean prehistory ever since Schliemann—tells a more complicated story. “Yes, we know,” that emphasis seems to suggest, “that the significance of our ancient finds is a complex affair, that it emanates from modern, not just ancient, contexts. But it is a good deal easier to understand significance if it is anchored in a concrete site, artifact, or a long-familiar legend; moreover, this works far better with students and the public than your notion of significance, dispersed as it is through perplexing modern and ancient conditions.” I agree, but I also worry: does not this concretization of significance, its fixing onto particular periods of prehistory and their artifacts, discourage us, today's Aegean prehistorians, from deeper thinking?

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