
MINOAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE ATHENS 2004 OLYMPIC GAMES

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Abstract: The Athens 2004 Olympic Games presented an opportunity for Greece to celebrate its ancient traditions and modern organizational skills. The organizers used archaeology as theory, iconography, idealism and so on. They particularly focused on Classical antiquity, when the Games were at their height before their modern revival. This article, however, will examine the use of Minoan archaeology. I argue that, although there is no archaeological evidence to connect Minoan archaeology to the original Olympic Games, the modern Greek national narrative adapted it to the current national image of the Olympic Games. I analyse this phenomenon by deconstructing some of its processes, taking Crete as a case study. I also highlight broader issues, concerning the instrumentality of the public domain in the shaping of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Athens 2004 Olympic Games, cultural heritage, Minoan archaeology, nationalism

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between cultural heritage, particularly archaeology, and the public (i.e. anyone outside the archaeological profession, including practitioners acting in private) has seen a surge of interest during the past two decades (for sample discourses, see Baer 2001; Copeland 2002, 2004; Hodder 2003; Johnstone 1998; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Lowenthal 1985; Merriman 2004; Phillips 1998; Renfrew and Bahn 1996; Silberman 1995; Smardz Frost 2004; Stone 1994; Trigger 2003; Ucko 1986). It covers such issues as nationalism, politics, education, fetishism, popularization, ownership, even psychoanalysis of the personal experience of the past, to list but a few. The relationship between archaeology and the public in Greece, in particular, is a relatively new area of research (see Bintliff 1984; Cadogan 2004; Coulby 2005; Farnoux 2003; Hamilakis 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996, 1999; Herzfeld 1991; Kardulias 1994; Κοσβύτης 2004; Mouliou 1996; Simandiraki 2004, in press; Treuil 2003; Yalouri 2001; Zambeta 2005). This has mainly concentrated on the historical reasons (e.g. the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Greek Independence) that have helped shape the current perceptions of the past by Greeks and non-Greeks. It has also begun to analyse the prevalent processes behind these such as education and archaeological exhibitions, among others. These implicit or explicit

processes affect the public's views, usually perpetuating a residual ethnocentrism (and all the consequences of identity construction this entails), as well as a conveniently sanitized view of antiquity. Classical times have been given more attention, by both the nationalist narratives and the researchers who study these, at the expense of other underrepresented eras in the public domain, such as the Minoan or Byzantine civilizations (e.g. see the entire issue 52 of *Αρχαιολογία & Τέχνες* 1994; Coulby 2005; Hamilakis 2000, 2001, 2003; Mouliou 1996; Yalouri 2001; Zambeta 2005).

The Minoan civilization of Crete of the third and second millennia BC is nowadays taught and promoted throughout Greece as part of Greek history. Archaeologists have been able to infer, mainly from iconographic evidence (frescoes, seals, vases and so on), that the Minoans had several sports, including bull-leaping and wrestling. In contrast, the first recorded occurrence of the ancient Greek Olympic Games dates to 776 BC. These were institutionalized sports between city-states.

For Cretans today, the Minoan civilization is very much alive as an everyday appropriation of the past, in tourism, education, the branding of products and services, the national narrative, identity construction and as a source of local pride. Consequently, the imagery of Minoan archaeology, frequently used and 'hellenized' by modern organizations and governments, was also used in the Athens 2004 Olympic Games (Athens 2004 henceforth). During this time, several enthusiastic explanations tried to link the two sets of games, mainly employing mythology and archaeology, although no connection can be proven between them. To attempt to do so is at least methodologically unsound, not to say phenomenologically naïve, as I shall justify.

Analysis of these circumstances can be taken as cultural insight or as national betrayal. However, this article is not an accusation. I simply intend to illuminate some uses of archaeology by the current milieu, that of Minoan archaeology in Athens 2004 in particular. I will explore the way in which such an apparently irrelevant historical *topos* and *chronos* was incorporated into the mainstream use of Classicist archaeology by the, sometimes undiscerning, public domain. I will also raise broader issues about the relationship between archaeology and the public – involving social, political, nationalist and other dimensions – and I will analyse some of their implications. I believe contemporary Crete provides excellent illustrations of these phenomena.

Before I begin, the reader may wish to observe how the bibliography works. It is divided between Academic and Media, wherein references are listed in alphabetical order. By tracing each reference in the appropriate section, one can infer its nature. Most Media references are newspaper and magazine articles.

THE OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

The chance to organize Athens 2004 was an opportunity for Greece to be the centre of attention in the international political and cultural arena and to overcome stereotypes of poor organization (Roche 2003:116; Φαναράς 2004). Local delays, international slander and the possible impact of a change of government (the

conservatives took over in March 2004 after a very long socialist period) raised fears about whether Olympic deadlines could be met.

Athens could not accommodate all the sports, nor did it wish to stir up the capital-provinces division by doing so. Volos, Herakleion, Thessaloniki and Patra were thus named 'Olympic cities' (Athens 2004b). Using existing or even building new athletic venues in the periphery was seen as a relief to the overwhelmed capital and a boost to local economies. Roads were (re)constructed; public transport was optimized; a publicity and marketing network was created; security against terrorism was tightened; and archaeological sites were restored, especially those connected to Athens 2004 and its 'Olympic cities', such as Knossos. The whole endeavour incurred unprecedented expense (Πανούτσος 2004), but contemporary criticism was stifled by widespread euphoria.

The Games also presented a host of other opportunities, for museum exhibitions, multiple Olympics-related publications, the odd plea for the return of the Elgin marbles (Ανδρέου 2004). The 'Ολυμπιακή εκκεχειρία' ('Olympic truce', in the ancient Greek sense) was one such opportunity to hold an inter-faith symposium (Newspaper 2004a; Athens News Agency 2004). International Christian (several denominations), Jewish, Islamic (Shiite and Sunni) and Buddhist leaders participated, 80 in total, representing all major monotheistic religions. The symposium took place in Athens, was organized by the Archbishop of Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Istanbul, was attended by various politicians, including the President of the Parliament and the Education Minister, and issued a relevant peaceful statement-agreement (Newspaper 2004b). I, however, believe the Greek Orthodox Church, which customarily opposes pre-Christian practices, thus joined in the 'archaeolatry' permeating Athens 2004 as a reaffirmation of its Greekness rather than as a confirmation of the ancient Olympic ideals.

A semi-formal economic forum, the Athens Business Club 2004 (Πάτζιος 2004), was also held in Athens by major state investment organizations (ΕΛΚΕ, ΣΕΒ, ΟΠΕ, ΕΒΕΑ) and the Ministry of Finance. As high ranking officials and businessmen from several countries came together for the Olympic Games, this was seen as an ideal opportunity to use an amalgam of antiquity and modern organization to boost investment, although participation was reported as disappointing (Βουγιουκαλάκης 2004; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996: esp. 119ff.; Πάτζιος 2004; Φρεμεντίτης & Πολυχρονιάδης 2004; Χιώτης 2004; see Newspaper 2004c).

The general feelings, especially immediately after the opening ceremony, were of immense pride (for more sombre voices see Μπακουνάκης 2004; Σωτηρόπουλος 2004; Φαναράς 2004). Greece had become the centre of the world; shadows of a doping scandal were dispersed; the Olympic flame was venerated; modern Greek organizational skills finally reversed world criticisms. A few issues were only hinted at, like the effort to dissuade spectators from bringing their own non-endorsed refreshments to the athletic venues (Ο.Ε.Ο.Α. ΑΘΗΝΑ 2004:8; Δρακόπουλος 2004), which was taken as being at odds with ancient ideals. This branding also included the manipulation of archaeological material culture. Yet another issue was the inflation of goods and ticket prices (Παπαδογιάννης 2004; Φρεμεντίτης & Πολυχρονιάδης 2004).

One issue not mentioned by anyone was that of the ambivalent treatment of foreigners. The media were ecstatic about the arrival of different ethnicities: the Olympics were 'a big party' where the diversity of world cultures (as encountered in the tourists, athletes, visiting artists) was a celebrated novelty. However, economic immigrants are still subjected to racism and xenophobia in Greece and this temporary limelight on ethnic diversity **jarred** with everyday Greek life (see Dimakos and Tasiopoulou 2003; Tastsoglou and Hadjicostandi 2003). All non-Greeks were tolerated and celebrated, as they had all allegedly been illuminated by the Greek civilization (Πονούτσος 2004; Τιβέριος 2004). I shall return to this point later, with respect to identity construction.

MINOAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN ATHENS 2004

Athens 2004 Minoan imagery

Particular cultural heritages are frequently branded through visual manipulation of their most striking artefacts, in order to be turned into instantly recognizable cultural logos. Not surprisingly, Athens 2004 had a specific look (Ξενόκη 2004), and Herakleion as an 'Olympic city' had two Olympic logos. Both derived from Minoan culture. One logo was based on the Minoan Bees Pendant, the other on the Dolphin Fresco. Additionally, some 'Minoan' symbols used in the collectable Olympic pins were:

- From Minoan Crete: the Snake Goddess Figurine, the Bull-leaping Fresco, the Prince of Lilies Fresco, the Bees Pendant, the Palace of Knossos, the Griffin Fresco, a double axe, the Phaestos disc, the Blue Ladies Fresco, the Dolphin Fresco.
- From prehistoric Thera: the Swallows Fresco, the Fisherman Fresco, the Boxers Fresco.
- From Tiryns (in the Peloponnese), but said to be from Minoan Crete: the Lady with Pyxis Fresco. (Εύσημον/Efsimon 2003)

Other Athens 2004 merchandise, such as an Olympic greeting card (Toubis 2004), also used Minoan imagery as part of the Games. At least five double strata can be identified on this card, that is, five heterogeneous symbols plus their modern renditions (Table 1; see Simandiraki 2004:185).

This is an example of how artefacts and monuments from different areas and eras become 'fossilized'. That is to say, once removed from their original context, they are subsequently incorporated into an overarching narrative in the public domain, and may or may not retain their original meaning. This fusion of areas, eras and civilizations is not methodologically sound for an archaeologist. It is, however, tolerated as part of an overall Greek national consciousness advocating the cohesion of Greek history.

'Olympic' Herakleion also underwent radical changes (Fig. 1; Newspaper 2004d; O.E.O.A ΑΘΗΝΑ 2004). As part of its Athens 2004 imagery, eloquent posters were

Table 1. Deconstruction of Toubis' Olympic greeting card (source: the author)

Stratum	Cultural Symbol on the greeting card	Modern appropriation – rendition
1	The Minoan site of Knossos	The photo angle is very characteristic and a standard illustration in the tourist press
2	One of the dolphins from the Dolphin Fresco	This rendition is one Herakleion 2004 Olympic logo
3	Eighth-century BC dolls	This rendition depicts the Athens Olympics 2004 mascots, Athena and Phevos
4	The Olympic circles dating to the modern revival of the Olympics	Part of the Athens 2004 Olympics logo
5	Classical Greek olive wreath	The Athens 2004 Olympics logo



Figure 1. Sign about Olympic-related works in Herakleion. A logo of Herakleion as an Olympic city can be seen on the top right hand corner (author's photo).

positioned centrally, such as that in Figure 2. My first observation concerns the poster's composition. The core of the poster is a close-up photo of the Bull-Leaping Fresco, a clear reference to Minoan Crete, as this is a widely known Minoan artefact. The top of the poster bears a strip with the logo of Heineken, an Athens 2004 sponsor. The bottom bears a strip with both Herakleion Olympic logos and the phrase 'Ηράκλειο Ολυμπιακή Πόλη' ('Herakleion Olympic City').



Figure 2. Herakleion Olympic City banner in the heart of Herakleion (author's photo)

My second observation concerns the poster's position. The obvious reason for the poster being erected in the centre of Herakleion was to celebrate the city's Athens 2004 contribution. Another, less obvious reason was that the building it adorned is derelict, so the poster was used to cover up the mess. To the right of the poster (although not clearly seen here) is a Greek flag. To the left of the poster are Olympic garlands and the Loggia, a Venetian building housing the Herakleion Municipality and seen in some Athens 2004 imagery. Below the poster is a sign for the 'Minoan Lines' shipping company. So, Figure 2 can be interpreted as another example of the fused narrative described earlier. In the same frame there coexist a chosen fragment of the Minoan past, a multinational corporate sponsor, a Venetian monument used as a modern Greek government building, a state flag and several modern Olympic and other logos – aimed at a mixed target audience: tourists, patriots, local politicians, sports enthusiasts, and archaeologists.

The 'Minoa' controversy

Another frequent phenomenon in the engagement of the public with the past is the use of disparate resources in order to recreate a part of that desired past, for instance, to rebuild a monument, re-enact an event or reconstruct an artefact. During 2000–2004, the Naval Museum of Crete, in collaboration with the Centre for Ancient Shipbuilding 'Ναυδόμος' ('Nafdomos'), both based in Chania, reconstructed a



Figure 3. *The Minoa on 29 May 2004, when its journey began from Chania (photo: Z. Simandiraki).*

Minoan ship, which, they maintained, was a contribution to Greek experimental archaeology. The overall project costs were estimated at €400,000 (Γιαΐτης 2004). The Ministry of Culture provided 16 per cent of the funds and put the whole project under its auspices, while the rest of the funds were purported to have come from private donations. The eight-strong team working on the 'Nafdomos' project endeavoured to create 'an exact replica of a Minoan vessel' (Βουρεξιάκη 2004:15), using the same techniques, materials and tools the Minoans of 1500 BC would have done. A small model and accompanying 'scholarly articles' were presented in two conferences in 2002 (Μανιουδάκης & Κοντός 2004; for rejections see Βουρεξιάκη 2004; Νικηφοράκης 2004:4). The ship was named *Μινώα* ('Minoa') by the Greek President K. Stefanopoulos during substantial festivities on 29 November 2003 'in order to automatically evoke the Minoan thalassocracy' ('προκειμένου να παραπέμπει χωρίς ιδιαίτερη σκέψη στη μινωική θαλασσοκρατία', Γιαΐτης 2004). Schoolchildren also actively participated in the launching festivities, rowing in the ship, holding drawing exhibitions and performing a theatrical play (Simandiraki in press).

Setting sail from Chania was a very public event, involving local authorities, the project team, folk groups, representatives of the 'Olympic Education Programme'¹ and local citizens (Figures 3–5). The Minoan replica can be seen in Figure 3 against the backdrop of the Venetian harbour of Chania and the banner (on another boat) of ANEK Lines, a Cretan shipping company based in Chania and an official sponsor of Athens 2004. Other symbols include the Greek flag and folk groups: the woman in the foreground is wearing a replica of a nineteenth-century AD traditional Chania costume. Figures 4–5 show some of the children representing the 'Olympic



Figure 4. Some 'Olympic Education' children wearing 'replicas' of Minoan clothes on 29 May 2004, when the *Minoa* began its journey from Chania (photo: Z. Simandiraki).

Education Programme', who participated dressed in apparent replicas of Minoan clothes or held triton shells in imitation of particular Minoan artefacts. We thus see another palimpsest of symbols, eras and social actors at play: the Minoan replica, the Olympic sponsor, the Greek flag, the Venetian harbour, the folk dancers, the dressed-up adults and schoolchildren, the local politicians and the local citizens.

The ship sailed on its first trip from Chania to Piraeus between 29 May 2004 and 24 June 2004. This journey, during which an Armed Forces ship escorted the volunteer rowers, also ended with substantial festivities including numerous local Peiraeus politicians and citizens, folk singing and dancing (Newspaper 2004e; Newspaper 2004f; Μανιουδάκης & Κοντός 2004; Νικηφοράκης 2004:4). The crew gave a wreath from an old Cretan olive tree to the Athenian delegates, in order for them in turn to award this to the Olympic marathon winner. The additional wish for the ship to transport the Olympic Flame seems not to have been granted. Subsequently, the ship was to tour the world with the Athens 2004 Cultural



Figure 5. Some 'Olympic Education' children holding triton shells on 29 May 2004, when the Minoan began its journey from Chania. A poster of the Minoan can be seen in the background (photo: Z. Simandiraki).

Olympiad and eventually become a permanent core exhibit of the Naval Museum's ancient shipbuilding displays (Newspaper 2004g; Athens 2004c; Γιαΐτης 2004). The Ministries of Culture and Education were so keen to include it in the Melina Educational Programmes² that the relevant educational materials were already in press by June 2004 (Newspaper 2004h; Βουρεξάκη 2004:14).

This seemingly uninterrupted course of the *Minoa* was rocked by great tribulation. No archaeologists were included in the project team, despite genuine advice and contacts from the local Archaeological Ephorate and other specialists (Βουρεξάκη 2004:14; Νικηφοράκης 2004:4 – even if the Naval Museum is only half a kilometre from the Archaeological Ephorate). No help was even sought from the Ephorate of Marine Antiquities, the most relevant body for collaboration. When the ship was publicized more actively, the Association of Greek Archaeologists, along with individuals, published a harsh critique (Newspaper 2004h; Βουρεξάκη 2004 offers a sober and substantiated analysis; Νικηφοράκης 2004:4; Παπαδογιαννάκη 2004). They quoted, among others, inaccuracies and lack of expertise, and firmly stated they would oppose the exhibition of the *Minoa* in or near an archaeological site, because that would lend academic validity to this amateur endeavour and misinform the public. This sparked a passionate debate in the local press between archaeologists, including the local Ephor, the director of the Naval Museum and the director of 'Nafdomos' in the months preceding the Olympic Games (and therefore the ship's involvement in the Cultural Olympiad). The project organizers eventually suggested a middle way: that this was not an exact replica, but a 'suggestion', aiming to help advance research in ancient shipbuilding and experimental archaeology.

Even though both sides presented some valid arguments, the project party tended to resort to passionately nationalist retorts, as can be seen, for instance, in their main response (Μανιουδάκης & Κοντός 2004; also see Κούρτης 2004a; Μανιουδάκης & Κοντός 2006; Τερεζάκης et al. 2006). A valid point was that the Ministry of Culture had provided support, and it should have contacted the Marine Antiquities Ephorate (they are this Ministry's employees). However, arguments that this was 'a petty guild reaction of a syndicated nature'³ by archaeologists who want 'to hurt their [the volunteers'] souls'⁴ were not only beside the point (i.e. the academic validity of the reconstruction), but in their spasmodic defence also served to perpetuate the stereotype of archaeologists as élitists detached from reality. Further analysis of this debate is attempted later.

Over a year later, in early August 2005, this controversy was still present (Newspaper 2005a; Newspaper 2005b). A host of festivities around the ship or the sea in general included speeches about the 'success' of the project and local politicians giving commemorative awards to the project members, the artisans and the volunteer rowers. These festivities belatedly involved an archaeologist explaining the significance of the project as part of a host of similar reconstructions of ancient ships of other eras (e.g. the *Argo*). In January 2006 the same emotional debate had moved to the members of the 'Minoa' project, including the rowers, tackling the condemning Athenian press (Μανιουδάκης & Κοντός 2006; Τερεζάκης et al. 2006).

The Athens 2004 opening ceremony

The use of cultural heritage as a vehicle for national promotion is a mechanism employed in all Olympic events. Besides welcoming the Olympic athletes, all Opening Ceremonies take advantage of the high viewer-ratings to showcase many

aspects of national history and culture. The Athens 2004 Opening Ceremony took place on 13 August 2004 in the Athens Olympic Stadium and lasted for approximately 3 hours. Its television broadcast was the same nationally and internationally, with different voice-overs from country to country, based however on the same script (Athens 2004a). After the first 26 minutes, a parade of 'history floats' called the 'Hour Glass' ('Κλεψύδρα', Ξενόκη 2004; Παπαδογιάννης 2004) appeared in the stadium. These slow-moving *tableaux vivants*, representing actual artefacts and monuments, started with Minoan Crete, Thera and Mycenae and finished with Tsarouchis paintings,⁵ in a sequence that is widely perceived to map the proven and unbroken continuity of Greek history (Newspaper 2004i; Ζορμπά 2004; Παπαδογιάννης 2004; Σπίνος et al. 2004; Συνολάκης 2004; for sarcastic critiques see Πανούτσος 2004; Τύρος 2004; Ψυχογιός 2004). The total televised length of the parade was 10 minutes exactly. The Minoan–Theran section occupied just under two minutes and produced nine out of an observed 52 themes and sources in the whole parade (original artefacts in brackets):

- 1 The Snake Goddess (figurine)
- 2 The Prince of Lilies (high relief fresco)
- 3 A Knossian Griffin (low relief fresco)
- 4 Figures from the Ayia Triada sarcophagus (fresco)
- 5 The Thera boxers (fresco)
- 6 The Knossian Bull-leapers (fresco)
- 7 The Thera fisherman (fresco)
- 8 Thera women with leaping dolphins behind them (fresco)
- 9 Thera Saffron gatherers (fresco)

The opening ceremony boosted the sense of euphoria and gained much publicity for the Greek nation. D. Papaioannou, the creator and general director of the opening ceremony, was consequently exalted by all the media.

Minoan Crete as the originator of the Olympic Games

Several articles and at least one book – wide-ranging in expertise, style and type of publication – advocated that the Cretans, or even the Minoans, were the founders of the Olympic Games. Two main arguments were proposed, one archaeological and one mythological.

The archaeological argument concerned Minoan sports. As the Minoan civilization presents the earliest such iconographic evidence in the Aegean, and because the Minoans had sports like wrestling, the latter were taken as the predecessors of the Olympic Games (Τσικριτής 2004; Χαρωνίτης 2004:44ff.; both authors are teachers). Ergoteles of Knossos, an Olympic athlete who competed as an Imera citizen, was also quoted as proof of the Cretan connection (he lived during the fifth century BC, as Τσικριτής 2004 admits). The Herakleion Archaeological Museum held an exhibition entitled *Sports in Ancient Crete* (Fig. 6; ΥΠ.ΠΟ. 2004). This was not accompanied by a catalogue and its brochure was only available on request. Although the



Figure 6. The Herakleion Museum entrance with the banner of the exhibition 'Sports in Ancient Crete'; the edge of the Greek flag can be seen on the roof (author's photo).

July–August 2004) was highly suggestive. Even though each of the (archaeologist) authors was very careful not to advocate a connection, the overall title of this special issue (arranged by the non-archaeologist editor) was *Minoan Games, From Crete to Olympia*.

The mythological argument quoted the Classical Greek myth, according to which Idaïos Herakles and his brothers, the Idaïoi Daktyloï, were the first to travel to Olympia and instigate the Olympic Games, initially playing and then competing in institutionalized sports (Κακκιδής 1986; used as evidence in Τσικριτσής 2004; Χαρωνίτης 2004:56 dates Idaïos Herakles to 1300 BC for no apparent reason). *Herakles, the founder of the Olympic Games*, a play at the 2004 Herakleion Summer Arts festival (Children's theatre group Carmen Roungeri, 29–30 July 2004), confused Idaïos Herakles with the son of Zeus – the two are distinct in Greek

exhibition could not bridge the considerable gap between the end of the Minoan times (fifteenth century BC as far as the public is concerned) and the beginning of the Olympic Games (776 BC), the sequential exhibition of artefacts from those two very different eras and civilizations advocated continuity and causality. In fact, one of the respondents to a survey conducted at that time purported there was a connection between the two, because the exhibition proved so (Simandiraki, forthcoming). At the same time there was the Olympic Torch Relay in Herakleion on 9–10 July 2004, a formal occasion that included local and Athenian politicians, a Minoan dance exhibition, Minoan-dressed women and children and a replica of the Tripartite Shrine of the Knossos Palace (M. Zeimbekis pers. comm.; Δήμος Ηρακλείου 2004). Finally, the sequence of articles in the *Cretan Panorama* (Κρητικό Πανόραμα issue 5,

mythology (Κακριδής 1986:297). The 'Cretan Olympic Champions' DVD (Χαρωνίτης 2004), a Cretan production sponsored by a host of state and private donors mainly connected to tourism, mixed facts and artefacts from many places and eras (especially visually, as opposed to the spoken narrative). After 32 minutes of a long and apparently irrelevant description of Minoan Crete, without including any advice from the well-known Minoan archaeologists consulted and without any hard evidence, the DVD asserts that 'the Minoan Games were the prehistory, the basis of the Olympic Games and Classical Greek athletics'.⁶

Both these arguments, set as they are in a matrix of Minoan-Olympic justifications, show basic flaws. The archaeological argument has no evidence to connect the two sets of athletic events – phenomenology is not enough to produce corroborated academic conclusions. Additionally, Ergoteles was a Knossian but not a Minoan. Regarding the mythological argument, some elements of actual Cretan – Peloponnesian prehistoric interactions may have survived in Classical myth, but it is futile to attempt to pinpoint the 'true' elements of this myth.

Interestingly, the majority of the occurrences supporting these arguments originated from non-archaeologists, who nevertheless displayed considerable research skill. Ironically, the occurrences originating from archaeologists did show adequate caution about linking Minoan and Classical Greek antiquity, but their context was used to ambivalently support the foregoing two arguments. For example, nowhere do the *Cretan Panorama* authors state a link. This is inferred by the editor and the readership in spite of the authors.

EMERGENT ISSUES

The exploration just given exemplifies some broader heritage issues, which deserve further attention. They include ownership of the past, collective and personal identity, and the shaping of time and space perceptions. Representation permeates all of these.

Ownership

Athens 2004, as explained already, was seen as an opportunity to brand Greekness locally and internationally. Therefore, ownership of the past entered the equation; this took the form of tangible and intangible ownership.

Tangible (i.e. financial, material) ownership appears frequently in discussions related to cultural heritage, where possession of the tangible present is negotiated as proof of the tangible past (e.g. Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999; Hodder 2003; Mouliou 1996; Renfrew and Bahn 1996:512ff.). A relevant example was the *Minoa* case, where the original artefacts were disregarded as indicators of the past in favour of current reconstructions. Here, funding, formal or informal education (e.g. inclusion in the Melina Programmes) and branding (putting the project under the Ministry's auspices, organizing festivities, including it in the Cultural Olympiad) served to establish the vessel in the public domain as a 'rendition', if not as a 'replica' of a Minoan ship. As a result, this artefactual *representation* became irrelevant to the

originality of the artefacts it used: its effectiveness lay in *its* depiction of the past. The Athens 2004 discourse more generally used *representations* as the non-negotiable, tangible past, despite being highly relative constructions created by the tangible present (e.g. the Herakleion Museum exhibition, Olympic pins, the 'Hour Glass', the theatre play, the Olympic Torch Relay and so on). This explains why the inaccuracies and doubtful methodology were overlooked by the general public.

The use of Minoan names or images has also been an apparent Greek and Cretan branding process in Cretan administration for some time, seen for example, in public buildings like the 1930s 'Minoanizing' Heroon on Eleutherias Square in Herakleion (Cadogan 2004:538) or many current street and municipality names throughout Crete. In our case, the Minoan images selected were 'fossils' (see Simandiraki 2004:186), that is readily identifiable markers of Minoan identity in the public domain: the Prince of Lilies fresco, The Blue Ladies fresco, the Snake Goddess figurine, and Knossos architectural reconstructions. What strikes one is the immediacy of these images in terms of their popularity (Simandiraki forthcoming), but also their visuality and/or imposing materiality, which seem to have distinguished them (they were overwhelmingly frescoes). Not surprisingly, therefore, no images from Prepalatial or Protopalatial Crete were used.

Intangible ownership was even more negotiable. Kin ownership (i.e. seeing oneself as part of an ancient continuum, a descendant of a past civilization) is a vital claim about which current Cretans are adamant with regard to the Minoan civilization. A homogenized continuum, which linked Minoan Crete and Classical Athens in an unbroken line, maintained a 'historical commonwealth' which could not be assaulted by theories of heterogeneity. It therefore evaded fragmentation, something also especially significant for Greek diasporic communities, whose identity relies heavily on this approach (see Hamilakis 2000; Kardulias 1994:382; McCrone 1998:52; Mouliou 1996:175–177; Roche 2003:108). This version of what has happened in and around the Aegean in the last 5000 years avoided dark sides of history (e.g. human sacrifice in the Minoan period, slavery in Classical Athens, the Civil War of 1945–1949) and assumed natural links between eras and civilizations (Hamilakis 2000:249, 253; Silberman 1995:250, 252).

Intellectual ownership included professional, educational, social and cultural aspects and regulated the very perceptions of the past. It was a somewhat broader rendition of kin ownership; in this case the 'clans' were groups who engendered certain interpretative paradigms. Familiarity with the past empowered each 'clan' with the right to interpret it (Kane 2003:4). For example, from the archaeological point of view, the *Minoa* was an amateur endeavour. Warnings and criticisms that no archaeologists were included in the project team circumscribed the deeper issue of struggles over authority and power. As the director of the Naval Museum claimed vociferously, archaeologists prohibited any good-will public archaeology which did not include them. This criticism about archaeological élitism went against another usual Greek public attitude that archaeologists are 'national workers' promoting 'our' cultural heritage (Hamilakis 1999; Simandiraki forthcoming). The nationality and patriotism of archaeologists criticizing the *Minoa* was questioned as soon as they doubted the popular 'national' reconstruction of the past. Likewise, this article will almost

certainly be perceived as controversial by advocates of this 'historical commonwealth', simply because it deconstructs it (Hamilakis 1996:978). From their point of view, however, the archaeologists were safeguarding professional quality standards (see Merriman 2004:7). This raises concerns regarding archaeological freedom of speech, archaeological ownership of the material symbols of cultural capital, as well as archaeological ownership of the public's temporal perceptions.

Identity

Hosting Athens 2004 in cities other than Athens and using their history boosted their local economies. For example, the *Minoa* was to be a core exhibit in the Chania Naval Museum, so its creation resulted in museum upgrading and funding. It meant more funding for 'Nafdomos', perhaps boosting tourist revenue by generating publicity about the city and the replica. The Herakleion Museum exhibition was also meant to attract more tourists and increase museum revenue. These were not only financial phenomena. They also related to collective identity, where present fiscal need was met by historical reconfiguration. This adaptation, originating from very old Greek state narratives (see Cadogan 2004:537–538 [esp. quoting Markatou 1998]; Coulby 2005; Κοσβίκης 2004; Simandiraki in press; Zambeta 2005), infiltrated the public domain as a form of national pride, validating local cultural origins and seeking to establish this historical version as a cornerstone of world heritage. For the archaeologist, claims that both the Minoan and the Classical civilization have had the same influence on European heritage are a fallacy. However, a homogeneous national pride was equated by the modern myth-makers to a homogenized historical diversity, resulting in 'a unifying web of retrospection' (Lowenthal 1985:198, also 195). Although the Minoan, at least in the non-Cretan Greek public domain, is a rather peripheral material past, on this occasion it was reinforced as an integral part of the 'historical commonwealth'. This does not necessarily mean that in this case the negotiation of the Minoan civilization differed from the local to the national framework: indeed, Minoan identity had gone through numerous similar 'hellenization' processes both inside and outside Crete (see Simandiraki in press).

Collective political uses of the past deserve special attention. In the *Minoa* case, the Ministry of Culture and the local authorities were interested more in national narrative than archaeological accuracy (for references to 'political funding', see Γκαζής 2004; Νικηφοράκης 2004:4; also Kardulias 1994:374, esp. 378, 381). The local press coverage echoed these micropolitics. The explicitly left wing press (e.g. *Crete's Struggle, ο Αγώνας της Κρήτης*) was very defensive of the project – which was conducted with the support of a leftist government – and its impact on local pride. The right wing press (e.g. *the Herald, ο Κήρυξ*) was critical of both project and organizers, while the more 'neutral' press (e.g. *Chania News, Χανιώτικα Νέα* and *Crete TV, Κρήτη TV*) quoted both sides equally. Representation of the past was translated into political power over who represented whom and what.

Collective recollection would remain an imposed construction without strategies of individual 'domestication' of the past. For the distant past to be linked to the individual's continuum in our case, particular integration strategies needed to be

employed, such as patriotism, nostalgia, physical continuity and so on (Hamilakis 2000; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996:123). This 'domestication' was again an issue of kin ownership, seen here through the lens of individual participation. For example, individual experiential learning by the members of the *Minoa* shipbuilding team or the volunteer rowers (Τερεζάκης et al. 2006) were attempts to relive and reconstruct the past. They therefore empowered them with a claim to the direct continuation of that past. Genetic, artefactual or linguistic evidence was rendered almost irrelevant in proving this continuum. But this 'domestication' consisted of a false familiarity with the distant past, mainly due to its being the product of modern discourses, as advocated by archaeological discontent.

In maintaining the 'historical commonwealth' collectively or individually, one could discern an intellectual pseudo-colonialism (see Hodder 2003:140). Here, this imposition of a particular paradigm on alternative views of the past could be seen in the representation of the impact of Greek antiquity as a perceived whole on other cultures during Athens 2004, and the superficial – conditional – celebration of their diversity. Hamilakis and Yalouri identify this as 'the official rhetoric about the "uniqueness" and "superiority" of the Greek past' (1996:126), while Kardulias (1994:383; see Trigger 2003) plausibly argues it is a social trend mobilized to counteract feelings of modern inferiority in the international arena.

Topos

Another common social trait mobilized by nationalism is the use of time as space: the geography of a civilization automatically taken as ancestry of the local population (e.g. Kohl and Fawcett 1995:11; Merriman 2004:14–15; Yalouri 2001). From the local point of view, building a replica of a Minoan ship helped in the reinforcement of local claims, as citizens took pride in what 'their ancestors' had achieved and what the city had reconstructed. Archaeological criticism was thus taken to mean that archaeologists were against a local patriotic project and that they must have had more devious reasons for opposing it. Ownership of the past was equated to ownership of local identity, so rival interpretations of the past were considered an assault on local loyalty.

As the 'Cretan Olympic Champions' DVD and the Ergoteles examples also demonstrate, 'Cretan' was used interchangeably with 'Minoan', when only the reverse may be archaeologically acceptable. The Minoans were Cretans, but the Cretans were not all Minoans. An even more controversial issue here is the interchangeability of 'Minoan' and 'Greek' (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996:126), a highly sensitive issue among the archaeological community working in Crete and a telling example of the 'hellenization' of the Minoans.

Chronos

On 15 August 2004, journalist P. Tsimas asked D. Papaioannou about the 'Hour Glass' (Τσίμας 2004). It seemed, Tsimas observed, that it had been rather hard to pick symbols representing historical eras the closer one got to the present (see Dewsbury 2002:149–150). Papaioannou agreed, maintaining that the more one approaches the present, the harder it is to discern what the enduring attributes of the respective era

will be. This observation was of great importance, as it implied that it was very hard (if not impossible) for 'fossils' to originate from the same milieu.

This suggests that the 'citizens' of the present feel its multiple dimensions cannot be completely regulated because it is in a state of flux (Dewsbury 2002:148). The past, in contrast, is perceived as finite (see Lowenthal 1985:91, 'we stand outside the past'). However, interpretations of the past are in reality infinite, because it is always viewed through the different perspectives of the present and always incompletely perceived (Brown and Theodossopoulos 2004:10; Geißler 2002:132, 138; Lowenthal 1985:185ff.). Kohl and Fawcett (1995:5) highlight this by asking: 'are the constructions of our own pasts or national identities more acceptable because they are ours?'

Ultimately, we feel we control the past simply because for us it is our constructed version of it that counts. The more adverse to ours a different interpretation is, the more the 'domestication' by our 'clan' or self is threatened. The paradox between the theoretical fixity and practical infinity of the past can simply be explained as different viewpoints of the present (Table 2). In fact, in considering the theoretical infinity of the past, Dewsbury maintains that 'we need to see time plurally to accommodate potential interpretations rather than just the one' (2002:152).

A temporal pseudo-colonialism of the present at the expense of the past could also be seen in this case study. Entrance strategies of the past into the present were conscious or subconscious, as seen earlier, but always involved individual or institutionalized forgetting by the present as part of the process. Consequently, 'fossils' of Minoan material culture were chosen to represent it in the public domain and connect it to the ancient Olympic Games. This phenomenon of 'increasingly readjusted memories' accounts for the malleability of public consciousness regarding particular pasts and is usually a prerequisite of nationalistic uses of the past (Baer 2001: 491–492, 498: 'hybrid and controversial space of cultural memory'; Lowenthal 1985:192, 199, 208; McCrone 1998:44; Roche 2003:109).

This analysis would not be complete without a reference to the Olympic Games as a socio-temporal phenomenon. Roche examines mega-events, such as World Fairs and Olympic Games, as instrumental in the 'interpersonal and public structuring of time' (2003:99). He argues that although postmodernity, with all its uncertainty and ambivalence, is a potential threat to the stability of temporal

Table 2. Fixity and infinity of the past in the present (source: the author).

	Theory	Practice
Fixity of the past	aware of own perspective	needs the past to be what one has decided it <i>was</i>
Infinity of the past	aware of own perspective in multitude of others	Would like the past to be as decided, but comes to terms with versions of what it <i>may have been</i>

perceptions, the Olympic Games represent cyclical collective rites of passage, which serve as positivist milestones in a person's or group's life. This is particularly rare and therefore life-changing when one experiences the Olympics in one's own country (Roche 2003:104). Roche purports that the periodicity, sense of belonging, preparation, experience and aftermath of the Olympics not only channel diverse and ambiguous temporalities, but also act as nodes, punctuating otherwise potentially chaotic timescapes.

These observations are particularly pertinent to this case study. Greece, and Crete within it, comprises a diversity of pasts and presents. The Minoan, Mycenaean, Classical and other pasts, even though part of the official narrative, can all be argued as being distinctly different. So can the presents and perceptions of Greeks and non-Greeks, children and adults, the educated and the uneducated, to use but a few coarse generalizations. Diverse pasts and presents went through specific ritualistic processes before, during and after the Olympics. Time and space converged through these processes: the national temporal narrative was reinforced, cities were renovated, ships were built, opening ceremonies were performed, nationalities coincided, athletic venues continued to be used, collective memories were produced when people participated in spirit or in flesh, and so the 'domestication' of distant pasts and presents was facilitated. Simply watching the 'Hour Glass' on television was a way of integration and temporal alignment with the present and the past (Roche 2003:109). The role of 'mediascapes' as conductors of history in such processes and events should not be overlooked, although Baer's discussion (2001) about the trivialization of history in popular culture should be also taken into account.

CONCLUSIONS

Archaeology, a discipline still within a scientific tradition despite alternative paradigms, largely uses material fetishism to inform its understanding of the past. Therefore, it represents a largely instrumental memory (Hamilakis 1999:68, 71; Hodder 2003:144; Kardulias 1994:375; Lowenthal 1985:202, also 204, 208; Merriman 2004:6). It is usually perceived by people involved in it as an unbroken unity of practice (e.g. excavations), professionals (e.g. archaeologists) and material culture (e.g. artefacts). The public, however, differentiates between these components and its relationship with them is severely influenced by this differentiation (see Simandiraki, forthcoming).

This case study was no exception: archaeological reservations based on material evidence were in dissonance with contemporary social attitudes. The lay present's past was creatively shaped by all the senses powered by yearning of a personal input to a past unknown (see Newspaper 2005b; Herzfeld 1991), including but not restricted to materiality. This is what Hamilakis advocates when he suggests a sensory archaeology (2002) and what Hodder describes as the 'social, economic and cultural impact of archaeological work' (2003:146; see Kohl and Fawcett 1995:8; Merriman 2004:10; Silberman 1995:261). Time conflation, anachronism, artefactual veneration or reinvention carried no 'rights' or 'wrongs' for the public, simply

because the latter was not concerned with just the material validity and 'logic' of a scientific approach, even when it tried to adopt one (see Copeland 2004; Dewsbury 2002:149; Hamilakis 1999:66, 2000:257).

Who has the right to preserve or reshape the past? Who needs to do so? Who ultimately gets away with it? Archaeology plays a central role in obstructing or facilitating representations of the past. As archaeologists employing particular methods to capture, interpret, reconstruct and represent the past, we feel we are its spokespeople. However, this view is not shared by many non-archaeologists, and even some archaeologists (Simandiraki in press; forthcoming). As this case study shows, the public domain is a fertile, if uncontrolled, discourse where exploring the past is a vital part of the ever-changing present and cannot be contained in one facet of it. We should explore these processes further in future, in order to form a more holistic view and to harness the dynamics of the relationship between archaeology and the public.

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NOTES

1. The 'Olympic Education Programme' was authorized and conducted by the Ministry of Culture. Its purpose was to promote Olympic values at pre-school, primary and secondary education in the Chania prefecture. Children participated in the *Minoan* maiden voyage festivities as part of this programme and their costumes were especially prepared.
2. Between 1995 and 2004, the pilot Melina Educational Programmes (named after Melina Mercouri, the actress and socialist politician, see Simandiraki 2004, in press) introduced further textbooks written by practising professionals (archaeologists, historians, artists, physical education and other pedagogues) and sought to promote the ideals of culture, heritage, art, sport and peace in primary and secondary education.
3. 'μικρόψυχη συντεχνιακή αντίδραση συνδικαλιστικού χαρακτήρα', *Κούρτης* 2004b.
4. 'να πληγώσουν τις ψυχές τους', Μανιουδάκης & Κοντός 2004.
5. Y. Tsarouchis was one of Greece's greatest modern artists and mentor of D. Papaioannou, director of the Athens 2004 Opening Ceremony.
6. An extreme use of the mythological argument as hard evidence can be seen in Newspaper 2004j (referring to this DVD), where the authors of a public letter refer to mythology as historical fact in order to stake a local claim.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Anna Simandiraki comes from Crete. She has a Degree in Archaeology and History of Art (Greece), and an MA and PhD in Minoan Archaeology (UK). She specializes in Aegean prehistory and has recently become involved in the field of international education. Her research interests include Aegean Bronze Age material culture and representation, ethnoarchaeology, identity construction, especially the dynamics between national/international education and cultural heritage. She is a Research Fellow at the International Baccalaureate Research Unit, Department of Education, University of Bath, UK.

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ABSTRACTS

Archéologie minoenne aux Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes de 2004
Anna Simandiraki

Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes de 2004 furent pour la Grèce une occasion de célébrer ses traditions anciennes et ses talents d'organisation modernes. Les organisateurs se sont basés sur l'archéologie comme théorie, iconographie, idéalisme etc. Ils se sont surtout concentrés sur l'antiquité classique, époque où les Jeux connaissaient leur apogée avant leur renaissance

moderne. Cet article étudie cependant spécifiquement l'utilisation de l'archéologie minoenne. Je prétends que, même sans qu'il n'y ait de preuve archéologique d'un rapport entre archéologie minoenne et Jeux Olympiques originaux, la narration grecque moderne l'a adaptée à l'image nationale commune des Jeux. J'analyse ce phénomène en décomposant quelques-uns de ses processus et en prenant Crète comme étude de cas. En même temps, je mets en évidence des sujets plus globaux se rapportant au rôle du domaine public dans l'énonciation du patrimoine culturel.

Mots clés: archéologie minoenne, Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes 2004, patrimoine culturel, nationalisme

Minoische Archäologie bei den Olympischen Spielen in Athen 2004

Anna Simandiraki

Die Olympischen Spiele 2004 in Athen gaben Griechenland die Möglichkeit, seine alten Traditionen und modernen Organisationsfähigkeiten zu feiern. Die Organisatoren nutzten Archäologie als Theorie, in der Ikonographie, beim Idealismus usw. Sie rückten dabei das klassische Altertum, während dessen sich die Spiele vor ihrer modernen Wiederbelebung auf dem Höhepunkt befanden, in den Mittelpunkt. Der vorliegende Beitrag untersucht dagegen die Nutzung der Minoischen Archäologie. Es wird erörtert, dass – auch wenn keine archäologischen Beweise vorliegen, um Minoische Archäologie mit den ursprünglichen Olympischen Spielen zu verbinden – die moderne griechische Tradition diese für das derzeitige Bild der Olympischen Spiele adaptierte. Dieses Phänomen wird diskutiert, indem anhand von Kreta als Fallstudie einige seiner Prozesse dekonstruiert werden. Es werden weiterführende Gesichtspunkte beleuchtet, die die Instrumentalisierung der Öffentlichkeit in der Formung des kulturellen Erbes betreffen.

Schlüsselbegriffe: kulturelles Erbe, Minoische Archäologie, Nationalismus, Olympische Spiele in Athen 2004

Η Μινωική Αρχαιολογία στους Ολυμπιακούς Αγώνες Αθήνα 2004

Άννα Σημανδηράκη

Οι Ολυμπιακοί Αγώνες της Αθήνας το 2004 παρουσίασαν για την Ελλάδα μία ευκαιρία να πανηγυρίσει για τις αρχαίες παραδόσεις της και τις σύγχρονες οργανωτικές της ικανότητες. Οι οργανωτές χρησιμοποίησαν την αρχαιολογία ως θεωρία, εικονογραφία, ιδεαλισμό κτλ. Εστίασαν ιδιαίτερα στην Κλασική αρχαιότητα, όταν οι Αγώνες βρίσκονταν στο απόγειό τους πριν τη σύγχρονη αναβίωσή τους. Αυτό το άρθρο όμως θα εξετάσει τη χρήση της Μινωικής αρχαιολογίας. Επιχειρηματολογώ ότι, αν και δεν υπάρχουν αρχαιολογικές αποδείξεις που να συνδέουν τη Μινωική αρχαιολογία με τους αρχαίους Ολυμπιακούς Αγώνες, η Νεοελληνική εθνική αφήγηση την προσάρμοσε στη σύγχρονη εθνική εικόνα των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων. Αναλύω αυτό το φαινόμενο με το να αποδομήσω ορισμένες από τις διαδικασίες του, λαμβάνοντας την Κρήτη ως μία παραδειγματική μελέτη. Τονίζω επίσης ευρύτερα θέματα που αφορούν στον κεντρικό ρόλο του κοινού στη διαμόρφωση της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Ολυμπιακοί Αγώνες Αθήνα 2004, πολιτιστική κληρονομιά, Μινωική αρχαιολογία, εθνικισμός.