CYBERSPACE/CYBERPAST/ CYBERNATION: CONSTRUCTING HELLENISM IN HYPERREALITY

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Abstract: This paper looks at representations of antiquity in cyberspace and discusses their meaning and position in global discourses on nationalism and identities. After a critical review of some recent discussions of globalization and the informational society, it adopts the concepts of ethnoscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes in examining the deployments of representations from antiquity in the web pages constructed by the Greek state, private organizations, and mostly Greek diasporic communities and individuals. It is suggested that organizations and individual social actors construct in cyberspace the national *topos* of Hellenism. In this process, representations from antiquity play a central and crucial role. Many social actors, mostly away from the 'homeland', form modern Hellenic ethnoscapes by projecting the national narrative and constructing an imaginative heterotopia where the personal becomes national and vice versa. These representations act as the currency of the symbolic capital of antiquity, a crucial resource in the foundation of the imagined community of the Hellenic nation. At the same time, they become an effective weapon in the ritual battles and contestations around the polarity between Greece and the West. Finally, representations from antiquity become a device which contributes to the 'domestication' of the cyberspace, its transformation from space to place, and its 'materialization' through the materiality that the representations of antiquity allude to.

Keywords: archaeology and nationalism, cyberspace, diasporas, Hellenism, modern Greece

INTRODUCTION

Fifteen years ago (1984), Bruce Trigger published in *Man* an article which was to become a classic. In the article 'Alternative archaeologies: nationalist, colonialist, imperialist', Trigger made the clear statement that archaeology serves political purposes and is constantly used for different agendas. As we know, this suggestion is a truism today. From a few isolated studies in the early 1980s, we now have a whole range of books and articles on the politics of the past in the present. This phenomenon, which is not unique to archaeology, has to a large extent to do with the dissolution of the epistemic and ontological certainties in the humanities and the collapse of the rigid separation between subject and object, past and present (Hamilakis 1996; Kohl 1998).

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If we take only one such phenomenon described and analysed by Trigger – nationalism – there are now several books on the topic and its relation to archaeology and a great many articles and chapters in other publications which touch upon the issue of cultural identities and archaeology (e.g. Atkinson et al. 1996; Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Graves-Brown et al. 1995; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Meskell 1998). Nationalism came under close archaeological investigation for 'external' reasons as well: the recent resurrection of ethnic and nationalist conflicts in many parts of the world including Europe. Does this proliferation of studies on the politics of the past indicate that archaeology has, at last, lost its political innocence?

There are certainly signs which may lead us to answer the above question positively but, if we take a closer look, the situation proves to be more complicated. While there are some sophisticated treatments of the subject in the current literature, in many recent studies on archaeology and nationalism, there is very little discussion on the nature of the phenomenon, its ontological and ideological foundations, its wider social connotations and consequences. Nationalism is often seen as an unproblematic phenomenon which has a mainly political dimension: the imposition of the authority of the nation-state. In that respect, we are lagging behind our colleagues in other disciplines, such as anthropology, social history, human geography and feminist studies, who have produced much more sophisticated accounts of nationalism. Moreover, many archaeological treatments of nationalism adopt a disembedding objectified position and see nationalist archaeology as an abuse of the 'objective' past. If we take this line of argument further, however, we may end up creating a dichotomy between the objectified, 'rational' West and the 'irrational' nationalist 'Other', which abuses the past and archaeological data to advance its programmes – a new version of the 'orientalist' attitude. As a result, in many cases, these studies tend to reproduce the very same notions, ideas, schemes and stereotypes which they are supposed to confront (Hamilakis 1996).

Furthermore, most archaeological discussions on identity and the politics of the past focus on a rather limited range of sources. Historiographic accounts and 'top-down' discussions seem to predominate. I would argue that the constructions and negotiations of national identity in everyday life and the deployment of the material past in these processes should be one of our main priorities for research. In this paper, I would like to take this issue further and suggest that, in this investigative process, our ethnographic locales should be expanded to include multiple spaces. As Clifford, among others, has recently suggested (1997), rather than focusing on bounded spatial units or constructing social actors as dwellers in a static space, we should explore modes of travelling, borders as borderlands, and the multiple landscapes where social experience and action are encountered (Appadurai 1991; R.J. Foster 1991; Ortner 1997; Stoller 1997). Furthermore, the notion of 'field' requires rethinking and restructuring. While maintaining the valuable experience of grounded localized research, the 'field' as bounded location out there where one ventures to do fieldwork should be replaced with the notion of 'shifting locations' (Clifford 1997; Gupta and Ferguson 1997:38), some of them much closer to 'home', some of them 'away', some of them out there in a constructed locality

and spatiality, corresponding to the equally shifting 'points of view' of the situated observer (see Pluciennik and Drew 2000 for an exploration of these issues).

This re-configuration of our fieldwork locales becomes inevitable if we consider the dramatic changes in the landscapes of late capitalism. Theorists such as Castells (e.g. 1996a, 1996b) have emphasized the need to comprehend the radical changes that have been taking place in the last quarter of the twentieth century, which amount to a technological revolution with information as its core material – the creation of an informational society, a society of networks and flows. Others, such as Hannerz (1996), celebrate what they call transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and the 'global ecumene'. Despite its apparent value and analytical potential, however, this approach often fails to take into account structures of power, new polarizations and asymmetries in the possession and dissemination of information, as well as in movement and global flows (Susser 1996; see also later in this article).

The links between antiquity/archaeology and cyberspace is a topic which has not been explored in any systematic way (cf. Allason-Jones et al. 1995; Gill 1995; Hodder 1999; and the recent thematic section in *Antiquity* 71, December 1997). Yet the issue has important implications for the nature of the archaeological process in the present and the notion of archaeological authorship (Hodder 1999), as well as for the construction of archaeological knowledges (Meskell 1997). This article focuses on another crucial issue: it examines discourses on identity and the past in cyberspace, in these new locales of social communication and interaction created with the help of electronic technology. It focuses on the most recent and advanced forms of such interactions such as the World Wide Web, which offer more opportunities for this kind of analysis. It has mostly to do with the representations of the past in the cyberspace and their deployment in the discourses of identity, both in the cyberworld and in more conventional spaces. Thus it is not an article on archaeology as disciplinary practice; it is rather an exploration on the recontextualization/consumption of some of the cultural production of archaeology.

This line of thinking and research is not a self-contained project. It is a by-product of a larger and wider project on the politics of the past, focusing on the case of modern Greece (Hamilakis 1999; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996, 1999). It came about when I realized that it is inadequate to explore issues of identity and sociopolitics of the past by an exclusive focus on the conventional forms of spatiality and social expression. Contestations of identity and the past take place in new, complex ways and spatial configurations, and any exploration of the matter would have been incomplete and inadequate without their consideration. Moreover, the fact that for the last decade I have been based and work in countries outside my primary research area has undoubtedly helped me to appreciate the extent and the importance of this phenomenon. Contact with students and scholars who live, study and work outside their country of origin has led me to question conventional notions of spatiality and its links with national imagination. This group of people move constantly between national boundaries and operate in different locales, some of which are material and conventional, and some virtual. This experience forced me to rethink and reorient my research, in order to confront notions such as 'national imagination' and 'exile', diasporic nationalism, and the paradox between

the grounding and materiality of antiquity, and the 'floating' post-materiality of the deployment of imagery from antiquity in the national cyber-discourse.

GLOBALIZATION, CYBERSPACE AND THE 'DISEMBODIED' INDIVIDUAL

In recent years a number of studies in different disciplines have attempted to identify, grasp and analyse a range of new phenomena and broader social developments which classic interpretative schemes fail to identify and explain. They concern radical changes in the world economic organization, such as the weakening or even the disintegration of conventional capitalist methods of production and the further expansion of global capitalism (post-Fordism); the proliferation of mass population movements (experienced as dislocation, displacement, or exile for many people) and the subsequent proliferation of studies on diasporas and migrations; the huge technological advances in travelling and communication (Castells 1996a, 1996b) which, according to some, must be described as a phenomenon of space/time compression (Harvey 1989); and the establishment of a new cultural economy which operates at a global level. Many of the above phenomena are often discussed under the term of globalization (from a hugely expanding literature, Appadurai 1996; Bauman 1998; Featherstone 1990; Friedman 1994; Waters 1995; see Lazarus 1998/99 for a critical review of the bibliography). Some of this discussion often views globalization in naive terms, as a celebration of the new world order with fewer boundaries and more opportunities for people to travel and communicate. The intensification of 'local' conflicts and wars throughout the globe and the creation of new borders and boundaries should have been enough to convince these voices of the fallacy of their argument. Moreover, globalization as the re-configuration of capital on a global scale is hardly a new phenomenon. Morley and Robins (1995:109) remind us that the East India Company was founded in 1600 and that, from the start, capitalism was a transnational enterprise. What we are witnessing recently is the intensification of that trend and its re-configuration in new media and modes of expression.

Furthermore, as Bauman (1998) has pointed out, the human consequences of globalization are very often forgotten (see also the recent special issue of *Race & Class* 40[2/3], 1998/99). Globalization in the present world means first and foremost the ability of global capital to exploit cheap labour anywhere in the world and to escape any 'local' consequences. Rather than creating homogenization, time/space compression has created a new polarity, where access to mobility and instant communication have become a new form of status distinction, devaluing at the same time the meaning of locality and depriving 'local' actors from one of their basic forms of identification and agency. In his analysis, however, Bauman fails to see that this new polarity does not go unchallenged. Actors who strongly identify with the locality use at the same time technologies of global communication and, in some cases, exploit to their full capacity the 'weapons' that global capitalism has introduced. It might be more appropriate, therefore, to talk about the local–global nexus as a dynamic and dialectic, but nevertheless asymmetrical,

process, rather than fetishizing the notion of globalization (Morley and Robins 1995:115–118).

It becomes clear that comprehension of this new local–global nexus requires new interpretative schemes and analytical categories. Within the anthropological and cultural studies field, Appadurai has been at the forefront in experimenting with such new schemes, as well as in trying out new arenas of academic expression, especially with his involvement with the *Public Culture* collective and journal. In the following analysis, I would like to employ the concepts of 'ethnoscape', 'mediascape' and 'ideoscape' proposed by Appadurai, who defines ethnoscape as:

> the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between persons to a hitherto unprecedented degree.
>
> (Appadurai 1990:297)

Mediascapes refer to the 'distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information . . . throughout the world; and to the images of the world created by these media' (Appadurai 1990:298–99). He sees mediascapes as image-centred, narrative-based accounts of reality which can be transformed into metaphors and fantasies.

> Ideoscapes are also concentrations of images, but they are often directly political, and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter-ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it.
>
> (Appadurai 1990:299)

I shall show how these concepts can be usefully deployed in the discussion which follows. Before that, however, it is important to make one or two passing observations and comments which will help to clarify further my approach. Within the literature on cyberspace, I would oppose both the demonization of cyberspace as an anti-social medium which promotes further isolation and individualization, 'a consensual cliché, a dumping ground for repackaged philosophies about space, subjectivity and culture' (Markley 1996:56; also other articles in the same volume; Healy 1997; Slouka 1995), but also its glorification as the triumph of a new global democracy and liberation (Rheingold 1991; Taylor and Saarinen 1994). A balanced analysis should pay attention to both aspects: e.g. its metaphysical, ideological basis which sees it as a realm between the material and the mental and leads to its de-materialization (Stallabras 1995), its colonizing properties (cf. Hall 1999), as well as the problems with its still limited accessibility, but also the opportunities for human interaction and collaboration it offers (Carter 1997 and especially Interrogate the Internet 1996 for discussions; Raab 1997).

For the purposes of this discussion, I would like to emphasize one or two additional important aspects. First, if we accept that space is not ontologically given or a mentally constructed entity but a set of relationships (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1985:102; Urry 1985:25) which is brought about, created and constructed by social

experience (structuring at the same time human experience and action: Soja 1985:98), then cyberspace is a form of constructed spatiality. In some ways, it can be grouped together with more conventional forms, despite differences in the conditions of construction and the nature of the experiential interaction which takes place within it. It should be, therefore, analysed as a social and political arena of human action, rather than as a technological phenomenon (Shields 1996:8). Secondly, the construction and the experience of cyberspace are not abstract global phenomena: they are primarily local phenomena with global consequences and effects (Shields 1996:3), or, better, local and global phenomena at the same time. 'People carry their virtual memories into the real world in significant ways' (Interrogate the Internet 1996:130). They involve real, embodied individuals who are usually active in many different locales, participating in many different communities. Their actions and experiences in cyberspace are influenced by their other spatial actions and vice versa (Argyle 1996; Argyle and Shields 1996; Wakeford 1996; *contra* Taylor and Saarinen 1994; Porter 1997; Baum 1995).

ANTIQUITIES IN THE GLOBAL HELLENIC ETHNOSCAPES

It is clear from the discussion just given that present-day social landscapes can often be described as multiple and often interlinked ethnoscapes, with people in motion either voluntarily (workers/business people, students, intellectuals) or forcefully (political exiles, displaced ethnic groups, economic emigrants). As these people become more and more divorced from the immediate reality of the 'homeland', they construct their own image of it – they create new mediascapes/ideoscapes. How do these recent changes in the reorganization of social life relate to perceptions of the past and antiquity and their deployment amongst Greeks? Some recent studies, mostly by anthropologists, have focused on national constructions by emigrants from Greece in countries such as Australia, the USA and Canada. One of the most prominent (Danforth 1995) has illustrated the deployment of notions, concepts and imagery from antiquity amongst Greek-Macedonians and Slavo-Macedonians away from the homeland. This important work, however, deals with conventional locales and it does not explore these deployments in new forms of spatiality such as the cyberspace. My research on the politics of the Greek past has attempted to incorporate this dimension. It has mainly concentrated on web sites constructed by Greek organizations, especially outside Greece: student societies, professional intellectual organizations, emigrant communities, and personal web pages by diasporic Greeks. Where appropriate, ethnographic research amongst social actors such as Greek students in the UK and Greek emigrants in the USA operating in more conventional locales has been incorporated and combined with research on the cyberspace.

The research for this material was carried out in two phases: the first during the summer of 1997, while I was preparing the initial oral form of this paper, and the second during the winter of 1998–1999, while I was revising the text for publication. During this second phase, I noticed that the number of web sites involved in the projection of Hellenic identity had dramatically increased; moreover, a number of

new features and characteristics were developed, some of which will be discussed later. I have surveyed a large number of sites of diverse nature: Greek state-run sites, sites run by private research organizations, sites constructed by student societies abroad and by emigrant communities, and finally personal web pages by Greeks living abroad. In this article, I am able to present only a small selection of this material by way of example. These examples are not meant to be representative of all or most of the web sites constructed and run by Greek organizations and individuals. They are simply examples of a noticeable attitude and cultural practice related to the politics of identity and the past which requires analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, the diverse nature of the sites should be taken into account in the discussion which follows. While this article focuses on a single unifying aspect, it will become clear that there is considerable variation in the aims, purpose, meaning, strategies of deployment and degree of success of these sites.

One of the main features on many sites and of particular interest to my project was the presence of imagery and other non-visual discourses coming directly from, or inspired by, antiquity. These representations occupy a key position in the rhetoric of those individuals and organizations in their ventures in cyberspace. The forms and types of these representations are quite diverse: images of ancient, mainly Classical sites and artefacts; places and personal names from antiquity; lettering and format imitating that of Classical Greek; and links to other sites with archaeological and historical information (in texts and images) on ancient Greek culture.

Odysseus, the information server of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture (originally called – ironically – *Ulysses*), deserves special mention. At the time of writing (October 1999), the core page of this very informative and elaborate information source features as its heading a misty illustration with the Parthenon as its dominant theme, accompanied by superimposed images of ancient themes such as the Hermes of Praxiteles, the so-called 'Vergina Star', the Poseidon from Artemision, the Praxitelean 'Hermes' from Marathon, the 'Prince with the Lilies' from Knossos, a Cycladic figurine, etc. In the top-left, in large blue letters acting as a caption, the words 'Hellenic Culture' have been inscribed. This official state-run site thus defines this visual construction as indicative of Hellenic culture and offers it for public consumption to the world. Other visual imagery includes an iconographic theme from a Classical vase depicting Odysseus on his travels, and themes signifying current national campaigns (which also serve as links to other web sites) such as the restitution of the Parthenon marbles, the 'Cultural Olympiad', major exhibitions and current cultural events. Yet, the core page of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture expresses clearly from the beginning doubts on whether the internet can convey the 'spirit' of Greek culture:

> It is not possible to appraise Greek Culture as a whole, through a computer screen. Nevertheless, being aware of the force and the potentialities of new technologies, we tried to squeeze in this program the millennia of artistry, the centuries of outstanding art, the achievements of the human spirit, the routes on which the western civilization strode in order to reach its current

> form. We tried to give you only a fraction of this great adventure that is called Greek Culture, from antiquity up to our days. . . . The name we gave our server is '*Odysseus*' because we believe that he, the greatest of all voyagers, is the most representative Greek of all. He is also the character most apt to lead our steps to the fascinating quest you just started.
>
> (http://www.culture.gr/welcome.html)

Another initiative with much activity on the internet is that of the 'Foundation of the Hellenic World' (http://www.fhw.gr). This private organization was set up by a Greek millionaire and its original Greek title can be translated as 'Foundation of the Wider Hellenism' (*Idryma Meizonos Ellinismou*). The founder of the initiative in his own web page (which is linked to the web pages of the Foundation) states his and his family's vision:

> Our vision is to create a place where:
>
> 1. The complete *history* of Hellenism from 8000 BC, till today, will be told.
> 2. The complete *presence* (in the geographical sense) of Hellenism, will be shown.
> 3. All *aspects of life* of the people will be presented.
> 4. All the above, will be shown in an *educative way* as means to help the people of today, through their lives.
>
> Our idea was born during our trips abroad and at home. In San Francisco, we were impressed by the educative [*sic*] value of the interactive 'Exploratorium'. In the southern part of Asia Minor (today being part of Turkey) we were astounded by the dozens of ancient relics of the Hellenic presence that not only were not marked or shown in any tourist map, but even I, although my origin is from that area, had only a vague idea of their existence.
>
> When touring Greece, our joy from the lovely countryside and the picturesque villages, was overshadowed by the never ending spectacle of historic sites, landmarks, decaying temples, old monasteries, tombs and other reminders of human life.
>
> (http://www.fhw.gr/fhw/en/people/other/le.html)

In the mission statement of the Foundation we read:

> The Foundation's mission is to preserve and disseminate historical memory and traditions, as well as the realization of the universal extent of Hellenism, and the projection of its contribution in the development of its aim is to promote the understanding of the past as a point of reference for the shaping of the present and the future, so that modern thought may be inspired once again by the Hellenic spirit.
>
> (http://www.fhw.gr/fhw/en/info/)

The core web pages of the Foundation present projects such as the 3D modelling of ancient monuments like the temple of Zeus at Olympia and the ancient town of Miletus in Asia Minor, maps and plans with the Classical *Bouleuteria* ('the birthplace of Democracy', according to the web site), and a historical outline of the Olympic

Games as part of the celebration for the centenary of the modern Olympic Games (1896–1996). The only theme to be found in the core page with no direct references to antiquity is an exhibition on the Athenian building of the Old Parliament, which currently houses the National Historical Museum of Greece.

The two web sites just described, which are based in Greece, are sufficiently important to qualify for a relatively detailed presentation but, as mentioned earlier, most sites which make references to Hellenic national identity and use 'material' from antiquity are 'based' outside Greece. In their imagery, prominent features include many of the most common signs of Hellenic identity such as the Acropolis and the Parthenon, other key archaeological sites such as Delphi and Olympia, but also images of Alexander the Great, artefacts from Vergina, and Classical architectural motives. These images are intersected by national symbols such as the Greek flag, other signifiers of Hellenism, such as images of Greek orthodoxy, and in many cases texts reproducing the dominant national narrative. In some cases, these are also mixed with other signifiers of identity such as logos of soccer teams, other information that denotes aspects of the national culture, including recipes of the perceived national cuisine, and the corporate image of the university in which the specific individual or group is based. In some cases, opportunities offered by computer technology have been used to present computer reconstructions of significant architectural monuments of antiquity.

Since persons and communities are defined by their associations and relationships, identity in the cyberspace is also, if not primarily, constructed through hypertext links (links to other web pages). A brief glance at the sites examined would reveal that most links are to Hellenic state and private cultural organizations (Ministry of Culture, Council for Greeks Overseas, The Greek Tourist Organization), projects related to signifiers of Hellenic identity, most of them from antiquity (Ancient Olympics, Classical resources and databases, the forthcoming Athens 2004 Olympics), the Christian Orthodox Church, and, for students' organizations, mostly other overseas student organizations worldwide (for reference purposes, a good starting point to look at some of these sites is the 'Archive of Hellenism', a privately-run on-line index of sites operated from Washington University at Saint Louis: (http://www.me.wustl.edu/ME/faculty/add/hellas/alpha.htm).

Personal web pages are of special interest, for some of these social actors have made serious efforts to construct elaborate presentations of the intermingling of the personal and the collective/national. Let me refer briefly to three cases. 'The Agamemnon Home Page' starts like this: 'Ya sas (Hello) and welcome to the home page of Agamemnon King of Mycenae; regular updates on the Cyprus Problem'. This web page includes a mixture of ancient Greek mythology, 'the family tree of Agamemnon', information on the Cyprus issue, as well as information on the creator's place of origin, her/his plan for a radio station, and lyrics from her/his favourite Greek songs. In another, the creator has constructed a page entitled 'Greece, chosen by the gods!' and headed by the Greek flag and an aerial view of the Parthenon. The page gives information on how to learn Greek and travel to Greece, how to find statistical facts about Greece, and how to greet people on their personal name-dates. Finally, on a third page, we find links to images from

the site of Vergina and links devoted to the Macedonian issue, as well as to Greek television channels, right-wing political organizations, football fan clubs, cartoons, and the Greek tourist organization – all in the same page!

One of the main differences between the personal web sites and the official sites representing organizations is that the former exercise greater freedom in picking and mixing visual representations from different periods of antiquity and intermingling them freely with other group identity signifiers, as well as with personal information. Moreover, mythological elements become inseparable from historical events, as do facts from antiquity and events from current state and international affairs. In the case of the 'Agamemnon' web page, a case to my knowledge unique, its creator has adopted the persona of the mythological hero for reasons which are not clear from the information given on the site. The official sites, by contrast, adopt a much more objectivist position, although representation of de-contextualized artefacts is not uncommon (see the web pages of the Ministry of Culture).

During the second phase of my research, it soon became clear that in addition to the vast proliferation of web sites by societies, organizations and individuals, there were attempts to structure the cyberspace and organize all sites related to Hellenic identity and Greece in general. There are now search facilities (search engines) devoted exclusively to Hellenic resources, as well as data bases which contain exclusively these resources. Terms such as 'GreekNet' are often used to denote these initiatives.

The internet is only one of the arenas where personal/national identities are projected. Many of the social actors who are responsible for these pages are also active in 'real life' in many ways. To give just two examples, centres of diasporic Greeks in Australia, Canada and the USA were the loci for the eruption of nationalist tensions over the Macedonia issue in the early and middle 1990s, involving, among other activities, ritual ceremonies with people dressed up as Alexander the Great or ancient Greek soldiers (Danforth 1995). In the spring of 1999, as part of a research trip in the USA, I witnessed the prominence of themes from antiquity in the life and public expression of many Greek-Americans and many Greek students studying in the USA. During the annual parade in New York's Fifth Avenue to commemorate the Greek War of Independence (1821–1830), which led to the foundation of the Greek state – perhaps the most important event in the national calendar of the Greek-Americans – replicas of ancient monuments and features, other representations and impersonated figures from antiquity were all paraded in front of many thousands of spectators (Figs 1–4).

In the following example, the connections between the internet and 'real life' activity can be easily established: it refers to the campaign over the restitution of the Parthenon (or 'Elgin') marbles by Greek student societies in Great Britain. The campaign, which was co-ordinated internationally through the internet (e.g. http://www.rethymno.forthnet.gr/marbles/), declared 5 December 1997 as International Parthenon Day, when rallies in many parts of the world were to be staged, with the central and the most important being the one outside the British Museum. During the week leading up to 5 December, student societies and individuals in Britain intensified their activity on the internet. The actual demonstration,

Figure 1. *New York, 28 March 1999. A group of Greek students belonging to the Greek society 'Socrates' partake in the parade for the commemoration of the Greek War of Independence. (Photograph by the author.)*

Figure 2. *Greek-Americans on floats used in the same event portrayed in Fig. 1. Themes from antiquity (such as Alexander the Great, in this case) featured prominently, in some cases in connection to national crusades such as the 'Macedonian Issue'. (Photograph by the author.)*

Figure 3. *A replica of the Parthenon on a float from the same event. (See Figs 1 and 2; photograph by the author.)*

Figure 4. *A replica of the ancient Greek mythological ship 'Argo', sailing down New York's Fifth Avenue, on 28 March 1999. (See Figs 1–3; photograph by the author.)*

at which I was present in the uncomfortable role of ethnographer/observer, and the events surrounding it were much smaller in participation and media attention, than the internet campaign let us believe (Hamilakis 1999).

In focus here is a range of complex and in some ways diverse phenomena, such as the propagation and dissemination of the national narrative by state organizations, the internalization of the narrative by groups, individuals and organizations, and the recasting, construction and projection of personal/national identities. The internet is usually thought of as the medium that transgresses national and other boundaries and defies ideologies of exclusion, such as nationalism. The phenomenon described here, therefore, amounts to an apparent paradox: the reproduction of nationalist discourses through electronic media and the internet, employing images and narratives from antiquity. There are some questions which immediately arise from this paradox: why does an apparently transnational and transgressive medium lend itself to nationalist discourses? Why is it that cyberspace, which is seen as one of the most powerful signifiers of globalization, is used in this context to promote anti-globalizing attitudes such as nationalism? More relevant to the context of the present discussion, what kind of meanings does imagery from antiquity acquire in the nationalist discourses taking place in cyberspace?

PRODUCING THE NATIONAL HETEROTOPIA IN THE CYBERSPACE

It must be emphasized again that most of these ventures into cyberspace are developed away from the homeland, as projects initiated by an educated diaspora operating in most cases within a multicultural environment, benefiting from the technological support of western academic institutions. Here we have, therefore, a well-recorded phenomenon: intelligentsia in exile, away from the diverse and complex reality of the homeland, imagining and dreaming the national *topos* (Anderson 1992, 1994; Gourgouris 1993, 1996). The imagined community of the nation can be dreamed of much more easily away from home, away from the lived experience of everyday life in the homeland. It is no coincidence that, in several national movements, including the one which led to the creation of the modern Greek state, the key intellectuals and activists operated from exile rather than from the homeland. Nor is it a coincidence that many recent national tensions involving Greece and Greek nationalism took place not in Greece itself but in Greek emigrant communities in North America and Australia (Danforth 1995; Karakasidou 1994).

If nationalism can be described as a secular religion (Anderson 1991; Kapferer 1988), then one of the most important differences between traditional religions and nationalism is that, in nationalism, each individual is a 'priest' and a 'preacher' and does not depend on others for ritual services (Gellner 1983; cf. Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999). Today's national social actors have at their disposal a medium, much more efficient, effective and easy to use than print technology – a catalyst for the construction and the dissemination of early national imagining (Anderson 1991). The internet offers not only a unique opportunity for the instant and, more importantly, simultaneous communication both with the 'homeland' and compatriots everywhere, but also the ability to preach the national dogmas through

the construction of web pages. This opportunity creates the feeling of an active and personal participation in the construction of the national dream. It also facilitates the appropriation of visual identity signifiers, such as motifs from antiquity, and their combination with other signifiers. In the context of exile, this project acquires the properties of a 'sacred' mission in a 'hostile' (i.e. heterodox) territory, a territory which is not part of the imagined national space. Many diasporic organizations proclaim as their two basic aims the further enhancement of the sense of community and belonging among Greeks and the dissemination of Greek culture, spirit and values in the host country. For example, one of the main aims of the Greek Students Association at the University of Toronto is 'to promote and portray within the Greek community and University community the Greek culture' (http://www.campuslife.utoronto.ca/groups/gsa/constitu.html). In the web pages of the Greek Students Association at Concordia University, Canada we read: 'The main goal of the association is to communicate and co-operate with other students, scientific, industrial and professional associations and unions, in order to promote Hellenic spirit and culture' (http://alcor.concordia.ca/~hellas/). In this scheme, key web servers in the 'homeland', such as the Server of the Ministry of Culture, acquire the status of provider of the national truth and operate as a key locus/link at the national centre.

Many personal web pages, however, indicate clearly the attempt to construct and project a personal identity which, although defined to a large extent with reference to national dogma, maintains many independent features from diverse origins. The references to antiquity are much more personalized than the ones found in official sites, sometimes emphasizing distinctive periods from the past, such as the Byzantine, and are combined with other elements of group and personal identity, from the local place of origin to the favourite soccer team and singer. In the secular religion of nationalism, where every faithful is at the same time a preacher, dogmatic principles are often modified and recast in a shape where the personal becomes inseparable from the national. The internet has made this process much easier than before.

Today, perhaps much more than ever, the social actors who form the body of Hellenism constitute an ethnoscape: a landscape of persons who live, move through, and act in many parts of the world as guestworkers, students (Greece is the biggest 'exporter' of student population in the European Union), intellectuals, tourists and business people. Many of them with access to the appropriate technology construct an imaginary world dominated by the visual signifiers of Hellenic personal/national identity: the mediascapes and ideoscapes of Hellenism in postmodernity.

Furthermore, the cyberspace becomes another battleground where the polarity between Greece and the West is being re-enacted. The quest for identity has been a constant preoccupation of Greeks since the eighteenth century, when European national discourses incorporated Greece within the western economic, ideological and political world system (Friedman 1992; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996; Kitromilides 1989). One of the main features of this quest is the internalization of the essentialist taxonomic schemes which were imposed upon Greeks by the dominant European national narrative. The populations of the Hellenic peninsula were constructed as Greeks and as successors of the Classical heritage, the kernel of the western modern cosmology (Gourgouris 1996; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996,

1999; Herzfeld 1982, 1987; Kotsakis 1991; Mouliou 1996; Petrakos 1987, 1988; Politis 1993; Skopetea 1988). At the same time, the people who were constructed by the Europeans as Greeks had to deal with those aspects of their identity which were not perceived as western and which did not fit in with the western Greek identity – hence the constant discussions and conflicts among Greeks on whether Greece belongs to the East or the West. More recently, Greeks have had to confront western attacks on the country's economic underdevelopment and its reliance on external, especially European Union funding. Concomitantly, they sometimes had to face accusations of 'backwardness', but also accusations of nationalism. In other words, they were both orientalized by the West as non-westerners (not real descendants of the Classical western European civilizations), and blamed at the same time for internalizing and taking further the notions and the concepts imposed on them by western nationalist discourses.

In the battleground of cyberspace, many diasporic Greeks, especially those educated in the West, are contesting those claims on several grounds. They are demonstrating their possession of the advanced knowledge of electronic western media and their ability to play a leading role in the new international playground of cyberspace, responding thus to claims of 'backwardness'. At the same time, however, by exhibiting imagery from Classical antiquity, they are reminding the western intelligentsia of their self-confessed ideological and cosmological roots, and they are reinstating their perceived privileged position as direct descendants and, therefore, rightful owners of this heritage.

Some of these ventures, especially the web pages of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, choose to confront explicitly, but with a dose of ambiguity and irony, the notion of the West and what is represents in terms of technological advancement on its own ground. The quotation from the 'Odysseus' web page given earlier states that the spirit of Hellenism cannot be contained in and expressed through structures such as the internet. At the same time, the site takes full advantage of the potentials of the medium and represents an extremely elaborate construction. This statement alludes to a whole set of polarities and dichotomies: the spiritual notion of Hellenism is contrasted to the technological notion of cyberspace. Its 'authenticity' is contrasted to the fabricated character of the internet; 'the millennia' of Hellenic culture are contrasted to the novelty of the 'computer revolution' and, indirectly and by implication, to its alluded ephemerality. These strategies amount to ritual and performative fighting and resistance towards the West, which had to pass through the millennia of history which are 'squeezed' in the pages of the server 'in order to reach its current form'. After all, we are invited to surf the net with the guidance of Odysseus (Ulysses) 'the greatest of all voyagers' and the 'most representative Greek of all'. In effect, these pages provide a highly ironic paradox: the medium is exploited in its full capacity but at the same time its authority is challenged and undermined.

These ritual battles, however, do not break from the dominant discourses on identity as an essentialist concept. All parties seem to reproduce the static notions of culture, spirit and boundedness. The usual techniques analysed by Alonso (1988) are reproduced here, not least de-particularization, with free-floating imagery

from antiquity devoid of its original context, and idealization, with the representation of a 'sanitized' past. The internet may resist nation-states' attempts to contain it (Poster 1995:84), but the imagined community of the nation finds in the virtual communities of cyberspace an appropriate medium with which it shares many characteristics.

There is another important dimension which needs to be explored in this context. As I implied earlier, nationalism can in many ways be described as topology – the quest for another imagined and dreamed *topos*, an 'enacted Utopia' (Foucault 1986:24), a heterotopia[1] (Gourgouris 1993, 1996; Leontis 1995). The national project can be also seen as a topographic one, the construction of the 'enacted Utopia' of the nation. National imagination and dreaming very rarely confines itself to the national state's territorial boundaries. Hellenism was always a locale much broader than the boundaries of the Greek nation-state. Cyberspace is in some ways an ideal terrain for the construction of the national heterotopic space. It is by definition another kind of spatial configuration, much closer to the imagined landscapes of the national dream than the conventional spatial structures of the 'ordinary' lived experience (on the links between cyberspace and 'imagined communities' see D. Foster 1997; Meskell 1997). In that respect, the web pages of the 'Foundation of Wider Hellenism' referred to earlier are a very good example of a heterotopic construction. The title itself is telling, for the 'wider Hellenism' (*Meizon Ellinismos*) has always been used by the national narrative to denote the wider, often deliberately fluid territory of the 'homeland'. Furthermore, the Foundation explicitly attempts to map the 'homeland', hence its emphasis on maps and other cartographic devices. This is supported by its aspiration to record the 'complete history' and 'complete presence' of Hellenism and to restore the topographic landmarks of the Hellenic homeland, where these have fallen into obscurity, e.g. the monuments of ancient Greek culture in Asia Minor.

This last example relates to another significant parameter. As Appadurai has very convincingly argued (1995), the production of any localities requires a range of laborious techniques and practices. The cyberspace has to be 'domesticated', transformed into cyberplace to become an 'intimate' place (Appadurai 1997). For that purpose, imagery from antiquity serves multiple aims. If the internet signifies and embodies globalization, antiquities as part of nationalist discourses act as resistance to the globalizing trend, as a mechanism for the production of locality, pointing to a certain fixed context of origin. The materiality alluded to by imagery from antiquity reinforces further the idea of a locality. Given the position of Classical antiquities within the western imagination and culture, however, representations from Classical antiquity operate as both local and global signifiers. If antiquities in modern Greece operate as symbolic capital (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996), then representations of antiquity in cyberspace help to construct the locality and the imagined topos of Hellenism, while at the same time operating as the currency of the symbolic capital in the global cultural market. Despite the rapid devaluation of this currency in the international stock markets of cultural economy, due to trends such as multiculturalism and the attack on the notion of Europeanness, these advocates of

Hellenism worldwide seem to be of the opinion that what is needed is better marketing – hence all the laborious efforts in the cyberspace.

CONCLUSIONS

The representation of archaeological production on the internet is a phenomenon which has barely been touched upon. To date, most archaeological discussion seems to treat the internet simply as a technological device. This article has argued that this is inadequate. It must be seen as a social phenomenon and its spatial properties should be critically interrogated. Many archaeologists have learned recently to pay more attention to the implications of archaeological production in present-day social realities. If we accept this as worthwhile, we have to face the fact that our social realities – our ethnoscapes – are to a large extent shaped by a world of images – by mediascapes and ideoscapes – some of which are constructed in the cyberspace. Our cultural archaeological production is today implicated in the discourses and contestations of identity, social roles and representations, in new ways, through new media and within new spatial configurations. If archaeologists are to play an active role in the process, and thereby come closer to disciplinary maturity, then we have to understand these processes and their position in the new cyber-order.

These ideas were explored using as a case study the constructions of Hellenism in cyberspace, where representations from antiquity play a central and crucial role. Many social actors, mostly away from the 'homeland', forming the modern Hellenic ethnoscapes, project the national narrative and construct an imaginative heterotopia where the personal becomes national and vice versa. The medium gives them the opportunity to recast the national narrative, intermingling it with other signifiers of identity, from music and cooking recipes to soccer club logos. Representations from antiquity in these new mediascapes are indispensable. Now, through the construction of web pages, the advocates of Hellenism have an enormous potential to project and reproduce imagery from antiquity and integrate it into their own visual narratives of personal/national identities. Antiquities become the landmarks in the topographic enterprise which is the construction of imagined Hellenic territory. Through them, the cyberspace becomes more intimate and tamed, becomes a familiar locality, material, through the materiality to which the representations of antiquity allude.

I should not like to give the impression that all web presence by Greeks overseas can be more or less described and analysed along the lines presented here. Moreover, as I have emphasized before, I would like to distance myself from the demonizing attitude, often adopted by imperialist and neocolonialist centres and approaches, which, in a essentialist manner, brands all Greeks overseas as extreme nationalists. This article has not claimed any 'statistical' or other quantitative validity, nor has it attempted to cover completely what is a huge and complex topic. It has simply pointed to a widespread phenomenon and has attempted to interpret and analyse it. At this stage, however, the cyber-activists of Hellenism seem to dominate the internet and they seem to be much more vocal than any dissenting voices.

This new phenomenon, upon which this article has barely touched, is no doubt in need of further exploration. Moreover, I have not even mentioned the issue of the implications of this phenomenon for archaeological work and production, and the public presentation and dissemination of archaeological knowledge. For example, will the ease with which images from antiquity are incorporated into narratives of identities elevate the value of antiquities and the past or will it result in further distance from the physicality and materiality of the past and its contextual associations?

As far as the broader debates around globalization and the 'network society' are concerned, this article has hopefully added further support to the analyses which have suggested that globalization does not go unchallenged, and that the new global-local nexus may in fact in some respects decrease rather than increase homogenization in the global cultural economy. Even in the 'network society', the creation of intimacy and the production of locality remain a central preoccupation. At the same time, it has shown that the projection of personal/national identities in the cyberspace is often grounded on the same essentialist and exclusivist notions which are central to the national dream and imagination. Moreover, the new medium makes national imagining and dreaming easier, helping every advocate of nationalism to become a more effective preacher. This contributes to the dissemination of homogenizing national 'truths' and narratives. This ritual performative fighting, involving new high-tech media, some very old artefacts, and some not-so-old concepts and stereotypes, is full of illuminating, interesting, and at times amusing paradoxes, ironies and ambiguities.

Finally, readers who have access to the internet are encouraged to access the web sites referred to here as well as other relevant ones, form a personal view, and interrogate the thoughts and ideas expressed in this article. As this essay, in addition to its paper form, will appear also in the on-line version of the journal, this will be much easier and it can become an interesting experiment in simultaneous intertextual multivocality.

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NOTE

1. While some would argue that 'Utopia' is a better term to describe the topos of the nation, I would maintain that, in the Foucaultian terminology, 'heterotopia' is the most appropriate concept. Foucault (1986: 24) defines heterotopias as 'real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively *enacted Utopia* in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (emphasis added). Thus the two fundamental features which make this term so powerful and more appropriate for defining national space are: the matter-reality of heterotopias as opposed to the un-reality of Utopias ('Utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces' – Foucault 1986:24); and the ability to function as enacted Utopias. Moreover, like national space 'the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (1986:25); they also create a break with the conventional time: 'they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies' (1986:26). Contrary to the common view, heterotopias are not defined exclusively in a negative way by Foucault (he would not himself use morally charged terms such as 'positive' and 'negative'; negative for whom?). Foucault has also included under this term what he has called 'crisis heterotopias' and 'heterotopias of deviance' as well as using the same term to analyse spaces such as the museum and the library (1986:26). Finally, this article is not the first to define the national space of Hellenism as heterotopia. In her recent important book, Leontis (1995:40–66) makes the same argument with reference to the topography of Hellenism.

GLOSSARY

The terms below and their explanation are reproduced from Loader (1997:228–230), where more information can be found.

WEB PAGE: An HTML document that is accessible on the web.

WORLD WIDE WEB: Also known as WWW, or W3, is a way that information is moved around the internet, the worldwide network of computer networks, providing text, files, graphics, sounds and moving pictures. It is a hypertext-based internet service for browsing internet resources.

BIT: A contraction of binary digits. A bit is the smallest unit of information a computer can hold.

BYTE: This is a number of bits used to represent a character. Eight bits is equivalent to a byte.

CYBERSPACE: A term coined by William Gibson (1994), a science fiction writer, to refer to a near-future computer network where users mentally travel through matrices of data. The term is now usually used to describe the internet and other computer networks.

HOME PAGE: This term is used loosely. It can refer to the top or main page of an organization, company, or personal page for an individual.

HTML: An acronym for HyperText Markup Language, HTML codes are interpreted by the Web browser to format documents in a particular way.

HTTP: The abbreviation for HyperText Transfer Protocol, a protocol used to transfer documents on the World Wide Web.

INTERNET: The collection of networks and gateways that use the IP Protocol suite and function as a single, co-operative virtual network.

TCP/IP: The basic protocols controlling communication on the internet.

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ABSTRACTS

Cyberspace/cyberpast/cybernation: la construction d'héllenisme en hyper-réalité
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Cet article passe en revue les images utilisées pour la représentation de l'antiquité dans l'espace cybernétique et discute leurs sens et leur place dans le discours global sur l'identité nationale et le nationalisme. Aprés une revue critique des discussions récentes sur la globalization et le gouvernement de la société par l'informatique, les concepts d'*ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes* et *ideoscapes* sont adoptés pour examiner le déploiement des représentations de l'antiquité dans les pages WEB construites par l'etat grec, par des organizations privées et surtout par les individus et la diaspora en grande majorité grecs. Il est suggéré que les organizations et les acteurs sociaux individuels, construisent dans l'espace cybernétique des topographies nationales helléniques. Les représentations de l'antiquité jouent un rôle central et crucial dans ce processus. De nombreux acteurs sociaux, la plupart exilés, loin de la terre maternelle, construisent des *ethnoscapes* helléniques modernes par la projection d'un narratif national et la construction d'une 'heterotopia' imaginaire où le personnel devient national et vice versa. Ces représentations sont la monnaie de la capitale symbolique de l'antiquité, une ressource décisive pour la fondation d'une communauté imaginaire de la nation hellénique. En même temps, ces représentations deviennent une arme efficace dans les batailles rituelles ainsi que dans les contestations autour de la polarization entre la Grèce et l'Ouest. Finalement, les représentations de l'antiquité deviennent l'instrument qui contribue à la domestication de l'espace cybernétique, à sa transformation d'espace en place et à sa matérialization au travers de l'objectification des représentations de l'antiquité.

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Dieser Artikel beschäftigt sich mit den Darstellungen der Antike im Cyberspace und diskutiert deren Bedeutung und Position im globalen Diskurs über Nationalismus und Identitäten. Nach einer kritischen Rückschau auf jüngere Diskussionen über Globalisierung und Informationsgesellschaft werden die Konzepte *Ethnoscapes*, *Mediascapes* und *Ideoscapes* angewandt, um den Einsatz von Darstellungen der Antike in Internetseiten zu untersuchen, die vom griechischen Staat, von privaten Organizationen und vor allem griechischen Gemeinden und Individuen in der Diaspora erstellt wurden. Es wird nahegelegt, dass Organisationen und individuelle soziale Akteure im Cyberspace den nationalen Topos Hellenismus konstruieren. Dabei spielen Darstellungen der antike eine zentrale und entscheidende Rolle. Viele soziale Akteure, meist fern der 'Heimat', formen moderne hellenische *Ethnoscapes*, indem sie die Nationalgeschichte(n) darauf projizieren und eine phantasievolle Heterotopie konstruieren, bei der das persönliche national wird und umgekehrt. Diese Darstellungen fungieren als Währung für das symbolische Kapital der Antike und sind so eine entscheidende Ressource bei der Gründung der vorgestellten Gemeinschaft der hellenischen Nation. Zugleich werden sie zu einer wirkungsvollen Waffe in den rituellen Schlachten und Auseinandersetzungen um den Gegensatz zwischen Griechenland und dem Westen. Schließlich werden die Darstellungen der Antike zu einem Werkzeug, das zur 'Domestikation' des Cyberspace dient, zu dessen Transformation von Raum zu Ort und zu dessen 'Materialisierung' durch die Materialität, auf die die Darstellungen der Antike anspielen.