3

GREEK MYTHS
AND METANARRATIVES
From Winckelmann to Bernal

COLLECTORS AND ANTIQUARIANS

It is often held that the 'rediscovery" of Greece came in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, it is true that until the late eighteenth century most educated west Europeans probably regarded their cultural origins as Roman and Christian. Language (Latin) was an important factor in this. An earlier rediscovery of Roman roots had occurred with Renaissance Italian artists drawing inspiration from Roman art. Yet, as studies like Richard Stoneman's show (and in a different way that of Alain Schnapp: see Bibliography), there is a continuity in the reception of the remains of the past and those of Greece in particular. One manifestation of this is Classicism,

In the 1500s François I of France was collecting Roman statues and Roman copies of Greek (as especially did Louis X1V1 as part of a French claim to be the new Rome. A great collection of bronze copies was formed at Fontainebleau (marble at Versailles). To own a cabinet of medals became popular In the same century. By 1550 there were 380 collections in Italy alone, 200 in the Low Countries, 200 in France and 175 in Germany. Collections too were started of drawings of antiquities and inscriptions. Two famous rival collectors in England of the seventeenth century were die Earl of Arundel (died 1646) and the Duke of Buckingham (assassinated 1628). Charles I was another. At his death Arundel had 37 statues. 128 busts and 250 inscriptions as well as sarcophagi, altars, fragments, coins, books and manuscripts. Neglected on his death, some of the collection eventually reached the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, in the nineteenth century.

Mention has already been made of Louis XIV (1638-1715)- During his reign a series of agents were sent out by Chief Minister Colbert to Greece and die Levant to collect books, manuscripts, medals and inscriptions. This French interest in Classical antiquities continued past the death of Louis. The Abbe* Michel Fourmont notoriously claimed the discovery of many important historical inscriptions at Sparta. They were later realised as forgeries at the end of the eighteenth century.

Fourmont records in 1730:

> For a month now, despite illness, I have been engaged with thirty workmen in the entire destruction of Sparta; not a day passes but I find something, and on some I have found up to twenty inscriptions. You understand, Monsieur, with what great joy, and with what fatigue, I have recovered such a great quantity of marbles. . ..
>
> If by overturning its walls and temples, if by not leaving one stone on another in the smallest of its sacella, its place will be unknown in the future, 1 at least have something by which to recognise it, and that *is* something. I have only this means to render my voyage in the Morea illustrious, which otherwise would have been entirely useless, which would have suited neither France, nor me.
>
> I am becoming a barbarian in the midst of Greece; this place is not the abode of the Muses, ignorance has driven them out, and it is that which makes me regret France, whither they have retreated. I should have liked to have more time to bring them at least more than bare nourishment, but the orders 1 have just received oblige me to finish.

Edward Dodwell on his later visit to Sparta in 1801 reported that Fourmont was still remembered as ordering the defacement of inscriptions he had just recorded.

Bernard de Montfaucon (1655-1741) was part of the great tradition of the Benedictine monks of Saint-Maur. His *L'Antiquite expliquee et representee en figures* compiled 30,000 pieces of antique art. It reveals something of a funerary obsession, but also an extraordinary and systematic collection of material to do with the life of antiquity. In it the image plays a fundamental role, but as a complement to the text. Schnapp contrasts this with the work of Francesco Bianchini, working in the Vatican, at the end of the seventeenth century. He treated the image as of a separate order of perception and knowledge and opened a new route to the past, that of comparative iconography. Through close scrutiny of imagery, Bianchini presented the decisive role of figuration in antiquity, with historical periods represented by particular emblematic images. Instead Schnapp detects in Montfaucon a Platonic element, a distinction between the world of ideas (represented by text and the subject of history) and that of the senses {images, the subject of archaeology): each object was connected to a body of text which gave it meaning. Thomas Carlyle was not impressed by Montfaucon's project, calling it 'mere classical ore and slag[1].

Anne Claude Philippe de Turbières de Grimoard de Pestels de Lévis, comte de Caylus, spent three years travelling in the eastern Mediterranean from 1714-17. Active member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (an antiquarian and historical association founded in 1701), he built up a large collection, becoming a leading antiquarian of his time. From 1752-67 appeared the seven volumes of his *Receuil d'Antiquites egyptiennes,*

étrusques, grecques et romaines. This was not just a monument to antiquarian relics; as well as the aft of the ancient world, contemporary art interested Caylus. The key point for Schnapp is Caylus's project of replacing the philological model of antiquarian or archaeological studies, which assumed the priority and metaphor of textual interpretation. For Caylus the antiquary was a sort of physician of the past with an experimental paradigm. In criticising the textual model of interpretation applied to monuments, he asserted the priority of observation and insisted on the positive experience of the artefact, that it was not just a supplement to history or something like an isolated text to be deciphered. Objects were clues or symptoms, diagnostic tools for recognising cultural and geographic origins, and for establishing sequences of change. In Caylus can be found a cultural determinism founded on observation and quantification, the basis or typology,

TRAVELLERS

By the 1670s English and French travellers were visiting Greece. The country had largely been ignored apart from Ciriaco Pizzicolli, known as Cyriac of Ancona, who, with antiquarian interests, had made several journeys from Italy in the fifteenth century and brought back many drawings of temples and reliefs.

Jacques Spon and George Wheler became travelling companions in 1675-6. The former's authoritative account of their travels became a benchmark for a century. For Spon, the past was a book to be read. This active metaphor, according to Schnapp, laid emphasis on medals and inscriptions; Spon can be created as the inventor of numismatics and epigraphy, applying a philological model to the past.

George Wheler in the Preface to his account of their travels, dedicated to Charles II, wrote the following:

> A country once mistress of the civil world, and a most famous nursery both of arms and sciences; but now a lamentable example of the instability of human things, wherein your majesty's discontented and factious subjects, if their own late calamities will not sufficiently instruct them, may see the miseries that other nations are reduced to, and behold, as in a picture, the natural fruits of schism, rebellion, and civil discord.

There are several elements present here of a nascent set of attitudes towards die Classical Greek past: time and the past; order and disorder; state unity versus political diversity; Greece as the ideal of liberty and excellence lost and crushed. More will be made of this chroughout this chapter.

Spon and Wheler were among the last to see the Parthenon in Athens relatively undamaged. In 1669 Pope Clement IX gave his blessing to the fleet which sailed against the Ottoman Empire. As pan of the campaigns the Doge of Venice, Motosini, moved against Athens. The Acropolis was bombarded,

with the Parthenon, at that time a mosque, being used as a powder magazine
.. . bits were blown hundreds of metres.

JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN
AND GREEK ART

Johann Joachim Winckelmann, born at Stendal near Berlin in 1717, was a
main figure in an eighteenth-century revolution in attitude towards the
ancient Greek past: an attitude which still has effect today. His *Gedanken*
of 1755 was translated by Fuseli into English (as *Reflections on the Imitation
of Nature in Greek Art)* in 1765. He became Librarian and President of
Antiquities at the Vatican, and in 1764 was published his two-volume work
Geschichte der Kunst des Atterthums. This was a chronological account of antique
art which had never before been attempted; Winckelmann produced a stylistic
chronology where others had only undertaken iconographic commentary. For
example, the most celebrated ancient statues in the Belvedere courtyard in the
Vatican or Florence's Tribuna had been considered simply as being of the 'best
period'. A four-stage scheme, adopted from Scaliger's for poetry (1608), was
proposed for Greek sculpture: pre- and early Classical was straight and hard;
the High Classical of Phidias was grand and square; that of fourth-century
Praxiteles was beautiful and flowing; then art was imititative.

Winckelmann's stylistic analysis was not, as for Caylus, a technical instrument,
though both, according to Schnapp, stood for an evolutionary model of art.
Winckelmann certainly describes an evolution from primitive beginnings
to perfection. The scheme derives ultimately from theories of rhetoric and
had been applied to the arts by Vasari in the Italian Renaissance. For
Winckelmann, stylistic analysis was the key to aesthetic understanding. So
rather than just explain works of art as artefacts, Winckelmann sought
to explain a culture by its works of art. In Greek art he found an idealised
pagan soul, a noble simplicity and calm grandeur (the famous ʿ*eine edle Einfalt
und eine stille Grŏsse').* Greece was to be seen as the childhood of Europe, the
foundation from which all European culture sprang. This had a great influence
on intellectuals like Goethe, Herder, Fichte and Schiller, for whom Winckel-
mann's heritage was the sublime mystery of Greek art. For others like Thomas
Jefferson and Jacques-Louis David, the neo-Classical painter of the French
Revolution, he stood for the freedom of Greek artists.

Winckelmann developed a way of writing about art which foregrounded
questions and issues of taste. In a full philosophy of art transcending mere
archaeology, art was inseparable from morality. Here is his rapturous adula-
tion of the Apollo Belvedere (a Roman copy, in the Vatican collections, of a
Greek original):

an eternal spring clothes with the charms of youth the graceful manliness
of ripened years, and plays with soft tenderness about the proud shape

Figure 3.1 William Blake's Laocoon

of his limbs ... My breast seems to enlarge and swell with reverence ... for my image seems to receive life and motion, like the beautiful creation of Pygmalion.

On the Belvedere torso (a fragment of a statue, again in the Vatican):

Ask those who know the best in mortal perfection whether they have ever seen a flank that can compare with the left side of this statue ...

You can learn here how a master's creative hand is able to endow matter with mind. The back, which appears as if flexed in noble thought, gives me the mental picture of a head filled with the joyful remembrance of his astonishing deeds, and, as this head full of wisdom and majesty arises before my inner eye, the other missing limbs also begin to take shape in my imagination.

These are exercises in an old Classical literary genre, the *ekphrasis.*

Winckelmann's method involved a close scrutiny of statues by torchlight. His alertness to details anticipates the later connoisseurship of the likes of Morelli (discussed in the previous chapter). He made observations on the size of knees and nipples; notable is his concern, amounting to anxiety, about the depth of the navel of the Venus de Medici, and the importance he attached 10 a barely perceptible flaring in the nostrils of the Apollo Belvedere, This was all part of a methodical stylistic analysis of anatomical parts; bur parts of Roman copies, not Greek originals. Winckelmann never went to Greece. And whereas he considered mainly sculpture, Winckelmann worked largely from ancient literature about art.

The importance attached by Winckelmann's connoisseurship to such close scrutiny can be related to a decline in the fashion of restoring ancient statues. Lord Elgin, for example, had originally hoped that the marbles which he had acquired from the Parthenon would be restored. (Thorvaldsen, the noted neo-Classical sculptor, restored the pedimental sculpture of the temple of Aphaia on Aegina which had been bought by Ludwig I for Munich.) Winckelmann valued the original fragments over later work, stressing, in a reverential attitude as towards sacred relics, that the excellence of ancient Greek sculpture could not be imitated.

In a recent short history of Classical archaeology, Ian Morris joins others in seeing Winckelmann as representative of a German elite resisting French assertions of its Roman roots and credentials. Here the role of German Protestantism is important, with ideas of getting back to the simple Greek original unencumbered by Latin and papal commentaries. By the late eighteenth century in Germany and elsewhere, ancient Greece was a meta-historical construct, something more than simply a part of history, and one of the methods considered appropriate to understanding ancient Greece was connoisseurship.

Winckelmann articulates a *metanarrative* which came to dominate study of and attitudes towards the Classical past, A metanarrative is a grand system, often taking form as a structure of emplotment, but may also be a body of theory or explanations, often approaching myth, which lies in the back-ground of particular accounts and provide general orientation, framework and legitimation, conferring meaning. One of the operative metanarratives in Classical archaeology is Winckelmann's Hellenism.

CONSTITUTING THE ART OBJECT

After Winckelmann there developed in the nineteenth century a Romantic attitude to Greek art. The new international art museums worked all our to gather collections. The Getty Museum in Malibu is the latest to join the big league who have taken over from the older aristocratic and royal collections.

Sculpture and pots are considered not just as archaeological relics, but works of art with no need of interpretation (for the educated viewer). The visual and aesthetic language of art has been presented as transparent. Whereas ancient literatures need careful commentary and critique, this has nor been considered necessary for an. This attitude is clear in the mode of presentation found in all of the world's big international art museums.

The Classical artefact is presented free-standing as art, with minimal supporting information, in the museum detached from the exigencies of day-to-day life - in splendid isolation from the prosaic. Art is presupposed as an immanent 'humanity', with artefacts formally identical according to spiritual truth, universal values expressed in the exceptional artefact. History is thus unified, and museums are free to roam the whole productive past, juxtaposing whatever is considered art. The viewer need only approach with finely tuned sensibilities.

This lack of interpretation of art (other than in more or less idealist arc histories) is compounded by the effects of the art market and lack of contextual information. Classification of artefacts considered as art so often becomes circular and a wholly unenlightening exercise. A pot arrives on the arc market. Without provenance it is classified by the (saleroom) expert as. say, typical early Hellenistic. It then enters the literatures as an early Hellenistic piece, and as part of an art historical corpus it provides justification for the schemes that allowed its attribution.

Attributions of the expert connoisseur are central to this attitude to Art', providing distinctions between authentic and fake, and passing judgements of quality, as explained in the last chapter, Critical art history (also discussed in Chapter 2) places importance on the sequence of works and so depends on contextual information to supply secure dates. But the ideology of pure works of art, which feeds the art market and which treats social and historical context as secondary, is an extremely dangerous threat to serious and critical understanding of artefacts.

VICKERS AND GILL AND THE CRITIQUE OF CERAMIC ART

Winckelmann concentrated on sculpture. A typical image of Greek art is also the fictile vase. Michael Vickers, of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and David Gill, lately of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, have made a long and carefully documented stand against the idea that Greek pots are high art.

Sir William Hamilton was posted as Envoy to the Court of Naples in 1764. He was there for thirty-six years, during which time he indulged his passion for antiquities. In 1774 he sold his first collection of Greek Vases' {still thought to be Etruscan or Campanian) to the British Museum for the extraordinary price of 8,000 guineas. He had had engravings of the collection published prior to the sale in sumptuous folio with a text by Pierre d'Hancarville. Vickers and Gill argue that this was a clever marketing job involving a confidence trick played by d'Hancarville. The claim was made that the vases were extremely expensive in antiquity. Winckelmann was involved. He did not produce such an argument, but was convinced of the superlative art of the vases and did argue, flimsily, that the Greeks competed for vases at games. The Greeks were artists: the British Museum was convinced; Winckelmann and Goethe were convinced. The arc market developed its tastes for Greek vases.

Why should pots be taken as expensive works of art? The context of such a shift in taste was right. Porcelain factories, such as Meissen, Sèvres, and at Vincennes, had been developing in eighteenth-century Europe. Many were established by royalty; all were patronised by royalty and the aristocracy. Porcelain design catered for aristocratic tastes and those of the emerging middle classes eager to emulate their social betters. Indeed, the techniques of porcelain manufacture had only recently been discovered at Dresden, though they had long been known in China; the art of Greek potting was similarly lost and unknown to eighteenth-century Europe.

So Greek vases could be compared with the royal porcelain of Europe. They also met certain new requirements of taste. Josiah Wedgwood was pioneering factory production of ceramics and new principles of marketing, manufacturing taste as well as cheaper wares for the new middle classes. Relations between the radical industrialist Wedgwood and antiquities are very clear. He commercially exploited antique design. His model factory in Staffordshire was named Etruria (vases such as Hamilton's were found in Etruscan graves). On the opening day of the factory, 13 June 1769, Wedgwood threw six 'Etruscan urns'. Encaustic techniques were used to imitate Attic red figure, and scenes were taken from one of Hamilton's vases.

Greek vases also suited changing tastes. In a reaction against decorative Baroque and Rococo, tastes were moving towards greater simplicity. Caylus in 1752 stressed the simplicity of Greek art, as did Winckelmann and d'Hancarville, one of whose comments on the Hamilton vases was 'the Elegance of the outline ... the Character of their distinguishing simplicity'. Goethe's *Italian Journey* of 1817, a successful and influential work, had the motto *'et in arcadia egò* - an allusion to the simplicity of the way of life in central Peloponnese and something Goethe found in the kingdom of the two Sicilies. This Romanticism coming together with neo-Classicism will be discussed below.

Vickers and Gill do not stop with the accusation of an art market. They
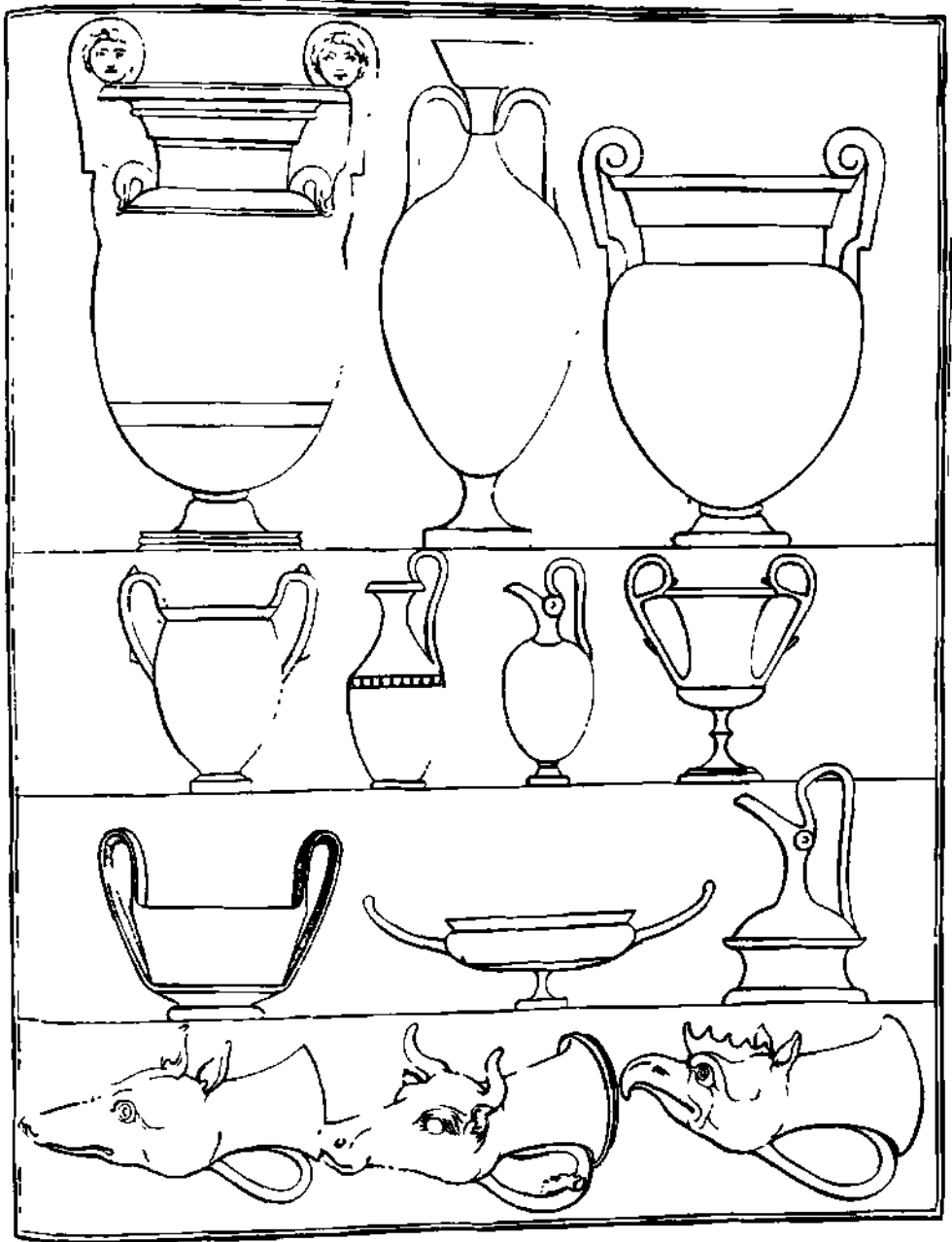
Figure 5.2 Part of Sir William Hamilton's second collection, published with Tischbein in Naples, 1791

have also aimed to show the scale and character of elite consumption and lifestyle in antiquity: that it had nothing to do with painted pots. It was all about precious metal plate and bullion.

Some of the 300 top Athenian families of the fifth century BC were millionaires in today's terms (Vickers and Gill draw such comparisons using clever calculations around gold values). But they were not as rich, by any means, as Persians; standards of wealth and luxury were set out east, The richest man in the Persian Empire of 480 BC was a certain Pythius, who possessed more than 50 tonnes of silver and 33 of gold: more than £220 million. These people did not use ceramic tableware.

Sanctuaries, the storehouses and treasuries of the ancient world, were stuffed full of metal plate according to contemporary accounts. Croesus of Lydia, for example, in the middle of the sixth century BC gave to Delphi (according to Herodotos): a huge gold shield; two craters of enormous size, one gold and another of silver that could hold 600 amphoras of wine; four silver casks; two lustral vases, one of gold, the other silver; a gold statue, three cubits high, of a woman; and many lathe-turned bowls of silver. Herodotos then describes a display of conspicuous consumption, a great sacrifice almost along the lines of what anthropologists call a potlatch. The ancient Greeks and Romans thought highly of metal plate, not ceramics. Connoisseurs in the late Roman Republic, when antiquarianism was, for once, popular, thought most highly of silver plate.

What happened to all of this wealth of the ancient world? It was stolen and/or melted down for recycling throughout antiquity. What does survive comes from the margins of the Greek world, in Thrace and Macedon, and particularly in the so-called Scythian tombs. Plate does not appear in Greek tombs because capital wealth was passed on to heirs. Etruscan tombs, in which have been found, according to Hemelrijk, perhaps 90 per cent of surviving Attic vases, provided a show of tokens and symbols of wealth in the vases, but not the expense of what really was valued.

Ceramics were, according to Vickers and Gill, skeuomorphic. that is copies or imitations of metal vessels. They claim that the reason why this possibility has not been seriously entertained is because of a doctrine that great art (read ceramics) deals with 'Truth' and is true to its medium and does not imitate another. But the position of Vickers and Gill is that ceramics were not art. Various aspects of the shape of many pots imitate techniques of metal manufacture. This has long been recognised and they point again to thin-walled vessels, handle shapes, ribbing, attachments and false rivets. They admit that Geometric pottery seems to obey a ceramic aesthetic, with its loose forms, otherwise ceramic form follows that of sheet metal. The main contribution to this line of thought about skeuomorphism concerns colour. Why is this pottery black or red figure? Why did potters go to extraordinary lengths to achieve the colour effects they so valued? Vickers and Gill argue that the colours imitate metals.

So black is silver, because the metal was allowed to tarnish. Taken alone this thesis can appear a little strained. The goddesses Thetis and Aphrodite are described as silver-footed. And consider this reference, made by Vickers and Gill, to bad water at Athens:

> Bad water, adduced by Athenaeus as a reason why silver might become oxidised, was a problem. Vitruvius describes how Athenian water brought by conduits had 'a foam floating on top, like purple glass in colour' so that people only used it for washing and took drinking water from wells. This sounds like a recipe for oxidation. Fumigation too, would have had a similar effect on silver, for if Homeric precedent was followed (as it seems to have been) both houses and storerooms might be cleansed by burning sulphur. Both sweaty hands and flatulence would have also contributed to making silver dark.

According to this skeuomorphism, red figure is gold figure. There are indeed many references to ruddy gold: in the poet Theognis, for example, refined gold is ruddy to look upon. Next, purple is copper, and white is ivory.

Pots in antiquity were also cheap, and ridiculously so. The highest recorded price for any Attic painted pot is 3 drachmas, or £5.40. In comparison, a cup of silver with gold figures, according to its weight, would cost more than £450. A commercial graffito on the underside of a red-figure pelike in Oxford and attributed by Beazley to the Achilles painter' can be read as 'four items for 3.5 obols' - 26 pence each. There was no money to be made in pots. Indeed, it is beginning to be held that trade in pottery in antiquity was probably a by-product of trade in other materials or of other activities (see below on the ancient economy in Chapter 6.

For Vickers and Gill the real artists were metalworkers. The signatures on pots are copying signatures on their metal models - Douris, Exekias, Euphronios and the others were working in metal. Hence some of the writing is garbage, not understood by potters, and some pots bearing the same signature are dearly by different hands: the example of Douris is cited. Sotades signed his name in many different ways and it seems that Phintias (Phintis, Phitias, or Philtias) and Memnon (Mnememnon, Memmnon, Memnoon, or Memon) could not spell their names!

A division of labour is indicated by the signatures. For example, a stand in New York bears the inscription:'*Kktrias egraphsen Ergotimos epoiesen* [Kleitias drew this; Ergotimos made it], Vickers and Gill suggests that *grammata* or *graphides* were designs in parchment or wood shown to a client before a metal vessel was made. This would not be appropriate for pottery, whose cost would not warrant it. Ergotimos would then be the silversmith in this case, while Kleitias designed the *gramma*. These were the artists who determined changes in fashion, and potters followed suit: the switch from black to red figure was a .shift in fashions of metal plate.

There is a faulted and circular logic in treating pots as art. The line of

thought goes as follows. The draughtsmen who produced Attic ceramics rank alongside Renaissance artists, therefore their work is amenable to the same sort of connoisseurship that is applied to Renaissance painting to discern artists. Therefore the work of potters must have been socially important and valuable; therefore their makers would have earned a good living. But lowly craftworkers were not valued in antiquity (according to Herodotos the Korinthians *despised* them least!). Here Vickers and Gill have Beazley, who adopted the method of Renaissance expert Morelli, as a Romantic, influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement (1880s onwards) in creating new attitudes towards craftsmanship and the 'art' of studio ceramics. Beazley here is depicted in the same light as Charles Norton, seeing the study of ancient art as an antidote to materialism and industrial consciousness.

So attribution studies, in treating pots as art and in searching for artists, have only confused matters and diverted attention away from understanding ceramics for what they were. But the connection between connoisseurship and the art market has already been mentioned. From the early nineteenth century a considerable investment of symbolic as well as monetary capital was placed in the growing art market in vases. John Beazley conveniently provided artists' names, and I have discussed this search for the creative individual. Here may be introduced the point that attribution deals with the distinction of original artist from derivative imitator or forger, matters at the heart of art market values. Here lies a major problem with the model of pottery workshops and schools. Beazley's artists influence and imitate one another (this is assumed by other attribution studies too, such as those produced for Korinthian pottery and discussed in Chapter 2). The notion of artistic style depends upon a genealogy of iconography with one porter being influenced by another. But the ceramic vessels of Attica went to be consumed in Etruscan tombs. One pot design could hardly be influencing a potter in Athens if it were underground in Etruria.

Vickers and Gill claim that the high status of ceramic artefacts is nothing to do with the ancient world; the pots were not considered works of art:

> Once it is widely recognised that the study of Greek pottery is largely conducted within an intellectual vacuum which has little point of contact with the values of the ancient world, there should be a decline in the extent to which Etruscan (and other) cemeteries are looted in order to supply museums and collectors — and behind them the market-makers and ancient-art consultants - with works of 'Art'.

In this argument artistic value is not an abstract constant, but related to social context. While this does throw doubt on the validity of artistic evaluation, and directly threatens the basis of a contemporary art market, the symptomatic logic of attribution and concepts of art style are left untouched.

Hence Vickers and Gill can concur with most of Beazley's attributions; '[b]ut what has tended to be obscured is the degree to which there is an overlap

of motifs between the work of one pot painter and another.' They explain this as a result of the copying of the designs of silversmiths. They still adhere to something of a hagiograhy of Beazley: 'Without Beazley's eye (and in the absence of his strict ethical code with regard to the art market), attribution studies become less worthy of respect.' Nor do Vickers and Gill challenge the notion of art: potters may not have been artists, but metalsmiths were. There is here a distinction between art and craft which will be taken up again and criticised in Chapter 6.

TASTE AND THE GREEK

Taste is a central concept in the construction of Greek artefacts as art. So far I have considered some aspects of the development of Romantic Hellenism. Here may be introduced the case of Lord Elgin.

At the end of the eighteenth century Elgin was building himself a house, Broomhall), on the *north* side of the Firth of Forth. In 1798 his architect Thomas Harrison persuaded him that books were not enough for contemporary design - casts and originals could change art. A diplomatic job in Constantinople was opportunity to do something about this; hence the Parthenon marbles ended up in Britain. But by 1803 Elgin had spent £40,000 of his own money on the sculptures, and when they went on exhibition in 1S07 many connoisseurs and antiquarians did their best to belittle the works, though some artists seem to have been enthralled. The Pheidian marbles were contrasted with hitherto exemplars of Classical taste such as the Apollo Belvedere: they were decidedly less ideal and more naturalistic. The marbles demanded a complete re-evaluation of taste which did not come too soon for Elgin. Elgin worked on public opinion, but it was the acquisition of the Aegina pedimental sculpture by Bavaria that had the significant effect on matters of taste (and the price that Elgin eventually received for the marbles). Ludwig I had staged a cultural coup in acquiring original Greek sculpture (not merely copies) for his capital Munich. He was known to be willing to buy the Parthenon marbles. The Trustees of the British Museum did not want to be upstaged twice and Elgin got £35,000 in 1815, less than half of what he had eventually spent. The sculpture became the symbol of Greek excellence, far surpassing, according to opinion, the Aegina marbles, and as naturalistic originals, outshining the ideal encapsulated by Roman copies such as the Apollo Belvedere.

When first visiting Athens in the late 1970s I was intrigued by some of the ancient sites of Athens listed as so significant by 'authorities' such as the *Blue Guide.* The Tower of the Winds (technically the Waterclock of Andronikos) and the Lantern of Demosthenes (the Lysicrares Monument) seemed inconsequential details of the Plaka compared with the Acropolis. I wondered why they were listed as so important and not to be missed. The reason is two English architects of the eighteenth century.
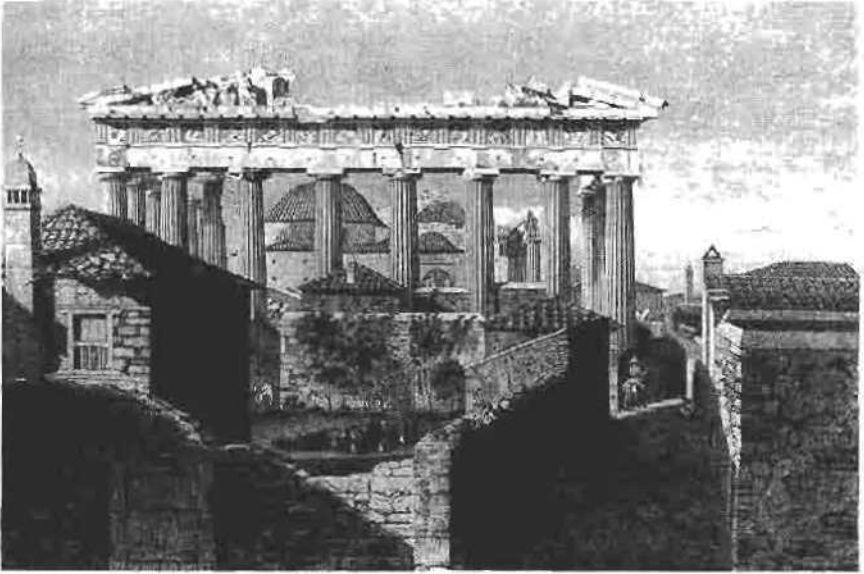
Figure 3.3 Stuart and Revett. *The Antiquities of Athens,* Volume 2. London 1787. Chapter *1*, Plate 1. The Parthenon

The Society of Dilettanti was founded probably in 1734 as a dining club for aristocrats who had visited Italy. In 1751 they funded James Stuart ('Athenian' Stuart as he became) and Nicholas Revett to go to Setines, as Athens was then known. Their aim **was** to produce a scholarly record of the buildings of ancient Greece, as Antoine Desgodetz had done for Rome in *Edifices antiques de Rome* (1682). The result was *The Antiquities of Athens* {tow massive and handsome volumes and a supplement; Volume 1 was published in 1762). These set new standards of accuracy in antiquarian recording and provided architectural models for the next 50 years. The Greek Revival was underway.

They had made much of the Tower of the Winds and the Lantern of Demosthenes, and these were used as source models for all sorts of neo-Classical buildings. Copies were even made: the Radcliffe Observatory in Oxford (James Wyatt, 1773-94) is a Tower of the Winds which *is* also to be found in the middle of a lake in Lord Shugborough's estate in Staffordshire (1765). ^

The Classical Greek is here being used, as antiquity had been for so long, as a tool in the construction of taste and cultural identities. These matters of taste are about what it is to be a cultured individual. They are about the constitution of types of self or subjectivity. In Chapter 2 I dealt with the character of the connoisseur, finding themselves mirrored in the past as
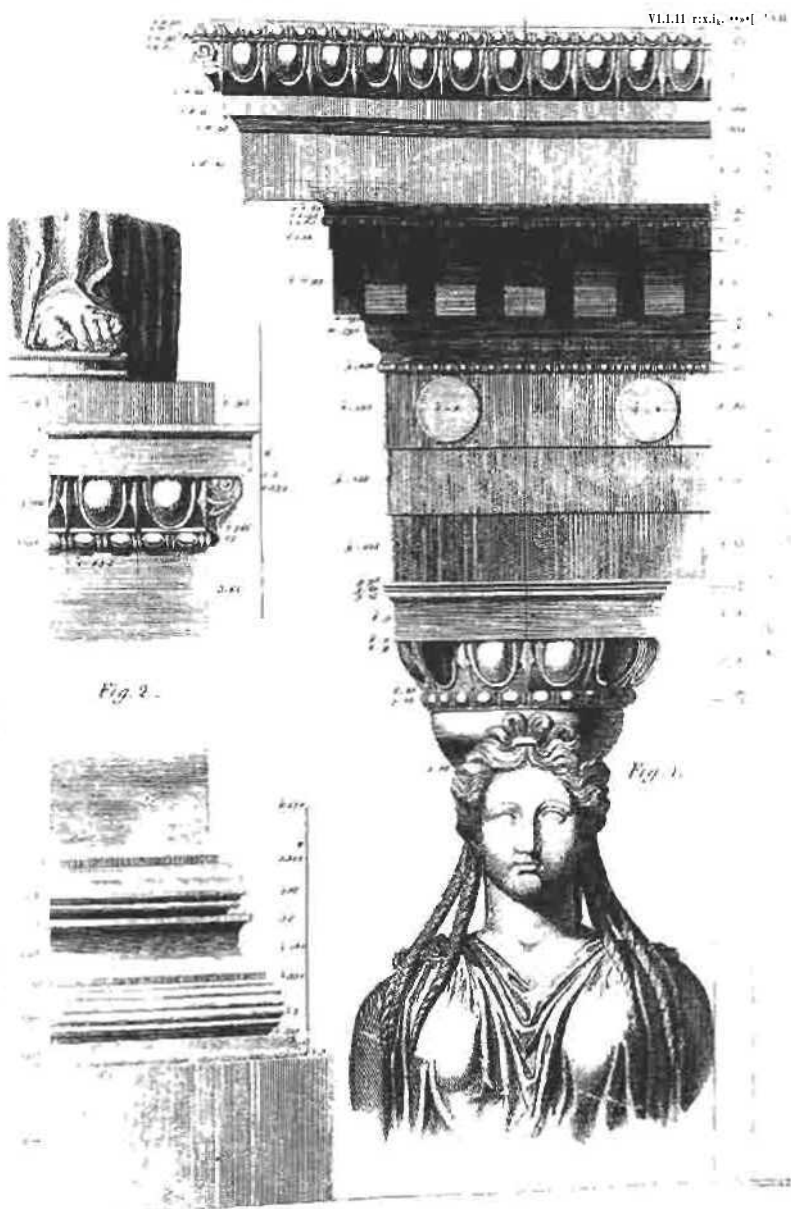
Figure 3.4 Stuart and Revett. *The Antiquities of Athens,* **Volume** 2. **London** 1787. Chapter *2,* **Plate 17. Drawing of Erechtheion,** detail

transnational artistic personalities. We move on in this chapter to see how the Greek has been used in the construction of much more.

GERMAN ACADEMICS AND THE IDEALISATION OF GREECE

For Winckelmann and many after him ancient Greece was a cultural pinnacle. This idealisation of Greece was carried through the nineteenth century by the unmatched rigour of German Classical scholarship.

There were radical changes in German higher education in the eighteenth century, instituted, for example, by Heync at Göttingen, and overseen by Alexander von Humboldt, Prussian Education Minister from 1808-10. Education was a crucial part of Prussian political ideology. Key features of von Humboldt's Hellenist *Bildung* were skills of source criticism, producing a science of the ancient world *Altenuinswhienschafi.* The Greeks were enshrined as beyond historical criticism. Classically educated graduates came to monopolise jobs in the state sector, in education and law. While the idealism of the early nineteenth century, centred upon the metaphysical concept *of Zeitgeist* (spirit of the age), gave way to a hard-headed realism and learned historicism, the German University set the intellectual agenda.

In the United States after 1850 it was considered by many that Germany was the place to go for a serious education. There was an impetus to emulate the Germans coming largely from within the American academies. In France in 1896-7 fifteen universities were opened on the German model. Despite these direct influences, major differences existed in the middle-class educational systems of the western nation states, but German scholarship was recognised as supremely rigorous and Hellenism held sway. This held chat (an idealised) Greece was the origin of Europe, and access to it was through original Greek. And whatever the political ideologies of the early Romantic champions of Hellenism, Classical education was conservative.

CLASSICISM, ROMANTICISM AND NEO-CLASSICISM

The counter-enlightenment of the eighteenth century came to idealise a simplicity and spontaneity seen to be the characteristic of ancient Greece, Roman art, so long the model, was now considered uninspired and derivative compared with Winckelmann's account of the liberty and spiritual simplicity of the Greek. The Greeks were free; the Romans decadent and corrupt.

This cultural shift is to be seen as part of a complex interplay of ideologies of Classicism and Romanticism; another term, Hellenism, has already been introduced. This is not the place to give a definitive account, which is anyway impossible, for the terms are not fixed, but have been constantly subject to rhetorical changes of meaning. It is important, however, to raise some broad issues.

In his book *The Classical Tradition in Art* (1978), Michael Greenhalgh defines Classicism in art as an approach to various media founded on the imitation of antiquity, and on the assumption of a set of values attributed to antiquity. Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny have documented the importance of copies and collections of plaster casts in this tradition. For many centuries it was accepted by everyone with a claim to taste that the heights of artistic achievement had been reached in a limited number of antique sculptures. Many were displayed in the Belvedere courtyard in Rome and in Florence's Tribuna. Later Naples and Paris came to hold significant pieces. Art schools everywhere acquired plaster cast copies for study. Winckelmann and the early antiquarian collectors can be considered in this context. In another interesting twist these sculptures now mostly attract our attention transformed into kitsch tourist souvenirs.

Most arts from Renaissance up to nineteenth-century Romanticism were governed by this retrospective ideal of antiquity. Furthermore art was considered governed by rules determined by reason. Beauty was truth, and art therefore had a moral aim. Renaissance humanism had placed man at the centre of things, as the measure of all; this was above all though a concern with the ideal, with the typical (eschewing the individual) and with morality in the widest sense.

Much of this Classicism is expressed in Raphael's frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura 1508/9—1512, a private apartment in the Vatican. Its style is that of the noble simplicity and calm grandeur so praised by Winckelmann. Its iconography is of the life of Man pictured as a search for Truth, with four ways to achieve it: Theology, Beauty and Art (the Muses and Mount Parnassus), Reason (the School of Athens) and Law (Figure 3-6).

Romanticism

> High towers, fair temples, goodly theatres,
> Strong walls, rich porches, princely palaces,
> Large streets, brave houses, sacred sepulchres,
> Sure gates, sweet gardens, stately galleries
> Wrought with fair pillars and fine imageries;
> All those (O pity!) now are turned to dust
> And overgrown with black oblivion's rust
>
> (Edmund Spenser, *The Ruins of Time*)

The Romantic component of this cultural nexus enveloping ancient Greece involves conceptions of the picturesque and historicity (the sense of history and time). David Le Roy was visiting Greece at the same time as Stuart and Revett. His book, *Ruines des plus beaux monuments de Grece* (1758) is also concerned with caste, but in a very different sense - with respect to the representation of ruination. The ruins of the Greek landscape are pictured as a

Figure 3.5 Plaster casts in the old Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge, 1977. Now the library of Peterhouse
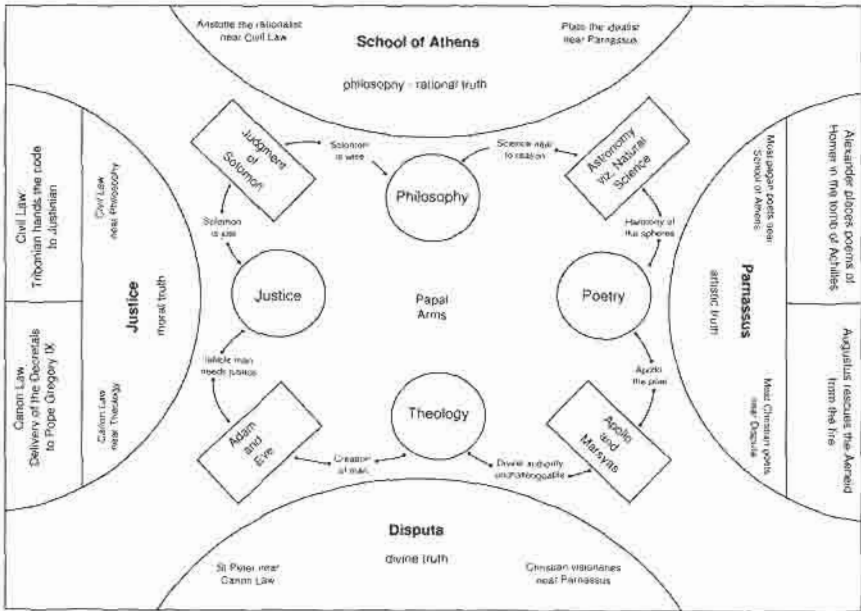

Figure 3.6 Raphael's frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura 1508/9–12. The encompassment of Classicism

Figure 3.7 Robert Sayer. *Ruins of Athens.* London 1759. Plate 10. Temple of the Winds, Athens and the Temple of Korinth

field of meditation and reverie, symbols of the passing of time, the disappearance of civilisation, the permanence of nature.

Iii 1776 Comte Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier travelled to the eastern Mediterranean. *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce* (two volumes, 1782) appeared under his name, though he had employed various draughtsmen, artists and antiquarians. He was an aristocratic collector as of old: consider this letter to his agent, the Consul Fauvel, in Athens: 'Take everything you can. Don't neglect any opportunity to pillage everything that can be pillaged in Athens and its territory . .. Spare neither the living nor the dead.' But the work of Choiseul-Gouffier does not belong with the scholarship of Caylus or Montfaucon. Few plates in the *Voyage are of* antiquities. His interest, shared with many later, was in topography.

The encyclopaedic treatments of antiquarian relics of the likes of Montfaucon and Caylus are replaced by the monographic study, by travel literatures, as interest shifted from artistic models and taste to landscape, its aesthetics in relation to **history.** Here fit the fantastic Roman ruins depicted by Piranesi and the paintings of Hubert Robert, 'Hubert des Ruines' as he was known. The picturesque was developed as an aesthetic theory. While William Wordsworth and William Gilpin speculated upon its character in *the* Wye Valley of the borders of England and Wales in the 1780s and 1790s, ideas of

nature and the aesthetic changed English landscape gardening. Painters and artists began visiting Greece from the end of the eighteenth century: Thomas Hope in 1795, Charles Eastlake in the 1820s, Edward Dodwell from 1801.

Fanny-Maria Tsigakou, in her beautifully illustrated *The Rediscovery of Greece* (1981), comments that Romantic paintings of Greece at this time owed more to the hazy light of paintings by Claude Lorrain; Richard Stoneman comments on the superficiality of their vision, together with a contrasting importance for Greek studies:

> The painters, naturally enough, had their eye on the pictorial possi-
> bilities of the scene. No melancholy here over fallen beauty, no Turnerian
> sublime but the charm of ruin and of pretty girls, of camels, and of
> exotically clad Greeks and Turks to adorn the ruins and the hills____But
> the young Englishmen who visited Greece rejected the rococo not, like
> Goethe or Diderot, for its superficiality and irrelevance to deeper human
> concerns, but for its inadequacy towards the real landscape and their
> sense of history. It was the discovery of the Greek landscape that changed
> the understanding of Greek history. And it was the historical sense that
> gave the Greek landscape its especial importance in picturesque theory,

Here is a new sense of history, beyond simple reflection upon time and mortality. These were ruins that not only attested to the ravages of time but also were traces of a great past to be recalled. This is an attitude found also in Pausanias: there is little interest in contemporary life; Greece is a landscape whose meaning is its ruin. As Edward Dodwell expressed it in his *Travels:*

> Almost every rock, every promontory, every view, is haunted by the
> shadows of the mighty dead. Every portion of the soil appears to team
> with historical recollections; or it borrows some potent but invisible
> charm from the inspirations of poetry, the effects of genius, or the
> energies of liberty or patriotism.

This topographical interest found its embodiment of efficiency in the British Army officer William Martin Leake, who established the location of so many sites mentioned in Classical authors between 1805 and 1810.

For stories of the Romantic adventure of archaeology, reference must be made to the association of aristocratic treasure hunters, mentioned above and including Cockerell, John Foster, Karl Haller von Hallerstein, Jacob Linck and Otto Magnus von Stackelberg, who discovered the sculptures of Aegina and Bassae. This international association broke up over disposal or rather sale of the sculptures in a series of events worthy of an Indiana Jones movie, including Turkish intrigues, power politics, armed violence and a special agent of Ludwig of Bavaria - Johann Martin von Wagner. Mention here must also be made of the Romantic association with nationalist move-ments, which found its notorious embodiment in Lord Byron, who had been on the fringes of the association in Athens. Winckelmann's death was

Figure 3-8 Baron von Stackelberg. *Der Apoliotemptl ZM Bassae in Araidicn.* Rome ami Frankfurt am Main 1826. 1'laie 2. View of (he Temple

an intriguing and romantic end: on his way back to Italy from Vienna, drawn as ever by the Classical Mediterranean, waiting to take the boa* from Trieste to Venice, he was murdered in a tavern.

Neo-Classicism

The reaction against the Roman accompanied the Greek Revival in architecture and neo-Classicism more generally. The latter was al its height from 1770 to 1820. neo-Classical taste prized austerity of ornament, frieze-like compositions, sculptural surfaces, and whiteness (it was not yet realised thai Classical sculpture was painted). The influence of Winckelmann's reassessment of the Greek in art is clear, and points also to some complex interactions with Romanticism.

It was an international style, and didactic, aiming at a purification of society. A central concept was that of *la beik nature.* This was a Platonic notion, defined by *A* Royal Academy lecture of this time as:

the general and permanent principles of visible objects, not disfigured by accident or distempered by disease, not modified by fashion or local habits. Nature is a collective idea, and, though its essence exists in each individual of the species, can never in its perfection inhabit a single object.

For the sculptor Canova, the Parthenon marbles displayed *'la venta` delta natura congiunta alia scelta delle forme bèlle* [the truth of nature united with the selection of beautiful forms].

John Flaxman produced severely simple sculpture. Angelica Kaufmann painted pretty pictures in the Grecian manner, while Jacques-Louis David and Ingres produced great epic paintings for the New French Republic, political allegory of the age of revolution, David produced a series of morals for the revolution, with Roman republican virtues dressed in Grecian style. His *Napoleon on the Imperial Throne* (1806) was much influenced by recent archaeological reconstructions of die chryselephantine statue of Zeus at Olympia. Canova's white statues are almost archetypal; Mario Praz called him the erotic frigidaire. Ingres was not the last artist to learn antiquity from direct contact, but one of the last in a long line to make this exploration a basis for his art.

Neo-classical architecture was popular all over Europe and the new world, particularly between 1790 and 1830. Buildings copied Greek temples and porticoes; monuments of Athens were turned into glorified banks, museums, town halls, court houses, universities and government buildings. A fine example is St Pancras New Church, London (W.H. Inwood 1817-22), whose design replicated the Erectheion; the Caryatid porch looks uneasy in London grey

In Munich Leo von Klenze, Ludwig's architect, designed the Königsplatz and Glyptothek, the museum for the Aegina marbles. Neo-Classical buildings with copies of ancient statues were constructed even, or perhaps especially, in Athens. Along the Leoforos Venizelos are the National Library, Academy and University designed by two Danes (the Hansens) and paid for by an Austrian, 'They gave dignity to a small town that had only one well-preserved Classical building of its own', as Donald Horne puts it. In the United States there is, notably, the Tennessee State Capitol (1845-59; William Strickland), the Lincoln Memorial (1911-22 and based on the Parthenon), and the Jefferson Memorial (1934—43; again white marmoreal Greek).

Neo-Classicism found champions in twentieth-century fascism. At the Berlin Olympics of 1936 film-maker Leni Riefensthal reincarnated the famous statue of the Discobolus as Aryan manhood. Hitler loved the statue and bought it for 5 million lire in 1938 (it was returned to Rome in 1948). Albert Speer, official architect, designed the great parade grounds of Nazi Germany, the Thingplatze, in clean neo-Classical style, Plato and fascism were united in their idealisation of heavy-metal Sparta. The similarity of fascist paramilitary youth organisations, Italy's Gioventù fascists and the Hitlerjugend, to Sparta is no coincidence.

TOURISM

The Temple of Poseidon at Sounion on its headland is one of the great sites of Greece visited by tens of thousands of tourists every year. The marble
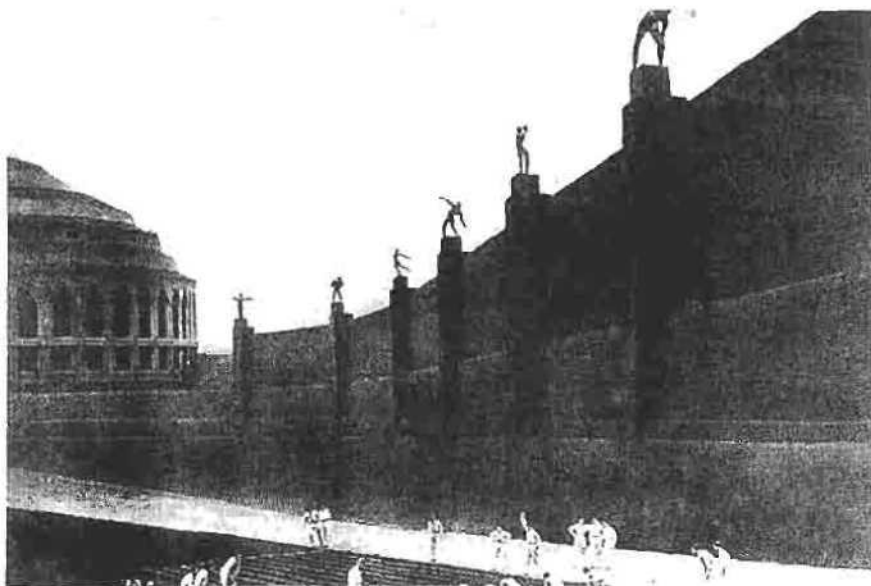
Figure 3.9 The stadium in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*

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(Courtesy of the Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge)

stones are covered with graffiti two centuries old. Byron muse have used a hammer and chisel to carve his name; it is no idle scratching. Just around the stone from his name is another. The name now escapes me, but I do recall that the visitor recorded his home town; it was North Shields on the river Tyne in northern England, not far from where I grew up. I am intrigued by this combination of someone from a provincial town making their mark on history, now forgotten, and a roving international aristocrat whose name stands for a cultural movement.

Donald Horne has considered the tourist trails of Europe in his book *The Great Museum* (1984). He calls die sites such as Athens, Olympia, Delphi and now the treasures of the tomb of Philip of Macedon dreamlands, dream factories, after Andre Malraux, strung together in a ceremonial agenda. Tourism is centred upon movements, travels through real and imagined geographies and histories; the difference is incidental.

He interprets the tourists of Europe visiting the national museums, sites and cityscapes, from the Louvre to the Nevsky Prospect and Leningrad, from the Parthenon to Auschwitz as on a secular pilgrimage. The secular relics began with the collection of antique works of art by the Renaissance popes and princes of Europe. Things often never meant to commemorate anything were turned into monuments, loaded up with meaning, becoming modern relics, objects of sacred fascination and veneration. The result is a collocation of fragments forming undifferentiated pasts across Europe.

Focal points of the ceremonial agenda are familiar: Christianity, aristo-cratic luxury and patronage, folk and peasants, the workers, the people and revolutionary change, images of national belonging, identity and pride, imperialist triumph and brutality. Neo-Classicism and the Classical heritage, the international style of the nineteenth century, feature prominently.

Much of this experience is captured in ascending the Acropolis. The crowds on a Sunday, when admission is free, ascend as to a temple of culture. At the top is veneration of site and cult objects, with spectacle and the aura invested in the stone. The Acropolis thus stands as focal point in the centre of the twentieth-century *nefos,* the Athenian smog, standing central within the Agora and Pnyx (economy and politics), the theatre of Dionysos (culture), the re-constructed stadium (sport and pursuit of physical perfection), the Stoa (the beginnings of philosophy). With the photo-calls, video shots and voices of polyglot guides in seven languages, we are tourists in history.

Horne associates such experiences with changes in public culture, which is now coming to be not a common storehouse of high cultural items, but the experience of the tour. With its reliance on punctuality, timetables, diligence in performing set tasks, and the abrogation of responsibility to an order of management, the ceremonial agenda approaches the experience of the office.

The tourist experience can be related to Post modernity and its critics. A key feature is the *anticipation* of pleasures: this ties tourism into film, TV,

Figure 3.11 National Museum, Athens

literature, food industries, various other media and experiences, a whole hyper-reality of imaginative pleasure-seeking. The tourist becomes semio-tician, seeking signifiers of notions pre-established in other discourses. A key dimension is authenticity and the genuine - the search for the *real* people, seeing the *real* things, the *real* countryside. But tourist culture is frequently centred upon the pseudo-event (a re-enaction of a false authenticity), stagings for the tourist gaze. This term of John Urry's relates tourism to the culture of the gaze or the look, with observation as surveillance, the one-way look of the tourist. Seeing and being seen are thus constituted as a relation of power between the tourist who has purchased the experience, and the site which is observed. The instability of any notion of authenticity in this set of experiences, the slippage between image and reality, and the manufacture of experience may all be taken as characterics of Postmodernity, as may the collocation of cultural fragments.

Pierre Bourdieu has researched what he terms the aristocracy of culture in a book entitled *Distinction* (English translation 1984). Symbolic capital (closely tied to class and educational capital) is invested in history and culture, laying claim to ownership of those qualities and experiences associated with social standing. But just as many middle-class people are not happy with the operation of high culture, which is **supposedly** their symbolic milieu, where they should have invested their symbolic capital, so too the secular pilgrimage may engender insight. For Home the intellectual worth of tourism lies in a
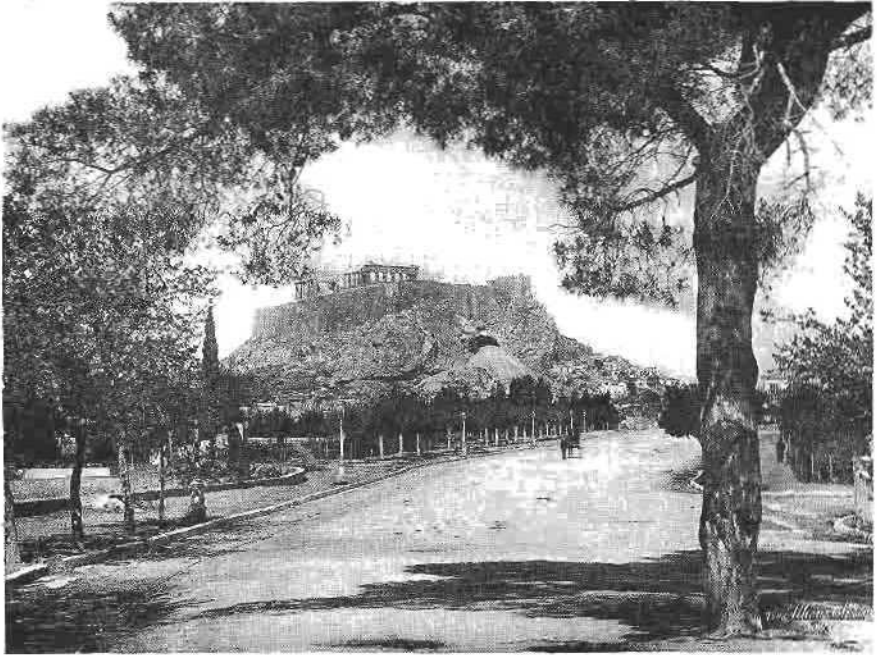
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Figure3.12 Nineteenth-century Athens. (Courtesy of the Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge)

vision of the rhetoric that underlies it all, seeing that the experiences are constructed, but not by the hand of god, artistic genius or a historical giant like Napoleon. Escaping the tourist bubble, that tourist reality of guides and hotels, airports and museums which surrounds the traveller, is to come to reflect upon history, originals and reconstructions. 'We can't live without theories of reality that, by giving some shape to existence, enable us to think and act. Sightseeing can be one of the ways in which we can speculate on these "reality-making" processes', as Home puts it. So sightseeing is simply a special case of a more general predicament within which the task is to try to understand how knowledges, experiences and the past are constructed. In so doing, one becomes a good tourist. Much has changed since the early days of travelling to Greece which I have been describing, and it may be tempting to wish for a romantic trip in the Greece of old, before the contaminations of modernity. But such hopes are always idealisms blind to realities *of* everyday life, and forgetful that this luxury of the imaginary was an aristocratic privilege bought at the expense of the degradation *of* whole European populations. If we look positively upon tourism now, there are popularisations of parts of the huge storehouse of goods, ideas and experiences which make up the past. These are rich resources for independent reflection, making them one's own.

MODERN GREEKS INTO THE PAST

In 1835 a column drum of the Parthenon was restored to welcome the new King Otto of Bavaria to his capital Athens. This was a clear symbol of ideological unity between Classicist ideas and the expression of state power. Administrative measures were swiftly taken in the independent state, recently freed from the Turk by the combined effort of European powers, to ensure protection of the Classical Greek past. Archaeological monuments became the very emblems of the new Greek state after 1821. New street plans drawn up for Athens in 1831 and 1834 incorporated the idea of the city as a living museum of European origins. Neo-Classical architect Leo Klenze was brought in when the original plans proved too expensive. He had worked for Ludwig of Bavaria, whose son Otto became the new King of Greece in 1833. The new royal palace, designed by Klenze and originally to have been on the Acropolis, was set at the east point of the new city plan, the Acropolis at the south. A grid was based on streets Stadiou, Athinas, Ermou and Eolou. Settlement was shifted north to expose the area where the Agora was known to have been, but this was soon filled with people moved to make way for the boulevards and by people from Nafplion, the old capital.

From this early date, according to Kostas Kotsakis, reconstruction of the past was tied to a specific political programme. Popularised archaeological notions eventually became deeply embedded in modern Greek state ideology and, at times, were part of actual concrete and powerful programmes of political and social integration.

Figure 3.13 **Nineteenth-century Athens. (Courtesy of the Museum** of Classical **Archaeology, Cambridge)**

Nineteenth-century Romantic nationalism, which Bruce Trigger considers to be one of the defining ideologies of modern archaeology (with imperialism and colonialism), took on a unique form in Greece. A nationalism focused upon monuments, history and other cultural phenomena was combined with an international concern for the Classical Greek past stemming not from ethnic interest but from ideas of cultural descent. Ideas of cultural continuity pre-existed this Romanticism in Greece, which operationalised this tradition by bringing in concrete factual evidence of the past running into the present. This diachronic continuity and direct kinship with the past became a prominent ideology in Greece. Anything outside this ideological focus was considered superfluous or an ungainly perplexity; hence official interest in the fate of medieval monuments did not come until 1914 with die foundation of the Byzantine Museum in Athens.

The search for continuity could be extended both forward and backward into prehistory. So Tsountas, founder of Greek prehistoric archaeology, provided an early (1909) discussion of the close relationship between the neolithic 'megaton' of Greece and the Classical Doric temple. With John Gennadius, a one-time Greek minister to Britain, he argued that Schliemann's discoveries showed that the Hellenic spirit was not restricted to the fifth and fourth centuries BC but could reappear in many times and in many forms including that of the late nineteenth century. Works such as Nilsson's *Mycenaean Origins of Greek Mythology* (1932), which read into Bronze Age artefacts myths and legends surviving in later Homeric and Classical literatures, are relevant here.

Kotsakis quotes the preface from the multi-volume I*storia tou Ellenikou Ethnous* (1970): 'This continuous march of man on the Greek land through millennia, from the first settlements of the stone age up to the present day is followed by the *History of the Greek Nation.* It presents the documented continuity of the Greek World, its cultural unity and the internal integrity of Greek culture.' This continuity, sometimes conceived as cultural, sometimes ethnic, is expressed by George Forrest:

> The best introduction to Modern Greek conversation is not the latest phrase book. It is Plato. MáXiCToc, ʾaˆTJOeia, and so on. And if Plato is the best introduction to the way the Greeks talk, Greek pots are the best introduction to the way they look. Sit on the quayside in Chios or Samos, sit in a café in Thebes or even in Livadia and look at the faces. They come straight from sixth century vases. I make no anthropological, no sociological point, only the assertion: they are the same.
>
> (G. Forrest, 'Two archaic ages of Greece' in T. Winnifrith and P. Murray, *Greece Old and New,* Macmillan, 1983)

The supposed continuity of a charismatic culture provided the justification for a 'normal science' focused on the acquisition of facts to the exclusion of

deeper questioning. History *per se* constituted an explanation. What needed explanation, the continuity of Greece, was thought to lie outside of archaeology> hence the point that Kotsakis makes is that this is an ahistorical 'historic' reconstruction of Greece which dominated its archaeology for so long, and still does so, except notably in prehistoric archaeology as practised in Greece.

HELLENISM AND CULTURAL POLITICS

Forrest reckons there are two types of student of modern Greece. There are philhellenes who think Greece really is like Periclean Athens, fountain of arts and cradle of democracy. But these people don't really like Greeks, real Greeks. They are worshipped as once they were, not as they are. So Alexander the Great showed his love of Pindar, the Theban poet, by destroying every other house in Thebes except Pindar's. On the other hand there are realists, who shudder at Greeks today, who seem to have nothing in common with the great past. This tension runs through many ideologies of Greek and European identity, as will now be explored.

Ian Morris, in his introduction to his edited book *Classical Greece* (1994J, has plotted the shift in Classical archaeology from enlightenment ideas to Hellenism. He defines Hellenism as part of the late eighteenth-century shift from Michel Foucault's Classical to Modern episteme (this will be examined and explained in the next chapter). It is an idealisation of ancient Greece as the birthplace of a European spirit. It is thus a 'continentalist' rather than nationalist view of the past, insisting that the Greek was unique or even superhuman. There is room in Hellenism for dispute over who had the strongest claim on Classical Greece, but it is generally agreed that it was the northwest Europeans.

Morris sees Hellenism developing in the context of nationalist disputes between France and the German states, and imperialist aggression by France and Britain against the Ottoman Empire. The 'continentalist' focus meant that the nationalist use of archaeology by Greeks was problematic, as periods and concepts had been appropriated and defined in advance by external European interests.

Hellenism, according to Morris, had a minimal archaeological component until the 1870s. Winckelmann and most intellectuals responsible for Hellenism after him worked with texts. But he argues that archaeological materials offered insights into everyday life, rather than simply the ideals of cultural excellence; moreover their potential for tracing change through time posed a threat to Hellenism, so Classical archaeology was reconstituted within Hellenism as an unthreatening skill focused upon data acquisition and management. Here his argument applies to that same characteristic of lack of critical reflexivity noted for Greek archaeology by Kotsakis, discussed above.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND EUROPEAN ORIGINS

Morris declares that 'the archaeology of Greece is intimately involved with a two-century-old project of understanding "Europeanness"'. We have come across the different elements of a metanarrative of European origins. Ancient Greece is considered fount of excellence, the home of transcendent artistic values. Modern Greece was liberated from the Turk. European nation states competed for relics and rilled their national museums with Greek statues and vases to show their commitment to Hellenism, their civilised status and also their imperialist might.

Greece (ancient and modern) comes between the exotic and the familiar, between the historically constituted symbolic poles of the European and the oriental. Michael Herzfeld has dealt with this ambiguity of Greece in his *Anthropology through the Looking Glass* (1987). He claims it emerged from Eurocentric preoccupations with otherness, the same preoccupations which gave birth to modern anthropology. Herzfeld is an anthropologist and sees Greek nationalism resembling anthropology to the extent that both are historically embedded in Romanticism and a concern to distinguish between identity and otherness. So Romantic Hellenism, an association of European powers and intellectuals, attempted to give a small and politically weak entity
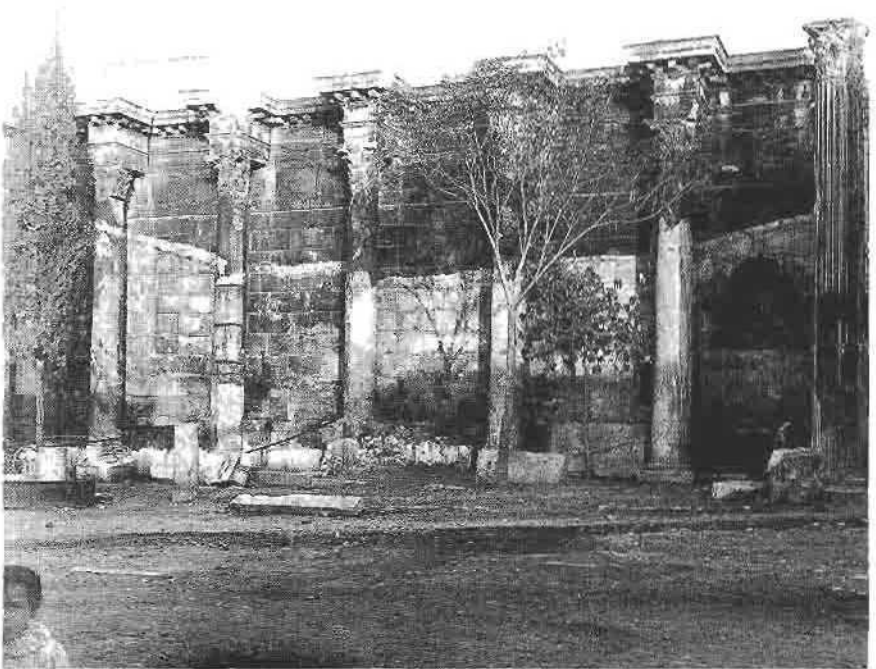

Figure 3.14 Library of Hadrian, Athens. (Courtesy of the Museum of Classical Archaeology, C ambridge)

a foothold in the nineteenth-century scrambles for national identity, and 'the West supported the Greeks on the implicit understanding that they would reciprocally accept the role of living ancestors of European civilisation - the standard, for most romantic writers, of civilisation in the most general and absolute sense'. The Greeks thus came to live out a tension between inclusion and exclusion, similarity and difference, being aboriginal Europeans and at same time oriental vassals. This is the anthropological problem of otherness or exoticism: European colonial powers using other societies to define themselves.

Understanding unity and diversity is seen by Herzfeld as a parallel problem for European identity and anthropology. Europe is conceived as a unity with common cultural origins, yet has simultaneously been divided by nationalisms for centuries. Various ideological solutions have been developed.

European diversity is present in nationalistic movements with their local folklores and folk cultures. And folk traditions have been pan of nationalist doctrines of cultural continuity. Herzfeld relates that 'the Greek intelligentsia, in particular, found it useful to treat the local peasantry internally as a backward population while simultaneously presenting folk culture to the outside world as evidence of the glorious common heritage of all Greeks'. The assumption of local archaicism within a larger unity such as the modern nation state is part of a long Eurocentric tradition. Other examples apart from the Greeks are the Celts. Both are treated as cultural survivals. This notion is part of evolutionary anthropology, as, for example, in Edward Tylor's *Researches into the Early History cf Mankind and the Development of Civilisation* (1865) and *Primitive Culture* (1871).

Winckelmann, who so articulated the Hellenic ideal, never went to Greece, even though he apparently wanted to. He studied copies in Rome, while modern Greece was put to one side for later. Greece was thus in the nineteenth century, in the term of Claude Levi-Strauss, a 'cold[1] society, an anthropological case, not part of'hot'Europe, yet central to its definition, just as anthropology defines its European parent culture in terms of the cultural otherness of 'primitive society'. But the anthropological implies human unity. This is rationalised by evolutionary anthropology of the nineteenth century and after which postulates grandiose and generalising schemes lying behind human culture and history, with progress leaving behind survivals such as modern 'stone age' cultures. Survivalism is thus nationalism writ large: a claim to the moral and cultural superiority of Europe over the entire world.

European identity included reference to Hellenism, with an idealised ancient Greece as the childhood of Europe. But modern Greece was, in Byron's words, a 'sad relic of departed worth'. The romantic love of ruins converts this into an image of a fallen Hellas, the aboriginal embodiment of a European ideal fallen to ruin and the evil corruption of anti-Europe, the Turk. This romantic ruin (of European culture) is suitably timeless, because the opposition is between eternity and history, not two phases of history.

VOYAGE PITTORESQUE

DE LA

GRÈCE

TOME PREMIER.

A PARIS,

M DCC LXXXII

Figure 3.15a Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier. *Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce.* Paris 1782. Frontispiece

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EXPLICATION

DU FRONTISPICE.

La Grèce, ſous la figure d'une femme chargée de fers, eſt entourée de monumens funèbres, élevés en l'honneur des grands Hommes de la Grèce qui ſe ſont dévoués pour ſa liberté; tels que Lycurgue, Miltiade, Thémiſtocle, Ariſtide, Epaminondas, Pélopidas, Timoléon, Démoſthène, Phocion, Philopœmen. Elle eſt appuyée ſur le tombeau de Léonidas, & derrière elle eſt le cippe ſur lequel fut gravée cette inſcription, que Simonide fit pour les trois cens Spartiates tués au combat des Thermopyles.

Paſſant, va dire à Lacédémone que nous ſommes morts ici pour obéir à ſes loix.

La Grèce ſemble évoquer les mânes de ces grands Hommes, & ſur le rocher voiſin ſont écrits ces mots, *Exoriare aliquis.* . . . .

Figure 3.15b Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier. *Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce.* Paris 1782. Explanation of Frontispiece

This metanarrative of the Fall (of the Classical west) affirms, in its Christian metaphor, European civilisation as the secular Eden. It also explains the unity and diversity of European society, represented by transnational European culture and Romantic nationalistic diversity of the nation states. As with the Tower of Babel, diversity comes out of an *Urtext of* European culture. Internal disunity is tied to a transcendent unity with political divisions conceived as a sign of health, the free expression of European individualism.

This individualist character of European identity is contrasted, in another variant of the metanarrative, with oriental homogeneity: the despotic east. Such Orientalism consists again of the reification of a zone of cultural difference through the ideologically motivated representation of otherness. The problem for Greeks, and one which embodies the tension between inclusion and exclusion, is that their 'folklore' or folk history was tainted with the Turk.

Another ambiguity of the Greek came later: primitive survivals rediscovered by Jane Harrison and E.R. Dodds. These Classicists challenged the notion of a purely rational and civilised Greek spirit with elaborations of primitive, irrational and archaic elements in ancient Greek culture: Apollo had his Dionysos. The Greeks again appear the same and different, with ineradicable relics of the past, difference projected into the past.

Winckelmann and others after him, including Marx, saw Greece as the childhood of Europe. Freudian notions of the origins of the person in the child add another dimension to this conception of the Greek: 'Had Greek civilisation never existed ... we would never have become fully conscious, which is to say that we would never have become, for better or worse, fully human', as wrote W.H. Auden.

The metanarrative of unity and diversity is a basic theoretical stance found in anthropology, archaeology and many other disciplines. It involves the reduction of a culture to a type, or the explanation of cultural diversity in terms of a general scheme. This is the project of nineteenth-century evolutionary anthropology. It is also the roots of state racism: local variation is reduced to being a supposed epiphenomenon of transcendent sameness, so any irreducible cultural diversity within the nation state (cultural pluralism) cannot be tolerated. Only local differences which can be assimilated into encompassing similarity can be allowed. So nationalist history and abstract theory, generalising disciplines and transnational cultures entail the repression of time and contingency in the supposed recapture of an original and pure (read necessary and timeless or divine) state of being or identity. History is denied in its classification and ordering.

For Herzfeld, traditional anthropology consists of an educated transnational culture claiming participatory rights in a local culture to which it is at the same time exterior and superior. This participant observation of ethnography is an intervention in people's everyday lives according to an assumption of common humanity, while at the same time professing a

sophistication, rationality and viewpoint which set apart the participant. So attempts to explore otherness have always implied a moral discrimination and inequality - them and us.

An analogous argument has been made by Johannes Fabian in his book *Time and the Other(1983).* The otherness which defines identity is conceived to be back then and over there. So if Greece is central to us as Europeans, it is also removed from us through mythic time; if it is exotic, its distance from us is one of cultural space. In either case the Greek is not us, even though we claim it for our own.

This ideological complex articulated by Herzfeld reaches its extreme in Nazism. While modern Greeks were contemptible and fit only for death and service, Nazi propagandists proclaimed in neo-Classical parade grounds that the present-day Germans and ancient Greeks were the twin pillars of the Aryan race.

ORIENTALISM AND BERNAL'S CRITIQUE OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GREEK

Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) has made a case against the ideology and metanarrative of Orientalism. As just indicated, this defines the east as a foil to the superiority of the west, proposing that the east consists of incompletely developed cultures, despotic or degenerate, defining what Europe is not. He traces Orientalism through academic disciplines, history and cultural relations with societies ease of Europe. It should be clear even from this abbreviation that Said's critique is closely related to Herzfeld's arguments about the anthropological origins of European identity in principles of otherness.

Some of what Said criticises can be seen, for example, in accounts of the Orientalising movement (within which ate placed centrally the aryballoi of ancient Korinth). Relationships with the arts of the Levant are clear in artefact design of the seventh century BC (and indeed at many other times). But there is supposed to be little exact copying. A standard explanation of the Orientalising movement is that static cultural forms of the east are taken up and transformed by the fertile genius of the Greek spirit. After all, the despotic empires of the east did not develop the wonders of the Classical Greek city states in the space of three centuries. There must have been something different about the Greeks. More generally, Schuchhardt and Furtwangler opposed the synthesis of European prehistory presented by Oscar Monrelius in the 1880s, which argued for the diffusion of civilisation from the near east. Their claim was that the inspiration for Mycenaean Greece was Aryan and eastern 'semitic' influences were irrelevant. Even accepting Montelius, it was claimed that the east was degenerating by the second millennium BC anyway.

Moving to the nineteenth century, the Greek wars of independence (1821-30) involving European powers liberating Greece, were presented as European youthful vigour versus the sick old man: the Ottoman Empire

with its eastern roots. Here an alliance of philhellenes, nationalist interests and academic Hellenists and Orientalists imposed upon the people of the eastern Mediterranaean its own version of their past, present and future. This involved a complex interplay of nineteenth-century Greeks as degenerates, but with their ancestors as aboriginal Europeans - that tension identified by Forrest and Herzfeld above.

At this point it is pertinent to introduce the ideas of Martin Bernal. Bernal's *Black Athena* reached its second (large) volume in 1991. A synopsis of a third volume was given in the introduction to the first, published in 1987; a fourth volume has been promised. This is a major project under-taken by a Professor of Government at Cornell University who specialises in Chinese history and has considerable linguistic expertise.

Perry Anderson, in *The Guardian,* referring to Volume 1 as 'a critical enquiry into a large part of the European imagination ... a retrospect of ingenious and often sardonic erudition', called it a 'spectacular undertaking. In *The Voice* the book was declared to be 'the single most important book on black and African history this decade'; 'not only Africa and Asia, but the entire world of scholarship owes Bernal a debt of gratitude' *{South Magazine)*. Welcomed by the left, largely ignored by the right in Britain, Volume 1 won the Socialist Book Award in 1987. Since then *Black Athena* has become the focus of considerable discussion and support from black interest groups, particularly on American university campuses; this has included some use by black racists. Bernal has been attacked by tight-wing journals in the US. He also reports being compared with revisionist historians who deny the Holocaust took place. Many academics see *Black Athena* as the work of a crank; Oswyn Murray, author of a standard text on early Greece, makes a point of distancing himself from what he calls Bernal's 'fantasies'.

What is this all about? Consider Bernal's argument. Ancient Greece owed much to the east, to Egypt and Phoenicia in the Levant particularly, conduits for ideas and materials from the great eastern empires. This has long been accepted. Bernal proposes conquest, political domination and colonisation of Greece by oriental powers in the second millennium BC; ancient Greece developed under direct and considerable influence from the east. For Bernal Egypt was black; Phoenicians were Semitic. If ancient Greece is conceived as the fount of European civilisation, then that civilisation is black and Semitic in origin. What is more, Bernal claims that the ancient Greeks knew of their origins. Nineteenth-century scholarship denied the Afro-Asiatic and Semitic roots of Greek culture because of racism and anti-semitism. Histories that oppose Bernal's 'revised ancient model' of the diffusion of civilisation from the east are complicit in this racism and anti-semitism. This thesis is presented with energy and verve, documented in tremendous detail. There is a rich mix of metanarratives. No wonder *Black Athena* has attracted attention.

The first two volumes are impressive compendia, covering themes

from several disciplines. The first sets out Bernal's project and focuses upon historiography, on the construction, from 1785, of an ancient Greece seen as cultural zenith, pure and seminal, independent of eastern imperial neighbours, and European in character. Much of what I have presented already in this chapter can be found in *Black Athena,* Volume 1. But rather than evaluate this model of a European Greece (with origins in northern Aryan invaders of the second millennium and an Indo-European language group), testing it against empírical evidence and contrasting it with a model of an Afro-Asiatic Greece, in Volume 2 Bernal simply provides 'thick description' of his version of history. Similarities in material culture, in myth and legend between Greek and the east, etymologies of Greek divinities, artefacts and place names, and references in ancient records and authors are marshalled to document what Bernal claims to be overwhelming eastern influence upon Greece, indeed at times direct political domination and colonisation of Greece.

I have already mentioned that contact and influence from the near east have always been recognised, but Bernal polemically divides opinion into
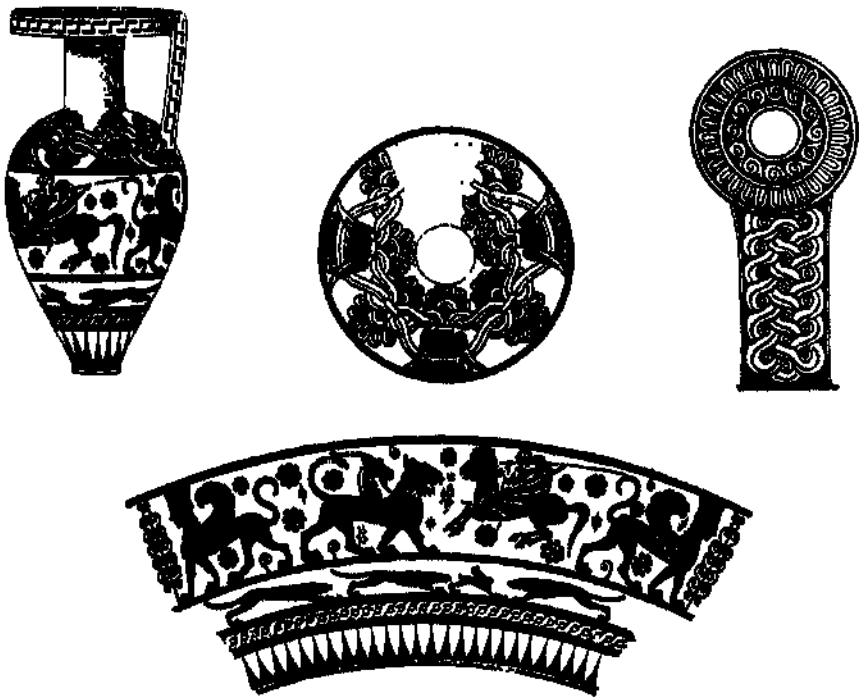

Figure 3.16 Bellerophon and Pegasus fight the Chimaira upon a Korinthian aryballos. Orientalising art. *{Source:* K.F. Johansen. *Les Vases Sicyoniens.* Paris: Champion, 1923)

'ultra-European ists', who argue for the purely independent genesis of Greece, those who support invasion from the north, and those like himself. The lines between these so-called opposing factions are drawn firmly because Bernal *sees* himself as precipitating a major disciplinary change, or to use a phrase explained more fully in the next chapter, a 'paradigm shift', from old models of ancient history to that of Afro-Asiatic origins.

Just what sort of history is Bernal writing? His topic is innovation and acculturation: the way Greece changed and developed in the second and first millennia, and the relationship between societies and polities in Greece and elsewhere - transmissions of cultural traits. But only two aspects of this topic of social change arc admitted - indigenous stimuli to change, or those diffused and introduced from outside. Hence the polarisation of models. Bernal is seeking origins. To explain ancient Greek culture, Bernal assumes, is to find the sources or antecedents of its components. For Bernal, most lie in the east, so he calls himself a 'modified diffusionist'.

The second volume of *Black Athena* is dedicated to Gordon Childe, a prominent prehistoric archaeologist of the mid-century, major proponent of an older archaeological project of culture history, which heavily relied upon diffusion as an origin of social change. And indeed, Bernal sounds very dated to most prehistoric archaeologists of the 1990s. He recognises that he is harking back to ideas that were more fashionable in the first decades of this century, dismissing newer thinking as transient. Bernal quite justifiably criticises a metanarrative of European origins. But in not critically considering the character of his sources, and I would include here both archaeological and linguistic materials, Bernal has propagated another metanarrative of cultural origins. To explain this I need to anticipate a little of the next chapter.

The character of Bernal's history is not a shock, but seems very familiar to an archaeologist who has followed the debates in anthropological archaeology of the last thirty years and who has taken seriously what David Clarke called the arrival of critical self-consciousness in the discipline (in a classic article published in the journal *Antiquity in* 1973). To put it simply, Bernal's history and historiography do not hold water after the considerable amount of work which has been directed at rethinking the character of social and historical change, and at understanding the uses and meanings of material culture, the raw materials of archaeological knowledge. Bernal takes no account of this.

His history consists of advanced states conquering and civilising others, of trading empires, imperialism, colonies, a 'Pax Aegyptiaca', international cultures, spheres of political influence. The second and first millennia BC sound very like nineteenth-century Europe. Bernal argues that this is the way it was. It can equally be argued that the basic elements of his story are a function of another nineteenth-century metanarrative, one that emphasises origins and the diffusion of culture.

This metanarrative of diffusionist ideas involves a research strategy of

searching for origins and tracing similarities. Without an origin any cultural element is meaningless: the culture to which that trait belongs provides its explanation. Diffusionism also assumes the existence of definable 'cultures': Egyptian, Semitic, and the Greek. So it is assumed that Egypt, for example, had a set of authentic Egyptian cultural traits (that is finding their origin in or belonging to 'Egyptianness') to transmit to others. Hence the problem is that, on the one hand, Bernal argues for cultural mixes, against notions of the purity of the European and the Greek. But his new Afro-Asiatic European cultural mix is of elements chat have to be culturally tagged and isolated for his argument to make sense. Diffusionism of the sort he practises requires separable 'peoples' who possess culture which influences and is influenced by culture belonging to others, it assumes the categories of race and culture which Bernal seems to wish to deny.

Anthropologists have been challenging this 'proprietary' nation of culture for many years now. 'Culture' is a very awkward category which may confuse as much as it aids understanding of other societies, especially if authentic culture is conceived as having an origin in a particular people or race. As some political groups have realised, Bernal's model of history is as compatible with racism as are those he opposes. It is quite possible within a diffusionist system of thought to demand recognition of cultural purity and precedence on the basis of origins of valued cultural traits traced back, archaeologically and linguistically, to racial origins. Gustav Kossina notoriously did this in the service of Nazism in the 1920s and 1930s. With respect to language it might be asked whether the 80 per cent of the population of Wales who do not speak the Welsh language are not really Welsh, even though many have lived all their lives in Wales, and even though their ancestors lived in Wales, and they consider themselves as Welsh as Welsh speakers. These vital issues of cultural politics are not easily resolved by a formula of simple equation: race=language=material culture. In anthropological archaeology there is now considerable evidence that material culture is not simply transmitted from superior to subordinate culture, or otherwise invented in a creative act. Material culture, with the technologies and economic and symbolic systems that form it, is a set of resources used in all sorts of social strategies. Is a tea cup to be explained by the fact that its design originated ultimately in the far east? What about tea drinking as social lubricant, all the symbolisms of different kinds of tea (tea bags to Earl Grey), tea production and colonial enterprise, tea cups and styles of interior decoration, histories of industrial ceramic design? Nor is social change in any way as simple as Bernal's conquest, invasion and 'influence', whatever nine tee nth-century imperialists would have us believe.

Bernal's source materials appear transparent to him; they tell of similarity and this means contact to him. But sources need interpreting. Our present understanding of archaeological sources needs to be related to their political and social context. Bernal does not do this.

Imagine a peasant in a Cretan field in the second millennium BC. Just because they come across things from a very different society does not mean they pack up and start building the extraordinary edifices archaeologists have called Minoan palaces. What did the articles mean to them? To understand innovation and acculturation, archaeologists now argue that account needs to be taken of social contexts of production and distribution. Bernal's history sounds so familiar in its resort to modern experience of social change because he does not consider such contexts and meanings of the appearance and use of the material items of the archaeological record.

What did the articles mean to the peasant? Were they considered as being from another 'society' at all? Perhaps the boundaries which we apply to the geography of the eastern Mediterranean are not sensible for understanding the second millennium BC when there was a widespread cultural mix joining Aegean, Levant and Egypt in a social system which included all three as essential components. I will pick up this point about the edges of societies in a discussion of world systems in Chapter 6. Here might be noted the positive moment to transnational culture. Greek culture conceived as crossing national and racial borders is no longer 'Greek'. Nationalisms and cultural chauvinisms have no place if culture has no specific origin and can be taken up authentically by whoever chooses.

Bernal's project is an admirable and interdisciplinary one of challenging notions of cultural identity in a metanarrative of European origins. He brings past and present together in attacking the racism and anti-semi tism of entrenched authorities, but on the basis of another metanarrative of cultural influence and social change which is ironically quite compatible with what he criticises. His social archaeology has been superseded in the last thirty years, and this is the topic of Chapters 5 and 6. The relationship between Classical archaeology and society is taken up in a further consideration of how the discipline works in Chapter 4.

CONCLUDING POINTS

Although this chapter is entitled myths and metanarratives, it is not the intention to imply that earlier travellers, collectors and others have succumbed to ideologies which we somehow now escape. It is to argue that past and present are coextensive, that our interests take us to the past, and its material remains are not transparent but need working upon. Interests are often wrapped up in metanarratives and ideological dispositions. A stronger argument is that disciplines and discourses construct the objects in which they are interested. This will be investigated in the next chapter.