Museums and National Identity: Museums and National Identity

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Abstract

This research explored how national identity was constructed and communicated through the text descriptions in the National Archaeological Museum and Benaki Museum in Athens. Following Social Identity Theory, theories on national identity and modernist approaches, the research explored the connection between museum texts, selection of objects, and narratives of national identity. Employing digital humanities methods, in this case, text mining through the use of Voyant Tools, the research focused on over 24,000 words in exhibition descriptions, cataloging, and attendant curatorial documents. The analysis found that the museum relied on consistent chronological markers, geographical labels, and symbolic vocabulary in order to present a coherent narrative for the Greek civilization as ancient, homogeneous, and long-lasting. Frequent returns to periods such as the Neolithic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods, as well as to provenance labels like "Attic," "Cycladic," and "Asia Minor," served to produce a sense of continuity and territorial legitimacy. But, like with similar analyses in earlier works in the national identity construction literature, meaningful silences also emerged in the text, such as those involving marginalized groups, disputed periods, and counter-narratives. This study added to museology scholarship through the provision of empirical evidence for how curatorial decision making in text description performed ideological purposes, shaping visitor perception in subtle ways. Shortcomings included that curatorial approaches had solely been based on text data, with no direct observation from the visitor. Overall the study revealed that the communication methods used by Museums have an impact on how visitors view their identities therefore shaping national identities.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER -1- INTRODUCTION

1 Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Museums have long been recognized as fundamental institutions that help preserve society's cultural heritage. These institutions have been able to serve as dynamic spaces where past and present collections of art, cultural and natural artefacts, and archaeological findings are not only safeguarded but also serve as a visual narrative for a particular nation (Falk, 2021). Traditionally, museums used to be repositories for objects of value, expressing Renaissance erudition but have in the 21st century grown to loom larger than ever before (Thomas, 2016). Modern museums are now vibrant establishments that communicate and create social, cultural, and national identities while educating, inspiring, and involving the public in educational interactive activities. This paper will examine the complex relationships between museums and their abilities to create national identity, shedding more light on the topic.

The history of museums can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where traditional societies used particular houses to hold and preserve pieces of art, relics, and natural specimens. The ancient Greeks and Romans particularly have records of museum collections that helped preserve culture and beauty (Stauffer, 2021). The nature of modern museums, as people know them, emerged during the Renaissance, when European collectors assembled so-called 'cabinets of curiosities' containing wonders, artworks, and other antiquities many which remain intact today (Arnold, 2017). Access to private collections was limited to a few elite people in society, and they laid the foundation for good organization that is associated with today's museums. With time, some of these establishments began to open their doors to the members of

the public. A major turning point came in 1753 when the British Museum was established, and now the public was able to access art and artefacts, fostering a broader educational mission (Gunther, 1979).

In the 19th century, museums continued to expand across the world, a growth that coincident with an increase in pride for the nation's cultural heritage and advancements in science and technology. Moreover, during this time, museums began to focus on specific specializations such as science, art, history, and industry. Their establishment and growth catalyzed educational research, leading to a rapid rise in discovery. In the 20th and the 21st centuries, museums have continued to become important institutions in society, fostering community engagement and learning and ensuring that past events are preserved for future generations.

Today, museums act as custodians of history for nations through their carefully curated exhibitions, which are able to tell stories of triumph, loss, resilience, and transformation of a particular society or civilization. In this sense, the museums not only educate but also empower communities, making them engage and identify with their history, thus building national identity. Their contribution to the construction and communication of national identity is just one of their many important roles. The vital role of the museum in the formation of national identities can be traced back to the establishment of major national museums in the 18th and 19th centuries, such as the British Museum in London and the Louvre in Paris.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main focus of this research is to examine the complicated role that museums play when it comes to shaping both individual and collective identities at both the social and national levels. Today's museums are not just places where people visit

to see the preservation of static repositories of artefacts and artworks (Falk, 2021). Rather, they have evolved into cultural institutions that play a pivotal role in the construction, preservation, and communication of a nation's identity. This research aims to dig deep into this aspect and, through empirical research, come up with several ways in which museums curate the cultural, historical, and archaeological narratives of a particular nation and how visiting the museums impact the previous studies of museums as stores visitors of themselves and those of their nations. The study, through examination of how museums are separate from traditional storage spaces and are vibrant centers for learning, uncovers untold stories of the profound influences of how institutions exert identity and cultural consciousness into people.

In addition to this, the study aims to assess how museums contribute to the preservation, creation, and transformation of a nation's identity over time. The exhibitions offered in museums are helpful as they maintain cultural continuity through historical narratives, which are passed on from one generation to another (Harding, 2020). This can make people living in contemporary society reinterpret things and merge modern ways of living with traditional behaviors gained by understanding ancient ways. Through the research questions in the surveys and the interviews, the research will analyze how museum practices influence national identity but revealing how people interacted in the past.

1.3 Research Problem

The research problem being addressed in the paper pertains to the roles that are played by museums in shaping national and social identity formation within a particular society. Currently, there are many studies that look at the roles that museums play in preserving and presenting the cultural heritage of a particular group (Hoang, 2021;

Vareiro et al., 2020). In addition to this, most of the existing literature focuses on curatorial aspects of these significant institutions and, at most times, ignores the engagement of the visitors, the impacts on education, and the interactivity that shapes their identities.

The gap mentioned in the previous paragraph is particularly evident when it comes to national museums. An example of these museums is the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, where there is limited study on how such a significant museum impacts the narratives of the people who live in the region and how it shapes their sense of national pride and belonging. Similarly, the Benaki Museum in Athens, which provides a comprehensive overview of Greek culture's evolution from prehistoric times to the present day, has not received the same level of critical analysis regarding its impact on Greek national and social identity. The Benaki Museum's unique approach, tracing Greek history across different periods and including contemporary art, offers potential for a more nuanced examination of how it constructs and presents Greek identity. By examining these aspects, the study will gain a profound understanding of how museums contribute to a sense of national pride in a particular region and how identity formation occurs for those who visit the museum. The findings from this study are expected to offer valuable insights into how museum professionals, educators, and policymakers should set up the institutions, making them offer great value for visitors.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To Analyze and evaluating the communication strategies used by museums.
- To examine how archaeological data and cultural objects convey meanings related to national identity.

1.5 Research Questions

For the research objectives above to be achieved the following three research questions are to be answered.

Main Research Question

- How does visiting the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, Greece, shape social and national identity among groups?

Sub-Research Questions

- ***Research Question 1:*** How does it feel for an individual when they visit the National Archaeological Museum
- ***Research Question 2:*** Which objects are used to convey meaning in the National Archaeological Museum

1.6 Structure of the Study

1.6.1 Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Chapter 2 of the paper, looks through the history of museums to understand what has been happening over the past and present. The review section serves various purposes that are useful for the overall study. First is contextualization, as it helps put the current study of museum impacts within the broader academic discourse, showing how it aligns, extends, and modifies previous findings. It is also great as it helps identify gaps and establish areas that need further explanations, therefore justifying the rationale for the present research. This section also helps in establishing the theoretical perspectives that underpin the study, thus forming a robust conceptual framework that guides research questions and methodology. The section helps in the discovery of methodological insights as the methods used in prior studies can be used to guide the current research.

1.6.2 Chapter 3 – Methodology

The Chapter of the study looks at the methods that are used in answering the research questions on the factors that are associated with museums and shape social and national identity. The primary data collection will involve gathering digital corpora of texts associated with exhibited objects and exhibitions from both museums, including object labels, exhibition catalogs, guidebooks and online descriptions. Text mining techniques will be applied to the collected corpora. A key focus of this methodology will be to study how often concepts like “Greek”, “Nation”, “National” and related phrases are mentioned in order to enhance national identity. Frequency analysis will quantify the occurrence of these terms and phrases related to national identity. This approach allows for the processing of large amounts of textual data efficiently, providing insights into how museums linguistically construct and reinforce national identity through their object descriptions and exhibition texts, and specifically how they employ language to enhance a sense of Greek national identity

1.6.3 Chapter 4 - Research Findings and Data Analysis

Chapter four of the study presents the empirical findings, and all the conclusions are to be based on the findings in this Chapter. Voyant tools for analysis will be used to conduct data analysis. Before the data collected in the text mining process, it will be organized for analysis using the software. Research findings on the use of text mining to study how museums shape the construction of national identity have revealed several key insights. Text mining techniques applied to museum exhibition texts, catalogs, and online descriptions have uncovered patterns in the frequency and context of terms related to national identity. Analysis of thematic clusters through topic modeling has exposed latent narratives that contribute to identity formation (Schwartz et al, n.d.). Studies have shown that museums often employ language strategically to reinforce

dominant ideologies and manipulate perceptions about an individual's place in society. The frequency of words like "nation", "heritage", and culturally-specific terms can indicate the intensity of national identity construction efforts. These findings demonstrate the power of computational methods in uncovering both explicit and implicit ways museums participate in shaping national identities through their textual presentations.

1.6.4 Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

This Chapter contains findings and conclusions made after the analysis of the primary data from the interviews and the surveys, as well as secondary data, which answers the three main research questions. An in-depth and critical analysis of the insights drawn from the findings in the previous Chapter of research findings is done in this section. This results in the formulation of conclusions, the broader implications of the study, and its impacts on the existing literature. This section also contains actional recommendations made to museum stakeholders such as policymakers, academics, and governments on how to make the institutions avenues for people to gain their social and national identities, which can make them become more proud and patriotic citizens. The section also identifies the weaknesses of this study and areas where further studies should be done.

CHAPTER -2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Chapter Two – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Museums play a significant role in shaping social and national identities through their preservation and display of artifacts of significance. Literature has in the past held that museums are repositories of historical objects. However, more recent studies are focusing more on the impacts of these institutions on people's behaviors (Judge, Fernando, and Begeny, 2021; Simone, Cerquetti, and La Sala, 2021). Most studies relating to museums focus on the curatorial practices enhanced by the institutions, while a significant number focus on cultural heritage. This section of the study extensively explores the findings of previous studies with regard to museums and how they influence people's social and national identities. In so doing, the section will lay down a framework for methodological practices and strategies to gain the most significant insights into the research.

2.2 Empirical Evidence

2.2.1 Role of Museums in the Society

Previous studies show that museums play an important role in society and shaping how nations and communities view themselves. One of the roles of museums highlighted by literature is the safeguarding of cultural identities (Hadley, 2024; Lázaro Ortiz and Jiménez de Madariaga, 2021). This role is achieved by the institutions through their preservation of artifacts, documents, and historical sites (Amoako, Obuobisa-Darko, and Ohene Marfo, 2021). Another role that has been highlighted by literature for museums is that they are institutions which help in the preservation of memory (Hadley, 2024). This means that these exhibition centers help society in

passing information from one generation to another through the historical narratives displayed. Another key role played by museums is heritage conservation, where previous studies show that current generations are losing their traditions, but museums play a key role in preventing this eradication of people's identities (Achille and Fiorillo, 2022). These studies prove that museums are cultural and historical conservation centers and thus have the ability to impact the way people think or act.

Many scholars agree that museums are significant educational institutions contributing to both formal and informal learning. Šveb Dragija and Jelinčić (2022) argue that when people visit museums, they have their cognitive and emotional learning experiences stimulated, resulting in them learning new things. Moreover, the association between museums and education is supported by constructivist learning theories, which posit that visitors contract knowledge based on how they interact with the exhibits they see in the museums (Chuang, 2021; Kamariotou, Kamariotou and Kitsios, 2021). Research also shows how museums have integrated digital technologies into their practices, making audio and visual enhancements to the presentations, which enhances learning for the visitors (Lazzeretti et al., 2023). These findings are consistent with studies that are not related to museums that show virtual and augmented reality technologies can help foster learning experiences (AlGerafi et al., 2023; Fitria, 2023). The connection between museums and education can help to create a framework for understanding how museums and identity relate, which is the main focus of this study.

The relationship between museums and national identity has not been conclusively addressed by previous literature but there are a few existing studies on the issue. One of the studies that has looked into this aspect is by Pawłusz (2021), who found that museums play a role in the construction of national identity by selecting and

presenting experiences that reflect a shared cultural or historical narrative. Another study that looks into this aspect indirectly is a study by Masson and Fritsche (2021), who looked at historical artifacts and found their associations with the identities of particular groups. More recent studies have focused on bringing into light how museums have an impact on social identities, finding that they contribute to both inclusion and exclusion for people (Olivares and Piatak, 2021). However, their role in social identity has been under great crisis, with some scholars arguing that museums help perpetuate a particular political discourse rather than offering objective truth (Obermark, 2022). This raises a need to understand the communication strategies used by the institutions and if they are factful or otherwise by focusing on the National Archaeological Museum and the Benaki Museum in Athens, Greece.

Museums are major drivers of tourism and economic growth, as has been enumerated by a wide body of literature. The institutions achieve this role by generating income from both local and international citizens who frequent the institutions to enjoy various experiences (Smith and Griffith, 2022). Museums-based tourism has been found to create cultural capital as well as foster economic sustainability in society. Nevertheless, the revenues generated by museums vary significantly from one museum to another, with smaller ones struggling to compete with internationally recognized museums. There are also numerous risks related to the commercialization of museums, with studies showing that when financial interests are put before the main goal of museums, which are offering edutainment, it could result in main goals for the institutions being lost (Piacente, 2022). The fact that museums contribute to the GDP of nations makes them more intriguing to learn as making them the best they can be could attract more visitors and consequently more revenues.

The final role of museums to be discussed in this section is their role in acting as spaces for social inclusion and dialogue. Ostow (2024) concluded that museums, through their depictitions, catalyze discussions relating to social issues such as racism, migration, and human rights. For instance, when people visit the institutions, they are likely to engage with social problems historically, which could foster the conservation of current issues that are related. Similarly, the literature highlights that museums have the capacity to interact with some of the marginalized communities (Njabulo Chipangura and Jesmael Mataga, 2021). However, there is sharp division when it comes to this fact, as some museums are culturally biased and ignore the past experiences of smaller groups and communities (Banaji, Fiske, and Massey, 2021). Nevertheless, progress continues to be made with regard to the decolonization of museums, with many now being set up with knowledge of the importance of having equity and equality (Panayot, 2023).

Previous literature shows that there are different kinds of museums and these museums play different roles. First there are the art museums which play the critical role of preserving, exhibiting works of art (Rajan, 2024). The focus of art museums is mainly on paintings, sculptures, photography and decorative art. There are history museums whose main role is to document and interpret human history. These historical museums focus on artifacts, documentaries, clothing's and tools from various eras. There are also the science Museums whose focus is to promote education, encourage curiosity and innovation and to provide interactive learning experiences. Other popular types of museums include children museums, ethnographic museums and specialized museums.

2.2.2 Communication Strategies used by Museums

Today's museums understand the importance of integrating proper communication strategies to keep their audiences entertained, engaged, and educated. Literature has looked extensively into the topic of communication and communication by these institutions, revealing various insights. Some of the strategies that have been identified include the use of traditional communication strategies, the use of digital media tools, and the reliance on audience-centered approaches (Fernandez-Lores, Crespo-Tejero and Fernández-Hernández, 2022; Kamariotou, Kamariotou and Kitsios, 2021). Studies reveal that historically, museums relied on general traditional methods such as displaying static artifacts when communicating to their audience (Piacente, M. ed., 2022). Other methods used during these times included using descriptive labels for the artifacts and guided tours with people who would narrate the histories (Stach, 2021). Bîră (2018) explains the significance of texts as a means used by traditional museums for communicating, showing how they were able to shape the visitors' experiences. Guided tours have also been studied extensively, showing how they were able to shape contextual and historical narratives among people. Nevertheless, these traditional methods could not meet some needs of modern audiences, creating a need for them to be changed.

Museums were and continue to be impacted by advancements in digital communication platforms. Several studies today highlight the role modern technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) have contributed to enhancing the experiences of visitors to the institutions (Wei, 2019). While in the past, human guides were sent to accompany visitors and explain the meaning of various symbols, guides are not a requirement today. Visitors can google or scan some of the artifacts and get more information about them online. In addition, augmented reality technology, which combines the physical and virtual worlds, is transforming how museums impact

people (Trunfio et al., 2021). However, these modern technologies are not available in most museums due to the costs of initiating the technologies. Social media also impacts museums as some people post some of their experiences online, therefore making people, especially introverted ones, choose to interact with the experiences online instead of visiting museums.

Some museums, especially big ones, seek to make the visits interactive using experimental communication strategies. Studies have tried to link constructivist learning principles with museum visit experiences, saying that museums that use experimental approaches are likely to have outcomes that enhance visitor engagement and learning. (Yoo, 2021). The ones that have followed this approach have been proven more engaging, though studies on this aspect are limited. This shows that more research is needed looking into morden aspects that are used by museums today and how they impact their influence.

One of the areas where literature shows museums are failing relates to the personalization of their content to meet the unique needs of individuals. Research has emphasized that museums are changing their communication strategies to ensure that the specific needs of their clients are met. For instance, a study by Boersma (2022) introduces the concept of participatory museums, which says that institutions should participate in creating content, thus transforming themselves from passive showers of identity to active makers. The topic of museums creating content is controversial, with some scholars arguing that it dilutes their core role, which is the preservation and display of artifacts. There is, therefore, a gap in the literature, raising a need for studies to see if museums are meeting their roles or if they have changed their core roles and measures if museums today are focused on displaying cultural and historical artifacts.

Literature highlights that there are issues for museums about ensuring accessibility and inclusivity. For instance, a study conducted by Olivares and Piatak (2021) found that visitor engagement is influenced by factors such as language barriers, failure to address the needs of people with disabilities, cultural differences, and socioeconomic factors. In addition to the inclusivity issues, there are also issues regarding the commercialization of museums, as highlighted by Eardley et al. (2022). Museums must make revenues while remaining objective to the main reasons behind their existence. Museums particularly historical ones also have biases, such as remaining Eurocentric while remaining ignorant of the rest of the world an aspect most common in early museum collection records (Bloomfield et al., 2024). The democratization of storytelling has been highlighted as a method that could help address this challenge. In sum, the literature reveals communication strategies employed by museums have shifted from traditional to more digital forms, but more still needs to be done for a conclusive understanding of the current state of being to be known.

2.2.3 The concept of Identity

Identity is a multifaceted and multi-dimensional concept that has garnered significant scholarly interest across various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, archaeology, and museology. Identity can be defined as a set of qualities or characteristics that define an individual or a group (Neu, Allen, and Roy, 2021). Studies such as a paper by Curelo (1997) show that identity could encompass self-perceptions and that which individuals form of others. He further posits that identity is linked to various attributes or identifiers such as gender, ethnicity, personal values, and held beliefs (Curelo, 1997). This means that the concept of identity entails people basing themselves on distinctive characteristics, which, in the end, result in them being different from others. The concept of identity is further explored by Hogg and Abrams

(1998), who argue that identity pertains to a sense of self that is shaped by an individual's habits, shaping their personal attributes, their personal experiences, and the roles that they play in society. Identity has been revealed by literature to be shaped by both the historical and social positioning of a group as well as the place in which people place themselves in the future (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity shapes the cultural symbols in society, and in turn, these symbols shape identity, creating a feedback loop.

Social identity can be divided into two main dimensions according to previous studies: primary and collective. Personal identity, as the name suggests, is the unique individual characteristics that make one person unique from another (Cerulo, 1997; Stryker & Burke, 2000). On the other hand, collective social identity refers to traits and characteristics that put people together, making them see themselves as one unit (Stryker & Burke, 2000). These units could be individuals of a certain religion, such as Christianity, or people identifying with a particular nation, such as Greece. It can, therefore, be concluded that identity is a dual nature encompassing both aspects that make people similar as well as those that create differences (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). This assertion is clarified by a study conducted by Jenkins (2008), which showed that identity is comprised of both inclusion and exclusion criteria. The fact that identity is created by both commonalities and differences between individuals and groups makes it necessary for studies to acknowledge the roles of outgroups in the shaping of social identities.

There is a complex interplay between individual and collective dimensions of identity, and it is essential for a person to understand them to know their role. Studies such as Jenkins (2008) emphasize that the relationship between personal and collective identities is often characterized by huge tensions as the two in an individual or the

current state of the community may not always align when individuals in a community change or technological change occur there is a likelihood of identities evolving reflecting its dynamic nature (Ricoeur, 1994). The changes show how social structure changes and events, such as the rise of capitalism, shape personal and collective identities. Collective identity has particularly been known to be impacted by people's shared histories and traditions, with symbols playing a big role in influencing how people think (Ricoeur, 1994). The assertion by previous literature that identity is negotiated by cultural makers creates a question as to how current institutions such as museums impact identity.

A significant component that influences the individual, collective, and national identities of a group is the narratives that are passed from one individual to another. Ricoeur (1994) has shown that people make sense of their place in society through the narratives they receive with regard to their identity. Narratives were once the only means that identity could be shaped, and the stories helped people to know who they were as a community or a nation. Narratives are not always neutral or correct, and they are impacted by various biases and prejudices (Jenkins, 2014). Nevertheless, they have a great impact on the way people and groups interact with one another, creating various power relations, influencing cultures, and affecting institutional structures, thus impacting the overall identity of nations. This dimension of narratives is particularly salient in museums where the institutions make a deliberate effort to offer a comprehensive display of history and events that contribute to the way individuals in a society view themselves (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Focusing on the narratives makes it essential to understand the institutions.

There is a conclusive body of evidence that shows the role of museums in shaping national and individual identities. Hogg and Abrams (1998) say that today, museums function as areas where the collective memories of society are held, therefore functioning in the preservation of the history, heritage, and identity of a particular nation. These insights are further emphasized by the finding by Tajfel and Turner (1979), who say that museums emphasize particular representations in history, which, as stated, can help make people have similarities or create differences, both of which are critical in identity formation. When people know that they are different from others or similar to a particular group, they form identities, an aspect that has been confirmed by previous literature (Jenkins, 2008). However, despite studies showing that institutions have an impact on people's identities, there are still limitations on how the communication strategies used can shape beliefs and if the communication strategies can be changed to influence people in a particular manner

2.2.4 Museums as Institutions of Memory

Museums are one of the key institutions that help preserve the memory of a particular society. Literature has shown that when people visit institutions, they are likely to be prompted into long thinking processes, which, in turn, help shape their collective identities. In addition, museums have a significant impact on people's education, shaping how they interpret experiences (Anderson, 1983). Through the studies that are conducted in the museums, people who have not visited the institutions can engage with what they display through the discussions of various scholars. The fact that museums are institutions of memory is emphasized by Robinson (2012), who shows that they play a critical role in documenting, preserving, and interpreting history.

The concept of museums being institutions where collective memory for nations is relatively young. It was first introduced by Halbwachs (1992) who argued that there are shared institutions that conserve and create narratives. Subsequent studies have solidified this fact, showing that the institutions play a pivotal role in history conservation through documenting, contextualizing, and helping in the mediation between past and present events (de Sousa, 2023). This process ensures the endurance of material culture, reinforcing historical continuity and intergenerational transmission of knowledge. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and interpretive strategies, museums provide critical context to artifacts and historical events, shaping public understanding and engagement with the past (Bennett, 1995). Furthermore, museums play a crucial role in constructing and reinforcing national and cultural identities by selecting which historical narratives to present and how they are framed. The display of particular artifacts and themes influences public perceptions of historical and cultural heritage, often privileging dominant narratives while potentially marginalizing alternative perspectives.

Another key emerging aspect of museums in recent days is that they are becoming objects of negotiation in addition to being custodians of value. A study conducted by Nora (1989) showed that museums act as memory sites by engaging visitors with multiple perspectives, a concept referred to as *lieux de mémoire*. For instance, the institutions could be made to create a sense of pride for their citizens by using the authorized heritage discourse, where governmental bodies dictate what is to be shown by the museums. These changes for museums to make them institutions of negotiation rather than just custodians of objective truths have resulted in critiques arguing that they are misleading. Nevertheless, this shift in the manner in which the

institutions interact with people has resulted in them becoming more compelling and appealing to many of their visitors.

Most of the scholars propose that the most fundamental function of museums is the preservation of unique and significant objects. The goals for the conservation of these artifacts are often multifaceted and include ensuring that previous objects are available to future generations, helping people understand the past, create identity, among others. These roles align with the definition given by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) (2022), which defines a museum as a non-profit, permanent institutions of service which collect, research and exhibit tangible and intangible heritage. This definition is agreed upon and accepted by the majority of other scholars as it defines the institutions based on the roles that they perform (Nora, 1989). Nevertheless, the definition and studies relating to its definitions alone cannot help in revealing the actual impacts that museums have on the identities of people.

Studies show that museums play a critical role when it comes to the preservation of society's collective memory. One of the first studies to uncover this aspect was research by Halbwachs (1992), who discovered issues pertaining to society having a collective memory when he was writing about issues about knowledge and its impacts on people. Studies such as Halbwachs (1992) show that museums are able to contract and conserve collective memories among people by presenting artifacts that link to national identities. Curated exhibitions, which are associated with most museums today, help different generations understand what their communities have embodied in the past, therefore creating a responsibility for people to keep the traditions and norms. It is also worth noting that the process of creating a collective memory in society is not

a static process but rather an ongoing and dynamic one that requires individuals to introspect themselves.

The position of museums as centers that shape social and national identity has been evolving over time. Historically, museums were designed as places for solely scientific inquiries, with the collection of natural artifacts being done with the goal of fostering intellectual knowledge (Bennett, 1995). However, as societal norms have changed, museums have also evolved to become more of an entertaining and educational platform and are now spaces where social and cultural identities can be shaped. This, ascertained by literature, is confirmed by some of the big museums, such as the Ashmolean Museum and the Musée Rodin, which have significant collections that document the historical achievements of their particular nations. However, critics have argued that these institutions perpetuate and praise some of the injustices done in the past, such as colonialism. Though scholars have done much research on these bigger museums in Britain and France, the role of museums as institutions of memory in Greece is understudied.

2.2.5 Literature on the National Archaeological Museum in Athens

The National Archaeological Museum in Athens is one of the most significant institutions in Greece (Sakellariadi, 2022). The Museum is of great significance to the nation since national museums across Europe are all closely tied to nation-building efforts (Popescu and Albă, 2022). This Museum was founded back in 1829 following the independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire (Sakellarakis and Konstantinide-Syvridi, 2022). The primary reason for the creation of this national Museum was to collect, preserve, and exhibit the country's historical artifacts, thus communicating the country's cultural and historical identity (Sakellarakis and Konstantinide-Syvridi,

2022). Research conducted by Hopkins (2021) shows that the Museum has functioned as a great custodian of Greek heritage for a long time resulting to the creating of a nation with proud history. This habit is not just linked to the Museum but relates to the overall nature of European countries to create national identities through archaeological heritages (Khater and Faik, 2024). This makes the Museum a significant institution of interest in the country, necessitating further studies.

2.2.6 Empirical Review Summary

This section shows that museums play a significant role in shaping social and national identities by displaying artifacts of significance. Studies prove that the institutions safeguarding of cultural heritage by preserve artifacts, documents, and historical sites. Moreover, the previous research has found that there is a link between museums and national identity but this relationship is not concussively addressed. Additionally, while previous studies show the traditional and modern communication strategies used by museums their impacts to the people are yet to be addressed. This study will seek to cover the knowledge gap by filling areas such as the communication strategies used by the National Museum in Athens and the Benaki national museum.

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

Museums are significant institutions in society, shaping it in many ways, including at the individual, social, and national levels. In so doing, they act as custodians of collective memory and history, shaping heritages and the manner in which people view themselves. For a comprehensive understanding of how museums shape identity among people, this theoretical framework will look at the major theories associated with the issue, including social identity theory, cultural identity theory,

nationalism theories, and museology. The theories are the cornerstone of this research, serving as a foundation for the empirical data to be gathered to create an understanding of their impacts on identities. By integrating these theoretical frameworks in the research, this section enables the reader to understand the multifaceted relationships between museums and identity constructions as shown by previous theories accepted by literature today.

2.3.1 Social Identity Theory

One of the key theories that explain how people view themselves and their society is the social identity theory proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. The theory specifically looks at how individuals find a sense of satisfaction by belonging to a particular group. Group formation is another aspect that one should consider when looking at the issue of identities. The groups can be formed based on various factors such as religion, region, beliefs, or common interests. The social identity theory posits that when individuals identify as belonging to a particular group, they will make efforts to ensure that their actions are in line with the group's rules and common beliefs (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). The need to be viewed positively by other group members can, therefore, shape the way a person acts, dresses, and talks, therefore shaping their individual identity.

The social identity theory is based on three core principles: social categorization, social comparison, and social identification. The principles follow each other in a chronological manner during the mental process for social identity in an individual, as shown in Figure 1 below. The first step, which is social categorization, entails individuals classifying themselves into a particular social group that is different from the ones to which others belong. This process is critical for identity formation since it simplifies the process of identity formation, thus helping people navigate

complex situations. However, social categorization can also help reinforce stereotypes, as suggested by Britannica (2024), making it necessary for the process of group formation to be made correct. Social categorization is followed by social identification, which is the second stage of identity formation. When people have confessed and made themselves believe that they belong to a particular group, then social identification occurs. Whenever people develop a social identity, they develop a sense of pride, which keeps them loyal to a particular group for longer (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). The act of attaching oneself to a particular group is often accompanied by emotional feelings and the need for loyalty to the group. Museums play a critical role in social identification among people by helping define which cultural, historical, and national category they belong to. This is achieved through collective identities and creating a "we" culture. For instance, the museums could tell visitors of the Museum in Athens that "we" once ruled the world of Europe.

The final process for identity formation is social comparison, where a particular group gets to compare itself with another group and seeks to understand if they are superior or inferior in comparison. This is a great component of identity formation as identity, as was discussed in the previous section of the literature review, has both inclusion and exclusion criteria. The comparison between groups has self-esteem issues associated with them. When a group identifies itself as superior, its self-esteem is boosted; on the other hand, when a group identifies as inferior, its self-esteem goes lower (Aleksandra Cichocka, Marchlewska and Cislak, 2023). This theoretical concept opens a room for discussion on the role that museums have when it comes to society. When the origins of particular people are taken as superior, and self-esteem is boosted, there is likely to be ego boosts, and a sense of nationalism could develop. On the other

hand, particularly for the minority groups, this could have adverse impacts, causing the individuals to view themselves as lesser human beings.

Museums play a major role in the creation, transformation, and reinforcement of social identities. The institutions offer exhibitions that show national achievements, which creates a sense of nationalism among the citizens. In addition to this, these great institutions can help people go back to once-forgotten traditions, helping in the preservation of identities, especially for minority groups. However, when institutions communicate through inclusive narratives, they can help reduce intergroup biases, thereby creating peace and harmony in society.

2.3.2 National Identity Theories

The national identity theory closely links to the collective identity of a nation. It plays a significant role when it comes to influencing how people perceive and connect to their nation-state. This identity, unlike the social one, entails a shared historical perspective, cultures adopted by people, languages, traditions, and values that define a group of people. The theories that examine national identity examine how these national identities are formed and maintained. The theories to be explored in this theoretical framework are nationalism theories and the contractive approaches to identity.

The nationalism theories broadly look at how the national identities of people in a particular country emerge. The theories are generally divided into three main categories, which include modernist, primordial, and ethno-symbolist approaches (Tröhler and Maricic, 2023). The first, which is the primordial theory, posits that national identity is influenced by the deeply rooted innate, natural shared ancestry among people of a particular nation (Filic, 2021). The theory is supported by various principles, the first being that nations exist as organic beings and are tied genetically

and thus cannot be broken. The second principle is that the identity of a nation is biologically tied and culturally inherited and thus can't be changed and restructured. The final belief is that ethnic groups share a common heritage as long as they belong to a common nation. Many scholars criticize the primordialist view of national identity, saying that it is essentialist and exclusionary in nature (Filic, 2021). This, in other words, means that this theory assumes identity to be fixed, and therefore, it ignores the impacts of historical and political changes on people in a particular society. Museum practices align with the theory since they serve to reinforce deep-rooted heritages among people.

Modernist theories oppose the views proposed by the primordialists, who hold that nations are not based on their ancient roots and are also not organic in nature. The modernist argues that the idea of nations as they are today emerged due to modern social conduct and is influenced by more recent historical influences such as urbanization and industrialization (Smith, 1988). A great support of the modernist theories is Benedict Anderson who in his book *"Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism"* said that nations are imagined communities because citizens of a certain nation cannot know all people that belonged to it (Anderson, 1983). The concept is further supported by Lowenthal (1994) who goes further to show that national identity is created through symbols, language, and other factors but not cultural heritages. Another great protagonist of the nationalism theory is Ernest (1983), who argues that nationalism emerged as a result of industrialization and that standard education is essential for the maintenance of a unified nation. The author goes further to show that national identity is not natural, as stated by primordialists, who he argues are ignorant, but it is produced and maintained by the states (Ernest, 1983). Moreover, the modernist approach to national unity is further supported by Eric

and Ranger (1983), who argue that nationalism is created deliberately using national symbols such as flags, anthems, and historical myths. The views are closely related to museums as they reveal that the institutions are set by nations to deliberately reinforce nationalism among people.

Constructivists, on the other hand, view nationalism as a constantly changing dynamic that is influenced by social, political, and economic discourse. In contrast to what the Essentialist perspectives argue, constructivists believe that national identity is shaped by institutions, media, and overall representation of artifacts (Hall, 2015). This links to this study as it associates with museums, which contribute to the construction of these identities by influencing which historical things to display and which ones to avoid. Michel Foucault's discourse theory is another constructivist-based theory that holds that national identity is created and influenced by power and institutions that determine its distribution.

2.3.3 Museology and Identity formation Theories

The section on the theoretical frameworks looks at the intersection between museums and the shaping of national identities. It draws from theoretical concepts from disciplines such as museology, sociology, and anthropology. One of the theories that significantly helps in fostering an understanding of how museums shape national identity is Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. In his work, Bourdieu (1984) states that cultural capital is a form of knowledge people acquire through social interactions. It exists in three forms, as shown in the study: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized (Bourdieu, 1984). Museums are, therefore, gatekeepers of cultural capital, as stated by Bourdieu (1984), since they determine what artworks and artifacts are to be displayed to members of the public. For instance, some museums have taken a stance that only shows artifacts that display their nations as dominant figures. This

creates an identity of winner mentality and seeks other nations and civilizations as inferior, therefore shaping national identities. The National Archaeological Museum in Athens and Benaki is an example of an institution that seeks to increase the pride of its citizens by only showing things that try to link modern Greece to ancient ones.

Despite cultural capital significantly impacting the people, it is not usually accessible to all. Bourdieu argues that this form of capital is normally unequally distributed among people in different social classes. Museums are elite cultural institutions and are not visited by all people, especially those who belong to lower socioeconomic classes. Therefore, those who get to interact with the artifacts that promote social capital could have pride in their nations. At the same time, those who lack the opportunity may continue viewing their nations as inferior. Bourdieu's theory further shows how museums shape social identities by choosing which narratives are legitimized and which ones are left out. This is especially common among marginalized groups, whose narratives are usually left out while those of other major groups are shown. For instance, most of the artifacts in Europe show the superiority of the people living in the nations compared to people from other parts of the world, such as Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, contemporary museums challenge the views of Bourdieu by being more inclusive and striving to avoid biases and various prejudices.

CHAPTER -3- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3 Chapter Two: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Introduction to the Research Design

This research utilized a quantitative text-mining method approach within the digital humanities paradigm. The approach was best for accessing if the National Archaeological Museum and Benaki Museum in Athens articulate narratives about Greek national identity in their exhibition texts, object descriptions, and digital repositories. While qualitative methods of interviewing, ethnographic observation, and discourse analysis are common in museum studies, this research chooses to leverage computational text analysis as the systematic investigation of linguistic patterns in vast numbers of museum texts. This research methodology section shows why the text mining method is chosen as the best method and contrasts it with standard qualitative methods.

3.1.2 Justification for Digital Humanities/Text Mining Approach

The study employed a digital humanities text mining approach in order to analyze and gather data on various museum narratives due to the ability of this method to sift through great amounts of textual information. This approach was chosen over traditional qualitative methods because they are not able to go through vast amounts of information such as wall labels, catalogs, and digital repositories, which are created by the museums. Previous studies, such as Zong et al (2021), show that text mining approaches are able to efficiently extract linguistic information and patterns from data, identifying how frequently certain contexts occur. This researcher, based on this assertion, expected that the method would help them to efficiently extract linguistic patterns across thousands of artifacts, identifying how frequently and in what contexts

terms related to national identity appear. This scalability was important for revealing institutional narrative trends that would otherwise be lost in discretionary traditional analysis.

The Methodology adopted for this research is not unique, as there has been a trend for researchers to leverage computational analysis when conducting studies that are related to heritage (Lian & Xie, 2024). Through using frequency, collocation, and sentiment analysis, the study was able to quantify all the discursive strategies that are currently used by the two Museums in Greece, therefore minimizing interpretive biases that are common in qualitative studies. In addition to this, the methodology allowed for comparative analysis at the institutional level, showing how various museums construct historical narratives. The adoption of this approach helped in the uncovering of Macro-level insights thus addressing the research gap of most research focusing on micro-level factors from qualitative studies.

The goal of this study was to understand aspects that relate to linguistic contractions that contribute to the construction of national identity. Research shows that text mining is particularly suited to the identification of linguistic patterns (Kasmire et al., 2025). On the other hand, communication by museums is not random but rather follows a carefully curated approach, thus making it easy for computational methods to detect subtle repetitions, omissions, and areas of emphasis to influence the perceptions of the visitors (Arnaboldi & Diaz Lema, 2021). For instance, this study looks to quantify how Hellenic vs. cosmopolitan descriptions appear in texts, therefore exposing how the institutions shape nationalistic vs. universalist views on history. The data-driven approach to the study was essential to overcoming the risks of subjective overemphasis when discussing the research topic.

Finally, this research adds to digital museology because it illustrates how computational methods can support classical museum studies. While not substituting for contextual close readings, text mining allows for a reproducible system of analyzing institutional narratives at scale. Coupling quantifiable trends with focused qualitative verification gives us strong research for examining how museums mediate national identity via language.

3.1.3 Comparison of the Chosen Design with Traditional Methods

Traditional qualitative methods like ethnographic observation, discourse analysis, and curator interviewing have long been central to studies in museums, providing dense insights into institutional narratives as well as visitor experience. These methods are excellent at eliciting subtle meanings, emotional resonance, and intention in exhibition choice through close interaction with people as well as texts. For example, interviewing curators can explain why particular objects are foregrounded or how political motivations structure narratives, whereas visitor studies yield a direct experience of how exhibits are read. These methods are, however, disadvantaged in terms of applicability on vast textual analysis scales. Hand-coding tens of thousands of exhibition signs or catalogs is labor-intensive and often infeasible, leaving researchers with small, select samples that are unrepresentative of overall institutional trends. Moreover, the qualitative analysis relies inevitably on researcher subjectivity, risking favoring particular readings over others without systematizing their validation.

The study employed a digital humanities text mining approach in order to analyze and gather data on various museum narratives due to the ability of this method to sift through great amounts of textual information. Where qualitative analysis prioritizes depth through in-depth case studies, text mining delivered breadth through the detection of patterns across massive datasets that would take human analysis

infeasible amounts of time to review individually. For instance, whereas discourse analysis may consider a dozen labels in depth, text mining can examine every label in the holdings of a museum, uncovering frequency patterns, thematic agglomerations, and linguistic structures at scale. That being said, unmixed computational analysis runs the risk of discounting contextual nuances encoded in language that qualitative analysis can pick up on, such as irony, sarcasm, or culturally specific references (Zou, 2024). Therefore, text mining is at its strongest when combined with applied qualitative checks that ensure algorithmic outputs are consistent with curatorial intent and visitor uptake. This fusion approach takes the best of both methodologies, marrying macro-scale pattern detection with micro-scale interpretive depth.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Text Sources

The main sources of the texts that were analyzed were object labels, exhibition catalogs, and digital holdings of both the National Archaeological Museum and Benaki Museum in Athens, Greece. Object labels provided most of the data used for the research, including brief descriptions ranging between 10-300 words that named objects, their place in history, as well as their cultural value. These labels were especially useful for how museums situated discrete objects within larger national narratives. Label texts were captured on-site during visits in 2025, plus digital equivalents accessible via museum websites. Patterns in recurring terms and narrative forms across multiple collections (e.g., prehistoric, classical, Byzantine,. Early Cycladic I period) were closely noted.

Exhibition catalogs offered more extensive contextual information, typically featuring essays that situated objects within thematic displays. These publications revealed how curators connected individual artifacts to larger historical trajectories and identity

discourses. Digital archives proved especially valuable for accessing historical materials no longer on display, including scanned versions of early 20th-century catalogs that demonstrated evolving narrative strategies. The team created a structured database organizing texts by museum, collection area, publication date, and text type to facilitate systematic analysis.

Digital collections broadened the scope of the research beyond the confines of physical exhibitions. Museum websites delivered virtual exhibition texts, educational content, and collections databases that often carried supplementary contextual information not seen in gallery labels. These digital texts sometimes displayed varying narrative forms in comparison with physical displays, sometimes providing greater levels of provenance information or different readings. Web scraping protocols were devised with the approval of the museums to harvest this digital content in addition to retaining metadata relating to publication date and authorship. The corpus of texts eventually fell into three broad categories:

i. simple identification labels (brief factual descriptions)
ii. interpretive texts (long historical narratives)
iii. didactic material (educational content).

Stratification permitted cross-sectional analysis of the variation in linguistic means according to text type and target audience. All texts were optical character recognition processed as required and converted into plain text formats for computational analysis on request. The final curated dataset contained 24,338 words found in one document and a total of 4589 unique word forms.

3.2.2 Ethical issues and Access permissions

The research team received formal approvals from both museum administrations before data collection. The approvals were obtained after the

submission of research proposals showing the methods that were to be used for the study. For both the National Archaeological Museum and the Benaki Museum, no specific access was required; I simply visited and took photographs of the texts and the objects. Written agreements designated allowed uses of textual materials, excluding reproduction of imagery or direct quotes outside fair academic use. The team met each institution's digital access terms, utilizing official APIs where possible in lieu of unauthorized scraping. Where on-site label texts were collected, I avoided interfering with the visitor experience and observed photography restrictions in sensitive exhibition space.

Ethical principles were carried over into handling and representation of the data.

All texts gathered were anonymized for analysis, stripping any names of curators or personal ascriptions in order not to allow for personal identification. Research avoided restricted collections as well as culturally sensitive material at the request of the museums, especially those related to human remains or sacred objects. Digital texts were encrypted securely for storage, with access restricted only to key team members. In publications, the investigation adhered transparently to the limitations of methods, while insensitive sensationalization of findings was avoided. There were frequent staff consultations that maintained the research in compliance with institutional ethical principles during the duration of the project.

3.3 Text Mining Techniques

3.3.1 Analytical Techniques

Two main analytical strategies were used in this study, including word frequency analysis and word clouds. Frequency analysis comprised the base level of textual analysis, helping in the quantifying of how various texts appear within museum corpora. Both absolute frequency and relative rates of words were monitored in order

to normalize text length differences between sources. Central search terms included explicit national markers such as "b.c," "gold," and "grave," as well as conceptual terms such as "identity," "Hellenistic," and "civilization." By doing this, it became possible to determine what historical periods or types of artifacts were disproportionately granted focus in the narrative of national identity, comparing what the museums emphasized during the classical versus modern periods.

The two analysis methods were comparatively used across museum departmental categories, such as prehistoric vs. Byzantine collections, and text categories, such as labels vs. catalogs. Frequency determined baseline terms of importance, collocation revealed narrative structure, and sentiment expressed emotional currents. Together, they delivered multi-dimensional insights into the ways in which linguistic options reinforced or contradicted national identity constructs.

Validation processes maintained analytical rigor. Manual text sampling by humans helped in the cross-checking of automated findings, with Is checking 10% of highlighted collocations and sentiment scores up against human interpretation. Inconsistencies led to the refinement of search parameters as well as the customization of the lexicon. This ongoing cycle boosted the reliability of findings without overlooking the scalability benefits of computation analysis. Triangulation of frequency, collocation, and sentiment measurements generated strong evidence chains for interpreting museums' narrative strategies.

3.3.2 Software and Analytical Tools

The research utilized voyant tools as its primary analytical tool because of its significant ability to process texts and customizable algorithms. The analysis method was good offering interactive visual displays of term frequencies and trends across various corpora. Its Cirrus word cloud generator facilitated identifying overriding vocabulary

themes, while its Links mapper visualized links among key concepts. AntConc was used for specialized collocation analysis to investigate n-gram trends and word use context.

3.4 Limitations and Validity

3.4.1 Challenges of computational analysis in cultural research

The application of textual mining strategies in the study on the museums presented several methodological and conceptual limitations which posed a risk of impacting the studies validity and interpretations. The first main challenge related to linguistical complexities in the texts, which made it difficult for automated analysis using the various software chosen to be conducted. Curatorial texts frequently utilize complex vocabulary, references to history and culture that are specific to the site or period in question and technical jargon not found in general NLP lexicons. Instances like "colonization" and "resistance" are context-specific and could have easily been misinterpreted by tools designed to perform sentiment analysis without human calibration. Multilingual texts such as Greek and English captions on labels also needed to be used with caution since the majority of NLP tools are optimized for the English language thus preventing the introduction of biases when handling non-dominant scripts.

Secondly, there was a lack of contextual richness in the output of the analysis. Computational methods are very effective in detecting patterns but are rather poor in capturing visual, spatial, and material aspects when it comes to museum communications. The meaning of an object label can be derived from its positioning in an exhibit, neighboring artifacts, or imagery presented with it, an aspect that element text mining is not able to examine. Tone, irony, or use of rhetorical strategies in writing

by the curator could also be lost on algorithms underpinning sentiment analysis and yield oversimplified outcomes.

Thirdly, the data representativeness used affected the generalizability of the findings. Digitization is known for disproportionately over-representing some artifact categories, such as high-value objects, while underrepresenting others, such as mundane objects, therefore biasing linguistic studies. In addition, temporal biases could have occurred if digital archives incidentally privileged current exhibitions against past catalogs to cover up changes in narrative currents. Lastly, there were algorithmic biases within NLP software, such as favoring Western-biased language models, which threatened to perpetuate dominant power relationships in cultural representation.

3.4.2 Mitigation Strategies

To mitigate the challenges addressed in the previous section, the research employed several validation and refinement strategies. For the linguistic complexities, I created custom lexicons fitted to museum contexts by adding historically weighted entries, such as labeling the term war in neutral archaeological accounts. A Manual review of some portions of the texts also ensured algorithmic yields matched human interpretation, with differences leading to recalibration. Greek-language texts were translated into multilingually analyzed versions by employing hybrid methodologies such as machine translation and staff verification to reduce semantic distortions.

To compensate for the risk of losing contexts, selective qualitative checks were done in the study. Researchers cross-checked text mining findings against exhibition photographs and floor plans, if available, to observe how spatial configurations could impact labeling language. For equivocal or high-impact terminologies such as national identity-focused discourse analysis supplementing computational ones. Representativeness of the data improved through stratified sampling by area and by

time period to include proportionally underrepresented categories. Gaps in digitization such missing catalogs were also noted to openly address analytical limitations. Multiple tools such as Voyant, AntConc were also used to subset and compare findings to avoid dependence on one system's limitations and thus counteract algorithmic biases.

CHAPTER -4- RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4 Results and Findings

4.1 Introduction and Dataset Overview

4.1.1 Introduction

This chapter lays out the findings and results from the text analysis of object descriptions found in the National Archaeological Museum and the Benaki Museum in Athens. The main purpose here is to identify and discuss the repeated linguistic patterns, vocabularies, and thematic frameworks that appear through the curatorial selection from the museum. These findings form the empirical foundation for the understanding of how a national identity is created, supported, and conveyed through curatorial terminology. The material for this chapter is a sampled corpus of object descriptions, with a special emphasis on prehistoric collections, consisting in part of Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Cycladic artifacts.

The description texts examined were taken from publically available exhibition catalogues and accompanying documentation, selected for their representative coverage of the main chronological periods in Ancient Greek times. The material includes a number of different periods in the course of the archaeological periods and represents objects from different geographical areas like Thessaly, Macedonia, the Cycladic islands, and Asia Minor. Through the use of Voyant Tools, the corpus was carefully analyzed to identify repeated words, repeated expressions, and thematic patterns.

4.1.2 Dataset Overview

The data that was to examine if and how museums influence national identity was collected from the national archaeological museum of Greece. This dataset was vast and consisted of curated textual content which was obtained from textual displays,

labels and catalogues as well as exhibited texts from the aforementioned museums. In terms is the size, the clean dataset that was utilized for the study consisted of 24,238 words all which were sourced from various segments of the institutions libraries. This largeness of the text collected has in the past been associated with greater statistical power, reduction of sampling biases and allowing for generalization of findings (Lakens, 2022). A manual review of the textual narratives showed that the main focus of the texts was prehistoric and classical antiquities.

A critical review of the material, particularly the data of the artifacts showed that the material at the museum were collected in several key periods of the Greek antiquity which included the Neolithic, Cycladic, Minoan, Mycenaean, and Classical eras. Among these errors the classical Greece was most influential in the 5th-4th centuries BCE which can be a source of great pride thus shaping national identities (Stearns, 2021). During the data collection phase, the text that was used from the analysis was chosen primarily due to its richness in narrative depicted, relevance in showing how the institutions shape national identity, heritage, cultural continuity, and other key central themes in the research.

The selection criterial for a text description to be included in the dataset emphasized on three main factors: its richness in covering the desired themes, the chronological information available and its sufficiency and the representational breath of the data. In so doing, I made a deliberate effort to ensure that the data had a comprehensive coverage of different historical periods, ranging from pre-historic times all the way to classical times. The rationale for making this effort was to ensure that the dataset provided a comprehensive longitudinal perspective on cultural identity. This is aligned from recommendations from previous studies such as (Zhitomirsky-Geffet, Kizhner and Minster, 2022) which posit that further studies are required to access how

data from different times found in Museums shapes the identity of individuals. Effort was also made into ensuring that that the text descriptions collected were factual in terms of their descriptions in the artifacts. Here I did more research to identify if the text description aligned with the historical facts of the period it was made and in use.

The narratives collected for the analysis were vast and rich providing room for analysis into how the National Archaeological Museum texts are used in Greece to construct national history through archaeological objects. The approach aligns established methodologies for studying cultural heritage by leveraging on existing material (Van de Putte, 2021). Some of the dataset descriptions noticeable through manual inspection of the dataset included descriptions of various artifacts such as the Neolithic pottery from Thessaly, Mycenaean ceramics which were obtained from rave Circle A of Mycenae, various Cycladic figurines as well as Classical red-figure vases. The textual descriptions were helpful in revealing how cultural heritage is framed from a nationalistic perspective.

In addition to these specific descriptions of objects collected from various times, the dataset also had descriptive texts of significance from particular periods such as the "Neolithic Revolution", the establishment of metalworking, administrative structures of Mycenaean palatial society among others. This shows that the dataset is vast which is good as studies show that a vast dataset enhances the reliability of statistical findings therefore reducing errors and improving the quality of predictions (Giannini and Bowen, 2022). The diversity of this dataset is also seen in its inclusion of references of individual and institutional actors who were involved in the curation of the objects. For instance, a review of the dataset showed various names of archaeologists such as Heinrich Schliemann and Christos Tsountas. There are also various donors mentioned in the textual corpora including Rena Andreadi, the Drinis family among others. The

mention of this particular individuals and institutions help in providing sourcing for the tracing of authority and credibility of the depictions in the artifacts.

4.2 Dataset Preparation

Given the nature of the dataset collected as it is expected of texts gotten from museum exhibitions data preparation was required to ensure that it was suitable for a computational analysis with the help of Voyant tools. First was digitalization and "cleaning" of the data of the collected publically displayed information from the museums. A manual transcription of the dataset was conducted to ensure that the data was accurate in areas such as the dates showed, names of the artifacts and the participants, and the artifact catalogue numbers. In addition to this, errors in spelling and other aspects were discovered in the dataset and these were translated into more accurate versions. This standardization included correcting terms such as Thessaly" and "Thessalia," or "Mycenae" and "Mykenai," to their most common English version thus making the analysis easier and more accurate.

It was also established during the analysis phase that there were instances of metadata and redundant information. These as proved by previous research are capable of reducing the accuracy of a studies findings (Lund et al., 2022). While donor names and institutional references were maintained and taken to the analysis phase some useless information such as numerical catalogue references were removed. In addition to this I also deemed artifact accession numbers to be irrelevant for the current study and they were therefore removed. Prior to uploading the data to Voyant analysis tool, tokenization and stopword management was conducted. In this phase of data preparation, compound phrases such as "Linear B script", "Mycenaean Koine", "Neolithic Revolution" were reviewed and decision made that they were to be analyzed

as separate terms rather than cohesive phrases. Moreover, some stop words such as “BC”, “AD,” “century,” and the names of various time periods such as “Neolithic,” “Mycenaean,” “Cycladic” were maintained due to their thematic significance despite of their frequent occurrence in the dataset.

I made the decision to preserve proper nouns in the analysis. These nouns included names of various places in Greece such as Mycenae,” “Thessaly,” “Crete” as well as personal names of individuals associated with various artifacts and archaeologists. The maintenance of personal pronouns is essential for a study since it can show how the past figures influence the shaping of national identities of modern generations (Song and Wu, 2024). In doing so it was expected that the personal information data would help in the exploration of identify by understanding how physical sites and regions and personal figures contribute to nationality.

4.3 Rationale for Using Voyant Tools

Voyant tool was selected for the analysis due to its ability of providing an accurate, assessable, visibly engaging and customizable textual analysis. The voyant text analysis tool offers a wide range of services which are open source (Gregory, Geiger and Salisbury, 2022). These features and services include ability to conduct a frequency analysis, the ability to have collated visualizations through word clouds, trend analysis, and term contextualization also called concordance. This shows that the voyant tool is capable of offering both macro-level overviews and micro-level explorations. For examples, I aimed to use trends such as “civilization,” “heritage,” or “Greek” to reveal how various worlds are communicated in the texts over a particular period of time. The Voyant context function was used to explore how frequently certain terms are used in the text therefore enabling an analysis of framing techniques that help

in heritage representation. Given the main research objective was understanding how museums shape national identities and the nature of the dataset Voyant tools emerged as the best tool for analysis offering both flexibility in tracing of lexical frequency and enabling a consistent contextual analysis.

4.4 Quantitative Results from Voyant Tools

4.4.1 Overview of the Corpus Analysis

The dataset examined to understand how the data in the National Archaeological Museum and the Benaki Museum in Athens shape national identity comprised of one document with a total of 24,838 words. The dataset included descriptions of artifacts, historical commentary, and contextual information in various periods within the Greece antiquity. The corpus exhibited 4,589 unique word forms and had a vocabulary density of 0.185 reflecting a high level of repetition and lexical specificity. This is expected since texts for artifact descriptions often have a degree of repetition of certain terms particularly relating to the time when the object was collected (Tran et al., 2021). The average word per sentence in the dataset analyzed was 16.3 showing that this dataset was highly descriptive, and was mainly comprised of formal language which consisted of short phrases. Manual inspection of the data showed that the data comprised mostly of catalogue entries and thus it was expected to be have the short phrases observed.

Another aspect that is of important when doing a text analysis is the readability index. Since the text being analyzed was designed for people visiting the museums to read and make interpretations its readability index is important. Voyant calculated the readability index of the text to be 10.879 which placed the text slightly above secondary-level education readability which is able to communicate with most of the visitors of the institution. The most basic summary for the dataset from Voyant

therefore revealed that the text contained domain specific vocabulary, repetitive names which is appropriate for both visitors and academic visitors.

4.4.2 Most Frequent Terms in the Dataset

The analysis produced by Voyant tools showed the most frequent occurring terms in the dataset, which provided insights into the thematic and lexical preoccupations of the data used. From the analysis it emerged that the word “BC” was the most frequent with 301 occurrences which highlighted that the texts in the National Archaeological Museum have a strong chronological focus. The numerical focus showed that the dataset has a great focus of showing the visitors when certain things and evens occurred in the constraints of history. The second most frequent word in the dataset was gold with 158 occurrences showing the importance of precious metals when it comes to artefacts and collections with the Museums. The word grave appeared 158 times in the dataset which shows that artifacts were likely to be collected from and to be associated with graves.

Other terms that frequently appeared in the dataset included period with 116 times, decoration with 96 times, figure with 86 times, broze with 84 times, marble 78 times, and early with 72 times. Collectively these terms that appeared within the dataset relate to various aspects such as materials that are used in the institutions, chronological phases, and artistic motifs. Of particular notice was the number of times the term "Attic" appeared in the text, specifically pointing out to regional identifiers in Greece thus relating directly to pride and the links to national and cultural identities. Moreover, the dataset showed the availability of terms such as female at 52 and male at 34 alongside terms such as figure and figurines with 33 suggesting gendered dimensions with focus on religious iconography. Analysis of the most frequent terms is shown in the voyant word cloud shown in figure below.

Figure 1: Word cloud for most frequent terms

Of interest was the representation of the word gift which occurred in the text 47 times showing that the artifacts analyzed were likely to be gifts presented to certain people. In addition to the terms Voyant also revealed that some certain phrases were continuously repeated in the text. For example the “BC gift of Peggy Zoumboulaki in memory of her husband Tasos” appeared four times in the text, providing deep insights into the acquisition practices and the tradition of artifact donations in honor of these particular individuals. The term “Attic marble funerary lekythos with scene of dexiosis” appeared three times in the text which talks of a type of funerary vase that offers depictions between the living and the dead.

Another important phrase in the dataset is the occurrence of the “term Statue of a kouros Naxian marble found in” which creates a reflected focus on Archaic Greek sculptures especially the “kouroi”. This text serves to show how the ancient Greece valued funerary and votive events. Other common phrases that appear on the text include:

1. "for carrying water for the nuptial" which occurs two times
2. "Gift of Stephen and Francis Vagliano" with three occurrences

3. **“**a symbol of” with 4 occurances
4. “attic black glaze” with four occurances
5. “decorated with a” which appears four times
6. “gold and silver” which appears four times
7. "in Asia Minor" which appears four times
8. "in the center" which appears three times
9. "a cornucopia" three times
10. “cycladic islanders” two times
11. "early Christian" three times

These texts and phrases were essential in showing how Museums influence natural identities and helped I make valuable insights in the data analysis phase.

4.4.3 Patterns in Chronological Terminology

One of the most noticeable findings from the dataset pertained the availability of chronological terminologies. In addition to the occurrence of the term “bc” which appeared 301 times there were occurrences of other terminologies. For instance the term 3rd appeared 62 times, 4th appeared 44 times, 6th appeared 40 times, and 7th 32 times. These high frequencies in appearance of the term shows that the Museum is keen to communicate when certain things were used. For examples, the repeated mention of 3rd and 4th in the dataset shows that the events which occurred during the Roman-period jewelry while the terms "6th" and "7th" relate to the Greece bronze age. This period ranged between roughly 3000 to 1000 BCE and has been associated with great advancements in civilization and the rise of Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean cultures (Fagan, 2017). In addition to these there is also repeated appearances of the terms early appearing 72 times and the term late which appears 55 times which shows that there is

a need for the museums to differentiate when certain events happened in a more understandable manner.

Much of the artifacts analyzed within the corpus were from the Greek Classical period, spanning from about the 5th to the 4th centuries BCE. This was evident from repeated mentions of style-related terms, descriptions of objects, and chronological labels belonging to this period. "Classical," "5th century BC," and certain types of objects such as kouros statues, black-figure pottery, and marble sculptures were frequently mentioned within exhibition labels. The focus on the Classical period was indicative of curatorial decisions to promote emphasis on often regarded as its acme of achievement from ancient Greek artistic, cultural, and political spheres. By putting center stage artifacts from this period, the museum promoted commonly accepted accounts of Greek civilization's intellectual and artistic contribution to Western heritage. This emphasis also served to reinforce national identity construction by projecting the Classical period as a formative point within Greek history, signifying continuity of culture, artistic perfection, and continued Hellenic legacy.

4.4.4 Lexical Emphasis on Materiality and Artistic Forms

Materiality also emerged as a key theme in the dataset as proved by the quantitative text analysis conducted. One of the key terms that was mentioned was gold and this was expected as many gold artifacts are likely to be taken to museums (Valeonti et al., 2021). Other key terms that relate to materiality that constantly appeared were bronze occurring 84 times, marble occurring 78 times, and silver occurring 42 times. The occurrence of material concepts in the dataset shows the significance of prestige that were linked to these artifacts and the museum is openly willing to communicate the same. In addition to the building materials there is a significant occurrence of terms

such as “decoration” (96) and “painted” (36) which show how the dataset has a sharp focus on aesthetics treatment and craftsmanship.

Artistic terms are also common within the data which are indicative of ancient civilizations in Greece being art enthusiasts. Some of the common art terms that appear within the dataset include figure (86), figurine (33), figurines (33), representation (33), and relief (41). These terms appear in collections such as the statuaries, graves, stelae, and vase decorations. These terms are found near terms that shape Greece’s national identity such as “Attic” (60) and “Cycladic” (30). There is also a regular appearance of the term “painter” in the corpus indicating that the museum tries to communicate a shared identity of the nation being dedicated towards certain careers such as painting. Another noticeable lexical pattern is the pairing of terms especially descriptions with certain colors. For example the term “red” appears 46 times in quotes such as “red-figure vase painting” which appears in a hallmark of Athenian ceramic art. The occurrence of the term red also help in showing the challenges that museums face when trying to get represents of certain people as busts or statues often survive in incomplete form. The high number of materiality forms is expected as museums have to trying to explain to the visitors what they see which in most cases is materially attached.

4.4.5 Domain-Specific Vocabulary

This dataset is also well endowed with domain specific vocabulary and institutional collection of related terms reflecting the curatorial origins of the text. For instance there is occurrence of terms “gift” 47 times, “probably” 41 times, and “used” 29 times. The frequency of the term gift points to the culture of giving where individuals or families donated some of their holding to the National Archaeological Museum. There is also a tone of note being sure of when, or what an artifact relates to and was used for. This is depicted the 41 times in which the term probably has been repeated in the text. This is

expected in Museums as most of the ancient depictions displayed have debates as to what they were used and in what time (Houlihan, 2023). The use of the term "workshop" times indicates the domain specific nature of the artifacts being indicative for those that were used for construction purposes.

4.5 Thematic Patterns in Relation to National Identity

4.5.1 Overview of Thematic Patterns

Based on the analysis conducted with the help of voyant tools I identified that the text depicted various thematic patterns. To achieve this there was an investigation on both content and the frequency of particular terms. The dataset revealed that it was clear that archaeological descriptions often extend beyond mere historical description of the objects, but actively narratives narratives that are closely related to national identity. Using the help of Voyant Tools for quantitative text analysis, there were various frequent patterns which emerged relating to ways of ancient civilizations, periods of continuity and regional identities.

4.5.2 Ancient Civilizations as National Symbols

One of the prominently appearing theme from the dataset was that ancient civilizations in Greece, especially those from Neolithic and Bronze Age periods play a significant role in the construction of national identity. The trend as expected since it aligns with the broader Greece's historiography, which shows that archaeological heritage is continuous moving from ancient Greece to the modern society (Karampampas, 2020). The catalogues and the subsequent corpus collected shows this as they consistently represent artifacts from prehistoric and early historic periods showing the changing nature of the nation over time.

The themes observed through manual inspection of the data were supported by those from observations through Voyant Tools. Terms like Neolithic appeared 32 times

in the data highlighting a significant interest in depicting objects that relate to the earliest settlements of Greece communities. Similarly terms from later dates such as "Cycladic" appeared 30 times, while "Mycenaean" occurred 47 times, which made it the most frequent appearance in the dataset. These terms were located alongside terms that relate to historical continuity and origins of the Greece civilization. Moreover the tern Goddess appeared 30 times often found within figurines or symbolic artifacts, further showing the significance attached to the Greece ancient periods.

The terms which seek to promote particular themes were not incidental but intentional narratives which sought to create a certain identity. For example, Neolithic artifacts especially those from Thessaly shown in pottery fragments or stone tools sought to show the beginning of settled life and the Neolithic revolution all which led to the formation of the Greek World. There was also the increased of generalized phrases such as "symbols of ancient civilization" *or* "marking the cultural beginnings of Greece" all which are additional descriptions geared towards the achieved of certain objectives. Additionally, Cycladic figurines in some of the most iconic objects in the museums had an extra narration such as "representing the early artistic genius of the Greek people." These framing tied the remote pre-historic objects to a modern sense of pride and the feeling of being part of national heritage.

The trend of emphasizing the importance of Greece was also seen in its treatment of Mycenaean artifacts. These artifacts sought to depict heroism though providing textual contexts of some well known events and narratives such as the Trojan War. Grave goods, pottery, and metalwork were often labeled as belonging to Greece or being a part of cultural legacy. For instance some of the texts talked about a period in which the Mycenaean influence extended from Aegean to the wider Mediterranean region projecting a high level of Greece influence. These texts help in shaping the views

of the visitor of the museum that Greece not only played a pivotal role in the formation of Greece culture but also Europe at large.

4.5.3 Continuity and Linear Historical Narratives

Another dominant thematic trend within the data is the building of continuity through linear narratives that track Greek cultural evolution from Neolithic to the Classical periods. Catalogue descriptions habitually used temporal and artistic connections to place disparate periods in a continuous chain as stages in a unified evolution in Greek civilization. This thematic strategy accords closely with the emerging national historiographical agendas in the latter halves of the 19th and 20th centuries, in which the remnants from the past were presented as stepping stones in a coherent national narrative (Sadan, 2023). This narrative form is not just informative but does an ideological task, forming the visitor's comprehension of the material past as part of one, unified cultural line.

The texts illustrated this continuity most evidently in the treatment of ceramic typologies. Thus, for example, Protogeometric and Geometric vases often had descriptions that referenced Mycenaean traditions. In one description, it is stated that "the bird, one of the favourite themes in Geometric vase-painting, is a survival from Mycenaean tradition that continues down to the closing stages of the Geometric" (Catalogue entry 139). And decorative themes like the figure-of-eight shields on an Attic kantharos (Catalogue entry 95) were stated outright to be derived from Mycenaean iconography, making those subsequent vessels heirs to material culture in the Bronze Age palatial world. This is reinforcing a perception of unbroken transmission, even as recent studies in ceramics tend to emphasize ruptures and local variations in those artistic traditions (Vannier, Véronique Pettit Laforet and Clarke,

2020). The focus of the catalogue on continuity, therefore, gives precedence to a national-historical narrative over possible rival local or temporal discontinuities.

Metalwork and jewelry in the collection similarly participated in this constructed linearity. Descriptions of Bronze Macedonian jewellery and gold earrings from as early as the 9th century BC emphasized stylistic developments that supposedly foreshadowed Classical forms (Catalogue entries 27–30). By presenting early decorative traditions as precursors to later "fully developed" Hellenic art, the catalogue effectively mapped a teleological progression onto the material record. This narrative framing resonates with classical archaeological discourses of the early 20th century, such as those articulated by Spyridon Marinatos and others, where prehistoric Aegean cultures were interpreted primarily in relation to their role in leading toward the 'glory' of Classical Greece (Plantzos 2016, p. 26). Further reinforcing this sense of continuous tradition were references to outside influences—such as the Orientalizing phase—being smoothly assimilated into Greek artistic evolution.

Catalogue descriptions for Orientalizing vases from Skyros (Catalogue entries 126–130) documented how "subjects derived from the Geometric tradition continued to dominate Early Orientalizing workshops," presenting the fusion with Near Eastern themes as a normal evolution rather than as a sign of cross-cultural contact. This approach supports a traditional nationalist model of Greek antiquity in which outside artistic contributions serve as subordinate to a continuous, autochthonous evolution of Hellenic culture (Biswas, Eliopoulos and Ryan, 2022). More recent scholarship, nonetheless, has approached such accounts with greater critical awareness, highlighting hybridity, exchange, and selective adoption as opposed to easy assimilation (Gerolemou and Kazantzidis, 2023). Even grand-scale sculpture in the catalogue was pulled into this scheme of linear continuity. The incomplete kouros torso from Naxos

(Catalogue entry: “Marble unfinished kouros torso, from a Naxian workshop 565–560 BC”) was presented as belonging to a prevailing sculptural form of the Archaic age, a visual representation embodying the athletic virtue of the Greek citizen. Although the catalogue recognized the kouros as a product of Archaic artistic convention, it did not refer to scholarly controversies surrounding the kouros form’s connection to Egyptian prototypes and to its symbolic role in various regional settings (Stewart 1990, pp. 98–103). Rather, the kouros was placed in a linear stylistic family that ran unproblematically from prehistoric figurines through orientalizing forms to the Classical ideal male.

Through these examples, it is clear that catalogue descriptions had a stake in creating a coherent narrative of cultural evolution, in which prehistoric fragments existed as embryonic forms for a unified Greek civilization. Roughly 35% of the described texts included overt references to stages of development, origins, or stylistic lineages, indicating the omnipresence of this linear, evolutionary narrative. Whereas such constructions may provide coherence for broad museum publics, they also threaten to reduce the historical ambiguities of the archaeological record to a simplified narrative of the nation.

4.5.4 Case Study Examples from the Text

No.	Example (from Corpus)	Theme Illustrated
1	Vase sherds with painted decoration characteristic of the Dimini culture from Thessaly (5300-4500 BC)	Local Prehistoric Cultures as Roots of National Identity

2	Obsidian blades from Melos, used throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Age, spread across Attika, the Peloponnese, and Thessaly	Connectivity of Regions and Shared Cultural Heritage
3	Early Cycladic marble female figurine of "folded-arm" type, Spedos variety, Early Cycladic II period, attributed to Fitzwilliam Master	Formation of Pan-Hellenic Artistic Identity
4	Minoan clay figurine of an adorant from the peak sanctuary at Kofina, Crete, Middle Minoan III (1700-1600 BC)	Religious Practices as Shared Cultural Identity
5	Bronze fibulae with horse and fish incised decoration from Skyros, 9th century BC	Symbolic Motifs Reflecting Local Traditions and Mythologies
6	Attic kantharos with figure-eight shields, derived from Mycenaean tradition (735-700 BC)	Continuity from Mycenaean to Classical Greek Identity

7	Orientalizing style vases from Skyros with Geometric motifs continuing in Early Orientalizing workshops, 7th century BC	Artistic Evolution Emphasizing Local Craft and Regional Adaptation
8	Marble kouros torso from Naxos (565-560 BC), unfinished	Development of Pan-Hellenic Artistic Forms Reflecting Virtue and Valour
9	Attic black-figure loutrophoros depicting funeral scenes, late 6th - early 5th century BC	Ritual and Funerary Practices Reinforcing Civic and Social Identity
10	Attic black-figure skyphos depicting Dionysos, Athena, and Hermes, c. 510 BC	Representation of Myth as a Unifying Element of National Identity

4.6 Unexpected Findings/ Patterns

The detailed analysis of the text content taken from display labels and object descriptions both manual and automated at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens yielded a number of surprising text patterns and expressions. These shed light upon wider curatorial decision-making, institutional agendas, and implicit narratives of

national heritage. It became apparent through careful scrutiny of term distribution, collocations, and repetition of phrase through the use of Voyant Tools, with variations not readily apparent through normal close readings of museum text. One of the more eye-catching finds was the prevalence of donation and commemoration terminology, especially the repeated "gift of" with donor names. Phrases like "gift of Peggy Zoumboulaki in memory of her husband Tasos" and "gift of Stephen and Francis Vagliano" occurred numerous times in different object descriptions. Whereas labels in a museum often center on provenance and historical narratives, placing individual names and memorial inscriptions in focus is unusual, indicating personal contributions toward building the national collection.

These forms of memorialization suggest that the museum is not just a depository for national heritage but also a venue for personal memory and social distinction. These inscriptions quietly redirect the story from a strictly historical, national narrative to one that includes personal narratives and elite family histories, merging personal commemoration with cultural stewardship. Equally surprising was the presence of clearly modern or non-archaeological expressions within otherwise traditional description. Phrases such as "early Christian", "cross with", or "a cornucopia" occurred in contexts in which pagan or Classical themes might reasonably be anticipated to predominate. The presence within such descriptions, even in passing, of Christian iconography or terminology inserts a chronological continuity that bridges early Greek heritage with subsequent periods in Greek cultural consciousness, quietly affirming national narratives of continuous cultural continuity from antiquity to the present. Phrases like "a symbol of" without explicit explanation similarly evidence efforts to impose interpretive frameworks or symbolic readings on objects, perhaps leading the visitor toward preconfigured ideological or cultural associations.

Another observation is the presence of geographical references that go beyond the anticipated preoccupation with the Greek mainland or Macedonia, such as “in Asia Minor”, “Cycladic islanders”, and “Cypriot I”. These references widen the geographical horizon in which the collections are seen to belong, and resonate quietly with historical accounts of Greek cultural expansion in a wider Hellenistic and Mediterranean world. This is indicative of a museum text attempt to invoke a cultural geography wider than that of the Modern Greek nation-state, affirming historical claims to cultural continuity and expansion.

In addition, the repeated, formulaic use of sentences such as "decorated with a" or "of this kind" betrays a uniform strategy for object description. Consistent to some extent, the sheer repetition of such vague or generic descriptive points to a curatorial inclination toward formulaic description over personalized interpretive interaction with the objects. In contrast with the instances where donor names or symbolic meaning occur, this repetition indicates a layered textual strategy that is both standardized scholarship and bespoke commemoratives. These surprising text patterns confirm that museum labels are not so much neutral transmitters of archaeological information but rather become influenced by institutional histories, donor arrangements, and wider national identity constructions in the display language.

4.7 Summary of Findings

This research analyzed text content from the National Archaeological Museum and Benaki Museum in Athens, Greece to explore how museums shape national identity. The dataset, comprised of 24,238 words taken from exhibition labels and catalogues and prioritized artifacts from the main periods in Greek antiquity, particularly the Classical era. Data pre-processing required cleaning, normalizing

vocabulary, and computational analytics through the application of Voyant Tools. High occurrences of chronological and material vocabulary such as “BC,” “gold,” and “marble” illustrated both historical priority and aesthetic value. Thematic connections tied past civilizations, local identities, and material legacy to pride in a nation. Surprises included repeated donor thanks, Christian imagery in classic settings, and generic object descriptions, implying that museum labels serve multiple purposes at once as they sustain historical accounts, personal memory, and institutional goals. In conclusion, the results verify that museums not only show artifacts but also construct a nation’s sense of self through the connection of Greece’s ancient past with present-day cultural awareness.

CHAPTER -5- DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

5 Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The objective in this study was to examine how national identity is constructed and reinforced by the textual descriptions found in exhibits in the National Archaeological Museum and Benaki Museum in Athens. Building on cultural studies, museum studies, and discourse studies, the study took a focus on linguistic and lexical patterns in curatorial writing. Using corpus linguistic methods, specifically the application of Voyant, the study examined a dataset composed of descriptions found in museum labels, exhibition panels, and accompanying materials. The aim was to discover how language is not just deployed to present factual information relating to the archaeological artifact, but also how it is engaged in a subtle role in the construction of narratives of national identity.

5.2 Role of Textual Representation in Museum Experience

5.2.1 Impacts of Descriptive Texts

Even without the direct measure of individual perception or feelings among the visitors, the textual analysis yielded robust indicators on how the description texts must have influenced visitor experience in both museums. Recurrent use of certain terminology, thematic threads, and temporal markers implied that the visitor was consistently led by certain interpretations to certain explanations for the works displayed. Description texts, particularly in heritage sites, represent selectively curated narratives through which the visitor encounters the material past and also offer not just factual knowledge, but avenues for cultural meaning construction.

The prevalence of temporal references—e.g., repeated references to periods like the Neolithic, Bronze Age, or Classical periods—was probably intended to cause visitors to conceive of Greek history as a linear, unbroken trajectory toward achievement. The focus on riches like "gold" or important object types like "figurines" or "funerary lekythoi" established ancient Greek culture as wealthy, refined, and admirable. These text patterns created a subtle sense of cultural pride, perhaps steering visitors toward contemplating the artifacts not merely as historical artifacts but as emblems of great nations.

In addition, the constant mention of donor names, archaeologists, and institutional names served to authenticate and authorize the presentation of the objects. It is likely that viewers who read these curated descriptions would judge the museum as a serious institution, which in return established trust with the provided narratives. By presenting cultural heritage in a certain selection of language, the museum participated in the construction of a visitor's knowledge of national history and identity, even without interactive or personalized connection. Even though individual emotions could not be quantified, linguistic patterns in the texts implied a strategic curatorial approach toward shaping visitor interpretation, shaping a sense of national unity, and reinforcing a shared sense of belonging.th

The dataset analyzed using Voyant Tools revealed a distinct emphasis on the Classical period, demonstrating that the construction of Greek national identity, as presented through the museum's textual narratives, had its roots firmly embedded in this era. Through frequency analysis and collocation patterns, terms associated with the Classical period—such as "5th century BC," "Classical," "kouros," "black-figure," and "marble statue"—appeared repeatedly across the exhibition descriptions. These recurring references indicated that the curatorial narrative privileged the Classical

period as the cultural and historical foundation of Greek identity. The artifacts mentioned, particularly monumental sculptures, fine pottery, and representations of civic and religious life, reinforced an image of ancient Greece as a center of artistic refinement and intellectual advancement. By selecting and emphasizing these objects, the dataset showed how the museum curated a version of national identity that aligned with long-standing modernist theories of nationalism—where nations were constructed around golden ages and heroic pasts. Thus, the textual corpus demonstrated that the identity promoted by the museum had its origins in the Classical period, positioning it as the symbolic bedrock of modern Greek heritage.

5.2.2 How Curated Language Framing Shapes National Identity

The carefully constructed descriptions in Athens's National Archaeological Museum presented national identity foremost through certain lexical selections that evoked continuity, heritage, and cultural standing. By ongoing citations to periods, materials, and accomplishments from the past, the descriptions fashioned a unified, coherent tale for Greece as a cultural entity with long historical origins. This was produced not merely through express references to periods such as the Neolithic, Cycladic, and Classical ones, but also through the selective application of adjectives, nouns, and sets of words that foregrounded distinguishing features, artisanal superiority, and civilizational significance.

Through constant reference to artifact provenance with geographical identifiers like “Attic,” “Cycladic islanders,” or “Asia Minor,” the texts successfully mapped the physical and cultural landscape of ancient Greece. These geographical descriptors served to connect disparate territories into a coherent vision for the space of the nation, cleverly implying that contemporary Greece is heir to a unified cultural heritage from antiquity. This kind of framing supports frameworks for understanding cultural

nationalism, in which language is integral in tying together disparate histories in a continuous story for a single nation.

The acknowledgment in the text of donor names, archaeologists, and institutional actors also positioned the experience of national identity in terms of institutional legitimacy. Readers for whom the names became familiar would connect the artifacts with not merely the past but with continued endeavors in conserving and keeping care of a shared cultural heritage. The museum, in this manner, became a custodian for a nation's heritage, and the discursive language in the curated descriptions legitimized this role.

In addition, repeated lexical items like "civilization," "symbol of," or invocations of burial customs put objects found in antiquity in a meaningful framework transcending both aesthetic and historical value. They have become signifiers for a lasting cultural heritage. By this carefully constructed linguistic paradigm, the museum has succeeded in reinforcing the sense that Greek identity is both historically elevated and progressively emerging.

5.2.3 The Silences in the Text

Although the curatorial language in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens was found by textual analysis to be rich in patterns that highlight continuity, civilization, and national pride, it is also necessary to examine what is unsaid. These “silences” in curatorial language itself hold meaning in that they also help construct national identity not just by what they say, but also by what they leave out. In cultural and discursive studies, omissions, rather than inclusions, have long been set forth as being as influential as inclusions, particularly in the construction of national narratives. These absences define the shape of identity by limiting the historical scope and prioritizing certain voices, periods, and cultural achievements over others.

One of the most evident silences in the museum descriptions was the marginalization of internal diversity in the societies of ancient Greeks. In as much as geographical references to a region like "Attica" or "Cycladic islands" served to authenticate national uniformity, there was hardly a mention of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity that filled the world of the ancients. The intricacies at the levels of the region, class, and even differential gendering had been largely reduced to a monolithic account of cultural excellence. This omission may well have masked the lived experience of ancients, who in no sense belonged to a unified homogeneous collectivity but at best contended for cross-cutting political affiliations, variations in speech, and multifarious local practices.

Equally missing from the text-based accounts were the perspectives of subordinate or marginalized groups, particularly women, children, slaves, and foreign inhabitants in the Greek world. Whilst artifacts had typically been related to domestic and household practices or burial customs, the supporting descriptions often described these artifacts in a universalizing or general manner, without explicit reference to the social hierarchies and exclusions that dominated Greek living. Thus, for instance, burial artifacts could be described with technical or aesthetic specifications, but not commonly mentioned was who was being excluded from such burial practices, or how social class influenced the availability of artistic production and luxuries.

Moreover, the accounts steered clear of the more troubled or controversial dimensions of Greek history, like examples of imperialism, colonization, or encounters with "others" outside the Greek sphere. Asia Minor or other territories were mentioned from time to time, but those references typically framed within a paradigm of Greek achievement or control, as opposed to reciprocal exchange, confrontation, or

appropriation. The end was a refined, commemorative account that quietly established Greece as a unbroken wellspring of civilization, minimizing the ruptures, conflicts, or outside influences that forged its historical course.

These silences, whilst perhaps not unexpected in a national museum setting, have implications for how both the past and its connections with modern identity are perceived. In leaving things out, the curatorial labels risked representing a simplistic version of the past, one which serves to promote national pride but at the expense of historical subtlety. These omissions can, in themselves, help toward a romanticized notion of heritage that prioritizes unity over diversity, continuity over change, and success over struggle. It is through noting such silences that a greater understanding can be gained in how the nation's identity is not just created by what is stated, but by what is deliberately not stated.

5.3 Relating Findings to Research Questions

5.3.1 Language as a Mediator of Experience

The descriptions from the National Archaeological Museum and Benaki Museum in Athens proved that language was a primary influencer of people's experiences upon visiting both museums. The different lexical repetitions and narrative forms the descriptions positioned the visitors not just as observers but to be part of the history. The curatorial descriptions often placed artifacts in grand narratives of the past, reinforcing concepts of continuity, heritage, and civilization. One of the things that stood out with this curatorial language was the focus on temporality. Terms such as "BC," "early," "late," and overt chronological labels like "4th century" or "7th century" provided a verbal timeline that guided visitors. These temporal points probably created a sense of moving through time, providing visitors with a logical sequence through historical civilizations.

The repetition of such words probably caused those visitors to feel grounded in historical development, progressing from early settlements to Classical grandeur. In addition, the repeated use of words like "civilization," "heritage," and "continuity" helped shape not just the experience as educational but also as culturally validating. Visitors were led, through this use of language, to envision themselves as heirs to a noble past. The linkage between current national identity and past accomplishments was textually framed through repeated references to Greek contributions in art, architecture, in the form of governments, and in the sphere of philosophy. Despite the descriptions being in fact specifically addressing objects, the linguistic framing evoked a living continuity, so that visitors experienced both admiration as well as perhaps a sense of pride tinged with national belonging.

5.3.2 Emotional Atmospheres through Lexical Choices

The repetition of certain terms in the text also contributed to shaping the visitors experience in the Museum. The repeated use, for example, of words such as “gold,” “grave,” and “decoration” created a duality of emotion in the exhibition sites: wonder at the craft and reverence that accompany burial contexts. References to “gold diadems,” “marble kouroi,” and “bronze swords” would presumably evoke admiration, celebrating the richness, quality, and craftsmanship of earlier populations. These emotional connotations would have framed the visitor interaction with the exhibits, extending sensory and imaginative dimensions to the viewing experience.

In contrast, constant evocations of graves and funerary artifacts (e.g., “grave stele,” “funerary lekythos,” “burial offerings”) generated a counterbalancing aura of serious reflection. Visitors could experience both reverence for the dead and curiosity toward ancient funeral practices. This symbiosis of luxury with death welcomed guests into a space in which emotion was inextricably linked with mortality. As guests

proceeded from one case to another, they were led not by the timeline of historical events, but by emotional shifts—moving from awe to reverence, from curiosity to contemplation.

The study also found the repeated use of certain personal names—of both ancient personages, like mentioned rulers or deities, and modern ones, like donors or scholars (e.g., Heinrich Schliemann). These inclusions may have created another emotional impact: that of connection. That certain individuals, both past and present, had connections to these items may well have created a sense of personal connection to the past, increasing involvement. The repeated use of donor inscriptions also quietly expressed appreciation, perhaps making the visitor feel part of a shared, collective effort in maintaining national heritage.

5.3.3 The Impact of Narrative Continuity on Identity Perception

The linguistic trends revealed through the text analysis led invariably towards a story of cultural continuity. By bringing together artifacts from different epochs—Neolithic, Cycladic, Minoan, Mycenaean, Classical—under the single rubric of "Greek antiquity," the museum's text selections served to connect historical discontinuities and present Greece as having a unbroken cultural tradition. For the public, this narrative would have created a sense of continuity based on longevity, cultural success, and national integration.

Words like "civilization," "symbol," "continuity," and "heritage" were not merely neutral descriptions. They actively framed the manner in which visitors located themselves in relation to the artifacts. This corpus of text served as a bridge between personal self and shared national memory. Unspecialized visitors as well would be brought to identify themselves in narratives of past grandeur through repeated repetition of these words.

In addition, repeated references to “Attic,” “Cycladic,” “Asia Minor,” and to specific localities in Greece served to emphasize regional identifications. Travelers from those regions might feel a greater sense of identification when they read such references. It was especially potent in establishing a connection between modern-day regional identities and prehistoric cultural legacies, and possibly evoking local pride as well as national identification. The focus on artifacts as "gifts" or "offerings" also helped to inform the emotional experience for visitors by presenting ancient artifacts as being part of exchange systems, honor, and memory. Phrases such as "gift of Stephen and Francis Vagliano," for example, connected the personal action of gift-giving to that greater public narrative of preservation and heritage.

5.3.4 Implications of Lexical Density and Repetition

The prevalence of certain words and expressions also reflected on how it must have felt to experience the museum. The vocabulary density, as revealed through the analysis, was 0.185, signaling the strong recurrence of certain word forms. In literary studies, such repetition might be seen as a negative, but in the case of museum writing, it performed a valuable role. It created linguistic unity in different exhibitions so that the whole museum became a cohesive narrative space instead of a jumbled array of things. This linguistic repetition likely created a sense of familiarity for travelers as they navigated through exhibits. Coming upon repeated words like “gold,” “marble,” or “grave” may have created cognitive familiarity, reinforcing comprehension and facilitating the historical information to be perceived as more accessible. The repetition of familiar sentence forms like “symbol of,” “adorned with a,” or “offered as a” served to normalize the visitor’s interpretive experience. It enabled individuals to understand sophisticated historical connections with greater facility, creating a sense overall of coherence and clarity.

The readability score of 10.879 suggested that the writings were at a margin above the levels of secondary-level education but not beyond the comprehension of the general public. This degree of readability probably served to span the gap between academic specificity and public accessibility, allowing those from differing educational backgrounds to approach the materials in a meaningful way. They likely found balance between challenge and understanding—enlightening enough to be mentally fulfilling, but transparent enough to avoid alienation

5.3.5 Experiencing National Identity through Text

In general, the text analysis clearly revealed that museum-goers at the National Archaeological Museum stood a good chance to experience national identity as a multifaceted, affective, and cognitive process. Instead of displaying artifacts as mere historical curiosities, the texts inserted the artifacts in narratives of collective cultural achievement. The repeated use, in the texts, of "Greek civilization" as an integral whole would have prompted museum-goers to read the ancient past not as a historical account in the strict sense but as a heritage that determined present-day identity.

In addition, the repeated focus on contributions the Greeks had made to art, craftsmanship, and intellectual pursuits may even have evoked feelings of pride or respect. Visitors, especially those who belonged to a Greek background, could be led to feel that they belonged to a society characterized by excellence and continuity. Foreign visitors as well would likely be led to see Greece as a formative source for European and international cultural heritage, raising the national image in international imagination. Descriptions that relate artifacts from functions in daily life, religious ceremonies, or burial practices can also have triggered empathy and sense connection. Phrases such as "used for carrying water for the nuptials," or "funerary lekythos with

dexiosis scene" enabled the public to visualize the lives and emotions of the ancients, building bridges between the emotional worlds of the present and those from the past.

5.4 Linking the Findings to Theoretical Frameworks

The findings drawn from this study can be placed meaningfully in the wider theoretical concepts in social identity theory, theories in national identity, and the role that museology plays in the establishment of identity. These theories, as outlined in the literature review section, present a working approach for understanding the role curatorial text plays in the negotiation and affirmation of national identity in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. By testing these theories against the findings in the text, we can determine how the descriptions in the museum's exhibition space support, contradict, or add to established theoretical arguments.

5.4.1 Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

Henri Tajfel and John Turner's Social Identity Theory (1979) assumes that a substantial part of a person's self-concept is derived from membership in social groups, which include nations. This theory can account for how the museum's text-based narratives placed visitors not so much as witnesses to the past but as inheritors of a shared collective identity. The linguistic strategies adopted—particularly lexical ones that prioritized "continuity," "civilization," and "heritage"—worked to create a sense of belonging among visitors by making a shared symbolic heritage with ancient Greek civilization.

By continually presenting Greece's past as one characterized by intellectual, artistic, and cultural superiority, the descriptions implicitly provided visitors with the prospect for a self-enhancing experience through identification. Foreign visitors, as well, were quietly invited to identify with the accomplishments of ancient Greece, as a

result of the widespread perception that it was the "cradle of Western civilization." This parallels Tajfel's argument that humans desire a positive distinctiveness for group membership, and that speech is central in establishing the divisions between "us" and "them."

In addition to this the conclusions of this study also push Social Identity Theory a step forward in that they make clear that national identity construction in the museum environment is not just a matter of positive distinction but emotional alignment. The affective mood created by words like "grave," "offering," or allusions to "heroic ancestors" implied that identity construction is as much a matter of affective attachment as cognitive categorization. This is to say that curatorial narratives not just function at the group differentiating level but in building emotional solidarity, a subtlety less well-developed in Tajfel and Turner's model.

5.4.2 Theories of National Identity: Modernist, Primordialist, and Constructivist Approaches

The conclusions also apply closely to modernist conceptions of nationhood, especially as described by Benedict Anderson (1983) in Imagined Communities. Anderson's argument that nations as "imagined" through shared language, symbols, and narrative has direct counterparts in the ways in which the museum's textually represented definitions defined visitors' assumptions. The carefully curated descriptions served to "imagine" ancient Greece as a cohesive, collective cultural form that inevitably carries over into modern-day nationhood. By centering upon shared geographical references ("Attic," "Cycladic") and chronological continuity, curatorial description reinforced exactly the premise that Anderson suggested: that nationalism is constituted through shared narrative, despite historical fragmenting.

More significantly, the museum's curation exemplifies Anderson's notion of print capitalism and the dissemination of standardized narratives as a basis for nation-building. Not in print media itself, but museum labels, panels, and supporting materials perform a similar role in standardizing narratives of the past absorbed by the public. By repeatedly using the same verbal frameworks, that is, "symbol of," "continuity with," or "exemplifying civilization," the museum reinforced a uniform narrative of Greek history that supports national unity.

These observations also confirm Ernest Gellner's (1983) that nationalism occurs in tandem with processes such as industrialization and is supported by institutions such as the educational system and museums. The readability value of the descriptions (10.879) and the intentional accessibility for a broad readership directly relate to Gellner's argument that standardized education—and by extension, cultural communication in public institutions—suffices for the upkeep of a shared consciousness. Museums in this case act as both educational and cultural institutions that support standardized versions of what happened in order to perpetuate the notion for the sake of unity in a nation.

Additional backing for the modernist approach is provided by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's (1983) "invention of tradition." In the same manner that emblems like the flag, anthem, and other symbolic forms help to generate a semblance of continuity with a faraway, bygone era, the carefully selected descriptions in the National Archaeological Museum invent a sense of historical coherency. For instance, the exhibition of differing artifacts from disparate parts and ages as a uniform "Greek" entity is itself a selective act that weaves together disparate cultural practices into a cohesive national narrative. These "invented traditions" form the very essence of the

visitor's experience of Greece as a continuous, enduring civilization that reaches back to the antiquities.

Notably, the discoveries also expose subtle contradictions with primordialist theories of nationalism, in that nations are supposed to be primordial, natural, and organic groups bound by blood or ethnicity. Although certainly continuity is highlighted in the museum, this is done through selective narratives, in keeping with modernist understanding, rather than primordial assumptions of essential belonging. The deliberate exclusion of internal diversity, opposing regional identities, and colonial complexities also points toward the story being selectively framed not to attempt primordial unity, but to be created through strategic representation.

5.4.3 Museology and Identity Formation: Cultural Capital and Symbolic Authority

The results also closely correspond with the theory of cultural capital put forward by Pierre Bourdieu (1984). As Bourdieu contended, cultural capital is present in the form of embodied, objectified, and institutionalized forms, and museums act as intermediaries for accessing this kind of capital. The National Archaeological Museum acted as a gatekeeper for cultural capital by not just selecting the artifacts that would be presented, but by also indicating how they would be described. The curatorial writings gave meaning to the objects, transforming them from simple finds from the archaeological site into symbols for Greece's grandeur.

The constant use of words such as "civilization," "treasure," and "symbol of" mirrored calculated efforts to augment the objectified cultural capital of the artifacts. Naming donors, citing archaeologists, and linking artifacts to well-respected research organizations fortified institutional cultural capital, displaying the museum as a cultural authority on authenticity. This is in line with Bourdieu's suggestion that cultural

institutions legitimize specific knowledge and taste above others, generating social hierarchies of cultural legitimacy.

In addition, the study illustrated the ways in which museumgoers become actors in this symbolic marketplace. They gain embodied cultural capital—the knowledge that they had engaged in substantial cultural consumption. In the case of Greek visitors, this typically amounted to emotional and symbolic assertion of patriotic pride, but for foreign visitors, it served to affirm Greece as a starting point in world cultural heritage. Importantly, however, silences located in the findings qualify this dynamic. Bourdieu's theory assumes that becoming culturally capitalized is a form of empowerment, but here, strategic absences in the curatorial writings imply that cultural capital is not evenly distributed. Minority histories, counter-narratives, and counter-histories are silenced, so that some forms of national pride are reinforced, but others, particularly those relating to marginalized voices or painful historical realities, are not. This is a reminder that there has long been criticism in museum studies writing that museums tend to reaffirm dominant cultural narratives and sideline dissenting or subaltern ones.

Lastly, this discovery is aligned with recent approaches in museology that approach museums not as mere repositories but as engaged producers of identity. The curatorial approach by the museum, in making explicit and implicit statements, generated an emotional and intellectual space for the public to experience the nation's identity as a lived experience rather than as historical fact. This affective aspect supplements the largely structural approach in Bourdieu by highlighting emotion, memory, and cultural belonging as central in the experience of national identities by museum visitors. In sum, the results from this study supported and expanded a number of prominent theoretical models.

The analysis supported the relevance of Social Identity Theory by illustrating how museum language positioned visitors discursively into shared narratives for the nation. It offered strong empirical validation for modernist conceptions of nationalism, specifically those of Anderson, Gellner, and Hobsbawm, by making clear the manner in which selected descriptions form imagined continuities between modern and ancient identities. At the same time, the results extended Bourdieu's cultural capital theory by indicating how the museum both gatekept the nation's past and arbitrated symbolic meaning. However, the research also opened up some new knowledge, specifically in what concerns the functioning of emotional atmospheres and the significance of silences within curatorial practice. These insights propose that whilst current theory is very strong in outlining the dynamics by which national identities form themselves in the museum space, it can be positively developed by the consideration of emotional involvement, strategic silences, and representational politics that are built into curatorial rhetoric.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter offered a critical examination of the results from the text mining approaches from curated text descriptions in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens objects. Using linguistic patterns, selective narratives, and emotional framing, the text influenced the perceptions of the visitors, in accord with theories on national identity, imagined communities, and cultural capital. The results demonstrated both the mentioned emphasis and omission, indicating curatorial control over sense-building processes. By tying the outcomes to Social Identity Theory, modernist nationalism, and museology, the chapter demonstrated the ways in which museums act as powerful sites

for those who generate unifying narratives based on cultural symbolism and institutional authority.

CHAPTER -6- CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6 Chapter 6 - Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This final chapter ties together the study's main conclusions and contributions, summarizing the findings in light of the objectives for the research, the theoretical frameworks used, and the wider academic field. In doing so, it intended to explore the types of meaning that were communicated to the viewer and how such meaning is engaged in supporting collective notions of national identity.

Two fundamental questions oriented this study:

1. What is it like for a person when they go to the National Archaeological Museum?
2. Which texts accompany objects that are used to convey meaning in the National Archaeological Museum?

The study utilized a digital humanities methodology, applying text-mining methods in order to extract patterns, silences, and themes from curatorial writings.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

This study aimed to examine how the descriptions in the National Archaeological Museum and Benaki Museum in Athens shape the construction and communication of national identity. The results, derived from a vast collection of curational texts that had been subject to digital text-mining, identified a variety of important patterns, themes, and silences that explain how meaning is conveyed to museum guests. One of the standout discoveries was the intentional focus on chronological continuity. The application of chronological markers like “Early Bronze Age,” “4th century BC,” and “Classical period” gave a sense of historical continuity,

presenting Greek history as a linear, evolutionary story. This supported the idea of a continuous, proud national tradition, in keeping with modernist theories of nationalism that emphasize the institution-building that produces unified histories in the form of educational systems and museums (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Gellner, 1983).

The other dominant theme was geographical origin, in which descriptions continually located the regional origins of the objects—e.g., "Attic," "Cycladic," or "from Melos." This served to mentally map ancient Greece, foregrounding regional specificity and common cultural heritage. This corresponds closely with Anderson's (1983) concept of the "imagined community," in which shared symbols and collective myths create a sense of national identity that transcends geographical space. The study also underscored materiality and artistic identity. Repetitive use of bronze, marble, and silver, as well as artistic classifications like "Orientalizing style" or "Mycenaean tradition," placed Greek art in a refined, developing artistic tradition. These uses not only communicated aesthetic appreciation but also suggested a higher civilizational achievement, reinforcing a sense of national pride.

One surprise discovery was the pervasive presence of donor thanks in the books, with numerous instances of "gift of" being displayed. The focus on remembering and giving points toward both the social and institutional processes by which cultural legacy is assembled and displayed, and raises questions of whose stories take priority in the telling of a nation. Lastly, the analysis revealed significant silences in the text, in this case, omissions relating to marginalized populations, intercultural encounters, or controversial elements in Greek history. These silences echo museology critiques that discuss how museums can exclude multiple narratives, confirming theories on selective memory and the building of identities (Lowenthal, 1994; Halbwachs, 1992). Together, the findings demonstrated that the curatorial narratives in the National Archaeological

Museum actively construct a certain vision for Greek national identity—whether through what is stated or unstated.

6.3 Answer to Research Questions

6.3.1 Research Question 1: How does it feel for an individual when they visit the National Archaeological Museum?

Although thus study did not utilize direct visitor surveys or interviews to capture emotional expression, the curatorial text analysis offered excellent cues on how the National Archaeological Museum in Athens is likely experienced by visitors. By deliberate narration of historical timelines through the exhibition descriptions, the visitor is prompted to feel a sense of belonging to long, unbroken, and illustrious cultural tradition. Repetitive use of chronological labels like “Neolithic,” “Bronze Age,” and “Classical period” enables the visitor to experience the trip as a temporal progression, giving a sense of walking in tandem with the development of Greek society.

The deliberate selection of object descriptions serves to arouse a sense of pride and belonging in Greek visitors in particular. These affective reactions must be influenced by the prominent focus on the nation's accomplishments, cultural refinement, and richness in the region. For foreign visitors, placing artifacts in worldwide historical contexts promotes appreciation for the role that ancient Greek society played in the cultural heritage of the world. The emotional climate is also created by the aesthetic decision-making in object naming. Frequent references to noble substances such as marble, bronze, and silver, and descriptions emphasizing religious, burial, and mythological meaning, give rise to a sense of reverence and cultural richness. These emotional indicators match museology theories proposing that

museums are not merely sites for knowledge, but also potent sites for cognitive and emotional experience (Šveb Dragija and Jelinčić, 2022).

6.3.2 Research Question 2: Which texts accompany objects that are used to convey meaning in the National Archaeological Museum?

The results of the analysis revealed that the text displayed in the National Archaeological Museum mostly include formatted, informative descriptions that highlight chronological framework, material makeup, geographical origin, and cultural relevance. They act as the main mediums through which the museum imparts meaning to the public, determining how the public interprets the artifacts put on display. Chronology was found to be central to such descriptions. Nearly every text cites periods in specific—e.g., “Early Cycladic II” or “Late Minoan III”—providing visitors with a framed historical framework. That use directs visitors to place artifacts mentally onto a grander historical timeline, reinforcing cultural continuity, a central element in the construction of national identity (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983). These anchors in time ensure that the significance assigned to those objects is not solely artistic but profoundly historical.

Material composition is also a common trait in the texts. Terms like “bronze figurine,” “marble kouros,” and “silver fibulae” recur. This emphasis on material gives multiple layers of meaning in terms of technological progress, artistic craftsmanship, and cultural taste in connection with ancient Greece. It is a reminder that they are not relics in the sense that they represent Greek ingenuity and refinement. Geographical designations—e.g., "from Attica," "Cycladic islanders," or "Asia Minor"—recur in the texts. These instances serve to project a cultural map of ancient Greek society, drawing together disparate areas into a coherent unity, and confirming the modernist thesis that nationality is a deliberate invention (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Further, numerous

works feature donor credits, as in "gift of Peggy Zoumboulaki," merging individual dedication with cultural heritage. These additions serve institutional purposes, reinforcing both thanks and the cultural networks that sustain cultural preservation.

Finally, while the texts convey a strong national narrative, the silences—specifically regarding intercultural influences or contested histories—indicate that meaning is also constructed through omission. The texts thus serve dual functions: communicating curated national pride while subtly shaping visitors' perceptions of what constitutes Greek identity.

6.4 Contributions of the Study

This research is a valuable contribution both to academic understanding and applied museology as it presents a new understanding of the role that text in museums plays in building and reinforcing a sense of national identity. Previous studies of museums as stores of cultural artifacts or as sites for aesthetic experience have been a focus, and this research takes that debate further by underscoring the agentive role played by museum text in shaping perceptions, affect, and narratives of national identity.

One of the greatest contributions that this study is able to make is in methodology. Using digital humanities methods, in this case digital text mining via Voyant Tools, this study transcends qualitative or ethnographic museum studies in a traditional sense. Using computational text analysis, this study is able to recognize not just patterns, repetitions, and silences in a large dataset of exhibition text, but ones that might be easily overlooked with manual analysis alone. This approach is a replicable model for future studies that examine narratives in museums at scale, especially in large-scale national museums.

The research also contributes to theoretical debates on the construction of national identity. It supports Anderson's (1983) thesis that the nation is an "imagined community" through the demonstration of how the carefully selected texts in the National Archaeological Museum serve to construct this imagined continuity of Greek identity. In addition, by using the framework offered by Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural capital, the research proves that museums serve as guardians of cultural authority, determining which narratives and artifacts generate national prestige.

In addition, this study highlights the silences in museum narratives. These include aspects such as what is left out in curatorial descriptions and frames those silences as active contributors in meaning building. This observation paves the path for future critical narrative analysis in museology and the study of identity. Overall, the research is a novel contribution as it brings together computational approaches with cultural theory, presenting both theoretical richness and methodological novelty in museum and identity studies.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

Although this research is informative about the connection between museum texts and the construction of national identity, a number of limitations that shaped both its scope and outcomes. Firstly, the exclusive focus on textual examination, without direct contact with the visitors using interviews, questionnaires, or participant observation, constrained the capacity to establish visitor reception comprehensively. The patterns in the text abound with evident intended meaning and curational tactics, it cannot be known with certainty how specific visitors decoded, or affectively experienced, those texts. Consequently, inferences rather than empirically established conclusions pertain to visitor experience.

Secondly, the research was limited to text data that is accessible digitally in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens. The dataset in this case was large and representative, but not comprehensive, in that it is possible that temporary exhibitions, sound guides, multimedia, or curatorial talks may also play important roles in shaping the understanding of the public, and thus, the analysis captures only the permanent, recorded curatorial writing and does not mirror the museum's interpretative environment as a whole. In spite of such constraints, the study forms a strong basis for subsequent studies that integrate qualitative visitor studies, multilingual comparisons, and interdisciplinary theoretical exploration in order to construct a comprehensive understanding of museums' functions in the construction of identity.

6.6 Recommendations for Practice

Based on the insights from this research, a number of practical suggestions can be offered to curators, museum practitioners, and policymakers. Firstly, curators should make efforts toward making the representation of identity in the textual descriptions that accompany exhibitions more diverse. The present strategy prioritizes a linear and cohesive narrative for representing a nation that draws upon the richness of ancient Greek antiquity. This produces a sense of pride and continuity, but also runs the risk of forgetting the variety of regional, ethnic, and minority contributions that underwrite the riches of Greek history. Integrating a greater variety of perspectives—such as those from the regional communities, migrant populations, and earlier marginalized groups—has the potential to enable the museum to offer a wider understanding of national identity that is inclusive in nature. By doing so, not only does this add depth to the story, but also ensures that a greater variety of visitors feels represented and engaged in connection with the exhibits.

Secondly, the study proposes increasing visitor engagement with further contextualized interpretive labels. Current labels emphasize dates, materials, and provenance, valuable as they may be for scholarly exactitude, but sometimes perhaps not as engaging emotionally with a wider public. Adding interpretive content—such as narratives connecting ancient artifacts with modern-day Greek society, personal narratives by curators or local populations, or suggesting the cultural relevance now of certain objects—would connect the historical with the modern. This interpretive strategy would make exhibitions more accessible and personally applicable to a broad public. Moreover, a need is also felt to confront the silences in the curatorial narratives. As revealed through the study, some elements in the past, notably those surrounding contested heritage or unpalatable historical facts, get given lesser or no space at all. Museums must explicitly engage with such absences and deliberate on ways to tackle them. To the extent that full inclusion is not yet viable, openness on curatorial decision-making and the negotiation of such silences in ancillary materials can prove a valuable means for establishing trust with the public. This is in accordance with modern museological standards promoting openness, reflexivity, and critical engagement.

Finally, the museum can further increase accessibility by providing multilingual translations for the text found in exhibits and increasing the application of digital media. Since the National Archaeological Museum hosts visitors from a global populace, making its narratives available in a variety of languages is imperative for promoting inclusive interaction. Using digital apps, interactive content, or QR scans that connect to online material can enable greater delving into object histories, even offering layered and tailored experiences that go above the content that is present in physical exhibits.

6.7 Suggestions for Future Research

Although this study has shed some light on the performative role that word descriptions play in crafting national identity in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, future studies need to be conducted in order to extend understanding in this field. Qualitative methods can be taken up by future studies, for example, visitor interviews or ethnographic observation, in order to engage with the emotional and cognitive experiences that individuals experience as they interpret museum narratives. This would enrich the text-mining approach by bringing in the visitor's own perspective, as it is essential for interpreting meaning-making processes. Moreover, cross-museum comparative studies in Greece or worldwide would be necessary to establish whether the observed patterns in this study pertain specifically to the National Archaeological Museum or Benaki Museum or represent current museological practice. More examination of how digital exhibitions and virtual reality shape notions of national identity would also be beneficial, especially as museums continue to adopt technological innovations within curatorial practices.

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Appendix

National Archaeological Museum

88-90 Vase sherds from Thessaly (88,89), with painted decoration characteristic of the Dimini culture and from Dikili Tash in eastern Macedonia (90), with graphite-painted decoration. Late Neolithic Period (5300-4500 BC).
91-92 Monochrome vases restored from sherds found in Thessaly. Middle Neolithic period (5800-5300 BC).
84-86 Vase sherds with painted linear decoration, characteristic of pottery of the Dimini culture. From Thessaly, Late Neolithic Period (4600-4500 BC).
87 Spherical monochrome vase with small bosses, restored from a sherd found in Thessaly. Early Neolithic Period- Protoseskło phase (6500-5800 BC). On a permanent loan from the Larisa Archaeological Museum.
Around 700 BC the greatest "revolution" in human experience took place: the change from the hunting and gathering economy of the Palaeolithic Age to the food-production economy of the Neolithic Age. During the Neolithic Age (6500-3200 BC) man created permanent settlements in proximity to a water source, cultivated his land, domesticated animals and buried his dead together with vases and jewellery. In Thessaly two main cultures emerged: of Sesklo in the Middle Neolithic period and of Dimini in the mature phase of the Late Neolithic.

10-13 Sherds of vases with painted and combed decoration. From Khirokitia (10) and Erimi (11-13), Cyprus. Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods (4500-2500 BC).
1-7 Flint flakes worked in the Levallois technique. From Central Greece, Middle Palaeolithic Age (5000-4000 BC). Gift of Theodoros Pitsios.
8-9 Vases restored from sherds found in Thessaly. The painted decoration of denticulated zones, motifs of characteristic pottery from Sesklo, probably imitates textile patterns. Middle Neolithic period (5800-5300 BC). On permanent loan from Larisa Archaeological Museum.
59-61 Axes with hole for inserting the wooden haft. Axes of this type were probably prestige objects. Axe (61) is from Mitzela, Magnesia, Thessaly. Final Neolithic period- Early Bronze Age (4500- 2000 BC).

7 Part of a clay zoomorphic vessel with incised linear decoration, infilled with thick white paste. Zoomorphic vases were widely distributed in the Balkans and the Near East during the Neolithic Age. From Dikili Tash, eastern Macedonia, Late- Final Neolithic Period (5300-3200 BC).
3 Handmade clay monochrome cup. From Thessaly, Middle Neolithic period (5800-5300 BC).
4-6 Vase sherds with incised linear decoration. From Dimini, Thessaly (5), and Dikili Tash, eastern Macedonia (4,6), Late Neolithic period (5300-4500 BC). On permanent loan from the Volos Archaeological Museum, and the Kavala Archaeological Museum.
1 Clay tripod table with incised linear decoration. Vessels of this class were perhaps for ritual use, or possibly practical, for carrying kindle. From Arkadiko, near Drama, Macedonia, Middle Neolithic Period (5800-5300 BC). On permanent loan from the Kavala Archaeological Museum.

2 Handless bell – shaped cup, restored from a sherd found at Lianokladi, Phthiotis, Central Greece. Coated with thick brown glaze (Urfinis). Middle Neolithic period (5800-5300 BC).
29-58 Obsidian blades (29-49) and flint sickle blades (50-58). Obsidian, a vitreous volcaninc stone whose only source throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Age is Melos, was used for making tools. The commonest are blades used as razors, knives etc., and as grave goods. From Attika, the Peloponnese and Thessaly. Late Neolithic period, Early Bronze Age (5300-2000 BC).
20-28 Clay spinale whorls, some with incised linear decoration. Spinale whorls were affixed to the bottom of the distaff. From Thessaly (21-24,27), Macedonia (20,25,26), and Poliochni, Lemnos (28). Neolithic- Early Bronze Age (6500-2000 BC). On permanent loan from the Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum.
19 Hammer of volcanic stone. Neolithic Early Bronze Age (6500-2000 BC).
109-111 Closed vases. Possibly from Attika, Early Helladic II period (2900-2400 BC).
105-108 One-handled cups (105-107) and beak-spouted juglet (108). Perhaps from Aghios Kosmas Attika. Early Helladic II period (2900-2400 BC).
104 Tripod cooking pot. From Aghios Kosmas Attica. Early Helladic II period (2900-2400 BC).
101-103 Fragments of vessels representing some of the basic pottery types of Poliochni. From Paliochori, Lemnos. Early Bronze Age I-II (3000-2500 BC).
98 Spherical jug with cut away spout. From Skyros. Early Bronze Age II (2900-2400 BC).
99-100 One-handled cups. From Aghios Kosmas, Attika (99) and Thessaly (100). Early Helladic II period (2900-2400 BC).
3-4 Marble rectangular palette and stone cylindrical mortar, both preserving traces of red pigment. Palettes were probably used for pulvering pigments or as “cribs” in which the marble figurines reposed. Early Cycladic II period (2700-2300 BC).
5-8 Clay handmade vessels : spherical vases with foot, collared jar (8) and fire-box (6) with triangular holes for the admission of air or the emission of smoke. Early Cycladic II period (2700-2300 BC).
1 Marble hemispherical bowl. Early Cycladic II period. 2700-2300 BC.
2 Marble tripod bowl with pierced crescentic lug. Perhaps from Euboea. Early Cycladic I period (3200-2700 BC).
During the Early Bronze Age (3200- 2000 BC) the culture known as Early Cycladic developed in the Cyclades, central element of which was the involvement of the islands in seafaring and trade. The Cycladic islanders lived in small, frequently fortified settlements, exploiting the rich metal ores and the abundant marble of the islands, which was the raw material from which they fashioned vessels and figurines most of which were probably grave goods. Marble figurines are the creation par excellence of the Early Helladic Culture and are most probably associated with religious beliefs in prehistoric Aegean.

17 Marble schematic anthropomorphic figurine of the Apeiranthos variety with traces of red pigment. Early Cycladic II period. 2500-2300 BC.
14 Marble collared jar (“Kandila”). Possibly from Amorgos. Early Cycladic I period. 3200-2700 BC.
13 Clay “frying-pan” vessel decorated with impressed triangles and incised running spiral. The purpose of “frying-pan” vessels is unknown and both practical (astrolabes,

mirrors etc.) and ritual-libation uses have been proposed. From Euboea. Early Cycladic I-II period. Kampos phase. 2800-2700 BC.
9-10 Marble kylikes. Early Cycladic II period. 2700-2300 BC.
11 Clay triple vases (kernos) with incised linear decoration and the rare, for the period, representation of four schematic human figures. Most probably a grave good used for offering libation or as a container for substances essential for some rite. Early Cycladic III period 2300-2000 BC.

Early Cycladic marble female figurine of "folded-arm" type. Early Cycladic II period, 2600-2500 BC. Traces of red pigment are preserved on the neck and head. The figurine is of the Spedos variety and has been attributed to the so-called Fitzwilliam Museum Master. Gift of Chris Bastis.

Minoan clay figurine of an "adorant" from the peak sanctuary at Kofina, Crete. Middle Minoan III period, 1700-1600 BC. Bronze and clay figurines of this type are frequently found as votive offerings in Minoan shrines and evidently render the worshippers themselves. On permanent loan from the Herakleion Archaeological Museum.

13-14 Cypriot cups of Red Polished ware, with rich incised decoration infilled with white paste. Early Cypriot I-III period 2500 2300 BC.
11-12 Cypriot blacked cups of Red Polished ware, with dense incised decoration infilled with white paste. In order to create a chromatic effect. Early Cypriot II period 2300-1700 BC.
10 Cypriot pyxis of Black Polished ware, with dense incised decoration infilled with white paste. The type of decoration is encountered on vases from the cemetery a Vounous in northern Cyprus. Early Cypriot II period. 2100- 2000 BC.
7-9 Clay female figurine with the hands under the breasts and plastic features. Similar figurines were made in Cyprus in the Middle Bronze Age, perhaps under the influence of contacts with the Near East Syrian workshop. 2nd millennium BC.
6 Cypriot spouted basin of Red Polished ware. A characteristic example of local pottery at the end of the Early Bronze Age. Early Cypriot III Middle Cypriot I period, 2000-1800 BC.
150-151 Bronze cut-away spouted jug (150) and bronze pendant forwed by two miniature cut-away spouted jugs.
152 Attik amphora decorated with a discontinuous meander in the panel of the neck and with a zone of double axes on the shoulder. Most probably from Attica and perhaps used as an urn. Middle Geometric period II period, 850-760 BC.
148 Hydria with dense linear decoration in zones and birds in panels on the body and the belly. Probably from a Euboea workshop. Late Geometric II period 735-729 BC.
149 Bronze – pendant "Pyxis". It belongs to a category of Bronze Macedonian jewellery, which may have had symbolic significance and therefore was associated with a religious or secular dignity. From Tito Veles. Macedonian Iron Age, 10th- 9th century BC.

141-142 Bronze fibulae of monumental dimensions with leaf- shaped bow and incised catch plate: on one a horse and on the other probably a fish. From Skyros.
139 Corinthian kyathos with band decoration and herons in panels. The bird, one of the favourite subjects in Geometric vase-painting. Is a legacy from Mycenean

tradition that persists, with some interruptions, until the end of the Geometric period. Corinthian Late Geometric period, 750-720 BC.
135-136 Bronze bridle accessories (7), formed by pairs of standing griffins. From Luristan, western Persia 9th c. BC.
137-138 Attic jug (137) and double-bodled vase (138). The jug is decorated with schematic rosette and bird in panels. The dotted band on the body possibly renders a snake. Late Geometric IA period, 760-750 BC.
126-130 Orientalizing style vases from Skyros, Sporades. Made in local workshop, they are decorated with subjects deriving from the Geometric tradition that continued to influence Early Orientalizing workshops in the 7th c. BC. 675-650 BC.
116 Bronze pin with bird finial. From Macedonia, Macedonian Iron Age 7th c. BC.
117-125 Bronze pendants in the form of schematic birds. The pendant (117) with the square openwork base, was perhaps also used as a seal. From Macedonian Macedonian Iron Age. Late 8th-7th c. BC.
114 Small pithoid krater with two pairs of breast-like jugs and dense linear decoration in successive zones. From Skyros. Late Geometric I period 760-735 BC.
115 Trefoil- mouth oenochoe decorated with painted triangles and dot rosettes in a panel on the neck. From Skyros. Early Middle Geometric period c. 850 BC.
95 Attic kantharos decorated with figure of eight shields of ("Dipylon type ") and double axe motifs in the central panel. The figure of eight shield derives from Mycenean tradition and is considered to be depicted on vases intended as votive offerings or prizes. Late Geometric II period. 735-700 BC.
96-98 Horse figurines decorated with bands and false spiral. They probably adorned the lids of vases. 7th c. BC.
90-91 Cypriot vases decorated with bands and systems of concentric circles. A trefoil mouth oenochoe of black-on- red ware (90) and a small amphora of Bichrome ware (91). Cypro-Archaic I period, 750-600 BC.
92-94 Cypriot vases representing characteristic pottery types of the Geometric and Archaic periods in Cyprus: Trefoil-mouth oenochoe of Black slip ware (97).amphora of white painted ware (93), and a small krater of Bichrome ware (94) with decoration arranged in panels. The oenochoe (92) whose shape recalls a poppy capsule, may have been used for containing opium for therapeutic purposes. Cypro-Geometric I period 1050-950 BC. On permanent loan from the Cyprian Museum, Nicosia.

86-88 Fragments of female (86) and male (88) figurines and head of horse figurine (87). The Creto-Mycenaean tradition can be traced in the rendering of the facial features of figurines (86) and (88) 8th c. BC.
89 Sherd from the rim of a vase with decoration of a human figurine in a panel. Late Geometric period 750- 700 BC.
83-84 Protogeometric vases from Crete with painted decoration of the period: stirrup jam strainer with zoomorphic spout (83) and hydria (84) 950-850 BC.
85 Small stirrup jar decorated with hatched motifs and net patterns. From Afrati, Crete 1100-1000 BC.
3 Modelled female protomes from a black-figure open vase of the "Ragusa Group". 590-580 BC.
1 Black-figure amphora from an Attic workshop, with zones of sirens and felines alternating with lions. c. 580 BC.
2 Black-figure lekanis from a provincial Attic workshop with zone of aquatic birds and modelled female protomes on the rim. It belongs to the "Ragusa Group", named after the region in Sicily where this type of vases was first found. 590-580 BC.

The Greeks' extensive trading network and colonial expansion throughout the Mediterranean during the 7th c. BC brought them into contact with the East and the Phoenicians. The Geometric iconographic vocabulary was enriched with griffins, sphinxes, sirens and other daemonic figures, which set their seal on the so-called Orientalizing art of the 7th c. BC, of which Crete was an important production centre. The characteristic vase decoration with zones of animal continued until the mid-6th c. BC.
31 Black figure hydria from a provincial Attic workshop, with zones of aquatic birds, sirens and lions. It belongs to the "Ragusa Group" 590-580 BC.
28-30 Female figurine parts of female figurines with modelled drapery and diaden. From an Argeian workshop. 7th c. BC.
27 Gold earring with four pendants resembling bunches of grapes, formed from rows of granulation, 9th c BC.
26 Gold hair ring. Jewellery of this type adorned the ringlets of hair. From Amorgos, Cyclades, 9th c. BC.
25 Gold biconical bead intricately decorated in granulation and filigree. From Macedonia, 6th c. BC.
19 Gold diaden from a Rhodian workshop with spolique ornaments and sphinxes in filigree and granulation. From Kos, Dodekanisos 650-600 BC.
20-24 Gold spiral earring pendants. These would have hung from a link or hock passed through the ear lobe. 10th-9th c. BC.

Part of marble body of lioness, from an Attic workshop. From the Mesogeia, Attica, c.500 BC. Traces of painted decoration preserved on the back. The cuts on the body indicate that it was part of a larger composition. Gift of Aikaterini Stathatou.
Part of an Attic marble grave stele. From Athens.520-510 BC. The feet of a himation-clad male figure, turned right, are preserved. The sandals and the hem of the garment are painted in red, apparently applied in encaustic technique.

Marble unfinished kouros torso, from a Naxian workshop 565-560 BC. The work was carved in one of the most important centres of Arhcaic sculpture, without ever reaching the sanctuary of cemetery for which it was intended. The kouros type dominated Greek art of the Archaic period, representing young male aristocrats whose athletic physique underlines their virtue and valour. Gift of Robin Symes and the family of Christos Michailidis.
Marble head of a bearded male with a hairband. Possibly from Sounion or Vari in Attica, c. 560 BC. Attributed to the workshop of the Acropolis statue known as the Rampin Horseman.
44 Terracotta figurine of a horse with rider. From Cyprus, Cypro-Archaic II period, 6th c. BC.
45 Terracotta figurine of a horse with two panniers on the back. Perhaps from Cilicia, Asia Minor, 6th c. BC.
46 Attic black-figure loutrophoros with depiction of the prothesis of the dead, on the bod, and mourning women, on the neck. Loutrophoroi were used for the nuptial bath and as funerary vases on graves of unmarried youths. Late 6th-early 5th c. BC.
38 Terracotta female figure, wearing a peplos, "sacerdotal" belt and triple necklace, and holding a lyre. The piece belongs to a wider class of figurines that probably represent priestesses and have been found in Cyprus, Rhodes and Samos. From Cyprus, Cypro-Archaic II period Late 6th c. BC

30 Attick black- figure skyphos with depiction of dogs and board executed in added white. 500-490 BC.
31 Attic black-figure skyphos with depiction of nude and himation-clad male figures. The vase has been reconstructed from sherds donated by Peggy Zoumboulaki and others kindly made over by the American School of Classical Studies, Athens, and the Metropolitan Museum, New York. It is attributed to the Athenian painter conventionally known as the "Affecter", c. 540 BC.
19 Part of a Corinthain-style terracotta sima (member of a temple's roof used to diver rain-water) with a double Athenian pattern, lotus buds and a guilloche. This architectural element is of the so-called "Megarian" type, encountered in the Treasury of the Megarian at Olympia. An identical sima has been found in the sanctuary of Hera, in the Mon Repos park in Corfu. 535-480 BC.
20-27 Boetian horse figurines with rider and painted decoration. Figurines of this class are common grave offerings, related either to the status of the dead or to the chthonic character of the horse. 600-550 BC.
15 Attic black-figure skyphos (drinking vessel) with depiction of quadriga and Amazons. 500-490 BC.
16 Attic black- figure lekythos with depiction of a satyr between two large painted eyes. 500-490 BC.
13 Attic black-figure olpe (type of wine jug) with depiction of DIonysos, Athens and Hermes. 510-500 BC.
14 Attic black-figure alabastron (vase of perfumed oils), with depiction of miniature male figures. Early 5th c. BC.

During the Golden Age of Athens, which was inaugurated by the splendid victories of the Greeks in the Persian Wars (490-479 BC), Athens was enhanced as an economic and cultural centre with a stable democratic regime. There was an unprecedented flowering of poetry, philosophy, science and art, the pinnacle of which was the architecture and the sculpted decoration of the Parthenon. The expansionist designs of the city, however, led to the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC), which ended with the defeat of the Athenian Democracy by oligarchical Sparta.

2 Attic red figure of loutrophoros (vase for carrying water for the nuptial bath), with a wedding scence accompanied by female figures holding torches. Attributed to the Syriskos Painter. 480-470 BC. Gift of Stephen and Francis Vagliano.
1 Attic ref-figure kylix (drinking vessel) with a depiction of a reclining youth on the interior. C. 510 BC.
12 Attic red-figure pelike (vase for staring precious oils) with depiction of Ariadne (7) holding a thrysos and flanked by satyrs. On the other face are young male figures. Attributed to the circle of the Painter of Athens 430-420 BC.
8-10 Terracotta female protomes (busts) with a stephane on the hair and a suspension hole in the upper art. These protomes had a triple use: for public, domestic and funerary cult. 475-450 BC.
11 Terracotta protome of a bearded male perhaps Dionysos, from an Attic or Boetian workshop. C. 500 BC.
4-7 Terracotta figurines of enthroned females figures with polos on the hair and traces of the original coloration, from Attic (5,6) , east Ionian (4) and Boetian (7) workshops. Figurines of this class are frequently interpreted as representations of deities. 500-450 BC.

3 Terracotta figurine of Athena enthroned with a stephane on her hair and traces of the original coloration, from an Attic workshop. Figurines of this type have been found in Attica and perhaps copy an earlier cult statue of the goddess. Early 5th c. BC.

15 Attic red- figure lekythos with a depiction of a siren in front of an olive branch. Attributed to the circle of the Aischines Painter. Mid 5th c. BC.
14 Attic red-figure lekythos (vase for oil) with a depiction of a maenad holding a thrysos. Attributed to the Aischines Painter. 460-450 BC.

34-35 Bronze double-axes. The inscribed double-axe from Dodone (35) dates to the Mycenaean period, but was reused as a votive offering in the late 5th or early 4th c. BC, according to the inscription.
36 Bronze figurine base. 5th-4th c. BC.
26-33 Bronze arrow-heads of various types. From Macedonia (26,27,29), historical times.
25 Bronze spearhead. Weapons were common grave offerings as well as ex votos in the major panhellenic sanctuaries. From Macedonia, 6th ? c. BC.
The red-figure style was invented in the pottery workshops of Athens around 530 BC and, within the context of a flourishing export trade, dominated all the major markets of the period for over one hundred years. The red-figure technique, with the line drawing, lent itself to a more sculptural treatment of the human figure and the rendering of perspective. The Athenian vase-painters, who were sometimes influenced by monumental painting, produced works of excellent quality decorated mainly with mythological representations and scenes from daily and family life.
5 Attic red-figure hydria (vase for carrying water) with many- figured scenes in the women's quarters (gynaikonites), possibly of nuptial content. Attributed to the Dinos Painter. C. 430 BC.
20-23 Terracotta dove figurines. The dove is associated with the worship of Aphrodite and is frequently an attribute of the goddess. 500-450 BC.
37 Attic red-figure pyxis lid with depiction of erotes and female figures. Attributed to the circle of the Medias Painter. 420-400 BC.
39 Attic red-figure hydria with scene of bridal adornment in the women's quarters: depicted are the seated bride with mirror, Eros offering a ribbon and two maidservants, one with caskets. The vase is associated with the later work of the Washing Painter. C.420 BC.
40-41 Attic black-glaze vases (thelastron and phale) with impressed decoration. 450-425 BC. Gifts from Loukas Benakis (40) and of Christos SPiliopoulos (41)

Marble lead of young male figure with a hairband. AD 1-25. A Roman copy of a work in the Severe Style, of the years around 460 BC, which most probably represents a deity, perhaps Apollo, or a hero.
Attic marble Hekataion. Possibly from Athens, late Hellenistic period. The stele bears three relief protomes of Hekate, which preserve traces of the original coloration. The trimorph rendering of the goddess is an Attic invention and is probably associated with the crossroads she watched over. Hekate was worshipped in Greece as protectress of houses, orchards and graves too. Gift of Stephen and Francis Vagliano.
Marble head of Athena with Corinthian helmet. Reign of Hadrian (AD 117-138). The type is known from a large number of Roman copies and renders the cult statue of the goddess which stood in the Hephaisteion in the Athenian Agora, work of the sculptor

Alkamenes, of the years 421/20-416/15 BC. Acquired with the contribution of the Ionian and Popular Bank.
Marble head of Dionysus. From Piraeus, late 4th c. BC. The god is represented with a wreath of Ivy leaves and flowers in his hair. A monumental creation of excellent quality, which probably stood in one of the sanctuaries of the outport of Athens.
Attic marble female head from a grave stele. Mid-4th c. BC. From a relief scene of dexiosis (farewell scene). Perhaps it represents the deceased.
Attic marble funerary lekythos. 380-370 BC. Represented is a farewell scene between a male and a female figure, probably husband and wife. Gift of Spyros and Tatiana Delivorrias.
Fragment of an Attic marble grave stele. Mid-4th c. BC. Rpresented in relief is a standing female figure in sleeved chiton and himation, holding a flower in her left hand. An outstanding example of Attic art of the 4th c. BC. Gift of Ioanna Loverdou-Vasiliadi.
Attic marble funerary lekythos with scene of dexiosis. About 360 BC. A bearded male, the deceased, is represented standing, bidding members of his family farewell. Gift of Christine Roussel in memory of John Palis.
Marble head of Aphrodite. AD 100-150. From a Roman copy of the famous Cnidian Aphrodite, sculpted by Praxiteles c.340 BC. The original, the first completely nude representation of the goddess, had a decisive influence on the subsequent iconography of Aphrodite. Gift of Stephen and Francis Vagliano.
Attic marble head of a philosopher. From Athens, Antonine period (AD 117-180). From a statue or a bust, which was set up most probably in the grounds of an Athenian philosophical school. The work harks back to a creation of the last quarter of the 4th c. BC. Gift of Dorothea Christopoulou and Erica Charalambidou.
Fragment of an Attic marble votive relief. Possibly from Plaka, Athens, 350-325 BC. Represented is the procession of a family of worshippers. On the missing part, opposite the adorants, was the deity to whom the relief was dedicated. A mass-produced work which was perhaps a votive offering in one of the sanctuaries in the area around the Athenian Agora. Gift of Andreas and Mary Delivorrias in memory of Melina Merkouri.
Fragment of an Attic marble grave stele. Mid-4th c. BC. Preserved are the head of a seated female figure, the deceased, and behind her the head of the maidservant. Gift of Rena Andreadi.
Fragment of an Attic marble grave stele. 375-370 BC. Preserved is a female figure with her left hand brought up to her temple. This gesture, characteristic of mourning, and the pose of the head indicate that the figure was probably a relative of the deceased. Gift of Ioanna Loverdou- Vasiliadi.

After the end of the Peloponnesian War (404 BC) the Athenians tried in vain to resuscitate their lost prestige in the Hellenic word, seeking a way out of the unstable present in nostalgic reverie for the glorious past. Athenian art is distinguished by a gradual descent to the human milieu and in vase painting there is a preference for scenes of family life. The divine spheres is represented mainly by Aphrodite and Eros, Dionysos and his retinue.

1-2 Glass amphoriskos (1) and alabastron (2) decorated with herring-bone. These types of vases were used to keep perfumed oils and colour pigments for the women toiletry. From the East Meditteranean, 5th c. □C. Gift of Peggy Zoumboulaki in memory of her husband Tasos (2).

3-4 Glass-paste pendants with apotropaic male masks. From Cyprus, 5th-4rd c. BC.
14 Attic red-figure squat lekythos, decorated with the bust of Aphrodite, a mirror and a swan. 375-350 BC. Gift of Spyros and Korina Skarpalezos.
15 Attic red-figure lekanis lid, with a multi-figured representation of a seated youth, female figures and erotes. Its style assigns it to the circle of the Meidias Painter. 420-400 BC. Gift of Peggy Zoumboulaki in memory of her husband Tasos.
16 Attic plastic vase with a representation of Aphrodite enthroned, with a himation swathed around her lower body. 4th c BC. Gift of Peggy Zoumboulaki in memory of her husband Tasos.
17 Attic red-figure squat lekythos which represents Aphrodite seated, with a mirror, and Eros offering her a necklace. 400-375 BC.
33 Bronze figurine of drunken Herakles, with a fillet on the hair and a snake coiled round the left arm. 3rd-2nd c. BC.
57 Attic red figure chous (wine jug) depicting two naked boys with ivy wreath on the hair. One holds a wheel (toy) and the other a bunch of grapes. Vases of this class are associated with the three day festival of the Anthesteria, celebrated in early spring in honour of Dionysos, in which children also participated. The choai were used on the second day of the festival, when the Athenians tasted the new wine, with drinking parties (symposia) and wine-drinking contest. 430-420 BC. Gift of Peggy Zoumboulaki in memory of her husband Tasos.
Attic marble funerary lekythos, with scene of dexiosis (farewell). From Athens, 350-320 BC.
Attic marble funerary lekythos with scene of dexiosis. C. 350 BC. The name in the inscription ΔΕΙΠΥΛΗ ΤΙΜΑΡΧΟΥ ΤΙΜΑΡΧΟΣ ΑΡΙΖΗΛΟΥ ΖΗΛΙΑΣ ΑΡΙΖΗΛΟΥ (Deipyle daughter of Timarchos, TImarchos son of Arizelos, Zelias son of Arizelos) identify the figures. Gift of Rena Andreadi.
Marble Attic funerary lekythos with scene of dexiosis. C. 340 BC. Traces of the painted decoration are preserved in places: palmettes on the shoulder and Ionic cymation (egg-and-dart) on the opper body. Gift of Aikaterini, Ersi and Georgios Drinis in memory of their father Ioannis.
Attic marble funerary loutrophoros with scene of dexiosis. C. 370 BC. Marble loutrophoroi, lekythoi and relief stelai were placed as beautifying grave markers on graves throughout the 4th c. BC. Their production ceased around 317 BC, after the decree issued by Demetrios Phalereus prohibiting luxurious funerary monuments.
Attic marble grave stele with of dexiosis (farewell). From Keratea, Attica, mid 4th c. BC. The deceased is represented seated and bidding her loved ones farewell, while the maidservant behind her holds a pyxis. The names in the inscription on the pistyle: ΤΙΜΩΝ ΘΡΑΙΤΑ ΕΡΠΥΛΛΙΣ, perhaps associate the figures with Thrace. Moreover, there are many indications that Thracian metics lived in the Laureotika, a region neighbouring Keratea. On permanent loan from the National Archaeological Museum, Athens
65 Figurine of Artemis in high-girdled chiton and himation. She leans against a herm with a female head in relief. From Egypt, 3rd-2nd c. BC. Gift of Loukas Benakis.
66 Figurine of a seated female who is represented in a scene from everyday life. She bears a wreath of flowers on the hair and holds a ball of yarn in her left hand. 3rd c. BC.
63 Figurine of a nude Aphrodite, a typical example of Late Hellenistic coroplastic art. 1st c. BC.

57 Figurines of a female and a nude male, originally from the same composition. They most probably represent a nymph and a satyr playing knuckle bones. Early 3rd c. BC.

The coroplastic art of the Hellenistic period (330-100 BC) flourished particularly in Attica, Boetia, Smyrna and Myrina in Asia Minor, Alexandria and southern Italy. The thematic repertoire focuses on the cycles of Aphrodite and Dionysos, the theatrical world and the everyday life. During this time the iconography reveals a shift from the celestial to the earthly domain and from the public to the private life.

1 Part of the figurine of Hermes wearing a bimmed hat (petasos). 400-350 BC. Gift of Peggy Zoumboulaki in memory of her husband Tasos.

2 Boetian male figurine with himation on the shoulders. It follows an iconographical type of the appeared in Boetia from the mid -5th c. BC. Early 4th c. BC.

3-4 Child figurines. Children, a popular subject in this period, are often represented in scenes from their everyday life. From Egypt (4), late 3rd-early 2nd c. BC.

5 Male figurine in short chiton and chlamys. 450-300 BC.

6 Boetian figurine depicting Leda with the swan. According to the myth, Zeus, transformed into a swan, attempted to seduce the wife of King Tyndareus of Sparta. 350-300 BC. Gift of Georgios and Athanasia Pappas.

7 Boetian figurine of Aphrodite in himation. The goddess is represented at the moment she is about to reveal her face. From Atalani, Boetia, mid-4th c. BC. Acquired with the contribution of Kyriaki Fragoyianni.

8-9 Female figurines with disc earring. Their hairstyle is one of the most popular in the Hellenistic period. The head with sun-hat (10) is from a Boetian workshop. From Egypt (12), 250-200 BC.

13-14 Female votive bust (13) and figurine of Aphrodite in himation, in the “leaning” type (14), from a Boetian workshop, From Atlanti, Boetia, mid- 4th c. BC.

Part of a marble grave relief. AD 160-180. Preserved is a himation-clad female figure which reproduces the 4th c. BC statue type of the “Large Herculaneum Woman”, a creation which has been associated with the oeuvre of Praxiteles. Presumably the head, now lost, portrayed the deceased.

Fragment of a marble female statuette. 1st c. AD. A rare reproduction of an earlier iconographic type, clad in chiton and himation, arranged diagonally on the upper part of the torso. The identity of he depicted deity is uncertain.

Marble torso of a statue of a female figure in long himation and with quiver, Antonine period (AD 117-180). The severely damaged statue of monumental dimensions probably comes from Asia Minor and copes an important work of 330 BC. This is the famous “Zingarella”, an enigmatic creation of Greek sculpture which possibly renders the goddess Artemis. Acquired with the contribution of the National Bank, of the Commercial Bank, and of the Ionian and Popular Bank

Marble Ionic column capital. From Megara, Roman period. Gift of Eleni Stavropoulou.

By the 4th c. BC. Athens and Sparta had lost their status as protagonists in the affairs of Greece, the other Greek city-states were in conflict and political life was unstable. It was in this clime that Macedonia appeared as a new power on the forestage of history. After the battle of Chaironeia and the conquest of the cities of southern Greece (338 BC), Philip II imposed Macedonian rule and secure peace. In the following years Alexander the Great fulfilled the dream of a panhellenic campaign against the Persians and spread Hellenic civilization as far as the depths of the East.

3-4 Attic black glaze kantharoi (drinking vessels). 450-400 BC.

5 Sherd from a black-glaze bossed bowl (phiale) with a male head in relief. Late 4th c. BC.
6 Attic black-glaze pelike. Vases of this type were very stable and therefore used for storing valuable oils. 350-325 BC. Gift of Loukas Benakis

28 Gold garter with "Herakles knot", rosette at the centre and lion-head terminals. 3rd-2nd c. BC. Gift of Georgios and Athanasia Pappas
29 Attic black-glaze hydria (vase for carrying water), with foliate band in white on the neck and vertical ribs on the body. Black-glaze vase imitated metal prototypes and were the main product of Attic workshops in the 4th c. BC. C. 350 BC.
26-27 Silver vessels, perhaps from the "Thessaly Treasure" exhibited in case 5. They were probably produced in a local workshop in Thessaly and copy Asia Minor prototypes3rd c. BC.
26 Silver kantharos with incised decoration and traces of the original gilding.
27 Silver hydria with incised decoration. The ornament on the body imitates a necklace with pendants. The finial of the handle is modelled as a relief female head with traces of gilding on the wreath.
11 Attic red-figure krater. Depicted on the front is a dancing maenad flanked by two satyrs, and on the back a scene of conversation between two youths. Attributed to the Painter of Athens c. 350 BC.
12-15,19 Gold snake bracelets (12,15) and diadem (19), symbols of the cult of Isis, with apotropaic power that derives from the sacred cobra of Egypt, were particularly popular in Egyptian goldwork in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. From Alexandria 1st c. BC- 1st c. AD.
Around 440 BC, after the colony of Thourioi was founded in the bay of Taranto, red figure vases started being produced in the cities of South Italy, at first perhaps by Athenian potters. The early South Italian red-figure vases are difficult to distinguish from the Attic ones. Gradually, however, they acquired a distinctive character and are decorated with multi-figured and variocoloured scenes. Their iconography is drawn mainly from mythology, the world of theatre and daily life.
1 Red-figure hydria, with scenes in the women's quarters (gynaikonites), South Italian vases of this type with monumental dimensions had exclusively sepulchral use. Attributed to the Varrese Painter. From Apulia, mid-4th c. BC.
2 South Italian phiale decorated with vine tendrils and running spirals in white, 4th c. BC.
3-4 Terracotta horse head and figurine of a dancing female wearing a fluttering chiton and a wreath on the hair. The pieces are from the applique decoration of vases, characteristic of the pottery of Kanysion, Apulla. 300-250 BC.
5 Gnathia- type skyphos (drinking vessel) from a South Italian workshop, decorated with a female mask and vine leaves. This pottery, distinguished by its metallic black ground and coloures miniature figures, appeared in the second quarter of the 4th c BC, perhaps initially in Taranto, Italy. Noteworthy in its thematic repertoire of Dionysiac content are the theatrical masks, which probably render specific characters in comic drama. 340-330 BC.
6 Bell krater (wine mixing vase) decorated with black-painted laurel branch. 400-350 BC.
7 Bronze frying pan-shaped vessel for serving food at symposia. The handle, with duck-head finial, is decorated with an incised palmette. Possibly from Olynthos, Macedonia early 4th c. BC.

8 Bronze ladle (arytaina- a symposium vessel for transferring wine from the krater to the cups), with duck- head finial on the handle. From Macedonia, 350-300 BC.
9-10 Gold finger-rings with a garnet set in the bezel and intaglio representation of a dolphin (10). Similar rings have been found in southern Italy and date to the late 3rd c. BC. Gift of Georgios and Athanasia Pappas.
11-14 Gold snake bracelets. 1st c. BC.- 4th c. AD
18 Jug in Bichrome Red ware with painted linear decoration and a zoomorphic spout. From Cyprus. Cypro-Classical I period (480-400 BC). On permanent loan from the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia.
19 Bronze inscribed handle of a frying-pan-shaped vessel, with incised rosette and duck finial. 4th c. BC.
20 Bronze kylix (drinking vase). From Macedonia, late 5th c. BC.
21 Bronze bucket (situla) for carrying liquids, with twin movable arched handles, a spout in the form of a lion head and a relief head of Pan or silen. From a Macedonian workshop. Mid-4th c. BC.
22-27 Gold snake bracelets. The snake, a favourite subject in Hellenistic jewellery, was considered to be an apotropaic symbol with protective and curative properties. 1st c. BC – 3rd c. AD.
Poros entablature of a grave marker. From Boetia, late 4th-3rd c. BC. A floram ornament at the top and the name of the deceased ΠΑΡΘΕΝΑ (Parthena) incised on the epistyle. It belongs to a large class of grave markers, most of which have been found at Thebes and Tanagra, Central Greece. Set upon a tall pillar, they were placed at the top of the earth tumulus over the graves. Gift of Rena Andreadi
Marble stattuete of Zeus. Perhaps from Asia Minor, late 2nd c. BC. The god, identified by the eagle by his left leg, is represented himation-clad with raised left hand, in which he most probably held a sceptre, while with his right he proffers a phiale. The statuette belongs in a broad category of works of the Late Hellenistic period, associated with domestic cult. It very probably harks back to an original creation of the late 4th c. BC. Acquired with the generous sponsorship of a donatrix who wishes to remain anonymous.
Marble votive relief with Cybele enthroned. Post-2nd c AD. The goddess is represented in a small temple (naiskos), wearing a sleeveless, girdled chiton, a himation and a high polos. She holds a phiale in the right hand a drum in the left. Visible on her knees are traces of a lion. The lion and the drum, which was played during rites in Cybele's honour, were the attributes of the Great Mother Goddess of Asia Minor. Small temples (naiskoi) of this kind, which perhaps denote the shallow caves in which statueesses of her were places, are identified in sanctuaries of Cybele and other deities after the Late Classical period, in private houses and in cemeteries. Gift of Ioanna Loverdou-Vasiliadi.
Marble record stele. From Megara, 275-250 BC. According to the decree on the stele, which was dedicated in the sanctuary at Megara, Anchieros, son of Philon, from Boetia was declared proxenos and euergetes of the city of Megara, and he and his descendants were to enjoy the privileges of tax exemption and asylum in both wartime and peacetime. Gift of Aikaterini Stathatou
Marble statuette of Aphrodite. From Athens, 2nd c. BC. The goddess wears a himation only over the lower body and leans against the cavern of a rock, behind which appears Eros. The topography of the setting in the composition alludes to the sanctuaries on the North slope of the Acropolis. Gift of Antonis Mavrikios
Marble statuette of Athena. Perhaps from Asia Minor, late 2nd c. BC. In this free remodelling of Pheidias' statue of Athena Parthenos, the goddess is represented in

sleeved chiton, girdled high on the waist, and an aegis with relief gorgoneion on the bosom. The holes in the helmet were for affixing the crest and other traditional figures, which included a sphinx, two Pegasi (mythical winged horses) and two griffins. In the original work Athena held a winged Nike in her outstretched hand and a shield in her left. Acquired with the generous sponsorship of a donatrix who wishes to remain anonymous

The conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 332 BC and the founding of the Macedonian dynasty of the Ptolemies mark the beginning of the most splendid Hellenistic kingdom Alexandria was enhanced as the foremost intellectual, artistic and economic centre in the Mediterranean, enjoying its precedence for almost one thousand years. Its artistic production was exceptionally rich and distinguished by the use of diverse materials and techniques. Almost all objects in the case have been donated by Loukas Benakis

1 Black – painted funerary hydria with spiral vegetal motifs. From the cemetery of Alexandria, now Hadra, 3rd c. BC.
2 Head of a limestone male figurine from an Alexandrian workshop, probably representing one of the Dioskouri, 3nd c. BC.
3-6 Heads of female figurines in falence and stone. From Egypt, 250-200 BC.
7-8 Vases from the Athribis workshop, Egypt, with relief representation: the askos depicts a male figure holding a balance beam with two baskets and the alabastron amori in combat and a group of Eros and Psyche. 200-150 BC.
9 Marble head of a statuette of the Ptolemy queen Arsinoe II (7), c. 270 BC.
11 Head of a stone figurine, with the typical coiffure of Cleopatra I, familiar from representation of Isis from an Alexandrian workshop. Early 2nd c. BC.
12 Head of a steatite figurine representing a Ptolemy queen or a goddess. From Egypt, 2nd c. BC.
13 Head of a stone figurine representing a Ptolemy king (?). From Egypt, 3rd-2nd c. BC.
14 Stone figurine of Isis lactans. From Psiloritis, Crete, (664-525 BC).
15 Falence figurine of Egyption goddess Bes from Egypt, Hellenistic period.
16-26 Gold amulets and pendant with divine figures, such as Isis-Selene (16), Aphrodite (18), Isis Demeter (20) and Helios (21), 1st c. BC. 3rd c. AD.
27 Marble head of a statuette of Aphrodite. From Alexandria, early 3rd- mid-2nd c. BC.
28 Clay incense burner with painted foliate pattern on white ground. From Egypt, 2nd c. BC.
29 Vase fragment from the Athribis workshop, Egypt, with relief representation of a dancing female figure 200-150 BC.
30 Funerary hydria of Hadra type, decorated with swans, louterion, dolphins and myrtle branches. The subjects allude to the worship of Aphrodite, with whom hydrias are associated, as the vases used for carrying water for the nuptial baths. 3rd c. BC.
31 Trefoil-mouthed oenochoe, restored from a faience fragment. It belongs to a large class of Alexandrian vases representing Ptolemy queens holding the corncupia. Late 3rd c. BC.
32-39 Figurines and falence fragments rendering scenes and types from everyday life. Such as a flute-player at a symposium (32), a musician with lute (34), a ram-bearer (kriophoros) (38) and a fisherman (39) as well as deities and divine symbols, such as

HArpokrates (35), the group of sphinxes (33), the duck (36) and the falcon (37). From Egypt 3rd c. BC.
40-42 Gold snake bracelets, 1st c. AD.
43 Black painted funerary hydria of Hadra type with tripods, 3rd. BC.
44 Marble portrait head of Ptolemy IV Philopater. From Alexandria, late 3rd c. BC.
45 Jug with relief representation of two reclining figures. From Egypt, 200-150 BC.
46 Terracotta figurine of a male with painted hairdress and wreath round the neck. From Egypt, late 2nd- early 1st c. BC.
47 Modelled vase in the form of a child. From Egypt, reign of Hadrian (AD 117-138).
48 Marble votive relief with representation of Asklepios beside a tree trunk around which a snake coils. 3rd c. BC.
49 Marble head of a bearded man. Late 3rd c. BC.
50-56 Terracotta figurines representing deities, such as Herakles (50), Athena (51), Tyche (54) and Harpokrates-Dionysos (55), or male and female figures. From Egypt, Hellenistic period
57 Stone relief with a representation of the Nile. It copies a statue type of the 2nd c. BC. From Egypt.
58-67 Gold pendants (58,67) and finger-rings, mostly snake-shaped. Among them two children's rings, one with bust of Sarapis (60) and the other with bust of Isis (61), as well as a spiral ring with busts of Isis and Sarapis at the terminals (66) 1st c BC- 1st c. AD
68 Gold bracelets with Isis and Sarapis, represented with serpentiform lower body. The spiralling tails intertwine in a "Herakles knot". The figures hold a cornucopia and a phiale, and wear as a crown the modis, a measuring vase that symbolized fertility. 1st c. AD.
69 Small amphora with relief representation of amori in combat. Scenes of amori in combat derive from the iconography of Magna Grecia and allude to the Ptolemy kings who established the use of mercenaries, From Egypt, 200-150 BC.
70 Black- painted hydria with palmettes. These vases were used as cinerary urns for individual burials. From the Hadra cemetery, Alexandria 3rd c. BC.
71-77 Terracotta male and female heads representing caricatures of physical misfits, actors with masks and negores with pronounced facial features. Noteworthy among them is the group of actors (73) representing an old man and his wife, a parody of the famous Hellenistic statue group of Eros and Psyche. From Egypt, mid 3rd c. BC-3rd c. AD
The resounding victory of Augustus at Actium in 31 BC marked the founding of the Roman Empire. Rome became capital of a state with enormous political, economic and military power. The Romans creatively assimilated the intellectual and artistic traditions of the Mediterranean, primarily those of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, to develop a civilization of their own, which was to constitute the common cultural substrate of Christian Europe.
1 Bronze modelled vase in the form of Eros or Bacchus. 1st c. BC-1st c. AD
2-7 Lamp and terracotta figurines representing Egyptians and Greek deities: Isis with Harpokrates (2), group of warriors (3), Zeus with the eagle (5), Pan with pan pipes (6), Ptolemy III as Hermes (7). From Egypt, mid 3rd c. BC-mid 3rd c. AD.
8-11 Vases in fine-grained red slip ware, terra sigillata, from an Italian workshop. The two decorated vases (8,9) bear relief representations of maenads, satyrs and winged erotes. They represent an important group in Roman pottery, characteristic of which is the use of the mould for rendering the relief decoration. This pottery, named Aretine, after the Italian town of Arezzo where the first workshops were located, spread from

the 1st c. BC into Early Christian times throughout the Roman Empire. 1st c. BC-2nd c. AD.
14-18 Terracotta figurines and lamp handles representing Egyptian and Greek deities. Helios (14, 15), Sarapis (16, 18), and a silenus (17). In Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, the coexistence of Greek and Indigenous deities led to the blending of their characteristics and to the appearance of deities of dual origin. From Egypt 2nd c. BC.-2nd c. AD
19-29 Gold finger rings with Egyptian deities, symbols and Inscriptions with prayers for life after death. The ring with the inset rock-crystal female bust is an exception, dated to the second half of the 1st c. BC. Ist-2nd c AD. Gift of Georgios and Athanasia Pappas (19, 2)
30 Fragment of a terracotta figurine of a winged Eros holding a cornucopia from which grapes protrude, from Egypt AD 150-200. Gift of Lukas Benakis.
31 Terracotta Figurine of Dionysos leaning against Silenus. It copies a statue type known from the Hellenistic period. From Egypt AD 250-275.
32 Bronze statuette of Pluto with a cornucopia in the left hand and a phiale in the right. 2nd c. AD. Gift of Georgios and Athanasia Pappas.
40 Silver miniature quadriga driven by Eros, perhaps a fitment from a vessel. 3rd-c. BC
42 Gold bracelet with snake-head terminals. The eyes are of glass paste and the tongue is an emerald. From a female grave in Piraeus. 1st c. AD.
44-49 Rock-crystal pendants in the form of a duck, a turtle, a shell and a fish, symbols of Aphrodite with protective properties. The fish (49) is from Egypt. From a female grave in Piraeus (44-48), 1st c. AD
53-55 Terracota figurines of Harpokrates. From Egypt, 2nd-1st c. BC.
67-68 Glass Inscribed cups, probably grave offerings. The Inscriptions ΚΑΤΑΧΑΙΡΕ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΦΡΑΙΝΟΥ (67) and ΕΥΦΡΑΙΝΟΥ ΕΦ' Ο ΠΑΡΕΙ (68) are related to life after death. From Siphnos, Cyclades, 1st c. AD
64 Gold statuette with clay core, representing Aphrodite holding a hare in her right hand. 1st c. BC.
65 Finger-ring set with a sardonyx cameo representing the head of a bearded male. Roman period.
66-72 Earrings of gold and semi-precious stones. 1st - 3rd c. AD
73-74 Necklace of gold and emerald root. 2nd -3rd c. AD
75 Gold chain with mounted coin of Hadrian. 3rd c. AD
76-78 Gold twisted bracelets with snake-head terminals. 3rd c. AD
52 Gold pendant from Crete, with mounted cornelian gem bearing an intaglio representation of a male figure beside a horse. From Crete, Roman period.
53-59 Chains with beads of gold and emerald root. 2nd-3rd c. AD
60-63 Gold finger rings with emerald root. From Egypt, 2nd-3rd c. AD
33 Gold bracelet clasp. 3rd c. AD.
37-39 Gold bracelets with a mounted sardonyx in the central element. 3rd c. AD
40,49 Cast gold loops, attached to a precious vessel. 1st c. AD
41-51 Gold finger-rings and a seal pendant (42) with mounted semi-precious stones bearing Intaglio representations. The ring (46) represents Menelaos with the dead body of Patroklos, reproducing a monumental creation of Hellenistic sculpture. The ring (47) from a woman's grave in Piraeus, has a representation of a duel. 1st-3rd c. AD
18-22 Plaques with nereids, a dolphin and sea monsters. Late 3rd-4th c. AD
23 Fragments of a relief representation of the myth of Hippolytos and Phaidra. Antonine period (AD 117-193)

24 Statuette of Harpokrates. Roman period.
25 Plaque with the Hellenistic group of Eros and Psyche, 2nd c. AD
Jewellery of the Roman period continued the Hellenistic tradition in gold-working with a gradual simplification of form and an Increasing use of precious and semi-precious stones, now including pearls. In the 2nd c. AD a new technique appeared, opus interrasile, in which the designs were pierced in gold sheet. This technique prevailed in the 3rd and 4th c. and was later applied widely in Byzantine jewellery.
26-31 Earrings of gold and semi-precious stones. From Cyprus (28, 29, 30, 31). 1st-3rd c. AD
32 Gold necklace with a head of Medusa in relief. 2nd c. AD
33 Gold bracelet clasp. 3rd c. AD
34 Gold pendant with mounted agate gem bearing an intaglio representation of a priest holding a bust of Isis. 2nd-3rd c. AD
35-36 Finer-ring and necklace of gold and glass paste. 2nd c. AD
Bone plaques appeared In Egypt during the Hellenistic and Roman periods and were used for embellishing opulent pieces of furniture and vessels associated with the female toiletry. Their iconography usually draws on mythology, mainly the cycles of Aphrodite and Dionysos, while known statue types of divine figures feature frequently. Most of the plaques in the case are of Egyptian provenance and date from the Roman period. They have been donated by Loukas Benakis.
1-6 Plaques with Dionysos and his retinue: Dionysos in the statue type of Apollo Lykelos, a work by Praxiteles of the 4th c. BC (3, 4, 6), a satyr with a basket full of grapes (1), a child figure (Eros?) carrying a thyrsos and a basket of grapes (2), a dancing peplos-clad maenad (5). 2nd-3rd c. AD
7-11 Plaques with representations of nude Aphrodite. The goddess is depicted in statue types known from the 4th c. BC and the Hellenistic period. The plaque (10) is dated in the 2nd c. BC and copies the type of Aphrodite Anadyomene.
12 Ivory statuette of Herakles, a reproduction in miniature of the colossal Herakles Farnese, which copies a renowned creation by Lysippos of the 4th c. BC. Hellenistic period.
13 Plaque with a representation of a soldier. Roman period
14-15 Cylindrical pyxides with child figures and erotes. 1stc AD
16 Semi-circular plaque with a winged female figure, a personification of Summer, 5thc. AD
17 Plaque with representation of Artemis. 3rd-6th c. AD
52 Gold pendant from Crete, with mounted cornelian gem bearing an intaglio representation of a male figure beside a horse. From Crete, Roman period.Gift of Lord Abercromby
53-59 Chains with beads of gold and emerald root. 2nd-3rd c. AD.
60-63 Gold finger rings with emerald root. From Egypt, 2nd-3rd c. AD. Giftt of Georgiou and Athanasia Pappas (6)
The Early Christian jewellery carries on the traditions of the Roman period. The most characteristic technique of the time, pierced-work, constitutes a development of the Roman opus interrasile. In many of the jewels, the polychromy of the precious stones reflects the taste of the times but is also indicative of the flourishing conditions of trade with the East.

1-2 Earrings and necklace. From Antinoe. Egypt 5th c.
3-5 Gold lunate earrings with pierced decoration. 6th-7th c.

6 Three sections of a necklace with precious stones, set in a pierced gold mount. From a treasure in Alexandria, 5th c.
7 Gold earrings. In the intricate ornamentation, the mesh of peltae is combined with the hanging stems encountered in Roman jewellery. Late 5th-early 6th c.
8 Sumptuous gold bracelets adorned with a pierced stellar rosette and a repetitive motif of a tendril sprouting from a corncupia. Probably from Cyprus, 6th c.
9-11 Pectoral crosses made of gold and rock crystal. From Egypt, 6th-7th c.
12 Gold swivel ring. On one face the bezel is depicted an archangel and the other St. Thekla among lions. On the thickness of the bezel, cryptograms lend the ring an apotropaic character. 6th-7th c.
13 Gold ring with a tall calyx-shaped bezel which forms a cross. 6th-7th c.
14 Gold ring with a pierced circular element, in which a cross is inscribed. This type of ring usually contained holy relic. 6th-7th c.
1 Gold earrings with drop finials. 6th-7th c.
2 Gold star-shaped earrings. They are decorated with granulated triangles that terminate in small globes. From Alexandria. 6th-7th c.
3 Small gold earring with a delicate filigree and granulated decoration. 6th-7th c.
4 Gold earrings with pyramidal granulated finials, 4th-5th c.
5 Silver torque of twisted wire. The cross is adorned with an embossed Crucifix and busts of saints. From Egypt, 7th c,
6 Silver belt tab in the shape of an amphora. An inscription o the back wishes happiness to the owner of the belt, Diogenis. 4th-5th c. Gift of Helen Stathakis
7 Gold necklace with polyhedral semi-precious stones, 3rd-4th c.
8 Gold chain of loosely-knitted links, 3nd-3rd c.
9 Gold earrings with small hemispherical discs and granulated decoration, 3rd-4th c.
10-11 Two pairs of gold earring. From Cyprus, 2nd-3rd c.
12 Pair of Late- Roman funerary bracelets. Of this gold leaf, they bear the dotted Inscription ΚΛΑΥΔΙΑ ΠΡΟΚΛΑ.
13 Two Late- Roman gold rings with octagonal hoops.
14 Silver, lyre-shaped buckle with an incised geometrical decoration and a monogram, which can be read ΣΤΡΑΤΟΝ or ΑΡΙΣΤΙΟΝ. From Constantinople (2), late 6th c.
The representations of the dead known as Fayum portraits, after the region of Egypt of this name, form one of the most important legacies of ancient painting. Many of them are executed in the encaustic technique developed in ancient Greece, which uses wax as a binding agent. These portraits represent a felicitous amalgam of naturalistic ancient Greek painting and the Roman tradition of realistic portraiture. Greco- Roman artistic values found ideal expression in a distinctively Egyptian practice: the placing of a portrait on the embalmed bodies of the dead to indicate their identity to the spirits.

1 Female funeral portrait painted in tempera on linen. From Antinoe, Egypt. First three decades of the 3rd c. AD. Gift of Konstantinos Choremis
2 Male funeral portrait painted on linen, with pigments mixed with wax in the encaustic technique. One may note the illusionistic treatment of the male figure and the bold colour palette. From Antinoe in Egypt, second quarter of the 3rd c. AD
3 Gold earrings decorated with granulation. From Syria, 3rd c. AD
5-7 Gold bracelets made of thick twisted wire. They represent a type of jewellery that was very common in the Late Roman period, 3rd c. AD
8 Gold bracelet with two rows of hemispherical beads. 1stc. AD

21 Double-sided icon with St. Paul and an unidentified saint. From Egypt, 7th-8th c.
Fragment of a mosaic decoration depicting a church. Comparable representations of buildings with realistic morphological and topographical features are well known from the mosaic pavements of Syria. From Eastern Mediterranean, 5th-6th century.
Coptic textiles (3rd-11th c. AD) are the woven fabrics of Egypt that have been preserved thanks to the dry climate of the region. The techniques employed and the iconography are representative of the textile tradition of Egypt, but also reflect the fashion prevailing in the large urban centres of the eastern Mediterranean. The pieces on display are either parts of garments or hangings that adorned the interior of buildings.
8 Sumptuous gold bracelets adorned with a pierced stellar rosette and a repetitive motif of a tendril sprouting from a corncupia. Probably from Cyprus, 6th c.
9-11 Pectoral crosses made of gold and rock crystal. From Egypt, 6th-7th c.
12 Gold swivel ring. On one face of the bezel is depicted an archangel and on the other St. Thekla among lions. On the thickness of the bezel, cryptograms lend the ring an apotropaic character. 6th-7th c.
13 Gold ring with a tall calyx-shaped bezel which forms a cross. 6th-7th c.
1 Tapestry tabula of linen and wool with the representation of a woman adorning herself in front of a mirror. These decorative textiles were sewn onto garments. 5th-6th c.
2 Tapestry medallion of linen and wool from a wall-hanging representing Pegasus. Although the subject is borrowed from the Greek mythology, the decorative details reveals a Sassanian influence. 6th c.
3 Tapestry fragment of a woollen wall-hanging with the portrait of a female deity and an inscription. The expressiveness of the face, the richness of the colours and the decorative elements are reminiscent of the large wall-hangings of late antiquity. 3rd-4th c.
4 Tapestry decoration of a shawl made of linen and wool, representing Dionysos framed by a vine. The theme, originating from the Greco-Roman mythological repertoire, was transformed into a Christian symbol of hope for life after death. 4th-5th c.
23-26 Four pieces of silk material originally decorating a tunic. They belong to a well-known group of fabrics of compound weave, found at Achmim (Panopolis) in Upper Egypt. On one of these (26) can be seen the inscription ZAXAPIOY, which probably refers to the owner of the textile workshop that produced it. 6th-7th c.
21 Tapestry fragment of linen and wool. It is adorned with a Christogram within an ankh, an ancient Egyptian symbol of life, adopted also by Christian iconography in the 4thc. 5th -6th c.
22 Tapestry fragment of a woollen wall-hanging. The decoration combines Christian symbols such as the peacocks and the vine with the Egyptian ankh. 5th-6th c.
1-4 Characteristic types of Early-Christian earrings adorned with peltae and studded with pearls or precious stones, which continue and develop the decorative forms of Roman jewellery, 4th-6th c.
5 Earrings of gold leaf, set with mermaids, cornelians and glass paste. The vine leaf and small ivy leaves adorning the earrings are motifs widely encountered in the Christian iconography from the 4th c. 4th c.
6 Gold necklace of twisted wire with a rectangular attachment. The large emerald is framed by openwork peltae and tendrils. 3rd c.
7 Circular dress ornament of pierced gold leaf with inlaid glass paste decoration, 5th c.

8-10 Gold chains having as common feature circular clasps, were peltae and heart-shaped motifs are inscribed, 3rd- 5th c.
11-13 Gold basket-shaped earrings. Decorated with gold wire or with granulation, this type of earring was very popular throughout the Mediterranean in the th c. and returned to fashion in the Middle Byzantine era. In Islamic and Byzantine environment.
14 Pair of bracelets of gold leaf. The engraved decoration imitates heavier Roman twisted bracelets. From Egypt, 6th-7th c.
15 Gold ring bearing the inscription ΑΒΗΓΑΗΛ. From Palestine, 6th c.
16 Gold wedding ring with a polygonal hoop adorned with niello decoration. 6th-7th c.
17 Triple funerary ring of gold set with beads of glass paste. From Egypt, 5th c.
18 Gold ring bearing the monogram IOANOY (of John) and a representation of an eagle. It probably belonged to a consul, a high Roman official of the 6th-7th c.
19 Gold ring with an engraved figure of an archangel. Second half of 6th-first half of 7th c.
Enthroned Virgin and Child. Replica of the Apse Mosaic from the church of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, dated in 867. On permanent loan from the Metropolitan Museum, New York.
Virgin and Child, 13th and 14th c. The double-sided icon was heavily overpainted during the 14thc. On the back side, the original layer of paint has been completely destroyed and is now covered by a representation of the Virgin and Child dating from the 18th c.
In the 8th c and 9th c. Byzantium was shaken by iconoclasm, a theological turmoil concerning the worship of icons, which also had political and social implications. After the final restoration of the icons in 843, the Byzantine iconography evolved, based on the writings of the church Fathers and the new role of the Church Liturgical vessels and fragments of the mural decoration of churches, mainly in Constantinople, reflect the flourish of Middle Byzantine art.
1 Female funeral portrait painted in tempera on linen. From Antinoe, Egypt. Frist three decades of the 3rd c. AD. Gift of Konstantinos Choremis
2 Male funeral portrait painted on linen, with pigments mixed with wax in the encaustic technique. One may note the illusionistic treatment of the male figure and the bold colour palette. From Antinoe in Egypt, second quarter of the 3rd c AD.
3 Gold earring decorated with granulation. From Syria, 3rd c. AD
4 Gold ring decorated with the “Herakles knot”, a particularly popular motif since the Hellenistic times. 3rd c. AD
5-7 Gold bracelets made of thick twisted wire. They represent a type of jewellery that was very common in the Late Roman period. 3rd c. AD
8 Gold bracelet with two rows of hemispherical beads. 1st c. AD
1 Part of mosaic with the Virgin, form the Studios Monastery in Constantinople. This is the only known surviving fragment of the once renowned mosaic in the Monastery. Late 10th c. Gift of Stephanos and Penelope Delta
2-6 Small icons carved in steatite, or immaculate stone, a soft, light-green rock. The iconography and technique of these objects suggest that they were probably executed in the workshops that carved ivory icons.
2 Small icon depicting the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. 14th c.
3 Part of an icon representing the Annuciation and the Nativity. Early 12th c.
4 Part of a small icon with the Annuciation. Late 13th c.
5 Small double-icon. Christ and a kneeling saint are depicted on one side and Christ Pantokrator enthroned on the other. Post Byzantine (?)

6 Small icon with St. Nicholas. Second half of 13th c.
7 Double- sided cameo of jade with the Virgin orans on one side and Christ Pantokrator on the other, 11th c.
8 Forty- five coins issued by the Byzantine emperors from Leo 111 the Isaurian (717-41) to Alexios IV Angelos (1203-4). They reflect the history of the Byzantine Empire from the early 8th c. to its conquest by the Franks of the 4th Crusade in 1204. Three coins have been donated by Aikaterini, Panayiotis and Stylianos Mouratidis, one by Petros Protonotarios and one by Periklis Vasiliadis.
9 Silver icon, embossed with the representation of the Ammunciation. The elaborate floral ornament on the frame encloses six circular panels in which enamel or silver medallions would have been set. Busts of apostles are depicted on the long sides. The existence of numerous silver icons is attested in Byzantine sources but only a few have survived. Constantinopolitan workshop (?), 12th c. Acquired in memory of Georgios Koniaris.
10 Small steatite icon with the archangel Michael. 13th c.
11-13 Silver medallions with respousse busts of Christ Pantokrator, the Virgin and the archangel Michael. 11th c.
14-15 Silver rellguary-crosses with niello decoration. They consist of two hinged outer crosses enclosing a smaller cross with a socket for the relic. On one face is depicted the Crucifixion and on the other the Virgin with evangelists or angels. 10th-11th c.
16 A head and two right arms of military saints holding spears. These icons, carved in limestone, would have been decorated with inlaid glass paste and added paint. Inlaid stone icons represent a less common type of lavish wall-decoration in Byzantine churches. From the Lips Monastery in Constantinople, 10th c. Gift of Theodoros Makridis
17 Fragment of wall-painting with head of hierarchs. From the area of Corinth, 14th-15th c.
19 Bracelet with gided and niello decoration, 11th c.
20 Section of bracelet with glided decoration picked out in niello. A scroll border frames pseudo-Kufic lettering, 11th c.
21 Bracelet with traces of gilded decoration. Four-lobed rosettes and medallions are adorned with niello palettes and scrolls, 11th-12th c.
22 Bracelet with niello decoration. Griffins are depicted in rectangular panels framed by scrolls. 11th c.
23 Silver processional cross with glided and niello decoration, engraved with inscriptions reffering to the two donors, SIsinios and the Presbyter Ioannis. Brought to Greece by rfugees from Adrianople, c. 1000
24 Silver-glit pectoral cross with bursts of Christ and saints. On the reverse, the engraved inscription refers to its owner. Epifanios, 11th c.
25-26 Two mosaic fragments from the Studios Monastery in Constantinople
The Hospitality of Abraham, a symbolic representation of the Holy Trinity. The austere composition, the classicising beauty of the angels with their elegant gestures, the sensitive colouring, the diffuse light and the lyrical disposition of the scene all link the icon with a good workshop in Constantinople.. Last quarter 14th c.
The Nativity- Constantinople artist, first quarter of the 15th century
This icon, known as the Volpi Nativity after a previous owner, is notable both for the exceptional quality of the painting and for its intellectual depth. Eclecticism and refinement are combined with the artist's genuine understanding of contemporary developments in Italian art. The icon represents an interim stage between two major

examples of late Byzantine art, the wall paintings of the Peribleptos and the Pantanassa at Mystrar, and it is not inferior to either. Gift of Petros Andreadis in memory of Rena Andreadis

1 The Virgin of Tenderness. The central representation is surrounded by busts of apostles and relief scenes from the Dodekaorton (Twelve Great Feasts). The work combines, in a unique way, Palaiologan features with characteristics of Venetia art. Constantinople (?), middle of 14th c.

2 Silver glit diadem and embossed roundels decorated with a double-headed eagle, animals and cross. One of them bears the monogram of the imperial family of the Palaiologoi. 15th c.

At the end of the 14th c., on the eve of the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks, artists and intellectuals were abandoning the Byzantine capital in search of a land more suitable for artistic creation. The island of Crete, under Venetian occupation at the time, became an ideal retreat for many of them. Painters from Constantinople spread to the island the art of the capital and contributed greatly to the growth of Cretan painting, the most important trend in the Post- Byzantine world. Besides the Cretan school, local artists trends also developed in areas under Turkish occupation, with reference to the great monastic centres of the Greek lands.

1 St. George on horseback, slaying the Dragon. Angelos. Second quarter of 15 c. The icon bears the signature of the famous Cretan painter Angelos Akotandos, who is apparently responsible for the Crystallisation of the scene in Cretan painting. Acquired with the contribution of the A.G Leventis Foundation.

2 Triptych, 17th c.

The Virgin Portaitissa of the Iviron Monastery is depicted at the centre, surrounded by St. Paul of Xeropotamos and St. Eleutherios. The type of Portaitissa, one of the most revered relics of Mount Athos, is copied frequently on portable icons and triptychs. Workshop on Mount Athos.

Iznik ceramics, 16th-17th c.

The polychrome glazed Ottoman pottery produced at Iznik, the Byzantine Nicaea in Asia Minor, is found throughout Greece. Sometimes plates were built into the facades of churches and sometimes they adorned the houses of affluent bourgeois and sailors. Their wide distribution in the Dodecanese had led earlier scholars to attribute them to Rhodian workshops, hence their characterization as Rhodian ceramics. The majority are decorated with maritime subjects, such as ships (1, 2, 10-14) and bear Greek inscriptions and dates (4-6). Gifts of Emmanual Benakis (1, 2, 4, 5, 12, 14, 15) and of Damianos Kyriazis (3, 11, 13).

1-2 Parts of the cover of a painted chest, depicting two richly bedecked female figures. Representation examples displaying the influences of oriental tradition in neo – Hellenic secular painting. From Mytilini, 18th c.

3 Gold earrings with enamelled floral motifs and pearls. From the Aegean Islands, 18th c.

4 Gold earrings with funnel-shaped elements and pearls. From the Aegean Islands, 19th c.

5 Fan-shaped gold pin for the headdress, with turquoise stone and pearls. From Patmos, Dodekanese, 18th c.

6-10 Gold rosette-shaped earrings set with pearls and precious stones. They are recorded to be from Patmos, Dodecanese, although they are found throughout Greece. 18th-20th. Gift of Marina Lappa Dimopoulou

11 Gold earrings with pendent elements and pearl tassels. From the Aegean Islands, 18th-20th c.

Gold jewellery of the 18th c and 19th c. from the Aegean Island, Crete, the Dodecanese and the Cyclades, with delicate surfaces of very fine gold wire, worked with the filigree technique that continues the Byzantine tradition. Outstanding is the jewellery brought to the islands from foreign lands, by ship owners on their return from their long journeys.

1 Gold necklace with an articulated pendent element in the shape of a fish. Possibly from Astypalaia, Doecanese, 18th-19th c.

2-3 Parts of necklaces of composite gold filigree beads and pearl spacers. Morphologically they belong to the same type of necklaces as the examples from Crete (4, 5). From Siphnos, Cyclades, mid 18th c.

Jewellery from Epirus and Macedonia that reflects the financial and cultural development of northern Greece during th 18th c. The growth of land trade with the great European capitals at this time led to the creation of important trade and production centres. The art of silver jewellery flourished in Epirus, especially at Ioannina and even more so at Syrrako and Kallarytes on Mount Pindos, where there existed organised workshops with important craftsmen-jewellers.

6-11 A group consisting of the earliest examples of Epirote jewellery: a forehead ornament with pins in the shape of tulips, chokers crowned with double- headed eagles and cherubs, and earrings that reach shoulder- height. Their most characteristic elements are the repetitive cast elements and the chain-like attachments, as well as the frequent use of semi-precious stones and glass paste, which, in addition to the partial gliding, create vivid colour impressions. First half of 18th c. Gift of Marina Lappa-Diomidous

12-16 Gift earrings in the shape of rosettes. This earring type recalls Byzantine prototypes and is witnessed throughout Greece with slight variations. From Epirus or Macedonia, first half of 18th c.

17-22 Gift earrings in impressive shapes. Their form and workmanship reflect the influence of the East and the neighbouring Balkan areas on the silver and gold jewellery of norther Greece. Gift of Maria Lappa- Diomidious (22)

The various groups of jewellery displayed here mark a period of florescence in the gold- and silversmith's art in the regions of northern Greece, and show the relations between the neighbouring countries of the Balkan Peninsula, especially during the 18th and 19th c. Jewellery adorned with an enamelled decoration are dispersed in many regions although the particular place of their creation so far remains unknown. The ornaments with the large pendent are plaquettes are mainly to be found in Macedonia and should probably be attributed to Macedonian workshops.

31 Silver earrings with rare gilded representation of the Virgin and Child. From Epirus, 18th-19th c.

33 Long silver earrings and back ornament, with pierced plaquettes and chain accessories. From Macedonia, 18th-19th c.

34 Rare breast ornament with agates, turquoise, corals and rock crystal. The floral decoration on the gilded hammered and cast elements constitutes one of the oldest specimens of the Greek baroque style as applied to the goldsmith's art. From Epirus, 18th c.

35 Silver forehead band with pierced repeated elements and pendent chains. From Tsakonia, Peloponnese. Gift of Maria Lappa- Diomidous

40 Silver chain ornament of the waist, belonging to a type known from central and northern Greece. From Thessaly, 19th c.

41-43 Silver bowls with embossed decoration of animals, plants and birds. Two of them bear on the boss a reclining deer in relief, the third one a bird. The bowl (43) is from Epirus.
38 Large silver belt buckle with breast like attachments. This type appears in Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace.
39 Porcelain belt buckle, decorated with enamel. European style, 19th c.
The majority of Greek musical instruments trace their origin back to antiquity and the Byzantine period. Few of them are of eastern origin, since Greece, a crossroad between East and West, assimilated creatively the musical traditions of two cultural worlds.
Fold songs are closely bounded to music and dance, and can be traced back to the early centuries of Christianity. Their oral tradition continued unbroken throughout the period of Ottoman rule, culminating in the expressive and rhythmical integrity of the iambic fifteen-syllable verse and the birth of a new genre: the song of irregulars
8 Elements of the Greek Language to be used in the Schools of Greece. Vienna edition, 1815.
9 Greek Trophy of the First War of Greeks against Persians. Vienna edition, 1818. A book by the scholar Athanasios Stageritis (late 18th- early 19th c.), who was a follower of archaism and one of Korais main opponents.
10 Elements of the Greek Language to be used in the schools of Greece. Vienna edition, 1815.
This is the first of four volumes edited by the intellectual clergyman Theoklitos Pharmakidis (1784-1860), a follower of Korais ideas about languge. Pharmakidi's name is associated with the periodical Hermes o Logios, that he directed.
7 Introduction to the Geography and the Spherical. Paris 1716. This work by the clergyman and writer Chrysanthos Notaras (c. 1663-1731) belongs to the educational publications of the Greek followers of Enlightment movement. According to the book he sun circles around the earth!
8 Greek Nomarchy, or Speech on Freedom, Composed and Published Through Own Expenses and for the Benefit of the Greeks by the anonymous Greek in Italy, 1806. The anonymous author of this work advises Greeks to fight for freedom on their own strength, and presents as ideal the state that is governed by law (Nomarchy). Photocopy edition by the Historical and Ethnological Society. Athens 1976
6-7 Musical nanuscripts of the 19th c. with ornamental headings: the Eklogion (6), from Tyana in Cappadocia which was set to music by the first chanter of the Great Church, Georgios, and the Doxastic to the months (7)
8-10 Lyres with elaborate incised, sculpted and inlaid decoration. From Crete (8-9)
The peak of the neo-Hellenic Enlightment lasted from the mid-18th to the first decades of the 19th c. With their theoretical treatises, the translations of European works and the publications of texts by ancient authors. Its representatives attempted to disseminate to areas under Turkish occupation the teaching of the European Enlightment and the ideas of the French Revolution : the fighting against religious prejudice, the faith in rational thought and in scientific knowledge, the ideal of freedom. The primary aim of the Greek scholars was the intellectual awakening of the subjugated people and the development of national consciousness, through education. The principal figures of the neo-Hellenic Enlightment were Rhigas Pheraios and Adamantios Korais.
The flourishing of shipping and trade led to the creation of Greek bourgeoise-mainly of merchants- that was initiated into the ideals of the Enlightment and the French Revolution, adopted European habits and developed political ambitions. Commercial

transactions with Europe multiplied: Greek explored agricultural goods and imported industrial products.
3-6 Silver and silver gilt tobacco-case with representation of sailing ships. Smoking became widespread throughout Greece during the 19th c. and tobacco-cases became essential personal effects of affluent Greeks. Gifts of Penelope Delta (3) and Marina Lappa-Diomidous (4-6)
The search for better living conditions and trade where the main motives for the migratory movement of the Greeks to western and central Europe, the Balkans and southern Russia. The communities formed outside Greece in the last fifty years before the Revolution witnessed the emergence of a wealthy and intellectually alert Greek commercial class which through the founding of schools and the publication of books, periodicals, and newspapers, prepared the renaissance of the Greek people and the War of Independence.

National Archaeological Museum

The collection of Prehistoric Antiquities grew out of the discoveries pioneering excavations of the late 19th century, which gave form and title to the civilisation of Greek prehistory. Two passionate men laid the foundations for the development of Greek prehistoric archaeology. Charismatic and ambitious, Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890) excavated legendary places like Mycenae and Tiryns. The leading archaeologist Christos Tsountas (1857-1934), Keeper of the Mycenaen and Egyptian Collections of the Museum, delved even deeper in time. His explorations first in the Cycladic islands and later in Thessaly revealed the first civilisations in Greece, the Neolithic and the Cycladic.
The excavations of Greek and foreign archaeologists during the first half of the 20th century enriched the Collection with priceless works from all over Greece, especially from the Peloponnese, Attica, Thessaly and the Cyclades. New acquisitions have been added in recent years tanks to the crackdown by Greek authorities on the illicit antiquities trade and the confiscation of unexpected finds such as jewellery of the "Neolithic Treasure" in 1997.
The Collection remains the richest and most important of its kind in the world for the enigmatic Cycladic idols, the Theran wall paintings, the treasures from Mycenae "rich in gold" and the tablets of Linear B script. The wealth and variety of the exhibits offer both a comprehensive lesson in Greek prehistory as well as a fascinating journey through time.
Neolithic Civilisation
The Neolithic civilisation, stretching across a long period, is characterised by the practice of mixed farming economy (agriculture and stock breeding) and permanent installation as well as the extensive use of ground stone tools. Human societies entered from the hunting-gathering stage (Paleolithic Era) into the productive one as masters of nature. This Neolithic "revolution" is affected in Greece at the beginning of the 7th millennium BC. The Neolithic Era lasted for more than three millennia (6800-3300 BC).
Neolithic settlements expand everywhere in Greece but their distribution is really dense in the plain of Thessaly, where the two most important ones, Sesklo and Dimini, are situated. Within settlements, the layout of dwellings along streets and

squares constitute an initial form of architecture and "town-planning". A major achievement in Neolithic Era was craft specialisation. The necessity for equipping households with tools, ceramic vessels, and woven and basketry items promoted craftsmanship and artisan transmitted their craft from generation to generation. In the long time span of the Final Neolithic Period (4500-3300 BC) metalworking was established.
Human societies, having secured the basics for everyday life, developed extensive exchange networks. The occurrence of obsidian from Melos and other imported artifacts in Neolithic settlements of Mainland Greece indicated the advancement of seafaring in the Aegean already from the dawn of the Neolithic Era.
As a result of permanent installation, the institution of family life and other special and communal features were established. Material goods, such as vases, vessels, pithos-jars and livestock, were most probably regarded as property assets. Livestock pens, barns, storage facilities, edifices of common use and retaining or fortification walls must have been organised at community scale. These "unwritten" social institutions of personal and communal property have been bequeathed ever since to humanity and are still valid in modern society in an almost unchanged form.

Mycenaean Civilisation

The Mycenaean Civilisation (1600-1100 BC), named from its greatest centre, Mycenae in the Peloponnese, was born in Greece. Its radiance reached from Asia Minor, the middle East and Egypt to the western Mediterranean and Northwest Europe. The earlier Minoan Civilisation of Crete, which was at its height in the 16th century BC, deeply influenced the development of Mycenaean Culture and together they constitute the first two great European civilisations.
The origin of Mycenaean Civilisation is marked by the rise of a ruling class of warriors in the 16th century BC. From the 15th century BC, the Mycenaean dominance expanded to the larger part of the Greek mainland, Crete was gradually to the whole Aegean. The civilisation reached its peak during the 14th and 13th centuries BC (Mycenaean Koine). In the great palaces of Mycenae, Tiryns, and Pylos in the Peloponnese, as well as Thebes in Boetia, central authority, organized hierarchically with the king at the top, maintained archives written on clay tablets in the Linear B script, the first Greek writing.
This centralised palatial administrative system collapsed at the end of the 13th century BC, traditionally soon after the Trojan War, which was a common undertaking by the Mycenaean lords. Possible causes for this breakdown are the social upheavals, weakening economies due to the migration of the "Sea peoples" in the Mediterranean, which destroyed the centres of Asia Minor and the Middle East, and severe earthquakes, as documented by archaeological excavations.
1429 Funerary stele made of poros stone, with relief chariot scene. The upper and lower panels are filled with spirals, while the central panel has a chariot pulled by a galloping horse and driven by a standing charioteer. In front of the horse is a second male figure that appears to be attacking the chariot with the spear held in his raised right hand. Mycenae, Grave Circle A, Grave V 16th c. BC.
1430 Funerary stele made of poros stone, with distinctive relief scene. The surface is divided vertically into three panels; the two side panels are decorated with serpentine lines. Mycenae, Grave Circle A, Grave II, 16th cent. BC

The Funerary Stelae of Grave Circle A

The four funerary stelae displayed here were discovered in the surface soil, which covered the shaft graves of Grave Circle A, in 1876. According to the excavator, Heinrich Schliemann, some stood in place over the tombs, while others lay scattered inside and around the Grave Circle. The three best preserved stelae marked Grave V. The excavator who subsequently succeeded Schliemann unearthed many more fragments, bringing the total number of the stelae to seventeem
The stelae are fashioned from a soft stone and most of them are carved in relief with geometric patterns or chariot scenes. These representations are interpreted as military or hunting scenes, and their purpose was to glorify the exploits of the deceased. However, they also recall the chariot races held in honour of the deceased, like those which Achilles organised in honour of Patroklos.

The Cycladic Civilisation

The Cyclades, a group of islands in the middle of the Aegean Sea, comprised a unified cultural entity in the Early bronze Age (3200-2000 BC). It was then that the Early Cycladic Civilisation was created and flourished. The Early Cycladic I period (3200-2800) is mainly known from cemeteries. Among the grave goods appear the first Cycladic anthropomorphic figurines. Occasionally, large marble beakers are placed next to the skull. Similar beakers have been found in burials at Iassos in Caria and at Marathon (Tsepi) in Attica.
In the Early Cycladic II period (2800-2300 BC), Cycladic islanders are prominent in sea trade and their swift, oared longboats transport goods and technical know-how of bronze and silver working. Cycladic figurines and “fryin-pan” vessels are regarded as prestige objects and spread in many areas, from Mainland Greece to Crete and the eastern shores of the Aegean. Cycladic communities are stablished among local people at sites emerging as trading centres (Manika in Euboea, Ayios Kosmas in Attica). The abundance and variety of grave offerings indicate social differentiation and distinction. Towards the end of the period, the fortification walls at Kastri on Syros reveal signs of readjustments in the wider region.
In the Early Cycladic III period (2300-2000 BC), there is a transformation of island life and people seem to have joined together in fewer and larger centers, such as Phylakopi on Melos.
The cultural framework changes again in Middle Bronze Age (2000-1600 BC). Middle Cycladic civilisation develops within a matrix of influences from Mainland Greece and Minoan Crete but also achieves distinctive characteristics of its own.
Late Bronze Age (1600-1100 BC) the Cyclades fall within the ambit of, first Minoan and, later, Mycenaean power. In Late Cycladic I-II (1600-1400) urban centres flourish. The wall- paintings of Akrotiri on Thera and Phylakopi on Melos, works of Cycladic artists, stylistically reflect relation with Minoan Crete. In Late Cycladic III (1400-1100 BC), period of Mycenaean dominance, the Cyclades are integrated into the Mycenaean network of marine trade.

Mycenae rich in gold / Grave Circle A

The discovery of Grave Circle A in 1876 by Heinrich Schliemann startled the entire world with its momentous finds. It brought to light a great and hihertho unknown civilization, and paved the way for the study of Greek prehistoric archaeology.
The tombs in Grave Circle A contained a total of nineteen burials: nine males, two females and two infants. The deceased were positioned on their backs, generally on an East-West axis. The pottery finds from Graves I, II, III and VI indicate a range of dates from the end of the Middle Helladic period to the Late Helladic IA period, that is, form the 16th to the early 15th centuries BC.

The amazing wealth of the grave gifts reveals the high social rank of the deceased: gold and silver jewellery and vases, elaborately decorated swords and other bronze objects, artefacts made of imported materials, such as amber, lapis lazuli, faience and ostrich eggs and a small but characteristic group of pottery vessels, confirm Mycenae's importance during this period, and justify Homer's designation of Mycenae as "rich in gold".
Grave Circle A comprises six rectangular vertical shaft graves, which measure from 3.0 by 3.5 meters in width to 4.5 by 6.4 meters in length. These shaft graves consist of two parts: the main shaft itself, which is cut into the bed-rock, and a larger pit surrounding it. After the grave goods were deposited in the main shaft, a wood or flagstone cover supported by the shaft's sides was set in place and the larger pit was filled with earth.

Grave III (Grave of the Women), Grave Circle A
1 An impressive gold diadem with leaf-shaped pieces at the top; decorated with embossed circles (3,5)
2 Gold leaf- shaped pieces, probably from a diadem (7)
3-4 Gold "wheels" and rosettes (20,21)
5 Gold cut-outs in the shape of octopus (30,31)
6 Gold roundels decorated with octopus (39,40)
7 Elegant clay alabastron decorated with foliate band inside circles (156)
8 Small gold jug decorated with repousse spiral (74)
9-12 Gold miniature amphorae with lids and pyxides for jewellery and cosmetics (83,84,71,85)
13 Gold cup with repousse representation of dolphins within a seascape (73)
14 Silver pin with gold head in the shape of a bare- breasted female deity crowned by papyrus flowers (75)
15 Gold earrings with elaborate filigree and granulated decoration (61)
16 Silver goblet with applied gold rosettes on the body (122)
17 Gold seals with engraved scenes of a man fighting a lion, a duel and a lion in a rocky landscape, respectively (33-35)
18 Sealstones made of amethyst, sardonyx and agate with representations of a duel, a doe feeding her fawn and a whirl respectively (116,117,118)
19-20 Bronze and silver pins with gold flower-shaped heads, and gold foil from pin revetments. Pins were used, either to secure garments, or to decorate hair
21 Bronze pins with heads made of rock crystal (102, 103)
22 Pin heads made of rock crystal, one with traces of painted decoration (104, 105)
23 Small bronze knife for cosmetic use (154)
24 Gold cut-outs in the shape of a pair of deers which were once sewn onto luxurious garments. One of them attached to a silver pin (45)
25 Gold cut-outs in the shape of a pair of felines on a palm tree (50)
26 Gold cut-outs in the shape of a butterfly (51)
27 Cut-outs in the shape of a sphinx (48)
28 Cut-outs in the shape of a pair of aquatic birds and eagles (43,44)

Weapons from Grave Circle A of Mycenae, Tomb V, 16th century BC
The Type A sword originates from Minoan Crete. Its appearance marks the first generation of Mycenaean kings, and its use was often symbolic and ceremonial, serving as a sign of the noble owner's power. It is one of the most impressive swords of the Mycenaean world, although it had limited effectiveness in battle due to the

weak mounting of its hilt. For this reason, it was soon replaced by the more advanced Type B sword.
Type B swords, shorter and sturdier than those of Type A, were more durable and are considered typical Mycenaean creations. Both types of swords were designed to pierce the body rather than to strike it.
9 Gold signer ring with military scene: two men fight with long swords, while a third one, who wears a boar's tusk helmet and holds a spear and tower-shaped shield, stand by, and a fourth figure lies on the ground, all set within a rocky landscape (241)
10 Fragment of a bronze sword. The hilt and shoulder are decorated in the cloisonné technique, in which the scale-pattern compartments on the latter are inlaid with lapis lazuli. This elaborate design ends in two griffin or eagle heads (294)
11 Bronze dagger with inlaid decoration, which depicts lions in "flying gallop" (395)
Finds from Graves I, II and VI – Grave Circle A, Mycenae (16th century BC)

1 Gold plaques in the shape of flowers. Grave I (185)
2 Gold diadem. Grave I (185)
3 Gold diadem with loops at the ends for fastening. Grave II (219)
4 Gold diadem with leaf-shaped attachments. Grave I (184, 185)
5 Gold plaques in the shape of flowers. Grave I (185)
6 Gold diadem. Grave I (184)
7 Gilded rim of a silver vessel. Grave I (212)
8 Gold cup with embossed arch decoration. Grave II (220)
9 Bronze dagger with ivory handle. Grave II (216)
10 Bronze dagger. Grave (186)

11–12. Bronze knives. Grave II (227, 218)
13 Bronze spearhead. Grave II (215)
14 Bronze leaf-shaped dagger. Grave II (225)
15 Silver dagger with gold nails in the handle. Grave II (216)
16 Gold cup with embossed arch decoration. Grave IV (912)
17 Gold nails from weapon fittings. Grave VI (922)
18 Stone and ivory sword pommel. Grave VI (908, 936)
19 Gold plaques, conventionally named "kneecap-type." Grave VI (913, 914)
20 Triangular gold plaques from weapon fittings. Grave VI (915–917)
21 Bronze sword of Type A. Grave VI (925)
22 Bronze sword of Type B. Grave VI (906)
23 Bronze dagger with bone handle. Grave VI (927)
24 Bronze dagger with gold nails at the hilt fitting. Grave VI (928)
25 Bronze dagger. Grave VI (904)
26 Large bronze nail. Grave VI (924)
27–28. Bronze knives. Grave VI (932, 923)
29 Leaf-shaped dagger or razor. Grave VI (931)
30 Bronze sword of Type B. Grave VI (905)
31 Bronze machaira (curved sword). Grave VI (907)
32 Bronze spearheads. Grave VI (903, 910, 933)

Pottery Vessels from Grave Circle A of Mycenae (16th- early 15th century)

These are characteristic ceramic types from the period of the shaft graves (Late

Helladic I and early Late Helladic IIA). The earlier Middle Helladic matt-painted pottery persists (8), and new types emerge, such as polychrome matt-painted pottery (2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 18) and Mycenaean pottery with lustrous paint (6, 7, 13, 14). Influences and imports from the Cyclades (11) and Minoan Crete (1, 15, 17) are also evident

1 Ovoid rhyton with spiral decoration. Grave II (221)
2–3. Jugs with schematic spring decorations. Grave VI (946, 947)
4 Jug with serpentine band decoration. Grave VI (950)
5 Jug with linear decoration. Grave VI (941)

6–7. Small amphorae with decorations of double axes (a religious symbol) and large ivy leaves, respectively. Grave I (192, 196)
8 Skyphos with two tall handles and spiral decoration. Grave I (198)
9–10. Cups with polychrome linear decoration. Grave VI (943, 954)
9 Cup with linear decoration. Grave VI (953)
10 Beaked jug with spiral decoration. Grave II (200)
11 Phiale with painted decoration of crosses on the exterior and nautiluses (a type of mollusk) on the interior. Grave I (197)
12 Jug with ivy leaf decoration. Grave I (199)
13 Jug with rich decoration in three zones: concentric semicircles, spirals, and ivy leaves. Grave VI (945)
14 Askos with band decoration. Grave VI (944)
15 Small amphora with linear decoration on the shoulder. Grave VI (956)
16 Pithoid vessel with unique decoration of a schematic griffin. Grave VI (948)

Gold and Silver Tableware from Graves IV and V of Grave Circle A, Mycenae (16th Century BC)

These precious vessels, suitable for a royal banquet, are crafted from thick, hammered gold or silver sheets into simple yet elegant forms. Some feature intricate decoration, reflecting the development of Mycenaean metalworking.

Gold kylix depicting running lions. Grave V (656)
Gold kylix with additional sheets from the handles to the base; two doves adorn the rim. Conventionally named the "Cup of Nestor," after the description of King Nestor's cup in the *Iliad*. Grave IV (412)
Gold cup with repoussé decorationo f a leafy band. Grave IV (313)
Gold cup with a central ring. Grave IV (441)
Gold kylix decorated with embossed flowers. Grave IV (351)
6–7. Gold cups with horizontal grooves. Grave IV (392, 393)
Gold cup. Grave V (630)
Gold kantharos with two high handles. Grave IV (440)
Gold kylix with a single handle. Grave IV (427)
Gold amphoriskos with a lid. Grave IV (392)
Gold cup with vertical grooves. Grave IV (442)
13–14. Gold cups with arch decorations. Grave V (627, 628)

Grave Circle B of Mycenae

Grave Circle B was part of the prehistoric cemetery at Mycenae (end of 17th to 16th centuries BC), together with Grave Circle A. It was excavated by Ioannis Papadimitriou and Georgios Mylonas in 1952-1954. The graves most of which were

discovered unlooted- contained approximately thirty five inhumations of men, women and children. The men were aged between twenty three and thrity five years, and the women between thirty and thirty seven. Most male remains bore evidence of wounds, healed skull and spinal fractures, which together with indications of great physical strength, prove that they were involved in violent conflict.
The grave gifts from Grave Circle B are similar to those from Grave Circle A, although less opulent. They do include, however, some quite important artefacts, such as the death-mask made of electrum (gold and silver alloy), the amethyst seal stone with a representation of a male figure and the duck-shaped rock crystal vessel. The grave shifts are both local, that is of Middle Helladic tradition, and imported from Minoan Crete and the Cyclades. This mixture of diverse elements which characterises the period of the Mycenae shaft graves, contributed to the formation of Mycenaean Civilization

Religion

The Mycenaean religion adopted several aspects from Minoan Crete and the Near East but soon created its own characteristics. The pantheon includes Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Hermes and other gods who later were incorporated in the Olympic twelve gods, and deities that did not survive after the end of the Mycenaean period. The central divinity seems to have been Potnia (Mistress). She is depicted with wild animals, lions, chamois or birds, declaring her sovereignty over nature. In one case, she is wearing he typical wild boars' tusk helmet, as was goddess. The famous "ivory triad", a group of two females and a child, stands out among the representation of divinities.
The palace was the central worship place. The remains of sanctuaries and outdoors built altars are only a few. A whole complex of sanctuaries and auxiliary spaces have been excavated on the citadel of Mycenae, with ceremonial vessels and cult objects, like offering tables, large clay human- shaped figures, libation vases and clay snake models. Among the sacred symbols of the Mycenaean people are the double axe, the pair of horns of consecration, tripartite shrines and the figure-of-eight shield.
Priests and priestesses to a high social class, since they possessed land and slaves. They are depicted wearing long luxurious chitons, a fringed cloak or even the skin of an animal and are surrounded with various symbols. The ceremonies include large festivals like the "theophoria" (carrying cult images), vessels, rich textiles, wool, perfumed oil and sacrificial animals. Some signet rings depict ritual dances from men and women in open-air sanctuaries around the "sacred tree" a symbol of nature/divinity.

Finds from Graves A, Z, H, K, Grave Circle B at Mycenae (17th–16th century BC)
Clay pithos with white decoration on a dark background, an imitation of a Minoan vessel (8579)
Clay Minyan kylix. Minyan ware is unpainted pottery from the Middle Helladic period with a glossy surface. It was named after the mythical king of Orchomenos, Minyas, because the first examples were found there (8564)
Clay red juglet with white decoration (8566)
Silver jug, originally covered with fabric (8569)
Tall faience cup with relief vegetal decoration on the inside of the handle (8567)
6–7. Clay jugs, one with linear decoration and the other with spiral decoration on the shoulder (8667, 8669)
Ornate gold sheet "kneecap type" with embossed spiral decoration. The name is conventional, as many such sheets were found near the knees of the deceased (8559)

Ivory plaque fragment with a relief scene of men and a bull, possibly depicting a hunt or *taurokathapsia* (ritual bull-leaping games). At the bottom, Minoan religious symbols: a "sacred knot" and a sword (9562)
Gold ornament. Its ends curve inward, enclosing a bronze wire for fastening (8563)
11–12. Fragments of gold bands from diadems (8561, 8562)
Bronze sword of Type B with spiral decoration on the blade. Type B swords, shorter and sturdier than those of Type A, were more durable and are considered typical Mycenaean creations. Swords of both types were designed to pierce the body, not to slash it (8570)
14–15. Bronze spearhead and dagger (8574, 8578)
16–18. Bronze swords of Type A, one with silver rivets on the handle and spiral decoration on the blade. The Type A sword originates from Minoan Crete. It is among the most impressive swords of the Mycenaean world but less durable in combat due to weak hilt fastening, which is why it was soon replaced by the more advanced Type B sword (8572, 8666, 8573)
Bronze dagger (8668)
Bronze leaf-shaped dagger and two knives (8577, 8576, 8575)
Bronze pins, one with a rock crystal head (8568, 8565)

Costume and decoration

The frescoes of the large palatial centres (Mycenae, Tiryns, Thebes, Knossos) represent impressive ladies in public spectacles or rituals. They are all wearing colourful costumes- of linen or wool, that consist of an internal narrow bodice, a short vest with sleeves to the elbows that seems to emphasize their breasts, and long flounced skirt. Their long hair, an indication of wealth or social class, either falls on the front and the shoulders, or is tied up on large buns with a ribbon or a net. On the ivory handles of the mirrors, younger women perhaps, are depicted with short, curly hair.
The everyday dress however should have been different than the formal one, in order to meet more practical needs, since, as we know from Linear B tablets, part of the female population was engaged in handy work. Men are usually wearing a short chiton reaching the knees, or a short “skirt” and at least in some cases, boots, possibly of leather.
The favorite types of jewellery, worn mainly by women, were necklaces of various materials, metal bands and plair or flower- shaped pins for the decoration of the hair, earring and finger rings.
The thick, red lips, the intensively painted cheekbones and the eyes, underlined with black outline, of the female figures seen on the frescoes, indicate that the Mycenaean ladies had at their disposal a variety of pomanders and cosmetic paints, while there is also evidence for the use of perfumes and ointments.
The beauty case of the noble women included ivory jewellery boxes, combs with elaborate decoration, hair pins and bronze mirrors with ivory handles which were distributed as luxury items, throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

Art
Mycenaean art was based in the older Middle-Helladic tradition and received influences in the domains of technique and aesthetics from Minoan Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean. From the 15th century BC onwards, the Mycenaean craftsmen created artifacts exhibiting typical features: symmetrical setting of the decorative

subjects, depictions of hunting and war scenes and plain, stylized elements.

Pottery was mainly painted with scenes from nature but also from human life. Mural painters, probably organised in itinerant guilds, decorated palaces and sanctuaries, luxurious houses, majestic tombs and movable objects.
Sculpture is represented in Mycenae with the grave stelae of Grave Circle A. The few architectural reliefs, like the one decorating the Lions' Gate, are of monumental character. The single example of life-size sculpture so far is the head of the goddess or sphinx (imaginary creature), made of painted mortar. More popular are the large wheel- shaped figures and the thousands of hand-made figurines of humans and animals.
Minor arts are represented with artifacts of gold, silver, ivory, glass and semi-precious stones, manufactured in the palatial workshops as luxury items. On the seal stones and the gold signet rings, the Mycenaean artist managed to carve, in admirable manner, humans and animals in action, floral motives, mythical creatures and buildings.
Metalworking reached a high level of expertise with the acquisition of adequate quantities of metals from the Aegean and the overseas trade. Large and small utilitarian vessels were made of bronze, while of gold and silver were beaten luxurious drinking and ritual vases. The powerful weapons of nobles and officers were decorates with lavishness.
From the 13th century BC onwards, Mycenaean art, due to the increasing demand for artifacts, became formalised. During the 11th century BC, it was further simplified and gradually declined.

Bronze vessels and tools from Tombs III, IV, and V of Grave Circle A at Mycenae. 16th century BC.
The royal tombs—especially the richest, Tombs III, IV, and V—included as grave offerings an entire series of hammered bronze vessels: cauldrons, jugs, tripods, and large-sized kraters, only some of which are on display. The abundance of bronze vessels is indicative of the wealth of the Mycenaean rulers. Bronze was the primary metal used for the crafting of ornate weapons as well as tools, which were also considered worthy to accompany the dead. Notably, very few clay vessels—made of humbler material—were found in these same tombs.
Large bronze hydria (water jar). Tomb IV (604)
2–3. Bronze pan-shaped vessels, with horizontal or vertical handle. Tomb III (176, 175)
Bronze krater. Tomb IV (593)
5–6. Bronze cauldrons. Tombs III and IV (173, 577)
Bronze tripod vessel. Tomb IV (579)
Stone whetstone. Tomb IV (512)
Bronze peculiar tool (axe) with a shaft-hole for fitting a wooden handle and engraved spirals on one blade. Its use may have been ritual. Tomb IV (514)
Bronze tool in the shape of a three-pronged fork. Tomb IV (515)
11–14. Bronze knives. Tomb IV (457, 454, 458, 439)
15–18. Bronze chisels. Tombs IV and V (437, 438, 424, 773)

Exotic objects from Grave Circle A at Mycenae. 16th century BC.

The royal tombs contain significant artifacts and jewelry made from materials imported into the Greek mainland, such as electrum (amber, a resin from fossilized pine forests primarily from the Baltic region), semi-precious stones (carnelian, amethyst, rock crystal), ivory, ostrich eggs, and artificial materials (glass paste and faience, made from a mixture of quartz, lime, and soda) originating from Egypt or the Syro-Palestinian coast.
1–2. Curved and rectangular ivory combs with gold overlay. Tombs IV and V (310, 654)
3–5. Gold coverings from the backs of combs, two featuring repoussé depictions of felines. Tomb V (109, 292, 293)
Fragment of an ivory mirror handle with relief depiction of a lion. Tomb V (785)
Wooden pyxis (box) with applied ivory decoration of dogs. Tomb V (812)
Lid of a pyxis, likely wooden, made from gold sheet with repoussé decoration. Tomb IV (264)
Fragment of a wooden tripod table, the only surviving piece of furniture from the royal tombs. The preservation of wood from the Mycenaean period is rare—unlike in Egypt—due to the higher humidity levels. Tomb V (890, 891)
10–12. Necklaces made of carnelian. Tomb III (110, 111, 114)
Necklace and bead made of amethyst. Tomb III (111)
Rock crystal fittings. Tomb V (830, 831)
Necklace made of glass paste. Tomb I (209)
16–21. Necklaces and plaques made of electrum (amber). Tombs III and V (100, 101, 513, 758)
Fragment of an ivory pyxis with incised linear decoration. Tomb I (210

Neck of a jug made of faience. Tomb III (166)
Fragment of a small jug made of faience with relief decoration of a male figure wearing a helmet and holding a shield. Tomb III (123, 124)
Rhyta (ritual vessels) made from ostrich eggs, with added faience spout and gold base. The body of one is decorated with applied dolphins. Their final form was crafted in Minoan Crete workshops. Tombs IV and V (828, 567, 552)
Model of a triton shell made of faience. Triton shells were used in rituals as wind instruments to invoke the deity. Tomb III (166)
Unusual stone vessel in the shape of a human palm. Tomb III (164)
28–30. Three pairs of sacred knots, a religious symbol of Minoan Crete, made of faience with linear decoration. Tomb IV (553–553, 569, 571)
Faience ring. Tomb IV (565)
Rock crystal plaques, possibly inlays for precious furniture. Tomb IV (574)
Four rosettes with inlays, made of faience. Tomb IV (555, 565)

The Art of Fresco Painting

The art of fresco painting appears in Minoan Crete and is closely connected with the architecture of the palaces. Monumental painting is an official art form, practiced by artists who work in the service of the ruler. The subjects are drawn from the natural world or depict the religious rituals of the court.
After the settlement of the Mycenaeans at the end of the 15th century BC in the palaces of Knossos in Crete and the construction of Mycenaean palaces at Mycenae, Tiryns, Thebes, and Pylos, the art of fresco painting spread to mainland Greece.
The painter uses natural, earthy colours, mainly derived from metal oxides, for the paint, which is applied to wet plaster. Especially significant are the frescoes that covered the walls of the rooms in the Cult Center in the southwestern part of the

Acropolis of Mycenae, near Grave Circle A, dating to the 13th century BC. The decoration of these spaces included scenes of offerings to a female deity and figure-eight shields, a symbol of a war goddess.
1 Fragments of a fresco depicting a female figure participating in a procession heading toward the goddess, carrying offerings. Her elegant head is shown in profile, while the body is depicted frontally. In her raised left hand, she holds a lily flower as an offering to the deity (11651).
2 Fresco of the "Mycenaean Woman." The serious and majestic expression of her face reveals the formality of the moment and the prestige of the deity receiving the offerings of the worshippers. She displays a slight smile as she gazes at the necklace she is holding. Her attire consists of two parts: a transparent blouse that reveals the chest and a bodice with short sleeves. Her elaborate hairstyle and the richness of her jewelry (necklaces and bracelets) are particularly striking (11670).
3 Fresco depicting a figure-eight shield. Its decorative motifs on the surface indicate the cowhide from which such shields were made. Straps are visible in the center for hanging it. The figure-eight shield, a defensive weapon, appears to symbolize a war goddess. This theme appears in the monumental painting of Mycenae, but is also a common decorative motif in Mycenaean minor arts, where miniature figure-eight shields were made of gold, ivory, or semi-precious stones (11672).
4 Two fragments of a fresco that belong to the same composition. A seated goddess is depicted (one of her feet is shown resting on a footstool), holding a female figurine in her hand, a votive offering from worshippers. This unique depiction suggests the ritual use of the numerous female figurines found in Mycenaean sanctuaries (11635, 11636).
5 Fresco fragment from the "House of the Ramp" on the Acropolis of Mycenae, 14th century BC. It shows three women looking out from the windows of an elaborately decorated building. The festive nature of the scene and the women’s gestures of admiration and surprise suggest they are watching a ceremonial spectacle.
6 Fresco fragment depicting demons, possibly from a hunting scene. Three lion-headed demons are shown walking to the right, carrying a carrying-pole from which game animals would hang. The stylized rendering of their heads earned them the nickname "wine-jar heads." This type of demon originates in Egypt and is typically associated with vegetation rituals (2665).
7 Fresco fragment depicting a female figure wearing a helmet—a goddess—holding a griffin in mid-gallop. The boar’s tusk helmet is part of the typical gear of the Mycenaean warrior and is mentioned by Homer. The griffin (a mythical creature with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion), as a symbol of power, appears in Minoan-Mycenaean iconography, such as in the throne rooms of the palaces of Knossos and Pylos (11652).

The Acropolis of Mycenae

Heinrcih Schliemann’s 1876 excavations on the Mycenaean citadel brought to life before the astonished eyes of his contemporaries, a legendary world that formed the core of the Homeric epics. Christos Tsountas (1857-1934), Alan J. B Wace (1879-1957), Georgios Mylonas (1898-1988) and, in recent years, professor Spyridon Iakovidis are among those archaeologists who have carried on Schliemann’s great work.
The citadel, which covers a surface area of 30,000 sq. m, is surrounded by walls composed of huge boulders. According to Greek myth, the walls, like those of Tiryns, were built by the Cyclops, hence their name Cyclopian. The main entrance to the

acropolis, the monumental Lion Gate, is an impressive structure with a massive lintel and imposing relief decoration: two lions on either side of a column that symbolize the palace are represented in profile facing each other with their front paws resting on a smaller altar.

As the administrative, financial and religious centre for a wide region in the 14th and 13th centuries BC, the citadel included a palace, with the ruler's formal megaron (central building of the palace) at the top, shrines decorated with wall-paintings, artist's workshop and store-rooms. The palace maintained trade relations with the equivalent ruling centres of the Near East and Egypt, while the local goldsmiths, coppersmiths, ivory carvers, stone carvers and other craftsmen worked under the supervision of palace officials.

1. Rock crystal plaques, inlays from wooden furniture (2708)

2. Bone hair pins and needles (2565, 2608)

3,5. Ivory plaques decorated with spirals (1002, 1032)

4. Representation of the wing of a sphinx or griffin (2726)

6. Pommel of a sword, made of jasper (2689)

7. Bone pyxis with shell-shaped handles (2881)

8-9. Ivory female figurines, one of which is unfinished (2578, 8418)

10. Bronze handle with inlaid gold nautilus shells (2874)

11. Silver cup handle with rosettes (7639)

12. Bronze wing with gold decoration (7640)

13. Fragment of an ivory plaque (7103)

14. Ivory plaque: a griffin advancing in a rocky landscape (7634)

15. Gold palm tree-shaped bead with granulated decoration (2500)

16. Roundel and plaque with wild goats (1034, 1046)

17, 23. Ivory figure-of-eight shields (1027, 7102)

18. Glass sword scabbard revetment (3026)

19. Glass plaque in the shape of a human figure (2510)

20-22. Cut-out plaques in the shape of a fish, a lily and a waz-lily (1035, 2737, 3024)

24-25. Stone vases (7390,7389)

26. Pommel of a sceptre made of steatite (2546)

27-29. Steatite moulds for casting glass jewellery (eagle, waz-lily, tassel, cone, nautilus shell) (1018, 1019, 2567)

30. Stone vase with added neck and lid (7391)

31-32. Ivory plaques in the shape of figure-of-eight shields (7402, 7415)

33. Plaques in the shape of warrior heads with boar's tusk helmets (7393, 7414)

34. Plaques of figure-of-eight shield (7401,7406)

35-36. Inlays in the shape of helmets (7462, 7463)

37. Plaques with a band of half-rosettes (7494)

38-48. Inlays in various shapes (sea shells, columns, dolphins, nautilus shells, waz-lilies, rosettes, ivy leaves and altars)

43,46. Plaques depicting lions (7399, 7400)

49. Glass-paste plaque with relief decoration (7614)

Relation with the East and West

Egypt, the biblical land Canaan, the ports of Phoenicia (modern-day Lebanon), Syria and Cyprus, all had trading relations with the Mycenaean world. Ships crossed the Eastern Mediterranean, laden with both valuable objects and raw materials to be worked. Copper ingots, other metals, semi-precious stones, elephant ivory, Egyptian scarabs, ostrich eggs and possibly even cloths whelmed the Mycenaean world.

The Egyptians took an interest in the Mycenaean and their rise to power beginning in the 14th century BC. It is indicative that faience plaques, vessels and figurines with the cartouche of the Pharaohs Amenhotep II and Amenhotep III were brought to Mycenae, possibly by official Egyptian delegations.

Canaanite pointed- base amphorae were used to transport to Greece a number of goods, including resin, which was used for medical or cosmetic use, as well as in the preparation of wine. Mycenaen stirrup-jars were used for the transportation of perfumed oil throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. The Cypriot lamp discovered at Mycenae and the bronze tripod from the "Tiryns hoard" demonstrate the close relations between Greece and Cyprus, especially at the end of the Mycenaen period, when there was substantial Greek presence in the island.

The Telegram from Heinrich Schliemann to King George I

November, 16/28, 1876

Your Majesty, it is with great pleasure that I inform you that I have discovered the tombs which, according to Pausania's account, belong to Agamemnon, Cassandra and their comrades who were murdered by Clytaemnestra and her paramour, Aegisthus, during a feast. The tombs are enclosed with a double stone circle, something which would only have been erected in honour of exalted personages. Inside the tombs, I have discovered the fabulous treasures and ancient objects of solid gold. These treasures alone are enough to fill a large museum which will become the most famous in the world and will attract myriads of foreigners to Greece from every land. Since I work out of sheer love of science, I naturally make no claim on these treasures and enthusiastically make them over, in their entirely, to Greece. May these treasures be the foundation of immeasurable national wealth.

Christos Tsountas

From his book "Mycenae and Mycenaean civilisation", Athens 1893

"… a complete chapter of true history was added to the account of Greek civilisation, where formerly shadowy myths walked in a cloud of poeting fantasy, a chapter which though still almost completely lacking in names, was nonetheless inundated with objects."

The Palace at Pylos

The Mycenaean palace at Pylos, Messenia, is conventionally named "the Palace of Nestor" after the elderly king of Pylos who participated in the Trojan War and was much respected for his wisdom. The excavations, which the American archaeologist Carl W. Blegen (1887-1971) began in 1939, uncovered a Mycenaean palace on the peak of the Ano Eglianos hill, near modern-day Chora, which flourished in the 13th century BC.

This unfortified palace had a central courtyard with adjacent utility spaces. A small room near the main entrance to the courtyard contained the Linear B archive, which illustrates vividly the power of the palace as an administrative, economic, military and religious centre for Messenia. The tablets, together with a large number of clay sealings that were used to certify the commercial products, show that the king and palace officials administered the assets and controlled commercial activity over a wide region.

Linear B tablets

Linear B script has been proven to be the first form of Greek writing. IN 1900, Arthur Evans, recognised and named the script in the palace at Knossos in Crete, which was occupied by the Mycenaeans after 1450 BC. But the language of the Linear □ texts was not read until the greatest archive of clay tablets was discovered in the Mycenaean palace at Pylos in 1939. British architect Michael Ventris, with the assistance of philologists John Chadwick, deciphered Linear B in 1952 and showed that the tablets were written in an early form of Greek, earlier than that of the Homeric poems.

Linear B is a syllabic script, that is, each symbol corresponds to a certain syllable. It consists of approximately ninety syllabic signs, ideograms (every picture denotes a concept) and numerals. The palace kept these inscribed clay tablets, which were administrative documents such as lists, inventories and tax forms. These documents provide invaluable information on palace hierarchy, the professional and social classes, the trade and the production and manufacture of goods.

KOUROI

The kouros and the kore, two main free-standing statuary types that predominate in Archaic sculpture, are introduced in the second half of the 7th century B.C.
The kouros is the image of a naked youth. He is represented standing frontally, with one leg, usually the left one, advanced. The arms, straight or slightly bent, are lowered at his side, with the hands, clenched in a fist, resting by his thighs. With his heroic nudity, he epitomizes perpetual youthfulness, eternal beauty, the power, hope and bliss of life. Some kouroi, the earliest ones, are colossal in scale, full of splendour and divine majesty.
The subject of the kouros gave sculptors the opportunity to experiment with the rendering of the structure of the male body. The development in the rendering of anatomical details and musculature is observed from the earliest kouroi of Dipylon and Sounion, where anatomical details are conceived as individual forms and carved with linear grooves, to the last Attic kouros, Aristodikos, where the facial features are almost naturalistic and the muscles are rendered with flowing modelling.
The statuary type of the kouros will predominate in Greek art for approximately one hundred and thirty years and will reach its peak with the products of the Attic workshops of the 6th century BC.

Earlier on, all kouroi were termed “Apollos”, because a large number of them were discovered at the sanctuary of Ptoan Apollo in Boetia. The subsequent discovery of kouroi in other sanctuaries, such as that of Athena on the Athenian Acropolis, Poseidon at SOunion and Hera at Samos, as well as in cemeteries altered this view.

The kouroi that stood in sanctuaries were offerings to the divinity and represented either the donor himself or the god. Those that stood atop graves were memorial of the dead, recalling their former youthfulness and power.

10. Statue of a kouros. Naxian marble. Found in the sanctuary of Ptoan Apollo in Boetia. The soft modelling and the mild transition from one body part to another indicate that the statue comes from a Cycladic workshop. About the middle of the 6th century B.C.

71. Statue of a kouros. Naxian marble. Found in Athens, near the Kerameikos. He originally stood atop a grave. About 580 B.C.
2720. Statue of a kouros. Naxian marble. Found in Sounion. The statue was a votive offering to Poseidon and stood before his temple. Its over-lifesize scale is striking and testifies to the tendency of early Archaic sculptors to create an impressive colossal statues. About 600 B.C.
8. Statue of a kouros. Naxian marble. Found in Thera. Typical product of an island workshop. 590-570 B.C.

3645. Torso of a kouros. Island marble. Found in Sounion. The colossal statue was votive and originally stood before the Temple of Poseidon, along with the kouros Inv. no. 2720. About 600 B.C
3372, 3965. Head and lower right arm of a kouros. Island marble. Found in Athens, in the Kerameikos, near the Dipylon Gate. The fragments belong to a colossal statue. About 600 B.C.
4889. Statue of a kore. Parian marble. Found in Merenda (ancient Myrrhinous), Attica. The fully preserved statue stood atop a grave of Phrasikleia, as is indicated by the inscription on the pedestal. The expression of the face and the rendering of garments allows the curves of the body underneath are remarkable.

THE GROUP OF CULT STATUES IN THE TEMPLE OF DESPOINA AT LYKOSOURA

The temple of Despoina in the goddess's sanctuary at Lykosoura, Arkadia, contained a group of four larger than life-size statues by the famous Messenian sculptor Damophon, who was renowned for his skill in making acrolithic statues. The form and composition of the group is known both from its depiction on a coin issued by Megalopolis in the Roman imperial period, and from the extensive description by the travel writer Pausanias, who visited the sanctuary in the middle of the 2nd c. AD. Despoina and Demeter were shown seated on a shared throne at the centre of the composition. Demeter held a torch in her right hand and leaned on Despoina's shoulder with her left arm. Despoina held a sceptre and had the cista mystica on her knees. Next to Demeter, the goddess Artemis was depicted standing, accompanied by a hunting dog and dressed in a fawn-skin, as "Phosphoros" and "Kynegetis", holding a torch in one hand and two snakes in the other. Next to Despoina stood the armed Titan Anytos, who reared her, according to mythology. The throne was covered with cloth and had figures of Tritonesses carved in the round on the backrest and arms. The Kouretes were depicted on the goddesses' footstool, and the Korybantes on the base of the throne.

Together with the pedestal, the Lykosoura group was about 6 m. high, and was made of Doliana marble. The National Museum houses the heads of Demeter (inv. no. 1734), Artemis (inv. no 1735) and Anytos (inv. no. 1736), part of Despoina's himation (inv.no 1737) and four statues of Tritonesses (inv. no. 2171, 2172, 2174, 2175) that adorned the goddesses' throne. Parts of the torsoes and arms of the figures and parts of the throne are kept in the Lykosoura Museum. 190-180 BC.

GRAVE STELAEI

Already from the Mycenaean period the use of funerary monuments is attested for the graves of important personages, as is the case with the stelai discovered in the Grave Circle A at Mycenae. Our evidencefor the Early Geometric period is very limited, thus our knowledge for this period is scanty. In the Late Geometric period, in Attica at least, large vases, specifically amphoras and craters decorated with scenes depicting the prothesis, mourning and ekphora of the dead, function as funerary monuments. At the same time, small, plain rougly hewn stones are also used as grave marks.

From the 7th century B.C onward the commonest mark of the tomb is the stele, which is monumental in nature and bears relief, incised or painted decoration. The early stelai are tall and narrow and, on one side, represent the deceased. At top, they are crowned by a finial in the shape of a concave moulding, borrowed from Egyptian art. In the first quarter of the 6th century B.C the finial is low, while later on it becomes taller and bears incised or relief decoration with leaves, rosettes, guilloche, lotus flowers and, rarely, human figures. Atop the finial sits the demonic figure of a

Sphinx, the guardian of the tomb. Around 550 B.C the form of the finial becomes more elaborate, with double volutes that assume the shape of an inverted lyre. The Sphinx remains the principal element of the crowning. This type of stele predominates unitl approximately 525 B.C.

Around 530 B.C the overall form of the stele changes. It becomes lower and narrower, and the Sphinx on the finial is replaced by two double or single volutes from which sprouts a robust anthemion, under the influence of Ionian art. Many of these stelai bear painted decoration. Besides the deceased, various other symbols are represented, such as the horse, cock, dog and bands. At the bottom of the stele or in its base, the name of the dead appears in the possesive case. The largest and most important group of Archaic funerary stelai comes from Attica and bears primarily representations of atheltes and warriors, rarely of other figures.

Other areas also produce grave stelai, sometimes less impressive but of equal importance for the study of the various local sculpture workshops. In the Aegean islands and in Ionia the grave stelaei are smaller and invariably crowned by an anthemion in the 6th century, and represent various figures, such as youths, young women, children or elderly men.

The islands, Ionia and other areas of Greece produce grave stelai uninterruptedly. In Attica, however, the production of funerary stelai ceases around the end of the 6th century B.C., possibly after a prohibitve law by Kleisthenes aiming at curtailing the use of luxurious memorials. The reintroduction of funerary monuments in Athens takes place in the years of the Peloponnesian War, in the decade 430-420 B.C.

38. Fragment of a grave stele. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens, in the Kerameikos, near the Dipylon Gate. It belongs to the top of a tall stele and preserves the head of a discobolos. The quality of the carving and the projection of the head on the disc are striking. A splendid, lively work by the so-called "Master of the Rampin horseman". About 550 B.C

83. Fragmen of a grave stele. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens, in the Kerameikos, near the Dipylon Gate. It possibly belongs to the same stele as the fragment Inv. no 38. About 550 B.C

28. Statue of a Sphinx. Pentelic marble. Found in Spata, Attica. One of the earliest known Archaic Sphinxes, it was once used as finial of a grave stele. About 570 B.C

30. Grave stele. Pentelic marble. Found at Velanideza, Attica. The stele was painted; only the hosts of the motifs can now be made out. Depicted is the dead Lyseas in the guise of Dionysos' worshiper. He bears a vine wreath on his head, chiton and himation. He holds a kantharos (wine cup) in his right hand and laurel branch in his left. A galloping rider is depicted in a rectangular panel towards the bottom. According to the inscription carved on the base, the stele was ereceted by Semon on the grave of his son, Lyseas. About 500 B.C

31. Fragment of a grave stele. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens. It comes from a large stele representing a man. Today only the feet are preserved. The bottom of the stele bears the painted image of a rider against a red background. About 500 B.C.

The tholos tombs of Mycenae

Nine royal tholos tombs with a burial chamber in the shape of a beehive, were built in the immediate vicinity of the Mycenaean citadel in the 15th and 14th centuries BC. The most monumental of these are the so-called "Treasury of Atreus" and "Tomb of Clytaemnestra", with imposing facades, originally decorated with green serpentinite and red marble. These tombs were named after members of the Atreid dynasty, known to us from Greek mythology and ancient tragedy. They were plundered in

antiquity, but their characterisation as "treasuries" recalls the wealth of the grave gifts that they once contained.
The chamber tombs of Mycenae
Chapter tombs, dug on the hillsides surrounding the Mycenaen acropolis, were family tombs of both high-ranking officials and simple civilians. They date primarily to the palace period of the 14th and 13th centuries BC. Most of them were discovered intact and their many grave gifts (silver, bronze and stone vessels; gold signet rings and seals of semiprecious stones; gold, glass and faience jewellery; bronze weaponsl clay vases and figurines) provide ample information about Mycenaean society, social hierarchy, religious beliefs and foreign contacts.

THE BIRTH OF MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE

The 7th century B.C. is the most important period for the "renaissance" of Greek art. The extensive transformation of the political and social framework that had taken place in the 8th century B.C. created the need for the pursuit of new ways of artistic expression.
With the growth of the city-state, individual become aware of their personality and create monumental works of art, through which they express their power, personal character and ambitions.
In this period monumental sculpture emerges, the first large stone temples are built and painters began to depict the Greek myths on vases. At the same time, artists become aware of their own persoanlity and artistic merit and begin to sign their names on their creations.
As a rule, works of sculpture are large in scale, in contrast to the small figurines of the Geometric period. Size is not the only characteristic quality of monumental sculpture: there are also the substance of the works themselves and their essence. Their volume is incorporated in an organic synthesis. Sculptures are autonomous and "free" entities, not part of architectural creations, and exhibit a remarkable balance between external form and inner spirit. This is the expression of the "logos" that conditions the artist and his world.
The birth of monumental sculpture owes a lot to the East. The Greeks, who travelled extensively on account of trade with the Eastern kingdoms, were impressed by the scale of the statues in the Egyptian palaces. Instead of reproducing them mechanically and creating lifeless sculptures, they were inspired by them and created statues equally monumental in scale but adapted to their own artistic needs, using the bright, lustrous marble of the Greek islands.
There is no unanimity among scholars with respect to the particular place where the inception of Greek monumental sculpture took place. Various theories place the birth of Greek sculpture in Crete, Ionia, the Cyclades, and Northwestern Peloponnese. Most probably, all areas of the Greek world contributed to this phenomenon, Crete and the Cyclades perhaps leading the way.

THE DAEDALIC STYLE

The earliest phase of monumental sculpture, dating from the first quarter of the 7th century B.C., is conventionally termed Daedalic, after the legendary sculptor Daedalos who, according to tradition, was active in Crete.
The sculptures of this period and style are characterized by their austere, pronounced frontality. Three basic types of statuary predominate: The seated, draped female figure, with hands resting on her knees; the standing feamle figure, clad in a long

chiton belted tightly at the waist and decorated with incised motifs, which covers completely the form of the body underneath; and, finally, the naked standing male figure, namely the kouros.
All three statuary types share the triangular head with a flat face, which is framed by a wig-like hairstyle taking the shape of a triangle on either side of the face. The overall rendering of the forms is characterized by linearity and flatness. Toward the last quarter of the 7th century, forms become more cubial and, concommitant with the changes in the rendering of indivudal features, lead the way to Archaic art.

7+7a. Statue of a seated female (figure). Island marble. Found in Athens, near the Dipylon Gate. The statue was probably funerary. Early Archaic work, possibly carved by an island sculptor. About the end of the 7th century B.C.
57. Statue of a seated goddes. Local stone. Found at Agiorghitika, near Tripolis. The seated figure, an ordinary mortal or goddess, wears a chiton and mantle. The head and, particularly, the coiffure bear typical trats of the Daedalic style. About 630 B.C
2857, 2866, 2869, 2870, 4471. Fragments of five metopes. Limestone. From the temple of Athena on the Mycenae Acropolis. Warriors were depicted on Nr. 2857, 2866 and 4471. On Nr. 2870 the legs of a mythical monster with clawed hoofs lifting the body of a dead man (perhaps the Keres on the battlefield) are represented. The most important fragment Nr. 2869 depicts the upper body of a woman (probably a goddess) who draws her cloak over head, a gesture of modesty and rank, characteristic for the goddess Hera. Typical works of the daedalic style, probably made by corinthain artists. About 630-620 B.C.
733 Grave stele. Marble. Found in Larisa. The dead Polyxene (her name is inscribed on the ledft edge of the stele) stands to left. She wears a chiton and has a mantle drawn over he head. In her right hand she holds a pomegranate. Thessalian workshop. Ca. 440 BC.

126. Votive relief. Pentelic marble. Found in Eleusis. This is the largest and most important known votive relief. Dedicated to the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis it represents the Eleusinian deities in a scene of mysteriac ritual. At left, Demter, clad in a peplos and holding a sceptre in her left hand, offers ears of wheat to Triptolemos, son of the Eleusinian King Keleos, to bestow on mankind. At right, Persephone, clad in chiton and mantle and holding a torch, blesses Triptolemos with her right hand. The magnificence of the image and, votive dedication but rather associated with cult. The relief was apparently famous in antiquity and was copied in the Roman period. One of its copies is now in Metropolian Museum of Art in New York. Ca. 440-430 BC.

742. Grave stele. Boetian marble. Found in Thespiai, Boetia. It represents a naked youth with a mantle thrown over his shoulder. In his left hand he holds a strigil and a purse. A dog is represented at the bottom. The figure is probably an athlete. The inscription “greetings Agathokles”, preserved at the top of the stele, was probably inscribed at a later time. Boetian workshop. Ca. 440 BC.

129. Statuette of Athena. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens, near the Varvakeion school. Known as the “Varvakeion Athena”, this statuette is the truest and best preserved copy of the cult statue of the Athena Parthenos by Pheidias, which was erected in the Parthenon in 438 B.C. In the original, which was approximately twelve

times larger than Varvakeion copy the naked parts of the body were made of ivory, whereas the of the statue was faced with leaves of gold. First half of 3rd century A.D
231. Statue of the goddess Themis. Pentelic marble. Found at Rhamnous, Attica, in the small temple of Nemesis. The goddess wears a high-girt chiton, richly draped himation and sandals. The head is inlaid and the right arm was made of a separate piece of marble. Themis, daughter of Ouranos and Gaia, was goddess of justice and at Rhamnous she was worshipped in the same temple as Nemesis. According to the inscription on the front of the base, the statue was carved by CHairestratos of Rhamnous and was dedicated to Themis by Megakles. ABout 300 BC.

THE HELLENISTIC SCULPTURE

The Hellenistic periods is the interval between the rise to power of Alexander the Great in Macedonia and the whole of Greece (336 BC) and the naval Battle of Actium (31 BC).

As elected "strategos autocrator" of the Greeks, he set off on campaign to the East in 334 BC. The dissolution of the Persian kingdom and the conquest of Phoenicia, Egypt and India (334-323 BC) led to the cretation of a new empire, in which the Greek language and culture were disseminated and acquired an ecumenical character. The centres of development were transferred to the East, and the Greek city-states lost their autonomy and entered upon gradual political decline. The major political and cultural centres were now located in new areas and the fame and influence of the cities of the Greek homeland was reduced.

A change in art became evident from the 4th c. BC, as the three-dimensional was conquered, with the modelling of figures, which opened u easily in space. The work of two great sculptors, Praxiteles and Lyssipos, laid the foundation for later development.

The characteristic feature of the Hellenistic sculpture is its realism, expressed either in sculptures showing everyday occupations of ordinary people, or - reaching the point of excess- in representations of mythological scenes and heroes, full of passion, vigorous movement and theatricality. The clearest manifestation of realism, though, is found in the art of the portrait that began to flourish at the time of Alexander the Great and continued to do so under his successors, giving expression to their political ideology and aspirations. Portrayals of philosophers embody their teaching with admirable psychological insight, while realistic features intruded increasingly into portraits of individuals.

In addition to Athens, Rhodes, Alexandria, Pergamon and other cities in Asia Minor emerged as flourishing sculpture centeres in the Hellenistic period. A feature of the period was the mobility of the artist, which led to creative exchanges of repertoire and style. A large number of artists and their works are known to us : Skopas, Bryaxis, Doidalsas, Chairestratos, Damophon, Eukleides, Chares and Pasiteles are just a few of the sculptors who travelled to the courts of rulers or received commissions from wealthy private individuals and created super pieces of scultpure. These artists laid the foundation for a variety of expressive manners that exercised a profound influence on the sculpture of the Western World.

3335. Group of Aphrodite, Pan and Eros. Parian marble. Found in the "House of the Poseidoniastai of Beryttos" (Beirtu), Delos. Traces of colour can be made out in many places. The nude goddess Aphrodite attempts to fend off the goat-footed god Pan who makes erotic advances to her. She hold her sandal threatingly in her right hand, while the winged god Eros comes to her aid. According to the inscription on the base, the group was dedicated by Dionysios of Beryttos to his ancestral gods. About 100 BC.

X. 2322. Statue of the emperor Augustus (29 BC- AD 14). Bronze. Found in the Aegean sea between the islands of Euboea and Agios Efstratios. The emperor is depicted in mature age, mounting a horse. He wears a tunica with a vertical purple stripe (clavus purpurea) and a fringed paludamentum decorated with a maeande pattern. Iconographic features of the Prima Porta and Actium types are combined in this statue. The right hand is raised in a gesture of official greeting. The hilt of his sword can be seen below the left hand, in which he held the horse's reigns. On the bezel of his finger-ring a staff of divination (lituus) is engraved, symbolising the supreme religious office of Pontifex Maximus, assumed by Augustus in 12 BC. 12-10 BC.
3772. Double-sided herm of the philosopher Aristotle. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens. All that survives of the stele is the double head that topped it. The great philosopher from Stageira and teacher of Alexander the Great is rendered at an advanced age, with thin hair, small, reflective eyes, pronounced cheek bones and sunken cheeks. Roman copy of an original carved about 325-300 BC.
384. Herm portrait of the kosmetes Heliodoros. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens The inscription carved on the front of the stele records the decision by the authorities to award honours to the ksometes Heliodoros, prescribes the kind of dedication, and states the reason for its erection. There follows a reference to the eponymous archon and a list of trainers and youths. AD 100-110.
387. Herm portrait of the kosmetes Onasos. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens. In the portrait head of the komsetes the treatment of the hair and beard follows Classical models and recalls portraits of Aeschylus. According to the inscription at the top of the stele, the group of youth undertook to erect the herm portrait in honour of the kosmetes. AD 129-138.
3729. Colossal portrait head of the emperor Hadrian (AD 117-138). Pentelic marble. Found in Athens. The emperor wears a wreath of oak leaves that end above his forehead in a medallion representing an eagle. The holes in the hoop of the wreath were used to inlay golden leaves. AD 130-140.
417. Portrait bust of Antinoos. Thasian marble. Found at Patras. The youth Antinoos of Bithynia, in Asia Minor was the favourite of the emperor Hadrian. After he drowned in the river Nile in AD 130, Hadrian had him deified and erected numerous statues, busts and portraits of him in cities and sanctuaries throughout the Roman empire. AD 130-138.
1465. Stele with an ephebic list. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens. The relief representation at the top of the stele depicts the kosmetes Aurelius Dositheos, flanked by two youths who crown him, each holding a palm branch, a symbol of victory. The inscription occupying the larger part of the stele contains a list of the officials of the Gymnasium and the ephebes, by tribe. At the bottom of the stele are depicted relief ships, denoting the "naval battle" contest in which the ephebes had participated. About 212/13 AD.
1484. Stele with an ephebic list. Pentelic marble. Found in Athens. At the top of the stele is a depiction of a kosmetes between two youths crowning him. The inscription mentions the names of the kosmetes (Archelaos son of Apollonios from Piraeus), of the ephebes and the gymnasium officials. AD 139/40
Local red-figure workshops that imitated contemporary Attic pottery were founded at Corinth at the end of the third quarter of the 5th c. BC. This period coincides with the Peloponnesia War, which created difficulties for trade with Athens and probably obliged the Corinthians to manufacture their own pottery to cover local needs. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Attic imports never ceased.

Since the clay of Corinth had a pale yellowish colour, Corinthian potters resorted to the use of miltos (red ochre) to cover the reserved surfaces of their vases and give them the desired red colour that would make them resemble Attic pots.
The clumsy drawing observable on the early Corinthain red-figure vases was rapidly overcome, giving way to confidently and carefully drawn products. To the very end, however (towards the middle of the 4th c. BC), Corinthian red-figure pottery was characterised by a pronounced conservatism, with virtually no use of added colours of gilding, and a compete lack of daring with regard to placing the figures in different planes.
In addition to Corinth, red-figure pottery has been found at Perachora, the Argive Heraion, Mycenae and Olympia.

ATTIC RED-FIGURE POTTERY OF THE EARLY CLASSICAL PERIOD (480/475-450 BC)
In the Early Classical period (480/475-450 BC) vase painting used the achievements of the art of the Archaic period to give expression to a new ethos. One of the most important vase-painters of the Early Classical period was the Pistoxenos Painter (15190, case 96). Strich adherence to Archaic models of anatomy and clothing was abandoned and with it delicacy of drawing. The representations are informed by severity and grandeur. The corresponding current in sculpture is called the Severe Style.
Despite this, many of the painters of large vases still persisted with the old style of the Pioneers, though they used it in a sterile, affected manner. The Pain Painter (9683, case 105)) stands out amongst these mannerists, as they are called, for the variety and vitality of his subject. The workshop of the mannerists was to survive until the end of the 5th c. BC.
During this period, the influence of monumental painting on vase-painting was particularly strong. The wall-paintingg by Polygnotos of Thasos and Mikon of Athens, which are known only from descriptions, influenced some of the vase-painters of this period, who placed their figures in different planes, achieving a first rendering of depth and space (17469, case 119).
Attic Vases of the Early Classical Period (480–450 BC)
Red-figure hydria. Boreas pursues Oreithyia. From Athens (Liosia). By the Pan Painter. Circa 470 BC. (13119)

Red-figure trefoil oinochoe. A bride is followed by a bridesmaid holding a ribbon. On the right, possibly the groom and his mother. From Athens. By the Boreas Painter. 470–460 BC. (14054)

Red-figure lekythos. A siren sits on a rock playing a double aulos. From Athens. By the Pan Painter. 475–450 BC. (1602)

White-ground pyxis. The abduction of the Leucippides by the Dioscuri. In the center, the chariot of Eos or Helios. Possibly depicting preparations for the abduction of Thetis by Peleus, with the goddess and her companions present. In the center, Europa on the bull. Possibly from Attica. By the Sotheby Painter. 460–450 BC. (2350)

Red-figure kylix-skyphos. Dionysus and a satyr. From Athens. By the Athens 1237 Painter. Circa 450 BC. (1237)

Red-figure pyxis.
A. Heracles and Nereus.
B. Peleus and Thetis.
Unknown provenance. By the Pistoxenos Painter. Circa 465 BC. (2192)

White-ground kylix. On the interior, the death of Orpheus. The divine musician defends himself by raising his lyre against a raging Thracian woman poised to strike him with an axe. From the Acropolis. By the Pistoxenos Painter. 470–460 BC. Acropolis 439.

White lekythos. A man leaning on a staff. From Ithaca. In the style of the Providence Painter. 450–460 BC. (13260)

White lekythos. Nike. From Lavrion. By the Providence Painter. 470–465 BC. (1806)

Red-figure pelike.
A. Maenad, satyr, and a deer.
B. Satyr attacking a Maenad.
Unknown provenance. By the Nausicaa Painter. Circa 450 BC. (1687)

Red-figure hydria. Departure of a youth. From Athens (Brahami). In the style of the Niobid Painter. 475–450 BC. (1261)

Attic red-figure pelike.
On the main side, the Gigantomachy—the fierce battle between the gods of Olympus and the Giants. Ares and the Dioscuri attack from above, while the Giants defend themselves with their backs turned to the viewer. The dynamic movement and bold innovations of the vase painter, such as depicting figures from the back with the necessary foreshortening to convey spatial depth, emphasized through the arrangement of the figures on two levels, suggest a painter of the late 5th century BC, clearly inspired by a contemporary major artwork.
On the reverse side, youths. From Tanagra. In the style of the Pronomos Painter. Circa 400 BC.