A Walk through the Past: Toward the Study of Archaeological Museums in Italy, Greece, and Israel

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Fig. 2.1. Rome, Roman National Museum – Palazzo Altemps
Southeast corner and visitors' entrance, January 2011
Fig. 2.2. Rome, Roman National Museum – Palazzo Altemps

Plan, ground floor (after De Angelis d'Ossat, *Scultura antica*, 30)
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Room of Ulysses and Polyphemus, north side
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Main staircase, stairs between the first and the second floor
First flight of steps, view upwards
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Main staircase, stairs between the first and the second floor
Middle landing and second flight of steps, view upwards
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Main staircase, second floor landing and relief with *loutrophoros*
View from the stairs between the second and the third floor (closed to visitors)
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Plan, second floor (after De Angelis d'Ossat, *Scultura antica in Palazzo Altemps*, 31)
Fig. 2.44. Rome, Roman National Museum – Palazzo Altemps

Southern Balcony, east end
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Room of Public and Private Cults or Room of the Young Bull, northeast corner
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Statues of Herakles resting and of Asklepios
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Room of the Painted Perspectives
Southeast corner
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Room of the Painted Perspectives
Southwest corner
Composite work
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Room of the Painted Perspectives, west side
Composite work and statue of Hermes with modern head removed
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Room of the Painted Perspectives
Northwest section
Statue of Hermes with modern head removed
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Room of the Painted Perspectives
North side
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Antechamber of the Four Season, southwest corner
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Chamber of the Cardinal, detail of the decorated upper walls
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“Studiolo della Clemenza,” view east and entrance to the Painted Balcony
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Painted Balcony, view east
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Painted Balcony, east end
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Painted Balcony, entrance to the Hall of the Gaul
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Room of the “Small Ludovisi,” northwest section
Statue of a seated man wearing a toga and “Small Ludovisi” sarcophagus
The torchbearer before the doorway had been temporarily removed for an exhibition when the picture was taken (January 2011)
Fig. 2.84. Rome, Roman National Museum – Palazzo Altemps
Room of the Obelisks, west side
Groups composed by a female and a sylvan creature
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Room of the Obelisks, east side
Statues of Muses and entrance to the Hall of the Gaul
Fig. 3.1. Map of central Bologna (after Guida d'Italia – Emilia-Romagna, 5th ed.)
The squares mark the locations of the Palazzo Poggi (top right) and of the Palazzo Galvani (center)
Fig. 3.2. Bologna, view of the City Archaeological Museum from Piazza Maggiore
Fig. 3.3. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum. Plan, 1871 (after Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, *Dalla Stanza delle Antichità*, 267 no. 164).

In its first incarnation, the museum was arranged in five rooms on the upper floor of the Palazzo Galvani, along its front and part of one side.
Fig. 3.4. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Project for the new museum by Edoardo Brizio, 1878, upper floor (after Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, *Dalla Stanza delle Antichità*, 359-360 no. 186.2)
Fig. 3.5. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum. Project for the new museum by Luigi Frati, 1878, ground floor (after Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, *Dalla Stanza delle Antichità*, 360-361 no. 186.3).
Fig. 3.6. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Project for the new museum by Luigi Frati, 1878, upper floor (after Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, *Dalla Stanza delle Antichità*, 360-361 no. 186.3)
Fig. 3.7. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room VIII, detail of cabinet

The red and blue tags attached to the artifacts indicate their provenance (University or Palagi collection)
Fig. 3.8. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Final plan, 1881, ground floor (after Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, *Dalla Stanza delle Antichità*, 362-363 no. 187.1)
Fig. 3.9. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Main courtyard with epigraphical collection and staircase
Fig. 3.10. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum

Staircase
Fig. 3.11. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum. Final plan, 1881, upper floor (after Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, *Dalla Stanza delle Antichità*, 362-363 no. 187.1).
Fig. 3.12. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room X, view from the west end
Fig. 3.13. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Ground floor, casts collection, view from the atrium (in the center is the copy of the “Athena Lemnia,” as reconstructed by A. Furtwängler)
Fig. 3.14. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room X, plan of the wall paintings (the names refer to the tombs from which the paintings were copied; after Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, *Dalla Stanza delle Antichità*, 366)
Fig. 3.15. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room II (Prehistoric comparanda), north and east sides
Fig. 3.16. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room II (Prehistoric comparanda), south and west sides
Fig. 3.17. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum

Room VI, detail of the old arrangement with the head of “Athena Lemnia” and the copy of the reconstructed statue (after Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, *Dalla Stanza delle Antichità*, 457)
Fig. 3.18. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Plan, 1914, ground floor (after Ducati, Guida)

MUSEO CIVICO

PIANO TERRENO

I — Atrio.
II — Primo cortile.
III — Sala dei frammenti architettonici.
IV — Vestibolo del secondo cortile.
V — Secondo cortile.
VI — Museo del Risorgimento.
Fig. 3.19. Bologna, C. A. M. Plan, 1914, upper floor (after Ducati, Guida).

The arrows show the two main itineraries within the ancient section (continuous = local antiquities, dashed = historical collections).
Fig. 3.20. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room X, east end and entrance to the annex housing the San Francesco bronze deposit (former room Xb)
Fig. 3.21. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Plan, 2010 (museum brochure)
Fig. 3.22. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Egyptian section, main gallery, view from the east end
Fig. 3.23. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Egyptian section, side gallery
Fig. 3.24. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum

Entrance to room III (formerly part of the Egyptian section, now housing materials from Verucchio)

The case with the goods from the “princely” grave is visible through the doorway.
Fig. 3.25. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum

Entrance to room IX from room X, January 2010 (room IX was under renovation, and movement through it was partially restricted, although all the other galleries were open)
Fig. 3.26. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room I (Prehistoric collections), view west towards the theatrical area
Fig. 3.27. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room I (Prehistoric collections), view east from the theatrical area
Fig. 3.28. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum

Room I, east end, horse skeletons and entrance to Room II
Fig. 3.29. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room I, east end, horse skeletons and entrance to room X
Fig. 3.30. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room X, side arm (former room Xa [Villanovan period]), view from the south end
Fig. 3.31. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room X, side arm (former room Xa [Villanovan period]), view from the north end
Fig. 3.32. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room X (Etruscan period), western half
Fig. 3.33. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room X (Etruscan period), west end
Bust of Edoardo Brizio above the case with the assemblage from the Etruscan “Tomba Grande”
Fig. 3.34. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum

Entrance to room V from room VI (formerly part of the Egyptian section, now housing the head of the “Athena Lemnia” and other small Greek artifacts)
Fig. 3.35. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room V, view from the northeast corner
Fig. 3.36. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room VI (Greek collection), view from the southeast corner
Fig. 3.37. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room VI (Greek collection), central case
Fig. 3.38. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room VI (Greek collection), view from the northwest corner
The head of the “Athena Lemnia” seems to embrace the whole gallery and to meet the gaze of any visitor who enters it.
Fig. 3.40. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room IX (Roman collection), view from the northwest corner
Fig. 3.41. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room IX (Roman collection), view from room VII
The doorway at the back (now blocked) gave access to room IV, which is no longer part of the museum.
Fig. 3.43. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum

Rooms VII-VIII, view from room VI
Fig. 3.44. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum
Room VIII (Etruscan and Italic collections), view from room VII
Fig. 3.45. Bologna, City Archaeological Museum Plan, 2009 (after Morigi Govi, *Guida al Museo Civico*, inside front cover)
Fig. 4.1. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna)

Aerial view of the old town with location of Porta Garibaldi (Archeological Environmental Museum)

Image © Foto GianCarlo Risi
Fig. 4.2. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Porta Garibaldi.
Fig. 4.3. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum

Plan (after Pancaldi, Marvelli and Marchesini, *Guida al Museo Archeologico*, 50)
Fig. 4.4. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum Eastern pier, ground floor
Introduction to the museum and to its contents
Fig. 4.5. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum Third floor, central corridor, view west – The signs on the door in the foreground point to the “Roman section” (above, red) and to the “medieval section” (below, blue)
Fig. 4.6. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum
Third floor, central corridor, view east
Fig. 4.7. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum Third floor, Roman section, first room
Fig. 4.8. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum
Third floor, medieval section, second room
Fig. 4.9. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum
Third floor, medieval section, third room
The sign on the gate indicates the way to the “Renaissance section” (green), while the faded one above the doorway (“Women”) refers to its previous function.
Fig. 4.11. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum Western pier, second floor (Renaissance section), central room
Fig. 4.12. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum Western pier, second floor (Renaissance section), northern room
Fig. 4.13. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum Western pier, second floor (Renaissance section), southern room
Fig. 4.14. San Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna), Archaeological Environmental Museum Western pier, ground floor, guestbook and lecture room
**Fig. 6.1.** Athens, National Archaeological Museum

First proposed plan and sketch of the museum by the German architect Leo von Klenze, 1836 (after Kaltsas, *The National Archaeological Museum*, 16)
Fig. 6.2. Athens, National Archaeological Museum
Drawing for the museum by the German architect Ludwig Lange, initially followed in the construction of the building (after Kaltsas, *The National Archaeological Museum*, 17)
Fig. 6.3. Athens, National Archaeological Museum  
Plan of the museum by the German architect Ludwig Lange, initially followed in the construction of the building (after Kaltsas, *The National Archaeological Museum*, 17)
Fig. 6.4. Athens, National Archaeological Museum
Drawing of the façade by the German architect Ernst Ziller, who amended Lange's design (after Kaltsas, The National Archaeological Museum, 18)
Fig. 6.5. Athens, National Archaeological Museum
Plan of the museum by the German architect Ernst Ziller, who amended Lange's design (after Kaltsas, *The National Archaeological Museum*, 18)
Fig. 6.6. Athens, National Archaeological Museum
The museum and its environs at the time of its opening in 1889 (after Kaltsas, *The National Archaeological Museum*, 14)
Fig. 6.7. Athens, National Archaeological Museum

Plan showing the three rooms added to the museum between 1903 and 1906 (after Baedeker, _Greece: Handbook for Travellers_, 80)
Fig. 6.8. Athens, National Archaeological Museum

Pre-World War II exhibit
Room II (Mycenaean Hall, corresponding to western and central section of current room 4; after Kaltsas, *The National Archaeological Museum*, 20-21)
Fig. 6.9. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Pre-World War II exhibit
Room VIII or “Room of Poseidon” (present room 13), dedicated to “works of the Alexandrian and
Roman times” (erga Alexandrinon kai Romaikon chronon; after Kaltsas, The National Archaeological
Museum, 19)
Fig. 6.10. Athens, National Archaeological Museum

Preparing for war at the museum (1940)
The *kouros* from Sounion is being readied to be stowed away for safekeeping (after Kaltsas, *The National Archaeological Museum*, 23)
Fig. 6.11. Athens, National Archaeological Museum
Preparing for war at the museum (1940)
Sculptures are being hidden below the floors of the galleries (after Kaltsas, *The National Archaeological Museum*, 22)
Fig. 6.12. Athens, National Archaeological Museum

Plan of the ground floor after World War II (after Karouzou, National Archaeological Museum – Collection of sculpture, xx)
Fig. 6.13. Athens, National Archaeological Museum
Façade and garden, 2008
Fig. 6.14. Athens, National Archaeological Museum Plan, 2011 (museum brochure)

The spaces occupied by the various collections are distinguished by color. The three larger sections are indicated in cream (Prehistory), light blue (Sculpture), brick red (Ceramic); various colors are used for the galleries dedicated to the Minor Arts
Fig. 6.15. Athens, National Archaeological Museum
Ground floor, prehistoric galleries
Room 4 (Mycenaean period), view from the main entrance (room 2)
Fig. 6.16. Athens, National Archaeological Museum
Ground floor, prehistoric galleries
Room 6 (Cycladic period)
Fig. 6.17. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries
Line of doorways giving access to rooms 7, 8 (where the *kouros* from Thera and the torso
from Sounion are visible), 11 and 13; the last entrance frames the *kouros* from Kea.
Fig. 6.18. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries Room 7 ("Daedalic" art), western section Kore of Nikandre surrounded by sculptures in the same style
Fig. 6.19. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries Room 7 (“Daedalic” art), eastern section
Dipylon amphora surrounded by smaller Geometric vases
Fig. 6.20. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries Room 8 (Archaic sculpture), entrances to rooms 11 and 13 – The kouroi from Thera and Kea appear once again in the foreground and at the very back, while the kouros from Melos, the kouros of Volomandra, and the Nike of Archermos become visible in room 11
Fig. 6.21. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries Room 11 (Archaic sculpture), western section – Statue of Phrasikleia and accompanying kouros, surrounded by reliefs and sphinxes in a symmetrical arrangement
Fig. 6.22. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries Room 13 (Archaic sculpture), view north coming from room 11
*Kouros* from Kea and *kouros* of Anavyssos
Fig. 6.23. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries Room 13 (Archaic sculpture), view east – A group of statues on the left (the kouros from Kea [fig. 6.22], the kouros of Anavyssos and a kouros from the sanctuary of Ptoan Apollo) and a row of smaller statues on the right direct the gaze towards the kouros of Aristodikos
Fig. 6.24. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries Room 13 (Archaic sculpture), northwest corner and entrance to room 12 (closed during winter, when the picture was taken)
Fig. 6.25. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries
Entrances to rooms 14 and 15, view from the east end of room 13, behind the screen against which the *kouros* of Aristodikos is placed; the second doorway frames the Zeus from Artemision
Remains from the sanctuary of Aphaia on Aegina
Fig. 6.27. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries
Room 15 (Severe Style), view east
First group of three works around which the gallery is arranged (disc fragment from Melos, relief with self-crowning athlete, Zeus from Artemision
Fig. 6.28. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries Room 15 (Severe Style), eastern section
Second group of three works around which the gallery is arranged ("Omphalos Apollo," young *Splanchnoptes*, Eleusinian relief)
Fig. 6.29. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries
Room 15, southeast corner – Line of doorways crossing the eastern side of the sculpture ring
(rooms 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28) and framing funerary and votive monuments
Fig. 6.30. Athens, National Archaeological Museum – Ground floor, sculpture galleries
Room 16 (Classical funerary monuments), central and eastern sections
Group of three marble *lekythoi* surrounded by reliefs
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A Walk through the Past:
Toward the Study of Archaeological Museums in Italy, Greece, and Israel

by

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ABSTRACT

Archaeological museums and museum displays help to broadcast ideological statements, particularly concerning the formation of national identities, yet the ways in which the messages being transmitted have been articulated within the actual spaces devoted to the display of artifacts are still far from being thoroughly studied. More specifically, little attention has been dedicated to some of the most immediate means through which a museum interprets the past for the modern-day visitor, such as its plan, the arrangement of its collections in the galleries, and its visiting paths.

The dissertation examines the physical features a group of archaeological museums in Italy, Greece, and Israel, three countries which became independent less than two centuries ago, and discusses how they shape the visitor's perception of the artifacts and encourage him or her to see them as elements of a meaningful narrative. The research embraces institutions of different scope and size (national, regional, local), and considers the history of each display, not just its present appearance. The following museums are analyzed: in Italy, the branch of the Roman National Museum installed in the Palazzo Altemps, the City Archaeological Museum in Bologna, and the Archaeological Environmental Museum in San Giovanni in Persiceto, near Bologna; in Greece, the National Archaeological Museum in Athens and the archaeological museums in Nafplio and Atalanti; in Israel, the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem and the Archaeological Museum Beit Miriam, Kibbutz Palmachim.
Reviewing the individual museums and establishing comparisons among them allows to address several important questions: the function of archaeology and its display in national states, especially when they have to incorporate an ancient and distinguished past in their process of self-definition; the sometimes tense cohabitation of artifacts entering museums as part of collections and objects discovered in excavations; the different ways of dealing with visitors, as expressed for example in rules and regulations concerning visits, and the behavior expected from them, sometimes not too different from the conduct associated with places of worship; the practical issues and challenges faced by museums, such as availability of space, distribution of weight, lighting, and climatic conditions.
To my parents and my sister, for their unwavering support
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PREFACE

When I arrived at Bryn Mawr in the fall of 2003, I was far from imagining that my dissertation would have dealt with archaeological museums. My general intention was rather to continue working on Attic vase painting, my main field of research during my undergraduate and graduate studies in Italy, or to choose a topic related both to ancient literature and to archaeology, to take advantage of the broad exposure to Greek and Latin literary sources received in my home country as part of my training as an archaeologist.

My plans changed radically already during my first semester, when I took part in a seminar on “The Concept of Style,” which can be said to have laid the foundation for the present work. The review of a wide range of theoretical perspectives during the course, and especially the examination of the attempts to find connections between style and national character in the nineteenth century, and of their influence on the formation of archaeology as a discipline, led me to develop a keen interest in the history and historiography of art and archaeology. Other courses offered in the following years, such as “Archaeological Method and Theory,” “Archaeology of Macedonia,” “Greece and the Near East,” and “Interpreting Mythology,” expanded my knowledge of the subject and gave me many opportunities to think about the relationship between archaeology and storytelling. The issues brought forward in the seminars, together with the impression produced by recent historical events, such as the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans that marked the end of the twentieth century, encouraged me to study how archaeological sites and artifacts have been used – and are being used – to create narratives about the past,
often for the purpose of backing political claims. The first result of my work on this subject is represented by my master's thesis on “The Modern Interpretations of the ‘Dorian Invasion,’” which describes how the significance assigned to texts and artifacts in determining the causes of the collapse of Mycenaean civilization shifted over time, and how scholars increasingly backed away from the hypothesis of a foreign invasion to explain it, especially after the defeat of Nazi Germany, which had adopted the Dorians as ethnic and spiritual ancestors.

The specific topic of the dissertation finds its immediate roots in my participation in the Regular Program of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens during the academic year 2007-2008, and more specifically in the numerous visits to archaeological sites and museums throughout Greece that form an essential component of the program. Those peregrinations made me increasingly aware that museums, far from being inert containers of their collections, have distinct personalities, which visitors are expected to recognize and heed in their behavior, and that displays of archaeological artifacts can serve as crucial channels for the diffusion of political and ideological messages. After returning to Bryn Mawr, I sought to obtain a more precise knowledge of the challenges faced by museums in interacting with their audience. To this end, I held a Curatorial Internship in the year 2009-2010, working in the archives of the University of Pennsylvania Museum for one semester and in the College Collection for another, and audited a graduate seminar on “Curatorial Issues” offered in the spring of 2011.

I decided to concentrate my research on Italy, Greece, and Israel because they are the contexts I feel most familiar with, but also because I have the impression that their specific attitudes towards archaeological museums have not received the attention they
deserve in current scholarship, especially in the English-speaking world. The kind of
analysis I propose is independent is not tied to any specific national context, however,
and can be easily applied to the study of similar institutions in other countries.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am extremely grateful to the personnel of the various museums which form the object of this dissertation for the help received in gathering the necessary textual and photographic documentation. I especially appreciate the willingness of the staff to share observations, insights, and anecdotes which shed light on the everyday life of a museum better than any publication. In particular, I wish to thank Alessandra Capodiferro and Letizia Rustico (Roman National Museum – Palazzo Altemps); Anna Dore, Federica Guidi, and Laura Minarini (City Archaeological Museum, Bologna); Silvia Marvelli, Director of the Archaeological Environmental Museum in San Giovanni in Persiceto, and her collaborators; Alexandra Christopoulou (National Archaeological Museum, Athens); Evangelia Pappi (Archaeological Museum, Nafplio); Eleni Zahou (Archeological Museum, Atalanti); Filip Vukosavovic and Carolyn Ben-David (Bible Lands Museum, Jerusalem); and Dror Porat (Archaeological Museum Beit Miriam, Kibbutz Palmachim).

I also wish to express my gratitude to the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens, the Mitrou Archaeological Project, and the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem for their logistic support during my research trips to Greece and Israel. Funding for the trips and for other expenses related to this project came from a Mrs. Giles Whiting Fellowship in the Humanities.

At Bryn Mawr, my thanks go above all to my advisor, A. A. Donohue, to the members of my Dissertation Committee, and to the faculty members and the graduate
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I wish also to thank my relatives and friends in Italy, whose friendship and support have always accompanied me despite the long periods of physical separation, and all the people in the United States who contributed to make the transition to a different way of living and learning as smooth as possible. I am especially indebted to Lea Miller and Teri Lobo, for their assistance with the administrative matters related to my progress in the program; to Li-Chen Chin and Theresa Cann, former and current Directors of the Office of International Programs, and to Patti Lausch, International Student Advisor, for their help in dealing with immigration and tax regulations; and to many other friends who offered me sympathy and advice, particularly former graduate students Andrea De Giorgi and Victoria Tsoukala, Diana Douglass and her family, and the faculty of the Department of Italian at Bryn Mawr College.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my parents, Luigi and Giovanna, for being always prepared to let me follow my aspirations, wherever they would take me, and to my sister Sara and my brother-in-law Arieh, for acquainting me with the American system of higher education, and for convincing me that earning a doctoral degree abroad was a goal
worth pursuing. Their constant care, and the joy brought in the lives of all of us by my nieces, Hallel, Neta, and Ayana, gave me the strength and confidence necessary to complete this long but rewarding journey.
INTRODUCTION

In his book *The Birth of the Museum*, Tony Bennett quotes an instruction directed to the visitors of the 1901 Pan-American Exposition: “Please remember when you get inside the gates you are part of the show.”\(^1\) Although the quip refers to a rather distinctive setting, it serves well to express the idea that going to a museum to see a permanent collection or a temporary exhibition does not mean being passive recipients of a sealed ideological package delivered by the powers that be for their own interests. In fact, the role of the public in constructing the meaning of what is placed before them, for themselves and for others, should never be underestimated. To borrow a comment which Ian Hodder and Scott Hutson apply to buildings or architectural complexes found in archaeological excavations, but which can be easily extended to museums (and to archaeological sites open to the public), an exhibit provokes contrasting responses among those who experience it at the very moment it strives to send a seemingly unifying message.\(^2\) Realizing that it is possible to react to an exhibit in a variety of ways is particularly important in the case of the display of archaeological artifacts, given their reputation of supposedly “objective” witnesses to past human life.

Scholarly discussion tends to group choices and practices related to the foundation and development of archaeological museums under very broad labels, such as nationalism. Nationalism has been identified as a powerful drive behind the growth of

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archaeology as a discipline, indeed, and the influence of nationalist concepts can be recognized in the way a country manages and displays its archaeological heritage. However, when one examines how the attempt to enlist the past in the creation of a national identity manifests itself in physical form, through the creation of places where a supposedly shared ancestry is made visible, rather than looking at it in theoretical terms, the use of nationalism as a blanket to explain any choice related to museums appears inadequate and in need of a reassessment. One factor that has hindered this undertaking is that, although it has been repeatedly observed how museums and museum displays help to broadcast ideological messages and to uphold specific worldviews, the various ways in which the messages being transmitted have been articulated within the actual spaces devoted to the display of artifacts are still far from being thoroughly studied. While the role of archaeology in the formation of a national idea – or in the efforts to undermine it – has been often emphasized and studied in different social and political contexts, the means through which such goals are pursued in practice often seem to be passed over in silence or, at best, are referred to in a sparse and anecdotal manner, which reveals the potential value of looking at archaeological museums, but leaves this source of wealth largely untapped.

The core of the present work consists of an analysis of a small number of

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3 See for example the articles collected in Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett, eds., Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology (Cambridge, 1995) and in Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Timothy Champion, eds., Nationalism and Archaeology in Europe (Boulder, CO, 1996).
archaeological museums in Italy, Greece, and Israel, three countries which became independent within the last two hundred years and offer plenty of material to refine our view of the relationship between archaeology and nationalism. A closer look at museums in these nations is also needed to correct an imbalance in the scholarship about museums and collections, which, at least in the English-speaking world, tends to cluster around a rather limited number of settings and subjects, mostly related to the United States and to northern and central Europe. In his recent introduction to museum archaeology, for example, Hedley Swain limits his discussion almost exclusively to the United Kingdom and the United States, making only a few general references to the situation in continental Europe and the Mediterranean.⁵ To give another parameter for reference, the whole output of the Journal of the History of Collections, up to the end of 2011, includes just one article which deals with a museum in post-unification Italy,⁶ one on an institution in independent Greece,⁷ and none on museums or collectors in Israel.

The analysis concentrates on the actual plan of each particular museum and on the arrangement of the collections in the galleries, two of the most immediate devices employed to interpret the past for the modern-day visitor. To my knowledge, however, very few studies have been devoted to them and their effect on the public. A notable contribution on the subject is the chapter which Susan Pearce dedicates to “Exhibiting Archaeology” in her 1990 manual, Archaeological Curatorship. Discussing the problem of how to make archaeological displays more intelligible for the public, Pearce applies to them the same concepts which Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes employ for

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⁵ Hedley Swain, An Introduction to Museum Archaeology (Cambridge, 2007), 18-34.
language. In her view, a display, like a sentence, consists of different features, such as frequency and format of labels and graphic aids; shape and organization of cases; sources and intensity of lighting; and of course typological and chronological range of the artifacts themselves. Each of these elements receives its meaning from its relationships not only with the others (syntagm), but also with all the possible substitutes that are available for it but, for one reason or another, are not selected for inclusion in the display (paradigm). With regard to the spatial arrangement of an exhibit, Pearce mentions several concepts that can be used to assess its intelligibility. According to her, a display can be analyzed in terms of its depth (“the number of spaces that need to be crossed to move from one point to another”), number of “rings” (“alternative ways of going from one space to another”), and entropy (“the number, and the simplicity of plan, of the straight, axial lines,” which determines how easily visitors can understand the structure of a gallery). The limit of her study is that the two examples she presents involve temporary exhibitions, which occupy a single floor of the museums housing them.

Another useful piece of research, which does concern a permanent exhibit, is an article by Mieke Bal on the American Museum of Natural History, published in 1992. The article does not deal with a museum formally designated as archaeological, but the methodology employed and the interpretation proposed are worthy looking at for the present work. Like Bal, I intend to follow the paths that visitors can take within various museums, identify the privileged ones, describe possible alternative routes and reconstruct the spectrum of messages broadcast by the exhibit, as well as the responses available to visitors.

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8 Susan Pearce, “Exhibiting Archaeology,” in Archaeological Curatorship (Washington, 1990), 144-146.
9 Pearce, “Exhibiting Archaeology,” 149-150.
In the discussion concerning specific institutions, an ideal adult visitor is usually assumed, who goes to the museum on his or her own (i.e., not as part of an organized tour) and is free to wander through the spaces occupied by the exhibit, unless prevented by physical barriers or explicit regulations enforced by the museum personnel. I am aware, of course, that many visitors do not experience the museum in such a way, but merely follow directions previously established for them through various means, such as room numbering, signs, guidebooks and brochures, audio guides, and more traditional guided tours. The last element deserves a few comments. Although nobody can deny the fundamental role of tours in shaping a visitor's perception of the museum, they will not be discussed extensively in the present work, for three reasons. First, a satisfactory treatment of the subject would entail the gathering and the analysis of a totally different set of data, which would shift the focus of the dissertation and obscure my argument. I decided to exclude from the project the museums associated with single archaeological sites for a similar reason, as the influence exercised on them by the peculiar features of each site would fragment the evidence too minutely and make the recognition of any significant pattern much more difficult. Second, in the institutions I plan to examine, as in most museums, guided tours are not the default mode of visit, being generally limited to certain categories of attendees. Third, and most important, as I have said, the physical layout of the museum and of its exhibits can be as effective in interpreting the artifacts for the public as any guided tour, if not more. Moreover, it seems easier to conceive alternative interpretations of an exhibit when one is free to move and gaze around at one's own leisure, since confronting a real person speaking for the museum would require

11 Guided tours with the mandatory presence of attendants began to disappear since the mid-nineteenth century (Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 198).
much more confidence. When such confrontations do occur, their outcome can be highly fascinating and informative, as scholars like Tamar Katriel have demonstrated, but a study of guided tours would carry me too far from the main subject of the dissertation.

Nevertheless, even when people are allowed to wander freely, many end up shepherded along privileged, more or less linear paths, from which it is difficult to distance oneself. At the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, for example, the sculpture galleries consist of a ring of rooms where statues and reliefs are displayed in chronological order. Nothing forces one to start the tour from the room dedicated to “Daedalic” art, though; it is perfectly possible to enter the Roman section first and proceed backwards in time from there. However, when one sees most people (especially schoolchildren) consistently turning or being led in a certain direction, it takes a conscious mental effort simply to realize that an alternative path exists – particularly in such a crowded building – and an even greater one to take it.

In fact, following the “right” path is just one element of a set of expectations which museums place on their visitors. The identification of the conduct expected from visitors is one of the primary goals of the research. Possible demands, explicit or implicit, are not limited to the observance of basic norms of good behavior and the avoidance of acts which could damage the objects on display. Above all, visitors are supposed to decipher and follow various kinds of visual cues, and to demonstrate their competence in doing so as they walk, stop, and look, in a sense becoming part of the display themselves.

According to Bennett, a crucial function of the modern museum is to provide a space that encourages visitors to recognize themselves and their fellows as members of an educated

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and ordered community, as opposed to the unruly crowd associated with other places of gathering.\textsuperscript{13} If this view is correct, however, it could be argued that visitors hold a certain measure of control in their interaction with the museum, whether they realize it or not. In fact, even an act as simple as deviating from the suggested visiting path could make a visitor stand out of the crowd, turning him or her into an element of disturbance and a potential challenge to whatever narrative is promoted by the institution.

The attribution of a civilizing role to the museum can go even further. As Carol Duncan has argued, the traditional image of the museum as “temple of the arts” is quite truthful in positing a similarity between museums and sacred places. Architecture, organization of spaces, and prescribed rules of behavior can project an exalted atmosphere on a museum, marking it as an environment separate from the outside world, giving it an almost sacred character, and turning the visit into a kind of ritual performance.\textsuperscript{14} Duncan's observations refer primarily to art museums, but they can be applied to archaeological museums as well, although the actual manner in which the process of sacralization takes place tends to differ according to the country in which a particular institution is located. For example, the comparison between museums and sacred spaces, as formulated by Duncan, can be extended quite easily to Greek institutions, even if their displays are not based on any organized religion or system of beliefs. On the contrary, in Israel, where one would expect Judaism to have a direct and unequivocal role in mediating access to the ancient past in the context of the museum, religious attitudes are woven into archaeological exhibits in subtler and less assertive ways.

\textsuperscript{13} On the museum as a training ground for well-behaved citizens, see Bennett, \textit{Birth of the Museum}, 99-102.

The analysis of the physical features of an exhibit is useful to investigate how archaeological museums exercise this transformative and uplifting function. The existence of nodal points, of areas which visitors are encouraged, if not forced, to cross, for example, immediately confers to such a location a considerable ennobling power. Any artifact or visual interpretative aid placed there acquires a special status, becoming one of the highlights of the story told by the museum. However, assigning such a didascalic role to the physical layout of a museum puts even more power in the hands of visitors who, as Duncan points out, are prone to misinterpret, if not actively reject, such visual cues,\textsuperscript{15} adding a further variable for curators to take into account as they strive to convey a particular message.

The dissertation is divided into three parts. Each part is introduced by a review of the specific regulations and policies concerning museums and archaeological artifacts in the country under consideration, in order to give the reader an idea of the conditions in which curators and museum staff operate. Moreover, a look at the principles underlying the various regulations and policies helps to understand certain features of the institutions with which the present work deals. Cultural heritage laws reflect an ideal relationship between a particular nation and its supposed roots, and provide justifications for state control of the material testimonies of these roots. In Italy, for example, the laws concerning cultural property tend to justify the necessity to monitor the conditions and the movements of cultural artifacts on the basis of their importance as a patrimony shared by all humanity, rather than their supposed national character. On a practical level, this approach has paved the way for a certain degree of administrative flexibility, particularly in the mechanisms through which cultural heritage is managed and made available for

\textsuperscript{15} Duncan, \textit{Civilizing Rituals}, 12-13.
public enjoyment. Greek law, on the contrary, puts more emphasis on the link between antiquities and national identity, which results in a stricter control on archaeological work in all its aspects on the part of the state. In Israel, the only country among the ones examined in this dissertation where the law does not explicitly assign the property of archaeological artifacts found in its territory to the state, the interests of private subjects, such as landowners and dealers, are granted more consideration in decisions concerning the retrieval and the movement of archaeological remains. One consequence of this legal framework is that private initiative plays a greater role in the constitution of museums, in the building of their collections, for example through the generous support of collectors and donors, and in the organization of museum displays.

An analysis of a small number of institutions of different scopes and sizes follows, proceeding from the larger and more popular buildings and displays to the smaller and less known ones. Besides being considered as a unit, each museum is plotted, so to speak, along two axes. On the one hand, the various institutions are studied as expressions of distinct national contexts, which have influenced the formation of their collections and the principles which govern their displays. On the other hand, they are grouped according to their scope and size (national, regional, local museums), as museums situated at the same level are likely to face analogous challenges, regardless of the country in which the institution is located. The cases to discuss have been chosen for their capacity to provide a sufficiently diverse yet manageable corpus, as well as my familiarity with them.

The analysis of the actual museums reveals how display practices are often quite distant from the ideal implicit in the law, and how the desire to celebrate the national past has to take many other considerations into account. First, a display is not a purely mental
construct, but it resides within a definite architectural space, with which it establishes a relationship. The physical background of an exhibit can condition its design quite heavily, especially when a museum occupies an already existing building, as it is often the case with regional and local institutions, particularly in Italy and Greece.

Second, no matter how uplifting an experience visiting a museum is thought to be, convincing the public to try it in the first place requires some effort, especially in an era of increasing cultural offer, which tends to combine education with entertainment. The competition can prove particularly hard for archaeological museums, especially the smaller ones, which seldom include aesthetically outstanding pieces in their holdings. In many museums, the basic solution to the problem is the insertion of some kind of visually appealing element in their displays, such as models and reconstructions. Such installations not only make the artifacts more engaging, but also draw attention to their contexts of use and deposition.

How to integrate these new features in the existing layout, without compromising the identity and the mission of the institution, constitutes a related issue. Middle-sized institutions struggle especially hard to reach a balance, having to contend both with a consolidated history, which they are expected to take into account when planning changes, and with the need to demonstrate their continual relevance for their communities in the present. Conversely, national museums tend to be more conservative in the organization of their exhibits, a stance favored by their reputation as symbols of the link between the nation and its past, although the risk of falling out of touch with their audience has been growing for them, too. As for local museums, usually less burdened by previous design choices, they can allow themselves to be more innovative.
Third, the appearance of individual museums can deviate from the general model suggested by the laws of a certain country through the influence of strong personalities, be they archaeologists, architects, curators, or collectors. Such interventions can affect museums of any size or category, although their results are easier to recognize in the larger and better known institutions.

Finally, in addition to these more abstract factors, the research seeks to take into account the practical issues and challenges faced by curators, in order to understand how they affected the transmission of the message, muffling it or possibly creating new opportunities to emphasize, modify, or even rethink it.

The first part of the dissertation, dedicated to Italian museums, opens with a detailed look at Palazzo Altemps in Rome, now as in the sixteenth century home to an archaeological collection of national, not to say international, importance. The discussion then moves to entities operating on a regional scale, exemplified by the Museo Civico Archeologico (City Archaeological Museum) in Bologna, where an interesting dialogue can be observed between artifacts that have entered the museum as part of a collection and objects discovered in excavations. Finally, I offer some observations on a local institution, the Museo Archeologico Ambientale (Archaeological Environmental Museum), located in my hometown, San Giovanni in Persiceto, not far from Bologna.

A similar scheme is followed with Greek museums in the second part. For this country, the choice of a national-scale institution to analyze, the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, is almost mandatory, a notion which already says much about the place of antiquities in the national imagination. Among the museums examined in the dissertation, the National Museum is also the one which bears the closest resemblance to
a sacred space, in the sense described by Duncan. The Nafplio Museum is then singled out to examine how regional entities define their identity and purpose in relation to the imposing central repository. The museum of Atalanti constitutes the case study for local establishments.

For Israel, the adoption of a different, bipolar scheme seems necessary, given the lack of a network of regional archaeological museums. A central structure in Jerusalem, the Bible Lands Museum, is contrasted with the small museums which dot the country, often attached to a kibbutz and represented here by the Archaeological Museum Beit Miriam in Kibbutz Palmachim, located between Tel Aviv and Ashdod.

The last chapter collects some general observations that have emerged from the analysis of the individual museums, establishing comparisons among them and associating their characteristics with national traditions, museum categories, and other relevant criteria of study. Through the intersection of such different perspectives, the effect of archaeological museums as physical entities on the visitors' experience of the past is assessed, as well as the importance of the research at a time when the appearance of new technologies is changing the definition of “visit” and “visitor” itself.
Part I

Italy
CHAPTER 1
HISTORICAL AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

1.1. The Pacca Edict and the pre-unification laws

Attempts at regulating the possession and circulation of antiquities began well before Italy gained independence in 1860, although the relevant dispositions adopted in the various Italian kingdoms and statelets in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries concentrated mainly on limiting the destruction of buildings and monuments, on the one hand, and the export of objects, on the other. The precursors in the undertaking were the popes, who had issued prohibitions against spoiling ancient monuments and removing antiquities and works of art from Rome and the Papal States since the late fifteenth century. Unlike later Italian regulations, such decrees did not define what constituted an “antiquity” on a chronological basis, listing instead types of artifacts which fell under this general category. Moreover, the lists seem intended to provide examples of antiquities, rather than to set rigid legal boundaries for the concept.  

One of the most comprehensive set of provisions was introduced by Pius VII with his Chirograph of 1802. The edict not only forbade the export (estrazione) of all...
antiquities, like its predecessors (art. 1), but it also extended the same prohibition to most later works of art (art. 2); exceptions were granted for creations by living artists and for works by dead ones judged of little value (art. 6). Moreover, the Chirograph confirmed past injunctions against the breaking of ancient statues and reliefs, the melting of medals and other metallic artifacts (art. 7), the demolition of ruins, even if located within private property (art. 8), and the removal of inscriptions, mosaics, and other antiquities, as well as later paintings, from churches and their annexes (art. 9-10). Any person who wished to move or alter a monument, artifact, or work of art had to receive papal permission through the Inspector of Fine Arts – a position which the edict assigned to Canova – and the Commissioner to the Antiquities; nobody else could grant it, no matter their state, rank, or privileges.

Further dispositions show a growing awareness that an accurate record of the cultural patrimony accumulated within the state was necessary for the traditional prescriptions to be truly effective. All private owners of antiquities and works of art were ordered to submit a list of their possessions to the authorities, and functionaries were to visit the collections regularly and check their integrity (art. 11). Any fortuitous discovery of ancient structures or artifacts had to be reported; movable objects found during road works went directly to the public museums, while the state reserved to itself the right of preemption on antiquities recovered in the course of interventions on private buildings (art. 12-13). Explicit permission was required to conduct excavations, even on one's own property. Provided it was granted, the excavator had to announce the starting date of the dig to the Inspector and the Commissioner, who had the option to be present at it, and to transmit a list of all finds to the government (art. 14). Finally, the Chirograph placed
supreme jurisdiction over antiquities and fine arts in the hands of a single authority, the Cardinal Camerlengo (art. 15), thus marking another departure from older dispositions, more generic and open to dispute on the part of holders of various titles and privileges.

From 1808 to 1814, Rome and the Papal States were under French control. After an initial phase in which the existing administration functioned under military occupation, in June 1809 the state became officially part of the Napoleonic empire, and on June 10 an extraordinary council (“Consulta”) was instituted to lay the foundations for a stable government. One of its first acts was the creation of a special Commission for the control and the preservation of ancient and modern monuments in Rome and in the States. On December 20 of the same year, the Consulta reaffirmed the prohibition against the export of antiquities, providing for the first time a rigid legal definition of the category. According to the decree, the word “antiquity” referred to columns, inscriptions, coffins, vases, statues, reliefs, and paintings; on the contrary, works by living artists could be freely brought out of the state. For artifacts falling between these two extremes, a special jury was tasked with their evaluation and the issuing of export licenses, which were subject to the approval of the Prefect, the new head of the administration. The importance of an object for the study of ancient art was a legitimate basis to refuse a license, and taxes continued to be applied on eligible items. The money raised through them was set aside to pay the jury and to assist artists. The remaining dispositions of the Chirograph remained in force.

The new regulations set up a more articulated procedure for excavations. Not only had they to be explicitly authorized (by the jury or the senate in Rome, and by the departmental prefects in the rest of the state), but the request had also to indicate the
methods and the instruments to be employed, as well as the distances from roads and public buildings. The president of the jury could order visits to the site at any time, not just at the beginning of the dig, and the work could be stopped for security or health reasons. Instead of a final list of finds, the decree mandated weekly reports. Chance discoveries had to be declared, too. A third group of prescriptions imposed the conservation of all monuments at public expense, and reaffirmed the injunctions against damaging them or removing material from them in any way. The draft of the decree included a final clause, which allowed the government to buy property for the purpose of conducting excavations itself, but the article was left out of the official text.18

Some years after the fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Papal government, in 1820, the then Camerlengo, Cardinal Pacca, in conformity with the prerogatives granted him by the Chirograph, issued an edict to provide guidelines regarding the protection of cultural property.19 Among other provisions, the Pacca Edict recognized the Committee on Fine Arts, instituted by the Cardinal to assist him in this matter, as part of the state administration, and mandated the creation of auxiliary Committees in all the provinces; in Bologna and Perugia, the members of the respective Committees had to be chosen among the names submitted by the local Academies of Fine Arts (art. 1, 5). Only public institutions were required to provide an account of their collections of antiquities and works of art, and such items did not acquire a special status just because of their presence in the list. The competent Committee would examine each account and make observations on its contents; artifacts singled out through such remarks could then be sold or change property only after notifying the authorities (art. 7-8).

19 For the text of the edict, see Emiliani, *Leggi, bandi e provvedimenti*, 130-145.
As for antiquities owned by individuals, the edict introduced a restrictive measure, the *vincolo* (bond). The Committees had to arrange visits to private collections and, should they find any object “of exceptional and noted value for art or erudition” (*di singolare e famoso pregio per l'Arte o per l'Erudizione*), to report it to the authorities, an act which imposed several prohibitions and obligations upon its owner. Artifacts so bonded could not be ceded without permission from the government, which could acquire them for itself, and both seller and buyer had to report the transaction, once it was concluded (art. 9-10). Unlike the Chirograph, however, the edict did not require the owners themselves to declare the possession of such objects, and let them free to sell unbounded pieces without giving notice, as long as the negotiation took place within the city of Rome (art. 11). A visit from the Committee, however, possibly followed by the placement of a bond, was always necessary before an artifact could be brought outside the Papal States, or even from Rome to the provinces (art. 12-13, 23).

Concerning excavations, the edict took up many of the regulations introduced by the French and built on them. Although landowners and excavators remained free to make their own arrangements, the latter had to brief the authorities about the site of the dig, which was subjected to a preliminary inspection. Excavations had to be conducted at a minimum distance from roads, buildings, city walls, aqueducts, ancient ruins, and Christian cemeteries, determined on a case-by-case basis when the permit was issued; moreover, any excavation could be shut down if deemed dangerous to public safety or air quality. The person in charge of the dig was required to submit a list of the finds every week, or more often if necessary (art. 28-33). Objects found in excavations could not be sold, taken out of the States, or restored until the appropriate Committee had seen them.
Even if they were declared interesting for the public collections, landowners were allowed to keep them, but they had to sell them to the state if they changed their mind, and the price would be determined by the condition of the artifact at the time of the visit by the Committee, without taking modifications and restorations into account (art. 34-38). Remains of buildings had to be reported, too, and it was forbidden to break or demolish them without authorization, to remove inscriptions, sculptures, stucco works, or paintings, to put monuments to “base and unworthy uses” (usi vili ed indegni), or to carry out agricultural work that could damage them (art. 39-44). Landowners were also required to inform the authorities if remains located on their property showed signs of deterioration; if they failed to comply, they had to pay for any repair deemed necessary by the government (art. 45). The same regulations applied to artifacts discovered by chance (art. 47-48). Once all the requirements had been satisfied, however, all finds became property of the landowner or of the excavator, according to the terms of their contract; in the case of chance discoveries, each party received one half of the finds, unless the discovery had been made by a hired worker (art. 49-50). The last section of the edict (art. 52-60) confirmed the prohibition against removing or damaging monuments or artifacts visible above ground or included in later structures, as well as the supreme authority of the Camerlengo in the matter of antiquities.

1.2. The early state and the 1939 law

Many of the principles that had inspired the Chirograph and the Pacca Edict
eventually resurfaced in the legislation of the unified Italian state, although the new entity, even more reluctant to encroach on private property than its autocratic predecessors and forced to concentrate on more urgent issues, was slow to develop effective means to take care of the patrimony it had inherited from its constituents. The earliest act dealing with the preservation of antiquities and works of art (L. 2359/1865) gave very little leverage to the state in this matter, only allowing it to expropriate monuments neglected by landowners. In 1875, the General Direction of Excavations and Monuments (later G. D. of Antiquities and Fine Arts) was formed within the Ministry of Public Education, the first central agency for the care of structures and objects deemed of historical, archaeological, and artistic importance. As local representatives of the government, the Prefects were supposed to watch over them, but the multiplicity of duties assigned to these functionaries and the lack of a comprehensive set of rules made their task virtually impossible.

By the time a specific law on cultural heritage was finally approved in the early twentieth century (L. 364/1909), however, the approach had radically changed. The law established a rigid control on the export of antiquities and works of art, prevented artifacts owned by institutions, both public and private, from being sold, accorded the
government a right of preemption on objects for sale by individuals, and provided for the preservation of monuments and the execution of archaeological digs. With a significant change in scope from pre-unification norms, the law subjected to its provisions all monuments and artifacts of historical, archaeological, and artistic significance, whether they had been included in an official list or not, with the exception of works by living persons or less than fifty years old. The centralization of cultural heritage management was further encouraged by the Fascist regime and reached its apex with the approval of a new law on the threshold of World War II (L. 1089/1939). The revised legislation meticulously enumerated several types of cultural heritage considered worthy of protection as products of intellectual and artistic expression of the human spirit, original and unrepeatable.

After the war, Italy became a republic and adopted a new Constitution, which went into effect on January 1, 1948. One of its earliest provisions (art. 9) states that “the Republic promotes the development of culture and of scientific research. It protects the natural, historical and artistic patrimony of the nation.” The connection suggested by the article between history and culture, art and scientific research, helped to reinforce a broader definition of cultural heritage, less constrained by aesthetic or antiquarian criteria and more related to the historic value of artifacts. At the same time, the concentration on tutela (protection), as distinct from other aspects of the care for cultural heritage, such as gestione (management) or valorizzazione (valorization), while still reserving a leading

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22 Ferretti, Diritto dei beni culturali, 56.

23 “La Repubblica promuove lo sviluppo della cultura e della ricerca scientifica. Tutela il paesaggio e il patrimonio storico e artistico della nazione” (my translation).

24 Ferretti, Diritto dei beni culturali, 14-15.
role to the central government, paved the way for the participation of subjects other than
the state in the life of museums and other cultural institutions.

1.3. The new Codice dei Beni Culturali

Despite the professed concern in the preservation of cultural heritage as a matter of
national interest, the long post-war recovery prevented Italian politicians from taking
serious care of it until the 1960s. For several decades, moreover, legislation on cultural
heritage dealt with partial, although important, aspects of the question and did not modify
substantially the framework provided by the 1939 law. Only towards the end of the
twentieth century were all the existing regulations combined and organized in a single act
(D.Lgs. 490/1999).

The new unified text, however, left issues not covered by already existing laws
unaddressed and became outdated as a whole within a few years, chiefly as a result of the
redistribution of legislative and administrative prerogatives between the central state and
its peripheral branches (regions, provinces, and municipalities) enacted through a
constitutional reform in 2001. The changed political situation prompted the redaction of
the most recent law regarding the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, known
as Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio (Cultural and Natural Heritage Code [D.Lgs.
42/2004]).

Most importantly, the revised Constitution has made the distinction between
protection and valorization of cultural heritage explicit, confirming the state as the only

25 Ferretti, Diritto dei beni culturali, 16-17.
authority in charge of the former and placing the latter under the joint responsibility of the central government and the regions. Applying the principle to concrete cases has been a tricky endeavor, though, because it is not always evident in which field any given measure falls. Thus, even if the Code assumes a very broad definition of “state,” calling the totality of its organs, including any institution under public control, to cooperate towards the safeguard of cultural heritage and its valorization and enjoyment (art. 1), in practice the lack of a clear division of roles has undermined such cooperation, and state and regions have accused each other of stepping beyond their respective spheres of activity several times. As for private subjects, they have to guarantee the integrity of any object of cultural importance in their possession, but not necessarily their public enjoyment (art. 1); however, they are explicitly encouraged to take part in the valorization of the cultural patrimony in general (art. 6).26

The Italian state exercises its responsibility towards the national cultural patrimony and insures public access to it through the Ministry for Cultural Property and Activities, instituted in 1975 and entrusted with duties previously distributed among the Ministry of Public Education, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Like other matters related to cultural heritage, in recent years the internal structure of the Ministry has been the object of a stream of laws and decrees.27 One of the most notable results of this legislative fervor is the creation of a system of Regional Directorates, to which the regulations now in force (D.P.R. 233/2007) assign the implementation of practically all the procedures which serve to identify, monitor, and protect cultural property. They also oversee all the other peripheral branches of the

27 A review of the numerous and quite complicated changes in the organization of the Ministry can be found in Ferretti, *Diritto dei beni culturali*, 79-120.
Ministry, including museums, which were previously supervised by its central apparatus. Very frequently, however, the Ministry interacts with the possessors and keepers of cultural property through the superintendents, who constitute the lower tier of its organization and whose sphere of operation usually coincides with a region, too. The superintendents are responsible, for example, for authorizing the execution of any kind of work on buildings, monuments, and artifacts having cultural interest. A separate superintendence looks after each major category of cultural property (archaeological, architectural and environmental, historical-artistic and ethnological-anthropological, archival).

The Code retains some features of the earlier legislation, such as the analytical definition of cultural property as anything of interest from an artistic, historical, archaeological, ethnographical, anthropological, bibliographic, or archival perspective, or the exemption from most of its provisions for works by living persons or less than fifty years old (art. 2, 10). At the same time, its scope is expanded so as to embrace any kind of evidence about civilization, a view fostered by the numerous international agreements on cultural heritage signed after World War II. It should be remarked that such notions as “interest” and “civilization” are taken in a general sense, as were l’Arte and l’Erudizione in the Pacca Edict. In other words, an artifact or monument does not need to be related to Italian history and culture (however one defines them) in order to be cared for, nor does it enjoy a privileged standing if such a connection exists. In fact, the primary criteria to determine what rules apply to cultural property seem to be physical presence within the national territory and ownership.

According to the Italian Civil Code, promulgated in 1942, all real property and all

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28 Ferretti, Diritto dei beni culturali, 57-58.
organic complexes of movables that belong to public territorial institutions (state, regions, provinces, and municipalities) and possess historical, artistic, or archaeological interest are considered part of the demanio – the most strictly regulated kind of public property – and cannot be sold or transferred under any condition. Analogous property owned by other public institutions and exhibiting a similar interest has to be managed according to specific laws, in this case the Cultural and Natural Heritage Code, rather than being subject to standard property law. The new Code prescribes that the existence of such an interest is to be verified by the state for all artifacts, monuments, or buildings belonging to the demanio and to non-profit institutions, either public or private. The collections of public museums, archives, or libraries possess it by default. Any other article deemed to lack it can be handled like normal private property, taking it out of the demanio if necessary (art. 10, 12).

Single objects belonging to other organizations or to individuals, private archival and bibliographic collections, and any other property, either public or private, related to the history of specific disciplines or institutions can be declared cultural property by means of a dedicated administrative procedure, comparable to the classic bond. In their case, however, the cultural interest they present must be judged “exceptional” or “particularly important” (art. 10, 13). What qualifies something for the superior rank is not specified, presumably to leave more flexibility in the determination of the cultural value of the property.

If the verification yields a positive result, or until it has been completed, or if the proper declaration has been issued, the property in question must be preserved from destruction, deterioration, damage, or improper use (art. 20). A ministerial authorization
is necessary to dismantle or move it, to split up collections, and to lend movables for exhibitions (art. 21, 48). Any other intervention, including conservation or restoration, has to be approved by the local superintendent (art. 31). The execution of maintenance work can also be imposed on the owner or keeper of the property, or carried out directly by the state (art. 32). The state is also allowed to contribute to the necessary expenses for jobs undertaken voluntarily; if the project is particularly significant, or affects property employed for public use, the subsidy can be higher, and can be granted even if the owner or keeper has been forced to act (art. 34-35). Whenever state funds are utilized for conservation or restoration, the property concerned has to be made accessible to the public in some form (art. 38). The safety and the accessibility of movable property can be further ensured through its relocation in a public structure, either by order of the Ministry, and for a limited time, or by agreement between the owner of the property and a particular institution. In the latter case, if the artifacts are private property, the change of location is allowed only to make them available for public enjoyment, and is restricted to objects of significant quality or which complement the public collection well (art. 43-44).

Certain kinds of cultural property belonging to the *demanio*, including archaeological sites and museum collections, can never leave it, although they can be transferred from one territorial entity to another, from the state to a region for example (art. 54). Any other transaction that involves cultural property belonging to such entities or to non-profit institutions must be authorized by the state. The essential requirement for the authorization is that the property is not harmed or subtracted from public enjoyment. An additional condition to transfer individual objects included in the *demanio* is that they are not considered interesting for the public collections, and the objects lose their status if
the authorization is conceded (art. 55-56). No authorization is needed to transfer cultural property to the state (art. 57).

The exchange of objects with other institutions or individuals, Italian or foreign, can be authorized, too, if it leads to the increase of the national cultural patrimony or the enrichment of the public collections (art. 58). The rule represents one of the few cases in which the “national character” of cultural property plays a role in determining its future, albeit on a limited scale. Finally, any change in ownership or keepership of cultural property has to be notified to the authorities; if the property is to change hands as a result of trade, the state can step in and replace the intended buyer (art. 59-60).

With regard to export, the Code confirms the special character of cultural artifacts by differentiating them from other goods, so that they are excluded from the regime of free circulation within the European Union, for example. Movables recognized as cultural property through the appropriate procedures cannot be brought out of the national territory permanently. Objects for which verification is required cannot leave the country at all until the completion of the process, and the state can block the departure of artifacts of various kinds for a limited time, regardless of their ownership, if their absence would prove detrimental for the cultural patrimony. Other property having cultural interest needs an export license to be relocated out of Italy (art. 64bis-65); the distinction applies especially to items belonging to for-profit organizations and to private individuals, which must possess a high degree of interest to be declared cultural property, as previously mentioned. The denial of the license triggers the procedure of declaration of cultural interest for the property involved. The competent office can also propose its purchase by the state before the license is granted or denied; in this case, the request for export can be
withdrawn at any time before the acquisition is completed (art. 68, 70). Additional EU regulations come into play if the destination is outside the Union. Temporary exit for exhibitions or other cultural events can be allowed for all objects, except for those which would suffer as a result of transportation or environmental conditions and those which form the core of a museum, archive, library, or collection, or of one of its sections (art. 66).

Once again, the emphasis is on the protection of cultural patrimony in a general sense, without reference to the “nation,” although the control on the international circulation of cultural property is itself viewed as a matter of national interest (art. 64bis). Such an inclusive coverage appears even more peculiar when one considers that the 1999 law explicitly mentioned damage to the historical and cultural national patrimony as a reason to deny permission to export an object. Consequently, as Ferretti observes, the range of items that cannot leave the country appears very broad when compared to EU guidelines, which do establish a relationship between cultural patrimony and national identity.29

The Code, however, has to follow EU directives in the section on the restitution of artifacts unlawfully brought out of another member state, which are applicable to any case that occurred after December 31, 1992. Leaving the procedural details aside, two important provisions deserve mention. First, responsibility for demanding the restitution of objects is assigned to the government of the country in which they were located, even if they are not public property (art. 77). Second, for many categories of cultural property, including objects belonging to public museum, library, and archival collections, no temporal limit exists for such demands (art 75, 78). With regard to the illicit removal of

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29 Ferretti, *Diritto dei beni culturali*, 204, 206.
artifacts to other parts of the world, the Code reaffirms the validity of the UNIDROIT Convention of Rome (June 24, 1995) and of the earlier UNESCO Convention of Paris (November 14, 1970), which contain analogous dispositions.30

The next section of the Code, which deals with discoveries and chance finds of sites, monuments, or artifacts, seems to bring back older concepts of cultural property and to assimilate it to other economic assets, since many provisions have been carried over from earlier legislation. However, while some of them may appear as a step backwards in the way the state deals with its archaeological patrimony, especially the rules on compensations and rewards, state control over it clearly remains very tight, in theory at least. According to the law, only the Ministry is allowed to take action in order to locate archaeological remains or objects likely to possess cultural interest in general. To this end, it can order the temporary occupation of the areas where such activities are to be conducted, for which their owners have to be repaid (art. 88). Other subjects, public or private, including the owner of the property involved, can perform the investigation under a permit from the government, but they have to comply with any instruction given by the Ministry before or during the execution of the project or lose the concession. The permit can also be withdrawn if the Ministry decides to conduct or continue the work by itself, although the holder is entitled to a refund for the expenses already incurred in such cases. The regions and other peripheral branches of the state may request that objects of cultural interest discovered within their territory remain there to be displayed, if adequate spaces are available (art. 89).

Whoever comes upon cultural remains or artifacts must alert the superintendent, the local mayor, or the police within 24 hours and care for their well-being until the

30 Ferretti, *Diritto dei beni culturali*, 216-217.
competent authority can examine them. All finds have to be left in the same place and state in which they were discovered, unless their removal is necessary to guarantee their safety and preservation (art. 90). All remains of the past uncovered underground or in the sea, either fortuitously or as part of a research, belong to the state; real property becomes part of the *demanio*, while movables are treated according to the dispositions previously outlined (art. 91), beginning with the requirement to verify their cultural interest. Both the owner of the land or structure where the discovery has taken place and its author are entitled to a reward of up to one quarter of the value of the finds. No reward can be claimed, however, if the holder of the permit was acting in accordance with its institutional or statutory purposes, if the author of a chance find did not immediately report it, or if he or she entered or searched the area without the owner's permission (art. 92). As said, the procedures just listed could be criticized from an archaeological perspective, since the state is allowed to employ part of the objects discovered to reimburse landowners for the temporary occupation of their property or to reward the parties involved in a discovery.

Finally, following a practice that dates back to the unification of Italy, the law reaffirms preservation of cultural property as a legitimate reason for expropriation. Both real and movable property can be expropriated by the Ministry or, through its authorization, by other public agencies, on their own behalf or on behalf of non-profit private organizations (art. 95). The increased emphasis on public enjoyment and valorization as the intended goal of preservation that characterizes post-World War II legislation is reflected in a widening of the reasons that justify expropriation, which is not strictly confined to property having cultural interest. The act may affect nearby buildings
or areas, in order to isolate or restore the property in question, to maintain lighting or perspective, to conserve or increase its attractiveness, or to make access to it easier. Expropriation to pursue archaeological research is also possible (art. 96-97).

Enjoyment and valorization of cultural property are regulated in detail in the next section of the Code. Museums figure prominently in it, being treated as cultural institutions and locations together with libraries, archives, archaeological areas, archaeological parks, and monumental complexes. For the purposes of the Code, a museum is “a permanent structure which acquires, catalogues, maintains, orders, and displays cultural property for purposes of education and study” (art. 101).\(^{31}\) As Ferretti remarks, the definition implies that the contents of a museum are cultural property, and the structures that house them can be recognized as such through the appropriate procedures, but the institution itself is not. A second characteristic of museums is that their holdings are open to expansion through acquisitions, although it is not clear why the same term is not used for libraries and archives, which are otherwise defined in a very similar manner (the law employs the word “collect” for them instead).\(^{32}\)

As previously mentioned, the regions play a greater role in the enjoyment of cultural property than in its protection, since they are supposed to provide the legislative framework to insure access to public cultural institutions which the state does not own or has chosen not to manage directly. Ultimately, however, in many aspects the everyday life of each particular structure is directed by the territorial institution which owns or manages it, although the various branches of the state can stipulate agreements to assure consistency (art. 102). In the case of public structures, for instance, it is up to the

\(^{31}\) “[U]na struttura permanente che acquisisce, cataloga, conserva, ordina ed espone beni culturali per finalità di educazione e di studio” (my translation).

\(^{32}\) Ferretti, _Diritto dei beni culturali_, 233-234.
competent territorial agencies to decide if, when, and how to charge for admission to which places and for what reasons, although access to libraries and archives for study or research purposes is always free (art. 103). Anyone familiar with British or American museum policies might find surprising that the request for an entrance fee was mandatory up to the 1999 law, and that Italian jurists think it should still constitute the norm, while the option to grant free access to all visitors has been introduced only with the Code. The issuing of tickets remains, in fact, the preferred means to govern access to cultural places and institutions for which the state is responsible.\textsuperscript{33} Income from entrance to such institutions is earmarked for conservation of the structures themselves, expropriation, and purchase of cultural property; earnings from tickets to other areas support the increase and the valorization of the cultural patrimony as a whole (art. 110). The determination of entrance fees is one of the questions where coordination among the various branches of the state is most forcefully sought, in order to avoid potentially discriminatory practices (the Code requires explicitly to treat all EU citizens in the same way with regard to reductions and exemptions).

Permission to use or reproduce cultural property is usually given in exchange for a fee, plus a deposit if the programmed activity poses risks to it. No fees are due for reproductions requested by private subjects for personal or research use, or by public ones for valorization purposes, although the applicant has to reimburse any expense incurred by the authority in charge of the property. A special disposition applies to the creation of casts from sculptures or reliefs, which can be allowed only in exceptional cases and requires a ministerial decree; the authorization of the superintendent is sufficient if the cast is to be taken from a copy or can be obtained without touching the

\textsuperscript{33} Ferretti, \textit{Diritto dei beni culturali}, 235-236.
The third sphere of activity regulated by the Code, the valorization of cultural property, is characterized by a more substantial involvement of private subjects (art. 111). Valorization of public cultural property is a matter left to regional legislation, except for institutions managed by the state, and agreements between different territorial institutions are similarly envisaged to define relevant objectives and strategies. The execution of such plans, however, need not be undertaken directly by the state apparatus, but it can be entrusted to organizations constituted specifically for this purpose, to which participating agencies can give in custody public property to be valorized. Participation in such ventures is open to private owners of cultural property likely to fall under their care, as well as other non-profit private subjects whose commitment to the valorization of cultural property is endorsed by law or charter. As part of the strategic agreements just mentioned, or even independently from them, the state can form partnerships with private subjects or cultural associations to manage related offices or services (art. 112).

The actual initiatives aimed at valorizing public cultural property are handled by the interested administrative bodies either directly or indirectly. The first choice requires them to create specialized divisions with scientific, organizational, and financial autonomy, which they can do individually or collectively, by pooling their resources into a consortium. In the second form of management, the agencies that own or manage the property, or the societies that have it in custody, issue permits to third parties to carry out specific projects related to it. For obvious reasons, private components of the issuing agent are excluded from such contracts (art. 115). The same options are available for a range of other services, such as publishing and selling catalogues, souvenirs, and audio-
visual aids, running shops and restaurants inside museums and archaeological sites, and planning exhibitions and cultural events (art. 117).

After dealing with the measures for the protection of natural heritage, which fall outside the scope of the present discussion, the Code lists penalties for transgressors. The basic sanction for any behavior which causes damage to cultural property is the obligation to pay for its repair. Similarly, if the property is lost or is known to have left the country, those responsible for its disappearance have to reimburse the state for its value (art. 160-161, 163). Harsher punishments – fines, jail time, in some cases confiscation of the property involved – are established for various specific offenses. The list is fairly straightforward and does not need detailed comments.

The promulgation of the Code could not be expected to put an end to the various disputes about preserving and managing cultural property, for example regarding the role of private subjects in its valorization. As far as museums are concerned, however, the law fixes some important principles. On the one hand, such institutions remain first and foremost keepers of the cultural patrimony, which they help to constitute and enlarge by bestowing the status of cultural property on certain sets of objects and by assisting the state in dealing with new finds and acquisitions. On the other hand, they are supposed to play a second, more active role as facilitators and educators, which requires much flexibility in the management and presentation of their contents. Archaeological museums, too, have to balance tradition and creativity, and the assumptions underlying the legislative developments outlined above are reflected in their displays, as the following chapters show.
CHAPTER 2
ROMAN NATIONAL MUSEUM – PALAZZO ALTEMPS, ROME

2.1. Early life of the palace

The sculpture collection housed in the beautiful aristocratic palace located between Piazza Navona and the Vatican (fig. 2.1) not only is an impressive set of works of art in itself, but it presents a peculiar situation from a museological point of view as well. When one thinks about Italian archaeological museums of national importance, the association with Rome suggests itself; and when one deals with the gathering and the display of antiquities in Rome, the crucial role played by the papal aristocracy and by the artists who gravitated around it must be acknowledged. The museum at Palazzo Altemps, one of the five branches of the Roman National Museum (the others being the installations at Palazzo Massimo, the Baths of Diocletian, the Palatine Museum and the Crypta Balbi) is designed to show how ancient sculpture was integrated into, and contributed to develop, a culture of spectacle and learning.

The first nucleus of the palace, which included earlier medieval buildings, is dated to the mid-fifteenth century. In the 1470s Girolamo Riario had it extended in preparation of his wedding to Caterina Sforza (1477). The works, however, ended only in 1483, and already in 1484, following the death of Sixtus IV, the building was ransacked. After it was repaired, Caterina made it available for rent (1496). In 1511 Francesco Soderini,
cardinal of Volterra, bought the palace and set to extend and embellish it further. He added a loggia to the garden court, which will later become the smaller of the two courtyards of the palace, and ordered the decoration of the façades and of the interior spaces. The first plans for the main courtyard were probably laid down around this time. Having Soderini run into judicial problems, since 1523 the establishment passed into the custody of Cardinal Innocenzo Cybo, who in 1541 rented it and turned it into a residence for Spanish ambassadors. He and other tenants promoted more works, particularly after the sack of Rome (1527).³⁴

The palace was bought in 1568 by Marco Sittico Altemps, Pius IV's nephew, who had been appointed as Cardinal some years before (1561). Since 1571, and more systematically after a partial collapse of the building in 1575, a new phase of consolidation, expansion, and decoration affected it. The elder Martino Longhi (1534-ca. 1591), a long-term associate of the family, was charged with completing the circuit of the main courtyard and creating a more harmonious joint with the buildings to the east of the palace through the realization of the second courtyard, a commission in which his son Onorio (1568-1619) was later involved. A group of painters, including Pasquale Cati (1550-1620) and Antonio Viviani (1560-1620), adorned the interior of the building. Charles Borromeo, Marco Sittico's cousin, was a guest in the residence, which became the seat of a collection of ancient sculptures. The additions and changes in its decoration during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century reflect in part the political vicissitudes of the family, primarily the execution of Roberto Altemps (1586), Marco Sittico's illegitimate son, who fell victim of political maneuvers. Although the episode

could not be commemorated publicly, echoes of it have been recognized in the iconography employed for certain rooms, especially the “Studiodella Clemenza” and, above all, the intramural church of St. Anicetus, commissioned by Roberto's son, Giovanni Angelo, and inaugurated in 1617. The same Giovanni Angelo promoted the constitution of an important library inside the palace (Biblioteca Altempsiana).\textsuperscript{35}

It is often repeated, especially on websites for tourists, that the Palazzo Altemps witnessed the formal constitution of the Arcadia in 1690, but no evidence of a link between the building and the early days of the famous literary academy can be found. Between 1691 and 1693, however, its members were allowed to gather in a garden near a residence which, like the Palazzo Altemps, used to belong to the Riario family and subsequently changed owners and appearance, becoming the Palazzo Corsini,\textsuperscript{36} where one of the branches of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica (National Gallery of Ancient Art) is housed today. The similar histories of the two edifices, and the fact that the Palazzo Altemps in fact hosted the Arcadia for a time, although much later, around 1875,\textsuperscript{37} could have originated the confusion.

An earthquake in 1703 spared the building, which saw only minor interventions for many decades afterwards. During the eighteenth century the palace often hosted sumptuous festivals and celebrations, enhanced by the setting up of temporary accoutrements which complemented its existing architectural, sculptural, and painted ornamentation. The events sponsored by Cardinal Melchior de Polignac (1661-1724),

\textsuperscript{35} Emmanuelle Brugerolles and François de Polignac, “Artistes, mécènes et collectionneurs au palais Altemps de Rome aux XVI\textdegree{} et XVIII\textdegree{} siècles,” \textit{Gazette des beaux-arts} 121 (1993), 60; De Angelis d'Ossat and Scoppola, \textit{La Contesa de' Numi}, 30-31, 38.
\textsuperscript{37} Emanuele Portal, \textit{L'Arcadia} (Palermo, 1922), 45, 91.
who lived in the palace during his stay in Rome as French ambassador to the Holy See, between 1724 and 1732, left a lasting impression. The festivities he organized in November 1729 in honor of Louis XV’s newborn son remained particularly memorable, culminating in the performance of La Contesa de’ Numi (The Dispute of the Gods), a work by the poet and Arcadia member Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782) in which various deities vie for the right to educate the young prince by magnifying the virtues each of them can bestow on him, until Jupiter closes the issue by declaring that all their gifts are necessary for the task.\(^{38}\)

In 1851 Giulio Hardouin married Maria, last heir to the Altemps family, and later ceded the building to the Holy See, although he kept the right to continue living in it with his family. The church of St. Anicetus witnessed the marriage of his daughter, also called Maria, to another illustrious guest of the palace, the poet Gabriele D’Annunzio (1883). The Vatican took full possession of the structure in 1887 and conceded it in use to the Pontifical Spanish College from 1894 to 1969. The change of residents led to one more wave of alterations, mostly related to the 1911 Universal Exposition and the jubilees of 1925 and 1950. By the time the College left the premises, their condition had noticeably worsened. The habitable sections of the palace were occupied by houses, shops, and political clubs, while the empty halls were in demand for shooting period movies.\(^{39}\)

The Italian state acquired Palazzo Altemps in 1982, together with the sculptures still kept inside, and gave it over to be used by the Archaeological Superintendence for Rome. Today the building contains both pieces gathered by its name family and sculptures formerly belonging to a second famous collection of papal Rome, the


\(^{39}\) De Angelis d'Ossat and Scoppola, La Contesa de’ Numi, 31-33.
Boncompagni Ludovisi, as well as objects formerly in possession of other families (Mattei and Del Drago) and an Egyptian collection. The organization of the exhibit is meant to reproduce as closely as possible the original disposition of the Altemps sculptures, as known from inventories, replacing missing elements with images of similar subjects from the Boncompagni Ludovisi collection.

2.2. Collections represented in the display

Only sixteen of about one hundred pieces which constituted the Altemps collection are kept in the palace today. Archival information about the collection is scarce, and only available for a few pieces. As already mentioned, its nucleus was put together by Marco Sittico Altemps, possibly in the years following his curial appointment. The sculptures were placed in the courtyard, along the great staircase and in the “Loggia detta Galleria” (probably to be identified with the Painted Balcony); later on they also occupied the great hall (now the Hall of the Gaul) near the private church of St. Anicetus. Their placement was dictated by the then dominant taste for scenographic arrangements, here translated into a predilection towards decorative symmetry. Other materials and devices were employed to reach the desired effect, with a special preference for colored marble.40

The breaking up of the Altemps collection and its dispersion among other noble families started already in the seventeenth century, and the sale of antiquities reached its peak in the period of the French Revolution. Some pieces ended up in the collection put

together by Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi during the pontificate of his uncle, Gregory XV (1621-1623), to decorate his sumptuous villa on the Quirinal, which was constituted through the purchase of various properties: the so-called Garden of Porta Pinciana, the first nucleus of the complex; the del Monte vineyard, which included a lodge known as “Casino Belvedere” and, later, as “Casino dell'Aurora”; the Orsini vineyard, also provided with a lodge, termed “palazzo Grande” in the inventories; and the Capponi vineyard, where another existing lodge was used first as a library and later as a display space for the sculptures. The pieces from the Altemps collection were distributed throughout the premises, joining works bought from other Roman noble families, found during the construction works, donated to the Cardinal or acquired soon after their discovery elsewhere in Rome. After Ippolita Ludovisi, a niece of Cardinal Ludovico's and the last member of the family to live in the villa, married Gregorio Boncompagni in 1681, the family – and the collection – took the name of Boncompagni Ludovisi.  

Following a widespread practice among aristocratic collectors, the prelate had many of the antiquities in his collection restored more or less heavily. Initially, most such commissions seem to have been assigned to Ippolito Buzzi or Buzio, at least judging from the high compensations he received, although other sculptors, including a young Gian Lorenzo Bernini, were hired to work on the statues. After 1626, however, only Alessandro Algardi, a native of Bologna like Cardinal Ludovisi, was employed as restorer. As the present appearance of the objects housed in the Palazzo Altemps demonstrates, choosing what to restore and how depended not only on the inclinations of  

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the individual artists,\textsuperscript{43} but also on numerous other factors, such as the state of preservation of the ancient statue or relief and its supposed subject, but also on the intended placement of the completed work and the objects which were meant to be displayed together with it. The holdings of the museum, however, also include many artifacts which underwent derestoration and were returned to the incomplete state in which they were found. Contrasting sharply with the integrated pieces, they provide a testimony to a later set of criteria to evaluate ancient sculpture, characterized by the reaction against extensive interventions on the original, an attitude for which the arrival of the Parthenon Marbles in England in the early nineteenth century was largely responsible.\textsuperscript{44}

Cardinal Ludovisi employed his purchases to embellish not only the interior of the buildings on its property, but also its extensive gardens, where the statues were ordered in long perspectives or placed at the intersections of the paths defined by flower-beds and hedges. Their disposition remained essentially unchanged – and much admired – until the early nineteenth century, when the most important pieces were brought inside to prevent their wearing away and newly arranged, perhaps with the assistance of Canova. After the Villa Ludovisi was sold to a real estate development company in 1885, the garden and some secondary buildings were destroyed, and the sculptures were moved elsewhere. Some of them found a new home in four rooms of the main building of the complex, which was partially incorporated into a new palace (now the seat of the U.S. Embassy).

\textsuperscript{43} Italo Faldi, “Il mito della classicità e il restauro delle sculture antiche nel XVII secolo a Roma,” in Giuliano, \textit{Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi}, 207-225.

The collection had been subjected to a *vincolo* (bond) under the terms of the Pacca Edict, but the works not covered by it began to be sold towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1900 the Italian state acquired 134 sculptures and allowed the sale of the rest of the collection. Other pieces, thought lost, turned up during the twentieth century. The sculptures were placed in a cloister within the complex of the Baths of Diocletian, but had to be moved to a different venue because of safety concerns, and now represent the core of the exhibit at the Palazzo Altemps.\(^{45}\)

A third group of artifacts housed in the palace is associated with the Mattei family, who employed antiquities to adorn their *villa* on the top of the Celio hill (Villa Celimontana) and their city palace. Their collection was sold to various buyers during the eighteenth century. The Italian state acquired the *villa* itself after World War I after it had changed ownership several times, and transferred it to the city of Rome in 1925, while the sculptures remained state property. Twenty-five works were moved to the Baths of Diocletian at that time; fourteen more were left on display outside the building and were eventually brought to Palazzo Altemps in 1996 to prevent damage.\(^{46}\)

\[2.3. The ground floor\]

The museum occupies the first and the second floor of the palace, except for its northeast section (fig. 2.2). At the heart of the establishment is the great central courtyard (fig. 2.3), which forms part of the main axis of the building, together with the long

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entrance corridor (fig. 2.4), the southern and northern porticoes (figs. 2.5-6), and the stairs that led to the northwest section of the building, where the theater was located. Today, however, the axial perspective is more difficult to appreciate, as visitors enter the palace through a group of service rooms in the eastern part of it (fig. 2.2, nos. I-X), which include the ticket office, a coat room, two bookstores/gift shops, and the restrooms.

The display assumes a high degree of previous knowledge about ancient sculpture and its restoration. The wall text, for example, is very spartan, consisting of black and white sheets in wooden frames which describe briefly the contents of a given room. No labels are placed near the works themselves, although some statues and busts bear inscriptions or plaques on their bases and pedestals, carried over from previous installations. However, even the practical usefulness of such writings is limited, since they usually provide only the name of the character depicted, often in Latin. In general, they look more like a part of the artistic composition than a didactic tool. An audio guide is available, but it has been designed according to the same principle of putting as few modern implements as possible between the visitor and the sculptures. The guide does not refer to a definite itinerary or a system of room numbering indicated by signs, but to points of observation, marked on a map of the museum which is given to the visitors together with the device.

An interesting element of the plan of the museum is the starting point of the visit, the eastern side of the southern portico, where the main staircase leading to the second floor is also placed (figs. 2.7-8). One is therefore free to decide which floor he or she wants to see first, although the written descriptions of the establishment tend to assume that visitors begin their tour with the lower level.
Already at the beginning, however, visitors must make a decision about how to proceed. The possibilities open to them are revealed in two recent overviews of the exhibit, the catalogue of the sculptures curated by Matilde De Angelis d'Ossat in 2002 and the guide to the Roman National Museum by Adriano La Regina published in 2005, more likely to be found in the hands of a visitor. Before dealing with the portico, De Angelis d'Ossat concentrates on the courtyard itself (fig. 2.2, no. 1), calling attention to the four statues from the Altemps collection that occupy the arches on its northern side (a Maenad, a Herakles, a resting athlete, and a Demeter) and to the fountain on its eastern side, which employs the front of a sarcophagus as its own and is flanked by two herms (fig. 2.9). Although this area is the first that whoever enters the museum actually sees, it comes last in the description of the ground floor in the guide by La Regina, which emphasizes physical closeness to the monument.

The rest of the itinerary is almost identical in both books, and the guide often takes remarks from the earlier catalogue. Visitors are first invited to cross the southern portico (fig. 2.2, no. 2), embellished with statues and funerary monuments formerly in the possession of the Mattei family (fig. 2.10). One thus arrives in the Atrium of Antoninus Pius (fig. 2.2, no. 3), which houses a statue of the emperor and a bust of Demeter, both from the Boncompagni Ludovisi collection (fig. 2.11). The same origin is shared by

47 De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 36-37.
48 Brugerolles and de Polignac, “Artistes, mécènes et collectioneurs,” 70-71, fig. 11; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 38-39.
49 Brugerolles and de Polignac, “Artistes, mécènes et collectioneurs,” 70-71, fig. 10; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 40-41.
50 De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 42-43.
51 De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 44-47.
52 Adriano La Regina, ed. Museo Nazionale Romano (Milan, 2005), 123.
53 De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 48-59; La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 114.
54 Beatrice Pulma and Lucilla de Lachenal, I Marmi Ludovisi nel Museo Nazionale Romano, vol. 1 of Museo Nazionale Romano, bk. 5 of Le sculture, ed. Antonio Giuliani (Rome, 1983), 15-17 no. 7
most of the other works of art displayed on the ground floor, in the rooms which form the southwest corner and western side of the palace. The rooms in question are also characterized by a sober look, since the stone walls are left naked, without embellishments. Therefore, the attention of the visitor is fully directed towards the sculptures.

While an access exists between the Atrium and the west wing (fig. 2.12), the visiting path suggested by De Angelis d'Ossat and by La Regina continues to the left into the small Passage of Pluto and Zeus (fig. 2.2, no. 4), where the heads of two gods are shown (fig. 2.13). Although Beatrice Palma suggests that both sculptures could depict Asklepios, De Angelis d'Ossat supports the identification of one of them, mounted on a seventeenth-century bust, with Pluto, because of its grave expression, and of the other head with Zeus. From the passage, or directly from the Atrium itself (fig. 2.14), it is possible to enter the Hall of the Portraits (fig. 2.2, no. 5).

The Hall houses busts of ancient personalities, a gallery constructed through a systematic work of restoration. In most cases, only part of the artifact – usually the head – is original, often showing repairs and integrations, while the rest was added in the seventeenth century. Beside two unidentified figures, a bearded man and a possible member of the imperial family, the subjects include Julius Caesar (a completely modern image), Titus's daughter Giulia, Matidia, Aristoteles, Demosthenes, Marcus

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(Antoninus Pius), 115 no. 50 (Demeter); De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 60-61; La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 114-115.

55 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 146 no. 63; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 62.
56 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 198 no. 84; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 63.
57 La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 115.
58 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 211 no. 92; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 68.
59 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 44-47 no. 21; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 69.
60 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 53-56 no. 24; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 64.
61 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 32-36 no. 15; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 65.
Aurelius, and above all Antinous. The position of each bust is carefully planned, so that entering and moving through the room from different directions allows better views of different works. For example, the entrance from the Atrium of Antoninus Pius frames the bust of the bearded male, but as soon as one enters, he or she finds the Marcus Aurelius immediately on the right (fig. 2.15). The portrait illustrates the inventiveness of the restorers in the service of the papal aristocracy particularly well. The bust of the emperor was obtained by joining a bronze head, copied from the equestrian statue on the Capitoline Hill, and a golden cloak to an ancient porphyry bust.65

The bust of Antinous is located right next to the Marcus Aurelius, in the northwest corner of the room, but visitors have to turn to notice it. It comes directly into view if one crosses the room from east to west, taking in the bust of Demosthenes in the process (fig. 2.16). The work as we have it was probably created in the late eighteenth century, when the popularity of the Antinous as an ideal of beauty reached its peak. The only elements that appear ancient are the bust and the left and back sides of the head, which seem to match the actual iconographic type; in their execution, however, they show similarities to the modern additions. Is the portrait, then, a heavily integrated piece or a complete reworking of an ancient object, perhaps sporting a different subject?66

Other sculptures, located in the eastern half of the room, offer their best look to visitors coming from the Atrium of Antoninus Pius or from the Tower Room, which lies

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62 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 19-21 no. 9; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 66.
63 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 124-127 no. 55; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 67.
64 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 121 no. 52; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 70.
65 De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 71.
west of the Hall of the Portraits and forms the southwest corner of the ground floor. They first see the large bust of Matidia near the center of the east wall (fig. 2.17), while a subsequent turn north towards the doorway to the Passage of Pluto and Zeus reveals the busts of Giulia and of Julius Caesar, as well as the doorway to the Passage itself, framing the head of Zeus (fig. 2.18).

The sculptures displayed in this section of the museum provide an excellent opportunity to examine the choices in labeling which characterize it. The attempt to give more information to visitors, while trying to keep modern curatorial interventions as unobtrusive as possible, is particularly evident. This design principle is revealed if one compares the pictures included in the catalogue by Palma and de Lachenal, the images in the more recent publication by De Angelis d'Ossat, and the photos I took during my latest visit to the museum (January 2010). In the older pictures, taken when the sculptures from the Boncompagni Ludovisi collection were still on display in the Baths of Diocletian, small plaques on the pedestal identify the subject of many of the works. At a later time, perhaps when the collection was reinstalled inside Palazzo Altemps, the plaques were removed, and the larger plates on the columnar bases on which the busts and their pedestals rest remained the most immediate means to recognize the identity of the character depicted.

In some cases, however, a third labeling system can be observed. For example, the bust of Demeter in the Atrium of Antoninus Pius bears a plate with the name of the goddess (Demetra) on its base (figs. 2.11, 2.14). In addition to it, the plaque which identified it as a “veiled Demeter” (Demeter velata) in the old exhibit (fig. 2.19) was replaced with a more modern-looking one, which provides details not only on the subject
of the bust, but also on its date, origin, and provenance (fig. 2.20). Given the available
space, however, the text appears extremely small, requiring visitors to come very close to
the object in order to read it. Moreover, while the bigger plates are employed for a
relatively large number of artifacts, for example the Pluto and several busts in the Hall of
the Portraits, the use of the new small plaques seems limited to only a few, such as the
bust of Demeter and the portrait of the member of the imperial family. It is possible, then,
that this solution was tried and eventually discarded in favor of the information sheets
placed on the walls of the galleries. Another reason could be the desire to avoid giving
inaccurate information, for example by assigning an ancient date to a heavily restored
piece, since the label is too small to bear a complete breakdown of what is original and
what was added or changed by the restorer. This explanation could find support in the
fact that the two portraits mentioned above required minimal restoration and do not raise
such problems.

The catalogue by De Angelis d'Ossat continues with the works exhibited in the Hall
of the Herms, which can be reached by returning to the Atrium of Antoninus Pius or
passing through the Tower Room. La Regina gives some attention to the latter room (fig.
2.2, no. 6), where remains of Roman and medieval structures have been exposed. For this
reason, the area has been reserved for the display of archaeological material discovered
throughout the building, including fragments of frescoes and mosaics, an inscription,
glass, and pottery (fig. 2.21).67

The Hall of the Herms (fig. 2.2, no. 7; figs. 2.22-25) is named after six objects of
this kind found in 1621 within the Ludovisi estate and possibly forming part a single
decorative ensemble; unlike the majority of the freestanding sculptures in the exhibit,

67 La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 115-116.
they were not restored, except for the one representing Athena. Other subjects include a
discus thrower, Hermes, Herakles, Dionysos, and Theseus. The same gallery
houses two statues of Apollo playing the kithara, acquired from another collector, which
instead underwent considerable restoration, probably at Ippolito Buzio's hands; their
symmetrical placement at the center of the north and the south walls resembles the
disposition they had in the Villa Ludovisi since 1623. Two more artifacts resulting from
the union of ancient and modern elements occupy the center of the room, a basin of green
marble over an added support, and a decorative marble vase formed by an
Egyptianizing capital to which were added a base, a cover, and two ram-head protomai.

From the Hall, or directly from the courtyard, one can reach a cluster of six rooms,
arranged in two rows, which offers many possible visiting paths. Both De Angelis d'Ossat
and La Regina, however, follow a winding trajectory, starting with the room to the
northwest of the Hall of the Herms, which corresponds to the old entrance to the Palazzo
Riario (fig. 2.2, no. 8). As other rooms, it receives a unique character from the choice and
position of the sculptures displayed. Apart from a female draped figure restored as
Demeter (fig. 2.26), the room houses two images of Aphrodite. One, an ancient head on
a modern bust, was first inventoried as Niobe but later identified as a replica of the
Knidian Aphrodite by Praxiteles. The second piece, a nude female torso, was easily connected with the same work and had her arms, legs, base, head, and bathing props restored accordingly (fig. 2.27). Aware of the presence of the head in the Ludovisi collection, the restorer (again probably Buzio) took it as a model for the reconstruction of the torso.

In the next two rooms (fig. 2.2, nos. 9-10), the simple background of the building is used even more effectively by placing a single artifact in each one. Once again the location allows comparing two representations of the same subject, the goddess Athena, created according to different procedures. The first statue is known as the Algardi Athena (fig. 2.28), as the elements inserted by the seventeenth-century sculptor Alessandro Algardi balance, or even outweigh, the ancient ones and make it comparable to an original creation. The basis for his work is a female torso flanked by a snake, perhaps representing Hygieia. The restored heads of the two figures reflect best the taste of the period. The goddess is depicted with youthful traits, while the reptile's head has a dramatic appearance, with large eyes and sharp teeth. As De Angelis d'Ossat remarks, the mannerisms of the former and the theatricality of the latter fit well in the context of the seventeenth century.

The other figure ("Atena Ludovisi") is a smaller and simplified version of the Athena Parthenos by Pheidias (figs. 2.29-30). It was fairly well preserved and needed no substantial integration – or maybe one should say it left not much room for them – except for the arms where, however, the additions were sufficient to make the statue

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significantly different from the model (the right arm is straight and lowered, as if touching the shield, instead of being bent to hold the Nike in the hand, while the left arm, which did support the shield in the original, is raised and used to be provided with a metal spear). The partial preservation of a signature in Greek on the dress of the statue contributes to its genuine look, although its inclusion in the collection seems to reflect an interest in variety rather than in authenticity.\(^8^1\) It should be noted that the second Athena is placed diagonally in the center of the room, so that visitors arriving from the adjacent rooms see it from the side; to obtain a frontal view, one has to enter the gallery from the main courtyard, which can be accessed from its northeast corner. The sudden variation in the perspective can be interpreted as yet another way to surprise the viewers and enrich their experience.

The itinerary continues with the Room of the Sarcophagi (fig. 2.2, no. 11), named after two such works, one decorated with the Labors of Herakles and the other, later reused as a fountain, with Dionysian themes (fig. 2.31). Part of the former image was lost when the front was cut and built into a wall of the Palazzo Grande in 1807. The choice of works displayed in this room and their arrangement (fig. 2.32) document a particular phase in the life of the Boncompagni Ludovisi collection, its rearrangement in the main building of the Villa by Carlo Ludovico Visconti after the sale of the estate at the end of the nineteenth century.\(^8^2\)

In the last two rooms in the series (fig. 2.2, nos. 12-13), the emphasis is once again on a single work of art and the comparison between them, explicitly suggested by La Regina. Unlike the pairs discussed earlier, the effect created by their proximity is entirely

\(^8^1\) Palma and de Lachenal, *Marmi Ludovisi*, 172-175 no. 73; De Angelis d'Ossat, *Scultura antica*, 90-93; La Regina, *Museo Nazionale Romano*, 117.

\(^8^2\) De Angelis d'Ossat, *Scultura antica*, 94-99; La Regina, *Museo Nazionale Romano*, 120.
a product of the modern display. One of the two pieces, a statue interpreted as a Maenad or Artemis (fig. 2.33), was discovered in 1777 and acquired by the National Museum only in 1997, after being in possession of an English collector for more than a century and a half. The adjacent room is dominated by a male torso, identified with Polyphemus (fig. 2.34). It was initially on display in the portico left of the main staircase, where now a copy of it is located, provided with a stucco head realized for the original in 1600.83

At the opposite end of the cluster, before emerging into the Northern Portico, visitors go through a room (fig. 2.2, no. 14) named after another colossal work, a group of Dionysos, a satyr, and a panther (fig. 2.35), discovered in the sixteenth century during the construction of Palazzo Mattei on the Quirinal and possibly first employed in the decoration of the Baths of Constantine.84 Almost all the objects displayed in the portico itself (fig. 2.2, no. 15) were also part of the Mattei collection. Unlike the contents of the previous galleries, the ensemble includes a small number of sculptures in the round, consisting instead of inscribed bases and funerary reliefs (fig. 2.36). Also on display here are two of the earliest objects acquired by the National Museum, a pair of klinai from the Boncompagni Ludovisi collection, bought around 1900, before the bulk of it was put on the market. The few statues that are present, however, are given the most notable position. Flanking the center of the portico, where the stairs leading down to the Altemps' private theater are located, are images of Dionysos and of a draped female of the Pudicitia type (fig. 2.37). Above all, as soon as the visitor enters the area, he or she faces the colossal statue of a Dacian at its opposite end (fig. 2.38). The unusual clothing and the use of different kinds of stone in the restoration, especially black marble for the head,

83 De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 100-103; La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 120.
84 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 101-105 no. 42; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 104-105; La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 121.
neck, and hands, contributed to its fame and to the multiple, imaginative suggestions for its identification, which included the Mauretanian king Bocchus and the Phrygian ruler Midas. The theater (fig. 2.2, nos. 16-18) has been in use since the fifteenth century, was frequented by celebrities such as Goldoni and Mozart, and is currently employed for lectures and temporary exhibitions.85

2.4. The second floor

Even the monumental staircase that connects the three floors of the building (fig. 2.2, no. 19) is integrated into the exhibit, as it was when the palace was inhabited. Each pair of floors is connected by two flights of steps, with a landing in between, but the stairs between the second and the third floor, which lead to the spaces occupied by the old Altemps library, are closed to the public. As visitors go up, they pass several niches containing statues of two draped females, an unknown togate and a bearded male, supposedly Asklepios (fig. 2.39); their heads are all ancient, but they do not belong to the bodies, except for one of the females, which shows traces of reworking in antiquity, however. The landings are employed to display busts of Hadrian, Anakreon, and Vitellius (figs. 2.40-41), as well as a funerary stele with a loutrophoros in relief, acquired in 1949 and placed at the top of the stairs between the first and the second floor (fig. 2.42).86

On the second floor, the staircase opens on the Southern Balcony (fig. 2.43, no. 20),

85 De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 106-121; La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 121-122. On the statue of the Dacian, see also Rolf Michael Schneider, Bunte Barbaren. Orientalenstatuen aus farbigem Marmor in der römischen Repräsentationskunst (Worms, 1986), 201-202 no. SO 23.
86 De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 122-131; La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 123-125.
which affords an excellent view of its northern counterpart and of the courtyard (fig. 2.3).

Two more female statues from the Boncompagni Ludovisi collection flank the doorway, a *peplophoros* and a draped figure (fig. 2.44); they have replaced two lost statues owned by the Altemps family, which the old inventories list as a Psyche and a goddess of abundance.\(^{87}\) A series of five reliefs and fronts of sarcophagi are affixed to the south wall, between the doors and the windows. Four of them, all formerly in the Del Drago Albani collection, are known since the sixteenth century, but they entered the museum only in 1964, after an attempt to sell them abroad, while the last one was discovered in 1885. At the west end of the balcony, another doorway opens on the Room of the Painted Perspectives (fig. 2.45), framing the statue of Hermes *Loghios* on display there.\(^{88}\)

Before treating it, however, both De Angelis d'Ossat and La Regina consider the series of rooms on the south side of the balcony, formerly an apartment, which can be accessed through two entrances. The western one (fig. 2.46) leads into the Room of Aphrodite (fig. 2.43, no. 21), named after the single work exhibited in it, a nude statue of the goddess in the crouched position; like the reliefs in the balcony, it constitutes a relatively recent acquisition of the museum, retrieved after having been illegally exported.\(^{89}\) The other entrance (fig. 2.47) leads to the Room of the Clergy of Isis and to the Room of the “Iseo Campense” (fig. 2.43, nos. 41-42), part of a group of galleries which house finds from temples of Egyptian gods in Rome and from private residences. Since they are distinct from the main sculpture collection, De Angelis d'Ossat discusses them at the end of her catalogue, while La Regina once again follows the order in which

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\(^{87}\) Palma and de Lachenal, *Marmi Ludovisi*, 113 no. 49, 185 no. 78; De Angelis d'Ossat, *Scultura antica*, 134-135.


\(^{89}\) De Angelis d'Ossat, *Scultura antica*, 144; La Regina, *Museo Nazionale Romano*, 126.
visitors are most likely to encounter them.

The first room he describes, which can be entered from the Room of Aphrodite, is known as Room of Public and Private Cults or Room of the Young Bull (fig. 2.43, no. 39), since it houses a black statue of the Apis bull of Ptolemaic age, discovered in 1886 near the Palazzo Brancaccio on the Esquiline, in the area of the *Horti Maecenatiani*.\(^9^0\)

The room contains other artifacts of mixed provenance (hence its primary name), shape, and style, gathered here to remind visitors of how Egyptian civilization, and particularly the cult of Isis, contributed to the formation of a rich cultural and aesthetic milieu in imperial Rome.\(^9^1\)

The Room of Public and Private Cults opens on two rooms housing finds from sanctuaries of the Egyptian gods, namely, the already mentioned “Iseo Campense” (the temple of Isis and Serapis in the Campo Marzio [fig. 2.48]) to the east and the sanctuary on the Gianicolo discovered in 1907-1908 to the north (fig. 2.43, no. 40; fig. 2.49). La Regina mentions only the area dedicated to the latter site, famous for having yielded statues of Osiris, Jupiter Serapis, and Dionysos. De Angelis d'Ossat instead leaves it last,\(^9^2\) beginning the relevant section of her catalogue with the room reserved for the Campo Marzio temple, represented by statues and fragments made of dark stone (basalt, diorite, black and gray granite) and a relief brought to Rome from an Egyptian temple.\(^9^3\)

De Angelis d'Ossat then describes the three remaining rooms belonging to this section of the museum, which are organized thematically rather than topographically. In the first, known as Room of Roman Isis or Room of the Mother Goddesses (fig. 2.43, no.

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43), two statues of Isis with Hellenized features are shown, together with the most recent acquisition of the museum, a late Hadrianic head of Ephesian Artemis, mounted on a column between two windows near the east wall (fig. 2.50). Adjacent to it is the Room of Serapis and of the Roman Emperors (fig. 2.43, no. 44), which contains, among other works, two heads of Serapis, a seated statue of the god with the head missing, and a bust of Septimius Severus in his guise (fig. 2.51). Lastly, the Room of the Clergy of Isis, which is also connected with the Room of the Shrine of the Gianicolo, includes the heads of two priests and of a child consecrated to the goddess among the works displayed (fig. 2.52).

The Room of the Bacchuses (fig. 2.43, no. 38), located between the Room of Aphrodite and the Room of the Painted Perspectives, and also accessible from the Room of the Young Bull, joins the Egyptian section to the rest of the museum, both physically and conceptually. It contains a miscellany of works, which include part of an image of the Middle Kingdom Pharaoh Amenhemat III and representations of Dionysos, which gave the room its name (fig. 2.53).

The Room of the Painted Perspectives (fig. 2.43, no. 22) occupies the southwest corner of the floor, right above the hall of Portraits. As La Regina points out, the presence of four corbels adorned with the symbols of the Evangelists indicate that the room was initially the palace chapel, and then became the main access to the residential quarters. It is among the first rooms in the itinerary to feature wall paintings, extensive remains of which are preserved. Interacting with the architecture and the sculptures, they add a third

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dimension to the visitors' experience. The sculptures displayed in the room are placed along the walls, at some distance from them. In her catalogue, De Angelis d'Ossat describes them clockwise, beginning with an image of Herakles resting, located to the left of the entrance from the porch (figs. 2.54-55). The statue has been restored less heavily than others, but the integrations include the plinth, which bears a modern signature in Greek.98 A second statue, representing Asklepios, also needed only limited restoration, which involved the upper part of the head and the right arm holding a staff (fig. 2.56).99

Next comes a group of three artifacts, put together to reconstitute a composite work (fig. 2.57), originally devised by Carlo Ludovico Visconti as part of his arrangement of the Galleria Ludovisi at the end of the nineteenth century. It consists of a satyr head, placed over a cinerary urn, which in turn rests on a small funerary altar; the front of the last piece was reworked and provided with a dedication to Cardinal Cesarini, who sponsored its restoration. The head, apparently lost in 1920, was found again in the early 1990s,100 so that it became possible to reconstruct the composite in the new installation of the Ludovisi collection inside Palazzo Altemps.

The series ends with two statues of Hermes. One is remarkable for its incomplete state, since its head with a petasos, a wholly modern addition, was later removed (figs. 2.58-59). In the second, the already mentioned Hermes Loghios, the right arm and the legs with the base, restored by Algardi, are still in place, so that the visual effect of the pose is maintained. However, the attributes held by the god, the caduceus and a small

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98 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 89-90 no. 37; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 147.
99 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 36-38 no. 16; Giuliano, Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi, 188-193 no. 23; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 148.
100 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 183-185 no. 77 (urn), 6-10 no. 3 (altar); Daniela Candilio, “Satiro in bigio morato della Collezione Ludovisi,” Bollettino di Archeologia 23-24 (1993), 179-182; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 149-153.
bag, added by the same sculptor, have been removed (fig. 2.60). La Regina follows a
different order, starting with the satyr, and emphasizes the relationship between the
paintings and the statues.¹⁰¹

Continuing along the west side of the floor, visitors enter the Room of the
Cupboard (fig. 2.43, no. 23), which takes its name from the remains of a wall painting
that reproduces a set of precious kitchen ware on shelves, inspired by the gifts for the
wedding of Girolamo Riario and Caterina Sforza. The sculptures placed here form a
triangle around the center of the room and create a privileged viewing position (figs.
2.61-62). The most popular of them is the Ares Ludovisi, a seated image of the armed
god accompanied by a little Eros. Its fame derives not only from the statue itself, but also
from the restoration conducted on it by Bernini in 1622. His intervention was peculiar,
since the additions, such as the lion-shaped pommel of the god's sword or the head of
Eros, are clearly distinguishable from the original work, as De Angelis d'Ossat remarks.
Moreover, despite being based on classical models, in the new context they give a
baroque flavor to the piece.¹⁰²

For a time, around the period when De Angelis d'Ossat's catalogue was published,
the Ares was placed near, indeed on the same pedestal as, a group showing Thetis seated
on a throne with a little Triton beside her, discovered almost intact in 1941 in the area of
Termini Station. The association was based on an alternative interpretation of the Ares
proposed by Filippo Coarelli, who saw in it Achilles receiving his new weapons from his

¹⁰¹ Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 142 no. 61 (headless Hermes), 177 no. 75 (Hermes Loghios);
Giuliano, Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi, 94-101 no. 5 (Hermes Loghios); De Angelis d'Ossat,
Scultura antica, 154-157; La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 129.
¹⁰² Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 115-121 no. 51; Giuliano, Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi,
74-83 no. 1; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 158-165; La Regina, Museo Nazionale Romano, 129-133.
mother, the subject of a late second-century BC work said by Pliny to have adorned the Temple of Neptune in the Campo Marzio. The catalogue, however, also includes pictures in which the Ares appears displayed as a single work – as it is today – as well as images which show the two works together, so that it is not clear how the discussion on the best way to exhibit them developed.103

Across the room is another group formed by two standing figures embracing each other, a draped female and a partially nude male, shorter than her. Their identity changed several times in the inventories, until Winckelmann suggested that the statues reproduced Orestes and Elektra after their encounter at their father's grave.104 The third corner of the triangle is represented by a second seated warrior, perhaps defeated or prisoner, or part of the decoration of a tomb, which has always been displayed as a companion to the Ares throughout the history of the collection.105

The Room of the Cupboard forms a pair with the adjacent Room of the Stories of Moses (fig. 2.43, no. 24), the subject of the fresco frieze running just below the ceiling, executed in 1591 by Pasquale Cati. It serves as the setting for three of the most renowned pieces of the collection, the colossal head known as “Acrolito Ludovisi,” the “Trono Ludovisi,” and the Juno Ludovisi (figs. 2.63-64). The first object, mentioned in the inventories of the collection since 1733, comes perhaps from a seated divine statue. The head is largely considered a Classical representation of Aphrodite, originally kept in the sanctuary of Marasà near Locri Epizephyri and brought to Rome in the early second

103 Filippo Coarelli, Il Campo Marzio. Dalle origini alla fine della repubblica (Rome, 1997), 433-446; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 166-167.
104 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 84-89 no. 35; Giuliano, Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi, 176-181 no. 21; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 168-171.
105 Palma and de Lachenal, Marmi Ludovisi, 167-170 no. 71; Giuliano, Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi, 84-89 no. 2; De Angelis d'Ossat, Scultura antica, 172-173.
century to decorate the temple of Venus Erycina, in the area later occupied by the *Horti Sallustiani* and then by the Villa Ludovisi. A similar origin has been suggested for the “Trono,” found in 1887 in the area of the Villa, which was undergoing urban development. Its function and iconography have been long debated. It has been regarded as part of a stair rail, a base for a cult statue, or the top of an altar or a shrine. The supposed connection with the “Acrolito” led scholars to propose the birth of Aphrodite, celebrated on the sides by priestesses, as the subject of the reliefs, although the return of Persephone has also been suggested.

The Juno has had a far longer history, since it belonged to the Cesi family already in the sixteenth century before being included in the first nucleus of the Ludovisi collection. Identified as the queen of the gods by Winckelmann, it was greatly admired by Goethe and Schiller, and became the symbol of German Neoclassicism. Current scholarship, however, tends to see the work as an idealized portrait of Antonia, Claudius's mother, or of Livia.

Continuing north from the Room of the Stories of Moses, the visitor has two options. The right exit allows access to the northwest section of the floor, while the left one leads to a two-room suite. La Regina leaves it as the last stop in the itinerary, inviting them to retrace their steps and take a second look at the highlights of the collection. The two rooms are called the Antechamber and the Room of the Duchess, with reference to Isabella Lante Altemps. In the first room (fig. 2.43, no. 37) the attention is captured by two statues which depict popular themes in Hellenistic sculpture, the child strangling a

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goose and the crouched nude Aphrodite. Both works were in the Cesi collection before being acquired by the Ludovisi. Their first owners put them together on a rotating base as Leda and the swan, an association maintained in the Ludovisi collection, but they rest on separate bases in the most recent arrangement.\textsuperscript{108} It should also be noticed that the two statues are turned towards the Room of the Duchess, and can be best viewed when coming out of it (fig. 2.65). If visitors arrive in the Antechamber from the south, after crossing the sequence of galleries which begins with the Room of the Painted Perspectives, they see them from behind, thus experiencing an abrupt visual rupture, as in the Room of the Athena Parthenos on the ground floor.

The Room of the Duchess (fig. 2.43, no. 36; fig. 2.66) is notable for its rich decoration, especially the painted frieze with mythological episodes executed in 1654. The works displayed in it include a second crouched Aphrodite with a dolphin,\textsuperscript{109} a bust of the same goddess where the ancient head is inserted into a modern mantle, like its analogues in the Hall of Portraits, and particularly the group of Cupid and Psyche. In the last work, even more starkly than in the Algardi Athena, the archaeological remains functioned as raw material for Ippolito Buzio to create an original piece. The head and the torso of both figures are ancient, but unrelated to each other, while the draped lower half of Psyche and the lower legs and the feet of Cupid are seventeenth-century additions. Moreover, Buzio reused the original parts without regard to their gender, so that a reworked male head and a male torso, to which he added breasts, were employed for the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 72 no. 29 (Aphrodite), 111 no. 47 (child and goose); Giuliano, \textit{Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi}, 108-115 no. 8a-b; De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 248-249; La Regina, \textit{Museo Nazionale Romano}, 162-163.
\item Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 72-75 no. 30; Giuliano, \textit{Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi}, 136-141 no. 13; De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 244-245.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
female character, while the male one sports a female head.\footnote{Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 41-42 no. 18; Giuliano, \textit{Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi}, 144-151 no. 15; De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 246; La Regina, \textit{Museo Nazionale Romano}, 163.}

The Antechamber of the Four Seasons and the Chamber of the Cardinal, which correspond to the master's bedroom, form the counterpart to the Duchess's suite. Like many rooms on the first floor, the Antechamber (fig. 2.43, no. 25) takes its name from the wall paintings that decorate it, centered on the passage of time and the cycle of seasons (fig. 2.67). Inside it are two heads from the Cesi collection, depicting Herakles and Hera, and the corner of a sarcophagus preserving a group of women, interpreted as part of a relief in which Phaedra is comforted by her friends (figs. 2.68-69).\footnote{Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 97-101 no. 41 (Hera), 113 no. 48 (Herakles), 193-195 no. 82 (sarcophagus fragment); De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 186-189; La Regina, \textit{Museo Nazionale Romano}, 142.}

Two more busts from the Cesi collection (Hygieia and Athena) and part of a second sarcophagus, decorated with the Judgment of Paris, are housed in the Chamber of the Cardinal (fig. 2.43, no. 26; fig. 2.70). The fragmentary state of the sarcophagus derives from the removal of stucco integrations applied to it by Algardi on the basis of older drawings and of reliefs with the same subject belonging to other collections.\footnote{Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 10 no. 4 (Athena), 107 no. 44 (Hygieia), 152-156 no. 65 (sarcophagus); De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 190-193.} The display is completed by a relief with the mask of a Maenad in profile, also from the Cesi collection, near the entrance to the “Studiolo della Clemenza” (fig. 2.71). The head has a hole in place of the iris and another near the mouth to allow the passage of steam or, more likely, of water; it was probably an element of a bath or a fountain. A notable feature of the room is that it exhibits remains of two decorative cycles, a sixteenth-century fresco frieze with landscapes and coats of arms and a seventeenth-century one with battle scenes...
Further north, the “Studiolo” (fig. 2.43, no. 27) acts as a junction between the main apartment, the Painted Balcony, and the Hall of the Gaul (fig. 2.73). Its role is enhanced by the single piece displayed in it and by the decoration on the ceiling. Like several rooms on the ground floor, the “Studiolo” contains just one artifact, a cylindrical base with dancers which seem to accompany the visitors as they turn around and decide which exit to take. The paintings – a Madonna and Child in the center, surrounded by episodes of Mary's life – encourage a circular movement, too. Altemps coats of arms in the corners, flanked by personifications of Mercy and other Virtues, complete the decoration.\(^{114}\)

The Painted Balcony (fig. 2.43, no. 28) represents yet another type of relationship between painted decoration and sculpture. The paintings were commissioned in 1595, when Marco Sittico Altemps acquired the building. After enjoying fantastic architectural landscapes and the atmosphere of a wedding, the visitor is transported into a lush garden where flowers and branches climb up, fruits and animals discovered in the New World find a new home, and putti play with exotic animals, while Virtues and heraldic personifications keep watch (fig. 2.74). As in the Northern Portico below, the wall opposite the entrance is marked as a focal point through the placement of a fountain, dressed with marble, stucco, and glass paste mosaic, and decorated with two water bearers on the sides and three little Fauns under a conch at the top (fig. 2.75). As for the


sculpture, although no outstanding works are displayed here, the artifacts chosen are significant because they were conceived as a coherent set, the portraits of the Twelve Caesars, a favorite subject among the classically educated aristocracy. The desire to own the complete series, however, led to doubtful attributions and to the heavy reworking of some portraits, when not to the creation of wholly new images.\(^{115}\)

The Hall of the Gaul (fig. 2.43, no. 29), which occupies most of the northwest section of the floor, was a ballroom created when the area was rebuilt after a collapse in 1575; it can be entered from the “Studiolo della Clemenza” (fig. 2.71) or from the Painted Balcony (fig. 2.76). Three more masterworks belonging to the Ludovisi collection are shown in it, namely, the unconscious female head known as “Erinni Ludovisi,” the colossal sarcophagus showing a battle between Romans and barbarians (“Great Ludovisi”), and the group of the Gaul killing himself and his wife (figs. 2.77-79). The last two works were both discovered around 1621 and entered the Ludovisi collection shortly after, while the Erinni arrived from the Cesi collection. In its previous setting, the head was placed in a garden, lying on a marble pillow, and regarded as a sleeping nymph. Other identifications with mythical or historical female characters, either dead or sleeping, have been proposed, although the object might be interpreted more prosaically as an element of a Hellenistic group, possibly a fragment of a wounded Amazon.\(^{116}\)

The Great Ludovisi and the group of the Gaul and his wife are two of the most famous depictions of the “barbarian.” In the sarcophagus there is a clear physical distinction between the Romans and their enemies, and the scene is designed to


emphasize the Roman commander at the center. The object possibly belonged to an imperial family member or to a figure of high military rank involved in battles against the Goths around the mid-third century (one of Emperor Decius's sons?), although a cover, now in Mainz, which seems to match it, suggests it was used for a deceased female.\footnote{Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 56-67 no. 25; De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 218-221; La Regina, \textit{Museo Nazionale Romano}, 152-153.} The group of the Gaul is well preserved, with only a few elements restored, such as the right hand of the warrior and part of the sword. Its location at the center of the hall allows one to appreciate the contrast of shapes between the two figures and to observe them from multiple points of view, an indispensable condition to notice all the details of the work.\footnote{Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 146-152 no. 64; De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 223-227; La Regina, \textit{Museo Nazionale Romano}, 148-149.}

Apart from the sculptures, the Hall is famous for its monumental fireplace (fig. 2.80), which has been recently restored and put back into place after having been dismantled to be sold. It is adorned with elements of colored marble, some of which are reused ancient remains, and bears an inscription in gold on black celebrating the master of the palace, surmounted by his bust, so that La Regina compares the whole piece to a sort of cenotaph.\footnote{La Regina, \textit{Museo Nazionale Romano}, 146.}

From two doors on the sides of the fireplace it is possible to reach the section of the palace dedicated to religious practices, which includes an entire church dedicated to the martyr St. Anicetus (fig. 2.43, no. 30; fig. 2.81), and the Chapel of St. Charles Borromeo (fig. 2.43, no. 33), where part of a liturgical vestment which allegedly belonged to the saint is kept. No ancient artifacts are on display in this area, except for a marble tub found on the Via Appia and donated by the pope to the Altemps family in 1617 to be used as
reliquary and base for the altar. However, the church is richly decorated and the rooms attached to it preserve many interesting features, such as the wooden furniture of the Sacristy (fig. 2.43, no. 32) and its door, outfitted with an intricate lock with multiple bolts, which need one special key to be opened all at once.\textsuperscript{120}

The last part of the exhibit is located in two other rooms to the west of the Hall of the Gaul, opposite the church and the chapel. One is known as Room of the Small Ludovisi (fig. 2.43, no. 34), since it houses a second sarcophagus decorated with a battle scene analogous to the one on the Great Ludovisi (fig. 2.82).\textsuperscript{121} It is accompanied by objects of various kinds, including a fragmentary relief with a triumphal procession, a funerary relief of a knight, a statue of a seated man wearing a toga, identified as an image of the poet Menander, and a funerary altar employed by the Ludovisi as a base for the Juno.\textsuperscript{122} Finally, through an arch in the south wall of the room, visitors enter the Room of the Obelisks (fig. 2.43, no. 35), where they encounter a balanced composition of works that captures their gaze. Two statues of Muses, Calliope and Urania, face two groups composed of a female and a sylvan creature (Pan and Daphnis, Satyr and Nymph), and the four converge on a torchbearer, created by Algardi from an ancient torso, probably of a young Satyr (figs. 2.83-85). Described as Prometheus or the Day in the old inventories, he holds the torch high in his right hand, and carries some apples in the left hand. The fruits are generally thought to stand for the garden of the Hesperides at the western edge of the world, and thus the night, while the torch represents the day.\textsuperscript{123} The symbolism

\textsuperscript{120} De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 228; La Regina, \textit{Museo Nazionale Romano}, 154-156.

\textsuperscript{121} Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 49-53 no. 23; De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 234-235.

\textsuperscript{122} De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 229-233; La Regina, \textit{Museo Nazionale Romano}, 156-158.

\textsuperscript{123} Palma and de Lachenal, \textit{Marmi Ludovisi}, 47-49 no. 22 (torchbearer), 77-79 no. 32 (Urania), 79 no. 33 (Satyr and Nymph), 89 no. 36 (Calliope), 90-94 no. 38 (Pan and Daphnis); Giuliano, \textit{Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi}, 168-175 no. 20 (Satyr and Nymph); De Angelis d'Ossat, \textit{Scultura antica}, 236-242; La Regina,
seems quite appropriate for the conclusion of an exhibit based on exploration and on the constant discovery of new details and references, which in turn confirm the viewers' dignified status.

2.5. *Getting lost in the labyrinth*

One important factor in the impression produced by an archaeological museum is the relationship between a collection and the building which houses it, namely, whether the latter was built specifically to serve as an archaeological museum or was already in existence with a different function. The peculiarity of Palazzo Altemps is that it shares traits with both categories of museums. Truly, the curators have had to work with an already existing building, but one that was constructed expressly to display ancient works, especially sculpture, among other purposes, so it can be compared to a newly built structure. Thus, both architecture and sculpture help one another to look more coherent and harmonious. Moreover, since the arrangement of the museum largely involved reinstalling artifacts which were shown there in earlier times, or comparable ones, practical issues such as static and lighting become less determinant, having been already taken into account in the original planning of the palace.

As explicitly indicated in the guides, and as the museum staff confirmed to me, great efforts were made to give modern visitors an impression similar to the one someone paying a visit to the Altemps or the Ludovisi would receive. Therefore, doorways, turns, axial perspectives, foreshortenings become part of the exhibit as much as the artifacts

*Museo Nazionale Romano*, 158-160.
themselves, especially if visitors follow the itinerary suggested by La Regina and, implicitly, by De Angelis d'Ossat. The evocative names of the various rooms contribute to build an atmosphere of expectation.

In any case, the overall effect is so fluid that it is easy to forget it is the product of thoughtful curatorial action. The exhibit has a hybrid character, since many works included in it were previously located not inside Palazzo Altemps, but in and around the Villa Ludovisi; by putting together some works already associated in that setting, the modern arrangement strives to convey a hint of its splendor, too. Second, sculptures which have entered the holdings of the Roman National Museum after the acquisition of the old collections needed to be integrated into the program, as well. Moreover, some artifacts underwent derestoration, mostly in the early twentieth century, which further removes the exhibit from its original context.

Finally, what constitutes the strength of the museum can also appear as its limitation. First, the architecture, the sculptures, and (where present) the wall paintings form a coherent, but static whole. Nothing can really be changed in the display without disrupting its effectiveness. Even if it were still in fashion, derestoration would be unthinkable, for instance, unless the building were damaged, as it happened with the Munich Glyptothek. Nevertheless, attempts to reconcile old perceptions and new interpretations have been made, for example through the use of pedestals to join or separate pairs of statues according to whether they are deemed to compose a single group, like the Ares Ludovisi and the Thetis, or not, as in the case of the child strangling the goose in relation to the Aphrodite. Such adjustments, however, never go so far as to break the illusion of a coherent and unified display.
Second, the effort to present the antiquities as they could have appeared to the eyes of the learned aristocrats engaged in their gathering and placement, who relied on their cultural upbringing and not on external aids for their interpretation, reflects the cultural biography of the works more accurately. At the same time, however, such a choice makes it more difficult for the general public to interpret the individual objects and the exhibit as a whole. Comments left by visitors, although generally positive, frequently express bewilderment and uncertainty as to the itinerary one is supposed to follow. One such comment likens the museum to a maze, a comparison acknowledged by the members of its staff who, however, sees it under a positive light. For the privileged few who had access to the sculptures, the sense of surprise – the pleasure of looking around or turning a corner to face always different subjects and poses, or to have one's gaze captured by a far-reaching view across multiple doorways – was a crucial element of their enjoyment, and the attempt to reproduce it in the modern display constitutes one of the distinctive features of the museum. It must also be admitted, however, that this game of discovery and wonder loses much of its appeal if visitors are not prepared to take part in it.
CHAPTER 3
CITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, BOLOGNA

3.1. The antecedents of the museum

The Museo Civico Archeologico (City Archaeological Museum) of Bologna is situated in the Palazzo Galvani on Via dell'Archiginnasio, one of the most elegant streets of the city, only a few meters away from the main square, Piazza Maggiore (figs. 3.1-2), and houses two major groups of artifacts. The first one consists of materials gathered by prominent citizens from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century that had been bequeathed first to the University and later to the city itself.

The core of the historic collection dates back to 1712, when the Bolognese erudite and collector Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli or Marsili (1658-1730), after a long and adventurous military career, donated the materials gathered during his travels in Europe and around the Mediterranean to the University, for the purpose of establishing an institution dedicated to research and teaching, the Institute of Sciences. In the Metodo d'istruzione letteraria, a series of proposals prepared by Marsili in the course of the necessary negotiations with the Senate, the governing body of the University, he laid down his plans for the organization of the future Institute. He conceived the structure as composed of a series of “rooms,” each dedicated to a different discipline and meant to house materials pertinent to it, such as astronomical instruments, military implements,
and natural specimens. Among the planned sections of the Institute there was also a “room of Antiquities” (stanza dell'Antichità), devoted to archaeological artifacts.\textsuperscript{124}

The Institute was to be located in the Palazzo Poggi (today the main building of the University), together with the Academy of Fine Arts, formally constituted in 1711. In Marsili's intentions, the antiquities were to be distributed along a circular path and grouped by function (cultic, funerary, votive, military), with the inscriptions and the objects of uncertain nature at the end; a container with drawers in the center would have served to house coins, weights, lead tokens, and gems. Sculptures and paintings were meant to form a separate nucleus, in order to take into account the needs of the Academy. The possibility that objects from the collection could be lent to it for teaching purposes was already stipulated when the Institute was established, as one of several means to facilitate the study of the human body. An agreement concluded between Marsili and the Academy in 1727 mentions a “Stanza del Nudo,” a practice room on the ground floor of the Palazzo Poggi where students of art could observe a model posing nude on a stage. Casts of notable ancient statues located in Rome at the time were placed in a second room and could be viewed through an open door.\textsuperscript{125}

Financial problems and theoretical disagreements between Marsili and the governing body of the University prevented him from realizing his plans. Instead of being integrated with the natural history collections under a single supervisor, the “Museo” was constituted as a separate entity within the University, inspired to traditional principles of


\textsuperscript{125} Gualandi, “Raccolta archeologica,” 135-136.
erudition and antiquarian research. The “Stanza delle Antichità,” arranged on the second floor of the Palazzo Poggi, included only the tools, the coins, and the small artifacts, while the sculptures ended up entirely in the spaces occupied by the Academy, together with the casts and a group of wooden models of buildings; the inscriptions were mounted on the walls of the atrium and of other halls of the palace.

Between 1742 and 1743 the Institute acquired two other collections, constituted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and left to the city by their original proprietors, the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605) and the nobleman Ferdinando Cospi (1606-1686). The two collections were very different in concept, size, and composition, truly representing the product of two separate periods. Aldrovandi gathered thousands of objects, most of which pertinent to the study of natural history, although he was interested in archaeological and ethnographic materials as well. His collection was conceived as a microcosm, in which every aspect of the observable world was represented in an encyclopedic fashion. Cospi put together a much smaller mix of different kinds of objects instead, following the model of the *Wunderkammer*, the eclectic gathering of unusual objects of both natural and artificial origin, chosen for their capacity to arouse curiosity and wonder. Cospi's collection was joined to Aldrovandi's when it was donated to the city, and in the seventeenth century, as scholars began to abandon the methods followed by Aldrovandi, his comprehensive assemblage of materials was increasingly seen as an accumulation of curiosities itself. The universal scope underlying the two collections could not be reconciled with the more compartmentalized structure of the Institute of Sciences, so they were broken up upon their incorporation into it, and their materials were integrated into the already existing “rooms” according to discipline. The need to
find more space for the antiquities after the new acquisitions and the partial opening to Enlightenment ideas on the part of Pope Benedict XIV (the Bolognese Prospero Lambertini, who reigned 1740-1758), led to the transfer of the “Stanza” to the ground floor of the palace and to a revival of the approach to the study of archaeological artifacts championed by Marsili.126

In the early nineteenth century, during the short-lived period of French hegemony in northern Italy, the University collections were rearranged, and the materials of the “Stanza delle Antichità” were used to constitute Bologna's first formally established archaeological museum, the Museo di Antichità (Museum of Antiquities) or Museo Universitario (University Museum), which opened in 1810. Its organization is known mainly from the Guida del forestiere, composed in 1814 by Filippo Schiassi, then professor of Archaeology at the University.127 The materials on display were distributed among seven rooms of the Palazzo Poggi, apparently without distinction between objects coming from the old collections and those discovered locally. The structure also included an antechamber, a study reserved for the Professor of Archaeology or the Keeper of the museum, and a storeroom.

The guidebook begins with some general information on the birth and the development of the museum from the Marsili, Aldrovandi, and Cospi collections, the

127 Filippo Schiassi, Guida del forestiere al Museo delle antichità della Regia Università di Bologna (Bologna, 1814); see also Gualandi, “Raccolta archeologica,” 141-142; Anna Maria Brizzolara, “Il Museo Universitario (1810-1878),” in Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, Dalla Stanza delle Antichità, 159-166.
ancient history of Bologna, other settlements in the area and significant scattered finds. The contents of the various galleries are then listed, although, as the author explicitly states, the book does not mention all the artifacts, but “only the most notable” (soltanto i più pregevoli). There is a strong disparity in the amount of space devoted to each room. Almost half the book (73 pages out of 151) discusses a large selection of objects from Room I, which housed the inscriptions. Schiassi’s – and his readers’ – primary interest clearly lies in the texts rather than in their supports. He treats them by category (sacred, honorific, historic, funerary), further dividing the epitaphs according to the relationship between the deceased and the person who set up the monument. Readers are informed about the place and date of discovery of each piece and about its contents, while long footnotes provide transcriptions and other historical and philological information; in contrast, the position of the objects in the room is omitted or given in a cursory manner.\footnote{Schiassi, \textit{Guida del forestiere}, 19-91.}

The remaining six rooms are examined in much shorter chapters, which range in length from 19 pages for Room II to a minimum of two pages for Room V. The second room contained the bulk of the Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek and Roman artifacts, with only a limited number of pieces receiving a summary description in the guide. Apart from the more prominent mummies and sarcophagi, the Egyptian material is grouped into three artistic phases, Pharaonic, Ptolemaic, and “of the times of Hadrian, called an age of imitation” (de' tempi d'Adriano, che dicesi epoca d'imitazione). Schiassi gives details on a large-scale artifact for each phase and adds a list of statuettes and other small objects.

The section on the Classical world opens with the painted vases “popularly called Etruscan” (che volgarmente si dicono etruschi), which are quickly dispatched them in a
couple of pages. Such a lack of interest might appear surprising today, but it seems understandable at a time when the question of the origin of these artifacts was still debated, despite the role played by the English diplomat and collector Sir William Hamilton (1731-1803) in establishing the Greek character of many of them. More attention is dedicated to the collection of Etruscan mirrors, called “patere” at the time. Other small works (small idols, reliefs, statuettes) are discussed summarily, since their subject could not be determined. Several pages are reserved for tools, appreciated for their usefulness in the study of everyday life. They are classified according to their domain of use (public, uncertain, private) and their function (ritual, trade, war, horsemanship, water management, sealing, dress, adornment, agriculture, weaving); household items (lamps, locks and keys, kitchen utensils) come last. Finally, there is mention of some urns lacking an explicitly funerary character.

Room III displayed various types of building materials and architectural decoration, together with sculptures. The architectural material included examples of capitals of the various orders, bricks and tiles used in different Roman building techniques, roof tiles and lion-head antefixes, lead pipes, mosaic tesserae. The sculpture collection consisted of fragments of architectural terracottas, statues, votive reliefs and statuettes. Once again, they are valued by the guide more as a source of antiquarian knowledge than as a display of artistic significance. Their description is brief and confined to the identification of the subject, sometimes complemented by iconographic or epigraphic comments.

The other rooms were devoted, respectively, to late antique, medieval, and early

130 Schiassi, Guida del forestiere, 92-110.
131 Schiassi, Guida del forestiere, 111-127.
modern artifacts (IV), wooden building models (V), ethnographic objects (VI), and to numismatic and glyptic (VII). The contents of Room IV occupied two cabinets, one of which held stone sculptures and reliefs, metal objects, and seals, while the other displayed works in ivory, enamel, glass, and other materials and techniques. The description is fairly detailed, although the guide reserves only nine pages for this room. Even less paper is used for Room V, just enough to acknowledge the presence of models of obelisks, of the Columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, and of the church of San Vitale in Ravenna; reproductions of the Mausoleum of Theoderic, also in Ravenna, and of an ancient theater were being prepared. The last two rooms are described in about six pages each. The ethnographic collection in Room VI filled five cabinets, respectively with “Turkish,” American, and Far Eastern creations, with American implements “for military and practical uses” (di uso militare e pratico), and with objects from various countries; bigger items, such as mats and “hanging beds” (letti pensili, probably meaning hammocks), hung from the walls. Finally, coins, medals and gems, selected series of which are listed in the guide, could be admired in Room VII. The book ends by praising Joachim Murat, Napoleon's brother-in-law and king of Naples from 1808 to 1815, from whom significant contributions to the collections were expected.132

Schiassi's hopes were to remain unfulfilled. Despite its illustrious roots, after the fall of Napoleon the Museum of Antiquities was not able to maintain a leading role in the acquisition and the study of the remains of the past, gradually losing ground to a new cultural establishment, the City Library, founded in the Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio in 1835. After its creation, the Archiginnasio (as the library is usually called) became the destination of small collections given to the city and scattered archaeological finds.

132 Schiassi, Guida del forestiere, 128-151.
brought to the attention of the authorities. Eventually, significant legacies found their way into the building, such as the Salina and, above all, the Palagi collection. Left to the city by the famous painter Pelagio Palagi (1775-1860), the collection featured Attic and South Italian painted pottery, Greek and Roman sculpture, an extensive coin series, and a large group of Egyptian artifacts such as few museums in Italy possessed at the time. Unfortunately, the lack of an adequate structure to accommodate it meant that the objects were kept in poor conditions and access to them was greatly limited. The need to display the Palagi collection in a proper manner was one of the main reasons for the creation of a new City Museum.\textsuperscript{133}

The second major group of materials that became eventually part of the museum includes the finds from the Villanovan, Etruscan and Gallic cemeteries excavated in and around Bologna by Giovanni Gozzadini (1810-1887) and Antonio Zannoni (1833-1910). In 1853 Gozzadini discovered a group of graves on one of his properties in Villanova, a village near Bologna, after which he named the cultural horizon they represented. Later, he dug another Villanovan cemetery at the Arsenale Militare (1873) and an Etruscan one at the Giardini Margherita, a public park in the city (1876). The importance of Etruscan Bologna had been revealed by Zannoni some years before, with the excavation of the Certosa cemetery (1869). A few years later, in 1873, he discovered the notable Benacci cemetery, which included graves of Villanovan, Gallic, and Roman times.\textsuperscript{134}

The discoveries made by Gozzadini and Zannoni pushed the date of the earliest

\begin{footnotes}
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settlement in the area well before the time suggested by the ancient sources and supported Pliny's statement about the leading position of the city among the northern Etruscans, who called it *Felsina*.\textsuperscript{135} Gozzadini's and Zannoni's activities, moreover, in conjunction with the work of renowned prehistorians such as Gaetano Chierici (1819-1886) and Luigi Pigorini (1842-1925), reinforced the position of Bologna as one of the liveliest centers of prehistoric research during the second half of the nineteenth century. The invitation to host the fifth session of the International Congress of Anthropology and Prehistoric Archaeology in 1871 was a remarkable acknowledgment of the prestige of the city among archaeologists. At the same time, it provided an excellent opportunity for the civic administration to draw the attention not only of the archaeological community, but of the whole, recently unified Italian state, of which Bologna had become part only a decade earlier. The creation of a new city museum fitted such a project very well. In fact, the Museo Civico (City Museum) opened on October 2, 1871, while the Congress was being held.

The new museum was initially meant to accommodate the Palagi collection only, and was to be dedicated to him, but the plan of the exhibit had to be modified in order to make space for Zannoni's amazing finds from the Certosa cemetery. As a result, only the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquities collected by Palagi were initially made accessible to the public, while significant groups of objects, chiefly the medieval ones, remained out of sight. In its first incarnation, the museum was located entirely on the second floor of the Palazzo Galvani, which is near the Archiginnasio and was at the time part of the library (fig. 3.3). It occupied a linear sequence of five rooms along the front and part of one side of the building. Rooms I and II were reserved for the Palagi

\textsuperscript{135} Livy 37.57.7-8; Plin. *HN* 3.15.115; Vell. Pat. 1.15.2.
materials. In the former, large cabinets along the walls contained the small Egyptian artifacts; attached to a section of wall were reliefs and stelai, with the papyri framed and hung above them. The Greek and Roman antiquities were on display in the second room. Between two long wall cases for the Greek and Etruscan pottery ran a central section, which included a third case with miscellaneous objects (lamps, terracotta statuettes, small glass items, South Italian vases), eight Attic kylikes in glass containers that allowed them to be viewed from both sides, another case with the bronzes, and the works of sculpture. Among them was one of the highlights of the collection, an “ephebic head” which Palagi bought from the Venetian antiquaries Sanquirico in 1829. The fame of the head, which today serves as the official symbol of the museum, grew considerably after Adolf Furtwängler joined it with a torso in Dresden and identified the type as the Athena Lemnia by Pheidias.136

The following two rooms had Bologna's past as their theme. Their significance lay not simply in the quality of the finds, but also in the choices made by Zannoni to document his work and show it to the public. The center of the rooms was in fact taken up by a selection of Certosa graves, removed from the ground with all their goods by means of an innovative method devised by the excavator. At a time when typology was still the main criterion for the display of archaeological artifacts, the display allowed visitors to understand not only what kinds of offerings could be found in a northern Etruscan tomb, but also which ones had been actually selected for different burials, and how they were positioned with regard to the deceased and to one another. A rich

136 Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, Dalla Stanza delle Antichità, 208-209 no. 142. Furtwängler's reconstruction and the identification of the type have been disputed by Kim J. Hartwick, “The Athena Lemnia Reconsidered,” American Journal of Archaeology 87 no. 3 (July 1983), 335-346 and defended by Olga Palagia, “Ερόθθημα … ἀντὶ κράνους: In Defense of Furtwängler's Athena Lemnia,” American Journal of Archaeology 91 no. 1 (January 1987), 81-84.
cartographic and photographic apparatus, which Zannoni regarded as a priority in doing archaeological work, complemented the display. Despite the attention given to context information, however, the presentation of most of the grave goods remained largely typological; the vases used as ash containers, too, were grouped in a separate case, while the funerary stelai were placed along the walls. The last room had been planned for the coins and medals of the Palagi collection, but they could not be studied properly; the space was thus left empty and eventually became a storeroom for other finds from Zannoni's excavations.137

3.2. Edoardo Brizio and the double identity of the City Museum

Shortly after the opening of the City Museum, in 1872, the city and the University, which still owned the materials housed in the old Museum of Antiquities, concluded an agreement to bring under one roof their respective collections of antiquities, although the initial plan called for a rigid separation between them, in order to safeguard property rights. Where and how the joint collections should be displayed became a matter of contention, however, and the discussion caused the project to be delayed for several years. The chief participants in the debate were Luigi Frati and the rising star of Italian prehistoric archaeology, Edoardo Brizio (1846-1907), who put forward a series of proposals and counter-proposals. Frati first suggested moving the proposed unified museum back to the Archiginnasio and using the Palazzo Galvani for the library, since

the city archives were going to be placed there, too. In 1877, shortly after his arrival in Bologna as professor of archaeology, Brizio submitted an overall plan that not only retained the Palazzo as the seat of the projected museum, but fused both collections in a single sequence (fig. 3.4) organized according to chronological criteria, starting with the Egyptian artifacts and continuing with the prehistoric, Etruscan, Greek, Roman, medieval and modern ones; the provision for a “Christian room” represented the only exception. Brizio's idea had some serious flaws, however. First, it did not make provision for a large part of the materials to be exhibited, including the weapons, the manuscripts, the coins and medals, and the cast collection, which Brizio himself had started to build systematically after his appointment.\textsuperscript{138} Moreover, his plan placed all the antiquities on the upper floor of the Palazzo Galvani, but such a disposition proved impossible on technical grounds. A second plan by Frati (figs. 3.5-6), submitted in 1878, was better received. Like Brizio, he proposed to employ the whole upper floor of the building to house the objects, presenting them in a series of rooms placed along a circular path. Frati's plan, too, was based on a chronological arrangement, beginning with an Egyptian section (monumenti egizi [fig. 3.6, nos. 42, 43b, 43e]) and ending with a Christian one (antichità cristiane [fig. 3.6, no. 61]), but it continued the sequence with thematic spaces for medieval and Renaissance artifacts (antichità medievali e del Rinascimento [fig. 3.6, nos. 62, 64]), exotic objects (arenarie e oggetti esotici [fig. 3.6, no. 65]), and manuscripts (libri corali [fig. 3.6, no. 65a]); the cast collection (collezione dei gessi [fig. 3.6, nos. 32, 34]) would have come last, preceded by a vestibule (fig. 3.6, no. 66) looking on the archives room (fig. 3.6, no. 63). As an alternative, Frati considered moving the museum

\textsuperscript{138} For an overview of the origins and the development of the collection, based on archival documents, see Anna Maria Brizzolara, “La gipsoteca e l’insegnamento dell’archeologia,” in Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, \textit{Dalla Stanza delle Antichità}, 465-472.
to a more spacious venue, the former monastery of San Michele in Bosco on the hills near Bologna, but the idea was soon dropped. That the new city museum had to be located in the heart of the city was already taken for granted.\footnote{On the negotiations between the University and the city administrators, and on the various plans for the new museum, see Cristiana Morigi Govi, “Il Museo Civico del 1881,” in Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, \textit{Dalla Stanza delle Antichità}, 347-353.}

With an official strategy in place, a final convention between the University and the city was stipulated in 1878. Gozzadini was appointed as director of the City Museum, while Brizio and Frati became his deputies, the former being in charge of the Antiquity section, and the latter of the medieval materials. As had happened ten years before, the date of the inauguration (September 25, 1881) was chosen to coincide with a major cultural event, the Second Congress of Geology, which had been organized by another renowned figure of the Bolognese academic world, Giovanni Capellini (1833-1922).

Although formally he had a subordinate role within the institution, Brizio was able to develop the archaeological part of the display according to his museographic principles and his convictions about the ethnic history of pre-Roman northern Italy. Opposing Gozzadini's hypothesis of an ethnic continuity between the bearers of the Villanovan culture and the Etruscans, Brizio maintained that several groups had succeeded one another in the control of the area, starting with the inhabitants of the \textit{terremare} and the Villanovans, whom he identified respectively with the Ligurians and the Umbrians of the literary sources, and continuing with the Etruscans, the Gauls, and the Romans.\footnote{Morigi Govi, “Museo Civico del 1881,” 355; Giuseppe Sassatelli, “Edoardo Brizio e la prima sistemazione storica dell'archeologia bolognese,” in Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, \textit{Dalla Stanza delle Antichità}, 386-387.} After the circular arrangement planned by Frati was broken by giving to the archives the space initially destined for the cast collection, Brizio created two distinct sections, separating
the finds from Bologna and its environs from the materials of various or unknown origin. The former were arranged chronologically, while the latter were grouped by type, paying attention to their usefulness for comparative purposes. Color-coded labels, still visible in some sections of the exhibit (fig. 3.7), and separate inventories allowed to keep track of the provenance of the artifacts.\textsuperscript{141}

The visit started from the ground floor of the Palazzo (fig. 3.8), where Roman inscriptions and architectural fragments were kept because of their excessive weight. After crossing the atrium (fig. 3.8, atrio), visitors entered the main courtyard (fig. 3.8, portico delle iscrizioni), surrounded by a portico which sheltered the inscribed monuments (fig. 3.9). The architectural fragments were located in a room near the atrium (fig. 3.8, sala degli avanzi architettonici); another side room to the south of the atrium housed the terracottas (fig. 3.8, sala delle terrecotte). A monumental staircase (fig. 3.10) at the far end of the courtyard led to the rest of the museum; a second courtyard behind it (fig. 3.8, cortile delle iscrizioni medievali) was given to medieval inscriptions. In Brizio's scheme, still recognizable in the present-day museum, the heart of the complex was the long hall X on the upper floor (figs. 3.11-12), dedicated to the Villanovan and Etruscan cemeteries of Felsina; a side room, initially reserved for the coins and medals and closed to the public (fig. 3.11, medagliere), was later turned into additional space for the growing quantity of grave goods brought to light by archaeologists throughout the region. After reaching the top of the stairs, visitors could turn left and go directly to room X, or proceed towards the historic collections on the opposite side. Before reaching them, however, they had a first taste of Bolognese prehistory in the room on the right of the

\textsuperscript{141} On the arrangement of the museum in 1881, see Edoardo Brizio and Luigi Frati, \textit{Guida del Museo Civico di Bologna} (Bologna, 1882); Morigi Govi, “Museo Civico del 1881,” 353-356.
stairs (I), where Bronze Age artifacts from the city and its territory were on display, together with implements from more distant areas. From it, they went through a series of four rooms (II, III, IV, V) containing the Egyptian materials. Rooms IV and V allowed passage respectively to the rooms dedicated to Greek and Roman sculpture (VII) and to the other Greek artifacts, especially the painted vases (VI). These two rooms were then connected to each other and to room IX, which contained the remaining Roman monuments; room VII also provided the only access to room VIII, used to display Etruscan and Italic antiquities. Through room IX one could finally enter room X.

A third section of the museum could be accessed only from room X. It opened with a gallery (XI) set aside for one of Zannoni’s greatest discoveries, the bronze deposit of Piazza San Francesco, found in 1877,142 and continued with rooms dedicated to the medieval and early modern periods (XII-XVII). Unlike the antiquity section, the post-antique wing followed the traditional arrangement by types of objects (weapons, pottery, miscellaneous works of art, sculptures, religious monuments). The cast collection, deprived of a gallery of its own, was moved inside the Institute of Archaeology, also located in the Palazzo Galvani, and used exclusively for educational purposes until the end of the 1960s. Because of physical deterioration and changes in teaching practices, the collection was later tucked away in the museum storerooms143 and remained out of public sight until 1990, when it was put on display in two rooms on the ground floor (fig. 3.13).

The museum owed part of its attractiveness to the decision to provide some sections of it with wall paintings related to the various civilizations featured in the exhibit. More

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142 The deposit consists of 14838 bronze artifacts, found piled within a large dolium and dated by Zannoni to the tenth century BC. He interpreted it as pertinent to a foundry, followed by Brizio, while other scholars regarded it as a votive deposit or as a cache of objects with a premonetary function (Morigi Govi, “Antonio Zannoni,” 250-252).
143 Brizzolara, “Gipsoteca,” 472.
specifically, the decorative program included lotus flowers in the Egyptian rooms, subjects inspired by Attic vases in room VI, a copy of the pediment of the Etruscan Tomba del Barone in room VIII, and compositions reminiscent of the Pompeian styles in room IX. The most conspicuous element of the decoration, however, was the series of images planned for room X. It grouped some of the best tomb paintings known from Cerveteri (Campana plaques), Chiusi (Tombe della Scimmia, del Colle), Orvieto (Tomba Golini), Tarquinia (Tomba del Barone, del Triclinio, dei Vasi Dipinti, del Citaredo), and Veii (Tomba Campana), arranged in pairs composed of a pediment scene and a frieze scene (figs. 3.12, 3.14). The project had a precedent in the figurative program devised for the Museo Gregoriano Etrusco in Rome, inaugurated in 1837. While the latter institution showed actual copies of tomb paintings known at the time, however, the cycle of the City Museum consisted of reproductions of published drawings, with some noticeable modifications. The artist, Luigi Busi (1838-1884), a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna, often employed only part of the decoration of a tomb, added details and color when they were missing in the source material, and formed the pairs without regard for the original association of the images. The scenes and elements to be included were meant to offer visitors a comprehensive summary of various aspects of Etruscan culture, such as athletic contests, dancing, and above all the banquet. Since the purpose of the images was primarily didactic, having a complete set of subjects was deemed more important than reproducing the paintings and their pairings correctly. As Gozzadini said in his speech for the inauguration of the museum, the figures, “better than any description, make known the customs of those whose funerary, and in part domestic, furniture are kept in the same hall.”144 Brizio, too, appreciated their usefulness for

144 “[Le pitture] meglio di qualunque descrizione, fan conoscere gli usi di coloro le cui suppellettili funebri,
teaching, even if the cycle seemed to contradict his distinction between Villanovans and Etruscans by suggesting that the totality of the objects on display in room X was to be referred to the latter.145

Judging from the 1881 plan, the Egyptian materials seem to have formed the backbone of the general collection. After looking at them, a visitor could decide to focus on Greece, Rome, or both. On the other hand, visitors coming to rooms VII-IX from room X could situate the local discoveries within a broader context and subsequently be introduced to remains of a time even more remote; the endpoint of the journey, however, was once again the Bologna's own distant past. Thus, whatever path was chosen by the visitors, their experience of the City Museum ideally began and ended with powerful reminders of the city's illustrious origins. In comparison, the medieval section looks almost like an appendage to a circuit already complete in itself, although the impressive finds from the San Francesco deposit might have offered an incentive to extend the visit to it. The visibility of the local antiquities was further enhanced some years later, in 1895, when the Capellini collection of Italian and foreign prehistoric artifacts was left to the museum. As a consequence, room I was rearranged so that it became entirely devoted to Bolognese prehistory, while the objects from other areas and the ones donated by Capellini were moved to an as yet unused side room (fig. 3.6, no. 41). Together with later various acquisitions and gifts, they were turned into a study collection, divided between two large cabinets that included artifacts from various Italian regions and from foreign lands as distant as India and the Americas (figs. 3.15-16). The installation, which has

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been preserved to this day, is accompanied by very synthetic labels, placed along the shelves below each group of objects, which mention only their region or country of origin and the sites where they were discovered.

During the first decades of life of the museum, other significant alterations in the display involved primarily the ground floor and the main courtyard. Already in 1893, the small terracottas joined the rest of the collections upstairs in order to make room for the new Museum of the Risorgimento. Moreover, the size of the epigraphic collection in the courtyard increased considerably after 1894, when a flood of the Reno river, which runs through Bologna, exposed the remains of the so-called muro del Reno ("Reno Wall"), a late antique structure for water containment in which many Roman inscriptions had been reused; texts continued to be recovered from the area until 1934. Finally, the prehistoric section knew one more appreciable enlargement through the finds from the Villanovan cemeteries of Via San Vitale and Via Savena, excavated by Brizio's successor, Gherardo Ghirardini (1854-1920), beginning in 1913.146 On the upper floor, the head of the "Athena Lemnia" was given a prominent place in the exhibit. A gypsum cast of the statue as recomposed by Furtwängler, painted in bronze color, was bought by the museum in 1908 and displayed near the head until the late 1960s (fig. 3.17), when it was moved to the antechamber of the director's office. It ultimately joined the cast collection (fig. 3.13), for which a cast of the Dresden torso alone had been procured in 1914.147

A 1906 Baedeker guide for northern Italy, followed in 1913 by a new edition with

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146 Since the discovery of the graves occurred in a construction area, it was decided to remove them from the ground and to empty them in the museum. Thus, although the excavation itself ended in 1915, the study of the cemeteries was still underway at the time of Ghirardini's death and was completed only several years later (Giuseppe Sassatelli, "I dubbi e le intuizioni di Gherardo Ghirardini," in Morigi Govi and Sassatelli, Dalla Stanza delle Antichità, 459).

minimal alterations, registers the inclusion of the Capellini collection in the display and documents another new feature, the opening of a room dedicated to Gallic and Roman materials from the territory of Bologna. Both editions, however, surprisingly miss the most striking development in the plan of the museum, the joining of room II to the coins room to create more space for the Villanovan and Etruscan material, a change attested in other guides of the city after the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{148} The expansion of room X cut off room I from the Egyptian gallery, making it possible for visitors to spend their time entirely among local antiquities, if they so wished.

An updated plan is presented in the third edition of the official museum guide, published in 1914 (figs. 3.18-19). Aside from the modifications just discussed, the plan no longer shows the opening between rooms IX and X. Perhaps the passage had been closed to traffic, and not physically walled up, or visitors were being discouraged from using it. In any case, its exclusion marks the old collections more strongly as a separate entity. The guide also employs a revised series of room numbers. The wing added to room X was named Xa, and the number II was assigned to the Capellini room. The space used for the Gallo-Roman exhibit became the new room XI, causing a shift in the numbering of the remaining galleries, which now ranged from XII to XVIII.\textsuperscript{149}

Being aimed primarily at casual tourists, rather than at scholars or amateurs, the Baedekers are on firmer ground in supplying practical information on the museum. It was open from 9 to 4 on weekdays (10-3 from November to March) and from 10 to 2 on


\textsuperscript{149} Edoardo Brizio, Luigi Frati and Lino Sighinolfi, \textit{Guida del Museo Civico di Bologna} (Bologna, 1914).
Sundays and holidays, when admission was free; during the rest of the year the entrance fee was 1 franc.\textsuperscript{150} The guides also give information about the availability of catalogues for sale and include the name of the director. The contents of the museum are summarily listed, something to be expected from a guide that covers such a broad geographic area. Other matters are treated rather superficially, though, even for this kind of publication. Concerning the history of the City Museum, for example, the books only specify that it was founded in 1712, the year in which Marsili formally established the Institute of Sciences, and that was moved to Palazzo Galvani in 1881.

Such deficiencies, however, did not diminish the usefulness and popularity of the Baedekers, which stimulated the publication of an Italian counterpart, the \textit{Guida d'Italia}. From its model, the new series of guides borrowed size and appearance (down to the red cover), selection of fonts, organization of the text, and typographical conventions, such as the use of asterisks to highlight noteworthy monuments or works of art on display in churches, palaces, museums, and art galleries. The first edition of the volume on Liguria, Emilia, and northern Tuscany (1916), which includes Bologna, dedicated four and a half pages to the City Museum, about twice as much space as the English guidebooks.\textsuperscript{151}

In 1923 a new publication by Pericle Ducati, who had succeeded Ghirardini as director, made its appearance. The book called attention to the historic collections by following the established numbering in its presentation of the galleries, so that rooms III-IX were dealt with first. The description of room X-Xa alone, however, occupied about one-fifth of the book, leaving no doubt as to what constituted the real focus of the

\textsuperscript{150} Baedeker, \textit{Northern Italy} (1906), 388; Baedeker, \textit{Northern Italy} (1913), 470. In the later edition of the guide the museum is said to be open from 10 to 12 on Sundays and holidays, but the discrepancy could be due to a typo.

\textsuperscript{151} Caini (“Ordinamento,” 79-80, 87) rightly emphasizes the originality of the \textit{Guida d'Italia} series among Italian guidebooks, but she does not mention its relationship with the Baedekers at all.
museum. It was preceded by an exhaustive introduction which examined the “Umbrian” (Villanovan) and Etruscan cultures as attested in Bologna and the development of Attic vase painting; it also illustrated the distribution of artifacts from the different cemeteries in the cases. The actual contents of each room, however, do not seem to have been substantially altered since the opening of the museum.152

The stability of the display was not simply the result of careful planning and internal coherence. In 1924, not long after Ducati wrote his guide, the institution of a state Antiquities Service cut the museum off from research and conservation activities and, by putting an end to the arrival of new materials, practically blocked its development. The period of reconstruction that followed World War II seemed propitious for a renovation of the City Museum. Relevant announcements and projects began to appear since the mid-1950s, but the debate on its execution dragged on fruitlessly for a long time, reinforcing the atmosphere of stagnation. The removal of the medieval materials in 1962 and the closure of the room facing gallery Xa represented the first significant modifications in the plan of the museum in about half a century. After their implementation, only the first two rooms of the former medieval wing remained part of the City Museum, regaining the numbers given to them in 1881 (XI and XII). The objects from the San Francesco deposit received a dramatic placement in a small annex at one end of room X (fig. 3.20), thus balancing the case that parades one of the most spectacular funerary assemblages from Bologna (the “Tomba Grande” from the Giardini Margherita cemetery), located at the opposite end of the hall. The resulting space in room XI was devoted to a selection of Villanovan and Etruscan artifacts from the territory of Bologna previously housed in room X, including considerable finds from Villanova

The second gallery concluded the exhibit with the finds pertinent to Gallic and Roman Bologna.

This situation is reflected in the pages dedicated to the City Museum in the fourth and fifth editions of the *Guida d'Italia* on Emilia and Romagna, published in 1957 and 1971, respectively. Compared to their pre-war predecessor, they provided a longer and more detailed outline of the collections and, more importantly, added plans for both floors of Palazzo Galvani. One can immediately notice that the plan for the upper floor shows once again the passage between rooms IX and X. Nevertheless, the suggested itinerary excludes it, making visitors see the old collections, then go all the way back to room III and proceed from there to room Xa. According to the 1971 *Guida*, the museum was open from 9 to 2 on weekdays except Monday and from 9 to 12:30 on weekends; no entrance fees are mentioned.

The museum published a new official guide about ten years later (1982, updated 1988), a century after the appearance of the first one by Brizio. The book provided some means, as its authors declared in the preface, to verify the validity of the traditional arrangement at a time when a revision of it seemed no longer avoidable and proposals were already being discussed.

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153 The materials from Villanova, originally part of Gozzadini's private museum, were donated to the city by his daughter in 1889 with the proviso that they were to be displayed in the Archiginnasio and not become part of the City Museum, a consequence of the long history of discord between Gozzadini and Brizio. As a matter of fact, they were never properly exhibited until their eventual cession to the museum in 1960 (Vitali, “Scoperta di Villanova,” 234).

154 *Guida d'Italia del Touring Club Italiano – Emilia-Romagna*, 5th ed. (Milan, 1971), 100-105. I could not consult the 1957 edition, but according to Caini (“Ordinamento,” 89) there are no substantial variations in the description of the museum between the two guides, with one obvious exception. In the later edition the information on the medieval collection was replaced with a notice about its removal and future redisplay.

155 *Guida d'Italia – Emilia-Romagna*, 89.

3.3. Breaking the balance

In the 1980s and early 1990s, extensive restoration work was conducted on the building, which among other goals involved the provision of facilities for disabled people and the renovation of the basement. In 1994, the areas thus obtained became the new home of the Egyptian collection, leaving space for the restructuring of the Etruscan, Greek and Roman ones (fig. 3.21). The basement level consists of a T-shaped gallery, precisely mirroring room X-Xa two floors above, divided into four parts. After an introduction to ancient Egyptian history and to the collection itself, the second section is devoted to the centerpiece of the collection, a series of reliefs from the tomb built at Saqqara for the general, later pharaoh, Horemheb (mid-fourteenth century BC). On the opposite side, the main body of the exhibit generally follows a chronological arrangement instead of the typological one previously adopted, except for a thematic section dedicated to Egyptian writing in the side corridor (figs. 3.22-23). From a museological point of view, the whole gallery was conceived as a self-contained structure, intentionally designed to resemble a monumental tomb.157

The opening of the new level had noticeable repercussions with regard to the upper floor. Room III became part of the prehistoric area and was filled with the contents of a “princely” grave and other finds from Verucchio, another important Iron Age site near Rimini (fig. 3.24), room IV was closed to the public, and the access to the rest of the historic collections shifted to the passage between rooms X and IX (fig. 3.25). At the

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157 On the new Egyptian gallery and the museological criteria followed in its creation, see Cristiana Morigi Govi and Sergio Pernigotti, eds., Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna – La collezione egiziana (Milan, 1994).
same time, however, one can observe clear signs of a tendency to preserve and display the museum's own past together with the past evoked by the objects it contains. For instance, the Egyptianizing motifs that ornament the walls of room III and V are still visible, and the number IV has not been reassigned.

The separation of the Egyptian materials from the rest of the exhibit represents more than a redistribution of materials within the Palazzo Galvani. As a major component of the wing of the museum dedicated to the objects from collections, which originally served to distribute the flow of visitors through it, the Egyptian section played a crucial role in maintaining a spatial balance between the galleries that contain the donated antiquities and those housing the excavated ones. The new installation has certainly allowed it to gain in importance as an ensemble meaningful in and of itself and as a showcase for the museum. It has also proved useful in making connections with foreign institutions, as demonstrated by the recent signing of an agreement between the City Museum and the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden (January 21, 2011), concerning a program of research on the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara. The relationship between the two main divisions of the museum, however, has irrevocably changed.

Attention to the local past, and to the history of its discovery and study, has further increased in recent years. The clearest evidence is offered by the prehistoric section in room I, much enlarged after the transfer of the city archives. Its new arrangement, set up in 2007, features brand new cases along the walls, inside which the finds are arranged chronologically and by site; in the center of the room, two rows of panels give information about Bolognese Stone and Bronze Ages and on the history of archaeological research in the area (figs. 3.26-27). Audio-visual aids have also been introduced, in the
form of two screens, right of the entrance, on which the fabrication of lithic and metallic artifacts is explained. In a small theatrical area created at the west end of the room, a video introduces visitors to early prehistoric research in Bologna, stressing the role of the great “fathers” such as Gozzadini, Brizio, and Ghirardini. Conversely, room II has retained its original appearance, which creates a fascinating tension with room I in general and especially with the attraction placed before its entrance, the remains of two horses from an Iron Age cemetery excavated between 2002 and 2005, displayed as they were found (fig. 3.28). Besides being a focus for room I, the modern removed context can also be seen as an introduction to, or as a reminder of, the graves brought to the museum by Zannoni that visitors start encountering as they enter room X (the virtual boundary with wing Xa has disappeared since the publication of the 1982 guide [fig. 3.29]).

As for room X itself, it shows the same combination of old and new display practices. The artifacts are still mostly kept in age-old containers, but the Villanovan section features large panels describing the various cemeteries and smaller ones detailing the most important graves, as well as more extensive labels (figs. 3.30-31), while the Etruscan materials are provided with very synthetic ones (fig. 3.32). Although plans for the future of the gallery are being discussed, an interest in maintaining ties with the early history of the museum seems evident, as a 2008 exhibition on Brizio demonstrated. His bust, visible for decades in room X, placed directly above the case with the finds from the “Tomba Grande” and surrounded by a selection of Etruscan funerary stelai (fig. 3.33), is a powerful reminder of the choices and circumstances which gave the City Museum its identity.  

158 The dedicatory inscription located under the bust reads: “Edoardo Brizio ordinò diresse per XXIX anni e crebbe del frutto de’ suoi scavi questo Museo Archeologico ove dalle superstite reliquie suscitò alla
Meanwhile, the museum is pursuing a program of renovation in the spaces still occupied by the old collections. The most significant changes have involved the Greek material, which has expanded into room V. The newly available space was used to make the “Athena Lemnia” head stand out even more clearly. The head now stands alone on a pedestal in the middle of the room, with an information panel in one corner behind it (fig. 3.34). Cases containing jewelry, glass objects, gems and gem matrices, terracotta reliefs and statuettes are located in the other corners. In particular, two small images of Artemis of Ephesus and Aphrodite of Aphrodisia are placed in the other corner behind the head and at roughly the same height, so that visitors coming from room VI can glimpse all three artifacts at once (fig. 3.35). The rest of the Greek collection remains in that room, divided into three tiers. The old cabinets containing the painted pottery, divided into two series by the passage communicating with room IX, have been kept, but their contents are now less cluttered and are accompanied by clearer labels. The pottery is arranged by class (Corinthian, Attic, South Italian); within each class, the vases are ordered chronologically and often grouped according to shape (fig. 3.36). Another case in the center of the room holds five large Attic red-figure cups lying on their sides, each turned 180 degrees with respect to its neighbors (fig. 3.37). Finally, the sculptures are lined up on a platform running along the back wall (fig. 3.38). The renovation of room VI was completed with the addition of computers to search the collections, including the coins and medals, which remain mostly inaccessible to the public.

luce della storia le prische genti italiche. // A lui che della dottrina fece principale tributo alla città / il Comune riconoscente dedicò nel II anniversario della morte / V maggio MCMIX” (E. B. arranged, directed for 29 years and enlarged from the results of his excavations this Archaeological Museum, where he lifted the primevalItalic peoples to the light of history through their extant remains. To him, who made knowledge his main contribution to the city, the Municipality [of Bologna] dedicated with gratitude on the second anniversary of his death, 5 May 1909).
As a result, if a visitor heads straight for the Greek exhibit after visiting room X – a decision possibly encouraged by the copious amount of Attic painted vessels exhibited in that room – the head seems to attract his or her gaze, serving as a pole of attraction and as an interpretative device not just for the Greek exhibit, but for the whole second nucleus of the display (fig. 3.39).

Today, however, visitors are more likely to stop in room IX first, which came up most recently for remodeling and was reopened in May 2010. It is symmetrical to room VI in its tripartite arrangement, which includes a row of old cabinets on each side of the passage to the adjacent room, a central case, and a long bench for the sculptures along the opposite wall (figs. 3.40-41). As in room I, a recent acquisition (a fragmentary relief of a Boread) serves as a point of attraction, since it can be seen immediately by anyone coming from room X (fig. 3.42). It also provides a link with room VII, where the rest of the sculpture collection is divided among the corners, between the archways which organize the flow of visitors (fig. 3.43). Other features of the renovated gallery include the use of busts on pedestals to frame the passages to rooms VI and VII, and the presence of coins in the central case, the first public appearance of this part of the collection in more than a century. As for Room VIII, the old typological display has been left untouched so far (fig. 3.44).

The new Roman gallery, however, is not a mere counterpart to room VI. First, the artifacts in room IX are grouped thematically and are employed to document various aspects of everyday life in Roman times. Moreover, the contents of the room include excavated objects from Roman Bologna previously displayed in room XII, which now houses only a few larger pieces but is no longer accessible. Brizio's scheme has thus been
weakened further, and another section of the former medieval appendix has been cut off, thus making the nucleus of galleries encircled by rooms I and X even more compact.

As revealing as the arrangement of the exhibit is the free brochure available at the entrance. Unlike the 1923 and 1982 guides, it does not lead the visitor through the rooms sequentially. Instead, its two sides define a privileged path, while theoretically offering a choice between the two traditional ones. Side A – the one visitors see as they open the brochure – describes the entrance and courtyard, briefly mentions the cast collection, then presents rooms I-II, X-XII and III (in that order), mostly dwelling on the Villanovan and Etruscan section. On the opposite side, one fold contains general information about the museum and a plan of it, while the remaining ones are given evenly to the Greek and Roman collections (rooms V-IX) and to the Egyptian gallery; also included is a short notice about the coins and medals collection. One interesting detail is represented by the lack of passages between the main staircase and room X in the plan, although it is still possible to access the hall from there; the door is frequently left open, especially in the spring and summer, but it seems now to be intended rather as an emergency exit.

Also available at the entrance is an audio guide, in Italian or English. It is composed of clips numbered in sequence, which visitors can recall by pressing the corresponding keys on the device they receive. Although the clips do not contain instructions to follow specific directions, the sequence itself works like a virtual itinerary. It begins with a general introduction on the museum, presumably to be heard while the visitor is still in the atrium, followed by some information on the objects displayed in the atrium itself. The exposition then continues directly with room X, skipping the prehistoric section, perhaps because it is already covered by the video which runs continually in
room I; the cast collection is not included, either. The order in which the other galleries are presented is very similar to the one followed in the brochure, starting with the early materials from Villanova and the Certosa cemetery in what used to be known as room Xa, and continuing with the rooms dedicated to Verucchio and to the Gallic period. Next come the Greek, Etrusco-Italic, and Roman collections, and finally the Egyptian section. For each gallery (or section of it, in the case of room X) the first clip provides an overview of the contents, then one or more outstanding pieces are described in more detail. One possible issue with the system is represented by the references to the clips, often small and difficult to notice in the display. It should also be noted that the same device can be employed to visit other museums in the city, being loaded with clips pertinent to different collections, therefore the recording time available for each institution is limited.

The latest interpretation of the display offered by the museum staff can be found in a new guidebook, which appeared in 2009. A break with the older publications, and with the museological approach that underlies them, is evident already on the inside of the cover. In fact, as soon as the book is opened, one faces the plans of the three floors of the museum (upper floor, ground floor, and basement), on which the rooms dedicated to the various collections are distinguished by color (fig. 3.45). A short text, titled “Suggestions for the visit,” accompanies the drawings, informing visitors that each section is treated separately, so that they can obtain a general idea of them, no matter the path they follow. In practice, instead of chapters describing the contents of each room and

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159 Cristiana Morigi Govi, ed., *Guida al Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna* (Bologna, 2009). In the plan of the upper floor, the number V is placed in what is actually the lower half of room VI, while it should designate the area at the lower right corner of the plan. The space is indicated in grey instead, as if it were inaccessible. Ironically, the mistake affects precisely the room that houses the head of the “Athena Lemnia,” one of the main points of attraction in the exhibit.
suggesting an itinerary based on their numbering, the book consists of a series of self-contained units that dispense with references to rooms and with visiting directions altogether.

Apart from its structure, the novelty of the book consists in its drawing attention to the museum itself, not just to the objects housed in it, so that users are made aware of its historical evolution. The same “Suggestions for the visit” explain that the guide outlines two itineraries, one dealing with the history of Bologna and the other with the old collections, which correspond to the traditional main components of the exhibit. Moreover, the chapters begin with an overview on the collection and its formation, followed by a series of entries on individual pieces, which often include further information about the work at specific sites or the activity of collectors. A glossary of archaeological terms and a bibliography conclude the book, making it a useful reference even beyond the visit. However, the graphic documentation supports the acquisition of this historical awareness only up to a certain point. On the one hand, the title of each chapter is printed over a two-page view of the particular collection described in it, almost as an additional reminder to visitors that their experience of the artifacts is not separable from the conditions of their display; some pictures showing details of the exhibit, both in its past arrangement and in its current state, are also scattered throughout the guide. On the other hand, the entries are accompanied by small illustrations of the artifacts, printed in isolation, without any visual indication of their context inside the museum.

At the same time, it should be noted that the two parts of the guide manifest a conceptual distinction between the two parts of the exhibit, although the contrast might be intended, in order to emphasize the different origin of the artifacts. The book dedicates
six chapters to each itinerary, and they take up roughly the same number of pages (98 for
the finds from the area, 86 for the materials from collections). The prehistoric collections
and the finds from Bologna and its environs, however, are presented as articulations of a
single system, as the use of the same brick-red color for all of its subsections in the plan
and in the index to the guide indicates, while the association of a different color with each
of the other sections of the display seems to imply that they are seen as more fragmented.
The guidebook thus confirms that the prehistoric, Villanovan, and Etruscan sections
remain the key to interpret the arrangement of the museum and of its contents.
As its very name implies, the Museo Archeologico Ambientale (Archaeological Environmental Museum) belongs to a growing number of local Italian museums conceived not merely as repositories of artifacts and curiosities, but as means to promote the knowledge and understanding of the past of a given territory in all its aspects. Moreover, its formation allows one to examine some of the challenges and opportunities that arise from the installation of an exhibit in a historic building with a past of its own.\textsuperscript{160}

The town of San Giovanni in Persiceto is located about twenty kilometers northwest of Bologna, and its existence is documented since the eighth century AD. The area, however, was already inhabited in prehistoric times, and the crisscross of roads and trails that separate the various plots of land in the countryside preserves the pattern of the Roman centuriation. After remaining a small rural center for most of its life, San Giovanni has expanded rapidly in the past thirty years. Much of its administrative, social and cultural life, however, still takes place in the old town, a roughly square area

\textsuperscript{160} A short guide to the museum has been published: Pierangelo Pancaldi, Silvia Marvelli and Marco Marchesini, \textit{Guida al Museo Archeologico Ambientale} (San Giovanni in Persiceto, 2005). Information is also available on the website of the Province of Bologna (“Museo Archeologico Ambientale,” \url{http://www2.provincia.bologna.it/musei.nsf/0/d57d07bde1111974c12568af00508758?OpenDocument} [accessed March 30, 2009]). I am indebted to the director, Silvia Marvelli, and to her staff for sharing with me information and thoughts about the development of the museum, the principles that govern its management, and the peculiar issues it raises.
surrounded by canals until the late 1950s, when they were replaced by heavy-traffic roads. As in many Italian towns, the heart of the historic quarter is the central square, Piazza del Popolo, where the church, the town hall, the post office and other civic buildings, as well as several bars and shops, are located. The main street, Corso Italia, which runs along the square in a SW-NE direction, stretches for the entire length of the quarter and is framed by two monumental arches, Porta Vittoria at its southern end and Porta Garibaldi at its northern one (fig. 4.1).

The Porta Garibaldi (fig. 4.2), built in 1830 in place of an old medieval gate and used as a prison until the 1960s, is the seat of the Archaeological Environmental Museum. The museum was instituted in the early 1980s and was originally named “Museo Archeologico ‘Liutprando,’” after the earliest historical figure associated with Persiceto, Liutprand, king of the Lombards from 712 to 744. Ascending to the throne after a period of decline for the kingdom, Liutprand was able to strengthen Lombard control in northern Italy and to establish closer ties with the Papacy, taking advantage of the negative reactions which followed the prohibition against venerating sacred images (iconoclasm), introduced in the Byzantine Empire in the late 720s. According to the historian Paul the Deacon, in the course of military operations conducted in the same years against the Byzantines, who still ruled over parts of Italy from Ravenna, near the Adriatic coast, Liutprand conquered many fortified towns around Bologna, including Persiceta.161

The initial purpose of the museum was to store finds from local excavations,

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mainly late medieval and early modern in date. There were no regular opening hours; the public library had to be contacted in order to gain access. Moreover, the museum had to share the premises with a photography club until the late 1990s. A decisive impulse for the relaunch of the establishment came from the discovery of a late first-early second millennium AD settlement near Sant'Agata Bolognese, a few kilometers away from San Giovanni. Its remains, which included part of a wooden palisade and other organic materials, were first the object of an exhibition (2003) and subsequently became the main attraction of the renovated museum, inaugurated in May 2004. The new denomination of “Museo Archeologico Ambientale” was also adopted at that time, as part of an effort to include the institution in a broader network of cultural centers dedicated to the study of the local territory in all its aspects, not just of its political and military history. The fact that king Liutprand was associated with a violent takeover of Persiceto could have also played a role in the decision to drop the old title.

Taking advantage of the possibilities opened by recent legislation on cultural heritage, the museum is not controlled directly by the state or the town, but managed by a non-profit association as part of a cluster of research institutions. The public character of the museum is not greatly affected by its legal status, since the constituents of the association are all public subjects. Such a framework, however, allows the museum to enjoy structural and financial autonomy, which enables it – at least in theory – to operate more efficiently and with less bureaucratic constraints. Its functioning is governed by a

charter and by a series of practical regulations; a third document, the “Carta dei Servizi,” details the services provided by the museum.¹⁶³

According to the charter (article 2), the purpose of the museum is “to gather, preserve, study, and inform about the material evidence concerning man and his environment in the territory of the town and in the surrounding areas.”¹⁶⁴ In practice, the museum pursues these goals through various means, listed in the same article: gathering, conserving, inventorying, researching and informing about the local archaeological heritage; organizing exhibitions, lectures and other public events; carrying out a constant stream of didactic and educational activities for schools; providing relevant advice in matters of city planning and building.

The way in which the preexisting spaces of the Porta Garibaldi have been conserved and, in a sense, integrated in the display, as well as the creative ingenuity shown in dealing with a relatively small and somewhat cramped space, sets the museum apart from other institutions of its kind and scope. In its current state (January 2010), the museum occupies all three floors of the Porta, only the uppermost of which spans the entire width of it. Because of space constraints, temporary exhibitions are usually mounted in a former church located nearby, Sant'Apollinare, which provides a picturesque setting and allows more freedom with regard to design and lighting. A detached section of the museum, based in Sant'Agata and dedicated to the Bronze Age, has been formally instituted in 2009, and a third branch has opened at the end of 2011 in

¹⁶³ The three documents (“Carta dei Servizi,” “Statuto,” and “Regolamento”) are available for consultation and download at the official website of the museum (http://www.museoarcheologicoambientale.it).
¹⁶⁴ “Il Museo ha come specifico oggetto la raccolta, la conservazione, lo studio e la divulgazione delle testimonianze materiali dell'uomo e del suo ambiente nel territorio comunale e aree limitrofe” (my translation).
another town nearby, Anzola dell'Emilia.

Although there is no prescribed visiting course for the permanent exhibit, its design (fig. 4.3) clearly assumes a linear path. Its existence is first suggested by the fact that the entrance and exit are separate and placed in front of each other on the inner side of the arch. While nothing prevents one from returning outside through the entrance door, such a behavior is obviously not the one expected of visitors. Moreover, the reverse operation is definitely impossible, as the exit door is one-way only.

An interesting feature is the presence of an introductory section accessible without any form of control. Before reaching the ticket office, located on the third floor, visitors can stop in two rooms at the base of the arch, inside the eastern pier (the second floor on that side is reserved for the storerooms, which are closed to the public). Panels placed just after the entrance explain the organization of the museum (fig. 4.4), while information on general subjects, like the architectural history of the Porta and the chronology of archaeological research in the area, could be found in an adjacent room. The same space was used to convey the perspective fostered by the museum in looking at the past, emphasizing the study of the relationship between humans and the land they inhabit. The purpose is achieved through a series of settlement distribution charts that include details about past hydrography. A second set of panels offers an overview of the Persicetan area in the Bronze Age, early Iron Age, and Etruscan and Celtic periods, respectively; once again, attention is devoted to the consequences of human settlement on the local environment. The organization of the introductory section was unfortunately disrupted in the second half of 2009, as the second room had to be sacrificed to shelter equipment related to a temporary exhibition and most panels (but not all) were moved near the
entrance, seriously reducing the already narrow space and the information available.

Even in displaying the evidence for the periods better documented archaeologically, which the first group of visual aids serves to put into context, panels, large drawings, and models of objects and structures constitute the primary focus of the exhibit, while the artifacts seem to have been selected according to their capacity to enliven the former. The exhibit proper is divided into three sections, dedicated respectively to the Roman period, to the early Middle Ages, and to the late medieval and early modern age. Each section illustrates the results of archaeological activity in the town and environs, and is associated with a color, which identifies it on plans and signs (red for the Roman, blue for the early medieval, and green for the late medieval-early modern section); even the walls of the various rooms are partially painted in the color of the respective section.

The first two sections occupy the entirety of the third floor, housed in former prison cells around the main corridor that spans the gate (figs. 4.5-6). Before starting their tour, visitors are greeted by two large panels showing the elements of the local flora, both domestic and wild. Two rooms on the front side of the corridor, opposite the ticket office, are reserved for the Roman materials. They were mostly retrieved in the 1990s, during rescue excavations conducted in the center of San Giovanni and survey campaign carried out in the countryside. Near the entrance to the first room, which has division of land and villae rusticae as its subjects, is a drawing that shows how the territory was parted, together with a model of a groma. The room itself features models of a spear and a pilum, as well as a case with different kinds of building materials (hexagonal floor tiles, mosaic tesserae, bricks [fig. 4.7]). The second room is dedicated to the economy and to everyday life in the area during Roman times, represented by copies of Roman vessels – some
holding carbonized seeds – and of a lamp; the associated case is filled with pottery, coins, items of personal ornament and more seeds.

Further down the corridor is a series of five rooms, arranged along a clockwise path but accessible in any order, which form the next part of the museum. Their purpose is to document various aspects of rural life and economy in the area around the turn of the second millennium, as much as the evidence from the Sant'Agata settlement allows archaeologists to reconstruct. As in the Roman section, the display in each room revolves around a particular theme, usually summarized through one or more text panels, a large reconstructive drawing, and a case containing relevant artifacts. The sequence begins with a presentation of the settlement itself and its most impressive testimony, the remains of the wooden palisade. In this first chamber one can learn about the discovery of the site and some possibly relevant written sources, and also examine a plastic model of it; there are no cases with small artifacts. The next room (fig. 4.8) offers further details on the settlement in its heyday, during the ninth and tenth century. A model and a drawing of a typical building accompany a case holding a selection of items both distinctive (sculpture fragments, one of which bears an inscription) and mundane (pottery, spindle whorls and a model of a spindle). Passing into the third room, on the back side of the hallway, visitors can enjoy glimpses of domestic life in the village, particularly diet, food preparation and consumption; vessels, mortars, iron keys and horse trappings, knives and arrowheads complement the usual panels and drawing (fig. 4.9). Vegetation and the activities associated with it (agriculture, grinding, weaving) form the subject of the fourth installation. Agricultural implements are shown together with remains of grinders and carbonized seeds, placed near modern ones; a model of grinder also helps engaging the
visitors. Lastly, metallurgy and trade come under the spotlight through a drawing of a foundry and a display of fine glazed pottery, glass, coins, metal tools, wooden small planks and combs; other features of the fifth room include distribution charts of pietra ollare and glazed pottery beside the usual panels, and examples of metal slags and coal remains.

The third and final slice of the exhibit takes up the second floor on the western pier of the Porta. It is reached through a stairway located between the first and the second room of the medieval section, which formerly gave access to the female section of the prison, as a faded sign above the doorway indicates (fig. 4.10). At the bottom, visitors find a tripartite room containing finds from excavations performed in San Giovanni between 1979 and 1990, some of which formed part of the original collection of the museum. Opposite the landing, one first encounters a case with a representative selection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pottery and modern seeds that reflect the spectrum of plants attested in the excavation; around it are some wooden poles from the town center, panels and a drawing describing Renaissance Persiceto (fig. 4.11).

Turning right, visitors can receive more detailed information on the town from the twelfth century to early modern times and on previous archaeological research in the area concerning this period. A large part of the right wing, however, deals with finds associated with pottery production (fig. 4.12). The material on display comes largely from kiln dumps uncovered during public utility works in the area behind the Teatro Comunale (1981). Remains of actual kilns came to light in 1986 during restoration works
inside the theater itself. A third kiln was excavated some years later (1990) in Via Rambelli, not far from the theater. Finally, on the left (fig. 4.13), attention is drawn on the production and iconography of Renaissance pottery and on domestic life in general, through the usual means (panels, drawing of a banquet, case with glass objects, bronze tools and miscellaneous items as well as pottery). From the landing, another flight of steps leads down to the ground floor, which on this side is provided with a lecture room and a guestbook (fig. 4.14), and to the exit.

The “Carta dei Servizi” details the various forms of interaction between the museum and the public. According to it, the staff guarantees service for a minimum of 24 hours per week, although only a fraction of the amount consists of actual opening hours (three 2-hour windows on Saturday and Sunday afternoon and on Sunday morning), while the remaining time is accounted for by assuring access to the museum on request during the week. In fact, the allotted hours are more than sufficient to accommodate the average number of visitors on weekends. Large crowds would not be desirable, either, as the available space inside the building is very limited; up to 25 people can be admitted in each area at any given time. Moreover, arranging tours in advance allows the museum to adjust them to the needs of the participants and to deal more efficiently with its audience, of which school groups constitute a significant portion.

The Carta also details the conduct which visitors are expected to keep. They are obviously expected to behave politely towards other visitors and the museum personnel, and to follow the rules posted at the entrance and any instruction given by the staff,

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otherwise they can be removed from the premises. Failing to observe the regulations on safety and security, or causing damage to any person or to the building, leads to the automatic removal of the offender and, in the latter case, can also result in legal consequences. Pieces of luggage, bags and large backpacks must be left at the ticket office. It is forbidden to bring animals or potentially dangerous objects inside the museum, take photographs or videos without permission, smoke, use cellphones, eat, or drink.

Besides the limitations imposed by its physical structure, the museum has to face other problems caused by a scarcity of human and financial resources. For example, tracking the emergence of new evidence about the past of San Giovanni remains a crucial task for an institution conceived to raise awareness of the relationship between human population and environment through time. Unfortunately, rapid urban development is constantly threatening the recovery of such information, and trying to keep ahead of it places a lot of strain on the museum personnel.

Comparing the Archaeological Environmental Museum to the other Italian institutions previously examined leads to an interesting conclusion which can serve as a starting point for the discussion about Greece and Israel, obviously taking into account the social and historical situation of the different countries. While at Palazzo Altemps the architecture and the monuments constitute symbols of an ideal of beauty and nobility valid everywhere, and the City Museum in Bologna has been induced to review its history and rethink not only its display, but the mechanisms of its involvement in the modern social and cultural context, the Archaeological Environmental Museum has always acted as a natural mediator between a specific community and the territory in
which it is situated, with all the opportunities and the challenges it presents.

The greater or lesser self-sufficiency of the various museums is also reflected in the relationship they have entertained with the public. Both at Palazzo Altemps and at the City Museum of Bologna the exhibits were conceived and arranged chiefly for scholars or for a learned audience in general. Their primary purpose was to impress viewers able to recognize what was before them, or teaching, and only in recent times the two museums had to deal with the problem of making their displays attractive for a more diverse public.

Conversely, for the Archaeological Environmental Museum reaching out to administrators and citizens is a necessity of life. Especially in an area like the suburbs of Bologna, which has experienced a surge in building activity in the past few decades, any institution dedicated to the study of the past must convincingly show that archaeology is a resource that can contribute to social and economic development, not a hindrance to it. Moreover, the small size of the museum and its limited resources practically forces it to coordinate with other entities, in order to maximize the efficacy of their work. Unlike the City Museum and the Archiginnasio in Bologna, whose uneasy coexistence was partly due to the respective circumstances of their formation, new local museums have the opportunity – at least in theory – to establish relationships with other interested parties in the cultural, social, and economic spheres and made concerted plans in advance.
Part II

Greece
5.1. Early laws and decrees

The Greek military and political leaders took an interest in the question of the ownership of the antiquities found in the country even before the end of the Greek War of Independence (1821-1828). The problem grew more complex after the foundation of the new state, as the role such artifacts were supposed to play in defining its identity became a matter of debate. All the subsequent regulations pertaining to cultural heritage have been influenced by this controversy, which has involved archaeologists and intellectuals, as well as politicians, and has been always intense and at times very heated. On the one hand, it was thought indispensable to keep antiquities inside the country, in order to emphasize their uniqueness and their importance as symbols of the continuity of “Greekness,” and to avoid the impression that the hallowed national heritage was being reduced to a commodity and exploited for money. On the other hand, their potential to promote Greece internationally and to emphasize the ties with Cyprus, the Aegean, and Macedonia was soon recognized, which led to various attempts to allow and regulate limited forms of export, particularly exchanges and loans for exhibitions.

Already in 1825, the priest Grigorios Flessas (Papaflessas, 1788-1825), Minister of the Interior of the revolutionary government, issued a decree regarding the collecting and
safeguarding of antiquities in schools, as a first step towards the creation of local museums and the rediscovery of Greek ancestry. Two years later, a resolution of the Third National Assembly of Troizen prohibited the sale and transfer of antiquities outside Greece, a ban partially amended by the National Assembly of Argos in 1829, on a proposal from Governor Ioannis Kapodistrias (1776-1831) to allow the concession of fragments of antiquities to foreign state-sponsored institutions for research purposes. Soon after the end of the military operations and the formation of a new government headed by Kapodistrias (1828), the Greek state began to set up an administrative structure for the protection of archaeological remains. Two important steps were represented by the opening of the first state museum in Aegina (1829) and by the institution of the Secretariat of State for Church Affairs and Public Education (1833), which was also responsible for the organization of excavations, the care of already discovered objects, and the enforcement of the ban on the export of antiquities.166

The first national archaeological law was drafted by Georg Ludwig von Maurer (1790-1872), one of King Otto's advisors, and promulgated in 1834. It established measures for the protection of antiquities which in part resembled those contained in the Pacca Edict, such as the prohibition against conducting excavations without a permit, and the obligation to declare any find. All antiquities within Greece were declared property of all the Greeks, although full state ownership was asserted only for artifacts found on publicly owned land or beneath it, at the bottom of the sea, in rivers or public streams, lakes or marshes. The law seems to have lacked an institution like the Papal, and later Italian, vincolo (bond), which subjected privately owned artifacts to a series of controls

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and restrictions. Instead, it introduced the category of “insignificant” or “superfluous” artifacts, which could be taken out of the country if accompanied by an export license, as could objects that had been legally imported from abroad. This provision applied to objects regarded as duplicates of those in museums, or otherwise declared not important by the state. The regulations called explicitly for the protection of medieval, as well as ancient, remains, a disposition reiterated in a royal decree of 1837, but the inclusive coverage proved not enough to block the dismantling of post-Classical vestiges carried out on the Athenian Acropolis and elsewhere.\footnote{Voudouri, “Greek Legislation,” 126, 127.}

The prestige enjoyed by antiquities as witnesses to the glorious past of Greece was such that the authorities felt the need to regulate not only their handling on the part of museums and collectors, as in Italy, but also the way in which they should be presented to the public. In 1885, a Decree Concerning the Organization of Athenian Museums imposed a chronological arrangement for the display of ancient artifacts and specified that their disposition had also to be aesthetically appropriate.\footnote{Andromache Gazi, “‘Artfully Classified’ and ‘Appropriately Placed’: Notes on the Display of Antiquities in Early Twentieth-century Greece,” in Damaskos and Plantzos, \textit{A Singular Antiquity}, 71.}

In 1899 a new and stricter law was approved (Law 2646/1899), which gave the state ownership of all antiquities, movable and immovable, to be found anywhere in Greece, even on private land, and dating up until 1453 (Byzantine objects were included under the category of “medieval Hellenism”). The possession, disposal, sale, and export of antiquities by individuals remained possible only for objects deemed redundant, and a tax was imposed on their value. Legally imported objects could be re-exported following the certification of their identity and the issuing of a license, to prevent dealing in antiquities coming from regions like Crete and Cyprus, still under Ottoman control. The
law also allowed state museums to exchange objects declared superfluous with foreign
museums and academic institutions, although their sale or gift remained forbidden.¹⁶⁹

The tightening of the regulations concerning private possession and export of
artifacts was probably one of the causes of the proliferation of museums in Greece during
the first decade of the twentieth century. As Andromache Gazi points out, 16 museums
were instituted between 1900 and 1909 (nine in the years 1903-1904 and 1906), almost
all through the efforts of the Archaeological Society at Athens. Seven of them were
designed for archaeological sites where excavations had been recently completed or were
still ongoing, and which were often located in isolated areas; as Gazi remarks, attracting
visitors was evidently not the primary purpose of such institutions. Only few museums,
including the Nafplio Museum, took advantage of already existing facilities, while the
others were built from scratch according to a very simple plan, consisting of two galleries
on either side of an antechamber.¹⁷⁰

After this phase of restriction, the pendulum began to swing back again, and in
1914 another law gave some leeway back to the state, allowing it to sell redundant
antiquities in its possession to state museums and smaller collections; the proceeds from
such transactions were to be used by the Archaeological Fund to expropriate
archaeological areas. As in Italy, however, the need for a new comprehensive law grew
and was eventually addressed in 1932.

¹⁷⁰ Gazi, “‘Artfully Classified,’” 67-68.
5.2. The 1932 law

Codified Law 5351/1932 combined the major principles of the laws who had preceded it.\(^{171}\) It confirmed the doctrine of state ownership of antiquities, but it also provided legal ways to possess or transfer them, and maintained the category of “duplicate” or “redundant” artifacts. In particular, the ban on the possession and sale of antiquities by individuals was significantly loosened, on the grounds that its enforcement was overfilling public museums, that collectors would be more interested in preserving artifacts if they were allowed to acquire them, and that a less rigid approach would discourage the concealment and smuggling of artifacts discovered by chance. Thus, for example, anyone who had found an ancient object on their property had to inform the authorities within fifteen days, and the local Ephor or another archaeologist appointed by the Ministry of Education had to inspect it as soon as possible. Afterwards, however, the discoverer was allowed to decide whether to keep it or to sell it, although the state had to be notified in the latter case and maintained the right of preemption. Moreover, if the find was judged of little scientific importance and of very little or no economic value, the authors of the discovery could do what they wanted with it (art. 5). If the discovery had taken place on public or church property, the finder was entitled to a reward corresponding to half the value of the object, provided he or she had reported it within the prescribed limit of fifteen days (art. 7). Private landholders could receive compensation if they had to give up use of part of their property because of an immovable find worth preserving (art. 8). In general, the preoccupation with the economic value of the

antiquities and with the procedure to establish it appears more pervasive than in subsequent legislation, including the most recent law on antiquities.

Antiquities could be imported freely, but they had to be declared to customs at the time of their entrance into the country. Otherwise, they were treated as if they had been found in Greece. The importer was also required to declare their value and to specify whether they constituted personal property or were destined for sale or transfer (art. 15-16). As with objects discovered within the borders, their sale had to be declared to the state, which had right of preemption on them (art. 17). Any artifact which had entered Greece legally could be exported again freely (art. 18).

A license was still required to export privately owned antiquities, but objects from excavations could be taken out of the country only if they had been judged redundant following their examination and publication (art. 19). A special regime was introduced for private collectors and dealers in antiquities. Collectors were subject to precise duties, such as keeping a catalogue of the objects in their possession and facilitating access to them for research purposes (art. 24-26). At the same time, collectors and holders of artifacts in general enjoyed several notable privileges, like the exclusive right to make and sell photographs or copies of them (art. 27-28). The state had to be informed of any sales of antiquities from private collections within Greece, and had right of preemption for them. Collectors, however, had the same right with respect to antiquities turned down by the state, if they were to be sold abroad, and were allowed to exchange ancient objects in their collections with others of equivalent value in foreign museums (art. 30).

Publicly owned antiquities, too, obtained more freedom of movement. Provided they had been judged of no use for public museums or smaller collections, they could be
exchanged with others in Greece or abroad, or even sold. The procedure to determine their status was quite complex, though, and a decision in favor of their demotion required a wide consensus among the officials involved (art. 53). Moreover, state control over the procurement of artifacts through excavation was tightened under the law, which imposed a limit of three permits per year for each foreign archaeological school (art. 37). This strict regulation admitted one significant exception: the excavation of the Athenian Agora, entrusted to the American School of Classical Studies at Athens through a special law promulgated a few years before (Law 4212/1929, amended in 1930), at the end of a rough period of negotiations. Two issues proved particularly contentious, namely, the conditions attached to the permit, especially the extension of the area to be investigated (which was to be expropriated at the School's expense), and the objections against placing the future of its residents, but also the rediscovery of an iconic ancient Greek site, in the hands of foreigners.172

The disputes surrounding the start of the Agora excavation anticipated the difficulty to translate into practice the relatively liberal provisions of the 1932 law. In particular, many Greek archaeologists opposed it, questioning the very notion of a “duplicate” or “redundant” artifact. Even the temporary export of antiquities has remained a thorny issue throughout the twentieth century, since making them available for exhibitions abroad has been often equated with degrading the national cultural patrimony to a commodity like any other, subject to the laws of the market. The need to regulate the matter has been often met with limited measures. The law which instituted the Benaki Museum (Law 3599/1930), for example, included the explicit permission to lend objects

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and dispose of duplicates; many years later, a similar provision was included in the law that established the Goulandris Foundation Museum of Cycladic Art (Law 1610/1986). In general, a greater willingness to send antiquities abroad was shown during the Metaxas dictatorship (1936-1941) and the rule of the junta (1967-1974).\footnote{Voudouri, “Greek Legislation,” 128-129, 135n46.}

In 1977, when objections were raised against sending a large number of important antiquities for an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum, a law was passed (L. 654/1977) that allowed the Council of Ministers to authorize the temporary export of artifacts to foreign museums on the basis of a recommendation by the Archaeological Council. The first application of the law was in connection with an exhibition on Aegean art held in 1979 in France, the United States, and the USSR. The departure of the artifacts was met with extremely negative reactions from all sides of Greek society, not just from archaeologists. Protests erupted throughout the country, especially on Crete, where they were reinforced by displeasure towards American military presence.\footnote{Marlen Mouliou, “Museum Representations of the Classical Past in Post-war Greece: A Critical Analysis,” in Damaskos and Plantzos, \textit{A Singular Antiquity}, 95; Voudouri, “Greek Legislation,” 129.}

5.3. Foreign relations and changes in museological practice

The year 1977 also witnessed a reorganization of the Greek Archaeological Service through the promulgation of Presidential Decree 941. The Ephorates, the regional branches of the Service, were doubled and split into Ephorates of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, and Ephorates of Byzantine Antiquities; every group of districts was to be covered by one office of each kind. The same decree increased considerably the

\footnote{Voudouri, “Greek Legislation,” 128-129, 135n46.}
number of positions within the Service, so that it could keep up with the growing demand for rescue excavations and with the resulting accumulation of artifacts in museums across the country. Although such measures were dictated by practical necessities, they led to a reduced flexibility in the management of the archaeological patrimony. Burdened with increasing bureaucratic duties, state archaeologists were left with less time to pursue their research, but also to review museum displays and activities and plan new ones. The consequence was a mounting sense of distance between the institutions and the public, frequently denounced in the press during the 1980s and 1990s.175

The entry of Greece into the European Community in 1981 and, more generally, its deeper involvement in the life of the international community were important factors of change in the approach to museum displays. The strengthening of ties with other countries not only helped to ease tensions surrounding the loan of antiquities, but it also facilitated the realization of their potential as cultural ambassadors, although the message entrusted to them tended to vary according to political circumstances. At the same time, the exposure accorded to such events as the 1979 exhibition dedicated to Aegean art forced Greek intellectuals and the general public to deal with different ways to present archaeological artifacts, and paved the way for a series of long-term developments, summarized by Marlen Mouliou as follows: “the introduction of aesthetically more pleasant museographies; the enhancement of the intellectual accessibility of the collections; the promotion of the educational role of archaeological museums; the offer of better visitor services; the aspiration to attract bigger audiences; and overall a better public understanding of the value of the past.” Meanwhile, the establishment of the Hellenic National Committee of the International Council of Museums in 1983 favored

awareness about codes of museum ethics and practices and their adaptation to the Greek context. The offer of events and services in museums has increased and has become more diverse, and the notion of museum policy was even given juridical expression in Law 2557/1997. Keeping up with scholarship and reviewing the interpretations of artifacts and displays has remained difficult for Greek archaeologists, however.176

5.4. The new 2002 law

The concerns about antiquities leaving Greece have been addressed in the most recent piece of legislation on the matter, Law 3028/2002.177 The stated aim of the act is the protection of the cultural heritage of the country, so that the historical memory is preserved for present and future generations, and the enhancement of the cultural environment. Such national cultural heritage includes all cultural objects found within Greek territory and in marine areas under its jurisdiction. Moreover, the protection of cultural objects originating from Greece or historically related to the country, no matter their present location, is declared of concern for the state (art. 1).

Article 2 defines cultural objects as “testimonies of the existence and the individual and collective creativity of humankind.” In particular, cultural objects of a material nature

177 The original Greek text of the law and an official English translation are available on the UNESCO website (http://www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/media/pdf/greece/gre_law_3028_engltof.pdf). See also Voudouri, “Greek Legislation,” 128, 134n22, 135n40.
are designated “monuments” and divided into subcategories according to chronology and mobility. The term “ancient monument” has been extended to cover all cultural objects dating from prehistory to 1830, as well as caves and paleontological remains demonstrably related to human existence. Cultural objects dating after 1830 and deemed worthy of protection because of their historical, artistic, or scientific significance are classified as “recent monuments.” With regard to mobility, the law calls “immovable monuments” those attached to the ground or lying on the bed of the sea, or lakes, or rivers, which cannot be moved without damaging their value as testimonies, and the single structural or decorative elements of such monuments; all other monuments are movable.

A distinction is also made between archaeological and historical sites. For the purposes of the law, an archaeological site is an area where the presence of ancient monuments is attested or can be proved, or which has constituted a monumental, urban, or burial group between antiquity and 1830. The designation includes the open space near the preserved monuments, as much as is necessary to appreciate them as a historical, aesthetic, and functional unity. Historical sites include areas where exceptional historical or mythical events took place, in any period, and sites where the presence of monuments or of “combined works of man and nature,” dating after 1830 and possessing historical, artistic, or scientific significance, is attested or can be proved. Finally, intangible cultural heritage, which is granted the same protection as cultural objects, comprises all expressions, practices, knowledge, and information pertinent to traditional, folk, and literary culture, such as myths, customs, oral traditions, dance, rituals, music, songs, skills or techniques.
Ancient immovable monuments are automatically subject to the provisions of the law, without need of a specific administrative act. Recent immovable cultural objects can be classified as monuments if they possess architectural, urban, social, ethnological, folk, technical, industrial, or any other kind of historical, artistic, or scientific significance; if the object is less than a century old, it must be of “particular” significance. Moreover, the demolition of a recent immovable object more than a hundred years old, or the execution of works which affect it, must be authorized by the responsible branch of the Ministry of Culture, even if it has not been declared a monument. As in Italy, a notification procedure has to be followed before the classification becomes permanent. An interesting clause states the obligation to announce that the object has been recommended for classification in a newspaper, in case no owner or holder can be found. It should also be noted that the Minister can opt to waive the protection of an immovable monument, if such a measure appears necessary to safeguard another monument (art. 6).

The law reaffirms state ownership for all ancient immovable monuments dating up to 1453 and all immovable antiquities revealed during excavation or archaeological research in general (art. 7). Accidental finds must be reported as soon as possible to the nearest archaeological, police, or port authority; if the discovery occurs during works on another immovable, the operations must stop until Ministry personnel have decided about measures for the protection of the antiquities. The person or persons who report the discovery can receive a reward proportionate to the importance of the antiquities and their contribution to their retrieval. No rewards are due, however, if the antiquities are already known to the authorities, if they are found in an archaeological site or during excavations, or if the discovery is made by a public employee during the execution of his
or her duties; people who find antiquities while acting in violation of the law, try to conceal them, or endanger them with their behavior have no right to a reward, either (art. 8).

After inspecting the finds, authorized personnel – supposedly functionaries of one of the two Ephorates covering the area, in most cases – has to decide, possibly following a preliminary excavation, whether to preserve them in situ, to remove them, or to bury them again. In the last two cases, the antiquities and their context must be carefully photographed and documented. The owner or keeper of the area where the discovery is made is entitled to compensation for the expense of protecting the finds until a decision on them is reached, as well as the restrictions on the availability of the property if no decision is made within three months, or if a preliminary excavation is conducted (art. 9).

For existing immovable monuments not claimed by the state, their owners or keepers are liable for their maintenance. As in Italy, if the person responsible neglects his or her duties, the state can take the necessary measures and then demand a reimbursement from them. However, the state can also just supply all or part of the required amount if the monument is going to be open to the public, the owner or keeper is not to blame for its condition, and he or she is not able to pay for its preservation; the person, however, must make sure that the public can actually access the site. Immovable monuments in private hands must also remain accessible for photography or study on the part of authorized officials or specialists (art. 11).

The law forbids any activity that may destroy, damage, pollute, or disfigure an immovable monument, directly or indirectly. The exploitation of quarries and mines must be authorized by the Ministry of Culture, which can block the proposed enterprise if it
threatens nearby monuments. A similar authorization has to be sought for the establishment of factories, workshops, or commercial facilities, the installation of equipment for telecommunications, and the execution of technical or building works in the proximity of a monument. In general, any other intervention performed on an immovable monument, except for emergency repairs, requires the assent of the Ministry. Ministerial pronouncements, when required, override all licenses issued by other authorities (art. 10).

The next section of the law, comprising articles 12-17, details the procedure to designate an area as an archaeological or historical site, and indicates what activities are allowed within their limits. While the specific provisions need not be discussed in detail, it is important to observe that the main criterion to determine what regulations apply is whether the site lies inside an existing and active settlement, or a section of land marked for development in local town planning, rather than in the open country. As a general rule, any repair or modification to a site requires a permit from the Ministry and cannot compromise its appearance or character. Operations near underwater sites are similarly restricted.

The state can expropriate, purchase, or put restrictions on the use of immovables, if considered necessary to protect a monument, an archaeological or historical site, or to carry out excavations (art. 18-19). While the imposition of restrictions can be decided by the Ministry of Culture alone, the other two measures require the additional agreement of the Ministry of the Economy and Finance. In all three cases, the interested parties are entitled to compensation. Expropriation can be challenged, but the final decision on it is reserved to the Ministry, not to a judge; there is no mention of an appeal for deprivation
or restriction of use. Immovable monuments that form part of public or ecclesiastical structures are entrusted to the care of the appropriate state agency, with no need for expropriation. Likewise, the law considers the protection of monuments located within immovables as implicit in the original use of those immovables, thereby excluding further ministerial interventions concerning them.

Movable monuments are divided into five categories: cultural objects dating up to 1453; archaeological finds, elements removed from immovable monuments, and icons and sacred objects dating between 1453 and 1830; other early modern artifacts designated as monuments by the Ministry on the basis of their historical, artistic, or scientific importance; objects later than 1830 and more than a century old classified as monuments on the same basis; objects less than a century old which deserve the designation because of their particular significance (art. 20). Movable ancient monuments dating up to 1453 and finds from excavations or other archaeological activities belong to the state (art. 21). Chance finds of antiquities must be declared, and their discoverers can be rewarded, according to a procedure similar to the one followed for immovable monuments. Moreover, whoever reports the discovery of a movable monument can apply to have it left in his or her custody, provided that the antiquity is not deemed scientifically or artistically important, the applicant gives sufficient assurance for its safety, and the person has no criminal record. The Ministry can transfer the permit to the heir of the original holder after his or her death, but it can also revoke it at any time if any of the above conditions ceases to be true (art. 23-24).

Practically all the restrictions on the movement of antiquities contained in the 1899 law have been reinstated, allowing only the loan and exchange of artifacts, and even such
transactions are admitted only under strict terms and conditions. Only published movable
monuments owned and kept by the state can be lent or exchanged, as long as they lack
particular significance for the country's cultural heritage. Moreover, exchange is possible
only if the monuments are not needed by other museums in the country to complete their
collections, and their leaving does not prejudice the unity of existing ones. The objects
received as part of an exchange must be as important as the ones given, must belong to
other states or to non-profit foreign subjects, and must contribute significantly to the
collections of the state museums (art. 25).

The nature and provenance of imported monuments must be declared by their
holders as soon as they are brought into the country. Legally and permanently imported
antiquities dating up to 1453 become state property. In order to maintain custody of them,
their holders may be required to prove that they had been out of Greece for at least fifty
years, had not been removed from monuments, collections, archaeological sites, or
storage facilities, and do not come from clandestine excavations (art. 33).

The export of monuments is prohibited as a rule, but the Ministry can grant a
specific permit, if the objects involved are not particularly significant for the cultural
heritage of the country and, for works more than a century old, their transfer does not
affect the unity of important collections. Monuments belonging to the state can be
exported only as part of a loan or exchange, under the conditions already described.
Despite the sensitivity of the issue, and as a sign of the evolution of attitudes towards it,
the law confirms the possibility to export monuments temporarily for exhibitions,
conservation, or study, provided that their safe transport, display, and return is
guaranteed. In the first case, permission to export can be given if the event is judged
useful to enhance the cultural heritage of the country or takes place in conditions of reciprocity. Export for conservation or study purposes is allowed only if the relevant task cannot be conducted in Greece (art. 34).

Private owners and keepers of movable monuments are responsible for their safety, under the watch of the appropriate branch of the Ministry. As with immovable monuments, if the artifacts are not properly cared for, the state can anticipate the necessary expenses and have the possessor refund them. It can even decide to take a monument to a public museum or another suitable place, if an immediate danger threatens it, but the wording of the law seems to suggest that no refund is due in such a case (art. 27). If the holder of a monument dating up to 1453 wants to transfer it, he or she must notify the authorities and inform them about the identity of the receiver, who has to submit an independent application for a holding permit. Failure to apply on the part of the new holder, or of the heir of the original one, results in the transfer of the monument to the state. The procedure to relinquish ownership of a movable monument depends on the character of the parties involved. A public agency needs the assent of the Ministry, and it might be limited by it in the choice of possible acquirers; religious organizations can transfer monuments only to other such entities, to the state and its peripheral branches, to public subjects, or to private museums. Transactions between other subjects must be reported to the authorities, and the state has right of preemption in case of sales or auctions (art. 28). Lastly, owners and holders of movable monuments are supposed to ensure their availability for purposes of study and exhibition (art. 29).

As in the 1932 law, a set of distinct rules applies to some special categories of possessors, namely, collectors and dealers. Both qualifications are granted by the
Ministry upon submission of an application similar to the one to obtain custody of single objects, and subject to analogous restrictions. Any legal holder or owner of movable monuments “which constitute a unity from an artistic, historical, or scientific point of view” can ask to be recognized as a collector, with the exception of persons involved in the protection of monuments or in their commerce. Understandably, only legally obtained monuments, either imported from abroad or acquired in Greece, can be used to enrich a collection. In addition to the duties common to all possessors of monuments, the law retains the obligation to keep a register of the objects in the collection and inform the authorities periodically of any addition to it. The collectors' right to take photographs of the objects, to make casts of them (after receiving official permission), and to dispose of both kinds of reproductions as they please has also been confirmed. The state can ask them to facilitate visits to their collections and allow them to charge admission. A collection must be kept intact, unless the collector receives permission from the Ministry to break it up. Whole collections can be transferred to the state, to a museum, or to another collector; museums have right of preemption over collectors, and the state has it over both (art. 31).

Unlike collectors, antique dealers and merchants of recent monuments are persons who systematically acquire movable monuments for the purpose of further transferring them or mediate in such transactions. Their duties include keeping track of all information about the objects to be transferred and the parties involved in the transactions. They are also required to certify whether a monument needs a permit to be exported or not. To practice these professions, applicants must demonstrate that they have no criminal record and possess relevant experience, and they must establish their
premises and storage facilities in cities where the appropriate offices for the protection of cultural heritage are based. Moreover, they must have not been previously recognized as collectors, as the 1932 law already imposed, or have been involved professionally in the protection of monuments. Dealers and merchants are not allowed to trade both original monuments and reproductions in the same premises. The personnel of the Ministry of Culture and of state museums, as well as any institution operating in the public sector, cannot engage in the trade of monuments at all, nor can they assess the authenticity or the monetary value of cultural objects, unless requested to do so by a public authority (art. 32).

The law then goes on to regulate archaeological excavations and conservation work (art. 35-44). While other countries just lay down general guidelines for such activities, possibly referring to second-level administrative acts for the precise norms concerning them, the inclusion of the latter in the body of the law is yet another indication of the central place of archaeology in the constitution of Greek cultural heritage. The limit of three excavation permits granted to foreign archaeological missions and schools is confirmed, and is significantly placed almost at the beginning of this section (art. 36); three additional projects carried out in cooperation with Greek agencies are also allowed. The same article lays down a series of strict requirements for the issuing of the permit, which include: satisfactory documentation about the existence of monuments and the reasons to excavate or do research in a specific area; the commitment of a reliable institution; an experienced director with a good reputation as a scholar; an interdisciplinary team similarly experienced in dealing with archaeological finds; an adequate technical infrastructure; a sufficient budget; and a sound program for the
excavation, the conservation, and the publication of the finds. The permit can be granted for a maximum of five years, after which a new one must be issued if it is necessary to continue the excavation. A new permit is also required to resume incomplete digs abandoned for more than two years and to start a new excavation on the site of a previously completed one; in both cases, the work should be assigned to the same people, unless there are reasons to do otherwise.

The legal burden of the excavation falls primarily on its director, who must not only possess strong credentials (at least five years of fieldwork experience matured after graduation and two publications related to fieldwork), but also handle many demanding tasks. He or she must see the work through its completion within the approved timetable, employing non-destructive methods as far as possible, ensure that the site is properly guarded, care for the preservation of the finds (preferably \textit{in situ}) and their conservation, and guarantee compliance with safety regulations. Moreover, the director has to make provisions for a possible restoration of the monuments, as well as the preservation of the landscape in the area to be excavated and, if necessary, its enhancement. One final obligation is represented by the prompt transport of the movable finds to the nearest public museum or to a suitable storage facility under state supervision.

Rescue excavations are carried out by public officials without need of a permit, although the rules for systematic excavations have to be followed if they grow into a full-scale dig (art. 37). The same regulations apply to research other than excavation, although the formulation of detailed rules for each kind of activity is left to the Ministry. The only provision spelled out is the need for a permission to use metal detectors or other scanning instruments (art. 38).
Another peculiarity of Greek legislation on antiquities is the laying down of precise deadlines for the publication of the results of archaeological work (art. 39). The director of a systematic excavation must submit an annual report to the authorities, produce a preliminary account of the stratigraphy and the finds within two years from the beginning of the project, and put out another one every two years thereafter. The final publication of an excavation is due within five years from its completion. The timing is different in the case of rescue excavations, for which a final report must be ready within nine months from the end of the work, while six years are allotted the publication of the finds. For surveys or other types of archaeological research, the deadline for the final publication is reduced to two years after its completion. All the deadlines are doubled if the research is conducted under water. Within the temporal limits just mentioned, only the person in charge of an excavation or an archaeological research project in general has the right to disseminate its results, although he or she can allow others to publish part of them or individual finds in advance. This restriction can lead to a more or less prolonged delay in the appearance of the final publication, especially since the law does not set explicit criteria to determine when a project is considered complete.

Conservation work on immovable monuments requires ministerial approval only if it is deemed of major importance, otherwise a study prepared by the appropriate state officials is sufficient to proceed (art. 40). Decisions concerning dilapidated monuments are assigned to a special committee, who can choose among a broad range of measures, including their consolidation, the removal of some of their elements, or even their partial or total demolition (art. 41). The removal of an immovable monument or of its elements always needs the authorization of the Ministry. Particularly important monuments,
designated as such by the Ministry, can be taken elsewhere only to protect them from natural dangers or to allow the execution of major works which satisfy vital defensive, economic, or social exigencies. Decorative elements may be taken away from an immovable only if absolutely necessary for their rescue (art. 42). If the works just mentioned have to be performed because of an emergency, they are entrusted to the appropriate governmental agency without any need for preliminary documentation. Interventions on movable monuments and decorative elements of immovables require a permit or a study, too, but they can be carried out only by state officials or by registered conservators under their supervision (art. 43). As with excavations and archaeological research in general, the people responsible for all the tasks related to conservation have to submit annual reports and produce a final publication within a fixed time, namely, fifteen months (art. 44).

For the first time, the law gives a definition of museums and provides a legal framework for their operations (art. 45). A museum is defined as a non-profit organization “which acquires, accepts, safeguards, conserves, records, documents, researches, interprets, and primarily exhibits and proposes to the public” archaeological, artistic, ethnological, or other collections documenting the life of humans and their environment, “for purposes of study, education, and enjoyment.” A museum can be established either by the state or by a legally recognized entity, in both cases through a decision of the Ministry, on the basis of the importance of the collections, the existence of adequate premises and personnel, and the lack of alternative ways to achieve the objectives of the proposed new institution. Other factors that may affect the decision include the content of the collections, the geographical area covered by them, and their ownership.
Museums have a series of obligations of their own, mostly quite straightforward. They must ensure opening hours and grant researchers access to the collections, although the exact terms of such services are determined by an internal set of rules approved by the Ministry. Their holdings are recorded in national inventories, and any change in their state or composition has to be reported periodically to the authorities. Moreover, museums cannot acquire or keep cultural objects suspected to have been exported illegally from their country of origin, even if the text leaves open the possibility for state museums to take in artifacts retrieved within Greece in violation of the law. Conversely, state museums cannot give away monuments in their collections, although they can exchange cultural objects with non-Greek institutions according to the general rules expressed in article 25. Recognized museums belonging to public entities or to private organizations active in the public sector can transfer ownership of artifacts to the state or, with ministerial permission, to a similar subject, in view of their placement in another museum. The Ministry can let all recognized museums take part in exchanges of objects with foreign institutions, once again on condition that the artifacts exchanged are not particularly significant for the collections or the cultural heritage of the country, while the ones obtained in return are.

With regard to archaeological sites, historical sites, and immovable monuments, the Ministry dictates the terms and conditions for their opening to the public and the organization of cultural events in them, as well as the related fees (the price for admission to monuments, museums, and sites is decided together with the Ministry of Economy and Finance). The reproduction of monuments belonging to the state for financial or commercial purposes, or the creation of databases with images of such monuments
requires permission from the Ministry and the payment of a fee. A fee is also required for reproductions made for artistic, educational, or scientific purposes, although exemptions can be granted (art. 46).

According to the law, practically every decision assigned to the Minister of Culture has to be taken “following an opinion of the Council.” The clause refers not to one, but to several different bodies, namely, the Central Archaeological Council, the Central Council of Recent Monuments, the Council of Museums, and the Local Councils of Monuments established in each province or insular region. Each Council advises the Minister on matters pertaining to its respective area of expertise. Their composition and functions vary, but all of them work in similar ways (art. 49-52).

Towards the end, the law lists the sanctions for each type of infraction. Significantly, the first offense mentioned is theft of monuments, which is punished with a prison term of five to ten years. Such a penalty applies if the monument stolen is highly valuable, but also if it has been removed from an immovable, an excavated site, a museum, a facility where antiquities are stored, or the place of residence of a collection (art. 53). In theory, then, even the removal of comparatively modest artifacts could be met with a harsh punishment. The carrying out of excavations without a permit (art. 61) and the illegal export of a cultural object (art. 63) are punished in the same way. A certain degree of flexibility is admitted in the case of the overdue repatriation of an object exported on a temporary permit. The sentence is lower – up to five years in prison – and may be condoned altogether if the delay is small; moreover, if the person responsible for it reimports the object before the violation is addressed, no charges are brought against them. Finally, it is worth noting that the minimum sentence for the illegal import of an
object into Greece is also relatively low (a prison term of one to five years) and depends on several precise conditions. In fact, the rule applies to objects that come from states that have ratified the 1970 Paris Convention on the protection of cultural property, that have been illegally removed from museums, religious or public monuments, and that are registered in the inventories of such institutions (art. 64).

The expansion of the concept of cultural heritage on which the new law is based constitutes one of the circumstances that have encouraged a rethinking of museological strategies and policies in Greece. The large number of interventions in museums and archaeological sites financed through European Union programs has contributed to it, too. A third cause of change in this sphere is the rush of funds related to the hosting of the Olympic Games in 2004 and the debate surrounding their disbursement. According to Mouliou, however, the vitality and diversity all these activities have stimulated remains mostly confined to aesthetic and technical aspects of the displays, while substantial changes on a conceptual and interpretative level have been less apparent.178

A comparison between the 1932 law and the one promulgated seventy years later suggests some interesting observations. Both laws are clearly meant to keep monuments, especially antiquities, inside the country, although not necessarily in the hands of the state. However, whereas the older legislation bases many of its provisions on the economic value of the artifacts, as well as their usefulness for museums and collections, the more recent act stresses the concept of cultural heritage as patrimony of the nation and as a coherent whole. Undoubtedly, the change of approach has been influenced by several factors, such as the growing concern for recent monuments, and especially the necessity to deal with the thorny issue of the temporary export of artifacts for exhibitions.

The emphasis on intangible heritage, another remarkable feature of the new law, has probably its roots in the interest in folk culture, which artists, intellectuals, and politicians have often held in high regard since the 1930s as an authentic expression of “Greekness” and as a visible proof of the spiritual, not to say racial, continuity between ancient and modern Greeks.179

The criteria employed by Greek legislation, most notably the sharp chronological boundaries, differentiate it from Italian law, which lacks such explicit ties with the national past; there are no references in it to fixed dates such as 1860, the year of Italian independence, for example. Israeli legislation, which will be examined in the next part of the dissertation, appears more pragmatic and less concerned with principles than its counterparts, and represents yet another approach to the management of cultural heritage.

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179 Several papers in the volume *A Singular Antiquity* deal with the formation and the meaning of the concept of “Greekness.” Of particular interest are Angeliki Koufou, “The Discourse on Hellenicity, Historical Continuity and the Greek Left” (p. 299-307) and Dimitris Damaskos, “The Uses of Antiquity in Photographs by Nelly: Imported Modernism and Home-grown Ancestor Worship in Inter-war Greece” (p. 321-336).
6.1. Initial plans

Unlike the Italian museums examined in the first part of the dissertation, the National Museum is housed in a building erected specifically for this purpose and inserted in a dedicated urban context, carefully planned to maximize its visibility as a museum, not unlike the area of the Glyptothek in Munich. The comparison should come as no surprise, given the role played by German personalities in its history, beginning with the creator of the Glyptothek himself, Leo von Klenze (1784-1864). While the decision to build a new structure suggests that a coherent display had been sought since the beginning, historical circumstances have in fact played a significant role in shaping the appearance of the museum.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first national museum of independent Greece was established in Aegina, the temporary capital, in 1829, under the directorship of the Corfiote Andreas Moustoxidis. A catalogue redacted by the archimandrite Leontios Kambanis shows that objects from the regions subtracted to Ottoman rule arrived there until 1832. In September of the same year, Kyriakos Pittakis was appointed Superintendent of Antiquities in Athens and began gathering all the movable monuments in the area, especially the sculptures. While the artifacts found on the Acropolis remained
there, the others were housed in the Church of the Great Panagia. A Royal Decree dated
November 13, 1834, issued in accordance with the newly emanated archaeological law,
instituted the Central Archaeological Museum in the building identified with the Temple
of Hephaistos, still known as the “Theseion.” The structure had functioned as a Christian
church until that time, but a few months later, on February 6, 1835, Church authorities
ordered the removal of all cult objects from it.180

Meanwhile, Athens had become the seat of the General Ephorate and the center for
the collection of antiquities from the whole country. By 1836 the “Theseion” was already
full, and Pittakis was forced to house new arrivals in the Library of Hadrian, which came
under further pressure when the most important works in the Aegina Museum were
moved to Athens in September 1837. Even more objects were donated to the public after
having been purchased or excavated by the Greek Archaeological Society, which was
also founded in 1837. The increasing number of antiquities in need of care induced the
authorities to employ the offices of the General Ephorate (1841) and the Tower of the
Winds (1843) as storage areas. In 1858 the Society founded its own museum, located
initially at the University and later, starting in 1865, in six rooms provided by the
government at the Varvakeio School.181

The scarcity of room to accommodate the objects heightened the necessity for the
construction of a new national museum. In 1834, as part of the urban renovation of
Athens he was conceiving, von Klenze had devised a plan for a National Sculpture
Gallery on the southeast corner of the Acropolis, but it never took concrete shape,
although the Acropolis Museum was later built in the area. Two years later, the architect

181 Karouzou, National Museum, ix-x; Nikolaos Kaltzas, The National Archaeological Museum (Athens,
2007), 15.
proposed a second, more grandiose project for an institution called “Pantechnéion,” to be built in the Kerameikos. Unlike later realizations of the museum, the envisaged structure consisted of two elements, an oblong rectangle and an octagon, connected by a portico but asymmetrical in plan and elevation (fig. 6.1). The complex was meant to recall the disposition of the monuments on the Acropolis, but the lack of funds prevented the realization of this second project, too.

Since 1854, the Greek government had set aside a yearly sum of ten thousand drachmas for the erection of a national museum, but only at the end of 1856 did the idea have a chance to materialize, thanks to a substantial donation from Demetrios Bernardakis, a Greek living in Petrograd (today St. Petersburg). Another decree dated June 30, 1858 officially instituted the Museum of Antiquities, and a competition for the design of the new building was announced. However, the Royal Academy of Munich, chosen as judge, rejected all the fourteen entries submitted. A new plan was then put forward by Ludwig Lange (1808-1868), who conceived a building made of two identical halves, each constructed around an internal courtyard, joined by a central component. The structure would have had a monumental entrance with a long colonnade (fig. 6.2), but it would also have featured elaborate side entrances. As Lange's drawings show, the exhibit was to occupy a ring of rooms and be arranged in chronological order, starting with the “Age of Heroes and of Aegina,” continuing with the “Time of Phidias and Praxiteles,” the “Macedonian Period,” and the “Roman Period,” and ending with the “Byzantine Period” (fig. 6.3). Additional rooms on the front and back sides were reserved for gypsum casts and foreign works.182

The political instability being experienced by Greece, which led to the fall of king

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Otto in 1862, and the difficulty in finding a suitable place to build the museum according to Lange's plan almost caused its fall into oblivion. A committee instituted in 1864 to study the existing plans based its work on one of the submissions for the earlier competition before noticing his drawings and adopting his ideas. A Presidential Decree dated February 24, 1865, the first official document to use the title “National Archaeological Museum,” stipulated that work be started at the Kerameikos site according to Lange's indications. Objections were raised concerning the chosen location, however, and the endeavor seemed destined to fail once again, when a sudden turn of events revived it fully.

6.2. The first Museum

In 1866, shortly before her death, Eleni Tositsa donated to the state a large lot on Patision Street, next to another property she had left in 1860 for the creation of the Polytechnic. She made a condition that the bequest be used for the erection of the museum, so that the two institutions could stand close to each other. Work could finally begin on October 3. A first milestone was reached in 1874 with the completion of the west wing, corresponding to the front side of Lange's project. The colonnaded portico was taken out of the project following a suggestion by the Greek architect Panagiotis Kalkos (1810-1878), who had been tasked with the execution of the plan but died some years later. The transfer of the antiquities kept in the “Theseion,” the Varvakeio, and the Library of Hadrian to the new building started in the same year.

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The lack of funds and the problem of finding a replacement for Kalkos caused further delays in the completion of the work. The financial difficulties were overcome with the help of the Archaeological Society and of another substantial gift of cash from Nikolaos Bernardakis, Demetrios's son. The second obstacle proved harder to tackle, since the chosen nominee, Theophil Hansen, wanted to abandon Lange's scheme altogether and made a new case for the side of the Acropolis as building site, but his plan was rejected as impractical and too expensive. One of his pupils, Ernst Ziller (1837-1923), saw the project to its end, making several important changes to Lange's proposal. In place of the discarded front colonnade, Ziller designed the entrance flanked by two porches that still welcomes visitors today (fig. 6.4), and removed the side entrances. Moreover, while in the initial project the rooms that formed the couples on the front and back sides were roughly equal in area, and the main exhibit was supposed to include the inner ones, Ziller enlarged the outer ones and linked them to the galleries on the other two sides, leaving the others as secondary spaces (fig. 6.5).183

Meanwhile, antiquities had continued to accumulate in the finished west wing in a scattered fashion; a catalogue published in 1881 listed 2682 sculptures. A Royal Decree dated April 19 of the same year fixed the name of the institution as “National Archaeological Museum,” putting an end to discussions over the terms “National” and “Central.” In 1884, the Archaeological Society began turning the artifacts in its custody over to the museum, a process completed only in 1891. They were soon followed by the finds from the excavations of the Asklepieion in Athens, by selected works from the provinces, and by various private collections donated to the state (Statathos, Karapanos, Empedoklis, Dimitriou). The task of arranging and cataloguing the material was given to

the General Ephor Panagiotis Kavvadias (1849-1928), who began his work in 1885 and produced two guides to the sculpture collection within a few years. He was assisted by Christos Tsountas for the inventory of the prehistoric artifacts. During the early twentieth century another catalogue of the sculptures was prepared by Panagiotis Kastriotis, while Valerios Stais published French descriptions of the Mycenaean, marble, and bronze collections.\textsuperscript{184}

The museum opened to the public in 1889 (fig. 6.6), presenting the prehistoric section and a large part of the sculpture collection. It was divided into four departments, which have formed the backbone of its organization up to this day. Three of them correspond to the broad categories of antiquities which constitute its holdings, namely, the Sculpture, Vase, and Minor Arts Collections. The last division, the Prehistoric Collection, is based instead on a chronological boundary, without regard for the material or the function of the artifacts.

The initial exhibit did not include the Mycenaean objects discovered by Schliemann, which had been on display at the Polytechnic since 1880 together with the holdings of the Archaeological Society. They were among the last artifacts brought to the museum, after an official decree (1891) instituted a collection of antiquities “of so-called pre-Hellenic art” within it. Their transfer took place in 1892. They were joined in their new home by Sophia Schliemann’s collection of antiquities from Troy, which she had donated to the state. Tsountas acted as curator of the collection between 1896 and 1904, expanding it with finds from his excavations in the Cyclades.

Nikolaos Kaltsas notes that during the early years after the opening, “the ancient artefacts were crowded, many reliefs were hung on the walls as paintings, and a multitude

of others were packed into the interior courts, while the growing number of works soon made it clear that additional space was required for their exhibition and storage.\textsuperscript{185} A first attempt to alleviate the pressure was made by adding a line of three halls to the eastern end of the museum between 1903 and 1906 (fig. 6.7). The appearance of the building at this stage is described in a Baedeker guidebook published in 1909.\textsuperscript{186} According to the guide, the museum was open from 9 to 12 in the morning (10-12 in December and January), while the afternoon hours lasted from a time between 2 and 4, depending on the time of year, until sunset; on Sundays and holidays access was possible only in the morning, from 10 to 12. Admission was free, but sticks and umbrellas had to be left in custody at the entrance for a fee.

A first striking feature of the exhibit, as described in the guide, consisted in the fact that the basic arrangement was no longer chronological, as Lange had imagined, but typological, to the point that each gallery was identified not only by a number, but also by a title based on its contents. The central spine housed the Mycenaean finds and the Egyptian collections, the sculptures occupied half of the west side and the entire north and east sides, the three newly built halls contained the bronzes, the south side was reserved for the vases, and the other half of the west side for the terracottas and the other minor collections. As it is still the case today, visitors passed through the entrance into the vestibule (room I), from where they could go forward, turn left or right.

The central section of the museum originally consisted of two separate rooms, flanked by side spaces. The prehistoric hall (room II), decorated by the artist and architect Georg Kawerau with murals inspired by Mycenaean art, revolved around the finds from

\textsuperscript{185} Kaltsas, \textit{National Museum}, 20.
Mycenae Grave Circle A ("Royal Tombs"), displayed in a parallel series of desk-cases down the center (fig. 6.8); the central case showed a reconstruction of Tomb VI, discovered by the Greek archaeologist Panagiotis Stamatakis after Schliemann had closed his excavation. Some outstanding artifacts were exhibited in prominent spots, such as the two golden cups from Vapheio, placed on columns flanking the back doorway, or the inlaid daggers with hunting and animal scenes, shown in a separate glass case in the middle. Other cases and cabinets along the sides of the hall held objects from the citadel and the lower town of Mycenae, on the left, and finds from various sites (Tiryns, Vaphio, Menidi, Spatha, Troy, Thorikos, Salamis, Naflpio, Dimini, Kapakli), on the right; two side rooms on the right contained vessels from Phylakopi on Melos.

The Baedeker guidebook states that the cases were numbered consecutively, and from the sequence it seems that visitors were encouraged to proceed forward, then turn and come back following the left wall, and finally repeat the process on the other side, with stops in room III and in the side rooms. A different itinerary could be followed, of course, but the first impression was transmitted by the wealth of the Mycenaeans, who by then had been fully accepted into the Greek family thanks to Homer and Schliemann. Moreover, the disposition of the central cases forced people to walk around them in order to cross the room, so that their exposure to the grave goods was considerably longer. In comparison, the collection of Egyptian antiquities in room III looks much less impressive, at least judging by its description. It is worth mentioning that Hellenistic terracottas were displayed in the room.

The plan of the outer ring of galleries had already assumed the appearance that it has today, with seven rooms (including the vestibule) on the west and east sides, and four
on the north and south sides. The vestibule is flanked by two groups of three rooms each; in the middle room of each group, the west wall forms a semicircle. The north and south wings consist instead of two long halls, a smaller rectangular room linking them, and another relatively small room at their west end. The vestibule, however, was narrower than the present entrance hall, since two anterooms on its north and south sides separated it from the rest of the ring. In the organization of the display, the anterooms formed two units with the nearby rooms IV and XXIV (today rooms 7 and 33), although doorways with pairs of columns marked the passage between the areas. So, for example, part of the contents of room IV (Room of Archaic Art), including the Kore of Nikandre, was actually located in the anteroom.

As in the current arrangement, the numbering of the rooms suggests a clockwise itinerary, which the Baedeker guide in fact follows. Apart from room IV, the first group of galleries was named after the main piece displayed in each one. So, for example, room V (today room 8) was known as Room of the Athena, after the small-scale reproduction of the Athena Parthenos by Pheidias placed in the middle of it; the Eleusinian relief with Demeter, Persephone and Triptolemos was also located here. Room VI, or Room of the Hermes (today room 11) took its name from a statue of the god situated near the middle of the west wall, a position which remains privileged in the current exhibit; the sculptures from the temple of Despoina at Lykosoura occupied the space near the two entrances to the room. Just as today, there was a small discrepancy between the numbering of the galleries and their actual disposition, as room VI gave access to room VIII (today room 13), called Room of Poseidon, after a statue of the god which formed its principal attraction, and was located close to the entrance from room VI. Room VII (today room
12) was in fact the space in the northwest corner of the building. Similarly to what happens in the present, visitors had only to enter room VIII to admire the main piece of room VII, the statue of Themis from the temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous, after which the gallery was named. Finally, room IX, in the middle of the north side of the museum (today room 14), was known as Room of the Kosmetae, because of the presence of a large group of herms depicting such officials. The Baedeker guide provides rather detailed descriptions for many artifacts in this section of the museum, giving information about location in the gallery, time and place of discovery, style and iconography. A picture included in Kaltsas's book (fig. 6.9), which matches the description given in the guide for room VIII, shows the sculptures arranged in long lines along the walls, with the smaller pieces (heads and busts) mounted on corbels at a higher level and the central section of the gallery largely empty, except for a single work (a sleeping Maenad).

Rooms X, XI and XII (today rooms 15-17) constituted the section of the museum dedicated to funerary monuments (reliefs and marble lekythoi). The three rooms receive a much shorter description than the preceding galleries, being limited to two paragraphs, the second of which is just a list of selected pieces. In the first paragraph, the author of the guide offers some comments on the expressiveness of the reliefs and on “how universal among the Athenians was that love of proportion and beauty, which inspired even the ordinary stone-masons.” Room X, the second long hall on the northern side of the museum, is the only one indicated by a title (Large Room of the Sepulchral Reliefs), while rooms XI and XII lack specific names.

The three rooms that form the center of the east side (XIII, XIV, and XV, today rooms 18, 21 and 22) receive even less attention, despite their prominent location. The
first two are dispatched with a sentence about their contents; only the title is given for the third. Like rooms X, XI, and XII, they were used to display funerary artifacts, as their names indicate (Room of the Sepulchral Vases, Room of the Sarcophagi, Room of the Roman Sepulchral Reliefs), and are in fact the last areas filled with such objects. Much more space is dedicated to the three rooms constituting the eastern extension, which could be reached from room XIV and housed the bronzes. The plan included in the guide shows no number for them, and in the book they are simply called Bronze Rooms. The first room had at its center the youth of Antikythera, which had been recovered at the end of 1900, only some years before the extension of the museum was built; along the sides were located cases containing bronzes from the Acropolis, to the right of the entrance, and from Olympia, to the left of it. In the second room were housed small-scale bronze figures and utensils. The last gallery, shaped as a rotunda, displayed the other bronze finds from the Antikythera wreck, including the famous astronomical mechanism.

After treating the Bronze Rooms and quickly mentioning room XV, the Baedeker guidebook deals with the last two galleries on the east side. Room XVI (Room of the Votive Reliefs, today room 23) displayed yet another selection of sculptures, although created for a purpose different from that of the works in rooms X-XIV. Finally, Room XVII (today room 24) was used to house a collection donated to the museum in 1902 by Konstantinos Karapanos (1840-1914), the Epirote politician who discovered and excavated ancient Dodona.

The galleries along the south and west side of the building, where the collections of vases and terracottas were housed, were not named after specific objects, but were known simply as First, Second, and Third Vase Room (Rooms XVIII-XX, today rooms 28-30),
and as First, Second, and Third Terracotta Rooms (Rooms XXI, XXIII-XXIV, today rooms 31-33). The Vase Rooms, the last galleries to receive a detailed description in the guide, were arranged chronologically and, in part, by technique (from the origin of vase-painting to the end of black-figure; red-figure; late red-figure, white-ground lekythoi, relief vases). The terracottas were instead grouped by area and site of provenience, with room XXI housing mostly pieces from Tanagra, room XXII devoted to objects from Asia Minor, and room XXIV containing products from Attica and other Greek centers, such as Eretria, Aegina, and Corinth. Room XXII (today room 31A) somewhat broke the unity of this section by displaying larger terracotta artifacts and Etruscan antiquities. Finally, part of room XXIV was reserved for the display of jewels and ornaments.

In Gazi's discussion of the characteristics of Greek archaeological museums in the early twentieth century, she observes that the display of the finest pieces was the primary concern, and the general criterion for the inclusion of an artifact in an exhibit was its historical or artistic value. Chronology and typology, in either order, were the main guiding principles of the exhibits; alternatively, finds could be arranged first according to their provenience. Secondary classification was based on material and dimensions, sometimes on theme. Little attention was given to the archaeological context, and the artifacts were generally shown in rows. Within these boundaries, a further goal was to show as many objects as possible. According to the guide to the sculpture collection by Georgios Kastriotis, published in 1908 and cited by Gazi, 2725 out of 5000 works of sculpture in the collections of the National Museum were on display at the time. Gazi also notes that the museum distinguished itself for the abundance of visiting and interpretative aids, such as catalogue numbers, information signs, visible names for
galleries, and plaster casts.\textsuperscript{187} Its prestige grew together with the reverent esteem accorded to the country's antiquities, which became more and more pronounced during the period in question, an attitude reflected in pieces of legislation such as the 1885 decree on the appropriate way to display antiquities and the 1899 law. In the preface to his catalogue, Kastriotis describes the museum as a “sacred shrine” and an object of pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{188}

In 1925 it was decided to enlarge the building, but work on a new eastern wing did not begin until seven years later, under the direction of Georgios Nomikos, and ended in 1939. The round hall at the eastern end was torn down and replaced by a two-story structure, which included not only exhibition spaces, but also storage areas in the basement, as well as rooms for offices and workshops. In plan, the construction looked like a smaller replica of the main building, since it was formed by two symmetrical groups of rooms arranged around courtyards. The complex thus maintained a regular appearance, but its realization demanded the sacrifice of a large yard located behind the museum, where the houses of the guards and the technicians stood.\textsuperscript{189}

Before the galleries could open, however, the involvement of Greece in World War II marked the onset of very troubled times for the institution. The collections were removed from public view and hidden in caves around Athens, in the vaults of the Bank of Greece (especially the Mycenaean gold artifacts), and inside the museum itself. Many statues, funerary monuments, and stelai were buried in layers in the high embankment at the base of the original building. The most important sculptures, the vases, and the smaller objects were instead stored in the lower spaces of the new extension, under a

\textsuperscript{187} Gazi, “‘Artfully Classified,’” 69-71.
\textsuperscript{188} Quoted in Gazi, “‘Artfully Classified,’” 74.
\textsuperscript{189} Karouzou, \textit{National Museum}, xiii.
thick cover of sand (figs. 6.10-11). Above them, the museum was requisitioned during the German occupation to accommodate several public offices, such as the State Orchestra, the Post Office, and some departments of the Ministry of Health. Towards the end of the war, it was damaged and lost its roof. Its use as a detention center during the Greek Civil War further delayed its reopening.  

6.3. Karouzos and the post-war years

Restoration started in 1946, and three galleries were opened in 1948. The event was hailed as the sign of a national resurrection, almost in an apocalyptic sense. Commentators like Giorgos Seferis hinted at a similarity between the return to light of the buried works and the rising of the bodies at the Second Coming.  

A temporary display occupying six rooms could be set up by 1950, and the reinstallation of the permanent collections was carried out in several stages between 1950 and 1966.

The protagonists in the revival were Christos Karouzos, acting director from 1942 to 1964, and his wife Semni Papaspyridi-Karouzou, Keeper of the Vase Collection from 1932 to 1964 and first woman employed by the Greek Archaeological Service. Their activity was inspired by a firm belief in the educational function of museums and in the power of art to engage the spirit, two forces that need the combined efforts of curator and visitor to manifest. On the one hand, the curator should be well versed in the history of

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190 Karouzou, *National Museum*, xiii-xvi; Kaltsas, *National Museum*, 20. According to Karouzou, the roof of the museum was ruined by gunfire from aircrafts in December 1944, while Kaltsas attributes the damage to bombing at the time of the Civil War. There are no references to the latter period in Karouzou's summary, not even to the use of the museum as a prison.

European art and possess the capacity to discern the characteristics of each period, without ranking objects according to an absolute artistic scale. On the other hand, for the transformative power of the museum to be activated, visitors have to contribute a proper state of mind, which requires time, comfort, devotion, and thorough knowledge, as Karouzou put it, to be obtained.

The Classical past remained at the center of the display, but it was now presented as the outcome of a linear artistic evolution. Moreover, artistic development was supposedly recognizable in the works themselves, so that external interpretative devices could be dispensed with. Stylistic analysis and attention to details were instead recommended as the only way to capture the essence of each work of art and of the period which produced it. The artifacts ought not to be constrained within a predetermined form of display; rather, their arrangement had to reflect the specific cultural climate of the period and take into account the features of the objects to be exhibited.192

Karouzos's holistic approach made him one of the strongest critics of the concept of “duplicate” or “redundant” artifacts, which justified their departure from Greece according to the 1932 law, although he was not opposed in principle to the exchange of antiquities or even, in exceptional circumstances, to their donation.193 A similar emphasis on the historicity of art and on the correct representation of chronology, typology, and style has helped to control the tensions that the early traveling exhibitions of the 1970s and 1980s could have caused, and to give them an aura of neutrality, once the political

192 “No aesthetic theory, no a priori conception, dictated the selection and the exhibition of the works. This was based on a separate evaluation of each artistic object, each one considered as an individual work but also as part of an organic historical evolution … [T]he placing of the works in the Museum was often dictated by the works themselves; sometimes they required space, sometimes isolation, sometimes the proximity of related works, sometimes a central position or a remote corner” (Karouzou, National Museum, xviii). On the museological principles of the two archaeologists, see also Mouliou, “Museum Representations,” 87-89.

disputes on the loan of antiquities had been overcome.\textsuperscript{194}

The effort to make the works themselves narrate the historical development of ancient Greek art is evident in the post-war reinstallation of the exhibit, particularly the sculpture collection, which remained in place until the late twentieth century, and in the guide to the sculptures written by Semni Karouzou and published in Greek, French, English, German, and Italian between 1967 and 1968. With the transfer of the vases, the bronzes, and the small collections to the finally available new wing, the entire circuit of rooms that formed the original building could be given to the statues and reliefs (fig. 6.12).

The guide provides general information only for some rooms, which are still designated through specific names rather than numbers. Its format makes it difficult to reconstruct the position of the artifacts in each room, since they are described individually, without viewing directions, references to their position in the gallery, or explicit connections to other works. The impression, however, is that the arrangement of several galleries, particularly the long halls, was already the same that can be observed today, at least in its general lines. Notable pieces such as the Kore of Nikandre, the Poseidon from Artemision, or the youth from Antikythera, for example, were located in the rooms they still occupy, and it seems likely that they were shown in a prominent spot. At the same time, the lists associated with each room reveal that many areas housed a selection of works different from those they contain now, room 21 being the most remarkable case. It seems also reasonable to suppose that the display continued to be based on principles of symmetry and order, although its appearance did not correspond to what visitors see today. Some basic features of the current exhibit were established at this

\textsuperscript{194} Mouliou, “Museum Representations,” 96-97.
time, such as the inclusion of a gallery of votive sculptures among the rooms dedicated to funerary monuments, in order to avoid creating an excessively somber atmosphere, or the transformation of the former first Bronze Room, which now connected the old and the new wing, into a replica of an open-air sanctuary.

The guide seems conceived as a reference, to which visitors can turn for detailed information on a particular work as they pass through the galleries, not a sequence of reproductions, which could compete with the originals for attention and distract people from their visual experience. Images of the most important pieces are present, but they are gathered at the end of the book instead of accompanying the text. It should also be noted that the last three rooms, which are reserved for Roman sculpture in the current display, are not mentioned at all in the guide, and even works that today occupy central positions in them lack a description, as well, as a quick comparison of their inventory numbers with the table at the beginning of the guide demonstrates. Unless such objects were still in storage when the book was published, and the trio of rooms was employed for other purposes, the absence of late sculpture is striking, although it would fit well the low regard in which the author explicitly holds it.195

Later interventions concerned only specific groups of artifacts, such as the Egyptian and Roman collections, reorganized in 1994 and 1996, respectively. In September 1999 an earthquake damaged the museum, an event which set in motion the process of designing a new display. A first large-scale rearrangement, which took place the following year, affected the Stathatos Collection, a group of nearly a thousand objects

195 “Most of [the sculptures] are originals, authentic Greek works … they are not copies like those which were mechanically carved during the years of the Roman conquest when creative spirit had declined and the feeling for the organic rhythm of the human body had died away” (Karouzou, National Museum, xvii-xviii).
dating from the fifth millennium BC to post-Byzantine times donated to the museum in 1957 by the collector Helen Stathatos, who had also curated its first display. The whole museum eventually closed for renovation in 2002, as more revisions were decided and executed in anticipation of the 2004 Olympic Games, celebrated in Athens. Once again, the Prehistoric and Sculpture Collections were the first to be shown, just in time for the Games. The Vase and Bronze Collections reopened the following year, while it was necessary to wait until 2008 for the Stathatos and Egyptian Collections to go back on display. Meanwhile, the transfer of the Numismatic Museum to the Ilion Metatron, Schliemann's Athenian mansion, freed up eight rooms where a group of small collections (terracotta figurines, gold jewelry, glass vessels, the Vlastos-Serpieris Collection, and the Cypriote Collection) could be exhibited for the first time.

6.4. The new arrangement of the sculpture galleries

Today the area occupied by the museum is delimited by Patision, Vasíleos Irakleíou, Bouboulínas and Tosítas streets. A spacious open area surrounds the building, separating it from the bordering constructions and marking it at first sight as an atypical space (fig. 6.13). Like many Greek institutions, the National Museum is open on weekdays (except Monday) until 3 p.m. Some sections of the exhibit are accessible only for part of the year, remaining closed to the public during winter. Guards are posted at all accesses to the exhibit and in many galleries, at least the ones which constitute the main itinerary. In addition to the regulations common to all museums, visitors are not allowed
to take photographs of other people. The prescription seems the basis for another rule enforced inside the museum, the prohibition against posing with the artifacts.

In its general arrangement, the exhibit maintains the traditional division into four major collections (fig. 6.14). Within each collection, chronology remains the primary organizing principle, while typology has been largely abandoned. Even if some groupings by category, by theme, or by site are recognizable, they are more likely to be dictated by aesthetic and practical considerations than by a classificatory intent.

In the older main wing of the museum, the layout of the ground floor resembles a fork with three prongs. The central one is represented by the prehistoric galleries, located right opposite the main entrance (room 2). Prominence is given to the Mycenaean age, to which the wider central hall (4) is dedicated. Visitors who choose to proceed forward encounter first the rich finds from the Grave Circles at Mycenae (fig. 6.15), which, together with the artifacts retrieved in the tholoi, in the chamber tombs and on the citadel, constitute the spine of the gallery. Around the middle cases are discoveries from other important Mycenaean centers in the Peloponnese, while one of the side rooms (3) contains objects from sites outside the peninsula. Despite their chronological primacy, the finds from the Neolithic and Bronze Age and from the Cycladic period are kept in two other smaller side rooms, 5 and 6 (fig. 6.16).

On either side of the entrance hall, a gateway preceded by two columns leads into the sculpture galleries, which occupy the perimeter of the original building. The exhibit is arranged chronologically, starting with the “Daedalic” style in the room left of the entrance and ending with Late Antiquity in the one on the right. The galleries are divided into a primary outer band and a secondary inner one. Space within the main ring is
organized in two different ways. The western and eastern sides consist of two series of three rooms each flanking a central area. The artifacts in each room are laid out around one or two selected works situated left of the entrance, provided that one follows the recommended path; some rooms have two objects, pairs, or groups of artifacts, positioned at the opposite sides of the doorway, which serve as focal points. The northern and southern sides are instead formed by two long halls connected by a smaller, roughly square room. Once again, one or more pieces are singled out and placed along the axis of each hall, while clusters of artifacts of a single type, such as kouroi, stelai, or reliefs, stand near the walls. Some unique works occupy special positions, for example near the turn of a corner. Low barriers surround a few important statues, especially the bronzes, the smaller pieces are kept in showcases, and the presence of the guards helps to prevent accidents and mischief. Most large sculptures, even very famous ones, are nonetheless displayed without visible protection. The rooms are very spacious, however, so accidental contact is easy to avoid, although they tend to become more crowded with artifacts as one goes forward in time.

One of the principles underlying the exhibit is that a visitor, especially if pressed for time, should be able to observe the development of ancient Greek civilization by seeing the sculpture galleries alone. As a result, they represent the only section of the museum which displays artifacts belonging in theory to other departments, primarily vases.

As a general rule, the contents of each room are revealed progressively to the visitor as he or she advances. For instance, the objects which form the focus of the display in the rooms on the western and eastern sides cannot be seen from outside, but
become visible only as one enters. Similarly, in the long halls on the northern and southern sides, the choice pieces are placed in a row, so that visitors cannot embrace all of them together, but they have to move around each one to obtain a full view of the next, paying close attention to its features in doing so. Moreover, the doorways on each side of the ring are all aligned, too, and their succession often frames one or more artifacts, as if to entice visitors and persuade them to come forward.

The deep perspectives are reinforced by the lack of doors between the rooms, although the presence of holes on the doorposts may indicate that some kind of obstruction existed in the past. Today, the only visible barriers are double doors which separate each half of the sculpture galleries from the entrance hall and from room 21, their midpoint. The doors, however, are kept wide open during the opening hours of the museum and would not block the view even if they were not. In fact, they are notable for their very light framework, consisting of metal bars which form a motif of stars within squares, with nothing in between.

Thus, even before entering the “Daedalic” gallery (7), visitors are able not only to see the torso from Sounion (inv. 3645) and the kouros from Thera (inv. 8) shown in room 8, but also to extend their gaze all the way into room 13, where it meets the kouros from Kea (inv. 3686 [fig. 6.17]). The contents of room 7 itself are not visible from the entrance hall. As soon as people go through the doorway, however, they are greeted by the Kore of Nikandre, standing in the center of the room, to their left (fig. 6.18); the Dipylon Amphora is displayed in front of it (fig. 6.19). Both works are surrounded by an ensemble of similar artifacts; a group of “Daedalic” sculptures accompanies the Kore, while cases with smaller Geometric pottery flank the Amphora.
The itinerary then continues with the rooms devoted to Archaic sculpture (8-13), which comprise the whole northwest section of the circuit. The main attraction of room 8 is the colossal *kouros* from Sounion (inv. 2720) which, once again, becomes visible on the left as visitors enter. Around it are three pairs of artifacts (two sculpted bases, two Protoattic vessels, and two smaller *kouroi* facing each other, one being the already mentioned statue from Thera) arranged symmetrically against the curve of the wall.

The next room in the outer circuit, room 11, offers no preview of its contents to people in the entrance hall. Three notable works become visible as it is approached from room 8: a *kouros* from Melos (inv. 1558) on the right, the *kouros* of Volomandra on the left of the doorway to room 13, and the Nike of Archermos on the right of it (fig. 6.20). Only when its threshold is crossed, however, the room reveals its most famed residents, the statue of Phrasikleia and the *kouros* which accompanied it (fig. 6.21). Apart from the *kouroi* and the Nike just mentioned, the two sculptures are accompanied by several reliefs and by two sphinxes (inv. 28, 76), arranged symmetrically around them as the objects in the previous room.

Room 13 is the first long hall encountered by visitors who follow the recommended path. As said, the *kouros* from Kea can be noticed already from the entrance hall, while the *kouros* of Anavysos, located near it, comes into view as one enters (fig. 6.22). Turning the corner reveals two rows of artifacts. Larger sculptures, like the two *kouroi* already mentioned and a third incomplete male statue from the sanctuary of Ptoan Apollo (inv. 20), and inscribed bases are lined up against the northern wall, facing a group of smaller statues. Their disposition directs the gaze towards the chief piece displayed here, the *kouros* of Aristodikos, standing alone in the middle of the hall, towards its far end. Its
setting against a white screen, which conceals the rest of the northern wing and the artifacts in it, signifies its prominence as the culmination of what has been shown up to that point (fig. 6.23). If one glances to the left while entering room 13, it is possible to notice two of the objects (a colossal torso and a quadruped behind it) housed in room 12, which forms the corner of the building (fig. 6.24); other pieces are set along the walls of the room, which is closed to the public during winter, and can be seen only at a closer distance from it.

The hall in the center of the northern side (14) serves as a junction with the quarter dedicated to the Classical period. The monumental focus of the room is less clear in comparison with the previous galleries; the first view visitors obtain of it after going around the screen in room 13 is a group of miscellaneous objects (inv. 4809, 1605, 39, 11761 [fig. 6.25]). A number of finds from the sanctuary of Aphaia on Aegina are displayed here, but they occupy only one side of the room and cannot be seen from the halls flanking it (fig. 6.26); they directly face the doorway leading to room 10, though. In general, room 14 looks like a genuine transitional space. A reason for the arrangement could be the need to keep the visitors' attention on the second long hall (room 15), which introduces the next section of the sculpture galleries.

This part of the museum begins with a series of works of the “Severe Style.” Instead of being placed on a single row, the most significant artifacts are disposed according to a schema 2-1-2-1 (figs. 6.27-28). The single elements are represented by the Zeus from Artemision and by the relief from Eleusis with Demeter, Persephone, and Triptolemos (inv. 126), both visible from room 14. As for the couples, the first is composed by the disc fragment from Melos (inv. 3990) and the relief with the athlete
crowning himself (inv. 3344), while the second includes the “Omphalos Apollo” (inv. 45) and the young *Splanchnoptes* (inv. 248); only the latter can be seen from the preceding room.

On turning the second corner, visitors are able to see through the whole eastern side of the sculpture galleries. As on the other sides, all the doorways are situated on the same line. A single work, usually a relief, is visible between one doorway and the next, creating a less monotonous sight (fig. 6.29). The exception is represented by the very first room (16), dedicated to late fifth-century funerary sculpture. Its representative piece is the large stone *lekythos* that commemorates Myrrhine (inv. 4485). Two other objects of the same type (inv. 815, 2584) become visible behind it as one arrives from room 15, and the trio is surrounded by funerary reliefs (fig. 6.30). Two stelai (inv. 1861, 3845) on the opposite end of the entrance balance the *lekythoi*, creating once again a symmetrical composition (fig. 6.31).

The next room (17) houses sculptures from the Argive Heraion and other dedications. It is introduced by a double-faced relief (inv. 1783), which can be seen from room 15. As soon as one goes beyond the *lekythos* of Myrrhine, the view opens on a group of works, including a small statue of Persephone (inv. 176), a head of Hera (inv. 1571), a votive relief from Mantinea (inv. 226) and other reliefs (fig. 6.32). Once inside the room, the visitor's eye is attracted by two pairs of statues, an armed Aphrodite and a Hermes (inv. 262, 243) to the east (fig. 6.33), a youth from Rhamnous and a seated woman (inv. 199, 3410) to the west (fig. 6.34). From here it is possible to enter room 19 on the inner side of the ring, with the doorway framing a female torso (inv. 228). This room and the adjacent room 20 display Roman copies of Classical works.
Like room 16, room 18 is devoted to funerary monuments, namely, flat reliefs and naiskoi dating to the early fourth century. The central piece, which can be viewed from room 15, is the stele of Hegeso (inv. 3624), on which a semicircle of similar objects converges; in particular, one other stele (inv. 726), with a depiction very like the first, is the second artifact to come into view, thus strengthening the theme of the room (fig. 6.35). That the area is conceived as a mirror to room 16 is revealed by the use of yet another funerary stone lekythos (inv. 835) as focus of the secondary half of the room, the one on the right of the entrance from room 17 (fig. 6.36).

As mentioned above, the midpoint of the sequence is represented by room 21, which is also in axis with the entrance and the prehistoric section, although it cannot be reached from it under normal circumstances (there is a passage, but it is closed by a door). This room stands out for its intrinsic features, such as its red-colored walls, which contrast sharply with the light tones used in the rest of the sculpture galleries (fig. 6.37). Its significance is further stressed by the connection with room 34, set up as an open-air sanctuary, where a marble altar lies in the center, surrounded by votive reliefs; the staircase leading to the upper floor rises immediately beyond, and normal visitors can reach it only from this area (fig. 6.38). A third peculiarity of room 21 is that it breaks the chronological order, since it houses selected works from different periods. On entering from room 18, visitors see on their right the statue of an athlete from Eleusis (inv. 254), the Diadoumenos (inv. 1826), the Aphrodite restored by Canova (inv. 3524), and an image of Artemis of the Versailles type (inv. 2567). On the far left are two statues of Hermes (inv. 240, 241), the first of which comes from Atalanti, and another representation of Artemis (inv. 1829). The fulcrum of the display, however, is the bronze
Artemision Jockey, which is not visible from outside the room, but appears as the point of convergence of the other works as soon as the doorway is crossed (fig. 6.39). Moreover, the Jockey, the altar in the center of room 34, and the staircase are on the same line when seen from the midpoint of the western side, where the door to the prehistoric gallery is located (fig. 6.40).

The ring of rooms then continues along the southern half of the museum, where one first encounters the finds from the temple of Asklepios at Epidaurus (room 22), most notably the pediments. Given the nature of the artifacts exhibited here, the room differs from the neighboring ones in arrangement. The ideal of symmetry is maintained by placing the sculptures near its eastern and western walls, but no outstanding works occupy its central section (fig. 6.41). Therefore, visitors do not receive preliminary information about the contents of the room while outside it. Once inside, however, they are able to freely survey the pediments simply by standing in the center of the room or passing through it, although they can move closer if they wish, of course.

Rooms 23 and 24 complete the zone of the museum dedicated to funerary sculpture. There is clearly a spatial and compositional relationship between them and the galleries on the other side of room 21. In fact, their arrangement relies on the same elements and general scheme, but they show enough variation to conserve a distinct character. Room 23 resembles room 18 in having a funerary stele, made for Panaitios (inv. 884), as its focal piece, with an arc of other stelai surrounding it. This main nucleus of artifacts, however, also includes three marble lekythoi (fig. 6.42); such objects, in other words, do not form a counterpart to the stelai, as in room 18. The role is instead given to two Sirens (inv. 774, 2589), which also frame the entrance to room 25, as well as another
relief visible through it (fig. 6.43).

As for room 24, it evidently matches room 16, situated at the opposite end of the line of rooms. Large stone vessels once again are placed in the center, while figurative works serve as counterparts to them. The former comprise a lebes-kalpe, reconstructed from more pieces (inv. 3619-3620, 3626a-b), which introduces the room in the perspective from room 15 (fig. 6.44), a marble lekythos (inv. 1055), and a loutrophoros of the same material (inv. 954 [fig. 6.45]). Prominent among the latter is a pair of crouched Skythians (inv. 823, 824), originally part of a single monument located in the Kerameikos (fig. 6.46). The inner side of the sculpture galleries is accessible from this room, too, and the entrance in this case opens on a pair of columnar reliefs (fig. 6.47). Finally, two lions flanking the doorway on the southern side of the room warn visitors that they have reached a critical juncture.

A funerary relief from Larisa Station (inv. 4464) introduces visitors to room 28, the third long hall in the sculpture galleries, and marks the endpoint of the visual line that traverses their eastern side. As one advances, two statues, a female (inv. 709) and a male in armor (inv. 3688), are revealed (fig. 6.48). Turning to the left, people can enjoy the imposing sight of the large funerary naiskos of Aristonautes (inv. 738) and of the two reliefs which flank it (inv. 833, 1005 [fig. 6.49]). The eye is then attracted by two bronze images, the athlete from the sea at Marathon and particularly the youth from Antikythera, which introduces a row of statues in perspective (figs. 6.50-51). No screens block the view into room 29, with which the section on Hellenistic sculpture begins.

The middle gallery on the southern side also differs from its northern counterpart, room 14, in that it features a central piece visible from the previous room, namely, the
statue of Themis from Rhamnous (inv. 231 [fig. 6.52]). Other notable finds are displayed here, such as the remains of a bronze statue of a philosopher from the Antikythera shipwreck, or the fragments of the cult image from the temple of Despoina at Lykosoura. The artifacts, however, do not show the regularity that characterizes other sections of the exhibit, and the room manifests a transitional character. The fourth and last long hall (room 30) is also dedicated to Hellenistic sculpture. Its first half is centered on an image of Poseidon (inv. 235), situated on the same axis as the Themis and the Antikythera youth (fig. 6.53). After passing it, as visitors prepare to turn the last corner, they can embrace several large works, including the group of Aphrodite and Pan, on the right of the doorway to room 31, a relief with Dionysus (inv. 3727), the wounded Gaul (inv. 247), and an equestrian statue (inv. 2715 [fig. 6.54]).

The last three rooms of the circuit (31-33) are dedicated to the sculptures of the Roman period. They appear more crowded than the previous galleries, although the works housed in them are displayed according to the same principles of order and symmetry. Moreover, no monuments are singled out to be viewed in perspective through the doorways (fig. 6.55). The arrangement of room 31 revolves around a bronze torso of Augustus (inv. X23322), standing on the left as one enters (fig. 6.56); the statue of a youth (inv. 244) at the left end of the room provides a secondary focal point. The opposite end is occupied by a group of three naiskoi between two statues, depicting a youth wearing a chlamys (inv. 4476) and a woman dressed in a peplos (inv. 3890 [fig. 6.57]). A colossal statue of the emperor Claudius (inv. 1759) guards the entrance to room 32.

The middle gallery has at its center not a single work, but a triangle formed by a statue of a striding youth (inv. 246), a table support decorated with a Dionysian group
(inv. 5706), and at its top the reclining figure of the sleeping Maenad (inv. 261) which occupied the center of room VIII in the pre-World War II exhibit. Near the wall behind it is a statue of Asklepios (inv. 263), placed between two lines of busts and portraits which follow the curve of the room (fig. 6.58). Finally, room 33 employs yet another scheme, deriving its visual efficacy from two groups of artifacts located on the opposite sides of the walking path and linked to each other in a chiastic disposition. Two smaller statues on the left, which show Isis and a priestess (inv. 1617, 1793), frame the large couch sarcophagus behind them (inv. 1497), while on the right two larger works, representing a youth and a woman (inv. 2779, 207), stand before a bench supporting a line of statuettes (figs. 6.59-60).

Besides being characterized by a symmetrical division, the circuit of the sculpture galleries can be also seen as a set of components, each of which appears spatially self-contained, like the prehistoric gallery. Archaic sculpture, for example, is contained within a compact block of galleries between rooms 2 and 14. The Classical collections are similarly delimited by rooms 14, 21, 29, and 39, and the Hellenistic and Roman ones by rooms 29 and 2. As if to reinforce the linearity of the display, most rooms have only two entrances, located on opposite sides; room 21, which allows passage in multiple directions, is the exception. Some areas, such as rooms 19, 20, and 25, which occupy the inner side of the quadrangle, show just one access; they are among the sections of the museum closed to the public during the winter.
6.5. The other collections

Rooms 21 and 34 also constitute a bottleneck on the way to the smaller collections of the museum, exhibited in its more recent NE wing. In order to reach them, visitors have to cross at least one half of the sculpture galleries, including the two focal points. An alternative way exists which allows visitors to reach room 39 from room 16, but it still requires them to take a shorter route through the Classical sculpture section or a longer one through the Archaic sculpture section. Nesting seems to be the organizing principle of the northeast wing. The galleries dedicated to the small bronzes (36-39), where the finds appear to be arranged mostly by site, are located on its inner side and can be entered from rooms 16 and 35 (access from outside to room 39 is reserved to disabled persons). They in turn provide access to the Egyptian collection (40-41), which returns to a chronological disposition. Finally, from room 41 one can visit the Stathatos collection (42) and reach the SE section of the ground floor (43-48), used for temporary exhibitions and for lectures; once again, a shorter route through rooms 21 and 34 is available.

The upper floor, like the ground floor, is divided into three prongs. From the stairs one can go straight to the rest of the Prehistoric Collection, consisting of the finds from Thera (48). Alternatively, he or she can turn left or right to the other sections dedicated to the Greek and Roman periods, namely, the Vase Collection and the former numismatic wing, which now houses the collections of minor objects (49-56).

Like the sculptures, the vases are arranged in chronological order, and one can theoretically see them starting either with the oldest artifacts or with the newest. In this section, too, rooms have generally two exits on opposite sides. Artifacts illustrating the
creation and decoration of vases introduce the collection proper, which opens with Protogeometric and Middle Geometric pottery (49-50), followed by Late Geometric, Orientalizing and Protocorinthian pottery (50). Room 51 brings Athens fully under the spotlight, showing Protoattic and early black-figure vases. A partially thematic arrangement characterizes the next room (52), which houses black-figure and decorated pottery from various sanctuaries. The exhibit then documents the culmination of black-figure and the contemporary production from other areas (Eubea, Corinth, Etruria, Ionia). In room 54 visitors can observe the beginnings of the red-figure technique. Room 55 is devoted to the ceramic output of the mature fifth century, including the white-ground lekythoi. Finally, room 56 illustrates the last century of Attic vase-painting, showing both red-figure and late black-figure vases, primarily Panathenaic amphorae, together with minor classes of red-figure pottery (Corinthian, Laconian, Boeotian). Also located in this room are groups of vases with images pertaining to specific themes, such as children or athletics.

The most recent guide to the museum\textsuperscript{196} describes the small collection wing beginning with room 62, where the gold jewelry is exhibited. From a topographical perspective, however, the entrance to it is represented by two rooms (58-59) dedicated to terracotta figurines, which come immediately after in the book. While the first room serves to illustrate the evolution of the craft by showing examples in chronological order, the other displays a collection of pieces from Myrina, donated to the museum by Ioannis Misthos in 1884. The guide then continues with the gallery containing the glass vessels (63), which are grouped by excavation site or, for isolated finds and donations, according to shape and production technique. The criterion followed in the book seems to be the

\textsuperscript{196} Nikolaos Kaltsas, \textit{National Archaeological Museum} (Athens, 2010).
date of accession of the various collections, since the next one presented is the Vlastos-Serpieris collection, on display in rooms 60 and 61. It consists of about 450 works, dating from 3000 to the early third century BC, acquired by Michael Vlastos and transferred to the Greek state in 1988 by the family of his son-in-law Ioannis Serpieris. The majority of the objects comes from Greece, but a group of them was found in Tarentum. Finally, room 64 is reserved for the Cypriot Collection, which was enhanced in 2009 through a long-term loan of a series of artifacts from the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia.

6.6. The National Museum as symbol

The staff of the National Museum emphasizes its accessibility and its capacity to speak to visitors. Its primary purpose is to give them a basic understanding of ancient Greek art and archaeology, especially through the tour of the sculpture galleries, keeping in mind that people are often in a hurry and that no one can become an expert in the subject after just one visit to the collections. The attempt to make the most of the time available to visitors is the stated reason why certain selected works are set up in the middle of each room. Indeed, the works are offered to public scrutiny in a clean state, without modern visual embellishments; everyone can approach them from their own unique background and be enriched in some way by them. Labels and general panels are present if more information is desired, but they should not hinder the experience of the artifacts. The visit to the museum is supposed to be a face-to-face exchange between the visitor and the objects. In this sense, the way the institution presents itself is consistent
with the road traced by Karouzos and his wife.

Even the possibility of visiting the sculpture galleries in reverse order, starting with Roman pieces instead of “Daedalic” ones, could be considered an expression of openness. Although not endorsed by the museum staff, the alternative itinerary is at least acknowledged silently; guards at the entrance to the Roman galleries allow visitors to pass after checking their tickets, rather than sending them towards the Mycenaean or the “Daedalic” galleries. Above all, the position of some sculptures and the layout of various rooms assume a view from the “wrong” direction, or at least they can be seen with ease when walking “backwards.” For example, because of the symmetrical arrangement of the rooms on the western and eastern sides of the ring, visitors going through them in reverse see their contents in a different order, and find the most important sculptures on their right as they enter each room instead of their left, but nothing seems out of place otherwise. In some cases, the difference is more striking, as with the double relief in room 17, since the image people actually see depends on the direction from which way they are coming.

Some of the arrangements in the long halls have a similar effect. The equestrian statue in room 30, for instance, plays the same role as the kouros from Kea in room 13, providing a focal point for visitors standing in the entrance hall (fig. 6.61). In room 13, furthermore, the torso from the Ilissos (inv. 3687), located on the other side of the screen behind the kouros of Aristodikos, requires an approach from the west to be seen frontally (fig. 6.62). A third case is represented by the three reliefs on the eastern end of room 28, on which the eye falls directly if someone comes from room 29, but only after passing the youth from Antikythera (fig. 6.63). The last example shows that the two itineraries
through the sculpture galleries are not on an equal footing after all. Especially in the long halls, many important pieces are seen from the back when approached in reverse order, suggesting that the path being followed is not the recommended one. Choices such as the installation of the Ilissos torso could perhaps have been motivated by the intention to avoid an abrupt blank space if someone happens to arrive from the “wrong” side.

The seemingly ambiguous character of the sculpture galleries emerges even more clearly if one compares it with the arrangement of the vase collection on the upper floor. Although no physical barriers prevent visitors from going backwards through the pottery section, either, a noticeable effort is made to discourage such behavior. The chronological linearity is even more pronounced than on the ground floor, and the direction of the itinerary is clearly marked by signs. Moreover, attempts to take the reverse path are clearly not expected by the personnel on duty, who is quick to point visitors to the “right” direction.

The prehistoric collections form a self-contained complex with its own visual structure and focal points. The plans of the museum usually show a passage between the Mycenaean gallery and room 21, which seems to place further emphasis on the central location of the latter. As we saw, however, the path is blocked by a heavy door and is not normally accessible; the door itself is covered by a line of cases full of Mycenaean luxury items for people in the entrance hall, and several turns around them are necessary just to notice it (fig. 6.64).

All these architectural and visual cues indicate that, even as it strives to welcome visitors from different backgrounds, the National Museum firmly asserts a specific identity. In fact, one of the assumptions of the exhibit is that the story it has to tell has a
universal relevance precisely because of its Greek roots. Through their spatial disposition, the three major components of the display (prehistoric wing, sculpture galleries, and ceramic section) aid one another in transmitting a coherent message. Their ideal convergence on room 21, the selection of artifacts displayed in the room itself, and their arrangement suggest strongly that Classical sculpture is an artistic and cultural pinnacle, the touchstone by which all other intellectual expressions, both inside and outside the museum, are to be measured. Whether one goes forward or backwards in time to reach it does not seem to matter, although the first path is clearly privileged.

The atmosphere of order and regularity that characterizes the exhibit, particularly the sculpture collection, is the medium through which the message reverberates. Although perspective and progressive revealing are widely employed, as at Palazzo Altemps, they seem designed to prepare visitors for the harmonious beauty they are soon to experience rather than to surprise them. Once inside a room, the symmetry that pervades it leaves very little to personal interpretation. The architecture, itself inspired by principles of symmetry, facilitates the contemplation of the works, but it is not supposed to interfere with it. After going through each doorway, visitors are invited to concentrate on the artifacts, not on the space that contains them. The only possible way to avoid taking part in the celebration of Classical beauty would be to limit the stay to the prehistoric section. Such a choice, however, leads visitors to a dead end, no matter how dignified.

The need on the visitor's part to approach the objects with a cultivated and respectful attitude to benefit from the display distinguishes the museum from other institutions of national scope like Palazzo Altemps. In the latter, visitors can appreciate
the display just by allowing themselves to be surprised at every turn. Of course, the more they are educated and able to recognize the references and the associations between the works, their subjects, the choices and assumptions underlying their restoring and displaying, and the vicissitudes of the Altemps family, the higher their potential enjoyment. The National Museum, in contrast, bases its communication on the parable of ancient Greek art reflected in the history of the nation, which need to remain clear and unequivocal to be effective. Even the most casual visitors are expected to open their mind to this source of spiritual elevation.

The respectful attitude that visitors are encouraged to maintain inside the National Museum has been described most vividly by Yannis Hamilakis in his recent book *The Nation and Its Ruins*. In his view, antiquities in Greece are treated as a “sacred symbolic capital” and used to promote a “national pedagogy.” The task of museums in such a context is to function as “temples of the nation.” The phrase designates the setting for a perpetual retelling of an established, immutable history, a framework that has influenced certain features of museum displays in Greece, such as linearity and chronological order. The artifacts themselves, as witnesses to the truthfulness of the account, have come to enjoy a very high degree of respect, bordering on religious piety.\(^{197}\) The expressions which Kastriotis and Seferis used to praise the National Museum are just two examples of this peculiar relationship with the past.

Before denouncing such stances as a sign of nationalistic excess, it is important to note, as Hamilakis himself does elsewhere, that they developed as a reaction to an equally unconditional narrative imposed on Greece from outside.\(^{198}\) Today, the National Museum

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\(^{198}\) Yannis Hamilakis, “Decolonizing Greek Archaeology: Indigenous Archaeologies, Modernist
is showing the effects of a long phase of reinterpretation. During a visit in January 2011, I was told by a member of its staff, Alexandra Christopoulou, that its importance in the construction of contemporary Greek identity has diminished, especially after the task of acting as repositories for finds from excavations began to fall more and more on local museums, starting in the 1960s. However, when asked about the relationship between the museum and the nearby Polytechnic, and the risk that the former could become a target for the discontent expressed in the banners and the graffiti which habitually adorn the latter, Dr. Christopoulou replied that the institution has been always respected by protestors. One wonders, then, to what degree the presentation of the past is still able to influence opinions and actions on current issues in the country.

Finally, one must not forget that the balanced appearance of the exhibit is the end product of a long development, which passed through several stages of greater and greater tidiness. Only as more space became available, and especially when the museum had to get back on its feet after World War II, did the sculpture collection acquire the central role it plays today. Truly, the National Museum came to occupy a central place in the national sentiment much earlier, and even in the first decades of its life, when the galleries were more crowded, efforts were made to maintain a balanced and orderly appearance. The symmetrical arrangement of the ground floor, however, is a new construction, albeit one that builds on previous ideas and acts as a distilled image of the process through which modern Greece found its supposed roots.

Archaeology and the Post-colonial Critique,” in Damaskos and Plantzos, A Singular Antiquity, 279-280.
CHAPTER 7
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, NAFPLIO

As mentioned in the chapter on Greek legislation, the Nafplio Museum was among the institutions established during the wave of museum building that swept Greece during the first decade of the twentieth century. It was also only one of two that was housed in an already existing building, the Vouleftiko, an eighteenth-century mosque that had been converted into an assembly space by the revolutionary government.199

Some time after its constitution (early 1930s, perhaps 1933, according to Evangelia Pappi, the curator), the museum was moved to a three-story building that occupies one short side of Plateia Syntagmatos (Constitution Square), the main square in the old city (fig. 7.1); the offices of the local Ephorate are also housed there. The structure was erected in 1713, during the second period of Venetian rule in the Peloponnese, when Agostino Sagredo was in charge of the area, and was originally used as barracks. The only guide in English referring to the old display, prepared by Petros Themelis and published probably in the 1980s, contains only some basic information about the museum and its highlights, as well as several pictures of them, but it does not say anything about the arrangement of the objects.200

The display occupied the same spaces as today, two floors on the right side of the building, each divided longitudinally into two sections by a series of arches. According to

199 Gazi, ““Artfully Classified,”” 68.
200 Petros G. Themelis, Nauplion. The City and the Museum. Tiryns (Athens, [1980s]).
Pappi, it included finds from Mycenae and from all Argolis, except for Argos itself and the Asklepieion at Epidauros, as well as objects from collections. The exhibit consisted mostly of pottery, disposed in chronological order, a design which made it very useful for students, less so for other categories of visitors. The labels did not indicate the provenience of the objects, and were generally very short; no information panels seem to have been in use. Some assemblages were kept together, such as the *tholos* tomb at Kazarma, dug in the 1970s, but linking the artifacts to their context was not the main concern of the museum. Most of them were placed in wooden cases situated along the center of the aisles, while some larger isolated vases stood on low pedestals set down to the side, sometimes under the arches (figs. 7.2-3). In any case, the objects usually stayed away from the walls, which were left almost completely bare. Sunlight apparently represented the main source of illumination, if not the only one.

The museum remained closed from 2003 to March 2009 for renovation. Its opening hours are essentially the same as those of most Greek public museums, which means visits end in the early afternoon, at 3 p.m. During the summer, however, it can be accessed until late afternoon-early evening; the admission fee is very affordable. Unfortunately, if Themelis's guide is not very useful to learn something about the previous look of the museum, no guidebook at all is yet available for the renovated structure, a problem visitors mention quite frequently in their comments.

The approach adopted in the rearranged exhibit is diametrically opposite to the one which characterized the old display. The cases are lined along the walls and near or against the piers of the arches, while their undersides and the aisles are generally left free from objects – with one notable exception. Among the regular cases are several groups of
artifacts left without barriers, as if they were flowing out of the blocked spaces; Pappi
would have liked to apply the same treatment to the whole exhibit, but compromises had
to be made for the sake of security. Although chronology remains the basic principle for
the arrangement of the collections, materials from each period are grouped by site and,
when possible, by assemblage. The labels, in Greek and English, reinforce the emphasis
on context by including data about provenience, and many large information panels
discuss aspects of the archaeology of the region in more depth. The boards provide a
background for the artifacts in the literal sense of the word, as they are placed behind
them, often within the cases themselves. The panels and other visual accoutrements add a
greater variety of colors to the whole. The intent, according to Pappi, is to help visitors
feel comfortable without obscuring the artifacts. As for lighting, natural illumination has
been largely replaced by rows of spotlights lined along the central section of the ceiling
on each aisle (fig. 7.4); sunlight from the windows is not totally blocked, but filtered.

On both floors, the chronological arrangement of the artifacts suggests a U-shaped
visiting path, but on the lower floor one can also turn left from the entrance and follow
the path inversely. It is also possible to decide on which floor to start. On the lower floor,
the right section (fig. 7.5) is dedicated to the Neolithic period, with a special emphasis on
Franchthi Cave (fig. 7.6), and to the Early and Middle Helladic (Asine, Berbati). A
screen, situated right opposite the entrance, displays views and reconstructions of
Mycenae and Tiryns, but the projector is turned off during the winter (fig. 7.7). A
fragment of plaster floor from the latter site is placed before the screen, near its bottom.
The opposite end (fig. 7.8) offers a giant image of the cave, with an interesting summary
of the stratigraphy, but it is harder to notice, since one has to turn around after entering.
Thus, by the time they turn the corner, visitors have already directed their attention to the Mycenaean period, with which the left wing deals. The finds on display pertain mostly to cemeteries in the area. The second half of the gallery begins with two cases, one against the wall opposite the archway people have to cross, and one on their right side as they approach the first (fig. 7.9). Their arrangement may not seem visually harmonious, but it is necessary to offer a clear view to someone coming from the corridor through the left entrance (fig. 7.10). Both ends of the left section are highlighted by giant pictures, which serve as background for displays on religion and on the Kazarma tholos tomb (figs. 7.11-12), while side cases are dedicated to finds from various Mycenaean cemeteries (Nafplio, Asine, Dendra, Palaia Epidaurus) and to the funerary cult in general.

Particularly conspicuous is a case with the finds from the “Cuirass Tomb” at Dendra, the only one located under an archway. It can be seen from both wings and thus receives a good look as soon as one enters, whichever direction they choose, and another as one is about to leave for the second floor (figs. 7.13-14); the position of the accompanying artifacts, however, suggests that the ensemble is meant to be seen primarily as an element of the Mycenaean section. The central location of the case is motivated not only by the quality, the rarity, and the archaeological importance of the assemblage, but also by serious practical constraints. The panoply, in fact, had to be housed in a container with an anti-seismic base, which increased its weight considerably and forced its placement in a position where some architectural support was available. The technical requirements, however, have been smoothly integrated into the exhibit by making the assemblage the center of a section on warfare and hunting. A case with pertinent finds is located nearby (fig. 7.15), preparing visitors for the full appreciation of
the main piece.

Along the corridor linking the two flights of steps are rows of pictures of excavations taken by the photographer Nikolaos Tombazis (1898-1986); more pictures are hung around the landing of the upper floor. Just to the left of the landing is a multimedia room, where a computer runs an application about the armor from Dendra (probably to be used by docents, not by visitors); cubic seats work as pieces of a giant puzzle of an Attic vase.

On the upper floor, the focal point for the right section is a row of seventh-century terracotta masks from Tiryns, placed on a red band over a white background (fig. 7.16); there is nothing on the back end. The wing is dedicated to the Iron Age, with most materials coming from the cemeteries of Tiryns and Asine. Two cases on the left deal with the development of the Geometric style (three amphorae, one Sub-Mycenaean, one Middle Geometric, and one Late Geometric [fig. 7.17]) and with the votive shields from Tiryns (fig. 7.18); the cases have screens with relevant images as background, so that explanatory text and visual evidence are offered together. The other cases are organized thematically (religion, death).

The left section begins with materials from ancient Hermione, particularly Attic and Hellenistic pottery and terracottas. Unlike the corresponding corner on the lower floor, which suits a frontal view better than a lateral one, here the artifacts are arranged to meet the visitors' gaze as they turn left after seeing the previous section (fig. 7.19). Most cases in the aisle deal with specific sites, such as Halieis, Epidauros, and Asine, rather than overarching themes; a separate space is reserved for the materials from the sixth-century AD farmstead established at Pyrgouthi over the ruins of a Hellenistic tower (fig. 7.20).
The exception is the last part of the exhibit, located at the very end of the wing, which deals with collecting. Separate cases are reserved for vases and terracottas from old collections.

As on the lower floor, both ends of the aisle are covered with giant pictures related to the objects placed there. The finds from Hermione have a photograph of the site as their background, while the artifacts from collections are displayed against a reproduction of an old manuscript inventory, complete with drawings (figs. 7.20-21). The section on Pyrgouthi, too, is graced by an enlarged picture of the remains of the tower. Looking closely, one notices that the finds are not only carefully arranged, with the larger vessels in the open air on the sides, and the smaller artifacts encased in the center, but they are placed at the same level of the floor of the structure in the image (fig. 7.22). The disposition creates an impression of dynamism, as if the artifacts were bursting out of the picture, and reaffirms once again the link between the objects and their find context.

The materials exhibited in the left wing are arranged in a roughly symmetrical disposition. In the corner left of the entrance, where the section on collecting is located, the placement of the artifacts in the cases offers a frontal view if visitors move towards them from the opposite end of the hallway, but not if they arrive directly from the entrance to the floor. The cases leave plenty of space to go by, however, so that one can decide to turn and go around the floor in reverse, although the attraction generated by the visual cues in the right section, especially the panel with the masks, makes such a choice less immediate. Nevertheless, looking at the materials from collections first offers an alternative and unexpected introduction to the remaining cases dedicated to the Classical period (fig. 7.23).
As an institution meant to promote the cultural heritage of what was, after all, the first capital of independent Greece and of its environs, which happen to include the heartland of Mycenaean civilization, the museum of Nafplio could seem, at first sight, relatively modest. The impression is due to the fact that the display must fit a rather small area, in a building which was erected for a wholly different purpose, and has to be shared with the offices of the Ephorate. According to Pappi, no relocation to a larger venue is to be expected any time soon. The range of the collections represents another factor that can determine how the exhibit is perceived. Despite being rich and scientifically valuable, they include more or less the same types of materials as other provincial establishments, given that the most spectacular finds from the region, with the exception of the cuirass and a few others, went to form one key section of the National Museum in Athens.

However, the apparent simplicity of the display has its positive aspects, too. First, the expectations of the public may not be as high as those which a first-rank institution must meet, and the margin for visitors to remain pleasantly surprised is greater. Moreover, the museum has some latitude in the arrangement and interpretation of the artifacts, since they are not key elements of an art-historical narrative, as many of the sculptures and the vases exhibited in the capital tend to become. As Pappi points out, being the central museum of the province allows to spotlight the cultural expressions that flourished in the Argolis, which would lose visibility in a larger institution. Greater emphasis can be given to the context in which the artifacts were produced and used, and it is easier to show them as interconnected components of everyday life rather than discrete works of art. At the same time, the continued adherence to the principle of linear time organizes the display according to a framework to which modern visitors are
acquainted. The combination of old and new display practices has the purpose to draw attention on what changes and what tends to remain stable in the ancient cultural landscape of the region.

A further advantage of having an exhibit based on local, familiar heritage, also stressed by Pappi, is the opportunity to build strong links between the museum and the territory it embraces, sometimes in a very literal sense. For example, a case which houses finds from the Mycenaean cemetery of Evangelistria is placed near a window from which the site itself is visible.

The museum is open year-round, and part of the activities organized by it consists of programs designed for schoolchildren. The activities are inspired by mythical tales and characters such as Proitos, the mythical king of Tiryns whose daughters were driven mad by the gods, but they have always the objects at their center, especially the finds from the Mycenaean period. As even a quick glance at the guestbook can attest, however, the majority of the audience consists of tourists who come to Nafplio in the summer. The comments left after the reopening of the museum in 2009 show that the reception of the new display has been generally positive. The setting, the lighting, the selection of pieces, and the didactic apparatus are often singled out for appreciation, while the lack of a catalogue or guidebook represents the most frequent basis for criticism. Some remarks are quite specific: “Photos of archaeological work could do with a translation. And 4 staff upstairs is too high – they sit in the way of visitors (and tell them not to receive calls on their mobiles!)” (June 9, 2009); “Needs a shop! Create a CD with digital collection!” (July 24, 2009); “Excellent display! The mirrors showing the underside of the vessels were outstanding” (August 15, 2009); “Very enjoyable and informative displays. Much
improved and more user friendly than when visited many years ago” (August 26, 2009);
“Very good display – you have changed it a lot since I was last here in 2000. You have some wonderful Mycenaean exhibits which do not appear in any of the books on the subject, particularly the finds from Evangelismos and Asine. You should produce a new guidebook. This display is better than Mycenae museum!” (May 2010); “Although some more information on the objects would be nice, I really enjoyed this beautifully refurbished museum” (June 14, 2010).

Although the praise extends to the physical as well as the didactic components of the museum, from the comments it is difficult to judge to what degree the influence of the former on the visit is realized. Visitors familiar with the old outlook of the museum are much better prepared to appreciate the changes, of course. Others might easily miss elements of its design philosophy, because of a scarcity of visual clues, unless they are made clear in some way. The lack of an official guide is particularly frustrating in this regard. True, the general layout of the museum is easy to understand. It translates the chronological arrangement on which the display is based, although it takes into account the architectural eccentricities of the building – such as the presence of two parallel entrances to the gallery on the lower floor – and tries to avoid ruptures. Subtler curatorial choices, however, can be harder to recognize. Details like the window that opens in the direction of the site showcased near it would have escaped me, had I not been informed by Pappi about them.

A second observation, not made in the comments but arising from an examination of the wall text, is the scarcity of details on the history of excavation at the various sites represented in the museum. The notion of context seems intended in a strongly objective
sense, as a clear background only waiting to be exposed through digging. The associations between finds and their depositional context are presented as if they were unequivocal and gave the former the capacity to “speak for themselves.” While there is no reason to question the accuracy and the usefulness of the information provided, a more precise account of how archaeologists conducted their investigations would be helpful, since assigning significance to the relationships between different components of an artifact, between different artifacts, and between the artifacts and the location of their discovery – which is how a context is reconstructed – involves an interpretative procedure.\textsuperscript{201} Once again, the relevant information could be provided when the museum guide is released, if only to avoid cluttering the wall text and discouraging visitors from learning about the context of the artifacts at all.

\textsuperscript{201} For a discussion of the problem of defining the context of an archaeological artifact, see Hodder and Hutson, \textit{Reading the Past}, 187-191.
The museum, opened in 1998, is housed in an early twentieth-century building on a slope above the church, next to the new school of the town; the establishment served as a high school itself until 1990 and was taken over by the 14th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in 1994. It is two stories high, but the uneven terrain causes the forecourt and the entrance to be on level with the upper floor (fig. 8.1). Moreover, the façade of the building does not face the street – after going up some stairs from the lower street level, it is necessary to follow its front and turn 90 degrees left to enter (fig. 8.2).

As in many other Greek museums, especially provincial or local ones, the open space around the building (in this case, both sides of the entrance) is used to display marble objects and fragments (sarcophagi, columns); more such objects are kept in a shed at the far end of the building (fig. 8.3). The exhibit occupies three rooms on the upper floor placed side by side, joined by an entrance corridor that functions as a spine (figs. 8.4-5), while the rest of the building contains storage and study space for chance finds and artifacts from excavations conducted throughout the district. The rooms are not numbered, but the guidebook to the museum, which can be bought at the entrance, calls them Eastern, Central, and Western Room, an understandable choice, since the front door
is located on the north side of the building.\textsuperscript{202}

The basic arrangement of the museum is chronological, beginning with a small Neolithic/Early and Middle Helladic section and continuing with finds from the Mycenaean and Geometric periods, mostly from graves, followed by Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman artifacts. Some thematic cases (children, tools, death, kitchen) complete the display. According to Eleni Zahou, the state archaeologist placed by the Ephorate in charge of the museum, whom I met during a visit to Atalanti in the summer of 2010, the institution is visited by about 100 people a year (it is not clear if the figure includes school groups).

The exhibit follows traditional principles, consisting mostly of rectangular wall cases, where the objects are arranged chronologically and further grouped by material and type. The museum therefore contrasts sharply with nearby institutions, such as the museum of Elateia, which relies more heavily on reconstructions, at least in the prehistoric section. At Atalanti, attempts at integration are rather limited, such as tying beads from Mycenaean graves into a single necklace, or adding a rope to an anchor, although the thematic section tries to put the artifacts in context, showing what one could find in an ancient Greek kitchen, for example.

Of the three rooms constituting the museum proper, the Eastern is dedicated to the Bronze Age, the Central groups the Iron Age, the Classical, and the Hellenistic periods, while the Western room houses the thematic cases and the reconstructions; the corridor itself is reserved for a small collection of stone objects, mostly stelai. Visitors might be tempted to go straight to the middle room, which is in axis with the entrance, but their

\textsuperscript{202} Phanouria Dakoronia, \textit{Archaiologiko Mouseio Atalantis} (Athens, 2006), 16.
small number makes it easy for the museum personnel to police them and send them the “right” way to the Eastern room.

The entrances to all three rooms are off-center, much more noticeably in the Eastern and Western rooms, giving the impression that they converge towards the main doorway (fig. 8.6). All the artifacts are displayed along the walls, while the central area of each room is left free. There is a preferred visiting path, signaled by the numbering of the cases and followed in the guidebook. In the Eastern room (fig. 8.7), the suggested itinerary begins with Case 1, immediately left of the entrance, which contains artifacts from the Neolithic period, mostly potsherds, accompanied by drawings of the corresponding whole shapes; the case also features a vase used as an ossuary, lithics, and small idols, the majority of which show female features. Visitors then continue clockwise along the east side of the room to Cases 2 and 3, dedicated respectively to the Early and to the Middle Bronze Age. The first displays the finds from the Early Helladic settlement excavated at “Rachi” (Proskynas). The provenience of the artifacts in Case 3 – once again, mostly pottery fragments – is more varied.

Case 3a, placed alone against the south wall and almost in axis with the entrance to the room, introduces emphatically the section on the Late Bronze Age by presenting one of the foremost groups of objects in the museum, the finds from the Mycenaean site of Kynos (Livanates Beach). The remains of a figured pottery workshop excavated there yielded fragments of a krater depicting a naval battle, the earliest scene of this kind known from continental Greece, if not from Europe, according to the guide.203 Cases 4 and 5, on the west side of the room, are mostly filled with goods from Mycenaean

chamber tombs found in the area. Case 4 illustrates the mature Late Bronze Age (fifteenth to thirteenth century BC) with finds from tombs of NE Phocis, golden objects from Kalapodi, weapons and armor pieces, and other metal objects such as surgical instruments. The objects in Case 5 belong to the last phase of Mycenaean civilization, after the collapse of the palatial system (late thirteenth to early eleventh century BC).

The Central room is organized according to a similar scheme (fig. 8.8). As in the previous room, the suggested itinerary follows a clockwise path, and the view from the entrance focuses on a single case (Case 8a) near the south wall that contains a particularly notable kind of materials, coins in this case. Case 6, located immediately to the left of the entrance, continues the sequence with a group of finds dated to the Submycenaean period and to the “Dark Ages,” which include pottery and iron artifacts, although weapons are remarkably absent. Cases 7 and 8, placed along the east wall and dedicated respectively to the Geometric and to the Archaic periods, for which evidence from settlements is scarce or not available, display pottery from tombs and artifacts from sanctuaries. A large part of the objects in Case 7 comes from a single site, the sanctuary of Artemis at Kalapodi, while case 8 collects artifacts from several excavated sanctuaries. Contrary to what one could expect for the Archaic period, such contexts have produced almost no large sculpture; the few preserved fragments are kept at the Lamia Museum, together with other notable pieces from the region. After passing Case 8a, in the last two vitrines, which occupy the west side of the room, visitors meet many familiar Greek wares of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, such as black- and red-figure Attic vases, as well as local products, in Case 9, and “Megarian” bowls, “Lokrian” jugs, and “Macedonian” amphorae in Case 10.
The entrance and the arrangement of the Western room are symmetrical to those of the Eastern room, with one important difference. In the Western room, only the north and west walls are occupied by cases (fig. 8.9), while the other two sides are reserved for two didactic reconstructions, a kitchen table and shelf with a selection of pottery and a funerary stela with offerings; between them is a group of millstones arranged in two lines on the floor (figs. 8.10-11). As a result, the visitor's attention tends to spread among several focal points rather than being channeled through a linear path by the order of the cases, as in the other two rooms. Case 11, immediately right of the entrance, concludes the chronological route with the Roman period. Pertinent objects include a few pieces of sculpture, “Pergamene” and “Samian” ware and terra sigillata, plus the torso of a general or emperor located in the corridor. The remaining three cases are filled with finds which document various aspects of life in the ancient world. Case 12 contains tools and implements related to occupations such as agriculture, animal husbandry, transportation, wood- and stoneworking, and measuring. Case 13 is dedicated to women and children and their activities, mainly cooking, child rearing, weaving, adornment, and playing. Finally, death and funerary practices is the theme of Case 14, which displays lekythoi and funerary offerings, as well as images of underworld deities.

Within the cases, the objects are grouped by type, but there is a certain attention to composition. The labels are in Greek and English, but the panels between the cases are in Greek only – as is the guidebook – and provide very synthetic information, at least in the left and middle rooms (introduction to each period, architecture, pottery, iconography, burial customs). A few pictures and drawings accompany the objects in the cases.

The entrances to the left and middle rooms open on special cases (pictorial...
Mycenaean pottery and local coins, respectively), but their potential impact on visitors is limited by their distance from the doorway and by the unfavorable lighting.

The fact that it is possible to make such observations shows how museums like the one in Atalanti are less bound by the reverent attitude which characterizes the National Museum. This more relaxed approach may be expected, if only because not many regional and local archaeological museums in Greece possess major works of art suitable for the kind of inspiring narrative proposed by their larger counterpart in Athens. Rather, their greatest asset is the capacity to show different aspects of ancient life through artifacts less charged with aesthetic or moral significance.

How to build an engaging exhibit when few outstanding artifacts are available, if any, is still a major concern for the curators of small Greek institutions, however. Under different circumstances, both Evangelia Pappi and Eleni Zahou have had to confront the difficulty to strike a balance between a traditional chronological and typological display, scientifically sound and appreciated by scholars but perhaps less attractive for the general public, and a one which places more emphasis on the archaeological context and on reconstructions, at the risk of not providing sufficient information on the artifacts. If at Nafplio it was possible to bring the two approaches together in the new arrangement, despite having to work within rigid spatial boundaries, at Atalanti, where the space is even more limited, finding new ways to attract visitors, particularly non-specialists, involves the additional problem of preserving the scholarly framework on which the exhibit is based. The eagerness to channel the visitors towards the suggested itinerary on the part of the museum staff shows how important it is that they not miss the sequence.

On a transnational level, it should be remarked that the museum of Atalanti does
not seem as interested in linking the archaeological evidence to the local environment as
the institutions at Persiceto and Palmachim. The reasons of the contrast are not clear,
although one could interpret it as one way in which the respectful attitude towards
antiquities that characterizes the major Greek museums is reflected even in smaller
institutions, after all. More specifically, there might be a less pressing need to emphasize
how nature influences human life in the area today as in the past in order to prove the
continued relevance of the museum, since the antiquities could serve as a focus to cement
the identity of the local community in and of themselves. More mundane reasons, such as
spatial or financial constraints, should also be considered, of course.
Part III

Israel
CHAPTER 9
HISTORICAL AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

9.1. The Ottoman period and the British Mandate

The earliest law dealing with the acquisition and the movement of archaeological artifacts in the Palestinian region was promulgated by the Ottoman authorities in 1874, in order to address the increasing fascination with Greek and Near Eastern antiquities shown by Westerners, which would lead to sensational transactions such as the transfer of the remains of the Pergamon Altar to the Germans, and the consequent looting of material. This first act had a rather limited scope, being aimed at regulating the trade in antiquities and the access to them on the part of foreigners. A second law, passed ten years later, was meant to institute a much stronger system of public control. Not only did it establish state ownership over all artifacts located in the Empire and made excavation permits mandatory, but it also assigned the property of all the finds from a dig to the National Museum in Constantinople and demanded that they be stored there until a decision on their fate had been reached by the authorities. Artifacts had to be cleared by the museum before they could be studied, and no artifact could be exported without its permission. Other norms included the concession of a share to landowners when artifacts were discovered on their property by chance, the prohibition to endanger sacred or military sites during excavations, and the payment of a rent if the work caused damage to crops.
Although the law contained many innovative principles and found approval even among foreign scholars, it proved difficult to enforce. The number of officials tasked with upholding it was too low to cover the whole extension of the Empire, and the bureaucracy connected with permits caused long delays in issuing them. Foreign archaeologists developed a strong resentment towards the new procedures, particularly the legislative bottleneck represented by the passage of the objects through the museum. Such reactions appear sometimes tinged by prejudice against the annoying Turkish officials, who had dared consider the acquisition of duplicates as something no longer taken for granted, but they also manifest a genuine frustration with the inability of the authorities to prevent looting while hindering the efforts of legitimate researchers. The temptation to cut the corners, together with the locals' unwillingness to give up an appreciable source of income, resulted in the creation of a complex smuggling network stretched over the entire Levant.204

Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, the archaeological patrimony of its former territories became one of the assets in a larger economic and political struggle over them. In particular, the region comprising modern Israel and the Palestinian Territories came under British control in 1917. In June 1922, the League of Nations – the predecessor of the United Nations – approved the creation of the Mandate for Palestine, entrusting the occupiers with the protection of the area and its inhabitants in preparation for eventual self-rule. Cultural heritage, too, fell under the

purview of the Mandate, and was given due attention even before British rule had been internationally sanctioned, an urgency justified by the historical and religious significance of the Holy Land.

An Antiquities Proclamation, which stressed the importance of preserving the archaeological patrimony, appeared already in 1918. In July 1920, when a civil administration replaced the military, a Department of Antiquities was founded to oversee archaeological activities and ensure they were conducted in a professional and scientific way. During the same years, work started on a new Palestine Archaeological Museum, designed to store the finds from the region and to house the offices of the Department, the archives, a library, and of course public exhibition galleries.205

The legislative framework that characterized the period of the Mandate with regard to the protection of cultural heritage was provided by the Antiquities Ordinance for Palestine, put forward by the Director of the Department, John Garstang, shortly after his appointment. The Ordinance was based on the 1884 law, but it also took into account the approaches to the matter taken by other nations, as well as the opinion of archaeologists and government officials. Above all, it broke with the previous system by placing a center of decision in Palestine itself rather than in an imperial capital, be it Constantinople or London. The new act defined an antiquity as “(a) any object, whether movable or immovable or a part of the soil, which has been constructed, shaped, inscribed, erected, excavated, or otherwise produced or modified by human agency earlier than the year 1700 CE, together with any part thereof which has at a later date been added, reconstructed, or restored; (b) human or animal remains of a date earlier than the year 600 CE, or (c) any building or construction of a date later than the year 1700 CE” declared to

be an antiquity by the Director (art. 2). 206

Ownership of cultural heritage, both movable and immovable, was assigned to the Civil Government of Palestine, while the Department assumed responsibility for the regulation of archaeological digs and, more importantly, for the sale of artifacts. In fact, the Ordinance stated that material deemed not essential for the national repository by the Director and the advisory board of the Department could be sold. Although the concept of “redundant artifact” had already surfaced in legal and archaeological debate, for example in Greece, the difference in contexts is crucial. In the Mandate territories, the idea of parting with seemingly unimportant objects appears to have been nowhere as controversial. On the contrary, giving legitimacy to the antiquities trade allowed the British authorities to show regard for an already existing way of life, while at the same time trying to bring it under control. The fact that the Department was also authorized to issue licenses for trade in antiquities can also be read as an attempt to reach the same goal. A provision in the Mandate charter of 1922, which stipulated that all members of the League of Nations had the right to access excavations and do research in Palestine (art. 21), complemented the legislation. 207

In 1929, the High Commissioner for Palestine issued Antiquities Ordinance No. 51, which eventually formed the basis for legislation on the protection of cultural property in both Israel and the Palestinian Territories. The Ordinance and the accompanying Rules, promulgated the following year, provided a more structured framework and a detailed set of regulations about the antiquities trade. In particular, they formalized the person of the dealer, using the word to designate anyone who buys and sells antiquities specifically for

206 The definition is quoted in Kersel, “Trade in Palestinian Antiquities,” 38n20.
the purpose of trade, and fixed the procedures to obtain a license and the obligations that came with it. Dealers, for example, were required to inform potential buyers about the need to secure an export permit to bring artifacts out of the area. As Morag Kersel remarks, the introduction of such rigid measures had a profound impact on the habits of the individuals and the families involved in the commerce of antiquities, who had to contend with the paperwork and fees related to the license, the requirement to accept inspections from the Department, and the need to keep inventories and sales records.208

In 1948, after Israel's proclamation of independence and the ensuing war, the region was split into three entities: the new state, the Gaza Strip, which passed under Egyptian control, and the West Bank, administered by the Kingdom of Jordan together with part of Jerusalem. To facilitate the consolidation of the unfamiliar legal and administrative system, the Israeli authorities kept in place most laws and regulations from the period of the Mandate, including the Antiquities Ordinance, the force of which was reaffirmed in the 1948 Law and Administration Ordinance. The unstable political situation, however, created new challenges that the existing laws were not sufficient to address. The abandonment of many Palestinian villages and towns during the war, either forced or voluntary, and their subsequent destruction, which have remained powerful stumbling blocks in the negotiations about the future of the area to this day, had among its consequences the exposure of many archaeological sites to damage and looting. As a

9.2. Survival of earlier principles and rules in Israel and the Palestinian Territories

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countermeasure, in July 1948 the newborn state instituted the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (IDAM) to guard and manage the archaeological heritage in the territories under its control. The Antiquities Ordinance kept its validity in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, too. In all three regions, permission from the respective departments of antiquities was necessary to deal in ancient artifacts and to export them.\textsuperscript{209}

The first significant change in the state of things occurred in 1966, when Jordan repealed the Ordinance for the West Bank and replaced it with a statute of its own (Temporary Law 51). The innovation, however, was more formal than practical, since the new provisions looked very similar to the old ones, including those on the trade and export of antiquities. Some defining points of the law were the designation of antiquities as state property and the imposition of tougher fines and penalties for transgressors. The act has been revived in recent years as a basis for an envisaged Palestinian legislation on cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{210}

The wars of 1967 and 1973 modified the political physiognomy of the region again, with the first leading to the establishment of an Israeli military authority in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, endowed with full legislative, executive, and administrative power. In 1973, Military Order No. 462 was introduced for the Gaza Strip, which forbade the sale and transfer of antiquities to non-residents without permission from the Director of the Israeli Department of Antiquities, and confirmed the obligation for dealers to keep a register of their merchandise. While transgressing the latter rule continued to carry a

\textsuperscript{209} Kersel, “Trade in Palestinian Antiquities,” 27. A recent book by Raz Kletter, \textit{Just Past? The Making of Israeli Archaeology} (London, 2006), offers snapshots on the early years of public archaeology in the country, drawing on a large corpus of archival documents, many of which are offered in an English translation for the first time. The work has an anecdotal character, and seems generally bent on vindicating the conduct of the first head of IDAM, Shmuel Yeivin. He is presented as a well-rounded scholar in the British tradition, dedicated to the protection of all kinds of heritage, but often victim of adverse political circumstances.

financial penalty, however, the violation of the restrictions on trade was turned into a criminal offense.

About a dozen years later, in 1986, a second Military Order (No. 1166) was issued for the West Bank. The Order in this case did not suppress the existing legislation, instead amending the 1966 Temporary Law so that the functions it contemplated were assigned to the Israeli antiquities staff officer for the region. As for the Gaza Strip, the authorization of the officer was needed to bring antiquities outside it. A feature common to both Orders is that an export license could be granted for a class of artifacts, not just for single objects as specified in the 1929 Antiquities Ordinance, thus creating the conditions for an increase in the number of antiquities which could be legally marketed.211

9.3. The Israel Antiquities Law

In Israel itself, the passing of a new Antiquities Law took several decades, and was accomplished only in 1978.212 According to Kersel, the greatest difficulty in reaching an agreement on it lay in the burgeoning demand for antiquities, which had been affected by two factors. On the one hand, uncovering and acquiring remains of the past was a means to build a relationship with it. As the study of the ancient Levant increasingly adopted a scientific perspective, archaeology offered the chance to place the historical trajectory of Israel within broader questions concerning trade relations and the development of ancient

212 An English translation of the law can be found on the website of the Israel Antiquities Authority (http://www.antiquities.org.il/article_Item_eng.asp?sec_id=42&subj_id=228&autotitle=true&Module_id=6).
societies. At the same time, the interest in obtaining ancient objects also grew on an emotional level, as a way for immigrants to bond with their ancestors. On the other hand, dealers and collectors could count on the backing of powerful figures such as Teddy Kollek and Moshe Dayan, who ensured the persistence of favorable conditions for the antiquities market.213

Being the fruit of a long period of negotiation can explain the final appearance of the law, in part at least. Compared to Italian and Greek legislation, the Israeli law appears more compact and less preoccupied with statements of principle. Some of its features, such as the existence of a specific legal status for collectors and dealers, or the placement of clear time limits for publishing the results of an excavation, recall analogous elements in the Greek laws of 1932 and 2002, respectively. There are also remarkable differences between the legislation of the two countries, however. Most provisions in the Israeli law apply to antiquities in general, without distinctions between movable and immovable heritage; the notion of intangible heritage is not given particular attention, either. Moreover, no immediate link between antiquities and the nation is made, although the concept of “national value” comes into play in the relationship between the state, on one side, and collectors and dealers in antiquities, on the other side; moreover, a special treatment is reserved for some kinds of monuments because of their religious significance.

Article 1 of the law defines an antiquity as “(a) any object, whether detached or fixed, which was made by man before the year 1700 of the general era, and includes anything subsequently added thereto which forms an integral part thereof; (b) any object

historical value, and which the Minister [of Education and Culture] has declared to be an antiquity; (c) zoological or botanical remains from before the year 1300 of the general era.” Under the same article, a museum is described as “any permanent exhibition of antiquities open to the public and any institution keeping a collection and exhibiting it for purposes of research, education or entertainment.”

Control over the acquisition and movement of antiquities is assigned to the Ministry of Education and Culture, more specifically to the Department of Antiquities and Museums and its Director, who enjoys many important prerogatives. The Director is supposed to determine the limits of state ownership of antiquities found after the promulgation of the law, which seems therefore not absolute, and can even waive said ownership (art. 2, 8). Any discovery of antiquities outside a licensed excavation must be reported to the Director within fifteen days (art. 3). The law does not require finders to turn artifacts or remains over to the state, but the Director can ask for them to be delivered to him or her; the concession of a reward to the finder is at his or her discretion (art. 4). The Director has also the power to borrow any antiquity – evidently including those brought to light before 1978 – for a maximum of ninety days (art. 5). If the discovery takes place during a larger operation, work has to be suspended for up to fifteen days, within which the Director allows it to continue, possibly under certain conditions, or orders its interruption; in the latter case, the affected persons have a right to compensation (art. 6-7).

Archaeological excavations can be conducted under a license from the Director, which specifies the temporal extent, the area, and the conditions of the dig, and should be granted primarily on the basis of the scientific and financial capacities of the applicant.
The issuing of a license does not override property rights (art. 9), a rule which implies that the holder has to secure permission to operate from whoever occupies the excavation area. After the license has been granted, this person can enter the zone freely, but other people need both his or her authorization and the consent of the license holder to do so. For the duration of the license, the holder is responsible for the safety of workers and visitors, for the preservation of the site, and for the protection of the antiquities brought to light; if these duties are neglected, the Director can take the necessary measures at the expense of the holder. While the excavation is being carried out, only the Director, his or her deputies, or people authorized by the license holder can obtain any kind of representation of the site or of the finds. At least once a year after the starting date of the dig, or more often if the Director so prescribes, the license holder must deliver a report on the excavation and its findings. The holder is granted exclusive publication rights about the work for ten years after its end, but its results must be published scientifically within five years after its termination (art. 10-12). If the license holder fails to comply with the law or with the conditions of the license, the Director can revoke it or establish additional provisions; moreover, if the deadline for publication is missed, the Director may refuse to grant further licenses to that person or institution until it is completed (art. 13). Finally, in what constitutes a major departure from the approach followed in Italy and Greece, it is possible to stipulate agreements with the license holder whereby the state waives its rights over the antiquities discovered and allows them to be split between the two parties as they see fit (art. 14).

A license, tied to a specific place of business, is also necessary to deal in antiquities (art. 15-16). Dealers are required to keep an inventory of their merchandise (art. 17) and
must indicate whether an article is a replica or imitation, or is composed from parts of different antiquities (art. 21). The dealer is assumed to know the actual status of the objects offered for sale (art. 20); in other words, if an article is presented as an antiquity, and is found to be a fake, responsibility for the scam falls on him or her. Possessors of antiquities who do not deal in them and dealers whose license has been suspended or revoked are considered collectors (art. 1, 18). Both categories of owners can be notified in writing by the Director that some antiquity in their possession is of national value, and can be asked to sell it to the state within three months thereafter. Even if no such request is made, owners of antiquities of national value must inform the Director before selling or transferring them, an act which gives him or her three more months to purchase the objects for the state (art. 19). No antiquities can be taken out of Israel without the written approval of the Director, whether they have been declared of national value or not (art. 22).

Collectors – not dealers – must provide the Director with certain information about the artifacts they own and have to allow the authorities to photograph or otherwise reproduce them (art. 23). Any artifact belonging to a collector may be subjected to a second type of protection because of its scientific importance, in which case it becomes a “special” antiquity. The legal treatment of special antiquities differs significantly from the one accorded to antiquities of national value. First, notification of their change in status can come from the Director or from a deputy and does not need to be written, although they, too, must be officially recorded and photographed (art. 24). Moreover, owners of antiquities of national importance must disclose the name and address of the new proprietor after a transaction, while such information is not required for special
antiquities, although their owner is still bound to notify the Director if he or she wishes to sell or transfer them. On the other hand, the Director has much less time (21 days) to acquire them for the state in such a case, and cannot make such a request unless they are going to be sold or moved. Once again, it is not specified that communication regarding this category of antiquities has to take place in writing (art. 25). The law applies similar regulations to museum collections, treating the owners and directors of such establishments as “collectors” of the artifacts they manage (art. 26-27). The duties and policies by which the museums themselves should abide, for example concerning the acquisition and the display of artifacts, form the object of a separate law.

Another prerogative of the Director is to officially designate a particular area as an antiquity site (art. 28). When such a declaration is made, most activities that affect the site can be undertaken only with the written permission of the Director, including building, mining, planting, dumping, repairing or removing antiquities, carving or painting, and any other operation he or she might specify. If an antiquity site is used for religious purposes, the Director cannot authorize any activity or modification without the approval of a high-level committee consisting of the Ministers of Education and Culture, of Religious Affairs, and of Justice (art. 29). People conducting operations at an antiquity site without permission or in violation of the prescribed terms have to restore it to its former condition; alternatively, the Director can take the necessary steps and recover the expenses from the transgressor (art. 31). Expropriation of antiquity sites for reasons of preservation and research, or of areas marked for excavation, is also possible, but the Minister of Education and Culture, not the Director, has to take the initiative. Once again, if the site serves some kind of religious function, the act needs the approval of a
ministerial committee (Education and Culture, Religious Affairs, Justice, Foreign Affairs) and of the Committee on Education and Culture of the Israeli Parliament (art. 32).

To assist the Director in the enforcement of the law – and presumably to balance his or her broad range of prerogatives – the Minister is instructed to appoint an Archaeological Council with advising functions (art. 34). The Council, in turn, must select two persons from outside its ranks who, together with a judge chosen by the Minister of Justice, constitute an Objection Committee (art. 35). Most decisions made by the Director can be appealed before the Committee, except for disagreements on the purchase of antiquities for the state, which are settled before a regular court. The Committee has the same powers as the Director and can overturn his or her decisions, although they remain valid until a verdict is reached (art. 36).

The last sections of the law are dedicated to offenses and punishments and to dispositions for exceptional cases. A stark reminder of the problem of looting is offered by the regulation stating that, if someone is found on an antiquity site with recently used digging tools or a metal detector in his possession or nearby, that person is presumed to have been looking for antiquities unless he or she proves otherwise (art. 38). The closing provisions confirm that a certificate from the Director is sufficient to establish the presence of antiquities in an area or to designate an object as one (art. 39). Once its status is declared, the Director or a representative can enter any land “at any reasonable time” to verify compliance with the provisions of the law and the terms of any license related to that land, or to examine and make reproductions of any antiquity discovered on it (art. 40). The Director can delegate most of his or her powers to other officials, the only notable exception being the waiving of state ownership on antiquities (art. 41).
The Minister is tasked with defining the specific rules about visits to antiquity sites and areas owned by the Department, the behavior of visitors, admission fees, the protection of the sites and of the antiquities in them, the handling of accessories and furniture. Police officers or deputies of the Director have the power to remove from sites persons who transgress such regulations or any other part of the law (art. 42). The consent of the Ministry of Defense is necessary to enter a military area or to perform operations prescribed by the law; on the other hand, the military needs the approval of the Director to deal with antiquities present in such areas (art. 43). Finally, the Minister can be permitted to exclude any antiquity, museum, excavation, or antiquity site from the effects of the law or of the regulations derived from it (art. 44).

A second law, passed in 1989, instituted a specific entity for the protection of cultural heritage, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), and gave it responsibility for the excavation, preservation, conservation, and administration of the country's antiquities, including underwater finds. Unlike the IDAM, which was part of the Ministry of Education, the IAA is an autonomous governmental organ. One of its major duties is to check violations of the Antiquities Law by means of inspectors. The creation of such figures further engendered the constitution of an anti-theft unit, expressly dedicated to the enforcement of the regulations concerning the licensing of dealers and the export of antiquities.214

A couple of amendments to the Antiquities Law introduced in 2002 are also meant to curb the flow of looted artifacts into the market. First, article 20 was modified so that dealers have to guarantee not just the authenticity of an object, but its legitimate origin as well. In fact, the added prescription stipulates that they can acquire antiquities only from

other dealers or from possessors authorized by the Director to transfer the pieces to their hands. The second change involved article 22 and established the need to obtain permission not only to move objects out of Israel, but also to bring them in from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, as Kersel observes, the amended law still contains some loopholes that can be exploited. In particular, she points out that dealers are not required to report finalized sales or to apply for export permits; instead, buyers are expected to do so. Only in response to such a request does the IAA verify that the item had been properly inventoried by the dealer. As long as the association between artifact and inventory number is not frozen through the export procedure, then, a dealer can sell an antiquity and reuse the same records for a similar object indefinitely.215

9.4. Proposed Palestinian legislation

Caring for the antiquities in Palestine became an even more complex matter with the birth of the Palestinian Authority and the passing of Jericho, the Gaza Strip, and parts of the West Bank to its jurisdiction between 1993 and 1995, as stipulated by the Oslo Accords of 1993. According to these treaties, the Israeli Civic Administration was progressively to hand over responsibility for the protection and the management of the cultural patrimony in those regions to the Authority. Its duty is to safeguard and prevent damage to archaeological sites and to keep sites of religious or archaeological significance accessible. Although the terms appear straightforward, several points of contention persist. Most notably, with regard to archaeology the extent of land under the

Authority's control is limited to about 40 per cent of the Palestinian Territories (the so-called Zone A, where the Authority has both administrative and security powers, and Zone B, where only the former are entrusted to it). Moreover, reciprocal free access to sites is not explicitly mandated in the zones still under Israeli administration. Both parties, however, are called to take action against the looting of sites and the illegal movement of antiquities from the Territories towards Israel and the rest of the world.

The Authority tried to answer the challenge quickly and drastically, establishing its own Department of Antiquities soon after the conclusion of the Oslo Agreements and, more significantly, banning legal trade in antiquities in the areas under its jurisdiction in 1996, a move that induced many dealers to relocate in Jerusalem's Old City. In the longer term, a primary goal has been to review the various laws in force in the Territories at one time or another (the Antiquities Ordinance, the Jordanian Temporary Law, and the Israeli Military Orders), and to draft a new text that corrects their defects or resolves their contradictions, but no law has been promulgated yet. Even operating under the older rules has been problematic, because of budget limitations, paucity of staff, and various forms of restriction on movement imposed by the Israeli military. Preventing not only the looting, but also the destruction of sites during development projects thus remains extremely difficult, to the point that even the area of Ramallah, where the Palestinian Department of Antiquities has its headquarters, suffers from a lack of effective control.216

Some of the proposed regulations constitute a striking departure from the legislative traditions of other Mediterranean countries. For example, the law would subordinate the protection of cultural heritage to the respect of private property rights, rather than

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proclaim the state as the central holder of prerogatives over movable and immovable antiquities. Other principles look more familiar. The possession and sale of antiquities must be authorized by the government, expressions of local heritage cannot be permanently exported, and there is a distinction between artifacts that can or cannot be traded. The exact boundaries and procedures of a legal trade in antiquities, however, are left for a future Commission to determine. The uncertainty highlights the difficulty of reaching a wide consensus on a subject that has profound effects on both the economy and the identity of Palestine.

9.5. The Israeli Museum Act

The historical and political circumstances just discussed must be taken into account when considering the way museums operate in Israel, although the most direct impact is of course exercised by the laws of the country themselves. As noted, museums receive only a brief treatment in the Israeli Antiquities Law, where they are considered equivalent to other types of collectors. The relationship between these institutions and the state, however, is more intricate, and is governed by a specific law, the Museums Act, promulgated in 1983. Its main characteristic is that it does not presuppose a system of public museums. Instead, it addresses cultural organizations throughout the country, different in ownership and structure, for example the collections of local archaeological

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218 The text of the law (in Hebrew) can be found online (http://www.tourism-law.co.il/muselaw.htm). I am grateful to Dror Porat, curator of the Beit Miriam Archaeological Museum, Kibbutz Palmachim, for providing me with an English translation.
materials often attached to *kibbutzim*. Museums can seek official recognition on the part of the Ministry of Education and supplement their budget with public funds as a result (art. 2, 5). Only entities publicly recognized or established by law can employ the single word “museum” as a legal denomination, while other institutions must add the adjective “private” if they want to use it (art. 8). Presumably in order to forestall possible claims based on usage, the law holds the management responsible if an unrecognized museum is so called in print without this qualification, unless they prove that they could not prevent it (art. 9).

The law seems principally aimed at giving the state some say in the operation of museums, chiefly to prevent damage or dispersal of artifacts. The Minister, in fact, has the power to introduce regulations, applicable to all museums or to some categories of them, by which recognized institutions are required to abide in exchange for state support. Museums are obligated to meet professional standards for employees, keep records and images of the artifacts in their collections, plan for various forms of education and outreach (labels, catalogues, activities for the public), provide for security, and submit annual reports on their activities. Other regulations have a restrictive character, and are meant to avert losses of objects due to their sale, export, exchange, failed return from a loan, destruction, or removal; likewise, the operation of commercial activities inside the museum must respect the limits imposed by the government. Finally, the Minister provides guidelines for the training of employees and for admission fees; yet, within the framework laid out by the Ministry, each museum is free to utilize its budget as its management sees fit (art. 3-4). The same reasoning inspires the provision that excludes artifacts from the assets that creditors can claim when a museum is
liquidated, specifying instead that they are to be transferred to the state or to another recognized institution (art. 6).

Similarly to what the Antiquities Law stipulates, decisions which affect museums are made in consultation with a dedicated Council. It consists of twenty-one members, the majority of which is formed by public functionaries and museum professionals. The Council is appointed for three years, and each one must retain at least one third of the members of the outgoing one; most of them, however, cannot sit in it for more than two consecutive terms, though. Another parallel with the regulations on antiquities is provided by the rule that the Director General of the Ministry or a deputy can visit any museum at any reasonable time to verify compliance with the law (art. 10-11).

The Museums Act also shows several notable differences with respect to the 1978 law. First, the main actor is the Minister of Education, not one of his or her subordinates. Second, more importance is placed on the assisting Council, the composition of which is spelled out in the law itself rather than being left to ministerial regulations. Although the Minister is the final authority with regard to the recognition of museums and the fixing of rules for their management, there seems to be a greater emphasis on collegiality than, for instance, in the designation of an antiquity or an archaeological site. The fact that such decisions are tied to the disbursement of public funds could explain the desire to place them within a firmer legal framework.
10.1. The formation of the Borowski collection and the first exhibitions

Opened on May 11, 1992, the Bible Lands Museum is the brainchild of Elie Borowski (1913-2003), a Polish scholar who became interested in the ancient Near East while studying for the rabbinate in Italy. After learning to read cuneiform, and particularly early Sumerian, at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, he moved to Paris, where he enlisted in the army as part of a unit of Jewish volunteers just before the outbreak of World War II. Arrived in Switzerland as a military internee, Borowski was employed by the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Geneva and published its collection of Mesopotamian seals and cuneiform tablets. During his stay in the city he began his own collection, starting in 1943 with a cylinder seal bearing an inscription which he linked to a minor Biblical character. As a way to cope with the Holocaust and with the loss of his family in it, Borowski gathered artifacts that could document or otherwise be related to persons, events, or customs mentioned in the Bible.219

Part of the collection was displayed in New York in 1968 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Israel's independence, and in 1976 the Lands of the Bible Archaeology Foundation was established in Toronto, where Borowski had moved after the end of the war. Another exhibition took place in the same city in 1979, but a partial

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catalogue of it appeared only in 1981. In the foreword, the Vice Chairman of the Foundation, A. D. Tushingham, wrote: “It was – and is – Dr. Borowski’s firm belief that the materialism, racism and cruelty which have characterized much of this century’s history are a result of the weakening effect of the Bible on man today. To present, with renewed strength, the biblical requirement of man ‘to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God’ (Micah 6:8) might accomplish that reformation in human character and priorities which could pluck man back from the destructive path he appears to have chosen and set him once more in the proper way.” The title of the exhibition, Ladders to Heaven, is not only a reference to the story of Jacob’s dream, which has an iconographic relative on one of the seals in the collection, but also a reminder of the different ways in which humans in Biblical times tried to make sense of their world and to connect with the powers behind it. The customs and practices resulting from such attempts, Tushingham continued, were known to the authors of the Scripture, who drew on them to obtain “true insights into the nature of God, of man himself, and of the world in which he lived.”

Borowski himself wrote the preface to the catalogue, in which he stressed the need for the peoples of the Western world – but the invitation is extended to all mankind – to rediscover the joint traditions which have shaped it, both the Biblical and the Classical. He presents the worldviews at their base as conflicting but reconcilable, but not as equally compelling. The first derives its authority from a “perfect, omnipotent and sublime” God, who often assumes human features in the Scriptures because of the limited expressive capacities of their authors. The divinity, however, maintains an independent

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221 Muscarella, Ladders to Heaven, 12-13.
identity outside the boundaries of what is said about him. In contrast, the sacred sphere of ancient Greece and Rome, as manifested in the deities who inhabit it, appears as an entirely human creation (“man has made god in his own image, with the moral standards and limited comprehensions of man himself”). The attribution of superhuman power and knowledge to them cannot conceal their nature as projections of the human mind, aimed at the glorification of human potential and lacking any transcendental character.

Forsaking one or the other perspective does not carry the same results, either. While the removal of God from society is given as the direct cause of “[t]he cultural and social upheavals in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century,” an excessive retreat into divine matters has provoked, “at times,” excessive distrust in what humanity can achieve. In any case, the Bible already provides a solution to the conflict, exalting human capabilities as means to live closer to God. Thus, even if Borowski saw nothing wrong with giving humans their due, one is left with the impression that one of the two perspectives is somehow superfluous. It is also worth noting that Egypt and Mesopotamia do not seem to play an autonomous role in the process, but rather to represent merely the stage for the Biblical tradition.

No matter their force, the two attitudes just mentioned express themselves first and foremost in the written sources, which determine the kind of objects best suited to elucidate them. As Borowski declared, the collection was formed with an eye to “artifacts which illustrate, explain or confirm the narratives or events known to me from cuneiform or biblical [sic] sources.” Within the textual evidence, the Bible is obviously the ultimate touchstone: “[t]he collection … does not re-interpret or challenge any word of the Bible; it only supports, in the light of archaeology, the narratives of the Bible.”
He then justifies the choice to entrust the collection to a Foundation, rather than to a single museum, invoking its unique character and the need to keep it intact. The selection of Canada as the seat of the Foundation was due to the capacity of the country to disseminate the message carried by the artifacts to the world at large, and to its impartiality with regard to religious, national, and ethnic claims. His hope was that dedicated people from many different backgrounds would come to recognize and promote not just the scientific, economic, or aesthetic value of the collection, but its moral and social cogency as well. At that point, “it will be free of partisanship; it will value art (but not at the expense of morals); it will strengthen the desire for the good which is inherent in man.” Towards the end, Borowski mentions his plan to split the collection into two permanent venues, one in Canada and one in Israel, and to leave the organization of temporary exhibitions around the world to the Foundation.

The next part of the story is told in the foreword and the preface to the catalogue of another exhibition, *Treasures of the Bible Lands*, held at Tel Aviv Museum in 1987. In 1983, as a Canadian tour of the collection was reaching its end, a decision was made to move it entirely to Jerusalem. Work on a suitable exhibition structure began in 1985, and the new museum was initially scheduled to open in 1988. The exhibition in Tel Aviv, meant to offer a preview of its contents, was the first exhibition of ancient art housed by that institution; its catalogue, a bilingual volume in English and Hebrew, constituted the first book of its kind on the ancient Near East available in the latter language. The preface, once again written by Borowski, is very similar in structure and content to his introduction for the Toronto catalogue, but there are some significant differences. First, the attitude which puts too much emphasis on divine power, to the detriment of human
potential, finds a precise contemporary referent, in the form of Khomeinism. Second, the role attributed to some artifacts seems to have changed. Most notably, while in the earlier catalogue the presence of Syro-Phoenician idols in the collection was cited as just one of several examples of how archaeology can help understand the Biblical text, in the new book it is more strongly connected with the infiltration of pagan cults into Israel. In particular, Borowski mentions the hard stance taken by Moses and Elijah against them, and remarks how their proliferation “make[s] the rise of Hebrew monotheism and its ultimate triumph so much more miraculous.”

10.2. Architectural features of the museum

Despite its proximity to the Israel Museum, the Bible Lands Museum was conceived as a separate institution, without architectural ties to its larger neighbor. In fact, Borowski intended to donate its collection to the already existing museum, on condition that it be displayed in a separate gallery, but the project was eventually abandoned. No significant changes have affected the display since the opening of the museum. There is a plan to erect a new seat for the Israel Antiquities Authority, now housed in the Rockefeller Museum, near the museum. The project is conceived so as to take the existing structures into account and combine with them to form a larger archaeological hub. How its realization will change the character of the museum remains to be seen.

From the outside, the Bible Lands Museum appears as a rectangle oriented

222 Rivka Merhav, ed., Treasures of the Bible Lands: The Elie Borowski Collection (Tel Aviv, 1987), vii-x.
223 I am grateful to Filip Vukosavovic, Curator of the museum, and to his staff for the information about the relationship between the BLMJ, the Israel Museum, and the new structure to be built.
northwest-southeast, relatively wide, but low (fig. 10.1). The entrance is located in the center of the façade; the sides are unadorned, but they are often covered with large banners announcing temporary exhibitions or other events, which give them a colorful look. The building itself, however, functions simply as a cover for the galleries, which are located below the street level and are reached through stairs placed just after the entrance. The declared intent is to give visitors the impression they are entering an archaeological site and promote an image of the museum as a compendium of everything that can be dug up in the Middle East.

The museum itself extends over two floors. The lower floor is used for temporary exhibitions; the museum cafeteria and the curator's office are also located there. As for the upper floor, its plan is based on a 5x5 grid, separated by walls which determine the possible visiting paths (fig. 10.2). The inner ring and part of the outer one constitute the main display, arranged chronologically, while the remaining outer galleries are dedicated to various aspects of the ancient Near Eastern world, such as writing or religion. Except for the front side and the sections near the corners, the outer walls are shaped like a succession of niches and buttresses, in a fashion that is reminiscent of an Egyptian or Mesopotamian enclosure (fig. 10.3). Moreover, many of the dividing walls are trapezoidal in shape and leave openings at the corners as they rise upwards, allowing visitors in one room to peek at the adjacent ones and inviting them to consider each civilization as part of a larger world (fig. 10.4).

Such devices lead visitors to appreciate a prominent characteristic of the display, the frequent interplay between artifacts and architecture. Besides the general features just mentioned, various expressions of this relationship are scattered throughout the galleries.
For example, in room 1, a cylinder seal showing the façade of a temple is placed within a frame that reproduces the same motif (fig. 10.5). More strikingly, the gallery dedicated to the Sumerian temple is shaped like a “holy of holies,” with a case containing a bronze horned helmet, which represents the divinity, placed at a 90-degree angle with respect to the entrance and mounted on top of three steps. White is by far the dominant color throughout the main visiting path, while darker tones are employed in some side galleries, such as rooms 3 and 4. Two types of display cases are used throughout the exhibit, small freestanding ones, roughly cubic in shape, containing a few objects, and larger ones which follow the perimeter of the galleries, set in the niches formed by the outer walls and into the dividing barriers.

A free brochure, with a brief description of the galleries in the permanent exhibit, is available at the entrance, while the latest edition of the guidebook can be purchased at the museum shop, located on top of the stairs, in front of the ticket counter. Rather than listing the contents of each gallery and possibly adding details item by item, the guide is constructed as a linear account divided into “chapters” (the various rooms), with references to the artifacts at specific points. The cases, therefore, work somewhat like illustrations to the written text (the guide contains only pictures of single objects on neutral backgrounds) and, although their arrangement can be understood on its own, they exert their maximum impact when observed on cue. Many galleries, or even single cases, are named after donors and supporters of the museum, whom the guidebook duly acknowledges.
10.3. *The visit as a journey, the Bible as guidebook*

The notion that all the peoples featured in the exhibit, and by extension all humans, belong to one family is reflected in the title of the introductory gallery (“The Family of Man”) and in the guidebook, which stresses the high frequency among ancient peoples of myths about the common origin of humankind. It also informs the decision to make Noah, rather than Abraham, the starting point of the visit. The gallery is divided into two sections by a large panel (fig. 10.6) bearing the first of many Biblical citations scattered throughout the exhibit, which traces the origin of the nations back to the survivors of the Flood (Genesis 10.32 [fig. 10.7]). All such texts appear in Hebrew, English, and Arabic, a choice which adds yet more support to the inclusive program of the museum. Before the panel, on the side facing the entrance, stand three small cases which introduce the descendants of Shem (Levantine, Syrian, and Mesopotamian peoples), Ham (Egyptians and Africans), and Japheth (Aegean, Anatolian, and Central Asian peoples), symbolized respectively by a Sabaean head, a fragment of an Egyptian coffin lid showing a face, and a small bronze *kouros*.

As in other parts of the exhibit, however, a diversity is marked against this universalistic background, although in a rather delicate way. The order of the cases, from left to right as one comes from the entrance, is not the usual one known from the Bible (Shem-Ham-Japheth). Instead, as the guide also points out, the *kouros* comes first, then the head, and finally the lid fragment. Moreover, the three cases are not on the same line, but they form a triangle, with “Shem” pushed back towards the dividing panel.

On the back of the panel, a second citation (*Deuteronomy* 32.8) accompanies a

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224 *Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem*, 11.
comparative chronology, with the Bible and Israel in the central column and the other “Bible Lands” placed on the sides according to geography; the table starts with the Chalcolithic age, marked “In the Beginning” (fig. 10.8). In other words, the sacred text dictates the coordinates of the exhibit not just spatially but also temporally. This principle distinguishes it from the archaeological section of the Israel Museum, where the emphasis is on the Land as a physical entity, and the narrative begins with the first humans living in the region about 1.5 million years ago.

Between the panel and the back wall (fig. 10.9), two cases along the sides offer a sample of the contents of each gallery, up to room 15. Abraham is encountered, albeit indirectly, on the back wall itself, on which an interactive map of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East is placed. Buttons allow turning on lights that mark the itinerary of the patriarch's journey, as well as the borders of the principal second-millennium empires. The introductory room constitutes practically the only section of the exhibit where the partition walls block the sight of the surrounding galleries.

The layout of this first space allows it to be experienced on two different levels. The first is based on the reference to Noah and his descendants, which are put forward as a symbol of the common ancestry of the human family. One could stop at this interpretative stage and move on, starting the tour proper (it is possible to go backwards, as at the National Museum in Athens). The decision to walk around the panel that divides the gallery in half gives access to a further significant amount of information, but it also forces one to confront a more focused perspective, in which the Jewish people and its sacred past play a more central role. By looking at the chronology and using the map, visitors are invited to conceive the pasts of the different civilizations featured in the
exhibit in a hierarchical order, on the one hand, and to visualize the ancient Near East through Abraham's eyes, on the other hand. They are in no way required to subscribe to such points of view, but they cannot ignore them.

From the introductory gallery, the suggested itinerary leads through a doorway to the left into room 1 (“From Hunter to Urban Dweller” [fig. 10.10]). On the wall immediately right of the entrance, a map illustrates the routes of domestication of various plants and animals, while nearby is a panel on the “first village farmers.” The text chosen to summarize the earliest phase of human history supposedly reflected in the Bible is the famous sendoff in which God commands the humans to subjugate the earth and gives them mastery over the other living beings (Genesis 1.28). The road from nomadism to sedentarization is made visible in a series of four freestanding cases, which house respectively flaked stone tools, ground stone artifacts, pottery, and objects from pre-urban northern Mesopotamia. The already-mentioned seal depicting a façade in a like-shaped frame is placed against a barrier which separates rooms 1 and 2, leaving a passage at both ends. On the side opposite the introductory gallery, flanking the doorway to room 4, are two vitrines dedicated to the first signs of political centralization in Mesopotamia and Egypt (cylinder seals employed by centers of production to the left, stone maceheads to the right).

Room 1 gives access to a group of three galleries (rooms 2-4), which are disposed around it like an L and form one corner of the display. Together with room 6, these rooms constitute the part of the permanent exhibit which is grouped thematically rather than chronologically. Each of them deals with a different aspect of communication in the ancient Near East, a subject essential to understanding the formation of the Bible itself.
Before passing into them, visitors have the opportunity to stop by a computer, located near the left passage from room 1 to 2, and consult *Seals: A Journey in Time*, a program designed to supply information about the seals in the collection, their origin, use, and role in the Bible.

Afterwards, in room 2, it is possible to look at actual seals of various kinds (stamp, amulet, cylinder) and at vessels with depictions of plants and animals. Visitors are especially invited to consider the role played by domesticated flora and fauna in religion, as testimonies of the emergence of civilization in Mesopotamia. The Uruk vase, which forms the subject of a wall panel at the left end of the gallery, provides a point of reference for the iconography of many objects displayed here. The presence of the goddess Inanna and her attributes, which provide a symbolic expression for the theme of fertility, is particularly significant. A quotation about the offerings made by Cain and Abel (*Genesis* 4.3-4) links the iconography with the development of agriculture and animal husbandry, the two activities usually associated with the reaching of a civilized state.

In room 3, seals are considered from the point of view of their value, both practical and symbolic. The display focuses on four panels which discuss the different types of seals and their fabrication, their usage, their value as status symbols, and their role in the Bible and in the Jewish world (fig. 10.11). Each panel is introduced by a Scriptural passage referring to seals and sealing, either in a literal or in a metaphorical sense (*Genesis* 38.18; *Job* 38.12-14; *Genesis* 41.41-42; *Song of Songs* 8.6). The computer which hosts the *Seals* program was previously installed in this gallery, according to the guidebook, which emphasizes its versatility and easiness of use.225

Finally, room 4 is dedicated to examples of writing representing various supports

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225 *Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem*, 29.
and epochs. The theme of the gallery is articulated by a trio of cases which occupies the niches along the outer wall. Their position allows them to be taken in from the passage leading back to room 1, in case a visitor decides to see this group of rooms in reverse order. Starting with the one closer to room 3, the cases are dedicated respectively to cuneiform, to pictographic scripts (Egyptian hieroglyphic, Luwian), and to alphabetic ones (Canaanite, Phoenician, Aramaic, Arabic). A fourth case, placed against a wall opposite the entrance from room 3 and thus immediately visible to whoever follows the suggested itinerary, houses an ancient Egyptian papyrus and a pair of bishop's sandals inscribed in Coptic, which represent the chronological extremes of the history of writing summarized in this room (fig. 10.12). Its apex is indicated by a passage from the end of the Pentateuch associated with the case, which records the completion and entrusting to the people of the most revered text, the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 31.24-25).

The chronological path is resumed in room 5, dedicated to the “Pre-Patriarchal World,” that is, the third millennium BC. As soon as visitors enter from room 1, they encounter a freestanding vitrine containing ornaments for standards, to which the guidebook draws attention. The case does not bear a Biblical text, but in this case the guide provides several references to its subject, reminding viewers of the importance of the standard as symbol of the Lord's presence, best exemplified in the story of Moses and the bronze serpent. The gallery also houses four wall cases on the topics of Anatolian and Syrian idols, transportation, jewelry, and trade, which are accompanied by quotations. The passages (Numbers 33.52; Genesis 46.5; Isaiah 61.10; Song of Songs 3.6) provide suggestive, but rather tangential references to such aspects of culture. The cases

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226 *Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem*, 39. The guide quotes Numbers 2.2, Numbers 21.8 (Moses and the bronze serpent) and Exodus 17.2, and mentions undetermined “prophetic utterances.”
are located along the northern, eastern, and southern walls, and they flank a doorway through which one is able to pass into room 14, at the center of the exhibit, already at this point. The remaining artifacts, arranged near the west side of the room, cast light upon a world that was becoming larger thanks to trade. The Syrian centers of Ebla and Mari are particularly emphasized; the latter site is conspicuously represented by a large male head, probably of a worshipper. In the center of the gallery stands a small case with only two objects, a small calcite bowl and a lapis lazuli medallion, both taken as booty by Akkadian kings. The inscriptions on the first object and the material of the second call attention respectively to Makkan (Oman) and Iran, further testifying to the blooming of civilization in areas beyond Mesopotamia.

Another doorway on the western wall of room 5 constitutes the only access to room 6, a confined space titled “The Sumerian Temple” and designed to resemble a place of worship, as the guidebook states. The case on the wall opposite the entrance constitutes an immediate point of attraction. It is filled with statuettes of worshippers, introduced by a reference to a famous Biblical act of devotion, Hannah's plea for the birth of a son, the future prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 1.11). The guide, however, prefers to ignore it for the moment, inviting visitors instead to turn right (as someone entering a temple would have done), thus making them face the side wall where the already-mentioned divine headdress is located (fig. 10.13). Before reaching it, they would encounter a selection of cylinder seals depicting the chief Mesopotamian deities. Beyond the headdress, a pedestal vitrine contains two more seals showing the gods and heroes of Sumer in action; one of them is the object that inspired the title of the Toronto exhibition, Ladders to Heaven.

The presence of animals and monsters on the seals serves to introduce the next part

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227 *Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem*, 47.
of the itinerary, which continues counterclockwise in the three niches built along the western side of the gallery, as in room 4. Cases set in them document different aspects of Sumerian religion. A group of figurines, chiefly of bulls and eagles, illustrate the first theme, the role of animals. The case dedicated to the human participants occupies the central position, as previously mentioned. The third case provides information about the spaces in which religious activity took place, through the display of architectural elements (foundation bricks, door socket) bearing dedicatory inscriptions, accompanied by a model of the Ziggurat of Ur (fig. 10.14). A vitrine opposite the headdress deals with the assumption of divine titles and imagery by kings of the Akkadian and Ur III dynasties. One last case, left of the entrance, contains objects pertaining to music and feasting, whose function is pointed out by a passage from the hymn of celebration at the end of the book of Psalms (*Psalm* 150.1, 5). Except for the two texts indicated, the cases have not been paired with Biblical quotations so far.

The last exit from room 5 leads into room 7, with which Egypt enters the picture. Like room 5, the space on “Old Kingdom Egypt” has four accesses, two leading to the adjacent rooms in the middle ring of the exhibit (5 and 13) and the others to those which form one corner of the outer ring (8 and 9). A large model of the Pyramid Complex at Giza dominates the gallery (fig. 10.15), from which the guidebook takes the cue for a description of the Egyptian view of death and the afterlife. The model is off center, so that it is on axis with the latter two entrances, but not with the former two. The room houses but two cases with artifacts, on either side of the entrance to room 8. The Anatolian pottery (mostly spouted jugs) and the painted vessels from Iran displayed in them are meant to illustrate cultural development outside Mesopotamia and Egypt in the

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228 *Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem,* 55-57.
third millennium. The case about Anatolia is open on both rooms 7 and 8, and visitors are expected to pass from one to the other to gain a full view of the pots and to read the labels associated with them. The same case bears the only Biblical quotation in the gallery (Genesis 24.45).

The next section of the museum, which includes rooms 8-11 and the central corridor, can be seen as an organic series of galleries concerning the age of the Patriarchs, the sojourn in Egypt, and the Exodus, arranged symmetrically. The outermost ones (rooms 8 and 11) illustrate the general situation in the Near East during the Middle and Late Bronze Age, the period of the great empires (Egypt, Hatti, Mitanni, Babylon), engaged in a tense coexistence, and of the many city-states trying to carve out some measure of power in the interstices between them. Room 8 is called “Genesis 14: The Age of Warfare,” with reference to the beginning of that section of the Bible, which mentions a clash between two coalitions of kings. The display consists entirely of weaponry and images of warriors. The passage to which the title alludes (Genesis 14.1-2) appears on a case inserted in the wall at the left end of the room, which contains a votive bronze warrior and various weapons. As in rooms 4 and 6, however, the core of the gallery is formed by three cases, corresponding to the niches in the western wall, and dedicated respectively to Levantine, Mesopotamian, and Anatolian armaments. Two more excerpts from Genesis (49.5 and 11.31) are placed on the first of these cases and on the wall by the opening into room 9. The corresponding section of the guidebook is notable for the high level of technical detail, in contrast with the more accessible accounts concerning history or religion given for other rooms.229

In the pair of large rooms (9 and 10) which correspond to the western and northern

229 Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 59-61.
corners of the upper floor, the scope narrows in order to show the cultural environment
the Patriarchs would have met in Palestine and their descendants in Egypt. Room 9 can
be ideally divided into two subsections, accessed respectively through the entrances from
room 8 and from room 7 (fig. 10.16). The first subsection is characterized by a long case
running along the wall left of the doorway. The center of the case is reserved for a tablet
from Larsa, inscribed with a ritual calendar for the month of Shabatu/Shevat; artifacts
related to the gods mentioned in it are displayed on each side of it. The whole ensemble is
crowned by the well-known verses from the book of *Qohelet* (3.1-5) about the existence
and desirability of an allotted time for everything. Another case, located right opposite
the entrance, houses cult objects from the Amorite kingdoms, paired with passages
dealing with idols (*Genesis* 31.19, 34).

Visitors arriving from room 7 are greeted instead by the sight of a painted wooden
coffin, which introduces them to the part of the exhibit dedicated to Middle Kingdom
Egypt. In other words, if they choose, they can continue to follow the development of
Egyptian civilization without interruption, bypassing the sections on Mesopotamia,
Anatolia, and the Levant in the corner of the building entirely. The break with the rest of
room 9 is not so sharp, however, since many objects placed near the other half of the
gallery are pertinent to the religious world of the Egyptians, their gods and myths.
Figurines of craftsmen, isolated or joined in models of workshops, which were deposited
in tombs to act magically as servants, provide details about other aspects of everyday life.
A small space before entering the central corridor is reserved for Crete. No quotations are
placed in this area of the museum, although the guidebook draws several parallels
between the artifacts on display and the stories of Joseph and Moses.\textsuperscript{230}

The passage that links rooms 9 and 10 is not numbered, and the guidebook devotes only a few paragraphs to it,\textsuperscript{231} yet it represents a crucial point in the narrative concerning Egypt and in the overall structure of the museum. Three large Egyptian artifacts are displayed here (fig. 10.17). A case in the center protects a wall painting of a husband and wife receiving offerings; two niches on its sides contain a seated statue of Ramses II and the lid of an anthropoid sarcophagus. The role assigned to the trio of monuments in the exhibit is suggested by a quote from the beginning of \textit{Exodus} (1.8-11), which refers to Pharaoh ordering the enslavement of the Israelites. Other physical features confirm that the objects are supposed to evoke the lowest point in the ancient history of the Jewish people. The corridor must be considered not only in relation to the adjacent spaces, but also to the central part of the display, located in front of it and visible through a glass wall, which presents the institution of the monarchy and the construction of the Temple. Although the area is not accessible from the hallway, and the view of its contents is partially blocked by a Neo-Hittite relief, visitors seem invited to establish a connection between the two poles of Jewish historical tradition.

The civilization of the Nile holds a primary position in room 10, as already mentioned. The basic arrangement consists of an alignment of cases on both sides of the path that ideally continues the corridor. Once again, the main theme of the gallery, New Kingdom Egypt, is developed in the three niches in which the outer wall of the building is articulated. The first vitrine deals with the historical background, showing artifacts related to the expulsion of the Hyksos, the expansion into Palestine and Nubia, and the

\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem}, 66-69.
\textsuperscript{231} \textit{Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem}, 71.
Amarna period; the following two cases are dedicated respectively to cosmetics and funerary art. The display culminates in the case placed against the wall opposite the exit from the corridor itself (fig. 10.18). It mirrors the one with the calendar in room 9, and its location causes it to be the first thing seen by visitors as they come out of the passage. That this element is meant to be the next station in an ideal journey is demonstrated not only by the topic of the case (Ramesside Egypt and the Exodus), but also by the quotation associated with it, the announcement of the final plague, the death of the Egyptian firstborns (Exodus 12.12). As the guidebook remarks, while the objects in this section hint at the greatness of Egyptian civilization, they suggest a contrast between the efforts made by the supposed Pharaoh of the Exodus, Ramses II, to glorify and perpetuate the memory of himself, on the one hand, and the Scripture, which puts a class of lowly workers in the spotlight and does not even preserve the name of their stubborn opponent, on the other.232

The cases on the right side of the path are dedicated to other regions and civilizations in the Late Bronze Age (Syria and Canaan, the Hittite empire, Mitanni and the Hurrians, Ugarit and the Levant), which the guidebook invites the visitors to observe in reverse order, after they – together with the Hebrews – have left Egypt. An interesting detail is the position of the cases dedicated to the more powerful political entities, Mitanni and Hatti, which flank the entrance to room 12. Similarly, the placement of the artifacts illustrating Mitanni and the Levant close to room 11 could be motivated by the proximity of the two regions to the peoples presented there, linguistic in one case, given the Indo-European affiliation of the Mitanni aristocracy, geographical in the other. Apart from the passage mentioned earlier, only a handful of Biblical quotations are employed in

232 Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 77-78.
the gallery, none so emotionally charged (*Numbers* 13.28 on Syria and Canaan; *Exodus* 16.3 on cosmetics; *Joshua* 1.4 on the Hittites).

The same spatial organization is maintained in room 11, which bears the general title “The Sea Peoples,” although the display covers the entire eastern Mediterranean in the late second millennium BC. The entrance from room 10 is particularly emphasized, being flanked by two vitrines, each enclosing a Mycenaean sarcophagus (fig. 10.19). A quotation on one of them, which reiterates the tradition about the descent of the Aegean peoples from Noah through his son Japheth (*Genesis* 10.4-5), introduces the theme of the gallery. Inside the room itself, the tripartite division of the outer wall is employed once again to acquaint visitors with areas and peoples which came to the fore in this period, namely, Crete, Mycenae, the Philistines, the Sardinians, Phrygia, Lydia, and western Anatolia. The central position is occupied by the materials associated with the accounts about the “Sea Peoples,” especially the Philistines, whose status of immigrants is duly reaffirmed by a Biblical quotation (*Amos* 9.7).

Cyprus receives significant attention, too. A case with pottery and figurines on the inner side of the gallery offers a glimpse of the culture of the island, together with a bronze cultic stand in a freestanding vitrine. The last artifact is located just inside the entrance to room 12, as if to mark the transition to the metalwork exhibited there. The wall case is the only other space in the area which bears a text from the Scripture, a prophecy mentioning the arrival on ships of the Kittim (*Numbers* 24.24). In the Hebrew Bible, the term seems to designate the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean in general and the inhabitants of these regions, although its immediate origin is apparently to be
found in the name of the city of Kition on Cyprus.  

The central part of the display revolves around rooms 13 and 14, with rooms 5, 7, 12 and 15 serving as links with the sequence of galleries in the outer ring. Room 12 (“Iranian Horsemen”) continues the overview of the late second millennium, focusing on the eastern side of the Biblical world. Two cases, which contain materials related to the Middle Assyrian kingdom and Elam and to Kassite Babylonia, flank the passage to room 10. The rest of the gallery is dedicated to Iran, more specifically to the time of the arrival of the Medes and of other nomadic peoples from Central Asia. A quotation from the prophet Jeremiah (50.41-42) crowns a map of the routes followed by the nomads, on the wall left of the entrance from room 11. Next to it are wall and freestanding cases with more examples of creatively molded and decorated pottery from the region, as well as luxury items in ivory and bronze. A final case, situated next to the opening into room 13, contains more examples of Iranian bronzework, namely, trappings for horses and riders, labeled as coming from Luristan (fig. 10.20). Although such objects are among the worst affected by the lack of information about their archaeological context, which sometimes calls even their authenticity into question, the issue of their provenience is left untreated in the guidebook, where the only mention of the region is in the caption to a picture of a standard finial.  

The two galleries dealing with the “age of migrations” set the stage for the main scene, the development of the Levantine states in the early first millennium. Its presentation begins in room 13 (“Stones of Aram”), which deals with the emergence of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms, represented chiefly by relief sculptures, many of which were

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233 The Anchor Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Kittim.”
234 Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 92-93.
executed on orthostats. Comprising some of the largest artifacts in the exhibit, they help
taking in a suddenly widening space, which almost catches visitors by surprise, given the
absence of clearly defined boundaries between rooms 13 and 14 (fig. 10.21). Their
placement along the walls turns them into a sort of procession that gently leads visitors
towards the heart of the display, almost paying homage to what follows. The guidebook
describes some of the reliefs, calling attention to their stylistic variety, and points to a
series of funerary stelai lined along the northern wall. The central piece, interposed
between the section on the United Monarchy and the Egyptian artifacts in the Passage,
depicts a male and a female seated at a table, accompanied by symbols of fertility and
industriousness (ear of corn, spindle, loaves of bread). The negative memory of the
captivity in Egypt is thus superseded by a more auspicious image.

Both the title and the arrangement of room 14 bring “Israel among the nations.”
Prepared by the striking view of the reliefs, visitors realize that they have reached a key
point in the narrative, namely, the growth of Israel into an entity which partakes fully of
the political and cultural environment of the Iron Age Levant. A large model of Jerusalem
in the First Temple period, which visitors see as they enter from room 12 and turn,
occupies most of the gallery. It marks the kingdom of David and Solomon as an actual
nation, since it testifies that all the requirements for its establishment, beginning with a
strong political and religious center, were present. The two cases which flank it, both
enhanced by Biblical passages, allude to the institution of monarchic power, too. In one
are gathered handles bearing the royal seal and other implements, which are related to the
furnishings ordered by Solomon for the Temple (1 Kings 7.48, 50). The other case
illustrates the culture of the Phoenicians, to whom the Scriptures assign an important role

235 Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 96-97.
in the erection of the building; the text chosen for it, however, does not refer to this event, being instead a passage from Ezekiel's “prophecy on Tyre” (Ezekiel 27.32-33).

Apart from the cases, the only other artifacts depicting the period to which the room is dedicated are the model itself and the Proto-Aeolic capital that surmounts it, one of the rare items in the display which has a known provenience. The gallery appears spacious, even barer than others, possibly because its primary purpose is to engage visitors on multiple levels of meaning, just as the introductory gallery does. Its location, directly opposite the Egyptian artifacts in the passage between rooms 9 and 10, is already extremely significant. Moreover, the screen against which the model is placed delimits a narrow alcove, which can be considered the “holy of holies” of the museum (fig. 10.22). The space is large enough not to be mistaken for a service area, yet its contents are invisible from the other side of the partition wall. It is freely accessible, but passage through it is not necessary to continue the visit, since the doorway to room 15 is located beside the model. The decision to cross the boundary is left entirely to the visitor.

If one resolves to do so, he or she finds a small gallery mostly devoted to the religion of the Levantine states, the cultural realm that traditionally sets Israel apart from its neighbors. Attached to the partition wall, therefore as close as possible to the model of Jerusalem, and surmounted by a Biblical passage in which God's greatness is praised after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15.11), is a series of vertical panels (fig. 10.23). They illustrate the religious systems of the ancient inhabitants of the region, through a combination of explanatory notes and small artifacts, chiefly seals and inscribed artifacts showing theophoric names. The panel in the center, slightly advanced with respect to the others, bears the title “The Religion of Israel” and deals with the monotheistic cult of
YHWH, while the side panels, grouped under the heading “Religious Beliefs of
Neighboring Peoples,” are dedicated to the pantheons of the surrounding polities. More
specifically, the space to the right of the central panel provides information on male gods,
and the one to the left on female deities.

Other cases in the alcove contain ivories from Syria and again from Phoenicia,
accompanied by Biblical references to those lands (Amos 6.1, 4; 1 Kings 10.18). The
different groups of Phoenician artifacts echo the ambivalent reputation the people enjoys
in the Scriptures as neighbors of the Israelites. If the Biblical tradition assigns them a
fundamental part in the construction of the Temple, they are also blamed as a prime
vector for the spread of idolatry in the Promised Land, a phenomenon which finds
expression in the story of Jezebel. Both aspects of their image are mentioned in the
guidebook.\textsuperscript{236}

Once again, then, physical markers are employed to indicate a shift from the
universal characterization of the museum to a polarized worldview in which the
specificity of the Jewish people takes center place. As in the introductory gallery, the
change in perspective is not revealed bluntly to the observers. The secluded space
beckons them and encourages them to look behind the screen. In so doing, visitors
become personally involved in the construction of a twofold identity. On the outside,
Israel is a nation like the others, sharing the culture of its neighbors and conscious of its
strength. Its past, however, also makes it a special community with a unique position in
the world, which needs an additional willing effort to be discovered and appreciated.

The same studied use of openings and barriers can be noticed at other locations in
the museum. For example, the plan of the permanent exhibit suggests that visitors have

\textsuperscript{236} Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 101-104, 106.
the option to bypass its central section altogether, and go directly from room 11 to room 16. In reality, however, the center of the doorway between the two galleries is blocked by a screen which serves as background for one of the cases and leaves only two side passages (fig. 10.24). Such an arrangement signals clearly that visitors are not supposed to continue in that direction. Rather, it is suggested that they keep following the path traced by the Biblical texts, in a sense eventually joining the population of the Jerusalem of the past. Once they arrive there, as just mentioned, it is up to them to decide which role they want to assume.

Having contemplated ancient Israel at the peak of its glory, visitors then encounter the agents of its downfall in room 15, “Assyria the Rod of My Anger.” The expression, taken from the book of Isaiah (10.5-6), is repeated on a panel that divides the room in two. The protagonist of this gallery is the Assyrian king Sennacherib, whose inscriptions and reliefs recording the siege of Lachish (701 BC), discovered around 1850, provided one of the earliest independent confirmations of historical events recounted in the Bible. It is thus not surprising to find a relevant passage from his Annals, one of the very few non-Biblical texts in the display, near the prophetic utterance. The importance of this agreement is stressed further by the installation of another model, placed on the wall to left of the entrance from room 14. It reproduces the suite of rooms from Sennacherib's “Palace Without Rivals” at Nineveh which includes the cycle of reliefs depicting the assault on the city; part of a slab from the same building provides a snapshot of Assyrian warfare.

Before reaching the model, however, the visitor's gaze is captured by the two images set before the central panel which allude to the interaction between Assyria and
the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (fig. 10.25). The first is another relief from
Sennacherib's palace, which shows a Chaldean family being deported. The victims, rather
than the conquerors, are given center place, and visitors are invited to sympathize with
their plight – and with the fate of the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom following its
conquest by Sargon II, Sennacherib's father, in 720 BC. The second artifact is a much
earlier stela, dating from the time of Shalmaneser III. Its significance, however, lies not in
its date, but in its subject. It depicts a “chief cupbearer,” a royal emissary like the one sent
by Sennacherib to negotiate the surrender of Jerusalem with Hezekiah, king of Judah,
during the same campaign that witnessed the siege of Lachish. According to the Bible,
the Assyrian demands were refused, but the city could not be taken. As in room 5, the
relevant passages (2 Kings 19.32-33, 36; Isaiah 37.33-34, 37) do not appear directly in
the gallery, but they are noted in the guidebook.237 Together with them, the guide brings
forward Herodotus, who records a miraculous defeat of Sennacherib, as well as the king's
own version of the event. Both testimonia must be handled with care, however. The
Greek historian gives his report in the context of an Assyrian attack against Egypt, not the
siege of Jerusalem.238 As for Sennacherib, he claims to have locked Hezekiah inside the
city and to have received a hefty tribute from him. This last statement, which the guide
leaves unchallenged, sounds odd after the presentation of the Assyrian campaign as a
failure, unless its outcome is meant to be contrasted with the idea that the addition of new
territories to the empire counted as a victory for the Assyrians.

A third reproduction, a three-dimensional plan of Babylon ca. 600 BC, set up
vertically on the southern wall of the room, introduces the theme of its other half,
Assyria’s neighbors Babylonia and Urartu (fig. 10.26). Should anyone enter this area from room 16, the dividing panel immediately gives an idea of it through a picture of the Ishtar Gate. Other features of this space include a map of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, placed after the 3-D plan, and a case dedicated to the Urartian civilization. The two elements are accompanied by passages from the book of Jeremiah (51.7, 27), which recall the past greatness of Babylon and mention the peoples who are going to invade her as divine punishment for her pride. Like its twin, the section on Babylon carries pathetic undertones, since it evokes the capture of Jerusalem and the traumatic experience of the exile. The break with the past is manifest in the layout of the gallery, as the model in room 13 is no longer visible after going around the panel. Once again, visitors are gently encouraged to join the Israelites in their journey, and to leave their familiar environment for a foreign country, with only the word of the prophet to comfort them.

Jeremiah’s words find confirmation as one passes into Room 16, labeled “The Splendor of Persia,” the physical and conceptual opposite of the display on Babylon. The room has two points of attraction, both underscored by Biblical quotations. More than other rooms in the outer circuit of the museum, it is clearly meant to be approached from the middle ring of galleries. Two features suggest a privileged path: the presence of the screen in the direction of room 11, and the fact that, of the usual three niches articulating the outer wall, the central one seems to have a primary role in the arrangement. Yet another model, in this case a rendering of the Apadana in Susa, occupies the middle space (fig. 10.27). The cases in the adjacent niches house objects used in Persian Judea and artifacts related to Persian culture proper. The first bears the edict with which, in the Bible, Cyrus the Great lets the Israelites return to their country and rebuild the Temple (2
Chronicles 36.23), while the other is accompanied by the end of the oracle about the Persian king in the book of Isaiah (45.13), where his enforcing of the same act is announced.

The second notable element is the back side of the screen that separates rooms 16 and 11, to which is attached a map of the Persian Empire with the indication of the various satrapies (fig. 10.28). Over it is a second excerpt from the same oracle in the book of Isaiah (45.1, 6), in which Cyrus is designated as the divine instrument of the return of Israel from exile. The composition is not immediately visible if one reaches the room through the narrow passages which connect it with room 11, and thus serves as a further incentive to follow the suggested itinerary.

The last quarter of the exhibit deals with the Hellenistic and Roman periods, with an appendix, in the last room, on Sassanian Mesopotamia, the background of the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud. As in the section of the exhibit on the opposite corner, the rooms in the outer ring embrace the Biblical world at large, while room 18, which is part of the middle tier of galleries, concentrates on a subject more directly related to the Jewish people (“Rome and Judea”). Very few quotations are employed in this area, which deals with topics already outside the scope of the Hebrew Bible.

No physical barriers mark the beginning of the final part of the tour. Rather, a small display about the Arabian kingdoms, located on the virtual border between rooms 16 and 17, forms a sort of “buffer zone” which prefigures the theme of Biblical wisdom reaching the ends of the earth. The choice of a passage from the tale of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10.1-2) for it is a rather obvious one.

Room 17 is the last gallery arranged on the basis of a succession of three niches
along the outer wall. The corresponding wall cases follow once again a sensible order, in this case chronological. The first two, for someone coming from room 16, are dedicated to Egypt during the Late and the Ptolemaic periods, while the third deals with Alexander the Great and his successors. The guidebook, however, presents them in reverse, in order to underline first the turning point constituted by the endeavors of the Macedonian ruler, although it delves more deeply into the Egyptian artifacts later. Other groups of artifacts refer to Judea in the Hellenistic period, with a particular focus on the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes and on the Hasmonean dynasty. The gallery also features a stela and some small objects of Carthaginian origin. The section on Ptolemaic Egypt spills into room 19, thereby establishing a tighter link between the two galleries, which continue to illustrate the changes in religious and burial practices in that culture.

The guidebook describes the layout of room 18 in a very direct manner. Visitors entering from room 17 can see Jewish artifacts on their right side, while the left half is dedicated to Christian materials (fig. 10.29). The first group includes Jewish and Roman coins, their iconography mainly dealing with the two Jewish Revolts and their suppression, protective amulets made of precious metals, and implements bearing symbols reminiscent of the Temple, ultimately destroyed at the hands of the Romans. The second section consists of sarcophagi, mosaics, and artifacts employed in early Christian architecture and liturgy, and notable for their adoption of texts and episodes from the Old Testament reinterpreted in the light of the new faith, such as the binding of Isaac. The debt of Christian imagery to Classical models is pointed out, too, in two sarcophagi located right after the entrance from room 17, and decorated with motifs common to both iconographic repertoires, chiefly the praying figure and the shepherd. The display is
accompanied by two suggestive Biblical quotations. One, a prediction of dire calamities for the people of Israel found in the book of the prophet Joel (2.5-7), which presumably alludes to the end of Judean independence, appears in the gallery itself, above one of the sarcophagi. As heading for the chapter on room 18, however, the guidebook uses a much more heartening prophecy contained in the book of Isaiah (62.1). Since the Christian tradition sees in the passage a reference to the advent of Christ, the choice well suits the general theme which characterizes the second half of the gallery.

In room 19 (“Roman and Coptic Egypt”), the second to last, the display focuses on Egyptian burial practices, both pagan and Christian, and on Coptic textiles. Its main features are a long sloping case which houses a painted shroud, and a continuous long wall niche used to exhibit mummy portraits and elaborately decorated cloth. Another passage from Ezekiel's “lament over Tyre” (27.7) is visible on the wall, where Egyptian embroidered cloth is specifically mentioned as the material employed to make sails for the Tyrian ships.

With room 20, located near the introductory gallery, the visitor is led back to Mesopotamia, and the circle is complete, in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense. From this gallery it is possible to return to the bottom of the entrance stairs, although the central part of the exit is obstructed by yet another screen. Once again, the layout of the display points to a double layer of meaning, although walls and openings are employed here in a slightly but significantly different way. From room 17 the way seems to split. Visitors can apparently choose to proceed straight through room 18, limiting themselves to a more historical and political overview of the period depicted, or they can extend their attention to rooms 19 and 20, and have one last, deeper look at the religious side of
Judaism.

Contrary to what happens in the introductory gallery and in room 14, however, in this case visitors do not have a choice, since the passage between room 18 and the introductory gallery is closed by a low barrier (fig. 10.9). Although they seem forced to accept a tighter perspective, it is precisely this narrow crossing which ultimately leads them to a universal message. In fact, the very last Biblical passage encountered in the tour is put on the screen at the far end of room 20, above a reproduction of Borowski's head. Written in much bigger letters than the other quotations, it is taken from a very expressive text, the oracle in the book of Isaiah (2.3) which calls all the peoples of the Earth to the holy mountain of the Lord. Intriguingly, this last feature of the exhibit is absent from the guidebook, which ends abruptly with the description of the last freestanding case in the same room, dedicated to Sassanian jewelry and coins. The sudden termination of the written narrative seems to imply that visitors have to decide by themselves what to carry away from the museum.

The combination of word and image is clearly intended as a summary of the ideals championed by the museum and its founder. Rather than being celebrated merely as father of the museum, Borowski is portrayed as a scholar and philanthropist in whom two worlds meet and who was able to turn his personal experience into a lasting call for unity among all human beings.
10.4. A truly universal message?

It could be objected that the claim to universality put forward by the museum is unfounded, since it is tied to the admission, on the visitor's part, that the omnipresent Biblical citations resonate in some way with his or her worldview. The free brochure states that the artifacts on display are meant “to place the Bible in its historical context,” but the relationship between the one and the others could be conceived the other way around; the artifacts provide the basis for reading history by the light of the Bible. As mentioned, quotations from other sources, Mesopotamian and Egyptian, are few and almost all confined to thematic panels. Borowski intended to create a liberating and inspiring atmosphere, but one can ask if the wide exposure given to a single narrative thread has the opposite effect, resulting in a constricting environment instead.

The issue, however, needs some elaboration. On the one hand, the quotations are not meant to promote religious beliefs or theological assertions. Their immediate referents are definite aspects of material culture and social behavior (communication, religion, trade, war, display of power and wealth), shared by a number of peoples across a very wide spatial and temporal interval. On the other hand, the artifacts take additional meaning from the Biblical framework and are inscribed within an intelligible vision of history. It is sufficient to recall the domestication of plants and animals put under the shadow of the divine command, in room 1; the compilation of the Law of Moses as the epitome of the most definite sign of civilization, writing, in room 4; and the rise and fall of states and empires conceived as the effect of arrogance and retribution.

Concurrent readings of the objects, which could stem from their archaeological
context, for example, are difficult to pursue, if only because many of them are from collections. In the setting of the museum, however, the disconnection does not reduce the expressive force of the artifacts. It could be said, in fact, that the Bible itself supplies a context for them. Even if the individual pieces can be linked to known cultural backgrounds, the reference to a tradition portrayed as influential for all humans turns the exhibit as a whole into a sort of bubble, lying outside precise spatial and temporal coordinates. As long as it maintains its internal coherence, there is no need for the objects to appear as products of an intricate social and economic reality in order to recount the story. The thinning of the historical dimension turns a visit to the museum into a return to an origin in which all humans are theoretically able to recognize themselves, just as Borowski envisioned. To borrow a concept dear to historians of religion like Mircea Eliade, the movement through the galleries can be assimilated to the retelling of a foundation myth.

Of course, the tendency of the collection to assume an ideal character makes its collocation in Jerusalem decisive, since it brings history back into the picture. Like an anchor, the Bible Lands Museum draws the exemplary events recalled in the display out of the realm of myth and causes them to become interwoven with history. Thus, the artifacts, no longer having ties to a land of their own, become markers of an archetypal yet supposedly tangible Land, of which the museum constitutes the map.

As already mentioned, however, the actual layout of the museum allows some

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239 A similar point is made with regard to the authenticity of the objects in the collection, specifically the glass ones, by Carol Meyer, in her review of *Reflections on Ancient Glass from the Borowski Collection*, ed. Robert Steven Bianchi et al., *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 66 no. 2 (April 2007), 134. As she contends, if the purpose of their study is to recognize and make them enjoyable as creations of beauty, “then it does not matter whether they were made three years ago or three thousand.”

240 The universal need to repeat – and to actually relive – how the world came to be, in order to prevent its dissolving back into chaos, is the central subject of Eliade’s seminal book, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York, 1954).
measure of diversion from what could be perceived as a single-minded program. Moreover, the elevated atmosphere of the upper floor is balanced by the temporary exhibitions and other forms of outreach put together on the lower floor, which allow the artifacts to be grounded more firmly in their social context, and the ideas underlying the permanent exhibit to be examined in greater depth. The imposing presence of the Israel Museum provides another opportunity to look at the past of the region in an alternative, more “secular” way.

Such internal and external alternatives to the main attraction place the Bible Lands Museum somewhere in the middle between the linear prodding that characterizes the National Museum in Athens and the considerable, at times bewildering, license to wander that can be experienced inside Palazzo Altemps. In all three museums, each artifact receives meaning from its connection with the rest of the exhibit. However, while the museum in Athens is comparable to a traditional book, to be read according to a rigid structure, and the one in Rome to a cloud of text, where every point touches every other one, the display in Jerusalem can be said to resemble a controlled intertext. It leaves some physical and interpretative freedom to its “readers,” but always within a framework (the Biblical) which is not negotiable. Perhaps the best definition of the Bible Lands Museum, then, is as a modern example of commentary to the Bible, the last heir to the scholarly tradition with which one becomes acquainted at the very end of the tour.
CHAPTER 11

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM BEIT MIRIAM, KIBBUTZ PALMACHIM

In certain respects, the Museum Beit Miriam resembles the museum of Persiceto. Both of them, in fact, are located in areas notable for their environmental richness, and both have made efforts to place the cultural remains of the past in a larger discourse which pays attention to natural resources and to the way humans have employed them.

The museum is part of Kibbutz Palmachim, a community situated on the Mediterranean coast, not far from Rishon le-Zion (First to Zion), the first stable Zionist foundation in Palestine in modern times, and from the suburbs of Tel Aviv. The settlement belongs to the second wave of *kibbutzim*, which sprang up throughout what would become Israel around and immediately after World War II. It was formed in 1949, at a time when the borders of the new state were still frail and it was deemed vital to expand the areas inhabited and cultivated by Jews as much and as quickly as possible. As was the case for many *kibbutzim* established in the wake of the 1948 war, the location of Palmachim was partly suggested by military reasons, such as the need to guard the coastline, and it stands close to an abandoned Arab village, Nabi Rubin, where a strand of Muslim (but not Jewish) tradition locates the tomb of Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and where a very popular summer festival was held until the war.241

241 A summary of the history of the village is given in Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape. The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948* (Berkeley, 2000), 274-276. He reports that, after decades of neglect, culminating in 1991 with the demolition of the minaret of the local mosque, the site was “rededicated” by replacing a banner which praised Allah and Reuben as His prophet with one bearing [caption]
The founders of the *kibbutz* were former members of Palmach, the elite branch of the Haganah (the Jewish clandestine organization active in the pre-state period), which had been disbanded shortly after the conclusion of the hostilities. Some of the settlers used to belong to the Sea Scouts and wanted to become fishermen, while others took up agriculture. The first archaeological artifacts in the area came to light during construction work for houses and sewers, while others turned up in the fields or were caught while fishing. One member of the *kibbutz*, in charge of tractor work, started collecting them, helped by his wife, to whom the museum, instituted in 1969, is dedicated.

The complex is located near the edge of the settlement, on a terrace overlooking the beach. It consists of two parallel structures, between which is a small green area where a few large artifacts are displayed (figs. 11.1-2). A third building stands closer to the extremity of the terrace, north of the museum proper, but it is not related to it, being the first house built in the *kibbutz*, which later became a members' club and is now used for special events (fig. 11.3).

The section of the complex to the right of the entrance, known today as the old wing, is the original seat of the museum (fig. 11.4). Its plan is very simple, consisting of a single large hall, without internal divisions. It was designed by the Israeli architect Shmuel Bixele, who often worked for *kibbutzim*, especially on public spaces, and was very attentive to the relationship between space and lighting. His project excluded

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242 The words used by Jacob to bless his son, according to the Bible (*Genesis* 49.3). On the rapid growth of *kibbutzim* in this period, see also Henry Near, *Crisis and Achievement, 1939-1995*, vol. 2 of *The Kibbutz Movement: A History* (London, 1997), 146-150.

242 I am deeply grateful to the curator of Beit Miriam, Dror Porat, for the information about the early life and the current activities of the museum. A short history and description of it can be found in Nadav Kashtan, “Maritime Treasures of Israel: From Excavations to Collections,” *Museum International* 48 no. 4 (1996), 12.
artificial light completely, relying instead on two rows of windows on the long sides of the building to provide illumination, enhanced through reflection on the concave ceiling (fig. 11.5). Since the museum is oriented north-south, one half of it was in full light in the morning and the other in the afternoon; around noon, the light would fall on a glass panel which forms the northern end of the building. Later on, however, the western row of windows had to be closed off because of rain seeping in, and light bulbs were introduced.

A large part of the collection revolves around the theme of maritime trade. It consists of jars, amphorae, and other transport vessels related to the nearby ancient harbor of Yavneh Yam and to other sites in the area. The exhibit is arranged into two lines of cases on the long sides of the hall, separated by a large silhouette of Europe and the Mediterranean that fills the south end of the hall and is dotted by examples of vessels typical of various areas. Some larger containers and other finds, such as a terracotta sarcophagus, have been placed throughout the hall directly on the floor. Since the vases in the display are generally undecorated and can quickly come to be confused in the eyes of a non-specialist, the map helps differentiate their individual characters. Particularly prominent are the remains of a large Byzantine mosaic, recovered in a salvage excavation in 1980243 and mounted vertically along the north wall, before the glass panel, which therefore can no longer be admired at close range (fig. 11.6).

The hall is an undivided space, without architectural cues to mark a definite visiting path. Rather, people are free to wander around as they please, although the disposition of the cases along the two long walls may tend to polarize their movement. The entrance is in fact positioned in the northwest corner of the building, and its proximity to the western row of cases encourages one to follow it and walk around the room in a counterclockwise

direction. Such a route leaves the mosaic – as it did the glass panel before it – in a highly scenographic position as the endpoint of the tour. The work is not directly visible from entrance, which opens on a small office set up between its support and the north wall. If visitors let their gaze be drawn to the cases, the mosaic comes fully into view only when they turn around after seeing the first half of the display.

The new wing used to be the communal library of the *kibbutz*, which was eventually moved elsewhere to protect the books from humidity and to free more space for the collection. The wing opened in 2003, at a time when ecology was gaining importance in the educational system. While the old wing houses an exclusively archaeological collection, the purpose of the new wing is to make visitors aware of the continued symbiosis between humans and the marine environment in the present as well as in the past. It, too, consists of a single room, accessed from the northeast corner, after passing a short corridor on which the offices of the museum open. A small area in the southwest part of the complex is dedicated to the memory of the *kibbutz* members who died in the war of 1948 and in subsequent conflicts.

As soon as visitors enter, they find to their right a further selection of transport vessels placed on an open platform, at different levels; its top runs upwards, giving the area some resemblance to the profile of a ship (fig. 11.7). The mental link with the world of sea traders is thus not interrupted by moving from one section of the museum to the other. Three cases along the west side, which replaced a series of windows, also contain similar artifacts (fig. 11.8). On the opposite side, one can instead admire a row of large pictures of marine flora and fauna, alternating with reconstructions of the sea bottom inside small cases, both used to illustrate the ecological diversity of the area (fig. 11.9).
Three quotations in Hebrew, all connected with the sea and navigation, are visible along
the top of the northern, western, and southern walls. The two headers facing each other
on the short sides of the hall reproduce passages from the Psalms. One of them (Psalm
77.19), which occupies the wall opposite the entrance area, above a large picture of a
patch of red coral, celebrates the power of the Lord to open pathways through the sea,
referring to the crossing of the Red Sea. The second text (Psalm 107.23), placed directly
above the stand with the pottery, is a more direct mention of seafaring merchants. The last
text, attributed to Ramy Klein, an Israeli marine biologist and underwater photographer,
draws a likeness between man and sea, since the sea wind, like the human spirit,244 longs
for places far away and knows no boundaries. The content and position of the quotation
suggest a link between the economic importance of the sea and its symbolic force. In
addition to serving as an exhibition space, the room is used for projections and hands-on
activities. The entrance to the new wing is also used for temporary displays, which
change every three or four months.

The museum lacks a dedicated space for full-scale exhibitions, a condition
unsuccessfully brought by its staff to the attention of the Ministry of Culture. Scarcity of
room is, in fact, the most pressing issue the institution has to face; according to the
curator, Dror Porat, if something new is put in, something else has literally to go out. This
situation was documented vividly during a visit to Palmachim in July of 2010, when
renovation of the old wing was in progress. All the artifacts not kept in the cases that
could be moved safely were taken out of the room, but the only available space to receive
them was the floor of the new wing, which was strewn with them. A comparison can be
made once again with the museum of Persiceto, where a room on the ground floor, meant

244 The sentence plays on the word *ruah*, which means both “wind” and “spirit” in Hebrew.
to give visitors an overview of the surrounding area and its earliest settlement, recently became inaccessible, as the space was needed to store didactic panels used in a temporary exhibition.

As Porat explained to me, even if adequate resources were at hand, expanding the museum is not at present possible, since the whole kibbutz is undergoing a planning phase. He also mentioned the existence of specific regulations also prescribe that nothing can be built near the Museum Beit Miriam or within a certain distance from the beach.\textsuperscript{245} In any case, even without such restrictions, the extremely sensitive location of the museum imposes caution, since any new construction could easily break the visual and conceptual link between the building and the sea.

Other kinds of issues seem to affect the everyday life of the museum less deeply. Conservation, for example, does not raise particular problems, since the artifacts included in the collection are mostly made of clay; only metal objects need periodic cleaning. Such a situation, of course, can be due to the likelihood that unusual finds, which often require special care, are sent off to larger and more prestigious institutions.

The kibbutz lies in the countryside and is almost cut off from public transportation, two factors which discourage casual tourism. Even more than in the Italian and Greek cases considered, school children represent the primary component of the audience of the museum. As a result, tours normally follow a well-established format, lasting about three hours. The children are given an introduction outside, during which they are invited to

\textsuperscript{245} Porat's remarks could be related to the criticism surrounding the projected construction of a seaside resort at Palmachim beach, which was blocked by the Israeli government around the time of my trip to the country, although I learned about it only much later. More details can be found in Michal Margalit, “Palmachim Beach Development Vote Delayed,” \textit{Globes}, July 4, 2010, \url{http://www.globes.co.il/serveen/globes/docview.asp?did=1000571561&fid=1124} and “Greens Notch Win as Beach Resort Put [sic] on Hold,” \textit{Globes}, July 11, 2010, \url{http://www.globes.co.il/serveen/globes/docview.asp?did=1000573361&fid=1124} (both accessed February 4, 2012).
take notice of objects or images that might capture their attention. Afterwards the group is
led into the old wing, where the curators offer further explanations, trying to make
connections between the artifacts and notions familiar to their audience from teaching or
everyday life. About 30-40 minutes are spent in the museum proper; then everyone passes
into the new wing to engage in hands-on activities or to receive further explanations
about maritime archaeology. Finally, the students are led to the beach for a conversation
about the local ecology, which once again focuses on the relationship between humans
and the environment and on the composition of the fauna, especially the sea shells. Visits
to archaeological sites along the beach are organized for older children. Adults generally
come to the museum as part of organized tours, but this stream of visitors is less regular;
some tour companies regularly include Palmachim in their packages, while others plan
stops at the kibbutz only sporadically.

After Dror Porat took charge of the museum, he thought about changing its
arrangement. In the end, however, the existing layout was judged preferable, since it
allows people to embrace the archaeology of the whole area at one time. According to
him, visitors seem to agree.\textsuperscript{246} In particular, he noted that many people are surprised by
the amount of space in the old wing, while the new wing, although smaller, is appreciated
as more colorful. My personal experience confirms that, indeed, the combination of
architecture and lighting, especially on a sunny summer day, makes the interior of the old
wing actually look bigger than the exterior.

The Museum Beit Miriam, like its counterparts in Italy and Greece, must
compensate for its limited means with a substantial dose of ingenuity in order to make the

\textsuperscript{246} As at Persiceto and Atalanti, no other visitors were present when I came to look at the museum. A
further problem met at Palmachim was that written comments were available only in Hebrew, and lack
of time prevented me from examining them, even with help from Mr. Porat and his assistant.
most effective use of what is available. Apart from space, several factors affect the
development of the museum and its collections. Not only does it necessarily reflect the
archaeological situation of the area, but it is further influenced by accidents of recovery,
such as the higher likelihood of transport amphorae and similar containers to turn up in
fishing nets. The fact that the most prominent element of the display comes from a rescue
excavation is another sign of the fluidity with which the institution must operate. The
dynamics of museum politics, especially the pressure to take notable finds to larger and
better known institutions, need to be taken into account, too, although practical
limitations can also play a role in such decisions. Judging from the pictures, for example,
if the mosaic had been recovered in its entirety, it would probably have been too large to
be kept inside the museum.

On the other hand, unlike at Persiceto and Atalanti, the curators have been able to
capitalize on the immediate surroundings of the complex, having practically turned the
beach into a third wing. The integration of the landscape into the display undoubtedly
stems from the awareness that connecting archaeology with broader ecological and
economic questions is necessary to generate visibility and interest in the museum.

Another reason to emphasize the uninterrupted symbiosis between man and sea could be
the impossibility of linking the area with any character or event mentioned in the Bible.

In general, its concentration on the distant past and the present differentiates the
Museum Beit Miriam from similar institutions established in more recent times, such as
the ones studied by Tamar Katriel, which more often collect and show memorabilia
related to modern Jewish settlement in Palestine and build their narratives around this
subject.\textsuperscript{247} Even if the display is not overtly laden with Biblical or Zionist references, it must be said that not all periods of history or all modern interactions with the environment are represented. Truly, such partiality is common to many museums throughout the world, but it deserves particular attention in a land with so contested a past as modern Israel. At least two more important landmarks in the area became known to me, not from my visit to Palmachim, but from research conducted outside. One is the village of Nabi Rubin, for centuries a lively center. The second is Palmachim Air Force Base, one of the principal Israeli military installations, where missile tests and launches of satellites are conducted.

Certainly, for such a small institution, so rooted in the community which gave rise to it, speaking of deliberate suppression of voices might not be appropriate. Numerous reasons could explain why the two sites are not included in the story told at Palmachim; for example, collecting and exhibiting material related to them might be difficult, for political or security reasons. Nevertheless, the impression left by a casual visit is that there is an unbroken link between the ancient inhabitants of Yavneh-Yam and the modern population of the \textit{kibbutz}, with no changes in between, a position which comes frequently under criticism in the discussion about the formation of Israel and the Palestinian question.

\textsuperscript{247} Katriel, \textit{Performing the Past}, 150-151. It is possible, of course, that visitors are interested in such matters and that the museum staff is able to provide specific information on them if requested. I was not able to follow a guided tour as Katriel did for her case studies, however, so I cannot say how likely the subject is to come up.
On February 1, 2011, the noted software company Google launched a new service, called Google Art Project. Realized in cooperation with a number of famous international museums, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery, the Uffizi Gallery, and the State Hermitage Museum, the online application allows users to take virtual tours inside them, and to examine single works of art down to their minutest details. Google Art Project joins an ever-growing list of instruments which act as mediators in the encounter between the public, the museum, and its contents. The mention of three actors in what is in fact a performance, as scholars like Bennett and Duncan have pointed out from different perspectives, is intentional. The experience of the museum, intended as a physical entity, is always modified when any kind of interpretive device comes into play. Some of them, such as guidebooks, audio guides, or even early dedicated applications for cellphones and smartphones, could be said to have a lesser impact on the relationship between the public and the museum than others, since they still presuppose the actual presence of the visitor in the building, to a greater or lesser degree. When virtuality enters the picture, of course, the whole need for such a presence is called into question, and the recent project supported by Google has added new fuel to the discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of looking at works of art on the screen of a computer rather than in person. It should be noted, however, that the change
of perspective affects not only the single object, but the museum in its entirety.

Moreover, compared to other tools developed for the same purpose, Google Art Project takes the concept of virtual visit in a definitely new direction. Users are no longer confined within the boundaries, however insubstantial, of a single place. Instead, they can pick a selection of works from all the institutions involved in the project, and create their own virtual collection, which can subsequently be shared with others. Needless to say, such technological developments have the potential to bypass entirely the context in which an object in exhibited, and to make questions of arrangement and display much less important.

Is the museum as we know it, contained in a definite physical space, on its way to retirement, then? And what are the consequences of an increased availability of electronic visiting tools for the particular category of museums which form the subject of the present research, namely, archaeological museums? The answer to the first question, of course, bears directly on the relevance of the analysis carried out in the previous chapters. An immediate, albeit partial, reply could be to question the temporal depth of a virtual tour. Seeing an artifact in its present context of display allows grasping only part of the meaning attributed to it by scholars, curators, and visitors, even before considering how much the modern interpretations of an object correspond to the ones held by its makers and users, if at all. The tendency to view and depict human life in the past according to contemporary prejudices and agendas, which represents one of the primary concerns of post-processualist archaeology, affects not just excavations and publications of finds, but museum displays as well, resulting for instance in the attribution of patriotic or even

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sacred connotations to the museum as a physical structure and to the act of visiting it. In order to gain a sense of the place of an artifact in the minds of viewers, both ancient and modern, the history of the exhibit to which it belongs has to be taken into account, a knowledge which requires close familiarity with the actual layout of a particular museum.

Another incentive to keep our eyes on traditional museums is that no virtual tour can engage a visitor's senses as an actual exhibit does – not yet, at least. As Bradley L. Taylor has pointed out in a recent paper, technological advances in the documentation and reproduction of works of art do not automatically enhance the intensity of the visitor's response to them; other variables must be taken into account.²⁴⁹ While sights do not radically change between one visit to a museum and the next, and can be reproduced more or less faithfully on a screen, and touch is generally out of the equation both in a virtual environment and in an actual museum, sounds and smells can place a unique mark on each visit. Depending on how much the exhibit relies on natural light, even the visual component of a tour might lose much of its communicative efficacy in a virtual rendition. The emotional impact caused by being in front of the actual object may constitute another important reason for preferring a physical tour to a virtual one, although any attempt to evaluate the psychological effects of having access to the original artifact obviously depends on how one defines “the original.”

Virtual tours cannot recreate the feeling of being near other humans in a museum, either. If a visit constitutes a performance, the purpose of which is to measure oneself against one's peers in a sort of ritual environment, as Bennett and Duncan argue, it requires to be carried out in person. It is also true, however, that the assembling and

sharing tools provided by Google Art Project pave the way for a different kind of competition altogether.

A third reason to consider the physical organization of museums, and especially of those institutions devoted to the display of archaeological remains, is that much of the scholarly debate about the placement of objects and how the public engages with it has been taking place with museums of art in mind. Knowing how space has been employed to interpret the remains of the past is a crucial step in assessing the best response archaeological museums can give to impulses toward change. The fact that in some museums, especially the national ones, a sizable part of the collection consists of artifacts significant for the history of art can provide some coordinates for the discussion.

Having considered the reasons for studying archaeological museums in all their concreteness, even when technological progress seems to have laid the foundations for a complete detachment of the artifact from the setting of its display, it is now time to look back at the institutions discussed in the previous chapters and to establish comparisons among them. The first observation which emerges is that a direct relationship seems to exist between the scope of a museum and the coherence of the exhibit, which in turn makes for a clearer and more forceful message. The three higher-level institutions examined (Palazzo Altemps, the National Museum in Athens, and the Bible Lands Museum) are all called to substantiate highly precise narratives, based on a complex of historical vicissitudes and socio-political expectations which vary according to the country. As a consequence, very little is left to chance in the disposition of the objects. At Palazzo Altemps, the aim is to recreate a distinct aspect of the experience of classical
antiquity in Renaissance and Baroque Italy, namely, its inclusion in a competitive spectacle of aristocratic taste and influence. The public is supposed to share the excitement felt by the few privileged guests who, thanks to their status and education, were allowed to appreciate the beauty of the works and the knowledge of the person who put them together. At the same time, it must not be distracted by the thought that the works on display, for the most part, have no previous connections with the palace, but used to decorate another celebrated establishment, the Villa Ludovisi.

Various means are employed to reduce the distance between past and present, often inspired by the treatment that the sculptures had received in earlier times. A frequent procedure consists in keeping together groups of artifacts which had been displayed as a unity at some point, as in the Room of the Sarcophagi, or could have been, given their association with a subject or theme popular among collectors, such as the Twelve Caesars in the Painted Balcony. The use of architecture to attract the visitor's gaze is another common strategy recognizable throughout the exhibit. Practically every corridor, doorway, and flight of steps serves to frame gods, heroes, and foreigners from exotic lands, in all kinds of poses. They beckon and tease viewers, making them wonder what lies beyond, and encouraging them to explore.

The desire to preserve this atmosphere provides a basis for practices which would normally be regarded as flaws, such as confining the information on the artifacts to inconspicuous panels on the walls of each room, rather than attaching panels or labels to single works. The sculptures can thus be kept in full focus, although visitors accustomed to more explicit directions, or just interested in learning more about ancient art or its collecting, are likely to feel disoriented. Moreover, as a branch of the Roman National
Museum, Palazzo Altemps can afford to retain a baroque way of displaying antiquities, since other aspects of the study of ancient art can be brought forward and explained more clearly in the remaining venues.

The National Museum in Athens and the Bible Lands Museum rely on an even tighter network of relationships among the artifacts they display, subsuming the entire tale of two iconic peoples within their walls. The former employs its sculpture collections to illustrate the parable of ancient Greek civilization, whose apex is represented by the art of the Classical period. By making visitors looking first at its Geometric and Archaic predecessors – or, if one prefers, its Hellenistic and Roman successors – the sculpture galleries create a sense of expectation and a respectful disposition in viewers, so that the works can exert their ameliorating influence on them. The prehistoric and ceramic collections also play important roles in demonstrating the unique character of Hellenic culture, but the layout of the building puts them in subordinate positions. The finds from Mycenae, located right in front of the entrance, attract immediate attention, but they ultimately lead the visitor to a dead end. As a matter of fact, their location makes them functional to the appreciation of later works, either by filling visitors with anticipation or, if entered at the end of the tour, by reminding them of the deep roots of Greek civilization. As for the vases, displayed on the second floor of the museum, they can be reached only after seeing at least one half of the sculpture galleries, with the final transition corresponding once again to the works of the Classical period. Likewise, visitors must go through part of the sculpture ring in order to access the galleries reserved to the smaller collections. In addition, this set of rooms has its own internal spatial hierarchy.
That the success of the Bible Lands Museum in conveying a clear message depends on the careful setting of its holdings is evident already in the attitude of its founder, who preferred to have an entirely new museum built rather than let his collection be dispersed in the Israel Museum. Unlike the other museums of national importance examined here, it does not entrust the success of communication to the exhibited artifacts alone, but also to the models and the informative panels which accompany them, and above all to a very distinctive kind of wall text, constituted by the Biblical quotations scattered throughout the permanent display. Their presence encourages a continuous shift between two interpretative dimensions. One, more immediate in character, draws attention to the political and cultural milieu of the ancient Near East, of which the Bible – and Israel – is a distinctive, but typical expression. The other perspective frames the concrete testimonies of past life into a transcendental vision of history, which manifests itself, for example, in exemplary cycles of offense and retribution. The narrative finds its main thread in the journey of Israel, offered to visitors as an experience to join and relive. The central axis of the museum (Introductory Gallery, Corridor, Model of Jerusalem and “Holy of Holies”), which is crossed several times during the tour, highlights the most important steps of the wandering.

In all three museums, the careful placement of the collections also reaffirms the role assigned to antiquities in the heritage laws of each country. The sculptures in the Palazzo Altemps are shown not only as a patrimony that gives prestige to modern Italy, but also as memories of a cultural phenomenon significant for Europe and the world at large, which the state is called to recognize. In Athens, the use of a very prominent public space to show the exemplary development of ancient Greek civilization, culminating in the
achievements of Classical sculpture, reflects the declared intent of the 2002 law to preserve the cultural heritage of the country for the benefit of present and future generations. With regard to the Bible Lands Museum, on the other hand, it was Borowski who controlled the process through which the archaeological artifacts came to form a coherent ensemble, taking advantage of the broad margins for action left to individuals by the Israeli Antiquities Law. Even if certain sections of the exhibit, such as the middle room centered on Jerusalem, seem to suggest parallels between the historical parable of the ancient Israelites and the formation of the Jewish state, the display translates the vision of a private collector rather than a national ideology.

Being subjected to a reduced pressure does not mean that regional and local museums feel free neglect the overall visual effect of their displays; quite the contrary, in fact. The program of wall paintings devised for the City Museum of Bologna, especially the reproductions of Etruscan funerary paintings, as well as the scenographic disposition of some artifacts and assemblages, is a good example of how archaeological museums of all levels strive to combine aesthetic pleasure with education. The old wing of the Palmachim museum, which initially relied only on natural light to show its contents, represents another manifestation of this trend. Smaller institutions, however, are more frequently obliged to find a compromise between curatorial goals and practical limitations, and the results of such compromises tend to be more evident.

A typical issue of this kind, often faced by local museums, is their being located in a building originally conceived for another purpose. Persiceto and Atalanti, housed respectively in a former jail and school, have had to make the best of the facilities at their disposal. The first clearly suffers from cramped spaces and very limited natural light,
which create a rather gloomy atmosphere. On the other hand, the rooms are well
furnished but not cluttered with materials, since the exhibit, rather than overwhelming
visitors with artifacts, tries to contextualize a selection of them with the help of visual
supports. Such aids consist primarily of brilliantly colored drawings that provide a feeling
of life and warmth. Moreover, the unusual environment, which has kept many signs of its
past existence, gives the museum a charm of its own. Another way to overcome these
limitations has been the setting up of separate branches of the Archaeological
Environmental Museum in nearby towns, a solution allowed by the administrative
flexibility built into recent Italian legislation on the management and enjoyment of
cultural heritage.

As for Atalanti, one peculiar inconvenience is that the building itself commands
relatively little attention, located as it is uphill from the street, with its entrance at the top
of a staircase, further removed down a path, and turned sideways with respect to the
adjacent structures. Once it is located, however, its quite large and well lighted rooms can
be appreciated. The museum also benefits from a straightforward arrangement, which
makes its chronological exposition easy to follow. Since the entrances to the three rooms
which constitute it are close to one another, the passage from one section to the next
occurs almost seamlessly. Such fluidity, together with the relative availability of space,
reduces the need for too rigid a classification of the collections, although a tripartition is
clearly discernible. Another feature of the museum, shared by many small institutions
throughout Greece and other Mediterranean countries with a favorable climate, is the
presence of a courtyard or other outside space, used to accommodate larger and more
durable finds, such as inscriptions, reliefs, and parts of columns. The advantage of
showing a larger number of objects without prejudicing the clarity of the display is evident. Moreover, the public is able to enjoy a change of environment, especially if the weather is good, and a greater degree of freedom. On the other hand, the open-air section of the exhibit seems to remain outside any definite organization. The lack of panels or other interpretative devices means that the artifacts are, in a sense, left to themselves. Their scattering can sometimes result in a picturesque impression, but it also tells visitors that they should not linger too long and that what counts is inside.

Some of the problems just mentioned are made less pressing by the fact that local museums have to deal with a limited number of visitors. Although their survival depends on keeping a core attendance, formed chiefly of school and tour groups, the exigencies to be met are such that they are usually able to guarantee a satisfactory experience.

Complementary to the tendency just discussed, an inverse relationship can be suggested between the scope and the visibility of a museum, on the one hand, and its flexibility, on the other. Accommodating new artifacts in a display, or revising it to take into account promising developments in museological practice, without disrupting its internal logic, seems an easier task where the museum is less invested with the responsibility to speak for the nation. Not all countries witness the phenomenon in the same measure, though. Greek institutions, for example, seem prone to a greater degree of rigidity at all levels. The preoccupation with keeping the places where the roots of “Greekness” are exhibited in a worthy condition, which was even codified in the 1885 decree, put smaller institutions in a delicate situation after the law of 1899 entrusted museums with the custody of archaeological finds.

At the National Museum in Athens, even small alterations in the display, especially
if they concern the sculpture galleries, are likely to be closely scrutinized and to become a
matter of public discussion. The museums of Nafplio and Atalanti, however, also have
their own audiences to satisfy. In particular, the Nafplio museum may receive more
attention than other institutions of its scope because of its location in a popular tourist
destination and its proximity to famous archaeological sites such as Tiryns. Even if the
museum grew in space, as long as it remained in the old town, it would still have to be in
harmony with its surroundings. Moreover, the comments left by visitors show that some
of them have seen the museum more than once and are sensitive to changes in the exhibit.
At Atalanti, the organization of the display is so tied to the history of research in the
region and to its main character, Phanouria Dakoronia, that significant changes in design
principles, for example by giving more importance to models and reconstructions, could
be interpreted as an implicit criticism of her work.

The Italian museums offer a clearer example of the pattern outlined above. At
Palazzo Altemps, the display includes some recent acquisitions of the Roman National
Museum, but it is clear that only specific types of artifacts are suitable for insertion in
such a carefully constructed exhibit. The Maenad/Artemis on the ground floor, the stele
with the loutrophoros at the top of the staircase, the statue of the crouched Aphrodite in
the room dedicated to her on the upper floor, and the head of Ephesian Artemis in the
Room of the Mother Goddesses are all examples of recently acquired works that could
smoothly enter the display, because they blend with the pieces already present and with
the architecture, lending themselves well to picturesque views.

The City Museum of Bologna, too, has to deal carefully with its history. Its original
design, based on a delicate balance between excavated artifacts and objects from
collections, forms a consolidated element of its identity, which cannot be ignored. Truly, a series of circumstances contributed to its persistence. Above all, transferring the care of finds from excavations to the Superintendences in the 1920s – the opposite of what happened in Greece – spared the museum the strain of having to deal with a constant stream of new arrivals. At the same time, the City Museum was left exposed to the risk of stagnation. After World War II, although the need for an update was widely realized, disagreement on how to proceed slowed down the modernizing efforts. Nevertheless, the appearance of the museum has changed significantly in the past fifty years, beginning with the transfer of the medieval objects to a separate structure, continuing with the detachment of the Egyptian collection, and reaching the present day with the renovation of the prehistoric, Greek and Roman sections. The process is still ongoing, and could have surprising results, since the staff is willing to review even the core elements of the display, especially the appearance of room X. Such welcoming of new ideas has come at a price, though. Even if an attempt was made to reimagine the arrangement of the University and Palagi collections around the head of the “Athena Lemnia,” the loss of the old points of reference may make difficult for the public to grasp the tension that characterized the exhibit. Recent developments, such as the mixing of excavated and collected artifacts in the renewed Roman gallery (room IX), widen the gap with the early history of the museum even more.

At first sight, the museum of Persiceto would seem to run counter to this trend. Although there are far fewer historical burdens that would make enlargements or changes in the display problematic, its extremely tight space renders such operations difficult in practice. However, the physical constraints are offset by its embrace of a decentralized
museological model. Being a node in a network of scientific centers, which include two separate branches of the museum itself located in nearby towns, offers more possibilities to engage the public in the interpretation of the artifacts than the distinctive but confined setting of the former town gate would suggest.

The situation in Israel is harder to decipher. The origin of many archaeological museums as private enterprises has given life to a multiplicity of settings and curatorial approaches. Even more than in the other two countries, the capacity of the displays to absorb new materials and concepts has to be judged case by case. At the Bible Lands Museum, the appearance of the permanent exhibit is doubly tightened, since each artifact or group of artifacts derives its communicative potential from its relationship not only with the surrounding pieces and other visual embellishments, but also with the Biblical text attached to the gallery or case which houses it. The latter, in particular, is not as prone to review as other types of labels, which leaves a very narrow margin for adding, moving, or taking away objects. Limited adjustments, conforming to the already established structure of the display, can be envisaged. Many cases and large artifacts, for example, lack a direct association with a Biblical passage, and nothing seems to prevent further quotations from being added in the future. Otherwise, a more promising terrain for intervention is represented by the lower floor of the museum. There the space is not so strictly parceled out, and ideas introduced in the permanent display can be expanded and built upon through temporary exhibitions, activities for families and children, and other initiatives.

As for Palmachim, the narrower scope and limited public visibility of the Museum Beit Miriam render it theoretically more receptive to innovations in concept and design.
The basic structure of the exhibit, however, seems unlikely to face substantial alterations, even if lack of space did not affect the museum so heavily. The preservation of the current layout of the museum can be viewed as desirable, not only to avoid prejudicing the benefits deriving from its recognition by the state, but also to stay true to the reasons which induced the *kibbutz* to establish it in the first place. The focus on human interaction with the environment, past and present, is certainly a qualifying trait for the museum, as it is for Persiceto, but the fact that at Palmachim archaeology drew significance from modern economic concerns could result in a different trajectory for it. In fact, given the particular nature of the Museum Beit Miriam's closest audience, making sure that it continues to reflect the interests of the community seems a major factor in determining its priorities. On the other hand, the emphasis on a past which is remote but is readily comparable to the present, rather than on the nearer but unrepeatable movement of Zionist settlers and pioneers, which younger Israelis are less and less likely to experience directly, can prove beneficial in the struggle to maintain the relevance of the *kibbutzim*.

In order to understand better the present arrangement of each exhibit and the directions it may take in the future, however, it is necessary to introduce the past into the analysis – not the past illustrated by the artifacts, but the historical background of the museums themselves. The displays as they stand now, no matter how coherent they may appear, are not to be taken automatically as something envisaged since the institution of the museum, nor as the final and necessary product of a linear evolution. Rather, they must be studied as the result of a combination of historical and technical factors, advances, and even setbacks, and of the way curators and visitors have dealt with them.
The National Museum in Athens is a case in point. The present look of its galleries dates back to less a decade ago, having been revealed in coincidence with the 2004 Olympic Games. Although the design remains essentially based on the principles laid out by Karouzos and Karouzou, even their vision, centered on the possibility of mental and spiritual elevation through the contemplation of beauty and the appreciation of the historical context in which it could be achieved, took shape only in the years after World War II. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, people who toured the halls, orderly but packed with artifacts, undoubtedly received a very different impression of Greek art. Moreover, if the museum had been built according to the initial project, its focus would have been a succession of disconnected rooms along the outer perimeter, linked by a ring of smaller hallways on the inner side, similarly to the three-pronged plan of the Atalanti museum. In reality, however, the relationship between the two areas was switched. Especially after the building was enlarged and the sculpture collection took over the original nucleus of the museum, the outer galleries became linked in a circuit that has formed the backbone of even the most cursory tour for decades, while the inner section was divided into many separate rooms, considerably less frequented by visitors, and even subject to closure during winter if there is scarcity of guards. At the newly reopened museum of Nafplio, the revised presentation of the archaeological patrimony of the Argolid, which centers on the importance of finding contexts, is a very recent development, too.

In Bologna, the museum assumed its definitive appearance after a decade of arguments over several proposals and counterproposals, each with its own merits. In the end, its layout rested on Brizio's insistence on keeping the artifacts donated by collectors
separate from those retrieved in excavations, giving each group of materials a specific role in a display which he viewed primarily as a teaching tool. The intent to promote the illustrious ancestry of Bologna, in response to the risks of centralization posed by Italian unification, certainly influenced the final result, too.

Such concerns have weakened with time, however, and new ones have emerged, beginning with the push to single out the Egyptian collection in order to emphasize its richness, compared to the holdings of other Italian institutions. The museum was able to modify its vision, thus also answering the problem of how to avoid fossilization, after administrative changes in the 1920s put a stop to new acquisitions. New ideas surfaced, and old suggestions were brought back, such as the mixing of the two components of the exhibit, although for now it has affected only the section on the Roman period, for which the number of artifacts from excavations is limited. The decision to integrate them into a single gallery, and to employ objects with either kind of origin to inform visitors about everyday life in the Roman period, instead of devoting a whole room to only a few pieces, seems justified on practical grounds, too. The museum of Bologna is undergoing a transition under the very eyes of its audience. Its story is a useful reminder that a community is not bound to a particular reading of its past once and for all, but it has to be constantly kept interested in revisiting it, using whatever strategies seem most effective at any given time. The need to keep abreast of social, cultural, and economical developments in their respective communities is even more evident in local museums like the ones at Persiceto and Palmachim, which not only have to adapt in order to maintain their relevance, but sometimes risk being overwhelmed by too-sudden changes and demands.
The Bible Lands Museum represents the opposite end of the spectrum, as far as the permanent exhibit is concerned. Based on the vision a single individual, and left practically untouched since the opening of the museum, the arrangement corresponds to a project as organic and unified as an interpreter can wish, outside of pure theory. The museum, however, is very young in comparison with the other national and regional institutions examined in this dissertation. Its seemingly firm organization represents the first phase of a history of unknown length and complexity, in the course of which many elements could change. In fact, the present institution already represents a departure from Borowski's initial plan, which called for a double housing of his collection in Canada and Israel. On the other hand, the more flexible principles followed in the management of the lower floor allow distributing the weight that contemporary political and cultural issues and themes could bring to bear on the permanent exhibit, so that the need to intervene in it is greatly reduced.

One aspect of their design brings archaeological museums and museums of art closer to each other. In both types of venue, the creation of a dialogue between the works and the contextual elements of the display, primarily architecture and lighting, is a recurrent goal. This observation holds true especially for buildings erected for the specific purpose of exhibiting ancient artifacts.

Despite their very different origins and histories, both Palazzo Altemps and the National Museum in Athens are striking examples of museums where the edifice housing the artifacts forms an integral part of the display. The first structure, although not designed as a public museum in the modern sense, was nonetheless intended by Cardinal
Marco Sittico and his descendants as a place to showcase ancient art and the educated
taste of the proprietors who collected it. The crucial relationship between the works and
the architectural background was in the minds of the curators as they turned the palace
into a branch of the Roman National Museum, and it inspired several notable aspects of
the current arrangement. For example, even if almost none of the actual elements of the
Altemps collection are in the palace now, the works chosen to embellish each particular
location are often analogous in subject to their predecessors there. The design of the
building as a stage for spectacles, both materially and figuratively, also made it easy to
take advantage of already existing features, for example the frequent use of doorways as
frames for certain selected sculptures.

The National Museum uses the power of architecture in a different way. While
Palazzo Altemps certainly has its share of impressive vistas, its Greek colleague bases the
entire visiting experience around breadth and sheer monumentality, instead of giving
away its charms piece by piece and trying to surprise the visitor at every corner. The
monumental façade already establishes the tone which characterizes the museum. Once
inside, the majestic entrance hall directs the eye towards the prehistoric section and the
treasures from Mycenae, straight ahead, and to some turning points (a particularly
appropriate expression in this case) in the history of ancient sculpture, to the sides.
Throughout the museum, and especially along the sculpture galleries, doorways serve to
attract the visitors' curiosity and induce them to follow a particular direction, as in Rome.
Rather than isolating single works, which then become a sort of teasers, however, the
openings line up to compose extended perspectives that tie several rooms together,
conveying a sense of regularity.
Among the institutions examined, the Bible Lands Museum is probably the most sophisticated example of interaction between architecture and artifacts. Being born of the vision of a single individual, it shows a very high degree of coherence in the organization of its spaces. Moreover, since it is only twenty years old, it has not yet been forced to revise its program by external historical or cultural circumstances. Thus, in the permanent exhibit, the disposition of barriers and openings gives physical form to the coexistence of two interpretative levels, between which visitors are able to shift at various junctures. While the suggested itinerary shepherds them through the journey of ancient Israel, the possibility to choose, within certain limits, the degree of involvement with the perspective of the Chosen People mitigates possible feelings of rejection towards what may appear as a single-minded view of history. In this way, the museum can uphold the claim that the Biblical narrative is meaningful to humans of all backgrounds, and everybody can benefit from learning more about it.

A different relationship between container and contents takes shape when an archaeological museum is established in a building previously destined to other functions, or has to live together with other activities, whether connected with it or not. Apart from exacerbating difficulties common to all museums, such as the need to plan for storage space, in such repositories the architectural features often act more as hindrances than as props. Having to keep them into account sometimes leads to curatorial decisions that might seem perplexing and open to criticism, when in fact they are dictated by cogent practical reasons.

One of the highlights of the Nafplio museum, the case with the panoply from Dendra, illustrates the point very well. Although it occupies a prominent location, and is
visible since the very beginning of the suggested itinerary, it does not enjoy the same scenographic treatment as, for example, the masks from Tiryns. Its placement is dependent on the weight of the container, which requires the presence of a supporting wall beneath it. At the City Museum of Bologna, concerns about weight and lack of adequate support prevented many Roman sculptures and monuments from being placed on the upper floor, together with the rest of the materials from the same period. Instead, they had to remain on the lower floor, greeting visitors in the atrium of the museum.

Even when so constrained, however, regional and local museums – the most likely to occupy premises formerly used for other purposes – strive to blend preexisting features into the layout of their exhibits as smoothly as possible, and even to enhance the display through them, treating them as a creative opportunity rather than as a burden. The results of the operation are especially notable in the case of Persiceto. The dark and gloomy setting of the former jail, and the almost claustrophobic narrowness of the cells housing the exhibit, which would heavily interfere with the enjoyment of a larger collection, fit such a small-scale institution better. In fact, they give the place a peculiar charm of its own. The appearance of the museum is further improved by the decision to keep only a small number of artifacts on display, and to accompany them with drawings and models, so that the visitor's attention can better concentrate on the aspects of everyday life that they represent, rather than on the objects themselves.

Particularly for regional and local museums, the link between artifacts and architecture is doubly useful. In fact, giving an active role to the building itself is one of the ways that help such institutions face a challenge unknown to other kinds of museums,
namely, how to make the public relate to objects which have little or no aesthetic value, are too detached from everyday life to elicit an immediate response, or lack the exotic air often associated with archaeology in popular imagination. The need to render memorable even the humblest artifact, the ones deprived of both resonance and wonder, to borrow Stephen Greenblatt's terms, 250 has inspired further variations in display choices.

The visual appeal of an object within a display must be considered in a relative, not absolute, sense. In every archaeological museum some artifacts stand out within the collection, because of their material, shape, or decoration, but generally not enough to enjoy the reputation awarded to works of art. The Mycenaean painted krater in the Atalanti museum is certainly a focus of attention for visitors to that institution, but it would be far less noticeable in the prehistoric section of the National Museum in Athens. Such exceptional objects are available, however, and curators obviously try to publicize them as effectively as possible.

One common strategy to draw attention on artifacts which lack visual appeal is to emphasize their historical value, usually through their careful grouping in cases and galleries. The exact criteria adopted for the operation vary according to places and times, in certain cases differing within the same museum. Older exhibits, based on a typological arrangement, showered visitors with large numbers of similar pieces at a time, as it can still be seen in the museum of Bologna. The same institution, however, was among the first to recognize the educational and museographic potential of the archaeological context, primarily by keeping the grave goods from single Villanovan and Etruscan tombs together, and by displaying some of the graves themselves. Even as they acknowledge the

significance of each individual artifact, though, museums are able to capitalize on the impression exercised by large groups of them, as the hoard of bronzes of San Francesco, also on display in Bologna, or the galleries dedicated to the funerary stelai at the National Museum in Athens demonstrate. Such mass gatherings of finds obviously require great attention to balance, so that the abundance does not turn into clutter.

Needless to say, curators have more room for distinctive presentations when their museums hold artifacts which regularly fall under the purview of history of art, such as Attic painted vases. A particularly successful combination of science and beauty, albeit at the expense of an accurate rendering of its context, is the assemblage from the “Tomba Grande” in Bologna. Not only is it arranged in a very ordered manner inside its case, so that it can be adequately examined at a glance, but it constitutes the heart of a larger group of artifacts, mostly Etruscan stelai, which forms a scenographic composition at one end of the long Villanovan-Etruscan gallery in the City Museum. On the other hand, such powerful installations are the most difficult to handle when an exhibit comes under review, as it is happening at that institution. The bust and the inscription honoring Brizio, visible above the objects, signal that they belong to a legacy which cannot be easily dismissed.

Another common approach is to suggest that the seemingly distant antiquities have, in fact, some bearing on our ordinary life. At Palmachim, for example, the birth of the museum and its continued relevance depend on the recognition that the ancient inhabitants and the modern settlers share the same environment, rely on analogous marine resources, and must deal with similar challenges. In Greece, archaeological museums have traditionally being regarded as memorials of a direct connection between
the ancient Hellenic culture and the modern state. The link is established not only at a historical level, but tends to assume an ideal and quasi-sacred aura, which has intensely colored the debates concerning the Parthenon Marbles and the removal of artifacts from the country, be it permanent or temporary. Towards the end of the twentieth century, however, the efforts to form closer ties with other European countries have encouraged Greek professionals to take a more active part in museological discussions. As a result, some museums, especially smaller ones, have begun to move away from an ideology which casts them as “temples of the nation.”

While the cultural and political role assigned to the artifacts is still likely to elicit a passionate response from Greek and foreign visitors alike, particularly in the National Museum, institutions less willing, or able, to stress the patriotic character of their holdings have to find other ways to build a positive relationship with the public. The museums of Atalanti and Elateia – one designed around a series of display cases in a traditional chronological sequence, the other relying more on reconstructions which bring together artifacts from different contexts – show two opposed approaches to the problem. Both of them must weigh immediacy of presentation against archaeological fidelity, which makes them more useful for scholars.

All the psychological, historical, and technical factors just considered influence not only the appearance of a display, but also the performance expected from visitors. The capacity to recognize and adhere to a suggested itinerary, for example by going through the rooms of a museum according to their numbering, and to move among the artifacts in
response to visual cues represents an important test of their education, but also of their civic maturity. Particularly in small institutions with a low number of visitors, straying unexpectedly from the recommended path can cause perplexities and suspicions among the museum staff. While an intended visiting path is usually built into the design of an exhibit from the beginning, with time the display may develop unexpected features, for example by being forced to accommodate more objects. Such changes can influence the perception of the artifacts and the general behavior of the visitors in ways not anticipated by the planners of the museum, giving rise to ambivalent responses towards the artifacts.

Part of the history of the National Museum in Athens, for example, is a chronicle of the efforts to adapt the structure to external circumstances, such as the accumulation of finds in the late nineteenth century and the ravages of World War II, while preserving the elegance and coherence required of a worldwide symbol of Greek culture.

Some expectations are more difficult for the public to recognize than others. At Palazzo Altemps, the paucity of signs concerning the itinerary and the works on display could be taken as a shortcoming on the part of the museum. Given its aim to recreate the atmosphere of a period in which admiring art was a form of leisure and self-promotion, however, another explanation is possible. More specifically, the lack of explicit directions can respond to a precise design philosophy, which encourages visitors to roam freely and enjoy continuous discoveries rather than to follow a rigid, predictable road. Even the guides and catalogues, which necessarily assume a definite path, follow different sequences of spaces. The similarity between the museum and a maze, made by one visitor, is very appropriate. In the comments, though, the resemblance is judged negatively, while the staff views it as a strong positive component of the identity of the
museum. The bewilderment felt by some visitors, then, seems less a result of poor planning than a defect of communication with the audience.

Finally, all the conclusions just outlined support the notion expressed at the beginning of the dissertation: it is necessary to go beyond the simplistic idea that the selection, disposition, and presentation of archaeological artifacts in a museum are merely ideological tools aimed at the construction and maintenance of a national identity. Archaeological museums are often interpreted as just one among many expressions of the antagonism between colonizers and colonized through which the modern history of many Mediterranean countries is frequently viewed, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world. In this perspective, the universal museums in England, France, and the United States appear as the cultural counterpart to the political and economic hegemony exercised by those countries, while the institutions founded in newly independent polities tend to be seen as a manifestation of their struggle to find a distinctive voice. Italy, for example, is frequently included among the structurally weak – and archaeologically exploited – countries, but an institution like the City Museum in Bologna, which includes both artifacts retrieved locally in excavations and objects of foreign provenience acquired on the market by collectors, blurs the distinction between active and passive subjects considerably.

Greece seems to represent better the dichotomy just outlined. The sensitive attitude towards antiquities that has come to characterize the country, a model example of the importance of the past in the construction of a national identity, arose in response to a similarly reverent admiration of ancient Hellenic culture, but tailored to the interests of
the colonial European Powers, as Hamilakis observes. Even in such marked a context, however, the role of archaeological museums is more complex than it appears. The fact that the plans for the National Museum were drafted by German architects did not hinder its adoption as a symbol of the dignity of modern Greece, and particularly of its resurgence after World War II.

In Israel, the untangling of the various strands of thought which underlie a display is complicated by the political situation in the area, which encourages every representation of the past by Israeli institutions to be judged in terms of the strengthening of the Jewish character of the region, at the expense of the Palestinian contribution to its history, economy, and culture. Institutions like the Bible Lands Museum, however, should be also studied as elements of a dynamic process internal to Israeli society. The plans for a new museum dedicated to the Bible, recently unveiled by the Israeli government,²⁵¹ suggest that the vision behind the existing institution might not correspond to the role that the Scripture should play in the life of the Jewish state, according to its current political leadership.

Of course I do not deny the weight of nationalistic ideas and motives in the development of archaeological museums, which emerges clearly in several of the cases analyzed. No matter what political and cultural circumstances led to the creation of the National Museum, it became a manifestation of the idea that ancient Greece is the direct ancestor of the modern state, and that caring for Greek antiquities is essentially a patriotic

²⁵¹ Nir Hasson, “New Bible Museum To Be Built in Jerusalem,” Haaretz, November 14, 2011, http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/new-bible-museum-to-be-built-in-jerusalem-1.395418 (accessed January 16, 2012). The article specifies that primary funding for the museum will come from a non-profit organization, that the government, while still debating about giving direct support, has approved the construction and will give the land for free, and that the area near the Israel Museum and the Bible Lands Museum is among the locations considered for the project.
duty. In Italy, too, the military and political process that allowed the country to become independent revealed the importance of archaeology as an instrument of political influence. In the Italian peninsula, however, the emphasis on the preservation of the past as a matter of national interest seems a later development, while the years of the unification saw archaeology rather as a means to promote a galaxy of regional and local identities which the construction of a national entity threatened to erase, or at least weaken considerably. With regard to Israel, the Bible Lands Museum is certainly committed to the propagation of a universal message of peace and mutual respect, but it also envisions a privileged historical role for the Jewish people, which cannot be divorced from the central place assigned to Jerusalem, in the Biblical narrative which the display reflects as in modern Israeli national discourse. At Palmachim, the focus on particular historical periods and socioeconomic phenomena helps to keep the museum relevant for its primary audience, but it also leaves the door open to accusations of simplifying the history of the surrounding territory and overlooking controversial, yet significant chapters of it.

Ideology, however, cannot be used as a blanket to explain each and every choice related to the display of the past. No matter what the official rhetoric claims about the importance for the nation to look at its most ancient past, for example, archaeological museums often struggle with very mundane issues, for example the scarcity of financial and human resources, or the ever diminishing availability of space to display artifacts. Moreover, the solutions devised to face such challenges do not necessarily emphasize the importance of a museum within a national discourse.

Even if a given display choice does not stem – or not only – from practical reasons,
it does not mean that its purpose is to promote a monolithic, assertive image of the nation. In every individual museum, the past provides the means to participate in multiple affirmations of identity, which often are directed to an internal audience as much as to a foreign one, if not more. Moreover, a display can address issues which concern the study of archaeology across different countries. An example already mentioned in the preceding discussion involves the advantages and disadvantages of a typological display, compared to one that tries to recreate their finding contexts, and the possibility, and desirability, of assembling either in a visually attractive way.

The assumptions and the expectations of individual scholars and curators also play a significant role in determining the arrangement and the meaning of an exhibit, so that it comes to reflect their specific priorities and interests rather than an abstract idea of nation. Although Bologna occupies a prominent place in the display of the City Museum, one should not forget that Brizio had conceived it primarily as a teaching tool, not as a self-referential celebration of the city. Likewise, the present layout of the National Museum in Athens owes much to the ideas championed by Karouzos and Karouzou about the uplifting power of ancient Greek art not just for modern Greeks, but for viewers of any background. How the contribution of strongly motivated experts can leave a recognizable mark on an exhibit is even clearer in the Bible Lands Museum, which translates Borowski's own views about the place of the Bible in the modern world. Smaller museums are even more likely to assume a peculiar physiognomy because of the imprint left by their designers, as in the case of Phanouria Dakoronia at Atalanti. Moreover, even if no individual personality is closely associated with their formation, other exigencies can cause them to assume a unique look, especially the need to treat
subjects important for the community in which such institutions are located.

Archaeology, through survey or excavation, can tell stories about a region or a site that complement, and possibly question, reconstructions of its past based on the written sources. Likewise, the analysis of the physical aspects of a display in an archaeological museum, and the unveiling of the historical layers that have led to its present appearance, are able to provide a vivid picture of the relationship between a society and the past it recognizes as its own, much richer than an image built solely on museological theory – especially if it employs concepts developed to study other kinds of museums – or on studies of nationalism.

Displays, however, cannot produce any effect by themselves. As in all instances of communication, a receiver is needed to activate the transmission, in this case by walking through the galleries and looking at the objects. In this sense, visitors are more than ever “a part of the show,” as the reminder quoted by Bennett calls them. At the same time, they cannot completely forego the physical space of the museum, if they want to obtain a clearer idea of the cultural history of an artifact. A tool such as Google Art Project, which at first sight makes the venue in which the show itself takes place superfluous, in fact prevents visitors from understanding a crucial part of that history, namely, the circumstances that have led the object to be exhibited under certain conditions. Rounding up all the information about the past, including how modern ideas have created a context for objects that have lost their original one, remains an essential service provided by archaeological museums, even if it requires them to be more active in reaching out to visitors than they used to. Since museums cannot produce any reaction in their visitors
without their physical involvement, the latter can become aware of the expectations placed on them, and possibly give life to alternative readings of the objects through very simple actions, such as departing from the suggested itinerary.
CONCLUSIONS

Although limited in number, the case studies examined in the previous chapters represent a fairly broad and diverse sample of archaeological displays, embracing a range of Mediterranean countries which seldom figure prominently in works on the history of collecting and museums. The analysis of the permanent exhibits of various museums, concentrated primarily on their physical features, brings to light several trends and phenomena worthy of consideration. Without obscuring the traits that make each museum unique, their comparison allows to establish links not only between museums of different categories within a single country, but also between institutions of similar size and scope across national boundaries. The results of the present work can thus provide inspiration to extend the research to other institutions in the same or other countries.

The first conclusion which the research allows to draw is that a direct relationship seems to exist between the scope of a museum and the coherence of the exhibit, and that the latter, in turn, affects the clarity and the forcefulness of the narrative which the artifacts are meant to broadcast. Particularly in national museums, the spatial and ideal links among the objects tend to be so tight that any change in the display not only interferes with the visitor's reception of the message directed to him or her, but it is more likely to be noticed and publicized, possibly attracting negative reactions. Even regional and local museums, although subject to a reduced pressure in this regard, feel the need to pay attention to the overall visual effect of their displays. Conversely, an inverse relationship can be suggested between the scope and the visibility of a museum, on the
one hand, and its capacity to accommodate new artifacts in a display, or to revise it without disrupting its internal logic, on the other, although not all countries witness the phenomenon in the same measure. In any case, for archaeological museums of all levels, the coherence of the exhibit is one of the primary tools in their effort to combine aesthetic pleasure with education. Smaller institutions, however, are more frequently obliged to find a compromise between curatorial goals and practical limitations, and the results of such compromises tend to be more evident.

If the interpretation of a display must consider the different factors which could affect it in the future, such as new acquisitions or changes in museological practice, it also has to acknowledge the likelihood that a museum underwent one or more phases of transformation in the course of its history, and that its current appearance is already the result of an adaptation. In other words, it would be misleading to look at a display in its present state, no matter how coherent it may appear, as something envisaged since the institution of a particular museum, or as the final and necessary product of a linear evolution. Rather, each exhibit must be studied as the product of the responses given by curators and visitors to a variety of technical challenges, advances, and even setbacks.

Even when facing more or less traumatic changes, one constant goal pursued by museum designers seems to be the creation of a dialogue between the works and the contextual elements of the display, primarily architecture and lighting, especially in buildings erected for the specific purpose of exhibiting ancient artifacts. However, when an archaeological museum is established in a building previously destined to other functions, or has to live together with other activities, whether connected with it or not, the architectural features often act more as hindrances than as props. Having to keep them
into account sometimes leads to curatorial decisions that might seem perplexing and open
to criticism, when in fact they are dictated by cogent practical reasons. In other cases,
however, the same physical limitations can stimulate the creativity of curators, and the
incorporation of preexisting elements in a display can become a way to state the
principles underlying it even more forcefully.

Employing the physical space of the museum as a kind of stage makes it easier for
the public to relate to objects which have little or no aesthetic value, are too detached
from everyday life to elicit an immediate response, or lack the exotic air often associated
with archaeology in popular imagination. By grouping ordinary-looking artifacts so that
their relationship emphasizes their historical value, or by employing visual aids to
suggest that the seemingly distant antiquities have, in fact, some bearing on our everyday
life, archaeological museums are able to counter criticisms related to their presumed lack
of relevance in the contemporary world.

The physical features of a museum influence not only the appearance of the display,
but also the performance expected from visitors. The capacity to recognize and adhere to
a suggested itinerary, for example by going through the rooms of a museum according to
their numbering, and to move among the artifacts in response to visual cues represents an
important test of a visitor's education, but also of his or her civic maturity. Many
complications can interfere with the correct execution of the performance, or of the ritual,
as one might call it, however. While an intended visiting path is usually built into the
design of an exhibit from the beginning, with time the display may develop unexpected
features, for example by being forced to accommodate more objects. Such changes can
influence the perception of the artifacts and the general behavior of the visitors in ways
not anticipated by the planners of the museum, giving rise to ambivalent responses
towards the artifacts. Moreover, the unique personality of each museum, and the design
choices necessary to maintain it, can render some expectations more difficult for the
public to recognize than others.

Finally, the results of the research allow going beyond the idea that the selection,
disposition, and presentation of archaeological artifacts in a museum are merely
ideological tools aimed at the construction and maintenance of a national identity. The
weight of nationalistic ideas and motives in the development of archaeological museums
emerges clearly in several of the cases analyzed, indeed, but ideology cannot be invoked
as a universal explanation for each and every choice related to the display of the past.
Archaeologists should be aware of the mechanisms by which the museum can turn a
multifaceted and problematic evidence into the building blocks of a linear, clear-cut and
above all “objective” narrative, beginning with the placement of the objects and the
shepherding of visitors through the establishment of visiting paths. Such mechanisms,
however, can operate independently from the reasons behind the design of a display, and
no archaeologist, curator, or political actor interested in using the past to further a specific
agenda can anticipate all the forms that the interaction between artifacts and viewers can
take. Whether this thought is comforting or exasperating depends on which it is thought
to come first, the artifact or the visitor, and on how one is supposed to be of service to the
other.


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