THE RESOURCES OF GREECE
A Plan for the Development of Greece's Greatest Resource

Prologue

The following plan is presented with the hope that it will be discussed, refined, and adopted by the Greek State.

The suggestions in the plan are based on the obvious observation that Greece has never exploited adequately its two greatest resources: archaeology and archaeologists.

The plan is based on the life-time experience of the undersigned who has worked ever more closely with Greek antiquities and archaeologists since his student days beginning 45 years ago.

Basic Principles

Few would argue that Greece owns a tremendous cultural treasure in the form of its antiquities, but few understand that the treasure is not only cultural but also economic - if developed properly.

The same is true of the hundreds of young Greeks who have been trained to a high degree of competence in archaeology, but whose training and enthusiasm is wasted by the lack of positions for them within the Archaeological Service (AS) or dissipated by superiors in the AS who treat them in an unfortunate fashion. These young archaeologists cannot make the contribution they would like to offer to Greek archaeology because there is no place for them, and no source of an economic basis for that place.

There is also an increasing number of experienced archaeologists who have recently retired, willy-nilly, but who are still competent to undertake archaeological work, and would like to continue to use their skills. Again, there is no economic space for them.

1 It is my observation, albeit a generalization, that people who come into a position of power for reasons other than professional competence will attempt to hide their incompetence behind "imperial behavior." In the face of such "superiors" the young person who cares about Greek antiquities becomes discouraged and frustrated; the young person who cares about position will learn a form of behavior that will perpetuate itself within the bureaucracy.
In other words, this plan is designed to take advantage of material resources in the form of Greek antiquities, and of human resources in the form of Greek archaeologists.

It is also guided by the principle of privatization, not of the antiquities themselves, but of their exploitation, and the belief that a private company, driven by a profit motive, will protect and use the antiquities in the best possible way since those very antiquities are the source of the company’s long-term income. Just as the farmer who maintains his fields carefully and prudently will derive a greater income from them, so the company which cares for the antiquities under its domain will realize greater wealth from them.

The Plan

The Greek State (GS) will designate a number of known ancient sites, perhaps 10 initially, each of which presents different points of interest; i.e. a spread in chronology and in character such as urban centers, cemeteries, sanctuaries, etc.

These sites are to be located geographically in various parts of Greece. The most obvious candidates will be those sites which are in rural areas, perhaps archaeologically tested during the past century, but not excavated to any extent, and not protected or guarded today. They will be free of modern encumbrances (buildings, pipelines, etc.). These sites will be advertised and bids solicited from private companies. Those bids will speak to the following rights and responsibilities, with the basic understanding that ownership of artifacts and ancient sites will always reside with the GS. The successful bidding company will "rent" the site and the right of economic development of it and its ancient remains, both moveable and not, for a specific period of time (perhaps 25 years).

Rights and Responsibilities of the Contracting Company (CC)

1) The CC will purchase in the name of the State all the property necessary for its excavations, and immediately fence and guard it.

2) The CC will construct, before its excavations, a building to serve for museum exhibition, conservation laboratory, and storage of unexhibited antiquities. The plans for the museum would be developed in consultation with the local office of the Archaeological Service, and expeditiously approved by the Ministry of Culture.

3) The CC will employ the following minimum staff before the excavations began:
a) Director. This will be a professional and experienced archaeologist responsible for all the on-site and museum work.2

b) Guards/Guides. There will be employed 8-10 guards in order to provide round-the-clock protection. They should be university graduates in archaeology with at least two languages. They would be responsible not only to guard, but also to provide information to visitors, and their responsibilities will expand as the CC begins its excavation work and they supervise parts of the excavation.

c) Local workmen. The CC will hire two men or women who would be responsible to keep the site and the ground around the museum in good order.

4) Once the necessary property has been acquired and the museum/laboratory in working order, the CC will add to its staff a qualified conservator and more guard-guides and workmen on a seasonal basis. The CC will also be able to utilize local volunteers/docents as guard-guides, much as is done – for example – in England (see http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/get-involved/volunteering/).

5) The CC will be obliged to conduct scientific excavation of the site for a minimum of two months each year.

6) The CC will have the right to sell entrance tickets and collect those proceeds on a year-round basis.

7) The CC will have the right to announce publicly the excavation schedule for the coming year, and to sell tickets which will allow visitors to observe the excavations in progress.

8) The CC will have the right to establish and maintain a gift shop, either within the museum, or nearby, with items relevant to or reminiscent of the site. It will further have the right to sell in that shop reproductions of artifacts discovered at the site.

9) The CC will have the right, with the support of the GS, to establish a coffee shop, and/or restaurant, and/or hotel in the vicinity of the museum, given that no antiquities would be damaged physically or esthetically by any new construction.

2 The CC will also need a Business Manager responsible for (among other things) the sales of entrance tickets and, in consultation with the Director, reproductions to be sold in the gift shop. He/she would – also in consultation with the Director – be responsible for site and museum maintenance and security, and for the hotel and restaurant business.
10) The CC will be obliged to conduct tours/seminars for local schoolchildren as a part of the latter's curriculum, and with the goal of exciting long-term archaeological interests in those children.

11) The CC will file an annual report with the GS containing the results of its excavations, a copy of the inventory of newly discovered artifacts, and a notification of any problems. At the same time, the CC will file with the GS its excavation plan for the following year, and the personnel who would carry out that plan.

12) The CC will have the right to publish and sell in the museum/gift shop its annual reports as well as more comprehensive guide books to the site and the museum. It would also have the right to issue press releases and to announce new discoveries with copies provided to the AS and the GS.

13) The CC will pay taxes on after-expense profits.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Greek State (GS)

1) The GS must create a commission, perhaps of 15 members, with representation from the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Education, Economics, and Development. This commission will have the responsibilities for:
   a) creation of a list of ancient sites to be made available to potential CCs.
   b) creation of a list of possible Project Directors (probably but not exclusively archaeologists) to be made available to potential CCs. These PDs will be experienced and knowledgeable with regard both to archaeological method and specific sites and regions. They should also be skilled in administration and public relations.
   c) consideration of proposals from CCs with ultimate acceptance (with or without emendation) or rejection of those proposals.
   d) final form of the contract between the GS and the CC.
   e) approval of location and form of museums to be constructed by the CCs.

2) In the event that the CC was unable to reach agreement with an owner for the direct purchase of property in the name of the GS, the GS will be obligated to declare expropriation proceedings against the owner, at the expense of the CC.

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3 In some of what follows the GS could/should be represented by the Central Archaeological Council (KAS), but a broader based commission would be necessary for some of the business considerations. The relations between KAS and the Commission need to be carefully defined.
3) The GS will be required to approve (or not) the plans for the museum within two months of their submission by the CC. Failure to respond would be the equivalent of approbation. The GS will also be obligated to facilitate the various building permits required by law for the construction of the museum.

4) The GS will be required to approve (or not) within two months after submission the plan of excavations and personnel proposed by the CC for the following year. Failure to respond would be the equivalent of approbation.

5) The local office of the Archaeological Service (AS) will report annually to the GS upon the progress of the CC's work and the fulfillment of its obligations, and to recommend (or not) the acceptance of the CC's report and its plan of work for the following year.

If the report of the AS were to be negative, the GS would investigate, and the CC would have the right to appeal. If the report of the AS were shown to be factually correct and that antiquities had suffered because of the CC's actions, the contractual agreement between the GS and the CC would be considered null and void, and the CC's investment would be lost.

If the report of the AS were to be negative, and it was shown after investigation that the AS report was factually incorrect, and that the antiquities had not suffered because of the CC's actions, the author of the AS report would be automatically demoted two levels. If that author submitted a second inaccurate negative report, he or she would be removed from the AS.

The Contract

The CC and the GS will enter into a contractual agreement with the above considerations embodied in the document. The Agreement would be valid for a specific period of time, perhaps 25 years. The Agreement could be renewed by mutual consent for a period to be determined.

The Pros of this Plan

1) The maintenance and security and development of a site will be taken on by a CC, under the supervision of the GS, but without expense to the GS.
Dozens of neglected sites, now open to vandalism and theft, thus will become protected, without encumbering the GS economically.\(^4\)

2) Employment will be given to a significant number of individuals, including professional archaeologists. Many local people (perhaps several dozen at each site) will be employed as workmen, cleaners, and employees in the gift shop and hotel and coffee-shop/restaurant.

3) The tourism developed from close personal contact with the archaeological work and the archaeologists will produce positive public relations, and many repeat participants. The tourist will come back again and again, year after year, to see what is being found at "his" site. The CC might also provide photographs of the tourist together with a discovery that he observed during his visit, and create a group of "Friends" of the site with whom reports would be shared.

4) In addition to entrance and observation tickets, the CC can expect steady customers for hotel and restaurant during the period when excavations are underway, and fewer but still significant numbers during the remainder of the year. The numbers will grow as the news of the site travels.

5) Tourist agencies will be able to organize tours with the participants going to several of the sites under excavation, and should co-ordinate with the various CC;s so that the total excavation season for different sites extends from Spring until Autumn.

6) School children will be encouraged to pursue careers in archaeology, thereby forming a continuing supply of manpower for the work of future generations.

7) Tax revenues for the GS will be generated from payroll taxes of the CC’s employees, and from profits of the CC itself.

The Cons of the Plan

1) It will be difficult to attract CCs which could and would make the necessary preliminary investments especially given the reputation of the AS for obstructionism.

\(^4\) The continuing exposure of the antiquities to vandalism can be demonstrated by, among many examples, the recent smashing of the ancient stone thrones at the southeast corner of the “palati” of Phlius (perhaps the bouleuterion) which was discovered in 1924. See Ν. Παπαχατζή, Παυσανίου Ελλάδος Περιηγήσις II (1976) p. 118, fig. 109, rear center.
2) It will require a concerted effort to persuade the AS to accept an apparent reduction of its power even though its ability to protect the antiquities would actually be enhanced with this plan.

3) There will be an initial negative reaction to this plan for two reasons:
   a) the idea that the CC will be able to steal antiquities without anyone knowing of the theft. This is not a real concern because of the economics – the CC will, by removing artifacts from Greece, undermine its own economic base. What will be on display in the museum? What reproductions can be made of an artifact that has disappeared? Etc. Further, in an excavation during the light of day, with many workmen and visitors as observers, the existence of the artifact will be widely known from the moment of discovery, and its subsequent history documented in the museum and the AS archives. The history of the Foreign Archaeological Schools’ excavations shows clearly the truly minimal danger of such thefts. In fact, as suggested above (Pros #1) illicit nocturnal excavations will be eradicated once a site is under the control of a CC.
   b) the commercialization of archaeology will be claimed as degrading and "Disneyesque". Such claims will likely be made by those who are currently in archaeological positions, and paid to fulfill their responsibilities; i.e. they are already using archaeology as the economic base of their lives. The issue is more one of taste, but there is nothing intrinsically distasteful about a properly conducted archaeological excavation, nor about the enthusiasm of its spectators.

General considerations

1) The plan outlined above has been, to a large degree, already in existence for the past 140 years with the Foreign Archaeological Schools playing the role of CCs. The obvious difference is that the FAS' goals are exclusively scientific, and that they retain the scientific rights to their discoveries. In this plan, the CCs will also have economic and commercial rights, which are currently very much underexploited by the GS. The FAS's have brought hundreds of millions of euros to Greece during the past 140 years; The CC's will bring even more as they seek to build the basis for profit from their investment.

2) This plan will give to people from every corner of the planet the opportunity to observe the discovery of a part of themselves. Hellenism is not confined to Greeks, for every human being has – to some degree – a part of ancient Greece in himself and his society.

3) During the few past decades, the personnel of the AS has been divided ever more into those who are motivated by a love for the antiquities, and those who are motivated by a lust for position and power; that is, those who are
primarily archaeologists on the one hand and those who are primarily bureaucrats on the other. The plan given here would give a place to the former where they could exercise their talents without the intervention of the latter. It would also remove the latter, at least to a limited extent, from mismanagement of the antiquities, or at least those in the sites controlled by the CCs.\textsuperscript{5}

It needs to be said that there is need both for archaeologists and for bureaucrats, but it is increasingly rare to find the qualities and personalities of both in single individuals. This plan would take a step in the direction of freeing the archaeologists to care for the antiquities, and the bureaucrats to protect their positions.

\textbf{Test example}

In the following discussion, I shall use the ancient site of Aidonia, west of Nemea, as an example, but there are dozens of other sites in similar situations spread throughout Greece. I use Aidonia simply because I know it relatively well, having lived and worked in the region for the past 40 years.

In 1976 a Mycenaean cemetery was discovered by illicit diggers on the edge of the village of Aidonia. The cemetery – as defined by the illicit excavations - consisted of 18 chamber tombs all of which were robbed by the illicit diggers to varying degrees. This was a theft that resulted in the loss of untold numbers of artifacts of untold value. The small part of that missing treasure (valued at $1,500,000) which was recovered at the end of 1993 from a private dealer in New York was a slight alleviation to the loss.

In the more than three decades since the previously opened tombs of the cemetery were responsibly re-excavated by the AS and some artifacts that had been left behind by the robbers were recovered, the land where the tombs are located has not been acquired by the GS, and it has not been fenced or guarded. The CC would purchase and protect that land, and the adjacent fields where many more tombs – unrobbed in modern times – can be shown to exist.

Given that tombs (i.e. dead people) imply once-living humans, the CC might be interested in the discovery and excavation of their habitation center. Again, that excavation would be preceded by the acquisition of the necessary property in the name of the GS.

The material already excavated and now located in the museum of Nemea, would be returned to Aidonia and put on display in a new museum there. Hence the new museum would be functioning and open to the public

\textsuperscript{5} I do not list here examples of such current mismanagement, but am willing to provide many if desired and if the preceding statement is doubted.
even before the CC began its new excavations. Some of that earlier material could be replicated and ready for sale in the new museum/gift shop.

The person to be the Director of the Aidonia excavation project on behalf of the CC should be experienced and knowledgeable, especially about Aidonia itself. In the case of Aidonia, such a person, recently retired from the AS, exists and could be hired to serve as Director on behalf of the CC. She has worked with the material from the AS excavations of Aidonia from the early days of excavations at the site, and would be in the best of positions to continue her publication work now supported by the CC meanwhile giving specifically experienced direction to the larger new project.

The local people, who have seen the example of Ancient Nemea, understand that the illicit excavations of the 1970’s constituted a theft from them, and are very supportive of a project that would provide both employment for dozens of them and a visible symbol of community pride. Hence, it can be hoped that agreement with the local authorities for the use of the old school house for hotel/restaurant/gift shop could be easily reached, and property negotiations, in general, would be much facilitated by local peer pressure.

Finally, the Aidonia CC might well expand to include the ancient site of Phlious a few miles away and thus present for the archaeological tourist both pre-historic burial and Classical/Hellenistic city contexts for their experience.

Conclusion

The plan suggested above undoubtedly needs refinement, and specific issues will emerge from site to site, but if it were to be embraced by the GS, and supported by the AS, it could serve as a blueprint for the development of a commercial treasure that is uniquely Greek and which could continue to be developed during the years to come. Hence, a sustainable source of economic support for Greece will be developed and exploited, as well as increasingly protected for future generations.

Greece can become a nation of archaeologists, and archaeology can become a vital, positive force in the Greek community, no longer to be regarded as a brake on progress, but rather as an on-going stimulus to the advancement of all Greeks.

Respectfully submitted,
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(1982-1987)
Greek citizen by decree of the President of the Republic (ΦΕΚ 1158-19/8/2005)
Επίτιµος Διδάκτωρ, Πανεπιστήµιο Αθηνών (1996)
Ταξιάρχης του τάγµατος της Τιµής (1996)
Επίτιµο µέλος του Διοικητικού Συµβουλίου της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής

Εταιρείας
Πρόεδρος, ΔΣ, Σύλλογος για την Αναβίωση των Νεµέων Αγώνων (2011-     )

8–10–2013