

From the Harpy Tomb to the Wonders of Ephesus: British Archaeologists in the Ottoman Empire 1840–1880

By Debbie Challis. Pp. xii + 211, figs. 53. Duckworth, London 2008. \$33. ISBN 978-0-7156-3757-9 (paper).

The British Consular Service in the Aegean and the Collection of Antiquities for the British Museum

By Lucia Patrizio Gunning. Pp. x + 224, figs. 12, maps 3. Ashgate Publishing, Surrey 2009. £60. ISBN 978-0-7546-6023-1 (cloth).

The formation of national collections of antiquities is a topic of considerable interest to those working on the history of (classical) archaeology. Both books reviewed here chart the mechanisms by which the British Museum acquired Greek antiquities for its national collection in the 19th century. In *From the Harpy Tomb to the Wonders of Ephesus*, Challis examines excavators engaged in acquisition within the Ottoman empire and their relationships to the British Museum from 1840 to 1880. In *The British Consular Service in the Aegean and the Collection of Antiquities for the British Museum*, Gunning addresses the role of consuls, vice-consuls, and consular agents in the Levant from 1815 to 1860. Challis explores in more detail the rationale for collection, employing the familiar concept that Europeans claimed symbols of the classical past as their own, necessitating collection for national museums and justifying their removal as rescuing them from the “decadent oriental” ignorant of their value. For Gunning, this rationale is implicit, though she notes that the consuls endorsed ideologies that justified their acquisition of

antiquities. Both authors take contemporary events into account, refer to competition between the British and French, and highlight the role of Charles Thomas Newton. Each makes copious use of archival sources, detailed in their respective bibliographies.

Challis identifies the period from 1840 to 1880 as a time of transition between casual antiquities collection and the professionalization of classical archaeology. At the core of the book is her traveler-archaeologist, a hybrid term coined to describe the intermediate state between traveler-collector and professional archaeologist. At the same time, she sees forces within the British Museum acting in accordance with the “Great Chain of Art,” a Hellenocentric theory that linked all art in an evolutionary chain, with classical Greek art at the aesthetic apex. Challis identifies precedents set during this period: the role of the traveler-archaeologist with his intimate knowledge of the region, the direct use of the Royal Navy, the employment of artists and architects with the new technology of photography, the new illustrated press’ interest in archaeology, and

general public enthusiasm for travel journals. She expertly weaves academic trends and popular perceptions together to provide a highly readable account.

Challis' book is arranged in three chronological parts. The first deals with Lycia in the 1840s (chs. 1–2) and Halicarnassus and Cnidus in the 1850s (ch. 3). Charles Fellows, excavator of Lycian tombs, embodies the characteristics of the traveler-archaeologist: he recognized the “burgeoning taste in travel guides” (24) and styled his published reports accordingly, employed an artist and architect, claimed authentic knowledge of the area, and used the pinhole camera to aid in the production of accurate drawings. By his third expedition, Fellows had the backing of the British Museum in obtaining an official *firman* (permission) to excavate. The Royal Navy provided manpower and ships to transport the monuments to England. Challis points out, however, that the reception of the Harpy and Payava tombs in London led to a conflict with the proponents of the Great Chain of Art, who saw in them barbarian or oriental influences.

The excavations at Halicarnassus and Cnidus by Newton, Challis claims, “cemented the use of state diplomacy in the acquisition of antiquities for the museum” (55). From 1840 until his appointment as vice-consul at Mytilene in 1853, Newton had been employed by the British Museum. From Mytilene, he maintained a regular correspondence with colleagues at the museum and prospected for promising archaeological sites on the coast of Asia Minor and the Aegean islands. His excavations received government support in the form of Navy ships and personnel, including an architect, engineer, and photographer. Newton conducted a scientific form of excavation by using photography, mapping finds, and carefully reading historical accounts to produce an academic publication rather than a popular travelogue. Challis tells us that even as victory in the Crimean War improved diplomatic relations with the Ottoman empire, a number of changes occurred at this time to facilitate Newton's activities: new personnel at the British Museum with an interest in furthering archaeological discovery, direct support from the foreign secretary, and advances in technology (robust steam ships, engineering techniques, and photography).

Part 2 moves to North Africa and the excavations at Carthage and Cyrene in the late 1850s and early 1860s (chs. 4–5). Chapters

4 and 5 each follow the same pattern: brief biographical information about the traveler-archaeologists and detailed accounts of the ancient history of the sites, their excavations, and the reception of the material in London. Carthage, and then Utica, were excavated in the late 1850s by Nathan Davies, an American in the employment of the British consulate at Tunis. In his search for Dido's city, Davies is portrayed by Challis as similar to Heinrich Schliemann in that they both were driven by literary accounts. Davies' publication was styled—like Fellows'—as a popular travelogue. Challis mentions Davies' use of a detailed map of Carthage produced earlier by the Dutch consul. In fact, a Dutch engineer, Jean Emile Humbert, had produced the map while in the employ of the bey of Tunisia. Humbert excavated the Punic city in the 1820s at the behest of the National Museum in Leiden, which, like the British Museum later, was in the process of acquiring antiquities for its own national collection. R. Murdock Smith, an engineer who had worked with Newton, and Edward Porcher, who had worked with Davies, also led an expedition (1860–1861) to the little-known territory of Cyrene. They were supported by Newton, who had subsequently become the Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum. Like Newton's publication, theirs was aimed at the intellectual reader.

Returning to the Levant, part 3 focuses on the major excavation at Ephesos and minor excavations of Priene, Rhodes, and Sardis, along with excavations on Cyprus in the late 1860s and 1870s (chs. 6–8). Again, the influence of Newton is felt: his connections in government meant he was able to raise funds for “cultural ventures” (115). He also traveled to the area at this time, visiting excavations at Ephesos (conducted by John Turtle Wood), Troy (Schliemann), Priene (Society of Dilettanti), Rhodes (Alfred Bilotti), and numerous others. Following the establishment of the Ottoman Imperial Museum in 1868, however, we begin to see a change in Ottoman attitudes. The clandestine removal of antiquities from the country by Schliemann contributed to the introduction of the first Ottoman antiquities law in 1874. Classical archaeology became professionalized by the 1880s: learned societies were founded, foreign schools established, and university posts created.

Gunning's introduction lays out three “challenges” for investigation: the difference in attitudes about the Levant between travelers and

foreign residents, the historical development of the British foreign service in the Levant from its origins in the Levant Company to its incorporation in the Foreign Office, and, finally, the collection of antiquities for the British Museum by government officials. Of the four substantial chapters in this book, the first deals with the transition of the consular position from the Levant Company to the Foreign Office. The need for change, Gunning tells us, was brought about by the establishment of the Ionian Protectorate and the allocation of British protective status to Ionian citizens trading or living in the Levant, creating additional consular work. Change was also necessitated by opinion at home—in the press and in Parliament—about the undesirability of foreign-born Levantine merchants representing British interests abroad, particularly in light of the volatile political situation in the Aegean during the Greek War of Independence (1821–1832) and its immediate aftermath. Gunning tracks the transformation in the duties of the consuls from a trade-oriented to a political role and the consequent worsening of their financial conditions. The second chapter looks at the changed political and commercial roles of the consuls in the Aegean islands and the coast of Asia Minor after 1825, when the service was handed over to the Foreign Office, documenting the gradual trend toward detached observation and diplomacy. These two chapters provide detailed historical context with numerous quotations from Levant Company and Foreign Office correspondence, representing a great deal of original research and successfully meeting the author's second "challenge."

The consular office at Rhodes, established in 1850, is the subject of chapter 3. Its establishment was due in part to the appointment on Rhodes of an Ottoman governor-general responsible for the Aegean islands, which highlighted the weakening of the Ottoman central government. Here, Gunning introduces Newton in his capacity as vice-consul at Mytilene. She quotes his two appointment letters: the first is a standard Foreign Office appointment; the second provides additional funds to extend his "usefulness in connection with the British Museum" (113), allowing him to travel and report on places of archaeological interest. Numerous quotations from Newton's papers and those of his secretary, Dominic Ellis Colnaghi, provide an insight into Newton's attitude toward the local population. Here, Gunning addresses her first "challenge": the

difference in attitudes to the present state of Greece between traveler (using Lord Byron as an example) and foreign resident (Newton). Drawing on her research on Byron as a philhellene, Gunning reiterates the well-known fact that Byron believed Greece was in transition toward a time when it would regain its ancient splendor. Newton, many years later, after Greece had become an independent state, believed the Greeks incapable of attaining that splendor. Whether this "challenge" can be considered successfully met on the basis of two individuals who came to different parts of the Aegean under different historical circumstances is debatable. In her explanation of Newton's negative views of modern Greeks, Gunning cites the stereotypes the British applied to the Greeks documented by Gallant (*Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity and Power in the British Mediterranean* [Notre Dame, Ind. 2002]) but does not take into account Gallant's rationale for them: justification of British rule in the Ionian islands.

Gunning's final chapter addresses the collection of antiquities for the British Museum by consuls and how this activity became embedded in their official responsibilities. She indicates that consuls had a reputation since the 18th century for acquiring antiquities for both public and private collections. The sale in 1820 of the collection acquired by Henry Salt, consul in Alexandria in the last years of the Levant Company, to the French (because the British could not meet the purchase price) is seen by Gunning as the turning point in the use of the consular service in obtaining antiquities for the national collection. She also traces the links between the British Museum and government that led to the use of the Royal Navy. Establishment of the first Greek antiquities law in 1834 turned attention to the Aegean islands and Asia Minor as the remaining place for the acquisition of classical antiquities not yet protected by law. However, it was not until Newton was appointed vice-consul in 1853 that the role of government in the acquisition of antiquities for the British Museum became clear. Gunning convincingly documents Newton's archaeological intentions in accepting the post of vice-consul while still retaining a link with the British Museum with a view to future employment. By the 1860s, under Newton's direction as keeper, the British Museum had an organized agency in the form of the consular service, the Royal Navy, and customs. In 1864, a circular, quoted in full by Gunning, was sent

out to all acting consuls, making the search for antiquities part of their official duties.

Both authors include an appendix: Challis a chapter-by-chapter list of British Museum galleries where the monuments and antiquities can now be found, and Gunning an alphabetical list of government agents in the Levant and at the embassy in Constantinople. Readers of Challis' appendix will need to check in advance for possible closures or rearrangements and should note that the Payava tomb is in Gallery 20, not Gallery 22 as printed. Challis' book is extensively illustrated, with many figures from the original traveler-archaeologists' publications complementing her text. There are, however, no maps. Though Gunning has two maps and one chart and uses original archive

photographs of Newton's excavations, they are not fully integrated with the text.

Taken together, these two books provide fascinating insight into the process by which the British Museum acquired antiquities in the 19th century. They are essential reading for anyone interested in the origins of classical archaeology and the historical circumstances in which 19th-century museum collections were formed.

DEBORAH HARLAN

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
SHEFFIELD S1 4ET
UNITED KINGDOM
D.HARLAN@SHEFFIELD.AC.UK