

Archaeology cultural heritage and modern greek identity



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Archaeology/Cultural Heritage and Modern Greek Identity

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of pages: 2 Premium 6530 Greece was one of those countries geographically situated at the crossroads of not only a multiple but also heterogeneous civilization and hence it is endowed with a contemporary culture of its own. Hence Modern Greek identity always remains as a subject that is always highly contestable and debatable especially when viewing it from a cultural standpoint. Many scholars and writers are rather fascinated by the subject of Modern Greek identity and how it came to be shaped and nurtured. The views of some of the most widely read authors give us an eye opener as to what it is all about.

One of the most quintessential symbols of Western Civilization is the Parthenon which has been under restoration for the last twenty five years and has very ‘ fascinating information about its history.’(Mary Beard, 2003) but unfortunately, instead of revealing its grand architectural merits, the restoration process stands to be questioned because the classic architectural sculptures has been denuded of its original beauty. In responding to this challenge, Mary Beard questions the authenticity of work carried out by Elgin Marbles in the most commendable and thought provoking way.

Her book is packed with historical, architectural and archaeological information in addition to very interesting anecdotal and literary quotations which help the reader to taste the flavor of what the Greek identity encompasses and portrays. She refers to the Parthenon as a diachronic and fascinating cultural phenomenon and concludes by saying that, “ if it had not been dismembered, the Parthenon would never have been half so famous”

(22) Mary Beard (2003) puts forward many new questions in reflecting about the Parthenon's limitations in bridging the ancient past and the modern present. She has elicited valuable information since the restoration work of the 70's of how the place was converted to a church in honor of the blessed Virgin Mary and then into a cathedral under the Franks, the Catalans and the Florentines, and then into a mosque under the Ottomans.

The book by Y. Hamilakis, titled "The Nation and Its Ruins" provides the reader with solid facts that surrounds the Greek identity, that are very essential not only to historians but to all those who visit the archaeological sites of Greece. The book gives us a lot of theoretical information on Greece's cultural identity which was prevalent at the same time which makes it all the more intellectually captivating. Hamilakis speaks extensively on the ruins of ancient Greece which was also a major contributing factor portraying the nationalist identities of Greece. Hamilakis work is taken to be the first serious study that provides us with a deep understanding of the past in Greece bringing out its spectacular but ancient cultural heritage that supports the Greek identity. In his own simplistic style, in his "Nations and its Ruins, Hamilakis crafts his arguments meticulously and adding newer challenges even while portraying the nations identity through the cultural role of archeology that was present in a Greek society.

For centuries now the Acropolis is taken to be synonymous to the Greek identity and has enamored as well as captured the imagination of travelers, readers and writer alike. The Acropolis is considered to be one of the world's most famous heritage sites and a national monument of Greece. In speaking of the Acropolis in her book "The Acropolis: global fame, local claim", Eleana Yalouri, says, "The Olympics should die in their place of origin." (E. Yalouri) <https://assignbuster.com/archaeologycultural-heritage-and-modern-greek-identity/>

Basically, the Acropolis is looked at in the context that dates back to the 5th century B. C of the Athenian society, but at the same time, what is overlooked today is its multiple local and international meanings. Yalouri's book examines the different aspects of this monument and tries to find the platform where it serves not only its own ancient cultural heritage, but also a wider global culture. The author feels that this great monument has the capacity to act as a powerful agent for negotiation on the international front.

References

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Y. Hamilakis, " The Nation and Its Ruins", Oxford 2007.