



The Tree of Life
in four seasons



Environment and Culture 2008/9

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Ministry of Culture and Tourism
General Directorate of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage
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Department of Educational Programs and Communication

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Environment and Culture 2008/9



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Environment and Culture 2008/9

'The tree of life in four seasons'

In Greece, devastating fires cause severe damage to our forests and mar our summers. Faced with events that fill us with pain and anger, we felt the need to formulate an answer, express an opinion, propose a solution.

It was from this context that the idea arose to launch a campaign on a national level, under the title 'Environment and Culture'. In the heart of this initiative lies the belief that in Greece the two notions are intimately related, forming two facets of a single cause. How often when visiting an archaeological site do we find ourselves admiring the natural setting of human accomplishments? And in this country's densely populated cities isn't the protected areas around monuments that offer a priceless oasis, a breath of fresh air to inhabitants and visitors? Nature inspires artistic creation; in turn, art and cultural heritage can provide an incentive for raising awareness on environmental issues and, thus, for enhancing our quality of life.

Our wish is that the campaign should be repeated annually in spring, with a new theme every two years. For years 2008 and 2009 the subject we proposed was 'The tree of life in four seasons'. The symbolism of the tree, rich and multifaceted, deeply rooted in the minds of people, combines myths and religious beliefs, traditions and philosophical ideas through different eras of Greek civilization: prehistory, ancient times, byzantine period and modern Greece. These four historical periods are seen as 'four seasons', each one adding new branches to the trunk of the tree's narratives, depictions and symbolic values.

We addressed our invitation to all services of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as well as to other cultural organizations, either supervisory or independent in nature. Those who choose to participate were asked to select from their collections or area of responsibility those exhibits, monuments, sites or actual trees that were relevant to the subject and mark them with a uniform logo.

We then addressed an invitation to the public: to celebrate the arrival of spring and to visit these places, not only interesting but also beautiful, where monuments harmoniously coexist with nature. Entrance was free to all public museums and sites which took part to the campaign.

During the days of celebration, in the entire country, organizers and visitors explored the subject and contemplated the tree in its countless variations: in painting, sculpture, or decorative arts, on important monuments and on objects of everyday use, in myths, cults and traditions or in association with historical events. From all these activities the tree emerged as a treasured companion in human life and a source of inspiration for art; an expression of fertility powers and a symbol of eternal rebirth; a sacred presence with magical qualities, but also a part of Nature under threat.

Assessing the project, we value as a positive step forward that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism offered its own perspective and laid down its own parameters with regard to a subject of considerable public concern. Indeed, the campaign managed to project a unified response from the cultural sector, establishing a precious network of collaborations.

We also consider a success the fact that our project drew upon the principles of contemporary museology and cultural management. The organization took into account issues and challenges such as proposing thematic tours and

interdisciplinary approaches, involving local communities, designing educational activities for schoolchildren but also for other social groups. Evaluation and feedback were carried out in every stage of the project. Through a wide range of events, we aimed at highlighting the social role of museum and cultural institutions on the one hand, and at developing their accessibility on the other. The campaign 'Environment and Culture' was a valuable experience for all, an example of good practice in the promotion of cultural heritage and its connection with our present.

The material assembled by the participating services and organizations is striking for both its wealth and beauty. The chosen items, whether exhibits, monuments or sites, create a delightful mosaic. The participants produced printed informative material, which was distributed to the visitors together with the pamphlet by the Educational Programs and Communication Department of the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs. In this way, the general topic was enriched with the dimension of local history. It is worth noting that in most cases the selected items were not among the well-known highlights or were not even accessible to the public; and this is certainly one of the campaign's major contributions.

Equally important is that a new communication channel with the public was opened. Visitors who attended the events (18,000 in 2008, 40,000 in 2009) had the opportunity to express on our responding cards their thoughts and fears, their dreams and wishes, either in words or in drawings. More than 10,000 cards were collected, sent by visitors of all ages from different parts of Greece and from different countries across the world. A selection has been posted on the Ministry's website, and a small sample is included in this book, decorating its pages.

The publication of the present album is the crowning of the entire effort. We did not simply aspire to create a commemorative volume of the first two years. More than that, we envisioned the album as yet another act of communication: communication between the participants, who would now acquire an overview of the entire project; communication between the objects themselves, assembled and set in dialogue with each other, even if they come from different cultural spheres or historical periods; and finally, communication with the public, the addressee of all our efforts. Therefore, objects, monuments and sites are presented thematically. At the end of the book an index presents all the material by responsible services or organizations, and also lists the contributors to the events and the authors of texts included in this volume.

The entire effort owes much to many people. We would like to express our thanks to the honorary General Director, Mrs Vivi Vassilopoulou, and to the Deputy General Director of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, Mrs Maria Andreadaki-Vlazaki for their valuable support. Also to the team from the University of the Aegean, the assistant professors Mrs Niki Nikonanou and Mrs Alexandra Bounia as well as the PhD student Mrs Despina Andriopoulou, who undertook the evaluation of the campaign and provided us with a useful tool to continue our efforts.

To the Head of the Educational Programs and Communication Department, Mrs Stella Chryssoulaki, and to all the staff that spared no labor for the implementation of the project we also address our warmest thanks; and especially to the graphic designer Mr Spilios Pistas, who designed the material sent to the participants, to the archaeologists Mrs Tonia Koutsouraki and Mrs Alexandra Seleli, who were responsible for the campaign's organization, and to Mrs Xenia Iliopoulou and Mr Yiorgos Grypaios, responsible for the project's secretarial support. Valuable was also the contribution of Mrs Dimitra Antonopoulou, Head of the Administration and Accounts Department of our Directorate.

Finally, we would like to thank all the Directors of the participating services and organizations for their enthusiastic response to the invitation of the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs, and for their contribu-

tion to the successful realization of the campaign.

We would like to believe that the celebration of ‘The tree of life in four seasons’ created a dynamic start, that will lead, hopefully, to the participation in coming years of more cultural organizations, the mobilization of a wider public, so that our present effort will live on and bear further fresh fruits.

For the next two years 2010 and 2011, the campaign ‘Environment and Culture’ will sail to explore a new theme: the first among the four elements of nature, or, as Odysseas Elytis pictured it, ‘the young water that sprung from the depth of time’.

Souzana Choulia-Kapeloni

Deputy Director of the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs



Len van Til, Holland



Fenia Kourouli, Mytilene



'The rainbow-tree', Julia V., Athens



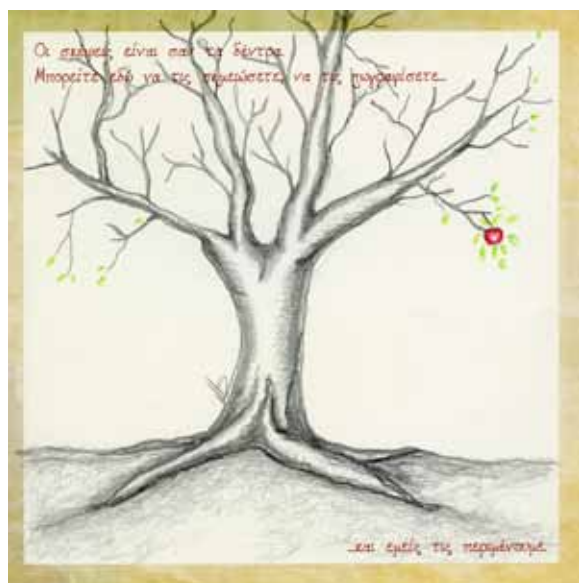
Vassileios Christodoulou, Athens



Stavros Xenos, Patras



Panayiotis Kouroupis, Herakleion



Unknown visitor, Volos



Aristotelis Triantis, Karditsa

'Life pays the obol of an olive leaf...'

Odysseas Elytis, *Laconic*

Rooted in the earth, the tree raises into the air through the gift of water. Nature's four elements – earth, water, air and, sometimes, fire – all play their part in the tree's life and death. Through our senses, sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, we compose its image. Just as we taste its fruits, the tree tastes the sun; it breathes and rustles, as do the creatures it shelters. The tree offers food, shade, a place of refuge. It offers itself and is transformed into a hearth, a house, even a ship which travels.

Active but fixed in the place where it is rooted, there where memory is anchored, the tree is a landmark; it defines life against the background of historical time.

The tree is connected to the concentric circles of nature: the yearly cycle and the cycle of life. Instability and change gave birth in humankind the fear of death. In turn, fear sired awe and reverence, and led to worship. It seems that man used his imagination to impose his existence on an unruly world. Symbols form the language of imagination and mythical metamorphoses are its work: young girls and handsome hunters, at once pursuer and pursued, were turned into trees; and gods often chose to appear to mortals seated on a tree as on a throne.

The tree's inexhaustible symbolism has found its place in religion, mythology and traditional lore, in everyday thought and even in philosophical enquiry. The title 'The tree of life in four seasons' refers to the close relationship between the tree and human life, while gesturing towards the history of civilization. The four eras of Greek history – prehistory, classical antiquity, the medieval and the modern age – have led to our time, with its own questions, its own myths, its own symbols.

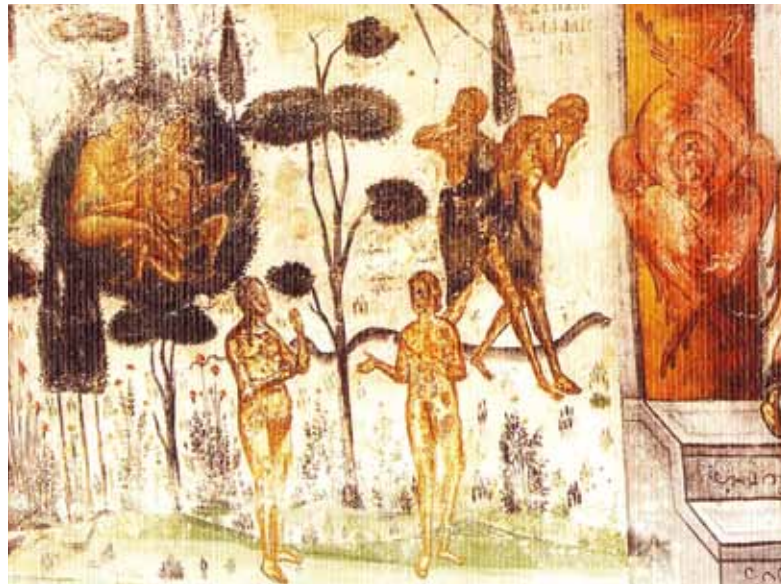
The tree is a bond that brings together the three 'worlds': the celestial, the earthy and the underworld. Below the leaves and trunk, the roots branch out in complex and mysterious courses. Perhaps this feature was that stirred the human imagination to produce so many stories, tales and images sprung from the tree. Men imagined it as a witness to their lives which silently accumulated experience and wisdom; they wrapped it in a veil of holiness and bestowed it with magical properties.

In myths and fables, many trees possess the gift of prophecy, or bear fruit which endows divine knowledge and eternal youth to whomever tastes it. Thus, the prophecies of the sacred oak of Dodona rustle in its leaves, the laurel of Apollo foretells the future, and Herakles, in completing his final labor, acquires the golden apples of the Hesperides and is given a place among the immortals on Mt Olympos.



The tree with the golden apples, gift of Zeus to Hera, took root in the garden of the Hesperides. A snake wrapped itself around the trunk of the tree to guard the precious fruit. Herakles, seated on a rock, converses with the Hesperides. He is depicted as young and unbearded. Having finished his labors, he has already been rewarded with the everlasting beauty of the gods. Detail of a scene on a red-figure hydria by the Meidias Painter, 420-400 B.C. Height of the vase: 51.2 cm. London, British Museum (inv. no. 1772,0320.30) ©Trustees of the British Museum.

At the center of the Garden of Eden, God causes the tree of knowledge and the tree of life to grow (Genesis 1:3). The snake persuades Adam and Eve to taste the forbidden fruit of the first tree. They thus acquire knowledge, but are banished from Paradise so that they do not claim the fruit of the tree of life for themselves and become immortal. Detail of a scene from a wall-painting, Philanthropinon Monastery, 1560, Island of Ioannina ©8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities.





Holding onto the trunk of a tree, Leto brings into the world her twin children. Light spread over Delos as soon as Apollo was born, and the palm tree which had sheltered the mother in her labor pains waved its golden branches, illuminating the world like the radiant sun itself.

Detail of a scene on a red-figure Attic pyxis (cosmetics jar), 340-330 B.C. Height of vase: 26 cm. Athens, National Archaeological Museum (inv. no. 1635) ©National Archaeological Museum.

In tales and traditions, the tree is associated equally with birth and death. It may stand over a grave in the place of a tombstone. The tree marks the space and reminds of the dead, it receives lamentations and offerings, and provides consolation as it grows even after the ephemeral lifespan of human beings. We also find the widespread habit, across both space and time, of planting a tree to mark the birth of a child, in order to 'root' our wishes for its good fortune.



Relatives lament their departed loved one by placing offerings on the branches of a small tree which grows over the grave.

Detail of a scene on a white Attic lekythos (oil flask) by the Bird Painter, 430-420 B.C. Height of vase: 24 cm. Athens, National Archaeological Museum (inv. no. 19338) ©National Archaeological Museum.

The experience of flowering and fruit-bearing, wilting and rebirth are significant for life, but are also objects of wonder for contemplation. Beneath the hard bark of the tree circulate the secret fluids of spring, and new growth is a near-magical expression of their power.

The tree appears across time and in different cultures as a symbol of eternal regeneration and fertility. We see it surrounded by recognizable animals or imaginary,

fantastical beasts in the art of Mesopotamia, in the iconography of the Creto-Mycenaean world, on the vases of the archaic period, in the decoration of a Byzantine church. It is possible that in each of these instances the scenes express particular ideas. Nevertheless, the central, shared belief remains the same: the tree is a sacred expression of Nature, it is the breath of the world and synonymous with life.



According to the Book of Revelation 22:4: 'Blessed are those who will have washed their robes clean, so that they will have the right to feed on the tree of life'. The tree of knowledge was the cause of the loss of the Garden of Eden; the tree of life would guarantee the salvation and transcendence of death in the heavenly world. Although the animals and birds which guard the tree bring together images with elements older than the Christian tradition, the theme is very popular in Byzantine art, as it concentrates in symbolic form the fundamental principles of Christian teaching. Marble chancel slab from the early Christian basilica of the High Priest Peter, 5th-6th c. Height: 95 cm.; max. width (intact): 124 cm. Phthiotic Thebes, Nea Anchialos (inv. no. Α 3880) ©7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities.



In Greek folk art the tree adorns a bride's embroidered linens, clothing and jewelry. With its colorful fruits, bright flowers and birds flying between its branches, the tree is a motif which wards off evil and promises fertility. Detail of a scene from an embroidered bridal sheet from Ioannina, late 18th c. Height: 30 cm.; width: 120 cm. Athens, Greek Folk Art Museum (inv. no. 3386) ©Greek Folk Art Museum.

Of all the parts of nature, the tree is perhaps the closest to humankind. Unlike the rocks, sea and sky, the tree was never considered to be immortal. Even though it is longer, the tree's life cycle follows the same course as that of humans: it grows, bears fruit, gives birth to new growth, ages, and dies. Thus, men have imagined the tree as resembling themselves: not only does it sometimes assume human form, but it is thought to share human feelings and characteristics, it is even deemed to possess that most immaterial, human feature, the soul.

Human beings who are metamorphosed into trees and young women who inhabit tree trunks are two aspects of this identification. The association is so intimate that in many stories the death of the tree is punished in the same coin, in other words, killing a tree brings the death of the perpetrator in its wake.

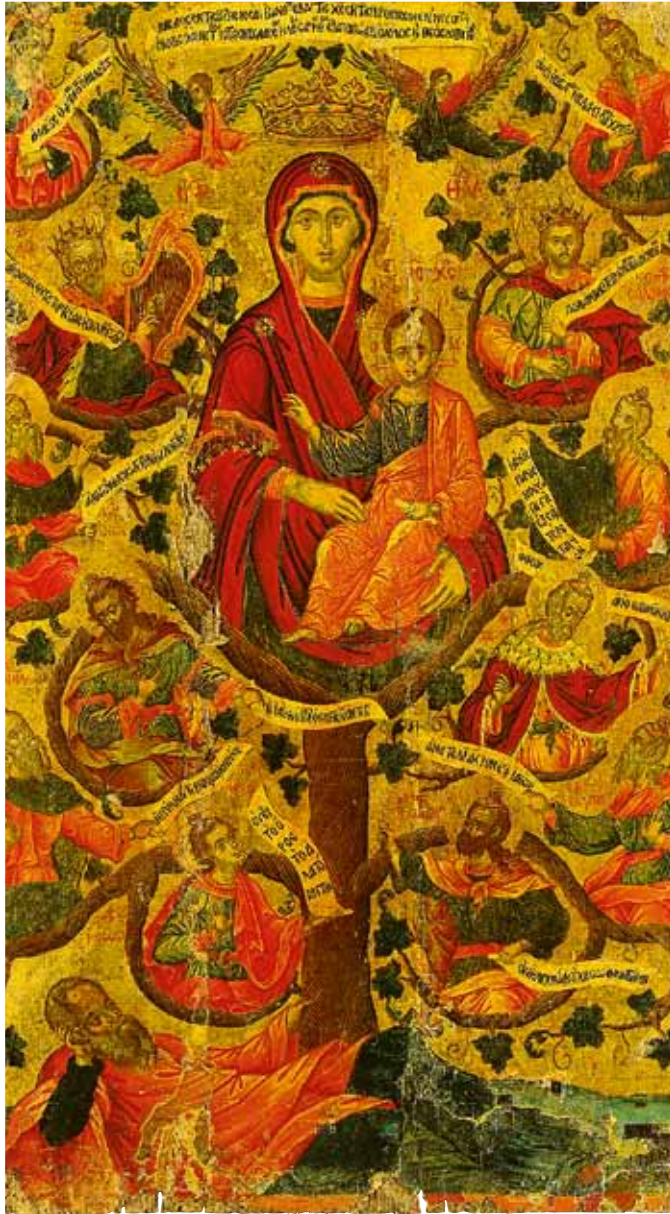


The anatomy of the human circulatory system is not random. From the muscular and elastic trunk of the aorta, the largest artery in the human body, branch out smaller arteries which course through every inch of the organism. The arrangement of the system which performs this function is analogous to that in the first large plants which existed from the beginning of the life on earth. Until today, the form taken by pine, almond and plane trees is most perfectly suited to the function each performs. Through the sometimes unexpected analogies of symmetry and shape we return to the fundamental principles of life itself, where form and function go hand in hand. Thus, a common medical examination such as an angiography, shows how the body of a human and that of a tree are governed by the same laws since they are designed to live in the same environment.





*One god of Nature who is born and dies according to the cycle of growth is the kouros, the eternally young god, beardless and beautiful. This god is revealed to his devotees through his most quintessential manifestation: the floral. The tree serves as a symbol of the god and an incarnation of nature which participates in his epiphany (apparition to humans).
Bronze foil sheet with a scene showing Hermes Kedritis ('of the cedar'); 3rd quarter of the 7th c. B.C. Max. height: 10.9 cm.; width: 7.5 cm. From the temple of Hermes and Aphrodite at Symi Viannou in Central Crete ©The Archaeological Society at Athens.*



When we speak about our origin and history, we borrow expressions from the 'vocabulary' of the tree: roots, genealogical tree, offspring, a branch of the family... We identify our relatives, ancestors and descendants with the parts of a tree. And if we represent our family visually, we organize it along a central trunk which serves as the organizing principle uniting the past and the present – and perhaps even what the future promises.

An iconographic version of the genealogical tree is known in English as the 'Tree of Jesse' (literally 'Root of Jesse' in Greek tradition). It appears in the middle ages, originally in the West whence it passes into the East, where it becomes popular especially in the post-Byzantine period. The 'Tree of Jesse' symbolically represents Christ's human ancestry from the royal lineage of David. The tree sprouts from the reclining body of the family founder, Jesse. The male ancestors of Christ are depicted on the branches, surrounding the priceless flower of the Virgin Mary with the Christ child. The icon celebrates the divine Nativity, as in the verses from the Christmas hymn: 'Thou art a rod from the tree of Jesse and a flower issuing from it; from the Virgin thou didst spring forth'. Theodoros Poulakis, Panagia, or Root of Jesse, 1666. Height: 107 cm.; width: 70 cm. Athens, Byzantine and Christian Museum (inv.no. 1575) ©Byzantine and Christian Museum.



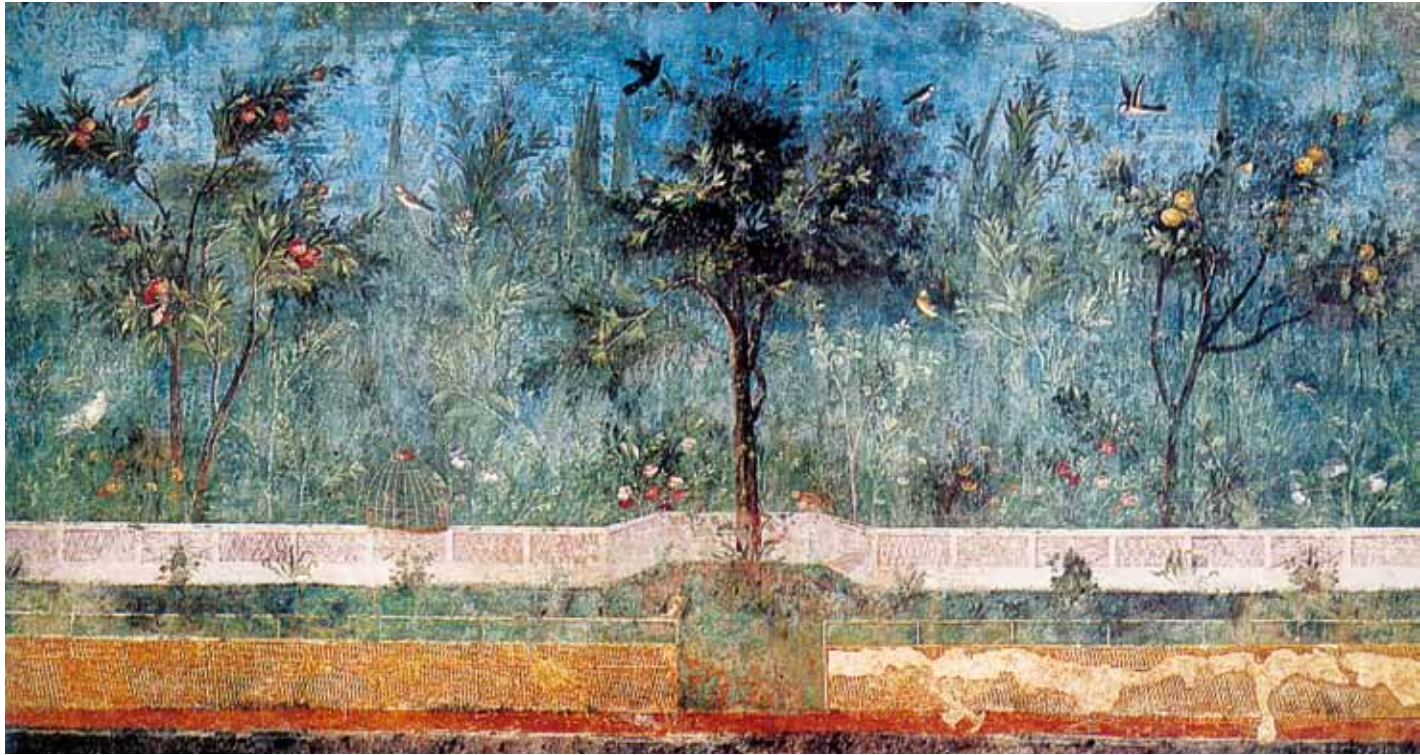
Four demons holding vases are approaching the goddess. Branches are depicted among them, as well as on the scene's upper part, together with the stars, the sun and the crescent of the moon. These beautiful branches symbolize vegetation and fertility, the goddess's precious gift to human beings. Golden signet ring from Tiryns, c.1500 B.C. Height: 3.5 cm.; width: 5.7 cm. Athens, National Archaeological Museum (inv.no. 6208) ©National Archaeological Museum.

Even when detached from the trunk, the branch preserves the characteristics of the tree. Linked with countless customs and rituals, the branch symbolizes the purity of the natural world, the dwelling place of the gods, and guarantees their collaboration in human prosperity. The branch has the power to convey Nature's blessing from the outer to the inner world, from the forest to the settlement, so long as the evergreen or the deciduous tree, which is continually reborn, safeguards the continuation of life.

The outer doors of temples and houses were decorated with branches to denote festal days. The olive branch

becomes the symbol of a suppliant in the hands of people seeking peace or forgiveness. Wrapped with wool threads, adorned with fruit, sweets and small pots with liquid offerings, branches become the 'eiresioni' designed to bring prosperity. These customs indicate how the tree is considered a bearer of all good things and not only its own fruit.

People still place wishes for abundance and fertility on tree branches. Even today, at Christmas, trees are laden with sweets, gifts, colorful balls and bright lights.



Flowers fully opened, ripe fruit, branches waving in the breeze, birds aflight...The garden of paradise spreads across the walls of an urban villa, offering its inhabitants both the pleasure of art and the illusion of being surrounded by Nature.

Detail from a wall-painting in the Villa di Livia, 30-25 B.C. Museo Nazionale Romano in Palazzo Massimo alle Terme ©Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma.

Art has loved the tree.

Artists have dedicated themselves to attempting to describe in their own language the shapes of the tree's branches, the texture of the trunk, the light as it passes through the leaves. Others have been more spare, representing the tree in a more schematic way, capturing

its symbolic presence, or seeing it as an element in the scene-setting of an action, or as a mirror reflecting thoughts and feelings.

In our day, form and expressions vary, as questions do. The tree is often the central theme of art, at once eloquent and fragile, representing Nature under threat.

In the works of Pavlos a series of inversions take place: useless paper – poorly printed posters, old newspapers, cast-off magazines – is converted into material for art. At the same time, the product itself – paper – becomes the raw material from which are created trees, flowers, even entire landscapes. The cheap and everyday acquire artistic value, the identities of these materials are recycled, and the dialogue between life, Nature and creation remains open.

Pavlos, Cypress, 1991. Height: 320 cm. Thessaloniki, Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art (inv. no. 1991.013CN.0928); ©Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art.



The tree has been worshiped by humankind as a divine presence, loved as a companion, hymned for its beauty and virtues, and has had a whole range of symbolisms grafted onto it; but today it is, above all, a part of Nature under threat. The balance has nearly been lost and our civilization has forgotten how to live in harmony with our natural environment. In the aftermath of the forest fires which scarred the summer of 2007, Kostas Tsoklis created a series of works which have the appearance of ancient tragedy: the flaming trees appear to tell the story of the catastrophe. What can we do? A lot. Without extinguishing the red flames from our memory, let us welcome the spring, turning our gaze to the healing green which sprouts amidst the burnt debris..

Kostas Tsoklis, Untitled, 2008. Height: 100 cm.; width: 70 cm. Athens, Astrolavos Art Galleries; ©Kostas Tsoklis – Astrolavos Art Galleries.



Evaluation of the National Campaign of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism 'Environment and Culture – The tree of life in four seasons' 2008/9

Niki Nikonanou, Alexandra Bounia, Despina Andriopoulou

1. Introduction

Evaluation is an essential and necessary tool for the development of museum policy and the study of its effectiveness.¹ In recognition of this fact, the General Directorate of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism and, in particular, the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs has collaborated with the Museology Laboratory² of the Department of Cultural Technology and Communication of the University of the Aegean in order to evaluate the National Campaign entitled 'Environment and Culture – The tree of life in four seasons', which has been organized during 2008 and 2009. It has been a systematic summative evaluation that aimed at charting the communication capabilities of the organizations (museums and heritage sites) involved, as well as at forming useful conclusions regarding current practices which would help the development of future policies and plans of both the Ministry's directorates and the individual heritage bodies involved.

2. Aims of the research

The main aim of this research has been to record data regarding a joint project between the directorate of the Ministry responsible for Communication and Education in museums and various organizations (museums and heritage sites) supervised by it or independent in nature, as well as defining the role and importance of the central planning and management of the campaign by the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs.

More specifically, the aims of the research have been the following:

1. To record data regarding the joint project between the department of the Ministry and the cultural heritage bodies supervised by it or independent. In particular, this data would refer to:
 - Cultural heritage bodies which responded to the Ministry's invitation to participate to such a campaign
 - Character of the activities each of the cultural heritage bodies decided to develop:

1. A discussion of the role and importance of evaluation is available at Hein 1998 and Hooper-Greenhill 2007. Also in Greek, Moussoury 1999, Economou 2003, and the last issue of the journal *Tetradia Mouseiologias* (2009).

2. The Museology Laboratory conducts research on museum communication and evaluation. Details of its research projects are available at the website: www.aegean.gr/culturaltec/museologylab.

- a. Location of activity
 - b. Category of activity
 - c. Duration of activity
 - d. Target group(s)
 - e. Participation – in comparison with other activities of the cultural heritage body
 - f. Additional material created by the cultural heritage body for the purposes of its activity/ies (for educational and communicational purposes)
2. To identify the role and importance of the central planning, development and management of the campaign, as well as of this particular method of collaboration between the Directorate and other cultural heritage bodies.
 - Advantages and disadvantages of the central planning, development and management
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of the material produced by the Directorate in order to support the campaign (such as leaflets and posters)
 - Initiative of individual heritage bodies (whether they would organize such an activity by themselves, or not and why)
 - Relation to the target group(s) involved in their activities (whether there has been a previous relationship with these groups or not)
 - Use of collections (whether the artifacts used for the activities of this campaign had been used for educational purposes before or not)
 - Influence of the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs in the selection of target group(s)
 - Collaboration with other bodies (e.g. local authorities, education boards, etc), as well as the history of their collaboration
 - Fundraising
 - Use of volunteer support.

3. Methodology of research

In order to collect the necessary data, the research team used the method of questionnaires; their development has been the result of collaboration between the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs and the Museology Laboratory. The questionnaires used for the evaluation of the 2008 campaign, were subsequently evaluated themselves and a new, slightly altered questionnaire was used for the evaluation of 2009. During 2008, 86 of the heritage bodies which had been informed about the campaign³ organized activities in order to participate to it; 75 of these bodies took part in the evaluation by returning their completed questionnaires.⁴ During 2009, the participants

3. *The Directorate sent the invitation to participate to 85 cultural heritage bodies of the Ministry, while the Hellenic Committee of ICOM invited its museum members as well. There have been 56 participants from the Ministry and 30 from the members of ICOM.*

4. *The Directorate, which undertook the responsibility of posting and receiving the questionnaires, collected 89 of them, since many heritage bodies, responsible for more than one sites, filled one questionnaire per activity.*

in the campaign were 81, while completed questionnaires were sent back by 71.⁵ The Museology Laboratory analysed both the quantitative (using the statistical software SPSS⁶) and the qualitative data.

4. Results

The analysis of the collected data provides interesting results, which on the one hand chart the current museum practice in Greece regarding communication and education, while on the other have already been used for the planning of activities, since the results of the first year's evaluation were used in the planning of the activities of the second year. The results of the evaluation can be summarized as follows:

- There has been great interest in the campaign during both years. This is a proof of the interest and wish of individual cultural heritage bodies to develop educational and communication policies, given the right support and encouragement. The plea of many bodies for government support in order to be able to organize activities and participate to such events is obvious in the questionnaires of both evaluation seasons.
- On the other hand, equally obvious is the interest of the public for activities and campaigns. It should be noted that participation to the activities dramatically increased between 2008 and 2009: in the former campaign the participants (according to the questionnaires) were approximately 18.815 people, while in the latter more than 31.340 people participated to the events.⁷ It becomes obvious that the Directorate organized the campaign better in 2009, using the experience of 2008, but also that the participants in the first year's events advertised their satisfaction and encouraged participation in the second year (as mentioned in many questionnaires of 2009).
- As far as the categories of activities organized, it is recorded that during both periods, the majority of the heritage bodies chose thematic guided tours and educational programs.⁸ There are two reasons for their selection: on the one hand, the guidance on the part of the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs, and on the other the previous knowledge and experience of the heritage bodies in the organisation of these two specific kinds of activities. The results of 2008 led the Directorate to a more detailed and systematic description of the aims of the campaign and to a rather more specific guidance to the individual bodies. Consequently, the activities of 2009 were more specialized and well-targeted.

5. *The number of the collected questionnaires was 93, since many heritage bodies, responsible for more than one sites, filled one questionnaire per activity.*

6. *For the purposes of this research descriptive statistics were used.*

7. *These numbers are recorded in the questionnaires. Taking into account the fact that not all heritage bodies returned their questionnaires, these numbers represent almost 84,1% of the total.*

8. *In 2008, 61,8% of the participants replied that they had organized thematic guided tours (55 activities), while in 2009 the percentage was 69,9% (65 activities). For the educational programs the respective percentages are 41,6% (37 activities) and 55,9% (52 activities).*

- During both years, there have been complaints on behalf of the individual bodies regarding the dates of the campaign. In 2008, when the campaign activities were scheduled for a weekend and one school day only, the heritage bodies were dissatisfied since they could not organize school programs for the whole duration (three days) of the campaign. In 2009, when the campaign was decided to last four days (instead of three), a weekend and two school days, some of the participating bodies were dissatisfied in terms of the dates themselves, since the chosen weekend coincided with a bank holiday and May is not considered a good month for collaboration with schools (because the exam period starts for Greek schools at this time of the year). On the contrary, very positive responses regarding the same issue were received by the heritage bodies that interpreted the term 'education' more broadly and designed leisure activities for different target groups and not only educational programs for school groups. In addition, many of the participants used the campaign as a starting point in order to organize activities that were offered to the visitors even after the official campaign dates. This can be indicative of first the understanding of the campaign not as an isolated action, but as an opportunity to develop a communication strategy and relevant activities, and second of the wish to maximize the benefits of the efforts made to this end by individuals and heritage bodies alike. Valuable time and resources could thus be put in longer use. In many of the questionnaires of 2009, the replies suggest that the activities organized within this campaign have now been incorporated in the services of the museum or site throughout the year. Finally, many heritage bodies express the wish for this campaign to last longer or to be repeated.
- As for the target groups, in 2008 few heritage bodies designed activities focused on specific target groups. It seemed that they shared the belief that all activities are, or should be, targeted to everybody. In 2009, the heritage bodies participating in the campaign were more willing to design activities focusing on specific target groups (mainly, of course, groups they were already familiar with, i.e. the school groups) and avoided the all inclusive approach (23,95%). This does not mean that there have not been heritage bodies that expressed the opinion that the same activities can be targeted to everybody (including in their replies more than one target groups). This idea probably derives from the fact that individual heritage bodies do not have the resources to develop or support specialized programs for different target groups, and they therefore try to take advantage of any opportunity to address as many people as possible, or their public in general. Simultaneously, though, there have been museums and sites that were happy to take the opportunity to address new target groups (such as people with disabilities, families, tourists, and so on).
- In 2008 the majority of the heritage bodies participating in the campaign did not use the opportunity to collaborate either between themselves or with other bodies. With the exception of the school boards, communication with other categories of public or private bodies was very limited (20,2%). In 2009 things changed, since almost twice as many bodies as before (39,8%) decided to work together with school boards, but also specific schools, local authorities or other agencies.
- The questionnaire of 2008 included a question asking for opinions regarding the relation of the heritage body with the local society. The replies were vague and rather perplexed: some of them expressed the opinion that

the approval and support of the local community was undisputable and even asking the question seemed unnecessary; some others expressed the view that the formation of relations between heritage sites and local communities was not the responsibility of the people who run the heritage site, but of the government or of the Ministry. The question was not included in the 2009 questionnaire, since it was decided that these opinions were too vague to be meaningful. Nevertheless, in the evaluation of 2009, many of the participants recorded in their answers to the open-ended questions either their gratitude to local communities or their active collaboration with them.

- The majority of the participants in both sessions believed that they could undertake the initiative to plan and organize such activities themselves, without the support or encouragement of the Directorate. Nevertheless, in 2008, 15% of the heritage bodies involved expressed the belief that the help they received from the Directorate was crucial to the success of their activities while in 2009 the same question received a 14% of similar answers. In 2009, clarifications were asked as for the importance of the Directorate's support; the replies mentioned that the Directorate involvement provides a sense of participating in a national event, the opportunity for small heritage bodies to be part of a major endeavor, material that individual heritage bodies cannot otherwise afford, as well as publicity that encourages visitors' involvement and results into greater participation to their activities. Naturally, there have been requests for more systematic promotion and advertising as well as particular requests regarding the needs of individual heritage sites (e.g. special leaflets).
- Almost all the heritage bodies involved created additional information and educational material both times.⁹ In 2008 many of them had expressed the need to receive support for the production. On the other hand, the material produced by the Directorate was considered satisfactory, whereas the only real comment referred to the need for it to be translated into other languages. In 2009, and given the fact that the Directorate had adopted some of the ideas of the heritage bodies (e.g. the translation), there was an overall very positive attitude towards the material. In addition, the individual bodies prepared their own productions, which need to be evaluated separately at another stage of this research.
- Both years, there has been the request on behalf of the bodies to receive financial support by the Ministry. In 2008, many museums and heritage sites also requested more specific guidelines regarding the concept of the campaign, but also guidance in terms of planning and organizing an activity. Apart from the financial one, these requests do not appear in the 2009 questionnaires, a fact which means firstly that the individual bodies seem to be more confident to deal with the campaign theme, and secondly that the guidance received was more clear and comprehensive than before.

9. In 2008 some of the participants had not understood the question, so although they did prepare and send to the Directorate samples of their additional material, they replied negatively to the relevant question of the questionnaire. For this reason, this question was rephrased in 2009.

The completion of the research in 2008 included an evaluation of the questionnaire used, as already mentioned. This was re-worked in order for a new and better questionnaire to be used in the 2009 evaluation programme. Overall, the results of the evaluation provided insight to the process, which allowed the re-development of the ideas of the campaign, of its aims and the characteristics of the activities organized within in. This was clearly reflected in the information sent to the heritage bodies and in the information and educational material produced by the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs. A similar evaluation of the methodology used to evaluate the campaign, also took place in 2009 in order to support future decisions and methodologies.

The evaluation process was an appropriate end to the National Campaign entitled 'Environment and Culture – The tree of life in four seasons' 2008/9, given the views of contemporary museology and museum education that every cultural communication program has to be comprised by three parts: design, implementation, evaluation. This is therefore, in our view, a successful and characteristic example of the possibilities offered by the evaluation of activities and events taking place in heritage sites and museums. It provides the opportunity for maximizing communication and establishing solid relations between cultural providers and their public.

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*This is the land where something wondrous grows,
something unheard of elsewhere,
not in the land of Asia,
nor on that great Doric island of Pelops,
self-born, self-grown, unaided my men's hands,
a terror to our enemies,
a thing which grows best upon this very land -
it is the children's nourisher,
the grey-leaved olive tree.
No youth nor aged man can damage or destroy it,
for Zeus Morios keeps watch with eyes forever waking,
and Pallas with her sea-pale gaze.*

*Sophocles, **Oedipus at Colonus**, 694-706*



olive tree



21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Delos

Piece of solidified lava with impression of olive leaves.
Date: probably created by the volcanic explosion of Santorini (c.1630 B.C.)
Dimensions: length: 14.5 cm.; width: 9.9 cm.; thickness: 5.2 cm.
Inventory number: B.26860
Provenance: Found at Delos in the old excavations. Brought to the island in antiquity, most likely from

Santorini, which supplied lava for the construction of flour mills.

In Greece, as in all the Mediterranean countries where it flourishes, from ancient times to the present day the olive is considered a sacred tree which symbolizes civilization and the works of peace.

According to myth, the cultivation and distribution of the olive was the work of the son of Apollo and the nymph Kyrene, Aristaios, who traveled throughout Thessaly, Boeotia, Arkadia, Kos, Sardinia and Sicily teaching humankind.



25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Rethymno

Stirrup jar with floral decoration (olive shoots).

Date: c.1340-1190 B.C. (LMIIIB)

Dimensions: height: 14.2 cm.

Inventory number: Π 1575

Provenance: Armenoi cemetery, Rethymno

The fruit of the olive tree is an important product for both the human diet and the economy: oil was a basic foodstuff, it provided fuel for lighting, was a raw material



for both cleaning agents and cosmetics, and served as a religious offering. Its significance is discernable from the law of the emperor Hadrian (121 A.D.) which regulated the obligations of oil-producers towards the city.

In Crete the olive tree was cultivated from at least the Stone Age.

Linear B tablets from Knossos indicate the exploitation of olive oil, and in the area of Rethymno (Hamalevri) the remains of what appears to have been a workshop for aromatic oils has been found, dating to 2160-2000 B.C., as well as an olive-press from the late Roman period.



1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Acropolis, Athens

The myth of the quarrel between Athena and Poseidon, and the judgment of Cecrops which lent the city its name, is well-known.

According to myth, the place where the two gods disputed is located on the north side of the Acropolis. It is there that the inhabitants of Athens chose to worship the 'holy signs' – the sacred olive tree, the marks of Poseidon's trident and the sea of Erechtheus – as well as the mythical kings and heroes of Athens. At this spot the

Erechtheion, dedicated to the cult of Athena and Poseidon, was constructed in the mid-5th century B.C. to replace the Archaic temple located somewhat to the south.

The most revered of the holy 'signs' was the crooked olive tree, the 'pankypnos elia', the gift of the goddess Athena and the oldest tree in the world. It was destroyed when the Persians set fire to the Acropolis in 480 B.C., but, according to a legend, sent out fresh shoots the following day.

The olive tree which we see today on the west side of the Erechtheion was probably planted on February 22, 1917, in memory of the original sacred tree.

13th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Athanasakeion Archaeological Museum of Volos

Silver coin from Athens, with an olive crown and owl on the reverse.

Date: 186-86 B.C.

Dimensions: diameter: 2.8 cm.

Inventory number: BE 12631

Provenance: Ancient Demetriada

In the ancient world, trees which were considered especially important for humankind were set apart and treated as holy plants.



17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Pella

Red-figure hydria used as funerary urn.

Date: end of the 5th century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 47 cm.

Inventory number: 80.514

Provenance: Cemetery in the area of the Agora

The red-figure hydria from Pella, the work of an important Attic artist, preserves a scene from the dispute between Athena and Poseidon over the naming of Athens. At the center of the scene, the artist has placed the sacred tree of the goddess Athena, the olive, in whose branches is entangled the lightning bolt of Zeus, thus signifying the victor in the contest. To its left appear Athena and a Nike who is preparing to crown the tree, and beyond them the mythical king of Athens, Cecrops. To the right of the tree Poseidon is shown departing with his trident and horse, his gift to the city.

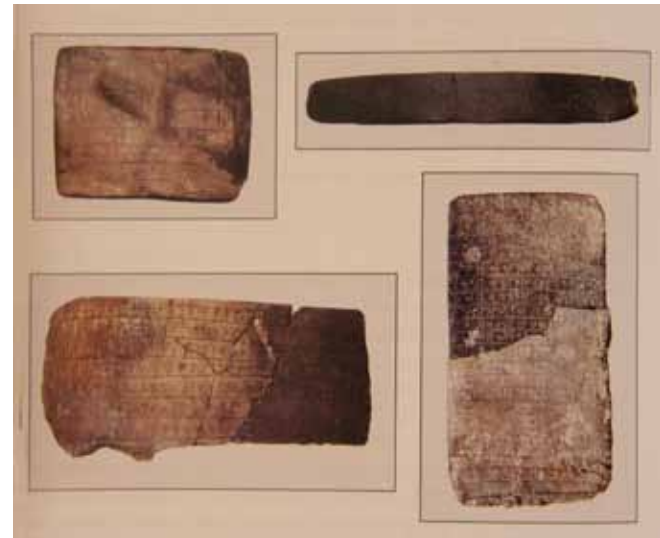


38th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Palace of Nestor – Archaeological Museum of Chora, Trifylia

The olive tree was the tree of life in the kingdom of Nestor in the 13th century B.C. The hill of Englianos, located near the palace, is surrounded by a sea of olive groves. Already from the Mycenaean period, the quantity of oil produced was such that this product supported to a large extent, the economy and commercial activity of Pylos kingdom. Olive oil and perfumed oil were produced. The latter was offered to the gods and to the king as a sign of honor, and was esteemed for both its healing and cosmetic properties. Homer, for example, when describing Telemachos's bath before his meeting with King Nestor, mentions the use of perfumed oil (*Odyssey* 3.465-470).

The clay tablets written in Linear B, which have been discovered in the palace, inform us about the production and transport of the perfumed oil; replicas of these tablets are exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Chora.

Just how precious these products were is obvious from the location of the oil store rooms next to the throne room. Indeed, at the rear of the throne room the visitor can see two store rooms for oil with large jars set in clay bases. Moreover, in the Archaeological Museum of Chora is exhibited an impressive jar with lid, used for storing oil. The large quantities of olive oil kept in the palace of Nestor, contributed to the spread of the fire which destroyed the complex in c.1200 B.C.





1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of the Ancient Agora, Stoa of Attalos, Athens

Black-figure lekythos with scene of a seated figure beside an olive tree.

Date: 500-490 B.C.

Inventory number: P 24522

Provenance: Ancient Agora of Athens

In ancient art, scenes of agricultural life were much beloved, such as the one pictured on this vase in which women are shown gathering olives into baskets. In Attica, olive and fig trees produced a rich harvest, playing a significant role in economy.



26th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Piraeus

Red-figure amphora.

Date: 420-410 B.C.

Dimensions: height: 58 cm.; diameter of the base: 21.8 cm.; diameter of the mouth: 35.5 cm.; max. diameter of the body: 40 cm.

Inventory number: 7341

Provenance: Trachones

Attributed to the Dinos painter.

Two crowned men gather the oil of a Moria, in the presence of the goddess Athena. Morias were considered to be holy olive trees, descendants of the gift of the goddess Athena, and were found scattered in estates across Attica. The oil was reserved to be given as a prize at the Panathenaic Games in vases used for this special purpose, the so-called Panathenaic amphorae.



36th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Lefkada

Display case with objects related to the olive tree and olive oil.

Date: 5th-3rd century B.C.

Provenance: Ancient city of Lefkada

The excavated objects confirm the extensive cultivation of the olive tree and the production of olive oil on Lefkada in antiquity. The agricultural installations which have been located at various points on the island suggest the

inhabitants' involvement with both the olive and other agricultural activities. The olive continues to be the chief agricultural concern today on Lefkada and to exercise a defining role in the rural economy.

In this particular display case are exhibited jugs for serving oil, vessels for perfumed oil and oil lamps. A typical example is the pitcher-like pyxis decorated with olive branches in relief.

Outside the display case the visitor can see a basin for the pressing of olive pulp or grapes, and a basin for crushing olives, known as a mortarium.

10th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Amphissa

Bell-shaped Corinthian oinochoe with trefoil-shaped mouth and ribbon handle. On the body of the vase is depicted an olive branch with olives.

Dimensions: height: 12 cm.; handle height: 15.8 cm.; diameter of mouth: 3.5 cm.; diameter of base: 7.2 cm.

Date: 4th century B.C.

Inventory number: 12262

Provenance: Grave 6 on a plot belonging to O.T.E. in Amphissa

The depiction of olive branches on vases, wall-paintings and coins of olive-producing cities is not only a simple symbol of geography, peace or prosperity, but also demonstrates the vital importance of the sacred olive tree and its fruit for the civilization of Greece. Olive tree was especially important for the development of the wider area around Delphi and, in particular, the city of Amphissa. Indeed, systematic olive culture is inseparably linked to the life and history of the city across time.



Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive-Oil, Sparta

Kylix (drinking cup) decorated with olive branches.

Date: first half of the 4th century B.C.

Inventory number: 3259

Provenance: Purchased in E.A. Vitalis antique shop.



25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Chania

Clay exaleiptron.

Date: early 3rd century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 18.5 cm.

Inventory number: Π 2439

Provenance: Agia Roumeli, 1970

Crete is considered the natural biotope of the olive, which has been cultivated on the island for thousands of years. People have used olive oil for its therapeutic qualities and for producing cosmetics. Today there are at least ten olive trees over one hundred years old; in the Prefecture of Chania they can be found at Palaia Roumata and Samonas.

The exaleiptron was a vessel used on special occasions. In ancient Tarras (Agia Roumeli) it was used in ritual fires over graves for commemorative services. According to Plutarch, it could hold oil, milk, wine, water and perfumes as offerings to the dead. The exaleiptron also played a role in everyday life as a cosmetics container for women.

6th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Courtyard of the Church of Zoodochos Pigi (Life-receiving-Spring), Kato Achaia

Fragment of a clay red-figure pinax (dedicatory plaque) with a scene of Asklepios wearing an olive crown and holding an olive branch in his hand. Opposite him is Hygeia, or perhaps a personification of the ancient city of Dyme, who is weaving an olive branch into a crown. The scene links the god of healing with the beneficial qualities of the products of the earth.

Date: 375-350 B.C.

Dimensions: height: 22.5 cm.; width: 21.5 cm.; thickness: 1.03 cm.

Inventory number: A.K. 16030

Provenance: Kato Achaia, Phaistou Street, plot of P. Tourtoura





16th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Vrasna Fortress

The area around the olive press at the Vrasna Fortress, at the site of Tripimeni Petra, Agios Georgios Municipality, Prefecture of Thessaloniki. The olive press in question, with its two flat, circular, rotating stones on top of a large lens-shaped stone, is among the earliest known of this type.

Date: 4th-2nd century B.C.

The functioning of an olive press inside the Vrasna

Fortress indicates the value of olive oil for the inhabitants' diet as well as for the economy of the region, and by extension it reveals the importance of the olive tree in antiquity. In a corner of the complex were discovered two large millstones used to crush the olives and expel the oil, together with large quantities of olive pits, in other words, refuse from the process of producing olive oil. Therefore, the public building at Vrasna was a military center but also served as a space for the production, storage and distribution of oil and other agricultural products.



9th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Schimatari

Stone olive press and receptacle for collecting oil.

Date / Provenance: The stone press and stone receptacle, placed next to an olive tree in the museum courtyard, come from a farm dated to the 3rd-4th century A.D. near ancient Tanagra.

Dimensions: receptacle: height: 50 cm.; diameter: 65 cm.; thickness of rim: 8 cm.

Material: grey limestone

Olive cultivation came from the Near East and was developed in Crete from c.3500 B.C., whence it spread across Greece and the Mediterranean. Already from classical antiquity it constituted one of the basic crops and Greek oil was stored in amphorae and transported to the entire Mediterranean region. The fruit of the olive tree and its oil constituted a main dietary element, and were also used in the production of perfumes and medicines.

In antiquity, in order to extract the oil they crushed the entire fruit of the olive without separating the flesh from the pit. The Roman period saw the invention of the stone olive press, such as the one on display. It consists of a semi-cylindrical stone, placed on a base with a channel running around the edge and terminating in a spout; the stone was then turned with the help of men and animals and crushed the fruit. The olive pulp was gathered in a stone receptacle placed next to the spout and when the pulp was pressed, the oil was extracted.



33rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Strongili, Roman farm – olive press

The impressive remains of a Roman farm in use from the 1st to the 3rd century A.D. were brought to light by archaeological excavation on Podarouli hill, a short distance from the Rodia and Tsoukalio lagoons in the Ambracian Gulf. The farm included dwellings for the inhabitants,

store rooms, and a warm water bath, as well as the olive press installation, which has three large stone presses for extracting oil from the olives, a fragment of the millstone and three stone receptacles from the olive press, with a circular channel around their edges and a spout for the flow of oil. A tour of the installation provides the visitor with the opportunity to contextualize the olive tree, its fruit and the production of a commodity which has continued to be highly valued from antiquity to the present day.

25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Hamalevri

Roman olive press at Hamalevri, Rethymno, with installations in situ. View from the north.

Date: late 2nd-early 3rd century A.D.

Cultivation of the olive, the most characteristic tree of the Cretan landscape, has been a basic element of the island's agrarian economy from the stone age to the present day. The discovery of a Roman olive press at Manouses in Hamalevri, Rethymno, is unique in Crete and even in Greece, on account of the survival intact, in situ and in large number of all the mechanisms used in olive oil production. The remains indicate the importance of olive culture in this particular period.

Three mechanisms for crushing olives, three circular bases for pressing, three receptacles for separating out the oil from the olive pulp, a receptacle for storing the olive pulp, and pits in which the olive oil storage jars rest have come to light. The discovery of the olive press and the existence to the present day of an extensive olive grove at Hamalevri suggest the importance of olive oil production across time as an important economic activity in the area.



20th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Old Archaeological Museum of Mytilene

Two rectangular inscribed plinths with details from a property register.

Date: 3rd-4th century A.D.

Dimensions: height: 33 cm.; length: 172 cm.; thickness: 42 cm.

Inventory number: MM 3175

Provenance: Mytilene, from the citadel

The properties mentioned in the inscription include vineyards, olive groves, ground under cultivation and pasture. All of them were measured in iugera, except for the olives. The latter were measured in 'yirous', in other words circular pits dug around the trunks of the trees. Among the recorded toponyms, two of those mentioned are still in use today: Petra and Sykounta.



9th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Agia Sophia, Thessaloniki

The dome of Agia Sophia in Thessaloniki is adorned with a mosaic depiction of the Ascension. The Apostles, Virgin Mary and two angels are shown on the Mount of Olives in the presence of Christ as he is taken up into the heavens. The figures appear between trees: twelve olive and three palm. The olive trees stand between the Apostles, whereas the Virgin Mary is framed by two palm trees, and a third appears on the side of the dome opposite her, dividing the ring of Apostles into two semi-circles headed by angels at the two ends closest to the Virgin. The olive was always a symbol of peace, but in this case it also represents the Mount of Olives, the setting of the Ascension, while the palm tree is related to triumph and symbolizes paradise.

The scene is dated to the mid-9th century (after the iconoclastic period).



Ethnological Museum of Thrace–Angeliki Yiannakidou, Alexandroupoli

Wooden press for olives.

Date: 19th century

Dimensions: length: 100 cm.; height: 190 cm.

Inventory number: 13230

The olive press is comprised of a horizontal beam fitted with two vertical supporting beams, while at the center of the horizontal beam is a hole with a wooden screw, which tightens and untightens. The vertical beams are fitted into holes in an oval wooden base, while a wooden basin with a spout is fitted into the hole at the center of the base. This type of press would have been used for crushing the olives in the production of oil.



Ethnological Museum of Thrace–Angeliki Yiannakidou, Alexandroupoli

Stamp from the Sakellaridis Soap Factory.

Date: 19th century

Dimensions: height: 16 cm.; base: 5.5 cm.

Inventory number: 13378

Provenance: Soufli, gift of A. Sakellaridis

Inside a square frame are carved the words: ΣΑΠΩΝ Ο ΕΒΡΟΣ ('Evros Soap'). The stamp was cut and smoothed from a tree trunk. Soap too was an olive oil product and used both as a medicine and a cleaning agent.



7th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, temporary exhibition, 'In praise of the olive', SPAP Conference Center, Ancient Olympia

Olive tree, painting by Yiannis Kottis.

Date: 2004

Type: acrylic on canvas

The pronounced narrative element in the painting by

Yiannis Kottis aspires to represent the dominant place of the olive in the formulation of our relationships with the earth, and the ancient meaning of the tree and its fruit in the local economy. The scene of an olive harvest, with the olive-gatherers who have emerged through the branches to collect the fruit, presents the olive tree as a symbol of Nature's offering to humankind and the prosperity of human society.



Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive-Oil, Sparta

Olive, sculpture by Angelos Panayiotidis. Dimensions: height: 240 cm.; perimeter: 140 cm.



Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, Museum of Industrial Olive-Oil Production, Lesvos

Olivestone, installation by Joseph Beuys.

Olivestone is an archetypal sculpture made of stone and olive oil, elements in a constant and solid union. Joseph Beuys does not 'see' these two as products of the earth, but as the earth itself. The stone receptacle and the fluid oil are none other than mutually sustaining parts of a living organism. They are two elements which symbolize time (rock = past and present, oil = future), two 'materials' which constitute an exceptional work of 'social sculpture', created not by Beuys, but by time and history.

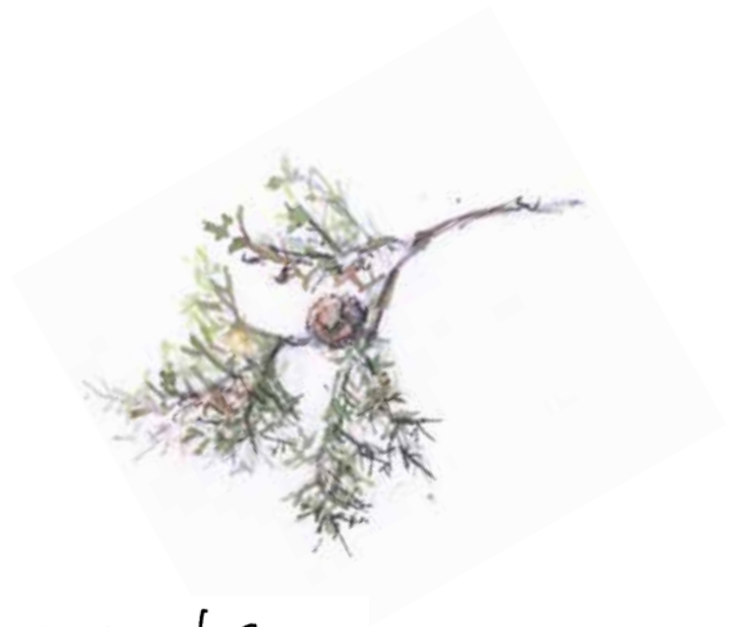
Stone = history, olive = the age-old symbol of peace, olive oil = the fruit of history and peace, and a symbol of productivity.

Known since antiquity as 'olive-planted Lesvos', the island could have 'produced' *Olivestone*. Its presentation at the Museum of Industrial Olive-Oil Production lends the work the potential to enrich its meanings and send a message for another 'reading' of the world, in which sensitivity, reciprocity, calm and harmony prevail.

Olivestone was presented at the Museum of Industrial Olive-Oil Production in Lesvos in the context of a temporary exhibition and does not belong to the museum's permanent collection.

*He [Cyparissus] only groaned and begged this
as the gift he most desired from heaven,
that he might mourn for ever.
And now, as his life forces were exhausted by endless
weeping,
his limbs began to change to a green color,
and his locks, which but now overhung his snowy brow,
were turned to a bristling crest, and he became a stiff tree
with slender top looking to the starry heavens.
The god [Apollo] groaned and, full of sadness, said:
"You shall be mourned by me,
shall mourn for others,
and shall always be a companion to others who grieve.*

*Ovid, **Metamorphoses** 10.134-142*



cypress tree



3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Kerameikos, Athens

The part of the Kerameikos outside the city walls formed the most important cemetery in ancient Athens. Sometimes the monuments of members of the same family were organized into funerary enclosures which were adorned not only with monuments and sculptures, but also with trees and gardens. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods in particular, these gardens were carefully

planned and tended, and became known as garden tombs.

The trees which were deemed most suitable for garden tombs were willows, poplars, and cypresses. Willows were chosen for the shape of their foliage, which bends downwards, as if in mourning. The two-colored leaf of the poplar represents the contrast between the upper and lower worlds. As for the cypress, from an early date its tall and slender trunk and dark, impenetrable foliage earned the tree its place among the symbols of mourning.



37th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Ancient Nemea

During the excavation of the sacred enclosure of the temple of Zeus at ancient Nemea, round pits were discovered. These were identified with the remains of a sacred grove, a conjecture supported by references in ancient literature. Analysis of soil from the pits shows that the trees they encircled were cypresses.

Sacred groves in ancient Greece were common in rural, suburban and urban sanctuaries, both simple outdoor spaces or more complex architectural complexes. We do not know any particular rituals celebrated exclusively in sacred groves. They would rather have offered shade to their visitors, and they were also considered as places of religious and political asylum. In the sanctuary of Zeus at Nemea, the sacred grove is intimately associated with the myth of Opheltis and the cult of the chthonic heroes, which is complemented by the fact that the cypress is considered to symbolize death, a tradition which continues into our own day. It seems that with the passage of time the sacred groves were understood as living links with events in the mythical past.

In 1979, at the archaeological site of Nemea, a grove of some 24 cypresses was planted in the same location where they had existed in antiquity.



5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Mystras

One of the most easily recognized trees of the archaeological site of Mystras is the cypress, a perennial evergreen tree. The cypress is native to Crete, Rhodes, Asia Minor and Persia, and was cultivated for decorative reasons all over the Mediterranean region already in the Roman period.

The first references to the cypress are found on Linear B tablets and in Homer. In ancient myth, the youth Kyparissos was metamorphosed into the tree, and it was the plant most strongly associated with mourning among the ancient Greeks. At the same time, the tree was sacred

to Apollo, the god of light, and as such had a double character: it was a tree of mourning and of rebirth. In Christian art, cypresses are often featured in architectural sculpture (capitals, episcopal thrones, marble panels) and minor arts. More often, however, they appear on graves stones and sarcophagi.

In the Ottoman period, artists were inspired by Byzantine monuments and employed cypresses as decorative elements on luxurious fountains and glazed floor tiles, as well as illustrated manuscripts. Greeks under Ottoman rule used the cypress in their adornment of stone-carved window screens, on fountains and on grave stones, drawing a parallel between mourning and life, on the one hand, and the bondage and freedom of the Greek people, on the other.



9th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Crypt of Agios Demetrios, Thessaloniki

Panel with a cross on a base, flanked by two cypresses which curve round to enclose the cross.

Date: probably 11th or 12th century

In the Byzantine period, already from the 9th century, we have evidence that the cypress adorned graves, as it still does today, and that it was consequently considered as a tree of mourning. Beyond this, the palm tree and the cypress, both evergreen and perennial, may also symbolize immortality and eternity, and for this reason they appear in the decoration of funerary monuments. In addition, the cypress is associated with the death and resurrection of Christ (Golgotha-Paradise), as is evident from epigrams of the period. The *Old Testament* honors a holy triad of trees: the pine, cypress and cedar.



Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki

Marble panel with griffin and cypress.

Date: 10th-11th century

Dimensions: height: 87.5 cm.; width: 69 cm.; thickness: 8 cm.

Inventory number: ΑΓ 3151

Provenance: Thessaloniki

Pictured on the panel are a griffin (mythical bird) and probably a cypress. The latter has been linked from antiquity with earth deities and the cult of the dead. In the context of the Christian religion, with its new understanding of death, the cypress too acquired a new dimension. Given its qualities as an evergreen and perennial tree, the cypress now became associated with resurrection, immortality and eternity. As a symbol of these ideas, we continue to find the cypress still today in Christian cemeteries.



12th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Mosque on Agamemnonos and Armen Streets, Drama

The mosque on Agamemnonos and Armen streets in Drama is important for the history of 19th-century secular painting in Macedonia, since preserved in its porch are valuable wall-paintings dated to the first decade of that century. Of special significance are two representations of the city of Drama, as a real and as a heavenly city. Equally important is the dedicatory wall-painting above

the entrance into the building. In the latter, which is pictured here, we see the mosque and two neighborhoods in what may be either a fantastical or highly schematic rendering of Drama as it was at that time. The buildings are surrounded by trees, among which the most prominent position is given to the cypress. Besides its decorative character, the cypress was usually found near places of worship such as churches, mosques and cemeteries, and served both to signify the holiness of a place and highlight its soteriological dimensions.



Center for Environmental Education, Makrinitsa, Pelion, Church of Agios Ioannis Prodromos, Makrinitsa Square

The church of Agios Ioannis Prodromos (Saint John the Forerunner) in the main square of Makrinitsa takes the form of a single-aisled basilica. The western facade is adorned with a carved plaque depicting a cross flanked by cypresses. At the peak of each tree sits a bird, and beneath the trees and cross are carved rosettes.

In addition, in the sanctuary apse is pictured a vase with flowers surrounded by cypresses.

According to an inscription, the plaques were carved by Theodosios from Vracha, Agrafa, in August 3, 1806.



Center for Environmental Education, Makrinitsa, Pelion, Museum of Folk Art and History of Pelion, Topalis Mansion

Housed in the Topalis Mansion are wooden chests with floral decoration. A particularly fine example, in the room with historic objects, is a painted wooden chest. On the inside of the lid is pictured a row of cypresses.

Folklore and Historical Museum of Komotini

Copper tray ('sini') with engraved decoration including cypresses.
Inventory number: 4



Center for the Study of Traditional Pottery, Athens

Bowl with depiction of a landscape with cypresses and a building.
Date: 19th century
Inventory number: 1605
Provenance: Çanakkale
In Greek tradition, the cypress is intimately associated with death, but also with resurrection. In Orphic texts a white cypress is the sign which the dead person must look for in order to avoid the spring of forgetfulness and approach the spring of remembrance.





Folklore and Historical Museum of Komotini

Headscarf ('tsevres') with embroidered decoration with cypresses.

Inventory number: 512



Folklore and Historical Museum of Larissa

Part of a wooden chest, used as a cabinet door. The front is decorated with cypresses, flower vases and birds.

Date: 18th century

Dimensions: length: 120 cm.; width: 80 cm.

Inventory number: Γ.M. 4197

Provenance: Gardiki, Trikala

*Lord Phoibos, when the goddess, lady Leto,
clasping a palm tree in her slender hands,
bore you, the most beautiful of immortals,
beside the wheel-round lake,
then all of boundless Delos was filled
with an ambrosial scent; the great goddess Ge laughed,
and the deep waters of the grey sea rejoiced.*

*Theognis, **Hymn to Appolo**, lines 5-10*



palm tree



35th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Argostoli

Mycenaean seal stone.

Date: 14th-13th century B.C.

Dimensions: length: 2.1 cm.; width: 2 cm.

Inventory number: M.A. 581-11

Provenance: The seal stone was discovered in the Mycenaean cemetery of Kokkolata in Kefalonia, at the place known as Kangelises, or Mavri Spilia, and it comes from

the excavation of a pit grave, carved in the bedrock.

A lens-shaped seal stone made of agate with an incised scene of a 'grazing bull' facing leftwards and a schematic double date palm in the background. The combination of date palm and bull does not only allude to a bucolic scene from everyday life, but also evokes a religious meaning and probably merits allegorical interpretation. The date palm refers to the 'tree of life' since beneath its shade grazes the bull, the most important sacrificial animal in Minoan and Mycenaean religion.



Archaeological Museum of Herakleion

Small pithos (storage jar) in the Kamaras ware style with white date palms on a black background.

Date: 1700-1650 B.C. (MM IIIA)

Dimensions: height: 55 cm.

Inventory number: Π 7691

Provenance: Knossos

The primary decorative pattern on the small Kamaras ware storage jar from Knossos is the white palm tree with a red outline, which stands out boldly against the dark background.

The date palm, even in this schematic rendering, alludes directly to 'Theophrastus's date palm' (phoenix

Theophrasti) which flourishes still today, in clusters or small groves, in various parts of Crete. The largest and most famous palm grove is found at Vai in Eastern Crete and together with a few others constitutes the last specimens of the 'Cretan date palm', as it was once known, which seems to be under threat in the present day.

Kamare ware, created in the palace workshops of Phaestos and Knossos, is characterized by its polychrome decorative designs, often derived from the natural world, the variety and precision of the shapes and, more generally, for their perfect construction, which shows them to have been luxury objects, prized merchandise in Mediterranean markets in the second millennium B.C.



21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Delos

Delos. The Sacred Lake and, in the background, the lions of Naxian marble. The lone palm at the center was planted in 1933, in memory of the date palm embraced by Leto when she was giving birth.

According to the myth, Leto, impregnated by Zeus, took refuge after much wandering on rocky Delos, 'there where Zeus made the primal palm and the laurel tree break out their leaves for beloved Leto in her labor pains'(Euripides, *Hecuba* 458-461). After nine days and nights of torment, 'she knelt down in the soft meadow and embraced the trunk of the palm tree' (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 116-118; *Odyssey* 6.160-165), and gave birth there, beneath the date palm, to the twin gods of light: Artemis and Apollo. According to the *Holy Qur'an*, Mary also gave birth to Jesus, the younger god of the unfading light, beneath a date palm: 'and, when the pains of childbirth drove her to [cling to] the trunk of a palm tree, she exclaimed,

'I wish I had been dead and forgotten before all this!' but a voice cried to her from below, 'Do not worry: your Lord had provided a stream at your feet and, if you shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you, it will deliver fresh ripe dates for you, so eat, drink, be glad.'" (*Holy Qur'an*, Sura 19 (Mary), lines 23-26).

In countries where it grows, the date palm is truly the tree of life, from antiquity (Herodotus 1.193, Xenophon, *Anabasis* 2.3,13-16, Strabo, *Geography*, 16.742) to the present day. Its delicious and exceptionally nourishing fruit, eaten both fresh and dried, can be consumed all year long and is often the only form of sustenance for both humans and animals. From the fruit can be made flour, bread, sweets, wine, distilled spirit, vinegar, honey, astringent, and syrup for bronchial afflictions. Date palm wood is used for heating, the construction of furniture and ceiling beams. Baskets and cages are woven from the branches, saddle bags, mats, hats and fans from the leaves, and from the fibers of the canes are woven waterproof fabric for tents.



22nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archeological Site of the Acropolis of Rhodes

On the acropolis of Rhodes, a date palm has grown up next to the temple of Pythian Apollo.



14th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Lamia

Red-figure kalyx krater, restored from many fragments. On one side is depicted the Apollonian triad (Leto, Apollo, Artemis) in the act of offering libations around the sacred date palm with the aid of which Leto brought Apollo into the world. Work by the Niobid painter or his workshop.

Date: second quarter of the 5th century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 52 cm.; diameter of base: 23 cm.; diameter of mouth: 51 cm.

Inventory number: K 10691

Provenance: Coast of Pelasgia, a region in central Greece, at place known as Agios Konstantinos, an unidentified ancient city from the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

Emphasis on the vase's decoration is given to the sacred date palm, a rare tree in Greece in antiquity. The tree came from Egypt, and was introduced and planted on Delos on account of its rarity. Today's viewers of the krater are drawn to the many-faceted meaning of the tree as a positive life force in the minds of the painter and his contemporaries. In the myth of Apollo's birth, the date palm served as a refuge, offering shade, strength and relaxation to the god's persecuted mother, and played a decisive role in Apollo's coming into being. The tree's presence is thus associated inseparably with the very gift of life. Apollo was no exception. Many times over the ages, women in the countryside sought refuge in the shade of a tree to give birth to their children, and this very human image would have provided the raw material for the creation of this particular myth.



Numismatic Museum, Athens

Silver tetradrachm of Carthage.
Date: end of the 5th century B.C.
Inventory number: NM Σ ΕΜΠ
Dimensions: diameter: 2.20 cm.
Provenance: Sicily

The date palm ('phoinix' in Greek) on the Carthaginian coin shows that their city was a colony of the Phoenicians. This tree became a 'speaking symbol', in other words, its image on this coin evokes the name of a people.



National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Red-figure hydria.
Date: 400 B.C.
Dimensions: height: 45 cm.
Inventory number: 17469, Vase Collection
Provenance: Athens

Pictured on this hydria are the seven daughters of Atlanta, the Pleiades, whom Zeus transformed into stars, pictured around a date palm. The date palm symbolizes the end of the world, that is, Ethiopia, from which the heavenly bodies began their ascent to the firmament.



20th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Old Archaeological Museum of Mytilene

Aiolian capital with base, lower drum and trochilus of an Aiolian column.

Date: 6th century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 59 cm.; diameter: 131 cm.; thickness: 50 cm.

Inventory number: MM 1372, 1374, 1375d

Provenance: Klopedi

This particular type of column capital, one of the Archaic variations of the Ionic order, was named 'Aeolic' by the German archaeologist R. Koldewey because the greatest number and most important examples of this

variation were discovered in Aeolis. The temple of Klopedi in Lesvos is dated to the mid-6th century B.C.

The shape of the Aeolic capitals probably derives from decoration motifs in the form of a palm tree, the 'sacred tree' of the Late Bronze Age. Although the decoration inspired by Nature in both Aeolic and Ionic orders present similarities, the manner in which they are articulated in order to support the upper part of the temple differs. In the Ionic order, the volutes are stretched horizontally with the result that it is obvious that the column and capital are two separate architectural members. In contrast, in the Aeolic order the volutes rise upwards and in this way give the impression that the column bifurcates like the trunk of a tree.



11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Roman Palaistra, Chalkis

Detail of a mosaic from the Palaistra, or Gymnasium, of Chalkis, Arethousa Street.

Date: Roman period

In the outer courtyard of the Palaistra was discovered a mosaic pavement whose center is covered with geometric designs, while around the edges runs a frieze with naked athletes shown wrestling. To the left stands the judge of the games, holding out the symbol of victory: the branch of a tree, probably a palm.

In the art of antiquity, the illustration of athletic victors or judges of the games holding palm branches in their hands was widespread. Mythology relates that Theseus on his return trip from Crete to Athens stopped at Delos to thank Apollo for the victorious issue of his struggle with the Minotaur. There he danced holding branches from the date palm, the sacred tree in whose shade the god was born. From that time the palm was a symbol of victors, a meaning which later passed into Christian iconography.



Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki

Cross with branches, tomb wall-painting.

Date: 6th century

Dimensions of wall-painting: height: 70 cm.; width: 70 cm.

Inventory number: BT 102E

Provenance: Thessaloniki

On the wall-paintings in tombs we often find vegetal motifs. The foliate cross, made of a tree or branches, is a symbol of salvation and eternity. According to the Orthodox tradition, it is the 'life-giving cross', the wood which gives life. In this wall-painting, the cross is flanked by two date palm branches, symbols of paradise and purity.

11th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Church of the Resurrection of Christ, Veroia

Palm Sunday.

Date: The wall-paintings in the church are dated to 1315.

Christ is represented on the white foal of a donkey, followed by his disciples. He rides towards the gate in the walls of Jerusalem, over which a group of Jews leans with palm branches in their hands to welcome him as king. Just in front of the gate we see a tree into which children have climbed.

The fact that in this particular scene the painter chose to adorn the whole composition with the rendering of a single tree, which appears vigorous in comparison to the rough dry land in the background, is suggestive of the artist's realistic and naturalistic approach.



Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki

Joseph in Egypt with Potifar, icon by Theodoros Poulakis.

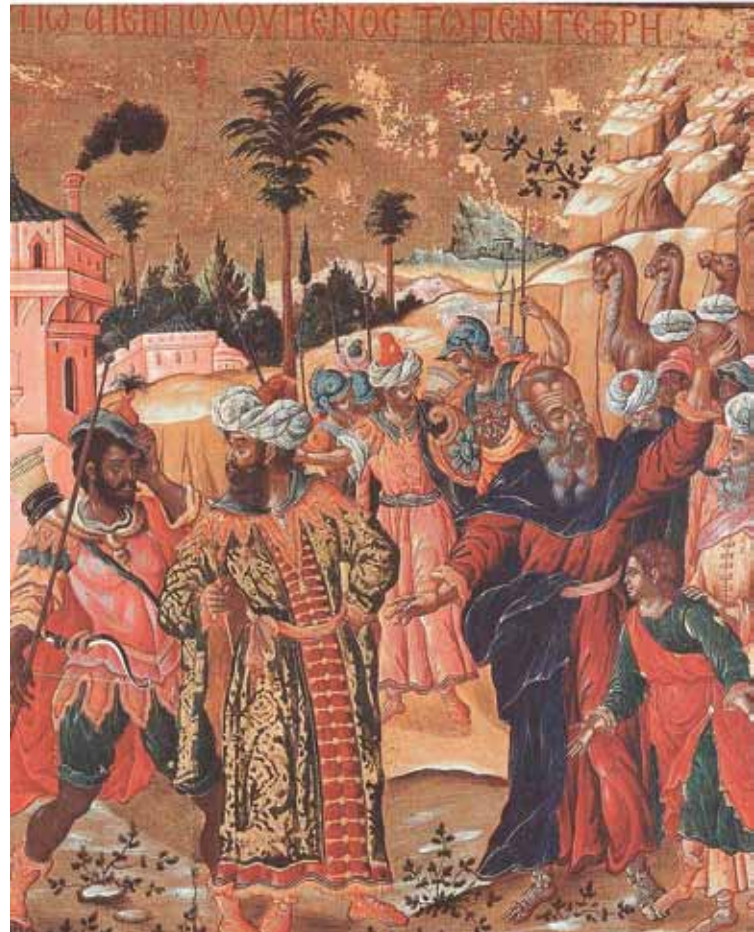
Date: 17th century

Dimensions: height: 46.3 cm.; width: 53.4 cm.;
thickness: 3.8 cm.

Inventory number: BEI 957

Provenance: purchase

The subject of the icon is inspired by the story of Joseph as told in the *Book of Genesis* in the *Old Testament*. The events unfold in an outdoor setting where there are trees, among which we can recognize date palms. In contrast with the schematic representation of the trees and plants in Byzantine art, here Poulakis attempts to create a more naturalistic image of nature. Influenced by Italian art, which he had been taught in Venice, he used detailed brushwork and gradations of color to achieve a sense of depth.





Museum of Islamic Art, Benaki Museum, Athens

Marble fragment of architectural decoration with low inlaid decoration.

Date: end of the 15th-beginning of the 16th century

Dimensions: height: 38 cm.

Inventory number: 10795

Provenance: Egypt

The idea that a tree stands at the peak of the mountain-pyramid which constitutes the entire universe is very old. The first traces of the idea may be found in myths of the ancient Mesopotamian civilizations. For Muslims, the tree of life marks the boundary of paradise. From the place where it grows and beyond, not even the Prophet himself may pass. There dwells God.

But which is this god-sent tree? For the nomadic Arab tribes it is the date palm, which brings humankind rare gifts such as wood, fruit and shade. In the *Qur'an* it is forbidden by the Prophet to cut any such valuable tree, thus establishing it in eternal paradise.

When as a child I used to pass nearby on donkey-back, on my way to enjoy one of our country feasts, I would daydream sweetly, and could never admire enough one beautiful tree, solitary, and enormous, a regal oak. What majesty it possessed! Its dark green branches, leafy and strong; its twigs - curved like the profile of an eagle, thick like the mane of a lion - twisted into royal crowns. She was the queen of the wood, lady of wild beauty, mistress of freshness...

*Alexandros Papadiamantis, **Beneath the regal oak** (excerpt)*



oak tree



Finance Management Fund for Archeological Projects, Committee for Dodona – 12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Dodona

The prophetic oak of the sanctuary of Dodona dominates the eastern side of the temple of Zeus, known as the Hierá Oikia.

The sacred oak tree was the focal point around which the oldest Greek oracle was founded (Herodotus 2.52). From prehistoric times and for centuries thereafter, the prophetic oak, the famed ‘*Quercus esculus*’ of Dodona, was the primary means by which divine will was communicated to mortals and was always closely linked to the cult of Zeus until the period of Christian domination.

The sacred oak delivered its prophecies to pilgrims by means of the rustling of its leaves. Thus the tree ‘spoke’ and men known as the ‘selloi’ were its interpreters. Among those who came from all over the ancient world to consult the god (Hesiod fr. 140 ed. M.-W.) were numbered famous heroes, such as Odysseus (*Odyssey* 14.327-330, 19.296-299), who arrived at Dodona to learn the divine will concerning his return to Ithaka; and mythological figures such as Io who took refuge among the ‘oaks that speak’ in her attempt to escape the wrath of Hera (Aeschelus, *Prometheus* 832ff). Finally, Iason, at the bidding of Athena, endowed his ship, the Argo, with a branch from the sacred oak tree of Dodona. Even though it was broken from the tree, the branch retained the gift of speech and on at least three occasions saved the expedition from ruin (Apollodorus, *Argonautica* 1.19.16).



12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Ioannina

Silver didrachm of the Epirote Confederacy.

Obverse: Head of Dodonian Zeus with a crown of oak leaves and a bust of Dione with a crown and veil on her head. Reverse: Bull encircled by the inscription ΑΠΕΙ/ΡΩΤΑΝ. The scene is framed by an oak wreath.

Date: 233/31-168/7 B.C. (Hellenistic period)

Weight: 10.09 gr.

Inventory number: 88

Provenance: Dodona

Dodona was the site of the oldest and, for a time, unique oracular shrine in Greece. The cult of the oak tree was associated with that of Mother Earth. At the beginning of the second millennium B.C., when the first Greeks and Thesprotians migrated to Epirus, the cult of Mother Earth gave way to that of Zeus. The prophetic aspects of the earlier cult were also transferred to Zeus, and Mother

Earth was renamed Dione. Now conceived as a pair, Zeus and Dione came to be worshiped as the divine couple.

The rituals were performed around the sacred oak, the dwelling place of the god. The pilgrims originally asked their questions orally to the god and the priests (known as 'selloi') delivered the oracles by listening to the rustling of the oak tree's leaves, as well as to the fluttering and cries of the birds. From the 8th century B.C. the sacred oak was encircled by a perimeter wall of cauldrons on tripods placed side by side. These produced a continuous sound, on the basis of which the oracular responses were given. In the 6th century B.C. pilgrims carved their questions on the soft surface of lead plaques and the priests answered them, usually orally, though less often in writing.

The great reputation of the pan-Epirotic sanctuary and its capture by the Molossians at the end of the 5th century B.C. contributed to the choice of the oak crown as the basic decorative theme on coins minted by the Epirotes.

National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Branch with oak leaves of metal foil.

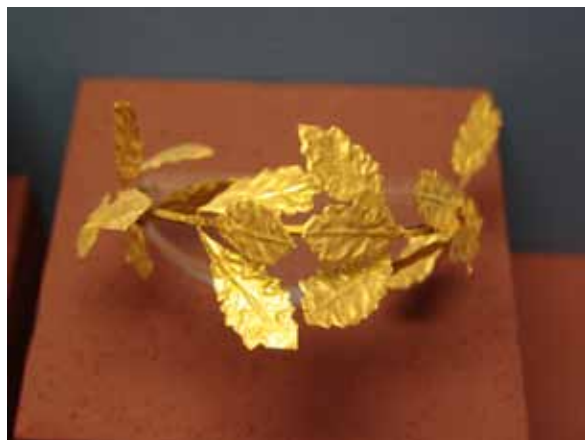
Date: probably 4th-3rd century B.C.

Dimensions: estimated max.: length: 24 cm.; width: 17 cm.

Inventory number: 303 and 312, Bronzes Collection

Provenance: Dodona sanctuary

An offering related to the functioning of the oracular shrine. At the oracle of Dodona, prophecy was directly connected with the interpretation of the rustling of the leaves of the sacred oak tree. Rites associated with tree worship survived from Mycenaean to later times, influencing oracular practices in particular. The cult surrounding the oak of Dodona expressed a new form of older Nature worship.



6th Ephorate of Classical and Prehistoric Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Aigion

Gold funerary wreath of thin ribbon foil with attachments at the ends, decorated with 18 oak leaves, arranged in threes.

Date: first half of the 2nd century B.C.

Dimensions: diameter: 10 cm.

Inventory number: AM 756

Provenance: 1 Anagennissis Street, Kouloura, Aigion

The oak is a sacred tree, consecrated to Zeus and a symbol of his power. Nature is present in all manifestations of life, and also of death, as is demonstrated in the practice of placing crowns of oak leaves in the graves of loved ones.



12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Ioannina

Gold funerary wreath with 38 oak leaves.

Date: 2nd century B.C. (Hellenistic period)

Dimensions: diameter: 21 cm.

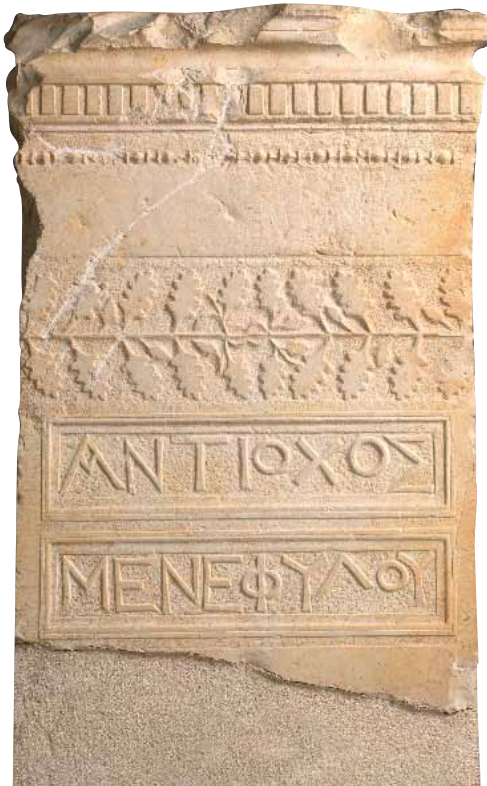
Inventory number: 11.295

Provenance: Western cemetery, Ambrakia (modern Arta)

A relatively common grave offering in the cemeteries of ancient Epirus was a gold or gilded crown of oak leaves. The

wreath, a symbol of authority in public life, lent holiness to the burial and sanctified the dead. In addition, as a circle the wreath symbolized perpetuity, the beginning and the end and, by extension, the life which continues after death.

The use of oak branches as a decorative motif in the construction of metal wreaths alludes to the original co-existence of the oak tree with the chthonic divinity Ge, or Mother Earth, at Dodona. The choice of the oak is also connected with the fact that, although it is not an evergreen, it retains its foliage, symbolizing both eternity and immortality.



12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Ioannina

Inscription on a funerary stele of local white limestone with relief decoration showing branches with oak leaves and acorns. The branches are joint to form a double knot, a motif known as 'the knot of Herakles'. The name of the deceased (ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΣ, Antiochos), along with his patronym (ΜΕΝΕΦΥΛΟΥ, Menephylou), appear in shallow rectangular recesses set in double frames. The back of the stele is unworked.

Date: early 2nd century B.C. (Hellenistic period)

Dimensions: height: 77 cm.; width: 50-54 cm.; thickness: 15-18 cm.

Inventory number: 17

Provenance: Neochoropoulo, Ioannina

The oak is the most distinctive tree in the forests of Epirus and the basis of animal husbandry in the region. Indicative of the important role played by the oak tree in Epirus is the frequent illustration of its branches and acorns on objects related to different aspects of Epirote life. The adoption in Epirus of the decorative motif of oak branches and leaves on funerary steles, for example, reveals the association of the oak with chthonic cult and death. In particular, this decorative theme is one of the main criteria for identifying the funerary steles known to scholars as the 'type of northwestern Greece'.

17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Acropolis of Ancient Edessa

Dedicatory stele to Zeus Hypsistos.

Date: A.D. 51

Dimensions: height: 125 cm.; width: 39-45 cm.; thickness: 13 cm.

Inventory number: AKE 139

Provenance: Lower polis of ancient Edessa. Hill of Agios Loukas, location of the Temple of Zeus Hypsistos.

The stele is crowned with a pediment and below it is carved an eagle inside a broad wreath of oak leaves, which is tied with a fillet. On the cornice of the pediment is inscribed 'To Zeus Hypsistos' and below the relief is another inscription with the name of the priest of Zeus, two caretakers who undertook to set up the monument and members of the cult society. At the end, the name of the artisan is mentioned.

The eagle and oak are intimately associated in the cult of Zeus. Oaks are tall, perennial trees which attract lightening, for which reason they are related to Zeus as a rain god, and more generally a weather god who aided the earth's fertility and fruitfulness.





27th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Dion

An oak tree which has been struck by lightning; located in the area of Agioneri in the archaeological site of Dion.

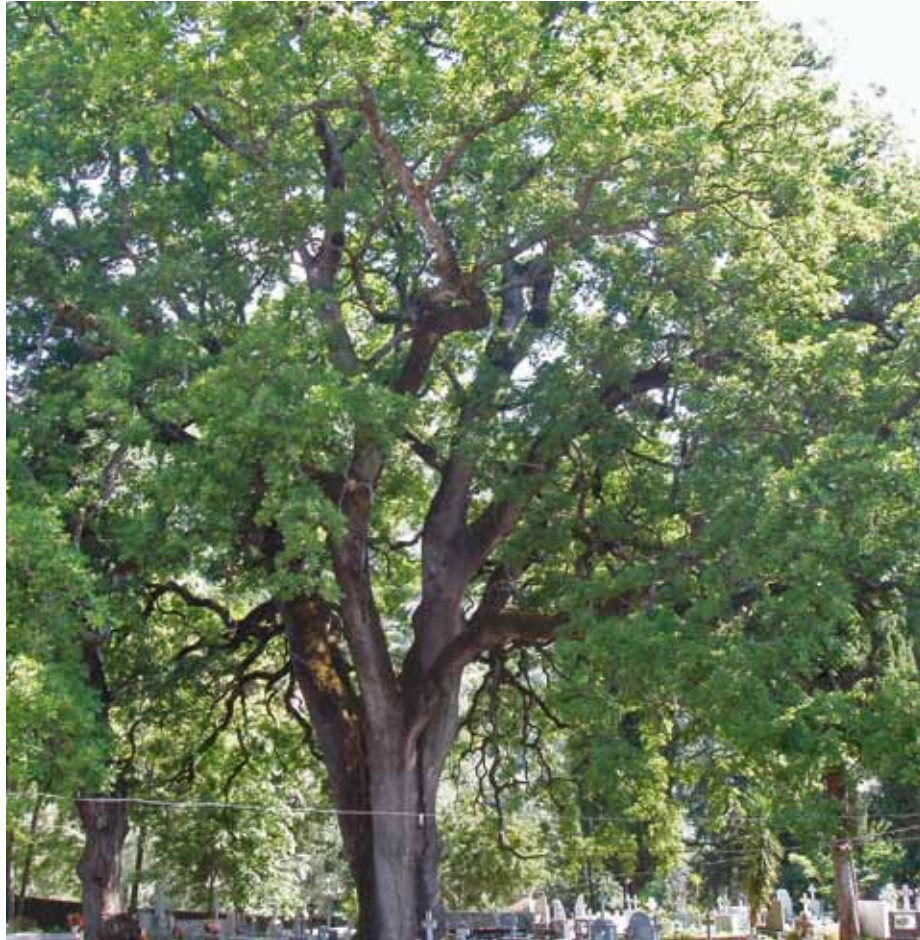


33rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Orraon

Orraon was founded in the 4th century B.C. by the Molossians as a fortified settlement of strategic importance, which controlled the pass from the Ambracian Gulf into the Epirote hinterland. Sections of the strong fortification are preserved as well as elements which reveal the urban grid and the organization of the dwellings. As a member of the Molossian Confederacy, Orraon maintained close relations with the temple of Zeus at Dodona, as is testi-

fied in four emancipation inscriptions and one honorary resolution found here.

In its original form, the sanctuary of Dodona was open-air and the various rites were performed around the sacred oak tree, at whose roots dwelt Zeus and Dione. The priests interpreted the will of Zeus and gave prophecies according to the rustling of the tree's leaves, the fluttering of the birds which nested in it, the murmuring of the water in the sacred well and the sound of the bronze cauldrons on tripods which formed a sort of perimeter wall around the oak.



Phoinikion Folklore Museum, Thesprotia

The oak next to the church rises to a height of 35 m. and the perimeter of its trunk is 7.5 m. Its shade covers roughly a quarter of an acre. According to written testimony, the tree stood in the church courtyard before 1600.

The 'church tree', as it is known in Phoiniki, has now stood green and proud for centuries and has many stories, both sad and delightful, to tell.



Averoff Museum of Neohellenic Art, Metsovo

Inspired by Dodona, painting by Michalis Manoussakis (b.1953).

Date: 2001

Type: acrylic and charcoal on plywood

Dimensions: height: 150 cm.; width: 210 cm.

Inventory number: Δ11

Provenance: From the exhibition '*Sketching out today, tomorrow and yesterday: Tribute to the region of Ioannina*'.

At the oldest oracular shrine, the presence of the renowned oak of Dodona suggested Nature personified as

a goddess. The tree with its prophetic powers played a leading role in all the celebrated rites of the oracle. It was the means by which Zeus's divine will was manifested.

Manoussakis represents the tree with its brilliant green foliage which bends all its branches toward the man who, enchanted by the embrace, turns away from the viewer. In ancient times, people believed that, through the blowing of the wind and the sound of the cauldrons, evil could be chased away. Manoussakis's figure listens to the heartbeat of the earth, the rustling of the leaves which embrace his face and soul. Man and tree belong to a cyclical relationship and create a recurrent pattern in which man takes from Nature and Nature from man.

Quid πλατανών opacissimus?

*Sleep wrapped you in green leaves like a tree
you breathed like a tree in the quiet light
in the limpid spring I looked at your face:
eyelids closed, eyelashes brushing the water.
In the soft grass my fingers found your fingers
I held your pulse a moment
and felt elsewhere your heart's pain.*

*Under the plane tree, near the water, among laurel
sleep moved you and scattered you
around me, near me, without my being able to touch the
whole of you –
once as you were with your silence;
seeing your shadow grow and diminish,
lose itself in the other shadows, in the other
world that let you go yet held you back.*

*The life that they gave us to live, we lived.
Pity those who wait with such patience
lost in the black laurel under the heavy plane trees
and those, alone, who speak to cisterns and wells
and drown in the voice's circles.
Pity the companion who shared our privation and our sweat
and plunged into the sun like a crow beyond the ruins,
without hope of enjoying our reward.*

Give us, outside sleep, serenity.

*Giorgos Seferis, **Mythistorema** 15*



plane tree

23rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Gortyn

Gortyn is associated with the ancient myth of Europa whom Zeus, transformed into a bull, stole from Phoenicia and carried on his back to the shores of the Lethaios River in Crete. There, beneath a plane tree which from that time has never shed its leaves, the sacred marriage, or 'hieros gamos', of Zeus and Europa was consecrated. The fruits of their union were Minos and Rhadamanthys. The tradition relates that Minos founded the city of Gortyn in the place of his birth.





17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities – Cultural Center of the School of Aristotle, Archaeological Site of the School of Aristotle – Nymphaion, Mieza

An extremely ancient plane tree, c. 1,000 years old, in the archaeological site of the School of Aristotle, is linked in popular tradition with the ancient philosopher and teacher of Alexander the Great. It is known as 'Aristotle's plane tree'.

17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities – Educational Programs and Communication Department (Ministry of Culture and Tourism) – Cultural Center of the School of Aristotle, Naoussa

During the first years of Ottoman rule, Gazi Evrenos, a cultivated man and fierce warrior, toured the subject Macedonian country. When he came to the region of Naoussa and was enchanted by the beauty of the landscape, the wealth of the land and the freshness of its waters, the desire to build there a distinguished city was at once fired within him. He sought permission from the sultan to build the city on a piece of level land the size of a buffalo hide. The sultan was surprised by his general's strange request, but was curious to see how he would manage to fit a city into the expanse of a buffalo hide.

It is said that Gazi Evrenos slaughtered a large buffalo and from the hide cut thin strips with which he made a long, leather cord. With this he managed to outline the boundaries of the new city, having tied it to four poles which marked the four cardinal points on the horizon. Later, the four perennial plane trees of Naoussa grew from these four poles. Fortunately, one of these trees survives still today, the so-called 'crooked plane tree' in the neighborhood of Agia Paraskevi. Scientists estimate the age of the tree at roughly 600 years.





Greek Folk Art Museum, Athens

The Great Plane Tree, wall-painting by Theophilos Hatzimihalis.

Date: early 20th century

Depiction of a scene from the Greek War of Independence (1821). The hero Katsantonis is shown sitting in the shade of the 'Great Plane Tree' with his musket on his lap and a stringed musical instrument in his arms.



Peloponnese Folklore Foundation, Syntagma Square, Nafplion

The plane tree which once gave its name to the central square of the old town of Nafplion, now called Syntagma Square, is a tree of historic significance; it was formerly known as both the 'plane tree of Kolokotronis' and 'plane tree of the heroes'. At the tree's roots rested the heroes of the Greek War of Independence and the site was often used as a place for political orations. In the shade of this tree the teacher of the nation, Yiorgos Gennadios, after the fall of Mesolongi (1826), exhorted the people to contribute their savings in order to offer material support to Greece which was in a completely ruined state.

The first offer of help was made by a poor woman named Psorokostaina.

*Zeus gave Apollo the mantic laurel
and blood-red roses to the rosy Cyprus-born goddess,
to grey-eyed Athena he gave the silvery olive shoot
and wheat to Demeter, and the vine to Dionysos.*

*Neither the rose, nor the fresh narcissus, nor the anemone,
neither the lily, nor the hyacinth are equal
to the shoot of Bacchus.*

*Nonnos, **Dionysiaca**, XII.110-113 and 238-239*



grape vine

1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of the Ancient Agora, Stoa of Attalos, Athens

Detail of a black-figure krater by Exekias with a scene showing a seated Maenad amidst clusters of grapes and vines.

Date: 530 B.C.

Dimensions: height: 45 cm.; max. diameter: 51 cm.

Inventory number: AP 1044

Provenance: North slope of the Acropolis of Athens

In vase-paintings of the Archaic and Classical periods, the orgiastic character of the vegetation is reflected in the trailing ivy and grape vines. These two plants are the most characteristic symbols of Dionysos, patron of wine, wine-making and wine-drinking, and often appear in scenes related to that divinity. On this krater (a vessel used for mixing wine and water) painted by Exekias, the grape vine and grape clusters occupy the area around the handles. Between the branches are seated Maenads, the female followers of Dionysos.

The krater's function and the iconographical choice to represent Dionysos with his characteristic symbols situate the scene within the context of the symposium, or drinking party.



32nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Igoumenitsa



Fulcrum (decorative fixture from a couch) with the head of Dionysos set against grape leaves.

Date: 4th-3rd century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 7.6 cm.; width: 7.1 cm.

Inventory number: ΘΕ 58

Provenance: Ancient Gitane, Thesprotia

The grape vine is a plant replete with symbolism. Its most valuable product, wine, played a role in almost every dimension of human life: in times of joy and pain, in religious rituals and rites of passage. Wine was worshiped through the god Dionysos, and constituted one of the most beloved themes of art from antiquity to the present day. The bronze fulcrum from the inner room of the prytaneion of ancient Gitane remind us that the god of wine could not be absent from the symposium, the most wide-spread form of entertainment and one of the most important institutions for social bonding among citizens in the ancient world.

14th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Atalanti



Bronze coin from the mint of Opuntian Locris.

Date: c.196-146 B.C.

Dimensions: diameter: 1.6 cm.; weight: 5.2 gr.

Inventory number: BE 4730

Provenance: Classical-Roman cemetery of Proskyna, Locris, at Korseia

The coin bears a representation of grapes on the reverse. The choice of this image is tied to the important role of viticulture in the economy of Locris.



36th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Lefkada

Display case with vessels related to the grape vine and wine.

Date: 5th-3rd century B.C.

Provenance: Ancient city of Lefkada

The wine of the island of Lefkada was among the ancient Greek wines known by name. The doctor Apollodoros recommended it to Ptolemy, the ruler of Egypt, as one of the finest in their day (Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis* XIV, 76). In one verse, the poet Eubulos likens Lefkadian wine to honey. Athenaeus, however, writes that the Lefkadians put chalk in their wine to give it a fine

red color, with the result that the wine induces headache (*Deipnosophists* 1.33b). Wine presses have been discovered in houses and farmsteads at various points both in and around the ancient city of Lefkada.

In this particular display case of the Lefkada museum are exhibited stamped handles from wine jars originating from various cities in the ancient world, including Lefkada (denoted by Λ, ΛΕ, ΛΕΥΚ), which were found in public buildings used for storing and trading in olive oil and wine. Also on display are implements used for serving wine, as well as drinking cups.

Outside the display cases stand three amphorae used for transporting oil and wine, with characteristic pointed bases.



35th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Argostoli

Roman lamp.

Date: 2nd-3rd century A.D.

Dimensions: height with handle: 5.2 cm.; base diameter: 3.6 cm.; larger diameter: 8.4 cm.

Inventory number: M.A. 2242

Provenance: The lamp was discovered in 1994, in the Roman cemetery of Fiskardo on Kefalonia.

A clay, single-nozzle Roman lamp with perforated and relief decoration. It has a raised handle with an aperture and a level base with a stamped inscription. There are traces of burning on the nozzle. The recessed upper sur-

face of the lamp is incised with a radiate design which fans out from the central aperture. Around the edge of the lamp's upper surface appears relief decoration in the form of grape vines and clusters of grapes.

In antiquity, the grape vine was considered to be the holy plant of the god Dionysos, and as such was the focal point of both religious rituals and everyday life for the ancient Greeks. In the Christian religion, the vine was identified with the God-man himself, and assumed new dimensions. More generally, the grape vine was a symbol of life and rebirth in many cultures and religious traditions (the 'tree of life'). Its fruits, the grape cluster and wine, are known for their beneficial effects for the human body and mind.

Benaki Museum, Athens

Section from a Coptic textile woven from wool and flax, with a representation of Dionysos amidst grape vines.

Date: 4th-5th century A.D.

Dimensions: height: 23.5 cm.; width: 17 cm.

Inventory number: 7127

Provenance: Egypt

This fabric was woven in Egypt in the 4th or 5th century after the birth of Christ, and adorned the shoulder of a chiton. The artisan who wove it was a Copt, that is, a Christian from Egypt, and belonged to an ancient Christian community which survives to this day.

The hot, dry climate of Egypt accounts for the good state of preservation of a large number of fabrics which bear witness to the rich, polychrome textile tradition among the Copts, and throughout Egypt more generally. The flax and wool, and more rarely precious silk, fabrics were woven with designs showing plants, animals and birds, together with shapes and symbols. Such textiles were used to decorate houses and clothing, and were often deemed to perform an apotropaic and protective function as well.

In the early Christian period, the ancient world remained a strong presence. The symbols of the new religion stood alongside and mixed with mythological themes, gods and age-old beliefs. The god of the vine, celebration and the annual rebirth of Nature lent his characteristics to a new scene, now Christianized, symbolizing the hope for life after death.





**Historical and Folklore Museum
of Kalamata**

Icon.

Date: 1837

Type: egg tempera on wood

Dimensions: height: 33 cm.;
width: 25 cm.

Inventory number: 224

Provenance: Messenia

The icon portrays the scene of Christ with the Twelve Apostles in the iconographic type known as 'I am the Vine', inspired by the *Gospel of Saint John* 15:1-8. In this allegorical scene, Jesus represents himself as the vine and his disciples as the vine branches, to illustrate the transmission of the spiritual life and its fruits to those who remain with him.

On the banks of the Ilissos River

Socrates: By Hera, it really is a beautiful resting place. The plane tree is tall and wide-spread; the chaste tree, high as it is, is wonderfully shady and as it is in full bloom, the whole place is filled with its fragrance...

*Plato, **Phaedrus**, 230 b*



laurel, myrtle and chaste tree



**11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities,
Archaeological Site of the Temple of Daphnephoros
Apollo, Eretria**

The sanctuary of Daphnephoros Apollo (the 'laurel-bearer') in Eretria, where the god was considered the city's patron, was founded at the center of the ancient city and flourished between the 8th century B.C. and the early Roman period. The myth of the god's wandering in the field of Lilantio before his final establishment at the temple at

Delphi led originally to the romantic theory that the oldest apsidal building in the sanctuary, the so-called 'Laurel House', was a copy of Apollo's hut of laurel at Delphi.

According to ancient epigraphic evidence, the god was worshiped with the name 'laurel-bearer' during the Classical period. Despite the fact that we have no information about the cult practised in his honor, it is known that the god was associated with the sacred plant of the laurel, which symbolizes youth, the renewal of Nature and the mantic art.



33rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Temple of Apollo in Ambrakia

At the center of the modern city of Arta, below which is buried ancient Ambrakia, stands the monumental late Archaic temple of Apollo, divine patron of the ancient city. Unfortunately, the temple was already used as a quarry from the early Christian period, with the result that it is preserved only to the height of the uppermost course of its foundations.

According to the myth, Apollo fell madly in love with the beautiful nymph Daphne, the daughter of the Peneios River and Gaia. But the nymph did not reciprocate the god's love. She asked her father to help her and he transformed his daughter into a tree. Apollo then cut a branch and wove it into a crown. From that time the laurel, 'daphne' in Greek, has been the sacred plant of Apollo.



Pottery sherd showing Daphnephoros Apollo, from Ambrakia, second half of the 5th century B.C.



21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Heraion, Samos

...the chaste tree, ancient crown of the Carians

Athenaeus

The cult of the goddess Hera on Samos is dated from the second half of the second millennium B.C. and her sanctuary on the island was one of the most famous cult sites of the goddess in the Greek world.

On Samos, Hera is independent from Zeus and her cult refers to her as the 'mother of all', in other words the Mother Goddess, who protects marriage and fertility, flocks and plants.

The beloved plant of the goddess was the chaste tree, which grew up in plains and is abundant even today in the Heraion of Samos, a remnant of a primordial tree cult which has survived until the second century A.D.

Moreover, according to local traditions, the goddess first saw the light of day under a chaste tree on the banks of the Imbrassos River, and it was there that the holy xoanon, or wooden cult statue, of Hera was found. There are other myths too which associate Hera with this tree and explain peculiar festal customs tied to her cult on Samos.



33rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Kassopi, Temple of Aphrodite

North of Kamarina, on the upland plain of Zalongos, are preserved the ruins of Kassopi, the capital of the tribe of the Kassopaioi. The city was founded in the first half of the 4th century B.C., partially destroyed by the Romans in 167 B.C., and finally abandoned in 31 B.C., when its inhabitants were forced to emigrate to Nikopolis.

One of the main divinities of the Greek pantheon to be worshiped at Kassopi was Aphrodite, and the peripteral temple found at the neck of the Zalongos plain was given over to the worship of that goddess. Measuring 17.50 m. by 10.60 m., with columns arranged 6 x 10, the temple is preserved at the level of its foundations because, as we know from written sources, it was deconstructed down to that level and transferred to the newly-founded Nikopolis.

One of the symbols of the goddess of beauty was the myrtle. According to one myth, the goddess, in order to hide her nakedness as she rose from the sea, hid behind a myrtle bush, which thenceforth was considered a symbol of youth and beauty.



25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Chania

Crown of myrtle with berries. The crown is made of two alternating bands, one of lead and the other of reed. The stems and leaves are of gilt bronze and the berries of gilt clay.

Date: late 4th-early 3rd century B.C.

Dimensions: length of leaves: 3 cm.; diameter of berries: 0.5-0.6 cm.

Inventory number: M 472

Provenance: Chania. Plot of A. Vayiaki-Sklaveniti 1983.

Funerary offering in a woman's grave (grave 3).

Myrtle is an aromatic bush endemic to Crete, where with appropriate pruning it can develop into a tree. In ancient Greek mythology, the myrtle was associated with Demeter and Persephone, as well as with Aphrodite, all goddesses of fertility and growth and, consequently, chthonic in character. Myrtle was used as a trophy for victory at the Olympic Games in antiquity and symbolized the ideals of peace, beauty and love.

Many crowns of myrtle have been found in ancient tombs. According to the Scholiast on Aristophanes, a family provided their deceased members with a crown in order for them to claim the right to eternal life after death among the virtuous.

*In petticoats of April first and in cicadas of August fifteenth
Tell me, she who plays, she who rages, she who charms
Casting off from fear its evil black glooms
Pouring intoxicating birds onto the sun's arms
Tell me, she who spreads the wings on the breast of all things
On the breast of our deepest dreams,
is she the mad pomegranate tree?*

*Odysseas Elytis, **The mad pomegranate tree** (excerpt)*



fig tree, pomegranate tree, apple tree, lemon tree



3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Kerameikos, Athens

In the archaeological site of the Kerameikos, a fig tree and an olive tree have entwined their branches.

Mythology relates that the fig was a special gift of Demeter to the inhabitants of Attica, where she took refuge during her search for her daughter Persephone, or Kore. It is also said to be among the trees beloved of Dionysos, or that it was the form assumed by one of the defeated Titans, Sykeus.

In ancient Athens, figs were highly valuable for trade, to such an extent that there was a law against their export from the city. However, the fig is rarely depicted in art, perhaps because its unruly growth and the rough texture of its leaves did not appeal to artists.

**19th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities,
Monastery of Great Meteoron**

Wall-painting illustrating the parable of the 'Withered Fig Tree'.

Date: 1552

In the iconographical program of the main church (katholikon) of the Monastery of Great Meteoron, the rare representation of the 'Withered Fig Tree' stands out. The depiction follows a description of the scene in the *Painter's Manuel* of Dionysios of Fournas: 'Castle and outside this mountains and a barren fig tree with dry leaves and Christ looking at it stretching out his hands towards it, and the apostles behind him in wonder'. The tree is picture barren and fruitless, as in the saying of Christ: 'May you never bear fruit again'.





3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of the Kerameikos, Athens

Painted, clay pomegranate, grave gift in a child's tomb.

Date: 750-700 B.C.

Inventory number: 1304

Provenance: Kerameikos Cemetery

Among the fruit born by trees, that of the pomegranate is perhaps the most peculiar, with its hard outer skin which hides the countless, blood-red seeds. The symbolisms attributed to the pomegranate are also countless. It is associated with death, but also with its transcendence; with love, fertility, abundance, and good fortune. We find it in customs related to some sort of transition, such as the coming of the new year, marriage or burial.



25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Kissamos

Detail of the mosaic of the *Hours and Seasons*: depicted is a branch from a pomegranate tree on which perch three partridges. Temporarily stored in an archeological store room of the Museum of Kissamos.

Date: second half of the 2nd century A.D.

Dimensions: height: 51 cm.; width: 52 cm.

Inventory number: Ψnφ. 9

Provenance: Kissamos, plot of V. Paterakis, 1979

The pomegranate tree, with its profusion of red fruit,

has enjoyed a variety of symbolic interpretations relating to life and to death. In ancient Greece it was the symbol of life and productivity, the fruit of fertility, inseparable from the cult of Hera, patron goddess of marriage and birth. The fruit's fertility symbolism also links it with the myth of Persephone. When Pluto seized Persephone and took her to the Underworld, he offered her a pomegranate, from which she ate only a few seeds. They were enough, however, to condemn her to spend part of the year (the winter months) with Pluto and the other in the Upper World (the summer months). Other myths associate the pomegranate with Aphrodite and Athena.



19th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Monastery of Great Meteoron

Wall-painting from the Monastery of Great Meteoron, in which Agios Euphrosynos is pictured holding a branch with apples.

Date: 1552

The scene refers to the vision seen by the priest of the monastery in which Agios Euphrosynos took refuge in order to offer his services. The priest saw Euphrosynos holding the good things (represented by the apples) which 'they who love the Lord' could enjoy.

Historical Museum of Crete, Herakleion

Pouch embroidered with floral decoration for wedding crowns, and crowns of lemon blossoms.

Date: 1941-1942

Dimensions: pouch: height: 40 cm.; width: 40 cm. (open); crowns: diameter: 19 cm.

Inventory number: ΓI 615 (pouch), ΓIII 389 (wedding crowns)

Provenance: Herakleion

In Greek Orthodox weddings, crowns of lemon blossoms were traditionally worn by the bride and groom. The plants and flowers which accompany marriage rites are naturally chosen among those which are endemic to each area, however the choice is also linked to rich cultural traditions. Lemon blossoms come from citrus trees which grow in tropical and temperate climates, because they do not tolerate very low temperatures. In addition, the white and delicate lemon blossoms emit a sweet, subtle scent and therefore symbolize virginity and innocence.



The garden of Alkinoos

*To left and right, outside, he saw an orchard
closed by a pale – four spacious acres planted
with trees in bloom or weighted down for picking;
pear trees, pomegranates, brilliant apples,
luscious figs, and olives ripe and dark.
Fruit never failed upon those trees: winter
and summer time they bore, for through the year
the breathing Westwind ripened all in turn –
so one pear came to prime, and then another,
and so with apples, figs and the vine's fruit
empurpled in the royal vineyard there.*

*Homer, **Odyssey** 7.114-132*



the trunk, the branches, the fruits



Ephorate of Paleoanthropology and Speleology of Southern Greece, Theopetra Cave, Trikala

The long-term excavations in the Theopetra Cave in the Prefecture of Trikala (1987-2007) brought to light a broad assemblage of evidence for uninterrupted material culture dated from the Middle Paleolithic Age to the end of the Neolithic Age. The vegetal remains assembled in Paleolithic and Mesolithic hearths in the cave (wild cereals, legumes, fruit and seeds of plants from the wild flora) belong to a large variety of plant species, genera, and families from the surrounding wild vegetation, and

provide information about the earliest stages of plant exploitation in Greece during the period when human groups in the region survived as hunters and gatherers. The plants cultivated in the Neolithic period (domesticated types of cereals and legumes, fruits and nuts, wild plants) help us to sketch aspects of the agricultural cycle of life which constituted the new economic reality at the end of the 7th millennium B.C. in the Aegean world. The archeobotanical collection at Theopetra represents a unique ensemble of data for the study of the interrelations between the human and the plant world in prehistoric Greece.



1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of the Ancient Agora, Stoa of Attalos, Athens

Neck of a clay protoattic hydria with a scene of dancing women who hold branches in their hands.

Date: 7th century B.C.

Dimensions: preserved height: 13 cm.; max. diameter: 9.5 cm.

Inventory number: P10229

Provenance: Ancient Agora of Athens

Similar dances in which the dancers held branches were performed at various celebrations and rites, either joyful or mournful in character. Such ring dances played a role in rites of passage, such as in mystery cults (Eleusinian Mysteries) and marriage ceremonies, memory of which survive in modern Greek customs.



7th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Museum of the History of the Olympic Games in Antiquity, Ancient Olympia

Bronze offering at the temple of Zeus with branches and leaves from an olive tree.

Date: Classical period

Inventory number: 357

Provenance: Archaeological site of ancient Olympia

The dedication is a reminder of the role of the wreath woven from a wild olive tree, known as the 'kotinos', in ancient Olympia and at the Olympic games. According to the myth mentioned by Pindar, the victors' prize was made of branches from the wild olive tree which grew behind the temple of Zeus. This tree was related to the wild olives which Herakles had planted on bare Kronios when he reached Olympia.

7th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Ancient Olympia

According to tradition, the sacred olive tree was planted by Herakles. It still flourishes today at the southwest corner of the temple of Zeus, at the heart of the Altis (as the sacred grove is known), to the delight of thousands of visitors to the archaeological site of Olympia. Woven from its branches was the crown of the Olympic victor, known as the 'kotinos' (derived from 'kotos', meaning wrath, virility, courage), a prize of inestimable moral value with which the 'good contest' was rewarded.



14th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Collection of Elateia

Almond-shaped vase.

Date: 4th century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 13 cm.; diameter of mouth: 2.5 cm.

Inventory number: BE 2610

Provenance: Classical-Hellenistic cemetery at Aves, Locris

In antiquity, the fruit of the almond tree symbolized fertility. Together with other dried fruits and nuts, the almond constituted a basic part of the diet and was put to various uses, pharmaceutical and cosmetic, among others. In the myth of Demophon, son of Theseus and Phyllis, daughter of the king of Thrace, the would-be bride is turned into an almond tree.



32nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Gitane

Grave offerings of fruit and nuts.

Date: Hellenistic period

Inventory numbers: OE 7820 - apple; OE 7821 - apple; OE 7979 - myrtle berries; OE 7982 - almond; OE 8041 - almond

Provenance: Riziani, Thesprotia

Making offerings of fruits and nuts to the dead constitutes one of the most usual funerary practices in the ancient Greek world. The clay models of apples and almonds, and beads in the form of nuts, which came to light during the excavation of a Hellenistic funerary monument (late 4th-early 3rd century B.C.) in the area of Riziani are typical examples of such grave goods. In addition to being fertility symbols, the earth's fruits were closely linked to the cycle of life and chthonic deities, whose worship was especially widespread throughout antiquity in Thesprotia.





**Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, exhibition
'The Gold of Macedon'**

Gold myrtle branch.

Date: 4th century B.C.

Inventory number: MΘ 5440 β

Probably once part of a crown, the myrtle branch consists of wire made from a thin band of gold foil, the berries are constructed from two hammered pieces of gold foil which have been joined, and the flowers too are created from gold foil.

13th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Athanasakeion Archaeological Museum, Volos

Reconstructed gold crown, made from single, double and triple olive(?) leaves.

Date: 2nd century B.C.

Inventory number: M 79

Provenance: Vlochos, Prefecture of Karditsa

In various periods of antiquity, it was the custom to crown kings, victors or heroes with branches from the 'sacred plant' of the gods. Similar crowns, created in precious metals, also accompanied the dead.



Epigraphical Museum, Athens

Honorary decree of Poseidippos Bakchios Kothokidis.

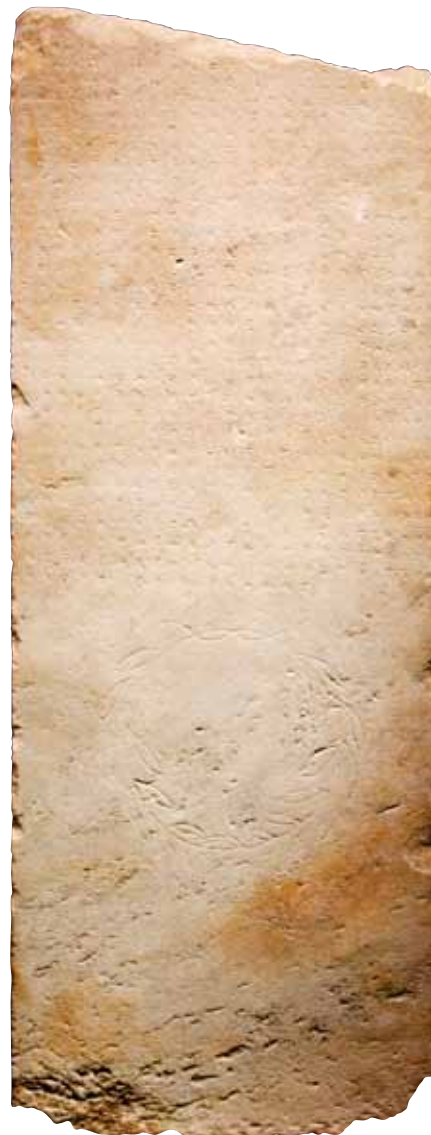
Date: 299-8 B.C.

Dimensions: height: 80 εκ.; width: 29 cm.; thickness: 4.8 cm.

Inventory number: EM7372 = IG II² 641

Provenance: Discovered between the National Garden and the Ilissos River.

Stele in Pentelic marble, missing upper section; most likely crowned originally by a pediment. The inscription records the vote to honor Poseidippos Bakchios Kothokidis for his services offered as ambassador of the Athenians to the kingdom of Cassander. The city honors him with a crown and the erection of the stele on which the vote is recorded. To be crowned with the celebrated 'thallou stephanos', crown of a young olive shoot, which is pictured in the lower part of the stele, was a sign of tremendous honor in ancient Athens.





11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Chalkis

Marble agonistic inscription with three rows of crowns.

Date: 2nd century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 80 cm.; length: 169 cm.; thickness: 13 cm.

Material: grey marble

Inventory number: 8

Provenance: Tripa, Chakis

The victors in the games celebrated at Chalkis in

honor of Herakles are named on this marble inscription. At the top of the inscription the signature of the stone carver, Timarchidis of Lysistratos, is discernable. This is followed by the name of the superintendent of the city's gymnasium, Demetrius Andromaches, which provided the prizes for the games. Each row consists of crowns (33 in total) made of branches from different trees: olive, laurel and oak.

These trees were associated with myths of the gods and heroes, and crowns woven from their branches constituted the usual prizes at games.



Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki

Forest no. 1, by Vassilis Vasilakakis.

Date: 2001-2002

Type: mixed media

Dimensions: height: 110 cm.; width: 122 cm.

Inventory number: 2002.020MM.0717

Provenance: gift of Vasilis Vasilakakis - 2002

The vibrant green leaves on the first layer of the image seem to float, either on water or in the air. The thick vegetation of the intertwined branches behind them lends a sense of hazy mystery to the forest's depiction and intensifies the dreamy atmosphere.



Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki

Tree trunks, by Yiorgos Vakalo.

Date: 1961

Type: oil on canvas

Dimensions: height: 130 cm.;
width: 80 cm.

Inventory number:

1961.019PA.0314

Provenance: gift of Eleni Vakalo
- 1996

Focusing on one part of the tree, its trunk, the work of Yiorgos Vakalo offers a different 'vision' of Nature, turning the viewer's attention to the visual interest of physical textures and surfaces.

The rendering of the trunk's surface produces an almost abstract image; and the work shows the intimate relation between art and Nature and also how the latter serves as an inspiration for a wide variety of artistic endeavors.



Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki

Forest, by Pavlos.

Date: 1983

Type: mixed media

Dimensions: height: 200 cm.; width: 300 cm.

Inventory number: 1983.015CN.0931

Provenance: gift of Alexandros Iolas

Constructed entirely from steel wire, the *Forest* ex-

plores the artistic potential of a new visual language. The main 'theme' of this work is the process of artistic creation itself; it can be seen in the context of efforts to find new artistic methods using everyday materials and objects from modern life.

In this way, the wire is converted from an industrial material to a tool for relating images from the natural world, thereby raising timely questions about the replacement of Nature by a contemporary, urbanized and industrialized landscape.

*He hastened with twenty attendants,
arming them both with double axes and with hatchets,
and they rushed shameless into the grove of Demeter.
Now there was a poplar, a great tree reaching to the sky,
and thereby the nymphs were wont to sport at noontide.
This poplar was smitten first and cried a woeful cry to the others.
Demeter marked that her holy tree was in pain,
and she was angered and said: 'who cuts down my fair trees?'*

*Callimachus, **Hymn to Demeter**, lines 37-41*



sacred trees



Archaeological Museum of Herakleion

'The Ring of Minos'. Gold signet ring with scene of tree cult.

Date: c. 1525-1400 B.C. (LMIB-II)

Dimensions: bezel length: 3.55 cm.; bezel width: 2.45 cm.; inner diameter of ring: 1.65 cm.; width of the ring: 0.09 cm.; thickness of the ring: 0.05 cm.; weight: 29.4 gr.

Inventory number: X-A 700

Provenance: Knossos

The tree claims a special position in the narrative iconography of Minoan seal rings.

On the 'Ring of Minos', as it was named by A. Evans, are pictured two trees which emerge from prominent buildings. Male and female figures clasp tree branches and the scene should in all probability be identified as a glimpse of tree worship. According to one view, the pointed object in the hand of the male figure is a sprouting bulb or seed.

In general, tree cult and its iconographic context seem to be related to the evocation of fertility and the rebirth of Nature.



National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Gold signet ring.

Date: end of the 15th century B.C.

Dimensions: bezel length: 2.5-3.4 cm.; diameter of ring:
2 cm.; weight: 29.6 gr.

Inventory number: 992, Prehistoric Collection

Provenance: Acropolis of the lower town of Mycenae. A goddess sits below a tree. Two upright female figures stand opposite her and between them can be discerned a double-headed axe. In the sky are depicted the sun and a half-moon. The seated goddess at the base of the tree seems to be identified with the tree in a scene of open-air cult.



34th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Panthessalian Sanctuary of Itonian Athena, Filia

The pan-Thessalian sanctuary of Itonian Athena, which is mentioned in literary and epigraphical sources, is located at the village of Filia in the Prefecture of Karditsa, on the right bank of the Onochonos River.

The oldest architectural remains are dated to the Mycenaean period, although we cannot be sure that the area was considered sacred at that time. The area's sanctity and its wealth, however, are confirmed in the Geometric

and Archaic periods thanks to the many bronze objects-dedications of exceptional quality which have been found there. It is very likely that in the middle of the 6th century B.C. the temple grove was burned, as is testified by evidence from excavation, in particular the existence of a widespread layer of ash. Within this layer have been discovered many metal objects-dedications, such as clasps with large plaques engraved with decorative geometrical motifs and animal scenes, fibulae, bird-shaped amulets, statues, small vases, round shields etc. These objects were either hung on the tree branches with string or leather strips, or attached to wooden boards.



14th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Mytilene

The countryside of Mytilene (Lesvos) is full of strange landscapes. Rocks, caves and trees are associated with legends, traditions and customs, and known by the names 'Agios' and 'Agia' (Saint) or 'Panagia' (the Virgin Mary). Still today the faithful are drawn to these places.

Many country chapels are shaded by large and often wild trees, known on Lesvos as 'arsizika'. These trees – evergreen oaks, cypresses, wild oaks and others – are age-old and have always been considered holy. Popular tradition protects each of them and the local people for this reason avoid harming them, leaving the trees to grow unhindered.

14th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Panagia Galousa, Mytilene

The early Christian monument of the Panagia Galousa is located in the area known as Pigadakia in the eastern part of the island. The monument is 'protected' by a stand of two-thousand-year-old evergreen oaks, while in the area there are signs of older cult. An olive grove with trunks resembling sculptures welcomes the visitor to the village, and together with the old fountain it creates the ideal place to walk and relax.





14th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Panagia Stypsiani, Mytilene

The church of Panagia Stypsiani is located in the village of Stypsis. It is protected by a great pine tree about which a legend recalls that once someone tried to cut it down, but the axe turned against him and cut off his hand. It is said that the trunk is as hard as marble. The area is an ideal destination for an excursion, as the surroundings and the view from the church are uniquely beautiful. Without being monumental, the church's architecture is distinguished and resembles a monastic complex with cells arranged around it.



14th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Agios Therapon at Klopedi, Mytilene

The church of Agios Therapon at Klopedi is a recently constructed chapel which is located, however, beside the ruins of a large early Christian basilica, surrounded by holm oaks and wild olive trees. Here at Agios Therapon's sanctuary continues to the present day the tradition of the 'tzatzala', according to which the faithful hang on the tree pieces of cloth from their clothing (known as a 'tzatzalo'), which symbolically represent their illnesses. Of special interest is the fact that on these same trees the Ottomans hung similar offerings, indicating that this tree cult transcends differences in religious doctrine.

12th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Holy Trees in the Prefecture of Drama

The custom of tying string, strips of cloth or old clothing to the branches of trees is very ancient. It is encountered across nearly all Eurasia and associated with the healing of and recovery from illness. Among the earliest records of the custom in the Byzantine period is that illustrated in the *Phyllada of Alexander*, in which the trees (cypresses in this case) also give oracles.

The custom is found all over Greece, particularly in the north and on the Aegean islands. In the prefecture of Drama there are many recorded examples; to these were recently added, thanks to the work of the students and teachers of the Directorate of Primary School Education of the Prefecture of Drama, the sites of the chapel of Agia Paraskevi at the Nevrokopi fortress and at the monastery of Agioi Konstantinos and Eleni. In all instances, the tree is located near a water source, linking it to the presence of what is known in Greek as an 'agiasma', or holy water which has the power to 'purify' and cure illness. In two cases there is also evidence for the practice known as the 'trypoperasma' or 'passing through the hole', a ritual means of recollecting the passage to rebirth and new life. It is no coincidence that, in some of the places where this ritual is practised, it is celebrated at times close to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, and is also connected with funerary rites and the presence of tombs in the area.

These holy sites are dedicated to various saints, although there is a preference for Zoodochos Pigi (the Virgin Mary as the Life-receiving Spring), and for Agia Paraskevi. The faithful pray for the healing of all sorts of illnesses, but those concerning small children make up the majority of entreaties. In general, the custom is linked with the release from evil (the evil is 'tied' and left behind with the cloth on the tree), the passage from death to life and, symbolically, to immortality.

Nevrokopi Fortress, Chapel of Agia Paraskevi

The pictured tree is an oak located at the Nevrokopi Fortress, near the chapel of Agia Paraskevi.

The chapel is modern and has its feast on the Friday of Easter Week. The holy tree with its hanging rags and the perforated stone stand behind the chapel's apse, together with the holy water source. The oak tree is low, loaded down with weather-worn strips of fabric. The pilgrims' prayers which relate to the healing of sterility in women are believed to be intensified by the adjacent 'trypoperasma'. The custom, which goes back to the Ottoman period (if not earlier) is well maintained still today.



Kefalari, Monastery of Agioi Konstantinos and Eleni

According to tradition, the monastery is built on the site of a previous monastery and is associated with a nearby 'agiasma', or holy water source. Strips of fabric, as well as children's toys are hung on a fig tree which grows beside the holy water source. The latter is linked with healing immersion in the holy water and in the Ottoman period was associated mainly with illnesses responsible for childhood mortality in the area. Today the custom remains strong and the holy complex is believed to be a site of cures more generally.



Paranesti, Chapel of Agia Paraskevi

The chapel is modern. The holy tree stands beside the 'agiasma', or holy water source of Agia Paraskevi, which is housed in a low, modern structure. The tree is a sturdy oak hung with offerings, including even baby bottles. According to information provided by the priests at Paranesti, Father Yeorgios Firinidis and Father Ioannis Christodoulou, the custom goes back to the Ottoman period (and probably earlier) and is related in general to the cure of illness.

1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Hills of the Muses, the Pnyx and the Hill of the Nymphs

On the hill of the National Observatory of Athens was located an open-air sanctuary to the Nymphs thanks to the discovery of the inscription: IEPON/NYMΦQN/ΔEMO

Age-old pine trees grow in the rocky surface of the sanctuary, beside the small fountain which has gathered water throughout the ages, as it continues to do still today. Their roots embrace the rock and pass through its fissures and, almost miraculously, are nourished by the moisture which seeps through. These evergreens are worthy of the name 'tree of life', around which the cult of the Nymphs once grew.

Nymphs of many names – Naiads, Orestiads, Dryads, Amadryads, etc. – lived in water sources, in mountains and in forests, on hills and in trees. Virgins endowed with enchanting beauty, they were crowned with spring flowers, and reveled in games and dances. They were divinities of birth or nurses who raised children to be heroes.

The numerous clay offerings in the shape of female figurines reveal the popularity of the cult on the Hill of the Nymphs already from the 7th century B.C. The connection of the Nymphs with the Demos, as suggested by the inscription, indicates that the cult had acquired an official status in the course of the 5th century B.C.

The Nymphs enjoy the pleasures of Nature as companions of the rustic god Pan, protector of fertility and growth, who was worshiped in Attica after the battle of Marathon. On the Pnyx Hill, next to a ravine with conifers and an old perennial eucalyptus, was recently discovered a sanctuary dedicated to him. Inside the chamber can be discerned an exceptionally fine scene carved in relief showing Pan with his hunting dog and a naked Nymph dancing between them. The expressive scene is completed by the presence of a schematic tree, which may be understood as a condensation of the symbolic qualities of the tree of life, the rebirth of Nature, and fertility.





Educational Programs and Communication Department (Ministry of Culture and Tourism) - 3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquity, Temple of Olympian Zeus and Sanctuaries along the Ilissos River

The archaeological site of the Olympieion forms today a protected natural and cultural place, a beautiful, green landscape in the heart of Athens.

In the area to the east of the Acropolis there was in antiquity a large religious complex with sanctuaries dedicated to Zeus, Apollo, Ge, Kronos and Rhea, Artemis, Pan, Acheloos and the Nymphs.

The sanctuaries were built in the valley of the Ilissos, on both the right and left banks of the river, except for the Temple of Olympian Zeus which commanded higher ground.

It would not have been by chance that the Athenians

chose this place to honor the divinities associated with the powers of Nature. The luxuriant and refreshing shore of the Ilissos lay at the core of Attica's cultic mythology.

In ancient mythology, the tree possessed magical powers, as did most parts of Nature. There were trees which produced magical fruit, or foretold the future; still others offered their trunks as dwelling places for the Amadryads, nymphs of the forests. Each tree had its own god and each god its own tree.

Ancient Greek mythology is full of enchanting stories of boys and girls who were transformed into trees. The young Kyparissos became a cypress tree, and the daughters of Helios were metamorphosed into poplars in order to be delivered from their sorrow, whereas the slender Pitys and beautiful Daphne each took the form of a tree in order to escape a persistent lover.

*The old trunk raises itself high in this our soil,
which is the cradle and grave of life; high on the trunk is the foliage
which catches so much of the sweet, kindly breeze; but its greenery is not
empty; happy on each leaf rests a spirit, so that the entire, enormous tree radiates and sings, pouring
out far and wide as many stars as are in the sky and as many voices as art can claim.*

*Dionysios Solomos, **The mystical tree** (excerpt)*



the tree between life and death



Benaki Museum, Athens

Detail from the decoration of a Minoan clay pyxis depicting the 'tree of life'.

Date: 12th century B.C.

Dimensions: height of pyxis: 27.5 cm.; diameter at opening: 27 cm.; base: 33 cm.

Provenance: Crete

The observation of changes in the natural world through the succession of seasons was, from a very early stage, a necessity for man's survival. He was directly dependent on the cycle of growth and stood in awe before the Earth and its inexhaustible productive capabilities.

Like a human being, the tree grows, rises in stature from year to year. It flowers, bears fruit, matures and 'falls silent' like the rest of Nature when winter comes.

With the coming of spring, a new cycle of life begins and the tree is reborn.

The representations of sacred trees in Minoan iconography are related to their quality of regeneration. Rebirth and perpetuation of life through death are conceived of and symbolized through the observation of rebirth in Nature itself. Thus, the habit of planting a tree over a tomb, a custom preserved still today, comes as no surprise.

The same concept may also have led to the depiction of the 'tree of life' on vessels used in funerary contexts, such as in the case of this Minoan pyxis. A tree with long wide leaves adorns one side of the jar, which was probably made in a workshop in Eastern Crete sometime between 1200-1100 B.C. in order to be used as a funerary urn.

Archaeological Museum of Herakleion

Clay model of a tree with birds seated in its branches.

Date: 8th century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 12.5 cm.

Inventory number: Π 14809

Provenance: Knossos, Fortezza cemetery

The clay model of a tree, found in a grave in the Fortezza cemetery, is related to the 'tree of life', a mythical tree of oriental descent, which was said to grow in the garden of the Hesperides and symbolized the live-giving powers of Nature and eternal rebirth. Also associated with the sacred tree, and known likewise in Minoan cult, are the birds which nest in its branches. They symbolize divine epiphany, but also the souls of the dead, or of those still to be born. The 'tree of life', and its birds, were depicted on funerary urns of the 8th century B.C., and clay models of birds were also found among grave goods. It is possible that their presence in graves reflects conceptions about death and the hope for the continuation of life.





National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Base of a marble funerary vessel.

Date: 410-400 B.C.

Dimensions: height: 83 cm.; width: 31 cm.; depth: 50 cm.

Inventory number: 4501, Sculpture Collection

Provenance: Moschato, Athens

A young woman and a young man gather apples from a tree. The tree symbolizes the afterlife in the Elysian Fields where, in ancient Greek tradition, the blessed deceased taste the tree's golden fruit. The eschatological character of the scene is completed by the presence on the base's narrow right side of a priest who holds a sacrificial knife and on the left narrow side Hermes, conductor of souls.

17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Veroia

Marble inscribed funerary stele with crowning palmette and a carved scene (detail).

Date: 2nd-1st century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 217 cm.; width: 53 cm.; thickness: 5 cm.

Inventory number: Α 294

Provenance: Veroia (Kato Elia)

The funerary stele of Paterinos is one of the most distinguished funerary monuments of Veroia. Below the exquisite crowning palmette, the four figures of the scene are carved in a rectangular recess. On the left stands a female figure and in front of her stands a slave holding a pyxis; next to her is the deceased, Paterinos, and beyond him stands his slave. Behind the figures is represented the chthonic symbol of a tree with a snake twined around its trunk, and on the far right a horse's head. The tree with a snake often appears on funeral steles of Veroia and symbolizes the 'tree of life' which possess the power of eternal rebirth, while the snake is well-known for its chthonic properties. Above the scene is inscribed the name of the deceased and below this the epigram in three elegaic couplets, according to which Paterinos died at age 50, having twice been elected to the highest political offices, and his daughter Agathe erected the monument.



**20th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquity,
New Archaeological Museum of Mytilene**

Marble funerary relief with a representation of the deceased female figure as a mounted hero. The scene is flanked by chthonic symbols: a tree with a snake twined around its trunk and an altar.

Date: 1st century B.C.-1st century A.D.

Dimensions: height: 60 cm.; width: 55 cm.; thickness: 12 cm.

Inventory number: NMM 248

Provenance: Eressos



Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki

Grave stele with Thracian hero-rider.

Date: second half of the 1st century A.D.

Dimensions: height: 74 cm.; width: 89 cm.; thickness: 6 cm. (lower section: 16 cm.)

Inventory number: MΘ 6937

Provenance: Kallindoia

Rectangular marble plaque with carved figures in pairs to the right and left of a central vertical axis, which consists of a small altar with a tree behind it. A snake, a common chthonic symbol, is twined around the trunk of the tree. The deceased is represented on horseback in the iconographical type of the Thracian hero-rider.





15th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Larissa

Funerary stele with a pediment carved on a rectangular plaque. Inside the tympanum of the pediment is set a rosette carved in relief. Below the pediment and also carved in relief, the deceased is represented as a hero-rider in a sacred grove. Below the scene appears the inscription: ΜΑΚΕΔΩΝ ΣΩΣΤΡΑΤΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΕΑΥΤΟΥ ΥΙΟΝ ΜΝΗΜΗΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ ΗΡΩΣ ΧΡΗΣΤΕ ΧΑΙΡΕ.

Date: Roman period

Dimensions: max. height: 75 cm.; max. width: 41.5 cm.; max. thickness: 12.5 cm.

Inventory number: 231

Provenance: Unknown; from the Old Collection of Larissa

In a series of carved Roman funerary steles in the Archaeological Museum of Larissa we find depicted the type known as 'the hero-rider in the sacred grove'. The palm tree in the scene serves symbolically to suggest the sacred grove. But its greatest role is to indicate the meaning, importance and range of symbolism attributed to the tree in the Greek world during the Roman period.

The relief-carved steles are typical examples of the iconography of the hero-rider with the palm tree, which was especially widespread in the Balkans and Asia Minor. The identification of the commemorated dead man remains, however, problematic. It is possible that the identification with the hero-rider bears some connection with his descent, or his profession.

*With a wave of the kerchief
do we welcome those who are coming
or – simply – bid farewell
to those who are leaving?
If the night follows
the day,
surely isn't the day
once more
succeeded by the night?
The same leaves
on the trees
last year,
won't they appear this year too –
again – in springtime?*

*Nikos Engonopoulos,
No man can serve two masters...
(excerpt)*



the tree between past and future



16th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Monastery of Panagia Mavriotissa

The Monastery of Panagia Mavriotissa is located 4 km. along the verdant south coast of the Kastoria peninsula.

Recent research has shown the monastery church, or katholikon, to have been constructed in the 11th century. The period of the monastery's greatest flourishing was the 13th century, when the katholikon was renovated and the wall-paintings executed.

Particularly distinguished among the paintings on the katholikon's exterior is the representation of the 'Tree of Jesse' on the south wall. It is one of the earliest surviving depictions of the genealogical tree of Christ, whose ancestry is traced back, in both the *Old* and *New Testaments*, to the royal house



of David. The iconography derives from the vision of Isaiah and was quickly incorporated into the artistic repertoire of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art.

At the Mavriotissa monastery, the Forefather Jesse, David's father, is portrayed lying on his back and the trunk of a tree grows from his chest. On the main part of the trunk appear the full-length figures of the prophet-kings David and Solomon, and at the top of the tree is the Panagia Brepokratousa (the Virgin holding the infant Christ).

To either side of the trunk stand six additional prophets, all of whom hold unrolled scrolls foretelling the Davidic descent of the Christ, in other words, his royal ancestry. From the time of the Komnenoi dynasty, noble descent comes to play a dominant role in Byzantine social conceptions, which may also explain the particular interest in Jesus's royal ancestry which is expounded in this scene.



4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Palace of the Grand Masters, Rhodes

Coat of arms with a pine tree, a unicorn at its side, and topped by two birds en face. Probably the coat of arms of a bourgeois Greek family.

Date: 1513

Dimensions: height: 55 cm.; width: 43 cm.; thickness: 18 cm.

Inventory number: Φ74

Provenance: From a mansion in the city of Rhodes, period of the Knights of St John.

Exhibition of Medieval Rhodes, Palace of the Grand Masters.



4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Palace of the Grand Masters, Rhodes

Coat of arms with a ram beneath the sun or a star, between three trees. Family crest of the Spaniard Knight of St. John L. Soldero.

Date: 1487 (or 1488)

Dimensions: height: 46 cm.; width: 29 cm.; thickness of plaque: 13 cm.

Inventory number: Φ73

Provenance: From a building in the city of Rhodes.

Exhibition of Medieval Rhodes, Palace of the Grand Masters.

4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Palace of the Grand Masters, Rhodes

Coat of arms with a tree with four branches, crossed in pairs. Family crest of a Knight of St John, member of the prominent Italian family della Rovere, which produced two popes.

Date: c.1470-1520

Dimensions: 44 cm.; width 34 cm.; thickness of plaque: 14.5 cm.

Inventory number: Φ64

Provenance: From a building in the city of Rhodes.

Exhibition of Medieval Rhodes, Palace of the Grand Masters.

The European middle ages were especially rich in symbolism. In western art of this period, which includes the coats of arms of Rhodes, the tree was especially popular. It was the preeminent symbol of the family and was usually depicted with its roots visible. The particular trees chosen for one's coat of arms, conveyed further meanings: the oak symbolized strength, the cypress the soul; trees whose fruits bore many seeds, such as the pine cone and pomegranate, symbolized fertility, while citrus fruits stood for youth and innocence. Particular trees and their fruit were often part of a word play with the name of the commissioner or owner of a work of art.

In the middle ages, man lived in an environment rich in thick forests, which were home to a wide variety of creatures, with every kind of mystery to go along with them. The enchantments of the medieval forests left their legacy in folk tales and stories in which the fantastical overlapped with the everyday.





National Historical Museum, Athens

Costume of Kyra Frosyni, decorated with the 'tree of life'.

Inventory number: 1379

Date: end of the 18th century

Provenance: Ioannina



Historical and Folklore Museum of Corinth

Silver clasp.

Date: 18th century

Dimensions: length: 31 cm.; width: 11 cm.

Inventory number: K 5 1153

Provenance: probably from Thessaly

On the central part of the clasp is portrayed a double-headed eagle (or vulture), while above it appears a man's head surrounded by rays, which may be interpreted as a depiction of the sun. Both the right and left sections of the clasp are decorated with the 'tree of life', in full blossom and emerging from a schematic urn. With a mixture of embossed and engraved techniques, the artisan has created an exceptionally rich decorative work.



Historical and Folklore Museum of Corinth

Gold-plated copper segmented belt, accessory to a woman's costume from Metaxades, Evros.

Date: 19th century

Dimensions: 90 cm.; width of belt: 7 cm.; width of clasp: 14 cm.

Inventory number: K 141

Provenance: Thrace

Made by Thracian goldsmiths, this belt was a groom's engagement present to his future bride. Its floral decoration depicts shoots and blossoms, while the large chased clasp, in the shape of a crown, is adorned with a scene of two birds en face flanking a 'tree of life'. All the decoration is rendered with polychrome lacquered enamel and colored stones.

The central scene symbolizes the new, shared life of the couple and is both decorative and apotropaic in character.



Historical Museum of Crete, Herakleion

Woven wall hanging ('banta') depicting a wedding procession (known as the 'psiki'): brides on horseback hold flags of the Cretan Republic, while surrounded by children on schematic trees, symbols of life.

Date: early 20th century

Dimensions: height: 60 cm.; length: 160 cm.

Inventory number: ΓΙ 275

Provenance: Krousonas, Province of Malevizi, Prefecture of Herakleion, Crete

Bantes are colorful textiles which traditionally decorated the walls of the Cretan house. A much-loved subject in Cretan weavings was scenes from wedding celebrations, which lasted for days, such as the wedding procession (psiki). The latter featured schematic children and trees, which expressed the wish that the new couple will produce heirs.

The depictions of trees and flowers (both naturalistic and abstract) have an important place in the Cretan textile tradition, since they are understood as symbols of life and fertility.



Folklore and Historical Museum of Larissa

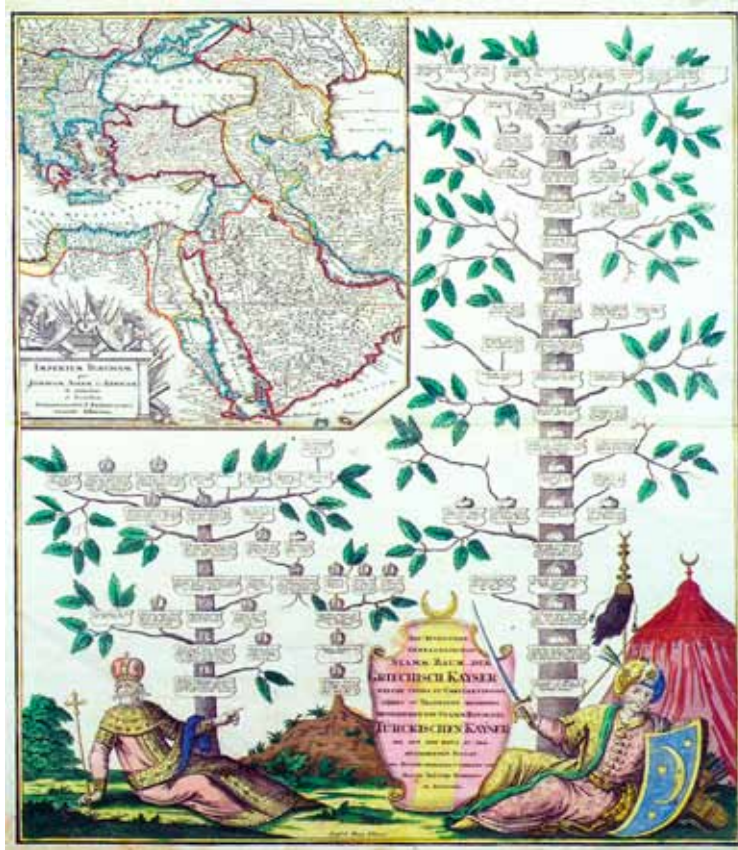
Woolen kilim, woven on a loom. At the center is the motif of the 'tree of life' and schematic floral patterns.

Date: end of the 19th century

Dimensions: length: 220 cm.; width: 136 cm.

Inventory number: Γ.Μ. 2467

Provenance: Agia, Larissa



Nautical Museum of Greece, Athens

Map by the German cartographer, Gottrieg Rogg (1669-1742). The early 18th-century Ottoman Empire in Europe, Asia and Africa appears in the upper, right-hand corner, while the greater part of the map is taken up by the genealogical trees of the Byzantine emperors and Ottoman sultans.

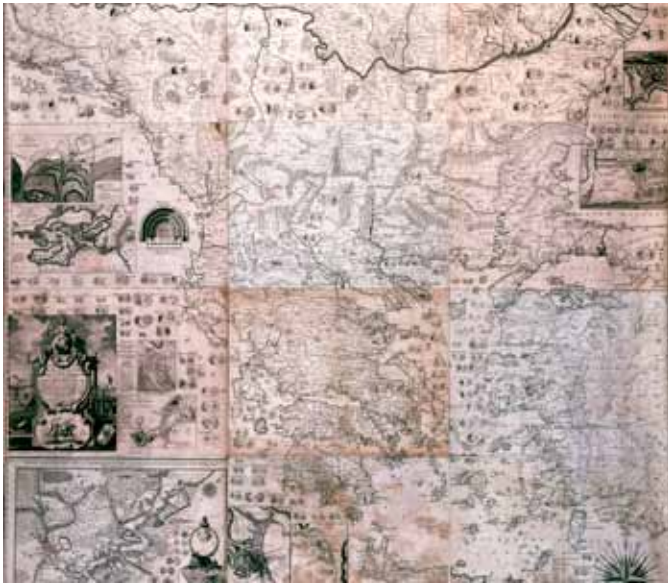
Date: early 18th century

Dimensions: height: 56 cm.; width: 48 cm.

Inventory number: X/O/750/005

Trees, the lungs of our planet, provide us with priceless oxygen, fruit and wood. In this way, they refresh us, nourish us, and enable us to travel. They have become kindling, the wheel, cart, house, furniture, ship, box, tool, bridge, book, medicine. They retain the soil, check the flow of rain water. They were and continue to be a symbol of life, hope, peace, knowledge, heritage and health.

This rare map by Gottrieg Rogg presents the tree as the continuation of family roots and a symbol of the heritability of names and of power.



National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, Eynard Mansion, Athens

Map of Greece, by Rigas Feraios.

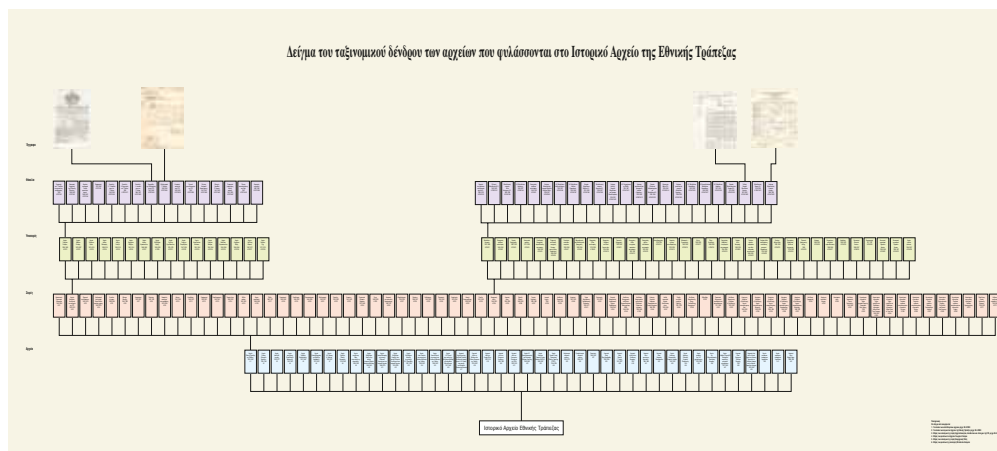
Date: Vienna 1797

Type: copper engraving

Dimensions: height: 207 cm.; width: 207 cm.

Provenance: gift of Victor and Niobe Mela

Rigas Feraios or Velestinlis, the most conscientious of the heroes and leaders in the struggle for Greek Independence, sowed the seeds of knowledge among the subject peoples of the waning Ottoman Empire. His goal was to root in the souls of the people of Greece and the Balkans faith in a free, democratic world. His dream was envisioned as the 'tree of freedom', whose outstretched branches bore the message of struggle and release from superstition. The 'tree of freedom' grew from his writings and maps, and through those people who believed in Rigas's vision and sacrificed their lives with him. Only shortly after his execution, the tree which he had planted bore the fruit of freedom, priceless then as today.



A sample of the classification tree of the records kept at the National Bank's Historical Archive.

The Historical Archive of National Bank of Greece, Diomidis Building, Athens

The form given to the classification system of an archive when expressed as a diagram resembles the form of a tree with its system of branches. The articulation of an archive can be represented in a few, basic levels, like a tree with a few branches, or with many intervening levels, sub-branches so to speak, depending on the complexity of the archival material.

The tree of the Historical Archive of National Bank of Greece has dense foliage and is perennially growing and developing. Today the root supports 44 enormous branches. Each branch represents one archive from which grow numerous smaller branches, 80 on average. These branches are the series of each archive. From each series/branch spring many even smaller branches, known as sub-series, and which can reach or even surpass 100 in each series. It is also possible, however, that a series generates only one sub-series. From each sub-series grows a number of files, we could call them twigs, which can be as many as

200 in each sub-series, and from these spring the leaves, the documents themselves. Each twig can support up to 600 leaves. In 2008, a total of 42,000,000 leaves hang from the branches of the tree of the Historical Archive of National Bank of Greece.

The enormous mass of paper leaves which rustle in the Historical Archive puts us in mind of the number of trees which are cut in order to produce the lasting raw material, the paper on which the information is printed – at least up to now. The technical language of the archivist, who is concerned with the preservation, destruction or conservation of these documents/leaves, is parallel to that of the contemporary ecologist.

Each leaf preserved in the Historical Archive of National Bank of Greece is unique and irreplaceable. It is preserved in perpetuity as an indispensable and integral part of the evergreen tree which keeps alive the history of the most important financial organization in the country, whose history has unfolded alongside that of the modern Greek state, and awaits researchers who will help to bring some of its aspects back to life.

*Go to paradise,
a laurel flourishes there,
guarded by a bright
angel, who waters it
singing these words*

*'Grow up through triumph,
grow up through love
of freedom and homeland
and so always blossom, o daphne,
unstruck by lightning'*

*Andreas Calvus, **Eighth Ode to Victory**, stanzas 15-16*



the guardians of the tree

7th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, New Archaeological Museum of Olympia

Hammered bronze Assyrian plaque with heraldic scene of wild goats flanking a 'tree of life'.

Date: 8th century B.C. (Late Hittite-Assyrian cycle)

Inventory number: B4980

Provenance: Stadium, Olympia

The 'tree of life', rich in symbolism and allowing almost free rein in artistic rendering, has been a favorite decorative theme in the art of many peoples and religions across time. The same subject appears in other hammered scenes on metal plaques found in Olympia, but with sphinxes instead of wild goats on either side of the tree. The plaques come from the region of Northern Syria and should probably be dated to the 8th century B.C.



11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Chalkis

Clay hydria depicting animals flanking a 'tree of life'.

Date: Geometric period

Inventory number: 2107

Provenance: Chalkis

On a panel painted on the neck of the hydria is pictured a 'tree of life' flanked by rearing horses. This iconographic theme has its roots in oriental art and became popular in Greece in the Geometric period. Although the motif does not always carry with it some particular symbolism, it nonetheless expresses human wonder in the face of the earth's fertility, which safeguards the prosperity of all living things.





7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Phthiotic Thebes (Nea Anchialos)

Marble pilaster-capital from the basilica of the High Priest Peter in Phthiotic Thebes. Decorated with a vase flanked by double-headed eagles, each emerging from kalyxes.

Date: 7th–8th century

Dimensions: height: 38 cm.; length: 46.5 cm.; thickness: 2-4.5 cm.

Inventory number: Α 271

Provenance: Phthiotic Thebes (Nea Anchialos)

In the early Christian period, in the site of ancient Pyrassos, flourished the city of Phthiotic Thebes. Innumerable excavated finds testify to its acme. Ten early Christian basilicas, both private and public buildings, and a large number of works of art have come to light which date from the 3rd to the 9th century. The basilica of the High Priest Peter was the find spot of the marble pilaster-capital decorated with a central vase flanked by birds, eagles in this case, an iconographical motif which symbolizes the 'source of life' and is considered a variation on the 'tree of life' theme.



Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki

Marble chancel slab (screen panel) with relief decoration of griffins.

Date: 10th century

Dimensions: height: 100 cm.; width: 70 cm.; thickness: 7 cm.

Inventory number: ΑΓ 275

Provenance: Thessaloniki

In the Middle Byzantine period (9th-12th century), we often encounter fantastical or real animals which cover the entire surface of the composition, either symmetrically arranged en face, or in scenes where beasts or birds of prey tear at other animals.

In this case, two griffins (mythical birds) are represented and between them the 'tree of life', which from the 6th century onwards was identified in Byzantine art with the cross as a symbol of salvation and immortality.

Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens

Marble chancel slab (screen panel) with relief decoration ('tree of life' between lions).

Date: 11th-12th century

Dimensions: height: 110 cm.; width: 91.5 cm.; thickness: 15.5 cm.

Inventory number: BXM 977

Provenance: Athens (Theseion Collection)

At the center of the scene stands the 'tree of life' flanked by two rampant lions, who appear to be tasting the tree's fruit. Already in antiquity, the lion was understood symbolically as guardian of gateway, throne or tomb, and in the Christian understanding it is often likened to Christ himself, who guards the human being and offers him salvation.

Similar decorative motifs with an obvious apotropaic character and references to eternal life, rebirth, protection and salvation were elaborated at various points in Christian churches (panels and pilaster-capitals of altar screens, door lintels) as well as on sarcophagi.



Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens

Marble chancel slab (screen panel) with relief decoration ('tree of life' between to sphinxes trampling on a deer).

Date: 12th century

Dimensions: 86.5 cm.; width: 63.5 cm.; thickness: 7.5 cm.

Inventory number: BXM 978

The central scene is composed of two sphinxes which have overpowered a deer and stand on either side of the 'tree of life'. The sphinx, a mythical beast which is usually represented with a woman's head, wings of a bird, and body and legs of a lion, was known in the ancient Greek world and among peoples in the East mainly as a symbol of wisdom and power. The 'tree of life', symbol of life itself and also known from antiquity, was adopted by the Christian tradition, according to which the tree grew in the middle of paradise and symbolized eternal life and immortality.



24th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Byzantine Museum of Phthiotis, Ypati

Representation of the 'tree of life' on a pavement slab from the Byzantine katholikon (main church) of the monastery at Aleospita.

Date: 12th century

Dimensions: height: 46,5 cm.; width: 49 cm.; thickness: 6 cm.

Inventory number: ΦΘ Λ 35.

A group of marble carvings from the 12th century are exhibited in the Byzantine Museum of Phthiotis. The carvings originate from a destroyed Byzantine monastery near the village of Aleospita in the foothills of Mount Oiti. The carvings decorated the doors, windows and altar screen of the church and reveal the luxurious quality of the building's construction. Of special interest is one intricately carved plaque which appears to have been positioned in the central part of the pavement inside the main church. This plaque is decorated with the 'tree of life' scene.

The tree has a simple form. The high, thin trunk terminates in a pine cone or cluster of grapes. Two peacocks stand to the right and left of the tree and raise their necks to peck at the fruit with their beaks. The peacock, a wondrous bird on account of its beauty and colors, was one of the basic symbols of eternal life for the Byzantines, an element which further strengthens the symbolic content of the 'tree of life' scene. The background of the plaque from Aleospita was roughly worked so that it could be filled with colored mastic resin (champlevé technique), which is not preserved today.



The appearance on the Aleospita carvings of the 'tree of life' motif, with its layers of symbolism, suggests the importance and meaning imbued to the decoration of each and every part of the Byzantine church. The unknown founder of the katholikon at the Aleospita monastery, or the marble artisans who worked there, would have chosen the 'tree of life' for the central position of the church pavement in the knowledge of its symbolic weight. And the same carvings reveal that the Byzantines understood and respected Nature as something sacred, as it too was God's creation.





Department of Educational Programs and Communication (Ministry of Culture and Tourism) - 1st Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Church of Panagia Gorgoepikoos, Athens

In the shade of a beautiful cluster of trees beside the modern cathedral of Athens stands an extraordinary Byzantine church. It was built at the end of the 12th century and dedicated to Panagia Gorgoepikoos ('Quick to hear', an epithet derived from the Virgin's immediate response to the prayers of the faithful).

What is distinctive about the church is the fact that the greater part of it is constructed of carved stones and marble plaques gathered from ruined buildings of earlier periods. Thus, every piece takes us to a different period and each period interprets the symbolisms hidden behind the carved decoration in a different way.

The 'tree of life' appears on many slabs on the west facade, the entrance to the church, which is understood as the earthly kingdom of God. Mythological beings and wild animals flank the symbol of paradise. Framed by crosses, these creatures become virtuous guardians of the tree. Thus, these motifs placed at the entrance to the church symbolically suggest the entrance to paradise, and to eternal life which the Christian Church promises to the faithful.

7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, George Schwartz Mansion, Ambelakia

Basket with flowers and fruit, supported on a male figure between two peacocks depicted en face. Painted panel from the mansion of George Schwartz in Ambelakia.

Date: 1798

The mansion of George Schwartz in Ambelakia is an outstanding example of traditional architecture from the 18th century. The mansion is impressive for its imposing architecture as well as its rich interior decoration, both painting and woodcarving. On the walls of the mezzanine and first floor, the subjects depicted include cities, real and mythical, landscapes, flowers and birds, garlands and other decorative motifs. Among these, a painted panel is adorned with a basket with flowers and fruit, supported on a male figure between two peacocks shown en face. The basket with flowers and fruit, and in particular the pomegranates and watermelons, are symbols referring to prosperity. In addition, the peacocks symbolize eternity and immortality, and are often represented en face on either side of the 'tree of life'.





10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Ouranoupolis Tower, Chalkidiki

Hand-woven rug.

Date: early 20th century

Dimensions: height: 265 cm.; width: 111 cm.

Provenance: Loch Collection

The hand-woven rug from the exhibition *'The Loch couple and 20th-century Ouranoupolis'* joins theoretical knowledge of the world of symbolism, which stems from the tree and its meanings in iconography, with practical knowledge of the natural world, as the threads of the hand-woven rugs are colored with natural dyes made from local plants.

The pattern rendered on the rug follows an early Byzantine prototype from the Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou on Mount Athos. It shows the 'tree of life', an important Biblical symbol, which is identified with the tree of knowledge which the Creator planted in paradise. At the top of the tree is a flower and below this a bird eats the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. At the base of the tree stand two dogs which have tasted of the fruit and their eyes are open to evil. All the other creatures are small birds and animals which live without having tasted the fruit. Around the tree, the struggle between good and evil is embodied in the grappling figures of dragons (symbol of the Church) and snakes (the creature of sin). The moral symbols of good and evil are clearly portrayed, and the tree as a primordial symbol emphasizes their lasting value.

It was in fact a park full of trees, exceedingly pleasant to gaze upon, encloistered by a sufficiently high wall and a chorus line of columns that together formed a covered portico on all four sides of the garden. Protected with the columns stood a thick assembly of trees. A network of sturdy branches interlaced to form an intricate pattern wherein petals gently embraced their neighbors, leaves wound around other leaves, and fruits rubbed softly on other fruits. Such for the world of plants is intercourse.

*Achilles Tatius, **Leucippe and Clitophon**, 1.15*



floral decoration



34th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaic Temple of Apollo at Ancient Metropolis, Karditsa

The construction of the temple of Apollo is dated to the middle of the 6th century B.C., while the location was used as a sanctuary already from the 7th century B.C. The temple was destroyed by fire in the middle of the 2nd century B.C.

The Archaic temple of Apollo is a source of information for the history and cult practices of the region, but also for artistic development in both architecture and the plastic arts. One of the particular features of its ar-

chitecture is the relief decoration of the echinus of the capitals with floral motifs of open and closed lotus blossoms. The differentiation in design among the capitals is a striking feature, as the original wooden columns of the aisle were gradually replaced by stone columns. Both unusual and important is the particularity of the Doric columns of the east side which rest on bases adorned with relief decoration of leaves as well as bead and reel designs. Finally, we find relief decoration employing flowers and buds also on the triangular antefixes in which the Corinthian-style ceramic tiles on the long sides of the temple terminate.



22nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes

Vase decorated in the 'Filkellura' style.

Date: 560-500 B.C.

Provenance: Archaic cemetery of Kamiros, Rhodes

The 'Filkellura' style (560-500 B.C.) was previously associated with Rhodes, but today Miletus is considered to have been the most important center of production for these wares.

The fact remains that these vases constitute a valuable testimony to the high standard of civilization at Kamiros, but also to the lively commercial relations in this period between Rhodes and the Southeastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor. At that time, on account of the overseas activities of the Greeks and their founding of colonies, new styles of ceramics appeared in different parts of the Greek world. The prevailing decorative themes, not only in ceramic wares, but in other art forms as well, are animals and exotic floral motifs, borrowed from the art of the Near East.



1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of the Ancient Agora, Stoa of Attalos, Athens

Clay stamp in the form of a rosette with eleven petals.

Date: Hellenistic period

Dimensions: preserved height: 3.6 cm.; diameter: 2.7 cm.

Inventory number: SS82

Provenance: Ancient Agora of Athens

During the Hellenistic period, Nature served as a source of purely decorative motifs in art. In the small clay stamp with the rosette design survives an unchanged and enduring motif which reaches back to the beginning of historical time. The wild rose, which we may recognize as the prototype of our stamp's motif, still grows today in the cracks of the rocky outcroppings in the Ancient Agora – a natural feature which left its mark in the artist's creation.

9th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Schimatari

Marble double-sided palmette crowning a funerary stele.

Date: 4th century B.C.

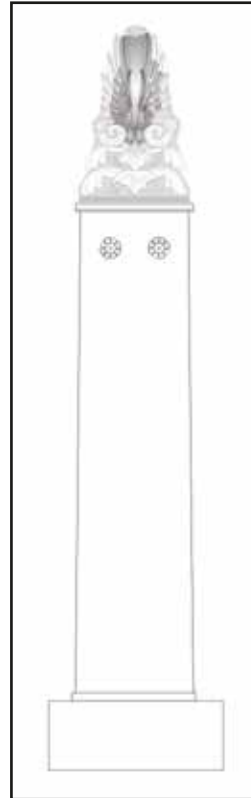
Dimensions: height: 150 cm.; width: 31 cm.; thickness: 65 cm.

Material: white marble

Inventory number: ΜΣ 1721

The total height of this colossal funerary monument – stele and crowning – would have reached a height of 4 m. A masterpiece of Athenian sculpture from the beginning of the last third of the 4th century B.C., it may be one of the last luxurious funerary monuments to have been created before the imposition in Athens of ‘austerity’ legislation by Demetrios of Phaleron (317 B.C.).

The palmette is a well-known form of floral decoration in ancient Greek art. It does not replicate a specific flower, but is a composite taking the form of a flower with petals which fan out from acanthus blossoms. It becomes especially popular as a decorative motif in architecture from the 7th century B.C. As the crowning feature of funerary steles it was used originally in Ionia (6th century B.C.) and especially in Attica from the 6th to the 4th century B.C.





Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki

Gold foil bands from which sprout pairs of diagonally arranged leaves, without stalks.

Date: 2nd century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 44 cm.; width: 2.5 cm.

Inventory number: Πυ 4283

Provenance: Pydna cemetery

Gold foil often adorned the clothing of men and women already from the Archaic period. These foil pieces, which allude to tree branches (for which reason they are often interpreted as crowns), bring vegetal motifs to clothing, since art in all its manifestations draws on Nature for its subjects.



3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Kerameikos, Athens

The acanthus is an indigenous plant to the Mediterranean region. Despite its humble appearance and the rather negative undertone of its name which is derived from 'thorn', the acanthus is associated with an important artistic innovation. It is said that in the 5th century B.C., the sculptor Kallimachos was inspired to create what became known as the Corinthian capital when he saw sitting on a young girl's tomb a basket with

her toys covered with a square tile and surrounded by acanthus shoots.

The decorative value of the acanthus was appreciated by many other artists who incorporated it into their compositions to create the lacy leaves which appear in art from the ancient Greek and Roman to the Byzantine and Renaissance periods, and continue in the Neo-classical era.

In the archaeological site of the Kerameikos, the acanthus flowers in spring, sometimes right beside examples of ancient sculpture adorned with the same pattern.



17th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Vourka Mansion, Kozani

Marble capital.

Dimensions: height: 28 cm.; diameter: 30 cm. /

Date / Provenance: Found during the excavation of an early Byzantine bath on the plot of the Kamkoutis family, Velvento, Kozani.

The basket of the capital is surrounded by a band with vegetal decoration consisting of eight upright leaves of soft acanthus carved in low relief. The abacus is 8 cm. high and has the form of a horizontal, rectangular plaque which juts out slightly to give the impression of a low band. The flattening of the carving and simplification of the construction of column capitals began at the end

of the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. In the 6th century, volutes no longer appear and the abacus becomes an undifferentiated square plaque. In addition, we find a round knob which served to stabilize the capital on the column.

The column capital shown here presents similarities in its technical construction with a group of five capitals in the Rotonda collection in Thessaloniki which are dated to the end of the 5th century or early 6th century.

The use of decorative motifs from the natural world on capitals was frequent and illustrates the indissoluble relationship of artists, and the entire community as well, to the natural environment. They considered it an inseparable part of their life attempting to imitate its many forms in their own art.

Benaki Museum, Athens

Wooden painted chest with scene of a couple in a flowering garden.

Date: late 18th-early 19th century

Dimensions: height: 46 cm.; length: 87 cm.; width: 43 cm.

Inventory number: 31165

Provenance: Mytilene

Bouquets with flowers made into garlands decorate the outside of this chest. Inside the lid is pictured a couple in a garden with ripe fruit and oversized flowers. The man, attired in formal island costume, plays a lute while the woman, wearing gold-embroidered garments typical of urban costume, reached out her hand to a flowering rose bush, which is painted at the center of the scene. The scene with the couple is flanked to the right and left with a quince tree and a peach tree.

The depiction of an orchard in full bloom alongside a couple reflects a romantic mood with clear allusions to fertility and prosperity, which were in any case symbolized in art of this period by fruit and flowers.

The chest from Mytilene is one of the most beautiful examples of modern Greek popular painting. In general, such chests constituted a basic part of the furnishings of an early modern Greek house, and their use became widespread in Greece through influence from the Venetian-ruled areas. Chests with painted, carved or inlaid decoration were usually used to store girls' dowries and other valuable objects.

Chests from this period were made by wandering artisans who followed the companies of stone builders who travelled throughout, and beyond, Greece. According to evidence from Venetian-ruled Crete, in the 16th and 17th centuries the decoration of painted chests was executed by specialized artisans.





Museum of Greek Folk Art, Tzisdarakis Mosque, Athens, Exhibition of Modern Greek Ceramics

Ceramic bowl by Nikos Theodorou with a pair of birds en face on the branches of a tree.

Date: second half of the 20th century

Dimensions: 15 cm.

Inventory number: 14947

Provenance: Thessaloniki

Born into a family from Sifnos, the Cycladic island famous for its ceramics, Nikos Theodorou (1923-2005) worked originally in Piraeus and later in Thessaloniki. He became known especially for his Byzantine-style ceramics. A typical example of his work is this small ceramic bowl, decorated with the incised technique used by the Byzantines called 'sgraffito', with white slip and green glaze. Inside the bowl, the elegant shape and simplicity of composition seem to hymn joy of life and love. Here the tree is presented as the natural setting for the sweet coupling of the birds, and thus stands for Nature and for the cycle of life.



Folklore and History Art Museum of Orestiada and Region

Arvanitis costume from Sakkos, Orestiada.

Multi-colored flowers adorn traditional costumes.

**Angelos and Leto Katakouzenos
Foundation, Athens**

Autumn and Summer, from *Four Seasons*, by Nikos Hatzikyriakos-Ghikas (1906-1994).

Date: 1960

Type: oil on wood (mahogany)

Provenance: Angelos and Leto Katakouzenos Foundation Collection

In his work *Four Seasons* painted on four doors of the house of his friends, Angelos and Leto Katakouzenos, Nikos Hatzikyriakos-Ghikas used a studied vocabulary of shapes, colors and subjects to capture the atmosphere of the Greek landscape. On the doors entitled *Autumn* and *Summer*, gentle curves depict Autumn and angular masses portray Summer. The palette of reds and yellows renders the grape harvest and vintage, while white and blue dominate the summer scene. Each season is represented by a tree: the summer by the fig, autumn the grape vine, winter a leafless tree, and summer the almond.





**National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation –
Paxinou-Minotis Museum, Athens**

DUENTE, embroidery by Katina Paximou after a drawing by Federico Garcia Lorca.

Date: winter 1970-71

Dimensions: height: 77 cm.; width: 65 cm.

Provenance: Alexis Minotis bequest

The tree of life, the tree of creativity, the tree of art.
A tree full of life, with fruit, birds, flowers. Taken from

a drawing by Federico Garcia Lorca, the great Greek actress Katina Paxinou chose to embroider this design, to dedicate it to him and to make it her own creation. She called it *Duente*. For Lorca, *Duente* is ‘...a power...a true form, blood, ancient culture, moment of creation...’. Paxinou embroidered it when she was acting in *Blood Wedding*, the winter of 1970-71. The poet’s tree of life was suddenly cut, shot by Franco’s fascists. But its art bears fruit. Poetry, painting, theater... but also responsibility towards one’s fellow man...

*I am sorry I let a broad river slip
through my fingers
without drinking a single drop.
Now I dip into stone.
A small pine tree in the red soil
is all the company I have.
Whatever I loved vanished with the houses
that were new last summer
and crumbled in the autumn wind.*

*Giorgos Seferis, **Mythistorema** 18*



the tree as a landmark

National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Gold Vapheio Cup.

Date: 15th century B.C.

Dimensions: height: 7.8-7.9 cm.; diameter: 10.6-10.7 cm.; weight: 280.5 gr.

Inventory number: 1759, Prehistoric Collection

Provenance: Vapheio, Laconian plain

This scene shows a man capturing a bull in a landscape with olive trees. The tree signifies the landscape and the natural world, without suggesting any particular symbolic meaning.



17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Vergina

Detail from the wall-painting of the hunt from the grave of Philip II (Grave B) at Aeges (Vergina).

Date: second half of the 4th century B.C.

Aeges is located at the heart of Macedonia, in the foothills of Pieria. In antiquity the area was renowned for its thick forests. Such an impressive forest is represented in the wall-painting of the hunt; even today the visitor who wanders a little way from the cities and national highways is also rewarded with the view of beautiful forestland. The gods have always dwelt in forests. Mortals dedicate a piece of themselves, as we see in the strips of cloth which hang from the branches of the tree in the painting. We see these dedications also in the 'tzatzala', or strips of cloth which are still hung on trees which grow near wayside shrines in hidden ravines. Time passes, human beings come and go, their works fade. The tree, with its roots and branches, as long as it exists, will reveal to us the unity of history and place, of humankind and the environment.





17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Pella

Mosaic floor with scene of a female centaur in front of a cave. She holds a flask and drinking cup. Behind her is a schematic representation of a tree.

Date: early 3rd century B.C.

Dimensions: length: 152 cm.; width: 90 cm.

Inventory number: Ψ6

Provenance: Pella. The mosaic decorated the space in front of the threshold of the dining room of a public building (possibly an estiatorion) in the area of the sanctuary of Darron (a local healing god).

In the Pella mosaic, a female centaur stands in front of the Cave of the Nymphs and Dionysos and is ready to offer a libation to the god of wine, a rite which would often have been performed in the dining room whose floor the mosaic adorns.

The cave and tree, not usual elements in the landscape repertoire of this period, are related, on the one hand, to the physical environment of the centaurs, and on the other, to the cult of Dionysos, who as the protector of Nature, plants and trees, was worshiped widely throughout the Greek world, as is testified by his various related epithets: Dendritis, Sykitis, Kissos, Anthios, Fytalmios, all linking him to the world of vegetation.

20th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, New Archaeological Museum of Mytilene

Mosaic floor with a scene of Orpheus enchanting the animals with his lyre.

Date: 3rd century A.D.

Dimensions: mosaic floor: height: 621 cm.; width: 633 cm.; central octagonal scene: height: 150 cm.; width: 148 cm.

Inventory number: NMM 30320

The scene unfolds in a forest, suggested by the rock on which the musician sits and the tree beside him. The mosaic adorns the formal room of the House of Menander in the refugee settlement of Mytilene.



25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Kissamos

Detail of a large Dionysiac mosaic with boar-hunting scene and a tree.

Date: 3rd century A.D.

Provenance: Kissamos, plot of A. Skounakis, 1985

The mosaic is a large work with various hunting episodes related to the god Dionysos, who is triumphantly represented in the central scenes.

In the section illustrated, there appears a leafy tree, which is not necessarily associated with the Cretan landscape, but stands allegorically for the forest in which the hunt is taking place.





25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Kissamos

The mythological Hours; main scene in a mosaic which features the seasons.

Date: second half of the 2nd century A.D.

Dimensions: central scene: height: 92 cm.; width: 92 cm.

Inventory number: M.K. Ψnφ. 9

Provenance: Kissamos, plot of V. Paterakis, 1979

The mosaic, a copy of a lost painting, shows the mythological Hours dancing around a lighted altar which stands at the center. At the right end of the composition

stands a tree with a slender trunk, small branches and leaves resembling the foliage of an olive tree. The tree symbolizes Nature, growth and the fertility of the earth. The Hours suggest the three seasons, according to the classical conception. From left to right appear Spring, Summer and Winter, whereas Autumn is subsumed into summer and winter.

The symbolic language which allows us to recognize the Hours includes color, clothing and the flowers on the head of Spring, who gazes outwards to the viewer. Flower petals have fallen onto her back from her hair.



26th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Church of the Agioi Apostoloi (Holy Apostles), Kalamata

Detail of fresco with scenes from the *Akathistos Hymn*.

Date: early 17th century

Among the many things Byzantium inherited from ancient world were its symbols, to which new content and new meaning, especially soteriological, were given. Thus, trees in Christian worship symbolized salvation and eternal life, and allegorical qualities are attributed to Christ and the Virgin Mary.

As a religious poem, the *Akathistos Hymn* contains allegories and a wealth of symbolic language. The Virgin Mary is likened to a ‘tree blessed with fruit’,

‘shady tree’, ‘tree of life of the Lord’, ‘vine with an undying shoot’, ‘bush that is not consumed by flame’, ‘true vine’. In the hymn’s prologue, the Virgin Mary is depicted as a rod from the tree of Jesse, in other words, a branch in Jesus’ genealogical tree. This depiction can be derived from the fact that the Virgin Mary is proclaimed in the *Akathistos* service as the ‘true vine, that has produced ripe grapes’.

However, trees and plants were not used in Byzantine art only as symbols but could also have a simply decorative character. This is often the case in the first 12 narrative stanzas of the *Akathistos Hymn*, in which trees and bushes are simply part of the landscape where the scenes unfold.

21st Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Byzantine Museum of the Antivouniotissa, Old Fortress, Corfu

'*Noli me tangere*', icon painted by Emmanuel Tzanes.

Date: 1657

Dimensions: height: 91 cm.; width: 71.5 cm.; thickness: 2.5 cm.

The appearance of the Lord to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection is depicted here, in accordance with the *Gospel of John* 20:14-17. The painter follows the iconographic tradition formed by the Cretan School in the 15th century. The garden mentioned by the *Gospel* is represented by the green ground, dotted with small flowers; on the rocky landscape of the background scarce trees are visible.

The tree in Byzantine painting is often used to stand in for the natural world. The landscape functions as a frame in which the figures in the scene act. It is represented schematically by means of rocky masses and sparse vegetation. The trees are rather standardized: slender trunks outlined in gold and branches with golden-green leaves. Only a few types of trees are identifiable in the scenes: olive, cypress, palm, laurel, oak, in other words, the trees that are mentioned in the *Gospels*.

Cretan painters such as Michael Damaskenos and Emmanuel Tzanes, who also worked in Corfu, were influenced by the Italian art of their day, and in their paintings rendered the landscape with greater narrative power and color. Trees are imbued with a remarkable naturalness, while small ornamental plants and flowers light up the ground.



Folklore Museum of Kymi

The engagement, embroidery.

Date: early 20th century

Dimensions: height: 66 cm.; width: 109 cm.

Inventory number: 331

Provenance: Kymi

The two trees offer the ideal frame for the encounter of the young lovers and their engagement is identified with the flowering of springtime.



National Historical Museum, Athens

The battle at Vassilika (26 August 1821).

Concept by Makriyiannis, painting by Panayiotis Zografos

Date: 1836

Type: egg tempera on wood

Dimensions: height: 38.5 cm.; width: 54.2 cm.

Inventory number: 3750 γ

Provenance: gift (1927)

The battle takes place in a rocky landscape in front of a row of trees which seem, through their movement, to join in the action and heighten its intensity.





National Historical Museum, Athens

'Palaska' (gunpowder pouch) of Alexis Christos Zervas.

Date: 1831

Dimensions: height: 10 cm.; width: 13 cm.

Inventory number: EIM 5441

Provenance: gift (1967)

The pouch is decorated with the technique known as 'savati'. The scene which adorns it shows an armed encounter around a tree.



Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki

Shepherd, by Theophilos Hatzimihalis.

Date: unknown

Type: mixed technique

Dimensions: height: 85 cm.; width: 41,3 cm.

Inventory number: 0000.002MM.0683

Provenance: gift of Alexandros and Dorotheas Xydi, 1999

Seated below a tree, a shepherd accompanies his sheep playing the flute.

In this painting by Theophilos, the trees, woven into the man-made environment, offer shade, refuge or relaxation. Beside them people carried out their everyday agricultural activities in pre-industrial societies. The countryside itself is presented as the most natural setting for man's existence, his work and activities.

**Averoff Museum of Neohellenic
Art, Metsovo**

Ravine on Olympus, by Vassileios
Ithakissios (1877-1977)

Date: unknown

Type: oil on canvas

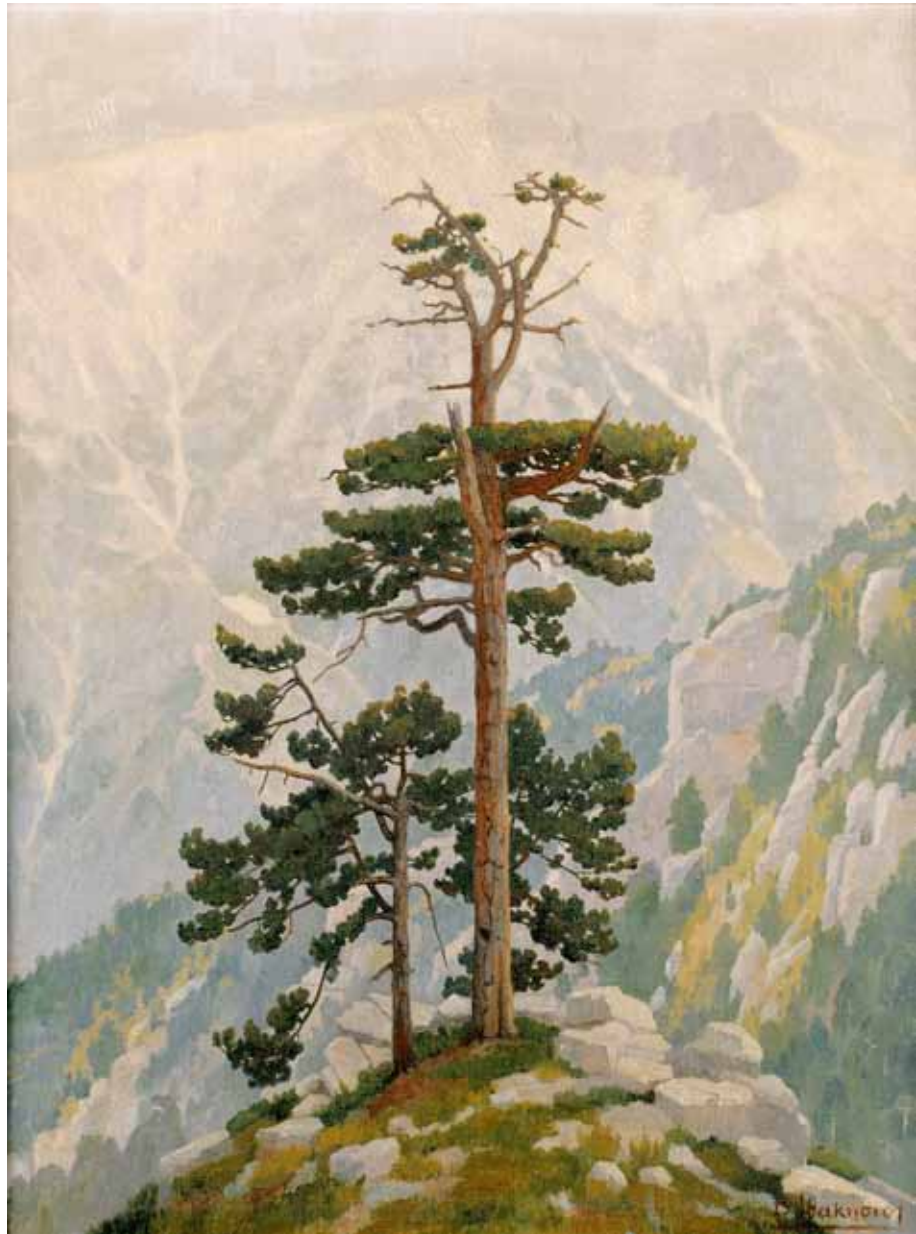
Dimensions: height: 61 cm.;
width: 46 cm.

Inventory number: 114

Provenance: Original Collection
of Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza

From 1928, Vassileios Ithakissios
lived for twenty years in a cave on
Mt Olympus, painting landscapes
and images of rural life. He later
traveled widely throughout Greece.
Abrupt mountainsides, wild crags,
and lightening-struck trees are his
most beloved subjects, and are char-
acterized by realism and precision
in his drawing.

The love and familiarity the art-
ist felt for the natural environment
are obvious in the entire opus of
Ithakissios and this affection is re-
vealed through the exploration and
depiction of the virgin landscape of
Olympus, untouched by humankind.





Averoff Museum of Neohellenic Art, Metsovo

Landscape with trees, by Agenor Asteriadis (1898-1977).

Date: 1924

Type: oil on cardboard

Dimensions: height: 34 cm.; width: 34 cm.

Inventory number: 106

Provenance: Original Collection of Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza

Agenor Asteriadis, an artist on the cutting edge of his time, attempted to fuse in his work the Greek popular tradition, the spirit of Byzantine icon-painting and the teachings of cubism and other trends in the visual arts at the beginning of the 20th century. His work is deeply linked to tradition, but was, for Greece at that time, in the avant-garde. In his work can be detected elements from the post-impressionist painters whom he knew indirectly from the work of his colleagues. In his visual repertoire, we find primarily landscapes and views of cities and villages. In his painting *Landscape with trees* we see space articulated into planes, an anti-naturalistic use of color, and the definition of depth from the juxtaposition of the trees in the first plane. The imposing trees overshadow the buildings in the background, while the shades of blue used to render the mountains blend into those of the sky.



Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki

Simple lessons of perception, by Vassilis Zografos.

Date: 2006

Type: oil on canvas

Dimensions: height: 140 cm.; width: 160 cm.

Inventory number: 2006.235PA.1519

Provenance: gift of Vassilis Zografos

Executed with an iconographical simplicity and a manner which comes close to abstraction, the scene depicted in this work by Vassilis Zografos focuses the viewer's gaze on a single, small tree. Its trunk, the only vertical feature in the composition, refers perhaps to the delicate stalk of a leaf, rendering its entire presence more fragile. However, despite its small form in comparison with the impressive mountainous mass which looms in the background, the lone tree asserts its own presence in the landscape.



Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki

The eagle, by Takis Zerdevas.

Type: slides mounted in a metal construction

Dimensions: height: 200 cm.; width: 130 cm.

Inventory number: 0000.160PHO.1380

Provenance: gift of Takis Zerdevas

Three super-imposed slides in a metal construction make up a simple black and white photograph whose primary focus is the figure of a man in an outdoor setting.

Takis Zerdevas's elegant photographic composition is created by three different slides placed one top of the other, each shifted a few centimeters. At the center of the composition, a man wearing a long overcoat and hat stands still and gazes at the horizon with his back to the viewer. At a distance from the man, the shapes of three isolated trees frame his presence. The actual empty space between the three slides is both aesthetic and functional, as it serves to intensify the feeling of stillness and distance between the man and the trees. Amidst the general feeling of the landscape's disturbed calm, in which no one element of the composition seems to 'converse' with the rest, only the eagle in the middle slide traces out its route and suggests movement.

*And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden
and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

*And out of the ground mad the Lord God to grow every
tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the
tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree
of knowledge of good and evil.*

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden.

Genesis, 2, verses 8-10



the gardens of Paradise



7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Church of Agios Achillios, Fortress of Larissa

A foliate cross from a vaulted tomb in the basilica of Agios Achillios in Larissa.

Date: early Christian period

The basilica of Agios Achillios is identified with the church in which the grave of Agios Achillios was located, and the vaulted tomb at the east end of the basilica's north

aisle has been identified with that of the saint. The walls are decorated with crosses painted in dark red. The crosses adorning the long walls of the tomb are foliate, with shoots and branches springing from their bases and covering the entire surface. The foliate cross flanked by two trees or by branches, buds or vines which spring from its base were favorite decorative motifs in tomb paintings. The foliate cross symbolized paradise and eternity, and from the sixth century constituted a simplified variation on the 'tree of life'.



11th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Church of the Resurrection of Christ, Veroia

Wall-painting with foliate cross.

Date: 1315

The cross appears among the symbols in Byzantine painting from the end of the 2nd century, taking the form of an isosceles cross or a Greek X. From the age of Constantine the Great and after the establishment of Christianity, the cross becomes known as a symbol of triumph and imperial victory, but above all of Christ's dominion over death, something which led to its frequent use as a funerary and apotropaic motif.

From the mid-6th century, the cross appears adorned with leaves. From its base sprout ears of corn and branches from laurel or palm trees, and from this mixture of plant elements is construed the 'tree of life', which ultimately refers to Christ himself. Thus in the middle Byzantine period foliate crosses flanked at their base by two trees, usually cypress or palm trees, are often depicted on funerary monuments. In this way, the image of the cross is linked directly with the burial ceremony in order to remind the faithful of the resurrection of the dead which is brought about by the Christ's death on the cross and his Resurrection.

The foliate cross expresses above all the idea of the cross as a symbol of salvation and of life. It is the 'life-giving', 'life-proffering' wood. In contrast to the 'tree of knowledge', the source of man's original fall, the tree-cross which stands in the New Eden of Jerusalem symbolizes the renewal of life, the triumph of life over death.

8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Byzantine Museum of Ioannina

Part of a chancel slab carved in relief.

Date: 12th century

Dimensions: height: 48 cm.; width: 34 cm.; thickness: 6 cm.

Inventory number: AK 10

Provenance: Glyki, Thesprotia

The panel is decorated with a cross on a stepped base, surrounded by branches with lance-shaped leaves. The foliate cross is a soteriological symbol alluding to paradise.



9th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Crypt of Agios Demetrios, Thessaloniki

Fragment of the long side of a pseudo-sarcophagus.

Date: 11th or 12th century

The sarcophagus is decorated with arches spanning foliate crosses of different types which stand on three-stepped bases. On the right is pictured a tree whose trunk is entwined by a snake. The motif symbolizes the 'life-giving wood', the salvation of humankind through the cross.

In addition to animals, both real and imaginary, we find depicted on sarcophagi serpents, mainly snakes, wrapped around tree trunks, salamanders in combination with peacocks, and snakes torn apart by eagles.

In this sarcophagus' decoration, snakes, together with the palm trees around which they twine, are symbols of paradise. The tree is the 'tree of life' and the snake, Satan, who provoked the fall of Adam and Eve, and their banishment from the Garden of Eden.





11th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Church of the Resurrection of Christ, Veroia

Wall-painting with scene of Crucifixion.

Date: 1315

The central part of the scene is occupied by the Cross on which the figure of Christ is pictured with outstretched arms slightly bent at the elbows. His head has dropped onto his chest and his body is slumped. To the right and left of Jesus stand the Mother of God with two women (Mary Magdalene and Mary of Clopas) on one side, and John and Longinus the centurion on the other. All have their gaze turned towards the Crucified One, and to the right and left of the cross on the upper register appear the cosmic symbols of the sun and moon. The 'honorable wood' of the Cross, understood as the 'wood of immortality' thanks to the Savior of humankind, symbolizes the 'tree of life' and, by extension, Christ himself.

8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Byzantine Museum of Ioannina

Icon of Agioi Pantes (All Saints) - detail from the depiction of paradise.

Date: 18th century

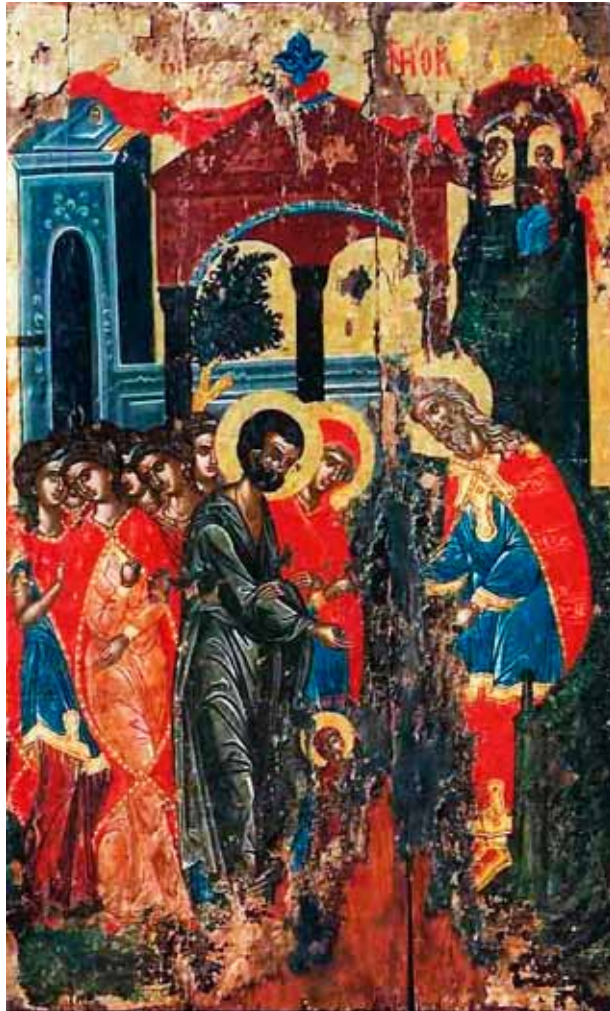
Dimensions: height: 74 cm.; width: 50 cm.

Inventory number: AK AΓΙΑ 1

Provenance: Holy Church of Agia Paraskevi, Agia, Preveza

The scene depicted is the Second Coming with the Righteous flanking the Lord, the Mother of God and Saints Constantinos and Eleni, arranged in four rows. Paradise is pictured at the lower register, in the middle of which sits Abraham, surrounded by lush fruit-bearing trees and holding the souls of men in his bosom.





11th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Byzantine Museum of Verroia

Entrance of the Mother of God in the Temple, portable icon by an anonymous painter (Anonymous A).

Date: 1565-1570

Provenance: Agios Nikolaos, parish of Agios Antonios

At the center of the icon appears the Mother of God with her parents before the righteous Zacharias. A distinctive feature in the iconography is the rendering of a leafy tree on a low wall which unifies the architectural elements in the background. It could be interpreted simply as the artist's attempt to fill the empty space behind the main figures ('horror vacui'). However, at a different level, we could perhaps relate the iconographical element of the tree to a homily by Saint Gregory Palamas on the occasion of the Marian feast of the Entrance into the Temple, where he describes the Mother of God as a fruit-bearing tree, basing himself on the passage from the *Gospel of Matthew* 7.17: 'If the tree is recognized by the fruit and the good tree also produces good fruit, the mother of goodness, the bearer of eternal beauty, wouldn't she be incomparable to every good thing both earthly and heavenly for her goodness and beauty?' In this context, the leafy tree could be understood to symbolize the 'tree of life', that is, the Virgin Mary who brought into the world the God-Man and Savior of the world.



19th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Roussanou Monastery, Meteora

Wall-painting with the Virgin Mary between two angels.

Date: 1560

The Roussanou Monastery owes its name, in all likelihood, to the rock's first inhabitant, or the founder of the old church (14th-15th century), while the monastery acquired its present form when the brothers and monk-

priests from Ioannina, Ioassaf and Maximos, restored the old katholikon, or main church, in 1527-1529.

The wall-paintings in the katholikon date to 1560 and were executed by an accomplished artist, whose name is lost, working in the style and technique distinctive to the Cretan School. In the background of the scene with the Virgin Mary between two angels is a row of trees which symbolize the purity of the Virgin, from whom without sowing and cultivation sprang Christ.



19th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Agios Nikolaos Anapafsas Monastery, Meteora

Wall-painting with Agios Christophoros, by Theophanes Strelitzas (Bathas).

Date: 1527

The Agios Nikolaos Anapafsas Monastery owes its name either to the original founder who climbed the rock in the early 14th century, or to an etymological association with the verb 'to rest' (αναπαύομαι), in which case Anapafsa ought to signify the place of rest after the difficult ascent to the monastery.

The monastery underwent radical renovation during the first decade of the 16th century. The wall-paintings date to 1527 and were executed by the famous Cretan painter, Theophanes Strelitzas, also known as Bathas, and are the oldest work under the name of this great artist, the first representative of the Cretan School. One of the most interesting paintings is that of Agios Christophoros (Saint Christopher) in the monastery katholikon. The saint offered to help the young Christ across a river. As sign of the infant's divine nature, as soon as Christ climbed onto the saint's shoulders, his wooden walking stick began to sprout leaves.

8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Philanthropinon Monastery, Island of Ioannina

Wall-painting showing the Wise Virgins in Paradise.

Date: The monastery of Agios Nikolaos Philanthropinon was founded in the 13th century. The wall-paintings of the western exo-narthex are dated to 1560.



8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Philanthropinon Monastery, Island of Ioannina

Wall-painting depicting the story of Adam and Eve.

Date: The wall-paintings of the north exonarthex belong to the third phase of painting at the Philanthropinon Monastery (1560).

The scene adorns the south side of the north exonarthex of the main church, or katholikon, of the monas-

tery of Agios Nikolaos Philanthropinon on the Island of Ioannina. On the left appears the creation of Adam and on the right that of Eve. The scene is elaborated with the Transgression of Adam and Eve, the symbol of the snake, and the Banishment from Paradise.

Christianity is inseparably connected with Nature because of the scriptures' numerous references to the symbolism of the tree, which have passed into the realm of art.



19th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Barlaam Monastery, Meteora

Modern wall-painting of the creation of the world.
The Barlaam monastery was inhabited, according to tradition, in the mid-14th century by the hermit Barlaam,

to whom the monastery owes its name. The space which functions as the narthex of the chapel of the Three Hierarchs is covered with modern wall-paintings. A striking representation on the ceiling shows the creation of the world and includes the inscription from *Genesis* 1:11: ‘And the Lord said ‘Let the earth bring forth with grass... and the fruit tree’.

*Our footsteps still echo
in the forest with the buzz of insects
and the heavy drops from the hoarfrost
which drips on the leaves of the trees
and there in the caves where
the sound of each blow of the woodcutters resounds
as they thin the tree trunks with their axes
holding in their mouths songs
which they learned when they were children
playing hide and seek in the forest.*

*Andreas Embeirikos, **Echo***



the vulnerable tree



26th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Piraeus

Red-figure lekythos with the rare scene of a wood-cutter.

Date: 430-420 B.C.

Dimensions: height: 23.5 cm.; diameter of base: 5.5 cm.; diameter of rim: 4.2 cm.; max. diameter of body: 7.5 cm.

Inventory number: 7073

Provenance: Found in a pyre during excavations in 1938 in the private plot of the Yiannakoupoulos family in Gourni, Vari.

The man wearing a short chiton and pilos hat who is shown cutting a tree with an axe could be either a simple wood-cutter, or some mythological character. But it cannot be excluded that this scene refers to some event contemporary with the vase, such as the destruction of the countryside of Attica by the Peloponnesians.

Epigraphical Museum, Athens

Stele of Pentelic marble. The upper section of the stele has a mutilated relief carving, the outline of which shows a bearded man, seated and holding a scepter, and a horseman wearing a chlamys.

Date: 418/7 B.C.

Catalogue number: EM 10616 =IG I³ 84

Dimensions: 149 cm.; width: 60 cm.; thickness: 19 cm.

By vote it was decided to enclose and lease the sacred precinct of the sanctuaries of Kodros, Neleos and Basile. According to the terms of the lease, the renter was obliged to plant at least 200 olive trees in the sacred precinct and construct a fence to protect the ground from water coming in from the neighboring area. The enforcement of olive planting in the sacred enclosure suggests the city's disposition to increase the sanctuary's income through olive cultivation, rather than resorting to the easy solution of cutting trees.



Epigraphical Museum, Athens

Stele of Pentelic marble with pediment. Lower part damaged.

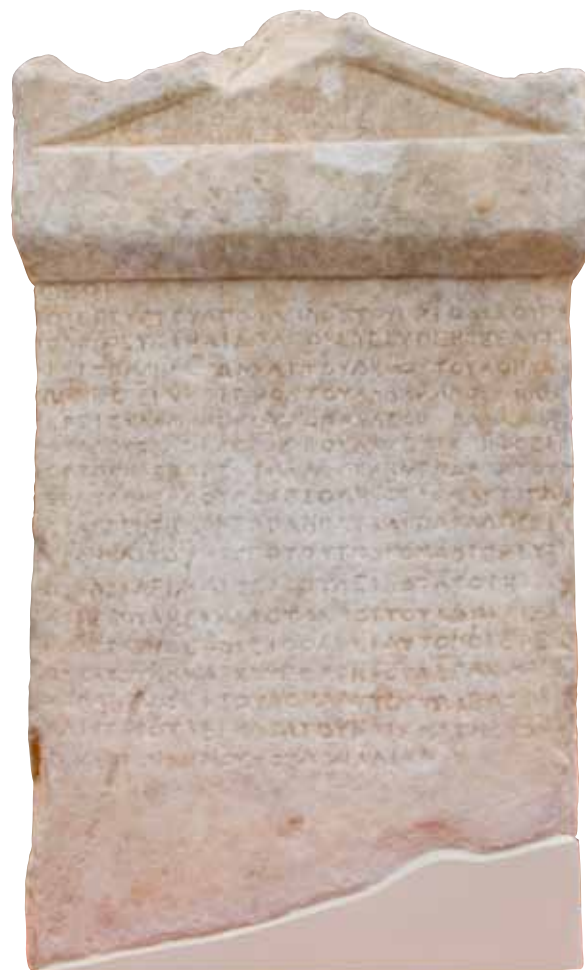
Date: late 4th century

Dimensions: height: 38 cm.; width: 21 cm.; thickness: 5.2 cm.

Inventory number: EM7990 = IG II²1362

Provenance: found at Kamatero, north of Liossia

The stele records the edict of a priest of Apollo Erithaseos concerned with the ban on illegal cutting and transport of trees from the sanctuary precinct and the imposition of a fine on transgressors according to their social rank. The punishment imposed is indicative of the importance given in antiquity to temple property. Of particular interest is the use of the word 'kouros', or youth, to indicate in this instance green branches, which leads by association to the likening of a tree to a human being.



34th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Karditsa

The charred tree in this exhibition at the Archaeological Museum of Karditsa symbolically presents the natural disaster of the fire in the grove of the Panthessalian Sanctuary of Itonian Athena at Filia, and at the same time shows the probable fashion in which sacred dedications were suspended from trees, a custom which persists still today.



Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki

Modern work of art by Kostas Tsoklis entitled *Dedication to Alexandros Iolas*. Tree trunk crushed by a large, rectangular lead plaque.

Exhibited in the museum courtyard.

Date: 1988

Dimensions: 160 x 830 cm. and 5 cm. x 572 cm. x 382 cm.

Inventory number: 1988.044IN.1033 (Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art)

Provenance: gift of I. Boutaris and Son (Holding) A.E.

A tree trunk crushed by a large, rectangular lead plaque. The roots are covered with the same malleable metal, whose texture resembles that of wood. On the surface of the plaque is carved a passage from the *Book of Revelation*.

The crushed tree could blossom again only with conscientious and prolonged effort to preserve it.

Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki

Arbre sec, by Vladimir Velickovic.
Date: 1994-1995
Type: oil on canvas
Dimensions: height: 214 cm.;
width: 156 cm.
Inventory number:
1995.202PA.0614
Provenance: gift of Vladimir
Velickovic, 1996

The work *Arbre sec (Dry tree)* belongs to a series of landscapes from the 1990s. The painting's main subject is a burnt tree, whose trunk and branches recall bare bones. The cross-shaped tree is watered with blood. Its striking anthropomorphic features lend the tree a sense of movement, as does its diagonal arrangement across the canvas. Dark and dramatic colors augment the oppressive, terrifying atmosphere in this landscape where nothing else survives and all that is left is parched and uninhabited. The absence of light and a horizon underline the hopeless ravaging of Nature and life.





7th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Ancient Olympia

Olive trees around the Stadium.

The olive trees which were burned in the forest fire at Olympia in August 2007 sent forth their first shoots only two months afterwards. Having survived the disaster, they remind those who lived through the tragic event of Nature's constant battle against annihilation. By association, the witness to this renewal is made aware of the reason why the olive branch in bloom was chosen from antiquity to the present day as a symbol of the victory of life.

*He fell, as when an oak goes down, or a white poplar,
or like a towering pine tree which in the mountains the carpenters
have hewn down with their whetted axes to make a ship-timber.*

*Homer, **Iliad**, 16.482-484*



wood

29th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Florina

Storage jars from the Early Bronze Age. Ceramics – construction technique. Habitations – construction materials. Stone – bone tools. Clay idols.

Date: 5300-1600 B.C.

The prehistoric settlement of Armenochori was inhabited almost without interruption for 3.5 millennia, from 5300 to 1600 B.C. Scientific excavation has brought to light private habitations built from the trunks and branches of trees, clay, mud and other organic materials, a fact which demonstrates the dependence of humankind on his physical environment at that time. The foundations of the houses consist of upright poles which are held together by beams and faced with branches, wattle and daub, and covered with a gable roof.





9th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Schimatari

Stone column or pilaster with scene of ships.

Dimensions: height: 67 cm.; width 42 cm.; thickness: 57 cm.

Material: porous stone

Inventory number: ΜΣ 2035

Provenance / Date: The column comes from the cemetery dating to the Middle Helladic III-Late Helladic II period (1600-1400 B.C.) discovered in 1946 near the modern settlement of Paralia Avlidas (Dramesi), which has been identified with the Homeric city of Hyria. Carved on one side is a scene of three ships with a steersman's cabin on deck, a rudder and a mast.

Ships played an important role in trade and in the movement of populations in the Aegean already from the prehistoric period. There are signs of commercial relations and the use of small boats in the Aegean in the Neolithic period, while trade clearly flourished in the Cyclades in the 3rd millennium B.C., when the first depictions of ships appear in art. The Minoans, and subsequently the Myceneans, were the leaders in navigation in the region during the 2nd millennium B.C. Their ships can be distinguished as those used for trade and those for war. The latter were longer and narrower, in order to maximize flexibility, whereas the cargo ships were wider with a deep hull. They were made of wood, mainly pine and oak, and less often cedar.



Wooden section of the hull of a shipwreck off Antikythera (c. 80 B.C.), which was found and brought up in 1900-01 by sponge divers from the island of Symi.

Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities

Navigation in the Aegean region is attested already from the 7th millennium B.C. All the political powers which held sway in the Mediterranean region from antiquity to the present day – Minoans, Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Franks, Venetians, Ottomans – depended on ships of trade and ships of war.

From the moment man took to the water, with even the most primitive means, such as rafts and dug-out canoes, wood was the only material which could dominate the hostile seas. The trees which provided the raw material

were those which can still be found around Mediterranean shores today: pine, cypress, oak, olive and cedar. It is estimated that a ship 13 m. by 16 m., which would have a carrying capacity of 60-65 tons, would have required roughly 15-18 cubic meters of wood. Wooden ships are estimated to last some 50-60 years. Thus, entire forests of trees were cleared in antiquity, and did not grow back in every case, with the result that the ancient forested landscapes were transformed into bare rocky ones, such as are found in the Cyclades and Crete. Evidence for this perennial process can be seen today underwater, in the form of the hulls and fittings of shipwrecks.



Thessaloniki Science Center and Technology Museum

Model of a trireme. Research has shown that a trireme had a length of 33 m., width of 4.80 m., draught 0.6 - 0.8 m., 2 rows of rowers and a crew of 50 rowers and 10 sailors.

Date: 2001 (model)

Dimensions: height: 47 cm.; length: 74 cm.; width: 23 cm.

Inventory number: T.M.Θ. 01983

Provenance: gift of I. Kardimis

Large forested areas were exploited for the construction of ships. Ship-building was highly important to the ancient Greeks, and required large quantities of wood. Ships were often the sole means of transporting both people and goods. The best known ship from Greek antiquity was the trireme, which prevailed in the eastern Mediterranean for more than 10 centuries.



Oinoussian Maritime Museum

Chest of a ship-carpenter with tools, including saws, hatchets, mallets, planes etc.

Date: 19th century

Dimensions: length of the chest: 100 cm.; width: 60 cm.

Provenance: gift of N.S. Lemos

Ship-builders and ship-carpenters contributed to the development of navigation on the island of Oinoussa. They learned the craft of ship-building on Syros where they had taken refuge after the massacre of 1822. This turn to the sea and engagement with occupations related to it had a definitive impact on Oinoussa's development. The sea gave life to the bare island. Trees became ships and men, once farmers and shepherds, sailors.

19th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Abdera

Attic red-figure hydria, used as a funerary urn. Decorated with a scene from women's quarters.

Date: 430-420 B.C.

Dimensions: height: 37 cm.; diameter of base: 13.5 cm.; diameter of mouth: 33.5 cm.

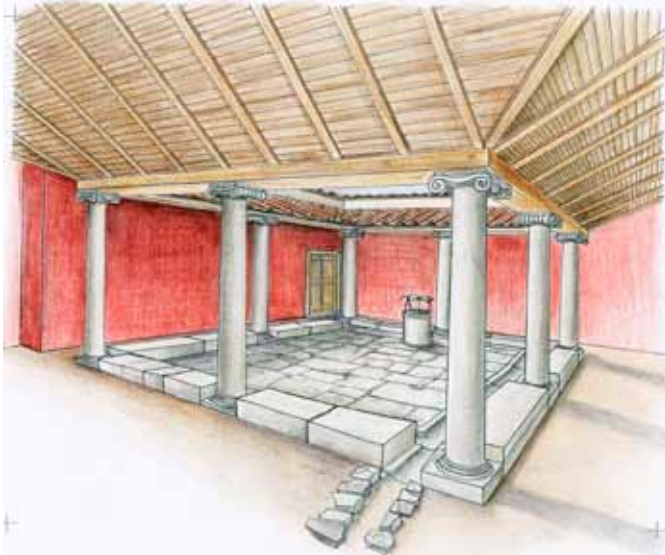
Inventory number: MA 5982

Provenance: ancient cemetery of Abdera

Valuable information concerning the shape of ancient furniture and other household objects can be gleaned from vase decoration. On this vase we see a female figure seated on a 'klismos' while a standing female figure to the left is shown holding onto a 'kibotidion'. The 'klismos' was a light, elegant chair usually unadorned, with a curved back and curved legs, but without arms. Less luxurious than the 'thronos', it was a distinctively Greek creation.

All houses had furniture used for storage. Clothing and bedding were placed in large chests, known as 'kibotia', funerary gifts and valuable objects were kept in medium-sized chests, while small ones, the size of a casket, were used for storing jewelry. There were metal boxes which imitated wooden ones; a typical example is the gold 'larnax' of Vergina. A basic material in the construction of ancient furniture was wood, which was abundant, especially in the region of Northern Greece: cypress, olive, beech, walnut, elm and many others.





19th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Abdera

One of the best preserved habitations in the southern enclosure of Abdera. Architecturally, it belongs to a type which was very common there, with a central courtyard and surrounding stoa, off which opened the rooms.

The reconstructive drawing of the courtyard is by Maria Miza, architect of the 16th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities.

Date: Hellenistic–Imperial Roman periods (4th century B.C.–4th century A.D.)

Although the preserved remains emphasize the use of stone in Greek architecture, a significant role was also played by wood, which served as a basic material in the construction of habitations. The reconstruction shows the wooden roof which covered the stoa and the wooden door which led to one of the rooms of the house. Wood was used for framework, doors, windows, floors, roofs, railings, stairs etc. Oak was usually used for the construction of columns and thresholds, pine or fir for ceilings and floors, cedar for stairs and doors, while cypress was favored for roofs. Literary sources also suggest a limited use of elm, olive, walnut, and beech.





39th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Tripolis

Bowl-shaped wooden vessels, each one carved from a piece of wood. Constructed from wood without knots, probably oak, hewn by hand without the use of any other instrument such as a lathe.

Date: early Hellenistic period (3rd century B.C.)

Dimensions: height of bowl a: 14 cm.; b: 21.5 cm.; c: 14 cm.

Inventory numbers: 2684, 2685, 2686

Provenance: Megalopolis

These bowl-shaped vessels were found during the

course of excavation in an ancient well in the area of Megalopolis. Given their shape and dimensions, the vessels were probably not designed for use at table, or for transporting or storing liquids. Instead, they were most likely used for decanting liquids, as is suggested by their spouts.

According to ancient literary sources, wooden vessels were used mainly by farmers and shepherds. Only very few of these ancient wooden vessels have come down to us in Greece, a fact owed to climatic conditions as well as to the decreased durability of wood over time. The superb state of preservation of the wooden bowls in the museum at Tripolis makes them unique.



Museum of Greek Folk Art, Annex, Panos Street 22, Athens, Temporary exhibition 'People and tools. Views of work in a pre-industrial society'

Small saw for pruning trees.
Date: second half of the 20th century.
Dimensions: 34 cm. x 7 cm.
Inventory number: 16130
Provenance: Agios Konstantinos, Aigion



'Stone hoe'. Hoe for ground clearing. Heavy construction to endure the hard ground and stones of the Mani where it was used.
Date: 20th century
Dimensions: 28 cm. x 8 cm.
Inventory number: 16802
Provenance: Mani



Metal rake for the collection of olives. With this rake, olive-pickers 'comb' the branches of the olive tree so that the olives fall to the ground.
Date: 20th century
Dimensions: 20 cm. x 12 cm.
Inventory number: 17017
Provenance: Mani

Man invented and adapted for his use a range of techniques and tools for tending trees, showing in this way his care for them, as well as his sense of reciprocity towards them.

The three tools on display in the 'People and tools' exhibition at the Museum of Greek Folk Art were used for digging around and planting trees, pruning their branches and harvesting their fruit.



Folklore and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia and Thrace, Thessaloniki

Functional model of a water-powered saw, exhibition space '*At the mills of Macedonia and Thrace: watermills in traditional society*'

Date: constructed in 2003 for the exhibition

Dimensions: height: 280 cm.; width: 350 cm. (in a ratio of 1: ½)

Inventory number: 03.32.1

The water-powered saw with a water wheel was a semi-permanent installation in pre-industrial society. It was constructed entirely of wood by the woodcutters and used from springtime to autumn. This machine

enjoyed great popularity already from the Renaissance and, in the Balkans, especially in the 19th century. It was very widely used in Greece, manned by crews who kept their trade a secret, working deep in forests, far from their families. Woodcutting, whether in the form of thinning, clearing or some other method of forest exploitation, has for centuries provided man with the priceless raw material, wood, which was, and is, used for the construction of houses, ships, furniture and implements. It was also the material used for the first tools made by humans, as well as that with which they built huts to live in, rafts by which to cross rivers, and fires to warm themselves and make the transition from raw to cooked food.



Kairios Library, Agadakis Pyrgos, Andros

On Andros, the old mansions are known as pyrgoi or 'towers'. The Agadakis pyrgos in Apatouria is a building from the 18th century which may have replaced an older one at the same location. It was located in a garden of roughly 1.5 acres with two wells and a traditional olive press. In the photograph are pictured 'thrinakia', farming tools used for threshing wheat.

Dimensions: length: 143 cm.

Inventory numbers: 1991.60, 1991.80, 1992.57.

Provenance: gifts



Aitoloakarnania Folklore Museum, Agrinio

Trough for kneading bread cut from a tree trunk.

Provenance: area of Agrinio, Aitoloakarnania



Ivy and bindweed wound their way around some of the massive trees; the bindweed clung to the plane tree by a soft filigree of tendrils, while the ivy spiraled intimately among the pine boughs. This symbiosis provided support for the ivy and ivy wreaths of honor for the tree.

*Achilles Tatius, **Leucippe and Clitophon**, 1.15*



historic trees and gardens

Museum of Dionysios Solomos and Eminent Zakynthians

The tree on Strani Hill, by Panos Zoupanos.

Date: 1961

Type: charcoal on paper

Provenance: gift of the artist to the Museum, 1972

The drawing depicts the tree in whose shade Dionysios Solomos wrote the *Hymn to Freedom* in May 1823.



Archaeological Society at Athens – 25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Zominthos

The site of Zominthos, located on Mount Psiloreitis at an altitude of 1187 m., preserves its pre-Hellenic name which dates back to the Minoan period. Set in a small, upland plain of exceptional natural beauty and with plentiful water, the 16th-century B.C. Minoan settlement which came to light here boasts a central building with a surface area of 1600 sq. m. in a uniquely impressive state of preservation.

The importance of Zominthos lies precisely in its location. Theophrastes and countless subsequent travelers extolled the flora of this landscape, unblemished still today, at the heart of Psiloreitis. Thanks to study of the vegetal remains brought to light by archaeologists, we know that the Minoan landscape was thick with maples, oaks, holm oaks, pines, cedars, wild plum and hazelnut trees, as well as with types of flowers belonging to the Compositae families. Analysis has also shown that the Minoans cultivated grains and legumes, such as vetch and a type of pea. From the 1980s, with the help of the multi-university program '*Creation of an archaeological park on Psiloreitis*', there has been a systematic attempt to study, upgrade and promote not only the varieties of structural environmental features which have remained constant over time on the upland plain and in the area more generally, but first and foremost the varieties of natural environmental features. The vegetation has been upgraded and the area is once again forested. Now, as in the past, one finds alongside the maples, holm oaks, cypresses and hawthorns, fruit-bearing trees such as cherries, pomegranates, apples, pears and walnuts – the realization of modern sustainable development.

Within the archaeological site a natural treasure of striking dimensions commands attention: it is a perennial tree, a hawthorn, or 'crataegus' according to its ancient scientific name. So great is its importance that the tree has been declared a Monument of Nature.



The 'trikokkia' or hawthorn tree (*Crataegus Oxyacantha*) of Zominthos



25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Armenoi

The Minoan cemetery of Armenoi is located south of the city of Rethymno and spreads over a low rising known as Prinokephalo, literally 'head of holm oak'. This is the largest cemetery from the Late Minoan III A-B period (c.1390-1190 B.C.) with 227 graves discovered at present, all of them stone tomb chambers, and one with a stone dome.

This precious archaeological site was discovered in the only forest of cultivated oaks which survives in Rethymno.

Its survival in the Armenoi cemetery is not accidental, but is the consequence of the preservation of the natural environment through the protection and development of our cultural heritage. Archaeological, archaeometric and osteological study of the grave findings have led to the conclusion that the Minoans buried here were part of a community based on animal husbandry and home industry. Thanks to the many ways in which it could be put to use, the oak tree from antiquity was connected with every form of human production and was considered by many peoples a sacred tree, interwoven with their own history and fate.



1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Ancient Agora of Athens – Museum of the Stoa of Attalos

In the ancient Greek world, Nature and the natural environment were divinized and worshiped, hymned by poets, served as inspiration for artists, and influenced both public and private life. Mythology, religion, customs, and everyday reality all tied man intimately to life-giving Nature. This relationship can be discerned in many of the objects exhibited in the Museum of the Stoa of Attalos, and in monuments in the archaeologi-

cal site of the Ancient Agora. The verdant site of the Ancient Agora at the historic center of Athens is the clearest witness to the harmonious co-existence of the natural environment and the ancient monuments. In the 1950s the American School of Classical Studies planted the area with trees and plants belonging primarily to Greek varieties, and it has become a refuge for a large number of birds and small animals, and offering an oasis of culture and Nature to the modern capital. The visitor to the Ancient Agora walks in the historic birthplace of democracy, and at the same time enjoys one of the last bastions of green in Attica.



The pomegranate tree planted in the forecourt of the Archaeological Museum of Eleusis as part of the celebration of the campaign 'Environment and Culture 2008', is a reminder to visitors of the mythology related to the cult of Demeter and Persephone.

3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Eleusis

The fertile meadow of Thriasios was the scene of one of the most famous stories in Greek mythology: the seizing of Persephone by Pluto.

The description of the meadow in the oldest narration of the myth, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (7th century B.C.) is enchanting. Kore (as Persephone is also known) was playing with the Nymphs of Ocean, 'gathering pomegranates, crocuses and flowers, and beautiful violets in the delicate meadow'. Distinguished among the flowers was the fragrant narcissus, thanks to which Pluto managed to lure Kore away from her companions.



On the architrave of the Small Propylaea (1st century B.C.-1st century A.D.) of the Eleusinian sanctuary of Demeter are depicted flowers and ears of corn, the precious gifts of the goddess.

The rest of the story is well-known. Demeter, distraught and enraged, keeps the earth sterile until a compromise solution is found: Persephone would spend a third of the year in the dark kingdom of Hades and the rest with her mother. With her return to the upper world, the earth flowers and bears fruit.

The worship of a goddess of vegetation is obviously older than the hymn and probably pre-Hellenic. The organized version of the cult, the Eleusinian Mysteries, was originally linked with guaranteeing the earth's fertility and in particular an ample grain harvest, which was highly-prized in Attica. Later, man's awe of the growth cycle and the recurrent seasons was associated with the desire for happiness in the present life and hope for the afterlife.



2nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Rhamnous

The archaeological site of Rhamnous with its famous temple of Nemesis and the acropolis where the military guard of the Athenians was stationed, according to the most persuasive theory, owes its name to the variety 'rhamnus graeca' (stone buckthorn), which grows along the shores of northeastern Attica.

The visitor to Rhamnous may investigate a typical specimen of 'rhamnus' as he enters the archaeological site by the main entrance and about 50 m. to the left of the guard house as well as on the path between the ancient city and the acropolis.

'Rhamnus' belongs to a genus of plants of the rhamnoides family which includes some one hundred types, native to temperate and tropical lands. They are trees and bushes which tend to be thorny, and they are all toxic, used for dyes and medicines.

Their fruits are small, round, red berries.

6th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Roman Bridge at Patras

The two-arched bridge at Patras is one of the best-preserved bridges in the Greek world.

The bridge was part of the Roman public road, or 'via publica', which linked Patras with Aegio, and was constructed during the 4th century A.D. over the Kallinaos River, known today as the Meilichos. This last piece of information was provided by an inscription, now lost, which refers to the construction of the bridge at the end of the 2nd-3rd century A.D. Towards the south a smaller bridge with a single arch is discernable, which was in use from the 1st to the 2nd century A.D.

Today the river flows c.100 m. further south and its banks are covered with many trees and hydrophilous plants, including plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*), osiers (*Vitex agnus-castus*), laurel trees (*Laurus nodilis*), oleanders (*Nerium oleander*), Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*), olives (*Olea europaea*) and myrtles (*Myrtus communis*). These trees are common features of the Greek natural world, and are associated with its mythology and traditions.



17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of the Acropolis of Ancient Edessa

The archaeological site of Edessa is distinguished by its lush natural environment fed by the constant flow of the Edessaïos River. The potential of the site contributed to its uninterrupted inhabitation already from pre-historic times.

At the entrance to the archaeological site stands a tree which is typical of the area, the 'cercis' or 'Judas tree'.

In the excavated area inside the south gate, beyond the central road and side roads, we encounter buildings with a variety of uses. From the inscriptions and other excavated finds it is known that weather gods were worshiped in the ancient city, such as Zeus Hypsistos, and also fertility gods, such as Dionysos, Sabazios and Artemis Agrotera, whose protection guaranteed the inhabitants' prosperity. Correspondingly, in late antiquity it is known that oil, bread and wine were associated with Christian cult in the basilical churches which have been identified in the church of Agios Nikolaos, below the Monastery of the Agia Triada and outside the north wall.

Finally, following a Nature-lovers' path we come to the monumental wall of ancient Edessa and enjoy the beauty of Nature. Cherry, peach, apricot, walnut and fig trees, climbing grapes and even olive trees continue to be cultivated from antiquity and to provide a source of wealth. There are also self-seeding wild trees and bushes, such as plane trees, jujube trees, blackberries and, especially, the elder tree. Archaeological research has shown that the white flowers and fruit of the elder tree were used, already from 6000 B.C., as a therapeutic plant or a sought-after dietary supplement.



Two of the trees which have grown up in the archaeological site of Edessa: the Judas tree and the elder tree.





30th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Site of Aiane

The ancient city of Aiane is surrounded on the south and southeast by the Hantakas, a branch of the Aliakmon River. The river banks are overgrown with perennial plane trees. Their roots hold ancient objects which are from time to time dragged from the extensive archaeological site of Aiane by the force of the river.

At these concentrations of antiquities along the plane tree forest have been found fragments of pots from different periods, spear heads, intact funerary vases washed

down from graves in the East Cemetery. Today, the visitor can stroll around the plane tree forest of Hantakas, follow ancient tracks and enjoy the beauty of the physical environment, even quench his thirst at ancient springs.

The willows in the archaeological site of Aiane are associated with primordial springs of water located southwest of the cemetery. Together with the ancient spring, the trees offered a resting place for the inhabitants of Aiane on their way to Kozani and the neighboring villages to the north.

Today, beneath these same trees, excavators and visitors to the site still pause to rest.

**23rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and
Classical Antiquities, Archaeo-
logical Site of Gortyn**

Ancient column inside an olive
trunk.

Early Byzantine period (?)

The column is located next to
the archaeological site of Gortyn,
at the probable site of the Classi-
cal Agora. The olive tree grew up
and embraced the column within
its trunk.





1st Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Pavlos Kountouriotis Mansion, Hydra

The mansions of Hydra, irrefutable witnesses to the island's economic prosperity at the end of the 18th century, impress the visitor with their striking height, stolidity and dignity.

Most of them were more or less autonomous residential units, organized so as to cover all the needs of the family members and personnel: they had ovens, cisterns for gathering water, flower and vegetable gardens, and even a chapel within the enclosed grounds.

The outdoor areas were decorated with marble fountains and covered with rare flowers and plants brought to the island by the owners who acquired them on their

distant journeys. It is worth noting that, according to contemporary sources, the Hydriots even transported earth from the Peloponnese in order to create their gardens.

With the island's harsh physical beauty as its frame, the Pavlos Kountouriotis Mansion, square in form and imposing in character, dominates an area of pine trees. The main building is constructed on three levels and there are utility rooms, courtyards and a garden surrounded by a high enclosure wall. Special care was taken with regard to the surroundings during the conversion of the historic building to a museum by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the work was executed in the light of a phytotechnological study, in order to recreate and reconfigure the garden with the plants which would have grown there during the period of Admiral Kountouriotis.

8th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archeological Site of Palaiopolis - Mon Repos Estate, Corfu

The vegetation in the park of the Mon Repos Estate, and the variety of the natural terrain in combination with the human material interventions in the park, both ancient and more recent, have all joined to create an ensemble which is unparalleled in its physical beauty and exceptional for its cultural importance. The rich vegetation includes olive trees, cedars, maples, smilax, laurel trees, araucarias, pines, magnolias, cactus, palm trees and many more plants and trees, both indigenous and exotic, which were planted in the park during the period of the British Protectorate (1814-1864), having been brought from the British colonies in Africa and Southeast Asia. Already from the 19th century, travellers were enchanted by the unique beauty of the place, and spoke of the park in the most flattering of terms, comparing it to 'the gardens of the mythological kingdom of Alcinooos'. Indeed, the famous French philhellene, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, calls the gardens of Mon Repos 'Eden'.

Of special interest is the collection of water colors by the English Painter Felicity Baxter, drawing on the plant life of Corfu. Her work is exhibited in the atrium of the Museum. Corfu's intense changes of color, its vivid greens, the gorgeous blue of the sea and the lighter palate of blues of the sky were a source of inspiration for the English painter and botanist, who studied the variety of the island's vegetation with great care and showed a special sensitivity in her artistic renderings.



*New Caledonia
pine (Araudaria
heterophylla)
at Mon Re-
pos Estate*



*Watercolors by Felic-
ity Baxter, based on
the flora of Corfu*



Directorate of Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Monuments, Zappeion Garden, Athens

The garden of the Zappeion Megaron was designed by Theophilus Hansen, who in the same period planned the Zappeion Megaron itself. The first trees were planted in the garden in 1857. In 1888, planting continued according to plans drawn up by the French engineer Quellenec with the architect E. Maton, whose designs for the flower beds were inspired by the garden of Versailles, and the head gardener A. Schmidt as consultants.

The Zappeion garden is home to a large number of works created by the most important sculptors from the Neo-Classical movement in Greece and constitutes, as such, an outdoor sculpture museum from the 19th and early 20th century. The sculptures are harmoniously fitted into the natural environment of the garden so as to form an inseparable ensemble with it.

The work of Yiorgos Dimitriadis, *Satyr on a rock*, adorns the entrance to the garden of the Zappeion Megaron from Leoforos Amalias.



Directorate of Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Monuments, National Garden, Athens

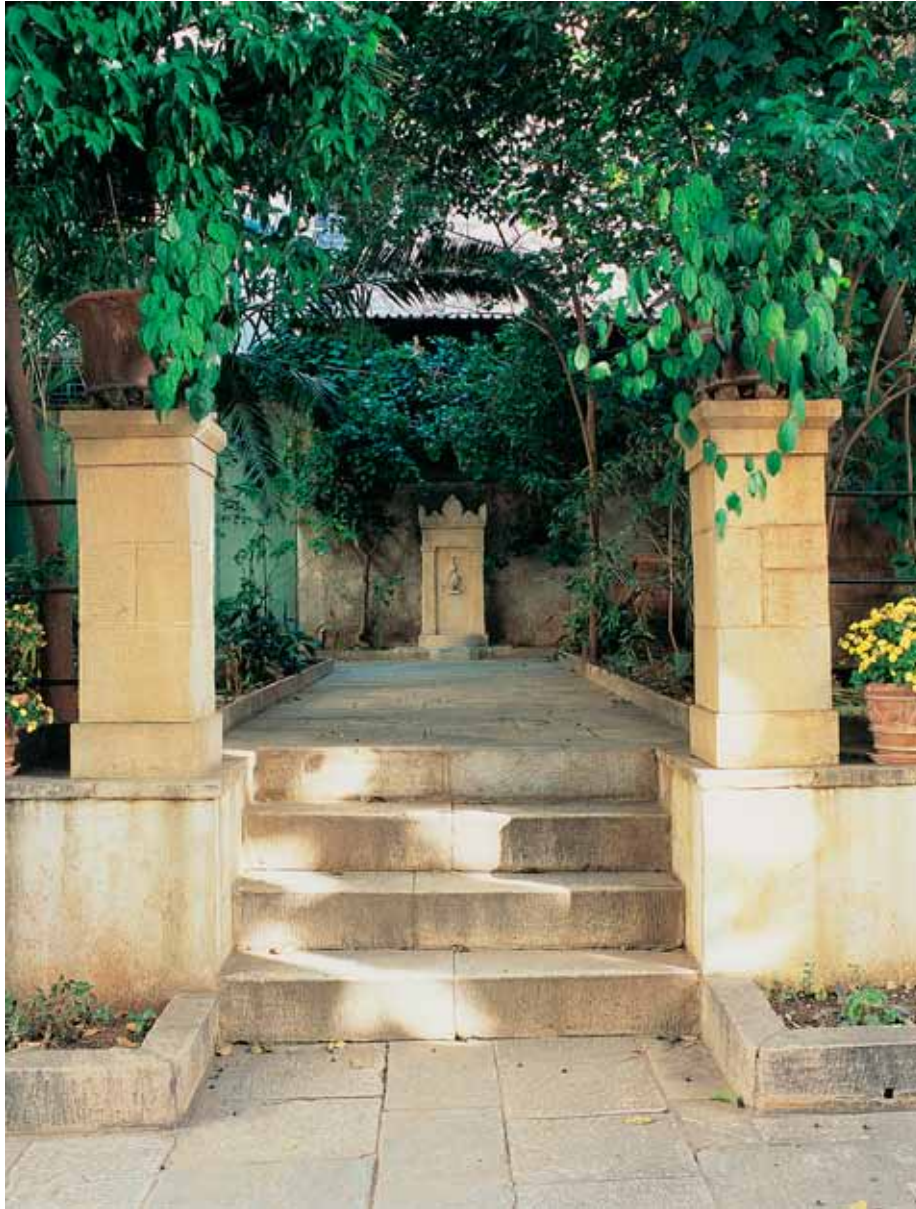
The foundation of the National Garden was an organized attempt to improve the city's urban fabric, following successful Central European prototypes. From 1839, while construction work on the palace was underway, the organization and planting of the garden began, over an expanse of 300 acres. Queen Amalia introduced many types of plants and, since she had studied botanical garden science and horticulture, undertook the garden's supervision herself. The palm trees were among her favorite trees.



One of the romantic corners of the National Garden is the artificial cave, constructed from rocks from the island of Milos. Above it there was a water reservoir which created an artificial waterfall, and in front of it was an impressive avenue of trees with kiosks and a fountain with statue of a shepherdess.

The Botanical Museum is the work of the important architect Ernst Ziller. It was originally the house of the royal gardener Friedrich Schmidt and, subsequently, an office of King George I. From 1984 it houses the botanical collections related to the history of the National Garden.





**Museum of the City of Athens,
Vouros-Eutaxias Foundation,
Garden of the Old Palace**

In the lovely Neo-Classical building which houses the Museum of the City of Athens, known as the 'Old Palace', survives to this day the garden created by the building's first inhabitants: the royal couple Otto and Amalia. Preserved in the garden, which was originally a zoological garden as well, is the palm tree which Amalia is said to have received as a gift and planted in 1836. The Bavarian king and queen lived in the Vouros Mansion for seven years while their official palace was under construction. It was their wish that gardens would be planted first and subsequently residences built, in order to create a cool atmosphere and to provide shade in the hot city of Athens.

The garden of the Vouros Mansion was created by the royal couple during the same period as the 'Royal' (now National) Garden was established.



Museum of the City of Athens, Vouros-Eutaxias Foundation

The Marquis de Nointel, ambassador of Louis XIV of France, and his entourage in Athens, with the Parthenon in the background, by Jacques Carrey.

Oil painting depicting Athens in 1674, the era when the city was under Ottoman control.

Date: 1674

Type: oil on canvas

Dimensions: height: 290 cm.; width: 500 cm.

Inventory number: mve_L_Carrey

Provenance: Chartres, France

This painting shows Athens during the period when the Parthenon was still an intact building, 23 years before it was bombarded by Morosini. An important feature of the painting for the history of the city is the representation of the natural setting, which takes up a large part of the painting and dominates it in terms of color. Of particular interest in the depiction of the olive grove of Athens, which at that time boasted 30,000 trees. Comparing this representation of the city in 1674 with today's reality, the viewer becomes aware of the value of the natural environment and the quality of life it offers to the city's inhabitants and visitors.



Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, The sycamore which exists no more

On one of the streets leading into the Philhellenon Square in Nafplion, there once stood, in a courtyard, an impressive, tall sycamore.

This one tree, together with the plane tree in Syntagma Square, was the city's symbol, and was also described as the tallest sycamore in the Eastern Mediterranean. Today the sycamore no longer exists thanks to brutal human intervention in the environment. In an act of sudden violence, this tree ceased to be and with it vanished a symbol of the first capital of the newly-formed Greek state.



18th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Archaeological Museum of Thassos

The Museum of Thassos, the first in northern Greece, was built in 1931-1934, according to plans drawn up by Henry Doucoux of the French Archaeological School. The pine trees in the courtyard were planted as soon as the museum was built, and thus were conceived from the start as an inseparable part of the museum's context. Moreover, the pine trees remind the visitor of the main type of vegetation found on the island, since Thassos is covered with pine forest.

A star exhibition of the museum is the 'kriophoros' or 'ram-bearer', the statue of a youth or kouros positioned still today where it originally stood in 1934, upon the building's completion. The kouros is dated to c.600 B.C. and is larger than life, rising to 3.5 m. It was found in 1921 and its inventory number is Λ1, in other words, it was the first find to be catalogued among the stone objects in the museum.

The kouros in the entrance hall and the pine trees in the museum courtyard are designed to show the links between cultural heritage and the natural environment. Both are 'rooted', so to speak, in the same earth and coexist in the historical context of Thassos.



Ephorate of Modern Monuments in Attica – Directorate of Modern Cultural Heritage, Anafiotika, Athens

Anafiotika is a small settlement with a strikingly regional character located on the northeast side of Plaka, at the foot of the Acropolis rock.

The majority of the first inhabitants were artisans: builders, masons, joiners, diggers, marble-workers and carpenters. They arrived in Athens in the 1840s from Anafi and other Cycladic islands in order to work on construction sites in the capital. They first settled in Proastio, the area known today as Exarcheia, but later moved to this cramped section of the Acropolis rock, naming it after their home: Anafiotika.

The original inhabitants were a homogenous and coherent group both professionally and socially, and the small settlement they built represents today an important example of popular architecture. The small houses are constructed of cut stones and filler conformed to the shape of the live rock. In other words, the space provided the similar conditions to those with which they were familiar from their island homes. Thus, they were flexible in their use of the terrain and built their settlement to resemble one in the Cyclades, an impression which the area retains today, even though the inhabitants of Anafiotika are now few. The natural environment, the trees, plants and courtyards full of flowers are in perfect harmony with the small, whitewashed houses, nestled between narrow, steep streets and innumerable flights of steps. This felicitous blending of the natural and built evokes the image of an island amidst the city.





Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest

Impressions of pine needles (*Pinus* sp.) which were caught in layers of volcanic ash.

Date: 20 millions years old

Dimensions: 9 cm. x 8 cm. x 1 cm.

Inventory number: ΦAB022

Provenance: area of the petrified forest

The fossilized pine needles are evidence for the extraordinary process of fossilization which took place in the forest of Lesvos over 20 million years ago. During this process organic plant matter was replaced molecule by molecule with inorganic material. In this way, all parts of the trees have been preserved in excellent condition.

Turkish pine (*Pinus brutia*).

Today on Lesvos, '*Pinus brutia*', known in English as Turkish pine, grows in large numbers, covering over 61 acres. The black pine is also found, but in a smaller quantity. The Turkish pine grows to 15-20 m. and may even reach, though rarely, 30 m. On Lesvos today are found not only contemporary representatives of the pine family, but also earlier varieties in the area of the petrified forest. All the parts of the pine tree – trunk, needles, branches, roots and cones – have been discovered in petrified form. Comparison with modern and fossilized parts has provided unique information about the development of the pine tree over the last 20 million years.





Lychnostatis, The Open-Air Museum of Traditional Life in Crete, Herakleion

Ecological Park with sea daffodils on the north coast of the Lychnostatis Museum.

Date: November 2008

The ecological park with sea daffodils was created by the Lychnostatis Museum, which is responsible for its maintenance. The park is an on-the-ground attempt by the museum to preserve the daffodil which is threatened with extinction. As part of their program, children enrich the park with daffodils and encircle them with sea stones and pebbles so that they can be easily noticed by visitors and not walked over by beach-goers. At the conclusion of the educational program, the participants symbolically encircle the ecological park and send a message of protection for the sea daffodil in particular, but for the entire natural environment as well.



*Summertime downpour:
the coloring of the air
the silver plum tree.*

Kagami Shiko



trees of the world

Museum of Asian Art, Corfu

Large white porcelain plate with famille verte decoration.

Date: 17th-18th century

Dimensions: diameter: 39 cm.

Inventory number: AE 286

Provenance: China. G. Manos Collection.

The central design on the plate is a schematic pine tree together with peony blossoms on a white ground. In Chinese art, the pine tree symbolizes winter. The symbols of the seasons represent a favorite decorative theme for household objects, as they were thought to bring Nature into more intimate connection with household activities.





Museum of Asian Art, Corfu

Learned men in a garden. Hanging scroll. Ink on silk.
Date: Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). Mid-16th–early
17th century

Dimensions: height: 150 cm.; width: 100 cm.

Inventory number: AE 6049

Provenance: China. G. Manos Collection.

This work depicts learned men in a garden, surrounded by their servants and seated at a table where they dedicate themselves to calligraphy.

In front of the staircase, which is depicted above the men, grows a banana tree. According to ancient texts, the banana tree was much-beloved by the Chinese not only for the color which they extracted from it, and its fruit, but for its large and impressive leaves. In poetry from the Tang dynasty (618–907) we learn that it was the sound of the tree's leaves in the wind and the sound of raindrops falling on the leaves which stimulated the imagination of the Chinese.

On the right side of the composition we see a tree called 'wu tong', while its botanical name is 'fermiana platanifolia', also known more commonly as the 'Chinese sun-visor tree'. The 'wu tong' was a favorite among the Chinese for the shade it afforded since its wide, thick leaves combined with its height created shade for relaxing in gardens, particularly during the hours when the sun was intense. The 'wu tong' was also considered as a symbol of good luck for the garden's owner.

Museum of Asian Art, Corfu

Painting with plum blossoms. Ink on silk.

Date: Joseon dynasty (1392-1910)

Dimensions: height: 52 cm.; width: 37.5 cm.

Inventory number: AE 1914

Provenance: Korea. G. Manos Collection.

Plum blossoms are painted in a misty landscape. The plum blossom, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum are related in Korean landscape art, as they are intimately associated with the four seasons and known symbolically as the 'four lords'. These 'four lords' were a favorite theme of the literati painters and their renderings are considered the highest examples of Korean art.





Museum of Asian Art, Corfu

Chinese garden. Famille rose Chinese porcelain for export.

Date: Tsing dynasty (1644-1911)

Dimensions: diameter: 36.5 cm.

Inventory number: AE 10757

Provenance: China. C. Chiotakis Collection.

This plate belongs to the category of works known conventionally as the 'famille rose', since pink is the dominant color in the decoration. Such porcelain was produced for export to the West. Represented on the plate is part of a Chinese garden in an autumnal landscape. At the center are two female figures and three children. A banana tree stands to the right of the composition. The table is adorned with a bouquet of chrysanthemums, a flower with a special symbolic weight in Chinese culture. The chrysanthemum stands for thought and, since it flowers in the ninth month of the year, September, is associated with the number nine and autumn. As the chrysanthemum is also linked with the sun and yang, it is believed that the wine distilled from this flower is beneficial for health and promotes longevity.

Museum of Islamic Art, Benaki Museum, Athens

Carved double door panels.

Inventory number: 9121

Date: second half of the 8th century

Dimensions: height: 255 cm.

Provenance: Iraq, environs of Baghdad

The Arabesque style sprang out of the interminable monotony of the Arabic desert. It can be described as schematic vegetal decoration which branches harmoniously and develops symmetrically to cover the entire surface of an object.

The style is believed to be related to late antique vegetal decoration. Already in the 6th century the process by which the twining grape vine and acanthus were transformed into a schematic motif had begun, and it reached completion in the 11th. In Islamic art the design acquires an exclusively decorative character, no longer serving as a frame, but assuming the place of the main subject.

A visual labyrinth is created, which incorporates other decorative elements such as palmettes, geometric lattice-work and medallions. In the case of the door from Iraq, the root of the tree is the object's base and the tree's intertwined branches provide the inspiration for the dense, elegant decoration.





Museum of Islamic Art, Benaki Museum, Athens

Ceramic bowl with scene of an enthroned ruler. Minai-type enamel.

Date: late 12th-early 13th century

Dimensions: diameter: 19.5 cm.

Inventory number: 715

Provenance: Iran, Kashan

On this 12th-century bowl are depicted a series of episodes from the everyday life of a ruler. At the center the prince appears seated on a throne, while in the circular band around the central medallion he gallops with his entourage toward a tree on which two harpies sit. The scene refers to the ancient iconography of the king-leader at the hunt. Examples survive from the Neolithic period, from the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Central Europe, from Minoan Crete, Sasanid Iran as well as Islamic art. In the royal hunt we see preserved a primordial idea and a symbol which cuts across time.

The power emitted by the tree's cycle of life suggests the divine presence on earth, while the hunter-king is the highest priest and god's representative. Hunting is considered a sacred, magical occupation which contributes to the preservation of authority.

Such a precious tree must be protected by wild beasts which threaten it and for this reason it is often depicted as guarded by imaginary or simply powerful animals, such as griffins, harpies, lions and rams.

Jewish Museum of Greece, Athens

Detail from embroideries with the 'tree of life':

- a. embroidery placed at the back of a headdress
- b. child's embroidered blanket from Larissa

Inventory numbers: 85.32 (headdress) and 77.66β (blanket)

Date: 19th century

The tree of life is first referred to in the *Torah* (Pentateuch), in the first book of Moses (*Genesis*) 2:9: 'And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow... the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil'. And at 3:3: 'But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' In other words, the 'tree of life' is a symbol of life, abundance, wisdom and all good things which God provides humankind when the latter does not transgress its limits.

The rabbis in their exegetical texts, at *Mishna Ambot* 6.7, even refer to the Torah itself as a 'tree of life': 'The Torah, the laws and guidance, is a tree of life for those who touch it, and whoever abides by has good fortune'.

The menorah (seven-branched candlestick) also symbolizes the 'tree of life', the Light of God, and illumination. In the second book of Moses (*Exodus* 25: 31-40) the construction of a lamp, like a tree with blossoms, is ordered.

Finally, there is the 'tree of life' of the Kabbalah with its ten rays, or Sephirot. The total of the rays make up the Primal Man, Adam Kadmon.





**Museum of Greek Folk Art, Tzisdarakis Mosque,
Athens**

Painted scene above the mihrab recess. Branches with flowers and leaves sprouting from a vase and on either side of a crescent moon.

Date: The mosque was built in 1759.

The Tzisdarakis Mosque is one of the few surviving monuments from Ottoman Athens. The floral designs which decorate the wall above the mihrab recess are typical of the aniconic decoration found on monuments of Islamic art. The key position given this design in the mosque suggests both its value and its allegorical implications, which allude to paradise, as conceived of in Islam, and to the 'tree of life', a fundamental notion in both Islamic religious thought and art.

PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN 'THE TREE OF LIFE IN FOUR SEASONS', 2008-2009

SERVICE/ ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	SELECTED MONUMENT/OBJECT/ NATURAL TREE	EVENTS ORGANIZERS	AUTHORS OF ENTRIES
Directorate of Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Monuments	National Garden	The National Garden and its monuments	Irini Keramida Angeliki Koumna Maria Leni Manos Mikelakis	Irini Keramida Angeliki Koumna Maria Leni Manos Mikelakis
	Garden of the Zappeion Megaron	The Garden of the Zappeion Megaron and its outdoor sculptures		
Directorate of Modern Cultural Heritage - Ephorate of Modern Monuments of Attica	Anafiotika	Anafiotika and its courtyards	Katerina Tzamourani Dimitra Fragouli	Katerina Tzamourani Dimitra Fragouli
Department of Educational Programs and Communication - 3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (EPCA)	Archaeological Site (A.S.) of the Olympieion	-Ilissos sanctuaries -Natural trees	Evi Pini Tonia Koutsouraki	Evi Pini Tonia Koutsouraki
Department of Educational Programs and Communication - Cultural Center of the School of Aristotle - 17th EPCA	City of Naoussa	The 'Crooked Plane Tree'	Tonia Koutsouraki Yiannis Koukoulos	Irini Psarra
Department of Educational Programs and Communication - 1st Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities (EBA)	Church of Panagia Gorgoepekoos	The church and its sculptural decoration (late 12th century)	Elena Bazini Alexandra Seleli Yioul Nestoridou	Jenny Albani Elena Bazini Alexandra Seleli

1st EPCA	Archaeological Site of the Acropolis of Athens	The olive tree of Athena in the Erechtheum	Yianna Venieri Alexandra Alexopoulou Vali Georgaka	Yianna Venieri Vali Georgaka
	A.S. of the Hills of the Nymphs – Muses – Pnyx	-Sanctuary of the Nymphs -Sanctuary of Pan and the Nymphs	Olga Dakoura-Voyiatzoglou Kalliopi Lazaridou	Olga Dakoura-Voyiatzoglou
	A.S. of the Ancient Agora - Museum of the Stoa of Attalos	-Botanological tour of the archaeological site of the Ancient Agora -Museum of the Stoa of Attalos: -P 24522: Black-figure lekythos with scene of a seated figure in front of an olive tree (500-490 BC) -SS 82: Clay stamp with pattern of a rosette with 11 petals (Hellenistic period) -P 10229: Neck of a clay proto-attic hydria with scene of women dancing with branches in their hands (7th c. BC) -AP 1044: Detail from a black-figure krater by Exekias with scene of a seated maenad amidst grape clusters and grape vines (530 BC)	Nikoletta Saraga Irimi Rossiou	Nikoletta Saraga Irimi Rossiou Yiorgos Goyias Christos Koukis
2nd EPCA	A.S. of Rhamnous	Rhamnus (buckthorn) tree	Eleni Banou Dora Tzeferi Liana Vardalou	Eleni Banou
3rd EPCA	A.S. and Archeological Museum (A.M.) of the Kerameikos	-1304: Clay pomegranate (750-500 BC) -P 1136: Acanthus leaves from the crowning of a funerary stele (c.380 BC) -147: Lotus blossoms from the decoration of offering vases (660-650 BC) -Pomegranate trees in the Hegeso funerary enclosure -Olive tree in the Tritopatreion (shrine of the Tritopatres) -Acanthus in a Hellenistic funerary enclosure -Laurel tree and cypresses in the archaeological site	Vassiliki Orfanou	Vassiliki Orfanou
	A.S. of Eleusis	Archaeological site	Kalliopi Papangeli	Kalliopi Papangeli

6th EPCA	A.S. of the Roman Bridge of Patras	The monument and surrounding area	Alexia Bardaki	Alexia Bardaki
	A.S. of the Odeion of Patras	The surrounding area of the monument	Georgia Georgopoulou	Georgia Georgopoulou
	A.M. of Aigion	AM 89, 756: Gold crowns of oak leaves (1st half of 2nd c. BC)	Georgia Georgopoulou Alexia Bardaki	Georgia Georgopoulou Alexia Bardaki
	Courtyard of the Church of Zoodochos Pigi, Kato Achaia	AK 16030: Fragment of a ceramic red-figure pinax with scene of Asklepios crowned with olive branches (375-350 BC)	Georgia Georgopoulou Alexia Bardaki Vassiliki Tzaknaki	Georgia Georgopoulou
7th EPCA	Museum of the History of the Olympic Games in Antiquity	-no. 357: Bronze olive tree leaves, fruit and branches (Classical period) -no 225: Silver stater with depiction of Zeus crowned with olive wreath (272-191 BC)	Georgia Hatzi-Spiliopoulou Konstantinos Antonopoulos Maro Alexaki	Georgia Hatzi-Spiliopoulou Konstantinos Antonopoulos Maro Alexaki
	Exhibition space of the SPAP Conference Center	<i>Olive</i> , by Yiannis Kottis, acrylic on canvas (2004)		
	A.S. of Ancient Olympia	-Olive trees around the stadium -Olive trees beside the temple of Zeus		
	New A.M. of Ancient Olympia	-B 4980: Part of an Assyrian hammered bronze sheet with a heraldic scene of wild goats flanking a 'tree of life' (8th c. BC) -Olive tree outside the New Museum which survived the forest fire of 2007		
8th EPCA	A.S. of Palaiopolis - Mon Repos Estate, Corfu	-Collection of watercolors by F. Baxter inspired by the flora of Corfu -Trees of the Mon Repos estate	Aikaterini Kanta-Kitsou Alexia Travlou	Alexia Travlou
9th EPCA	A.M. of Schimatari	-Stone olive-press and oil receptacle (3rd-4th c. AD) -ΜΣ 2035: Stone column or pilaster with a scene of ships (1600-1400 BC) -ΜΣ 1721: Marble palmette crowning of a funerary stele (4th c. BC)	Alexandra Harami	Alexandra Harami

10th EPCA	A.M. of Amphissa	- 12262 : Oinochoe with depiction of an olive branch (late 4th c. BC) - 16669 : Oil lamp with vines (late 2nd-early 3rd c. AD) -Gold crown with tripartite leaves -Olive tree seeds	Anthoula Tsarouha	Anthoula Tsarouha
11th EPCA	A.M. of Chalkis	- 2107 : Hydria from Chalkis (Geometric period) - 8 : Marble agonistic inscription with three rows of crowns (2nd c. BC) - 6529 : Gold crown of athletic victor (1st c. BC) - 32 : marble statue of Antinoos (2nd c. AD)	Amalia Karapashalidou	Amalia Karapashalidou
	A.S. of the Temple of Daphnephoros Apollo, Eretria	The monument and surrounding area	Sophia Katsali Athanasia Psalti	Sophia Katsali Athanasia Psalti
	A.S. of the Roman Palaistra, Chalkis	Mosaic with scene of athletes (Roman Times)	Amalia Karapashalidou	Amalia Karapashalidou
	A.S. of Aulis	Temple of Artemis - the sacred plane tree whose trunk was kept in the temple	Amalia Karapashalidou	Amalia Karapashalidou
	A.S. of the House with Mosaics, Eretria	Mosaic with floral decorative motifs (2nd half of 4th c. BC)	Sophia Katsali	Sophia Katsali
12th EPCA	A.M. of Ioannina	- 17 : Inscribed funerary stele (early 2nd c. BC, Hellenistic period) - 88 : Silver didrachm of the Epirote Confederacy (233/31-168/7 BC, Hellenistic period) - 11.295 : Gold funerary crown composed of 38 oak leaves (2nd c. BC, Hellenistic period)	Eleni Vassileiou	Eleni Vassileiou

13th EPCA	Athanasakeion A.M. of Volos	<p>-BE 12631: Silver tetradrachm of Athens (186-86 BC)</p> <p>-M 79: Reconstructed gold crown composed of single, double and triple olive (?) leaves (2nd c. BC)</p> <p>-A 245: Funerary stele carved in relief with scene of funerary banquet (3rd-2nd c. BC)</p> <p>-Wood from the roof of a Neolithic house from the Neolithic settlement at Prodomos, Prefecture of Karditsa</p>	Aimilia Kaloyianni	Argyroula Doulyeri-Intzesiloglou Aimilia Kaloyianni
14th EPCA	A.M. of Lamia	<p>-K 5776: Black-figure oinochoe with scene of Dionysos and a satyr (late Archaic period)</p> <p>-K 302: Red-figure aryballos-shaped lekythos with depiction of a tree (Classical period)</p> <p>-K 10691: Red-figure kalyx-shaped krater with the Apolline triad (Apollo, Leto, Artemis) beside a date palm tree (2nd quarter of the 5th c. BC)</p>	Efi Karantzali	Eleni Froussou
	Archaeological Collection of Elateia	<p>-BE 2610: Almond-shaped vase (lekythion) (4th c. BC)</p> <p>-BE 183: Front part of a sima (fragment) with white paint and relief decoration showing olive shoots and leaves (3rd c. BC)</p> <p>-BE 2609: Small krater with white painted decoration of ivy leaves (3rd-2nd c. BC)</p>	Sophia Dimaki	Sophia Dimaki
	A.M. Atalanti	<p>- BE 3275: Black-glazed kantharos with white decoration showing olive leaves (5th c. BC)</p> <p>- BE 700: Lamp with impressed grape decoration (2nd-3rd c. AD)</p> <p>- BE 4730: Bronze coin from the mint of Opuntian Locris with a depiction of grapes (196-146 BC)</p>	Sophia Dimaki	Sophia Dimaki
15th EPCA	A.M. of Larissa	231, 120, 600 : Three late Roman funerary steles with rider in a sacred grove	Stella Katakouta Konstantina Koutsiouba	Stella Katakouta Georgia Sourla

16th EPCA	A.S. of Vrasna Fortress	Olive-press at the Vrasna fortress (4th-2nd c. BC)	Lillian Aheilara	Lillian Aheilara
	A.S. of Asprovalta farm-house	Remains of the farm-house building (Classical-Hellenistic period)		
17th EPCA	A.M. of Pella	- 80.514 : Red-figure hydria with scene of the contest between Athena and Poseidon (late 5th c. BC) - Ψ 6 : Mosaic pavement with scene of a female centaur and tree (early 3rd c. BC)	Maria Lilibaki-Akamati	Maria Lilibaki-Akamati
	A.S. of the Acropolis of Ancient Edessa	-Flora in the archaeological site - ΑΚΕ 139 : Dedicatory stele to Zeus Hypsistos with a carved eagle surrounded by an oak wreath (AD 51) -Glazed lagini (oil pitcher) with floral decoration (post-Byzantine period)	Anastasia Chryssostomou	Anastasia Chryssostomou
	A.S. of Vergina, Museum of the Royal Tombs of Aegae	Wall-painting of hunt from the grave of Philip II	Yiannis Karliabas	Yiannis Karliabas
	A.M. of Veroia	- Λ 294 : Funerary stele of Paterinos (2nd-1st c. BC) - Λ121 : Funerary stele of Laneika (1st c. BC)	Irini Psarra Yiannis Karliabas	Irini Psarra
17th EPCA – Cultural Center of the School of Aristotle	A.S. of the School of Aristotle - Nymphaion, Mieza	‘The plane tree of Aristotle’	Irini Psarra Yiannis Koukoulos	Irini Psarra
18th EPCA	A.M. of Thassos	-Archaic kouros -Pine tree in the museum courtyard	Dimitria Malamidou	Dimitria Malamidou
19th EPCA	A.M. of Abdera	Exhibits related to the use of wood in antiquity	Maria Chryssafi Kyriaki Hatziprokopiou	Maria Chryssafi Kyriaki Hatziprokopiou

20th EPCA	Old A.M. of Mytilene	- MM 1372 : Aeolian column capital (6th c. BC) - MM 139 : Rectangular pedestal with hunting scenes carved in relief (Roman Period) - MM 3206, 3175 : Two rectangular plinths inscribed with a property register (3rd-4th c. AD)	Olga Filaniotou Anastasia Galani Thaleia Kyriakopoulou	Anastasia Galani Thaleia Kyriakopoulou
	New A.M. of Mytilene	- NMM 30320 : Mosaic pavement with Orpheus (3rd c. AD) - NMM 248 : Marble funerary relief with scene of the deceased as a rider beside a tree entwined by a snake (1st c. BC-1st c. AD)	Olga Filaniotou Anastasia Galani Thaleia Kyriakopoulou	Anastasia Galani Thaleia Kyriakopoulou
	Prehistoric settlement of Thermi	The archeological site	Olga Filaniotou Anastasia Galani Dimitris Kritharas	
21st EPCA	A.S. of the Heraion of Samos	'The willow of Hera'	Maria Viglaki-Sofianou	Maria Viglaki-Sofianou
	A.S. and A.M. of Delos	- 'The date palm of Delos' on the archaeological site - B.26860 : Piece of solidified lava with the impression of olive leaves (c. 1630 BC)	Panayiotis Hatzidakis	Panayiotis Hatzidakis
22nd EPCA	A.M. of Rhodes	- 'Fikellura' vases with floral motifs - Red-figure vases with floral motifs - Case of exhibits with the 'rose' symbol	Maria Mihalaki-Kollia	Maria Mihalaki-Kolia
	Temple of Pythios Apollo, Rhodes Acropolis	The monument and surrounding area - date palm tree		
	A.S. of Ag. Ioannis funerary complex	The monuments and the surrounding area - pomegranate tree		
23rd EPCA	A.S. of Gortyn	- 'The evergreen plane tree' of Gortyn - Ancient column inside the trunk of an olive tree	Maria Nikoloudi	Maria Nikoloudi
	A.S. of Phaistos	Perennial olive tree	Irini Antonakaki	

25th EPCA	A.M. of Chania	- Π 961 : Clay model of a pomegranate from a grave (4th-3rd c. BC) - M 472 : Crown of fruit-bearing myrtle (late 4th-early 3rd c. BC) - Π 2439 : Ceramic hexaleiptron (early 3rd c. BC)	Katerina Tzanakaki	Katerina Tzanakaki
	A.M. of Rethymno	- Π 2337 : Pyxis with floral decoration (LMII, c.1425-1390 BC) - Π 1575 : Stirrup jar decorated with olive shoots (LMIIIB c.1340-1190 BC) - Π 808 : Hydria with floral decoration (LMIIIB) - Coin of Eleutherna with a date palm on the reverse and Apollo on the obverse (3rd c. BC) - Parts of the arms and hands of idols of different sizes which hold the fruit of the pomegranate tree (6th-5th c. BC)	Irini Gavrilaki Eva Tegou	Irini Gavrilaki Eva Tegou
	A.M. of Kissamos	- M.K. Ψνφ. 9 : Mosaic pavement of the 'Hours and Seasons' (2nd half of the 2nd c. AD) - M.K. Ψνφ. 12 : Mosaic pavement with Dionysiac scenes (3rd c. AD)	Stavroula Markoulaki	Stavroula Markoulaki
	A.S. of Armenoi, Rethymno	Minoan cemetery and surrounding area – oak trees	Eleni Papadopoulou	Eleni Papadopoulou
	A.S. of Hamalevri, Rethymno	Roman olive-press	Epameinondas Kapranos Niki Tsatsaki	Epameinondas Kapranos Niki Tsatsaki
26th EPCA	A.M. of Piraeus	- ΜΠ 7341 : Red-figure amphora with scene of oil collection from the sacred olive trees of Attica (420-410 BC) - ΜΠ 7073 : Red-figure lekythos with scene of a wood-cutter (430-420 BC)	Kornilia Axioti	Kornilia Axioti
27th EPCA	A.S. of Dion	Oak trees in the archaeological site of Dion	Evangelia Alvanou Georgia Gavanoudi	Evangelia Alvanou Georgia Gavanoudi
	A.S. of Leivithra	Plane tree forest	Evangelia Alvanou Georgia Gavanoudi Anna Fessa	Evangelia Alvanou Georgia Gavanoudi Anna Fessa

29th EPCA	A.M. of Florina	-Use of wood in the prehistoric settlement of Armenochori -Use of wood in the Hellenistic city of Petron (kitchen – food preparation) and the use of sundial through the seasons of the year	Damianos Patsakiotis Demosthenis Kehayias Angeliki Andreadou Evangelia Torou	Angeliki Andreadou
30th EPCA	A.M. of Aiane	-9965: Black-figure lekythos with Herakles (490-480 BC) -9978: Skyphos made in a local workshop (early 5th c. BC) -11233: Black-figure alabastron (490-480 BC)	Georgia Karamitrou-Mentessidi Angeliki Pateli	Georgia Karamitrou-Mentessidi Angeliki Pateli
	A.S. of the Ancient City and Necropolis of Aiane	Surrounding area – plane tree forest – willows		
32nd EPCA	A.S. of Gitani, Thessprotia	Archeological site – natural trees	Aikaterini Kanta-Kitsou Ourania Palli Atalanti Betsiou Iphigenia Anagnostou Christina Gania Sotiris Fatsios Elpida Saltayianni Eleni Bellou	Aikaterini Kanta-Kitsou Ourania Palli Iphigenia Anagnostou Christina Gania Sotiris Fatsios Elpida Saltayianni Atalanti Betsiou Eleni Bellou
	A.S. of Doliani, Thessprotia	Archeological site – oak, laurel and olive trees		
	A.M. of Igoumenitsa	-NO 2994, NO 3268: Bronze coins of the Koinon of Epirus -OE 58: Fulcrum with the head of Dionysos imposed on a grape leaf (4th-3rd c. BC) -OE 7820, OE 7821, OE 7982, OE 8041, OE 7979: Grave offerings of fruits and nuts (late 4th-early 3rd BC) -NO 2979: Coin with scene of Persephone and Kerberos (335/330-325 BC) -OE 2911: Gold crown with olive leaves -OE 2908: Gold crown with oak leaves -AE 9620: Silver coin of the Koinon of Epirus		

33rd EPCA	A.S. of Nikopolis	Victory monument of Augustus and surrounding area – laurel tree	Athina Konstantaki Petroula Tatsopoulou	Athina Konstantaki
	A.S. of Kassopi	Temple of Aphrodite and surrounding area – myrtle tree	Kassiani Gafa Athanasia Keramari Christos Spanodimos	Kassiani Gafa Athanasia Keramari Christos Spanodimos
	A.S. of Orraon	Temple of Zeus and surrounding area – oak tree	Sophia Kinga Aristeidis Vassios	Sophia Kinga
	A.S. of Strongili	Roman olive-press	Dimitra Papakosta Maria Karaba	Dimitra Papakosta Maria Karaba
	A.S. of the Temple of Apollo at Ambrakia	Temple of Apollo and surrounding area – laurel tree	Anastasia Hantzara Ada Katsarou	Anthi Angeli
34th EPCA	A.M. of Karditsa	Exhibit with charred tree and dedications	Leonidas Hatziangelakis	Leonidas Hatziangelakis
	A.S. of the Pan-Thessalian Temple of Itonian Athena, Filia, Karditsa	Sanctuary of Itonian Athena and surrounding area		
	A.S. of the Archaic Temple of Apollo, Ancient Metropolis of Karditsa	Floral decoration of the temple – surrounding area		
35th EPCA	A.M. of Argostoli	- M.A. 581-11: Mycenaean seal stone with palm tree and bull (14th-13th c. BC) - M.A. 2279: Roman lamp with bucolic scene in relief (2nd-3rd c. AD) - M.A. 2241: Roman lamp with floral decoration (grape vine) (2nd-3rd c. AD)	Andreas Sotiriou Maria Kamoulakou	Andreas Sotiriou Maria Kamoulakou
36th EPCA	A.M. of Lefkada	-Display case related to the grape vine and wine -Display case related to the olive and olive oil	Vivian Staikou	Vivian Staikou
37th EPCA	A.S. of Ancient Nemea	Cypress grove at the temple of Zeus at Nemea	Panayiota Kassimi Eleni Andrianou	Panayiota Kassimi
38th EPCA	A.M. of Chora	-Stirrup jars -Pithoi for storing olive oil -Linear B moulds (13th c. BC)	Demosthenis Kosmopoulos Maria Tsoulakou	Demosthenis Kosmopoulos Maria Tsoulakou
	A.S. of the Palace of Nestor	-Olive oil storeroom -Olive tree in the area of the palace		

39th EPCA	A.M. of Tripolis	-nos. 2684, 2685, 2686: Bowl-shaped wooden vessels	Anna Vassiliki Karapanayiotou	Anna Vassiliki Karapanayiotou
1st Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities (EBA)	Kountouriotis Mansion, Hydra	Mansion garden	Yiouli Nestoridou	Yiouli Nestoridou
4th EBA	Palace of the Grand Masters, Rhodes	Φ74, Φ73, Φ64: Three coats of arms from medieval Rhodes with symbolic representations of trees	Konstantina Kephala Yiorgos Stalidis	Anna-Maria Kasdagli
5th EBA	A.S. of Mystras	388, 83, 1274: Relief slabs with scenes of trees (cypresses)	Panayiotis Perdikoulias Yianna Katsoungraki	Panayiotis Perdikoulias Yianna Katsoungraki
7th EBA	A.S. of Pthiotic Thebes	-Λ 3880, Λ 48: Two early Christian marble slabs with symbolic representations of the 'source of life' -Λ 271: Early Christian marble pilaster capital with symbolic representation of the 'source of life'	Aspasia Dina	Aspasia Dina
	Church of Agios Achilios, Larissa Fortress	Wall-painting with foliate cross from tomb in the early Christian church of Agios Achillios	Anna Yialouri	Anna Yialouri
	G. Schwartz Mansion, Ambelakia	Wall-painting with floral decoration (18th c)	Archontoula Anastasiadou	Archontoula Anastasiadou
8th EBA	Byzantine Museum of Ioannina	-AK 10: Part of a carved panel with a foliate cross (12th c.) -AK 21: Marble capital with scene of a cross flanked by cypresses (12th c.) -AK ΑΓΙΑ 1: Icon with a scene of Agioi Pantes (18th c.)	Varvara Papadopoulou Argyro Karaberidi Anthi Filidou	Varvara Papadopoulou Argyro Karaberidi Anthi Filidou
	Philanthropinon Monastery, Island of Ioannina	Wall-paintings with scenes of paradise (1560)	Varvara Papadopoulou Argyro Karaberidi Antigoni Vagena Dimitra Papaioannou Katerina Banti Eleni Mihou Lambrini Benatsi	Argyro Karaberidi Antigoni Vagena

9th EBA	Crypt of Agios Demetrios	-Two marble fragments of an arch with carved cypresses (early 10th c.) -Panel with a cross flanked by cypresses (11th or 12th c.) -Fragment of a pseudo-sarcophagus with foliate crosses (11th c.)	Aikaterini Koussoula	Aikaterini Koussoula
	Church of Agia Sophia, Thessaloniki	Mosaic scene of the Ascension (after the mid-9th c.)	Melachrini Paissidou Sophia Akrivopoulou	Melachrini Paissidou Sophia Akrivopoulou
	Church of Agioi Apostoloi, Thessaloniki	Wall-painting with the 'Tree of Jesse' (early 14th c.)		
	Church of Agios Nikolaos Orfanos, Thessaloniki	Wall-painting with 'The Myrrh-bearing Women' (early 14th c.)		
10th EBA	Tower of Ouranoupolis, Chalkidiki	Hand-woven rug with depiction of the 'tree of life' (early 20th c.)	Nikos Alibertis Archontia Polyzoudi Varvara Marinidou	Nikos Alibertis
11th EBA	Byzantine Museum of Veroia	Icon with the Presentation of the Theotokos into the Temple (1565-1570)	Maria Polatidou Maria Heimonopoulou	Maria Platidou Maria Heimonopoulou
	Church of the Resurrection of Christ, Veroia	- Wall-paintings of the church (1315): - Palm Sunday - Crucifixion - Foliate crosses		
12th EBA	A.M. of Drama	- Α 114 : Altar screen panel with foliate cross (11th c.) - ΔΔ1/79 : Bottom of a late Byzantine bowl with depiction of a tree	Magdalini Parharidou- Anagnostou	Magdalini Parharidou- Anagnostou
	Prefecture of Drama	Holy trees with votive offerings		
	Mosque on Agameonos and Armen Streets	Wall-painting with scene of a city (Drama?) surrounded by trees (1st decade of the 19th c.)		
14th EBA	Church of Panagia Galousa, Mytilene	Church and surrounding area – trees (olive, holly oak, and oak trees)	Maria Papageorgiou Michalis Apladas	Maria Papageorgiou
	Church of Agios Therapon Klopedis, Mytilene	Churches and their surrounding areas		
	Church of Panagia Stypsiani, Mytilene			

16th EBA	Monastery of Panagia Mavriotissa	Exterior wall-painting with 'Tree of Jesse' (13th c.)	Amalia Gimourtzina Andromache Skreka	Amalia Gimourtzina Andromache Skreka
17th EBA	Vourka Mansion, Kozani	Column capital with acanthus leaf decoration (early Byzantine period)	Maria Tsiapali	Maria Tsiapali
19th EBA	Meteora	-Panagia between angels, wall-painting in Roussanou Monastery (1560) -Parable of the 'Withered Fig Tree', wall-painting in Great Meteoron Monastery (1552) -Agios Euphrosynos, wall-painting in Great Meteoron Monastery (1552) -Agios Christophoros, wall-painting by Theophanes Strelitzas (Bathas) in Agios Nikolaos Anapafsas Monastery (1527) -Creation of the world, modern wall-painting in Varlaam Monastery, chapel of the Three Hierarchs	Krystallia Mantzana	Krystallia Mantzana
21st EBA	Byzantine Museum of Antivouniotissa, Corfu	-Icon of Agios Demetrios (late 16th-early 17th c.) -Icon of the Nativity of Christ (1st half of the 17th c.) -Icon of the Nativity of Christ (18th c.) -Icon of Agios Ioannis Prodromos by Emmanuel Lampardos (late 16th-early 17th c.) -Icon of Agios Ioannis the Hermit by Jeremiah Paladas (early 17th c.) -Icon with 'Noli me tangere' scene by Emmanuel Tzane (1657)	Tenia Rigakou Dimitra Zoe Dimitris Ballas	Tenia Rigakou
24th EBA	Byzantine Museum of Phthiotis, Ypati	-ΦΘ Λ 35: Floor tile with peacocks pecking at the 'tree of life' (12th c.) -ΦΘ Λ 31 and 32: Mullion capitals with a tree and floral decoration (12th c.)	Yiorgos Kakavas Yiorgos Pallis Alexia Ifanti	Yiorgos Pallis
26th EBA	Church of Agioi Apostoloi, Kalamata	Wall-paintings with scenes from the Akathistos Hymn (early 17th c.)	Evangelia Militsi	Evangelia Militsi

Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities	Temporary Exhibition at the Byzantine and Christian Museum	Wooden objects from ancient shipwrecks	Kalliopi Preka-Alexandri Angeliki Simossi Dimitris Kourkoumelis Theotokis Theodoulou Siarita Kouka	Kallioi Preka-Alexandri Angeliki Simossi Dimitris Kourkoumelis Theotokis Theodoulou Siarita Kouka
Ephorate of Palaeoanthropology and Speleology of Southern Greece	Theopetra Cave	Fruit and nuts from strata belonging to the Neolithic period	Katerina Trantalidou Georgia Kotzamani	Georgia Kotzamani
National Archaeological Museum		<p>-17469: Red-figure hydria with scene showing the Pleiades around a palm tree (400 BC)</p> <p>-4502: Base of a marble funerary urn with scene of a young man and woman gathering apples, symbols of life after death in the Elysian Fields (410-400 BC)</p> <p>-303, 312: Metal branch and leaves of oak, the sacred tree of the oracle at Dodona (probably 4th-3rd c. BC)</p> <p>-992: Gold signet ring with a goddess seated at the foot of a tree (late 15th c. BC)</p> <p>-1759: Gold cup from Vapheio, Laconia, picturing the capture of bulls in a landscape with olive trees (15th c.)</p>	Alexandra Christopoulou Despina Kalessopoulou Maria Selekou Anna Mytilinaiou Nayia Dalakoura	Alexandra Christopoulou Maria Selekou
Byzantine and Christian Museum		<p>-BXM 977: Carved marble panel with 'tree of life' between lions (11th-12th c.)</p> <p>-BXM 978: Carved marble panel with 'tree of life' between two sphinxes (12th c.)</p> <p>-BXM 1057: Carved marble lintel with foliate anchor cross and two sphinxes holding 'the tree of life' (10th-11th c.)</p>	Stathis Gotsis Rania Fatola	Stathis Gotsis Rania Fatola

Numismatic Museum	<p>-NM 2813: Attic bronze coin depicting the contest between Athena and Poseidon (2nd c. AD) -NM 1896/7: Silver stater of Gortyn with Europa seated beside a tree (mid-4th c. BC) -NM Σ ΕΜΠ: Silver tetradrachm of Carthage in Sicily with a palm tree (late 5th c. BC)</p>	Terry Fourtouni	Terry Fourtouni
Epigraphic Museum	<p>-EM 10616=IG I³ 84: Attic vote to enclose and lease the enclosure of the sanctuaries of Kodros, Neleos and Basile (418-17 BC) -EM 7372=IG II² 641: Attic vote to honor Poseidippos Bakchios Kothokides (299-8 BC) -EM 7990=IG II² 1362: Decree of the priest of Apollo, Erithaseos (late 4th c. BC)</p>	Maria Lagoyianni- Yeorgakarakou Elena Zavvou Athanasios Themos Irini Loukia Choremi Yerasimos Chryssovitsanos	Maria Lagoyianni- Yeorgakarakou Elena Zavvou Athanasios Themos Irini Loukia Choremi Yerasimos Chryssovitsanos
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki	<p>-ΜΘ 6937: Funerary stele with Thracian hero-rider (1st half of the 1st c. AD) -ΜΘ 5440 β: Gold myrtle branch (4th c. BC) -Πυ 4283: Gold foil decoration for clothing (2nd c. BC) -10773: Funerary relief of Leukios Kornelios Neon (mid-1st c. AD) -1988.044IN.1033: Installation by Tsoklis in the museum forecourt (1988)</p>	Christos Gatzolis Olga Sakali Maria Kokorotskou	Christos Gatzolis
Museum of Byzantine Culture	<p>-ΑΓ 675α: Doorframe from the Acheiropoietos church with grape vine decoration (mid-5th c.) -ΑΓ 275: Panel with two griffins flanking a tree (10th c.) -ΒΤ 102Ε: Wall-painting from a tomb with a cross flanked by two palm branches (6th c.) -ΒΥΦ 58: Sakos, or outer vestment, of Bishop Ioannes of Melenikos, on one side of which is depicted the 'Tree of Jesse' (1745-53) -ΑΓ 3151: Panel with griffin and cypress (10th-11th c.) -ΒΕΙ 957: Icon by Theodoros Poulakis (17th c.)</p>	Eva Fourlinga Ioulia Gavriilidou	Eva Fourlinga Ioulia Gavriilidou Nikos Bonovas

Archaeological Museum of Herakleion		<p>-II 7691: Small Kamares-ware pithos with white palm trees on a black ground (MMIIIA 1700-1650 BC.)</p> <p>-X-A 700: The 'Ring of Minoa', gold signet ring with scene of tree cult (LMIB-II 1525-1400 BC)</p> <p>-II 14809: Clay model of a tree with birds resting in its branches (8th c. BC)</p>	Yiorgos Rethemiotakis Irini Galli Katerina Athanassaki	Katerina Athanassaki (jar, ring) Irini Galli (clay tree)
Museum of Asian Art, Corfu		<p>-AE 286: Large white porcelain plate with a pine and peony blossoms (17th-18th c.)</p> <p>-AE 6049: Scroll with scene of learned men in a garden (mid 16th-early 17th c.)</p> <p>-AE 1914: Plum blossoms, ink on silk (Joseon dynasty, 1392-1910)</p> <p>-AE 10757: Plate with depiction of autumn in a Chinese garden (Tsing dynasty, 1644-1911)</p> <p>-AE 1427: Dedicatory plaque with ideogram of spring (Tsing dynasty, 1644-1911)</p>	Despina Zernioti	Despina Zernioti
Finance Management Fund for Archaeological Projects, Committee of Dodona - 12th EPCA	A.S of Dodona	The oracular oak tree	Yeorgios Yeorgoulas Eleni Skalisti	Yeorgios Yeorgoulas Eleni Skalisti
Municipal Museum of Kavala		<p>-Untitled, watercolor by Polygnotos Vagis (c.1950)</p> <p>-Human presence, oil painting by Michalis Avramidis (1979)</p> <p>-Greek Winter, oil painting by Themis Simitsakos (1990)</p> <p>-Rivers of Thasos. The olive harvest, watercolor by Panos Papanakos (1980)</p> <p>-Thirst, engraving by Isabella Harbouri</p> <p>-Living Nature, oil painting by Dimitris Xonoglou (1981)</p>	Euphrossyni Boskou	Euphrossyni Boskou

Jewish Museum of Greece		<p>'Tree of life' as depicted on various objects in the museum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -81.39: Kippah (prayer cap) -85.32: Pudia (headdress embroidery) -77.66β: Child's coverlet -78.248: Velvet mappah (Torah cover) -77.57: Dowry embroidery <p>All objects date to the 19th c.</p>	Orietta Treveza-Soussi	Orietta Treveza-Soussi
National Historical Museum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1379: Gold-embroidered dress of Kyra Frosyni with the 'tree of life' (late 18th c.) -EIM 5441: Palaska (gunpowder flask) of Alexis Christos Zervas, decorated with the 'tree of life' (1831) -3750 γ: Painting (egg-tempera on wood) depicting the battle of Vassilika, by Panayiotis Zographos (1836) 	Angela-Maria Vidali	Angela-Maria Vidali
Ethnological Museum of Thrace - Angeliki Yiannakidou		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -13230: Wooden press for crushing olives (19th c.) -50099 50099-1: Clay vessels for storing and transporting oil (late 18th c.) -13378: Wooden stamp from the soap manufacturer Sakellaridis (19th c.) 	Katerina Yioftsalı	Katerina Yioftsalı
Angelos and Leto Katakouzenos Foundation	Katakouzenos House Museum	The four seasons, by Nikos Hatzikyriakos-Ghikas, oil on wood (1960)	Yiorgis Manginis Sophia Peloponnisııou-Vassilakou	Yiorgis Manginis Sophia Peloponnisııou-Vassilakou
Kairios Library, Andros	Agadakis Pyrgos, pre-industrial olive-press	Exhibits related to pre-industrialized farming	Maria Hala	Maria Hala
Science Center and Technology Museum, Thessaloniki		Trireme model	Periklis Iliopoulos	Sophia Xenitidou
Hellenic Children's Museum		'In the shadow of the trees', educational activity for children ages 6-12	Dimitra Diroyianni	Dimitra Diroyianni
Archaeological Society at Athens - 25th EPCA	A.S. of Zominthos	Archaeological site and surrounding area - trikokia (hawthorn tree)	Yiannis Georgiou	Yiannis Georgiou

Foundation of the Hellenic World	'Hellenic World' Cultural Center	The olive tree. The tree and its juice. The gold of the Hellenic earth.	Maria Grigoropoulou	Maria Grigoropoulou
Historical Archive of National Bank of Greece	Diomidis Building	The archival tree of the Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece – illustration of the taxonomic diagram of the archives.	Maria Lebessi	Maria Lebessi
Historical and Folklore Museum of Kalamata		- 224 : Icon of Christ and the 12 Apostles of the 'I am the vine' type (1837) - 73 : Kalamata, lithograph by Otto Stackelberg (1837 edition) - 1105 : Faience porcelain plate decorated with trees and flowers (19th c.) - 2 : Kalamata, copper engraving (19th c.) - 154 : Landscape by a popular painter (early 20th c.) - 160 : Landscape by a popular painter (early 20th c.)	Maria Yeranea-Papoulia	Maria Yeranea-Papoulia
Historical and Folklore Museum of Corinth		- K 141 : Gold-plated copper segmented belt, accessory for a woman's costume, with the 'tree of life' between a pair of birds (Thrace, 19th c.) - K 5 1153 : Silver clasp with embossed 'tree of life' (18th c.)	Maria Mexia	Maria Mexia
Historical and Folklore Museum of Rethymno		- 35 : Woven fabric with the 'tree of life' (late 19th c.) - 82 : Embroidered cloth with olive decoration (late 19th c.) -Olive and lemon trees in the museum courtyard	Anastasia Platyrachou	Anastasia Platyrachou
Historical Museum of Crete		- ΓΙΙΙ 21 : Wooden chest with carved floral and animal decoration (17th-18th c.) - ΓΙ 275 : Woven banta, or wall hanging, with scene from the psiki, or wedding procession (early 20th c.) - ΓΙ 615 και ΓΙΙΙ 389 : Embroidered pouch for wedding crowns with floral decoration, and wedding crowns with lemon blossoms (1941-1942)	Fani Kambani	Angeliki Baltatzi Fani Kambani

<p>Center for the Study of Traditional Pottery</p>		<p>-1361: Pithos from Çannakale decorated with landscape with trees (18th c.) -1605: Bowl from Çannakale decorated with landscape with a house and a tree (19th c.) -Plate from Samos decorated with landscape with houses and a tree (20th c.) -Pithari (earthenware jar) from Thrapsano, Rethymno (20th c.) -Pithari from Margarites, Rethymno (20th c.)</p>	<p>Fotini Katsaouni Nikos Simantirakis Nikos Liaros</p>	<p>Irini Gavrilaki</p>
<p>Folklore and Ethnological Museum of Macedonian and Thrace</p>		<p>-03.31.1: Watermill -03.32.1: Water powered saw-mill -79.5.1660: 'Panayoula' or apron, part of Sarakatsani woman's costume embroidered with the 'tree of life'</p>	<p>Fotini Oikonomidou-Botsiou Valia Amoiridou Evangelia Sofi</p>	<p>Fotini Oikonomidou-Botsiou Valia Amoiridou Evangelia Sofi</p>
<p>Phoinikion Folklore Museum, Thesprotia</p>		<p>Oak tree in the courtyard of the church</p>	<p>Michalis Manos</p>	<p>Basilis Voutsis</p>
<p>Folklore and Historical Museum of Komotini</p>		<p>-4: Bronze sini (disk) engraved with tree patterns -512: Tsevres embroidered with trees -432: Peskiri (face towel) embroidered with trees -279: Front part of a carved wooden chest decorated with trees -278: Part of a carved wooden altar screen with laurel branches</p>	<p>Eleni Sarchossidou Dimitris Vassileiadis</p>	<p>Eleni Sarchossidou Dimitris Vassileiadis</p>
<p>Folklore and Historical Museum of Larissa</p>		<p>- Γ.Μ. 4197: Part of a carved wooden chest decorated with cypresses, flower vases and birds (18th c.) - Γ.Μ. 2467: Loom-woven wool kilim decorated with the 'tree of life' (late 19th c.) - Γ.Μ. 423: Bronze sini with engraved decoration (late 19th c.)</p>	<p>Ageliki Vafeiadaki Lina Moussioni Konstantina Konsta</p>	<p>Ageliki Vafeiadaki Lina Moussioni Konstantina Konsta</p>

Folklore Museum of Aitolokarnania		-Wooden vessels and tools: -Bee hive or grain measure -Skafidi (trough) cut from a tree trunk for kneading bread -Pinakoti (board) cut from a tree trunk for the preparation of bread -Trees of the area	Mary Chryssikopoulou	Mary Chryssikopoulou
Folklore Museum of Kyme		- 1159 : Tsouklos (headdress) (mid-19th c.) - 331 : Banta (embroidery), The engagement (early 20th c.) - 661 : Frame, The Monastery (early 20th c.)	Ioannis Adamopoulos Eleni Mitara	Eleni Mitara
Folklore Museum of the Orestiada and Region		-Traditional rural costumes from Orestiada and region -Traditional agricultural tools -Traditional tools for metal and wood-working	Ioannis Siopidis Paschalis Mavridis	Ioannis Siopidis Paschalis Mavridis
Folklore Association of Eleusis, 'To Adrachti'	Historical and Folklore Museum of Eleusis	-Traditional costume -Pinakoti (wooden board) for bread-making	Elli Laskou Maria Karelou	Elli Laskou Maria Karelou
	A.S. of Eleusis	Propylaia and artesian well at the archaeological site of Eleusis		
Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art		- 2002.020MM.0717 : Forest no.1, by Vassilis Vassilakakis (2001-2) - 2006.235PA.1519 : Simple lessons of perception, by Vassilis Zografos (2006) - 0000.160PHO.1380 : The eagle, by Takis Zerdevas - 0000.002MM.0683 : Shepherd, by Theophilos Hatzimichail - 1933.003MM.0684 : Family of Arvanitovlachs, by Theophilos Hatzimichail (1933) - 1960.272PA.1605 : Trees, by Marios Prassinos (1957-8) - 1961.019PA.0314 : Trunks, by Yiorgos Vakalo (1961) - 1983.015CN.0931 : Forest, by Pavlos (1983) - 1995.202PA.0614 : Arbre sec, by Vladimir Velickovic (1994-1995)	Christina Mavini	-Christina Mavini -Christina Mavini and Maro Psirra (Forest, by Pavlos) -Areti Adamopoulou (Arbre Sec, by V. Velickovic)

National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation	Eynard Mansion	- 'The tree of freedom': a symbolic tree for Rigas Feraios and his struggle	Victor Melas Sophia Peloponnisou-Vassilakou	Sophia Peloponnisou-Vassilakou
	Paxinou – Minotis Museum	- 'The tree of art', a tree laden with fruit, embroidery by Katina Paxinou, based on a drawing by F.G. Lorca, which she called Duente, suggesting, in the poet's view, the idea of Art.	Antigoni Manassi	Antigoni Manassi
Museum of Industrial Olive-Oil Production in Lesvos (Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation)		Olivestone, installation by Joseph Beuys, temporary exhibition	Elia Vlachou Yiorgos Marinopoulos Anna Kallinikidou Eleni Kotsoni	Lucrezia de Domizio Durini
Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive-Oil in Sparta (Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation)		- 3259 : Kylix decorated with olive branches (1st half of the 4th c. BC) -Olive, sculpture by Angelos Panayiotidis - Olive grove with six different varieties of olive tree in the museum courtyard	Elia Vlachou Yiorgos Marinopoulos Anna Kallinikidou Yiannis Kalakos 'PaizoPoreia' group	
Museum of Greek Folk Art	Main Building	- 1687 : Carved wooden chest decorated with buildings, cypresses and the 'tree of life' (18th c.) - 11393 : Silver clasp decorated with a flower pot-'tree of life' (18th-19th c.) - 3134 : Embroidered bridal sheet with scenes from the psiki (wedding procession), birds, flowers, and the 'tree of life' (late 18th-early 19th c.) -The Great Plane Tree, wall-painting by Theophilos Hatzimichail, in which the hero Katsantonis is pictured seated at the foot of the tree (early 20th c.)	Niki Dafni	Niki Dafni Eugenia Dafni

	Mosque of Monastiraki (Tzisdarakaki)	-Painted decoration above the mihrab niche : branches with flowers and leaves in a vase (2nd half of the 18th c.) - A.M. 15011 : Ceramic plate with painted decoration showing branches nested in by pelicans, work of Menas Avramidis (2nd quarter of the 20th c.) - A.M. 14947 : Ceramic bowl incised with branches and pairs of birds, work of Nikos Theodorou (2nd half of the 20th c.)	Eleni Papathoma	Eleni Papathoma
	Annex on 22 Panos Street, Exhibition: 'People and Tools: Views of work in the pre-industrial community'	- A.M. 17017 : Metal rake for gathering olives (20th c.) - A.M. 16130 : Small saw for pruning trees (2nd half of the 20th c.) - A.M. 16802 : Stone hoe for loosening soil (20th c.)	Vassiliki Polyzoï	Vassiliki Polyzoï
Center for Environmental Education of Makrinitisa - Community of Makrinitisa	Museum of Folk Art and History of Pelion - Topalis Mansion	Wooden chests with floral decoration	Gerassimos Tsimbloulis Penelope Tsave Theologos Pardalidis	Gerassimos Tsimbloudis
	Makrinitisa Square	Stone relief, in the central fountain of the square, decorated with a cypress, symbol of eternity (1807)		
	Church of Agios Ioannis Prodromos, Makrinitisa Square	-Stone relief, in sanctuary apse of the church, depicting a flower vase surrounded by cypresses (1806) -Stone relief, at the west end of the church, depicting a cross flanked by cypresses (1806)		
Benaki Museum		- 29003 : Minoan pyxis decorated with the 'tree of life' (12th c. BC) - 7127 : Part of a Coptic fabric depicting Dionysos amidst grape vines (4th-5th c. AD) - 31165 : Wooden chest painted with scene of a couple in a flowering garden (late 18th-early 19th c.)	Maria Christina Yiannoulatou	Sophia Bitsa (pyxis) Maria Christina Yiannoulatou(coptic textile) Maria Karvounaki-Vaporaki (chest)

Benaki Museum - Museum of Islamic Art		<p>-9121: Double wooden doors with the 'tree of life' (2nd half of the 8th c.)</p> <p>-10795: Marble panel with palm tree (late 15th-early 16th c.)</p> <p>-715: Ceramic bowl with scene of a prince between trees (late 12th-early 13th c.)</p>	Maria Christina Yiannoulatou	Fotini Grammatikou
Lychnostatis, The Open-Air Museum of Traditional Life in Crete		<p>-The History of Crete, sculpture carved from a tamarisk tree, work of Franz Pogar (1994)</p> <p>-The History of the Olive Tree, tree about to be carved by a popular artist</p> <p>-The Woman of Crete, sculpture carved from eucalyptus tree, work of Franz Polgar (2001)</p> <p>-Natural trees and plants: sea daffodils, pear trees, olive trees, apricot trees, agave</p>	Yiorgos Adamidis Yiannis Markakis Mary Baritaki	Mary Baritaki Konstantina Nikolopoulou
Museum of the City of Athens - Vouros-Eutaxias Foundation		<p>-Garden of the 'Old Palace' (Vouros and Aphthonidis Mansion) with the palm tree of Queen Amalia</p> <p>-Reconstructive model of Athens in 1842, in which are visible the 'Royal Garden' (now National Garden) next to the 'Palace' (now Parliament), and the 'Old Palace' (Vouros and Aphthonidis residences)</p> <p>-mve_L_Carrey: The Marquis De Nointel, ambassador of Louis XIV, and his entourage in Athens with the Parthenon in the background, oil on canvas, by Jacques Carrey (1674)</p>	Aglaiia Archontidou-Argyri Maria Tsiolaki	Maria Tsiolaki
Museum of Dionysios Solomos and Eminent Zakynthians		<p>-Part of a holly oak beneath which Dionysios Solomos composed the Hymn to Freedom</p> <p>-Drawing which illustrates the tree on Strani Hill, work of Panos Zoupanos</p> <p>-Floral motifs in the museum's collection of crests</p>	Katerina Demeti	Katerina Demeti

Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest	Museum	- ΔΚΣ025 : Part of the petrified trunk of a conifer - ΦΑΒ024 : Mould of an ancient variety of pine cone - ΦΑΒ022 : Impressions of needles of an ancient variety of pine which were captured in layers of volcanic ash 20 million years ago	Nikolaos Zouros Konstantina Bentana	Nikolaos Zouros
	Park of the Petrified Forest of Sigri	-Root network of a petrified conifer -Petrified trunk of a conifer		
Museum of Photography		Slide show	Evangelos Ioakeimidis	Evangelos Ioakeimidis
Nautical Museum of Greece		X/O/750/005 : Map of the Ottoman Empire by the cartographer Gottriep Lopp with the genealogical tree of the Byzantine emperors and the Ottoman sultans (early 18th c.)	Charalambos Tortorelis	Charalambos Tortorelis
Oinoussian Maritime Museum		- 2 : Model of the ship Giovana Lignou and painting by Aristeidis Glykas which depicts the same sailing ship -Chest with tools of a ship-carpenter	Eleni Achliopta	Eleni Achliopta
Peloponnese Folklore Foundation Museum of V. Papantoniou	Historic Center of Nafplion	-The Plane Tree in Syntagma Square in Nauplion -The Sycamore which no longer exists	Popi Zachou-Kalkounou	Popi Zachou-Kalkounou
Averoff Museum of Neohellenic Art, Metsovo		- Δ11 : Inspired by Dodona, by Michalis Manoussakis, acrylic and charcoal on plywood (2001) - 114 : Ravine on Olympus, by Vasilis Ithakissios, oil on canvas - 106 : Landscape with trees, by Agenor Asteriadis, oil on cardboard (1924)	Katerina Stathopoulou	Dimitris Papastamos (Ithakissios, Asteriadis) Lina Tsikouta (Manoussakis)

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Ministry of Culture and Tourism
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Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs
Department of Educational Programs and Communication