

Chapter 4

The British Consuls in the Aegean as Collectors of Antiquities for the British Museum.

The subject of the collection of antiquities has become, in recent years, a popular topic of research. If until a decade ago virtually no research had been done on the link between the consular service and this very challenging time for the history of this country, a number of publications have in the last few years dealt with this subject. If however, the history of some of the individual consuls who have dealt with antiquities has been described, little has been said to the reasons that had brought them, as a category, to engage in such undertakings.

Collecting had always been a prerogative of the English aristocracy, country houses were traditionally furnished and embellished with artifacts purchased and imported from the continent, trophies of journeys and emblems of cultures that had shaped the present. Collecting for the nation was, however, a new concept all together, as relatively new were the institutions themselves that required to acquire such collections.

The concept of national museums had originated on the continent with the ancient Romans and the Greeks, but the institutions themselves had not survived the centuries. Thus since the renaissance, pieces of art, paintings, sculptures and archeological remains, had primarily been the interest of rich private collectors. Princes, monarchs and members of the European aristocracy, had always amassed private collections, but

these were inaccessible to the wider public.¹ In France on the 10 August 1793 the *Musée de la République*, later renamed the Louvre, had opened its doors to the public after an idea of Louis XVI to show the substantial collections amassed by the French royal families through the years. The collections dated back to the times of Charles V, and housed the remarkable art collection started by Francois I, who had had 12 painting brought in from Italy, amongst these, the most famous piece, by Leonardo Da Vinci, La Gioconda.²

The Louvre was, however, by no means the first of such institutions, it had been preceded years before by the British Museum. In London, in fact, the opportunity to establish a national museum had first arisen in 1753 when Sir Hans Sloane had left his collection to the country. Unlike the French one, his was no royal collection, however, Sloane's bequest had coincided with a growing desire to create such a national institution, and despite the initial reluctance of the Government to spend public money in the purchase of a private collection, the acquisition was eventually financed by the creation of a lottery. Sloane's residence was also purchased to house his collection. In 1757 King George II donated the Old Royal Library and, with it, the privilege of copyright receipt. In 1759 the Museum opened for the first time its doors to the public. The so called 'foundation collections' consisted mainly of manuscripts, books and objects of natural history. There were also some antiquities, although the first pieces of recognised international importance in this sense were acquired first in 1772 with the purchase of William Hamilton's collection of Greek vases, and in 1798 when, as a result

¹ Roland and Francois Etienne, *The Search for Ancient Greece* (Thames and Hudson 1992), p. 65.

² A Short History of the Louvre - the Museum, in www.paris.org/Musees/Louvre/musehistory.html.

of the French defeat in Egypt, Britain acquired the Rosetta Stone and the other archeological pieces found with it.

By then, the Louvre had also established itself as a recognised institution of international importance and Britain and France had embarked on a new type of war, this time centred on procuring antiquities for their national institutions. If the first instances of collecting were fairly casual, it was this rivalry with the Louvre that was to provide the impetus for governmental action in favour of the 'British' Museum.

As the British Museum was a new type of institution, from its inception it was decided that its collections were to belong to the nation, and that they would be open to all and free of charge. As an institution, it was intended to promote and encourage scholarship and research. A board of Trustees was set up to secure its future, and to ensure that the Government would continue to care for it. Directly responsible to Parliament, this Board of Trustees included a representative from virtually every branch of government. This resulted in the creation of a powerful organisation able to safeguard and secure the future of the Museum as well as represent its interests at the heart of the country's politics. The Statutes and Rules of the British Museum listed the Trustees in order of importance.

Three principal Trustees:

the Archbishop of Canterbury,

the Lord Chancellor,

the Speaker of the House of Commons;

and twenty one others:

the First Lord of the Treasury, the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, the Bishop of London, the Principal Secretaries of State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord Chief Justice of England, the Master

of the Rolls, the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the President of the Royal Society, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, the President of the Society of Antiquaries, the President of the Royal Academy ...³

This impressive panel, to which were added representatives of the sovereign and members of the families that contributed most to the growth of the Museum, was, by its very nature, able to guarantee the support of almost every sector of public life. Indeed, the number of members of the Government comprising the Board of Trustees was impressive.

Keen to build up a national collection, the British Government came to see this aim both as a sign of national prestige, and as a contribution to the cultural growth of its own population. This desire was reinforced by the spirit of competition with the French and their museum, and in particular by the hostility to Napoleon's aims as both conqueror and collector.

The early nineteenth century was a lawless time, with regard to the collection of antiquities. Laws, regulations and rules, were practically non-existent, and the countries that held the most sought after antiquities were mostly subjugated by foreign powers,

³ *British Museum, Statutes and Rules of the British Museum* (1932), p. 21. There were, in total, 49 Trustees, 24 by office, 1 by appointment of the Crown, 9 by Family appointment and 15 elected. The families appointed were: the Sloane family, 2 trustees; the Cotton family, 2 trustees; the Harley family, 2 trustees (of which, elected in 1813 until 1829, George Canning was one of them); the Townley family, 1 trustee; the Earls of Elgin family, 1 trustee; the Knight family, 1 trustee. There were also 15 elected others. Amongst them we find in 1838-58 William Richard Hamilton, private secretary to Lord Elgin; in 1841 George Granville; in 1855 Lord John Russell; 1856 William Ewart Gladstone MP; in 1857 Spencer Horatio Walpole MP; in 1861 Algernon Duke of Northumberland; in 1863 Benjamin Disraeli MP.

their populations worried more about their future rather than their past. Nothing was impossible, the prerequisites being a good relationship with the local authorities and possibly, an influential position locally.

Although they had opened their national museum later than the British, the French nevertheless showed an incredible determination in using state apparatus to acquire antiquities for their own institution.⁴ Napoleon's invasion of Egypt showed how a well organised government machine could work in favour of such a national institution. When he sailed from France to conquer Egypt in 1798, he carried 'a 167 strong Commission on the Sciences and Arts' together with his army of 31000 men. His, promised to be a cultural conquest, as well as a political one.⁵

⁴ B. Dolan, *Exploring European Frontiers*, pp.187 and 180-1. Dolan explains how:

in the Europe of post -Revolutionary France and early industrial Britain, reflections on how best to think of European identity were imbued with notions of who best represented *the civilised*. ... This was the underlying issue at stake in the contest between Britain and France over the imperial and historical frontier in the Levant. Control over that land and exclusive rights to its 'historical memoirs' was tied to debates over the proper constitution of a 'free government', the benefits of artistic patronage of the arts, and Britain or France's respective mastery over 'orientalism' ... There was an historic association between the civilised status of modern Europe and the legacy of the country in which the principles of modern government were first pronounced. There were also conflicting interests ... which formed the frontier for competing European imperial powers. Hence, British explorers of the ancient lands analysed historical civilisation, not to prove it inherently European, but to lay privileged claim to it by personally identifying themselves - as *British* - with what they hoped to appropriate as their heritage.

⁵ H. Hoock, 'The British State and the Anglo-French Wars over Antiquities, 1798-1858', *The Historical Journal*, 50, I (2007): 49-72, p. 56.

M. Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire, Conquest and Collecting in the East 1750-1850*, (Harper Perennial, 2006), pp. 132-3.

By contrast, Lord Elgin's acquisition of the Parthenon friezes had been the result of his own determination rather than the result of a state managed enterprise.⁶ When Elgin's marbles eventually arrived in London, following their acquisition by the British Museum, a select committee reported in Parliament on how the possession of such works of art contributed to the esteem and dignity of the country:

Your Committee cannot dismiss this interesting subject, without submitting to the attentive reflection of the House, how highly the cultivation of the Fine Arts has contributed to the respect, character, and dignity of every government by which they have been encouraged and how intimately they are connected with the advancement of everything valuable in science, literature and philosophy ... no country can be better adapted than our own to afford an honourable asylum to these monuments of the school of Phidias, and of the administration of Pericles; where, secure from further injury and degradation, they may receive that admiration of homage to which they are entitled and serve in return as models and examples to those who, by knowing how to revere and appreciate them, may learn first to imitate, and ultimately to rival them.⁷

It would, however, have been impossible for Elgin to obtain the marbles if not through his position as Ambassador of Great Britain. It should be stressed that he had received governmental help to collect and ship the cases back to London, indeed it would have been inconceivable for him to organise and pay for the shipment of such fragile and heavy pieces without the support of the Navy. But, at this stage, Elgin had received no financial help.

It took years of negotiation to convince the Government to pay for Elgin's marbles and the select committee report sought to emphasise not only how important

⁶ Jonathan Scott, *The Pleasures of Antiquity*, (Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 219-30.

⁷ 'Extract from the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Earl of Elgin's Collection of Sculptured Marbles, 25 March 1816'. *The Museum of Classical Antiquities*, 1 (1851-55): 403.

their acquisition was, but also how vital the Government's financial support was for the future of the Museum. Although willing to involve itself in the acquisition of antiquities by providing help through a number of governmental agencies, the Government was, at this stage, still little disposed towards direct expenditure. This attitude forced the Trustees to spend a great deal of effort on obtaining grants and support. Where private collectors were limited by their own personal finances, the Museum was entirely reliant on the Treasury, whose annual grants financed all excavations and acquisitions. Sums considered enormous by the Treasury were in reality barely sufficient for the purposes and aims they were destined to, and there were several occasions in which money to acquire particular pieces were denied.

Even though many of the Trustees were themselves part of the Government, in truth, it was still a hard task for them, as a body, to get financial help, harder still for the Museum to convince the relevant individuals of the need to obtain grants for specific purposes. The position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a Trustee, for example, made it difficult for him to refuse financial help to the Museum, but equally it made it necessary for him to impose restrictions on its requests. He had a duty to help the Museum obtaining grants to carry out as many excavations as possible, whilst at the same time, taking account of his wider financial responsibilities. Despite this conflicting position, and the awkwardness of this situation which emerges from his correspondence with the Trustees, the Chancellor's support was of great importance to the Museum. Parsimonious funding by the Chancellor was often followed by the Trustees applying, cap in hand, for more money. A letter dated January 1849 informed him that: 'the amount of the Enclosed estimate will prove to you that the Trustees are endeavouring to

act in accordance with your wishes on the subject of the Museum Grants for the ensuing year...'⁸ However, just one year later, the Trustees were asking for yet more money.

'Sir, I have the honor to enclose you the copy of a minute of our Trustees made at their board on Saturday last, praying your assistance to obtain a sum of money in addition to the £1500 already granted for the present year to enable Mr. Layard to carry out his excavations at Nimrud with increased force'.⁹

This continual struggle for adequate financial support conditioned the Museum's early dealings with the British consuls in the Levant.

*

By the end of the eighteenth century, consuls had already acquired a reputation throughout Europe as collectors of antiquities. Indeed, in 1972, Hermann claimed in his book that 'the British consuls in various parts of Italy during the latter half of the eighteenth century were among the most enterprising seekers after antiquities and

⁸ 17 Jan 1849, B.M.A., Letter book n. 34, fol. 45. In the same letter we read:

'... The Trustees desire me to solicit the favour of a reply to their letter of Nov. 29th regarding the continuance of Archeological researches in Assyria. They earnestly hope for an answer sanctioning their approval ...'

⁹ 13 March 1850, B.M.A., Letter book n. 37, fol. 23.

pictures on behalf of clients in England',¹⁰ and although it is not within the scope of this study to find out at what point consuls in the Levant began to procure antiquities for private collectors, there is evidence of their activity for and on behalf of public museums in the letter books of incoming and outgoing correspondence at the British Museum. These documents also reveal how collaboration between the Museum and the Foreign Office developed over time.

In 1820 Henry Salt, who had been the Levant Company consul at Alexandria since 1815, offered to sell the Museum the collection he had acquired as a result of his excavations and research in the Levant. Salt was the first consul to formally offer pieces of art to the British Museum, however, he found the Government unprepared to finance the purchase of artifacts from private individuals and his offer was refused. Salt's undertakings have been recently described in Maya Jasanoff's book *The Edge of Empire*. Jasanoff explains how Salt was appointed to Alexandria thanks to the indirect patronage of Sir Joseph Banks, then president of the Royal Society, with the Foreign Minister Lord Castlereagh, whom Salt had met after his journey to the East with Lord Valentia. Before leaving for Egypt, Salt visited Banks who, in his capacity as a Trustee,

¹⁰ Frank Herrmann, *The English as Collectors* (1972), p. 162. In his book, Herrmann records how Eastlake, director of the National Gallery, having gone to Italy to purchase a painting, met the hostility of the Florentine government who forbade the sale to a foreign gallery. Herrmann records an entry from Lady Eastlake's diary: '... when this news [of the impossibility of the purchase] reached us and as my husband has a letter from Lord Clarendon to all ministers and consuls to assist him in any difficulty, he took it at once, and has set his Lordship to work to overrule, if possible, the intrigues ...' Herrmann, *The English as Collectors* (1972), p. 311

The episode underlines the use of diplomacy in Italy with the aim of obtaining pieces of art. In Greece, it took some time for the British Museum to achieve the same results.

encouraged him to look for antiquities on behalf of the British Museum. He also received a fairly formal request from the Society of Antiquaries to look for ‘the remaining fragments of the Stone of Rosetta supposed to have been left in the ruins of the Fort St. Julian’. Jasanoff quotes a Foreign Office letter with the following statement: ‘The expense of the undertaking, whether successful or otherwise, ... would be most cheerfully supported by an enlighten’d nation, eager to anticipate its Rivals in the prosecution of the best interests of literature and science’¹¹.

Of course, when it came to it, the Treasury refused to pay and the Trustees were unable to sway a government which had yet to appreciate the potential of the diplomatic service as an agency for the search of antiquities. Even if Banks had believed that he would be able to convince the Government to accept Salt’s antiquities at a price, this was not to be the case. The Trustees would have to educate the Government, and lobby from within, for the prestige and future of the Museum at large. The importance of Salt’s offer was eventually understood when, faced with refusal, he decided to sell his valuable collection to the French. However, perhaps the most representative case of this sort occurred when Salt, once more, offered antiquities to the Museum, on this occasion, the so called Belzoni sarcophagus. Yet again the Government considered the price too high, and the Trustees had to forgo the opportunity to purchase this valuable piece which was instead acquired by the architect and collector Sir John Soane. Despite the details of Salt’s original appointment, and the circumstances by which he had been able

¹¹ F.O. 24/6, fol. 66, in Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 238. For Salt’s story, in the same book see chapter 7, paragraph IV. See also Deborah Manley, Peta Ree, *Henry Salt: Artist, Traveller, Diplomat, Egyptologist*, (London 2001).

to retrieve his Egyptian pieces, it was clearly too early for effective state involvement in the collection of antiquities.

When Salt had offered his collections to the Museum, the possibility of a take-over of the consular service was already under discussion. As an employee of the Levant Company, he had no direct connection with the Government which remained unaware of the substantial opportunities offered to a consul in the Levant in the retrieval and collection of antiquities. The Government seems to have harboured the naive belief that an individual sent to Egypt with a vague agreement and semi-official permission, but without a binding contract to excavate on behalf of the British Museum, and, more importantly, without money paid to him for his undertakings, would eventually surrender his own findings at virtually no cost. There is evidence that Salt used his consular position to gain permission to excavate and, when it came to it, to prevent other individuals from doing the same, as a letter written a few years later reveals:

I am sorry to say in connection with this subject that Mr S.[alt] employed the power entrusted to him by Government entirely for his own advantage and to the exclusion of other parties, engaging in a kind of trading monopoly in conjunction with Sig. Drovetti in a manner not very creditable to either the individuals or their Governments.¹²

So, although Salt had used his official appointment as a consul to excavate the antiquities, when faced by the constant refusal to pay for them, he had turned his back on his country and sold abroad.

¹² Catherwood to Hawkins, 24 August 1835, M.E. Letter book n. 1, new series, fol. 72. Bernardino Drovetti was the French consul in Egypt. Sent there in 1803 by Napoleon, Drovetti had a passion for archeology. He commissioned extensive excavations and came in contact with Belzoni and Salt, often trying to outdo them in the race for antiquities. For a short but detailed history of Drovetti see: www.travellersinegypt.org/archives/2005/04/bernardino_drovetti.html.

When Salt's antiquities were eventually sold to the French, Edward Hawkins, director of the Department of Antiquities at the British Museum, wrote an angry letter to the Foreign Office emphasising how the consular service in the Near East was ideally placed to be used for the procurement of artefacts; he also expressed outrage that Salt's collection had been allowed to be sold to the competing museum.

From some late transactions it would appear that Mr. Salt is not accurately informed of the great interest which is felt in this country for Egyptian Antiquities, and that we have consequently lost many objects of great importance which have been eagerly obtained by French Government. I trust therefore that your Lordship will excuse my bespeaking your influence with Mr. Salt and our other consuls that our national Museum may be enriched by many interesting objects which may be in their power to obtain; and that our collection of Antiquities and of Natural History may be unrivalled, as our opportunities and facilities exceed those of any other Nation.¹³

Salt died in 1828, unable to offer his services to the Museum. Many of his pieces had, sadly, ended up in the Louvre, a considerable part in Turin, his unique sarcophagus had been acquired by John Soane. This had been possible because, although Salt had left England with an appointment from the Foreign Office as consul general, he had had no clear or specific indication that part of his official duties should be to help gather antiquities for the British Museum. He had received informal requests, and had understood these aims as a private appointment from which he expected to earn handsomely. He had invested his private fortune in this adventure, he had overspent, and had been left without money and, when the Government had refused to meet the cost of the collections he had gathered in Egypt, he had been left with little alternative but to sell abroad. However, seven years later, some parts of his collection were still

¹³ 2 November, 1827, F.O. 78/177, fol. 182.

available for sale, by auction, to the highest bidder. The Trustees wrote a letter to the Lords Commissioners of H.M. Treasury:

The collection consists of a large variety of objects of Art, ... the greater part of which are of a character very different, not only from those in Mr Salt's first collection, but from any other already in the Museum ... Many of them illustrate in a singular manner the scientific pursuits of the ancient Egyptians ... but the most singular and perhaps the most valuable part of the Collection is to be found in the papyri, which are written in all the various characters and languages of ancient Egypt ... these are more than one hundred in number and those in the Greek language are evidently of high interest, and it would be a just source of general regret and some reflection on the national character, if these rare and precious documents, after having been collected by the enterprise and judgment of one of our own Countrymen, should be suffered to leave our Metropolis and to enrich the Antiquarian and literary stores of foreign nations¹⁴. In a letter dated August 3, 1833, the Trustees endeavor to point out to your Lordships the importance of adding to the class of antiquities to which the attention of the Learned throughout Europe has been of late years so particularly directed ... An opportunity such as the present cannot be expected to occur again within a short period, or indeed at all.¹⁵ We are not likely to have any European resident in Egypt whose means of acquisition and zeal in acquiring will equal those of the late Mr. Salt and if we had, the prohibition to excavate now strictly enforced by Ibrahim *Pasha*, would prevent his success. The Trustees do not therefore hesitate to represent to your

¹⁴ There is evidence that the manuscripts were eventually purchased. An entry dated 8 August 1835 in the Committee Meeting book n. 14, stated: 'Mr Forshall was authorised to employ Messrs Colnaghi to unroll and secure the Papyri recently purchased at Mr Salt's sale, and also those bought from Mr Sams last year'. In B.M.A., Committee, vol. 14, Sept. 1834 to Nov. 1835, fol. 4057.

¹⁵ The letter of 3 August 1833, also to the Lords of the Treasury, in which the Trustees tried to convince the Treasury to give the Museum the funds to buy a collection of Egyptian antiquities containing a very rare white marble sarcophagus, reads: 'Your Lordships are aware that for the last half century, the learned of Europe have been actively engaged in the investigation of the manners, art and literature of the ancient Egyptians, and that several of the continental States, have made liberal contributions out of their public funds in aid of these researches, and the Government of France, Holland and Sardinia, in particular, have severally expended large sums in forming collections of such ancient remains of Egyptian art as tend to elucidate the civilisation of that extraordinary people'. To the Treasury, 3 August, 1833, B.M.A. Letter Book, Volume n. 4, fols 34-7.

Lordships in the strongest manner the possibility of securing for the nation such part of this Collection as are most important with a view to improve the Museum Gallery of Egyptian Antiquities ...¹⁶

In the same year, and perhaps the connection is not a coincidence, a new opportunity arose for the acquisition of antiquities when Giovanni D'Athanasì,¹⁷ who had worked as an agent for Salt, wrote to the British Museum with a proposal to undertake excavations in Egypt:

I should feel competent if it be here desired, to undertake an engagement to supply the British Museum with the most beautiful specimen of Egyptian Antiquities, so as in five years to put it in condition to rival the Museum at Paris; on condition that I should each of these years be supplied with the sum of Fifteen Hundred Pounds Sterling, and also with letters of recommendation to the Consul General of Great Britain in Egypt, in order to procure the aid and protection from the local Government which does not permit all who come to make researches ... At the end of each year I should review all that had been collected. It is well known that in making these researches double and triple specimens of the same sort are found, which would be superfluous for one Museum, and which might be advantageously sold by Auction, if they were not wanted to supply any other Gallery in the kingdom. Out of this surplus might be paid not only half of the amount of the five years outlay, but also the salaries of those employed ... If before coming to any determination on the matter, it were desired to make any references respecting myself and my qualifications, I would adduce the correspondence I had with Mr Salt and which will show the zeal and activity displayed in all my proceedings. I would redouble my exertions and my zeal if I were to be appointed to this enterprise, for it would then be my object to obtain a certain renown and perhaps honourable distinction ...

I hope that the Noblemen and Gentlemen, Trustees of the British Museum, will after taking my proposition into consideration, consider it a fair one, and likely to be highly advantageous to the country, and that such an opportunity is not likely to occur again.

If it is desired to make enquiries respecting myself ... I can refer to persons worthy of credit who knew me in Egypt ... namely Lord Prudhoe, ... [Consuls] Mr. Robert Hay and Mr. Wilkinson, not

¹⁶ To the Treasury, 17 June, 1835, B.M.A. Letter Book, Volume n. 6, fols 75-8.

¹⁷ In correspondence, D'Athanasì's name is referred to also as Athanasi, Attanasi and there is also the variant chosen by Jasanoff: Yanni Athanasi. His first name appears also as Jannai, Gianni or, as he signed himself and the variant chosen for this book, Giovanni.

to mention a great number of others who are at present not in London ... I have decided upon making the proposal after having been a long time urged to it by many English Travelers who had regretted to see their National Museum in need of many fine articles which went to furnish the Galleries of other Countries.¹⁸

D'Athanasi made it clear that should his proposal be rejected, he would turn to France as Salt had done before him. Worried by the prospect of a second refusal by the Government, and a second ideological defeat to the French, Hawkins sent a circular, with copy to the Lords of the Treasury:

As the Government of this Country has never, I believe, engaged in undertakings of this nature, it [is] not unlikely that the offer of Athanasi might be declined if left to its own unsupported advocacy ... I shall therefore be much obliged by your favouring me with your sentiments in regard of the following points. How far it is reasonable to expect, that excavations will produce Objects commensurate in value with the probable expense? Is Athanasi competent to the undertakings he proposes? Is he trustworthy? What is the more effectual mode of securing a proper expenditure of the money and of the certain transfer to England of all the objects discovered? If there are any other points to which you think the attention of the Government should be directed, I will thank you to state them.¹⁹

Hawkins hoped, by taking this precaution, that he might help to convince the Treasury, both as individuals and as a body, of the importance of financing the enterprise. A number of letters thus followed, all replying scrupulously to the points made by Hawkins, and essentially confirming the success and competence of D'Athanasi's previous undertakings, as well as his likelihood of finding more.

Hay replied, in a detailed letter, that the proposal was sensible and that D'Athanasi was indeed a trustworthy professional. He suggested a daily record of all people employed

¹⁸ Proposition of Giovanni D'Athanasi to the Trustees of the British Museum, 11 July 1835, M.E., Letter Book n. 2, old series, 1826-60, fol. 118.

¹⁹ Hawkins, Circular, 18 Aug. 1835, M.E., Letter book n. 1, new series, fol. 68.

and objects found, even of things ‘insignificant in appearance’.²⁰ On behalf of the Lords of the Treasury, Maddox also replied in support of D’Athanasī’s proposal, regretting the lack of support for Salt at the time of his first proposal.

I cannot but lament the lateness of the day at which this Country turns its attention to Egypt, and that it is only now, when so much has been excavated and so many valuable relics sent to all parts of the World, that we are about to begin. From 1816 to 1820 was the harvest time of discovery and Mr. Salt neglected when he should have been assisted, had the sole honour of forming what might and ought have been a British Collection of Egyptian Antiquities, but the narrow heartlessness of, I suppose, a mistaken economy drove his matchless Museum to the Capital of our Rivals.²¹

These sentiments were reinforced by those of Algernon Prudhoe from the Admiralty, who highlighted the successes of previous consuls in Egypt in collecting antiquities. He also spoke highly of D’Athanasī and suggested that the Government should go ahead with this plan.

It is reasonable to expect that the Objects found will far exceed in value the expense of labour employed - for such has been the result of three Collections made by Mr. Salt and in those made by Drovetti, the French consul, and Anastasy the Swedish Consul at Alexandria ...

You ask is he trustworthy? It is not likely that one more trustworthy will be found, at the same time I would not place the same confidence in a Greek as in an Englishman ...

The only precaution to secure a proper expenditure of Money, and transfer of all objects found to England, in addition to a clear and binding agreement - will be to place the entire control of Agent and Work in the Resident or Consul General in Egypt, and let him alone draw for money, and supply to Yanni the necessary funds.

The *Pasha* of Egypt has always been jealous of granting permission to excavate, but he will have no hesitation to grant such a permission to the British Government ...

Many valuable objects might be obtained with comparatively little cost.

Should the work be undertaken, two thirds at least of the cost of transport might be saved by the assistance of the Navy.²²

²⁰ Hay to Hawkins, 20 August 1835, M.E., Letter book n. 1, new series, fol. 69.

²¹ Maddox to Hawkins, 28 Aug. 1835, M.E., Letter book n. 1, new series, fols 63 and 75 (copy).

²² Prudhoe to Hawkins, 21 Aug. 1835, M.E., Letter book n. 1, new series, fols 59 and 70.

Hawkins had made an intelligent tactical move. By asking the Lords for their opinion on the matter in fact, he had indeed secured their vote without specifically asking for it. Thus when it came to voting for the very serious matter of financial support to the Museum, a point on which, we have seen, many previous collections had been lost, this time the funds were granted.

Prudhoe's suggestion for collaboration with the Navy was eventually to prove invaluable, since it saved money which could be diverted toward more excavations, and it showed a willingness to spare funds, which remained a matter of concern for the Government.

D'Athanasī had timed his offer to coincide with the general reorganisation of the consular service by the Foreign Office and he encountered a willingness to consider new roles for its consuls in the Levant. Moreover, after two defeats to the French, it had become a matter of pride for the Government to acquire antiquities for its own institution, albeit, at as little cost as possible. Employing the consuls in their official capacity gave them just this opportunity. Instructing them to participate in the furnishing of the national museum was quite a different matter from paying for antiquities found by an independent individual, and their reward did not necessarily need to be financial.

Following D'Athanasī's suggestion, the Trustees wrote to consuls Hay and Wilkinson and to other consuls resident in places where D'Athanasī had previously excavated, to ask their opinion on his character and capacities as an archaeologist.²³ Wilkinson replied that 'it is much more advantageous to excavate than to purchase

²³ Their correspondence regarding this point is copious, see Letter book n. 1, new series, fols 58 and passim.

Antiquities. That as Signor Yanni was trusted with the management of these matters and with the expenditure of the money employed for the purpose of excavating ... every reason to be contented with his conduct was found by Mr Salt ...'²⁴ He went on to give practical and financial advice on the cost and locations for the excavations, and to point out that, as D'Athanasi himself had suggested, part of the expense might be recovered by selling the surplus and duplicated in an auction in London:

I do not hesitate in saying that I consider no one to be equally capable of superintending, directing and fixing upon the place for the excavations that may be made in that Country ... Every object, every duplicate, and all that is found, must belong to the British Government, unless it be deemed more advisable to have them all sent to England and to sell them in London, which indeed I should think more profitable, the expense of freight being also taken into consideration.²⁵

When the decision to employ D'Athanasi was eventually taken, it became necessary to contact a consul to monitor and support his activities. So in 1835, as a result of his proposal, the British Museum first employed an agent to excavate on its behalf, using consuls to monitor the excavations, collect the pieces, and pay D'Athanasi for his work.

In his correspondence with Hawkins, Lord Maddox had underlined the additional advantages that British diplomats might provide in obtaining the permission from Mohammed Ali, the Egyptian *Pasha*. In the same document he had stated that 'it is of great moment that our Consul should be on good terms with His Highness, otherwise the attempt is futile'.²⁶ Maddox thus specifically recognised the importance of the consuls as representatives of the British Government. This occasion marked a fundamental change in the way the Museum operated. Whilst it had previously been the

²⁴ Wilkinson to Hawkins, 4 August 1835, M.E., Letter book n. 1, new series, fol. 67.

²⁵ Wilkinson to Hawkins, 4 August 1835, M.E., Letter book n. 1, new series, fol. 67.

²⁶ Maddox to British Museum, 28 Aug. 1835, M.E., Letter book n. 1, new series, fols 63 and 75.

passive recipient and occasional purchaser of private collections, or even, as in the case of Elgin, of collections purchased as the result of private initiative with state help, it had on this occasion become the proactive agency it had set itself to be, actively promoting the discovery, study and collection of archaeological remains.

The episodes of Salt's collection had brought the potential use of the consular service as an agency for the collection of antiquities to the attention of the Trustees; however, although the Foreign Office reorganisation of the consular service in the Aegean had already commenced, at that stage, the extent of collaboration that the consuls could offer remained unclear.

It certainly was not hard for the British consuls to obtain antiquities, due in part to the deference and respect that their official position inspired in the local populations. Under the Levant Company organisation, they had tended to pursue the collection of artefacts as a hobby, which might bring occasional financial benefits from the sale of pieces to private collectors; their contact with the Museum was, at this stage, sporadic. However, the Foreign Office reorganisation of the consular service radically reformed the consular life style and salaries, forcing the consuls to seek alternative means of income, and it was for this reason, and at this stage, that communication with the Museum inevitably became more frequent.

Contact between the British Museum and the consuls seems to have been initially conducted on a private basis. The consuls did not have a duty to mention their archeological activities in their official reports to the Foreign Office, but their existence was well known by the Secretary of State, who authorised the British Museum to send

letters for consuls in the Foreign Office bag.²⁷ Whilst the Foreign Office did not identify archeology as one of the tasks of its diplomats, and no mention of such activity enters the official correspondence at this stage, it was, however, prepared to let its consuls spend time in their retrieval. Permission for leave of absence from their duties was also granted to dedicate time to the excavation of remains.

Consuls could only move once they had been granted permission by the ambassador, whose role in the procurement of antiquities was thus fundamental. The obtaining of a firman to excavate, collect and export the pieces, depended very much upon delicate negotiations conducted directly between the ambassador at Constantinople and the Sultan. This point is well exemplified in a letter from the Trustees to the Earl of Aberdeen.

The Trustees confide in Sir Stratford Canning for the employment of such good offices with the Turkish government as may be necessary to obtain the requisite facilities for the accomplishment of the objects of the expedition.²⁸

In this respect, when it came to Greek antiquities, the British had an advantage over the French, whose support for Egyptian independence had effectively lost them the sympathy of the Sultan.

The gradual weakening of the Ottoman Empire had made it increasingly reliant on foreign support and this strengthened the British position. The continued gratitude of the Sultan ensured the possibility of excavating, collecting and exporting antiquities.

²⁷ 27 Feb. 1852, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 41, fol. 29.

²⁸ The Trustees to the Earl of Aberdeen, 10 Aug. 1843, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 23, fol. 25.

Several of the ambassadors sent to the Porte in the period between 1820 and 1860 played fundamental roles in the acquisition of pieces for the British Museum.²⁹ Lord Elgin had obtained the Parthenon marbles, and Stratford Canning had not only encouraged Layard to make excavations but had also gained permission from the Turkish authorities, and had privately financed the excavation and transport of pieces destined to the Museum. Indeed ambassadorial intercession remained a fundamental part of the process of procurement of antiquities as late as 1860.

... I am now informed by Mr Salzmann, who has a joint interest with Mr Biliotti in the excavations adverted to above, that the Vizierial letter which has been received ..., and which is a document of inferior authority to a Firman, is comparatively ineffective; and that, to enable them to proceed satisfactorily, it is necessary that they should have a Firman authorising them to excavate and remove antiquities from Rhodes, Cyprus and the Turkish Islands in the Archipelago. Under these circumstances, I have to request, on behalf of the Trustees of the British Museum, that Lord John Russell will be pleased to give such directions as may lead, if possible, to the issue of the desired Firman by the Porte.³⁰

²⁹ B.M.A., C.T. Newton, 'Excavations and Discoveries at Calymnos made in November 1854, by Direction of Lord Stratford De Redcliffe, H.B.M. Ambassador at Constantinople', pp. 4-5. '... It appeared to me that Calymnos ... presented greater number of promising spots for excavations, than any island I had yet visited. I took an early opportunity of submitting my views on this subject to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Stratford De Redcliffe. In mentioning that name so long associated with our most important archeological discoveries in the East, it is scarcely necessary for me to add how deeply we are indebted to Lord Stratford for those inestimable acquisitions, the Lycian, Bodrum and Assyrian antiquities, by which the British Museum has been of late years enriched ... Immediately on receiving my report on Calymnos ... Lord Stratford with that promptitude and liberality with which he has ever promoted archeological enterprise, obtained the necessary firman from the Porte to enable me to excavate, and placed ample funds at my disposal. With these means I set to work in November 1854'.

³⁰ Anthony Panizzi to Edmund Hammond, Foreign Office, 2 Feb. 1860, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 4, second series, fols 372-3.

The initial involvement of the consuls seems to have been sought in order to save money on the employment of local agents, both to collect information, and to assist in the excavation and shipment of pieces of art.

The Trustees have received from Mr. Sloane, Chancellor of His Majesty's Consulate in Egypt, the present of a Colossal Figure of Sesostris, reported to the Trustees upon good authority to be of the best style of Egyptian Workmanship, and to be of great historical interest having been particularly mentioned by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus. The size of the statue, which far exceeds any work of ancient art at present in this country, being upwards of thirty five feet in height, would render it an object of general admiration, if transported to this Metropolis. But as the conveyance of a statue of so great Bulk and weight must necessarily be attended with considerable cost, the Trustees before they endeavour to obtain the sanction of His Majesty's Government to the removal of the Figure, think it proper to procure an Estimate of the charge which would be incurred by its transport ... The information which the Trustees seek, can of course be furnished only by Persons resident in Egypt, and the Trustees would feel themselves indebted to Your Lordship if Your Lordship would call the attention of His Majesty's Consul General at Alexandria to the subject, and request him to supply at his earliest convenience, the particulars I have specified ... A rough calculation of the expense of removing the statue to Alexandria was made some years ago by Jannai D'Athanasi, a Greek, who is now in Egypt, having recently returned thither from this Country. Several English Travelers who have become acquainted with D'Athanasi, speak highly of his Character and Ability; he was extensively and successfully employed under the late Mr Salt and under Mr Barker in making excavations, and they appear to have placed great confidence in his integrity. Colonel Campbell³¹ might probably obtain useful aid from him on this occasion.³²

Governmental help in the procurement of antiquities seems instead to have begun initially with the involvement of the Navy in 1835, following Prudhoe's suggestion that naval vessels be used to transport the results of D'Athanasi's researches, it was extended to the contribution of naval personnel for their excavation and collection. However, this was no great gain, as the same had been done in the past for Elgin.

³¹ Colonel Richard Campbell was consul at Rhodes between 1853 and 1862.

³² The Trustees to Viscount Palmerston, 10 Dec. 1835, B.M.A., Letter Book Volume n. 7, fols 66-9.

Economic considerations continued to be a matter of primary concern: collaboration with the Admiralty had greatly reduced the cost of transporting antiquities back to Britain, but Custom House duty remained an obstacle to their import. On more than one occasion this tax had prevented the Museum from accepting gifts in antiquities. Consul Robert Hay had attempted to offer the Museum the antiquities he had found in Greece in 1838, but he was compelled to withdraw the offer when he attempted to pass the objects through the Custom House.

Mr Hawkins ... begged to call the attention of the Trustees to the circumstances which have induced Mr Hay to depart from his original intention of presenting them to the Museum. These circumstances Mr Hawkins represented to be the delay trouble and expense in passing such objects through the Custom House, and he suggested that it would be good policy to adopt such regulations as would encourage rather than obstruct the introduction of Monuments of Antiquity into the Country.³³

This episode prompted the Trustees, in the same meeting, to discuss and draft a proposal addressed to the Treasury aimed at eliminating altogether the tax on the importing of antiquities to England destined to a public museum.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a Draft of a Letter to the Lords of the Treasury respectfully suggesting to their Lordships whether it might not be expedient to repeal the duty which is at present chargeable upon Monuments of Antiquity and objects of early art, and to give greater facilities to the importation of objects which without competing with the products of our native industry tend to the encouragement of art, science and literature.³⁴

It was swiftly followed by an official letter to the Treasury.

My Lords, I am directed by the Trustees to bring under the consideration of your Lordships the expediency of removing so far as is possible the Custom House duties and obstructions which at present prevent the free importation of Antique Vases, Statues, Bronzes and other objects of ancient

³³ B.M.A., 27 Jan. 1838, Committee, volume 16, May 1837 to Oct. 1838, fols 4695 and 4696; see also List of Papers Sent to British Ministers and Consuls Abroad by the British Museum in 1862.

³⁴ B.M.A., 27 Jan. 1838, Committee, volume 16, May 1837 to Oct. 1838, fols 4695 and 4696.

art as well as of casts and impressions taken therefrom ... It is so clearly good policy to encourage the introduction into the country of the best examples and models in design that the Trustees do not doubt the readiness of Your Lordships to promote to the utmost the object which they have in view.³⁵

Custom House duty on antiquities was eventually eliminated as a result of these letters, and with it, also the need to inspect the cases at the Custom House, a practice which had on more than one occasion caused damage to the goods inspected. It followed that cases of antiquities entering the country and directed to the British Museum were delivered free of duty to the Museum, to be inspected *in loco* by a Customs official together with an expert from the Museum.³⁶

*

There is evidence that, by 1840, the Foreign Office was passing the Museum the names of consuls appointed in the Levant. Indeed, later communications even included copies of dispatches that might be of relevance and by 1862 they included lists of papers sent to British Ministers and Consuls abroad.³⁷ The Museum would contact consuls on their appointment, prior to their departure for the Levant. When Edmund Lyons, consul-general at Athens, left Greece, the Trustees wrote to thank him for 'the frequent instances of your attention to their wishes and interests while you have been residing in

³⁵ 15 March 1838, B.M.A., Letter book n. 12, fol. 41.

³⁶ To the Treasury, 2 July 1855, B.M.A., Letter book n. 48, fols 14-15.

³⁷ B.M.A., Minutes of Sub Committees, vol. 3, p. 1315.

Greece'.³⁸ They had already contacted his successor, Thomas Wyse, with the intention of obtaining information regarding a particular statue.

Understanding that you are about to proceed as H.M.'s Minister to the court of Athens, the Trustees have directed me to bring these facts under your notice ... and they will consider themselves under an especial obligation if you should be able to obtain and will communicate to them any satisfactory information respecting the statue above mentioned.³⁹

Wyse, who was evidently still unfamiliar with these matters, replied:

It is contrary to the laws of Greece for works of art to be sent out of the country, so that even were the information respecting the statue belonging to Mr. Alby such as to induce the Trustees to desire its acquisition, it would not be advisable to enter upon a negotiation for the purchase, with the prospect that any application to the Greek government to be permitted to transport the statue to England would in all probability be unsuccessful. With reference to the marble sarcophagus, the same difficulty occurs ...⁴⁰

The Trustees thanked Wyse for his response, leaving him to his duties. Six years later they contacted him again:

The Trustees are most anxious to obtain if possible, any original marble fragments once belonging to the Parthenon Sculptures as they might be useful to connect some of the Museum fragments with their proper figures. The Trustees feel assured that upon their request, you will not omit any opportunity of obtaining such fragments, and desire me therefore to draw your attention to the subject.⁴¹

Wise eventually came to realise that there was little purpose in obstructing the Trustees in their hunt for archeological pieces. In 1857 he himself informed them that

³⁸ 15 Feb. 1849, B.M.A., Letter book n. 34, fols 126-7.

³⁹ 14 Feb. 1849, Letter book n. 34, fols 128-30.

⁴⁰ 6 Oct. 1849, B.M.A., Letter book n. 36, fols 42-3.

⁴¹ 4 Jan. 1856, B.M.A., Letter book n. 48, fols 158-60.

excavations could be made at Mycenae ‘with a view to the discovery of Antiquities’.⁴²

By this stage it appears that consuls were being employed to report on the movements of their French colleagues in relation to antiquities, providing the British Museum with a means of monitoring their rival’s progress in acquisitions.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of a ... copy of a dispatch from Mr. Crowe, H.M. Consul General at Tripoli by which the Trustees are made acquainted with the proceedings of the French Vice Consul at Bengasi in collecting and removing sculptures from the cities of Cirenaica.⁴³

*

If Greece had provided Britain with the greatest examples of archeological remains the country could have desired, the Greeks had learned a lesson. No effort had been spared in Athens to stop the removal of the sculptures from the Parthenon, nor in the following decades, indeed up to the present day, to secure their return. At a conference in 1827 the newly established Greek state banned further exports of antiquities from their country⁴⁴. In 1833 they established a Greek Archeological Service, and a law for the control and exportation of antiquities was passed in 1834.⁴⁵ Egypt followed suit the year after, when

⁴² Panizzi to the Lords of HM Treasury, 7 April 1857, B.M.A., Letter book n. 1, second series, fols 128-9. ‘... The Trustees being led to believe that objects of great interests may be obtained, + important discoveries made by the search proposed, + the amount required being inconsiderable, they would recommend the proposition to Your lordships’ favourable consideration + request that you will be pleased to authorise the expenditure of a sum not exceeding five hundred pounds for the purpose of carrying so desirable a project into execution.’

⁴³ To Palmerston, 28 Nov. 1848, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 33, fol. 135.

⁴⁴ Etienne, *The Search for Ancient Greece*, p. 88: The protection of antiquities.

⁴⁵ Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 383 n. 79.

in 1835 Muhammad Ali ‘issued an ordinance forbidding the export of antiquities altogether, and proposing the establishment of a museum in Cairo’.⁴⁶

The Greek Archeological Society was founded in 1837 and in 1846, once again anticipating the British in their archeological efforts, the French opened the first European school of archeology in Athens: The French School of Athens⁴⁷. It was not until 1885 that the British Archeological School was founded, three years after the American one. The opening of the schools of archeology represented a positive step forward in the excavation and study of antiquities in Greece. Following the 1834 law in fact, and to an extent as a result of the public outrage that the removal of the Parthenon marbles had provoked across Europe, the future of archeology in Greece was going to be in and for Greece. The schools of archeology were, and remain, scholarly centres of research, promoting archeological excavations and the study of Greek culture, history

⁴⁶ Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 299.

⁴⁷ And indeed the scope seemed to be precisely that: to precede the British in any of their archeological efforts. This is even confirmed in the history section of the site of the French Archeological School of Athens:

Ces deux motivations expliquent le décret de fondation de septembre 1846. Il est né de la volonté des ‘politiques’: l’ambassadeur de France en Grèce, Piscatory, et le ministre grec Colettis, qui avaient tissé des liens pendant la guerre d’Indépendance, voulaient conforter les intérêts du ‘clan’ francophile contre l’influence des Anglais, au point que, pour l’historien de l’EFA, dire que ‘l’École française est une création de l’Angleterre’ ne relève pas tout à fait du paradoxe. Le ‘complot’ athénien reçoit l’appui en France du ministre de l’Instruction Publique, de Salvandy, gagné au philhellénisme, et jouit du soutien des milieux intellectuels: Sainte-Beuve, dès 1841, formule l’idée d’un établissement français en Grèce, et, en 1845, l’Académie des Beaux-Arts autorise des pensionnaires de la Villa Médicis à Rome à gagner Athènes pour y étudier les antiquités’

École Française d’Athènes, 1846-70, ‘Les circonstances d’une naissance’ at http://www.efa.gr/histoire/histoire1846_02.htm.

and archeology at large. The results of their excavations were, from then on, destined to remain in Greece. Some foreign schools were indeed allowed to take small, representative pieces: 'small pots, terracottas and small metal objects' but they couldn't choose which ones. 'Small representative pieces from excavations in Crete (Knossos, Praisos and other things collected by Evans and now in the Ashmolean) and the mainland (excavations at Artemis Orthia near Sparta and at Perachora near Corinth) reached museums in the UK ... with the principal object of forming 'teaching collections' for archaeology students. A practice that continued until the second world war, when it seems to have stopped altogether'.⁴⁸

But these exports were undertaken with the 'express permission' of the Greek Archeological Service and for educational purposes only. Indeed, no large pieces left Greece after that time, and certainly no sculptures.

The law forbidding the export of antiquities from Greece was seen as a deterrent by any honest official, and together with a similar prohibition on the export of Egyptian

⁴⁸ Quotation from an e mail from the Director of The British School at Athens Dr. James Whitley.

For more reference see his article 'Classical archaeology and British identity: the role of the British School at Athens' *Pharos: Journal of the Netherlands Institute in Athens*, XI (2003): 95-111.

remains,⁴⁹ it caused the focus of archaeological attention to shift to the one area of the classical world not protected by law, the Aegean. We have seen how this part of the Ottoman Empire had been retained under Ottoman control when the boundaries of the Greek state were defined. Indeed, from this point onward, a handful of small islands in the Aegean archipelago came to be perceived as an essential source of material for the European museums. In 1835, the Navy commenced a collaboration with the British Museum with the aim of making a survey of the Grecian Archipelago:

...The part at present under examination being the Western Coast of Asia Minor from the Troad to Rhodes, an interval abounding with classical remains and at present very superficially explored, because the investigators had always made these searches in fear of tyrannical Aghas; that with an English Vessel of War in sight, the Collectors might now without difficulty measure the Temples, copy the inscriptions, dig the remain, and sketch the Scenery; and that the opportunity seemed to be one of adding to the Classical Antiquities of the Country which ought not to be lost.⁵⁰

The survey, completed in 1839, emphasised the archaeological potential of the region and indicated it as a rich source of remains. The unstable political state of the Aegean

⁴⁹ To the Treasury, 17 June, 1835, B.M.A. Letter Book, Volume n. 6, fols 75-8. ‘We are not likely to have any European resident in Egypt whose means of acquisition and zeal in acquiring will equal those of the late Mr. Salt and if we had, the prohibition to excavate now strictly enforced by Ibrahim *Pasha*, would prevent his success.’

See also the letter sent by Catherwood to Hawkins, 24 August 1835, M.E. Letter book n. 1, new series, fol. 72. ‘Government is not perhaps aware that the Pasha of Egypt for some time past, has put a stop to all excavations by private individuals, and the only works of that kind publicly carried on when I quitted Egypt in 1833 where in Thebes and on account of Ibrahim Pasha who is forming an extensive though not a very choice collection ...’ and that by Lord King to Hawkins, 20 Sept. 1835, M.E. Letter book n. 1, new series, fol. 79. ‘An order was issued by the Pasha’s Government forbidding any excavations on the part of any but its own agents, how far this may be enforced now I am not aware, it certainly was acted upon at the time.’ See also: Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, ch. 9, pp. 299-301.

⁵⁰ B.M.A., Committee, volume 14, Sept. 1834 to Nov. 1835, fol. 4057.

contributed to making the area a particularly fertile source of antiquities for the British Museum, since the diminishing power of the Ottoman Empire made it difficult for the Sultan to deny the necessary permissions to the European powers. More significantly, as Russia became increasingly concentrated on the reduction of his territory, the Sultan sought to buy support and military help from his European allies. The *Porte* thus showed little interest in preventing the excavation and export of artefacts from the Aegean territories.

By 1840, the connections between the British Museum, the Foreign Office and the Admiralty had strengthened enough for the Admiralty to offer the Museum advice on the timing of approaches towards the collection of particular pieces. In 1839 the Egyptian pasha Muhammed Ali had waged a campaign against the Ottoman Empire, and the joint intervention of Britain with Russia, Austria and Prussia, in favour of the *Porte* had forced his retreat from Crete and Syria. The empire's position and integrity were safe,⁵¹ and at the Admiralty it was believed that the role played by the British was likely to make the Ottoman authorities inclined to a display of gratitude. Precedent for such a display had already been established in 1798, when the British had helped the Sultan to defeat the French in Egypt and were presented with land at Constantinople upon which to build their embassy. On this occasion, it was felt that Britain could ask permission to obtain the remains of the ancient temple of Halicarnassus, whose marble lions had been built into the walls of the castle at Bodrum on the Aegean coast of the Turkish mainland.

⁵¹ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, p. 281.

[insert illustration 4:1 here - landscape]

Charles Thomas Newton with colossal lion removed from castle wall at Bodrum

...No moment has appeared so auspicious as the present for obtaining for our Museum the Mausoleum Marbles at Halicarnassus (Boudroune), built here and there, some with the Sculpture outside and some with it inside in the castle walls. They are the remains of one of the Seven Wonders of the world, and Mr Banks who saw them pronounces them to be superior to the Elgin and Figaleian Sculptures. In 1816 Mr. Banks obtained a firman to have these marbles removed from the Castle walls ... The order however was so vaguely worded that the *Pashaw* [sic] who commanded at Boudroune refused to permit the marbles to be removed.

In 1818 Capt. Isby and I being at Constantinople, offered to Sir Robert Liston our Ambassador (provided he procured us a firman), 'to remove these marbles at our own expense, and present them gratuitously to the British Museum'. We could not however persuade Sir Robert to comply with our request, and thus failed the second attempt to obtain these Treasures. Now seems to be the time to make the third effort, for the capture of Acre is as likely to dispose the Sultan to grant us a favour just now, as the capture of Egypt was favourable to Lord Elgin in obtaining the concession of the 'Elgin Marbles' with this difference that we shall most likely obtain these marbles for nothing - whereas both the Elgin and Figaleian Sculptures were purchased at a considerable cost to the country, and if our fleet winter in Marmoria [sic] Bay they will be so very near to Boudroune that a steamer could be sent for them and they might be in England in a few months ... The Turks set no value on these Antiquities and would, if asked, as readily permit their removal as they did the 'Elgin' and 'Phigaleian' ... We may never have such a chance as the present of obtaining these Marbles and now if we get them as a compliment for the capture of Acre, they will be doubly associated with Chivalrous and Classical Recollections.⁵²

The excavations at Bodrum did not take place until over a decade later, when Charles Thomas Newton began the process of removing the lions from the walls of the castle.

⁵² Capt. James Mangles to Capt. Francis Beaufort of the Admiralty, 1 Dec. 1840, M.E., Letter Book n. 9 old series, fol. 3465.

As the collaboration between the Admiralty, the Foreign Office and the Museum grew, so did the role of the Navy in offering passages to and from Britain, and in helping the consuls move among the islands.

Mr. Fellows⁵³ ... offers to proceed to Xanthus for the purpose of aiding in the removal of the Antiquities discovered by him in that neighbourhood, on condition that he receives a free passage out and home again in some of H.M. ships or packets. The Trustees have no doubt that the Naval Officer superintending the operation would find the presence of Mr Fellows, who has twice visited the spot, of much service ... also in pointing out other inscriptions and antiquities which might escape the notice of any one unaccustomed to archeological researches. The Trustees will therefore feel gratified to learn that your Lordships are enabled to provide for Mr. Fellows' passage in the manner which he desires.⁵⁴

Whilst initial contacts had been made exclusively to save on the cost of transport, over time they grew into a real collaboration between the Museum, the Admiralty and the Foreign Office with the aim of gaining information, collecting artefacts and remains, and transporting them to England. As early as 1840 this seemed to be relatively effective:

I am directed by the Trustees to transmit a copy of the correspondence which has taken place with the Foreign Office on the subject of the Antiquities at Xanthus and I am to request that Your Lordships will give such instructions to the naval officer commanding on the station as may prepare him for the immediate removal of the Antiquities, when the necessary firman has been obtained by H.M.

Ambassador at Constantinople.⁵⁵

The Trustees have, through H.M. ministers in Greece, obtained permission to take casts of several sculptures discovered of late years at Athens. The casts already made, fill seventeen cases and are in the charge of the British Consul there, together with a case of books also intended for the Museum. It

⁵³ Sir Charles Fellows (1799-1860) was an archaeologist and traveller and was responsible for discovering the ruins at Xanthus.

⁵⁴ To the Admiralty, 14 Oct. 1841, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 19, fols 106-7.

⁵⁵ 15 October 1840, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 18, fols 54-5.

would be a saving of expense if these Cases could be conveyed to Malta and thence to England by some of H.M. Vessels and if the conveyance can be accomplished without inconvenience to the naval service. The Trustees will feel obliged by Your Ldsp. giving directions to Sir Edward Owen accordingly.⁵⁶

With time, the Trustees letters to the Admiralty grew in confidence:

The great public interest which has been excited by the exhibition of the sculptures already arrived, renders it imperative upon the Trustees to lose no opportunity which may present itself for procuring the transport of the remaining objects to this country. It has come to the knowledge of the Trustees that a government ship called the *Menace*, which has been recently launched at Bombay, is about to sail for England ... and the Trustees are under the impression that little or no inconvenience would arise if the *Menace* were ordered to proceed to Bussorash on her voyage to England, and to take on board the packages of antiquities still laying there.⁵⁷

By the date of this third letter, it had become familiar practice to contact the Trustee responsible for a particular section of the Government, privately, to request his personal attention to the issue in discussion. The letter to the Admiralty was thus supported by a direct approach to Sir Francis Baring, First Lord of the Admiralty:

The Trustees at their last meeting and with the information then before the Board directed me to write the letter to the Lords of the Admiralty which their Lordships will receive this day requesting that 'the *Mecanee*' might be sent to Bussorah on her way to England to take some sculptures which have been lying there now for a very long time and which the Trustees are very anxious to procure conveyance for, to this country. I am told by Mr Hawkins that he has received information from you that the '*Mecanee*'⁵⁸ has already sailed from Bombay so that the application of the Trustees can be of no avail. When however the Trustees letter of this day comes under the consideration of Their Lordships, I am quite sure the Trustees would esteem themselves under a great obligation if the Lord Commissioner will consider the application which has been made respecting the '*Mecanee*' to apply to any of Her Majesty's vessels which may be under similar circumstances and may be available for

⁵⁶ 5 July 1844, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 24, fol. 102.

⁵⁷ 29 March 1849, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 35, fols 18-20.

⁵⁸ The name of the boat must be the same as in the previous letter, and this is perhaps just a spelling mistake on behalf of the writer.

the purpose of transporting the Assyrian Sculptures to England in the same manner in which the Trustees hoped that the 'Mecanee' might have been.⁵⁹

The Museum used this technique extensively both with representatives of the Government, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and with members of the Foreign Office. In January 1843 they wrote to Lord Aberdeen regarding a collection of antiquities left at Xanthus due to bad weather:

The Trustees ... intend shortly to lay before H.M. Government a definite proposal upon the subject. In the mean time I am respectfully to submit to Your Lordship that it might be prudent, with a view to prevent any interference on the part of other Europeans, to apprise the Turkish authorities at Constantinople, through Her Majesty's ambassador there, that in consequence of the heath of the weather and the irrigation of the country interrupting the workmen, it had not been possible in the last spring to bring away from Xanthus all the sculptured stones, included in the permission given by the letter from the Grand Vizier to the Pasha of Rhodes of the 29 November 1841, and that it was therefore the wish of the Trustees to resume the work and complete the removal, as soon after the next autumnal season as circumstances should permit.

I am also to suggest to Your Lordship that it might not be unadvisable [sic] if Sir Stratford Canning were to communicate the intention of the Trustees to the British Vice Consul at Rhodes, requesting him to take an opportunity of incidentally mentioning these intentions to the Pasha there.⁶⁰

The role of the British consuls both as representatives of the government and as intermediaries for the Museum was already understood, and their capacities as collectors had been demonstrated by the collections of Salt and Hay. However, the real potential of the consular service in the Aegean as an agency for the retrieval, excavation, and collection of antiquities became clear with the appointment of Charles Thomas Newton as vice-consul at Mytilene.

⁵⁹ 29 March 1849, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 35, fols 21-2.

⁶⁰ To Lord Aberdeen, 21 Jan 1843, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 21, fols 155-7.

Newton did not arrive to the Aegean by chance, nor was his appointment as a vice consul in the Aegean island of Lesbos a coincidence as far as diplomacy goes. He had set himself the specific duty to look for, and collect, antiquities for The British Museum, and he had used his well connected friend Antonio Panizzi to obtain an appointment that could potentially change the course of his career.

Newton was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, graduating in 1837, and receiving a Masters degree three years later. In 1840 he entered the Department of Antiquities at the British Museum through the intercession of the Principal Librarian, Henry Ellis, with the Trustees.⁶¹ He had been working as an assistant at the Museum for ten years when he left it for an appointment as vice consul on the island of Lesbos in 1852, and he was clearly not looking for a better paid and more rewarding job, since the living conditions in the Aegean had undergone a sharp deterioration in the years following the independence of Greece. If consuls were paid little, vice consuls were paid even less, but with minor responsibilities, their job allowed them considerable free time.

Indeed, while working in the British Museum, Newton had observed the potential of a consular appointment in the Aegean: he had seen that the Museum had acquired

⁶¹ Ellis to Newton, 11 April 1840, BMA, Letter Book n. 17, fol. 19:

Dear Newton, I hear from Dr Bliss that you are remaining at Oxford in some anxiety and not a little inconvenience to yourself: though I have made several applications for your appointment, I have not as yet been able to procure it with the signatures of the Principal Trustees: I have no doubt that the sole cause of the delay arises from the paper having been accidentally mislaid. Under these circumstances, I venture to request that you will come up hither at once for the purpose of entering upon your duties.

The appointment was then confirmed in a Committee meeting on the 13 June 1840. Committee, vol. 18, fol. 5391, Appointment of Newton as an assistant at the British Museum.

most of its archeological pieces from consuls and diplomats. Newton was well acquainted with the pattern of acquisition of antiquities that the Government had been willing to finance. He knew that London was no Paris in this sense, and that as there had been no grand plans for past acquisitions, there were equally no plans for future ones, although the Government was by now willing to pay for worthwhile causes. The dealings with Salt had demonstrated that consuls needed to be contacted and educated to prevent their collections being diverted to foreign museums. Newton went a step further: he had observed, and understood, during his years at the British Museum, that a consular appointment offered not only the opportunity to find other pieces for the Museum, it also gave him a unique opportunity of advancing his otherwise very slow career in that institution.

[insert illustration 4:2 here - landscape]

Charles Thomas Newton's excavations at Bodrum

While in the Museum he had developed influential contacts, amongst these, his acquaintance with Antonio Panizzi, the future Principal Librarian of the British Museum and great friend of Gladstone, proved invaluable.⁶² Panizzi was then lobbying behind

⁶² Panizzi, who was one of a number of high profile Italian exiles in England, became well established in London society circles, namely, the Holland House set, who encouraged and helped him to establish himself in this country. See 'The Holland House Set' in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online edn, Oxford University Press, Oct 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/93786>]); Michele Lessona, *Volere è Potere*, (Firenze 1869, and www.liberliber.it/biblioteca/l/lessona/volere_e_potere/pdf/volere_p.pdf), p.119, Lucio Sponza, *Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Realities and Images*, (Leicester University Press, 1988).

Henry Ellis, the old and weak principal librarian, and his influence and power were growing accordingly. Newton strengthened a friendship with him that was to be the key to his success in the Museum. He had used his connections to procure his appointment as he described in a letter to his good friend, the Reverend Dr Bliss, registrar and keeper of the Oxford University Archives:

My Dear Dr Bliss,

some months your friend Mr Girdlestone called on me with a letter of introduction from you and made some enquiries about the place of Assistant in the Department of Antiquities here, wishing to know whether it could suit his son. I have thought that he would probably like to know of the first vacancy, and therefore I write at once to announce what I should otherwise have written probably this same day to you, one of my oldest friends, that I am going to leave the Museum. Having long been desirous to study archeology in the Levant, I have through my friend General Fox asked for a small consulship, Mytilene on the coast of Asia Minor, which Lord Granville has given me at once in the kindest manner. Therefore as I shall be gazetted very soon, your friend if he wishes to come here I should look about him at once. My resignation is not yet announced to the Trustees but it will be very shortly. I hope to see you before long ...⁶³

It appears that Newton was also holding a studentship at Oxford. On hearing about his consular appointment, the Dean had questioned his ability to retain the studentship with the appointment abroad. In response Newton had written to Bliss:

... I have ascertained from the F.O. that I can always get leave to come home for a time, which will enable me to keep a term at Oxford if necessary. But I think the Dean is not ill pleased and that there is a lurking thought of the Athos monasteries. He says he is very much surprised. Not more so than I am and indeed all my friends. For my appointment was a small coup d'etat. I will tell you more when we meet.⁶⁴

His letter of resignation to the museum was indicative of his own intentions:

In the new career on which I am about to enter, I shall probably have many opportunities of rendering service to the British Museum, not only by collecting such antiquities and works of art in the island in

⁶³ Newton to Bliss, Jan. 9, 1852; B.L., Add.MS 34582, fol. 329.

⁶⁴ Newton to Bliss, Jan 14, 1852, B.L., Add.MS 34582, fol. 333.

which I am destined to reside but by examining and reporting on collections and discoveries in the neighbourhood, whenever I may have the opportunity.⁶⁵

Newton had written two identical letters, one addressed to the Foreign Office and a second to the Trustees themselves. In the second one, he had added:

Should I at any time be honoured by your commands, I shall be most happy to serve the British Museum in any way consistent with the rules of the service in which I am about to engage.⁶⁶

The Trustees replied:

Dear Sir,

I laid before the Trustees on Saturday last, your letter resigning the Appointment of Assistant in the Museum, which you have held for upward of eleven years in the Department of Antiquities. The Trustees direct me to signify to you their congratulations on your having obtained the honorable [sic] office of which your letter has informed them, and at the same time to express the high opinion they entertain of your character, and the satisfaction they have always felt with your services in the British Museum. They look forward also with pleasure to the prospect of keeping up the connection with you in your new position through the opportunities of advancing the interests of the Museum which your residence in an island of the Archipelago and in the neighbourhood of the chief scenes of Grecian Antiquity may be expected to afford ...⁶⁷

There seems to be no evidence that Newton left for the Aegean with a formal request from the Trustees to excavate on their behalf. It is my opinion that Newton acted out of his own personal determination, with a deliberate intent of exploring and collecting in the Aegean archipelago and a very clear plan for his future career, as he had mysteriously anticipated in his letter to Bliss. The location and the job description were perfectly suitable to his plans, he needed a salary, however meagre, to survive in the

⁶⁵ 31 Jan. 1852, F.O. 78/905, fols 322-5.

See also: M.E., Letter Book n. 10, old series, fol. 3857.

⁶⁶ 30 Jan, 1852, M.E., Letter Book n. 10, old series, fol. 3857.

⁶⁷ Ellis to Newton, 2 Feb. 1852, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 41, fols 168-9.

See also: 31 Jan. 1852, B.M.A., Committee, vol. 24, fols 8351-2.

islands, and an official position gave him credibility when applying for permission to excavate.

Before leaving for the Aegean he had taken care to forward copy of his resignation and of the Trustees reply to the Foreign Office. These had prompted a response from Lord Grenville authorising him to dedicate time to the search for antiquities and giving him a small grant to do so:

Sir,

I have received and read with pleasure your letter of the 15th inst. inclosing copies of a letter which you addressed to the Trustees of the British Museum on the occasion of your receiving your appointment of British Vice Consul at Mytilene and of their reply thereto, a correspondence which is highly honourable to you.

I should be happy to afford any facilities which the Foreign Office can give to enable you, without neglecting your Consular Duties, to extend your usefulness in connection with the British Museum; and with this view I hereby authorise you, when those Duties will admit of your absence from Mytilene, to visit from time to time the several islands and other places of archeological interest in the vicinity of your Vice Consulate and you will receive an allowance at the rate of fifty pounds a year to defray your traveling expenses on these occasions.⁶⁸

Newton was delighted. As he wrote to his father, the allowance of £50 had come as a pleasant surprise.

I left London knowing that he [Lord Grenville] contemplated doing something of the kind, but not feeling at all sure that it would come to pass. The grant of £50 a year for traveling expenses was a favour quite unsolicited and unexpected on his part, and I think that the example he has set for the encouragement of literature is a very honourable one. I was fortunate in having the benefit of

⁶⁸ Grenville to Newton, 20 Feb. 1852, B.L. Add.MS 71705, fol. 27.

Layard's⁶⁹ good offices though over for so short a time, for I did not like to trouble Lord Grenville myself, and, his good intentions might have passed out of his head for want of somebody to remind him. I conclude his successor will ratify the grant made to me which considering the strict rules of the Foreign Office is a great privilege'.⁷⁰

Newton had met Layard at Constantinople on his arrival in the Levant and had dined with him at the embassy every other evening. He had opened his heart to Layard about his intentions to excavate in the islands.⁷¹ Stratford Canning had also been supportive: '... made a point of being introduced to Lord De Redcliffe to talk over Archeology in the

⁶⁹ Austin Henry Layard arrived in Constantinople in 1842 where he met Stratford Canning who encouraged and paid him to make excavations at Nimrud. From 1846 he applied from funding to the Trustees of the British Museum, a small sum was granted which allowed him to dig at Kuyunjik, near Mosul, where he quickly discovered the largest Assyrian palace, that of Sennacherib. In 1847 through Canning he obtained a posting at the Embassy at Constantinople to work on the Turkish -Persian boundary question. From then on, having gained fame, he dedicated to his political and diplomatic career ... In 1852 he was nominated under-secretary of foreign affairs by the new foreign secretary, Lord Granville. When Newton arrived at Constantinople in 1852, he made acquaintance with Layard with whom he would correspond for the rest of his life. To him, Newton had written on the 6th June, 1852, thanking him for his support with Lord Grenville: 'I hope you will not think me unmindful of the service you have rendered me, if I have not sooner acknowledged it. The fact is, nobody wrote to me from England to tell me what Lord Grenville had done for me, so that till I got to Rhodes the other day, I did not see his Despatch authorising me to be occasionally absent from my post and giving me an allowance of £50, which was, I must say, an unexpected pleasure to me. I must now thank you very much for your good offices in this matter for I know how very much the success of such small affairs as these depends on the kind advocacy employed and the moment chosen for calling attention to a case ... ' Newton to Layard, B.L., Add. MS 38 981, fol. 54.

⁷⁰ Newton to father, Smyrna, 18 May 1852, B.L., Add. MS 71705, fol. 20.

⁷¹ Newton to Father, Constantinople, 20 Apr. 1852, B.L., Add. MS 71705, fol. 19.

East with him. He takes a real interest in it and was very kind to me at Constantinople.⁷²

Newton needed no further encouragement, indeed, before he had even arrived to his post, he had stopped in Athens, writing to William Richard Hamilton to suggest that casts be taken from recently excavated fragments of Parthenon sculptures there. As *Formatori* were not available in Athens, Newton suggested that some be appointed in Rome or Naples to be sent there; were they to be sent from England, they would need to be able to speak Italian.⁷³

Newton sent regular updates of his activities to the Trustees and wrote regularly to Birch and Hawkins at the Department of Antiquities, keeping them informed of his findings. This correspondence served Newton two purposes, keeping him aware of events in the Museum, and ensuring that he himself would not be forgotten there. He demanded replies, and complained when they arrived late.

I have written a great many letters to the Mus. Brit. but have received none in reply except from Mr Hamilton who very kindly wrote to tell me that the Trustees had voted £300 for Mr Wise to have casts made of the remaining fragments of the Parthenon ...⁷⁴

⁷² B.L., Add.MS 71705, fol. 20.

⁷³ 8 May 1852, B.M.A., Committee, vol. 25, fols 8399-40; 3 March 1828 to April 1876, Sub Committee 1, vol. 1- fols 537 passim.

⁷⁴ 16 July 1851, M.E., Letter Book n.10, old series, fol. 3858, (error in the date, it should be 1852).

Newton brought with him a young assistant, Dominic Ellis Colnaghi, the elder son of Dominic Paul Colnaghi, a well known and well connected collector and dealer in fine art in Pall Mall.⁷⁵

The Colnaghis had a long standing relationship with the British Museum, it seems that they attended to a number of Museum publications and the correspondence in the Letter Books of the British Museum testifies this. Dominic Ellis accompanied Newton to Mytilene, both to assess the possibility of procuring pieces of art for the family firm and as a sort of educational grand tour. It should not be excluded that he had envisaged a diplomatic career for himself, but, at least initially, his private correspondence shows that there seemed to be no specific plan for him in this sense. Colnaghi must have met Newton through the British Museum to which his family's firm made regular donations.

⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that the Colnaghi family had a number of connections to the town of Morcote in the Ticino canton in Switzerland. Antonio Panizzi had escaped there from Italy in October 1822 having been sentenced to death. The architect Gaspare Fossati and his brother Giuseppe were also from Morcote. The Fossati became important public figures in Constantinople, Gaspare had designed a number of public buildings in town and his fame culminated with the commission for the restoration of Aghia Sophia from the Sultan Abdul-Medjid-Khan. When, in 1850, Gaspare decided to publish a folio of drawings dedicated to the Sultan, he travelled to London to commission P. & D. Colnaghi & Co; the book was published in 1852. Moreover, his brother Giuseppe, who had travelled to Constantinople to assist with the restoration work, was commissioned in 1855 to design and construct a house for the governor of Samos, Stefano Vogorides. At that time Charles Thomas Newton and Dominic Ellis Colnaghi were in Lesbos, the island immediately adjacent to Samos, where Newton was Vice Consul. Carlo Palumbo Fossati, *I Fossati di Morcote*, (Istituto Editoriale Ticinese, Bellinzona, 1979), pp.145 and 152. Goodwin, Godfrey, 'Gaspare Fossati di Morcote and His Brother Giuseppe', *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre*, (1990): 122-7. See also: Lessona, *Volere è Potere*, pp.164 and 119 .

He received a stipend directly from Newton,⁷⁶ whom he assisted during excavations, recording them photographically on behalf of his firm, the first time this new media was used for archaeological purposes. At a very young age, he was of great help to Newton in a number of ways, not least as he was good company. When Newton left the consulate for his frequent tours of the islands in search of archeological pieces, Colnaghi looked after it. Almost Newton's private secretary, he also ensured that the

⁷⁶ In 1853 Charles Thomas Newton opened an account with Hoare's Bank in Fleet Street. The Customer Ledgers give the exact details of Newton's transactions for the years 1854 to 1861. From them, we learn that the stipend Newton paid to Colnaghi varied from year to year. It is interesting that around 1856 Colnaghi started to be paid in what was today's form of travellers' cheques, through a bank called Herries Farquard and Co., formed in London's West End in 1770 by Robert Herries. Herries developed the idea of the Travellers' cheque and set up the London Exchange Banking Co. in St. James. He made successful business with a niche of people who were accustomed to traveling. See: J. Orbell and A. Turton, *British Banking*, (Ashgate 2001), pp. 269-70.

Between May and July 1855, Colnaghi received £51 from Newton in three payments:

May 29th, £20

June 2nd, £20

July 30th, £11.

Hoare's Bank, Customer Ledger N.90, 1853-55, fol. 542;

May 7th, 1856, £26 (to Herries Bank for D.E. Colnaghi)

Feb. 17, 1857, £20

June 24th, 1857, £25

Hoare's Bank, Customer Ledger N.6, 1855-59, fol. 360;

Feb. 25th, 1858, £60

May 22, 1858, £57.50

Hoare's Bank, Customer Ledger N. 22, 1857-59, fol. 361;

June 28, 1860, ££50.

Hoare's Bank, Customer Ledger N.39, 1861-62, folio 360.

regular contacts were maintained with the British Museum, even writing letters on Newton's behalf when he was away.

Sir,

this morning quite unexpectedly Mr Newton left Rhodes, with Mr Finlay of Athens who has been staying with him two or three days, in a Turkish government steamer to visit the islands of Cos, Patmos and Chios. The steamer does not ply regularly between these islands, so that the opportunity was too tempting to be lost. Mr Newton started in so great a hurry that he had not time to write to his friends in England, but, that you might not think him neglectful, he has desired me to write a few lines, to say that he had fully intended writing to you by tomorrow's post ...

Rhodes is a most interesting island, the Knights of St John have left wonderful architectural memories of their residence here, and we have also plenty of work with the inscriptions of an earlier period; of which we find great numbers in the streets, and suburbs of the town. Mr Newton takes a survey every morning of a certain portion of the town, and is generally rewarded by finding three or four, or even more inscriptions, and many inedited ...⁷⁷

When on leave back home, Colnaghi was sent to deliver pieces to the British Museum⁷⁸.

On one occasion, failing to get an acknowledgment from Hawkins, Newton wrote to Birch:

Could you be kind enough to ascertain for me whether Mr Hawkins has ever received these objects, what he has done with them and whether he wishes them for the Brit. Mus. I have long perceived that with the exception of yourself the officers of the Department of Antiquities do not think it worth while to answer the letters of business of persons who are specially employed on behalf of the British Museum and who have therefore a special claim on the time and attention of the officers of the Department ... Whether the interest of the British Museum will be promoted ultimately by such mastered and systematic neglect of its most zealous servant, I know not, nor do I very much care. In myself I have made up my mind for the future to address all communications to the Department of

⁷⁷ Colnaghi to Birch, 31 May 1853, M.E., Letter Book n. 10, old series, fol. 3871.

⁷⁸ He sent Hawkins two coins purchased by Colnaghi at Mytilene: 'Colnaghi, a young gentleman on leave of absence from the East ... who is a very active collector for me. He will be very grateful for some lessons in numismatics from the Professors in the Medal Room ...' Newton to Hawkins, 28 March 1855, M.E., Letter Book n. 10, old series, fol. 3886.

Antiquities thro'[sic] Sir H. Ellis. He at least has the courtesy to acknowledge the receipt of letters and antiquities ...⁷⁹

Whether this letter proves that Newton's personal and political influence and plans within the Museum were overseen by a number of people, is difficult to judge, it does show, however, that he was determined to make his activities known and to obtain at least a level of official recognition within the Museum. He became frustrated that his efforts only seemed to be noticed by his friend Birch, and then only thanks to his own determination in writing and keeping him informed of his dealings in the East. A second letter reinforces this sentiment:

... I am really quite disgusted with the apathy and neglect which I have met with on the part of friends from whom I had a right to expect at least common civility. It is impossible for [piece missing, letter teared] to carry on correspondence with people who never acknowledge letters, who lose coins and then say that they have never received them!! [an obvious reference to the coins given by Colnaghi to Hawkins and never acknowledged] and who overlook often repeated questions which would not take three minutes to answer.⁸⁰

Newton had previously written to Hawkins:

In reference to the coins respecting which I enquired through Birch a short time ago I have to state that Colnaghi is now arrived here and that he declares most positively that he gave you my letter containing them ... I have no doubt if you make a good search in your table drawer you will find my letter ...⁸¹

⁷⁹ Newton to Birch, 3 August 1855, M.E., Letter Book n. 10, old series, fol. 3888.

⁸⁰ Newton to Birch, Oct. 29, 1855, M.E., Letter Book n. 10, old series, fol. 3892. His lament also referred to Way from the Archeological Institute who had never acknowledged a paper sent to him about the excavations at Calymnos and that Newton presumably expected to see published. The lack of response had prompted him to write to Birch that such neglect didn't allow him to advance in 'the only career open to me'.

⁸¹ Newton to Hawkins, 11 Oct. 1855, M.E., Letter Book n. 10, old series, fol. 3891.

Hawkins' own reply eventually flattered and reassured him, and he found himself having to apologise:

The phenomenon of a letter from you of Nov. 10 followed by your second of Dec 18 did indeed surprise me. It is always a great pleasure to me to hear from you though I know you have not much time for writing. I was glad to learn that you had received the two coins, you do not mention the gems which accompanied them ... I certainly was very sore [?] about my paper. You must make allowance for the feeling of a sad and solitary exile imprisoned in a Greek island as I was last Summer. It is, I know, a weakness, but I cannot work without some demonstration of sympathy from home or at least from Europe. Some men can ... Nature has made me more dependent on social sympathy ...⁸²

My guess is that Newton's fortune turned just six months later, when in March 1856 his friend and supporter Antonio Panizzi was created Principal Librarian at the British Museum. Newton would have been sure, by then, that provided he continued to demonstrate his abilities, he would be rewarded with a better appointment at the Museum.

Newton's correspondence with Panizzi is very different in tone from his letters to Hawkins. He praised Panizzi, listened to his advice and in turn gave his own. The correspondence between the two intensifies around the date of Panizzi's promotion, when he starts to write to Newton regularly. In April 1856, on his way to Rome, Newton wrote from Malta:

My dear Panizzi,

I had been digging up Greek graves at Bodrum all the winter when at length returning to the frontiers of European civilization at Rhodes I took up a *Galignani*⁸³ and the first thing I saw was your appointment to the Principal Librarianship of the British Museum. The news gave me very great pleasure and after the kind interest you have always taken in my career I should be very ungrateful if I

⁸² Newton to Hawkins, 4 March 1856, M.E., Letter Book n. 10, old series, fol. 3893.

⁸³ This must be the *Galignani Magazine and Paris Monthly Review* which Newton would have picked up in Malta.

did not find all the satisfaction which I would express in now congratulating you on your appointment. I feel quite sure that the increased power which it confers upon you will be to the public advantage and will enable you to carry out on a much grander scale those plans for the improvement of the Museum which you have so long and so earnestly pursued ...⁸⁴

Panizzi's letter books of correspondence at the British Library are heaving with letters from Newton. They show that a very special friendship developed through the correspondence. Newton didn't just address Panizzi about antiquities, he often wrote him about a particular consul or other, or a particular official in the navy. He was able to identify, whilst in the Levant, the precise nature of the individuals employed in the service at the time of his posting there, and to recommend their promotion to specific places.

I hope you will secure the Benghazi vases and encourage Werry to buy more. It is of the greatest consequence that we have somebody in the Cyrenaica to buy for us.⁸⁵

In the event of Mytilene becoming vacant, I should very much like to see my old friend Lieutenant Blunt promoted to the post. He has only £150 - at Valo - a pestiferous place. He is just going to be married and his salary is not sufficient for him unless he trades, which is a most undesirable employment for an English Consul in the Levant. He is a young man of good promise and did good service in the Crimea under Lord Lucan. If his uncle the Master in Chancery whom you know could get a hint however slight that Mytilene is likely to be vacant, he could make an early application at the Foreign Office and, as you know in these cases time is everything.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Newton to Panizzi, 9 April 1856, B.L., Add. MS 36717, fol. 458.

⁸⁵ Newton to Panizzi, 7 July 1856, B.L. Add. MS 36717, fol. 525.

⁸⁶ Newton wrote this letter from Rome where he had been posted to examine the Campana collection for the British Museum. He had himself asked to be posted to Rhodes and there was already a possibility that he would be posted to Rome. Thus, envisaging that his own post at Mytilene could become free, he recommended Blunt for it.

Newton to Panizzi, 5 June 1856, B.L. Add. MS 36717, fol. 497.

In November 1856, as Newton's archaeological work in the Aegean began to bear fruit, he wrote privately to Panizzi with one eye clearly on his planned return to the British Museum. The content of his letter, was eventually going to change the entire course of his life.

My dear Panizzi,

in a conversation with you shortly before I left England I stated to you how much I should wish to offer my services again to the British Museum and the exact capacity in which I thought I could be most useful. I will now repeat in writing the substance of what I stated. The duties of the officers of the Department of Antiquities are so varied and conflicting that it may well be doubted whether they can be efficiently combined in the manner adopted at present and whether the public service would not be more satisfactorily performed by another organisation and a more marked division of labour. To make this more clear I will state in what these duties consist. The keepership of the Department of Antiquities is preeminently an office of Custody. The safety of the precious objects confided to his charge ought to be paramount consideration in his mind. Custody implies constant residence at the Museum, and a considerable restriction of personal liberty.

Next in importance to this duty of Custody, is the business of Acquisition, whether by purchase or thro' donations. This is a business perpetually going on and must necessarily occupy much of the time and thoughts of a Keeper of Antiquities. He alone is responsible for the manner in which the public money invested in antiquities is expended; on his judgment every purchase is made, and his responsibility cannot be shifted to any subordinate officer. Any one who examines the list of purchases yearly made by the Department of Antiquities and who is practically acquainted with the business of buying objects of this kind, knows how very much time and attention this business requires. Not only do the objects offered for purchase demand the most careful scrutiny, but they are in their nature more difficult matters for negotiation than those ordinary articles of commerce of which the market price is known and the quality can be easily tested.

The next function to be considered is that of exhibition. It is not sufficient that antiquities should be acquired, they must be arranged in an intelligent manner so as to convey the highest amount of instruction and pleasure to the Archeologist, the artist, and the public generally.

In order that this function of exhibition should be efficiently performed, a very active staff of officers is required in such extensive collection of Antiquities as those in the British Museum. Where new acquisitions are constantly flowing in, previous arrangements, however perfect, are constantly being disturbed and the ingenuity of the exhibition is continually put to the test in order to adapt the

space in his command to new and unlooked for requirements. The future chances of Archeological discovery being altogether incalculable, no certain estimate of the amount of future acquisitions of Antiquities can be made and all arrangements for purposes of exhibition must be considered as liable to change. Hence the labour of arrangement is one that can never cease, nor is such an expenditure of the time of Museum officers to be judged. Thousands of persons who walk through the galleries of antiquities in the course of the year [take] ... instruction and pleasure from their visit exactly in proportion to the intelligent labour bestowed on the arrangement of the several collections. Scientific exhibition is obviously not complete unless explanatory titles, names and labels are attached to the several objects exhibited and thus work of labeling leads me to the consideration of the 4th function of the officers of the Department of Antiquities.

This function is interpretation with a view to Publication. It is obvious that antiquities no more explain themselves to the ordinary eye without the aid of catalogues and descriptions than classical texts explain themselves to the school boy without lexicons and commentaries ... Now my object in writing to you this letter is to make a distinct practical proposal. I have no wish to undertake the duties of Custody, Acquisition or Exhibition, such duties are foreign to the habits of my mind ... But I conceive that I am naturally and by my previous training well prepared for my literary labour which the Department may have to perform. I have had long practice in the work of making Catalogues and in the editing of archeological works ... I have never lost site of the study of Archeology ... to me its literary interest has always been the paramount consideration, to which I have sacrificed my prospects of personal advancement ... I would either undertake the catalogue of some particular class of antiquities ... or I would serve in the general capacity of Editor of the Publications of the Department ... ⁸⁷

Newton wished to be directly responsible and accountable to the Trustees, and to be remunerated according to his long standing tenure as a civil servant.

Panizzi, not only read this letter, he also showed it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.⁸⁸ Newton's return to the museum and his promotion now rested in the hands

⁸⁷ Newton to Panizzi, 9 Nov. 1856, B.L., Add. MS 36 717, fols 612 passim.

⁸⁸ Newton to Panizzi, 15 Feb. 1857, B.L., Add. MS 36718, fol. 28. 'I was very much pleased to hear that the Chancellor of the Exchequer read my letter. I have my case in your joint hands feeling quite sure that you will act jointly by me and by the Museum at the same time. By the month of May I suppose something definite will be settled.'

of the two men. Newton's letters from this point onward built upon his previous analysis, engaging extensively with possible reorganisations of the Museum collection whilst describing the important discoveries he had made at Bodrum. He had, in fact, found the site of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus and secured for the British Museum the lions which now rest majestically in the Great Court.

In a long letter written in May 1857 Newton suggested the division of the national collection into specific institutions dealing with typologies of objects and periods. As there was a gallery of pictures at Trafalgar Square and a museum of mediaeval art at Marlborough House, these should be strengthened. The British Museum should concentrate on its antiquities, which could in turn be divided according to their different provenance and age. Comparisons were made with the Louvre, with other French and European museums, and he suggested the creation of a museum of military history and of an ethnographical museum, both separate from the British Museum.⁸⁹

In April 1858 however, following a change of government, his chances of success in returning to the Museum seemed scattered to the winds. Newton expressed his dismay to Panizzi.

I am aghast at the change of Ministry. All our friends out of office! all the influences which by a singular and felicitous contribution of circumstances had been brought to bear on the question of an appointment for me seen scattered to the winds! When I left England on my present mission, I was perfectly aware of the risk I was running personally, for Ministries do not last for ever and it is prudent to make hay when the sun shines ... and though I have not a single personal friend in the present Ministry, I trust to you and I hope, I may say, to the country at large to make good my claims when the time comes for my return.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Newton to Panizzi, B.L., Add. MS 36718, fols 104-123.

⁹⁰ B.L., Add. MS 36718, 6 April 1858, fol. 310.

Panizzi seems to have looked after him, though, and in December of the same year he made Newton a proposal. He was now able to take a decision and he wished to know in which position Newton wanted to be appointed. Newton replied:

As you may have to decide on final arrangements for the Department of Antiquities before I can be in England ... my proposition to the Trustees is to be employed in literary labour in the Department of Antiquities ... with a vacation of two months to be taken in the winter or spring if I wish it and with a salary of not less than £300 a year.⁹¹

Panizzi offered him the keepership of the Department of Antiquities, Newton refused.

My conviction is that I shall be most useful to the public and shall at the same time best consult my own welfare by declining the responsibility involved in the office of Keeper. I wish to have my mind free for literary labour ... your object is of course to find the right man for the place, mine to find the right place for the man ... I am quite content to work as hard as I can for such pay as will give me a respectable maintenance which I have never ... had, for the Vice Consulship of Mytilene hardly pays its expenses ...⁹²

But the expected offer never materialised and Newton, ever prone to pessimism in his isolated vice consulate, wrote to Panizzi of his doubts about his future and career. The excavations at Cnidus had ended and he felt a desire to return home:

I don't think I shall pack up my property at Mytilene till I know what my fate is to be in England, for I feel that my prospects are altogether precarious. I do not much care. There is no-one who is the least dependent on me for support, and long residence in this uncomfortable country has inured me to so much privation that, if it be my destiny to be poor, I shall accept it without grumbling.⁹³

Panizzi came to the rescue: in 1859 Newton was appointed consul general in Rome. In the Aegean, he was instructing Biliotti and Campbell, respectively vice consul and consul in Rhodes, to conduct excavations on behalf of the Museum. It was at this time

⁹¹ B.L., Add. MS 36718, 17 Dec. 1858, fol. 501.

⁹² B.L., Add. MS 36718, 20 Feb. 1859, fol. 573.

⁹³ 21 March 1859, B.L., Add. MS 36,719, fol. 93.

that Newton met Salzmänn, an artist who had initially been employed by the French at Rhodes, and who had so impressed Newton with his skills, that he had recommended him to Panizzi.⁹⁴ It would be Salzmänn, paired with Biliotti, to continue Newton's work on his departure from the Aegean. Newton wrote to Panizzi to explain the extent of their discovery at Camirus:

My dear Panizzi,

you are aware that the Supply brings home a most interesting collection of Antiquities found in the cemetery of Camirus in the island of Rhodes by Messers Biliotti and Salzmänn during this year.

These antiquities consist of vases and gold ornaments and are, I believe, of the earlier period of Greek art exhibiting plain evidence of Egyptian derivation on the one hand, and of Assyrian on the other. I consider this discovery one of the most remarkable that has ever been made in Hellenic archeology.

The excavations originally commanded by Messers Salzmänn and Biliotti at my suggestion but at the wish of these gentlemen.

The news of such important discoveries had spread in the island and the two now needed an official permission to excavate. Salzmänn was a French citizen, and Newton suggested that the firman that Campbell⁹⁵ had sought more than once ought rather to be obtained in the name of Alfred Biliotti, and for the whole island.⁹⁶ Biliotti corresponded extensively with the Trustees. Panizzi dealt directly with them, negotiating the price of the discoveries.⁹⁷

I am directed by the Trustees to acquaint you, that the Antiquities received from you in October last have been examined, and a selection has been made from them. The articles selected are valued in your catalogue, at £389, but are estimated by the Officers of the Museum at £316, at which amount

⁹⁴ B.L., Add. MS 36718, 11 May 1858, fols 345-6.

⁹⁵ The British consul at Rhodes.

⁹⁶ Newton to Panizzi, 15 July 1859, B.L., Add. MS 36720, fols 17 passim.

⁹⁷ Index to the Minutes, vol. v, C9626, C9641, C9687-8,11-2, 33 passim. Committee, vol. 30, fols 10582 passim.

the Trustees are willing to purchase them by the payment of a Bill of Exchange falling due after the 1st of April next.

I shall be glad to hear, as early as possible, whether you accept this arrangement, in which case a form for the Bill of Exchange to be drawn for £316 will be duly forwarded to you by me.⁹⁸

Newton continued to correspond with the pair from Rome, directing their researches and forwarding the content of their letters to Panizzi.⁹⁹ He had learned of his appointment in Malta.

This morning I took up The Globe and read my appointment to Rome ... Several reasons made me hesitate to accept but after half an hour cogitation I have made up my mind that I ought not to refuse ... We shall meet very soon, still I lose not a moment in thanking you for a step which I consider due more to you than any one else.¹⁰⁰

He asked to take Colnaghi with him:

I want Colnaghi if possible as vice consul, but failing that, as my private secretary. If Govt. object to making a paid Vice Consul at Rome, would they give him the title? I would give him board and lodging and as good a salary as I could afford. You will at once see how important it will be to me that my Secretary should be a really confidential person and I know not Colnaghi's equal, for honesty, silence and intelligence. Would you think this over, I have told him to call on you.¹⁰¹

Newton felt very lonely in Rome, he feared that with no job at the Museum he could be left to wonder in Europe in a diplomatic career that he no longer wanted to pursue.

The more I think about this place, the less I like it the idea of making it my home. I am very glad to serve the F. O. here as elsewhere and like them as masters. They have always been very kind to me. But every year I remain out from England, I dislike my exile more and more. Not even the attractions of Rome would ever reconcile me to the loss of my country, therefore, if my services are still thought

⁹⁸ A. Panizzi to Messrs Salzman and Biliotti, 15 Nov. 1860, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 5, second series, fol. 352.

⁹⁹ B.L., Add. MS 36720, fol. 406. In the same letter he informed that Wise was requesting from Athens the arrival of a *formatore* to complete the casts for the British Museum.

¹⁰⁰ 23 June 1859, B.L., Add. MS 36,719, fol. 564.

¹⁰¹ B.L., Add. MS 36,719, fol. 564.

desirable at the B.M. I would gladly return and, though I should prefer purely literary employment I am prepared to undertake the mixed duties of custody.¹⁰²

He was now ready to take the keepership that he had once refused. In reply to a letter from Panizzi which has not survived, Newton wrote:

Many thanks of your kind letter of May 17. Nothing would be more satisfactory to me than to form part of the new arrangement of the Department of Antiquities as you propose. I am weary of the unsettled state of mind in which I have lived now for years, and so I hope to cast anchor finally and settle down into something useful at home.

Before receiving your letter ... I had already written to Lord Lansdown, as he has always been a good friend of mine, explaining to him that in wishing to exchange Rome for the Museum I was anxious not to appear dissatisfied or unmindful of what had been done for me by the F.O. but that I thought that the reorganisation of the Department of Antiquities presented an opportunity for me to obtain employment at home which was not likely to occur again, and therefore I should like to take advantage of it if it were possible.¹⁰³

By this time, a select Committee was preparing to discuss, in the House of Commons, the possible reorganisation of the Museum. Newton's plans were at risk again. Again he wrote to Panizzi and all his friends to ask their support for his return at the Museum: Lord Carlisle, Lord Granville, Lord Stratford De Redcliffe. Again he wrote of how he dreaded to remain in exile: 'Rome is so particularly desirable an appointment except as a Consular one'. The expenses were too high and the salary, inevitably, too small.¹⁰⁴

In the Museum Hawkins was gaining reputation for incompetence. Newton had accused him of neglect in the care of the antiquities, and Layard, upset by the result of a

¹⁰² Newton to Panizzi, 14 May 1860, B.L., Add. MS 36720, fol. 436.

¹⁰³ 'I shall now leave the matter in your hands, because I think this is one of those cases in which premature agitation would be likely to defer it no end'. Newton to Panizzi, 12 June 1860, B.L., Add. MS 36720, fol. 485.

¹⁰⁴ 'I should very much prefer the keepership of statues or [?] if possible to coins, but will take whichever is offered to me.' Newton to Panizzi, 18 June 1860, B.L., Add. MS 36720, fol. 493.

Select Committee on the British Museum which had failed to give any useful recommendations on this respect, had come out with serious accusations in a public letter to *The Times*. During a visit to the Museum he had noticed in fact, the antiquities collected by Newton at Halicarnassus being affected from leaks in the roof. In particular, the rain concentrated on the head of a 'fine statue'. If this state of things could find partial justification in the fact that this lot of antiquities was sheltered in a temporary building, which was susceptible to the changes of weather, little excuse could be offered instead for the Assyrian galleries, where the same state of things had been noticed. He remarked: 'It will be remembered that the substance in which the Assyrian sculptures are carved is very soon affected by damp ... So much for the care of the collection confided by the Trustees'.¹⁰⁵

The article criticised the building and its present condition, but it also voiced serious reservations on the practice of having a national treasure managed by a body of trustees rather than a single individual.

If all that related to art and archaeology were placed under an intelligent and responsible head, we should soon see an end to the present state of confusion and mismanagement.¹⁰⁶

Panizzi asked Hawkins whether Layard's accusations were well founded.

¹⁰⁵ The Times, August 30, 1860, *The British Museum*, in B.M.A., British Museum Extracts from Newspapers, 1837-63, folio n. 60.

M.E., Letter Book n. 10, new series, fol. 4411, no date (Although the note in the page before tells us that the letter was written on 29 August 1860).

¹⁰⁶ *The Times*, 30 August 1860.

I know of course that there has been occasional leakage through the glass roofs of the enclosures in front, but this has been but trifling, as far as my knowledge extends, and would by no means justify Mr Layard's statement.¹⁰⁷

The House of Commons committee eventually concluded that the ruins of the Temple of Halicarnassus were going to remain in the temporary building and that no new roof would be provided for them.¹⁰⁸ Panizzi instead, had taken the matter of a possible new keepership to the Sub Committee on Antiquities which was discussing the proposal to divide the Department of Antiquities in four different new ones: Greek and Roman Antiquities, Oriental Antiquities, Coins and Medals, and Ethnography and Mediaeval Antiquities. Hawkins would lose the general supervision which would be allocated to four new keepers, the most senior of whom, would 'occupy the house now occupied by Mr Hawkins, and shall have a salary of £600 a year'.¹⁰⁹ But Newton was worried:

I have not heard a word about the Museum vacancy ... in the meantime the number of applications for the Consulate of Rome are something fabulous I hear. If I had an opportunity of giving an opinion as to the proper kind of appointment for the post I should strongly recommend a man with some private fortune. The salary which at this moment, less income tax and F.O. agency is just £372 a year is absurdly low for the expenses of Rome which get higher and higher every year in consequence of the oppressive taxation.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Panizzi to Hawkins, 2 October 1860, M.E., Letter Book n. 10, new series, fol. 4411.

¹⁰⁸ Newton to Panizzi, 13 Oct. 1860, B.L., Add. MS 36721, fol. 32.

¹⁰⁹ 5 July 1860, B.M.A., SC1 (vol. 1-3), 1828-86, fols 1159-60.

¹¹⁰ Newton to Panizzi, 1 Sept. 1860, B.L., Add. MS 36720, fol. 547. Ironically, Newton's successor as consul in Rome was not a man with a private fortune, but instead Joseph Severn, a commercially unsuccessful artist whose daughter, Ann Mary, Newton had met while on leave in London in 1858. Severn's appointment to Rome allowed Newton to marry Ann, in April 1861, freeing her from the financial burden of her father. Sadly she died of measles at their home in Gower Street in 1866.

Newton had decided to get married and his return was thus not just the result of a desire to end his exile, he was also ready to settle down.

I must come to England ... for I cannot defer my marriage longer. We are both quite tired of waiting now, but Hawkins is quite capable of staying on at the Museum till nature removes him. He always was the most obstinate of men and age has not improved him. The report of the H.C. Committee is a miserably 'lame and impotent conclusion'.

Notwithstanding public criticism, Hawkins was holding on,¹¹¹ but by now Newton was canvassing the 'Lord Chancellor ... the Archbishop and Speaker', he would also write to 'Lord J. Russell ... Lord Lansdown, Sir S. Lewis and others just by way of reminder' about his keepership at the Museum.

You will observe that I make application for Hawkin's place, because I have no official knowledge that any other will be vacated and I cannot assume that Birch will necessarily be promoted. But I don't mean in making this application to oppose him, and therefore at the close of my letter I ask for a Keepership, not the Keepership. I will take whatever the Trustees like to give me, provided it is not less than £500 a year. I think I ought to have £600 ... I hope that the plan of Three independent Keeperships will be carried, though I am quite willing to be an assistant Keeper under Birch. We have always pulled well together. Though I am anxious for my own promotion, I cannot help hoping that Vaux will not be passed over. He is a man of many ... qualities and under a better system would have done the Museum good service and will still.¹¹²

In March 1861, On Hawkins' retirement, the reorganisation of the museum was finalised. Charles Thomas Newton was assigned the post once covered by Hawkins¹¹³ and the department of Antiquities was divided into three rather than four new

¹¹¹ Newton to Panizzi, 30 Oct. 1860, B.L., Add. MS 36721, fol. 61.

¹¹² Newton to Panizzi, 6 Nov. 1860, B.L., Add. MS 36721, fol. 79.

¹¹³ 'The Keepership' as he had described the most important of the three in the letter to Panizzi of 6 November 1860 in this page.

departments.¹¹⁴ Birch was rewarded with the keepership of the department of Oriental, British and Mediaeval Antiquities, and a third separate department was created in Coins and Medals with William Sandys Wright Vaux as its first keeper; he remained in charge of the department until 1870 when Reginald Stuart Poole succeeded him.¹¹⁵

The minutes of the Sub Committee on Antiquities show however that, long before he was officially appointed to become keeper of the newly formed department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, Newton had effectively taken over the running of this part of the museum. The same Committee discussed the possible despatch of Newton to Rome to negotiate with the 'Roman Government' the purchase of a collection of antiquities. Newton's 'Plan of the proposed arrangement of the Parthenon Sculptures' was presented, as was a letter by him, including a second one from 'Lieut. Smith R.E. upon the subject of archeological researches now going on in the Cyrenaica'. Newton had requested money to support Smith's researches, these were granted in the same meeting.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ 14 March 1861, B:M.A., SC1 (vol. 1-3), 1828-86, fol. 1176 'The Principal Librarian reported the illness of Mr Birch, and his incapacity to undertake, at present, a journey to Rome, as requested at the last meeting of the Standing Committee. The Sub Committee decided that Mr Birch should be at once relieved from this duty, and that, subject to the same conditions, it should be confided to Mr Newton, the Sub Committee relying on the confirmation of this decision by the Standing Committee.'

¹¹⁵ *British Museum Statutes and Rules*, 1932, p. 34.

¹¹⁶ B.M.A., SC1 (vol. 1-3), 1828-86, fols 1177/8. 'That the sum of £100 be placed at Lieut. Smith's disposal, and that he be requested to secure the Statue of Bacchus for the Museum if possible. That the First Lord of the Admiralty be requested to grant the aid of a Ship of War, with the necessary stores, to facilitate Lieut. Smith's operations. That applications be made to the Secretary of State for War, for an extension of Lieut. Smith's leave and for the requisite supply of stores from those under His Lordship's control'.

After his involvement in the search and collection of antiquities in the Aegean, Newton's keepership gave the newly formed Department a fresh, more focused direction, with a less casual approach to the acquisition of antiquities. In the space of six years, from the date of his first appointment as vice consul in the Aegean island of Lesbos, Newton had radically changed his career. From his very first letters demanding attention and a response, Newton had worked with determination toward his goal, and he had succeeded fully.

Colnaghi also benefited from the time he spent at Mytilene. In 1859 he was not sent to Rome, instead, after one year spent as Lord Stratford's private secretary and an appointment as consul at Messolonghi, he was rapidly promoted to the post of consul general in Florence.

[insert illustration 4:3 here - landscape]

Excavations at Bodrum

Colnaghi's later career raises the issue of whether there was a link between the donation of antiquities to the British Museum, and his initial appointment to the consular service. The registers of donations to the British Museum show evidence of a regular number of contributions from the Colnaghi firm up until the 1860s when Dominic's career began.¹¹⁷ It is not clear why Colnaghi, rather than continuing the

¹¹⁷ B.M.A., Registers of Donations, vols 3-5, passim.

family business, had decided instead to enter the consular service. However, his rapid promotion should be certainly seen as related to Newton's¹¹⁸.

It is likely in my view that a gentlemen's agreement did exist between the Museum and the consuls; one by which the retrieval and donation of antiquities was indirectly linked to the appointment of relatives or friends of the consuls in specific places, or even of unpaid vice consuls to paid positions. Letters of thanks for antiquities suggest that a link of this nature might have been sanctioned. They appear regularly in the Trustees' correspondence, addressed to, among others, J.E. Blunt, consul at Salonica, Niven Kerr, consul at Rhodes, and Richard Wilkinson, consul at Syros. Many of the consuls mentioned in this work appear repeatedly amongst the registers of donations to the British Museum¹¹⁹ however, there seems to be no source that might allow verification of whether, apart from Biliotti, other consuls who contributed to the retrieval of antiquities, or their relatives, were subsequently employed by the Museum or whether their donations to the Museum were linked to their consular appointment.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ And possibly, to the family connections going back to Morcote.

¹¹⁹ B.M.A., Register of Donations to the British Museum, vols 3,4,5 passim. 'Greek bust of marble representing Ariadne, found on the sea shore at Mytilene, donated by F.H.S. Werry, H.M. vice consul at Bengazi, through Mr. C.T. Newton, H.M. vice consul at Mytilene' 13 May 1854, vol. 5, fol. 23. 'Two Greek autonomous coins ... from A.C. Cumberbatch Esq. H.M. consul general in Turkey' 8 Oct. 1853, vol. 4, fol. 892. 'A copper Greek imperial coin of Caracalla struck at Alabande in Caria, and a silver Greek autonomous coin of Miletus: from Niven Kerr, H.M. consul at Rhodes' 12 July 1854, vol. 5, fol. 43.

¹²⁰ The Foreign Office lists which start from 1856 mention only the names of the consuls and vice consuls, but not of the consular agents. The information they contain is incomplete. The Museum, for its part, never kept record of the backgrounds of people who applied for a position there but were rejected. Comparison of the names is thus impossible due a the lack of information on both sides.

One instance though, is striking. When, in 1860, Panizzi wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the three principal Trustees, to recommend Newton's appointment as keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, he suggested a certain A.H. Wilkinson for a minor, unspecified, appointment.¹²¹ Richard Wilkinson had been consul at Syros since 1834, and had already recommended three other Wilkinsons as vice consuls or consular agents in the Levant. He had also made donations of both archaeological remains and natural history specimens to the Museum. Syros was a major centre for communications in the Levant and most vessels arriving or leaving the Aegean passed through its harbour. The consul at Syros were of great assistance in the removal of antiquities to Britain. Through Newton Wilkinson could appeal to Panizzi¹²² and so the potential certainly existed for a relative of Richard Wilkinson to be recommended for an appointment at the Museum. The appearance of the name together with that of Newton in a letter from Antonio Panizzi, increases the likeliness that there was some linkage.

The Museums appointments criteria in the early part of the century had been unclear and for this reason Panizzi introduced, in 1858, a rule requiring that potential employees should pass the civil service examination.

For his part, Newton had followed a path that had proved successful. He was determined that other should follow his example and so when Panizzi wrote asking his opinion on the potential appointment of Mr Pullam, who had put himself forward to

¹²¹ To the Archbishop of Canterbury, 29 Dec 1860, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 5, second series, fols 434-5.

¹²² As he had done many times in directing the consuls to sell their antiquities to the Museum.

carry out excavations on behalf of the Museum as an agent¹²³ Newton replied by making him aware of the benefits that well informed consuls might bring to the Museum and pointing out the benefit of a consular appointment against that of an agent.

No ostensible agent of the British Government should be sent to the Levant to purchase antiquities... By employing consuls as agents... a much more effectual agency is set on foot. No one can compete with a consul in the market except another consul. His dragoman is in much the same position as a solicitor of a small county town in England. He knows everybody's secrets, debts and crimes. Here money will not purchase antiquities in the Levant, but money and consular influence together will do much... I have travelled much, for six years... all the real prizes were sold not to the agent of the British Museum but to the Vice Consul of Mytilene and the acting consul of Rhodes. Mr. Pullam would find, when he came to purchase, that he required that particular influence which no-one but a Consul's dragoman can bring into play.¹²⁴

He wrote that there was no need to appoint a costly agent who would spend the Government's money and achieve very little, because he believed 'that all that he could possibly do for the Museum could be a great deal better done by the present Vice Consul at Rhodes, Mr Biliotti who has a most extensive connection in the islands and whom I find very well disposed to help me because he is an unpaid Vice Consul and lives in hopes of getting something from the Government'. Should the Government insist in appointing Pullam, it would stand a serious risk that the French would send their artists again, as an agent would be seen as a weak presence in the territory.¹²⁵

¹²³ Pullam was proposing to be appointed as vice consul in Rhodes and from there to act, much like Newton had done from Mytilene, as an agent for the British Museum, again under the cover of an official appointment. Newton was deeply against this solution because he had identified others, already in the Aegean, who could do the job better.

¹²⁴ Newton to Panizzi, March 1859, B.L., Add MS 36719, fols 149-54.

¹²⁵ B.L., Add. MS 36719, fols 149-54.

Newton pointed out to Panizzi how Biliotti, who was looking for a paid consular appointment, would be the perfect agent instead. He suggested appointing him as a paid consul in exchange for his archeological services in the Aegean.

In fact, in 1859 Biliotti, on his own initiative, was effectively already excavating for Newton on behalf of the Museum. Newton had found that the instructions he had left to Biliotti and his friend Salzman to excavate the possible necropolis of Cumirus had brought to light important discoveries. He was delighted and felt that Biliotti had demonstrated that he was a person worth holding onto, and had thus made a point of recommending his appointment to Panizzi.

I thought the collection so important that I at once purchased a selection but I thought the Museum would do well to take the whole, if a fair bargain can be made. I think both Salzman and Biliotti are disposed to be liberal. The latter the more so, as he is our unpaid British Vice Consul at Rhodes, and wants advancement in the service.¹²⁶

Newton pointed out that Biliotti would be a better agent than Pullam in Rhodes. His knowledge of the area, his family links and connections would take him a long way in the collection of antiquities for the Museum.

Whether it became a rule for the Museum to have a say in the appointment of specific consuls in specific places after 1860 is beyond the scope of this book, but the issue was certainly raised and discussed, not only by Newton and Panizzi in the letter dealing with Pullam but also by the architect and archeologist Edward Falkener to whom Panizzi wrote:

My dear Sir, - I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, suggesting that exertions be made to convert Mr. Newton's former appointment to Mytilene into a precedent, and obtain, as a recognized principle, that a gentleman should always be appointed to one of the Eastern consulates

¹²⁶ 18 June 1859; B.L., Add. MS 36719, fols 550-4.

who is recommended by the Antiquarian Department of the British Museum. In my individual capacity I cannot, of course, presume to make such a suggestion; nor do I think the Trustees will take on themselves to make it; if, however, you intend your letter to be laid before the Board of Trustees, please let me know that such is your wish.¹²⁷

The careers of both Newton and Colnaghi confirm that a certain leverage had already been established with the Foreign Office. Sir Henry Layard had similarly begun with a simple appointment as attaché, and his career had progressed very rapidly as a result of his important discoveries.

The evidence shows that the Museum eventually came to influence the appointment of specific consuls in the Aegean. The interests involved were too important to allow the placing in archaeologically important consulates of individuals who might remain insensitive to the requirements of the Museum, or worst, who could sell their services to the French! It would appear, considering how little mention is made of archeological excavations in the official correspondence with the Foreign Office, that the matter was delicate and required discretion.

[insert illustration 4:4 here - landscape]

Excavations Photographed by Domnic Ellis Colnaghi

¹²⁷ A. Panizzi to E. Falkener, 18 June 1859, B.M.A. Letter Book n. 3, second series, fols 524-5.

Edward Falkener was an archaeologist. He was the editor of the periodical, *The Museum of Classical Antiquities* and the author of numerous books on classical archaeology. He kept correspondence with the Trustees and was aware of the findings of the Aegean consuls. It was his periodical to publish extracts from Newton's discoveries.

When Newton arrived in the Levant in 1852, certain individuals were more involved than others in the search for antiquities. Consul Barker, the successor to Henry Salt at Alexandria, had for instance followed in the footsteps of his predecessor. Newton sought to raise the awareness of his colleagues in the Aegean to the search for antiquities and instructed them on how to make excavations.¹²⁸ He also helped consuls who had found antiquities to market them, beginning an activity that continued after his departure from Greece. One of his letters to Panizzi bears testimony to this:

The bearer of this letter is Mr. Werry, our vice consul at Bengazi; he has been excavating in the Cirenaica and has got some interesting vases which I hope to see in the British Museum. Perhaps you may give him any information he may require with reference to the best manner of submitting his antiquities to the Trustees for purchase.¹²⁹

By 1860 the Museum had organised an effective agency for the collection of antiquities, under Newton's direction, with the Foreign Office, the Admiralty and the Customs. From 1835, the date of the first excavations in Egypt and consequently of the first official contacts with the Levant consuls, the Government had slowly, but consistently, prepared the means for a state subsidised, economically and efficiently run collection of antiquities for the national museum.

[insert illustration 4:5 here - landscape]

Archaeological remains at Bodrum

¹²⁸ M.E., Letter Book n.10, old series, fols 3844 and passim.

¹²⁹ Newton to Panizzi, 9 Apr. 1856, B.L., Add. MS 36717, fols 149-53.

Prior to his departure from the Levant in 1859 Newton had instructed and involved all the local consuls in the search for, and sale of, remains. By 1860, the consular dispatches to the ambassador seem to have dealt extensively with reports on antiquities. These dispatches were sent on to the British Museum and formed the basis to obtain government grants for excavations.

Sir, - I am directed by the Trustees of the British Museum to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th inst., with the enclosures from Mr. Vice Consul Crowe reporting the discovery of an Ancient Greek Vault containing Sarcophagi and other Antiquities, near the town of Bengazi, and I am to request to you to return the thanks of the Trustees to Lord John Russell for his Lordship's kindness in sending them the particulars of this interesting discovery ... As regards further exploration in the region of the Cyrenaica the Trustees desire me to submit their opinion to His Lordship, that from the great importance and advanced civilisation of the district in former times, and from the discoveries that have already been made there, the most satisfactory results might be anticipated were the Government disposed to grant the necessary funds and to engage a gentleman of experience and judgment to carry out their instructions in this behalf.¹³⁰

All this was the result of Newton's activities. With Panizzi's support, he had managed to focus the attention of the consuls on the search of antiquities 'for' the national museum. He had also managed, at a governmental level, to obtain the financial support necessary for such activities in the Aegean. The results were so outstanding that four years later the Trustees asked him to prepare 'a draft for transmission to the Foreign Office of proposed instructions to H.M. consuls abroad in reference to the acquisition of antiquities for the British Museum'.¹³¹ The draft was presented at a Sub Committee for Antiquities on the 5 June 1863. It was accepted by the British Museum Committee on

¹³⁰ A. Panizzi to J. Murray at the Foreign Office, 16 Nov. 1860, B.M.A., Letter Book n. 5, second series, fols 354-5.

¹³¹ 13 June 1863, B.M.A., Committee, vol. 30, fols 10354-5.

the 14 December 1863, and finally approved by a Sub Committee on Antiquities on the 15th December 1864.¹³²

The points to which it would be desirable to direct the attentions of Consuls within their districts are as follows:

1 All remains of ancient cities, buildings or cemeteries, which there is reason to believe not to have been fully explored.

2 All discoveries of ancient architectural remains, sculptures, inscriptions, coins, pottery and other antiquities, which may fall under the observation of Consuls in their own district. In reference to such enquiries it might be observed that even where remains are no longer to be found on the site of an ancient city or building, evidence of its former existence may be obtained by a careful examination of the castles, churches, mosques or other buildings in its neighbourhood, the walls of which frequently contain ancient marbles reworked as building materials.

Interesting sculptures, inscriptions and architectural remains may thus be detected in the walls of modern villages.

In examining the site of an ancient city it is of great importance to ascertain, if possible, the position of its cemeteries. These will generally be discovered by a careful examination of the ground outside the city gates.

Even where no remains of tombs are visible above the soil, the position of the cemetery may often be indicated by the fragments of Greek pottery which strew the surface of the ground.

This pottery is distinguished by its lustrous black varnish and by the figures and ornaments drawn on it.

It is always worth while to note the localities where fragments of this vase are found in abundance, and to collect specimens of it for transmission to the British Museum.¹³³

These instructions were to be forwarded to all Foreign Office consuls, making the systematic search for antiquities one of the official duties of the consular profession.

¹³² B.M.A., SC1 (vol. 1-3) March 1828-April 1876; Sub Committee on Antiquities: 5 June 1863, fol. 1315, and 15 December 1864, fol. 1356.

¹³³ 11 June 1863, B.M.A., Officers Reports, vol. 70, report n. 4859 from the Keeper of the Greek and Roman Antiquities Department.