

# Reading into the mysteries of *Artemis Ephesia*

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On 18 September 1956, Franz Miltner, head of the Austrian team of archaeologists working at the ancient site of Ephesos, near modern Selçuk in the Izmir province of Turkey, was informed by an enthusiastic Turkish excavation worker about the unearthing of a golden statue in the Prytaneion (see triptych<sup>1</sup>).<sup>2</sup> On closer examination, the statue turned out to be not gold but, most probably, coated in gold on the upper half. The perfectly worked marble statue was named 'Artemis the Beautiful' by Miltner on the basis of its high-quality workmanship, distinguishing it from the later-discovered 'Artemis the Colossal', again from the Prytaneion, thus named because of its size. A third, smaller-than-life-size statue again from the Prytaneion would soon join the two.<sup>3</sup>



The three *Artemis Ephesia* sculptures now on display at Efes Museum in Selçuk, the 'Beautiful' on the left and the 'Colossal' in the centre.

Thought to be Roman period copies of cult statues in the Artemision,<sup>4</sup> the three statues are currently on display in the Artemis Hall of Efes Museum in Selçuk, which was specially designed for the purpose. In this chapter, I will try to examine the possibilities encouraged by the architecture and contents of this hall for an interpretation of the enigmatic *Artemis Ephesia*.

## The curiosity named *Artemis Ephesia*

The peculiarities distinguishing the goddess of the Ephesians from those of other cities had been noticed by the Turkish workers who unearthed 'Artemis the Beautiful'. Sabahattin Türkoğlu, a former director of Efes Museum, reported that the statue appeared rather strange to the workers who, glancing secretly at the lumps on the goddess's chest, asked 'could a woman possibly have more than two breasts?'.<sup>5</sup> Efes Museum's researcher, Öcal Özeren, explained how those

breastlike swells on her chest were first thought to be breasts, then bodies of bees (the emblem of Ephesus is a bee), but then the thesis that these were the testicles of the bulls sacrificed to the goddess gained weight.<sup>6</sup>

The latter two theories challenge Edward Falkner's mid-nineteenth-century argument that the swellings were animal breasts, concluding that this 'confirms the opinion of some learned men, that the Egyptian Isis and the Greek Diana were the same divinity with Rhœa, whose name they suppose to be derived from the Hebrew word, Rehah, to feed'.<sup>7</sup> What these interpretations share is the belief that there should be a way of being sure about what the Ephesian Artemis figure signifies.

Discussing the potentials of semiotics for the history of art, Vernon Hyde Minor explains our search for hidden or unknown meanings in visual art works as part of a general human desire for a natural, commonsensical, immediate way of knowing, of 'being sure about the world'.<sup>8</sup> Semiotics attempts to fulfil this desire by offering the reader and viewer counter-intuitive ciphers and cryptographic systems for decoding and uncovering hidden meanings, with meaning arising 'in the collaboration between signs (visual or verbal) and interpreters',<sup>9</sup> giving the work of art its discursive character. This is evident in Falkner's encounter with the Ephesian Artemis figure:

The circle around her head denotes the nimbus of her glory; the griffins inside of which express its brilliancy. In her breasts are the twelve signs of the zodiac; of which those seen in front are the Ram, Bull, Twins, Crab, and Lion: they are divided by the hours. Her necklace is composed of acorns, the primeval food of man. Lions are on her arms, to denote her power, and her hands are stretched out to show that she is ready to receive all who come to her. Her body is covered with various beasts and monsters, as sirens, sphinxes, and griffins, to show that she is the source of nature, the mother of all things.<sup>10</sup>

The ‘reading’ goes on. This conceptualisation of works of plastic art as decipherable texts would seem to be rooted in a Renaissance conception of the world as a language.<sup>11</sup> In the field of curatorship, this conception has produced the cabinet of curiosity, one of the commonly accepted predecessors of the modern museum.<sup>12</sup> The difference lay in the fact that the scientific museums succeeded the ‘literary’ museums formed by the cabinets of curiosities by prioritising ‘seeing’ over ‘reading’.<sup>13</sup> Every collector of curiosities would seem to have lived under the illusion that the microcosmos he constructed with his collection is, in a way, an installation of the macrocosmos that is the whole universe, an assembly of all extant knowledge in the same physical space, and a world-view in personal scale.<sup>14</sup> While each cabinet is a mystery for other people, it is a very meaningful semiotic treasure for its own designer, a *theatrum mundi* that reveals the intrinsic order in apparently chaotic things through mysterious correspondences it establishes between the curiosities that are arranged regardless of their spatial and temporal attributes.<sup>15</sup> Like every literary construct, it invites its visitors to contemplate a reading of those correspondences, to form their own personal image of the world. It is perhaps possible to conceive of the Ephesian Artemis figure as a *theatrum mundi* in itself, i.e. as a construction under the same illusion, in that it was an installation of the whole universe, a microcosmos revealing the intrinsic order in the apparently chaotic macrocosmos through a reading into the mysterious correspondences between its components. Perhaps this was what the mysteries of the Ephesian Artemis were about: ‘a cult of wonder’ not necessarily for the beauty but for the excessive, the surprising, the literally outlandish, the prodigious.<sup>16</sup>

After the transition from ‘the old science’ of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance into ‘the new philosophy’ emerging in the early seventeenth century,<sup>17</sup> order is no longer revealed in the cross-references and enigmatic correspondences between things, but is imposed on them by the rational grids invented by such philosophers as Bacon, Descartes and Leibniz. In order to highlight the spatial and visual character of this paradigm shift, it may be useful to recall Camillo’s fascinating ‘memory theatre’, which attempted an encyclopaedic ordering of contemporary knowledge in the first half of the sixteenth century through a spatial disposition of objects of knowledge to be viewed from the stage. The memory theatre derived from Cicero’s proposal to assist memory by assigning each rhetorical object a specific spatial location within a room, a building, a city.<sup>18</sup> In this formulation, things represent reality only when ordered in reference to their place in the catalogues, that are themselves based on the visible and definable similarities and differences in their physical attributes. The establishment and safeguarding of that reality in the Enlightenment museum thus became the duty of the curator.<sup>19</sup> In this way, Michel Foucault’s ‘words’ and ‘things’ are disconnected, and the latter are redefined within the syntax of a new universal language which is no longer learned from the world itself. Instead, the world itself is now learned from the books and encyclopaedias written in that language.<sup>20</sup>

Later, in the nineteenth century, a deep historicity came to infuse the heart of ‘things’, isolating and defining them in their own coherence, imposing upon them

forms of order implied by the continuity of time.<sup>21</sup> As to the curiosities, in the universe of the classified, the defined, the measured, and the ordered, which is ideal for a semiotic exercise, they have apparently lost their charm, as they represented the condition of *aporia* by escaping classification, definition, measurement and ordering.<sup>22</sup> Minor argues that, in this way, they shift our attention to the problems of decoding itself, reminding us of the impossibility of 'being sure about the world', and of the fact that 'we can find pleasure in contemplating things that escape our understanding'.<sup>23</sup> This would mean a continuation of the attempt to read into the mysteries of the Ephesian Artemis, even after accepting the impossibility of being sure about the validity of any of the possible interpretations including those quoted above.

The curiosity named *Artemis Ephesia* may, in this respect, be comparable to Stonehenge, one of the world's most familiar sites, analysed by Kevin Hetherington<sup>24</sup> as 'a museum without walls' in allusion to Malraux's famous essay of the same title.<sup>25</sup> Malraux describes the museum principally as a spatial relation that has had a trajectory towards openness in its involvement with the process of ordering that takes place in or around certain sites or buildings. As such, the concept would seem to find its parallel in the concept of *opera aperta*, or the open work, first proposed by Umberto Eco in his eponymous book in 1962 and later elaborated on in his work on semiology.<sup>26</sup> Owing partly to its ruined state, the openness of Stonehenge to interpretation is attested in the vast literature that offers the widest possible range of answers or guesses as to its age, purpose and makers,<sup>27</sup> as if 'specifically designed to accommodate every notion that could possibly be projected onto it',<sup>28</sup> just like the Kubrick-designed monolith buried beneath the moon's surface in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). According to Hetherington, Stonehenge functions as a 'museum without walls' by accommodating a multiplicity of attempts to show its meaning and use, ranging from the archaeological and museological practices of English Heritage to those of an earth-mysteries tradition. Whether or not they are part of a 'museum without walls' would likewise determine the degree to which the *Artemis Ephesia* sculptures, as exhibited in the Efes Museum in Selçuk, would accomplish their intrinsic potential as curiosities.

## The Artemis Hall: a cabinet of curiosity or a modern museum gallery?

When viewed from the framework of the transition from the Renaissance cabinet of curiosity to the Enlightenment museum and then to nineteenth-century historicism, a spatial analysis of the Artemis Hall in the Efes Museum reveals something of all the three notions at work, intentionally or not creating an appeal for different kind of visitors. The analysis of the architectural plan organisation in the Natural History Museum in London by John Peponis and Jenny Hendin as a space enmeshed in the organisation of knowledge provides an illuminating tool in this regard.<sup>29</sup> Peponis and Hendin show how the initial edifice, designed to house the Victorian natural history collections by

Waterhouse and opened in 1881, had a comb-like ground-floor plan with a hall at the centre of its major axis which acted as a fulcrum from which all parts branched off. Situated in the western front of the museum, the birds gallery similarly has a series of display cases arranged at right angles to a central aisle, creating a series of convex spaces on either side of the aisle that are reachable from one another in two steps – one into the central aisle and one into the destination space – which enables a return to the starting point without having to retrace one's steps.<sup>30</sup> This reveals the dominant controlling function of the central aisle, which renders the whole layout easily comprehensible to the visitors, as if from the stage of Camillo's *theatrum mundi*. Peponis and Hedin conclude:

The Bird Gallery seems to correspond to a scheme where knowledge is inherently spatial – it is about the table of classification on which immutable beings find their correct position.... Order, over and above that which is built physically, is carried by the objects themselves. Visitors can observe in the characteristics of species the principles of classification that located them in their appropriate display cases.<sup>31</sup>

A quick glimpse at the plan layout of the Efes Museum reveals the difference of its organisation from that of the Natural History Museum and its birds gallery. The Efes Museum in fact represents the organisation of the later-renovated human biology hall of the Natural History Museum, which Peponis and Hedin compare and contrast to the birds gallery to highlight a contemporary change in relation to the enunciation, transmitting and social organisation of knowledge.

Lacking a dominant controlling central hall with branching halls and cases, the Efes Museum offers, instead, a series of exhibition spaces that loosely wrap around a small courtyard which also has a direct connection with the entrance as a café space. From the entrance hall, the visitors are directed into a hall of exhibits from the so-called Slope Houses, alongside the longer edge of which a straight path from the entrance directs them to the next hall of sculptural remains from three fountains in the ancient city, and then into a third dimly lit hall of recent and small finds where it terminates in a window that provides visual access to a courtyard at the back that functions as a sculpture garden. After circling around the exhibits in these three halls, the visitors need to make an effort to find the doorway opening onto the sculpture garden from under a colonnade, on the opposite side of which is located another doorway leading into another dimly hall reserved for cemetery finds. At this doorway wraps the path leading to the entrance hall across the Artemis and Imperial Cult halls that wrap around the small inner courtyard.<sup>32</sup> As the idea of wrapping would suggest, unlike the two steps required to reach another exhibition space in the birds gallery, the visitors have to cross several of these halls and back many steps to return to their starting point, occasionally making a number of loops, which show the depth of the exhibition space in Peponis and Hedin's terms, while rendering it difficult for the visitors to find their way and comprehend the overall structure of the museum, as was found to be the case with the human biology hall of the Natural History Museum. Although the

visitors are offered a single route for exploring the small museum at Selçuk, the presence of looping routes inside individual exhibition halls and the lack of a sequential arrangement of displays in and through them would suggest the potential of the whole installation to become a ‘museum without walls’, functioning as a spatial event in its own right, rather than conveying an explicit curatorial message about the order of things.

Peponis and Hedin’s observations of the human biology hall of the Natural History Museum apply equally well to the Efes Museum:

Firstly, the increase in depth not just within the exhibitions but also between the entrance hall and the exhibitions, may mark a categorical emphasis bearing on the visitors themselves. They have to be driven deep into the building before knowledge opens up for them, as if to be initiated in the ritual of transmission. Knowledge is not immediately accessible. Secondly, visitors are broken down into small groups, and transmission is individualized. The fragmentation of axiality, and the increase in subdivision, keeps the numbers of people who are in spatial contact with each other small ... Thirdly, in so far as rings are used, they allow scope for differences between visitors. In theory at least, personal routes through the exhibits within the same gallery are possible.<sup>33</sup>

In the case of Efes Museum, the adoption of display strategies similar to those used in the human biology hall of the Natural History Museum would appear appropriate for a collection that has its origins in a storeroom. This storeroom was originally set up in 1929 in the village of Selçuk, enlarged in 1964, and finally took its current form after the construction of annexed spaces in 1976, built to house the sculptural artefacts unearthed during the excavations of the so-called Curetes Street at *Ephesos*. This street was lined with such important monuments as the Trajan Fountain, Pollio Fountain and the Memmius Monument, as explained by Türkoğlu.<sup>34</sup>

There is, then, a degree of impossibility in cataloguing such a collection on the basis of the visible and definable similarities and differences in their physical attributes, in such a way as to reveal a unifying order intrinsic in them. Instead, the high aesthetic value attributed to these objects on display by one of the former directors of the museum, and the limited use of accompanying textual and complementary visual information in their exhibition – except in the renovated Slope Houses Hall – would seem to hint at the relevance of Carol Duncan’s analysis of the modern museum as a ‘ritual space’.<sup>35</sup> Duncan uses the term ‘ritual’ in the sense of ‘habitual or routinized behaviour that lacks meaningful subjective context’.<sup>36</sup> According to Duncan, museums force their visitors into a routinised kind of behaviour by changing the meanings of the displayed objects by removing them from their original settings and redefining them as works of art, claiming them ‘for a new kind of ritual attention [which] could entail the negation or obscuring the other, older meanings’.<sup>37</sup>

By inventing aesthetics to transfer spiritual values to the secular realm of the Enlightenment, museums thus serve to isolate objects for the concentrating gaze

of the aesthetic adept and suppress as irrelevant other meanings the objects might have by presenting 'works of art as just that, as objects of aesthetic contemplation and not as illustrative of historical or archaeological information'.<sup>38</sup> Svetlana Alpers describes the same transformation of all objects into works of art as the 'museum effect'.<sup>39</sup> Kevin Walsh argues, in *The Representation of the Past* (1992), that

[t]he auratic display, where the 'beauty' or aesthetic quality of the object is intentionally the predominant characteristic of the display, is oppressive in its impressiveness; the medium consumes the message and the auratic display is itself a form of spectacle, suppressing the ability to interpret.<sup>40</sup>

More than the other exhibits in Efes Museum, this discursive framework is particularly useful for an analysis of the current display of the three *Artemis Ephesia* statues whose rediscovery has inspired many interpretative attempts, including the present one.

The Artemis Hall where the three sculptures are located is a rectangular room whose length is more than double its width. 'Artemis the Beautiful' and 'Artemis the Colossal' face each other from the two shorter sides of the Hall. The Hall occupies a central position in the Efes Museum, between the so-called 'Hall of Cemetery Finds'<sup>41</sup> and that of the 'Imperial Cult'.<sup>42</sup> The approach along the earlier described route is from the former hall, bringing the visitor directly to the area where 'Artemis the Colossal' is displayed in a recess that frames it in a kind of 'aesthetic chapel', facilitating its contemplation as a work of art just like 'Artemis the Beautiful', located in a smaller niche. Painted blue and naturally lit from the top, the semi-circular niche of 'Artemis the Beautiful' would indeed seem to conform to Miltner's naming of the statue on the basis of aesthetic criteria. For those visitors who are attracted to



**'Artemis the Beautiful' as displayed before the 1999 renovation of the Artemis Hall.**

museums with the hope of leaving with the satisfaction of an aesthetic experience, this part of Efes Museum should have been the favourite spot, at least before the 1999 renovation of the Hall.

On the other hand, visitors interested in these acts of framing might notice that, rather than the historically neutral niche housing 'Artemis the Beautiful', the two pieces of wall that create an alcove for the display of 'Artemis the Colossal' were decorated with a pair of column paintings that hint at an attempt to recreate the authentic atmosphere within which the Artemis of Ephesus had presumably been worshipped by her ancient believers. For those visitors who are attracted to ancient sites and museums with the hope of going through a re-enactment of an authentic experience, this is the spot to look for it, allowing them to perceive what they saw, not as a work of art for aesthetic contemplation, but as *Artemis Ephesia* herself, one of the most curious-looking goddesses of Antiquity. Their gaze, in turn, would have transformed 'Artemis the Colossal' into a *theatrum mundi* that revealed the intrinsic order in apparent chaos through the mysterious correspondences between its various parts, a 'reading' of which would have helped the visitors either to form their own personal image of the world or to accept the impossibility of being sure about the world, and allow them to enjoy it from the stage of the *theatrum mundi*.

Prior to the 1999 renovation of this part of the Efes Museum, visitors given to accepting this invitation to contemplate Artemis the Colossal as *theatrum mundi* may have even suspected that the whole Artemis Hall was, in fact, a cabinet of accidentally revealed curiosities. This included the third *Artemis Ephesia* statue, dated to AD 150–200 and displayed on one side of 'Artemis the Beautiful', which had, on its other side, a marble block depicting a peace treaty between Ephesus and Alexandria, dated to AD 238–44, with reliefs of the goddesses of the two cities, *Artemis Ephesia*



'Artemis the Colossal' as displayed before the 1999 renovation of the Artemis Hall.

and *Serapis*. On closer inspection of the labelling of these curiosities (as labels are part of the process of classifying ‘things’ by naming them in ‘words’), there are along the longitudinal wall on the side of the smallest *Artemis Ephesia* other items labelled ‘lead pipe with stone sleeve sockets from the altar of Artemision’, ‘fragments of a horse possibly from a quadriga – Altar of Diana’s temple – early Hellenistic’ and ‘ideal male head, 350/300 B.V’. Along the facing wall is a window displaying ‘finds from the Altar of Artemision’, according to a label at one end, and the ‘Head of an Amazon from the Altars frieze’, according to another label at its other end, with none other in between them. Other contents of the Artemis Hall were, and still are, not labelled, apparently to the advantage of the curiosity-lovers.

For, those visitors who prefer reading ‘words’ instead of the ‘things’ on display<sup>43</sup> are bound to fail in locating, among the votive offerings from the Artemision Altar in this window, what any informed curiosity-lover would immediately identify as ‘things’ originating from Eastern Mediterranean sites such as Egypt, Phoenicia and Cyprus. A detailed list of these items, with expert opinion on their age, purpose and makers, would be accessible only to those visitors who have the motivation to learn the world from the books and encyclopaedias written in the universal language of the Enlightenment and, so, never go on a site trip without an expert guidebook, such as the one prepared by the Austrian team of excavators for Ephesos under the coordination of Peter Scherrer. Perhaps this latter type of visitors hope that the more knowledge they acquire on the time- and place-specific attributes of the items on display, the more defined those items would become for them within the syntax of a historicist language that would then impose upon ‘things’ forms of order implied by the continuity of time, as a possibility of ‘being sure about the world’.

Only these adequately prepared visitors would be able to access the order imposed upon the chaotic display of ‘finds from the Altar of Artemision’ by Ulrike Muss, from the Austrian Institute of Archaeology, through her description of the items in the order of ‘Geometric Period finds’,<sup>44</sup> ‘7th–6th century BC finds’,<sup>45</sup> and then of ‘gold’,<sup>46</sup> ‘ivory’,<sup>47</sup> ‘marble’,<sup>48</sup> ‘schist’<sup>49</sup> and ‘limestone’<sup>50</sup> finds, apparently proceeding from the most to the least valuable materials.<sup>51</sup> The importance of these finds is due to the fact, emphasised by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood on early Greek sanctuaries of the eighth century BC, ‘that the sanctuary with altar – with or without a temple – is the regular, taken-for-granted focus of religious activity’,<sup>52</sup> with votive offerings representing a more permanently attested form of worship.<sup>53</sup> In the case of the Artemision of Ephesos, the earliest-dated votive offerings are thought to be contemporary with an eighth-century BC peripteral temple, which is described, on the website of the Austrian Institute of Archaeology, as having

served as a prototype for numerous peripteral temples, up to the Parthenon of the Athenian Acropolis.... Since all the older installations were abandoned and thereby sealed up already in the 6th century BC the small finds may be understood as stored up information concerning the cult and its representation.<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, their presence in the Artemis Hall actually has the potential to provoke a perception of the displayed *Artemis Ephesia* statues not as works of art for aesthetic contemplation, but as illustrative of historical or archaeological information that would reveal those 'other, older meanings' which are argued above after Duncan to be commonly negated or obscured in modern museum practices.

More specifically, Catherine Morgan explains the exotic luxuries such as the Phoenician, Egyptian and Cypriot dedications at the early Ionian sanctuaries at Ephesos and the facing island of Samos by the commercial transactions for which the region was famous in the so-called Orientalising period of Eastern Mediterranean influence over Greek art:<sup>55</sup> 'Although there is little unusual in the range of objects offered, their styles often reflect a fusion of Greek and foreign traits',<sup>56</sup> revealing 'the greater mobility and interaction within the Greek world and outside it'.<sup>57</sup> Morgan's comments are especially important in the light of the observation by Helmut Kyrieleis on the Heraion at Samos, that 'in general, the equation of Greek and Near Eastern divinities is a well-documented phenomenon in the history of Greek religion'.<sup>58</sup> The relevance of these arguments for this chapter is due to a reference to Artemis in the *Iliad* (21.470) and elsewhere as *Potnia Theron* or 'Mistress of Animals', which is commonly represented by a female figure standing between a pair of lions or other wild or fantastic animals such as the bird, deer or griffon, which we have already seen as constructing the curiosity that is *Artemis Ephesia*.<sup>59</sup> In her research on the cult of Anatolian *Cybele*, Lynn E. Roller finds the origins of this representational model in the second millennium Near East, and its later spread in Minoan and Mycenaean art, with Near Eastern centres such as Assyria and Cyprus providing the source material in the Early Iron Age, which corresponds to the period of the eighth-century BC peripteral temple in the Artemision. These would support Falkaner's attribution of the mystery of the Ephesian Artemis to a fusion of Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean traits, by referring to the Egyptian Isis, Roman Diana and Greek Rhœa as derived from the Hebrew '*Rehah*'.

However, this line of argument would seem to counter the one imposed by a group of installations in Efes Museum that would seem to centre, instead, on the presumption of an interrelation between pre-Greek and Greek populations at the site of Ephesos.<sup>60</sup> The same suggestion surfaces in Morgan's explanation that

a rich collection of ivories dedicated at the Artemision at *Ephesos* between c. 650 BC and 550 BC (and possibly the work of Lydian craftsmen) shows non-Greek influences in style and workmanship, and their subjects include Hittite-style 'Hawk Priestess' as well as non-Greek figures from daily life.<sup>61</sup>

The difference between these two arguments, when analysed using the concept of the 'museum without walls' that would accommodate a multiplicity of attempts to interpret the meaning and use of its contents, highlights the importance of the part played by the display strategy in Efes Museum for the possible interpretations of the enigmatic *Artemis Ephesia* figure within its walls.

## Reading into the mysteries of Artemis Ephesra in the Artemis Hall of the Efes Museum

Duncan and Wallace describe the modern museum as a complex architectural phenomenon that structures the visitor experience through the organisation of a selection of artworks in an architectural order.<sup>62</sup> Although individuals respond to this structuring differently, depending on their educational, cultural and social background, the architectural setting of the museum nevertheless imposes the same structure to everyone by making all visitors follow the same architectural scenario during their activity in the museum, which they describe with the term 'ritual', on the basis of its striking similarity with sacred rituals, both in terms of form and in terms of content.<sup>63</sup> The experience resembles traditional religious practices, in that the positioning of individual works, plans of individual rooms and the ordering of individual collections, encourage the visitors to practise the rites and internalise the beliefs that are inscribed in the architectural scenario<sup>64</sup> serving, in this way, to articulate hidden broader political and ideological objectives.<sup>65</sup>

The architectural layout of Efes Museum would gain in importance when viewed from this conceptual framework, as the scenario here directs the visitors into the Artemis Hall from the Hall of Cemetery Finds wherein are also displayed offerings for *Cybele*.<sup>66</sup> Before entering the Artemis Hall, the visitors make their last stop in front of a series of drawings and objects that 'reveal' the order implied by continuity of time. This is structured as a sequence proceeding from a sixth-millennium BC Mother Goddess figurine from the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük in central Anatolia, to a sixth-century BC one from the Hittite capital Hattusha further to the north, then to an eighth-century BC Hittite one and a ninth-century BC Hittite *Kubaba*, both from Kargamish in



**The sequence of images at the entrance of the Artemis Hall from the Hall of Cemetery Finds.**

south-eastern Anatolia, to conclude with a sixth-century BC Phrygian *Kybele* from the current capital city of Ankara.<sup>67</sup> Passing to the Artemis Hall, visitors find themselves facing the next step in the evolution that is authoritatively outlined for them as such, which is none other than 'Artemis the Colossal', i.e. the most 'auratic' object in an undifferentiated path of progress towards the modern in Walsh's terms.<sup>68</sup> In this way, Walsh shows that 'its meaning is conferred by the "writer", that is, the curator, the archaeologist, the historian, or the visitor who possesses the "cultural competence" to recognize the conferred meaning given by the "expert"'.<sup>69</sup>

The selection of these items and their structuring in the architectural scenario uniquely in this part of the museum, which otherwise lacks a sequential arrangement of displays, would seem to support a particular interpretation of the Ephesian Artemis, namely one suggesting an evolution from *Cybele* at the very site of *Ephesos*, which is equated with the city of Apasas in Hittite texts.<sup>70</sup> In this portion of the museum alone the visitors follow a programmed narrative that is a version of ancient history.<sup>71</sup> The significance of this clear choice from among various possible alternative explanatory models for cultural interaction and change in Mediterranean prehistory deserves to be addressed in a separate study on the bond between politics and archaeology in Anatolian historiography. Yet, it should be noted here that this is the strongest curatorial suggestion that may be encountered within the walls of Efes Museum and without, as the same suggestion has found its way into, or perhaps rather it originated from, Ekrem Akurgal's *Ancient Civilizations and Ruins of Turkey*, which is the best-known expert guidebook on the topic in the English language:

On reaching this spot [i.e. the site of Ephesos], the Greeks found that the mother goddess, Kybele, held sway as chief deity, as in almost every part of Anatolia. In order to placate the indigenous peoples, they adopted a policy of syncretism and introduced the worship of Artemis and Kybele in the same deity.<sup>72</sup>

According to the Efes Museum's researcher Öcal Özeren's guidebook to the site and its museum, '[t]he big reliefs of lions on her arms are strong evidence that the goddess [Artemis] was in the stage of transition from Cybele. In all statues of Cybele there were lions at her side'.<sup>73</sup>

The power of this interpretative structure would seem to have increased, intentionally or not, through a series of modifications in the Artemis Hall during a renovation in 1999. These include the removal of the suspended ceiling that used to create a focus of natural light on 'Artemis the Beautiful' in a dimly lit hall that would have invited visitors for an aesthetic contemplation. The result is a brightly and more homogeneously lit hall within which the 'aesthetic chapels' of the former scenario no longer play any significant part. Also, on the other side of the hall, the pair of columns painted on the front walls of the niche housing 'Artemis the Colossal' has been painted over in grey. Instead of the two statues facing each other from their chapels at two ends of a dark central space, the leading part would now seem to be taken by that very space, thanks to the installation there of a model showing the Temple of Artemis at Ephesos

**The Artemis Hall of Efes Museum after the 1999 renovation.**



in its Hellenistic phase, considered to have been one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

So, we end up with an anachronistic ensemble, consisting of a window of votive offerings from the pre-sixth-century BC deposit below the Hellenistic altar, which is believed by the Austrian excavators of the site to have served as a predecessor and prototype for later monumental altars such as the one at Pergamon;<sup>74</sup> a highly speculative reconstruction of the Hellenistic period temple fronted by the altar; three Roman-period *Artemis Ephesia* statues that do not come from Artemision but may easily be believed by visitors to have done so in the absence of information on their labels about their provenance; in addition to the other pieces described above. Located at the centre of the hall, the model representing one among the several temples at the Artemision would, thus, seem to be ordering the apparent chaos created by the various items displayed in the room by relating all to the Artemision and Artemision alone, and not to each other as in the cabinet of curiosities, discouraging the establishment of a direct connection with the 'lumps on the goddess' chest' and geometric period finds originating from Egypt and Phoenicia in 'her' altar. In the physical space of the Artemis Hall, one now has to step into the Artemision to reach one from the other.

Therefore, what we now find (amid a sequence of spaces that resemble the human biology hall of the Natural History Museum in its depth, fragmentation and openness to a variety of personal visitor choices) is a major hall that is perhaps the most popular part of the whole exhibition, which resembles the birds gallery of the Natural History Museum which is characterised by the dominant controlling function of its central aisle. The installation of a model of the Artemision at this very centre would seem to encourage the visitors further to internalise the idea, already introduced in the former Hall of Cemetery Finds, of a local evolution at Ephesos from *Cybele* to *Artemis Ephesia*. It would seem that Efes Museum tends to build walls around this exhibition space to convey a curatorial message about the order of things through the unity of its architectural space that imposes one interpretation as the correct one. In this architectural scenario, there seems to exist no part for the Egyptian *Isis* or the Hebrew-sounding *Rhea*, not to mention the unlabelled votive offerings from Eastern Mediterranean sites such as Phoenicia, which would have suggested, instead, cross-cultural interaction in space and time leading to a fusion of Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean traits as an explanation for the curiosity named *Artemis Ephesia*.

## Conclusion

This chapter has been motivated by an observation of lost interpretative possibilities in the 1999 renovation of the Artemis Hall of Efes Museum as a potential starting point for a discussion on the ideological aspect of archaeological museum architecture and curatorship, and its impact on the reconstructions of the past. My initial intention was to interpret the architectural scenario in which *Artemis Ephesia* was displayed before 1999 as a ritual object for aesthetic contemplation in isolation from its context, to contrast it with its subsequent re-contextualisation in such a way as to encourage one among several possible versions of East Mediterranean prehistory. However, while trying to do this, my own 'correct' version tended to surface between the above lines of mine. Another interpreter with a different background and agenda may have easily adopted the very same interpretative framework to evaluate the introduction of a model of the Artemision positively, as an attempt to overcome the former 'museum effect' through contextualisation.

This does not, however, necessarily conform to Alan Radley's description of the configuration of the modern museum using the 'department store' model which he contrasts with the old 'cathedrals' for 'ritual' in Duncan's sense.<sup>75</sup> The department-store model is 'based upon the idea of a freely moving visitor who scans the array of artefacts, choosing to stop here or to wander there',<sup>76</sup> sampling this and leaving out that, which would imply in the case of an archaeology museum 'that the past is capable of being reconstructed',<sup>77</sup> albeit in many different ways, as exemplified at Stonehenge. In recent literature especially in public archaeology and museum studies, there has been a strong contingent that wishes to promote this model as a transformation of the museum into 'a truly democratic institution of civil society, where the

equation of power and knowledge is redesigned to accommodate postmodern resistance to exclusively expert interpretations of collective and peripheral knowledges'.<sup>78</sup>

Seen in this way, the Efes Museum enables an acceptance of the value of expert interpretations of archaeological material, taking the view that an expert in any field is an individual who has been given the opportunity to profess that field for the community as a whole. Those individuals may, nevertheless, have hidden ideological agendas, who construct, as Roland Barthes theorised, sets of shared communal values, such as 'The Great Family of Man',<sup>79</sup> which in the context of the present discussion might specifically encompass *The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*.<sup>80</sup>

Ultimately, the best protection against hidden ideological agendas might be found in curiosities such as *Artemis Ephesia*, in that it defies the imposition of any rational grid that would fail to overlap the mysterious correspondences between its components. The viewer/visitor/reader should not be assumed as passive and uncritical, and subject to manipulation by any hidden social and ideological agenda in a museum.<sup>81</sup> Nor should the museum-going ritual, or hunger for the so-called 'museum effect', be evaluated as a fruitless quest for meaning. So long as we accept the invitation, the informative power of curiosities would keep us in the middle of our never-ending search for a way of being sure about the world. This is not to advocate any form of 'over-interpretation', rather the kind of openness which Umberto Eco's concept of the open work implies, whereby all works of art possess an openness to a multiplicity of interpretations, the limits of which are imposed by the works themselves.<sup>82</sup> In any museological strategy, the object still remains right there, with all its indices always open onto alternative interpretative paths for those who may wish to take them.<sup>83</sup>

## Notes

- 1 All the photographic images included in this chapter were taken by I. Can Şiram, during two site trips in April 1999 and October 2007. I thank him wholeheartedly for his support throughout the lengthy period that finally resulted in this chapter.
- 2 For a full account of the discovery, see Sabahattin Türkoğlu (1991), *Efes'in Öyküsü*, İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, p. 152.
- 3 Peter Scherrer (2000), *Efes Rehberi*, İstanbul: Ege Yayınları ve Avusturya Arkeoloji Enstitüsü, p. 210.
- 4 Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 210.
- 5 Türkoğlu, *Efes'in Öyküsü*, p. 152.
- 6 Öcal Özeren (1991), *Ephesus*, İstanbul: Keskin Color Kartpostalçılık Ltd. Sti., p. 124.
- 7 Edward Falkner (1862), *Ephesus, and the Temple of Diana*, London: Day and Son, p. 290.
- 8 Vernon Hyde Minor (1994), *Art History's History*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, p. 172.
- 9 Norman Bryson (1990), *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 10, cited in Minor, *Art History's History*, p. 174.
- 10 Falkner, *Ephesus, and the Temple of Diana*, pp. 290–1.

- 11 Paul Hirst (1993), 'Foucault and Architecture', *AA Files: Annals of the Architectural Association* 26: 52–60, p. 54, quoted in Ali Artun (2006), *Tarih Sahneleri – Sanat Müzeleri I. Müze ve Modernlik*, İstanbul: İletişim, p. 41.
- 12 Kevin Walsh (1992), *The Representation of the Past. Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World*, London; New York: Routledge, pp. 18–22.
- 13 Artun, *Tarih Sahneleri – Sanat Müzeleri I*, p. 41.
- 14 Artun, *Tarih Sahneleri – Sanat Müzeleri I*, p. 41.
- 15 Artun, *Tarih Sahneleri – Sanat Müzeleri I*, p. 41.
- 16 Stephen Greenblatt (1991), 'Resonance and Wonder', in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds), *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics of Museum Display*, Washington, DC; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, pp. 42–56, at p. 50.
- 17 Gwynne Evans Blakemore (1987), *Elizabethan-Jacobean Drama: A New Hermaid Background Book*, London: A&C Black, pp. 313–23.
- 18 Martin Prösler (1996), 'Museums and Globalization', in Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (eds), *Theorizing Museums. Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review, pp. 21–44, at p. 28.
- 19 Artun, *Tarih Sahneleri – Sanat Müzeleri I*, p. 96.
- 20 Michel Foucault (1994), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, New York: Random House; cited also in Artun, *Tarih Sahneleri – Sanat Müzeleri I*, pp. 139–40.
- 21 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xxiii.
- 22 As discussed in Umberto Eco (2000), *Kant and the Platypus – Essays on Language and Cognition*, New York; London: Harcourt, Inc.
- 23 Minor, *Art History's History*, p. 181.
- 24 Kevin Hetherington (1996), 'The Utopics of Social Ordering – Stonehenge as a Museum without Walls', in Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (eds), *Theorizing Museums*, pp. 153–76, at p. 28.
- 25 André Malraux (1967), *Museum without Walls*, transl. Stuart Gilbert and Francis Price, London: Secker and Warburg.
- 26 Umberto Eco (1989 [1962]), *The Open Work*, transl. A. Cancogni with an Introduction by D. Robey, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Umberto Eco (1984 [1979]), *The Role of the Reader – Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press; Umberto Eco (1994 [1990]), *The Limits of Interpretation*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- 27 Various authors have attributed Stonehenge to various makers including  
 Phoenicians, Romans, Danes, Saxons, Celtic Druids, British aborigines, Brahmins, Egyptians, Chaldeans, and even ... the Red Indians. Giants, dwarfs and supernatural forces were suggested by several of the pre-scientific writers. The post-scientific ones have added Atlanteans and extra terrestrials. It has been called a temple, an observatory, a memorial, a parliament, a necropolis, an orrery, a stone-age computer, and much besides.  
 J. Michell (1982), *Megalithomania*, London: Thames and Hudson, p. 22, quoted in Hetherington, p. 163.
- 28 Michell, in Hetherington, 'The Utopics of Social Ordering', p. 163.
- 29 John Peponis and Jenny Hedin (1982), 'The Layout of Theories in the Natural History Museum', *9H*, 3: 21–5.
- 30 Peponis and Hedin, 'The Layout of Theories in the Natural History Museum', p. 21.
- 31 Peponis and Hedin, 'The Layout of Theories in the Natural History Museum', pp. 23, 24.
- 32 The hall housing a thematic exhibition of gladiatorial fights for some years has a separate entrance opposite the small courtyard, and is disconnected, in a way, from the series of wrapping halls that are entered from the other side of the entrance hall.

- 33 Peponis and Hedin, 'The Layout of Theories in the Natural History Museum', p. 25.
- 34 Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 197; Türkoğlu, *Efes'in Öyküsü*, p. 153.
- 35 E.g. Carol Duncan (1991), 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds), *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics of Museum Display*, Washington, DC; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, pp. 88–103, at p. 90; Carol Duncan (1998), 'The Art Museum as Ritual', in Donald Preziosi (ed.), *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 473–85; Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach (2004), 'The Universal Survey Museum', in Bettina Messias Carbonell (ed.), *Museum Studies – An Anthology of Contexts*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 51–70.
- 36 Duncan, 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', p. 478.
- 37 Duncan, 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', pp. 481–2.
- 38 Duncan, 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', p. 482.
- 39 Svetlana Alpers (1991), 'The Museum as a Way of Seeing', in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds), *Exhibiting Cultures*, pp. 25–32, at p. 26.
- 40 Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p. 35.
- 41 Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, pp. 208–9.
- 42 Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, pp. 214–16.
- 43 In reference to Michel Foucault (1966), *Les Mots et les Choses. Une archéologie des sciences humaines*, Paris: Gallimard.
- 44 These consist of a small bronze peacock, a small bell in the form of a pair of ducks, a big bronze peacock, a water buffalo (or ram?) and deer (maybe in Hittite style); two amber necklaces and a glazed terracotta one, all from the Geometric period peripteros (Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 212).
- 45 These consist of two bronze griffon bases, a pierced ivory pendant in the form of a lion's head, a bronze omphalos cup, multi-coloured protoms; terracotta bases in the form of female and bull's heads; four aryballooi in Corinthian order; a small Phoenician ivory plate pertaining to a small box with images of Egyptian gods Bastet and Hathor; ivory pomegranates; four hyperboloid transparent pieces of quartz that may have been used as lenses (Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 212).
- 46 Among these, a pendant featuring a bull–lion head composition that was recovered in 1986 near the cult base in the north, a golden fibula, a golden pin, and a pierced golden plate have been denoted as found worthy of mentioning, in addition to a golden *sphyrelaton* (i.e. applied over a timber core) statue of a goddess that was recovered from the west part of the temple, a copy of which is now on display (Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 212).
- 47 These consist of an ivory goddess figurine in Oriental cloths, carrying votive bowls over her head, from the northwest corner of the temple; a Caryatid type of ivory female figurine, from the west part of the temple; a large lid pertaining to a *pyxis* with carved lotus palmette decorations, an ivory ram, a small *askos* for sacrifices (Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 212).
- 48 That is, a larger white marble oil lamp (Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 212).
- 49 That is, a smaller green schist oil lamp (Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 212).
- 50 That is, an Archaic Neo-Cypriac head that was unearthed in the altar excavations of 1970 (Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 212).
- 51 Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 212.
- 52 Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1995), 'Early Sanctuaries, the Eighth Century and Ritual Space. Fragments of a Discourse', in Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg (eds), *Greek Sanctuaries – New Approaches*, London & New York: Routledge, pp. 1–17.
- 53 Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Early Sanctuaries, the Eighth Century and Ritual Space', p. 11.
- 54 Available online: [www.oeai.at/eng/ausland/artemision.html](http://www.oeai.at/eng/ausland/artemision.html), accessed on 13 November 2007.

- 55 Catherine Morgan (1995), 'The Origins of Pan-Hellenism', in Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg (eds), *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 18–44.
- 56 Morgan, 'The Origins of Pan-Hellenism', p. 34.
- 57 Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Early Sanctuaries, the Eighth Century and Ritual Space', p. 11; also emphasised in Helmut Kyrieleis (1995), 'The Heraion at Samos', in Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg (eds), *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 125–53, at p. 138.
- 58 Kyrieleis, 'The Heraion at Samos', p. 146.
- 59 Lynn E. Roller (2004), *Ana Tanrıça'nın İzinde. Anadolu Kybele Kültürü [In Search of God the Mother. The Cult of Anatolian Cybele]*, translated into Turkish by Betül Avunç], İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, pp. 141–2.
- 60 In reference to Walter Burkert (1995), 'Concordia Discors: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence on the Sanctuary of Samothrace', in Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg (eds), *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 178–91, at p. 185.
- 61 Morgan, 'The Origins of Pan-Hellenism', p. 34.
- 62 Duncan and Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', translated into Turkish by Renan Akman as Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach (2006), 'Evrensel müze', in Ali Artun (ed.), *Tarih Sahneleri – Sanat Müzeleri II. Müze ve Eleştirel Düşünce*, İstanbul: İletişim, pp. 49–86, at p. 52.
- 63 Duncan and Wallach, 'Evrensel müze', pp. 52–3.
- 64 Duncan and Wallach, 'Evrensel müze', p. 54.
- 65 Duncan, 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', translated into Turkish by Elcin Gen as Carol Duncan (2006), 'Sanat müzeleri ve yurttaşlık ritüeli', in Ali Artun (ed.), *Tarih Sahneleri – Sanat Müzeleri II*, pp. 203–24, at p. 206.
- 66 Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 208.
- 67 Below these hand drawings are displayed various Meter representations and reliefs including one Meter-Cybele from Ephesus, dated to 470s BC, and a seated (Late Hellenistic?) goddess on her throne with lions on her sides (Scherrer, *Efes Rehberi*, p. 209).
- 68 Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p. 36.
- 69 Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p. 37.
- 70 J.G. Macqueen (1968), 'Geography and History in Western Asia Minor in the Second Millennium B.C.', *Anatolian Studies XVIII*: 169–85, p. 169.
- 71 In allusion to Duncan, 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', p. 92.
- 72 Ekrem Akurgal (1978), *Ancient Civilizations and Ruins of Turkey. From Prehistoric Times until the End of the Roman Empire*, İstanbul: Haşet Kitabevi, p. 142.
- 73 Özeren, *Ephesus*, p. 124
- 74 Available online: [www.oeai.at/eng/ausland/artemision.html](http://www.oeai.at/eng/ausland/artemision.html), accessed on 13 November 2007.
- 75 Alan Radley (1991), 'Boredom, Fascination and Mortality: Reflections upon the Experience of Museum Visiting', in Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.) *Museum Languages: Objects and Texts*, Leicester; London; New York: Leicester University Press, pp. 65–82.
- 76 Radley, 'Boredom, Fascination and Mortality', p. 71.
- 77 Radley, 'Boredom, Fascination and Mortality', p. 72.
- 78 Carmel Borg, Bernard Cauchi and Peter Mayo (2003), 'Museum Education and Cultural Contestation', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 13, 1: 89–108, p. 102.
- 79 Roland Barthes (1973), 'The Great Family of Man', in R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, London: Paladin, pp. 100–2.
- 80 The allusion here is obviously to Martin Bernal's highly controversial (1987) *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, Vol. I, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785–1985*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, and (1991) Vol. II, *The Archaeological and Documentary Evidence*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

- 81 Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1991), 'A New Communication Model for Museums', in Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.), *Museum Languages*, pp. 49–61.
- 82 Cf. Stefan Collini (ed.) (1992), *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Umberto Eco (1994 [1990]), *The Limits of Interpretation*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- 83 Hooper-Greenhill, 'A New Communication Model for Museums', pp. 54–5.