

Κάμπος

Cambridge Papers
in Modern Greek

Cambridge

No. 7 1999

© Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages
University of Cambridge 1999
ISSN: 1356-5109

Published by:

The Modern Greek Section
Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages
Sidgwick Avenue
Cambridge CB3 9DA
United Kingdom

Price per issue: £8.00

All correspondence should be sent to the above address.

Edited by David Holton, Dimitris Livanios and Jocelyn Pye
Layout by Liz Crossfield

*Cover illustration: from the Grammar of Gregorios Sarafis, published at Kydonies (Ayvalik) in 1820 (see A. Koumarianou, L. Droulia & E. Layton, *To Ελληνικό Βιβλίο 1476-1830*. Athens 1986, Plate 239)*

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The late-Byzantine romance: problems of defining a genre*

Ulrich Moennig

Questions concerning the Byzantine romance as a genre are usually not easy to treat. There was no Byzantine literary theory concerning the generic characteristics of the romance. In Byzantine references to ancient romances no definition of the literary genre is given.¹ Thus, there is no *a priori* standard which would help us to classify a late-Byzantine (narrative) text as a romance.

In external and internal references to ancient or Byzantine romances a number of *termini*, which describe single aspects of what is a romance, are found. None of these *termini* can be taken as a genre name, or – more precisely – as an *exclusive* genre name.² The reason for this lack might lie in the fact that there was no ancient *terminus* for romance.³ Since there is no ancient or Byzantine *terminus* meaning “romance” or “novel”, the surviving texts are not called “romance” in their respective manuscripts (for example, in the rubrics). Nouns such as διήγησις,⁴ διήγημα,⁵

* I am grateful to Dimitris Livanios and to my colleagues at the University of Hamburg, Sophia Vulgari and Claudia Klodt, for correcting my English. I am also grateful to David Holton for his comments on this paper.

¹ For references see Beaton 1996b: 713.

² On *termini* used for “external and internal references” to the romance as a genre or to single texts of this genre see Agapitos 1991: 43-7.

³ Cf. Holzberg 1995: 8-9 and 1996: 11 and *passim*.

⁴ Διήγησις ἐξαιρέτος Βελθάνδρου τοῦ Ρωμαίου (*Belthandros and Chrystantza*, ed. Cupane 1995, tit.).

⁵ Τὸ κατὰ Καλλίμαχον καὶ Χρυσορρόην ἐρωτικὸν διήγημα (*Kallimachos and Chryssorrhoe*, ed. Pichard 1956).

ἀρχή,⁶ στίχοι or ἀφήγησις,⁷ which are found in the titles of several late-Byzantine romances, do not refer to a literary genre. This makes it sometimes difficult to decide whether a given text should be regarded as a “romance” or not.

The fact that there existed a Byzantine romance as a self-conscious genre is beyond question. The group of the four twelfth-century (= Komnenian) erotic romances, for example, is well defined by its *imitation* of ancient models, such as the *Leukippe and Kleitophon* of Achilles Tatios and the *Aithiopica* of Heliodoros.⁸ This imitation may serve as proof for the existence of the genre. Moreover, it is a mark of its “Renaissance”.⁹ The late-Byzantine romance, which is the subject of the present paper, continues this revival.

Since we have no external criteria for classifying a Byzantine text as a romance, our knowledge about romance as a genre and its generic features has to be based on analysis and comparison of the extant texts. This situation causes a problem of circular reasoning in Byzantine philology: what we consider to be the standard of the romance as a genre depends on our selection of texts, and our selection of texts depends on what we consider to be the standard of the genre.

In his monograph *The Medieval Greek romance*, Roderick Beaton (1996a) analyses a total of eleven late-Byzantine romances (“1204-1453”). Some of these are relatively closely related to their ancient and twelfth-century Byzantine predecessors (*Libistros and Rhodamne*, *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, and *Belthandros and Chrysantza*), others show an impressive variation compared to this triad (for example, the *War of Troy*). Other late-Byzantine narrative texts have not even been

⁶ Ἀρχὴ τοῦ πανθαυμασιωτάτου καὶ μεγάλου Ἀχιλλέως (*Achilleid N*, ed. Cupane 1995). (Ole Smith in his new edition [1999] supplies the title Διήγησις τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως.)

⁷ Στίχοι πολὺ ἐρωτικοί, ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου, πῶς ὁ φίλος ὁ Κλιτωβὸς διηγεῖται τῆς Μυρτάνης (*Libistros and Rhodamne*, Codex Neapolitanus, ed. Lambert 1935).

⁸ See e.g. Cupane 1995: 12-16. The texts are conveniently accessible in one volume with an Italian translation in Conca 1994.

⁹ “Renaissance of a genre” is the title of the relevant chapter in Beaton 1996a (52-69). See especially MacAlister 1996, a comparative study of ancient and Komnenian erotic romances.

(seriously) discussed as to whether they can be considered as romances or not. I have in mind at least one of the later versions of the *Alexander Romance* (recension zeta [ζ]), which was substantially reworked in Byzantine times.¹⁰ One could also regard the *Belisariad* as a romance, and I would even think of the *Chronicle of the Morea* as related to the genre of the romance.

If we look at the literature on late-Byzantine romances, we will hardly find a definition which could be used as a basis for what is and what is not a romance. The most serviceable attempt towards a definition is that made by Carolina Cupane (1996). Cupane approaches the late-Byzantine romance as erotic romance. She stresses the continuity as to the rhetorical elements – descriptions, monologic parts, inserted letters and speeches – and observes innovations in the use of the vernacular, in the consequent use of metre (*politikos stichos*) and in aspects of content. In her definition, style is characterised by formulaic expressions and in what she calls “immanent intertextuality”.¹¹ Following others, Cupane divides the extant texts into “original romances” and “adaptations of western romances”, according to Beaton’s monograph.¹² Cupane draws attention to three of the “original romances” (the triad I already mentioned in the previous paragraph), which are generally considered to be the central late-Byzantine romances. In comparison with their ancient and twelfth-century predecessors they display great continuity (in the use of *topoi*, for instance). What Cupane means by changes of motif concerns innovations in the concept of sexual morals in these texts: lovemaking, for example, is allowed even without an official wedding. She also refers to what Beaton calls the “bipartite structure” (e.g. 1996a: 119), and to the self-referring narrator.¹³ As far as the “adaptations” are concerned,

¹⁰ On this late-Byzantine recension of the *Alexander Romance* see Moennig 1992.

¹¹ On these problems and the relevant discussion see Beaton 1996a: 164–88.

¹² Beaton 1996a: 101–45 (see also Beck 1971: 117–47).

¹³ On the self-referring narrator in *Libistros and Rhodamne*, *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* and *Belthandros and Chrysantza* see Agapitos 1991: 74–95 and Cupane 1994–5. For samples, see Cupane 1995: 714 (indice, under “interventi autoriali metanarrativi”).

Cupane stresses their close dependence on their respective models.

In her article, which is based to some extent on the first (1989) edition of Beaton's monograph, Cupane gives an *a posteriori* definition. Her definition is primarily based on a selection of texts which continue to a relatively large extent the tradition of ancient and twelfth-century Byzantine erotic romance. If we accept this definition for the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century romances, we will find an impressive percentage of exceptions.

In what follows I will try to single out several features in a number of late-Byzantine texts which might be helpful for classifying and eventually defining what a romance is in (thirteenth-,) fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Byzantium. These features appear in texts which deviate to a considerable degree from the conventions of ancient and twelfth-century Byzantine romance. At a narrative level, these features concern a different concept of time. On the level of contents they concern the existence of historical references, a "historical axis". This historical axis, in the texts under consideration, is often combined with a biographical setting of the life of the protagonist. Precisely because there was no *a priori* definition of the genre, late-Byzantine romance writers felt free to innovate, thus widening the range of generic *variatio* and extending the boundaries of the genre by producing new texts with innovative features. I will try to describe the extension of the generic range by linking together texts which have common characteristics, moving from the more traditional texts to some of the more innovative ones.¹⁴ The love theme and its specific treatment, which plays a central role as a generic characteristic in ancient and Byzantine romance writing, will serve as a linking element between the more conventional and the innovative texts. (A first attempt at widening the generic range can already be seen in the twelfth-century *Digenes Akrites*, a text that on linguistic grounds and on the basis of the facts of its reception is more

¹⁴ See Holzberg 1996 for an analogous problem in ancient romance.

closely linked to the late-Byzantine than to the twelfth-century works.¹⁵)

One problem in our judgement on the late-Byzantine romances lies in the traditional division into "original romances" and "adaptations of western romances". These seemingly clear categories do not correspond to the narrative features of the respective texts. Among the "originals" the previously mentioned triad of erotic romances is usually singled out. In these erotic romances we first meet the heroes as grown-ups. We then witness their first experience in the desire of love and watch them going through a series of tests and adventures. In the (happy) end any obstacles to their final union have been overcome. As far as these three romances are concerned, "original" implies a close relationship (at the level of the story) to the conventions of the older tradition of the genre. The – equally "original" – *Byzantine Achilleid*¹⁶ features a great deal of diversification in comparison with this triad, for example in its unhappy end¹⁷. On the other hand, among the "adaptations", the *Apollonios Romance*, for example, has a story which is much closer to the older conventions than that of the *Byzantine Achilleid*.

Let me continue discussing the division into "original romances" and "adaptations of western romances". According to Beaton,¹⁸ there is a fifth "original romance", the *Byzantine Iliad*. The outline of the *Byzantine Iliad* is based on the chapter about the Trojan War in the twelfth-century chronicle of Konstantinos Manasses¹⁹ and on a number of secondary (Greek)

¹⁵ The oldest versions are accessible in a new bilingual (Greek and English) edition in Jeffreys 1998, the text of the younger contamination Z in Trapp 1971.

¹⁶ For reasons of convenience I refer here to the Naples version (ed. Smith 1999).

¹⁷ Beaton (1996a: 102-3) links the *Achilleid* to the *Digenes Akrites*. He explains its unhappy end as an imitation of the *Digenes Akrites* ("Its ending, with the death of the heroine substituted for that of the hero, also seems as if it is addressed to readers or hearers more familiar with that poem [i.e. *Digenis Akritis*] than with the conventions of the twelfth- or fourteenth-century romances").

¹⁸ 1996a: 107 and *passim*.

¹⁹ Verses 1119-1451 (ed. Lampsidis 1996).

sources.²⁰ Given this fact, can we really consider the *Byzantine Iliad* to be an original romance, or do we have to treat it as an adaptation – an adaptation of a Greek model? This would mean that this text would have to be moved from the category of “original texts” to the “adaptations”, and that the group of adaptations will no longer be confined to texts based on a *western* model. Indeed, I believe that the *Byzantine Iliad* is not the only late-Byzantine narrative, reworked on a Greek model. Late-Byzantine transformations of the *Alexander Romance* have to be discussed as similar instances.

Moreover, “adaptations” are not even confined to those based on western and Greek models. There is another late-Byzantine romance, not yet published and, as a consequence, not commented on in Beaton’s monograph (1996a): the *Tale of Alexander and Semiramis*. This romance is based on an oriental, Ottoman or Persian, model.²¹ Thus, our current categories are not as clear as they might seem. The genre is divided into a small group of four “original texts” and a much larger group of “adaptations”, with a variety of provenances for their respective models. On a thematic level, several “originals” have a closer relation to certain “adaptations” than to their own group – and *vice versa*.

In any case, “adaptation” means that these texts are not simply translated. The *sujet* is based on a French, Italian, Greek or oriental narrative text. But the story is often remodelled, several times substantially so.²² Some of these narratives were “byzantinized”, thus featuring a lesser or higher degree of “originality”. In several instances, it is this recasting of the model which reveals how the *topoi* of the late-Byzantine romance are used. The *Byzantine Iliad* is a good example of that (I will come to this at a later point of this paper). What we should ask ourselves is this: should we continue to categorise the texts into “originals” and “adaptations”, or should we consider all texts as witnesses of the range of flexibility that romance, as

²⁰ Lavagnini 1988: 29-85.

²¹ Moennig 1993: 107-8, n. 14. Cf. Dimitroulopoulos 1995: 55-110.

²² See, for example, M. and E. Jeffreys (1971) on the *Imberios*, Cupane (1995: 448-9) and Agapitos-Smith (1992: 69) on the case of the *Florios*, and Lavagnini (1988: 29-85) on the *Byzantine Iliad*.

a non-defined, open, and developing genre, possessed in the last two or three centuries of Byzantium?

A good case-study for the change of generic conventions within late-Byzantine romance might be offered by the *Achilleid*. As I have already mentioned, this text is not based on any (known) model. Thus, its deviations from genre tradition have to be ascribed to its late-Byzantine author. A basic difference from the triad *Libistros and Rhodamne*, *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, and *Belthandros and Chrysantza* lies in its biographical arrangement.²³ The story begins at a point when the hero is not yet born. It begins even before his conception. Achilles will be the only son of an elderly king and his wife, who had both despaired of ever having a child and heir. When Achilles is born, he soon shows his eminent virtues in learning at school, in physical strength, and in fighting skills. When he becomes a young man, he is described in terms of a military leader and heir to his father's throne. But his real nature is an erotic one. We are informed about this fact at an early point in the romance (see Smith's commentary on verses N 283-327 [1999: 89-90]). When Achilles is fifteen years old (N 191), but still a "boy" (the narrator speaks of him as a *καὶδὶν* in verses N 331 and N 359), he leaves his country to fight a foreign aggressor. (The king, Achilles's father, is unable to confront his powerful enemy.) Achilles succeeds in freeing his country from danger. In the scene following his victory, Achilles sees the defeated enemy's daughter from a distance and falls in love at first sight. From the scene of Achilles's triumph onwards there is a marked change in the attitude towards the hero: from now on he is treated as an adult. His character and virtues as a grown-up are those very ones that crystallised during his childhood and youth, as described in the first part of the romance (verses 21-751).²⁴ The major themes in the second part of the text are the

²³ See Jouanno 1996 on the *topoi* for describing the youth of a future saint or romantic – "épique", according to her approach (see especially 1996: 43, "enfances épiques") – hero (including the case of Achilles in the *Byzantine Achilleid*).

²⁴ I think Beaton (1996a: 117-18) is right in analysing the (Naples version of the) *Byzantine Achilleid* as tripartite, rather than as bipartite, as Smith does (1999: 71, 109).

girl and the obstacles to the fulfilling of Achilles's and – as the story develops – the couple's mutual desire. The (unnamed²⁵) heroine is described in a detailed *ekphrasis*. At first she turns down Achilles's wooing. Later on, though, she seems to be even more passionate to consummate their desire than Achilles himself.²⁶ Thus this first obstacle is removed. But there is a second one: she is the daughter of the enemy king, and in defeating her father Achilles has killed two of her brothers. Her parents would never give her to him willingly. That is why, in the third part, Achilles kidnaps her, with her consent, using his great physical strength. There follows a description of their life together: the girl's family gives in, the couple marry, and in a sequence of scenes Achilles's great strength is proved once again. Suddenly (N 1654, ed. Smith) the plot turns again, and it does so in a very abrupt way: the young woman falls ill, and despite his overall virtues Achilles is not able to defend her against Charos, the personification of death. Then, in the Naples version, there follows the Trojan end (N 1860-1926).

The first turning-point in the plot, the scene when Achilles falls in love, can be described as an initiation (to adult life) by the experience of desire and the pains love may cause. A scene of initiation is almost obligatory in erotic romances, usually at an early point within the story. In the *Achilleid* this scene of initiation is a marked turning-point in the development of the story. The focus, which until that point was concentrated on Achilles's personality and character, is turned to the love theme.

So far, the *Achilleid* is an "original" romance but quite different compared to the classical triad, which in the treatment of the love story is closer to the ancient and twelfth-century Byzantine conventions of the erotic romance. One difference is that the time in which the *Achilleid* is set is not as fictitious as in traditional erotic romances. For, although the story of the *Achilleid* is not the story of the Homeric (and post-Homeric) Achilles, the hero's very name carries a link to historical

²⁵ With the exception of N 1352, where she is called Polyxene.

²⁶ See Smith's commentary on N 1296-1341 (1999: 126-7).

time.²⁷ A second element of variation lies in the different treatment of narrative time. Traditionally, we are used to first meeting the heroes of erotic romances as young men. Their initiation is a scene which we would expect somewhere near the beginning of a romance of the more traditional type.²⁸ Moreover, a traditional erotic romance ends with the marriage of hero and heroine. Hero and heroine are still young, and illness and death are too far away to be a subject of the story. If we compare the *Achilleid* to *Libistros and Rhodamne*, *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, and *Belthandros and Chrysantza*, this wider focus covering the span of the hero's entire life is an innovative setting, with the unhappy end as the most unexpected feature. Beaton comments on the unhappy end as follows: "the happy ending of the romance is diverted from its conventional course..." (1996a: 110), and more bluntly: "then the story parts company with the genre of romance" (Beaton 1996b: 730). I do not think that it parts company with the genre. In my view, romance in its late-Byzantine state of development allows for the unhappy end. If we compare the *Achilleid* to other texts, this feature will not seem unique.

The text that springs to mind for comparison with the *Achilleid* is the *Digenes Akrites*. In fact the *Digenes Akrites* is not just one text, but a number of texts, each with its own size, structure, story, plot, but always featuring the same hero, Digenes Akrites, the son of a Christian mother and an Arab father. Until recently the *Digenes Akrites* was considered to be an epic poem. As to time in history and place in geography, the setting of *Digenes Akrites* evokes the situation in the middle Byzantine no-mans-land between Byzantium and Syria.²⁹ In the introduction to her new edition of the Grottaferrata and Escorial versions, Elizabeth Jeffreys brings the *Digenes Akrites* quite close to the genre of romance and to the four twelfth-century Byzantine texts. She claims that there was an original on which

²⁷ On the elements of the Homeric and post-Homeric Achilles in the *Byzantine Achilleid* see Smith's analysis in 1991-2, especially 78-82.

²⁸ *Libistros and Rhodamne*, Codex Escorialensis, ed. Lambert 1935, verses 100ff.; *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* (ed. Cupane 1995) verses 449ff.; *Belthandros and Chrysantza* (ed. Cupane 1995) verses 366ff.

²⁹ Jeffreys 1998: xxx-xli.

the oldest versions are based. This original, according to her opinion, dates from the twelfth century, close in time to the four Komnenian romances.³⁰ "Literary affiliations", in both versions, to "literary texts" belonging or related to the genre of romance support her approach. A striking "affiliation" to ancient and contemporary erotic romances is the use of the traditional imagery of love in the *Digenes Akrites*.³¹ The question that arises is the following: how does this fifth twelfth-century romance fit into what we considered until now the Komnenian romance? Compared to the other four extant texts it differs in several major respects. There are quotations of ancient models, but there is no close imitation; the background is Christian, not pagan; the love theme may be strongly present, but it is not the central one; the setting in time and place includes a number of references to historical time. And there is the biographical setting, beginning at a time even before the conception of the hero and ending with the death of both him and his wife.

There is a third text, or rather group of texts, which is not usually taken into account in discussions on the Byzantine romance. I am referring to the *Alexander Romance*. Beaton characterises the *Alexander Romance* as a "legacy from antiquity" and excludes it from discussion.³² I do, however, consider the fourteenth-century recension zeta to be closely related to the late-Byzantine romance. The text of zeta is lost, but there is a contemporary Slavonic translation, which can easily be used to fill the gap.³³ I would not consider this recension of the *Alexander Romance* to be a "legacy from antiquity" because it has been revised to a very great extent. It is a late-Byzantine adaptation of a middle-Byzantine model. Alexander has become

³⁰ Jeffreys 1998, especially lvi-lvii.

³¹ Jeffreys 1998: xliv-xlvii. See also a number of her comments and especially those on Book 6 of the Grottaferrata version.

³² Beaton 1996a: 31.

³³ This Slavonic translation was retranslated into (vernacular) Greek, probably in the course of the fifteenth century. I call this retranslation "zeta". It is preserved in a number of manuscripts, several of which have been edited (see Moennig 1992: 32-4 and 41-5). The best accessible editions are those of manuscripts F and E by Lolos 1983 and Konstantinopulos 1983. A convenient edition of the Slavonic text with a translation into German is offered by Christians 1991.

a Byzantine emperor, the attitude towards the world and its history displayed in this recension is that of Byzantine chroniclers. The connection to historical time (and space) is even more obvious in this text than in the *Byzantine Achilleid* and the *Digenes Akrites*. Compared to its antecedents, recension zeta features an extensive use of rhetorical descriptions,³⁴ which is a generic characteristic of the Byzantine romance. And, what is more, the relationship between Alexander and his wife Roxane is turned into a romantic love story with a tragic end: when Alexander dies of poison, Roxane commits suicide.³⁵ For the *topos* of shared death by suicide see, for example, the parallel in the *Byzantine Achilleid*: καὶ τὸ μαχαίριν ἤπραξεν νὰ σφάξῃ τὸν ἑαυτὸν του (ed. Smith, N 1814).

If we regard the *Alexander Romance* as a late-Byzantine romance, our definition of what is a late-Byzantine romance, at least as far the genre's formal conventions are concerned, has to be altered. The (lost) original text was written in prose and most probably at a learned level of Byzantine Greek.³⁶ This is a major deviation from what is accepted as the formal norm of a late-Byzantine romance. As far as the thematic conventions of the late-Byzantine romance are concerned, compared to the central motif of the fulfilment of Alexander's role in world history, the love theme is secondary. But nonetheless, it constitutes a strong link between zeta and the late-Byzantine romance.

Thus, beside the classical triad of erotic romances there is another group of texts which display the common characteristic of a biographical setting. The stories start by introducing the hero's parents, continue by describing his birth and youth, and lead to a scene of initiation, which introduces the narration of his deeds in adult life. In this type of romance deaths of the hero and his wife traditionally mark the end. This scene is often

³⁴ See, for example, the description of the Indian palace in Christians 1991: 344-7, and Konstantinopulos 1983: 98-9 (chapter FE103. 2). See also my comment on this chapter in Moennig 1992: 268-70.

³⁵ See Christians 1991: 478-81, Konstantinopulos 1983: 204-7, and Moennig 1992: 302-3. On the *topos* of suicide in ancient and Komnenian romances see MacAlister 1996.

³⁶ Moennig 1992: 85-6.

followed – I have not yet mentioned this – by an epilogue about the vanity of all things.

With the treatment of the love theme as a criterion, the *Byzantine Achilleid* seems to be more closely related to the traditional erotic romances than the *Digenes Akrites* (in all its versions) is, and the *Digenes Akrites* again seems to be more closely related to the tradition than the *Alexander Romance*. For within the group of the “biographical” texts, the love theme plays an important part, but it is not as central as it is in the purely erotic romances. The scene of the initiation of the hero is a proleptic indicator as to the role love will play in the plot.³⁷ Nonetheless, the existence of the love theme means that there are links between the group of erotic romances proper, without a biographical setting, and the “biographical” texts. Thus, a number of intermediate texts link the *Alexander Romance*, recension zeta, to the traditional erotic romances.

An interesting instance of an intermediate form is the *Byzantine Iliad*. Scholarly literature is not very enthusiastic about this romance. Major problems are seen in the strange use of traditional narrative material covering the Trojan War.³⁸ I would rather stress the innovative use of literary conventions. The central hero of the *Byzantine Iliad* is Paris, who is, again, introduced at a point of time before his birth. We watch him growing up, falling in love with Helen, defending his love against Menelaos, and being killed as a consequence of the capture of Troy. The *Byzantine Iliad* is very interesting, because the anonymous author of the text does not merely use the *topoi* of the late-Byzantine romance; he plays with them. Paris is the only instance, in Byzantine romance, of a “negative” hero who uses his virtues in order to cause harm. The woman he falls in love with is already married, and their love story leads to the

³⁷ See *Digenes Akrites*, Grottaferrata version, book 4 (ed. Jeffreys 1998: 66-132), and Escorial version, verses 702-1088 (ed. Jeffreys 1998: 292-320). For the *Alexander Romance*, recension zeta, see Christians 1991: 85-9, and Lolos 1983: 138-43.

³⁸ Cf. Beaton (1996a: 134): “a writer much less sure of his craft than the authors of the romances so far discussed seems to have tried with only limited success to create a unified story by combining popular history with the form and conventions of the romance”.

death of many "positive" heroes, like Hector and Achilles, and, finally, to the destruction of the famous city of Troy. In this romance, the scene of Paris's initiation is very interesting. In a shipwreck with him as the only survivor, Paris becomes aware of the fact that fate protects him, so that he can cause evil:

καθ' ἑαυτοῦ του ἔλεγεν· νᾶτον πνιγμὸς σὲ μέναν,
 νᾶχα πνιγῆ κ' ἐγὼ μαζί μετὰ τοὺς ἐδικούς μου
 καὶ διὰ νᾶ γένουν τὰ 'πασιν οἱ μάνται ἀστρονόμοι,
 ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου ἐβγάζει με ἡ ἄτυχή μου τύχης
 (*Byzantine Iliad*, ed. Nørgaard-Smith 1975, verses 438-41).

Doing harm is Paris's fate, he is bad by nature. The unhappy end of this story (verses 1116-37) does not come as a sudden change in the narrative, but as a logical consequence of the hero's existence.

So far, we have four texts which display a biographical setting: the names of their heroes are Digenes Akrites, Alexander, Achilles, and Paris. All these names have historical connotations, as to time and place. One notices a link between the biographical setting of several romances and a certain attitude towards history, which is absent in the traditional erotic romances. If we check the historical references in these texts, we do not usually find them satisfactory – from our point of view. In the *Digenes Akrites* a number of references to places, persons and facts may be found, but put together they do not refer to the same time and place: they are part of the fictional frame of the romance. In the *Alexander Romance*, place and time are anachronistic: the places Alexander visits and the persons he meets do play a role in world history, but they do so at times different from the times when they appear in the plot of the romance.³⁹ In the *Byzantine Iliad* some central facts of the Trojan War, as they are related in the medieval post-Homeric tradition, are mentioned, but the criteria of combining them in the narrative are not those of historical/chronographical writing. The relation between the Achilles of the *Achilleid* and the Homeric and post-Homeric Achilles is very loose and superficial: for example, Achilles's beloved is not comparable to Briseis, but to his standard medieval mistress, Polyxene.⁴⁰ Like the girl in the

³⁹ See Moennig 1992: 136-41.

⁴⁰ That she is named Polyxene in N 1352 may serve as proof.

Achilleid, Polyxene is the enemy's daughter. Their (mutual) love leads to the death of both, Achilles and Polyxene. The point I would argue is the following: there is a connection between the biographical setting of the romances under consideration and their being located within a frame of historical time and place. The necessary presupposition is that the concept of history underlying this fictional use of historical material is that of the Byzantine world chronicles.

So far, I have stressed the link between biographical settings in romances and an historical axis. There are two texts which have biographical settings, at least at their beginning, but are not enacted against a specific historical background: the *Florios* and *Imberios* romances.⁴¹ Thus, the combination of the biographical setting and an historical axis is not obligatory.

Nonetheless, if we want to describe adequately the development of romance writing in the late-Byzantine centuries, we will have to take into account that beside the erotic romances proper with their purely fictional settings there is a group of texts which shows a different concept of time and place. This concept is combined with a biographical setting and (though not obligatory) an historical axis within the frame of fictional writing. Using Bakhtin's terminology, the difference between the purely erotic romances and the *Digenes Akrites*, the *Alexander Romance*, the *Byzantine Iliad*, and the *Achilleid* lies in their use of *adventure-time* and *biographical time*.⁴² In the *adventure-time* of ancient romances the passage of time leaves the heroes (physically) untouched. The time that passes while the heroine and the hero try to find each other in order to be finally united seems endless, but it does not leave any traces of ageing on them. Their adventures take place in a time independent of their biological life: the time that passes is not spent. Thus, in the end the narrator leaves them as a young couple, who are just starting their adult life. (It is true, though, that the incongruity between narrative time and "real" time in

⁴¹ In the two versions of the *Florios* romance, two alternative endings are presented: see the text in Cupane 1995: 564 and 463. See also Smith's comment on the ending of the Vienna version (Smith 1999: 136).

⁴² See chapters 1 and 3 of Bakhtin's essay "Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel" (1975 [1981]: 86-110, and 130-46).

late-Byzantine erotic romances is not as striking as in their ancient and Komnenian counterparts. The *Apollonios* and *Imberios* romances seem to show the greatest divergence between time passed and time (biologically) spent.)

In "biographical" romances what happens before the protagonist's initiation is quite important: it is the story of the development of the hero's character; or, more precisely, it is the story of the revelation of the hero's character. Usually, in a number of (quite topical) episodes the hero's eminent virtues emerge. These virtues in the story of his adult life are usually taken as given. In the *Digenes Akrites* Akrites's supernatural strength becomes evident already from the time of his childhood. In the first part of the *Achilleid* the hero's strength, his being a natural born leader and his erotic nature are stressed. Alexander's virtues as a born leader appear even from his first contacts with the boys of his age. And whatever virtues distinguish the young Paris, he uses them for evil. The *Byzantine Iliad* goes even further in what the concept of biographical time may mean in Byzantine romances: even from the time of Hecuba's pregnancy it is known that Paris will cause the destruction of Troy. On a narrative level he is from the beginning what he will become at the end of the story. All these features come quite close to what Bakhtin describes as *prodigia* (1975 [1981: 138-9]).

Thus, while *adventure-time* leaves the protagonists' *physical life* untouched, *biographical time* leaves their *essence* untouched: they fulfil their role, and this role remains unchanged from the beginning to the end. Whatever will happen within the story is given, on a more abstract level, from the beginning. In "biographical" romances, time in narrative does *not* leave the heroes *physically* untouched: it leads to the end of their existence. They may have won each other through a number of adventures, but their success lasts just as long as their earthly existence. Thus, the epilogue on the vanity of all existence, which usually follows the unhappy end of "biographical" late-Byzantine romances, fits in with this change in perception of the fictional idealisation of human life.

What I have shown (rather schematically) so far, covers just a few elements of innovations in the use of *topoi* in late-Byzantine romance. (In the following paragraph I will briefly refer to several texts which come close to the concept of chrono-

graphical story-writing.) It does not explain, for example, the rather sudden change in the narrative (even on the level of microstructure) in several texts, when the story comes to its unhappy end. This sudden change from happiness to death appears in the *Achilleid* and in the *Florios* romance, as it is presented in the Vienna manuscript. A similar end (even in the wording) is also found in the *Tale of Alexander and Semiramis*, which, up to that point, falls within the category either of *adventure-time* or of *biographical time*. There is, for example, no biographical starting-point, and there is no initiation. Nonetheless, it is exactly this abrupt turnaround in these stories which underlines the great difference in conception between romances with a happy end and romances with an unhappy end.

I have mentioned previously that there are texts in which neither the concept of *adventure-time* nor the concept of *biographical time* is applied. I have in mind the case of the *War of Troy*. This romance consists of subplots narrating the deeds of subsequent generations, thus extending the range of the Byzantine romance, leading it into the twilight-zone between fictional story-writing and chronographical history. The *War of Troy* is a text with changing protagonists. And while the *War of Troy* brings late-Byzantine romance writing close to chronographical history, the *Chronicle of the Morea* brings chronographical history close to romance writing. See, for example, the narrator's self-referential statements in the narrative frame of this text. This element of narrative technique has obvious debts to late-Byzantine romance-writing.⁴³ Here, I could also mention the *Belisariad* as an intermediate instance of story-telling between historical romance-writing and fictional historiography. In any case, the underlying concept of time in these texts is far removed from that of *adventure-time*, for time definitely does change the persons involved in the story.

Thus, in late-Byzantine romances we can posit different concepts of narrative time – *adventure-time* versus *biographical*

⁴³ *Chronicle of the Morea*, Codex Parisinus, ed. Schmitt 1904, verses 1-2: Θέλω νὰ σὲ ἀφηγηθῶ ἀφήγησιν μεγάλην· κι ἂν θέλης νὰ μὲ ἀκροαστῆς, ὀλίγω νὰ σ' ἀρέσῃ; verses 441-2: ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ θέλω ἀπ' ἐδῶ ὅπως νὰ τὸ σκολάσω, καὶ ἄλλο τοῦ νὰ ἄρξωμαι τοῦ νὰ καταπιάσω... For references concerning the self-referring narrator see above, note 13.

time (and several instances with a concept of time closer to that of chronographical history). There are erotic romances and romances which combine a love story with an historical theme (and a few instances of texts which focus primarily on events). Love theme and historical theme are combined in different ways: the *Achilleid* is a romance with a primary love theme and historical references on a secondary level. The *Alexander Romance* has a primary historical story and a love story on a secondary level. The *Byzantine Iliad* is an example of a romance in which both the love story and the story of an historical event develop on comparable levels. In any future study of the development of the Byzantine romance from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, we should take into account that the genre had already achieved a great range of variety. We should probably speak rather about "innovations" within the late-Byzantine romance than about "exceptions" in order to describe adequately its narrative and thematic features.

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Women and gender roles in Modern Greek folktales

Birgit Olsen

In this paper I shall present an ongoing research project on women and gender roles in Modern Greek folktales. The purpose of the project is to shed light on the depiction of women in Greek folktales, the role of women in the tale tradition, and the interrelation between tales and (local) society in terms of women and gender roles. This will be documented first through a detailed analysis of the local society of the island of Kos and its tales, with special reference to gender roles and the position of women, and secondly by applying the results of this analysis to a larger body of material from the entire Greek-speaking area. By way of introduction I shall present the background to the project together with an example of a female storyteller, who will be used as its point of departure.

I got the idea of viewing Greek folktales from a female angle while reading some of the radical feminists of the late seventies and early eighties and their analyses of the female role in fairy tales. Feminists such as Marcia Lieberman and Karen Rowe argued that fairy tales produce very stereotyped images of women.¹ The young woman of the fairy tale is beautiful and passive. She is waiting for "the first prince who happens down the highway ... to release her",² and her only aspiration is to get married. Female characters with power in the tales are either negative (when they are human) or not human (when they are positive), as, for example, the wicked stepmother or the fairy godmother. Furthermore, it was argued that traditionally fairy tales not only were a form of entertainment but also played an

¹ M. K. Lieberman, "'Some day my prince will come': Female acculturation through the fairy tale", and K. E. Rowe, "Feminism and fairy tales". In: J. Zipes (ed.), *Don't bet on the prince* (Aldershot 1993), pp. 185-200 and 209-26 respectively.

² Rowe, op. cit., p. 217.

important role in the process of acculturation, and as such suggest that culture's very survival depends on a woman's acceptance of roles that relegate her to motherhood and domesticity.

It is not my intention here to enter into any lengthy discussion or rejection of the radical feminist analysis. I do not think that would be very fruitful. My main objection to the approach is that it took the tales out of their context and criticised texts that were products partly of a feudal and partly of a Victorian bourgeois culture for their failure to represent values of the 1970s. But it provoked me to look at the state of affairs in the traditional folktale material, since I had the feeling that the picture might not be as one-sided as the feminists claimed it to be in their material.

However, before entering into the main subject of this paper I find it necessary to add a few remarks on the choice of the term folktale for the title of the project. I have chosen this broader term even though I am almost exclusively treating a segment of folktales, namely the fairy tales, also known as tales of magic, or wonder tales.³ I have done so in order to stress that the material used will be traditional, orally produced tales told by the folk for an audience of the folk. In this connection it should also be stressed that the main audience of folktales is formed by adults. In traditional society children may listen to tales but they are not their primary recipients.

Women's role in the tale tradition

The first collection of Greek folktales was published, in German translation, in 1864 by Johann Georg von Hahn.⁴ From some remarks in his introduction to the translation we may conclude that von Hahn believed the bearers of the fairy-tale tradition to be women, whereas men were ashamed to tell fairy tales and would limit themselves to telling jokes. He knew that the young girls and women of the countryside would gather during the long winter nights and pass the time while they were working by

³ I.e. the tales listed under the numbers 300-749 in the Aarne-Thompson classification.

⁴ For a study of von Hahn's work see B. Olsen, "Η γερμανοπρέπεια των ελληνικών παραμυθιών στη συλλογή του J. G. von Hahn", *Ελληνικά* 41 (1990) 79-93.

narrating fairy tales. He also knew that even men sometimes took part in these gatherings.

A later collector of folktales on the island of Tinos, Adamantios Adamantiou, informs us how the people of the villages, especially in winter when the nights were long and the cold forced them to stay together in one place to keep warm, would gather in the evening, often at the baker's shop, and among other activities they would tell tales, just as townspeople would assemble for literary soirées. Both men and women had skills in telling stories, and among the more gifted of the narrators, who knew many tales, the men were called "paramythades" and the women "paramythoudes".⁵ As part of his study Adamantiou also published one version of a tale told by a male informant, and four variants of the same story told by women.⁶ On the other hand, Michail Michailidis-Nouaros informs us regarding his native island, Karpathos, around the turn of the century, that the narrators at the evening gatherings were mostly men. Women very seldom had the courage to tell tales in public and would normally restrict themselves to telling shorter tales to the children at home.⁷ Like Adamantiou, he also published tales told by male and female narrators alike.

In his work on the interpretation of fairy tales, which will be discussed below, the Danish folktale scholar Bengt Holbek argues that seemingly there are cultural differences in the gender distribution of folktale narrators. Whereas in some parts of Scandinavia, in Ireland, parts of Germany and Eastern Europe it seems to be a male-dominated craft, in the Mediterranean area it seems to be a female one.⁸ Linda Dégh's field research in Hungarian communities with a living storytelling tradition showed that when it came to performances in public places the

⁵ A.I. Adamantiou, "Τηνιακά", *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελλάδος* 5 (1896) 277-326, especially pp. 278-81.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-318.

⁷ M.G. Michailidis-Nouaros, *Λαογραφικά σύμμεικτα Καπάθου*, I (Athens 1932), p. 267.

⁸ B. Holbek, *Interpretation of fairy tales. Danish folklore in a European perspective* [FF Communications No. 239] (Helsinki 1987), pp. 154-5.

narrators were normally men.⁹ I believe that this is also applicable to Greek local communities.

Another circumstance that may influence the picture is that tales lingered longer among women. That at least was the conclusion reached by Holbek's source Evald Tang Kristensen, who collected folklore material in the western part of Denmark from the 1860s to the 1920s. In his later collecting period he found it more difficult to get male informants.¹⁰

A last aspect that one may expect to be of importance when collecting folklore is the gender of the collector. But for Tang Kristensen at least there does not seem to have been any difficulty in approaching women. Even though he listed almost twice as many male informants of folktales as female, when it came to ballads most of his informants were women.¹¹ Likewise, both Adamantiou and Michailidis-Nouaros, as mentioned above, as well as Yakovos Zarraftis, who will be discussed below, refer to women as their informants.

Unfortunately folktales have not been one of the predominant subjects for folklore studies in Greece until rather recently, and when studied earlier it was with either a linguistic or a nationalistic purpose in mind (i.e. in order to establish a cultural continuity to ancient Hellas). For that reason we do not have any detailed accounts of a Greek storytelling community from the time when this craft was still a living and integrated part of adult entertainment. References like the above are all we have to give us a picture of the context of the tales: the occasions of storytelling, the narrators, and the audience, and, as indicated, we therefore have to look to other, better-documented cultures for comparison. By mentioning the names of Holbek and Tang Kristensen I have also mentioned the main sources of my inspiration.

⁹ L. Dégh, *Folktales and society. Story-telling in a Hungarian peasant community* (Bloomington 1969), pp. 92-3.

¹⁰ Holbek, *op. cit.*, pp. 82 and 154-7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-6.

The Danish case

When it comes to the Danish material we are better helped than with the Greek material. It is therefore quite natural for me to use my own country, among others, as a comparative case.

The reason for the more favourable situation in Denmark is that by the end of the last century Evald Tang Kristensen, a local teacher, had collected an extensive amount of folklore material in Jutland. Fortunately he was, for his time at least, a very conscientious collector.¹² Not only did he succeed in developing a method of transcribing that reproduced the narrative form and style of the orally performed material, but he also presented brief portraits of his most important informants. In this way we get a picture of the context of storytelling at a time when it was a dying craft. The narrators of tales were men and women belonging to the lowest strata of the rural population. Among the more wealthy part of the population the old lore had already ceased to have any interest.

Bengt Holbek used Tang Kristensen's material for his extensive and important study *Interpretation of fairy tales*. In my turn, I shall use Holbek's approach in my analysis of Greek tales. Holbek exclusively analyses the fairy tales which end with a wedding or the reunion of a couple. These tales begin with the break-up of a family and end with the creation of a new one. As mentioned above, his material is from Jutland but, to quote Holbek himself, is "part of a tradition which extends far beyond our borders".¹³ The social setting of this tradition was more or less the same in other countries, even far distant ones. So the method should also be applicable to a Greek community.

Holbek's selection of the material is based on the "craftsmanship" viewpoint: in other words, on the assumption that connections exist between the contents of the tales and the living conditions of the narrators. In summarising the social setting of a storytelling community Holbek makes a list of six main features which may be summarised as follows:¹⁴

¹² Holbek (op. cit., p. 39) groups him with the so-called "ethnographers".

¹³ Ibid., p. 405.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 405-6.

- 1) The number of people who specialise in the telling of fairy tales is – and probably always has been – strictly limited. Tales are told by specialists.
- 2) Nearly all the people who tell and listen to these tales belong to the lower or lowest strata of traditional communities.
- 3) Fairy tales are told for and by adults (children do not form a culturally separate group in traditional communities).
- 4) Male and female repertoires differ. Men tend to prefer masculine fairy tales whereas women's repertoires are more evenly distributed. Men would often tell tales away from home, to all-male audiences, whereas women would normally perform in domestic circles only.
- 5) Fairy tales are regarded as "lies", i.e. as fiction. This is signalled by opening and closing formulas emphasising the distance in space and time.
- 6) Tellers and audience identify with the hero(in)es of the tales. The social circumstances of the hero(in)es are similar to those of the audience. In traditional communities fairy tales provided a means of collective daydreaming. They were escape fantasies in which wrongs were righted and the poor and powerless justly recognised for their true worth, and they kept alive a keen sense of justice and fairness and depicted a true world, i.e. the world as it should be.

I am much attracted by Holbek's connecting the tales closely to their surrounding community, and I find it a fruitful way of approaching the Greek material. We do not have a Tang Kristensen in the Greek-speaking area, but in the Dodecanese at the beginning of this century we meet the local *con amore* scholar Yakovos Zarraftis, who, among other activities, collected folklore material, especially in the town and villages of his native island, Kos. Unfortunately, Zarraftis does not provide us with any information about his informants either – with one exception. In a footnote to one of his tales he casually mentions a woman called Chatzi-Yavrouda (Yavrouda the Pilgrim). This tale was collected in the village of Asfendiou in Kos and there are reasons to believe that other tales from this village were also told by the same narrator. I have therefore chosen to present Yakovos Zarraftis as an example of a collector and to use his

informant Chatzi-Yavrouda as the point of departure for an analysis of a female narrator and her presentation of women and gender roles. Accordingly, Kos will be the local community studied at closer range.

Yakovos Zarraftis

Yakovos Zarraftis was born around 1845-50 in the village of Asfendiou in Kos. His father was a priest from Kalymnos who had married a woman from Asfendiou. Yakovos went to the newly established local primary school, continued his secondary education on Kalymnos, and thereafter studied for two years in Athens. He probably never finished his studies, but they left him with an ardent interest in the study of local matters. He was an enthusiastic local patriot who between 1906 and 1923 published various studies on Koan subjects, including history, archaeology, mythology, and folklore. But he also wrote literature: we have a tragedy as well as a comedy from his hand. The comedy is particularly interesting for us, because it is written in the local dialect and includes interpretations of dialect words. Its main purpose was to show the state of the language, in particular the damage it had suffered from the many years of Turkish domination.

From the end of the last century Zarraftis was involved in the archaeological excavations in Kos. Various European archaeologists took him on as their helper in their search for the Asklepios sanctuary. According to local tradition Zarraftis was the very person responsible for the eventual discovery of the Asklepieion because, after some fruitless attempts, he succeeded in persuading the German archaeologist Rudolph Herzog to start digging in the right place.¹⁵ Subsequently he was put in charge of a small museum on the site, and after the Italian occupation of the island he was given the supervision of the first archaeological museum, established in the fortress in Kos town.¹⁶

¹⁵ So it is generally believed on the island; cf. A.I. Markoglou, *Κωικό πανόραμα* (Kos 1992), p. 175.

¹⁶ For Zarraftis's biography see Markoglou, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-3 and V. Chatzivasileiou, *Η ιστορία της νήσου Κω* (Kos 1990), pp. 516-19 and 663-4.

The British classical philologist and headmaster of the Perse School in Cambridge, William H.D. Rouse, probably came into contact with Zarraftis while visiting Kos in 1898, and their correspondence lasted until 1915. During this period Zarraftis collected and sent folkloric material to Rouse, such as tales, ballads, proverbs, riddles, jokes, etc. Only part of this material has been published,¹⁷ but the manuscripts are still kept in the Faculty of Classics at Cambridge University, along with the letters Zarraftis sent to Rouse. Through these letters we get a very vivid picture both of Zarraftis's activities and of the man himself. Even though in a letter of 1912 he complains about his old age, he did not die until 1933 – and then as a consequence of the earthquake that befell Kos in that year. Zarraftis was buried under the ruins of his house and he is specifically mentioned as one of the victims in a local ballad describing the catastrophe.¹⁸

Today Zarraftis is held in very high esteem by the local intellectuals. He is considered one of the main sources for the history and culture of the island, and when in 1950 the British classicist and neohellenist Richard M. Dawkins published the *Forty-five stories from the Dodekanese*, based on Zarraftis's material, he also presented a very positive portrait of him, including a list of his publications.¹⁹ Of all Zarraftis's activities, however, the most interesting for us is obviously his considerable collection of folklore material.

In my opinion, Dawkins's bilingual edition of the tales collected by Zarraftis is one of the most important publications of Greek folktales. It contains some of the longest, most complicated and most interesting Greek tales. Of the forty-five tales, twenty-eight came from the town and villages of Kos, and

¹⁷ For the tales see below and note 19. Apart from the tales Dawkins also published a collection of forty-three ballads in the periodical *Λαογραφία*. See R.M. Dawkins, "Τραγούδια των Δωδεκανήσων", *Λαογραφία* 13 (1950) 33-99.

¹⁸ See M.A. Alexiadis, "Η έρευνα του λαϊκού πολιτισμού και η περίπτωση της νήσου Κω (1980-1990)", *Τα Κωικά* 4 (1993) 198.

¹⁹ R.M. Dawkins, *Forty-five stories from the Dodekanese* (Cambridge 1950), pp. 1-2.

of these Zarraftis collected the largest part, ten altogether, in his native village of Asfendiou.²⁰

Unfortunately Zarraftis does not give us any direct information to shed light on our picture of the social setting of the folktales. He says nothing about the performance situation, his own working method, or his purpose, and next to nothing about his informants. However, we may deduce a few things from the letters and the manuscripts of the material. In a letter dated October 1901 Zarraftis presented Rouse with the idea of publishing a newspaper that would include both the archaeological matters Zarraftis came upon from time to time and any kind of folklore he found it interesting to write about. The folklore material he would supply with notes on the language and dialect, and the purpose of publishing this kind of material was “να ζωγραφίζει τ’ ανατολικά μας συνήθια” (“to depict our Anatolian customs”). The project obviously did not materialise. Instead Zarraftis collected, copied, and sent all kinds of folklore material to Rouse at Cambridge and was paid to do so. Most of the material he copied into plain exercise books and arranged systematically according to genres. Here we recognise the intended content and layout of the newspaper-to-be, and of so many of the contemporary folklore collections, published in local journals. A small part of the material he sent on loose leaves, one tale or one song at a time. The exercise books are often signed and dated on the last page. Likewise the material sent on loose leaves was normally enclosed with a dated letter that referred to the tale or song in question. It is thus possible to establish a chronology telling us when a substantial part of the material was sent from Zarraftis to Rouse and probably also when it was copied, but of course this does not prove anything about the time of collection. On the contrary, it is evident from the correspondence that Zarraftis sometimes kept the material for quite some time before copying and sending it to Rouse. For example, in a letter of April 1902 he was pleased to announce that he had rediscovered the ballad “Η Νεραντζιά”, which he had mislaid, even though he had it “γραμμένην από πολύν καιρόν” (“written

²⁰ The other Koan tales are distributed as follows: five from the town of Kos, four each from the villages of Andimakia and Kefalos, three from the village of Pyli, and finally two from the village of Kardamena.

down long since"). In the exercise book he had left space for it, obviously in the hope of finding it before finishing the copy and sending off the material.

Most of the Koan material was copied and sent to Rouse during the period 1905-9. Of the twenty-eight tales we can attach precise datings to twenty-six. The year 1905 seems to have been especially productive. Most of the tales and the list of Koan dialect words were copied and sent to Cambridge during this year.

That Zarraftis was a conscientious collector who did not interfere too much with his material may be deduced from the fact that style and language vary from tale to tale. But naturally we cannot be certain to what extent he played the role of editor. This is a problem most students of western folktales will meet, since the technical facilities for recording the narrations were not available until the craft of storytelling had died out in most parts of the area. Therefore, to quote Holbek, "if we are not to abandon all folktale study ... we must make do with what we have".²¹

Chatzi-Yavrouda

As mentioned above, Zarraftis only once reveals information about his informants. In a footnote to the tale "Myrmidonia and Pharaonia" he remarks that these localities were unknown to his female storyteller Chatzi-Yavrouda. Likewise, in his notes to the ballad "Ἡ Νεραντζιά", he states the name of his informant as Chatzi-Yavrouda, and since this song was also collected in Asfendiou we may assume that we have to do with the same woman. But otherwise it has so far not been possible to find any other references to her.

Chatzi-Yavrouda was probably born in the first half of the last century, and we meet her at the beginning of this century in the village of Asfendiou. At that time Asfendiou was a thriving village, second in terms of population only to the town of Kos, with approximately 1,900 inhabitants, all Christians.²² It consisted of five parishes which extended along the wooded mountainsides close to Dikaïos, the highest point of the island.

²¹ Op. cit., p. 48.

²² Chatzivasileiou, op. cit., p. 396.

The main occupation of the inhabitants was farming. The villagers had their homes in the mountain village but their fields on the plain below, some three to five miles away. We may assume that from 1845 primary education was provided in Asfendiou, and in 1868 a primary school was established in the cellars of the Asomaton monastery.²³ In 1908 the village school had four classes, two teachers and 160 pupils, of whom 30 were girls.²⁴

The tale attributed to Chatzi-Yavrouda is obviously told by a very skilled storyteller. It can therefore probably be assumed that she was the source for more than this single tale. Thus far I ascribe four tales to her.²⁵

These tales are complex with many details. They are often built up of different tale types and sometimes they also include motifs from written tradition. We thus meet the Apollonios story, a variant of the Susanna in the bath story, and I also sense an inspiration from *Erofili* in the way the king threatens to kill his daughter in "Yannakis". Chatzi-Yavrouda's style is dramatic, with dialogues, brief interjections, lots of onomatopoeic words, and vivid descriptions of storms and other natural disasters, as for example, "οι βροντές βροντούσαν βροντερότερες και τρομαχτικότερες" ("the thunder thundered in a more thundering way and more terrifically").²⁶ In general she has a very elaborate sense of language. She knows how to play with words – some are probably even made-up. She uses a lot of compounds, repetitions and even the technique of *coppia*, all elements familiar to Greek vernacular literature. Let me give a few examples: "ψευτογογγυσμούς και ψευτοαναστεναγμούς" ("lying murmurs and groans"), "τέντωναν και ξετέντωναν" ("stretched and slackened") "η κακομοίρα, η κακογραμμένη του κόσμου" ("poor me, the saddest fate in the world is mine"), "βουβός και απολόιτος" ("dumb and with no answer to make"). She is also very fond of details. For example, she describes the wedding

²³ Chatzivasileiou (op. cit., pp. 384 and 387) is somewhat ambiguous on this point.

²⁴ Chatzivasileiou, op. cit., p. 390.

²⁵ Nos. 17, 33, 36 and 45. Dawkins (op. cit., p. 3) believed her to be the source also of no. 42, but I do not agree with this view.

²⁶ The quotations from the tales are all in Dawkins's translation.

garment and jewellery of the heroine Yavrouda in every detail, the coffee-making and the men's dancing in "Yannakis", and the orthodox wedding ritual in "The Crab". (Here it is interesting to see how priests, and wedding candles and crowns easily go along with autokinetic objects, especially when one of these objects is the altar with the book of the gospels upon it!)

There is a realistic or down-to-earth touch to Chatzi-Yavrouda's tales, and she seems to have been a pious person with high moral standards. Her characters often pray to God or mention God as their helper or as responsible for their punishment. The main characters are tried and the villains are punished for their impious or immoral deeds. Some of the elements, supernatural in other tales, are explained in Chatzi-Yavrouda's versions as God's work. But this does not exclude her from operating with supernatural elements or beings more familiar to the fairy-tale tradition. As mentioned above, the introduction of religious phenomena along with magic elements obviously presents no conflict. For instance, both the ogresses in "The Crab" and the snake prince in "Yavrouda" are traditional fairy-tale elements, and in the latter story we also meet *neraides* and a man enchanted by these creatures. However, as Charles Stewart has also shown in his book *Demons and the Devil*,²⁷ the belief in such *exotika* is not opposed to Christian faith for the traditional villager. So in her mixing of religion and superstition, or even fiction, Chatzi-Yavrouda is probably very much in accordance with the general way of thinking of her fellow villagers.

The more naturalistic touch to her tales, as well as her skills as a narrator, are also seen in the inserted remarks where she steps out of the frame and addresses the audience more directly with asides like "mothers love their children much and what they ask for they give them", and "sometimes things become so complicated in cases like these that, while a man is trying to unravel the ravelled skein of his affairs, other circumstances arise and make the unravelling still more difficult." She also familiarises her tales by references to localities on the island, known to her audience, as for example when she compares

²⁷ C. Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral imagination in Modern Greece* (Princeton 1991). See especially pp. 97 and 99.

Paradisi to Alonaki: "it was called Parādisi, and indeed it was like paradise. It was a level place high up, like Alonaki." Alonaki was a locality with terraces just outside the parish of Zia in Asfendiou. Other familiar elements could be references to common practices, as for example when the owner of the coffee-house sends off Yannakis to take coffee to the king, or the reference in "Yavrouda" to embroidery and an embroidery teacher. We are informed by Zarraftis – at a time when he was head of an embroidery school at Astypalea – that in Asfendiou there were women skilled in "old-time" embroidery.²⁸

There can be no doubt that Chatzi-Yavrouda was a real "paramythou", who mastered the traditional craft to perfection. I am also convinced that a teller of her capacity did not restrict herself to telling tales to children at home, but definitely performed to gatherings of adults too.²⁹ She is a gifted teller who is able to combine the different elements of traditional fairy-tale material, inspiration from written works, and her own view of life, and a teller who masters the balance between detail and action. The result is a very personal style because she does not just tell a good story in an entertaining and exciting way, but also conveys her own moral message to the audience.

How did a woman like Chatzi-Yavrouda obtain her story material and build up a repertoire? Again we have to make our conclusions by drawing on parallels from other cultures.

The repertoire of a skilled storyteller is voluminous. A good narrator knows at least 40 tales – "του σαραντήμερου τα παραμύθια" ("the tales of the forty days")³⁰ – but the number will often be as many as 200-300.³¹ Both men and women learned their stock of material through a whole lifetime and therefore the most skilled narrators, those with the widest repertoire, were the old people. They also had the necessary authority and

²⁸ Letter dated Kos 20 October 1905.

²⁹ I share this opinion with Antonis Chatzinikolaou, who has published a study and a revised edition of tale no. 45. See A. Chatzinikolaou, "Ένα λογοτέχνημα από μια αγράμματη Ασφενδιανή!", *Τα Κωακά* 5 (1995) 376.

³⁰ Adamantiou, op. cit., p. 278.

³¹ For a description of the narrators cf. L. Dégh, op. cit., especially pp. 165-86.

respect in the community, which came with greater knowledge and experience.

The gifted narrators need nothing but an outline of the plot or the raw material, and from that they form their own tales. Skills learned as a basis are the technique of composition, the traditional ways of storytelling, and the proper presentation. In the course of time themes and, especially, motifs are added to the basic skills, and in combining these elements the storyteller is left with hundreds of possibilities. The tales may be made longer or shorter, two themes may be combined into one tale, and so on. The narrators' greatest freedom is in the details concerning reality. They add their personal imprint to the tales in the way in which they actualise and perform them. Again we notice how our Chatzi-Yavrouda fits the picture of a skilled narrator.

What determines how a tale is composed and performed is the interaction between narrator and audience, i.e. the narrator's mood, the audience's response, the whole situation. Different tales are told in different situations and different motifs are used according to the situation. For instance, Alan Dundes's study of what he calls "allomotifs" showed that in traditional lore decapitation is equivalent to castration. The audience is perfectly aware of this and the allomotif can therefore be used with the same effect. If the story is told by a male narrator to a male audience the castration variant would probably be preferred, but if women and children were present the decapitation variant would be chosen.³² In the same way Margaret Mills, in her study of Afghan storytelling, found that in a version of the Cinderella story, when told in an entirely female context, the wicked stepsister is punished by being beaten with a snake and a donkey's penis. As a result she grows these two excrescences on her face. But other variants of the story lack the phallic imagery – none of Mills's own informants used it – and she explains this fact as probably due to self-censorship in a stranger's presence.³³ In the same way Chatzi-Yavrouda

³² A. Dundes, "The symbolic equivalence of allomotifs in the Rabbit-Herd (AT 570)", *Arv* 36 (1980) 95-6.

³³ M. Mills, "Sex role reversals, sex changes, and transvestite disguise in the oral tradition of a conservative muslim community in Afghanistan". In: Rosan A. Jordan and Susan Kalcik (eds.), *Women's folklore women's*

modifies the initial incest episode in "Yannakis". While the king in the original (the Apollonios story) deliberately removes any suitor in order to keep his daughter to himself, the father of our story is "urged by temptation" but immediately regrets his "ill deed".³⁴ These are sensitive subjects to be spoken about in public, especially by a woman.

New stories or new elements would be acquired by contact with the outside world either by travelling oneself or by listening to others who had travelled. In traditional society mobility was not great, particularly for women, and therefore much material must have been gained from listening to travellers. Good sources were itinerant craftsmen, day-labourers, sailors, fishermen, and gypsies. The gifted narrators were also able to extract material from written books, even if they were not able to read themselves. They would get somebody to read aloud to them, as is shown by a fine example from a blind storyteller in Finland. When interviewed by a scholar, he gave the information, much to the surprise of the interviewer, that he obtained a lot of his material from books at the local library. He simply had the children read the books to him.³⁵

As mentioned above, Chatzi-Yavrouda's stories show traits of contact with written tradition, and she had made at least one long journey in her life. From her name we may conclude that she had visited the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. But apart from this assumption we do not have any information about her mobility or her sources. She may have had some school education, and thus been able to read herself, but she may just as well have heard the literary stories either by somebody reading them aloud or as part of the oral tradition. Her stories show an intimate knowledge of the sea, sailing, and fishing. So even though she lived in a mountain village she must have had contact with sailors and fishermen. This may have happened

culture [Publications of the American Folklore Society, New Series vol. 8] (Philadelphia 1985), pp. 204-6.

³⁴ See also Chatzinikolaou, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

³⁵ G. Herranen, "Aspects of a blind storyteller's repertoire". In: R. Kvideland and H. K. Sehmsdorf (eds.), *Nordic Folklore. Recent studies* (Bloomington 1989), p. 65.

during the Summer period when the villagers camped in the plain close to the sea in order to attend to their fields.

Holbek's model

For analysing the content of fairy tales Holbek uses a synthetic model, based mainly on the works of the famous Russian formalist Vladimir Propp³⁶ and those of Elli Kõngäs Maranda and Pierre Maranda.³⁷ The basic principle is Propp's definition of a function as "an act of a tale role, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action". This definition implies, in Holbek's words, that "the meaning of an action in a fairy tale is to be seen or deduced from its result. Superficially identical actions which lead to different results represent different functions." This principle Holbek applies, contrary to Propp, to the narrative as a whole, and he states the reasons for choosing this method as follows:

it is the *only* way to expose the basic system of semantic oppositions in fairy tales as discovered by Kõngäs Maranda. We regard that system as vitally important because it reflects the real oppositions dominating traditional storytelling communities.³⁸

According to Kõngäs Maranda a personage in a European folktale represented three "dimensions": that of status (H = high, L = low), that of age (Y = young, A = adult); and that of sex (M = male, F = female).³⁹ These dimensions or categories Holbek views as "the very categories we assume to have been of importance to the traditional storytellers and their audiences", and it "depicts a semantically defined system of tale roles", in

³⁶ V. Propp. *The morphology of the folktale* [American Folklore Society bibliographical and special series vol. 9; Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore and Linguistics 10] (2nd rev. ed., Austin/London 1968).

³⁷ E. Kõngäs Maranda and P. Maranda, *Structural models in folklore and transformational essays* [Approaches to Semiotics 10] (The Hague/Paris 1971).

³⁸ Op. cit., p. 410.

³⁹ Holbek, op. cit., p. 347.

contrast to most structuralistic systems which are syntactically defined.⁴⁰

According to Holbek's model the most significant part of the tale is the end. In that he follows Axel Olrik's "law of the weight of the stern", i.e. the most important comes last.⁴¹ The wedding in the end of the story Holbek sees as the crowning achievement of efforts at three levels:

that of gaining independence from parents and other authorities of the preceding generation, that of winning the love of a person of the opposite sex; and that of securing the future of the new family.

These efforts are, then, dominated by three sets of thematic oppositions: "1) that of the conflict between generations," (Y vs. A, following Kōngäs Maranda's system) "2) that of the meeting of the sexes," (M vs. F) and "3) that of the social opposition between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'" (L vs. H).⁴²

To sum up, the general theme of fairy tales could be expressed as two conflicts: a social and a sexual conflict. Every tale has two main characters: a young person of each sex, one of them being of low social status and the other of high. Both main characters have to pass the sexual conflict or the conflict of maturity, i.e. they both have to pass from Y to A. But the young person of low social status (LYM/LYF) in addition has to pass the social conflict, i.e. to pass from L to H. The gender of the tale corresponds with the gender of the young person of low social status. If this character is male (LYM) the gender of the tale is also masculine and accordingly if this character is female (LYF) the gender of the tale is feminine. Some tale types are found both in masculine and feminine versions.

Gender

Tang Kristensen's material showed that while women tend to tell almost the same amount of masculine and feminine tales,

⁴⁰ Holbek, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

⁴¹ Holbek, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

⁴² *Op. cit.*, p. 410.

men tell far more masculine tales than feminine.⁴³ Mills's study of Afghan storytelling revealed almost the same situation,⁴⁴ and I thus find it reasonable to assume that the situation must have been similar in Greece. It is obviously not interesting to men to tell stories about the female world, or else they do not have the required knowledge to do so. Women on the other hand find it equally interesting to tell stories about the female and the male worlds, and it might also be easier for them to gain information about the male world than *vice versa*. This is definitely the case in a traditional Muslim society like the Afghan, where the male world is more visible and public than the female. But I do not think the situation in a traditional Greek community would be very different. Here we also encounter a strong gender segregation, the male sphere being the public and the female the private, and strict regulations on women's mobility.⁴⁵ This is reflected in the tales as we shall see below. Taking into consideration the parallels drawn from other cultures as well as the documented gender segregation of the traditional Greek community it is thus far my hypothesis that in Greece too the greater part of the feminine tales are told by women. All the four tales I ascribe to Chatzi-Yavrouda contain feminine stories. One of them ("Yannakis") has a masculine frame story but with a feminine insert.

The picture of women

How are women portrayed in Chatzi-Yavrouda's tales? Are they just passive and beautiful as the feminists claimed the heroines of the so-called best-known tales to be? Of course the activity level depends on the gender of the tale. In a masculine tale the hero plays the active role but is normally helped by the heroine, and correspondingly in a feminine tale the heroine plays the active role. It is therefore a prerequisite to any analysis to clarify the gender of the tale. It is no less important to define what is meant by activity. Obviously we cannot expect the two sexes to act in the same way in tales rooted in a

⁴³ Holbek, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-9.

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 187-8.

⁴⁵ Cf. J. Dubisch, *Gender and power in rural Greece* (Princeton 1986), pp. 9-12 with further references, and Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 and 67

traditional society. It would be anachronistic to expect the heroines of the tales to act by the same means and in the same ways as the heroes. To illustrate this I shall use Chatzi-Yavrouda's story "Myrmidonia and Pharaonia". It is a complex tale comprising different tale-types, but for now I shall concentrate on the main story.

The initial part of this tale is normally known in a masculine version where a young prince mocks an old woman and consequently he is cursed with the longing for Trisevgeni (Thrice-Noble). He therefore takes off in search of her, and on his way he has to perform various tasks. But our narrator chooses to change the gender of the tale, and this has some consequences. The heroine, Tartana, being a young girl of marriageable age, is not able to set off in search of her beloved, so she sends her brother in her stead. He gets into trouble because of her, and hence she has to rescue him. Again this cannot be done directly, so she is forced to leave home, hidden in a trunk, and is sent to sea. Up to this point she has not been very active on her own behalf, but from now on she takes both her own and her brother's fate in her hands. The tool she uses for saving her brother's life and clearing her own name and honour and in the end winning the young king, is female cleverness. Disguised as a veiled dancer she gains access to the palace and succeeds in threatening her evil spirit, the Negro, to make him admit his falseness against herself and her brother.

She is described as beautiful and the king's first motive for marrying her is her beauty. But when necessary she is also clever and assertive. She merely acts within the confines of a woman's possibilities in a traditional society.

To some extent Chatzi-Yavrouda's other heroines have the same characteristics. Both Yavrouda from "Yavrouda" and Angelikoula from "Yannakis" are also forced out of their homes and sent on journeys. Like Tartana, Angelikoula also has to defend her honour, and even to overcome serious attacks on her virtue. Tartana and Angelikoula are both "active" heroines or female counterparts to the heroes of the masculine tales. Yavrouda on the other hand is a "persecuted" heroine. She has to redeem an ill deed, the killing of her mother, and as a consequence she has to pass different tests. She saves two men, and they are both as dependent on her as Cinderella and the

Sleeping Beauty are on Prince Charming. The tests that she passes are nothing like the killing of dragons or the fighting with giants that a male hero would undertake but activities normally associated with the female sphere. She has to deliver and nurse a child and to marry a young man. But when it is taken into account that this child, and later young man, is a snake that eats the hands of the midwives, the breasts of the nurses and, when married, the entire bodies of his brides in the wedding bed, her deeds are no less spectacular than those of a male hero.

All Chatzi-Yavrouda's heroines are good Christians and they are often helped by God. This is also one of the elements that places her stories closer to the reality of the surrounding community. In traditional Greek society the relationship with religion and the church is the women's responsibility. They are responsible for the family's spiritual condition as men are for its material condition.⁴⁶

Tales and society

In general the heroines of Greek folktales present traditional female values. They are tested on skills associated with the female sphere: they have to spin enormous amounts of wool, sweep a whole tower, do the laundry without soap, provide food with no ingredients, etc. But that does not mean that they are passive or unassertive. They succeed in performing the tasks or deeds by a mixture of inventiveness and the mastering of female skills.

They are not able to set off to seek their fortune, but they can, for example, travel freely disguised as a nun. They can also let the world come to them by building an inn or a bath house and in this way obtain the contact and information needed, or they may be forced to leave home in one way or the other, as with the heroine in "Myrmidonia and Pharaonia". If the heroines leave home on their own initiative to seek their fortunes, they do so disguised as men. In some Greek tales the young heroines dress and act like men. These are the stories about the girl who went to war. The girl dresses and acts like a man, but if, at some point in the story, there is doubt about her gender, in the end she wins the test by proving very skilled in a specific female virtue: modesty.

⁴⁶ See Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 68 with further references.

There are even examples of gender shifts in the tales. Again a girl goes off to war dressed like a man, acts bravely, and (unluckily) is rewarded by being given the king's daughter in marriage. After many trials she has to undergo a gender shift in order to secure the happy ending.

It is remarkable that in the Afghan tradition the tales about women dressing and acting like men were mainly told by male narrators.⁴⁷ Mills also refers to a few tales containing gender shifts *per se*, and these were all told by male narrators.⁴⁸ Unfortunately I have not thus far come across any Greek variant of tales concerning change either of sex roles or of sex told by an eponymous narrator, and therefore I am not able to make any conclusions yet about the gender distribution of this kind of tale in Greece.

The heroines of Chatzi-Yavrouda's tales are, of course, beautiful – would it be a fairy tale if they were not? But if their beauty plays a role at all it is a negative one because it makes them attractive and thus vulnerable to male desires, and to attacks on their virtue. Beauty is definitely not the heroines' only asset and does not function as such in the tales. It may also be noted that Chatzi-Yavrouda's male heroes are not less attractive than her heroines. Yannakis is described as “ὄμορφον” (“fair”), the Crab is compared to an angel and his brothers are “παράμορφα παλλικάρια” (“very handsome youths”).

The final result of all fairy tales, masculine or feminine, is the same: the wedding. If we follow Holbek the theme of a tale is maturity and replacement of generations. The young persons have to come to terms with their own sexuality, to show themselves capable of meeting and living with the other sex, and to prove their ability to replace the older generation “on the throne”. This is what the happy ending means, and in traditional society, in Greece as elsewhere, marriage is considered a necessity for male and female individuals alike.⁴⁹ Since the time of courtship in traditional society is a period when, to quote Stewart, “males and females exhibit very marked

⁴⁷ Mills, *op. cit.*, pp. 188, 193-5 and 210.

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

⁴⁹ For Greece cf. J. du Boulay, *Portrait of a Greek mountain village* (Oxford 1974), p. 121, and Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

and stylized gender traits”,⁵⁰ it is only natural that the skills tested in the tales are the gender-specific ones.

In presenting the storyteller Chatzi-Yavrouda, I hope I have managed to give an outline of my project and its theoretical foundations. As stated at the beginning of this paper, it is my intention, after the detailed analysis of Chatzi-Yavrouda’s tales and the other – anonymous – Koan tales, to extend the analysis to anonymous and eponymous tales from other parts of Greece. I expect this approach to enable me, in due time, to present a more detailed and well-documented picture of women and gender roles in Modern Greek fairy tales.

University of Copenhagen

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 175.

Greek Cypriot cultural identity: a question of the “elite” or of the whole people?

Pavlos Tzermias

Surveying the history of Cyprus over several millennia one realises that the island has been under the influence of Greek culture from an early period. For the Cypriots their history is continuous. This consciousness of continuity is a psychological factor of great importance. As the Greek poet Kostis Palamas once said: “The island has changed many despots, but its heart has never changed.” This consciousness should not let us forget the tension resulting from the changes between foreign influences and the persisting force of indigenous culture. Franz Georg Maier rightly emphasises this aspect.¹

For different reasons – arising, to a great extent, from the geopolitical situation – the historical development of Cyprus has been marked by the contrast between dependence and the indigenous Cypriot culture – for example during the struggle between Byzantium and Islam or during the rule of the Lusignans or the Venetians. From the point of view of Greek Cypriot identity the conquest of the island by the Ottomans and the period of Turkish rule (from 1571 to 1878) are of particular interest.

The period of Ottoman rule should not be idealised, but neither should it be demonised. The Greek Cypriot Giorgos Georgis points out: “Cyprus was fortunate to have a lighter yoke perhaps than any other region.”² According to Georgis the island did not experience the painful institution of *Yeniçeri* (the Janissaries). On the other hand there was a gap between the Ottoman administrative formula and the reality marked by

¹ F. G. Maier, *Cyprern: Insel am Kreuzweg der Geschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck 1982).

² G. Georgis, “Από την πρώτη στη δεύτερη αγγλοκρατία 1191-1878”, in: G. Tenekidis and G.N. Kranidiotis (edd.), *Κύπρος: Ιστορία, προβλήματα και αγώνες του λαού της* (Athens: Estia 1981), p.117.

arbitrariness and corruption. There were Greek Cypriot liberation movements. The co-operation between exploited Greek and Turkish labourers gave a supranational character to these liberation movements. In any event the religious and national contrasts were not settled.

The era of Archbishop Chrysanthos (from 1767 to 1810) was characterised by a strengthening of Greek Cypriot autonomy. The increase of Chrysanthos's power embittered the Turkish Cypriots. In 1804 a Turkish Cypriot revolt against the Turkish Governor, who was reproached with being compliant with the Archbishop, was put down by Turkish troops from Anatolia. The island Turks felt humiliated. After the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821 hundreds of Greek Cypriots were slaughtered.

By 1821 a sense of a collective identity was well established among the Greeks, and the Greek Cypriots felt that they too shared that identity. Here the consciousness of the continuity of Greek culture on the island played an important role. The Greek Cypriot cultural identity now had a national dimension. To borrow Anthony D. Smith's maxim: "The process from culture to politics is the path towards nation-building."³ The process from ethnic community (*ethnie*) to nation involves the movement from culture to politics. According to Smith ethnic communities are "human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity".⁴ But what is understood by nation? This is an extremely difficult question, the significance of which in the case of Cyprus is crucial. While the literature is extensive, it has not yet produced definitive results.

We can distinguish between: definitions by objective criteria (for instance origin, language, religion); definitions by subjective criteria (for instance consciousness and will); and combined definitions. There is no consensus regarding the decisive criteria. The difficulty of the problem lies in the nature of the thing itself. The nation is an historical phenomenon subject to change. In this sense the so-called historico-political definitions are the most appropriate ones. For the purposes of this paper it seems to

³ A. D. Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations* (Oxford: Blackwell 1986 and reprints), p. 154.

⁴ A. D. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

me important to state that a dogmatic definition can be dangerous. Here we must mention, for instance, the question much debated in the academic literature as to whether the nation preceded the state or succeeded it.⁵

It has been suggested that the Greek and Greek Cypriot identities were formed long before the creation of the Modern Greek state in 1830. The same holds good for the Modern Greek nation. As mentioned above, the Greek Cypriots felt themselves to be members of this nation. The existence of an already independent "motherland" strengthened the demand for union with Greece (Enosis). During British rule (from 1878 to 1960) this postulate played an important role. The claim for Enosis was compatible with the right to self-determination in view of the will of the Greek Cypriot majority, expressed in the plebiscite held in 1950, and in view of the demographic situation (1960: 77% Greek Cypriots, 18.3% Turkish Cypriots). In many respects the Greek Cypriot struggle against British colonial power was different from that of other liberation movements. The existence of the Greek "motherland" as the centre of Greek Cypriot ethno-centrism gave the struggle an irredentist character.

In order to study British policy on Cyprus it is necessary to examine the socio-economic developments. Cypriot agriculture was characterised by the fragmentation of holdings, the dependence of small farmers on usurers, low productivity, and the precarious situation of many property-less farm-hands. At the same time there were the problems which resulted from the large holdings belonging to private landowners and the Church. The tribute question highlighted the difficulties during the period from 1878 to 1927. The economic development in the period from 1939 to 1955 could not eliminate the weak points of the island's economic structure. In short: London pursued a policy answering the needs of the colonial power.

Under British rule the political and constitutional system was incompatible with liberal and democratic principles. The High Commissioner, who from 1925 onwards was called Governor, enjoyed unrestricted powers. The Legislative Council was in fact merely decorative in character. The British

⁵ For instance, E. Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell 1983 and reprints).

employed the tactics of *divide et impera* to oppose the liberation movement of the Greek Cypriots. They ignored the important factor of the cultural identity and national feeling of the Greek Cypriots. In 1907 Winston Churchill recognised this factor when he said that he deemed the Greek Cypriot endeavour for unification with their motherland as natural. But Churchill did not infer the political consequences. On the other hand it would not be correct to ignore the errors made by the Cypriot liberation movement, legitimised by the principle of self-determination. Often these errors were connected with those made by Athens.

The leaders of the Greek Cypriots – above all the Church and its nationalistic allies – adopted the method of maximalism. They were adopting the mentality of everything or nothing. In the decade 1950-60 (when the foundations were laid for the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus) the initiatives undertaken by Athens and the Greek Cypriot leadership to achieve a solution for the Cyprus problem wavered between diplomacy and armed struggle. In the literature we encounter the belated realisation that errors were committed: illusions about the role of the United Nations, underestimation of the Turkish factor by Athens and of the Turkish Cypriots by the Greek Cypriot leadership, romantic nationalism, poor knowledge of the self-determination problem, belated realisations concerning the significance of independence, irredentism in the era of liquidation of colonial power, poor co-ordination of the initiatives undertaken by the Greek and the Greek Cypriot leaderships, rivalry between Makarios and Grivas, the discrediting of the heroic EOKA struggle by criminal acts, lack of flexibility during the negotiations with the British, involvement in bloody conflicts with the Turkish Cypriots.

But mentioning all the errors committed by Athens and by the Greek Cypriot leadership does not mean releasing the British government or the Turkish and the Turkish Cypriot nationalists from responsibility. I merely wish to stress that historical truth is not one-dimensional, as I argued in detail in

my book *Geschichte der Republik Zypern*.⁶ The same goes for the evaluation of the role of the external powers in the problem of Cyprus and in the forming of Greek Cypriot cultural and national identity. I have emphasised the tension resulting from the interaction of foreign influences and the persisting force of indigenous culture. This also means that the foreign influences should not be overestimated. According to Jeanette Choisi (and other authors):

we must understand Cyprus and the Cypriots as a historical unity whose non-unified history had not developed from within the society but was set in motion by adoption of foreign influences.⁷

Greek Cypriot ethnocentrism was and is connected with the existence of the Greek "motherland". But Greek Cypriot cultural and national identity has also developed from within the society of Cyprus. The Greek Cypriot Ioannis Karatzas (1767-98) fought for the freedom of the Greeks together with Rigas Velestinlis (Feraios) before the establishment of the Modern Greek state. He was by no means the only Greek Cypriot to engage in such activities. Greek Cypriot cultural and national identity was and is to a great extent an expression of the persisting force of the indigenous culture of the island. Incidentally, the same is also true, *mutatis mutandis*, for the Turkish Cypriots. According to Kudret Akay, Turkish nationalism in Cyprus was not initiated by the rise of Greek Cypriot nationalism.⁸ Turkish nationalism in Cyprus was a sub-case of Turkish nationalism. But the consciousness that made Turkish Cypriot nationalism operational existed within the cultural and social system in

⁶ P. Tzermias, *Geschichte der Republik Zypern, mit Berücksichtigung der historischen Entwicklung der Insel während der Jahrtausende* (3rd ed., Tübingen: Francke 1998).

⁷ J. Choisi, "The Problem of the Cypriot identity: ethnic or elite conflict?", in: Heinz-Jürgen Axt and Hansjörg Brey (edd.), *Cyprus and the European Union: New chances for solving an old conflict?* (Munich 1997) [Südosteuropa Aktuell, 23], pp. 24-35.

⁸ K. Akay, "Past experiences and future prospects", in: I. Ioannou, A. Theophanous and N. Peristianis (edd.), *The Cyprus problem: Its solution and the day after* (Nicosia: Intercollege 1998), pp. 29-42.

Cyprus. The overemphasis on the role played by the influences of the respective motherlands reminds us of the overestimation of other forms of foreign penetration. Tom Nairn remarks on this form of overestimation:

On this point I agree ... with Paschalis Kitromilides; to attribute all developments within a country to outside manipulation without looking at domestic structures would amount not only to oversimplification but also to a mystification of such notions as foreign penetration and imperialism...⁹

I said that the nation is a historical phenomenon subject to changes and that in this sense the so-called historico-political definitions are the most appropriate ones. The role of ancestry myths is relevant here. But this role should not be overestimated. Greek Cypriot cultural and national identity cannot be considered as representing an imagined community in the sense of Benedict Anderson.¹⁰ It is a national myth to think of the Greek Cypriots as racially homogeneous and linearly descended from the ancient Hellenes. But blood is not the right criterion. Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer was wrong. The Greek historian Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos was right when he wrote that spirit is what is important, not blood.¹¹ Later the Greek historian Nikos Svoronos, who cannot be considered an exponent of a nationalistic approach to history, emphasised the Greek consciousness of continuity, although he condemned the "biological" interpretation of this continuity.¹² The nation is a relatively modern notion. But before the coming into being of this phenomenon there was a pre-existent "material", as Hans Kohn correctly maintains. Or, to borrow the words of Eric J. Hobsbawm: "Before nationalism there was a protonationalism."

⁹ T. Nairn, *Small states in the modern world*, quoted by K. Akay, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁰ B. Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso 1991).

¹¹ See K. Th. Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος: Η εποχή του - Η ζωή του - Το έργο του* (Athens: Ethniki Trapeza 1986), pp. 145-69.

¹² See P. Tzermias, *Η εικόνα της Ελλάδας στον ξένο κόσμο* (Athens: I. Sideris 1997), p. 152.

An important element of this “material”, in the case of the Greeks or the Greek Cypriots, is the language. For the significance of the continuity of the language I refer the reader to my book *Für eine Hellenistik mit Zukunft*.¹³ The language is a substantial characteristic of Greek Cypriot identity. This element nourishes the subjective criterion of consciousness and will, the factor of a “plébiscite de tous les jours” in the sense of Ernest Renan. To cite the famous phrase by Renan here does not mean that I fail to recognise the shortcomings of a subjectivistic definition. Hermann Heller expressed himself notably in this respect.¹⁴ On the other hand it cannot be denied that Renan’s “principe spirituel”, by stressing the consciousness of solidarity, does underline a liberal democratic element. Volition and the sense of identity often correspond with certain objective factors. So the consciousness of the Greek Cypriots could certainly not be separated from language, religion and other objective factors. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for the national aspirations of the Turkish Cypriots. But under the principle of self-determination the ultimate decision is taken by the will of individuals. And this is an element that ensures freedom and democracy.

From this point of view language has a great importance. In 1916 the Greek politician Alexandros Papanastasiou emphasised the “democratic character” of the language. For Papanastasiou language is an expression of a community of volition. The Greek Cypriot dialect is a good example here. The dialect has a long history and cannot be considered as the preserve of an elite. There are Greek Cypriot words whose origin is Achaean, for example βόρτακος, “frog”.¹⁵ It is significant that the old elements are primarily the heritage of the rural population, the so-called common people. The absorption of non-Greek words was primarily a phenomenon within a section of the so-called elite.

¹³ P. Tzermias, *Für eine Hellenistik mit Zukunft: Plädoyer für die Überwindung der Krise des Humanismus* (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz 1998).

¹⁴ H. Heller, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff 1971), pp. 258-67.

¹⁵ See K. Chatziioannou, *Ετυμολογικό λεξικό της ομιλουμένης κυπριακής διαλέκτου* (Nicosia: Tamasos 1996), p. 9.

However, an exception must be made here as regards Turkish words. It may be that a section of the so-called Turkish Cypriot elite, as well as a section of the so-called Greek Cypriot elite, was influenced by the English way of life. Kudret Akay speaks of "Brito-Muslims" among the Turkish Cypriots. Lawrence Durrell wrote that a Greek Cypriot told him, at the time of the EOKA struggle against the British, that even Grivas was very pro-British. According to this Greek Cypriot, Grivas killed the British with regret, even with affection.¹⁶ A paradoxical love-hate relationship. But here we have to avoid generalisations. The Greek Cypriot dialect is an important characteristic of the cultural and national identity of the whole Hellenic people of the island. It is typical that the Greek Cypriots, even those of the upper class, speak their dialect among themselves. This is similar to of the use of the Swiss German dialect.

The perpetuation of the Cyprus question is without doubt an expression of the fact that the history of the island was to a great extent determined by two different ethnic identities, the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot. As far as that goes one can speak of the lack of a common Cypriot identity. But this remark should not be exaggerated. Fine differentiations are necessary. It must be emphasised that the Cyprus conflict is not only a conflict of elites. Of course the "elites" determined the historical events to a great extent. The Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus and its followers were protagonists of the Enosis movement on the Greek Cypriot side. On the Turkish Cypriot side the middle class remained limited in numbers. That is why the Turkish Cypriot ruling class was to a great extent dependent on British colonialism. But here too nationalism played a part. For example, the Cyprus Turkish Lycée in Nicosia was the centre of anti-British and pro-Turkish nationalistic activities in the 1930s.

The Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot nationalisms were attached to the "motherlands", Greece and Turkey. But this bond was by no means artificial. It was often the expression of the ethnic identity of the Greek Cypriot or Turkish Cypriot community respectively. This feeling of identity was usually deeply held by the local population and was not considered as

¹⁶ L. Durrell, *Bitter Lemons* (London: Faber n.d.), p. 251.

forcibly imposed from outside. Therefore this feeling frequently embraced the masses too, not only the so-called elites. Often the so-called elites acted under the pressure of the masses. In the eyes of many Greek Cypriots, for instance, the Orthodox Church was the symbol of their ethnic and religious identities. Cultural and national identities merged. The word "elite" is ultimately misleading because it includes, etymologically, a positive value judgement that in many cases is incompatible with the reality.

Eric J. Hobsbawm is overstating his case when he writes that the Greeks who fought against the Turks in 1821 battled more for Rome than for Greece.¹⁷ Hobsbawm distinguishes too strongly between the intelligentsia and the common people. Makriyannis was almost illiterate, but he felt himself to be a descendant of the ancient Greeks. Hobsbawm also distinguishes too strongly between καθαρεύουσα and δημοτική. He overlooks the continuity of language. He rightly states that *Romiosyni* includes a relationship to Byzantium. Nevertheless, he confuses things when he says that the Greeks battled more for Rome than for Greece. *Romiosyni* is to be identified with "Greekness". Hobsbawm does not have a good knowledge of Greek sources. For the Greek Cypriots too *Romiosyni* means Greekness.¹⁸ Vasilis Michailidis, the great Greek Cypriot poet (1849?-1917), wrote in the nineteenth century, in his poem on the massacre of hundreds of Greek Cypriots by the Turks after the outbreak of the Greek Revolution:

Η Ρωμιοσύνη εν φυλή συνότζιαιρη του κόσμου!
Η Ρωμιοσύνη εν να χαθεί όντας ο κόσμος λείπει!

¹⁷ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990), pp. 76-7.

¹⁸ Concerning the notion of *Romiosyni* see P. Tzermias, "Das 'hellenisch-romäische Dilemma' der Spätbyzantiner", in: *The 17th International Byzantine Congress 1986. Abstracts of short papers* (Dumbarton Oaks: Georgetown University n.d.), pp. 368-70.

Romiosyni is a race as old as the world.

Romiosyni will be lost only when the world is finished.¹⁹

Kyriakos Chatziioannou calls the poem of Michailidis the best Modern Greek epic. I would say that it is a masterpiece of Greek Cypriot literature. It is an original work, owing nothing to imported influences. The statement of Jacob Grimm is relevant here: "Unsere Sprache ist auch unsere Geschichte." ("Our language is also our history.")

It is true that the Greek Cypriots are Greeks. But they have their own peculiarities, in the same way as, for instance, the inhabitants of Crete have their own distinctive features in comparison with the mainland Greeks. Cyprus is in this respect related to Crete. An expression of this affinity is the dialect. The dialect plays a part in the literature, for instance in *Erotokritos* in Crete or in love poems in the age of Petrarchism in Cyprus. The dialect is in both cases an expression of identity. The same goes for the Turkish Cypriots. They are Turks, but they have their own peculiarities. Many Turkish Cypriots spoke Greek. There were numerous Greek-speaking Muslims. I know from my own experience that the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash is fluent in Greek. Here we have to lay emphasis on the fact that in the course of the island's history there have been remarkable approaches to a common Cypriot consciousness, a Cypriot identity, in spite of all religious and national antagonisms. Think of the common trade-union activity of Greek and Turkish Cypriots! Think of the "co-existence" in village life and of other inter-communal relationships, which Michalis Attalides rightly stresses in his studies. Although it may seem strange to some, it is a fact: many Turkish words are part of the Greek Cypriot dialect, for instance *meremetin* (Turkish *meremet*), "a small repair". The Greeks say *meremeti*, the Greek Cypriots *meremetin*. This word is a common element of the cultural identity of Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

¹⁹ "Φυλή" (literally "race") in Greek often means merely *έθνος* ("nation"). Concerning these differentiations see P. Tzermias, *Neugriechische Geschichte* (3rd ed., Tübingen: Francke 1999), pp. 13-49.

Although over the years of living together Greek and Turkish Cypriots have developed many common characteristics, the course of events up to the birth of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 never led to the creation of a Cypriot nation embracing both groups, at least not a nation in the ordinary sense of this word. Incidentally, the notion "Cypriot nation" contradicted the Enosis demand of the Greek Cypriots as well as the watchword *Taksim* (division) of the Turkish Cypriots. In general the leaders of the two communities acted against the background of two different cultural and ethnic identities. In this way a distinction between nation and people was not under discussion. It was precisely this distinction, however, which came to be highly relevant with the creation of the Republic of Cyprus, because the new state was largely based on the idea of a people consisting of two national communities.

The total population of the island thus represented one people in the sense of a politically organised entity – in the sense of the so-called "Romance and Anglo-Saxon" state theory or linguistic regulation: *popolo, peuple, people*. In this definition the ethnic factor (common origin, language etc.) was left out of consideration. In the process of organising the state, however, the existence of the two ethnic groups (Greek and Turkish Cypriots) has been considered from many aspects. In other words the concept of nation in the sense of *Volkstum*, as it is widely understood, especially in the German-speaking lands, has largely been taken into account. It is beyond doubt that the distinction between the two notions must not be absolutised. The differentiation between people and nation serves in the context of my discourse as an ideal type. It abstracts from the confusions which exist in practice.

So the people here is not understood as *ἔθνος*, as a community based on origin, language and culture, but as *δῆμος*, that is the sum of citizens in a liberal democracy. Nation on the other hand is not conceived as a state nation, but as a notion indicating the ethnic unity. Therefore the people here is not meant to be the nation as conceived by Johann Gottfried Herder or Johann Gottlieb Fichte, but a community by will in the sense of the *volonté générale* propounded by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The fact that the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot national movements did not affect the differentiation between nation and people was

no accident. It was an expression of Greek and Turkish Cypriot nationalisms respectively. From the angle of both nationalisms, nation and people had to be coterminous. This was manifested in the ideology of committed nationalists on both sides of the Aegean Sea, for instance in the ideology of Ion Dragoumis on the one hand and of Ziya Gökalp on the other hand. But both nationalisms were not only a matter of the so-called elites. The ideology was often the expression of the cultural and nationalistic feeling of the masses. Of course, there were various ideological trends. Eleftherios Venizelos, to give just one example, pleaded for the French conception of nation. Fine differentiations are necessary in the literature too, for instance between Kostis Palamas and Konstantinos Kavafis or, in Cyprus, between Tefkros Anthias and Kostas Montis.

The Greek Cypriot national movement, not distinguishing between nation and people, was taken by surprise. So it was not prepared and actually not willing to tackle the Cyprus problem from the aspect of a "political nation" or "consensus nation" that would comprise – perhaps "on the Swiss pattern" – the Greek as well as the Turkish Cypriots. With regard to the "political nation" the Turkish Cypriot minority assumed the same attitude. The power situation (disadvantageous for the Greek Cypriots) led to the agreements of Zurich and London in 1959. In August 1960 the Republic of Cyprus was proclaimed, Britain, Greece and Turkey guaranteeing by treaty its existence and structure. The creation of the Republic brought about the liquidation of Enosis as well as the rejection of the *Taksim* demand of the Turkish nationalists. This rejection, however, was paid for by heavy privileges of the Turkish Cypriots (in relation to the majority population, but also to the smaller minority groups).²⁰ The main weakness of the Cyprus arrangements of 1959-60 was not, as the Enosis nationalists thought, the abandonment of the unification plans, but the fact that the eliminated Cyprus irredentism was not replaced by some common ideal of freedom for both parts of the people.

Pellegrino Rossi, a naturalised citizen of Geneva, said in 1833 of the national identity of the Swiss: "The name of

²⁰ See F. Crouzet, *Le Conflit de Chypre, 1946-1959*, Vol. 2 (Brussels 1973), p. 1145.

Switzerland alone announces a great national fact... It is more powerful, this name, than our differences of language, religion, customs, trades." A national consciousness of this kind did not underlie the constitution imposed upon Cyprus. For the architects of the Cyprus arrangements there were no Cypriots on the island, but Greeks and Turks. As an establishment of the facts this was not really wrong. But the terminology of the constitution ignored things held in common which formed, and still form, a bond between the two communities beyond all differences and contrasts. The constitution was not an expression of the will of the Cypriot people, not even an expression of the will of the so-called elites of the two communities. The constitution was imposed from outside. If the creators of the constitution had really cared about stimulating the development of a common Cypriot identity, they would not have used those basically disuniting terms Greeks and Turks.

This communal dualism was therefore problematic. It represented a division which was irreconcilable with the notion of a political (or "civic") nation, of the people in the above-mentioned sense. The dualism of authority within the institutions of the Republic was somehow based *a priori* upon the affirmation of both Greek and Turkish nationalism. In the duel of the two nations the turbulent life of the Republic was almost foreordained. Towards the end of 1963 the bloody conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots broke out. In 1964 a United Nations Peace Keeping Force was sent to Cyprus. The treaty of guarantee provided the so-called protecting powers (Great Britain, Greece and Turkey) with the possibility of interfering in the internal affairs of the Republic. In the case of Ankara this meant the subordination of the Turkish Cypriot nationalists to its dictate. The existence of a Cypriot state brought about the bipolarity of Athens and Nicosia and consequently a change in the national ideology of Hellenism. Athens saw itself as the leading centre of Hellenism, while Nicosia, in practice and sometimes also in declared doctrine, claimed the right to decide on the fate of Cypriot Hellenism. Both sides made use of a patriotic style of argumentation. It was, in somewhat exaggerated terms, the clash of two national ideologies, of two identities, within the "lap" of Hellenism. The cultural aspects of this clash were and still are significant.

During the period 1967-74 the doctrine of the "national centre" went through a very dangerous intensification because of the military regime in Athens. The criminal coup of Dimitrios Ioannidis against Makarios in 1974 was a perversion of the Enosis ideology. Ioannidis's coup illustrates that it is grotesque to claim, without any qualification, that the Cyprus conflict is only a conflict of elites. Ioannidis was not the exponent of the ideas of a Greek Cypriot elite, not even of those of a Greek elite. He was a conspirator. Ioannidis gave Turkey the welcome opportunity to occupy almost 40% of the territory of Cyprus, on the pretext of applying the treaty of guarantee. As a result of Turkey's action, which was contrary to international law, about 200,000 Greek Cypriots lost their homes. Then came the settlement of the occupied areas by mainland Turks to change the demographic character of the island. Turkey carried out "ethnic cleansing". As a consequence of the Turkish invasion the Hellenic cultural heritage was destroyed. The invasion was a blow to Greek Cypriot cultural identity, but also to Turkish Cypriot cultural identity. As early as 1979, Vamik D. Volkan, a Turkish Cypriot working in the United States, drew attention to frictions between the settlers and the Turkish Cypriots, and between the settlers and the Turkish soldiers.²¹ The Turkish invasion was a blow to the whole Cypriot people.

Turkey's action gave an impetus to an ideological propensity in favour of partition. Turkish Cypriot secessionism was intensified to an alarming degree. But the theory of the existence of two peoples, as held by Rauf Denktash, contradicts the concept of an all-Cyprus identity, of a culture of the whole Cypriot people – a culture with different, as well as common, elements. Only a united Cyprus, a Cyprus of the whole people, can be a factor for stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. "Ethnic pride and arrogance must be forsaken for Cypriotism," as Halil Ibrahim Salih correctly writes.²² Cypriotism signifies a rapprochement between the two communities through the

²¹ V. D. Volkan, *Cyprus – war and adaptation: A psychoanalytic history of two ethnic groups in conflict* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 1979), p. 142.

²² H. I. Salih, *Cyprus: The impact of diverse nationalism on a state* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press 1978), p. 118.

realisation that only as the common home of all its inhabitants can the island have a humane and peaceful future. In this way it is possible to create and nurture a common self-consciousness that stresses the uniting elements and rejects any physical and psychological division. Here I have to lay emphasis on the fact that Cypriotism does not mean a negation of Greek Cypriot or Turkish Cypriot cultural identity. Greek Cypriot culture is not without a measure of cosmopolitanism. We must distinguish between nationalism and a patriotism which respects the cultural identities of other ethnic groups. Indeed, real patriotism assumes such respect. The Swiss author Gottfried Keller has put it incisively: "A nation can only be really happy and free, if and when it has consideration for the welfare, the freedom and the glory of other nations."

University of Fribourg



Independent Greece: the search for a frontier, 1822-35

Malcolm Wagstaff

Introduction

Greece was no more than a geographical expression before 1830. There had never before been a single Greek state. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, though, the distribution of Greek-speakers – the vast majority of them Orthodox Christians – was particularly wide and embraced not only the Balkan peninsula but also western Anatolia/Asia Minor and Cyprus, as well as southern Italy. Many of the territories where they lived were part of the Ottoman Empire and had been so for upwards of 400 years, much longer than colonial rule in South America, say, or India. They were administered at the time through a patchwork of local arrangements – most of the Aegean islands under the *Kapudan Pasha* or High Admiral, for example, and the Morea under a *Mufassil* (an officer analogous to “Collector” in British India, though he purchased his position). Even though some of the local governors were extremely powerful, like Ali Pasha of Yannina, they were at least nominally appointed by the Sultan and ultimately answerable to Istanbul.

In 1821 a series of uprisings in the Balkan peninsula coalesced into a major insurrection. Both sides committed atrocities (St Clair 1972): the Muslims in the Morea were virtually eliminated in a process that we have learnt to call “ethnic cleansing”, whilst the Ottoman commander, Ibrahim Pasha, was accused of trying to exterminate the Christians. The insurgents enjoyed early success in the Morea/Peloponnese and southern Rumeli, but were contained elsewhere. Defeat seemed very close in 1826 when Britain, France and Russia decided to intervene. Destruction of the combined Ottoman and Egyptian fleets in the Bay of Navarino (20 October 1827) isolated the imperial forces in the Morea, whilst war with Russia (April-September 1828) threatened the imperial capital. These events

together put the necessary leverage on the Ottoman government to agree to Greek independence.

Independence, of course, needs expression in governmental and administrative structures. Independence also needs territorial definition. The rest of this paper outlines the story of how Greek independence was given territorial definition, not by the insurgents themselves but by the protectors of the new state. It is based on the diplomatic documents of the time.

First attempts at territorial definition (1821-27)

The Greek insurgents of 1821 had no clear territorial ambitions. They did, however, create "senates" or comparable governments for the Morea, Western Greece and Eastern Greece (Finlay 1861). Neither the first national constitution (the Constitution of Epidaurus, 13 January 1822) nor the subsequent declaration of independence (27 January 1822) referred to specific territories, though behind both lay some vague notion of *Héllénie* (*State Papers* 9, 621-32). By the end of August 1822, *Héllénie* had been clarified for the Congress of European leaders held at Verona. The Greek submission to the Congress said that the provisional government claimed those areas where "the banner of the cross flies victorious over the ramparts of the towns" (*State Papers* 10, 1021-2). Using terms from ancient geography, these areas were defined as the Peloponnese, Attica, Euboea (Evia), Boeotia, Acarnania, Aetolia, the greater part of Thessaly and Epirus, Crete and the islands of the Aegean Sea. But the claims lacked any more precise definition.

The European leaders tended to regard the Greek insurrection as an internal matter for the Ottoman Empire and were reluctant to become involved (Crawley 1930). They did not wish to be seen to support any apparent challenge to the principle of imperial sovereignty, lest it should encourage the liberal opposition within their own boundaries. Russia, however, claimed the right to protect the Orthodox Christian subjects of the Sultan (e.g. under the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, 1774, and the Treaty of Jassy, 1792; Crawley 1930: 1-2). It eventually took the initiative in making proposals for the "Pacification of Greece" (15 January 1824) (*State Papers* 11, 819-27). These suggested the creation of three Greek principalities. They would remain part of the Ottoman Empire, but would be allowed a degree of

autonomy similar to that enjoyed by the Danubian Principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia, which were still part of the Ottoman Empire.

Eastern Greece would consist of Thessaly, Boeotia and Attica. Western Greece would comprise the coastal areas formerly under Venetian control (*l'ancien Littoral vénitien*) which had not already fallen under Austrian rule, together with Epirus and Acarnania. The third principality, Southern Greece, would consist of the Morea and possibly the island of Candia/Crete.

A fourth territorial unit was also recognised, the Islands. These would remain under the municipal-type regimes under which they were supposed to be run at the time, but with their privileges renewed and regularised.

The Ottoman government was to retain sovereignty over the Principalities and Islands and would be allowed to garrison a certain number of fortresses. Public positions, however, were to be filled by local people. The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople would continue to represent them to the Sultan. An annual tribute was to be paid, but there would be complete freedom of trade and each principality would enjoy its own flag. The detailed arrangements, however, would be decided in "negotiations between the Porte, the Allied Courts and a Greek deputation ..." (*State Papers* 11, 822-3).

The Russian proposals were originally secret, but were leaked to *The Times* (*Wellington Papers* 1/855/20; 1/856/6; 1/856/8). The Sultan was indignant at this blatant attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of his Empire. The Greeks appealed to Britain to defend their independence.

To cut a long story short, the involvement of both Britain and Russia in what Wellington called "the Greek affair" (quoted by Crawley 1930: 121), led eventually to a Protocol between these countries (4 April 1826) (Hertslet 1875: no. 129). This reserved to them the right to settle "the limits of the Territory, and the names of the Islands of the Archipelago ..." which were "to be proposed to the Porte to comprise under the denomination of Greece". According to the British negotiator of the Protocol, the Duke of Wellington, the objective was to preserve the peace of Europe rather than to advance the Greek cause (*Wellington Papers* 1/900/4). Nonetheless, it is surprising that the Political

Constitution of Greece issued in May 1827 made no territorial claims, other than stating (Article II) that "Greece is one and indivisible" (*State Papers* 15, 1069-83).

The 1826 Protocol was put into effect by the Treaty of London (6 July 1827) (Hertslet 1875: no. 136). The signatories – France, as well as Britain and Russia – stated that they would use force if necessary to secure the compliance of the Ottoman Empire. The declared objective was reconciliation between the Porte and its Greek subjects, rather than independence. As also envisaged in the 1826 Protocol, this would be based upon the principle of "a complete separation between individuals of the two nations", i.e. Greeks and Turks. Thus, the allied negotiators accepted the fiction that most Muslims previously found in the territories under discussion were Turks in some ethnic sense, even though many were in fact speakers of Greek and converts from Christianity. Separation was to be achieved by allowing Greeks to acquire Turkish property (*a fait accompli* anyway). The Treaty, unlike the Protocol, specified that the boundaries of "the Territory upon the Continent, and the designation of the Islands of the Archipelago" were to be decided through negotiations involving the two contestants, as well as the signatory powers. The Treaty was presented to the Ottoman government in August, 1827 and rejected in November, despite what Prince Metternich called the "frightful catastrophe" of Navarino (quoted by Crawley 1930: 93), news of which had reached Istanbul only a few days earlier. The Greeks had already accepted it (3 September 1827). These matters rested for almost a year.

Renewed attempts at definition (1828-29)

On 26 April 1828 Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire. The cause was not the continued intransigence of the Ottoman government over Greece, but the Sultan's reluctance to withdraw troops from the Danubian Principalities as agreed by the Treaty of Ackermann of 25 September 1826. Russian success in the ensuing war was seen by the two western powers as likely to result in the Greeks being placed under the Czar's protection. Britain and France were unhappy at the prospect. Further efforts were made to settle the "Greek affair" by diplomacy. Following a conference in the British Foreign Office on 2 July 1828, chaired by

Lord Aberdeen ("Athenian Aberdeen") (Chamberlain 1983: 30-45), the Allied ambassadors to the Porte (who had temporarily withdrawn from Istanbul) were instructed to proceed to insurgent Greece. There they were instructed to discover the political and military situation in the country and to determine the detailed arrangements necessary for peace. A Protocol agreed by the July conference gave some guidance about the possible boundaries for Greece:

The limits of the Greek state, ought, perhaps, to include a fair proportion of the Greek population who have been in actual insurrection against the Porte. The Frontier should be clearly defined, and it should be easily defensible. The precise Boundary might be determined by the nature of the ground, and its local peculiarities: but it should be such as would be most likely to prevent future disputes between the Inhabitants of coterminous Provinces.

Four possible boundaries were listed:

1. "... a line from the mouth of the Gulph [sic] of Volo to the mouth of the Aspropotamos ..."

2. "... from the Pass of Thermopylae, following the ridge of Mount Oeta to the west, and approaching the Gulph [sic] of Corinth by including the mountains which form the group of Parnassus"

3. "... should comprise Attica and Megara, by following the well-defined ridges of Parnes and Cithaeron, and which should not extend farther west than the strong ground north of the isthmus of Corinth"

4. "... is limited to the Morea, or rather to the Mountain Passes which command the approach to the Isthmus from the north".

At the same time it appeared reasonable

to include a large proportion of the Greek islands, not only those in the immediate neighbourhood of the Morea, but the numerous assemblage comprising the ancient Cyclades. This should embrace nearly all the Islands which are to be found between the 36th and the 39th parallels of latitude, and which lie between the Continent of Greece, and the 26th degree of longitude. It is probable, however, that on either side of the Line, thus arbitrarily traced, some deviation may be necessary; more

especially, since within the assigned limits is situated the important Island of Euboea, almost entirely occupied by a Turkish Population, and which has therefore taken no part in the insurrection (*State Papers*, 17, 87-91).¹

The conference between the allied ambassadors and representatives of the Greeks took place at Poros between September and December 1828 (Lane-Poole 1888: I, 471-82). Whilst it was in progress (16 November 1828), the Allies placed the Morea, the adjoining islands and "those commonly called Cyclades" under their provisional protection (*State Papers* 17, 131). The final report of the Poros Conference, dated 12 December 1828, gave its conclusions on the boundaries of Greece (*State Papers* 17, 405-31). Under the influence of the French Ambassador (Lane-Poole 1888: I, 475), Lt. Col. Comte Armand-Charles Guilleminot (1774-1840), a distinguished soldier and political geographer, they proposed that on the mainland the boundary should run from the Gulf of Arta and the Pass of Makrynoros, in the west, to the chain of Mt Orthrys near the entrance to the Gulf of Volos, in the east. As for the Islands, the conference accepted that the boundaries suggested in the July Protocol included, with the exception of Samos, "all those islands which by virtue of their population, the ownership of property, the part taken in the Insurrection, and their complete lack of Turks, had a right to be part of the Greek state". The report recommended, however, that three other islands should be included: Samos, because it had been independent of the Porte for some eight years; Candia/Crete, because it contained a Greek majority and had suffered like the rest of Greece, and because inclusion within Greece would prevent the Porte from using it as a base for aggression against Greece; Euboea/Evia, because of its position near the proposed frontier. No one commented that the 26th meridian east bisects the island of Chios, notorious then and since for the massacre of Christians in 1822; but then it had remained under Ottoman control throughout the conflict.

A reconvened London Conference accepted the proposals from the Poros Conference (March 1829) with the exception of those about Crete and Samos (Hertslet 1875: no. 142). Samos was duly

¹ The information about Euboea/Evia was incorrect.

returned to the Ottoman Empire, which provided it with a new status. In 1830, Crete was granted to Mehmet Ali of Egypt as a reward for his support against the Greeks.

The Conference's decisions were conveyed to the Porte on 9 July 1829. They were haughtily rebuffed. Instead, the Sultan issued a *firman* offering to pardon his subjects in the Morea and to restore the previous administrative arrangements, but requiring the return of Muslim property and the surrender of the fortresses. This was unacceptable to the Allies, as well as to the Greeks. The Allies continued to pressure the Ottoman government, and on 15 August 1829 it accepted the London proposals, though confining their application to the Morea and the Cyclades (Crawley 1930: 162 and n. 15). The advance of Russian forces to the Aegean coast at Adrianople (Edirne) persuaded them to reconsider. Under Article X of the Treaty of Adrianople (14 September 1829), the Porte finally accepted the terms of the Treaty of London of March 1829 (Hertslet 1875: no. 145).

Independence accepted: a territory defined (1830-35)

By a Protocol of 3 February 1830 (Hertslet 1875: no. 149) Britain, France and Russia declared that Greece was now a totally independent state and that its independence was guaranteed by each Power. They also declared that the form of government would be an hereditary monarchy, an idea which the Allies – themselves monarchies, of course – had favoured for some time and which had even been accepted by Ioannis Capodistrias (1776-1831), who had been elected President of Greece for a term of seven years by the Greek National Assembly on 14 April 1827.² The Protocol offered yet another line for the boundary of Greece. This was an attempt to meet the Ottoman request for a reduction of the frontiers suggested by the Protocol of March 1829 as a *quid pro quo* for the Porte's acceptance of complete independence for Greece (Article 2). The actual line proposed was apparently first suggested by Lord Grey of Reform Bill fame (9 September 1829) as a possible compromise between the

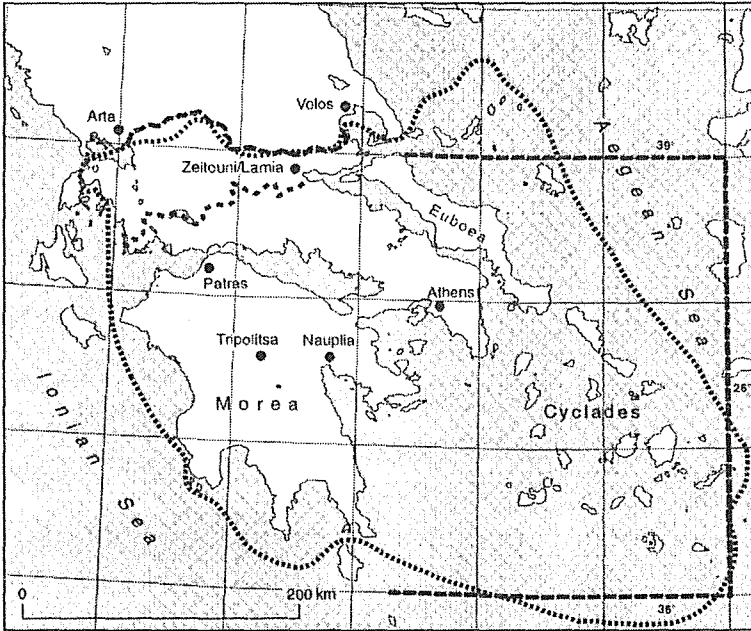
² Capodistrias was a nobleman from Corfu who had served in the government of the Septinsular Republic before joining the Russian diplomatic service, where he had risen to the rank of joint Foreign Secretary (1816-22) with Count Karl Robert Nesselrode.

generous frontiers of the March Protocol favoured by France and Russia and the impossibly narrow boundary of the Morea preferred by the Duke of Wellington (Trevelyan 1920: 229). Demarcation, however, proved impossible when the boundary commissioners set to work on the ground (*State Papers* 18, 633-7). The map used to plot the boundary in February 1830 was shown to be defective. Attempts were made to adjust the original proposals to the actual topography of central Greece, but without success. The Allied Ambassadors to the Porte were therefore asked to renegotiate the Volos to Arta line originally proposed in the Protocol of 22 March, 1829, to include Negroponte (Euboea/Evia) in the new state and to offer an indemnity to the Porte for the further loss of territory and tribute. Negotiations dragged on. Greece – the territory within the new state – lapsed into chaos: the Mani had been in revolt since May 1831; Hydra and Spetsia were demanding huge indemnities for their part in the War of Independence; the Cyclades refused to accept the authority of President Capodistrias, who was in any case opposed by many of the leaders of the original insurrection on the mainland; and on 9 October 1831 Capodistrias was assassinated. Ottoman garrisons remained in Athens and Evia (Crawley 1930: 189-201).

On 7 May 1832 Britain, France and Russia concluded their negotiations with the King of Bavaria for making his second son, Prince Frederick Otto, the King of Greece and guaranteed the independence of the new state (*State Papers* 19, 1831-32, 33-41). Just over two months later the Porte gave in to Allied pressure and accepted the new proposals for the Greek frontier in return for Allied support against a new threat to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Mehmet Ali of Egypt had decided to expand into Syria.

Although the Treaty of Constantinople (21 July 1832) (Hertslet 1875: no. 161) sketched out a new boundary for Greece, the demarcation of a precise line was left to commissioners appointed by Greece and the Ottoman Empire, as well as by Britain, France and Russia. Six months were originally set for this work, but definitive maps could not be exchanged until 9 December 1835 (Crawley 1930: 211 n. 21).

Fig 1: Proposals for the Frontier of Independent Greece



- Frontier Line accepted in 1832
- - - Frontier Line suggested by Lord Grey, 19 September, 1829
- . - . Frontier Line suggested by the Protocol of 22 March, 1829

Conclusion

Eleven years had lapsed since the Russians had made their original proposals; fourteen had passed since the start of the insurrection out of which the Greek state emerged. Throughout this period, Britain, France and Russia had dictated the terms on which the new state would be allowed to exist, even though the precise content of their plans had to change to meet the situation as it developed on the ground and to some extent to meet the interests of the other Great European Powers, the Austrian Empire and – to a smaller degree – Prussia. The Greeks themselves were barely consulted.

In retrospect we can see that, though there were rivalries between the Allies, a number of principles guided their policy-making over “the Greek affair”.

The first principle was a wish to ensure that the rights of sovereigns over their empires were not challenged; the Ottoman Sultan really should be allowed to decide the fate of his Greek-speaking Orthodox subjects. The allies were not entirely successful in this, and by allowing a subject people to form a state based on community identity they opened the way to the breaking up both of the multi-community empires in south-eastern Europe, Austria-Hungary no less than the Ottoman Empire.

The second guiding principle was the preservation of peace in Europe. This was to be achieved by avoiding conflict between the Russian and Ottoman Empires because war between them would inevitably bring in the Austrian Empire, which also shared common frontiers, and effect the political and economic interests of Britain and France in the eastern Mediterranean as well. On the whole, the Allies were successful, at least in preventing a major European war.

In addition to enlightened self-interest, the Allies were guided by concern for the Greeks. They genuinely wished to recognise the success and the sufferings of the insurgents. They were moved partly by humanitarian feelings (horror stories circulated freely in the 1820s), but also by romantic notions of the glories of ancient Greece and the possibility of their being revived. There was also a degree of anti-Turkish, that is anti-Muslim, feeling as well. It was important, then, as a fifth principle to separate the two “peoples”, Greeks and Turks, Christians and Muslims, who could no longer apparently live

with each other. Accordingly, a sixth principle came into play. That was the requirement for defensible frontiers. The attempt to abide by those two principles delayed an agreement on the final boundary between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, though there were practical considerations too.

A final principle was unique to British policy formation. Britain wished to retain her protectorate over the Ionian Islands. This had been established at the Peace Settlement reached at the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1814-15) following the freeing of the Septinsular Republic from French rule by British forces and their continued occupation of the Islands (Hertslet 1875: no. 39). Retention of the Seven Islands, together with Malta, gave Britain control of the strategic seaways of the central Mediterranean. It also provided an ideal listening post. Much of the international mail of the eastern Mediterranean went through the Ionian Islands where it was routinely delayed, opened and read (Chamberlain 1983: 216). British colonial rule lasted until 1864 when the Ionian Islands were transferred to Greece (Hertslet 1875: nos. 357, 358, 361, 369).

Acknowledgement: thanks are due to Lyn Ertl, of the Cartographic Unit, University of Southampton, for drawing the map.

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About the contributors

Ulrich Moennig is Lecturer in Byzantine and Modern Greek Philology at the University of Hamburg. He has held visiting teaching appointments at the Universities of Crete and Cyprus. His main interests are in Byzantine narrative literature and in aspects of education and book-production during the Ottoman period. His PhD thesis is on the late-Byzantine *Alexander Romance* (Cologne: Romiosini 1992), and his most recent work is a monograph on a series of eighteenth-century missionary imprints (*Οι νεοελληνικές εκδόσεις της Typographia Orientalis*), to be published by Ermis in 1999. He is currently preparing an edition of the late-Byzantine romance *The tale of Alexander and Semiramis*.

Birgit Olsen holds a Research Council for the Humanities fellowship in the Department of Folklore at the University of Copenhagen. Her PhD is in the field of late-medieval Greek vernacular literature and her publications are mainly concerned with Greek chapbooks and especially with the Greek *Theseid*. She has also worked on Greek folktales and is co-translator (into Danish) of Alki Zei's novel *Achilles' fiancée*.

Pavlos Tzermias has taught Modern Greek and Byzantine history, language and literature at the Universities of Fribourg (Switzerland) and Zurich. He was Director of the European Cultural Centre at Delphi (1977-9) and political analyst of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* for Greece and Cyprus (1967-95). His research and publications cover a wide spectrum of Greek and Cypriot history and culture. Among his most recent publications is the third edition of his *Geschichte der Republik Zypern* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag 1998). His work has been recognised by awards from the President of the Hellenic Republic and the Academy of Athens.

Malcolm Wagstaff is a Professor of Geography at the University of Southampton. While carrying out his doctoral research on settlement structures in the Mani he was attached to the University of Athens (1962-3), and subsequently held an appointment at the Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Durham. Although he has published in a variety of fields, he has retained a special interest in the historical geography of Greece, particularly in the eighteenth century. His atlas of modern Greek history is in press.