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Kazantzakis's abortive foray into politics in liberated Athens, 1944-46

Peter Bien
Dartmouth College

When Kazantzakis immersed himself in the grit of everyday affairs in Athens in 1944, he was really not abandoning the imaginative life he had led in Aegina during the German occupation; rather, he was acting out the vision that he had created there in his imagination. His "action" during both the occupation years and those immediately following was "imaginative" in so far as in each case it was directed towards an imagined goal in the future. However, there is a significant difference between 1940 to 1944 in his life and 1944 to 1946: his efforts in the first period produced lasting results; his efforts in the second did not.

1940 to 1944 was a period of remarkable literary productivity for him: *Zorba; Buddha*; the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and Dante translations; the *Prometheas* trilogy; *Kapodistrias*; *Konstantinos Palaiologos*. When he emerged from his Olympian isolation in October 1944 and came to Athens, his reputation was at its zenith. Far from being condemned for non-participation in the resistance, he was admired (except of course by extremists of both the right and the left) as a dispassionate philosopher, one who – precisely because he had devoted himself so single-mindedly to the civilized life while civilization all around him was disintegrating – was particularly qualified to play a role in re-establishing civilization now that the Germans had departed. This is the time when he was elected president of the Society of Greek Writers, was proposed for the Academy, nominated for the Nobel Prize, appointed a minister of state, invited to England by the British Council, and accorded the honour of having his play *Kapodistrias* premiered by the National Theatre on Independence Day, 25 March 1946.

But we are moving ahead of our story. When Kazantzakis left his writing and arrived in Athens in October 1944 immediately after liberation, he entered upon the longest sustained period of practical activity in his career. Along with many others, he believed that this was the moment when a new era of justice, concord, and creativity was about to be established.

His activities may be divided into two compartments: "cultural politics" and "party politics". The former occupied him from the very start of his stay in Athens until the very end, whereas the involvement in party politics occupied him only from May 1945 until January 1946, nine months out of a total of twenty. I shall treat the cultural involvement first, proceeding afterwards to Kazantzakis's activities as the founder of a political party and as a minister of state.

Writers in Greece were in particular distress after so many years when normal outlets had been closed to them. One of the very first acts of the George Papandreou government after liberation was its attempt to secure an income for Kazantzakis. The prime minister's plan was to introduce legislation providing that stipends be paid to members of the Academy, and then to see that his friend became a member. The law was duly passed, and before the end of October 1944 it was announced that Kazantzakis had become an Academician by virtue of an "honorary decree". It is hardly surprising that this extraordinary procedure met with so much opposition that it had to be invalidated. Kazantzakis eventually submitted his candidature for the Academy in the normal manner but without success, as we shall see.

Papandreou's next move was a plan to dispatch Kazantzakis, and also Angelos Sikelianos, to the United States. On 3 November 1944 the press announced that the two authors were being sent to help secure funds in aid of reconstruction. The trip never took place; instead, the *Dekemvrianá* took place, and Papandreou's government fell. But, as we shall see, the plan flared up again later. Kazantzakis had formulated detailed plans for a United States Institute of Greek Culture, and hoped to travel to New York to spread the word. "Not just the political and economic situation

but also the intellectual and moral situation is extremely serious in Greece," he wrote to Börje Knös on 14 November 1946; "this Institute would become the battleground for a few exceptionally pure Greeks – writers, artists, scholars – who might stir up on foreign soil the intellectual flame of Greece today."[1] It need hardly be added that neither Kazantzakis's journey nor the proposed institute ever materialized.

All cultural activity was of course halted by the December civil war. Afterwards, Kazantzakis and others tried to take up where they had left off, still believing in the possibility of cultural, political, and economic rebirth. In January 1945, he moved with his partner, Eleni Samiou, to the home of Tea Anemoyanni, which became the site of literary soirées practically every Saturday. There were sometimes as many as sixty individuals who came to "talk about Kazantzakis, or a certain canto in his *Odyssey* or a certain theme in his work, to read extracts from his epic and then comment upon them".[2] The atmosphere apparently also became boisterous on many occasions, with everyone shouting at the same time, each advancing with passion his or her own interpretation of a given passage. As for Kazantzakis, "he was silent, for he liked to see and hear how others understood him."[3] His *Odyssey* was not the only work discussed. Professor Yannis Kakridis came on several occasions and recited from the new Kakridis-Kazantzakis translation of the *Iliad*. In addition, young writers brought their poetry and prose to Kazantzakis, and he would listen to them reading their works, "always with the same patience and goodwill" even when the works were of little value. Mrs Kazantzakis tells us that occasionally one of the younger, "modern" poets would get up in disgust and leave during a recitation from the *Odyssey*. "Nikos," she comments, "respected the repugnance

[1] Eleni N. Kazantzaki, *Le Dissident: biographie de Nikos Kazantzaki* (Paris: Plon 1968), p. 472; cf. Helen Kazantzakis, *Nikos Kazantzakis: a biography based on his letters* (New York: Simon and Schuster 1968), p. 460. (I cite letters from the original Greek or French.)

[2] K. I. Despotopoulos, *Φιλολογικά* (Athens: Fexis 1964), p. 84.

[3] Colette Janiaud-Lust, *Nikos Kazantzaki: sa vie, son œuvre (1893–1957)* (Paris: Maspero 1970), p. 436.

felt by the disciples [of T. S. Eliot] for his epic, which they judged so antimodern. Indeed sometimes it was clear that he enjoyed seeing them jostle him while he opposed them in silence."[4]

It should be clear from all this that Kazantzakis, even for those who felt estranged from his ideas or style, was a great figure, a personality, a kind of impassive god surrounded by incense-burners. Admission to the Academy, this time by the normal procedure of election, was accordingly the first question that he attempted to take up again after the December-January violence. A place fell vacant. Kazantzakis submitted his candidature on 5 March 1945, backed by a bibliography that included five travel books, eight plays (with four more ready to be printed), three philosophical treatises, one epic in verse, two novels in Greek, two novels in French, one literary history, numerous volumes of translations from German, French, English, Spanish, and Italian, one novel for children, countless translations and adaptations of foreign books for children, 174 articles in the Eleftheroudakis Encyclopaedia, and 111 contributions to domestic and foreign periodicals. He was short-listed by the review body for his division and on 18 May was given their highest endorsement. Only two days later, we should note, Kazantzakis announced his entry into politics, and by the end of May had published his political credo, in which he advocated democratic socialism. Two weeks after this, on 15 June, his candidature came before the full body of the Academy. Out of thirty votes cast, he received fifteen. Eighteen votes were required for election; thus he failed by only three votes, and this because the three additional Academicians who had declared themselves for him were unable to participate, one because of illness and two because they were obliged to attend a meeting of the ministerial council at the same hour. I cite these details in order to counteract the repeated assertion that Kazantzakis was always a prophet without honour in his own country. On the contrary, it is clear that even in this period when the hatreds formed in the initial engagements of the

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[4] Eleni N. Kazantzaki, *Νίκος Καζαντζάκης, ο ασυμβίβαστος* (Athens 1977), p. 502; cf. Helen Kazantzakis, *Biography*, p. 427.

civil war were fresh, and when Kazantzakis had publicly declared himself a socialist, his prestige as a thinker and creative artist was still so high that, but for the unfortunate absence of three supporters, he would have been accorded Greece's highest public honour.

In the spring of 1945, he was appointed by the new prime minister, Admiral Petros Voulgaris, to serve on a four-man committee charged with verifying the German atrocities in Crete. Each of the four men was instructed to pick up a new second-hand suit from UNRRA so that he would not look so shabby, plus some first-aid supplies from the Red Cross. What the committee members saw in their forty days in Crete was horrible, yet paradoxically encouraging because, along with grim accounts of mass executions, entire families and villages being taken hostage and exterminated, there was repeated evidence of Cretan nobility. "I expected to hear weeping and to see hands stretched out begging for help," Kazantzakis wrote afterwards. "And I found unsubdued, unyielding souls, and half-naked, famished bodies that were unbending [...]. Truly, the Cretans love life passionately, but at the same time never fear death [...]. Like all brave souls, the Cretans find deliverance at the extremity of despair [...]. What strength and endurance this is, I reflected. Where do these bodies find so much soul?"[5] I cite this statement because the chief importance of Kazantzakis's experience in Crete seems to have been an artistic one. His renewed admiration for the peasantry, coupled with experiences during the occupation that enabled this admiration to be truly felt and not just another "big idea", effected a remarkable alteration in his style of writing.

Kazantzakis departed Crete on 6 August 1945. Although evidence for his cultural activities from August through November is lacking, the plan to send him to America with Sikelianos must still have been alive because on 11 November 1945 an extraordinary thing happened: Kazantzakis got married! Mrs Kazantzakis has explained that although she and Kazantzakis had lived together for

[5] Nikos Kazantzakis, "Η Κρήτη", *Νέα Εστία* 66 (Christmas 1959) 39.

eighteen years without the need of any ceremony, it was now decided to legitimatize the relationship so that she could accompany him to the United States without undue complications. Two weeks later the government of Themistocles Sofoulis was established and Kazantzakis was sworn in (on 26 November) as minister without portfolio. At the back of Sofoulis's mind was the desire "to send Nikos to the United States, Mexico, and England to plead the cause of reconstruction".[6] This plan for a mission abroad was duly announced by the press on the next day in its coverage of Kazantzakis's appointment. Within hours he was in the thick of things, for only a day or so later he was writing to Eleni Samiou (now Mrs Kazantzakis): "Impossible to describe how tired I get and how much I suffer. Everyone is pouncing on me to get a position."[7] He seems to have assumed various duties, but the chief one was still to prepare for the mission abroad, which meant choosing colleagues. Although everyone was after him to get a position, at the same time he was collecting "material for America – essays, articles, photographs, films of the famine, etc. [...] Thousands of high society types are asking to go [he continued in his letter] [...]. Many people want to become Academicians [...]. They want medals, awards, positions, missions, and they rush about burdening me with their hopes and desires [...]. It's a heavy thing to have to live with human beings [...]."[8]

The mission to America never materialized. However, Kazantzakis continued to be a factor in Greece's cultural politics, even if unwittingly, because of the furore aroused over his play *Kapodistrias,* premiered on 25 March 1946, and withdrawn a month later owing to vitriolic condemnation by the right-wing press, not to mention the threat by a certain general who showed up at various ministries promising to rally the Maniots to burn down the National Theatre because the play touched his family esteem! Kazantzakis weathered this, remaining in Athens even after the

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[6] Helen Kazantzakis, *Biography*, p. 432.
[7] Ibid., p. 433.
[8] Eleni Kazantzaki, *Ασυμβίβαστος*, p. 509; cf. Helen Kazantzakis, *Biography*, pp. 433-4.

elections of 31 March gave power to the royalists, apparently still hoping to play some active role in his nation's cultural revival. We learn from Professor Peter Topping's (unpublished) diary that Kazantzakis and Emmanuel Hourmouzios were trying to bring into existence "a new organization to give impulse to the arts, with theatre being the basic thing but no discipline to be ignored". They hoped to see a corresponding organization established in the United States. Professor Topping, who, together with Kazantzakis, the theatrical director Karolos Koun, and others, attended organizational meetings on 11 and 13 April 1946, fortunately recorded some of the details:

> Kazantzakis explained the men involved must be good, optimistic – no one with misgivings or doubts should be part of the nucleus either in Greece or abroad. Money needed – a substantial amount. Faith and brains not enough. "Το χρήμα γίνεται πνεύμα" [money turns into spirit]. The men of the nucleus must have both φλόγα and μυαλά, [ardour and brains], a rare combination. There are plenty of people (Kaz. went on) with brains in Greece, good writers and artists [...]. Greece is small, unimportant politically and economically. Her only contribution can be intellectual and spiritual [...]. (A little breathtaking to hear the group talking about a renaissance of the arts and the spirit.) Half a dozen outstanding men working together, Kaz. and Hourmouzios agree, can create a renaissance [...].

Peter Topping's diary speaks for itself. It makes us realize more intensely than ever the full tragedy for Greece of that sharp political division between left and right that forced people like Kazantzakis to live abroad, and made them "traitors" in the eyes of the ill-informed.

But we still have not reached that point. Although the royalists were now in office and were preparing the way for the king's return, Kazantzakis still enjoyed not only prestige but also official recognition, albeit from quarters other than the Greek government. The British Council arranged for him to visit England as a cultural V.I.P. The invitation came at the end of April, shortly after Kazantzakis had returned with relief to Aegina. He left in June

1946 – for good. Meanwhile, however, the esteem accorded him did not wane; despite his residence in Aegina he continued to play a public role in Greek cultural life. President now of the Society of Greek Writers, in this capacity he presided at the official celebration to honour the French surrealist poet, communist, and hero of the resistance, Paul Eluard. This celebration took place on 26 May 1946 in the Attiko Theatre before a huge audience. Kazantzakis's speech of welcome is of interest to us because it treats the relation between art and politics. Here is some of the text:

> [...] In our age, the poet no longer suffices [...].
> Poets step out in front and sow words. But today these words must be filled with explosive matter. Anaemic intellectuals are afraid; they think that freedom can come one lovely morning like the springtime, without violence [...].
> [...] the poet who remains above the fray is performing a disgraceful act.[9]

Should we accuse Kazantzakis of hypocrisy? He had just completed what he felt was a successful political intervention as a democratic (i.e. non-violent) socialist. There is no doubt where the Greek democratic socialists stood regarding the question of means. Yet in the speech welcoming Eluard, we find him scorning "anaemic intellectuals" for their belief that freedom can be achieved without violence. Whether this is hypocrisy or simply the pull of rhetoric one must decide for oneself. I will try to defend Kazantzakis against this charge because there is evidence that when he was not shunted off-centre by enthusiasm, the glamour of the podium, or personal discouragement, he avoided extreme views. For example, in a letter written in October 1947, while he was in Paris, he states, "Here the two camps are organizing themselves, extreme right and extreme left. The middle road, the correct one, has been lost."[10] All his life Kazantzakis resisted a narrow concept of political commitment, while he maintained at

[9] *Νέα Εστία* 39 (15 April 1945) 493.
[10] Helen Kazantzakis, *Biography*, p. 472.

the same time that art must not be autonomous. Occasional statements such as in the Eluard introduction are not the best reflection of this complicated position; the novels are.

I began this discussion of the Eluard introduction as a way of showing the esteem accorded to Kazantzakis (although not by the far right, of course) even after the elections of 31 March, and the role that he continued to play in Athenian cultural life despite his return to Aegina. The next cultural event in his life – and the final one before his departure for England – was his candidacy for the Nobel Prize.

On 30 April 1946, the governing board of the Society of Greek Writers had decided to nominate Angelos Sikelianos for this honour. Kazantzakis, the society's president, had applauded this decision. After this, however, various people close to Kazantzakis lodged complaints, saying that the candidacy should be a joint one. Kazantzakis, obviously placed in an embarrassing position, and not wishing to diminish Sikelianos's chances, examined the problem carefully. According to Mrs Kazantzakis:

> [...] Nikos and his friends had studied the statutes of the Nobel Prize; they saw [...] that sometimes it was divided in two [...]. Each nation submitted 4-5 names [...].
> [...] he went to ask Sikelianos himself if he agreed that they should seek the prize together. Angelos was very pleased: "I shall set my crown upon your head and you shall set your crown upon my head."[11]

As a result, the governing board at its meeting of 27 May resolved after heated debate to submit Kazantzakis's name as well. It is hardly surprising that this caused a great amount of controversy. We already know that a campaign of vilification by rightist newspapers had been launched against Kazantzakis owing to the National Theatre's mounting of *Kapodistrias*. In addition to the expected vilification from the right came a campaign by certain of

[11] Eleni Kazantzaki, *Ασυμβίβαστος*, pp. 516–517; cf. Helen Kazantzakis, *Biography*, p. 438.

Sikelianos's friends, who accused Kazantzakis of undermining Sikelianos's chances in order to promote his own. This propaganda apparently influenced Sikelianos himself to turn against Kazantzakis and to try to dissolve the joint candidacy. There is no doubt that Kazantzakis wanted the Nobel Prize desperately, not only for Greece's honour but for his own, and it is clear that he left no stone unturned in his attempt to contact important personalities who might be influential in his behalf. But there is no doubt, as well, that Kazantzakis sincerely desired to share the prize with Sikelianos. In the event, of course, neither was successful, nor was Greece honoured in this way until the award went to George Seferis in 1963.

* * *

Kazantzakis's involvement in cultural politics lasted, as we have seen, from the moment he arrived in Athens until the moment he left that city. The plunge into *party* politics, something we must now consider, was not in his plans when he departed for Athens immediately after liberation; it was forced upon him by the turn of events, and grew directly out of the literary soirées held each Saturday at Tea Anemoyanni's home. The total duration of this plunge, less than a year, was long enough to teach Kazantzakis that he should never involve himself in such a way again.

The basic cause was the right wing's labelling of EAM (the National Liberation Front) as communist. This led certain moderate socialists who had formerly cooperated with EAM to form a new party that advocated a socialist economy as the solution to Greece's problems, but determined to reach that solution through parliamentary means, not through violence. Led by Professor Alexandros Svolos, this group was small, powerless, and weakened by its own factionalism. Kazantzakis's hope was to make democratic socialism a viable third force by overcoming this factionalism thanks to a pan-socialist congress.

The original idea and many of the original members of the new movement came, as I have said, from Tea Anemoyanni's

literary soirées. In early May 1945, the decision was taken at one of these meetings to found a new socialist party and to work for such a congress. After several additional gatherings at Anemoyianni's home, more than one hundred members of various socialist parties, coming from all areas of Greece and representing all classes of society, met on 20 May in order to select a central committee charged with making the proposed congress a reality. Kazantzakis was elected chairman of this committee. On the same day, he drafted a statement meant to allay fears that the newly formed group was unpatriotic:

> From its very nature, the socialist ideology is universal and the aims of a Socialist Party embrace the full human family, independent of racial, religious, and ethnic differences. However, this does not mean that the Socialist Party sacrifices national rights on the pretext of socialism's international aims.[12]

His next move was to make the necessary announcements in the press, proclaiming the aims of the new party together with his own political credo. This he accomplished by means of a front-page interview on 29 and 30 May in the right-wing newspaper *Akropolis*. The interview occasioned an ominous leading article signed "M" under the headline "A hermit", which begins by hailing Kazantzakis as a "great philosopher" whose international reputation is assured. All these years, "M" continues, Kazantzakis has renounced the world, preferring to live on Aegina in his own little world of books. Why is he suddenly giving all this up? The answers, he says, can be found in today's interview – whereupon "M" proceeds to attack Kazantzakis's statement as just empty words that ignore the country's real problems. In conclusion, he predicts that the hermit will soon find politics very discouraging and dirty, will fail in his objectives, and become embittered. "One day the poet will discover how unpleasant politics are, how evil human beings are, and he will leave once again for his island."

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[12] Nikos D. Pouliopoulos, "Η πολιτική φυσιογνωμία του Νίκου Καζαντζάκη", *Καινούρια Εποχή* (Autumn 1958) 285.

We should remember this prediction when we find Kazantzakis back in Aegina eleven months later, sighing "How did I ever bring myself to leave, and why?"

In the interview, Kazantzakis analyses Greece's problems, outlines a solution, and concludes with his own responsibilities as an intellectual. He begins with a clear declaration:

> Only socialism as the goal and democracy as the means will be able to provide a satisfactory and equitable solution to the terrible, frightfully urgent problems of the age in which we are living.

He then challenges the various socialist factions to surpass their bickering and to unite. To achieve this purpose, he calls for a socialist congress. At the end he speaks about his own role:

> I felt that an intellectual person, one who never involved himself in politics, has the right – and not only the right, but the obligation – to speak his mind like everyone else in a time of crisis, to intervene just as others do, and to assume responsibilities [...]. If I hadn't done this, I would have been a deserter.[13]

Kazantzakis launched his intervention at a particularly dramatic moment, for 30 May 1945 was also the day when Nikos Zachariades, the leader of the Greek communist party, returned to Athens after having been found in Dachau by Allied troops. The very next day, *Rizospastis*, the communist newspaper, printed Zachariades's call for the establishment of a People's Democracy in Greece, convincing many Greeks that the only choice was between communism and monarchy. This was the atmosphere in which Kazantzakis's group began to function. Its first bulletin was dated 15 June. It contained the party's platform, expanded by Kazantzakis from previous statements and signed by 852 supporters. It also contained the following words of appreciation for

[13] Thanasis Papathanasopoulos, *Γύρω στον Καζαντζάκη* (Athens 1985), p. 68.

Kazantzakis's involvement:

> The "Bulletin" believes that it is expressing the pleasure of the pioneering forces of the Greek people in hailing the recruitment of the great European thinker Nikos Kazantzakis to the militant camp of Socialism and Democracy. His decision to enter the arena of ideological struggle at this critical time when the nation is fighting to find its salvation, and to join his forces with socialistic forces [...] shows his great ethical stature and his sincere intellectual intention. He did not weigh the practical personal benefits in order to decide. He did not calculate which party was the most certain to be insured against the danger of failure. He was not an opportunist or self-seeking schemer like most of the Greek thinkers who involved themselves in politics in the past. He simply listened to the voice of his heart and, disregarding the danger, threw himself completely into the great obligation. Socialism and Democracy are gaining a Great Comrade at this moment and Nikos Kazantzakis is gaining the admiration and love of the pioneering forces of the Greek people.[14]

Shortly afterwards, the committee established an actual political party called the Σοσιαλιστική Εργατική Ένωση (S.E.E.; Socialist Workers' Union). In due course the party published a manifesto written not by Kazantzakis, as was commonly supposed, but by its secretary-general, Angelos Prokopiou. The main long-term goal remained the convocation of the pan-socialist congress as a means of uniting all socialist factions. Kazantzakis had left Athens at the end of June, we remember, in order to verify the atrocities committed by the Germans in Crete. By 7 August he was back in the capital; a week later the cadres of the new party met in caucus in order to map out their future actions. The first item on the agenda was an address by Kazantzakis in his capacity as president of the S.E.E. In this, he attempted to summarize where the party stood – that is, its accomplishments to date, and the next steps needed:

[14] Pouliopoulos, "Η πολιτική φυσιογνωμία", p. 286.

Dear comrades and friends,

Our meeting tonight is crucial; this meeting of ours can and must constitute a creative milestone, not just for the initiative that we have undertaken, to unite the socialist forces of our land, but also for Greece's entire political life.

Remember that at the start, and even just a few months ago, we were few and weak. We applied to exalted personalities [...]. All of these personalities hesitated, lost their nerve, and in the end refused. They did not know if our efforts were destined to succeed, and they did not accept to endanger their moral capital by placing it in an uncertain enterprise. We applied to organized socialistic groups. Some refused openly and objected, others held their accession in reserve, waiting – they, too – to see first if our energies would be fruitful.

The fruit came more quickly than even we ourselves had expected. People from every social class, unorganized socialists, souls saddened by our troubled, anarchic homeland, joined our side without reservation [...]. That which the purest and most enlightened Greeks had craved for years, they found suddenly now in the extremely clear and simple slogan that we were giving: "Socialists of Greece entire, unite!" [...]

What we sought a few months ago with such opposition, such pain, and such ardour, is being realized in these days [...].

This success is owing to two fundamental factors:

1) Our purity. We did not set out to form a political party; we did not condescend to work in order to gratify personal ambitions. In epochs that are immoral and out of joint, as is this age when the capitalistic world is disintegrating, there is no weapon stronger and more effectual than purity, and that is what we have.

2) We succeeded, in addition, because our effort was a widespread, objective need. We did nothing but formulate with clear, practical words what the most enlightened [...] socialists in Greece desired: to unite [...].

The first step is finished. Tonight we are calling on you, all together, united, to effectuate the second step. This day can and must become historic. It depends upon us. From the decisions that we will make tonight, a new situation may be created, the beginning of a new, superior political life in our land [...].

> We are living in a great, critical time; let us appear worthy of it.[15]

The important thing to realize is that Kazantzakis and others of the moderate left were still hopeful, indeed enthusiastic. If we smile condescendingly (and from hindsight) at their naïveté, we must on the other hand admire their resilience.

The Voulgaris government fell on 9 October, inaugurating a period of chaos. It was in the midst of this that Kazantzakis, still hoping to be sent to the United States, finally married Eleni Samiou. On 13 November, two days after the wedding, the British envoy Hector McNeil began effecting the "bloodless coup" that led to Sofoulis's coalition government, a turn in events that initiated the next stage in Kazantzakis's political involvement. Sofoulis wished to bring about an atmosphere wherein free elections could take place. His attempt to rehabilitate EAM was meant to be a step in this direction; so was his invitation to the democratic socialists to join his government. Kazantzakis, as president of S.E.E., was invited into the government as minister without portfolio. This was not without opposition. Professor Svolos stood against his decision to accept, and eventually put pressure on him to resign. Pressure was also apparently applied to prevent Kazantzakis from being given the ministry of education, as had been announced in the evening papers the day the government was to be formed. In any case, he was sworn in as minister without portfolio on 26 November and began work immediately.

It is hard to know exactly what Kazantzakis's assignment was supposed to be. The newspapers of 27 November note that he was slated for a mission outside of Greece. We know that this trip abroad did not materialize, although Kazantzakis had at first occupied himself in preparing for it. Beyond this, we have his own testimony, already cited, of how he was pounced upon by self-seekers desiring awards, medals, positions. We possess as well the testimony of one of Kazantzakis's fellow ministers that he worked

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[15] Pandelis Prevelakis, *Τετρακόσια γράμματα του Καζαντζάκη στον Πρεβελάκη* (Athens: Galaxias 1965), pp. 523-6.

"with ardent zeal on the ministerial council, which [...] was attempting with unimaginable labour to rebuild the ruined State".[16] As the weeks went by, however, Kazantzakis's precise role in the government must have become more anomalous, for we hear that by the time he was called upon to resign he had become thoroughly discouraged with a position that did not permit him to accomplish anything, since Sofoulis had not assigned him any area of jurisdiction.

We must remember that Kazantzakis's tenure as minister was exceedingly short – only forty-six days. It seems clear that, once the proposed journey abroad was cancelled, his prime task was to use his governmental position to help bring about the pan-socialist congress. This was duly convened in the first week of January 1946.

At the congress, the greater proportion of socialists in Greece did unite into a single coalition, which of course brought about the dissolution of S.E.E. The question that remained was: What should be done with Kazantzakis? Professor Svolos had been elected president by the congress; his followers were the dominant group. Accordingly, the congress proposed to Kazantzakis that he resign. This proposal he accepted readily. Svolos then suggested that Kazantzakis be elected to the new central committee "by acclamation" (as opposed to the secret balloting required for other members). This was done, and Kazantzakis therefore found himself not only without a party but also without any real position except one that needs to be termed "honorary". The official announcement of his resignation as minister came in due course, on 11 January. It was promulgated to the public the following day by the newspaper *Makhi* in a long article under huge headlines and complete with a photo of Kazantzakis holding his pipe and looking extremely gaunt behind his horn-rimmed spectacles. In his letter of resignation to Sofoulis, he stated that he had intervened initially in politics for one and only one reason: to help

[16] Yeoryios Athanasiadis-Novas, "Νίκος Καζαντζάκης: Η πολιτική και ο πνευματικός άνθρωπος — Η Ακαδημία", *Νέα Εστία* 66 (Christmas 1959) 61.

unite the various socialist parties, because "I had and have the unshakeable conviction that the historic moment for the socialist idea has arrived [...]."[17] This purpose having been achieved, he now wished at long last to release himself from party ranks; furthermore, lest it be thought that he was taking personal advantage of his former activity, he wished as well to leave the ministry and to return to his true climate: solitude.

With this, Kazantzakis's party activism (as opposed to cultural activism) came to an end, for although he was now on the central committee of the new coalition, he did not take part in its deliberations and eventually requested to be "excused".

Kazantzakis's willing and hasty resignation after only forty-six days as minister has been interpreted (as one might have expected) in conflicting ways. A colleague took Kazantzakis's own statement at face value and commented enthusiastically:

> Which of the political figures of present-day Greece [1958] would remain so faithful and consistent to the line he had declared, and would give up his ministerial post without the slightest objection?
>
> Kazantzakis's attitude should constitute a model of political behaviour and an exemplary basis for the rebirth of our political life, which has entered a period of complete moral decadence.[18]

This is fine so far as it goes. But it is clear that Kazantzakis did not resign solely because he wished to remain faithful and consistent to the line he had declared. Kazantzakis's most persistent detractors insist that he resigned because here, as elsewhere in his career, he refused to occupy a subordinate position: if he could not be president or director he would always withdraw completely. Nikiforos Vrettakos, who is generally sympathetic to Kazantzakis and whose criticisms therefore carry more weight, sees in the entire episode one more example of Kazantzakis's self-deceiving

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[17] Photo and French translation in Georges Stassinakis (ed.), *Le Regard crétois*, no. 26 (Décembre 2002) 2-3.

[18] Pouliopoulos, "Η πολιτική φυσιογνωμία", p. 283.

ability to view himself as a social reformer, and his tendency to withdraw at the first setback, after he could no longer fool himself about the unimportant, infinitesimal position held by the socialists, even following their unification.

There is presumably some truth in all of these assertions; chiefly, however, it would seem to me that Kazantzakis resigned (a) out of a sense of relief because he had accomplished a limited objective, joined paradoxically to (b) a simultaneous sense of frustration and wearied disgust because he knew that his long-range goals – the goals conceived by the imagination – were completely out of reach. The relief, at any rate, is indisputable. I. M. Panayiotopoulos remembers meeting Kazantzakis opposite the National Gardens on 11 January:

> He was walking with rapid steps, like a child. I hadn't seen him so cheerful for a long time. "I have just this minute handed in my resignation," he told me, "and I feel terribly free. It's as though I'd had a lengthy illness and were now beginning my recovery."[19]

His experience in party politics – eight months in all – was a kind of Karaghiozis drama in which the visionary hermit of Aegina projected his shadow onto the screen of public life – or, if one wishes a more Western analogy, tilted against windmills. The truth, of course, was that Kazantzakis's party was powerless, that the socialists as a whole were powerless as well, and that the country was moving inexorably towards renewed civil war. For years Kazantzakis had craved one more chance to "stretch blue-eyed Idea down / on earth like a chaste bride and fill her full of seed" (*Odyssey* XIV.1378-9) – to build his City just as his Odysseas had done, even though he knew all too well what the end would necessarily be. Now, chastened not only by his experiences in politics but also by the fate of *Kapodistrias* on the stage, he returned to boundless solitude, his true climate, bringing

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[19] I. M. Panayiotopoulos, "Ο ένας Καζαντζάκης, ο ταξιδιώτης", *Καινούρια Εποχή* (Autumn 1958) 142.

another cycle of his life to a close and fulfilling the rather malicious yet perceptive prediction made by "M" when Kazantzakis had first published his political credo eleven months earlier: "One day the poet will discover how unpleasant politics are, how evil human beings are, and he will leave once again for his island." Thus the following letter to Prevelakis from Aegina:

> Paradise, April 28, 1946
>
> Dear Brother,
>
> [...] Paradise here. How did I ever bring myself to leave, and why? As soon as I arrived, I began to work: *Constantine Palaiologos* [...]
>
> Sunshine, the sea, solitude [...].[20]

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[20] Prevelakis, *Τετρακόσια γράμματα*, p. 527.

Aspects of the Hellenization of Greek Macedonia, ca. 1912-ca. 1959

Philip Carabott
King's College London

Introduction

When in autumn 1991 the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia voted to secede from the Yugoslav Federation and establish the independent Republic of Macedonia, few among the international community could have predicted the wave of nationalist outcry that began to sweep throughout Greece proper and the Diaspora from North America to Australia. Employing a wide array of unambiguous religious and cultural symbols as well as teleological slogans ("Macedonia was, is and always will be Greek!", "Macedonian history is Greek history!", "Real Macedonians are Greek!"), nationally-minded demonstrators sought to assert the Greekness of Macedonia from time "im-memorial", while condemning the so-called "Skopians", itself a derisive appellation, as vile usurpers of "History". Admittedly, such unequivocal public manifestations were partly underpinned by the unspoken assumption that the national character of late twentieth-century Greek Macedonia had only been attained after much toil, hardship, and blood.

An underdeveloped, though potentially profitable, region with a record of ethnonational competition and strife, its variegated Ottoman past, comprising a rich ethnic tapestry of Greeks, Muslims, Sephardic Jews, Southern Slavs, and Vlachs, had been eroded by the late 1950s. This was partly due to significant population movements in the first three decades of the twentieth century, as well as the carnage of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, two world wars and the Greek Civil War of the 1940s. But it also came about as a result of state-propagated nationalizing strategies

and operations. Indeed, like many a modern centralizing state with newly-acquired lands, in the second decade of the twentieth century Greece embarked in earnest on a course of Hellenization/homogenization.

In what follows, both these terms are understood to refer to a series of interrelated processes designed to reconfigure political authority in all its dimensions along "national lines" by promoting, *inter alia*, the language, culture and demographic position "of the nominally state-bearing nation".[1] Over and above the integration into the host society of ethnic-kin population groups that flocked into the country between 1912 and the aftermath of the 1923 Greco-Turkish compulsory exchange of populations, homogenization also purported to integrate, assimilate and/or neutralize heteroreligious (αλλόθρησκες) and heterolingual (αλλόγλωσσες) groups, predominantly those residing in "sensitive" border areas and claimed by neighbouring states as unredeemed brethren.

Throughout the long nineteenth century, Greek perceptions of and practices vis-à-vis such – relatively – numerically small groups domiciled in the kingdom were grounded on the predominance of nationhood/ethnic descent over citizenship – a trend also manifested in other nascent Balkan state entities. As the state expanded, *jus soli* (territory law) gave way to *jus sanguinis* (blood law) as the basic determinant of national identity – a development that underscored the incompatibility of the "national" with the "alien". Concurrently, the reconfiguration of political authority along "national lines" evidenced the uneasiness, if not inability, of the dominant ethnic group at the local level to accept in its midst and live side by side with the religious "other". The massive Muslim exodus from former Ottoman Thessaly, following the region's cession in 1881, and the Corfu pogrom of 1891 heralded, at an official level, the beginning of a new era in relations with most heteroreligious and heterolingual groups. Both gradually came to be considered as hovering on the very margins of the

[1] Brubaker 1995: 107.

national community, their status as citizens notwithstanding.[2] As "Old Greece" gave way to "Greater Greece" relations were strained further, compounded by the incorporation in the "commonwealth" of more old "others" as well as new ones – only, this time around, unmistakably of the "ethnic variety". And it would not be long before they came to be perceived as constituting distinct components of the "enemy from within".

Admittedly, nowhere else was the process of homogenization more appositely demonstrated than in the lands that came to constitute Greek Macedonia in the post-1912 period. In what follows, I seek to trace the fortunes of the most important, in terms of intrastate and interstate relations, and most numerous heterolingual group of the country, the Slav-speakers of Greek Macedonia, as the backdrop for discussing aspects of the region's Hellenization.

Hellenizing Greek Macedonia

The Hellenization of parts of Ottoman Macedonia had begun in earnest in the 1870s. Defined by the doyen of Greek historiography Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos as the "spreading of the Greek language to foreign [ξενικούς] people and [...] their infusion [εγχάραξη] with the national character of the Greeks",[3] it was precipitated by the establishment of an independent Bulgarian Church in 1870; this was a development that carried the potential of substantially diminishing the allure of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, an instrumental pillar of the "national community", among non-Greek-speakers, and turning the Exarchate into a potent vehicle of Bulgarian nationalism. It was also underscored by the belated inclusion of Macedonia as an important constituent part of the narrative on Hellenism. According to the new official nationalist discourse, the region had always been "Greek" from the days of Philip the Macedon and Alexander the Great down to Late Antiquity, until the "barbaric" invasions of the seventh century, when its Greek-speakers began

[2] See Carabott 2005.

[3] Cited in Sigalas 2001: 7.

to be linguistically "de-Hellenized", though retaining their "Greek national consciousness".[4]

Such a Renanian reasoning was a constant in Greek nationalist thinking and practice – though, significantly, only with regard to as yet unredeemed Christian non-Greek-speaking communities. For example, on the eve of the Paris Peace Conference in late 1918, Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, laying claim on southern Albania (northern Epirus), with a population of some 120,000 "Greeks" and 80,000 "Albanians" according to his estimates, maintained that:

> One may be tempted to raise the objection that a substantial portion of this Greek population has Albanian as its mother tongue, and is consequently, in all probability, of Albanian origin; but the democratic conceptions of the Allied and Associated Powers cannot admit of any other criterion than that of national consciousness. Only the Teutonic conception could prefer the criterion of race or of language. Notwithstanding that the majority of them speak Albanian, the Greeks in Northern Epirus have formed part of the Greek family for centuries, long before the foundation of the Kingdom of Greece.[5]

A year later, offering its "observations" to Sofia's response on Greek territorial claims, Athens was even more unequivocal when arguing that:

> Le principe que le Gouvernement Hellénique, et avec lui l'Hellénisme tout entier, met à la base de la nationalité n'est autre que celui qui a été dégage par Ernest Renan et adopté depuis lors par la science politique de tous les pays civilisés, à savoir: la *conscience nationale.*
>
> La religion, la race, la langue ne sauraient être considérés comme des indices certains de la nationalité. Le seul facteur infaillible est le conscience nationale, c'est-à-dire la volonté

[4] Exertzoglou 1999: 79-81.
[5] Venizelos 1919: 2-3.

> réfléchie des individus de déterminer leur sort et de décider à quelle famille nationale il leur convient d'appartenir.[6]

Thus, consciousness was elevated to "a primordial quasi-metaphysical sentiment" that could be (and was) shared by non-Greek-speakers.[7] As the president of the aptly-named nationalist association "Hellenism" and dean of the University of Athens, Neoklis Kazazis, put it in 1907:

> National consciousness in Macedonia is pre-eminently Greek [...]. National consciousness [...] cannot be taught, it cannot be imposed by coercion, by material force, it cannot be bought off. It is an inherent, mysterious [...] feeling.[8]

Critics were quick to point out that, in claiming Ottoman Macedonia for themselves, the Greeks:

> are before all else legitimists. The Bulgarian will assert that in point of fact the Macedonians are Slavs. The Greek takes higher ground. His mind moves among abstractions. He talks not of Greeks, but of Hellenism, not of fact, but of right. That Hellenism has a right to Macedonia is his thesis, and he is never at a loss for an argument.[9]

Either way, by the end of the 1890s Ottoman Macedonia had become the focal battleground of at least four antagonistic state nationalisms. Athens, Sofia and, to a lesser extent, Belgrade coveted the Greek- and – more numerous – Slav-speaking Orthodox Christian element; Athens and Bucharest fought for the allegiance of Vlach-speakers; Albanian nationalists for that of both Christian and Muslim Albanian ones; while another – as yet non-state-identifiable nationalistic movement – sought the loyalty of all indigenous inhabitants under the motto "Macedonia for the Macedonians", though it increasingly fell under the spell of Sofia.

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[6] Délégation Hellénique 1919: 20 (emphasis in the original).
[7] Exertzoglou 1999: 81-2.
[8] Kazazis 1992: 413.
[9] Brailsford 1906: 194.

In what came to be called in Greek discourse the Μακεδονικός Αγώνας (Macedonian Struggle), Athens sought, first through ecclesiastical and educational means and then, in the 1900s, through armed violence, to mould the identity of Orthodox Christian Macedonians (Greek, Slav and Vlach speakers alike) in its own national image in a bid "to incorporate local ethnic groups" into its "imagined community".[10] This was an undertaking of some magnitude, not only because it took place in the face of a fierce religious and ethnonational strife or because it was carried out in the Ottoman "commonwealth"; or even because expectations often exceeded what was realistically possible on the basis of available resources, the Great Powers' equivocal stance, and the lack of potential ethnic homogeneity even in areas where the Greek-speaking element seemed to prevail. The enormity of the task in hand was augmented by the fact that it aimed not solely at making "Greeks" out of illiterate and parochial, often non-Greek-speaking, peasants but also at deterring these same people from becoming "Bulgarians", by turning to the Exarchate, or "Serbs" or "Macedonians". And all this, at a time when at least some of the "targets" of the competing "-ization" enterprises either crossed the divide and aligned themselves with the erstwhile enemy or, on occasion, chose not to take sides; a not uncommon phenomenon that compelled a "witty French consul" in the region to exaggeratedly "declare that with a fund of a million francs he would undertake to make all Macedonian French", by teaching them that "they are the descendants of the French crusaders who conquered Salonica in the twelfth century[;] the francs would do the rest".[11]

This fluctuation propelled Greek diplomats and nationalists to invent the term "ρευστή εθνική συνείδηση" (fluid national consciousness) in an "attempt to grasp a non-national reality, an order of things quite unthinkable within a nationally-oriented understanding of things".[12] Understandably, perhaps, when eventually

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[10] Kitromilides 1990: 43.
[11] Brailsford 1906: 103.
[12] Exertzoglou 1999: 88 (n. 8).

some of the alleged practitioners of such a "non-national reality" found themselves – or chose to remain – on the "wrong" side of "national" borders in the 1920s, following the partition of Ottoman Macedonia and in the aftermath of the exchange of populations, the Greek authorities could not but look upon them, as well as the committed "Schismatics" (the followers of the Exarchate), as an element alien and inimical to the national community; a constituent part of the "scourge" that, according to the then Metropolitan of Corinth (and future Archbishop of Athens and All Greece), was poised to "overthrow the existing order of things".[13]

The Μακεδονικός Αγώνας, in many respects a conflict of attrition, and the Second Balkan War of summer 1913 provided the catalyst for the crystallization of the notion of the "rival Slav in whom", as a seasoned British diplomat had recalled in 1905, "far more than in their ancient oppressor the Turk, the Hellenes [have] long come to see their most dangerous enemy".[14] In the process, the Bulgarian "race", which "like no other one in the whole world, hated and hates Hellenism",[15] was elevated to the enemy *par excellence*. "At last! After seven centuries [sic], the God of Greece made it possible for the Greek fist to re-acquaint itself with the Bulgarian Tatarian scull",[16] exclaimed the author of a book appropriately titled *Οι αιώνιοι εχθροί μας Βούλγαροι* (Our perennial enemies the Bulgarians). As evidenced in soldiers' letters from the front published in the Greek press, wherein the newly-crowned King Constantine was accorded the title "Bulgaroctonus",[17] such discourse had filtered down to the rank and file. At the same time, contemporary "popular posters"

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[13] AEV 251: Damaskinos to Venizelos (16 August 1931).
[14] Rumbold 1905: 41.
[15] Cited in Skopetea n.d.: 15
[16] Cited in Skopetea n.d.: 21.
[17] Papapoliviou 1999: 47.

depicted the Greek soldier as Βουλγαροφάγος (Bulgar-eater)[18], and were adorned with inciting verses such as:

> The sea of fire which boils in my breast
> and calls for vengeance with the savage waves of my soul,
> will be quenched when the monsters of Sofia are still,
> and thy life blood extinguishes my hate.[19]

As the 1913 Carnegie Endowment inquiry into the causes and conduct of the conflict maintained, albeit not without provoking substantial criticism both at the time of its publication and later on, hatred towards the Bulgarians was underscored by the pervasive belief that "they are not human beings",[20] and was viciously manifested in the field – particularly during the Second Balkan War. Partly in revenge for "unspeakable" atrocities committed by the "despicable Bulgarians" against "unfortunate Turkish and Greek civilians", partly animated by a desire to remove "for good these beasts" from Macedonia,[21] Exarchist Slav-speaking villages were razed to the ground, their inhabitants either fleeing under cover of the retreating Bulgarian troops or taken prisoner, as they were deemed to be *komitadjis*, or killed on the spot.[22] As a Greek staff officer gleefully informed his wife: "Spare the rod and spoil the child comes from heaven! With this sacred [practice] we put these hideous monsters in the place they deserve."[23]

The partition of Ottoman Macedonia among the former Balkan allies momentarily brought to an end the war of attrition over this most heavily contested region of the "sick man of Europe". Yet, on an intrastate – and briefly, again, when Bulgaria

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[18] A neologism, like "Τουρκοφάγος" (Turk-eater), in use since at least 1888; Koumanoudis 1980: 224.
[19] Cited in CEIP 1914: 97.
[20] CEIP 1914: 95.
[21] Extracts from the letters of a Greek staff officer to his wife, cited in Tricha 1993: 327, 324, 318, respectively.
[22] CEIP 1914: 186-207.
[23] Cited in Tricha 1993: 326; see also Papapoliviou 1999: 48.

occupied parts of Greek and Serbian/Yugoslav Macedonia during both World Wars, on an interstate – level it survived well into the interwar period. In theory, Athens, Belgrade and Sofia availed the "other" of the opportunity to take up their respective citizenship. However, membership of the civic nation was incompatible both with that of the national community and with the predominant notion of nationhood/ethnic descent as the basic attribute of national identity. In this light, the ethnic heterogeneity of newly acquired spoils could not but intensify the "-ization" practices of the immediate past.

In the case of Greek Macedonia, the homogenization drive was given a substantial boost with the signing in November 1919 of the Greco-Bulgarian Convention of Neuilly on the "reciprocal voluntary emigration" of Greek and Bulgarian minorities.[24] Proposed by Athens and sanctioned by the Allies, it was hailed by Venizelos as the means by which Greek populations would be "embedded" in areas with compactly-settled "foreign" ones.[25] Put under the auspices of the newly-established League of Nations, the convention obliged both contracting parties "not to place directly or indirectly any restriction on the right of emigration" (Article 2); crucially, there was no mention of not exercising pressure, overt or covert, on potential migrants – though both parties seemed to have done exactly that.[26] As numerous directives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Governor General of Salonica (GGS) to local officials make abundantly clear, the "national interest" necessitated the emigration of as many Slav-speakers as possible, particularly of "former Schismatics" imbued with "φυλετικό φανατισμό" (racial fanaticism), who should be compelled to move to Bulgaria through "skilful and specialized work".[27] On top of the undue

[24] League of Nations 1927: 102-5.
[25] Ladas 1932: 28-31, Divani 1999: 58.
[26] For the treatment meted out to the Greeks of Bulgaria, see Divani 1999: 355-61.
[27] Indicatively see IAIE 1923/31.3: MFA to GGS (26 May 1923); GGS to Prefects and Deputy-Governors, (8 June 1923).

pressure exercised by gendarmes on potential migrants,[28] the latter included preferential treatment accorded to Greek Orthodox refugees over the allocation of appropriated and exchanged lands and dwellings, particularly in central and eastern Macedonia,[29] summed up, somewhat exaggeratedly, in the admonition "move out you, who are Slav-speaking Bulgarians, so that we, the descendants of Pericles, might move in."[30] Such favouritism not only "persuaded" Slav-speakers to emigrate but, on occasion, led to incidents of inter-communal strife between those who remained and the newcomers.[31] In the event, and according to official League of Nations estimates, as many as 92,000 Slav-speakers had migrated to Bulgaria and 46,000 Greek-speakers to Greece by May 1929.[32]

In between, hundreds of Slav-speakers were forcibly "relocated" to other parts of the country or exiled to Bulgaria on suspicion of "spreading pro-Bulgarian propaganda" and, after the establishment of the Macedonian Front in late 1915, on charges of "collaborating with the enemy";[33] following the end of the Great War, this measure was extended to include the families of the "supporters of Bulgarianism".[34] Others, who had evaded their military service, were hunted down and court-martialled.[35] And in

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[28] IAIE 1923/17.4: Chiefs of Staff to Ministry of War (18 July 1923).

[29] IAIE 1923/21.4: Mixed Commission to Minister of Agriculture (21 July 1923), and FO 371/8566/C15084: British Embassy at Athens to FO (20 August 1923), enclosing "Notes on a tour made by the Mixed Commission on Greco-Bulgarian emigration in western and central Macedonia" by Colonel A.C. Corfe.

[30] Karavidas 1924.

[31] Indicatively see AEV 113: Prefect of Serres to Ministry of the Interior (17 February 1933), reporting on the murder of two refugees by native "Bulgarophones with Bulgarian consciousness", and AFD 26/1/53: Governor General of Macedonia to Ministry of Agriculture (2 May 1933).

[32] Memorandum 1929: 37; cf. Ladas 1932: 123.

[33] Hassiotis n.d.; cf. Gounaris 1997: 92.

[34] IAIE 1919/A.5.4: Note of Colonel A. Mazarakis (April 1919).

[35] Indicatively see IAIE 1923/6.7: Report by Captain I. Mathios (17 November 1922).

early 1923, amidst a state of martial law and on the justifiable grounds that they had been aiding and participating in the incursions of Bulgarian bands (the *komitadjis*) into Greece, Athens sent to internal exile (mostly in Thessaly and Crete) more than 5,000 Slav-speaking "activists" and their families from eastern Macedonia and (principally) western Thrace. Following international pressure and the threat of reprisals against the dwindling Greek minority in Bulgaria, the exiles were allowed to return in the summer of that year, only to find that their dwellings and lands had been given to incoming Greek Orthodox refugees. And although civilian authorities provided them with immediate relief, its scale was too limited to halt the exodus to Bulgaria.[36]

Table 1: Ethnic Composition of Greek Macedonia (1912)[37]

			No.	**%**
Greeks	Greek-speaking	442,342	513,198	*42.50*
	Slav-speaking	70,856		
Muslims			438,945	*36.35*
Bulgarians	Exarchists, Uniates, Protestants		181,552	*15.04*
Jews			66,312	*5.49*
Others			7,424	*0.62*
		Total	1,207,431	*100*

Source: Kostopoulos 2002: 105.

[36] See FO 371/8565 (numerous files), IAIE 1923/6.3 (also numerous files), and Michailidis 2003: 111-34. Local Greek officials disputed Bulgarian allegations that the deportees were ill-treated, maintaining that the "fatherly care" they were provided with exceeded even that accorded to "the hundreds of thousands of destitute Asia Minor refugees"; IAIE 1923/KtE/8.1: Governor General of Crete to MFA (14 May 1923).

[37] Population data on heteroreligious and heterolingual groups, whether recorded in official censuses or mentioned in state reports and publications of all kinds, should be treated with caution and *only* as estimates.

Table 2: Ethnic Composition of Greek Macedonia (August 1915)

			No.	%
Greeks	Greek-speaking	486,456	722,615	*56.21*
	Slav-speaking	74,887		
	Refugees	161,272		
Muslims			353,300	*27.48*
Former Schismatics & current Orthodox			133,942	*10.42*
Bulgarians			1,912	*0.15*
Jews			66,430	*5.17*
Others			7,424	*0.57*
		Total	1,285,623	*100*

Source: Kostopoulos 2002: 105.

Table 3: Population of Greek Macedonia according to religion and mother tongue (May 1928)

	No.	%
Orthodox/Greek	1,161,191	*82.21*
Orthodox/*Macédonoslave*	80,668	*5.71*
Orthodox/Turkish	70,032	*4.96*
Jewish/Ladino	59,073	*4.18*
Orthodox/Vlach	13,465	*0.95*
Orthodox/Armenian	10,743	*0.76*
Others	17,305	*1.23*
Total	1,412,477	*100*

Source: IEI/GSIE 1935: xxix.

According to an official report compiled for the then (1915) Governor General of the region, on the eve of the Balkan Wars in the lands that a year later came to constitute Greek Macedonia, the "Greek" element (both Greek- and Slav-speaking) was estimated at 42.50% of the total, rising to 56.21% by August 1915 (Tables 1 and 2). Thirteen years later, in the official census of 1928, which did not distinguish between ethnic and non-ethnic Greek citizens, the religious and linguistic other was recorded as comprising less than 18% of the total (Table 3). The pitfalls of such contentious (and partly incompatible) data notwithstanding, conventional wisdom holds that, in line with the prevailing trend of population movements in the southern Balkans and Asia Minor at the time, from 1912 onwards to at least until the mid-1920s scores of indigenous heteroreligious and heterolingual others "moved out", either in the face of advancing and/or retreating armies or in the context of the Greco-Bulgarian and Greco-Turkish exchange of populations, and were replaced by ethnically-kin newcomers: refugees and "exchangeables".[38] In line with Venizelos's unequivocal October 1922 view of the refugees as a means by which Macedonia (and western Thrace) would become "Greek lands" not only from a political but also from an ethnological point of view,[39] on 10 August 1923 the GGS informed his superiors in Athens that hundreds of thousands of "new Greek citizens" should be embedded by the Directorate General of Settlement with "our national programme of the Hellenization of Macedonia" in mind.[40] Thus, in less than a generation, the ethnic composition of the region was dramatically altered in favour of the Greek element.

[38] Indicatively see Pallis 1925, and Pentzopoulos 2002: 124-40.
[39] Cited in Svolopoulos 1988: 114-15.
[40] IAIE 1923/KtE.39.

Table 4: Estimates on population movements out of and into Greek Macedonia (1912-25)[41]

	Muslims	Slav-speakers	Greek Orthodox	+/–
1912-13	10,000 [a]	43,700 [b]	15,000 [a]	– 38,700
1913-14	100,000 [c]		117,090 [d]	+ 17,090
1915-20			150,000 [a]	+ 150,000
1920-25	350,000 [a]	53,061 [e]	776,000 [f]	+ 372,939
Total	*– 460,000*	*– 109,826*	*+ 1,058,090*	*+ 488,174*

Sources: (a) Pallis 1925: 13, 14, 15; (b) Kostopoulos 2000: 31; (c) Pelayidis 1997: 332; (d) Pelayidis 1998: 369; (e) Michailidis 1998: 16; (f) Pentzopoulos 2002: 134 (n. 31).

As Table 4 suggests, such a teleological viewpoint is by and large correct, especially with regard to the Muslim element. However, it shrouds the fact that other than directly war-related processes also account for changes in the region's human geography. For it was the gradual erosion of Ottoman rule in the Balkans and its substitution by the forces and agents of the centralizing nation-state that also facilitated what Lord Curzon called the "unmixing of peoples". The advent of modernity in Greek Macedonia was bound to bring about significant changes in the politics, socio-economic fabric, and cultural milieu of all communities – co- and hetero-religious, co- and hetero-lingual alike. These ranged from the novelty of participating in an electoral process moulded in the fashion of "Old Greece" and, from 1915 onwards, to that of the εθνικός διχασμός (national schism) of "Greater Greece", to military conscription for men; from the wearing away of communal administration to the vagaries of unelected appointees and law-enforcement officers, and the unscrupulousness of school teachers; from the loss of the

[41] Drawn from official Greek and League of Nations sources.

Macedonian hinterland as an outlet for economic activities through the drawing of national borders to a centrally-imposed system of taxation; from the closing down of all Exarchist schools to a uniform educational system and the further dissemination of the Greek language as the "mother of wisdom" – to name but a few. And however slow and/or imperfect the forces of modernity may have been,[42] the changes they sought to effect were grounded on "the hegemony of the nation and its implied legitimation",[43] that is along the lines of *a* Greek national consciousness, which, contrary to the 1907 attestations of Kazazis, *could be* taught and *could be* imposed by coercion in the post-1912 period.

This is not to suggest, however, that the "enterprise" was not without its problems, as the following extensive passage from a late 1922 report – one of many of its kind – of the Prefect of Florina, where the bulk of Slav-speakers resided, attests:

> It cannot be said that the situation with regard to national convictions [εθνικά φρονήματα] is pleasing. The population of the prefecture, by and large foreign-speaking [ξενόφωνος] and of another nation [αλλοεθνής], of course is not delighted with any kind of improvement in our nation
> al matters. It is necessary for all officials, but particularly administrators, policemen and *above all educators*, to work systematically so that in due course the inhabitants' national consciousness can be changed. Here, one cannot speak of distinctions along party lines but along national consciousnesses [...]. Staff in schools should be the best available [and imbued] with national consciousness. Boarding schools and kindergartens should be established as well as night schools in which adults, male and female, learn the [Greek] language.[44]

In other words, homogenization, in this case through the instilling of a Greek national consciousness on "foreign" speakers allegedly bereft of Greek national convictions, would be principally effected

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[42] A point that underscores Gounaris's (1997) account.
[43] Karakasidou 2000: 58.
[44] IAM/GDM 87a (emphasis in the original); cf. Karakasidou 2000: 58.

through their linguistic Hellenization, which in "due course" would lead to their being imbued "with the national character of the Greeks" – as Paparrigopoulos would have it. The point, of course, was not simply to make them learn how to speak and to write in Greek but, principally, to teach them "to feel and to think ελληνιστί [Greek]".[45] As the leading demoticist Manolis Triantafillidis put it in 1916, linguistic assimilation

> means that I teach and spread among foreign speakers my language, I make them use the language I speak – not as though it is alien, for example as we learn French or German, but in a manner that will slowly [assist them] in making it their own, as though it is their maternal tongue, so that they use it on every occasion of their life, in good and bad times, for their thoughts and feelings, at home, at work and in their social life.[46]

Not unsurprisingly, the enterprise was to focus on the moulding of future adults. As it was exaggeratedly put in early 1921 by the inspector of primary education in the province of Kastoria (also one with sizeable communities of Slav-speakers):

> In most Bulgarian-speaking villages, men over the age of twenty and almost all women have Bulgarian convictions, and as such look at our Greek greatness [μεγαλείον] with hatred, secretly undermining it to the best of their abilities. Whatever we do regarding these down to the marrow Bulgarians [μέχρι μυελού οστέων βούλγαρους], will go amiss. I do not believe the same holds true in the case of those less than fifteen years old. I trust that we can make them Greeks with good elementary education and scouting organizations.[47]

That much was also evidenced in the, admittedly, far more refined view of a leading ideologue of the Metaxas regime (and son-in-law of the *archigos*) twenty-seven years later:

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[45] IAM/GDM 90: Prefect of Florina to General Directorate of Macedonia (13 January 1925).
[46] Triantafillidis 1916: 3; cf. Kostopoulos 2002: 85.
[47] IAIE 1921/41.2: V. Voyias to Governor General of Kozani-Florina (2 January 1921).

> The Greek psyche is not an acquired virtue. One cannot be in spirit Greek, if one is not Greek by birth, however hard we try. What we can do is to assimilate non-Greeks in such a way that, because we are stronger as a race, after one or two generations we can effect the assimilation of the *xenos*, who will see in his children and grandchildren Greeks.[48]

Crucially, whereas in the convoluted times of the struggle over Ottoman Macedonia at the turn of the century religious affiliation was considered as the basic marker of national identity, now, whether at a governmental or the local level, the maternal tongue of *all* Slav-speakers, former Patriarchists and former Exarchists alike, became a basic criterion employed to contest their "allegiance [...] to the imperative of ethnic loyalty".[49] In August 1927, another inspector of primary education, this time in the prefecture of Florina, explicitly invoked Greek "as the face of [Greece] and of [Greekness] itself",[50] when opining that the "spoken language" must reflect "unequivocally and indisputably the national image of this land". Arguing that "the existence of Slav-speaking pupils in the midst of Greek rule and Greek education throttles our Hellenism in this corner of Greece", his remedy centred on the propagation of the Greek language and, crucially, the "uprooting of this repugnant foreign-like language, on the hearing of which every Greek soul is irritated", so that the people's "national convictions can be revived and strengthened".[51]

The return to the early nineteenth-century Koraic notion of language constituting the very nation was also conditioned by the looming danger of Slav-speakers being used as a kind of Trojan horse by neighbouring Slav states, and the publicly unspoken conviction that, even among former Patriarchists, large numbers of them either were against the "nation" or harboured pro-Bulgarian convictions. In what amounts to an acknowledgement of the bankruptcy of the official nineteenth-century discourse on the per-

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[48] Mantzoufas 1938: 1326.
[49] Cf. Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 307.
[50] Cf. McDonald 1989: 5.
[51] Cited in Carabott 2003: 143-4.

ceived "Greek consciousness" of Ottoman Macedonia's Slav-speakers, on 16 June 1923 the Minister of the Interior, one Yeoryios Papandreou, opined that numerous "pro-Greek" inhabitants of Macedonia, who over the centuries had been "unfortunate enough to abandon their paternal linguistic idiom", had recently ceded "even their Greek convictions [...] hating everything Greek".[52] Neither the credulous assertion of the compilers of the 1928 official census that the majority of the 80,608 *Orthodoxes macédono-slavophones* had a "Greek national consciousness",[53] nor the appellation Σλαβόφωνοι Έλληνες (Slavophone Greeks), which was employed in public discourse in the post-1928 period, could conceal the evidence and perceptions to the contrary. In addition to the moral and, on occasion, logistical support offered by some pro-Bulgarian "elements" to the raids of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) into Greek Macedonia, and the "anti-national activities" of locals who had emigrated to the United States and Canada, Greek officials, from prefects and governor generals to heads of the gendarmerie and high-ranking prelates of the church in the region, not to mention discerned nationally-minded citizens, incessantly spoke of *voulgarizontes*, *voulgarofrones* or simply groups with "Bulgarian consciousness"; of "borders guarded by partly enemy populations, by name and law Greeks, by soul Bulgarians"; of people who "detest anything that is Greek", "collaborate with foreign gangs, hail foreign States, threaten us, scorn us, call us names, slander us", and "delude themselves that one day the whole of Macedonia will become Bulgarian".[54]

Not surprisingly, the urgency that underscores such a discourse shaped the dynamics of linguistic Hellenization, over and above the content and logistics of the whole homogenization process. For example, the compulsory character of primary schooling provided for in the constitutions of 1911 and 1927, was emphatically re-affirmed in the Venizelist educational legislation of 1929

[52] IAIE 1923/6.7.
[53] IEI/GSIE 1935: xxviii.
[54] Carabott 2003: 151.

and effectively and persistently monitored thereafter; and in the case of Slav-speaking pupils, it was facilitated by the "assistance" of law-enforcement authorities – as a local schoolteacher gleefully maintained in 1931.[55] Likewise, the establishment of night schools for illiterate adults, originally proposed as early as 1914, was not solely designed to combat illiteracy but, crucially, to provide non-Greek-speakers with "elements from the contemporary life of the nation" through the teaching of "national history and geography".[56] In the words of another schoolteacher, night schools constituted the "basis of the Hellenization endeavour", and the work carried out therein was considered to be "of immeasurable significance for the national good".[57]

Admittedly though, the whole enterprise was to centre on the moulding of the Slav-speaking youth's soul from the tender age of four. As early as October 1913, the Inspector General of Primary Education in Greek Macedonia had published a 32-page manual in which he highlighted the pivotal role that kindergartens could play in inculcating Greek sentiments in the soul of foreign-speaking offspring. Taking the cue, a month later, the Minister of Public Education Ilias Tsirimokos announced in Parliament the opening of numerous kindergartens in non-Greek-speaking communities so that the "offspring of the people" learn to speak and think in the nation's "mother tongue".[58] There was, of course, the intractable issue of what was the "nation's mother tongue": the spoken vernacular, *dimotiki*, or the official written language, *katharevousa*? Tsirimokos' fellow leading demoticist, M. Triantafillidis, had no qualms in arguing for the former:

> *Linguistic assimilation cannot but be attained through the living language, and it is this language that must be taught in all*

[55] AFD 104/1: Concise study by P. Iliadis on "Slavophone Macedonians" (31 August 1931); PMO 2000: 294, 297; Lefas 1942: 56-7.
[56] Dimaras 1986: 172.
[57] AIM 36: Memorandum by G. Papadopoulos (22 July 1938).
[58] Cited in Kostopoulos 2002: 93-4.

> *Macedonian* [kindergartens and primary] *schools* where there are foreign speakers.[59]

In the event, the issue was resolved in 1927, when the ecumenical government decreed that the language of instruction in primary education would be the *dimotiki*, though other inherent obstacles to the assimilation of Slav-speakers via education survived for much of the interwar period.[60]

In the meantime, parallel attempts were made to Hellenize the principal carriers of the cultural environment in which the Slav-speaking youth grew up, through the linguistic and spiritual assimilation of the Slav-speaking mother:[61]

> *For it is primarily she who transmits to her children and perpetuates through them the Bulgarian language, Bulgarian manners and customs, Bulgarian culture.*[62]

To this effect, the state, in cooperation with the Society for the Dissemination of Greek Letters, opened a number of female boarding schools in western and central Macedonia in which Slav-speaking girls received a Greek education (ελληνοπρεπή μόρφωσιν). Upon graduation, it was envisaged that they would return to their homes and turn them into centres of the "dissemination of Greek ideas, of Greek manners and customs, of Greek culture".[63]

Circumstantial evidence seems to suggest that such persistent efforts to "wrest control of enculturation away from the private domain of the family and to place it under the control of state institutions",[64] met with limited success – at least in the short term. Not only because the kindergartens, primary and boarding schools and the like were hampered by a perennial shortage of suitable

[59] Triantafillidis 1916: 6 (emphasis in the original).
[60] Lefas 1942: 457; cf. Carabott 1997a: 250-1.
[61] Cf. Karakasidou 1997a: 99-103.
[62] IAIE 1934/A.21.II: P. Dimitriadis to Minister of Education and Religious Affairs (8 January 1932) (emphasis in the original).
[63] AEV 373: Dimitriadis to A. Zaimis (3 August 1927).
[64] Karakasidou 1993: 1. For enculturation practices among young male Slav-speaking conscripts, see Kostopoulos 2000: 138-9.

personnel, inadequate infrastructure and insufficient funds, but also because:

> Today's Greek school is neither a true educational nor an assimilatory force – at least as far as agricultural and stock-raising populations are concerned. It seeks to put by force in the head of rural Slav children a few incomprehensible words and expressions that neither relate to their daily experiences nor are essential for their advancement.[65]

If the logistics of linguistic Hellenization and the non-compatibility and recalcitrance of some members of the target group account for the limited short-term success of the enterprise in hand, in the long term it was the vulnerable, defenceless status of the Slav-speaking element and its real and imaginary association with revisionist Bulgaria, the enemy from without *par excellence*, that undoubtedly conditioned its assimilation. On paper at least, the collective ethnic rights of the two main other "others" in the region (see Table 3), the Sephardic Jews, and the Vlachs (and, of course, those of the Muslims of western Thrace), were explicitly guaranteed by name in international and bilateral agreements.[66] And, in any case, the former could hardly be considered assimilatory material, whereas the pro-Rumanian Vlachs were an insignificant minority, the vast majority of Vlach-speaking citizens having already been assimilated.

By contrast, the Slav-speaking element as a whole was not only potentially open to assimilation but, crucially, was not even recognized by name as constituting a heterolingual minority. Its well-being was theoretically assured in the context of the broad obligations that Greece, together with numerous other European states in the immediate aftermath of World War I, had undertaken vis-à-vis those of its citizens who belonged to "racial, religious or

[65] Karavidas 1931: 240.

[66] See League of Nations 1927: 23. On the August 1913 Greco-Rumanian accord concerning the religious and educational rights of Vlach-speakers in Greece, see Antonopoulos 1917: 101-2, 154; on the "integration" of the Salonica Jewry, see Marketos 1999.

linguistic minorities". Placed under the auspices of the League of Nations, these obligations were appended to the abortive Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920, but only came into force following the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne (July 1923) on 30 August 1924. Until then, former Schismatic citizens could neither directly resort to international "instruments of checks and balances" nor collectively seek to safeguard their educational and religious rights in the face of homogenization, as could the Sephardic Jews and the pro-Rumanian Vlachs. That much was demonstrated immediately upon the advent of Greek rule in Macedonia, when all Exarchist schools were closed down, while Exarchist churches were temporarily placed under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, before being taken over by the Autocephalous Church of Greece in 1928 – both measures justified retroactively by the 1919 Neuilly Convention on the Greco-Bulgarian voluntary exchange of populations.[67]

The emphasis on homogenization through the assimilation of Slav-speakers continued, even after the coming into force of the so-called "minorities treaty". Indeed, the evidence at hand does not seem to corroborate the standard contemporaneous Greek standpoint on Athens's policy vis-à-vis the "Slavophones", neatly expressed recently as aiming at "granting them minority rights, while promoting at the same time their integration into the national body".[68] Asked by the government to comment on the minorities treaty, on 28 December 1920/10 January 1921 the renowned Professor of Constitutional Law N. Saripolos noted that articles 7 and 8, which provided for "the free use not only of foreign languages but also of corrupted ones, i.e. certain Greco-Slav linguistic idioms, in courts and schools", were in breach of the 1911 constitution (Articles 16/§4 & 107; see Table 5). To this effect, he proposed the following constitutional amendment: "The provisions of the treaty on the safeguarding of national minorities [...] are applicable even if they contravene articles of the con-

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[67] In particular, Article 6/§4; see League of Nations 1927: 104; cf. Michailidis 1996b: 196.
[68] Michailidis 2003: 244.

stitution or those of the pertinent legislation." For only then could Article 1 of the treaty, which had provided that "Greece undertakes that the stipulations contained in Articles 2 to 8 of this Chapter shall be recognised as fundamental laws, and that no law, regulation or official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, not shall any law, regulation or official action prevail over them", be implemented by "the legislator, the judge, the civil servant in general".[69] Not only did his proposal remain a dead letter, but, in the wake of the abortive Politis-Kalfoff protocol of September 1924 that had recognized the Slav-speaking element of the country as constituting a "Bulgarian" minority, an additional caveat was raised by the MFA, which accepted the view of its legal counsellor S. Seferiadis (father of the future poet-laureate Yiorgos) that minority rights could only be granted to those minority groups whose members "are trustworthy [ειλικρινείς] citizens [...] of the State of which they happen to be nationals".[70]

Table 5

Articles on "Private educational establishments" in the 1911 & 1927 Constitutions[71]	**Key articles of the Minorities Treaty**[72]	**Assessment of Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs**[73]
	Article 7/§4: No restriction shall be imposed on the free use by any Greek national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, in religion, in the press or in publications of any kind, or at public meetings.	

[69] IAIE 1923/KtE 8.1.
[70] IAIE 1925/B/37.1: Seferiadis to MFA (10 December 1924).
[71] Axelos 1972: 149, 166, 173-4.
[72] League of Nations 1927: 22-3.
[73] IAIE 1921/15.2: Undated MFA memorandum.

Article 107 **[only in 1911 Constitution]**: The official language of the State is that in which the constitution and legislative texts are written. Any intervention seeking to corrupt it is prohibited.	[*§5*] Notwithstanding any establishment by the Greek Government of an official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Greek nationals of non-Greek speech for the use of their language, either orally or in writing, before the courts.	As regards §5, the Greek Government is neither thinking to – nor can – appoint in each court as many translators as the number of linguistic idioms that are spoken in the new lands. Therefore and for the time being, it will confine itself to the appointment of translators of Turkish, which is the most widespread language after Greek.
Articles 16/§3 & 23/§3: Individuals and legal entities are allowed to found private educational establishments, which operate according to the Constitution and the laws of the State.	*Article 8:* Greek nationals who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as the other Greek nationals. In particular they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their religion freely therein.	Concerning Article 8, we note that the creation of propagandist centres with monies sent from abroad should not be allowed. A detailed examination of funds to that effect should precede any consent to the establishment of such institutions, while a rigorous inspection of those that already exist should eliminate any foreign intervention. We specifically stress that the relative application should correspond to the free [will] of the community and should not be the work of a few trouble-makers.
	Article 9: Greece will provide in the public educational system in towns and districts in which a considerable proportion of Greek nationals of other than Greek speech are resident	The provisions of Article 9, especially as regards foreign-speaking Christian populations, are particularly dangerous because they could form the pretext for foreign propagandist

	adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Greek nationals through the medium of their own language. This provision shall not prevent the Greek Government from making the teaching of the Greek language obligatory in the said schools. In towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Greek nationals belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in the enjoyment and application of the sums which may be provided out of public funds under the State, municipal or other budgets for educational, religious or charitable purposes. The provisions of this Article apply only to the territories transferred to Greece since January 1st, 1913.	activities. For this reason in order to apply the provisions of this article, [applications] should be received from compactly-settled populations via their legal representatives, who should truly express the free will of the minority that they represent.

As the right-hand column in Table 5 suggests, Athens was not eager to "execute" its minority obligations vis-à-vis the Slav-speaking element. Seizing on the fact that the treaty as a whole neither explicitly set out the precise criteria on the basis of which a population group was to be considered a "minority" nor specifically named the "Slavophones" as such, it was content to leave the matter of granting them minority rights to their own devices.

Only when taken to task, did it seek to meet its "obligations" – albeit grudgingly. Thus in the aftermath of the Greek Assembly giving the thumbs down to the Politis-Kalfoff protocol, and in response to a League of Nations request to provide information on the measures it had taken to fulfil its obligations vis-à-vis its "Bulgarian minority", in the summer of 1925 it produced the so-called *Abecedar*, a primer printed in the Latin script, compiled in the *macédonoslave* dialect, and intended for use in the schools of areas with sizeable Slav-speaking communities.[74] Later in the year, the establishment of a seven-member department charged with the administration and supervision of primary education among foreign speakers in northern Greece was proposed by the Ministry of Education,[75] while on 2 February 1926 the MFA sent a circular to the authorities in Macedonia informing them that Greece was obliged to set up in primary schools of Slav-speaking communities a "separate class in which the language of instruction was to be the Slav dialect".[76] Following the vehement objections of both Belgrade and Sofia and the open opposition of pro-Greek Slav-speakers, the experiment with this "linguistic Frankenstein" was abandoned – with the blessing of the League of Nations. Henceforth, Athens would repeatedly and unequivocally state its intention to grant Slav-speakers their own "minority schools" – albeit only if they so requested.[77] This time around there was not going to be any "skilful and specialized work" to that effect; and, although not publicly admitted, any such requests (and none was forthcoming) were to be examined in light of the petitioners' νομιμοφροσύνη (law-abidingness) to guard against the possibility of these schools becoming centres of anti-Greek propaganda.[78]

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[74] Michailidis 1996a: 336-7.
[75] AFD 104/1/10: Unsigned and undated typescript; Michailidis (1996a: 336) maintains that the said department was established by "legislative degree".
[76] AEV 373: Dimitriadis to Zaimis (23 August 1927).
[77] Michailidis 1996a: 337-40, Divani 1999: 334, 337-8.
[78] AKK 19: Memorandum by K. Karavidas (30 April 1925); cf. here Table 5.

Seven years later, replying to a complaint lodged by the Bulgarian Church with the League of Nations concerning the "situation of the Bulgarian minority in Greece, particularly with reference to certain questions of a religious nature", Athens reiterated the view that the "Slavophones" had Greek convictions, "lived like good Greeks, and were peaceful and law-abiding" citizens. On the vexed issue of whether religious services in churches attended by Slav-speakers were conducted in the Bulgarian language, as stipulated by the minorities treaty, its reply was both nebulous and credulous. Maintaining that religious services were always performed in the language that was in accordance with the wishes of the flock, it pointed to a government decree that allegedly forbade any prohibitions in usage of a language other than Greek (to date, no such decree has been "unearthed"), and argued that, in any case, the issue fell under the jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Church, over which the government had no powers of intervention.[79] In what was yet another telling test of its resilience, the League of Nations dropped the matter altogether.

Perhaps the most blatant contravention of the minorities treaty occurred with regard to Article 7/§4 (see Table 5). And yet at the core of the whole Hellenization process lay the eradication of "every trace of this barbarian-like linguistic idiom", as the Prefect of Pella put it in 1921.[80] Whether referred to as a Bulgarian, Slav, mixed-Slav or a foreign idiom or as the Macedonian-Slav, Slavomacedonian or Bulgaromacedonian language, the Slav-speakers' mother tongue was seen as a disruptive element that introduced chaotic, destabilizing characteristics in an allegedly organized world system; one that mirrored at best their fluctuating allegiance – at worst their opposition – to "Greek ideals".

The unofficial and – with the imposition of the Metaxas dictatorship in August 1936 – official banning of that "repugnant foreign-like language" "in the street, in public places, in trans-

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[79] Michailidis 1996b: 196-9.
[80] Cited in Kostopoulos 2002: 94.

actions and generally in every relevant instance", as a Metaxist enthusiast put it,[81] came on top of concerted efforts to promote the reconfiguring of the Macedonian landscape through the official renaming of most local Slavic and Turkish place-names into Greek – an enterprise "of great and urgent necessity", according to a high-ranking official of the MFA, which had begun in the late 1900s.[82] And if one is to take at face value the allegations of Macedonian internet sites, the desecration of tombstones written in Cyrillic and the whitewashing of similar iconography constituted an "all too familiar story" in post-1912 Greek Macedonia.[83] Indeed, on 4 January 1941, the Holy Synod sent a circular, asking priests to replace remaining Slavic icons in churches with Greek ones.[84] Such practices were in line with the Hellenization of Salonica's skyline in the immediate aftermath of the Muslim exodus and the arrival of the refugees. Writing on the demolishing of minarets on the orders of the municipality in March 1924, a local journalist opined thus:

> Their threatening height will no longer intimidate us, nor remind us of the former misfortunes of our race, the frightful slavery and the suffering of their subjects. The voice of the muezzin will no longer bother our ears [...]. Nothing, nothing at all must remind us again of the epoch of slavery.[85]

Other equally visible practices included the putting up of numerous signs in Macedonian townships and villages urging the inhabitants to "Speak Greek", and the refusal of postal authorities to deliver letters as long as the name of sender and addressee was in Cyrillic.[86] An equally distinguishable practice was the re-

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[81] See here n. 57.
[82] Kolokotronis 1925: 3-4; cf. Kostopoulos 2000: 139-47, and Carabott 2005.
[83] Indicatively see: http://www.mymacedonia.net/aegean/hellenization.htm
[84] Kostopoulos 2001: 40.
[85] Cited in (and translated by) Mazower 2004: 351.
[86] Indicatively see *Έθνος* (Florina), no. 1 (17 January 1931), and AEV 283: Venizelos to MFA (23 November 1930).

naming of surnames with distinct Slavic endings into Greek ones.[87] Personal names, particularly of Slav offspring, were also Hellenized, partly because priests, acting on the orders of the Church,[88] refused to baptize them with Slav ones, partly on the initiative of their parents as a means of avoiding further discrimination. As a Slav-speaker from the region of Almopia recently recalled: "When I went to school, my parents changed my name. 'You cannot stand on your two feet with such a name', my mother used to say."[89] Yet, changing one's name from "Petre" to "Petros" or from "Pasica" to "Aspasia", did not result in the enhancing of Greek among Slav-speakers, at least in the short term. In the late 1940s, Slav-speaking pupils continued to converse in their mother tongue in class, incurring, like Vlach-speaking pupils in the late 1880s, the wrath – and caning – of their Greek teacher.[90]

Caning was just one of many "penalties" that Slav-speakers endured during the Metaxas dictatorship if caught violating the banning order; steep fines, drinking of castor oil, and short-term imprisonment were the norm.[91] Internal exile was also on the cards, a practice on which the regime surpassed its predecessors. The latter, in addition to scholastically monitoring the movements and activities of Slav-speakers, whose sentiments they believed to be anti-Greek, and intercepting their correspondence, had on occasion resorted to sending them to internal exile on charges of "supporting the *komitadjis*", normally for a period not exceeding thirty-six months, or deporting them to Bulgaria on the orders of the notorious Committees of Public Security. In the same vein, Slav-speakers who had migrated to the New World and had allegedly been members of pro-Bulgarian societies and parti-

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[87] Koufis 1990: 54; Karakasidou 1997b: 189; Kostopoulos 2000: 147-51.
[88] See the Holy Synod's encyclical of 20 May 1937 in Kostopoulos (2001: 39-40), wherein Slav personal names are said to be incompatible with "the dedication of every Greek [...] to true Hellenism and the preservation of our national language".
[89] Cited in Kostopoulos 2000: 150.
[90] Votsis 1998: 165-6; cf. Carabott 2005.
[91] Indicatively see Koufis 1990: 55; FO 371/22372/R3533: Waterlow to Lord Halifax (23 March 1938).

cipated in IMRO-related activities were struck off the municipal rolls and stripped of their Greek citizenship (ιθαγένεια) on the grounds of leaving the country with no intention of returning.[92]

The Fourth of August Regime introduced a new element in the equation, indeed one that has endured till now: that of bracketing together Slav-speakers with communism. This was no doubt because of the official acceptance by the Communist Party of Greece in early 1925 of the Comintern ruling on the right to self-determination of all the nationalities (εθνότητες) of Greek Macedonia and western Thrace, which was changed in March 1935 to full national and political equality for all national minorities (εθνικές μειονότητες) within the country. In line with the regime's obsessive anticommunist hysteria as well as its understandable Bulgarophobia given Sofia's revisionism, increasing numbers of Slav-speakers were deported to remote and barren places of exile as Bulgarophiles and communists. Such harsh treatment was supplemented by a law that prohibited the settlement of foreigners (αλλοδαποί) and individuals of non-Greek ethnic origin (μη Έλληνες την εθνικότητα) in border regions, such as Florina, with retroactive effect. It also provided for the setting up of Committees of Military Security, charged with exiling for a period of up to five years individuals, with or without their families, who were deemed "dangerous".[93]

All these practices of assimilation and intolerance, and their attendant mechanisms of repression and containment, did not necessarily or always set out with the homogenization of Greek Macedonia in mind, though admittedly they were used as a means to that end. Compared with those carried out by Belgrade vis-à-vis its own pro-Bulgarian Slav-speakers in Yugoslav Macedonia, or by Sofia vis-à-vis its few remaining Greek-speaking citizens,[94]

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[92] Carabott 2003: 153-4; Kostopoulos 2003: 53-5.

[93] Carabott 1997b: 67-8; Carabott 2003: 155.

[94] Conveniently, see Banac 1984: 307-28, and anecdotally IAIE 1925/A.24.7: Press Office of the MFA to MFA (23 July 1925), enclosing in translation a passage from a communal degree on the "banning" of any language other than Bulgarian in the region of Efrem.

those of Athens were probably less severe, at least until the advent of Metaxas to power. By the same token, the treatment meted out to pro-Rumanian Vlach-speakers in Macedonia (and Epirus) was benevolent when compared to that experienced by Slav-speakers. By the end of the inter-war period, when according to the official census of 1940 the Vlach-speaking population of the country numbered 53,997 souls, there were as many as twenty-two primary and three secondary Vlach minority schools, attended by around 1,300 pupils, principally funded and partly staffed by Bucharest.[95] The authorities considered such establishments hot-beds of Rumanian propaganda, which, it was argued, set a bad precedent "as Bulgarian propaganda employs the example of the Rumanian minority in order to kindle and preserve the old demand of the Schismatic Slavophones for the recognition of a Slavophone Bulgarian minority".[96] Exaggerated as such concerns may have been, inasmuch as some 8,000 pro-Rumanian Vlachs had left for the Dobrudja in 1925-26 and another 2,000 in 1932-33 in the context of an agreement on unilateral emigration between the two countries that Athens keenly sought to "promote", on occasion they even led to tampering with the official correspondence of the secretary of the Rumanian embassy in Athens, at the request of the MFA itself.[97] More importantly, perhaps, they are indicative of the mainstream perception of the time, wherein each and every element of Orthodox Christian "otherness" was seen as incompatible with Greek nationhood, the desire to assimilate – if not, eradicate – it being, at the end of the day, the norm.

By contrast, the incongruity of the non-Greek Orthodox "other" called neither for its assimilation nor for its eradication,

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[95] ESIE 1961: cx; Papaevgeniou 1946: 28, 31, 33, 36, 42, 43.

[96] IAIE 1934/A.21.IIIa: Prefect of Florina to Governor General of Macedonia (15 June 1934).

[97] IAIE 1933/A.21b: MFA memorandum (3 July 1929), and Governor General of Macedonia to MFA (3 March 1933); IAIE 1923/30.1: MFA to Chiefs of Staff (14 April 1923); FO 371/15970: Ramsay to FO (12 December 1932): "The gradual elimination from Greek Macedonia [...] of the Kutso-Vlach element appears to [...] be an interesting and important step towards the final solution of the Macedonian tangle".

Epilogue

It is, of course, an indisputable fact that the Second World War and the Greek Civil War that followed it were instrumental in bringing to fruition the homogenization of Greek Macedonia – if not of the country as a whole, the presence of some 110,000 Muslims in western Thrace notwithstanding (Table 6). Sephardic Jews, pro-Rumanian Vlachs, Albanian Tsams, and Slav-speakers in vast numbers perished, emigrated or were "moved out". And yet, in summer 1959 in at least half a dozen of the remaining Slav-speaking villages of western Greek Macedonia the authorities found it necessary to stage pageantries in which those present went through the ritual of public language oaths. As custom decreed in instances where local matters were entwined with affairs of the nation-state, following the Sunday church service, villagers would gather at either the village square or the school yard, both adorned with Greek flags and other national emblems, to listen to patriotic speeches by the local representatives and dignitaries of the state: the president of the village council, the village priest, the village schoolteacher, and the head of the local police station. With their morale raised to a degree comparable with the solemnity of the occasion, villagers were then invited to raise their right hand and repeat after their president:

> I promise in front of God, men, and the official authorities of our State, that I will stop speaking the Slavic idiom which gives reason for misunderstanding to the enemies of our country, the Bulgarians, and that I will speak, everywhere and always, the official language of our country, Greek, in which the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ is written.[100]

The similarity in nature and content of such pageantries with those staged in response to the declaration of Macedonian independence in late 1991 and 1992 is striking: both were state-organized and -attended, both aimed at asserting the Greekness of

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[100] Cited in (and translated by) Karakasidou 2002: 122-3; see also Kostopoulos 2000: 234-44.

Macedonia and, arguably, both reveal a deep-rooted sense of societal insecurity. What is somewhat surprising is that the former occurred at a time when the country's remaining non-Greek Slav-speaking element had been numerically, at least, rendered insignificant.

How are we to account for the 1959 pageantries? One explanation might be that after more than forty years of Greek rule, numerous population comings and goings, concerted efforts at Hellenization and the like, the eradication of that "repugnant foreign-like language" was still a *desideratum*. Giving rise to "misunderstandings" with "the enemies of our country", a perception in line with the concept of the "enemy from within and without", is certainly also an apposite reason, as the following extract from a 1962 speech of the then Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vlach by origin, Evangelos Averof-Tositsa, shows:

> International recognition of a national minority implies the admission of a foreign territorial claim, and Greece will never sign a treaty regarding the protection of a [Slavo-Macedonian] minority. Such a treaty would imply the right of foreign supervision and intervention on Greek territory. Besides, [Slavo-Macedonians] are not a nationality. In Yugoslavia, in twenty years or so, there may be created a Macedonian nation in the fullest sense of the word. That is their affair... In Greece, it is different.[101]

An additional "justification" might also be found in Article 16/§4 of the 1952 Constitution, which provided that:

> Instruction in all primary and secondary schools aims at the ethical and spiritual upbringing and the development of the youth's national consciousness on the basis of the ideological guidelines of the Helleno-Christian culture [ελληνοχριστιανικού πολιτισμού].[102]

[101] Cited in Pribichevich 1982: 242.
[102] Axelos 1972: 213.

Either way, the perceptions on – and the mechanisms and practices of – homogenization, as discussed herein with particular reference to Greek Macedonia and the region's Slav-speaking citizens, were embedded in the exclusive, though not unique, ethno-cultural type of nationhood that the Greek state had espoused early on – and probably still does (this in light of the fact that the 1982 law which allowed political refugees of the Civil War period to return clearly discriminated against former Slav-speaking citizens by excluding individuals of non-Greek ethnic descent).[103] Although Hellenization, at least on an institutional level, never reached the heights of *Francisation*,[104] it was congruent to the invocation of Greek as the face of Greece and of Greekness itself; to the pervasive, at times, allure of the concept of the enemy from within and without;[105] and to the equally omnipresent inability (subjective as well as objective) to look beyond the "language spoken at home, in the family, [and] at the church" to that in which "the individual thinks" in order to verify one's allegiance to the "imperative of ethnic loyalty". In this light, the culture, by and large oral and familial, of Greek Macedonia's Slav-speaking citizens was seen as "alien", its carriers disfiguring the Greekness of the region and with their "anti-national" activities in the 1940s threatening it with extinction from within. The province's homogenization was intentionally politicised in the context of an age-old discourse on the Slav enemy and the emergence of a radical communist-led people's – as opposed to national – movement. It was elevated to a *sine qua non*, as the only means by which the "outsider within" could either be assimilated by the Greek national community in due course or be

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[103] Kostopoulos 2000: 298-300.

[104] Conveniently, see Schiffman 1996: chapters 4-5, where *Francisation* is defined as "the process of making French speakers out of speakers of other languages, [and/] or the process of making the territory, institutions, morals and customs of non-French-speaking regions French" (290/n.4).

[105] Cf. McDonald 1989: 2.

compelled to move out and become an "insider/outsider without", as the case might be.[106]

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AEV = Archive of Eleftherios Venizelos. Benaki Musuem, Athens
AFD = Archive of Filippos Dragoumis. Gennadius Library, Athens
AIM = Archive of Ioannis Metaxas. General State Archives, Athens
AKK = Archive of Konstantinos Karavidas. Gennadius Library, Athens
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[106] Carabott 2003: 156-9; cf. Smith 1999: 187.

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Byron, Greece, and guilt

Peter Cochran

Byron was above all an ironist, a player of games, a self-parodist so skilful that most of his nearest and dearest were fooled by him. "If I am a poet," he is said to have said to Trelawny, "it is the air of Greece which has made me one" (a statement quoted, for example, by Elizabeth Longford).[1] In fact what Trelawny says he said is this:

> If I am a poet – Gifford says I am; I doubt it – the air of Greece has made me one. I climbed the haunts of Minerva and the Muses. – He leered at me with an ironical smile.[2]

It's true that the air and light, the history and heroes of Greece called forth some of his most characteristic early poetry:

> SLOW sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
> Along Morea's hills the setting sun;
> Not, as in Northern climes, obscurely bright,
> But one unclouded blaze of living light!
> O'er the hushed deep the yellow beam he throws,
> Gilds the green wave, that trembles as it glows.
> On old Ægina's rock and Idra's isle,
> The god of gladness sheds his parting smile;
> O'er his own regions lingering, loves to shine,
> Though there his altars are no more divine.
> Descending fast the mountain shadows kiss
> Thy glorious gulf, unconquered Salamis!
> Their azure arches through the long expanse
> More deeply purpled meet his mellowing glance,

[1] Elizabeth Longford, *Byron's Greece* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1976), p. 8.
[2] E. J. Trelawny, *Records of Shelley, Byron and the author*. Edited with an introduction by David Wright (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1973), p. 83.

> And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
> Mark his gay course, and own the hues of heaven;
> Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
> Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

The air, light, and history of Greece: not the contemporary politics or the present population.

Byron is the most European of English writers, and it seems that everyone in Europe – in sharp distinction to everyone in Britain, for most of whom he's an uncategorisable nuisance – wants a piece of him. His borrowings from French, German and Italian cultures are well known; Pushkin's indebtedness to him is so great that it still has to be thoroughly written about; there are Byron societies in addition in Poland, Holland, Albania, Belgium, Romania, and last but in no way least, in Greece.

When we turn to Greece, the picture develops. In that country Byron, as I'm sure you all know, is a major icon. It was the Mayor of Missolonghi who in 1973, when the Byron Society laid a wreath to him in the Garden of Heroes, said, "But he is not your Lord Byron, he is *our* Lord Byron."[3] No town is complete without its statue of him and its important street carrying his name. You find Byron tavernas, Byron hotels, Byron cigarette cards, and Byron phone cards. Greek children are taught how he died fighting for their country's freedom, and (or so I'm told) how he sold Newstead Abbey to finance the Greek War of Independence. It's true that when asked what they think of his poetry, they may answer, "What poetry?" Unless I'm wrong, the main Greek translation of his complete works (a book hard to come by in any case) is not of his complete works, and is done into free verse from a Greek prose version of an early nineteenth-century French translation.[4]

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[3] Longford, *Byron's Greece*, p. 7.

[4] The book is Λόρδου Βύρωνος, *Ποιητικά έργα*. Έμμετρη μετάφραση Μαρία Ιω. Κεσίση (Athens: Spanos 1974), which contains parts of *The Giaour, Parisina, The Siege of Corinth, The Bride of Abydos, The Curse of Minerva, Mazeppa* and *The Corsair*. The translations are based on

There may be an insuperable culture barrier here. To the frivolous and mindless Brits, Byron signifies kinky sex: to the serious and moral Greeks, he signifies heroic self-sacrifice. The question you may ask is, "Shouldn't there be room for both?" My answer is, "There should be room for neither"; but the barriers to the eradication of both images seem insuperable.

The historical Byron is as well documented as anyone of his time – probably better documented, for everyone who knew him wrote down their impressions and kept his letters, and he kept nearly every letter he received. There are many biographies, and thorough editions of his poetry, prose, and correspondence. There was even last year a very good TV mini-series, though it's true it had to be put on a bit late on account of the sodomy and the incest. Byron should be one of the best-known figures in history. But there's something about him which resists the commonsense approach, and prevents a consensus forming: "He is *our* Lord Byron, not *yours*."

I have even heard a member of the London Greek community deploring in public Byron's status as a freedom fighter, implying as it did that Byron had left-wing sympathies. *His* Byron, the gentleman made clear, would support the establishment, whatever nationality or persuasion it might be.

The problem is seen at its most cynical in the advertisement placed by the Greek National Tourist Organisation in the *Byron Journal*. The ad parades a quotation from *The Isles of Greece*, from *Don Juan* III. The original runs:

> The Isles of Greece – the Isles of Greece!
> Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
> Where grew the Arts of War and Peace –
> Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!
> Eternal Summer gilds them yet,
> But All, except their Sun, is set.

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those of G. Politis, whose 3-volume edition was published in Athens 1867-71.

The Greek National Tourist Organisation reduces this to:

> The Isles of Greece, the isles of Greece
> Where grew the arts of war and peace
> Where Delos and Phoebus sprung!
> Eternal Summer gilds them yet

When you're marketing yourself, it's best to cut references either to the sexually ambivalent and morally dubious Sappho, or to the fact that when your culture icon, Byron, wrote, the sunsets were the only good feature of the holiday location.

The Isles of Greece is, in the myth, Byron's most famous call to action. It is, in the myth, the point where he insists that life and poetry are co-extensive, and that what a poet does, having committed the word to paper via ink, is to commit himself to the world via sweat and blood.

I'd like to examine *The Isles of Greece*. It was written at the end of 1819, before the Greek War of Independence began. It is sung by an unnamed, changeable and opportunistic poet, whom Haidee and Juan seem to have hired to recite to them and their guests at a non-stop party they're having, on the island which Haidee thinks she's inherited from her father, the pirate Lambro. Lambro isn't dead, but is on the island, and will in the next canto disrupt their party, arrest Juan and sell him into slavery. Haidee will die of grief. The poet who declaims it is a strange mixture of Byron and his enemy Southey. He's a prostitute-poet, one who can change his style to suit his audience, as Byron had during his Years of Fame and as – so Byron asserted – Southey, the Poet Laureate, did all the time. Except that this poet can do it in any language he likes:

> 86.
> In France, for instance, he would write a Chanson;
> In England, a Six-Canto Quarto tale;
> In Spain, he'd make a ballad or romance on
> The last war – much the same in Portugal;
> In Germany, the Pegasus he'd prance on

Would be old Goethe's (see what says de Stael)
In Italy, he'd ape the "Trecentisti";
In Greece he'd sing some sort of hymn like this t'ye:

The rhymes signal, I hope you'll agree, that whatever the song is like, there's something suspect about the singer.

1.
The Isles of Greece – the Isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the Arts of War and Peace –
Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!
Eternal Summer gilds them yet,
But All, except their Sun, is set.

This is a song to be sung at a party – I would suggest, from the last line here, to be sung at the end of the party, when everyone's exhausted and melancholy. The next five verses contrast Greece's heroic past with the degeneracy of her present. All a poet can do today is muse, dream, blush, and weep. Action of the ancient Greek heroic kind is not an option.

2.
The Scian and the Teian Muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your Shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To Sounds which Echo further West
Than your Sires' "Islands of the Blest." –

3.
The Mountains look on Marathon –
And Marathon looks on the Sea;
And musing there an hour Alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persian's Grave,
I could not deem myself a Slave. –

4.
A King sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er Sea-born Salamis,

And Ships by thousands lay below,
    And Men in Nations – All were His!
He counted them at Break of day –
And when the Sun set – where were They? –

5.

And where are they? – and where art Thou,
    My Country? On thy voiceless shore
The Heroic lay is tuneless now –
    The Heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy Lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine? –

6.

'Tis Something, in the dearth of Fame,
    Though linked among a fettered race,
To feel at least a Patriot's Shame,
    Even as I sing, suffuse my face –
For what is left the Poet here?
For Greeks a blush – for Greece a tear. –

In stanzas 7 and 8 the voices of the ancient Greeks are heard; but the modern Greeks have no response to them:

7.

Must *We* but weep o'er days more blest? –
    Must *We* but blush? – Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
    A Remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred Grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

8.

What silent still? and silent All?
    Ah! No – the Voices of the dead
Sound like a distant Torrent's fall,
    And answer – "Let one living head,
"But one, arise – We come, We come!"
'Tis but the Living Who are dumb. –

In stanza 9 the poet makes a call, not for action, but for more wine, and, it appears, his audience agree with him:

9.
In vain – in vain – Strike other Chords –
Fill high the Cup with Samian Wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish Hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's Vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble Call,
How answers each bold Bacchanal! –

In stanzas 10, 11, and 12, he tries to turn his audience's enthusiasm for drink into one for patriotic nostalgia: perhaps if they get more drunk they'll become more brave. Yet as he muses himself, all he can think of are past Greek tyrants. The song here alternates between determination and anticlimactic pessimism – will we, if we defeat the Turks, merely replace them with tyrants of our own on the ancient model?

10.
You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet –
Where is the Pyrrhic Phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave –
Think Ye he meant them for a Slave? –

11.
Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's Song divine;
He served, but served Polycrates,
A Tyrant; but our Masters then
Were still, at least, our Countrymen. –

12.
The Tyrant of the Chersonese
Was Freedom's best and bravest friend;
That Tyrant was Miltiades! –
Oh! that the present hour would lend

Another Despot of the kind!
Such Chains as his were sure to bind. –

The poet now brings the song into the present day. Parga, referred to next, had just been sold by the English to Ali Pasha – the event was greeted with disgust by many liberal-minded people. Byron may have been misled, by an article about it which Ugo Foscolo had published in the *Edinburgh Review*, into thinking that the outrage had brought out some old heroic traits in the Pargiots:

13.
Fill high the bowl with Samian Wine!
    On Suli's Rock, and Parga's Shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
    Such as the Doric Mothers bore;
And there perhaps some Seed is sown
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Stanza 14 warns the Greeks against trusting the promises of western Europeans. It echoes some ideas in Foscolo's *Edinburgh Review* article, and ends pessimistically:

14.
Trust not for freedom to the Franks –
    They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords, and native ranks,
    The only hope of Courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your Shield, however broad. –

We may assume that by now the poet is drunk. As he contemplates the beauty of Greek women, he certainly becomes maudlin:

15.
Fill high the bowl with Samian Wine!
    Our Virgins dance beneath the Shade –
I see their glorious black Eyes shine;
    But gazing on each glowing Maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle Slaves. –

The last stanza, in everything but the penultimate line, sees the poet losing contact with his song's supposed theme. The last line is not a call to stop drinking and to take up arms – it's a call to dash your wine glass down, and fill up another (at least, that's one interpretation: if the cup still has Samian wine in it, you drink it first and dash it down afterwards):

16.

Place me on Sunium's marbled Steep,
    Where nothing save the Waves and I
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
    There, Swan-like, let me sing and die –
A land of Slaves shall ne'er be mine –
Dash down yon Cup of Samian Wine! –

Lest we should still, despite the evidence, think the poet is a war-poet, a Tyrtaeus, Byron resumes his disillusioned and anti-climactic tone as he resumes the narrative, and makes clear his suspicion of all poetry:

87.

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
    The modern Greek, in tolerable Verse;
If not like Orpheus quite when Greece was young,
    Yet in these times he might have done much worse:
His Strain displayed some feeling – right or wrong;
    And Feeling, in a Poet, is the Source
Of Others' feeling – but they are such liars,
And take all colours – like the hands of Dyers.

A real man doesn't sing, doesn't write poetry – a real man acts. A year after *The Isles of Greece* was published the Greek War of Independence started; I think no one in Greece had read *Don Juan*, however. Shame at the message of *The Isles of Greece* was not one of their motives.

* * *

In 1924, the centenary of Byron's death, the Greek Minister Demetrius Caclamanos gave two addresses in England. Near the end of the second one he said the following:

> In many a letter and discourse, which reveal in him [Byron] an acute political sense, did he advocate tolerance, concord, co-operation among all Greeks. By the gift of his help, of his youth [*Byron would have been delighted to hear that – "youth"!*], of his life, he showed that his counsels of wisdom issued from a heart passionately devoted to the Greek people – which, at the time of Byron's sacrifice, symbolised the struggle of the spirit of liberty itself against the dark forces of oppression.
>
> While still only a schoolboy, Byron fought always for the small and weak, and I think it was this very sentiment that brought him to Missolonghi. He wrote, too, somewhere, that he liked Robert Rushton because, like the latter, he felt himself to be a "friendless animal". He attached himself to Greece because Greece, too, was friendless, and "friendless nation" and "friendless poet" were to become the best of friends.
>
> Since we had Byron as our friend, we have been fortunate enough to earn the friendship of others of whom we are as well proud. But Byron's friendship remains with us, nevertheless, the tenderest of all. He is to us as the first-love which one never forgets. What Mary Chaworth was to Byron, Byron is to Greece.
>
> The sacrifice which ennobled his life and rendered his name forever immortal is engraved upon our hearts in ineffaceable characters. He was the Crusader of Liberty. He was the Soldier of Greece; the "Stratiot," to use his own word in his appeal to the Suliots:
>
> Up to battle! Sons of Suli,
> Up and do your duty duly!
> . . . .
> Up and charge my Stratiotes
> Bouwah! Bouwah! Suliotes![5]

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[5] *The Centenary of Byron's death in England: two addresses delivered by Demetrius Caclamanos*. Privately printed (London 1924), pp. 38-42.

Most modern Greeks, I suspect, would concur with this: the urge to mythologize Byron overcomes all barriers. But Robert Rushton was, according to Caroline Lamb (though not according to the new *ODNB* entry), Byron's boyfriend, his sexual partner, a young victim of his lust. And "Mary Chaworth was to Byron" a source of acute misery. She would have nothing to do with his romantic approaches, and preferred marriage to a boorish Tory squire called Jack Musters, who was a Master of Hounds and a persecutor of Luddites. When her marriage failed, she cast an optimistic eye on Byron, now her ex-admirer, who had become the most glamorous figure in the country, and tried to make contact with him; but they never met again, and she went out of her mind. She was not in any case Byron's first love: that was Mary Duff. In addition, we object, there were many philhellenes before and besides Byron. I shall return to this poem "A Song for the Suliots".

About ten years ago they released a film – a Greco-Russian co-production – called *Byron, Ballad of a Demon*. It depicted him as a bald, sweaty person, unhealthy and unattractive, and his death at Missolonghi as the culmination of a career devoted to self-hatred and self-destruction. It attempted to demythologize him, but was clearly motivated by the most intense dislike, and so could easily be ignored. Everyone in Greece hated it; and so did I. I hope this lecture will help, in a more sympathetic way, towards Byron's demythologization.

* * *

In a letter dated from 21 June 21/3 July 1823, Metropolitan Ignatius of Arta, a priest then temporarily resident in Pisa, wrote to Byron (I translate from his French):

> You will find, my Lord, that the land you are visiting is much more devastated than it was on your first voyage there; but by contrast you will find its inhabitants to be worthy sons of their ancestors, and worthy once more to be called sons of Greece. The Greeks have been awaiting the moment to show the world

> that the blood of their fathers flows still in their veins; and now that the moment has arrived they have shown us that their exploits are as sublime, as noble, as great, as those of the heroes led by Themistocles, Miltiades, and Leonidas. In the midst of this greatness, my Lord, you will find confusion and disorder as well; but your goodness will know to excuse them, and to attribute their cause, partly to ignorance, partly to that spirit of independence proper to the Greek character, and partly to the novelty of their state. But order in society is only created by time, and it is to time that we must leave the creation of order. You will have occasion, my Lord, to see our fleet, which, I hope, will attract your attention, and from amongst our heroes I must especially recommend to you Marcos Botsaris and his Souliots.[6]

Metropolitan Ignatius spoke with forked tongue. To Mavrocordatos he wrote, on 29 July 1823:

> I recommend Lord Byron to you; he must have arrived at Zakynthos by now. [...] Do whatever you can to please him, not so much because he can spend and really help, but more so because if he's dissatisfied he could do more harm than you have bargained for [...].[7]

A certain mistrust, perhaps of the supposed amateur on the part of one who thought himself a professional, can be seen here.

When he was at Missolonghi, Byron got to know the Suliots of Marcos Botsaris, whom Ignatius recommends. He didn't meet Botsaris, who was killed in battle in August 1823. He wrote this song for them, quoted inaccurately in his 1924 address by Demetrius Caclamanos. I don't think the poem took Byron very long to write, but, in his best manner, it manages to be at once empathetic and ironical:

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[6] John Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland.

[7] Quoted by Nora Liassis, "... 'a cult of Lord Byron' in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*", in: Marios Byron Raizis (ed.), *Byron: a poet for all seasons* (Missolonghi 2000), p. 220.

Up to battle! Sons of Suli –
Up, and do your duty duly –
There the wall – and there the Moat is –
Bouwah! – Bouwah! – Suliotes!
There is booty, there is Beauty –
Up, my boys, and do your duty. –

By the sally and the rally
Which defied the arms of Ali –
By your own dear native Highlands
By your children in the Islands –
Up and charge my Stratiotes!
Bouwah! – Bouwah! – Suliotes!

As our ploughshare is the Sabre
Here's the harvest of our labour –
For behind those battered breaches
Are our foes with all their riches –
There is glory – there is plunder –
Then away in spite of thunder. –

How different from the passage from *The Corsair* which I read at first: there, he celebrates the air, light, and ancient heroes of Greece. Here, he celebrates her modern heroes. The poem's sloppiness is not uncharacteristic. Byron had actually rhymed "booty" with "beauty" at lines 77 and 81 of the third canto of *The Prophecy of Dante,* a poem written at greater leisure than this. But the song still makes grim reading, given the warm way in which Metropolitan Ignatius had recommended the Suliots. In line 13, Byron refers to Isaiah 2, 4: "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks." The Suliots, it seems, reverse this dictum, beat their ploughshares into sabres, and, by implication, their pruning-hooks into spears. In the last line, Byron quotes *Macbeth* IV i 86: "That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies, / And sleep in spite of thunder." As Macbeth has just decided to kill Macduff, which is the second biggest mistake he makes after killing Duncan, this is another unfortunate echo. Byron had found at Missolonghi that the three hundred or so supposed Suliots there were mostly not Suliots, and in many cases

not even Greeks. He had paid them: but they demanded that half their number should be promoted, and thus be paid more. In so far as he had had any illusions about them, he lost them now, and three months before his death wrote the following:

> Having tried in vain at every expence – considerable trouble – and some danger to unite the Suliotes for the good of Greece – and their own – I have come to the following resolution. –
> I will have nothing more to do with the Suliotes – they may go to the Turks or – the devil [–] they may cut me into more pieces than they have dissensions among them, sooner than change my resolution –
>
> For the rest I hold my means and person at the disposal of the Greek Nation and Government the same as before.[8]

Booty and beauty were the main objectives of the so-called Suliots; greed and lust their motivation. Of patriotism they knew nothing, having no homeland. The idea of a Greek homeland was in any case a foreign idea: a Frankish idea. Helen Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, a carefully disinterested writer, reports that Frankish travellers

> could not easily pretend that they ignored the aspirations of the Greeks, who made their sentiments quite clear. Yet, some travellers disputed their precise nature and sincerity. The reason was twofold. In the first place, they hardly considered these debased people able to entertain such noble sentiments. Then, these aspirations interfered with their own political analysis, interests, and tactics.
>
> Thus, [Frederic] Douglas wrote that the young Greeks used to sing patriotic songs, but to them the word "πατρίς"[,] fatherland, bore an indeterminate meaning, affixed to no precise idea. Moreover, those who expressed a deep hatred for their oppressors and pity for their country could be seen joining the

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[8] *Byron's letters and journals.* Edited by Leslie A. Marchand. 13 vols. (London: John Murray 1973-94), vol. XI, pp. 111-12 (hereafter *BLJ*).

> usual intrigues in order to acquire an office from the authorities.[9]

Every man knew that his allegiance was to his church, and to his clan chief, his warlord: to whoever would feed him. The idea that Greece was a nation was strange. What was a "nation" anyway?

The idea of Greek nationhood had much stronger roots in the thinking of the merchants and writers of the Greek diaspora, in Vienna, where the *Logios Hermes* was published, or in Paris, where Adamantios Korais lived and wrote, than it had in Greece. Byron's friend Hobhouse, co-founder of the London Greek Committee (I *think*: his diary's not clear), had met the editor of the *Hermes* in Vienna in 1814, and had met Korais in Paris in 1815. Byron may have held his means and person at the disposal of the Greek Government – but where and what was the Greek Government, and was it any improvement on the Suliots? The man who wanted above all others to form a constitutional government – Mavrocordatos – was on the run. The rest of those who might have been members of such a government were divided as much from one another as they were from the Turks. Parts of Greece were still controlled by Mavrocordatos; parts by Colocotrones; parts by the brigand Odysseus Androutses (soon to become Trelawny's hero); and parts by no one at all except the local inhabitants. When the Turks left (or were massacred), the Greeks turned on each other. Richard Clogg quotes General Makriyannis at this point: "I took an oath to fight against Turks, not Greeks!"[10]

Many young Frankish idealists came to Greece to assist what they understood to be a repetition of the Persian wars of the fifth century, were disillusioned (for no-one wanted them), and many died. One Prussian officer who managed to return put up a placard

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[9] Helen Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, *The eve of the Greek revival: British travellers' perceptions of early nineteenth-century Greece* (London: Routledge 1990), p. 96.

[10] Richard Clogg, *A concise history of Greece*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1992), p. 35.

in Marseilles, warning others not to do what he had done, not to yield to the Greek ideal with which they'd been educated. It read:

> The Ancient Greeks no longer exist. Blind ignorance has succeeded Solon, Socrates and Demosthenes. Barbarism has replaced the wise laws of Athens.[11]

* * *

Why did Byron go on his second, unhappy journey to Greece? Teresa Guiccioli, his Italian mistress, puts one reason in a characteristic tone:

> He felt that he was born for a life of action, and indeed for the world of politics; but he was alienated from political activities as they were carried on in England then. A selfish Toryism prevailed there, with Castlereagh as its very soul and embodiment. Lord Byron was estranged from that kind of politics, because, although he had a practical mind and rejected any utopias, he did not accept, in political any more than in private life, that self-interest should take the place of generosity, honesty, conscientiousness, and fair play.[12]

The absence of logic and commonsense here is typical of Teresa. If self-interest took the place of generosity, why couldn't a right-minded man such as Byron stay at home in England and fight it, and make generosity replace self-interest? After all, a mere eight years after his death, Hobhouse assisted in the passing of the Great Reform Bill of 1832, one of the most far-reaching acts of legislation in British history. The answer was that for Byron such a course, involving compromise and committee-work, was too boring. He would never wait eight years for anything: he

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[11] David Howarth, *The Greek adventure: Lord Byron and other eccentrics in the War of Independence* (London: Collins 1976), p. 81.

[12] Teresa Guiccioli, *Lord Byron's life in Italy*. Trans. Michael Rees, edited by Peter Cochran (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press 2005), p. 391.

never, after all, took Horace's advice, and waited nine years before publishing a poem. Parliamentary politics was for drones and losers like Hobhouse. Early in 1814 an unfortunate man in the Debtors' Prison had asked Byron to present a petition to the Lords on behalf of the inmates. He recorded in his diary:

> I have declined presenting the Debtors' Petition, being sick of parliamentary mummeries. I have spoken thrice; but I doubt my ever becoming an orator. My first was liked; the second and third – I don't know whether they succeeded or not. I have never yet set to it *con amore*; – one must have some excuse to one's self for laziness, or inability, or both, and this is mine. "Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me;" –[13]

Lord Holland presented the petition instead. For Byron, revolutions were more romantic than prosaic petitions. Hobhouse could sit on committees, and go to jail. Byron found that funny. He would go to Greece.

* * *

Another reason for him to go and support the Greek revolutionists was his disillusion with the Italian revolutionists. When, in late 1820 and early 1821, the Neapolitans had forced their Bourbon King to accept a constitution, the Austrians had invaded, and the Neapolitans had run from them without a shot being fired. Byron's two friends Ruggiero and Pietro Gamba – in theory, enthusiastic political activists – had contrived, just as the Austrians were massing, to be absent. Hobhouse recorded in his diary:

> Byron told me that Gamba, the son, and a friend went out shooting for several days at the very time they expected to rise and revolutionize Italy. It was represented to them that they should not be absent at such a conjuncture, but they resolved to

[13] *BLJ* III, 206.

> go, and did go where no letters could reach them. These are patriots – and Italy is to depend on them.[14]

No wonder Byron told Thomas Moore, after the Neapolitans had capitulated:

> As a very pretty woman said to me a few nights ago, with the tears in her eyes, as she sat at the harpsichord, "Alas! the Italians must now return to making operas." I fear *that* and maccaroni are their forte, and "motley their only wear". However, there are some high spirits among them still.[15]

Byron was *capo* of the Ravenna Carbonari, but had been naïve enough at first, in a literalist, Anglo-Saxon sort of way, to take their rhetoric seriously. He wrote the following in his journal for February 1821:

> Today I have had no communication with my Carbonari cronies; but, in the mean time, my lower apartments are full of their bayonets, fusils, cartridges, and what not. I suppose they consider me as a depôt, to be sacrificed, in case of accidents. It is no great matter, supposing that Italy could be liberated, who or what is sacrificed. It is a grand object – the very *poetry* of politics. Only think – a free Italy![16]

By 1823 he read Italian posture more accurately. As with Italian marriage ethics, so with Italian politics – you shouldn't expect the exterior appearance to conform with the practical reality. The Carbonari had hid their ammunition in his cellar, so that he'd get done for possessing it and they wouldn't. He might have known that the Greeks were no better, and even that their version of practical reality was much worse: but he knew above all that Italy was not a place where he could expect to make any political impact.

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[14] Quoted in Teresa Guiccioli, *Lord Byron's life in Italy*, p. 646.
[15] *BLJ* VIII, 105; letter of 28 April 1821.
[16] *BLJ* VIII, 47.

* * *

A third reason to go was because he had to get away from Teresa. Hobhouse reports that at Pisa on 19 September 1822 "we had some talk of his liaison, which he does not wish to continue". Henry Fox, who was her lover after Byron's death, writes in his diary:

> In order to distress her, and also perhaps in hopes of making us quarrel, she [Lady Blessington] told T[eresa]. G[uiccioli]. of L[or]d Byron, in 1823, having said to me at Genoa that one of his reasons for going to Greece was to get rid of her and her family – which he meant, I conclude, by saying he wished to cut cables in Italy and go either to Greece or England in order to regain his liberty. Of course I denied it, tho' it is true. [17]

Mary Shelley was scathing about Byron's attitude to Teresa. On 23 July 1823 she wrote to Jane Williams:

> The Guiccioli is gone to Bologna – e poi cosa fara? Chi lo sa? Cosa vuol che la dica? He talks seriously of returning to her, and may if he finds none of equal rank to be got as cheaply – She cost him nothing & was thus invaluable.[18]

Even supposing Mary Shelley's cynicism to be accurate, Byron could not just walk out on Teresa, in part because their relationship was the longest he had ever had, and he felt loyal despite his indifference.

Moreover, Teresa's relationship with him had compromised not only her but her father, her brother, and their entire household. The fact that they were part of his entourage had brought down

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[17] *The Journal of the Hon. Henry Edward Fox (afterwards fourth and last Lord Holland) 1818-1830*, edited by the Earl of Ilchester (n.p.: Thornton Butterworth Limited 1923), p. 298.
[18] *The letters of Mary Woolstonecraft Shelley*, edited by Betty T. Bennett (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 1980), Vol. I, p. 349.

upon them the persecuting wrath of the Vatican, the Austrians, the Tuscan government, of any authority who thought Byron a dangerous firebrand and irreligious radical. When the secret police heard that he was a "romantic", they assumed that the word's roots were "Roma antica", and that he was therefore a republican. He was too famous to be persecuted, and was an English milord to boot, so they persecuted his loved ones instead, to force him from their states. When Teresa's family had been banished from Ravenna in 1821, he stayed there ostentatiously (reading Walter Scott), in theory to show that he wouldn't be bullied, but in fact (I think) as a way of keeping away from her for a while.

Teresa was at once a strong personality, and a self-deceived sentimentalist. Only a Noble Cause, he knew, would do for an excuse to cover up the fact (which she could not not have sensed) that he was now bored by her. What Nobler Cause could there be than Fighting for Greek Independence? His decision to go to Greece might free her and her relatives from persecution. If this was his plan, it didn't work. Teresa's brother Pietro Gamba came with him to Greece, and eventually died there too. Her father, Ruggiero Gamba, was arrested and imprisoned for seven years.

Whether or not he was, as Fiona Macarthy's recent biography would have us believe, really homosexual, and only went to bed with those scores and scores of Venetian women just to fill in the time, we have to admit that it was some years since he had satisfied the other side of his sexual nature, and experienced what he certainly relished, namely, the adoration of young boys and young men, who formed his worshipping gang, his loving tribe, his loyal clan, of the kind he'd had at Harrow. In Greece, he thought, he'd be able to recapture the bliss that he had, in 1811, experienced with the pupils at the Capuchin convent in Athens. But...

> ... now at thirty years my hair is gray
> (I wonder what it will be like at forty?
> I thought of dyeing it the other day)[19]

[19] Byron, *Don Juan* I, 196 1-3.

In Greece he fell in love with the beautiful Loukas Chalandritsanos, dressed him in fine clothes, loaded him with presents, and worried about his safety: all to no avail. Loukas, even if he knew what was going on, gave him no inkling of affection. Lines from another poem tell it all:

> And when convulsive throes denied my breath
> The fainted utterance to my fainting thought –
> To thee – to thee – even in the grip of death
> My Spirit turned – Ah! oftener than it ought.
>
> Thus much and more – and yet thou lov'st me not,
> And never will – Love dwells not in our will –
> Nor can I blame thee – though it be my lot –
> To strongly – wrongly – vainly – love thee still. –[20]

Byron had failed as a father both to Ada and Allegra, and as a husband to Annabella. He had failed as a heterosexual lover to Teresa. In Italy he had failed as an Italian insurrectionist, being able to find no fellows to insurrect with. Here, in Greece, he faced failure as a Greek insurrectionist, and as a homosexual lover too. Is it any wonder that, when he became ill, his resistance was low? All he had left by March 1824 were drunken bouts with William Parry, the fire-master; cruel jokes played on his servants; and conversations with Lyon, his Newfoundland dog. Here is Parry:

> With Lyon Lord Byron was accustomed not only to associate, but to commune very much, and very often. His most usual phrase was, "Lyon, you are no rogue, Lyon;" or "Lyon," his Lordship would say, "thou art an honest fellow, Lyon." The dog's eyes sparkled, and his tail swept the floor, as he sat with his haunches upon the ground. "Thou art more faithful than men, Lyon; I trust thee more." Lyon sprang up, and barked and bounded round his master, as much as to say, "You may trust me, I will watch you actively on every side." "Lyon, I love thee,

[20] Lord Byron, *The complete poetical works*. Edited by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1980-93), Vol. 7, p. 82.

> thou art my faithful dog!" and Lyon jumped and kissed his master's hand, as an acknowledgement of his homage. In this sort of mingled talk and gambol, Lord Byron passed a good deal of time, and seemed more contented, more calmly self-satisfied, on such occasions, than almost on any other. In conversation and in company he was animated and brilliant; but with Lyon and in stillness he was pleased and perfectly happy.[21]

Small wonder then that when Drs Bruno and Millingen pressed him for the umpteenth time to be bled, he gave in. "Come:" he said. "I see you are a d——d set of butchers. Take away as much blood as you will; but have done with it."

He seems to be blaming them; but surely this is the reason why he had really come to Greece. He'd come to Greece in order to die. But he had hoped for a more magnificent death than this – dying of Mediterranean tic fever, an illness picked up from close proximity to dogs.[22]

* * *

There are several reports of the clinical manner in which Byron approached his supposed destiny in Greece. Lady Blessington records this:

> There is something so exciting in the idea of the greatest poet of his day sacrificing his fortune, his occupations, his enjoyments, – in short, offering up on the altar of Liberty all the immense advantages which station, fortune and genius can bestow, that it is impossible to reflect on it without admiration; but when one hears this same person calmly talk of the worthlessness of the people he proposes to make those sacrifices for, the loans he means to advance, the uniforms he intends to wear, entering into petty details, and always with perfect *sang froid*, one's admiration evaporates, and the action loses all its charms,

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[21] William Parry, *The last days of Lord Byron* (London 1825), p. 75.
[22] See Raymond Mills, "The last illness of Lord Byron", *The Byron Journal* 28 (2000) 56-7.

> though the real merit of it still remains. Perhaps Byron wishes to show that his going to Greece is more an affair of *principle* than of *feeling*, and as such, more entitled to respect, though perhaps less likely to excite warmer feelings. However this may be, his whole manner and conversation on the subject are calculated to chill the admiration such an enterprise ought to create, and to reduce it to a more ordinary standard.[23]

We have an amusing example of his "whole manner and conversation" in the following, which is from Trelawny, and is a three-way conversation between him, Fletcher, his valet, and Captain Scott of the *Hercules*, the ship which took him on his second voyage:

> "What is your master going to such a wild country of savages for? My mate was at Corfu, and he says an officer of the garrison crossed over to Albania to shoot, and was shot by the natives; they thought the brass buttons on his jacket were gold."
>
> "When I was there," said Fletcher, "the Turks were masters, and kept them down."
>
> CAPTAIN: What may the country be like?
>
> FLETCHER: Bless you! there is very little country; it's all rocks and robbers. They live in holes in rocks, and come out like foxes; they have long guns, pistols, and knives. We were obliged to have a guard of soldiers to go from one place to another.
>
> CAPTAIN: How did you live?
>
> FLETCHER: Like dogs, on goat's flesh and rice, sitting on the floor in a hovel, all eating out of one dirty round dish, tearing the flesh to pieces with their fingers; no knives, no forks, and only two or three horn spoons. They drink a stuff they call wine, but it tastes more of turps than grapes, and is carried about in stinking goat-skins, and every one drinks from the same bowl; then they have coffee, which is pounded, and they drink it, dregs and all, without sugar. They are all smoking

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23 Marguerite, Countess of Blessington, *Conversations of Lord Byron*. Edited with an introduction and notes by Ernest J. Lovell, Jr (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1969), pp. 85-6.

> when not sleeping; they sleep on the floor in their clothes and shoes; they never undress or wash, except the ends of their fingers, and are covered with lice and fleas. The Turks were the only respectable people in the country. If they go, Greece will be like bedlam broke loose. It's a land of lies, and lice, and fleas, and thieves. What my lord is going there for the Lord only knows, I don't.
>
> Then seeing his master was looking, he said, "And my master can't deny what I have said is true."
>
> "No," said Byron, "to those who look at things with hog's eyes, and can see nothing else. What Fletcher says may be true, but I didn't note it. The Greeks are returned to barbarism; Mitford says the people were never anything better. Nor do I know what I am going for. I was tired of Italy, and liked Greece, and the London Committee told me I should be of use, but of what use they do not say nor do I see."[24]

Note the way in which Byron agrees with Fletcher even as he despises him. Parry reports that Byron said of the London Greek Committee, whom, indeed, he allowed to persuade him to go to Greece in the first place, that "All their deeds have been only talk and foolery."[25] Parry further writes of the Greek Loan of £800,000, raised by the Committee in February 1824:

> While the loan was negotiating, and after it was contracted for, he [Byron] frequently congratulated himself that he had never written a single line to induce his countrymen to subscribe to it; and that they must hold him perfectly guiltless, should they afterwards lose their money, of having contributed in any way to delude them.[26]

To Charles Napier, English Resident on Cephalonia, Byron wrote:

> … fail or not fail I can hardly be disappointed – for I believed myself on a fool's errand from the outset – [27]

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[24] Trelawny, *Records of Shelley, Byron*, pp. 228-9.
[25] Parry, *The last days*, p. 192.
[26] Parry, *The last days*, p. 168.
[27] *BLJ* XI, 20.

* * *

In whatever mindset Byron went to Greece in 1823, once he got there he became still more flinty-eyed. On Cephalonia he wrote, in his journal:

> Whoever goes into Greece at present should do it as Mrs Fry went into Newgate – not in the expectation of meeting with any especial indication of existing probity – but in the hope that time and better treatment will reclaim the present burglarious and larcenous tendencies which have followed this General Gaol delivery. – When the limbs of the Greeks are a little less stiff from the shackles of four centuries – they will not march so much "as if they had gyves on their legs". – – At present the Chains are broken indeed; but the links are still clanking – and the Saturnalia is still too recent to have converted the Slave into a sober Citizen. – The worst of them is that (to use a coarse but the only expression that will not fall short of the truth) they are such d——d liars; – there never was such an incapacity for veracity shown since Eve lied in Paradise. – One of them found fault the other day with the English language – because it had so few shades of a Negative – whereas a Greek can so modify a No – to a yes – and vice versa – by the slippery qualities of his language – that prevarication may be carried to any extent and still leave a loop-hole through which perjury may slip without being perceived. – – –
>
> This was the Gentleman's own talk – and is only to be doubted because in the words of the Syllogism – "Now Epimenides was a Cretan". But they may be mended by and bye. –[28]

Whenever, in a letter or journal, Byron casts himself as Falstaff, we know he's stressed. The line about the Greeks walking as if they'd "had gyves on their legs" is from *Henry IV I*, IV ii 40 app.: "the villains march wide betwixt their legs, as if they had gyves on." It makes Byron into Falstaff, and the Greeks Falstaff's followers, "food for powder", of whom the jail has just

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[28] *BLJ* XI, 32-3.

been emptied. Not a dignified image. Not one to convey the idea of discipline or dedication.

One reason for the Greeks' deification of Byron was that it was (in addition to the Frankish vampire doctors who surrounded him) Greek mendacity, Greek greed, Greek dissension, and above all Greek indifference to the ideals which Greeks now claim he inspired in them, which lowered his resistance, drove him to despair and killed him. Their cult of Byron is a massive act of denial. Perhaps there's an element of atonement in it: but I don't think they'd admit that there was anything to atone for.

It may be argued that it's not a person's words and motives that make them worthy to be made into an icon, but what they do – but the problem in Byron's case is that, apart from spending a lot of money, he did nothing. He saw no action and enabled no political compromises. His gesture – for that was all his second Greek expedition was – had no tangible result except his elevation to the status of an icon.

There were other Englishmen who contributed a lot more to the Greek struggle than Byron. You have the three Cs. You have Church. You have Cochrane. Last but not least you have Codrington, whose combined allied fleet destroyed the Turkish fleet at Navarino and who set the seal on the whole affair. But none of them were sexy, none of them were poets, and none of them died at the correct time. Byron is to Greece what Princess Di is to us – a figure you worship because, as Byron puts it at the start of *Don Juan*, you "want a hero" – he's someone to whom you erect statues and lay out fountains because you can't think of a foreigner more suitable, and have no local characters whom all agree would fit the bill.

The sub-canonical meets the non-canonical: rebetika and inter-war Greek literature

Stathis Gauntlett
La Trobe University

The nexus between rebetika and inter-war Greek literature is most conspicuous in literary texts of the period where songs which are now called rebetika are quoted, usually by way of local colour in the depiction of urban low-life. Inter-war literature thus becomes a source for rebetika (often in idiosyncratic variants), even though, to my knowledge, the songs are never referred to by that name. This was not the first occurrence of songs now called rebetika in Greek literature: realist fiction dating from the 1890s is a source of "protorebetika" (Gauntlett 1985: 226-8), as is the Greek review-theatre of the same era (Hatzipantazis 1986: 85 ff., n. 78). But the particular interest of the inter-war occurrence is heightened by the fact that this was a period when the recording industry was setting the parameters of rebetika as a genre under that name with occasional (mostly hostile) input from music journalism and, from late 1937 onwards, state censorship.

This paper therefore seeks to examine the role of creative literature in the process of construction of the rebetika genre – in substance, if not in name. This will involve side-stepping the prohibitive declaration by the late Elias Petropoulos in his seminal work *Ρεμπέτικα τραγούδια* (1968: 33) that the literary Generation of 1930 ignored rebetika. Like many of Petropoulos's summary pronouncements, this claim does not stand close scrutiny. I have enumerated elsewhere some readily available examples of the contrary from the canon of the poetry and prose of the Generation of 1930 (Gauntlett 2001: 69, n. 16) and have collected several more intertextual references, such as Nikos Kavadias's use of the

rebetika motif of trafficking drugs to Hades at the end of the poem "Ένας νέγρος θερμαστής από το Τζιμπουτί" (1990: 29).

Admittedly, while they clearly do not ignore rebetika, several authors of the Generation of 1930 do not appear greatly enamoured of rebetika. Myrivilis, for example, derides the classic rebetiko song "Λαχανάδες" (in an idiosyncratic variant) and disparages this whole "heroic poetic cycle of the noble order of pickpockets and jailbirds" (1956: 59). Theotokas also seems to mock the world of rebetika in a particularly mischievous episode of the short story "Ευριπίδης Πεντοζάλης" (first published in 1934) which pits the inter-war Athenian intelligentsia against the established hashish-smokers of Philopappou Hill in hand-to-hand combat over occupancy of the moonlit Acropolis precinct and the amorous attentions of the debutante Aspasia Kalamogdarti (who does not fail to live up to the blue-stockinged promiscuity suggested by her name). However, the narrator seems at pains to emphasize that the twenty-three hashish-smokers defending their "club" are no Philistines: they are initially kept at bay by the exquisite lyricism of Palamas's "Hymn to Athena" and when the spell is broken by a prosaic comment, they enter the ensuing fray chanting a gruffly improvised example of their own poetic art. And finally the ethereal Miss Kalamogdarti adds her own testimony to the poetic prowess of her hashish-smoking abductors: "Tonight [...] I have savoured the poetry of life" (Theotokas n.d.: 27). Insofar as anything serious can be extracted from this patently whimsical narrative, Theotokas might conceivably be seen to salute the poetry-loving hashish-smokers for the heroine's momentary release from the stifling grasp of Athenian philistinism. It is more likely though that Theotokas's interest in them is limited to their usefulness as pawns in his nuanced contest for cultural authority in inter-war Greece; placing the Athenian intelligentsia on a par with "χασικλήδες" is primarily a statement of his contempt for the former.

A less flippant engagement with the world of rebetika can be found at some distance from the Modernist project of the Generation of 1930 in the fiction of Karagatsis. Urban squalor is

Karagatsis's trademark milieu and some of his inter-war stories included in the compilation *Το μεγάλο συναξάρι* (1952) are extremely provocative examples of writing about low-life, particularly those where he weds the sacred to the profane. A signal example, with obvious rebetika connections, is the short story "Η Μεγάλη Εβδομάδα του πρεζάκη", first published over the dateline "1934-1944" in the collection *Πυρετός* (1945). Here Karagatsis takes irreverent parody of religious scripture to heights worthy of Kostas Varnalis, to whom the story is dedicated. Karagatsis's "Passion Story" propels a Piraeus drug-addict (appropriately named Christos Nezeritis) through seven daily stages, from vilification to enforced resurrection and fortuitous redemption, to the refrain "Go to the devil, junkie", which the narrator describes as "the leitmotif of his tragedy". The human "tragedy" of Christos Nezeritis is retrieved from the brink of some rather misogynistic melodrama (involving a Magdalene) by mordent satire, which is mainly directed at institutions of the Greek state ranging from the police to the communist party (headed by the devil incarnate). A gratuitous *dénouement* sees Christos press-ganged aboard the American steamship "Redemptor" and, even less plausibly, entrusted to steer its westward course; this makes a mockery of the dedication to the Marxist Varnalis. Though clearly ironic, the story's engagement with the world of rebetika at least supplies some details of the "etiquette" of the hashish-dives of Piraeus and its musical accompaniment, asserting *inter alia* that "σερέτικα" and "χασικλίδικα" songs, such as "Από κάτω απ' τα ραδίκια", and the *zeibekiko* and *tsifteteli* dances, all have their appointed time and place (1945: 23). Perhaps more significantly, Karagatsis's "Η Μεγάλη Εβδομάδα του πρεζάκη" is at a number of points thematically analogous to two rebetika of the mid-1930s about heroin addiction, "Ο πρεζάκιας" by Yiovan Tsaous and "Ο πόνος του πρεζάκια" by Anestis Delias (Aulin and Vejleskov 1991: 70 and 111 respectively). Both songs give graphic first-person accounts of rejection, vilification and implacable hostility at every turn; in the former song, the degradation of the addict, like that of Karagatsis's anti-hero, continues after his death with a parody of a

funeral in a municipal cart. The potential for an intertextual reading might suggest that Karagatsis was more favourably disposed towards rebetika than his aforementioned contemporaries, but a piece of his post-war journalism in which he reviews nocturnal musical entertainment in the environs of Athens exudes disdain for this form of popular culture (at least in its commercialised version), its exponents and its devotees (Karagatsis 1946).

The search for a more substantial literary engagement with rebetika leads to the largely non-canonical works of the older generation of inter-war writers and to the earlier years of the inter-war era, when, particularly in the aftermath of the Asia Minor disaster, "all roads led to the mean streets", to paraphrase Moullas (1993: 47). Several Greek writers seem to have taken more than just a literary stroll into low life during those years, some impelled by high-class bohemianism, others by journalism, others by ideology, and others simply by destitution. The crusading anthology compiled by Thomas Gorbas, *Περιπετειώδες, κοινωνικό και μαύρο νεοελληνικό αφήγημα* (1981), offers sympathetic biographies for some of the footloose and unacknowledged writers of the inter-war years, several of whom he alleges to have frequented the hashish dives of Athens and Piraeus, including Napoleon Lapathiotis, Mitsos Papanikolaou, Themos Kornaros, Dolis Nikvas, George Tsoukalas and Nikos Saravas. He further claims that Saravas was well acquainted with the low-life musicians of Piraeus (Gorbas 1981: 148).

The dividing line between what might be styled "ρεμπετίζοντες λογοτέχνες" and "λογοτεχνίζοντες ρεμπέτες" seems difficult to draw in that period, and there are tantalising suggestions that the published corpus of rebetika-related literature (or paraliterature) is just the tip of an iceberg. Submerged works eventually brought to visibility almost by accident, include some rebetika-related prose fiction allegedly rescued from a lunatic asylum by Varnalis and published under the title "Χασικλίδικη λογοτεχνία" (1978). Another notable example is a lengthy poem titled "Ο βίος και η απελπισία" attributed to the pickpocket-rhymester Christos Makris and published by Arnellos (1988: 194-

5), long after some of its verses were recorded in Athens for export to the USA in May 1931, at the behest of the Greek-American "artist-and-repertory" agent for the RCA Victor, Tetos Demetriadis. (A 12", 78 rpm record titled "Toumbeleki" was duly pressed from the matrix in America on the Orthophonic label [S-613]; cf. the Artist Sheets of The Gramophone Co. Ltd. held in the British Library: BIRS Microfilms, reel 395 frame 208.)

Considerations of space permit me to mention only a few of the writers of the 1920s whose work significantly connects with rebetika. I hope that this will nonetheless give an indication of the range and nature of the engagement of the fuller list of writers with the genre, and of some of the issues arising. The authors in question are variously assigned by literary historians to literary "generations", whether dated generically to the decade of 1920 or to the specific years 1907 (marking the foundation of the periodical *Ηγησώ*), or 1909 (the Goudi coup), or 1922 (the Asia Minor Disaster), or named after a place of congregation, as with the "Ομάδα του Μπάγκειου" (the café and clearing house for literary gossip and factionalism in Omonia Square). Several of these writers were prolific and original, but with few exceptions they are seldom invoked in recent criticism, as the bibliographies in Moullas (1993) and Dounia (1999) attest. Few of their works are still in print and older copies of many of them have been purged from public libraries by right-wing regimes, commencing with the book-burning dictatorship of Metaxas. Indeed, it is opportune to note here that Metaxas's censorship may have inhibited the scope for literary engagement with rebetika in the last third of the 1930s, just as it changed the course of rebetika. (This may in part explain, for example, the inordinately long gestation of Karagatsis's "Η Μεγάλη Εβδομάδα του πρεζάκη", mentioned earlier.) Yet paradoxically, the link between the worlds of *belles lettres* and rebetika took a new form under Metaxas, involving the writers Yiannis Beratis and G. N. Politis, who were appointed to the censorship board (Vlisidis 2004: 51). In that capacity Politis, one of the founders of the periodical *Ηγησώ*, not only approved or rejected song lyrics proposed for recording, but seems to have had

a hand in "improving" some well-known rebetika of the period (Vlisidis 2004: 51 n.73; cf. Christianopoulos 1994: 22 f.).

Of the better known writers, Kostas Varnalis's engagement with rebetika is framed in politically charged satire. He blazed the trail of satirical depiction of Greek low-life in major composite poetic works such as *Το φως που καίει* (1922) and *Σκλάβοι πολιορκημένοι* (1927). His well-known shorter poem "Οι μοιραίοι" (1921) succinctly established the coordinates for such writing: an insalubrious subterranean tavern infested by degenerate specimens of humanity whose fatalism prevents them from breaking out of the physical and moral degradation that afflicts their successive generations. The poem further alludes to the other regular settings for this type of writing, the brothel/red-light district (το Γκάζι) and the prison (το Παλαμήδι), and also to strident music, another standard ingredient. The strophic structure of the poem, featuring a couplet tailpiece to each stanza, recalls the structure of some rebetika, but it is above all Varnalis's use of the low-life argot that resonates with rebetika and provocatively distances his diction from the linguistic aesthetics of bourgeois Greek poetry. His choice of poetic idiom thus makes rebetika a constant intertext of much of his poetry in this period, "Καλός πολίτης" (1926-7) and "Εξαγνισμός" (1928) being particularly good examples (cf. Papaioannou 1984). Occasionally Varnalis takes a direct quotation from rebetika, such as "Πάλι μεθυσμένος είσαι" at the opening of the prologue to *Σκλάβοι πολιορκημένοι*.

Politically motivated satire is also the context of the use of rebetika-like diction by the Cypriot poet Tefkros Anthias, another habitué of the "Μπάγκειον". Having failed as a teacher in the provincial primary schools of Greece in the 1920s, Anthias became an embittered and impecunious poet-vagabond, producing his best known collection *Τα σφυρίγματα του αλήτη* in 1929, under the manifest influence of the Knut Hamsun and Kostas Karyotakis. His subsequent espousal of Marxism led him to invest the residue of his acquaintance with Athenian low-life in the poem "Δευτέρα παρουσία", first published in 1931 and more reminiscent of Varnalis's larger compositions. Its theme is the trial and over-

throw of the Christian God, and of interest here is a sequence of pastiche-rebetika verses which form part of a long (and rather lame) metrical tirade directed against the erstwhile Almighty by a syphilitic whore; she relives her various experiences of low life in verses such as the following:

> Θαν τα κάψω ντερβισάδες,
> βάλτε χασίσι στους λουλάδες.
> Έλα, ρε βάσανο Τερέζα,
> κουνήσου φέρε μου μια πρέζα. (Anthias 1962: 92)

Pastiche-rebetika of varying degrees of plausibility were also being written by other members of the "Μπάγκειον" fraternity. An unpublished example by Napoleon Lapathiotis titled "Κάτω στου Μήτσου τον τεκέ κάναν οι μπάτσοι μπλόκο" was brought to light by Aris Diktaios long after the poet's death (1984: 54). It is more competent metrically than Anthias's pastiche, but it borders on parody in its combination of rebetika themes with formula patterns from historical and lyrical folksongs:

> Πήραν τις ντουμανότρυπες, πήραν και τους λουλάδες,
> πήραν και τις διμούτσουνες, τα δεκαοχτώ μαρκούτσια...

one of which also echoes Solomos's "Ξανθούλα":

> Δεν κλαίω που με τσιμπήσανε και στο πλεχτό με πάνε,
> μόν' κλαίω που μου τη σκάσανε κι ακόμα είμαι χαρμάνι.

The most reverential literary engagement with rebetika at this time was surely that of Kostas Faltaits. His rather melodramatic and predictable novel *Οι παραστρατημένοι* (1925) belies its subtitle *Πρωτότυπο αθηναϊκό μυθιστόρημα* in all but its very full depiction of an Athenian hashish-den, its etiquette and poetic practices. The narrative is copiously illustrated with sample verses which bear no trace of the parody seen above. Indeed, some of these couplets reappear in a lengthy feature article on the songs of the hashish dens of Athens titled "Τραγούδια του μπαγλαμά", which Faltaits also wrote in 1929 for the Athenian magazine

Μπουκέτο, edited by the bohemian poet Mitsos Papanikolaou. Faltaits claims these hashish songs include "veritable masterpieces" worthy of the attention of folklorists for their "spontaneity and sincerity which both surprise and charm", and the "artistry of their versification". Similar advocacy is to be found in another article which appeared in *Μπουκέτο* in 1933 under the by-line "Reporter" and described the songs of Greek prisons as a treasure unknown to those fortunate enough not to go to prison.

During the 1930s Faltaits was placed in charge of the Greek popular-song catalogue of Columbia Records. To judge from the recently published testimonies of the singer Daisy Stavropoulou (Hatzidoulis 2003: 27 f.) and the bouzouki-player Mitsos "Bayianderas" Gogos (Papadopoulos 2004: 126), Faltaits took a distinctly hands-on approach to managing the format of what was recorded for his catalogue.

Perhaps surprisingly, Faltaits escapes inclusion in Gorbas's 1981 anthology of "black" uncanonical prose, as does Petros Pikros, who was surely one of the most intriguing and shadowy literary figures of inter-war non-canonical literature. But then, as a disgraced communist, Pikros is also one of the most vilified characters in Greek literary history: a singularly unflattering pen-picture of him in Panselinos's *Τότε που ζούσαμε* includes a vicious pre-emptive epitaph for Pikros published by disaffected comrades even before his formal expulsion from the Communist Party (1974: 201).

Pikros died in poverty and oblivion at the height of the Cold War, apparently not dangerous enough to be sent into exile. He is best remembered, if at all, for what he called "Η τριλογία των χαμένων κορμιών", two collections of short stories and a novel published between 1922 and 1927, all three of which were popular enough in their time to warrant two or three editions. Of the nine stories in *Χαμένα κορμιά* (first published in 1922), three are set in Greek brothels, one in a Greek prison, and one involves Parisian low-life. From the outset they reveal Pikros's most distinctive contribution to Greek fiction, the composition of complete narratives in the argot or "Lumpen-language" in which rebetika are also

composed. This is justified by placing the narratives in the mouths of low-life characters. Rebetika thus become the ever-present intertext to Pikros's prose, as they were to much of Varnalis's poetry. Pikros delights in reducing the terminology of politics and economics to the idiom of rebetika, and matches Varnalis's penchant for mixing the divine and profane by making prostitutes use liturgical language. Whether to facilitate comprehension of his argot or to draw greater attention to his literary heresy, Pikros supplied a glossary in the last work of the trilogy, the novel *Τουμπεκί...*, whose very title is slang. The pause-marks, a little observed detail of the title, are another hallmark of Pikros's prose, denoting a pregnant pause, ambiguity or a conspiratorial wink to the reader.

Like Karagatsis, Pikros wallows in excessively detailed descriptions of the minutiae of physical squalor and moral degradation. But while Karagatsis dabbles in Freudian psychology, Pikros is obsessed with demonstrating Marxist precepts about class-based societies, which he further expounds in his prologues. Prostitution is his exemplar of the capitalist order and the pimp is his model capitalist, living in fear and loathing of communism.

Pikros's second collection of short stories *Σα θα γίνουμε άνθρωποι* (1925) raises the stakes of sexual perversion to include incest and bestiality, but of greater relevance to present purposes is the setting of the title story in a subterranean καφέ αμάν, an oriental musical café which was the principal venue for Smyrna-style rebetika in the inter-war years. An exemplary capitalist, its low-life proprietor markets his human and cultural commodities well enough to turn the place from a *kafe-aman* playing *alla Turca* into a *café chantant* equipped with European orchestra and three blonde Hungarian artistes (supplied by the vice squad). The older female personnel are duly relegated from artistes to sex workers of the lowest order, notably the plump belly-dancer Güzel Marika from Smyrna, who smokes ever more hashish and dreams of returning to her lost fatherland.

Such Orientalist juxtapositions of East and West culminate in Pikros's novel *Τουμπεκί...* (1927), whose hero, named Αράπης, is

a criminal entrepreneur from Istanbul, where he learned his trade from the grand masters of the Levant. It is significant that Arapis went on to "higher studies" in the seaports of the western Mediterranean before establishing himself in Athens. This parody of a rounded education recalls the grotesque world of professional beggars in Karkavitsas's *Ο ζητιάνος*, but Arapis's career also uncannily mirrors the notoriously unverified *curriculum vitae* claimed by Pikros for himself, which allegedly culminated in a French medical degree (with parallel studies in philosophy and sociology). In the novel, Arapis is obsessively fearful of being marginalised by the Western-based advances in his "industry", and makes the mistake of recruiting a tertiary-educated assistant for one of his enterprises, which leads to his imprisonment (for the wrong crime). Arapis prospers in this patently Levantine environment, conquering an adversary called "Εγγλέζος", and causing the jail to resound with traditional prison songs extolling his exploits in the traditional Levantine way.

Pikros's variations on Orientalism range widely, from the exotic soft-pornography of the story titled "Ανατολίτικο" in *Χαμένα κορμιά* to the depiction of the Levant as the source of the inter-war Greek underworld and its surest foundation (for the present at least), in the novel *Τουμπεκί...* He persistently marginalises oriental Greek culture by identifying it with low life and sordid corruption. The lugubriously fatalistic or macho rebetika verses with which the trilogy is laced (variously called "τραγούδια της φυλακής" or "ασίκικα" or "τραγούδια που λέμε στους τεκέδες") are components of this Orientalist discourse.

Before we conclude this survey of the role played by inter-war Greek literature in the construction of the genre rebetika, the issue of nomenclature raised at the outset must be revisited. Pikros is not alone among inter-war literati in his ignorance or avoidance of the genre term "rebetika". It was gaining a foothold on record labels and in catalogues by the late 1920s, but not until the mid-1930s did it achieve acceptance in journalism, commencing with an article in *Μπουκέτο* in 1936 (Vlisidis 2002: 206). By late 1937 an article in the Athenian newspaper *Έθνος* reported that more

than 80% of hit records were either of tango music or rebetika (Vlisidis 2002: 86), but at the same time an article by Sophia Spanoudi in *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* ominously congratulated the Metaxas regime on banning the recording of "amanedes" and called for a similar prohibition to be applied to "rebetika", which, while native to Greece, "flow in the same stinking sewer" as the imported amanedes (Vlisidis 2002: 225). The recording industry duly sacrificed the term "rebetika" to Metaxas's censor, inasmuch as the term disappeared from record labels and catalogues printed in Greece, but songs displaying many features of erstwhile "rebetika" continued to be recorded and marketed as "laika", as the HMV Catalogue of Greek Records for 1938 attests.

A novel first published in the inter-war period provides some insight into development of the usage of the relevant genre-terms. The 1939 edition of Pindaros Bredimas's novel *Ο τροφοδότης* describes the song "Λαχανάδες" as an example of σερέτικα, whereas the second edition of 1957 appears to make retrospective amends by substituting the term ρεμπέτικα. Both editions offer the same definition for the divergently named genre: "δηλαδή τα τραγούδια με τους συρτούς και βαριούς, όλο πίκρα στόνους της κοινωνικής υποστάθμης της Αθήνας, που αναπνέει σε μιαν ατμόσφαιρα παραπόνου, αγωνίας και ανημποριάς", further noting that: "οι κυρίες βρίσκανε τα τραγούδια αυτά κακού γούστου".

It is inter-war Greek literature that also supplies the earliest extant attestation for the word "ρεμπέτης", which denotes the protagonist of the songs, and on current indications, Pikros is to be credited with its use even before it appears in the songs. In fact Pikros uses the feminine form "ρεμπέτα", referring to the deranged female protagonist of the story "Μπαλάντα στο φεγγάρι" (1925: 98 f.). Up to this point Greek writers had exhausted a broad gamut of near synonyms without once using "rebetis" (Gauntlett 2001: 35). Thereafter Angelos Terzakis used the word in 1937 and then both Seferis and Theotokas in 1941 (Gauntlett 2001: 34 f.).

Overall, inter-war Greek literature seems to have made a modest and largely indirect contribution to the long-term con-

struction of rebetika as a genre, by signalling its existence (albeit by other names), creating a mystique around its performance context and, at a safe distance, cultivating awareness of its myths, forms and idiom (albeit in a negative or parodic vein). In the process it also planted or reinforced the prejudices behind the well-known post-war controversy about rebetika, which in turn determined its further evolution.

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The Greek dialects of Southern Italy: an overview

Io Manolessou
University of Patras

ta dekatria choria, pou efte isan ennea, ce simmeri in' ofto, ce avri methavri en isserome posa theloun mini...
D. Tondi, *Glossa: La lingua greca del Salento*, Noci 1935, p. 92

The Greek dialect enclaves in Southern Italy have been a major topic of discussion (and dispute) for historians, historical linguists and dialectologists for about two centuries.[1] The present paper aims to provide an overview and evaluation of the basic data concerning these dialects, under two main headings: a) the current status and sociolinguistic situation of the Southern Italian dialects: language contact, language obsolescence and chances of survival; and b) their history and origin: the controversy surrounding their origin. The geographical and sociolinguistic facts are relatively well known (although a comprehensive survey in the English language is lacking), but, as it is argued here, the historical linguistic question is in need of an in-depth re-evaluation, in the light of our more complete knowledge of Southern Italian Greek and our better comprehension of sociolinguistics and the mechanisms of language change.

[1] To be precise, since 1821, when a German traveller in Italy came across speakers of the dialect and published a specimen of their speech in a philological periodical (Witte 1856 [1821]).

1. Synchrony

1.1 Location

The Greek-speaking enclaves are located in the southernmost edges of the Italian peninsula, "the toe and heel of Italy" in the words of Robert Browning (1983: 132), that is Calabria and Puglia respectively. The Greek-speaking enclave of Calabria ("Bovesia") was until recently made up of nine villages, on the slopes of the Aspromonte Mountains, to the south-east of Reggio di Calabria, and covered about 230 square km. The villages are: Amendolea, Bova (superiore), the old capital of the Greek area, Gallicianò, Bova Marina, Condofuri, Roghudi, Roccaforte, Chorio di Roccaforte and Chorio Roghudi (Karanastasis 1984: ια΄). A few decades ago, the size of the Greek-speaking area was three times as big, and in the Middle Ages it must have encompassed the whole of S. Calabria, as well as the opposite coast of Sicily.

Nowadays, however, even in the areas where Greek is still spoken, it is spoken by a small percentage of the population, typically of advanced age. According to recent statistics (Telmon 1992: 45), there were about 11,000 Greek-speakers in 1935, which had been reduced to 3,000 in 1980, whereas nowadays there cannot be more than 500 native speakers of the language remaining in the mountain villages (Katsoyannou 1999b: 607). Since the 1950s, the Greek-speaking population has declined by 70%. The Greek dialect has died out in Bova, Bova Marina and Condofuri, and various natural disasters, such as floods and land-slides during the 70s, have caused the population of Roghudi and Chorio Roghudi to abandon their homes and settle amongst Italian-speakers elsewhere. According to Petropoulou (1995: 35), Roghudi is (or was, ten years ago) a phantom village, inhabited only by a single old man, while the native population now lives in new villages on the coast (Roghudi Nuovo, Bova Marina, Condo-furi Marina, Melito di Porto Salvo). In Reggio itself there are neighbourhoods of solid Greek-speaking populations, immigrants from the abandoned villages (Petropoulou 1995: 37). Only in Gallicianò can one still find a Greek-speaking community that is

"alive", with a strong nucleus of native speakers, mainly because of the village's inaccessible position, high in the mountains, and the absence of roads – until recently, the only way to reach it was by donkey. This is the reason why the only modern linguistic description of the dialect of Calabria was based on the Gallicianò variety (Katsoyannou 1995a).

The Greek-speakers in the Salento area of Puglia present a similar image of rapid decrease, although they seem to be resisting more strongly: there are about 20,000 speakers reported, and no deserted villages. The Greek-speaking area, Grecia Salentina, consists of nine villages here as well: Calimera, Castrignano dei Greci, Corigliano d'Otranto, Martano, Martignano, Melpignano, Soleto, Sternatia and Zollino (Karanastasis 1984: ια΄). In the later Middle Ages, all the area below Lecce must have been Greek-speaking. Here, as in Calabria, the native speakers of the dialect are elderly, and in some villages (Melpignano, Soleto) the dialect has died out completely. But, in contrast to Calabria, the environment is an ally and not an enemy of the Greek language: Salento is a fertile plain, currently experiencing a period of economic and touristic development, something which has repercussions on the prestige of the Greek dialect.

1.2 Speakers

The sociolinguistic environment is not at all conducive to the survival of the Italiot dialects, which are dying out despite all revival efforts. In linguistic terms, one is dealing with a case of language obsolescence and death:[2] under the pressure of a more prestigious linguistic variety, a language undergoes massive structural change, and is slowly abandoned by its speakers. To be more precise, this is not simply a bilingual situation, a low vs. a high prestige language, but a multilingual one: the Greek dialect has to compete not only with Italian, but with the local Romance Calabrian or Puglian dialect as well. If we consider that even Italian itself is not homogeneous and has at least two registers, a standard/

[2] In the definition of McMahon (1994: 285).

official one and a local/everyday variety, no less than four linguistic varieties are involved. According to Martino (1980: 338), the linguistic environment in S. Calabria takes the following form:

1) Standard Italian
2) Local variety of standard Italian (italiano regionale)
3) Local Calabrian dialect (dialetto)
4) Italiot Greek.

Only form (3) is available to all social strata. The lower social classes are excluded from forms (1) and (2), while form (4) is passively known to about a quarter of the population, but used actively by only 10%, all being above 40 years of age and belonging to the lower classes. A recent survey in schools (Profili 1999b) has shown that out of 327 schoolchildren, 90% never use Greek at home, and only one claimed to know more than a hundred words. It must be mentioned, however, that other researches (Petropoulou 1995) indicate that Greek-speakers may be more numerous than those mentioned in official statistics: the locals tend to conceal the fact that they can speak the dialect, either because it is considered "inferior" or because they have had enough of being treated like "guinea pigs". The casual visitor will be unable to ascertain the level of usage of the Greek dialect. Only an extended stay, familiarisation with the locals, and participation in their everyday activities can give a true picture of their linguistic behaviour.

The linguistic situation in Puglia is similar to that in Calabria. According to Profili (1985), three linguistic varieties are involved:

1) Italian, used in administration, education, and the media.
2) The local Romance dialect of Puglia, used in local commerce and business, in street conversation, in public places and cafés, and
3) The Greek dialect (Grico) used only in the family and especially by aged members.

The main issue in such a multilingual (and diglossic) environment is that the presence of the Romance dialect denies the dying Grico the main reason of resistance of all minority languages:

communicative situations which require its use. Classic diglossia[3] takes the following form: there is a "high" variety, the language of the state and of literature, which enjoys high prestige. This contrasts with a "low" variety, the code used in social interactions between friends and in the family, which guarantees a social identity, group solidarity, a sense of belonging and of being somebody "special". For this reason, the low variety also has prestige, which, however, is covert as opposed to the overt prestige of the high variety. In the case of S. Italy, the linguistic roles which confer high prestige are assumed by Italian, whereas the covert prestige belongs to the local Romance dialect, which is the main instrument of everyday communication and social integration. This leaves no specific role for the Greek dialect to play, except in extreme situations of "secret" communication (Petropoulou [1995] uses the term *cryptolalie*: parents not wishing to be understood by their children, businessmen wanting to exchange a message in front of an interested third party, etc.).

In addition to that, one must consider that these dialects also lack the support of a separate national, religious or cultural identity. Sociolinguistic research (interviews and questionnaires addressed to both schoolchildren and adults) in the area shows that the inhabitants of these regions consider themselves Italians and not Greeks,[4] and therefore do not require something that will differentiate them from the surrounding Italian society – quite the contrary.

Apart from these factors, which reduce the resistance of the Greek dialects against their competitors, there are additional ones which actively lead them to extinction. The most important one is

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[3] In the standard sense of Ferguson (1959), diglossia involves two varieties of the *same* language, differing in prestige and register (e.g., in the case of Greek, *katharevousa* vs. *dimotiki*). The situation of the Greek dialects of S. Italy, where *different* languages compete in prestige, can be described as diglossic in the extended sense of Fishman (1980).

[4] On this issue see Profili 1999a. Characteristically, Dizikirikis (1968: 1), who visited S. Italy in the sixties, reports that the less educated of the Greek-speakers were not even aware that their language was of Greek origin – they believed it to be an aberrant *Italian* dialect.

that with the passage of time the Greek dialects have acquired a strongly negative social character. Because their speakers usually belonged to the lower strata of society (farmers, shepherds, manual workers), and came from poor and isolated areas, the language they spoke became a synonym of social inferiority and an obstacle to social advancement. Very frequently the speakers themselves refrained from teaching their language to their children, or even actively prohibited them to use it.[5]

We are thus dealing not simply with a case of language death, but of language suicide, a situation where the speakers themselves no longer strive to transmit their language to the next generation:[6] the result is that whereas until the 1930s the first/native language of all the inhabitants of the area was the Greek dialect, because of the systematic avoidance of transmission to the next generation, everyone's first language is now the local Romance dialect.

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[5] The sociolinguistic situation in S. Italy is described in detail in Martino 1980; Telmon 1992; Katsoyannou 1999a.

[6] This is not the standard definition of "language suicide": most sociolinguistic studies use this term in order to describe a situation where "the less prestigious of two closely-related languages co-existing in a community progressively borrows words and construction from the more prestigious language, until the two eventually become almost indistinguishable. The less prestigious language consequently appears to commit suicide by absorbing more and more material from its socially superior neighbour" (McMahon 1994: 287). It would perhaps be possible to apply this sense of "suicide" to the Greek dialects of S. Italy as well, since it can be demonstrated (Profili 1985) that they are undergoing "romanisation", i.e. massive vocabulary and structural borrowing from the neighbouring Italian dialects. However, a) such an application would need to extend the standard definition, which involves only closely related languages (usually a creole and its parent language, e.g. Trinidadian English vs. standard English, or a dialect vs. a standard variety, e.g. Irish English vs. standard English), whereas Greek and Italian belong to different language families, and b) it is doubtful whether this process of romanisation could ever end up in the virtual indistinguishability of Greek and Italian – Italiot Greek will disappear because it will no longer be spoken, not because it will no longer be different from Italian. In any case, Katsoyannou (1999a: 610-11) uses the term "language suicide" in a completely different sense, according to which the speakers of a language commit linguistic suicide when they consciously decide not to perpetuate it.

Furthermore, the dialects themselves are undergoing very rapid and radical changes due to the irresistible influence of Romance (Profili 1985).

Apart from the negative sociolinguistic environment, a number of additional factors contribute to the obsolescence of the Italiot dialects:[7]

Economic factors: Calabria is one of the poorest regions in Europe, and S. Italy cannot, in general, compete with Northern Italy in terms of economic affluence. Thus, the transition from a rural to an urban economy that took place in the twentieth century hit the Greek-speaking areas hard: a large percentage of their population immigrated to the industrialised north, abroad, or even to the nearby Italian cities, in search of work. Furthermore, the almost total isolation that had "protected" the Greek dialects until that time[8] was broken after the Second World War: along with economic progress (building of roads, spread of the media) came the social progress of the Italian state; the result was compulsory school education (since 1924) and compulsory military service, which enforced the learning of Italian and the realisation that the native Greek idiom is inadequate or even inimical to social adaptation and progress.

Historical factors: The first real blow against the Greek dialects was struck at the end of the Middle Ages, when the Catholic church banned their use under threat of excommunication (1573 in Calabria, 1621 in Puglia).[9] The transition from Orthodoxy to Catholicism denied the Greek dialects an important communicative environment. In the twentieth century, secular power

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[7] For details see Karanastasis 1974; Profili 1999a.

[8] Karatzas (1958: 250-1), who considers the isolation and the lack of roads the most important factor in the survival of Italiot Greek, describes the following characteristic episode: when, on one of his visits to Salento, he was informed that in 1930 the majority of the inhabitants were exclusively Greek-speaking, he asked how they managed to communicate when the visited the local capital, Lecce. The answer, accompanied by an expression of surprise, was "but we never visited Lecce!".

[9] Interestingly enough, the first Catholic bishop to impose the penalty of excommunication was of Greek origin – a Cypriot. See Longo 1988 for details.

added its strong opposition: fascism, with Mussolini's personal dislike of dialects and his constant efforts for the creation of a homogeneous national state, adopted a very negative stance towards all dialects on Italian soil (Romance or not).[10] Official documents of the period characterise the dialects of Italy as relics of the past, which impede the progress of the new Italian state. Even Gerhard Rohlfs, the most important researcher of the Greek dialects of S. Italy, was refused, in 1935, when he asked permission to organise a conference on the subject (Fanciullo 1997: x).

Natural factors: Calabria is subject to frequent earthquakes and subsequent disasters (landslides etc.). In the last decades there have been several of these, something which has led to the ravaging of many villages.

1.3 Revival efforts

Despite the negative prospects of survival, recent decades have seen a concerted rescue effort, on the part of the Greek-speakers themselves, the Greek state, which has realised their historical importance, and the Italian state, which has included the Greek dialects in its recent law for the protection of linguistic minorities (1999).

First of all, the connotations of social inferiority associated with these dialects have started to recede, and to be replaced by a feeling of pride for their cultural distinctiveness. Of course, this re-evaluation originates mainly from the educated strata of the population, for which the notions "social identity" and "resistance to the centralisation of the Italian state" have some meaning, and not from the rural masses of the population, which constitute the main body of Greek-speakers. Thus one observes the contradictory phenomenon that the main supporters of a language are the social classes which were the first to abandon it (Telmon

[10] Cf. Sanguin (1993: 165): "l'unité politique de l'état italien remonte à plus d'un siècle; elle s'est accompagnée par la naissance d'une action législative et scolaire ayant pour but un rigide monolinguisme. Cette action est devenue particulièrement forte pendant la période fasciste."

1992). This is indeed a phenomenon that often occurs in the case of stigmatised linguistic minorities: the local urban and intellectually higher class, which has irreversibly lost the minority language, is the one trying to "save" it, whereas its real bearers are trying to discard it.

In fact, the latest research data from Salento (Profili 1999b) show that the positive attitude towards Grico has now permeated all the social classes. Revival in Salento has taken the following forms:

1) Language teaching (Orlando 1996, Profili 1999b). Experimental classes in Grico started in 1972, and nowadays they are offered in all villages (there are about 1,000 students). The most serious problem is the lack of a standard writing system and a standard form of the language – each village has its own form, as is natural for an orally transmitted isolated dialect. As an alternative, the Italian state has often opted for the teaching of Standard Modern Greek (Petropoulou 1995: 47). The result was disastrous: first of all, Standard Modern Greek is so different from the Greek dialects of S. Italy that it causes difficulties for those Greek-speakers attempting to learn it, and also creates the impression that there is a very wide distance between them and the Greeks. Second, and more important, it threatens the distinctive form and identity of the Italiot dialects, since its structural and historical similarity with them allows for massive lexical borrowing, and leads to the introduction of hundreds of new words (especially in the cultural and scientific register) unknown to older speakers.

2) Cutural activities: the *Unione dei Greci dell'Italia Meridionale* promotes cooperation between the dozens of cultural clubs and organizations (e.g. "La Jonica" "Zoí ce glossa", "Cinurio Cosmo", "Jalò tu Vúa", "Apodiafázi" and CUMELCA in Calabria, "Glossa-ma", "Xora-ma", "Ghetonia", "V. D. Palumbo" in Puglia, cf. Orlando 1996: 9), and supports the publication of newspapers and calendars. For a considerable time there were a number of radio broadcasts in the local dialect, and it has long

been used for literary and translation activities. Finally, there is considerable internet activity in support of Italiot Greek.

3) State support: the Greek state tries to encourage cultural exchanges with the Greek-speaking villages of S. Italy, summer camps in Greece for Italiots, conferences, etc. The Italian state, as already mentioned, has in the last years increased monetary support, since it has included S. Italian Greek in the law protecting linguistic minorities on Italian soil.

2. Diachrony

2.1. The debate

The origin of the S. Italian dialects was a hotly debated issue a few decades ago. In particular, Italian scholarship is unanimous in agreeing that the Greek dialects were planted on Italian soil during the Byzantine period,[11] whereas Greek scholarship maintains the Ancient Greek origin of these dialects, which are considered a continuation of the Hellenism of Magna Graecia.[12] The issue is hardly ever discussed nowadays, however, as many scholars view the debate as a "meaningless medical council over a patient's deathbed" (Fanciullo 1997: x).

The position accepted by most non-Italian and non-Greek scholars[13] is the following: the Greek dialects of S. Italy are essentially dialects of Modern Greek which participated in the same linguistic evolution as the rest of the Greek language until the late Middle Ages. By virtue of that, they are continuations of the Hellenistic Koine, exactly as Standard Modern Greek and all Modern Greek dialects (with the exception of Tsakonian). However, they show in their structure and vocabulary a few archaic traits that point to the survival of Doric elements within this Koine

[11] Older accounts: Parlangeli 1953; Spano 1965. Recent re-affirmations: Carducci 1993; Seriani and Trifone 1994.

[12] Older accounts: Caratzas 1958; Kapsomenos 1977. Recent re-affirmations: Karanastasis 1984, 1992. An overview of the controversy is given in Minniti 1992.

[13] See Browning 1983: 132; Sanguin 1993: 166; Horrocks 1997: 304-5; Ledgeway 1998: 49.

and thus attest to an uninterrupted Greek presence in Italy since ancient times.

When the S. Italian dialects first became known to the scholarly public, in the nineteenth century, their obvious similarities with Modern Greek and differences from Ancient Greek inevitably led to the conclusion that these are hitherto unknown Modern Greek dialects, relics of the Byzantine colonisation in S. Italy. This was the opinion of the first serious investigator of S. Italian Greek, G. Morosi (1870). Although this opinion was refuted by the venerable father of Greek linguistics, G. N. Hatzidakis, the Byzantine view became generally accepted. Thus, in 1924 the book by Gerhard Rohlfs, *Griechen und Romanen in Unteritalien*, which was based on extensive fieldwork and proposed the ancient Greek origin of these dialects, "exploded in Italy like a bomb" (Fanciullo 2001: 69) and caused strong reactions on the part of Italian linguists.

As it is now admitted in Italy in a more sober spirit (Fanciullo 2001), Rohlfs's proposal of an uninterrupted Greek culture in S. Italy entailed the denial of the total Latinisation/Romanisation of S. Italy in the centuries that followed the conquest of the Greek city-states by Rome. This denial of the "Latin" and consequently of the "Italian" identity of a large part of Italy came at a historically difficult period: the 1920s and the 1930s, when the comparatively new Italian state was struggling to expand its borders and acquire the form of a contemporary homogenous nation with a single ethnic identity. Apart from the "national" issues, there were two more causes for the general adoption of the Byzantine position:

1) The – until recently – inadequate knowledge of the history of the Greek language. Early researchers had not realised that most phonological, morphological and syntactic phenomena that distinguish Ancient from Modern Greek originate not in the medieval/Byzantine period but in the Hellenistic period of the first centuries BC and AD.

2) The delayed development of the scientific discipline of sociolinguistics, which is the only one capable of investigating

and interpreting situations of bilingualism, i.e. of co-existence of different languages and nations in the same geographical area. Thus, the issue of the "Greekness" or "Itality" of S. Italy was seen as an absolute black or white distinction, with no realisation of the true situation: the simultaneous presence of both languages for several centuries, and the influence of one on the other (Fanciullo 2001: 70).

2.2 The argumentation

The arguments that have been put forward in order to support one or the other position are of two kinds, historical and linguistic. The main focus of the historical argumentation is the information in primary sources: whether or not Byzantine historiography mentions massive migrations to S. Italy, and whether or not one can find inscriptional evidence of Greek for the first four centuries AD (i.e. after the Roman but before the Byzantine conquest).

The first issue is more in favour of the "ancient" position, since in Byzantine sources there are only three mentions of large population movements from Greece to S. Italy during the Byzantine period, none of which sounds particularly convincing, because none involves the critical mass of speakers necessary to induce language shift (for details see Caratzas 1958, Karanastasis 1984: ιζ΄-κ΄).[14] The second issue is more in favour of the "Byzantine" position, since there are very few inscriptions in the Greek language to be found in S. Italy during Late Antiquity, although a few more have been coming to light in recent years (cf. Fanciullo 2001 and especially Rohlfs 1997: 195-202).

The greater part of the linguistic argumentation comes from the multiplicity of Rohlfs's publications, but especially his last large work, *Nuovi scavi linguistici nell'antica Magna Grecia*

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[14] It has often been argued, however, that population movements from Greece to Italy in the Byzantine period were so frequent that the historians of the period deemed it unnecessary to mention them. Since this argument is impossible to evaluate except by speculations on what a Byzantine historian would consider worth mentioning, or on how many ships and how much time it would take for, say, 15,000 Greeks to cross the Adriatic sea (Fanciullo 2001: 73), it is not further discussed here.

(Rohlfs 1972). An important point must be made here. The historical provenance of the S. Italian dialects urgently requires re-examination and further investigation, because most of the usually mentioned "arguments" are worthless. For some of them there have been recent counter-arguments which have not been properly addressed, since the "ancient" side remains faithful to the established views of past scholars: Rohlfs, Caratzas, Karanastasis etc. It is imperative that the data be re-examined on the basis of a) a more in-depth knowledge of Medieval Greek, because many of the characteristics of S. Italian Greek are medieval, and b) a better knowledge of the local Romance dialects, i.e. Calabrese and Pugliese, as well as of the history of the Italian language.

One can divide the linguistic arguments into five groups, as follows:

1) *Arguments pertaining to the archaism of the S. Italian dialects*. Being peripheral dialects of Greek, the Italiot dialects display several conservative and archaising linguistic characteristics, some of which, allegedly, go back to Ancient Greek, and have not been maintained in other Modern Greek dialects. Some of these archaic characteristics are the following:

a) On the phonological level:

– Retention of Doric long /a/ instead of Attic-Ionic long /e/ in several lexical items, such as λανό (ληνός), παττά (πηκτή), άσαμο (άσημος), κυσπάλα (κυψέλη) (full list in Karanastasis 1984: κγ΄-κδ΄). There are about 25 such items (four of which appear also in medieval documents from S. Italy, cf. Minas 1994: 37), mostly belonging to the rural-pastoral vocabulary. These constitute the strongest evidence of historical continuity, but they are unfortunately rather limited in number. In general, it is very difficult to pinpoint survivals of Ancient Greek dialects in Modern Greek dialects, and several connections with Doric that have been proposed in the past both for S. Italian and for other Modern Greek dialects (Cretan, Maniot, Rhodian etc.) are controversial (Kontosopoulos 1987: 118).

– Retention of geminate consonants. The double consonants of Classical Greek underwent degemination at some point in the

Hellenistic period, and the only dialects exempt from this phenomenon are the south-eastern dialects of the Dodecanese and Cyprus. Italian linguists reject the Ancient Greek origin of S. Italiot geminate consonants, pointing to the evidence of medieval Greek manuscript corpora from S. Italian monasteries, which show fluctuation in the spelling between single and geminate consonants (Colotti 1978, Caracausi 1986). An additional counter-argument is the extensive existence of secondary gemination in S. Italian, i.e. the presence of double consonants where they are not etymologically justified, but are due to the influence of stress accent, to foreign borrowing or to a phenomenon common to Romance S. Italian dialects, known as "raddoppiamento sintattico" (e.g. αφήννω, σώννω, άννηθο, πόσσο, τόσσο, εμμένα, αππίδι). Secondary gemination is also a characteristic of Dodecanesian and Cypriot (Seiler 1957), and until these phenomena are better understood, it is impossible to reject outright the possibility that the geminate consonants of S. Italian do not stem directly from Ancient Greek but from medieval influence of the neighbouring, geminating, Romance dialects.

– Pronunciation of <ζ> as /dz/ and not /z/. The affricate pronunciation of <ζ> in Salento has been taken by Rohlfs as conclusive proof of ancient origin, since, according to him, the sound [dz] does not even exist in the neighbouring Romance dialects. The Italian side (Caracausi 1975) has answered with the counter-argument that this /dz/ is a late evolution from standard Koine and Medieval Greek /z/, similar to secondary evolutions of /dz/ in Dodecanesian dialects such as Karpathos, Symi etc. Here again, the data require a more thorough and unbiassed examination: the medieval documents from the Dodecanese and S. Italy need to be compared, and the processes of secondary affrication of /z/ better understood.

– Absence of voicing of stops after nasal consonants. Standard Modern Greek and all of its dialects, without exception, show voicing of the clusters /nt, mp, nk/ to [nd, mb, ng] respectively, a phenomenon that must have arisen again during the Koine period (Dressler 1966; Horrocks 1997: 112). However, the Greek dialect

of Puglia does not possess this characteristic, neither word-internally nor at word boundaries. For example, the words δόντι and βροντή would be pronounced [δóndi] and [vrondí] in Standard Modern Greek and in Calabrian Greek, but [δónti] and [vrontí] in Salento Greek. Similarly, the phrase τον τόπο would be pronounced [tondópo] in Standard Modern Greek and Calabrian Greek, but [to ttópo] in Salento (all examples from Rohlfs 1976). The Italian answer to this argument is not as valid as the objections raised for the previous phenomena: it is claimed that the phenomenon of voicing after nasals in Greek should be dated not to the Koine period, but after the fourteenth century AD, something that can be easily contested. A superior counter-argument (but one that has not been put forward) would be that this phenomenon is due to Romance phonological influence, since Italian and its dialects do not display voicing assimilation after nasals.

b) syntactic archaisms (Karanastasis 1991):

– Retention of the infinitive after verbs of volition, seeing and hearing. Although the infinitive disappeared from nearly all Greek dialects (Pontic being possibly the main exception), in S. Italian Greek its residual existence is still attested, as in the following examples (from Rohlfs 1972: 76): δε σ-σώννω φάει, δεν έχω πού πάει, τον ήκουα έρτει. Unfortunately for the "ancient" side, this argument is meaningless: the last traces of the infinitive disappeared from most Greek dialects in the late Middle Ages, and not in ancient times. The last constructions to resist infinitive loss, as shown by recent studies on the Medieval Greek infinitive, were precisely the ones which still maintain it in S. Italian (Mackridge 1997). The only thing that infinitive usage in S. Italian Greek shows is that communication between S. Italy and the rest of the Greek-speaking world was interrupted in the Middle Ages.

– Non-existence of a future tense. The S. Italian dialects use the present instead of the future, e.g. αύρι βρέχει, μεθαύρι έρκομαι (Katsoyannou 1995b: 543). They do not display a Modern Greek future with θα, or its previous stage, θέλω ίνα + subjunctive or even θέλω + infinitive. According to Minas (1994: 121), θέλω-

futures are not attested even in medieval documents from S. Italy. Again, this argument shows not the ancient origin of Italiot Greek, but its non-participation in late medieval evolutions. Interestingly, the synthetic (monolectic) future tense is absent from the Romance dialects of Puglia and Calabria as well (Maiden and Pair 1997: 345, 363).

– Periphrastic usage of the verb "to stand", στέκω, with a participle, in order to express a progressive action: στέκω γράφοντα, έστεκε τρώγοντα. This usage is attested in Hellenistic Greek but not in any other Modern Greek dialect. However, once again we are probably not dealing with an ancient survival: this is much more likely to be a result of Italian influence, i.e. of the very frequent Italian periphrasis with the verb *sto* + gerund: *sta dicendo* etc. (Katsoyannou 1995b: 549).

c) Archaisms in the vocabulary:

There is a considerable number of lexical items with Ancient Greek etymology which have not been preserved in any Modern Greek dialect. These lexical items belong to the agricultural and pastoral vocabulary, and therefore presuppose usage of the Greek language by the lowest levels of society in Ancient Greek times. Apart from the examples given above in the discussion of Doric /a/ (λανό, κυσπάλα), standard examples include άρτε (< ἄρτι), and the negation in Salento, which is δένγε (< οὐδένγε) and ούμμε (< οὖν μέν). In S. Italian Greek there also exists a series of semantic archaisms: words which, although they appear in Modern Greek or its dialects, have lost their original meaning. These include αργάτη (= ploughing ox), άτσαλο (= ἔξαλλος, great, wonderful), ώρα (= spring). Lexical and semantic archaisms are actually the strongest evidence of ancient survivals in S. Italian (Karanastasis 1984: κε΄-κστ΄).

2) *Arguments pertaining to the relationship between Italiot and the other Modern Greek dialects*. S. Italian Greek does not specifically resemble any other Modern Greek dialect, and therefore it is not possible to attribute to its speakers a specific geographical origin within the Greek-speaking world. For example, S. Italian presents geminate consonants, a characteristic of South-

eastern Greek, infinitive usage, a characteristic of Pontic and Cypriot, and some evidence of mid-vowel raising similar to that observed in Northern Greek dialects (but most probably due to the nearby Romance dialects, which, along with the whole of S. Italy and Sicily, have a similar type of vocalism).

From another viewpoint, it is interesting to compare the status of the Greek-speaking enclaves in S. Italy with that of other linguistic minorities. In the same area there are important Albanian and less important Croatian linguistic islands (Clauss 1979, Telmon 1992, Seriani and Trifone 1994), whose origin lies in waves of migration at the end of the Byzantine period, as a result of the Ottoman advance. These minorities a) are isolated and firmly entrenched in well-defined areas, whereas the Greek-speaking areas are the relics of a gradually receding much larger area, b) are easily recognisable as to their local provenance, since the dialect form spoken bears all the distinctive characteristics of the corresponding Balkan language at the period of separation, whereas the Greek dialects do not resemble any specific Greek dialect of mainland Greece, and c) the Albanian- and Slavic-speakers have a strong separate ethnic and cultural identity, whereas the Greek-speakers are assimilated to their Italian surroundings, something which denotes a much longer period of co-existence.

This argument is of limited validity: that S. Italian Greek does not resemble any specific Modern Greek dialect is a result of the fact that in the Middle Ages, when S. Italian became separated from the rest of the Greek-speaking world, the Modern Greek dialects had not yet assumed a definitive form. The comparison with Albanian and Croatian does indeed indicate a much longer period of existence on Italian soil, but does not provide a precise dating for its appearance.

3) *Arguments pertaining to language evolution.* The basically medieval character of the S. Italian Greek dialects is in reality irrelevant to the question of their origin. Most of the early efforts of Italian scholars, who detected medieval characteristics in S. Italian, were misplaced: the continuous linguistic history since

ancient times of peripheral areas such as Cyprus or the Pontus is not disproved because Cypriot and Pontic have medieval characteristics. In the same vein, it would not be necessary to assume a medieval immigration of Italians to Romania in order to explain the greater similarity of Romanian with Italian than with Latin.

4) *Arguments concerning the presence of Greek linguistic characteristics in the Romance dialects of S. Italy and Sicily.* Calabrian, Puglian and Sicilian display a considerable level of Greek influence, mainly in the syntax and the lexicon. However, the influence of Greek in the rest of Italy is quite small, even in the areas which had been under Byzantine rule for a period of time, such as the Exarchate of Ravenna (540-572 AD) or Sardinia. The high degree of Greek influence in S. Italy is best interpreted as a result of an extensive Greek substratum, which has undergone a shift to Romance at some period in the Middle Ages, or of extensive bilingualism between Greek and Romance for the same period.

The most frequently mentioned substratum influence of Greek on the Romance dialects of S. Italy is the loss of the infinitive. These dialects present replacement of infinitival structures by finite structures, e.g. "I want that I go" instead of "I want to go" – this is a very rare phenomenon for Romance, and recent research attributes it to Greek influence (Ledgeway 1998). As mentioned above, S. Italian Greek preserves the infinitive only in a restricted number of constructions (verbs of seeing, hearing etc.), while in Standard Modern Greek the infinitive has completely disappeared.

Greek substratum influence is also detectable in the vocabulary: Greek loanwords are very numerous in the Romance dialects of Salento and Calabria, even in areas where Greek has not been spoken for more than a century. This high percentage of Greek loans is not attested in other Greek-occupied areas of Italy. Furthermore, the loanwords belong either to basic vocabulary, which is in general impervious to borrowing except in very strongly bilingual situations, or to the pastoral and agricultural domain, and not to the administrative or military one, and they thus show "persistence from below" rather than "imposition from

above". Examples include *caùru* (< κάβουρας), *cilòna* (< χελώνα), *mantìle* (<μαντήλι), *àddhu* (<άλλος).

5) *Arguments pertaining to the structure of the Romance dialects of S. Italy.* These dialects, S. Calabrian and Sicilian, contain very few Latin archaisms and in general have a "recent" and "mixed" character, according to Rohlfs (1997: 253) and Fanciullo (2001: 70). For example, for several basic terms they exhibit not the inherited local vocabulary item of Latin origin that one finds in Northern Calabria, but a standard Italian term or a Norman loan. This, according to Rohlfs, suggests that the Romanisation of these areas took place rather late, in the medieval period, much later than northern Calabria. However, this last argument has received strong criticism from specialists in Romance linguistics in later years.[15]

Let us summarise the issue so far and reach some conclusions. The debate on the origin of S. Italian Greek was a major issue some decades ago, when linguistic scholarship was not adequately prepared to resolve it, having an imperfect knowledge of both Medieval Greek and Medieval Italian, and being unable to recognise situations of bilingualism and language shift. The same debate is a minor issue now, and modern scholarship has turned rather to synchronic issues – but now is the time for a mature re-evaluation of the origin question. Serious scholarly work on S. Italian Greek has increased enormously in the last decades; however, it is almost exclusively synchronic, functional/descriptive, and sociolinguistic in nature. Historical linguistic thinking and research needs to rise to the challenge.

[15] Cf. Trumper (1997: 355-6), with relevant bibliography. Note however that some of his arguments pertaining to the "Byzantine" nature of Greek loans in Calabrian must be re-evaluated.

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Greece as a postmodern example: *Boundary 2* and its special issue on Greece

Dimitris Papanikolaou
St Cross College, Oxford

However we may think of Greece, it is certainly not as "the origin of postmodernity". Readers of Perry Anderson's well-known introduction *The origins of postmodernity* (1998) may, however, have been intrigued to see Athens taking its place as one of the supposed origins in the first pages of the book. Playfully narrating the genesis of the idea of the postmodern as an itinerary with stops in various places of the world, Anderson starts his chapter titled "Crystallization" with a first stop in Athens (before moving on to Ihab Hassan's Cairo, Robert Venturi's Las Vegas, and Lyotard's Montreal). For someone going through these pages the effect is immediate: Anderson seems to be suggesting that the postmodern in its crystallized form was first born in Athens!

I hasten to add that the reason Athens earns its place in this genealogy of the postmodern is almost entirely accidental, and has to do with a Greek-American critic and academic, William Spanos, who decided, while in Athens in the early 1970s, to found the first journal of postmodern literature and theory. The journal, *Boundary 2*, subtitled "a journal of postmodern literature", was founded in 1972 at the State University of New York at Binghampton by Spanos and the author Robert Kroetsch, and became, as Anderson notes, "the real turning point" in the crystallization of the postmodern, the first scholarly publication to include the term

postmodern in its title as a qualifier for the word literature.[1] Anderson explains:

> [The creator of *Boundary 2*,] William Spanos, decided to found the journal as a result of his shock at US collusion with the Greek Junta, while a visiting teacher at the University of Athens. He later explained that "at the time, 'Modern' meant, literally, the Modernist literature that had precipitated the New Criticism and the New Criticism which had defined Modernism in its own autotelic terms." In Athens he sensed "a kind of complicity", between an established orthodoxy, in which he had been trained, and the callous officialdom he was witnessing. On returning to America, he conceived *Boundary 2* as a break with both. At the height of the Vietnam War, his aim was to "get literature back into the domain of the world", at a time of "the most dramatic moment of American hegemony and its collapse", and to demonstrate that "postmodernism is a kind of rejection, an attack, an undermining of the aesthetic formalism and conservative politics of the New Criticism."[2]

Influenced by Heidegger and by the larger appetite of the time for engaged progressive intellectual discourse, the first contributors of *Boundary 2* proposed that "the postmodern impulse was characterized by a desire for authentic existentialist historicity and could lead to a postmodern poetry that, in Robert Kern's words, would embody the presence of living speech, Heidegger's 'Saying'" (Bertens 1997: 10). For this particular early version of postmodernity, and at least for Spanos, as I will explain, Athens, Greece and Greek literature of the time provided some crucial characteristics that allowed it to be seen as paradigmatic.

Indeed, as early as its second appearance in 1973 (volume 1 no. 2, winter 1973), *Boundary 2*, the first "Journal of Postmodern Literature" dedicated a whole issue to Greece (guest-edited by

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[1] Some of the contributors to the first volume included: Edward Said ("Michel Foucault as an Intellectual Imagination"), David Antin on "Postmodernism in American poetry", Ihab Hassan, and James Curtis on "Marshall McLuhan and French Structuralism".

[2] Anderson 1998: 16; quotations from Spanos 1990: 1-3 and 16-17.

Nicos Germanacos). As this was the first special issue of the journal and the first to be devoted to a national literature, the effect was that Greece was treated as a paradigm for the idea of postmodernity the journal wanted to propose.

In what follows, I will try first to give a historical account of how this special issue of *Boundary 2* came about, before presenting in detail the "postmodern" reading of Greece offered by the editors of the journal. In hindsight, this is not a very easy task, since our understanding of the postmodern today has certainly moved on from the embryonic definition that was emerging in 1973. I will thus initially attempt to see *Boundary 2*'s claims about Greece on their own terms. I will then implicitly contrast them with later and current understandings of the postmodern, which, for working purposes, I understand as a cultural expression that: is largely antimodernist; engages with the socio-economic situation of late capitalism; uses new media and reflects on their impact; promotes undecidability at the expense of absolute values; defies cultural boundaries and subverts rigid cultural taxonomies; focuses on identities rather than identity; opens a playful dialogue with the past and avoids aesthetic canons while not escaping aestheticization; promotes pastiche and hybridization over modernist parody and irony; distrusts grand narratives and privileges space over time.

All this is not what *Boundary 2* originally understood as postmodern, and, indeed, in William Spanos's or Ihab Hassan's thinking of the period the postmodern is very often much closer to what criticism classifies today as high modernism or avant-garde – today's critics might condescend, pointing out that their understanding confuses the post-modern with the postmodern (see Bertens 1995: 37-52). On the other hand, we cannot downplay the important input of these figures and the journal itself in the multiple conceptualizations of postmodernity that followed it.

Even in the early 1970s there were huge differences between the understanding of postmodernity offered by, for example, Ihab Hassan (whose book *The dismemberment of Orpheus: toward a postmodern literature* and polemical article "POSTmodernISM"

were both published in 1971, setting the agenda), Leslie Fiedler (who argued persistently in the 60s for a re-appreciation of youth popular culture) and William Spanos's Heideggerian liberalism, let alone Edward Said, who was much more influenced by French poststructuralism. *Boundary 2* appeared at that crucial moment, and became a forum to synthesize diverse opinions proposed by American intellectuals about what was collectively understood as a new cultural phase, and a need for a new theoretical basis to analyse and comprehend it. Browsing its issues of the 1970s and early 1980s, one realizes that arguments that later came to dominate the discussion on the postmodern appeared in its pages early on. In closer review, it seems that *Boundary 2* is not as "archaeological" to our version of the postmodern as we think. Concepts and ideas have their own genealogies, a living background, an echo that remains constantly with them. In that genealogy of postmodernity constantly reshaping our current understanding, *Boundary 2* undoubtedly has a decisive place.

Having said that, in the last part of this paper I will attempt to contrast *Boundary 2*'s views with a more up-to-date assessment of postmodern elements in Modern Greek culture that, it goes without saying, can in no way be exhaustive or definitive. My main focus will be on literature, but I will also mention other cultural domains as well as the larger understanding of the postmodern as a sociocultural historical phase.

Before I go into the details of the *Boundary 2* special issue on Greece, I should add that the issue does not seem to have had any impact in that country whatsoever, either as a theoretical/poetic statement, or as a piece of intellectual history. It is indicative that the first book on the postmodern published in Greece (*Μοντέρνο-Μεταμοντέρνο*, 1988), begins with an essay by Olivier Revault d'Alonnes, in which he gives 1975 as the date for the genesis of the term. Neither his nor any other essay in that collection mentions *Boundary 2* and its 1973 special issue. Moreover, the postmodern, as a theoretical concept and cultural modality, has been persistently seen as coming from outside Greece and, unlike what happened with modernism, there has not been a sustained

effort to localize, to hellenize postmodernism as an intellectual stance, or to argue that its condition could be re-viewed as somehow indigenous. As Vassilis Lambropoulos remarked in 1988, "Postmodernism is the impossible paradox of contemporary Greek literature – a deviation, an aberration, a scandal. [...] It will not enter the mainstream because its tradition is quite foreign" (1988: 156).

Why, then, does this special issue on Greece by the now almost forgotten first journal of "postmodern literature" matter?

It does, one could say, simply because it is there, a statement about Greece in a journal that played a pioneering role in the central debate of recent intellectual history. Furthermore, looking back at this issue, and addressing its historical specificity from the point of view of Modern Greek Studies, gives us an interesting angle both to review and critique these first steps in the theorization of the postmodern. A second reason is that, as a rare and early statement about Greek postmodernism, this issue stands as a challenge for us to start a discussion about the possibility of reading postmodernism into Greek culture, which is long overdue.

Reading Greece as a postmodern topography

A claim that Greek literature is postmodern, coming from as early as 1973, sounds extremely dissonant to all of us who know that the concept of postmodernism as a condition and a cluster of critical discourses remained under-used in Greece until at least the 1990s. Moreover, most critics have yet to acknowledge the possibility of a classification such as "postmodern Greek literature", and the term which still takes precedence is that of belated (or uneven) modernism, of avant-garde and modernity (πρωτοπορία and νεωτερικότητα), terms largely associated with the modern and with modernist discourses.[3]

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[3] Even attempts such as the journal *Πάλι*, which could be seen as bringing about a rupture with modernism, are viewed as a combination of modernism and avant-garde; see Valaoritis 1997. On the other hand, major research projects on postmodernism have only registered the absence of a discussion about postmodernism in Greece. In Fokkema and Bertens 1997, for instance, Greece is almost the only European country

Boundary 2's editors seem to pre-empt this in a way, since they start their introduction by claiming that "*On the surface*, a great deal of the literature of contemporary Greece recalls earlier modes of modernism" (1973: 261, emphasis added). Nevertheless, one only needs to go a layer deeper, for the modernist surface to be dismantled and *a critical condition* to erupt:

> Greeks [after the Fall of Constantinople] – especially those committed to the life of the spirit – were driven into a world devoid of those religious, social, political, and creative points of reference that give the individual and the society in which he lives a sense of identity, which is to say, a sense of direction. They were driven, that is, across the frontiers of a dead past into *a boundary situation*. (ibid., emphasis added)

After independence things did not improve, since Greeks were "torn between the 'neo-classic' humanism of the Philhellenic West and its 'oriental' roots in Byzantium and the Greece of the Turkokratia", and consequently "the Greek imagination has been unable to reconcile the discontinuities" (1973: 262). Thus, the editors conclude,

> the Greek writer continues to confront the same unnamed boundary world with all its uncertainties, its anxieties – and its possibilities [...]. He [sic] encounters this boundary world, in other words, not as in the contemporary West, as a recent development, but as something like a heritage. [By contrast, the Western critic or writer] all too easily loses the feel of that *Ur*-realm, the encounter with which has almost always generated the most moving, if not the most "beautiful" literature, the dreadful sense of being on the boundary, in the zero zone, which demands the courage to be, the courage to risk oneself in one way or another for the sake of the human community. [...] Besides expressing their agony, therefore, perhaps the "unsophisticated" – the uncertain, the tentative, the heroic – voices

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that is not given a chapter (and actually, not even one mention) in the part of the book on "postmodernism in Europe".

> in the following pages have something very important to teach the West about the boundary. (262)

What is being argued here is that in Greece, a permanent feeling of living "this late" in history and "this marginally" in cultural geography establishes, always already, a postmodern condition. Greek culture, the editors imply, remains discontinuous in its reinventions of identities drawn from the past, and therefore becomes ideally postmodern because it forces writers to be always critically self-reflexive, to take a stance, to fight. All this, they argue, happens in spite of the modernist effort to bridge the gaps and "impose a cultural identity on this very old, new nation by alternately recovering the forms of Ancient Greece or of Byzantium" (ibid.). Put simply: it is Greece's uneven modernity, in both the cultural and the sociohistorical domain, that safeguards and sanctifies it as an islet of postmodernity.

The introduction, titled "Greek Writing and the Boundary: A foreword", is signed by William Spanos and Robert Kroetsch (and not by the guest editor of the issue, Nicos Germanacos). It is, however, identifiably written mainly by Spanos (who had the necessary knowledge, and also repeated similar claims in later single-authored texts). One could thus comment on the parallel between that view of Greek culture, and his own feelings about his Greek identity being under pressure and erasure while growing up as a child of Greek immigrants in USA. Being discriminated against and abused when he first went to school, he responded, he says in an interview, by blaming "my parents, [...] the fact that I was of Greek descent, [...] the language, the first language I spoke at home, which was Greek, and which our parents insisted on our speaking, and thinking that somehow *I* was wrong, somehow *we* were wrong, *my family* was wrong, somehow *the culture* my family was part of was wrong [...] [I understand now] how absolutely coerced I was by the hegemonic discourse that is dominant in America" (Spanos 1990: 6). It is interesting to note here the importance assigned to Greekness on a personal level. Returning to his own suppressed Greek identity, the critic also becomes able to revolt and liberate himself from American hegemony.

Spanos's own latent feeling of the contradictions inherent in his being a Greek-American seems here to have been the crucial catalyst for his later views on Greece as a "boundary situation" and a "critical condition". The very personal experience of diasporic Greekness as a boundary situation seems to have shaped the intellectual decision to see Greece as the paradigm for being and thinking in-the-boundary.

In the interview from which I have already quoted (conducted in 1990 by his successor to the editorship of *Boundary 2*, Paul Bové), Spanos also gives some clues about how he came to experience the particular sociopolitical situation in Greece of the 1970s as a critical space for the intellectual. He describes how crucial it was for him, as a young scholar on a visiting post in early-1970s Greece, to realize that he had to react against an oppressive regime. When his secretary was arrested and tortured by the secret police, he realized, he says, that something in the "remoteness" and "autonomy" of the literary text he was advocating as a young New Critic had to change.

> I don't think I began to understand the political imperative of an existential stance – of being-in-the-world – until I confronted the crassness, the self-serving vulgarity, of the American Embassy's response to the brutal imprisonment by the security police of my Greek colleague in the Fulbright office. That was the real occasion – the real beginning – of my self-conscious development as a literary intellectual and of my realization that the intellectual life is necessarily the life of practice.[4]

As we have seen, Spanos went on to advocate as a result the active engagement of literature and literary scholarship through a solid system of "postmodernity" conceived on the basis of Sartrean existentialism and the Heideggerian notions of being-in-the-world and actuality. This remained the intellectual obsession in *Boundary 2* for a long time and was perhaps more successfully used in Spanos's own critique of New Criticism, which he saw as

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[4] Spanos 1990: 13.

a spatializing enquiry draining the text and the reading process of their actual temporal presence, that is, as a negation of temporality in the name of spatiality.[5]

Putting aside questions one might raise, such as why a liberal American scholar went to Greece during the Junta with Fulbright assistance in the first place, or why he had to wait until his secretary was arrested to understand the oppression exerted by the regime, we need to consider both the reasons and the rhetorics of nominating Greece as a postmodern example in this particular instance. As I have already implied, Spanos's personal feelings about his cultural heritage (and possibly his feelings of nostalgia about a lost cultural background), as well as his own experience in Greece, have most certainly played a role in this theorization. An even more important factor was, I think, that by 1972 a very large circle of Greek intellectuals had become fully engaged in the struggle against the dictatorship, and had produced a series of subversive publications. The intellectual environment Spanos found when he went to Greece was as close as one can be to his ideal for a literature that constitutes a political act.[6]

Reviewing the famous anti-dictatorship Greek collection *Δεκαοχτώ κείμενα* (*Eighteen texts*) in a 1973 issue of the journal *Contemporary Literature*, Spanos would celebrate that publication as not "simply an aesthetic experience. It is, rather, a book of poetry, fiction and criticism that *collectively* constitutes a *political act* [...] this book does indeed release a kind of beauty precisely at the point where the word engages the world that denies it [...] [we have] to perceive the work as an act in its own complex context" (Spanos 1973: 364).

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[5] This is the main argument of his article "The Detective and the Boundary", published in the first issue of *Boundary 2*, autumn 1972.

[6] It is no coincidence that a fragment from a defiant woodcut print by Vasso Katraki (showing a person in front of a tree raising his hand) was chosen as the colophon of the journal (it would stay as such for at least twenty years) and that a group of poems by Yannis Ritsos was translated for the first issue of *Boundary 2*, and printed following Spanos's own polemical article, "The Detective and the Boundary".

Let me make this clear: it seems to me that the most important reason Greece takes its place within this particular view of the postmodern is a historical contingency, the dictatorship, and the way it has forced literature and culture to stage a *reaction* to it. Indeed, *Δεκαοχτώ κείμενα* would not only become the sole book presented (by Peter Bien this time) in the review section of the *Boundary 2* special issue on Greece; it would also serve, it seems, as its prototype.[7] The way this special issue is laid out, with a series of suggestive epigraphs on the first pages, Seferis's poem "Επί ασπαλάθων..." as its first text, followed by texts by writers from all generations and from across the political spectrum, more than reminds one of the layout of *Δεκαοχτώ κείμενα*.

Last but not least, this issue belongs, without a doubt, to a certain genre gathering momentum at the time: literary journals devoting special issues to Greece or other countries under a military regime. By issuing a volume on Greece, the first postmodern journal was proving how literary scholarship could also be politically engaged. Talking about Greece had pressing intellectual credentials; talking about its culture showed an insider's knowledge that perhaps other similar writing on Greece may have been seen as lacking.

Boundary 2's Greek postmodernism reminds one, in that sense, of certain much more recent postcolonial takes on Indian or African writing. Like them, it capitalized on the relative obscurity and remoteness of Greek writing, its exoticism, as it were, for American intellectuals, which it turned into pure difference, or, in Spanos's terms, into "being in the zero zone, in a boundary situation".

Defining postmodernity

We should not forget that, in the introduction to the special issue on Greece, the editors make their first attempt to offer an overarching definition of what they mean by postmodernity. The

[7] The similarity between parts of the introduction to the special issue and Spanos's own review of *Δεκαοχτώ κείμενα* published in *Contemporary Literature* is more than persuasive.

inaugural issue of *Boundary 2* may have offered articles that individually attempted to theorize on new literary trends, but it did not include any attempt at a definition, and did not have any introductory or other overarching statement. The issue on Greece is the first instance when "postmodern literature" is given a concrete and programmatic definition – with the help of Greek writing as a necessary example. Crucially, in its attempt to pin down postmodern literature, this issue presents something both illuminating and risky: it territorializes the postmodern.

This introduces a series of further complications. The most impressive is seeing postmodernity as an inherent condition in the case of Greece. Postmodernity is, according to the introduction at least, for Greek writers "something like a heritage". Greece, that is, is postmodern *avant la lettre*, it is always already postmodern. Moreover, taking into account that the situation described has much to do with the establishment of the modern state in the nineteenth century, postmodernity in Greece was precipitated, it is suggested, at the very moment when (and by the very process by which) Europe was inventing its own modernity. This more or less means, if we want to push the thought further, that European modernity operated by also creating islets of postmodernity on its margins that would eventually be drawn out of the wilderness as liberatory modes in a later phase.

One should recall here that ideas about space and time have been very central in our understanding of modernity and postmodernity. Fredric Jameson has influentially argued that while time is at the centre of an understanding of modernity, space becomes the main way of experiencing and expressing postmodernity (Jameson 1991; 1994). On the other hand, Spanos seems to have had a tendency to celebrate postmodernity as a new modernity which would defy what he saw as the spatializing (over time) tendency of New Criticism; his "in-the-world" literature is seen as a victorious return of time to upstage space (Spanos 1972). What is crucial in the case of the *Boundary 2* issue is that Greece becomes the place par excellence where *time and space collapse into each other*. Time is spatialized (constant boundary) and its

topography gives rise to the constant synchrony of (re)act(ion), crisis and agony. That is to say that in the case of Greece, the boundary cuts through space and time to introduce a new metaphysics – a metaphysics of actuality.

But let us take another look at the issue's material. It presents different generations of poets, from Cavafy to Valtinos, Mastoraki and Poulios; there is, however, a preference for the Seferis and Elytis of the late 1960s, enough Cavafy but no Palamas, more poetry than prose. There is a limited attempt to include a discussion of art forms other than literature, in the texts by musician Theodore Antoniou (on contemporary theatre music) and artist A. Tassos (on Antonis Kiriakoulis). Many texts have a political subtext: the issue starts with Seferis's "Επί ασπαλάθων...", includes Cavafy's "Πλην Λακεδαιμονίων", Valtinos's "Η κάθοδος των εννιά", Anagnostakis's political poems. There is also an emphasis on literature that deals with the "quest for identity", both national and personal – tellingly, the last piece in the collection is Taktsis's short story "Τα ρέστα".

A centrepiece of the special issue is the long interview/ discussion between the guest editor, Nicos Germanacos, and three well-known Greek writers of the time. Its insistence on the pragmatics of the literary profession in Greece and long description of the way Greeks see themselves and their past and use symbolic language in their literature can be viewed as an extension of the issue's introductory note. There are also questions about censorship, the authors' decision not to publish in the first years of the dictatorship, and a handful of anti-Junta insinuations. The word postmodernism, though, never appears, and each time Germanacos attempts to introduce questions that could pave the way for it, the Greek authors retaliate by persistently underlining the extent to which their country still has to catch up on its own process of modernity.

"Personally, I don't think I have any problems of identity. At least, no more than any other human being," answers Valtinos, to a question about how much Modern Greek identity is weighed down by the classical past. He continues: "I don't understand why

this thing you call 'the awful burden of the past' should weigh on my shoulders, or on my shoulders only and not, say, on an Englishman's" (279). And a little later the same author comments on the political situation and the way it affects expression: "on the one hand you have a nation constantly struggling and bleeding to stand upright, to see a sunny day, and on the other a bunch of carpetbaggers, an untalented jaundiced bunch of usurpers constantly shortcircuiting the people's aspirations."

All in all, exploring modern identity and political commitment in literature seem to have been the key criteria behind the editing of this special issue. In any case, the framework set out by the introduction would allow almost any Greek writing touching on identity and politics to be called postmodern. This could even apply to the modernist modalities of Seferis's poetry, or the rational and emancipatory statements of the three writers in the interview with Nicos Germanacos. On the other hand, readers of the issue today can acknowledge postmodern characteristics in Valtinos and Ioannou, or the poems by Poulios and Jenny Mastoraki. It would be more difficult to make such a claim for the poetry by Ritsos collected under the title *Corridors and stairs*, and almost impossible for other texts, such as those by Tsirkas, Elytis, Karouzos and Anagnostakis. From a contemporary viewpoint, therefore, it is clear that the issue brought together both modernist and postmodernist texts and tendencies, and its overall importance was performative rather than descriptive: it pointed towards the possibility of a departure from modernism in Greek literature, without mapping it exhaustively.

Whither the Greek postmodern?

I am by no means the first to point out the problems that theorizations of postmodernity have when they attempt to construct a coherent narrative, and present the postmodern as a distinct period, a mode of production (cultural, social and economic), or, in the words of Fredric Jameson, a concrete narrative. Jameson himself has painstakingly argued about the unavoidable necessity, but also the violence that a periodization along these lines would

imply (Jameson 1998). To put it simply, to nominate the postmodern and define postmodernity seems much more difficult than to theorize about it. In a sense the postmodern ceases to be so postmodern the very moment it gets inscribed in the critical discourse purporting to define it. This is as much of a problem now as it was when the term first started being used extensively. Thus to speak about "postmodernism in Greece" runs the risk today, it seems to me, of as many problems as it did back in the 1970s.

As I have already mentioned, literary criticism in Greece has been reluctant to adopt the category of the postmodern as viable; some critics have seen this as evidence of Greek culture's structural inability to nurture a postmodern expression (Lambropoulos 1988) and others have argued that, in the absence of a high modernism that would establish an autonomous realm for art, an indigenous postmodernism is almost impossible (Jusdanis 1987).

On the other hand, there has been some effort to map specific characteristics of recent Greek writing that can be seen as inaugurating a Greek postmodern. A persuasive argument is that if there is a larger trend in world literature that we understand as postmodernism, then it does not make sense to argue that Greek writers remained impervious to, intertextually blocked from, a dialogue with it (Beaton 1999: 21-3). Critics have also started locating postmodern elements in many Greek texts, in characteristics ranging from formal aspects such as the techniques of allusion and parody or the use of magical realism, to characterization and the use of language, the presentation of self and otherness or Greekness and the idea of history and the historical narrative in them. In doing so, they also attempt to trace its emergence in the cultural fabric of Greek society of the twentieth century (Tziovas 1993; 2003).

On the basis of these and many other similar analyses, it is clear that we can no longer argue that postmodernism is impossible in Greece. This becomes even more evident if we include a review not only of literature, but also of art, architecture, historiography, music and popular culture trends – and certainly if we accept that, just as it is fruitless to think of postmodernism outside

postmodernity and late capitalism, it is also flawed to think that a postmodernism-free culture can exist in the global socio-economic context of late capitalism.

The heart of the matter is not whether elements that are linked to postmodern expression can be found in modern Greek writing or art. Anybody can point out postmodern elements in, say, *Tristram Shandy*[8] and someone who would aim to do the same for Roidis's *Pope Joan* would not have a difficult time either. The point is not whether this or that text has postmodern characteristics; it is, rather, whether the text's postmodern features make sense as a whole and help create a meaningful relationship with its context, the cultural institutions, the sociopolitical, economic and cultural reality that envelops the work of art and its (re)production. Whether, that is, these features evolve into a modality that is meaningful within the sociohistorical space in which they are uttered.[9]

The problem with *Boundary 2* was not that it imposed postmodernism on a Greece that could not have had it; it was, instead, that it tried to produce the Greek postmodern by articulating it not so much with the Greek reality of the time, but with American intellectual needs. Greece makes sense as a postmodern example, as presented by *Boundary 2*, only in the context of *Boundary 2*, that is, within the circles of the American postmodernists of the early 1970s. We still have to search out those other contexts in

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[8] Spanos himself, in a later text, claimed as postmodern the following works, among others: Euripides's *Orestes*, Petronius's *Satyricon*, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Dickens's *Bleak House*, also claiming that "postmodernism is not fundamentally a chronological event, but rather a permanent mode of human-understanding" (Spanos 1979: 107).

[9] Here the critics who argue the impossibility or structural marginality of Greek postmodernism may have a point, in that they imply that, even though certain postmodern aspects appeared in Greek texts, they never made sense within the Greek cultural economy. But in doing so, in presenting a certainty about the "impossibility" of postmodernism in Greece, they fail to notice alternative developments that have changed the picture.

which what we understand as postmodern occurred and became meaningful in Greece.

I would nevertheless like to close this discussion by taking up the challenge the *Boundary 2* 1973 issue presents us with, and hazarding an attempt to discuss some postmodern trends in Greek culture related to ideas and texts presented by the journal.

1) *The relationship with the classical past* as an unresolved riddle of identity, especially as it is paired with Greece's uneven modernization. This is, to be sure, a relationship that has been scrutinized by a number of Greek theorists, who have read it through notions such as "aporia", "oxymoron", "gap", "belatedness", "dream" and recently Vangelis Calotychos's "ab-sense". Such theorizations show how fertile this ground can be for a postmodern expression, if indeed there is the willingness to articulate the identity gap through postmodern modalities. In short, I would suggest that a defiance or an overturning of modernism, especially in the cultural domain, can come and has come in recent Greek culture from a review of the "identity pressure" the classics exert over the country's culture. This is certainly not tantamount to claiming a residual postmodernity that has always been there in Greece, as *Boundary 2* did. On the contrary, Seferis's use of the classical past, for instance, does not have anything to do with the use of the classical (inter)text in Matesis's *Ο παλαιός των ημερών*, Bost's *Μήδεια*, Gourogiannis's *Το ασημόχορτο ανθίζει*, the *Μήδεια* of Omada Edafous, Kouroupos/Heimonas's *Πυλάδης*, Eva Stefani's *Ακρόπολις*, Houvardas and Marmarinos's takes on ancient drama, and so on and so forth.[10]

[10] Research work that is being done at the moment shows, for instance, how much recent theatre producers in Greece have engaged in postmodern interpretations of classical texts that, while in contact with similar readings of their colleagues abroad, use these new avenues of expression in order to construct a further dialogue with their own, Greek tradition of reading the classics. In other words, many of the new uses of classical texts in theatre are not only self-consciously postmodern, they do so in a manner that makes their interventions meaningful in the larger context of Greek culture, thus producing a Greek postmodern.

2) *The role of the dictatorship in precipitating postmodern modes of expression in Greece.* As Spanos realized, the Junta did indeed create a sense of urgency that made artists adopt new models of expression to cope with the situation. The dictators established an oppressive regime and used the discourse of economic modernization and the language of myth and the past, as its main propaganda tools. A discussion among intellectuals about the meaning of Greek identity and the pressures of Hellenism resurfaced at that very moment as a resistance to the absurdity of the dictatorship's discourse. And one could argue that modes of expression able to reach beyond modernist readability were at the time used for these particular reasons – postmodern expression being the only way both to make sense of the situation and create subversive work.

Postmodernism, *pace* Spanos, was certainly not the only way, and actually much reaction to the Junta's inconsistent, inconsequential and often near-psychotic discourse came through very modernist tactics. In *Δεκαοχτώ κείμενα*, for instance, the modernist strategy of Seferis's "Οι γάτες τ' Άη Νικόλα", or of the rational critique of *katharevousa* by Argyriou in his essay, is contrasted to the more postmodern modalities of the texts by Heimonas, Valtinos, and Nora Anagnostaki, not to mention the collection's parody by Bost in his series *18 Αντι-κείμενα*, published in the magazine *Αντί* in 1973-74. In the larger context, the modernism of Theodorakis and the work he produced after moving to France could be contrasted with the postmodern hybrids of Savvopoulos, especially in performance in the clubs of Plaka; the high modernist framework of Angelopoulos's monumental film *Ο Θίασος* could be contrasted with the extremely popular TV series *Εκείνος κι εκείνος,* written by Kostas Mourselas. I venture the suggestion that after 1974, modernist modalities gained the foreground again with postmodern elements moving to the background until well into the 1980s. The reasons for this are to be found not only in the cultural domain, but also in the socio-economic structures and political discourses of that period, areas which I do not have space to discuss here.

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To conclude: I have presented and contextualized here a very early attempt to define postmodernity, and have analysed its use of Greece and Greek writing as a paradigm. I have explained how this view was produced but have also shown the limits of this attempt. However, my aim was to characterize *Boundary 2* as both limited by its own specificity and as extremely helpful in stimulating us to think about the Greek postmodern. I have thus moved in two directions: on the one hand to analyse and critique the journal's special issue, and on the other, to take its cue and see it as a challenge. My larger claim is that even though the postmodern in Greece may not reside exactly where *Boundary 2* said it did, we need to look to the period of its publication and the literary and cultural texts it presents, in order to establish the genealogy of the Greek postmodern. In other words: *Boundary 2* reminds us that the "scandal of postmodernism" has happened in Greece. What remains is to find the scene of the crime.

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Agnes Smith: a Victorian traveller through Greece and Cyprus

Mary Roussou-Sinclair
University of Cyprus

The subject of this paper is a Victorian traveller whose connection with Cambridge University, and especially, as its benefactor, with Westminster College, was very close.

Agnes Smith and her twin Margaret were born in 1843 in Irvine, Scotland. Their mother died when they were three weeks old, and their father, a well-off lawyer, never remarried. They had attended Irvine Academy, the local school, and at the age of fifteen they went to boarding school at Birkenhead. They left the boarding school when they were eighteen for a finishing school in Kensington. The death of their father in 1866, when they were twenty-three years old, was an important, though painful, turning point in their lives, as they were left with no other close relatives and with no serious prospects of getting married, but with a substantial fortune which eventually allowed them to embark on their journeys to the East and to carry out their subsequent extraordinary scholarly achievements. The prospect of living a quiet provincial Scottish life, as their sex and pious Presbyterian upbringing would have otherwise suggested, was slowly but surely forgotten. Having already visited France, Germany and Italy, they decided to travel to the Middle East, accompanied by Grace Blyth, a teacher with whom they had become close friends at their Kensington school.[1]

[1] There is so far one biography of the twin sisters, written by A. Whigham Price (1985). Dr Janet Soskice, of Jesus College, Cambridge, has completed a new biography, which will be published in the near future. See also Riggs 2004: 35-7. D. K. Sakellaropoulos, the editor of the Greek monthly periodical *Απόλλων*, wrote a short biography of

That first journey in 1868, from London to Constantinople by train and subsequently to Port Said and Alexandria by boat, and eventually to Cairo and to a Nile trip, extended to Jerusalem and the Holy Places. The journey was described in Agnes Smith's first travel book, *Eastern pilgrims*, published in 1870; the itinerary was very similar to the road taken by several other travellers before them, in the tradition of the Grand Tour.[2] The mere title of Chateaubriand's famous *Itinéraire de Paris à Jerusalem*, first published in 1811, serves to characterize the journeys of these earlier travellers. However, the title of Agnes Smith's book suggests a trip with a primarily religious drive, despite the fact that the Holy Land occupies a relatively small place in the narrative. According to Johannes Fabian, we must distinguish between the travels with a religious purpose which took place before the eighteenth century, and the secular travels of the established bourgeoisie, which were carried out from that century onwards.[3] In the case of Agnes Smith, we cannot apply the distinction in such a clear-cut manner, because her first travel book combines religious with secular purposes, and this is due to her very strong Presbyterian convictions. The latter were to take an interesting shape in her book on Greece and, subsequently contribute to the development of her interest in biblical scholarship.

The interest of the twin sisters in the East never ceased after that first journey. On the contrary, it become more and more systematic, and it took the shape of a well-planned strategy, which included the learning of the relevant languages, starting with Greek. Mr Vice of King's College taught them, but their real teacher of Modern Greek was Professor John Stuart Blackie, who had been appointed Professor of Greek at Edinburgh in 1852. Through him, they acquired the modern pronunciation and the firm belief that the notion of Greek being a dead language was nothing but "an Oxford superstition". Blackie's views, a little at

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Agnes Smith, followed by a review of her book on Greece, *Glimpses of Greek life and scenery*: Sakellaropoulos 1885: 375-7.

[2] Smith 1870.

[3] Fabian 1983: 6.

odds with the British Classical tradition of the time, were highly praised by Constantine Cavafy, in his article, "Ο Καθηγητής Βλάκη περί της Νεοελληνικής", published in 1891.[4] It seems that the notion of continuity between the ancient and the modern Greek languages struck a sensitive chord, not only in certain intellectual circles in Greece, called in a somewhat ironical fashion "οι λογιότατοι", but also among the common people.[5] Konstantinos Dimaras, writing on the life and times of K. Paparrigopoulos, the major nineteenth-century Greek historian, has suggested that the extensive use of *katharevousa*, from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, reflected the wish of the Greeks to emphasize the continuity between the Ancient Greeks and themselves.[6]

Looking at the periodical press of the period, for example the monthly *Απόλλων*, published by D. Sakellaropoulos in Piraeus, we find articles expressing considerable interest in the subject.[7] This interest must be connected to the ideologies that shaped the Modern Greek nation and are best crystallized in Paparrigopoulos's *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, published between 1860 and 1874.[8]

In early January 1883, Agnes and Margaret Smith, aged 40, embarked on a trip to Greece. They stayed in the country until May of the same year, accompanied once more by Grace Blyth. This journey led Agnes to write her second travel book, which was published in 1884, under the title *Glimpses of Greek life and scenery*.[9] They arrived in Piraeus on 14 February 1883 and were taken immediately to Athens by carriage, by "the commissionaire from the Hôtel d'Angleterre", where they stayed until 8 April. Having already visited Aegina, Sounion and Marathon, they

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[4] Reprinted in Cavafy 2003: 53-7.
[5] Politis 1993: 107-10.
[6] Dimaras 1986: 83ff.
[7] "Βλαίκιος περί της συνεχείας της Ελληνικής γλώσσης", *Απόλλων* 66 (Ιούν. 1890) 1022-5, "Περί της προφοράς της Ελληνικής γλώσσης", *Απόλλων* 67 (Ιούλ. 1890) 1038-42.
[8] Dimaras 1986: 96ff., 181 and Politis 1993: 36-47.
[9] Smith 1884.

continued around the Peloponnese, starting from Corinth and going via Mycenae, Argos, Tripolis, Sparta, through the Messenian plain to Vassai, Olympia, Mega Spelaion, Kalavryta and Lepanto. They subsequently crossed the Gulf of Corinth and continued to Galaxidi, Delfi, Arachova, Chaeronia, Orchomenos, Thebes, Eleusis and back to Athens. They then decided to leave Greece, in May 1883, "as Athens was getting intolerably hot", and took the Austrian Lloyd's boat to Trieste. This gave them the opportunity to have a very brief look at the town of the island of Corfu, as the boat made a three-hour stop there.

The book extends to 352 pages and is divided into twenty-one chapters. Four chapters are devoted to Attica, including Athens, which is examined in two separate chapters. Interestingly, in the two final chapters of the book the author discusses in a rather matter-of-fact, if not academic, manner "The language and character of the Modern Greeks" and draws a "Comparison of Syrian and Grecian travel". Finally, the book includes five illustrations and a very detailed map with their itinerary marked in red ink.

Here we should look briefly at one aspect of the European literary landscape in which Agnes Smith's book was written: a background of European prejudice against the young Greek Kingdom.[10] Such a prejudice sprang primarily from political considerations. In 1883 Philhellenism was definitely not the dominant sentiment in Britain, as it had been a few decades previously. The severely critical attitude towards Greece was due first of all to the unwise manner – to British and European eyes at least – in which the Kingdom of Greece was conducting its internal and external affairs, as a young, semi-democratic state with an important geostrategic position facing the Ottoman Empire. The problem was mainly its irredentist aspirations codified under the term *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*: the grand political purpose of enlarging the territory of the Kingdom by including all the unredeemed Greek-inhabited territories still occupied by the Ottoman Empire. That policy was the

[10] Dimaras 1986: 93.

main trend in Greek political thought from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards.[11] Its more serious debacles were the defeat of Greece by the Ottoman Empire in the war of 1897 and the Asia Minor Campaign and the disastrous events of 1922. But in the 1880s it was the most important political issue in Greece and dominated the country's internal political life. It was also a source of friction with the European powers; the latter did not want further instability in the area. The Greeks, instead of concentrating on organizing the country as a modern European state, albeit a small one, aspired to gain more territory.[12] Thus to the Peloponnese and Sterea, the two regions of which the kingdom was originally composed, they added the Ionian Islands, given by Britain in 1864, and Thessaly and part of Epirus, granted to them in 1881.[13]

The negative European attitude towards Greece is also evinced in the travel literature of the period. The turning point was Edmond About's famous *La Grèce contemporaine* of 1854, translated into English in 1857, and the same author's *Le Roi des montagnes*, published in 1865.[14] These two books were followed by the acerbic comments of the American Mark Twain in *The Innocents Abroad*, published in 1869, and of William Thackeray, which feature in his book *From Cornhill to Cairo*, published in 1846.[15] Of course there were exceptions to this anti-philhellenic sentiment, but even these people sometimes expressed the feeling that Greece was "un singulier mélange de féodalité et de démocratie. [...] Aussi la Grèce est-elle, en politique, le pays des faits bizarres, des cas étranges, des aventures fabuleuses", as Pierre Antoine Grenier politely put it in his book *La Grèce en 1863*.[16] Nevertheless, there had been a considerable change in the King-

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[11] Dimaras 1985: 405-18; Kitromilides 1984: 107-21.
[12] Politis 1993: 163-4.
[13] Dertilis 1983: 145-74.
[14] About 1857 and 1865.
[15] Eisner 1993: 125, 145-7, 167-8.
[16] Berchet 1985: 222.

dom of Greece and especially in Athens, between its establishment in 1833 and the 1880s.

It is evident that despite and because of these critical views of Greece, Agnes Smith's book was greeted as belonging to the tradition of Philhellenism, which had been interrupted now for several decades. The Philhellenism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century derived not only from the rediscovery of the Classical ruins of Greece but also from a Neoclassical idealism which suggested that the liberation of the Greek people from Ottoman rule would be the means of reviving the cultural glories of Ancient Greece. The French Revolution, in particular, inspired European travellers and other writers to picture Greece as a land which could develop and flower culturally and politically through the freedom of thought and expression which would result from the expulsion of the Ottomans. Even so, reservations were expressed as to whether the ignorant, disorganized and factious Greeks could be the agents of such a restoration.

By the mid-nineteenth century such Philhellenism was a thing of the past. On the other hand the impact in Greece of the new European contempt for that country, which had taken two decades to develop, seems to have been sudden. Edmond About's two books (published in 1854 and 1865 respectively) caused such a furore that the Greeks themselves wrote books to restore the damage done, admittedly not explicitly avowing that purpose.[17] Greek reviewers of European books on Greece tend to focus on the question of the fairness or otherwise of their depiction of the country.[18] Such an approach led to a simple categorization of the books under review as either philhellenic or antihellenic.

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[17] See for example the very thorough *La Grèce telle qu'elle est*, written in French by Petros Moraitinis and published in Paris in 1877.

[18] See for example a review published in *Εβδομάς* in 1885: "Υπό τον τίτλον *Η Ελλάς τω 1883* εδημοσιεύθη άρτι υπό M. B. Girard μελέτη περί της Ελλάδος, ήτις δεν είνε έργον φαντασίας αυτού προς επίδειξιν πνεύματος, αλλά σοβαρόν έργον, εν ω εξετάζεται η Ελλάς πολιτικώς, διοικητικώς, οικονομικώς, στρατιωτικώς και εμπορικώς". *Εβδομάς*, B', 64 (19 Μαΐου 1885) 237.

The Greeks naturally saw Agnes Smith's book as an attempt to put the record straight, and it was their approval which was gained in the first place. In the Greek newspaper *'Εσπερος*, which was published in the German city of Leipzig, we read:

> Ελάβομεν εκ Λονδίνου βιβλίον τα μάλιστα ενδιαφέρον ημάς τους Έλληνας, τίτλον φέρον *Glimpses of Greek Life and Scenery*. Του βιβλίου τούτου συγγραφεύς είναι η λογία Σκωτίς δεσποσύνη Agnes Smith [...]. Η Κυρία αύτη, περιηγηθείσα προ δύο περίπου ετών την Ελλάδα, εμφορουμένη υπό φιλελληνικωτάτων αισθημάτων, κατέθεσε εν τω βιβλίω τούτω τας εντυπώσεις της και έκρινε τα παρ' ημίν λίαν ευνοϊκώς. Ο ακραιφνής αυτής φιλελληνισμός την προέτρεψε να εκμάθη και την νεωτέραν ελληνικήν γλώσσαν, ην μετά πολλής ευχερείας γράφει.[19]

> We have received from London a book which is very interesting for us Greeks, entitled *Glimpses of Greek Life and Scenery*. The author of the book is the Scottish littérateur Miss Agnes Smith [...]. This lady toured Greece approximately two years ago. Full of fervent philhellenic sentiments, she has put down her impressions of our country. Her judgements are very favourable. Her extreme philhellenic sentiment has also led her to learn the modern Greek language, which she writes with great facility.

This notice is followed by a letter from Agnes Smith herself (in *katharevousa*), addressed to the editor of *Έσπερος*; immediately afterwards comes a translated extract from *Glimpses* itself, for the benefit of the periodical's readers ("χάριν των ημετέρων αναγνωστών"). It is not surprising then that the book was very soon translated into *katharevousa* and published in Leipzig in 1885, by Ioannis Pervanoglou, the editor of *Έσπερος*.[20]

Let us turn now to the book itself. Its interpretation depends heavily on a basic question, that of the motives and purposes of a middle-class Scottish Presbyterian woman travelling in the Greece

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[19] *Έσπερος* 68 (Φεβρ.1884) 306-7. Most probably the review and translation are by the editor I. Pervanoglou.
[20] Smith 1885.

of the 1880s. This woman provides us with a partial answer, in the first page of her narrative:

> Returning from the Holy Land in 1869, I spent a few days in Athens. The sight of its wonderful ruins, and of that vigorous national life which contrasts so strikingly with the desolations of Asia Minor, aroused in me an irrepressible wish to learn more of the country and people. (1884: 1)

The "wonderful ruins" provoke her admiration on many occasions, especially in Athens. Besides Murray's and Baedeker's travel guides, she quotes Christopher Wordsworth, the nephew of the poet, who was well known in England for his two books, *Athens and Attica* (1836) and *Greece: pictorial, descriptive and historical* (1840). The ruins, which remained a constant attraction for all travellers, apart from being the standing witnesses of ancient Greek civilization, were significant in Agnes Smith's case for yet another reason: they were known as stations of St Paul's journeys in Greece. St Paul had preached the Gospel in places such as the Areopagus and Corinth:

> Across the road rises the Areopagus, while betwixt it and you lay the Agora, so full of most sacred memories. Down there Socrates was wont to stroll of a morning. There Paul lifted up his voice to warn the idol-loving city. [...] Here the seeds of truth were sown in minds which centuries had prepared for their reception. Christianity had Palestine for its cradle, but it came to manhood in the schools of Attica. (1884: 39)

The passage is important because it sums up Agnes Smith's defence of Greece as the school in which Christian belief matured. In her view, the ground had already been prepared, allowing Christianity to flourish there. In several passages she juxtaposes St Paul with Socrates, since, as she says, "the Spirit who spoke to Paul, spoke also, though less clearly, to Socrates." In the same vein, she quotes verses from Sophocles and especially Euripides, which demonstrate that the basis of monotheism already existed in

the Classical period.[21] This is an interesting justification for the importance of classical studies in the British curriculum. The thorough study of classical letters and history allowed comparisons between the Athenian and the British Empire.

> We are, in some respects, the modern representatives of these Athenians. We have the same passionate love for freedom, and we have inherited a maritime empire. [...] And can we avoid their mistakes? [...] Shall we yield to an insane lust for military glory, until we find a second Syracuse? Will the love of luxury and pleasure make our children the ready slaves of another Philip? Surely, our purer faith will keep us from such a fate! (1884: 15)

Between these lines an anxiety for the future of the British Empire can also be read. The issue was much discussed in Britain at the time. The 1880s witnessed the replacement of mid-Victorian confidence with pessimism and uncertainty about the future. Such an anxiety had been expressed earlier by writers such as Carlyle, who condemned the evils of democracy, free trade, franchise and political corruption in his famous article "Shooting Niagara: and after?", published in 1867 in *Macmillan's Magazine*.[22] Agnes Smith holds a more optimistic view than Carlyle as to the future of Britain, based on the strength of Christian faith.

There is indeed a tendency in the travel writing of the period to validate biblical truth on the spot, and thus the previous interest in the Greek classical heritage shifts to the geographical area of the Holy Land.[23] Agnes Smith's *Eastern pilgrims* definitely follows that trend. But in her *Glimpses of Greek life and scenery* we get an insight into the views of a Scottish Presbyterian woman, who, perhaps not surprisingly, is very sympathetic to the Greek

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[21] Interestingly, similar ideas are expressed by Petros Vrailas-Armenis, in his book *Περί της ιστορικής αποστολής του Ελληνισμού*, published in 1872 in Corfu. See Moutsopoulos 1970: 122-7.

[22] Carlyle 1869: 340-80. See the discussion on the ideologies in the period of British high imperialism in Roussou-Sinclair 2002: 57-63.

[23] Eisner 1993: 128.

Orthodox Church.[24] On encountering a funeral procession in Athens, she comments that "there is something very touching in their simple way of doing it. I, at least, felt as if a Greek funeral were more Christian, in some respects, than a British one" (1884: 55). As for the prospects for unification between the Protestant and the Orthodox churches, she finds it highly unlikely, "as so many [of the latter's] prayers are addressed to the Virgin" (1884: 57). There are many instances in the narrative where the author makes favourable remarks about the Orthodox Church. One possible explanation for such a standpoint is the common ground of anti-Catholicism. Despite the fact that the Orthodox Church is ritualistic, its ceremonies evoke a simpler spirit, closer to the original practices and beliefs of Christianity. The simpler spirit which Agnes Smith sees in Orthodox ceremonies is in turn far distanced from High Church rituals. Behind Agnes Smith's sympathy for the Orthodox Church it is perhaps possible to read her disapproval, as a fervent Presbyterian, of the High Anglican Church's ritualism.[25]

What of her philhellenic sentiments, so much praised by the editor of *Έσπερος*? She admires the Greeks as a people who gained their freedom through a revolution. She holds them up as an example demonstrating the potential for the nationalities composing the Turkish Empire (as she puts it) to liberate themselves. She notes that the Greeks have been called the English of the East: this compliment is based on their love of both order and liberty and on their commercial enterprise. She notes that Greece's geographical position favours commercial development. She admits that the Greeks have not come up to the expectations held for them in Byron's day, and that the Greek state suffers from certain disadvantages: small size, the absence of manufacturing industry, foreign debts. But she asserts that alone among eastern nations

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[24] In the biographical sketch published in *Απόλλων*, mentioned above (n. 1), we read that she learnt Modern Greek in order to be able to read the New Testament in the original.

[25] Wilson 2002: 365-9.

(the classification is interesting) the Greeks are open to western ideas (1884: 336ff.).

During the second half of the nineteenth century the travel books on Greece display, side by side with their interest in the monuments and other aspects of the classical heritage, a concern for the condition of the modern country – its politics, its economic condition and other matters. This concern is due to the significant and rapid changes that had taken place in Greek life from 1832 onwards, and of course to the fact that Greece was a new – albeit small – nation-state, trying hard to overcome the difficulties caused by four hundred years of Ottoman rule.[26]

Another issue which considerably blackened the country's image in Europe was that of attacks on travellers by brigands. The unfortunate events of the Dilessi murders in 1870 caused a real turmoil in the relationship between Greece and Great Britain, and turned British public opinion against the Greeks. These events left such an impression on the consciousness of European travellers that Agnes Smith, thirteen years later, points to the "spot where the brigands seized the Englishmen" (1884: 77); and in another instance: "Now, it happened that we had still a lurking fear of brigands, not being yet aware that the Greek shepherds are a most simple and kindly race" (1884: 77). But this fear is soon completely forgotten and discussed in a manner which mocks the heavily romanticized Byronic ideal of Greece:

> "As for danger", said Edith, "there is more in London. I have actually been asked if I do not fear returning to a country where I may be blown up by dynamite at any moment. Byron's lines about the Acro-Corinthus are magnificent", she continued, "but they are slightly exaggerated. It is impossible that all the blood shed around it could cover the plain of the isthmus, or the bones of the slain make a hill to rival it in bulk." (1884: 111)

Agnes Smith follows the above-mentioned trend of European travel writing in her book, something that is also suggested by her

[26] Politis 1993: 15-29, 90ff.

title. Furthermore, both she and her sister are so eager to get into the spirit of the place that they take every opportunity, especially when in Athens, to do so. They stroll in the streets of Athens conversing with the shopkeepers; they go to the Greek Parliament twice to attend the sessions and to the philological society *Παρνασσός* to hear a lecture by a certain Archimandrite; and they pay a visit to Heinrich Schliemann's house. On the other hand, they are able to read newspapers and periodicals in Greek, and this greatly enhances their insight into the life and current affairs of the period. They read *Έσπερος, Αιών* and *Εστία.* As for the language of these publications, "One might indeed take a number of *Αιών*, or of the *Εστία*, without being able to tell whether they were written in the ancient or in the modern tongue" (1884: 333). By "modern tongue" she means the *katharevousa* and not the vernacular spoken by ordinary people. Agnes Smith also mentions a satirical newspaper, which they avoid reading (after a first exposure) and whose name they do not even mention: "the only comic print we saw was vulgar and not too moral" (1884: 333).

She expresses no doubt as to the continuity between those who fought at Thermopylae and Marathon on the one hand and those who fought in the Greek Revolution on the other. In so doing, she aligns herself with the Greek historiography of the period, which defended the continuity between Ancient and Modern Greece as the ideology with which to bind together the new nation.[27] The attacks of Jacob Fallmerayer rebutting the classical provenance of Modern Greeks were a severe blow to the Greek self-image in that respect. Fallmerayer had argued that after the many influxes of Slavic peoples during the Middle Ages there was very little left of true Greek blood. Interestingly, Agnes Smith seems to be a little surprised when she comes across people who speak the Albanian dialect in some villages in Attica and the Peloponnese. She notes the fact but does not comment on it:

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[27] Veloudis 1982.

> Angelo told us that the people here speak an Albanian dialect, which is passing strange, seeing that we are in Attica. (1884: 64)
> The tongue which they themselves use is Albanian, the reverend father knowing just enough of Greek to read the service. [...] Mother and daughter wear the national dress, as indeed do all the Peloponnesian peasants. [...] Edith showed them the Alphabeterion and the New Testament, but they could read neither. (1884 106-7)

In the same vein, the issue of continuity between the Modern Greeks and their ancestors provides Greek historiography and political thought of the period with a justification for the pursuit of the *Megali Idea*. The author comes across these views by reading "A History of the Revolution", written for the use of schools in Athens, and subsequently presents us with her own views on the *Megali Idea*:

> And Greece dreams now not only of freedom for her still enslaved sons, but of an Eastern Empire ruled by a Constantine born in the purple of King George's nursery. To attain this, she must have a princely leader, possessing a strong arm, a clear brain, and determined will.
>
> What will Europe say to the ambitious design? We cannot tell; but we, who believe that Greece's true glory existed before the age of Macedonia's Philip, would confine ourselves in the meantime to a strong sympathy with the wish of a heroic little people to bring back to their common hearth all who speak the same beautiful tongue. (1884: 225)

There is some evidence in the text that Agnes Smith supports the policy of the *Megali Idea*, completely antithetical to British policy, because she is Scottish. She readily compares Greeks and Scots, finding many affinities between the two nations. This is perhaps another vein of her philhellenic sentiment. On the other hand, her strong Presbyterian convictions allow her to understand

and appreciate the connection between the mission of Hellenism and Providence.[28]

Trying to correct the negative aspects that dominate the views of many European travellers of the period (particularly Edmond About and Mark Twain), she dedicates a whole chapter to the "language and character of the Modern Greeks". This chapter attempts to rebut the various reports and descriptions which blackened the image of the country and its people. Agnes Smith, in her book on Greece, tries to revive the image of a country possessing "wonderful ruins" and "vigorous national life". She attacks one by one the accusations that tended to be a sort of common joke in European circles: that the Greeks are filthy, dishonest, unworthy of their classical heritage and unfit to maintain a stable political life; that their country is unsafe, full of brigands, with no resources and hopelessly impoverished.

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Let us now turn briefly to the next travel book by Agnes Smith: *Through Cyprus*, published in 1887. This is of interest here as a book concerning a people in many ways comparable to the Greeks of Greece itself, but now living under British rule. The present author has already examined *Through Cyprus* within the framework of Victorian travel writing on the island after its annexation by Britain in 1878.[29] By the Cyprus Convention of 4 June 1878, which was concluded secretly between the Porte and Great Britain, Cyprus passed from Ottoman to British control. Under the terms of the Convention, Britain was merely to administer the island. *De iure* sovereignty remained with the Ottoman Empire, and until the First World War Britain never sought to deny or

[28] See on the subject the perceptive comments of Dimaras: "Η *Αποστολή* είναι, πολύ πέρα από τα ελληνικά προβλήματα, ένα από τα πλέον ρωμαλέα θέματα της ευρωπαϊκής ρομαντικής νοοτροπίας. Εύκολα βλέπει κανείς την συσχέτιση με τον *ευσεβισμό*, και συνεπώς, με την συγγενική έννοια της *(θείας) Προνοίας*." Dimaras 1986: 141-2.
[29] See Roussou-Sinclair 2002.

cover up the Ottoman Empire's ultimate rights to Cyprus. Soon after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 Cyprus was annexed to Britain and the Cypriots became British subjects. During our period, the island was not therefore a British colony but rather a British-administered territory. It became a British colony in a formal sense, not in fact at the annexation during the First World War, but only in 1925.

Agnes Smith visited and wrote about Cyprus eleven years after the British occupation of the island. The first part of the voyage, described in the book's first five chapters, included Cairo, Alexandria and Beirut. Many of the subjects discussed in her Greek narrative come up again in the book on Cyprus. The greatest difference is that because Cyprus is administered by the British, she is somewhat more careful about expressing views which would tend to undermine the justification for British rule. Although she remains sympathetic to the Cypriots' wishes to unite with Greece, she advises them not to take such a course of action for the time being. Instead, through the medium of education, they should appreciate the benefits of being part of the British Empire:

> I would by no means object to this feeling on the part of our Cypriot fellow-subjects, but I would wish that some one would at the same time, put into the hands of the rising generation books which should tell them in their own tongue something of the greatness of that empire into which they are now incorporated; tell them how Great Britain has been for centuries the true foster-mother of modern freedom [...] (1887: 128)

In many instances she notes that there has been significant improvement from the time that Britain occupied the island. The annexation then takes in her eyes the form of a sort of an experiment, which shows the difference that would be made when a part of the Ottoman Empire was administered by a modern European power like Britain.

Her enthusiasm for the Ancient and Modern Greeks does not take the same shape when she discusses the Cypriots, and maybe

this is due to the fact that no revolution had taken place in which the Ottomans were successfully driven out:

> The history of the island is not heroic. The great deeds that were done in it were the deeds of foreigners. St Paul's footsteps have left a track of glory from Salamis [...] to Paphos. He seems to have followed the road that we took. His companion, Barnabas, was born in the island. But, with this exception, no Cypriot's name can make the pulses thrill except that of Evagoras, the self-made man, the liberator and tyrant of Salamis. (1887: 127)

Similarly, there were no standing temples of the Classical period in Cyprus to attract her admiration, as there were in Greece; the exceptions were the temple of Aphrodite in Paphos and the ruins of the city of Curium, which at the time were not adequately excavated. The numerous passages that she quotes, from Homer to Euripides and from Pausanias to Plutarch, nevertheless put the island within the framework of classical tradition.

For Agnes Smith it was far more important that a Christian nation should be saved from the "utter barbarism" of oppressive Ottoman rule. The contradiction here is that in her case, although she recognised the bonds between Greece and Cyprus, she thought the latter should be allowed to unite with the former only if Britain decided that she no longer wanted Cyprus. Agnes Smith's position vis-à-vis the Cypriots is in itself very contradictory. Her familiarity with the Modern Greek language and the young Greek Kingdom give her an insight into the issues involving Cyprus which is not shared by other British travellers. But she remains hesitant to express views that would justify the irredentist aspirations of the Cypriots, because those aspirations, naturally, contradict British foreign policy of the time. For that reason, she proposes a half measure and advises the Cypriots to wait for more favourable circumstances for their union with Greece.

Travel books can tell us much, not only about the countries visited, but also about the mentalities, beliefs, ideologies and prejudices of their authors. In the case of Agnes Smith, we get an interesting insight into the Greece and Cyprus of the 1880s, which

were respectively a newly founded state within the sphere of influence of Great Britain and a territory recently occupied by Britain. The difference in their political status creates different narratives, which have nevertheless interesting common features. If for Agnes Smith Greece's main attraction as a country is its "wonderful ruins and vigorous national life", Cyprus on the other hand is "an island which yields to none of our British possessions in beauty, in fertility or in importance".

Agnes Smith became famous for her Sinaitic discoveries and her numerous biblical publications. Undoubtedly her long life, her scholarly achievements and her Cambridge days should be examined together with those of her twin sister Margaret. In my presentation, I have deliberately left these aside, because I wished to discuss the two lesser known travel books. These works nevertheless contain a foretaste of the erudite and enterprising scholars the sisters would eventually become.

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The year 2004-5 at Cambridge

Students

Timothy Coomar and Gwendolyn Edwards completed their BA degrees, taking most or all of their Part II papers in Modern Greek. Tim was awarded a first class and Gwen an upper second. Natalia Marisova was awarded a II.1 in Part IB of the Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos. Three students completed their first-year examinations (Part IA) in Modern Greek. One of the three, Cecily Arthur, gained first class honours.

Four students were successful in the examinations for the Certificate in Modern Greek; two of them, Christopher Pettett and Benjamin Yielding, passed with Distinction. Erika Clark and Alexander Ioannidis passed the examinations for the Diploma in Modern Greek.

Kostas Yiavis, who is in the third year of his PhD research, was awarded joint first prize in the London Hellenic Society postgraduate essay competition for 2004.

Teaching staff

Dr Dimitris Karadimas completed three years of teaching Greek language courses, as Language Assistant seconded by the Greek Ministry of Education. Dr Tina Lendari lectured on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. Courses on modern Greek history were taught by Mr Kostas Skordyles, of the Universities of Surrey and Westminster. Some other teaching was undertaken by PhD students: Marina Rodosthenous gave four lectures on Cretan Renaissance texts, and Kostas Yiavis taught classes in translation from English into Greek.

Visiting speakers

Ten lectures were given in the course of the year. The programme was as follows:

14 October. Professor Robin Cormack (Courtauld Institute of Art): *"Faith and Power (1261-1557) at the Metropolitan Museum": what was the exhibition about?*

28 October. Dr Peter Cochran (University of Liverpool): *Byron, Greece and guilt: the motives behind Byron's second journey*

11 November. David Brewer: *Four hundred years of Turkish rule – were they really that bad?*

25 November. Professor Stathis Gauntlett (La Trobe University, Melbourne): *The discreet charm of low life in inter-war Greek literature*

3 February. Dr Mary Roussou-Sinclair (University of Cyprus): *Agnes Smith: a Victorian traveller through Greece and Cyprus*

10 February. Dr Io Manolessou (University of Patras): *The Greek dialects of Southern Italy*

24 February. Dr Philip Carabott (King's College London): *Nationalizing the land and its people: the case of Greek Macedonia, c. 1912-c. 1959*

10 March. Professor Peter Bien (Dartmouth College, New Hampshire): *Kazantzakis's abortive foray into politics in liberated Athens, 1944-1946*

5 May. Professor Margaret Alexiou (Harvard University): *Who is speaking? Voice and persona in Greek love songs*

12 May. Dr Dimitris Papanikolaou (St Cross College, Oxford): *Greece as a postmodern example:* Boundary 2 *and its special issue on Greek writing (1973)*

Research project: A grammar of Medieval Greek

Work on this five-year research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, began officially on 1 October 2004. Dr Tina Lendari was appointed as Research Associate from that date, and she was joined by the second Research Associate, Dr Notis Toufexis, in December. Dr Toufexis is a graduate of the University of Thessaloniki and has a PhD from the University of Hamburg, where he has also carried out post-doctoral research with Professor Hans Eideneier. Dr Io Manolessou (University of Patras) made three extended visits to Cambridge in the course of the year, in her role as consultant to the project.

An International Advisory Board has been established, with the following membership: Professor Despina Chila-Markopoulou (University of Athens), Professor Arnold van Gemert (University of Amsterdam), Professor Martin Hinterberger (University of Cyprus), Professor Elizabeth Jeffreys (University of Oxford), Professor Michael Jeffreys (King's College London), Professor Peter Mackridge (University of Oxford). The Advisory Board will meet annually to review progress on the project.

Work during the first year has had three main aims: to create a range of databases for bibliographical and linguistic data; to put together a collection of source materials, i.e. literary and non-literary texts in vernacular Greek, which is essentially the corpus on which the grammar will be based; and to begin work on the first phase of linguistic analysis, which deals with phonology and the writing system.

A conference related to the project is planned for July 2006, in collaboration with the Cambridge Centre for Research in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH). The conference, entitled "Unlocking the potential of texts: interdisciplinary perspectives on Medieval Greek", will bring together scholars from various disciplines who work with texts written in some form vernacular Greek, dating from about 1100 to 1700.

Further information about the project can be found at: http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/greek/grammarofmedievalgreek/

Graduate Seminar

The Graduate Seminar held seven meetings in the course of the year. Research papers were given by Thodoris Markopoulos and Helen O'Neill. Three sessions were devoted to text-based topics, presented by members of the "Grammar of Medieval Greek" research project: David Holton, Tina Lendari and Notis Toufexis. The seminar also had a joint meeting with the Classics Linguistics Seminar, at which the speaker was Professor Mark Janse, of the University of Gent and the Roosevelt Academy, Middelburg.

Activities of members of the Modern Greek Section

Dr David Holton gave two invited lectures in the course of the year: one in October 2004 at King's College London, entitled "Pastoral poetry in Renaissance Crete", and one in December 2004 for the "Εταιρεία Ελλήνων Επιστημόνων" in London, on "The artistry of *Erotokritos*". Otherwise he has had a relatively uneventful year, but he did travel to the University of Gothenburg to act as "opponent" in a public disputation for the PhD degree. He is co-editor, with Tina Lendari, Ulrich Moennig and Peter Vejleskov, of the proceedings of a conference held at the Danish Institute in Athens: *Copyists, collectors, redactors and editors: manuscripts and editions of late Byzantine and early modern Greek literature* (Heraklion: Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis 2005).

Dr Dimitris Karadimas participated in an International Conference organised by the Centre for Hellenic Studies at King's College London in September 2003 under the title: "The Logos Conference – Controlling Language: The Greek Experience". He gave a paper entitled "Rhetoric: a force for change or a vehicle of standardization?: taking Lucian as an example". His contribution, entitled "Epictetus on Rhetoric", to a collective volume in honour of Professor I.-Th. Papademetriou, is to be published soon. He is also working on a translation into Modern Greek of a work by Aelius Aristides (orator and sophist of the second century AD).

Dr Tina Lendari participated in the International Colloquium held in honour of Professor Theocharis Detorakis at the University of Crete, Rethymno, organised by the Department of Philology of the same university in November 2004. She gave a paper entitled: "Illness and interpretation: reading disease in the works of Stefanos Sachlikis and Manolis Limenitis", to be published in the proceedings of the colloquium. She has published the following articles:

"Ερωτικά μυθολογικά θέματα στις δημώδεις ερωτικές μυθιστορίες", in: S. Kaklamanis and M. Paschalis (eds.), *Η πρόσληψη της αρχαιότητας στο βυζαντινό και νεοελληνικό μυθιστόρημα* (Athens: Stigmi 2005), pp. 87-111

Trelawny for the new *Dictionary of National Biography.* He has just published his edition of Michael Rees's translation of Teresa Guiccioli's *Lord Byron's life in Italy.*

Stathis Gauntlett is Foundation Professor of Hellenic Studies at La Trobe University. He previously lectured in Modern Greek at the University of Melbourne for twenty-five years. His main research interest is in the oral traditions of modern Greece and the diaspora (with recent publications on rebetika, Greek-Australian discography, and Asia Minor refugee musicians), but he has also published articles on twentieth-century Greek literature and literary translations, including a (co-authored) prose version of the *Erotokritos*, with introduction and notes (Melbourne 2004).

Io Manolessou is a lecturer in Historical Linguistics at the Department of Philology, University of Patras. Previously she worked as a researcher at the Academy of Athens, Research Centre for Modern Greek Dialects (2001-2004). She studied Greek literature and linguistics at the University of Athens and holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge. She has published several articles on the history of the Greek language (especially on historical syntax), and is currently involved as a consultant with the Grammar of Medieval Greek project at the University of Cambridge.

Dimitris Papanikolaou studied Classics and Modern Greek in Athens (BA) and Comparative Literature in London (MA, PhD). He was a Mellon teaching and research fellow at University College London from 2002 until 2004. In 2004 he succeeded Professor Peter Mackridge as University Lecturer in Modern Greek at Oxford University. His research focuses on the ways Modern Greek literature opens a dialogue with other cultural forms (especially Greek popular culture), as well as with other literatures and cultures. He is also interested in literary and cultural theory and the new perspectives it offers for the study of literature. He is currently completing a monograph on Greek and

French singer-songwriters of the 1950s and 1960s, and his recent and forthcoming publications include articles on Cavafy from the perspective of queer theory, the representation of immigrants in recent Greek cinema, literature in the dictatorship, and the English poems of Demetrios Capetanakis.

Mary Roussou-Sinclair studied classics at the University of Ioannina. She did an MPhil at the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham, with a thesis on the multiple presence of Cavafy in Tsirkas and Durrell. Her PhD, also from Birmingham, concerns British travellers in Cyprus in the early years of British rule (published as *British travellers in Cyprus: A garden of their own*). She teaches Modern Greek literature at the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, University of Cyprus. Her interests include 19th-century travel literature, 19th-century history of ideas in Greece and Britain, and 20th-century Greek prose fiction.

"Τόσο κοντά και τόσο μακριά: ο *Διγενής* και ο *Λίβιστρος* του χειρογράφου Escorial Ψ IV 22", in: D. Holton, T. Lendari, U. Moennig and P. Vejleskov (eds.), *Copyists, collectors, redactors and editors: manuscripts and editions of late Byzantine and early modern Greek literature* (Heraklion: Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis 2005), pp. 161-78

About the contributors

Peter Bien is Emeritus Professor of English and Comparative Literature, at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. Although in his teaching he concentrated on British and Irish fiction, his research and writing are mainly concerned with Modern Greek literature and language. His translations include Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Saint Francis*, and *Report to Greco*, Myrivilis's *Life in the tomb*, and poetry by Ritsos, Cavafy, and Harkianakis. His scholarly writings treat Cavafy, Ritsos, and especially Kazantzakis, whose "Selected letters" he expects to publish in a few years. A founder of the Modern Greek Studies Association of America, Professor Bien served twice as its president and also as the editor-in-chief of its periodical, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*. He is the co-author of *Greek today*, a textbook for the teaching of Greek via the oral/aural method, and of a bilingual anthology of twentieth-century Greek poetry, published in 2004. Volume 1 of his critical/biographical study, *Kazantzakis: Politics of the spirit*, was brought out in Greek translation by the University of Crete Press (2001); he has just completed volume 2.

Philip Carabott is Cyprus Hellenic Foundation Lecturer in Modern Greek History at King's College London. He has edited and contributed to *Greece and Europe in the modern period: Aspects of a troubled relationship* (Centre for Hellenic Studies, 1995), *Greek society in the making, 1863-1913: Realities, symbols and visions* (Ashgate, 1997), and *The Greek Civil War: Essays on a conflict of exceptionalism and silences* (Ashgate, 2004).

Peter Cochran is the editor of the *Newstead Abbey Byron Society Review*. He has lectured on Byron in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Newstead, Glasgow, Liverpool, Versailles, Salzburg, Yerevan and New York, and published numerous articles on the poet. He is the author of the Byron entry in the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, and of the entries on J. C. Hobhouse and E. J.