

8. Hellenism and the Making of Modern Greece: Time, Language, Space

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Ξύπνησα με το μαρμάρινο τούτο κεφάλι στα χέρια
που μου εξαντλεί τους αγκώνες και δεν ξέρω που να
τ'ακουμπήσω.

Έπεφτε στο όνειρο καθώς έβγαίνα από το όνειρο
έτσι ενώθηκε η ζωή μας και θα είναι δυσκολο να
ξαναχωρίσει.

I awoke with this marble head in my hands
it exhausts my elbows
and I do not know where to put it down.
It was falling into the dream
as I was coming out of the dream.

So our life became one and it will be very difficult for it to separate again.

George Seferis, *Mythistorima*

1. Modern Greek History

1.1. The Construction of National Time

Just as the writing of modern history developed within the context of national historiography since the nineteenth century, so the concept of "nation" has become one of the essential categories through which the imagination of space and the notion of time are constructed.¹ This is the tradition and the institutional environment within which contemporary historians conduct their research and write their texts, reconstructing and reinforcing the structures of power that they experience.

Historically, the concept of the nation has been approached from two basically different perspectives, despite internal variations. The first is that of the nation builders and the advocates of nationalism. Despite the huge differences among the multifarious cases of nation formation, a common denominator can be recognized: the nation exists and the issue is how it is to be represented in the modern world. But representation means performance, and through it the nation learns how to conceive itself and

¹ Sheeham 1981.

how to construct its image regarding history, time, and space. The second is related to interpretations of the construction of the nation in modern times. Their common denominator is that the "nation" is constructed. Theories belonging to the first perspective (essentialist theories) constitute parts of the national ideology, especially in its romantic and historicist phases. Theories belonging to the second perspective (constructivist theories) derive from the studies on ideology and the discursive construction of identities developed in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and now constitute the common background of working theories on the nation within the international academic community.² I am referring to both of these perspectives on the nation because each perspective involves a different conception of time. Indeed, there are two readings of the direction of time. In representation, the direction of time is read as being from the past to the present; whereas, in interpretation, time is viewed in the opposite direction, as extending back from the present into the past. Both directions relate to the reading of dreams. During dreaming, "the preceding events are caused by the ending, even if, in narrative composition as we know it, the ending is linked to the events which precede it by a cause and effect relationship."³ This is also the time of history making. History and national ideology share the double time of the dream.

Having a temporal structure, national identity imposes a unification and restructuring of the perceptions of time, defined in pre-modern and pre-national periods principally by religion and cosmology. This new perception is articulated as narrative and narration. It is formulated in the shape of national history, using the organic category of "the nation." Through the national narrative, it identifies the subjects with the national collectivity and impersonates the nation; it consolidates these identifications in the domains of institutions and symbols; it influences, clarifies, and unifies different traditions, thus constructing national culture. The construction of the national narrative restructures the experience of time, attributing a new significance to it and presenting the nation as an active historical agent that, through the narration, acquires a new historical identity.⁴ In this sense, national historiography constitutes the codified past which is activated through present action and which aims at an expected future. In other words, it embodies a significant and ever-present element of the

² Barth 1969; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983. For an assessment of this transition from the essentialist to the constructivist theories of the nation, see Govers & Vermeulen 1977: 1–30.

³ Uspenskij 1988: 13. On the association of history, identity and dreaming, see Stewart, p. 274 in this volume.

⁴ On the restructure of experience of time through narrative: Ricoeur 1983: 52–87, and on the term "appropriation of the past," Ricoeur 1995.

nation, its active memory. Memory, however, since it has been activated and articulated in a certain narrative, cannot accept blank spaces. This means that a national narrative should have an internal element of coherence and cannot exist if there are temporal discontinuities. The question of continuity has acquired a crucial importance in the construction of national history, particularly for Mediterranean nations.

1.2. *Mediterranean Pasts*

Mediterranean nations “awoke” with a “marble head” in their hands. The need to deal with long historical periods and different cultures, which preceded the constitution of these nations as independent states, is a common feature of their national histories. But Mediterranean nations undertook the difficult task of combining different and significant pasts: The Greco-Roman world with the Christian, the Greek with the Slav and the Ottoman worlds. Egyptian national history is the most conspicuous example of the difficulties of this synthesis: how to combine in a unique and meaningful narrative the Egyptian, the Hellenistic, the Roman, the Islamic, the Arab, and the Ottoman past, with the era of British colonialism and the independence?⁵ All of these periods have different meanings for the construction of Mediterranean identities and for the shaping of national cultures and politics.

How, for instance, should *historia sacra* (sacred history) and *historia profana* (secular history) be amalgamated in Christian nations, or the Arab, Iranian and Ottoman past with the Islamic past? The Ottoman past and the Islamic past are one and the same thing for Turkey, but not for Syria or Egypt! Is the Hellenistic Period part of the history of Egypt, or does it belong to the history of Greece? Byzantine chroniclers ignored ancient Greek history and acknowledged the Biblical story as their past. Ottoman historians long ignored their Byzantine past. New national histories used to ignore their immediate past. Other questions had to do with the claims of ownership in history. To whom does Byzantium belong? Is it part of Greek history or does it belong equally to Bulgarian and Serbian history? Is the Ottoman Period an organic part of Balkan and Arab history, or is it a foreign interruption of their history? To which continuity does Macedonian history belong? Does it belong to a Southern Slav, Hellenic, or local Macedonian continuity? To whom does the history of early modern Thessaloniki belong: to a history of the Jewish Diaspora, to Ottoman history, or to Greek history? Is there a place in Balkan national histories for non-national, ethnic, and religious minorities such as the Sephardic Jewish communities, the Vlachs, the Greek-speaking Catholic, or the Turkish-speaking Orthodox populations? All these questions relate to identities. What is Egyptian identity? Is it

⁵ Crabbs 1984; Gorman 2003; Gershoni 1992: 4.6–37; Gordon 1971.

Arab, Islamic, or geographic and cultural (the child of the Nile) extending from the Pharaonic to the post-Colonial era? What consequence might the adoption of one or another of the definitions of identity have for domestic or foreign politics?

The appropriation and the resignification of these pasts have to do with the adjustment of different perceptions of time (Biblical, cyclical, mythical) to a modern perception of a linear, continuous, and secular time.⁶ Consequently, the homogenization of the way people perceive time constitutes a necessary precondition for the construction of national historical time. The narration of this national time implies the incorporation of temporal units into a coherent scheme. This process is particularly depicted in historiography and the philosophy of history. This incorporation of historical time does not take place uniquely or immediately, but is carried out in stages and with hesitations and contradictions. What is at stake is not simply the appropriation of a part of historical experience, but the construction, in the present, of a discourse that reproduces the past and transforms it into national time. This is a process of the production of time. According to Paul Ricoeur, history in its narrative form replaces the history which has been collectively experienced.⁷ In this way, the elementary myth of the nation is constructed. The rearrangement of the collective sense of time is a presupposition of the construction of the nation, and, at the same time, the nation constructs a collective and meaningful sense of time.

1.3. *Revivalism*

Greek historiography is a product of the Greek national state.⁸ During the foundation of the new state, the constitutive myth was the resurrection of the mythical Phoenix.⁹ Its significance was that Greece resurrected itself, like the mythical Phoenix, after having been under the subjugation of the Macedonians, the Romans, the Byzantines, and the Turks. The first rector of the University of Athens in 1837, Constantine Schinas, referred to the metaphor of an enslaved Greece handed over by the Macedonians to the Romans and then by the Byzantines to the Turks.¹⁰ That was the first official imagination of Greek history in the aftermath of the war of liberation in 1821. As a consequence, the primary period that was incorporated into the national feeling of history was the period of classical antiquity. The appropriation of this period was established during the period of the Enlightenment's influence on Greece, in the 50 years or so before the Greek

⁶ Kosellek 1985.

⁷ Ricoeur 1983: 52–87.

⁸ Gazi 2000.

⁹ Droulia 1995. See Mackridge, p. 309 in this volume.

¹⁰ Dimaras 1987: 31.

Revolution, and, though not without disagreement or reservation from the post-Byzantine tradition of the Orthodox Church, it proved sufficiently strong so as to prevail in the national consciousness of modern Greeks.¹¹ Yet, in contrast to most young nations which were expected to construct their own self-image, the myth of ancient Greece was also powerful outside the Greek-speaking society of the Ottoman Empire. Modern Greeks acquired a passport, so to speak, without much pain—compared, for instance, to their Balkan neighbors and to other newborn nations—so as to be able to introduce themselves to Europe and the world.¹²

The story of how the myth of ancient Greece was incorporated into modern Greek national ideology is complex and controversial. The most powerful tradition in Europe, even before the creation of national states, was the tradition of written texts: Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.¹³ This written tradition was the *corpus* and the *locus* where pre-national history was shaped. Before the emergence of nation-states, myths of national origins were connected to this written tradition.¹⁴ Greeks appropriated a great part of this learned tradition and transformed it into a national tradition. This appropriation was not an isolated case. Hellenism, as a cultural *topos* (“place/category”), was an intellectual product of the Renaissance, which was subsequently renovated through intellectual trends ranging from the Enlightenment to the Romanticism.¹⁵ As concepts, Hellenism and Revival were strictly interconnected. Once the Renaissance had introduced a threefold concept of time (ancient, medieval, and modern), revivalism was established as the intellectual model in culture. In this sense, each major change in culture, until Romanticism, was presented as a phenomenon of revival.¹⁶ Indeed, nationalism can be defined, in this framework, as the “myth of historical renovation.”¹⁷ As a result, the incorporation of antiquity constitutes not simply the beginning of the national narrative, but actually the construction of the object of this narrative. For Greeks, to feel as national subjects means to internalize their relationship with ancient Greece.

The revival of antiquity in modern Greece was not aimed exclusively at the legitimization of genealogy, because Classical antiquity was also projected as the ideal model for the organization of a modern society. One of the most important works of early modern Greek historiography,

¹¹ Politis 1998. See Augustinos in this volume.

¹² For this view, see Augustinos, Most, and Mackridge in this volume.

¹³ Bolgar: 1973; Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1982; Lambropoulos 1992.

¹⁴ Asher 1993; Beaune 1985; Weber 1991; Macneill 1981; Stanford 1976.

¹⁵ Turner 1981; Lambropoulos 1993; Augustinos 1994; Hadas 1960; Marchand 1996; Miliori 1998.

¹⁶ Ferguson 1948; Burke 1970. See also Most and Augustinos in this volume.

¹⁷ Smith 1983: 22; Hutchinson 1987.

George Kozakis Tipaldos's *Philosophical Essay on the Progress and Decline of Old Greece* (1839), reflects this attitude.¹⁸ The exemplary and nomothetic function of the ancient world does not concern exclusively the construction of the modern Greek state. It constitutes part of a transcultural tradition. This important functional role of the other (i.e. the ancient) world, deeply embedded in historical consciousness, relates to notions of authority, power, holiness, and truth. In this way, the concepts with which we understand the world should originate from another world in the remote past. To this same tradition could be ascribed the uses of the Torah for Israel, and of the Koran and the *Sharia* for the Muslim nations.¹⁹

1.4. Continuity

During the first decades of Greek independence, the initial present-past relationship was composed of two alternative poles: the national resurrection (the 1821 Revolution and the formation of the Greek state) and Classical antiquity. The myth of the reborn Phoenix, however, was too weak to sustain a national ideology, especially since it involved an immense time gap. Moreover, it excluded an important part of present experience—the religious one.²⁰ The blank pages of Greek history became visible in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1852, the historian Spyridon Zambelios pointed out, “We only hope that all those scattered and torn pieces of our history will be articulated and will acquire completeness and unity.”²¹ Filling these gaps meant furnishing criteria and signification in order to appropriate different periods such as the Macedonian domination of Greece, the Hellenistic and Roman Periods, the Byzantine Era, along with the Venetian and Ottoman rule. In 1872, a philosopher, Petros Vrailas Armenis, referred briefly to the meanings that should be stressed for each period:

In what concerns the historical past of Greece, meaning the mission of Hellenism, it is necessary to examine the ways Greece is related to its preceding Oriental World, what it was itself, the influence it exercised on the Romans, its relation to Christianity, what happened to Greece in the Middle Ages, in which ways Greece contributed to the Renaissance, how it contributes to contemporary civilization, how and why Greece survived till our times although it was enslaved, how it resurrected itself, what is its mission today.²²

¹⁸ Tipaldos 1839.

¹⁹ Voloshinov 1973; van der Veer and Lehman 1999; Yerushalmi 1982; Zerubavel 1995.

²⁰ Skopetea 1988.

²¹ Zambelios 1852: 16.

²² Armenis 1872: 4.

In this view, history is identified with the nation's mission and, as a consequence, it is Divine Providence that attributes a certain meaning to it.²³ The temporal incorporation also refers to the nation's relation with the surrounding world. In other words, it constitutes a national reading of world history. This is a reading of world history from a Eurocentric point of view. In fact, this perspective lays the foundations of a dialectic between European and Greek national historiography. On the one hand, it aims at the emancipation of national history encapsulated in a European point of view (the contempt for Byzantium as a degeneration of the Roman Empire), while on the other, it evaluates national history for its contribution to European history, that is, the history of Western civilization.

The filling of these gaps was the task of Greek historiography during the second half of nineteenth century. In 1918, the historian Spyridon Lambros, summarizing the historical production of the first century of the independent Greek state, pointed out that, "A cohesive conception of Greek history, representing the fortune of a people maintaining their national existence and consciousness throughout the ages, came to life very late."²⁴ The incorporation into the national narrative of the periods that would contribute to the making of national history took place in stages, which endure more than three generations of historians, from Korais to Paparrigopoulos, and then to Lambros—and not without objection and cultural debate.

The timing of each temporal incorporation was a function of a relationship between the Greek and Western European historiography. For example, the appropriation of the Macedonian and Hellenistic Periods, through the concept of national supremacy, was facilitated by the disjuncture of the concept of civic freedom from Classical Greece.²⁵ Within the debate concerning the re-evaluation of the Hellenistic Period (in German historiography of the nineteenth century), it became possible to present Hellenism (with the meaning and the cultural characteristics that were attributed to it at the time) as the predecessor of Christianity, and to establish the imperial ideal (especially in the works of Johann Gustav Droysen).²⁶ However, the contempt for Byzantium of Voltaire, Gibbon, and Hegel—in other words, the negative attitude that developed towards it within the framework of the Enlightenment—did not allow it to be incorporated at this stage.²⁷ Moreover, since "Hellenism," as a cultural construction of Western civilization, was conceived by Philhellenes as the revival of the

²³ On the sacralization of the past in Korais, see Augustinos, p. 189 in this volume.

²⁴ Lambros 1918: ch. 7, 1–2.

²⁵ On theories of national supremacy in Germany, see Most in this volume.

²⁶ Momigliano 1985. On Droysen, see Burstein, p. 62 in this volume.

²⁷ Zakythinis 1973.

ancient in the modern Greece, the rejection of Byzantium, along with all other historical periods between the Classical Age and the Greek revolt in 1821, was unavoidable. To span the huge difference between the classical ideal and the reality of modern Greece, the concept of decline and fall was inevitable.²⁸ According to Byron, in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (canto 2, stanza 73), modern Greece was a "sad relic of departed worth." Besides, the concept of revival itself actually entailed the concept of discontinuity because it presupposed a time of disappearance between the first and the second life. The concept of "relics" omnipresent in the early modern and the Romantic culture implies a moment of death, of mourning, and of melancholy, but also gives the beat for the successive renaissances, revivals, re-evolutions, re-formations, and all of the European cultural phenomena characterized by concepts of a new beginning.²⁹

How was a national narrative possible with such a discontinuity?

The appropriation of the Byzantine Period has major significance, since it illustrates the transition from one mental structure of historical imagination to another: from the schema of revival to one of continuity. It is a transition that primarily concerns the concept of historical time. Once this transition has been accomplished, each historical period would find its place within this schema. The result, and also partly the cause, of this great mental change was the monumental work of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, *History of the Greek Nation (1860–1874)*. Paparrigopoulos, honored as "national historian," created the grand narrative and introduced a new style in writing Greek national historiography.³⁰ Although his predecessors had employed the third-person in referring to their object, Paparrigopoulos imposed a very dominant use of "we" and "us" in describing the Greeks of the past, in this way identifying the reader with the national subject. In addition, the appropriation of Byzantine history changed the content of national identity and transformed it from one that had been imported by scholars into one that was produced locally. This modification acquired the features of a "revolt" against a view of the national self that had been imposed on Greece by European classicism. This transformation was a response to a general feeling of nineteenth-century Greek intellectuals: "The Past? Alas, we allow foreigners to present it according to their own prejudices and their own way of thought and interests."³¹

1.5. *Inside and Outside Western Europe*

At the same time, of course, those who strove to incorporate Byzantium into the Greek national narrative attempted to define the contribution of

²⁸ See Augustinos on Korais, esp. pp. 170ff. in this volume.

²⁹ Settis 1994.

³⁰ Dimaras 1986.

³¹ Zambelios 1852: 7.

Byzantium to Western civilization. This became another permanent feature in Greek historical culture: To keep national Greek history outside the influence of Western historical thinking, on the one hand and, on the other hand, to consider it as an essential contribution to Western culture; to resist the Western canon of history and to participate in it. For example, the late Archbishop of Athens, Christodoulos, insisted that Greeks should not learn Byzantine history from foreigners, and, at the same time, that Byzantine history is one of the foundations of contemporary European identity. This attitude could be compared with modern Islamic attitudes on history: “[Islamic history] is influenced by Western education, [which is unable] to understand Islam (...). The mind that will judge Islamic life must be Islamic in its essence.”³² If we attempt to see a grammar of such attitudes, we could approach the relational structure of national historiographies. From a non-Western point of view, there is a move from the suppression of entire past periods, located outside the Western cultural canon, to the idealization of these same periods as distinct cultural features and as contributions to universal civilization. Another Mediterranean example of this oscillation is the case of Turkish historiography with respect to the Ottoman Period. From its denigration during the Kemal Atatürk era, the Ottoman Empire came to be considered as the solution to the social problem of the peasant and as the third way between capitalism and socialism!³³

This shift of the center of the writing of national history from outside to inside the nation, as well as the move from intellectual elites to the ordinary people, is the attempt to romanticize and popularize national history: “While ordinary people recognize that it was to the Medieval Period that they owe their existence, their language, and their religion, it is only intellectuals that deny it.”³⁴ This is also another permanent oscillation: On the one hand, history needed to be elevated to a scientific status; on the other, there was a mistrust towards intellectuals. Dismissing “foreign” educated intellectuals was a concession to the “authenticity” of the people. The plea for authenticity was commonplace in the Romantic Tradition but also a prerequisite for the nationalization of the masses.

The appropriation of a past culture is a long process. Thus, a lengthy period of time passed between the acceptance of Byzantium as a part of the national narrative, and the actual interest of historians in Byzantium and their use of it in the fields of national symbolism and representation. For instance, Byzantium was not rehabilitated in school manuals until the end of the nineteenth century; the Byzantine Museum was not established until

³² Haddad 1980: 166.

³³ Berktaý 1992: 156.

³⁴ Paparrigopoulos 1860–1874: preface to third and fourth volumes.

1914; and the first professors of Byzantine Art and Byzantine History were only appointed at the University of Athens in 1912 and 1924, respectively.³⁵ Appropriation takes place in stages as regards not only the concrete setting of the specific period, but also its different aspects. In this way, the theory of the unity of Greek history was transferred from the field of political history to the field of language³⁶ and folklore.³⁷ In the case of Byzantium, this process took several decades to complete, and new images are still in play.

1.6. *National Genealog*

The constitution of the “unity” of Greek history also created its narrative form. The innovation in Paparrigopoulos’s work lies in the fact that it reifies Greek history, and organizes it around a main character, giving a different meaning to each period. He introduced the terms *First Hellenism*, *Macedonian Hellenism*, *Christian Hellenism*, *Medieval Hellenism*, *Modern Hellenism*. The First Hellenism was ancient Hellenism, that is, the Classical Hellenism that declined after the Peloponnesian Wars. It was succeeded by Macedonian Hellenism, which was actually “a slight transformation of the First Hellenism.” This one was followed by Christian Hellenism, which was later replaced by Medieval Hellenism, which brought Modern Hellenism to life in the thirteenth century. These Hellenisms are connected by the following genealogy:

Ancient Hellenism	father	great-great-grandfather
Macedonian Hellenism	son	great-grandfather
Christian Hellenism	grandson	grandfather
Medieval Hellenism	great-grandson	father
Modern Hellenism	great-great-grandson	son

(No mothers or daughters; only fathers and sons!)

The specific features that differentiate or, rather, give substance to each Hellenism are formed according to the “*historical order*” prescribed by Divine Providence, in other words, the “*mission*” or the “*final aim*.” These orders are related to the nation’s contribution to world history. Paparrigopoulos

³⁵ Koulouri 1991; Kiousopoulou 1993. See also Mackridge, p. 303 in this volume.

³⁶ Hatzidakis 1915.

³⁷ Politis 1871.

has constructed a teleological sequence in the Greek national history with long-term consequences.

The crucial question is the relation of these Hellenisms to the nation. Paparrigopoulos used the theological concept of the Holy Trinity (the same essence in multiple expressions) as a metaphor for Hellenism: the uniqueness of the perennial nation amidst a multiplicity of temporary Hellenisms. This idea was used a century later when the prominent Marxist historian of the second half of the twentieth century, Nikos Svoronos, faced the same problem: "Hellenism as a metaphysical entity, as a *sui generis* ("alone of its kind") essence does not participate in the changes of the environment and as a result, it remains continuous, coherent, and unchanging in its qualities."³⁸ National historiography, even in its Marxist version, remained founded on metaphysics.

The conceptual construct of a genealogy of Hellenism solves various problems that neither the theory of revival nor the theory of continuity was capable of solving, because the narrative structure of Hellenisms achieves unity through difference, in a way much stricter than that imposed by Hegelian dialectic in the synthesis of world history. In Hegel, world history tends towards an end embodied in the state. In Paparrigopoulos, the end is manifest in each period but with autonomous meaning. Revival survives within the schema of continuation. In Paparrigopoulos's work, the rise of modern Hellenism in the thirteenth century is related to the rediscovery of ancient Hellenism: "The fall of Constantinople [to the Crusaders in 1204] reorients our minds and hearts towards historical Athens." It is ancient Hellenism that provides the political element in modern Hellenism and makes national independence possible without the intervention of Europe and without the impact of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Thus, revival turns into a radical political identity. Why radical? It is radical because national consciousness turns out to be the result of the elaboration of political consciousness, through its relation with the civic culture of Classical Greece. Nevertheless, the difficult and vague compatibility between Hellenism and the Greek nation survives to this day. In contemporary historical culture, one encounters a larger number of references to the term Hellenism than to the term Greek nation, a fact that conceals a disregard for the political process by which the Greek nation was constituted and the downgrading of citizenship to the status of an ethno-nationalistic definition of Greek identity. Consequences of this ethnic definition of the Greek national identity are the attitudes towards minorities in Greece.³⁹

³⁸ Svoronos 1982: 71.

³⁹ On attitudes towards the newly arrived Balkan immigrants in Greece, see Zacharia, pp. 337–52 in this volume.

Through this association with the concept of Hellenism, modern Greek identity turns to exclusivity instead of inclusivity.

1.7. Cultural History

One of the problems related to the genealogy of Hellenism was the historical appropriation of the periods since the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire in AD 1204. The period of the Frankish occupation (AD 1204–1261) was mingled with the Byzantine Period, but it was also connected with the period of the Venetian occupation, an extension of the Frankish occupation lasting until 1797 in certain areas, which in turn was interwoven with that of the Ottoman rule. New axes were necessary for the incorporation of this field into the national narrative, and new meanings needed to be attributed to it. Greek historiography, without the central backbone of political history, has used cultural history as a substitute for it.

The first pathway, which originated from Western historiography and more precisely from Renaissance historiography, was the contribution of Byzantine scholars to Italian humanism of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which extended to the myth that the Greeks were the cause of the revival of civilization in modern Europe.⁴⁰ This powerful myth largely influenced the formation of the Greek national myth, the Great Idea. "Greece was destined to enlighten the West with its decline and the East with its resurrection."⁴¹ It was to be expected, of course, that this specific perception, which stressed the nation's contribution to world history, would be pointed out not only as an accidental event in world history, but more or less through the perspective of "The History of Greek Learning Culture (*paideia*) from the Fall of Constantinople until 1821."⁴² Since culture was an indication of progress, it was obvious that the history of the progress of the nation would emphasize the history of the expansion of Greek culture. The interest in scholars who promoted the interaction between Byzantium and the West had already been introduced by Andreas Moustoxidis, a historian who lived in Corfu, northern Italy, and Greece (1785–1960), and his review

⁴⁰ Geanakoplos 1962; Wilson 1992.

⁴¹ In this metaphor, used by the Prime Minister Ioannis Kolettis (1844), Greece is like a candle. With the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the light migrated to the West, but with the national revolution of 1821 the candle is destined to enlighten the East; Dimaras 1982: 405–7.

⁴² This was the title of the 4th Rodokanakeios Literary Competition (1865) in which Constantinos Sathas was awarded the first prize for his work *Neoelliniki philologia. Viographiai ton en tois grammasi dialampsanton Ellinon apo tis kataliseos tis Vizantinis Aftokratorias mehri tis Ellinikis Ethnegersias (1453–1821)* [Neohellenic Literature. Biographies of Distinguished Greek Scholars from the Decline of the Byzantine Empire Until the Greek Resurrection]. Athens 1868.

Hellenomnemon (1843–1847).⁴³ The origins of modern Hellenism were pursued in the history of literature and erudition. From literature to the history of language, research was mainly orientated towards the vernacular texts of the last centuries of the Byzantine Empire, with specific emphasis on literature and culture in Crete during the five centuries of Venetian rule. So, scholars turned to the Venetian archives, which provided new ground for Greek historiography.⁴⁴ In order to be incorporated into the national narrative, the history of the Venetian period was adapted to the demands of national ideology:

[I]n an *a posteriori* judgment, one would say that this subjugation of Hellenism by Western peoples has proved fatal ever since. Due to the interaction of the two elements (Greek and Latin), the revival of art and scholarship became possible in the West.⁴⁵

The most conspicuous attempt concerns the exploration of the characteristics of the Hellenic “soul” in the works of Cretan literature and painting, and the emergence of the idea of a Greek Renaissance through Cretan culture.⁴⁶ In this way, cultural history filled the gap in the absence of the political supremacy of the nation. A remarkable consequence of this turn to culture is that although national historiography in Europe was developed first in the field of political history, in Greece it was cultural history dealing with the biographies of literary men and literature, and not political history, the privileged field of traditional history.

1.8. *The Ottoman Legacy*

A great problem for Greek historiography was the appropriation of four centuries of Ottoman rule from 1453 until 1821, known as the *Tourkokratia* (Turkish occupation).⁴⁷ Through this term, four centuries have been detached from a longer period of the Ottoman presence in the north-eastern Mediterranean, dating from the eleventh to the second decade of the twentieth century. For nineteenth-century Greek society, this period was its immediate past, still alive in its everyday culture, although in the cultural debate it has been suppressed, since it was perceived to be a cause of the backwardness of Greece. At the same time, it was mythologized as the breeding ground of national virtues. In historiography, the *Tourkokratia* has

⁴³ Andreas Moustoxidis was an intellectual from Corfu, who attempted to connect Italian to Ionian scholarship. His work belongs partly to Italian Literature.

⁴⁴ Manousakas 1971.

⁴⁵ Theotokis 1926: 3.

⁴⁶ Seferis 1981; Holton 1991; Chatzinikolaou 1999.

⁴⁷ On this period, see Livianos in this volume.

been considered as a passive period of slavery and at the same time as a long prologue to the national revolution. According to Paparrigopoulos, "In the years of slavery, the military, bourgeois and intellectual forces that brought about the Greek Revolution were created." The history of this period was mixed with historical mythology, seeking to justify the ideological, social, and political balance of power in post-revolutionary Greece. It should be pointed out that each historical period was appropriated through a different discourse. If the canon of Greek history was defined by Paparrigopoulos, the epistemological rupture in modern Greek historiography is related to the importation of historical positivism by Spyridon Lambros.⁴⁸ This rupture concerned not only the establishment of a positivistic discourse. While the nation had been convinced that all preceding historical periods belonged to it, the new social and further cultural demands of the twentieth century needed a different knowledge of this recent past.

1.9. Demoticism and Socialism

One of the most important intellectual movements at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century was "demoticism," the movement for the adoption of the vernacular as the official language. Demoticism proposed the term *Romiosini* instead of *Hellenism* for the Greek identity. The term dissociates modern Greek identity from the Classical past, and adopts a more diffused, popular, and immediate feeling for identity, that of *Romaioi*, the self-nomination of Greeks during the Byzantine and Ottoman centuries. However, demoticism's perception of the national past was no different from the official one. Demoticism basically aimed at the transformation of the discourse of national identity through literature and linguistic change and hardly at all through historical writing. In spite of that, demoticists were accused of attempting to disrupt the unity of national history. As a consequence, for them historiography was not a privileged terrain. They preferred sociological to historical arguments. However, they managed to graft onto the hegemonic version of Greek continuity a strong (and positive) sensitivity towards the nation's recent past, and particularly towards the cultural tradition of recent periods.⁴⁹

The hegemonic version of history was not challenged even by socialists and Marxists. However, they did challenge the prevailing version of the Greek Revolution. Two of them, George Skliros (*Our Social Question*, Athens: 1907) and Yannis Kordatos (*The Social Significance of the Revolution of 1821*, Athens: 1924) provoked an intense political debate on the origins of the revolution and its agency during the first decades of the twentieth century.

⁴⁸ Gazi 1997.

⁴⁹ Tziovas 1986.

This debate, which lasted until the 1950s, was the result of a reorientation of Greek intellectuals' interest from the unification of the nation towards the "social question" under the influence of the Socialist revolution in Russia and the emergence of the Greek socialist movement.⁵⁰ The influx of Greek populations from Asia Minor and the Balkans into Greece in 1922, the social crisis of the interwar years and World War II, including the Resistance and the Civil War, posed the question of the redefinition of national identity. It is no coincidence that the first serious works on Greek society during the centuries of the Ottoman rule were written during this period (late 1930s–late 1950s), paving the way for a new approach to a historical period denoted by the general term *Tourkokratia*.⁵¹

In order to be effective, the appropriation of this period of foreign domination as part of the history of Hellenism needed an interpretative narrative. It was offered by Dimaras, who introduced the term "Modern Greek Enlightenment" to the historical discourse in 1945. Through this term, all the facts and the events of the *Tourkokratia* were viewed in a different perspective. Dimaras introduced a new organization of time, a new discourse, and new research priorities that meant a shift in the paradigm relating to the period. Through this schema, Hellenism gained an active role in the period of Ottoman rule and the historical narrative gained coherence and orientation. Thus, a "missing" period was integrated into the national time. The national narrative composed by Paparrigopoulos was concluded by the Dimaras narrative, but this conclusion had a paradoxical effect. In his writings, Dimaras activated the debate on the issue of national identity, offering alternative suggestions and new concepts that came from Western Europe related to the construction of the nation. Dimaras emphasized the role of intellectuals, the development of their communicative networks, and their social mobility. In this way, Dimaras managed to reveal the processes and the constituent elements of nation-building and its self-consciousness and he deconstructed the prevailing essentialist representations of the nation, even though he himself was not familiar with the interpretative theories of the nation. On the other hand, however, while integrating a period within historical time and revealing the process of its construction, he did not deconstruct the broader schema of national time created by Paparrigopoulos.

In addition to Dimaras, another strong influence on the studies on the Ottoman period of Greek history came from the work of Nikos Svoronos. He emphasized the economic and social history of the period and particularly the emergence of a class with modern economic activities. This thematic shift reoriented historical studies from the political and cultural events of

⁵⁰ Dertilis 1988.

⁵¹ Sakellariou 1939; Vakalopoulos 1939; Dimaras 1945; Svoronos 1956.

the Greek Revolution to the social realities in the period which preceded it. Svoronos's influence on the wider public is chiefly due to his *Histoire de la Grèce Moderne* (*History of Modern Greece*).⁵² This was a popularizing work published in Paris, in the "Que sais-je?" ("What Do I Know?") series in 1955. It appeared in Greek translation 20 years later under the title *Episkópsi tis Neoellinikís Istorías* (*Overview of Modern Greek History*) and, ever since, acquired the status of a canonical book on the national history. If in the Enlightenment School, the schema of history was the modernist elite versus the inert masses, the schema of Marxist history, inspired by Svoronos, was "society and people" versus "state" and the "mechanisms of local and foreign power."

1.10. History and Aesthetics

The literature of the modernist "Generation of '30s," the interest in popular art (Angeliki Hatzimihali) and the transformation of the aesthetic canon in the interwar period (Dimitris Pikionis, Fotis Kontoglou) had provided the wider cultural framework within which a new reading of the history of the Ottoman Period beyond the *Tourkokratía* became possible. But it was specifically the Resistance to the German Occupation (1941–1944) that activated the references to the Revolution of 1821 and created historical analogies between the *Tourkokratía* and the *Germanokratía*. From these experiences there emerged two different approaches to Greek history. The first was a popular reading of history in the form of a conspiracy in which the Greek people were the victims of foreign intervention and popular efforts for progress were frustrated by imposed regimes. The second reading established a connection between history and aesthetics. It was supposed that history was embodied in Hellenism as a *Weltanschauung* ("world view") immutable in time despite historical changes. The term used was *Hellenikotita* (an equivalent of *Hispanidad* or *Italianità*) and resulted in a search for authenticity in the cultural tradition from archaic times to modern Greece. This tradition was considered continuous and living in the language, the popular artifacts, and the "spirit" of the people, beyond Western influences. It contributed to a consideration of history as part of the aesthetic canon, from high cultural activities to popular entertainment.⁵³ This sentimental affection for national history was spread in the post-war period by the modernist poetry of Yannis Ritsos, George Seferis, and Odysseas Elytis, and by the popularization of poetry through the music of Mikis Theodorakis and Manos Hadjidakis. This popular and aesthetic reading of history peaked in the 1960s and 1970s, mainly in the ten years following the end of the dictatorship in 1974. In the 1980s, there was a renewed attachment to national history politicized by the socialists of Andreas

⁵² Svoronos 1975.

⁵³ Tziouvas 1989. On Greek cinema, see Zacharia in this volume.

Papandreou's PASOK party with the slogan "Greece for the Greeks." The socialists managed to inspire a new popular attachment to the great historical continuities, namely Hellenism and Orthodoxy. It was not strange that when the "Macedonian crisis" exploded in 1991–1993, this attachment to history prevailed over all other political considerations. Politicians had argued like historians. History, even without historians, had become a decisive force for determining politics.⁵⁴ Hellenism as the embodiment of the Greek history, culture and spirit became a powerful ideology for Greeks.

1.11. *Who Owns Hellenism?*

What were the consequences of the appropriation of Hellenism by modern Greek historians? Let's turn to academic micro-history.

In 1962, a renowned British Byzantine historian, Romilly Jenkins (1907–1969), gave two lectures in Cincinnati, Ohio, entitled "Byzantium and Byzantinism," where he questioned the connection between Byzantium and Greek antiquity.⁵⁵ Jenkins challenged the idea that the Byzantine Empire formed part of a Greek Empire. George Georgiadis-Arnakis (1912–1976), a professor at the University of Texas, Austin, replied, and so, in turn, did Gunnar Hering (1934–1994), then still a history student and later Professor of Modern Greek History in Göttingen and Vienna.⁵⁶ Two years later, in 1964, Cyril Mango (1928–), newly appointed to the much-embattled Korais Chair, in London,⁵⁷ gave his inaugural lecture on "Byzantinism and Romantic Hellenism." The attack this time was directed towards the relationship between modern Greece and Byzantium. He maintained that there was not a continuity, but a discontinuity between Byzantium and modern Greece.⁵⁸ A reply came from Apostolos Vakalopoulos (1909–2002) in 1968 in *Balkan Studies*, an English-language journal promoting Greek national interests.⁵⁹ In 1971, Donald Nicol (1923–2003) intervened, again from the Korais Chair in London, in a lecture entitled "Byzantium and Greece." He cast his doubts as to whether the contemporary Greeks can be called Greeks, whether they have the right to call the Byzantine Empire Greek, and finally questioned what the Greece of Pericles and the Greece of the Colonels (Military Dictatorship 1967–1974) had in common.⁶⁰ This debate spread across three decades in about 20 publications, some articles, some books, and with the participation of most historians of modern Greece and Byzantium in Britain

⁵⁴ Liakos 1993.

⁵⁵ Jenkins 1967.

⁵⁶ Arnakis 1963b; Hering 1967.

⁵⁷ Clogg 1986.

⁵⁸ Mango 1981: 48–57.

⁵⁹ Vakalopoulos 1968.

⁶⁰ Nicol 1986.

and the United States. Whatever was published during these years in these countries could not ignore, indeed was compelled in one way or another to acknowledge, this debate.

What was the importance of this debate? Usually, modern Greek history is dealt with as a construct of the modern Greeks, as their internal affair. It is not, though. Neither is the invention of continuity from ancient to modern Greece a modern Greek affair. Furthermore, in the debates in the United States, the issue as to whether the Greeks invented on their own the image of their history or whether it had been imposed on them by the imagination of Philhellenes was tackled many times.⁶¹ Whichever answer one opts for, it is a fact that the modern Greeks laid claim to cognitive areas that corresponded to historical periods which formed constructive elements in Western European *paideia*, and especially the idea of Hellenism that formed the foundation and distinctive feature of Western civilization as imagined in both its European and its American versions. The modern Greek references to the history of antiquity, of course, did not influence this cognitive field at all. Classical studies were established in European and American universities long before the creation of the first modern Greek university (Athens 1837), and, in any case, archaeology in Greece developed at the hands of foreign missions and belonged especially in their publications.⁶² As a consequence, Classicists could afford to ignore the appropriation of Greek antiquity by modern Greek national history. But Byzantine historians did not have the same advantage, because of their dependency on the Classicists. Byzantine studies were housed in their departments, and were considered their extension, but with somewhat lower prestige. On the other hand, they were in no position to ignore the idea of a Hellenic Byzantium that Byzantine studies in Greece were promoting with financial support for academic chairs by the Greek state. On one level, the debate that started in 1962 was a revolt of Byzantine historians which was aimed both at the hegemony of the Classicists who saw Byzantium as a corrupted extension of Classical Greece, and at the Greeks who had appropriated Byzantium as a period of Greek history. It could also be understood as getting even for the ostracism of Arnold Toynbee from the Korais Chair at the University of London after the end of World War I.⁶³ Furthermore, this debate had nuances of an oriental perception both for Byzantium and for modern Greece. However, since it dealt especially with the issue of cultural continuities and the provenance of the modern Greek national consciousness, it showed that the stakes were even higher. The major issue

⁶¹ Herzfeld 1987; Herzfeld 1997; Gourgouris 1996.

⁶² Marchand 1996.

⁶³ Clogg 1986.

here had to do with the dichotomized standards with which Greece was approached in the Western world. This dichotomy, a quasi-literary *topos* to the approach of Greece, ancient and modern, was eloquently presented by Virginia Woolf in "A dialogue upon Mount Pentelicus": "I take pains to put old Greece on my right hand and new Greece on my left and nothing I say of one shall apply to the other."⁶⁴ The university debate echoed these double standards but also nourished them. It also weighed down upon modern Greek studies, which usually evolved in Classics departments abroad, as a continuation and second-rate relative of Byzantine studies. In that respect, the "continuation" functioned as a gilded cage for modern Greek studies; it secured their presence but prevented their self-sufficiency.

In 1978, the debate was transferred to another terrain by John Petropoulos. Petropoulos argued that Greeks inherited at least three different pasts: the Hellenic, the Byzantine, and the Ottoman. He makes a distinction between the dead and the living past. The living past is the one that survives in the present, despite the fact that it functions with different terms. The dead past is the one that has disappeared, but functions as an idea that can be resurrected in the present and correct or complement the memory. For the Greeks, the living past was the Ottoman, which they tried to discard (the politics of oblivion). On the contrary, they recovered the dead past as a model, an example for change and an element that legalized and directed this change. I have given special weight to Petropoulos's view because it turns the issue on its head. Instead of pursuing continuities from one period to the next, it looks into how Greek society perceived the previous periods, and what were the political and social consequences of these pursuits.⁶⁵ It involves a major twist and in 20 years it would be succeeded by a number of works which deal with the construction of the Greek past.⁶⁶

Indeed, in Greece from the 1990s onwards, the historical viewpoint, at least in the academic world, changed. Modern Greek history is not considered to be a natural continuation of Hellenism. The relationship between the present and the past was problematized and special emphasis was placed on how modern Greek historical consciousness was shaped regarding Hellenism.⁶⁷ However, as the empirical studies of the popular views show, if modern Greeks feel national pride, it is due to ancient Greek history and the fact that Hellenism is considered the foundation of Western civilization. In a study conducted by the University of Athens among young people, to

⁶⁴ Leontis 1995b: 102–12.

⁶⁵ A parallel problematic, focused on the issue of why the Greeks perceived in different eras so differently their relationship to their past, was developed by Toynbee 1981.

⁶⁶ Petropoulos 1978.

⁶⁷ Liakos 2004c: 351–78.

the questions regarding the reasons for their historical pride, 75.1 percent listed ancient Greek civilization.⁶⁸ Yet despite what is happening within the community of historians, the structure of national time, elaborated over the past two centuries, is sustained in the public use of history and in the historical culture. Paraphrasing the poem of Seferis, “the marble head that exhausts our elbows is difficult to set down.”

2. *Language and Identity*

2.1. *Greek Language as Cultural Distinction*

The standard argument for the continuity in Greek history from Homer to the present time is the presence of a unique language, despite its evolution in time. Despite the thorough criticism by linguistics, this argument still prevails because if there is something tangible in the history of Hellenism, it is language. But how are the terms Hellenic, Hellenism, and modern Greece related? During the centuries of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek language spread like a net over populations without clearly defined linguistic boundaries. Under this net, the linguistic reality was constituted by a variety of languages and dialects: Greek, Slavic, Albanian, Vlach, Turkish, Ladino, Italian, and so on. Greek was the language of the Orthodox Church, the institution with the longest history, the broadest geographical spread in the area of eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, and the biggest flock. It was the language of learned men, of the printed word and books, of the long-distance trade networks, and also the language of the higher echelons of the administration in the Danubian principalities. If, however, Greek had been confined to the role of a “high language,” as Latin had been in Central Europe, it would have disappeared. The linguistic affinity between this linguistic net and the Greek-speaking areas lent Greek a power of attraction and, above all, a nation-building potential. Greek, in other words, as the tangible reality of a continuum which ranged from the learned language to the popular tongue, despite all the other differences, formed the awareness that Orthodox Christians—either as native Greek speakers or learners of the language—could be identified as a community.⁶⁹

Before the Greek Revolution of 1821, the Greek language functioned not as a criterion of nationality, as was claimed by the national ideology of the nineteenth century, but as a means of social mobility and cultural distinction, as a means of transition to the status of civilized man. In 1802, Daniel Moschopolitis, a clergyman in a Vlach-speaking town in Albania, wrote: “Albanians, Vlachs, Bulgarians, speakers of other tongues, rejoice

⁶⁸ Study of the University of Athens: *Ta Nea*, 20 May 2005; Frangoudaki & Dragona 1997.

⁶⁹ Christidis 2007.

and prepare yourselves, one and all, to become *Romaioi*, leaving behind your barbarian language, speech and customs and adopting the *Romaic* language⁷⁰ *Romaioi* and *Romaic* were the most commonly used terms for the Greek-speaking Orthodox and their language before the establishment of the Greek state. But this is the beginning of a puzzle with the names. Both terms (*Romaioi* and *Romaic*) in the same period were translated into European languages as “Greeks” and “Greek language” because of another historical puzzle related to the medieval Eastern Roman Empire, named “Roman” by Orthodox and “Greek” by Catholics. During the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, the term *Hellen* (Ἕλληνας) acquired a national meaning in the writings of intellectuals connected with the Italian Renaissance, although in the common language, under the influence of the Church, the term was a residual name for pagans. But the use of the term “Hellenic language” (Ἑλληνική γλώσσα, Ἑλληνικά) was simpler. It was used for the ancient Greek language but not for the Greek vernacular of this time. These difficulties were not only related to Greek. We encounter similar difficulties in the understanding of national names, since they acquired through nationalism new uses and new meanings. For example, before the nineteenth century, the term “Bulgarian” referred not to the present-day population of Bulgaria, but to all the Slav-speaking people, east and south of Serbia.⁷¹

2.2. Language Reforms and Social Norms

With the advent of the era of nationalism, the linguistic representations of the communities were transformed into vehicles for the implementation of national identities. In the Greek case, language acquired a normative function for the making of the modern Greek identity. On the one hand, Greek nationalism claimed that all the Greek-speaking Orthodox were Greek, while on the other to learn Greek was taken to be a proof of Greekness. How, though, did the concepts of nation and language come to be mutually transformed through their relationship?

The emergence of national languages and the uses of the vernaculars in Renaissance Europe were the decisive points of departure. In the context of the opposition between Latin and modern languages, the modern Greek language ceased to be regarded as the degenerate development of a Classical language, Hellenic. Using the example of the formation of national languages in Europe, Nikolaos Sofianos, the author of the first manuscript of grammar of the spoken Greek language (written in Venice, c. 1540, but published in 1870), considered the need to cultivate the language as a concern for the well-being of his fellow countrymen. In other words, the creation of national

⁷⁰ Konstantakopoulou 1988.

⁷¹ On the use of national names: Geary 2002.

languages in early modern Europe also posed the problem of the creation of a modern Greek language. For the Greek intellectuals, the question was not *what language should be used*, but *what should be done with the language?* The emphasis was shifted from the recognition of their contemporary linguistic reality to the need to reform it. There were two main blocs. The first bloc was the “archaists.” For them, the common language was the language of “vulgar people,” the “mob” and women (as “inferior” beings). Therefore, they worried their social distinction would be diminished if the common language was adopted by the elites, or, conversely, if the learned language was spoken by the populace. “I consider it the gravest misfortune for a nation if its philosophers use the vulgar tongue, or if the common people attempt to be philosophers,” wrote one of them, Panayotis Kodrikas.⁷² This dispute also concerned the language of the Church. The use of the common language by a part of the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic clergy (so that their sermons could reach a wider audience), was opposed by another part with the argument that “the canonical works of the Church ought not to be published in plain language, so that the common people will not become familiar with the content of the holy canons” (Patriarch Neophytos 1802).⁷³ The other bloc, the supporters of the common language, that is to say, the adherents of the “party of the mob,” were interested in the “perfection” of the whole nation through the cultivation of its language. With the prevalence of national ideology, the social indifference towards language was replaced by the politics of the linguistic unification of the nation and by the identification of Hellenization with the ennoblement of the whole national body.

2.3. *Matrix of the History of the Nation*

Did different conceptions of the language imply different historical perspectives on the nation? The archaists promoted a timeless conception of language, believing Greek to be a unitary language, which could be revived “so that if any ancient Greek were to rise from the dead, he would recognize his language” (Neophytos Doukas 1813).⁷⁴ Their opponents believed that “the Romaic language is very closely related to Hellenic and is its daughter” (Philippidis-Konstantas).⁷⁵ They did not believe, in other words, that it was identical. The confusion of the various approaches is manifest in the terminology. Classical Greek was called *Helleniká*, without any other temporal qualification. On the other hand, the spoken language was called *Roméika*

⁷² Triandafyllidis 1993: 470.

⁷³ Triandafyllidis 1993: 431.

⁷⁴ Triandafyllidis 1993: 449.

⁷⁵ Triandafyllidis 1993: 440.

or *Roméika*, “simple” or “common language,” even “vulgar language.” Few people called it “present-day” Greek.⁷⁶

The realization that the nation is founded on language resulted in the history of the language becoming the matrix of the history of the nation. Since the language could be traced back to the form it had acquired in antiquity, the origin of the nation could also be found in the remote past. And vice versa: Since the nation originated in this distant epoch, then the form of the language that the nation ought to adopt should also go directly back to antiquity. The connection between history and language was extended to the past, marginalizing all the other linguistic realities. Another consequence of this bond was the strong socio-cultural normativity of the language question (Γλωσσικό ζήτημα) and its thematization for a long period of modern Greek history. An example of this normativity of the language is to be found in the complaints of Constantine Oikonomos, an influential clergyman, who wrote that “The order or disorder of the language stems from the order or disorder of concepts. If grammar must be regulated by the uneducated part of the nation, then logic too should have the same rules.”⁷⁷ For him, as for other conservative intellectuals, language and, as a consequence, ideology should be regulated by the ecclesiastical and social elites.

On the eve of the Greek Revolution, there was more than one response to the need to standardize the language and the method by which this should be done. Proposing a linguistic *via media* between the archaic and the vernacular, Adamantios Korais, the leading enlightened intellectual, offered a more democratic version:

A mob is everywhere a mob. If we do not have the right to make the tyrannical demand “Thus do I bid you speak,” we certainly do have the right to give the brotherly advice “Thus ought we to speak.” ... A nation’s men of letters are naturally the lawgivers of the language which the nation speaks, yet they are (I repeat) lawgivers in democracy.⁷⁸

The romantic poet Dionysios Solomos, adopting a more radical-position-favored conflict writes: “Does anything else occupy my mind but liberty and language? The former has begun to trample on the heads of the Turks, while the latter will soon begin to trample on those of the pedants.”⁷⁹ Obedience or freedom in language were, more or less, the choices with regard to the cultural and political character of the nation. Regulating the language became a metonym of how to craft the nation.

⁷⁶ Iliou 1997: 658.

⁷⁷ Triandafyllidis 1993: 455.

⁷⁸ Triandafyllidis 1993: 450. On Korais, see Augustinos in this volume.

⁷⁹ Triandafyllidis 1993: 444.

2.4. *Crafting a National Language*

The pre-revolutionary debates about the reform of the language could not be resolved without the formation of a state power, that is, a unified national center. Yet the creation of a state in itself posed new problems, as it required the practical management of new situations. In the administration, the economy, the army, the judicial system, and education there was an urgent need for a standardized vocabulary and grammar. For national ideology, there was the need to purge the language of words and expressions of Turkish, Italian, Slavic, and Albanian origin. New forms of communication and the new symbolic order needed a new form of the language.

The first 50 years of the life of the Modern Greek state (1830–1880) could be described as a period of the “Hellenization” of the Greek language. Indeed, *katharévoussa* gradually came to prevail as the language of the administration, newspapers, and education. It also had the capacity to absorb significant morphological influences and loans from Ancient Greek. It was a compromise. It adopted the syntax of the vernacular and the morphology of the ancient language. In modern Greek, form (morphology) was called upon to show the diachronic character of the language, and structure (syntax) its synchronic nature. The dominance of *katharévoussa* did not mean that the popular parlance was completely cast aside. An example of this is the adoption of Dionysios Solomos’s poem “Hymn to Liberty,” written in demotic in 1823, as the national anthem in 1865.⁸⁰ Yet even the forms of *katharévoussa* used by politicians and scholars varied widely. Scholars of the nineteenth century stressed the linguistic anarchy in everyday usage, which oscillated between a wide range of language varieties (idioms) and supported the need to settle the language question.

Archaizing intellectuals were the stronger bloc in the linguistic controversy, because they had appropriated the symbolic power of Hellenism. Most of them were scholars who aimed to become the cultural leaders of the nation. Therefore, for these men the skilful use of *katharévoussa* and the classical language was a mark of social distinction, a form of cultural capital, a political stance. The gradual archaization of the language took place in a context in which it was fashionable to exalt and imitate Classical models. Archaeologists restored Classical monuments while ignoring monuments from the Roman and Byzantine eras. Town-planners implemented Hippodamian designs in the towns. Architects constructed neoclassical buildings. It was this Classicist aesthetic ideology, then, that determined the characteristics of the national ideology during the nineteenth century. The predominance of *katharévoussa*, therefore, was an aspect of this project of “Hellenizing” the nation, in which “Hellenization”

⁸⁰ Triandafyllidis 1993: 496.

signified the desire to imitate ancient forms. This was also evident in the creation of an environment of “Hellenized” landscape. The archaizing language supported these aims by privileging the moment of Classical Greece in contemporary Greek culture.

Reordering the national consciousness meant, during the early years of the Greek state’s existence, exiling the memory of the Ottoman and Byzantine eras and embracing the concept of Hellenism as a timeless national essence. When the poet Panagiotis Soutsos wrote that “the language of the ancient Greeks and ourselves, the modern Greeks, will be one and the same,”⁸¹ Stephanos Koumanoudis, a professor of Classics, but actually an opponent of archaism, rightly replied that “the language of learned men has driven us in a diametrically opposite direction to the language of our fathers.” This “language of the fathers” was regarded as a product of corruption, as the result of “national disasters,” as the surviving memory of the “Turkish yoke.”⁸²

This neoclassical mood was at odds with the memory of the Church and the memory of the Byzantine era. How could the religious experience be accommodated in the new ideological world of Classical images? After the middle of the nineteenth century, it was sensed that the archaizing ideology did not fully satisfy the needs of the nation and that the idea of national revival ought to be replaced by, or combined with, the idea of national continuity, which gave birth to the concept of Modern Hellenism (Ελληνισμός). The search for the origins of modern Hellenism to the late medieval times, and the intense preoccupation with the previously neglected periods of Greek history, led to a reassessment of the early forms of the modern Greek language. Modern Greek could no longer be regarded as a corrupt form of the ancient language; it acquired a value of its own. If, however, the history of the language was being reassessed, then ought not the question of language be posed anew?

2.5. *Who Represents Hellenism?*

The most outstanding event in the linguistic history of this period was the emergence of the demoticist movement, which proclaimed demotic as the linguistic orthodoxy and a project to normalize the language. Leading figures of this movement such as Jean Psycharis, who taught modern Greek in Paris, and rich Greek merchants and intellectuals abroad accused *katharévoussa* and linguistic purism of being responsible for the inadequacy of the schooling and widespread illiteracy. *Katharévoussa* was capable of expressing neither the “soul” of the people nor the “practical spirit” of the age. These attitudes echoed the linguistic theories of the day and the rise of

⁸¹ Triandafyllidis 1993: 479.

⁸² Triandafyllidis 1993: 483.

state interventionism in the domain of cultural issues. In the rest of Europe, it was a time when the state was beginning to broaden the scope of its involvement in society and a transition was taking place from a phase in which national ideology was the concern of the elites to another phase, that of the nationalization of the masses.⁸³ In the Greek context, these elements pushed the language into the domain of state policy and made the field of language policy a political and ideological battlefield. The movement inspired by Psycharis's demoticism found a receptive audience amongst young intellectuals who were toying with ideas of radical change, from Marx to Nietzsche. One can therefore easily understand why this movement was associated with a broad spectrum of ideological viewpoints, ranging from socialism to anti-parliamentary nationalism.

During this period, which extends up to the war-torn decade of 1912–1922, demoticism was regarded as being something broader than an attempt at linguistic reform. For the socialist demoticists, the issue was that *katharévoussa* was not only a false language, but a fraudulent ideology for the subjugation of the working class. For them, linguistic change ought to be connected with social change. On the other hand, the nationalist demoticists argued that *katharévoussa* was an inadequate linguistic tool in the Greek propaganda struggle to win over the non-Greek-speaking populations of the Balkans, more precisely Macedonia.

When Eleftherios Venizelos came to power in 1910 and the vision of social modernization coincided with the fulfillment of national expectations for a Great Greece, the majority of demoticists went along with his plan and joined the alliance of his supporters. They were aiming to change the educational system and impose demotic as the language of primary education. They were disappointed when Venizelos favored a simple form of *katharévoussa*, and included an article on the language in the Constitution of 1911. The emergence of demoticism as a movement led to an ideological polarization in Greece. After World War I, linguistic reform was identified with the newly born Left. It was believed to pose a threat to national culture, which was summed up in the triple alliance of “fatherland, language, and religion” or, on occasion, “fatherland, religion, and family,” and to serve the interests of the nation's enemies.⁸⁴ Thus, throughout the interwar period, the educational initiatives of the demoticists were blocked by their opponents and the key figures often faced persecution or public outrage. However, during this same period, between the two world wars, demotic had completely taken over literature and a significant proportion of essay-writing. It acquired institutional bastions such as the Faculty of Arts at

⁸³ Mosses 1974.

⁸⁴ Stavridou-Patrikiou: 1976.

the University of Thessaloniki, where two of the pioneers of educational demoticism, Manolis Triandafyllidis and Alexandros Delmouzos, were appointed as professors. The interwar period was, of course, a difficult period for reforms.⁸⁵ There was a succession of military coups and the period finally came to an end with the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas (1936–1941). Despite the fact that the dictatorship drew its ideological content from the hard core of ideas of the anti-demoticist camp, its leader entrusted Triandafyllidis with the task of writing a comprehensive and authoritative grammar of demotic. This seemingly paradoxical choice cannot be explained only by Metaxas' personality. Indeed, he originated from the Ionian Islands, where regional culture and tradition were identified to a large extent with demoticism, and he had some sensitivity towards cultural matters. But the main reason is that the official writing of the grammar of the demotic language represented the greatest attempt to normalize the language that had ever been made. Moreover, during this period, demoticism had lost the polemical character of its early phase. The demotic language of the 1930s was no longer the battle cry for the people. It had become a language of educated people, incorporating the rich literary tradition, which had been excluded until then from *katharévoussa's* literary canon. Literary works, such as the seventeenth-century Cretan Renaissance poem *Erotókritos* and the memoirs of General Makriyannis concerning his experiences during and after the War of Independence, became the new symbols of a unified national culture canonized by the literary generation of the 1930s. Gradually, *katharévoussa* was reduced from being a national language to the language of the state bureaucracy. By contrast, the vernacular was recognized as possessing the virtues of belonging to the great chain of the Greek language and having as its essence the core values of Hellenism from the Athenian philosophers to the illiterate captains of the Greek Revolution.⁸⁶

The central question of the language dispute was who represented Hellenism? The theoretical dimension of the problem was analyzed by Dimitris Glinos, one of the three leaders of demoticism in the twentieth century, along with Alexandros Delmouzos and Manolis Triandafyllidis. He wrote in 1915 that:

Historicism is quite different from the historical discipline. History itself, as mere cognition, has a decorative and indirect meaning for life. By contrast, the role of historicism is substantial. Historicism is the conscious effort to retain the values

⁸⁵ Frangoudaki 1977.

⁸⁶ Giannouloupoulos 2003.

of the past as absolute values for the present, or to transubstantiate them into seeds of a new life.⁸⁷

For Glinos, the purists were seeking to retain the tradition of Hellenism in a sterile way by mimicking it. On the contrary, the aim of demoticism would be to fertilize Hellenism with new elements of life. The writer uses the term “Historical discipline” (ιστορική έπιστήμη) and “Historicism” (ιστορισμός), identifying the first with the approach to the past implied in purism, and the second with the perception of historical past implied in demoticism. This distinction transferred to Greece the debates on Hellenism in relation to *Bildung* and *Lebensphilosophie* (“cultivation/education” and “philosophy of life”) in early twentieth century Germany, where the three leaders of demoticism had studied.⁸⁸ Like his German Classicist colleagues (among them Werner Jaeger, the writer of *Paideia*, 1934), Glinos wanted to free the reception of the values of Hellenism from the relativist approach of historians and the frozen aestheticized culture of the elites. His aim was to transform Hellenism into a living culture and educational project of character-formation and dedication to the *polis*.

Reading these debates on the form and reform of language today, we may conclude that during the first century of Greek independence, the itinerary of modern Greek Hellenism cannot be understood outside the context of European Hellenism and Philhellenism, and particularly their German version.⁸⁹

2.6. *New Codes*

During World War II, the most influential resistance organizations came from the Left, and questioned the language and ideology of the pre-war world in a very real way. The manifesto of the National Liberation Front was written in demotic, and the writer was Dimitris Glinos.⁹⁰ A vigorous intellectual and cultural life developed during this period. Freed from the restrictions of the state, it turned to demotic and the values of folk culture, molding in the young a sense of language that differed from that of the previous generations, which had been brought up in a climate of *katharévoussa*. Of course, the defeat of the Left in the Civil War and the predominance of a Right with extreme ideological tendencies virtually criminalized the use of demotic in public speech.⁹¹ Beneath the surface, however, powerful forces were at work undermining *katharévoussa*. By now the largest part of the cultural output was

⁸⁷ Glinos 1976: 47–62.

⁸⁸ Marchand 1996: 312–30.

⁸⁹ On German Philhellenism, see Most in this volume.

⁹⁰ Glinos 1944.

⁹¹ Kastrinaki 2005.

being written in demotic. Even if the demoticists differed in their ideological and political preferences, the production of culture in *katharévoussa* was drastically reduced. The greatest blow to the political support of *katharévoussa* was dealt by the dictatorship of 1967–1974. It divided the conservative camp, which had served as *katharévoussa's* traditional base of support. The shamefaced flight of the Colonels from power deprived the *katharévoussa* camp of any kind of legitimacy and paved the way for the establishment of demotic as the official language of the state in 1976.

The changes which led up to this outcome were not only of a political nature. The post-war era in Greece, as indeed throughout the Western world, was characterized by high levels of internal migration and the social rise of the middle classes. The old fabric of the upper classes of Greek society, which had been brought up on *katharévoussa*, crumbled before the tide of new social forces. The new classes imposed their own codes of communication, their own style and, above all, their need to gain approval through the symbolic recognition of the language they spoke. The official establishment of demotic meant that access to the state machinery could now be gained without *katharévoussa*. *Katharévoussa*, therefore, was also driven out of school education. Another factor was the changes that took place in communication technologies. The spread of radio and, later, of television, and the transition from controlled state radio to private radio and television broadcasting, could not fail to have an impact on language. *Katharévoussa* had been able to function in the written and printed word or in the restricted audience of educated people in the urban centers. Even if during the first 30 years of radio broadcasting the news was read in *katharévoussa*, songs, plays, soap operas, and advertisements were broadcasted in demotic. Both the language and modes of speech changed in such a way as to repeat and recycle the linguistic habits of the public.

The common Greek language in the last quarter of the twentieth century was neither a restored version of the tongue of the popular heroes of the Greek Revolution, nor the demotic of the diaspora intellectuals. It was passed through the filter of *katharévoussa*, just as national ideology passed through the filter of the “Hellenization” process. In the Greek language of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, the word “Hellenic” meant the language of ancient Greece. In Greek today, the word “Hellenic” means modern Greek, and one needs to add the adjective “ancient” to refer to the language of the Classical era. In the academic programs in the English-speaking world, though, “Greek” refers to Classical-language programs. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, modern Greece was “Hellenized” and “Hellenism” acquired a modern Greek version.

3. *Hellenization of Space*

3.1. *Name-Changing and Nation-Building*

When arriving by airplane at Athens, one lands at the new airport at Spata. Spata is a town situated in the Messogia region that bears an Arvanite name that means “axe” or “sword” (in Greek, σπάψ, *spāya* from which derives the Albanian *spata*). The term “Arvanite” is the medieval equivalent of “Albanian.” It is retained today for the descendants of the Albanian tribes that migrated to the Greek lands during a period covering two centuries, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth.⁹² The area round the airport, like the rest of Attica, was riddled with Arvanite toponyms (place names), of which only very few survive today: Liopesi was changed to Paiania, Harvati was changed to Pallini, Koropi was changed to Kekropia, Liosia was changed to Ilion, Menidi, to Acharnai. These changes of toponyms from Arvanite to (Classical) Greek create a puzzle for scholars who must examine, in each case, the relation between the toponyms they encounter in older sources and those in use today, and must have recourse to ancient maps and dictionaries. But when were the names of the cities, villages, mountains, and rivers of Greece changed?

The tourist who travels today in Greece recognizes in the regions visited the names of places encountered in ancient Greek literature, mythology, and history. But the visitor does not know that this map of ancient Greece has been constantly redesigned over the last 170 years, that is, since the beginning of the Greek state. The creation of the new state, as we know, does not only mean the reorganization of the map or of collective memory, according to the scheme on which the state founded its ideology; it also means the creation of a historical consciousness out of living memories or forgotten histories and the allocation of their marks to space. One way to achieve this reorganization of the historical consciousness is to attribute new names to common places, or to nationalize space.⁹³ In modern Greece, the privileged field of memory was that of Classical antiquity. Even if this period did not correspond to the memory of the inhabitants of each place, it was a question of the “discovery,” or invention, of a *chronotope* (literally, “space-time”).⁹⁴ In this way, the conferring of a place name involved a reference to a whole chapter of Greek history.

3.2. *Dark Periods – Banned Names*

The modification of place names began just after the constitution of the Greek state in the early 1830s, and went hand in hand with the reorganization

⁹² Jochalas 1967.

⁹³ On space and memory: Halbwachs 1992; Nora 1998.

⁹⁴ On “chronotope”: Bakhtin 1981: 84–5.

of the administration of the country and its division into prefectures, municipalities, and parishes. The people attempting this renaming of space were conscious of the ideological importance of this action. In the language of the time, it was deemed no less than the continuation of the Greek Revolution which reconstituted the Greek nation.⁹⁵ The renaming of space was not achieved in a single attempt but was a long process that went on for decades. It took place each time a new region was integrated into the Greek State. This was the case with the integration of Thessaly (1881), of Macedonia (1913), and of Thrace (1920).⁹⁶ Every time they carried out a reform of the local administration—until as recently as 1998, when many municipalities and communities were reunited with the so-called Kapodistrias plan—“new” Greek Classical names, previously unknown to the local inhabitants, made their appearance.

Which were the toponyms that had to disappear? According to the Greek authorities, they were those toponyms that were “foreign or did not sound good,” in other words, those that were in “bad Greek.” What did the first category consist of? The answer is those that recalled the Turkish past and the other “dark periods” in the history of the nation. The historical consciousness should conform to the national narrative, according to which the history of the nation was constituted by glorious and dark periods. To the first belonged Classical Greece, Hellenistic times, and the Byzantine Era. To the second belonged the centuries of Roman domination until the foundation of Constantinople, and the periods of Latin, Venetian and, above all, Turkish domination.

Despite the weight of official ideology, there was no unanimity among the leading intellectuals as to what exactly to do with the names. Living in a century of historicism and of the cult of tracing the past, they hesitated to erase them all. Some toponyms, according to Nikolaos Politis, the “father of Greek folklore studies,” could be eliminated without scruple. Scruples weighed on the conscience of historians in cases where the toponyms were thought to represent historical testimonies of displaced populations. On the other hand, the art of constructing a national historical consciousness was developed not only by remembering but also by forgetting. The middle of the nineteenth century was the stage of a conflict between the Greek intelligentsia and Fallmerayer, who maintained that, in the Middle Ages, Greece was inhabited by Slavs and Albanian peoples.⁹⁷ As a consequence, Greek intellectuals were prompt to erase all the Slavic and Albanian names which could support the rival arguments. In 1909, the government-appointed

⁹⁵ Politis 1920.

⁹⁶ Livani 2000.

⁹⁷ Skopetea 1997. On Fallmerayer, see Rapp, 132f. in this volume.

commission on toponyms reported that one village in three in Greece (that is, 30 percent of the total) should have its name changed (of the 5,069 Greek villages, 1,500 were considered as “speaking a barbaric language”). This expression is characteristic: The names that ought to be changed were qualified as “barbaric,” but what is equally important is that these very same villages were called “villages of barbaric language.” They, thus, reintroduced the Classical distinction between Greek and barbarian, and, because place names were based on that distinction, their modification amounted to a sort of “Hellenization” of the country and assumed a civilizing function. “Hellenizing” the minorities meant subjecting them to a civilizing process. After the Balkan wars (1912–1913), new reasons were added to the previous ones: Names ought to be changed so as not to “give rise to damaging ethnological implications for the Greek nation, of a sort which could be used against us by our enemies.”⁹⁸ The new enemy was the revisionism of the northern borders acquired after the Balkan wars, through the use of minority issues. As a consequence, the renaming of space was given a new dimension and a new importance, which was related not only to the internal procedures of building the nation but to threats to this process from external sources. Those who did not conform to the change of toponyms were liable to a fine or even imprisonment as traitors to the nation.

But how were the names changed? One method was the direct replacement of the existing names by their ancient predecessors. The usual source was Pausanias’ *Description of Greece*, written in the second century AD. When the names stemmed from (ancient) Greek toponyms but had been adapted to the local dialect (i.e. they had been “altered”), they should be reformed in accordance with the phonetic and morphological rules of *katharevousa*. (Marousi, derived from the ancient Amarynthos, became Amarousion). Sometimes, toponyms were replaced by names that really existed; other times they were changed randomly and hastily. When non-Greek toponyms were adapted, this was done in a totally arbitrary fashion, sometimes on the basis of misunderstood morphology (for example, a wooded village might be called “tree-less” (*Αδενδρον*). In other cases, the result was the unsuccessful translation of the non-Greek name. Names that had acquired a commemorative value, particularly since the Revolution of 1821, were often replaced by obscure, antiquated denominations (Tripoli in place of Tropolitza, Aigion in place of Vostitsa, Kalamai in place of Kalamata, Amphissa in place of Salona, Lamia in place of Zitouni, Agrinion in place of Vlachori). Even national heroes had to change names. For example, Rigas Velestinlis had to change to Rigas Pheraios, because his village of Velestino

⁹⁸ Politis 1920: 5.

was near the site of the ancient town of Pherai.⁹⁹ Still, despite apparent chaos, frequently comic results, and general incoherence, the process followed an internal logic: the creation of a “Hellenized” toponymic environment.

3.3. *From “Above” and from “Below”*

Who decided to change the toponyms? It might have been expected that this would have been done at the initiative of the state: An instruction came from above, from the center to the region. But it did not happen exactly this way. The government used to appoint commissions composed of university professors of history, linguistics, folklore, and archaeology. The 1920 commission, set up after the acquisition by Greece of Macedonia, Thrace, and Epeirus, was constituted by the same persons who had created the “scientific” study of the Greek nation—that is, the creators of the country’s history, archives, and the Museum of National History (Spyridon Lambros), of its folklore (Nikolaos Politis), and of its linguistics (Georgios Hatjidakis).¹⁰⁰ Those same intellectuals who had “marked out” time were now assigned the task of “marking out” space, as well. In other words, their task was to produce the national “space-time” (*chronotope*). But the initiative to change the toponyms rested with local authorities: The local politicians, the mayors, and chairs of local communities themselves took the initiative in rebaptizing their cities and their villages, on the basis of the proposals offered to them by amateur local historians.¹⁰¹ This was part of a general tendency towards archaization and “Hellenization.” Even the Arvanites of Attica requested that the names of their villages be “Hellenized.” These requests indicate a linguistic consciousness that was really a consciousness of social differentiation, a claim to the ownership of cultural capital. Since the most famous inhabitants of Attica were the Athenians of the Classical Period, why not lay claim to them as ancestors? Quite often, an ancient name became the apple of discord between neighboring towns. However, in the regions newly acquired by the Greek state where ethnic minorities were amply represented, it was the prefects who were directly nominated to take the initiative and impose “Hellenization.” Consequently, the modifications of the names in Macedonia and Thrace followed instructions that came from above. Despite the democratic character of this procedure in southern Greece, the state had always exercised control. Even when the initiative rested with the local authorities, it was subject to the approval of the commission of professors who

⁹⁹ On Pheraios, see Mackridge, p. 314 in this volume.

¹⁰⁰ For the exact composition of the commission of 1919: Politis 1920: 7.

¹⁰¹ The demands of the Arvanites of Attica who laid claim to classical names for their municipalities and their villages, thus considering themselves descendants of the Athenians (!), present a particular interest for one who has a linguistic conscience: Politis, 1920: 14.

had been nominated for this task by the state.¹⁰² Besides local authorities, the railway companies gave their stations ancient names so that the European tourists would recognize them as part of a nostalgic geography. A general spirit of archaization prevailed everywhere.

4. *The Hellenization of Modern Greece*

The reorganization of memory constituted “a struggle over memory,” for it gave rise to much opposition. Where did this come from? Often from the inhabitants themselves, as with the Spetsiots who did not want to replace the name of their island Spetses, well known for its contribution to national revolution, with the ancient but unknown name Tiparinos. Sometimes, they succeeded in keeping their old name. At other times, they reached a compromise, as when the inhabitants of Kiato managed to keep also their ancient name Sikyonia. At still other times, the inhabitants did not understand the meaning of the new name or interpreted it erroneously, as was the case with the inhabitants of the village Zygovítsi. When this was renamed Zygós (“yoke”) they protested because they believed that the name recalled the “yoke of slavery.” In other cases, historians also protested. They wished to preserve the historical information conveyed by the toponyms and to compare it to “inscriptions engraved on the ground.”¹⁰³ Antonios Miliarakis, a geographer and historian, proposed a compromise: on the one hand, leave toponyms as they stood, but at the same time, set up everywhere national monuments to “mark” the national space.¹⁰⁴ This proposition was interesting because it establishes a distinction between historical trace as testimony of the past, and commemorative monuments as representation of a specific national past. Both would have different functions. The toponym as testimony would perform a function by providing information for the specialists of history. The monument would fulfill a pedagogical function by performing the national history. The first would regard historical information; the second, historical consciousness.

¹⁰² In 1915, this commission rejected the request of the municipality of Ligourio, near Epidaurus, that wished to be renamed Asklipeion, judging that the name Ligourio was sufficiently old and sounded quite well. In 1998, the same municipality, in the context of the Kapodistrian reform, returned to its earlier request for an ancient name and decided to be renamed Municipality of Asklipeion.

¹⁰³ “The historical information that are contained in the toponyms are important and valuable because they clarify notably the dark periods of the history of our nation”, according to Politis who compared them to “the inscriptions engraved on the ground”. Triandafyllidis 1993: 575.

¹⁰⁴ A. Miliarakis proposed to preserve the information in the title “the inscriptions engraved on the ground” and to mark at the same time the space by setting up national monuments: Triandafyllidis 1993: 577.

Although Milarakis's proposal was not accepted, in the end both functions were fulfilled at archaeological sites. The Athenian Acropolis, Mycenae, Epidauros, Delphi, Olympia, recently Vergina, and many other sites and archaeological museums, became at the same time testimonies of history and national monuments around Greece.¹⁰⁵ In northern Greece, where the presence of ancient sites was not so strong, the national demarcation of space was effectuated through a politics of national monuments.¹⁰⁶

Again, the intellectuals who made up the commission assigned to impose and supervise the modification of the toponyms feared that excessive zeal might lead to the disappearance of toponyms coming down from the medieval period. That happened often as a result of over-hasty archaization. For example, the renowned Byzantine city-fortress of Monemvasia was temporarily renamed Epidauros Limira, that is to say it was given an unknown name for which there was no authority. It was unclear whether only names that recalled the foreign conquerors ought to be changed, or if the modification of the name ought to consist of a general restoration of names of the Classical Era. This dilemma was explained by the fact that, at the time of the creation of the Greek state, the only "past" which was thought worthy of commemoration was the Classical Period. Ancient sites and monuments were subjected to the same procedure of erasing the medieval past.¹⁰⁷ The image of the Parthenon we see now was created in the nineteenth century after the elimination from the Acropolis of all the buildings not belonging to the Classical Period of the fifth century bc.¹⁰⁸ It was only after the Balkan wars in 1912–1913 that the Byzantine and medieval periods began to be thought capable of providing references in "space-time" for modern Greek ideology. However, even after the national ideology was enriched in these ways, Classical antiquity never lost its primacy.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Greek intellectuals were divided into partisans of the preservation of *katharévousa* and partisans of the demotic language. It is to be expected that the former would have supported the archaization of the toponyms. But what was the attitude of the demoticists? Surprisingly, they were no different from the purists. A few, such as Alexandros Pallis, wanted name changes to be left to the local inhabitants as a right. Others, such as Manolis Triandafyllidis, seem to have favored the modification of names so as to conform more closely to the morphology and phonology of the demotic language.¹⁰⁹ The modification of toponyms in Greece has created a process that goes hand in hand with

¹⁰⁵ Yalouri 2001, Hamilakis 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Tsiara 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Alcock 1993.

¹⁰⁸ Hamilakis 2007.

¹⁰⁹ Triandafyllidis 1993: 570–8.

the adoption of new terms and the formation of a new language for the administration, commerce, the army and navy, the press, and education. Everywhere, new Classically derived words have appeared. Ancient Greek provided a source of words that modern Greece has taken over and by which she has been “Hellenized.” Through the “Hellenization” of toponyms, modern Greece could claim that she was the same country as that of the glorious Greece of the past.

The “Hellenization” of Greece in modern times was one of the most successful efforts of restoring a remote past through nationalism. To these efforts belong, besides name changing, the claim for the Olympic Games, the Elgin Marbles, and several initiatives regarding the heritage of “Hellenism.”¹¹⁰ “Hellenism” was a source of inspiration for modern Greek nationalism, which restored its own version of “Hellenism.” Modern Greek “Hellenism” became one of the multiple faces of “Hellenism.” Sometimes this face was recognized as related to “Hellenism,” but sometimes it was not. The tension was constant and absorbed much energy and constant efforts from modern Greeks to claim this legacy. After all, for them to represent “Hellenism” was a crucial matter, having to do not only with their self-fashioning, but also with their representation and performance in the modern world.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Kitroeff 2004.

¹¹¹ This chapter draws upon material from Liakos 2001a, 2001b, 2004a, 2004b, and, 2007, reproduced with permission. I thank especially Katerina Zacharia for her helpful and fruitful involvement in the editing of this chapter.