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# POLITICAL USES OF THE PAST

The Recent Mediterranean Experience

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11. Claude Fauriel, *Chansons populaires de la Grèce moderne*, Vol. 1 (Paris, 1824). See also Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, pp.97–122; Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros, *I theoria tis ellinikis laoghrafias: Kritiki analisi* (Athens, 1978), pp.91–7.
12. See, notably, Andonis Liakos (ed.), *O Ianos tou ethnikismou ke i elliniki valkaniki politiki* (Athens, 1993).
13. Alexandra Halkias, 'Democracy Revisited: Democracy and Agon in Modern Greece' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1997); Heather Anne Paxson, 'Redefining Reproduction in Urban Greece: A Cultural Study of Fertility Control' (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1998); idem, *Making Modern Mothers* (Berkeley, forthcoming).
14. See *Ours Once More*, pp.69, 108 ff.
15. George A. Megas, *The Greek House: Its Evolution and Its Relation to the Houses of the Other Balkan Peoples* (Athens, 1951).
16. Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (Oxford, 1979).
17. Michael Herzfeld, *A Place in History: Social and Monumental Time in a Cretan Town* (Princeton, 1991).

## The Construction of National Time: The Making of the Modern Greek Historical Imagination

ANTONIS LIAKOS

I awoke with this marble head in my hands  
 which exhausts my elbows and I do not know where to set it down.  
 It was falling into the dream as I was coming out of the dream  
 our lives joined thus and it will be difficult to part them  
 George Seferis, *Mythical Story*

As modern history writing has developed since the nineteenth century, the concept of the nation has become one of the essential categories for the construction of notions of space and time.<sup>1</sup> 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.

The concept of the nation has been approached from two basically different perspectives. The first concerns representations of national revival: the nation, a preexisting entity, resurrected and, under certain conditions, assumes an active historical role. The second perspective refers to interpretations of the construction of the nation through national ideology and the institutions of the political community. Theories of the first category (essentialist theories) are part of the national ideology, especially in its romantic and historicist phases. They refer to and eventually rationalize the way the nation perceives itself; more precisely, they describe the dominant view of the national ideology. Essentialist theories contribute to the construction of the nation. Since they have been transformed into ideology and acquired significance in space and time, in culture, and in institutions, they do not simply describe a process but reproduce their object. They constitute the reflection through which the nation constructs its self-image. As a result, they intervene in the processes of redefinition and construction of identities.<sup>2</sup> Theories of the second category (constructing theories), closer to the French tradition that conceptualizes the nation on the premise of a sense of belonging, have been shaped by the work of Frederik Barth, Eric

Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and others.<sup>3</sup> This theoretical framework has been enriched by post-1970s studies on ideology and the discursive construction of identities and now constitutes the common background of working theories of the nation within the international academic community.<sup>4</sup> These two approaches to the nation differ in their readings of the direction of time. In representation the direction is from the past to the present; in interpretation it is from the present to 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'.<sup>5</sup> This is also the time of history making. History and national ideology share the double time of the dream. As Seferis wrote, 'it was falling into the dream as I was coming out of the dream'.

#### TIME AND THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE

National identity, having a temporal structure, imposes a restructuring of the perception of time. This perception is articulated as narrative; it is formulated in the shape of national history using the organic category of the nation. The national narrative identifies subjects with the national collectivity and represents the nation; it consolidates these identifications in the domains of institutions and of symbols; it influences, clarifies, and unifies different traditions, thus constructing a national culture. The construction of the national narrative restructures the experience of time, attributing new significance to it and presenting the nation as an active historical agent that, through the narrative, acquires a new historical identity.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, national historiography constitutes a codified past which is revived through present action aimed at an expected future. In other words, it embodies a significant and ever-present element of the nation, its active memory. Memory, however, since it has been activated and articulated in a certain narrative, cannot accept gaps. This means that a national narrative should have internal coherence and no temporal discontinuities. The question of continuity has acquired crucial importance in the construction of national history, particularly for Mediterranean nations.

#### MEDITERRANEAN PARTS

The Mediterranean nations have awakened with a marble head in their hands. The need to deal with long historical periods and diverse cultures is a common feature of their national histories. They have undertaken the

difficult task of combining different significant pasts – synthesizing the Greek–Roman world with the Christian, the Latin with the German, the Greek with the Slav and the Ottoman world, the Egyptian, the Hellenistic, the Roman, the Islamic, the Arab, the Ottoman past, colonialism and independence. These pasts have various meanings for the construction of Mediterranean identities and the shaping of national cultures and politics.

How, for instance, should the Christian nations' *historia sacra* and *historia profana* be made compatible, or the Arab, Iranian, and Ottoman be reconciled with the Islamic past? Is the Hellenistic period part of the history of Egypt, or does it belong to the history of Greece? To whose history does Byzantium belong? Is it Greek, or does it belong equally to Bulgaria and Serbia? Is the Ottoman period an integrated part of Balkan and Arab history or a foreign interruption of it? Does Macedonian history belong to a Southern Slav, a Hellenic, or a local Macedonian tradition? Is the history of early modern Thessaloniki part of a history of the Jewish Diaspora, Ottoman history, or Greek history? Is there a place in the Balkan national histories for non-national, ethnic and religious minorities such as the Sephardic Jews, the Vlachs, the Greek Catholics, and the Turkish-speaking Orthodox populations? All these questions relate to identities. Is Egyptian identity Arab, Islamic, or geographic and cultural (child of the Nile)? What are the consequences for domestic or foreign policy of the adoption of one or another of these definitions of identity?<sup>7</sup>

#### THE PRODUCTION OF TIME

The appropriation and the resignification of these pasts involve the adjustment of different perceptions of the structure of time.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the homogenization of the way people perceive time is 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. The construction of historical time is conducted in stages and with hesitations and contradictions. What it involves 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. In other words, it 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,<sup>9</sup> constructing the basic myth of the nation. 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 sense of time.

## THE GREEK CASE

*Revivalism*

Greek historiography is a product of the Greek national state. During the foundation of the new state the constitutive myth was the resurrection of the mythical Phoenix.<sup>10</sup> Its significance was that Greece had been resurrected after having been successfully subjugated by the Macedonians, the Romans, the Byzantines, and the Turks. The first rector of the University of Athens, 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.<sup>11</sup> This was the first official view of Greek history in the aftermath of the war of liberation in 1821. As a consequence, the first period to become part of the national sense of history was that of classical antiquity. The appropriation of this period was accomplished under the influence of the Enlightenment, about 50 years before the Greek revolution and despite the reservations on the part of the post-Byzantine Orthodox Church.<sup>12</sup> The myth of ancient Greece was also powerful outside the Greek-speaking society of the Ottoman empire. The modern Greeks used it to introduce themselves to other nations, although it is an oversimplification to consider Greek identity simply a product of post-Enlightenment colonialism.<sup>13</sup>

The story of the incorporation of the myth of ancient Greece into the national ideology is complex and controversial. The most powerful tradition, even before the creation of nation-states, was that of written texts, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.<sup>14</sup> This written tradition was the corpus from which prenatal history was shaped, and before the emergence of nation-states myths of national origins were connected to this written tradition.<sup>15</sup> Greeks appropriated much of this learned tradition and transformed it into a national tradition. This appropriation was not an isolated case. Hellenism as a cultural topos was an intellectual product of the Renaissance revived by intellectual trends ranging from the Enlightenment to Romanticism.<sup>16</sup> As concepts, Hellenism and revival were closely linked. The Renaissance having introduced a threefold conception of time (ancient, medieval, and modern), revivalism was established as the intellectual model, and every major change in culture until Romanticism was presented as a revival.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, nationalism can be defined, in this framework, as 'myths of the historical renovation'.<sup>18</sup> The first incorporation, as a result, constitutes not simply the beginning of the national narrative but actually the construction of the object of this narrative. For Greeks, feeling like a nation means internalizing their relationship with ancient Greece.

Another aspect which should not be underestimated is that the revival of antiquity was not aimed exclusively at the legitimation of genealogy. 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, George Kozakis Tipaldos's 1839 *Philosophical Essay on the Progress and Decline of Ancient Greece*, reflects this attitude.<sup>19</sup> The exemplary and nomothetic function of the ancient world is not limited to the construction of the modern Greek state but part of a transcultural tradition. This important role of the other (that is, the ancient) world, deeply embedded in historical consciousness, has to do with notions of authority, power, sacredness, and truth. Thus concepts of the world 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 Shariah for the Muslim nations.<sup>20</sup>

*Continuity*

During the first decades of Greek independence, the initial present–past relationship had two poles: the national resurrection (the 1821 revolution and the formation of the Greek state) and classical antiquity. The myth of the 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 the present religious experience.<sup>21</sup> The blank pages of Greek history became visible in the middle of the nineteenth century. The historian Spyridon Zambelios wrote in 1852: 'We only hope that all those scattered and torn pieces of our history will be articulated and succeeded by completeness and unity.'<sup>22</sup> Filling these gaps meant supplying criteria for the appropriation of periods such as the Macedonian domination of Greece, the Hellenistic and Roman period, the Byzantine era, and periods of Venetian and Ottoman rule. In 1872 the philosopher Petros Vrailas Armenis referred briefly to the meanings that should be stressed for each period:<sup>23</sup>

With regard to the historical past of Greece, meaning the mission of Hellenism, it is necessary to examine the ways in which Greece is related to its preceding Oriental world, what it was, the influence it exercised on the Romans, its relation to Christianity, what happened to Greece in the Middle Ages, how Greece contributed to the Renaissance, how it contributes to contemporary civilization, how and why it has survived to this day despite its enslavement, and how it has resurrected itself, which is its mission today.

In this view, history is identified with the nation's mission and, as a consequence, it is Divine Providence that attributes meaning to it. The incorporation also refers to the nation's relation to the surrounding world. In other words, it constitutes a national reading of world history. This is, however, a particular 'world history' concentrated on Western European civilization, recognized as its peak – a reading of world history from a

Eurocentric point of view. In fact, this perspective lays the foundation for a dialectic between European and Greek national historiography. On the one hand, it aims at the emancipation of national history from Eurocentrism (contempt of 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 historiography during the second half of the 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 coherent conception of Greek history, representing the fortune of a people maintaining its existence and consciousness throughout the ages, emerged very late'.<sup>24</sup> The incorporation into the national narrative of the various periods that would contribute to the making of national history took place in stages and not without debate.

The timing of each incorporation involved a relationship between Greek and Western European historiography. For example, the appropriation of the Macedonian and the Hellenistic periods was facilitated by the concept of national supremacy. Within the debate in nineteenth century German historiography on the reassessment of the Hellenistic period, 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 an imperial ideal (especially in the works of Johann Gustav Droysen).<sup>25</sup> 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 – prevented its incorporation at this stage.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, since the concept of 'Hellenism' as a cultural construction of western civilization was restricted by philhellenes to the revival of modern Greece, the rejection of Byzantium along with all the other historical periods between the classical age and the Greek revolt in 1821 was unavoidable. To span the huge gap between the classical ideal and the reality of modern Greece, the concept of a decline and fall was inevitable: Byron, in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (canto 2, stanza 73), called the modern Greeks a 'sad relic of departed worth'. Otherwise, the concept of revival itself would have contained a discontinuity, and a national narrative could not entertain discontinuity.

The appropriation of the Byzantine period is of major significance because it represents the transition from one structure of the historical imagination to another: from the schema of revival to one of continuity. This transition is primarily a matter of the concept of historical time. Once this transition has been accomplished, each historical period finds its place within this schema. The result of this change was Constantinos Paparrigopoulos's monumental *History of the Greek Nation (1860–1874)*.

Paparrigopoulos, honoured as 'national historian', created the grand narrative and introduced a new style to national historiography.<sup>27</sup> 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, thus identifying the reader with the national subject. In addition, the appropriation of Byzantine history turned the national identity into a native-produced one. This change acquired the features of a revolt against the national self-image that had been imposed on Greece by European classicism. It 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 to their own way of thinking and interests.'<sup>28</sup>

#### *Inside and Outside Western Europe*

At the same time, of course, the agents of the incorporation of Byzantium into the national history attempted to define the contribution of Byzantium to Western civilization. This became another permanent feature of Greek historical culture: keeping Greek national history beyond the influence of Western historical thinking, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, considering it an essential contribution to Western culture – both resisting the western canon of history and participating in it. For example, the present archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church insists that Greeks should not learn Byzantine history from foreigners and that Byzantine history is one of the foundations of contemporary European identity. This attitude might be compared with modern Islamic attitudes towards 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.'<sup>29</sup> Attempting to construct a grammar of such attitudes would be one approach to 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 tradition to the idealization of these same periods as distinctive cultural features and as contributions to world civilization. Another Mediterranean example of this oscillation is the case of Turkish historiography of the Ottoman period. Suppressed during the Atatürk era, the Ottoman empire has come to be considered the solution to the peasant problem and a third way between capitalism and socialism.<sup>30</sup>

This move from outside definitions of national history and identity to their self-definition and from intellectual elites to ordinary people is an attempt to relocate the centre of national history: 'While ordinary people recognize that it is to the medieval period that they owe their existence, their language, and their religion, it is only intellectuals who deny it.'<sup>31</sup> This is

another oscillation between the claims of history to scientific status, on the one hand and the mistrust of intellectuals writing history, on the other.

Appropriation of a past culture is a long process. Thus, a lengthy period of time passed between the legitimization of Byzantium as part of the national narrative and historians' use of it in national symbolism and representation. Byzantium was not reassessed in textbooks until the end of the nineteenth century; the Byzantine Museum was not established until 1914, and the first professors of Byzantine art and history were appointed at the University of Athens only in 1912 and 1924 respectively.<sup>32</sup> Appropriation takes place in stages with regard not only to the concrete setting of the specific period but also to its various aspects. Thus the theory of the unity of Greek history has been transferred from political history to linguistics<sup>33</sup> and folklore.<sup>34</sup> In the case of Byzantium, this process took several decades to complete, and new images are still in play. The delay in the development of Byzantine studies in Western Europe emphasizes the fact that international historical debate may affect national history but does not entirely determine it.

#### *National Genealogy*

The construction 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 in terms of a main characteristic giving a particular meaning to each period. His first Hellenism is 'Ancient Hellenism', the classical Hellenism that declined after the Peloponnesian Wars. It is succeeded by 'Macedonian Hellenism', actually 'a slight transformation of the first Hellenism'. This is followed by 'Christian Hellenism', which is later replaced by the 'medieval Hellenism' from which 'modern Hellenism' emerges in the thirteenth century. A genealogy connects these Hellenisms:

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

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, its 'mission' or 'final aim'. These orders are related to the nation's past or expected future contribution to world history.

The crucial question is the relation of these Hellenisms to the nation. An exploration of the internal logic is not helpful here. On the contrary, if we

approach the question from a morphological point of view, we soon realize that it is actually a transfer to history of the religious concept of the Holy Trinity – the same essence in multiple expressions. The schema ultimately has a theological point of reference which became obvious in Droysen's use of the term 'Hellenism', although Paparrigopoulos used it differently.<sup>35</sup> The idea has been transformed and diffused. A century later, the Marxist historian Nikolaos Svoronos would face the same problem: 'Hellenism as a metaphysical entity, as a *sui generis* genre, does not participate in changes in the environment, and as a result it remains continuous, coherent and unchanging in its qualities'.<sup>36</sup> National historiography, even in its Marxist version, remained founded on metaphysics.

The conceptual construct of multiple Hellenisms solves various problems that were intractable both for the theory of revival and for the theory of continuity because the narrative structure of Hellenisms is one of unity through difference. The 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 modern Hellenism its political component and makes national independence possible without the intervention of Europe and the impact of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Thus the revival becomes a radical political identity. The historical argument here is that national consciousness was the result of the elaboration of political consciousness through its relation to the civic culture of classical Greece.

Nevertheless, the incongruity between Hellenism and the Greek nation has survived to this day. That references to 'Hellenism' outnumber references to 'the Greek Nation' in contemporary historical culture conceals a contempt of the political process by which the Greek nation has been constituted and the downgrading of citizenship to the status of an ethnonationalistic definition of Greek identity. In this way Greek identity has been purified of 'alien' elements, most obviously in the politics of and popular attitudes towards minorities in Greece, and through the elaboration of the term 'Hellenism' an ethnocultural definition of the nation has been imposed.

#### *Cultural History*

The notion of different Hellenisms created a problem for the historical appropriation of the periods since the disintegration of the Byzantine empire in 1204. The period of the Frankish occupation was combined with the Byzantine period, but it was also connected with the period of the Venetian occupation, in its turn interwoven with that of 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 backbone of political history, used cultural history as a substitute.

The first approach, which originated in Western and more precisely in Renaissance historiography, was through the contribution of Byzantine scholars to Italian humanism in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which extended to the myth that the Greeks were responsible for the revival of civilization in modern Europe.<sup>37</sup> This powerful myth largely influenced the formation of the Greek national myth, the Great Idea. 'Greece is destined to enlighten the West with its decline and the East with its resurrection'.<sup>38</sup> It was to be expected, of course, that this particular perception, stressing the nation's contribution to world history, would be pointed to not only as a chance event but more or less from the perspective of 'The History of Greek education from the fall of Constantinople till 1821'.<sup>39</sup> Since education 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 education. Interest in scholars who had promoted interaction between Byzantium and the West had already been introduced by Andreas Moustoxidis and his periodical *Hellinonimion* (1843-47).<sup>40</sup> The origins of modern Hellenism were pursued in the history of literature and erudition. Research was mainly oriented towards the vernacular texts of the last centuries of the Byzantine empire, with emphasis on literature and culture in Crete during the five centuries of Venetian rule. Scholars therefore turned to the Venetian archives, which provided new ground for Greek historiography.<sup>41</sup> In order to be incorporated into the national narrative, the history of the Venetian period was adapted to the demands of national ideology. 'In an a posteriori judgement, one would say that this mastery of Hellenism by Western peoples has proved fateful ever since. Because of the interaction of the two elements [Greek and Latin], the revival of art and scholarship became possible in the West'.<sup>42</sup>

The most conspicuous effort was the exploration of the characteristics of the Hellenic 'soul' in Cretan literature and painting and the emergence of the idea of a Greek Renaissance through Cretan culture.<sup>43</sup> Thus cultural history filled the gap created by the lack of political supremacy of the nation. It is interesting in this regard that cultural history, dealing with the biographies of literary men and literature, and not political history has been the traditional genre of modern Greek historiography.

#### *The Ottoman Legacy*

A great problem for Greek historiography was the appropriation of the four centuries of Ottoman rule from 1453 until 1821, called the Turkokratia (Turkish occupation). With this term, four centuries are detached from a

longer period of the Ottoman presence in the northeastern Mediterranean, dating from the eleventh century 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 the cultural debate had been suppressed as a cause of Greece's backwardness. At the same time it was mythologized as the cradle of national virtues. In historiography the Turkokratia was considered as a passive period of slavery and at the same time as having procedure, in the words of Paparrigopoulos, 'the military, bourgeois, and intellectual forces that realized the Greek revolution'. The history of this period was mixed with historical mythology seeking to justify the ideological, social, and political balance of power in postrevolutionary Greece. It should be pointed out that each historical period was appropriated through a different discourse. Whereas the canon of Greek history was defined by Paparrigopoulos, the epistemological rupture in neohellenic historiography is related to Lambros's importation of historical positivism.<sup>44</sup> This rupture was not just a matter of 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 called for a different knowledge of this recent past.

#### *Demoticism and Socialism*

One of the most important intellectual movements at the end of nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was demoticism, the movement for the adoption of the vernacular as the official language. Demoticism proposed the term 'Romiosyni' instead of 'Hellenism' for Greek identity. The term disassociated modern Greek identity from the classical past and adopted a more diffuse, 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; it basically aimed at the transformation of the discourse of national identity through literature and linguistic change. In spite of this, the demoticists were accused of attempting to disrupt the unity of national history, and in response they emphasized sociology rather than history. However, they did manage 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.<sup>45</sup>

The hegemonic version of history went unchallenged even by the socialists and the Marxists. They did, however, challenge the prevailing version of the Greek revolution, mainly through the work of George Skliros (*Our Social Question*, 1908) and Yannis Kordatos (*The Social Significance of the Revolution of 1821*, 1924), and thus provoked an intense political debate on the origins of the revolution and its agency. This debate 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.<sup>46</sup> The influx of Greek populations from Asia Minor and the Balkans into Greece in 1922 and 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. Thus the first serious works on Greek society during Ottoman rule were those of Michael Sakellariou,<sup>47</sup> Apostolos Vakalopoulos,<sup>48</sup> Nikos Svoronos,<sup>49</sup> and Costantinos Dimaras,<sup>50</sup> which paved the way for a new approach to the Turkokratia and the establishment modern Greek historiography in the years during and after World War II.

To be effective, the appropriation of the Turkokratia needed an interpretive narrative. This was offered by Dimaras, who introduced the term 'Neohellenic Enlightenment' to historical discourse in 1945. Through this term, all the events of the Turkokratia were viewed from 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 assumed an active role in the period of Ottoman rule and the historical narrative gained coherence and orientation. Thus, a 'missing' period was integrated into 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 had revived the debate on the issue of national identity, offering alternative suggestions and new concepts that came from Western Europe with regard to the construction of the nation. Emphasizing the role of intellectuals, the development of their communicative networks, and their social mobility, he managed to reveal the processes and constituent elements of nation building and its self-consciousness. In this way, he deconstructed the prevailing representations of the nation even though he himself was unfamiliar with interpretive theories of the nation. At the same time, however, he did not deconstruct the broader schema of national time that Paparrigopoulos has created.

In addition to Dimaras, another strong influence on studies of the Turkokratia 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 the revolution to the social realities of the period which preceded it. However, Svoronos's influence on the wider public is chiefly due to his *History of Modern Greece*.<sup>51</sup> If in the Enlightenment School the schema of history was the modernist elite versus the inert masses, the schema of Marxist history

advocated by Svoronos was society and the people versus the 'state' and the mechanisms of local and foreign power.

### *History and Aesthetics*

The literature of the modernist 'Generation of the '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 broader cultural framework within which a new reading of the history of the Turkokratia became possible. It was the period of the Resistance to the German occupation that revived the references to the Revolution of 1821 and created historical analogies. Thus, the historical appropriation of the period of Ottoman rule came in the twentieth century and brought with it the late study of modern Greek history and its isolation from the Ottoman and Balkan context. The first professor of modern Greek history at the University of Athens was appointed as late as 1937.

Through these experiences came, first, a popular reading of the hegemonic version of history and, secondly, a connection between history and aesthetics. The popular reading of history was as a plot in which the Greek people were the victims of foreign intervention and popular efforts at progress were frustrated by imposed regimes. The Marxist and anti-imperialist spirit of the time is obvious in this reading. The connection between history and aesthetics meant the historicization of aesthetics and the aestheticization of history. The discourses during the interwar years about '*Hellinikotita*' (the equivalent of *Hispanidad* or *Italianità*) resulted in a search for authenticity in the tradition and contributed to a consideration of history as part of the aesthetic canon, from high cultural activities to popular entertainment.<sup>52</sup> The modernist poetry of Yannis Ritsos, George Seferis, and Odisseas Elitis and the popularization of poetry through the music of Mikis Theodorakis and Manos Hatzidakis in the postwar period spread this sentimental affection for national history. This popular reading of history, enriched by aesthetics, emerged with the end of the dictatorship in 1974, and in the 1980s there was a renewed attachment to a national history politicized by the socialists of Andreas Papandreou: 'Greece for the Greeks.' When the socialist ideals sank after 1989, what remained was the popular attachment to the great historical continuities, Hellenism and Orthodoxy. With the disappearance of anti-imperialism, a kind of nativism with anti-Western colours surfaced. It is therefore no surprise that when the 'Macedonian crisis' exploded in 1991–93 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.<sup>53</sup>



*The Modernization of National History*

The modernization of national history coincided with an attempt at the revival of neohellenic historiography. However, the postwar period was not favourable for the development of research. Even the suspicion that historical work disputed the official version of history was enough to incur legal consequences for the author. Thus, when Svoronos published his history in Paris in 1955, he was deprived of his passport. It took more than 20 years after the end of the war for modern Greek history to be incorporated into the national narrative. In the past 20 years, the majority of Greek historians have been influenced by the French *Annales* school, with a tinge of Western Marxism, by British and American social science, and, more or less, by the school of the history of the Greek Enlightenment created by Dimaras. The traditional history of the nation has been replaced by a new history of the society, creating a critical counterbalance to the pressure of nationalism. Criticism of the national ideology and representations, the construction of the national narrative and identity, and the history of the Greek minorities emerged in the 1990s as new topics in Greek historiography. Yet despite what is happening within the community of historians, the structure of national time elaborated over the past two centuries persists in the public use of history and in historical culture. The marble head that tires our arms is difficult to set down.

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## Shifting Boundaries, Clientalism and Balkan Identities

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The fact that three distinctive continental realities confront each other in the Mediterranean area makes comparative research there very difficult. Mediterranean Europe, Mediterranean Asia, and Mediterranean Africa are of uneven relevance within their respective continental frameworks, and at each point on the Mediterranean coast there is a tradition of contacts of different kinds with the quasi-totality of the Mediterranean world. These traditions are not always understood and appreciated, and therefore it is not always realistic, in historiographical terms, to insist upon comparative approaches, much less upon a comparative history. Fernand Braudel established a new area of intellectual communication with his *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*,<sup>1</sup> and it would be unjust not to recognize its positive impact. Nevertheless, there has been no new major intellectual breakthrough since. He himself, turning his attention to the world and to France, has not produced anything to match that initial work, and in his own country many of its components have been rejected.

The Mediterranean heritage has everywhere been internalized in a national 'grand narrative' and even critically reevaluated, but generally without meeting the challenge of a comparative Mediterranean interpretation. Too much concerned with an exceptionalist attitude towards their respective national heritages, historians in the Mediterranean area, although accepting the idea of shared Mediterranean roots, usually prefer to overlook what those involved in concrete historical terms. If they compare at all, they tend to insist upon differences. This obsession with differences can be treated not only to the imperatives of national historiographies functioning as national ideologies but to an earlier heritage of competition among maritime cities, empires, religions, and so on. Although it may have been important at a particular point for a particular project of nation building in the Mediterranean area in the twentieth century, today it is usually perceived from outside as parochial, outdated, and susceptible to misuse. But this attitude towards differences in detail can be a way of 'deconstructing' each national 'grand narrative'