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Spectres of the Past:

**A comparative study of the role of historiography
and cultural memory in the development of
nationalism in Modern Scotland and Greece**

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore themes in the development of national ideology in Scotland and Greece largely in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The analysis consists of two pairs of case studies where, using the comparative method, the role of historiography in providing 'mental maps', precise boundaries for the nation in space and time, its application in constructing a national consensus on an acceptable past, and the use of the latter in consolidating a national identity, are explored in detail. This process followed intricate paths in both Scotland and Greece and displayed rifts and fissures in patterns thought common in the development of nationalism in Europe. The fundamental ideological challenges to which significant segments of the Scottish and Greek society had to respond are shown to have influenced their respective societies' worldview until the present time. The resilience of a number of different valid perceptions of Scotland in the nineteenth century and the dichotomy between equally possible concepts of Greece demonstrate, in concluding, the fluidity of national identity and the indeterminacy of their modern ethnogenesis as late as the eve of the Great War.

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Introduction

“We live in an age of nationalism, but one which spends a lot of its energies denying that nationalism exists”, David McCrone asserts in the opening pages of one of his most recent works.¹ There is indeed plenty of evidence around us to support this view. From the declarations of all sides enmeshed in the successive wars in former Yugoslavia to the demands of Basque autonomists and the continuing uncertainty in Ireland and the Middle East it seems that the right to self-determination can be actually expressed in any number of ways from peace talks to terrorism to armed conflict without those engaged accepting the unwanted adjective. Other variations are preferred to underline devotion to country: loyal, national, ethnic, patriotic. We have to deal, not just in academic but in everyday life, with an array of concepts that, far from having permanently disappeared as an optimistic and progress-oriented interpretation of history maintained, were merely submerged to surface again when conditions permitted it. The modern course of nationalism shows that there is no clean break with the past and these continuities are the canon, not the exception.

“We know what it is when you do not ask us, but we cannot very quickly explain or define it”²: the obvious place to start this discussion, a definition of nationalism, constitutes a rather murky territory. Along with liberalism and democracy it forms one of the fundamental building blocks of modern society, yet we still seem to lack precision in its study. To admit of course that it remains “obdurately alien and incomprehensible to those who are not possessed by it”, as Ernest Gellner’s editor maintained in 1983³, would be to render an injustice to all those researchers who strove towards its understanding. Gellner himself offered a simple and widely accepted

¹ David McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism*, (London and New York, 1998), p.vii.

² Walter Bagehot, quoted in E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780. Programme, myth, reality*, (Cambridge, 1992), p.1.

³ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, (London, 1983), Editor’s note.

description as a political principle propagating the convergence of a political and a national entity.⁴

There are other points of agreement for current historians. Most scholars today consider nationalism as a modern phenomenon. But research having bypassed the old dilemmas between primordialism and modernism essentially considers the impact of modernity on older forms of consciousness. The mere act of constructing something does not render it false. Nationalism therefore is not the 'false consciousness' of marxist thinkers such as Hobsbawm. However, it is not also a fact devoid of roots and origins. Links and affinities between modern nations and pre-existing *ethnies* were tracked in Anthony D. Smith's early work. In later years even more flexible notions seem to carry us beyond static schemes in his studies. What brings together pre-national sentiments and national constructs is the use of ideology. And the present work focuses on this nexus which ensures that past and present are molded to consist the whole in the national ideal.

My intention in this comparative study is to examine certain parameters in the evolution of nationalism in Europe. To delineate the limits and uses of history in constructing a plausible identity for the mass of the nation. To show that although history was widely used its applications varied and the national ideals depended on the existing political situation. To underline the gradual progress and fluidity of the identities under construction despite the assertions of official ideology. In the course of the work one will not fail to notice the limits of the comparative method in general. It is not merely the protean form of nationalism that obstructs us but the difficulty of reducing different cultural experiences to common denominators. The comparison then, without undermining the validity of the project, has a meaning up to a certain point.

The most apparent question would be why these particular examples? Why specifically Scotland and Greece? Is there a patent connection, some common or uncommon characteristics that could possibly link these places?

Small nations both, were indeed both latecomers to nationalism. Greece was an early new state in the rearranged nineteenth-century Europe

⁴ E. Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, p. 1.

while Scotland only developed a challenging nationalism almost a hundred years later. Presently both touching the centre and the periphery of Europe owing to their geographical position and at the same time their participation in the European Union, they present challenging cases to the historian. Two historical nations with divergent courses in modern times, although not without ties: Greece in Scotland, through the heritage of classical antiquity that had strongly influenced Scottish education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and had turned Edinburgh into an ‘Athens of the North’⁵; Scotland in Greece, through *philhellenism*, the freedom fighters and historians of the Greek War of Independence.⁶ The character of both countries has been shaped in the not so remote past from the migration experience, albeit a product of different needs and social conditions. Although initially Scottish migration was a way out of poverty or an authoritarian state curtailing religious and civil liberties, it had later to do with filling the needs of administration in a vast empire in which their own stake gradually increased. The Greeks migrated in successive waves that reached their peak in the decades just before the Great War and right after World War II looking for better chances in the United States of America, Germany and Australia mainly: expectations of a better quality of life rather than politics were the determining factor in deciding to go abroad.

Besides these characteristics however what catches the scholar’s eye is a certain insularity both societies continue to present today despite continuous interaction with neighbour European nations and their own respective diaspora cultures. Traces of introspection are obvious in the rhetoric of major political parties and the way tradition and culture are daily ‘flagged’ to Scots and Greeks. This preoccupation with the local element as opposed to a more open-minded outlook is not so much a result of parochialism, which is often offered as an easy explanation, but reflects rather a fundamental instability concerning their respective identities: uncertainty of their status and position in the modern world has been a dominant feature of both Scotland and Greece in the past two centuries.

⁵ See David Allan, “The Age of Pericles in the Modern Athens: Greek history, Scottish politics, and the fading of the Enlightenment”, *The Historical Journal* 44, (2001).

⁶ See below, ch.2, for a discussion of Scot historians of the Greek War of Independence.

The proximity of a model paradigm, physical or imaginary, has been crucial to that. Scotland's geographical place and political history practically forced a comparison with England, evident in a series of manifestations. The mid-nineteenth century grievances about heraldry and the name of Great Britain, Home Rule, the debates on university reformation, the repudiation of a Scottish focus in post-Union historiography were in fact reactions to that deeper discomfort.⁷ English gravitational pull begat a persistent uneasiness at prospective Anglicisation. On the other hand, the imaginary entity of 'Europe' was what Greece has always measured itself against. The 'Protective Powers' of Britain, France and Russia enjoyed a spectral existence in the Greek psyche, marking a community that never was. On the contrary, the neighbouring Balkan states remained in obscurity, actual reminders of what to avoid. In Greece "our proper honourable place in the European family" was always the spoken or unspoken constant.⁸

Despite these affinities or even more striking similarities, as for example, the high role of the Church in both societies until a rather late stage,⁹ this is a story of divergence. Social developments and political circumstances produced different results although the materials used to build a national identity were applied in much the same way. Scotland and Greece took varying paths in E.J. Hobsbawm's 'dual revolution': the former became the 'workshop of the world', the latter secured its political independence. They were certainly marked by what they failed to achieve. Nationalism in

⁷ See I.G.C. Hutchison, *A political history of Scotland, 1832-1924. Parties, Elections and Issues*, (Edinburgh, 1986); Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past. Scottish Whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c.1830*, (Cambridge, 1993); George E. Davie, *The Democratic Intellect. Scotland and her Universities in the nineteenth century*, (Edinburgh, 1999).

⁸ Georgios Martinelis, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός εις την Ελληνικήν Παλιγγενεσίαν αυτοσχεδίως απαγγελθείς προς τον Κερκυραϊκόν λαόν την 5μ.μ. ώραν της 25 Μαρτίου 1879 προ της Πλατείας του Θεάτρου υπό Γεωργίου Μαρτινέλη*, (Kerkyra, 1879), p.8.

⁹ David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland. The sociology of a stateless nation*, (London and New York, 1992), p.39, Hutchison, *A political history of Scotland*, Paraskeuas Matalas, *Έθνος και Ορθοδοξία: Οι περιπέτειες μιας σχέσης. Από το «ελλαδικό» στο βουλγαρικό σχίσμα*, (Heracleion, 2002).

these countries bears the mark of compensation for statelessness and underdevelopment.

My present analysis of national ideology is build on the concepts of imagined communities and invented traditions.¹⁰ These are used here in a complementary way. Essentially, I follow the process of constructing the model of a nation as presented by intellectuals. The multiplicity of possible approaches means the existence of various images. There are indeed many a 'Scotland' and 'Greece' to be encountered later on among followers of the Burns cult or celebrators of the University of Athens. Matching however words with actions the propagators of a national discourse communicate with a wider audience. Thus we find that the nation is celebrated in rituals of identity confirmation – which constitute invented traditions. I focus then on communities of intellectuals and their rituals of confirming their national identity as they comprehend it.

The study begins to examine common beginnings with a synopsis of the historians' quest for identity in the two countries. The debate on Scottish origins and the unification of the Greek past were a search for the proper continuities among more than one candidacies. The end product depended on political rather than scientific principles. In Scotland, the choice between Celtic or Saxon determined a stance towards England while the peculiarity of the Union created peculiar identities: 'what made Scotland Scotland' was frequently invoked by many but rarely described in detail without disagreement. In Greece the rift between an Enlightenment and Romantic view of history relayed to their claims of rightful partnership in 'Europe' due to a common ancient heritage. Greek nineteenth-century historians were faced with reconciling the dilemmas of a society looking to the West while its playground was still the Orient and the Near East.

The extent to which historiography promoted national identity in codifying symbols, providing periodisations and establishing patterns of consensus is apparent in treatments of Wars of Independence and is presented in the second part of this work. The Scottish War of

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, (London, 1991), Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of tradition*, (Cambridge, 1983).

Independence formed a focal point of national consciousness and its key symbols – William Wallace and Robert the Bruce – were elevated to the status of icons. Nineteenth-century Scottish historians treated this period with exceptional care as a minimum of an identity consensus. Despite various religious, political or ideological dissensions, sometimes manifest in the works of Patrick Fraser Tytler, John Hill Burton or Andrew Lang, “all Scots could agree to be proud” of the Wars of Independence.¹¹ The Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire became a foundation myth full of romantic heroes creating a political and historiographical consensus that vindicated the conduct of both national and civil war winners and justified the *raison d’être* of the new state. The failure of contemporary foreign or later Marxist critics to establish a credible alternative view to the primacy of the official *Great Idea* will be shown to have been a result of their own political interests, preoccupations or stereotypes.

The third part deals with the development of images of Greek and Scottish identity through the eyes of intellectuals. The celebrations of the birth of Robert Burns, Greek Independence Day in the University of Athens and the creation of the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople demonstrate different options offered in the conception of national identity and the interplay between them. The range of views expressed in these instances transcends the patterns of official ideology and highlights the possible margins a discussion on the content of nationality could take in each society without straying from the mainstream. In Scotland, a Unionist-Nationalist perspective did not eliminate the casual expression of views of Britain as a unitary state or its appropriation in the form of ‘Scottish Empire’. The Greek state’s ambition to provide exclusively national ideology in its interior and the ‘unredeemed’ communities of the Ottoman Empire did not appeal for long to those among Ottoman Greeks who believed that the interests of their element were better served by an Austro-Hungarian type of settlement or gaining cultural mastery inside the Empire. These developments however did not happen in the absence of society. The cases of Robert Burns and the University of Athens also tie the appeal of intellectual subjects to the general public. The respect and genuine interest

¹¹ Marinell Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish history*, (Edinburgh, 1980), p.103.

this public showed for these institutions was evident in the popularity of their celebrations.

Thus, the interplay between history and identity is the common underlying theme in examining the influences between discipline and ideology. From this standpoint the first part traces the beginnings of Scottish and Greek national identities in historiography. The second part of the study focuses on the forging of a significant point of confidence where the presence of national historiography draws in elements stressing community and solidifies their paragon into a consensus. Finally, in the third part we follow one of the paths along which these emerged identities were 'applied' through historical schemes and cultural images and reached wider segments of society being disseminated by intellectuals. It is evident that in each of these instances the effect was two-way. It was not merely the case of Patrick Fraser Tytler writing the national history that shaped an identity, it was also a particular national identity that dictated the kind of history created, as Greek historians of the War of Independence clearly show.

Studying Scottish nationalism is the essential search for "the secret causes, perhaps more felt than understood" that tie the people to their symbols and feelings.¹² The Rev. Andrew Wilson drew attention to this latent quality for his own reasons but his observation proves valid nevertheless. The Scottish nationality is precisely that: felt most of the time, not exactly seen. From the letters of the 'North Briton' to the SNP a kind of 'ghost' nationalism ebbs and flows always leaving a residue which some fail to discern while others prefer to dismiss. On the other hand, the case of Greece remains closer to the norm. Nation-building in one of the 'new' nineteenth-century nation-states followed the familiar patterns of standardisation and homogeneity, successfully turning previously particularistic peasants into Greeks and Hellenising foreign-sounding names

¹² James Ballantine, *Chronicle of the hundredth birthday of Robert Burns*, (Edinburgh and London, 1859), p.365.

to restore their hidden ancient glory¹³. Yet, in both cases national ideology appears very strongly as an everyday experience. In Michael Billig's terms history is 'flagged' daily to Scots and Greek citizens: statues of important personages and inscriptions commemorating key events can be met at every other step. 'Memory' and 'tradition' are highly estimated qualities expected both on a social and a personal level: significant historical dates are marked by state celebrations and designated as 'days of memory' in the media while the people are called not to forget these instances. Here, national ideology appears as an everyday experience.

Woven through historiography, geography and educational purposes into daily routine, nationalism is a constant of everyday practice. 'Flagging' the obvious may at times be a way of celebrating, reassuring the public or simply attracting votes. In the case of Scotland and Greece however there are some subtle elements showing a latent disaffection. It seems that peace and prosperity coming in different degrees in the post-war era have not been enough for these two countries to adapt and achieve a confident self-image. Lack of confidence is apparent in a string of cases that periodically catch the public's eye and command its attendance. In Scotland, *Braveheart*, Robert Burns's DNA and the outcry over William Wallace's absence from the Museum of Scotland; in Greece, where in Paparrigopoulos's sharp evaluation history retains a 'more practical character than usual', the fascination with state names or resentment towards Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*. These attitudes cannot simply be attributed to parochialism as easily as journalists or even intellectuals would like.¹⁴ Although ostensibly different they echo similar uncertainties in the content of their respective identities. The weight of the past, essential in being Scot or Greek, cannot be laid to rest.

¹³ «Βασιλικό διάταγμα περί συστάσεως επιτροπείας προς μελέτην των τοπωνυμιών της Ελλάδος και εξακρίβωσιν του ιστορικού λόγου αυτών» in *Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως*, Α', 125, 31/5/1909.

¹⁴ Graeme Morton, *William Wallace. Man and Myth*, (Stroud, 2001), p.31.

PART ONE

Historiographical Origins

Chapter One

Structuring the Past in Scottish and Greek Historiography

In this chapter my main aim is to delineate the course of the beginnings for the search of a national identity in Scotland and Greece. In both cases this problem was viewed as a challenge to assumptions that had their origin in a more remote past, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Scotland, and the pre-Revolutionary eighteenth-century movement of the Greek Enlightenment in Greece. The Greek case underlines the importance of historical perceptions in the gradual construction of a 'usable past' as a firm foundation for a national identity. To accommodate a rising Greek identity intellectuals had to shift from a dominant historical paradigm to another more suitable to political and ideological practices. The Scottish case however seems to illustrate with greater clarity the element of selection in shaping a consistent canon of historical events on which this national identity is based. The debate on Scottish origins carried a range of political overtones that dominated the participants' intentions and choice of argumentative reasoning. In fact, this first attempt at a definition of the Scottish ancestry and identity was more an effort on the part of the scholars involved to underline their own vision of their contemporary Scottish political community.

The Origins of Scotland

Most medieval European states cultivated a historical tradition that could be politically useful. Legitimacy was sought in a number of ways – and levels. The acceptance of the Church, Roman Catholic in the West, Orthodox in the East was of course the unmistakeable mark of a legitimate monarch for the greater part of the middle ages even after the fierce struggles of the Papacy with the German Emperors, or the Iconoclastic schism in Byzantium. However, this pertained personally to the king, certifying that he himself was God's elect. The state he ruled however, although admittedly also a personal possession, was in need of similar justification of its existence to strengthen its monarch's bargaining position in the frequent legal disputes and armed conflicts of the era. It was also to be a subtle reminder of achieved or aspiring status among neighbouring principalities, as the use of *tsar*, Slavic form of *Cesar*, to denote medieval rulers of Bulgarians and Russians implied.

A part of these founding myths was ancient or classical heritage. The Brutus myth of England's colonisation is a good example of forging a direct link to a desirable past lineage. To be included in the Homeric world, determining in this way their nation's extreme antiquity and noble ancestry, and since it would be considered absurd to put forward a link to the Greeks, the English chose the extinct Trojans as their progenitors. In other parts of the British isles there were voices among the Irish maintaining that Ireland was Homer's Ogygia while one of the alleged progenitors of the Scots was Scota, an Egyptian pharaoh's daughter. In another example both the Byzantine and Carolingian empires based their claims of precedence over other states in their status as successors of the Roman Empire.

This insistence in classical heritage then, was an indication of ancestry that became necessary to mark a place in international relations. Indeed, a definition by faith would not be enough in this case. Religion being the linchpin of medieval society in theory, it was not an applicable fact in differentiating among the European kingdoms until the Reformation. Significantly enough, the sum of the continent to the west of the Ottoman lands continued to profess the same creed, and was known under the

collective name of Christendom. The presence of Orthodox Christians, Jews or even some Muslims – notably the Moors in Spain until the end of the fifteenth century – was not enough to alter this exclusive perception of European societies. The political clout of these arguments based on classical ancestry however was limited to a symbolic show rather than a realistic prospect, for it is quite obvious that the German Emperors never conceded primacy to English Kings, Brutus notwithstanding.

Foundation myths however, are only one aspect of forging links between people of a given community. To form this sum of mutual characteristics that constitute a national identity is, in essence, to form an ideology: some variant of the idea that the Greek or the Scottish nation exists, always did and always will, following a certain heritage and claiming its own unique contribution to modern civilisation.¹ “Myths of national identity”, says Anthony Smith, “typically refer to territory or ancestry (or both) as the basis of political community”.² Political community and national identity then come together to form a coherent whole. In the modern world, where the nation is a universally accepted ideological category, the myths buttressing and determining national or ethnic identities are at the same time promoting distinct ‘imagined communities’. To create an order, however, to define, to articulate and to present a specific identity, is the work of intellectuals.

Politics, ideology and intellectuals are three major elements acting in the debate over Scottish origins. Its roots lay in the later middle ages but it was mainly instigated from late seventeenth-century developments in the political and ecclesiastical field. The Restoration of the Stuarts to the throne in 1660 in the person of Charles II and the settlement that made it possible proved with the passage of time to be unstable. Differences in religious practices between Scotland and England and the enthroning of the openly Catholic James VII and II led to the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89. A suitable protestant prince was found in William of Orange, reigning

¹ See David Lowenthal, “Identity, heritage, and history” in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations. The politics of national identity*, (New Jersey, 1994), pp.46-7. Also, David Lowenthal, *The past is a foreign country*, (Cambridge, 1995).

² Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (London, 1991), p. viii.

alongside Mary, James's daughter, but the threat of an exiled dynasty longing for return did not disappear entirely from the British political horizon until after the defeat of the 1745 Jacobite insurrection. The context of the early quest for Scottish identity is therefore one of political instability and religious contention.

One has to mark here that despite the earlier efforts of Hector Boece and George Buchanan, the debate on the origins of Scotland marked the first time there was a conscious effort of examining the past and determining the historical course of the Scots in order to shape them into a coherent narrative. In the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this anxiety to produce a definitive text which would survey the past and represent the 'historical truth' almost achieved a life of its own, turning into a current finally interpolating various matters of Scottish interest: the War of Independence, the Reformation, the Union of 1707. In this sense what has finally been accepted as "the identity of the Scottish nation"³ is the legacy of the debate we are about to follow.

According to Richard Sennett the search for origins is an attempt at recovery, an effort to establish a clear line of events.⁴ The history of Boethius sought less clarity of events than a revitalization of the past in the manner of the ancient Roman historians who were his model. Hector Boece (c.1465 – 1536), a sixteenth-century scholar skilled in Latin, Principal of the University of Aberdeen, wrote *Scotorum Historiae* in 1526, a work translated in Scots in 1531. It would be tempting and easy to discredit Boece and reject him as another teller of tall tales. Certainly, the continuous recurrence of supernatural events and verbose language that the leading figures of his history use to explain and justify their actions would suffice for that. However, as A. A. M. Duncan has observed, to consider Boece a mere obscurantist with a humanist veneer would be wide of the mark. The fact

³ William Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation. An historic quest*, (Edinburgh, 1998). Also, Edward J. Cowan, "The Invention of Celtic Scotland" in Edward J. Cowan and R. Andrew McDonald (eds), *Alba.Celtic Scotland in the Medieval Era*, (East Linton, 2000), pp.1-23.

that his work was quite quickly translated into the vernacular and enjoyed success shows that he wrote rather with the public than his fellow scholars in mind.

The work also contained a political objective. Its basic target was Geoffrey of Monmouth and his claim that the Britons were the first to set foot on the British isles through Brutus of Troy. In order to properly show the ancestry of the Scots Boece had to breach a gap of information concerning their first kings: Fergus mac Ferquhart (or Fergus I), supposed to have reigned in c. 330 BC and Fergus mac Erch (or Fergus II), crowned in 503 AD were the only ones with less than shadowy existence according to the sources. Boece skilfully filled that gap relying on other sources (John of Fordun and Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* among them) and interposing forty five kings between these two.⁵ It seems that for the next 150 years Boece's adaptation of old traditions was the canon for Scottish history – and an admittedly popular one.

The debate concerning the Scottish origins was triggered when the bishop of St. Asaph, William Lloyd, rejected this specific pillar of traditional Scottish history. William Lloyd (1625 – 1717), then bishop of St. Asaph was the first to raise the subject in 1684. Lloyd's aim was an ecclesiastical one: to prove Presbyterian notions of an ancient Scottish church government null and void. Boece became his main target. Pointing out John of Fordun's inconsistencies and Veremundus the chronicler's dubious existence, Lloyd managed to discredit Boece's basic sources and put in jeopardy the "forty kings". According to him, the Scots in Ireland were converted to Christianity in 432 by St. Patrick and those in Scotland by St. Columba, who although not being a bishop himself, he was still Lloyd assures us "for proper episcopacy".⁶ As for the Culdees, those early monks who lacked a hierarchy of sorts in a conveniently Presbyterian way, he considered them

⁴ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye. The Design and Social Life of Cities*, (London and New York, 1992), p. 194.

⁵ Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, pp. 56-76.

⁶ Lloyd, *An Historical account*, pp. 78 – 88, 114 – 118.

only a “late fable” and failed to find any mention of them in the years before 800 A.D.⁷

Why would a staunch Episcopalian choose that particular moment to put forth these arguments? Lloyd wrote at a time when the royal line of Stuarts stayed under scrutiny as to their confessional practices. There was much anxiety about the probable succession of James, the king’s brother and duke of York, a known and declared papist. A Catholic prince could be tolerated under the present circumstances, provided that his conduct remained cautious and his religious profile low, but the prospect of a Catholic king would no doubt excite the Protestant majority. In any event, the existing settlement should not be touched. Lloyd’s message was a warning to the court that might think otherwise and to Presbyterians and other radicals who might wish to carry their Protestantism too far.

A year later, in 1685, Roderick O’Flaherty (1629 – 1718) attacked Boece from another angle. O’Flaherty wrote to demonstrate the ancestry and glory of Ireland, in reality the Homeric Ogygia, Calypso’s enchanted island from *Odyssey*. Besides maintaining the Irish achievements in arts and arms, he used his sources to underline the inefficiency of Scottish historians whose “history is no more than a fabulous modern production, founded on oral tradition and fiction”.⁸ Comparing Boece’s king – lists with Irish sources dating from the days of Malcolm Canmore (1058-1093) he decided that Fergus I was indeed fiction, therefore he began his account of kings in Scotland with Loarn mac Erc, who preceded his brother Fergus II reigning for a decade.⁹

Edward Stillingfleet (1635 – 1699) produced his *Origines Britannicae* with a double aim : to defend his friend William Lloyd from the attack of Sir George Mackenzie and to establish the foundation of a Christian apostolic church in Britain by St. Paul. Boece’s kings he also considered as obvious fictions and thought it was time for Scots “ to follow the examples of other European nations, in rejecting the romantic fables of the monkish times,

⁷ Lloyd, *An Historical account*, pp. 139 – 147.

⁸ Roderick O’Flaherty, *Ogygia, or a Chronological Account of Irish Events*, (First edition: 1685, London. Edition used: Dublin, 1793), 2 vols, Vol. I, p. 226.

⁹ *Ibid*, I, p. 230.

and at last to settle their antiquities on firm and solid foundations”¹⁰. Besides, those forty kings Boece evoked were unacceptable as products of an elective monarchy, which was the same dogma that paved the way to civil war and the execution of Charles I. Thus Stillingfleet managed to turn the tables on Mackenzie who was talking of *lèse majesté* on the part of Lloyd. For his part Stillingfleet was content to show the British churches not having anything to do with Rome as accused by the Presbyterians.¹¹

Sir George Mackenzie in *The Antiquity of the Royal Line of Scotland Farther Cleared and Defended* shifted the weight to the political repercussions of such arguments. Mackenzie pointed out that Stillingfleet damaged both the Scottish past and the famous unbroken royal line of the kings of Scotland and England. He employed a complex argumentative logic to assert two goals: that the Scots were in Britain before 300 BC and that Christianity in Scotland was more ancient than the Roman Catholic authority. The implications of his reasoning were in turn to be understood in their entirety when he went on to accuse Lloyd of an intention to subvert Scotland’s antiquity in order to accommodate Episcopalian arguments¹². But Mackenzie, as the King’s Advocate for Scotland, was essentially interested in defending the Stuarts in a difficult political moment. James VII and II had ascended on the throne and a Catholic king was found to be unacceptable after all. His prerogative on this throne however had to be accepted and any nuance to his representing a weakened royal line, thus lacking in authority, was vehemently denied. Mackenzie then sought to uphold the royal prerogative, not to offer an accurate interpretation of the early stages of Scottish history.

Sir George Mackenzie however offers an insight into the way a historian treated his material in the late seventeenth century. In fact, Mackenzie is an interesting case in combining the properties of both historian and antiquarian – and in separating his methodologies according to

¹⁰ Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines Britannicae ; or The Antiquities of the British Churches*, (First edition: London, 1685. Edition used: Oxford 1842), 2 vols., Vol. I, p.cxli - cxlii.

¹¹ *Ibid*, I, p. 356.

which discipline he was currently serving. Antiquarians exhibited proto-archaeological and proto-geological interests in their surveys, sketches and collections of relics in a general spirit of preservation of the past. This interest was extended to documents which were collected and transcribed – but not always studied. Partly this was the result of the nature of the antiquaries' intentions that were generally more akin to those of collectors than of researchers. However, this attitude was equally lacking in seventeenth-century historians as the paradigm focused on its literary qualities and didactic function. Thus, Sir George Mackenzie could as an antiquarian publish the Declaration of Arbroath in 1680 while as a historian he remained sceptical of documentary evidence considering it unreliable.¹³

Mackenzie as historian determined his erudition by hearsay. Many Latin extracts could be found in his pages but quotes, annotations, footnotes, were missing. Sources were taken for granted as were the authors of several mentioned works. It would take a lot of time for a scholar to verify his accuracy even if he commanded extraordinary memory powers. Mackenzie's opponents were rarely stated by name; rather they were described for reasons of style or irony, not adding to clarity. The structure of his work and the content of his arguments remind the reader of a legal procedure : everything was linear, points were confirmed or refuted one by one and their discussion led straight to the next until a conclusion (or a verdict) was reached. Judging from this example only, one would indeed be in difficulty in assessing whether or not to count Mackenzie among the ranks of historians proper. However, this point-scoring approach was the dominant methodological paradigm for history until well into the next century. A text free of all the nuisances of corroboration and small print that are so familiar to modern-day historians was the format in which such figureheads of the Enlightenment as David Hume and William Robertson wrote.

¹² Sir George Mackenzie, *The Antiquity of the Royal line of Scotland Farther cleared and defended against the exceptions lately offer'd by Dr. Stillingfleet, in his Vindication of the Bishop of St. Asaph*, (London ,1686), ch. v.

Father Thomas Innes (1662-1744) was also a personality of as many interests as Mackenzie: by turns antiquarian, historian and theologian. He was also Roman Catholic, a Jacobite and a man who, despite having been born in and written excessively about Scotland, spent the greater part of his life in France. He worked with two ends in mind : extirpation of George Buchanan's (1506-1582) – and through him Boece and Fordun's – claims to an ancient Scottish institution of limited monarchy and demolition of Presbyterian views of a church founded without Episcopal or Roman intervention. His first goal would vindicate Jacobite claims to the crown, the second would discredit the views of Scottish Reformation as a return to a long gone pure apostolic church that had only been corrupted later by the agents of Rome.

To achieve his goals he had to undermine certain beliefs that were counted among the paragons of traditional Scottish history. By examining and comparing the existing King – lists he concluded along with O'Flaherty that the 'forty kings' were later additions¹⁴. Their downfall made Buchanan's arguments on an ancient Scottish constitution of elective monarchy quite obsolete. Innes was probably right, but whether the blame should be shifted to Boece, Fordun or some obscure predecessor it remains doubtful. According to A. A. M. Duncan the 'forty kings' were concocted out of a marriage between the Scythian founding myth of Scota and the genuine king-lists in order for English arguments on the precedence of other elements than the Scots in Scotland, as were the Picts, to be refuted.¹⁵ However, for Innes, a staunch supporter of Divine Right kingship and the Stuarts, it was not enough that his opponents' views were discredited. His own actions should be accomplished under a proper pretext. His claim was to rid Scottish history of myths and legends, "to separate what seemed

¹³ Thomas I. Rae, "The Scottish antiquarian tradition" in *Scots Antiquaries and Historians. Papers read at the Silver jubilee conference of the Abertay Historical Society on 15 April 1972*, (Dundee, 1972), pp.17-22.

¹⁴ Thomas Innes, *A Critical Essay On the Ancient Inhabitants of Northern Britain or Scotland*, (First edition: 1729, London. Edition used: Edinburgh, 1879), pp. 122-149.

¹⁵ A.A.M. Duncan, "Hector Boece and the medieval tradition" in *Scots Antiquaries and Historians* , pp.2-3.

fabulous and groundless from what appears more certain”.¹⁶ To observe here that this had also been the professed objective of Edward Stillingfleet would serve to underline the fact that this was not merely a matter of noble disputes on texts and sources between fellow philologists.

What was more concrete a foundation to build an early Scottish history for Innes was the existence of the Picts. According to him they were the first inhabitants of Scotland, Celts, and were formerly known as *Caledonians*. He accepted their king – lists as genuine and argued that they had exchanged their language for that of the Scots after their union under Kenneth MacAlpine in 843 AD because of a “cultural affinity” between the two people.¹⁷ The advantage of the Pictish case was that in this way

“we are under no kind of necessity to have recourse to the Scots, who came from Ireland, for maintaining either the antiquity of the royal line of our kings beyond any monarchy, or the ancient settlement of the inhabitants in Britain”.¹⁸

In fact, there was nothing that would lead a serious scholar like Innes to favour the reliability of the Pictish king – lists in comparison with the Dalriadic Scots. On the contrary, very little besides these lists were known about the Picts themselves, which, in later years were to become a constant point of controversy. Contradictory descriptions of Roman writers and some words salvaged from their language would be enough to turn them into a source of alternative perceptions of Scottish history – and a chance for Sir Walter Scott to depict the antiquaries’ dilettantism.

By showing the ‘forty kings’ to be a figment of the imagination though, Innes was able to discredit those Presbyterian views which persisted on the apostolic origin of the Scottish church. The intervention of the Church of Rome in the image of St. Ninian, St. Patrick and St. Columba could not be disproved.¹⁹ On the other hand the myth of the Culdees could not be sustained any more. Even if their existence could be verified, in the absence of kings before Fergus mac Erch their church would not have been

¹⁶ Innes, *A Critical Essay*, p. 19.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.61.

¹⁸ Innes, *A Critical Essay*, p.105.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.9.

legitimate. Thus the whole Whig system suddenly became irrelevant. Innes however did not press the point home at the time. Had he decided in favour of showing Catholic zeal, he would have risked his compatriots' rejection. And since in a letter of his to the Old Pretender he assured the latter of taking pains in order not to offend the Government, it is obvious he definitely desired to be read in Scotland.²⁰ He dealt in length with ecclesiastical matters in *The Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, a work that would have been his *magnum opus* had he been able to complete it while alive. When it was finally published, in 1853, Catholic emancipation had already rendered obsolete any possible controversy.²¹

If there was an innovation that Innes ushered in his work it had to do with style and method. Although repetitive, his arguments were clear, precise and easier to follow than his predecessors'. His progress remained linear, like Stillingfleet or Mackenzie, but his prose was simpler and with more sense of purpose. Ferguson states that "in the *strict* sense, Innes did not make use of record scholarship".²² Beyond this strict sense though, he seemed to handle documents extremely well. Hardly anybody would argue that Innes was the first to incorporate documents in a work of history, but the comparative element and the examination to which he submitted them to, surely anticipated future historical techniques. Textual criticism was not an eighteenth – century novelty. Lorenzo Valla's (1407-1457) pioneering work that proved the *Donatio Constantini* a forgery was based on internal discrepancies, linguistic and other anachronisms.²³ Towards the end of the seventeenth century Jean Mabillon (1632-1707) and Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) developed techniques of palaeography and documentary comparison to other existing evidence. Thomas Innes knew Mabillon personally and incorporated his developments in his own approach.²⁴

Besides his revisionism Innes accepted that the Scottish past could be accessed and studied. On the contrary, one of the most famous names of

²⁰ Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, p.191.

²¹ Thomas Innes, *The Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, (Aberdeen, Spalding Club, 1853).

²² Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, p.188.

²³ Rae, "The Scottish antiquarian tradition", p.19.

the Scottish Enlightenment, his contemporary William Robertson (1721-1793), did not hesitate in declaring that “the first ages of Scottish history are dark and fabulous”.²⁵ “An immense space [was] left for invention to occupy”: the material in question consisted of “uncertain legends, and the traditions of their bards, still more uncertain”.²⁶ The whole debate on the Picts was dismissed in two lines.²⁷ Robertson concluded that “the first period [to the reign of Kenneth II] is the region of pure fable and conjecture, and ought to be totally neglected, or abandoned to the industry and credulity of antiquaries”.²⁸ To our eyes Robertson’s view looks thoroughly modern and justified. However, it was not the outcome of theoretical or methodological observations on history *per se* but a corollary of his dedication to Enlightenment articles of faith and attitudes.

The worldview of Enlightenment intellectuals was shaped by their basic beliefs in the uniformity of human nature and its potential improvement. They recognised the value of scepticism towards perceived authorities and put their faith in the possibility of explaining the physical world by scientific knowledge beyond doctrines and superstitions. Robertson merely implemented these basic principles in the writing of a Scottish history. He rejected ‘legends’ and ‘traditions’ on philosophical grounds, on the basis of his scepticism and the absence of concrete proof, not in an attempt to delineate a specific canon for historians. Moreover, his work was, of its own nature, placed outside the circle of controversy on the Dark Ages of Scotland. Robertson did not strictly engage in the debate for Scottish origins as this would have been a limited and pointless venture. He was prepared to leave all that to the “credulity of antiquaries”. If this emphasises once more the perceived difference between antiquaries and historians, it also highlights the preoccupation of the Enlightenment with the near present rather than the remote past. Robertson’s choice to write a

²⁴ Rae, “The Scottish antiquarian tradition”, pp. 19-20.

²⁵ William Robertson, *The History of Scotland*, (First edition: 1759, London. Edition used: London, 1809), p. 201.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 202.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 203.

²⁸ Robertson, *The History of Scotland*, pp. 205 – 06.

Scottish history based on verified fact only had produced an admirable achievement that would not find many eager imitators in his century.²⁹

James Macpherson (1736 – 1796), who formed a focal point in the debate for the Scottish past, was more representative of trends followed. Born a native Gaelic speaker of Inverness-shire, Macpherson should be understood in the frame of the aftermath of the 1745 rebellion. Not so much because he belonged to a strongly Jacobite clan but because he grew up in a climate of poverty and Scottophobia, evident in the early 1760s agitations of John Wilkes and the unpopularity of the Earl of Bute as prime minister. Macpherson managed to ride the wave of reverses in his youth, get a good education at the university of Aberdeen and acquire a place as schoolmaster in his native town, Ruthven of Badenoch. The influence of his teachers, especially Thomas Blackwell, a devoted Homeric researcher, was lasting, for a little later on he started collecting and translating traditional Gaelic material. In 1760 he was catapulted to fame with the publication of his *Fragments of Ancient poetry*, followed two years later, after an extensive tour of the Highlands in search of material, by *Fingal. Temora's* reception in 1763, took on a more subdued tone. The poems of Ossian, this sublime third century poet, had already begun to create a great interest in Europe, introducing Scotland to a wider public to the point of becoming in later years Napoleon Bonaparte's favourite campaign reading.³⁰ However, soon this mania with Ossian took a more sinister turn when serious doubts were aired on the authenticity of the epics and the existence of Ossian himself. Starting with Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) in 1775, the debate on whether Macpherson acted as a forger or not and to what extent raged for a long time and in some ways it still remains unresolved. It may be said however with some conviction that it obscured Macpherson's literary and documentary contribution to Gaelic studies.

Whether he was in reality a perfect swindler or a totally innocent romantic is not something that a twentieth century scholar should much dwell on. Fiona Stafford sums it up by stating that

²⁹ Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, was the sole exception in producing his *Annals of Scotland* between 1776 and 1779 in relying on the verification of authentic sources.

³⁰ Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, pp. 240-41.

“Macpherson’s Ossian was by no means the work of a confidence trickster, bent on achieving fame and fortune through a clever hoax. Neither was it what it purported to be – a literal translation of Gaelic poems which had survived unaltered since the third century”.³¹

The idea of a pure original, corrupted versions of which were then circulating in the Highlands, and the duty of a translator to restore them to its “original purity”³² was an idea shared by many, Macpherson among them. What mattered was not what existed but what “ought to have been”.³³ We should keep that in mind along with the fact that Macpherson’s were not the only traditional poetry in Europe to be tampered with or restored. Indeed, the circumstances and even the results of his effort, were not fundamentally different from those of others who went in search of popular culture and tradition in the last decades of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The ‘Ossian’ affair created a surge of Celtic romanticism linked to the idea that ancient Caledonians were Celts, notably Gaels. Hugh Blair found that Ossian compared to Gothic poetry was “like passing from a savage desert, into a fertile and cultivated country”.³⁴ According to him, Ossian lived in a time where “the cares of men were few. They lived a roving, indolent life ; hunting and war their principal employments”.³⁵ Blair then subscribed to the cult of primitivism, the natural condition of humanity before the coming of civil society that was eagerly praised in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and which was to be juxtaposed to the complexities and cares of the eighteenth century. Ossian’s era was interpreted and relished as a pre – or proto-society radically different from the one of contemporary times: “everything presents to us the most simple and

³¹ Fiona Stafford, *The Sublime Savage. A Study of James Macpherson and the poems of Ossian*, (Edinburgh, 1988), p.4.

³² *Ibid*, p. 83.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 84.

³⁴ James Macpherson, *The Poems of Ossian*, (London, 1806), p. 60.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 65.

unimproved manners”.³⁶ And Scots were Celts, “past all doubt”, he assured us.

But Macpherson’s tender and sublime past was a romantic ideal, not the real Dark Ages of Scotland, as Fiona Stafford observes³⁷. The fact that sometimes Blair seemed to take the historicity of these poems for granted and emphasised rather their historical importance than literary value was something that would later give rise to John Pinkerton’s reaction – and rejection. In this aspect Ossian was as much Blair’s and his associates’ child as Macpherson’s. What was seen as a chance for the elevation of Scottish history and literature in classical heights could not pass unexploited – even if Blair and his colleagues should be rather considered as wishful thinkers than instigators to fraud.

In the end, as Fiona Stafford notes, the poems of Ossian offered an “imaginative escape” to those who found the climate of the Enlightenment “somewhat lacking”.³⁸ Their simplicity was most appealing throughout Europe since they made use of a *leitmotif* of the age, the natural condition of humanity before civil society. Jean – Jacques Rousseau had already depicted a similar kind of paradise beyond demands and conventions of age and class. Both Rousseau and Macpherson stepped out of time to draw simple alternatives to times perceived as complex. Macpherson’s was an exotic utopia of green landscapes, battles, death and passion, and a counterpart maybe to the more idyllic escape of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Macpherson’s contribution to the problem of the origins of Scotland rested in his defence of Celticism, not merely as a culture or a distinct way of life but as a usable historical past. Macpherson returned to Boece and Fordun in his professed Celticism but did this through a modified variant. Not only the Scots were the original inhabitants of Scotland, not only were they Gaels, but they had also peopled Ireland – Fordun’s claim to the opposite only being a useful argument in repelling Edward I’s claims of Scotland being his fief.³⁹ The same views concerning Scotland were

³⁶ Macpherson, *The Poems of Ossian*, p. 66.

³⁷ Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, p.70.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 4.

³⁹ Macpherson, *The Poems of Ossian*, pp. 19-20.

essentially expressed in the *Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*. Ireland was colonised by British Gaels “who in the after period were distinguished in Britain by the name of Caledonians”.⁴⁰ These Gaels “who possessed the northern Britain by the name of Caledonians...retained the pure but unimproved language of their ancestors”.⁴¹ What Macpherson had achieved in this improbable reasoning was to bypass Thomas Innes’s Pictish predominance. Indeed, his rather simple modification turned both Scots and Picts into Caledonian tribes of pure Celtic origin. It seems that a version of this view of Scottish history remained alive until recently.⁴²

John Pinkerton’s (1758 – 1826) career demonstrated the extent of a completely different conception of Scottish identity. Pinkerton started out as a disciple of the Enlightenment, then turned to a “Rousseauesque romanticism” only to end up as a follower of natural science.⁴³ In his youth Pinkerton had also trod the road of the antiquary in collecting Scots Lowland ballads inspired by Macpherson’s precedent. It seems he followed his footsteps so closely that he presented a ‘restored’ version of one of these ballads, only to be exposed by the English antiquary Joseph Ritson (1752-1803). Pinkerton’s erratic nature was to become more evident in the future. In his historical work he picked up just where Innes left in his obsession with the Picts. However, whereas Innes proposed a mild reform of Scottish history by giving precedence to the Picts, Pinkerton opted for more radical solutions. ‘Piks’, or “Pihtar, Pehtar, Peohtar” as Pinkerton believed their original name to have been before being Latinised by the Romans⁴⁴, were the only true ancestors of the modern Scots, being the first to have arrived and colonised the country. Moreover, these Piks were not Celts but Goths from Scandinavia.

⁴⁰ James Macpherson, *An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, (Dublin, 1773), p. 54.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.35.

⁴² Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, p. 239.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 250.

⁴⁴ John Pinkerton, *An enquiry into the history of Scotland preceding the reign of Malcolm Canmore or the year 1056: including the authentic history of that period*, 2 vols., (First edition: 1789, London and Edinburgh. Edition used: Edinburgh, 1814), vol. II, p.232.

In his *Enquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the reign of Malcolm Canmore or the year 1056* Pinkerton replaced the already tangled web of Scottish history with another version of his own imagining. The Dalriadic Scots were wiped out by the Piks, who were fully Goths situated in Scotland at least 300 years before Christ.⁴⁵ Despite their predominance, the Picts acquired the name 'Scoti' that was given to them by later Celtic writers. Responsible for this confusion were Irish churchmen of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This Celtic version, although belonging to "the most ignorant strollers that ever graced a country" was nevertheless preferred because "their speech was a written one and more polished than the Pikish, an unwritten tongue".⁴⁶ The famous union between Scots and Picts did not happen in c. 843 after the latter were defeated by Kenneth MacAlpine ; in fact, it was the other way around, the Piks had subdued the Scots as early as 739 and Kenneth was by heritage in reality a Pictish king. Along with showing that the Piks, the "real people of this country", were paramount in ancient Scotland, Pinkerton argued in a strong line of racialism, determined to prove the absolute inferiority of anything Celtic compared to Gothic. The Highlands and their inhabitants featured prominently in this, being "ever the ready tools of despotism", "indolent, slavish, strangers to industry".⁴⁷

To arrive at his conclusions Pinkerton saw fit to employ certain 'scientific propositions'. The first one was that ancient authorities formed the only standard of history : "For he who denies ancient authorities, and prefers his own conjectures, is a fabulist, and not a historian".⁴⁸ Sometimes his 'authorities' were really vague, as in the case of his proof for the Gothic origin of the Greeks : "it is *universally allowed by the learned* that ΠΕΛΑΣΓΟΙ, Pelasgi, was the first name of the Greeks who afterwards bore the name of ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ, Hellenes"⁴⁹. More proofs as to the origins of Greeks and their

⁴⁵ Pinkerton, *An enquiry into the history of Scotland*, I, p. 196. He reached this conclusion from the Picts' absence of mention in several Roman texts, notably Tacitus, Ptolemy, Dio and Herodian.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, I, p. 251.

⁴⁷ Pinkerton, *An enquiry into the history of Scotland*, I, p. 339.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, I, p. 161.

⁴⁹ John Pinkerton, *A Dissertation on the origin and progress of the Scythians or Goths ; being an introduction to the ancient and modern history of Europe*, (First edition:

culture could easily be categorised as assertions but not as corroborating evidence in support of an argument.⁵⁰ In fact the citation of ancient texts was far from the absolute truth that Pinkerton seemed to affirm, for all of the scholars mentioned here, from Stillingfleet to W.F. Skene, Pinkerton included, used exactly the same Roman authors and texts managing nevertheless to produce striking variations in their interpretation.

His second methodological proposition was the concept of ‘Historic Truth’ :

“For though the truth in historic research be far from mathematical, yet that highest probability, here called Historic Truth, consists in this, that though you cannot demonstrate it true, yet you can prove all opposite opinions to be false ; so that, as truth is one, and no two opposite opinions can be both true, this remains Historic Truth”.⁵¹

Expressed this way it sounded rather deterministic and Pinkerton treated it accordingly. At the end of each chapter of the *Dissertation on the origin and progress of the Scythians or Goths* he attached an ‘Historic Truth’ supposedly proved during its course. But in many cases things were considered so obvious that ‘historic truth’ became merely another name for prejudice. Thus, the Goths were “a wise, valiant and generous race” while Highlanders remained “ever the ready tools of despotism”⁵².

Pinkerton’s argumentative reasoning is not as straightforward as it might look at first. William Ferguson suggests plain racism as a possible alternative motivation to that of a show of erudition. He believes that although Pinkerton was an industrious worker, considerable scholar and able to form acute arguments, he also suffered from a succession of *idées fixes* which seriously impaired his work.⁵³ Ferguson calls into attention certain abstracts from the *Enquiry* and the *Dissertation*, especially these in which Pinkerton writes that “The Celts were so inferior a people , *being to the*

London, 1787. Edition used: Edinburgh, 1814), [Appended to Vol. II of the *Enquiry* but with its own pagination], p. 63. My italics.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 74-78.

⁵¹ Pinkerton, *A Dissertation* p. xvii.

⁵² Pinkerton, *An enquiry into the history of Scotland*, I, p. 339.

Scythians as a negro to a European, that, as all history shows, to see them was to conquer them”⁵⁴ ; or that “a Tartar, a Negro, an American, &c. &c. differ as much from a German , as a bull-dog, a lap-dog, a shepherd’s cur from a pointer. The differences are radical”⁵⁵. He considers these as evidence of scorn and hatred for the “lesser breeds” that goes beyond everything that has come before. Pinkerton comes close to be the author of the concept of the “master race”, “a social Darwinist before Darwin”⁵⁶.

Pinkerton was indeed a distinguished Teutonist racist. However, even this was not the whole story, for his philological racialism was not a mere theoretical principle but was employed as a powerful weapon directed against the Celts. Pinkerton essentially split the Scottish people in two, praising the Teuton Lowlanders who were thus akin to the English, both of them being descendants of Scythian Goths, for their sensible and industrious nature while castigating the Celtic Highlanders for their indolence and slavishness. The latter were essentially not only stuck in a primitive stadium of civilisation but there were serious doubts on their ability to escape it some day because of their inferior inherent racial characteristics.⁵⁷ Here, the Enlightenment theory of human progress was linked to an “ethnic determinism” to cut across borders and undermine notions of a Scottish national community.⁵⁸ A side effect of these assertions would be their subversion of some pillars of common ancestry and development that a possible Scottish nationalism could have used to build upon.

Pinkerton’s objectives however were not projected in such a far future. In the context of his age we might point out that a differentiation between Highlands and Lowlands had started to appear – not necessarily one based on uniform contempt of the former towards the latter. Samuel Johnson had

⁵³ Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, pp. 250-251.

⁵⁴ Pinkerton, *A Dissertation*, p. 123.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.36.

⁵⁶ Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, p. 254.

⁵⁷ Colin Kidd, “Teutonist Ethnology and Scottish National Inhibition, 1780-1880”, *Scottish Historical Review*, LXXIV, (1995), 51-3; Pinkerton, *An enquiry into the history of Scotland*, II, p.19.

⁵⁸ Kidd, “Teutonist Ethnology”, 50-2.

displayed a number of prejudices against the backward Highlanders but he abstained from pronouncing them racially inferior. Their savage manners were “rather produced by their situation than derived from their ancestors”.⁵⁹ The Highland Society was founded in London as early as 1778 and the highland dress was already disseminating in the Lowlands, as it contained the “radiance of disappearing authenticity”.⁶⁰ The culmination of this folklore interest for the ‘authentic’ or ‘primitive’, which was effectively the flipside of racist denunciations, was undoubtedly Sir Walter Scott’s impressive pageants that were enacted in the 1822 visit of George IV to Scotland. However, around 1770 a change in perceptions came with the radical opinions of Thomas Pennant and Sir John Sinclair that paved the road to Pinkerton’s racist views.⁶¹ In this light, Pinkerton’s *Enquiry* and his persistent Gothomania was an effort to discredit the Celtic – Highlander tradition by exposing their backwardness, a reaction to the pan – European obsession with Celts that ‘Ossian’ Macpherson had precipitated. Pinkerton’s own obsession had a wider pedigree than a mere denunciation of him and his works. In Pinkerton’s version of Scottish history the debt to the Irish did not exist. The Gothic link established guaranteed that Scotland was a rightful Teuton partner to England and had been shaped by only the right influences.

George Chalmers’s (1742-1825) work was formulated as a direct answer to Pinkerton’s Gothic allegations. Chalmers himself was rather a model antiquary in his passion for collecting than an impressive scholar or textual critic. He was an American loyalist, having migrated to Baltimore in Maryland and then returned in the wake of the Revolution, to publish a number of tracts justifying the actions of the British. He then went on to occupy a place in the administration and devote more time to his literary pursuits.⁶² In these he countered Pinkerton with equally sweeping arguments.

⁵⁹ Krisztina Fenyô, “ ‘Contempt, Sympathy and Romance’. Lowland perceptions of the Highlands and the clearances during the Famine years, 1845-1855”, University of Glasgow thesis, (1996), p.21. [This work has now been published by Tuckwell Press, (East Linton, 2000)].

⁶⁰ See T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, (London, 2000), ch.11. Quote from *ibid*, p.244.

⁶¹ Fenyô, “ ‘Contempt, Sympathy and Romance’ ”, pp.37-9.

⁶² Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, pp.276-77.

He regarded the Celts as “the aboriginal people of Europe throughout its ample limits”.⁶³ The Gauls were the first to arrive in postdiluvian Britain.⁶⁴ Next in line was Ireland, colonised from Britain “by Celtic tribes”.⁶⁵ The population of North Britain came from the Southern parts of the island.⁶⁶ As in the case of all preceding antiquaries his unquestionable sources were ancient writers, only he drew from them his own conclusions : for instance,

“that the Picts were Caledonians, we thus have seen in the mention of classic authors during three centuries ; that the Caledonians were the North Britons who have fought Agricola at the foot of the Grampian, we know from the nature of the events, and the attestation of Tacitus ; that the Northern Britons of the first century were the descendants of the Celtic Aborigines, who were the same people as the Southern Britons during the earliest times, has been satisfactorily proved as a moral certainty”.⁶⁷

As a line against Pinkerton this was a devastating argument. As an attempt at a consistent use of sources however, it was one of the examples that corroborated Sir Walter Scott’s comment that the “slightest of authorities” were called upon to buttress disproportionably strong convictions.

For Chalmers, the subject of the Goths was a lost cause. “More confidence than authority” guided those who recounted their progress.⁶⁸ He himself was unable to find scarcely anything but fable to be related of the ancient Scythians. Indeed, in a direct reference to Pinkerton’s methodology he alluded to “scholars who formed their judgements from reading books” who treated Picts as Goths in contrast to those “who weighed circumstances, examined topography, and adverted to language” and regarded them as

⁶³ George Chalmers, *Caledonia or a historical and topographical account of North Britain*, 7 vols, (First edition: London, 1807-1824. Edition used: Paisley, 1887-1894), vol. I., p.7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, I, p.15.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.18.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, I, p.31.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, I, p.192.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, I, p.8.

Britons.⁶⁹ But Chalmers was equally immune to James Macpherson's visions of Gaelic Caledonians for the latter's object was to revive "the fabulous conceits of the ancient priority of Scots in North Britain which critical controversy had driven into obscure darkness".⁷⁰

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) is of extreme importance to this debate not so much in his contribution to the subjects of the Scottish origins itself, but because of his influence in the way history was to be understood in the nineteenth century both inside and outside Scotland. With the publication of *Waverley* in 1814, Scott embarked on a series of novels that would redefine Scotland in European eyes and would bring to the fore the Scottish landscapes as a romantic scenery *par excellence*. His inspiration was to have a more lasting effect than either Macpherson's Ossian or Robert Burns's poems that had first acquainted the European public with Scotland's natural beauties. However, Scott's sense of the historical did not stop there. His was a view of the past that linked it directly to the present – and the problems Scottish society faced in the wake of industrialisation and Anglicisation. The possibility of legal and economic reforms intervening in its fundamental institutions alerted him, as evident in the *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther*, to the point of issuing his famous warning on the idiosyncrasy of the country – "what makes Scotland Scotland" – being on the verge of extinction. This, rather than being a show of conservatism or mere anti-Englishness, was a call to a different perception of national history altogether, obvious in Scott's association with the Bannatyne Club.

What distinguished the Bannatyne Club, which was formed in 1823 by Scott, Thomas Thomson (1768-1852), David Laing (1793-1878) and other prominent members of Edinburgh society, from its predecessor, the Roxburghe, was the lack of dilettantism and its intention of being "in effect, a national body" despite its "exclusiveness of membership and publication".⁷¹ Scott's presence as the first president of this publishing club

⁶⁹ Chalmers, *Caledonia*, I, p. 227.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, I, p. 230.

⁷¹ Marinell Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh, 1980), p.67; Marinell Ash, "Scott and historical publishing: The Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs" in *Scots Antiquaries and Historians*, p.31.

not only endowed it with significant prestige, it also ensured that it would turn to practical objects and would find significant imitators among both intellectuals and wealthy representatives of the middle class. From an initial idea appealing to “collectors of rarities”, it had evolved in 1826 as Scott observed to a project of “real utility” and called for an enlargement of membership which would in itself attract more publicity.⁷²

The ‘utility’ Scott referred to was the publishing of the original sources of Scottish history that was the Club’s main feat and concern until its last products were released in 1867. It is possible though, that this direction towards the preservation and dissemination of documents did not constitute the Bannatyne’s or its many imitators’ – the Maitland, the Iona, the Spalding Club – sole contribution. Scott’s aim, as we have already seen, was not merely that of an isolated reaction but aspired to the creation of a favourable atmosphere into which Scottish history could flourish and Scottish national consciousness could be strengthened as a consequence. Besides the attraction the Bannatyne’s activities offered to intellectuals, Scott and his partners were eager to include in their ranks “ ‘working’ historians and record scholars” such as Robert Pitcairn, Patrick Fraser Tytler, Francis Palgrave or Cosmo Innes.⁷³ In the same frame we must look upon Scott’s suggestion to Patrick Fraser Tytler in 1823 to undertake the writing of a history of Scotland: “something more was wanted than a popular romance; [...] a right history of Scotland was yet to be written”.⁷⁴

Scott’s own efforts to that direction kept being hampered by other priorities. He was contemplating it since 1816 but a continuing demand for new novels did not let him modify or rework the small piece he had already composed. Later on, his whole efforts would be consumed by his bankruptcy and his subsequent attempt to repay his creditors. Not counting the *Tales of a Grandfather* then, what has remained from Scott’s historical ventures are a series of snippets instead of a complete coherent text. In these, the debate for the Scottish origins could not pass without comment, since it touched on the point himself was trying to make: the past retained the essential

⁷² Ash, “Scott and historical publishing”, p.32.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p.31.

⁷⁴ Ash, *The Strange Death*, pp.87-8.

characteristics of Scotland, its peculiar qualities that should be preserved and studied. “The facts are indeed, numerous”, he asserted; “but cleared of the hypotheses with which these have been defended, some account of Scotland from the earliest period is a chapter of importance to the history of mankind”.⁷⁵ He directed his criticism to many recipients. Thus, Boethius had “dressed up and adorned the rude fictions of early times, and gave wings to the bug which would otherwise have crawled unnoticed in its native obscurity”.⁷⁶ On the other hand, the “Highland antiquaries” were justly denounced “for the readiness with which they had reposed unlimited confidence in the sophisticated poems of Ossian and endeavoured to pass them as historical authorities upon their neighbours”.⁷⁷ His essential view of the whole debate however was that it had been allowed to deteriorate to a “contest of wit and ingenuity with research and learning”.⁷⁸ In the end there was disappointment in a case where “the most violent opinions were maintained on the slightest authorities”.⁷⁹ What was implied here was a double miss: a serious subject became depreciated to simple polemics and its scholarly treatment was found wanting.

Some more subtle comments to illustrate Scott’s overall impression of the debate on Scottish origins can be found in *The Antiquary*. Here, the novelist had an ample opportunity to indicate his opinion on certain well-known incidents and widely held views. The protagonist, Lovel, found out he was to be the judge of a dispute on the origin of the Picts between the local antiquaries and friends, Jonathan Oldbuck and Sir Arthur Wardour who kept evoking the views of the “learned Pinkerton” or “the indefatigable and erudite Chalmers” – and the outcome depended on “penval”, the only surviving word of the Pictish language.⁸⁰ In another incident, clearly implying the Macpherson controversy, Hector MacIntyre, a Gaelic speaker, native Highlander and hot-headed soldier, resolved to prove Ossian’s authenticity

⁷⁵ *Quarterly Review*, XLI, (1829), 335.

⁷⁶ Walter Scott, *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, 28vols., (Edinburgh, 1834-36), Vol. XX, “Ancient History of Scotland”, p.303.

⁷⁷ Scott, “Ancient History of Scotland”, p.323.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.318.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.319.

⁸⁰ Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, (Edinburgh, 1995), pp.48-9.

by reciting a dialogue between Ossian and Saint Patrick, hilarious and illustrative in its absurdity: Ossian called the priest an ass and a “son of a female dog” and the Saint responded in equal tones. When Oldbuck remarked on the absence of these precise words from McPherson’s translation, MacIntyre gravely replied that “he must have taken very unwarrantable liberties with his original”.⁸¹ The negative but playful image of antiquaries that Scott painted in this novel was far from a hidden indictment. After all, he himself and many of his colleagues in the Bannatyne Club acted as antiquarians in their bibliomania and passion for collection. Henry Cockburn’s assertion that “very few of us can read our books, and fewer can understand them, yet type, morocco, and the corporation spirit make us print on” and Scott’s own attestation to their being Scots *and* bibliomaniacs in that order would be enough to show their respect for that form of scholarship.

Antiquarianism however was gradually being superseded, like the problem of origins itself. At the time William Forbes Skene (1809-1892) presented a more consistent and disciplined approach to the question on the identity of the Scottish nation, this subject was already being debated at another level by Patrick Fraser Tytler, John Hill Burton, Andrew Lang and Peter Hume Brown, who employed a more consciously historical methodology to examine such key themes as the Wars of Independence, the Reformation and the Union. After almost two hundred years of continuing polemics the Scottish origins were beginning to look rather stale. Skene, who was of Gaelic descent on the side of his mother and had been partly brought up in the Highlands, essentially maintained James Macpherson’s old argument on the Caledonians being Gaels and “consequently the later Scottish nation in embryo”.⁸² Indeed, the early Skene remained largely an amateur historian who held controversial views, as in advocating the poems of Ossian as “the oldest record of history of a very remote age”.⁸³ In that he probably indulged his own personal interests and possibly erred because of a

⁸¹ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p.245.

⁸² Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation*, pp. 292-3, Cowan, “The invention of Celtic Scotland”, pp.1-4.

⁸³ William Forbes Skene, *The Highlanders of Scotland*, (First edition: 1837, London. Edition used: Stirling, 1902), p.139.

bias due to his Gaelic origin. In his later projects however, wider research made him revise some of the most questionable aspects, notably those that had to do with the descent of the Caledonians. In *Celtic Scotland*, a comprehensive study of the Dark Ages, he showed himself more cautious and composed, employing strict methods from the German schools of history and philology. His work had indeed some distinct methodological merits, notably his proposition “to lay a sound foundation” for a history of Scotland by taking into account “the more trustworthy authorities”.⁸⁴ The flaws of the past, in his opinion, were due “first...an uncritical use of the materials which are authentic; and second...the combination with these materials of others which are undoubtedly spurious”.⁸⁵ His consistent employing of textual examination and his faith in “trustworthy documents”⁸⁶ put him into a Rankean nineteenth-century historical perspective in an age where Scottish history was undergoing radical change in its professionalisation and acceptance as a distinct academic subject.

Reviewing the whole origins of Scotland debate one cannot fail to spot that it was in effect a disjointed affair rather than a consistent discussion. For some it was indeed a matter that had to do with the Scots’ self-image and their heritage. Scottish society was under continuous strains initially attributed to the religious and political controversies of the seventeenth century that pitted Protestants against Catholics and, later on, radical against moderate Protestants. In the eighteenth century, the consequences of the Union with England had complicated matters, inspiring resentment, evident in the Jacobite insurrections of 1715 and 1745, and fears of imminent Anglicisation. This instability called for extensive search of the past either to cement old interpretations or to disseminate new, adaptable to the era at hand. For the great majority of those who took part in the Scottish origins debate however, what mattered in the final analysis was not if the Picts were Gaels or Goths or if the Scots were indigenous or came from Ireland. Their

⁸⁴ William Forbes Skene, *Celtic Scotland. A history of ancient Alban*, 3 vols., (Edinburgh, 1876-1880), Vol. I, p. vi.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.20.

⁸⁶ Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, I, p.19.

deeper allegiance was to a personal cause they strove to further: an ancient Scottish constitution for George Buchanan; an unbroken royal line for George Mackenzie, to defend James VII and II's prerogatives on the throne ; a Pictish 'absolute monarchy' for Thomas Innes to vindicate Jacobite claims to the crown and the fiction of Boece and Buchanan's 'forty kings' destroyed to arrive at a Scottish church founded by Roman Catholic bishops. James Macpherson looked to uphold the antedecence of Celtic Scots in the British Isles and John Pinkerton used the Goths as a proxy for dissemination of his Teutonist racialism that linked the Lowlanders to the industrious English nation. Even Walter Scott's comments pointed towards his own vision of constructing a consistent Scottish history and reinforcing Scottish consciousness. It was after all an intellectual shadowplay that ended in Scottishness all but becoming a brilliant disguise, the perfect pretext and playground of pressure groups who sought to promote their own idea of a Scottish state and church.

Was there a common thread then running through this whole engagement, providing some focus ? Can the debate on Scottish origins be read also as a reaction to what was perceived as the Anglicisation of Scottish society ? Not in so many words. The debate was technically initiated before the Union – but the questions revolving around the latter development were already aired in the end of the seventeenth century. There was, of course, the Ossian episode where Samuel Johnson virulently attacked Macpherson's credibility and in a first phase at least Blair and many other Scottish literary figures sided with their compatriot. To put things in perspective we have to remember the 1760s and 1770s were an age of mutual distrust between English and Scots. Here, Scottophobia was the flipside of fear of Anglicisation north of the border. However, I would think the connection between fear of Anglicisation and the quest for origins to be subtler. The debate did not revolve around law or education, the paramount pillars of Scottish society while the way the church was involved had more to do with matters of internal balance than anything else. In no contributor can we find an open attack on England or an imported way of life. But Anglicisation did influence an inward look concerning the past on the part of Scottish intellectuals. If we consider Scotland after the loss of her parliament as

undergoing an identity crisis, then the debate can be read as both a symptom and a more rational attempt at introspection, a premature attempt at structuring national time and space.

In the end then the questions that seem to arise from this long search for Scottish identity in the Dark Ages are in hindsight more straightforward than their inceptors indicated at the time. ‘Which of the possible histories should be propagated?’ The answers here were two but with some variations: Scots were either Goths or Celts, but these could have been Scythians or Scandinavians, indigenous or migrant Celts, from Ireland or the European continent. But the fundamental question was as much about the past as the present: ‘Which nation?’ Undoubtedly, both, say, John Pinkerton and Walter Scott understood themselves to be patriots serving Scotland’s interests after their fashion. Scott’s record is unassailable while Pinkerton had published an edition of Barbour’s *Bruce* in 1790.⁸⁷ The road chosen however proved to be a dead end. To reach a consensus or even to force one was beyond both antiquaries and historians engaged in the discussion as their inadequate methodologies could not sustain successfully their political arguments, which deteriorated to personal rivalries. Although the foundations for the building of a Scottish identity were laid then, it would be the work of another batch of historians, following a more disciplined path to delineate the shaping of a unitary nation through the War of Independence.

Changing the paradigm: the formation of a Greek history outline in the nineteenth century

For someone who would study ideological developments in modern Greece the origins of the independent state do not display any convictions, rather a lack of certainty and precision. The turbulent course of Modern Greek history requires a preliminary discussion of some historical points in order to better understand the roots of the Greek state and identity. The Revolution that produced it went through a succession of phases, from an

⁸⁷ Kidd, “Teutonist Ethnology”, 54.

early string of spectacular successes for the revolutionaries to a considerable Turkish backlash and a late intervention of the Great Powers, turning into a time-consuming affair that lasted from 1821 to 1829. Between 1828 and 1832 however, it was for the better part an exercise in European diplomacy, for a conference comprised by representatives of the Great Powers (plus the belligerent parties, occasionally) sat in London trying to come up with what was in effect another partial solution to the Eastern Question. The matter of Greek independence, remained a prolonged affair in terms of foreign policy. It was finally approved by the Sublime Porte in 1830 although the Treaty of London, which determined its borders, was only ratified in 1832.

Statecraft being a less than easy task for those engaging in it for the first time, the Greek Kingdom's prospects were not considered great. Despite early signs of optimism from its intellectuals – a University to 'enlighten the Orient' was founded in Athens in 1837 – the state's affairs went on in a poor way and disillusionment settled in even for those who had come a long way to support its cause: the historian George Finlay (1799-1875), who had left Glasgow in 1821 to bear witness as a *Philhellen* to a nation reborn, was talking in 1861 of a "diminutive kingdom".⁸⁸ Expectations were high for those not considering the huge amounts of effort needed to unify regions facing social dislocation, cultural disunity and suffering from the results of a ten-year war. Optimism was inherent in the Greek Enlightenment which, as its European counterpart that provided the example and fundamental principles of thought, stressed the splendour of ancient Greek civilisation and anticipated a suitable future once freedom was attained.

The ancient past however did not prove a sufficient blueprint to the present since its foundations were only built in the world of ideas. From the beginning of its existence the newborn state was faced with serious political and financial problems asking for brisk attitudes and tangible measures. It is generally admitted that the political elite did not rise to the occasion. A continuing instability can be discerned in the murder of the first Governor, Ioannis Kapodistrias; the overthrow of the Bavarian Regency of underage

⁸⁸ George Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 2 vols. , (London and Edinburgh, 1861), vol. II, p. 382.

King Otto; the Revolution of 1843, culminating in the King's granting a constitution; and his final dethronement in 1862. During the same period there were also continuous incidents of brigandage in the country and across the border with the Ottoman Empire, a general unrest during the Crimean War, strife in the Parliament between formations bearing the colourful names of the 'English', 'French' and 'Russian' parties. The Protective Powers of the Treaty of London were jostling for position in order to preserve and further their interests – and those of their subjects. Twice in the 1850s, in 1850 and again in 1854, the United Kingdom sent its gunboats to blockade Piraeus in order to settle public or private disputes with the Greek government.

The element of uncertainty in matters political was complicated further by ideological ambiguities. The citizenship affair of 1843-44 illustrated the connection between political struggle and the perception of Greek identity in the aftermath of the Revolution. The division between *autochthones* (native Greeks) and *eterochthones* (non-native Greeks) in eligibility for civil service showed in effect how a fight for spoils was conducted. The compromise between the two factions, which cut across particularistic and party lines, preempted stern measures against *eterochthones* civil servants. This was first and foremost a covert acceptance of the fact that the Revolution had created new elites that enjoyed power and others who were excluded and ready to challenge them. On the other hand, it confirmed existing rifts in society and pointed to a certain lack of agreement on the content of Greek identity. Remedies for that were sought immediately. It was during this debate that Ioannis Kolettis articulated for the first time the basic frame of the *Megali Idea*.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Elli Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο Βασίλειο» και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα. Όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα (1830-1880)*, (Athens, 1988), pp. 41-63; John A. Petropoulos, *Πολιτική και συγκρότηση κράτους στο ελληνικό βασίλειο (1833-1843)*, (Athens, 1985), pp. 611-16; *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, vol. ΙΓ', pp. 110-11. Also, a detailed analysis of the matter in Ioannis Dimakis, *Η πολιτειακή μεταβολή του 1843 και το ζήτημα των «αυτοχθόνων» και «ετεροχθόνων»*, (Athens, 1991). For Kolettis's address see Konstantinos Th. Dimaras, *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, (Athens, 1994), pp.359-63 and 405-18.

Questions on Greek identity however were at the same time also posed by Europeans. The historian Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790-1861) created a sensation by denying any connection between ancient and modern Greeks. The impressions were such that they triggered the emergence of a great interest in folklore, thus leading to the development of ethnography in Greece⁹⁰, while in the field of history it pointed to the need for a more foolproof national narrative by exposing the ambiguities the Enlightenment view posed. In this way the German historian became actually the conduit through which the Greeks crossed the road to historical romanticism and produced one of the finest buttresses of national identity in a pan-European scale. The need to provide an answer turned Fallmerayer's aspiring opponents to a systemization of their work thus producing the first examples of Greek historicism.⁹¹ Fallmerayer's example leads us to the heart of the matter, the content of Greek identity, and a brief discussion on his case and its repercussions seems in order.

Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer was born in the Austrian village of Tschotsch, near Brixen in Tyrol in 1790 and spent his academic career being controversial. Indeed, his work proves its consistency only through a remarkable series of *idées fixes*. Anti-slavic sentiments and Russophobia permeate his thought as a universal constant in their threat against Germany. This was evident even in his contribution to the events of 1848, which lay not so much on the grounds of liberal government as to the need for German unity in the face of danger. Already in 1849 Fallmerayer favoured a smaller Germany under Prussia because the Habsburgs had opened the door to the Czar, who was the "modern-day Genghis Khan".⁹² As to the Greeks, whose eclipse he had announced to the world, they were not Fallmerayer's main target. These were merely a proxy. The real enemies his work was directed against were the Bavarian authorities and establishment. In fact, his rejection of ardent *philhellenism*, long-time part of the official Bavarian state

⁹⁰ Michael Herzfeld, *Ours once more: Folklore, ideology and the making of modern Greece*, (Austin, 1982).

⁹¹ Georgios Veloudis, *O Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer και η γένεση του Ελληνικού Ιστορισμού*, (Athens, 1982).

ideology, was merely a way to get at them. In the end Fallmerayer seems to have indeed spent his life being chased by ghosts: those of authoritarian Bavaria and its meddling Catholic clergy, critics who objected to his sweeping generalisations, Slavs and Greeks.

To be sure, evidence on the eclipse of Greece was far from conclusive. His views on modern Greek degeneration however, stripped of their purported scientific proof – which in the final analysis only rested on Fallmerayer’s interpretation of ancient sources – do not vary significantly from what was quickly becoming a norm among travellers and *philhellenes*.⁹³ His obituary on classical Greece retroactively put their moral lapse in focus. Everyone could see with his own eyes that these were not the descendants of Pericles or Plato; it was not the Turks’ fault as the common explanation ran. Slavs and Albanians had accomplished this feat long before the Ottomans came.

When Fallmerayer’s book about medieval Peloponnese became known in Greece it was met with a general outrage.⁹⁴ The majority considered his views an aberration, neither representing the sum of historians nor the Western European public in their opinion about Greece. But he was decried as a wanton enemy of Greece, illiterate and a dreadful historian. There is much doubt whether scholars or intellectuals in Greece actually read Fallmerayer’s book before attempting to refute his arguments⁹⁵. The extent of the outcry and incoherence in public opinion was such that many accused

⁹² Elli Skopetea, *Φαλμεράδερ. Τεχνάσματα του αντιπάλου δέους*, (Athens, 1997), pp.15-62, 88-9, 105-6, 130-32.

⁹³ More accurately, it was becoming once again the norm. British eighteenth-century travellers, for example, in the words of C. M. Woodhouse, noted how superstitious, factious, lazy, lying, filthy, greedy, robbing, degenerate and degraded modern Greeks were. Maria Todorova points out how their sympathies generally lay with the Turks and attributes it to an “almost unconscious reverence to political success”. In Chris M. Woodhouse, *The Philhellenes*, (London, 1969), pp.31-7, 10; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (New York, 1997), p. 91, 94.

⁹⁴ Even in the 1870s mention of his name was enough to raise “heaps of abuse” from a respectable University professor. Charles Tuckermann, *Οι Έλληνες της σήμερον*, (Athens, 1877), pp.279-80. Tuckerman was a former ambassador of the United States of America in Athens.

⁹⁵ The first volume was only translated into Greek in 2002.

him of panslavism.⁹⁶ As Fallmerayer did not require travelling to Greece to comprehend it thoroughly, Greeks did not need to study his work to denounce him utterly. The majority of refuters turned to what was termed the ‘comparative method’, an early application of ethnography, and not to historical terms.⁹⁷ The practical results of this sudden introduction of folklorism and ethnography were disappointing. It is rather ironic that in the end it was a famous Slovene medievalist, Bartholomaeus Kopitar who sapped the etymological criteria, and the German Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen who managed to express a suitable answer on the basis of historical terms.⁹⁸

The importance in the Fallmerayer incident was that he had unintentionally uncovered a deep anxiety on the part of Greeks regarding their relationship to Western Europe. The abstraction of ‘Europe’ was a hydra of many heads and faces: Europe as a model society, Europe as a debtor – on account of following in the steps of ancient Greek civilisation –, Europe as an all-seeing eye and supreme judge of each and every effort.⁹⁹ To plainly state that “we have lost Europe’s esteem” in a leading Athenian newspaper in 1862 or to emphasise in it the previous year that “if the Franks [popular designation of Europeans] have all gone pro-Turkish it is mainly our own fault for we have become unworthy of their sympathy, and continue to do so”¹⁰⁰ are statements illustrative of an existing uncertainty for the country’s international standing. The death of *Philhellenism* was lamented to display the unwillingness of the European Concert to concede to further

⁹⁶ Veloudis, *O Jakob Philipp Falmerayer*, p.46.

⁹⁷ Georgios Pentadis Darvaris, *Δοκίμιον περί της σπουδής της Ιστορίας*, (Athens, 1842); Sophocles Oikonomos, *Περί Μάρκου του Κυπρίου και της υπ’ αυτού συγγραφείσης εις την κοινήν διάλεκτον ερμηνείας των Ιπποκράτους Αφορισμών διατριβή, εν η και μία λέξις προς τον Φαλμεράυερν*, (Athens, 1843). Emmanuel Bybilakis, *Neugriechisches Leben, verglichen mit dem altgriechischen; zur Erläuterung beider*, (Berlin, 1840); Anastasios Georgiadis, *Ανατροπή των δοξασάντων, γραψάντων και τύποις κοινωνούντων, ότι ουδείς των νυν την Ελλάδα οικούντων απόγονος των αρχαίων Ελλήνων εστί*, (Athens, 1843); Kyriakos Pittakis, «Υλη ίνα χρησιμεύση προς απόδειξιν, ότι οι νυν κατοικούντες την Ελλάδα εισίν απόγονοι των αρχαίων Ελλήνων», *Εφημερίς Αρχαιολογική* 30, (1852).

⁹⁸ Veloudis, *O Jakob Philipp Falmerayer*, pp.43-6.

⁹⁹ Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο Βασίλειο»*, pp. 163-171.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, p.167.

Greek enlargement.¹⁰¹ But this formed the flipside of impressions most of the *Philhellenes* had conveyed in their memoirs, where disillusionment settled in. They had almost said implicitly what Fallmerayer explicitly put forth some years later: could these people be in good faith considered Europeans? These “ambitious, intriguing, presumptuous” people who displayed “meanness, cunning, cowardice and dissimulation”, who exhibited a “thousand petty passions and jealousies” or “ample traces of slavish character and moral degeneration”¹⁰² were certainly far from the model classical Greeks they knew. Closer association of two cultures was indeed putting earlier assumptions under strain. However, while Greek opinion of matters European was almost irrelevant, foreign acceptance was vital to modern Greek identity.

The fundamentals of this identity rested on the incorporation of the Greek past into a national narrative. This procedure was initiated after the independent state was formed in 1830. To trace perceptions of the past during the times preceding the War of Independence is not the easiest of tasks. On the part of the elites we can only rely on the treatments of Adamantios Korais or Church officials, which are less systematic than we would have liked. As far as it concerns the subaltern classes it would be hard to hazard a guess. The silence however is a kind of evidence itself, according to Alexis Politis. Rural populations certainly adopted a Christian perspective, in which relations to the past were regulated by problems of faith and salvation. The common view would not be any different from that of the early eighteenth-century preacher Kosmas Aitolos who taught in his sermons that

“the good God sent St Constantine and founded a Christian kingdom, and the Christians had this kingdom for one thousand one hundred and fifty years. Then God took the kingdom from the Christians and brought the Turk from the East and gave it to him for our own good... For God knew that the other kingdoms

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Skopetea, *To «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, p.166.

¹⁰² Finlay, *History*, II, p.284; Thomas Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 2 vols., (Edinburgh and London, 1832), vol. I, p.33, 311; Karl Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, 2 vols., (Athens, 1895), vol. I, p.83.

do harm to our faith and that the Turk harms us not...and God has the Turk as our guard dog”.¹⁰³

Before the 1850s trends in Greek academia were set by scholars and intellectuals who had studied in early nineteenth-century European universities and were influenced by the way the European Enlightenment still dominated views regarding the historical process. Edward Gibbon’s monumental synthesis became available in Greece in 1840¹⁰⁴ and did so as part of the humanities’ orthodoxy.¹⁰⁵ Delighting in Gibbon’s views these early Greek philologists considered Byzantium to be nothing but a corrupt empire, a continuation of the Roman that had subdued both the ancient Greek states and spirit. George Pentadis Darvaris, for instance, in an unsuccessful attempt to procure a philosophy of history, summed up in 1842 the causes of the Byzantine Empire’s downfall in “senility, theological dissension, the enmity of the Pope in Rome, but above all, the pusillanimity and moral corruption of most Byzantine Emperors”.¹⁰⁶ A decade later, Stephanos Koumanoudis (1819-1899), one of the most prominent philologists of his time and professor for forty years in the University of Athens continued to view medieval times as an interpolation in the course of Greek history, not recording any connection between Byzantium’s downfall and the “rise of the Greek element”.¹⁰⁷ And Michail Potlis, another academic professor, in his 1859 inaugural lesson in Church Law did not hesitate to deny all claims that could be laid on scientific progress on Byzantium’s behalf: “lack of judgement, method and art form the general character of the

¹⁰³ Alexis Politis, “From Christian Roman emperors to the glorious Greek ancestors” in David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (eds.), *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, (London, 1998), pp.1-6. These views recall Tertsetis’s mention of Byzantium as a “Christian Empire”.

¹⁰⁴ Veloudis, *O Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer*, p.17.

¹⁰⁵ Konstantinos Pappargopoulos, who was later to present a diametrically opposed view of Byzantium, felt the need to praise him as late as 1857. In Veloudis, *O Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer*, p.75.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Konstantinos Th. Dimaras, «Η ανάσχεση του Διαφωτισμού και ο Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος» in K. Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός*, (Athens, 1998), p.396.

¹⁰⁷ Stephanos Koumanoudis, *Λόγος εκφωνηθείς τη 20ή Μαΐου 1853, κατά την επέτειον εορτήν της ιδρύσεως του Πανεπιστημίου του Όθωνος*, (Athens, 1853), p.24.

Byzantines in almost all the branches of science they took to”.¹⁰⁸ In short, for all of the above Byzantium was lacking the moral fibre to stand along the formidable ancient Greek civilisation.

Stephanos Koumanoudis, Efthymios Kastorhis, Konstantinos Asopios and other prominent historians and scholars more or less treated the state emerging from the War of Independence as a resurrection of an ancient Greek equivalent. This was achieved through the ‘spirit’ of ancient Greece, which, far from dead, was only dormant among the Greeks, waking up at the right moment. The nine-year struggle against an enemy far superior in firepower and resources along with the heroic conduct of many chief figures during the Revolution was, according to them sufficient proof for the modern Greeks’ being direct descendants of the ancients.¹⁰⁹ However, the most prominent fault this approach presented, notably the eclipse of a Greek element or people, was set aside. Where Greeks were, or what had happened to their language, institutions or culture in the meantime, did not matter. The lapse was even considered an advantage in demonstrating an insurmountable vigour and vitality welling up to perform something close to a miracle: the Phoenix myth, as Konstantinos Shinas had put it in his memorable address during the inauguration of the University of Athens.¹¹⁰ That this gap though, which excluded such a patently powerful element of modern Greeks as the Christian Orthodox religion, could give rise to many assumptions had not occurred to them. The ardent *philhellenism* of the revolutionary era and their own adherence to accepted norms determined that.

The ‘old school of history’ as Koumanoudis proudly named it, the one whose adherents “avoided the paradoxes” Paparrigopoulos was about to

¹⁰⁸ Michail Potlis, *Εισαγωγικόν μάθημα εις το Εκκλησιαστικόν Δίκαιον*, (Athens, 1859), p.10.

¹⁰⁹ Even Georgios Tertsetis, the representative of an older generation and of a different approach to religion in his Catholicism, remained nevertheless surprisingly accurate on that aspect: in his celebratory addresses the Persian Wars were likened to the Revolution. In Georgios Tertsetis, *Τί είδα εις την τετράμηνον περιήγισίν μου*, (Athens, 1859), pp.34-35.

¹¹⁰ For Shinas’ presence and the significance of the celebrations see Konstantinos Th. Dimaras, *Εν Αθήναις τη 3^η Μαΐου 1837*, (Athens, 1987).

introduce, had nevertheless its own turns and amendments.¹¹¹ Towards the end of the 1830s, for instance, their creed could be summed up in Konstantinos Shinas's words:

“Greece having afterwards been subjected with merely a shadow of an autonomy to Macedonian domination, having finally been beaten by the Romans under Mommius, was subsequently transferred by way of inheritance under the sceptre of the Byzantine emperors, heirs to the Roman Imperium, and four hundred years ago was subjugated to the hindmost and unendurable bondage”.¹¹²

For Iakovos Rizos-Neroulos, president of the Archaeological Society in 1841, Greece was the heir of the classical times and everything intermediate, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantine, Turks were foreign elements. Alexander the Great was not a hero but a catastrophe, and Byzantium was an “almost interlinked and incredibly long series of moronic actions and disgraceful violence”.¹¹³ The two thousand years’ ‘chasm’ was not a cause of fear to Nikolaos I. Saripolos: it was ‘bridged’ by the modern Greeks. All they were required to do was “avert their eyes” from the gap.¹¹⁴

In the 1850s however, something started to change. In 1856 Konstantinos Asopios chose Alexander for the subject of his inaugural address as Dean of the University of Athens presenting him as a “symbol of unity” for Greeks in word and deed, while two years later Ioannis Soutsos asserted in his own address that his example urged Greeks to “rise to prominence in the Oriental world through our national unity”.¹¹⁵ Georgios Tertsetis had also reserved a place for him and the Macedonians in his outline of Greek history: Alexander followed Agesilaus, king of Sparta, in the

¹¹¹ Koumanoudis, *Λόγος εκφωνηθείς τη 20ή Μαΐου 1853*, p.32.

¹¹² Konstantinos Shinas, *Λογίδριον εκφωνηθέν εις την ημέραν της εγκαθιδρύσεως του Πανεπιστημίου Ὑθωνος*, (Athens, 1837), p.1.

¹¹³ Dimaras, «Η ιδεολογική υποδομή» in *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, p.339.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.380.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp.368-69.

same breath in a Greek heroic pantheon, thus being incorporated as an appendage to the history of classical antiquity.¹¹⁶

These changes indicate that even the representatives of an older order were not exactly blind to the necessities and challenges of their times. As a matter of fact, during the whole course of the nineteenth century history in Greece remained the only discipline continuously in touch with contemporary Western European trends. At the same time the political agenda was changing. Adamantios Korais's approach that gave preponderance to the organisation of a democratic – and republican – polity had proved useful while the country was waging a War of Independence. Some of these components, republicanism for instance, were dropped very early from the agenda. After the Revolution of 3 September 1843, however, and the introduction of constitutionalism, most of these aspirations were fulfilled according to the letter if not the spirit of the law, while new priorities seemed to take precedence and impose themselves. After years of bitter political strife “unity” was sternly demanded in all its possible guises: national, ideological, religious, historiographical.¹¹⁷ Events in Western Europe could always provide examples to uphold these new demands. Victor Emmanuel of Piedmont was likened to Alexander in 1859, the year of the *Risorgimento*.¹¹⁸

As it became apparent that the historiographical format of the Enlightenment could not serve the identity needs of Greece in an effective way a new approach was sought. The reformer was to be Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (1815-1891), prominent historian, professor for forty years in the University of Athens, a complex and politically active personality. His family originated in the Peloponnese, and suffered much in the Ottoman reprisals in 1821. Paparrigopoulos and his mother took refuge in Odessa. Later on, in 1830, he was drawn to Greece. He entered the civil service in the employment of the Ministry of Justice, remaining there for a decade. In 1844

¹¹⁶ Georgios Tertsetis, *Λόγος της 25 Μαρτίου 1857. Τα επιστρόφια εις τον Θεόν*, (Athens, 1857), p.21.

¹¹⁷ Dimaras, «Η ορμή προς την εθνική ενότητα μέσα στον Ελληνικό Ρωμαντισμό» in *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, pp. 419-427.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.426.

he was considered an *eterochthon* and was fired from his position. However, not all ways were closed to him. Paparrigopoulos had supported the leader of the 'French party', Ioannis Kolettis. Earning his trust, he found a job in Education as professor of History in the Secondary School of Athens in 1846. Two years later he tried to secure a place in the University of Athens; it was the start of a three-year struggle with as much political as academic character. To begin with, Paparrigopoulos was not a doctor of Philosophy: circumstances had prevented him from completing his studies but his erudition could not really be contested. The University of Munich provided him with the said diploma *in absentia* after examining a memorandum stating his qualifications. Before that, a public argument on their respective formal qualifications would form a gap between him and Efthymios Kastorhis (1815-1889), recently appointed as lecturer in Latin. Finally, after a long wait and an abortive attempt to secure a chair in Law School, Paparrigopoulos was appointed to the Faculty of Arts in March 1851. The object of his teaching would be the "fortunes of the Greek nation from the most ancient time until the present".¹¹⁹

In these early years there was no concrete evidence to suggest he was on the verge of a breakthrough. His work *The last year of Greek freedom* (1845) referred to Greek subjugation to Rome and implied that its author acknowledged the contemporary view discarding Byzantium. To further support the notion that Paparrigopoulos gradually formed a new plan in his mind there is his translation of *Elements of General History* by D. E. Levi-Alvares. The book, which obtained a recommendation from the Ministry of Education for teaching in schools, decried Byzantium in the Gibbonian tradition.¹²⁰ When starting in 1850 to write regularly for *Πανδώρα*, a literary magazine he published along with Nikolaos Dragoumis, Alexandros Rizos Ragavis and others, Paparrigopoulos produced an article to refute Fallmerayer in which Byzantium seemed to be accepted as a state where the Greek element dominated. Yet, a systematic treatment or organisation of the subject was still missing. Paparrigopoulos however was already driven towards a unifying principle. He had noted in the past that everything in

¹¹⁹ Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, (Athens, 1986), pp. 110-143.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, pp.123-24.

classical times contributed in generating and preserving division while modern Greece had achieved religious, linguistic and national unity and was “struggling to regain its political unity”.¹²¹ The leap from unity in space to unity in time was not a great one. His 1853 *History of the Greek Nation from the most ancient times to the present day* aimed to be used for teaching purposes and recalled the description of his university lessons. The same goes for his *History of the Greek Nation* (1860-1874) but the projected audience was different. The subtitle *χάριν των πολλών* [for the benefit of the public] would accompany the title until 1874 when it was finally dropped.¹²²

What Paparrigopoulos masterfully achieved in this great synthesis was the smooth integration within the national historical canon of what was previously an unusable past. On the eve of Paparrigopoulos’s appointment Greek history as such was not taught in the University of Athens: Theodoros Manousis was teaching General History – that is, World History – and Konstantinos Shinas, Classical. There was no space in between for the cultivation of a subject dedicated to national history. The interest was lacking because the dominant paradigm did not recognise the continuous existence of a Greek state. However, we already mentioned that the gap was beginning to fill with Alexander and the Macedonians as an epilogue to classicism. Notions of an even more modified scheme could be hinted in Georgios Tertsetis’s thought. Christianity, a vital link connecting modern Greece to the Middle Ages had been correctly spotted: “We are not related to the old Greeks? Who says so? What separates us from them? Just one person – Jesus Christ”.¹²³

There were others ready to take the point further. Skarlatos Vyzantios in his *Constantinople* in 1851 was engaged in an “untimely and overstretched plea of byzantine history”, a history righteously scorned by prominent authorities according to Stephanos Koumanoudis.¹²⁴ Vyzantios’s reply was equally telling. He admitted the defects of the Byzantines and added that

¹²¹ Dimaras, «Η ορμή» in *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, pp.421-22.

¹²² Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, p.223. Dimaras links the subtitle to Guizot’s quotation on the “practical lessons” for the people in the first page.

¹²³ Georgios Tertsetis, *Λόγος της 25 Μαρτίου 1855*, (Athens, 1856), p.22.

since “we already do this, as we should, with respect to the ancient Greeks, I consider it fair to act similarly towards the Byzantines”.¹²⁵ In 1852, Spyridon Zampelios (1815-1881) would publish a lengthy work on popular song and poetry, in which the theoretical part greatly exceeded the actual collection, followed after five years by a volume entitled *Byzantine Studies* [Βυζαντινὰ Μελέται]. Despite the fact that Zampelios had a head start and his work put forth a rudimentary philosophy of history along with a tripartite division of Hellenism – which was one and indivisible throughout its historical course – his complicated phrases, hazy style, bordering at times on the inscrutable, and lack of systemization in his studies did not serve in securing him a more significant place among Greek scholars.

Contrary to his predecessors then, Paparrigopoulos used his inherent literary and analytical powers to the utmost in order to produce a systematic and innovative work. His attention to detail and lively discussion of social, cultural and economic factors gave a sound background to his treatment of political history. No less sound was the structure underpinning the overall synthesis. In its first edition the *History of the Greek Nation* was divided in five volumes and fifteen books that examined the *res gestae* of a unitary *Hellenism*.¹²⁶ Paparrigopoulos discerned three periods: ancient Hellenism; Byzantine Hellenism; Modern (or Contemporary [καθ’ ἡμᾶς]) Hellenism. This outline was not so precise from the beginning. Some of his terms were to prove awkward indeed. A distinct ‘Macedonian Hellenism’ has not survived; this period has been successfully incorporated into ancient Greek history. ‘Christian Hellenism’ no longer exists because it essentially denoted the early Byzantine era. The initial format gradually evolved into a simpler and universally accepted form although in Paparrigopoulos’s work some overlapping in terminology remained between ‘ancient’ and ‘Macedonian’ or ‘Christian’ and ‘Byzantine’ Greeks. However, we owe these reductions to the writer himself, not to his followers.

¹²⁴ Dimaras, *Κωνσταντῖνος Παπαρηγόπουλος*, p.178. The lack of capitalisation is another indication of Koumanoudis’s contempt.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 179. Vyzantios properly capitalises.

¹²⁶ The term indicates the sum of all Greeks throughout the world or time, but also their whole culture or even civilisation of a certain era. Here it means the latter.

Paparrigopoulos's history remains a lengthy and difficult book that should be handled carefully by those who would study it. In the age of Romanticism he produced a grand narrative in the manner of his great European counterparts, Treitschke, Michelet, Guizot, Ranke, Macaulay. It was not simply a historical but also an important literary work with a beginning, middle and ending, sound plot and a multitudinous cast. The observation that in his composition we cross the line from "the history of a period in time to that of its protagonist"¹²⁷, where *Hellenism* takes up the role of a "collective historical agent" according to P. M. Kitromilides¹²⁸, provides an insight and a key to the reading of the whole work. To become the 'national historiographer' Paparrigopoulos called forth the spirit of the nation. He was also cautious enough not to turn history into propaganda. There is a sense of measure throughout the extent of his work. It is rather because his interpretation has become in the passage of time the gospel of Greek nationalism that the one responsible for its conception is under suspicion. Even our having knowledge of Paparrigopoulos' political initiatives concerning the Greek element's welfare in Ottoman-ruled Macedonia, does not make it any easier to pinpoint any transgressions. Because of his preoccupation with the contrast between his 'scientific' and 'national duty' to be discussed later on, he was being careful himself.

However, there exists a contradiction between the care in the methodological structure of the work and its popularising character. Although "composed for the benefit of the public", it was to be a guide to 'national truth' for the many in Greece – and an introduction to it for the Europeans. In 1877 the Parliament voted for an amount of six thousand drachmas in order for a summary of the whole project to be translated in French. Under the title *Histoire de la civilisation hellénique* it was published the following year, designed for European purposes: an exercise in cultural foreign policy in the midst of the Eastern Crisis. The emphasis on *civilisation*,

¹²⁷ Antonis Liakos, «Προς επισκευήν ολομελείας και ενότητος. Η Δόμηση του εθνικού χρόνου» in *Επιστημονική Συνάντηση στη μνήμη του Κ. Θ. Δημαρά*, (Athens, 1994), pp.183-84.

in contrast to *history* as read in the original title, is self-explanatory: Paparrigopoulos's work was offered as evidence, both of a glorious past and an active present. It was acting, in other words, as a cultural argument. In the conjuncture of the Congress of Berlin and an expected solution of the Eastern Question Greece was not to resort to Fallmerayer's "empty-handed beggary"¹²⁹.

But what about the content of Paparrigopoulos's work? What tools did he use to accomplish his breakthrough and in what way the unification achieved was proved exceptional?

The keys to understanding Paparrigopoulos's argument are the concepts of *metaplasis* [transformation]¹³⁰ and *entoli* [mandate]. The former term fluctuates between 'transformation' and 'mutation' without being exactly one or the other. In this particular context it means a modification in which the original, although quite unrecognisable, is still there. The essence of *metaplasis* was this: the Ancient Greek and Roman elements fused into the Byzantines. These three components, plus Ottoman and Western influences were then crystallised into Modern Greeks. This theory of continuity through the ages became an avenue linking Modern Greece with Classical Antiquity, thus also with Modern Europe, without the merest gap. If another Fallmerayer was ever to question the validity of contemporary Greek heritage, he would be referred to, through *metaplasis*, to previous periods of Greek history all the way back to ancient Greece. The tripartite format acted as a safety net for an identity.

Entoli on the other hand went hand in hand with 'mission'. The ancient Greek nation losing its own political progeny

"adopted in turn the works of Alexander the Great, of Christianity, of Constantine the Great and transformed [*μεταπλασσόμενον*] according to the needs and occasions of each

¹²⁸ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "On the intellectual content of Greek nationalism: Paparrigopoulos, Byzantium and the Great Idea" in Ricks and Magdalino (eds.), *Byzantium*, p. 28.

¹²⁹ Skopetea, *Φαλμεράδερ*, p.171.

¹³⁰ To be noted that Paparrigopoulos does not use the exact counterpart of 'transformation' – which would be *metallaxis*.

new historical mandate...had a leading role for a long time yet in this world”.¹³¹

‘Hellenism’ was endowed with a mission as an agent of Providence – or to be precise, with a variety of missions. It had to propagate and defend Christianity, sow the seeds of the Renaissance and the Reformation, and finally, supplant the Ottoman Empire among European Powers in order to fulfil the prophecy the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen had uttered in 1829.¹³² It was plain to see that “naturally the Greek nation has not disappeared from the face of the earth, as some have professed”.¹³³

The ubiquitous presence of Fallmerayer, implied in Paparrigopoulos’s last phrase, leads us back to politics. Certainly Paparrigopoulos was aware of the possible dichotomies and contradictions between history and politics. There are matters “both scientific and national” and the historian may find himself in a place of conflicting loyalties as he did in a confrontation with the fellow scholar Konstantinos Sathas: “as a scientist I am not denying it; as a Greek however I do confess I would like somebody else to undertake the disclosure of this pitiful truth, a foreigner rather than a fellow countryman”.¹³⁴ However, a threshold existed between these two activities that he was not prepared to cross. Paparrigopoulos was already a known contributor and member of patriotic clubs as the Society for the Propagation of Greek Letters, essentially run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or the National Defence [*Εθνική Άμυνα*] which was supporting Greek interests in Macedonia in 1877. He did not hide his political convictions: in the past he had publicly supported Ioannis Kolettis and King Otto in times of trouble by publishing newspapers. Nevertheless, he conceded that “we are writing history, not political programmes”.¹³⁵

Paradoxically, the only way out of this dilemma Paparrigopoulos permitted himself was through the nation and this goes only to prove he was not without contradictions himself. He advised caution, yet believed in a

¹³¹ Dimaras (ed.), *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος: Προλεγόμενα*, (Athens, 1970), p.116.

¹³² *Ibid*, pp. 125-163.

¹³³ *Ibid*, pp.153-54.

¹³⁴ Dimaras, *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, p.605.

¹³⁵ Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, p.367, 376.

‘national truth’ that he was prepared to defend and articulate from his University chair for as long as he could remain standing.¹³⁶ His students and followers in matters historiographical opted to neglect his caution, finding no fault in merging history and national propaganda. Surprisingly enough we find Spyridon Lampros to copy word for word¹³⁷ his saying on the scientific and national duties only to turn it on its head, from word of caution to activist cry. But then again, Lampros’s balance visibly tilted to one side: in 1896 he was writing political programmes for the ardent nationalists of the *Ethnike Hetaireia* [National Society] and acted on them too.¹³⁸

It is not our purpose to judge Paparrigopoulos’s intentions, to be sure, so to pronounce him a nationalist or not would be beside the point. However, we have to underline the general atmosphere in which he worked for the better part of his life. The University of Athens has already been shown linked to politics – not merely academic ones but those with a capital P – almost from its inception. The respect intellectuals commanded in nineteenth – century Greece can be demonstrated in the poets’ popularity, in the great audiences university professors drew in their public lectures and the frequency with which the Press reported their speeches, in the students’ activities both inside and outside the campus, and finally, in the close connection between academics and political parties, evident in their political careers. Instead of merely preparing cadres for administrative careers in the civil service the University was endowed with a clear cultural mission from its establishment. It had transcended it in producing ideology and securing for itself the place of the nation’s conscience. Spyridon Lampros, Neoklis Kazazis (1849-1936), and the rest of the late nineteenth-century dons, were not exactly trying to carve a niche for themselves in political life as Efi Gazi maintained¹³⁹. They had already their place and a pedestal to spread their

¹³⁶ Dimaras, «Η Ρωμαντική Ιστοριογραφία στην Ελλάδα» in *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, , pp.466-67.

¹³⁷ Dimaras, *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, p. 606.

¹³⁸ See below, ch.5 for details on Lampros’s political activities.

¹³⁹ Efi Gazi, «Συμβολικός λόγος και πολιτική πρακτική κατά την περίοδο του πολέμου του 1897: σύγκλιση, απόκλιση, σύγκρουση» in the Abstracts of Historical Conference in Moraitis School, *Ο πόλεμος του 1897*, (Athens, 1999).

opinions from. What they actually tried to do was broaden their base and their interests' range.

Reactions to Paparrigopoulos's proposed format were not free from the intrusions of politics. Konstantinos Dimaras has drawn attention to the significant amount of time it took for it to achieve an unassailable place.¹⁴⁰ It will be shown below, however, that the state quickly recognised the ramifications of his work and authorised the incorporation of its outlining format into school curricula. In my opinion this not only signals its acceptance into official national ideology but also forms the prerequisite for a wide dissemination throughout Greek society. Among intellectuals and University dons, on the other hand, it was not always a matter of ideas. Certainly, Stephanos Koumanoudis or Efthymios Kastorhis disapproved of Paparrigopoulos's dogmas out of principle and on ideological grounds. The former, as early as 1853, had spoken ironically of those who professed that "almost no evil had descended among the wretched Greeks during medieval times; it was fortunately moving from less to more perfect transformations that they were suddenly subjugated by the hordes of craven Asia!"¹⁴¹. But there was also the reality of power play and rival factions on campus. Paparrigopoulos having sought in the early 1870s, when nearing the *History's* completion, to be elected Dean of the University of Athens was defeated twice, in 1870 and 1871, before securing the position in 1872. In the first case there were hints of foul play, as King George I refused to sign his appointment. The second time round the contest was won by Efthymios Kastorhis, a close associate of Koumanoudis's.¹⁴² Other attacks were of a more personal character, as the one in an anonymous newspaper article in 1879 which denounced the historian as an "international beggar".¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Dimaras, «Η ανάσχεση του Διαφωτισμού», p.407.

¹⁴¹ Koumanoudis, *Λόγος εκφωνηθείς τη 20ή Μαΐου 1853*, p.32.

¹⁴² Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, pp.249-257. P. Moullas in «Η διαμάχη Π. Σούτσου – Κ. Ασωπίου (1853) και η ιστορική συγκυρία» suggests it was also a case of particularism: Ionians (Kastorhis) against Constantinopolitans (Paparrigopoulos). In P. Moullas, *Ρήξεις και συνέχειες. Μελέτες για τον 19^ο αιώνα*, (Athens, 1993), pp. 273-74.

¹⁴³ Dimaras, «Η ανάσχεση του διαφωτισμού», p.409. Dimaras attributes it to Nikolaos I. Saripolos, yet another upholder of the Enlightenment and frequent opponent.

Another facet of the constant interplay between politics and academic life may be demonstrated in the early endorsement by the Greek state which meant that Paparrigopoulos's work entered the canon. As early as 1861 the Ministry of Internal Affairs recommended that the book be obtained by the wealthier municipalities and used as a prize for prominent pupils. In 1872 the parliament compensated Paparrigopoulos with two thousand drachmas for a trip to Europe. We have already mentioned another funding in 1877 that permitted the publication of the *History's* French version in one volume. The University of Athens also emerged as a significant contributor, not only in the salary raises that the author received in 1862-63 and again in 1867-68 but in sustaining the whole publishing effort: five hundred volumes were purchased between 1861 and 1876 while fifty complete series were commissioned in 1889, after the second edition was completed.¹⁴⁴

It was rather recognition of a simpler fact than patronage necessities that commanded their attention. Achieving unity of a national timeline could also serve other expectations, closer to home. The importance of history for the nations as an "infallible guide to progress and happiness"¹⁴⁵ formed a basic argument in the 1861 Ministry of Education reasoning for purchasing volumes as presents to diligent students. Indeed then, history in Greece had a "more practical character than usual" in the astute Paparrigopoulos's aphorism.¹⁴⁶ As an instrument of ideology the tripartite format provided the means to give shape to those vague claims that formed irredentism as a foreign policy: a 'Greek Empire' until the 1850s, Union with Crete in the 1860s, anti-Slavism from the 1870s onwards.¹⁴⁷

The airiness of territorial demands at the time of Paparrigopoulos cannot be discerned so much in foreign policy directions, for diplomacy imposed its own necessities to Greek politicians. We can better follow the quest for the limits of Greek expansion in the thought and writings of

¹⁴⁴ Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, pp.229-231.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.229.

¹⁴⁶ "History in Greece is of a more practical character than usual". Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos's observation in *Πανδώρα*, vol. Γ', 65, (1865), 397.

¹⁴⁷ Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, pp.273-346. In 1834 Kolettis seriously proposed that the Greek Kingdom should not settle on an official capital since Constantinople was the real one anyway.

individuals. It is only a sample indicating the variety of opinions. “Greek Empire or death” was Spyridon Karaiskakis’s – son of the famous 1821 revolutionary Georgios Karaiskakis – keynote in an 1854 proclamation issued from his camp. In it he called for a struggle where mainland Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians would fight along Asia Minor Greeks to fulfil his slogan.¹⁴⁸ The concept of a Greek ‘mission’ was not always identified with the sum of the dominions of the Ottoman Empire. For A. D. Kappotas, for instance, it was merely the “liberation of Greeks everywhere”, for A. Despotopoulos the “rehabilitation of an oriental Greek civilisation”.¹⁴⁹ N. Katramis exercised some restraint in depicting a blueprint for a future expansion of the Kingdom: it should contain

“ the heroic Epirus, mother of the Muses – the fertile Thessaly, land of able men – warlike Macedonia – Crete of a thousand gates, and the rest of the lands of our forefathers up to the Bosphorus sea in Thrace”.¹⁵⁰

K.N. Ieroklis proved rather more demanding: “Greece extends from the extremes of Pontus to the coasts of Adriatic and [the banks of the] Danube”.¹⁵¹ There was absolutely no question on the ability of the state or army to put any of these fanciful plans to execution. In the space of almost sixty years two episodes clearly emphasize the disparity between means and desires. In 1839 on the word of sultan Mahmud’s death King Otto gave voice to his plan to go to Constantinople and get crowned as Emperor, only to discard it when informed that the Kingdom’s only steamship was under repair; in 1897 a brief Greco-Turkish war in the wake of a Cretan Revolution demanding union with Greece ended in a Turkish triumph.

¹⁴⁸ Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, pp.277-78.

¹⁴⁹ A.D. Kappotas, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός απαγγελθείς εν τω ιερώ ναώ του Αγίου Νικολάου τη εικοστή πέμπτη μαρτίου, τελουμένης της εθνικής τελετής υπό του γυμνασιάρχου Α. Δ. Καππώτου*, (Lamia, 1867), p.5; A. Despotopoulos, *Η 25 Μαρτίου 1867 εν Αιγίω*, (Aigion, 1867), p.8.

¹⁵⁰ N. Katramis, *Λόγος εκφωνηθείς εν τω ναώ της Θ. Φανερωμένης*, (Zakynthos, 1862), p.6.

¹⁵¹ K. N. Ieroklis, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός επί τη πεντηκονταετηρίδι της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας, εορτασθείσης ιδία υπό του Φιλολογικού Συλλόγου "Παρνασσού" υπό του τακτικού μέλους Κ. Ν. Ιεροκλέους, εντολή του συλλόγου εκφωνηθείς*, (Athens, 1871), p.15.

Questions of boundaries, warlike addresses and visions of an Empire, or even a “model Kingdom”¹⁵² to that extent, were essentially exercises in rhetoric. Rhetoric, however, could also be of importance if based on consistent arguments and it was this kind of consistency that Paparrigopoulos offered. Eliminating the two thousand year gap between Classical Antiquity and his contemporary times meant that the ‘lands of our forefathers’ could be claimed in a more effective way, backed by respectable scientific opinion. Thus, the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople could send a memorandum asserting the ‘historical rights’ on behalf of ‘Hellenism’ to the Congress of Berlin and demand “in the event of an irrevocable political solution all the land beyond the great mountains [Balkans] from the Ionian Sea to the Thracian Bosphorus”.¹⁵³

Both ‘Hellenism’ and ‘Byzantium’ grew from mere representations to embody and evoke whole ideological and cultural categories. ‘Hellenism’ used in a Paparrigopoulean context made irrelevant any attempt of approaching the content of ‘Greekness’. After its integration Byzantium could play an important role in denoting possible future Greek borders. Throughout its long existence the empire waxed and waned. Now its unstable and indeterminate boundaries could easily become those of an imagined Greek Kingdom by default, at least as far as it concerned the Balkans and the Near East; for nobody staked any claims to Bari or any other Italian cities the Byzantines had only left in the eleventh century.¹⁵⁴ Finally, while Byzantine borders were legitimised as an ideal claim, possible

¹⁵² “It is the aim of my ambition, as far it depends on me, to render Greece a model Kingdom in the Orient” read King George I’s proclamation to the Greeks on his ascendance to the throne in October 1863. In *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, vol. ΙΓ’, p.231.

¹⁵³ Georgios Giannakopoulos, «Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1861-1922). Η Ελληνική παιδεία και επιστήμη ως εθνική πολιτική στην Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία», [unpublished Ph.D thesis, (Athens, 1998)], pp.132-133.

¹⁵⁴ Spyridon Zampelios had already stated that the proper bounds of the ‘Neohellenic Fatherland’ were those defined by the emperors Nikiforos Fokas and Ioannis Tzimiskis back in the 10th century. Quoted in George Huxley, “Aspects of modern Greek historiography of Byzantium” in Ricks and Magdalino (eds.), *Byzantium*, p.16.

inclusion of non-Greek populations received a plausible justification. An expanded Greece could be viewed as a Byzantium restored, a multi-national Empire.¹⁵⁵

We conclude then that Paparrigopoulos's influence worked on a number of levels. With regard to historiography he was providing an internal element of cohesion: the national narrative, as far as it represents memory, cannot accept gaps. Conceptualisation of national time then presupposes the existence of a historical discourse converting the selected past into it, leading to the creation of foundation myths. Thus Antonis Liakos has explained the successive incorporation of different periods into the canon of Greek history to the inherent deeper needs required by the process of nation-building, noting at the same time the interplay between Greek and European historiography.¹⁵⁶ On another level Paschalis Kitromilides has noticed the function of Paparrigopoulos's work as ideological infrastructure, investing national identity with an arsenal of concepts and examples enough to transcend past insecurities and offer legitimation to the unifying measures and political aspirations of the nineteenth-century Greek state; in other words, ground enough for the *Megali idea* to seem sound as foreign policy.¹⁵⁷ On a final note Konstantinos Dimaras has questioned the way Greek intellectuals opted for in their reading of the *History*, as a "misinterpretation" that in the final analysis "flattered modern Greek national pride". It was his conviction that Paparrigopoulos was not essentially looking to flatter modern Greeks but to criticise both society and state.¹⁵⁸ In my opinion, the fact that

¹⁵⁵ Political realism would eventually limit in the 1870s Greek 'historical rights' to areas with significant Greek population – hence the educational interest in Macedonian Greeks. These matters are discussed in detail in ch.5.

¹⁵⁶ Liakos, «Προς επισκευήν», pp. 174-190. Liakos places K. Th. Dimaras at the end of this process in integrating the period of 'Greek Enlightenment', essentially the eighteenth century, into our followed historical outline.

¹⁵⁷ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, «Το ιστοριογραφικό εκκρεμές και ο Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος», *Νέα Εστία*, 1991, pp. 1571-78; "On the intellectual content ", pp. 25-33.

¹⁵⁸ Konstantinos Th. Dimaras, "Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος: Εκατό χρόνια μετά", *Νέα Εστία*, 1991, p.1568. On the relationship between Paparrigopoulos and Dimaras see Elli Skopetea, «Ο Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος του Κ.Θ.Δημαρά και μερικές σκέψεις περί εθνικής ιστοριογραφίας», *Σύγχρονα Θέματα* 35-37, 1988, pp.286-294.

Paparrigopoulos's format carried the day in a relatively short period of time practically in the space of roughly ten years – and with negligent resistance – before gaining entrance to school texts renders all such speculation obsolete. It was not a matter of interpretation but appropriation.

The emergence of the new paradigm was to have a considerable ideological impact in primary and secondary education. The vision of a 'national education' building strong character and forging national identity would endow the past with special interest: "the legitimacy of possessing areas claimed as Greek depended on their antiquity" while

"definition of 'boundaries' for Hellenism, which points to a clear delineation of national claims determines at the same time the actual aims of national education[...] After 1880 schools are considered as the Greek nation's 'gunsmith's workshop'".¹⁵⁹

The role of history in its capacity as school lesson was clear. Here, the situation mirrored the one in historiography, even if we allow for a certain divergence of needs. Until 1853 Byzantium in Greek education was an alien factor, another link in the long chain of bondage. Sometimes texts of Greek history would stop just after the Roman conquest while those of General history would devote only few paragraphs to the Byzantine Empire following Gibbon's outline in considering it as a "period of decline and darkness in civilisation".¹⁶⁰ In other places the disapproval would become evident in denouncing the "two thousand years of slavery".¹⁶¹ These rigid views however had already started to be mitigated with the acceptance of Macedonians in the canon of classical antiquity: "the Macedonians, despite their not being referred to in the most ancient times of Greek history, were nevertheless Greeks".¹⁶² Already in 1845 Theodoros Manousis and Konstantinos Asopios, representatives of a late Enlightenment, were suggesting an alternative view in "the perspective of the 'long history of the

¹⁵⁹ Christina Koulouri, *Ιστορία και Γεωγραφία στα Ελληνικά Σχολεία (1834-1914)*, (Athens, 1988), p.77.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.36.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 150. [Thomas Keightley, *Ιστορία της Αρχαίας Ελλάδος*, , μετάφραση Σ. Αντωνιάδη για τα Ελληνικά Σχολεία (1850)].

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p.162. [*Ιστορία του Ελληνικού έθνους* του Κ Παπαρρηγόπουλου για τα σχολεία (1853)].

Greek nation”¹⁶³ K.S. Xanthopoulos in 1873 noted that the mostly foreign works in use then did not develop Byzantine history at the desired length, while D. E. Kyriakopoulos in 1879 in a work intended for secondary education presented Constantine I as the “assistant of Greek national regeneration in political terms” and his era as the “most illustrious of the Constantinopolitan Greek state”.¹⁶⁴

Three years later Paparrigopoulos’s tripartite format was formally introduced in education. This did not include any of his works as teaching material. However, the debts to his thought and theories were evident in a great number of people who wrote history textbooks.¹⁶⁵ But certainly, what was more significant was the fact that the ministry of education was ready to issue its analytical programmes, containing the structuring of lessons and instructions to teachers, endorsing his format and basing the entire tutoring of history on it. The 1884 programme was to introduce the concept of a history of the Greek nation as the core of the lesson, with the content being appropriately defined for each grade in ascending order: in primary school, for example, the subject was ancient history in the fourth grade, to be followed by Roman and Byzantine in the fifth and Modern Greek in the sixth. The structure was to be repeated in the 1894 analytical programme and we find it again in the 1913-1914 ones for both primary and secondary education.¹⁶⁶ It remained the model through which my own generation was to be introduced to history for the first time in the 1980s.

The fabrication of continuity in Greek history was crucial to the development of nationalism. Not that its absence had forestalled it; its cultural counterpart had been proclaimed as early as 1837 when during his address in the inauguration of the University of Athens its first dean declared “the enlightenment of the Orient” as Greece’s foremost *raison d’ être*, to be

¹⁶³ Koulouri, *Ιστορία και Γεωγραφία*, p.37.

¹⁶⁴ Koulouri, *Ιστορία και Γεωγραφία*, p.34. Quotes from [*Πρώτη και Μέση Εκπαίδευσις του Κ.Σ. Ξανθοπούλου* (1873)], p.234; [*Ιστορία Ελληνική από των αρχαιστάτων χρόνων μέχρι Καποδιστρίου του Δ. Η. Κυριακόπουλου* (1879)], p.253.

¹⁶⁵ See for example, *ibid*, [*Στοιχειώδης Ιστορία Ρωμαϊκή και Βυζαντινή του Κ. Ζαχαριάδη* (1884)], pp.295-96.

¹⁶⁶ Koulouri, *Ιστορία και Γεωγραφία*, pp. 565-577.

achieved by the University.¹⁶⁷ The *Megali Idea* as a version of political programme was stated for the first time in 1844 by prime minister I. Kolettis, forming the basis for the development of Greek nationalism as ideology and irredentism as Greek foreign policy.¹⁶⁸ But Paparrigopoulos's interpretation gave to the official national ideology both an edge and an ability still unsurpassed today, notably to move the population according to the so-called 'national interests'. It has been often observed that Paparrigopoulos did not have an heir, in the historical sense, and did not therefore create a school in historical interpretation. In a manner of speaking then, his inheritor was the Greek state itself.

Certainly, recognition by the state of the fact of his theory's advantages was not only on an abstract level. The tripartite format was soon employed in education in order to enhance national sentiment and buttress a sense of national identity in the frame of a desired 'national education' [*εθνική αγωγή*]. The consolidation of Paparrigopoulos's concepts was a gradual process that gained momentum when his project, *History of the Greek Nation*, was completed. In the space of roughly twenty years between 1882, the date of its introduction in educational programmes and school curricula, to 1900 when we trace its frequent mention in the University of Athens celebratory addresses for Independence Day¹⁶⁹, it became dominant, if not the norm.¹⁷⁰ Challenges and disputes existed but they lacked a comprehensive frame and persuasive power. At the same time recurring Byzantine themes in literature, from Alexandros Papadiamantis's works in the 1880s to Kostis Palamas's and Penelope Delta's in the early 1900s show on the one hand the ideological needs and on the other the appeal a rehabilitated Byzantium

¹⁶⁷ Dimaras, «Η ιδεολογική υποδομή» in *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, pp. 349-350.

¹⁶⁸ Ironically enough, during the debate in Parliament to decide the prerequisites of eligibility of Greek citizenship for those joining the civil service, unarguably too prosaic a subject for lofty ideals.

¹⁶⁹ See below, ch.5.

¹⁷⁰ It is noteworthy that the date of the Paparrigopoulos format's introduction in the school curriculum coincides with the first competition for uniform textbooks that in Skopetea's words "gradually ascertains homogeneity in historical knowledge". In Elli Skopetea, "Βαλκανικές Εθνικές Ιστορίες" in *Εθνος-Κράτος-Εθνικισμός. Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο*, (Athens, 1995), p.309.

exerted to contemporary intellectuals.¹⁷¹ Those who were to fulfil a foreign policy aspiring to a ‘model kingdom in the Orient’, to supplant the Ottoman Empire or even to a plainer still “proper honourable place in the European family”¹⁷² were in need of a safety net, to justify and legitimise intentions, words and actions.

For that part, the national historiographer’s structure and arguments have never been really recalled to reserve. It has been stated that as far as it concerns Greek historiography, we are still following the cognitive categories of Paparrigopoulos.¹⁷³ The observation is more than sound. Today school history books do not even mention him nor is there a clue that alternatives to these views ever existed, a fact that plainly states that names are expendable when titles are sufficient. *History of the Greek Nation* was the title selected for the most recent and comprehensive Greek history, a collective work comprised, in its most recent incarnation, by seventeen volumes and a time range from prehistory to the twenty-first century. But recent developments both in historiography and reality in Southeastern Europe show, I believe, the national narrative to be a little too airtight. The question is, as always, what to replace it with when “for us Greeks it has been useful

¹⁷¹ See Ricks and Magdalino (eds.), *Byzantium*, especially Robert Shannan Peckham, “Papadiamantis, ecumenism and the theft of Byzantium”, pp. 91-104; Anthony Hirst, “Two cheers for Byzantium: equivocal attitudes in the poetry of Palamas and Cavafy”, pp.105-118; Marianna Spanaki, “Byzantium and the novel in the twentieth century: from Penelope Delta to Maro Douka”, pp.119-130.

¹⁷² Georgios Martinelis, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός εις την Ελληνικήν Παλιγγενεσίαν αυτοσχεδίως απαγγελθείς προς τον Κερκυραϊκόν λαόν την 5μ.μ. ώραν της 25 Μαρτίου 1879 προ της Πλατείας του Θεάτρου υπό Γεωργίου Μαρτινέλη*, (Kerkyra, 1879), p.8.

¹⁷³ Kitromilides, «Το ιστοριογραφικό εκκρεμές», p.1575. The first person plural does not strictly refer to Greek historians. Not only Paparrigopoulos’s format remains the accepted international norm concerning Byzantium, but his overall conception of Greek national history found imitators in Nicolae Iorga and Vladimir Zlatarski’s quests for a suitable Romanian and Bulgarian pasts respectively. In Kitromilides “On the intellectual content”, p.30.

as a bridge...or as a link through which the history of the descendants is attached to the history of the ancestors”.¹⁷⁴

Conclusion

The appeal to history served different functions in Scotland and Greece. In the first case, where the discussion of Scottish identity was thorough and drew at length, it preserved the interests of several parties. Indeed, political necessities determined the views of many of the protagonists in the debate on Scottish origins which did not manage to create a consensus on a national identity. Greek identity, on the other hand, did not become the object of a general political discussion neither before nor after the emergence of an independent kingdom. Here, a consensus was taken for granted and when political parties touched on it as in the *autochthones* case politicians and intellectuals were cautious enough to avoid disputes. Since the Greek national identity was not under any internal scrutiny the question lay to the ways that could be found to bolster it and contribute to an effective foreign policy. History became the common thread to legitimise both the renascence of a Greek polity and its future course of action.

A final question must address the extent of dissemination of the views discussed in this chapter among the Scottish and Greek public. It is evident, I think, that the debates followed here did not make an impact beyond the middle classes. Both Scott's bibliomaniacs in the Maitland Club and Paparrigopoulos's friends or adversaries could not have been popular among the great mass of the subjects because their concerns were more complex than the ordinary citizen's educational level. Their general influence however was wider. What did come down to the subaltern classes in an undeniable way was the general feeling of Scottishness or Greekness these intellectuals were propagating. The mass gatherings in Stirling for the Wallace monument

¹⁷⁴ Koulouri, *Ιστορία και Γεωγραφία, [Ιστορία Ρωμαϊκή και Βυζαντινή των Θ.Β. Βενιζέλου και Α.Κ. Σπαθάκη (1894)]*, p.413. The author refers to the Byzantine achievements.

or the riotous assemblies in Athens on the eve of every national crisis essentially denote the course from 'national theory' to 'national sentiment' that Pantelis Lekkas has described.¹⁷⁵ Walter Scott and P.F. Tytler or Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos and Spyridon Lampros, besides their popularising interests, wrote for a limited public who could afford and understand their complex works and their theories appealed to a certain circle of academics, intellectuals and learned individuals that formed the political and financial elite of their times. As it will be illustrated in the following chapters, history in the nineteenth century remained mainly the interest of the better classes – until translated into meaningful symbols.

¹⁷⁵ «Εθνική θεωρία» and «εθνικό φρόνημα» in the original. Pantelis E. Lekkas, *Η Εθνικιστική Ιδεολογία. Πέντε υποθέσεις εργασίας στην Ιστορική Κοινωνιολογία*, (Athens, 1992).

PART TWO

Wars of National Independence and the emergence of a historical consensus

Chapter Two

‘Common people’, ‘extraordinary individuals’: The Scottish Wars of Independence and the nineteenth-century national narrative, c.1830 – 1900

In the course of the present chapter and the one that follows we will consider historiographical conceptions of the Wars of Independence in Scotland and Greece. What I intend to explore here is the process of building a consensus and the subsequent canonisation of a period in the past conceived as a *caesura* – a milestone in the history of the nation. I propose to focus on the nineteenth century and if this sounds natural for the Greek case, as that was the time a new state was established, further explanation might be needed as far as it concerns the Scottish one. Here, the conflict was not so recent, in historical terms. Indeed, Scottish independence was consolidated in the later middle ages, dating from the end of the thirteenth century. A gap of five hundred years separated the actual events from the period of our interest. Why should we be concerned then with paying particular attention to nineteenth-century perceptions instead of some different point in time?

Although the Wars of Independence did enjoy an exceptional place in Scottish collective memory through the cultural heritage provided by Blind Harry's and Barbour's works¹, it remains doubtful if they were ever conceptualised as such in early modern times. As central a document as the

¹ As seen in Ian Ross and Stephen Scobie, "Patriotic publishing as a response to the Union" in Thomas I. Rae, *The union of 1707: its impact on Scotland*, (Glasgow, 1974), pp. 2-3, 118.

Declaration of Arbroath remained forgotten until the seventeenth century but even its discovery cannot be said to have rekindled the historians' interest. As late as the age of Enlightenment the Wars were far from treated as a coherent whole. During the eighteenth century Whigs and Jacobite historians still fought over parts of the story that could be exploited as useful political arguments, notably where legitimacy lay in the Bruce – Balliol controversy.² However, it is between 1800 and 1900 that the Wars of Independence underwent intense study and scrutiny and became an indispensable part of monographs and general histories. Belief in the 'objective existence of the nation'³ was an article of faith for those nineteenth-century historians who constructed a consistent image of the conflict and shaped the Scottish national narrative. Both the sense of a historical course and the canon of Scottish history effectively followed to the present are the products of this era and mentality. They cannot be conceived separately from such a paragon as the Wars of Independence.

Such archetypes of national identity however sometimes turn the historical canon into a burden for the historian. The unassailable importance of the Reformation and the Union in Scottish history may have obscured other significant aspects pending clarification.⁴ Insofar as the Whig interpretation in the eighteenth century denied any intrinsic meaning to Scottish history, it was responsible for neglecting a whole area of study. The recent flourishing of political history in Scotland was hailed as a welcome departure from its old norms which incorporated and hid Scottish aspects behind an Anglo – British frame.⁵ A re-evaluation of past views, without the weight of the canon pressing down on us any more would seem to be in order. We still tend, however, whenever confronted with the ideological implications of eighteenth or nineteenth-century historians' works, to

² See Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past. Scottish Whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c.1830*, (Cambridge, 1993), pp.86-8.

³ Michael Biddiss, "Nationalism and the moulding of Modern Europe" in *History* 79, (1994), 413.

⁴ The course of canonisation of Scottish history is depicted in Colin Kidd, "The canon of patriotic landmarks in Scottish history", *Scotlands*, 1, (Edinburgh, 1994), 1-17.

⁵ Michael Fry, "The Whig interpretation of Scottish History" in Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley (eds.), *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh, 1992).

automatically fall back on the established political and religious categories of Whigs and Tories, Presbyterians and Episcopalians. The critique of major general Scottish histories of the time rested there to show major fault lines in the development of historiography. This did not mean that these political and cultural rifts they expressed were the only significant segment of their work. I would argue here, in borrowing Rosemary Mitchell's words, that "the presentation of the national narrative is always ambiguous and essentially protean" but what has to count is the existence or not of a common motif – a "structure beneath the surface content".⁶

The old aphorism, particularly appropriate to history, favours the forest over the tree and with good reason, for in the narrative woods wolves may lurk. However, at times something may be said for the tree too; for favouring the part over the whole, giving it a second look and thought. The Scottish fourteenth century thrives in our time in an admittedly condensed and commercialised form loosely based on the great works of past masters. An altogether different picture appears when we detach the Wars of Independence from the whole *oeuvre* of Patrick Fraser Tytler, John Hill Burton or Peter Hume Brown, especially when linked to the fortunes of Scottish national identity in the latter part of the nineteenth century. I propose thus to explore nineteenth-century views of the Wars of Independence through the eyes of its historians focusing on their attitudes on just that particular part, keeping the professed links to the Union in the background. In the end, when summing it all up, we shall see if, and to what extent, their embracing of diverse political and ecclesiastical principles directly influenced their stance on the subject of our enquiry.

In following the representation of the Wars of Independence⁷ in the nineteenth century we stand to gain a wider knowledge as to the facts of self-

⁶ Rosemary Mitchell, *Picturing the past: English history in text and image 1830-1870*, (Oxford, 2000), p.286.

⁷ For details on the Wars of Independence see J.D. Mackie, *A history of Scotland*, (London, 1978); Rosalind Mitchison, *A history of Scotland*, (London and New York, 1982); Michael Lynch, *Scotland. A new history*, (London, 1991); Ranald Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages. The Edinburgh History of Scotland*, vol. II, (Edinburgh, 1974); Alexander Grant, *Independence and Nationhood. Scotland 1306-*

image and professed national identity the Scots were building, through what was effectively the apogee of the British Empire. Scottish historiography, as has been amply demonstrated by Colin Kidd and Marinell Ash in their seminal studies for the eighteenth and nineteenth century, had been labouring since the Union under the latter's plain implications and consequences for its practitioners.⁸ The adoption of the Whig interpretation of history essentially meant that an individual treatment of Scottish history through the ages was to be abandoned and its subsequent tie to that of England would always endow unequal comparisons and criticisms.⁹ In the British context Scottish history looked increasingly redundant and Scottish historiography did not have a *raison d'être* anymore; lacking that, it was to feel the full impact of ecclesiastical splits, political factions and class divisions and regress in the course of the nineteenth-century into a "succession of historical kailyards".¹⁰

Nevertheless, history did not cease to be written in Scotland. It went on under a changed political frame and a new set of parameters insofar regarding its principal aims. Union and its benefits being real and unassailable, the question would be how they could be justified without giving away claims to a special relationship Scotland had been enjoying since 1707. A second prerequisite would be to confirm this privileged status avoiding the danger of relinquishing their peculiar identity – to a general 'Britishness' or a special 'Anglicisation'. To serve this purpose the Wars of Independence offered a unique advantage: they could be used to both bolster a sense of national identity in existence since the Later Middle Ages and underline the element of balance in the relations with their southern neighbours. Throughout the period under study mentions of the importance

1469, (Edinburgh, 1984); Geoffrey Barrow, *Robert the Bruce and the community of the realm of Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1988).

⁸ Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past*; Kidd, "The Strange Death of Scottish History revisited: Constructions of the Past in Scotland, c.1790-1914" in *The Scottish Historical Review*, LXXVI, (1997), 86-102; Marinell Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh, 1980).

⁹ Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past*, pp.268-80; Kidd, "The Strange Death...revisited", 87.

¹⁰ Ash, *The Strange Death*, p. 152.

of this conflict's outcome for the future of these two countries abounded. At the same time strands of a national history were woven to create a consensus for at least this particular era. Despite the fragmentation in political views expressed, Whigs, royalists, Jacobites, Episcopalians, nationalists, moderate liberals and Tories seemed to be of the same mind as far as it concerned symbolic representation, social cohesion and national consciousness. William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, the people as opposed to the nobility and a distinct Scottish patriotism emerging as a direct corollary of the said conflict were to form cornerstones of national discourse until well into the twentieth century. They pose equal problems for historians today and they are to provide our outline for the analysis at hand.

National histories would disclaim themselves if they did not hail the nation as a primary ideological category. Even today most of them trace its beginnings to some remote past, appropriately shaped in order to provide a convenient continuity: the French employ *leurs ancêtres les Gaulois*, Italians the heritage of the Roman Empire. The Scottish Wars of Independence thrust the national past well into the Later Middle Ages. To search for an accomplished nation so far back is not the privilege of many. The Greek case is an exception: as we have seen already in Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos's *History of the Greek Nation* ancient city-states, the Byzantine Empire and the modern Greek kingdom emerged as variations on a theme, tracing an identity in the depths of antiquity. Fragmentation of its ancient past in the influx of different tribes and a rather turbulent and unclear course after the Romans withdrew, denied Scottish historians the privilege of resting their national identity on a scheme of unbroken continuity. Instead, as in England, legitimacy was sought in the middle ages. Religious discontinuity posed another problem. In England it was bypassed by redress to constitutional and institutional history whereas in Scotland it seems to simply have been bypassed in the course of writing.¹¹ After the Union the existence of a

¹¹ Historians either avoid the subject or do not seem to perceive a contradiction: Wallace had a 'gift' from the Almighty, Divine providence had raised up Bruce according to James Taylor in *The Pictorial History of Scotland from the Roman invasion to the close of the Jacobite Rebellion, A.D. 79-1746*, 2 vols., vol. I, (London and New York, 1859),

former Scottish state was not just a nostalgic sanctuary for those who opposed it. It was also a safe haven for the confirmation of a nationality that at times was felt to be threatened by the sheer magnitude of its political partner.

Accepting Walter Scott's effort in creating a historical consensus we may notice that he did not begin from an obvious point: no great novel of his is associated with the Wars of Independence. Apparently, he was beaten to it by Jane Porter whose *The Scottish Chiefs and the Heroism of Sir William Wallace* appeared in 1810 with such tremendous success that prevented Scott from venturing in the same territory.¹² But Scott remained a powerful force in matters historical. The Bannatyne Club was the precursor of a whole array of imitators engaging in the noble pursuit of rare books and documents for collection and publication. Moreover, the Bannatyne's activities were initially conceived as much satisfying the personal interests of its members as contributing to the development of historical studies.¹³ In remarking "we were Scotsmen before we were bibliomaniacs" Scott defined his objective. His suggestion to Patrick Fraser Tytler for the writing of a history of Scotland and his own promise to deliver one – abandoned at first, then later fulfilled, mainly due to financial reasons – are telling enough in themselves. However, Scott "had done nothing to rebuild a plausible framework for a self-confident Scottish history".¹⁴ The chance to achieve it remained for his successors.

No one may say they did not try to fill the void. Tytler's contention in 1838 that his was the 'only history of Scotland' was repeatedly challenged and by the end of the nineteenth century Hill Burton's work was already complete while Andrew Lang and Peter Hume Brown had their own

pp.93-94, 139, 164. E.Cowan mentions earlier efforts to protestantize Wallace. In "The Wallace factor in Scottish history", *Images of Scotland 2*, (1997), 12.

¹² Graeme Morton, *William Wallace. Man and myth*, (Stroud, 2001), p.61. Porter's work was first published in 1810. Walter Scott disapproved of the way she had cast Wallace into a "fine gentleman" but he nevertheless refrained from trying his hand at a similar venture. (Scott's opinion quoted by E.J. Cowan in "The Wallace factor...", *Images 2*, 15).

¹³ Ash, *The Strange Death*, pp.59-69.

¹⁴ Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past*, p.266.

undertakings under way. James Taylor had come up with a *Pictorial History* in 1859 and William Burns was to present his own contribution to Scottish history in 1874 concentrating on the War of Independence. A little later, between 1878 and 1888 John Mackintosh would provide an attempt at a great synthesis concerning himself not only with political history but also society and culture in his *History of Civilisation in Scotland*. Most of these works were based not just on a perusal of previous works – although Lord Hailes’s *Annals* were still a standard reference work – but also research on original documents and sources. It was an altogether impressive body of work even if we do not take into consideration the variety of popular histories and digests in circulation at the same time. To paraphrase David Hume, if Scotland was to be a historical nation, this had to prove its historical age.

Compared to others, this was a relatively unproblematic area for a historian of Scotland.¹⁵ The great dividing gaps of Reformation and Union which could rally partisans of numerous factions in heated discussion or the quagmire of post-Roman times where scores of antiquarians had been locked in battle to determine the origins of Picts and Scots were far more troublesome. Certainly, there was a lot to be said for or against the Scottish variety of feudalism but more than enough ground for accord existed. Lang and Brown, for instance, agreed that the age of the Alexanders was the “golden age of Scotland”.¹⁶ None would attest to the opposite, just as none was about to attempt justification for English attitudes and conduct in the course that led to war. The Wars of Independence represented in essence the struggle of one nation against another; the right to indigenous government and the pursuit of freedom from foreign powers; the consolidation of

¹⁵ A critique of Scottish nineteenth-century history and its practitioners can be found in Ash, *The Strange Death*; Kidd, *Subverting Scotland’s past*; Kidd, “*The Strange Death...revisited*”; Fry, “The Whig interpretation”; Ronald Gordon Cant, *The Writing of Scottish History in the Time of Andrew Lang*, St Andrews University, St John’s House Papers, (St Andrews, 1978); Richard J. Finlay, “Controlling the Past: Scottish Historiography and Scottish Identity in the 19th and 20th centuries” in *Scottish Affairs* 9, (1994), 127-142.

¹⁶ Andrew Lang, *A history of Scotland from the Roman occupation*, 4 vols., vol. I, (Edinburgh and London, 1900), p.159; Peter Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, 3 vols., vol. I, (Cambridge, 1899), p.110.

national independence. On their way to demonstrating the above Scottish historians were required to provide credible answers to a series of reasonable questions. Who constituted the nation? How was national independence achieved? What was the significance of its major symbols, William Wallace and Robert the Bruce?

The 'people' and 'the nation'

The first problem identified itself as a cleavage between 'the nobility' and 'the people'. To begin with, the attitude of the nobles was generally described as 'vacillating' and, truly enough, nobody can fail but notice a general fluidity in the conduct of Robert Wishart, Bishop of Glasgow, the Comyns or the Bruces. For Patrick Fraser Tytler (1791-1849), who first entered the fray – his first two volumes appearing in 1828 and 1829 – it was a matter of selfishness and jealousy. A "corrupted part of the Scottish nobility"¹⁷ with its eyes either on their English lands or the Scottish crown were eager to compromise with Edward I in order to secure their goals: "the patriotic principle...seems at this time to have entirely deserted the highest ranks of the Scottish nobles, whose selfish dissensions had brought ruin and bondage upon their country".¹⁸ Tytler periodically returned to this throughout his account of the initial phases in the conflict. In fact, his persistence almost makes it the *leitmotif* of the War of Independence. Wallace was brought down by "the dissensions of a jealous nobility"¹⁹ that "deserted their country and, refused to act with the only man whose success and military talents were equal to the emergency".²⁰ The patriotism necessary to fight a war against English aggression the nobles lacked was to be found in ample quantities in what Tytler labelled as 'the nation'. However, this was more scantily depicted and leaves a lot to be imagined. From Tytler's

¹⁷ Patrick Fraser Tytler, *The History of Scotland from the accession of Alexander III to the Union*, 4 vols., (First edition: Edinburgh, 1828-1843. Edition used: Edinburgh, 1892), vol. I, p.32.

¹⁸ Tytler, *The History of Scotland*, I, p.48.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, I, p.123.

²⁰ *Ibid*, I, p.60.

description we understand that it did not exhaust itself in the estates and the nobility. It fundamentally consisted of “these broken men and rebels, as they are termed by Edward. The lesser barons, being less contaminated by the money and intrigues of England preserved also the healthy and honest feelings of national independence”.²¹ It is in describing Wallace’s followers that Tytler proceeded to that distinction, which was to be reiterated after Bannockburn: what kept Scotland afloat was the “strong hand of free-born men...and the spirit of indignant resistance to foreign power”.²²

Tytler’s history, although a prototype in the treatment of protagonists, basic themes and structure for all who were to follow, also posed questions that were left unanswered. It is true that whether Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Christian Orthodox or Roman Catholic nineteenth-century historians acted basically as judges of morals. Tytler’s Edward, for instance was not exactly a villain, but less than a paragon of virtue: a quick, bold and determined king, also prone to ungovernable rages, paroxysms of wrath, great oaths, scheming and double-crossing. His main features were “a union of sagacity, boldness and unscrupulous ambition”.²³ His policy “towards Scotland and its new king [Baliol] was at once artful and insulting”.²⁴ Vengeful and warlike, vain and duplicitous, Edward was the commander of an army that pillaged Berwick and turned its churches into stables for the English cavalry²⁵, a monarch who divided and conquered by “arraying their private and selfish ambition against the love of their country”.²⁶ To be sure, Tytler was not the one who wove this personality out of thin air. He followed others, Fordun, Walshingham, Prynne, Innes, to name but a few. His material restricted him up to a point, especially since he was methodologically committed to primary sources and original documents²⁷ – but he was known to exercise his judgement without misgivings when he deemed it right. In this case the English king’s ultimate

²¹ Tytler, *The History of Scotland*, I, p.48.

²² *Ibid*, I, p.123.

²³ *Ibid*, I, p.30.

²⁴ *Ibid*, I, p.39.

²⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.43.

²⁶ *Ibid*, I, p.46.

²⁷ Ash, *The Strange Death*, pp.109-110.

failure, along with the brevity with which the historian saw fit to handle his death, cannot but suggest a connection between motives and results.

This code of morality though seems less than enough to explain the nobility's conduct. Plain selfishness is not enough to account for lack of patriotism in a plurality of complex episodes such as the compromise of the competitors and Edward I, Wallace's lukewarm support, Robert the Bruce's civil strife with the Comyns. We need a stronger argument, so it is time to turn to another example. With John Hill Burton (1809-1881) a number of insightful hints begin to emerge. Burton remains, in all probability, the most readable nineteenth-century historian of Scotland because of his concise, clear and informative style – one that would have passed for drab in his own time.²⁸ In presenting his *History of Scotland* between 1853 and 1870 he introduced a set of arguments not wholly dissimilar to those of Tytler – but with a twist. The dichotomy in attitudes still rested between a nobility and the Scottish 'people' – but this nobility was an 'alien' one, incapable of manifesting any patriotism since they did not belong to Scotland. Moreover, they were "peculiarly offensive" to the latter, populated by "a fierce, self-willed people, nourished in independence and national pride"²⁹, the real caretakers of the country's spirit. Normans, even those with "strong Scots connections" like Bruce, Balliol and Comyn, were presented almost as Englishmen in their interests and calculations.³⁰ To placate the Scottish Estates "the Norman courtier must make himself, as nearly as he could, a patriotic Scotsman", said Burton.³¹ The Scottish Estates then represented the patriotic Scots, forming an element of the 'people'. This concept however

²⁸ Probably because he is "devoid of all those which exalt historical composition to the sphere of poetry and drama" and his "absence of imagination". The accusations come from Richard Garnett, his biographer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, a man who has been called "the ideal librarian" and was the keeper of books in the British Museum for forty-eight years.

²⁹ John Hill Burton, *The History of Scotland from Agricola's invasion to the extinction of the last Jacobite insurrection*, 8 vols., (Edinburgh and London, 1897), p.152.

³⁰ "Their taste and training, in many cases their interest too, attached them to the brilliant court of the King of England". Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p.186. Also see II, pp.124-25.

³¹ *Ibid*, II, p.124.

continues to vex the prospective reader in its vagueness. His portraying of Wallace may offer a partially open way out: he was “certainly the representative and champion of the Saxon or pure Norse inhabitants of Britain, who had not yet been subjected to the southern yoke”.³² The answer may not be as illuminating as we would have liked but at least it supplies us with some names. Burton however, more fortunately provided finer distinctions concerning the ranks of nobles although he refrained from giving in to the common notion of jealousies and power struggles that undermined Wallace’s authority.³³ The case of Wallace presented him with the chance to underline the integrating abilities of the Scottish people and apply them to the nobility. Saxons and Normans being kin, extraction did not mean much after a while and the latter were assimilated to the Scots. Ultimately, those who could not be trusted with national interests’ were only those Normans that held lands outside Scotland: William of Douglas, for instance, did not, and thus he was pronounced one of “the few great landed lords who could be truly called Scotsmen”.³⁴ In refining his initial position on an ‘alien’ Norman nobility then, Burton now claimed that “social position was of more weight in this matter than mere origin”.³⁵ The basic argument though stands reinforced: the closer to the people the more patriotic, the more Scot.

However, what comes out of this is a tautology. The Scots were the ‘people’ and the ‘people’ were Scots. We may obtain some further clarification from James Taylor (1813-1892), a minister of the United Presbyterian church, and an equally capable preacher, debater and historian. He was also convinced of the basic dichotomy of Scots during the Wars of Independence. The nobles were rather mercenaries who “served for pay”, than patriots fighting for their land, the place of their fathers’ sepulchres.³⁶ Their conduct, “selfish and vacillating” cannot have been otherwise, determined by the fact they were “foreigners – Anglo-Normans and Anglo-

³² Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p.179.

³³ *Ibid*, II, pp.201-202.

³⁴ *Ibid*, II, pp.180, 185.

³⁵ *Ibid*, II, p.179.

³⁶ Taylor, *The Pictorial History*, I, p. 93.

Saxons – who felt no patriotic attachment to the country in which they had settled, and were not bound to it by those strong ties that connect a people with a land which has been for ages the abode of their fathers”. Instead, they were subjects of both kingdoms and “as they had no peculiar affection for either, their allegiance was made to depend almost entirely upon personal considerations” – which accounts for the “frequency and shamelessness with which they changed sides, according as their private interest dictated, without the slightest regard to the public welfare”.³⁷ In fact, then and afterwards they were “the pensioners of England”.³⁸ Predictably enough, the “Scottish nation at large” exhibited a totally different attitude. Taylor though resolved to fill this ‘nation’ with a more concrete content: “the middle and lower class of proprietors especially, whom were sprung of the native race of Scotland, felt keenly their national degradation, and the loss of the independence of their country”. Moreover, “animated by an ardent spirit of patriotism and a determined hatred against their oppressors, they burned with impatience to throw off the English yoke”.³⁹

Things were even clearer in Andrew Lang (1844-1912), the “last great man of letters of the old Scottish tradition”⁴⁰ who summarily dealt with Norman nobility of the Scottish kingdom early in his chapters on the War : “even when they had a strain of Celtic blood through heiresses, lords holding lands in England and in Scotland both, could have little or no national sentiment. ‘Patriotism’ must inevitably be a meaningless word to them...”.⁴¹ However, he noted at another point that “patriotism, new born in his [Bruce’s time], was then, in a great degree, attachment to such a king, as well as to country”.⁴² Lang’s use of a phrase linked to modern connotations of patriotism is significant as his notions of a clear ‘national sentiment’ that permeated the kingdom – although not shared by nobles. It existed nevertheless, and we are about to see to whom it should be attributed. The important thing to mark presently is that the gap Tytler had originally

³⁷ Taylor, *The Pictorial History*, I, p. 93.

³⁸ *Ibid*, I, p.111.

³⁹ *Ibid*.

⁴⁰ *Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁴¹ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, I, p.163.

pictured between nobles and commons gained ethnic proportions in Lang. Not only was resistance directed against 'England' but also it formed "essentially a popular and clerical movement, at the head of which, later, the Anglo-Norman Bruce only placed himself in stress of personal danger"⁴³ – a movement encompassing churchmen, lords of mixed blood, even Celts.⁴⁴

However, where Lang proves himself invaluable indeed is in his determination to define this elusive subject, the common people, the *communitas* : consisting of free-holders, it was comprised by "Scots (in the modern sense)"⁴⁵ who "man, woman and child, were ready to die than bow the neck to England".⁴⁶ It is to this people that Lang repeatedly turned to establish the feeling of a national community when patriotism was in short supply. For instance, in the years of David II, a period where "in place of a united resistance to a powerful neighbour, we have to observe a mass of selfish intrigues, redeemed by gallant persistence on the part of a few of the nobles, and of the people".⁴⁷ And again: "Patriotism, national sentiment, among the conspicuous Scottish leaders, almost disappeared, though it survived in the hearts of the people".⁴⁸

William Burns (1809-1876) forms the perfect bridge to pass from the question on the content of a fourteenth-century Scottish nation to the one on the possibility of actual nationhood and its significance for nineteenth-century historians. Burns differs from all authors on the Wars of Independence examined so far in a number of reasons. For one, he was the most patently nationalistic, to which his career stands proof. His involvement in the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, his sparring with Viscount Palmerston and *The Times* on the proper name for Great Britain, his involvement in the propagation and construction of the Wallace Monument at Abbey Craig, are evidence of his significant role

⁴² Lang, *A history of Scotland* I, p.236.

⁴³ *Ibid*, I, p.163.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, I, p.165, 179.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.171. "*Communitas*" seems a "term of rather vague import" to Hume Brown. In Brown, *History of Scotland*, I, p.137.

⁴⁶ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, I, p.237.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, I, p.242.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, I, p.251.

in the mid-nineteenth century 'nationalist' movement. As a matter of fact he declared that the idea to write on the Wars of Independence was first suggested to him

“by witnessing the singularly conflicting views expressed in consequence of the movement for the erection of a National Monument to the memory of the Scottish hero, WILLIAM WALLACE”.⁴⁹

For Burns, history has a point. He did not profess to have achieved any breakthroughs in it as a discipline: he had no “new discoveries or original documents” to offer.⁵⁰ His work was strictly to act in popularising already known facts and help in clarifying points of contention, a lesson to contemporaries so that the “conflict of views” in the case of Wallace be removed.⁵¹ For history should act as agent of truth and bringer of justice: “it seems to be time that some pen however feeble, should endeavour to point out the fallacious character of the statements and views they propound”.⁵² In providing this true view of Scottish history that would rectify mendacious allegations and mistaken assumptions Burns rejected Burton’s contention of Scottish and English being “kindred peoples” and looked for the distinguishing Scottish national characteristics in a different population composition which definitely made for two separate nations⁵³. Otherwise, “the stirring annals of her [Scotland’s] struggles for independence or integrity...and the WAR OF INDEPENDENCE itself...was an unfortunate blunder, or, at best, a splendid specimen of wrongheadedness”.⁵⁴

In pointing out that “tradition fully believed exercises precisely the same kind of influence as the best authenticated history”⁵⁵ Burns makes an acute and still more than valid observation. Its condensed version, to be found in a political tract, shows he was ready enough himself to put it in

⁴⁹ William Burns, *The Scottish War of Independence. Its antecedents and effects*, vol. I, (Glasgow, 1874), p.1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, I, p.5.

⁵¹ *Ibid*.

⁵² *Ibid*, I, p.21.

⁵³ *Ibid*, I, pp.10-17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, I, p.17.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.28.

good use: “tradition believed has all the effects of established truth”.⁵⁶ Knowing his penchant for identifying history with truth we can understand the way he proceeded to draw conclusions from his professed motto. According to him we should not always exercise scepticism towards the “fables” of the past for sometimes this is worse than credulity. This moralistic argument professed that without these neither individuals nor peoples achieve “great actions” and “landmarks of history”.⁵⁷ What does this aspire to? Faith unto chroniclers, quite possibly, in general – as we are to see later on in discussing the reception of William Wallace. In particular, that

“the faith, or belief, of the Scottish people, whose individuality Edward I attempted to destroy, was that they and their predecessors had heretofore been an ancient, free and independent nation, and that the maintenance of this independence was worthy of any effort or sacrifice”.⁵⁸

What was this ‘free and independent nation’ composed of? “The small proprietors, the free tenantry, the burghers and peasantry, chiefly of the native races, who were not either bent or broken”.⁵⁹ The Normans were not a part of it nor did they have any influence on its shaping: “we have no evidence of their having been accompanied or followed, by such numbers as could materially change the general population of the country”.⁶⁰ He used the Declaration of Arbroath to determine that “the *Scottish nation* here referred to” did not consist of Norwegians, Danes, English or indeed any of these later additions.⁶¹ Burns accepted E.W. Robertson’s “old Scottish nation” or “original Scots” to be the predominant element among fourteenth-century Scotsmen.⁶² New elements have been introduced at intervals but

⁵⁶ William Burns, *Scotland and her Calumniators: her past, her present and her future. Remarks suggested by the strictures of the London press*, (Glasgow, 1858), p.15.

⁵⁷ Burns, *The Scottish War*, I, p.29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, I, p.395.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p.285.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, I, p.303.

⁶² *Ibid.*, I, p.288. E.W. Robertson’s work to which Burns refers to is *Scotland under her early kings: a history of the kingdom to the close of the thirteenth century*, (Edinburgh, 1862).

“these have been assimilated, without breaking the continuity of traditions and ideas...[and] each body of new comers has, in turn, been *baptized into the traditional faith* of the original people and the result is, that even before passing through the furnace of the great war, they have become a nation, made up, more or less, of different materials”.⁶³

These people having been “combined and moulded” underwent however unconsciously... a course of training calculated to inspire, and mature, the leading ideas which we attempted to explain at the outset”.⁶⁴ Hill Burton’s treatment was faulty on this point, Burns declared. “Inconsistencies” existed in admitting the reality of a “fierce, self-willed people, nourished in independence and national pride”, only to pronounce them of the “same race” as the English.⁶⁵ This latter view, shared by the author of the *Pictorial History of Scotland*, James Taylor, had to be renounced on methodological grounds: “Such are the inconsistencies into which historians must necessarily fall, when they adopt some conventional theory which cannot be reconciled with the current of actual events”.⁶⁶

Finally, Burns confronted the matter of race and homogeneity and gave a definition as to the factors that, in his opinion, designate a nation. Race, or common extraction, was not an indispensable prerequisite of nationality: “we scarcely find such thing as a homogeneous people, certainly not in Europe, at all events”.⁶⁷ Common origin and common language may be powerful factors, however, he maintained that

“a common history, identity of memories and associations, of institutions and interests, of ideas and aspirations, are even more efficient in producing that sympathy which is the essence of nationality: and if to these has been superadded some common

⁶³ Burns, *The Scottish War*, I, p.316.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, I, pp.484-486; Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p.194.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, I, p.486.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, I, p.305.

struggle against outward aggression, mere racial affinity seems really of minor importance”.⁶⁸

There were nevertheless limits to the integrating abilities the Scots were displaying – or in their motivation to employ them. The Norman nobility lay outside the Scottish nation as “one unassimilated element, dangerous to the health, and even the life of the community... holding lands in England, and thus owing allegiance to a foreign and ambitious power”.⁶⁹ But the author’s line wavered significantly. At times the Normans were identified with the English as the foreign servants of a foreign power or were summarily dismissed as “mere adventurers without a country”.⁷⁰ In other places this totally negative stance was moderated by implying the “alien nobility” in Burns’s mind referred only to those “having lands or other connections in England”.⁷¹

‘National sentiment’ and ‘national independence’

In this brief review of the aspect of national content in the times of the Wars of Independence from a nineteenth-century standpoint we have until now concerned ourselves with delineating the limits of a certain consensus which included a professed belief in a basic distinction between a perceived as indifferent, and sometimes downright treacherous, nobility and a patriotic ‘common people’ – the Scots – who formed the real ‘nation’. Having determined the general acceptance and sketched the variations of this dichotomy, it is now time to check whether this picture retains its validity or not, and what might have been its function in a Scottish nineteenth-century national narrative.

The apparent divisions of the nobility render all efforts to determine their patriotism inconclusive. The sources refer to the parties of Bruce and Comyn as established factions, each with their own following and claims to the crown, locked in perpetual conflict and only uniting in their common

⁶⁸ Burns, *The Scottish War*, I, pp.305-06.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, I, p.316.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, I, p.369.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, I, p.443.

interest to bring down Wallace.⁷² These and the rest of the barons engaged in a shifting hodgepodge of alliances with themselves and with Edward depending on their feudal interests and the military moment. We have noted before the ambivalent conduct of the Bruces until 1306. The victory over the English at Roslin in 1302 is attributed to “the Comyn party”.⁷³ When Bruce proclaimed himself King in 1306 it took him almost three years to overrun the country, not just by the English but also by those who should be counted among his vassals and chose instead to hang on to their allegiance to Balliol – or to him and themselves, as the Comyns.⁷⁴ He achieved his goal and won the battle of Bannockburn with “scarcely a knight...who had not served with Edward”.⁷⁵ Thomas Randolph, one of his best lieutenants, had been in the service of Edward and was imprisoned by Bruce himself before transferring his allegiance while Wishart, bishop of Glasgow, had a long record of changing sides. Alexander Grant quotes the colourful case of Alexander Seton who changed sides no less than six times between 1306 and 1334 backing the Bruce, the English and Edward Balliol.⁷⁶ In assuming a society functioning with the same categories as modern ones, where empires and nation-states could appeal to subjects and citizens and mobilise them in the name of a common identity, again either imperial or national, the debate on patriotism would have a valid point. Nineteenth-century historians evidently made this assumption: Lang and Burns explicitly used the ideological categories of nationalism to speak about ‘national sentiment’ and ‘national independence’. Whether this interpretation was close to the mark or not will become clearer if we consider it in the context of fourteenth-century society and culture.

Is there a more convincing case to be made for parallel developments at the same time on the level of the subaltern classes? An affirmative answer could be offered in the 1296-1297 resistance movement of Andrew Moray

⁷² Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p.66.

⁷³ Mackie, *A history of Scotland*, p.71.

⁷⁴ Mackie, *A history of Scotland*, pp.73-74; Mitchison, *A history of Scotland*, pp.46-47; Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, pp. 9-12; Nicholson, *The Later Middle Ages*, pp.75-80.

⁷⁵ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, I, p.225.

⁷⁶ Grant, *Independence and nationhood*, p.25.

and the intrepid William Wallace. The problem with this view is that it proves very convenient. The period of Wallace was a short intermission to begin with; it did not produce any standing results or long-term influences in the conduct of the war. It did not bring a permanent rift between nobles and peasants nor did it signify the emergence of an enduring popular movement aiming to drive out the English. It actually petered out after Falkirk when the nobles returned to hold the reigns as Guardians of Scotland. For this period Fiona Watson writes that “Edward’s regime was finding increasing acceptance among the people of lowland Scotland” so long as it provided for strong, efficient and not especially encroaching government. These conditions were more or less met in 1301-1302. Evidence also shows that ‘common people’ were not averse to spying for the English in order to collect rewards.⁷⁷

If we cannot argue convincingly on a fixed national consciousness on the part of the nobility then, it is also hard to make such a case for the subaltern strata. For we should remember that throughout the middle ages we encounter examples where these people raised and took matters into their hands whenever the elite failed to carry on the obligations the moral economy of the age required of them: good government, justice and peace. In fourteenth-century Byzantium, when a significant part of the country was ravaged in a civil war between John V Palaeologus and his grandfather John VI Cantacuzenus, a local party of political and religious dissidents, the Zealots, defied both, took hold of Thessaloniki, second city of the Empire, and put into practice a communal system with considerable success. The revolt that turned the city into a *de facto* independent republic managed to maintain this regime for seven years, between 1342 and 1349, before submitting to the joint authorities of the now reconciled co-emperors.⁷⁸ The downfall was precipitated by another popular insurrection when the Zealots’ intentions to surrender the city to Stephen Dushan, King of Serbia became

⁷⁷ Fiona Watson, *Under the Hammer: Edward I and Scotland, 1286-1306*, (East Linton, 1998), p.162, 193.

⁷⁸ John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium: The Decline and Fall*, (London, 1996), p.297, 302, 314.

known. Allowing for the proper margins in this parallel, we may conclude nevertheless that Wallace was not a unique case.

Since the lesser Scottish nobility took a verified stand against English aggressiveness we cannot possibly apply cultural reasons to the case and talk about rifts between Anglo-Normans, Celts and Saxons in later medieval Scottish society, with the former apprehensive to engage in war with their southern kin and the latter clinging to old notions of independence. The Anglo-Normans certainly formed a significant part of the higher nobility since the time of David I and his successors: the Bruces, Comyns, Umfravilles, Balliols and Stewarts had acquired Scottish lands through ceding of holdings and marriages but old Celtic families like the Lennoxes still retained their earldoms.⁷⁹ The fact that some of these magnates maintained lands in England – and Balliol even held extensive estates in France too – did not necessarily mean a contradiction in their allegiances. After all, Edward I himself was a vassal of Philip the Fair without that encroaching on his sovereign rights as King of England – although legal disputes in matters of homage were frequent. Neither did it mean they exhibited lack of patriotism in supporting the English king or the rebels for relations then were governed by a complex hierarchical network of personal ties that took precedence over abstract concepts. Service was owed to the king as the personification of authority – not to the country as an imagined community or even as a recognised territorial state.⁸⁰ Indeed, Wallace in his trial reportedly did not justify his actions as stemming from his duty to the Scottish state, he underlined his freedom to act because he had not sworn fealty to *Edward* – which rendered him innocent of the accusation of treason.⁸¹ Or take John Balliol who, after the fall of Berwick, did not complain of violations of the country's rights but renounced *his* allegiance to Edward I instead.

⁷⁹ Mackie, *A history of Scotland*, pp.48-49; Mitchison, *A history of Scotland*, pp.22-24.

⁸⁰ For the Scottish case see Grant, *Independence and nationhood*, pp. 24-31; Fiona Watson, "The Enigmatic Lion: Scotland, Kingship and National Identity in the Wars of Independence" in Dauvit Broun, R.J. Finlay and Michael Lynch (eds.), *Image and identity: The making and Re-making of Scotland through the ages*, (Edinburgh, 1998); Morton, *William Wallace*.

⁸¹ Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p.82.

The more pressing question then at this point concerns the status of a national identity in Scotland during the Wars of Independence and the place it was assuming inside the nineteenth-century national narrative. Tytler and Burton, the oldest examples, whatever their shortcomings may have been are generally accepted as diligent historians – to the point of caution. Where the sources become sparse or cross-examination raises doubts on the authenticity of an incident Hill Burton’s description condenses itself to bare necessities: the actual description of Wallace’s trial merely covers a page – while William Burns manages to extend it to fifteen.⁸² They both mention the “nation”, “national sentiments” or even “national independence” in Tytler’s case⁸³ but it is not yet a grand theme. It does not pervade their whole work or form a pillar to support the whole edifice. Andrew Lang is far more straightforward. A distinct “national character” emerges, a “popular and clerical movement” arises to fight for “king and country” in a struggle involving Scotland and England, not in fact two plain kingdoms, but essentially two nations. “The Scottish people, man, woman and child were ready to die rather than bow the neck to England” from these times until the Reformation proceeded to change an already existing national sentiment.⁸⁴ Until then “the History of Scotland is inspired by one national idea, Independence, resistance to England”.⁸⁵

Peter Hume Brown (1849-1918), the first professor to hold the Edinburgh chair of Scottish History in 1901, managed to supersede Lang and trail him at the same time – by both accepting and rejecting Scottish nationhood in the Later Middle Ages. This is not to be entirely unexpected of him: he was considered as “too cautious, or unduly respectful to his public”.⁸⁶ His narrative permeated a remarkable ability to smooth all possible

⁸² Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, pp. 226-27, Burns, *The Scottish War*, II, pp. 137-151. Of course Burton does not entirely reject chroniclers’ stories. Blind Harry is at least partially credible since “little morsels of evidence have turned up, serving curiously to confirm the fundamentals of some of his stories”. In Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p. 183.

⁸³ Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p. 48.

⁸⁴ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, I, p.237.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.269.

⁸⁶ *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1912-1921.

points of contention. For instance, no hint of the clashes among the Scots appeared in the first years of the war and there was also no mention of conflicting allegiances. Wallace merely “put heart” into the presumably merely disheartened nobility.⁸⁷ Brown’s categories however seemed to be definitively on the modern side. “Scottish barons” who battled the “English army” since Edward, harsh and impervious, had “evoked a truly national hate”.⁸⁸ In the end, Brown went as far as claiming nationhood for Scotland before even the times of the Wars:

“it has been constantly said that, through their long struggle with England, the Scots were fashioned into national unity: it would be nearer the truth to say that, had not Scotland been a nation before, it must inevitably have gone to pieces in the ordeal through which it had passed”.

However, there is an almost immediate retraction since Brown did acknowledge the impossibility of “truly national consciousness”: “in the modern significance of the word, indeed, a nation could not then exist”. With the standards of the times, though, his argument runs on, Alexander III’s Scotland was as much a nation as any other in Christendom – with the sole exception of England. All the significant elements for that were in existence: “a dynasty of centuries’ standing, a national church, a national council, and national laws”.⁸⁹ Despite this explanation the argument remains muddled and less than persuasive.

In contrast to Brown, whatever else might be said of William Burns it is quite certain he never wavered in pronouncing his views and, once having pronounced them, he could be trusted never to retract them. We have already noticed that Burns proposed to have a comprehensible idea as to the matter of Scottish nationality and its components. However, what he was actually interested in demonstrating was the predominance of the national idea among Scots, not just at the time of the Wars of Independence or afterwards, but since Scotland’s conception and for all eternity. In fact, looked at on an ideological level, it actually formed the *raison d’être* of

⁸⁷ Brown, *History of Scotland*, I, p.147.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, I, p.152.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, I, p.180.

Scotland. Each nation possessed “some leading idea, or, it may be, ideas”⁹⁰ – revelation for the Jews, commercial development and civil liberty for England, political equality for the United States of America. As for Scotland,

“her leading idea seems to have been, all along, that of resistance against foreign control or aggression, in other words, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE. But, interwoven with this, so intimately that to leave it out of view would mar the picture, there has been another governing idea, - namely, that of RELIGIOUS or ecclesiastical FREEDOM”.⁹¹

Scotland’s ‘leading idea’ through the centuries expressed itself in the fourteenth century through the ‘common people’ that Burns took such pains to define. Wallace’s army formed “the first example of a military force composed of the common people, fighting, independently of the feudal lords, for a purely national idea and object”.⁹² Dedication to the national principle was bound to supersede all other loyalties: “what did it matter to them [the people of Scotland] whether a Baliol or a Bruce occupied the throne?”⁹³ Of course, the question was rhetorical. To confirm the hegemonic role of the ‘nation’ the author had to downplay all other allegiances, especially dynastic ones. Hence, the repudiation of any possible interest of the people in something carefully presented in terms of nineteenth or twentieth-century party power play.

This stance did not ensue from unearthing contemporary evidence. It was a projection supporting Burns’s whole concept of Scottish nationality and at the same time a direct corollary of his own subjection to it. Fiona Watson has persuasively shown the complications that such a simplistic view fails to consider. To arrive unquestioningly at the conclusions Burns drew someone would have to disregard completely the medieval identification of kingdom with king. Balliol’s prolonged absence in captivity proved that a war sustained in order to secure independence instead of restoration, had its limits in bringing uncertainty as to its actual final aims.

⁹⁰ Burns, *The Scottish War*, I, p.25.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, I, p.26.

⁹² *Ibid*, I, p.444.

⁹³ *Ibid*, I, p.357.

Moreover, even restored kingship would not be enough by itself. The King could not just march in and declare his right to the throne in the name of the nation. He should present a legitimate claim to the crown, something that puts into perspective the difficulties Bruce faced after his coronation in 1306. His prospective subjects would think twice before pledging their allegiance to an unproved man, who had a little while before committed sacrilege, while their lawful ruler was still alive. Had Bruce not been successful in his war pursuits he would not, in all probability, have received their trust. Despite later propaganda of a national call to arms, which Bruce put into circulation in order to justify his unprecedented – by fourteenth-century political theory – actions, independence of the kingdom “above all else” could not have been the foremost concern and primary objective of the community of the realm.⁹⁴ Burns’s feudal nationalism was anachronistic.

Naturally, there is not much left to point us with accuracy towards the exact feelings of the subaltern classes at the time and information about the nobility’s conduct sometimes leave us with things to be desired too; it is more than certain that dynastic allegiances would guarantee devotion to the royal line of Scotland or, failing that, the closest descendant – something the King of England apparently was not considered to be. Early acceptance of Balliol, when he had yet to show his hand at government, suggests that. But as for patriotism and national sentiment being the prerogatives of a definite segment of fourteenth-century Scottish society – Tytler’s ‘lesser nobles’, Lang’s churchmen or Hill Burton’s ‘people’ – who formed in this way a sort of outpost of nationalism in the Later Middle Ages we have to remain sceptical. Alexander Grant has pronounced all above interpretations unlikely and notes that “detailed analysis shows that none of these, nor any other element of society, was significantly more patriotic”.⁹⁵ The situation he described is not one of broad resolutions and clear-cut lines but one where various associations have to be weighed and loyalties considered before a decision is made. In the end individuals ended up fighting for – or against –

⁹⁴ Watson, “The Enigmatic Lion”, pp. 23-32. However, the argument on the “existence of a nationalism which looks uncannily like the modern version” would be called into question from the rest of the article.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.24.

independence for diverse reasons: “patriotism, natural rebelliousness, personal feuds, or simply because they had little more to lose”.⁹⁶ All the trappings of a feudal conflict were apparent: arguments and justifications based on ancient constitutions, alliances of interest, and the payment or not of homage. This was not a war between England and Scotland *per se*. It was a war *mainly* between English and Scottish nobles. For the latter also squabbled between themselves, two generations of Bruces against Balliols, even in the face of foreign threat. If we admit Rosalind Mitchison’s argument, we deal with a war between two states only at a later stage, after 1355, when Edward III left aside Edward Balliol’s claims to the Scottish crown to replace them with his own. But even then we may talk about a conflict between two polities but not between two *nations* in the modern meaning.

Some reflections on the Declaration of Arbroath and its significance for both nineteenth-century and contemporary historians may further illustrate this last observation. Andrew Lang paved the road considering it as “the classic note of national freedom”⁹⁷. He was not alone in holding this view. Tytler and Burton in a show of caution only pronounced the document “memorable” but the fact they quoted it at extensive length hints at their basic acceptance of its language.⁹⁸ Burns called it a “manifesto” and employed it in many ways, not the least of which was to prove it displaying the “belief of the people as to their origin and position, as a nation”.⁹⁹ John Mackintosh marked its “historical and constitutional importance” and kept his comments to a minimum, confining himself to the original text.¹⁰⁰ However, he had already hailed the 1309 declaration of the clergy as a virtual rehearsal to Arbroath, one that “boldly asserted the constitutional rights of the people even in the choice of the King”.¹⁰¹ In the words of a modern-day

⁹⁶ Watson, “The Enigmatic Lion”, p.26.

⁹⁷ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, I, p.230.

⁹⁸ Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, pp. 140-41; Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, pp. 283-87.

⁹⁹ Burns, *The Scottish War*, II, p. 382.

¹⁰⁰ Mackintosh, *History of Civilisation*, I, pp.296-98.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, I, p.288.

historian the Declaration of Arbroath is heard “ringing down the centuries”.¹⁰² Can it be accepted in that spirit and in good faith?

The note rang was probably thought as off-key then in its hints at popular sovereignty. Its foremost function however was to achieve a political goal, not to proclaim a new ideology. The Barons and Estates of Scotland acted in an effort to persuade the Pope to recognise the Bruce and involve himself in the peace process between the Scottish and English kingdoms. Moreover, the Declaration was also a political text, drawing inspiration from the Bible, Roman historians and medieval political theorists, in order to serve the interests of Robert the Bruce’s foreign policy.¹⁰³ It was not drafted to be the Declaration of the Rights of Man but a tool in a war of words, accompanying the one in deeds. Certainly anti-English feelings were running high after thirty years of war between the two countries but to take this important document as anything more than indication of the early stages of a process leading to national consciousness would be carrying a significant risk.¹⁰⁴ The fact that it remained in obscurity for three hundred years to re-emerge in the rhetoric of anti-Union proponents when the prospects of a Union came under consideration should be enough to cast sufficient doubt on any claimed continuities.¹⁰⁵ Without doubt, Arbroath is indicative of national directions but it does not mark a full-blown consciousness. We may retrospectively view it today as the root of Scottish national identity or the beginning of a theory of constitutionalism but we also have the gift of

¹⁰² Mackie, *A history of Scotland*, p.77.

¹⁰³ A detailed discussion of the Declaration from different points of view is to be found in Grant G. Simpson, “The Declaration of Arbroath revitalised” in *Scottish Historical Review* LVI, (1977), 11-33 and E. J. Cowan, “Identity, Freedom and the Declaration of Arbroath” in Broun, Finlay and Lynch, *Image and Identity*, pp.38-69. Simpson emphasises that it must be seen as an “essentially diplomatic document”.

¹⁰⁴ It is significant for the integration of nationalism in social and institutional structures that the interest of historians is attracted to such documents as the Declaration of Arbroath in contrast, for example, to the letter sent to Edward in 1291 in the name of the community of the realm stating that they could not reply in the place of their absent king. The former implies popular sovereignty while the latter does not. Inasmuch, of course, both are to be taken at face value instead of political moves.

¹⁰⁵ David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland. The sociology of a stateless nation*, (London and New York, 1992), p.19.

hindsight: with this in mind we should exercise caution and ask what was its purpose then, how was it meant to ring at its own time?

This actually brings us to the crux of the whole subject. Nineteenth-century historians have been looking to the Wars of Independence attempting to portray a feudal society, yet they were unable to suppress an urge to judge it based on ideas and values of their own time. Finding it difficult to detach themselves completely from the norms of Victorian Britain they were eager to project to the past attitudes and ideologies peculiar to their era; it was a map where the blank spaces of uncharted history could be colonised by geographers of purpose and explorers of ideology. As has been previously shown loyalties and identities in fourteenth-century Scotland, indeed all around Europe, were more complex and less inflexible than originally thought and could not be so easily reduced to trouble-free 'patriotic/unpatriotic' patterns. Analytical tools and ideological categories employed in this way would eventually lead to false routes and run the danger of producing artificial results: the case of Robert the Bruce is instructive of such interpretations of facts. As will be shown later on, to account for his overall conduct his career is split to two distinct parts, before and after his claiming the crown. The early Bruce's performance is pronounced as "inconsistent", "vacillating", "not very creditable", belonging to a class showing "dubious movements and uncertain aims", "unscrupulously and perfidiously self-seeking"¹⁰⁶ while at the end of his career he is a perfect knight, the "restorer of the freedom of his country", the man who carried out his mission in the "independence of his country, and the restoration of the Scottish monarchy".¹⁰⁷ This was not so much a result of a radical change of character on Bruce's part as a consequence of the attempt to place him on a patriotic/unpatriotic axis.

With this in mind we have to be quite careful in employing the terms 'nation' or 'national identity' if we want to avoid projection of contemporary

¹⁰⁶ Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p.50; Mackintosh, *History of Civilisation*, I, p.281; Burns, *The Scottish War*, I, p.435; Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p.186; Lang, *History of Scotland*, I, p.236.

¹⁰⁷ Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p.251; Tytler, *The History of Scotland*, I, p.47; Burns, *The Scottish War*, II, p. 419.

norms and concepts to an era in which their modern content and patterns would not be recognisable. Would an “emotional nationalism”¹⁰⁸ be enough to describe Scotland’s case? Precedents exist, as in the case of the accepted term ‘sentimental Jacobitism’. However, from the later Middle Ages on we can safely speak of the rise of a sovereign territorial state – in contrast to city-states and other forms of medieval polities. “Territorial states” equal “territorial identities” and this term would probably be closer to the standards of the time while permitting us to avoid the quagmire between accuracies and inaccuracies inherent in the course of continuing processes.¹⁰⁹

Was there anything else besides the current paradigm of historical discipline that compelled accomplished historians as Tytler and Hill Burton to tread this road? One cannot help but feel that here a patent need for strengthening the concept of political continuity appears. There were reasons in the Scottish nineteenth century that called for a definite link with medieval times, a connection proving not only the existence of a Scottish state but the beginnings of a nation-state at least. A national consciousness in advanced stage was accepted, insofar as it provided the pedigree for that development. Walter Scott’s observation in the introduction to *Waverley* that Scotland had undergone the most ‘complete change’ of every European nation in the space of sixty years could be taken both in an optimistic and a pessimistic light. The benefits of the Union nobody could deny in good faith – and did not, as we are about to see below. The whole point of Unionist-nationalism rested exactly there, in Scotland’s recent prosperity and participation in the Empire.¹¹⁰ But Scott’s remark had also another side: “what made Scotland

¹⁰⁸ Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, p.26.

¹⁰⁹ On reasons why the rise of a sovereign state in Western Europe does not necessarily entail a rise of the nation state, see Hugh Seton-Watson, “On trying to be a historian of Eastern Europe” in Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak (eds.), *Historians as nation-builders*, (London, 1988), pp.10-11.

¹¹⁰ On unionist-nationalism and its functions in mid-century Scottish society see Graeme Morton, *Unionist-nationalism. Governing Urban Scotland 1830-1860*, (East Linton, 1999); Morton, “What if ? The significance of Scotland’s missing nationalism in the nineteenth century” in Broun, Finlay and Lynch (eds.), *Image and Identity: The Making and Remaking of Scotland through the ages*, pp.156-176; Morton, “Scottish Rights and

Scotland” – culture, language, mentality – was seriously threatened.¹¹¹ A growing fear of Anglicisation, evident in the calls for reform in Scottish universities, in William Burns’s defence of ‘Great Britain’, in the campaign for Scottish grievances the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights waged between 1853 and 1856 show that a certain kind of *malaise* was affecting Scotland. A common characteristic definitely exhibited in all its aspects was a renewed search for Scottish identity. Without challenging the Union, for the most part, Scottish intellectuals were grasping for a definite space where Scotland could be placed. This was where the Wars of Independence might fit and help secure a distinct corner.

What is striking about their treatment of the Union settlement is the unanimity in which they consider it as a natural or necessary measure. Hill Burton pronounced it “the happy climax of the great romance of our history...Those who should never have separated are firmly united at last”.¹¹² A linear progress led inexorably to that “natural flower of evolution”, to borrow Andrew Lang’s words. Divine Providence may have not been the author of this particular act but it was undoubtedly a pre-determined development: “nature designed the inhabitants of the isle of Britain to be citizens of a single state”.¹¹³ Taylor, Mackintosh and Hume Brown lagged merely a step behind in their admission of the Union’s necessity. Being an “essential measure” for peace and prosperity, or perhaps a product of “the uneasy conviction [of both nations] that union meant self-preservation”, it was nevertheless an exercise in reading history backwards.¹¹⁴ Having the benefit of hindsight they could maintain that “the consenting testimony of a later time has approved the far-sighted wisdom of their [the advocates’ of the Union] policy” or that “the least of all possible evils, was, in the process of

‘centralisation’ in the mid-nineteenth century” in *Nations and Nationalism*, 2, (1996), 257-279.

¹¹¹ Marinell Ash, “Scott and historical publishing: The Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs” in *Scots Antiquaries and historians. Papers read at the Silver jubilee conference of the Abertay Historical Society on 15 April 1972*, (Dundee, 1972), p.29.

¹¹² Burton, *The History of Scotland*, VIII, p.2.

¹¹³ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, IV, p. 522. Previous quotation by Lang in *ibid*, p.110.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, *The Pictorial History*, II, p.830; Brown, *History of Scotland*, III, p.81.

time to become the greatest of all possible goods in this imperfect world”¹¹⁵. The later confidence and sense of security in the majesty of Empire were employed to show that “politically it was best that the Island should be under one supreme government”.¹¹⁶ Finally, the concluding years of the Scottish kingdom were nothing but a sham, since Scotland was already governed by the English “with royal commissioners and backstage methods”, whereas the new arrangement restored true independence. For Lang,

“there was actually more real independence and much less corruption in the country when it came to be represented in the open air and light of the Parliament of Great Britain, than when fighting against English Court influence, with an Opposition made up of hostile groups, in the Parliament House of Edinburgh”.¹¹⁷

There was no disagreement then in the Union of 1707 being an auspicious event. But what was the significance, if any, of the War of Independence in it?

For most of Scottish historians, unionist-nationalist and plain nationalist alike, prosperity lay inside the British Empire, so a comparison with the sorry status of Ireland was to ensue. It can be argued that in these remarks the United Kingdom’s duality was pragmatically appraised. It may have been constituted by three partners in name but it was apparent to anyone that England and Scotland led and Ireland trailed. To explain this divergence a persuasive argument had to be put forward. Scottish historians chose to regard Ireland as an essentially conquered country, lacking the rights the War of Independence had secured for Scotland:

“we have only to think of the most obvious consequences which must have resulted from Scotland becoming a conquered province of England; and if we wish for proof, to fix our eyes on the present condition of Ireland, in order to feel the reality

¹¹⁵ Brown, *History of Scotland*, pp.101-2; Lang, *A history of Scotland*, IV, p.110.

¹¹⁶ Mackintosh, *History of civilisation*, III, p.231.

¹¹⁷ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, IV, p.109.

of all that we owe to the victory at Bannockburn and to the memory of such men as Bruce, Randolph, and Douglas".¹¹⁸

Whether somebody expected it or not, William Burns was prepared to take the same road:

"the question at once suggests itself, whether *such* a union [one of equals] could ever have taken place by means of coercion on the part of England; and the case of Ireland answers that question...and if so, then the actual union between England and Scotland was one of the "effects" of the War of Independence".¹¹⁹

More moderate nationalists than Burns, as Lord Elgin would attribute the Union's "great results" to the Bannockburn factor: indeed, they were "due to the glorious struggle which was commenced on the plain of Stirling and consummated on that of Bannockburn".¹²⁰ This was the final destination that Tytler and the rest were driving at. The Wars of Independence had made a continuous independence possible and that independence finally secured for Scotland the special relationship it was to enjoy in the Treaty of Union. The subordinate state of Ireland, on the other hand, was effectively attributed to its capacity as a loser in the wars with England. The terms of this comparison may look rather cynical by contemporary standards but they reinforced a constant in Scots' political rhetoric, that of a Union of equals.

For some, however, these were not the only terms in which a relationship with England could be expressed. Burns's resolution in exorcising homogeneity of race from a desired panel of national qualities, as we have previously noticed, related to attitudes and conceptions that sought to define a Highland/Lowland division in more than mere terms of culture. Teutonism functioned as a peculiar warp, drawing the Lowlander component

¹¹⁸ Tytler, *History of Scotland*, I, p. 123. Taylor follows suit: "there cannot be a doubt that the proud position which Scotland now occupies, is, in no small degree, owing to the great deliverance achieved by the exertions of Bruce and his gallant compatriots". In Taylor, *The Pictorial History*, I, p.139.

¹¹⁹ Burns, *The Scottish War*, II, pp.498-99.

¹²⁰ Quoted in Graeme Morton, "The Most Efficacious Patriot: The Heritage of William Wallace in Nineteenth-Century Scotland" in *The Scottish Historical Review*, LXXVII, (1998), 243.

to England and pushing the Celtic even more to the fringes. Continuity and change in opposing opinions among the public concerning Highland Gaels in mid-nineteenth century has been the subject of detailed study by Krisztina Fenyô.¹²¹ Fenyô has shown how conflicting perceptions of a “hardly and gallant race” or a “people in a semi-barbarous state”, in short ‘contempt, sympathy and romance’, were to be found side by side among the Lowlanders, even in the same newspaper.¹²² A curve may be traced though from the mid-1840s to the mid-1850s where largely contemptive views were replaced with largely sympathetic ones – although both were characterised by overlapping elements.¹²³ The rehabilitation of the Gaels, if one may term it this way since differing opinions were indeed expressed both before and after the period under study, became possible in the context of the clearances, the famine of 1846 and the Crimean War. It coincided then with a form of integration in the British Empire, expressed in the creation of Highland regiments in the army, and the recurrence of a common European theme, that of the discovery of a traditional popular culture in the process of dying out during the transition to industrialisation.

Underlining the attitudes discussed above, however, the rehabilitation of the Highlanders notwithstanding, were notions failing to undergo any marked change during that time: the persisting view of their being, all things considered, a different race from the Lowlanders¹²⁴ showed the pervasiveness of Robert Knox’s and Herbert Spencer’s ideas. Especially Knox’s racial determinism that prescribed to it “literature, science, art – in a word, civilisation”¹²⁵ and was accompanied by offhand aphorisms of the Celts’ ignorance of meaning of independence and their distinctiveness from the Lowland Saxons “as Negro from American” or “Hottentot from Caffre”,

¹²¹ Krisztina Fenyô, “ ‘Contempt, sympathy and romance’. Lowland perceptions of the Highlands and the clearances during the Famine years, 1845-1855”, University of Glasgow thesis, (1996). [This work has now been published by Tuckwell Press, (East Linton, 2000)].

¹²² Fenyô, “ ‘Contempt, sympathy and romance’ ”, p.254.

¹²³ *Ibid*, pp. 67-154, 198-250. Common ground where the Highlanders were pictured as a doomed people is discussed in pp.263-283.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p.9.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p.58.

proved influential to figures which belonged by way of their affiliated institutions, if not their status as individuals, to the mainstream of British society and scholarship.¹²⁶ David Wilson (1816-1892), the founder of Scottish archaeology and James Hunt (1833-1869), president of the Anthropological Society of London formed two poles of acceptance of racial anthropology, one in mild, the other in radical form. It was implicit in the writings and conduct of the explorer Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) who thought of Africa as “a primeval place, untouched by history”. It was also to be found in the admiration of the Saxon element’s achievements at the expense of the Celts in the Scottish histories of Patrick Fraser Tytler and John Hill Burton.¹²⁷

This was precisely the course William Burns was trying to banish from Scottish historiography recognising in it a subversive element for Scottish nationality. It has been shown how Teutonism functioned in some among the Scots literati as the flipside of an institutional Anglo-Britishness. Expressed in the representation of Teutons as a people

“distinguished for their love of freedom, the preservation of their ancient constitution and common law throughout the vicissitudes of their political history, and, more recently, for their commercial and manufacturing superiority”

and contrasting them with the vicious, indolent and slavish Celts made an evident case for the English nation and their Lowland Saxon kin.¹²⁸ This professed “natural community of Saxons” found its institutional expression

¹²⁶ Colin Kidd, “Teutonist Ethnology and Scottish national inhibition, 1780-1880” in *Scottish Historical Review*, LXXIV, (1995), 58-9. Knox himself was a respected enough member of Edinburgh society and “influential Fellow of the Edinburgh College of surgeons” until a case of cadaver-procurement (the Burke and Hare scandal) put an end to his career and led him to engage in theoretical projects in which he casually expressed the necessity of the Celts’ being “disposed of” for the sake of English safety. See Fenyô, “ ‘Contempt, sympathy and romance’”, p.58-61; Kidd, “Teutonist Ethnology”, 57. Also, Owen Dudley Edwards, *Burke and Hare*, (Edinburgh, 1993).

¹²⁷ Kidd, “Teutonist Ethnology”, 49, 59-60; Felix Driver, “Henry Morton Stanley and his critics: Geography, Exploration and Empire” in *Past and Present* 133, (1991), 140. See also Christine Bolt, *Victorian attitudes to race*, (London, 1971).

¹²⁸ Kidd, “Teutonist Ethnology”, 48.

in the British state and its manifest destiny in the imperial mission.¹²⁹ The inherent dangers this view held for a Scottish national ideology were obvious, for stressing the preponderance of either the Saxon or the Celtic element in Scotland's past would mean failure to emphasise unity, thus undermining continuity. Constructing a potent national identity was not compatible with such fissures and Burns, for one, had grasped so. This is why he was so keen on refuting Hill Burton's attestation of Scottish and English being 'kindred peoples'. The latter's insistence in promoting the Saxons and in highlighting their affinities with the Normans was accompanied by derision and criticism towards the Celts. Not only, according to Burton, "the days were long past when the Celt was a leader in civilisation" and the Goth was now "far ahead of him", it had also become the practise of the latter "to till the soil and enrich himself" while the former chose "to live idly and seize upon the riches of his Lowland neighbour when he could get at them".¹³⁰ In the beginning of his work Burns had issued an explicit warning to all those taking this line: "Pictish advocates" and "Saxonist racialists" were both undermining Scottish nationhood.¹³¹ Clearly, one of the aims of his work was that all these dissidents should stand corrected and fall into the patriotic line. The 'conflict of views' should be turned into unanimity.

'Wallace' and 'The Bruce'

Furnishing Scotland with a portion of the past on which a general consensus was achieved effectively meant this consensus needed symbols of

¹²⁹ Kidd, "Teutonist Ethnology", pp.61-2.

¹³⁰ Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, pp.389-390.

¹³¹ Burns, *The Scottish War*, I, pp.9-10. However, Burns was accused himself of racist attitudes against the English. Charles Rogers, with whom he was not on the best of terms, charged him with "fomenting racial disharmony between Scotland and England, of hating England and of developing a theory of Scottish racial superiority". In H.J. Hanham, "Mid-century Scottish nationalism: romantic and radical" in R. Robson (ed.), *Ideas and institutions of Victorian Britain: Essays in honour of George Kitson Clark*, (London, 1967), p.162.

expression. These were already cast and the Scottish historians' responsibility was simply to disentangle the traditional figures from the literary webs centuries had spun and bring them back to reality. William Wallace and Robert the Bruce were to be recast and built again in an image contemporary society could recognise. Blind Harry's *Wallace* was in circulation from the later fifteenth century and what was good for a pre-reformation society could not presumably prove as popular in a more sophisticated one.¹³² The acceptance of Robert the Bruce, on the other hand, who as a kingly figure could provide for modern connotations – favourable or not – had to pass intact from the crooked path his many *volte-faces* during the war had opened. Having been properly depicted and embedded in their historical context Wallace and Bruce could be safely used by a wider public: nobles, commoners, civilians, agriculturists, merchants, churchmen, volunteers and masons¹³³, all could be proud in the national figureheads – according to their favourite views.

The first step would be to establish their respective characters. Since from this point of view the Bruce presents more of a challenge let us begin with him. As we have already pointed out the Bruce has been in a way a victim of nineteenth-century methodology. To account for his stance in comprehensible language historians had to split his biography in two parts, before and after his espousal of the “national cause”. For Tytler the earlier personality was “vacillating and inconsistent” but his sympathy towards monarchy and his protagonist's later conduct conspired to present quite a lenient verdict on him. Besides the mild reproach noted above he did not have anything else to tax him with. Bruce was just being “selfish” as all nobility in Tytler's interpretation, so he was not actually standing out by much. By contrast, the later Bruce was a leader of men. He was presented as a gallant knight¹³⁴, accepting challenges, making speeches, encouraging his

¹³² Morton notices the decline of Blind Harry's editions in the nineteenth century and shows the hero's continued existence in fashion through “shortened and paraphrastic versions”. Morton, “The Most Efficacious Patriot”, 226.

¹³³ Charles Rogers, *The Book of Wallace*, 2 vols., (Edinburgh, 1889), vol. II, p.277.

¹³⁴ “He excelled in all the exercises of chivalry, to such a degree, indeed, that the English themselves did not scruple to account him the third best knight in Europe”. Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p.159.

army as an accomplished general, showing martial prowess¹³⁵ and military talent, giving quarter to his vanquished enemies: after Bannockburn in the place of slaughter and retaliation “we find a high-toned courtesy, which has called forth the praises of his enemies”.¹³⁶ In the course of the war he managed to raise the spirit of his people and its successful conduct depended on him to such a point that Tytler declares he “stood alone and shared the glory with no one”.¹³⁷ Accordingly, his symbolic stature made him a giant among men: “We only see through the mists which time has cast around it, a figure of colossal proportion ‘walking amid his shadowy peers’”.¹³⁸

Burton’s Bruce led a shadowy existence for the most part of his pre-royal days. His changes of allegiance were reported and won him no praise – but not severe blame either. With him as a pretext it was that Burton put the call to “follow the course of their [the nobles] actions in a spirit of indifference towards the personal motives at work”.¹³⁹ Later, he was the model of chivalry:

“a tall, strong man, of comely, attractive, and commanding countenance... he is a thorough paladin, dealing with sword or mace the doughtiest blows going in his day... he can take to the ways of the half-naked mountaineer – can make long journeys on foot, scramble over ragged ground, and endure cold and hunger. He is steady and sanguine of temperament; his good spirits and good humour never fail, and in the midst of misery and peril he can keep up the spirits of his followers by chivalrous stories and pleasant banter. To women he is ever courteous, and he is kindly and considerate to all less able to bear fatigue and adversity than himself”.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p.92, 99. At some point he kills “three soldiers who attacked him at the same time and at a disadvantage” Tytler reports.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, I, p.122. One of his prisoners, Sir Marmaduke de Twenge he kept in his company for some time and then released him without asking for ransom, giving him presents instead.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, I, p.156.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, I, p.159.

¹³⁹ Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p.186.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, II, p.251.

He died a hero, the “Good King Robert”, whose reign was “success after success”.¹⁴¹

It is possible that Andrew Lang read the younger Bruce’s attitude in a more adept way than his predecessors discussed here. It is also possible this merely shows at play the bipolar relationship of a ‘proletarian Wallace’ and an ‘opportunistic Bruce’, in Graeme Morton’s words, which seems to shape the nineteenth century national narrative around these two figures. Lang was careful to point out all the circumstances where the Bruces displayed “un-patriotic” behaviour from the elder Bruce’s feud with Balliol at the beginning of the interregnum to Robert the Bruce’s going over to Edward in 1302.¹⁴² At another point, just before Wallace’s arrest he mentions that “Wallace was lurking about the Forth, when Bruce was doing Edward’s business with zeal” and lets the reader judge by himself whose conduct was most acceptable.¹⁴³ Another implicit comparison was made between the two when Lang remarked that Edward’s opponents were not fighting in 1306 “as Wallace fought, for king and country: they were fighting, at this moment, ‘for their own hands’”.¹⁴⁴ However, Lang too followed the rule in distinguishing two divergent eras in Bruce’s life, before and after the death of Comyn: an “unscrupulously and perfidiously self-seeking” person turned after 1306 into a man of “unflinching resolution, consummate generalship, brilliant courage, perfect courtesy, consideration, reading, humour and wisdom”.¹⁴⁵

Although these descriptions are heavily indebted to medieval chroniclers there is no doubt that they quickly took root in a process of symbolic representation that we are to follow later on with William Wallace as our guide. For the moment a passage from William Burns suffices to alert us to the existence of a tradition, running parallel to the official version of facts, that sought to present the Bruces as consistent defenders of the country’s rights. The reference is to a “popular account” in which the elder

¹⁴¹ Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p.308.

¹⁴² Lang, *A history of Scotland*, I, pp. 163-64, 192.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, I, p.194.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, I, p.207.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.236. Contrast this view with Hume Brown’s work which shows a remarkable ability to smooth all possible points of contention and largely exonerates Bruce from his dubious past. In Brown, *History of Scotland*, I, pp. 147, 151-169.

Bruce instead of asking for the partition of the kingdom in 1291, in order to receive his share, he rejected outright Edward's offer of the crown " 'unless he held it in freest royalty as his elders before him' ".¹⁴⁶ Unfortunately the author does not quote his source, possibly thinking it a matter of common knowledge; it nevertheless shows a tendency towards removing any lingering shadows to the past of a national hero and an intention to redeem the Bruces from the consequences of their doubtful early conduct. Both James Taylor and John Mackintosh tried to come up with plausible justifications of Robert the Bruce's initial inconsistencies and later commitment to the country's cause. Taylor's explanation involved an elaborate scheme on Bruce's part in which the "seeming inconsistencies" were in fact "the movements of a cautious and far-seeing policy...[paving] the way for the establishment of his own claims and the restoration of his country's freedom".¹⁴⁷ Mackintosh's argument follows his interpretation of the Declarations of Bruce's time as laying claim to popular sovereignty. Since this remained with the people, it was for them he had fought, not for the shake of himself or the restoration of kingship: "Robert I had now secured to the people of Scotland the full acknowledgement of their national independence and liberty".¹⁴⁸ The attempt to smooth the rough edges of a turbulent early reign appeared vividly in the treatment of the campaign against Comyn in 1306. Far from pronouncing it a civil strife he purports it had been conducted in the name of ridding the country from one who "upheld the English authority in this quarter of the kingdom".¹⁴⁹

Not fabricated out of nothingness or materialised out of thin air, William Wallace is nevertheless a figure concocted with a greater percentage of creativity than the Bruce. From the beginning of his career he is a myth for documentary evidence is scarce. "There are only... four writs and charters, a note guaranteeing safe passage for three monks and the trading letter produced in the name of Wallace and Murray while they were stationed

¹⁴⁶ Burns, *The Scottish War*, I, p.357.

¹⁴⁷ Taylor, *The Pictorial History*, I, p.114.

¹⁴⁸ Mackintosh, *The History of Civilisation*, I, p.302.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, I, p.287.

in Haddington on 11 October 1297”.¹⁵⁰ Contrast this paucity of reality with Blind Harry’s description of the man where Wallace became the proverbial giant of fairy tales: “Nyne quartaris large he was in lenth indeed/ Thryd part lenth in schuldrys braid was he/ Rycht sembly, strang and lusty for to se”¹⁵¹. Historians are most of the time in debt to their sources. As it was not conceivable that such a distinguished person as Wallace could remain in obscurity details had to come from somewhere. They were only to be found in the chronicles of Blind Harry, Fordun and Wyntoun. It was not just that Tytler or Burton were caught on the “patriotic/corroboation nexus”.¹⁵² A man’s life, especially one that was crafted into a symbol of national inspiration and proportions could not be based on merely six documents.

Therefore Wallace became a man of hasty and violent passions that turned out the extraordinary individual of Tytler’s description.¹⁵³ He upheld honourable causes, protecting the monks of Hexham from being harmed by his own soldiers¹⁵⁴ or trying to render the army disciplined.¹⁵⁵ Single-handedly he brought Scotland to the point of victory, only to be stopped by an obstructing nobility. Wallace managed while “not only unassisted, but actually thwarted and opposed by the nobility of his country” to render “the iron power of Edward completely broken, and Scotland once more able to lift her head among free nations”.¹⁵⁶ This hostile attitude is frequently underlined: his public measures as Governor of Scotland were taken in spite of the “jealousy and desertion of a great majority of the nobility”.¹⁵⁷ The greater barons “had envied his assumption of power” and acted in “selfish jealousies”.¹⁵⁸

In Hill Burton Wallace was “the idol of the people”, “a man of vast political and military genius”, “the champion of the remnant of the

¹⁵⁰ Morton, *William Wallace*, p.19.

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Morton, “The Most Efficacious Patriot”, 233.

¹⁵² Morton, *William Wallace*, p.51.

¹⁵³ Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p.48.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, I, p.57.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.58.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, I, p.55.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, I, p.58.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, I, p.60.

Saxon”¹⁵⁹. His Norman family had integrated with the Scots after living among them for so long that differences became almost nonexistent¹⁶⁰: “They were all in a common adventure, and he was but the chief adventurer”.¹⁶¹ As the “representative of popular nationality” he was the real danger Edward faced after Stirling.¹⁶² It was implied though that what Wallace expressed was somehow out of the current set of rules and feudal regulations and therein lay Edward’s “real difficulty”.¹⁶³

Taylor being a minister, his Wallace was raised as a gift from the Almighty, an Anglo-Norman, but neither rich nor noble – a status that somehow redeemed and excluded him from his ‘mercenary’ compatriots. As the author followed closely the chronicles, his Wallace was probably the most fabulous figure of all. This became apparent both in the narrative of his youth exploits¹⁶⁴ and his trial. In the latter Taylor followed Tytler in stating a purported answer in which a defiant Wallace rejected accusations of treason on the grounds of never having sworn fealty to Edward I. He also saw fit to put into his mouth an acknowledgement of everything having been done in the discharge of the “duty to his country”.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, the author remained a subscriber to the view that Wallace was in a way, sabotaged by the nobles, who being in opposition to him, did not bother to help after Stirling.¹⁶⁶

Preconceptions seemed to guide Lang’s view of Wallace too. Lang’s attempt to parry one of the English charges of theft levied against him is not based on hard evidence but conjecture founded on his moral character. The fact that an Englishman was also involved made the case appear even shakier to the historian: “it is most improbable that the heroic Wallace bilked a tavern-keeper with an Englishman for his accomplice”.¹⁶⁷ To pronounce the

¹⁵⁹ Burton, *The History of Scotland*, II, p.179, 181, 198.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, II, p.179.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, II, p.180.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, II, p.225.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, *The Pictorial History*, I, pp.93-94.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.110.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, I, p.97, 99, 102.

¹⁶⁷ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, I, p.180.

incident true or false is beside point. What draws attention is Lang's conviction on the projected attitude of a shadowy figure. It did not matter how Wallace acted in reality but how he *should* have acted in order to live up to his myth and conform to the historian's standards. Conceding that many facts about his life were the stuff of legend, he still used the language of legends to depict him "ruthless and strong, like some sudden avenging Judge of Israel".¹⁶⁸ The comparison to Jeanne d' Arc, although "not gentle and winning like the maid"¹⁶⁹, is in fact telling enough of the mythical proportions Wallace was gaining as a national symbol.

An "ordinary Scotsman's highest ideal of patriotism" is how William Burns chose to introduce his version of William Wallace.¹⁷⁰ Lord Hailes' account not being able to "satisfy any intelligent mind"¹⁷¹ the author took it upon himself to fulfil that duty in proceeding to conjecture, to imagining "how it must have been" for Wallace. In this way Burns refuted Hill Burton's conjectures about Wallace's birth and family with his own, attributed his purported gigantic stature to the way war was waged in his time and his strong character and prowess to the simple fact that besides his lowly origin he rose to become a leader of men.¹⁷² To discover this leader's origins Burns relied to chroniclers, including such obscure figures as "Master Blair", schoolfellow of Wallace and Thomas Gray, a parson from Libertoun. These were put in the same league as nineteenth-century historians and were for the most part, more leniently treated. In the eyes of Burns they represented an established tradition which he revered and equalled to 'accepted truth'. In national matters he was prepared to put away scepticism and recognize the importance of creative credulity. Suspending unrelenting reason and attention to sentiments, this was the way to 'great actions' for individuals and nations.¹⁷³ National history, as Burns wrote it, sanctioned the use of imagination in the absence of facts.

¹⁶⁸ Lang, *A history of Scotland*, I, p.196.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Burns, *The Scottish War*, I, p.397.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid*, I, pp. 397-405.

¹⁷³ See above, pp.89-90 for Burns's views on the function of history.

Wallace forms another case of a fabricated symbol. He may not have been an invention of historians but the scarcity of sources on his person cannot fail to amaze. The little known facts about his actual life before his involvement in Scotland's War of Independence are reiterated by every historian, without exposing his transparency. On the contrary, by encountering the same facts everywhere one gets a sense of authenticity as lack of variations must equal truth. However, there are times when this presence grows too ghostly even for a symbol. The only incident from his childhood Tytler recounted had to do with his education, attributing his love of country to the teachings of a priest, uncle of Wallace, who "deploring the calamities of his country, was never weary of extolling the sweets of liberty, and lamenting the miseries of dependence".¹⁷⁴ Significant as it may be for the course of the historian's argument, it remains a mere snippet of information for a figure of the historical proportions Wallace was given.

On the other hand, the amount of information may be just right, if we think of Robert the Bruce, the other great Scottish symbol. We know far more about Bruce than we may even wished for: details of his questionable dealings with Edward prevent him of securing first place in national symbolic imagery. Wallace can be the man of the people, because there is little else we have on him. But Bruce is not a spectral figure and can be held accountable for blame or praise in almost all the crucial instances of the War. Therefore, Robert the Bruce appears only too real to become good myth material. Not that there has been no effort for his life to be accommodated to certain norms: his initial conduct towards Edward I was properly downplayed.¹⁷⁵ Yet, without the appropriate mythical elements no effective and satisfying national symbols can be proclaimed.

This is why there is a "patriotic/corroborative nexus"¹⁷⁶ in Blind Harry's half-hearted acceptance by Tytler and Hill Burton; the "role of patriotic belief to sustain unwarranted and dangerous assumptive arguments

¹⁷⁴ Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p.48.

¹⁷⁵ Tytler's treatment is quite lenient: "The conduct of the younger Bruce, afterwards the heroic Robert the First, was at this period vacillating and inconsistent". Tytler, *The history of Scotland*, I, p.50.

¹⁷⁶ Morton, *William Wallace*, p.51.

made to sit alongside more reasoned judgement and usually within the same text”¹⁷⁷ is something every national historian has to face. It is a matter of “both scientific and national duty” in the apt phrase of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos. In appreciating the bipolarity of Bruce and Wallace we meet an axis pointing to different directions: patriotism/opportunism coupled with popular/aristocratic dichotomies. “Wallace was the man of the people to Bruce’s ennoblement, the outlaw to the monarch, the loyal Scot to the political opportunist”.¹⁷⁸ I would add that sometimes and to some extent he was the Scottish to the Norman-English as well. However, many times and in the course of the same text, when Wallace quits the stage Bruce undergoes a transformation that makes him thoroughly acceptable as continuing the former’s work in drawing all classes into a “community of the realm”. The process follows a double course: to proceed in this move it is implied that Bruce casts away his aristocratic/Norman characteristics and comes nearer to the people too. Finally, it all comes down to what William Burns had noted with exceptional precision in the end of his *Scottish War of Independence*. Wallace and Bruce, far from being disjointed by some fundamental rift, were there to act as complementary figures. The former was a kind of link, “standing between the past and the future”, ready to “pass onwards to a new generation the *idea* of an unbroken nationality” while the latter “accepting the trust, should carry it to a successful issue... *As the one departed, his mantle fell on the other... Had there been no Wallace, there would have been no Bruce; had there been no Stirling-bridge, there would have been no Bannockburn*”.¹⁷⁹

The culmination of this relationship eloquently presented itself in the building of the National Wallace Monument in Stirling. Although the monument was situated at Abbey Craig the laying of the foundation stone was scheduled for the 24th June 1861, the anniversary of Bannockburn. That morning 50,000 people, over 200 Masonic lodges and 40 bands playing “Scots wha hae” swarmed there to commemorate the day. Henry Glassford Bell, although the tower was yet to be built, declared he looked upon it as a reflex of the spirit of the age; a place where “the living pulse of Scotland

¹⁷⁷ Morton, *William Wallace*, p.51.

¹⁷⁸ Morton, “The Most Efficacious Patriot”, 239.

¹⁷⁹ Burns, *The Scottish War*, II, p.521. My italics.

beats...In its architecture it is simple, national and appropriate”.¹⁸⁰ Bruce and Wallace were the “deathless two”. And Scottish nationality was “not weakness, not jealousy, not dissension, but one of the main pillars and supports of the whole British Empire”.¹⁸¹

Conclusion

The Scottish national narrative in the Victorian age may not have provided us with *nationalists*, as Morton maintains, but it certainly displays a group of *national* historians. That said, it must not be thought it designates a team or implies any affiliations resting on disciplinary principles and political ideas. In this respect the Scottish historical context would reveal a fragmentary picture.¹⁸² Categorisation is not an easy task once more. A negative view of the Scottish past may have been indeed the centrepiece of Tory historians such as Tytler – while he, Hill Burton and Andrew Lang also promoted an Episcopalian view of Scotland – but in the course of the nineteenth century there were others who took pains to re-establish Scotland’s reputation by way of the middle ages. William Burns, James Mackintosh and Peter Hume Brown focused their interests in stressing Scottish national independence in the wake of the Wars of Independence and reinforced Scottish nationality and identity. Tytler, Burton and Lang did not lag far behind in that aspect, each with his own variations and peculiarities. Lang and Tytler were noted for their royalist and aristocratic sympathies and the latter showed something of it in protecting Bruce and allowing him much the spotlight. William Burns may have attempted to put everything under a nationalist light but in his basic assumptions concerning the Wars of Independence he found himself less an aberration – actually well within the norm. Criticism of these historians’ work did not touch their handling of the Later Middle Ages– with the possible exception of Burns, who, never mind the title Tytler had laid claim to in the 1830s, was writing as if *his* was not just the only, but the only *possible* history of Scotland. Even

¹⁸⁰ Rogers, *The Book of Wallace*, II, p.277.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, II, p. 287, 292, addresses of Sheriff Bell and James Dodds respectively.

¹⁸² See Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past*, especially pp.247-280.

when Tytler came under fire it was as “the grandson of the zealous vindicator of Mary” and the “Episcopalian historian of a Presbyterian country”, not as the defiler of Wallace and Bruce’s memory.¹⁸³

They all presented an essentially common view of Scotland in the Wars of Independence in denouncing English aggression, praising Wallace and more or less Bruce and finding the “common people” as true representatives of the nation and real protagonists of the struggle; as Ash puts it “all Scots could agree to be proud” in the War of Independence.¹⁸⁴ It was not to be a replay of a consensus of Whig historiography in Scottish guise though, since its protagonists lay on either side of the Whig spectrum. Furthermore, the effort in tracing freedom, independence and nationality did not celebrate Scottish constitutional history and achievements but was influenced by the comparative example of England to which it had to measure.¹⁸⁵

It also culminated in a sort of preparation and anticipation of the Union which Mackintosh considered as “one of the most beneficial events in the history of the country”.¹⁸⁶ Andrew Lang, John Hill Burton and James Taylor in his *Pictorial History of Scotland* significantly opted for concluding their works not in bringing them up to their contemporary times but stopped just after 1745. Not necessarily because they were Jacobites – although it was told of Lang that “his chance of politics was gone with Culloden”¹⁸⁷ – but because in this timeline they had reached their own inevitable end of story. The consolidation of the Union was unassailable and its beneficial influence was there for everyone to see.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, their work provided

¹⁸³ Kidd, “*The Strange Death...revisited*”, 97. Ash, *The Strange Death*, p.118. John Steill’s attack in *P.F. Tytler called to account for his misrepresentations of the life and character of Sir William Wallace*, (Edinburgh, 1846) is the sole exception.

¹⁸⁴ Ash, *The Strange Death*, p.103.

¹⁸⁵ See Kidd, *Subverting Scotland’s past*; Kidd, “*The Strange Death...revisited*”.

¹⁸⁶ Mackintosh, *The History of Civilisation*, III, p.209.

¹⁸⁷ *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1912-1921.

¹⁸⁸ Practitioners of nineteenth-century history regarded it as a linear process and subscribed to a cult of progress: John Macintosh’s *History of Civilisation in Scotland* attests to that in carving a course from “the mists of far-gone ages” to the “light of

justification for the special relationship the Scots felt their country enjoyed – or was entitled to enjoy – since the Union. The Scottish Wars of Independence had secured the continuing presence of Scotland, thus making certain that it was only in a Union of equals that the two states would unite. This argument put forward a distinct place for Scotland and provided it with a usable past. Unionist sentiments were not challenged to a significant degree in Scotland, yet a certain feeling of Scottish national identity was evident and on the rise. Meanwhile, the Wars of Independence threw a lifeline for the forging of a common identity as a counter-argument to those who, treading in the footsteps of Pinkerton, Chalmers, Cosmo Innes and W.F. Skene, were putting in danger the common past by maintaining the distinctiveness of racial elements. Nevertheless, there were threads in this past that could be exploited to sustain arguments in diverse ways as we are to see later on: in celebrating a thoroughly British, a markedly Scottish or even dual identities – plus a number of variations. Several ideological undercurrents were at play and there was potential for the “white dwarf of Europe”¹⁸⁹ to break off further gravitational collapse into neutron star.

In the end, developing a national consensus resting on a fixed point in the past was a prerequisite for the subsequent emergence of nationalist rhetoric. Nationalists, however, in the nineteenth, and to a far greater extent in the twentieth century, were preoccupied with other matters. Their sights were set upon diverse aspects of Scotland’s relations with England and especially on the amount of influence exacted in Scottish culture and society. Tracing back this problem to its roots intellectuals such as Andrew Dewar Gibb were, as we shall see below, to focus on the Union as the turning point *par excellence*. In underlining its questionable aspects they brought to the fore a theme forming the core of similar perceptions since the 1850s: Scotland, instead of enjoying an equal partnership was on the receiving end of contempt befitting a subjugated province. To solidify their arguments on English attitudes they had to rely in part on examples from the pre-Union days – and this is where the consensus built around the Wars of

consciousness dawning” to the achievements of industry and culture in his times, Mackintosh, *The History of Civilisation*, I, pp.17-21.

¹⁸⁹ Kidd, *Subverting Scotland’s past*, p.280.

Independence proved handy. The medieval past did not pose a problem because it had been rendered stable and tangible. Its more tricky points that considered Scottish feudalism could be conveniently consigned to obscurity while the stage was being taken by the appeal and legitimacy that William Wallace and Robert the Bruce conveyed. Having entered the canon of national history, the Wars of Independence could be finally reduced to the figures of their two protagonists and provide the much-needed foundations of nationalist ideology. The nationalists are winning indeed, but with Tytler's and Hill Burton's Wallace.

Chapter Three

‘High hopes, meagre results’: Perceptions of the Greek War of Independence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, 1853-1939¹

The Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) may not have been strictly the first independence movement in Southeastern Europe – the Serbs preceded it in 1804 – but it was certainly the first one to generate widespread concern and a whole romantic movement, that of *philhellenism*. Correspondence of ideas and reactions towards the Greek Revolution illustrate a dividing line of European interest in the Balkans since the Age of Enlightenment. Although the nineteenth century bred a whole wave of romantic *philhellenes*, eager to fight alongside Greeks or donate money for their cause, today the circumstances of this age are largely forgotten. This is not surprising, of course, since the Eastern Question has been succeeded by the Middle-Eastern and other riddles of diplomacy. In this light a brief summary of facts and phases of the Greek Revolution and its ideological context should be carried out before proceeding to examine how it was perceived in the last two centuries by historians both foreign and Greek.

¹ Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos's final verdict on the Greek Revolution was that although it was instigated with "high hopes" it concluded in "meagre results". In Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους από των αρχαιοτάτων χρόνων μέχρι των καθ' ημάς*, 7 vols., (First edition: 1860-1874, Athens. Edition used: Athens, 1932), vol. ΣΤ', p.196. Paparrigopoulos's hint here was a subtle comment on the inefficacy of the independent kingdom.

The Greek movement clearly derived from the heritage of the French Revolution and exhibited all the characteristics of a national uprising. There was a previous flourishing of a merchant element inside the Ottoman Empire and the Greek communities in Europe², a general interest in education, an intellectual movement mainly carried out by Greeks of the diaspora, known as the 'Greek Enlightenment', influenced by its European counterpart and seeking to emphasize ties to the renowned ancient past.³ The War of Independence can be viewed as part of an 'age of Revolutions' with similar causes and demands both in Europe and the Americas that heralded the start of a 'long nineteenth century'.⁴ The fact that Greek delegates in the Congress of Verona in 1822 denied any possible ideological connections between their insurrection and current rebellions in Italy and Spain was a desperate political move to avoid being branded as 'Jacobinists' or *carbonari* by the Holy Alliance. This attempt to mollify an initial negative inclination among European monarchs and at the same time not to alienate the Great Powers, who could in all probability guarantee their independence at a later date, did not necessarily echo the Revolutionaries' authentic political stance. Evidence on the latter can be seen in the influences from

² For a Greek merchant class in Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century see T. Stoianovich, "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant", *Journal of Economic History*, XX, (1960); George D. Frangos, "The Philike Hetaireia: A premature national coalition" in Richard Clogg, *The Struggle for Greek Independence. Essays to mark the 150th anniversary of the Greek War of Independence*, (London, 1973). For Greek commercial activity in general, see Nikos Svoronos, *Le commerce de Salonique au XVIII^e siècle*, (Paris, 1956); Vassilis Kremmydas, *Το εμπόριο της Πελοποννήσου στον 18^ο αιώνα*, (Thessaloniki, 1972).

³ For more on the subject see Konstantinos Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός*, (Athens, 1985); Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός*, (Athens, 1998); Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: studies in the culture and political thought of Southeastern Europe*, (New York, 1994); Kitromilides, *The Enlightenment as Social criticism : Iosipos Moisiodax and Greek culture in the eighteenth century*, (New York, 1992).

⁴ E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolutions 1789-1848*, (London, 1962).

the French revolutionary constitutions that may easily be traced in the first constitutional documents of the War of Independence.⁵

However, it has to be admitted that in many cases the path leading from the Greek to the French Revolution, despite constitutional guarantees of equality and fraternity or even some local social movements, was more narrow than straight. The distance was far indeed, the culture and necessities different. When in 1798 Christoforos Perraivos, a friend and follower of Rigas Velestinlis, celebrated as forerunner of the Greek Revolution, wrote an enthusiastic 'hymn to general Bonaparte', he set it on the tune of *Ça ira*. The choice highlighted Greek hopes and priorities because at the time of the Directoire a song of the Terror would be much too radical in France.⁶ The flipside comes from 1824, when in the midst of the Revolution there was a French plan to secure a contemplated throne of Greece for the Duke de Nemours, grandson of Philippe Egalité. George Kountouriotis, one of the most prominent island primates, vehemently denied it on the grounds of his being a descendant of one of the murderers of Louis XVI.⁷ Here, the French Revolution was already presented as a threat to the *status quo*.

From the start of the war European assistance was sought and there was a conscious effort to appeal to the Great Powers to intervene and make the Ottoman Empire accept Greek independence. This effort was backed by serious military successes during the first two years and a stabilisation of supremacy in the Peloponnese until 1823. In the first phase of the war the virtues of the guerrilla tactics of the armed bandits known as *klephts* had

⁵ On the constitutions of the Revolution see A. Mamoukas, *Τα κατά την αναγέννησιν της Ελλάδος, ήτοι συλλογή των περί την αναγεννωμένην Ελλάδα συνταχθέντων πολιτευμάτων, νόμων και άλλων επισήμων πράξεων από του 1921 μέχρι του τέλους 1832*, (Athens, 1839-1852). The first Greek constitution, drafted in 1822, was modelled on the French constitution of 1795 according to Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "European political thought in the Making of Greek Liberalism: The Second National Assembly of 1862-1864 and the Reception of John Stuart Mill's Ideas in Greece" in *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy. Studied in the culture and political thought of south-eastern Europe*, (Aldershot, 1994), p.12

⁶ In Apostolos Daskalakis, *Τα αίτια και οι παράγοντες της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, (Paris, 1927), p.24.

⁷ In Panayotis Pipinelis, *Πολιτική Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, (Paris, 1927), p.185.

secured a string of local victories in Roumeli and the Peloponnese. The principal castles, where the Turkish element sought shelter after the outbreak of the Revolution, were forced to surrender and in some cases, as in Tripolitza, massacres were reported. A full retort from the Ottoman Empire was hampered by the fact that Ali Pasha of Epirus, probably the strongest regional prefect, who was practically running his *pashalik* as a virtually independent state, had rebelled in 1820 and the war against him kept significant forces occupied. Reprisals followed however in the Ottoman Empire when news of the outbreak of the Revolution reached Constantinople. The Ecumenical Patriarch, whose place in the Ottoman administration as *millet bashi*, leader of the community, rendered him responsible in the eyes of the Sultan for the disobedience of his subjects, was executed although he had promptly denounced the initial stage of the Revolution, Alexandros Hypsilantis's movement in the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. Several bishops, Primate and other Greeks were also killed throughout the Ottoman Empire. When Sultan Mahmud II managed to mobilise his forces in 1822, Mahmud Dramali Pasha and his host of 20.000 were brought to ruin by Theodoros Kolokotronis's guerrilla war in the Peloponnese.⁸

What was build up in this time though was almost lost after a series of bitter rivalries for power and civil strife brought on by particularistic tendencies. Wealthy Primate families, as those of Zaimis or Kountouriotis, *klepht* chiefs turned popular military captains, as Theodoros Kolokotronis and Odysseas Androutsos, men educated in Western Europe and eager to follow a career in politics, as Alexandros Mavrokordatos and Ioannis Kolettis vied for the right to exercise authority in the liberated areas. Rivalries were exacerbated because of severe particularism between Rumelians and islanders on the one side, and the Peloponnesians on the

⁸ See Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence*, (London, 1973), pp.41-103. For Ali Pasha's significance, see Dennis N. Skiotis, "The Greek Revolution: Ali Pasha's last gamble" in Nikiforos P. Diamandouros, John P. Anton, John A. Petropoulos and Peter Topping (eds.), *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Independence (1821-1830): Continuity and change*, (Thessaloniki, 1976). For Hypsilantis's movement in the Wallachia-Moldavia, see E.D. Tappe, "The 1821 Revolution in the Rumanian principalities" in Clogg (ed.), *The Struggle for Greek Independence*.

other. These rifts that led to civil war in 1824-1825 diminished the fighting capability of Greeks to a critical point. While in 1826 and 1827 the revolutionary forces desperately hang on in the Peloponnese, locked in uneven battles with the well-trained regular troops of Ibrahim Pasha, European intervention came in the form of a naval battle at Navarino where British, French and Russian ships destroyed an Ottoman fleet and determined the outcome of the War of Independence. In January 1828, after a preliminary treaty in London and with the agreement of the Great Powers, Ioannis Kapodistrias arrived at Egina to assume the powers of Governor of Greece. The remaining years until the recognition of an independent state in 22 January/3 February 1830 were times of negotiations between the Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire and political troubles inside Greece between supporters and opponents of the newly appointed Governor that finally led to his murder in 1831. An end to the Revolution though did not come until 18/30 August 1832, when a London protocol determined the borders of the new state.⁹ In January 1833 the designated King Otto I, son of Leopold, King of Bavaria, reached the capital of Nafplion, where an enthusiastic crowd awaited him. His reign however was to prove less auspicious than its expectations.

In the rest of this chapter I propose to examine major general histories dealing with the subject of the Greek War of Independence from the 1850s to the 1930s, written by both Greek and foreign historians. On the part of the latter it has to be remarked beforehand that the impact of the Greek War of Independence in European historiography has been felt more then than now. There exists an array of French, German and British histories of the Revolution spanning the nineteenth century, most of them having been written by people like the Scots Thomas Gordon and George

⁹ For developments in Greece in 1824-1832, Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence*, pp.123-312. On the events of the Revolution in general see Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence*, (London, 1973) and *The Unification of Greece, 1770-1923*, (London, 1972); Clogg (ed.), *The Struggle for Greek Independence*. Also, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, vol. IB', (Athens, 1975). A brief summary of the Revolution in Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan national states, 1804-1920*, (Seattle and London, 1977), pp. 38-52.

Finlay and the American Samuel Gridley Howe, keen observers involved in the events, with personal experience of time and place. I have tried to keep some balance between nationalities, political affiliations and also between these observers turned historians and later academic historians who wrote with the benefit of distance from time and place. The sample is representative of major trends but not exhaustive. I have focused on some of the most popular and acclaimed works and tried to avoid repeating similar sets of arguments: one might opt for, say, G.G. Gervinus instead of Mendelssohn Bartholdy to underline the German viewpoint, or Amvrosios Frantzis instead of Ioannis Philimon to explain the defence of the 'Russian' party, without altering the final picture.

What I am interested in is the interpretation of this era from a historian's point of view, so memoirs, speeches and short sketches of individuals are not included, although they undoubtedly illustrate the facts and were the primary material historiographers built upon along with official documents. However, in approaching the Greek War of Independence in this frame we have to keep in mind the possible purposes the works presented here could be serving. As far as it concerns our Greek representatives what comes to light is not so much an early flourishing of history as a discipline but as an extension to memory. Even the most ambitious efforts, the one of Spyridon Trikoupis or Ioannis Philimon, lack a strict methodological character and consequently do not make for a striking difference to the array of memoirs that freedom fighters – Theodoros Kolokotronis, Nikolaos Kasomoulis, Ioannis Makrygiannis to name the most informative and interesting works – produced either themselves or with the help of contemporary scholars.

Justification of their actions was necessary for a number of reasons. The War of Independence had generated a number of internal rifts: social ones, between *kotzabashis* (Primates) and the popular element; political ones, between military and administrative authorities at first, later on among the 'parties'; territorialist ones, between Rumeliots and Peloponnesians. Politics did not vanish when Greece was declared an independent Kingdom and the generation taking part in the struggle did not disappear from stage in one

night.¹⁰ On the contrary, its representatives would claim their right to participate in decision making and remain active until fairly late, Antonios Kriezis being prime minister in 1849-1854, Konstantinos Kanaris until even later, in 1877.

To justify their decisions then, both present and past, those who essayed to establish a history of the Greek Revolution did so in defending their personal interests and ideological convictions. Two examples will suffice: Spyridon Trikoupis could not avoid criticism on his being biased since he was a long time companion to Alexandros Mavrokordatos, favoured the 'English' party and had played a crucial role in the 1825 appeal to Britain to protect Greece. He was also quite sympathetic to the primates, being himself one of them. Amvrosios Frantzis, on the other hand, had written in 1839-1841 to vindicate Kolokotronis and refute all the arguments of the Anglophiles.¹¹ Ioannis Philimon had concluded at an early time his contribution on the *Philiki Hetaireia* but one of its most significant founding members, Emmanuel Xanthos, strongly disagreed with his views and presented his own version in 1845.¹² In the end, the quest for a universal truth on the facts of the War of Independence, vividly expressed as the aim of these works, turned out to a series of partial and individualistic ones. This however only applies to what in the long run amounts to historical snippets. In ideological matters, the line these works formed was impenetrable.

The judgemental frame of mind nineteenth-century historians exhibited means that these works may frequently exhibit an air of challenge and polemic. It does not necessarily guarantee innovations or new lines of

¹⁰ See Christos Lyrintzis, *To τέλος των «τζακιών». Κοινωνία και πολιτική στην Αχαΐα του 19^{ου} αιώνα*, (Athens, 1991) for continuities in Greek political elites before and after the Revolution.

¹¹ See Nikiforos P. Diamandouros, "Bibliographical Essay" in Diamandouros, Anton, Petropoulos and Topping, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, pp.205-9.

¹² Amvrosios Frantzis, *Επιτομή της ιστορίας της αναγεννηθείσης Ελλάδος αρχομένη από του έτους 1715 και λήγουσα το 1835*, 4 vols., (Athens, 1839-1841); Ioannis Philimon, *Δοκίμιον Ιστορικόν περί της Φιλικής Εταιρείας*, (Nafplion, 1834); Emmanuel Xanthos, *Απομνημονεύματα περί της Φιλικής Εταιρείας*, (Athens, 1845); Spyridon Trikoupis, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, 4 vols., (London, 1853-1857).

sight. I hope to show there is a certain general image of the War of Independence emerging from these works, especially those of Greek authors : a kind of beautified approach that blunted certain edges to sharpen others, throwing light on specific corners and darkening those that could prove difficult to tread on. Foreign historians were less prone to such tailoring but most of them could not easily shed stereotypes and labels that circulated freely in Western Europe considering the Orient. Finally, through this proposed discussion I will attempt to focus on the fine line between politics and history and underline the interplay between history and nationalism.

Building the consensus: Greek historians

Spyridon Trikoupis : History as an exercise in morals

Spyridon Trikoupis's (1788-1873) *History of the Greek Revolution* was an ambitious work in its conception and scope. We may determine the measure of Trikoupis's ambition if we consider that he saw fit to begin this work with a declaration of objectivity, evoking Thucydides' methodology as his primary guide in his investigations.¹³ This preoccupation with the ancient historian was not entirely unexpected. Not because the author was Greek, but because he was a product of the Enlightenment that favoured the *topoi* of ancient Greece and its magnificence. After his initial studies in Patras, Rome and other European cities he took part in the War of Independence in various administrative positions. Twice prime minister and foreign minister during the Revolution and the Bavarian Regency, but in brief tenures, he spent most of his political life as an ambassador in London, holding this place in 1838, 1841-1843, and again between 1853 and 1862, before his failing health forced him to resign. He was praised in both his capacities, as a diplomat – Viscount Palmerston was said to trust and respect his views in Oriental affairs – and as a historian.

It is rather difficult though to detect in this work the Thucydidean objectivity he aspired to. Trikoupis was eager from the start to exonerate the

¹³ Trikoupis, *Ιστορία*, vol. Α', Προλεγόμενα.

nation. He ascribed to the “bloodthirsty Asians” the first massacres, which covered sixteen pages in volume A’.¹⁴ Then he went on to condemn the killings of Turks in Greece but remarked that this conduct was merely the result of the Ottoman reprisals and indignation from the Patriarch’s execution in Constantinople. Moreover, the revolutionaries committed these crimes during a state of anarchy, as a result of “Turkish lessons”.¹⁵ It was also a matter of historical necessity for “whenever a people overthrow a long and heavy yoke they always move against their despots in a beastly way”.¹⁶ To those who would condemn such conduct he reminded that civilised nations had recently acted in a similar way, notably the French in Jaffa. The Greeks then were justified, either by the forces of historical determinism or by the vendetta reasoning absolving reprisals or by a comparative study of European incidents. To be sure, on the other side, the Turks represented each and every grade of barbarity. Thus, Trikoupi succeeded in building a basic disparity between the two sides, which although receding later on, would set the tone for the whole work.

Despite these deplorable acts, Trikoupi viewed the Revolution itself in the most positive light. This was a national revolution which greatly differed from its English, American and French counterparts. All of the above were not premeditated whereas the Greeks “declared before God and men from the start of its struggle that they took arms to crash the foreign yoke and raise their nation and independence”.¹⁷ The second noteworthy characteristic of this struggle was its strong moral basis. The struggle was both “sacred and just”¹⁸ as proven by its final acceptance by the Great Powers. This argument also worked in the opposite way. The European states “listened to the redeeming orders of morality and the sacred voice of

¹⁴ Trikoupi, *Ιστορία*, A’, pp.98-114. “Constantinople looked more like a brigands’ den or a bloodthirsty beast’s lair than the capital of a King and residence of European ambassadors”. And “in one word every idea of shame disappeared and every spark of mercy was put out”. Trikoupi, *Ιστορία*, A’, p.110, 192 respectively.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, A’, p.277 and p.9 respectively.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, A’, p.100. He also noted that “the Greeks seemed they wanted in the space of a day to pay back for four centuries’ of injustices”.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, A’, p.3.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

humanity under oppression”.¹⁹ The Greek War of Independence was rewarded because of its deeply moral character.²⁰

The essence of history according to Trikoupis was spectacle and morality. History was a kind of theatre, directed by Divine Providence to guide the people towards the right way of living. In this *theatrum mundi* “the brightest, most sacred and full of meaning of the spectacles History presents on the stage of the World is the rise of a fallen nation”²¹ – instigated by Divine Providence. The course of the Christian states in Europe was at first “insecure” and “ill – advised”²². It was implied that this was changed by the Greeks’ perseverance and public sympathy throughout Europe – but only because their cause was just and thus favoured by Divine Providence.

Morals, patriotism and good intentions, were concepts Trikoupis endorsed in his depiction of individuals. Personal virtue guaranteed the general outcome of a situation. Note his attitude towards admiral Cochrane after the defeat at Phaliron, a botched affair that cost the lives of 1000 Greeks and *Philhellenes* in 1827: these were “the results of Cochrane’s folly, who was meddling in affairs that were not of his responsibility”.²³ Cochrane’s character fault was arrogance, which along with personal interests were the downfall of men. Pride and arrogance were ascribed to Kapodistrias, first governor of Greece, who in Trikoupis words’ despised virtually everybody, primates, *klephts*, Phanariots and scholars²⁴ and was assassinated in 1831 by opposition members. “His measure in politics was always his personal interests”²⁵ was his comment on Odysseas Androutsos who played a double game with Greeks and Turks, coveting high military offices and ended up killed by order of the Greek government. On the contrary, Andreas Zaimis’s

¹⁹ Trikoupis, *Ιστορία*, Α’, p.3.

²⁰ This does not mean that the author cannot contradict himself. In vol. Β’, pp. 145-6 he assures us that “the revolution in Greece did not erupt on principles other than to throw off the Ottoman yoke and raise the Greek nation”.

²¹ Trikoupis, *Ιστορία*, Α’, p.5. In vol. Γ’, p.349 the siege of Messolonghi was “the great drama”.

²² *Ibid*, Α’, p.125.

²³ *Ibid*, Δ’, pp. 157-58.

²⁴ *Ibid*, Α’, pp.285-86.

²⁵ *Ibid*, Γ’, p.236.

arrogance did not weigh as much as his patriotism, good character and social virtues which finally preserved his fame.²⁶ Good intentions, an amiable character and polite behaviour were redeeming features making individuals worthy of reconsideration in Trikoupis's opinion.

Morality's impact on history and the works of Divine Providence guaranteed the inevitability of the Revolution. "A struggle of a higher nature"²⁷, as the historian remarked, could be nothing other than preordained. But as for its practical causes, the Revolution was a natural consequence of the Ottoman Empire's crumbling structure and the characteristics of its dominant element. The rulers stagnated while the ruled progressed.²⁸ The Turks in contrast to the Greeks, had no real taste or passion for commerce, industry or culture while the Greeks had the benefit of a real spiritual religion, a natural tendency to arts and letters, a glorious past and a special link to Western Europe.²⁹ So, the Greek War of Independence was presented as both the work of a Divine Providence according to the laws of morality and a natural process abiding to the laws of society, a double inevitability.

Trikoupis's main fault rests with his handling of key concepts in the light of his political stance. His hazy picture of the 'nation' is a good example. In contrast to Finlay, as we shall see later on, Trikoupis merely declared the national character of the war, using the term independently of any frame of reference. On a number of occasions he even voiced negative views about the 'people': they were "the armed rabble, shame of every government and mortal wound of every society"³⁰, or the "inordinate rabble" whose shouts a government could not obey openly without committing suicide.³¹ However, in downplaying the significance of the people his attitude should be compared to his opinion of the primates. Trikoupis worked closely with the aristocracy during the war years and wrote in their favour in his account. He essentially attributed to them the

²⁶ For Zaimis, see Trikoupis, *Ιστορία*, Δ', pp.8-9.

²⁷ *Ibid*, Γ', p.97.

²⁸ *Ibid*, Α', p.15.

²⁹ *Ibid*, Α', p.17.

³⁰ *Ibid*, Α', p.115.

freedom of Greece and its political existence during the war. They did abuse power but only 'lightly'. They were to be praised for not getting richer out of the war but barely gaining their living. Even the liberal constitution voted in the First National Assembly in 1822, Trikoupis ascribed not merely to the need for pan-European attention, but to the primates' prudence and goodwill.³² In some aspects Trikoupis actually composed an apology for the *kotzabashis* who emerged from his work with far more rights to representing the nation than the 'people'.

It is most striking that one would treat a case of civil war in the midst of national struggle as a small affair. Trikoupis justified his opinion on the assumption that the different factions did not seek absolute power or complete destruction of their opponents, but only vied for governmental authority in the existing frame of the constitution.³³ In taking this view Trikoupis undoubtedly thought that he performed a service to the nation in diffusing any possible accusations of stirring passions. It was also a way for him not only to justify the conduct of his party by diminishing the importance of their actions, but also to shed any and all responsibilities for military defeats in the following year (1825-1826). Another major factor, in spite of the author denying it, would be the rifts opened between not mere persons, but whole provinces: the clashes between Rumeliots and Peloponnesians bred enmities³⁴ showing up in years to come generating an atmosphere of wide-ranging suspicion and dire particularism. The clashes and looting between different factions of Rumeliots and Peloponnesians at Nafplion in 1827 were proof enough of mutual suspicion and hard feelings lingering after the civil war.³⁵ Viewed at length and in perspective, the civil strife of the years 1824-1825 could be interpreted as a clash among diverse elements: between politicians and military, the old primate order of the Ottoman era and the new revolutionary powers, Westernisers and

³¹ Trikoupis, *Ιστορία*, Β', p.52.

³² *Ibid*, Β', p.147.

³³ *Ibid*, Β', pp.108-110.

³⁴ Peloponnesian military leaders treated their province as their 'homeland' and warned the Rumeliots, employed by the government to stay out of it. In Trikoupis, *Ιστορία*, Γ', p.180, 382.

³⁵ *Ibid*, Β', pp.166-170.

conservatives, native Greeks and newcomers from Asia Minor, Constantinople and Europe. Therefore, Trikoupis was right in pointing out that alliances were unstable, unclear and shifting as in a power play with the slowly emerging independent state as stake.

In assessing the influence of foreign powers in revolutionary Greece Trikoupis used a scale to weigh their attitude but the results were again determined by his own political beliefs. Austria emerged on the bottom due to its despotic rule over various people and its Turkophile foreign policy that ran contrary to Greek interests.³⁶ Russia and France were a step above because of a certain favour towards the Greeks. On top of them all came the British : “The British people always proved themselves even more liberal than their liberal politicians, showing great sympathy to the Greek struggle.”³⁷ Trikoupis was prepared to treat their diplomatic manoeuvres with a certain leniency. He regarded the Act of Submission, for instance, a move of the Anglophiles in 1825 to win independence from the Sublime Porte by petitioning the British government to make a protectorate out of Greece, as a useful gambit on its propagators’ part that positively motivated the other Great Powers to Greek gains.³⁸ Nonetheless, he condemned the Treaty of London of July 1827 as “a unique example of eternally self-interested policy”.³⁹

This latter insight on the role of the Great Powers from a Greek point of view would become clearer in the matter of the new state’s border demarcation. Political necessity determined their decisions:

“No acute mind, nor sound policy, nor good will led those comprising this council in delineating the Greek border... Had they pursued a more acute and bolder policy, the Greek Revolution would have solved the Eastern Question, thus endorsing safety instead of a constantly endangered balance and in the benefit of an unduly suffering humanity”.⁴⁰

³⁶ Trikoupis, *Ιστορία*, Γ', p.264.

³⁷ *Ibid*, Γ', pp. 266-267.

³⁸ *Ibid*, Γ', pp.272-276.

³⁹ *Ibid*, Δ', p.197.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, Δ', p.331.

The above abstract clearly shows the Greek tendency of viewing the Eastern Question in terms of their 'unredeemed brothers' only. What Trikoupis implied here was that, had the new state incorporated Thessaly, Macedonia and Crete, the Eastern Question could be considered as closed. This rash view certainly ignored the reality of the Ottoman Empire's complex structure, society and institutions. To a nineteenth-century Greek however to supplant or displace the Ottoman Empire was merely a matter of time, the outcome already determined and sealed. To Trikoupis then, the Eastern Question was practically an altogether Greco-Turkish matter that ought to be resolved preferably by others, notably the Great Powers. Their failure to do that was a violation of morality, a case of 'self-interest'.

This presumed responsibility of the Great Powers, through their actions or inactions, for crucial subjects or aspects of Greek concern in the field of foreign affairs, was a recurring theme, a *leitmotif* in Greek nineteenth-century politics and historiography. Trikoupis wrote and published his *History* during the Crimean War, an era in which King Otho's foreign policy, consisting chiefly of belligerent rhetorical boasts in the line of the recently articulated *Megali Idea*, was backed by revolts in Thessaly and Epirus. However, this rhetoric gambit functioned perfectly as a deterrent of criticism on the home front, especially as the Great Powers, not seeking further complications in an already precarious situation strongly advised against Otho's advances of rearguard actions. Also predictable was the public reaction: Great Britain and France were portrayed as the ever Turkophiles, the only obstacle between the nation's cavalry, Constantinople and the toppling of the Sultan.⁴¹

This erratic behaviour definitely depicts the complex relationship between Greece and Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which has many times before been noticed in bibliography, amply described, but not adequately explained.⁴² One does not get too many insights on what

⁴¹ The atmosphere and ideological repercussions of the Crimean War in Athens are presented in Elli Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο» και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα. Όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα (1830-1880)*, (Athens, 1988), pp.277-286.

⁴² See Skopetea, *Το «Πρότυπο Βασίλειο»*, especially pp.217-230 for the years 1830-1880. Interesting insights on Greek image abroad during the nineteenth century can also

was really meant by this perception of Europe as the sturdy follower and careful watcher of all things Greek. The absolute measure to compare with, the definer and final judge of rights and wrongs, 'Europe' remained for a long time a presence to aspire to or a partner that held the country back; it was a handy excuse for the faults or responsibilities of the political elites that administered power in the Greek state. This growing under the shadow of Europe – of which Britain, or simply 'England' as still widely known in Greece, was a more than essential part – has to be compared to Colin Kidd's observation of English things being for a long time the measure for Scotland and Scottish society.⁴³ Certainly, the ripples the industrial nations made went further away than their inhabitants, even their statesmen, expected.

Trikoupis' work may not have been on a par with Thucydides after all but it provided an adequate view of the War of Independence, possibly the most thorough work achieved by a nineteenth-century Greek historian. His success might be gauged by the fact that he was to provide source material for later histories. As to his objectivity, his merits and limitations have already been discussed. Finlay blamed him for failing to report the massacres of Muslims in the Peloponnese. His defects in defending the primates and presenting his fellows of the 'English Party' in the most positive light, have also been noted. He used however his central place in revolutionary administration to gather a wealth of information valued for its precision. His attention to morals and morality as important factors in history was a widespread nineteenth century trend for the employing of which George Finlay again, would be an even better example. Overall, the work of Trikoupiis offers to a careful reader plenty of notions and insights on his contemporaries' mentality and attitude towards the War of Independence. In this guise his effort still remains both significant and valuable.

be drawn from Jenkins, *The Dilessi Murders*; Edmond About, *Ο βασιλεύς των Ορέων*, (Athens, nd).

⁴³ See Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past. Scottish Whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c.1830*, (Cambridge, 1993) for a convincing view of the changing image of Scottish historiography after the Union of 1707.

Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos: a brief recapitulation

Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (1815-1891), cannot be considered as effective a historian of the Greek War of Independence as Trikoupi, Gordon or even Mendelssohn Bartholdy. It was not a matter of having arrived late, for distance from actual events is not a particular disadvantage; it was rather a matter of goals and intentions. The author of a monumental work, as *History of the Greek Nation* has been considered for a long time, could not shy away from depicting the circumstances leading to the development of the Modern Greek state, much as he would have liked to. Paparrigopoulos was unwilling to enter into an extended treatment of the independent Kingdom and its life and times thereto.

Post-revolutionary nineteenth-century Greek thinkers usually emphasised how the War of Independence remained inconclusive as to liberating a fair part of national territory and presented the new state as a weak and diminutive one, unable to hold its own in the scene of European affairs or live up to the Revolution's legacy. The giants of old were succeeded by pygmies in Alexandros Soutsos's aphorism.⁴⁴ Paparrigopoulos shared these reservations, which grew with the political entanglements of the Eastern Question in the 1860s and 1870s. He had also noted his reluctance to be the chronicler of contemporary events. The War of Independence stood at the inception of contemporary rivalries insofar as the political atmosphere remained tainted by past conflicts. Careful in matters political, Paparrigopoulos declared it "extremely hard for the historian to pass fitting judgement on these times".⁴⁵

Thus, particularistic tendencies, questions of authority, constitutions and their implementation were his key themes. He argued that

⁴⁴ See Panayiotis Moullas, *Ρήξεις και Συνέχειες. Μελέτες για τον 19^ο αιώνα*, (Athens, 1993), p.50.

⁴⁵ Kostis Papagiorgis, *Τα καπάκια Βαρνακιώτης, Καραϊσκάκης, Ανδρούτσος*, (Athens, 2003), p.184. He was referring to the civil strife.

“throughout this struggle there never was a government caring for the real interest of the nation...”.⁴⁶ Constitutions and governments were the sum of compromises between second-rate chieftains and whenever somebody tried to exercise real authority, civil wars ensued. Constitutions were voted in order not to be implemented⁴⁷ while the “imaginary panacea”⁴⁸ of the National Assemblies led to actual disorganization and anarchy that was government only in name. “The principles of the Epidavros’ constitution”, Paparrigopoulos observed, “[...] had as their primary goal to form the most infirm of governments in order for the primates to rule their provinces as they saw fit”.⁴⁹ The primates according to him opposed a centralized government so they could continue playing the vital part they had during the Ottoman times. In many cases during the Revolution this attitude reduced Greece to the sum of its provinces instead of a united nation. Other groups and individuals coming to the front during the Revolution did not manage to form a policy based on concrete political values and ideas. Thus their struggle for power and consequent civil strife was the result of personal interests and gains to be had, not a clash of principles.⁵⁰

Paparrigopoulos deplored this spectre of anarchy and its inherent dangers for social stability. Through the whole run of the *History* we meet two recurring themes that are stressed continuously: the importance of the nation and its superiority over all social groups, in conjunction with the necessity for strong leadership. The nation’s interests overrode all others, individual or collective, and powerful guiding hands formed a prerequisite to fulfilling them. It was the desirable thing for a state, even in the case when the authorities initiated controversial measures. That was the reason why Paparrigopoulos condoned the actions of the Hydriot primates who clashed with a “crowd difficult to lead”⁵¹ and praised Kapodistrias’s government.⁵²

⁴⁶ Paparrigopoulos, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, ΣΤ΄, p. 35.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, ΣΤ΄, p.41.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, ΣΤ΄, p.44.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, ΣΤ΄, p.100.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, ΣΤ΄, p.76 for Mavrokordatos and Kolokotronis. Paparrigopoulos stresses the personal character of these clashes discounting the notion of existing interest groups vying for power.

⁵¹ Paparrigopoulos, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, ΣΤ΄, p. 80.

Paparrigopoulos made these comments in looking back to his own era, which remained one of lost chances and unfulfilled hopes. The average run of governments in power during the 1860s and 1870s was no more than a year and widespread accusations of nepotism, favouritism and incompetence saw light in the press on a daily basis. Political instability then stood out as the common denominator between the Revolution's failures and the inability of the Greek state to achieve its lofty goals in liberating the 'unredeemed brothers' and elevating its status in the Orient.

Weak leadership, however, did not mean that the public was exempt from responsibility in Paparrigopoulos's view. Leaders and institutions in a parliamentary state, he wrote, mirrored the people's conduct and enhanced, in fact, the public's responsibility for their functioning:

“[institutions and leaders] are not quite innocent nor absolutely evil but show, like mirrors, persons acting and things happening. If these things and persons do not function in an acceptable manner, it is not the mirrors' fault; in vain we would break them because our new ones would present us with the same image”.⁵³

The matter of responsibility was touched once more, significantly enough while discussing foreign powers and their intervention in things Greek:

“There is among many of us a tendency to hold others responsible for our own misfortunes, a tendency unfitting for a people who many times in the past took their fate in their own hands. [...] But while we maintain that always others are in fault and we alone of all people are right, it is difficult to stop making mistakes”.⁵⁴

Paparrigopoulos was slow to succumb to mass hysteria or give in to explanations out to satisfy the *hoi polloi*. He may have written his *History* for the benefit of the public but in many cases he was not the one to tell them what they might have liked to hear.

⁵² Paparrigopoulos, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, ΣΤ', p.194.

⁵³ *Ibid*, ΣΤ', p. 43.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, ΣΤ', pp. 145-146.

In what was essentially a brief account of a more than eventful period, Paparrigopoulos managed to drive home some interesting points. His work is valuable for his comments and observations but does not hold any innovative answers on any of the questions the subject of the War of Independence posed. The author felt that since modern-day Hellenism had not yet completed its historical course as the ancient Greek city-states or the Byzantine Empire it would be premature to judge its successes or failures.⁵⁵ With the benefit of hindsight, criticizing Paparrigopoulos for deciding not to apply his considerable abilities of synthesis in order to delve deeper into a subject of great significance would be easy. At first it strikes us as a lost chance to put particular emphasis on his own groundbreaking concept of a tripartite scheme for Greek History, culminating in the formation of an independent state. Nevertheless, the author's arguments and structure of the *History of the Greek Nation* were effective enough to permit him to abstain from a longer treatment of the War of Independence on grounds of politics. Finally, no contemporary would think to counter his succinct closing statement that managed to summarize in a few words the feelings of a whole generation: "The Revolution, having started with high hopes, concluded in meagre results".⁵⁶

Philimon's abortive effort

Contrary to Paparrigopoulos, who envisaged from the beginning his foray into the history of the Greek Revolution more as a liability than an integral part of his work, Ioannis Philimon (1798-1873) had in mind a project of wide scope and range. Philimon, like Paparrigopoulos was a Constantinopolitan. Unlike him though, he was fortunate enough to escape the Ottoman reprisals completely and came to mainland Greece in October 1821. Having studied in Constantinople, he did not find it difficult to secure a high position as secretary to one of the leaders of the Greek movement,

⁵⁵ Dimaras, Κ. Παπαρρηγόπουλος, *Προλεγόμενα*, p.155.

⁵⁶ Paparrigopoulos, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, ΣΤ', p.196.

initially working for Petrobey Mavromihalis, the most prominent primate in the Peloponnese, and shortly after for Demetrios Hypsilantis, commander in chief during the first year of the Revolution. After the end of the war he distinguished himself as one of the most prominent journalists.

As a historian, what Philimon set out to do was write a comprehensive history of the Greek War of Independence, including the development of the *Philiki Hetaireia*,⁵⁷ the secret society that prepared the Revolution, precedents in Wallachia - Moldavia where this was first proclaimed, and a complete account of its proceedings in mainland Greece. If realised, this would have been a work of titanic proportions and an unparalleled achievement for its era. Unfortunately, Philimon was not able to move past the end of the first revolutionary year in Greece and his work is mainly cited today for its methodological merits, notably his ample use of official and private documents, and therefore his important contribution to a nascent Greek historiography.

According to the author, documents are useful in the narration of contemporary events as they render the historian innocent of accusations of being subjective. On the other hand their use is not without perils. Philimon suggested caution in accepting intentions described as genuine and stated that the historian should have personal experience of the events in order to be an accurate judge of documentary evidence.⁵⁸ Interestingly enough, he opted for narrating events in a chronological order, moving from place to place to examine simultaneous incidents, a narrative mode that broke the flow of his text and made for a tiring read. He employed detailed military descriptions and paid particular attention to certain personalities whose involvement he considered crucial. The second volume, for instance, dealt exclusively with the history of the family of Alexandros Hypsilantis's, the

⁵⁷ On the *Philike Hetaireia*, see Frangos, "The *Philike Hetaireia*" in Clogg (ed.), *The Struggle for Greek Independence*, pp.87-103; C.M. Woodhouse, "Kapodistrias and the *Philike Hetaireia*, 1814-1821" in Clogg (ed.), *The Struggle for Greek Independence*, pp.104-134.

⁵⁸ Ioannis Philimon, *Δοκίμιον Ιστορικόν περί της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, 4 vols, (Athens, 1859-1861), pp. xx-xxi. His previous work, dealing with the origins of the *Philike Hetaireia*, *Δοκίμιον Ιστορικόν περί της Φιλικής Εταιρείας*, (Nafplion, 1834), should also be mentioned here considered as the first part of the whole projected work.

former officer of the Russian army and military leader of the Revolution in the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, while Philimon also devoted a chapter from the third volume to Demetrios Hypsilantis's coming to Greece in 1821.⁵⁹ This was consistent with his belief that "things are related to persons, and the historian through penning the former, portrays the latter".⁶⁰

It was also a tribute to his being a notorious Russophile who intended to vindicate the czar's policies. The Greeks under the guidance of religious mores and the divine providence showed no "enmities, discord, jealousy, anger, murder"⁶¹ and any rifts or conflicts were the results of foreign hands. Philimon was not even-handed though. In a covert attack to Britain and France he attributed the continuous civil strife and discord in 1824, 1831 and 1854 to "foreign spirit, foreign proliferation and machinations".⁶² The allusion was easy to detect since in each of these case Britain and France were at loggerheads with Russia as to their Greek policy. It is interesting to note for the author's reasoning however that his faith on the future never wavered: the sultan's sovereignty over any Greek population should be considered "temporary" and "merely a matter of time".⁶³

This mere 'matter of time' however might have taken a long time indeed to settle if Philimon's appreciation of the Greek state was to prove accurate. His disenchantment was evident when he contrasted Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary Greece. His train of thought was characterised by contempt towards the independent kingdom and society:

"Our fathers proved themselves greater than the era they were born in, but the sons are smaller than the times they live in; the former [represented] the spirit and self denial for the homeland's sake, the latter [represent] material gain and cruelty towards the

⁵⁹ Philimon, *Δοκίμιον Ιστορικόν περί της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως*, vol. Γ', ch. 13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, Α', Legend on the first page.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, Γ', p. ix.

⁶² *Ibid*, Γ', p. xiii.

⁶³ *Ibid*, Γ', p.xxvii.

country; the former sacrificed themselves for the country, the latter sacrifice the country to themselves”.⁶⁴

Philimon’s pessimism recalls George Finlay, who, writing at the same time, spoke of a ‘diminutive kingdom’ in a view many Greek intellectuals shared from the moment the high hopes the Revolution had raised, were not realised. Philimon, in contrast to Paparrigopoulos, preferred to shift whole responsibility for this failure to certain of the Great Powers, than to the Revolution’s inherent discords and liabilities.

The way Philimon dealt with the subject of the legitimacy of massacres during wartime was illustrative of the will to justify a series of events that cast doubt on the Greek cause:

“while the revolutionaries only fought armed Turks, the Turks massacred, plundered and destroyed unarmed Greeks, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, Croats and others. The Greeks never burned Turks on the stake or tortured or hung them on their ships in triumph as the Turks did. The Greeks never sold in bustling markets Turkish prisoners of all ages and gender, forced them to convert, or desecrated whatever they held sacred and moral as the Turks did. [...] For all these the moral superiority of the revolutionaries over their tyrants is incontestable”.⁶⁵

It is not easy to reconcile this train of thought with the events at Tripolitza that Philimon himself depicted later on.⁶⁶ Despite however having mentioned the sack of Tripolitza, the author in his introduction thought it prudent to imitate Trikoupis in declaring massacres of Turks an aberration. Therefore, these were not to be considered a permanent stain for such a glorious moment as the birth of a nation.

⁶⁴ Philimon, *Δοκίμιον Ιστορικόν*, Γ', p. xi.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, Δ', pp. xix – xx. Philimon devoted pages 209-266 of volume Γ' to describe Turkish atrocities in detail and establish Greek moral superiority.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, Δ', p. 102. He held that the sack of Tripolitza and the subsequent massacre of a great number of its Muslim population were the result of Turkish resistance and subsequent lack of a treaty. At p. 225 he mentioned that “the love of the homeland turned into an unstoppable passion and this made the Greeks stoop to tragic actions” while at pp.228-229 he reminded his reader that the Turks perpetrated massacres first and that relations of their victims were among the Greeks.

Philimon's particular way of exorcising events, in shifting responsibility to external factors or reducing the magnitude of questionable moments remains a vivid example of constructing a mythos. Remarkably enough, and in contrast to similar experiences in other European countries, historiography in Greece has treated the Revolution in a surprisingly uniform way. Suffice it to say that such was not the legacy of revolutions, either in France or in Britain. In French historiography and politics there was a clear distinction between monarchists and republicans who documented their own radically different views of the Revolution.⁶⁷ In Britain, Whigs, Tories and Jacobites used the Glorious Revolution's inheritance to consolidate political gains, with the Whigs securing the lion's share.

In Greece the arguments advanced did not concern a theoretical plane. The 'English', 'French' and 'Russian' parties, despite their consecutive existence for roughly thirty years, from the 1820s to the 1850s, were not concrete political formations expressing the country's social realities. Consequently, they were not able to generate and defend an exclusive interpretation of the Revolution for their own benefit. There was not to be a 'constitutionalist' or 'monarchist' view of the Greek War of Independence either. Constitutionalism in its first incarnation was a vehicle for the anti-Kapodistrian policy of the 'English' party⁶⁸ while its finest hour in 1843, when it managed to also rally the 'French' party and significant popular support, was marred by subsequent inefficient government on the part of its beneficiaries.⁶⁹ The quicksand of Greek politics did not favour the creation of a united and unwavering monarchist faction until the dissension between the prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos and King Constantine I on the country's foreign policy regarding the Great War. Greek historians then constrained their analytical faculties in writing for or against persons and political groups: for or against the *Philiki Hetaireia*, for or against

⁶⁷ See Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into battle : Republican imagery and symbolism in France*, (Cambridge, 1981).

⁶⁸ Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence*, pp.293-4.

⁶⁹ For the revolution of 1843 and its significance, see Petropoulos, *Politics and statecraft*.

Kolokotronis, for or against the primates. The national aspect of the Revolution remained an unassailable constant.

The War of Independence attained very early on the status of a founding myth, being canonized as a public holiday in 1838. This swiftness in sanctifying a generation that still commanded the political scene besides being a bold political move on the part of the King and his advisors, demonstrated the popular feeling. The first years of the celebrations were marked by great crowds and general merriment.⁷⁰ The element of unity was stressed by the press in the wake of these celebrations and contrasted to the usual particularistic stance that formed the day-to-day Greek reality. However, this narrow territorialist view of Greece was in large part due to the attitudes of that exalted generation who had exacerbated these tensions in their personal political struggles for authority. Moreover, despite the fact that most of the leading figures who had participated in the civil wars were not politically active, those that remained, as Alexandros Mavrokordatos or Ioannis Kolettis, along with second-stringers as Ioannis Makrygiannis and Demetrios Plapoutas, still exchanged verbal blows in the Greek Parliament in the debate on *autochthones* and *eterochthones*. Of course, these rather than being the results of some hereditary disposition to discord on the part of the Greeks or signs of inadequate government, were indications of political life, albeit at an admittedly nascent stage.

The Greek state may have been born a fragile entity, but it was nevertheless modelled and structured on its Western European counterparts. The Bavarian Regency, governing in the name of underage Otto I between 1833 and 1838 created a kingdom imitating the “centralized absolute monarchies favoured by the conservative powers of Restoration Europe”.⁷¹ The initial efforts to curb particularism and fashion a homogeneous nation-state were followed by successive governments throughout the nineteenth century with special attention being paid to the institutions of education and the army. It was in such a context that Philimon, Trikoupis, Paparrigopoulos and the other historians of the Revolution wrote. The construction of the administrative apparatus of the kingdom went hand-in-hand with the

⁷⁰ See below, ch.5, for some contemporary descriptions.

⁷¹ Kitromilides, “European political thought in the Making of Greek Liberalism”, p.12.

formation of its ideological infrastructure. For as we shall see later on, the eulogising of figureheads and instances of the Revolution, along with comparisons to heroic precedence from classical antiquity would constitute a key concept of Independence Day celebratory addresses sketching the outlines of a national identity.⁷² Finally, Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer's early challenge to the link between ancient and modern Greeks reinforced the value of the War of Independence as a founding myth, insofar as his attack was perceived as vilifying to the sum of the Greek nation.

In the end, most of the Greek historians who wrote in the nineteenth century on the War of Independence were personally connected to it in a number of ways. Ioannis Makrygiannis and Theodoros Kolokotronis, who wrote probably the most interesting memoirs, were significant figures – indeed the latter still remains the symbolic icon of the Revolution *par excellence*. Spyridon Trikoupis, Ioannis Philimon, Amvrosios Frantzis had taken active part in it. Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos was largely a spectator but had suffered the loss of his father and brother in the Ottoman reprisals in Constantinople. They cannot be accused in good faith of having deliberately misrepresented facts in order to shift the blame to the side of the Turks. Some foreign historians, as Francois Pouqueville, who we shall examine later on, wrote in a far more propagandistic spirit. Greek historians did not hesitate to castigate their compatriots' behaviour, even if in most of the cases these were their political or personal rivals. However, they all remained eager defendants of their romantic construct of the Revolution and their emphasis on the heroic aspects of the conflict reflected the growing necessities of an official national ideology. For to turn peasants into Greeks, the vision of unity in a national uprising was an indispensable element.

⁷² See below, ch.5, for the significance of celebratory addresses.

Building the consensus: Foreign historians

George Finlay: History as morality

George Finlay (1799-1875) was born at Faversham in Kent. He came from a Glasgow family and when his father died in 1805 he returned to Scotland, eventually growing up at the home of his uncle, Kirkman Finlay, at Castle Toward in Argyllshire. His early studies in Glasgow and Gottingen set him on a course for a career in law but his liberal preoccupations and involvement in liberal societies facilitated his travel to Greece to experience the Revolution in 1823. With the exception of a small absence he remained there for the duration of the War of Independence. He did not take part in actual fighting, being on the whole a keen observer. Deciding to permanently reside in Athens in 1829, he took active interest in the creation of the new state by assisting in rehabilitating the city in 1834. His most valued contribution though, was his *History of Greece*, especially the part on the Greek Revolution, which even today remains one of the key sources to the period.⁷³ By all means an exceptional personality, Finlay showed in his history an even-handed attitude towards both his native and adopted countries, retaining all the while a European kind of aloofness to certain aspects of a society in the Orient.

Finlay proved himself a thorough historian, in covering a broad range of subjects, in promptly organising the course of clear and precise arguments, and in presenting an overall satisfying structure. Douglas Dakin commended Finlay on his “great insight into the importance of economic factors, a thorough grasp of administrative history, and great subtlety of

⁷³ The British School at Athens, *George Finlay, A celebration of the Bicentenary of his birth. An exhibition Guide*, (Athens, 1999), pp.1-18.

treatment of the relationships between ideas, social changes and the actions of individuals”.⁷⁴ “Comment and generalisation” were his force, producing a “more stimulating and vigorous study” than Gordon.⁷⁵ There can be found however in Finlay’s work a trace of irony and hints of condescension concerning the Balkan nations. Greeks were “ambitious, intriguing, and presumptuous, and few were restrained by any moral principle in seeking self-glory and self-advancement”.⁷⁶ His idea of the *klephts*, armed bandits and prominent revolutionaries, was not a high one. He regarded them as “highwaymen and sheep – stealers”.⁷⁷ His views on the character traits of the people in Greece bordered on the exotic and he showed a tendency towards anecdotes stressing the peculiarity of places and customs.⁷⁸

Finlay discerned various causes for the outbreak of the Revolution, the chief one of them having been the failure of the rule of law. “The utter want of any judicial organisation” was considered as “the most striking feature in the Ottoman administration”.⁷⁹ On the part of the Greeks, an “appetite for revenge” and a “passion for liberty” were the main instigators of the uprisings.⁸⁰ The educational factor was mentioned, along with the dues to the English, French and American Revolutions in terms of circulation of ideas concerning nationality, civil liberties and independence. It was the expression of an “advancing civilisation”, inspiring to political

⁷⁴ Douglas Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes during the War of Greek Independence, 1821-1833*, (Thessaloniki, 1955), p.210.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.212. His defects were not small, either. According to Dakin he overrated the contribution of the masses, underrated that of the *klephts* and mistook particularism as evidence of democratic principles.

⁷⁶ George Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 2 vols., (London and Edinburgh, 1861), vol. II, p.284.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, I, p. 32. A detailed study of the *klephts* to be found in Ioannis Vlahogiannis, *Κλέφτες του Μωριά (1715-1820)*, (Athens, 1935). An interesting article also in B.P. Panagiotopoulos, «Νέα στοιχεία περί του θεσμού των κάπων εν Πελοποννήσῳ», *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας*, IX, (Athens, 1956), pp.78-85.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, II, pp. 186-7. Cf with Pouqueville, where such incidents form the body of the work.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, I, pp.118-9.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, I, p.118.

independence.⁸¹ Furthermore, it was also a matter of Providence: “the fullness of time had arrived”⁸² for the Greeks to lead a national and political existence. Morally, they were on the ascendant: “prepared to climb the rugged paths of virtue and self – sacrifice”⁸³ as opposed to the Turks, a race in moral and physical decline.

However, the Greek Revolution was not a mere insurrection of some few disaffected individuals or factions. It was a mass movement, “a movement of the people” as Finlay observed. The author stressed the endurance and courage of the people in comparison to the inadequacy of their leaders: “Greece at this conjuncture was saved by the constancy and patriotism of the people, not by the energy of the government or the valour of the captains”.⁸⁴ “Never in the records of states did a nation’s success depend more entirely on the conduct of the mass of the population”, he asserted.⁸⁵ Therein “the true glory of the Greek Revolution lay”.⁸⁶ To this popular movement all the lasting achievements of the war should be ascribed. Contrary to almost all other historians then, who solely attributed the revolution’s salvation to the Great Powers’ intervention, the author made it clear that the Allied powers themselves “merely modified the political results of a revolution which had irrevocably separated the present from the past”.⁸⁷

Separation from past practices was not absolute however. Those same people whose energy and perseverance the author commended, could turn into a “turbulent population” whose passions were “excited instead of being restrained”.⁸⁸ Finlay reported the massacres at the start of the revolution: in the space of a month that “it is estimated that from ten to

⁸¹ Finlay, *History*, I, p.204.

⁸² *Ibid*, I, p.127.

⁸³ *Ibid*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 355. The latter, combining “heroism and fraud, ought to be praised only in French novels”, Finlay wrote in vol. II, p.43.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, II, p. 381.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, I, p.283.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, I, p.283.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, I, p.216.

fifteen thousand Muslims perished in cold blood”.⁸⁹ The chief instigators of this conduct were the advocates of the *Philiki Hetaireia* although no further evidence than his word seems to support that. Their motive was lack of influence: “and, like men who believe their merits have been overlooked, they were irritable and violent”.⁹⁰ Moreover, Finlay went on to assert that “the extermination of the Turks by the Greeks in the rural districts was the result of a premeditated design” brought on by the spirit of vengeance the Hetaerists and certain men of letters propagated among the peasants.⁹¹ As he considered the *Hetaireia* a Russian design, Finlay was probably more severe than just in his contempt of Russian autocracy. But this did not change the fact that the Greeks had “by long oppression been degraded into a kind of Christian Turks”.⁹² Moreover, their historians “have recoiled from recording the crimes which the people perpetrated”, ignored the spirit of truth of Thucydides and Tacitus and violated the laws of morality.⁹³

Morality was Finlay’s central theme and the one he perceived as the driving force of history. Divine Providence, Finlay implied, did not act in an arbitrary manner. People’s deeds carried a certain weight; they had consequences and repercussions that could not be ignored. When moral standards were upheld, individuals and whole nations were proportionally rewarded, as was the case in the Greek Revolution. The Greeks were morally superior to the Turks, having to put up with impermissible excesses and lawlessness. This superiority coincided with a year of ascendancy, followed by a difficult season after the Greeks violated the moral code and perpetrated massacres. Because of these crimes, which lowered them from their initial moral high ground, in the end “[the Revolution’s] success was the consequence of peculiar circumstances”.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Finlay, *History*, I, p.188.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid*, I, p.187.

⁹² *Ibid*, I, p.235.

⁹³ *Ibid*, I, p.187. Probably an allusion to Trikoupi who professed writing in the spirit of Thucydides. To the extent of my knowledge massacres were reported; there was however a conscious effort to exonerate the nation of any responsibility.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, I, p.118.

There was a whole array of incidents throughout Finlay's work that revealed individual moral standards to determine the outcome of events. Take for instance Alexandros Hypsilantis and his lieutenant Karavia, who conducted themselves disgracefully and dishonourably. Their end, and that of their efforts in Wallachia-Moldavia could not have been an auspicious one: "rash ambition" brought "great calamities to the people".⁹⁵ Conduct showed character, Finlay professed. "An insatiable rapacity of honours" ⁹⁶ was Mavrokordatos's guide to catastrophe although his fate was not tragic as Hypsilantis's or Androutsos's. The latter, renowned *klepht* and major player during the first year of the revolution "pursued his own interest... without submitting to any restraint from duty, morality or religion".⁹⁷ As a result "in trying to overreach everybody he overreached himself and was easily overpowered".⁹⁸ His political opponents killed him after he was arrested for treason.

Finlay described the way in which the public became gradually interested in the Greek case. Before the war in Greece "all questions relating to the East were then beyond the domain of public opinion, and very little was known in England concerning the condition of the modern Greeks".⁹⁹ The travellers' tales remained inconclusive and Finlay's final judgement was that "the condition of the Greeks presented many anomalies".¹⁰⁰ The European public opinion became increasingly interested as the case was found to touch on a number of important subjects: "Mohammedanism and Christianity, tyranny and liberty, despotism and law".¹⁰¹ Moreover, the press had a chance, by bringing up the subject, to engage in political discussion "proclaiming that principles of political justice were applicable to Greeks

⁹⁵ Finlay, *History*, I, p.165.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, I, p.323.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, I, p.305.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, II, p.92.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, I, p.7.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, I, p.8.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, II, p.3.

and Turks which they dared not affirm to be applicable to the subjects and rulers in Christian nations”.¹⁰²

This affair was seen through a distorting mirror. Finlay’s testimony on Mavrokordatos’s reception in Britain where he was thought to be “the head of a powerful constitutional party” is evidence to that.¹⁰³ The nebulous ideology and shifting alliances of the ‘English party’ were far from the stable and responsible image Finlay’s phrase might have conveyed. In modern terms the ‘English’, ‘French’ and ‘Russian’ parties were rather factions comprised by loose groups dominated by charismatic individuals and their policies were directly influenced by the respective powers.¹⁰⁴ It is plain in this example that the political circumstances in Greece were being assessed in current European terms and paradigms and this train of thought could not possibly promote any real understanding of the situation. Of course, it would not be realistic to expect the European public to realise the particulars and peculiarities of an Oriental society. Nevertheless, this kind of approach did not facilitate things, something that Finlay did not fail to notice in his criticism on the *Philhellenes*.

Cautious as he was towards the *Philhellenes* Finlay showed an acceptance that was guarded at best. He spoke favourably of the regular infantry regiment that fought valiantly at Petta and gave their lives almost to a man, but commented unfavourably on their leaders’ decisions.¹⁰⁵ He did not hesitate to criticise Church, his long time friend, on his military abilities.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Finlay believed that

“the interference of foreigners in the affairs of Greece was generally unfortunate, often injudicious, and sometimes

¹⁰² Finlay, *History*, II, p.162. These projections of international questions to internal problems in the United Kingdom has been noted for the nineteenth century by Maria Todorova in *Imagining the Balkans*, (Oxford, 1997), p.100.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, II, p.33.

¹⁰⁴ For the foreign intervention in the War of Independence, see Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence*, chs.5-6.

¹⁰⁵ George Finlay, *A history of Greece from its conquest by the Romans to the present time, B.C. 146 to A.D. 1864*, (London, 1877), vol. VI, pp.264-270.

¹⁰⁶ Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes*, p.219.

dishonest. Few of the officers who entered the Greek service did anything worthy of their previous reputation.”¹⁰⁷

Disapproval of foreign intervention became evident in Finlay's treatment of the Great Powers' foreign policy, where he chastised Russian ambition, instigating bigotry and the violation of moral principles among Greeks in their conduct of the war.¹⁰⁸ However, those who were most severely castigated were individuals, the English *Philhellenes* who took part in the construction of two frigates for the Greek navy: Finlay accused them for nothing short of embezzlement.¹⁰⁹

If the conduct of foreigners had been at times reprehensible, that of revolutionary leaders and notables proved even worse.¹¹⁰ The clash of interests regarding power between politicians, chieftains and *klephts* was noticed from the early stages of the war. Already in early 1822, Finlay observed the different schemes being worked out by the leaders adding that “every subaltern officer and secondary politician had his own ends to gain”.¹¹¹ He profoundly disliked the *klephts*, who formed the bulk of the military. Theodoros Kolokotronis, for example, then as now the foremost popular icon of the Revolution, was portrayed as selfish, confusing justice with injustice and disliking law and order.¹¹² However, Finlay conceded he was a fitting person to be leader of irregulars being “ignorant of tactics and insensible of the value of discipline”.¹¹³ For Finlay the essentials of effective leadership were simple: political competence, experience and good intentions. *Klephts* and primates, military and political leaders, although being patriots, they lacked all that – and created more problems than they solved.

The way all these exercised authority and administrated revolutionary Greece, however, was not any different from the one they

¹⁰⁷ Finlay, *History*, II, p.154.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, II, part V, ch.1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, II, pp.155-157.

¹¹⁰ Finlay had written after the war that “the Greeks would infallibly become a great nation, if they had no government and no great ideas”. Cited in Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes*, p.213.

¹¹¹ Finlay, *History*, I, p.345.

¹¹² *Ibid*, I, p.189.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, I, p.193.

conducted their affairs under the Ottomans. A short time before the War of Independence, for instance, between 1812 and 1816, the rival factions of the primates Londos and Deligiannis did not hesitate at all in cooperating with the Ottoman governor of the Peloponnese in order to smash their opponents.¹¹⁴ This was not an isolated incident but far from being evidence of innate incompetence or moral degeneracy, it merely proved a realistic assessment of a situation where factionism and intrigue were legitimate political weapons. When the Revolution in 1823 seemed to have succeeded after two years of continuous victories, the matter of political authority remained unclear, as more than one groups now laid claim to it. It was continuity with past practices rather than a radical break with tradition that led Greeks to civil strife in 1824-1825.

To Finlay things concerning the civil strife were quite simple: “factious madness and shameless expenditure... rendered the English loans the prize and aliment of two civil wars”.¹¹⁵ The object of the wars was clearly pecuniary, no matters of principle or even differences in policy ranked as significant causes. The English loans were used to buy alliances and shift the balance of power between three main parties: those of the Hydra shipbuilders, the Peloponnese primates and the Rumeliot *klephts*. The author did not hold any of them in high estimation. To the Hydriots he ascribed sheer incapability¹¹⁶, to the primates “unprincipled selfishness”¹¹⁷, while the Rumeliots hired their services to the highest bidder.¹¹⁸ Consequences to the fighting capability of the Greeks were disastrous; the islands of Kasos and Psara “were abandoned to be conquered by the Turks” and neglect of the Peloponnese “prepared the Morea to be subdued by Ibrahim Pasha”.¹¹⁹

In the end, the success of the Revolution was considered as a balanced affair. The Greek independent state that came out of the war in 1832 did not grow according to the *Philhellenes'* expectations: “it has not

¹¹⁴ See Michail B. Sakellariou, *Η Πελοπόννησος κατά την Δευτέραν Τουρκοκρατίαν (1715-1821)*, (Athens, 1939), pp.247-252.

¹¹⁵ Finlay, *History*, II, p.26.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, vol. II, p.31.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, II, pp.31-32.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, II, p.28.

created a growing population and an expanding nation”¹²⁰ but remained a “diminutive Kingdom”.¹²¹ Finlay shared this idea of an inconclusive War of Independence with most Greek nineteenth-century thinkers, either because of the numerous Greeks still under Ottoman rule or because of the failure to establish a modern state by European standards. But the glass could be seen as half-full too. For Finlay the unassailable independence of the country, the establishment of popular institutions in monarchy and parliament and the growth of a national identity could be ascribed as the overall positive achievements and the lasting heritage of the Revolution.

Significantly enough, the War of Independence kept being assessed on the basis of expectations created, not results rendered, and was thoroughly identified with the independent state’s future course. “The struggle is not yet at an end, do not accept foreign customs” was a famous poet’s counsel to the young people, showing both the contemporary interest in lands considered as Greek patrimony, and his own anxiety over the Westernising process under way in the Kingdom.¹²² It was in this gap between imagination and reality, so common in the period of Romanticism, that the *Megali Idea* flourished. Irredentism and a ‘model kingdom’ became fuel for Greek national ideology in the rest of the nineteenth century.

Disenchantment with the results of the War of Independence among the inhabitants of the new state followed initial elation. The playful mode of Alexandros Rizos Ragavis, who thought aloud in 1839 which Constantinopolitan public buildings could be put to what use, was succeeded by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos’s resentment in 1871. The historian speaking at a memorial service, would recall a time when “vigorous and hopeful thirty years back, now old and stooping, we mourn on the grave of those contemporaries who have preceded us there, and sadder still, we mourn on the grave of our own hopes”.¹²³ It was not due to the sombre

¹²⁰ Finlay, *History*, II, p.382

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, p.67. The verse belongs to George Zalokostas.

¹²³ In Dimaras, «Η ιδεολογική υποδομή του Νέου Ελληνικού κράτους. Η κληρονομιά των περασμένων, οι νέες πραγματικότητες, οι νέες ανάγκες (1830-1880)» in *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός*, p.340 and Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, p.377, respectively.

surroundings that Paparrigopoulos's address sounded this desolate tone. Alexandros Soutsos, the archetype of the Greek romanticists in poetry, if not in life, wrote that "a coward and lazy Greece succeeds the Greece of Heroes and the Giants of old are followed by pygmies".¹²⁴ In such a disillusioned atmosphere George Finlay lived out his mature years and composed his *History of Greece*. Having taken part in the struggle to the extent of his powers and considering his adoptive country as "the scene of my boyish enthusiasm and the hopes of my matured years"¹²⁵ we can understand why a late reappraisal of his labour tasted bitter, "severe and cold, like the work of a disappointed enthusiast".¹²⁶ Of the latter, he was merely one of a host.

Thomas Gordon: A balanced approach

Thomas Gordon (1788-1841) was born at Cairness, the eldest and only surviving son of Charles Gordon of Buthlaw and Cairness in Lonmay, Aberdeenshire. A diligent soldier and an adventurer, he started his military career in the Scots Greys in 1808-1810, then travelled extensively in the European and Asiatic parts of the Ottoman Empire after inheriting a substantial fortune until 1813, when he served as a Staff Captain in the Russian army. Before Waterloo he applied for an appointment in Wellington's army but was turned down. He formed an initial bond to Greece by getting married to a half-Greek in 1816. In 1821, when news of the Revolution reached him in Paris, he did not hesitate to rush to Marseille, charter a ship, hire a few French officers and sail to Greece. He campaigned with the revolutionaries in the Peloponnese and took part in the siege of Tripolitza but retired from service after his remonstrations against the massacres following the fall of the city were not heeded. He was active in the London Greek Committee and founded another one in Aberdeen but

¹²⁴ Moullas, *Πήξεις και Συνέχειες*, p.50.

¹²⁵ Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes*, p. 209.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p.210.

did not return to Greece until 1826. Gordon campaigned again, leading the 1827 expedition to relieve Athens before Lord Cochrane's tactics brought the contingent to disaster. After the war, Gordon served in the Greek army, reaching the rank of major-general à la suite. He died in 1841, leaving one of the fondest memories among his contemporary Greeks.

As a historian, Gordon early on clarified his intention on writing a general history of the Revolution to fill the void left by hastily written accounts laden with "strong prejudices"¹²⁷ that had seen the light of day until then. This was probably the first work on the War of Independence to come out since the Treaty of London was ratified. It was therefore a text lacking any journalistic pretensions that characterised a whole array of books circulating in Europe while the war was still being fought. Its author was careful to make that distinction himself: commenting on Pouqueville's work, among others, he pointed out the latter's persistence in the relaying of local events and lack of painting the broad picture along with his writing for a "political purpose".¹²⁸ Indeed, contrary to Francois Pouqueville, there is little here that could disprove Gordon's objectivity. His own authority sprang from experiencing places, people and events firsthand, as he played an important part among the *Philhellenes*. As to his overall view of history, it was but a simple one: "to represent the Greek Revolution as it really was"¹²⁹ in a phrase that reminds one of Leopold von Ranke's aspirations.

Gordon's strong points were not insight or generalisation. He did not keep a constant overview of the field as Finlay did and, his noble intentions notwithstanding, the broad picture eluded him as well. Extremely detailed and well structured, his work was mainly a straightforward political history, recounting facts, not prone to generic comprehensive explanations of events. Gordon refrained from venturing into discussions on social or economic matters and, consequently, their influence on the Revolution's course is missing from his narrative. His military descriptions were lucid and precise. Gordon has to be credited with a marked tendency to view

¹²⁷ Thomas Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution*, 2 vols., (Edinburgh and London, 1832), vol. I, p. ii.

¹²⁸ Gordon, *History*, I, p. ii.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, I, p. iii.

things in more shades than black and white that permitted him to present the most finely balanced account of the war. It seems though that Gordon's wish, expressed as a kind of epilogue, to conclude some day his effort by chronicling the final chapters of the war after Navarino and the reign of Otho I never had a chance to materialise before his death.

What easily strikes the reader is the trouble Gordon went to, as Finlay before him, to establish an image of Oriental morals as the fundamental basis of understanding Greek society. The "weak moral perception in Greece"¹³⁰ was one of the milder expressions one encounters among foreign historians, travellers and correspondents but it still illustrates a world of perceived difference between the Balkans and Western Europe. Greek character, Gordon asserted, bore great similarities to that of the ancients but centuries of Turkish influence had dulled the people, making modern Greeks show "meanness, cunning, cowardice and dissimulation".¹³¹ "Factious and intriguing spirit ...is the curse of the Greek character"¹³² in this 'orientalised' version. Consequently, Greeks showed a narrow and selfish patriotism which "seldom glanced further than to the limits of their own province, island or canton".¹³³ Their tainted patriotism and other moral transgressions were the results of the tyranny they had to endure.

No matter how brute and unjust the government under the Turks though, it could be no excuse for all the "massacres and excesses" experienced in the course of the war. Despite his obvious discomfort, Gordon managed to present the reader with a relative view of things, avoiding in a great deal the vehement moral condemnation common in most of his colleagues. Moreover, he suggested such events should not be examined only in an Oriental but also a European perspective:

"at whatever period undertaken, the war must necessarily have been attended with massacres and excesses; which however culpable in themselves, or declaimed against by party zeal, were not, in fact, of a deeper dye, than deeds perpetrated in hundred

¹³⁰ Gordon, *History*, I, p. 231.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, I, p.33.

¹³² *Ibid*, I, p.117.

¹³³ *Ibid*, I, p.313.

times in the civil wars of Great Britain, France and Germany, as well as in the recent Spanish struggle against the ambition of Napoleon”.¹³⁴

Indeed, “every civilized nation has, in its turn committed equal barbarities”.¹³⁵ But his own purpose was not to write for “rendering exclusively odious one nation or party”.¹³⁶ His avoidance of a moral high ground did not make Gordon a cynic: “authority acquired and maintained by perfidy and cruelty”, he informed us, stands “on a frail basis”.¹³⁷ Nor did it mean that he condoned or justified actions of cruelty. “Dark spots” did exist and should be addressed and discussed in due course – but not inflated to the point of overshadowing all else.

Gordon had spotted these dark places early enough. In describing the state of Greece in the end of 1821 he did not feel that there was really much to inspire optimism. The revolutionaries were already divided “by a thousand petty passions and jealousies”.¹³⁸ The people expected “a panacea for their ills from the meeting of the National Assembly”¹³⁹. The ambition of the movement’s leaders had precipitated a constitution totally unfit for the existing state of the country, not so much out of their conviction to build a solid republic as out of a desire to secure a place for themselves in it.¹⁴⁰ It was with obvious regret that he observed that

“revolutions, like the one of which we are treating, although bright and dazzling when contemplated from a distance, disclose to a close and scrutinizing regard many dark spots, especially in a nation contaminated by long misrule and pernicious example”.¹⁴¹

He persistently noted that while “the Greeks are fond of asserting that few political crimes tarnished their revolution... they ought rather to affirm that

¹³⁴ Gordon, *History*, I, pp.76-77.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, I, p.313.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, I, pp. 185-194, 246-249. Quote from Gordon, *History*, vol. I, p.192.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, I, p.80.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, I, p.311.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, I, p.321.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, I, p.325.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, I, p.311.

little publicity was given to such delinquencies, for we could easily draw out a long and black scroll”.¹⁴² Gordon was not afraid to draw the scroll himself.

The ‘thousand petty passions and jealousies’ the author discerned in the beginning of the Revolution were to unfold later on in internecine hatred. According to Gordon, pre-existing divisions and aspirations to power were to be held accountable for the civil strife. It was actually particularism, the ‘narrow and selfish patriotism’ mentioned earlier, and power play, evident in the manipulation of the constitution, that facilitated the conflict. Personal character faults among those who constituted the government merely accentuated the problem. Count Metaxas was “a vile intriguer” and Petrobey Mavromichalis, while always having “the word ‘patriotism’ in his mouth, busily gratified his cupidity at the expense of his country”.¹⁴³ The members of the Executive branch of the government¹⁴⁴ “were no better than public robbers”.¹⁴⁵ As a rule, though, Gordon preferred to treat the civil war as a mainly political affair, recounting major events and their dire consequences to the Peloponnese, refraining from branding it an example in Oriental morals.

Although Gordon did not follow any late developments of the War of Independence in their fervent diplomatic labyrinths, his presence in Greece at the time guaranteed his continuing familiarity with the subject. Hindsight and knowledge of backstage procedures permitted him to see that while he concluded his history after Navarino and the “virtual emancipation...through formal recognition”¹⁴⁶ of Greece, the end of the Revolution was still far away because of foreign policy entanglements. Five years after the sea battle that had heralded the fortunate outcome of the insurgents’ efforts, Greece remained “a football for diplomacy”¹⁴⁷ in the give and take of the Eastern Question. Had he lived to see the turn of events in

¹⁴² Gordon, *History*, I, p.482.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, II, p. 23.

¹⁴⁴ Greek government during the Revolution consisted of two chambers (Legislative and Executive) before the arrival of Governor Kapodistrias in 1828. Their small numbers meant they functioned more as committees rather than a parliament.

¹⁴⁵ Gordon, *History*, II, p.73.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, II, p.503.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, II, p.503.

the era of the Crimean War and beyond, he would have probably also joined the ranks of disillusioned romantics that most of his friends and colleagues had by then become.

Pouqueville and the journalist's feeling of history

It is fitting for Francois Pouqueville (1770-1838) to follow Thomas Gordon as it permits us to contrast two radically different approaches to history by two quite opposite characters. Contrary to Gordon's distinguished and restless soldier, Pouqueville was emphatically a traveller. After studying medicine in Paris he followed Napoleon's scientific detachment in Egypt. On his return to France during convalescence he was captured by Algerian pirates and sent to the pasha of the Peloponnese and later on to jail in Constantinople from where he was released in 1801. He made his reputation with his 1805 work *Travels in Morea, Constantinople, Albania and many other places of the Ottoman Empire in 1798-1801*, which became a great success. He returned to the Ottoman Empire in the same year as French agent in the court of Ali Pasha of Epirus and remained there for ten years. Drawing from information his brother, French consul in Patras at the beginning of the Revolution, procured him, he wrote a history of the Greek Revolution that enjoyed an appeal to the European public and provided inspiration to many *philhellenes*.

Despite its early fame Pouqueville's work suffers from basic flaws owed to the way it was conceived. Pouqueville offered neither new material nor a reappraisal of a certain period within the Revolution, as Mendelssohn Bartholdy did for the Kapodistrias era, or as Finlay in his account of the Bavarian Regency and the first years of Otho I's reign. Still, Pouqueville may very well be an example, and a very good one at that, of a contemporary historian: his *History of the Greek Revolution* was published in France in 1824 in the midst of the war. Pouqueville's haste to deliver a work on an ongoing dispute recalls to mind present attitudes concerning hot spots around the globe. Pouqueville and a whole stream of others reporting from Greece and

later on, Italy, were the pioneers of a journalistic approach that presents us with purportedly informed and acute analysis soon after the most recent crisis. But Pouqueville's approach more than a series of dispatches from an embattled area. It did revolve around a central theme that returned periodically to the narrative like a *leitmotif*, adding an air of literary romance to the whole project.

To arrive at that in due course though, we have to examine Pouqueville's ideas on history first. His *credo* recalls Herodotus: "My duty is not to hide anything said but also not to believe in everything".¹⁴⁸ This professed impartiality would presumably leave the reader to decide himself whether the facts presented resemble the truth or not. It would be a straightforward enough principle, to be judged by its application, if the author would not seek to complicate matters and contradict himself in the process. Although he had declared that he would stay aloof from the conflict and present his case in an appropriate manner, his religious stance greatly influenced his opinion. A historian was like a prophet: "a higher voice commands me: 'If you fail to show evil, you shall have to answer for this sin'".¹⁴⁹ Accordingly, he presented his main theme, the antithesis between the Greek/Christian and Turk/Muslim element, with the fervour of a crusader.

Pouqueville discerned between the 'barbarous Turk' and the 'suffering Christian'. The Turks beheaded, raped, tortured, converted at sword point and bathed "in the blood of the people and ministers of the One True God"¹⁵⁰. Even the gentle and courageous ones, as was the case with one Ahmed Din, easily shed this semblance of civilisation and "reverted to the Turkish nature by impaling and roasting in slow fire some Christians" who fell into their hands.¹⁵¹ Although Greeks were most of the time viewed in an equally stereotypic way, Pouqueville treated them with leniency. In Greek massacres the style remained explicit enough, but the

¹⁴⁸ Francois Pouqueville, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, 2 vols., (First edition: Paris, 1824. Edition used: Athens, 1901), vol. A', p.20.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, A', p.50.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, A', p. 110.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, A', p. 122.

tone changed, abandoning verbose denunciations and giving the impression that only Turkish actions should be considered an affront to humanity. After all, it was in Turkey, not in Greece that “an honest man could not go unpunished”.¹⁵²

In this journalistic view of history, elements of inconsistency often crept up. Pouqueville was the sole historian of the Revolution to support the existence of the Hagia Lavra incident, a symbolic act that purportedly announced the revolt. The widespread popular belief on the Metropolitan of Patras raising a banner in the monastery to proclaim the revolt was not corroborated by any of his contemporaries. Most historians accept today that the Revolution did not start simultaneously along the Peloponnese on a prearranged date, but developed in a series of skirmishes going back to March 21.¹⁵³ Pouqueville’s description in which the metropolitan Germanos “had the colours of the Cross flown on the church”¹⁵⁴ has to be considered fictitious in its entirety. Dramatic or climactic moments were the author’s specialty since he was not, after all, merely writing a historical work but presented to his readers the romance of a war.

As a proper romance Pouqueville’s work seemed to display clear and precise limits: a beginning at Hagia Lavra, an end at Navarino and a middle filled up with stirring action scenes.¹⁵⁵ In his rush to follow Pouqueville exhibited lack of any reasonable structure. Take for example the siege of Patras during April 1821. Pouqueville’s view remained limited, no broad picture of the Revolution was attached, and the whole affair resembled a chronicle of individual cases and events where his brother featured prominently. Despite the great length devoted to the siege, estimations on essentials, as numbers of victims, or accurate dates did not appear in the narrative.¹⁵⁶ His preference for a subjective view of

¹⁵² Pouqueville, *Ιστορία*, A’, p. 127.

¹⁵³ See *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, vol. IB’, (Athens, 1977).

¹⁵⁴ Pouqueville, *Ιστορία*, A’, p. 14. Curiously, Douglas Dakin accepts this widespread myth without questioning it at all. See Dakin, *The Greek Struggle*, p.59.

¹⁵⁵ Vol. B’ of the 1901 Greek edition actually contains Mendelssohn-Bartholdy’s text on the relevant events after 1824. Apparently the early twentieth century editor saw fit to complete in this way a work that did not follow the story to its end...

¹⁵⁶ See for example Pouqueville, *Ιστορία*, A’, pp. 23-26.

developments over a spherical one was not a momentary lapse but was to appear throughout the work. When the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, Gregory V, was executed as a traitor by order of the Sultan along with other primates and members of the Church the author relied on the dramatic impact of the event, not its exact facts or context. Minute details carried the day instead of hints on its overall significance and this disjointed picture implied more a Christian saint's martyrdom than anything else. Pouqueville made his intentions clear in likening the circumstances of Gregory's death to those of Christ.¹⁵⁷ Sensational history rested on vivid images, not accuracy of details.

The great list of defects upon which we have focused does not mean Pouqueville's work is totally devoid of insightful moments. His long stay in the Orient, his experience of the people and culture were of obvious help in explaining the Westerners' conception of an ideal Greece and their disappointment in the actual one. According to him, the *Philhellenes* were not up to the task they had undertaken, because their civilised background and romantic aspirations rested on a nonexistent image of classical Greece. As a result instead of founding Plato's Republic they "damned the day the idea occurred to them to undertake the dangers of a people who wanted to regain their country before engaging in debates over state government".¹⁵⁸ Disillusioned, they left "damning the barbarity and ingratitude of the Greeks".¹⁵⁹ A third reason for their failure to achieve more was that some of them expected to draw profit from this situation: "they wanted to be appointed generals or colonels and... only few among them did not expect to get out of it wealthy".¹⁶⁰ Pouqueville however remained prone to generalisations not based on solid facts and could not have a comprehensive view of the conflict since he left early himself. Many *philhellenes* may have indeed quit Greece after the battle of Petta in 1822, but others returned

¹⁵⁷ Pouqueville, *Ιστορία*, A', p.70.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, A', p.154. The unsuccessful efforts of Colonel Stanhope, a Benthamite, towards freedom of press and a model constitution were criticized by his friend, Lord Byron. See Finlay, *A history of Greece*, vol. VI, p.327. Thomas Gordon in his *History*, vol. II, p.108 also refers to Stanhope and notes the inadequacy of certain *Philhellenes*.

¹⁵⁹ Pouqueville, *Ιστορία*, A', pp.264-265.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, A', p.264.

later, as Thomas Gordon, and others still, as Lord Byron, started involving themselves at a fairly late date for Pouqueville to record it.¹⁶¹

Nevertheless, these useful insights were most of the time lost into the tide of a narrative rife with crusading tones. Pouqueville was addressing his history to 'Christian Europe' and took care to show the conflict in terms of a religious war, with the intention of making his readership identify with the Greeks, the 'suffering Christians'. The dichotomy remains unique among the historians of the Greek Revolution, including Greeks. Indeed, neither Trikoupi nor Paparrigopoulos or Philimon made the stereotype of the 'barbarous Turk' against the 'suffering Christian' into their major argument. Pouqueville's uniqueness raises the question of its possible motives. He was a traveller with immense knowledge of Greece and extensive understanding of the culture and functioning of Ottoman society. He had lived in it for a long time and served as Napoleon's consul in the court of one of its most powerful functionaries, Ali Pasha of Epirus for ten consecutive years. Was his previous personal experience and imprisonment in Constantinople enough to make him so sensitive and instil these prejudices or were there other reasons?

A phrase of Thomas Gordon may offer a hint of a partial explanation. In his introduction he accused Pouqueville of writing to serve a 'political purpose', which with genuine nineteenth-century reticence he then refrained from revealing. To an informed contemporary reader the connection with party strife in Greece and the jostling between the Great Powers to exact more influence would not have been lost. Even a quick look through Pouqueville's work would suffice to establish his distaste for Great Britain: it was pictured as predominantly pro-Ottoman¹⁶², and thoroughly anti-Catholic (and thus, anti-French), in the custom of burning the Pope's effigy on Ash Wednesday.¹⁶³ "British policy never worked towards

¹⁶¹ See William St. Clair, *That Greece might still be free. The Philhellenes in the War of Independence*, (London, 1972), pp. 173-184 for 'Byron's Brigade'.

¹⁶² Pouqueville, *Ιστορία*, A', pp. 20, 56 respectively. Further examples of anti-Britishness in *ibid*, A', pp. 284-5, 440.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, A', p.55.

humanity's interest as an end but only as means",¹⁶⁴ Pouqueville proclaimed. At this point, between 1823 and 1825, two distinct factions operated in Greece, the one seeking its alignment with Britain, culminating in the 1825 Act of Submission, the other looking for connections with France in attempting to establish de Nemours, son of the Duke of Orleans, as King of a Greek state.¹⁶⁵ In this particular context, although Pouqueville was never cited as a major player in the game of influence, one cannot help but reconsider his professed impartiality. Implicit in the polemic tone of his work, in his blend of journalism and romance was a tip of the hat towards Catholic France, hinting at a crusade to save a suffering Christian Greece from both Muslim Turks and unscrupulous British. As both romantic traveller and French citizen Pouqueville would have seen this as his duty.

Mendelssohn Bartholdy and the Greek Revolution

Karl Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1838-1897), professor of history in the University of Freiburg, offered in the 1870s an example of academic history on the War of Independence, as a part of a greater composition examining Greece from the fall of Constantinople until his contemporary times. Mendelssohn Bartholdy's work would prove a useful guide for a reader who would like to obtain an extended view of the last years of the War of Independence and Otho I's reign until 1835. The German historian's work stands out for a number of advantages due to the author's academic background. It should be commended on the important context he provided on Austrian and Prussian perceptions and foreign policy towards the Revolution. Mendelssohn Bartholdy's detailed and vigorous description of Kapodistrias's period as governor of Greece probably forms the best part of his labour although his treatment of the Governor himself can be

¹⁶⁴ Pouqueville, *Ιστορία*, A', p.270.

¹⁶⁵ See Konstantinos Rados, *Περί το στέμμα της Ελλάδος. Η απόπειρα των Ορλεανιδών, 1825-1826*, (Athens, 1917). Also Dakin, *The Greek Struggle*, pp. 156-166; Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes*, pp.98-9.

considered as rather scornful and prejudiced.¹⁶⁶ To his credit also must be ascribed an introduction that gives a lot of information considering the literary and ethnographical background, a necessary context that other histories were lacking.¹⁶⁷ A rich store in anecdotes and an analysis of Greek society based on a repetition of stereotypes backed by widely circulated rumours and cautionary tales should be considered his most obvious deficiencies.¹⁶⁸

Mendelssohn Bartholdy's overall impression was that Greek independence was the result not so much of moral superiority – because he considered Greeks to show still “ample traces of slavish character and moral degeneracy”¹⁶⁹ – but a combination of Turkish decline, will to freedom, and the mediation of the Great Powers. True to this view he described the massacres as a “race war that would stop only when one of [the opponents] was destroyed or separated from the other for ever”.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, he attested that this idea of a ‘race war’ in Greece prevailed throughout Europe after the Chios massacres in the summer of 1822 when “the Osman tribe provided once more clear evidence of its incompatibility to European civilisation”.¹⁷¹

Bartholdy subscribed to the idea that internal discord in subsequent years should be attributed more “to personal interests than disagreement on principles”.¹⁷² The military leaders, especially Theodoros Kolokotronis, professed representing the nation and expected to share political administration with the primates. The author described the factions and alliances between the primates, *klephts*, Phanariots and Greeks arriving from Western Europe. He showed in exceptional detail the lack of trust on the part of native Greeks towards their fellow countrymen returning from

¹⁶⁶ He might have decided after all to take Finlay's advice when they met in Athens: “Ne dites pas trop de bien de lui”. In Karl Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, 2 vols., (Athens, 1895), vol. B', p.1255.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, A', Book I, Ch. II and III.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, A', Book I, Ch. III.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, A', p.83.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, A', p.341.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, A', p.392.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, A', p.371.

Western Europe. This stance was the result of a traditional peasant and mountaineer attitude towards city people, especially intellectuals. Mavrokordatos or Negris were men of letters, not fighters, and many considered that a disadvantage in a society where honour conferred by arms, as in war or brigandage, was the highest praise. Sturdy *klephts* like Kolokotronis, found it very difficult to understand why a person clearly unable to bear arms like Mavrokordatos should rise to high political offices and dictate the conduct of war; it was far more easier for the old *klepht* to mock the latter's European dress and express his uncontrollable urge to throw lemons at him.¹⁷³

To Mendelssohn Bartholdy it was obvious that while Greeks were grateful for any and all moves that contributed to their independence, they still relied on their own stereotypes determining their attitude towards the *Franks* and their habits. Regular infantry, for instance, a Western European innovation the *philhellenes* introduced, never won the military chiefs' confidence, who were warriors, not soldiers. To them it was a ludicrous novelty and they showed more than once a genuine aversion to pitched battles: guerrilla tactics were the only reasonable method of fighting. The defeat of the Philhellenes Battalion at Petta, although owing more to logistic and leadership problems than to their tactics, reduced the popularity of regular troops even more.¹⁷⁴ As a result, other *philhellenes*, as Charles Fabvier, who tried to form such a corps later on were respected for their courage but considered somewhat out of touch with reality. But the *Franks*, in the generic and rather pejorative term used to describe Westerners, were in any case thought inconsistent and certainly not resilient enough to endure the hardships of war: Georgios Karaiskakis expressed it eloquently enough before Thomas Cochrane's lost battle – and his own death – at Phaliron in 1827.¹⁷⁵ Of course, these stereotypes gained weight by the inability of certain Europeans to adapt in a society that greatly differed from their own.

¹⁷³ Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Ιστορία*, Α', p.410, 486, Β', p.1008.

¹⁷⁴ For the battle of Petta and the Philhellene Battalion see St.Clair, *That Greece might still be free*, pp.82-102.

¹⁷⁵ "These Franks and their impatience will be the death of us". In Trikoupis, *Ιστορία*, Δ', p.142; Paparrigopoulos, *Ιστορία*, ΣΤ', p.177.

Thomas Gordon brought up the example of Colonel Stanhope, a staunch Benthamite, who urged towards forming a constitution in the American model at a time the revolutionaries were in dire need of gunpowder.¹⁷⁶

Mendelssohn Bartholdy came rather late into the historiography of the Greek revolution, publishing his *History of Greece* between 1870 and 1874, without the ambition to break the mould in which it was cast. His contribution had more to do with his own German origins and the source material he used than with any intentions to produce an innovative work. Unlike most of the historians we have encountered so far, he was an academic, not a man of action. He was in fact born after the end of the War of Independence, not having any direct relation to it. The results of his research showed a determined and diligent scholar who dedicated much energy in clarifying the diplomatic entanglements and repercussions of the Greek Revolution, paying less attention to internal political affairs. In Mendelssohn Bartholdy we may detect the development of components common to both Greek and foreign historians of the War of Independence: the will to national freedom on the part of Greeks, their questionable morality, the cultural gap between them and the Westerners. What was missing, not just from him, but from all his late nineteenth-century colleagues was a rethinking of the forces behind the movement for independence. Such an interpretation would not appear until well into the next century.

What comes out most forcefully in foreign historians' conceptions of the Greek War of Independence is its dimension as a romantic myth all around Europe. This attitude may in part be regarded as having been prepared since the age of Enlightenment. Classical Antiquity was then identified with Greece – and it was Greece that had revolted in these early Romantic times. Most of the European volunteers then were not merely arduous early Romanticists but also products of a late Enlightenment movement in having been indoctrinated in the splendours of ancient Greece before departing to fight alongside modern Greeks in a peculiar Grand Tour. There were also those left behind who organised Greek committees

¹⁷⁶ Gordon, *History*, II, p. 108.

and raised money in a double imaginative feat, that of the glory of the ancient civilisation next to the modern glories of the battlefield: Charles Krazeisen's sketch of Greeks defending the ancient ruins of Corinth plainly illustrates this view.¹⁷⁷ Whether these were the first to be disillusioned or the volunteers themselves it is difficult to ascertain: in 1826 these committees were thought as nests of corruption.¹⁷⁸

The reality of Oriental culture and society remained for the most part inaccessible to most *Philhellenes*, even those who spent a great amount of time there, as evident in the moralistic tales that Finlay, Gordon, Pouqueville recounted in their histories. True, they were not prepared for such a radically different cultural context but they also brought with them their own representations and prejudices. There was indeed admiration and comradeship between the *klephts* and the *Philhellenes* but both retained their own customary worldviews, as evident in Georgios Karaiskakis's distrust of the 'Franks' quality in the field or Colonel Stanhope's insistence on the dire need of a constitution. In the end, *Philhellenism* created its own romantic myth of modern Greece – almost as a counterpart to the founding myth the Greeks made of the Revolution themselves – only to demolish it later on when its inaccuracies became evident.

The foreign historians of the Greek War of Independence wrote for the most part in this gap between the ideals of their youth and the reality of their matured years. Most of them had fought on the side of the Greeks and some even chose to make their abode there after Independence. However, their historiographical efforts to approach the Revolution remained inconclusive insofar as they failed to produce an alternative historical model. Finlay, Gordon and Pouqueville, all accepted a national revolution as an unassailable reality without juxtaposing it effectively with the phenomenon of particularism. As a result their interpretations of the civil wars did not proceed to a deeper level, exactly as in the works of their

¹⁷⁷ Plate 2 in St. Clair, *That Greece might still be free*, facing p.39, originally from Krazeisen Charles, *Portraits des Grecs et des Philhellenes*, (Munich, 1828-29).

¹⁷⁸ See Plate 9 in St. Clair, *That Greece might still be free*, facing p.183, where faith, hope and charity have been turned into a money-making machine with numerous recipients in Britain.

Greek counterparts. Despite their great experience of the Orient they were not able to make use of this knowledge to get an understanding of the fundamental functions of society. They continued to look at it under western eyes, through the lenses of the dichotomy between civilisation and barbarity and the undemanding solution of moral degeneration. Finlay, who was probably the most perceptive of them all, reserved indeed a much more positive approach to Greece and the Greeks in his private conversations and opinions.¹⁷⁹ Publicly though he remained his always acerbic self, incensing Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos to the point of pronouncing him a “weird *Philhellene*”. Let us remember that in his *History*, Finlay retained a rigid view that regarded Greeks as ‘Christian Turks’ in their decline of the Ottoman times.

In the end, Thomas Gordon was right in his observation on the ‘dark spots’ of events that may seem as bright and clear only from afar. The War of Independence was not indeed such a bright event, as both Greek and foreign historians demonstrated. However, their inherent merits and limits determined the way they portrayed it: the former in building on it a consensus as a symbolic beginning for a modern Greek national identity, the latter as a partial failure, stripped from its initial romantic background that had drawn many Europeans to it. As far as their efforts are to be considered, many of the dark places they had spotted remained dark even after they had tried to throw some light on them.

The breach of the consensus: Ioannis Kordatos

Writing in the 1920s, Ioannis Kordatos (1891-1962) was the first propagator of Marxist historiography in Greece. Socialist ideas had a rather short history until then, their first adherents emerging in the second half of the 1870s, an era of attempts at industrializing which generally went awry.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes*, pp.213-4.

¹⁸⁰ For the development of Socialist ideas in Greece and the circumstances leading to the formation of the Communist party, see Panayiotis Noutsos, *Η Σοσιαλιστική σκέψη στην*

Kordatos, who was active in the socialist cause since the early 1900s, especially in the intellectual debates on *demoticism* – the official adoption of a simpler type of language – became the first Secretary General of the Communist Party in 1922, elected some months before being arrested and sent to jail for the next year. On his release, he disagreed with certain aspects of party policy and resigned, making his presence felt only occasionally during the following decade. Despite his acknowledged deficiencies, the sum of his work provided new lines of interest and otherwise stimulated the Greek historical discipline with the rudimentary conceptual tools of an alternative approach.

Kordatos' language, structure and goal were equally simple. His main point was to procure a Marxist narrative on the Greek Revolution as a counterpoint to bourgeois historiography. Ambitions notwithstanding, the work lacked a detailed prologue dealing with theory and methodology and charting the argumentative course of the text. The simplicity and lax discipline of it gave a clue not only to the author's capabilities but also to his public. Like Paparrigopoulos, Kordatos was a gifted amateur, not prone to weigh his work with careful footnotes or bibliography for further reading. He wrote 'for the benefit of the public', for the spreading of new ideas and different ways of thinking. It was "grammar school pupils and teachers" who "were persecuted by the police"¹⁸¹ for reading his book. Written by the Secretary General of the Communist Party it was not merely a historical, but to a greater degree a political text.

As a popularising book, fit for challenging established historiographical opinions and authorities, it still stands out today. It did exercise a similar function to Paparrigopoulos's history, although it is true

Ελλάδα; George Leontaritis, *Το ελληνικό εργατικό κίνημα στον Α' Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο*, (Athens, 1978); Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou, *Ο Γ.Σκληρός στην Αίγυπτο*, (Athens, 1988). A case study of early socialist formation can be found in Lito Apostolakou, " 'All for one and One for All': Anarchists, Socialists and Demoticists in the Labour Centre of Volos (1908-1911) in Philip Carabott (ed.), *Greek Society in the making, 1863-1913. Realities, Symbols and Visions*, (Aldershot, 1997).

¹⁸¹ Ioannis Kordatos, *Η κοινωνική σημασία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης του 1821*, (First edition: Athens, 1924. Edition used: Athens, 1946), p.10. See also Kordatos, *Νεοελληνική Πολιτική Ιστορία*, (Athens, 1925).

that in rigor, discipline and erudition it could never be its par. However, not the least of its functions was to provide the newly founded Communist Party with past examples of reform struggles: to seek classes¹⁸², parties¹⁸³ or “popular-democratic movements” in the Byzantine Empire¹⁸⁴ was a deliberate effort of mythologizing the present, looking for straight lines and avenues in history from pre-modern to modern times in order to justify contemporary social attitudes with calculated interpretations. But Kordatos was not a refined Marxist historiographer. Anxious to follow the lines of a certain theory he did not pay due attention to facts and remained more of a copier than an original thinker. There was even a certain poverty of theory evident, for instance, in pronouncing Ali Pasha of Jannina, a rather dark and contradicting figure, as “the representative of the rising bourgeoisie”.¹⁸⁵

The overall scheme of Greek history that the author presented demanded to tackle the subject of national continuity before proceeding in his analysis of the Revolution. Among Marxist historians this matter still remains unresolved. Paparrigopoulos’s format makes them uncomfortable but there is no satisfying alternative. Their interests revolve around Modern Greece and they seldom venture into the pre-modern period to underline their distrust of a full continuity they deem unconvincing. Kordatos though, being at the start of the track, followed another trail, turning back to the Enlightenment interpretation of Greek history for support.¹⁸⁶ In his opinion the Byzantine Empire was hardly a Greek polity and Greek nation existed before industrialisation.¹⁸⁷ Continuity as described by Paparrigopoulos and Zampelios in the familiar tripartite scheme was not valid : “this distinction is unstable and, moreover, a figment of the imagination”.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² Kordatos, *Η κοινωνική σημασία*, pp.36-37.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p.47. Kordatos distinguished three parties: ‘a feudal-aristocratic’, a ‘bourgeois’ and a ‘plebeian’ one.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, pp.39-40.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p.92.

¹⁸⁶ See above, ch.2, for an analysis of the Enlightenment version of Greek history in conjunction with Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos’s proposed format.

¹⁸⁷ Kordatos, *Η κοινωνική σημασία*, p.52.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.28.

Kordatos borrowed the idea but failed to acknowledge his debts. Although he described the old scheme word for word, he neither mentioned the Enlightenment nor any of its numerous nineteenth-century propagators. Rigas Velestinlis and Adamantios Korais were called in as respectable names to prove that no historic memory of Byzantium as Greece had survived among nineteenth-century Greeks¹⁸⁹ – but Kordatos failed to observe their denial was due to the Gibbonian tradition that branded the Byzantine Empire as declined and degenerate. In a way then, Kordatos's approach on that matter was Enlightenment turned on its head.

In his actual account of the War of Independence his main concern was to prove that it was mostly an affair of class warfare between peasants and the great landowner class. On the nature of the revolution Kordatos generally remained unclear. He proclaimed it a “national uprising”¹⁹⁰ only to observe a little later that most Phanariots lacked “national consciousness”¹⁹¹, the clergy and the primates favoured the Turks and the bourgeoisie, after preparing and instigating the revolt betrayed the cause.¹⁹² Rounding up the arguments, this left only peasants as patriots *par excellence* and the main revolutionary force. Did this make the War of Independence similar to the French Revolution when the *troisième état* declared themselves *la nation* in the Convention leaving out the aristocracy and clergy? Not really, because the Greek “national uprising” was rife with what Kordatos termed “peasant-popular revolts”¹⁹³: the “popular masses” revolted but “along with national liberation the people wished for a social one too. The shackles of national and social oppression should be torn down”.¹⁹⁴ Whereas conventional historiographers stressed the concordance of Greek people and the receding of social or particularistic tensions before a common enemy, Kordatos argued on their dissimilar standing and interests that affected their uprising. The idea seemed intriguing and one would expect it to give rise to a lively

¹⁸⁹ Kordatos, *Η κοινωνική σημασία*, p.62.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.100.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, p.101.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, p.213.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, p.156.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, pp.157-158.

discussion of the civil strife. However, the author decided to give it an altogether different twist.

Thus, Kordatos viewed the civil war in 1824-1825 as class struggle. However the only evidence he cited on that was the people's eager participation:

“these were clearly class struggles which in many cases resembled party antagonisms and although seeming rather more serious than most, they were for the most part class affairs; this is why the clashes took a massive character”.¹⁹⁵

This kind of analysis is as much flawed as Trikoupi's attempt to downplay the civil strife's significance. While both of them professed to accurately interpret their sources, each with his own conceptual tools, they both produced results rather fitting certain political necessities of the moment than doing justice to the material at hand.

The ‘peasant-popular revolts’, for one, were not on the whole convincing. It is true that during the War of Independence sentiments against the primates and the merchant class were at times running high. Most historians of the revolution related the incident at Vervena, where the people threatened to kill the primates because they had strongly disagreed with Demetrios Hypsilantis¹⁹⁶. The same holds for the revolution's outbreak in Hydra, where primates and great naval merchants procrastinated, having second thoughts for the whole project, and the inciting role of Antonios Oikonomos in rousing the people.¹⁹⁷ Both instances were seen in the account of Kordatos not as disjointed, random events in the revolutionary process, but as a conscious attempt on the part of the subaltern classes to wrest the initiative and power from the hands of the primates.¹⁹⁸ What the author chose to ignore was that the same people who backed Oikonomos, later sided against him motivated by the primates, and Kolokotronis easily mollified those gathered at Vervena. In both cases, it was hardly the way

¹⁹⁵ Kordatos, *Η κοινωνική σημασία*, p.210.

¹⁹⁶ See for example, Trikoupi, *Ιστορία*, Α', pp. 351-52.

¹⁹⁷ Kordatos, *Η κοινωνική σημασία*, pp.179-184.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp.181-186.

social revolutions go. The fault of Kordatos was to identify from the beginning mass participation with social revolution.

This misconception brings us to his terminology and its relation to the nature of the Greek Revolution. The following excerpt is probably one of the most lucid the author provided on the subject :

“Surely the revolution of 1821 turned out to be a social one too. Unfortunately, the bourgeoisie proved to be its traitors. As time moved on they allied themselves with the *kotzabashis* [the primates], thus diluting the struggle’s content and aims and preventing it from realising its potential in full”.¹⁹⁹

Here, Kordatos’s position seems quite simple and straightforward although the type of alliance he described fits more the 1848 ‘springtime of the people’, particularly its second, ‘law and order’ phase. However, the text’s greatest difficulty is terminology. In most other cases, preventing us from gaining a full understanding is a number of terms for which the only explanation is their presence in the text : ‘peasant-popular’, ‘bourgeois-great-landowner’, ‘oligarchs’, ‘the people’. Their content not only remained vague throughout the narrative, but the author saw fit to use them as interchangeable. ‘Oligarchs’, ‘primates’ and ‘bourgeois-great landowners’ were considered as signifying the same social strata and employed for variety reasons only. Who exactly these ‘people’, ‘oligarchs’, ‘reactionaries’ were, and what was the relationship between them, if any, we never get to know. Kordatos rendered his own case opaque, turning terms into mere words and arguments into unsophisticated slogans.

Fragmentary and undisciplined, at times even sloppy, Kordatos’s work is more valuable today as a differing perception than as a noteworthy piece of historiography. Even in his day it was seen more as a challenge than a significant alternative of established views and ideas.²⁰⁰ However, this was to be its foremost contribution and lasting inheritance: the choice of a differing opinion on a crucial subject of identity and the ability of viewing history as a field where social, economic and cultural aspects, not just politics, diplomacy and biographies, could and should be examined. Of

¹⁹⁹ Kordatos, *Η κοινωνική σημασία*, p.213.

²⁰⁰ See below, pp.214-221 for its short-term impact on historiography.

course, Kordatos himself did not achieve this. It was rather his legacy, bequeathed to people who followed in his footsteps and worked in these fields.

The breaching of the consensus among the Greek historical community over the nature of the Revolution, though, cannot be considered as serious a turning point as Paparrigopoulos's recasting of Greek history. For years to come the Communist party would lead a hazy existence at the borders of legality, so the works of Marxist historians would either be discouraged or persecuted. The impact of the Great War in Greece shattered the political scene. The bitter chasm between Venizelos and King Constantine was topped by the consequences of military defeat in Asia Minor. Socially as well as politically, the Greek 1920s stand as a watershed between the *belle époque* and the disenchantment of the 'short twentieth century'. Seen in such context the appearance of a Marxist historiographer could only be a sign of changing times.

The challenge accepted: Daskalakis, Pipinelis, Sakellariou and the refutation of a 'bourgeois revolution'

Insofar as Kordatos's books were a bold statement on both ideology and historical discipline one could expect a swift denunciation and considerable backlash from its opponents at all fronts. Kordatos and his willing refuters wrote in the aftermath of the War in Asia Minor and the ensuing downfall of the *Megali Idea*. Along with feelings of despair caused by the magnitude of the defeat and destruction came indignation and anger directed against those who were thought responsible. The 'revolution' proclaimed by returning army units, sought out a quick catharsis and in the trials that followed, six of the highest cadres in army and government, the Commander-in-Chief G. Hatzianestis and the former prime minister Demetrios Gounaris among them, were found guilty and executed.

Constitutional monarchy was abolished by referendum, replaced by a Republic in 1924, the year of the first edition of Ioannis Kordatos's work on the War of Independence. It is significant that a re-evaluation of the Greek Revolution and the subsequent debate on it took place in such troubled times. Older certainties and a whole way of thinking indeed, had been swept away and it was a moment to turn inwards, examine and appraise the past to indicate possible faults, responsibilities and propositions on a future course. What had failed were not merely a military campaign but key aspects of national ideology.

Nevertheless, there were many who were far from prepared to acknowledge Marxism as either a preferred political alternative or a useful tool for historical analysis. Common ground between Apostolos Daskalakis, Panayotis Pipinelis and Michail Sakellariou is certainly their adherence to, indeed, the sacrosanct of the nation. Otherwise, their intentions, objectives and methods vary demonstrably, from Pipinelis's monarchist interpretations of history to Sakellariou's clarity and consistency of discipline. Daskalakis's work was an amateurish effort while Sakellariou's was a thesis prepared for the University of Athens only to be turned down for obscure reasons.²⁰¹ Pipinelis wrote a political history of the War of Independence, Daskalakis examined the causes and factors leading to the conflict itself, while Sakellariou chose to present a case study of a selected province in the century preceding the Revolution. More or less, all made clear their belief in a pre-existing Greek national consciousness, with Sakellariou being the most reserved and Daskalakis the most militant, to the extent of propagating the reality of a Greek state-within-a-state in Ottoman times. It was their fundamental antithesis to Kordatos's suggestions though, clearly if not always explicitly stated in their introductions²⁰², that justifies exploring them under the same heading.

²⁰¹ In his introduction the author hints at political motives. Sakellariou, *Η Πελοπόννησος*, p.ζ.

²⁰² Daskalakis, *Τα αίτια και οι παράγοντες της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως του 1821*, (Paris, 1927), p.5; Pipinelis, *Πολιτική Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασεως*, (Paris, 1927), p.8; Sakellariou, *Η Πελοπόννησος κατά την δευτέραν τουρκοκρατίαν (1715-1821)*, (Athens, 1939), pp.35-6.

Daskalakis vehemently denied any claims on the Greek Revolution having any social overtones from the very first sentence: “The Greek Revolution of 1821 is neither a ‘social movement’, as the great French Revolution, nor an ‘independence movement’, as the one of the American states, but remains clearly and unassailably a ‘racial movement’”.²⁰³ However confusing this may sound, he was not a racist. As it was going to appear a little later, when he stated that “it is natural for the slavery of a race...to procure an unwavering and unalterable cause of national revolution”,²⁰⁴ he belonged to an older tradition of Greek intellectuals that used ‘race’, *gens* [Γένος] and ‘nation’ to denote the same concept. This initial mishandling of a major statement, although not crucial at the time of the publication, can be seen today as an example of the awkwardness of arguments that proves to be the most consistent quality of his work.

The basic contentions of Kordatos that Daskalakis set out to undo were three: the absence of a national identity in the Ottoman era, the instigation of the Greek Revolution by a bourgeois class and the primacy of economic factors in history on which the previous suggestion rested upon. To counter the argument of the absence of a Greek nation before the industrialisation Daskalakis asserted that a Greek national consciousness was already in place right after the fall of Constantinople. Byzantium was a “Greek empire” containing a Greek nation that never considered its captivity as permanent or “lost the idea of its independence”.²⁰⁵ The tools used to corroborate that remind one of the anti-Fallmerayerists of the previous century, as ethnography proved a key component in his approach. Daskalakis invoked popular songs, which he considered as “popular sagas of historical value”, traditions and even prophecies, as evidence of a national consciousness and its diffusion among the populace.²⁰⁶ Those who acted on its existence were the *klephts* and *armatoloi*, armed bands of bandits living a hard life according to the mountaineer ethos, sometimes being hunt down,

²⁰³ Daskalakis, *Τα αίτια και οι παράγοντες*, p.5.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.8.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.7. Also in p.8, more forcefully: “The Greek national consciousness existed in a continuous and unbroken way from the abolition of the Greek empire from the Turks to the recreation of a Greek state”.

sometimes employed by the state. In Daskalakis's view however they formed a mountain "armed society" and "a state within a state"²⁰⁷, a ghost Greek polity during Ottoman times that was the equivalent of the professed compact national identity.

On the ideological front matters did not look so well. Kordatos had used the pre and post-Revolutionary obsession with ancient Greece and the absence of any positive identification of Byzantium as Greek to maintain that such a notion, and consequently, any concepts of a nationality spanning the ages, did not exist in the Ottoman era. Daskalakis countered with the absurd contention that all this was a brilliant ploy on the part of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century intellectuals in order to secure European endorsement for the War of Independence. Otherwise, "they [the Europeans] would not hesitate to abandon the Orthodox subjects of the Turks to their fate, if the latter emerged as 'descendants of the Byzantines'".²⁰⁸ Finally, to discredit the materialist view on the primacy of economic factors, he put forward the significance of national ideals (homeland, religion, will to freedom) and the "personal factor" – the contribution of exceptional individuals to the historical process. After all, it was the people who were the pioneers. The bourgeois may have been more conscious of their Greekness, but they invariably followed in the wake of developments, they did not lead.²⁰⁹ Therefore, it was not the war of some regions or certain classes but it belonged to "the Greek race as a whole".²¹⁰

Panayotis Pipinelis had also realised that to argue from the facts and events of the War of Independence itself would not result in a strong case for a national revolution. Not necessarily because Kordatos was right – Pipinelis condescendingly hinted at his work as "enthusiastic creative fancy"²¹¹ – but because, as Sakellariou was to point out a decade later, these matters could not be decided upon without detailed research of new primary materials. Despite the title professing it to be a political history of the Greek

²⁰⁶ Daskalakis, *Τα αίτια και οι παράγοντες*, pp.10-16, 63-4.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, pp.59-60.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.38.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, pp.20-1.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.90.

Revolution, almost half of Pipinelis's book was devoted in tracing the roots of different social strata and groups (*kotzabashis*, clergy, bourgeoisie and *klephts*) in pre-Revolutionary Greece.²¹² Insofar as the main social, economic and ideological factors contributing to the War of Independence were developed in these times it could be said that "the political history of the Revolution is above all the history of the Turkish domination"²¹³. Meanwhile, the existence of an early Greek national consciousness predating the emergence of a bourgeois class, as evident in the numerous revolts during the Ottoman era and the *klephts* activities²¹⁴, was for Pipinelis the essential proof of the "historical inaccuracy" in which Marxist analysis had embarked on.²¹⁵ His alternative to Marxism however, was merely a return to the Rankean principles: to avoid all complicated schemes as unnecessary and reject in effect any philosophy of history.²¹⁶

Pipinelis's answer to Marxism then was essentially a retrogression to an ideal constitution of ideology and society that unfortunately existed only on a theoretical plane. This became especially clear in what underlay the structure of his whole work. Leading the reader through the meanderings of a pre-Revolutionary Greece and Revolutionary politics, Pipinelis never lost a chance to trumpet the benefits of monarchy for a given society²¹⁷, but kept looking for political legitimacy to the Revolution and, indirectly, even further back, to Byzantium. He employed Pavlos Karolidis's argument, that at the time a monarch was not valued so much for political reasons but "for reasons of deeper national moral significance" in linking the Revolution to the Byzantine Empire.²¹⁸ Indeed, Revolutionary Greece was, according to Pipinelis the "natural successor of the old empire".²¹⁹ Royal authority then was a powerful traditional institution in Greece, "superior to social classes

²¹¹ Pipinelis, *Πολιτική Ιστορία*, p.8.

²¹² *Ibid*, chs.1-4, 6.

²¹³ *Ibid*, p.8.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp.86, 101-9.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.87.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.90.

²¹⁷ At the time he was writing the Greek royal family was still in exile.

²¹⁸ Pipinelis, *Πολιτική Ιστορία*, p.188.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.190.

and tapping its power directly from the national consciousness”²²⁰, the only real warrant for a solution to the “social question”. Even though his arguments on the monarchy as selflessly intervening among the social classes to restore social balance, were less than persuasive Pipinelis was to devote a whole chapter in analysing the advantages of the “royal solution”, apparently as an alternative to the communist one.²²¹ His ending, more than re-enacting the atmosphere of the end of the War of Independence in Otho I’s triumphant disembarking in Nafplion in 1833, was in all probability an imaginary rendition of a glorious return of the royal family in his present-day Athens.

Sakellariou, on his part, as shown in his extensive introduction, attempted to offer a way out of the conundrum not stemming from a sterile confrontational ideological disposition. Kordatos’s work remained vulnerable from a theoretical point and this was something Sakellariou used to his benefit as his own work was built on solid ground. Despite his praising the works of his predecessors, Daskalakis and Pipinelis, it is doubtful if they had succeeded in raising any serious methodological doubts on Kordatos. Far from wallowing in the quagmire of ideological developments during the long ages of Turkish domination, Sakellariou started from the beginning. He pointed out the safest and most reasonable way to corroborate or discredit the Marxist position: the testimony of primary materials. Here, his mastery over Kordatos is unmistakable for his procuring and handling a wealth of previously unpublished evidence would be enough to put any of his contemporary scholars on the defensive. Poor in theory and lacking in substantial confirmation from sources, Kordatos’s work could only stand on its pioneer outlook and suggestions.²²² Faced with a study of sound theory and considerable factual support, its weaknesses were revealed.

The great merit of Sakellariou’s analysis is probably its rigorous methodology. Reluctant to pronounce judgement on matters not directly

²²⁰ Pipinelis, *Πολιτική Ιστορία*, p.136.

²²¹ *Ibid*, ch.9.

²²² Something Pipinelis, somewhat grudgingly, accepted. Pipinelis, *Πολιτική Ιστορία*, p.19.

related to his material and area of study he offered a measured portrait of the Peloponnese up to the eve of the War of Independence. He treated the province as an organic entity and carefully observed the social and economic background from which the revolutionary ethos stemmed. Instead of relying on national consciousness only – which he basically accepted and affirmed – he introduced the question of the existence of a ‘political consciousness’. The lack of it among both *Klephts* and primates was the primary cause of an abortive revolt in 1770, instigated by the Russians. The development however of a political consciousness between 1770 and 1821 as a result of the self-government granted by the Ottomans in the interceding years led to maturity expressed in the first revolutionary political institutions that sprung in 1821.²²³ Where there was no self-government, as in Asia Minor, there was no Revolution at all.²²⁴ In the areas where the latter flourished political and national consciousness was not the prerogative of a bourgeois class. Indeed, a bourgeoisie in the complete sense of the word did not really exist then. Throughout the eighteenth century, the population of the Peloponnese, which was to form the main seat of Greek power and the hotbed of resistance in the War of Independence, remained predominantly agricultural. The initiative in eighteenth-century trade did not emanate with some ascending bourgeois class but was the product of Greek and Turk landowner activity: the primates invested in merchant ventures.²²⁵ A Greek bourgeoisie would finally emerge in the far end of this process but not before the creation of a suitable frame in the guise of an independent Greek kingdom. Sakellariou’s way may have been an indirect one, but successful nevertheless: without the existence of a bourgeoisie Kordatos’s ambitious scheme of a social revolution in 1821 was toppled.

²²³ Sakellariou, *Η Πελοπόννησος*, p.98.

²²⁴ *Ibid*, pp.137-8.

²²⁵ *Ibid*, pp.218-220.

Conclusion

Ample source material for the Greek War of Independence can be found in memoirs, sketches and official documents and an impressive volume of secondary bibliography has piled since the formation of the new state. Still the general impression is, like the revolution itself, one of unfinished business. The best pieces work adequately on some levels but fail on others, notably on matters of perception. It would be fair enough for an unfinished revolution to end up as history unfinished. However, there seems to be a kind of reluctance in taking up a subject declared to be the cornerstone of Modern Greek history. Overindulgence in political and diplomatic history during the past century and a half means that there is in reality little to be told anymore concerning the facts of the Revolution itself. These are determined in a surprisingly accurate way, not even contested by those who profoundly disagree on matters of ideological interpretation. Also surprisingly, a consideration of the social content and repercussions of the revolution is either missing from the majority of studies or taking up a very small part, always giving the notion that the Greek society probably enjoyed an admiring stability and unbreakable continuity either as when a part of the Ottoman Empire or an independent kingdom. Compensating for that, Marxist analyses offer their suggestions, tainted by a tendency to reinterpret the political element.

What reasons might there be for neglecting important facets of an otherwise much talked about subject? Surely, the Greek War of Independence cannot carry in the present circumstances the magnitude it had at its inception. In the nineteenth century the subject increasingly turned into an exclusive playground for Greek historians – to the point of detecting a slight apprehension towards foreign attempts.²²⁶ Accepting Paparrigopoulos's remark that history in Greece presents a more practical character than usual, we may see why a consensus on the significance, aims,

²²⁶ Paparrigopoulos referred to Finlay as a “weird *Philhellene*” who loved Greece “according to the biblical writing: whomever God loves he puts on trial”. See Dimaras, (ed.), *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος, Προλεγόμενα*, p. 41.

meaning and morals of the Greek Revolution was reached so quickly. The new nation-state was in need of a foundation myth and the historical discipline was there to provide it. This view actually gave the historian (a member then of a highly esteemed academic community) a pivotal role in acting as the nation's memory keeper, who should be by turns both a reminder and a gadfly, according to the circumstances. What is more, there was nothing unscientific in such a stance. The trends of nineteenth – century history pointed to a romantic vindication of the rights of nations, founded on a central idea of morality governing the acts and determining the consequences of both sole individuals and whole societies. Reading the most distinguished Greek nineteenth – century historians (Paparrigopoulos, Lampros, Karolidis) one can almost feel the weight and palpability of history for contemporaries. It was through it that the nation lived.

Greek historians of the War of Independence should be considered in this frame. Trikoupi, Philimon and Paparrigopoulos asserted the right of a revolution on both moral and national terms. The boundaries between these were generally indistinguishable. So noble an undertaking, an equivalent to ancient achievements, could not be pictured as anything but a series of courageous and heroic incidents. Since the formation of a national identity requires the building of a consensus over perceived critical moments and the absence of points of contention, an explanation should be found to reconcile known facts clearly in contrast with the bright picture mentioned above. Massacres perpetrated, party strife, civil wars, were all presented in a low profile and moral excuses were sought. Were these facts to be brought under scrutiny and viewed with serious consideration, discord and disagreement were bound to appear, as their examination by foreign historians had shown.

Foreign historians did not shy away from depicting or commenting on controversial events despite their *philhellenic* sentiments. George Finlay passed scathing judgment on prisoners' massacres without being handicapped by the fact that he had left his mother country at an early age in order to reach Greece. Thomas Gordon, one of the earliest volunteers, did not hesitate in underlining and decrying all sorts of political power games. This does not mean they did not carry their own prejudices into the field.

Most of them approached their subject with a certain twin preconception towards Greece and Oriental societies: an image heavily influenced by classic ideals and notions of exotic mores. None of them failed in spotting moral degradation, rife in the Orient, and common in both Turks and Greeks. In describing the latter, one discerns disappointment, if in muted tones, for seeking a place among 'civilized nations' without adhering to their values. Even the more perceptive like Finlay, or those who emphasized neglected aspects of the conflict, like Mendelssohn Bartholdy, could not detach themselves from a basically Euro-centric approach. It does not come as a surprise then that foreign historians' works gained praise in their respective countries while going largely unnoticed by the public in Greece. Their inability to grasp and reflect on the peculiarities of Greek society prevented them in the end from delivering a radically different interpretation from the one the Greek historians produced. This failure in a way contributed to the establishment of a beautified view of the Greek Revolution.

In the twentieth century, this traditional view of a morally just, national and unitary revolution was both challenged and reinforced by Greek historians. Ioannis Kordatos and his followers, Tassos Vournas, Takis Stamatopoulos and other Marxists, mounted a sustained attack against the idea of a strictly national and unified movement, an attack that suffered from inability to piece together all known facts about the rebellion. Their thought was to provide eventually new conceptual tools and enlarge the interests of the historical discipline in Greece, bringing economic, demographic and social factors to the attention of scholars. Trying to base the history of Modern Greece on more concrete foundations, they proposed different readings of the Greek War of Independence, either as a rural uprising or as a bourgeois revolution without, however, destroying in the process its affirmation as expression of national will. The nation was still there, only this time it was constituted by the subaltern classes who fought elements of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy alongside the Ottomans. The Marxist approach carried along a certain poverty of theory and unwillingness to take in the impossibility of existence of general schemes to be unquestionably applied to all cases. In the end, these narratives remained fragmentary, being able to provide adequate answers only to certain

interpretational problems of both the Revolution and Modern Greek History in general.

The answer to this early challenge was swift and looked to heal the threatening breach. Socialism in Greece came into its own at a late date compared to its Western European counterparts. Politically, it ensured that while maturing at the time of the great schism between socialist and communist parties, Greek socialism was not to be considered as a viable alternative until the end of World War II. Trust in communism remained in short supply among Greek intellectuals and politicians: Eleftherios Venizelos, a modernizer and an undoubted liberal would nevertheless introduce anti-Communist legal measures in 1929. In this atmosphere, enhanced by defeat in Asia Minor, subsequent refugee problems and political instability, Kordatos's work was not considered an exercise in theory or a welcome addition to the historical discipline, but a blow to national ideology and the established polity. Those who attempted to refute him did so in the name of an unbroken national continuity and identity. When Michail Sakellariou exposed the basic methodological weakness of Kordatos's Marxist analysis, the traditional ideological consensus on the history of the War of Independence was restored to a point but remained in need of a convincing reply.

Efforts to provide for an updated version of the traditional view of the War of Independence in the twentieth century were actually hampered by the impact of reality. Modern historians devoted their time in coming to terms with the end of the *Megali Idea* and the passing of the 'long nineteenth century' that brought many burdens and strains to Greek society. It was more reasonable to deal with the bitter outcome of an ideology that was in fact a child of the Revolution than with the Revolution itself. Moreover, the Revolution had produced acceptable results, if meagre according to Paparrigopoulos, while the second and third quarters of the parting century had offered two World Wars, a Civil War, a military dictatorship and periods of repression and incessant political passions in Greece. Amidst all that the War of Independence could not function as a point of contention anymore. Beautified versions remained the norm while recent evaluations of the subject may have provided multi-faced options but little insight on the part

of images, perception and ideology. Certainties pertain to symbols and the War of Independence has been elevated to symbolic status as soon as the fights were over. However, when whole historical subjects are turned to symbols, considered as untouchable by nature, certainties cannot avoid bearing the trademark of latent nationalism.

PART THREE

Images, identities and cultural memory

Chapter Four

‘A perfect union’ and a perfect symbol: Robert Burns and Images of a Scottish identity, 1859-1930

In early 1894 when Earth's North Pole was still proving itself elusive to explorers, Dr Fridtjof Nansen's expedition provided a focus for publicity. The Norwegian explorer had set off for the Pole from Kristiania, Norway, in the previous summer aboard a ship designed by him to withstand the pressure of ice. Although many contemporary Arctic explorers criticized his plan to let his ship freeze and drift northward Nansen proceeded reaching 78°50 N, 133°37 E in 22 September 1893 where his ship was caught by ice. From this point on information on his whereabouts must have slowed to a trickle, yet his expedition's progress remained the talk of the day. Indeed, it found itself the object of a small funny picture at the back of an annual dinner menu in which the explorer, after enduring his share of dangers and having finally mastered the forces of nature, arrives at the North Pole only to find himself already beaten to it. The 'proverbial Scotsman' stands before him, kilted and bearded, carrying the invitation to 'Greenock Burns Club, North Pole Branch' where a glass and bottle await to put up a warm show of hospitality to a naturally startled guest. If we relied on his expression and not on the caption accompanying the picture we would hardly agree that "Dr Nansen finds himself forestalled at the NORTH POLE by the proverbial Scotsman but is consoled by an invitation to the local BURNS CLUB

DINNER”.¹ Certainly, Nansen’s countenance is far less amiable than his Scottish host’s and tends rather towards outrage...

However, we are interested in the implications, and what is implied here is that an annual dinner in the memory of Robert Burns (1759-1796), national poet of Scotland, was an honour rivalling that of being the first one to set foot on the North Pole and certainly an event of no less a magnitude. Robert Burns is shown here to be as much a household name in 1894 as Nansen’s mission, or the northern extremity of the planet itself. Moreover, the poet, unable to be himself there in actuality, has nevertheless left a worthy substitution in his stead: the proverbial Scotsman. The poet and the genius of nationality complement each other so well that become interchangeable symbols.

What we shall try to determine in the course of this chapter are relations and connections between Robert Burns as a symbol and Scotland as the object of this representation. Burns as a poet is actually just a starting point since his literary career and merits will only set the scenery and will form an altogether peripheral part of the discussion. Perceptions of Burns, the way his work and himself have been appropriated in the past in order to give credit to diverse ideologies and worldviews shall form a first part. There will follow considerations on the poet’s function as a symbol in general and a national symbol in particular. These will show how a series of images concerning the meaning and content of Scottishness formed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Taking Burns clubs in both the United Kingdom and abroad as an example of literary communities we can trace certain currents of thought and ideological developments at the time and establish a fairly good idea on the discourse concerning Scottish national ideology. The participation in Burns’s celebrations of a wide range of voluntary societies from Temperance and Abstinence societies to Victuallers’ and Drapers’ guilds will bring to the fore the measure of diffusion of national discourse in civil society.

¹ Greenock Burns Club, *Souvenir and menu of the annual dinner: 25th January, 1894*, (Greenock, 1894).

The bulk of my material consists of texts and addresses of the latter part of the nineteenth century used in celebrations to honour Robert Burns. Most of them are associated with the annual Burns Club dinners traditionally held on the poet's birthday, the 25th of January. What is striking to the reader is the close association between poet and nation and, above all, the variety of *possible nations* the celebrants seem to have in mind. It would be in all probability quite hard for the 'Scotlands' perceived in these addresses to be successfully grouped for any other reason than convenience. These perceptions, accumulated with time, at least do seem to correspond to the great gallery of images painted for Robert Burns. Despite, however, the order previous models from Whig historiography to Unionist-Nationalism have imposed on perceptions of Scottish national identity, what we encounter here is a series of splinters and partial images. We shall attempt then in the course of the chapter to explain and account for these inconsistencies in tracing the many layers and interactions connecting these 'imagined Scotlands' with the United Kingdom and the British Empire.

We shall begin with our conduit to these various attitudes, Robert Burns. I would like to emphasize once more that I focus not upon Burns's career, but upon his perception, and, in particular, upon the various ways his legend has been appropriated to bolster the national ideal. For our purpose what matters is his ideological interpretation and treatment during the period under consideration, therefore we shall avoid entering into details about his life and work.² We need however to examine the credibility of various claims made by supporters of different groups, associations and political parties and show how the poet's image developed into an "everyman's Burns", a symbol of remarkable versatility and national appeal.

² Through an array of works on Burns's life, most helpful have been those of Ian MacIntyre, *Dirt and Deity: A life of Robert Burns*, (London, 1995); Thomas Crawford, *Burns: A study of the Poems and Songs*, (Edinburgh, 1994); William Donaldson, *The Jacobite Song: Political Myth and National Identity*, (Aberdeen, 1988).

Symbols and Interpretations: Robert Burns in the Scottish mirror

The range of opinions on who Burns actually was and what his poetry signified is lengthy and wide. To start with an all-encompassing note, he was “the poet who embraced all mankind”³ according to Hugh MacDonald. Belief in his belonging to the world was widespread and his sympathies towards international causes duly noted: Lord Rosebery detected his sympathy to the French Revolution although he only considered it an “abstract one”.⁴ For James Taylor, in the poet’s person and teaching there can be found “a splendid union of Nationalism and Internationalism”⁵. But at the same time and for a great number of persons he was considered “the poet of the people – the poet of the working man”⁶, “the poet of the poor”⁷ – a “peasant-poet” befriending the little man and opposed to aristocracy. Robert Turner at Keith turns to his Scottishness: “the poet is emphatically *our* poet. Scotland, her story, her people, is his theme”⁸. Robert Langholm tags him as “the national poet”⁹. He was celebrated and hailed as an upholder of the Liberal legacy in Gladstone’s Midlothian campaign in 1879.¹⁰

³ James Ballantine, *Chronicle of the hundredth birthday of Robert Burns*, (Edinburgh and London, 1859), p.84. Cf an anonymous address in Manchester: “the heart of Burns was too large and his genius too universal to be confined to Scotland”. In *Robert Burns, Poet and Liberator. An address delivered to the members and friends of the Manchester and Salford Caledonian Association, 16th November 1900, by One of the Members*, (np, nd) p.12.

⁴ *Robert Burns. Two addresses delivered at Dumfries and Glasgow on the Centenary of the Poet’s Death, 21st July 1896 by Lord Rosebery*, (Edinburgh, 1896), pp.27-28.

⁵ James Taylor, *Robert Burns, Patriot and Internationalist*, (Vancouver, 1926), p.1.

⁶ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.82. Quote by Hugh Macdonald.

⁷ *Ibid*, p.83.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.294.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.318.

¹⁰ MacIntyre, *Dirt and deity*, p.424. In a poster from the 1880 election Gladstone is indicting Disraeli before a crowd of voters while the ghosts of Burns and Wallace dutifully support him with their presence. From Carol McGuirk, “Burns and Nostalgia” in Kenneth Simpson (ed.), *Burns Now*, (Edinburgh, 1994), pp.56-57.

His patriotism was clear and unassailable: D.T. Holmes pronounced that “with Burns, patriotism was a passion”.¹¹

The distance between patriotism and nationalism would not take such a big step to cross and therefore to John Buchan he was a nationalist although one of a “reasoned, spirited and sane nationalism” – quite contrary to the creed of “so many modern progressives – a love of every country but their own”¹² – so much then for James Taylor’s ‘splendid union’. Charles Sarolea, a Belgian occupying the chair of French Language and Literature at the University of Edinburgh agreed with Buchan and outbid him in pointing out that “the historical significance of Burns lies in the fact that he is the greatest and most inspired prophet of Scottish nationalism”.¹³ Just a little ahead we meet those who found fault with certain aspects of the poet’s representation – and proposed their own evaluations. David Dickie took exception in Burns’s actual representation in art: “they are too Parisian – too suggestive of a dandy and a foreigner”,¹⁴ two presumably objectionable qualities in a person, that the Bard certainly could have never possessed. Arthur Kay, Esq. offered his own, slightly jingoist point of view. He did not think Burns “would have wasted much time in being the champion of foreigners, nor would he have belittled his own countrymen” because Burns was “no sentimental cosmopolitan”.¹⁵ No, according to William Wallace he was but “a Democratic Imperialist before his time” who would have in effect endorsed the British Empire in the above guise

“because he would have seen in it the best machinery that the wit of man has yet devised for securing stable, enlightened, and

¹¹ D.T. Holmes, “On Burns. An address delivered before the Greenock Burns Club, January 25, 1894” in *Burnsiana: a collection of literary odds and ends relating to Robert Burns compiled by J.D.Ross*, V, (1895), 38.

¹² *The Hamilton Burns Club, 1877-1927*, (np, nd). John Buchan’s address to the club dates from 25th January 1927.

¹³ *Edinburgh Professor on Scottish Nationalism. Scathing indictment of present status. The Scotsman*, 1929.

¹⁴ David Dickie, *Glasgow Ayrshire Society’s Dinner. “The memory of Burns” proposed by David Dickie, 25th January 1913*, (Glasgow, 1913), p.3.

¹⁵ Govan Burns Club, *Speech by Arthur Kay, Esq. At annual dinner on 24th January 1908*, (np, nd), p.9.

equitable government, for securing equality of opportunity for individuals, and equality of treatment for races, for ensuring the triumph, in all departments of political activity, of that ‘crowned Republic’s crowning common sense’”.¹⁶

And last, but not least, there were democrats, reformers and masons claiming Burns as their own. Colonel Shaw, for instance, of the Ayr Working Men’s Reform Association proclaimed in 1859 that “ we have assembled for the purpose of doing justice to the reformer who, more than seventy years ago, went for “manhood suffrage” – singing a man’s a man for a’ that”.¹⁷ “His genius partakes of the Masonic order or type”¹⁸ maintained Benjamin Ward Richardson, himself a freemason. Colonel Ingersoll, an American citizen, demonstrated his republicanism, including his conviction that the poet was “in every fibre of his being a sincere democrat” and believed “that honest peasants were superior to titled parasites”.¹⁹ William Elder went as far as claiming Burns on behalf of “Freethinkers, Secularists, Atheists”.²⁰

This barrage of statements, declarations and evaluations demonstrate that Burns has practically been all things to all people. Can we in all probability safely pronounce Burns a propagator of a single ideology? Is it possible to distinguish between his own ideas and those attributed to him in successive attempts of interpretation and reinterpretation? To analyse the possible truth or false of all these allegations would be beyond our scope. Since this is a study on aspects of national ideology a verdict on Burns’s link to nationalism would allow us to form a better idea on the process of appropriation and legitimisation that connects the poet with the construction of an image of Scotland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

¹⁶ William Wallace, “Robert Burns, Patriot and Democratic Imperialist” in *Britannia*, 1901, 5.

¹⁷ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.115.

¹⁸ Benjamin Ward Richardson, *The Masonic genius of Robert Burns. An address delivered in Lodge ‘Quatuor Coronati’, 2076, 4th March 1892*, (np, nd), p.5.

¹⁹ John D. Ross (ed.), *The Memory of Burns*, (Glasgow, 1899).

²⁰ William Elder, *Robert Burns as Freethinker, Poet and Democrat. A lecture delivered before the members and friends of the Glasgow Eclectic Institute, 17th October 1872*, (Paisley, 1881), p.4.

The fact itself of Burns advocating nationalism or not is not of the utmost importance. Our interest lies more in the uses of the poet's work through time. The appropriation of 'Scots wha hae' and its elevation to the status of national anthem actually matters more in this light than whether it was written with deliberation or in a passing moment of patriotic passion. However, it does not conform to reason for a person to espouse at the same time all the ideologies with which Burns is credited. On that matter we do find a kind of consensus. Christopher Whatley assures us of Burns's patriotism but does not condone a nationalist reading of his poetry in general: "bought and sold for English gold" is "powerful language" that swells the heart, lifts the head and provides Scottish patriots with a menu of memorable lines.²¹ However, he believes that as Burns's "most fervent" blessings to God for the Stuarts' failures in 1715 and 1745 prove him just a sentimental Jacobite, his confused politics and general uncertainty in matters of ideology make him only a retrospective nationalist.²² He also suggests that we should draw a line between Burns as a citizen and Burns as "self-consciously the national bard"²³, who became part of a national popular canon of Scottish history that frequently fails to correspond with the actual facts. Richard Finlay admits a "sentimental appeal to the past" to be his dominant view²⁴ while Thomas Preston takes a different road, pointing us towards a whole poetic – political project: "a national literary language...a proto – Scottish print – language"²⁵. But this should not be taken as an expression of nationalism after all.²⁶ Such a detailed and ambitious scheme

²¹ Christopher A. Whatley, "Burns and the Union of 1707" in Kenneth Simpson (ed.), *Love and Liberty. Robert Burns, A Bicentenary Celebration*, East Linton 1997, p.184.

²² *Ibid*, p.191.

²³ *Ibid*, p.193.

²⁴ Richard J. Finlay, "The Burns Cult and Scottish Identity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in Simpson (ed.), *Love and liberty*, p.75.

²⁵ Thomas R. Preston, "Contrary Scriptings: Implied National Narratives in Burns and Smollett" in Simpson (ed.), *Love and liberty*, p.212.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.204. Preston envisages this project as founded on "a Scottish cultural nationalism" that remains engaged in dialogue with the other British cultures.

however remains under question if Ian MacIntyre's note on Burns's politics being "never less than moderately confused" is to be given any validity.²⁷

For a differing opinion on Burns's national ideals we have to rely on Paul H. Scott and Andrew Noble.²⁸ Right from the beginning Scott claims him as "a patriot, or if you prefer, a nationalist, especially because he deeply resented Scotland's loss of independence".²⁹ According to him Burns's true political ideas can be found in 'Scots wha hae' and 'Parcel of rogues in a nation' and echo his support of the Jacobite cause, in essence a nationalist attempt to overthrow the Union.³⁰ The main problem in the course of Scott's analysis is a methodological one. His arguments rest rather on a series of statements and assumptions than on a chain of proven facts:

"His regret for the loss of the Scottish monarchy is regret for the loss of sovereignty and legislative power...These feelings for the 'injured Stewart line' more, I think, because they were Scottish than because they were royal... Jacobitism in Scotland was largely a patriotic, nationalist attempt to overthrow the Union"³¹.

These opinions however are stated without any examples or justifications following in order to build a compelling case and persuade the reader. It is not so much that the Jacobite uprisings do not exhibit key traits and characteristics found in national revolutions as that known facts contrary to the author's opinions are either neglected or not sufficiently explained. "Be Britain still to Britain true" is not an easy verse to accommodate in this

²⁷ Macintyre, *Dirt and deity*, p.123. Thomas Crawford also notes this in observing that "it is by no means certain that the patriotic but still radical mood of 'Does haughty Gaul invasion threat' would have been any more permanent than that which underlay his public declaration of 'attachment to the Constitution &...abhorrence of Riot' two years earlier, in 1793". In. Crawford, *Burns. A study of the Poems and songs*, p.237.

²⁸ Paul H. Scott, "Robert Burns, Patriot" in Simpson (ed.), *Love and liberty*, pp. 266-273; Andrew Noble, "Burns and Scottish Nationalism" in K. Simpson (ed.), *Burns Now*, pp. 167-192.

²⁹ Scott, "Robert Burns, Patriot", p.266.

³⁰ *Ibid*, pp.266-269.

³¹ *Ibid*, pp.268-269.

light and his rendering as nothing but “prudent insincerities”³², written in order to temporarily placate the government and secure the poet’s income seems at the least shaky. Are we to attribute the poet’s observation on his gratefulness for the failure of the Stuarts – and indeed every instance of his expressing pro-Union sentiments – to strictly pecuniary reasons? Although certainly Burns articulated his loyalty to his native country in a clear and precise way, it is also plain that he did not advocate the dissolution of the Union. Finally, to accept Scott’s views would mean to agree on Burns’s basic political consistency. If Burns, however, had been politically consistent his image would have probably resisted any and all efforts at reinterpretation and would have remained just another particular symbol, not the property of the nation.

Andrew Noble’s technique is subtler but his conclusion is essentially the same. Noble argues for the existence of a gap between Burns’s actual sympathies and his place in society, between his convictions and his posthumous interpretation. Political circumstances and Burns’s social status meant that he increasingly had to tone down or muffle his real voice and give in to what his audience in the Scottish establishment, the literati and privileged wished to hear from a loyal subject. For the author the dichotomy between ‘patricians and plebs’, with the heaven-taught ploughman naturally on the side of the latter forms not just a cultural but also a political antithesis. It is implied that the ‘Scottish establishment’ held an anglicised, British-imperial stance, which presumably, was not in agreement with popular feelings. Therefore, Noble casts Burns into a radical guise in attributing to him the diagnosis of two ills that supposedly *still* plague Scottish society: “the corrupting politics and psychology generated by the Union; the degeneration of parliament and of other British civic and fiscal institutions causing increasing disparity between rich and poor”³³ lie at the heart of Burns’s political vision. Burns’s Scotland remains a victim of British imperial ambitions and the greed of its ruling class – a parcel of rogues in a nation.

But such dichotomies are easy to construct and evoke, usually bringing us in front of dilemmatic situations. What is not accounted for here

³² Scott, “Robert Burns, Patriot”, p.272.

³³ Noble, “Burns and Scottish Nationalism”, p. 188.

is Burns's deviations from the purported norm: a *sentimental* Jacobite, a *cautious* radical, an *early* supporter of the French Revolution, he never carried any of these extreme ideas to the end. Examining at length the former part of and attributing the latter to mere pretensions suggests that sometimes the halo of the national symbol exceeds our ability to distinguish the intricacies of an actual person.

Burns does not appear to have been either a staunch nationalist or an apologist for lost causes as some nineteenth-century and sometimes more recent admirers would have him. There is no doubt that he was an internationalist. He supported the American Revolution seeing in it a noble cause and remained favourable to the French revolution for the same reason. This was not all, however. Marilyn Butler persuasively argues on twists, turns and hidden meanings in 'Scots wha hae', 'A man's a man for a' that' and 'Does haughty Gaul invasion threat' to show that in the context they were written these poems include verses with implications contrary to what is perceived as their main point.³⁴ Thus, besides rallying the people round the Scottish, British or common brotherhood flag, the above are considered to contain notions towards the realising of French Revolution ideals. Butler observes the ambiguity: 'Scots wha hae' could equally be a call to arms against the government in London or one on the side of the French Republic or even for the ideal of Liberty anywhere.³⁵ Fond of dramatic turns as he was, Burns "rarely continues levelly in one vain".³⁶

To try and sum all this up and at the same time give a plausible explanation we have to bear in mind the era in which the poet lived. Nationalism and the Romantic movement led to the search for folklore and the hasty interest for the preservation of popular culture all around Europe.³⁷ Burns's song production was in the same track with the work of James Macpherson, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried Herder, moving

³⁴ Marilyn Butler, "Burns and politics" in Crawford (ed.), *Burns and cultural authority*, pp.96-102.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p.100. Devine puts forward the notion of it being inspired by the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. In T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, London 2000, p.237.

³⁶ Butler, "Burns and politics", p.99.

³⁷ See Peter Burke, *Popular culture in Early Modern Europe*, (London, 1994) for the discovery of popular culture towards the end of the eighteenth century.

through dissemination of popular forms towards the creation of a national heritage and cultural nationalism. Britain was ready for a rehabilitation of the Highlands, something amply demonstrated in the 1760s with *Ossian's* war epics' huge appeal. It is not a coincidence that the Highland Society was founded in London in 1778 and that Highlandism was already spreading in the Scottish Lowland society in the dissemination of Highland dress³⁸. The "radiance of disappearing authenticity"³⁹ had taken over and in its folklore the Scottish past was seen as "surviving into the present".⁴⁰ In an era of liberal nationalism cultural heritage could be a pan-European concern as *Ossian* and Sir Walter Scott's novels showed. This was certainly not the light in which Scottish Nationalists chose to interpret Burns in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As can be surmised from the above discussion it would be far from valid and even less just for him to be cast in such a restricting mould. It is his many facets and his political contradictions that permit manifold readings of his artistic expression.

The discussion so far has concerned Burns as a person, considering his actual possible views and politics as arising from his own life and art. There is no reason, however, to regard Robert Burns the man as an equivalent to Robert Burns the national symbol. Symbols are useful abstracts, forms that encompass given totals of properties and qualities, permitting us to employ them in order to recall otherwise complex concepts and meanings⁴¹: national anthems and flags, tartanry or revered artefacts indicate common bonds and identities in simple and perceiving ways.⁴² The creation of a national symbol certainly presupposes a process of normalization. To create the necessary cohesion certain aspects are given emphasis while others are obscured after careful selection. Elevation to that status usually means a pre-existing consensus: national ideology abhors

³⁸ Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, ch.11.

³⁹ Quoted in *ibid*, p. 244.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.245.

⁴¹ What I have in mind is not so much a definition in terms of anthropology or linguistics but the way symbols function in ideology.

⁴² For the importance of national anthems and flags see Eric Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, 1983). On the subject of revered artefacts, the cases of the Sword of Wallace and the Stone of Destiny are characteristic.

divisions. Fringe figures cannot possibly aspire to such an honour because they seldom appear unitary. Finally, it is an inherent characteristic of symbols that their services can be employed by diverse parts, subject to the functions of reintegration and reinterpretation⁴³: popular, but controversial to the point of plunging the country in the midst of an undeclared civil war in his time, Eleftherios Venizelos is universally regarded today as having played an indispensable part in Greece's course towards modernization.⁴⁴

On his way to being created a national symbol of the first magnitude his perceived Scottishness made Burns a wholly appropriate figure. In Andrew Nash's words Burns's reception in the nineteenth century "identified him as the national expression of Scotland".⁴⁵ His exalted position in Scots' conscience was already thoroughly established in 1859: councillor Martin, addressing a gathering of 150 in the Tontine Reading Room, Glasgow, described him as "the representative poet of Scotland".⁴⁶ His undisputed literary merits notwithstanding ("the power of imparting a sense of reality to the scenes of imagination... breadth and massiveness...vigour and intensity"), it was his Scottishness that emerged as his most dear and valued quality : "he has portrayed Scottish manners, habits and customs with such marked individuality of character and such intensely national feeling... He is intensely Scotch".⁴⁷ This "intensely Scotch" personality possessed exemplary qualities, in depicting the Scottish character:

"there is an exalted spirit of freedom and independence – there is a native valour, which is oftentimes evoked and displayed in deeds of dauntless daring – there is a passion which young men

⁴³ Maurice Agulhon's seminal work *Marianne into battle : Republican imagery and symbolism in France*, (Cambridge, 1981), vividly marks the course of this Republican archetype from the moment of its canonisation in the 1880s.

⁴⁴ He was recently declared in various polls as the most important Greek of the 20th century while he is also the only politician to appear in the Greek edition of the Euro monetary unit. Therefore, there was no fitter choice for the new Athens airport to be named after. See *TA NEA* newspaper, 12/1/2000, 12/5/2000 and 5/7/2000, 17/3/2001.

⁴⁵ Andrew Nash, "The Cotter's Kailyard", in Crawford (ed.), *Robert Burns and cultural authority*, p.181.

⁴⁶ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.77.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

and maidens fondly designate love, with the depth, the intensity, the sincerity and the tenderness of its characteristics, as manifested in the nature of Scotchmen – there is a geniality and breadth of humour which cheers and gladdens the social circle – there is a love of truth and high integrity of character deep-seated in the Scottish heart – there is an earnest religious spirit, which has not only been productive of great events, but also renders sacred the hearts and homes of even the lowest of the people, and which brings contentment and peace, and joy, even to honest poverty, by a confident trust in the kindness and wisdom of Providence”.⁴⁸

Martin therefore viewed the poet’s works as a kind of mirror in which a realistic reflection of Scotland could be found – even if this reflection seemed to possess good qualities in abundance but strangely enough no character faults at all. This literary Scotland is more real than the real one: literature is received as authenticating and legitimising a definitive national identity.⁴⁹ In this insinuating way Burns becomes associated with his country and acquires the image of a “proverbial Scotsman”, one who can signify Scotland in all circumstances and stand in for the nation. To obtain a clearer idea for the exact relation felt to exist between poet and country we turn to Professor Hodgson: “as for Burns, it may be said he was not so much Scotch as he was Scotland itself – Scotland incarnate as it were – Scotland personified – that is, embodied in a person and made visible and audible”.⁵⁰ The poet recalls the nation, remains both an inspiration and a valid reason to address and praise it. In a remarkable example Professor Blackie would bring together on his side William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, Patrick Hamilton, John Knox and Walter Scott, in other words all the totemic personages of Scottish history, to which “truly representative men” Scots should be “most indebted for the inheritance of our great birthright of

⁴⁸ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, pp.77-78.

⁴⁹ See Nash, “The Cotter’s Kailyard”, pp.180-197.

⁵⁰ *The Anniversary of the birth of Burns*. Edinburgh Burns Club in Daily Review, Monday, January 26, 1874.

national feeling”.⁵¹ In many instances we will encounter reference to the precision with which Burns expressed the spirit of Scotland or preserved the true Scottish character, and to the debt his country has incurred. It is not simply the “yet many instalments of honour to pay to our peasant-poet, little noticed and rewarded as he was by our grandsires”⁵². The limits between “Scotland’s Burns and Scotland...as ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night’”⁵³ blur: we end up with a textual nation and a nationalised poet.

The remarkable absence of defects in Burns’s textual Scotland did not avail its symbolic creator. His social life, full of amorous liaisons, which find their way, sometimes quite explicitly, in his poetry had always been a point of contention.⁵⁴ The facts being widely known there was no question of a chance to be struck from the record or to be quietly ignored in order for Burns to conform to Victorian gentlemanly ideals.⁵⁵ It had to be admitted and excuses offered: social causes⁵⁶ or the human condition.⁵⁷ There was

⁵¹ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.14.

⁵² James Fergusson in his address in the Ayr County Hall. Ibid, p.99. Cf. Carol McGuirk’s suggestion that Burns “ ‘remembered’ Scotland on behalf of all its uncounted nineteenth century exiles ... and in their turn the Scots remembered Burns” in “Burns and ...”, Simpson (ed.), *Burns Now*, p.60.

⁵³ Andrew Nash observes the link developing between poet and nation: “it was unanimous that by understanding Burns you were understanding Scotland”: according to George Gilfillan Burns was “a living image of his country...a microcosm of his nation”. He also brings to our attention Duncan Macmillan’s assertion for Wilkie’s painting ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night’ forming “*the* canonical image of Scottish art”. In Nash, “The Cotter’s Kailyard”, p.187, 183 respectively.

⁵⁴ Rev. Dr Norman McLeod wishes for “a centenary edition of his poems from which every thing would be excluded which a Christian father could not read aloud in his family circle”. The audience replied with hisses drowned in cheers. In Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.54.

⁵⁵ Although his works and letters were sometimes properly “sanitized” by obliging nineteenth-century editors. See G. Ross Roy, “Editing Burns in the Nineteenth Century” in Simpson (ed.), *Burns Now*.

⁵⁶ John McGavin blames “the customs of the times” when drink “was held to be the symbol of friendship” and “had mingled itself with the most pleasant experiences, as well as the most solemn occurrences of life”. In Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.61.

⁵⁷ Professor Aytoun in the Ayr County Hall puts forth the argument that “all of us, even the best, in the eyes of the Creator are but sinners” while Sheriff Napier in a speech of his

however a more successful way to bypass the problem, namely by casting him to the role of a “self-destructive genius”⁵⁸ whose passions with the one hand freely fanned his remarkable art while with the other led him to moral lapses and an early grave.

George Combe, a phrenologist – phrenology being quite an acceptable practice at the time – who had conducted an examination of the poet’s skull, illustrated the argument with scientific authority recounted in the appropriate Victorian reticence. Burns was endowed with “powers calculated for a far higher sphere than that which he was able to reach, and of passions which he could with difficulty restrain, and which it was fatal to indulge”.⁵⁹ Taking care not to refer to any specifics, Lord Ardmillan admitted that “we must deplore and condemn much in the character and in the writings of Burns”⁶⁰ who was “floating rudderless and helpless on the tide of life”.⁶¹ Sir Archibald Alison conceded his life having been at times “irregular” and acknowledged that the common excuse was that “his frailties were those to which men of ardent and poetic mind have in all ages been most subject”.⁶² And John Hamilton agreed that “his voice...was simply the voice of Nature itself, and the only serious fault of some of his productions is that to Nature’s truth he was but too true”.⁶³ A plain and straightforward condemnation though would have been both unrespectable and unacceptable, as the vehemence with which *The Scotsman* had declared as “pulpit trash” a lecture in which Burns was deplored as “a person who never loved a woman but to betray her, and who never made an acquaintance

read at the Dumfries Assembly Rooms acknowledges Burns to having partaken “of the common lot of sinning mortality”. In Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.99, 136 respectively.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Roe, “Authenticating Robert Burns”, in Crawford (ed.), *Burns and cultural authority*, p.161.

⁵⁹ Roe, “Authenticating Robert Burns”, pp.172-173.

⁶⁰ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.7.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.6. The circumlocutions used in the 1859 celebrations to describe Burns’s erratic behaviour would make for a long list: “jovial habits”, “manly vices”, “shortcomings”, “errors”, “weaknesses”, “failings”, “foibles and frailties”, even “the hindrances of accidents and circumstance and time” are merely indicative.

⁶² *Ibid*, pp.42-43.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.139.

among either young men or women but he injured and corrupted”⁶⁴, had clearly showed. A venerated symbol may only stand so much criticism. Burns as property of the Scottish nation was entitled to some reprieve.

Belonging to the nation however meant the existence of latent powers to be utilized to national benefit. Andrew Nash has established that literature had an exceptional place in showing “a powerful potential to market and validate an authoritative identity for Scotland”.⁶⁵ That being the case it is easy to understand why Burns the symbol would be useful in providing legitimisation to “forces eager to impose their own patterns of cultural authority”.⁶⁶ Political authority did not lag far behind. In the nineteenth century Burns was cast into the role of representative of an anti – aristocratic, democratic, meritocratic Scotland, “older, purer and uncorrupted”, to “accommodate the predominant *laissez-faire* ideology of the day.”⁶⁷ Indeed, “Burnsian notions of freedom and liberty and the dignity of mankind were ideally suited to Scottish middle-class self-perception and the erection of statues in his honour throughout the country reinforced the belief that talent was God-given and not the preserve of noble birth”.⁶⁸ In this frame Burns was used by Temperance advocates, Churchmen and politicians while excused for his perceived Scottish nationalism by repeated reference to his British patriotism. When in the twentieth century Liberalism gave way to class politics, Burns was properly recast in socialist lines by Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald, while the Nationalists easily appropriated his “bought and sold for English gold” theme which was lying there for the taking.

Simpson notes the political versatility of the Burns legend, which permits both Scottish Socialists and nationalists to employ him as a symbol. Finlay’s observation that “so long as the man and his work can be appropriated by lots of political factions and none has exclusive ideological

⁶⁴ Quoted in Roe, “Authenticating Robert Burns”, p.159.

⁶⁵ Nash, “The Cotter’s kailyard”, p.181.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Finlay, “The Burns Cult” in Simpson (ed.), *Love and liberty*, p.71.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p.72.

ownership his centrality as a Scottish cultural icon is guaranteed”⁶⁹ can easily be extended to William Wallace, Robert the Bruce and others on whom a national consensus exists. This undiminished power as cultural icons, along with persistence in being aligned to the other powerful Scottish symbols, permits us to underscore their potency. In the proper setting and array symbols become irresistible to the point of substituting the concepts they represent. Today a possible mention of Wallace, Bruce, Burns, Protestantism, the Union of 1707, Scottish Enlightenment, along with Devolution and the 1999 parliament sums up Scottish history for every non – historian. Such symbols, carefully picked, can provide a handy overview, reduce whole patterns to single elements, be encompassing and easily accessible at the same time, without being controversial. Such symbols are called in to mobilize the people when the nation is in need. Elevated to the status of a national symbol Burns can be revered even by Temperance and Total Abstinence societies no matter how contradicting to his actual way of life this might be.

“A safe apolitical emblem” is Finlay’s final verdict⁷⁰ on Burns and the popularity of the poet confirms it as a proper one: “Burns permits a safe celebration of Scottish identity which raises no awkward political questions, and this has been an enduring feature of the Bard’s role in Scottish national identity”.⁷¹ It is precisely the work of national ideologies to create such ‘apolitical emblems’ that do not raise ‘awkward political questions’, since whatever pertains and belongs to the nation must inherently and of its own nature rise above petty affairs and group interests. Since the nation must be a homogeneous whole, devoid of gaps and cleavages that threaten to tear it asunder its symbols have to be unitary. Whatever aspires to the national has to be both elastic and untouchable at the same time.⁷² We have already noted the extremely wide range of appropriations that the poet has generated in his symbolic guise. Because Burns’s politics were “never less than moderately

⁶⁹ Kenneth Simpson, “Introduction” in Simpson (ed.) *Love and liberty*, p.2.

⁷⁰ Finlay, “The Burns Cult” in Simpson (ed.), *Love and liberty* , p.76.

⁷¹ Hutchison, “Burns, the Elastic Symbol”, p.76.

⁷² The controversy ensuing after Ian MacIntyre’s initiative for a DNA examination of the poet’s remains is quite illustrating.

confused” his elasticity as a symbol could be stretched to the proper limit. Confused politics can easily be turned into an absence of politics or whatever politics do not bother the majority at a given moment. In any case, this was another contributing factor in elevating him to the status of a national symbol. To present and accept Burns as ‘apolitical’ is to render him appropriately national.

But what exactly was this national identity for which Burns was supposed to supply an image, an emblem and inspiration? What was the image of Scotland that people were constructing in the long nineteenth century through their veneration of Burns? We propose to explore this by approaching celebratory addresses in honour of the Bard mostly given at the annual January Burns dinners. A great part of our sample derives from the centenary celebrations of 1859 but an adequate number remains to confirm the trends of later years. The origin of the material means that this is in effect the approach an intellectual community was taking and not, for instance, a popular view of Scotland. In the course of this examination we do meet gatherings and celebrations of the ‘working men’, ‘working classes’, ‘sons of toil’. This is however for the most part fragmentary evidence, filtered through the lens of representatives expressing literary aspirations and intent on imitating ‘the better classes’. If there is an alternative popular conception of Scotland for the extent of this period it lies beyond the reach and scope of the present work.

A conduit to diversion: Representations of Scotland in the Burns Clubs

“The lapse of time, the rise and fall of kings, the wars of factions, the clashing of rival sects of religionists, and even the Treaty of Union itself, - all had failed to deprive Scotland of her distinctive nationality. And why was this? It was because our nationality was not a myth, it was no mere idle whim, or passing fancy. It was

stamped on the aspect of our soil; it was interwoven with our manners and customs; it lent a tinge to our superstitions and traditions; it gave a character to our music; and was based on all the tenderest emotions and deepest affections of the human heart. Possessing such elements of undying vitality, it was indestructible and imperishable”.⁷³

Thus Dr. Adam, “late of Dumfries, now of Boston, Lincolnshire” spoke in the Dumfries Assembly Rooms on 25 January 1859. After the lapse of a hundred and fifty-two years between the Union of Parliaments and his time the good Doctor was asserting Scotland’s “distinctive nationality” and distinct national identity. This was by no means an accident in wording or an utterance of some extreme figure in the political spectrum. Far from being an expression of marginal opinion as it was, it does not follow suite, as contemporary experience would expect, that it constitutes a sign of a permanent silent majority line formed at some past time and never really having wavered since.

The assertion then of a separate Scottish national identity as differing from the English, Irish, Welsh or British was not the prerogative of Dr. Adam. Let us turn to Professor John Stuart Blackie (1809-1895) the “most prominent feature of the patriotic and literary life of Edinburgh”, holder of the chair of Latin in Aberdeen (1841-1852) and Greek in Edinburgh (1852-1882), honorary member of the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople and a major contributor in university reform in his sustained efforts towards founding the Celtic chair in Edinburgh in 1882. A keen advocate of Scottish nationalism, Blackie persistently referred to the distinctive Scottish character to which the great totemic names of Wallace, Bruce, Hamilton, Knox, Burns and Scott have contributed

“to make us what, by the grace of God, we are – a free, an independent, a thoughtful, a sober-minded and a conscientious – an earnest, determined, and persevering – and, as long as we cherish these virtues, a prosperous and an invincible people”.⁷⁴

⁷³ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, pp.122-123.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p.14. According to the professor a Scotsman should “glory in his national peculiarities, as a lion glories in his mane” despite “a certain class of shallow witlings

Others made the connection too. Hugh Macmillan's address in 1897 brought to the fore a danger that in many cases seems to haunt Scottish thoughts: that of assimilation to the English because of "superior wealth and political importance". Scots were called upon "to maintain and assert our individuality as a nation and country with greater zeal and resoluteness than ever".⁷⁵ Donald Fraser credited Burns with saving the "old kingdom" from "wholly sinking into a province".⁷⁶ An anonymous member of the Manchester and Salford Caledonian Association informed us in 1900 that the "Scottish nationality is perhaps the most intense that can be found".⁷⁷ This Scottish consciousness rose from a very deep well since "in a moral sense the nation was deeply conscious in the struggle for independence"⁷⁸ and in the times of Knox. However, it was Burns who "has deepened and intensified the feeling, and, what is more, he has given it a clear and articulate voice. It is not too much to say, that, by the aid of this one man, Scotland has now evolved a national consciousness full and complete".

This nineteenth-century vein of national advocacy then traces the nation's historical course back to the Wars of Independence, the Reformation and the eighteenth century, the era of the Union and Burns himself. From these three eras different keys to Scottish identity emerge. Mention of the thirteenth century not only evokes a time of rallying against an invader, it also brings to the fore the existence of an independent state. John Knox is the symbol of a religious identity that greatly contributed to the development of Scottish society. The eighteenth century is a time of great change, for better or for worse. What is common in all three eras these

besouth the Tweed who would have the whole British world refashioned after their Anglican image".

⁷⁵ Hugh Macmillan, *Anniversary of Robert Burns. Address delivered to Greenock Burns Club*, (Greenock, 1897), pp.4-5.

⁷⁶ *Celebration of the One Hundred and Thirty-Second anniversary of the Birth-day of Robert Burns*, (Paisley, 1891), p.12.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, *Robert Burns, Poet and Liberator*, (np, nd), p.9.

⁷⁸ *Addresses delivered at the opening of the Burns Exhibition, Glasgow, 15th July 1896, and at the public meeting in commemoration of the centenary of the poet's death in St Andrew's Halls, Glasgow, 21st July, 1896, by the Right Hon. the Earl of Rosebery, K.G., K.T., and others*, (Glasgow, 1896), p.10.

Scottish intellectuals suggest as watersheds is the rivalry to England. If there was to be a Scottish nationality on their terms this was the Other on which their antithetical definition was going to rest. Aytoun himself had clearly driven the point home in 1853: “The Union neither did nor could denationalise us”.⁷⁹

The idea of a distinct nationality though cannot possibly stand alone as a simple declaration avoiding any further complications as some current interpretations imply. The label of Unionist-Nationalism may be applicable to a large number of cases despite their diversity as we will see below but sometimes it can only hold so much water. It is not surprising then that Provost Palmer in Annan can raise the audience’s cheers in describing a captivating scene with Bruce “on the hills of Bannockburn, charging the ranks of the usurper Edward, driving them from the field, and achieving for ever the glory of Scotland’s independence”.⁸⁰ The keyword in the above text is not ‘independence’, it is ‘for ever’. What lies beneath this subtle phrasing is an essentially Scottish approach to the Union of 1707: equal partnership between the two kingdoms does not rest in the Union of Crowns of 1603 but at the result of the Wars of Independence. These ensured the need for “compensation”⁸¹; independence, nationhood or parliament was given up, swapped for development, material progress, the Empire. Feeling justified in their views these advocates of a free Scotland do not withdraw their loyalty or question the Union in an outright way but at times it seems as if they are coming within inches of it:

“True, you may unite Scotland to England by a band of parchment (and God forbid that ever I should see them disunited) – you may even try to incorporate Scotland with England as Nicholas did Poland with Russia – you may, as he

⁷⁹ Quoted in Graeme Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism. Governing Urban Scotland 1830-1860*, (East Linton, 1999), p.146.

⁸⁰ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.161.

⁸¹ Carl MacDougall’s note brought to attention by K. Simpson on Burns as “a compensation for the loss of nationhood” can also be applied to Wallace and Bruce or even more appropriately to the Scottish institutions left intact after 1707: Church, Law, Education. In Simpson, (ed.), “Introduction” in *Love and liberty*, p.2.

did, attempt to erase her name from the map of Europe, or suppress even her very language if you will; but notwithstanding of all this, so long as the names of Bruce and Wallace and Burns shall live as they have done, and their deeds and fame remain engraved on the hearts of Scotland's sons, Scotland shall still remain as distinct, as separate, as free and independent a nation as on that day when Bruce emancipated her on the bloodstained field of Bannockburn".⁸²

The strength of J.B.Ross's words is such that the bracketed disclaimer almost passes unnoticed. These people take the loyal oaths and proffer the 'loyal and patriotic toasts' to the Queen, the Army and the Royal family, traditionally set at the beginning of Burns dinners but the answer to the question if they remain on the whole loyal and devoted to the British Empire would be 'grudgingly so'.⁸³

Without doubt these are signs pertaining to the slight *malaise* the Scottish society was exhibiting in the 1850s: the correspondence between – not a Scot, significantly, but – a *North Briton* or William Burns with *The Times* and Palmerston concerning the frequent substitution of the name 'England' for 'Great Britain', disputes about heraldry, the whole array of 'grievances' that culminated in the formation of the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights in 1853 and is studied today under the label of 'unionist-nationalism'.⁸⁴ It is certainly noteworthy that a roll call of the

⁸² Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.262. Address by J.B. Ross in Girvan.

⁸³ There is no love lost, for instance, between Robert Fergie and what he calls the "English Government": "...ever since the Union, English Governments have ever been better at levying taxes on Scotland than bestowing favours, however slight, on her sons, unless due servility is forthcoming". In "Address delivered 24th January, 1896, before the South Edinburgh Burns Club" from Ross (ed.), *The Memory*, p.152.

⁸⁴ See Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism. Governing Urban Scotland 1830-1860*, (East Linton, 1999); Morton, "What if ? The significance of Scotland's missing nationalism in the nineteenth century" in D.Broun, R. Finlay and M. Lynch (eds.), *Image and Identity: The Making and Remaking of Scotland through the ages*, (Edinburgh, 1998), pp.156-176; Morton, "Scottish Rights and 'centralisation' in the mid-nineteenth century in *Nations and Nationalism*, 2, (1996), 257-279; H.J. Hanham, "Mid-century Scottish nationalism: romantic and radical" in R. Robson (ed.), *Ideas and institutions of Victorian Britain*:

Association's most prominent figures resembles a coalition of the disaffected: W.E. Aytoun and Sir Archibald Alison were High Tories and Protectionists, disappointed by the turn of things in their party after the repeal of Corn Laws, the Rev. James Begg and Duncan MacLaren were involved in unsuccessful power struggles inside the Free Church.⁸⁵ If we admit though that the Scottish society had suffered from resurfacing identity crises after the Union this was certainly not thought as a great one at the time. It only looks important in hindsight, in presenting elements that will need almost another century to come to the fore and affect its political and ideological structure.

But it was not an untroubled period altogether, whether we choose to attribute its problems to deficiencies of the British political system, within which Scotland had sunk to merely provincial status, to the effects of rapid industrialisation the country had undergone in the past half-century, to differing ideological undercurrents running inside Scottish society, or to all of these together. The Disruption of 1843 should not be seen in merely religious terms because of its destabilising role in all three institutions constituting the country's semi-independent state since the Union. Kirk, courts and universities were deeply enmeshed in this dissension, which even if it did not shatter the social consensus at least seriously impaired it for a while. The shifting of political alliances and consequent fragmentation became evident in the series of elections fought during the 1840s and the debate on educational reform in the early 1850s.⁸⁶ We should not then disassociate these developments from the pensive and introspective mood we can often discern in the 1850s Scotland.

Not all Scots felt slighted however, even among supporters of a strong national stance. Mark Napier (1798-1879), descended from the Napiers of Merchiston and sheriff of Dumfriesshire for 35 years, was definitely not one to mince words when the instance demanded it: "a keen

Essays in honour of George Kitson Clark, (London, 1967); *Scottish Nationalism*, (London, 1969).

⁸⁵ See I.G.C. Hutchison, *A political history of Scotland, 1832-1924. Parties, Elections and Issues*, (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 91-93.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, ch.3.

controversialist and most unsparing in epithets of abuse” was *The Scotsman*’s verdict.⁸⁷ Despite his Jacobitism – described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as “of the old-fashioned fanatical type” and obvious in his well known controversial biography of Montrose – which could have justified any possible anti-unionist inclination, in a Dumfries meeting for Burns’s hundredth birthday he did not hesitate in throwing a rather mocking jab in the direction of the National Association and the heraldic obsessions of some of its most prominent supporters:

“Gentlemen, we have of late years heard something about those grievances of Scotland, which consist in the fanciful danger of her national individuality becoming merged and lost. Do not Burns and Scott guard it for ever? Are they not better than two unicorns! [...] A fig for the armorial monster. For the eternal preservation of the national individuality of Scotland, I say we have Burns and Scott, and so, not only may the heraldic lion chase the heraldic unicorn right about the town, but he may dine upon his haunches, and pick his teeth with his horn – so far as Scotland either cares or need care”.⁸⁸

Napier articulated a more sensible approach in ridiculing matters already looking as trifles and echoed the notions of another current of thought that viewed Scotland as an indispensable part of the British Empire. “Be Britain still to Britain true/Amang ourselves united/For never but by British hands/Maun British wrangs be righted”⁸⁹ was Bailie Greig’s use of Burns’s affirmation of British patriotism in commending Scots distinguishing themselves in the Indian Army. William Young, from the vantage point of the Canadian colonies acted as a herald for a unitary nation-state:

“now that the faint lines between Scotland and England have all but vanished, and that Ireland is drawing more closely every day to Britain, so that these two magnificent islands – small in

⁸⁷ *The Scotsman*, 24/11/1879.

⁸⁸ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.135.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.354.

dimensions, but magnificent in power – are combining into a perfect union, Scottish genius is British genius”.⁹⁰

Young’s political vision of unitary perfection owes at least part of it to the idealization afforded by distance and colonial experience. However, others, nearer the centre, were thinking along these lines too: J. Woodhead in Huddersfield assured us that

“Scotland and England are so thoroughly united – their people living under the same government, speaking the same language, believing essentially in the same religious faith, rejoicing in the same freedom, and aiming at the same great destiny”.⁹¹

Or take David Masson (1822-1907), Professor of Rhetoric in Edinburgh (1865-1895), historiographer-royal for Scotland and an advocate of higher education and the medical education of women, a man commended for his “broad-minded patriotism, untainted by the parochialism which he heartily condemned”.⁹² In a speech in Aberdeen he declared that

“the sentiment of Scottish nationality is not something barbaric and obsolete, the poetical expression of which is justifiable only on historical grounds; it exists indestructibly yet among the powers and forces of the present composite and united British body politic, and is capable of services in the affairs of that body politic that may be of incalculable utility even yet”.⁹³

Certainly Burns’s hundredth birthday turned out signifying much more than simply commemorating the poet. It was to be a celebration of the

⁹⁰ *Celebration of Burns’ centenary, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 25th January 1859 (reported by Messrs. Weeks and Cochran), (Halifax, 1859), p.56.*

⁹¹ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.454. Woodhead’s notion finds its perfect expression in an early address (1844) of Sir John Macneil who states that “We are proud of the victories of Cressy, of Agincourt, of Poitiers, as if they had been won by our own ancestors”. In *Proceedings at the Great National Festival in honour of the memory of Robert Burns, and to welcome his sons to the bank of the Doon, held near Alloway Kirk on Tuesday, 6th August 1844, (np, nd), p.18.*

⁹² Quoted in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Second Supplement, (London, 1912).

⁹³ Professor Masson in unveiling the Burns statue in Aberdeen on 15th September 1892 “in the presence of about 6000 onlookers”. In *Burnsiana*, III, (1894), p.32.

Empire. Not only was it celebrated in places as far apart as Edinburgh, London, Toronto, Dublin, Melbourne and Bombay – where Nowrojee Ardaseer Davur, Esq., “kindly lent his splendid mansion at Tardeo for the occasion”⁹⁴ –, it became an event to remind of imperial successes and services, to talk of civilization, trade, religion and other linchpins of Empire or to extol the virtues of armies that kept her afloat. In many places the occasion was accompanied by pageantry and processions where the authorities, civic as in Ayr or imperial as in Halifax, Nova Scotia⁹⁵, commanded a prominent place. The whole conduct of the ceremonial dinners, with the loyal and patriotic toasts to the Queen or the Army and Navy, the singing of the national anthem (sometimes ‘God save the Queen’, others ‘Rule Britannia’) recall to mind the occasions of a Queen’s birthday, a Jubilee or other public ceremonies effectively stressing “history and hierarchy, unity and order, crown and empire”.⁹⁶ Elevated to something more than a literary moment or a regional pageant, there was still a distinctive Scottish tinge on the palette with which the Empire was painted this time and to attribute it simply to the poet’s origin would not be the full story by far.

The vision of a Scotland-in-the-Empire became the story of Scottish success in matters military and colonial. India had opened great chances providing a new field for administration and enterprise, being in the words of Walter Scott, “the corn-chest of Scotland”.⁹⁷ Patronage and the colonisers’ individual qualities allowed for the existence of a system of maintenance of close links with the home country in trade, industry and new recruits.⁹⁸ Forming the majority of Bombay merchants Scots attracted Charles Dilke’s praise who commented on their advance “from small beginnings without external aid” and observed that it was “strange, indeed, that Scotland has not

⁹⁴ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.512.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp, 92-95, 515-522 respectively.

⁹⁶ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire*, (London, 2001), p.106.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, p.216.

⁹⁸ John M. Mackenzie, “On Scotland and the Empire”, *International Historical Review*, XV, (1993), 724.

become the popular name for the United Kingdom”.⁹⁹ The hundredth anniversary of Burns’s birth fell at the end of the Indian mutiny. In many addresses we encounter “amidst the red fields of Ind the tartan’d heroes of old Scotia”¹⁰⁰ dreaming of their home “they may never see again”. In later years we find the “Burning Plains or...the Remote Mountains of India” where Scotsmen had distinguished themselves “in war and administration and commerce and religion” or the “Far Eastern Seas”, where the British fleet is “maintaining ...equality of opportunity in a great national drama [the Boxers’ rebellion].¹⁰¹ A special place was reserved for David Livingstone, explorer of Africa, where “Scottish Pioneers and Scottish soldiers ...are helping to replace Bloodshed and Barbarism by Peace and Civilisation”.¹⁰²

The unitary state envisaged and presupposed in the previous accounts was not a vision gladly shared by all who supported an Imperial Scotland. There were also those who chose to depict a less centralised picture. Sir James Fergusson made passing comment on Scotland being “only one of a confederacy of nations, with common interests and common glories”.¹⁰³ A ‘confederacy of nations’ seems indeed an awkward way to portray an Empire. The term implies equal authority, brings to mind echoes of political debates on the other side of the Atlantic and recalls the short-lived ‘Confederate States of America’, whose authority principle rested on the right of secession, displaying the states’ supremacy in regard to a central government. Influential writers as Walter Bagehot and John Stuart Mill offered their views on federalism in the 1860s commenting on the American example and its apparent limitations.¹⁰⁴

There was no need to cross the ocean, however, for the debate on federalism in the Empire was already open since the 1830s and related to the question of the colonies’ participation in their own government. Indeed, Canada was created a federal Dominion in 1867 and the next decade saw an

⁹⁹ Quoted in Fry, *The Scottish Nation*, ch.25.

¹⁰⁰ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.82.

¹⁰¹ Anonymous, *The Memory of Burns: A speech at the annual dinner of the Glasgow Ayrshire Society on 25th January 1898*, (np, nd), pp.25-26.

¹⁰² Anonymous, *The Memory of Burns: A speech*, p.26.

¹⁰³ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.97.

¹⁰⁴ John Kendle, *Federal Britain. A history*, (London and New York, 1997), pp.28-30.

abundance of schemes and proposals of similar arrangements for the sum of the Empire – or at least its colonies of white settlement. Not surprisingly, it was at some point linked to Irish Home Rule, the great warp of British politics in the 1880s, only to be dismissed as a recipe for weak, ineffective government, one irreconcilable to the United Kingdom political tradition.¹⁰⁵ In essence, the opponents of federalism viewed it as stepping down from the imperial pedigree, something altogether uncalled for and unimaginable: for Edward Freeman it was “unrealistic to suggest that the United Kingdom be asked to give up its enormous power and become no more powerful in law than any other part of the proposed federation” while Henry Thring thought that “in so far as an institution is Imperial it cannot be Federal, and in so far as it is Federal it cannot be Imperial”.¹⁰⁶

To be certain, the debate reflected existing problems in administering vast territories and has to be considered along with developments leading from informal to formal Empire. It was also coupled with a latent, but always present, recognition of the multiplicity of elements making up Britain – and a perceived kind of anxiety due to that. More significantly though, what is actually hinted here is that in the absence of a monolithic understanding of the British state people were taking liberties in visualizing the United Kingdom and its constituent parts in a number of differing approaches.

But then again, if the federal alternative was gaining ground in the 1850s, what is one to make of John Fraser, Barrister – at – Law, who was to respond in Dublin to the Lord Mayor’s toast to “The Land we live in”? After alluding to his double descent, both Scottish and Irish, he added that he would rather speak as a subject of the British Empire” in admitting that

“while Ireland could boast of her great men, and Scotland of her Burns, England might claim the two greatest uninspired names – Shakespeare and Newton. (Cheers). Let them remember this, and while proud of their great countrymen, let them feel particular

¹⁰⁵ Kendle, *Federal Britain*, chs.2,3 and 4.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, pp.50-51.

pride in the greatness and magnificence which the three countries
as one empire had attained. (Cheers)".¹⁰⁷

A note on the Empire being "three countries as one", a union of equals where England did not (or should not) enjoy special status or prerogatives – but the tone was not just one of stating a simple fact but one of warning. This resembled a skewed view of a holy trinity, indivisible but not of the same substance, taken from theology and transferred into politics in order to emphasise the contributions of the Celtic element. As an indicator of discomfort towards English prevalence it is quite telling ; however, it does not promote any clearer image of Scotland. It just adds another variance.

A "perfect union"? A "confederacy of nations"? "Sister kingdoms"¹⁰⁸? Or "three countries as one empire"? Taking into account views of Scotland not as "thoroughly united" to England but "free and independent", not to mention outright imperialists boasting that "*we* hold a quarter of the world"¹⁰⁹, we seem to already have encountered a wider array of concepts than expected. Where exactly in that spectrum can we position the Imperial Federation League of 1884?¹¹⁰ How to account for the "United Empire loyalists", set to promote "the closer union of home country and colonies", meaning the "consolidation of the extended nation into a practical and effective Confederation"?¹¹¹

The feeling we get is not one of clarity: definitions proliferate where we would have least expected, examples appear in abundance, their construction and order seem mystifying. Robert Bell in Lerwick puts Burns,

¹⁰⁷ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.509.

¹⁰⁸ Toast to the "Poets of the sister kingdoms" drank in Lauder. In Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.321.

¹⁰⁹ My emphasis. Govan Burns Club, *Speech by Arthur Kay*, p.8.

¹¹⁰ Strengthening of imperial ties as an alternative to "drifting apart" was also widely propagated by Joseph Chamberlain. On "constructive imperialism" and its varieties see E.H.H. Green, "The political economy of Empire, 1880-1914" in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. III, (London, 1999), pp. 346-367.

¹¹¹ Legend and Editorial in *Britannia*, (1901), 1. The issue can be considered as a fascinating indicator of imperial mentalities. A section called "Stories from Greater Britain" provides a short story propagating gentlemanly ideals, cricket, punitive expeditions against the rebellious Matabeli and Mashonas and fair play both in love and war for the colonists – but hard work for the "Kaffirs".

therefore Scotland, in a thoroughly British perspective flanking him with his contemporaries William Pitt and Horatio Nelson. Pitt “kept afloat the good ship of the British constitution, richly freighted as she was with the cause of order and the liberties of mankind”¹¹² from the twin dangers of anarchy and despotism, namely the French Revolution – which Burns espoused for a time¹¹³ – and Napoleon. Nelson, on the other hand, may have made “the name of Britain feared and honoured” but it was the “ ‘meteor flag of England’ ” he saw “floating triumphant...and her empire established on the seas” while Burns’s ‘Scots wha hae’ “fanned the flame of patriotic ardour...on the tented fields of the Peninsula and the Crimea”.¹¹⁴ Scotland, Britain, England, all appear in the same sentence, Burns and Pitt stand side by side, ‘Scots wha hae’ is a patriotic song rallying army ranks not in the service of the Scottish nation but to the cause of the empire, yet obviously the address was not treated as an exercise in incoherence.

This confusion promptly reappears and consolidates when the interpretation of key national symbols is involved. Mentions of a national flag sometimes appear quite out of context. We read of the ‘national colours’ but which national colours exactly are we dealing with? Is this St Andrew’s Cross or the Union Jack? The question is far from being rhetorical because this subject is vested in ambiguity. Nelson brings glory to *Britain* but it is the flag of *England* that floats triumphantly in Robert Bell’s address mentioned above. Sometimes “mingled carelessness” goes to the point where a statue of Burns can be flanked by the flags of Scotland, England, France and America supported by the shields of Scotland and Glasgow.¹¹⁵ John Clark Ferguson’s address in Carlisle, England, offered a singular example of the accommodation of symbols in British identity. Ferguson managed to concentrate all the questioning we have attempted thus far in a few compact lines. He stated that

¹¹² Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.326.

¹¹³ MacIntyre, *Dirt and deity*, p. 293-297. Burns then went on to join the volunteers regiments in 1795 promptly accompanying his decision with *Should haughty Gaul invasion threat*.

¹¹⁴ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.326.

¹¹⁵ On the hundredth anniversary of Robert Burns celebration in Glasgow City Hall. In Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.39.

“perhaps, the characteristic which most distinguishes the Scotch is the reflection of the patriotic ardour that animated Burns when he wrote ‘Scots wha hae’, the spirit of determined and invincible heroism, and in proof of this I need only, gentlemen, refer you to the conduct of the gallant Highlanders at the ever memorable field of Waterloo! – while they have put the seal upon the courage and valour, within the recollection of all present, at Alma, Balaclava, and Inkermann. And since the sympathies of the two countries have become interwoven and consolidated, the Scotchman is now one of the main supporters of the majesty of that flag, the glorious symbol of our national pride and independence – “The flag that braved a thousand years/the battle and the breeze” – that flag which is ever the precursor of victory, of destruction to the tyrant, and of mercy to the captive”.¹¹⁶

Ferguson used an example of British frame, namely the Highlanders in Waterloo, to illustrate the extent of modern Scottish patriotism, implying that the feeling expressed in ‘Scots wha hae’ was essentially the same with the spirit of troops who have fought in the Crimean War at Balaclava. To follow his reasoning, it ensues that there has been no real transference of loyalties for Scots between the middle ages and his contemporary times, just an extension of ‘sympathies’ becoming in the process ‘interwoven and consolidated’ since 1707. Therefore, there is now one nation represented by one flag to which the Scottish people pledge their allegiance. However, the reference to the ‘thousand years spanned’ appears opaque for certainly the United Kingdom’s existence did not span such a period of time. Ferguson had in mind the English flag, projecting in a way the British Empire in the English past – or an English Empire to his British present. Either way, this added an assimilationist spin to his meaning and another layer to this mixture of ideas concerning a Scottish-British identity.

No greater clarity can be found in enquiring after the national anthem. In the 1859 celebrations the canon was to open the ceremonies

¹¹⁶ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.445. John Clark Ferguson is described as “a poet of ability” and is the brother of Carlisle’s mayor, Robert Ferguson.

sometimes with ‘Rule Britannia’ but in most cases with ‘God save the Queen’. Since this was Robert Burns’s and Scotland’s commemoration it would be difficult to avoid ‘Scots wha hae’ – although its absence from English celebrations was conspicuous: it was only mentioned three times.¹¹⁷ It apparently served more than one function. After toasts to the Army and Navy, as in, say Bradford, it was only a war song, an appropriate accompaniment to honouring the military. However it could also be the “indisputably national war-song of Scotland”¹¹⁸, “national air”¹¹⁹, “the Scottish national lyric for all time”¹²⁰. All these designate it effectively as the Scottish national anthem. Mr William Hutton, shoemaker, in his turn in the Working Men’s Soiree in Linlithgow asked “how often has the stern red line and the flowing tartans of Caledonia stemmed the furious onset of the foe, as the terrible slogan pealed upon the ear ‘Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled’”.¹²¹ The answer came from Robert Thomson who used the “sublime and bold national hymn” to illustrate his own rhetorical question whether

“do we ever think that there could be found men who would not feel as if inspired by some spirit of resistless power, which would make them, in the cause of their country, rights, and liberties, as strong as the resistless tides of the raging sea, in defence of all that is held holy, sacred, good and great in Britain”.¹²²

Unexpected images: A Scottish Empire

We have mentioned before another layer to the variety of Scottish constructions we have come across, linked to an imperial conception of

¹¹⁷ Twice in Liverpool and once in Bradford. In Ballantine, *Chronicle*, pp. 458-459, 436 respectively.

¹¹⁸ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.175. “It is to us what the war-songs of Alcaeus must have been to ancient Greeks” Francis Adams explains.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.179.

¹²⁰ *Burnsiana*, III, (1894), 32.

¹²¹ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.331.

¹²² *Ibid*, p.109.

Britain with a different kind of assimilationist spin, and it is now time to elaborate. From what has already been presented most Scots from mid-century onwards seemed to regard the state they were living in as a prospering Empire, celebrating its laws, its civilisation, its bustling commerce. It is quite clear they attributed this to the Treaty of Union, which had brought together two equal sovereign states forming a new polity of their own accord. It was this freedom and equality that shaped an entity to which they felt they belonged and were ready to defend.

However, the product of a hundred and fifty years of Union between two equal partners in this line of thought was neither an English Empire nor a Scottish Kingdom and, in a way it was not even a fusion of these two elements. The British Empire was actually delegated into a Scottish one: “our Indian Empire was established by Clive and Cornwallis”, David Syme announced at Kinross¹²³ and this *our* taken in its Scottish background is telling enough. The underlying ‘we’ may designate the British element in the above sentence, but Scotland has been blended, incorporated, integrated in that formation and the relation can also be expressed now in terms of equivalence where British state is Scottish state and vice versa. Notice how John Blaikie, Esq, of Craigiebuckler, demonstrated this in his recalling of the times of Burns: “About the time of his birth we had only one possession in India, where Lord Clive was commencing his brilliant career. At that time we had not lost our American possessions, and the victories of Lord Nelson and the great Duke had still to be gained”.¹²⁴ He went on to remind his audience that Lord Erskine had yet to appear, James Watt was still unknown, the spinning jenny had yet to be invented by Arkwright and “the institution of Blackwood’s magazine had not taken place”¹²⁵.

Here a Scottish setting is quite smoothly framed in an imperial one where the first person plural comes as natural. In fact, they blend into each

¹²³ Ballantine, *Chronicle* , p.309. Robert Clive, 1st Baron Clive of Plassey (1725-1774) and Charles Cornwallis, Viscount Brome (1738-1805) were both English. Syme’s speech is another one excelling in ambiguities of terms, using ‘England’, ‘Scotland’ and ‘British’ in an offhand manner but at least comes clean in considering Scotland as his ‘country’.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p.283.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*.

other. Celebrating the Indian Army's and the Highland Regiments' successes, pioneer work in Africa, colonising efforts in Australia or Canada are ways of Scotticising the Empire and emphasize on the act of empire-building as particular to their own character.¹²⁶ Perceiving it in this light permitted Scots to be its loyal subjects, work for its aggrandizement, enjoy its prestige and power and 'extend their sympathies' to the rest of it, the 'sister kingdoms', the 'confederacy of nations' without compromising their distinct Scottish identity. From a Scottish point of view then this was more than anything else 'a confederacy of Empires'.

The Scottish imperial drive and imperial language certainly did not appear for the first time in the nineteenth century. The Scots especially managed to keep themselves busy as much before as after the ruin of the Darien venture. On an individual level they were to be found as indispensable middlemen for various commercial empires. It was exactly in this colonial spirit and through this peculiar apprenticeship that the Scots shaped their own ideas for a deserved place in the sun. They did not really invent an imperialism of their own. However, nor did they borrow the English one under its British façade after the Union. They might have envisioned "an empire of trade" contrary to the English concept of "an empire of settlement"¹²⁷ but the distinction was not one of principles but of mentalities and attitude towards natives. As for the notion of a 'Christian Empire', the fact that trade, religion and politics went hand in hand is apparent in *Researches in South Africa*, the work of John Philip, an evangelical missionary. The Scottish missionaries while scattering "the seeds of civilization" were at the same time "extending British interests, British influence and the British empire".¹²⁸

¹²⁶ "Empire – building was depicted as something peculiarly Scottish and as the fulfilment of a national destiny" T.M. Devine observes in *The Scottish Nation*, p.290. The same is pointed out by L. Paterson who adds on the Empire that "it was theirs [the Scots'] as much as England's". In Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of modern Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1994), p.50.

¹²⁷ Fry, *The Scottish Empire*, ch.7. John Mackenzie sees in it a "combination of English institutions with the Scottish ethic". In Mackenzie, "On Scotland", p.737.

¹²⁸ Fry, *The Scottish Empire*, ch.11.

Contemporary historians perceived the Scottish imperial experience in their own light. For two examples of radically differing opinions let us consider John R. Seeley (1834-1895) and Andrew Dewar Gibb, who wrote within fifty years of each other. Seeley in his influential *Expansion of England* (1883) managed not to refer to Scotland at all, her having been assimilated to the point that no mention to the Union was needed: “in these islands we feel ourselves for all purposes one nation”.¹²⁹ In addition, the British ‘Empire’ was nothing of the sort, “in the ordinary sense”. It was a “mere normal extension of the English race into other lands...It creates not properly an Empire, but only a very large state”.¹³⁰ To be sure, this ‘normality’ and sense of the ‘proper’ were quite alien to Gibb. He was a nationalist with strong convictions who had contributed to the founding of the Scottish National Party some years before, but not one to easily give in to delusions. He did not hesitate in recognising that the Empire built was essentially English¹³¹. England, in his opinion, had used the capabilities and resources of her smaller neighbour, had usurped the name of Britain and offered to the Scot the place of a subordinate. Equality visualised as an “empire of his own”, was “inadmissible and intolerable”, and his reward for his toil along the globe was “a few names in the New Town and a large pillar surmounted by a statue of Dundas”.¹³² There was indeed a Scottish contribution, no matter how invisible for Seeley, but one only appreciated on an individual level, even if its protagonists were effectively “lost to their own country”.¹³³ Gibb, citing name after name of Scottish empire-builders, provides an impressive roster that does credit to his title, even if the whole project provides evidence

¹²⁹ Although in the same sentence he continued admitting that in Wales and Ireland “there is Celtic blood, and Celtic languages utterly unintelligible to us are still spoken”. In John R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, second edition, (London, 1909), p.59.

¹³⁰ Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, pp.343-44. Politically, Seeley sided with the Liberal Unionists and was closely connected to the Imperial Federation League. For details on Seeley’s life and thought see Deborah Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the uses of History*, (Cambridge, 1980).

¹³¹ Andrew Dewar Gibb, *Scottish Empire*, (London, 1937), p.5.

¹³² *Ibid*, p.311.

¹³³ Andrew Dewar Gibb, *Scotland Resurgent*, (Stirling, 1950), pp.312-14.

of his own ambiguities on the matter. In the end the title is as much the product of irony as of genuine pride in these accomplishments.

If the older generation's conception was one of obvious pride in the Scottish contribution to the British Empire, Gibb opted for a negative stance. His notion of a Scottish Empire was fragmentary, complicated and not wholly coherent. He underlined that its beneficiaries were to a great extent the ruling classes, those who had acquiesced "loyally and even blindly" in the Union,¹³⁴ the fortunate who featured in his account, not the people. But he was not averse to the imperial concept itself. Had it been realised, the Scottish Empire would be acceptable to him – either as a form of British integration complying with the dignity of the Scottish nation or as a national enterprise in itself. It would have been a preferable version, as "the Scots would have brought their own institutions, their own culture, their own ideas".¹³⁵ Still, as he wrote elsewhere, Scotland remained a "mother nation" and "so long as hegemony endures in the British Empire, it must reside in England and Scotland, never in England alone".¹³⁶ Gibb's primary concern then, as we shall see below, was with the nation itself. The Empire had run its course, becoming through English supremacy an albatross around Scotland's neck. It was time to shake off both: "her imperial task ended, she will seek to form and to justify a new conception of her function in the framework of European civilization".¹³⁷

The extent to which Scots saw this empire as their own affair though, not in theoretical texts but in everyday practice, is attested by the fervent defence the Scottish Churches put on when the missionary colony on the River Shire, tributary of the Zambezi, found itself on ground disputed by the Portuguese. Not only did Scots support the demands for declaration of a protectorate the missionaries made in 1888, they were themselves buttressed by the wider backing they received in public meetings and petitions

¹³⁴ Gibb, *Scotland Resurgent*, p.312.

¹³⁵ Andrew Dewar Gibb, *Scotland in Eclipse*, (London, 1930), p.23.

¹³⁶ Gibb, *Scotland in Eclipse*, p.187. Wales and Ireland were but "satrapies of England". The 'mother nation' notion is to be found previously in Scottish National League resolutions as early as 1926. In Richard J. Finlay, *Independent and free: Scottish politics and the origins of the Scottish National Party 1918-1945*, (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 66.

¹³⁷ Gibb, *Scottish Empire*, p.315.

throughout Scotland when the government seemed for a while ready to cede to the Portuguese what they wanted. “This is the voice of Scotland” were the words of Dr Archibald Scott, convener of the Kirk’s Foreign Missions Committee, to the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury in presenting him with a petition signed by 11.000 ministers and elders.¹³⁸ In 1891 the protectorate, *de facto* existing since 1889, was officially proclaimed.

Important as it was as an everyday practice this Scottish Empire never acquired any philosophical justification. Orators in anniversaries, Burns clubs addressees and historians did not lay out any grand scheme – William Burns’s ‘leading idea’ – to justify this development, they only agreed in portraying individual after individual in his personal history of conquest, success or failure. Alexander Mackenzie, David Livingstone, Henry Havelock, even Walter Scott and Robert Burns were employed to embody the Scottish spirit and virtues in triumph and noble efforts. This was a direct consequence of Scottish culture being unable in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to override the English comparison. The absence of a reliable grand theme in Scottish history, as shown by Colin Kidd and Marinell Ash was crucial as its want precluded the development of forceful arguments for political ideological use. The result was that where Scottish notions of the Empire did not follow the established British norm, the Scottish Empire was becoming a shallow theme, a mere list of figureheads.¹³⁹ While the Scottish church, education system and civil society in the guise of Caledonian and Burns societies spread in the colonies, the “heroic myths” of a Scottish Empire continued to be missionaries, explorers and military figures.¹⁴⁰ The perennial *leitmotif* of the Scottish imperial experience became that of the self-made man.

¹³⁸ Fry, *The Scottish Empire*, ch.13. The extent of Scottish influence in institutions as religion and education is noted by John M. Mackenzie who points out that “the Scots succeeded in exporting aspects of their civil society”. In Mackenzie, “On Scotland”, p.732.

¹³⁹ Modern retrospective analyses of the Scottish imperial experience may follow the same road. See, for instance, Stewart Lamont, *When Scotland ruled the world. The Story of the Golden Age of Genius, Creativity and Exploration*, (London, 2001).

¹⁴⁰ See John M. Mackenzie, “Empire and Metropolitan cultures” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. III, pp.289-90.

How does the view discussed above pertain to Unionist-Nationalism, the current influential model of explaining these times? Graeme Morton proposes it as an alternative to previous regards of failed nationalism and romantic nationalism in the period 1830-1860. He stresses the demand for equality inside the Union, in fact for “more union, not less”, far away from separatist claims. The arguments rest on the interaction between the civil society/state axis and their relation to ‘government’. Dual identities continued to function in an effective way, especially since the prevalent arrangement provided for great autonomy on the level of urban government, which actually tended to particular Scottish issues, and where most of the political elite and would-be challengers of the status quo were already active. Mid – century Scotland appears here as a *virtual* state, thus enjoying a unique relationship which consequently gave rise to a unique brand of nationalism.¹⁴¹

Such clarity however is not present in my material. In the second half of the nineteenth century a more disjointed and complicated picture appears, fascinating in its fragmentation. If the split was merely between a majority envisaging Scotland as a part of the Empire and a minority evoking a separate nationhood Unionist-Nationalism would look all the more attractive as a conciliating force. The diversity of views we encounter, though, covers an especially broad range on both unionism and nationalism: just like watching light through a prism, these solid blocks dissolve into a variety of shades and colours. In the end common ground can be reached not in the words themselves but in a mentality hinted at in addresses and visible only in perspective. A recurring persistent *we* that does not refer to the British Empire as an external thing implies that for the Scots the Empire is also Scottish. In their view Scotland was gradually integrated in the Union, not incorporated to England, while the Scottish identity itself expanded to provide a wider patriotism. Thus a possible surge of Scottish nationalism was

¹⁴¹ Variations of the same pattern as ‘semi-independence’, ‘nation within a nation’, ‘independence in Britain’ have been used by N.T. Phillipson, R.J. Morris and the late Donald Dewar and are quoted by Morton in *Unionist-Nationalism*, p.10. For a detailed treatment of this view see L. Paterson, *The Autonomy of modern Scotland*.

defused and contained before the need arose to come to the fore or at least before becoming fully fledged, for there was no apparent reason to demand a distinct presence in – or even separation from – a political entity to whom Scots felt being part.¹⁴² In answering Graeme Morton’s fundamental question with a question, why ask for a Scottish state while there was a *Scottish Empire*?

Robert Burns and early nationalism

The experience of the Great War and its aftermath in the following ‘roaring’ but uncertain ‘20s produced a new boost for the imperial cause and seemed to normalize for a while British loyalty as unchallenged in Scotland. Donald Macmillan in 1917 made an eloquent sermon in Glasgow on behalf of the war effort. He described Scotland as “a small state”, proclaimed that “no nation that can hold up its head with equal pride”¹⁴³ fighting with the rest of the British Empire for nationality, liberty, humanity and progress, “doing battle to the death” while “the future of civilization is hanging in the balance”.¹⁴⁴ Three years later Colonel J. Beaufin Irving celebrating Burns’s memory in Dumfries summarized the spirit of post-Great War by saying that “the whole Empire as a body had pulled together in the most wonderful way, and every colony, even the very smallest as well as the biggest, gave something in money and men to help the Mother Country”.¹⁴⁵ It would take some time for the pendulum to swing back to pre-war order when the Scottish Unionists discerned between a “parochial [patriotism]...based more largely on jealousy of others” and an accepted one, a “wider imperial patriotism”.¹⁴⁶

However, the age of remembrance and reliance to the old glories of the 1914-1918 struggles would not prove enough. As the industrial

¹⁴² Michael Fry observes the initial compatibility of Scottish nationalism and Empire in *The Scottish Empire*, ch.38.

¹⁴³ Donald Macmillan, *Burns and the War. His message to the Nation. An address delivered before the Glasgow and District Burns Association, in St. George’s Parish Church, Glasgow, on 28th January 1917*, (Glasgow, 1917), p.3.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p.7.

¹⁴⁵ *Centenary Book of the Burns Club of Dumfries, 1820-1920*, (np, nd) p.22.

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Fry, *The Scottish Empire*, ch. 28.

mechanism of the Empire seemed to wind down and Scotland was hit by recession, nationalism in its modern guise came into the fore and gained appeal to a wider audience.¹⁴⁷ The collapse of liberal values in the post-war era and the political eclipse of the Liberal party were signs of an extensive rearrangement of loyalties and priorities. While British Liberalism, an essential product of the nineteenth century, whose most radical policies were never more than reformist, did not seem viable at a time of acute polarisation, the ascendance of the Labour party to the status of Opposition generated anxiety among middle-class majorities.¹⁴⁸ The dissolution of the Liberal hegemony in Scotland, even if we allow for the Unionists as a worthy political replacement in the inter-war era, meant there was enough ground for alternative voices to be heard, especially when the Labour party moved towards a more centralist platform disassociating itself from earlier Home Rule pledges. Attempting to fill a vacuum of effective ideas and policies and accommodate the *malaise* the Scottish society was experiencing the nationalists acted at first as gadfly to Labour, hoping to indicate the importance of Home Rule. The electoral challenge they posed however caused a gap between parties and contributed to the fusion of nationalists of a moderate left background with those of moderate right in a single entity.

The unification of the Scottish Home Rule Association, the Scottish National League and the Scottish National Movement in the National Party of Scotland in 1928 did not produce spectacular results. This was mainly due to inexperience in conducting political campaigns and the party's hazy ideological platform which accompanied such leftists as Roland Muirhead, separatists like Tom Gibson, Celticists such as Erskine of Mar, and anti-democrats as, for example, the early Hugh MacDiarmid. A general air of crankiness and extremism may have damaged their prospects at this early

¹⁴⁷ The anxiety over the country's economic state was a key theme in interwar nationalist rhetoric: "Look at the Clyde, as silent and shipless as the Orinoco" urged Cunnighame Graham on Wallace Commemoration Day in 1933. Quoted in Graeme Morton, *William Wallace, Man and myth*, (Stroud, 2001), p.127.

¹⁴⁸ See Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, ch.14. The fortunes of the Liberal Party are discussed at length in G.R. Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and disintegration, 1886-1929*, (Basingstoke, 2001); Paul Adelman, *The Decline of the Liberal Party 1910-1931*, (London, 1995).

stage. Soon there appeared a challenge from the more right-wing and conservative – but also pro-imperial and devolutionist elements who followed Andrew Dewar Gibb and George Malcolm Thomson in forming the Scottish Party in June 1932. Internal struggles, discontent and political disagreement, what Lewis Spence had at an earlier time described as “hubbub, outcry, chaos”, would afflict the nationalists until the unity of the movement was secured after many twists and turns in 1934.¹⁴⁹

The Scottish National Party may only have emerged in 1934 but the first signs of a rekindling of old aspirations dated from the time of the Scottish cultural and literary revival in the early twenties. In 1921 J.F. Tocher maintained that “this [Burns’s birthday] is the time of year when we consider ourselves, not as a unit of, but as a unit apart from, the matrix forming the British Empire”.¹⁵⁰ In 1929 the National Party of Scotland circulated a reprint from *The Scotsman* containing the address of professor of French language and Literature at Edinburgh University, Charles Sarolea, a speech he gave in his capacity as Honorary President of the Greenock Burns Club. Sarolea’s opinion was that the historical significance of Burns lay in his capacity as prophet of Scottish nationalism – and his gospel had to be heeded for Scotland’s modern history was an obvious retrogression: “Scotland has been more and more merged and absorbed in the Empire. She has sold her national birthright for a mess of Imperial pottage”. He believed that Scotland “would serve the Empire much more efficiently if it were a self-contained and self-governing unity”. To avoid “a dead level of uniformity” Scots should “refuse to seek their salvation in Whitehall or Westminster” and “follow the spirit and the traditions which made them great in the past, in the face of the most adverse circumstances”.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ See Finlay, *Independent and free*, chs.1-3. Quoted in Morton, *William Wallace*, p.122. Lewis Spence quoted in H.J. Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*, (London, 1969), p.154.

¹⁵⁰ J.F. Tocher, *Ancestry, youth and environment of Robert Burns. Remarks made in proposing “The Immortal Memory” at the Annual Dinner of the Aberdeen Burns Club on 25th January 1921, and at the Annual Dinner of the Elgin Burns Club on 26th January, 1921*, (Aberdeen, 1921), p.5.

¹⁵¹ *Edinburgh Professor on Scottish Nationalism. Scathing indictment of present status.* From *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh 1929.

Nationalism may have been a negligible political power in its formative years but it nevertheless attracted figures that were far from marginal inside Scottish society. Andrew Dewar Gibb was professor of Law in the University of Glasgow and his view on contemporary Scottish matters was scarcely less bleak than Sarolea's. We have already noted his notions and critique of a Scottish Empire. Accordingly, Gibb was not prepared to sing hymns to the Union. On the contrary, this was a transaction at gunpoint, more reminiscent of highway robbery than anything else: "with the pistol of the robber on her head Scotland was forced into acceptance of a Union which most of her people loathed and feared".¹⁵² In his *Scotland in Eclipse* Gibb essentially attributed to the Union a number of problems in Scottish society, past and present: Highland depopulation, de-industrialisation, Irish immigration.¹⁵³ His views gained in radicalism with the passage of time. In 1930 he asserted that "the establishment of a Scottish legislature on strictly provincial lines is not an event which captures the imagination. But if it be thought of as merely a step towards the ideal, it is something which can be welcomed".¹⁵⁴ Scotland possessed all the necessary prerequisites to attain independence: fiscal self-sufficiency, cultural continuity, contributions to civilization, a population total similar or greater than other historical European nations.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the scheme he proposed involved separate Parliaments, executive, possibly consular and diplomatic representation and full control of the national purse leaving aside defence, foreign affairs, post, telegraph and colonial services for some vague friendly

¹⁵² Gibb, *Scotland in Eclipse*, p.12.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, pp.37-78. Gibb was anti-Irish to the point of open racism. (See Gibb, *Scotland in Eclipse*, pp.54-6). These racial prejudices were not a strictly personal quirk. Prominent figures of early Scottish nationalism as William Gillies and Lewis Spence shared them while the Scottish Presbyterian churches were also influenced by racial doctrines in the inter-war years and sought to marginalize the Scoto-Irish both socially and legislatively. See Finlay, *Independent and free*, ch. 1-2; Stewart J. Brown, " 'Outside the Covenant': The Scottish Presbyterian Churches and Irish immigration, 1922-1938" in *The Innes Review*, XLII, (1991), 19-45; Richard J. Finlay, "Nationalism, Race, Religion and the Irish Question in inter-war Scotland" in *The Innes Review*, XLII, (1991), 46-67.

¹⁵⁴ Gibb, *Scotland in Eclipse*, p.183.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp.19-21.

arrangement.¹⁵⁶ It was not until 1950 that he argued for total independence, complete with a Viceroy and the crowning of a King of Scotland.¹⁵⁷

Tocher, Gibb and Sarolea, each in his own way, proposed old wine in new casks. To a different degree, they put forward the view that the Union had practically failed and somehow a new arrangement should take its place. They even challenged the unwavering constant of improvement. From the bleak vantage point of recession years the spectacular industrial performance that had made Scotland 'workshop of the world' only amounted to gains for 'individual Scots' and a simultaneous 'retrogression' of their society. Moreover, integration in the British Empire had been a vain attempt and an empty shell altogether, nothing but a 'mess of Imperial pottage' in comparison with the originality and presumed vigour befitting a 'national birthright'.

The inclusion of Burns as a prophet of Scottish nationalism projected a figurehead to stretch the practicality and viability of Scotland going its own way. To incorporate Burns in a nationalist vision was certainly the obvious way out in proportion to his mythic status, but it was by no means the only way out.¹⁵⁸ In 1927, the Rev. James Barr, in moving the second reading of the Government of Scotland Bill, could still maintain that "we are but setting the songs of Burns to their proper tunes"¹⁵⁹ seeking to accommodate Burns to Home Rule. But in these troubled times when Scotland faced economic dislocation and social upheaval the Burns legacy

¹⁵⁶ Gibb, *Scotland in Eclipse*, pp.184-5.

¹⁵⁷ Gibb, *Scotland Resurgent*, p.287.

¹⁵⁸ Nor was Burns the only symbol employed for the job. David Livingstone has been at this time increasingly appealing and appeared in his biographies as personifying the traditional Scottish virtues of practical and intellectual skills, perseverance and resistance to hardship, as well as representing a perfect mixture of Highlander and Lowlander. In J.M. Mackenzie, "David Livingstone, the construction of the myth" in T. Gallagher and G. Walker (eds.), *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant popular culture in modern Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1990). Livingstone, like Burns, was after his death assimilated into a shining example of the cause of British imperialism. His canonising Scots were no more put off than the English by his usually denoting the Empire by its – according to Michael Fry – "common shorthand" of *England*.

¹⁵⁹ James Barr, *Lang Syne. Memoirs of the Rev. James Barr, B.D.*, (Glasgow, 1949), p.147.

looked under considerable strain, something patently manifested in Hugh MacDiarmid's attacks both on the validity of his literary status and perception. The Burns Clubs, engaged in praising "the externalities of Burns and his work"¹⁶⁰, had "year in and year out, conspired to bury Burns under an increasing cairn of the most ludicrous and inapposite eulogy"¹⁶¹, in a "spate of essentially meaningless verbosity".¹⁶² However, even MacDiarmid could not escape the Bard's shadow, as evident in the complex structure of his *A Drunk man looks at the thistle*¹⁶³, a fact demonstrating the extent of the iconic powers Burns had been endowed with – to the point that he cannot be bypassed. Both our last commentators, Sarolea and MacDiarmid, used him as a pedigree to air their radical ideas on a new attitude regarding the Scottish past and a new future Scottish collective. After the post-Union *malaise*, the heraldic grievances of the 1850s and the Irish-triggered Home Rule demands of the 1890s Scottish society moved into the era of outright political nationalism in the familiar European pattern.

Conclusion

What we have been trying to trace in the course of this chapter was a succession of images constructed for Scotland in the period between the first centenary of Burns birth and 1930. Burns's importance as a national symbol can be discerned from the fact that participants often described these celebrations in the language of a national holiday that Scotland – and for

¹⁶⁰ Hugh MacDiarmid, "The Burns Cult (I)" in *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, (Manchester, 1995), p.354. See also "The Burns Cult" in Hugh MacDiarmid, *At the sign of the thistle. A collection of essays*, (London, nd [1934]).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.355.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p.356.

¹⁶³ Alan Riach, "MacDiarmid's Burns" in Crawford (ed.), *Burns and cultural authority*, pp.205-208.

that, the whole of the United Kingdom – lacks until the present day.¹⁶⁴ Burns was regarded as ‘Scotland personified’ and it is especially this significance that permitted him to be used in different schemes and guises, to the advantage of diverse politics and ideologies, each with their own national vision. However, this plurality of Burns images was equalled by that of Scottish identity constructions.

In the second half of the nineteenth century Scottish identity still seemed malleable and fluid enough to fluctuate between a purely national version and a British Imperial one. A mere hesitation between these two currents was not the extent of the vacillation. Overall, British identity in the nineteenth century seemed to accommodate lots of different perspectives: an ‘independent and free Scotland’ which you may unite to England by ‘a band of parchment’ but will still remain as distinct and separate as in Bannockburn, a unitary nation-state in the form of the Empire, a ‘confederacy of nations’, ‘three countries as one empire’, a ‘perfect union’. However, underlying constructions of Scotland in the Empire can be found traces of a mentality conceptualising the latter as a not merely British but Scottish enterprise worthy of pride and celebration. The vision of a Scottish Empire comes as a direct correlation of the equal partnership inside the Union. The lack of precision in delineating a Scottish identity though repeated itself in the interpretation of key symbols: as a war song ‘Scots wha hae’ could even be sung by Englishmen showing that they rise above “national differences and party feuds”.¹⁶⁵ Not even flags could point towards a coherent image in a tangible and efficient way: Nelson may have laboured for the glory of Britain but it was “the meteor flag of England floating triumphant” that he saw before dying in battle. And surely the Scotsman who was then “one of the main supporters of the majesty of that [British] flag” would have wondered at the attestation that it had already “braved a thousand years”.

¹⁶⁴ There are arguably equivalents in Remembrance Day for Britain in its entirety, and St Andrew’s or St Patrick’s day for its parts. They do not however carry strictly national connotations.

¹⁶⁵ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p.438.

The unionist perspective secured a prominent position in Scotland during the time and in the aftermath of the Great War but general uncertainty and the Depression in the late '20s prepared the ground for a renewed appearance of nationalism, this time in the modern guise of a Nationalist party. What we have to stress as a final point is that, while appearing quite monolithic to continental Europeans, the United Kingdom remained essentially a union of multiple identities and concentric loyalties. To employ David Cannadine's apposite point it was another example of large areas of the map covered by the same colour : " that cartographical image provided a reassuring picture of coherence and uniformity".¹⁶⁶ In the case of Scotland these identities and loyalties which blur a seemingly homogeneous surface continued to coexist for a long time besides the vagaries of political and economic conjunctures, and in the end designated the structure and experience of modern-day Scottish society.

¹⁶⁶ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p.85.

Chapter Five

‘Highest mission’ and ‘inalienable property’: ‘National holidays’ and national consciousness in Greece and the Ottoman Empire, c.1860 – 1923¹

Eric J. Hobsbawm has described the invention of tradition as a “process of formalization and ritualization” designed to produce a firm link to a society’s past. The role of such “symbolic complexes” becomes apparent in a national setting where these traditions help solidify the contents of community rituals. As observed in cases as the British Royal Christmas broadcast, the celebrations and imagery of the French Third Republic and those of the Second German Empire, invented traditions were used to mobilize the people and/or confer legitimacy to relatively new regimes.² In this spirit it is my suggestion that we can observe their function in a vivid way in the confirmation of a common identity that the ‘national holidays’

¹ Iroklis Vasiadis, prominent member of the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople, considered it a bridge connecting Europe to the Orient whose civilising progress remained “the highest mission of Hellenism”. Ioannis Aristoklis, on the other hand, president of the Society in 1877-78, expressed his concern over possible loss of “our inalienable property” in Macedonia and Thrace in the wake of the San Stefano treaty. In *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, Η’, [1873-74], (1874), 352 and ΙΒ’, [1877-78], (1879), 140. As the journal of the Greek Literary Society proved to be an irregular publication I have included in square brackets the years each of the volumes covered. The journal was published in Constantinople throughout its run.

² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of tradition*, (Cambridge, 1983), pp.1-14, 268-278.

constitute. State-organised ceremonies in modern times recall the past in bright pageantry, processions and orations that repeat themselves invariably year after year in a semblance of permanence. The importance of, say, the 4th of July in the United States or the Bastille Day in France rests on the symbolic union they provide for their citizens in an ‘imagined community’ transcending local ties, social groups or political parties. However, the context and ideas proclaimed on such occasions remind us that modern nations are also political constructs, not spontaneous groupings or results of a natural evolutionary progress.

In the course of this chapter we shall engage in a discussion of some aspects of ‘national holidays’ as invented traditions in the Greek world. The first part of the chapter considers the impact of Independence Day celebrations in Athens in general, and its University in particular. A description of the circumstances of their inception will be followed with an analysis of their ideological content as expressed in celebratory addresses. The second part will deal with notions of national identity among Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. Here, the case is more complex since it concerns the unofficial celebration of a literary society where the tones of national rhetoric, for a number of reasons, remain subdued. However, what links both cases is the interplay of culture and ideology in order to forge a particular group identity. Special attention should be paid to what is being said about the nation. These ‘discursive practices’ do not exist in a vacuum; they constitute a part of politics where justification is sought and legitimization is conferred for ideas and ideologies.³ This ‘national discourse’, conveying a specific symbolic ideological image, is probably the single most important element of these occasions.

In the second half of the nineteenth century academics and men of letters in the Greek world held a high social status and were always looked upon to provide intellectual leadership. Universities and literary societies in independent Greece and among the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire captured the public ear in a more forceful way than in Western Europe.

³ Christos Lyrantzis, *Το τέλος των τζακιών. Κοινωνία και πολιτική στην Αχαΐα του 19^{ου} αιώνα*, (Athens, 1991), pp.50-51.

These institutions were a novelty in the Orient and combined the excitement of innovation, respect towards educational efforts and approval of European imitation to appeal to broad sections of the public. Moreover, from the moment of their inception such institutions had been defined by great expectations bestowed upon themselves by founding members who did not shy away from lofty goals. The University of Athens would be the instrument for the 'enlightenment of the Orient' according to its first dean, Konstantinos Shinas, while the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople proclaimed a renaissance of Greek letters throughout the Ottoman Empire. The measure of the impression such efforts had can be ascertained from the stirring their activities produced among the population. Until 1862, the annual poetical contest of the University of Athens was brought to its climax by a procession of people accompanying the winning poet laureate home. During the 1860s and 1870s, the public lectures and organized lessons of the Greek Literary Society were widely popular.

Evidence in this chapter could not embrace the whole of Greek presence in the Ottoman Empire. This would be a work far greater in scope than of a simple dissertation. To turn our eye towards great civic centres and follow bourgeois middle class intellectual activities would be an acceptable limit as long as their efforts appealed to segments both of the aristocracy and the subaltern classes. That such has been the case in our paradigm will be shown in the course of the narrative. As a prospective field of work Constantinople was the obvious choice, and not just because of its swarming Greek community or its definite value as a centre for trade and arts in the Eastern Mediterranean. There is no denying the fact that Constantinople or Smyrna would be the right environments for reviewing the attitudes and activities of a flourishing Greek merchant class, especially the first, being also the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch, head of the Orthodox *millet*.⁴ However,

⁴ The *millet* originally represented religious communities integrated in the administrative machine of the Ottoman Empire. Their official recognition in the Constitution of 1876 signified their rapid transformation into *de facto* national communities. For more see Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (London, 1968); Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey*, (Cambridge, 1976-77); Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the *Millet* System" in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The*

nineteenth-century Constantinople was the perfect crossroads between the Orient and Western Europe.⁵ Indeed, it was a place of contradictions. Less than a European capital but more than just another Balkan city, turn-of-the-century Constantinople was a place of abounding and conflicting identities and loyalties, its citizens pledging allegiance at the same time to the Sultan, the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Bulgarian Exarch, the Balkan states of their ethnic origins or various other European nationalities.

Assessing Greek national identity in such a context becomes necessary for our understanding of the complex relations between the independent kingdom and outside Greek communities. Although the former was indeed foremost in procuring policies and directions in foreign affairs, culture and education, some of the latter, self-assured and financially prosperous, were still seeking an active role of their own. In the most interesting of these cases the urban Greek element in the Ottoman Empire enjoyed a rejuvenation after the 1840s taking advantage of a favourable economic situation in sustaining successful trading and banking activities. This emerging merchant class gradually felt the pull and influence of the Greek state while at the same time struggled to perform the requirements of everyday reality under the Sultan's regime. It is in a place and time where national identity, ethnic origins and civil citizenship did not match, that we have to look for attitudes and factors commanding or overriding loyalties. For thus we can gain knowledge of the measure, variances, common or different perceptions of a national identity that was neither homogeneous

functioning of a plural society, (New York, 1982); Kemal H. Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era" in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews*; Roderic H. Davison, "The Millets as Agents of Change in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire" in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews*.

⁵ On an attempt to reconstruct 'the Orient' in 'the West' and its repercussions, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism. Western conceptions of the Orient*, (London, 1991); Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London, 1993). For a related approach in a Balkan context, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (Oxford, 1997).

nor unified nor compact, but fluid and evolving until the end of the Great War.

Independence Day ceremonies in Athens

Although political power and executive authority during the Greek War of Independence had been fiercely contested between rival factions, the aftermath of the Revolution did not see different groups vying for its heritage.⁶ Political figures from the past and newcomers on the stage quickly polarised along other lines. In the late 1830s the apple of discord remained the Bavarian Regency of underage King Otho. When the Regents were finally ousted the young king received his crown in a general mood of exhilaration. Slow to think and act and keeping less than brilliant councillors in his court Otho did not prove himself an able and steadfast king. Where he excelled was in manipulating symbols to strengthen the power of the throne. In times of crisis he did not hesitate to conjure the vision of a restored Greek empire in order to alleviate internal discontent and rally the people behind him.⁷ As early as 1838, the first year of his reign, he made a bold move in declaring the 25th of March a national holiday to honour Independence Day and thus the 1821 revolution.

The instances of its inception shed light on the mechanisms of establishing a national holiday. To begin with, there was a direct attempt to legitimize this ‘invented tradition’ by linking it to its supposed precedents. The *Αθηνα* newspaper mentioned in an article in 1840 a great variety of such occasions beginning with national holidays as appeared in the Bible and continuing with relevant examples in ancient Greece and Rome. The conclusion was that “even if these celebrations did not exist among other

⁶ See above ch.2 for the historiographical consensus on the War of Independence. Although individuals essayed to justify their own conduct during the war in their memoirs and histories all agreed to uphold the national character of the Revolution.

⁷ Elli Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο» και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα. Όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος 1830-1880*, (Athens, 1986), pp.273-286.

nations, new and old, the Greek one should establish some national holiday because of the unique example it represents in history, namely, its resurrection after all these centuries”.⁸ The need for continuity in post-revolutionary Greece was so palpable that there were direct calls for the introduction of community rituals. The times were ripe for such calls: in 1840-41 the Greeks twice felt what to them amounted to rejection by their European mentors. The Protective Powers forbade any moves against the Ottoman Empire and the historian Jacob Philipp Fallmerayer denied them any real link to Classical Antiquity. Was then a national holiday compensation enough?

The decision was a popular one since the Regents were frequently castigated for neglecting the survivors of the Revolution. To cash in on that popularity there was a deliberate effort to make the festivities revolve around the king’s person. The main attraction was the procession of the royal couple to Athens’ metropolitan church where a celebratory mass was held. Gun salutes of 21 volleys were fired on the eve and again in the morning of the 25th of March, as was the case after the mass. Early in the morning, the City Guard deployed in the streets from where the royal couple were to proceed to the church on a chariot. In front and behind the chariot representatives of the guilds and bands of people “danced in exaltation and blessed our King and Queen”.⁹ But when in 1839, a turbulent year because of Eastern Question complications, the national holiday was quietly bypassed, allegedly for coinciding with Easter, the lack of dances and illumination in the city was criticised and attributed to machinations of the Minister of the Interior. “What kind of danger”, the press protested,

“could arise for the country from a holiday that in silencing passions and erasing local differences would reconcile in the same feelings the inhabitants of the Peloponnese, Roumeli and the islands and which in revealing us all as citizens and members of one and the same society, one and the same body,

⁸ The *Αθηνά* newspaper, 20/3/1840.

⁹ *Αθηνά*, 25/3/1838.

would gradually extinguish the partisan spirit that splits and mangles the Greek nation?”¹⁰

According to the press, Independence Day was unique in bringing on a spirit of public unity. It was described as “the only political celebration considered sacred by all Greeks with absolutely no exception”.¹¹ This celebration needed visible symbols for the public to focus on and the king to attach himself to, since neither Otho nor the subsequent monarchs of the Danish Glucksburg dynasty could establish any direct connection or contribution to the Revolution. Any surviving military chiefs were still considered its living symbols. During the ceremonies in 1867 king George I saw to it that lieutenant general Gennaios Kolokotronis, son of Theodoros Kolokotronis, was seated next to him.¹² In the first years of his reign, the press commented quite favourably on his custom of inviting surviving combatants from the rank of major upwards to the supper he used to hold for the city authorities in the palace.¹³ Such living symbols were always revered and treated most deferentially. So much so that the *Αιών* newspaper did not hesitate in declaring Theodoros Kolokotronis’ wearing of *σαρούχια* in the 1842 ceremonies as a grave statement.¹⁴ George I took care to keep perfect relations with this glorious generation of living symbols. His idea to pay a visit to the old fire-ship captain Konstantinos Kanaris in the latter’s demesne in Kypseli on the eve of the national holiday in 1873 was commended again as “most fortunate and national, worthy of a king of Greeks”.¹⁵

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the ceremonies for celebrating Independence Day went through a number of phases, ebbs and flows, according to current political circumstances. A decade of slack

¹⁰ *Αθηνά*, 1/4/1839. Such assurances of inclusion should not be taken at face value. The 25th of March marks the Orthodox Annunciation and it is doubtful that its significance on the symbolic plane would move Roman Catholic or Jew Greek citizens.

¹¹ The *Αιών* newspaper, 25/3/1846. As mentioned before (ch. 2), this was the official view of the matter.

¹² *Αιών*, 27/3/1867.

¹³ *Ibid*, 23/3/1872 and 23/3/1873.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 27/3/1842.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 27/3/1873.

performances succeeded the illustrious ceremonies of 1838. In 1842 the celebration consisted only of the church mass and an additional in honour of the war dead while next year a “rainy night” made for a meagre outcome.¹⁶ “The usual adornments, abundance of symbols and iconic shows did not occur this year” journalists reported in 1845.¹⁷ The most disappointing of all proved to be 1846: no ceremonies, no city illumination, no adornments, not even any participation of the public. The ceremony was not held in the centre of Athens but at Georgios Karaiskakis’ tomb at Phaleron and the celebratory address of Rigas Palamidis, Speaker of the House, was considered contrary to the spirit of the 1843 revolution that had established a constitutional monarchy.¹⁸ In times of surge in the national feeling though, the ceremonies were upgraded and the public rose to the occasion. “The day before yesterday the national holiday of the 25th of March was celebrated with all the enthusiasm expected in the present circumstances” the *Αιών* newspaper reported amidst the Crimean War in 1854.¹⁹ While in 1867 it was reported that “the national holiday was celebrated in a more solemn and ceremonial way, no doubt because of the Cretan struggle and the circumstances besetting us”.²⁰ In 1905, at an instance of another great eruption of the Cretan Question, Athens would behold one of the greatest celebrations ever, involving fireworks and illuminating the Acropolis.²¹

This attitude clearly reveals that in the view of the public Independence Day was supposed to bring together any and all elements belonging to the nation: the people, religious and civic authorities, the head of state. But on the other hand the above rituals imply that the political hatreds formed in the fires of the Revolution were still far from being doused, so that a *national* holiday was broadly considered as a unifying factor of an otherwise fragmented political body. The faultlines along which Greeks polarised, both regional and factional, had to be countered with symbolical affirmations of identity. However, the need for expressing and

¹⁶ *Αθηναίος*, 21/3/1842; *Αιών*, 27/3/1843.

¹⁷ *Αιών*, 27/3/1845.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 27/3/1846.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 27/3/1854.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 27/3/1867.

articulating sentiments on a day like that could not possibly rely just on symbols and imagery, obviously vivid but altogether silent. It should be addressed in inspiring words and stirring messages.

All over the Greek world, the celebratory address has been a distinct literary genre, thoroughly representative of the nineteenth century and vigorously cultivated among its manifold societies. As Greeks in their independent kingdom, the Ottoman Empire and various communities in the Old and New World moved into bourgeois middle class they were prone to copy already existing forms of collective bodies to express and propagate their values. All sorts of educational, literary, political, sports and charitable societies and associations sprang into the fore in the 1860s and 1870s in such a prominent way that the Athenian press, always eager to identify and comment on new trends, did not hesitate to talk pejoratively of an “associational mania”.²²

In their own words however these associations were not to be taken lightly. Their final scope was more or less the formation of a general plan on the improvement of Hellenism. The Conference of the Greek Associations in Athens in 1879 could have been, for example, a great event in itself altogether in bringing along large numbers of vigorous personalities and learned scholars²³ to debate on subjects of their interest. At a second glance it would seem to be more or less an effort to chart an educational and cultural policy in the areas where “unredeemed brothers” where to be found: Macedonia, Thrace and Asia Minor.²⁴ Collective bodies acting in such a

²¹ The *Ακρόπολις* newspaper, 26/3/1905.

²² Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, p.81. F. Paraskeuaidis sounded the alarm on a phenomenon “that does not bring light but burns the heart of the nation to ashes”.

²³ Their overwhelming majority came from Greece and ‘the Orient’, which in Greek nineteenth-century use denoted the Ottoman Empire.

²⁴ The widely perceived poor showing of successive Greek governments during the Eastern Question crisis between 1875 and 1878 was surely a defining factor in the course of organizing this conference. However, it must be noted that in the view of Greek societies from the Ottoman Empire it was also an attempt of the Greek state to direct and dictate policies that should exclusively be their own affair. Details on the Conference in *Συνέδριον των Ελληνικών Συλλόγων. Πρακτικά της πρώτης αυτού συνόδου, συγκροτηθείσης εν Αθήναις εν έτει 1879*, (Athens, 1879).

frame of mind surely needed to constantly remind their members and the public of their final goal: hence, the celebratory addresses. And the occasions for remembrance were plenty: national holidays, religious holidays²⁵, local holidays, celebrations on the society's foundation day. What better way of determining the future than reciting the past?

In inquiring after the functions of a celebratory address, we should start from the obvious. Etymologically speaking, the nominal function of such a peroration is to celebrate, laud, commend on the facts, meaning and importance of a given circumstance. Inherent in its nature is a final favourable look on things, even when the outlook of the moment is bleak. Rarely would one find addresses that end on anything but an upbeat tone on the *future* prospects of the group, be it a small society or a whole nation. There is also a distinct time frame moving in an axis leading from the *past* to this *future*. Usually some glorious past is evoked or remembered in order not only to commemorate successful instances but also to provide legitimacy for the group. Then, the glories of the past can act as a beacon, both assuring future achievements and lighting the way towards them with their example. This general format can be said to apply, with variations of course, to all kinds of celebratory addresses. However, the *present*, the particular moment the event of the speech is taking place, has not a fixed use. It depends on the occasion and the audience. In the Independence Day addresses we are going to examine, whether they belong to the University of Athens or not, the present time is used mostly as a bridge, a time of trials which will eventually lead towards the nation's manifest destiny. In the Greek Literary Society's speeches though, which also mark the annual report of the society's activities, the present is much more palpable, reduced to facts and numbers that underline each administration's abilities.

The celebratory address's most crucial function though is the one underlying precisely that trip along the time axis: committing to memory,

²⁵ Or both, as in the case of the Independence Day. In King Otho's decree there is mention of the 25th March being already "a radiant day for every Greek because of the Annunciation of Holy Mary". *Αθηναί*, 23/3/1838.

instructing and acting as “a stimulus for self-consciousness”.²⁶ In almost all circumstances in the era under consideration a national holiday is marked by the speech, which becomes the focal point and culmination of the festivities. The centrality of a commemoration act provides a historical perspective and content. This perspective of course cannot help but conform to the standards set at the time. A national holiday reasonably implies the existence of national history. Thus, history in celebratory addresses is national history even at times when the state is a multinational empire as the Ottoman, although in such cases deviations, restrictions and twists according to the political situation of the moment can be clearly discerned. Undoubtedly, we can follow these twists, turns and developments in national ideology by examining celebratory addresses; what is more, we can even get the measure of official national ideology. The University of Athens was not just another educational institute. As emphasized by its full title it was a ‘national’, hence a state institution, and its scholars were in many cases quite active in Greek political life²⁷.

Celebratory addresses on Independence Day

To the scholar approaching for the first time the subject of Independence Day celebratory addresses, finding material in abundance would seem to be the order of the day. Considering the rapid growth of societies and associations in Greece and the Greek world in the second half of the nineteenth century, and all their honorary sessions every March 25,

²⁶ George B. Leontaritis, «Ο συμβολισμός του πανηγυρικού και ο ιστορικός λόγος», *Μνήμων* 14, (1992), 119, where also more to be found on the functions of celebratory addresses.

²⁷ Spyridon Lampros, for instance, professor of history and politician, was in 1897 member of an ‘Invisible Directorate’ of a secret society determined to uphold Greek interests in Macedonia. For more see Giannis Giannouloupoulos, «Η ευγενής μας τύφλωσις...». *Εξωτερική πολιτική και «εθνικά θέματα» από την ήττα του 1897 έως τη Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή*, (Αθήνα, 1998).

that would hardly seem strange. On a national holiday so gloriously celebrated with torchlight processions, 21-gun salutes and church masses, an institution with high profile and prospects as the University of Athens should get a prominent place, as was its due. Not only was the university looked upon as one of the most important state institutions, it was also awarded first place among all associations and societies as mentioned in the yearbook the Conference of the Greek Associations published in 1879.²⁸ However, the first celebratory addresses officially assigned by the Senate can only be traced in its abstracts or Dean's reports in 1899, while a compact *corpus* exists merely from 1952. This is at first glance a paradox, not because somebody would expect to find a celebration ritual perfectly defined from the moment of its inception, but because of the University's high profile.

It was inaugurated in 1837 in an exuberant atmosphere and was heralded by Greek intellectuals as a major development in matters educational (and political) in the Balkans. For the ever-impatient heirs of the ancient Greeks, the University was to bring about a great cultural task, that of "enlightening the Orient"²⁹. Underlining these expectations was the conviction that Greece formed a part of Europe but the fact was yet unacknowledged by the Europeans. Seeking a plausible mission fitting the laurels of Classical Antiquity, the new state embraced the passing on of civilization to the not so fortunate in order to prove its still disputed merit and establish itself among the great. This mimicking of the West in undertaking a civilizing mission in the Orient also emphasized Greek interest in the geographical area of the Near East. For all these reasons the University of Athens had to be an outpost of progress.

With these great prospects beckoning, the least we would expect was participating in some way in the Independence Day celebrations as it already did in the cases of honouring the memory of the Three Hierarchs (since

²⁸ K.Th.Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, (Athens, 1986), p.352. Dimaras continues: "This helps us to understand exactly the place this higher educational institution commanded among Athenian scholars".

²⁹ Konstantinos Shinas, *Λογίδριον εκφωνηθέν εις την ημέραν της εγκαθιδρύσεως του Πανεπιστημίου Οθωνος*, (Athens, 1837), p.1.

1842)³⁰ and the annual feast for its inauguration (between 1837 and 1875).³¹ Nevertheless, for the period before the end of the nineteenth century there is no accurate information on whether the University of Athens participated in any official or unofficial way in the celebrations on 25 March.

Practically, there was no reason for an official celebration before the 1870s. As we have already seen in the first years of its inception, Independence Day was a rather centralized affair. Taking into consideration that the Athenian population in the late 1830s and early 1840s did not exceed 30,000 by much it is easy to grasp that to fragment the festivities would be both inadvisable and unnecessary. From the 1850s on, we are informed that the weight of the celebration had shifted. The king was now a constitutional monarch and not as popular as in the first few years of its reign. Accordingly, and as the city was starting to prosper, wealthy merchants stepped into the fore to further the country's literary renaissance by sponsoring poetic contests organized and supervised by the University of Athens; otherwise they would not have any merit.

The Ralleios poetic contest was held for the first time in 25 March 1851 and instantly captured the imagination of Athenians. From that year on until 1862, when it was moved to May 3, the anniversary of the University's inauguration, the Great Hall was always packed for the announcement of the results, which followed mass at the metropolitan church of Saint Eirini. A foreigner's description of the whole atmosphere would suffice to impart the spirit of the day:

“On this day, the whole of Athens is in a turmoil. All social classes show the same enthusiasm. Markets and cafes are emptied while squares are full of people gesticulating, shouting and conversing in an excitement so natural to them. After reading a report on the diverse works submitted, the chairman announces

³⁰ A religious feast of three church fathers of the Eastern Orthodox Church who are considered patron saints of letters. Details for the participation of the University of Athens in Ioannis Pantazidis, *Χρονικόν της πρώτης πεντηκονταετίας του Ελληνικού Πανεπιστημίου*, (Athens, 1899), p. 150.

³¹ “...the celebration of the University's inauguration was converted into a literary contest” and lasted until the end of the Tsokaneios (1855-60) and Rodokanakeios (1860-75) literary contests. Pantazidis, *Χρονικόν*, p. 275, 135-137 and 249-250.

the winner, congratulates him on behalf of the whole nation, recites his verses and crowns him with a wreath of laurels. At the end of the ceremony, the poet laureate is cheered by the crowd and led home in an almost triumphal procession. It is impossible for somebody to imagine the disputes and stormy debates that permeate this great literary event until its last possible moment”.³²

This is a very lively and convincing description of a clearly important event. I would like though to point out from the start that since it was the product of a European and not a Greek scholar some things are left unsaid and others are being taken for granted. It did not occur to Eugene Yemeniz to make the connection with Independence Day being celebrated, although he did mention the chairman congratulating the winner “on behalf of the nation”.³³ After closer inspection the ideological connotations of the event come to the fore. The crowning with a wreath of laurels, the triumphal procession, even the chairman’s congratulations were direct references to the Olympic games and recalled the *locus* of Greek antiquity. The demand of A.S. Rallis to settle on the archaic (an extreme *katharevousa*) and not the *demotike* as acceptable language for contestants³⁴ is telling enough of the sponsor’s intentions. What was sought was “an image, a symbol, a vivid reference to Greek Antiquity”, as Moullas points out, “because our world is the world of the Antiquity or at least its continuation”.³⁵ In the end, this aspiration to continuity and legitimation became perfectly clear in the words of Theodoros Afentoulis, a member of the electing committee in 1872: this poetic contest was nothing but a refutation of Fallmerayer’s slurs against the Modern

³² Panayiotis Moullas, «Ποίηση και ιδεολογία: Οι αθηναϊκοί πανεπιστημιακοί διαγωνισμοί (1851-1877)» in *Ρήξεις και Συνέχειες. Μελέτες για τον 19^ο αιώνα*, (Athens, 1993), p.283.

³³ The Greek term used (“in the name of the nation”) is even more forceful and indicative.

³⁴ Panayiotis Moullas, *Les concours poetiques de l’universite d’Athenes 1851-1877*, (Athens, 1989), p.41, Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, pp.190-191.

³⁵ Moullas, *Ρήξεις και συνέχειες*, p.284. When the sponsor changed in the person of progressive merchant Voutsinas so did the rules and works written in the *demotike* were accepted.

Greeks. Had they chosen to deliver a celebratory address instead, the organisers of the contest could have hardly been more eloquent.

Until 1877 then in the University of Athens a literary contest seems to overshadow the historical and commemorating functions of celebratory addresses. Significant in itself, this fact does not fully explain the reluctance of the Senate to declare an official holiday in honour of Independence Day. This reluctance was partly due to an already existent unofficial celebration not under direct control of university authorities. Student commemoration in the beginning of the twentieth century led to a serious wave of altercations and bitter arguments with the authorities that ended in a sit-in and a subsequent military intervention.³⁶ In the past, there had been more than a few instances where student activities took on a distinct political tone. During the 1843 Revolution, when King Otho I conceded a constitution, Athens was patrolled at night by a Student Column, an event that repeated itself in 1862 when Otho was finally ousted – and this time Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos was leading the formation. In 1858, the funeral of professor of History Theodoros Manousis provided an occasion for students to air their liberal tendencies and denounce Otho and his establishment. To try and fill the void of an official University celebration with their own would not only be an act of academic defiance for the students but also a clear political statement.

The evidence is of course fragmentary, since the Senate abstracts usually deal with administrative matters and seldom record student activity, but it remains significant nevertheless. There was a general disorder in 1843 when they were not permitted to celebrate, something that was unfavourably interpreted in the context of a general distrust of authorities, while the debate on constitutional demands was already heating.³⁷ Almost half a century later, in 1891 the students requested Spyridon Lampros, professor in History to deliver an address to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the War of

³⁶ See *Abstracts of the Senate of the University of Athens*, vol. 22, December 1907 sessions.

³⁷ Moullas, *Πήξεις και συνέχειες*, p.293.

Independence.³⁸ In 1902, they organised a torchlight procession.³⁹ Next year matters took a rather sinister turn when some students started collecting money inside the premises to organise a celebration, in spite of the Senate having already forbidden this particular way of funding. A delegation appeared before the Dean Spyridon Sakellaropoulos and asked for the standard of the university to be delivered to them in order for the celebration to have a more distinctive colour. The Dean refused on the grounds that “...this sacred symbol should not be removed from its place save for the most exceptional of circumstances”.⁴⁰ The students behaved in an “unseemly way” but the “disorder” did not get out of hand although two of them were suspended.⁴¹

From this limited information we get out of the Senate abstracts we can at least testify on a procedure the students considered traditional, if not official and, in certain cases, not even sanctioned by university authorities. There is no word of the students’ celebration being officially prohibited, but there seems to be an effort to downgrade it after the Senate decided on formal festivities: the torch procession of 1902 was sponsored by the University and we have already noted how raising funds was discouraged next year. It is plain that from the point of view of the university authorities students as spectators were preferred to actively celebrating students, possibly promoting uncontrollable political messages. Constant political tension between liberal students and conservative university authorities was a marked characteristic of the era and led to “disputes and stormy debates” in the verdicts of the poetic contests.⁴²

However, in 1899 the Senate saw fit to announce the participation of the University of Athens in the Independence Day celebrations. Details are again sketchy. The Dean Timoleon Argyropoulos, in his annual report said that

³⁸ Spyridon Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια. Λόγοι και άρθρα επί τη εθνική εορτή της 25 Μαρτίου, 1891-1910*, (Athens, 1911).

³⁹ *Abstracts of the Senate*, vol. 21, p.9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.153.

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

⁴² Moullas, *Ρήξεις και συνέχειες*, pp.286-87 and 298-300.

“...we also deemed necessary for the National University especially to celebrate the National holiday of 25th March and, therefore, on the day of the festivities we summoned all the students in the Great Hall where, according to the Senate’s decision, the professor Mr. S. Lampros eloquently expressed the feelings that hold sway over the souls of Greeks on this occasion, which, he very appositely proceeded to call ‘a holiday of Freedom’ ”.⁴³

The Senate abstracts are proven even sparser: “Address of Sp.Lampros” is the only comment the stenographer saw fit to print on the margins.⁴⁴ Although the first step had been taken with the decision to hold an official celebration the details were still not thought over. Between 1899 and 1912 the person appointed by the Senate to deliver the celebratory speech was sometimes omitted in the abstracts, while it was not until the latter date that the authorities made a point of observing that the law decrees the 25th of March to be a celebration day. These ideological reinforcements then, were only established after military defeat by the Ottomans in 1897. It was in a climate of instability that the University of Athens had to step in, take up its role as a respected institution, a real “diverter of European civilization in the Orient”⁴⁵ and console the nation.

Consolation’s burden fell on the shoulders of historians. The great majority of celebratory addresses between 1900 and 1930 belonged to them with few exceptions: in 1914 Margaritis Euaggelidis, professor of Philosophy delivered the speech while three years later the honour was conferred to K. Vasileiou, Dean of Law School. Spyridon Lampros, to whom we should be grateful for a number of reasons, supplied most of the rest. Lampros was a significant historian and politician and at the same time a consistent and reliable scholar, dutifully compiling his diverse addresses and publishing them at regular intervals. Of course, this was something quite common to

⁴³ National University, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν Τιμολέοντος Αργυροπούλου*, (Athens, 1900), p.44. In 1895-96 there was an early official celebration that did not repeat itself until 1899. See National University, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν Α. Διομήδους Κυριακού*, (Athens, 1898), p.59.

⁴⁴ *Abstracts of the Senate*, vol. 19, p.455.

scholars of this age. However, what draws attention to Lampros's works is that he managed to fill almost an entire volume with speeches and articles referring to Independence Day. In this compilation he included his University addresses but also speeches assigned to him by societies as the Parnassus Literary Society of Athens or associations such as that of the Shop-Assistants, offering us an opportunity to view different angles of his expressed ideology as articulated before varied audiences.⁴⁶ Meanwhile Lampros's general ideas and his treatment of Greek history seem to conform to a general scheme, which is to be analysed a little later.

This is probably the right moment to pause for a while and properly introduce this outstanding personage. To begin with, Spyridon Lampros (1851-1919) was born in Athens to a well-known family. He studied in Athens (1867-1871), Berlin and Leipzig, obtaining there his doctorate of Philosophy in 1873. Returning to Greece he pursued an uninterrupted academic career for 35 years. He taught history and palaeography at first, became Professor of General History in Extraordinary in 1887 and in Ordinary three years later, in a chair he was to occupy until 1913. Lampros was extraordinarily prolific, even for nineteenth-century standards. His published works number 479 publications covering a wide variety of subjects in history, palaeography and general matters pertaining to Greek society. Not one to produce a great synthesis or even innovative monographs on a grand scale, he remained a popularizer. At the same time he constituted a scholar greatly influencing the course of Greek historiography in his exceptional diligence, prolific research and strictness of methodology, the virtues in his most distinguished work, a *History of Greece from the ancient times to the fall of Constantinople*.⁴⁷ The fact that he did not attempt a major synthetic work is probably due to his teacher Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos and amply demonstrates the latter's dominion over historians of both his own and later generations. Lampros was not the only

⁴⁵ Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, p.159.

⁴⁶ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*.

⁴⁷ Spyridon Lampros, *Ιστορία της Ελλάδος μετ'εικόνων, από των αρχαιοτάτων χρόνων μέχρι της αλώσεως της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, 6 vols., (Athens, 1886-1908).

one to let the matter rest. His peers were content to remain in Paparrigopoulos's protective shadow. As a result, from the 1880s onwards nobody seriously tried to refute Paparrigopoulos and, perhaps more significantly, no one tried to follow in his footsteps. The sole exception, Pavlos Karolides's work in the 1920s, was in fact to edit and update the 'national historiographer's' own project.

On the other hand, Lampros's interest in politics exceeded Paparrigopoulos's by far and bordered on a commitment. Although it was certainly not surprising for a nineteenth-century intellectual to cultivate his presence in an array of literary, scientific or philanthropic societies we have to keep in mind that these associations also carried virtual political connotations, especially in later nineteenth-century Greece. We only have to recall the 1879 Athens Conference of Associations as evidence to that. The extent then of Lampros' involvement can be shown in his multiple activities: at times founding member, secretary and president of the most influencing societies,⁴⁸ twice Dean of the University of Athens in 1893-94 and 1912-13, prime minister in 1916-17. This extraordinary resume becomes even more impressive if we recall that being prime minister of Greece in 1916 essentially meant taking sides in an undeclared civil war between the pro-Entente supporters of twice resigned former prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos and those of the pro-neutral – and covertly pro-German – King Konstantinos I. Lampros, a conservative by nature and a product of German culture took his chances with the King and after the latter's abdication under Entente coercion and the return of Venizelos, he was deported to the islands of Hydra and Skopelos. His health failing after these hardships, he died in Athens in 1919.

In fact Lampros's career as a politician was overshadowed by his stint as a conspiratorial leader of secret societies. Throughout the whole

⁴⁸ He was a founding member of the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece, founding member of the Parnassus Literary Society, prominent member of the Archaeological, Ethnographical [Λαογραφική] and Educational [Φιλεκπαιδευτική] societies, secretary of the Olympic Games committee (1901-1918) president of the Epirus committee in 1907, president of the Supervisory Board for Secondary Education in 1908 and president of the Board of Greek Sports and Gymnastic Associations (1897-1906).

‘associational mania’ that took over the Greek world in the second half of the nineteenth century surely the *Ethnike Hetaireia* (National Society) has to be considered one of the most obscure – and possibly the most infamous. Although it was in principle a secret society, participation in it was so widespread, especially in the army ranks, its existence so widely known and its activities so extensively discussed that anybody would hesitate to describe it as such. Its title was a tribute and a reminiscence of the revolutionary *Philike Hetaireia*: it signified preparations, undertaken on behalf of the nation, for a new struggle towards completion of the unfinished Independence in 1821. Their pamphlets promised wide uprisings in the Ottoman Empire at a time when the Cretan Question had once again flared up and the Great Powers were hard pressed for a solution accommodating not only the conflicting states but their own disagreements on the matter as well. The ‘great curator of the nation’s interests’, as the *Hetaireia*’s self-praise ran, intended to use the Cretan revolt of 1895 in order to press not only for this island’s Union with Greece but to demand a general rearrangement of the Greek border to include Macedonia.

The Greek government tried to execute a series of delicate and risky manoeuvres befitting tightrope walkers rather than politicians. The aim was to retain public confidence and at the same time avoid war with Turkey by way of a timely intervention of the Great Powers, in a replay of a similar situation in 1885-86.⁴⁹ This time round the assumptions proved wrong, the manoeuvres miscarried and foreign intervention did not materialize. Although Prime Minister Theodoros Diligiannis’s allegations after the debacle of the Greco-Turkish war in 1897, that the *Ethnike Hetaireia* actually

⁴⁹ Theodoros Diligiannis was also prime minister at the time of another Eastern Crisis precipitated by the Bulgarian decision to unilaterally annex Eastern Rumelia which the 1878 Congress of Berlin had declared autonomous under Ottoman suzerainty. Diligiannis, giving in to populism, grabbed the chance of a brief Serbo-Bulgarian war and general uncertainty to mobilise the army and demand a border correction from the Ottoman Empire in the form of ceding a part of Epirus that, while having already been granted to Greece, was still occupied. When pressure shifted to the Greek side Diligiannis, finding himself in a dead end, managed a heroic retreat when the Great Powers declared a blockade on Greece. His stunt was mockingly referred to as “peaceful war” [ειρηνοπόλεμος] and “armed beggary” [ένοπλος επατεία].

usurped foreign policy from his own government, are not to be taken at face value, there is plenty of evidence their influence was certainly great both in army and government circles. So great in fact, that Diligiannis's government took the easy way out in placating a public inspired by the *Hetaireia*'s inflammatory manifestos and declared war on Turkey, a war that was promptly lost and proved financially destructive.⁵⁰

Lampros's role was that of conspirator in chief, as it was determined later on. He was one of the persons forming an 'Invisible Directoire', as it was known at the time. His were decisions affecting acceptance of members, amassing capital, purchasing and distributing guns to Greeks in Macedonia, organising military contingents in Ottoman territory. It is not our intention though to pronounce him solely responsible for the inception and conduct of the *Hetaireia*.⁵¹ In a sense, this network of conspirators cannot be detached from its Balkan context. The *Ethnike Hetaireia* can be seen as the result of the mood prevailing among Greeks in the aftermath of the Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878. The fact that Bulgarians and Bosnian-Herzegovinians were seen in the eyes of the European public as the principal victims of Ottoman repression – and subsequently the principal beneficiaries of the Great Powers' favour – certainly accounted for a feeling of injustice. Greece as a state had been founded by direct intervention of the Great Powers and they had guaranteed its independence. In the eyes of many Greeks that was the equivalent of a contract in which their part was to follow a path to modernity while Europe should look after their nation's interests. It was not merely the 'national dignity' that suffered in 1878 though.⁵² Vital Greek interests, in fact

⁵⁰ Giannis N. Giannouloupoulos, "Πολιτικές όψεις του Ελληνοτουρκικού πολέμου» in the Abstracts of Historical Conference in Moraitis School, *Ο πόλεμος του 1897. Διήμερο με την ευκαιρία των 100 χρόνων*, (Athens, 1999), pp. 15-77; Giannouloupoulos, «*Η ευγενής μας τύφλωσις...*».

⁵¹ For details on Lampros's involvement in the *Ethnike Hetaireia*, its action and the Greco-Turkish War in 1897 see Giannouloupoulos, «*Η ευγενής μας τύφλωσις*», and «Πολιτικές όψεις» in *Ο πόλεμος του 1897*.

⁵² For some aspects on Greek foreign policy during the Eastern Question crisis in 1875-1878 and repercussions of the loss of 'national dignity' see Euaggelos Kofos, «Διαπλοκή στρατηγικών και τακτικών επιλογών: ο Τρικούπης κατά την Ανατολική Κρίση, 1875-1878» and Lina Louvi, «Η αποκατάσταση της εθνικής αξιοπρέπειας: η ευκαιρία της

the whole construct of its foreign policy was at stake. The impression that panslavism was on the rise with the blessings of the Western Powers had taken root.⁵³ In this spirit Lampros was only acting for a swift recovery of territories deemed “historically just” for Greece before they fell, once and for all, in the hands of “latecomers”.⁵⁴

Taking the initiative in national matters also meant personal gains. Using Spyridon Lampros as an example Efi Gazi points out that intellectuals in general, and the academic community in particular, viewed what was essentially a direct venture into politics – their association with the *Ethnike Hetaireia* – as a natural consequence of their occupation in shaping national discourse. The nation’s ideology, which they were building, should be translated into action; and they were the people to act. Gazi sees in that case an attempt on the part of these intellectuals to secure a place for themselves inside the state’s political machine.⁵⁵ In that spirit Lampros, himself a student of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, drew a more than interesting parallel and put one of his teacher’s sayings into a completely different use:

Αιγύπτου», both to be found in Kaiti Aroni-Tsihli and Lydia Triha (eds.), *Ο Χαρίλαος Τρικούπης και η εποχή του. Πολιτικές επιδιώξεις και κοινωνικές συνθήκες*, (Athens, 2000), pp. 43-62 and 119-132 respectively. The warmongering climate of the time is vividly shown in Lina Louvi, *Περιγέλωτος Βασιλείων. Οι σατιρικές εφημερίδες και το Εθνικό Ζήτημα (1875-1886)*, (Athens, 2002).

⁵³ See Odysseas Ialemos, *Ελλήνων Δίκαια και Καθήκοντα*, (Athens, 1877). In its Memorandum to the Great Powers on the San Stefano treaty, the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople decried Bulgarians as “peasant latecomers” and declared “in the event of an irrevocable political solution all the land beyond the great mountains [Balkans] from the Ionian Sea to the Thracian Bosphorus should only belong to [Hellenism]”. See Georgios Giannakopoulos, “Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1861-1922). Η Ελληνική παιδεία και επιστήμη ως εθνική πολιτική στην Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία”, [unpublished Ph.D thesis, (Athens 1998)], pp.132-133. My sincere thanks to the author for permitting me to consult this groundbreaking work.

⁵⁴ Ialemos, *Ελλήνων Δίκαια*, p.59.

⁵⁵ Efi Gazi, «Συμβολικός λόγος και πολιτική πρακτική κατά την περίοδο του πολέμου του 1897: σύγκλιση, απόκλιση, σύγκρουση» in the Abstracts of Historical Conference in Moraitis School, *Ο πόλεμος του 1897*. Panayiotis Stathis also observes the connection between the nineteenth-century academic historians and politics. In Panayiotis Stathis, «Οψεις της διαμόρφωσης της εθνικής ιστοριογραφίας στην Ελλάδα τον 19^ο αιώνα: η συμβολή των καθηγητών Ιστορίας του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών».

“This duty is both scientific and national. No other science than history can be at the same time both servant and defender of the just interests of the nation. Truly, there is no greater solidarity between the historian’s desk and the tent of an encamped army. The same flag flies above both and it is the flag of the motherland”.⁵⁶

In this way Paparrigopoulos’s cautionary remark on the historian’s duties (scientific and national) and their burden became in Lampros’s context the militarisation of history and a call to arms.

Having concluded a brief excursion to the land of politics, it is time we got back to academic reality to observe its impact on the historians’ outlook. From the beginning, we have to point out that the standard Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos had set, the tripartite format of Greek history, was never contested. It had already acquired the mantle of orthodoxy among Greek historians. Still, in two of his university speeches, in 1891 and 1899 respectively, Spyridon Lampros only alluded to Byzantium either by referring to certain emperors⁵⁷ or to popular songs.⁵⁸ This absence of the Byzantine element can probably be attributed to the timing of addresses. The 1899 speech, for example, was given “on the aftermath of an ominous national defeat”⁵⁹, that in the Greco-Turkish war of 1897. A direct reference to Byzantium, terminated in the seizure of Constantinople by the Ottomans, would run the danger of causing distress and recall unwanted parallels to the audience.

The Byzantine Empire was a key feature in many of the addresses, in contrast to times past when its Hellenic content was severely disputed. In a perfect swing, there were now some who held that this Hellenic identity for the Empire was never really contested. “The Athenian [medieval] historian Laonikos Halkokondyles was the first to prove that the fallen empire was

⁵⁶ Gazi, «Συμβολικός λόγος και πολιτική πρακτική», p.110.

⁵⁷ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, p.9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.49. “Ours once more” is a popular song dating from the seventeenth – eighteenth centuries and referring to the seizure of Constantinople by the Ottomans and its future liberation.

properly Greek” was Simos Menardos’s argument.⁶⁰ The past thirty years had taught Greek intellectuals that by integrating Byzantium into the national discourse they automatically acquired a completely new arsenal of arguments. In such a frame, classical antiquity was somehow inferior to medieval times. The robust Byzantine state was a great improvement in comparison to the splintered world of Greek city-states. Spyridon Lampros not only viewed Byzantium in a sympathetic light, not only imagined a funeral cortege to Constantine Palaeologus as a funeral cortege to the sum of Hellenism⁶¹, he also stated that

“that free, great Greece [of classical antiquity] had not formed the perfect concept of the great Greek idea, which appears for the most part in the Byzantine days and gathers shape during the time of slavery”.⁶²

The ‘idea’ Lampros referred to was the political unity of all Greeks under a single state, in essence the basis for the post-revolutionary *Megali Idea*.

Usually these addresses do not dwell for a long time upon the achievements of Byzantium. The seizure of Constantinople by the Ottomans and the death of Constantine Palaeologus were constantly invoked as symbols and appropriate images of the whole.⁶³ Constantinople was the symbol of Greek civilization and the temple of St Sophia stood as an image of the “Christian Greek nation”.⁶⁴ The “Christian Empire”, as Byzantium

⁵⁹ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, p.19.

⁶⁰ Simos Menardos, *Πανηγυρικός εις την ΚΕ' Μαρτίου, εκφωνηθείς ενώπιον της Α.Μ. του Βασιλέως Κωνσταντίνου του Β' εν τη μεγάλη αιθούση του Πανεπιστημίου υπό Σίμου Μενάρδου, διδάκτορος της Φιλοσοφίας και της Νομικής, τακτικού καθηγητού των Ελληνικών γραμμάτων*, (Athens, 1916), p.6. The King was present during the address and he was referred to as ‘Constantine XII’, his Danish origins notwithstanding. The last Byzantine emperor was Constantine XI Palaeologus.

⁶¹ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, pp.86-87.

⁶² *Ibid*, p.77.

⁶³ See *Ο πανηγυρισμός τη εκατονταετηρίδας της Ελληνικής επανάστασεως. Λόγοι εν τη αιθούση των τελετών του πανεπιστημίου τη 25^η Μαρτίου 1930 υπό Θεοφίλου Βορέα και Κωνστ. Αμάντου*, (Athens, 1930), p.7. Also Menardos, *Πανηγυρικός*, p.7; Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, pp.66-69, 84-87.

⁶⁴ Pavlos Karolidis, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός, απαγγελθείς υπό Π.Καρολίδου, τακτικού καθηγητού της Ελληνικής Ιστορίας, κατά την εν τω Πανεπιστημίω τελεσθείσαν τη 25^η*

was branded in the first half of the nineteenth century, transformed itself into a “Christian Greek Empire” which had contributed a lot on the cultural level. Theofilos Voreas chose to remind to all who may have forgotten that the Renaissance was actually the result of “Greek letters being transferred to the West”⁶⁵ and cited an extended sequence of scholars to sustain his argument. The empire may not get credit for “profusion of originality” or “delicacy in creation” as Classical Antiquity but held as counterweight the martial virtues of Justinian, Heraclius and Vassilius II⁶⁶ which permitted it to survive the test of time and become “a guardian of the masterpieces of ancient Greek wisdom”, source of Christianity and a Noah’s ark of Roman Law.⁶⁷ While the “Christian” nature of Byzantium weakened in comparison to the “Greek” one, its old image as a rampart defending Europe against the Arabs became inactive. The emperor Vassilius II who successfully fought against Bulgarians, those “latecomers” in the Balkans who coveted Macedonia, got to be cited a lot more than Leon III who had repelled the Arabs. Once more Paparrigopoulos’s quotation about history in Greece having a more practical character than elsewhere proved to be accurate.

The three components constituting the Greek past do not always appear together; and they are not credited with equal importance. Naturally, it was the “great revolution” that got the lion’s share. Its hopes and trials⁶⁸, its tragic moments⁶⁹, the combatants⁷⁰, places and battles⁷¹ were recounted in great length. This pattern emerged clearly in Spyridon Lampros’s addresses which moved along a main axis focusing on the nation’s course in history from past to future while the present was just a transitional moment merely containing the celebration of the day: “today we celebrate the eve of the

*Μαρτίου 1921*εορτήν της εκατονταετηρίδος του μεγάλου υπέρ ελευθερίας αγώνος του 1821, (Athens, 1921), p.7.

⁶⁵ Theofilos Voreas, *Η αιωνία Ελλάς: Λόγος κατ’ εντολήν της Συγκλήτου εν τη των τελετών αιθούση του Πανεπιστημίου ρηθείς τη 25 Μαρτίου 1919*, (Athens, 1919), p.24.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, pp.18-20.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.23.

⁶⁸ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, pp.20-21, 58, 89-90, 118-119.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, pp.120-126 (fall of Messolonghi), 127-130 (ruin of Psara).

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp.11-13, 113-114.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.115.

great feast of the nation's rebirth".⁷² His duty was to preserve this special occasion and the nation's historical progress in the collective memory. It is significant then that the words 'memory' and 'commemoration' were frequently mentioned in the speeches. The same frequency also applies to the Classical Antiquity *leitmotif*. By uniting all Greeks in common celebration the 25th of March reminded Lampros of the Olympic games.⁷³ Elsewhere he cited *exempla* of feminine bravery⁷⁴ or compared the glory of the dead of the 1897 war to that of those in Thermopylae.⁷⁵ He finished his speech to the students, who had pressed for an address in honour of the Revolution's seventieth-year anniversary in 1891, by imagining future youths, on their victorious return from a war against an unnamed but altogether known enemy, to address an icon of Greece in the Attic dialect: 'Εγρεο μάτερ! Arise Mother!⁷⁶ Significantly enough for both the sense of Classical Antiquity and revanche for the lost war of 1897, his 1899 speech to a similar audience ended with an appeal to Nemesis.⁷⁷

Of greater interest are connections drawn between Classical Antiquity and the other constituents in the Greek historical scheme. Events and personages from the War of Independence, for example, were to be linked to their counterparts in antiquity. The chosen equivalents were episodes and protagonists of the Persian Wars.⁷⁸ According to Ch. Androutsos "the Spartan King's *Μολών λαβέ* echoed a million times in Modern Greek utterances" while Odysseas Androutsos was the reincarnation of Leonidas and Andreas Miaoulis that of Themistocles.⁷⁹ Ch. Androutsos

⁷² Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, p.101.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p.8.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p.22.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.88.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.16. Lampros chose his connotations carefully to raise the audience's spirits: K.Th. Dimaras notes that this snippet is to be met in a large number of texts featuring revolutionary content in the eighteenth and nineteenth century until the War of Independence. In Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, p.427.

⁷⁷ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, p.36.

⁷⁸ S. Menardos deviated by lauding revolutionary heroes in Thucydides' words. S. Menardos, *Πανηγυρικός*, pp.25-26.

⁷⁹ Christos Androutsos, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός εις την 25 Μαρτίου, ημέραν της εθνεγερσίας, εκφωνηθείς κατ' εντολήν της Συγκλήτου εν τη μεγάλη αιθούση των τελετών του*

considered as the Revolution's greatest fruit not the emergence of an independent Greek state but evidence that

“we Greeks are in essence our ancestors’ direct descents... We are our ancestors’ direct descents because, as our sacred struggle has shown, we are animated by the same military and social virtues. The single fact of the Revolution overruled the 18th century historians’ view that time had erased ancient Greece and that the history of Byzantium is in everything detached and altogether different to ancient Greek life”.⁸⁰

The direct link to ancient Greece continued to echo the Fallmerayer dispute long after its end and demonstrated how crucial an element continuity had become for Greek identity.

During the optimistic era following the victories in the Balkan Wars and Greece’s doubling of territory and population some scholars felt that the War of Independence could now step into the background. The unfinished Revolution could now rest in peace and its phase presented as bridging the gap between Classical Antiquity and the triumphs of 1912-1913.

“This is the day in which Plataias begot Vassilika and Graviass’ Hostel prepared Kilkis, in which Mykalis begot Eressos and Eressos the victories of the modern Greek fleet in the Dardanelle... This is the day that ancient heroes march as modern ones, in the same avenue crowned with laurels, along with the veterans of 1821 and the pioneers of the nation’s rebirth walk alongside the liberators of 1912 and 1913”.⁸¹

Nevertheless, the weight of the past was so strong that when in 1919 Theofilos Voreas detailed the national expectations in the wake of the Versailles conference Homer, Thales, Heraclitus and Anaxagoras urged with their origin towards cession of Asia Minor to Greece while Protagoras and Democritus did the same for Thrace.⁸²

Πανεπιστημίου. Χρήστου Ανδρούτσου, τακτικού καθηγητού του Πανεπιστημίου και Κοσμήτορος της Θεολογικής Σχολής, (Athens, 1922), p.9.

⁸⁰ Androutsos, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός εις την 25 Μαρτίου*, p.12.

⁸¹ Spyridon Lampros, *Πανηγυρικός λόγος, 25 Μαρτίου 1915*, (Athens, 1915), p.27.

⁸² Voreas, *Η αιωνία Ελλάς*, pp.4-5.

Meanwhile the addressers sought inventive ways to inspire their student audience into action. Lampros recalled to memory an imaginary teacher in the years of Ottoman domination. The teacher showed his pupils

“the sea of Salamis, the field of Marathon, the mountain of Valathisti, where Vassilius vanquished the Bulgarians... Athens and Byzantium, the twin poles of Hellenism arose in life in the pupil’s heart but his teacher did not tell him ‘Stay inert, Miltiades and Themistocles, Heraclius and Vassilius will save you’”.⁸³

When speaking Lampros quite often ventured into the Byzantine past in search of suitable arguments. In another political interpretation of the past along the lines of the present he referred to Vassilius II’s double pilgrimage to St Sophia in Constantinople and to the Parthenon, serving in medieval times as the church of Holy-Mary-in-Athens. According to Lampros “Vassilius rightly understood the victory against Bulgarians as a common one of both an ancient Hellenism flourishing on the banks of Ilissus river and a new one on the coast of Bosphorus”.⁸⁴ The invocation of Classical Antiquity, far from being accidental, played right into common anti-Bulgarian sentiment: “latecomers” could be nothing but loutish peasants, unfit to compare to the pillars of modern civilization.

There was still another important component discussed in these addresses. What did those scholars think about the nation’s future? Up to a point, with *terminus ante quem* 1912-1913, the years of the Balkan wars, the struggle begun in the Revolution imposed a clear duty on future generations: redemption of the rest of the nation. “The effort towards liberating the rest of the Greeks remains [Greece’s] finest work” C. Amantos related in a nostalgic tone at a time when all ideas, great and small, had turned to ashes along with their Ionian visions.⁸⁵ Spyridon Lampros joined him from another time by attesting that only when these people were free once more could the celebration of the 25th of March be full and complete,⁸⁶

⁸³ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, p.75.

⁸⁴ Lampros, *Πανηγυρικός*, p.16.

⁸⁵ Amantos, *Ο πανηγυρισμός*, p.17.

⁸⁶ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, pp.91-92.

“when Hellenism will have the right and the courage to unfurl the banner of Constantine Palaeologus’, who died for faith and country, and raise the flag which Philip’s blond son took from Macedonia only to bring victoriously on the walls of Persepolis and the ramparts of Babylon”.⁸⁷

Therefore, Lampros counselled, everyone’s duty was to renew the vows of the Revolution until there would be reason for greater celebration still.⁸⁸ Theofilos Voreas in 1919 believed that “the struggle to restore the Greek nation which began with such glories the Greeks have just completed”.⁸⁹ Pavlos Karolides agreed with him in 1921, just one year before the final defeat of the Greek army in Anatolia. The bright future, which all post-revolutionary generations aspired to, had timely arrived on the hundredth year from the beginning of the Revolution.

“Now Greece is about to accomplish its political unity in order to devote itself afterwards to the effort of an intellectual conquest and mastery in the Orient, according to the great destiny in the moral order of this world that the God of our fathers, creator and illuminator of the world, saw fit in his wisdom to bestow on the Greek nation”.⁹⁰

What were the ambitions linked to that ‘political unity’ Greece was about to achieve? To say the least, these aspirations were certainly far from definite. Of course Konstantinos Shinas, first Dean of the University of Athens, did not make idle talk when he spoke of channelling knowledge from the West to the Orient, just as King George I did not use an empty phrase when he promised to strive for a ‘model kingdom in the Orient’. Spyridon Lampros considered Greece as a “crossroads” between the West and the Orient⁹¹ while Christos Androutsos talked of a “bridge”⁹² that connected them. All the above personages definitely agreed on the geographical place the country occupied. They also implied that taking

⁸⁷ Lampros, *Τα Ελευθέρια*, p.36.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.116.

⁸⁹ Voreas, *Η αιωνία Ελλάδα*, p.31.

⁹⁰ Karolides, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός*, p.29.

⁹¹ Lampros, *Πανηγυρικός*, p.4.

precedence in Classical Antiquity's heritage notwithstanding, this was no pledge for the state's participation in 'civilized Europe'. To be the inheritors of Ancient Greek civilization, considered by Western Europeans as the basis of the modern, did not automatically elevate the country from its status of "Balkan pet"⁹³. So, intellectuals and politicians hopefully turned their eyes towards 'the Orient', but always as a means of reaching 'the West'.

Finally, what did this mysterious "Orient" signify? Geographically speaking, it denoted the Eastern Mediterranean; politically, it referred to the Ottoman Empire. The two meanings though could be intertwined in such a way that differences became blurred and distinctions delicate. Of course, all this ambiguity was quite proper in the nineteenth century and was welcome to politicians, intellectuals and journalists. During the course of the Crimean War K. Paparrigopoulos was in charge of the magazine *Le spectateur de l'Orient*, in circulation between 1853 and 1857. The title may have referred only to the Ottoman Empire, which was by all means the centre of attention throughout Europe. However, K. Th. Dimaras points out that "this new publication's goal [was] to familiarize foreign readers with general subjects having to do with modern Hellenism, but especially and much more clearly to demonstrate urgent matters of Greek interest".⁹⁴ These were naturally related to national objectives and aspirations. When the international crisis subsided, as Dimaras mentions, the magazine discontinued its publication⁹⁵: after the war, there was no chance of influencing European foreign policy in 'the Orient'.

In the same time frame a new slogan entered Greek political life: 'the Orient by the Orient' [*η Ανατολή διά της Ανατολής*] was similar to what in a

⁹² Androutsos, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός*, p.12.

⁹³ For 'pet nations' in the Balkans see Todorova, *Imagining*, p.82. As far as it concerns Britain, Todorova and Skopetea see in this a transference of problems British society faced: Ireland for Macedonia, poverty for suppressed nationalities, feminism for life in the harem, India or the Boer War as guilt for Turkish atrocities. In Todorova, *Imagining*, p.100; Elli Skopetea, *Η Δύση της Ανατολής. Εικόνες από το τέλος της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας*, (Athens, 1992), pp.136-7. One may of course draw parallels between these cases and the international interest in the war in Yugoslavia.

⁹⁴ Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος*, p.177.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

few years would be *Italia fara da se*. Elli Skopetea shows that this phrase “not only does not conform to a simple interpretation but can easily apply itself to contradicting aims”.⁹⁶ At first sight, this slogan may even seem unintelligible. It meant that the Orient should be elevated by its own powers but this was not a matter of gaining independence as in the *Risorgimento* Italy; at least not as a primary goal. The Greeks of the Ottoman Empire seemed to use the phrase in a context signifying their ascendancy on a status that would eventually mean either administering the state on the basis of a settlement similar to that of the Austro-Hungarian Empire or even the Greek element succeeding the Turkish outright.⁹⁷ For the Greeks of the independent kingdom though, *η Ανατολή διά της Ανατολής* signified a direct influence on the part of Greece proper: “the whole of the Orient is being regenerated, civilized and prospers through Greece” A.I. Olympios ascertained in 1871.⁹⁸

The geopolitical terms the world was divided into were quite clear. Where Greek intellectuals had trouble in most cases was to link the independent kingdom with a place and a mission. Timoleon Philimon’s distinction between a ‘civilized world’ and ‘the Orient’ did not make for a groundbreaking discovery. As a state Greece was too young to carry any important weight in the ‘civilized world’ but the nation’s historical achievements and former glory did not allow it to be considered on a par with the obviously ‘uncivilized’ Orient. Therefore, the proper role for Greece was to gain mastery in the latter. However, here was where the limits between the Orient as ‘the East’ and as ‘the Ottoman Empire’ became entirely blurred and meanings interchangeable. The Dean of the University of Athens Anastasios Hristomanos, for instance, stressed that without developing the sciences “we are not to gain our deserved mastery in the

⁹⁶ Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, p.342.

⁹⁷ G.Giannakopoulos also notes some instances where the slogan is meant as criticism towards the Greek kingdom’s foreign policy. See his *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, p.54.

⁹⁸ A.I. Olympios, *Λόγος εις την πεντηκονταετηρίδα της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας, εκφωνηθείς εντολή του συλλόγου, εν τω Φιλολογικώ Συλλόγω Παρνασσώ την 24 Απριλίου 1871 υπό Α.Ι. Ολυμπίου*, (Athens, 1871), p.5.

Orient neither intellectually nor materially nor territorially”.⁹⁹ Hristomanos went on to justify this role:

“Since Greece is from all sides surrounded by the ocean, since it forms the natural sea lane between the West and the Orient and possesses great natural wealth, it could and should be the Orient for the West and for the still semi-savage Orient, the civilized West”.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, to what exactly did he refer to? The Balkan peninsula and the Ottoman Empire or simply the latter? Both answers are equally applicable without changing anything in the sentence. The critical point then was ‘mastery deserved’. The area could be conveniently left unclear.

Some more daring spoke more openly. Timoleon Philimon tried to define this ‘semi-savage’ Orient. The Greeks had been its “scouts and warders” for centuries and they could never be ousted by “novel people” even though they might enjoy the support of the mighty. For, in the final analysis,

“the Orient does not mean the inaccessible lands, the high peaks of the Balkan mountains, the valleys of the Sava and Morava rivers, the Black Mountain and Sophia. The Orient, the always alive and glorious Orient that conquered and prospered, are the shores, the coasts, and the sea. [...]”.¹⁰¹

“Dominance of the seas has always been awarded to the Greeks”, so “the coast of the Orient along with a thin stripe of land” would be enough for the Greek merchant marine to dominate.¹⁰² This was the definitive way towards achieving a ‘great structure’ in the Orient¹⁰³. Philimon in 1877 suggested dropping the Balkans altogether as a field of foreign policy, because the future of Hellenism lay where his past had been, in Asia Minor. In the wake

⁹⁹ Anastasios K. Hristomanos, *Λόγοι και ευθύναι Αναστασίου Κ. Χρηστομάνου*, (Athens, 1898), p.33.

¹⁰⁰ Hristomanos, *Λόγοι και ευθύναι*, p.33.

¹⁰¹ Timoleon Philimon, *Η ΚΕ’Μαρτίου. Λόγος πανηγυρικός εκφωνηθείς την 3 Απριλίου 1877, εν Αθήναις, υπό Τιμολέοντος Φιλήμονος, βουλευτού Αττικής, τακτικού μέλους, κατ’ εντολήν του συλλόγου*. [Πολιτικός Σύλλογος «Ρήγας»], (Athens, 1877).

¹⁰² *Ibid*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰³ Timoleon Philimon, *Η ΚΕ’Μαρτίου*, p.49.

of defeat in the Asia Minor War Konstantinos Amantos returned to the Balkans. The importance of the Greek Revolution may have been great for the entire Orient but the Greeks have been trying to inspire the spirit of freedom to the Balkan people since the time of Rigas Velestinlis. Although they have been opposed, “in part by other Oriental people” only the fact of the existence of their independent kingdom should be considered as a benefit for them all.¹⁰⁴

It seems then that the only conclusion one can safely draw from examining the use of the term ‘Orient’ has to do with the influence of political conjuncture on the content of celebratory addresses. This influence certainly demonstrates the University’s role as producer and purveyor of state ideology and its deep implication in political conflicts raging in Greek society. When Sp. Lampros, a known opponent of Venizelos’s policy held that “every storm erupting on the horizon of the oriental world” and “every whirlwind originating in the West” could sweep Greece along¹⁰⁵ surely stated a generally accepted opinion. At the same time it was a convenient way to allude to the circumstances of the Great War and suggest caution as a true Royalist. When Simos Menardos set out to laud the glory of the Balkan Wars he referred to the King as “destined, born in the purple Avenger”: “Konstantinos XII is he who rapidly leads the grandchildren of those who defeated the Turks in victories royal in every respect, the one who bears the enchanting name, the orthodox, Athenian Konstantinos”.¹⁰⁶ This image of a soldier-king was widely cultivated to the point that Margaritis Evaggelidis in 1914 almost neglected the War of Independence in order to praise Konstantinos.¹⁰⁷ Certainly it does not constitute a surprise that Menardos, like Lampros before, sought in 1916 a veiled way to extol the virtues of neutrality: “in the middle of the present firestorm caution is our first duty”.¹⁰⁸ Menardos delivered his speech after Venizelos had resigned for a second time in the space of six months; the French had already occupied Corfu to

¹⁰⁴ Amantos, *Ο πανηγυρισμός*, pp.12-13.

¹⁰⁵ Lampros, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός*, p.8.

¹⁰⁶ Menardos, *Πανηγυρικός*, p.13.

¹⁰⁷ Margaritis Evaggelidis, *Λόγος απαγγελθείς κατ’ εντολήν της ακαδημαϊκής συγκλήτου*, (Athens, 1914).

accommodate the remnants of the beaten Serbian army and the country teetered on the brink of civil strife which would materialize towards the end of the year when Venizelos in Thessaloniki contested the King's authority in Athens. Still, in 1921 when the "whirlwind" Lampros had mentioned was about to be reaped, Pavlos Karolides would ask of the students that formed his audience, to protect faith, language, freedom and along with them a monarchy proved to be "both popular and friendly towards the people" and always preserved liberty from the syzygy of "anarchist tyranny and tyrannical anarchy".¹⁰⁹

On a final note, it was not just visions of mastery in the Orient and veiled anti-Venizelist sentiments that found their way in our politically charged celebratory addresses. More than anything, the University of Athens has been throughout its long history a pillar of the established order of things and a paragon of official state ideology. It was out of this sense of duty that K. Amantos hastened in 1930 to condemn certain revisionist theories on the War of Independence that had recently seen the light of day.

"Those who have recently examined the factors that lead to the Greek Revolution wrongly commented on its success having been an achievement of a certain class. The truth is that the entire Nation has laboured to be set free, because everybody, rich and poor alike, were suffering under the yoke of slavery and one and all wanted to acquire the right to live..."¹¹⁰

What Amantos criticised and subsequently rejected was the socialist views on a peasant movement that Ioannis Kordatos had just codified in his work on the *Social meaning of the Revolution in 1821*. In this case Amantos's 'scientific duty' had to stand together with 'national duty' just as Paparrigopoulos had joined them in his phrase of almost fifty years past.

As we have seen in the above analysis, invented traditions in Greece at the end of the nineteenth century were changing in content to adapt to new terms and conditions. The content and structure of celebratory

¹⁰⁸ Menardos, *Πανηγυρικός*, p.13.

¹⁰⁹ Karolides, *Λόγος πανηγυρικός*, p.27.

¹¹⁰ Amantos, *Ο πανηγυρισμός*, p.11.

addresses became more or less fixed¹¹¹ and the nation's unbroken continuity, Paparrigopoulos's formidable achievement, proved itself incontestable. With the advent of the twentieth century came along a new ritual focusing on parading – of schoolchildren at first, military added later – that gradually substituted and displaced the celebratory address as a means of expression. From that point on, the national discourse was less articulated than symbolically expressed in front of the public. However, the schemes of a 'national completion' or 'mastery in the Orient' had already been dropped since, after the Asia Minor War and the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, they had stopped serving any ideological needs. Interests now turned inwards. It was ascertained that "efforts towards liberating the rest of the Greeks" along with other geopolitical factors were to be blamed for the "slow or uneven development of the state".¹¹² There were however still sound reasons to be optimistic since "our past guarantees our future".¹¹³ Greek science, which in the first centenary of the independent state's life had served Greece and the Orient, according to C. Amantos, was now called upon to benefit all of humanity. The only ambitions left could be of an intellectual nature.

The Greek Literary Society of Constantinople and the adventures of Greek identity in the Ottoman Empire

In the second part of this chapter, we do not deal so overtly with national celebrations although they still provide the basic material of our discussion. In the context of a Greek literary association in a foreign country we may not speak of a 'national holiday' since there was no official authority.

¹¹¹ See Petros Haris (ed.), *To Εικοσιένα. Πανηγυρικοί λόγοι ακαδημαϊκών*, (Athens, 1977). Especially, the addresses of K. Palamas (1930) and N.K. Louros (1976), pp.55-68 and 989-998 respectively, noting the endurance of the tripartite scheme in celebratory speeches and its applications accordingly to temporal and political conjunctures.

¹¹² Amantos, *Ο πανηγυρισμός*, p.16.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p.17.

Moreover, what was being proclaimed as the Society's official ideology could not be overtly nationalist; therefore it had to be compared to the rest of its efforts and day-to-day activities. Our outlook will not be turning to history so much as to the concept of education. For reasons inherent in both the Greek element's presence in the Empire and the Literary Society's conception and policy, history as an identity and ideology pointer was downplayed. Whether it was the members' disagreement on key subjects, their professed avoidance of politics, their reluctance to challenge Ottoman authorities, their compliance to Ottoman legitimacy, their supposed 'Ottoman patriotism' of a 'common country' for all ethnicities, or all of these together and in various degrees, it is a matter of question. There surely exists a gap between the way history was presented and used in the Society's meetings and the way it was taught in schools that the Society funded and provided with textbooks. The Greek identity of the Byzantine Empire, for example, was never openly discussed by members but referred to in schoolbooks. Yet, to approach this inconsistency effectively it is to the educational policies of the Greek elites we have to turn to, since they provide us with clearer identity markers for the appointed place and time.

Because of their significant numbers, innate qualities and geographical position the ethnic Greeks of the Ottoman Empire formed a special part of the diaspora, whose relation to and interaction with Greece greatly differed from similar communities in the rest of Europe or America. Much as it would like to, the independent kingdom was neither the paramount force in the Balkans nor the only source of culture and ideas for 'external Greeks'. There is no possible way of detaching the Greek element in the Ottoman Empire from the rest of this society and examining it as a separate piece. Ottoman Greeks at the same time formed a part of the Greek nation in diaspora and an essential component of the Sultan's state and it is in such a context that they should be studied. Their conceptions of identity were formed in an environment distinctively shaped by Ottoman reforms in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁴ The modernising attempts known as 'Tanzimat'

¹¹⁴ On the Ottoman reforms and the history of the Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries see R.H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (Princeton, 1963); "The *Millets* as Agents of Change"; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*.

(1839-1876) may have not been enough to transform the ailing Ottoman Empire into a model state but they did create new perspectives as to the internal situation and relations with the Great Powers.

Where did the Ottoman reforms specifically influence the Greek element's position? Their pre-eminent outcome was that they greatly altered the relationship between the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Ottoman government and the orthodox community. When the Patriarch's dealings with the government stopped being ruled by custom and became subject to law under the regulations of 1856 all matters pertaining to them and the Greek community were formally translated into administrative ones. Although this kind of formal recognition of the Patriarchate's authority signified its consolidation and expansion, from another point of view it turned out to be limiting and restricting.¹¹⁵ One of the Tanzimat's targets was to achieve secularisation of the state and that certainly meant religious institutions were to enjoy less of an open field than before. Hence, a series of recurring conflicts between the Patriarchate and the government, from the 1880s onwards, on what was known as the 'Prerogatives' Question'. The crucible was the definition of which among these prerogatives, historically conferred by the Sultans on a customary basis, constituted 'spiritual matters' and were still to be left under the Patriarch's care, and which should be labelled 'temporal' ones, for which responsibility should rest with a 'National Council' comprised by both cleric and lay members. Correct and accurate interpretation of these terms not only determined relations between Ecumenical Patriarchate and Ottoman Government, it also brought out obstacles and dissensions amidst the Greek community itself.¹¹⁶

Until then the Ecumenical Patriarch was primarily the head of a religious community whose authority on lay matters concerning it was respected out of deference to the weight of tradition. This view was about to

(London, 1961); Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey*, (Cambridge, 1976-77); Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, (Oxford, 1969); A.L. Macfie, *The End of the Ottoman Empire 1908-1923*, (London, 1998).

¹¹⁵ See Karpas, "Millets and Nationality", pp. 164-5 for some of the implications of these changes.

¹¹⁶ Sia Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία, 19^{ος} αιώνας – 1919: Οι Ελληνορθόδοξες κοινότητες. Από το μιλλέτ των Ρωμιών στο ελληνικό έθνος*, (Athens 1998), pp.283-289.

be challenged. The nineteenth century had already seen a gradual ascendancy of a Greek merchant middle class that became quite visible between 1839 and 1856 when many of the greatest bankers and financiers of Constantinople were of Greek origin. Confident of their vision for the future and eager to transform the fortunes of Ottoman Greeks through a vigorous programme and a modern syllabus, they proceeded in the 1860s to take over educational matters from the hands of the Patriarchate, something the latter resented on grounds of principle and power. The ‘ethnarchic tradition’ dictated that every initiative of such magnitude should be the Patriarchate’s prerogative as the font of authority and *de facto* arbiter of matters Greek.¹¹⁷ The regulations or organic laws provided by a committee under the urging of the Sublime Porte between 1860 and 1862 formally introduced the lay element in *millet* administration.¹¹⁸ By creating a kind of ‘National Council’ comprised by both cleric and lay members the Tanzimat reforms acknowledged a *de jure* lay authority on all subjects pertaining to the Orthodox and effectively forced the Patriarchate to relinquish part of its own. Meanwhile, from 1861 onwards the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople functioned as a *de facto* secretariat for educational matters, propagating the vision of secular education, with national consciousness in mind and in complete independence from the Patriarchate. Naturally, this did not please the latter since it was considered a direct infringement of its responsibilities. There were frequent attempts to short-circuit the rules and gain back what was taken; there were arguments on the usefulness of the Society, contemptuous comments on the ‘new centres of knowledge’ and in 1880 the Greek Literary Society found itself trying to compete against a new and attractive association founded by the Great Church. By 1890, faced with dire financial trouble and harassment on the part of the Ottoman

¹¹⁷ It is noteworthy that even today the Patriarchate evokes the weight of history in arguments with sister churches: Bartholomew I has recently seen fit to remind the Church of Greece that “the Ecumenical Patriarchate carries 1700 years of history” and its authority should not be treated lightly. (From *TA NEA* newspaper, 17/4/2001).

¹¹⁸ The Patriarchate had already drawn up a set of “General Ordinances” in 1858-60. For details on the 1862-63 procedures see Davison, *Reform*, pp. 114-120, 126-129. For an overview of the Greek *millet* see Richard Clogg, “The Greek *Millet* in the Ottoman Empire” in Braude and Lewis, *Christians and Jews*.

government the Society conceded to the Patriarchate, which on its part was quite content to offer legitimation, in order to alleviate its problems.¹¹⁹

As far as it concerns the Great Church there seems to be at least one contradiction in terms. In the course of this narrative, we have been talking about an Orthodox 'Ecumenical' Patriarchate, which forms the authority of a 'Greek' community. To be 'ecumenical' naturally meant not to be bound by adjectives or behaviour partial to or indicative of nationality. An easy answer could be that simplifying was due to the Greeks being the predominant orthodox element in Constantinople. Closer to the truth though would be the view that as the nineteenth century drew on the Patriarchate increasingly tended to associate itself with the Greek element. The rise of nationalism in the Balkans would be confirmed by the decision of the Bulgarian church to secede from the Patriarch's spiritual leadership and elect in his stead an Exarch of Bulgarian origin in 1870. With that bold move a pattern for the future was set, the vehement reaction of the Patriarchate notwithstanding. Every claim the Patriarchate laid to being an institution untainted by nationalism was shattered and similar motions in other Balkan states, notably Romania, had to be settled by uneasy compromises.¹²⁰ When it finally became clear that old policies were no more fit for modern times, the Patriarchate turned to the element more likely to support it. Furthermore, this about-turn automatically signified upgraded relations with the Greek state – and greater dependency on it as well. For the remainder of the nineteenth century the Patriarchate would pay close attention to the Bulgarian church's claims to purported followers in Macedonia, where the Greek kingdom was more than eager to prevent what were considered as political ambitions in areas thought to be Greek by hereditary right.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία*, pp.290-301.

¹²⁰ An independent Romanian church was recognised in 1885 (in Macfie, *The End*, p.7) but according to Mark Mazower (*The Balkans*, p.75) it had already broken away without the Patriarchate's sanction in 1871. Similar moves in the 1830s had resulted to autocephalus churches in Serbia and Greece that the Patriarchate reluctantly accepted (in the case of Greece years later, in 1850-1851).

¹²¹ This does not mean that the relations between the Patriarchate and the Greek state were always cordial: the latter took for granted a certain primacy in drawing a political course and directing the policies affecting the totality of Greek populations inside the

The passage of time did not leave the Great Church itself unaffected; being drawn into the politics of nationalism it had lost its previous uniformity. Joachim III, twice Ecumenical Patriarch in times of crisis in 1878-1884 and 1901-1912 belonged to the old school of thought, a 'Byzantine Greek'.¹²² When some time after the Young Turk coup in 1908 he was asked about his political programme concerning the Greek community, he answered: "What programme would you expect from the Patriarchate? The Patriarchate has traditions, it has rights and prerogatives... There is only one programme for the Patriarchate, to save its rights and prerogatives and hope".¹²³ For others, younger and more vigorous figures, as Chrysostomos, metropolitan of Drama at first, and later on Smyrna, Joachim was the 'wooden statue' and 'the most false of Patriarchs' for his reluctance to accept the authority and the vision of the Greek Kingdom.¹²⁴ It might be said that the latter correctly recognised the necessities of the times – but whether their proposed solution was a suitable one it remained to be seen. In the wake of

Kingdom and abroad. Furthermore, its outlook was definitely nationalist – something that the Patriarchate still found hard to approve. In an instructive episode of this uneasy alliance Harilaos Trikoupis, the most prominent Greek politician between 1875 and 1895, strongly disagreed with Joachim III. Their radically different approaches to Greek interests led to the Patriarch's abdication in 1884. See for more *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, vol.IΔ', pp. 16-20; Sia Anagnostopoulou, «Η σύγκρουση Χ. Τρικούπη – Ιωακείμ Γ'. Όψεις της πολύπλοκης και αντιφατικής διαδικασίας για την επιβολή της Αθήνας ως πολιτικο-εθνικού κέντρου» in Kaiti Aroni-Tsihli and Lydia Triha (eds.), *Ο Χαρίλαος Τρικούπης και η εποχή του*, pp.99-106; Christos Kardaras, *Ιωακείμ Γ'- Χαρίλαος Τρικούπης. Η αντιπαράθεση. Από την ανέκδοτη αλληλογραφία του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου (1878-1884)*, (Athens, 1998).

¹²² In Ion Dragoumis, *Ο Ελληνισμός μου και οι Έλληνες. Ελληνικός Πολιτισμός*, (Athens, 2000), pp.116-7.

¹²³ Athanasios Souliotis-Nikolaides, *Οργάνωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, (Athens, 1984), pp.70-1.

¹²⁴ Professor Kitromilides has aptly demonstrated these rifts inside the Eastern Orthodox Church and the latter's interaction with the Greek state in P.M. Kitromilides, «Το τέλος της εθναρχικής παράδοσης. Μαρτυρίες από ανέκδοτες επιστολές του Χρυσοστόμου Σμύρνης προς τον Ίωνα Δραγούμη» in *Αμητός στη μνήμη Φώτη Αποστολόπουλου*, (Athens, 1984), p.489, 496. Chrysostomos had played an important role in the Macedonian struggle in the past and later on openly asked Ion Dragoumis for the Greek state to intervene to the Patriarchate and have him reinstated as a metropolitan.

the twentieth century, especially after the Young Turk Revolution, when incorporation to the Greek state was increasingly coming to represent in the eyes of the Ottoman Greeks the only viable alternative among past routes, the Patriarchate could do nothing but accept this fact and act accordingly.

In the midst of such a cultural mosaic and political labyrinth, we have to try establishing the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople's identity. To determine it we have to start with the obvious question: who were the people that in 1861 founded the Literary Society? In a catalogue of thirty-three founding members, we find ten physicians, seven coming from the entrepreneurial world (six merchants and one banker), six academics and scholars, four Ottoman civil servants and only one cleric, all of them Greek.¹²⁵ Initial numbers show a slight preponderance for members of an urban Greek upper middle class: merchants, bankers and civil servants. This preponderance rises into pre-eminence looking at a catalogue of regular members in 1879: 155 out of 304, a little over half of the total number fall into these three categories while lawyers or physicians, typical middle class professionals, make only for 8,4%. Without doubt the Literary Society in its first period, from its inception until well into the 1890s had been under the influence of upper middle class. A brief look at the names of the presidents for its first decade (Stefanos Karatheodori, Petros Zanos, Spyridon Maurogenis, Konstantinos Karatheodori, Christakis Zografos, Staurakis Aristarchis, Konstantinos Karapanos) is enough to demonstrate their origins in wealthy and/or otherwise longstanding Constantinopolitan families. There is a striking differentiation between these days and the first decade of the 20th century when merchants and bankers only accounted for 20% of the regular members while 'middle' middle class professions in the guise of physicians, lawyers and architects prevailed with almost a third of the total.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Haris Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα στην Κωνσταντινούπολη τον 19^ο αιώνα. Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως 1861-1912*, (Athens, 1996), p.20, where also the full names are to be found.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p.34, where also the table of regular members for the period 1879-1909 can be found.

Our main task is to examine the ideology underlining the Society's members plentiful and diverse action and the impact this had on the perception of Greek identity itself inside the Ottoman Empire. To determine that would therefore require of us to settle on the fundamental character of the Society as a community of intellectuals. Are we dealing with an association whose members only concern was the propagation of science for the common good, or does its vigorous activity aspired to political ends?

In the language of its founders, their aim was both clear and true. It was a *literary* society¹²⁷, being the result of *Greek* initiative and residing in *Constantinople*. Its ends were altogether simple: "The Society's object", the president Michalis Psallidas pointed out in 1904, "as clearly stated in Article 1 of its charter, is *the advancement of letters and sciences and their propagation throughout the Orient*".¹²⁸ Three years later another president, Leonidas Limarakis would resume the subject and elaborate on it:

"Our founding fathers, having taken these things into consideration, and having set as their purpose the cultivation and propagation of our ancient wisdom in the Orient, and through this, the regeneration of our Race (*Γένος*), besides their other toils on the general educational movement of our nation, they introduced this stadium of intellectual labour, the Greek Literary Society, in April 1861".¹²⁹

Both presidents emphasised the scientific standing of their association although from differing points of view, Psallidas being more cosmopolitan, while Limarakis interpreting the whole effort as of purely Greek interest. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that this undertaking was only a voluntary society with the best of intentions.

The Literary Society then, according to its members, was purported to be a purely scientific association with cultural and educational interests. A

¹²⁷ The adjective "literary" [*φιλολογικός*] in Greek usually refers to all humanities.

¹²⁸ «Λογοδοσία των κατά το ΜΓ' συλλογικόν έτος 1903-1904 πεπραγμένων εν τω συλλόγῳ», 13/6/1904, in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος* (Journal of the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople), vol.ΚΘ' [1902-1905], (1907), 54. Underlined in the original text.

¹²⁹ «Λογοδοσία των κατά το ΜΣΤ' συλλογικόν έτος 1906-1907 πεπραγμένων εν τω συλλόγῳ», 13/5/1907 in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, Λ' [1905-1907]*, (1908), 78.

reasonable next question would be what it was not. Not surprisingly, we find out a warning that under no circumstance this should be interpreted as a political association: article 2 of its charter bans politics and political discussions from the Society.¹³⁰ Evidently, this did not prove enough for in the course of time, and in an almost regular way, a number of people vehemently denied any relation between politics and their association. Iroklis Vasiadis, one of the founders and its most prominent member stressed as early as 1869 that

“the Society, as a friend of peacetime works has never aspired to anything else since its inception than the cultivation of sciences and letters; therefore, we exercised every caution in abstaining from politics and it was a wise decision”.¹³¹

Almost twenty years later, when the Macedonian Society was looking for premises to hold its regular meetings, the Society would be happy to oblige on a number of conditions of which the main was that “political or religious debates are to be prohibited”.¹³² This policy was to be diligently observed and proclaimed at intervals throughout the Society’s long history, being broken only in the aftermath of the Young Turks Revolution in 1908. However, even at the time the Greek army was fighting in Asia Minor in 1922 the president Minas Afthentopoulos still attempted to maintain the weight of tradition: “...our society does not practice politics, except if those who do, on purpose confuse politics with any national activity for whose benefit this humble institution has been founded and ever since strived”.¹³³

In fact, it was all a matter of interpretation. The Ottoman state had never been particularly interested in the education of its subjects, which for a long time was a prerogative associated with its various religions and was

¹³⁰ *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, Α΄ [1863], (1864), ε΄.

¹³¹ «Εκτακτος συνεδρίασις της επετείου πανηγύρεως των Ελληνικών Συλλόγων», 4/5/1869 in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, Δ΄ [1865-1870], (1871), 239.

¹³² *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, ΚΑ΄ [1887-1889], (1891), 242.

¹³³ Minas Afthentopoulos, “Λογοδοσία των κατά το ΞΑ΄ συλλογικόν έτος 1921-1922 πεπραγμένων εν τω Ελληνικώ Φιλολογικώ Συλλόγω, αναγνωσθείσα κατά την επέτειον αυτού εορτήν τη 17/30 Απριλίου 1922 υπό του προέδρου Κου Μ. Αυθεντοπούλου”, in Minas Afthentopoulos, *Λογοδοσίαι Μηνά Αυθεντοπούλου, προέδρου του εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Φιλολογικού Συλλόγου 1918-1922*, (Athens, 1972), p.95.

organised under their auspices. Attempts for secularisation in the times of the Tanzimat did not move beyond providing half-measures. There was to be a University in Constantinople in 1870 – 71 and again in 1900, but since already first conceived (in the 1840s) it was not designed as an agent of a common educational pattern for all ethnic communities. Each of them was left to its own devices to carve a high road to the professed and desired common Ottoman patriotism (*osmanlilik*) with the collaboration between lay and cleric element as the only significant condition. But entrusting the minorities with their own education without the counter-balance of some common higher institution pointing towards a more or less general course meant that the government could not exercise – or did not risk imposing – effective control. It was fairly reasonable for the multiple ethnicities of the Empire, given the prevailing of national ideology in the Balkans, to move towards confirming their own national identities and not embrace some vague novel ‘Ottoman patriotism’. This not being a desired effect, the authorities were forced to step outside normal procedures and resort to coercion. Greek schooltexts, for example, were frequently censored.¹³⁴ The point the Ottoman government kept missing was the potential political role of education in an era of nationalism.¹³⁵ In fact, the precise implications of the nationalist concept itself seem to have eluded them until relatively late.¹³⁶

But again, this was only one facet of the educational puzzle in the Ottoman state. We have already mentioned the conflict inside the Christian Orthodox *millet* in the 1870s between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the newfound Bulgarian Exarchate. It chiefly rested not on questions of dogma but of national awareness¹³⁷ and the prize both sides sought for themselves were the Christians of Macedonia, a province constituting a hodgepodge of ethnicities, Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, Albanians, Vlachs, for whom language

¹³⁴ Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία*, p.383.

¹³⁵ Not according to Davison who observes that Ali Pasha, Fuad Pasha and others were conscious of the problem. In Davison, *Reform*, p.133. Nonetheless, the extent of their grip on it remains a question mark. See Davison, *Reform*, pp.248-49.

¹³⁶ Davison points out that the reorganization in *millet* lines actually helped to “re-emphasise lack of homogeneity among Ottoman peoples”. In Davison, *Reform*, p.132.

¹³⁷ The Exarchate clergy held mass in the Bulgarian language and appealed to ‘ethnic’ Bulgarians.

and ethnic origin were not clear pointers at all because they did not coincide. Until then these people were living the pre-national order of things in simply defining themselves in terms of religion. The schism greatly upset the local communities and threw them into much confusion as to which their proper identity should be.¹³⁸ The Bulgarian – speaking village of Tyrnovo although following the Exarchate for a number of years, later on drafted a petition to the Metropolitan of Andrianople asking the Patriarchate for pardon and reverting to its jurisdiction.¹³⁹ The case of another Bulgarian – speaking village, that of Velika, illustrates the fluidity of the situation. The village priest wrote a letter to the Literary Society asking for funds to set up a school, “because the Tyrnovians night and day are trying to send us both Bulgarian priest and teacher but we are used in Roman (Greek) letters and want to stay the same”.¹⁴⁰ Language not being a watershed, it was not striking that the Greek educational associations would call to the Literary Society for an extension of the school grid

“through which only it would be possible for the Greek language to be propagated in Bulgarian and Turkish speaking Greek communities, thus becoming the family language and prevailing ; without it Hellenism will never be able to wrest from the crooked talons of Panslavism our non-Greek speaking brothers in Macedonia”...¹⁴¹

In Asia Minor though, the Greek communities seemed to face somewhat different troubles. Here, it was presupposed that Turkophone Orthodox Christians “of a most Greek character type”¹⁴² had somehow lost their patrimonial language in the past and they should be promptly restored

¹³⁸ See Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, (Chicago, 1997). On the whole this is a fascinating anthropological picture of Macedonian loyalties in the last two centuries although the *Megali Idea* is presented in it as a monolithic block.

¹³⁹ Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα*, p.80.

¹⁴⁰ *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, Η' [1873-74], (1874), 264. Both churches would continuously argue on repression tactics being pursued to convert followers and rising tensions would eventually lead to open confrontation between partisan groups sent from Greece and Bulgaria in 1904-1908.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, ΙΓ' [1878-1879], (1880), 210-11.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, Ζ' [1872-1873], (1874), p.209.

to it since there was a clear danger of their being lost to the nation. Moreover, this lack of preserving the Greek language exposed these populations to the dangers of conversion by protestant missionaries, something that seems would automatically exclude them from partaking of Hellenism. In Ikonion the local magistrates of a community of 150 Turkophone families would welcome the establishment of a girls' school in order

“to save from an imminent national religious ruin this handful of Greeks who, after having lost the patrimonial language, are also in danger of forfeiting religion, the only bond still connecting them to Hellenism, by being persecuted by missionaries”.¹⁴³

In this setting where the Patriarchate's authority was not seriously challenged by a schismatic church, language took precedence as a desired criterion of nationality compared to religion. This becomes clearer when we point that the existence of these Turkophone Greeks was not a result of the recent past but stemmed from the realities of this particular geographical area and was known for centuries. However, the necessities of national identity inherently require a kind of conformity and it was towards this that Greek educational societies aspired in this area. The same process can be observed in Macedonia later on, in the beginning of the 20th century when lines were finally drawn and language, religion and ethnicity were on their way to concurring. Meanwhile, the Greek Literary Society and other educational associations in the Ottoman Empire viewed the expansion of a school network as the only solution to strengthening Greek national consciousness.

In the setting described above education can be finally considered as a virtually political concept, gradually developing into an instrument for distinguishing between ethnicities. Should we accordingly consider the Literary Society as a political project then? As far as it was aspiring to build a national identity for the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, we have to answer in the affirmative. There are only variations on the degree of affirmation. Haris Exertzoglou, for example, believes that “although the Society did not form an overtly political organisation, its activities had an indirect political

¹⁴³ *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, ΙΓ' [1878-1879], (1880), p.116.

tinge since partaking of a clearly political field, that of conflicting nationalisms”.¹⁴⁴ Giorgos Giannakopoulos, on the other hand, states that

“the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople was an essentially political organisation. Its efforts towards bolstering educational activities, the propagation of Greek language and culture and the growth of science, were certainly not of neutral but of a political character as far as their object was the forging and strengthening of Greek national consciousness and serving the motion for the unity of Hellenism”.¹⁴⁵

A look through some of the most important activities of the Society would easily affirm these views. Besides providing schools in various areas of the Ottoman Empire with 5.300 Turkish *lire* between 1872 and 1877, they also contributed significant sums to textbook (grammar, geography, history) and Greek folklore (concentrating on “Greek dialects, mores, customs and superstitions”) contests.¹⁴⁶ They organised lessons and addresses for “the popular classes of our society...and their moral regeneration and intellectual formation” along with Sunday schools.¹⁴⁷ The Society drafted and dispatched two memorandums on the just cause and plea of Greek populations in the Ottoman Empire, one to be delivered to the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and the other to the Paris Peace Conference after the end of the Great War. By all means, the Literary Society did not brandish a political flag but it certainly was “a child of the Reform”¹⁴⁸, propagating a virtually political, national programme.

The ideological composition of the Greek Literary Society shows the different views prevailing in the Greek Constantinopolitan middle class. The association has been neither homogeneous nor monolithic as to opinions expressed. Following its journal we can draw an initial line between an official view, carried out in the celebratory addresses the president delivered

¹⁴⁴ Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα*, p.73.

¹⁴⁵ Giannakopoulos, *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, p.III. “Hellenism” constitutes an abstract concept used to describe the sum of Greeks worldwide or the Greek spirit in general.

¹⁴⁶ Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα*, pp. 99, 104.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.67.

¹⁴⁸ Giannakopoulos, *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, p.382.

every spring, and informal views shown in lectures, meetings or written articles. The president's addresses, for instance, always exercised caution in avoiding references to the current political situation, refrained from mentioning the Greek state even as a factor of cultural influence and were careful in giving the Ottoman government its due, that ranged from a typical expression of gratitude to the reigning Sultan to more substantial thanks to some functionary for a favourable decision.¹⁴⁹ Informal lectures or debates on the other hand, indicate some gaps to that immaculate picture and suggest that legitimist approach to be sometimes no more than a necessary evil, a subject we will have to turn to later on. However, the same gaps can be discerned when we attempt a broad classification of the Society's general ideological trends in chronological order. From its inception to roughly 1878, a spirit of obedience to the government run along with ideas of a possible partnership between Greeks and Ottomans. After 1878 and the memorandum sent to the Berlin Congress on the rights and expectations of Greek populations the Society was beset by financial problems and troubles with the Hamidian regime. From 1908 onwards, the bonds with the Greek state were proclaimed and it seems incorporation in it sounded the only viable alternative, something that would be clearly shown after the advent of the Greek army in Asia Minor in 1919.

The 1860s and 1870s was the period in which the Society functioned in a smooth and untroubled way throughout an era of reforms, secularisation and a conjuncture of economic prosperity. Not only the Ottoman government was offering guarantees – in principle, at least – of respecting their religion and means, it also officially sanctioned the partial secularisation of their *millet*. As a result, the Literary Society grew rapidly and its proclaimed aims matured and came to focus. From the initial all embracing, humanistic and possibly utopian “propagation of letters to the Christian Orthodox peoples of the Ottoman Empire in general and especially to the female sex,

¹⁴⁹ See, for example *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, «Λογοδοσία των κατά το ΜΕ΄ συλλογικόν έτος 1905-1906 πεπραγμένων εν τω συλλόγῳ», Α΄, [1905-1907], (1908), p.45; «Έκτακτος Συνεδρίασις» 5/5/1863, Α΄, [1861-62], (1863), 204; ΙΑ΄, [1876-77], (1878), 143; «Συνεδρίασις (έκτακτος)» 13/5/1884, ΙΗ΄, [1883-84], (1888), 101; ΚΖ΄, [1895-99],*

without any discrimination, be that religious or linguistic”¹⁵⁰ they arrived to the more flexible and realistic “regeneration of our Race (*Γένος*)”.¹⁵¹ Between 1861 and 1878 the Literary Society gradually conceived and proceeded towards fulfilling an extensive educational programme: funding of schools in Macedonia, Thrace and Asia Minor,¹⁵² organising competitions for the writing of schoolbooks,¹⁵³ providing textbooks on geography, history and grammar, lectures and popularising lessons for the lower classes of Constantinople. What was the common denominator of these efforts? Greek culture, according to Georgios Sophocles, who noted that in the span of the nineteenth century “we fought to Frankicise ourselves...we lived as Franks, walked as Franks, were born, lived, died as Franks ”.¹⁵⁴ This anxiety over the nation’s future was palpable in many of the Society’s documents: notice the ‘crooked talons of Panslavism’ in Macedonia, ‘the lost patrimonial language’ in Asia Minor, the imitation of the Franks in Constantinople. They remain indicators of a conscious national discourse seeking to carve a niche for the Greek element.

Take for instance Iroklis Vasiadis and the image he conceived of the mission of the Greek ethnicity in the Orient. “The Greek race”, he wrote,

“has been placed in the Orient as yeast, in order to stimulate growth, as soul, in order to grant life and energy; Greeks in the Orient today are still, as twenty two centuries ago, the motive power; for wherever in the Orient the letters, trade, industry or civilisation have flourished it is due to the successful striving of industrious Greeks. The Greek race, as an intellectual and vigorous power, is preordained to rekindle and regenerate the other Christian peoples of Asia holding in perpetuity primacy of

(1900), 32; «Συνεδριάσις (έκτακτος) επί τη ΚΘ’ επετείω του συλλόγου εορτή» 13/5/1890, KB’, [1889-1891], (1891), 66.

¹⁵⁰ Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα*, p.19. Charter of the Educational Institution, an association founded in 1860 by the same people who next year formed the Literary Society, which can be viewed as its heir.

¹⁵¹ Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα*, p.24.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p.26.

¹⁵³ Details in *ibid*, pp.103-131.

¹⁵⁴ *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, Α’, [1861-1862], (1863), 109.

intellect and civilisation and moral influence. Greeks are the mediators through which European ideas and civilisation are conveyed to other peoples in the Orient; because close and direct contact to Europe impairs rather than benefits these people, corrupts rather than elevates, brings rather death than life. Greeks form the bridge that attaches Asia to Europe neither with wood, nor with rafts or other soulless bonds as Xerxes had attempted by building the Hellespont Bridge, but with irrevocable affiliations of spirit and intellect”.¹⁵⁵

This extensive and certainly highly optimistic view was actually less pompous than the nineteenth-century manner in which it was delivered lets us perceive. It represented a constant of Greek thought on both sides of the Aegean. It sprung forth from the need of a sense of mission and invented a role in the great scheme of things. It was the ‘enlightenment of the Orient’ the first Dean of the University of Athens had imagined in 1837 all over again with a small but significant change. Vasiadis, being an Ottoman Greek and a Constantinopolitan, put the Society in the University’s place: “such a bridge [between the West and the Orient] our own society becomes”.¹⁵⁶ This minor change lies at the heart of Ottoman Greek beliefs before 1878 and signifies the divergence of policies between them and mainland Greeks until the end of the nineteenth century – and for the Patriarchate even further on.

Towards the end of the 1870s and in the 1880s both the Greek Constantinopolitan middle class and the Literary Society faced a series of setbacks that were more or less intertwined. First of all, the favourable economical conjuncture that had made the fortune of many Greek bankers ceased to exist with the final regulation of the Ottoman public debt in 1881. The problems of solvency the Ottoman state had met with in the aftermath of the 1875 bankruptcy, and chose to counter with short-term loans that left great profits to the banks issuing them, had been overcome. The 1875 insurrections in Bosnia – Herzegovina spread into Bulgaria and became a full-blown Eastern crisis, complete with a Russo-Turkish war that for a time

¹⁵⁵ *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, Β΄, [1862-1863], (1864), 241.

¹⁵⁶ «Συνεδρίασις (έκτακτος) επί τη επετείω εορτή» 8/5/1874 in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, Η΄, [1873-1874], (1874), 352.

even threatened to turn Constantinople into Russian territory. The treaty of San Stefano and the Berlin Congress sounded a double alarm. The Ottoman Empire lost both provinces while the Greek state seemed totally unprepared to defend its own interests, unable to follow a consistent and successful strategy and emerged discredited from the whole affair.

The time of compliance was over as the Ottoman regime moved away from the period of reforms and into the autocratic reign of Abdul Hamid II. In Constantinople for the first time the Literary Society encountered a series of direct problems with censorship. Its journal was out of circulation between 1880 and 1884 because “due to misunderstanding”¹⁵⁷ the government withheld its permission. When permission was finally given, several conditions accompanied it.¹⁵⁸ In 1886 the government prohibited a conference the Society was about to organise in celebration of its twenty-five years, again “due to misunderstanding” according to Vasiadis, presumably because of its international character.¹⁵⁹ A third ‘misunderstanding’ occurred in 1888 when the celebratory volume for the twenty-five year jubilee was confiscated and remained out of circulation until 1890 when the government proved its “partiality to arts”, as the president Konstantinos Kalliades informs us, and allowed its publication with minor changes.¹⁶⁰ The same year the government raised doubts on the legitimacy of the Society because of its

¹⁵⁷ *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, ΙΗ', [1883-1884], (1888), 48.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, ΙΗ', [1883-1884], (1888), 48. Among the conditions were : “This journal is to contain as of old scientific, literary and philosophic articles, barring any articles or texts dealing with the administrative or political science. (...) Political news or thoughts are to be excluded. (...) Treatises on aspects of the various nations and religions and their ongoing arguments are not to be included. (...) On the request of the Press Office any treatise should be handed over in its entirety for necessary reading and inspection prior to publication”.

¹⁵⁹ «Λόγος Ηροκλέους Βασιάδου, προέδρου, κατά την εικοσιπενταετηρίδα του Συλλόγου» 7/19/9/1886 in *Εικοσιπενταετηρίς 1861-1886*, (Constantinople, 1888), pp.11-12.

¹⁶⁰ «Συνεδρίασις (έκτακτος) επί τη ΚΘ'επετείω του συλλόγου εορτή» 13/5/1890 in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, ΚΒ', [1889-1891], (1891), 66. H. Exertzoglou is mistaken in stating that “with the exception of prohibiting a scientific conference the Society organised to celebrate its twenty-five years, the Ottoman government seems not to have interfered with its activities”. In Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα*, p.71.

lacking an imperial decree for its foundation. In the absence of any other significant leverage its members had to fall back on the Patriarchate, still the supreme Greek authority in the Empire and source of the whole *millet's* legitimacy, in order to intervene on their behalf.¹⁶¹ This meant though that they had to capitulate to the Patriarch on educational matters¹⁶² since the Patriarchate had never really recognised their primacy and had already formed its own educational association in 1880. This initiative split the energies of the city elite and added to the Society's pressing financial problems.¹⁶³

As a result of all this trouble there was a gradual but distinct shift in the Society's capabilities and interests. Its financial condition could not meet the needs of an expanding educational system, so the association had to limit its funding and revert to literary and scientific concerns. A new 'Committee of sociology' was in session for the first time in 1896-1897 besides the traditional archaeological, educational and literary ones.¹⁶⁴ Changes also affected the Society's ideology. For the first time one of its members openly advocated inclusion in the independent state. Odysseas Ialemos had participated in the Greek Constitutional Assembly that drew the 1864 Constitution, but he remained nevertheless one of the Society's most significant members and its elected president for 1879. It was before that though, in 1876, in the eventful period following Abdul Aziz's death and Murad V's deposition, almost a month before the new Sultan Abdul Hamid II promulgated the first Ottoman constitution, that Ialemos wrote in Constantinople and subsequently published in Athens an interesting article on the ongoing crisis of the Eastern Question. It is doubtful that this work could have seen the light of day in Constantinople where the press was under strict surveillance from the mid-1860s. Indeed, it was probably written with

¹⁶¹ Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία*, p.385.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p.297. The Society invited for the first time in its meetings the Patriarchal "Central Educational Committee" and submitted its conclusions to "our Supreme Centre, where educational matters of our nation are to be reported".

¹⁶³ Ten out of twelve members of the new association's council were at the same time members in the Literary Society. Giannakopoulos, *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, p.144.

¹⁶⁴ *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, KZ', [1895-1899], (1900), 132.

the Athenian public in mind since references to Byzantine emperors and the Persian Wars of ancient Greece can be found in abundance and the ghost of Fallmerayer was once more evoked.¹⁶⁵ The piece was essentially a reappraisal of Greek foreign policy on the eve of the crisis and a discussion of the possibilities open to the Greek element in both the independent kingdom and the Ottoman Empire. What is striking is Ialemos's mind not to reproach past policies in Athens and Constantinople or put the blame to any particular individuals but to present a clear line of argument for the future. Since 1870, Ialemos argued,

“we have moved into an era of civilised barbarity and whomever chooses not to go about clad in iron and does not spend the sweat of the poor and the surplus of the rich in buying Krupps and breechloader guns, this man does not conform to the vital spirit of the times”.¹⁶⁶

Therefore, he concluded, it is the Greek state's duty to “quickly come to an understanding with the rest of the Greeks wherever they might be, to issue a loan or to levy a significant tax; one percent of each Greek's property, for example, would suffice to build an effective military”, especially since the Greek navy “has to conform to the needs of the entire nation” and not just to those of the state.¹⁶⁷ The message was plain. The demands of the times had surpassed their own means; therefore it was now the Greek kingdom's duty to protect the Greek community in the Ottoman Empire.

Certainly, this is no more than a simple indicator. It is only in hindsight that we can say with conviction that 1878 had indeed been a significant date in the ideological evolution of the Literary Society. As the nineteenth century was drawing towards its end, the social structure of Greek urban middle class was altering and this change was reflected in the people constituting the Society. In 1909 out of a total of two hundred regular members, merchants, bankers and civil servants only accounted for forty-seven while physicians, lawyers and architects had reached seventy (and they were eighty-six only

¹⁶⁵ Ialemos, *Ελλήνων Δίκαια*, p.76.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.62.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.74.

three years before).¹⁶⁸ It has been argued that an ascendancy of a Greek 'middle' middle class throughout the Ottoman Empire clearly existed and it was also linked to an open endorsement of the *Megali Idea*. The urban class of cities in the coast of Asia Minor, especially Smyrna, found itself in a favourable economic conjuncture originating from their enjoying double citizenship (both Greek and Ottoman) and Greece having been granted capitulations status. In the aftermath of the 1897 Greco-Turkish war, which the Empire won in a spectacularly easy way, this group's privileges were placed under threat for diplomatic and economic relations between the two states were disconnected and were not renewed until 1901-1903. Besides, the Ottoman state, in an effort to undercut the wide tax exemption this category of citizens was enjoying, tried to force them into relinquishing Greek citizenship and taking up only the Ottoman on pain of quitting the country in the space of two weeks. This motion created an atmosphere of confrontation between Greek consular and Ottoman state authorities. Naturally, in this sort of climate ties between this Greek urban middle class and Greek national ideology as expressed by the Greek state tended to be reinforced and consolidated.¹⁶⁹

Unfortunately, this view does not consider Constantinople. We do have a few pointers as to its substantiality¹⁷⁰ but, as far as the Literary Society is concerned, they are lost in the release of sentiments the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 provided. The significance of certain manifestations is almost palpable. The president Leonidas Limarakis wished in 10/9/1908 for "the liberty restored to the people of the Empire to prove profitable and beneficial to the progress and general activity of our society towards the greater good of the Nation".¹⁷¹ Not only was 'the nation' now a gold letter word referred to in capital letters, but in the general festive atmosphere, its

¹⁶⁸ Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα*, p.34.

¹⁶⁹ Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία*, pp. 307-318.

¹⁷⁰ Giannakopoulos notes that "there is to be found in the *Literary Society* a group with doctors, lawyers and scholars as its adherents that professed incorporation in the Greek state and fell into line with its propagated irredentism". In *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, p.25.

¹⁷¹ «Φιλολογική εορτή» 18/9/1908 in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, ΛΒ', [1908-1910], (1911), 6.

symbols appeared in the open. Consider the “Literary fête” the Society proclaimed for 18/9/1908. A group of Greeks had arrived in Constantinople to convey congratulations in a climate of brotherhood and friendship rather common in such changes of polity – especially when change was perceived to be for the best in terms of international relations. Leonidas Limarakis delivered an address under the title ‘The Gifts of Liberty’ in the presence of Prince Sabaheddin – then a leading figure of the liberal faction in the Committee of Union and Progress and later of the opposition – which began with the Greek national anthem. The stanzas were not in the correct order for, significantly enough, Limarakis chose to start with the third one instead that reads: “That day [of freedom in Greece] was long to come/ and everything was silent/ cringing with fear/ under bitter slavery”.¹⁷² He went on to explicitly mention the Greek Revolution, for the first time in the forty-seven years of the Society’s existence. The light of freedom “was still preserved in the homeland, until through an immense struggle it shone again in its ancient birthplace eighty-seven years past, and dazzled by it, the onlookers declared the whole thing a resurrection”.¹⁷³ Whether this was the result of a suppressed national feeling resurfacing or the completion of a *volte-face* of the Society’s majority originating in 1878, the important fact is the absence of any hesitation. From this moment on the Ottoman Greeks threw in their lot with that of the *Megali Idea*.

Soon after these festivities the Literary Society was entangled in the chaotic political developments and machinations following the Young Turks’ Revolution. To begin with, the Literary Society had never been the only association of the Constantinopolitan Greeks and in the present circumstances, since not overtly politic, it proved the worst equipped of all to ride the political storm. Besides the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whose policy has been described earlier, after July 1908 the Greek community in the capital of the Ottoman Empire were under the influence of the Political

¹⁷² Φιλολογική εορτή» 18/9/1908 in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, ΛΒ’, [1908-1910], (1911), 6.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* Contrast this with Limarakis’s predecessor, H. Hatzihristos, also a doctor, who had lavishly praised Abdul Hamid in his celebratory address of 11/6/1906. *Ibid.* Λ’, [1905-1907], (1908), 45.

Association, in effect a Greek political party, and the Organisation of Constantinople, a semi-secret society closely associated with the Greek state.¹⁷⁴ The Organisation, brainchild of ardent nationalists Ion Dragoumis and Athanasios Souliotis-Nikolaides was in its first stage working for the realisation of the *Megali Idea*.¹⁷⁵ In its attempts to secure favourable conditions for the Greek community the Organisation was enmeshed in the politics of the Committee of Union and Progress, electing to support the leader of the liberal faction and nephew of Sultan Abdul Hamid, Prince Sabaheddin. However, the scheme backfired when the staged military *coup* against the Young Turks failed in April 1909.¹⁷⁶

The fortunes of the Organisation and the Literary Society then were bound to cross paths, especially at a time when greater freedom of movement for the minorities' clubs and associations was supposed to exist: Limarakis clearly illustrated this feeling in 17/5/1909 by mentioning the "air of freedom" which

"broke the chains of a thirty-three year old tyranny and an already centuries old autocracy and inequality between people; and all the nations were called, in mutual respect and equality, liberty and justice, to participate in the rights and duties in the service of the common country".¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Ion Dragoumis was a diplomat in the Greek Embassy at the time while Souliotis was sanctioned by the Greek Foreign Ministry. The origins of the Organisation in Souliotis-Nikolaides, *Οργάνωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, pp.30-39. As a memoir, this is a work distanced in time from the actual events and written mainly to justify past actions and decisions, an aspect that should be kept in mind while reading it.

¹⁷⁵ See the memoirs of Souliotis-Nikolaides entitled *Οργάνωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*. Also Thanos Veremis, «Από το Εθνικό κράτος στο έθνος δίχως κράτος. Το πείραμα της Οργάνωσης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως» in Thanos Veremis (ed), *Εθνική Ταυτότητα και Εθνικισμός στη Νεότερη Ελλάδα*, (Athens 1997), pp.27-52; A.J. Panayotopoulos, "The 'Great Idea' and the vision of Eastern Federation: A propos of the views of I. Dragoumis and A. Souliotis-Nikolaides in *Balkan Studies* 21, (1980), pp.331-365.

¹⁷⁶ Souliotis described how Sabaheddin was encouraged and helped by the Greek government and the *Organisation* in his journey from France – through Greece – to Constantinople. In *Οργάνωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, p.94.

¹⁷⁷ «Λογοδοσία των κατά το ΜΗ' συλλογικόν έτος πεπραγμένων εν τω συλλόγω» 17/5/1909 in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, ΑΒ', [1908-1910], (1911), 36.

He also mentioned “everybody’s urge to enter the field of politics” and a motion for the transformation of the Society into a political association that had been turned down.¹⁷⁸ What he failed to mention was his being a member of the Organisation, along with 37 others of the Society, comprising almost 20% of its regular members for year 1909.¹⁷⁹ This clearly shows us that the ‘urge’ to formally enter politics was almost upon the Literary Society although it would take a few more years to move into the field openly.

When the Society “rose from the dead”¹⁸⁰ as president Minas Afthentopoulos proclaimed in 1919 all questions and illusions finally came to an end. The Society had been the victim of serious violence on the part of the Ottoman government during the war, its mobile property confiscated and thrown into the street and a genuine painting of Homer by Ingres adorning the Meeting Hall taken to a police precinct due to debts the president decried as fictional.¹⁸¹ Greek foreign policy was now provided with ardent support: “the Society is going to participate valiantly in the glorious struggle for Greek regeneration in a spirit of national solidarity”.¹⁸² Eleftherios Venizelos, the Greek Prime Minister, had been proclaimed honorary president for life, his name day in 15th December was celebrated as an “occasion of worship to our national ideology” and an epic poem entitled ‘The Venizeliad’ was composed and read in his honour.¹⁸³ In the lectures’ programme, prominent subjects included ‘A page out of our national history’, ‘The development of the *Megali Idea* since the fall of Constantinople, on occasion of the hundredth year anniversary of the first National Assembly

¹⁷⁸ «Λογοδοσία των κατά το ΜΗ’ συλλογικόν έτος πεπραγμένων», [1908-1910], (1911),36.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. catalogue of the Organisation members in *Οργάνωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, pp. 219-230 with Literary Society members in *Πεντηκονταετηρίς* (Celebratory volume on the fiftieth anniversary of the *Greek Literary Society*, appendix to vol. ΑΔ’. This last volume never actually appeared.), (Constantinople, 1913-1921), pp.ε’-ι’. According to Souliotis, Limarakis was a close associate, visiting him every day in his office.

¹⁸⁰ Afthentopoulos, *Λογοδοσίαι Μηνά Αυθεντοπούλου*, p.21.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.19. The painting was sold in an auction.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, p.33.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, pp.20, 38 , 58 respectively.

in Epidavros', 'On the *Megali Idea*'.¹⁸⁴ On the 20/3/1919 the president of the Society invited the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army, in Constantinople as part of the force the victors of the Great War had appointed to occupy the Straits, to formal lunch in his honour in the renowned hotel of *Pera Palace*. Towards the end of his address Afthentopoulos said: "Long life to you, therefore, victorious general, hooray to you, to the valiant army and to Eleftherios Venizelos, with all them and above all hooray for mother Greece, the finally united and great Greece".¹⁸⁵ In the end, the controversy over the possible political status of the Society was settled in defiance of reality: "...our society does not practise politics, except if those who do, on purpose confuse politics with any national activity for whose benefit this humble institution has been founded and ever since strived".¹⁸⁶ Four months after this final address of Minas Afthentopoulos the Greek Army in Asia Minor was to be defeated by the Turkish forces of Mustafa Kemal. The treaty of Lausanne in 1923 would regulate future relations between the two countries; almost two million people would migrate in panic or be exchanged and the bustling Greek communities of the Near East would practically cease to exist¹⁸⁷ – the Literary Society of Constantinople already had, in the wake of the Greek retreat.

A last point to be stressed before concluding is to further clarify the interaction between the Literary Society and the Greek state. As an agent of Greek urban middle class values in the Empire, the Society stands out as a remarkable indicator of their attitude towards the policy the Greek kingdom followed towards them. Initially, in the first period of the Society between 1861 and 1878, the Greek Constantinopolitan elites seemed to favour legitimism and a kind of collaboration with the Ottoman government which has been called 'Greek Ottomanism'.¹⁸⁸ What was meant by 'Greek

¹⁸⁴ Afthentopoulos, *Λογοδοσίαι Μηνά Αυθεντοπούλου*, pp.29, 82.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p.131.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁷ Mazower, *The Balkans*, p.107.

¹⁸⁸ On 'Greek Ottomanism' see especially Alexis Alexandris, «Οι Έλληνες στην υπηρεσία της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας, 1850-1922» in *Δελτίο Ιστορικής και*

Ottomanism' was primarily the acceptance of the preservation of the Ottoman Empire. For the upper middle class of Constantinople the Greek kingdom could not offer the guarantees necessary to invest upon: it was small, diminutive and ineffective. After the Crimean War it seemed as if the Ottoman Empire would still retain its tenacious hold to existence for the foreseeable future. The best bet would be to roll with the tide. The Tanzimat presented the chance to comply with the will of the Great Powers in their search for a Russian deterrent and at the same time try to take advantage of it in imagining a future Ottoman Empire as a prospective condominium between Greeks and Turks.¹⁸⁹ This view, Skopetea notes, suggested that "the Empire would not be undermined from the inside but Greeks would be incorporated to the Ottoman administrative machine; Greeks in the Empire would not be prominent members of the Greek ethnicity but privileged Ottoman subjects"¹⁹⁰. It anticipated the 1867 arrangement that produced the Austro – Hungarian Empire by almost a decade. And last, but not least, this way the Greek upper middle class was originating a rival scheme to the *Megali Idea* propagated by Athens, thus regaining the ideological initiative lost since the formation of the independent Greek state. However, there was also a cultural level in 'Greek Ottomanism'. It had to do with strengthening the Greek position inside the Christian Orthodox *millet* in order to compete with a rising Slav nationalism and retain the Greek upper middle class's control of it. The educational efforts undertaken and mentioned cannot be understood properly out of this context.¹⁹¹

Without denying coherence and plausibility to the above arguments, we should also remember that the terms 'Greek Ottomanism' or *Megali Idea* were not the rigid structures they might appear on paper. In this quest for Greek identity we encounter not merely the primary colours but also their shades. As 'Greek Ottomanism' never became a dominant ideology, the future was to prove that the *Megali Idea* itself was not an object of unanimous

Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας, vol. ΚΓ', (1980), 365-404; Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, pp.309-325.

¹⁸⁹ Skopetea, *Το «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, pp.304-305, 314-315.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.315.

¹⁹¹ Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία*, p.305.

agreement even among the mainlanders. The disagreement between King Constantine and Venizelos on the country's alignment in the Great War was not a simple personal feud. It showed the difficulties of translating national ideology to working foreign policy, especially when this was to be directly related to the interests and competition among the Great Powers. Thus Venizelos's 'Ionian vision' and Constantine's image of a 'small yet honest Greece' transcended the dilemmas of the Great War in being variations on the political ideology the Greek state had pledged itself since its inception.

Similar dilemmas were being faced on the other bank of the Aegean. For instance, the Greek upper middle class in the Ottoman Empire was not itself totally homogeneous on accepting or denouncing the Greek kingdom. Odysseas Ialemos made a curious statement in an 1877 address on the 'History of the Literary Society', in which he maintained that by certain changes in its charter the Society had become "not merely Greek but Panhellenic, engulfing with its spiritual energies every province in the Ottoman Empire inhabited by Greek or Orthodox desiring Greek education".¹⁹² It is indeed a strange definition of 'panhellenic' one that promptly excludes the independent kingdom. Iroklis Vasiadis, probably the most prominent member of the Literary Society and the closest thing to its spokesman in the 1860s, had not hesitated to call the independent state "little Greece"¹⁹³, alluding to a greater one either in the broad sense of the diaspora or specifically having in mind the community living in the Ottoman Empire. He had also castigated what he considered as an Athenian cultural hegemony using very strong language:

"it is now fifty years that only one home and source of Greek lights remains and all others have been destroyed; almost all our scholars have now flocked there; because of that a frosty, deathly cold pervaded the rim where all initiative and activity has withered while the centre suffers from great swelling and oversupply; stricken and assailed by that most of them have become overheated and copied the politicians in altercations and controversies and in abusing each other vulgarly and

¹⁹² *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, IB' [1877-1878], (1879), 17.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, B' (1864-1865), (1871), 275.

profusely, thinking that by arraigning others on grounds of ignorance and thus debasing their own selves they were actually elevated and triumphed upon their opponents”.¹⁹⁴

These words were certain not to make Vasiadis a popular figure in Athens. However, the same person who was being so critical of these educational aspects of Greek foreign policy had collaborated with the Central Committee of Cretans in Athens as a representative of the Constantinopolitan Cretan Committee in 1866 and was sent in the capital of the kingdom to buy guns for the Cretan insurrection then in progress.¹⁹⁵ This goes to show that rhetoric notwithstanding, there was always a minimum of cooperation between the Kingdom and Ottoman Greek leaders when wider aims were considered. For the existence of a committee collecting sums for the Cretans, although drawing upon a general interest of the public as in all similar cases, surely presupposed the contributions and sponsoring of wealthier citizens. Besides, it constituted an instance where the considered upholders of ‘Greek Ottomanism’ were working not only to the interest of their ‘irredentist brothers’, but towards the aggrandizement of ‘little Greece’ since the majority of Cretans demanded the Union.

Moreover, what has already been discussed as to the Literary Society’s ideology and activities should be juxtaposed to considering ‘Greek Ottomanism’ as a coherent alternative to the *Megali Idea*. Odysseas Ialemos again, attributed ‘Greek Ottomanist’ attitudes not only to the Greeks of the Empire but those of the independent state too:

“This traditional policy was surely attended by the system in which Greece and the Greeks seemed to say to Turkey ‘we are going to peacefully exist together, at least for a certain time, because it is in your interest to tend your natural resources and it is in ours to operate in the Orient at ease’”.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ «Εκτακτος συνεδρίασις της επετείου πανηγύρεως των Ελληνικών Συλλόγων» 4/5/1869 in *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, Δ', [1865-1870], (1871), 242.

¹⁹⁵ Giannakopoulos, *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, p.52. Also Tatiana Stavrou, *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος. Το υπουργείον Παιδείας του αλύτρωτου Ελληνισμού*, (Athens, 1967), p.87.

¹⁹⁶ Ialemos, *Ελλήνων Δίκαια*, p.29.

In the years that followed the Cretan Revolution of 1866-1869, the Greek state had conceded to an improvement of its relations with the Ottoman Empire, finding in it an uneasy but equally alarmed partner over the rise of Bulgarian nationalism in Macedonia. This brief respite of a *détente*, called by an enthusiastic Constantinopolitan Greek newspaper “the new, really *MEGALI* (Great) Idea”¹⁹⁷, lasted for roughly three years between 1870 and 1873 before both countries saw fit to revert to the previous and more familiar pattern. By the time Ialemos was writing the above piece, which was set to appear in Athens, ‘Greek Ottomanism’, never really popular in Greece¹⁹⁸, was already in retreat even in Constantinople. The Eastern Crisis and the subsequent Russo-Turkish war put paid to thoughts of rapprochement. In 1876 Ialemos called for the Greek state to enlarge its borders and proceed in solving the Eastern Question by itself.¹⁹⁹ From this point on the aims of Ottoman and mainland Greeks increasingly converged.

In the end, what was probably more remarkable than the Literary Society’s compliance to the regulations of the Ottoman government was its manifest will to retain control of the national discourse circulating in the Empire on behalf of the local Greek community and in spite of the independent kingdom’s attempts to the contrary. We have mentioned before Vasiadis’s severe criticism of the Greek state’s cultural policy regarding ‘external Greek’ communities. The solution was clear to him: “it is necessary to introduce manifold luminous seats of Greek learning to rekindle noble competition and pride”.²⁰⁰ The keyword here is ‘manifold’, in contrast to the sovereignty of Athens. The Greek capital was pursuing the wardship of

¹⁹⁷ Skopetea, *To «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, p.316.

¹⁹⁸ Anastasios Vyzantios wrote in 1878: “There [in Constantinople] in the days of old was born the monster certain sages today call Greco-Roman civilization and others Greco-Roman barbarity.(...) Five hundred years have passed and we have a new birthday! (...) A second, similar but worse monster which in the next centuries future Paparrigopouloi will be ready, no doubt, to baptise as Greco-Turkish civilization. (...) And this offspring of adultery mumbles Turkish ideas in Greek language; to the Turks declares itself Turkish and to Greeks, Greek...”. In Skopetea, *To «πρότυπο βασίλειο»*, p.312.

¹⁹⁹ Ialemos, *Ελλήνων Δίκαια*, p.59.

²⁰⁰ Giannakopoulos, *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, p. 52.

Ottoman Greeks”²⁰¹ and for their part they had a “reasonable claim of acting on their own advice in their own area”.²⁰² The Literary Society functioned as “father and progenitor” as to other societies and associations in the Ottoman Empire.²⁰³ Giannakopoulos writes that “almost every newfound association hastens to notify the *Society* of its formation, thus proclaiming it into a kind of registry offering a sort of recognition”.²⁰⁴ What was inside the borders of the Ottoman Empire laid outside Athenian jurisdiction and was *de jure* under the auspices of the Society as far as it concerned them. Odysseas Ialemos interpreted the charter’s modification in 1871 as an effort for the association to become “the leader of all Greeks in Turkey in educational activities and the epicentre of every yearning and act pertaining to it, (...) a virtual ministry of Education for Greeks and those desiring Greek culture (‘Ελληνίζοντες’) in Turkey”.²⁰⁵ Bearing in mind that the Society in the 1870s was coordinating the efforts of hundreds of local educational societies the term ‘ministry’ is perfectly apt. Not only does it recall to mind an organised system, it also implies authority; the authority to articulate a national discourse or to administer another produced elsewhere, and even skilfully alter and shape it to fulfil the demands of an altogether different reality. Thus, the fundamentally Greek ideology of reuniting all populations of Greek origin in the Balkans and the Near East under the sceptre of the King of Hellenes, in other words the essence of the *Megali Idea*, was transformed, ‘orientalised’, into a prospective condominium of Ottomans and Greeks of the Empire – or at least in their cultural supremacy.²⁰⁶ The Greek element’s ascendancy

²⁰¹ Giannakopoulos, *Ο Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*, p.119.

²⁰² *Ibid*, p.138.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, p.122.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁰⁵ Exertzoglou, *Εθνική ταυτότητα*, pp.24-25. Ialemos’s comment in 1877.

²⁰⁶ “A peculiar ethnogenesis” is the term Elli Skopetea uses to sum up the Greek experience in the Ottoman Empire in the latter part of the nineteenth century pointing out that it remained incomplete. In *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας στον 20ό αιώνα*, vol. A2, (Athens, 2000), p.22. Maria Todorova observes similar attitudes in the 1860s and 1870s in advocating a “dualist Turko-Bulgarian state” inspired from the Austro-Hungarian compromise. In Todorova, *Imagining*, p.167.

remained a constant. Which particular Greek element was to avail itself did not.

Conclusion

My main aim in this chapter was to chart the course of a Greek identity in Greece and the Ottoman Empire between roughly the 1860s and 1930. In the mainland developments were more straightforward altogether. The existence of an independent kingdom ensured the gradual formation and dissemination of an official ideology that put its stamp on national identity. As it has been shown before²⁰⁷ an Enlightenment view of Greek history decrying Byzantium as corrupt and immoral was substituted in the 1870s and 1880s by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos's tripartite format that incorporated the Constantinopolitan state into the main trunk of Greek history. Twenty years later, when our first celebratory addresses from the University of Athens start to appear, we can find it there, fully fledged, as the spine of national ideology. It was out of the past, whether that of Classical Antiquity, or more often, Byzantine medieval times, that political authority was sought and the *Megali Idea* was planted. While Classical Antiquity offered a deep temporal background for any demands and a link to modern Europe, Byzantium's image determined the extent of spatial claims and conferred legitimacy as the previous form of a Greek state. These elements were employed to enhance Greek foreign policy as historically just, insofar as the *Megali Idea* in its rather hazy aspects of a deliverance of 'unredeemed brothers' or a cultural 'enlightenment of the Orient' was applied as such. We have seen how Spyridon Lampros had manipulated similar arguments to galvanise his students' national feelings in more than one occasion. We have also seen him seeking to employ history for more practical reasons, in helping to create secret societies that hoped to act as its agents in fulfilling the above mentioned claims *en lieu* of the state. Because national rhetoric

²⁰⁷ See above, ch.1.

notwithstanding, foreign policy cannot be enacted without clear and precise aims the Greek Kingdom from the 1870s on had set a table of priorities and Macedonia occupied the top place. It was there that history and ideology were to converge and translate into action.

At this point Greek consciousness and institutions in the Ottoman Empire came into play. Going through a modern textbook or a general Greek history one may safely conclude that the Greek element there remained a passive observer of developments in the independent kingdom, merely sitting and waiting for deliverance. However, without an equally careful examination of Ottoman Greeks a study of national identity would be far from complete. It is a widely held assumption, rooted in the above treatment, that their thoughts and aspirations were exactly the same as those of mainland Greeks; that they were uncritical upholders of the *Megali Idea* and strong supporters of the Union. This is rather a product of wishful thinking on the part of its propagators than the result of consistent research. The Greek element may have been integrated in the Ottoman Empire but still retained its own institutions that permitted the existence of a civil society of their own. People looked up to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for religious solace and the legitimacy of their *millet*, to the schools of the community for proper education and to their clubs and associations, the Literary Society of Constantinople taking point, for intellectual and ideological guidance. Differences in political, social and economical conditions between the independent kingdom and the Ottoman Empire practically guaranteed that, for some time at least, respected notions of national consciousness were bound to diverge. This was clearly expressed in what has been called 'Greek Ottomanism'.

'Greek Ottomanism' cannot be considered as a mere offshoot of the *Megali Idea* as Tatiana Stavrou has suggested²⁰⁸ because it does not presuppose the dominant role of the Greek Kingdom. Insofar as this was identified with the state's foreign policy, the views of the Ottoman Greeks until the 1870s were exactly the opposite. To be subordinate to a weak and diminutive polity was definitely not their aim. On the other hand 'Greek Ottomanism' cannot be said to have represented a full acceptance of

²⁰⁸ Stavrou, *Ο εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος*.

Ottoman sovereignty or the willingness to serve the aims and policy of the Ottoman Empire. 'Greek Ottomanism' as seen in the activities of the Literary Society was in fact the *Megali Idea* in an oriental setting. It represented a double effort on the part of the elites to secure for themselves and for the rest of the Greek community a better place in the quicksand that the Empire was becoming in the second part of the nineteenth century – and to resist the gravitational pull the Greek Kingdom exacted.

To that extent, an autonomous role in ideological dissemination and cultural matters was a prerequisite. By transforming and altering concepts of national discourse propagated by the Greek state, mainly in the schools, which were created by local communities but staffed with teachers from Greece²⁰⁹, the Ottoman Greeks could arrive to a functional construct serving their own part of the nation's needs. The Literary Society of Constantinople gathered and channelled these energies for almost twenty years after its inception, providing a focus for ideology and attempting to keep control of things educational in Macedonia, where the Society for the Propagation of Greek Letters was expanding the influence of the Greek Kingdom since 1869. It was this strange course between politics and science that determined the Society's fate in an age and place where rival nationalisms were about to overthrow the old order in which it was conceived and realised.

On this last point the answer concerning the adventures of Greek national identity between 1860 and 1923 may finally rest. As the nineteenth century drew to its end the 'Ottoman Greeks' realised that these two components were gradually transforming into a contradiction in terms. If before 1878 they were eager to preserve this multinational society in the shape of a condominium with the Turkish element or exchange even this prospect for cultural hegemony, after the failure of the Reforms this was no longer an option. Incorporation to an enlarged Greek Kingdom became an inviting alternative, initially expressed in so many words in 1908, in the joyous aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution and briefly accomplished in

²⁰⁹ It was also common for scholarships to be given from Ottoman Greek associations for studies undertaken in the University of Athens with the provision that students should return after graduation and "enable their fellow villagers to become superior to those of other races and to retain this superiority". In Clogg, "The Greek *Miller*", p.197.

1919 when the Greek army assumed responsibility in the mandate of Smyrna. If Ottoman Greeks have been 'Ottoman' before 1878 then, they certainly became increasingly more 'Greek' later. The culmination of this course came in 1919, shortly before the Greek army landing in Smyrna, when the Ecumenical Patriarchate "formally released the Ottoman Greeks from their civic responsibilities as Ottoman citizens".²¹⁰ It took almost three years and a war lost to strike the former adjective and leave a unified Greek identity and ideology. Ironically enough though, reality ensured that its essence would be stripped from any *Megali Idea* territorial ambitions.

²¹⁰ Clogg, "The Greek Millet", p.200.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to explore themes in the development of national ideology in Scotland and Greece largely in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Using the comparative method, I have tried to show how a variety of elements functioned in the procedure of shaping the nation through the quest for an acceptable self-image, the construction of a national discourse or image through historiography, and the ultimate fusion of these components into a specific national identity. Cultural and political factors were employed to examine different currents of thought and underline the peculiarities of the Scottish and Greek cases in the belief that the development of nationalism in Europe may not have been as neat or streamlined as is sometimes described. In fact, what these examples demonstrate is that modern ethnogenesis, far from corroborating any determinist propositions on a 'predestined' outcome, proceeded through intricate paths and came along with its own uncertainty principle. There remain however a few points I would like to mention or emphasise before concluding this thesis.

It is obvious that in looking back towards the formation of nations and the processes of establishing a national ideology we essentially look back towards the making of history itself. Certainly, we have been aware for some time of the contribution of our discipline in the construction and imposition of a coherent whole out of scattered parts of past, what has been termed as "narrating the nation".¹ Insofar as the latter remains not an actual but an 'imagined community', a representation rather than a tangible reality, it is to the historical discipline we have to look for its articulation and placement in an accepted timeframe. The formulation of a national imaginary accompanying and appealing to the national sentiment has frequently been the work of historians who set the limits and suggest the shape of national

¹ Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, (London, 1990).

memory. Values and aspirations of the present are enforced and projected to the past which undergoes a selective procedure to comply with a suitable pattern for a contemporary society. In this guise of an intellectual vanguard historians and archaeologists may be indeed understood as nation-builders.²

On the one hand then there is narration. On the other, there is the object of this narration: national identity. 'Identity' in the way the term is employed today is a modern concept itself, having been popularised by Erik Erikson in the late 1950s. What prevents us from being anachronistic when applying it to ages past are the various forms of communal solidarity and the questions of origins expressed in these societies. We have seen how the Scots began their quest for identity in entering a discussion concerning their origins in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Meanwhile, on the other side of Europe, a variation of the Enlightenment introduced a similar question and a possible answer into Greek society under Ottoman rule.³ What was sought in both cases was continuity in language and culture. Goths or Gaels and classical Greek antiquity were building blocks needed for contemporary political and ideological constructs. The particular characteristics of national consciousness and the existing version of national identity in Scotland and Greece are to a great extent the result of a process whose roots were firmly planted in the eighteenth century, during the dawn of the modern age.

Yet, it was the Romantic paradigm that saw in the nation the agent of history. Where Enlightenment affirmed the uniformity of human nature and society as unchanging through the ages the Romantics were increasingly concerned with national character and race. The pervasiveness of national ideology can be discerned in Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, whose *History of the Greek Nation* projected this concept onto classical

² See Dennis Deletant and Harry Hannak (eds.), *Historians as nation-builders*, (London, 1988). Also, Margarita Diaz-Andreu and Timothy Champion (eds.), *Nationalism and archaeology in Europe*, (London, 1996); Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett (eds.), *Nationalism, politics and the practice of archaeology*, (Cambridge, 1995).

³ Being a part of the continent, Greece was more influenced by the French movement but the works of David Hume and Adam Smith were not unfamiliar to the disciples of Adamantios Korais. See Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός*, (Athens, 1998), p.462.

antiquity, incorporating with it not merely Byzantium but 3,000 years of history that found its fulfilment in modern Greece. Yet, here we might note the peculiarity of the Scottish example: although Scots Enlightenment and Romantic figures as Robertson, Hume or Sir Walter Scott have been central to the evolution of new perceptions and techniques, Scotland as a country did not respond to these stimuli in an overtly nationalist way. The Union of 1707 ensured in the long run that neither a sovereign Scottish nation nor a predominant Scottish history became the canon.

A created historical consensus acted as the cornerstone of national ideology. This in turn offered a broad base for political arguments. Scottish references to a Union of equals sprang from the acceptance of a number of assumptions on Scottish identity into the historical canon. The particular way Scots interpreted the War of Independence and the medieval kingdom of Scotland reinforced political arguments and claims to Westminster. Territorial demands and appeals to liberate Greek 'unredeemed brothers' still under the authority of the Ottoman Empire were not made only in the light of statistics or economic viability plans for each region. The vision of Byzantium as an expanded form of modern Greece thrust in its furthest limits was only made possible when the dominant historical format was properly modified.

However, the inevitability of a specific national identity is put into question by both our cases. Out of this consolidating process neither a monolithic sense of Scottishness nor a unitary Greekness emerged. In fact, Scotland, locked in Union with England, a much larger state in terms of population, resources, financial and cultural influence, succeeded nonetheless – or possibly because of that – in generating a surprising number of partial images and identities. Besides the Unionist British identity that exerted a great influence, we have encountered in the latter part of the nineteenth century identifications with an 'independent and free' Scotland. Expressions of loyalty were proffered however to 'sister kingdoms', to 'three countries as one empire', even to a 'perfect union' – one that had abolished both the previous states putting in their place a new, fused creation. Indeed, it was far from unusual to observe these being articulated side to side in such a virtual national holiday as the celebration of Robert Burns. The extent of

ambiguities and uncertainties in these multiple late nineteenth-century 'Scotlands' is probably outlined in the 1880 poster from Gladstone's Midlothian campaign, where the English Liberal leader addressed an eager public while the spectral figures of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce stood beside him in silent approval.

Inside Greece, on the other hand, modern state organization and machinery in the form of the army and education despite being mocked for sluggishness and inefficiency, succeeded nonetheless in disseminating the official national ideology. Out of the heavily particularistic tendencies still evident at the end of the War of Independence a cohesive national identity was formed, quickly finding inspiration in the plight of the 'unredeemed Greeks' of the Ottoman Empire and the *Megali Idea*. The rest of the Greek communities however, especially the richer ones in the Ottoman Empire, were not attracted instantly. There, Greeks produced their own variations of a national ideology that had largely to do with the aspirations and worldview of a society not merely Greek but *Ottoman* Greek. As we have shown, the *Megali Idea* was 'orientalised' into 'Greek Ottomanism', the notion of cooperating with the Turkish element in a reformed Empire in order to elevate Greek authority and culture or even to supplant the Turks as the predominant element in the Ottoman Empire. This essentially meant the prospective existence of two Greek states, because this view evidently did not take into account the independent kingdom's foreign policy of incorporating the 'unredeemed brothers'. This 'peculiar ethnogenesis' however failed after 1878 as economic factors in the Near East and political priorities in Europe started to change.

The fluidity of national identity then is my main point. Two minor ones uncovered by my research that merit further examination stem from this general sentence, one concerning Scotland, the other Greece. There are hints that freedom of movement and favourable conditions for individual enrichment was enough for a sizeable number of Scots to develop faith in a *Scottish Empire* not as a mere rhetorical scheme devised to disguise English supremacy but as a tangible reality that saw them expanding their business to the furthest corners of the world. The celebration of pioneers, missionaries, Scots in the Indian Army or those in the colonial administration was

frequently embedded in a thoroughly Scottish context. In the end, Scots managed to accommodate their intense national feeling and the reality of a British Empire run by the English in assuring themselves that the latter also belonged to them.

One might say that as Scots 'scotticised' the British Empire, Ottoman Greeks 'orientalised' the *Megali Idea*. Pressed between two centres of power and disadvantaged by lacking even 'semi-independence' they tried nevertheless to articulate a distinct national discourse. At a time when the Greek kingdom offered an attractive rhetorical vision but very little else convincing the financiers and merchants, intellectuals and community leaders of Constantinople, who were undoubtedly in the vanguard of their element, favoured 'Greek Ottomanism' as an alternative that would secure cultural mastery or even a condominium in the Ottoman Empire. This informal revision of mainland Greek aspirations was the result of the existence of a separate civil society, aiming at retaining its autonomy. To them the right to decision-making and possible gains out of any rearrangements in the Orient should be an exclusive prerogative of Ottoman Greeks.

The final outcome that determined the modern shape of Scottish and Greek national ideologies should not be attributed to purely internal social developments. On the contrary, and this is where the study of these distant nations comes together, it has to be set in a wider European perspective. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards these societies have partook of increasingly common experiences. The two World Wars, the Cold War and the present reality of the European Union certainly stand out as milestones in the history of the continent and the traces they have left shall not be easily erased. Developments in politics, culture or science had for all this time instant repercussions for citizens of regions as far away as Scotland and Greece. The decline of British Unionism in the former or the drive towards a model Western European state in the latter would be difficult to explain in any other light. Under these conditions it becomes all the more important for the historian to broaden his view, familiarize himself with the particulars of diverse cultures and be careful to place his studies in an international context.

The comparison ends in dissimilarity rather than similarity. No clear parallel exists in the general course of these nations' history. Hints to a latent relationship exist in the pride both countries share in their history and heritage, the keenness to express their nationality and the importance they apply to their distinctive identity. If we had to place the two countries on the axis of Eric Hobsbawm's 'dual revolution', Scotland would come out as the *par excellence* child of the industrial while Greece would be the obvious progeny of the French revolution. This basic disparity is the reason why in many instances common elements found in both societies as religious dedication, the convergence of religion and politics, intense political feeling or enthusiastic endorsement of national ideology actually lead to divergent ways and distinct outcomes. A comparative study does not necessarily have to always come up with matching results. For our goals then, this diversion instead of posing a problem becomes all the more reason for studying as it exposes even more vividly the workings and intricacies of national identity building.

I believe that the above analysis has also shown the limits of the comparative method. The problems a comparative historian faces in the effort to offer consistent and valid interpretations are multiple. The danger of superficial semblances and forced parallels is only inferior to the necessity of bringing together elements from different contexts and social realities. This raises the question on the adequacy of our terminology and conceptual tools to rise to the challenge. It seems that comparative history inherently presupposes a broader, less detailed view, and wider interpretations. As the grand narratives and syntheses of the past have given way to a multiplicity of specialised approaches and case studies, in order not to proffer comprehensive but to suggest partial explanations, one might wonder whether among this perpetual splintering, comparative history is not becoming increasingly redundant.

In the end it seems that nationalism triumphed in both Scotland and Greece even if its roads there were far from straightforward. Although both countries enjoy presently membership in the European Union⁴, their respective positions still remain dissimilar. For some the opening of a

⁴ Greece as a full member state, Scotland as part of Great Britain.

parliament in Edinburgh in 1999 seems to have testified to the fact that Scotland is not a 'stateless nation' any more.⁵ Nevertheless, it is still not a nation-state. It seems however that the historical consensus on national cornerstones has found its equivalent in the field of politics. Nationalism in accepting the nation as the paramount ideological category is now firmly rooted in both countries, as I can attest myself as a contemporary observer of recent elections there. The pattern of all major Greek political parties accepting and asserting a kind of national rhetoric has also emerged in the North with minimal exceptions. What this change signifies is that Scottish nationalism is about to shed, if it has not done already, some of its peculiar spectral qualities that made it stand out at times and at others withdraw behind the unique features of the United Kingdom's structure. It shall become more visible, nearer to the Greek and indeed, to the majority of contemporary European nationalisms. But the spectres of the past, be they Scots or Greeks, will not go away, because they are embedded in our political and ideological institutions, because they form part of the routines of everyday life.

⁵ David McCrone has dropped the adjective "stateless" from the subtitle of his 2001 edition of *Understanding Scotland*.

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