

Gerasimos Augustinos, *The Greeks of Asia Minor: Confession, Community, and Ethnicity in the Nineteenth Century*. Kent, Ohio and London, England: The Kent State University Press, 1992. Pp. x+270+1 map. Hard-bound.

Gerasimos Augustinos, professor of history at the University of South Carolina, editor of *Diverse Paths to Modernity in Southeastern Europe: Essays in National Development*, and author of *Consciousness and History: Nationalist Critics of Greek Society*, has produced a marvelous comprehensive study of the Asia Minor Greeks for the first time available in the English language, concentrating on the period from 1840 to 1880, a time of transition from traditional agrarian society and the primacy of religious identity in multinational authoritarian states in Eastern Europe to the more dynamic and more complex period of industrialization, nationalist ideology, mass politics, and centralized states. No student of modern Greece can understand well contemporary Greek national society without knowing or at least familiarizing oneself with this book, which sets the groundwork for the eventual de-Hellenization of what was left of the thriving Greek communities in the Ottoman Empire and the expulsion of virtually all Greeks from Anatolia.

The author is concerned with "the world of the Greeks whose institutions were bound up with religion and with their responses to a state-directed, culturally defined ideology, nationalism, that now offered an active rather than a passive identity grounded on ethnic factors and coupled to defined territory" (p. 2) and "to examine the ways in which this people responded to unsettling political and economic forces during the nineteenth century and the developmental implications inherent in them from the perspective of their social and cultural institutions, their confessional organization, and local communities. It was through through these institutions that the Asia Minor Greeks channeled their social and economic interests" (pp. 2-3). Augustinos describes the Asia Minor Greeks as a nationality and rejects the use of the loaded contemporary term "minority" for purposes of this study for obvious reasons, though all Christians were to become a minority in Asia Minor.

It is the Ottoman Tanzimat (Reform Movement) that constitutes the backdrop for this study. The bureaucratic, secular-minded Ottoman elite attempted to reestablish Ottoman central authority by promoting a common Ottoman identity, and by encouraging a broader civic culture among the various subject people, at a time when the Great Powers of Europe had become intensely involved in the Ottoman Empire's affairs and world trade was wide open. The Asia Minor Greeks were naturally affected in ways that

necessitated their finding a place in relation to the major social culture of Asia Minor and to the culture of the Greek national state. The result was predictably increased tensions within the Greek community (or communities) of Asia Minor and the remolding of ethnic identity. The problems were those of a communally organized people in a multinational state, in which the Greek Orthodox Church and Patriarchate were forced to reconsider the range of ecclesiastical authority and the boundaries between spiritual and temporal now insisted upon by the state and even by many of the laity. The communities had wielded social and moral authority and were limited and self-limiting. The Church had to preserve its own ecclesiastical character and organization of communal life, while at the same time supporting the progressive development of ethnicity in the communities as a means to strengthening confessional loyalty. The Church, in effect, became an instrument for promoting nationalism because the Ottoman state demanded, in the name of reform, that there be greater lay participation and representation at all levels. Even the Patriarch's election had to involve laymen. A Mixed Council (1857) was created. The Hatt-i-Humayun (Imperial Rescript of 1856) demanded financial responsibility from the religious establishment. Affairs relating to civil matters had to involve the participation of clergy and laymen alike. The Mixed Council, though called "temporary", was to include seven clerics and twenty laymen, but that was not the only challenge to the Greek Orthodox *millet*. There was increasing Slavic opposition to the authority of the Greek Orthodox hierarchy and Protestant missionaries raised questions about the validity of Greek Orthodox practices, engaged in proselytism, and enticingly offered educational opportunities. Reorganization of the Rum Millet (the Greek Orthodox ethnos) did not mean a break with the past but rather continuity through accommodation.

Curiously the Greeks were successful commercially because they had been excluded from political power (also the Armenians). They became part of the middle class that was made up of different nationalities and relied on themselves as individual merchants and shopkeepers but still remained bound to their ethnic communities and vigorously supported Greek education within the Ottoman Empire.

Augustinos appropriately spends a good deal of time on Ottoman educational policies which were presumably pursued to fulfill state needs and community interests but which tended to promote ethnic identity rather than imperial unity. Augustinos says rather pointedly that "Whatever the Tanzimat reformers had of strengthening the state through a progressive technical and civic educational system went largely unfulfilled" (p. 148).

The majority of schools were on the primary level, the Asia Minor Greek communities doing quite well compared to state-supported schools in Greece. Educational societies were founded that supported schools and learning. The Hellenic Philological Society of Constantinople, well supported financially, gained great prominence in the Greek intellectual community, paralleling in certain ways, the Ottoman Scientific Society, but stressing Greek culture of all historical periods. Ironically, it was the Ottoman state that provided the opportunities for Greek cultural development by allowing confessional communities to maintain their own educational institutions, incorporating civic formulations from the Greek state and modern Western ideas of ethnic identity. The Church blessed the teaching of the Greek language and culture in the schools to retain its faithful, thus unwittingly promoting Greek nationalism.

Augustinos notes that until the end of the 19th century the Greek Orthodox defined themselves as (1) the community in which they were born and raised; (2) as a confessional community (religious) unlimited by time and space; and (3) as a linguistic community, delineated but less circumscribed intellectually than the religious community. These worlds were all affected by the Greek revolt of 1821, revealing a fourth world (an independent Greek state). The old imperial structure was no longer to be viable. A self-generated urban service class emerged as against the trading, entrepreneurial class of the Ottoman Greeks. Survival for the Asia Minor Greeks was through culture and the politics of ethnicity.

For the contemporary reader, it is important to note that "The socially prominent elements in Greek and Ottoman society in the empire recognized that the status quo could not be maintained even if they so desired....the more realistic among the Greek professionals realized that, by themselves, they could not hope to forcibly change their political world...both had come to terms with the embodiment of the national community, the Greek Kingdom, sooner or later" (p. 198). The progression from ethnic communal identity to national consciousness in terms of territorial ethnicity was not exactly linear. Asia Minor Greeks were caught in between, but the road led eventually to Athens, not Constantinople. The movement was multilinear and trans-institutional. Community, confession, and culture had to be either integrated with or subordinated to the state. There could be little question of which state, and there can also be little question of how much the Asia Minor Greeks have contributed to the formation of the modern Greek state in the process. Professor Gerasimos Augustinos has helped us understand this all too well.