

*Alexander Kitroeff*

### **Greek Nationhood and Modernity in the 19th c.**

The focus of this article is the evolution of Greek nationhood —the idea of the Greek nation— from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century. The idea of the Greek nation is understood both as the ways a state incorporates its subjects and excludes others as well as the ways it defines its territory within certain boundaries in symbolic “national” terms as belonging to its jurisdiction —the nation in other words is a human and a physical entity vested in a particular, nationalist discourse that legitimizes its existence. This paper argues that Greek nationhood evolved away from a primarily cultural or ethnic type of nationalism and towards a mainly civic or political nationalism between the 1860s and 1890s. This shift reflected a shift away from the eastern-oriented and Romanticist-colored ideas that had prevailed in the 1840s and 1850s and which themselves had been formulated as a reaction to the earlier Enlightenment influences that had shaped Greek nationalist thought from the late eighteenth century through the revolutionary 1820s. Indeed, in the 1850s, in the aftermath of the Crimean War, Greek nationhood began to be conceived more and more in terms that were considered “European” and rational. The goal of achieving a greater Greece, the “Great Idea” remained, but its realization was understood differently after the 1850s.

In employing the categories “civic” and “ethnic” the purpose here is to highlight the considerable changes Greek nationalism experienced in the second half of the nineteenth century. This typology has been used to examine the two prevalent models of European nationhood, the politically defined territorial nation that arose from France’s experience and the culturally defined ethnic nation that was at the core of the emergence of German nationhood. Certainly the attitudes of France and Germany in terms to whom they would include and who they would exclude as well as their policies towards boundary issues were different and were in-

fluenced by those two different principles that underlay their understanding of nationhood<sup>1</sup>. To be sure, "civic" and "ethnic" should be considered convenient forms of classification, not normative categories. Civic nationalism does not exist without recourse to notions of culture and memory that are prevalent in cultural or ethnic nationalism<sup>2</sup>. As important is the need to be suspicious about the views that associate liberalism and democracy with civic forms of nationalism and, by the same token, assuming that cultural or ethnic nationalism necessarily leads to exclusive, anti-democratic and violent policies. Countries with civic-oriented nationhood have their share of undemocratic and violent developments, and vice versa<sup>3</sup>.

The move from a primarily culturally oriented view of nationhood over to a view of nationhood that was more civic-like unfolded against the background of a political and ideological struggle that dated back to Greek state-building that began in earnest in 1833 when the arrival of the newly independent country's Bavarian monarch Othon put an end to the political hiatus that ensued at the end of the decade long war the 1821 revolution had unleashed. The clash entailed differing views of how the new state and nation should be constructed. Building an independent nation was considered as the only way that the Greeks could close the chapter of Ottoman rule and take up their rightful position among other European nations. The nation and modernity went hand in hand in the minds of Greek nationalist thinkers since the eighteenth century. This is not to deny the crucial importance of the material and social circumstances that generated the conditions in which the nation could be constructed in real terms in the nineteenth century. But the idea of the nation preceded socio-economic modernization, the nation was projected as a realization of modernity.

We can think of this struggle in a schematic way as pitting advocates of a nation-state that was centralized, secular, shorn of many remnants of the Ottoman era and modeled and relying upon Britain and France

1. Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Cambridge 1992.

2. Nicholas Xenos, "Civic Nationalism: Oxymoron?", *Critical Review* 10<sub>2</sub> (Spring 1996) 213-232.

3. Bernard Yack, "The Myth of the Civic Nation", *Critical Review* 10<sub>2</sub> (Spring 1996) 193-212.

(hence the creation of the “English” and “French” parties) against advocates of a more traditionally colored, religiously defined nation state that would be closer to Russia in terms of its international orientation. Many of the former were outsider Greeks who had returned from Europe to play a role in building the new nation state. Many of the traditionalists were local notables and military chieftains, groups that stood to benefit if some of the traditional structures would be preserved. In practice, there were many differences between these two sides and indeed rather than polarized, these approaches overlapped in many cases. The uprising in the name of a constitution in 1843 and the formulation of a constitution in the following year provide a good example of shifting alliances and overlaps among groups who had different visions of Greece’s future. The traditionalist Russian party joined forces with its English and French counterparts to put pressure on King Othon and persuade him to grant a constitution —earlier the Russian party had stood alone in opposing the state’s plans to place the Church under its control. Yet during the constitutional assembly, the Russian party’s agenda and in particular its support of the local notables and its opposition towards the opposing element in the assembly, the pro-British and pro-French outsider Greeks set it apart from all other political forces<sup>4</sup>.

The struggle between pro-westernizers and traditionalists that continued with a changing pattern of permutations through the 1850s concerned the means rather than the accepted goal of the nation state that had been defined more or less unanimously in irredentist terms as the enlargement of Greece’s boundaries to encompass lands and populations that were considered culturally Greek. Much has been made by scholars of nineteenth century nationalism over the supposed dichotomy between so-called modernizers and irredentist nationalists. The modernizers, political leaders such as Alexandros Mavrokordatos and Charilaos Trikoupis are described in those studies as advocating domestic socio-economic development prior to taking steps to pursue the nationalist goals. By the same token, “traditionalists” such as Alexandros Koumoundouros and Theodoros Deliyannis are considered as primarily favoring irredentism policies over steps to bring about domestic changes.

4. The most useful account of post-independence politics remains John A. Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece 1833-1843*, Princeton 1968.

The facts do not fit the theory very well, however, because judging from their own writings and speeches, all those political leaders shared a commitment to progress and to achieving the “Great Idea”. And in any case, that view is based on a different understanding of the relationship between nationalism and modernity than the one that is employed here. That view considers nationalism as being separate, indeed contradictory to notions of progress and modernity. This article hopes to illustrate why this was not true and how nationalism and modernization became more and more interconnected in the minds of intellectuals and politicians.

\*\*\*

The revolutionary 1820s witnessed definitions of Greek nationhood that bore a strong resemblance to the political/territorial definitions of nationhood, though cultural criteria were also evident. All those persons and all regions that had taken up arms against the Ottomans were claimed as constituent parts of the Greek nation in the revolutionary constitutions and in the pronouncements of governor Capodistrias between 1828 and 1831. Let us take one example, the constitution drafted by the last assembly held during the revolution that met in Troezen in 1827. The Troezen constitution of 1827, the last formal charter produced during the years of the insurgency would not satisfy a strict application of civic nationalism standards because it fell short of offering a clear definition of the Greek nation state’s territorial limits. The Greek nation state was declared one and indivisible and consisting of provinces. The provinces that were considered part of Greece were “those which took up and will take up arms against the Ottoman dynasty”<sup>5</sup>. This formulation re-emphasized the fact that only the insurgent regions were formally considered part of Greece but did not clarify the status of the provinces in which the insurgency had collapsed and also left open the prospect of adjacent regions, that were not named, could be incorporated within the Greek nation-state.

The same constitution did bear many parallels to France’s, “civic” constitution. It earned its reputation as a remarkably liberal and democratic charter because of the way it enshrined individual liberty and

5. Char. Frangistas, «Αι Βάσεις των Πολιτευμάτων του Αγώνος», in *Αφιέρωμα εις τα 150 Χρόνια από της Επανάστασης του 1821*, Thessaloniki 1971, p. 129.

rights, because it strengthened the legislature's relationship with the executive branch of government; its treatment of nationality was also more liberal than its predecessor constitutions. The constitution downplayed the role of religion. It declared that individuals were free to worship the religion of their choice and that they would be protected in doing so. This was more emphatic than earlier constitutions that had merely signaled the authorities' tolerance of religions other than Eastern Orthodoxy. The downplaying of religion paved the way for broadening the categories of nationality the citizenship that were considered synonymous, even though certain criteria for nationality explicitly included Christianity. They included, first the indigenous Christian population within the territories under Greek rule; second, Christians from beyond those territories and originating from regions under Ottoman rule who arrived in the regions the insurgency was taking place either to fight or, in the future, to settle; third, persons born abroad (outside the Ottoman Empire) and whose father was Greek; fourth, persons who were indigenous or originated from other Ottoman regions who had become citizens of another country but had moved to insurgent Greece and swore an oath of allegiance to its laws and, finally, fifth, "foreigners" who would do likewise<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, judged in terms of the principle of civic and cultural nationhood, the 1827 constitution's criteria for nationality combined both, favoring the civic criteria. The first category, persons indigenous to the liberated territories and those who had moved into them from other Ottoman domains was obviously an application of civic nationalism, based as it was on *jus soli*. The second and third categories judged nationality according to cultural criteria. The second fairly broadly by requiring persons who moved either to fight or to settle in the liberated territories to be Christians. The third category, persons born abroad of a Greek father is a typical application of *jus sanguinis*. Yet the cultural criteria of the second and third categories did not necessarily have to be satisfied: the fourth and fifth categories added civic nationalist criteria by allowing Greek and foreign outsiders to swear allegiance to Greece and gain citizenship irrespective of religion. Those criteria would be revisited in an atmosphere of controversy when the first constitution of the indepen-

6. A. Z. Mamoukas, *Ta κατά την Αναγέννησιν της Ελλάδος*, Vol. 9 Peiraeus: Agathi Tuchi, 1841, pp. 128-129.

dence ere was debated in 1844.

The establishment of the monarchy in 1833 and the reactions to its efforts to form a centralized state caused a Romanticist-inspired cultural backlash against the predominantly Enlightenment-oriented political thought and discourse. The controversy over the state's control over the church and the increasingly vociferous voices of the traditionalists who wished to protect the church but also the role of religion was emblematic of this process. It involved other aspects as well, such as a philosophical assertion of Romanticist ideas<sup>7</sup>. This reaction paved the way for a set of ambiguous definitions of nationhood in the course of the constitutional assembly of 1843-1844. Those definitions were the outcome of the demands put forward by indigenous Greeks who felt that the outsider Greeks were monopolizing all the important positions in the state bureaucracy. The political leadership, largely made up of outsider Greeks who were nonetheless tolerated by indigenous Greeks tried to reach a compromise position: Greek citizenship was determined according to territory, not race or ethnicity. Outsiders had to fulfill certain residency conditions to qualify for citizenship, a necessary criterion for access to positions in the bureaucracy. But as a compromise, and in order not to alienate the outsiders, an ethnic/racial definition of the nation was juxtaposed to the political definition of citizenship. In the famous speech by Kolettis, Greece's destiny was described as the "Great Idea", a mission to liberate "the Greeks" of the East, a reference to a Greek nation that was clearly a cultural rather than a political construct. The "Great Idea" was both a call for national unification and an irredentist call to work towards a greater Greece since the "nation" was defined in cultural terms. In short, the Romanticist reaction to the Enlightenment, produced mixed results in terms of the definition of nationhood: citizenship was defined according to the political criteria introduced by the Enlightenment, the "nation" however, was defined culturally, in a manner that reflected the influence of Romanticist-oriented political thought.

The following decade, the 1850s, brought a major setback to the cultural definition of the nation and its implications: Russia's defeat in the Crimean War dealt a severe blow to the eastern-looking pro-Ortho-

7. Paschalis Kitromilides, "The Dialectic of Intolerance: Ideological Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* VI<sub>4</sub> (1979) 5-30.

dox and pro-Russian nationalist language as well as the military attempts to foment uprisings among the Greeks beyond Greece's borders. Militant irredentism and its supporters, including the monarch who had approved the Greek incursions into Ottoman territory found themselves politically embarrassed. The political crisis in Greece was far-reaching and it culminated in the collapse of the Bavarian monarchy, the installation of a new monarchical dynasty and the introduction of a more democratically-oriented constitution.

It was only after the end of those particular upheavals that the issue of nationhood returned to the center of political and ideological debates. There began another phase in the evolution of the ideas about Greek nationhood. It represented a new round in the struggle between the western-oriented and the eastern-oriented views of nationhood, a process that represented a decisive turn toward the type of political nationhood that predominated in the West. Bit by bit, the idea of the Greek nation was rationalized ... step by step, Kolettis' undefined "Greek East" was defined, specified, justified and necessarily reduced to parameters that were considered realistic and feasible for their time. This process involved both space, the physical boundaries of the nation as well as the criteria that were used to define who could be part of the Greek nation.

For the purposes of this article, I will be focusing primarily on the aspects of nationhood that refer to how the membership of the Greek nation was defined, touching only briefly on the parallel debates about how the nation as space and territory was defined. Chronologically, I will be focusing on the last third of the nineteenth century, from the 1860s through the 1890s. There are four particular turning points in that period that are illustrative of the overall trend the ideas about nationhood were following. The first is the introduction or rather the re-introduction of the term nationality (ΕΘΝΙΚΟΤΗΤΑ) in the vocabulary and the political agendas of Greek political thinkers and activists in the 1860s. Previously, the term had been used to denote citizenship. Now, the term began being used to denote the term nationality along the same lines it was being used in Europe. The second turning point came in the early 1870s and involved another semantic and practical shift in the ways the achievement of the "Great Idea" was conceived. The European concepts of progress and civilization were put forward as the major prerequisites for achieving Greece's nationalist goals. Militant irre-

dentism was replaced by projects designed to assist the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire retain their Greek identity through partaking of the progress and civilization that Greece promoted. For example, the jubilee of the Greek revolution in 1871 became an occasion when Greece's national mission was proclaimed to be the education of the Greeks beyond the state's borders. The implication was that their future liberation was conditional on their embrace of Greek civilization, it was not an automatic right they possessed because of their ethnic characteristics.

A third turning point in the evolution of Greek nationalism came with the emergence of ethnographic writing in the late 1870s, a consequence and a form of response to the newly crystallized attitude of the Great Powers that the Ottoman Christian subjects in the Balkans constituted nationalities with legitimate rights to nationhood and to statehood. This development threatened Greece's chances of realizing all of its claims in the region and Greek ethnographers set about strengthening Greece's case. The Powers' recognition of the population in the region as "nationalities" rather than Christian subjects undermined the position of the more religiously-oriented Greek nationalists who would express Greece's claims in terms of religious identity. The ethnographic writings further undermined the cause of those who saw identity in religious terms.

The potential harm that could be done to Greece's claims by discussing the existence of other nationalities was dealt with by the ethnographers not by insisting upon the older invocations of Greek religious or racial superiority, but with the help of the dominant European ethnographic model of evolutionism. Thus while the existence of a large number of races in the Balkans was readily acknowledged, their respective national claims were judged according to the stage they had reached on the conventional evolutionary continuum. This tactic was adopted because the Greeks, on the basis of their ancient past, could claim to have reached a higher evolutionary stage. Also, by invoking an ethnological language familiar to the Europeans, the Greeks could make their claims appear all the more credible. Ultimately, the emergence of ethnography represented a shift away from the traditionalist views and it affirmed the nationalist thinkers who endorsed an explicitly pro-western articulation of Greek national discourse.

The fourth turning point came in the 1880s and it entailed a shift in



the criteria of nationality away from objective, cultural standards and towards an acknowledgment that nationality was subjective. The shift was initially a tactical move that stemmed from the difficulties there were in establishing that populations in the Greek irredenta were culturally Greek. There were several regions north of the Greco-Ottoman boundary where the local populations could not be classified Greek by the language they spoke or by the Church they attended. Choice of school thus suddenly became a crucial criterion for the Greek side. The way those populations were defined as Greek, by recourse to their choice to send their children to Greek schools, thus demonstrate a Greek allegiance (φρόνημα) was yet another way in which European style criteria of nationality were being adopted.

### *The term "nationality"*

Let us now examine each of those turning points in greater detail, beginning with the first one that entailed the usage of the term nationality. The term was introduced into the language of European nationalism by Giuseppe Mazzini. As far as the Italian thinker was concerned, the existence of a collective nationality required that all those identified it should gain their own political autonomy. This was a third general definition of nationhood, following the civic and the cultural models. It was not based on political territory or ethnic culture, but the conscious political choice of ordinary people, whom the events of 1848 had rendered as legitimate political actors in the eyes of many political thinkers and activists. Ethnic identity, expressed through the allegiance of citizens to a state should, according to Mazzini, acquire political representation, all this in the name of liberalism and democracy<sup>8</sup>.

European leaders appeared to embrace this "principle of nationalities" in their dealings with the Ottoman Empire: The Paris treaty of 1856 that ended the Crimean War ushered in a new era for nationalism in the Balkans. The Porte made certain concessions to its Christian subjects based on an indirect acknowledgment of the principle of nationalities. By permitting the creation of consultative bodies and secular

8. Giuseppe Mazzini, "The Duties of Man" in Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay (eds), *The Nationalism Reader*, Atlantic Highlands NJ 1995, 87-97; Gaetano Salvemini, *Mazzini* I. M. Rawson transl., New York 1962.

schools, the Ottoman weakened the centuries-old monopoly of administrative rights enjoyed by the religious leaders of the non-Muslim subjects. The significance of those measures for the Balkan peoples was further magnified since they understood the Porte's initiative to be dictated by the Powers, and by Britain in particular. The more indications they could find suggesting that the principle of nationalities was acknowledged by public figures in Britain and France—for example, the essay on nationality published in London in 1862 by the future Lord Acton—the more Balkan nationalists could view the adoption of the principle of nationalities as a boon to their aims<sup>9</sup>.

One of the earliest examples of how the “principle of nationalities” becoming central to Greece's political vocabulary are the early reactions to the Cretan uprising of 1866-1868. Earlier events, such as incursions across the Greco-Turkish border had been described with references to the Greek race, editorial comments about the events in Crete connected them explicitly to the principle of nationalities. The Athens-based and formerly pro-Russian newspaper *Aion* saw the Cretan uprising as leading to a greater uprising; it wrote in May 1866 that “no force will be able to block the force of the Greeks when war comes to the East and the flag of nationalities (εθνικοτήτων) is raised”. A few weeks later the same newspaper protested the indifference of the Western European press to the Cretan struggle during the summer of 1866 stating “At a time when so much noise is being made about the principle of nationalities (της αρχής των εθνικοτήτων) and so many sacrifices are being made at its altar, does it not behoove the European press to consider the fate of nationalities that are at the gates of Western Europe, living under a foreign conquering tyranny...?”<sup>10</sup>. “O brave Cretans, freedom fighters”, concluded a short pamphlet on the Cretan question issued by the newspaper *Athena* in August 1866, “stand by your heroic decisions in unity and in faith, the God of freedom will inspire the hearts of the Christian forces of France, England, and Russia favorably for *you*, for *justice*, for *nationality*”.

In the aftermath of the Cretan events, the newspaper *Avge* criticized

9. Lord Acton, “Nationality” in Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay (eds), *The Nationalism Reader*, Atlantic Highlands NJ 1995, 108-118.

10. *Aion*, July 21, 1866.

the government for not having taken the opportunity, with the conclusion of the Cretan crisis, to inform the Great Powers that all that Greece demanded was “for the principles of nationalities to apply to them” and that “as long as a Greek breathes, Greece will not stop advocating and working for the cause of the liberation of the enslaved Greeks<sup>11</sup>. Around the same time another newspaper, the *Prometheus* described the nineteenth century as the “century of civilization and political freedom when peoples unite politically according to the dogma of the nationalities<sup>12</sup>.

The introduction of the term “nationality” was an important step away from the terminology of race and religion that had functioned as the nationalist currency in the earlier period. It was clearly a move toward aligning Greek nationalist thought with European nationalism as these quotes reveal. Perhaps the most effective intervention at that time was by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, who, in his magnum opus *Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous* used the term Hellenism in a way that referred directly and indirectly to the term nationality. In his more direct references, Paparrigopoulos drew parallels between the history of the Ancient Greeks and of the modern Italians where the principle of nationalities was so predominant. When he talks about the need for political unity, Paparrigopoulos compares Philip of Macedon to Italy’s Victor Emmanuel, and Ancient Macedonia to Piedmont. And he adds, wondering why the Ancient Macedonians had not always been viewed in a positive light by European historians: “the great majority of the Italian nation and all true friends of its progress and glory approved of Victor Emmanuel’s actions as the most appropriate in reviving politically that nationality (εθνότητα). Why, therefore, did the friends of the progress and glory of the Ancient Greek nation not similarly approve of the deeds of Philip and Alexander, since Macedonia had almost the same relationship to the rest of Greece as Piedmont has to the rest of Italy?”<sup>13</sup>.

### *Progress and Civilization*

The reactions to this trend occasioned the second turning point

11. *Avge*, Jan. 16, 1869.

12. *Prometheus*, Oct. 9, 1869.

13. Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, *Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous*, Reprint Athens: Fanos, 1957, Vol. 2, p. 464.

which entailed the welding of nationalist goals with the need to promote progress and civilization. The mere introduction of the terms nationality and Hellenism did not of themselves guarantee the predominance of a western-oriented definition of national identity. They certainly favored it, shifting the semantic ground away from the vocabulary of race, but there were those who persisted in defining nationality and Hellenism in cultural and religious ways. They simply took on the new terminology and sought to define it according to their own beliefs. Advocates of religion sought to emphasize the role of Orthodoxy as the moral consciousness of the nation and they claimed that religion had salvaged nationality (εθνισμός) during Ottoman rule. A professor at the Rezarios theological seminary, writing about national upbringing in *Athineon*, a new journal published by the literary society which went by the same name, describes family values and religion as the basic moral ingredients of Greek nationality<sup>14</sup>.

The political leadership and most of the intellectual world, keenly aware of the trouble that religious and eastern-oriented definitions of the nations had caused in the 1850s, threw their weight behind defining nationality in terms of language and civilization. This trend was stimulated by a collective disappointment over Greece's inability to offer any help to the rebels on the Ottoman-held Island of Crete who rose against the Ottomans in the name of union with Greece. Following the Cretan debacle many editorials noted the persistent backwardness of the political system despite the changes introduced 1862-1864. One newspaper wrote: "The whole of Greece suffers under desperate conditions that are abetted by the corruption of public servants who engage in mutual attrition and factionalism in the name of their political patrons"<sup>15</sup>. Even gloomier observations were made. In a speech that year on the occasion of the anniversary of the Greek Revolution the elderly and respected commentator Tertsetis asked his audience "Where have we sinned? Where did we go against rational logic so that instead of progress the glory of the Greek race delays, falls back?"<sup>16</sup>.

As in the case of the adoption of the term "Hellenism", the political

14. Aristides K. Spatharis, "Περί Εθνικής των Ελλήνων Αγωγής", *Athineon* 3 (1874) 354-368.

15. *Prometheus*, Aug. 13, 1869.

16. Yeorgios Tertsetis, *Εργα*, Vol. 2 repr. Athens 1969, p. 206.

elite was quick to endorse the campaign toward civilization, especially since it provided a convenient new direction that led away from the type of policies that had produced the defeats of the 1850s and the 1860s. In making a speech that an admiring journalist later described as “the crowning achievement of his political carrier” Koumoundouros told the *Vouli* that the Eastern Question would be resolved to the advantage of whichever “race” in the region was most closely associated with “civilization”. The Greeks would have to reform themselves in order to prove that they, of all “races” in the East were the bearers of civilization. He said: “Let us not forget that in the future the East will belong to civilization (πολιτισμός) and the race (φυλή) that prevails will be that which embraces civilization. And that race will be the Greek one because it is a true and genuine representative of civilization. Let us promote ourselves and support the promotion of this race ...”<sup>17</sup>. Although officially a member of the opposition at the time, Koumoundouros avoided the partisan wrangling other political leaders engaged in, and used the issue of civilization as a means toward lending his speech a statesmanlike authority. The government of prime minister Zaimis gladly endorsed that vision of an educational and civilizing mission.

The commemoration of the Greek revolution’s jubilee in 1871 was an occasion when the newfound concern with the “progress” of Hellenism and its inability to keep up with “Europe” was in evidence, and it gave the jubilee of the 1821 revolution a special meaning. Previously, the revolution’s legacy had been invoked in anti-government attacks, especially during the Othonian era. For their part, however, personal accounts of the revolution had either tried to justify the author’s actions of choices during that period or had touched upon general themes, concerns of an earlier era such as the revolution’s continuity with the past or the role of the Great Powers<sup>18</sup>. Around the time of the jubilee, the revolution was seen more and more as the launching pad of “progress” that had yet to be achieved. Greece lagged behind other European nations that were more “civilized and educated”, observes a speaker at the revolution’s commemoration in 1872, “enthusiasm is not enough, one

17. *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos*, 1869.

18. Tasos Gritsopoulos, “Ιστοριογραφία του Αγώνος”, *Mnemosyne* 3 (1970-1971) 33-253; Elli Skopetea, *Το «Πρότυπο Βασίλειο» και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα. Όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα (1830-1880)*, Athens 1988, pp. 207-211.

needs the means to implement it are non-existent ... who can deny that good government, a good economic situation, means of transport, industry and education are the strength of a land? Who can deny that all that can co-exist harmoniously with excellent military and naval organization? Let us turn our gaze toward the nations that are enjoying better fortunes. They are England, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, even Serbia". The speech continued, noting how Italy and Prussia had overtaken Greece and how well Serbia, "that semibarbarian nation", was doing<sup>19</sup>.

### *The growth of Ethnography*

Another important turning point in the incorporation of the idea of nationality among Greek intellectuals and politicians came in the late 1870s, a time when the Great Powers indicated clearly their belief that the so-called dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire was imminent. They also shifted their views on the Empire's Balkan subjects and ceased to describe them as the Sultan's Christian or Orthodox subjects and instead began referring to them in ways that showed that they were thinking of them as nationalities deserving their own nation-states. They talked of "Bulgaria" for example, or the "Bulgarians" of "Montenegro" and the "Montenegrins", were assessing the extent to which the Balkan peoples could be granted independence or autonomy. In the case of territories that concerned Greece, the European diplomats talked of Greece being awarded Epirus and Thessaly, areas they acknowledged had a preponderantly Greek population.

This new approach by the Powers, their tacit recognition of the existence of nationalities in the Balkan domains of the Ottoman Empire and their tentative consideration of forcing the Porte to make territorial concessions gave rise to new debates in Greece not only about the definitions of the Greek nation in terms of space and identity but also the first systematic acknowledgement of the existence of other nationalities in the Ottoman Balkans. The result was the publication of a considerable number of geographical and ethnographic studies.

19. Charilaos D. Meletopoulos, *Μελέτη επί της Γενεάς του 1821 και επί των μετ' αυτήν Γενεών*, Athens: Efimeris ton Sizitiseon, 1872, pp. 19-24.

In those ethnographic writings, the focus on different nationalities among the Balkan peoples further undermined the cause of those who saw identity in religious terms. Interestingly, the potential harm that could be done to Greece's claims by discussing the existence of other nationalities was dealt with not with the older invocations of Greek religious or racial superiority, but with the help of the dominant European ethnographic model of evolutionism. Thus while the existence of a large number of races in the Balkans was readily acknowledged, their respective national claims were judged according to the stage they had reached on the conventional evolutionary continuum: savagery, barbarity and civilization. Groups described as having only "recently" emerged from the second stage were considered unsuited to cross the threshold of nationality. Thus their territorial claims in the Balkans were considered null and void. One study for example listed as many as twelve "nations and races" in the region: the Romanians, the Serbs, the Bulgars, the Albanians (sub-divided into Ghegs and Tosks), the Helleno-Vlachs, the Hellenes (Greeks), the Turks, the Jews, the Gypsies, the Armenians, the Tatars and the Circassians. In discussing the "nationalistic potential" of those groups the author considered "descent" as being more important than religion and language, the criteria that were usually applied in such cases. Religious affiliation, the author believed, was generally too broad a designation to enable one to distinguish among all of those twelve groups. The criterion of language was misleading because "reasons having to do with political adventures obliged certain populations to use a foreign and imported idiom that was only partially or even entirely absent in the lands they inhabited". Descent, indeed national descent (εθνική καταγωγή) was what mattered and this could be observed only by studying the customs, traditions, religion (sic) and the "sympathies" (συμπάθειαι) of the local populations<sup>20</sup>.

Other authors, claiming that the Greeks and the Albanians shared a common descent stressed language and mostly ignored religion as a salient factor. A pamphlet on the topic of "The Albanians and their future within Hellenism" opened by describing the Albanians, both Christians and Muslims, as being of "pure Greek descent" because their ancestors

20. Ηρακλής Λαζαρίδης, «Εισαγωγή» *Εδουάρδου Στάνφορντ Εθνογραφικός Χάρτης*, Athens: Efimeris ton Sizitiseon, 1877, pp. 1-2.

were the Ancient Pelasgians who had inhabited the lower part of the Balkan peninsula before the arrival of the tribes that eventually evolved into the Ancient Greeks and with whom the Pelasgians purportedly fused. Thus the Albanians and the Greeks were considered as “related peoples” who ought to spurn the attempts made to divide them and offer each other a “brotherly hand” as had been the case during the Greek revolution and again in 1847. There had been many instances of “inter-racial” or civil war [επολεμήσαμεν εμφύλιον πολλάκις] but those had resulted in negative outcomes in the long run for both Albanians and Greeks<sup>21</sup>. The text cited a protocol of the Berlin Conference the cession of a part of Epirus as an act that united the Pelasgians with the Greeks. It assured the Albanians of the good intentions of the Greeks. The pure Greek “would respect the customs and mores and the dialect of the Muslim or Christian Albanian, as he respects the customs of the Israelite or the Turk in Greece”. Greek laws, moreover, provided political and civil rights irrespective of race or religion.

The same text drew parallels between Italy’s unification and the unification of Epirus with Greece by stating that King George should behave like Italy’s king Victor Emmanuel if he wanted justly to be called the king of all Greeks. Finally, Greece’s political and social elite was called upon to demonstrate that “education is the vehicle of the Greeks in their current adventures, and through education the Greeks would join in fraternal bonds [αδελφοποιούμενος] with all nations, especially with the Muslim Albanians, who we have always truly loved”<sup>22</sup>.

The Bulgars were treated more ambiguously at the time, something that is not surprising given the animosity toward them after they gained ecclesiastical autonomy. Although they were generally recognized as a nationality, evolutionist ideas were used against them. Nevertheless, the prospect of a Greco-Bulgar collaboration was also entertained if they would understand that the dominance of Panslavism in the region would not be in their interests. Instead, they should avail themselves of the advantages offered by Greek education: “by the spread of Greek letters, though the transmission of Greek upbringing and Greek beliefs to our

21. Th. A. Paschidis, *Οι Ανατολικοί Λαοί ως προς τον Ελληνισμόν*, Athens: Τυπογραfeion Ellinikis Anexartias, 1880, pp. 5-7.

22. Ibid, pp. 7-8, 15.



correligionist Bulgars, ... we will forge unbreakable bonds between the two peoples and thus, the Bulgars, being established as a nation beyond the Hæmus mountains ... will become an outpost defending Hellenism from Panslavism”, wrote the author of the first Greek language history of the Bulgars, published in 1877<sup>23</sup>.

The albeit ambivalent recognition accorded to the Bulgarians brought here too a re-conceptualization of definitions of Greekness. The older emphasis on religion and then on language was superseded by the new criterion of “descent” or origins. Even though the Bulgarian lands were described as being north of the Hæmus (Balkan) mountain range, recognizing the Bulgars as a separate entity entailed an acknowledgment of their considerable numbers south of those mountains and in Macedonia especially. The recognition of a Bulgar national entity gave a new significance to the existence of Bulgarian language speakers in areas such as Macedonia that the Greeks considered as culturally Greek. If there was indeed a Bulgarian nation, might not the presence of Bulgarian speakers signify the land was Bulgarian? The answer that the Greek history of the Bulgarians provided was that nationality should not be judged according to religion or language, but by descent, something that was determined by the “identity of customs and feelings” (καταγωγής και της ταυτότητας των ηθών και αισθημάτων)<sup>24</sup>.

### *Nationality through Allegiance*

The launching of the Greek campaign to promote Greek civilization had more or less assumed the prevalence if not the predominance of Greek identity in the irredenta. By the early 1880s, however, there were obviously great differences among areas in the ways local populations reacted to the establishment of Greek schools. This was especially so in Macedonia. The big differences in the numbers of pupils the Greek schools were attracting in Macedonia was debated extensively among all those responsible in Athens and especially the *Σύλλογος προς Διάδοσιν των Ελληνικών Γραμμάτων*, an organization established by the Mini-

23. N. I. Kokkonis, *Ιστορία των Βουλγάρων*, Athens: Tupografeion Filadelfeos, 1877, p. vi.

24. Ibid, pp. vii-viii.

stry and charged with coordinating the effort to establish a network of Greek schools in the irredenta, the territories Greece wished to incorporate within its borders. The organization's president, Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos was clear in his correspondence with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Athens that there was no point in establishing schools in the northern zone of Macedonia because there were virtually no Greek speakers living there and the local populations preferred to attend Bulgarian language schools. Following Paparrigopoulos' lead, the *Sylogos* and several Consuls had adopted the view that Macedonia was divided into three zones, north, middle and south. The south was considered to be inhabited overwhelmingly by Greek speakers, the middle zone inhabited by a mixture of Greek, Bulgarian and Albanian speakers, the northern zone by Bulgarian and Albanian speakers. This general view was shared by many of those involved in the debate. They disagreed over the precise delineation of each zone but they did agree that the northern zone was in Paparrigopoulos' words, undeniably alien to Hellenism [*αναμφισβήτως αλλότρια του Ελληνισμού*]<sup>25</sup>.

The same debate that generated the theory of the three zones, which relied so much on the need to rationalize Greece's territorial claims, also led to the recognition that national identity in the irredenta was determined subjectively. In delineating the three Macedonian zones Paparrigopoulos, after studying the responsiveness of local populations to the Greek schools concluded that part of the population in the lower and middle Macedonia zones, though not Greek-speaking, did send their children to Greek schools while other non-Greek speakers chose other schools. It could be said of those sending their children to Greek schools that they were pro-Greek *Έλληνες το φρόνημα* or Greeks by allegiance<sup>26</sup>.

The purpose of this is obvious. To the extent that the numbers attending the schools were thus greater than the numbers of Greek speakers, by citing numbers of school attendees, Greek claims on particular regions could be strengthened. Paparrigopoulos and others encouraged such a tactic and argued that educational efforts should be redoubled

25. Sophia Vouri, *Εκπαίδευση και Εθνικισμός στα Βαλκάνια. Η περίπτωση της Βορειοδυτικής Μακεδονίας 1870-1904*, Athens 1994, Chapter 5.

26. Evangelos Kofos, "Dilemmas and Orientations of Greek Policy in Macedonia 1878-1886", *Balkan Studies* 21 (1980) 45-55.

where there was evidence of Greek allegiance and not wasted in the more northern Macedonia zone where there was none of areas where former Greek speakers had evidently decided to adopt Bulgarian instead.

In conceptual terms, the shift from “language” as the major factor defining identity over to defining identity through “allegiance” represented nothing less than a major shift away from defining identity objectively over to defining it subjectively. The will, motivations and choice of the population of Ottoman Macedonia were clearly acknowledged as defining factors in their identity. Indeed, the importance the rival nationalist movements in Macedonia attached to schooling and the type of (national) school person chose for their children would have certainly appealed to the French thinker Ernest Renan who described nationality as a daily plebiscite in 1882. When Greek nationalists described Bulgarian-speakers as “Greeks” as long as they sent their children to Greek schools (and attended churches that used Greek in their liturgy) they were endorsing the view that nationalist identity was subjective. In that sense, the evolution of nationalist identity was subjective. In that sense, the evolution of nationalist thought was faithful to the Mazzinian principles of nationalism that Greek nationalism had turned toward in the late 1860s when it launched the campaign to spread Hellenic civilization in the irredenta. Mazzini was also an early advocate of the idea that national identity was, ideally, the product of a subjective, voluntarist action by individuals.

\*\*\*

Studies focusing on the phenomenon of modernity in 19th century Europe have questioned the extent to which it has prevailed, politically and intellectually in regions where the national question remained unresolved. The central elements of modernity, rationalization of thought, development of economy and society fused in a central quest for progress in which the future predominates over the past are at first glance, have been considered as present yet submerged under the movement toward national liberation, especially in the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires<sup>27</sup>. The reasons cited for the overshadowing of modernity by the significance attached to the national question are the “irrational” character of nationalism, especially in the early 19th century Roman-

27. Alain Touraine, *Critique of Modernity*, Cambridge 1995, p. 69.

ticist era, the displacement of socio-economic goals by the quest for the nation or the greater nation and, finally, the appeal to the collective and often organic concept of the nation that tends to diminish the role of the individual as a historical subject.

The study of 19th century Greek nationalism has reproduced many of these positions. Social science-influenced approaches especially have tended to see the pursuit of irredentism either as a policy that has undermined programs of domestic political and economic reform or as a policy that has undermined the development of democracy and civil society by a policy manipulated by the state to strengthen its hegemony by creating an artificial unity and consensus around the irredentist goal. Several recent historically and text-based approaches have tended to conform to a similar problematic, while diplomatic histories have not contributed to any critical penetration of the irredentist concept. By focusing on the underlying principles of the various blue-prints of the nation that were produced in nineteenth century Greece, and by using the distinction between cultural and civic nationalism we have here, offered an alternative perspective. This article, albeit in its necessary broad sweep has identified four turning points that unfolded within an overarching trend towards an explicit or implicit movement closer to Western Europe, more accurately perhaps the constructed western Europe that represented a prototype of progress and rationalization for most Greek nationalist thinkers. The adoption of the term nationality, the identification of the national goals with the pursuit of progress and civilization, the implications of the emergence of ethnographic writing and, finally, the criterion of subjective allegiance all bore the stamp of a nationalist movement consciously redefining itself in European terms. Thus, irredentism accelerated rather than delayed the country's movement toward modernity.