

# Abstracts

N. G. MOUTSOPOULOS

## COMMENTS ON THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE NABATAEAN PANTHEON

On the steep sides of the narrow ravine of El-Siq which leads from the vast Jordanian desert into the heart of the secret Nabataean city of Petra, one can see, at intervals, several *conchae* that have been hewed out of the rock, some of which are surrounded by arches and others by temple-like decorations. Inside these *conchae*, there are various rectangular parallelepipeds, some of them single, others double, triple or even multiple, but not always equivalent or of the same height. However, these *conchae* often contain single hemispheric or omphaloid geometric figures (figures similar to the delphic omphaluses, that is paraboloids of revolution). These are representations of deities of the Nabataean Pantheon.

By studying extracts from the Bible we can deduce that, in very ancient times, the stone-worshipping Nabataean Arabs represented the deities of the semitic pantheon in the form of unshaped, natural slabs of rock (menhirs, bethels), and during the historic times in the form of prisms (pyramids, rectangular parallelepipeds, cubes, hemispheres or paraboloids of revolution). Dhu-Shara was the supreme deity of the Nabataeans and Alilat his female counterpart, and these appellations have been preserved in the ancient Greek literature (Herodotus, Strabo, Hesychios and others). Herodotus and Strabo have recorded specific information on the Nabataean religion.

This text contains all the related passages from the work of Pausanias, who, with his well-known curiosity to know and record all kinds of legends and popular beliefs and, also, with the perceptiveness that characterized him, has recorded all the information he gathered during his visits to the oldest temples of the Greek world, so that we can see that the worship of the statues of the Greek Pantheon replaced a very ancient (in some cases pre-hellenic) general stone worship.

During that ancient period, amorphous or crudely worked stones represented most of the primeval deities which were, later, identified with the Olympian gods (Cybele, Aphrodite, Zeus) and with other secondary but

equally important ancient deities of fertility, such as Eros, in the form of phalluses or hermaic columns.

The Ancient Greeks believed that some rocks were the dwellings of certain gods and, in the end, the rocks were identified with these deities. The religious beliefs of the simitic peoples evolved in a somewhat similar way.

The Bible contains many references to stone worship (op. cit. p. 26 ff.) where the significance of the erection of a spab of stone is explained (men-hir, avadir, bethel, where the interpretation of the event is inherent in the appellation).

As a matter of fact the word "bethel" derives from the hebrew word bêt-elaha, which means "house of God". But the Byzantine word for "brick" (tubulon, besalon) also derives from the same root and has the same meaning.

The name of the Nabataean capital, too, which can be found in many regions of greater Macedonia, where it designates "cols", "passes" and "passages" is probably pre-hellenic; and it is particularly interesting that it appears in such a critical part of the nabataean world as its capital Petra. I believe that Petra had been the original name of the famous and very narrow pass which led to the secret capital of the Nabataean kingdom, which, for many centuries, had controlled the caravan routes, the land routes by which the Asian countries communicated with the West: in other words the pass of El-Siq.

#### IOANNIS A. PAPADRIANOS

##### THE SUPPORTERS OF RIGAS VELESTINLIS IN THE SERBIAN TOWN OF ZEMUN

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the impact that Rigas Velestinlis' revolutionary plans had on the Greeks living at the town of Zemun located on the border between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire. The author of the study claims that the supporters of Rigas represented a wide band of the social spectrum, for they were not only teachers and scholars, but also capable merchants who enjoyed considerable financial prominence and an enviable social position,

## JAMES J. FARSOLAS

HISTORICAL REALITY AND LEGEND IN ALEXANDER PUSHKIN'S SHORT STORY *KIRDJALI* — AN EPISODE FROM THE GREEK INSURRECTION OF 1821 IN THE ROMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES

The purpose of this study is to analyze, discuss, and delineate the historical facts from the legendary and fictional elements in Pushkin's short story *Kirdjali*. From the time of its publication in 1834, the story produced a spirited debate among scholars, literary critics, and historians, which continued down to the 20th century. The controversy centered on the question whether the story is an historical or a fictional account, and whether the prototype of Pushkin's hero, Kirdjali, was a living historical person or merely a legendary character of a folk brigand.

The majority of the Pushkinian scholars agree that *Kirdjali* is a short narrative dealing with an episode from the Greek or Hetairist insurrection in the Romanian Principalities in 1821. But they disagree on the question whether Kirdjali was an historical person or simply a fictional character. One group of critics considers Pushkin's hero an inventive, fictitious, anecdotal, and romantic character. The second group argues that Kirdjali was a authentic historical person; that he fought in the ranks of Ypsilanti's army in the Romanian Principalities in the summer of 1821; and that the account of the story is based on authentic historical sources.

Both groups of scholars and critics raised several important points in their works in defense of their arguments. This study attempts to separate those elements which constitute the anecdotal part of the story from those facts which are based on historical reality.

The author concludes that Pushkin's story is a combination of fictional and historical narrative. It contains reliable aspects from the Ypsilanti's movement in the Principalities. Some of Kirdjali's actions are often fictionalized and his fame as a brigand is achieved through the aura of a folk hero based on popular tales and legends which circulated in Bessarabia and Moldavia at the beginning of the 19th century. At the same time, Pushkin ascribes to Kirdjali the qualities of a rebel who struggles against social injustice. He is a daring and humble individual; an avenger on the Turkish masters, punishing the powerful, condemning the predatory for suppressing and exploiting the poor and downtrodden, and glorifying freedom.

## NINA BAKISIAN

## AN UNREALIZED REALITY: SOME VIEWS ON DANUBIAN FEDERATION

During the nineteenth century, most of East Central Europe lay within the realm of the Habsburg empire. At the same time, nationalism was on the ascendance throughout the continent. The national groups sought recognition within the empire and when that became unavailable they pursued other means. Politicians and intellectuals proposed the organization of the Danubian basin into a cohesive federation. They were by no means uniform in their approach and on the contrary had wide-ranging views and loyalties. Their common goal was the formation of a union that would give their co-nationals national and civil rights.

## ZACHARIAS N. TSIRPANLIS

THE MORALE OF THE GREEK AND THE ITALIAN SOLDIER  
IN THE 1940-41 WAR

To what did the Greek soldier owe his victory on the mountains of Epirus in 1940-41? The writer shows that the Greek army's success was not due to the Italians' cowardice or lack of training. The invaders' morale was high; they fought heroically and with self-sacrifice, at least during the first, most decisive, days of the war. But the lower-ranking Greek officers, NCOs and troops put up a resistance which surpassed all rational bounds, freely making reckless and bloody sacrifices beyond measure.

The General Staff and the political leaders in Athens were no less astonished than the Italians. From their first defeats until the end of the Greek-Italian conflict, the latter consistently overestimated their adversary's abilities and were overwhelmed by a profound sense of awe, fatalism, weakness, and collective resignation.

The writer points out that both sides suffered virtually the same loss of human life; which shows that the Greeks defeated a foe who also knew how to fight, to lay down his life for his ideals, to retreat, certainly, but also to defy death.

The appendix contains official Italian documents published for the first time.

*EVANTHIS HATZIVASSILIOU*

## GREECE AND BULGARIA. 1949-1964: THE UNSPOKEN ASSUMPTIONS

The history of Greek-Bulgarian relations in the first post-war period is very complicated. It is in a combination of factors that one should seek to trace the perceptions of statesmen in Athens and in Sofia. Apart from differences of their political economic and social systems, additional factors divided the two countries. Since 1870, there was an uninterrupted legacy of conflict between Greece and Bulgaria. This made the Greeks reluctant to believe that the Bulgarians would abandon their traditional policy of pursuing territorial revision. The break up of the Korean war in 1950 seemed to confirm these fears. Greek armed forces, furthermore, were far weaker than the Bulgarian ones, something which did not allow the Greek governments to take a confident attitude towards Sofia. Finally, the Cyprus question permitted the Soviet bloc (of which the major representative in the Balkans was Bulgaria) to exert all kinds of pressure to Athens. It was only after the 1962 Cuban missile crisis that both Greeks and Bulgarians felt confident to make a fresh start. In 1964, they proceeded to a full normalisation of relations, which became one of the most precious stabilising elements in the region.

*KYRIAKOS D. KENTROTIS*PARTIES AND TRADE UNIONS IN BULGARIA AFTER ZIVKOV'S FALL  
(1989-1991)

The years 1989-1991 constitute a period of proliferation and intense activity for scores of parties, movements and citizens' initiatives in Bulgaria. The two general elections (June 1990 and October 1991) were indeed characterized by utter fragmentation of the political spectrum into a vast variety of parties and splinter groups, most of which, however, failed to secure a place in parliament.

The principle political formation of the Right, the UDF, was split into three groups, while its arch-rival, the BSP (former communist), maintained a fair degree of support. In the end of 1991 Bulgaria still lacked a political Centre, as the two middle-of-the-road Agrarian parties did not return a single

deputy after the October 1991 elections. Of particular significance is the case of the party of the Turkish minority, which seems to play the role of an arbiter in Bulgarian politics.

The trade unions strove to rid themselves of the legacy of the communist past, taking an active part in this period of transition to pluralist society and parliamentary democracy in Bulgaria.