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GREEK DIASPORA AND MIGRATION SINCE 1700
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List of Contributors

Venetia Apostolidou is Associate Professor of Modern Greek Literature and Literary Education in the Education Department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She has published books and articles on the history of Modern Greek literary criticism, on post-war fiction and on literature in education. Her latest book is *Literature and History in Post-war Leftist Criticism. The Intervention of Dimitris Chatzis* (in Greek), Athens, 2003.

Maria Christina Chatziioannou is Research Director in the Institute for Neohellenic Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation and co-ordinator of the section for Social and Economic History (seventeenth to twentieth centuries). She has taught graduate and postgraduate courses at the Universities of Crete and Athens. She has published on several issues of modern social and economic history: merchant enterprises and entrepreneurs, business culture and ethics, history of Greek settlements and Italian historiography. Her current research is a multidisciplinary and comparative study of merchant networks and business enterprises in the Eastern Mediterranean and Great Britain.

Dimitris Christopoulos is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and History at the Panteion University of Athens. A founder member of the Minority Groups Research Centre (KEMO) set up in 1996 (www.kemo.gr), he has been President of the Hellenic League for Human Rights (www.hlhr.gr) since 2003. He has edited several collective volumes and he is the author of two books and numerous publications in Greek, English and French in the field of legal and political theory focusing on issues related to human rights, minorities, migrants and citizenship.

Anastasia Christou is currently Research Fellow for the AHRC-funded project ‘Cultural Geographies of Counter-Diasporic Migration: The Second Generation Returns “Home”’ under the Diasporas, Migration and Identities Programme affiliated with the Sussex Centre for Migration Research of the University of Sussex, UK (2007–2009). She was previously Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Sussex (2005, 2006) and Visiting Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Humanities, Department of History, International and Social Studies at the University of Aalborg and Postdoctoral Researcher at the Academy for Migration Studies in Denmark (2004).

Thomas W. Gallant holds the Nicholas Family Chair of Modern Greek History at the University of California, San Diego. His most recently published books are *The

Stathis Gauntlett retired from the Chair of Hellenic Studies at La Trobe University in 2006 after teaching Modern Greek at Australian universities for 33 years. He continues to research into Greek oral traditions, popular culture and literature. His recent publications include articles on rebetika and annotated translations of the Erotokritos and Lefkios Zafiriou’s novella The Gangsters. He was elected to the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 2007.

Anthony Gorman is Lecturer in Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of Edinburgh and has taught at universities in Australia, Egypt and the University of London (SOAS). He is the author of Historians, State and Politics in Twentieth Century Egypt: Contesting the Nation (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003) as well as a number of articles on aspects of radical secular politics in Egypt. He is currently working on a more detailed study of anarchism in the Middle East and a history of Middle Eastern prisons.


Lena Hoff is currently revising her dissertation on the cultural politics of Nicolas Calas for publication at the same time as translating his collected poems into English. Her research has centred on Calas since 2000 when she organised the Calas Archives at the Danish Institute in Athens and her work has been published in journals and books in Scandinavia, Greece and England.

Gerasimus Katsan is Assistant Professor of Modern Greek and Coordinator of the Modern Greek Program in the Department of European Languages and Literatures, Queens College, CUNY. He holds degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies and Modern Greek from Ohio State University, and a degree in English from the University of Utah. His research interests include contemporary fiction, postmodernism and comparative approaches to literature.

Alexander Kazamias is Senior Lecturer in Politics at Coventry University. He has written several articles and contributed chapters to a number of books
on Greek politics and foreign policy, Euro-Mediterranean relations and the history of Egypt’s Greek community. From 1994 until 2008 he was a regular contributor to the Greek periodical *Anti*.

**Alexander Kitroeff** is Associate Professor of History at Haverford College and he has also taught at Queens College, Princeton University, Temple University and New York University. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*. His publications include *The Greeks in Egypt, 1919–1937* (London, 1989); *Griegos en América, 1492–1992* (Madrid, 1992); *Wrestling with the Ancients: Modern Greek Identity and the Olympics* (New York, 2004), numerous chapters in books and scholarly articles on the history of the Greek diaspora, especially the Greeks in the United States.

**Martha Klironomos**, Professor of English and Modern Greek, has been the Director of the Center for Modern Greek Studies and held the Nikos Kazantzakis Chair at San Francisco State University since 1996. A specialist in Greek, British and American Modernism, her current research interests include the oeuvre of Greek poet George Seferis, early twentieth-century British travellers to Greece and contemporary Greek American writing.

**Iakovos D. Michailidis** is Assistant Professor in Contemporary and Modern History at the Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. His interests focus on population movements, the status of minorities and interventions by the World Powers in south-eastern Europe. Among his recent publications are *The War of Statistics: Slav-speaking Emigrants and Refugees from Greece (1912–1930)* and *Greek–Yugoslav Relations, 1944–1949* (in two volumes).

**Dimitris Papanikolaou** is University Lecturer in Modern Greek Studies and Fellow of St Cross College, University of Oxford. He has published the monograph *Singing Poets: Literature and Popular Music in France and Greece* (Legenda, 2007) and a series of articles on Modern Greek literature and culture. He is currently working on a study of the writings of C.P. Cavafy informed by Queer Theory and the History of Sexuality.

**Eleni Papargyriou** received a Master of Studies and D.Phil from the University of Oxford, after which she held tutoring appointments in Oxford and King’s College London. In 2007–2008 she was Hannah Seeger Davis Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Princeton, working on the photography of George Seferis. Her publications include articles on intertextuality and reading, literary games, poetry, photography and marginality.

**Dimitris Tziovas** is Professor of Modern Greek Studies and General Editor of a translation series of Modern Greek literature published by the Centre for Byzantine,
Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Birmingham. His books include: *The Other Self: Selfhood and Society in Modern Greek Fiction* (Lexington, 2003; translated into Greek 2007) and the edited volume *Greece and the Balkans: Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment* (Ashgate, 2003).

**Lina Venturas** is Associate Professor of Migration and Diaspora Studies at the University of the Peloponnese. She is the author of several articles and two books on migration: *Migration and Nation: Transformations of Collectivities and Social Positions* (Athens 1994) and *Greek Migrants in Belgium* (Athens 1999) (both in Greek). She has co-edited a special issue on ‘Contemporary Approaches to the Migration Phenomenon’ of *Synchrona Themata* (92, 2006, in Greek).

**Elpida Vogli** is lecturer in Modern Greek History in the Department of History and Ethnology at the Democritus University of Thrace. Her research interests involve issues of citizenship, national and gender identities, and social and political rights. She is also interested in political and social history with an emphasis on the history of the institution of the family.
Acknowledgements

The essays in this volume are a selection of edited papers originally presented at a conference held at the University of Birmingham in June 2007. I would like to thank all the speakers and other participants at the conference for making it such an enjoyable and intellectually rewarding event. I am also grateful for the generous financial support which the conference received from the British Academy, J.F. Costopoulos Foundation, John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, The Michael Marks Charitable Trust and the Ministry of Education & Culture of the Republic of Cyprus. Special thanks are also due to Valerie Nunn for proofreading.
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Introduction

Dimitris Tziovas

It could be argued that diaspora, exile and immigration represent three successive phases in Modern Greek history and that they could serve as useful vantage points from which to analyse changes in Greek society, politics and culture over the last three centuries. Looking at a wide range of case studies, this volume charts the role of territorial displacements as social and cultural agents from the eighteenth century to the present day and examines their impact on communities, politics, institutional attitudes and culture.

Along with the Jewish and the Armenian, the Greek diaspora has been considered one of the paradigmatic historical diasporas. Though some trace the origins of the Greek diaspora to ancient Greek colonies, it should be seen as a more modern phenomenon and its history can be divided into three broad phases. The first coincides with the period of Ottoman rule (mid-fifteenth century to the emergence of the Greek state in 1830); the second extends from the mid-nineteenth century until the beginning of World War II; and the third covers the period from the 1940s to the 1970s. In the second period the Peloponnese tended to be the main supplier of the migratory flow, though very few women emigrated (on average 2.5–5 per cent of the overall total of emigrants between 1869–1925). In the third period northern Greece produced the bulk of the migrants and the proportion of women among them increased dramatically (Hassiotis 2004: 96–8; Yannoulopoulos 1985).

After the bloody civil war of 1946–9 the long-standing exodus of Greeks to the USA, Australia and Germany was swelled by a large number of political exiles who fled to Eastern Europe. In the 1990s, however, with the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Balkans, Greece experienced an influx of economic migrants from neighbouring countries, including Pontic Greeks from the diaspora communities in the former USSR. The arrival of these migrants and the increasing recognition of the rights of minorities has meant Greece has rapidly developed into a more multicultural, open and diverse society. Moreover, since the restoration of democracy in 1974, expatriate lobbies, particularly in the USA, have been used to support or promote Greek foreign policy, a strategy which received new impetus after 1989 with the ‘Macedonian issue’ and the emerging economic or cultural aspirations of Greece in the Balkans and in parts of the former USSR.

1 See the special issue ‘The Odyssey of the Pontic Greeks’, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 4 (4) 1991.
These developments point to deep social, economic and cultural changes and invite us to take a more comprehensive look at migratory trends, reconfigurations of identities and transnational networks from a fresh perspective. By studying migratory trends over the years the aim is to map out the transformation of Greece from a largely homogenous society with a high proportion of emigrants, refugees, political exiles and Gastarbeiter to a more diverse society inundated by immigrants after the end of the Cold War. This constitutes the distinctiveness of this volume and makes it the first of its kind in bringing together diaspora, exile and immigration and focusing on developments both inside and outside Greece.

In the last 30 years a number of books have been published on the Greek diaspora, indicating that the subject constitutes a distinct and flourishing area of academic interest. These books examine the history and development of Greek communities in different parts of the world (e.g. Hassiotis 1993, Clogg 1999, Hassiotis et al. 2006), or in specific areas, e.g. Australia (Tamis 2005), the USA (Moskos 1989, Papaoannou 1985), Canada (Chimbos 1980), Argentina (Damilakou 2004), Russia (Mazis 2004, Kardasis 1998 and 2001, Koromila 1991), Italy (Katsiardi-Hering 1986), Belgium (Venturas 1999), and Africa (Kitroeff 1989, Markakis 1998). This volume continues to some extent the historical approach of these earlier studies by exploring hitherto unexplored aspects of the history of the diaspora communities (see Chapters 2, 3 and 4), but it aspires to adopt a broader perspective by examining developments from the eighteenth century to the present day, covering four continents (Europe, USA, Africa and Australia) and looking at political exiles and recent migrants to Greece.

With the exception of the Greek Americans, the cultural impact of diaspora, exile and migration has not been fully explored as yet and this volume pays particular attention to the way in which migrants are represented in fiction, travel writing, poetry, film and music. It also deals with the poetics of repatriation and the complexities of homecoming and not only with departures, settlement and challenges abroad. Moreover, the examination of the attitudes of the Greek state towards expatriate Greeks and migrants since the nineteenth century, particularly regarding issues of naturalisation and nationality adds a new perspective and will contribute to a better understanding of the way these people have been treated when returning to or arriving in Greece.

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2 The study of Greek Americans has received new impetus from the following books: Laliotou 2004, Orfanos 2002, Moskos and Georgakas 1991.

3 Three other edited volumes should be mentioned here: the general-interest Proceedings of the First International Congress on the Hellenic Diaspora (Fossey 1991) and two more specialised works, one examining entrepreneurial networks (Baghdiantz McCabe et al. 2005) and the other the role of the Greek diaspora in influencing the foreign policy of certain countries (e.g. USA, Australia, Canada) (Constas and Platias 1993).

4 The volumes edited by Spanaki (2001) and Tsokalidou and Paparousi (2005) and the books by Niki Eideneier (2006) and Kalogeras (2007) are the most recent attempts to explore the relationship of literature and the Greek diaspora.
The growth of interest in diaspora Greeks since the 1970s has been seen as representing a shift of emphasis, partly influenced by Marxist historiography, from the history of the Greek state to the history of the Greek communities abroad before the Greek War of Independence. As a result attention was focused on the study of the Greek Enlightenment and the expatriate intellectual elites, the relationship between centre and periphery, the role of commerce and the emergence of a middle class outside the mainland (Katsiardi-Hering 2004). This volume aspires to redress this emphasis by examining the attitudes of the Greek state towards diaspora Greeks and immigrants (see Chapters 7, 8 and 9).

Two texts could be seen as setting rough chronological parameters for the present volume, reflecting its theme and demonstrating how things have changed over the years. The first one is Γράμματα από το Άμστερνταμ [Letters from Amsterdam] by Stamatis Petrou, written between October 1772 and October 1774 (Petrou 2005). The book consists of 14 letters sent by Petrou to his employer in Smyrna and concern the westernisation of Adamantios Korais (1748–1833) who was working in Amsterdam at that time for the same company. The letters chart the clash between modernisation and traditionalism, Orthodoxy and secularism, as Korais abandons his traditional clothes, religious fasting and so on and gives in to western pleasures, being transformed from an oriental merchant into a western intellectual. The letters offer us an insight into the emergence of Greek communities in Western Europe and the intellectual formation and changing lifestyles of leading diaspora figures such as Korais.

The second book, Μικρό Ημερολόγιο Συνόρων [A Brief Diary of Borders] by Gazmend Kapllani, an Albanian journalist living in Greece, was published in Greek in 2006. The narrative develops on two alternating levels. The first, printed in italics, recalls his life in Albania and his first days in Greece as a migrant; the second level is a series of reflections on being a migrant. In his book he points out:

The migrant is surrounded by borders. The conventional borders which separate the countries are for him simply a large, visible borderline. There are, however, a thousand other invisible borders which wait for him every moment, every day, almost in his every move, desire and ambition. (Kapllani 2006: 96)

Migration for Kapllani is a physical as well as a mental experience. It is a struggle with real and imaginary borders. For him the migrant is like a tree; its branches

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5 It should be noted that the Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora started its publication in 1974.

6 His lecture ‘Mémoire sur l’état présent de la civilisation dans la Grèce’, published in 1803 in Paris and available in English translation (Kedourie 1970: 153–88), has been considered as ‘a stunningly modern analysis of the sociological bases for Greek nationalism’ (Anderson 1983: 70). It has also been described as ‘a capital document to illustrate the spread of nationalist ideology outside the Western cultural sphere’ (Kedourie 1970: 42).
look towards the country s/he left behind while its roots are growing deeper into the host country (Kapllani 2006: 150).

These two books represent two phenomena (diaspora and border crossing) that blow up – both enlarge and explode – the hyphen in hybrid identities where it could be said to act as a kind of border. They invite us to reflect on the links between diaspora and migration and to explore the contribution of diaspora communities, refugee and migrant experiences to historical changes and cultural developments over the last two centuries. Though Korais and Kapllani could be seen as representing the intellectual migrant, their texts offer a good insight into the formation of the migrant subject and the provisional status of their identity. As Salman Rushdie has remarked, those who have experienced cultural displacement have been forced to accept the provisional nature of all truths and all certainties (Rushdie 1991: 12).

By focusing on the dialogic tension between home and abroad, ethnic self and immigrant other, this volume explores the interstices between experience and memory. Moreover, it tackles issues of religion, identity, colonialism and otherness, thus presenting the opportunity to address a number of questions, such as the following: is the Greek diaspora on the wane now that Greece has more immigrants arriving than emigrants leaving the country or are new expatriate communities being ‘invented’ particularly in Eastern Europe, which the Greek state can use to advance its own economic and political interests? Are new diasporic subjects emerging in the form of nomadic academics and professional people, making London and New York, the Odessa, Vienna or Trieste of the twenty-first century for Greek expatriates? Does Greece use its diaspora to offset its marginal status on the international scene? Is there a tendency to downplay the proletarian migration out of Greece in the twentieth century and talk up the link between the commercial and intellectual diaspora before Independence and recent developments? To what extent could one argue that, whereas until the 1970s Greece was struggling to come to terms with the political other, in the last two decades the challenge has been to find a modus vivendi with the cultural or ethnic other?

We tend to identify exile and migration with a sense of loss and a painful experience. But as Said asks: ‘If true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture? … Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees’ (Said 2001: 173). Exile and migration, therefore, are no longer simply survival stories, but present an opportunity to think through some vexed questions: solidarity and criticism, belonging and distance, insider spaces and outsider spaces, identity as invention and identity as natural, location–subject positionality and the politics of representation (Radhakrishnan 2003: 129). What migration and diaspora ‘have done is to move the margins to the centre’ (Cohen 1997: 134) and register a broader shift within human sciences from temporality, fixity and rootedness to space, distance and travel. Diaspora, exile and migration involve an oscillation between proximity and distance and this ambiguous in-between space has of late attracted huge scholarly attention.
What diaspora, exile and migration have in common and underpins this volume is the idea of home as a symbolic space rather than a physical place.

Mapping the world starts with the primary marker of the home. The distinctions between self/other; inside/outside; order/chaos revolve around the prior constructions of the home as the position from which these values can be discerned. Home is the place where moral knots are untied and ethical patterns are stitched together. (Papastergiadis 1988: 5–6)

The traditional idea of home and identity assumed a strong linkage between time and space, but as we experience an increasing ‘time-space distanciation’, the concept of home as a geographically defined entity and as the embodiment of culture, stability, order and history is increasingly being challenged. Modernity entails the breaking up of the attachment to place (Giddens 1990), and therefore identity can no longer be confirmed by naming a single place of origin. Hence, it is increasingly defined by reference to other places. Deepening the crisis of identity, diaspora and exile are no longer identified with wilderness, instability or oblivion, but emerge as new conceptions of ‘home’, pointing to an identity premised more on memory and less on common territory. The stereotype of the migrant as either denying his/her past or trying to retrieve it gives way to a negotiation that includes both. Living between a lost past and a non-integrated present, diasporic and migrant subjects experience a perpetual state of liminality while their identities are formed ‘on the move’.

In recent years postmodernism has embraced nomadism and rejected the aestheticism of modernist exile associated with solitude and spirituality (Kaplan 1996). It aspired to replace the ‘critical distance’ of exile with the betweenness of hybridity while the user of the internet has often been described as a kind of postmodern traveller. Postmodernism refuses an attachment to an abode and sees migrants suspended between departure and arrival. By challenging the financial or class connotations of migration, it changes the semantics of migrancy, thus treating it as an identity and not as an administrative category. Postmodernity is no longer based on tradition or ancestry but is experienced as a provisional site of identity which must be constantly (re)invented and (re)negotiated. Diasporas promote this notion of ethnicity since they have the potential to unsettle essentialist or totalising conceptions of ‘national culture’ or ‘national identity’.

Though the term diaspora etymologically suggests the fertility of dispersion, dissemination and the scattering of seeds, its current use denotes communities dislocated from their native homelands through migration and exile. It is an ambiguous category since, on the one hand, it could be associated with traditional communities or those resistant to change while, on the other hand, diaspora artists and intellectuals can champion modern and challenging ideas. Despite its ambiguity, the term ‘diaspora’ has found new currency and featured prominently in the recent theoretical debates related to postmodernism, postcolonialism and globalisation.
Like the critical terms rhizome, créole, creolization, hybridity, heterogeneity, métis and métissage, then, diaspora has emerged as an internal critique of the binarisms (coloniser/colonised; white/black; West/East) that circulated and found currency within colonial discourse and that persist even within some spheres of postcolonial studies (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 4).

While in the past the study of diaspora was neglected, today the concept is used widely across many disciplines and has recently acquired new meanings, including global processes of deterritorialisation, transnational migration and cultural hybridity. It has also encapsulated groups ‘known by other names until the late 1960s: as exile groups, overseas communities, ethnic and racial minorities, and so forth’ (Tölölyan 1996: 3). The prominence of diaspora in discourse in recent decades represents a passage from ‘being’ to ‘feeling’, from groups to networks, from ethnicity to symbolic ethnicity, namely the emphasis on discursive and representational practices, while diasporic identity offers the opportunity to express our discontent with nation-states and to celebrate multiplicity and mobility. This academic growth and semantic change, however, tends to downplay traumatic dispersal, persecution and loss, often associated with diasporas, and simply highlights the potential of diasporas as ‘mediating cultures’.

Migration and diaspora might point to a postnational condition and deterritorialised reality, but the struggles of certain diasporas could be perceived in nationalistic terms. As Gregory Jusdanis points out: ‘The Macedonians, residing in multicultural societies of Canada and Australia, did not mute their passions in the fight over Macedonian nationhood on account of their diasporic existence. Their struggle was quintessentially nationalist’ (Jusdanis 2001: 207). On the other hand, it could be said that the nation-state aspires to terminate the multiple attachments associated with the diaspora, either through assimilation or return. So do diasporas represent a utopian transnational ideal or can they often be seen as supporting irredentist claims? Whatever their ideologies of purity or nostalgic visions, James Clifford argues, ‘diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist’ (1997: 251). Though they may have irredentist moments, diaspora cultures are not separatist and have rarely founded nation-states since ‘homecomings’ are, by definition, the negation of diaspora.

Taking into account the rapid flow of mass-mediated images, Arjun Appadurai emphasises the work of imagination in the relationship between electronic mediation and mass migration and argues that ‘diasporic public spheres, diverse among themselves, are the crucibles of a postnational political order’ (Appadurai 1996: 22). While diasporas might be positioned between nation-states and ‘travelling cultures’, diasporic identities can be both restrictive and liberating. Diaspora, like migration and exile, is not always voluntary and Robin Cohen’s

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7 **It has been pointed out that since** ‘the journal Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies was inaugurated in 1991, debates over the theoretical, cultural, and historical resonances of the term have proliferated’ (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 2).
The typology of diasporas (victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural) raises questions as to which category best suits the Greek diaspora (1997: x, 178).

The Greek diaspora can be seen both as a conduit for channelling new and challenging ideas to the mother country, particularly in the period from the end of the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, and as a conservative agent, maintaining fossilised cultural practices, or, as in the case of Greek Americans between 1967 and 1974, offering cautious support to the military junta or, more recently, demonstrating nationalist intransigence with regard to recent developments over the name Macedonia (see Chapter 10). Despite its Greek provenance, the term ‘diaspora’ has only recently been adopted in Greece, hesitantly replacing terms such as ‘apodimoi Ellines’ (Hellenes abroad) or ‘omogeneis’ (co-ethnics). This suggests that for the Greek authorities, who still perceive diaspora communities in ethnocentric terms as Greeks abroad, the term ‘diaspora’ is synonymous with globalisation, and as something which threatens the integrity of the nation. Towards the end of the twentieth century diasporic Hellenism has emerged as a new cultural ‘Great Idea’, creating the illusion that Greece, despite being a small country, has a virtual empire thanks to its worldwide diaspora. The re-hellenisation of the post-Soviet diaspora communities (Voutira 2006) or the ‘invention’ of new communities such as the Gagauz (Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians in Moldavia) and the Kalasha (a non-Muslim pagan community living near the Afghanistan border with Pakistan and considered descendants of Alexander the Great) have also contributed to this illusion.

In recent years the Greek diaspora and migration have featured prominently in films such as the romantic comedy My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002), written by and starring Nia Vardalos, Brides [Nymphs] (2004), directed by Pantelis Voulgaris, and The Journey: The Greek American Dream (2007), directed by Maria Iliou. Moreover there is a growing interest in writers of Greek origin publishing in the language of their host country such as George Pelekanos and Jeffrey Eugenides (USA), Vassilis Alexakis (France), Aris Fioretos and Theodor Kallifatides (Sweden), Panos Karnezis (UK), Perikles Monioudis (Switzerland), who are translated into Greek or invited to Athens to present their work. Painters born or living outside Greece for most of their lives such as Theodoros Stamos (1922–97), Yerasimos Steris (1898–1987), Periklis Pantazis (1849–84), Stephen Antonakos

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8 The term ‘Greater Hellenism’ (μεγαλύτερη Ελληνική) is often used to refer to Greek communities in the Balkans and East Mediterranean region.

9 The increasing political role of the diaspora is reflected in the fact that the Greek government is considering allowing expatriate Greeks to vote in Greek general elections.

10 Elena Paparizou, a Greek singer born and raised in Sweden, won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2005 for Greece and a Greek-American singer, Kalomoira, represented Greece in the same contest in 2008.
(b.1926), Yannis Kounelis (b.1936) and Luca Samaras (b.1936) have also enjoyed greater prominence.11

As has already been said, Greek society has been significantly transformed over the last 30 years and from a country of emigrants has become a host to migrants, who have contributed enormously to the Greek economy. According to a report compiled in October 2005 by Ruby Gropas and Anna Triandafyllidou, Greece’s immigrant population, including aliens and co-ethnic returnees such as Pontic and ethnic Greek Albanians, had reached just over one million people and this represented about 9 per cent of the total resident population.12 The 1991 census indicates that the total population of Greece was then 10,260,000 of which 167,000 were foreigners, but in the census of 2001 the number of foreigners had increased to 797,091 (of which 47,000 were EU citizens) while the total population was 10,964,020. This is indeed a strikingly high proportion of immigrants for a country which, only a few years before, was sending large numbers of migrants abroad. According to the report, approximately three-quarters of the immigrant population currently has legal status (work and residence permits) though most immigrants entered Greece illegally.13

The largest group of immigrants were from the Balkans, given that more than half were Albanian citizens (i.e. 438,000 or 57 per cent), with the Bulgarians in second place, though lagging way behind with just 35,000 migrants (or 4.4 per cent of all immigrants to Greece). By the year 2000, according to a census carried out by the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad, 152,204 Pontic Greeks had settled in Greece (about 80,000 from Georgia, 31,000 from Kazakhstan, 23,000 from Russia and about 9,000 from Armenia). The Greek state granted special status to immigrants of Greek ethnic origin thus distinguishing them from the other immigrants. Co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union were given preferential treatment with regard to naturalisation, while ethnic Greek Albanian citizens were issued with special identity cards, but discouraged from naturalising so as not to lose their Albanian citizenship.

According to the 2005 report, males make up 54.5 per cent and females 45.5 per cent of the total immigrant population. Women represent almost two-thirds of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Bulgaria, as well as approximately four-fifths of the Filipinos. On the other hand, immigrants from Pakistan and India are almost exclusively male. The participation of immigrants

11 The Mataroa, the ship which in December 1945 took a number of young Greeks from Piraeus to France via Italy, has been mythologised in Greece and has featured in a number of recent publications. Some of the ship’s passengers (e.g. Cornelius Castoriadis [1922–97] and Iannis Xenakis [1922–2001]) became well-known intellectuals and artists in France where they lived for the rest of their lives.

12 The full report along with reports on all 25 EU member states is available from the following website: www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe.

13 For an analysis of some aspects of recent migration to Greece within the wider context of Southern Europe see (King et al. 2000 and Anthias and Lazaridis 2000).
in public life is very limited, but some of them publish their own newspapers or demand their own places of worship. The proposal to build a mosque in Athens has proved a controversial issue recently, and it has been reported that Athens is the only European capital without a purpose-built mosque.

Until the 1990s Greece lacked the legislative framework to manage the influx of the immigrants effectively and since then it has introduced a number of Laws and Presidential Decrees concerning the status of migrants. The first Act 1975/1991, entitled ‘entry-exit, sojourn, employment, expulsion of aliens, procedure for the recognition of the status of refugee for foreigners and other measures’, was aimed at curbing migration and making it harder for economic migrants to stay in the country. It is not surprising therefore, that Greece ranks alongside Switzerland in requiring a longer period of residence for naturalisation (more than 10 years in the last 12) than any other country in Europe.

Another aspect of migration to Greece involves citizens from EU countries who have chosen to settle in Greece (mainly on the islands), even though Greek bureaucracy makes it hard for them to buy property in the country. In some places (e.g. Symi, Vamos) they even outnumber the local population and determine the outcome of the local elections. Television channels in Crete have introduced news programmes in English having these migrants as the target audience.

The impact of immigrants on Greek society can be judged by their widespread representation in Greek fiction and film (see Chapter 18). Over the last few years the novels and films about migrants in Greece have proliferated, while Greek writers from Albania (e.g. Tilemachos Kotsias) have started publishing in Greece. Recent Greek fiction and film suggest that Greeks are gradually coming to terms with the growing multicultural and multiethnic character of their society.

This book consists of two parts and the chapters can be classified into three overlapping categories on the basis of the approaches they adopt: socio-historical, institutional/political and cultural. In the first section of Part I, which deals with the émigré experience, Thomas Gallant explores the darker side to the story of Greek migration by focusing on ‘underworld’ migrants (petty criminals, prostitutes, brawlers and sailors) who moved between major cities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. He reconstructs the social world of these itinerant Greeks, as they moved back and forth between the margins of their home society and their host society. Jonathan Harris examines the survival of the Greek community in Britain during the eighteenth century and Maria Christina Chatziioannou traces its development into a thriving merchant hub during the nineteenth century with the arrival of Greeks (mostly from the island of Chios) in London, Manchester and Liverpool. Settlement in Britain in the nineteenth century offered Greek expatriates the unique experience of a competitive business environment and

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14 The Greek fiction competition ‘Hotel 2007’ for young writers had as its theme ‘we are all migrants’ and the best six stories have been published in book form (Fais 2007).

15 Where no publisher is given in the bibliographic references, this means that the publisher is unknown.
coexistence with a socially stratified society. Both chapters offer some interesting comparisons with other diaspora communities or ethnic groups settled in Britain and their entrepreneurial culture.

The next three chapters focus on the Greek community in Egypt, the Slav Macedonian political refugees and the Greek migrants in Denmark. Anthony Gorman discusses the challenges that Greeks faced in Egypt since 1945 and the range of options available to them after Nasser’s rise to power. Iakovos Michailidis examines the economic and political consequences for Greece of the exodus of Slav Macedonian refugees in the 1940s, their settlement abroad and the impact of the Slav Macedonian refugee factor on diplomatic relations between Greece and Eastern bloc countries. Anastasia Christou explores how the multiple identities of Greek migrants in Denmark are shaped by and constructed through their spatial and cultural encounters in both home and host countries. Identification processes are linked with a state of migrancy and develop across temporal and spatial contexts that convey the transitional nature of the migration phenomenon.

The second section of Part I concentrates on issues of integration and naturalisation, the attitude of the Greek state towards diaspora Greeks and migrants, and the role of the Greek-American lobby. Elpida Vogli argues that the openness of Greek laws and policies towards ethnic Greeks was connected to Greek irredentism and nationalism. Dimitris Christopoulos reviews Greek policies on nationality throughout the twentieth century and examines the recent trends in Greek legislation pertaining to acquisition of nationality and human rights. Lina Venturas concludes the examination of the policies of the Greek state by focusing on the period 1974–2001. She considers international developments, changes in Greek foreign policy and terminology regarding Greeks abroad as well as the setting up of new institutions such as ‘The World Council of Hellenes Abroad’ in 1995. Alexander Kitroeff examines the activities of the Greek-American lobby at the end of the twentieth century and more generally ethnic lobbying in American politics in an age of transnationalism.

The chapters in Part II look at travel writing, diaspora writers, literary production in Eastern Europe by political exiles, the representation of migrants in fiction and film, and finally popular culture in the diaspora communities. Dimitris Tziovas’s chapter discusses the travel narratives by diaspora Greeks during the period 1880–1930 and outlines the range of attitudes they adopted towards their native land. Their texts show that there is no unified perspective among diaspora Greeks on their country and highlight their ambiguous status as both outsiders and insiders. Alexander Kazamias analyses Greek-Egyptian literary production and the two cultural perspectives on Egyptian-Greekness developed in relation to Greek identity, the Egyptian experience and British colonialism in Egypt, which broadly speaking can be characterised as ‘pro-European’ and ‘anti-colonialist’. Eleni Papargyriou’s contribution looks at the work of Stratis Tsirkas, whose trilogy Drifting Cities (1959–65) and subsequent novel Lost Spring (1976) are largely informed by the notions of exile, diaspora and repatriation. Tsirkas’s move from Alexandria to Athens is used as a subtext that permeates the sequence of
his novelistic output, while geography, culture and politics are identified as three key aspects in the transition. In his contribution Gerasimus Katsan argues that it is the sense of being resigned to the exilic situation and the realisation of the final ‘impossibility of return’ that leads to a sense of acceptance on the part of the exile, creating new bonds to the place of exile and a feeling of strangeness as regards the homeland. His contribution explores the ramifications of these processes and the problem of return in the work of several post-war authors, including Dimitris Chatzis and Alki Zei, while taking Mimika Kranaki’s *Philhellenes* as his main focus for interpretation. Venetia Apostolidou explores the considerable literary and semi-literary output produced by the Greek political exiles in Eastern Europe. She investigates the conditions and the constraints under which the political exiles produced their work and negotiated the trauma of their political defeat and exile.

The next two chapters focus on the ‘comeback’ in Greece of the Greek-American writer Nicolas Calas and on contemporary Greek-American writing. Lena Hoff examines the comeback of Nikitas Randos/Nicolas Calas as a Greek poet in the 1960s after his departure from Greece in 1937 first for Paris and then for New York, and focuses on his critique of Greek society and Greekness. Her contribution traces a connection between the poet of the past (Nikitas Randos) and the poet of the present (Nicolas Calas) and discusses issues of identity, memory and critical detachment. Martha Klironomos explores the fictional output of second- and third-generation Greek-American authors since the early 1990s. She identifies a recurrent trope that has surfaced in this corpus of writing and is often identified as the Greek ancestral village.

The last two chapters of the book turn their attention to film and popular culture. Dimitris Papanikolaou analyses the complex relationship between narratives about members of the Greek diaspora returning to Greece and representations of new immigrants to Greece in the 1990s. His contribution focuses on the two most acclaimed recent Greek films on immigration: *Eternity and a Day* by Theo Angelopoulos and *From the Edge of the City* by Constantine Giannaris (both released in 1998). Angelopoulos and Giannaris both expose and mediate the tensions and inconsistencies evident in the reception of new immigrants to Greece, albeit taking different viewpoints. Stathis Gauntlett concludes this section and the volume by outlining how Melbourne became one of the acknowledged global centres of rebetika (‘arguably the artistic genre of Greek migration and diaspora par excellence’) and illustrating the ways in which the genre has been used in diaspora identity politics.

The examination of key aspects of migration to and from Greece, of the political or institutional treatment of migrants and of the representation of territorial displacements in various cultural forms, make this volume both wide-ranging and multi-disciplinary, thus hopefully appealing to a wide variety of readers, researchers and academics. There was no space to explore here the impact of satellite television, the internet or other new technologies and globalisation on diaspora and migrant identities, but this could be the theme of another volume.
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PART I
Society and Politics
1. The Emigré Experience: Case Studies
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Chapter 1
Tales from the Dark Side:
Transnational Migration, the Underworld
and the ‘Other’ Greeks of the Diaspora

Thomas W. Gallant

On Wednesday, 9 March 1859, Nikolaos Antonellos murdered Stefan Lagerhamn. The slaying was quick and brutal. Lagerhamn was the captain of the Swedish merchant vessel the Magnus Stenbock and Antonellos was an off-duty ship’s pilot and a passenger on board. At four o’clock in the morning as the ship was nearing the mouth of the Bosphorus, Antonellos confronted the captain on the ship’s deck and, in front of two crew members, drew a dagger and fatally stabbed Lagerhamn in the chest. Aroused by the commotion, the ship’s crew gathered on deck, subdued the murderer and locked him in the captain’s quarters, where he was seen licking the blood off the murder weapon.¹ Word of the incident spread rapidly while the ship was moored at the Lazaretto so that, when the period of quarantine had ended and the crew and their prisoner could disembark, a mob of men from the Ionian Islands had gathered to rescue their compatriot Antonellos. They were unsuccessful but the judicial proceedings against the murderous pilot proved long and complicated. The accused was a citizen of the United States of the Ionian Islands and because of that he was also a subject of the British Crown, which exercised legal protection over the Ionian state (Gallant 2002). The killing, however, involved a Swedish national and had occurred on a Swedish vessel in international waters. Consequently, three different legal authorities, the Ionian, the Swedish and the British, claimed jurisdiction. After numerous hearings the British finally ceded authority to the Swedes and so, in March 1860, Antonellos was tried and convicted in Stockholm.² While fascinating in its own right, the Antonellos case is of interest for the topic of this study, because the massive paper trail it created provides us with insights into the social world of men like him, who spent their lives migrating to and working in the port cities around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

¹ National Archive, Colonial Office [hereafter NA CO] 136/360. The Antonellos affair is the subject of an ongoing project.
² He was sentenced to 28 days on bread and water and then 10 years’ hard labour. What became of him after he served his time is unknown.
In many ways Antonellos typifies the migrants discussed in this chapter. Born on the Ionian island of Kefallinia, he spent most of his adult life working in foreign lands as a ship’s pilot. His sojourning took him from Constantinople to Sulina to Odessa. During the 17 years he worked on ships he returned to his home village of Pali on five occasions, once to take a bride. He never severed his ties to his place of birth and did not settle in any one place. Instead, he was constantly on the move, travelling from port to port with the occasional trip back to his homeland. In addition, while residing abroad he was connected to a community of fellow workers and migrants. So numerous were Ionian islanders in the ports of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea that, according to Sir Patrick MacChombaich de Colquhoun, Chief Justice of the Ionian Supreme Court, the Greek-Italian patois that they spoke had become the lingua franca of workers (Colquhoun 1878: 448). But Ionian islanders were only one of many groups who constituted the sailors, stevedores, pilots, dockworkers and petty artisans who migrated to the major ports of the Ottoman Empire. Antonellos and the men and women like him dwelt on the margins of ‘respectable’ society, in a rough-and-tumble world marked by high levels of crime and violence. As one defence witness responded when asked if the accused was a man of fierce character: ‘No. He was not a violent man. Sure, he stabbed some men before, but never without cause’ (NA CO 136/360: deposition 78). For men like Antonellos and his peers violence was not deviant or socially dysfunctional, it was a way of life. And theirs was a social world where ‘murder, prostitution, theft and sexual profligacy’ flourished (Vryonis 2004: 261).

As Dimitris Tziovas so eloquently points out in the introduction to this volume, the literature on the Greek diaspora is extensive. Much of that work has focused on the most prominent emigration movements like those to the United States and Australia during the twentieth century. There are numerous studies that discuss in detail the formation and course of these migrations and on the development of Greek communities in the new host countries. Another often told story is that of the merchants and traders who settled all around the world and who created the commercial networks that connected the Greeks of the diaspora (Katsiariadi-Hering 2004; Vlami 2006). Much work has also been done on the writers and artists who flourished in diaspora communities. The people in these stories tended to migrate and settle outside of Greece permanently. There has been some work on people who migrated on a seasonal basis, such as shepherds and itinerant peddlers (Caftanzoglou 1997). There was, however, another stream in the Greek migratory flow, and that was of people who moved neither permanently nor seasonally. These people, men like Antonellos, travelled abroad to work but their movement was more of a circulatory flow than a point-to-point migration.

One of the problems confronting historians who study the men and women who dwelt on the dark side of society is the sources. People from this sector of society simply did not leave behind documents, such as letters, diaries and memoirs. Using official records such as population registers, passport lists or censuses, we can catch glimpses of people’s movements, like when they left and when they returned (Costa 1988; Caftanzoglou 1997; Hionidou 2002; Loukos 2004). But these sources tell us
only about the numbers of people travelling and the timeframe of their sojourning, and little else. One of the few categories of sources that allow us to hear the voices of the lower classes and to learn about their lives are criminal justice records. When people had brushes with the law, even if they were never charged with a crime, statements were taken and records kept. In the notes and memos written by police officers, in the statements of victims and witnesses, in the transcripts of trials, and in other court records, we can hear them talk about the social world they dwelled in. Of course, their voices do not come to us directly but are mediated by criminal justice institutions. Plus the only stories that we hear are the ones of people who had dealings with the police and the courts. Nonetheless, from the narratives they related we can glean much information about migrant society.

Because the sources about them are so plentiful I focus on two groups of migrants. The first is the men and women from the Ionian Islands who were tried in British Consular Courts in the Ottoman Empire and the second is the women who worked as prostitutes in brothels on the islands and in the cities of Greece and the Ottoman Empire. Because citizens of the Ionian Islands were also British subjects, when they committed crimes in the Ottoman Empire they were tried in British courts attached to the British Embassy in Constantinople or to British consulates in the major cities, such as Salonica, Smyrna and Alexandria. Being tried in a British court or having British consular personnel present at a hearing in an Ottoman court was extremely advantageous. As Charles Thomas Newton noted, ‘The advantages of British protection in a Turkish court are so obvious, that the Ionians are the object of general envy among the Christian subjects of the Porte. The desire to possess a British passport is so strong that every sort of ingenious device is practised in order to obtain one’ (Newton 1865: 76–7). So burdensome had the legal duties of the British consuls become that Sir Edmund G. Hornby was commissioned to completely reorganise the consular judicial system in 1857, creating a separate judicial branch with courts in each of the major Ottoman Empire cities and with a supreme court in Constantinople over which he presided (Hornby 1909). I examined 858 criminal cases adjudicated by the Consular Courts, the majority of them dated to the years 1855 to 1862, i.e. from just before and then after the reorganisation of the courts. Since on the Ionian Islands, in the Kingdom of Greece and the Ottoman Empire, prostitution was legal but regulated, the police kept careful records about the women who worked in their jurisdictions, and I use these documents to examine prostitution in a transnational setting.

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first I examine the social world of men and women who fell foul of the law. The second deals with people whom we can consider career criminals; in other words, unlike the first group who were labourers and petty artisans who broke the law, this second group consists of people for whom criminal activity was their livelihood. The third section focuses on prostitution.

I begin with some general observations based on a quantitative study of the cases heard by the consular courts. Not surprisingly the Supreme Court in Constantinople adjudicated the majority of cases (37 per cent); followed by
Alexandria (28 per cent), Chania (9 per cent), Smyrna (9 per cent), Salonica (6 per cent) and Preveza (5 per cent). That the preponderance of trials took place in Constantinople and Alexandria was due to the fact that they hosted large communities of Ionian islanders and were two of the most important commercial and manufacturing areas in the Near East (Hornby 1909: 92–4). In his memoirs Hornby repeatedly castigates the Ionians as being the most ‘scoundrelly’ race on the planet (Hornby 1909: 92). His anti-Ionian prejudice notwithstanding, it is empirically correct that Ionian islanders dominated the dockets of the Consular criminal courts (Hornby 1909: 144). Ionian islanders sat in the box in 2,840 of the 3,965 criminal cases tried before the Consular criminal court in Constantinople in 1851 (NA Foreign Office 76/976, cited in Turgay 1982: 315, note 30). And that was not an exceptional year.

A more detailed examination of who did what to whom can give us some insights into the lives of migrants. The majority of men were tried for offences committed against another person (66 per cent), with assault constituting the lion’s share of these (70 per cent). The next most common crimes of violence were knife-fighting (12 per cent), armed robbery (8 per cent) and homicide (6 per cent). In regard to crimes against property (27 per cent of the total number of crimes committed), these were more or less evenly distributed between simple breaking and entering (31 per cent), smuggling (30 per cent) and petty theft (27 per cent).

At the age of 12 Yeoryios Mandiras’s parents apprenticed him to a cobbler in Smyrna. After he left his home in Kerkyra he spent two years working in that bustling port city. His master then sold his contract to a cobbler in Salonica, and there, one day in July 1857, he assaulted another apprentice, Ussi Amire, with a hammer (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 31, Salonica, 18 March 1855: 96). Spyros Stanellos, a young man (aged 22) from Kerkyra, was a ‘seller of game’ in Constantinople. During the summer of 1852 Ioanna Iakoumi from Greece accused him of indecent assault. But, when she failed to appear at the trial, the judge reluctantly dismissed the case (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 13, Constantinople, 1 July 1852: 44). Nikolas Antypas, a 38-year-old Kefallinian, had for many years run a wine shop in the Constantinople neighbourhood of Kumkapi. In 1852 he was accused of assaulting Ioannis Kakoris from Kerkyra in front of three witnesses. The parties reconciled and so the case was dismissed (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 15, Constantinople, 14 July 1852: 44). Yerasimos Florin, a 61-year-old innkeeper from Ithaka, committed an armed robbery against Andon de Avonese, an Ottoman subject. Because of the severity of the offence, he was charged with a capital crime and the case was sent to the Supreme Court, where the jury found him guilty (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 2, Constantinople, 10 January 1853: 48). Ioannis Ferentinos, a 30-year-old pilot from Lefkas, was charged with assault and uttering a verbal threat against Themistoklis Vlassopoulos Tzannachis, a fellow Ionian islander. There were four witnesses to the fight. He was convicted and ordered to provide surety that he would keep the peace or face expulsion from

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3 The remaining 7 per cent of cases were for being drunk and disorderly in public.
the Ottoman Empire. ‘He gave good security and was liberated’ (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 26, Constantinople, 29 June 1853: 50). Aristotelis Kovellas, a 27-year-old merchant from Zakynthos resident in Salonica’s Frankish Quarter was convicted of assaulting Yitzhak Markesun, a Jewish porter. The judge ordered him to pay the victim $5. In the margin of the report the Judge noted: ‘No serious injury done to the plaintiff; the fine imposed, [because] many of the Ionians consider it meritorious to molest the Jews’ (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 4, Salonica, 19 December 1853: 58). Anastasios Loizos, a 36-year-old publican from Kerkyra, lived in the Cretan town of Chania. In the winter of 1853 a Cretan Muslim named Selim charged him with assault. Hadji Ali, Barea Reis Said and Mehdi witnessed the fight. The Municipal Council acquitted the defendant, deciding that the fight had been a fair contest, but they noted that Loizos was a notorious brawler, having been brought before them on similar charges on 4 August 1847 and 14 October 1851, and so they ordered him to pay a surety to keep the peace (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 2, Chania, Crete, 7 March 1853: 68).

These cases capture the salient characteristics of the people who sojourned abroad during the nineteenth century, the types of crimes they committed and the social context in which they committed them. The overwhelming number of arrests was for crimes committed by men against other men; approximately 98 per cent of criminal defendants were male as were 97 per cent of their victims. Though men of all ages committed crimes, the vast majority of both perpetrators and victims were young men in their twenties (the average age of criminal defendants was 28). As to the occupations of the accused, 34 per cent were petty artisans, like cobblers, carpenters and lamp-makers; 22 per cent were involved in maritime activities, 18 per cent were listed as ‘labourers’ and 17 per cent were hawkers and street vendors. In notes attached to their cases, the court scribes recorded their previous residences, and occasionally letters were sent to the police elsewhere to obtain information about their activities. From these marginal notations it is clear that these men moved regularly and frequently. Moreover there are numerous cases like that of Timotheos Voukinas, a 29-year-old sailor from Kefallinia, who was convicted of assault in Constantinople in 1852 and was punished by banishment from the Ottoman Empire (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 22, Constantinople, 8 September 1852: 44). In situations where they could not impose custodial sentences, judges often simply expelled the person and passed the problem on to an official in another jurisdiction.

The criminal court records provide an entry point into the social milieu of working-class men. The following, from Abraham Benveniste, in a letter dated 5 May 1892, aptly captures the feel of the typical working-class neighbourhood in Smyrna.

The young men, numerous enough and inclined to laziness and idleness are the ‘palicares’ of the quarter. They drink and often after nocturnal orgies they come home drunk, breaking the shop windows and using knives from time to time. They are the plague of the whole quarter. Consequently, the brawls are
frequent and women often side with them … Not a Saturday afternoon passes without noise and confusion and without the police being obliged to intervene to reestablish order. [The police, however, are afraid of the men.] I know a Jew who had half murdered a Greek woman with a knife. Four months later he returned home and since then walked calmly the streets like a man with nothing on his conscience, where he should have been condemned to several years at hard labour. (Cited in Dumont 1982: 237)

It captures the essential flavour of any of the waterfronts and neighbourhoods in a port city of the Eastern Mediterranean. The population dynamics of the poorer neighbourhoods in these communities were extremely fluid. Moreover, social intercourse among these populations was steeped in an ethos of hypermasculinity.

These men originated from a sector of Greek society in which they were acculturated from childhood to respond to any slight, real or perceived, with aggression (Papathanassiou 2004: 333, 339, 341). In their world a man who did not react violently risked being branded as less than a man. The criminal justice records from the Ionian Islands are replete with examples of homicides and assaults that occurred for the most banal of reasons (Gallant 2000, 2002 and 2008). Even in Athens at times during the nineteenth century masculine violence in tekes and bars rendered the city one of the most violent places in the world (Gallant 1998). In the bars, brothels and taverns, where sailors, labourers, stevedores and other working men of the diaspora gathered for a brief respite from their toils, violence flourished. The Kefallinian poet and sailor, Nikos Kavvadias, poignantly captures just how trivial the reason for killing a man could be:

Forgive me … as when I had drunk too much
And I did not know what I was doing, in Algiers,
Over a young Arab girl who was dancing nude,
I hurled a knife into the chest of a man.
(From A Cadet on the Bridge at the Moment of Danger, cited in Vryonis 2004: 260)

The men discussed above committed crimes, but their criminal acts have to be understood as having been triggered by a combination of a specific form of masculinity and a socio-spatial context where alcohol, drugs and women put that masculinity to the test.

There were, however, other men in the diaspora whom we can consider by any reasonable measure to be transnational professional criminals. The detailed court and police records, along with the correspondence between consular officers, allow us to track the activities of this seamier side of the flow of Greek migrants. Theodoros Petalas and Christos Kokkinos, both from Ithaka, ranged far and wide in the Ottoman Empire, producing and passing counterfeit money. In Smyrna they were imprisoned for eight months. Shortly after their release, they moved to
Constantinople where, in November 1845, they were again convicted of forgery. They may have been prolific in their job: just not very good at it (NA CO 136/748/4, enclosure 9). Andreas Mavroiannis from Kefallinia preyed on victims in the ports of Kerkýra, Hermoupolis, Smyrna, Alexandria and Constantinople, being arrested on no less than 11 occasions for pickpocketing and petty theft between 1848 and 1855 (Criminal Cases, 1852–55, Docket 22, Constantinople, 12 October 1855: 74). Ioannis Kapomatis from Kerkýra was a different kind of professional thief. He was a gigolo. His modus operandi was to move from city to city and mingle in ‘polite society’. He would select a woman of means and then seduce her. Once he had gained her confidence, he would abscond with her jewellery and other valuables. He was finally captured in Constantinople in 1854 when a jeweller to whom he was trying to sell the goods recognised some of the pieces and informed the authorities that they must be stolen. The owner of the loot was informed and she pressed charges. The investigating magistrate learned from colleagues that at least four other women in Alexandria, Smyrna and Constantinople had been preyed upon in just such a manner and he strongly believed that Kapomatis was the villain. After a very brief trial Kapomatis was convicted but, in an unexpected twist of fate, he was ‘liberated at [his accuser’s] interception’. She paid his fine and they left the British Consular Prison together (NA CO 136/718/2, enclosure 480). Manolis Antonellos, a relative of Nikolaos, was arrested in Alexandria in May 1857. He had sold some jewellery to a French sea captain, which upon closer examination, turned out to be fake. Charged with swindling, when asked by the police to give his profession, he proudly proclaimed himself to be: a ‘swindler’. He was, not surprisingly, convicted (NA CO 136/868/11, enclosure 41).

Given the types of activities that they specialised in, professional criminals were highly itinerant. There was a limited timeframe in which they could swindle suckers, seduce grande dames, pass phoney coins or pick unsuspecting pockets without arousing suspicion. When they had made enough money in one place, they would then move on to the greener pastures of another port city. That is, unless they were apprehended first. But judges, both British and Ottoman, often found it more expedient to expel offenders rather than impose the modest fines or short custodial sentences available to them. This practice, of course, added volume and velocity to the flow of criminals circulating around the Eastern Mediterranean.

There was one other prominent stream of people in the river of migrants that ran through the darker neighbourhoods of the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, and it consisted of female prostitutes. While there are numerous studies of prostitution elsewhere in Europe during the nineteenth century, as Yiannitsiotis points out in his excellent study of Piraeus (2006: 246), very little work has been done in Greece. There has been some research conducted about prostitution in the

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4 According to Judge Hornby, counterfeiting was a very serious problem in the Empire, and he himself had a brush with an alluring Russian duchess, who also happened to be a member of a counterfeiting ring (1929: 174–5). Pamuk (2000: 197) has shown that throughout the nineteenth century counterfeiting was an endemic problem.
Ottoman Empire (Çolak 2002; Semerdjian 2003), but we still do not have detailed statistical studies and social histories like those from other parts of Europe. My discussion, therefore, will be based on the data collected in two studies: one by Thomas Dritsas (2002) on prostitution in the city of Hermoupolis on the island of Syros between 1856 and 1891 and an unpublished study of my own on the prostitutes of Kerkyra covering the period from 1830 to 1864. Before discussing the lives and careers of the ‘public women’ from these two bustling port cities, a few words need to be said about the laws regulating prostitution in each place.

In both the Ionian Islands and the Kingdom of Greece prostitution was legal but regulated. The regulations on the Ionian Islands, for example, mandated that all prostitutes had to register with the police the day they arrived in a municipality and inform them if they intended to move. At the beginning of each year, they had to report to the police to verify their registration. The women’s activities and physical conditions were carefully monitored. Women could only work out of a residence, usually a hotel or a wine shop, in one of the neighbourhoods approved of by the police. Once a month all prostitutes had to undergo a physical examination by a physician appointed by the chief of police and to undergo mandatory treatment if they were suffering from a venereal disease (Diaforai 1869: 30–2). The laws were very similar in Greece (Dritsas 2002: 79–83). Because the women had to register with the police and undergo periodic examinations by medical officials, records were kept about them, and these provide us with our best sources for studying prostitution. There was no universal or uniform legal prescription in the Ottoman Empire. Regulation or prohibition was left in the hands of local authorities. In Constantinople, prostitution was legal from the late seventeenth century onward. After the commencement of the Tanzimat in 1838, prostitution became more widespread in the city, and especially in the neighbourhoods of Pera, Galata and Beyoğlu – exactly the same working-class areas where much of the crime discussed above took place. The majority of the brothels were owned and staffed by Greek and Armenian women and their pimps. One of the most infamous Greek bawdy houses in Galata was run by Madam Evdoxia; at least until she stabbed her lover, Manolis, to death one night in 1899 (Çolak 2002: 93–6). No port city in the Eastern Mediterranean was without its red light district, and there was a constant movement of women among them.

‘The prostitutes of Hermoupolis came from all over Greece and the Ottoman Empire’ (Dritsas 2002: 65). Fifty-five per cent of the women who worked as prostitutes in Hermoupolis came from the Kingdom of Greece, with the overwhelming majority of them coming from the Cyclades or Athens. Of the remaining 45 per cent, most of them moved to Hermoupolis from the Ionian Islands, Smyrna or Constantinople (Dritsas 2002: 266–70). Located in the centre of the Aegean and at the hub of an international commercial network, it attracted

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5 My database was compiled from numerous documents. The most important are NA CO 136/633 and Istoriko Archeio tis Kerkyras, Ektelestiko Archeio 1301 and 1169, which are compilations of the registers kept by the police for each year between 1830 and 1864.
women from both the East (Constantinople and Smyrna) and the West (the Ionian Islands), who joined women from the Cyclades to work in the city’s brothels. There was, it seems, an especially close connection between Hermoupolis and the Ottoman capital. So much so that, in 1875, the Greek minister in Constantinople wrote to the mayor of Hermoupolis that he needed to do something to stop the flow of women coming from that city to work in the capital, noting the deleterious affect their activities were having on public morals and national dignity (Clogg 1996: 195).

The population of prostitutes working in the city of Kerkýra was, if anything, even more cosmopolitan than that in Hermoupolis. Based on a synoptic analysis of over 2,500 women who were registered in the police registers of ‘public women’ between 1830 and 1864, it appears that the majority of women (60 per cent) came from one of the Ionian Islands. Of the remaining 40 per cent of women the distribution was: Kingdom of Greece (12 per cent), Malta (10 per cent), United Kingdom (8 per cent), Italy and Sicily (7 per cent) and the Ottoman Empire (3 per cent). Much like Hermoupolis in the Aegean, Kerkýra was a hub in the central Mediterranean and, for that reason, it attracted more women from the Western Mediterranean and fewer from the eastern regions, especially the Ottoman Empire. The British controlled Malta and so it was easy for women to move back and forth between the two islands. As to the presence of so many British women, that is also easily explained. Women, such as Mary Higgins, Elizabeth Jones and Georgina Warren, accompanied their lovers, who were soldiers in the British army, when the men were assigned to garrison duty on one of the Ionian Islands. Once stationed there, however, these men reneged on their promises of marriage, and the jilted women found themselves adrift and destitute in a foreign land. Having few other options, they turned to prostitution (NA CO 136/748/5, enclosure 32; NA CO 136/760/15, enclosure 18; NA CO 136/771/15, enclosure 37; NA CO 136/727/2, enclosure 39).

There were two different but connected migration streams of female prostitutes. One consisted of women who travelled to a new place in search of work, usually as domestic servants or seamstresses, but who soon found themselves in distress either because of sexual abuse in the home of their employer or because they could not make ends meet. While set in a slightly different context, Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s story of the 17-year-old Kalliopi’s slide into prostitution captures essentially what happened to many young girls. When her marriage to a Muslim man collapsed and her family would not take her back, she moved to another neighbourhood in Constantinople where she found work as a seamstress. But Kalliopi could not make enough money to live sewing dresses and so she had to borrow until she fell into debt and out of desperation ‘found the solution in selling herself to a brothel’ (Çolak 2002: 104). Midhat Efendi tells Kalliopi’s story in his novella Henüz Onyedi

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6 There was one woman from the United States. From 1846 to 1849, Susan Henderson from Texas was the toast of the Rosario Hotel. How she came to be there or where she went after she left is, unfortunately, unknown.
Yaşında [Still Seventeen Years Old] published in 1882. Midhat Efendi had special insight into the world of Greek prostitutes through his second wife, Vassiliki, who had worked in a brothel before their marriage. Kalliopi’s tale closely resembles that of many women.

Most prostitutes were single young women. In Kerkyra 65 per cent of the prostitutes registered in 1847, for example, were under the age of 30 and 75 per cent of them were unmarried. The average age at which they entered the profession was 18 (Dritsas (2002: 69) recorded similar figures for Hermoupolis). Many women, however, worked for only a short period of time. Almost one-third of the women listed in the police registers in Kerkyra between 1830 and 1864 worked for fewer than five years. In other words, the ‘typical’ prostitute turned to such work out of material distress or disgrace at age 18 or 19; she worked in a brothel for four or five years, at which point, either through marriage or some other change in her circumstances, she left the life, and, of course, disappeared from the police records. A small number of them (8.2 per cent on Kerkyra) returned to prostitution for short stints and then disappeared once more. In sum, what we see are women for whom prostitution fits into a well-known pattern. Working in brothels was life-cycle related. They migrated, found themselves in dire straits, turned to prostitution until they got a better job or got married, and then moved on with their lives.

There were, however, women for whom prostitution was a life-long career, and they constituted the second migration stream. Many of these women moved around the Mediterranean working in numerous brothels over the course of their careers. Of all the women who were registered in Kerkyra, 28 per cent worked as prostitutes for 20 years or more. Take, for example, Meletti Zafiropoulou. She worked at the Boussalino brothel in Kerkyra for 54 years without a break. She is listed in the police register for 1864, the last year for which registers survive. She was 71 years old and apparently still going strong. Dritsas (2002: 69) recounts the story of Marigo Gambrinopoulou from Kythira who was still working in Hermoupolis when she was 70 years old.

It was quite common for sisters to work together. Dritsas (2002: 67–8) discusses the activities of the Sakkoula and the Sahana sisters in Hermoupolis. On Kerkyra almost one-third of the brothels had sisters working together.

More than half of the long-term prostitutes on Kerkyra vanished from the police registers for an extended period of time; some never returned but many did, and the police recorded their stories in the margins of the registers. There were two brothels in Kerkyra’s Jewish Quarter; the Levi sisters, Rina and Maschia, ran one and the Moschavi sisters, Rita, Sara and Savrina, the other. In 1841, Rita left her sisters and moved first to Salonica and then to Constantinople where she worked in various brothels before rejoining the sororal business in 1850. Anastasia Fiorenti from the island of Zakynthos worked on Kerkyra from 1835 to 1841, and then in Salonica from 1841 to 1843 and Hermoupolis from 1843 to 1850. Over the course of her career Theoni Galati from Kerkyra went on a veritable tour of the Mediterranean. She began working...
in the Perouli brothel in her home town in 1834, and then over the next 26 years she moved to Hermoupolis, Constantinople, Smyrna, Beirut, Malta and Salonica, before returning to her native island. One of the most (in)famous prostitutes in Hermoupolis was Eleni M. Sfirelli (usually referred to by her nickname, Lil’ Eleni the Smyrniate or, in Greek, Elenitsa i Smyrnia). According to police records the 35-year-old woman had worked in Athens, Smyrna and Constantinople before moving to Hermoupolis in December 1866. She had saved enough money from her previous jobs to have 744 drachmas, which she invested along with two other women and their pimp, an erstwhile goldsmith named Nikolaos Psomas, in the purchase of one floor of a hotel in the neighbourhood of Vrontado. So successful was her business that, in 1867, she purchased a second brothel on her own, paying 2,000 drachmas for that one.\(^9\) Between 1872 and 1884, she was tried 12 times for various criminal offences relating to her profession, usually public indecency or disturbing the peace. She died in October 1890, after having worked as a prostitute for over half a century (Dritsas 2002: 90–5). Marigo Mikedaki, herself a well-travelled prostitute, accumulated enough money to be able to purchase a house in Hermoupolis worth 2,900 drachmas as part of a dowry for her daughter Evangelista (Dritsas 2002: 308, note 42). Not all, or probably not even most, working women were as successful as Lil’ Eleni or Marigo, but thousands of them got by as best they could and made prostitution a career.

These women were connected to a dense and widespread network of brothels that spanned the Mediterranean. Travelling along the paths of this network were thousands of women who regularly and routinely moved between port cities, such as Kerkyra, Hermoupolis, Salonica, Constantinople, Smyrna, Beirut and Alexandria. They resided in the same neighbourhoods as the men discussed earlier in this chapter. And like them they were sojourners, who never really cut the ties to their home community but who resided abroad, constantly on the move, for much of their adult lives.

The history of the Greek diaspora is often told as a celebratory tale. The metanarrative is replete with stories of poor but industrious emigrants who left their homeland to find a better life in a foreign land. There, through hard work and frugal living, the migrant and his family made it. The ‘self-made’ immigrant man, who moved up the socio-economic ladder to achieve success, the ‘American dream’ as it were, is a trope central to the history of the diaspora. Only slightly less prevalent is the story of the merchant families, who in times past left Greece or the Ottoman Empire and established trading networks that spanned the globe. The names of these international entrepreneurs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries read like a ‘who’s who’ of the Greek rich and famous. These tend to be the stories that dominate the literature about the Greek diaspora and while they are an important part of the story, they are not the whole story. Any history of the Greek diaspora will be incomplete until we write into it the stories of the men

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\(^9\) The average price of a ‘visit’ to a prostitute in 1871 was 10–15 drachmas (Dritsas 2002: 71).
and women described in this chapter. Their tales, like their activities, do not ‘fit’ the conventional stereotypes of Greek migrants. They did not move permanently to a new land where they assimilated and made it in their host society. They did not become wealthy and endow foundations. Nor were they a source of ‘national pride’. Nonetheless their stories are important. The tales of these sailors, artisans, labourers and prostitutes are central to a complete study of the history of Greek society in the nineteenth century. And so, even though they may be tales from the dark side, they cast valuable light on the history of the Greek diaspora.

References

Διάφορα Αστυνομικά Διατάξεις της Δημοτικής Αστυνομίας Ζακύνθου (Zakynthos: Rosolimou, 1869), cited as Diaforai.


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Visitors to the Soho district of London can still walk down the thoroughfare which runs between Soho Square and Shaftesbury Avenue and which bears the name of Greek Street. Originally called Hog Lane, the street took its name from a Greek Orthodox church which was built there in the late 1670s, largely thanks to the efforts of the Archbishop of Samos, Iosif Yeorgirinis of Melos. The construction of a church and the persistence of the name both imply that the last decades of the seventeenth century saw an increase in the numbers of Greek-speaking, Orthodox Christians in London to the point where they could perhaps be referred to as a community.\footnote{For earlier studies of Greeks in London in this period, see Dowling and Fletcher 1915: 48–50; Constantinides 1933: 1–9; Bezodis 1966: 278–84; Tsimpidaros 1974: 39–43; Haynes 1979: 179–87; Catsiyannis 1993: 11–27; Barron 2006: 79–112; Harris and Porphyriou 2007: 78–86.}

It is by no means surprising that there should have been a Greek presence in London in this period. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Christian subject minorities of the Ottoman Empire, both Greeks and Armenians, established a network of small communities in cities across the world. They were to be found in cities as far apart as Vienna, Budapest, Amsterdam, Marseilles, Odessa and Calcutta and they played an important role in fostering Greek self-awareness in the years leading up to the outbreak of the War of Independence in 1821 (Anonymous 1827: 221–4; Karidis 1981: 111–36; Tomadakis 1972: 179–88; Fûves 1968: 313–38; Échinard 1973: 3–135; Stoianovich 1960: 269–73; Geanakoplos 1976: 59–77; Manoussacas 1981: 791–821).

There were two characteristics that these widely scattered communities had in common. In the first place, the source of their wealth was trade. That was why they were always to be found in large, mercantile cities from which they could exploit their members’ contacts in the great cities of the Ottoman Empire (Constantinople, Smyrna and Alexandria), in the Greek islands (particularly Chios) and in the older Greek settlements in Italy, such as Venice and Livorno. Consequently, the most affluent and influential members of the Greek communities were merchants. In Amsterdam, for example, the surviving records describe many of the resident Greeks as koopman or merchants. One of the most prominent among them was Ioannis Pringos (c.1725–89), whose diary provides an important source...

The second common characteristic of these diaspora communities was that, wherever possible, their wealthy members used their money at the first opportunity, to build a church where the Orthodox liturgy could be celebrated in Greek. In Calcutta, for example, such a church was established in 1772, some 20 years after the first recorded Greek presence there. It took longer in Marseilles where there was some opposition from the Catholic Church, which insisted that any Greek church should follow the Uniate rite. Nevertheless an Orthodox chapel came into being there in 1821 (Anonymous 1827: 222; Échinard 1973: 15, 100–104).

This then was the pattern of Greek expatriate communities of the eighteenth century. To what extent did London conform to that pattern? At first sight, the Greek presence there seems to lack the two essential characteristics outlined above. Greek merchants certainly visited London. One unnamed individual did well enough there to send back to his home island of Chios a new bell for the church of the monastery of Nea Moni (Argenti and Kyriakidis 1946, vol. ii: 754–5). What is difficult to discern, however, is any sign of a wealthy, mercantile elite, permanently based in the host city and able to lead the community. A glance at the calendar of acts of naturalisation and denization for the eighteenth century reveals not a single Greek name, implying that no Greeks had the wealth and connections necessary to secure this official recognition of their right to live in England (Shaw 1923).

Instead, contemporary records reveal that most of the Greeks who passed through London in the eighteenth century were transient visitors. Not only were they not wealthy merchants but, on the contrary, they came to seek charity. Many were ecclesiastics of the Orthodox Church who came to gather donations to help their home congregations. Neophytos, Archbishop of Philippopolis in Thrace (now Plovdiv in Bulgaria) visited in 1701; Arsenios, Bishop of Thebaid, in 1712, and Yerasimos Avlonites, Bishop of Arkadia on Crete in 1762. Dositheos, Abbot of the monastery of the Pantokrator on Mount Athos stayed for some seven years in the late 1720s and early 1730s, but he too departed in due course. There were also other, less high-profile Orthodox priests, who toured the country making charitable collections for Christians under Ottoman rule, not always with the full approval of the authorities. Others claimed to be refugees, escaping persecution by the Ottoman authorities. Ioannis Nikolaides, who was in London between 1775 and 1782, described himself as the nephew of the Patriarch of Constantinople and said that he had escaped from a massacre of Christian Greeks (British Library, London Add. Ms 6194, f. 63; National Archives, London SP35/65/92; SP36/45/78; SP36/27/161; Historical Manuscripts Commission 1895: 44; Moore 1851: 10; Stubbings 1976: 316; Dawkins 1936: 324–6; Tillyrides 1978: 679–96;
There were Greeks who settled permanently in London and made their living there. Some were interpreters. Solomon Negri was in the service of the Moroccan envoy in London between 1718 and 1725 and Voltaire reported that in 1726 he had met a Smyrniot Greek who was the interpreter of the king of England. There were booksellers and librarians like Ioannis Karavelas who served as ‘library keeper’ at the Royal College of Physicians in the 1770s and those who supplied manuscripts to the bibliophile and Greek scholar, Humfrey Wanley (1672–1726), such as Nikolaos Rhodostomo of Corfu. The proprietor of the Grecian coffee house in Devereux Court between 1677 and 1728 was Yeoryios (George) Konstantinos who was probably from the island of Skopelos in the Northern Sporades (Voltaire 1877–85: viii. 59; Dyer 1814: ii. 382–3; Wanley 1966: i. 39, 116, 145, 147, 156, 160, 162, 164, 170, 173, ii. 218, 251, 334, 355, 365–6, 405, 457; Wanley 1989: 270–74, 281–2; Stubbings 1976: 316; Harris 2000: 1–13).

None of these people seems to have been wealthy enough to play a leading role in the London community and to organise the maintenance of an Orthodox church, in the way that the Chiot merchant Pandias Stephanos Rallis (1793–1865) was to do in the following century (Catsiyannis 1986). Consequently, although a Greek church was built in London in the later seventeenth century, it seems to have been slightly different from the examples cited above from other cities. It was not paid for by the Greeks themselves, but by charitable donations raised by Archbishop Yeorgirinis from a variety of local sources. Moreover, the venture was not a success. Although the building was completed and functioning by 1681, within a year it was taken over by the parish of St Martin’s and given to a congregation of French Huguenots. There was then no specifically Greek Orthodox place of worship in London until 1837 when a small chapel was established at Finsbury Circus (Bezodis 1966: 279–80, 281–2; Constantinides 1933: 5–7, 18–33; Barron 2006: 97–8; Catsiyannis 1986: 68–75; Harris 2002: 6).

It is therefore tempting to conclude that no Greek community as such existed in eighteenth-century London and that there was not one until the 1830s. Those Greeks who did find their way there were either merely passing through, or were isolated individuals, pursuing their own business in London and having little or no cohesion as a group. Rather than seeing the Greeks of London in the same light as those of Odessa or Marseilles, the parallel might rather be drawn with Ethiopia, where a number of Greeks are known to have lived in this period but where there was hardly a community as such (Natsoulas 1985: 63–76). In the second part of this chapter, however, it will be argued that such a conclusion would be inaccurate. There was a Greek community in London and, while it does not exactly fit the pattern elsewhere, it nevertheless had a certain cohesion and awareness of itself as a distinct group.

The starting point once again is the ill-fated Greek church of Soho. It is curious, if there were only a very few Greeks in London, that anyone should go to the trouble of building a church at all, and then having done so, dispose of it so
quickly. The answer lies in the type of people for whom the church was specifically built. When a delegation of Greeks led by the priest Daniil Voulgaris had petitioned the Privy Council for permission to build the church in January 1675, they had made it quite clear why it was needed. Many of their fellow Greeks were ‘serving on board his majesty’s fleete and in merchantmen and others with their families having settled here’ (National Archives, London PC2/64). Voulgaris’s assertion is confirmed by a later Greek visitor to England, Alexander Helladius, a native of Larissa, who had spent time as a student at Oxford in 1703. Helladius noted that Greeks, particularly those from the island of Lesvos, were to be found on ships of all nations, including English ones (Helladius 1714: 253, 274). Nor is it only Greek sources that make this claim. The records of the English Treasury, for example, record that the Patience which put in at London with a cargo of wine from La Rochelle at the end of 1677 had a Greek among its crew. The anatomist James Douglas (1675–1742) noted that Yeoryios Konstantinos, proprietor of The Grecian, had been a mariner before he went into the coffee business (Shaw 1911a: i. 818; Douglas 1727: 31–2).

The recruitment and pressing of Greek seamen onto English warships and merchantmen had been going on for some time. As early as 1675, 24 Greeks among the crew of a Tripolese vessel had been captured by Sir John Narborough. Not sure what to do with them, Narborough had written to the Admiralty for instructions and was told to use them as galley slaves. After a year, however, Narborough released them, perhaps because he was uneasy at using Christians as slaves (Tanner 1903–9: iv. 218–19, 295).

As the chronic shortage of men that constantly plagued the Navy throughout the eighteenth century grew worse, specific provision was made so that the shortfall could be made up from other sources. A change was made to the law in 1707–8 to allow foreign sailors to man British vessels, provided that at least a quarter of the crew (as opposed to three-quarters in the past) remained of British extraction. As an inducement to enlist, it was further enacted that foreign seamen who served for two years would be deemed to be natural-born subjects of the British Crown. The Admiralty even employed a recruiting agent, a Cretan called Nikolaos Zee, to bring in Greek, Turkish and Armenian volunteers during the Seven Years War of 1756–63. Nor was manpower sought only for the navy. In 1767 several hundred Greeks, mainly from Mani in the Peloponnese, were transported to Florida in order to establish a new silk industry at the appropriately named colony of New Smyrna (Statutes 1769: 338 = 6 Anne, c.37; Grant and Munro 1908–12: iv. 719; Lloyd 1968: 84, 122; Spence 2002: 30–37; Corse 1919; Panagopoulos 1966; Bailyn and DeWolfe 1986: 451–61).

This practice of recruiting Greek sailors, willing or pressed, inevitably led to some of them finding their way to London. Some captains were humane enough not to expect their Greek crewmen to serve outside the Eastern Mediterranean. Benjamin Hartley, master of the St John Pink, allowed Greeks who were reluctant to sail to Falmouth to disembark at Thessaloniki with their wages paid (Old Bailey 2003–7: T17370224-1). Others were not so considerate. Once a ship reached London and their services were no longer needed, it was common practice for the
Greek seamen to be discharged and effectively abandoned, without any means of getting home. Not surprisingly, some of them got into trouble. Matthew ‘Thorichy’ was indicted for murder in Whitechapel in May 1763 and an interpreter had to be found to enable him to conduct his defence (Old Bailey 2003–7: T17630518-34). He was acquitted but other stories did not end as happily. In about 1669 a Greek priest from Patras arrived in London looking for his brother who had been taken by a British frigate. His long and dangerous journey had a sad conclusion for it transpired that the brother had died in Holland and the priest had to return alone (National Archives, London SP29/270/24; Green 1894: 652–3). By the early years of the eighteenth century there were so many Greeks in this situation in London that an Anglian clergyman, Edward Stephens (d. 1706) published a pamphlet giving an account of their plight. Stephens claimed that there were about 40 or 50 Greeks aboard British ships and he urged that they be set at liberty, or at least allowed to serve together on the same ship (Stephens 1705).

The presence of the abandoned sailors explains who the Orthodox Church in Soho was for. There must have been a permanent group of Greek seafarers in London, perhaps between voyages, perhaps stranded and unable to get home, or perhaps, like Yeoryios Konstantinos, happy to stay and take advantage of the opportunities offered by a thriving, commercial city. The nature of the congregation also explains why the church in Soho was so short-lived. As Yeorgirinis himself had to admit, it was ‘inconveniently situated, being too remote from the abodes of most of the Grecians, dwelling chiefly in the furthest parts of the city’ (Yeorgirinis 1867: 165). In all probability they would have lived near the river Thames and to the east of the city, close to the places where the ships docked. Yeoryios Konstantinos opened his first coffee house at Wapping, which was probably where he found himself when his maritime career came to an end. Andrew George, who seems also to have once been a sailor, was running a tavern in Queen Street, Tower Hill in 1763. Half a century later, a parliamentary report noted that the population of nearby Shadwell was almost entirely composed of foreign sailors, including Greeks (Douglas 1727: 31; Old Bailey 2003–7: T17630413-31; House of Commons 1817: 195).

Yet while the presence of Greek sailors in London explains the decision to found a Greek church and its failure, it does not explain why no specifically Greek place of worship replaced it. It is certainly not that Greeks ceased to be present in London after 1682. Enough were there in 1705 for the patriarchate of Constantinople to express concern about their ‘irregular lifestyle’, presumably because there was no church where they could practise their Orthodox faith (Ffoulkes 1863: 499–500).

The answer is that, although there was no Greek church, Orthodox worship was provided for by the Russian embassy chapel. The chapel was established in

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2 Stephens made the same point in the manuscript of his ‘A Good and Necessary Proposal for the Restitution of Catholick Communion between the Greek Churches and the Church of England’. The passage was not, however, included in the printed version: Lambeth Palace Library, London, Ms 935, no. 30.
1716, largely thanks to the efforts of Iakov Seniavich, a member of the Russian mission in London, and it was housed in Exeter Exchange Court, off the Strand. Although the chapel was funded by the Russian government, for the first half of the eighteenth century it was staffed by two Greek priests, the Cypriot Archimandrite Yennadios (d. 1737), and his nephew, Vartholomaios Kassanos (1697–1746), who had originally arrived in the suite of Bishop Arsenios in 1712. During the period of their administration, the services were conducted in Greek, Greek books were used, and the locals seem to have regarded the congregation as being made up of ‘Grecians’ (Entick 1766: iv. 403–4; Constantinides 1933: 9–16; Cross 1980: 35–7; De Beer 1969: 399).

It would seem too that most of these Greeks were the same poor sailors for whom the original church had been founded, the new site close to the northern bank of the Thames being perhaps more convenient than Soho. The Russian ambassador wrote disparagingly of them in 1749, lamenting that ‘apart from three or four people who have reasonable clothes on their backs and a few Greek merchants who come briefly to trade, all are from the lowest strata: sailors, beggars and similar rabble’. Not surprisingly, the church was not wealthy. In 1753, one of the Russian priests complained that most of the paint had peeled off the iconostasis and he declared that he expected the building to fall down at any moment. Only the financial support of the Russian government kept the church in existence and later provided it with more prestigious accommodation, first in Burlington Gardens, then Great Portland Street and finally Welbeck Street (Cross 1980: 36).

It is this poverty which marks the Greek community of London out from others in the Hellenic diaspora in the eighteenth century. As far as London was concerned, however, the Greeks had much in common with other immigrant groups. Like the Huguenots and Palatine Protestants, they were seen as victims of religious persecution and so entitled to some sympathy and protection. They also had much in common with less favoured groups like London’s black population. There were considerable numbers of West Indians at certain times, particularly in the years immediately after the end of the American War of Independence in 1783, when many of those who had served with the British forces found themselves discharged and stranded in London (George 1966: 139–43; Cunningham 1897: 223–53; Walvin 1973: 46–73; Gerzina 1995: 19–25).

Yet although the Greeks of London were relatively poor and obscure, and dependent on charity first from British sympathisers and then from the Russian government, there can be no doubt that they constituted a distinct community rather than just a collection of transient individuals. This is certainly the impression given by an examination of the register of the chapel, written in Greek between 1721 and 1746 and in Russian thereafter, which is now lodged in the National Archives. The register shows clearly that many of the Greeks, who are known from other sources to have been in London in this period, attended the church. Nikolaos Rhodostomo, who sold books to Humfrey Wanley, acted as godfather to one of the children of Vartholomaios Kassanos in 1725. Yeoryios Konstantinos, the proprietor of The Grecian, stood as godfather to the daughter of Angelos Metaxas in August 1727.
The abbot of the Athonite Pantokrator monastery, Dositheos, was involved with the church during his visit to London in 1730. He acted as godfather to the son of Antonios Trifillis and his secretary, Nikolaos Drakon of Zante, did likewise at the christening of two other children (National Archives, London RG8/111, ff. 18v, 19v, 20, 20v: orig. pp. 158, 160, 161–2; Dawkins 1936: 325–6).

The register also provides some indication of how the community perpetuated itself. There appear to have been very few Greek women in London. Occasionally, British merchants and travellers brought back a wife acquired during a stay in Smyrna or another of the trading cities in the Levant. Among them were the Scottish physician, Andrew Turnbull (c.1718–92), who married a lady from Smyrna, and John Spiller who brought his Greek wife back with him to Richmond in 1667 and later secured her naturalisation by act of Parliament. These were, however, rare cases and such unions were often frowned upon. In 1705 George Bridges, treasurer of the Levant Company at Constantinople, was summarily dismissed when his employers discovered that he had married locally ‘to show a just and necessary resentment of so ill an example set to others by one in your station’ (National Archives, London PROB 11/354/403, SP105/115, 13 September 1705; Shaw 1911b: 100; House of Commons 1803: 24, 33; Chandler 1971: 60; Wood 1964: 244; Corse 1919: 15–18; Frangakis-Syrett 1992: 76–85).

The Greeks of London had little option but to find partners among local women and these marriages were recorded in the register of the Greek church. The priest Vartholomaios Kassanos, for example, married Elizabeth Barton in July 1724, which no doubt assisted him in learning the near perfect English with which he was later credited. Angelos Metaxas married Elizabeth Thompson in 1721, and Antonios Trifillis Elizabeth Fear in 1729. Intermarriage with local women does not seem to have led to any loss of religious identity, for these English wives all adopted their husbands’ Orthodox faith. Elizabeth Kassanos did so on the feast of the Assumption 1724, a month or so after her marriage. The children produced by the couples were all given Greek names, or at least names which could serve in both English and Greek. Vartholomaios and Elizabeth Kassanos’s daughter was christened Eleni, which could also pass muster as Helen. The three children of Angelos and Elizabeth Metaxas were named Maria, Elizabeth and Constantine. The son of Antonios and Elizabeth Trifillis, was christened Nicholas (National Archives, London RG8/111, ff. 18, 19–20v: orig. pp. 157, 159–62; Cross 1980: 36).

The wives of Greeks were not the only English members of the congregation. Although when he gave permission for the chapel the bishop of London had specifically stipulated that English people were not to be allowed to attend, on 26 March 1730 Susanna Dunn was received into Orthodoxy there, without apparently having married a Greek or Russian. Robert Brait, his wife Elizabeth, and their children, Robert and Sarah, were received on Christmas day, 1731. During 1732 the church received Sarah Jackson, William Scott and his wife Anne, and William Thomas with his wife and two children. The Braits later had their daughter Mary baptised in the chapel (National Archives, London RG8/111, ff. 18–18v, 20v: orig. pp. 157–8, 162; Cross 1980: 35). These conversions substantiate the
Greek Diaspora and Migration since 1700

claim of Archbishop Arsenios that, during his tour of England in 1712–16, many people had asked him to receive them into the Orthodox Church, but he had refused because there was no Orthodox place of worship. They also explain why Vartholomaios Kassanos worked so hard to translate Greek liturgical books into English. Throughout the century, there were a small number of conversions from among the establishment as well. The Reverend Edward Stephens, the author of the tract on the plight of Greek seamen, allegedly died believing himself to be a member of the Orthodox Church, though there is no evidence that he was ever formally received. The most high profile English proselyte was Frederick North (1766–1827), fifth earl of Guilford, who converted secretly on Corfu during the 1790s (Constantinides 1933: 10–11; Hearne 1885–1921: ix. 250, x. 201–2, xi. 52; Ware 1976: 247–56; Cross 1980: 36, 39).

The register also shows that as well as constituting the focal point of a small Greek community, and perpetuating and even extending the Orthodox faith in London, the chapel probably included in its congregation a few of those enterprising merchants who were such a feature of the diaspora. The Russian ambassador mentioned that there were some and one was probably Stefanos Serkis, described as a merchant of Smyrna, who stood as a godfather in 1729. Margaritis Moschos, described in the register as a ‘Rhomaic merchant’, stood as synteknos, the person giving away the bride, at the marriage of the Russian Alexis Partzikalas and Anna Ramble in July 1745 (National Archives RG8/111, f. 19v–20: orig. pp. 160–61).

The presence of these people, however fleeting it may have been, shows that just as the Greeks of London were not isolated individuals but a small community, so that community was in touch with other, larger Greek enclaves. Passes issued by the British government to Greeks leaving the country show that there was a great deal of coming and going between London and the Greek communities in Amsterdam, Minorca and Livorno. The Amsterdam community took a concerned interest in the fate of the Orthodox chapel in London and Ioannis ‘Majendie’, presbyter of the Greek and Russian church in Amsterdam was in London for several weeks during 1763. Similarly, when Grigorios Kassava arrived in London in 1744 to present a petition from the Greek merchants of Minorca asking to be made British subjects, it was the priest Vartholomaios Kassanos who acted as his interpreter and probably also as his host (National Archives, London SP44/339/116; SP44/344/523; SP44/387/375; SP44/389/54; Hardy 1895: 206; Hardy 1913: 249; Mahaffy 1924: 327, 336; Historical Manuscripts Commission 1895: 44; Historical Manuscripts Commission 1876: 323; Ledward 1931: 112, 114, 117–18, 202; Skouvaras 1964: 40–42, 62–3). The London Greek community should therefore be seen as part of the network provided by the wider Greek diaspora, and not as a separate phenomenon.

To conclude, it cannot be said that the Greek community was one of the most important in the Greek diaspora of the eighteenth century. It was too small and poor to rival Odessa or Marseilles and was to remain so until the 1830s. Nevertheless of its existence there can be no doubt, while the evidence of the Russian embassy
chapel register suggests that it kept its identity and sense of community as successfully as the larger and more prosperous colonies.

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Contextualising Greek Trade Migrations

Recent historiographical trends have pointed up trade diasporas, transnational networks of merchants and bankers (Curtin 1984; Baghdiantz McCabe et al. 2005). These debates have extended the idea of diaspora, very often used rhetorically by national historiographies and aspirations, into a field for conceptualising many interconnected processes. It is also evident that the long history and the long-lasting implications of the historical diasporas, or ‘victim diasporas’ (e.g. Jewish, Greek, Armenian), can make diaspora one of the most problematic conceptual alternatives to nation-based historical narratives.

Diaspora historiography has often emphasised cultural bonds, transnational organisations and networks linking people across geographical boundaries, thus opening the way to more global approaches. The problem that emerges from this viewpoint, which examines the diaspora as a set of transnational and emotional ties, is that it often disconnects the diaspora from any historical context. The diaspora is presented as a coherent unit of geographically dispersed people bound by sentiment, culture and history. What, however, are these cultural bonds? They can be described as a set of human beliefs and values viewed as holistically bounded deterministic entities. Nonetheless, a cultural analysis may focus on how discourse, representations, social behaviour and organisation are historically shaped. It may analyse the mechanisms and assumptions by which culture shapes the life of diasporic people or groups, exacting a more sophisticated and historical understanding of culture (Clifford 1994: 302–38; McKeown 1999: 306–37). Key questions about ethnic or religious diasporas have often created more problems than they have solved. Standing back a little, as it were, from the ethnic diaspora label, we will focus here on the main economic activity of diasporic groups: trade. Curtin defined trade diasporas, as communities of merchants living among aliens in associated networks (Curtin 1984: 3). The historiographical shift to ‘world history’ placed emphasis on the importance of trade diasporas. Traders facilitated the exchange of goods and also served as transmitters of ideas (Pomeranz and Topik 2006: 9–11).

Attributing economic value to ethnic minorities engaged in trade has been a long-standing historical tendency. It has often obscured the role of central government, political authorities and institutions, to the extent that ethnic trading
minorities have sometimes been presented as agents of progress and liberalism against totalitarian empires.

The world of the Greek trade diaspora was created during the period of Ottoman rule, when a large part of the population migrated, mobilised primarily by economic factors. These migrants engaged in commerce or supplied specialist skills. This economic migration of Greeks spread within the ‘unified’ territory of the Ottoman Empire, which included the geographical area corresponding to the later Greek state. Trade was an economic activity which introduced a large number of local merchants, as well as diaspora merchants from the Ottoman Empire, into international and inter-ethnic transactions. Business transactions were the platform upon which merchants of different origin, nationality and religion met in the economic centres of the Ottoman, Russian, Hapsburg and British Empires. Merchants and their activities shaped the market economy, the characteristics of which, to a certain extent, constituted a homogeneous culture. Did all deterritorialised social agents of the same origin share a system of beliefs, opinions and mercantile practices? Did the common search for opportunities constitute a homogenous social and cultural identity?

The organisation of mercantile migration from Ottoman-ruled Greece to the territories of the Hapsburg, Russian and British Empires was based on the creation of networks capable of providing power and consequently profit to members of the group. A family or an ethnic/local group could combine, utilise and circulate economic and cultural capital through characteristic institutions, by projecting collective dynamism and imposing terms of moral economy – combining cultural mores and economic activity – on its members. The organisation of the Greek networks in the territories of the aforementioned empires presents common traits (Chatziioannou 2005b: 371–82).

The great empires attracted ethnic groups of merchants in the pre-industrial period by offering economic opportunities, institutional organisation and an ideological frame of reference to each ethnic/religious group. Frequently the empire’s institutional framework offered homogenising advantages to the group itself. The different ethnic minorities, motivated by the same economic incentives, migrated to the economic centres of those empires. The process of migration offered a unique opportunity for acquiring knowledge of the new countries, as well as of new ideas and new business practices. Processes of transformation in identity, culture and cultural tradition sometimes pass unnoticed in national narratives. In any case the common aim for all the ethnic or religious diasporas was the accumulation of capital, which was based on personal labour, family help and individual ingenuity in exploiting business opportunities.

To the set of working methods analysing diaspora, community, networks, we could add those of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is examined according to the ability to manage information and can be examined as a constitutive element of human capital, like technical specialisation and a capacity for organisational management. In the nineteenth century the entrepreneur was shaped by a complex web of typical and atypical economic factors, as well as by
a series of psychological ones. An interpretation based on psychological evidence enhances the incentive for fulfilling personal achievements, in which the main reward is satisfaction with the achievement itself, while monetary reward is the outward symbol of this success. The special incentives that define non-economic factors, such as psychological security, recognition and prestige in the community, are differentiated even within different generations of the same family (Wilken 1979: 17–21).

The history of the Chiots after the devastation of their island in 1822 confirms the importance of the psychological factor, that is the importance of a group’s violent loss of economic and social status in shaping the entrepreneur and causing them to strive to regain an ideal social position. The same history also creates collective memory, which underpins entrepreneurial activity. The story of Loukis Laras, written in the 1870s by Dimitrios Vikelas, describes the moral trajectory of a victim of the Greek revolution of 1821, who survives financial ruin and moves to England. It is the success story of a self-made man, a member of a distinguished local group engaged in a constant quest for business opportunities (Llewelyn Smith 2006; Chatziioannou 2004). Thus the group is constituted in the space of migration and from it emerges the charismatic personality of the entrepreneur.

Whereas we can satisfactorily gauge the participation of Greek migrants in commerce and other activities in their place of settlement in the Ottoman Empire, the Black Sea ports and the Italian Peninsula in the eighteenth century, we know very little about the impact of British economic and social development on the business activities and business culture of the Greeks in Britain (London, Manchester, Liverpool) in the nineteenth century. Apart from a thorough overview of the mercantile shipping (Harlaftis 1996: 55–62), we know very little about the pattern of life of the Greek immigrants in any of these cities or what form their business activities (mainly in Manchester and Liverpool) took.

Britain became a crossroads in the development of Greek trading companies. The organisation of the Greek communities in London, Manchester and Liverpool followed the model of the Greek communities of the previous phase in the Italian Peninsula, and was the launching pad principally for Greek migrant entrepreneurs from Mediterranean ports and other Anatolian cities, as well as from the Greek state after the 1830s. The cultural model of the British businessman was a strong factor in reinforcing and maintaining Greek entrepreneurship there (Chatziioannou 2005a: 145–66).

The liberal British political and economic climate offered conditions conducive to business competition for newcomers: Greeks, Germans, Jews, Scots and Irish. These were well-structured entrepreneurial groups in the nineteenth century, operating mainly through family enterprise. Competition de facto developed mostly in the field of business activities, and the most successful and enduring enterprises were to go through a process of social and cultural integration into
bourgeois British life: the Ralli, Rodocanachi and Ionides families being cases in point. Settlement in Britain in the nineteenth century offered Greek expatriates the unique experience of a competitive business environment and coexistence with a socially stratified society. Adapting G. Simmel’s thesis on sociological interest analysis may help us understand the importance of competition. Simmel wrote on the interests that drive people to form social relations, and argued that it was only through these social relations that such interests could be expressed. Competition in this context implies parallel efforts, whereby one tries to do what one’s competitor does rather than destroying them (Smelser and Swedberg 2005: 350).

Long before the nineteenth century London was the pre-eminent centre for almost all types of trade in England. The City underwrote a great part of the financial transactions in the country’s provinces; the Royal Exchange became the primary meeting place for merchants and several hundred brokers who acted as intermediaries (Kynaston 1994: 9–11). From the end of the eighteenth century the development of other economic centres such as Manchester and Liverpool was spectacular. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Greeks – the majority Chiots – from London arrived in Manchester, along with other European entrepreneurs. The Chiots, with the same enterprise with which they had grasped the challenge of Syros and Piraeus in the Greek state, discovered industrial Manchester and the port of Liverpool. These were the years following the abolition of the Corn Laws (1846), and Greeks continued to develop their commercial activities through importing agricultural products from the Eastern Mediterranean (e.g. raisins, cotton, wheat) to England (Harlaftis 1996: 40–51).

Free trade became an important feature of British imperial ideology. Alongside trade, ideology and migration were the wheels of economic and social progress in Britain by the mid-nineteenth century. Economic liberalism became a standard aspiration in British politics. Free trade meant the repeal of tariffs. The abolition of the Corn Laws was a major initiative in favour of free trade which forced the decline of protectionism. The leading British industries were in textiles and metallurgy, and depended on export markets. A British-centred globalism was created. British industries imported raw materials from all over the world. Cotton was imported from the USA, but the American Civil War (1861–5) and the Union blockade led to major reform of this market and an increase in cotton imports from Egypt and India (Black 2004: 192–6). With the repeal of the Navigation Acts in Britain, in the mid-nineteenth century, free trade took off, resulting in a 15-fold increase in the volume of intercontinental trade between 1850 and 1914, and an almost 11-fold increase in investment in shipping over the same period (Fisher and

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2 From as early as 1780 every merchant and manufacturer in Manchester had created a partnership with a merchant-banker in London (Chapman 1992: 43). In 1830 the first passenger railway in the world had been inaugurated between these two cities, but until the middle of the century commercial traffic between the two cities went via the rivers and the ship canals (Kidd 1993: 32). In the winter of 1864 some Greeks attended a theatrical performance on this railway line (see Greek magazine Pandora, 1 February 1864, 559).
There were seminal technological changes in the maritime sector too, with corresponding adaptations in some European and North American ports. Liverpool was one of the old ports that successfully adapted to the new needs (Hyde 1971).

For British history the last decades of the nineteenth century were the time when imperialism and colonial expansion were at their peak, with serious economic, social and cultural transformations taking place in the country and the colonies. Colonialism was a key concept at this time. The conquest of Egypt in 1882 consolidated Britain’s position in the Mediterranean, limiting French expansion in the region and securing the route to India via the Suez Canal. It should be stressed that the Greeks were present and economically active in Egypt from the 1830s. As a result of the major territorial expansion in the 1880s and 1890s, Britain had dominion over one-fifth of the world’s land surface by the eve of the twentieth century (Black 2004: 230). The peopling of the Empire became a vast and complicated enterprise. Nowadays it is admitted that the migrant’s life-changing decisions were shaped perhaps less by the policies of governments and emigration societies than by local conditions, private incentives and support from family, friends and community through multifaceted networks (Harper 1999: 75–6). The British were migrating to the colonies and international centres and outsiders were establishing themselves in Britain, grasping economic opportunities mentioned in the outline above.

Greek migration to Britain was a voluntary process based on trade. The expansion of imperial trade opened up new opportunities related to export–import activities for established and aspiring merchant entrepreneurs. Besides, there was a cultural background that may have helped Greek migrants to settle down and penetrate the British economic and social environment, as numerically small groups. Even before the mid-nineteenth century classical studies were flourishing in British universities, organising Greek language courses, encouraging travel to Greek archaeological sites, promulgating Neoclassicism in architecture and the liberal arts (Jenkyns 1980; Turner 1981). All these developments coincided with the boosting of Greek mercantile activities in Britain.

Greeks usually created introvert communities in their place of settlement, as they had done in the previous phase of trade migration. They established and restructured trade networks based on personal trust, which enabled them to enlarge and finance commercial operations. Most Greek immigrants were involved with their business affairs, attending their religious services and nurturing their national pride, mainly through their support of Greek language and culture. These were also the key elements of social and economic life for the first Greek-born merchants in London (Magriotis 1986), Manchester and Liverpool. Mutual aid, hard work, discipline and a strict hierarchy were the essential elements that had enabled Greek mercantile networks to flourish economically in the Eastern Mediterranean from the last quarter of the eighteenth century and they continued to obtain in Britain in the early nineteenth century. Right from the start the Greek language and the Orthodox Christian religion were the cohesive elements for the Greek migrants,
but these had a different impact where Greek communities were created from the eighteenth century onwards.

If, for example, we consider Orthodoxy as the main common cultural factor that enabled Greek merchants to establish themselves in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, or as the common cultural platform between Greek and Serb migrants in the Balkans and Central Europe, we must consider what the pivotal cultural element was that helped Greeks establish themselves in Britain and to become naturalised British citizens. In this case it is not the ‘Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant’ (Stoianovich 1960) who sets the tone of the socio-economic milieu, but a British merchant-banker, industrialist, cotton merchant and/or antiquarian.

In addition to the liberal economic climate, we must take into consideration the rigorous dedication of the British bourgeoisie to education and art, which led to the establishment of Greek classical studies in British universities, the revival of Neoclassical architecture and art, and the fashion for collecting artworks from ancient civilisations (e.g. Greek, Roman or Chinese), and the promotion of avant-garde artistic movements. An exemplary figure was Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792–1872), an affluent and devoted collector of books and manuscripts. Phillipps was easily seduced by the notorious forger of Greek manuscripts Constantine Simonides during the years 1853–63 in London (Munby 1967: 202–17). In Victorian England the cultural features that combined antiquarianism, bibliophilia and a love of learning with classical moral and aesthetic values facilitated the Greeks’ assimilation into a flourishing bourgeois society.

In this respect it is important to mention three generations of the Ionides family and George Eumorfopoulos (1863–1939), all leading art collectors in Victorian London. George Eumorfopoulos’s parents were Aristides, an importer of Russian wheat in Liverpool, and Mariora Scaramanga, a descendant of a well-known international mercantile family originally from Chios. Eumorfopoulos became a collector of oriental ceramics, married Julia Scaramanga and worked for the Ralli brothers for over 30 years (Manginis 2001–2 and 2003). Another significant example of integration is the participation of some second-generation Greeks in England in the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Marie Spartali-Stillman (1843–1927), daughter of Michael Spartali an import–export merchant in London, a Pre-Raphaelite artist herself, was friends with and modelled for artists like Ford Madox Brown and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The versatile artist Maria Terpsithea Zambaco (1843–1914), daughter of the cotton merchant Dimitrios Cassavettis and Efrosini Ionides participated actively in this same movement as well as working with Spartali-Stillman (Marsh and Gerrish Nunn 1997: 131–7). The Pre-Raphaelite movement in the second half of the nineteenth century was an artistic circle looking for patrons, which perhaps made it all the more open to foreigners. Victorian bourgeois culture and lifestyle could have been the main vehicle for a complex process of transformation in identity, ethnic culture and tradition in the circles of the Greek trade diaspora in England.
Grasping Economic Opportunities in England

Manchester, the ‘shock city’ (Briggs 1968: 56) was the place that Disraeli described in 1843 as the Athens of his time. He was referring by implication to the progress of a Neoclassical city in a prosperous era. Nineteenth-century Manchester was dominated by a class-ridden society in which employers and employees were separated not only by work, income and accommodation, but also by social values and behaviour patterns, in other words by different lifestyles (Davies and Fielding 1992: 1–2). The rapid industrialisation of the city also reinforced its commercial character. Nearby Liverpool became the centre for buying raw cotton and Manchester the world centre for selling manufactured cotton goods, a city full of warehouses and mills. In the last decades of the eighteenth century, not only had trading houses been established there, but also the renowned Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (1781), since peculiar social and economic conditions had been formed which led to the enhancement of the typology of merchants and industrialists, better known at the time as the ‘Manchester man’ (Kidd 1993: 21–32, 72–80).

In this highly socially stratified city, several foreign communities were established during the nineteenth century: German, French, Italian, Greek and others (see Table 3.1). It is of major interest to identify certain cultural features that determined intra-ethnic and intra-religious relations and rivalries. John Scholes has bequeathed us a precious primary source, a register of all foreign merchants who relocated to Manchester between 1784 and 1870. In this manuscript he reports that the Greeks first arrived in Manchester in 1828, ‘as transporters to Constantinople only one or two for a time’, and then they became more numerous around 1834–5. This reveals the importance of the international Eastern Mediterranean centre (Constantinople) as one of the major exit points for Greeks and other ‘Orientals’ heading for England.

The first nucleus of Greek merchants assembled for their religious services in Cheetham Hill Road in north Manchester, in the area where the Town Hall (1853–5) and the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue (1874) were later erected. A private house served as the Orthodox church of the Annunciation until 1848;

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3 For the organisation and the volume of trading transactions see Redford (1934 and 1956) and Farnie (1979).
4 Manchester Central Library, Scholes’ Manchester Foreign Merchants, MS FF 382-S35. John Scholes (1837–1924?), signs as ‘compiler of the manuscript collection of merchants being foreigners A.D. 1870 in the city of Manchester’. He also declares that he was son of James and Sarah, and grandson of Samuel and Margaret.
5 Archive of the Greek community of Manchester, from the series of unclassified manuscript registers. Register containing the regulations of the Orthodox church in Manchester.
6 See the account of the Greek Orthodox community in the local newspaper Manchester Examiner & Times, 9 May 1860, 7.
some years later the church was transferred to the neighbouring district of Strangeways.

What is striking is that although John Scholes acknowledges a considerable difference in religion and customs of ‘oriental merchants’ coming from the East, he implies that Greeks, Turks, Armenians and Arabs somehow formed one body of foreign merchants, since they were shipping goods ‘to the same quarter of the globe’. Nonetheless, he reiterates a common view of his time, that ‘a Greek was always a Greek and is a Greek’, and he distinguished the Greek firms established in Manchester, describing Eustratio Ralli 1828 as ‘the most antique firm in the city’. At the same time, he paid tribute to the ‘the great monetary house’ of the German Nathan Mayer Rothschild of Manchester (1801–11), and the Greek houses of Michael Ralli (1838), Ralli & Mavrojani (1840), Antoni Laskaridi (1833), Stephen Franghiadi (1834), Calvocoressi Bros (1837), Negreponte Bros and Coronio (1837), Argenti-Sechiari and Co. (1840), G.M. Mavrogordato & Co. (1840) and Paul Cababe (1840). He went on to praise the Armenian Hadjick Capamagian & Co. (1838) and the Turkish consul and merchant Abdullah Yalibi (1846–7).

Table 3.1 Ethnic/national groups in Manchester (1820–70)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GERMAN</th>
<th>‘ORIENTALS’</th>
<th>FRENCH</th>
<th>ITALIANS</th>
<th>OTHERS</th>
<th>‘ORIENTALS’: Greeks, Armenians, Arabs after 1848</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1855-59</td>
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<td>1865-69</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: J. Scholes, Manchester Foreign Merchants, MS FF 382-S35 (Manchester Central Library). Notes

a. Ethnic and national groups first appeared in Manchester in the early 1820s with a small number of entrepreneurs (190) which had almost decupled over a period of 50 years (1790).

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7 The much praised merchant had died in London while Scholes was still finishing his account of foreign merchants in Manchester.
b. The first immigrants were Germans who made up 82 per cent of the foreign community between 1820 and 1830.

c. In the same years the French and Italians were arriving too. Even though they were present from the early 1820s, they remained a small minority throughout the next 50 years.

d. From the middle of the nineteenth century ‘Orientals’ (comprising Greeks, Turks, Armenians and Arabs) arrived in large numbers and by 1870 they outnumbered all other ethnic and national groups in Manchester.

The increased presence of merchants from the East in the 50-year period 1820–1870 was a consequence of the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Treaty of 1838, which initiated the mass introduction of Manchester cotton goods to the Ottoman Empire. That was the beginning of a long-lasting domination of British manufactured goods which was only ended by World War I (Redford 1934: 199).

Although Greece had been an independent state since the 1830s, associated with an identifiable ancient culture and with consular representation in England, it seems that it was as part of the East or the ‘Orient’, as in the case of John Scholes’s testimony, that Greece’s presence in nineteenth-century England was sometimes perceived. Since the early nineteenth century Armenians had been moving to Manchester from Constantinople alongside the Greeks and they used the same church. The first Armenians settled there as silk merchants in 1835. By 1862 it is estimated that there were 30 Armenian businesses in the city and their religious services had by then separated from the Greek Orthodox, as was the case with the Orthodox Serb merchants in Trieste who established a new church of their own in 1869. The Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in Manchester was consecrated in 1870 in the south of the city.\(^8\) We can assume that in the early years of settlement, in the 1840s to 1860s, Greeks and Armenians led parallel lives in Manchester due to their common origin in the Ottoman Empire. The initial close relationship of the Greeks with their fellow Orthodox Albanians and Serbs is a phenomenon well known from the Greek communities in the Italian Peninsula, the Balkans and Central Europe. It seems that religious services were initially celebrated together by Orthodox Greeks and Armenians, but they went their separate ways after the enlargement of their respective trading groups in Manchester. The first concern of the migrant merchants was to bring together the pan-Orthodox community and to found a church with public-benefit facilities. The next concern of the Greek community was to take care of its dead. In 1872 they acquired part of the Ardwick Cemetery for the burial of Greek Orthodox residents in Manchester.\(^9\)

On 8 May 1860 the Orthodox church of the Annunciation was founded in Higher Broughton, in north Manchester where the majority of Greek immigrants

\(^8\) Greeks and the Serbs shared a common church in Trieste from 1753 up to 1782 (Katsiardi-Hering 2001: 522). For the Armenians in Manchester see George (2002: 4).

\(^9\) Ardwick Cemetery in Manchester was opened in 1838 and closed in 1950.
resided. The foundation stone was laid along with an urn containing an issue of the *Manchester Examiner & Times* newspaper and Greek and British coins.\(^\text{10}\) This was a characteristic act that underlines a successful collaboration and coexistence. The principles of free trade were one of the major issues concerning local society in the first phase of the Chiot migration in Manchester. Advocates of the Free Trade Movement and C.P. Scott, the Unitarian editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, had publicly thanked the Greeks for their support (Frangopoulos 1969: 118–19). Even so the Greeks of Manchester had been characterised by British writers as the most inward-looking community (Frangopoulos 1963–5: 203). The reasons for this should be sought in the social structures and the cultural alienation vis-à-vis other immigrant groups. Other migrants from the East (such as Armenians or Turks) surrounded the Greek presence in Manchester until the mid-nineteenth century. Although the first Greek migrants were the Chiot merchants, from the 1840s onward the Greek presence in Manchester was reinforced by other commercial entrepreneurs, profiting from the economic opportunities arising from British free-trade policy. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Greeks had a distinct national and religious character, and faced an economic transition due to the restructuring of the trade economy, while assimilation into the local society for second-generation Greeks in Manchester had already begun.

Liverpool was a vital hub in the wider world of commerce and of the British Empire, and the basis of its prosperity lay in the triad: shipping–trade–port development. It was only natural that the inhabitants, locals and immigrants, who set up their businesses on the basis of this economic scheme, should enjoy more and different opportunities than those in many other places in Europe. Between 1701 and 1801 the population of Liverpool increased almost 14-fold, from 5,715 to 78,000 inhabitants, and in the course of the nineteenth century it grew eight-fold to 685,000 inhabitants in 1901 (Sharples 2004: 10). The city attracted countless immigrants, mainly from Ireland, where the famine in the 1840s resulted in mass emigration to Liverpool, bringing about an increase in its Catholic population and the building of many Catholic churches. Liverpool held first place in British trade with America, as well as in passenger transport in the nineteenth century. The city’s commercial character gave a ‘practical tone’ to its public life. Liverpool kept its commercial character, despite the economic and political changes that took place in the first half of the nineteenth century. A conspicuous Stock Market for commodities was built behind the City Hall between 1803 and 1808, and around it sprang up civic buildings in which transactions were conducted. Furthermore, the city acquired its Neoclassical architectural style, the prevalence of which in the period 1815–40 should be emphasised here. Liverpool then was frequently compared with the maritime cities of antiquity and the adoption of the Greek

\(^{10}\) See the account in the local newspaper *Manchester Examiner & Times*, 9 May 1860, 7. It had been designed by British architects in the Neoclassical style and T.P. Vryzakis had been invited from Munich to execute the wall-paintings. It was consecrated on 6 October 1861, see the report from Manchester by Parmenidis (1861).
Revival style took on a special symbolism, beyond mere imitation or fashion (Sharples 2004: 12–13).

What brought Greeks to Liverpool in the nineteenth century and in what numbers? The settlement of Greek merchant-entrepreneurs in Liverpool, as in nearby Manchester, is conspicuous in the Victorian Age (1837–1901), the period in which the Greek state was concurrently organising its national and political identity. The number of Greeks who settled in Liverpool in the Victorian age was relatively small. In the British census of 1881, of a total population of 500,000, only 180 declared Greece as their place of origin or birth.11 Of these, 80 had British surnames. These were British citizens who came from Greece. How can they be accounted for? It is probable that in 1864, when the Ionian Islands passed from being a British Protectorate to incorporation in the Greek state, most of the Britons returned home. A portion of the repatriated Greek-born British from the Ionian Islands is encountered in the British censuses, declaring Greece as their place of origin and indeed specifying Corfu, Zakynthos and so on.

Among the Greek surnames registered in Liverpool are the international families of Chiot entrepreneurs, such as Ralli, Rodocanachi, Schilizzi, and others less well known. Most of the Greeks recorded in the 1881 census had been born in Liverpool or its outskirts; that is, they were the second generation of immigrants from Greece, whose parents had made their home in the great port city of northwest England during the 1830s. This pioneering group of immigrants had been professionally involved with commerce and resided in one particular part of the city. Names and places of origin conferred a distinctive ethnic identity.

In their daily life in Liverpool, the most characteristic architectural reference point for the group of immigrants from Greece was the Orthodox church of St Nicholas, which is still standing. Built by British architects between 1864 and 1870, it was, according to British sources, modelled on the plan of the Byzantine church of St Theodore at Constantinople (Sharples 2004: 245).12 It is interesting to note here the identification with the Byzantine heritage attributed to the nineteenth-century Greeks of Liverpool.

England in the mid-nineteenth century not only offered opportunities for a career in business but also excellent conditions for studying, in the framework of a general promotion of science and technology. The typology of the Greek migrants in England in the nineteenth century encompasses the Chiot merchant corresponding more or less to Vikelas’ s hero of Loukis Laras, the self-made man who survived the massacre of Chios (1822), an entrepreneur recovering from a trauma, for whom sentiments of loss, anger and sorrow become the motivation for achievement and success. The Chiot merchant of the post-massacre period

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11 I would like to thank Prof. R. Lee for permitting me access to the census data gathered for the Mercantile Liverpool Project, University of Liverpool.

12 The church of St Theodore was converted in the fifteenth century into the Molla Gurani mosque and still stands in the district of Vefa. For a plan and longitudinal section of the church/mosque see Kırımtayrf (2001: 28–31).
can also be compared to the merchants of the previous phase, those in the Greek communities of the Italian Peninsula and Central Europe. Such men were merchant partners in Greek networks scattered across port cities of the Mediterranean. These networks extended to London, Manchester and Liverpool after the 1830s, and were focused on the same type of activities.

Vikelas and his hero Loukis Laras, the Melas family (Yeoryios, Konstantinos, Vassilios and Leon), Stephanos Xenos, and many others represent the same type of Greek merchant migrants in Britain, a Mediterranean entrepreneur. They were descendants of merchants or had been trained in the ambiance of Greek commercial networks active in the Eastern Mediterranean from the late eighteenth century. They were prominent merchants who were involved in inter-Ottoman trade and who also participated in the international business of Ottoman trade with Britain. This group collaborated with an equally high-profile group based in Constantinople: Greek financiers such as Andreas Syngros. By the time Syngros visited London in the 1870s the changing trading pattern in the Greek mercantile community there was apparent: ‘I had observed in the Greeks in London the destructive tendency towards profiteering and neglect of the serious trade through which our fathers, with greatest patience and parsimony of expenses, had amassed those significant fortunes and had succeeded in becoming most essential factors, mainly in those branches of trade, that is grain, tiftic, etc., as import goods to England, and all manner of colonial products as export goods from there to the whole of the East’ (Syngros 1908, vol. 2: 267). From the mingling of the Mediterranean merchants and the Stock Exchange speculators, the new type of Greek migrant-entrepreneur emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century; the merchant who established family-based multinational companies involved in trade, shipping and finance, like the Vagliano brothers. The great traders followed an entrepreneurial path from the Levant to the City of London, becoming merchant bankers, ship-owners and participating in joint-stock companies (Chatziioannou and Harlaftis 2007: 13–40; Harlaftis 2007: 237–68).

The changing entrepreneurial path of the Greek merchants in Britain is also noted by Stefanos Xenos. His testimony as to the changing pattern of trading in London is revelatory:

Mr. Andrew W. inherited from his father a small but respectable and profitable business. The father had traded after the old style. His mode was safe but not brilliant. He preferred reasonable but secure profits to grand possibilities attended by great risks. In short, he was a man of the old school. I need not remark that the City of London is very different to that which obtained forty years, or even twenty years ago. Many a stately commercial fabric of the present day is based solely upon paper. (Xenos 1869: 309)

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13 Syngros disliked the English weather and way of life, but contested with financial practices of the City (Syngros 1908, vol. 2: 234–9).
It was trade that ensured cultural continuity in the Greek communities of Britain. In the final years of the nineteenth century the typology of Greek merchants in Britain diversified in order to correspond to the needs of the British imperial economy.

In the Victorian age Greek merchants flourished in the general export–import trade, participated in the Egyptian cotton boom from the 1860s and had a strong presence in the trade in grain and currants to London and Liverpool. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century many of them either fell into decline, like the Melas and Xenos merchant houses, or continued to make profits by speculating on the London Stock Exchange. In many cases their descendants ceased to be merchants. From the last decades of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, Greeks and Greek-speaking subjects of the dissolving Ottoman Empire continued to migrate to England as merchant entrepreneurs. Some of them became employees in the long-lasting and prosperous Greek merchant house of the Ralli brothers. This firm, one of the best examples of multinational companies, constitutes a unique example in business history of an international company of Greek origin (Jones 2000: 24–5). I would suggest that the main connecting node in the Greek networks in England were the Ralli brothers who gathered a number of Greek migrants to work in their branch offices. Among them were Argyris Eftaliotis, Alexandros Pallis and Dimitrios Fotiadis, who not only accrued business know-how but also created a Greek literature of their own.

Greeks in England shared common cultural features concerning the preservation of their language and Christian Orthodox religion. They also acquired bourgeois tastes prevalent in Victorian England such as the appreciation of the arts and art collecting. The presence of some strong mercantile networks like that of the Ralli brothers created the prevailing view of Greeks as people who tended to cluster together and form interrelated networks, a view that has been vindicated – especially for London. The fact that the Ralli family were among the earliest Greek arrivals in London (1818), the most renowned and successful paradigm, as well as an enduring focal point for other Greek migrants, helped to create this view. Greeks in Manchester and Liverpool constituted a world of their own; by settling in and adapting themselves to a highly competitive environment, where other ethnic and national groups were economically active at the same time. Greeks in London, Manchester and Liverpool acted as intermediaries for British trade throughout the nineteenth century by importing raw materials and commodities from the Eastern Mediterranean and exporting textiles from Lancashire. By the 1870s Greeks in London had become more involved in financial transactions or shipping. These opportunities for business diversification were accessible there, while the Greeks in the other two English centres continued their previous activities until they faded away before World War I, giving way to the newcomers of a similar culture, the Cypriots (Frangopoulos 1969: 118–19).
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Chapter 4
Repatriation, Migration or Readjustment: Egyptian Greek Dilemmas of the 1950s
Anthony Gorman

Introduction

In the decade and a half immediately after the Second World War the Greek population of Egypt, a distinctive vibrant presence since the nineteenth century, went from a position of apparent prosperity into terminal decline. The phenomenon has most often been characterised in terms of political changes on a national or international scale, such as a consequence of the wane of British imperial power, the subsequent rise of strident Arab nationalism, and the Egyptian government policies of nationalisation and state socialism. While these factors certainly played an important part in determining the ultimate fortunes of the Egyptian Greek community, they overlook the discussion going on within the community itself on how best to deal with the changes in postwar Egypt. In examining some of this local debate about the future of Egyptian Hellenism, this chapter seeks to explore the attitudes of a group that has been variously conceived as a foreign colony, an ethnic community, a network of communal institutions and a diaspora phenomenon. In doing so, it seeks to shed light on aspects of a community identity that could talk of repatriation to Greece at the same time as it asserted that Egyptian Greeks had an integral place in Egyptian society and regarded Egypt as their ‘second patrida’.  

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1 Among the substantial Greek-language literature on Egyptian Hellenism, much of it of a nostalgic, celebratory or memorialist kind, Yialourakis (1967) stands out. Of the English language scholarship, Kitroeff (1989) provides the best study of the period 1919–37 while Karanasou’s essay (1999) offers a useful if limited overview of the period 1805–1961.

2 I employ the general term ‘Egyptian Greeks’ here as the simplest translation of Egyptiotes Ellines although it should not be understood to indicate any particular formal nationality. On Egyptian–Greek identity see the contribution by Alexander Kazamias to the present volume (Chapter 12).
The Greek Presence

The modern Greek presence in Egypt was the product of a process of extensive migration that began during the first half of the nineteenth century. Attracted by the economic opportunities created by the policies of Muhammad Ali and his successors, Greeks became the most numerous of the resident foreign communities of Egypt, numbering about 100,000 by the late 1920s. They were represented across a broad range of social classes and occupations, from factory workers to the cosmopolitan elite, from the owners of small businesses, notably grocery stores and cafés, to the professional classes of lawyers, doctors, pharmacists and the super wealthy cotton merchants and bankers. Although a significant minority had been living in smaller settlements in the Delta and the towns of Upper Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century, as time progressed Egyptian Greeks became relatively more affluent and increasingly urban, with about 80 per cent of their number living in the two major cities, Cairo and Alexandria by the late 1940s.

The Political Context

The fortunes of the Egyptian Greek community need to be seen in their political context. During the first half of the nineteenth century Egypt had maintained a resolutely independent policy but by the 1870s its freedom of action was increasingly curbed by debt problems and growing Western influence. Following the ‘Urabi Revolt and the perceived threat to the interests of European bondholders, British forces occupied Egypt in 1882 and administered it under a succession of legal regimes, first as part of the Ottoman Empire and then as a formal British protectorate, until it was granted self-government in 1922. However, the British government reserved important formal powers for itself; among them the protection of foreign minorities living in Egypt, and continued to exercise considerable informal influence. The 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty signalled some political compromise: Britain secured its position in the country for 20 years while agreeing to support Egyptian nationalist demands for abolition of the Capitulations, the regime of legal and economic privileges that favoured foreign nationals, at the Conference of Montreux the following year. The last vestiges of a legal system associated with colonialism were swept away with the dissolution of the Mixed

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3 This figure from the Egyptian census of 1927 includes all ethnic Greeks resident in Egypt, about three-quarters of whom were Greek nationals.

4 Kitroeff (1989: 31), followed by others (Karanasou 1999: 36) proposed a diamond-shaped model for the socio-economic profile of Greek-Egyptian society as opposed to the pyramid shape of Egyptian society at large but this may give an exaggerated sense of the middle class. Athanasiadis in the 1940s, for example, calculated that 60 per cent of Egyptian Greeks were working poor (cited in Souloyannis 1999: 58).

5 Population Census of Egypt, 1947.
Courts in 1949. While there are differing views on how complicit Egyptian Greeks were in the colonial order, whether by choice or circumstance, the fortunes of the community were undeniably affected by it.

In the years after 1945, the political tensions that had been on hold during wartime resumed and a re-energised national movement agitated for a British withdrawal while Egyptian governments sought to negotiate with the British government in an atmosphere of increasing political violence. The continued British occupation was not the only issue. The failure of the Egyptian government to tackle economic problems such as lack of industrialisation, landlessness of the peasantry, high unemployment and declining standards of living contributed to an atmosphere of uncertainty. New political forces, such as the communists and Muslim Brotherhood, were challenging the old order of the traditional elites.

The political stalemate was broken with the coup launched by a group of young army officers in July 1952 that overthrew the parliamentary regime, established a revolutionary council and abolished the monarchy. Apart from a general commitment to Egyptian independence – British withdrawal was secured by agreement in 1954 – the new regime was initially not hostile to foreign interests. However, after the diplomatic victory of Suez in 1956, Egypt embraced a more aggressive nationalist policy that was increasingly Arab in character. The policy of Egyptianisation, first promoted in the 1930s (Karanasou 1999: 40), was now pursued with greater vigour and signalled a more restrictive conception of the national economy. Over the next two years a series of legislative measures were passed that stipulated Egyptian ownership and minimum participation of Egyptian nationals in different economic sectors, particularly banking, insurance and joint-stock companies, areas in which Greeks were prominent. Arabic was made the compulsory language in business dealings and additional legislation was brought in that tightened work and residence regulations. Further nationalisations in July 1961 were extended to large industrial, transport, commercial, financial and reclamation companies (Issawi 1963: 57–9). Though these measures were not aimed specifically at local Greeks they prompted the departure of a community that had lived in Egypt for generations.²

Diverse Voices

The public discussion among Egyptian Greeks in the face of these changing circumstances needs to be understood within the general configuration of the community.³ Neither monolithic nor static in constitution or character, the Egyptian

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² For a detailed discussion of Egyptian Greek reactions to the legislative changes of the late 1950s, see Chrysostomidis (2002).
³ Generally speaking scholars have been more concerned with how the divisions of mainland Greek politics expressed themselves in Egypt. Egyptian Greek attitudes to the Egyptian political scene have been little studied and less understood.
Greek collectivity – in its broadest conception, the *paroikia* – was constituted by different points of political, cultural, economic, social, even religious reference, sometimes with inherent and unresolved tensions between them. In formal terms, these included the Greek Orthodox Church, various community associations and organisations, the Greek language press and the Greek state. Perhaps the most significant local reference point was the *Koinotita* (pl. *Koinotites*) that served as the institutional focus of much Egyptian Greek political, social and cultural life. The oldest and wealthiest *Koinotita* was in Alexandria but a network of 28 such bodies were established in areas of significant Greek population throughout the country offering a framework of community governance that included educational, social and welfare institutions, all of which played a role in maintaining community cohesion, culture and identity. While the *Koinotites* had a democratic veneer, evident in the regular election of their officers, membership and thus voting rights were quite restricted. In fact, the ‘historical leadership’ of the Greek community, whose embodiment was the flagship *Koinotita* in Alexandria, was very heavily influenced by the ethos of the plutocracy that sustained its financial existence, even if it purported to speak in the name of all Egyptian Greeks.

Closely affiliated to the *Koinotita* in Alexandria was the Greek Chamber of Commerce of Alexandria (GCCA) established in 1901 with support from the Greek state. Formed to promote commercial relations between Egypt and Greece, and to represent the interests of its members, the GCCA embodied the business interests and political values of the Egyptian Greek merchant, banking and industrial elite, whose members served as its executive. From its foundation until the 1960s it exercised considerable influence, acting as a lobby group and forum on relevant economic issues, and publishing a regular bulletin that provided commercial reports, trade figures and business news. However, the interests of the GCCA were never wholly economic and, in a series of leading articles in the late 1940s, its bulletin engaged with the broader debate on the future of Egyptian Hellenism.

While the *Koinotita* used its financial and moral clout to exercise an authority beyond its formal powers, other community organisations and actors within the *paroikia* sought to project an independent outlook. The *Antifasistiki Protoporia* [Anti-Fascist Vanguard] (AP), the underground communist organisation of the Egyptian-Greek Left in the postwar period, represented the clearest oppositional force, but there were also a number of legal, progressive organisations. These included the Union of Graduates of Ambeteios, the League of Demobilised Greeks of Alexandria 1945, and the Greek Union of Amateurs of Cairo, all established or

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8 It is not possible here to discuss the role of the Greek state and its local representatives although they clearly influenced both the thoughts and actions of elements within the Egyptian Greek community.

9 This is not to deny a plurality of views within the *Koinotita*. Dimitris Zerbinis, the president from 1948–54, was accused at one point of being a ‘fellow-traveller’ by the Greek Consul Argyropoulos (Chrysostomidis 2002: 130).

10 For a discussion of the postwar Greek Left, see Gorman (2002).
revitalised during the optimism of the immediate postwar period, and served as forums for more open political and social debate (Anastasiadis 1993: 115–48). The Greek-Egyptian Council of Friendship and Cooperation formed in Alexandria in December 1951 served as an umbrella organisation for many of these groups. Building on local Greek support shown during the Egyptian nationalist demonstrations of November 1951, the Council mounted a press campaign in the following months, took the lead in congratulating the Free Officers (and the Egyptian people) after their seizure of power and rallied Egyptian Greeks to assist their ‘Egyptian brothers’ in the battle against ‘Anglo-French imperialism’ in 1956. These actions were motivated in part by solidarity and ideological affinity but they were also an expression of the claim that Greeks had a legitimate place in the new Egypt.

Finally, the local Greek language press, already with a long and distinguished record of activity, represented a vital manifestation of the plurality of voices within the broader Greek community. The Alexandrian daily *Tachydromos* (est. 1880) represented the liberal voice throughout this period while the Cairene newspaper, *Fos*, projected a conservative voice of Egyptian Hellenism during the 1940s and 1950s. The profile of the leftist press was more complex and less established. *Kiryx* had served as a mouthpiece for the anti-fascist struggle in the late 1930s and was joined during the war by *Ellin*, the organ of the National Liberation League (EAS). During the Greek civil war, relations between the leftist press and the Greek Embassy in Cairo were in a constant state of tension. At the end of 1946, stung by their criticism of the Greek government, the Greek Embassy in Cairo and its Press Office in Alexandria contrived to close down *Kiryx* and *Ellin* by the end of 1947 (Anastasiadis 1993: 93). Not until 1952 did the Greek Left secure a new newspaper title, *I Foni tou Egyptiotou Ellinismou* [The Voice of Egyptian Hellenism]. Over 40 weeks the paper featured regular editorial commentary on matters of Egyptian and Greek politics, aspects of Egyptian-Greek community life, and a wide range of literary articles, before being closed down by the Egyptian authorities, an action almost certainly supported, if not instigated, by the Greek Embassy. While the owners of *I Foni* successfully contested this decision in court, in the meantime it was replaced by another newspaper, *O Paroikos*, as the progressive voice of the community until it in turn was closed down by order of the Greek consul general in Cairo in June 1961.

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11 Greek Literary and Historical Archive (ELIA), Stratis Tsirkas Archive, IV, A, file 3.
12 *Ellin* had originally been a bilingual (Greek and Arabic) newspaper, *Αγνοπιστείς-Ελλην-υυναϊν αλ-μτμασςیر*, dedicated to Greek-Egyptian relations (Gorman 2001).
14 Military decree, 15 March 1953, which cited the paper’s ‘extreme views’ and ‘incitement to unrest’.
The Search for a Solution

These different centres of community authority, reference and interest within the Egyptian Greek *paroikia* contributed in varying measure to the debate on the future of Egyptian Hellenism after 1945. Such anxiety was not new and had been expressed even before the First World War (Souloyiannis 1999: 201–7), but in the dynamic and volatile environment of the postwar period the issue took on greater urgency, and even greater still after the Free Officers took power in 1952. Suggested solutions ranged from repatriation to Greece to adjustment (or ‘readjustment’) to the new circumstances in Egypt. These proposals were not only strategies to deal with an increasingly uncertain future but were themselves expressive of contrasting perceptions of the way in which Egyptian Greeks saw their position in Egypt, viewed their place in the wider Egyptian society and regarded the Greek state. In exploring this public discussion I will here largely restrict my discussion to two types of sources: firstly, a number of booklets written by members of the Egyptian Greek Left that specifically addressed the future of the community, and secondly, a series of editorials from the Bulletin of the Greek Chamber of Commerce in Alexandria written in 1948 dealing with the same issues.

Repatriation

The call for repatriation (*epanapatrismos*), namely a return to Greece (or perhaps Cyprus), possessed a great simplicity and made a clear, and perhaps for some, natural connection with the national homeland, even if for many this would mean a return to the land of their formal nationality rather than a place from which they themselves had ever personally migrated.15

Yet, despite its rhetorical force, in the late 1940s repatriation received little support from either the Left or the business community. In a published lecture given at the Union of Graduates of Ambeteios School in Cairo, Nikolas Tsaravopoulos, former assistant editor at *Kiryx* and a member of AP, described repatriation as ‘reactionary’ and an ‘unthinkable evil’ that ‘incites the dissolution of the *paroikia*’. While conceding that repatriation might be viable at another time, the conditions in Greece, then in its third year of civil war, made such a step unthinkable particularly for the poor. The idea of mass repatriation for many Greeks recalled the ‘catastrophe’ of 1922 when more than a million refugees from Asia Minor were resettled in Greece, no doubt alluded to by Tsavaropoulos when he warned of ‘the equivalent of a new edition of the refugee tragedy’ (Tsaravopoulos 1948: 32). The opposition to repatriation was shared by the GCCA bulletin which acknowledged the ‘tragic trials’ that Greece was currently suffering. More than this, however, it pointed to the lack of adequate living space in Greece and the

15 The 1917 Census listed 51 per cent of Greek nationals as having been born in Greece.
fact that Greek governments themselves looked to emigration as an answer to the problem of excess population. Repatriation of the poor, it noted, would be ‘frivolous and illogical’ (GCCA 1948a: 2).

Migration

Migration (metanastefsi) to a country other than Greece was proposed as another possible solution to the Egyptian Greek future. Various destinations were suggested, either neighbouring countries in Africa, or more distant immigrant countries in North and South America, Australia and South Africa, where Greeks could re-establish themselves as they had done in the past.

Tsaravopoulos himself regarded migration as ‘unrealistic and adventurist’. ‘The period of fat cows is over’, he declared, and countries now sought migrants with more specific qualifications than they had in the nineteenth century. Moreover, such migration was only a temporary solution and simply moved the problem to another place:

It is foolish to think that the mass of Egyptian Greeks will undertake to play the role of the modern wandering Jew, who sets up in one country and, when things get difficult, collects his small bundle and goes to another country from where he will be compelled again to flee in a little time. (Tsaravopoulos 1948: 33–4)

By contrast, the editors of the GCCA bulletin took a quite different view and considered a certain type of migration beneficial both to Egypt and Egyptian-Greek business interests. Recognising the high level of unemployment among Egyptian Greeks, they proposed that the poor and small businessmen be resettled on a long-term basis in neighbouring countries where they could provide the manpower required to facilitate access to raw materials and assist in the expansion of markets beyond Egyptian borders to the greater enrichment of the Egyptian economy. While recognising the hardships that such migrants might suffer: ‘isolation, the deprivation of comforting pleasures and the inadequate communications with the densely populated centres’, the editors suggested that with adequate social planning before departure, these difficulties could be adequately addressed. With the necessary support of the Egyptian authorities to allow among other things the flexibility of movement of those concerned, such a scheme would assist not only in the economic development of Egypt but would play an important part in securing a permanent Greek presence in Egypt (GCCA 1948f).

16 Among members of the Egyptian Greek Left, there were objections phrased more ideologically that Greek migration, particularly to other parts of Africa, would simply reproduce the Greek colonial role of exploiting the natives (interviews of the author with members of AP).
Readjustment

The most innovative, complex and flexible solution proposed to secure an Egyptian Greek future was ‘adjustment’ (prosarmoyi) or ‘readjustment’ (anaprosarmoyi). The idea that Greeks modify their manner of living to accommodate, engage, even integrate with the new Egyptian ‘reality’ had been canvassed in some form at least since the interwar period. In the early 1930s, the progressive journal, Panaigyptia, had called for closer social and cultural relations with Egyptians while a small business organisation, ELPOA (Greek Popular Progressive Organisation of Egypt), had sought to adapt to the challenges of the changing economic environment (Kitroeff 1989: 176–7). With the end of the Second World War, the slogan of readjustment was taken up by other voices, who applied it more widely to the reorganisation of the Koinotita, the organisation of the paroikia and to more general aspects of Egyptian Greek society.

An early postwar expression of readjustment was put forward by Manolis Yialourakis who, while acknowledging both a certain xenophobia amongst some classes of Egyptians and a narrow-mindedness amongst some Greeks, stressed the need for Greeks to accommodate the new Egyptian order:

Progressive people of the paroikia … have a duty to persuade the Egyptians in every way that Hellenism of this country not only does not feel itself foreign to the place but is eager to adapt quickly to the new conditions and to work honestly and efficiently for the elevation of the Egyptian people and their political and social emancipation. (1946: 5–6)

He emphasised that Egyptian Greeks held their fate in their own hands and needed to declare their commitment to a greater common good ‘not as foreigners and as “Europeans” but as genuine brothers of the Egyptians’ (Yialourakis 1946: 6). Tsaravopoulos took up this theme of mutual interest, declaring that rather than seeking to be treated as a privileged minority, Greeks had to understand that

our future will be judged by our professional abilities, the level of friendship that we develop with the Egyptian people and the honour and respect we command from them as their friends. (1948: 40)

This need to cultivate a closer relationship with mainstream Egyptian life was taken up in other quarters. In a regular column titled, ‘In order that we know Egypt’, the leftist weekly I Foni provided a long-running survey of modern Egyptian history, and discussions of literature and society.

More than mutual recognition between two peoples, for Tsaravopoulos an essential element of readjustment was the reorganisation of the paroikia itself. The establishment of a new system of management based on community organisations rather than the philanthropy of the wealthy few that had operated in the past would generate a modernised, genuine solidarity within all of Egyptian Hellenism
(1948: 39–40). This theme was taken up in more concrete terms in *Programma Anaprosarmoyis* by Sokratis Kalliarekos, Persis Kitrilakis and Kostas Stamellos (Kalliarekos et al. 1954). All members of AP, the authors published this manifesto in support of their candidature in the *Koinotita* elections in Alexandria in 1954. Subtitled: ‘in order that the *Koinotita* is strengthened and the *Paroikia* does not slip away’, it addressed some urgent issues of the day, such as rights of residence and work, education, health and community welfare, and called for the *Koinotita* to be more representative by allowing all Greek men and women to register as members.

Not merely speaking to practical issues, *Programma Anaprosarmoyis* openly addressed the question of the competing influences within the community, acknowledging, for example, the historical tensions between the *Koinotita* and the Patriarchate and calling for reconciliation between the two (Kalliarekos et al. 1954: 9–10). The authors more aggressively raised the issue of another agent of influence, namely, the Greek state. Recognising the established connections between the *Koinotita* and the Greek government, they nevertheless criticised the latter for having exceeded its authority: ‘these bonds … do not allow for and do not justify the interference of the Centre [i.e. the Greek state] in purely community matters’. They went on, ‘Governments come and go, while the *Paroikia* and its *Koinotita* remain and should remain’. For these reasons ‘the committee of the *Koinotita* should defeat persistent and continual attempts until the Centre is persuaded that it has the obligation to help to cover the gaps at least during the interim period of readjustment’ (Kalliarekos et al. 1954: 8–9).

In contrast to its attitude of keeping the Greek state at a safe distance, the *Programma* emphasised the need for greater connections between the *paroikia* and the Egyptian nation, particularly in the teaching of the Arabic language and the cultural history of the Egyptian people (Kalliarekos et al. 1954: 12).

While progressive elements stressed the need for reform of communal structures and the broadening of cultural and social attitudes, the conception of readjustment promoted in the GCCA bulletin was couched in much more limited terms. Here the changes to be made were dictated by economic problems: the increasing numbers of Greeks unemployed, the status of professions and the competition posed by Egyptian businessmen, and to be addressed by corresponding economic solutions, such as proposed collaboration between Greek and Egyptian commercial interests or the regional migration scheme sketched above. In its discussion of the unemployed Greeks, the GCCA assured the Egyptian authorities that they would not be an economic burden on the state: ‘we will not be forced to show them a begging hand for help of the unemployed’ (GCCA 1948e: 3). Even when the GCCA encouraged closer social relations with Egyptians, it took on a narrow instrumental tone: they might act as useful intermediaries in facilitating any difficulties with government bureaucracy (GCCA 1948g: 3–4).

Although such a focus in a business publication is not unexpected, these views rested on social and political attitudes that contrasted with those of the Left. Whereas Tsaravopoulos (1948: 34) had welcomed the prospect of a ‘completely
free and independent Egypt with a democratic and liberal leadership’, the president of the GCCA, N. Sakellarios, was reported in March 1952 as describing Egyptians as being made up of two groups, a distinguished elite and a ‘rebellious mob’, and therefore ‘unsuitable for a developed democratic regime’. The GCCA also placed more confidence in an active role for the Greek state, most manifest in its support for a new Egyptian-Greek Treaty that would establish the legal basis for relations between the two countries and their nationals (GCCA 1948e: 3; 1948f: 2), although this ultimately came to nothing. Further, the GCCA bulletin emphasised the role the Emigrant (Apodimon) Section in the Foreign Ministry in Athens could or should play in protecting Egyptian Greek interests. This view suggested that Egyptian Hellenism was simply an aspect of the greater Greek diaspora (GCCA 1948d), to be considered along with other Greek migrant communities, particularly those in America (GCCA 1948b and 1948c), rather than as a specific, individual, even unique expression of Greek society upheld by others.

Published in 1961, the work of Themis Matsakis was perhaps the last significant discussion on the future of Egyptian Hellenism. Revisiting the three basic options, Matsakis rejected migration as being an ‘exceptionally dangerous adventure into the unknown’, not open to all, and indeed promoted by those who wished to get rid of the poor and unemployed of the paroikia (Matsakis 1961: 17–18). He now saw only two genuine solutions to the Egyptian Greek ‘dilemma’: repatriation or Egyptian nationality. The former was to be preferred, as it allowed the agreeable prospect ‘to live and work and toil amongst his own people, to share its joys and sadness, in contrast to any foreign country with unlimited discriminations, adventures and uncertainties’. Alternatively, with the protection of Egyptian nationality, an Egyptian Greek could remain in Egypt: ‘where he was born and grew old … where he has established work and his house and cultivated longstanding professional and friendly relations with the genuinely friendly and good-hearted Arab people’ (Matsakis 1961: 17). In fact, the mass extension of Egyptian nationality to resident Greeks had been discussed at least since 1957 and been supported in the pages of O Paroikos, but for reasons still not entirely clear was apparently neither pursued with vigour by Greeks nor offered by the Egyptian government. In the end the Egyptian Greeks made their own decisions, some ‘returning’ to Greece, others migrating elsewhere and, it is widely assumed, a minority staying on and ‘adjusting’.

Conclusion

The debate among Egyptian Greeks on the future of Egyptian Hellenism and the search for solutions in a volatile Egyptian environment in the post-war period were

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17 See Resolution (undated), ELIA, Stratis Tsirkas Archive, IV, A, file 3.
expressive of diverse and dissonant voices within the community. While Greek emigration from Egypt during these years suggested that some already felt their future lay elsewhere, the public discussions carried out in print initially resisted the notion of departure. At the end of the 1940s neither the GCCA nor elements of the Greek Left supported repatriation, even if they differed on migration elsewhere as a solution. Rather, the mantra of readjustment, and thus the desire to stay, was widely adopted, even if the term was interpreted in different ways. Progressive elements called for reform of both the Koinotita and paroikia and a greater engagement with Egyptian society at different levels while the GCCA conceived of readjustment in economic terms and proposed measures with an economic rationale to secure its future in the country. Underpinning these differences were contrasting political attitudes towards the prospect of full Egyptian independence and the Greek state. While the Left affirmed Egypt’s right to full independence and qualified the role of the Greek state as limited to facilitating the reorganisation of community affairs, elements within the GCCA were lukewarm, and could even be dismissive of Egyptian independence, placing much greater weight on the Greek government as the agent for securing its future. In effect these views crystallised different conceptions of the Egyptian Greek presence: for elements on the Left, the history, culture and society of Egypt in some measure were incorporated in its particular and special character. For the GCCA Egyptian Hellenism was located more properly within the broader framework of the Greek diaspora.

The ultimate dissolution of the Egyptian Greek community may have been the result of forces largely beyond its control but the range of responses to the changing circumstances reflected the different perspectives of its constituent elements. Identifying or seeking to identify with Egypt and yet seeing themselves as Greeks was part of the complex, sometimes contradictory, character of Egyptiotismos. Born in Cyprus and raised in Egypt, George Pierides captured some of this paradoxical quality when he wrote of his departure for Cyprus: ‘I was not sure whether I was setting off to go to my country or whether I was leaving my country behind’ (Pierides 1992: 109).

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Yialourakis, Manolis (1967), Η Αίγυπτος των Ελλήνων, Athens: Metropolis.
The Greek Civil War ended in the late summer of 1949 on Grammos and Vitsi mountains in Macedonia. The communists of the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) were decimated on the mountains by the soldiers of the Greek National Army. Those who survived the defeat – approximately 60–70,000 – found temporary refuge mainly in Albania and in Bulgaria. Others escaped to Yugoslavia, despite the blockade of the border on the Yugoslav side.

A number of Greek Slav-Macedonian *andartes* who had served with NOF (People’s Liberation Front),¹ which was allied with DAG, took refuge in Eastern European countries. The majority of the Greek guerrillas who sought refuge in Yugoslavia, especially in PRM (People’s Republic of Macedonia), were also Slav-Macedonians. Their destination was evidently not unfamiliar. Since the mid-1940s many Slav-Macedonians from Greek Macedonia had fled to PRM. Some of them were guerillas searching for a safe place but many of them were also refugees, women and children, forced to emigrate by the various right-wing illegal organisations active in Greece after the Varkiza Agreement. According to Slav-Macedonian sources, from March 1945 to the end of 1946, approximately 20,000 Slav-Macedonians from Greece fled to PRM.²

The first Slav-Macedonian refugees were treated very favourably by the leadership and the people of PRM. Many of them were appointed to government posts, while others joined the local armed forces of partisans and returned to Greek Macedonia to continue their struggle. It is estimated that by the end of 1949 a total of approximately 25–30,000 Slav-Macedonians, excluding kidnapped

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¹ NOF [Popular (or ‘People’s’) Liberation Front] = НОФ [Народно Освободителнот Фронт]. This was an activist organisation of Slavophones in Greece. Founded at the instance of the Yugoslav Communists and active throughout the Greek Civil War, its aim was the secession of Greek Macedonia.

² Public Record Office/Foreign Office 371/48389, Stevenson to Foreign Office, Belgrade, 3 August 1945, Call No.1287.
children, had arrived in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania of whom about 20,000 ended up in Yugoslavia (Kirjazovski 1989: 29–30). It should be noted that these political refugees were normally called Slav-Macedonians in Greece and *Egejju* (Aegeans) in Yugoslavia.

The thousands of Slav-Macedonians who fled to PRM in waves during the 1940s were warmly received by the local authorities. Some of them claimed leading roles for themselves in the affairs of the Republic. The most significant figure was Naum Pejov, while Ilias Dimakis (Goçe), Vangel Ajanovski-Oche and Mihail Keramičiev also played leading roles. These four had long been the representatives of the pro-Yugoslav faction of the Greek Slav-speaking population.

However, the Pejov, Keramičiev, Oche and Goçe team was the only group among the Slav-Macedonian refugees from Greece to work together systematically. The great majority of the Slav-Macedonian refugees had no specific aim. Most of them were the victims of the civil war, of the appalling violence committed both by left- and right-wing elements. Involuntarily exposed to this reality, they had been forced to leave Greece. These people had to be rehabilitated and organised and then taught to acquire the ideology that their leaders wanted them to have.

In early 1950 this led to the establishment of ‘Здружението на бегалците од Егејска Македонија’ (Union of Refugees from Aegean Macedonia) in Skopje. The Union aimed to bring together in one organisation all the refugees from Greece who lived in PRM, in order to enable the local authorities to provide them with financial relief and integrate them in the local community, as well as work towards their cultural improvement. The ultimate goal was to develop bonds with the refugees, and achieve more widespread participation of the Union members in the socialist reconstruction. Every refugee living in Yugoslavia could become a Union member. The Refugees’ Union was run by a central council and it had branches in various places that were run by local councils.

The Refugee Union’s immediate concern was the political guidance of the political refugees. In September 1950 it began publishing the newspaper *Глас на Егејите* (Voice of the Aegeans), which became the official organ of the Refugees’ Union. Its publication was abruptly terminated in May 1954 by the federal government because of the radical improvement in Greek–Yugoslav relations. This newspaper was the major instrument for shaping and popularising the Slav-Macedonian ideology and during its three and a half years of publication it developed into the ideological guidebook of the ‘Egejju’ (Aegeans). In its first issue, it explained the reasons for its existence in an article entitled ‘Why we were published’. The main objective of the newspaper, as the article claims, is to organise the refugees: ‘The paper’s first and foremost obligation is to show

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3 A veteran of the SNOF [Slav-Macedonian People’s Liberation Front] and a native of the village of Gavros, near Kastoria.

4 Архив на Македонија [Archives of Macedonia], фонд 946.
the course we must follow, the course of Gotse Deltsev, Janne Sandanski, Lazo Terpovski and Irina Ginova-Mirka. It also aims to oppose the GCP’s [Greek Communist Party] and Zachariadis’s chauvinist policy’.

The strategic rivals of this monthly paper were evidently the official leaders of the GCP and those who had supported the subjugation of the Slav-Macedonians to the communist leadership. ‘Through this newspaper, the Macedonians will finally know the real face of Zachariadis and his faction’, the anonymous columnist declared, thus giving a first taste of the paper’s ideological position (Глас на Езежуиме, September 1950).

If we study the newspaper columns, we can see that they fall into three major categories according to the goals they were called upon to serve. The first category includes those articles that refer to the process of settling and rehabilitating the refugees. They recount the problems faced by the refugees, the actions taken by the state authorities for their relief, the process of constructing housing units, the problems faced by the ‘child refugees’ in the various ‘children’s homes’. The second category includes various columns of political interest and others on the bilateral relations between PRM and neighbouring states. A special place is given to the position of the ‘Macedonian’ minority in Greece, the persecutions it still suffered at the hands of the Greek authorities, and some critical comments on GCP policy and Zachariadis’s attitude. The third and largest category comprised a series of columns referring to the heroic past of the Slav-Macedonian political refugees and more particularly the events of the Civil War. The objective was quite evident. There was a dire need for the writing of their own history, which, they claimed, had until then been deliberately silenced by Balkan historiographers and a need to educate the younger generation. Their ultimate objective was the construction of a Slav-Macedonian national myth and the Slav-Macedonian intelligentsia had already realised the unique opportunity provided them by their stay in the hospitable motherland of PRM.

The construction of their written history was achieved through the following means: a) recording and integrating the story of the armed conflicts of the previous decade (the period of the German occupation and the Greek Civil War) in the chain of Slav-Macedonian history; b) connecting the above period with the more distant past, mainly the Ilinden uprising in 1903; c) creating Slav-Macedonian heroes, mainly from the recent historical past, and integrating them with the other Slav-Macedonian heroes in the pantheon of the Federal Republic.

In the annual General Assembly of the Refugees’ Union in June 1951 the leading members discussed the appropriate objectives of the organisation at great length. In his speech Naum Pejov stressed that:

Our youth should create a vigorous national intelligentsia which will defend the interests of our people. We have never had the opportunity to develop an intelligentsia, because these people studied in neighbouring countries and they developed a hostile attitude toward our national cause … We do not have clearly stated views on the victims among and material losses suffered by our
people, and this is a part of our national history that should be used for the education of our youth. **This would help us show our friends and our enemies our desire for a free life.** Therefore, our memoirs should be written down, the victims should be recorded, and pamphlets and books should be written in a professional manner.

(Глас на Егејите, 17 June 1951)

Following Naum Pejov’s **exhortation**, the newspaper published an announcement in **early 1952** asking the Εγειју to send in photographs from various parts of Macedonia, especially photographs of dead people, for the publication of an album. **At the same time**, the Central Council of the Union organised the collection of information about the victims. The objective was to publish a White Paper for Aegean Macedonia. **Efforts to create a monument dedicated to the dead Slav-Macedonian Εγειју heroes of the 1940s also formed part of these overall activities.**

Within this framework, and using the relevant newspaper columns as raw material, in 1951 the printing-house of the Refugees’ Union published Christo Andonovski’s book Εγειјска Македонија [Aegean Macedonia]. In the same year, Mihail Keramičev contributed an article to the volume Егејска Македонија во нашата национална историја [Aegean Macedonia in our National History]. Moreover, the newspaper’s management undertook the role of distributing Andonovski’s book and supplying it to refugee organisations.

The recording of their history by the Εγειју coincided with the admission of the first young refugee students to the University of Skopje. In **January 1952**, the newspaper informed its readers with profound satisfaction that a total of six Εγειју were studying at the University’s School of Philosophy. **At the beginning of 1952**, 47 Εγειју were studying in the various departments of the University (founded in 1949), and it was noted that they all received a monthly state scholarship.

The second goal, namely connecting the 1940s with the events of the uprising of Macedonian villagers in 1903, was also evident from the first issue. The newspaper’s priority then, as mentioned above, was to follow the course mapped out by the comitadjis of the beginning of the century, Gotse Deltshev and Janne Sandanski, **and their successors in the 1940s**, Lazo Terpovski and Irina Ginova-Mirka. Making the connection with the Ilinden events was another fundamental objective of PRM. In 1944 the first meeting of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the People’s Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) was deliberately held on 2 August, feast day of the Prophet Elijah, and that day was declared an official national holiday in PRM.

In **August 1952** the Presidency of the People’s Assembly of PRM issued an order for the writing of new memoirs by former fighters of the Ilinden period. **The order mentioned that the aim of this action was to protect the memory of** the heroic Ilinden uprising ‘during which the Macedonian people suffered many losses in the struggle for freedom and state independence’, and to express their
gratitude to the dead. By then they had collected memoirs for 398 people. Another very important issue was the provision of pensions to the ‘Aegean’ fighters in Ilinden, something that the newspaper viewed positively.

The newspaper worked hard from its first issue towards the third goal: producing new Slav-Macedonian heroes from the period of the German occupation and the Civil War. From January 1951, there was a regular column entitled ‘Honour and glory to our killed fighters’, which continued until the paper’s last issue. The column created approximately 90 portraits of Slav-Macedonian heroes, all former SNOF and NOF members. Beginning in August 1952 there was a new regular column entitled ‘Bloody Lists’, which presented a list of the victims from the same period from 21 Macedonian villages.

The process of constructing a Slav-Macedonian written history stopped in 1954, when publication of the newspaper Глас на Егејците was terminated. This period, I believe, represents the earliest phase in this process, the heroic era of an emotional recounting of events, when memories of the recent dramatic past were still fresh. The aim during that period was to give a privileged place to the Егејците refugees in the recounting of their history.

The government of PRM was active from the start in order to provide relief and refugee to the Slav-Macedonians who arrived in large numbers from Greece in the autumn of 1949. It is estimated that a total of 20,000 Slav-Macedonian refugees had arrived in PRM by the beginning of 1950.5 Table 5.1 shows the destinations and the numbers of refugees.

The refugees’ problems were dealt with in two phases: the first phase consisted of immediate measures for temporary relief while the second was the process of arranging for their more permanent settlement. During the second phase the major priority was the construction of houses followed by the provision of special care to the poor and the war victims, the management of the ‘child refugee’ problem, the education and cultural development of the refugees and of the young people in particular. Some of the refugees settled in cities and villages, but a large number preferred the state farms, where many houses were constructed to accommodate them.

The PRM government took a two-pronged approach to the construction of housing units in urban centres. On the one hand it erected houses to accommodate refugees, and on the other it allotted a total of 800 million dinars in loans, so that the refugees could build their own houses. The money from these loans (repayable over a period of 25 years) was given in two instalments with exceptionally favourable terms: 20 per cent would be paid by the Егејците and 80 per cent by the state (Глас на Егејците, 17 June 1951). Following the example of the PRM government, at the end of 1951 the federal government in Belgrade also allotted 800 million dinars for the same cause (Глас на Егејците, October 1951).

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5 Архив на Македонија, фонд 946, ‘List of refugees settled in PRM’.
By the end of 1951 the first houses for refugees were already in place. A few months later, on 31 April 1952, during the third session of the people’s assembly of PRM, the Prime Minister Lazar Količevski underlined in his closing remarks that there was ‘No discrimination against the Egejci. They are our brothers’ (Глас на Егејците, June 1952). More than 600 apartments were constructed with loan money, while another 400 were built by the PRM government (Kolisevkski 1986: 230).

Despite the seeming euphoria caused by the erection of houses for the refugees, it seems that the reality was far from rosy. Quite significantly, the construction of separate quarters for the Egejci in the towns where they settled has been presented

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Table 5.1  Slav-Macedonian refugees in PRM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Total number of refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>5,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitola</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumanovo</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titov Veles</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlepes</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stip</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetovo</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strumica</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohrid</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorče Petrov</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resna</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gostivar</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kočani</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td>932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sv. Nikole</td>
<td>325</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavadarci</td>
<td>269</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radoviš</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kičevo</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gevgelija</td>
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<td></td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kratovo</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demir Hisar</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struga</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debar</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berovo</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,159</td>
<td>1,218</td>
<td>17,905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Searching for a Motherland

as the beginning of ‘their urban but mostly political ghettoization’ (Denes, 9 July 1998).

The construction of houses was evidently the biggest problem faced by the PRM authorities. The other significant issue was that the destitute refugees and war victims, most of whom were unable to work, could not fund their everyday needs. From the outset the authorities set up committees for the care and relief of war victims in the various towns. It is significant that by mid-autumn 1950, approximately 350 injured, ill and disabled fighters had received hospital care; what is more, half of them were totally disabled. At the end of 1950, 155 disabled fugitives who could not work were receiving an allowance from the Ministry of Social Care, while 120 of them had been sent for spa therapy, all expenses paid by the local government. More than 100 elderly people without relatives were taken to old people’s homes. Orphans and children of big families were sent to orphanages and their financial support was underwritten by the Yugoslav Red Cross. Special care was given to the Ilinden veterans. Thus, following a decision of the local parliament, 147 Ilinden fighters from Aegean Macedonia received a state pension (Pirinski Glas, 6 November 1950).

The increased interest of the PRM government in the Egeju was not merely humanitarian. The Yugoslav authorities made it clear from the start that they saw the refugees from Greece and their settlement in Yugoslav territory as permanent. This could not easily be accepted by the refugees themselves, since many of them still believed that the road back to their birthplace would very soon be open. For this reason, many members of the large refugee community from Greece initially refused to accept Yugoslav citizenship. Quite significantly, until mid 1952 only 3–4,000 refugees had agreed to become citizens of PRM, while by June that number had increased to 6,050. At the same time, more than 3,000 refugees had notified the Greek consulate in Skopje of their intention to be repatriated to Greece. The same report estimated that approximately 25–30 per cent of the Egeju were prepared to be repatriated if Greece were to grant them amnesty.6

Overall we can say that, until the mid-1950s, a large community of Slav-Macedonians from Greek Macedonia was established in PRM. These people were favourably received by the local authorities and very soon they managed to settle in the republic as productive citizens. At the same time their leadership, through the Refugees’ Organisation, had managed to instil in them a Slav-Macedonian ideology and thus to encourage the writing of their own history, ‘forgotten’ until then by historians of the Balkan states.

In subsequent years the ‘Aegeans’ were gradually integrated into the political and social structure of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and Federal Yugoslavia. Although publication of the newspaper Глас на Егејите was suspended in 1954, it was later replaced by the monthly magazine Македонија and by the annual Иселенички Календар.

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6 Архив на Македонија, фонд 996, ‘Egeju’. 
The history of ‘Aegean Macedonia’ was not the exclusive historical domain of former guerrillas from Greece. It soon became a special field of reference and study at the Institute of National History (INH), the Socialist Republic of Macedonia’s official historical research institution. The INH was founded by the SRM’s government in 1948, and its clear purpose was ‘to write down and demonstrate the official history of the Macedonian people’, in addition to making it part of Yugoslav history in general (Ivanovski 1978). In fact, on 1 July 1956, during the first official annual conference of the INH in the presence of party officials and eminent members of the academic community, Todor Šimovski, a refugee from Kilkis who was the first ‘Aegean’ to be employed by the INH in 1952, claimed that one of the main duties of the Institute should be the collection of historical material. And this material should not only relate to the distant past but also to the new struggles of the ‘Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia’, an area where significant events and struggles had taken place, which should be included so as not to be forgotten (Anonymous 1957: 339). Šimovski’s exhortation seems to have had a positive effect and in subsequent years many ‘Aegean’ historians gradually started working for the INH. Those historians’ singular duty was to write down their own history. The result of their efforts was that, by the end of the 1980s, a quarter of all the Institute’s academic associates were of Greek origin. In fact, their research was entirely focused on matters of Greek interest, especially the Department of Balkan Studies which was staffed mainly by ‘Aegeans’. Its director was Rastislav Terziovski from Perlepe and all of its academic associates were of Aegean Macedonian origin. In 1976 Todor Šimovski became a member of the editorial staff of the Гласник magazine, which was published by the Institute. It is very interesting to point out that the history written by the self-proclaimed ‘Aegean lobby’ was imposed on the historiography of the Federal Yugoslav government.

The advancement of the ‘Aegeans’ during the 1960s and 1970s as the predominant historians of Yugoslavia went hand in hand with the diplomatic guerrilla war which was being fought at the same time between Athens and Belgrade. The conflict over the Macedonian Question and the fact that the subject often was being broached by the Yugoslavs was the result of the rich fund of history produced by the committed and ‘unjustified’ ‘Aegean’ historians, the legitimacy of whose views were by that point protected by the government.7 The exchange of words between Constantine Karamanlis, then Greek Prime Minister, and Duranovic, Federal Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, at Split in March 1979, afford a typical instance. The discussions turned to the subject of cultural exchanges, whereupon Duranovic remarked: ‘In the domain of bilateral cooperation there is the matter of the Macedonian ethnic minority’. Karamanlis immediately replied that that was ‘a regrettable issue’ in bilateral relations. He asked what the point was of the Macedonians digging up the Macedonian Question 40 years on. Duranovic’s answer was: ‘There are no differences between Belgrade and Skopje on matters of foreign policy’. The atmosphere was dangerously charged. Karamanlis refused to discuss the subject any further, and the two leaders turned their attention to other matters. It was, however, plain that this skirmish

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7 The exchange of words between Constantine Karamanlis, then Greek Prime Minister, and Duranovic, Federal Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, at Split in March 1979, afford a typical instance. The discussions turned to the subject of cultural exchanges, whereupon Duranovic remarked: ‘In the domain of bilateral cooperation there is the matter of the Macedonian ethnic minority’. Karamanlis immediately replied that that was ‘a regrettable issue’ in bilateral relations. He asked what the point was of the Macedonians digging up the Macedonian Question 40 years on. Duranovic’s answer was: ‘There are no differences between Belgrade and Skopje on matters of foreign policy’. The atmosphere was dangerously charged. Karamanlis refused to discuss the subject any further, and the two leaders turned their attention to other matters. It was, however, plain that this skirmish
three-volume Историја на македонскиот народ [History of the Macedonian People] was published with great enthusiasm by the Institute of National History in 1969 and included extensive reports on ‘Aegean’ Macedonia written by Christo Andonovski, Todor Šimovski and Kruste Bitoshki.

In subsequent decades the motto of the ‘un-emancipated Aegean Macedonia’ became the banner of the People’s Republic of Macedonia. Depending on the international situation, it could be used as a very useful diplomatic asset in the list of contacts between Greek and Yugoslav politicians and diplomats. In fact, Slav-Macedonian refugees were the only political refugees excluded from the process of repatriation to Greece at the beginning of the 1980s on the grounds that they were not ‘ethnic Greeks’.

Today the situation can be described as follows: there are many Aegean refugee associations, whose main aim is to make the matter internationally known and who refer to the existence of a ‘Macedonian’ minority in Greece. That is why they participate in various international forums as well as organising regular meetings. In fact, after the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia became an independent state, all these associations intensified their efforts by denouncing the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest and speaking about genocide in the area of Greek Macedonia. Their efforts culminated in 1998, when the Second World Refugee Children’s Reunion took place under the aegis of the former president of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov. They also continue to publish commemorative books – tributes to the villages, which they come from, or to the historic events of the Greek Civil War.

When some Slav-Macedonians tried to enter Greece in 2003, initially they were refused entry, but later the Greek government revoked this decision. Despite the rumours about possible disruptions, nothing actually happened. A few dozen elderly people gathered at a local coffee shop just outside of Florina and after singing some songs about Macedonia they left in peace. Despite everything that was written by certain members of the Greek press (Kathimerini, 19 August 2003), the safety of Greek Macedonia was not threatened in any way. A political hot potato had turned into a harmless gathering over 50 years after the end of the Greek Civil War. It seems that only the passage of time can offer a solution to this problem. In the meantime it behoves Greece and other states to approach such potential crises with care and sensitivity. What seems like a threatening mob coming over to Grammos or Vitsi may turn out to be just some old men who want to shed a sentimental tear and sing an old song in the place of their birth.

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about the Macedonian Question had overshadowed the summit talks. See Svolopoulos (1997: 64–8).
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Kolisevski, Lazar (1986), Πτυχές του Μακεδονικού Ζητήματος, Greek translation by Vasko Karatza, Skopje.

This chapter explores how the multiple identities of Greek migrants in Denmark are shaped by and constructed through their spatial and cultural encounters in both ‘home’ and ‘host’ countries. Such encounters are ‘rooted’ in the nation-state but also unfold beyond its borders within cultural, diasporic and transnational spaces. Identification processes are linked with a state of migrancy and develop across temporal and spatial contexts that convey the transitional nature of the migration phenomenon. Through life-story narratives of ‘homecoming’ visits and the ‘biographicity’ of everyday life in the diaspora migrants express an ‘agonising struggle’ to define their identities in relation to otherness. This acts as a marker of selfhood as exemplified through the case of Greek migrants in search of their ‘Greekness’ in their Nordic surroundings but also in the context of discovering the ‘changing face’ of Greece.

The story of diasporas is the story of a continuing tension between the disparity of exile and the myth of return. Yet the diasporic condition is conceived through the cultural enterprise of dissolving such tensions and hence it is constructed in a unique context of overlapping continuities of longing and nostalgia along intertwining discontinuities of roots and routes. An important part of this debate on the dislocating and at times disabling condition of diaspora is the very notion of the stranger; the stranger within in search of a home but also the stranger surrounding ‘home’ and ‘host’ locations and the divisions that construct the ‘us’

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1 At the heart of the theoretical concept of ‘biographicity’ is the synthesis of structure and individuality. ‘Biographicity’ is the intuitively available genetic structure of a biography. It is the ability of the individual to shape that which is social ‘self-referentially’, and to place oneself in relation to society. ‘Biographicity’ means that individuals can continually reinterpret their life in the contexts in which they experience it, and that they themselves experience these contexts as ‘mouldable’ and ‘shapeable’. When individuals as social actors relate to their life-world in such a way that their self-reflexive activities begin to shape social contexts this establishes an act of ‘biographicity’ which is a very important notion in documenting patterns of coping and ways of organising lives and composing identities across various social groups (West et al. 2007).
and ‘them’ in the ‘here’ and ‘there’ but also because of the in-betweenness that stimulates a process of becoming. In one sense this strangeness within and without is a continuing process of discovery of the self through encounters with the other, shaped by the very process of cultural formations. This is a process of rethinking the notion of identities in the same way that Hall and du Gay (1996) see the very production of the self as never centred, neither closed nor fixed, and hence identities as never absolutes, not fixed in essentialised terms by race, gender or class, yet shaped by such social categorisations in being reinvented by experiences of ‘migranthood’ that signal the journey, the double consciousness (Gilroy 1993), dispersal and fragmentation.

On the other hand, the diasporic condition involves a struggle to belong or at least to clarify the nebulous agony of where ‘homeness’ exists. The often polysemic and nuanced meanings of belongingness as a concept are intertwined with both mobility and stasis. The search for home implies the need of fixedness in location in order to achieve a grounding of ‘home’.

Home is about belongingness and this type of connectedness is about the fundamentals of culture and identity. And, as such, it is about sustaining cultural boundaries and boundedness. To belong in this way is to protect exclusive, and therefore excluding, identities against those who are seen as aliens and ‘foreigners’. The ‘other’ is always an ongoing threat to the security and integrity of those who share a common home. In contemporary European culture the longing for home is not an innocent utopia (Morley and Robins 1993). Above all migrancy is not simply restricted to geographical movement but involves ruptures, cultural continuity but also discontinuity and transmutation. Hence the social construction of identity as well as the constructs of ‘family’, ‘community’ and ‘nation’ are profoundly affected by migrancy and a diasporic state of existence (Christou 2006). Therefore belongingness should be ‘translated’ through these complex parameters.

In discussing the remembrance and memorialisation of diaspora we need to question how the temporality and spatiality of nostalgia shapes such journeys. The content of this chapter highlights two distinct yet overlapping projects: a macro project of spatial mobility through migration and return migration trajectories inclusive of a micro project of identification and belongingness. I reflect on the sense of gendered identifications and how these shape belongingness, but also how mobility and stasis are inherently autonomous praxes nevertheless saturated

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2 In their insightful volume, The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity (2002), Hedetoft and Hjort indicate that ‘belonging is a notion replete with organicist meanings and romantic images. It is a foundational, existential, ‘thick’ notion. In the sense that it circumscribes feelings of ‘homeness’ (as well as homesickness), it is also a significant determinant of identity, that elusive but still real psychological state of being in sync with oneself under given external conditions’ (vii). Elsewhere (Christou 2006) I have illustrated how the state of ‘homeness’ is that psycho-spatial context in which belongingness takes shape through the negotiation of the homeland as a territorially-based view of ‘home-place’. 
No Place is (like) Home

by national, ethnic and self constructions. As Leichtman suggests: ‘we should focus our research on better understanding sociocultural and ideological ties and the importance of the homeland’ (2005: 665). This is precisely where the boundaries of cultural spaces are constructed in both territorial and imaginative realms of what constitutes a home: is it the place of birth, the place of origin, the place of ancestral heritage, the place of (re)membering, the place of longing that incorporates belonging? Is it selectively one, all, or neither of the above? Is it temporally, historically and culturally defined? These are all important questions that situate the discussion on ‘home’ and belongingness and how identification is mediated within conditions of migrancy and diaspora.

Imaginative Homelands: Desire for and Hatred of the ‘Quintessential’ (Home) Land

Migration as a social phenomenon produces and is produced through multiple biographies that may be expressive of pain and joy, optimism and depression, instability and development and so on. The journey is composed not just of binaries of life events, but is an amalgamation of pieces put together in producing the fabric of mobility of memories, territories and people. This is primarily true because:

migrants spend their lives supposedly in two incompatible ‘cultures’, the culture of origin and the culture of destination. The culture of origin is usually identified as an ideal-type traditional pattern of living with a tinge of folkloristic degeneration. The absorbing culture is unquestionably regarded as ‘modern’ and ruled by universalist-rational values. Focus of one culture is the family, of the other, the job. The obligation to oscillate between the two cultures creates problems of identity and integration. (Alheit 1992: 200)

Narrative theorisation argues that narratives are the central device of identification processes and thus the crux of how we construct the self and how we give meaning to our lives (Bruner 1990; Mishler 2000). However, in reaching meaning we also need to scrutinise the wider social context of life narratives (Goodson 2006) lest we deprive ourselves and our collaborators of meaning itself and understanding (Andrews 1991).

Individual memory is seen as a person’s capacity to store and retrieve information and thus as a physiological and psychological function it is primarily information processing. However, the processes of remembering and forgetting are inherently social (Christou 2003). Nevertheless, the production of ethnic memories does not entail a single process of identification and therefore should be analysed at specific intersections of racial, class, gender and ideological locations (Christou 2003; Anagnostou 2004).

Remembrance in the migration process is all about social dynamics and cultural imprints. It is about reprocessing cultural elements of the past, reshaping places
and inevitably redefining selfhood in migranthood (Christou 2006). The processes of remembrance create spaces of connectedness and spaces of belonging: spaces of belonging are meaningful insofar as they are inhabited by ‘living memories’ (Fortier 2000: 173), and the motions of remembering are more about interconnectedness than simple reproduction or imitation (Braidotti 1994: 5). Furthermore the rubric of ‘migrant belongingness’, which involves processes of (re)creating memories of place, culture and history, is deemed central to the definition and duration of identities because, as Fortier explains: ‘memory becomes a primary ground of identity formation in the context of migration, where “territory” is decentred and exploded into multiple settings’ (2000: 157).

The significance of memories in the construction of individual migrant and ethnic community identities has been attested by studies (Thomson 1999), highlighting the dialectical relationship between memory and identity. More specifically:

Our current identity (or ‘identities’, a term which better expresses the multiple, fractured and dynamic nature of identity) affects how we structure, articulate and indeed remember the story of our life. The experience of migration … presents … an urgent need for … the construction of coherent identities and life stories. (Thompson 1994: 35)

The journey of migrant life is one of mobility and identity, of grieving for a lost home and anticipation of an imagined home to be discovered (Christou 2006). These processes are inextricably linked as the reconstruction of memories through cultural experiences composes feelings and identities that make migrants comfortable with their lives and identities (Thomson 1999; Einhorn 2000). Migrant life stories, as narratives of ‘homeness’ and estrangement, are negotiated acts of encounters and experiences that are ‘culturally’ translated and ‘ethnically’ negotiated.

**Narratives and the Biographicity of Subjectivities**

The storied life transforms into a catalyst that initiates the reassessment of a lived life in the exploration of meanings directed by constructions of culture, nation, ethnicity and place; in other words, where the *ethnos* meets the *topos* and where the stories are constructed around a perception of self, contextualised in past and present constructions of home, and leading, in response, to a re-evaluation of the future (Christou 2006).

During the data collection stage of the research the participants dwelled on their experiences of migrancy. They included critical as well as positive commentary about life both in Denmark and Greece. However, on a deeper psychic level, ‘migranthood’ is also characterised as a self-actualisation process of introspection. It is actually an identification project and a reflective experience of belongingness:
And for me you know it was very good because it was Greece and even now it is like a country you go on vacation, I hadn’t lived the regular life in Greece. So I went and it was a tremendous experience because I understood then that I belong to Denmark rather than Greece. I felt not as a foreigner but when I was in Greece I would see the Danish aspects that I have and when I am in Denmark I see the Greek side, so I can’t say that I am completely Greek or completely Danish, I see that I have both and I try to take the good parts from both the Danish and Greek. But what made a big impression on me was that in Greece you live like a robot. That’s how I felt, that you don’t have your freedom, you run around here and there, it’s difficult, it’s difficult to make new friendships, I see that the Greeks keep their friendships from their childhood years; it is very difficult for them to make new friendships. (Daphne, second generation, 27 years old)

Close and reliable family relations among Greeks are very attractive to the participants because this is (in their view) unusual in Denmark. However, they also recognise that there is a price to pay for such intense care from loved ones and that is the loss of one’s personal freedom and autonomy as Greek family relations tend to be very possessive, at times domineering and suffocating, often resulting in a dependency syndrome between parents and children.

Since I was a child I always liked that the family is very tight knit. It is very tight and connected and if you are sick about twenty people will look after you. Family relations are really warm in Greece but on the other hand you don’t have your freedom; that means that somebody is constantly over you. They are very much afraid, they have a lot of anxiety that parents here (in Denmark) don’t have. (Daphne, second generation, 27 years old)

On similar lines female participants reflect on patriarchal experiences they had encountered in Greece during their stay:

I stayed in Greece when I was twenty and it wasn’t suitable for a girl to have male friends, to go out alone. That was not possible, whereas in Denmark it is very normal to go out alone, to go out with a boy without being boyfriend-girlfriend, so this whole idea of equal rights, equality, I didn’t see that much in Greece before … but I think, how do you say that, they have a more relaxed relationship men and women in Denmark. I don’t know if respect is the right word. (Natalia, second generation, 34 years old)

The search for self seems to be a constant negotiation of two differing cultural worlds. Identification is thus a recurrent performance in which cultural worlds are mediated through subjectivities of multiple selves.
Performances and the Embodiment of Subjectivities

Life stories are constructed, negotiated and articulated subjectivities. They are contextually defined, socially situated and culturally mediated enactments of certain fragments of a life and of particular glimpses of time while they are saturated by social categorisations and marked by cultural experiences. Stories of the self cannot be anything but stories of a gendered, ethicised and classed self. However, stories are not articulated in a vacuum but are (re)constructed, recalled, (re)told, modified, expressed and narrated in a particular context, which is also a space of collectives: events, past and shared memories, interrelationships of characters, configurations of experiences in specific time and space and processual processes of identification throughout. In this respect, it is quite important to go beyond the textual to the social and historical conditions that facilitate the production and articulation of stories (Plummer 1995). Hence, stories cannot stand in isolation but are shaped by the very socio-cultural and politico-historical conditions that penetrate their narrative construction.

Here, we must see the subject as relationally, psycho-biographically, historically and culturally constituted (Chodorow 1999). The individual, as a subject but also an active-actor, forms and develops the ‘self’ in response to specific ‘others’. The life course of the individual takes place during social time and within social space as it is inscribed in and mediated by the subjectivity of the individual. This connection between individual and society is fundamental insofar as the individual and society cannot be understood other than intertwined in how people create personal meaning. Such meanings are subjective and they are grounded in the psychic realm, the biographical container, the historical context and the cultural platform of everyday life. These meanings are constructed but also acquired by the individual in a discursive and habitual manner.

But how do the participants identify? What sense of belongingness do they express? Here are some characteristic responses:

I am still struggling to unite them because it is like I neither belong here nor in Greece and then I wonder where do I belong? It is almost as if I don’t have a country. It’s like not having that base that I know when I turn eighty I will certainly go to my country because that’s where I want to die. I don’t have that kind of base which on the one hand upsets me very much and that must be such a big sense of security because you know that is where you belong in a way. But on the other hand I think it gives a bigger sense of freedom which would enable me to live anywhere in the world because it is what you have inside and not what country you belong. And you can see things more openly. But I still get confused because something inside me wants to say that I belong here but also there. And then I say ok I belong to myself. (Hermione, second generation, 34 years old)

I am lucky I think because I have two of everything, two idiosyncrasies, two cultures, two languages, I am lucky, others have only one language, one
It is clear that, as a complex notion, in the case of the participants, identity inhabits a sense of duality; it is always in the making, non-stable, not fixed and constantly under negotiation between the ‘here’ and ‘there’. Yet, for some participants instead of deep confusion it appears to offer a sense of harmony and completion of their life experiences along with a wider sense of their surroundings and ‘place’ in the world; a wider context than a confined cultural space. However, above all, belonging and identity are subjectively mediated notions translated through personal and experiential cultural circumstances.

Spatialities and the Mobility of Subjectivities

Migrant narratives are a testimony to the multiple interactive layers of subjectivity of people’s lived experiences (Christou 2006). To illustrate then what I have termed ‘the counter-diasporic experience’ of migrants and return migrants (Christou 2006: 211) particularly those of the second generation, we need to make sense of counter-narratives and (auto)biographical accounts as acts of (re)collection of experiences but also as transformative performative possibilities of the self in constructing the other and finally an avenue for making sense of the collective. Hence, inner dialogues in one’s personal psychological space provide an entry into the constitution of the self through reflexive acts of (re)membering.

The following excerpts from second-generation Greek-Danes focus on the demarcation between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in both ‘host’ and ‘home’ lands. The narratives express a particular ‘culture of fear’ correlated with an increase in Islamophobia across Europe. Moreover, a particular sense of women’s embodied fear is expressed by such narratives.

The Greeks are not that racist, especially in comparison to other nations. Not so much. But you see at the same time that the Albanians are the ones who steal and murder and they are all bad … but it’s a difficult topic to discuss because, even myself being half foreign and not belonging anywhere I have a tendency not to want so many Somalis in Denmark and others, without considering myself racist. But I see that there is no respect from those people and in any case I may be considered a racist because I don’t like the Muslims. I don’t like them, especially those who are extremists. They bother me, why shouldn’t I admit it? Of course you are forbidden from saying this in Denmark. You can’t say it because they will immediately say that you are a racist. And that is not logical, it is emotional and that is wrong. Of course it’s ok for them to bury us, to steal from us, to take advantage of us, those people, and for us to accept them with open arms? Well no! For me it’s not right and that is proven everyday that they take advantage of us right in front of our eyes. Well, I have an opinion for all
these things. I take a position. I am not saying that it is correct my position, but at least I have a position. (Zoe, second generation, 37 years old)

For most participants, there was a clear feeling that ‘Greece had changed’ and it was not exactly the place of their imagination or of their parents’ memories, or even of their own memories of ‘homecoming’ visits. The disappointment captures a sense of agony. This agony is an avenue to comprehend the way in which the comparison between expectation and reality is contaminated by a mixing of the current urban setting with idealised memories of life in the ancestral homeland. Furthermore, there appears to be an affirmation of a racialised embodiment of the nation and hence of Greekness (or Danishness) as being exemplified as ‘contaminated’ by other ‘races’. Hence, the body is also the zone of the ethnos. The female body, as narrated by participants, in the security and protection of the familiarity of the nation is without fear but when fear emerges, as illustrated above in the newly acquired multicultural context, then the body is vulnerable and threatened. Participants reiterate the notion of ‘transition’ and ‘transformation’ in the country’s very own social fabric. This resonates with an overall ‘culture of fear’ (Furedi 2006) stimulated by the presence of the ‘other’. The discussion on the changing Greek society and the increase in criminality produced just such characteristic responses. When focusing on the notion of ‘migrants encountering migrants in the city’ (Christou and King 2006) participants express a sense of outrage against and intolerance of the ‘threatening’ other. Again, this recurrence revolves around an atmosphere of fear, crime and violence allegedly generated by [other] migrants and the fear of extremism as a threat to security. Hence, the presence of the migrants as the ‘others’ is correlated with the spatial production of urban fear.

Migration then becomes a process of self-searching, self-reflection, transition and transformation. Migration is not solely about mobility or even stasis for that matter. Even when one settles in the country of destination there seems to be internal mobility as one thinks about the ancestral homeland and transfers such nostalgic feelings not only to the second, but even to the third generation. Lydia talks about such feelings quite powerfully in the following excerpt:

I feel like I am a Dane, but meaning what? A Greek-Dane? Because I would never become a Dane-Dane and Greece is very much alive inside me. It is a part of my character, it is a part of my life. Every year I go there for my vacation with my family, both my Greek and my Danish family, and I have those encounters and relations with Greece. I go about four times annually and I feel right at this moment that I have my family in Greece … but I said since I am now here and I have to try to find ways of being in Greece often without losing the language and my relationship and my relations and my inner relationship with the Greek world, which is always strong. Always strong, always, even now. Because the way I see it … how do I see it? I see it as every time I come back from Greece from vacation and holidays I face a whole week of melancholy, light depression, not psychosomatic, no. It is emotional, like I am in a state of sadness, a sadness,
sadness, one whole week of sadness during which I cannot work. I read Greek books, I read Greek newspapers, I take them with me until I get out of this week and I say to myself, now it is time to get out of this. It is a conscious decision to exit from this sadness and there is no reason for me to be in this sadness because in four months I will be back in Greece. But it is an internal process, probably that is what it is which my children also go through to tell you about the second generation. My daughter has the exact same thing and now my granddaughter has it. (…) There is however a certain pain which you try to soothe but every time you have a crisis, personal, social, family, professional, those wounds open up again and you tell yourself, ‘why did I leave my country, my family, my language, my homeland? Why aren’t I there in order to contribute’? (Lydia, first generation, 66 years old)

Finally, in the last two narratives, Catherine and Alexandra draw on their personal family experiences of how one maintains ethnic and cultural bonds with the ancestral homeland especially in the case of the second generation. Both women talk about a conscious effort to transmit ethnocultural symbols to the next generation, for instance in teaching them the language and tradition.

I have noticed a lot of changes in Greece. A lot. When I go there, because I go two-three times a year since ’73, I see that Greece is heading backwards, a lot. I see it in my family, I see it in my friends, my relatives. I try because when I return back I return the same way I was when I left Greece and I think that things should remain that way but unfortunately they have changed everything a great deal, very much so, extremely so. But when I am there I try to be Greek, a Greek like them. The price is very high, it costs me a great deal of pain, a lot; because it is very difficult to have two faces. I feel Greek inside me, I cannot change my ethnicity and culture at all. I try to make it always first but I place it along with the Danish one and I feel that part of my life to be peaceful but when I do something like a prediction of what will happen to me and what I will do, I think in Greek. I think that I gain with that and when I am at my job I am a Dane because I’m there for eight hours in order to get my money and to have a good time, they respect me, I respect them, we are friends but to the point of being friends only at work. I don’t invite them and I don’t want them to invite me to their place. But inside me I think a lot as a Greek. I taught my children the Greek language. (Katerina, first generation, 56 years old)

By contrast, Alexandra emphasises that cultural transmission is a conscious act but above all not always necessary for a smooth integration of migrant offspring. She believes that a child’s happiness is far more important than the maintenance of one’s ethnic and cultural roots; while obviously, depending on the migrant’s origins, there are degrees of acceptance in the host society:
Yes, to maintain one’s Greekness, it must happen consciously. I cannot talk about everyone in public but in my life it is impossible and I try to maintain my Greekness as much as I can but in reality there is a decrease in all those things in my children and I see it coming, as much as I try and I see it from my husband as well who comes from a mixed family. His father is of course Greek but he wasn’t one of those fathers who was fanatic with his ethnicity and culture … so many things that make me wonder what will happen in the third and fourth generation, how much Greekness will my grandchildren have. So consciously we try, but due to reality I see that there is a withdrawal and this kind of withdrawal some would characterise as small and others as big, meaning how much can somebody remain Greek? Yes, I don’t believe that I have to make my children keep their Greekness. And who is a Greek? As opposed to their happiness, to their adjustment and to their future which I think doesn’t really influence them … it is a very subjective issue and it depends on the family and the circumstances as in every country. Yes I believe this and the same holds for Greece even, whatever values you will give to your child depends on the family and the consciousness of every person. They say that values have been named Greek but in Greece there are values that no longer have a name and those are the ones that we have to give our children as well as within the area of Greek identity. (Alexandra, first generation, 43 years old)

Alexandra’s narrative excerpt is quite revealing about the issues that preoccupy parents of the first generation in relation to the future of subsequent generations. There are several important implications here about cultural metamorphoses, ethnic interpretations and how identities are translated and transformed. Above all, as new cultural geographies of diasporic generations emerge, old discussions require new angles of inquiry.

**Conclusion**

Much like migrant lives, migrant life stories are complex. As migrants experience changes in their lives such transitions are imprinted into the storied version of their lifeworlds. Hence, life stories are glimpses of particular moments, specific events, and memorable experiences, while, as biographical accounts, they depict a filtered version of these things. They are stories of multiple journeys in time and space, in memory and fantasy of the desired, the possible and the achieved but also the forgotten, the rejected and the mythical.

Biographical and narrative methods and the use of life stories in migration research offer great insights into the subjectivities and the complexities of gender, migrancy, belongingness and identification. Life stories are also powerful outlets for agency for women as they can manifest action through locating themselves in the world, by telling and relating to the other and becoming aware of their own unique personal history (Personal Narratives Group 1989).
The participants elaborated on how their sense of belongingness was shaped by their ethnic background and their experiences living in Denmark and Greece. They developed their views on Danish and Greek social norms, family values and personal relationships, educational and socialisation patterns, attitudes towards migrants, the welfare system, redefinition of roles, attitudes towards ageing parents etc. Throughout the discussions there appeared to be a preoccupation with socio-cultural issues related to migration, such as integration, questions of identity and belonging, questions of return migration.

In terms of participants’ mobility patterns, there is an intense transnational connection with the ancestral homeland and travel back and forth occurs frequently and across generations. The participants make at least two trips a year and they spend all their holiday time in Greece. For the self-employed and those with flexible working schedules trips are more frequent and last longer. Discussions that I had with the second generation confirmed what I had been told about their autonomous decision to relocate to Greece for a minimum of one year and sometimes over five–six years to become fluent in the language, to study, to work and live a Greek life. This usually occurred either right after high school or in their early twenties. Additionally, many family members and friends would visit them in Denmark.

A major part of the second generation’s socialisation process is the ancestral relocation trip mentioned above. In terms of those second-generation migrants who return to Denmark after a short or long-term stay in Greece and eventually have their own family, one of the most notable issues is their desire and intent to reaffirm a ‘Greekness component’ in their offspring; that is, not only to make their children aware of their ‘half’ or ‘quarter’ Greekness but to pass on to them crucial ethnocultural markers of Greekness, such as language skills, values, knowledge of Greek history and culture and a sense of pride in their heritage and roots.

In order to explore the interrelationships between migrant identities and women’s sense of belonging in a diasporic space between ‘home’ and ‘host’ countries, it is important to locate their personal stories within the interconnected systems of social, historical, cultural and political dynamics that connects both women’s experiential narrations of space, and the gendered constitution of home-spaces. These women perceive themselves as autonomous and independent individuals who would like to break away from previous roles imposed by authoritarian, conservative and traditional perspectives of ‘Greekness’, yet they intend to actively maintain a relationship with the ancestral homeland and some of them to eventually permanently relocate there. By looking at the subjectivities of migrancy we can further analyse the process of appropriation of cultural space and the extent to which the migrants themselves respond to ethnocultural signifiers.
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PART I
Society and Politics
2. National Centre and Transnational Periphery
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In a satirical dialogue published in 1844 Hermes, the messenger of the gods, appeared before the righteous Greeks in the Elysian Fields to inform them about the decisions taken by the first constitutional National Assembly of the free Greek kingdom which had just finished its deliberations. So, addressing himself to Adamantios Korais, father of the Greek nation, he said: ‘Were you to have lived until now, old man, your Greece would not even be prepared to recognize you as a citizen’ (Karasoutsas 1844: 7). The author had been inspired by the much discussed Resolution II of the National Assembly of 1844 which denied certain groups of naturalised Greek citizens, who had not been born in the Greek Kingdom, the right to become public servants for a certain period of time.

And who were the Greeks whose return to Greece had given rise to the discussions in the National Assembly which resulted in this particular resolution? They were Greeks who had ‘returned’ to the country after 1827, and specifically Greek citizens who had not fought in the final battles of the war and did not come from those areas to which the struggle for Independence had spread, so that they were not considered migrants in the sense that the term acquired in the protocols which governed the exchange of populations between the two states (Proceedings 1844: 720–1). Consequently it was almost exclusively those who had ‘returned’ to Greece from other European countries. The main reason for their being at the forefront of political concern at this time was that, thanks to their experience of Europe and the fact that they were better educated than the locals, they were practically monopolising the public sector in Greece.

This Resolution, of course, did not intend them to be deprived of Greek citizenship altogether but was just imposing a sort of ‘national’ penalty (in the guise of the temporary loss of some of their civil rights) for their tardy response to the revolutionary call to arms from the fatherland (Vogli 2007a: 343–8). On the other hand, however, the same Resolution seemed to restrict rights of access to

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1 On the proceedings and the Resolution of the National Assembly see www.parliament.gr/onlinePublishing/PRA/index.htm.
the Greek state for those Greeks who had remained abroad – and that would have included Adamantios Korais, had he not already died.

In the late 1840s doubts, not only as regards identifying the state with the nation but also as regards parity for all Greeks within the nation, as measured in terms of equal right of access to public office for all (whether permanent residents or expatriates), sparked off the sort of political criticism which the satirical dialogue quoted above is reflecting. Its author blamed the ‘aristocratic’ elite of locals for ‘splitting’ the nation (something which even the sultan had not managed to do), implying that it was neither the principle of equality nor the ideal of the republican identity of the citizen which had inspired this regulation to the detriment of expatriates. So, the author of the dialogue asked in his prologue, for which Greeks had the Greek state been set up? This chapter will focus on just this question and will examine the policy of the Greek state towards its expatriates [omogeneis] throughout the nineteenth century.

‘You are Greeks ...’ The Legislative Framework during the War of Independence

From the very beginning of the Greek War of Independence the theory, so beloved of the early nineteenth century, which held that humanity was naturally divided into nations, provided the theoretical basis for Greek policy. This theory also held that these nations were made up of collective entities characterised by specific and empirically ascertainable characteristics and had the supreme political right to self-government (Kedourie 1960: 1). The identification of nation with state (Connor 1994: 38–9) was safeguarded in the proclamation of Greek political independence which, following the model of the French proclamation of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (Brubaker 1996: 21, 43–4; Heather 1999: 96–7), transferred sovereignty to the one indivisible Greek nation – in other words to all Greek citizens.

Of course, as an institution and moreover as the legal formalisation of the criteria required for a Greek identity, Greek nationality was not the result of a long process of nation-building nor did it spring from increasing familiarisation with the theories and practices of political activity. Its appearance in Greek law was closely linked with the needs which arose during the War of Independence and more especially with the necessity to define in law the Greek identity of people who were fighting on the battlefields and through them the ‘Greekness’ of those who had been born and had always lived in the Greek regions, and ultimately of the state they wanted to found. Greek legislators sought the basis on which to organise the institutions of their emergent country without exception in foreign legislative models of the period. But it is no accident that, particularly during the drafting of the provisions which concerned Greek nationality, the only things they took from these legislative models were the safeguarded rights of a citizen of an independent state and the conditions they provided for regulating the necessary
procedures for granting citizenship – in other words the naturalisation process and the confiscation of civil rights. By contrast, under the extraordinary circumstances of the ongoing war, every conceivable criterion of ‘Greekness’ was projected onto the relevant provisions of Greek law, even if such criteria had never put in an appearance in the nationality law of other states.

In 1822 the first Provisional Government recognised as citizens of revolutionary Greece the native Christian inhabitants of the regions in revolt. Religion was the only criterion which clearly separated the revolutionaries from the Muslims, who were also native inhabitants of the same regions, though the enemies of the Greeks in the theatre of war at the time. And it was also the criterion which excluded the latter from taking part in collective decisions and in administering public affairs. Despite being included in all the revolutionary constitutions, indigenousness [ius soli] could not be the principal criterion underpinning the Greek law, while the war was going on and the borders of the Greek state were changing in accordance with the outcome of battles being fought on the ground. And the frequent changes in territory created additional complications once many fighter-citizens began to revert to the status of ‘foreigners’, after the revolution had failed in their particular part of the Empire.

With the fate of this group in mind the legislators, to whom the Second National Assembly gave the task of revising the constitution, granted Greek nationality to non-native Christians living in the regions which had taken part in the uprising as long as they had Greek as their mother tongue and declared themselves, in the presence of the local revolutionary authorities, desirous of being included in the society of Greek citizens. By ‘returning’ to what was still a temporary Greek state, expatriate Greeks achieved equal status with those born on Greek soil. This was all the more necessary for a nation which, as a consequence of its historical development, had some of its constituent parts in a wide area across the enormous Ottoman Empire as well in various European countries. Nevertheless the attempts of the legislators in 1823 to describe the identity of non-native Greeks using religious faith (with the addition this time of the mother tongue) as criteria, exposed their difficulties in introducing the criterion of ethnic origins, with the meaning it acquired in the Napoleonic Code. In other words, if a father could hand down French nationality to his descendants, this presupposed he himself was a French national. Yet the Greeks who lived in the rest of the Ottoman Empire or who had moved to Europe before 1821 did not acquire Greek nationality. Indeed, according to the law of 1822 (Law 4/23.02./1822) which forbade Greek citizens to leave regions in revolt without written permission from the administration, expatriate citizens of the emergent country were subject to even more restrictions.

Nevertheless the legislative commission, which in 1827 took on the drafting of the third constitution of Revolutionary Greece did not repeat these prohibitive measures. On the contrary, giving priority to the need for direct or indirect

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2 The constitutions, the laws and the debates of the national assemblies of the revolutionary period can be found on the website: www.parliament.gr/paligenesia.
‘enlistment’ of all Greeks by descent in the service of their ‘reborn’ homeland, the legislative committee of 1827 judged it necessary to distinguish not only the native Christians, but also two distinct groups of non-native citizens: a) firstly the Christians from the rest of the Ottoman Empire, once they had moved to liberated regions, so that there should be no obstacle to making the ‘distinction’ between the two embattled nations which European diplomacy was insisting upon at that time⁴ and b) secondly, the Greeks by descent [iōs sanguinis] who had remained abroad, mostly in Europe (Vogli 2007a: 37–151).

This distinction seemed to give the emergent society of Greek citizens the basic characteristics of a Christian community which had developed historically between East and West: that is on the one hand the Christian diaspora, mostly spread throughout the Ottoman Empire, and on the other the large and thriving Greek communities in various European cities, resulting from sporadic mass migrations. Yet it also showed the way Greek policy, on the issue of Greek nationality and identity, was increasingly adapted to the need for diplomacy as international recognition of the state drew nearer. The groups of citizens, registered either by locality or on the basis of permanent residence on Greek territory, or alternatively on the grounds of their ethnic descent, reflected the phases in the historical development of the Greek nation in which the state was recognised from the outset to be smaller in terms of territorial extent than its leaders had hoped for. Thus it was evident that the aim of Greek nationality law was not to identify the nation with the geographical extent of the state at any given time. If what was required in the way of bonds which could legitimately link the cultural community of the nation with the state gave the impression that the aim was to identify the one with the other (Diamandouros 1983: 51–8; Veremis 1983: 59–67), this was only ever intended to be a short-term solution. Once the expansionist policy of the Greek Kingdom had extended its initial, limited borders, this would no longer be necessary.

**Greek Policy on Expatriates**

The term ‘ομογενής’ appeared in the Greek political vocabulary at the same time as the ‘theoretical’ expansion of the Greek state abroad, which resulted from the formation of a Greek consular network (Diliyiannis and Zinopoulos 1846: 211–12); Yeoryis 1995). The ‘ομογενής’ or ‘ομοεθνής’ Greeks, terms which were used interchangeably with much the same meaning in the Greek vocabulary of the nineteenth century (like the words ‘εθνικότητα’ and ‘ιθαγενεία’– nationality – or ‘ιπικοούτιτα’ – citizenship), were Greeks who were entitled to the diplomatic protection of Greek consulates in the small ‘notional’ islands of Greek territory which the consulates constituted in places outside the Greek borders. But, as

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⁴ This condition was imposed for the first time in the St. Petersburg Protocol, 23 Mar/4 Apr. 1826 (Skoufos 1834: 64–5).
the Greeks who had left the territory of the state before 1821 or even during the Revolution were not Greek citizens, the first responsibility of the consular machinery was to regularise the papers of those who had free access to Greek nationality on account of their ethnic descent (as laid down in the relevant clause of the 1827 constitution) but who – due to the conditions at the time – had not yet exercised this right.

This process provided for candidates for citizenship to be sworn in and registered in the Greek municipality of their choice, and ultimately for their registration in the directories of the Greek consulates, all without leaving their domicile. At this time the swearing in and registration on the municipal roll were the only preconditions for acquiring Greek nationality for anyone resident on Greek soil who applied to be naturalised. Naturally, according to the Ministry’s official version, carrying out this procedure in the Greek consulates was a temporary measure and something they intended to abandon once the new law on Greek nationality was issued or even as soon as the necessary transitional stage of the corresponding regularisation was complete. Moreover, what was not explicitly pointed out in the guidelines and the pronouncements from the Ministry was that it was impossible to implement this policy in the same way in Greek consular buildings based in the Ottoman Empire. Unlike European governments, who were not interested in the ambitions or the specific tactics which underlay Greek policies, the Porte tried to keep the number of Greek subjects in its territory as low as possible, so as to avoid acknowledging a possible Greek minority (at a time when the distinctiveness of such a group could be defined on the basis of its political rather than its ethnic or religious identity).

The different tactics employed as part of Greek policy in the Ottoman Empire are reflected in the limited number of official applications made by the Greek consulates within the Empire to register Greek subjects on their consular rolls: and they only registered natives of the Greek state, who lived and worked in the neighbouring country, not including beggars. The first Greek ambassador in Constantinople, Konstantinos Zografos, had managed hastily to return many of these indigents to Greek soil in 1835, though, as he himself stressed, he had done so ‘illegally’ and indeed at the expense of the state. About a decade later his successor at the embassy admitted that the ministry’s efforts to afford Greek diplomatic protection to as many Christian inhabitants of the Ottoman state as possible had been entirely mistaken. Moreover, if the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs concealed the ‘irregularity’ of the ‘Hellenisations’ taking place abroad, most of the Christians from the Ottoman Empire who sought naturalisation did so on Greek soil. Both the ministry and the consular officials recognised that a short

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4 The procedure was laid down in a series of royal decrees published between February and May 1835 (see Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, folder 1825/49.1 and Vogli 2007a: 261–2).

5 See the letters of K. Zografos to the Nomarch of the Cyclades and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 22 Oct./3 Nov. 1835, Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs folder 1835/49.2.
trip to Greece was usually enough for the Christian subjects of the sultan to return home with a Greek passport (Vogli 2007a: 257–96).

The regular checks made by the Ottoman authorities on the Greek identity of those presenting themselves as Greek subjects within the Ottoman Empire put the ambassadors in a particularly difficult position and above all did not allow them to exercise ‘general moral influence’ over all the Christians in Turkey, which was the primary purpose of their mission. Therefore the Greek ambassador suggested that the transitional stage in which Greek identity papers were regularised in the Ottoman Empire should be done away with by the end of 1845. Otherwise, in his judgement, there was a risk of diplomatic clashes between the two countries arousing suspicions in the ‘outside world’, and thus encouraging the great powers of the day to look more closely at the ultimate aims of the Greek policy currently being implemented unimpeded in European countries. Naturally, in the correspondence between ministers and consuls there was no need to analyse the aims and aspirations of Greek policy. But not even the laws on Greek nationality were intended to explain the objectives they happened to serve.

In fact, the Code of Greek Nationality, published in May 1835, did not affect the probative value of the certificates of oath-taking and registration on the municipal roll, but neither did it put an end to the process of regularisation, which had been set in motion the previous year. The new law, which in theory put an end to the irregularities and makeshift nature of the relevant revolutionary legislation, was a Greek translation of the Napoleonic Civil Code of 1804, supplemented by some additional provisions which allowed the French text to be adapted to the specific circumstances of Greece (Dimakopoulos 1991–3: 125–44). To protect the ‘continuity’ of Greek legislation provision was made for recognising the Greek nationality of all those who had already been acknowledged as citizens ‘on the basis of the previous laws’. As for the handing down of Greek nationality (or ‘Greekness’) to subsequent generations, this was regulated in exactly the same way as in French law on the basis of having been born ‘in Greece of foreign parents’ or ‘abroad of a Greek father’, that is to say a Greek citizen.

Like the municipal law which obliged Greek citizens to register with a municipality in Greek territory, the Code of Greek Nationality did not make it clear how someone could demonstrate that they fulfilled the legal requirements as regards being considered a Greek citizen before acquiring a certificate of registration on the municipal roll, something which would entitle them to a Greek passport and thus to Greek protection outside Greece’s borders. In other words there was no clear explanation as to what the difference was between registering on the municipal roll and acquiring Greek nationality and thus in what way the municipal

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7 Greek Government Gazette, no. 20, 16/28.05.1835.
8 Greek Government Gazette, no. 3, 22.01.1834.
The registration process which expatriates could go through from abroad differed from the process of being granted naturalisation while remaining domiciled outside Greece. At the same time it was hard – and at times perhaps impractical – for the Greek consular authorities to verify the Greek status or the expatriate identity of those who presented themselves as Greeks abroad, partly because the ministry concerned – Foreign Affairs – had no reason at that time to draw up any special procedure for verifying and checking.

The chaotic situation in the Greek consulates is described quite revealingly by the consular agents on the spot. Among the ‘new subjects’ of the Greek Kingdom who were ‘christened’ as Greeks through the protection of consulates in European towns, most were natives of the Ottoman Empire rather than Greek provincials and, in formal terms, they did not have the ‘Greek qualities’ which the law prescribed. Many of them had not only never visited the territory of free Greece, but also had a foreign passport and a second nationality, despite the fact that Greek law had no provisions for allowing Greek citizens to acquire a second nationality. This undermined the Greek ministry’s assertion that its policy had been designed to ensure expatriates should not remain unprotected and stateless while they were putting their affairs in order prior to returning to Greece. Moreover, for the most part it was not the expatriates who went to the Greek consulates to claim their Greek rights; rather it was consular officials who were trying to get the expatriates interested in becoming Greek citizens.

The Greek consul in Ancona, for example, had managed to draw up consular rolls from as early as 1835, inducing the local expatriates to put their Greek identity documents in order so that they would come under the jurisdiction of the then newly constituted autocephalous Greek Church and be rid of religious pressures from the papacy. In 1846 the Greek consul in Odessa described in a letter to the Ministry his successful collaboration with the Russian military governor of the region, who had allowed him to recognise the local expatriates (even without their consent) as refugees from the War of Independence and thus temporarily Greek citizens. The consul even suggested that his Russian colleague should be rewarded for his help in this matter by awarding him the Grand Cross of the Order of the Saviour. Three years later the Greek consul in Tuscany explained to the Ministry that he was handing out Greek passports freely to local expatriates from Chios, despite being fully aware of the fact that Chios was not part of the Greek Kingdom though it had been destroyed by the Turks during the War of Independence (Vogli 2007a: 257–96).

The efforts of these two consuls were part of the ‘second round’ in the process of setting up a network of Greek consulates, which had been begun on the orders of the first elected Greek government after the establishment of the constitutional monarchy in an effort to regularise the question of the Greek nationality of expatriates. This had been prompted by the pressure being exerted at that time by the Sublime Porte to allow Greek citizens resident abroad to take part in the National Assembly of 1844 as representatives of communities identified by the names of the Ottoman regions in which they lived (Dimakis 1991: 181–202). The fact that
the National Assembly itself had voted for the famous Resolution II mentioned above involving the criterion of indigenousness obliged the Greek government to pursue immediate political advantages this time. In other words, by encouraging the ‘Hellenisation’ of expatriates in the European consulates, they attempted to dispel the impression that Resolution II was at odds with the ethnocentric view that saw expatriates as the equals of ‘real’ Greeks and consequently citizens even before they set foot on Greek territory – and naturally most welcome visitors in the eyes of the state.

Moreover, continuing the policy devised in 1835, they avoided replying to the crucial question which in fact had sparked off the debate in the National Assembly: what were the ulterior motives behind Greek government policy? Was the aim to recognise Greek subjects who might (and preferably would) remain abroad or, by ensuring ease of access to Greek nationality for Greeks by descent, to give them an incentive to move to Greek territory as quickly as possible (at a time when, as is well known, Greece urgently needed to increase its population)? Furthermore the fact that successive Greek governments preferred to keep quiet about the possibility of integrating the expatriates into Greek society, was entirely in line with their tactics of perpetuating the practice of dividing expatriates into two groups depending on whether they lived in the Ottoman Empire or in Europe.

Indeed, in 1847, when the Ministry provided its consular officials with documentation on its policy, it presented the protection described above which it so graciously granted as a sort of interim measure for expatriates. The whole process relied, as the Ministry explained, on the fact that expatriates were not to blame for having been out of the country up to now and therefore it was only fair that they should enjoy Greek rights up front on condition that they were intending to return to Greece.9

The promise to return, regardless of whether they would do so or not, seemed to be sufficient indication of national consciousness in Greeks by descent, who had not yet identified their own interests with those of the Greek state. And it was perhaps a sufficiently convincing indication, according to the Ministry’s interpretation, for distinguishing between ‘the Greek only by descent’ who was not entitled to the ‘facility’ of the Greek consulates and ‘those in the process of acquiring and having the qualities of Greek nationality’. It is clear that the presence of Greek citizens abroad, even if it did nothing to strengthen national unity within the state, did nothing to threaten it. Consequently there was no reason for such people, who in any case were co-religionists, mostly spoke the same language and in ‘whose veins’ there was no doubt that ‘Greek blood’ flowed, to be subject to special measures prior to their incorporation into Greek society.

And furthermore, if the Code of Greek Citizenship, following the French model, protected free access to Greek nationality for the child of foreign nationals who, albeit by chance, was born on Greek soil (article 2), then it was only natural

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9 Circular from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no 1057 to consuls (25 August 1847) in Christopoulos et al. (1853a: 64–5).
that an expatriate should also have an unimpeachable right to this, regardless of his place of birth or residence (Christopoulos et al. 1853a: 4). Attempts to substantiate those views could draw upon some of the most liberal ideas, or indeed some of the most conservative objections, to be heard nearly half a century ago in the French parliament before the voting of the Napoleonic Civil Code (Brubaker 1996: 86–91). The supposed sentimental ‘attachment’ of a man ‘to his place of birth’ and by extension to the political nation, in the sense of the term in which it is identical with the state, also explains the generosity of Greek law towards people who were foreigners by birth but also native inhabitants of Greece (Christopoulos et al. 1853a: 9–11). Consequently the ‘attachment’ of Greeks ‘by blood’ to the nation could justify the granting of suffrage (Christopoulos et al. 1853b: 24).10

The Civil Code of 1856,11 which remained in force for a hundred years, granted Greek nationality to expatriates one year earlier than to foreign nationals (article 15). Indeed the lack of clarifications in the text of the law as to just what the obligatory settling in Greece of those Greeks registering as citizens meant allowed, according to one reliable witness, Greek regional and municipal authorities to interpret the law at will and thus to grant Greek passports to expatriates without delay – and above all to those living in the Ottoman provinces who had to spend several days travelling to Greece because, unlike the Greeks living in European countries, they could not easily acquire a Greek passport at some local consulate.12 Moreover the Greek state rather discouraged their permanent settlement in Greece. In other words the ‘distribution’ of Greeks by descent between Greece and Turkey had created in Greece a sizeable group of non-indigenous Greek citizens who had been born in the Ottoman provinces and who, as the state was keen to maintain, had not agreed to be separated from their fellow compatriots or their birthplace. On the contrary they were claiming the right to determine the place of the provincial town or village where they had been born on the political map of the region, based on their and their fellow compatriots’ identities and national pretensions. These ploys on the part of the Greeks intensified the frequent irredentist uprisings even more, as well as increasing the hordes of Greeks by descent who became refugees, seeking refuge in the free state at times of diplomatic crisis but always returning to their birthplace once Greco-Turkish relations had been restored (Vogli 2007b). It is indicative that these tactics were deployed to particularly good effect in the claims made on behalf of the Greek state at the Berlin Congress by the then Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs and later Greek Prime Minister, Theodoros Deligiannis (Karavas 2006).

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10 Indeed in 1862 expatriates voted for the first time in their local Greek consulates for the election of the king.
11 *Greek Government Gazette*, no. 75, 15.11.1856.
12 *Report from the Greek Embassy in Constantinople to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 1156, 11.02.1856 (Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs folder 1866/49.1).
However the potential ‘return’ of expatriates from Europe did not fit in with Greece’s territorial aspirations. Indeed one gets the impression that the other regulations in the civil law relating to Greek nationality were directed above all at expatriates in Europe and were intended to maintain the ties that currently bound them – and would in the future bind their descendants – to the nation-state. Thus the law allowed Greek nationality to be handed down on the father’s side to his illegitimate children, as long as he had already acknowledged them (article 14). Similarly illegitimate children of Greek women could also acquire Greek nationality, unless they had been recognised by a non-Greek father whose foreign nationality they had inherited, when it was necessary for them to have attained their majority and to settle in Greece (articles 14 and 19). Greek women who lost their Greek nationality as a result of marrying a foreigner could regain it if widowed or divorced or if their husband had shown himself willing to seek citizenship himself (article 25). Moreover the children and the spouses of those Greek citizens who, by law, lost their Greek rights, either by dint of acquiring a second nationality or by taking on public office abroad without the permission of the King of Greece (article 23), remained Greek citizens (article 24). Moreover, even those deprived of Greek nationality, could regain it at any time, as long as they returned to their homeland and expressed the desire to do so (articles 27–8).

From the 1870s, which saw an enormous increase in Greek citizens emigrating, the same legislative framework served the need to maintain their links with the state admirably. Moreover, the generosity of Greek policy towards expatriates needed no explanation, even if in practice ‘Greek blood’ was impossible to verify; even if a simple promise of returning on the part of expatriates was a completely ineffectual basis for a policy of ‘Hellenisations’ as has been described; even if the aims of Greek policy were undermined by not discouraging Greek citizens from emigrating (Kourtoumi-Chantzi 1999).

Conclusion

Legislation is undeniably our main source for examining the development of nationality in a state. In reality, however, laws are shaped by state policies in relation to the type and character of its national community (Fahrmeir 2000: 16). In the case of nineteenth-century Greece one should add that Greek citizenship laws reflected some of the strategies associated with the state’s expansionist policy.

Given that any expansion of the nation state as a territorial entity would entail a corresponding expansion of the political nation (that is of the body of Greek citizens), it is not surprising to find that a constant feature of Greek policy in the nineteenth century was the pigeonholing of expatriates into specific groups depending on their relationship with the regions to which Greece laid claim. This is something which, as it turns out, was to have an even longer history than the issue of ‘continuity’, a continuity usually accounted for by the importance given to the criterion of descent by blood in Greek law – an opinion which to this day
legitimises the bias in state policy and the laws towards expatriates [omogeneis]. The main consequence of this ever expanding classification system was a correspondingly large number of categories of expatriates who, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, found themselves treated differently not just as regards the rights to which they were entitled outside of Greece as Greek nationals but above all as regards the scope provided for their integration into Greek society after their return to Greece (Mylonas and Vogli forthcoming).

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The Changing Boundaries of (any) Nationality

Defining the boundaries of (any) nationality implies that nationality is a differentiating concept: it includes through exclusion as it is always based on particularistic considerations regarding access to membership. A strong democratic conception of nationality puts political equality and participation at its centre while at the same time demanding certain prerequisites for membership that not all people possess. To put it simply: only some have access to formal equality, which means that the circle of people entitled to full participation rights has everywhere, even in the most democratic polity, remained narrower than the class of persons subject to the law (Neuman 1996). Exclusion then must be faced as a constitutive of the very ideal of modern nationality: only some can become equal (Cohen 1999: 249).

Then again defining the changing boundaries of nationality implies that the limits between the demos and the population are subject to changing considerations and interpretations by the state in the course of time. As this case study of the Greek nationality witnesses, these considerations represent deeper strategic choices of inclusion or exclusion, pretensions and phobias which go back a long way. However, notwithstanding their durability, these precepts have proved extremely flexible. And that is why the boundaries of nationality are changing: not only because they are submitted to long-term strategies of defining and reshaping the ‘we’, but also because they are subjected to circumstantial political manoeuvres of the juncture, considerations of foreign policy etc. Such considerations are surprising in their unpredictability but also as regards the inventiveness of the administration: who would ever have dared to imagine even 20 years ago that the pool of ethnic Greeks abroad, the so-called omogeneis, would ever contain the Arab Orthodox population of the Hatai region of Southern Turkey (Antioheia) who, since their migration to Istanbul, have been included in the population of the Greek Orthodox minority there, attending the same churches and schools?

This chapter has two objectives. The first is to provide detailed descriptions of how my introductory remarks relate to the case of Greek nationality. The second is to give material and arguments for a strategic reorientation of the Greek normative framework and administrative practice related to nationality, based on the experience of the twentieth century.
Formulating a ‘Definition’ of Greek Nationality: ‘Once a Greek, always a Greek’?

An extraordinarily indifferent article in the Code of Greek Nationality provides as follows: ‘In accordance with the decision of the General Secretary of the relevant region the acquisition or otherwise of Greek nationality by persons who request that their nationality be determined is ascertained in accordance with the regulations of the present Code, and with the relevant regulations previously in force and with international agreements and conventions’.  

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that, behind the dry official phraseology, the salient points in the history and practice of Greek nationality throughout the twentieth century (and indeed to the present day) are discernible, affording glimpses of the relationship between nationality, diaspora and the Greek state.

The term ‘defining’ [καθορισμός] is used interchangeably with the word ‘ascertaining’ [διαίτηση] in relation to nationality, which suggests that the practice is not of a definitive nature. The wherewithal to be Greek predates the act of defining in which the authorities content themselves with checking that the applicant has this capacity. Thus defining nationality, unlike naturalisation, does not make Greeks; strictly speaking it just pinpoints potential Greeks in foreign populations.

The definition of nationality describes the process whereby the Greek authorities (by law the regions, but in practice often central government in the form of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) themselves decide whether an individual has Greek nationality or not. This individual is usually an alien who is descended from Greek citizens or from persons who at some stage in their lives were Greek. It is evident therefore that the defining of Greek nationality is a process which is initiated for a relatively small group of people. It cannot apply in a general way to those who wish to acquire Greek nationality, since the question of integration in Greek society does not come under scrutiny. Moreover the definition of Greek nationality does not require residence in Greece: ‘worldwide Hellenism’ takes priority over residence.

The ‘definition of nationality’ is exclusively concerned with those sectors of the Greek diaspora which can provide documentary evidence that one of their ancestors was Greek, i.e. registered on the municipal rolls or Registers of Males in a municipality or commune of the Greek state. For those who cannot demonstrate something of this sort, Greek law allows expatriates [ομογενείς] to be naturalised without the usual requirement for a prior period of residence in the country.

In most cases the decision as to the definition goes back to the point at which the interested party was born, or when events which have to be registered have taken place, such as the marriage of their parents, which affect the acquisition of nationality. Thus the definition of nationality takes place firstly once the authorities have consulted the

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1 Article 25, para. 2 of Law 3284/2004.
2 See also the contribution by ELPIDA VOGLI to the present volume (Chapter 7).
3 In accordance with Articles 5 and 10 of the Code.
municipal rolls or Registers of Males which show the registering of a person from whom the applicant is descended, and secondly on the basis of a marriage certificate for her/his forebears. If, at the time the union was celebrated, the marriage was valid in Greece then the children acquire Greek nationality ipso jure and retroactively. If the union is not recognised in Greece, as in the case of civil marriages before 1982, then it is considered null and void, which means that the children cannot acquire the Greek nationality of their parent. A marriage deemed invalid cannot result in ascertaining the nationality of the children born of the union.4

From the generalised and impersonal nature of the regulation in the Code relating to the defining of Greek nationality it is pretty clear that Greek legislators avoided stipulating the practical and procedural aspects of particular issues relating to the definition of nationality. In simple terms, the process of defining Greek nationality refers in essence to the regulation in paragraph 1 of Article 1 in the Code, which states that: ‘the child of a Greek man [or woman] acquires Greek nationality by birth’.5

It is worth underlining what the above means in practice. The individual who at some point in her/his life wishes to proceed with the process of defining their nationality, whether this is because they have suddenly learnt that some Greek forebear could give them this posthumous ‘gift’, or because their emotional and other ties with Greece make it desirable or essential that they acquire Greek nationality, in effect acquires Greek nationality through a process which is no different in legal terms to that which applies to all newborns who acquire Greek nationality simply by being born, as long their parents – one of whom must be Greek – take the necessary steps to have the child registered on the municipal rolls.

In the course of the evolution of the citizenship law and its application in the historical context, the term genos [race, descent] became the key element of Greekness and an actual legal category distinguishing between those who were of Greek descent and those who were not. The former, omogeneis [literally, ‘people of the same lineage’] are deemed Greek regardless of their actual citizenship status. The latter, allogeneis [literally, ‘people of another lineage’] are non-Greek even if they possess Greek citizenship (Tsitselikis 2006: 147).

Thus – and herein lies a major inconsistency and inherent difficulty – through the process of definition, Greek nationality can be ascertained even in the descendants of

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4 In these cases the applicants acquire Greek nationality through a process of affirmation, provided for under what is now Article 14, para. 2 of the Code of Greek Nationality, but nationality acquired in this way is not retroactive but is only recognised from the point at which the affirmation is made. Whenever there is a marriage on which the right to acquire Greek nationality is founded, the authorities always look into the provisions in force at the time when the marriage was celebrated. Thus one can see that – perhaps paradoxically – even nowadays the Greek legal system distinguishes between children born of civil or church marriages.

5 Thus the rules for defining this conform with the various changes in the rules relating to the acquisition of Greek nationality by virtue of birth, of which the most notable is the addition of the words ‘or woman’ in 1984.
allogeneis Greek citizens. As a rule the Greek authorities included in this category (and to a lesser extent nowadays they still do) persons belonging to minorities living on Greek soil. To cite an example: the grandson of a Macedonian Slav migrant who moved from somewhere in Greek Macedonia in 1920, who is living in Australia as a second- or third-generation ethnic Macedonian, is entitled, by virtue of the law’s devout attachment to the bloodline, to request ascertainment of his Greek nationality. The Greek authorities’ obligation to define the Greek nationality of any individual who is able to prove descent from some distant Greek ancestor, creates in many of the cases cited above major problems, as it renders the authorities prone to infringements of the law, committed in order to dodge the politically repugnant but legally essential requirement: ascertaining the Greek nationality of the aforementioned (Slav) Macedonian Australian simply because one of his ancestors was once a Greek citizen. The same applies to all the minorities, which have lived or live in Greece. So, while one can understand the politico-historic reasons why the Greek state does not want certain people to acquire Greek nationality, the process of definition leaves no room for manoeuvre: if someone can demonstrate that once upon a time one of their forebears was a Greek citizen (and never had that nationality revoked), then the authorities are obliged to ascertain their nationality. Thus one realises that this unswerving attachment to the principle ‘once a Greek, always a Greek’ leads the authorities to resort to law-breaking, because preventing some ‘fifth columnist’, such as someone who had once been a member of a minority group, from acquiring Greek nationality is considered to be the lesser of two evils. These sorts of deviations from the letter of the law are everyday events in the day-to-day routine of the Nationality Directorate in the Ministry for Internal Affairs.

Formulating the ‘Definition’ of Greek Nationality: ‘You’re born a Greek, you don’t become one’.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the process of defining Greek nationality involves far more people than the naturalisation process, which in Greece, as in many other countries in continental Europe, is subject to extremely restrictive

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6 ‘Differentiating between national and foreigner, the law of Greek nationality draws, with regard to the individual’s descent, the additional distinction between members of the Greek-orthodox genos, that is homogeneis, and persons of different descent, of another genos, that is allogeneis. This additional distinction between the two categories of homogeneis and allogeneis, is under continual historical and political negotiation: the most exciting aspects of the history of Greek nationality are related to this negotiation. In Greece there are all possible combinations of the above-mentioned different meanings. In the firm image of the Greek national homogenis, appears the revealing exception of the national allogenis, which refers to persons belonging to minorities in Greece or to naturalised foreigners. The rule of foreigner allogenis includes the exception of the foreigner homogenis, i.e. the Greek from the diaspora, who is either member of a Greek minority abroad or emigrant’ (Christopoulos 2006: 253).
conditions and is usually – more or less – left entirely to the discretion of the authorities. The complete absence of statistics concerning actual data on definitions is a significant obstacle to researching this process, though it does not detract from the fact that in Greece there have always been and continue to this day to be far more definitions than there are naturalisations.

Any attempt to identify the basic historical (pre)conditions responsible for the increased importance in late twentieth-century Europe of the process of defining Greek nationality, would point to the following which – in the course of 10 years – helped to change the whole scenario:

Firstly, Greece’s entry into the European Economic Community in 1981. When Greece joined the EEC the Greek passport, hitherto rather insignificant in global terms, entered the ranks of the much sought-after passports of member states, and acquiring it meant the ability to travel freely, work and settle in other EEC (subsequently EU) member states.

Secondly, *ex matre jus sanguinis* i.e. Greek women acquiring (from 1984 onwards) the legal right to pass on their nationality to their children. The most important change to take place in Greek nationality law to date came in 1984, with Law 1438 ‘on modifying regulations in the Greek Nationality Code and the law on birth, marriage and death certificates’. This law brought about major changes regarding the nationality status of Greek women, who for the first time in Greek history got the right to pass on their nationality to their children. Thus first and foremost this law honoured the constitutional mandate for equality of the sexes with regard to nationality.7

Thirdly, the break up of the regimes and federations of the former socialist states which provoked a great exodus of people leaving these states/countries, whether for political reasons or – more often – for economic reasons. Among the new refugees or migrants from Eastern and Central Europe, there was a critical mass of Greek population, which did not belong to the category of political refugees from the civil war, as it had been possible for them to return home as early as the mid-1970s with the restoration of democracy and above all in the early 1980s.

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7 The basic changes which should be noted are as follows:

a) Standardising the acquisition of nationality by those who were born of a Greek father or Greek mother. It should be noted that only children born out of wedlock or whose father was a non Greek had hitherto acquired the nationality of their Greek mother.

b) Establishing civil marriage as a reality in accordance with the previous Law 1250/1982, since – as we have seen – hitherto a non-Orthodox marriage of a Greek with a foreigner excluded the children of that union from acquiring Greek nationality.

c) Establishing the principle of the independence or individual character of nationality given that, hitherto, the principle of acquiring nationality through marriage had prevailed. According to this principle, a Greek woman who married a foreigner lost her Greek nationality, unless she made a declaration in advance of her objection to this. Conversely a foreign woman who married a Greek automatically acquired Greek nationality, unless she explicitly declared her opposition to this in advance.
The most important group to come to Greece and acquire nationality through the process of definition are the so-called \textit{omogeneis} Greeks from the former Soviet Union. When we speak of ‘Pontic Greeks’ we mean what were in the first instance\footnote{I use the word ‘in the first instance’ because a large part of this population was bilingual (speaking Pontic and Turkish) from as far back as the early twentieth century. But their move to the Soviet Union brought about a drastic decline in the use of Pontic in favour of Russian or other ethnic languages of the Soviet Republics which had taken them in.} Pontic-speaking Orthodox Christians who left Turkish territory before the exchange of populations in 1923, because of the persecution they suffered under the Atatürk regime. This is why they did not get ‘exchange’ status, as the other Orthodox Christians from Turkey did just a few years later under the Treaty of Lausanne.

The secessionary conflict between the autonomous Republic of Abkhazia in Georgia with Tbilisi and the de facto secession of the former from the Georgian state had direct and drastic consequences on the lives of many Pontic Greeks who had settled in the region as far back as the early twentieth century. This group found itself caught up in the maelstrom of a war, which it could never win. From the early 1990s the solution which seems to have been preferred – and to which the Greek state occasionally gave its blessing – was what was referred to as ‘repatriation’ of refugees from Abkhazia. Subsequently, and in circumstances that have yet to be explored in the relevant literature, the trend for ‘repatriation’ spread to various expatriate Greek groups from the former Soviet Union. For about a decade the arrival of these populations entailed – if they themselves so desired – the acquisition of Greek nationality through the process of definition, in contravention of all the statutes laid down in Greek nationality law. The parallels which can be drawn between those ‘repatriates’ returning to a foreign country, as Greece was for them, and the German Aussiedler as an ‘ideologically defined category’ (von Koppenfels 2001) are clear to see.

This was a time when, if someone provided a certificate of Greek descent for some forebear of theirs from the Soviet Union, s/he would get Greek nationality just on the basis of an ‘affirmation’. The process of defining nationality went on for a decade, until the enactment of Law 2790/2000, when the process of extraordinary naturalisation was introduced in parallel, something which the above law had provided for, especially in relation to the expatriates [\textit{omogeneis}] from the former Soviet Union. From 2000 on a basic check was introduced which resulted in a drastic reduction in the numbers of so-called ‘Pontic Greeks’ acquiring nationality as well as the revoking of many decisions on nationality definition after pronouncements made by the Council of State. Finally, after the consultatory response of the Legal Council of the State,\footnote{89/2006 Γ’’ Department of the Legal Council of State.} the issue of defining the nationality of \textit{omogeneis} from the Soviet Union, was handed over to committees, while at the same time the possibility of definition was in effect repealed by law\footnote{Article 18 of Law 3491/2006.} and an investigative process instituted.
The absence of any further reference to ‘defining’ Greek nationality in the relevant legislation cannot, of course, be attributed to careless workmanship on the part of Greek legislators, but must be attributed to a conscious choice on their part to leave the procedures relating to ‘definition’ out of transparent legal demarcations. We should not be surprised that the non-regulation of the definition of nationality contributes de facto to the whole process becoming wrapped in a cloak of political secrecy and administrative obscurity. Because criteria are not laid down by law, the discretion afforded the authorities can easily be translated into arbitrariness. Political expediency has been the implicit guideline for the granting of Greek nationality.11

The Greek Ombudsman, in his first detailed report on matters of nationality, reveals that:

A fundamental point of difficulty in relation to the process of ascertaining or defining nationality is the fact that, while this process is covered under para. 2 of Article 25 of the Code of Greek Nationality it is not described in the provisions laid down therein. There is absolutely no provision relating to the requirements or the supporting documentation needed for submission of an application for ascertainment/definition, or for the process of scrutiny. Thus it allows arbitrary choices to be made between stricter or more flexible practices. In some cases this is useful in order to correct organisational irregularities, but in most cases it has been used to overturn the granting of nationality. Despite the best of intentions a certain arbitrariness in the administration is consequently encouraged. (The Greek Ombudsman 2008)

The absence of any consistent regulatory framework, the guidelines for which could even be included in the Code of Greek Nationality, has been replaced by a veritable legal labyrinth of rules, judgements, opinions and legal precedents, circulars from the Ministry for Internal Affairs, case law, administrative practices based on verbal instructions or even the personal opinions of high-ranking civil servants. All the above define people’s nationality in an inconsistent way, which eventually results in unsubstantiated conclusions. The fundamental reason for the

11 Yet even in cases of no political significance the relevant officials in the regional offices charged with the defining of nationality, and in the Ministry for Internal Affairs itself, are simply not able to pronounce on the nationality of the interested party for several years. Yet, even if the political ulterior motives which govern the system of defining Greek nationality were to disappear, things would continue to be difficult. This is because the process of defining nationality requires a profound knowledge of the nationality law as it has been applied over the years in Greece: the general principle according to which legal matters are judged according to the provisions in force at the time the matter arose also applies to issues of Greek nationality law. Thus a general principle is that a new law cannot be applied to a situation which has arisen in conformity with the old law (Pasia-Papasiopi 2004: 63).
Inability to ascertain nationality or for the enormous delays involved is the fact that the evidence, which is accepted as a legal basis for the defining of nationality, is nowhere provided for in the law. Depending on the circumstances, this results in either a casuistical or an arbitrary interpretation of their probative force, which relies on the opinions of middle- and high-ranking officials in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. These opinions appear to be relatively unaffected by the periodic changes ‘at the top’ in the Ministry.

So a crucial administrative development emerges from the foregoing: what we might describe as the transfer of the process of defining nationality from the sphere of governmental obligation to administrative discretion. And, indeed, literally a matter of absolute discretion, without time limits, ultimately without rules across the board. Thus the process of defining Greek nationality shows itself to be surprisingly similar to the process of acquiring Greek nationality through naturalisation, given that the two processes depend on related systems of political expediency, legal obscurity and unpredictability.

So one becomes aware that the converse of the expression which regulates Greek nationality law: ‘once a Greek, always a Greek’ is the notion so eloquently expressed when a high-achieving Albanian student was appointed as a standard-bearer in the school parade for Greek National Day on 28 October 2002 in a municipality just outside Thessaloniki. The argument of those who resolutely obliged the young Albanian (who, by the way, now has a scholarship at one of the best universities in the United States) to resign his entitlement to carry the flag is a well-known one: ‘You’re born a Greek, you don’t become one’. The two assumptions are entirely consistent in content and values, while the administrative practice which has been constructed around them is governed by the same unwritten rules based on the political chicanery, ideological entrenchment and ultimately the fears (justifiable or otherwise) of the Greek government. In other words, they are two sides of the same coin. Unfortunately, however, for Greek law and order, these rules constitute an altogether unsatisfactory formula for dealing with both the vicissitudes which Greek history has bequeathed us and the situations which arise out of the presence of at least a million migrants who arrived in Greece in the early years of the twentieth century (Christopoulos 2006: 276).

Some Figures on Nationality Definition for Greeks from the Soviet Union

As has already been mentioned above there is little doubt that the total number of people who have been ‘defined’ as having Greek nationality is greater than the number who have acquired Greek nationality through naturalisation. Nevertheless, as one might expect, the Greek authorities have no statistical database relating to this important process. No one knows the number of people who have been ‘defined’
Defining the Changing Boundaries of Greek Nationality

as having Greek nationality and there has never even been any attempt to count them.  

From a very recent study conducted for the Migration Policy Institute the purpose of which has been to design and implement the proposed immigration policy of the country, I quote the following:

The Interior Ministry should address the very serious lack of reliable data on award of Greek citizenship … There seem to be two major sorts of problem – data collection and data access. Thus, the compilation of all data on award of Greek citizenship should be prioritized and a centralized database (like that of residence permits) established. In particular, the system should integrate data concerning the three different categories of citizenship award: to allogeneis, homogeneis from other than CIS countries and to homogeneis from CIS countries. (Baldwin-Edwards 2005: 39)

The recommendation made above witnesses the serious problem of collecting statistical data related to Greek nationality. Because of the extremely sensitive nature of the issue for the Greek administration, but also due to more general maladministration practices or structural deficits, no such figures can be provided in Greece, despite the fact that this would be to the state’s advantage. The national Census carried out in 2001 failed to provide any reliable data in this respect, since it did not include any questions on the subject. Moreover, it provided completely wrong data on cases of dual nationality and on the nationality of the omogeneis. Ironically, the National Statistical Service of Greece found that there are only six omogeneis without Greek citizenship residing on Greek soil, whereas according to reliable information there are more than a hundred thousand of them.

According to the results of an investigation I conducted at the Ministry for Internal Affairs, the following data (see Table 8.1) concerning acquisition of nationality by Pontic Greeks from the former Soviet Union could be retrieved.

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12 The response of the Under Secretary for the Ministry for Internal Affairs to a question from a Coalition of the Radical Left MP, Mr Fotis Kouvelis, on 10 April 2007, is informative. The questioner asked what was the total number of cases of ‘nationality definition’ in respect of omogeneis and were there any statistics shedding light on the identity of those acquiring Greek nationality, such as primary nationality or race; the reply was as follows: ‘The total number of decisions on the defining of Greek nationality issued by the General Secretaries of the country’s Regions cannot at present be checked, because on the one hand the issuing of these decisions is not recorded in the databases of the Regional Authorities concerned according to whether or not the applicant is an “omogenis” or “allogenis”, and on the other because the legal basis for issuing these particular decisions considers all the circumstances of people seeking Greek nationality in accordance with the provisions of article 25 (para. 2) of Law 3284/2004 (KEI) which include aliens (allogeneis)’. Ministry for Internal Affairs, Public Administration and Decentralisation, Directorate of Urban and Municipal Affairs, Athens, 30/5/2007 Α.Π.Φ. 78400/34916/07.
Table 8.1 Geographical distribution by Region. Acquisition of nationality by *omogeneis* from the former Soviet Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attica</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Macedonia Thrace</td>
<td>32,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Thessaly</td>
<td>1,535</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epirus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ionian Islands</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Greece</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peloponese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Greece</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Aegean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Aegean</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Crete</td>
<td>3,143</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2 Evolution of nationality acquisition by *omogeneis* from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s

<table>
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<td>2608</td>
<td>2776</td>
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</table>

The above data shows that the majority of nationality definitions for Pontic Greeks are registered in Prefectures of Northern Greece. This is no coincidence. It is mainly on account of the existence of Pontic associations dating back to the 1923 exchange of populations, which played a significant role in taking in the so-called ‘new refugees’ in the nineties. This specific population concentration might also point to an implicit strategy (not necessarily the result of any central
political decision of the Greek State), which can be regarded as consistent with the tradition of settling Black Sea Greeks and Greeks from Asia Minor in Northern Greece during the 1920s. The very high number of nationality acquisitions in the department of Thrace should also be regarded as an attempt to counterbalance the presence of the Turkish minority there. Furthermore, the data shows that the award of nationality to omogeneis from the former Soviet Union – the so-called process of ellinopoïisis – is a practice, which could equally well be attributed to both parties that formed governments in the 1990s.

Can the Changing Boundaries of Greek Nationality be Redefined?

The history of Greek nationality constantly hangs in the balance between triumph and disaster, a case of unfulfilled desires but also of entrenched positions. Thus whenever over the years attempts have been made to heal the wounds left by the turbulent career of Greek political history and Greece’s international relations in a troubled period, the state line on nationality comes up against the cataclysmic changes brought about in the demographic and ethnic map of Greece by the migrations of the 1990s.

As I have suggested, to study the history of Greek nationality is to decipher the deepest strategies of exclusion and integration, which in the course of its history the Greek state has adopted by virtue of miscellaneous regulatory arrangements and administrative practices. For the most part, these practices make up an inaccessible domain full of impersonal, indirect and implied references. The latter lead to the mind-blowing discovery of a long-drawn-out panorama of Modern Greek political history, with all its turning points and (dis)continuities.

The history of Greek nationality is the very consciousness of Greek political history, inextricably linked with the founding narratives of the national ideology, or the tactical manoeuvres of the administrative practices (depending on whether we are talking about a domestic or international state of affairs). The fullest expression – both at a technical as well as a symbolic level – of the state’s line on nationality emerges when the theory, which attempts to regularise and systematise the social fabric, is seriously undermined by the situation. Greece has never had more comprehensive and coherent legislation from a legal point of view as it does today with the new Code of Nationality passed in 2004. Nevertheless the fundamental regulatory choices and value horizons in the Code reflect outdated conditions: even deputies who voted for it in the Greek parliament have admitted this.13 This

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13 The former minister for Internal Affairs, Alekos Papadopoulos, stated in this debate: ‘This is the same way of thinking. And I remember how, as Minister for Internal Affairs, I was very hesitant about granting nationality to foreigners. You are acting in the same way. This has to stop ... I am aware of our special qualities. But, as a state we cannot go on dealing with the matter with such incredible fearfulness’ (Proceedings of the Parliament [Πρακτικά Βουλής], Session 52 [NB’], 2 November 2004, p. 2161).
obvious discordance ultimately results in the central ideological choices of the legislation on Greek nationality looking like an attempt to organise the present on the basis of a corpus of interpretations and rules which reflect ideas of outdated moral value and political usefulness. Even the Greek administration itself seems to have begun to understand this.

Therefore it is, paradoxically, at the moment when the state’s line on nationality has achieved its fullest expression that it starts to show that it is historically exhausted and begins gradually to disappear from the political scene and be replaced by some new dogma. In the final analysis the history of Greek nationality is the political history of Modern Greece with a slightly different timeline.

To conclude, I quote a revealing extract from a confidential document signed by a Greek consular official in 2005, requested by the relevant Directorate in the Greek Ministry of the Interior to provide information about a person who has asked for the definition of his Greek nationality on the grounds that his father was once a Greek citizen. He answers in a rather atypical tone for a diplomat:

Referring to your previous document, I would like to underline what I have repeatedly argued both in writing and *viva voce* concerning the issue of ‘researching and collecting data related to the attitude of people vis-à-vis national issues and their assimilation in the local environment’. It is at least paradoxical for a consular authority to investigate such things in a country in the process of accession to the EU. Moreover, such information would have been of dubious credibility, since it could only be based on oral testimonies which I could therefore not transmit to you. Finally, I would insist that the Consulate [of …] does not have and could never have had access to such data or the wherewithal to collect such information as we are requested to provide. If, of course, this is a mere formality, then my answer is that there is no such information on the persons you are asking about. I do understand that this information is requested because the law so requires. But maybe it is time to update the law and not to ask the consul in cases of nationality definition or naturalisation to answer questions such as whether the person concerned ‘has a Greek national consciousness’.

I believe that this question is unanswerable, since generally speaking human consciousness is not a quality that one can easily appraise with such measures.

Back in 1941, the Director of the Nationality Department of the Ministry for Internal Affairs formulated the following unconsciously prophetic comment about his country: ‘A state on the receiving end of large numbers of migrants which applies the *jus sanguinis* principle, would risk being flooded, in the course of time, with the installation on a permanent basis of foreign citizens. The risk that this State would run is obvious … In order to prevent such a danger, the State finds itself in urgent need of finding solutions, which would seek to integrate these foreigners, at any cost, and chiefly by applying the principle of *jus soli*’ (Yeoryiadou 1941: 6–7).

Defining the changing boundaries of Greek nationality was the intellectual challenge I set myself in this chapter. ‘Changing the Boundaries ...’ (Bauböck
1994: 199) of the Greek nationality is an inescapable major political challenge which is already on the agenda of the Greek polity.

References


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Chapter 9

‘Deterritorialising’ the Nation: the Greek State and ‘Ecumenical Hellenism’

Lina Venturas

The Greek state has used *ethnic origins*, *Orthodoxy* and the *cultural heritage of Hellenism* to define ‘belonging’ since its establishment in the early nineteenth century. Invoking ethnic origins and a common culture is moreover an internationally tried and tested strategy for shaping or pointing up similarities and concealing differences and changes in identifications over time. But nowadays, with the scope of state sovereignty being reconfigured and the relationship between authority, population, citizenship and territory being transformed, the use by Greece and other states of such criteria to define belonging is part of a whole new scenario. This chapter will attempt a preliminary examination of the policy of the Greek state after the restoration of democracy in 1974 towards the ‘*omogenia’/diaspora’, that is the Orthodox Christians living abroad who are considered (or consider themselves) as ‘of Greek descent’.¹ It aims to show the shifting goals and connotations of the partially traditional practices and ideologies involved in the invocation of ‘ethnic origins’ in the definition of belonging.

Soon after the Greek state was created the Great Idea – with its unspecified territorial content – invested the nation with a transterritorial character. In other words, the nation was considered to comprise three sub-groups: those residing within the borders of the independent state, the ‘irredeemed’ Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire and those of the diaspora. The existence – according to the Great Idea – of sub-groups of the Greek nation outside the state’s boundaries, the way in which the nation-state was formed (with repeated annexations of territory) and the attempts to enhance ethnic homogeneity within its borders were decisive reasons for attributing special weight to the concept of ‘ethnic origins’ in the imaginary and institutional definition of belonging and in perpetuating its significance. Thus, in

¹ The terms *omogenia* and *diaspora* do not have the same meaning in all discourses and at all times: use of the term *diaspora* often presupposes that those included within the term have themselves migrated or are living abroad as a result of their parents’ or grandparents’ emigrating. In other words they are a sub-group of the *omogenia*, a category which also includes the members of ethnically Greek minorities in foreign countries who have never lived (nor did their immediate forebears) on Greek territory. However, since at least 1989, government bodies, and indeed many politicians, journalists and scholars, have been inclined to use the two terms as synonymous.
addition to adopting the *jus sanguinis*, a distinction was soon established between ‘*omogeneis*’ (aliens of ‘Greek descent’), and ‘*allogeneis*’ (of ‘non-Greek descent’) and preferential treatment was reserved for the former under Greek citizenship law.²

Up until 1922 the Greek state addressed itself to the communities of the *merchant diaspora*, mainly seeking support for its irredentist policy. To various degrees, depending on the size of the communities and international and local developments, it attempted to influence the ideological, political and economic processes within the diaspora (Kitroeff 1991: 237–8, Kardasis and Harlaftis 2006: 72–3). Governments quite quickly began to take an interest in the many Greek *emigrants* who had taken up residence in the USA after 1890 (Moskos 1999: 103–19, Kitroeff 1999: 123–72). Their principal concerns were: the loss of potential conscripts, assimilation by naturalisation and ensuring that remittances continued to be sent back to the homeland. Particular anxiety also arose over the potential influence of propaganda on behalf of rival Balkan nationalisms on US foreign policy and over the possibility of this propaganda being disseminated amongst immigrants who might return to the ‘irredeemed’ parts of the Ottoman Empire (Kourtoumi-Chantzi 1999, Papadopoulos 2008).

The defeat in the Asia Minor war and the mass influx of refugees into Greece, combined with the drastic restrictions imposed by the US government in the 1920s on immigration from South-Eastern Europe soon imposed other priorities on Greek governments. Moreover, the collapse of the Great Idea and the settling of Orthodox populations from Asia Minor in Greece undermined the importance of relations between the state and the diaspora and led to the emergence of a perception of the Greek nation as being confined to its territory (Kitroeff 1991: 243).

From the end of the Civil War until 1973 emigration once again increased apace. In the face of rising unemployment the authorities promoted what was at the time the internationally dominant model of organised migration and encouraged movement within Europe, believing that this would be a temporary form of migration. Thus Greece signed migration agreements with many Western European countries. These agreements safeguarded, if somewhat patchily, Greek workers and their families who moved abroad officially, guaranteeing them, at least on paper, the same conditions of work as the native workforce in their host countries.

When the number of Greek workers in host states in Europe increased and the authorities realised that they were prolonging their stay abroad, they adopted a series of measures: instituting posts for labour attachés in certain consulates, setting up a number of ‘Greek houses’, funding cultural events, and appointing teachers to cities in Western Europe in order to teach Greek to the children of Greek emigrants.

² *Omogeneis* usually refers to people ‘of Greek descent’ living abroad with foreign nationality. However, recently the term has come to cover various other categories of populations: on the one hand an increasing number of foreign citizens ‘of Greek descent’ have acquired Greek nationality in addition to that of the country in which they are living. On the other hand, since 1989, the word has also designated foreign – or recently naturalised – populations ‘of Greek descent’ who now live in Greece in official parlance.
These measures, however, were never incorporated into an all-embracing and coherent policy, but were often contradictory and not followed through.

Nevertheless there was wide-scale government intervention in the whole process of migration: from the issuing of the passport, the selection of candidates and of labour attachés, to the organisation of Greek associations abroad. Greek governments were particularly interested in their influence over migrants heading for Western Europe on account of what everyone thought as the short-term nature of their move, the close ties which they maintained with Greece and the importance of their remittances to the economy (Venturas 2001).

The 1973 oil crisis put a stop to the demand for foreign workers in Western Europe and increased the repatriation trend of Greek migrants. The disruption to emigration and the realisation that many Greeks had settled in Western Europe permanently, while many others were returning home, gradually contributed to a change in government policy towards emigrés. Interest in emigrants was particularly heightened by the social and political sensibilities that prevailed after 1974 and nurtured by increased and more proactive pressure from the emigrants themselves, especially those living in Europe.

Having enlisted their help over the Cyprus conflict after the Turkish invasion of 1974 and witnessed the role they played in stimulating awareness in public opinion and in promoting Greece’s position worldwide, the government’s willingness to engage with the problems of the expatriates was all the greater. Mention was often made in the official rhetoric of the Greek lobby’s briefly successful role in shaping American policy on the Cyprus issue between 1975 and 1978. However, the strong anti-American sentiment prevailing in Greece after the restoration of democracy made it difficult for politicians to play up the role of the Greek-American community in promoting Greece’s ‘national issues’ (Kitroeff 1999, Mousourou 1983, Kazakos 1994). Besides, the first post-1974 governments had a strong European orientation as they strove to bring Greece into the EEC. Thus, until around the middle of the 1980s whenever both New Democracy and PASOK governments spoke of ‘Hellenism abroad’ they mostly had in mind Greek migrants within Europe. Moreover the relationship between the early PASOK governments and the Greek-American communities went through a serious crisis on account of the party’s intensely anti-American rhetoric (Coufoudakis 1993: 55).

The objectives of PASOK’s policy towards Greek expatriates were to improve their living and working conditions, but above all to facilitate their return to Greece. It is indicative of the priority given to repatriation that from 1981 onwards the government created a number of all Greek schools in Germany and in other Western European countries for emigrants’ children (Michelakaki 2001). They also took

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3 See, for example, the debate over article 108 of the 1975 Constitution: Minutes of the Parliamentary Proceedings on the debate over the 1975 Constitution [Πρακτικά του Συνεδρίασεων της Βουλής επί των συζητήσεων του Συντάγματος 1975], Athens 1975: 481; Ministry of the President’s Office, GSGA, General Secretariat for Popular Life-long Education 1985: 18, 23–4, 31.
measures to transfer the social security and pension rights of repatriates (Sakellari 1985). Overall then from 1974 until 1989 the official discourse underscored the economic and social problems of emigrants in Europe and measures taken by the state focused on ways of dealing with these issues.

The setting up in 1982 of a General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad constituted a turning point in government policy on emigrants and returnees. For the first time a special government agency was created to deal with their problems, so that more coherent measures might be taken. Among the priorities of the GSGA was to organise emigrants and create bodies, in which the expatriates would be represented, that would advise the state on relevant issues. To this end the First World Congress for Greeks Abroad was organised in 1985.

At this congress it was proposed that a World Council of Hellenism Abroad be set up and the difficulties in creating a system of representation for Greeks abroad were discussed (Ministry of Culture, GSGA 1985: 5–25, 273–85). These difficulties were due to the great differences in the ways in which migrant communities and their federations were structured and to the existence of many regional or cultural associations which frequently had more members than the Communities themselves. The problems involved in drawing up a system of representation, the inability of the state to devise a strategy and other factors finally led to the passing of a bill to set up the World Council of Hellenism Abroad (SAE) after four years’ delay in 1989, and it took another six years before it began to function in 1995.

In the meantime the momentous events of the years 1989–91 brought radical transformations at international and local levels. One of the most important changes in Greece was the arrival (over a period of just a few years) of thousands of immigrants and refugees from the former socialist countries, among whom were more than 160,000 Pontic Greeks from the former Soviet Union and around 60–80,000 members of the Greek minority in Albania (Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace 2000, Emke-Poulopoulou 2007: 226). Though these developments took the authorities by surprise, they immediately resorted to the distinction ‘omogeneis/allogeneis’ in shaping their policies and the representations of the incomers. In other words, by bringing the terms ‘omogeneis’ and ‘repatriates’ into play, the authorities constructed the legitimate perceptions of one group of foreign citizens settling in

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4 The GSGA was set up under an article of Law 1288/1982, but it only began to function a year later.

5 Greek Communities in English-speaking host countries are organised around their parishes, while in Western Europe they are lay communities. Some federations of Communities accept individual members, not just Communities; most operate collectively but some do not; some are organised by region and others by country (Petropoulos 1985).

6 The SAE was set up under Law 1867/1989, though it only began to function after publication of P.D. 196 in 1995.

7 The number of Albanian citizens, who have been allotted the status of omogeneis up to now is close on 150–200,000, but they were not all members of the Greek minority in Albania (Pavlou 2003: 274).
Greece, by incorporating them – at least in official parlance – into the nation. They were thus trying to ensure that those defined as ‘omogeneis’ would themselves embrace a Greek identity, be more easily accepted by the native population, and that they would be differentiated from immigrants ‘of foreign descent’.

In 1990 the authorities set up a special body to process the installation of Pontic Greeks from the former Soviet Union. They went on to devise and fund policies designed to facilitate their integration into Greek society and, in a relatively short time, they saw to the naturalisation of most of them (Fakiolas 2001, Baltsiotis 2004: 323). The so-called ‘Northern Epirotes’ who came to Greece in the same period, were not treated so favourably on account of fears that the Greek minority in Albania might cease to exist, tensions in the relationship with the neighbouring state and rising ‘Albanophobia’ in Greece. Despite discrimination in the government’s measures, efforts were made to incorporate the ‘Northern Epirotes’ into the national community by acknowledging them as ‘omogeneis’, making them exempt from the restrictions on residency and working which the law imposed on immigrants ‘of foreign descent’. Relatively late in the day, in 2000 and 2006, Greek governments decided to allow many categories of ‘Northern Epirotes’ to be naturalised. Thus they too were finally treated as members of the nation – if, until recently, inferior ones – while being clearly differentiated from the ‘allogeneis’ Albanians who had entered the country at the same time.

However, it was not long before Greek governments radically altered their policy (in 1994), deciding that, rather than welcome ‘omogeneis’ from the former socialist bloc in Greece, it would be better to help them remain in the countries in which they were currently living (Kandilapti 2003: 273). To this end they established embassies and consulates in these countries, organised humanitarian aid missions and appointed teachers; attempts were also made to start up economic agencies designed to put Greek and Greek-origin business people in touch with the ‘omogeneis’ in the former Soviet Union (Bruneau 1998: 241–3). This change...
in direction was directly related to anxiety as to the prospect of continuing mass immigration of proletarianised ‘omogeneis’ from the former people’s republics. However, as we shall see, it was also linked with Greece’s financial aspirations in the Balkan countries and the Black Sea, as well as with a new perception of the international situation and the position of the nation-state therein by parts of the political elite.

The change which swept over the former socialist countries between 1989 and 1991 coincided with a period of political and ideological crisis in Greece. This crisis was also apparent in the area of foreign policy where, between 1991 and 1995, the Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs, by focusing its attention almost exclusively on the issue of the appellation of the neighbouring Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, led the country into international isolation in diplomatic terms. Moreover, many politicians, working with the mass media, exacerbated the wave of nationalism and the phobic reactions resulting from the collapse of Cold War certainties, both on the domestic front and in expatriate communities (Walden 2003: 392, 408, 412, 434). Discourse over the potential role that the diaspora might play in promoting ‘national issues’ abroad, though not new, intensified in these circumstances of heightened nationalism. By dint of being compared to earlier lobbying on the Cyprus issue, the Greek-Americans’ mobilisation over the Macedonian question was highly praised despite being ineffective (Kitroeff 2003: 397 and his contribution to this volume, Chapter 10).

Due to international pressure, but also to Greek financial agents active in the Balkans, who wanted relations with neighbouring countries normalised, Greek foreign policy soon followed a new course. From 1995 on Greece actively sought to join the Economic and Monetary Union, supported Turkey’s entry to the EU, attempted to achieve a fast-track rapprochement between the countries of South-Eastern Europe and NATO and the EU, to promote political and economic stability in the region and to create mutual economic interests with Balkan and Black Sea states (Ioakimidis 2003: 119–20, Walden 2003: 412). Several Greek businesses, both state-owned and private, acquired a strong presence in strategic sectors of the economy of the Balkan states, such as telecommunications, banks and the energy industry. The Balkans opened the way to the wider area of the Black Sea, where Greek companies subsequently began to invest (Kipas 2004: 110–65, 438–557, Bastian 2004). Many analysts have stressed the crucial role played by political refugees and their children who remained in these countries, the Greek students living in certain Eastern European countries and members of the ethnically Greek populations of the former USSR in the initial phase when Greek firms moved into the Balkans and the Black Sea states and in their subsequent success (Lesser 2005, Kipas 2004: 113, 491).

Foreseeing that the Balkans and the Black Sea region would acquire added importance as a passage for the pipelines carrying oil and natural gas from the Caspian to Western markets, and that relations between the EU and the states in the region would become closer, Greek governments in the second half of the 1990s
gave special weight to plans for developing economic links with them. The Greek state created an institutional framework for economic collaboration, signing intergovernmental agreements, and supporting the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. At the same time it installed offices for economic and trade advisers in its embassies in Balkan countries and former Soviet states and took many measures to help the businesses operating in the area. So the economy was used as a powerful instrument of foreign policy and – in addition to the state – both businesses and individual citizens of these countries with ties to Greece were involved in economic diplomacy (Larrabee 2005, Bastian 2004).

In its efforts to readjust its policy and tactics to suit the new economic and political state of affairs worldwide, the state implemented its project to set up a World Council for Hellenism Abroad (SAE) in Thessaloniki in 1995. Its objectives and the way in which the SAE was organised were adapted to the new set of circumstances. It was entrusted with enhancing relations between ‘the national centre’ and the diaspora and coordinating their efforts; its powers were restricted to advising and submitting proposals to the Greek government, on which it was entirely dependent for funding and to a large extent for its operation. The SAE – which in the initial blueprint was to represent the link between the state and emigrants – was finally not established on the basis of democratic representation of migrant communities according to their population size or to the balance of power in the various political factions within them, but as an organ for promoting state policies, mainly in respect of ‘national issues’ and economic expansion. Thus, apart from the federations of Greek communities abroad, regional associations and other organisations, designated by the state as ‘of strategic importance’, participated from the outset. Moreover, gradually the ‘omogeneis’ who had never emigrated from Greece, such as the Pontic Greeks living in the former Soviet Union, ethnic Greeks from Istanbul and Albania and even the Cypriots of the diaspora, were represented in the SAE.

The inauguration of the SAE constitutes the second turning point in state policy towards the ‘omogenia’. Its establishment triggered a boom in many related institutions between 1995 and 2001 when – in addition to the Inter-Party

10 According to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1999, G. Niotis: ‘These areas’ [the Caucasus, Black Sea and Central Asian region] ‘were of historical importance for Hellenism in previous centuries, whereas nowadays they are the natural extension zone for Europe. It is impossible for Greece to see its advantages diminish, when other countries are trying to create and to increase their existing advantages in a region which is going to play an important part in the new age’ (ibid.).

11 PD 196/1995. Apart from the federations of regional associations, these organisations of ‘strategic importance’ include ecclesiastical bodies, cultural centres and associations of expatriate scholars, businessmen, journalists and young people.

Parliamentary Committee on Hellenism Abroad – a series of centres and networks with similar, though more specialised aims to the SAE were set up: the Centre for Research and Development of Hellenic Culture in the Black Sea, the World Inter-Parliamentary Union of Hellenism, the Federation of Greek Diaspora Journalists etc. The institutional highpoint of this policy came in 2001, when the SAE was enshrined in the constitution.13

The SAE began to operate at a transitional moment and has been marked by its contradictions: certain political circles in Greece and some leaders of diaspora communities, still influenced by the nationalism and insecurity of earlier years, ‘discovered’ Greek populations in the former socialist countries which, according to them, wanted to be ‘linked’ with Greece.14 So the SAE was to function as the institutionalised link between these populations and the ‘national centre’. On its part, the SAE would also seek to mobilise the diaspora, and above all Greek Americans, to promote Greece’s point of view on ‘national issues’.

Given the country’s enhanced international status as a member of the European Union, other political and economic factions aimed at expanding Greece’s economic and political scope in the international arena. In their eyes the SAE was intended to help retain the ‘omogenes’ of the former Soviet Union in their countries of residence, while keeping them closely tied to Greece, and to slow down the process of estrangement of Americans of Greek extraction from their ancestral homeland in order to strengthen the links between the ‘omogenes’ and the ‘national centre’. These factions had their eye on the access the ‘omogenia’ could offer to the economic life of former socialist countries, to Greek-American funds and to the potential influence of the US- and EU-based diaspora on decision-making centres (Niotis 1999: 89–93, ISTAME 2001: 62, 125–9, 167–74, Papasotiriou 2000: 37). The SAE was intended to play a part in the state’s efforts to secure privileged access to and build economic bridges with the Balkans and the countries of the former Soviet Union in order to make Greece appear as a possible intermediary between the EU and other parts of the world vital to the progress of European integration or to its energy policy. Moreover the SAE soon took the first initiatives in this direction: on the one hand its Greek-American president, with the backing of Greek businesses and the governments of the United States and Greece, organised a medical relief programme for the ‘omogenes’ of the former Soviet Union and Albania, sending medicines and opening medical centres. On the other hand the website ‘hellasbiz’ was inaugurated under the auspices of the SAE Business Network in order to facilitate business and trade contacts (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, GSGA 2001: 86–7).

A state’s ability to control co-ethnics resident abroad is restricted by many factors, chief of which are: the ‘nuisance’ caused to host countries by attempts

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13 Article 108, para. 2 of the 2001 Constitution defines the SAE’s brief as being: ‘to speak for all the constituents of worldwide Hellenism’.
to influence their citizens, limited financial means and difficulties in devising a strategy and coordinating efforts. These restrictions generally make symbolic policies the preferred and most effective option. Moreover, cultural or educational policies, as well as humanitarian aid, are also ways of promoting economic or political aims (Sherman 1999: 865, 870, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GSGA 2001: 86–7, ISTAME 2001: 125). So at the same time as creating institutions, the Greek state took care to improve channels of communication with the diaspora through the use of satellite TV and the internet. It also developed various policies for promoting cultural ties such as organising ‘Hellenic Cultural Months’ in cities abroad or athletic events in Greece for young ‘omogeneis’ from all over the world (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, GSGA 2001: 62–7).

Among such symbolic policies, especially from 1974 onwards, particular emphasis was given to Greek language education for emigrants’ children, not only in official discourse, but as a percentage of the state’s budget for education. Up to the 1990s the state mainly provided for the education of emigrants’ children in Western Europe by running all Greek schools, and more generally through funding and organising language classes. 1996 saw a change in this policy when a new law was passed on Greek education abroad.15 The preamble to the bill deviated from the traditional rhetoric of Greek governments: it recognised the failure of the diverse forms of Greek-language teaching abroad, while it particularly criticised the all-Greek schools. Above all it stressed the necessity of integrating younger generations into their host countries and the local educational system, at the same time as cultivating a knowledge of Greek language and culture. It also stipulated that Greek education abroad should no longer be reserved mainly for the descendants of migrants in Western Europe, but should also be directed to the populations of ethnic Greeks in the countries of the former Soviet Union and Albania.16 Thus the symbolic reversal of the aims of Greek policy towards the diaspora was complete: moving from fear of assimilation and the pursuit of ‘repatriation’ in order to revitalise the homeland, to retaining the ‘omogeneis’ in the diaspora so that they could serve the interests of the ‘national centre’ from afar.17

15 Law 2413/1996. In the 1990s the state spent around 60 million euros a year for Greek language teaching abroad, and it appointed about 2,000 teachers on secondment to foreign countries (1,500 to Western Europe), at a time when there were no more than 105,000 students worldwide taking various kinds of Greek-language teaching (Kondyli 2002: 224).


17 See, for example, the relevant statement of the GSGA: ‘successful integration of “omogeneis” into the societies of their host countries is what makes it possible to valorise the potential of the omogenia on behalf of the metropolitan centre’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2001: 15).
At the end of the twentieth century, both in Greece and worldwide, the concept of ‘diaspora’ acquired new significance and different meanings.\textsuperscript{18} In the radically different international context of the time, and given the country’s stronger position on the international scene, the ‘discovery’ after 1989 of ‘omogeneis’ in what were considered the ‘backward’ countries of the former socialist bloc and the influx into Greece of proletarianised immigrants – both ‘omogeneis’ and ‘allogeneis’ – helped create favourable conditions for a shift in the discourse about the ‘Greek element’ abroad. The number of ‘Hellenes abroad’ was largely inflated; references to the diaspora and to ‘worldwide Hellenism’ proliferated and became part of a more general policy aimed at overturning widespread notions as to the economic and cultural ‘backwardness’ of Greece and at improving the country’s image both at home and abroad.\textsuperscript{19}

In the past too, in the early twentieth century, the mass migration of Greeks to the USA and their proletarianisation in a country considered to be culturally superior, contributed to changes in the prevailing nineteenth-century representations of the diaspora: the focus of the discourse about the ‘omogenia’ shifted from the wealth and intellectual radiance of the merchant diaspora to pointing out the risks of the nation ‘bleeding out’ and of its poor and uneducated emigrants being assimilated. The prevalence of the debate over Greeks being absorbed into the ‘melting pot’ of America undermined ideas about the innate and everlasting nature of the national identity and the civilising role of the Greek nation (Laliotou 2004: 50–90). After World War II the renewed mass emigration of Greeks and their proletarianisation in Western European countries, which were perceived as culturally superior, combined with Greece’s weak position economically and politically on the international scene, eroded yet further the stereotype of the compatriot who was prospering abroad and the myth of the Greeks’ ‘specialness’.

In the late twentieth century there was a new about-turn in the perception of ‘Hellenism abroad’, in which the state played the leading role, supported by many politicians, journalists and scholars: a narrative of continuity between the economically and intellectually flourishing pre-1821 merchant diaspora and that of today was developed, which downplayed the references to proletarian migration

\textsuperscript{18} On international transformations of the meanings of the term ‘diaspora’, see Anthias (1998: 557).

\textsuperscript{19} See the discourse of many Greek politicians to the SAE Assemblies. For example: ‘ecumenical Hellenism, which is the well-spring and ultimate expression of the nation, is the main factor decreasing the significance of the population restrictions of Greece by linking it with millions of Greeks in the diaspora and thus multiplying the political, economic and cultural breadth of Hellenism’ (GSGA 1996: 57) or ‘We are once again living in a period when Greek commercial activity can extend Greek territory through its activities beyond the Greek borders, operating in the Balkans, the Black Sea region and the Middle East’ (GSGA 1996: 449).
in the twentieth century. The ‘omogenia’ was reintegrated into the national narrative, giving it a global dimension. Thus, after 1989, despite the confusion and the disputes over choices of terminology, the frequency with which formerly prevalent terms such as ‘migrants’ or ‘Hellenism abroad’ were used diminished in favour of other terms, such as ‘omogeneis’ ‘diaspora’, ‘worldwide’ or ‘ecumenical Hellenism’. These terms reinforced the desired emphasis on the supraterritorial nature of the nation. Regardless of the effectiveness of its policy and the gap between rhetoric and practice, the state directed its efforts at the ‘omogeneis’ and tried to incorporate them into the nation, invoking common descent and a common heritage as extra-territorial connective links.

As a result of the transformations of 1989 the Greek state once again sought, as did others at that time – by creating new institutions and networks – to find support from its ‘omogeneis’ abroad. Its objectives this time, however, were to attract foreign investment, to get international political support, to counterbalance its marginal position in the EU and on the international scene and to strengthen its economy in world markets. State machinery intervened actively at institutional and political level, as well as rhetorically, in the nomenclature and re-delimitation of ‘omogenia’/diaspora, and in redefining the criteria for and ways of belonging to the nation; it also sought to strengthen ties among the ‘omogeneis’ scattered across the globe, as well as between them and the ‘national centre’.

The relatively generous granting of Greek nationality to ever widening categories of ‘omogeneis’ after 1974 had the same objective. The restructuring of the law on citizenship in the 1980s allowed Greek women, who had married foreigners, and their children, as well as the offspring of Greek citizens living abroad, who had married in civil ceremonies, to acquire Greek nationality. Later in 1993 ‘omogeneis’ who lived permanently outside Greece were once again allowed to acquire citizenship at consulates (Christopoulos 2006). Moreover, ever since 1974 – albeit belatedly and of necessity (i.e. under pressure from the various problems which arose with the settlement of these populations in Greece) – political refugees, ethnic Greeks from Istanbul, the former Soviet Union and Albania have been naturalised en masse.

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20 It is characteristic that in nearly all the general histories of Greece published in recent years there are chapters on Hellenism abroad. See, for example, Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Εθνών (2000) and Panayiotopoulos (2003).

21 In the 1990s many historical works about the Greek diaspora also contributed to the spread of this narrative of continuity (Venturas 2004).

22 In the words of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1995, G. Niotis: ‘And we decided not to assemble the SAE on the basis of Greek citizenship or suffrage, but on the basis of Greek descent. An institution representing the ecumenical unity of Hellenism should not exclude millions of Greeks in the diaspora who by origins and blood are Greek’ (GSGA 1996: 48).

23 On the policies of other states towards their diasporas see, for example, Klimt (2000) and Sherman (1999).
So with the policy and the rhetoric developed in respect of the ‘omogenia’ since 1989 the state has been addressing itself to ever broader and more scattered groups of Greeks and people of Greek extraction or consciousness, in order to incorporate them in an imaginary ‘national body’ and strengthen contacts and networks. However, the invariable use to the present day of the term ‘national centre’, the efforts of the authorities over time to manipulate the communities abroad, as well as the way in which the SAE was recently established and is being run – and its financial dependence on state funding – shed light on the continuing paternalism of the state. They reveal the desire to control the diaspora, despite a late flowering rhetoric about mutual interaction. Government concern is not so much to look after the ‘omogeneis’ living far beyond Greece’s borders, as to create conditions conducive to their mobilisation in order to promote the ‘national’, economic and other objectives set by the ‘national centre’. Establishing what the ‘national interest’ means, designing policy on ‘national issues’, defining the criteria for belonging to the nation and setting its boundaries are all considered the sole preserve of Athens.

From its inception up until 1922 the Greek state attributed a transterritorial character to the nation, though then it was aiming to gather the nation within its territory by extending the borders, by ‘liberating’ the ‘irredeemed’, and through the instalment or return to Greece of the members of the diaspora. By subsuming ever more categories of populations of ‘Greek descent’ living outside the country into the nation in practice and in symbolic terms, contemporary political elites are attempting, for the first time since 1922, to attribute a supraterritorial character to the nation once more. But this time the transterritorialised concept of the nation is not aimed at extending or revising the borders, nor at concentrating its members on Greek soil. On the contrary, the ‘omogeneis’ are invited to serve their country by remaining permanently far away from it, through their social integration and their financial and political empowerment in the countries in which they live.

When it uses the terms ‘ecumenical’ or ‘worldwide Hellenism’ the Greek state is addressing itself to populations scattered far and wide, which it intends to encourage to act ‘on behalf of their homeland’. But rallying populations so distant and different from one another and marshalling those whom the state had to a large extent ignored for decades requires re-activating ethnicising processes. Thus, by invoking common descent, Greek elites appeal to a group, which they are in fact attempting to form or to re-form as part of their new policies and economic objectives. The drafting of a policy with regard to the ‘omogenia’ and combining older versions of the nationalist discourse with the contemporary

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24 According to Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs then G. Niotis: ‘nowadays it is even more necessary to draw up a Strategy for Hellenism ... These new circumstances constitute a different reality which “obliges” Hellenism to “rely” on its international networks/relationships ... That is to say, after having a “closed” model of the nation-state, we are now contemplating the prospect of supra-national associations and collaborations, but in an international system of interaction and mutual influence’ (Niotis 1999: 17–20).
language of cultural communities which transcend state borders are among the
methods adopted by the political elite in Greece, as in other parts of the world,
in order to extend the nation and their political power beyond the state’s territory.
In other words they are deterritorialising practices of sovereignty and elaborating
‘global nation policies’ (Levitt and De la Dehesa 2003). However, ethnicisation
is hampered by the considerable differences in terms of historical development
and cultural references as well as by socially embedded inequalities between the
various ‘components of Hellenism’; it also runs up against the divergent political
and ideological references and aims within the elites in Greece and the diaspora,
which often cause rifts and inconsistencies in the official discourse and government
policy, as well as in word and deed on the part of the ‘omogeneis’.

At a time when the importance of deterritorialised boundaries (transnational
and sub-national) is increasing at the expense of geographically defined borders
(Kastoryano 2006, Sassen 2006: 413–17), invoking common descent and heritage
is a mode of delimitation of the nation, but also the political community, which is
developed at the expense of other ways which are articulated around a common
existence in the same territory. Thus the re-activation of the concept of ‘ethnic
origins’ also contributes to excluding the aliens ‘of foreign descent’ who live
and work in Greece from the political and national community just when their
collective presence is making itself felt in the country.

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The study of ethnic lobbying in Washington DC has attracted its share of controversy over the past few decades. Yet no one was prepared for the furore unleashed by an essay entitled ‘The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy,’ by Professors John J. Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen M. Walt of Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. Published in 2006 in the London Review of Books (after it was rejected by the reputable US-based journal The Atlantic Monthly, which had originally commissioned the essay), it elicited extremely strong reactions, mostly negative, because it argued that the Jewish-American lobby dictated the US policy towards, and close relations with, Israel to the detriment of US interests. The two authors published a long article offering rebuttals to all their critics and in 2007 they published a book-length version of their thesis which, not surprisingly, elicited a new round of critiques and debate (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006a, 2006b, 2007; see also Massing 2006).

Leaving the Mearsheimer and Walt thesis aside for the moment, the larger topic they addressed, i.e. the influence of ethnic lobbying in US politics, is not in dispute. Indeed ethnic lobbying reached its heyday in the 1970s and has remained prominent in Washington DC since then. It is currently enjoying a resurgence of sorts on a global scale. There is a substantial body of recent literature pointing towards the increased importance of diasporic and ethnic groups functioning as important transnational actors in the post-Cold War era of globalisation (Cohen 1997; Shain and Barth 2003; Lechterman 2006). More specifically in the American context Tony Smith, a political science professor at Tufts University, has argued in his study entitled Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy that the power of ethnic groups in the making of American foreign policy has increased since the end of the Cold War. As the title implies, his book is a critique of ethnic lobbies and at the same time inflates their importance in order to make its point, most certainly in the case of the Greek-American lobby, whose power has waned since the 1970s (Smith 2000).

Scholars interested in the phenomenon of transnationalism as well as those focusing on transnationalism and migration have also suggested that the post-

*Research for this essay was contributed by my research assistant Demetra Fatseas (Bryn Mawr College Class of ’08) thanks to a Haverford College Faculty Research Grant.
Cold War era of globalisation has generated conditions that have enhanced the role of ethnic groups in international affairs. In doing so, they imply a difference between the older phenomenon of diasporic relations with the homeland, a connection that has underpinned Jewish-American political activism over the past several decades and was also the basis of Greek-American involvement in trying to shape US foreign policy. Arjun Appadurai has noted that among transnational communities these ‘new patriotisms’ are not just an extension of nationalist and counter-nationalist debates by other means, although there is certainly a great deal of nationalism and nostalgia involved in the dealings of exiles with their erstwhile homelands. According to Appadurai:

They also involve various other puzzling new forms of linkage between diasporic nationalisms, delocalized political communications and revitalized political commitments at both ends of the diasporic process. (Appadurai 1995: 220; see also Vertovec 1999)

In a less theoretical vein, and speaking about the situation in the United States, in his book *Foreign Attachments* Smith concurs that the end of the Cold War has contributed to the rise of ethnic group influence in Washington and suggests the causes lie with two interrelated developments: the rise of ethno-nationalist conflict abroad and the end of the Cold War atmosphere which made Congress susceptible to a variety of influences and priorities. Smith’s book appeared before 11 September 2001, but one could argue that the US’s search for allies in the wake of the Iraq war enables the work of ethnic lobbies as long as they promise to bear gifts in the form of support for American strategy and tactics. Mearsheimer and Walt imply as much by underlining how the post-Cold War era only strengthened the Jewish-American lobby’s hand.

This leads to the main question posed by this chapter: to what extent did the conditions favouring transnationalism which emerged after the Cold War affect the operation and the effectiveness of the Greek-American lobby? The lobby’s influence in the 1970s is beyond dispute. Its actions persuaded the US Congress to impose an embargo on sales of US arms to Turkey after Greece’s neighbour invaded Cyprus in 1974. The embargo lasted from 1975 to 1978 and is generally regarded as an example of how a well-organised ethnic lobby could successfully prevail on Congress and indirectly shape US foreign policy. Yet the lobby lost much of its influence after the embargo was lifted in 1978 and it remained minimally effective throughout the 1980s. It then experienced a resurgence after the end of the Cold War and more specifically during the break-up of Yugoslavia. These fluctuations in the lobby’s effectiveness correlate only partially with the emergence of the era of globalisation and transnationalism. This suggests that ethnic lobbying, at least in the case of the Greek-American lobby, has been and continues to be shaped by a broader range of influences.

This chapter argues on the basis of the material it surveys that there are limits to the Greek-American lobby’s effectiveness and range, especially compared
The Limits of Political Transnationalism

To its heyday in the 1970s, the present era of globalisation and transnationalism notwithstanding. These limits are rooted, first, in the political nature of ethnic lobbying, which sets it apart from the culturally-based re-engagement of Greek-Americans with their heritage and Greece itself. What distinguishes the political from the cultural spheres of transnational interaction is the presence of states, the ways they decide their respective foreign policies, their diplomatic relations and, especially in the Greek case, the way they treat non-governmental organisations including those formed by diaspora Greeks. The ways in which foreign policy is determined, in other words, have withstood the new conditions of globalisation that have reinforced the role of non-state political actors (and non-governmental organisations) and made them more permanent and institutionalised, and given them ‘stability and resilience over time’ (Portes et al. 1999: 219). All this notwithstanding, the process of making foreign policy has remained very much under the control of the state and, in the case of the United States in the 1980s, of the executive branch, not the legislature, which is more susceptible to lobbying pressures.

A second set of limitations on the effectiveness and range of ethnic lobbies relates to the state of bilateral relations between the two countries concerned. As Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald have pointed out in their own critique of transnationalism, states regulate the transnational activity of migrant groups (or, as in the case of Greek Americans, groups that define themselves according to ethnic heritage) by allowing such activities to go on, and will tend to do so when their bilateral relations are amicable or at least peaceful or, we should add, when the ethnic group in question has been offered a safe haven in the host society (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004).

There is, finally, a third set of limitations on ethnic lobbying that relates specifically to the nature of Greek politics and the characteristics of an important and politically active segment of the Greek-American community. The end of the Cold War paved the way for a wide-ranging ‘re-discovery’ by the Greeks of their diaspora, past and present, and this spawned a range of cultural and intellectual projects. The Greek government unleashed its own set of initiatives, which included activating plans to create a Council for Greeks Abroad, known by its Greek acronym of SAE, which was funded by the Greek state and based in Thessaloniki. The dominant role played by the Greek government in that organisation alienated the more Americanised Greek-American organisations such as the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association and its emphasis on the Greek language along with its political nature excluded de facto the involvement of several Greek-American cultural societies based in large US cities. By the same token, organisations representing first-generation Greek Americans and especially those pursuing political agendas such as the Pan-Macedonian Federation or who simply wished to establish closer contact with Greek government ministers and parliamentary deputies and others representing their home districts in Greece, jumped at the opportunity to establish closer ties with the government and the Greek political world (Kitroeff 2003).
The 1970s and the Turkish Arms Embargo

The Greek-American lobby emerged in Washington in the summer of 1974 and in just a year it had managed to persuade the US Congress to impose an embargo on arms sales to Turkey. The lobby was a reaction to Turkey’s invasion of the island of Cyprus, an independent state with an 80 per cent Greek and 20 per cent Turkish population. The invasion itself was a reaction to the successful coup against the Cyprus government engineered by the military junta then in power in Athens. By mid-August, the junta had collapsed and democracy was restored in Greece and the coup in Cyprus had failed. But Turkey had managed to occupy the northern third of Cyprus’s territory while thousands of Greek-Cypriots living in the north of the island fled to the south. Meanwhile, in the United States, a combination of Washington-based lobbying groups, a range of large organisations representing the million-strong Greek-American community and several Greek-American grassroots bodies launched a campaign designed to persuade the United States to reverse Turkey’s actions. In the US Congress itself, a number of Greek-American congressmen and others who were critical of the administration’s inaction joined the lobbying effort. They were finally successful in late 1975 when a majority in Congress voted to impose the so-called Turkish Arms Embargo which lasted until 1978. This achievement still ranks as an example of how ethnic lobbies can shape US foreign policy albeit for a short period of time and under favourable circumstances, most notably a temporarily weakened executive branch of government. It also led to the permanent establishment in Washington DC of several Greek-American lobbying organisations.

The Greek-American lobby’s success in persuading Congress to impose the Turkish arms embargo was due to ‘political’ as well as ‘cultural’ factors. The lobby’s formation coincided with the culmination of the Watergate crisis and President Richard Nixon’s resignation. It was a rare moment in history when the executive branch of the US government was especially weak. In contrast, many members of Congress were determined to seize the initiative in the sphere of foreign policy after what they saw as systematic abuse of America’s laws by the Nixon administration, not least in the case of the Vietnam War. The new president, Gerald Ford, lacked the authority and the power to rein in the resurgent Congress.

The Greek-American lobbying organisations in Washington DC and especially the American Hellenic Institute (AHI) were able to exploit those circumstances by making sure they framed their demands for the US to take steps against Turkey in terms of upholding the rule of law. According to American law, arms provided to another country are intended to be used only for defence purposes and certainly not to invade a third country. The principle of defending the ‘rule of law’ resonated well beyond the circle of members of Congress who were already determined to oppose Turkey’s actions. It became the basis on which eventually, thanks to the efforts of the entire lobby, a majority was persuaded to back the embargo (Watanabe 1984).
The lobby’s success was also due to the extent of the Greek-American community’s mobilisation and this has been acknowledged by supporters, critics and neutral observers. One study mentions that at the height of the lobbying campaign Michigan senator Robert Griffin spent between 40 and 50 hours talking to Greek-American constituents on the phone and that he received about 300 telegrams a day, all of which ultimately persuaded him to support the embargo. The senator did not believe he would have lost his seat, if he had not supported the lobby, but he was certain he wanted to avoid the ‘hassles’ his opposition would have invited. And Greek-American congressman John Brademas stated on numerous occasions that his efforts to persuade his colleagues would not have been successful without the community’s mobilisation (Rourke 1983: 264).

The extent of the Greek-American community’s mobilisation owed a great deal to the ongoing revival of ethnicity in the United States. The civil rights movement of black Americans had legitimised interest in cultural roots and geographical origins and it also shaped the way Americans of Eastern and Southeastern European origin re-evaluated their own background. Their parents had been forced to assimilate and Americanise themselves, beginning in the 1920s, but the next American-born generation was now able to embrace their ethnic heritage. Greek-American journalist Nicholas Gage put it best when he wrote, in 1975, ‘it is chic to be Greek’ (Gage 1975: 66).

The cultural revival of ethnicity produced an especially powerful combination of responses from within the Greek-American community. The second-generation Greek Americans who spearheaded the lobbying efforts portrayed the campaign as a call on the US government to adhere to the ‘rule of law’. They presented the lobbying campaign as one undertaken by American citizens and aiming to serve the interests of the United States. In essence, both in form and in content, their initiatives showed how integrated they had become in American political culture without having lost a sense of their ethnic background. When the legislation passed and was made into policy in 1975, the message was reiterated to Greek Americans by the lobbying organisations such as AHI-PAC: the embargo was not a pro-Greek or a pro-Turkish measure, instead it was ‘an important victory for the rule of law’ (AHI-PAC Newsletter 1975: 1).

In contrast, the first-generation Greek Americans and Greek-Cypriot Americans (who are mostly first-generation immigrants) joined the campaign for the embargo with a publicly acknowledged attachment to their Greek and Cypriot homelands. The calls for mobilisation issued by their respective organisations were in the Greek language and adopted a discourse ranging from patriotic to nationalistic. In the demonstrations and the annual Greek Independence Day parades they participated in, they displayed Greek and Cypriot flags and Greek-language as well as English-language banners. Their efforts showed how closely they remained attached to their homeland political cultures in the manner of Greek diaspora communities in earlier periods of Greek history. The combination of the two forms of Greek-American mobilisation had a powerful impact (Kitroeff 1994).
When political conditions changed, no amount of culturally based mobilisation by the Greek Americans was able to prevent the lifting of the embargo in 1978. By that time, Jimmy Carter had become president and his presence meant the executive was now stronger. He cautiously moved towards reasserting presidential prerogatives in the foreign policy sphere. Carter scored some important successes, most notably over the Panama Canal Treaty and the mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan. Lifting the embargo in 1978 and replacing it with much milder restrictions on the provision of arms to Turkey was another example of how he was able to overcome opposition to his foreign policy initiatives from within Congress.

The 1980s: Lobbying caught in between Bilateral Relations

The 1980s witnessed the decline of the Greek-American lobby due to the weakening of the US Congress and the sudden coolness in bilateral relations between the United States and Greece. The continuing strengthening of the executive branch with the emergence of a strong presidency in the person of Ronald Reagan led to a decline in the influence of Congress in shaping foreign policy. This meant a corresponding weakness in the influence of ethnic lobbies, with the exception of the Cuban and Jewish-American lobbies, whose goals conformed to Reagan’s foreign policy objectives. The Greek-American lobby did all it could to establish close relations with the White House but, although it was successful, this did not yield any significant results.

In any case, US–Greek relations deteriorated steadily during the 1980s and the likelihood of Washington being willing to accommodate Greek demands was remote. The worsening of the relations was due to a rightward turn in US foreign policy following Reagan’s election as president and, in Athens, a leftward turn following the election of a socialist, anti-American government under Andreas Papandreou. Greece adopted a more neutral posture at a time when the Cold War had not yet ended, took a critical stance towards US foreign-policy initiatives and by the same token drew closer to the Palestinians and the Soviet bloc. Yet in antagonising the United States, Papandreou was careful not to go too far, knowing full well that Greece remained dependent on the United States for military assistance and as a broker in the fraught relationship between Greece and Turkey (Iatrides 1992: 153).

The effect of all this on the Greek-American lobby was a reorientation towards applying pressure on Athens rather than Washington, a policy described by one astute observer as ‘the reverse influence phenomenon’ (Coufoudakis 1993: 70–72). The conservative political inclination of the Greek-American leaders did not make them well disposed towards PASOK but the prospect of Athens’ anti-Americanism making any type of US–Greek relationship redundant was particularly worrying. If that was the case, then the lobby could not wield any influence. Thus ideological inclinations and institutional interests combined to bring about the so-called reverse
influence phenomenon in which the Greek-American lobby tried to influence policy in Athens rather than in Washington.

The successful candidacy of the Greek-American Michael Dukakis for the nomination as Democratic candidate in the presidential election of 1988 was a fortuitous event that revitalised Greek-American interest in the political process at a time when the lobby had lost a great deal of its clout in Washington. Throughout his campaign for the nomination (which he won in the summer of 1988) and his subsequent campaign for the presidency Dukakis’s ethnicity was covered extensively in the media. The altogether positive image of the son of Greek immigrants making it in America, an echo of the mythology of the American Dream and the idealised immigrant experience in the United States, reflected positively on the entire community and the majority rallied around Dukakis (Editorial 1988a; Editorial 1988b; Kopan 1988; Stylianou 1988).

Globalisation, Transnationalism, Revival: the 1990s

The post-Cold War 1990s brought the type of regeneration of Greek-American life that the literature on transnationalism notes, both in terms of cultural as well as political activities. With regard to the cultural sphere the Greek-American community displayed a heightened awareness of its ethnic identity along with a stronger sense of autonomy and self-importance. There were several indications. First, there was the community’s mobilisation against Archbishop Spyridon who replaced Archbishop Iakovos, the powerful prelate who had been at the head of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America since 1959. A part of the Greek-American elite realised the community had enough power ultimately to force Spyridon out despite the objections of the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch who had appointed him, and they managed that within three years. In the long history of the Archdiocese that was established in the 1920s this is the first example of the lay element succeeding in dethroning the head of the Greek Orthodox Church in the United States.

There are other examples of Greek America’s new sense of autonomy that indicate a wish to break with past practices and assert a more independent identity. The best indicator was the rise in the numbers of those declaring a Greek ethnic heritage in the 2000 US national census. There were several more signs. One was the emergence of a movement within the community, indeed within the Greek Orthodox community, to overturn current practices and establish an English-speaking non-ethnically defined church. It was and is spearheaded by the Orthodox Christian Laity movement. Formed in 1987, it grew considerably in the 1990s. The other is the demise of Greek-language newspapers and periodicals and their replacement by English-language Greek-American publications. Most importantly, their content began to refer mostly to Greek-American life and the earlier emphasis on homeland issues became less prevalent or took on a distinctly diasporic perspective (Kitroeff 2004).
The Macedonian Question

The end of the Cold War brought significant developments in the political sphere. On the one hand this triggered increased ethnic lobbying on the part of the Greek Americans but on the other it brought increased government involvement on both sides of the Atlantic, which ultimately curtailed the scope of the Greek-American lobby. More specifically, the lobby sprang into action in support of Greece’s reactions to the independence of the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and especially its wish to adopt a name that contained the word ‘Macedonia’. This would become a dominant issue in Greek foreign policy and Greece’s relations with the United States in the 1990s, at least until 1995 when eventually Greece and the republic signed an agreement establishing bilateral relations. Greece nonetheless remained steadfastly attached to its position that the republic ought to be called the ‘Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’ and this and other lingering bilateral differences mean that the Greek-American lobby remains involved with this issue to this day. Greek-American lobbying over the issue of the name in the first half of the 1990s was designed to pressure the United States not to recognise the republic if its new name included the word ‘Macedonia’ and to put pressure on the latter to drop the name from its official title.

The lobby’s demands were identical to those expressed by the government in Athens but what was even more important was that the lobby’s demands were expressed in terms of Greek interests. This time there was no serious effort to frame the demands in terms that American legislators could relate to, as had been the case with the ‘rule of law’ in the lobbying over Cyprus. The ‘Greek’ character of the lobbying campaign in the 1990s was highlighted in May 1992 at a massive Greek-American demonstration in Washington DC, emulating the huge rally that had taken place in Thessaloniki a few months earlier over the name ‘Macedonia’. The protesters in Washington, estimated at 20,000 by the US Park police and at more than 50,000 by the organisers, formed the largest Greek-American rally since the one held in 1978 in support of the Turkish arms embargo.

The rally’s main message was ‘Macedonia is only Greek’ and that epitomised the Greek orientation of the campaign. The flyers distributed among Greek Americans in major urban centres included that phrase along with a call for Turkish troops to leave Cyprus – not the older demand of re-establishing the rule of law. The participants appeared unaware of the need to portray their demands in any other way than supporting Greece’s interests. The Washington Post was the only major American newspaper to report on the rally. The protesters, many of whom were from New York, which has a large concentration of first-generation Greek Americans, made no effort to hide the Greek character of their demands that the US government should not recognise the new republic. One of them told the Washington Post: ‘The Greek people have made a resolve. We will not accept this’ (Evans 1992: A20). The language employed in the Greek-American press in describing the rally portrayed the event in explicitly nationalistic terms (Maliopoulou 1992; Papathanasiou 1992).
The Greek orientation of the lobbying efforts over the Macedonian Question was at least partially due to a series of initiatives Athens had taken to strengthen its ties with the diaspora in the post-Cold War era. Several of these moves were designed to strengthen the political ties between the homeland and the diaspora. The number of legislative initiatives produced in the Greek parliament relating to Greeks abroad increased in the 1990s. In contrast to the 1980s, when there was a single major initiative, the creation of the Secretariat of Greeks Abroad in 1982, there were six bills issued in the 1990s relating to matters such as the reception and rehabilitation of return migrants and the development of educational programmes and training of teachers in Greek schools abroad (Damanakis 2007). The establishment of SAE, the Council of Greeks Abroad, brought the Greek government closer to the diaspora. In the United States, first-generation immigrants interested in acquiring closer ties with the government responded by either forming new organisations or reviving others that had lapsed with a view to gaining representation in the SAE’s elected bodies. One of those organisations was the National Council of Hellenism that claimed to represent the city-level federations of Greek-American organisations in major urban centres in the United States. The Council held its first meeting in New York in 1989 in the presence of the Greek General Consul and in 1992 it met in Boston to organise its first congress. One of the Council’s first major initiatives was to organise a trip to Athens where it met with Greek politicians (Daskalopoulos 1992).

By early 1994 the battle to prevent the republic’s recognition was lost and in February the Clinton administration, citing the dangers of instability in the region, followed the lead of several European countries and recognised it under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Just prior to that move the White House notified the Greek government and the major Greek-American organisations. This was a defeat for the Greek-American lobby although ironically one conservative American columnist – and critic of ethnic lobbies – believed that the lobby had won something by delaying the republic’s recognition (Hoagland 1994: A19).

The lobby’s defeat over the Macedonian Question in 1994 was a reminder that even at a time of increased assertiveness in diaspora groups, ethnic lobbying is beholden to state interests. The US, although its bilateral relationship with Athens had been restored, felt it could not acquiesce to the lobby’s demands because it would risk losing influence in the Balkans. Even the Greek government began soft-pedalling on the name issue; so much so that one scholar has suggested it manipulated the lobby but abandoned it when it decided it could no longer stand up to pressure from the United States government (Tsakonas 1997).

All organisations that made up the lobby protested at Washington’s recognition of the republic but it was only the Pan-Macedonian Federation that also protested its ‘abandonment’ by Athens, and this is indicative of how closely it saw itself operating with the Greek government. The Washington-based lobbying organisations quietly changed course and began advocating that the US side with Greece in its disputes with the Republic of Macedonia, not on the basis of Greece’s national rights but because there was a convergence between American and Greek
national interests in the region. This, of course, echoed the lobby’s longstanding position that Greece was an ideal strategic ally of the United States in the region, a concept used much more effectively by the Jewish-American lobby with regard to US–Israeli relations, but one that, crucially, invoked US interests. In contrast, the Pan-Macedonian Federation remained entrenched in a hard-line position, issuing declarations against any policy that would afford recognition to the Republic of Macedonia or bring about a compromise and agreement between the republic and Greece. It issued strong condemnations of the republic at its annual conventions and even criticised Greek government officials such as Theodoros Pangalos for seeking a compromise and for underplaying the significance of the use of the name Macedonia. This drew a rare public rebuke of the Federation from the minister for Macedonia and Thrace, Filippos Petsalnikos, in his speech at the 1997 convention held in Thessaloniki (Commentary 1997; Tzannetakos 1997).

The lobby’s setback, meanwhile, elicited a blistering critique of its effectiveness launched by Christopher Hitchens, a Washington-based writer and pundit whose publications include books on the Cyprus crisis. It was published, of all places, in Odyssey, an Athens-based English-language magazine with a huge circulation among Greeks abroad and itself a result of the 1990s new Greek diaspora consciousness. Hitchens’ essay, entitled ‘Dead End: the Decline and Fall of the Greek Lobby in America’, was prominently featured on the cover of Odyssey’s November–December 1995 issue. Hitchens’ 3,000-word essay was relatively light on facts but heavy in its disparagement of the lobby’s activities. ‘Look at the record’, Hitchens wrote. ‘The Cyprus issue has slipped so far down the Washington agenda as to be sometimes practically invisible’. He was even harsher on the Macedonian question:

The Greek position on Skopje is probably the most widely ridiculed stand taken by any American ally, and the campaign to alter the perception of it is regarded by experts as the most incompetent ever to be undertaken by a serious country. Not one intelligent article or believable newspaper advertisement was generated by the entire campaign, which generally speaking rested on bizarre and sometimes hysterical invocations of exclusive ‘Greekness’. (Hitchens 1995: 31)

Predictably, there was a storm of protest on the part of the lobbying organisations, and the next issue of the magazine devoted six pages to the letters sent by the leaders of the major lobbying organisations. Many others also wrote and, according to the magazine’s editor, had all the correspondence received been published, it would have taken up most of the issue. In their letters, the lobby leaders rejected Hitchens’ claims and pointed out a range of legislative initiatives the lobby had succeeded in passing. They included reducing the monetary aid the House of Representatives proposed to offer Turkey and steps taken to place conditions on US aid to Turkey. The letters also pointed to the ways the lobby had at least slowed down the pace at which the United States was inching towards recognising the Republic of Macedonia.
Epilogue

In some ways this exchange over the effectiveness of the lobby was a dialogue of the deaf, but it also points to the new conditions in which Greek-American lobbying was operating in the post-Cold War era. Hitchens was judging the lobby’s effectiveness against the achievement of the Turkish arms embargo in the 1970s, while the lobby leaders themselves were measuring their achievements against the realities they faced in the 1990s. To be sure, until Hitchens put them on the spot, the lobby leaders had never acknowledged that their expectations of what they could achieve had been scaled down.

Unless there is a resurgence in Congress’s role in foreign policy, comparable to that of the 1970s, it is unlikely that the Greek-American lobby can achieve any major success. With the present configuration, in which Congress defers to the executive branch, the Greek-American lobby does not have the power of its Cuban and Jewish counterparts, nor does Greece have the same ideological or strategic value that would make the White House and the State Department more amenable to any of its demands (Dekmejian and Themelis 1997). The Greek-American lobby cannot muster the organisational clout of the Jewish-American lobby described by Mearsheimer and Walt. What it can achieve is relatively little, though not entirely insignificant according to the new, reduced and pragmatic expectations its leadership pursues. It may well continue to achieve some small changes in US foreign policy, and succeed in creating a closer US–Greek relationship. At the same time, in other spheres beyond politics, the Greek Americans are becoming increasingly active in terms of developing their communal institutions and finding ways to embrace and promote their heritage. In that context, homeland policies will continue to matter, at least for the Greek-born immigrants (Karpathakis 1999; Kitroeff 2004). And the new conditions of globalisation and transnationalism favour their actions. But not those of their lobbying organisations, which are beholden to the political realities in Athens and Washington that have remained more or less constant both before and after the end of the Cold War. This is a case in which an ethnic cultural resurgence does not come with any commensurate growth in political influence.

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PART II
Literature and Culture
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Chapter 11

Indigenous Foreigners: The Greek Diaspora and Travel Writing (1880–1930)

Dimitris Tziovas

Distance is not a safety-zone but a field of tension (Theodor Adorno 1974: 127)

Travel writing about Greek lands by non-Greeks has been studied systematically in recent years in an attempt to expose prejudices, analyse patterns or to chart the invention of an earthly paradise (Angelomatis-Tsougarakis 1990, Eisner 1993, Keeley 1999). Yet travel writing by Greeks themselves has not received the same degree of attention and analysis despite the sporadic appearance of anthologies and individual studies (Panaretou 1995, Sachinis 1971, Xefloudas 1956). Some of these studies have tended to focus on ascertaining or praising the literary qualities of the travel narratives, thus overlooking the wider ideological, social or cultural issues associated with this type of writing. The emphasis so far has been on ‘impressions’ (εντυπώσεις) and the art of recording them. In this chapter I would like to shift attention to the perspective of the travelling subject and how this is shaped by the wider context (in this case the diasporic condition, experience of other countries, earlier journeys, ethnographic or other reading).

Raising questions regarding the epistemology of the standpoint or the position of enunciation, diasporic travel writing presents some analogies with translation where two tongues seem to speak together as well as with colonial women travellers. These women’s position within and outside the colonial context and their manoeuvring between the public and the private could be seen as similar to the experience of diaspora travellers. As Susan Bassnett points out: ‘once the gaze of the traveller reflected the singularity of a dominant culture; today, the gaze is more likely to be multi-focal, reflecting the demise of a world-view that separated us from them, and the role of women in adjusting perspectives is immense’ (Bassnett 2002: 240). I would argue that the study of diaspora travellers could make a similar contribution to the recognition of this multi-focal perspective. However, the role of perspective in Greek travel writing has not yet received the attention it deserves nor has it been subjected to rigorous scrutiny. Some travel narratives by diaspora Greeks writing during the period 1880–1930 offer a challenging starting point.

It could be argued that the years between 1880 and 1930 were crucial for the Greek state, given that it expanded its borders three times in the period (1881, 1913, 1920), before the Asia Minor Disaster (1922) put an abrupt end to this process. However this was the time when the premierships of Trikoupis and Venizelos saw
important attempts at reform and modernisation. This period is also the golden age of the Greek diaspora: important commercial activities were developing while mass migration to the USA was gathering momentum towards the end of the nineteenth century and then again after 1922. What is also important to note here is that it is during this period that the intelligentsia of the Greek diaspora brings together issues of travel, trade, the language question and translation activity in a very interesting and as yet not fully explored combination.

This is particularly evident in the case of demoticists living in England such as Pallis, Ephthaliotis and Vlastos, who also lived in India for a number of years (Vlastos was in fact born there in 1879). They all made several trips to Greece and translated widely, ranging from Shakespeare, Kant and the Gospels (Pallis) to physics textbooks (Vlastos) and Homer (Pallis, Ephthaliotis). Their translation activity seems to have an intensity similar to that seen during the Greek Enlightenment testifying to their pedagogical zeal and their efforts to make a range of texts accessible to a wider public. These diaspora demoticists were also quite wealthy due to their association with the highly successful Ralli Brothers company. It is interesting to note that their life style contrasts sharply with that of demoticists in Greece, like Kostis Palamas, who never travelled outside his country.

In this chapter I will explore travel writing produced by diaspora Greeks during the period 1880–1930, focusing on three emblematic texts: Dimitrios Vikelas, Από Νικοπόλεως εις Ολυμπίαν (first published in French as De Nicopolis à Olympie) (1885), Yiannis Psycharlis, Το ταξίδι μου [My Journey] (1888), and Alexandros Pallis, Μπρούσος [Broussos] (1921). Unlike Psycharlis, the other two authors tended to avoid Athens and concentrate on other parts of Greece while Vikelas’s account is the most focused and least rambling of the three. These three texts invite questions, which, in turn, could lead to a better overall understanding of Greeks in the diaspora during that period. The questions are: what is the image of Greece they project? Do they share a vision of modernity? Do they support the nationalism of the Great Idea or adopt a particular stance towards Greek politics? To what extent do their authors approach their own country as Greeks, Westerners or both? What is the purpose of drawing comparisons with other countries such as Turkey and India? How far do they combine anti-colonial Romanticism with Western colonial critical attitudes towards the indigenous population?

The travel narratives of the diaspora demoticists articulate their social and intellectual dilemmas. Pallis, Ephthaliotis and Vlastos try to reconcile two opposing roles or double identifications: the wealthy diaspora merchant with the Greek man of letters or the aristocrat with the peasant. Psycharlis, on the other hand, is trying to satisfy his two-fold ambition to be recognised as a French literary figure and at the same time a respected Greek intellectual. In the former case the diaspora identity involves a social predicament, in the latter an intellectual crisis. This ‘double frame’ of the diasporic aesthetic is further complicated by the fact that some diaspora demoticists used pseudonyms, which refer to their place of origin (Lekas Arvanitis, Ephthaliotis). Fusing distance and intimacy, detachment and nostalgia, the diaspora demoticists try to combine elitism and populism.
Travel writing is a hybrid form of narrative combining the confessional tone of a diary with the reflective and critical character of an essay and is the form best suited to expressing the relative perspective and the ambivalent attitude towards their country of the diaspora Greeks. They record and compare their impressions and memories from earlier travels or readings and at the same time they express their views on wider issues about race, language and national character. Their accounts are indeed something between a diary and an essay, though this might have something to do with the fact that some of them were serialised in periodicals. By combining the autobiographical with the national, the anecdotal with the historical, the local with the cosmopolitan, the mundane with the sublime, they can refer to the national character or natural beauty of a place and be critical of institutions and their practices. The one informs the other and vice versa.

Their travel or fictional writings show that there is no single perspective on their country among diaspora Greeks, while their accounts are used as convenient vehicles for expressing their views on a number of issues, and, most importantly, on their ambiguous status as outsiders and insiders. Greece is experienced by diaspora travellers as a heterotopia, which, like a mirror, relies on an interplay of absence and presence, reality and illusion. In Michel Foucault’s words: ‘The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there’ (Foucault 1986: 24).

The diasporic perspective has been theorised as double consciousness, a kind of internal hybridity, which highlights ‘the diasporic’s ambivalent allegiance to, or double hesitation about, belonging to the “ancestral” home, on the one hand, and to the host country, on the other’ (Dayal 1996: 54). The concept ‘double consciousness’ was introduced by W.E.B. Du Bois in 1903 as the ‘sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others’ (Du Bois 1997: 38) and conveys, for example, ‘the special difficulties arising from black internalisation of an American identity’ (Gilroy 1993: 126).

Diaspora travellers collapse the distinction between insiders and outsiders in the same way the idea of crypto-colonialism challenges the neat split into colonisers and colonised (Herzfeld 2002). Their duality could be compared to that of James Joyce who has been read as both supportive of Irish nationalism and highly critical of it. His writings have been described as ‘semicolonial’ since ‘in their dealings with questions of nationalism and imperialism they evince a

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1 Vlastos states: ‘I thought that you would understand me better if I copied some passages, from here and there, from the notebook where, while travelling, I was keeping some passing pictures or thoughts which were developing inside me – a few passages, and to send them to you as they are written without any elaboration or distortion’ (1912: 63). See also the prologue of the ‘autobiographical chronicle’ of another diaspora Greek, A.A. Pallis, the son of Alexandros Pallis (A.A. Pallis 1954: 9–11).
complex and ambivalent set of attitudes, not reducible to a simple anticolonialism but very far from expressing approval of the colonial organizations and methods’ (Attridge and Howes 2000: 3). Joyce spent most of his life outside Ireland and his semi-detached relationship with his country could be seen as paradigmatic for many diaspora writers, including Psychari.

The latter characteristically begins My Journey by emphasising his dual allegiance: ‘My life is French. What I am, I owe it to France. I love her as a mother and homeland. I became her child while I was unhappy and depressed, how then can I not adore her. On the other hand, I was born Greek and I cannot forget this; I owe debts to Greece too’ (37). Hence the description of these diaspora Greeks as ‘indigenous foreigners’. With the exception of Psychari all those mentioned above lived in England for many years and were involved in trade, while Vikelas, who also lived in France, is the only one who returned to Greece to stay.

The travel books of Vikelas, Psychari and Pallis more or less mark the two ends of the period under examination here, while other demoticists such as Argyris Eptaliotis (1849–1923) and Petros Vlastos (1879–1941) wrote texts dealing with travel and the diaspora experience either in the form of diaries, articles or fiction. Ranging from idealism to adverse criticism in their perception of Greek reality, these texts also raise questions about their aims, the audience to which they are addressed, their generic identity, and their mode of composition.

Eptaliotis introduces migration, travel and separation in some of his earlier stories. Subsequently his short, posthumously published, novel Ο Μανόλης ο ντελμπέντερης [O Manolis o Delbederis] (written in 1900–1901) aspires to demonstrate the purity and authenticity of Greek island life, presumably modelled on his native Lesvos, by contrast with the unstable life of England and elsewhere abroad. Lacking the modernising drive and cosmopolitan confidence shown by Vikelas in his novel Loukis Laras and his travelogue, Eptaliotis’s story tends to be didactic and moralistic. In his novel he displays nostalgia and patriotic idealism, treating the diasporic condition in moral terms. Life in the Western world is associated with alienation, calculation and ultimately corruption whereas on the island it is characterised by loyalty and honesty. The world of the island, to which Manolis eventually returns, is portrayed as one of respectable poverty, commitment and stability.

Petros Vlastos in his Κριτικά Ταξίδια [Critical Journeys] (1912) describes his visit to Kashmir and interpolates travel writing with his views on the role of the milieu, race and truth, making references to William James’s pragmatism. Vlastos

2 All page numbers, given in parenthesis in the main text or in footnotes, refer to the editions cited in the bibliography. All translations of Greek quotations are mine unless otherwise stated.

3 See his stories ‘Αληθινό παραμύθι’ [True fable] and ‘Ο Μιμής’ [Mimis] from his Οι νησιώτικες ιστορίες [Island Stories] (1894) and ‘Ο θάνατος του Τραμουντάνα’ [The Death of Tramoundana] and ‘Η λαχτάρα του γέρο-Ανέστη’ [Old Anestis’s yearning] from his Η μαζώχτρα και άλλες ιστορίες [The Reaper-Woman and other Stories] (1900).
seems to reject both religion and science as subjective and relative while he finds in nature traces of the distant past. Through nature he believes that he is able to understand the age-old history of the race. In the landscape of Kashmir he finds something ancient and mystical: ‘I haven’t seen such forests. The air of creation moves inside them. Something religious and primordial comes to memory and blurs it melodiously’ (30). The landscape of Kashmir seems to bring him back to racial origins and to a kind of primordial state and religious feeling. This might explain why some of the illustrations in the section on Kashmir are of ancient temples taken from the book by Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir* (1895). What Vlastos is seeking in the countryside of Kashmir is a way of understanding racial origins by going back to the very beginnings of humanity. In the rural Kashmir one can trace fundamental and archaic conflicts and this is why Vlastos felt the need to return to Hesiod (11). He was searching for a new religion which would involve social discipline, strong leadership and a new fertility cult which in turn could lead to a better and more refined race (50). The Kashmir diary gives him the opportunity to make some general points which draw on his experience of England, India and Greece as, for example, when he praises the engagement of the English with sports even in India (8) or how competently some of them have organised their lives there (33–4).⁴

Diaspora Greeks tend to adopt a range of attitudes towards their native land during the period: active involvement in the development and modernisation of Greece (Vikelas), patriotic irony (Psycharis), naïve idealisation (Ephialiotis), racism (Vlastos) and critical distance (Pallis). Their perspectives also vary ranging from the historical (Vikelas) to the emotional (Ephialiotis), and from the linguistic (Psycharis) to the philosophical (Vlastos) and the ethnographic (Pallis). So let us look in more detail at the travel narratives of Vikelas, Psycharis and Pallis.

Dimitrios Vikelas (1835–1908) was a leading figure of the Greek diaspora with an extensive network of international contacts in many countries. Michael Llewellyn Smith described him as ‘a real Victorian all-rounder, positive, optimistic, believing in progress’ (2007: 11; see also 2006). His novel *Λούκις Λάρας* (1879) could be seen as one of the most successful fictionalisations of the story of a diaspora Greek and in his travel narrative he outlines recent developments in Greece, alongside references to antiquity as the title suggests. Not being associated with the movement of demoticism and not on good terms with Psycharis, was Vikelas any less radical a supporter of modernisation than the diaspora demoticists? Perhaps comparing his travel book with those of Psycharis and Pallis will help us to answer this question.

He first published his travel book *De Nicopolis à Olympie* in French in July 1885 and immediately translated it into Greek. It was first serialised in the journal *Estia* (1885) and was subsequently published in a single volume the same year.

⁴ Brief accounts of trips to England and India, with comparative references to Greek landscape, can be found in his book *Τῆς ζωῆς* [On Life] (1904) published under the pen name Ermonas.
The book consists of 15 letters from 19 April to 2 May 1884 sent to his friend the Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire who encouraged him to publish them so that the readers could follow the progress Greece was making. The letters were written while Vikelas was travelling to western Greece either on board ship or from towns he visited during his journey. Though the book was written in French and addressed to a Frenchman, the fact that it appeared in Greek so quickly it makes it difficult to ascertain the target audience of this book. Did Vikelas write for the French or the Greeks or both?

I think he wrote it with both audiences in mind. On the one hand, he acts as a champion of enlightened cosmopolitanism, attempting to portray Greece as making considerable advances towards modernity and progress, and thus to reassure his Western audience that the country could soon be ranked among the civilised ones, and, on the other hand, he allows occasionally ethnocentrism or traditionalism to creep in as he emphasises the superiority of the Greek architecture against the Roman (56, 119), highlights historical continuity by directing attention to Greece’s more recent past, or appreciates the local dress (foustanella) as a form of resistance to rampant Westernisation. Though with his title he places the emphasis on ancient sites such as Olympia and Nicopolis, he is keen to stress his interest in modern culture quoting folk ballads or poems by Spyridon Trikoupis, Drosinis or Solomos or presenting himself as a man believing in progress. Vikelas, therefore, is careful to maintain a subtle balance between antiquity and modern development, cosmopolitanism and patriotism, tradition and modernity.

Being familiar with European expectations and cultural stereotypes, Vikelas urges his readers to visit Greece before the country is spoiled by civilisation or the incipient development. Thus, with a touch of irony, he appeals to the colonial instincts of the foreign travellers who seek out the rough and primitive character of certain places, but at the same time he subtly confirms the inexorable modernisation of Greece. Aspiring to make his book more appealing to a Western audience with a classical background and to stress at the same time the continuity of Greek history, Vikelas follows a two-fold strategy, trying to promote Greece as both an ancient and a modern country. He follows in the footsteps of other Western travellers and offers extensive accounts of Greek and Roman antiquities or draws parallels with antiquity as for example when he meets some women from Ithaca on the boat and wonders whether their accent is similar to that of Penelope (24). However, Vikelas does not simply promote the Greek antiquity with which his foreign reader might be familiar, but also stresses the idea of historical continuity by pointing out that the struggle of 1821 is the last link in the chain which began with the gods of Olympus (16) while the landscape bears the traces of a range of historical events as the following passage suggests:

The name of each place recalls glorious events. Faced with these landscapes which mythology honoured and history celebrated, it is not only classical antiquity which springs to mind; the Roman period, the middle ages, the Greek War of Independence are rekindled in your imagination when you see those
mountains, the headlands, the seas, those silent witnesses to a range of events. (16)

Vikelas sees Greece as a historical palimpsest (59) and the idea of historical continuity helps him to reconcile a reverence for the past with his strong belief in progress and his optimism about the country’s future. This fusion of past, present and future allows him to overcome his predicament as a diaspora Greek who adopts both a Western and a Greek perspective when he visits his homeland.

His diasporic outlook and wide-ranging cosmopolitan experience help Vikelas to make some pertinent remarks about Greeks and to place Greece in a comparative context. He tends to compare Greek towns with either European or Turkish ones. He claims that in 10 or 15 years’ time travelling to Greece will be very easy and visitors will go to the country as they do to Switzerland or Scotland (Tziovas 1998: 128–9).

His comparisons often involve the East as when, for example, he points out the oriental character of the town of Lefkas, which lacks the town planning of Italianate Corfu or Zante (28). He is aware that comparisons are crucial, but that they always depend on a perspective shaped by the city or country from which one comes:

One coming straight from Paris thinks that Europe ends here, whereas when he comes from Turkey, he sees that Greece is the beginning of Europe. This, in my view, constitutes a fundamental difference. (181)

By acting as a mediator between his French correspondent and his backward compatriots, Vikelas writes both as an insider and outsider; this is reflected in the way he travels around. At first he surveys the mainland from a steamship and thus the distance between him, a privileged observer, and his compatriots, observed subjects, is pronounced (34). Later on, he disembarks and travels overland, thus reinforcing the point he makes about the Greek national character combining the islander with the mountain villager (113).

Vikelas tries to present a comprehensive and varied picture of the areas he visits, mixing detail with more general points and focusing on diverse aspects of Greek life from railways to clothes, from history to prisons and from antiquities to currants. However, one gets the impression that some of his points are intended more for the foreign reader and only some for the Greeks. For instance, he is keen to emphasise that brigandage, which had been the chief hazard of the newly

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5 Vikelas notes that travellers do not visit the medieval monuments of Greece (178).

6 In My Journey Psycharis makes a similar point (191), suggesting that Greece can be compared both to Europe and Turkey and it is a matter of which perspective will be adopted and from which direction one visits the country. Earlier Muir G. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby had pointed out that it makes ‘a vast difference in your judgement of Modern Greece, whether you come to her from Europe, or from the interior of Turkey’ (1867: 4).
founded Greek state, had been eradicated (6, 36, 58). He was writing, of course, almost 15 years after a party of English aristocrats had been kidnapped and murdered at Dilessi in Boetia (Jenkins 1961), and, thus, Vikelas is eager to reassure foreigners that Greece is a safe travel destination. On the other hand, he tries to temper his passionate support for modernisation and reassure the conservative Greek reader that he cares about tradition, lamenting the disappearance of the traditional costumes or the gradual introduction of the café chantant (8, 62–5, 73, 91, 144–5).

Though he champions technological progress (expansion of railways, opening of the Corinth canal), he seems to enjoy the simple and authentic Greece away from the French pretensions of Athens (73). It is difficult to tell whether he replicates the attitude of a Western traveller in appreciating areas unspoiled by civilisation or is expressing the nostalgia of a diaspora Greek for traditional culture as the country is transformed. Vikelas’s narrative exudes patriotic confidence and optimism, but also pragmatism as he repudiates the nationalism of the Great Idea (138).

Being a diaspora Greek, he attempts to show how the country depends on migration by importing and exporting migrants. At some point in his narrative he makes reference to Albanian migrants, who were crossing the borders close to Arta looking for work. Conjuring up recent images of economic migrants (and unwittingly evoking parallels between the end of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries), Vikelas tells us that these workers were Muslims, could not speak any Greek, and were attracted to Greece by the public works projects and the generous wages (44–5).

Vikelas tries to pick his way between antiquity and modernity, European dress and foustanella, café aman and café chantant. His dilemma is encapsulated by the complaint of his English friend who objects to a railway station at Eleusis and other developments, because they will tarnish the classical landscape while Vikelas points out that Greece is not the only destination for antiquity lovers (197–8). To overcome this dilemma between Western archaeological expectations, resistant to change, and the desire for modernisation as a way of entering the civilised world, Vikelas proposes the idea of historical continuity which combines past and present in the same way the landscape of the places he visits bears the traces of history and progress. For him history is a means to explain national character (133) and a way of resolving the dilemma of a diaspora Greek, who oscillates between classical ideals and modernist aspirations.

Though My Journey by Yiannis Psycharis (1854–1929) has been much discussed, it has so far received more attention for the linguistic views expressed in it than for its other ideas. Though he often refers to the cultural gap with Europe, Psycharis does not try to bridge it, as Vikelas aspired to do by championing institutional and infrastructural modernisation of the country, but by looking for

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7 Around the same time Agnes Lewis née Smith asserted in her travel book that we ‘do not want to see factory chimneys pouring smoke over Parnassus and Helicon’ (1884: 336).
the elusive authenticity of the spoken language and the national character. In the prologue to his book, Psycharis parodies the customary realism of travel narratives, stating that he is not going to follow the normal practice of other travellers who describe in detail what time they arrived or left, what kind of wine they have drunk, how many mosquitoes have bitten them, whom they saw or what sort of hair their landlord had. Indeed, he goes even further, disclaiming the truth of what is said in his book and describing it as full of imagination and poetry (38).

Psycharis’s text suggests an identity crisis since, while he longs to hear and meet the Greeks, he claims that whereas his body travels on the boat, his soul is left behind in Paris. He even considers Paris his home, the city which gave birth to his mind and soul. Elsewhere, however, the Parisian professor claims to be a simple villager, thus appearing both aristocrat and peasant. He is critical of the Greek intellectual establishment which was trying to impress or imitate Europe and fond of the ordinary people who represented the genuine Greek character. Psycharis even draws a distinction between the calm, polite and monotonous Europeans and the irascible and exuberant Greeks (41, 83). It is hard to say to what extent he rediscovers himself as a Greek during the journey or how far he reinforces the distinction between the Apollonian rational West and the Dionysian explosive East, thus contrasting exotic exceptionalism with Western uniformity. In Psycharis’s book Greeks and Europeans are seen in terms of the opposition between heart and mind, whereas Turks are treated as the barbarians of Europe (67, 93, 101, 181).

My Journey is a book which places more emphasis on emotions and temperamental reactions than on rationalism, its aim being to stir up patriotic feelings, the worship of great poets, and to boost self-esteem among its Greek readers. As he points out on the very first page of his book, he believes the Greek nation is indeed a nation when it is not ashamed of its demotic language, and elsewhere he encourages Greeks not to be ashamed to show what they are (48). Self-confidence, nationalism and a strong army seem more important to Psycharis in the process of nation-building than institutional reform and modernisation.

Discussing katharevousa, Psycharis raises the problem of drawing a distinction between original and imitation, natural and constructed. He appears to privilege everything which is innate rather than acquired, thus promoting nature at the expense of culture. When he acknowledges his mixed family background, he is doing it in order to claim the power of Greek blood: ‘we accepted foreign blood and we made it our own’ (46). Psycharis celebrates evolution and military might, biological strength (his fictitious brother Yiannis is presented as larger than life), natural purity and authentic origins. Hence he appears as a supporter of organicist Romanticism rather than of rationalist Enlightenment.

His journey is as much a real as an imaginary one with visions, dreams and fictional encounters. Apart from the references to language there is very little information regarding ordinary Greek life. For example, the only brief description of modern urban reality is when he notes the transformation of Piraeus: ‘Today you see everywhere roads, shops, machines, factories, industry, activity and trade.
I like these factories very much’ (191). Psycharis’s book is more about imagining the nation than experiencing the reality or the development of the country.

Though he draws analogies between Greece and Europe and sees Greece on a different wavelength to Europe (57), Psycharis puts more emphasis on the duality of the Greek national character and by extension on his own identity as a Westerner and a Greek. He is trying to see his own self as part of the national soul. His narrative is not a travel memoir but a sort of national biography, the tale of the national soul to which he makes constant references. By contrasting deeply embedded national characteristics and emphasising national essences, Psycharis is not able to develop a complex perspective in the same way Vikelas does because he tends to maintain a distance between the emotional Greek and the rational European. He himself seems divided and unable to reconcile his two sides. It is hard to tell whether this is a genuine identity crisis or a ploy to make his book more appealing to a Greek audience. It seems that Vikelas is writing as a Greek to a Western European and Psycharis as a European to a Greek audience.

Alexandros Pallis (1851–1935), like Psycharis, was an active demoticist and a financial backer of the periodical *O Noumas*, the main instrument of Demoticism in Greece. His text has been chosen as it was written towards the end of the most active period of Demoticism and reflects a different reality from the other two. Using his trip to the monastery of Broussos in Evrytania as a pretext Pallis is writing a travel book highly critical of the Greeks with references to history, politics, some of his earlier journeys to Greece as well as to the accounts of other travellers to exotic lands, but with very few descriptions of the actual journey or the places visited.

He was almost 70 when he began his trip from Athens to the monastery of Broussos in Evrytania in November 1920 after Venizelos had lost the elections. He started his journey from Athens heading for Patras and then, via Messolongi and Agrinio, to Broussos, thus passing through some of the towns Vikelas had visited earlier. His account was serialised first in the periodical *O Noumas* (20 February–15 November 1921), revised during the summer of 1922 and reprinted in February 1923. While the electoral defeat of Venizelos left its mark on the first edition, the Asia Minor Disaster was mentioned briefly in the second edition.

Pallis starts his account by stating that history repeats itself and argues that Venizelos is described as a tyrant in the same way that in the past Kapodistrias, Otto, Kountouriotis and Trikoupis had been treated as tyrants. As an anti-royalist, he takes the opportunity to express his support for Venizelos in his narrative and to praise Trikoupis. In spite of the discussion of Greek politics the real purpose of his book is to determine how civilised Greeks are. Civilisation is associated with an appreciation of natural beauty and respect for animals.

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8 His tendency to treat his own work as a manifestation of the national soul is also evident in his novels (e.g. *Τὸ ἄνω τοῦ Γιαννίρη* [Yianniris’s Dream]).

9 It is significant that he never attempted to translate *My Journey* into French as he did with some of his novels and short stories.
Extensive descriptions of landscapes, towns or people are absent. Very little of his narrative (just over 20 per cent) is about the actual journey or the places he visits (see Moschonas’s Introduction to Pallis 1975: xxvi). It is more of a textual journey since Pallis refers to various historical, scientific or travel books or cites from literary, classical and biblical texts. His narrative is replete with memories and digressions, giving the impression that it is not a travel narrative as such but a compilation drawn from different sources or his earlier travels. It seems that, like Psycharis’s My Journey, the trip to Broussos offers him the opportunity to put together his thoughts and observations about Greece and the Greeks in general. In this respect, it is more like a diary than a travel book.

His travels to India, where, like Vlastos, he spent some years, and his reading of primarily English ethnographers like Thomas Belt (1832–78), historians or scientists provide him with the material to draw comparisons and make points that only he with his knowledge and experience as a diaspora Greek could make. At one point, for example, he draws parallels between Greek and Indian peasants, criticising the inaccurate information each offers when questioned (60–61). He even describes some dangerous incidents, involving elephants, snakes and horses, from his trips to India (76–7, 89), thus implicitly suggesting that both Greece and India are dangerous places. On the other hand, he offers little detail about his life in England.

Associating a love of nature with civic virtue, he complains about the destruction of trees, arguing that the good husbandry is a sign of civilisation, and making comparisons between Greece and other places. Witnessing a cruel method of loading cattle onto ships in Thessaloniki, he draws a parallel with the ‘sleepy and crude’ people of Latin America. For Pallis clean and tidy surroundings take priority over the emancipation of women or their higher education. He deems the former essential, while the latter merely imitates foreign ways (83–4).

In contrast to Vikelas, Pallis claims that the Greek nation, having been the largest in Europe and the most civilised in the world, has ended up as one of the smallest and least educated European nations (32). Considering Greece an uncivilised country (41), Pallis draws analogies between the lawlessness in Crete and the ‘wild’ Aru islands as described by Alfred Russel Wallace (70–71) or between the mules described by Thomas Belt in his work The Naturalist in Nicaragua (1874) and people who prepared to compromise over the language question.

In his narrative Pallis behaves as an outsider, critical of Greek institutions such as the National Library (17), the prisons and the system of justice (20–21), education (51), the church (52) and monasteries (92–3) as well selfish individualism (8), Greek habits such as gambling (26), the vandalising monuments (40–41), dirty inns (46, 49–50), or indiscreet curiosity (58–9) and cruelty to animals and birds...
He also observes that villagers in Greece do not know how to cook meat because they so rarely eat it (63).

His Western perspective is emphasised at various points in the narrative. His point of comparison is often England as in the following passage on Greek mendacity:

This sad practice of untruthfulness makes an awful impression on you when you come from England, where if a child utters even an innocent inaccuracy, his friends with every expression of disgust will tell him shame, shame and where, if you call somebody a liar, you will run the danger of receiving British blows in abundance. (14)

He also draws comparisons between Greek and Catholic monasteries (93), Greek and English hunters (87), or comments on the superficial imitation of leisure activities as observed in the English districts of Patras, Smyrna and Alexandria (24–5). In making a number of botanical observations and claiming that he had tried to form a Botanical Association in Greece, he seems to follow the example of travellers and naturalists cited in his narrative from John Sibthorp (1758–96) to Charles Darwin (1809–82). This interest in botany is associated with his love of nature. A love of the natural world and beauty are for Pallis the hallmarks of civilisation. Pallis is like an artist preaching art for art’s sake when he claims that his compatriots cannot understand how one could travel without a material purpose, but simply for love of learning and natural beauty. He presents himself as a disinterested observer/artist, superior to the people he visits, who cannot understand abstract motives. His trip to Broussos is a form of escapism, fleeing from human malice and the depressing political reality of Athens to the beauties of nature (11).

In his travel writing Pallis appears to be a frustrated diaspora Greek who sees his country as not having made significant progress since Independence due to some pernicious national traits. Highlighting national characteristics which have obstructed the progress of the nation over the years, he castigates the erroneous descriptions of plants and flowers or faulty information about natural phenomena. Using his botanical knowledge he is able to demonstrate his English empiricism.

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10 David Ricks points out that Pallis was a Gladstonian liberal and in Broussos he ‘exhibited to the Greek public a set of assumptions permeated with English liberal values’ (Ricks 1991: 428).

11 His support for a writing system without diacritics might also have its origins in the West. In an Afterword Pallis praises this system of writing, arguing that like Latin the texts without any accents or breathings seem aesthetically better. He disagrees with those who argue that the lack of diacritics makes reading more difficult and points out that ‘foreigners seem to read their unstressed texts with the same ease as we read our stressed ones’ (103–4). This idea might come from his experience of Western languages and he stresses the aesthetic and practical aspects of the suggested simplification.
when he corrects inaccuracies regarding flowers, plants or other details in literary texts of the nineteenth century (28–31). He does not offer any analysis of Greek society, but resorts to using the national character as an explanatory tool to combine past and present. In this respect he is like Western travellers. His cosmopolitan, liberal outlook and his erudition evident in the wide variety of his sources, contrast sharply with the attitude of ordinary Greeks who expect political favours or the backwardness of the peasants who do not know how to cook meat.

The narratives of Vikelas and Pallis constitute different visions of Greek modernity. Vikelas’s vision of a modern and civilised Greece centres around the role of the state in improving transportation and security and he knows how to appeal to a European audience and make intelligent use of Greek antiquity or history. Pallis puts more emphasis on the improvement of social behaviour by eradicating certain bad habits (e.g. gambling or indiscreet curiosity), inculcating respect for nature and avoiding cruelty towards animals and birds. His negative attitude does not stem entirely from his political disillusionment, recorded a few years earlier in his lecture at King’s College London (Pallis 1916), or his views on language, but to some extent from his aristocratic colonial mentality. In Broussos he writes like a British aristocrat and a colonial ethnographer judging from his references to a number of them. His text, however, does not seem to have a target audience and his obsession with the demotic prevents him from adopting a broader cultural perspective.

Vikelas was trying to present Greece as relatively Westernised and in the process of development whereas Pallis saw it as being in cultural decline and similar to places like India or Latin America. The former was more positive, proactive and optimistic about Greece’s future as his subsequent involvement with various projects in Greece such as the Olympic Games or the Society for the Promotion of Useful Books testifies. On the other hand, the latter lived all his adult life outside Greece and did not become involved in any public projects in Greece. He, like the other demoticists, seems to have aspired to maintain a critical distance from the reality of the Greek state rather than becoming practically involved (as Vikelas had) in any specific project which could bring him closer to the country.

 Whereas we usually learn (however slanted the account) a great deal about different places or people from travel writing, the narratives of Psycharis, Pallis or Vlastos, offer little information about the places they have visited or lived, interpolated as they are with thoughts, visions, memories or textual citations and digressions. On the other hand, Vikelas’s narrative is the more readable, informative and focused than any of them. Therefore, one can argue that the vague character of the travel narratives produced by demoticists is not so much due to the nature of the genre itself, as to the fact that diaspora demoticists lacked the comprehensive and clear vision of the modernisation of Greece which Vikelas

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12 The same could be said about Psycharis who, on his second trip to Greece, simply chose to provoke with a lecture about the history of the kiss (Psycharis 1996).
had. In this respect, the travel books of the demoticists offer us the opportunity to reassess their modernising vision or drive.

The travel writing discussed here represent different forms of engagement on the part of their authors with their own country and this is reflected even in their narrative methods. Vikelas uses the letter to a foreign friend as a device to present his views on Greek culture and to report on recent developments in his country without giving the impression that he is preaching to the converted. Adopting a rather emotional and moral attitude, Ephtaliotis uses storytelling as a more suitable form to express his nostalgia and love for his country. Psycharis, Vlastos and Pallis, however, do not seem to have a clear aim and their narratives demonstrate a sort of indecision which is also reflected in the narrative modes they chose.

As frustrated Greeks and ‘superior’ Europeans, caught between disillusionment and detachment, diaspora demoticists did not see institutional modernisation as the solution to Greece’s problems but preferred to search for authentic origins. This might lead to a wider reassessment of Demoticism as a progressive movement and their campaign for the spoken language could be seen as part of their general tendency to rediscover organic roots, strengthen biological origins and delve into national character or natural world. Their obsession with the authentic led them to develop linguistic views which have often been perceived in Greece proper as unrealistic and artificial. Even though they express their deep love for their country or their native island it is clear that diaspora demoticists such as Psycharis and Ephtaliotis viewed their country as outsiders and this was why they never returned to Greece. Psycharis died in Paris and Ephtaliotis in Antibes where he had retired with his American wife.

The question which has not been addressed so far, the answer to which could offer some insights into the role of the diaspora demoticists is: why did they become supporters of the demotic in the first place? How could they reconcile colonialism, eugenics, aristocratic elitism and self-centred individualism with populist demoticism? Were they acting as collectors of demotic treasures or as individualists constructing their own language? Did they see their Demoticism as part of a wider institutional modernisation or as a way of rethinking the cultural past in relation to their need to find a language to express their own diasporic identity?

In the diaspora demoticists one finds an attitude common among expatriates. Their different perception of or attachment to the ‘home’ culture or their resistance to integration or failure to integrate in the host country often led them to oscillate between naive patriotism and carping criticism. Diaspora demoticists appear both idealists and rationalists, nationalists and polemists, populists and aristocrats, nationalists and polemists, populists and aristocrats,

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13 The diaspora travellers I am discussing here present some similarities with Greek Americans who have returned to Greece and written of their experience. In the texts of Greek-American travellers Greece is perceived both as familiar and alien. As Yiorgos Kalogeras argues, their responses are of particular interest ‘because they reflect the ambiguities of speaking for and through an orientalising discourse while at the same time encountering unexpected resistances to it’ (Kalogeras 1998: 703).
Romioi and Hellenes. Unlike Vikelas, they do not demonstrate pragmatism and this might be explained by the fact that they do not place their emphasis on the development of Greek institutions. Their connection with Athens, the metropolis of the modern state, was tenuous since they either focused on the periphery of Hellenism – Constantinople (Psycharis), Mytilini (Ephtaliotis), Chios (Vlastos, Psycharis), Albania/Epirus/Roumeli/Dodecanese (Pallis, Vlastos) – or they lived in foreign cosmopolitan centres or colonies.

Their diasporic condition makes them ambivalent in their attitude towards the Greek past. Did they envisage a revival of the Byzantine Empire in supporting the Great Idea? Did they admire the classical past or try to see it through folk tradition by translating Odysseus as Dysseas and Helen as Lenio (Pallis) and Parthenon as Parthenos (Psycharis)? Did they really aim to rewrite the past producing new histories, like the History of Romiosyni (1901) by Ephtaliotis? Their ambivalence and confusion might be explained in various ways, but can also be attributed to the fact that their point of departure is a blurred ideological standpoint where imperial aspirations, cultural nostalgia, aristocratic individualism, commercial and colonial mentality coalesce.

Their commercial practical instincts might incline them to support the spoken language, but this support often seems rather idiosyncratic and idealistic and not part of a wider project. The language question gives them the illusion that they are participating in what is going on in Greece while at the same time they keep a safe distance from any real involvement. It should not be forgotten that the language controversy attracted the attention of a number of foreign scholars who sided with supporters of demotic. Diaspora demoticists played an instrumental role in eliciting the views of non-Greek scholars (Karl Krumbacher, Karl Dieterich, Albert Thumb) on the language issue, translating their articles into Greek or publishing books on the issue in English in India. Their approach, however, was top-down and did not take sufficient account of Greek reality.

It could be argued that the emphasis on the demotic was a way of bypassing state institutions and their formal language, of distancing themselves from the Helladic state and reconnecting with ordinary people. In this respect demotic language represents a bond with the authentic culture of the country, but is at the same time a means of keeping a distance since most of the demoticists constructed their own idiomatic and ‘diasporic’ language either by not using diacritics or using capital letters when publishing their books (Pallis). They were, in fact, aware that their language was not accessible and they often provided glossaries (Vlastos). They veered between an archaeology of rediscovering the genuine voice of the people and the production of their own idiomatic language. Substituting language for identity we can see that they are oscillating between a conception of identity as a hidden essence and an identity as a production of the diaspora experience and a difference constructed through language. Their identity, therefore, has to be thought of in terms of the dialogic relationship between these two processes (Mercer 1988, Hall 1990). The question is to what extent one could argue that the diaspora demoticists tried to establish their own idiomatic language/identity,
using the folk tradition as a legitimising tradition. Or were they simply trying to reinforce and update this tradition?

Greece emerges as an intermediate/liminal space, an anti-home, between the idealised folk culture of Romiosyni and the outer critical and comparative space of Europe and beyond. Diaspora demoticists could not come to terms with Greece itself and by means of their Demoticism they tried to recover or invent their own authentic Greece.\(^\text{14}\) Hard-line Demoticism represents a sublimated Greece, constructed by the diasporic imagination to replace the rejected Greek state. And this becomes clearer when their travel writing is compared to that of Vikelas.

Demoticists were not so much modernisers and reformists as idealisers of the purity of the indigenous and the authentic, looking for an organic and spontaneous language (Psycharis), strong racial origins (Vlastos), celebrating the beauty of nature (Pallis), or indulging in nostalgia for the ‘uncorrupted’ birthplace (Ephtaliotis). Vikelas on the other hand (a non-demoticist) wanted to bring Greece closer to Europe by modernising its institutions. In this respect, national character appears more important for the diaspora demoticists (particularly Psycharis) than institutional reform or political progress. Vikelas appears to be closer to the ideas of Western enlightenment and liberalism than the demoticists, who seem to draw their inspiration from biological determinism and Romantic purism.

Taking for granted the longstanding association of the demotic with modernity could blind us to more productive approaches to these travel narratives and in particular prevent us from seeing the ways in which they resist modernity. Demoticist travel accounts could be seen as a form of homage to the authenticity of nature and folk culture, a yearning for origins and an uncontaminated past. The worship of authenticity implies and mandates the existence of its opposite: the artificial, the unnatural and fake (i.e., in this case, katharevousa). Hence our assessment of the travel writings discussed here depends on whether we see them as mythologising the nostalgia of the authentic and the recovery of the pre-modern rather than championing the progress of modernisation. A careful consideration and comparison of the demoticists’ travel accounts leads us to adopt the former rather than the latter approach. Diaspora demoticists can best be described not so much as making a gesture towards modernity but rather as attempting to reclaim and mythologise origins as a way out of the impasses and complexities of the diasporic experience.

Trying to construct a picture of Greece during the period 1880–1930 on the basis of the travel narratives of Vikelas and Pallis one ends up with two conflicting images. This is not so much due to the two accounts being separated by almost 40 years as to the fact that they were written from different perspectives. Though Pallis appears to be writing as a Greek, his perspective is foreign; he sees his homeland from outside and compares it to exotic and still ‘uncivilised’ non-Western lands. Seeing Greece from inside and presenting it as making progress,\(^\text{14}\) a similar resentment can be seen in the views of Ion Dragoumis and later of Nikos Kazantzakis, who could be seen as continuing the legacy of diaspora demoticists.
Vikelas, on the other hand, is writing with a Western reader in mind, but (despite writing in French) his perspective is Greek. His diasporic perspective relies on a combination of modernisation, rejection of nationalism and acknowledgement of the post-classical period.\footnote{Later another diaspora Greek, Yeorgios Skliros, with his controversial book \textit{To κοινωνικόν μας ζήτημα} [Our Social Issue] (1907) would see modernisation as the solution to the social problem in Greece.}

Hence these travel narratives pose the following question: what do we mean by a diaspora perspective in relation to travel narratives? The answer is that we could have a range of diaspora perspectives: an emotional and nostalgic perspective like that of Epftaliotis which leads to the moral idealisation of homeland, a critical perspective on the country like that of Pallis and Vlastos which, in turn, leads to the idealisation of authentic origins, or an oscillating one, like that of Psycharis, who weavers between an emotional attachment to Greece and his critical stance as a Parisian professor towards the Greek intellectual and linguistic establishment. Compared to the demoticists, Vikelas appears neither an emotional idealist nor critical or oscillating. His perspective is so skilfully hybridised, taking into account the Greek and European points of view, that any distinction between a local and an occidental perspective is obscured.

It could be argued that it is hard to treat Greek diaspora travellers as a unified group with a common outlook or shared views about their country of origin and their diaspora experience. Though the travel narratives examined here might have different or even conflicting perspectives on Greece, it is reasonable to conclude that Greek diaspora travellers could be seen as a distinct category between the Western travellers and the native Greeks of the time (such as Andreas Karkavitsas, Alexandros Moraitidis, Emmanouil Lykoudis, Dimitris Chatzopoulos) who travelled within their own country. What makes them a distinctive group is their dual perspective as both ‘locals’ and foreign observers, combining in different degrees familiarity and detached observation often informed by British or French cultural standards or the experience of ‘oriental’ India or Turkey.

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Chapter 12

Between Language, Land and Empire: Humanist and Orientalist Perspectives on Egyptian-Greek Identity

Alexander Kazamias

Among the city’s ‘foreign elements’, notes E.M. Forster in *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* (1922), ‘it is to the oldest of them, the Greek, that she owes such modern culture as is to be found in her’ (2004: 81; Lagoudis Pinchin 1977: 105). Since then other distinguished writers have paid tribute to Egypt’s small but lively community of Greek literati. After a visit to Egypt in 1927, Nikos Kazantzakis would write fondly of the poet C.P. Cavafy and about ‘the highly intellectual circle of Alexandria’ led by the latter’s friend, Pavlos Petridis (Kazantzakis 2004: 81). The Athenian poet Kostas Ouranis also predicted in the 1950s that ‘the history of contemporary Greek literature … will certainly dedicate a full chapter to the Greek intellectuals of Alexandria who … created … a new “Alexandrian era”’ (Ouranis 1955: 147–8). The list is longer, but it suffices to note here that it extends beyond Cavafy’s time. Recently, the *TLS* described Stratis Tsirkas as ‘the great figure of Alexandrian letters after Cavafy’ and his 1960s fiction trilogy, *Drifting Cities*, as a ‘masterpiece’ (MacSweeney 2001: 15), while an Egyptian book on Nikos Nikolaidis described him as a writer whose work deserves ‘world-wide attention’ (‘Atteya 1993: 162).

In the century or so of its existence, that is from the early 1860s to the mid-1960s, Egyptian-Greek literature acquired a status which defies easy categorisation. Insofar as Egypt was the home of a sizeable Greek community from the 1820s to the 1960s, the literary production of this ethnic group might perhaps qualify for the description of ‘minority literature’. Nevertheless, in contrast to other minority narratives, this literature neither produced works in the language of the host society, i.e. in Arabic, nor did it share with them the attribute of marginality: it was, in fact, both totally cut off from the Egyptian literary scene and very influential in the Greek mainstream, as Ouranis’s remarks quoted above confirm. On the other hand, its conceptualisation as a ‘diaspora’ or ‘peripheral literature’ in accordance with the conventions of Modern Greek criticism (Dimaras 2000: xv) is equally problematic insofar as it overlooks both the considerable influence of Egyptian themes upon it and the significant autonomy of its writers and readers with respect to the national system of Greek literary production. In other words, there is a strong element of duality in Egyptian-Greek literature, which places it not merely
‘in a median state’ between two national cultures (Said 1994: 36), but also in the middle of two hybrid literary types: minority and diaspora writing. Historically, this is largely a reflection of the long, yet incomplete transition of Egypt’s Greek community from a scattered section of the Ottoman Empire to a semi-privileged\textsuperscript{1} ethnic group seeking permanent minority status on the eve of its exodus from Nasser’s Arab Republic of Egypt (Chrysostomidis 2002: 128).

In contrast to previous studies, this chapter aims to provide an overall assessment of Egyptian-Greek literature which focuses on how it treated the issue of Egyptian-Greek identity and, more specifically, how it sought to construct it. In this sense, the ensuing discussion is an attempt to interpret the work of Egypt’s Greek writers from the perspective of its ability to fashion itself as distinctively Egyptian-Greek and, in doing so, offer a cultural framework for the continuing presence of a Greek community in the Nile Valley. The method used to carry out this task is fairly straightforward: it amounts to a critical reading of how this literature relates to its Egyptian context or, to be more precise, of how Egypt and its people are represented in its texts. It is, in other words, an attempt to reconnect its writers to their Egyptian environment with the aim of showing how they reacted to it and how they developed different conceptions of Egyptian-Greekness.

**Recovering the Egyptian Context**

Of the two main critical works on the subject, I.M. Chatziphotis’s *Αλεξανδρινή Λογοτεχνία* [Alexandrian Literature] (1967) constitutes the most consistent attempt to apply a ‘hellenocentric’ reading to Egyptian-Greek literature. As the book’s title indicates, all the literary works it discusses are reduced to a purely ‘Alexandrian’ phenomenon, a common method of facilitating their hellenisation: Alexandria, we are told, is ‘a Mediterranean port’ where ‘the Egyptian space and Arabic element … were not as intense as in Egypt’s interior’. Then, to account for many writers who lived in other cities, the book also claims that ‘Cairo was always turned towards Alexandria, of which it was an annex’ (Chatziphotis 1971: 12–13). After these spatial adjustments, a definition of Egyptian-Greek literature is given as follows:

> The Greeks who migrated to Egypt took with them all the characteristics of the modern Greek nation and thanks to the favourable conditions which they found there … they passed them on from generation to generation. It was therefore natural for the literature which the Egyptian Greeks developed, to follow generally the same path as Modern Greek letters. (Chatziphotis 1971: 11)

\textsuperscript{1} From 1855 until 1937 most Egyptian Greeks enjoyed the privileges of the Capitulations, but these were often curtailed and did not apply to many of them who were Ottoman and, after 1923, Egyptian subjects.
What renders this conception problematic is neither its narrow textualist approach, nor its ethnocentric bias. If, for example, all Egyptian-Greek literature had followed in the footsteps of its reputed first poet, Eleni Gousiou, then Chatziphotis’s definition would have been valid. Consider, for example, these verses from her collection Μικρά Ἀνθοδέσμη [Small Bunch of Flowers] (1861):

Thirty-eight are the years / since Greece was liberated from the Turks / and was given back to its children.
Today is the day / when Greece was reborn when it took its black clothes off / and was dressed again in white.

The naive and awkward construction might betray the poet’s youth, but contains nothing to suggest that these verses were written outside Greece and, specifically, by a young blind woman living in Egypt. Indeed, the same distance from the Egyptian context can be found in a substantial part of other Egyptian-Greek literary works, a phenomenon suggesting that we should not always assume that diaspora or minority writers develop hybrid or cosmopolitan identities simply because they are physically located in a country whose culture differs from their own. Where Chatziphotis’s definition breaks down, however, is in its failure to recognise that this attitude was not uniform among Egypt’s Greek writers, as many did choose to introduce Egyptian themes to their works.2

Thankfully, the other main critical work on the subject, Manolis Yialourakis’s Η ιστορία των ελληνικών γραμμάτων στην Αίγυπτο [History of Greek Letters in Egypt] (1962) adopts a different approach. There we are told that Egyptian-Greek writers are writers whose attention is turned towards the Metropolis, but at the same time under certain obligations … towards their environment …. And the efforts of this literature tend precisely to this aim: not to cut itself off from the Metropolis, not to isolate itself from the international artistic currents and teachings of Europe, but also to reflect life in the land of the Nile. (Yialourakis 1962: 36–7)

Besides acknowledging the significance of contextual factors, this triadic model – Greek culture, Egyptian setting, European currents – also captures the diversity of Egyptian-Greek literature and its pronounced cross-cultural dimension. Through Yialourakis’s perspective Egyptian-Greek letters appear in brighter ‘cosmopolitan’ colours. Cavafy is no longer Dimaras’s ‘fanatical nationalist’ (2000: 596), but ‘a great European poet’; Yani Yamvili, author of a collection of short stories written in Latin characters, Το λιμάνι κι’ αλλα διιύματα [The Port and other Short Stories] (1960), is not accused of vandalising the Greek language, but hailed as ‘the first

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2 A revised version of Chatziphotis’s Alexandrian Literature appeared later in his book Αλεξάνδρεια [Alexandria] (1999), 175–351. The ethnocentric bias there is moderated, but the revisions are mainly descriptive and lacking in critical edge.
European short story writer in Egyptian-Greek letters’; and a similar badge of honour is also given to his mentor, Timos Malanos, ‘the first Modern Greek European critic’ (Yialourakis 1962: 31, 102, 83).

Because of its Eurocentric bias, however, Yialourakis’s ‘cosmopolitan’ approach presents a number of problems. Purely hellenocentric poets like K.N. Konstandinidis, for example, feature prominently, while racist writers like Kostas Tsangaradas are also positively received (1962: 45–6, 93–4). Moreover, despite claims to critical openness (1962: 18–19), the bold cosmopolitanism of Tsirkas’s Η Λέχη [The Club] (1961), arguably the finest Greek novel ever written in Egypt, is derided as a ‘deviation to a pure workshop intellectualism’, while Nikolaides’s Το βιβλίο του μοναχού [Book of the Monk] (1951), a poetic prose work satirising hypocrisy and sexual repression in monastic life, is dismissed as ‘unsatisfactory’ (1962: 100, 97). Above all, the Egyptian context which Yialourakis is prepared to consider does not differ substantially from the de-Egyptianised ‘favourable conditions’ of the hellenocentric critics. For instance, while he praises George Vrisimitzakis for being the first to publish such daring verses as ‘Land of Egypt, thou art my fatherland’ in Τα τραγούδια του φελλάχου [The Songs of the Fellah] (1920), he says the same about Tsangaradas, whose short story ‘Βογαδες’ [‘Boys’ lusting] (1927) claims that Egyptian male adolescents are ‘distinguished from all other peoples’ because the only group sporting activity they can take part in is masturbating in the mud (Tsangaradas 1927: 218). As far as Yialourakis is concerned, both are equally ‘pioneers’ in turning Egyptian-Greek literature towards ‘the life of the fellahs’ (1962: 46, 94).

The Relevance of Post-colonial Criticism

The sources of this confusion, however, lie in the inherent inability of Eurocentric approaches to discern beneath the cosmopolitan façade of colonial urban life the deeper power structures of imperial domination. Yet, if we concur that the history of Egyptian-Greek letters cannot be fully comprehended outside an analysis that relates it, at least in part, to its Egyptian context, then we are also obliged to accept that this context cannot be properly understood except as a colonial one. In formal terms at least, from the imposition of the Anglo-French dual control in 1876 until the end of the Suez War in January 1957, that is, virtually throughout its entire history, Greek literature in Egypt was part of a broader colonial cultural phenomenon.

Nonetheless critics like Yialourakis, Chatziphotis, Malanos and historians like Athanasios Politis, i.e. the four most influential formers of our knowledge about Egyptian-Greek literature, would lead us to believe that Egypt’s colonial experience has been of marginal, if any, interest to the country’s Greek writers. In the hundreds of pages they wrote on the subject it has proved impossible to trace more than one explicit reference to Ioannis Gikas’s ‘anti-British – anti-colonial feelings’ and a coded reference to Petros Magnis’s article on ‘Mustafa Kamel, the fighter for Egyptian freedom’, both attributed in passing to the socialist ideals of
their youth (Yialourakis 1962: 92, 38). A third and much longer reference exists in an extensive polemic by Malanos and Yialourakis in a book-length interview entitled *Ο Καβάφης του κεφαλαίου* [Cavafy of the Capital] (1959). They decry ‘Mr Tsirkas’s attempt to present the Greek community as having a different attitude to that which it really had towards the British Occupation, and Cavafy as fanatically anti-British’ (Malanos 1971: 321) – in other words, a complete denial of the colonial dimension.

A more careful reading, however, suggests that Egypt’s colonial condition had a considerable influence on most of its leading Greek writers. Moreover, the question of British colonial rule was by no means the exclusive domain of socialist or leftist authors and, more importantly still, it was not always treated from a critical, anti-colonial perspective. Nevertheless, its presence as a defining socio-political and cultural experience is seldom disconnected from issues of identity and otherness and, specifically, from the determination of what it means to be an Egyptian Greek amidst a complex web of relationships with Egypt, Greece and the British Empire.

**Humanist Notions of Egyptian-Greek Identity**

One group of Egyptian-Greek intellectuals, who became influenced by Egypt’s colonial experience, were writers of different persuasions who shared a common set of humanist values. Their views reflected some of the core tenets of early twentieth-century humanism, including the central belief in ‘a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate’ (Sellars 1933: 60). With respect to their ethnic community these writers stressed in particular the free and voluntary cooperation between Greeks and Egyptians and called for mutual friendship and solidarity across ethnic boundaries to resist British colonialism.

A representative example of this intellectual current can be found in the following poem by Pavlos Gneftos from his collection *Ευγένια* [Evensongs] (1930):

Three Arab women are strolling in the afternoon
With heavy panniers on their heads and breasts set high.
Now as they stop and one says something to the others
Artisans, draw a roof above their heads.

And as humanity will rush from every place to see
Their immortal bodies holding the roof that way,
Put there a guard, one of the best guards,
And tell him ‘Watch it! There are Elgins in the world’.

Gneftos was not a socialist and no one ever thought of him as being particularly concerned about British rule in Egypt; indeed, his work was honoured by the Academy of Athens in 1947, at the height of Anglophile feeling on the nationalist
side during the Greek Civil War. Those who took him seriously called him ‘a follower of tradition’, while serious critics like Gikas, contrasted his cool-headedness as a paediatrician with his ‘childish enthusiasm when he turned to the Muses’ ( Politis 1930: 456). Nevertheless, beneath the poem’s banal imagery and naive verses, lies a complex cultural construction which goes deep into the makings of the Egyptian-Greek self. The beauty of the three Egyptian women recalls a classical Greek theme, the Caryatids, and the two, identified with one another, generate a common will to resist, both the looting of the Parthenon marbles by Lord Elgin and the plundering of Egypt’s cultural landmarks by other imperial collectors.

The same identification with the Egyptians can be found in Petros Magnis’s contributions to the Athenian journal _Noumas_. There the poet, who is often ranked as second only to Cavafy (Yialourakis 1962: 31; Chatziphotis 1971: 70), not only writes about the Egyptian leader, Mustafa Kamel, but goes some way towards appropriating his identity by adopting the pen name ‘Kostas Kamel’. Moreover, his 1908 obituary of the 34-year-old statesman does not merely pay tribute, as Yialourakis suggests, to an abstract notion of ‘Egyptian freedom’ (1962: 38), but specifically extols Mustafa Kamel’s contribution to Egypt’s anti-colonial struggle:

> What he achieved can be easily spotted among his compatriots, in Cromer’s departure, in the new policy of the English. Today’s Egyptians are not the Egyptians they once were, his fervent articles … his … National Party, have forced England to think more seriously about its domination in the Nile Valley. (Kamel 1908: 2–3)

Magnis also seeks to draw lessons from Mustafa Kamel’s leadership regarding political change in his country of origin. The article’s title is ‘Παράδειγμα για μίμηση’ [An example to follow], but its conclusion leaves few illusions about the likelihood of this happening in Greece. ‘Congratulations to Egypt on producing such patriots’, it says, ‘and three times shame on us … for our lust for power, selfishness and self-serving individualism’ (Kamel 1908: 3).

The same year also saw the appearance of Lord Cromer’s _Modern Egypt_, a two-volume memoir by the country’s de facto ruler from 1883 to 1907. In an act of defiance the leading Egyptian-Greek prose writer of the time, Ioannis Gikas, published a satirical review of the book in _Nea Zoi_, criticising Cromer’s unflattering portrayal of the Greeks in the Nile Valley. Although Yialourakis describes it as ‘a socialist … hangover from the prejudices of his youth’ (1962: 92) Gikas’s ‘Cromer and the Greeks’ contains no traces of socialist ideas. It is essentially a moralistic, liberal and humanist critique of British imperialism, tinged with a mix of populist, nationalist, orientalist and anti-British stereotypes, all recruited in the service of the noble cause of defending the Greek presence in Egypt. Its central thesis is this:

> Although the English regard us as usurers, alcohol-dealers, racketeers and immoral, the fellah himself considers us much more honest in our dealings and
much more sympathetic to his dark slavery, which the liberal and compassionate Albion has so selfishly imposed on this unfortunate Egypt. (Gikas 1908: 792)

While ‘the fellah’, if asked, might not fully agree – at least Egyptian historians only do so up to a point (Suleyman 1996: 317–30; ‘Eshmawi 1997: 65–83; Fahmy 2004: 293, 299) – the invocation of the Egyptian farmer as a better judge than Lord Cromer of what the Greeks are doing in his country, is in itself an eloquent statement about what the standard should be: not the country’s ‘reform’, as Cromer would argue (Baring 1908: 555), but ‘the fellah’s love for the Greek’ (Gikas 1908: 792), i.e. the friendship of the Egyptian people towards their foreign communities.

A deeper identification with the Egyptian ‘other’ and parallel alienation from the Greek self appears in George Philippou (Pieridis)’s novel Βαμβακάδες [The Cotton Dealers] (1945), a work commissioned by the leftist periodical Ellin (Pieridis 1992: 102). Based on his experience of Upper Egyptian country life, the novel portrays these sentiments through the character of the grocer, Dysseas, who ‘speaks about the Greeks – his own … in the third person’ and is kept at bay by the town’s Greek community; but the Egyptians, who cannot pronounce his name, call him ‘Sef’ (sword), because he is honest (Philippou 1945: 144–6). Yet Dysseas ‘deceives himself’ into thinking he is still a Greek and every ‘Sunday afternoon he remembers his national identity. He shaves, wears his straw hat, and … goes to the café, where he takes part in the life and conversations of the “community”’. As the narrator explains, he is ‘suspended between two worlds – alienated from one, but not fully assimilated into the other’ (ibid.: 147–8). Through him we learn that what brought his father and the other members of the town’s Greek community to Egypt was the Minia Sugar Company, which recruited vigilantes to stop the fellahin from violating its Capitulatory privileges when the Mixed Tribunals were established (Philippou 1945: 149). The revelation is crucial to the entire novel, because it explains why most of its Greek characters compare so unfavourably with the Egyptians. Their greed, hypocrisy, cowardice and racism towards the latter are a manifestation of their underlying complicity with Egypt’s colonial rulers.

The notion of an Egyptian-Greek identity based on solidarity with the Egyptians in a common anti-colonial struggle reaches its apogee in the work of Stratis Tsirkas. From his poetic debut with the collection Φελλάχοι [Fellahs] (1937), most of his later work was anticipated in verses which Panayiotis Moullas (2001: 25) aptly describes as ‘a kind of programmatic declaration’:

Yes. I sing of Egypt. This
Which Cook does not show you, what
You have been tripping over for years without seeing.

The leitmotif of an anti-colonial solidarity between Egyptians and Greeks first appears in Tsirkas’s short story ‘Ο μπεζλιβάνης με το γάιδαρο, τους δύο σκύλους

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3 This took place in 1876.
και το νταούλι’ [The itinerant wrestler with the donkey, the two dogs and the tambour] (1945). In this tale a group of detainees held by the British after the leftist uprising in the Greek armed forces in Egypt in 1944 manage to smuggle letters and obtain cigarettes via the Egyptian wrestler when they relate their cause to ‘the struggle of Sa’ad the Great for Egypt’s independence’ (Tsirkas 1994b: 362). The same theme runs through another short story, ‘Ο Ζήτη Άψην στην πολυτελία του Π.Κ.Π.’ [Z’d Ahmed at the siege of the P.K.P.] (1947), told through the eyes of an Upper Egyptian porter who watches the blockade of Greek sailors by the British soldiers. ‘Both are dogs, let them eat each other!’ he mutters to his Egyptian boss; but when the latter retorts that ‘with those Greeks we are brothers … The British are the enemy’, a stream of childhood memories come back to him and freeze-frame on the image of his father shot dead in the water during the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 (Tsirkas 1994b: 297–302). From the opposite perspective ‘To χωριό με τις καμπίνες’ [The village with the cabins] (1947) tells the story of a Greek leftist who narrowly escapes arrest by the British authorities because he abandons his hiding place to help a crowd of panicking people, mostly Egyptians, during a Nazi air raid.

In his novella Νουρέντιν Μπόμπα [Nouredin Bomba] (1957), written in the euphoria that followed the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, the theme of Greek-Egyptian anti-colonial solidarity is contrasted with the petty colonialism of Egypt’s Greek nationalists. There Tsirkas tells the story of a proud Upper Egyptian boatman, Nour, whose growing business brings him into conflict with the Egyptian notables of the town of Deirut. When he refuses to sell his feluccas to them, he is sent to the British inspector of irrigation, Coxon, who orders him to be beaten and have his moustache forcibly shaved off – apparently a common colonial practice to judge by the appearance of a similar scene in Abdel Rahman al-Sharqawi’s novel Al ‘Ard [The Earth] (1954). To wash away the shame, Nour kills Coxon and goes into hiding until he reappears as a local leader in the Revolution of 1919, though without much hope of its success. ‘A lost cause. The guns are too few and are held by the pashas’ (Tsirkas 1994a: 74), he tells his Greek friend Polyvios, who narrates the story in 1956. When the Revolution is suppressed, he is among the accused in a trial, but the prosecution witness refuses to testify against him. However, Nour is still sentenced to death because Polyvios’s boss, the small Greek industrialist and moneylender, Rozakis, reminds the British judges that seven years ago he had ‘killed Mr. Coxon’. To underline the irony, the trial is set symbolically on Greek Independence Day and, for this reason, Rozakis appears in court wearing ‘a white pressed linen suit’, the hallmark of a European colonialist (Tsirkas 1994a: 94–5).

These themes take full form in Ariagni (1962) the second novel of Tsirkas’s Drifting Cities, whose eponymous heroine stands out in the entire tradition of Egypt’s Greek literature as the role model for, among other things, an authentic Egyptian-Greek woman. Known to her neighbours as ‘Om-Mechali’ (mother of

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4 On Tsirkas’s novels see the contribution by Eleni Papargyriou to the present volume (Chapter 13).
Michali), Ariagni lives in the notorious Balaxa alley in the petit bourgeois Cairo district of ‘Abdeen. She prefers Yunes, the Muslim dervish with the two wives, to her socialist Greek husband who says ‘these locals need the whip’ (Tsirkas 1995: 271). When her little boy Nikos abandons his Arab gang to join a school-mate who shouts at him: ‘You dirty nigger Arab, you circumcised bastard, the Greek camp is over here!’, she says: ‘And you … joined those who insulted you?’ (Tsirkas 1995: 377). For Yunes, who hid arms in the ‘haunted house’, and for her, who saved his life in the events of 1919, once again, ‘the enemy was the same: the British’ (Tsirkas 1995: 371). Where Ariagni exceeds all of Tsirkas’s other Egyptian-Greek characters – or those of any other writer, for that matter – is in her pronounced humanity (Kazamias 2000: 39). ‘And you, father of my children, why invoke the whip? Wherever there’s suffering and sweat and tears, there is humanity’, she thinks to herself (Tsirkas 1995: 272). Besides her anti-racist and anti-colonial feelings, Ariagni’s empathy also extends to the homosexual British professor, the decadent Robbie Richards, whose principled humanism leads her to defend him as worthy of joining the anti-colonial struggle to ‘become human again’ (Tsirkas 1995: 376).

**Egyptian-Greek Orientalism**

From the aftermath of the British invasion another trend appeared in Egyptian-Greek literature which reproduced many features of European Orientalist discourse. It adopted what Edward Said calls a ‘European’ perspective of ‘exteriority’ and purported to be ‘bringing civilisation to [the] primitive or barbaric’ Orientals (Said 1994: xi). It typically represents the Egyptians as ‘backward’, ‘savage’ and ‘treacherous’, but also as ‘noble’, ‘sensual’ and ‘mysterious’. According to Homi Bhabha (1994: 118) Orientalist discourse portrays the colonised as ‘both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants’, an inconsistency justified through another stereotype, that of ‘the inscrutable Oriental’.

An early representative of this trend was the Greek-speaking Italian journalist and teacher, Ferdinando Oddi, known in Greece as a ‘liberal’ and a ‘polymath’ (Skokos 1894: 362) and later described by Yialourakis (1967: 605) as the leading Egyptian-Greek literary figure of his time. His autobiographical short story, ‘Απομνημονεύµατα Οικογένειας Προσφόγων’ [Memoirs of a family of refugees] (1883) recounts the ordeal of his family and that of an Austrian friend during the bombardment of Alexandria by the British fleet in July 1882, ‘a duel between civilisation and barbarism’, as he put it (Oddis 1911: 18). Although both families reside in Egypt, they turn into ‘refugees’ when ‘150,000 Europeans’ are transported to Europe to clear the ground for the invasion. They receive protection in a Bedouin house when they say ‘we don’t like the English’, but secretly they wish ‘to see the [British] flag on the Citadel of Cairo’ (Oddis 1911: 15). Nevertheless, only the Bedouins are described as ‘liars’, because their chief, Said, when threatened by armed Egyptian nationalists, agrees to hand over his guests ‘after three days’.
Said’s friend, loyal Ahmed, breaks the news to them like this: ‘Among your dogs … there is one which has caught rabies’ (Oddis 1911: 24). Thankfully, though, on the third day ‘the blessed three-syllable word’ is heard in the streets: ‘El Engliz!’ and our heroes are saved. Before the happy ending, however, a chain of typical Orientalist scenes unfold. Ahmed’s wife returns from outside in tears because a friend of hers had lost her family in the bombardment; but the guests, who have not been out, know better: ‘Poor Fatma, she lied to you, the British are not barbaric’, they explain. Then, to arouse a sadistic male Orientalist fantasy, Fatma is asked: ‘Would you like to be an Englishman’s slave?’ – to which she replies: ‘Why not? Since God permits it’ (Oddis 1911: 27). This is followed by the Islamophobic scene of ‘cannibalism’. An Egyptian is heard from the street shouting: ‘Come Muslims … Nazarene meat, 15 piastres per oke!’ and then Fatma offers the families a steaming pot of ‘boiling meat’. Although this turns out to be a joke – the vendor, again, was just lying – the narrative assumption is that Fatma is capable of buying and cooking human meat for her guests. This is further confirmed when we learn that the vendor was lying only because the British invaders had suffered no casualties (Oddis 1911: 33, 37).

A more sadistic imagery appears in Kostas Tsangaradas’s novel Ναβία [Nabia] (1924), aptly analysed by Manolis Marangoulis as an Orientalist and racist work (2004: 34). Here, more so than in Oddis’s story, a clear notion of Egyptian-Greek identity is advanced. Turning the humanist concept on its head, Tsangaradas establishes a sharp divide between the colonised Egyptians on the one hand and all the ‘Europeans’ on the other, who include the British rulers and the other foreign communities, headed, of course, by the Greeks. Nabia, named after the leading character, a 15-year-old Egyptian prostitute, starts as a semi-pornographic tale about the ‘mysterious pleasures’ and ‘untold orgies’ of a brothel in the city of Assiut (Tsangaradas 1924: 36) and evolves into an epic narrative about the Revolution of 1919. The novel ends with the futurist image of a British hydroplane whose ‘saving work’, we are told, consisted of ‘using its machine gun to sow fear and havoc’ and of ‘bombing various gatherings’ of the ‘maniac vandals’ who demanded Egyptian independence. And who exactly did this unmistakably fascist image of a man-machine actually ‘save’? ‘The worried European settlers’, the ‘European shops near the station’ and, ‘thankfully also … the isolated villas of the Europeans’ (Tsangaradas 1924: 157–8, 152–3). As Marangoulis points out (2006: 350–2), Nabia also portrays Assiut as divided into two sectors: the ‘Eastern’, ‘densely populated’ and ‘dirty’ part lacking in character, and ‘New Assiut’, the affluent European quarter. The latter, we read, is marked by a mansion in ‘Greek style’, made ‘of Pentelic marble’ and built by ‘a Greek architect and Athenian artisans’, a building unmatched even in ‘Alexandria’s Ramleh’, the ‘capital’ of Egypt’s Greek haute bourgeoisie (Tsangaradas 1924: 50). The symbolism is obvious: Assiut is a microcosm of modern Egypt and what is best in its ‘civilised’ part is an all-Greek cultural achievement.

The same division between the ‘civilised’, ‘European’ Greeks and the ‘characterless’ Egyptians runs through other texts by prominent Egyptian-Greek
writers, including Timos Malanos’s Απομνημονεύματα Αλεξάνδρινού [Memoirs of an Alexandrian] (1971). In one passage, for example, he says that:

The Egyptian Greeks had been so dedicated to matters back home that their interest in Egyptian affairs was rather journalistic. This was … the position of other Europeans too. … The same indifference may be also detected in Cavafy’s work. … In its modern context it deliberately ignores the Egyptian, unless we wish to admit that that figure without an identity, ‘the sleeping servant’, in his daring erotic poem ‘Comes to rest’, represents modern Egypt. (Malanos 1971: 359–60)

Perhaps the most complex and conflicted image of Egyptian ‘otherness’ in this literary trend can be found in the fiction of Penelope Delta, whose absence from the histories of Egyptian-Greek literature is hardly justifiable, considering that she was born and spent half of her life in Egypt. Her children’s novel Μάγκας [Mangas] (1935), named after a ‘Greek’ fox terrier with the same name, is replete with racist aphorisms about everything Egyptian, except the stray ‘black Arab dog’, Afratos, for whom the little hero nurtures the friendliest (albeit racist) feelings. For all his ‘dirty’, ‘scruffy’ and ‘ugly’ looks and his appalling ‘lack of manners’, Afratos is described as ‘nobler and better’ than his pedigree ‘Greek’ friend (Delta 2004: 254–5). This dual portrayal has recently led to a confused and misleading interpretation whereby the moral of the story is said to be that: ‘the “Arabs” are not responsible for their wickedness, as this is owing to the manner in which they have been treated’ – apparently by the British colonialists (Navet-Grémillet 2006: 328, 334 ft31). Through a more careful reading, however, we discover that Afratos says to his ‘Greek’ friend ‘civilisation has corrupted you’ and, in even more revealing words: ‘your race has gone through many stages of civilisation, [but] I am more primitive’ (Delta 2004: 247, 251). From this dialogue, it emerges quite clearly that the Egyptian dog is ‘nobler and better’ only insofar as he embodies the main features of the ‘noble savage’, the instructive and entertaining companion of every colonial explorer.

Furthermore, when the two dogs stroll along Alexandria’s seashore, they first meet an Egyptian fisherman, who insidiously attacks them, and then suffer similar treatment from every other Arab they encounter. This causes Mangas to burst into an angry monologue which stands out as one of the most racist passages in Modern Greek literature:

I detested the nigger Arab who smelt of nigger Arab niff, like all blacks who have a particularly heavy smell. I was disgusted by his naked feet, the dirty houses, which smelt of burning oil, and which exuded a stench of stuffiness and human stink. … ‘Disgusting, disgusting this place is!’ I cried. Every Arab is a thief, is a villain. They all smell and conspire against me! (Delta 2004: 227)
Of all the places along the 12-mile-long Corniche of Alexandria, the only one where our ‘Greek’ and ‘Egyptian’ friends are offered food is the British army barracks. Of course, the soldiers there tie Mangas to a barrel, but they pat him on the head and offer him soup, bread and bones, while Afratos is just thrown a few bones and turned away.

The novel is not uncritical of British colonialism. Mangas is worried that in disliking things Egyptian, he sounds too much like Daisy, the arrogant English mare. Christos, a guest at his owners’ house, is ridiculed for showing off his English manners. Ultimately, however, even our proud ‘Greek’ hero is a fox terrier and, as the wise English horse, Bobby, tells him, ‘fox terriers are always English’ (Delta 2004: 28–31). In effect, the novel’s coded message is this: if civilisation is to prevail over primitivism, then British colonialism must be accepted as a necessary evil, especially by the Greeks who, despite their proud national identity, are distant relatives of the British. This also explains why Mangas is separated from Afratos at the end of the novel and jumps on a boat to go to Greece.

A Brief Note on Cavafy

Questions of Egyptian-Greek identity were also of deep concern to Egypt’s foremost Greek literary figure, the poet C.P. Cavafy. Although the nuanced manner in which he dealt with them requires lengthier treatment, a few remarks are still in order. Even if we were to accept that Cavafy’s poetic gift ‘was not the creation of an identity’ (Mabro 2004: 260), a broader outlook on his cultural impact inside the Greek community and on Alexandria’s intellectual life, suggests rather the opposite. In his interviews, for example, he spoke about the strong ties between Egypt’s Greek writers and their Egyptian environment and called upon ‘Arabic-speaking Egyptian Greeks to make known to the Greek world the modern Arabic literature of Egypt’ (Pieris 2003: 152). In an article about the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria he invited ‘students of the history of Egypt’s Hellenism’ to visit it to see how past Greek civilisations had developed ‘so healthily’ in Egypt. When Politis’s Hellenism and Modern Egypt (1928–30) appeared, he urged the Egyptian Greeks to read it because it narrated ‘the history … of the Hellenism to which they belong’ (Pieris 2003: 151). Above all, the publication of most of his poems in Alexandrian rather than in Athenian journals and the construction of an authorial identity that was inextricably bound up with his city, lent a strong Egyptian-Greek dimension to his work, which turned it into a cultural reference point for many Greek writers from Egypt.

Cavafy’s interest in contemporary Egypt is also evident in at least two of his non-canonical poems ‘Σαμή Ελ Νεσίμ’ [Sham el Nesim] (1892) and ‘27 Ιουνίου 1906, 2 μ.μ.’ [27 June 1906, 2 pm] (1908). The first, which describes how the Egyptians celebrate the coming of spring, conveys a strong sense of belonging to Egypt, whose Arabic name appears five times in the poem as ‘our Misr’. The second poem, which depicts the execution of the youngest of four men hanged by
the British at the village of Denshawai, is more controversial. After its discovery in 1963, Tsirkas hailed it as an unquestionable proof of Cavafy’s anti-colonial feelings (1984: 93), but Robert Liddell – following Malanos’s view that the poet was an Anglophile who cared little about politics – explained it in terms of Cavafy’s opposition to the death penalty and his alleged interest in ‘the connection between sex and hanging’ (Liddell 2000: 91–2). Although Liddell’s disturbing interpretation totally misses the poem’s explicit critique of the injustices of British rule, this does not mean that Cavafy should be counted among the opponents of British imperialism. Throughout his single-minded argument, Tsirkas is puzzled by one thing: the poem was dated ‘January 1908’, that is 18 months after the executions at Denshawai; yet his conclusion still is that Cavafy wrote it within the broader ‘circumstances’ of the event (Tsirkas 1984: 85–6). What he and other critics after him have failed to observe is that on 8 January 1908, following a public outcry, the British government itself decided to release the remaining Denshawai prisoners, thus acknowledging the grave injustice committed on 27 June 1906 (Anonymous 1908: 46). For such reasons Cavafy cannot be considered an anti-colonial writer; but his concern about the inhuman acts of the British Occupation and his calls for closer ties between the Greek community and Egyptians in the country they shared confirm his intellectual affinity with the views of the humanist writers about Egyptian-Greek identity.

Conclusion

Apart from showing that Egypt’s natural and social environment had a significant impact on Egyptian-Greek literature, this chapter has also tried to demonstrate that this influence was largely mediated through the structures of British colonialism. To account for this mediation, dual models of diaspora or minority identity construction were avoided because of their tendency to reduce this process to a simple dialectic between two monolithic national cultures: that of the country of origin versus that of the host country. Instead, a triadic model was adopted to reflect some of the complexities of Egyptian society and particularly its inner division between one social order for the colonialists and another for the colonised.

The present analysis also showed that, under the triple influence of Greek language, Egyptian land and British Empire, the formation of a distinctive Egyptian-Greek identity was a matter of vital concern for Egypt’s Greek writers. This concern, as we saw, did not result in the formation of a unified identity, but rather of two contrasting and competing conceptions of it: the first, deriving from the work of humanist writers, was anti-colonial, integrationist and supportive of Egyptianisation; the second, arising from the work of Orientalist writers, was colonialist, separatist and Eurocentric. Despite the isolated case of Cavafy, the polarisation between humanists and orientalists demonstrates that, ultimately, Egypt’s colonisation had a divisive effect on the efforts of Egypt’s Greek writers to formulate a common cultural identity for their ethnic community. This conclusion,
on the one hand, challenges the widely held assumption that, by virtue of their hybrid character, diaspora and minority identities are able to transcend the binary divisions between colonisers and colonised. On the other hand, it also provides an explanation for the tragic failure of the Egyptian Greeks to reach a common strategy about their future in Egypt, when the pressures of post-colonial transition began to threaten their very existence as an ethnic group.

References


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In his influential article ‘Reflections on exile’ Edward Said defines exile as an enforced state resulting in terminal loss: ‘It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home’ (Said 2000: 173). While Said’s claim is certainly true on those occasions where exile is the result of violent uprooting, whether this violence is physical or psychological, the broad application of the term to encompass any form of displacement polarises the distinction between exile and home, reducing the former’s semantic complexity to a spatial abjection and elevating the latter to an abstract, utopian space.¹ The same applies to a distinction between exile and nation, which, Said claims, offers an effective defence mechanism against the exile’s afflictions. For one thing this polarisation prohibits the notion of return; for another it is rather dismissive of any distinction between the causes that might lead subjects to exile.²

The term ‘diaspora’, on the other hand, which has gained considerable critical momentum since the 1960s,³ has managed to bridge the gap between exile and nation (Tölöyan 1996: 3–36, Baumann 2000: 313–37) and to shift away from the notion of enforcement. Diaspora implies a set of transactions that constantly negotiate the distance between exile and nation and, in a sense, assigns to the subject a double identity, designating a split which is constantly in the process of being reconciled. Unlike exile, characterised by terminal loss, diaspora is a more complex, more subtle condition of concurrent absences. While in the case

¹ I extend my warmest thanks to the Program in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University for the Hannah Seeger Davis Postdoctoral Fellowship, which enabled me to write this article.

² See also Victor Burgin’s commentary on Said’s essay in ‘Paranoiac spaces’. Burgin argues that the clash between private and public voices represents the difficulty of placing the exile (Burgin 1996: 117).

³ For example, to be born in exile, as Said claims (Said 2000: 184), is a contradiction in terms, as there is no enforcement to drive the subject away from his/her home country. Similarly, the mention of James Joyce as someone who ‘chose to be in exile’ (Said’s emphasis) further obfuscates the rigid categorisation that Said strives to establish.

³ For an inquiry into the notion of ‘diaspora’ originating in Jewish studies see Tölöyan (1996: 9–16).
of exile return is impossible, diaspora defies the notion of return altogether. The notion of diaspora is developed in the context of a cosmopolitan society, where the identification of home with the geographical confines of one country and the ideological and emotional framework of one nation is no longer possible.\(^4\)

Stratis Tsirkas (1911–80) was a second-generation Greek Egyptian who lived in Egypt until 1963, when he and his family moved to Athens.\(^5\) As the son of Greek immigrants to Egypt, who subsequently left his native land to migrate back to that of his ancestors, Tsirkas is seen as carrying the stigma of double exile, a stigma that he himself embraced.\(^6\) However, to use the term ‘exile’, to designate a complete and irreversible break between two places and two cultures, seems problematic; Tsirkas was born in Egypt unlike his parents, who were not. On the other hand, the national, religious and linguistic identity of Greek communities in Egypt and their close connections to the Greek state as well as their relative cultural and linguistic immunisation to local Arab culture and language\(^7\) all point

\(^4\) To these terms one should add the Greek ‘\textit{xeniteia}’. As Ilias Kouloukoundis argued in 1967, \textit{xeniteia} ‘does not exactly mean exile as you inflict it upon yourself and does not entail estrangement as it does not lead to intellectual estrangement. It is just loss of one’s country of birth’ (Kalogeras 2002: 69).

\(^5\) Tsirkas’s father was brought to Cairo by his own father from the island of Imvros at a young age so that he would avoid serving in the Ottoman army, while his mother’s family had moved to Haifa after the 1881 earthquakes on Chios and subsequently to Alexandria after the war of 1897. Tsirkas was born in Cairo in 1911 and spent most of his youth between Cairo and Alexandria before he settled permanently in Alexandria in 1939 to become director in the Chalkousis tannery. Before he moved to Athens in 1963 Tsirkas had only made short visits to Greece, whereas he had travelled extensively in Europe. His move to Greece was impelled by financial terms linked to the nationalisation of the Chalkousis enterprise by the Nasser government (Prokopaki 1985: 4–22).

\(^6\) Alexandros Kazamias in his article ‘Stratis Tsirkas: I too was feeling a refugee’ points out: ‘Although deeply integrated in his social context, Tsirkas, as it seems, never ceased to feel that his refugee origin as the offspring of Chiot immigrants in Egypt, was a defining quality both socially and intellectually’ (Kazamias 2001: 20). The term ‘refugee’ is here taken as a subcategory of ‘exile’, implicating political and/or military factors in the enforced displacement.

\(^7\) ‘In examining the community’s cultural life, finally, it should be mentioned that the community was influenced by three separate cultures. One was the indigenous Arabic-Islamic culture, which made little impact on it. This was not surprising, since Egyptian society had been structured in such a way that foreigners were judicially, politically, economically, and socially segregated from the native population in many important ways. There was little incentive therefore for foreigners to acquaint themselves with this culture. The only exception occurred among the lower strata of the foreign element who lived in the poorer urban areas or in the provinces. They became fluent in Arabic’ (Kitroeff 1983: 14–15). Soulogiannis also argues: ‘The Greek Egyptian experienced a basic contradiction. On the one hand, he believed that he was passing through the country and the time would come when he would return to his homeland; on the other hand, he considered Egypt to be his second homeland. He also thought that his fate was irrevocably tied to Greece as
to a continuum between what one could term the periphery (or perhaps even a colony) and the metropolis. Similarly, the word ‘repatriation’ cannot even be used figuratively in Tsirkas’s case, as his relation to Greece is not that of an expatriate returning home, but that of the peripheral subject reconnecting to the metropolis. Both before and after his move to Greece, Tsirkas existed in two parallel worlds, where contemplating the absent place would be a constant impulse. While he saw Egypt as his home, Tsirkas connected intellectually, as well as politically, to Greece proper. Just as he sought the appreciation of the Greek intelligentsia for his writing, he would inscribe Greek-Egyptian political affairs in the larger horizon of Greek political affairs. Thus, when he settled in Athens in 1963 Tsirkas did not lose Alexandria, as the Alexandria he had was cosmopolitan – thus also Greek – and filtered through the lens of a diasporic, terminally transitory subject. Rather than return, in his case the term ‘repatriation’ signifies the physical reconnection to and the re-appropriation of what had till then been a virtual centre.

Space and transit become major constituents in Tsirkas’s work. The trilogy Ακούβερνητες Πολιτείες [Drifting Cities] (1961–5) and the subsequent novel Χαμένη Ανοιξη [Lost Spring] (1976), which constitute Tsirkas’s main novelistic output, are largely based on individual experiences of exile, diaspora and repatriation, which are reflected both in these novels’ themes as well as their poetics. However, reflecting his real life experience, Tsirkas’s fiction constantly problematises commonplace approaches to these notions: by making an aesthetic principle out of the affective orientation of individual characters towards the space they inhabit, he negotiates the irreversibility of the term ‘exile’ and builds bridges between places and cultures where other fictions accentuate rifts. The content of this affective orientation is based on a political appropriation of space, which for Tsirkas offers a solution to the conundrums of geographic and cultural displacement. Politicising space is a way of discovering affinities, of accepting cultural and religious differences, of overcoming nationalist sentiments and, thus, facilitates successful integration in a new social context.

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8 This connection, which became closer in later years, is also visible in Tsirkas’s choice of publisher: until the 1950s Tsirkas published his books in Alexandria. After that he started collaborating with Nana Kallianesi in Kedros, an Athenian publishing house, which has published all his texts ever since.

9 The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu names the collective ethos of the expatriate habitus, the coherent amalgam of practices linking habit with inhabitance (Bourdieu 1988: 782). Paraphrasing this, one could refer to habitus as a kind of emotive geography.

10 There are too many examples to mention more than a couple: in Dimitris Chatzis’s novel Το διπλό βιβλίο [The Double Book] (1976) the immigrant protagonists are never reconciled with the culture of their host country. Similarly, upon repatriation, they discover that all ties with their homeland have been broken. The same applies to Mimika Kranaki’s Φιλόλαθας [Philhellenes] (1992).
The first part of *Drifting Cities* entitled *ΗΛέχη* [The Club] (1961) takes place in Jerusalem in 1942 and reflects Tsirkas’s own short-term experience as a leftist exile in British-ruled Palestine at the time of Rommel’s march on Cairo and Alexandria. *The Club* lays the foundation for a political approach to space. At the beginning of the novel both main characters, Manos Simonidis, a Greek communist estranged from his party and Emmy Bobretzberg, the wife of an Austrian minister, keep away from political affairs while confined in an alien city. Consumed by her excessively sensual nature, Emmy regards politics with indifference as yet another game staged and performed by the powerful, whereas Manos’s disengagement emanates from his desolation at his own party’s dogmatism. As the setting for a novel that largely deals with geographical as well as political displacement, Jerusalem is depicted in *The Club* as an ethnically and socially fragmented transit camp, where characters from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds wait for politics to enter the scene from outside. Similarly, the Kohler Pension, where the main characters take up temporary residence, stands as a *mise en abyme* for this larger world, presenting an array of different ethnicities and social classes. Being rootless in Jerusalem and lacking any political memory of the place, the characters in *The Club* engage in a circumstantial type of cosmopolitanism, substantially different from that of Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century, where mixing with other cultures and classes was more a matter of choice than of necessity. However, at the end of the novel Manos finds a sense of orientation in choosing political action over intellectual observation, while under the impact of her passion for Manos and after having had a child by another Greek man, Emmy reconsiders her indifference towards politics and acquires social consciousness. And this reconsideration tellingly coincides with her adoption of Greece as her new homeland (Tsirkas 1974: 194–202).

Political appropriation of space also becomes a theme in the second part, *Αριάγνη* [Ariagni] (1962), which takes place in Cairo – a more familiar terrain to Tsirkas. *Ariagni*, published on the eve of Tsirkas’s departure from Egypt in the summer of 1963, uses this transit as a subtext to evoke nostalgic reminiscences of the past, communicating some of Tsirkas’s own childhood experiences in working-class areas of the city. The title refers to one of the main characters, Ariagni Saridi, a Greek-Egyptian woman whose indiscriminate kindness to Arabs and Greeks, children and adults alike, makes her a symbol of universal motherhood. Although not actively engaged in politics, Ariagni instinctively possesses a quintessentially socialist ethos, in that she brings harmony to the ethnically and religiously disparate communities of her working-class neighbourhood. Ariagni is deeply attached to Egypt and regards it as her homeland, but is able to see the presence of the Greeks in Egypt as temporary; she predicts the day when ‘the crowds [would be] jostling on the pier, surrounded by mountains of suitcases and bundles and mattresses’

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11 Modernist narrative techniques, manifested in the adoption of three different narrative voices in the novel, serve to underline the fragmented world of the city and the miscommunication between characters.
The Poetics of Transit

(Tsirkas 1974: 272). Ariagni stoically accepts this fate, aware that, in terms of colonial aspirations of accumulating capital, the toehold of Greeks in Egypt is precarious. This open and human approach effectively tears down barriers between the two cultures: ‘Wherever there’s suffering and sweat and tears there’s humanity, isn’t there?’ (Tsirkas 1974: 272). Seen in the wider context of post-colonialism, any hints of violence and banishment suggested in the departure of the Greeks from Egypt are clearly smoothed away.\(^{12}\)

On a symbolic level alluding to the mythical Ariadne, her novelistic counterpart Ariagni\(^ {13}\) holds the key to the political labyrinth which makes up much of the novel’s plot (Beaton 1984–5: 49–50). The sequel and last part of the trilogy \textit{H Νυχτέριδα} [The Bat] (1965) is developed along similar lines. The predicament of Manos’s group operating in the Egyptian Branch of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and their struggle to guarantee independence to the Greek army against British control is closely related to the colonial status of Egypt in 1944. The mutiny of April 1944, in which the last part of the trilogy culminates, violently suppressed by the British forces, is seen as part of an interventionist policy that unites liberal Greeks and Egyptians in a common cause. As in \textit{Ariagni}, characters in \textit{The Bat} declare their solidarity with the Egyptian nationalist movement, reflecting Tsirkas’s own unwillingness to share the colonial leanings of other Europeans.\(^ {14}\) Antoinos, a wise old character in \textit{The Bat}, who has been in Egypt for several decades, gives an account of his encounter with Urabi Pasha in the 1880s, quoting the latter as saying:

\begin{quotation}
\textit{... where there's suffering and sweat and tears there's humanity, isn't there?...}\textit{... where there's suffering and sweat and tears there's humanity, isn't there?...}
\end{quotation}

\(^{12}\) At the time when Tsirkas started writing \textit{The Club} in 1959 the Nasser government was well established, the constitution had been revised, and major economic reforms were sweeping across the country. On Tsirkas’s support for the Egyptian nationalist movement see Chrysostomidis (2001).

\(^{13}\) The slight difference in the way the name is pronounced reflects the Naxiot origin of Tsirkas’s heroine.

\(^{14}\) Such feelings were manifested in a previous novella entitled \textit{Nourendin Bomba} (1957) in which Tsirkas had used the theme of an Arab boatman who rebels against the British in 1919. As Miltos Pechlivanos has shown, after the critique launched against \textit{The Club} by the left-wing intelligentsia and Tsirkas’s expulsion from the Egyptian branch of the Greek Communist Party, he decided to downplay the narrative experimentations of \textit{The Club} and return to the socialist pragmatism of \textit{Nourendin} (Pechlivanos 2000: 14). Consequently, in the last two parts of the trilogy Tsirkas uses the setting of the two Egyptian cities he knows best, Cairo and Alexandria. At the same time he focuses on the semiotics of the Greek-Egyptian cultural identity, making the circumstantial cosmopolitanism of \textit{The Club}, which had infuriated critics, redundant (Prokopaki 1980: 38–9). He substantially reduced the range of ethnicities involved and focuses on the complex cultural identity of Greeks in Egypt, particularly on those of socialist ethos. The Arab-Islamic element, absent in \textit{The Club}, is introduced in the second part and, quite significantly, through the depiction of a poor working-class area in Cairo, where Greeks and Arabs of humble background cohabit harmoniously. Thus, the procession from \textit{The Club} to \textit{The Bat} runs through the return to the homeland.
‘Now you get this in your thick skull. You’re guests in this country. Our people have woken up, and they want to be masters in their own house. Don’t be fool enough to trust the British. They try to pass as your protectors, but when they don’t need you any more, they’ll slip the noose round your necks and sell you cheap. If you know what’s good for you, keep your eyes wide open. We like you, we don’t mind having you here. But as guests, see, not as bosses.’ ‘My dear Pasha,’ I said to him, ‘may your mouth be blessed for what you said. That’s just what I keep telling my countrymen. I’m not blind, am I? If a man knows what’s right, he’s got to say it out loud.’ (Tsirkas 1974: 552)

The uprising of the 1880s, the narrative present of 1944 and the time of writing The Bat in 1964, away from Egypt, become confounded in a seamless historical horizon. The implied transitory subject – Tsirkas speaking through his character – does not leave Egypt with the bitterness of expulsion but with an appreciation of expired hospitality.

Set in Alexandria The Bat was for the most part written in Athens, and thus makes an aesthetic event out of the nostalgia for the absent city. Through the evocative narrative of Paraschos in The Bat Tsirkas explores the history of the Greek community in Alexandria, which to a large extent coincides with that of his own family. Evocation entails a narrative return to an absent place and to the emotions with which it has become associated. In addition, Paraschos’s second-person narrative entails a self-addressed confession, which transcends the boundaries of the character to reach the collective conscience of any diasporic subject. This blend of evocation and confession is a product of the time-lag but also of geographic distance, something which would not have been possible had Tsirkas still been in Egypt at the time of writing. In Ta ημερολόγια της τριλογίας [The Diaries of the Trilogy] Tsirkas gives an account of how the impression of the landscape in Attica instigated the fictionalisation of Alexandria:

It was, I remember, after my first swim in the sea of Ayios Kosmas in April 1964. I lay on the sand; the sun was warm but not burning. Memories of beloved people came back to me, regrets, sorrows, difficulties in settling in Greece, anxiety from problems concerning the novel smothered me. I turned around and had a good cry. That was it; I got up, went home and set myself to work.17

15 Only a small part of the novel was written in Egypt and it was the part that Tsirkas massively revised after he moved to Greece (Tsirkas 1973: 55–67).
16 It has been suggested that Paraschos is the person to whom the implied authorship of the trilogy is assigned (Politi 2006: 202–3).
17 The practical hardships of Tsirkas’s move to Greece are scarcely documented; in the published diaries he only mentions that he felt ‘shell-shocked’ by the sudden change of surroundings and had serious writer’s block, which delayed the writing of the third part by several months (Tsirkas 1973: 66–7).
The visual intersection of views of Attica with Tsirka’s own memories of Alexandria resulted in the epiphanic moment that eventually yielded to the writing process. Not surprisingly, the first episode recollected by Paraschos is one of swimming in the sea in Alexandria.

The same transposition of visual signs occurs in the setting of the trilogy’s epilogue in Thessaloniki – the fourth ‘drifting city’ in the eyes of many – in 1954. Having spent the years of the civil war in Egypt, Tsirka was somewhat handicapped when it came to blending the April 1944 mutiny in Egypt with the Greek Civil War. The problem may be more complex than it seems in that it combines location with politics: Tsirka sought a resolution of a spatial-political conflict in which he was clearly involved, as the April 1944 mutiny had not been officially acknowledged by the Greek Communist Party. In the epilogue the surviving characters reunite in a tavern in the Ano Poli (the old part of the city enclosed in the city walls), where they commemorate their dead companions. Thessaloniki and the location of Ano Poli are not chosen without good reason; the physical resemblance that Thessaloniki bears to Alexandria, with its sharp city planning and prominent seaside culture, as well as its vivid political memories illustrated in the adjacent prison of Eptapyrgio, offers a suitable transitory setting for the symbolic passage to the Greek political scene. Filtered through a time lapse of 10 years the April 1944 movement and the omitted – in a sense silenced – Greek Civil War become confused in a common battlefield, irreversibly colouring political events in the trilogy as Greek affairs despite their Middle-Eastern setting. By gazing at the city from atop the hill in Ano Poli the survivors of the war gain a comprehensive understanding of space and politics. Staging the resolution of this conflict between two cities which are in a sense both absent, neither Greek nor Egyptian, but cities reclaimed in fiction, completes the poetics of transit.

18 In April 1965 the writing of the trilogy was essentially finished, since I was done with depicting the suppression of the antifascist movement of April 1944. The reader of the novel would arguably be left wondering what happened to the main characters. For a long time I contemplated filling this gap by describing their adventures and their fate after they had been transferred to Greece. But this posed a major, if not insurmountable, obstacle. I had not experienced Greece during the years of the Civil War, as I had been in Egypt then. Should I make it up from stories and reading? I felt an inner kind of resistance to this thought: it would be as if I was committing a forgery, a punishable act’ (Tsirka 1973: 82).

19 See Tsirka (1987: 33): ‘I wrote this book because I am deeply concerned, even after having written it, about the “April” issue. I felt the April [mutiny] and the injustice done to people who fought and sacrificed themselves so intensely that until today the contribution of the April movement to the national unity has not been yet acknowledged … This made me write, to do justice to those events of April’.

20 Absent spaces are replaced with mnemonic correlates; one imagines the missing place through other places one knows or has imagined. In an essay entitled ‘Shadow cities’ the Egyptian diaspora author André Aciman describes the emotional effect of making a daily visit to a little square in New York as a substitute for Alexandria: ‘I come to Strauss Park to remember Alexandria albeit an unreal Alexandria, an Alexandria that does not exist,
In Greece Tsirka produced only one novel, Χαμένη άνοιξη [Lost Spring] (1976), which deals with the return of a leftist political refugee to Athens, a city swept by the dramatic events of July 1965. These were the events which culminated in the collapse of the Papandreou government; a collapse that famously paved the way for the military junta of 1967, and the assassination of student Sotiris Petroulas during a demonstration. The novel repeats themes familiar from The Club regarding the diverse relations that characters form with the alien space of the city of Athens. Alongside Andreas there is Flora, a Danish-Swiss young woman, who finds shelter in Athens after a broken marriage. Much like Emmy before her, Flora engages in politics only to the extent that it helps her satisfy her incommensurate appetite for sex. However, the city that Flora explores through sensual pleasure is at the same time transformed by political commotion: the communal spirit, that unites people in the Papandreou camp against the machinations of the Palace and of foreign diplomacy, makes Athens “the most open city in the world” (Tsirka 1976: 210). This air of political optimism momentarily overtakes Flora, who thinks she might have found a new homeland. Unlike Emmy, however, Flora does not in the end reach a new consciousness; disorientated and destitute after failing to revive her short affair with Andreas, she vanishes into thin air. Andreas, on the other hand, becomes totally immersed in the political vertigo that turns the city upside down. Despite the fact that the process of liberalisation expected to happen under the Papandreou administration is violently interrupted, the collective ethos that has emerged out of it leaves a sweet aftertaste. The optimistic tone on which the novel ends is not diminished by the ‘loss’ indicated by the title. In this collective spirit Athens embodies the possibility of real return for the repatriating protagonist. Lost Spring openly addresses the difficulties faced by the repatriate Andreas in his efforts to blend in successfully with a society he had left some 18 years before. In a similar fashion, Tsirka had had to relinquish Egypt and discover the reality of Athens in 1963. In the following extract from an interview he outlines the impact of coming to Greece late:

I saw life in Athens and the suburbs, for example Byonas, Kaisariani, Piraeus, being an experienced observer. I had been substantially trained in observation

that I’ve invented, or learned to cultivate in Rome as in Paris, so that in the end the Paris and the Rome I retrieve here are really the shadow of the shadow of Alexandria, versions of Alexandria, the remanence of Alexandria, infusing Strauss Park itself now, reminding me of something that is not just elsewhere, but that is perhaps more in me than it was ever out there, that it is, after all, perhaps just me, a me that is no less a fragment of time than this city is a fragment of space’ (Aciman 1999: 34).

21 The title Lost Spring (spring in Greek is ‘anoixi’, a derivative of the verb ‘anoigo’ that means ‘to open’) directly alludes to the geographical and political openness of the city of Athens.

22 ‘Flora’s good mood was restored. It was as if one had half opened a door for her, so that she could also belong to a community. Maybe to a homeland too’ (Tsirka 1976: 122).
and I could discover things afresh. Whereas others live their lives day by day and end up being bored, I was seeing these things in all their limpidity and novelty. Now, did I manage to depict them? I am not sure I did, or how much of Greece I managed to render. Very little. The criterion must be a few short stories and the novel *Lost Spring*. *Lost Spring*, unfortunately, revolves around Kolonaki; where is Greece? I have not yet dealt with a working-class family, for example in Kaisariani or Ymittos and I am not sure if I am capable, if I have the guts to do it. As I have Ariagni in Cairo, a similar Ariagni here. But not in Kolonaki. Kolonaki is different, cosmopolitanism and Europeans get involved, and these things lead you out of your way as much as they can. Will I ever make it? Question is, how much life have we left to live? (Tsirkas 1987: 35)

In *Lost Spring* Athens is discovered gradually through intense observation of its class system and through uncovering its underground social dynamics. In dealing with the events of July 1965 Tsirkas aims at overcoming his isolation from the Greek political scene during the years of the Civil War. As happens in the rest of his novels, the story revolves around the diverse reactions of different types of people to political actuality, which allows a polyphonic representation of historical events. These different voices enable Tsirkas to explore the antinomies in the social and political space of Athens. In this way, Athens – a formerly logocentric city not yet invested with emotion – gradually becomes a homeland to those characters who are minded to approach it that way. If Tsirkas had realised his intention to write an Athenian trilogy – an ambition perhaps hinted at in the above extract – he would no doubt have further explored this newly gained emotional attachment, by representing a different aspect of the city, something closer to his own experience: a working-class family in a working-class area.

Tsirkas’s fiction shows that labels such as ‘exile’, ‘repatriate’ or ‘refugee’ are not permanent attributes, and it is certainly within the capacity of individuals to prove them temporary or even false. By embarking on an exploration of Athens Tsirkas shows that at that time he had settled his account with Egypt and was willing to accept the necessity of appropriating one’s immediate geographical and cultural surroundings. Tsirkas’s origins in a cosmopolitan environment such as Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century and his subsequent move to Greece marks his state as transitory and facilitates his attempt to relate his subjectivity to the foreign place. In addition, his commitment to a leftist ideology makes him see beyond geographic and cultural rifts, not because such an ideology would be immune to them in practice, but because its class orientation articulates itself theoretically beyond geography, culture and the nation. Both his cosmopolitanism and his ideological commitment become aesthetic principles in his fiction, which effectively transcends the rigidity of notions commonly used to describe the different conditions that lead to displacement. Tsirkas’s oeuvre proves that literary texts can become emotional contact zones between people, places and cultures, those recently relinquished and those newly gained.
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Chapter 14

‘Be it Ever so Humble’:
Nostalgia for Home and the Problem of Return in Post-War Greek Novels

Gerasimus Katsan

The experience of exile can be characterised in terms of the movement of an individual from one place, through dis-placement, to re-placement, that is the final adjustment to the new environment. For the exiled intellectual, writing becomes an ‘act of replacement’ (Millington 1991: 65), the reinvention of the symbolic structure of the old place that works to ultimately destroy the sense of placelessness of exile. The exile undergoes a process of identification, or several identifications: the nostalgic identification with home in which the exile re-establishes the ‘imaginary wholeness’ (Millington 1991: 70) of his or her existence in the homeland, either through metonymic practices or through the diasporic strategies of the myth of the return or the idealisation of the homeland; and the identification with the place of exile that eventually leads to a sense of resignation, and often to a reconfiguration of the sense of home. If, however, as some theorists of exile suggest, the exile remains in a state of continual marginality, an unending crisis of identity and sense of fragmentation, how then can a ‘return’ be achieved? It is the sense of resignation to the exilic situation and the realisation of the final ‘impossibility of return’ that leads to a sense of acceptance on the part of the exile, creating new bonds to the place of exile and a feeling of strangeness as regards the homeland.

The exilic experience of many post-Civil War intellectuals contributed to a reconsideration of the meaning of ‘Greekness’, broadened their horizons as regards contact with the world outside of Greece, and can be seen as a re-evaluation or critique of Greek national ideology. Writers such as Melpo Axioti, Dimitris Chatzis, Alki Zei and Mimika Kranaki attempt to reconfigure the sense of the nation as seen through the eyes of the exile and the diaspora in their works. Their commitment to ‘openness’ extends to the acceptance of the significance of the diaspora and the possibility of alternative or multiple conceptions of Hellenism. It is the problem of return and conceptions of ‘nostos’ that prove to be most troubling to them.

The exilic or diasporic experience can be thought of in terms of space, both in the ‘constructions’ of space in the host country and the idealisation of territory (e.g. the homeland); but other factors can be just as important, such as religion and culture, which are ‘territorially indeterminate’ (Eisenzwieg 1981: 262). Conceptions and constructions of space can be regarded as overlaps with postmodernism. In
discussing the problems of space and time, David Harvey challenges the notion of a ‘naturalised’ space that has an ostensibly objective distinction:

We do recognize, of course, that our subjective experience can take us into realms of perception, imagination, fiction and fantasy which produce mental spaces and maps as so many mirages of the supposedly ‘real thing’. (Harvey 1989: 203)

Harvey acknowledges the role of human practices in the construction of time and space: postmodern space is an evident construction, and the way in which the exile constructs space is related to this process. The exile continuously renegotiates his/her relationship to the host country as well as to the homeland, creating imaginary spaces of comfort, be they images of home or in the cultural spaces of diaspora communities. Often these spaces are real enough: in the case of the Greek Americans, for example, the church building itself is designated as not only the site of religious belief but a storehouse of cultural and national tradition.

But at the same time, exile is a kind of humiliating ‘metaphysical condition’ (Brodsky 1991: 3) where the individual experiences a rush of newness in the host country mixed with a deep feeling of nostalgia and sadness at the knowledge of the impossibility of return. Within this experience are feelings of isolation and stagnation. For Joseph Brodsky the past becomes central as ‘safe territory’ for the mechanisms that combat the condition of exile:

Even having gained the freedom to travel, even having actually done some traveling he will stick in his writing to the familiar material of his past, producing, as it were, sequels of his previous work. (Brodsky 1991: 4)

The past is part of an attempt to retain something of one’s own in the strangeness of exile, but it is not to be cherished. Rather the past is used as a delaying tactic: the exiles try to hold off the realisation of their own condition as long as possible. The exiled individual constructs a sense of identity in order to cope with his or her situation: this construction entails self-awareness in that the past and reality are ‘objects’ which can be acted upon, manipulated subjectively by the individual in order to create some kind of pattern in a chaotic, fragmentary or alienating situation.

Edward Said’s conception of exile is quite different. He focuses upon the ‘literal banishment’ (Said 1993: 113) of exile in which the place of the exile as an outsider in a given host society is politically volatile. This brings him a quixotic, even masochistic pleasure in the knowledge of his displacement. Unlike Brodsky, for Said there is no escape into the past, and no accommodation: the exile must take his place in the public forum. This state of public, continual marginality offers the further pleasures of creation and critique, which Said characterises as ‘productive anguish’ (Said 1993: 17). Thus this experience of exile does not allow for total isolation:
There is a popular but wholly mistaken assumption that to be exiled is to be totally cut off, isolated, hopelessly separated from your place of origin...The fact is that for most exiles the difficulty consists not simply in being forced to live away from home, but rather, given today’s world, in living with the many reminders that you are in exile, that your home is not in fact so far away, and that the normal traffic of everyday contemporary life keeps you in constant but tantalizing and unfulfilled touch with the old place. (Said 1993: 114)

This implies the postmodern conditions of the global economy and international communications technology that allow for the ‘shrinking effect’ of world culture; ironically the proliferation of communications technology meant to ‘connect’ people creates only shallow ‘non-communication’ between them. It is in this context that self-presentation and identity are important to the exile, for he must constantly construct them in his new and ever changing environment, or, as Hallvard Dahlie put it: ‘exiles in a sense must always create a new reality out of nothing’ (Dowling 1987: 217). Here we see a convergence in postmodern concerns with the construction of reality and the exile’s constant use of such techniques.

As stated above, writing becomes an ‘act of replacement’, the reinvention of the symbolic structure of the old place that works to destroy the sense of the placelessness of exile. For Millington, unlike Said, the exile is not necessarily politicised in the host country. Apathy tends to de-politicise many exiles as they resign themselves to a futile situation and thus become politically impotent (Millington 1991: 68). However, the exile always retains the desire to reproduce the self and to create familiar boundaries where none exist, or where they have been taken away from them. Nevertheless, the exile remains in a state of continual marginality, a crisis of identity and retains a sense of fragmentation. The ‘completeness’ of identification with either the host country or the homeland remains imaginary.

The condition of exile, then, creates an ambivalent relationship between the exile and both the homeland and the host country. For exiled or expatriate Greek writers, the return to Greece was most problematic. For Melpo Axioti’s Το Σπίτι μου [My Home] (1965), for example, an engineer attempts to ‘get to know’ the island of Mykonos through the stories and narrations of Kadmo, a woman who has been living in exile. Axioti creates many different layers through the piecing together of historical fragments and other ‘artifacts’, each one separate yet crystallised through the image of the island. While they are separate in time, they are not separate in space, and for Kadmo this is their importance, for, taken all together, they constitute that place for her. And so she knows the place as if she had ‘drunk from the three wells’ in the local saying that another character tells the engineer about:

Our place, you know, is not easy for someone to understand, and besides, the easiest things are always exactly what you don’t know. For someone to get to know our place he would have to manage to see the people born and buried. In other words, to observe two generations of life. Naturally for a stranger this is
utterly impossible, so that the only way would be, sir, for you to drink the water of the three wells… We have three wells… right in the middle of the town, and an old saying: the people insist that whoever drinks their water will never again leave our place. (Axioti 1986: 33)¹

The novel is an overt attempt by an exiled writer to make sense of her homeland in a meaningful way, and to effect some kind of return through an understanding (and ‘creation’) of place. Kadmo attempts a fragmented reconstruction of her reality in order to ameliorate her state of exile, the deep feelings of sadness and nostalgia that she feels. In her isolation she has turned to the past as her ‘safe-territory’, so that she can combat the strangeness of her exile. The engineer serves as a catalyst for this experience and also as the hope of one day reclaiming the homeland. And yet Kadmo constructs a highly fragmented reality for herself, composed of bits and pieces of a multi-layered past that cannot fully allow the return (nostos), let alone a full understanding or knowledge of the place. Some would argue she has become ‘extracognizant’ (Seidel 1986: ix) of both the past and the present, but to an end that may not bring the desired redemption. On the other hand, Mairi Mike has argued that this is not what Kadmo is really after:

> it is not about a nostalgic return to the past, to some golden age, the greatness of which we are invited to relive. Rather it concerns radical reassessment of history, for ‘co-illumination’ of the present-past, for connection and the lively presence of the past. (Mike 1996: 44–5)

Ultimately the alienation Kadmo combats from her place of exile through the fragmentary history of the island cannot be alleviated upon return, despite her wish to live with the ‘lively presence of the past’ (Mike 1996: 45). This experience, galvanised through memory, ties Kadmo to the place: her identity leaves an indelible stamp on the landscape just as the landscape leaves one on her. Through the identifications of the past, she attempts to unite herself with the place, her homeland. For Kadmo understanding occurs through knowledge of the history of the place as much as through physical contact. For the stranger, the engineer, physical contact through drinking the water of the three wells must suffice, for he cannot place himself within the memory or the history of the place. In a sense, then, one cannot know a place, even the homeland, without both memory and physical experience: neither will do on their own.

The problem of nostos or return also concerns Dimitris Chatzis in To Διπλό Βιβλίο [The Double Book] (1976). The character Skouroyiannis serves as a representation of another undermined ‘diaspora myth’. He sustains himself in ‘exile’ with the constant thought of his return to the homeland, or at least his imaginary version of it. Like Dorothy Gale, he keeps telling himself ‘There’s no place like home, there’s no place like home!’, yet when he finally arrives back in

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¹ All translations of texts are mine except where otherwise noted.
his mythologised Dobrinovo he must ask himself the question: ‘Is this really my home?’ And he finds that he no longer belongs in this place; that the imagined topos was much more than the real place could ever be.

The last of his own crowd was Stavros – there was no one else. The others – were there others, do they still exist? – had remained in Germany: nice pseudo-philosophers, tortured menials, Greeks living in bitterness, poverty, nostalgia. And then Skouroyiannis could finally know, returning to the Dobrinovo that had been deserted, that this place was the place of the final, of the conclusive desolation. Unreal place. How he had suffered for twenty years, how he dreamed, so that he could finally arrive at this unreal place. (Chatzis 1993: 149)

When the reality of this discrepancy sinks in, he must find solace again in the ‘outside’, in another perhaps imaginary topos in the natural environs of Greece, and where, ultimately, he is misunderstood by the ‘insiders’. For Chatzis nostos is a state of mind in the exiled individual, which is not necessarily tied to one place. For as Skouroyiannis illustrates, the return to Dobrinovo did not mean that he felt nostos, and he had to look elsewhere to find it, resigning himself to something different.

The theme of the return is also present in Alki Zei’s Η Αρραβωνιαστικά του Αχιλλέα [Achilles’ Fiancée] (1987). For the main character, Eleni, after spending years in exile, the nostalgia and the yearning for the homeland take their toll both on her relationship with Achilles and with her sense of self. Eleni wishes to return to Greece at any cost, but if return is always a resolution of sorts, it is never total resolution. For example, towards the end of the novel, just as Eleni and her daughter Daphnoula are slowly beginning to become accustomed to Greece, they must flee once again because of the Junta. Yet the child Daphnoula was already feeling she had been ‘exiled’ from her homeland by Eleni:

I stroke her and slowly she calms down. Her words come out between sobs: ‘I want to go home. I want my Daddy, the Marinoua, Aunty Zenia, my school...’ I make her promises. We’ll make a trip to Moscow at Easter. I have been missing my friends too. (Zei 1991: 355)

Eleni realizes that she has made connections to Moscow that are just as difficult to give up as Greece was before. For Zei this is the ultimately paradoxical nature of exile: seemingly there can never be a true return, a true nostos.

Mimika Kranaki’s Φιλήληνες [Philhellenes] (1992) provides yet another example. The novel tells the story of a group of mostly leftist students who are given scholarships to study in France at the end of the German occupation, just as the Civil War is beginning in Greece.² The students, while escaping the horrors

² Coincidentally, along with Kranaki, Melpo Axioti was a member of this group who left Greece at that time. Kranaki, however, distanced herself from the leftist movement early after the Civil War, and the novel can be seen as a critique of leftist ideology.
of the Greek Civil War, must undergo the difficult and often ugly experiences of exile which lead them through various stages of loneliness, depression, despair and finally resignation. The exilic experience takes its toll on the students in many different ways, and it changes most of the individuals irrevocably; their relationship to the homeland, their political views, their sense of identity, their sense of history as well as of reality all undergo a transformation. Kranaki utilises postmodernist techniques in the portrayal of the lives of these students and of those they left behind in Greece to express the fragmentary condition of exile.

At the time of their departure from a Greece on the brink of civil war, most of the students considered themselves leftists of one ilk or another, so their exile in France is coloured by their sense of political identity. This sense of political identity is a thread that can be seen to run through the work of Axioti and Zei as well. In France they see themselves as free from the restraints of the conservative, right-wing government of Greece, yet somehow, because of the factionalism of the leftists (Stalinists, Leninists, Trotskyites etc.) they do not altogether experience the ‘internationalism’ that communism espoused. This political disenchantment has a good deal to do with the perceived xenophobia of the French as well, which ties political identity to other aspects of identity in the novel. The various experiences of the students, and perhaps the way they mature as a result of them, cause them for one reason or another either to moderate their political views or to become disillusioned with them. By the end of the novel they have become much less radical and a few have even ‘sold out’ to the right-wing capitalists. At one point, in a letter to three students nicknamed ‘the Mafia’, their former teacher and friend in Greece accuses them of having given up their beliefs: ‘Living in a foreign land has made you nationalists, yes, followers of the Megali Idea and reactionaries’ (Kranaki 1992: 180). This accusation is based upon their complaints about the shabby way they feel they have been treated, both as foreigners and as leftists in France. Over the course of the novel the effect of exile on their political identity leaves its mark.

The students, however, see themselves in more than just political terms, for as exiles they must come to grips with their ‘strangeness’, their ‘otherness’ in the eyes of the French. Much of the novel is devoted to the very problem of living as a stranger in a strange land, which has both physical and psychological effects upon the characters. Living away from their homeland and their loved ones brings a despondence and, sometimes, suicidal despair. This is the case for the anonymous narrator of ‘E’ [Chapter 5], who becomes paranoid, neurotic and hypochondriac, eventually ending up in a mental hospital. The students perceive an extreme xenophobia in the French that is perhaps a projection of their self-consciousness as strangers. There is a constant negotiation between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the novel that brings about a yearning for return to the homeland, or, since this is not possible, a substitution through letters or other ‘material’ things for the sense of identity the homeland can give.

One aspect of identity in the book is how the students view themselves as Greeks vis-à-vis their homeland. Having lived outside of the homeland for so
long, they eventually come to the conclusion that they are no longer ‘Ελληνες’ [Hellenes/Greeks], in the sense of belonging to that certain topos, country, nation, behaviour, but have become ‘φιλ-Ελληνες’ [philhellenes]. When this is first mentioned, none of the characters denies the fact, though they are almost ashamed to admit it to themselves:

So that’s how it is. Neither ‘anti-hellene’ nor ‘mis-hellene’, nor ‘leftist guerilla’; out they go into the dustbin of history. Phil-hellene, the way you say philo-sopher (lover of wisdom) or ‘philo-mousos’ (music-lover); you love wisdom, music, but you are neither wise nor a musician. From a distance. Unlucky, platonic love. Others will make the world, life, and you, the distant lover, you will sit there and watch. Neither poor nor wealthy will you find Ithaka. It’s gone; the place (topos) that belonged to you, which you loved and which loved you, is lost. (Kranaki 1992: 155)

Ultimately the students’ realisation that they are philhellenes but no longer ‘Greeks’ is an acceptance of their ‘fate’ as exiles and immigrants. They know that they can never go back, that something within them has changed towards their homeland, and that their homeland itself has changed. For Kranaki ‘philhellene’ comes to mean the exile who seeks a mythic homeland, who longs for an impossible return to Odysseus’s mythic Ithaka that cannot be. Here the reference to Cavafy is also clear. Nostos for Kranaki is something that comes from inside the individual in the process of acculturation and the construction of a new homeland.

The exilic experience is prone to a fixation on utopic visions of some unreachable world or half-imagined past, whether the homeland, the land of exile, or some other place. The novel itself describes in general the intractable, ‘apocalyptic’, dystopian landscape not only of civil war Greece but also of post-war Europe. For this reason the exiled characters long for an idealised topos, whether it is prewar, pre-Metaxas Greece, the idealised Eastern Bloc or the United States. France itself is characterised in dystopian terms, the ugly state of exile both figuratively and literally. The students cannot accustom themselves to their dingy, miserable existence in France and so look back, keeping whatever sense of connectedness they can, even through fragmentary telecommunications. Memory plays an important role in this imagining, and the novel is filled with many reminiscences of past events, some good and some bad, but all with a sense of connection.3

Out of the dystopia of exile several of the students manage to travel to some of the dreamed-of utopias. In ‘Φ’ [Chapter 21], ‘Reminiscences from the land of the lotus eaters’, Alexis Mitropoulos writes a long letter describing his extended sojourn in America. Mitropoulos, however, does not only see the good side of things – the letter is as much a critique of America as is it a joyous discovery of its wonders – but he has given himself over to the euphoric sense of being

3 On the role of memory in the fiction of Greek political exiles see the contribution by Venetia Apostolidou to the present volume (Chapter 15).
somewhere he has accepted as ‘home’. Specifically, for him the land of the lotus eaters is not just anywhere in America, but in Southern California, a place that even Americans have mythologised. He has partaken of the lotus and melted into forgetfulness (ληθή):

The ravenous, the weary, the tired want this peace, the soft quiet, the comfort, the forgetfulness. I immerse myself here, as if in butter, the days roll by comfortably … This is exactly what I wanted, Stavros: to change my past. That is what I needed, a type of unconsciousness, a sleep-therapy without dreams. I didn’t say that it was called happiness. But it’s bearable. I learned to moderate my demands. (Kranaki 1992: 374–5)

In Alexis we see the suggestion of resignation. He is tired of the struggle of exile, and has finally allowed himself to put down roots in a new homeland, a new place; accepting the fact that he can never return to Greece, he has created or found his own personal utopia. Forgetfulness is a type of healing process that smooths away the cares of the exile, diminishing the importance of history in his personal experience of reality. Ironically, Alexis had been a life-long leftist – which was one of the main reasons he left Greece in the first place – and has given it all up in the United States: even his son wants to become a Republican because he thinks it will make him feel more American (Kranaki 1992: 385).

For the most part the characters experience this same sense of resignation to the exilic situation and realise the ultimate impossibility of return: they accept the fact that they must forever live outside, creating new bonds to their places of exile and becoming strangers in their homeland. This is what Kranaki means when she calls them ‘philhellenes’, for they no longer have a sense of being at home in Greece. Many years after the fall of the Junta, over 30 years after their initial departure, the students find that they cannot return, even after an official government amnesty has been granted to all leftists. In the 35 years they have been gone they have changed and so has Greece. When one exile visits Greece in the early 1980s he cannot relate to anything at all: for him even the ‘mentality’ (νοοτροπία) of the people has changed. He cannot bear the ‘tragedy’ that Greece has become a consumer society with an economy based on tourism. He feels a stranger in Greece, like a French tourist, as does Alexis Mitropoulos:

I went to Greece, tentatively; on the off-chance that I might find work. Desperation seized me at the chaos that reigns there, and I left quickly. Since that time I have never again set foot there. Why? Because I feel like a stranger there … and it is a feeling that I have unlearned here in the New World. (Kranaki 1992: 385)

A return to Greece therefore is impossible, but nostos is not. Kranaki herself seems to make this distinction. For example, Christina Pappas, who had been living in France for 23 years, suddenly finds ‘nostos’ after the May uprising in 1968. For her the concept has little to do with the physical return to Greece. Rather it seems
to be a sort of metaphysical condition in which she finally feels at home, and no longer feels like a stranger in France. France has become her homeland now. Like the others, she feels a stranger in Greece. ‘Greece’ takes on symbolic, mythic importance:

It was then that I understood that, in fact, something had changed, something new had been born, perhaps we were finally walking in Greece, the one which for eons now had been shown by the compass of the philhellenes. (Kranaki 1992: 396)

In ‘X’ [Chapter 22] Kranaki begins to bring together many of the disparate themes of the novel, tying in the intersection of the fictitious characters with real historical events to the concept of exile and nostos, the beginning of a sense of closure or at least resignation in the lives of her characters, the final dissipation of the sense of strangeness that has marked all of their lives.

There is a sense of paradox, however, in the notion of a ‘postmodern’ exile. Exile ostensibly concerns itself with certain absolutes, such as the meaning of identity, history or politics and their relation to one’s own place or home. The exiled individual is always concerned with the problem of the homeland: this could be an attempt at some kind of reconciliation or more simply the hope of return. In any form of exile, this condition is always concerned with dimensions of place, with a rootedness in or separation from one’s home. There is always a point of departure and a point of return, coupled with an intense sense of loss. Yet this is difficult to reconcile with the openness exhibited by postmodernism, where there is a sense of playful and complex fluidity that remains at odds with such absolutes. The fragmented postmodern experience is one where boundaries are either reconfigured or obliterated altogether.

The yearning for a simple return to the homeland is replaced by the problematic notion of nostos, which entails rather a sense of feeling at home, of no longer feeling separation, alienation or strangeness. In the postmodern conception of exile nostos is either impossible or entails major compromise. A sense of resignation takes over, so that ultimately the exile becomes less obsessed with the physical return to the homeland and more interested in constructing a ‘new’ homeland for her/himself. This reflects the constructedness of the postmodern. Many of the characters in the novels – principally in Philhellenes, but in the others as well – find that eventually the need for the homeland changes or ebbs away, leaving only the desire to be at ease not just with their existence in a different place (‘not the homeland’) but with the construction and acceptance of that different place as home. This is the heterotopia of postmodern exile. In a sense, then, postmodern writing becomes a way in which to express this act of replacement that metonymically becomes the reinvention of the symbolic structure of the homeland, something which can ultimately eradicate the placelessness of exile. The exile has not come ‘home’; but has become resigned to a different one, however humble that may be.
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Chapter 15
The Politics of Memory in the Fiction of Greek Political Exiles in Eastern Europe

Venetia Apostolidou

Political exiles in Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Greek Civil War (1946–9) constitute an interesting research field in which the Greek experience of civil war and its consequences intersects with the East European experience of communist regimes. It is an area which raises issues concerning the identity construction of political exiles, a process involving negotiation with the traumatic experiences of war and defeat as well as with the new experiences in the communist countries. The completely new way of life which the exiles had to face challenged their political and ideological beliefs, their national consciousness and their social and family roles. The community of civil-war political refugees is therefore a crucial part of the Greek diaspora, if one that has been insufficiently studied – most probably because of the complicated ideological and archival problems involved in researching it.¹

During the 1950s and 1960s Greek political exiles produced a considerable number of literary and semi-literary texts which were published by the publishing house of the Communist Party of Greece. This corpus includes works by such well-known Greek writers as Dimitris Chatzis, Melpo Axioti, Elli Alexiou, Alki Zei, Mitsos Alexandropoulos, Yiorgos Sevastikoglou and by figures less well known outside their own community of exiles, such as Apostolos Spilios, Takis Adamos, Kostas Bosis, Theodosis Pieridis, Alexis Parnis and Dimos Rendis.

This chapter is part of a research project which aims to examine this literary production from a variety of theoretical perspectives: e.g. as a literature of the exile, which it certainly is, though a very ‘soft’ exile in the ‘dream-land’ of a

¹ I wish to thank Dr Vangelis Karamanolakis for facilitating my research in the Archives of Contemporary Social History (ASKI) in Athens, Dr Alexander Kazamias, who proofread this paper and made suggestions for improvements and Professor Riki van Boeschoten, whose work on collective memory of the Greek Civil War has informed and inspired this paper. See Van Boeschoten (1997) and Van Boeschoten (2008).

¹ Richard Clogg (1999: 15) apologises in his introduction to The Greek Diaspora in the Twentieth Century for not including a chapter on the political refugees while Ioannis Hassiotis (1993: 148–9) has remarked that: ‘our information on that chapter of the history of the Greek diaspora is fragmental and often not accurate’. Now a collected volume on political refugees (Voutira et al. 2005) is available.
regime which they had fought for; and as a literature of trauma, since it was one of the means through which the survivors of the Civil War tried to negotiate the effects of their traumatic experiences and come to terms with their past; and in the context of the construction of a collective memory about the Civil War, insofar as this literature offers an institutional basis for shaping, circulating and contesting the collective narratives of war memory as a complex hegemonic process. Other angles to be researched include the relationship between political engagement and literature, since the cultural production of the civil-war exiles was subjected to the Communist Party line through its publishing policy, censorship and the self-censorship of the authors themselves; and, last but not least, the reception of this literature by mainstream criticism in Greece. It is worth mentioning here, however, that the exiles themselves considered their work as being ideologically engaged, thematically narrow, linguistically poor and contaminated by bad lyricism and pompous rhetorical devices (Axioti 1955). Apart from a few exceptions, such as the works of Chatzis, Axioti, Alexiou and Alexandropoulos, most of this literary production remained completely unknown in Greece and has never been reprinted.

In a previous paper, I focused on the texts of these writers which dealt directly with their life in exile (Apostolidou 2005). These include only a handful of novels and short stories portraying their own experience and adventures under communist regimes. Most of their prose, however, focuses on their earlier experience of resistance against the Axis Occupation, the December 1944 riots in Athens, the period of anti-communist ‘white terror’ in 1945–7, the Civil War in the mountains in 1946–9 and their imprisonment and exile on Greek islands. Some of it also goes back to the pre-war era in an effort to depict the social conditions that caused the Civil War, while another part deals with the post-war situation in Greece, although this was terra incognita for the refugees. The reasons which led these writers to return to their historical experience of the 1940s and to avoid their contemporary life in Eastern Europe are common to all exilic literature: as Michael Seidel put it, the task for the exiled artist is ‘to transform the figure of rupture back into a figure of connection …. [N]ative territory is the product of heightened and sharpened memory and imagination is, indeed, a special homecoming’ (1986: x–xi). Additionally, the political exiles in question, following Marxist aesthetic theories, believed that the duty of a realist writer was to write about what s/he knows best and through it, to contribute to the social political struggle in their own country. Though they lived as ‘comrades’ in the communist countries where they found themselves, they were also regarded as outsiders and it was clearly very dangerous for a stranger to talk about life under communism in the charged climate of the Cold War. In any case, dealing with their mixed feelings about their lives in exile was not as important a priority to them as was the need to commemorate their struggles and to defend themselves against the fierce and bitter

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2 Exile affects the work of those writers in many different ways even when their themes are completely unrelated to the topic of exile (see Balta 2003, Tziovas 2003).
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This chapter will discuss a number of novels and short stories dealing with the experience of war ‘back home’, namely resistance against the Axis Occupation and involvement in the Civil War. These texts will be specifically examined in the context of trauma literature and, more specifically, I shall be posing the question of how the political decisions and aspirations of the Communist Party influenced the memory paths of these writers in exile and how it interfered with the elaboration process of their traumatic experiences.

Trauma, now most commonly defined in medical terms as ‘post-traumatic stress disorder’, refers to a range of distressing emotional, psychological and bodily responses to terror and helplessness caused by a shocking event or circumstance, out of the range of ordinary human experience, in which one’s life or the lives of one’s family are endangered. The effects of trauma are identified as an ‘entrapment’ in a reality which eludes understanding and assimilation, but is relived as a ‘haunting’ memory in ceaseless repetitions and re-enactments. If the survivor is to undo the entrapment and reclaim both his life and his past, a social process of storytelling is necessary: that is, a process of constructing a narrative, shaping the traumatic event into narrative form and integrating it into their world of meaning. This is necessary to enable the survivor to reassert the veracity of the past and to build anew its linkage to and assimilation into their present day life (Dawson 2005: 156, 168, Liakos 2007).

It goes without saying that literary narrative can play this comforting role (Kopf 2005); moreover literature, as an institution, does not only supply such narrative devices, but operates as a ‘socio-political space’ or ‘social arena’ (Dawson 2005: 154) where individual memories transcend their private circle and secure a more extensive public recognition. On the other hand, precisely because literature, as an institution, is linked with other social institutions, this process is never spontaneous or free from restrictions. Memory adapts itself to the conventions (usage, customs, values, stereotypes etc.) of the group of people as well as of the narrative genre that constructs this memory.

Civil wars, to an even greater extent than national wars, produce literature that can be called literature of trauma.3 Civil war is a situation of extreme social division, violent armed conflict, family dissolution, governed by feelings of shame, frustration and despair. Exile, prison, social and economic oppression are the consequences for the defeated, while the winners feel neither proud nor secure about their victory, as the enemy is still in the country. The aftermath of a civil war forms a situation in which one’s one trauma is tied up with the trauma of a significant other who may be brother, friend or neighbour. Trauma may lead, therefore, to an encounter with the other, through the very possibility of listening

3 Other historical events that have produced trauma literature are the Holocaust and the Vietnam War. Of course, trauma literature also includes personal tragedies such as rape or incest (Tal 1991).
to another’s hurt (Caruth 1996: 8). This causes interesting complications in the trauma elaboration process which will be discussed at the end of the chapter. At the moment, we have to keep in mind that the exiled writers in Eastern Europe are survivors of the Greek Civil War and their identity as authors is inseparable from their identity as trauma survivors.

Before we proceed to their texts, some clarification on the operation of the Communist Party’s publishing house is required. Thanks to the valuable book by Anna Mattheou and Popi Polemi (2003), we now have a complete bibliography of the works by Greek authors published in Eastern Europe between 1947 and 1968 as well as ample information (e.g. unpublished reports and reviews, fragments of newspaper articles) about the cultural life of political refugees. Decisions on publishing policy, as far as literary works were concerned, were made by the so-called ‘Literary Circle’, which was part of the party’s Commissariat of Enlightenment. The Circle used to scrutinise the authors’ manuscripts and propose corrections and alterations, something which can certainly be characterised as a form of censorship. Criticism, however, did not end with publication. In fact, it became even stricter when the books were published and appeared in the official party review, *Neos Kosmos* [New World]. The exiled authors operated as a small community within which writing was a painful job: away from their home and language, politically defeated, obsessed by traumatic memories and deprived of new books published in the West, they were sceptical guests in countries where the political utopia, in which they had believed and which they had fought for, was supposed to have been realised. At the same time they were subjected to the power of the party, which, though defeated and illegal in Greece, was in government in the so called ‘refugee land’.

I have collected a corpus of eight texts to discuss here. They all deal with the experiences of the 1940s and are written by prominent authors from the exiled community of writers living mainly in Romania and the USSR. Evidently it is not accidental that these writers held key positions in the party hierarchy. The corpus consists of: Kostas Bosis, *Εμ�ίς θα νικήσουμε* [We Shall Win], 1953; Yioryis Grivas, *Καινούριοι άνθρωποι* [New People], 1954 and *Οργιμένα χρόνια* [Angry Years], 1956; Kostas Bosis, *Δύσκολες μέρες* [Hard Days], vol. 1 1956, and vol. 2 1957 (rejected by the party commissars); Takis Adamos, *Απλοί άνθρωποι* [Simple People], 1957; Mitsos Alexandropoulos, *Νύχτες και αυγές* [Nights and Dawns], vol. 1, *Η πολιτεία* [The City], 1961 and vol. 2, *Τα βουνά* [The Mountains], 1963; Dimos Rendis, *Ο δρομάκος με την πεπερά* [The Street with the Pepper Tree], 1964; and Elli Alexiou, *Και ούτω καθεξής* [And So Forth], 1965.

Of the above, Kostas Bosis (aka Kostas Pournaras) and Takis Adamos each held the post of Head of the Literary Circle for several years, while Mitsos Alexandropoulos, Dimos Rendis and Elli Alexiou were members of the Circle (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 82, 124). Their novels were discussed both before and after publication, mainly with reference to the party’s position on political matters and they have been selected precisely because they made an impression at the time. Of course, there were many more novels, short stories and memoirs
reflecting on the same experiences published by the party’s publishing house, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss them here.

I have divided the corpus into three sets: the first three novels are marked by the influence of Nikos Zachariadis’s leadership of the party and reflect the earliest reactions to defeat in the Civil War. The next two appeared as a response to the party’s policy change after the Sixth Central Committee Plenary in 1956, in which Zachariadis was deposed following criticisms of his autocratic and Stalinist leadership methods. The third set consists of the last three novels which were relatively free from direct political engagement.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, there was a growing tendency among writers of the Left to write down what had happened in that conflict. Everyone, including both the Party leadership and the former partisans, wanted to narrate their glorious acts of heroism during the Resistance and the Civil War, each for their own reasons. The party, represented by intellectuals such as Takis Adamos, Kostas Bosis, Apostolos Spilios tried to show through articles in *Neos Kosmos* that the struggle had not yet ceased; resistance had to continue now against the American ‘occupation’ of Greece. In this respect, texts about the Resistance and the Democratic Army’s heroic battles in the Civil War were meant to reflect the continuing spirit of defiance and optimism about the final victory of the party which would surely come in the end (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 82–3). The former partisans on the other hand, most of them barely literate, felt a need and even a duty to commemorate their experiences and to construct some personal myth around them. As Kali Tal (1991: 230) put it with reference to the Vietnam War literature: ‘each of these authors articulates the belief that he or she is a storyteller with a mission; their responsibility as survivors is to bare the tale’. One of the Greek exiles, Menelaos Moustos, wrote in the preface to his memoir:

> I am not a writer and I have no ambition to become one. I am fascinated by the glory of the soldiers of the Democratic army and I feel a duty towards the party and the people to write these lines hoping that this may be of some help. The tough and bloody struggle of the Democratic army to free our country needs to be well known everywhere and we will succeed in this only if each one of us writes down what he has lived. (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 88)

Obviously, the process of shaping this collective narrative started immediately after the end of the war, because the survivors were already organised as a community. Unlike those trauma survivors who perceive themselves as suffering alone, who have no sense of belonging to a community of victims and remain silent, imagining that their pain has no relevance to the rest of society (Tal 1991: 235), Greek political exiles live in a well-organised community which is more than willing to listen, witness and share the burden of their pain (Dawson 2005: 168). While the challenge for the ordinary partisans was just to tell their story, the community’s expectations of the established writers in exile were much higher. The very titles of the first three novels are telling. Bosis’s novel *We Shall Win* (1953) follows the hero from
his childhood years in a poor village before the war, thus taking the opportunity to depict the miserable life of the peasants, their poverty and repression by the local teachers, priests, policemen and landowners. The underlying aim here is to show the social causes of the Civil War. Not surprisingly, the hero joins the party and becomes a Democratic Army fighter. The main emphasis in depicting the Civil War is on: the cruelty of the enemy (especially in such acts as the forcible removal of children), the traitors and the enemy spies who pretended to be communist partisans, and the personality cult of Stalin. The hero survives the major battle of Grammos and, although the enemy prevails, he nevertheless exclaims at the end of the novel: ‘We shall win!’

Grivas’s *New People* (1954) treats the struggle of the Democratic Army in a similar tone. Nevertheless, the novel apparently went beyond the party’s expectations; the Commissariat of Enlightenment in a letter to the author criticised the novel for attributing excessive cruelty to the enemy (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 551–2). His next novel *Angry Years* (1956) is a more promising work, situated in the first years of the Axis Occupation, which narrates the process of founding the resistance organisation EAM (National Liberation Front) and its military wing ELAS (Greek Liberation Army). It suggests that EAM–ELAS were created exclusively by communists whose aim was strictly the country’s liberation. The novel was written shortly before the Sixth Plenary of the Communist Party. In an unpublished review, written straight after the Sixth Plenary, the novel was criticised for neglecting the social dimension of the Greek Resistance (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 334). In another review by Antonis Voyiazos in *Neos Kosmos* it was argued that hitherto there had been no good literary works on the Resistance because the interpretation of this period given by Zachariadis, the deposed leader, was wrong (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 334).

How are we to interpret the role of this first set of texts in the construction of collective memory? Fundamentally, I think that all three represent a clear case of distorted collective memory. According to Baumeister and Hastings:

> Most groups, like most individuals, try to maintain a positive image of the self. Because the reality of events does not always fit that desired image, it is necessary to choose between revising the image and revising the meaning of events. The latter choice is the one of self-deception. (Baumeister and Hastings 1997: 277)

Among the dominant patterns of distortion in collective memory is the phenomenon of blaming the enemy. By focusing on the actual or presumed misdeeds of one’s enemies, to the extent of minimising one’s own misdeeds as mere responses to them, one runs the risk of attributing even one’s own side’s misdeeds to the enemy. Both Bosis and Grivas, for example, in their efforts to cope with the memory of violence and to find some form of justification for the violence of the partisans, stress the aggression of the enemy, while at the same time praising the national role of the Communist Party as the chief organiser of the anti-Nazi resistance. Both
narrative strategies, that is, the nationalisation of communist action and blaming the enemy, mark the first set of texts in our corpus.

As already noted, the Sixth Plenary Session of 1956 was a turning point in literary production as well as virtually every other activity overseen by the party. Yet the new party line was so deeply riddled with contradictions and ambiguities that it would be difficult to deduce what was really being expected from writers at that time. It is not surprising, for example, that the two most prominent party authors, Bosis and Adams, responded to the policy change almost automatically, with two new books which form the second set of our corpus. Bosis’s first volume of *Hard Days* (1956) was probably written shortly before the Sixth Party Plenary, whereas the second volume written in 1957, despite its obvious attempt to incorporate the new political line, was rejected by the Commissariat of Enlightenment as ‘vulgar and dangerous’. The reasons behind the rejection of the second volume, as presented by two prominent party members, Yiorgos Athanasiadis and Lefteris Apostolou, are interesting. Both criticise Bosis’s characters who, although communists, are shown to be torn by psychological contradictions and doubts about their actions, and one woman is even shown as having suicidal thoughts. The novel also depicts painful situations such as mistakes, conspiracies within the party or the desperate position of those sections of the Democratic Army which were cut off and left behind by their comrades. Apostolou, moreover, thinks that the author was indeed inspired by the questions raised at the Sixth Plenary regarding the party’s errors in the Civil War, but thought that these were treated in a very superficial way. Interestingly, therefore, he rejects the novel on mainly literary grounds: if the writers were to apply the spirit of the Sixth Plenary in their texts, they must above all write good literature. This will also enable them to appeal to a wider reading public in Greece and to contribute to the formation of a patriotic front, reconciliation between opposing sides in the Greek people and peaceful social change (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 605–9).

Adamos’s *Simple People* (1957) was considered much more successful in embodying the spirit of the Sixth Plenary. This is a collection of seven short stories each dealing with a different period of the leftist movement, arranged in chronological order. The first discusses the purges of the left by the Metaxas dictatorship in the late 1930s and the political awakening of a worker, who prepares for the political struggles of the 1940s. The second story deals with the armed anti-Nazi resistance, stressing also the minor British contribution to that struggle. The story ends with the exclamation: ‘Who shall be responsible for these dead people? Who shall justify their sacrifice?’. From an unpublished review (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 352) we know that this exclamation was interpreted by former partisans as referring to the crucial question: why, after so much blood, so many sacrifices and so many heroic acts, had they been defeated. Whose fault was it? The next four stories deal respectively with the ‘white terror’ of 1945–7; the Grammos battles; the friendship between a Slav Macedonian partisan and a Greek party commissioner; and women fighters; while the last exalts the courage of a soldier who, although severely injured, manages to return to his comrades.
The book is free from violent scenes and shows that the soldiers of the National Army were also workers with families who were waiting for them to come home. Although it was at first received enthusiastically by ordinary readers, the subsequent official decision of the Commissariat of Enlightenment (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 585) maintained that questions like: ‘Who is to be held responsible for the deaths?’ reinforced Greek state propaganda blaming the communists. In the name of the Sixth Plenary, the Commissariat objected to such questions about where responsibility for the defeat lay.

In 1957, in the same decision by the Commissariat of Enlightenment, written by Kostas Bosis, authors were called upon to reflect the party line in their work. They were specifically asked to convey the social changes taking place in Greece and to stay close to Greek themes. Themes deriving from the Civil War were not forbidden, but these now had to be represented in the spirit of the Sixth Plenary (Mattheou and Polemi 2003: 585). But exactly what was that spirit after all?

The political change brought about by the Sixth Plenary put the Greek writers in exile in a very difficult position. Though the Plenary claimed to be supportive of self-criticism and scepticism about the mistakes of the party leadership during the Civil War, it did not allow the traumatic experience of the partisans or persistent questions about the causes of defeat to be expressed on the grounds that they would play into the hands of Greek state propaganda. Violent scenes were also not recommended lest they offend the reading public in Greece and thus undermine the formation of a broad patriotic front. Last, but not least, the new party line urged writers to talk about the contemporary situation in Greece, which was unknown to them and, as far as the Civil War was concerned, to set it aside in favour of Resistance themes. Consequently, although the Sixth Plenary appeared to allow for some freedom of expression, what it really did was to set a more complex set of restrictions on the way in which the traumatic experience and memory of the Civil War was to be elaborated. How could one talk about the Civil War therefore in the new spirit of reconciliation?

Nevertheless these texts, and especially Adamos’s Simple People, represent a further step in the process of commemoration. As the years went by, there was a higher cognitive and emotional distancing from the collective catastrophe, coupled with the growth of an ambivalent view of the event and a deeper interest in knowing its real causes. While the new texts continued to build on the comforting myth of the brave partisan with the just cause versus the violent enemy, a new tendency emerged which was critical of certain decisions by the leadership, sympathetic towards the mixed feelings of the characters and more willing to acknowledge the suffering of the Other. These characteristics might have served to produce works

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4 It is striking that the Communist Party of Spain adopted a reconciliation policy in 1956 as well, which initiated the production of a series of novels and films in that spirit (Fernandez 2005: 162).

5 The same happened in the literature of the Spanish Civil War (Igartua and Paez 1997: 97).
that were richer in emotions, stronger in reflection and clearer in enabling the reader to identify with their characters, as their enthusiastic reception suggests. At the same time, however, they still fell short of meeting the official party expectations. In fact, they appear rather to have posed a certain threat to the latter by their critical tendencies. Their authors were quite clearly torn between the need to explore their traumatic experiences and the sense of frustration, which they themselves and their community obviously felt, in greater depth and the party’s demands to change their subject matter and abandon the Civil War altogether in favour of the Resistance.\footnote{It should be pointed out here that the refugees’ political requests for amnesty and repatriation lay behind the direction to abandon the literary representation of the Civil War.}

The last set of texts in our corpus includes the most noteworthy novels from a literary viewpoint. All, to an extent, are successful in providing a broader portrayal of the life and adventures of their leftist heroes, whilst avoiding the subject of the Civil War in a way that followed the new party line. For example, Alexandropoulos’s novel \textit{Nights and Dawns} (1961–3) and Rendis’s \textit{The Street With the Pepper Tree} (1964) start their narrative at the beginning of the German occupation and end it in 1945, shortly after the December riots in Athens. On the other hand, Alexiou’s autobiographical novel \textit{And So Forth} (1965) starts on the eve of the Metaxas dictatorship (1936), and though it ends in 1952, it avoids the Civil War since the main character, who is a teacher and probably represents Alexiou herself, leaves Greece for Paris along with other young leftist intellectuals immediately after the December troubles. The novel is written in an anti-heroic spirit but is highly descriptive and superficial, clearly the weakest of the three.

The other two novels are more nuanced and well structured. Alexandropoulos’s \textit{Nights and Dawns} attempts an ambitious synthesis of the complex realities of the Resistance. Kosmas, the hero, is a poor young man who arrives in Athens to study at university in the first year of the German occupation. We follow his adventures in a dangerous city where he meets all types of people such as Nazi collaborators, black-marketeers, young bourgeois men and women who support the collaborationist Security Battalions. Kosmas then decides to join the National Liberation Front (EAM), becomes politically active in its ranks and gets arrested and tortured, but manages to escape. The second volume starts with Kosmas in the mountains, fighting with the ELAS partisans. Through him, we follow their lives, their disputes with the British and their clashes with nationalist resistance fighters. In the fighting Kosmas loses his arm and later works as a journalist and interpreter for the British. After the liberation in October 1944, he and his wife return to Athens where we follow the build-up to the December Riots. When his pregnant wife is murdered by the Security Battalions, he follows the party’s command to retreat from Athens and return to the mountains, but gets arrested again, and this time, as the narrator informs us, he spends the next 18 years in prison. In a review by Dimitris Chatzis (1962), where the book is praised as a sort of reply to Nikos Kasdaglis’s \textit{Τὰ δόντια τῆς μολόστρας} [The Teeth of the Millstone] (1955), it is
contended that the psychological process through which the hero decides to join the left is unclear. Chatzis says that he would have liked a more introspective and better justified explanation through narrative of Kosmas’s political engagement. While these points are to some extent valid, I think the second volume is more successful in this regard, although overall the novel is rather long, with several repetitions and a fairly predictable plot. In many ways it falls almost entirely within the boundaries of what the party considered politically correct at that time.

Rendis’s novel The Street with the Pepper Tree shares the same aims as Nights and Dawns, but is a more complex text. It is situated in an Athenian neighbourhood, with some action in the nearby villages. It has a central character but what characterises the novel is the wide range of characters and types of people: leftist and right-wing, rich and poor, men and women, active and retired, opportunists and idealists, Resistance fighters and collaborators. Emphasis is laid on the intersection between the public and the private; at the centre of the plot is a very adventurous love affair which remains lively until the end, despite the misfortunes and the ultimate imprisonment of the hero. The novel shows moreover the effects of the major events of the 1940s on the lives of individuals, beginning with the Greek–Italian war of 1940–1941 and continuing through the Occupation and Resistance to the December Riots. It constructs a narrative about continuous poverty, pain and bitterness. Although there is no programmatic optimism in the book, nevertheless the prevailing feeling is that, ultimately, life will go on. From a political standpoint, The Street with the Pepper Tree approaches the making of history from below, thus allowing space for the rethinking and criticism of decisions and commands issued from the top. Especially with regard to the December Riots, it stresses the contradictory orders from the Communist Party leadership and the impasse into which they led the party members, including the objections against the Varkiza Pact of February 1945. It is rather surprising that a novel of such high literary standards, by an author well established in the community of Civil War refugees was not, to the best of my knowledge, discussed or reviewed at the time.

The most obvious conclusion arising from a reading of the last set of novels in our corpus is that leftist authors in exile began to abandon, temporarily at least, the literary elaboration of the Civil War. Their narrative stops at the December Riots because that event, although a dress rehearsal for the Civil War, was – from the point of view of the left – politically justified as a defensive war against British military intervention. One could therefore argue that in this case the guidelines laid down by the Commissariat of Enlightenment were followed by the authors. On the other hand, these texts and especially Rendis’s novel manage, by setting human suffering in a historical continuum, to give meaning to the past and offer some clues about the socio-political causes of the traumatic events that led to Civil War. All three are mature works in the sense that they manage to stand at a critical distance from the collective catastrophe. The fact that they appeared more than 10 years after the event, confirms with near mathematical accuracy Kali Tal’s view that:
Survival literature tends to appear at least a decade after the traumatic experience in question. As the immediacy of the event fades into memory, the natural process of revision begins to occur in the mind of the survivor. (1991: 236)

Greek political refugees in Eastern Europe form a unique memory community which, although devastated by defeat and exile, possessed from the outset many of the requirements for constructing a collective memory of their traumatic experiences. In other words they had an organised community which fostered their sense of belonging and gave them the means to shape and circulate a narrative (e.g. publishers). In contrast to the defeated forces of the Spanish or the Finnish civil wars, who remained silent for a long time (Igartua and Paez 1997, Heimo and Peltonen 2003), Greek political exiles very soon began to tell their story in the ‘public arena’. However, these advantages may also have proved serious obstacles when this memory community was subjected to the complexities of official party policy, which had to take into account the political struggle in Greece and the use of the refugee question as a key issue in the Cold War agenda.

In this context literature, as a commemorative practice, proved to be mostly affected by official party policy. However, while it submitted to political priorities, at the same time it succeeded in finding ways of widening and deepening the elaboration of the traumatic experience, both for authors and for readers as well; and this was doubtless a political act in itself. To have a clearer idea about the part that this exilic literature played in the overall literature on the Greek Civil War, comparisons should be made with texts written and published inside the (other) memory community of those survivors who lived in Greece and faced very different constraints and forms of oppression. What I can say for the time being at least is that both memory communities, for quite different political reasons, were trapped in a similar ‘politics of suffering’. This type of politics favours a dominant narrative about the past which recognises and appreciates only the trauma of the self and neglects the trauma of the other. However, as long as the trauma of the other is not recognised, polarisation continues and critical approaches, as well as the process of reconciliation with the past, become indefinitely postponed (Van Boeschoten 2008: 146–7). No matter the quality and quantity of texts about the Civil War, in Greek literature this recognition has been a very long time in coming; that is, if we assume that it has happened at all.

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In 1932 the young leftist critic Nikos Kalamaris, later known as Nicolas Calas, made his debut as an avant-garde poet with the collection Ποιήματα [Poems]. While using the pseudonym M. Spieros, inspired by the French revolutionary Maximilien Robespierre, as a critic, he published his poems under the name Nikitas Randos. From the very beginning of his poetic career, Calas embraced a wide range of different influences in his formulation of a thoroughly modernist poetry which aspired to be revolutionary both in form and content. However, he did not focus on creating and perfecting any one particular style, but experimented with different forms of poetic expression such as futurism, expressionism and surrealism. While Calas’s avant-garde poetics were received with hostility by his communist friends, who advocated the doctrine of socialist realism, his socialist convictions and critique of Greekness put him in opposition to the dominant forces in Greek criticism, which responded mostly negatively to his poems. Calas’s ensuing ideological and artistic isolation made it difficult for him to stay in Greece and in the mid-1930s he decided instead to join the surrealist group around André Breton in Paris. It was also in France that he started using his new pseudonym Nicolas Calas, which he would later adopt as his legal name in America. After the outbreak of World War II he left for Lisbon, before finally settling permanently in New York in 1940, where he worked mainly as an art critic until his death in 1988.

Although Calas could be described as a refugee, first from the Metaxas regime and then from fascism and war, it is also true that his continued expatriation was the result of his quest for intellectual freedom, his artistic identity (otherness) and his cosmopolitanism. An intellectual exile, together with a great many other anti-militaristic and well-educated writers, artists and professionals displaced by Nazi Germany, he had, in fact, already distanced himself from the narrow-minded Greek cultural milieu through his long sojourns in Paris before Metaxas took power in Greece in 1936. Calas later talked about wanting to escape the ‘suffocating atmosphere of Athens’ (Stamatiou 1977) and further claimed that he had decided to leave Greece out of a sense of dissatisfaction and disappointment following his ‘failure’ as a poet and the rejection he felt by friends in literary circles (Fostieris and Niarchos 1981: 488). In a letter to Nanos Valaoritis, dated 14 May 1960, he
revealed that, when he had left Greece in the 1930s, it had been with the intention of never living there again and that he had been very bitter at the cold reception that his first poems had received (Valaoritis 1997: 113).

Calas’s cosmopolitanism was the natural result of his upbringing. He was born Nikos Kalamaris in 1907 in Lausanne, Switzerland, but grew up in Athens, the only son of Ioannis Kalamaris, who was descended from a family of ship-owners and landowners from Syros, and Rosa Caradja, who was the great-granddaughter of Markos Botsaris, the military leader and hero of the Greek War of Independence. Calas’s wealthy bourgeois background meant that he received a solid education in French and English from private tutors which laid the foundation for his cosmopolitan outlook and his broad knowledge of foreign literary trends. After leaving Greece, he did not seem to mourn the loss of his homeland, became an American citizen in 1945 and never made any serious attempt to return to Greece other than as an occasional visitor. Furthermore, it was the disappointment of his initial ‘home-coming’ visits that proved decisive in his poetic development as a satirist. He later talked of being utterly disappointed by 1950s Greece and further claimed that the atmosphere of Athens was then even more suffocating, if such a thing were possible, than when he had left more than a decade earlier (Stamatiou 1977).

After moving to America, Calas more or less abandoned writing poetry for the next two decades. However, his prolonged stays in Greece to sort out family affairs during the 1950s provided the impetus to start writing poems again in Greek. Almost all of the poems first published in the literary avant-garde magazine *Pali* between 1964 and 1965, and later reprinted in the 1977 collection *Οδός Νικήτα Ράντοου* [Nikitas Randos Street], were written in the satirical vein. Although many of Calas’s early poems were distinguished by a sharply critical point of view, opposing tradition and Greekness at the same time as satirising bourgeois values and a corrupt political system, it was not until the 1960s that they took on a poetic form which could be characterised as satire. Calas’s intellectualism, critical attitude, aphoristic style of writing coupled with an obsession with puns, also characteristics of his essays, were well-suited to the genre of satire. Moreover, this literary form gave him the opportunity to express his social concerns and attack the political and cultural status quo in Greece. Calas’s physical and emotional distance from his homeland, far from blunting his critical disposition, fuelled his critique with insights which were the result of clear-minded detachment and his new outsider identity. Edward W. Said has described exile as a state of never being ‘satisfied, placid, or secure’ and concluded that: ‘seeing “the entire world as a foreign land” makes possible originality of vision’ (2002: 186). Removed from Greek literary circles and unaware of much of the development of poetry in his homeland, Calas was free to pursue his own highly unique poetic vision with
the result that his poems appeared original and bold as well as strange and rather foreign to a Greek audience.\footnote{According to Alexandros Argyriou, ‘these new poems are, as far as I can judge, nothing more, for the most part, than satirical, mocking, poetic sketches that are relatively removed from any poetic codes. They are (if they are poems at all) the poems of an amateur who is cut off from the next poetic phase of the other Greek poets of his generation’ (1990: 25). While Argyriou believed that Calas’s absence from Greece had adversely influenced his poems, Nanos Valaoritis, on the other hand, believed that it had contributed to a fresh and very original poetic style. In a letter to Calas, dated 5 May 1960, Valaoritis commented: ‘You will excuse my taking the liberty to correct your Greek which you have become a little unused to in the grammatical sense, but I must say that your style has great originality and probably its strangeness comes also from the fact that for so many years you have not used it, in the current or the intellectual sense [sic]’ (Nicolas Calas Archive, Nordic Library, Athens, file 30.3.15).}

Although the Greek society that Calas returned to in the mid-1950s had gone through many changes since his departure almost 20 years earlier, the cultural climate and literary scene were still very much at odds with his own cultural politics. The concept of Greekness, as formulated by the so-called ‘generation of the 1930s’, had in the meantime been consolidated by poets as well as academic and literary criticism and now constituted the dominant ideology as a form of institutionalised national modernism. The two literary ‘giants’ in Greece, George Seferis and Odysseas Elytis, were both involved in an exploration of Greekness in their poetry which had very little in common with Calas’s concerns. Furthermore, according to David Close, the post-Civil War right-wing state had created a repressive and sterile intellectual climate that ‘discouraged critical discussion in the cultural, social and political spheres’ (2002: 96). However, Calas’s new position as an outsider in Greece gave him a certain freedom to take an even more critical attitude than before. The heightened polemical content and sharply satirical expression of his new poems suggests that his detached viewpoint made him oppose the dominant Greek cultural politics even more effectively than when he had lived in Greece. Moreover, for a short while in the mid-1960s, Calas found a receptive forum for his satires in the radical magazine *Pali*, which published previously neglected surrealists, such as Calas and Embirikos, as well as advocating the formation of a new Greek avant-garde inspired by surrealism and the American Beat generation, among others.

Calas’s satirical poems mocked Greek modernism and some of its most representative poets, such as Andreas Embirikos and George Seferis, political and cultural institutions, the ideology of Greekness, post-war Americanised petit-bourgeois Greeks, and Greece itself as a tourist destination. Other favoured targets for Calas’s poison-pen poetry were the royal family, the rule of the Colonels after the 1967 military putsch, as well as foreign involvement in Greek politics. Tasos Vournas has described satire as a furious assault on an unjust society and claims...
that, even if it cannot always be the social dynamite that blows up the establishment, satire can at least function as a challenge and as a warning of resistance (1979: 154). Alvin B. Kerman has also pointed out that satire functions as a form of catharsis from the evils of society through its use of irony, sarcasm and caricature (1971: 271–2). The subversive and provocative purposes of satire are clearly evident in Calas’s poems and were further expressed in his later self-description as being a ‘poet, diagnostician, and polemicist’.2 His emphasis on raising questions, rather than offering solutions and definite answers, was not just an important part of his essays but was also evident in his satirical verse. Calas’s satires can thus be understood as an integral part of his writings as a ‘diagnostician’ by unmasking the falseness and the sickness of a society that he sought to subvert.

Calas’s hostility towards all kinds of patriotic sentiment and national stereotypes also made him avoid the Greek diaspora groupings in America, always preferring the forward-looking and the ground-breaking to the nostalgic. In an unpublished poem from 1968, entitled ‘Όχι και Ποτέ’ [No and never], he ridiculed the conservativism of the Greek communities in New York which not only resisted cultural assimilation but also failed to embrace a multitude of different cultures in their insistence on tradition and nostalgia for the homeland:

We have our own ‘Κιφισσία’, without trees or greenery
Full of bouzoukia, retsina, Greek kids and ‘Zorbas’
Instead of the ‘Stars’ we have the ‘Astoria’.
(Nicolas Calas Archive, Nordic Library, Athens, file 17.3.24)3

Here he satirised the Astoria neighbourhood in Queens, New York, which is known for being home to the largest concentration of Greeks outside Greece. In an interview from 1981, Calas confessed that he had always kept his distance from other Greek expatriates since he believed that their interests and problems were completely different from his own. Moreover, he claimed that he wanted to stay clear of a Greek plutocracy that showed no interest in a ‘fallen’ member of their own class (Fostieris and Niarchos 1981: 488). It was not until the end of the 1960s that he was finally able to find some common ground with other American Greeks through their anti-junta work.

The critique of Greekness, first expressed in Calas’s 1930s poems, was carried on and intensified in several of the satires that he wrote during the 1950s and 1960s. One of the most dominant literary figures in Greece and thus a symbol of a stereotypical national poetry, George Seferis, was mockingly described as the ‘Jar man’ who had ‘discovered the poetic worth of warm water’ (Calas 1977: 103), referring to an untitled couplet by Seferis from 1940: ‘The warm water reminds

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2 This is how he signed his last articles (early 1980s) published in Artoforum.

3 'Εχουμε κι εμείς μία 'Κηφισσία', χωρίς δέντρα και πρασίνα / Όλο μπουζούκια, ρετσίνα, 'παιδιά' και 'Ζορμπά' / Αντίς από τ' 'Αστέρια' έχουμε τ' 'Αστόρια'.
me each morning / that I have nothing else alive near me’ (Seferis 1995: 97).

Moreover, when Seferis was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1963, Calas suggested that one of the reasons for the poet’s international acknowledgement was because he was heavily influenced by T.S. Eliot. In a previously unpublished satire from 1964, Seferis’s poems were mockingly characterised as ‘Ελιοτροπίες’ [Eliot mannerisms] (Hoff 2008: 117).

Calas also satirised fellow surrealist Andreas Embirikos in the poem ‘Μυστικός Δείπνος’ [The Last Supper] which parodied the poet’s exaggerated use of religious exclamations:

The bells struck with a tinny sound
The cassocks were joined together with abstract darkness.
Lighthouse and cloud mingled
And the inner land of the photographer revealed
A blast furnace worthy of a bishop in a top hat.

Although he attempted to form a surrealist group in Athens with Embirikos in the mid-1930s, he soon found himself at odds with his friend’s insistence on automatic writing as well as his non-political attitude. Calas’s differences with the other Greek surrealists clearly contributed to his decision to leave Greece and instead join the French movement in Paris, which at that point had long since abandoned automatism and was known for its staunch political radicalism.

Most of Calas’s satires were formulated as ironic comments on contemporary political events such as the Cyprus crisis. The poem ‘Ξένα δοξήα’ [Foreign vessels] partly targeted the British colonialist politics deciding the future of the island, but also attacked capitalism and its vulgarisation of ancient (pagan) cultural values. The symbols of capitalism (both Greek and foreign) make boastful claims to superiority in a series of ironical juxtapositions of the mores of modern and classical times:

Sayeth Mr. Fix to Callirhoe: ‘I am the Ilissos river’
sayeth Hilton to the Parthenon: ‘I am the Acropolis’

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4 Τὸ γεῦτὸ νερὸ μου θημίζει κάθε προϊ / πως δὲν ἔχω τίποτε ἄλλο ζωτικό κοντά μου (Seferis 1979: 147). English translation by Edmund Keeley.

5 Ντενεκέδενι ήχο χτυπούσαν οι καμπάνες / τα ράσα συγκολληθήκαν μ´ αφηρημένο σκότος. / Φανάρι και νέφος σμέζαν / κι η ενδοχώρα του φωτογράφου εμφάνισε / υψικάμινο αντάξια δεσπότη με ψηλό κατέλο (Calas 1983: 116). Apart from containing references to Embirikos’s first two poetry collections Υψικάμινος [Blast furnace] and Ενδοχώρα [Inner land] there is also an allusion to the surrealist poet’s interest in photography.

6 Karolos Fix was a Greek industrialist who made a fortune from Fix Beer. Callirhoe is a mythical ocean nymph but also the name of a major street in Athens. Ilissos is a river in ancient Greece which has now been largely canalised into underground routes around Athens.
sayeth Edison to the Owl: ‘I am the light’
sayeth little Helen to Belafonte: ‘You are my Homer’.
As a matter of courtesy Navarchos will be named Niarchos⁷
and its pontoon Tositsas⁸

In the satire ‘Με ασπισμούς’ [With kisses] Calas portrayed Greece as a prostitute
selling her favours to the Americans at Hotel Cairo City at a time when capitalist
interests had invaded Greek society:

Irma with her peppermint, but whiskey for her customers.
‘Excuse me, darling, that was the porter at hotel “Cairo City” an American
wants me – not tonight, I can’t –’⁹

The reference to Egypt was meant to draw attention to its acquiescence to the
British insistence on a continued military presence along the Suez Canal in the
Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, a situation which was likened to the Cyprus problem.
The American client from hotel Cairo City¹⁰ thus became a symbol of British
colonialist interests and the prostitute represented Greece’s submission to foreign
powers for political and economic reasons but also in an attempt to become further
Westernised.

In the poem ‘Διηγενή’ [Man of two races] Calas parodied Greek Americans and
the banalities of a new form of folkloristic Greekness aimed at the tourist dollar as
Greeks increasingly imitated Western culture while exploiting their own ancient
heritage. The satire poked fun at the Americanised Greek couple Mr and Mrs
Peacock who were now simply tourists in their own country, ‘dancing rock’n’roll
with the palace guards’ (Calas 1977: 92). Furthermore, he ridiculed their petit-
bourgeois mentality which made them brag and show off their newly accumulated
wealth when they returned to Greece as summer guests. Finally, Calas repeated his

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⁷ Niarchos = from ‘nia’ which is a Homeric word for ship and ‘archos’ (leader). This
is a pun on the famous shipowner Niarchos. The Navarchos (Miaoulis) was a great Greek
cruiser, launched in 1879, which had been purchased as a part of the naval expansion after
the unsuccessful Cretan uprising in 1866.

⁸ Είπεν ο Φίξ στήν Καλλαρρή: ‘Εγώ είμαι ο Ιλισός’ / είπεν ο Χάλιτ ον στόν Παρθενώνα:
‘Εγώ είμαι η Ακρόπολι’ / είπεν ο Έντεισε στήν Κουκουβάγια: ‘Εγώ είμαι το φως’ /
είπεν η Ελενίτσα στήν Μπελαφόντε: ‘Ο Ομηρός μου εσύ’. / Τιμής ένεκεν Νήσαρχος θα
λέγεται ο Ναύαρχος / και το πλοίο του Τοσίτσα (Calas 1977: 87). Michail Tositsas was a
Greek-Egyptian businessman and entrepreneur who, together with his wife Eleni, became
important benefactors to Greek institutions.

⁹ Ίρμα με το πεπεριμένει της, μα για τους πελάτες ουίσκι. / ‘Με συγχωρείς, χρυσό μου,
ήταν ο πορτέρας του “Κάιρο Σίτυ” / ένας Αμερικανός με θέλει – όχι απόψε δεν μπορώ –’
(Calas 1977: 88).

¹⁰ Cairo City was the name of a hotel in Athens in the early 1950s as well as functioning
here as a symbol of Egypt and its relationship to Britain.
idea of Greece prostituting herself to foreigners, in other words being a submissive 
(and willing) victim of the capitalist interests of both colonialism and tourism. 
In a thematically linked English poem, Calas described Greece as a place of 
degradation and shame, overflowing with vulgar American music and offering the 
lure of sexual adventures:

In the Isles of Byron and Sappho
on the shrinking sands of Greece
Host of heroes and sex
Ladies and gents knee deep in sex
drown their darkest hour
in the lungs of Frank Sinatra.
(Hoff 2008: 118)

Calas saved his most scathing satires to attack and ridicule the Greek royal family. 
It is in these poems that we find manifested most clearly the anger, spite and hatred 
which K.Th. Dimaras claims are the chief characteristics of the genre (1979: 
305). The monarchy came to symbolise Greece’s continued dependence on the 
‘protection’ of foreign powers who manipulated domestic political developments 
to serve their own interests by securing an undemocratic right-wing government. 
Calas’s first anti-royalist poem from 1964, ‘Ευτυχοσπολίς [Happy city], used 
multiple puns referring to the Danish origin of the Greek royal family to ridicule the 
monarchy and its interference in national politics. After the Colonels’ coup of 21 
April 1967 one of Calas’s friends from his Paris years, the Trotskyist revolutionary 
Michalis Raptis, organised an international resistance network which also 
published the paper Antistasi between 1967 and 1971 in Paris and London. Calas 
contributed several articles and polemics as well as organising a small resistance 
group, encouraged by Raptis, together with other Greek leftists in New York. 11 He also wrote the poem ‘Όχι κατ Ποτέ’ (No and never) especially for Antistasi 
although it failed to get published at the time. In this satire Calas emphasised 
the close connection between the Palace and the junta, which he presented as a 
natural outcome of the repressive politics of the right, particularly the hysterical 
anti-communist feelings that characterised the post-war governments and paved 
the way for the military putsch. Under the rule of the Colonels, described as ‘the 
Herculeses of the Crown,’ the Greek flag had become a ‘flag of convenience’ as 
Greece continued being a country ruled by the interests of foreign powers. Calas 
further characterised Greece as a ‘banana republic’ acting as the puppet of foreign 
capital, commercial interests and tourism (Nicolas Calas Archive, Nordic Library, 
Athens, file 17.3.24).

11 For an account of the political correspondence between Calas and Raptis, see Hoff 
(2002), and for an analysis of the same correspondence and their resistance work, see Hoff 
(2003).
Calas would return to the subject of the Glücksburg family a few years later in a satire which also attacked the rule of the junta. ‘Η σοφίς του λαού η μοναρχική μου σαγάτη’ [The back of the hare my one and only monarchical love] recounted the history of the Greek monarchy, the rule and fall of the Colonels and the return of Karamanlis, chiefly by employing the satirical methods of grotesque caricature and vulgarity. For instance, Constantine II was likened to a dunghill (Κοπρώνυμος Β) [Copronymos II] and his wife Anne-Marie of Denmark became a princess of utter stupidity (Αννα Μαρία) [Anne-Marie = Ανο Μορία = above stupidity]. He signed the poem ‘Bacillicide’ (Βακλαλοκτόνος) thus suggesting that a regicide was simply an exterminator of germs (Calas 1977: 131). One of the main aims of satire is to disturb a current political situation and mock contemporary social mores, but instead this poem, published in 1975 after the fall of the junta, offered the laughter of relief at the end of a nightmare.

Calas’s ‘comeback’ as a Greek poet in the mid-1960s was not so much the result of a changed point of view but a continuation of earlier political concerns in a different disguise. Whereas his poetry had always been characterised by an intellectual approach and a highly critical spirit, his new poems were radically different in style thanks to their use of satire and parody with multiple puns. Calas’s satires were formulated as sharp and violent attacks on an unjust society and the falsity of Greekness as well as functioning as a form of catharsis. However, the use of the satirical form soon gave way to a different kind of poetic expression which could be described as reflective poetry. Most of Calas’s poems written from 1975 onwards were self-referential in some form or another as they stated his beliefs, formulated a critical position, and discussed his personal experiences and history. As he grew older, Calas sought to make a connection between the poet of the past (Nikitas Randos) and the poet of the present (Nicolas Calas), using memory (as opposed to nostalgia) in order to redefine his own identity as well as his cultural placement in and out of Greece.

Several of these poems reveal Calas’s need to explain himself to a new Greek audience, unfamiliar with the poet of the 1930s. The reflective poetry thus attempted to draw a line between his past identity as Nikitas Randos and the Nicolas Calas of New York. In one poem, which reads as an imaginary conversation between Calas and a Greek compatriot, he is asked about his reasons for leaving Athens and Paris and subsequently making New York his home. His answer shows that Calas considered the American metropolis a modern-day Babylon, a sort of necessary purgatory at the heart of capitalism, which supplied him with the creative impulse that life in petit-bourgeois Athens was unable to give him (Calas 1977: 98). He had expressed this belief already in 1946 in a letter to Yiorgos Theotokas: ‘I regard America as a form of purgatory … I do not believe in life in Paradise, I think that purgatory is the right place to live’ (Konstantoulaki-Chantzou 1989: 52–3). He further indicated that the chaos of the city and its masses of people made it possible for him to lose himself (or his unwanted past) and look towards the future. In another poem, he tried to re-establish the connection between the old and the new Calas, reminding us that he still followed the path of Nikitas Randos:
Nikitas Randos, can’t you hear me? […] Don’t you recognise me? I am a Manhattaner from Athens Plaka, and within me shout the burning visions of your troubled soul.12

The poem which closed the 1977 collection *Nikitas Randos Street* was essentially a self-portrait which described his entire life-path, his beliefs and creative influences. Most importantly, it shows a continuity of thought from the young to the old Calas and thus creates a natural link between such disparate places as Mount Athos and New York. He characterised himself as an ‘émigré revolutionary’ who celebrated the solstices, rather than the religious holidays, and believed in the socialism of the Paris Commune at the same time as sustaining a dialogue with ‘atheist Buddhists, anarchists and heretics’ (Calas 1977: 147). The unpublished, lengthy English poem ‘Who speaks?’ can be read as an episodic journey through Calas’s life and some of its main events apart from being a celebration of his surrealist past and revolutionary ideals. His rejection of patriotic feelings and values in favour of the internationalist, subversive principles of surrealism was expressed by juxtaposing the French national symbol Jeanne d’Arc with the once notorious murdereress (patricide), Violette Nozière, who had been a hero to the surrealists but was now forgotten together with surrealism itself. The poem leads up to the time of Calas’s flight to New York: ‘Wanderer, what is your destination: Jerusalem or Babylon?’ The answer was of course Babylon (New York) – the devil rather than Jesus: ‘I am for Manhattan and Satan, for the Mad Hatter and Lucifer, for a voice that comes from the Steppes’. The ‘voice … from the Steppes’ is a reference to Leon Trotsky, affirming Calas’s lifelong adherence to socialist ideals and, more specifically, Trotskyism (Nicolas Calas Archive, Nordic Library, Athens, file 17.6.22).

If Calas’s ideologically and literary marginalised position in the 1930s had made it difficult for him to stay in Greece, the dreary political and cultural climate of the 1950s discouraged him from trying to return. Calas chose to make his exile permanent in order to survive and thrive intellectually as well as artistically. His rejection of an affirmative national literature and his divergence from the (conservative) modernist search for a new Greekness was not just a significant transgression in 1930s Greece, but continued to place him in opposition to the cultural establishment until the 1960–70s when he was finally (re)discovered. In 1977 he was even awarded the National Prize for best poetry collection with *Nikitas Randos Street*, which included poems written between 1933 and 1936 as well as the satires of the 1960s and some of his later reflective or self-referential poems.

We can conclude that the return of Nikitas Randos, Calas’s ‘comeback’ as a Greek poet, was characterised by a distinctly satirical voice which criticised Greekness, nostalgia, patriotism and middle-class morality, while also attacking the cultural and political institutions of Greece. The otherness of Calas, an

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12 Νικήτα Ράντο, δεν μ’ ακούς; […] / Δεν μ’ αναγνωρίζεις; Είμαι Πλακιότης Μανχατανάς, / και βροντοφωνούνε μέσα μου / της ταραχμένης σου ψυχής φλογερά οράματα (Calas 1977: 109).
intellectual exile who rejected national definitions and stereotypes, made him the ideal observer and satirist of the social mores of Greeks both in and out of Greece. The critical detachment he felt as an outsider is evident in his poetry of sharp, almost cruel, satires which also reveal the distinct coolness of his observations and a highly original poetic vision. The use of memory in his reflective poems was far from backward-looking and nostalgic but instead sought to recall the revolutionary ethics which had characterised his early poetry and were carried on in his later poems which thus continued the path of Nikitas Randos Street.

References

Chapter 17
The *Topos* of Home in New Greek-American Writing

Martha Klironomos

Nicholas Samaras’s poem ‘Translation’ is prefaced by an epigraph, a passage from Henry Miller’s *Colossus of Maroussi* (1941):

> What is vital here is land, just land. I had almost forgotten that it meant such a simple, eternal thing. One gets twisted, devoured, spavined and indoctrinated shouting ‘Land of the Free,’ et cetera. Land is something on which to grow crops, build a home, raise cows and sheep. (Samaras 1992: 26)

This passage comes from Miller’s account of his travels through the Peloponnesian countryside. After having seen the ruins at Mycenae, he gazes ‘into the field of green’ and contemplates the ‘eternal’ land before him. The immediate experience of place leads him to rethink how land is imagined in American nationalist discourse. But land, he observes, needs to be stripped of its nationalist rhetoric to attain its ‘vital’ function as provider of home, shelter and subsistence. In redeeming such a primordial image of the land, he re-defines the notion of home as it relates to national identity. With this reference to Miller, Samaras taps into a rich tradition of travel writing about Greece ensconced within Anglo-American literature that often conflates the aestheticised *topos* of home with the articulation of national sensibilities (see Leontis 1995, 1999; Tziovas 1989). Though grounded in the discourses of Hellenism, this tradition nevertheless dictates its own ideological interpretation of the Greek landscape, projecting a particular trajectory for the casual traveller replete with visits to ancient and pastoral sites.

Yet travel to Greece is not merely something casual for the Greek-American subject in Samaras’s poem, which chronicles the descendant’s return to the ancestral home. Reflecting a common social rite, the poem illustrates how travel for the ethnic American charts its own separate trajectory for the rediscovery of the originary home in order to retrace ethnic roots (see Jacobson 2008). But unlike Miller, who is relatively secure in his definition of the primordial home, Samaras addresses the

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* My thanks to Yiorgos Anagnostou, Eva Konstantellou and Anne Carson for reading this essay and offering helpful suggestions.

1 This point also applies to Greek-American writers such as Harry Mark Petrakis. See Jacobson’s discussion of Petrakis’s fictionalisation of the homecoming (2008: 135–6)
question with ambivalence. High on a summit, looking over a vast expanse of green, Samaras wonders whether to claim the space as ‘home’. Feeling both ‘home’ and ‘lost,’ he situates himself not only in relation to the terrain that slopes before him but also to the words that similarly descend upon the page. Immersed in the ancestral land, he inscribes his endeavour to locate home in the very act of writing, something that is, at once, familiar and disorienting (see Rapport and Dawson 1998: 8):

The rock’s grey place is precise
and phrases everything
else.

Be ginger.
Sit on the green hill, the high view
sloping in declension.

Watch the movement of trees.
The cursive branches.
Verb of the wind over a whitened plain.
I am home. And lost.

My hands on my knees.
This paper. These words.
(Samaras 1992: 27)

Samaras’s poem strikes at the core of how the search for ‘home’ in a new strand of Greek-American writing expresses an essential paradox: the desire to find a primordial place of origin to ground one’s sense of identity, but it is a longing which remains relatively unfulfilled. Recent works by Joy Manesiotis, Eleni N. Gage, Tryfon Tolides and George Sarrinikolaou reflect a postmodern anxiety in trying to locate home in an age where stable and conventional definitions of it as a tangible place are being constantly eroded. While the desire is often thwarted, rather than abandon its relevance in anchoring ethnic identity, the concept of home that permeates these texts emerges as a metaphysical ideal, offering temporary respite from the anxieties over identity wrought by the condition of postmodernity. But, unlike nativist imaginings of home, the notion of home in these examples idealises place without binding itself to a concomitant sense of national community. Conversely, in its most radical and controversial forms of expression, the concept of home here manifests its vision as a moral corrective to critique overt forms of nationalism.

More cogently, with the conditions that afford ease in contemporary modes of travel, home in this body of work emerges in a ‘grey place,’ a cognitive, emotive and, at times, highly charged ideological space that is constructed at the crossroads between casual travel writing and ethnic self-discovery narratives (Kalogeras 1998). The travel experience entails an introspective journey that addresses the contours of Greek-American identity, something which veers between knowledge
of Greece acquired from an ideological reading of texts produced by the discourses of Hellenism and knowledge of ethnic origins acquired by oral transmission, ritual practice and empirical contact.

With regard to travel writing about Greece, the writers considered here also offer an array of aestheticised images of the Greek topos that range from timeless pastorals of the rural countryside to timely invectives of the modern cityscape. Manesiotis, for example, paints pastels onto the rural landscape in her poetry: ‘Levels of terraced land, the pale wash of dried oats, strips of grass, prásina’; ‘gray stone walls … cupping silver-gray olive trees, and above, the backdrop of green’ (2000: 26). Sarrinikolaou, by contrast, attributes a certain opaqueness to urban space in his memoir. Unlike the ‘pastoral landscape’ of the Parthenon, which ‘radiate[s]’ high up on the Acropolis, the modern city of Athens below ‘fades into the haze’; its ‘architectural frenzy’, ‘an oppressing combination of building density’ and ‘congestion’; its roads ‘are often too narrow, unlit, unmarked’ (2004: 6, 5, 23, 4, 128, 11). Indeed, such polarities recall the rhetorical devices of previous Anglo-American travellers to Greece in the course of the past century which have articulated national sensibilities of self and other through veiled strategies of objectification in either aestheticising or orientalising the Greek topos and its society (see Pratt 1992; Said 1978; Klironomos 2007a).

But what distinguishes this corpus of texts from mere travel writing, however, is that the pursuit of home here creates a particular liminal space for nostalgic longing on the part of the Greek-American subject, embodying the desire for reconciliation with the past to redress the loss of the family and its culture. At times, the search for home is reflective of lived experience; at others, a mere projection of what was and what may have been.

Emerging as a dynamic tension between ‘home’ and ‘travel’, this corpus of texts illustrates that the concept of home is locked within the recesses of private memory. Among images of the Greek topos that recur in the poetry, however, as this discussion will explore, qualitative differences underlie individual subjectivities. For writers of the first generation, such as Tolides and Sarrinikolaou, the search for home is presented in a transnational vision of fluidity, moving back and forth between Greece and America to come to terms with both the past and the present, enveloped within its own solipsism in reaction to overt forms of nationalism. For writers of the third generation, the search for home is subsumed in the effort to recover fragments of lost familial history, whether class-conscious in the case of Manesiotis or ideologically-charged in the case of Gage, through which they explore the contours of their ethnic identity.

The concept of home in these texts wavers between articulations of homecoming and homelessness, as well as the rootedness and rootlessness that typify transnational consciousness in a ‘world of movement’ to use Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson’s formulation (1998). While the problematic of defining the concept of ‘home,’ as many theorists have pointed out (Brah 1996: 193), may be integral to the transnational condition, we should nevertheless not assume it to be exclusive to these subjectivities under consideration here. In her study The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction
(1996), Rosemary Marangoly George reminds us of how the concepts of ‘home’ and ‘home country’ have had a long tradition in literature written in English. These concepts have been re-rooted and re-routed in texts written in English by colonisers, the colonised, newly independent peoples and immigrants over the course of the last century, who have each produced various fictions reflective of divergent ideologies of home (George 1996: 1). In English, the word ‘home’ was often strictly associated with ‘the private sphere of patriarchal hierarchy, gendered self-identity, shelter, comfort, nurture and protection’ (George 1996: 1). An ‘auratic’ term, to use George’s formulation, home as a constructed fiction, had conventionally signaled a desire that was either fulfilled or thwarted. And while the idea of home has ventured along several axes, it was often projected as fixed, rooted and stable (George 1996: 2ff.). In postulating home as a dominant trope for national identity formation and belonging, the question of who can and who cannot claim the space has underscored much debate between citizens and immigrants, the subject of much academic discussion over the course of the last few decades.

In considering its postmodern articulations Rapport and Dawson in Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement (1998) discuss how the idea of home, as something fixed, rooted and stable, has been destabilised in both practice and theory with the advent of global travel, population shifts, fluctuating economies, and communications. Discussions in the field of anthropology, for example, have recognised:

> the practices of identity-formation in a world (modern, late-capitalist, postmodern ...) where processes of globalization (creolization, compression, hybridity, synchronicity) have made traditional conceptions of individuals as members of fixed and separate societies and cultures redundant. (1998: 3)

Rather than subscribe to an obsolete model, they suggest placing the dual concepts of home and movement in a dynamic and fluid relationship to reflect the shared experience of migrancy and travel, which distinguishes contemporary identity and practice not only physically but cognitively (1998: 4). ‘Certainly in terms of individual awareness, even if not of universal practice’, they point out, ‘movement has become fundamental to modern identity, and an experience of non-place (beyond “territory” and “society”) an essential component of everyday existence’ (1998: 6). The spaces inhabited by the Greek-American travellers discussed in this chapter represent these ‘non-place’ entry points for consideration, including harbours and hotels as well as temporary and extended abodes in the village or city.

For Manesiotis in ‘Return to Loganiko’ home is neither ‘here’ nor ‘there.’ She travels to her family’s ancestral home in a village of the Taygetos mountain region

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2 Home as a microcosm of pre-modern societies has been taken to illustrate coercive institutions of power; whereas eutopic visions of home have been postulated as models of progressiveness. See Rapport and Dawson (1998: 8ff.).

3 See Rapport and Dawson’s overview of anthropological theory, for example (1998: 3ff.).
to recover the history of the family and retrace the course of their migration to America. In her narration she interjects stories about her grandmother’s childhood and adolescence, both real and re-imagined episodes that recount near-death and family separation experiences in the form of moiroloyia and tales of xeniteia.

She anticipates coming into contact with ‘all that was Greek/now touched and moving’, but also feels unsettled by the place. The road towards the village exudes ‘the emptiness of no place, no/home’ (2000: 20). What ultimately gives the place a sense of familiarity is how it rekindles her own definition of what it means to be ‘Greek’ embodied within her own consciousness – remnants of language, folk belief, custom and practice:

… Parts of it

live in me: bottles of holy water
to bless each house, the blue eye, shield

against the evil one, shreds of language and that rise
in my throat, the music from the villages, and

zembékiko, slow slide across the dirt floor, sway
and finger snap …
(2000: 20–21)

Manesiotis’s focus shifts to the dilapidated ancestral home in Loganiko, an image associated here with abandonment and separation as she traces her grandparents’ trajectory from this world ‘into the other world’ of America:

… The house
perched against the side: tile roof, fire pit,

broken boards. Georgaki, Eleni. The children
who went down into the world, down from the mountain,

down from the spring, the mill, family, away
away. Into the other world.
(2000: 21)

Unable to reconcile herself fully with the place, Manesiotis wavers between the boundaries of this and that life: ‘Now, this is not home, and/I am left the thin track to walk, path/and boundary, between this and that, this life/and that, mountain and sea …’ (2000: 21).

A brief excursion to an island village further demarcates the differences between those who can and cannot claim the place as home. Here the tranquillity of the island for the natives, who remain in their houses peering out from behind
closed shutters, is inundated by the onset of a multitude of transient and wealthy European tourists, who crowd the waterfront:

Here is a village, horyó, in August, on an island, houses stacked on the hillside, blank windows, eyes staring out, the quiet hours, deep blue shutters drawn against the heat, and red tiled roofs scattered among the gray shale ones, boats plying in and out of the harbor: Icarus, Flying Dolphin. At night, cosmos, so many cosmos, tourists throng the waterfront…. (2000: 21–2)

The travellers temporarily reside in a small ‘whitewashed’ hotel, ‘with wooden beds, a hot plate and washstand’ (2000: 21–2). Despite attempts to instil a sense of permanence, by buying houses to lay claim to a piece of the ‘tradition’, the travellers remain, as Manesiotis puts it, unlike the impoverished natives, ‘xéni, foreigners, not the inside, not/the hours of work that turn the hands old’ (2000: 23).

She returns finally to the village and gazes at the ancestral house. Mourning her grandmother’s absence, Manesiotis imagines what her life might have been like as a child and turns away. Her journey yields an unresolved vision of home that veers between past and present, presence and absence, the real and the imagined. It is a journey that primarily takes place in the imagination, bereft of human contact, and conveys the pervading influence of the family on the individual’s ethnic consciousness.

Manesiotis’s example, not unlike Gage’s which will be discussed next, illustrates how homes in the Greek-American literary imagination are as much about travel away from home as they are about reclaiming lost homelands and ancestry, signifying the desire to return to one’s ethnic origins for the recovery of familial lived history. It reserves a liminal space for nostalgic longing, embodying the desire for reconciliation with a re-imagined past ‘to call back lineage’ and its culture. Its definition of ‘Greekness’, here and in other comparable examples, hinges on varying degrees of knowledge of traditional conceptions of the Greek popular tradition. Paying homage to such traditional conceptions, however, does not necessarily imply a restrictive interpretation of Hellenism. Rather, constructing the ideal of home within the microcosm of the village – with its strict adherence to tradition and popular customs – offers the Greek-American subject a way in which to stabilise identity in a world marked by flux and impermanence. The concept of home that surfaces in these texts offers temporary respite from the paradoxes of

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4 From Samaras’s ‘What Grandfathers Leave’.
5 See Samaras’s ‘What Continues’ and other poems by Manesiotis including ‘Rousannou’ and ‘Lament: Moirologia.’ My understanding of ‘Greekness’ here approximates the meaning ascribed to it by the Greek writers of the generation of the 1930s, who equated popular consciousness with national ideals. See Leontis (1995) and Tziovas (1989).
postmodernity in generating new configurations in the grounding of self beyond nation. By taking refuge in the village the Greek-American subject underscores an essential predicament in that the ‘price paid for progress was the destruction of past ways of living and being in the world’ (Huyssen 2003: 2).

Gage’s memoir North of Ithaka (2004) chronicles a descendant’s reclaiming of the primordial home. Through the symbolic act of rebuilding the ancestral house, located in a village in Epirus, she acquaints herself with her Greek roots in an effort to reconcile her feelings of ‘hybridity’ and make herself ‘whole’. But the prospect of renovating the house, which belonged to the author’s paternal grandmother, Eleni Gatzoyianni, forces her to confront the violence of the civil war politics with which the village is inextricably linked. Gage’s narration presents the process of relating the family’s past as one of testament and recovery through which she embarks on her own path to self-discovery. Yet the memoir unavoidably generates a reading of the past that is ideologically charged and illustrates how the boundaries between public and private memory are obliterated at a stroke as a result of the memoir’s production and reception.

The abandoned house in the village of Lia stands near the border between Greece and Albania. In the memoir’s introduction, Gage notes that the house standing in ruins before her, ‘which now looks cozy and benign, like the stone cottage of a noble woodcutter in a fairy tale’ (Gage 2004: xvi), has become a repository for the remnants of a traumatic history long since suppressed and forgotten. Her recounting of that history, however, is fragmented and elusive, distancing itself from the deeper issues at hand – both ideological and otherwise – that contributed to the violence:⁶

Her grandmother was among the prisoners, shot by guerillas in retribution for securing passage for her children, not to the Iron Curtain as had been mandated by the communists, but to America to join their father who had already immigrated and left his wife behind before the outbreak of the war. ‘After the war,’ Gage notes, ‘[my grandmother’s] house was abandoned; its roof rotted and the house collapsed onto itself, as if to bury the memories of all it has witnessed’ (Gage 2004: xvi–xvii). Weighing the moral issues revolving around the renovation of the house, she reckons with the living memories of older survivors who witnessed the tragedy of the Civil War and wonders ‘if the villagers [would] even want to see the finished house, to

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⁶ While controversial, recent academic commentary on the Greek Civil War, for example, has also provided counter-ideological interpretations to explain the logic underlying the violence. See Kalyvas (2006).
come to a place where their friends and relatives were imprisoned, tortured and killed – thirty-seven of them buried right here in the front yard’ (Gage 2004: xvi).

The proposal to renovate the house had already triggered several reactions even within the Gatzoyiannis family before Gage’s departure. Gage’s aunts, who, like her father, had grown up in the house and were forced to flee during the war and leave their mother behind, had been traumatised by her subsequent execution on the premises. For her aunts the abandonment of the house had entailed a desire to suppress that past. They tried to dissuade Gage from returning. So did her father, the author, Nicholas Gage, despite having sought to recover that same past in his novel, *Eleni* (1983). In its reception, however, the novel went on to become contested terrain between the right and left within the domain of the social history of the Civil War, sparking counter-interpretations in Greece of Gatzoyianni’s position within the village’s political divisions. While Eleni Gage’s reading of the past is just as politicised as her father’s in its critical stance towards the left, she provides strikingly little factual knowledge of the turmoil wrought by the Civil War in this period nor does she deal with the controversy that her father’s version of events has generated – a controversy fueled by the fact that his account was written from the vantage point of an outsider (see Arapoglou 2005).

Before she left America for Lia, Eleni Gage’s friends were incredulous when she revealed that she had neither read the novel nor seen the movie which was based on it, attributing her reluctance to fear. To overcome this obstacle and absolve herself of her ‘ignorance’ of the past, she became ‘determined to rebuild the house, both as a monument to my grandmother and, for myself, as a tangible link to my family’s past and our village’ (Gage 2004: xvii). Through a series of reminiscences interspersed throughout the course of the memoir, she portions out threads of the family’s collective memories of the house. At times, she fixates on narrating horrific details related to the brutal violence of the war; at others, she chooses to inject poignant episodes or humorous anecdotes in the timeline of the house to offset the heaviness of the overarching tragedy that is associated with it.

With this rhetorical strategy, Gage consistently tries to distance herself from the turmoil generated by the violence of the past. She wants to exercise ‘control’, as she puts it, by restoring the house to its condition before the war and by living in the present through the forging of new ties with the remaining relatives and inhabitants of the village. Unlike her Greek-American friends who storm through Greece island-hopping and wallow in the excesses of tourist culture, Gage’s journey has its own unique trajectory. These new ties lead her to enrich the knowledge of Greek popular culture, which she had acquired as a student at Harvard as a folklore major. The memoir offers a rich ethnography of the village of Lia, exhibiting facets of ‘Greekness’ from the religious to the secular that permeate its present society.

Among her encounters is an episode in which she philosophises on the meaning of the primordial home. In an excursion across the border into Albania to find the

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7 Counter-responses to his novel include Anastasis G. Takas’s *Αντί-Ελένη* [Anti-Helen] (1986).
childhood home of Thio Angelo, she emphasises how, for the Greeks of Epirus, because of the dire conditions that forced them to uproot themselves and migrate across state borders during the Civil War, the longing to reclaim and be reunited with the topos of home is all the more exigent despite the material comforts afforded by modern life:

If you abandon your home, you can’t expect to have a homeland to return to someday. But as we bumped along the road to Kyria Deena’s house, I understood why people moved away. In Greece we had the same striking scenery plus paved roads, fair-to-middling litter removal, and all the churches you could want. But next to me sat Thio Angelo, who enjoyed paved roads in Greece and America and was still desperate to see the place where he grew up. I once saw a nature show that said mothers of all species are biologically programmed to love their children. Perhaps children are programmed to long for – if not love – their motherland. You can forget the language of your forebears or never see your ancestral home. But for Thio Angelo and me, anyway, the places our families came from were an inextricable part of our identity. (2004: 147)

Crucially, with respect to the concerns of Greek-American identity explored thus far in this discussion, the episode culminates in a vision of longing for the ancestral home that is highly emotive and linked to a Greek idiomatic expression to underscore its ‘truth’. Gage describes Thio Angelo as feeling pain for his lost home. She shares this sentiment and observes: ‘A place that pains you, in Greek vernacular, is somewhere you love. To love a place is to feel for it, to let it wound you so it leaves a scar, a permanent keepsake that helps you identify yourself’ (2004: 152).

For Tolides, the return to the village presents a vision of the primordial home that is both preserved in the past but also repeatedly replenished as the transnational subject moves back and forth between Greece and America. In ‘Almond Tree’, for example, Tolides pines for his village, located somewhere in Northern Greece, amid other ‘voices from Tirane and Skopje’ that emanate from the radio waves. Locked within the recesses of memory, he longingly recalls home, aestheticised through rich textures, hues and sounds (see Klironomos 2007b):

I miss smashing the green-covered shells,  
peeling the bitter skin, putting the slippery seed  
on my tongue….
I miss the bundles of tree limbs, the crackling fires,  
the crazy bright fields of tan and clover….
(Tolides 2006: 2)

Home here is prominently displayed as recalling the essence of lived experience in the originary homeland, which highlights, for some, a true transnational disposition (see Brah 1996: 192). Elsewhere, the desire for home is marred by feelings of impermanence and rootlessness. The speaker in ‘My Mother’s Room’ captures
the essence of the continual displacement of the transnational subject in recalling the image of his deceased mother’s suitcases as being transported back and forth between two countries:

She used to wish the suitcases
might stay together in one place,
or – better – that they’d never been bought,
lugging and dispersing hope as they did
back and forth across the ocean
all those years, her lost name
etched deep into their sides.
(Tolides 2006: 62)

In the poem ‘I Will Sweep’, the narrator, on return to his home village, copes with loss by getting himself to perform routine home-making chores around the house to reconnect with family members who have died: ‘Sweep, clean, tidy up, my arm repeating/a motion until I am woven with my dead into a clear/and living braid’ (Tolides 2006: 66). Home in this instance is associated with routine patterns of behaviour, the organisation of space and the division of labour, generating suitable conditions for the triggering of remembrance (see Rapport and Dawson 1998: 6–7).

Such routine forms of behaviour recur in poems such as ‘Watering’ but carry a more pointed meaning. Here mother and son tend to the land in a methodical, meditative, manner:

On the front steps:
basil, a mosquito plant,
tomatoes, geraniums,
pansies by the walkway,
irises and snapdragons I planted with my mother.

Some will need to be moved
to keep from being burned.

The news says talks break down over Kosovo,
bombings to be ratcheted up.

I will water them all.
It hasn’t rained for a long time.

By the tap at the side of the house
and late into the hours of the dark,
I move about the yard prayerfully,
filling and refilling the pail.
(Tolides 2006: 32)
Their inclination to nurture and protect the plants from the sun contrasts with the wilful destruction of the bombings over Kosovo. Tolides’s penchant for landscape in his poetic vision does not merely signal a nostalgic turn, nor is it merely a romanticised escape; it reveals a proclivity towards critique. Reference to the bombings in Kosovo – with which ethnic strife is readily associated – interrupt the description of home-making practices and a stable way of life. His vision of home instils a more natural, moral, order.

The village in Tolides’s poetry emerges as a utopic place of refuge where one can withstand the ills generated by global conflict and ethnic strife. One is struck by the pristine image of the landscape, whether in Greece or America, particularly when juxtaposed with media-generated images and sound bites that pointedly refer to the destructiveness wrought by global conflict, whether in the Balkans or the Middle East, in poems such as ‘More Sense’ and ‘Enduring Freedom’. Tolides offers temporary respite from the excesses caused by acute nationalism or statist rhetoric and recalls Henry Miller’s affirmation of the primordial landscape.

Unlike the static images of the rural landscape that characterise the other examples of Greek-American writing discussed thus far, George Sarrinikolaou’s memoir Facing Athens (2004) chronicles the return home in a transnational vision of fluidity. His representation of home vacillates between the recollected and the new social reality of Greece, one of demographic movement from both East and West with the influx of newly arrived immigrants and migrants. Rendered in a scathing critique, however, the dystopic cityscape of modern Athens ‘sprawls’ like a ‘labyrinth’ in a state of ever-changing flux and chaos and serves as an emblem for a modern nation-state fraught with a multitude of social, political and economic ills.

This devastating pronouncement derives from Sarrinikolaou’s unique vantage point. Alternately referring to himself as ‘a displaced native’ and ‘a perennial visitor’, he is ‘neither an insider nor an outsider, but one who stares at one’s life through glass’ (2004: 4, x). He maintains that this perspective, acquired over the years spent living in the US, has enabled him to observe contemporary Athenian society with complete clarity: ‘[M]y distance from the city has produced not only a sense of loss, but also a perspective that is different from, but no less clear than, that of anyone who lives there’ (2004: xii). Having been uprooted from Greece, the memoir is the way in which he tries to overcome the loss of a stable sense of home and identity. His narration, interjected with fragments of childhood memories from when he lived in Athens, reckons with the past, both ‘real and imagined’ (2004: xi) – of what was and what may have been.

His sojourn lasts for a period of three months during which he consciously chooses to live as a ‘lodger’ in a crudely furnished rented room, to which he retreats to ‘write, to claim my place in the city, and add my voice’, grieving both for the past and the present (2004: xiii). Writing in this ‘non-place’, he inscribes the vantage point of the transnational subject, having felt marginalised by native
Greeks who have discounted his opinions on political, social and economic issues precisely because he is deemed an outsider. Living without the comforts of home, he argues, enables him to witness life on the streets, facilitating contact with native locals, newly arrived immigrants, undocumented workers, and the displaced. The feeling of fluidity is most readily conveyed in his description of Omonia Square where ‘waves of immigrants … make the center [of Athens] a point in flux’, but it is ‘a center that is losing its hold’ (2004: 24, 20):

Pieces of the shattered iron curtain are everywhere – Albanians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Poles, and Russians. The men work in construction, often as day workers, or in factories, many off the books. The women clean houses and care for the elderly. Some become strippers and turn tricks. Their children may offer to sell you packs of tissues, or to wash your windshield, others simply beg. Here, too, are the Kurds of Iraq, abandoned by the United States and its allies as Saddam Hussein’s forces closed in after the First Gulf War. And, here, of course, are displaced Serbs, who have come in the hope that Greek sympathy will translate into a job. I also find Chinese, Africans, Arabs, Indians, and Pakistanis, all touched somehow by some faraway upheaval. In a city that was until recently largely homogenous, the influx of immigrants has been a shock. (2004: 17)

He points squarely to the plight of the disenfranchised others from the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Central and Southeast Asia as well as local migrants and transients who cannot be adequately accommodated by Greek society, revealing a facet of modern Athens that, in his opinion, is ‘very much unlike the spirit of omonia’ – for it counters the ideals of ‘concord, harmony, and unity’ upon which the modern nation is based (2004: 34, 19). He goes on astutely to undermine these utopic ideals upon which the city planners grounded the construction of Omonia Square, referencing a number of collective myths, drawn from ancient, Byzantine and modern history that are evoked by the names of the various streets leading to the square.

He depicts newly arrived immigrants as having replaced internal migrants who have long since abandoned their homes in the city centre and have gone on to build themselves suburban domiciles. ‘The city’s social transformation’, he observes, ‘is something from which to take cover, the home is the last piece of the city over which one has some control’ (2004: 34). But he describes the varying ways in which homes are acquired in Greece, albeit in his opinion often by questionable and dubious means, and illustrates how ‘tenuous’ the idea of home – in the sense of a space that provides shelter and protection – can be (2004: 14).

Regarding himself as an ‘immigrant’, who grew up in New York City in a multi-ethnic society, he consciously sets himself to articulate the unjust treatment of the disenfranchised other, something which he attributes to racism, as in this reference to an encounter with a Persian santouri player:
But I don’t ask why he is here, or how he got to Greece from Iran, why he chose to stop in Athens, how he survives, what he hopes to do, or if he misses his home. The answers to these questions would only point to what I already know. Living an immigrant’s life is one of the most difficult things a person can do. Being an immigrant in Athens must be especially hard. The city has forgotten that it is itself made up of internal immigrants and Greek refugees. It has forgotten that, for much of the last century, emigrating abroad was the only way to survive for countless Greeks, and that the country’s economy relied on the money immigrants sent home. Now Greece, and Athens especially, has unwillingly become an immigrant destination. Greeks call their treatment of the new inhabitants xenophobic, but, really, it’s racist. (2004: 7–8)

Yet for all his sympathy with the plight of the immigrant, and despite his journalistic training, Sarrinikolaou misses the opportunity to go more in depth in order to understand the predicament of these new inhabitants. His use of the terms ‘racist’ or ‘xenophobic’ begs further definition, as well as differentiating between the conditions that marked the socialisation of immigrants in early twentieth-century America and those in present-day Greece. Moreover, he makes superficial judgements, based on the new immigrants’ appearance, and projects motivations and reasons for their being in Greece without investigation. Rather than illuminate his subject, his experience in this brief sojourn raises questions as to whether he has actually witnessed Athenian life – for the stay in Athens has been based on a model of entering and leaving the site and not engaging with his proposed subjects over a prolonged period of time in which relationships could realistically be formed.9 His chance encounters effectively dehumanise the subjects of his inquiry.

Though unattainable, the desire to reclaim the primordial home beyond the confines of the nation is integral to Greek-American identity in the spectrum of examples we have looked at in this discussion. For writers of the third generation, retracing vestiges of the familial past opens the path towards self-discovery. For Manesiotis, the return to the village brings her into contact with the ancestral home, allowing her to locate roots and reaffirm traditional conceptualisations of Greekness in an attempt to stabilise contemporary identity in a world inundated by flux and impermanence. Like Samaras, however, she finds herself ambivalent after the experience and unable to reconcile herself with the notion of home. Gage confronts and tries to excise the traumatic and controversial history inextricably tied to the site of the ancestral home by restoring the fabric of the house. She opts to engage in an ongoing social dynamic with the contemporary inhabitants of her ancestral village and grounds her identity in its present-day rural culture.

For writers of the first generation, the transnational subject moves back and forth between Greece and America in order to come to terms with both the past and the present, enveloped within its own solipsism in reaction to overt forms of nationalism. In its pastoral luminosity, home, for Tolides, emerges as a utopic

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9 It is a strategy that has already brought him sharp criticism. See Panourgia (2007).
place of refuge in which to withstand the ills wrought by global conflict and ethnic strife. For Sarrinikolaou the idea of home, in a transnational vision of fluidity, reflects how the Athenian cityscape has become a crossroads of demographic movement from both East and West in which he reveals the paradoxes that these transformations have posed to statist definitions of Greek national identity.

The aestheticisation and orientalising of the Greek topos in this body of writing recall rhetorical strategies of Anglo-American travel writing. Yet we can distinguish this corpus of texts from mere casual travel writing in its representation of home, steeped as it is in images of ancestral homes, onto which the intricacies of Greek-American subjectivity are projected. In articulating a poetics of nostalgia, it redresses the loss of the family and its culture. Its fleeting vision, however, is often based in the life of the imagination rather than in the experience of human fellowship. While such claims to the primordial home are indeed articulated, in reality, acceptance and accommodation by native Greeks are sometimes denied, revealing, to an even greater extent, how in many instances the writers considered here are inscribing an ideological position. It is one in which, with each visit to Greece, they continually strive to negotiate.

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Chapter 18
Repatriation on Screen: National Culture and the Immigrant Other since the 1990s
Dimitris Papanikolaou

On 18 August 2004 the 17-year-old Ilias Iliadis won the gold medal in the Judo (81 kg category) at the Athens Olympics. The next day both the Greek and international press were eager to tell his tearful story: Iliadis was ‘a Greek Pontic repatriate’, a ‘proud son’ of the community from the Black Sea who ‘had returned to their ancestral homeland’ after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This was, in the word-playing title of Figaro of 18 August, ‘L’Odyssée d’ Iliadis’, and the athlete was seen by Le Monde of 19 August as a typical ‘héros Grec, venu de Géorgie’. Iliadis himself supported this narrative by declaring that his life-hero was Alexander the Great and by dedicating his medal to ‘all Greeks, especially the co-ethnic migrants’ [in Greek: ομογενείς (hereafter: omogeneis)]. He was also eventually decorated by the Pan-Pontic Organization of Greece, its president announcing that: ‘In him we honour our repatriates [palinostountes], the Pontic Greeks from the Soviet Union who came as refugees at the end of the twentieth century to the land of their forefathers.’

Only a couple of days later did it emerge that Iliadis was actually born and raised Jiarji Zviadaouri in Tbilisi, the son of a Georgian family with no Greek connections. He had emigrated to Greece only a couple of years before the Olympics. Having been formally adopted by his coach, Nikos Iliadis, himself a ‘repatriate’ of Pontic origin from Tbilisi, he had taken the family name. To all intents and purposes, Zviadaouri/Iliadis was an immigrant athlete, fighting for a European country in need of (and ready to pay for) gold medal winners. In symbolic terms, he had to be presented as a long lost returning son.¹

The questions I will address in this chapter are encapsulated in this incident. What makes Greeks (and apparently not only Greeks) prefer to see repatriates instead of immigrants? What is the role of stories about the Greek diaspora and repatriation in today’s multicultural Greece? Do these stories have an impact on the way new immigrants to countries such as Greece are treated and, perhaps more importantly, represented?

¹ Quotes and details of the Iliadis case are drawn from articles in the Greek national daily newspapers Ta Nea 18 and 19 August 2004 and Eleftherotypia 19 and 28 August 2004.
It is not difficult in the first instance to see why stories of repatriation and ‘return’ may be appealing in today’s national contests and contexts. They are easily readable, as they confirm (rather than challenge) stereotypes (e.g. the Greek hero), symbolic narratives (the return of Odysseus) and more stable accounts of collective identity (the originary homeland). The case of Ilias Iliadis shows that stories of ‘co-ethnic repatriation’ can also be used to overshadow other stories, the ones related to new migratory movements, which are often pushed aside in the national economy of representation, even though they are central to the current economic growth of a European nation state such as Greece. Coverage and official representations of these very Olympic Games, that saw Zviadaouri/Iliadis win his gold medal for Greece, are a case in point. They were full of references to diaspora Greeks, while lacking any mention of the multiculturalism of today’s Athens or any acknowledgment of the thousands of non-Greek immigrant workers who laboured (and, in some cases, died) in order to prepare the event on time.

I do not want to argue, in this chapter at least, that a focus on the diaspora simply takes the space, literally elbows out of the picture the non-ethnic immigrants who have been living in Greece since the 1990s. Rather, what I am suggesting is that, if we want to review the cultural representation and the discourses related to immigration to Greece after 1990, we will need also to investigate a distinction that often passes unnoticed as a subtext in these discourses, that is the distinction between ‘Greek diasporic subject vs. non-Greek immigrant’, or ‘ethnic (migratory) self vs. immigrant other’. This distinction rests, of course, on a number of oversimplifications and narratives about the Greek diaspora, in which the geography and temporality of different migrations from the recent to the remote past, as well as their social specificity, collapse to reiterate primordial narratives about the ethnic self. The conceptual border that is thus enforced between ‘Migrant Us’ and ‘Immigrant Them’ eventually produces very topical and persistent, if at times unnoticed, ideological work.

David Eng has argued that ‘precisely because culture in our postmodern era of “late” capitalism has been especially burdened with managing the contradictions of the nation-state, it is often on the terrain of culture that discrepancies between the individual and the state, politics and economics, and the material and the imaginary are resolved or, alternately, exposed’ (in Desai 2002: 65). Keeping this in mind, in the second part of this chapter I will turn to the two most acclaimed recent Greek films on immigration: Eternity and a Day by Theo Angelopoulos and From the Edge of the City by Constantine Giannaris (both released in 1998). After positioning them in their larger cultural context, I will theorise these films’ complex take on the relationship between Greekness, national culture and discourses about migration. I will show how both films engage with recognisable patterns of representing the new immigrants to Greece in the 1990s, especially in the way they interweave the presence of new immigrants with the (spectral) apparition of the Greek repatriate. In their own ways both films alternately negotiate and expose the discrepancies between the imaginary national homogeneity (often projected on
the figure of the co-ethnic returning migrant) and the feared heterogeneity that the non-Greek new immigrant is symbolically seen as introducing.

‘Migrant Us’ vs. ‘Immigrant Them’ and Representation

It is well documented that since the late 1980s Greece, along with other Southern European countries such as Spain and Italy, has seen itself turn from a country exporting immigrants to one receiving them. Triggered by the collapse of command economies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the main influx of immigrants occurred in the 1990s. This is the reason why sources often refer to people who came to Greece in that period and afterwards as new immigrants. Less than 20 years after this new wave of immigration Greece’s immigrant population was estimated at just over one million people, the vast majority of whom were born in Albania and the former Soviet Union (figures from Gropas and Triantafyllidou 2005, who review the main sources). The number of non-Greek nationals in Greece in the first decade of the new century accounts for about 9 per cent of the total resident population, a figure which, strikingly, is very similar to the percentage of Greeks who emigrated to Central Europe and America after the Second World War (cf. Kubat 1979, King et al. 1997, King 2000).

The larger background against which I want to position my analysis is dominated by the argument that has tended to follow ‘naturally’ from this analogy between ‘Greece as formerly an exporter of emigrants’ and ‘Greece as currently a receiver of immigrants’. Indeed, progressive political discourse has often assumed that the very experience of Greece as a ‘nation of emigrants’ would make it much easier for the country to become a host to new immigrants. The underlying assumption here is that Greeks can understand the plight of the immigrants better, because migration has been central in the national narrative. This is also an attitude often shared by officials and emulated uncritically by cultural policy-makers. Recent state-supported cultural gestures, such as the big retrospective on ‘Immigration in Greek Cinema, 1956–2006’ organised by the Thessaloniki Film Festival, tend to group together and purposefully conflate older representations of Greek emigrants with recent representations of immigrants to Greece. The assumption underlying this tendency is that there is a seamless continuity linking the narratives of Greek emigration, of longing for the Greek homeland and of repatriation, to the representation of the new immigrants who have been coming to Greece since the 1990s. It is also implicitly argued that the archive of cultural texts and images related to emigration from Greece can function almost as an educational platform for Greeks to understand, welcome and help integrate new, non-ethnically Greek, immigrants (Kartalou et al. 2006, Tomai-Konstantopoulou 2004).

However, research has shown that the advent of new immigrants has been largely met with a steep rise in xenophobia in Greece, resulting, crucially, in more intense expressions of ‘defensive nationalism’ (Papataxiarchis 2006: 46–50). New immigrants have been the victims of negative representation by the Greek media,
especially during the 1990s when most of them remained in the country ‘without papers’ and illegally (Karydis 1996, Pavlou 2001, Venturas 2004b). And Greek audiences seem to have drawn strict conceptual borders between the cultural archive of Greek migrations and the cultural representations of new immigrants on offer.²

These reactions can be better understood in the context of the more general observation that contact with new immigrants in today’s Fortress Europe results in a tendency to reinforce perceptions about the cultural homogeneity of the host population. Instead of the old rhetoric of racial differences, anti-immigration discourses today define the immigrants by their exclusion, their externality, their otherness, their cultural difference constituted as a threat. Hence the rise of ‘a rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion that emphasizes the distinctiveness of cultural identity, traditions, and heritage among groups and assumes the closure of culture by territory’ (Stolcke 1999: 2; see also Christopoulos 2001: 89–91, Venturas 2004b).

It is in this context that the typified figure of the Greek migrant comes to play a key role in the projection of a homogeneous, solid and resilient Greek identity. Greek migrations are largely thought of as unique, and there has been a very uneasy reaction to efforts to compare the public’s negative treatment of new immigrants in Greece today with the phobic attitudes that Greek emigrants had to face in their host countries earlier in the twentieth century.³ The figure of the Greek migrant has not (and cannot) be effectively used to promote an openness towards new immigrants, simply because it plays such a key role in conceptualisations of what constitutes ‘primordial Greekness’ – common ancestry, culture, religion and language (Hirschon 1999: 176; cf. Kitromilides 1990, Triantafyllidou 2000).

Stories of migration, displacement and ‘return’ are presented as permeating the very texture of Greece’s cultural fabric, from the demotic song tradition to the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the popular cinema of the 1960s and the popular music of the 1960s–1970s. Thus a folk song about migration from the nineteenth century comes to inhabit the same cultural space as a story about refugees from Asia Minor in 1922, a popular song from the 1950s and a film about Greek immigrants in Germany in the 1960s. These are all, of course, representations of very different population movements, undertaken in very different historical

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² On public attitudes towards the immigrants see Triantafyllidou 2000, 2001, Petrakou 2001; for a similar discussion on Italy, see Mai 2003.

³ A series of articles published in the newspaper Eleftherotypia in 1998 compared early American phobic views about the criminality of Greek immigrants to the USA with the dominant perceptions about Albanian criminality in 1990s Greece. The articles caused widespread reaction especially because, as Lina Venturas points out, they aimed to undermine the powerful ‘stereotype of fellow countrymen who always excel abroad and the myth about the “particularity” of Greeks’. The heated arguments that followed demonstrated that ‘the past and its perception constitute an issue related to the contemporary polemic on migration but also on the “identity of Greeks”’ (2004a: 121).
circumstances, archived in very different forms of cultural text. What makes them resonate together is their subsequent use to support the idea of ‘common fate’ and ‘common experience’ of a unified ‘migrant Greekness’. Turned in this way into an atemporal national fixture, the migratory narratives promoted by contemporary national culture perform a dual function. On the one hand, they map Greekness by underlining those aspects of identity that migrant subjects safeguard as Greek. On the other hand, they become celebratory assertions of the ability of Greekness to survive, even under pressure and displacement.

The centrality of the figure of the Greek migrant in conceptions of Greekness is further reinforced by the Greek state’s conceptualisation of the Greek diaspora and the official state policies towards diaspora Greeks’ ‘right of return’ and right to claim full citizenship under the *jus sanguinis*. Yet this does not mean that all the people who have benefited from these policies as *palinostountes omogeneis* (co-ethnic returnees), especially after the 1990s, have found an unconditional welcome in the country. Their co-ethnic status does not mean that they are not taxonomised by xenophobic discourses into more and less welcome, or, even, more or less Greek, often by state procedures themselves. Actually, what often happens is that *omogeneis* are instrumentalised in exclusionary narratives of migration (which posit the ‘good’ migrant as the returning co-ethnic migrant), narratives by which they might also ultimately be judged and excluded (as not co-ethnic *enough*).

For instance, the two most significant groups of new immigrants to Greece, the members of the communities in Northern Epirus that formed the Greek minority in Albania (*Voreioipeirotis* = Northern Epirotes) and the Pontic populations from the former Soviet Union, have largely been welcomed as fellow Greeks by the Greek state that granted them special status and easier routes to naturalisation (Diamanti-Karanou 2002, Triantafyllidou and Veikou 2002). However, it is surprising how easily *Voreioipeirotis* become ‘Albanians’ in xenophobic discourses. Something similar happens with the Pontic Greeks from the Soviet Union, who are called ‘*Pontioi*’ (Pontics) when their co-ethnic status needs to be underlined, and ‘*Rossopontioi*’ (Russian Pontics) when the emphasis falls on their immigrant status.

The two films I will now turn to are important for an understanding of the discrepancies in the cultural representation of migration in Greece precisely because they focus on characters who can claim to belong to the category of ‘co-ethnic returnee’. Both films show how these characters negotiate between the positionality of the new immigrant and that of the returnee: between the ‘repatriate Voreioipeirotis’ and the ‘clandestine Albanian immigrant’ in the first case, and between the ‘returning Pontios’ and the ‘Rossopontios’ in the second. I will argue that, by so doing, both films offer new ways to critique and think through the complex intertwining of the national, the cultural, the nation state and the new challenges immigration has been posing for Greece since the 1990s.

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4 For an analysis of such tactics see Baltsiotis 2004; cf. Pavlou 2002.

5 On Pontic Greeks, politics and identity, see Voutira 2006.
Buying Cultural Closure: Theo Angelopoulos’s *Eternity and a Day*

Theo Angelopoulos’s *Eternity and a Day* narrates the story of Alexandros (Bruno Ganz), a terminally ill Greek poet on his long journey to hospital, on what seems to be the last day of his life. While on a memory-evoking journey around his native Thessaloniki, the poet comes across an immigrant boy begging on the streets. The gradually emerging friendship between poet and boy helps the poet in his journey to self-awareness, becoming the catalyst for the epiphanic ending of the film.

It seems that Angelopoulos had been working on a script about a dying poet on the path to self-revelation when stories describing the harassment and exploitation of young immigrants (‘the children of the traffic-lights’ scandal) shocked Greece in 1996. He decided at that stage to integrate the subplot with the immigrant boy as a comment against the mistreatment of immigrant children.

One of Angelopoulos’s most typical films, *Eternity and a Day* is a highly accomplished meditation on time, creativity, memory, love, art, history, presence, absence, travel and death. Yet when it comes to the story of the immigrant boy and the hardships faced by those who find themselves clandestine immigrants in contemporary Greece, the film seems both to want to document and shy away from the issue. In the larger narrative economy of the film the boy’s story ends up functioning only as a catalyst. Its aim is to bestow closure on that larger meditation on personal and national identity with which the film seems to be concerned.

We never find out the boy’s name in the film, just as we are never told where exactly he comes from. We only see him teaming up with other immigrant friends, one of whom has the Muslim-Albanian name Selim. All seem to be clandestine; without papers or permanent homes, they are often harassed by older people-traffickers, have to constantly flee the police and at one point are apprehended by a gang that tries to sell them on for adoption. Crucially, though, unlike the rest of his friends, this boy (he is referred to in the credits as ‘the small boy of the traffic lights’) has ethnic Greek links. We first see the boy using his links to Greekness as a survival tactic: when the poet Alexandros decides to send him back to ‘his village over the border’, the boy starts singing a Greek folk song on migration (‘Xenitemeno mou pouli’ [‘My little migratory bird’]) in which the Greek word ‘korfoula’ is used idiomatically to mean ‘little flower, new plant’. The word, once uttered, not only attracts the interest of the ailing poet, it also triggers a much deeper connection between the two characters.

The boy’s double status as a clandestine immigrant and an ethnically Greek participant in the body of the nation will from that moment on become instrumental in the unfolding of the story. It is the boy’s suddenly apparent Greek ethnic

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6 On the inspirations for *Eternity and a Day* and the script’s development, see Angelopoulos’s interviews in Fainaru 2001: 101–22, esp. 114. It is interesting that in these interviews, as well as in the reviews that appeared upon the film’s original release, the young boy is alternately called ‘Albanian’, ‘Greek Albanian’, ‘refugee from Albania’, ‘immigrant’, and ‘Northern Epirote’.
Repatriation on Screen

background that strengthens his relationship with the dying Alexandros. Moved by his idiomatic use of language, the poet asks the boy to teach him more rare Greek words used in his village – a village that Greek audiences would assume is in Southern Albania (Northern Epirus), but which, significantly, is also never named in the film. In a gesture presented as highly symbolic, the ailing poet even offers payment every time a new word is introduced by the young boy. Two more new words will be introduced that way, enough for the film to achieve a climax of sorts: xenitis and argadini ['a migrant everywhere in the world’ and ‘too late’]. Defamiliarising, if not strictly speaking idiomatic, these words, like the folk songs in which similar words are often used, function as easy signifiers of local identity, understood by a pan-Hellenic audience as ‘authentic’, culturally specific, nationally significant. The film builds on them further: these words end up exemplifying a primordial meaning and, therefore, a hidden riddle in the meditation on identity that Angelopoulos tries to develop.

The ‘uncorrupted Greek language’ spoken by the boy slowly becomes a metonymy of the authentic Greek soul. In this particular context the film introduces a metadiegetic level involving the story of Greece’s national poet, Dionysios Solomos (1798–1857). An Italian-educated nobleman from Zante who spoke Italian much better than he did Greek, Solomos followed his Romantic impulse to write national literature and, legend has it, used to go around villages in order to collect ‘authentic’ Greek words and phrases from the lips of the people.7 Earlier on in Eternity we have learned that a lifelong project for the poet Alexandros had been to fill in the gaps of Solomos’s most ambitious but unfinished masterpiece, The Free Besieged, which incidentally happens to be a canonical poem on the Greek War of Independence and one about clearly defined boundaries demarcating insiders and outsiders. Finishing this task had been impossible for Alexandros. As a bourgeois intellectual with a European education, he was also, like Solomos, ‘missing the right words’. Such words, it is implied, he is now able to ‘buy’ from the young immigrant he meets on the streets on what is probably the last day of his life.

Significantly, after a long excursus around Thessaloniki, poet and boy end up in the harbour, where the latter – his Albanian friend Selim having already been killed in an accident – leaves for an unspecified destination, handsomely swept out of view (and most probably out of Greece). The ailing poet will go back to his deserted ancestral house by the sea which will now be transformed, in the last shot

7 Angelopoulos explains the slightly exaggerated version presented in the film as follows: ‘While it is true that [Solomos] collected the language of the people, it is not true that he actually paid for words. So that must have evolved in my imagination, and since it seemed to me to be a very poetic idea, I left it in. … The metaphor is clear. Our mother tongue is our only real identity card. To quote Heidegger: our only home is our language. Every word opens new doors for the person who acquires it, but to go through that door, you have to pay’ (Fainaru 2001: 108, 121).
of the film, through a flashback to the memory of its heyday, when it was all new and vibrant. And, in symbolic terms, exclusively Greek.

The use of the immigrant boy as a vessel of ‘authentic’ Greek culture taps into the larger discourse that has related co-ethnic repatriates with the notion of ‘deep Greekness’. The film intensifies this allusion through another character, that of the poet’s housekeeper, a Pontic Greek. In a long sequence we even watch the elaborate ritual of her son’s traditional Pontic marriage in the harbour of Thessaloniki.

In actual fact, *Eternity* uses the character of a young Greek-Albanian boy as a catalyst in order to tell a multiple story of return(s). On the highest level it is the story of the poet returning to his loved ones, his personal memories, his house and his deep understanding of life. At subordinate narrative levels, it is the figure of the *Greek migrant returning* that looms everywhere, as, for example, in the metadiegetic scene with Solomos which starts with him in Italy exclaiming: ‘Ho preso la mia decisione. Parto per la Grecia. Non posso più rimanere qui’ (‘I have taken a decision: I am departing for Greece; I can’t remain here anymore’). Similarly, we learn that the poet Alexandros had to live abroad for long periods, though always returning home in the end. He sums up the challenge of the film in a poetic monologue, triggered by both his memories and his meeting with the young immigrant boy. Alexandros cries: ‘Why did I live my life in exile? Why was it that the only times I was able to return were when I was granted the grace to speak my language? My own language? When I could still recover lost words, or retrieve forgotten words from the silence? Why was it that that was the only moment I could hear the sound of my steps in the house? Why?’

To be fair, return is an overarching theme in Angelopoulos’s poetics. It runs through many of his films – in which ethnic Greek *Gastarbeiter*, directors, poets, actors, writers, journalists, political exiles, return to the Greek homeland – and is organically paired with a return to memory, childhood and the trauma of history. This *poetics of return* is also one of the key aspects supporting Angelopoulos’s status as the essential national auteur in New Greek Cinema. What interests me is that, in *Eternity and a Day*, return also engulfs the story of an exploited immigrant boy in 1990s Thessaloniki. It is precisely the formalist handling of Angelopoulos’s filmic storytelling that permits this critique. In the highly aestheticised narrative of *Eternity*, the *migrant* boy triggers a familiar set of stories of return, before he is shipped off to an unknown destination. Thus the film disposes of the only characteristic that remained unredeemed within this story of returns: the boy’s status as an *immigrant* in contemporary Greece.

It is not coincidental that Alexandros had been aiming all his life to write a conclusion to one of Dionysios Solomos’s unfinished masterpieces. Solomos, the Romantic national poet, left most of his poems, even the ones that later became the centrepieces of Greek identity such as *The Free Besieged*, unfinished. Angelopoulos, the modernist filmmaker, strives to complete the missing links, to give an order and a meaning to fragments. It is exactly in this process of creative search that the young immigrant’s ethnic background becomes instrumental. The young boy’s presence, understood as the return of the authentic and migratory Greek self, fills
the gap left by the nation-building process. What *Eternity* establishes is that in order for a modernist, aesthetically circular account of Greekness to be celebrated in the late twentieth century, a return of the migrant Greek self has to be symbolically effected. Yet the moment such a return becomes central in the search for identity, the otherness of the immigrant within the Greek space is effaced. As soon as the narrative of co-ethnicity, ‘*omogeneia*’, is called on, the actual heterogeneity of the real situation is symbolically dropped. It is important to understand here what is achieved at the expense of the immigrant’s otherness: the departure of the boy, together with all his friends and the issues related to their clandestinity, from the harbour of Thessaloniki, symbolises the active disposal of the ‘noisy’ elements in the body of the ‘homoge-nation’.

To push the interpretation a step further, Angelopoulos’s film expresses in a subliminal way a very real situation: the presence of new immigrants reinvigorates the modern Greek state in economic and social terms, in the same way that the presence of the young boy gives the last breath of life and a promise of rejuvenation to the dying poet in the film. In Angelopoulos’s modernist poetics the boy means form, missing links with the past and the self, and the promise of a new aesthetic order. In Greek reality the immigrant, as much needed workforce, means the fulfilment of a process of modernisation that has been constantly celebrated, especially in the urban Greek landscape since the 1990s (with new highways, train and metro lines, the new Athens airport, stadiums and the 2004 Olympics). But in order for this process to be narrated within the aesthetic order of national identity, the dissonance, the otherness of the immigrant, have to be airbrushed from the picture. Idealised narratives of Greek migration, co-ethnic return (*palinostisi*) and co-ethnic diaspora (*omogeneia*), can also be used symbolically to that effect.

‘*My name is Pond, Russo-Pond*’: Constantine Giannaris’s *From the Edge of the City*

The ideas about migration, national identity and aesthetic order that we saw at work in *Eternity and a Day*, form the set of sublimated assumptions against which, I will argue, Constantine Giannaris’s *From the Edge of the City* positions itself. Still a subcultural hit with audiences around the world but never a box office triumph in Greece, the film engages with and actively subverts the narratives I have so far been analysing, thereby also demonstrating their power and pervasiveness. In it another repatriate takes centre stage, this time only to disrupt the narrative of *omogeneia* and homogeneity and provide a powerful statement of otherness and alienation.

*From the Edge of the City* centres on 17-year-old Sasha and his group of friends, most of them presented from the outset as petty thieves and rent boys. All the boys have emigrated to Greece from the former Soviet Union and identify (not without a certain degree of self-irony) as Soviet Pontic Greeks. Often treated by the media as ‘returnees to the land of their forefathers’, these members of Pontic Greek
communities from the Black Sea, displaced in parts of the Soviet Union in the early twentieth century (and then further displaced in accordance with Stalin’s nationalities policies) have emigrated to Greece in large numbers in the 1990s. Even though officially welcomed as kin and offered faster tracks to naturalisation than other immigrants, Pontic Greeks from the former Soviet Union soon became ‘Rossopontioi’ in common parlance, had difficulties finding jobs suited to their education and training, and most of them had to make ends meet by trading household items from the former Soviet Union.

Giannaris’s film establishes its position regarding the narrative processes of ‘repatriation’ and return very early on. Facing the camera and in playful mood, Sasha, played by the real life Pontic Greek returnee Stathis Papadopoulos, mimics the James Bond catchphrase and announces: ‘My name is Pond, Russo-Pond’. In this way director and subject locate themselves: the young man watches the camera watching him and ‘plays the actor’, imitates and etiolates a cinema cliché while poking fun at the word Rossopontios, the immigrant category he has been interpellated to fit. At the same time the director emerges as the one who renarrativises this playful moment as meaningful (one realises this incident may have come after workshop experimentation, and then been kept in the editing by Giannaris). We are in completely different territory here: the omogeneia is defied as just a posture, the phantasmatic homogeneity supported in Greek cultural discourses subverted from the outset. Significantly, the boys in Sasha’s group will continue mixing Russian and Greek in their conversations for the duration of the film (while the Greek-Albanian boys in Eternity speak between themselves only in heavily accented Greek).

From the Edge of the City is about exclusion, about the subculture of a group of immigrant youths and their life (on the verge of lawlessness and on the outskirts of urban Athens). It is about their play with identity, their interaction with other groups of legal and illegal immigrants – an important part of the film is also occupied by a sex-trafficking subplot involving a Russian prostitute. This group of Russian/Greek youths forms a web of relations that maps, partially but vividly, a city beneath the city, the Athens of new immigrants, a system of life with its own hierarchies, market forces and rules.

Crucially at no point in the film do we see the Athens we know, the city of official representations. No image of any of the city’s landmarks appears: most scenes in central Athens are shot at night, revealing vibrant underground urban locations, dodgy hotels, bars, bordellos and pick-up squares. The morning shots are uncharacteristic, but obsessively focus on the city in all its modern-day expansion. Repeatedly filmed from the geographically marginal viewpoint of the poor suburb of Menidi where the boys live, the Attica basin emerges as a conglomerate of concrete and glittering solar panels. The boys’ Greek patrons and clients, men but also women, are seen living in exuberantly modern apartments, fully accessorised with the latest gadgets. Travelling in the city, the characters constantly come across huge building sites and roadworks – workplaces for the new immigrants. The 1990s Athens depicted from its margins is caught up in construction fever,
keen to catch up on its modernisation signalled by Greece’s participation in the European Monetary Union and its staging of the Olympic Games. In the meantime, the young group of friends is filmed hanging around taking drugs, fantasies about easy money, dancing in pre-choreographed routines, travelling in fast cars, sharing jokes in Russian and negotiating their own version of uneven urban reality.8

*From the Edge of the City* was originally conceived as a 30-minute documentary, a format that survives in the interviews between the central character and an unseen interviewer, the director himself. This helps the film expose a series of negotiations from which representation results. Most characters are played by real-life immigrant youths, yet, in its final form, the film is eerily unsettling, with most of the non-professional actors, playing a version of themselves, ‘reading’ their lines as if this were a game. The viewer realises very early on that this is the story as told by the director, a narrativisation not of the characters’ exclusion, but of the director’s own negotiation with it (and with them). Even the occasional ‘flashbacks’, where the central character is dreaming of an idyllic childhood in the golden wheatfields of Kazakhstan, with their cinematic referencing of Parajanov and Tarkovsky, as well as their idealistic representation of rural life, look like they come not from the characters’ imaginary, but from the director’s fantasies about them. These scenes are not, as their counterparts are in *Eternity* (in particular the scenes with Dionysios Solomos) a form of soul-searching for the authentic ethnic self. They stand, rather, as subtle critiques of the constructedness of such fantasies of ethnic authenticity, memory and belonging.

Giannaris posits, in the subtlest of ways, that any contact with the other is potentially always already a manipulation, and that representation is instrumental in this manipulation. His camera follows the boys obsessively, listens out for their jokes, teases their bodies, eroticises them, plays with their availability. The strategy gives way to a complex game of belonging and identity. Instead of being proud members of the Greek diaspora, these youths seem to express, as José Arroyo has noted, a sense of ‘diasporic alienation, of belonging to several places and nowhere at all’ (Arroyo 2000: 43–4). Yet, I would argue, they are not represented as suspended ‘between here and there’, suspended between countries, trying to integrate and belong to the Greek motherland but unable to do so. These youths are watched negotiating both the ‘here’ and the ‘there’, playfully changing versions of both, juggling identity-positions just as the central character returns to play (and negotiate) with the camera in his ‘interviews’ with the director.

I need to stress here that in formal terms Giannaris effects a break with the characteristics of the cinematic style of Angelopoulos, widely imitated in Greece to the point of being considered the central characteristic of a national school of New Greek Cinema. If there is such a thing as a New Greek cinematic language, Giannaris’s extremely fast pace and jumpy editing in *From the Edge* is defiantly ‘un-Greek’ and shows a different direction in cinematography. It is no coincidence that the film was the first its director shot in Greece after having worked for more than

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8 For a solid analysis of the film and its reception, see Mini 2006.
a decade in the UK, close to Derek Jarman and a group of directors acknowledged by *Sight and Sound* in the 1990s as the British version of ‘New Queer Cinema’ (Bell et al. 1992). Interviewed for the 1992 special issue on the trend, Giannaris declared: ‘What I am trying to grapple with now is whether my sexuality has any relevance to the broader world. How does it allow certain insights … I want to use these formal devices, that outlook and sensibility to look at a wider society … It’s taking on taboos, saying the unsayable – to me that’s what queerness is’ (Giannaris in Bell et al. 1992: 35). Made five years after this statement, *From the Edge of the City* can be seen as successfully putting this idea into practice. Reread in this light, one can claim that a central part of the film’s subversiveness is exactly the thinly veiled positionality of the director’s gaze. The immigrant ‘subjects’ of the film are there to negotiate their marginality with a narrating viewpoint that is itself self-expository, marginal, strange, queer, and ready to ‘say the unsayable’.

On the level of form, with constant references to Gus Van Sant’s *My Own Private Idaho*, as well as to Derek Jarman and Isaac Julien, *From the Edge* associates itself with a ‘new queer’ aesthetic instead of conforming to a poetics of national culture. Decidedly post-nationalist, framed by desire and the fluidity of identities, the film adopts an aesthetic code that allows it to expose and critique the dominant narratives of repatriation, migrant return and homogeneous modernisation, which I showed at work in *Eternity and a Day*.

If, in order to tell the story of a new immigrant, a film such as *Eternity* decided to attach it to a narrative of repatriation and return, Giannaris adopts a new queer framework that allows him to expose and dismantle the fictiveness of national and gender identities, the personal, the ethnic, the historical, the depth and the surface. In doing so, his work understands the immigrants as subjects who negotiate their otherness with the range of discontinuous identities that populate the fictitiously homogeneous modern Greek self. In *From the Edge of the City*, immigrants are Greek in that they are both different and real, loud, heterogeneous and here to stay.

**Conclusion**

In their two very different films, *Eternity and a Day* and *From the Edge of the City*, Angelopoulos and Giannaris expose and mediate those tensions and inconsistencies evident in the reception of new immigrants to Greece since the 1990s, albeit pointing in different directions. Angelopoulos seems to propose a national culture that will re-engage with the themes of otherness, movement and identity on its own terms, thus accommodating the fast-changing human geography of Greece in order to reinvigorate itself. However, the cultural vocabulary Angelopoulos uses, including the consistent framing of his film as part of the oeuvre of a national auteur, becomes instrumental in effacing the potential (cultural and social) challenges posed by the presence of new immigrants. *Eternity* shows how difficult it is to escape a vocabulary of national culture that celebrates returnees and erases
immigrants, especially since one of its key roles has been the formation/projection of a homogeneous Greekness. This is why it was important to underline how *From the Edge of the City* effects a break with the narrative (and the expected form) of a homogeneous national culture, in order to give representational space to its characters as immigrants rather than returnees.

In the final analysis, the recent discursive tension between ‘ethnic Self’ and ‘immigrant Other’ in Greece needs to be seen in the larger context of the discrepancy between the heterogeneity of contemporary Greek society and the homogeneity of the imaginary projections that support Greekness. In the films I have analysed, one can see this discrepancy at work: it ultimately shapes representation, ready to be exposed even when the narrative mediates to resolve it.

**References**


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Rebetika songs are arguably the artistic genre of Greek migration and diaspora par excellence. The very genesis of this type of song is commonly attributed to successive displacements of large numbers of Greeks into urban centres around the Aegean and beyond. Accordingly, refugees and emigrants are credited with signal contributions to the development of the genre in the early twentieth century, and diaspora recordings were crucial to its revival in the 1970s. Rebetikos is an adjective redolent of migrancy: one version of its disputed etymology traces its origins to ρεμβόμαι meaning ‘I rove’. And some of the earliest examples of its application to song appear on record labels and in record catalogues printed for overseas Greek communities, complete with various transliterations and translations into English, such as ‘Greek bum song’ (see Gauntlett 2005: 183f.).

Reflecting and reinforcing all this, expatriation has long been a core theme of rebetika. Indeed, the spiritual homeland of rebetes, the mythical heroes of the songs, is to kourbeti, most literally ‘exile’ (cf. the Turkish gurbet), as attested by Markos Vamvakaris’s classic song ‘All the rebetes in the world’. This song was recorded in 1937, but its title presciently adumbrates a globalisation of the genre and its mythology which reached its apogee in 2004 in ‘The Diaspora of Rebetika’ a global audio-anthology issued by the World Music publishers Network Medien of Frankfurt, featuring 31 ensembles from 13 countries (Network 27.418).

Of course, long before their appropriation to World Music or their extensive availability on the internet, rebetika were globalised ‘from below’ by expatriate Greek consumers and producers around the planet. This chapter illustrates and discusses selected aspects of this process with reference to rebetika in Australia, home to supposedly half a million Greeks at some point (the majority now Australian-born), and specifically in Melbourne, whose large and conspicuously

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1 Throughout this chapter I have taken the liberty of standardising the variant transliterations as ‘rebetika’, ‘rebetis’ [s.], ‘rebetes’ [pl.] etc. All the translations from Greek are my own.
2 The text is transcribed in Kounadis (2005: 170) from the 78 rpm record Parlophone B21915.
3 The 2006 Census actually reports 365,150 persons claiming Greek ancestry in Australia of whom 109,988 were born in Greece; the corresponding figures for Melbourne
festive Greek community has been acknowledged as one of the global centres of the genre. It will explore the role of rebetika in the evolving construction and contestation of identities in Australia.

The special power of music and dance in processes of identity formation, maintenance, transformation and affirmation is widely acknowledged. Simon Frith (2007: 295) sees music as ‘a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective’; while Thomas Turino (2004: 18) claims ‘Sonic and kinesic synchrony are the very experience of similarity, of identity … the experience of a special kind of physical bond with others’ [original emphasis]. Turino further asserts the centrality of the study of music and other diasporic arts to any proper understanding of diasporas, arguing that such social formations depend on expressive cultural practices for their very existence and that the arts have special potential for modelling the hybrid identities central to diaspora experience (Turino 2004: 5, 14).

With particular reference to the role of the arts in ethnic self-identification in Australia, Smolicz (1992) found that young second-generation Greek Australians rated music and dance much higher than religion as a core value of significance for maintenance of their cultural identity. But Greek music is also argued to function in the construction of Australian identity beyond just the ethnic level. Bottomley (2002) attests to the power of rebetika especially, with all their inherent ambiguities and diverse origins, to transcend the ethnic community of origin (indeed to challenge ‘bounded constructs of identity’) and be embraced by other Australians as their own cultural capital in the imagined musical community of multicultural Australia. Presumably this community includes the increasing numbers of non-Greek-speaking Australians of Greek background, given the power of music to trigger visceral reactions even where the lyrics are not understood (Frith 2007: 303).

This chapter will therefore illustrate not only how rebetika became an emblematic music of the Greek-Australian community in both its self-image and the expectations of the host society, but also how its appeal crossed generational and ethnic boundaries. It will give some insight into how rebetika evolved within the Australian music industry and local systems of patronage and brokerage, recording and performance. The broader ideological context for the musical construction of identities (debates about Australian national culture, immigration and multiculturalism, indigenous–settler relations, continuing ties to Britain) has been very competently outlined by the ethnomusicologist Graeme Smith in Singing Australian (2005). The book includes a section on musical multiculturalism and the implications of the attempt to locate Australia’s national distinctiveness in its

are 149,186 and 52,279. The website of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (www.abs.gov.au) concedes that a formatting technicality has contributed to a decrease in the number of responses since the 2001 Census, but the figures have been in decline since the census of 1971, when the Greek-born in Australia alone numbered 160,200.

4 In the 1982 Australian-produced documentary ‘Rebetika, the Blues of Greece’, narrated by Anthony ‘Zorba’ Quinn.
cultural diversity for the other popular music ‘scenes’ (Anglo-Celtic folk, country and rock). Smith also usefully explicates the evolution of Australian cultural activists (mainly of leftist political leanings): at the time of the ethnic rights movement, they projected ‘romantic workerism … on to the migrant’; then, as ‘a more general preoccupation with the musical affirmation of community’ prevailed, they became multicultural entrepreneurs; finally they reinvented themselves in the 1990s within the World Music movement, celebrating the aesthetic unity of diverse musics (Smith 2005: 146f.).

Obviously the trajectory of rebetika in Australia has also been strongly influenced by developments in Greece, via the importation of records, films, television shows and printed matter. In addition, it has been influenced by visiting exponents of rebetika from Greece; indeed, those touring artists who decided to stay in Australia primed the development of the local product. But the social relations and cultural politics surrounding the production, consumption and revival of rebetika in each country are uniquely situated within local debates and have developed in contradistinction to other local styles and genres. This chapter will therefore note both convergences and divergences between Greece and Melbourne in this regard and identify instances where the diaspora might be seen to be ‘singing back’, in the sense of disputing or subverting metropolitan cultural primacy by counterposing its own hybrid forms to notions of cultural purity and authenticity.

‘Singing back’ in this sense has already been explored to some extent with reference to Greek Americans, who have historical primacy among the trans-oceanic countries of the ‘diaspora of rebetika’. For commodified mass culture such as rebetika to flourish, a sufficient population of solvent consumers is needed to sustain a critical mass of local producers, distributors etc., and Greek Americans had attained that commercial viability by the second decade of the twentieth century. Enjoying relatively ready and uncensored access to sound recording and commercial distribution, Greek Americans were not content to take a lead from Greece. Indeed, American recordings of bouzouki music played a catalytic role in the commercial development of the so-called ‘Piraeus style’ of rebetika in Greece itself, and the unusually extensive use of the term ‘rebetiko’ on American record labels and catalogues in the 1920s may also have helped consolidate the overall usage of the term (Gauntlett 2005: 183). Again the revival of rebetika in Greece which began in the 1970s was boosted by the re-release of early American recordings by metropolitan entrepreneurs seemingly intent on maximising the mystification of this unfamiliar material. Consequently the apparent primitivism of some American recordings became a benchmark for supposedly pre-commercial authenticity. Furthermore, Greek settlers in the USA recorded songs about their own social, moral and economic concerns as diaspora Greeks, referring to their local institutional framework, importing their own localities and place-names and code-switching into ‘Gringlish’ to the consternation of later Helladic aficionados (Frangos 1995–6: 249ff.).

For its part, the metropolitan ‘homeland’ of Greek song took cognisance of the American branch of the diaspora in some distinctly unflattering songs: they start...
with the complaints of ‘exported’ brides and culminate in an early manifestation of Greek anti-Americanism in ‘A curse on you America with your many dollars’, a song written by Pantelidis and Petropouleas in whose 1938 recording Vasilis Tsitsanis played bouzouki (Odeon GA7279). Even the acknowledgement of expatriate remittances is rather ungracious in metropolitan rebetika: e.g. in a song by Markos Vamvakaris where a Greek-American appears to supplant that proverbial benefactor, ‘the uncle from Koroni’.

Elsewhere the predatory, street-wise machos of the metropolis describe techniques for fleecing repatriated migrants (Schorelis 1978: 288). In a noteworthy progression from orientalism to occidentalism, the gullible Amerikanos appears to have inherited the mantle of such traditional dupes of rebetika as the Ottoman Jew and the generic feckless spiv from Istanbul (see Gauntlett 2003a: 256).

Such songs are, however, peripheral to the main thematic thrust of Greek songs about exile (tragoudia tis xenitias) which reflects the fact that both folk songs (dimotika) and rebetika have traditionally represented the viewpoint of those left behind in Greece, even where the narrators purport to be the emigrants themselves. In this regard the songs resemble laments for the dead (moirolovia); indeed, emigrants are depicted as the living dead and exile as living death, a Hades-like place of unrelieved torment and deprivation. In his seminal work Ρεμπέτικα [rebetika tragoudia] (1968) Elias Petropoulos devoted whole sections of both the anthology of texts and his prolegomena to ‘black exile’ (mavri xenitia) and advisedly positioned them between songs about Charos (the Greek grim reaper) and Mother, both key personae in rebetika on this theme.

One of the most poignant and typical rebetika on this fundamental theme is ‘Much have my eyes seen’, composed and performed to bouzouki accompaniment by Markos Vamvakaris on the 1954 record Odeon GA7812:

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Much have my eyes seen, and I’ve been through storms
as I’ve travelled alone in foreign lands.
Always alone, no one was ever there for me
who had so much trouble hidden in my heart.
I remembered my mother and shed black tears.
My barren exile was never-ending.
She used to tell me: ‘Dear child, exile is a heavy burden,
and twice the grief for me who raised you’.
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While the words purport to belong to the lonely, vulnerable expatriate, the narrative is hijacked by the mother he left behind, to the extent that his (‘single’) torment is subordinated to her (‘double’) grief. In rebetika of the Greek Civil War era, the allegorical potential of exile was explored and expatriation came to signify forced displacement and political exile, most famously in the banned song ‘A certain
mother’ by Tsitsanis (Petropoulos 1968: 321). The already durable popularity of exile as a theme for Greek songs was thus extended at a time when Greek migration changed destinations but not intensity.

Australia was a later destination for Greek mass-migration, and the critical mass for development of a local popular music industry was attained there much later. Initially Greek Australians found it difficult to make headway against the colonial Anglo-Australian aesthetic which typically deprecated traditional Greek music as ‘snake-charmer music’ (Gauntlett 2003b: 26). As late as 1962, when there were some 150,000 nostalgic Greeks in Australia, EMI (Australia), the main corporate player in recorded sound, was telling company headquarters in England:

only the old Greek people here continue to buy Greek records. The younger folk, after a short period of assimilation change their buying habits to English and American recordings. The number of the Greek community in Australia is not a true guide to the market potential that exists here. (Gauntlett 2003b: 29)

The British manager of EMI (Greece) accused EMI (Australia) of wilfully creating a dangerous ‘sales vacuum’ for Greek records. I have written elsewhere at length about the issues behind this, including the impact of the Imperial Preferential Tariff (Gauntlett 2003b). The force of numbers of Greeks in Australia eventually caused the assimilationist corporate mentality to yield to a greed-driven form of multiculturalism before sociologists, politicians and cultural entrepreneurs harnessed the word in the 1970s.

Gough Whitlam’s Labour administration of 1972–5 first institutionalised multiculturalism and it remained the official policy of successive Australian governments until John Howard’s Liberal governments of 1996–2007 repudiated it in favour of basically Anglocentric, national homogeneity. At a rather crude level, the rise in popularity of rebetika and other forms of Greek music might be seen to parallel that of gastronomic multiculturalism in Melbourne, which since the 1970s has experienced a spectacular proliferation of licensed Greek tavernas and concomitant live or mediated entertainment. However, over the years of official multiculturalism and also in the Howard era, successive generations of Greek Australians have increasingly pushed rebetika to the forefront of the broad showcase of music with which they proclaim their Greekness to themselves and others. Rebetika have become a musical staple of almost every kind of secular festive event staged by Melbourne’s myriad Greek organisations, including those of regional and rural orientation. Even revivals of antique Greek folklore in Melbourne have succumbed to the genre, as a newspaper headline proclaimed: ‘At the Anthestiria authentic rebetika flourished’ (Neos Kosmos 11 September 1997). Horn (2002: 299) reports audiences of 600 attending rebetika concerts in Melbourne at the turn of the millennium, and rebetika are often performed live to rolling audiences of many thousands at the weekend street-party (Glendi) with which the annual Greek Antipodes Festival is launched by the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria (with funding from the Greek government
and Tourism Victoria) in the Greek precinct of the city’s central business district. Thus in 2003 the revivalist band Ta Paidia tis Patras was brought from Greece to top the bill at the ‘Glendi’ and the festival also featured separate concerts of rebetika by Apodimi Compania and Rebetiki, and a postcolonial-rebetika excursus performed by Eurotrash Taksim. Perhaps more remarkably, the 1995 Antipodes Festival included a musical play entitled ‘The Rebetes’ written in English and staged at the Melbourne Malthouse Theatre by an Anglo-Australian, non-Greek-speaker, the late Rhondda Johnson, who claimed in a press interview: ‘This play is not about the trendy “pseudo-rebetes” who have surfaced in recent years. It is about real life experiences … of those free spirits, the rebetes of Yarraville’ (Neos Kosmos 20 March 1995). This supplies further testimony to the scope for non-Greek-speakers in Melbourne to access enough of the ambient mythology of rebetika to relate to the genre passionately, even protectively.

The concern for authenticity evinced above by both Greeks and non-Greeks is a recurrent issue in discourse about rebetika in Melbourne and elsewhere. Indeed, the identity of rebetika has been as contentious as the issues of ethno-cultural identity of its devotees in Australia. The ideology of authenticity has been deconstructed as ‘an aesthetic judgement of effect … translated into a sociological description of cause’ (Frith 2007: 306), but it is of no less interest to current purposes that some Melburnians affect discernment about the songs they admit to the rebetika genre or that perceptions of what constitutes the canon of rebetika songs are as divergent and contradictory in Melbourne as anywhere else. Much of what has occurred in the name of rebetika in the diaspora might well be excluded by the more puristic definitions of the genre, but the same is true of the metropolis. Accordingly the approach adopted here is descriptive, not prescriptive, recognising that genre is not a transcendent essence but an inherently unstable, dynamic, elusive and eminently contestable construct.

Indeed, the deliberate transgression of the labelling practices of purists and of commercial ‘bin categories’ is a strategy of subversion relevant to the notion of the diaspora’s ‘singing back’ through hybridity.

Between Greek festivals rebetika continue to infiltrate Melbourne’s airwaves, almost unremarkably now, from all manner of public and private premises, vehicles and mobile telephones. Radio programmes emitting rebetika on a regular basis extend beyond those of local Greek stations to the national broadcaster’s ‘Music Deli’ and ‘The Nightly Planet’. The signifier ‘rebetika’ is also ubiquitous and often crops up incongruously, e.g. on the sign above the door of a Gothic-style church (now decommissioned and converted into a Greek taverna) and as the name of a racehorse shouted excitedly in the broad Australian tones of a race-caller through every television in the land. The genre has also been domesticated

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6 Yarraville is a working class suburb of Melbourne, which in the 1950s had a high proportion of poor Greek immigrants; it was comparable to the refugee quarters of Piraeus in the playwright’s perception.

locally as ‘Piraeus blues’ and even ‘Greek bodgey songs’ (bodgies being the Australian ‘teddy boys’ of the 1950s), and Melbourne has been a prolific centre of performance, recording and discourse about rebetika (Gauntlett 1993b).

Their earliest transplantation into the sonic landscape of Australia is shrouded in nebulous speculation, such as the notion that the earliest Greeks to arrive in Australia in 1829 might have brought ‘proto-rebetika’ with them. The seven young pirates from Hydra – ‘ignorant young men … only one being able to read and write, and that very imperfectly’ as one pleaded at their trial (Gilchrist 1992: 30) – who were transported to the penal colony of New South Wales do indeed seem well qualified to inaugurate in Australia the oral traditions from the dark underside of seaports around the Aegean at that time. But the earliest material evidence of rebetika in Australia dates from more than a hundred years later and takes the form of two American recordings of Greek hashish-songs pressed on a double-sided 78 rpm record (His Master’s Voice AP36) in Sydney by EMI (Australia); the American matrices would have been exported to Australia via England in order to benefit from the Preferential Imperial Tariff. Their innocuous translated titles, ‘Uncle John’ and ‘The whole of you’, presumably helped the recordings to elude closer scrutiny from His Majesty’s Customs Service in both England and Australia. The designation ‘rebetika’ does not appear on the labels printed in Australia, but the songs are considered rebetika today.

Nor did the term ‘rebetika’ appear in Melbourne in any other printed form, to my knowledge, until 1957 when the Melbourne newspaper Neos Kosmos, in just its second month of publication, published two articles about the genre in quick succession. The first appeared on the front page of the 6 March issue, as befitted the writing of Danae Stratigopoulou, a celebrated Athenian singer of European-style popular songs; the second was a contribution to the ‘Free opinions’ column of 20 March from a Melbourne Greek of clearly left-wing leanings (Vlisidis 2006: 230–3). Both articles condemn rebetika as decadent, anachronistic and an embarrassment to the Greek nation; the second sees the promotion of the genre as a scurrilous attempt to besmirch the militant proletariat by association with low-life. This had been the standard rhetoric of hostile journalism in Greece from across the political spectrum since the 1940s (see Gauntlett 1991: 15–22), to which was added in the 1950s a growing anxiety about the potential for damage to the image of Greece abroad in exporting performers or recordings of rebetika (see Vlisidis 2006: 174, 207). Counter-arguments were published in Greece, though apparently not taken up in Australia at the time, to the effect that the despised rebetika could comfort and sustain expatriate Greeks, that the interest of foreigners further validated rebetika and that Greeks needed foreigners to explain to them the value of their own culture yet again (Vlisidis 2006: 177, 250).

Neither of the Neos Kosmos articles refers to local performance of rebetika in Australia. Public performance of Greek song in general in Australia before the 1960s is only sketchily documented, but it is unlikely that the straight-laced village mores of the early Greek settlers in Australia, reinforced by colonial puritanism, would have produced audiences receptive to rebetika. Nevertheless,
musically competent immigrants of the 1950s (such as the *ud* player Bailtsidis and the bouzouki players Tourloubis and Thomas Papadopoulos) report having found some demand for rebetika in the makeshift and ephemeral Greek clubs and cafés of the time (Horn 2002: 204, 234). The mostly Egyptian-Greek musicians operating in properly licensed premises in Melbourne seem to have favoured Greek songs in Latin-American style (Horn 2002: 239).

Accordingly, the opening of an Athenian-style bouzouki-club in Melbourne in 1960 was advertised as ‘incredible but true’ (Gauntlett 1993b). No details were given of the provenance or repertoire of the musicians, but the Athenian cachet would suggest at least the interpolation of medleys of the more presentable rebetika. By 1962 the bouzouki was sufficiently acclimatised in Australia to sustain the first of a long sequence of visits by leading exponents of rebetika and rebetika-derivatives (Gauntlett 1993b). Among the less illustrious early bouzouki-tourists from Greece was Thymios Stathoulopoulos; but he distinguished himself by taking up residence in Melbourne in 1964 and, over a period of 28 years, growing into the role of the first and most authentic of Melbourne’s ‘old rebetes’ (Gauntlett 1993c). His acknowledged primacy in the growing ranks of Melbourne’s rebetes is attested by the widespread reference to him by his first name alone (cf. the use of ‘Markos’ to denote Vamvakaris). Thymios’s artistic evolution, including his entrepreneurial setbacks and his recording career, is documented elsewhere in some detail, as is the development of the rebetika scene in Melbourne to the time of his death in 1992 (Gauntlett 1993b and 1993c). Present purposes are sufficiently served by a brief discussion of some verses from his landmark album ‘The Rebetika of Melbourne’ (TS01) produced in 1985 with financial assistance from the Australian Arts Council. The English cover-notes claim that:

Many Greeks in Australia have retained unique cultural elements brought with them from Greece – cultural elements that are vanishing in Greece, yet retained in Australia. Thymios Stathoulopoulos is a genuine unspoilt rebetis in both musical expression and life-style.

His recorded compositions seek to underpin this status by proclaiming his pedigree as an old rebetis, commemorating famous exponents of the genre as colleagues, purporting to rescue named compositions of theirs from oblivion, and denigrating other genres of Greek music as pseudo-American and European affectations. The autobiographical song ‘I am one of the old rebetes’ tells some of his story with unusual restraint:

I am one of the old rebetes and found myself in foreign parts.
I had never imagined what fate had written for me.

Refrain: With my bouzouki for company and with my baglamas
I forgot all my bitterness and trouble.
For many years I’ve stayed up all night, and I’m still doing it, playing and singing old rebetika.

I was never interested in money, it has no importance, but wherever I’ve walked I’ve been paid respect.

In the song ‘Bouzoukia in Melbourne’ Thymios explicitly acknowledges his local setting and the involvement of non-Greeks (indeed, ‘desirable Australian blondes’) in ‘purely Greek’ revelry, ‘getting drunk on Aussie wine and breaking the plates’. Here he may be seen to be singing of Australia to Australians, perhaps in deference to the record’s sponsors, perhaps ironically. For although it is arguably the title track of the album, this light-hearted, good-times song is unrepresentative of its overall content; most of the songs paint an unmitigatedly bleak picture of an alienated diasporic experience, consistent with the traditional Helladic discourse of ‘black exile’, as illustrated above in Vamvakaris’s ‘Much have my eyes seen’. Thymios’s composition ‘Alone and suffering in exile’ has as its refrain:

I stay out all night, alone and careworn,
I’m in a foreign land and am always a foreigner.

The alienation expressed here stands in stark contrast to the ‘commitment to Australia’ famously lauded by the former Prime Minister Howard when holding up Greek Australians as exemplars of successful settlement. The song ‘I never managed’ features another noctivagant expatriate, who divides his time between hard drinking and gambling dens. There is a striking antithesis between all the forlorn anti-heroes of ‘The Rebetika of Melbourne’ and the irrepressible, conquering Greek migrant of the triumphalist hegemonic narrative. Even his much vaunted diasporic entrepreneurship is countered by a professed disdain for material gain.

Thymios’s claims to seniority and authenticity as a rebetis may be read as a sign of the times: by the mid-1980s he faced competition from home-grown devotees of an alternative authenticity. These were student musicians who frequented the Tsakpina Cafè, a rebetika venue created in the Greek precinct of Melbourne by a third-generation Greek Australian as ‘a rebetiko playground for Australian-born Greek kids … a piece of Greece that no longer existed even in Greece’ (Horn 2002: 245). The proprietor had embraced rebetika enthusiastically as a profoundly ‘cool’ antidote to the stolidly virtuous image of Greece portrayed by his parents and he persuaded himself that when ‘the hookah came out, [and] the music started playing, it was very authentic’ (Horn 2002: 245). The plausibility of this claim is of less interest than the perception and the overall whimsical approach, in keeping with which the stairway to the cafè entrance was emblazoned with life-size koalas holding bouzoukia.

Thymios was filmed at the Tsakpina Cafè for the 1982 documentary ‘Rebetika, the Blues of Greece’ and he was joined on the bill of the local memorial concerts
for Tsitsanis in March 1984 by newly formed bands (*kombanies*) of young Australian-raised musicians who also frequented the café. Their unamplified instruments, including the six-string bouzouki, contrasted with the electrified eight-string version to which Thymios had long since graduated. Foremost among these bands was a group of mainly Australian-born university students that evolved into *Apodimi Compania*. Their evolution is sufficiently documented elsewhere (Gauntlett 1999; Horn 2002: 279–300), but of relevance here is their functioning as a small experimental collective, in contrast to the celebrity-focused professional enterprises of their seniors. Their workshops and research included collaboration with musicians from other ethnic communities on matters such as improvisation, modality and the manufacture of instruments. *Apodimi Compania* moved confidently and easily among the venues offered to them within and outside the Greek community, including pubs where bush-bands or pub-rock groups normally performed and major folk festivals around Australia at which they also conducted workshops. Their hallmark in performance and recording was an eclectic repertoire of old rebetika songs learnt from rare 78 rpm gramophone records; they closely reproduced the old recordings, but sometimes spiked them with flagrantly hypercorrect and ahistorical flourishes, such as the use of a *cura saz* in the song ‘The Baglamas’ on their laconically titled, first album ‘Rebetika’ (Brunswick Recordings 03). The album appeared within 18 months of Thymios’s ‘The Rebetika of Melbourne’ and was followed by a second in 1989, titled ‘Patris’ after the ship that had brought their parents to Australia (Brunswick Recordings 10). As Horn (2002: 282) notes, this was the first recording of regional folksongs by a second-generation Australian band and established their range as ‘an inter-generational, inter-regional and inter-cultural “voice” for Greeks in the Melbourne diaspora’. However, their inclusion of a ‘Slavic Macedonian’ melody incurred the ire of one sector of the Greek community. From 1989–94 *Apodimi Compania* were the resident pub-band at the The Retreat Hotel, another idiosyncratic rebetika venue created by another Australian-raised enthusiast with the diversion of Greek-Australian youth in mind.

The Melbourne *kombanies* were to some extent following in the footsteps of the youthful revival groups that proliferated in Greece in the 1970s and 1980s. The decade of ‘the greening of the Greek blues’ under Andreas Papandreou also produced a welter of audio-visual recordings, which promptly reached Australian television and radio (Gauntlett 1993b). Characteristically, Greece’s official gift to the Australian Bicentenary in 1988 was an exhibition of ‘Music in the Aegean’ from pre-classical antiquity to the rebetika of Markos Vamvakaris. In 1997 Australia was pleased to return the compliment by sending the band *Rebetiki* to Melbourne’s sister city Thessaloniki to help her celebrate her year as cultural capital of Europe. But by then the ‘rebetomania’ of the 1980s had abated in post-Papandreou Greece and symptoms of rebetika-fatigue were evident, as in some very ungracious press coverage of Sotiria Bellou’s death. A tendency was also gathering momentum among commentators in Greece to play down the underworld associations of the rebetika. This ‘underworld denialism’ has its roots in the 1970s when Tasos
Shoreli responded to the sensationalist foregrounding of the low-life dimension of rebetika by Elias Petropoulos (Gauntlett 1991: 25ff.). In Melbourne, however, the celebration of marginality, prodigality and persecution remained fundamental to the ideology of authenticity and a cornerstone of Australian enthusiasm for rebetika.

Far from showing signs of rebetika-fatigue in the late 1990s, the educated and upwardly mobile youth of Melbourne's Greek community was reportedly in the grip of a veritable 'epidemic' of enthusiasm for the genre (Nerantzis 1996, 1997). Their tributes to rebetika centred on the songs' authenticity, immediacy and capacity to evoke powerful passions. Young Melburnians also saw parallels between the plight of the refugees and other outcasts described in rebetika and that of immigrants in Australia. They further claimed that rebetika are the thinking Greek-Australian's songs of choice and that the capacity to appreciate them is an index of Greekness (Nerantzis 1996). Demeter Tsounis (1995: 169) reported similar findings among young Greek Australians in Adelaide, identifying the underlying ideologies as those of 'soul music' or 'roots music' according to venue. The Melbourne journalist Tasos Nerantzis felt reassured that his young interviewees were not lost to Greek culture through xenomania and assimilation, as was often readily assumed by their elders; but he also confessed to some alarm at the thought that the future leaders of the community should primarily associate Hellenic civilisation and their own cultural identity with a controversial subculture of dubious origins (Nerantzis 1996). There was nothing new in these misgivings; letters to Melbourne's Greek newspapers regularly rehearsed the argument that 'bouzouki music' was corruptive and amounted to a betrayal of the Greek War of Independence (Gauntlett 1999: 132).

The moral panic and embarrassment of such commentators, mostly first-generation immigrants, are exacerbated by an apparent benevolence towards rebetika on the part of Anglo-Australian officialdom in its various manifestations. As noted above, Australian public funds have repeatedly been invested in rebetika and the genre has been prominently paraded in public displays of the inclusive pluralism of Australian culture and society. The discourse of World Music and the availability of kombanies through mainstream booking agencies have facilitated the musical catering for such official functions and the delivery of breezily superficial introductions to the musical fare; but those who understand the lyrics cannot fail to see the incongruity of the rough-hewn content of many of the songs amid the political correctness of the events.

The durability of the appeal of rebetika at many levels in multicultural Melbourne is not lost on local professional musicians. Their versatility and opportunism is well illustrated in the remarkable second career of Anestis Kavouras, son of Yiorgos Kavouras, the legendary rebetika vocalist of the 1930s. Anestis had made his mark on the Australian popular music scene as an Elvis impersonator under the stage name 'Tazzy Crab', but in 1998 he briefly refloated his performing career as the scion of the famous family of rebetes, with a repertoire to match.

By this time, however, the mainstay of the sustained interest in rebetika in Melbourne was a second wave of youthful enthusiasts who had been mentored by
the *kombanies* of the 1980s. Much ad hoc reshuffling of musicians between bands and renaming of loosely configured groups followed the relocation of *Apodimi Compania* to Greece, but the fieldwork of the ethnomusicologist Kipps Horn (2002) reveals three generations of rebetika musicians still active in Melbourne at the turn of the millennium, each with a different perspective on the migration experience and with varying preferences in repertoire and performance styles. His interviews with musicians and other stakeholders in Melbourne’s rebetika scene broadly confirm that, subject to some inter-generational variation, rebetika are perceived to be particularly relevant to a diaspora community and able to help maintain a Greek-Australian identity. He further found that first-generation immigrants from rural Greece were often late converts to rebetika, compared to their Australian-born offspring, for whom rebetika partly fulfilled a need for generational differentiation.

Reviewing the development of the genre in Melbourne over half a century, Horn found no substantial evidence of a radical transformation of the imported musical forms despite the sharing of skills and instruments with non-Greek musicians. He reports some adaptation of rebetika instruments to local conditions and materials, and some experimental hybrids (such as the ‘bouzoukoni’, a flat-bodied cross between bouzouki and guitar, and an eight-string *tzouras*) (Horn 2002: 206ff., 216, 219).

Experimentation with hybrids has been seen to produce distinctive representations of diasporic identity (Turino 2004: 10, 14). Various hybrids of rebetika are, indeed, exemplified in ‘The Diaspora of Rebetika’ anthology, including use of the indigenous Australian didgeridoo as a rhythmical drone by the *Ankala* ensemble. But hybridisation is by no means the exclusive preserve of diaspora musicians, as the fusion of blues and rebetika improvisations performed in Greece and included in the same audio-anthology illustrates.

However, a Melbourne fusion-performance of rebetika infused with a large measure of reflexively irreverent ‘larrikinism’, to use the local vernacular, may have come close to attaining a distinctly Australian inflection. For the 2003 Melbourne Antipodes Festival an ambitious postmodern project titled ‘Alternative voices: post-colonial blues’ was designed by *Eurotrash Taksim* (an occasional reconfiguration of *Rebetiki* and other bands) and was billed as a ‘deconstruction of rebetika and related idioms’, examining ‘the connections of blues throughout the world in all its forms, adding an element of personal flavour while also throwing out all constrictive rules of structure’. *Eurotrash Taksim* would therefore be performing their own work ‘while also approaching established pieces from an experimental point of view’. The parallel Greek text in the programme also defined the project as a ‘continuation of their musical heritage and identity in a post-colonial Australia’. This new type of eclectic revivalism, based on broad-ranging...

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8 *The Times* (22 May 2007: 43) supplies a useful definition of the Australianism ‘larrikin’: ‘A mischievous person, typified by irreverence, mockery of authority and a general disregard for the norms of propriety’.
bricolage and improvisation, has the potential to subvert the dominant curatorial mode and to reinvigorate the genre’s jaded, institutionalised, oppositional posture, in keeping with the spirit of *rebetia* – and larrikinism.

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