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**Cereal Trade between Black Sea and Greece:
From the Archaic until the Early Hellenistic Period**

Introduction

August 5, 2010: Russia reaches the end of what had turned out to be a disastrous summer of drought and fires. The fertile fields of southern Russia, especially in the area of the Black Sea, normally help feed the world; the crops grown in these areas produce millions of tons of wheat, barley, and other grains for export. But not that year. The earth is parched and many of the crops have wilted. The result: 20% of the national grain crop has vanished. Vladimir Putin decides that no grain should be exported from Russia, until the end of the summer: a politically wise decision, as the Russians were already facing sharp rise in bread price. Turning the clock twenty-four centuries back, we find a public prosecutor –using Lysias’ speech capabilities– arguing that the death penalty should be the punishment of the wholesalers persecuted under the charge of forming a “cartel” and technically rising grain price in Athens. The famous case “Kata Sitopolon,” a speech of the notorious Greek orator Lysias against grain merchants in Athens of the 4th century BC, is considered the first ever trial against a cartel. And it is surprisingly, even amazingly, similar with the arguments the Greek government used in August 2010 to stop grain price rise.

Factors Affecting Cereals and Trade

Agriculture was the basis of economy of the ancient communities. Greece and the Euxine Sea were agricultural economies and their main products were cereals: wheat, oat, barley, and millet.¹ Grain was the main staple food of the majority of the population.

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¹ Aleksandre A. Maslennikov, *Οι αρχαίοι Έλληνες στο βόρειο Εύξεινο Πόντο* (The Ancient Greeks at the North Black Sea) (Athens: Afoi Kyriakidi), 23.

It is important to examine some factors that have an impact on the production and the trade of grain. First it is the climate. The cultivation conditions in the Mediterranean are diverse from region to region but in general the climate is characterized by a large variability of rainfall. The numerous mountains and stretches of sea add further complications² and as Aristotle had noticed in *Meteorologica*, particularly for Greece:

“some years are rainy and wet, others windy and dry. Sometimes there is much drought or rain, and it prevails over a great and continuous stretch of country. At other times it is local; the surrounding country often getting seasonable or even excessive rains while there is drought in a certain part; or, contrariwise, all the surrounding country gets little or even no rain while a certain part gets rain in abundance.”³

All these cause crop yields to fluctuate widely from year to year and may even lead to crop failures. Cereal crops, especially wheat, are very vulnerable to rainfall changes and climatic variability, which can lead to a shortage from time to time and to an increased need for grain import.⁴ On the other hand, barley is a more drought-resistant grain; therefore, it yields well in light soil and dry climates.⁵ Consequently, some areas could be grain exporters or importers, depending on conditions.

Athens, the most important centre of the Greek world at that time, is usually regarded as an importer of cereals, though Thessaly, Epirus, and the Northern Black Sea region are normally regarded as exporters. Samos was probably more typical of Greek cities having either surplus or shortfall.⁶

² Michael Hamilton Jameson, “Famine in the Greek World,” in *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity*, ed. P. Garnsey–C.R. Whittaker (Cambridge: Cambridge Philol. Soc., 1983), 8.

³ Aristotle, *Meteorologica*, 2.4.

⁴ Errietta Bissa, *Governmental Intervention in Foreign Trade in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 153-4.

⁵ Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 96.

⁶ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 10.

A second factor that affects the production of grain is the fertility of the soil and the surface of the cultivable land. Particularly in Attica, Garnsey⁷ estimates, since there are no data from that period, that a reasonable cultivable portion could be 35-40% of the land. The soil of Attica has been commented by Thucydides, Strabo, and Plutarch in a not positive way:

“Accordingly, Attica, from the poverty of its soil enjoying from a very remote period freedom from faction, never changed its inhabitants.⁸ Megaris, like Attica, is very sterile, and the greater part of it is occupied by what are called the Oneii Mountains.⁹ Observing that the city was getting full of people who were constantly streaming into Attica from all quarters for greater security of living, and that most of the country was unfruitful and worthless.”¹⁰

On the contrary, Theophrastus in *Historia Plantarum* writes:

“In Athens the barley produces more meal than anywhere else, since it is an excellent land for that crop.¹¹ Attic soil was infertile, due to lack of technical means and the ability for systemic cultivation. Just 1/3 of the Attic land was cultivated. Thus grain production was poor, covering just 1/4 of the population needs.”

The fertility of the soil of the Black Sea region, especially the northern part, has been commented by Strabo’s *Geography*¹² and by Herodotus, who writes for the river Dnieper (“Borysthenes”), that “along its banks crops are produced better than elsewhere.”¹³

⁷ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 92.

⁸ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 1.2.5.

⁹ Strabo, *Geography*, 9.1.8.

¹⁰ Plutarch, *Solon*, 22.1.

¹¹ Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, 8.8.2.

¹² David Braund, “Black Sea Grain for Athens? From Herodotus to Demosthenes,” in *The Black Sea in Antiquity: Regional and Interregional Economic Exchanges*, ed. Vincent Gabrielsen–John Lund (Aarhus University Press, 2007), 41.

¹³ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4.53.

These two factors, the climate and the fertility of the land, together with the other geographical characteristics of each region (rivers, plains, mountains, and the social, political, and economic issues of each historical period, such as the population growth, the governing, the wars, the alliances, etc. determined the extent of the cereal trade between Greece and the Black Sea in antiquity.

Greece and the Black Sea Cereal Trade in the Archaic Period

There is no direct evidence such as an explicit statement, a historical description, or some public record for import of poetic grain in Greece in the Archaic period. As a matter of fact, Greece was still an exporter of grain until the end of the 7th century BC. This derives from the interpretation of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, according to some scholars.¹⁴ The poem was written around 700 BC and talks about Demeter's grain,¹⁵ sailing, and seaborne cereal trade:

“If ever you turn your misguided heart to trading and wish to escape from debt and joyless hunger, I will show you the measures of the loud-roaring sea, though I have no skill in sea-faring nor in ships.”¹⁶

Hesiod implies that trade of agricultural products for profit was something common for the 7th century society. The risks taken were only sea-risks due to bad weather conditions¹⁷ and not commercial ones; therefore, the markets overseas were considered stable. The volume of trade is indicated by Hesiod's suggestion to use a large ship¹⁸ and also by the introduction of new ships, the construction of Diolkos near Corinth and of piers and other docking facilities in that period in Greece.¹⁹ Other information given by Hesiod is that cereal trade was

¹⁴ Hahn, I. 1983. “Foreign Trade and Foreign Policy in Archaic Greece.” In Garnsey and Whittaker, *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge: 31-3; Jameson, *op.cit.*, 8; Bissa, *op.cit.*, 155.

¹⁵ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 31.

¹⁶ *Op.cit.*, 645-9.

¹⁷ *Op.cit.*, 664-95.

¹⁸ *Op.cit.*, 641-5.

¹⁹ Hahn, *Foreign Trade*, 32.

in private hands, in the hands of landowners with yield-surplus and of sailors or men who owned ships. Cities neither owned merchant ships nor employed people who sailed in them.²⁰ In Hesiod's text though, there is no direct reference to the Black Sea.

The areas that exported grain in the archaic and classical period are all around Greece: The Black Sea, Egypt, Italy, and Sicily. In most of these areas the Greeks had established their colonies from the 8th century BC. The reasons and aims that made the Greeks settle abroad and how far settlement in the Black Sea was influenced by the needs of the city-states in Greece and Asia Minor for imported grain are impossible to estimate. It is said that the fact that most of the colonies were established in areas suited for agriculture maybe is relative to food and land shortages of their mother-cities.²¹ The kinship, religious, and political bonds that the colonies had with their founding cities could have also made them dependable suppliers of staples.²² Trade can be considered probable if a surplus of grain and a corresponding need for import existed due to reasons of bad weather or war, even if it was not part of the original decision of settlement.²³ Therefore, the corn trade from the Euxine in the 7th and 6th centuries, if it existed at all, must have been in the hands of the Milesians and the Megarians, who had settled their colonies there.²⁴ Since they imported items from their homelands, they may have supplied in return basic staples, such as grain.²⁵ Greek vase fragments that have been found near the Olbia/Berezan area in the Black Sea and are dated back to the 6th century could have been left there probably in exchange for grain, since it was one of the main products of the area.²⁶ Also, Attic black-figured pottery, dated to the same period, has been found in Histria and Apollonia. But if grain had really started to reach mainland Greece from the Black Sea, this must have happened after the second half of the 6th century BC, be-

²⁰ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 70.

²¹ Hahn, *Foreign Trade*, 33.

²² *Op.cit.*, 35.

²³ Bissa, *op.cit.*, 167.

²⁴ Robert John Hopper, *Trade and Industry in Classical Greece* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 73.

²⁵ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 72.

²⁶ Hahn, *op.cit.*, 34; Bissa, *op.cit.*, 159.

cause then was the time when the first Greek colonies developed in city-states and their chorai became massive and able to produce large amounts of grain.²⁷ The foundation of emporia, maritime trade posts at the Black Sea,²⁸ is also a sign for the existence of trade from this area and for the economic expectations of the mother-cities, which financed and organised them.²⁹

Athens and Black Sea Cereal Trade in the Archaic Period

At the end of the 7th century BC, Athens captured the former Mytilenian colony, Sigeion,³⁰ which was near the entrance to the Hellespont and also established the Athenian family of Philidae in the Thracian Chersonese.³¹ These actions indicate possible relations with the North Aegean and the Black Sea region through control of the straits of the Hellespont. It is also supported that this could have been an intention of the Athenians to stake a claim on the corn route from the Euxine, which was later to be the main source of Athens' supplies. Therefore, it is possible that this was a first step towards the cereal imports from the Black Sea and an indication of the beginning of the Athenian dependence on imported corn.³² Sigeion was conquered by the Persians and Darius, in the end of the 6th century, at the beginning of the Persian invasion in 513 BC in Eastern Thrace and Getae, complicating furthermore the situation of the Attic trade.

There is no reason to deny that grain from the Black Sea travelled to the Aegean and to Athens, though in small quantities and not regularly, even from the 6th century, since there were already Greek settlements there.³³ On the other hand, according to Garnsey, for Athens

²⁷ Gocha R. Tsetschladze, *Trade on the Black Sea in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (Routledge, 1998), 54.

²⁸ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4.17.1, 4.24.1.

²⁹ Hahn, *op.cit.*, 31.

³⁰ Michalis Tiverios, "Greek Colonisation of the Northern Aegean," in *Greek Colonisation. An Account of Greek Colonies and Other Settlements Overseas II*, ed. Gocha R. Tsetschladze (Brill, 2008), 122.

³¹ Hopper, *op.cit.*, 72.

³² John Bagnell Bury–Russell Meiggs, *A History Of Greece* (Red Globe Press, 1977), 122.

³³ Braund, *op.cit.*, 39.

of the archaic period, even if it needed grain-imports from time to time, there was no reason for importing them from such long-distance suppliers, such as the Black Sea, since Euboea, Boeotia, and Thessaly were also grain suppliers and were within the region.³⁴

Greece, Athens, and Black Sea in the 5th Century

At the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century BC, the Persian conquest of the Hellespont (513-480 BC) made the exchanges between Greece and the Black Sea difficult. In 479/8 BC the Persian garrison was expelled from Sestos and Byzantium, reopening the trade-route from the north.

A very important alliance was founded in 478/9 BC and lasted until the end of the Peloponnesian War. This was the Delian League, which would provide security from Persia and from piracy to its members;³⁵ more than 170 city-states of Greece and Asia Minor entered, under the leadership of Athens. The Delian League made Athens a very strong sea-power and placed it in the position to control the long-distance movement of grain, including the route from the Black Sea.³⁶ Other cities, not subjects to Athens, were not allowed to trade as it is said by the Old Oligarch (an anonymous critic of the third quarter of the 5th century):

“Of the Athenians’ subject cities on the mainland, some which are large are ruled because of fear, and some small are ruled because of actual need; for there is no city which does not have to import or export, and these activities will be impossible for a city unless it is subject to the rulers of the sea.”³⁷

The 5th century ends with the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) in Greece, which finds the Athenian Empire weakened and declined after twenty-seven years of war. Thucydides in *History of the Peloponnesian War* underlines the magnitude and the effects of this war on Greece:

³⁴ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 112.

³⁵ Simon Hornblower, *The Greek World 479-323 BC* (Routledge, 2011), 5.

³⁶ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 120.

³⁷ Pseudo-Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 2.3.

“there were earthquakes of unparalleled extent and violence; eclipses of the sun occurred with a frequency unrecorded in previous history; there were great droughts in sundry places and consequent famines, and that most calamitous and awfully fatal visitation, the plague. All this came upon them with the late war, which was begun by the Athenians and Peloponnesians.”³⁸

As for the Black Sea region, through the first half of the 5th century, the Bosporan Kingdom in Crimea, which later in the 4th century is the only known exporter in the Black Sea, was still at the first steps of its development under the Archaianaktid dynasty. The change over to the Spartocid dynasty was maybe a period of uncertainty and political disturbance and Crimea is considered to have been a precarious source for grain.³⁹ Olbia also seems to have experienced difficulties at that time.⁴⁰

Athens and Black Sea Cereal Trade in the 5th Century

Attica’s food needs in the 5th century BC could not be met from the agricultural production of Attica’s territory, because of the constantly growing population. The truth is that there is lack of information related to land cultivation and demographic data and thus the extent of dependence on grain imports is difficult to calculate. Garnsey has made an estimation of the population of Attica in the 5th century, which was “around 120-150,000 in 480 to a high point of around 250,000 just before the Peloponnesian War.”⁴¹ A corn shortage in Athens is attested by an Athenian inscription⁴² of c. 445 BC which, although very fragmentary, seems to thank someone “in the corn shortage.”⁴³

Athens, during the time of the Delian League, was very rich and powerful and had a very attractive port for traders in all goods, Pirae-

³⁸ Thucydides, *History*, 1.23.3.

³⁹ Hornblower, *op.cit.*, 31; Hopper, *op.cit.*, 72.

⁴⁰ Braund, *op.cit.*, 43.

⁴¹ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 90.

⁴² IG 1³ 30.

⁴³ Hornblower, *op.cit.*, 32.

us. At the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, the Long Walls had already been built, securing the communications between Athens and Piraeus.⁴⁴ A fragment of the comic poet of Hermippus' *Basket-bearers*, a parody maybe of some other text, foregrounds the material benefits of the sea power and gives us the idea that Piraeus was an international port, where a big variety of goods were brought to from all the points of the compass:

“Now tell me, Muses, dwellers on Olympus, which goods Dionysus brought here for men on his black ship, from the time when he traded over the wine-dark sea. From Cyrene, the silphium-stalk and ox-hide, from Hellespont mackerel and every salted fish, from Thessaly fine flour and ribs of beef, and from Sitalces the itch for the Spartans, and from Perdiccas lies by the ship-load. And the Syracusans furnish pigs and cheese, and the Corcyraeans – may Poseidon destroying their hollow ships, for they are eager for both sides. Then these things. From Egypt rigged sails and books. And from Syria, further, frankincense. And fine Crete provides cypress for the gods, and Libya ivory in plenty for sale; Rhodes raisins and sweet-dream figs. Moreover, from Euboea, pears and apples. Slaves from Phrygia and from Arcadia mercenaries. Pagasae provides slaves and slave-marks. Paphlagonians provide the acorns of Zeus and shining almonds. For they are the ornaments of a feast. Phoenicia, further, palm-fruit and fine grain-flour. Carthage, carpets and cushions of many colours.”⁴⁵

In this poem there is no mention of grain from Pontus, but only from Thessaly and Phoenicia. The only mention of Pontus is the Paphlagonian nuts (acorns of Zeus) and almonds. This poem, though, may not be a very reliable source.⁴⁶

The characteristic feature of the Athenian naval imperialism of the 5th century was the settling of citizens abroad in colonies and cleru-

⁴⁴ Hornblower, *op.cit.*, 33.

⁴⁵ Hermippus, apud Athenaeus, 1.27e-28a- Rudolf Kassel–Colin Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* fr. 63.

⁴⁶ Braund, *op.cit.*, 47.

chies. This policy, according to Croix, was also an answer to the problem of overpopulation and to the fact that Athens needed grain imports to feed its citizens, metics, and slaves. In exchange it exported silver, olive oil, pottery, and other goods.⁴⁷ He also asserts that “Athens’ dependence on corn imports from the Pontus and elsewhere was quite as great, but is (so to speak) masked by the overwhelming predominance of Athens at sea.”⁴⁸ Braund does not agree with this point of view, sustaining that if there were substantial grain imports from Pontus, it would have been mentioned somewhere, as Euboea is mentioned to have been a major corn supplier, since there is a large amount of information about the society and the economy of Athens in the 5th century.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Peace of Callias in c. 450 BC, which ended the Persian Wars, banned the Athenian warships from Pontus and this must have not encouraged traders to travel to the distant Black Sea.⁵⁰ This hypothesis does not mean, though, that there was no connection between the Black Sea and Athens. As Plutarch narrates, Aristides may have died on an expedition in the Black Sea:

“As touching the death of Aristides, some say he died in Pontus, on an expedition in the public service; others at Athens, of old age, honored and admired by his countrymen.”⁵¹

Pericles’ expedition to Sinope in 437 BC, as it is described by Plutarch’s *Pericles*, had the aim to include Black Sea cities to the Delian League and find a way of cooperating with them, in addition to the settlement of Athenian colonists there. Sinope, Olbia, and Nymphaion are known to have belonged to the Athenian Empire. In Plutarch’s text though, there is nothing about pontic grain in Pericles’ expedition, while a large gift of grain brought to Athens from Egypt⁵² is mentioned. Pericles’ expedition is the only known occasion of Athens taking a fleet beyond Byzantium and Plutarch is the only source of that

⁴⁷ Geoffrey Ernest Maurice de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (Bristol Classical Press, 1989), 46-7.

⁴⁸ Croix, *op.cit.*, 49.

⁴⁹ Braund, *op.cit.*, 42.

⁵⁰ Braund, *op.cit.*, 42.

⁵¹ Plutarch, *Aristides*, 26.1.

⁵² Plutarch, *Pericles*, 37.

information; therefore, there is a possibility that it did not happen at all.⁵³

It would be expected also from Pericles' funeral speech of 430 BC (in the version of Thucydides) to say something about pontic grain, since he had been there on his expedition. Instead, he does not mention it explicitly:

“while the magnitude of our city draws the produce of the world into our harbor, so that to the Athenian the fruits of other countries are as familiar a luxury as those of his own.”⁵⁴

The outbreak of the Peloponnesian War is considered to be a crucial turning point, because thereafter the Athenians were not in control of their territory. As they were probably becoming more dependent on grain imports, they had to find ways to secure it.⁵⁵ An Athenian inscription of 428 BC mentions for the first time the “Wardens of the Hellespont” (“Hellespontophylakes”), who controlled and supervised the passage of corn from the Euxine and presumably exacted customs duties on grain and everything else.⁵⁶

During this period though, the silence of the sources for Athens' grain continues as far as the Black Sea is concerned. In the text of *Old Oligarch*, which was written around 424 BC, although he tries to emphasize on the importance of the control of the sea for the Athenians, he does not include, neither excludes explicitly, Black Sea grain.⁵⁷ He only talks about delicacies, which gives the notion to the reader of something sweet and luxurious:

“If there should be mention also of slighter matters, first, by virtue of their naval power, the Athenians have mingled with various peoples and discovered types of luxury. Whatever the delicacy in Sicily, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Lydia, Pontus, the

⁵³ Tsetschladze, *op.cit.*, 55.

⁵⁴ Thucydides, *History*, 2.38.2.

⁵⁵ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 132.

⁵⁶ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 122.

⁵⁷ Braund, *op.cit.*, 45.

Peloponnesese, or anywhere else, all these have been brought together into one place by virtue of naval power.”⁵⁸

The playwright of Aristophanes’ *Merchant ships* in the 420s may be a hint of information about imports from the Black Sea. The problem is that there are only fragments of it that tell us a lot about various grains and legumes carried to Athens⁵⁹ but almost nothing about their sources. In another fragment, the “Mossynoecian barley-cake boards” and somebody from Colchian Phasis⁶⁰ are mentioned. The Mossynoecians lived in the southeast Black Sea and barley-cakes could suggest grain.⁶¹

The first explicit statement in the sources of regular grain imports comes from Thucydides’ *History*, where Nicias, in a speech in 415 BC seems to worry about Athenian dependence on imported grain:

“they have also money, partly in the hands of private persons, partly in the temples at Selinus, and at Syracuse first-fruits from some of the barbarians as well. But their chief advantage over us lies in the number of their horses, and in the fact that they grow their corn at home instead of importing it.”⁶²

This is a dangerous situation for a city in war time because the enemy is likely to interrupt its supply and place the city at his mercy.⁶³ This was one of the results of the Spartan occupation of Decelea from 413 BC; the blockade of the grain supply by land from Euboea. Due to this fact, grain from the Black Sea became more important and the Spartan King Agis from his fort at Decelea realized that he had to intervene to Calchedon and Byzantium and cut off the grain route from there:

“Meanwhile Agis, who could see from Decelea great numbers of grain-ships sailing in to Piraeus, said that it was use-

⁵⁸ Pseudo-Xenophon, *op.cit.*, 2.7.

⁵⁹ Kastel–Austin, *op.cit.*, fr. 428.

⁶⁰ Kastel–Austin, *op.cit.*, fr. 431, 443.

⁶¹ Braund, *op.cit.*, 47-8.

⁶² Thucydides, *History*, 6.20.4.

⁶³ Croix, *op.cit.*, 47.

less for his troops to be trying all this long time to shut off the Athenians from access to their land, unless one should occupy also the country from which the grain was coming in by sea; and that it was best to send to Calchedon and Byzantium Clearchus, the son of Rhamphias, who was diplomatic agent for the Byzantines at Sparta.”⁶⁴

This plan was finally achieved by the Spartan Lysander at the battle of Aigospotamoi in 405 BC in the straits of the Hellespont, where the Athenian fleet was destroyed and the Spartans took control of the pontic waters; therefore, one year later, in 404 BC, Athens was starved out and had to surrender to Sparta.⁶⁵

Athens and the Black Sea Cereal Trade in the 4th Century

The issue of the 4th century BC is the quantity of the imported grain to Athens, as there is evidence that shows this activity. On the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War and the complete defeat of Athens, its consequent diminution of the naval power and the significant losses in Sicily, the grain supply became a major problem. A new city in the Black Sea emerges in the cereal trade, the city of Chersonesus, which is the land of Taurians according to Herodotus. In Euripides play *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, which was staged in 412 BC, there is a straight connection between the Tauri of Crimea and Attica. It seems that in the 4th century Chersonesus produced and exported grain and, probably, as we cannot say for sure, Athens imported this commodity mainly after 413. Athenians created trade relations with this city as the Scythians tried to gain profits from the grain trade.⁶⁶

The problem of ensuring grain for Athens became again serious few years later, after the Peloponnesian War, as a new war in the Greek mainland broke out. Many cities, such as Athens, Sparta, Argos, and Corinth, were engaged in the Corinthian war, which ended with the Peace of Antalcidas in 387 BC. The power of Athens was once more emasculated by the successful operations of the Spartan

⁶⁴ Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 1.1.35.

⁶⁵ Croix, *op.cit.*, 48.

⁶⁶ Braund, *op.cit.*, 53.

Antalcidas in Hellespont, who managed to gain control of the region and cut off the supply lines from the Black Sea to Athens.⁶⁷ The pressure that imposes the Spartan control of Pontic grain and the fear of the blockade actually made the Athenians to negotiate and finally capitulate in 387 BC as Xenophon mentions:

“then Antalcidas, the whole number of his ships amounting to more than eighty, was master of the sea, so that he also prevented the ships from the Pontus from sailing to Athens, and compelled them to sail to the ports of his people’s allies. The Athenians, therefore, seeing that the enemy’s ships were many, fearing that they might be completely subdued, as they had been before, now that the King had become an ally of the Lacedaemonians, and being beset by the raiding parties from Aegina, for these reasons were exceedingly desirous of peace.”⁶⁸

The following years, the situation in Athens seems to have gotten worse as the power of the city diminishes. Consequently, Athenians tried to overcome this crisis by offering incentives to private foreign traders in order to bring grain to Athens and also to exporters to export to Athens. There are many inscriptions of honors to private traders, especially after the last quarter of the century. Furthermore, the “dikai emporikai” were also a measure of incentives, as Athens offered equality of judgment to all foreign traders. More specifically, many traders from the Black Sea brought grain to Athens. There is a fragment from Bosphorus that gives honors for services to leading Bosphorans. This fact shows the Pontic grain trade from various parts of the region. Xenophon illustrates the activity of these grain traders:

“You are saying, Ischomachus, that your father is really by nature a lover of farming no less than merchants are lovers of grain. For merchants on account of their excessive love for grain set sail for it to wherever they hear that most is available, crossing the Aegean, the Euxine and the Sicilian Sea.

⁶⁷ R. J. Buck, *Boiotia and the Boiotian League, 432-371 B.C.* (Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1994), 58.

⁶⁸ Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 5.1.28-29.

Then having taken as much as they can, they carry it across the sea, even placing it in the ship in which they themselves are sailing. And when they need money, they tend not to unload the grain where they happen to be, but take it and exchange it wherever they hear that it is especially valued and people think the most of it. Your father seems to be a lover of farming in that kind of way.”⁶⁹

This extract shows undoubtedly the importance of grain as a trade commodity, the fact that Black Sea was one of the most important grain suppliers for Greece and, finally, depicts the portrait of the grain traders who were sailing all over Greece in order to sell their product and get the highest profit. It is obvious that they were seeking for the best market conditions. Furthermore, we can deduce that the grain production in the Greek world was variable from year to year and differed from city to city.

A well-known passage in Demosthenes’ speech *Against Leptines* (354 BC) shows the Athenian grain supply from the Black Sea. In this speech, the orator is trying to underline the vital role of the Bosporan Kingdom to the grain supply of Athens, as he speaks for 400,000 medimnoi of grain (1 medimnos of wheat: 32.96kg, 1 medimnos of barley: 27.47kg) from Bosphorus to Athens, a figure that could be checked in the records of the sitophylakes:

“For you are aware that we consume more imported corn than any other nation. Now the corn that comes to our ports from the Black Sea is equal to the whole amount from all other places of export. And this is not surprising; for not only is that district most productive of corn, but also Leucon, who controls the trade, has granted exemption from dues to merchants conveying corn to Athens, and he proclaims that those bound for your port shall have priority of lading. For Leucon, enjoying exemption for himself and his children, has granted exemption to every one of you. See what this amounts to. He exacts a toll of one-thirtieth from exporters of corn from his country. Now from the Bosphorus there come to Athens about

⁶⁹ Xenophon, *Economics*, 20.27-28.

four hundred thousand bushels; the figures can be checked by the books of the grain commissioners. So, for each three hundred thousand bushels he makes us a present of ten thousand bushels, and for the remaining hundred thousand a present of roughly three thousand.”⁷⁰

The purpose of the writer is to stress the role of Leucon as a benefactor for the Athenians and also to attack a new law proposed by someone called Leptines that cancelled all the immunities from public services (liturgies). The context of the passage speaks for constant and annual quantities. Demosthenes' claim surely underestimates the non Pontic imports of grain and we cannot safely assume that this was the real amount.⁷¹ Generally, Demosthenes is using the example of Bosphorans objectively, as he maintained close relations with the Bosphoran rulers. According to Demosthenes, the legislation of Leptines would also affect the Bosphorans, and he clearly says that this amount of grain comes from Leukon, the ruler of the Bosphoran Kingdom, who showed great generosity towards Athens and consequently deserves better treatment from them. The city of Athens was definitely an important market for the Bosphorans, as the honors and the privilege of *ateleia* show. Thus, the economic advantages of the Bosphoran rulers are important, as they seek to expand their trade in the whole Aegean world. In 346 BC, the decree of the politician Androtion honors Leukon's sons Spartokos and Pairisades, almost ten years after the *Against Leptines*.⁷² These inscribed honors for the Spartocid dynasty of the Bosphoran Kingdom describe the connection between Athens and Bosphorus as a reciprocal relationship. On the one hand, Athens gets the grain supply and Bosphorans retain their economic privileges.

Another evidence of this close relation is the movement of the Athenian elite to Bosphorus and its safe harbors. In the 390s there was a voyage of that kind from the son of a Bosphoran noble called Sopai-

⁷⁰ Demosthenes, *Against Leptines*, 20.31-32.

⁷¹ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 97.

⁷² IG II², 212.

os.⁷³ The trips had both educational and commercial character and were frequent during the rule of Leukon. Isocrates refers to his aristocratic students from Pontus who were studying with famous Athenians like the historian Ephorus, the general Timotheus and the politician Androtion.⁷⁴ His students were proponents of the expansion and the control of the Athenians in Hellespont:

“I should like to ask those who disapprove of me what they think about the students who cross the sea from Sicily, from the Pontus, and from other parts of the world in order to enjoy my instruction. Do they think that they voyage to Athens because of the dearth of evil-minded men at home? But anywhere on earth anyone can find no lack of men willing to aid him in depravity and crime.”⁷⁵

This important relation of Athens and Bosphorus is also obvious in art as there are many masterpieces from the 4th century kurgans of Bosphorus and Scythia made by Greeks who lived or worked there, especially at Panticapaeum. Finally, we can say that this was an interaction between the democratic state of Athens and an oligarchic kingdom that was its grain supply.⁷⁶

From the well-known First Fruits inscription from Eleusis⁷⁷ we know that in 329/8 the total production figures in Attica for barley and wheat were 339,925 medimnoi and 27,062 medimnoi respectively. The sums show that the harvest of 329/8 was not adequate to feed the population. However, it is difficult to say whether this harvest was normal or not, as there is not any other data in order to compare⁷⁸.

⁷³ Alfonso Moreno, “Athenian Wheat-Tsars: Black Sea Grain and Elite Culture,” in *The Black Sea in Antiquity: Regional and Interregional Economic Exchanges*, Vincent Gabrielsen–John Lund eds. (Aarhus University Press, 2007), 73.

⁷⁴ Moreno, *op.cit.*, 73-4.

⁷⁵ Isocrates, *Speeches*, 15.224.

⁷⁶ Moreno, *op.cit.*, 81.

⁷⁷ IG I³ 78.

⁷⁸ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 99.

Cereal Trade between other City-states and Black Sea

Athens was the largest city-state in the Greek world and the basic importer of grain in large quantities mainly from Egypt, Sicily, and the Black Sea.⁷⁹ More information on the imports of Athens has survived than on of all the other city-states together.

In mainland Greece, Thessaly, Epirus, and Euboea are mentioned as exporters of grain. Unlike Euboea, Thessaly and Epirus are considered as minor exporters.⁸⁰ Xenophon in his work *Hellenica* writes about Thessaly:

“And who are likely to be better able to maintain the sailors, we, who on account of our abundance even have corn to export to other lands, or the Athenians, who have not even enough for themselves unless they buy it?”⁸¹

Lycurgus gives information about Epirus in his work *Against Leocrates*:

“Living at Megara and using as capital the money which he had withdrawn from Athens he shipped corn, bought from Cleopatra, from Epirus to Leucas and from there to Corinth.”⁸²

Information concerning Euboea is given by Thucydides. It is easily understood that its grain was very important to Athens, at least during the Peloponnesian War. In the passage that follows, Thucydides speaks about the effects of Decelea’s capture in 413:

“Besides, the transport of provisions from Euboea, which had before been carried on so much more quickly over land by Decelea from Oropus, was now effected at great cost by sea round Sunium.”⁸³

⁷⁹ Bissa, *op.cit.*, 191.

⁸⁰ Bissa, *op.cit.*, 167.

⁸¹ Xenophon, *Economics*, 6.1.11.

⁸² Lycurgus, *Speeches*, 1.26.

⁸³ Thucydides, *History*, 7.28.

Aristophanes in his play *Wasps* also mentions Euboea when Bdelycleon complains about wheat:

“When they are afraid, they promise to divide Euboea among you and to give each fifty bushels of wheat, but what have they given you? Nothing excepting, quite recently, five bushels of barley, and even these you have only obtained with great difficulty, on proving you were not aliens, and then choenix by choenix.”⁸⁴

Euboea rebelled in 411 BC and left the Athenian League. Thereafter it is believed that Athens turned to its long-distance suppliers of grain, such as the Black Sea, more regularly.

The Peloponnese cultivated its own grain but it also imported it from the Black Sea, from Egypt and Sicily.⁸⁵ There is no other evidence for the Pontus’ imports apart from Herodotus who mentions ships carrying grain from the Black Sea to Aegina and the Peloponnese:

“This was like that other saying of Xerxes when he was at Abydos and saw ships laden with corn sailing out of the Pontus through the Hellespont on their way to Aegina and the Peloponnese.”⁸⁶

Methone was a small city, member of the Delian League, situated at the west coast of the Thermaic gulf. The Athenians in 426 BC passed a decree that gave the right to the Methonians to import a specified amount of grain from Byzantium every year:

“The Methonians shall be permitted to import from Byzantium up to the amount of [...] thousand medimnoi each year. The Wardens of the Hellespont shall not themselves prevent them from exporting it or allow anyone else to prevent them, and if they do, they are to be liable to a fine of 10,000 drachmas each. After giving notice to the Wardens of the Hellespont, they shall export up to the permitted amount. There

⁸⁴ Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 715-8.

⁸⁵ Diodoros 14.79; Thucydides, *History*, 3.86.4.

⁸⁶ Herodotus, *The Histories*, 7.147.2.

shall also be exemption from payment for the ship carrying it.”⁸⁷

The city of Aphytis in Chalcidice seems that it was enjoying the same privilege with Methone at about the same period, as it was permitted to import up to 10,000 medimnoi from Byzantium.⁸⁸ According to Demosthenes, both Akanthos and Maroneia in Chalcidice also imported pontic grain:

“For when Paerisades had published a decree in Bosphorus that whoever wished to transport grain to Athens for the Athenian market might export it free of duty, Lampis, who was at the time in Bosphorus, obtained permission to export grain and the exemption from duty in the name of the state; and having loaded a large vessel with grain, carried it to Acanthus and there disposed of it –he, who had made himself the partner of Phormio here with our money.”⁸⁹

The general, Timomachus, however, for an embassy from the Maronites had come to him, begging him to convoy their grain ships –ordered us trierarchs to make cables fast to the ships and tow them to Maroneia– a long voyage across the open sea.”⁹⁰

Akanthos is located in Chalcidice and there is evidence of imported grain from Pontus as the area is not suitable for grain crops. The reference for grain supplies from the Black Sea is probably better understood if we take into consideration the strained relations between Akanthos and Macedon or Thrace. This political situation caused the need for the Pontic grain.⁹¹

Delos, the powerful island of Cyclades, rarely needed to address to foreign exporters of grain, as its local production covered its needs. However, a single decree was found specifically honoring a dealer in

⁸⁷ IG I³ 61, 32-41.

⁸⁸ IG I³ 62.

⁸⁹ Demosthenes, *Against Phormio*, 36.

⁹⁰ Demosthenes, *Against Polyycles*, 20.

⁹¹ Bissa, *op.cit.*, 204.

grain, Dionysius of Byzantium, who in the first half of the third century sold 500 medimnoi of wheat to the city at a price the city requested.

Finally, another evidence of grain imports from the Black Sea concerns the city of Mytilene. Thucydides speaks about the preparations of the city for revolt against Athens (428/7 BC) and the waiting for the supplies from Pontus; archers and grain:

“Immediately after the invasion of the Peloponnesians all Lesbos, except Methymna, revolted from the Athenians. The Lesbians had wished to revolt even before the war, but the Lacedaemonians would not receive them; and yet now when they did revolt, they were compelled to do so sooner than they had intended. While they were waiting until the moles for their harbors and the ships and walls that they had in building should be finished, and for the arrival of archers and corn and other things that they were engaged in fetching from the Pontus.”⁹²

It is understood from all this evidence above that Athens until the end of the 5th century BC had almost total control of the imports of pontic grain, thanks to the control of the Hellespont. It was up to its decision to permit or not the imports of grain to its allies and to define the quantity and the frequency of them, or to deny and block them in case of an enemy or a rebellious ally.

Laws and taxes

Cereal trade was too important for flourishing Greek cities, such as Athens; important enough to send counterparts to frequent meetings at the courtroom [monumental proof of which is the speech of Lysias “Against the Sitopolon (*Grain Merchants*)”] and to grant ateleia to benefactors and to create special public servants units to safeguard the city’s supplies: the “epimelitai” and the “sitophylakes,” who were responsible for the amount and the price of grain being unloaded at the “emporion” (the marketplace at Piraeus port) and the final price bread

⁹² Thucydides, *History*, 3.2.

was sold at. All in all, Athens was dependent on imports of grain city, as the growing population, especially during the gold 5th and 4th centuries, could not have been fed only by local production; and grain was at the core of the Attic diet.

First signs, though disputable ones, of the city's dependence on grain imports appear at the 6th century. At that point, we detect the first rules for merchants exporting goods from Athens: Solon's law forbids any export of Athenian products, under the shadow of curses, making a single exception for oil. Some scholars find this the first attempt to secure Athens' grain sufficiency. But as there is no direct reference to grain, other scholars find this law an indirect attempt to reinforce oil production and exports. The prohibition of the export of agricultural products except olive oil implies that olive cultivation was already developed, but also that this law was an attempt to check the free exportation of grain by the large landowners,⁹³ or to stop the sale of corn to Aegina and Megara, both of which were potential enemies.⁹⁴ Grain trade could have been of much importance at that period also because of a possible shortage due to the change of the cultivation of cereals to that of olive trees and vines, which were more suitable for Attica's soil.⁹⁵ The fact is that Solon's law does not speak of grain at all and many scholars believe that grain has nothing to do with this law, which is just a law encouraging the production of oil.⁹⁶

Later, as the needs grow and Piraeus becomes the center of global free trade, Athenians decide that grain was too important to be freely sold and bought. Ships arrive at the emporion from all parts of the known world, "emporoi" (merchants) unload grain and sell it to wholesalers, who, in their turn, sell it to bakers: bread was the only food product sold ready to consume, without the need of cooking at home.

"There are 7 laws relating to the grain trade from Athens. Isager and Hansen have provided the most concise treatment of 5 of them and the sources in which they appear: Finally the

⁹³ Garnsey, *op.cit.*, 110-1; Jameson, *op.cit.*, 11.

⁹⁴ Bury-Meiggs, *op.cit.*, 122.

⁹⁵ Croix, *op.cit.*, 46.

⁹⁶ Bissa, *op.cit.*, 179.

grain trade was regulated through legislation. Among the laws on grain the following have been transmitted to us: 1. It is forbidden to export any crop except olives;⁹⁷ 2. It is forbidden to purchase more than 50 phormoi of grain at a time;⁹⁸ 3. It is a capital offence for persons resident in Athens to ship grain to harbors other than the Piraeus;⁹⁹ 4. Any grain ship touching in at the harbor of the Piraeus is required to at least 2/3 of her cargo and may re-export a maximum of 1/3;¹⁰⁰ 5. It is forbidden for persons resident in Athens to extend a maritime loan unless the ship under contract conveys grain to the Piraeus.”¹⁰¹

Heavily regulated, the grain market needed some people to make sure rules were followed: the overseers (epimelitai) and the regulators (sitophylakes). The epimelitai were the ones who oversaw the unloading of the grain load at Piraeus.

“Kotsiris¹⁰² identified two groups that the regulatory tasks were divided between. The first were the “overseers of the import market” or epimelitai, whose responsibility was to ensure that all grain ships entering Piraeus, the port Athens controlled, sold at least two-thirds of their grain to Athenians. The emporoi (the shipmasters delivering grain to Athens) were prohibited by Athenian law from retaining more than one-third of their grain, presumably for later sale or sale at a different port.”¹⁰³

Additionally, Athenians picked thirty-five citizens each year, named them sitophylakes and charged them with the duty to control grain trade and bread price.

⁹⁷ Plutarch, *Solon*, 24.

⁹⁸ Lysias, *Speeches*, 22.6.

⁹⁹ Demosthenes, *Speeches*, 34.37, 35.50; *Lykourgos 1.27*.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, 51.4.

¹⁰¹ Demosthenes, *Speeches*, 35.51, 56.6, 56.11; Bissa, *op.cit.*, 177.

¹⁰² L.E. Kotsiris, An Antitrust Case in Ancient Greek Law, 22 *Int'l L.* 451 (1988). <https://scholar.smu.edu/til/vol22/iss2/7> (accessed 28-4-2021).

¹⁰³ Wayne R. Dunham, *Cold Case Files: The Athenian Grain Merchants 386 B.C.* (U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 2007).

“Aristotle mentions that the sitophylakes, 15 in Piraeus and 20 in Athens, also picked by lot, had to control the wheat and barley, before it was milled. They also had to check the bread sellers, to make sure the bread weighed as the law ordered. A lighter bread was considered adulteration.¹⁰⁴

Ancient writers mention that the price of grain had a lot of ups and downs. More specifically, it went very high in times of lacking and very low when there was abundance. In order to stabilize the market, the Athenian state named a regulators’ body, called the Sitophylakes, with the purpose to impose a price for grain, that the state considered fare. But, as I. Finley, Professor of Ancient History at Cambridge University, has concluded, this policy completely failed. Because, despite constant reforms, despite the death penalty for profiteering, and despite courts condemning to death the last and corrupted sitophylakes, the price continued to go up and down, worse than before.¹⁰⁵

The Sitophylakes (10 at first and 35 in the years 330-320, years of rich production) had the task to oversee the grain trade. According to Lysias, the Sitophylakes had to be alerted, so that the grain merchants, at the time of the arrival of the grain at the market, would not purchase more than a certain quantity (50 formous=baskets) a day. This measure was to prevent monopoly and profiteering.”¹⁰⁶

Of course, the sitophylakes were not alone: at the Emporion also worked the agoranomoi, the metronomoi (public slaves), and the anti-nomian: a sudden proof that the Athenian democracy felt a deep need to protect its citizens from what, even then, must have been considered a malicious tribe: the merchants.

“In the play *Athenean State*, Aristotle mentions that the state selected by lot 10 agoranomous, who had to oversee the

¹⁰⁴ Prasianakis, Varoufakis, Matsas, www.bep.gr (accessed 28-4-2021).

¹⁰⁵ G. C. Bitros–A. D. Karayannis, “Values and Institutions as Determinants of Entrepreneurship in Ancient Athens,” *Journal of Institutional Economics* 4.2 (2008): 205-30.

¹⁰⁶ Hala, *Economy Of Ancient Athens*.

products sold in the market, so that they should be clean and unadulterated (“kithara kai akibdila”), meaning they should follow hygiene rules and they should not have been adulterated. In case of juggle, a fine was imposed to both the producer and the merchant. That way the consumer was protected.¹⁰⁷

The Metronomoi were those who oversaw the means of weighing (metra and stathma). Just like the Agoranomoi, the Metronomoi were 10, 5 at the Athenian agora and 5 at the agora of Piraeus.¹⁰⁸

Magistrates such as the Athenian metronomoi, the weight inspectors, seem to have been primarily concerned with trying to ensure honest practice in the marketplace; the use of a single agreed weight system would also make it easier for citizen consumers to compare the prices of different merchants.”¹⁰⁹

Of course, rules are made to be broken, especially when money is at stake. And as the texts prove, a great deal of money was at stake in cereal trade, even in antiquity.

“It is worth mention that, while in the middle of the 4th c. BC the price of an attic medimnos (52,18 liters or 40,27 kilos) of grain was 5 drachmas, around 330 BC it rose to 16 drachmas.”¹¹⁰

Thus, the city courts often found themselves judging on accusations of profiteering, through cereal trade. And the price for those intending to make fortunes out of the need of people to be fed, was heavy: the death penalty.

¹⁰⁷ Prasianakis, Varoufakis, Matsas, www.bep.gr (accessed 26-4-2021).

¹⁰⁸ Hala, *Economy Of Ancient Athens*.

¹⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, 51 in Neville Morley, *Trade in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹¹⁰ Demosthenes, *Speeches*, 34.39; Giannis Stogias, “Οι νομισματοκοπίες των Αθηνών” (The Mints of Athens), in W. R. Dunham, “Cold Case Files: The Athenian Grain Merchants 386 B.C.,” *Economic Analysis Group Discussion Paper* (2007), 1-23. <http://www.usdoj.gov/atr/public/eag/221241.pdf> (accessed in 27-4-2022).

“Their [sc. the resident alien wholesalers’] interests are the opposite of other men’s: they make the most profit when some bad news reaches the city and they can sell their grain for the higher price. They are so delighted to hear of your disasters that they either get news of them before anyone else, or spread the rumors themselves.¹¹¹

Some of these men would send off goods from Egypt, others would travel on board with the shipments, and others would remain here in Athens and dispose of the merchandise. Then those who remained here would send letters to those abroad to inform them of the prevailing prices, so that if grain were expensive in Athens they might bring it here, and if the price should fall they might head to some other port. This was the main reason, men of the jury, why the price of grain rose: it was due to such letters and conspiracies.¹¹²

The right to bring an action for offences like supplying grain to a market other than Athens or making excessive profits on the sale of bread was not limited to those directly injured; any concerned citizen might bring a prosecution and benefit from half of any fine levied if successful; in theory a strong deterrent against merchants going against the perceived interests of the polis, or at least an additional risk to be considered.”¹¹³

Price spikes like the ones dominating modern economic front-pages and news bulletins were at the core of political dispute in Athens of the 4th century BC. Scholars find that Lysias’ speech *Against Sitopolon* was the first attempt from the state to barricade a cartel.

“The two regulations most relevant to the case brought against the grain merchants were profit controls and purchase or inventory limitations imposed on the grain merchants. They were prohibited from adding more than an Obol (one-sixth of a Drachma) per medimnus to the price of grain they had paid to the *emporoi* (the ship-masters importing the grain

¹¹¹ Lysias, *Speeches*, 22.14.

¹¹² Demosthenes, *Speeches*, 56.8.

¹¹³ Morley, *op.cit.*

into Athens). A Drachma was approximately what a stone-cutter or a carpenter would get paid for a day's labor. The most controversial of the restrictions, in terms of modern translations, is unfortunately also one of the key regulations the grain merchants were accused of violating and that was a prohibition on hoarding. Lysias cites a law that prohibits anyone from buying more than 50 phormai of grain...

In response to a negative supply shock to the grain market, regulators encouraged grain importers to form a buyers' cartel (monopsony), hoping that it would reduce retail prices by first lowering wholesale grain prices. In reality, the decrease in wholesale prices resulted in a decrease in the willingness of producers in other regions to supply grain to Athens, and retail grain prices increased substantially. Grain importers soon found themselves on trial for their lives in what is probably the earliest recorded antitrust trial."¹¹⁴

In antiquity, the same carrot that modern countries run to was used: tax exception, the well-known *ateleia*. *Ateleia* was the relief of the taxes imposed to the *metikoi* trading goods at Piraeus port. King of Bosphorus, Leukon, was granted *ateleia* for giving motives to merchants to take their grain to Athens. Several years after *ateleia* was granted to Leukon, Demosthenes defended his privilege at the Athenian court in his speech *Against Leptines*. Leptines was an Athenian citizen, obviously well off, who proposed a law to abolish the privilege of *ateleia*:

“A large proportion of the speech is devoted to arguing that there are holders of the privilege who deserve it: to deprive them of it, as Leptines' law does, imposes on them a financial loss in some cases, and in every case an insult. The first example is Leukon, who was the ruler of the country of Bosphorus on the north side of the Black Sea.¹¹⁵ That was a growing area from which a large part of Athens' food supply was imported. As an act of friendship, Leukon allowed grain to be

¹¹⁴ Dunham, *op.cit.*

¹¹⁵ Demosthenes, *Against Leptines*, 20.29-40.

shipped from Bosphorus free of export tax, on condition that it was taken to Athens. In gratitude the Athenians had given him Athenian citizenship and other privileges, including *ateleia*. Since Leukon was never likely to visit Athens, this was purely a compliment; but it would be correspondingly insulting to take *ateleia* away from him, and might well provoke him to stop the Athenians' exemption from Bosphoran export tax.¹¹⁶

Leukon, who controls the trade, has granted exemption from dues to merchants conveying corn to Athens, and he proclaims that those bound for your port shall have priority of lading. For Leukon, enjoying exemption for himself and his children, has granted exemption to every one of you."¹¹⁷

It seems, though, that regulation was proved incapable of assuring sufficient supplies for the city. During the 4th century BC Athens suffered increasing difficulties in guaranteeing adequate grain supplies after the loss of its naval supremacy and the empire. This is the context of Xenophon's proposals, dating from the middle of the century, which are expressly intended to make the city more attractive to merchants and thus to influence their decisions about which port to visit. New ways had to be found to attract cereal merchants.

"If prizes were to be offered to the market officials for settling disputes between merchants justly and promptly, so that sailings were not delayed, the effect would be that a far larger number of merchants would trade with us and would so with much greater satisfaction it would also be an excellent idea to reserve seats in the front row of the theatre for merchants and ship owners, and to offer them hospitality occasionally, when the high quality of their ships and merchandise they carry entitles them to be considered benefactors of the state. If they could look forward to such honors they would look on us as friends and hasten to visit us so as to gain the honor as well as the profit. Any rise in the number of residents and visitors

¹¹⁶ Douglas M. MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹¹⁷ Demosthenes, *Speeches*, 20.30-32.

would of course lead to a corresponding expansion of our imports and exports, and of the money received from sales, rents and customs.¹¹⁸ It is noticeable that Xenophon emphasizes on the importance of being able to offer the swift resolution of legal disputes, so that non-resident merchants were not forced to hang around Athens waiting for justice (becoming liable for the “metric tax” after a month), but could head off on their next voyage.”¹¹⁹

But as the border between use and abuse is often crossed, when money and trade are involved, ancient writers give us a sense of how these privileges turned to ground for bribe.

“Many of these leading Athenians established intensely personal, hereditary connections with the Spartokidai. Just as it was Gylon’s grandson Demosthenes who defended Leukon’s *ateleia* in 355 BC, and, according to Dinarchos,¹²⁰ set up public statutes of the Spartokidai in exchange for personal, yearly gifts of grain; it was Isocrates’ pupil Androtion who moved honors for Leukon’s sons in 346 BC;¹²¹ and it was Agyrrhios’ great-grandson, also named Agyrrhios, who did the same for Spartokos III in 285/4.”¹²²

When things got rough, something that obviously happened short after the Peloponnesian War, authorities introduced a tax in goods: a special grain tax. The Athenian grain tax law of 374/3 BC was imposed “in order that there may be grain for the people in the public domain,” as scholars assume, but without being sure. As it is, also, “not clear why anyone would bid for the right to bring the grain tax.”

“On the proposal of Agyrrhios, revealed here active fourteen years after the latest literary mention of him, the Athenians decide to sell the one –twelfth tax (which Stroud unhelpfully calls the 8 1/3 tax) from Lemnos, Imbros and Skyros and the

¹¹⁸ Xenophon, *Ways and Means*, 3.12.

¹¹⁹ Morley, *op.cit.*, 58.

¹²⁰ Dinarchus, *Speeches*, 1.43.

¹²¹ IG II², 212.

¹²² IG II², 653; Moreno, *op.cit.*, 74.

2% tax, 'in terms of grain.' Each portion will consist of 500 medimnoi, 100 of wheat and 400 of barley. Those who 'buy' the tax have to transport the grain to the Aiakeion in Athens at their own expense.¹²³ The law orders the Assembly to sell the grain collected from two taxes –the pentekoste or 2% tax on grain and the dodekate of 8 1/3% tax collected in the islands of Lemnos, Scyros and Imbros– not before the month of Anthesterion at a price fixed by the Assembly.¹²⁴ The pentekoste was collected on all grain imports and the dodekate was a transit tax collected on all grain that merchants brought to the islands and then shipped to other ports. The month of Anthesterion was right before the harvest and during the time when the seas were closed to shipping. Since shortages of grain might occur at this time, the law therefore instructed the Assembly to sell the grain collected from the two taxes during this month, in order to keep prices low."¹²⁵

The tax was only imposed on grain trade from these three islands, but it is characteristic of the degree of state intervention in a constant battle to ensure affordable bread for people.

Conclusion

To conclude, we know that grain was one of the most important commodities in trade for both Greece and the Black Sea, as it was the main staple food for the majority of the population. The first imports from the Black Sea probably happened even in the 6th century BC. Most of the evidence about trade in general, coming from the written sources and the archaeological finds, concerns Athens. In the 5th century BC, Athens had to import grain as the local production was not

¹²³ R. Osborne, "Archaeology, the Salaminioi, and the Politics of Sacred Space in Archaic Attica." In Susan E. Alcock–Robin Osborne, *Placing the Gods: Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994): 143-60.

¹²⁴ "The Athenian Grain-Tax Law of 374/3 B.C.," *Hesperia Supplement* 29 (1998): 4-9.

¹²⁵ Edward Harris, *Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens: Essays on Law, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 36-44.

sufficient, but there was no reason for importing it from such long-distance suppliers, such as the Black Sea, since Euboea, Boeotia, and Thessaly were also grain suppliers and were within the region. Furthermore, there is no direct evidence of regular and substantial imports from Pontus, at least until the battle at Aigospotamoi in 405 BC at the end of the Peloponnesian War. What has to be noted is that Euboea, a constant grain exporter to Athens, had rebelled and left the Delian League in 411 BC. It is probable that thereafter Athens turned to its long-distance suppliers of grain, such as the Black Sea, more regularly. In the 4th century things changed even more, as a specific export policy for grain was established between Athens and the Spartocid dynasty of the Bosporan Kingdom. The regular grain trade between the Black Sea and the other cities in mainland Greece and the Aegean world, such as Mytilene, Corinth, Sparta, and Epirus, is not possible to be estimated, as few evidence exists.

*Ermal Baze**

Historical Data on the Life of Albanian Women in the Late Middle Ages (14th-15th Centuries)

The situation of the Albanian women has attracted the attention of foreign Albanologists and researchers, starting from the 19th century (François Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville,¹ Johannes George Von Hahn,² Edith Durham³) until present day (Roberto Morozzo della Rocca,⁴ Bernd Jürgen Fischer⁵). Nonetheless, in their research (with the exception of Pierre Cabanes⁶) the woman question has not yet been analyzed in depth. As far as concerns the Albanian historiography, special papers and scientific studies (monographs,⁷ eth-

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¹ François Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville, *Voyage dans la Grèce* (Paris: 1820-21).

² Johannes George Von Hahn, *Reise durch die Gebirge des Drin und Wardar* (Wien: 1867).

³ Edith Durham, *Bregja e Ballkanit dhe Vepra të tjera për Shqipërinë dhe Shqiptarët* (The Burden of the Balkans and other Works for Albania and the Albanians) (Tirana: Naum Veqilharxhi, 1998).

⁴ Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Kombi dhe feja në Shqipëri: 1920-1924* (Nation and Religion in Albania: 1920-1924) (Tirana: Elena Gjika, 1994).

⁵ Bernd J. Fischer, *Mbreti Zog dhe përprjekja për stabilitet në Shqipëri* (King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania) (Tirana: Çabej, 1997).

⁶ Pierre Cabanes, "Vendi i gruas në Epirin antic" (The Position of Woman in Ancient Epirus), *Iliria* 2 (1983): 193-209; Neritan Ceka, *Ilirët deri te Shqiptarët* (From Illyrians to Albanians) (Tirana: Migjeni, 2015), 387-8.

⁷ Injaz Zamputi, "Pozita shoqërore e gruas malësore shqiptare sipas Kanunit" (The Social Position of the Malesori Women According to the Canon), *Buletin i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës* 2 (1961): 101-23; Beqir Sinani, "Lëvizja për emancipimin e femrës në vitet 1920-1924" (The Movement for the Emancipation of Women in the Years 1920-1924), *Studime Historike* 1 (1986); Pal Doçi, *Vetëqeverisja e Mirditës: vështrim etnologjik e historik* (Mirdita Self-government: Ethnological and Historical Perspective) (Tirana: Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1996); Fatmira Musaj, *Gruaja në Shqipëri në vitet 1912-1939* (Women in Albania in the Years 1912-1939) (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 2002); Eduart Caka, "Disa të dhëna mbi rolin dhe të drejtat e gruas në Shqipëri gjatë shekujve XVII-XVIII" (Some Data on the Role and the Rights of Women in Albania during the 17th- 18th Centuries),

nologists,⁸ anthropologists, jurists and customary law scholars,⁹ social-ogists¹⁰ etc., mainly have in focus women in the Ottoman period until the 20th century.

The present paper is based on a wide documentary material, of which the most used are: the Byzantine period documents on the history of the Albanians (7th-15th centuries),¹¹ the *Statutes of Shkodra*,¹² the documents on the history of Albania of the 15th century (years 1400-1405, 1406-1410, and 1479-1506),¹³ and also the 1416-1417 *Cadastre and*

Studime Historike 1-2 (2015): 69-87; Gentiana Kera–Enriketa Papa, “Karakteristikat e familjes shqiptare sipas regjistrimit të popullsisë në vitin 1918” (Characteristics of the Albanian Family according to the 1918 Census), *Politika dhe Shoqëria* 5, no. 1/10 (2002): 83-96.

⁸ Abaz Dojaka, “Karakterit i lidhjeve martesore para çlirimit” (The Character of Marital Ties before Liberation), *Etnografia shqiptare* 11 (1981); Kahreman Ulqini, “E drejta zakonore përballë së drejtës kanonike dhe shariatit” (Customary Law versus Ecclesiastical Law and Sharia), *Etnografia shqiptare* 16 (1989).

⁹ Ismet Elezi, *E drejta zakonore e Labërisë në planin krahasues* (The Customary Law of Labëria in a Comparative Plan) (Tirana: Tirana University Press, 1994); Aleks Luarasi, *Marrëdhëniet Familjare* (Family Relations), (Tirana: Luarasi, 2001).

¹⁰ Zyhdi Dervishi, *Gratë në syrin e ciklonit të sfidave dhe perspektiva: trajtesë sociologjike e problematikës sociokulturore të grave shqiptare në vitet '90 të shekullit XX* (Women in the Eye of the Cyclone of Challenges and Perspectives: A Sociological Approach to the Socio-cultural Problems of Albanian Women in the '90s of the 20th Century) (Tirana: Dora D'Istria, 2000).

¹¹ *Dokumente të periudhës bizantine për historinë e Shqipërisë: shek. VII-XV* (Documents of the Byzantine Period for the History of Albania: 7th-15th centuries) [hereafter DBS], ed. Koço Bozhori (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1978).

¹² *Statuti di Scutari della prima metà del secolo XIV con le addizione fino al 1469*, ed. Lucia Nadin (Roma: Viella, 2002).

¹³ *Dokumente për historinë e Shqipërisë të shekullit XV* (Documents on the History of Albania of the 15th Century), 1 (1400-1405) [hereafter DHS 1], ed. Injaz Zamputi–Luan Malltezi (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1987); *Dokumente për historinë e Shqipërisë të shekullit XV* (Documents on the History of Albania of the 15th Century), 2 (1406-1410) [hereafter DHS 2], ed. Injaz Zamputi–Pranvera Bogdani (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1984); *Dokumenta të shekullit XV për historinë e Shqipërisë* (15th Century Documents on the History of Albania), 4 (1479-1506): Part I (1479-1499) [hereafter DHS 1479-1506, Part I], ed. Injac Zamputi (Tirana: University of Tirana, Institute of History and Linguistics, 1967); *Dokumente për historinë e Shqipërisë 1479-1506* (Documents on the History of Albania 1479-1506): Part II (1499-1506) [hereafter DHS 1499-1506,

Concessions Register for the District of Shkodra.¹⁴ Also, *Gjon Muzaka's Chronicle*,¹⁵ the *Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini*,¹⁶ and the *Kanun of Scanderbeg* (The Canon of Scanderbeg)¹⁷ are used as supplementary sources.

In distinction from the customary law data, a characteristic of the local governing of rural and mountainous areas in Albania, the documentary sources give considerable information on the role and importance of women living in the autonomous cities during the Albanian medieval history and shed light on the legal protection of their personality, dignity, and honor. The earliest historical data on some of the most important rights of the Albanian women are to be found in the Byzantine sources dating back to the first decades and the beginning of the second half of the 13th century a woman's right to ask for a divorce,¹⁸ to manage or bequeath their own property,¹⁹ and other similar acts.²⁰ In a letter of the Ohrid archbishop, Dhimitër Homatjanoj,²¹ of May 1223,

Part II], ed. Injaz Zamputi (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1979).

¹⁴ *Regjistri i Kadastrës dhe i Koncesioneve për rrethin e Shkodrës 1416-1417* (Cadastre and Concessions Register for the District of Shkodra 1416-1417) [hereafter RKKS], ed. Injac Zamputi (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1977).

¹⁵ Karl Hopf, *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites ou peu connues* (Berlin: Librairie de Weidmann, 1873). Used for publication after the translation of Dhori Qiriazi: Gjon Muzaka, *Memorje* (Memories) (Tirana: Toena, 1996) and after the translation of Pëllumb Xhufit from the Italian copy in his monograph: *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt: Berati dhe Vlora në shekujt XII-XV* (From the Palaeologians to the Muzakaj: Berat and Vlora in the 12th-15th Centuries) (Tirana: "55," 2009), 380-456; *Historia dhe gjenealogjia e shtëpisë Muzaka* (History and Genealogy of the Muzaka Dynasty), written by Don John Muzaka, Despot of Epirus.

¹⁶ Shtjefën Gjeçovi, *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit* (The Canon of Lekë Dukagjini) [hereafter KLD], (Tirana: Parliament of Albania, 2001).

¹⁷ Frano Ilia, *Kanuni i Skanderbegut* (The Canon of Scanderbeg) (Milot: Rosa, 1993).

¹⁸ DBS, doc. 26, 55.

¹⁹ DBS, doc. 28, 60-62: "The testament is legal, when includes all those who enjoy the heritage right. A landowner in Dibra becomes peer."

²⁰ DBS, doc. 45, 82-84: "February 1258—The sale of vineyard near the city of Durrës."

²¹ Dhimitër Homatjanoj concluded the studies for jurisprudence in Constantinople and around 1200 was sent in Ohrid as cartophilax (one of the most important aids of the patriarch) of the bishopric, where he carried out this duty until 1216, when he became archbishop. He held this position until 1234. See DBS, doc. 28, 58.

it is mentioned: “[...] the so-called Kabasilina, who was within the castle of Durrës, bequeathing without being present with her sons and not mentioning the latter [i.e., her sons] in the testament.”²²

Similarly to the Byzantine sources, the Statutes of Shkodra give relatively important information, in which the western-fashioned archetypic role of a woman’s importance in the society is reflected. In a series of dispositions, special place is also occupied by penal actions against morality, which evidences the legal and penal protection of a woman’s personality, dignity, and honor. The law was very sensitive towards the complaints from women about insults²³ and the exercise of physical or sexual violence²⁴ against them. The punitive measures were serious and didn’t spare anyone, whatever his social position or status was, without making any kind of distinction between secular persons or the clergy. The fact that a vast variety of different situations and combinations was included in the legal framework on this aspect convinces us that the respect of the women’s rights and dignity in that period was true and was taken seriously. If a married woman complained for rape, beating or robbery against a cleric, then she had to be trusted even without witnesses.²⁵ The cleric was immediately fined with fifty hyperpers, half of which were transferred to the bishop, one fourth to the count (representative of the Serb royal authority in the city of Shkodra),²⁶ and one fourth was granted to the claimant woman.²⁷ The statutory norms also provided for the cases when a man raped an honest and unmarried woman: in these circumstances, if the man was also unmarried, he was

²² DBS, doc. 28, 61.

²³ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 255.

²⁴ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 256: “If it’s proven that a secular person touches or beats a woman, or violates her home, this is condemned with a fine of eight hyperpers. If violates another woman at the same way, he had to pay eight hyperpers, half to the count and the other half to the claimant.”

²⁵ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 200.

²⁶ *Acta et Diplomata Res Albaniae Mediae Aetatis Illustrantia* (collegerunt et digesserunt Dr. Ludovicus de Thalloczy, Dr. Konstantin Jireček et Dr. Emilianus de Sufflay), vol. I, (Annos 344-1343 Tabulamque geographician continens), Vindobonae MCMXIII, reedition, Tiranë, Prishtinë: “Dukagjini”–Pejë, 2002, document 527 (hereafter *Acta Albaniae I*).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

forced to legally marry her.²⁸ If they were both married, the man was punished with a fine of fifty hyperpers, equally distributed between the count and the woman.²⁹ Unlike the first case, when the woman was believed even without witnesses, in this situation the woman had to prove herself by bringing convincing evidence.³⁰

Nevertheless, in the coastal Albanian cities (Durrës, Lezha, Shkodra, Drisht, Ulqin, Tivar) under the administration of the Republic of San Marco (1392-1479), the question of disrespecting the statutes, the rules and old customs by the Venetian authorities started to cause dissatisfactions among the local population.³¹ In the municipalities of Durrës and Drisht, cases of abuse and violation of even the elementary norms of morality against the local women by the Venetian local governors are well documented: “The governor of Durrës, Pietro Arimondo, as it is seen from the process against him on October 29, 1409, had had arrested the inhabitant of Durrës, Kirana, to force her to perjury that allegedly the testament bequeathed by the chancellor of Durrës, Nicola Parma (with whom the Venetian governor had to settle old scores), was a fake testament. The governor exercised his menaces to force her to act as he wished, otherwise he would have tortured her with the most barbarian tools. And he hanged the chancellor of Durrës after forced Kirana to perjury [...]” “Heustak Grioni one of the ugliest figures that we the citizens of Drisht knew on 1401-1402, in the most banditry way that can be imagined, entered in the house of the citizen George Varshi, when the latter was not there to rape his wife. In front of the powerful anger who erupted in Drisht, the Seignory was forced to move away her citizen without concluding his time of service and to somehow preserve the discredited prestige of the state stained by its governor.”³²

The *Statutes of Shkodra* also included very severe punishment measures for women of dubious morals, who were not allowed to wear hats or to live and share company with the city’s noble ladies. Those

²⁸ Ibid, chap. 201.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Luan Malltezi, *Qytetet e bregdetit shqiptar gjatë sundimit venedikas* (Albanian Coastal Cities during Venetian Rule) (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1988), 217.

³² Malltezi, *Qytetet e bregdetit*, 220-2.

women who violated the rules and conducted forbidden activities were beaten with sticks and within three days were banished from the city: “If a woman is proved that is vicious from the testimony of two or three men, she is not to be allowed to carry a hat on the head, as our custom is, nor to share company at her will. She is not permitted to stay or dwell close to the noble ladies. If she infringes these orders, she will be punished with eight hyperpers that will be divided between the count and the claimant. If its proven that a vicious woman makes dirty works or seeks to ruin the others, she had to leave our city within three days and if this deadline is not respected, she will be punished with a fine of eight hyperpers, fustigated in the roads of the city and at the end to be evicted and never return to our land.”³³ Along with the prostitutes, they were excluded from the right to inherit the wealth of their family: “[...] when the daughter ends as prostitute, even if the father and mother are dead, the brothers have the power to exclude their prostitute sister from the heritage; if this sister has not living father, mother or brothers, but only a sister that is a fair woman, then to the latter should pass the part of the above defamatory sister.”³⁴ It is quite certain that these severe sanctions were mainly taken to cut the way of promoting and developing the whoredom, which was widespread in the coastal cities of the Eastern Adriatic. “In all the cities of the seashore” –says Milan Šufflay– “certainly existed brothels,” and this is proved by the “whores” mentioned in the Statutes of Budva (1350) and in the “battessa di bordello” that is mentioned in Ragusa (1400).³⁵

The husband in general had to show respect to his wife and should not abandon her because of dowry lack or her little wealth.³⁶ Her dowry should not be alienated or wasted by the husband,³⁷ because protecting

³³ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 87.

³⁴ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 171.

³⁵ Milan V. Šufflay, *Städte und Burgen Albaniens* (Wien und Leipzig, 1924); Used after the edition in Albanian prepared by Luan Malltezi, *Qytetet dhe kështjellat e Shqipërisë, kryesisht në mesjetë* (Cities and Castles of Albania, mainly in the Middle Ages) (Tirana: Onufri, 2009), 96.

³⁶ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 265: “The man who enters his home a woman as a wife, cannot discard her out because she has not kept dowry in the house. The dowry must be by reason sought. He that banishes the wife is fined with eight hyperpers, half for the count and half for the claimant.”

³⁷ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 165.

the wife's wealth was his right. Also, he was not permitted to use his wife's dowry to liquidate the blood tax or the urazba: "To no man was allowed to take something from the wife's dowry to pay a blood feud or urazba. The commune should protect the woman, while the husband who commits such a foolish action had to pay it himself."³⁸

According to the statutes, both consorts should have reciprocity relations between them, situation that is reflected in bequeathing each other when one of them passed away.³⁹ Additionally, not only the husband but also the wife had the right to draft a testament.⁴⁰ The wife had the right to keep her part of the inheritance from the father- and mother-in law and also the right to bequeath: "The daughter and the woman in general has the right to issue a testament, starting from the age of twelve years old and on."⁴¹ The women's rights to file a lawsuit,⁴² draft and inherit a testament,⁴³ take profit from it,⁴⁴ warrant,⁴⁵ have legal representatives on different issues of their wealth,⁴⁶ and to be church warden (epitrope) to apply the testament's dispositions⁴⁷ are evidenced by the Dubrovnik archival documents (Državni u Dubrovniku) at the beginning of the 15th century and this is valid not only for Shkodra and Durrës, but also for the other coastal cities of Albania, such as Ulqin and Tivar. On the basis of Dubrovnik's and other Venetian documentary sources, women who possessed properties and assets⁴⁸ and had the right

³⁸ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 266.

³⁹ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 168.

⁴⁰ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 196.

⁴¹ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 186.

⁴² DHS 2, doc. 374.

⁴³ DHS 1, doc. 24, 65, 121, 132, 160, 161.

⁴⁴ DHS 1, doc. 295, 374, 403. DHS 2 doc. 214.

⁴⁵ DHS 1, doc. 274, 285, 377, 408, 428.

⁴⁶ DHS 1, doc. 228: "27 June 1402—The legal representative of a woman from Tivar withdraws in Dubrovnik what the daughter has left to her after death."

⁴⁷ DHS 1, doc. 410.

⁴⁸ DHS 1, doc. 39, 84, 158, 173, 228; DHS 2, doc. 129, 366.

to administer,⁴⁹ donate⁵⁰ and sell⁵¹ them for different economic interests are mentioned in these cities.⁵²

In the *Cadastral and Concessions Register for the District of Shkodra 1416-1417*, drafted by the Venetian administration regarding the properties in possession of “the Adriatic Queen” in the Albanian territories and the fiscal system on the inhabitants living within her authority, the term “woman’s right” is often mentioned for various cases of women’s, inhabitants of Shkodra, land possessions in the city and the surroundings, among whom there were also widows.⁵³ In general, women inhabitants of Shkodra of the 14th and 15th centuries had a status that would be envied even in the centuries to come. According to the statutes, the family wealth was an equal property: “Everything that husband and wife gain together is considered equal, viz half belongs to the husband and half to the wife.”⁵⁴ One could compare this to the article of the *Lekë Dukagjini’s Canun*: “The woman bellows to carry as much as she could in her husband’s home.”⁵⁵ “If the husband beats the wife, the canon does not blame him, and either the parents can’t redeem the beating”⁵⁶ or “the woman that leaves her husband’s home, has no right to take anything but her clothes.”⁵⁷ In this direction, some improvements and novelties were brought in the family law by Scanderbeg, who changed the old customary law that allowed the husband to divorce the wife without reason and without granting her any asset.⁵⁸ *The Canon of*

⁴⁹ DHS 1, doc. 428: “20 April 1404—A woman from Tivar presents a general power of attorney to extract and administer the properties and the assets that has inherited in Tivar and surroundings.”

⁵⁰ DHS 1, doc. 63: “6 September 1400—The widow of a shoemaker from Durrës donates a house in Durrës,” doc. 239: “4 August 1402—The wife of Nicholas Spani from Drisht distributes the assets of the husband in Albania.”

⁵¹ DHS 1 doc. 339; DHS 2, doc. 364.

⁵² DHS 1, doc. 210: “28 April 1402—The daughter of a man from Tivar in Dubrovnik has economic interests in the city of Tivar.”

⁵³ RKKS, doc. 2/a, 3/a, 20/a, 30/a, doc. 9/a, 9/b, 10/b, 11/a, 19/b, 21/a, 25/b, 30/b, 35/a.

⁵⁴ *Statuti di Scutari*, chap. 166.

⁵⁵ KLD, chap. 29.

⁵⁶ KLD, chap., 28.

⁵⁷ KLD, chap., 31.

⁵⁸ Aleks Luarasi, “E drejta në shtetin e Skënderbeut” (Legal law in the state of Skanderbeg), in *Studime për Epokën e Skënderbeut* 3 (1989): 51.

Scanderbeg –Aleks Luarasi ascertains– “previewed only two legal causes to divorce the wife: stealing and the conjugal unfaithfulness (dishonesty affairs).”⁵⁹ According to *The Canon of Scanderbeg*, the wife could be divorced for other causes also, but in these cases the husband was obliged to give her part of the conjugal wealth recognizing her contribution in the common (home) wealth.⁶⁰ Divorcing the wife without reason was also previewed in Scanderbeg’s Canon, but in this case she would get half of the couple’s private land to secure her life.⁶¹ However, the changes that Scanderbeg brought to the customary law were partial and temporary.⁶² After his death and Albania’s occupation by the Ottomans, most of these rules were abolished.

In relation with the above-mentioned rules of the customary law, in the positive law,⁶³ as it is represented by the Statutes of Shkodra, the protection of a woman’s moral integrity and right to wealth proves in a certain extent the respect of her personality and, furthermore, the Shkodra and other coastal communes’ citizens’ development and emancipation in the Late Middle Age Albania (14th-15th centuries).

The sources and the chronicles inform us about a considerable part of the noble Albanian women of the 14th-15th centuries. The dynasty marriages and marriage alliances in medieval Europe, as everywhere else, were first of all a political act, through which the political alliances with the neighbors were strengthened, and they also led to the enlargement of the principalities’ territorial–political formation during the

⁵⁹ Luarasi, “E drejta në shtetin,” 51.

⁶⁰ Aleks Luarasi, *Historia e shtetit dhe e së drejtës në Shqipëri* (History of the State and Law in Albania) (Tirana: Luarasi University Press, 2007⁴), 189.

⁶¹ Luarasi, *Historia e shtetit*, 189.

⁶² Petrika Thëngjilli, *Historia e popullit shqiptar 395-1875* (History of the Albanian People 395-1875) (Tirana: Tirana University Press, 1999), 169.

⁶³ Pëllumb Xhufi, “Statutet e Shkodrës mes së drejtës pozitive dhe së drejtës zakonore” (Statutes of Shkodra between Positive Law and Customary Law), in *Statutet e Shkodrës nga gjysma e parë e shek. XIV, me shtesa deri më 1469*, (Statutes of Shkodra from the First Half of the 14th Century, with Additions up to 1469), anastatic edition (Tirana: IDK, 2017), 27; In the case of Albania, and not only, the positive and the customary law have coexisted until the moment of the modern state establishment, each of whom having the proper implementation zone: the first mainly reigned in the prosperous agricultural areas and cities, while the second was thriving in the hinterland mountainous areas.

Middle Ages and the spread of their influence. Such family alliances were established during the 14th-15th centuries in almost all the noble families of the time, as were the Arianiti, Muzaka, Topia, Dukagjini, Zaharia, Kastrioti, Balshaj, Zenebishi, Ohrid, and Dibra's Gropaj, the lords of Prespa families etc.⁶⁴ Also, there is no lack of cases of dynasty marriages and family alliances of a political character of the Albanian nobility with foreign nobles, mainly coming from the region and the Adriatic shores.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ See also *Historia dhe gjenealogjia shtëpisë Muzaka*, 293.

⁶⁵ Among the first Albanian nobility marriages with foreigners in the Byzantine sources is mentioned that of Demetrios, ruler of Albania's principality (between 1208 and 1216), with Komnena, the daughter of Serbia's great župan, Stefan Nemanja (1196-1227), in 1208. Approximately at the same time is mentioned the marriage of the pansevast sevast Grigor Kamona, Governor of the Despotate of Epirus, with the daughter of Jihn Progoni, second ruler of the Albania's principality in 1198-1208; DBS, doc. 26 and 27, 54-60; The aunt of the chronicler John Muzaka, Helena, was married with the Venetian noble Filippo Barelli, a Ragusa citizen, former administrator of the Balsha family. John Zenebishi, the ruler of Gjirokastra and Vagenetia until 1418, gave his sister in marriage to the Italian Petrotto d'Altavilla, heir of the earlier Norman dynasty, who ruled Southern Italy during 11th-12th centuries. According to John Muzaka, Komnen Arianiti was married with the daughter of a certain Nicolò Sacati, former baron of two cities in Sendia (according to D. Shuteriqi, it must be Serbia). Despina, the daughter of Ajdin Klope (ruler of Vrezda) and of Helena Muzaka (sister of Andrea Muzaka, grandfather of the chronicler John Muzaka) married with the sanjak bey of Ciorne, Ali Bey. In the beginning of the second half of the 14th century, George Balsha married the daughter of Vukašin Mrnjavčević (kral-ruler of the Western Macedonia and co-ruler with the King of Serbia Stefan Uroš V from 1365 to 1371), Olivera Mrnjavčević. George Arianiti in parallel to the first marriage with Maria Muzaka (sister of Jihn II and aunt of the chronicler John Muzaka) nearly at the end of the '40s of the 15th century, married the Italian Pietrina Francone from the city of Lecce (in Southern Italy), the daughter of one of the vassals of Naples Alfonso V, Oliverio Francone, "barone di Taurisano," Governor of the city of Lecce. Around 1461 Angelina Arianiti (1440-1520), (daughter of George Arianiti from his first marriage according to the chronicle of Gjon Muzaka; on the contrary, according to the scholar and German Orientalist Franz Babinger, she is the daughter of George Arianiti from his second marriage), married the despot of Serbia, Stefan Branković (1458-9), known as the "Blind Stefan" (son of Đurađ Branković, despot of Serbia from 1427 to 1456). The son of Scanderbeg, Gjon Kastrioti (1456-1502), married the third daughter of the despot Lazar Branković of Serbia (1456-8) and Helena Paleologue (1431-7), Jerina Branković. (Note of the author: There are plenty of other examples, which we are not mentioning here); *Historia dhe gjenealogjia e shtëpisë Muzaka*, 432, 433, 435,

One should emphasize the fact that the outcome of these alliances was not always successful; in many cases they caused dissatisfaction and political or military conflicts among the Albanian noble families in the beginning of the second half of the 15th century. The chronicler Gjon Muzaka mentions that one of his sisters, named Zanfina or Suina, was married to Muzak Topia⁶⁶ around 1460, at a time when these two families lacked the glow they had once.⁶⁷ But even this relation didn't last for long because Muzak Topia soon divorced his wife to marry Mamica Kastrioti, Scanderbeg's sister. "Lord Scanderbeg ruined the marriage of the above-mentioned lord Muzakë Topia with lady Zanfinë Muzaka, without taking into consideration the God and nothing else nor the children they had and married him with his own sister, Lady Mamica."⁶⁸

This incident, that the chronicler Gjon Muzaka attributes to Scanderbeg's intervention and influence, complicated the relations between the Muzaka family and the Topia and Kastrioti families. This must be the reason a later Scanderbeg "would grab from Muzaka family after the death of Gjin II Muzaka [father of the chronicler Gjon Muzaka (author's note)], Tomonishta, i.e., the small Myzeqe [...]"⁶⁹ Together with the Muzaka family, included in the group of the families dissatisfied towards Scanderbeg, was also Moisi Golemi, an important personage of the time, to whom the leader of the Kastrioti family inherited his possessions in Dibra.⁷⁰ The marriage of Moisi Golemi with Zanfina or

436, 448; Milan Šufflay, *Serbët e Shqiptarët* (Serbs and Albanians) (Tirana: Barghini, 2001), 132; Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi, "Aranitët, emri dhe gjenealogjia" (Aranites, Name and Genealogy), in *Studime për Epokën e Skënderbeut* (Studies on the Skanderbeg Era) (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1989), 64, 68, 75; Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 292.

⁶⁶ *Historia dhe gjenealogjia shtëpisë Muzaka*, 450.

⁶⁷ Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 304. The author dates the marriage of Zanfina or Suina Muzaka with Muzak Topia around 1460, while the scholar D. S. Shuteriqi on page 65 of his paper entitled "Aranitët, emri dhe gjenealogjia" (Aranites, Name and Genealogy) dates the marriage in 1445.

⁶⁸ *Historia dhe gjenealogjia shtëpisë Muzaka*, 451.

⁶⁹ *Op.cit.*, 453.

⁷⁰ *Op.cit.*

Suina Muzaka,⁷¹ the woman divorced by Muzak Topia, expressed exactly one of the causes of the Albanian big feudal lords' rebellion against Scanderbeg.⁷²

These dynasty and family marriage alliances were a characteristic of the European Middle Ages in general (also including here the Balkan region), and beyond any doubt they redounded in giving a leading social-political character to the noble women of local or foreign origin who left their traces not only in the history of the region, but on both sides of the Adriatic Sea.

It is worth individuating the Serb Nemanja family and the French Angevins, around 1250, when Uroš I (1243-76) married the French princess Helene, who "was praised for her sharp way of speech, kindness, generosity and spirituality."⁷³ Not without reason the administration of the Catholic enclaves of the Serb Kingdom, firstly that of Dioklea (Žeta, Monte Negro), were set under her direct control:⁷⁴ "The devout Helena had founded the Franciscan monasteries in front of the gates of Tivar and Kotorr."⁷⁵ She was provably a ruler in these territories until 1314, the year of her death, while her sister, Maria de Chaur, was the ruler of Ulqin since 1283, when she was honored with the title "domina Ulcinii." "Maria, sister of queen Helena, was married to Anselm de Chaur, who in 1273 is mentioned as general captain of Charles I in Albania. Maria lived as a widow (since 1281) in the country of her sister, where she was granted with a residence in Ulqin."⁷⁶

The pretext of protecting Catholicism by the French queen of medieval Serbia explicitly explains the reason a good part of the east-Adriatic-coast Albanian communes with an overwhelming Catholic popula-

⁷¹ Shuteriqi, "Aranitët, emri dhe gjenealogjia," 65.

⁷² Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 304.

⁷³ Konstantin Jireček, *Historia e Serbëve* (History of Serbs), part I (up to 1371) (Tirana: "55," 2010), 356.

⁷⁴ Acta Albaniae I, doc. 509; Pëllumb Xhufi, *Dilemat e Arbërit* (The Dilemmas of Arber) (Tirana: Pegi, 2006), 283.

⁷⁵ Konstantin Jireček, *Historia e Serbëve* (History of Serbs), part II (1371-1537) (Tirana: "55," 2010), 41.

⁷⁶ Acta Albaniae I, doc. 470; Jireček, *Historia e Serbëve*, part I, 357.

tion, such as Tivar, Ulqin, and Shkodra, enjoyed the status of local autonomy, i.e., of communal self-governing and self-organization, while they respected the sovereignty of the Serb kingdom's Crown.⁷⁷

This was the case with the efforts of Komnena Balšić with the Venetians before May 1386, when an Ottoman expedition led by Sultan Murad I himself was expected against Vlora.⁷⁸ Komnena Balšić, the eldest daughter of despot Andrea II Musachi, was the ruler of Kanina and Vlora and all their surroundings and widow of Balša II [the third son of Balša I, founder of the Balšić dynasty (died 1367)], who died in the Battle of Savra on September 18, 1385, against the troops of Charles Thopia, who had formed an alliance with the Ottomans.⁷⁹ According to the monograph *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt* of the medievalist P. Xhufi, in May 1386 the Republic of Venice presented its proposals to the lady of Vlora: "in the first version, Venice sought that Kanina and Vlora with the surroundings to be given unconditionally to Signory and with all rights and jurisdictions that Komnena herself had. If Komnena wouldn't accept this solution, Venice was ready to offer a second version, after which Komnena Balsha, as long as she would live, would get all the revenues extracted from her possessions; but at the same time she would face all the necessary expenses for their defense. Meanwhile, a unit of Venetian bowmen (ballistarii) should be established without delay in the tower of Kanina and should act under Signory orders. That was the maximum of the San Marco Republic engagement promise in defense of Vlora."⁸⁰

Furthermore, the Senate of the Republic of Venice warned the Venetian citizens that none of them should marry either lady Komnena Balsha of Vlora or her daughter; otherwise he would be punished by imprisonment.⁸¹ This decision proved explicitly that the Signoria

⁷⁷ Ermal Baze, *Një qytet me statute: Shkodra në gjysmën e parë të shekullit XIV* (A City with Statutes: Shkodra in the First Half of the 14th Century) (Tirana: Muzgu, 2013), 37-8.

⁷⁸ *Historia dhe gjenealogjia shtëpisë Muzaka*, 429-30; Peter Bartl, *Shqiptarët: nga Mesjeta deri në ditët tona* (Albanians: From Middle Ages to the Present) (Tirana: IDK, 2017), 38-40.

⁷⁹ Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 304.

⁸⁰ Xhufi, *op.cit.*, 315.

⁸¹ Xhufi, *op.cit.*.

wanted Vlora and Kanina for itself, by not encouraging a joint Albanian-Venetian government in the territory in question, which could implicate the “Queen of the Adriatic” in the problematic relations that the female ruler of Vlora had with the Ottomans. Venice sought to build relationships based solely on their own interests, free of the historical baggage and grievances of others.⁸²

Komnena Balsha would open the lengthy series of treaties with Venice regarding the question of her possessions, in February⁸³ and in June 1389, when the ruler of Vlora took an extreme stance by expressing her readiness to give the Venetian Seigniorly Vlora and the castle of Kanina, although under certain conditions.⁸⁴ But the Venetian authorities declined once more the proposal of Komnena Balsha because Corfu, Butrint⁸⁵ and later Durrës (1392) would be sufficient for the Signoria to secure its territory in the lower Adriatic and northern Ionian sea. The last negotiation of Komnena Balsha with the Venetians was that of autumn 1395 (when she is mentioned as a ruler for the last time), when she sent a delegation to Venice and presented her proposals. Under the pressure of the Ottomans and of the precarious health situation of Komnena Balsha, the latter accepted to surrender Vlora, Kanina, and Parg, from which she profited 9,000 golden ducats per year, towards an annual provision of 7,000 ducats, as long as Komnena and her daughter⁸⁶ would be alive.⁸⁷ Even this last proposal was not at all taken into consideration by the Republic of Venice.

⁸² Xhufi, *op.cit.*, 316.

⁸³ Xhufi, *op.cit.*, 318-9.

⁸⁴ Xhufi, *op.cit.*, 322.

⁸⁵ Roberto Cessi, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, vol. 1 (Milano: Casa Editrice Giuseppe Principato), 350.

⁸⁶ Giuseppe Gelcich, *Zeta dhe Dinastia e Balshajve* (Zeta and the Balshaj Dynasty) (Tirana: “55,” 2009), 95. Balsha II had no other children with Komnena Muzaka; one daughter, Rugina, after his death ruled together with her mother Vlora and Kanina, which she inherited from her ancestors.

⁸⁷ Konstantin Jireček, “Valona in Mittelalter,” in *Illyrisch-Albanische Forschungen*, ed. Dr. Ludwig von Thallóczy (München und Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1916). It was used after the translation in Albanian by Mustafa Merlika-Kruja: Konstantin Jireček, “Vlora në Mesjetë,” in *Vëzhgime iliro-shqiptare*, ed. Dr. Ludwig Von Thallóczy (Shkodër: Camaj-Pipa, 2004), 136; Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 323.

In September 1396 as rulers of Vlora and Kanina are mentioned Mrkša Žarković (1396-1414),⁸⁸ son of the Žeta ruler, and Rugina Balsha, daughter of Balsha II and Komnena (Muzaka–Balsha), who would rule these territories until 1417 (even after the death of her husband in 1414).⁸⁹ The marriage of Mrkša with Rugina,⁹⁰ celebrated in 1391, re-consolidated the relations between the rulers of Vlora and Žeta, which were interrupted after the murder of Balsha II in the battle of Savër.⁹¹ The marriage had to be sanctioned by the Holy Synod of Constantinople in 1394, due to the kinship of the couple: Mrkša's mother, Teodora (a Serb noble from Dejanović family), married after 1371 Rugina's uncle, Gjergj I Balsha (1362-78).⁹²

Rugina Balsha, the only ruler of Vlora after Mrkša's death in 1414, under the pressure of the Ottoman threat continued the negotiations and pleas for help and protection of her possessions from Venice with a humbleness worthy to a woman ruler, as was also the case of her mother, Komnena Balsha. The efforts of Rugina Balsha's delegation at the beginning of February 1415 and the end of January 1416⁹³ in the Republic of San Marco faced the indifference and apathetic stance of the Venetian authorities. When the Ottoman commander Hamza bey Evrenoz conquered Berat, Kanina, and Vlora in June 1417, Rugina Balsha together with her family and court moved firstly to Corfu and in 1421 in Ragusa, where she also deposited her treasure.⁹⁴ There is no historical source mentioning Rugina Balsha after 1421.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Šufflay, *Serbët e Shqiptarët*, 25.

⁸⁹ *Historia dhe gjenealogjia shtëpisë Muzaka*, 441.

⁹⁰ *Op.cit.*

⁹¹ Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 324. Even after the murder of Balsha II in Savër, the Balsha family continued to be called rulers of Vlora. According to the Venetian chronicler and historian Marin Sanudo Junior (1466-1536), Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha pretended to rule the territories that belonged to his ancestors, despite the fact that the Balshaj family possessions in his time were considerably corrugated. Thus, even after the tragedy in Savër, Gjergj Strazimir Balsha considered himself “suzerain of the territories from Vlora to Berat.”

⁹² Jireček, “Vlora në Mesjetë,” 135; Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 324.

⁹³ Jireček, *op.cit.*, 332-3.

⁹⁴ Jireček, *op.cit.*, 136.

⁹⁵ Jireček, *op.cit.*

Another noble woman with political ambitions, progeny of the above mentioned families, was Evdokia Balsha, daughter of Gjergj I Balsha and Teodora, which was at the same time cousin of Rugina Balsha and stepsister of Mrkša.⁹⁶ Around 1402, Evdokia married in the city of Vlora (in the territory ruled by her brother) with the Italian despot of Ioannina Ezau Buondelmonte Acciaiuoli (1385-1411), after he divorced his second wife, Irena Shpata, sister of Gjin Bua Shpata, ruler of Arta and the surroundings (1359-99).⁹⁷ Reference on the marriage of Evdokia Balsha can be found in a document from Ragusa of July 11 and 14, 1402, where the Council of Ragusa decided to send a gift of 100 hyperpers to Mrkša's sister, and also offered to the latter an armed Ragusan ship to escort his sister to her husband.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Cronaca dei Tocco di Cefalonia di Anonimo*, Prolegomeni-Testo Critico traduzione di Giuseppe Schirò (Junior) (Roma: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1975), 277. *Burime tregimtare bizantine për historinë e Shqipërisë shek. X-XV* (Byzantine Narrative Sources on the History of Albania c. X-XV), ed. Koço Bozhori-Filip Liço (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1975), 277: Chronicle of Tocco.

⁹⁷ Ibid; Konstantin Jireček, "Witwe und die Söhne des Despoten Esau von Epirus," in *Byzantisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 1 (1920): 5; For more see: Giuseppe Schirò (Junior), "Evdokia Balšič di Gianina," in *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 8 (1964): 383-91; Koço Bozhori, "Chronicle of the Tocco as Source on the History of the National Formation of Southern Albanians at the E of the XIV Century and in the First Quarter of the XV Century," *Studime Historike* 3 (1976): 183, 187. The Italian despot of Ioannina, Ezau Buondelmonte Acciaiuoli, married in 1396 with Irena Shpata, mother of Maurice Shpata, ruler of Arta principality, but divorced in 1402 to marry with Evdokia Balsha. According to the *Chronicle of the Tocco*, after the death of Gjin Bua Shpata on October 29, 1399, head of the principality was crowned Muriq Shpata, Gjin's nephew and son of Sguro Bua Shpata (Gjin's brother), who was married with a French Countess, Mirsi Makazanin. After the battle of Ankara of 1402, Maurice Shpata not only improved the relations with the Ottomans, but also relaxed them with the despot Ezau of Ioannina, who was Muriq's stepfather. Moreover, Ioannina's Ezau asked the hand of Muriq's daughter for his son born from his marriage with the Albanian Evdokia Balsha, daughter of Gjergj I Balsha. A part of this note is taken from *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I, 283.

⁹⁸ *Acta et Diplomata Res Albaniae Mediae Aetatis Illustrantia* (collegerunt et digesserunt Dr. Ludovicus de Thalloczy, Dr. Konstantin Jireček et Dr. Emilianus de Sufflay), vol. II, (Annos 1344-1406 Tabulamque geographician continens), Vindobonae MCMXIII, ribotim, Tiranë, Prishtinë: "Dukagjini"-Pejë, 2002, document 699 [hereafter *Acta Albaniae II*]; DHS 1, doc. 231, 234.

After the death of the despot Ezau in 1411, Evdokia Balsha tried to govern Ioannina by herself. She opposed the efforts of a good part of the city-peers that wanted to surrender the city of Ioannina to the nephew of the despot Ezau, Count of Kefalonia, Karl Toko.⁹⁹ Mainly supported by the lower and middle strata of the city, “Albania’s Despina” started negotiations with Gjon Zenebishi, a choice that put in movement the supporters of Karl Toko.¹⁰⁰ After a complot organized by them, despina Evdokia together with her sons was forced to abandon the city and temporarily take shelter at Gjon Zenebishi in Gjirokastra.¹⁰¹

“On 1427 –as P. Xhufi evidences– Evdokia and her two sons are ascertained in Ragusa. ‘Albania’s Despina’ was now nearly 60 years old and her presence in Ragusa seems that caused inconveniences on the city authorities: Evdokia pretended properties from the possessions of the Balsha family, on which existed a strong clash between Venice and Serbia with which Ragusa had problematic relations.”¹⁰² For this reason, the Ragusan government showed interest in Evdokia Balsha and her sons moving away from Ragusa and being carefully watched and protected.¹⁰³ A year later (1428) the Great Council of Ragusa approved to grant Evdokia the permission to settle in the city of Modon¹⁰⁴ (Methoni), in the southwest of Peloponnese.

Helena Topia (1388-1402/03), daughter of Charles Topia (1359-88),¹⁰⁵ heir of a part of Topia principality after her father’s death, became the ruler of Kruja and the surrounding regions together with her husband, the Venetian noble March Barbadico.¹⁰⁶ With the agreement

⁹⁹ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I, 286.

¹⁰⁰ *Op.cit.*, vol. I, 286.

¹⁰¹ *Op.cit.*, vol. I, 286.

¹⁰² Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 326.

¹⁰³ Xhufi, *op.cit.*, 326.

¹⁰⁴ Jireček, “Witwe und die Söhne,” 16.

¹⁰⁵ The other daughter of Charles Topia was also Vojsava or Vojslava dead on 1394, which was married with Progon Dukagjini (son of Lekë I Dukagjini) and after with a Venetian noble “Kyr Izakun, Kursaka, as is said, with the head of the patrician Venetian families, Engjëll.” Šufflay, *Serbët e Shqiptarët*, 134; *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I, 311.

¹⁰⁶ Ludwig von Thallóczy–Konstantin Jireček, “Zwei Urkunden aus Nordalbanien,” in *Illyrisch–Albanische Forschungen*, ed. Dr. Ludwig von Thallóczy. (München und Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1916). This was used after the translation

of August 28, 1393, Venice succeeded to convince Helena Topia and March Barbadico to continue ruling Kruja on behalf of the Seigniorship and as its vassals.¹⁰⁷ A year later (1394), the consorts Topia and Barbadico pledged alliance with the Ottomans and became vassals of the sultan Bayezid I (1389-1402), an act that caused the Venetians' dissatisfaction.¹⁰⁸ The husband of Helena Topia, under the Ottomans' approval, tried to occupy all the territories to the outskirts of Durrës and also encourage the local population in rebellion against the Venetian authorities.¹⁰⁹ In these conditions, on September 6, 1394, the Republic of San Marco decided to organize the occupation of Kruja and arrest the rebel Barbadico and his wife Helena Topia, who according to the Venetians inspired her husband in his political stances.¹¹⁰

Referring to Milan Šufflay, on February 14, 1395, Constantinus Balsha (the son of George I Balsha and Teodora Dejanović), the second husband of Helena Topia, "had taken over Kruja as a Turk vassal. Constantinus Balsha who married with Helena Topia had Kruja in possession. He became ruler of the entire region of Skuria near Durrës and on 1401 became honorary citizen of Venice together with his wife and children.¹¹¹ But, he didn't give up his old plans to conquer Durrës even with the help of the Ottomans. Later he met a tragical end, being sent to Venice with his wife, after his mother Theodora was sentenced to death on October 22nd 1402."¹¹² On October 22, 1402, the Venetian authorities proclaimed Helena Topia innocent and also decided to give back the previously confiscated properties.¹¹³ The year 1403 would mark the end

in Albanian by Mustafa Merlika-Kruja: Ludwig von Thallóczy–Konstantin Jireček, "Kruja e qarku i saj bërthamë e Shqipnis Mesjetore" (Kruja and its core region of Medieval Albanian), in *Vëzhgime iliro-shqiptare*, ed. Dr. Ludwig Von Thallóczy (Shkodër: Camaj-Pipa, 2004), 72; Šufflay, *Serbët e Shqiptarët*, 134; *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I, 291.

¹⁰⁷ Xhufi, *Nga Paleologët te Muzakajt*, 316.

¹⁰⁸ Thallóczy–Jireček, "Kruja e qarku i saj bërthamë e Shqipnis Mesjetore," 72.

¹⁰⁹ *Acta Albaniae* II, doc. 518, 522; Šufflay, *Serbët e Shqiptarët*, 134.

¹¹⁰ *Acta Albaniae* II, doc. 524, 525; DHS 1, doc. 168, 169; Šufflay, *Serbët e Shqiptarët*, 134.

¹¹¹ About this issue see also DHS 1, doc. 125.

¹¹² Šufflay, *Serbët e Shqiptarët*, 135; For more see Thallóczy–Jireček, "Kruja e qarku i saj bërthamë e Shqipnis Mesjetore," 73.

¹¹³ DHS 1, doc. 267; Šufflay, *Serbët e Shqiptarët*, 134.

of the political activity of the noble Topia family, when the Count Niketë Topia took the castle of Kruja from the hands of his cousin, Helena.¹¹⁴

A special brunt in the political activity of Zaharia family had Boksa Dukagjini (daughter of Lekë I Dukagjini), wife of Kojë Zaharia, ruler of the castle of Shas and then of Deja and the straits of the road along the Drin river. The Dukagjini and Zaharia families, which shared common boundaries and often had marriage alliances among them, had in general close relations.¹¹⁵ After the death of Lekë Zaharia (son of Kojë Zaharia and Boksa Dukagjini) in 1444, his grandmother Boksa Dukagjini became head of the family because her son Koja II was still an infant: she sought the Venetian support by giving up Deja and Shas to the Republic of San Marco, while the other territories of the Zaharia family were handed over to the Dukagjini family.¹¹⁶

A leading figure in the political life has also been the most important woman of the medieval Albania, Andronika Komnena (the elder daughter of Arianit Komneni or Gjergj Arianiti and Marie Muzaka) as it is mentioned in Gjon Muzaka's *Memorandum*,¹¹⁷ who is widely known with the name Donika Kastrioti, wife of George Kastrioti-Scanderbeg (married him in April 1451).¹¹⁸ In the work of the prominent Albanian historian and humanist Marin Barleti, *Historia e jetës dhe e bëmave të Skënderbeut*, published in Rome during 1508-10, the leading role and importance of Donika Kastrioti in ruling Scanderbeg's state is mentioned, at a time when he was leading nearly 3,000 warriors who landed in August 1461 in the city of Barletta in southern Italy to aid the King

¹¹⁴ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I, 291.

¹¹⁵ *Op.cit.*, vol. I, 312.

¹¹⁶ *Op.cit.*

¹¹⁷ *Historia dhe gjenealogjia shtëpisë Muzaka*, 418-9, 432.

¹¹⁸ Marinus Barletius, *Historia de vita et gestis Scanderbegi Epirotarvm principis* (Roma: Bernardinus Venetus de Vitalibus, 1508-1510). This was used after the translation from the original by Stefan J. Prifti: Marin Barleti, *Historia e Skënderbeut* (A History of Skanderbeg) (Tirana: Tirana University Press, Institute of History and Linguistics, 1964), 291; Kristo Frashëri, *Skënderbeu: jeta dhe vepra* (Skanderbeg: Life and Work) (Tirana: Toena, 2002), 181; *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I, 416; Kasëm Biçoku, *Skënderbeu* (Skanderbeg) (Tirana: Albanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 2005), 127, 149-50.

Ferrante I of Naples (June 27, 1458-January 25, 1494), who was encircled along with a part of his army:¹¹⁹ “With an army composed by the prime of youth and powerful, he quickly arrived in Dauni; but, before leaving his kingdom, he carefully and with wisdom agreed with Mehmet II, the ruler of the Turks and signed an armistice with him for a year. There is no doubt that he [Scanderbeg] fixed the agreement as he wanted to, and all the other questions of his power the lead and the defense left at the hands of his wife and to some friends peer to him.”¹²⁰

Donika enjoyed political privileges even after Scanderbeg’s death on January 17, 1468. Referring to one of the most interesting Italian scholars on the medieval Albania of the last decades of the 20th century, Paolo Petta (1942-99), “Donika hasten to write on 24 February 1468 to king of Naples, Ferrante I, to inform him on her husband’s death: and in that occasion the king immediately replied to her that Scanderbeg was to him like a second father and his death was not less hard than that of my honorable father, king Alfonso.”¹²¹ At the same day, – P. Petta continues– King Ferrante I wrote to the faithful noble, Jeronimo Caravigno, and ordered him to meet Donika and her son and to ascertain that in case they would settle in his kingdom “they would have by myself all the attention and honors that every son is obliged to do to his mother and every father’s son” and that they would enjoy their feuds and other benefits if necessary.¹²²

Since King Ferrante I immediately offered them his protection and the possibility to enjoy the revenues from their possessions in Monte Sant’ Angelo and San Giovanni Rotondo (where Donika had previously

¹¹⁹ Barleti, *Historia e Skënderbeut*, book 9, 353-417; Frashëri, *Historia e Skënderbeut*, 379-80; *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I, 442-3; Biçoku, *Skënderbeu*, 179-80: As a sign of gratitude for this help, the king of Naples donated to Scanderbeg the feuds of Monte Sant’ Angelo and of San Giovanni Rotondo and an annual pension of 1,200 ducats.

¹²⁰ Barleti, *Historia e Skënderbeut*, 392-3.

¹²¹ Paolo Petta, *Despotë të Epirit e princër të Maqedonisë: mërgata shqiptare në Italinë e periudhës së Rilindjes* (Despots of Epirus and Prince of Macedonia: Albanian Diaspora in Renaissance Italy) (Tirana: Edition IDK, 2001), 32.

¹²² Petta, *op.cit.*, 32.

stayed), she and her son decided to settle in Naples and not in the Republic of San Marco.¹²³ In these harsh historic conditions of serious political turmoil of the Albanian territories, most of which were occupied by the Ottomans, Donika together with her 13-year-old son Gjon, escorted by a retinue, which after the narrations of the chronicler Gjon Muzaka was generally composed of women, widows and daughters of the Albanian noble families (among whom there were the two sisters of the chronicler themselves) that had lost their fathers in the war, were included in the big Albanian exodus towards southern Italy.¹²⁴ Donika Kastrioti lived the biggest part of her life in the Aragon court of Naples, where she enjoyed growing authority and privileges¹²⁵ and the support and friendship of the queen Juana (Giovanna) of Aragon (1476-94), second wife of Ferrante I.¹²⁶ The fate of other Albanian noble women who emigrated in the Kingdom of Naples was not so bitter; thanks to the above-mentioned queen, who had contributed in their dowry, they were accepted in the bosom of the royal aristocracy, shining in the mundane Neapolitan society.¹²⁷

During the second half of the 15th century, Albania's women played a considerable role for the protection of their cities from the Ottoman attacks and sieges. In Barleti's first work entitled *Rrethimi i Shkodrës* (De obsidione Scodrensi), published in Latin in Venice on January 10, 1504, the courage, heroism, and contribution of the Shkodran women to the protection of their city during the second siege (second half of the 1478-beginning of 1479) are being described: "The enemy flags a thousand times were raised on the top of the moats; were held body to body

¹²³ Petta, *op.cit.*, 32; Biçoku, *Skënderbeu*, 202: The Senate of Venice decided to send in Albania Pal Engjëlli, who for many years was staying there as Scanderbeg's representative. Just after arriving to Albania, Pal Engjëlli talked with Scanderbeg's wife and son and with relatives of Kastrioti family, and asked them to give Kruja to Venice along the other possessions. When Scanderbeg's wife and son left Albania, Kruja passed at the hands of Venetians.

¹²⁴ *Historia dhe gjenealogjia shtëpisë Muzaka*, 419-20.

¹²⁵ DHS 1479-1506, Part I, doc. 147: 18 August 1489–The King of Sicily decides that to Donika Kastrioti to be sent an Albanian boy called Kolë.

¹²⁶ DHS 1499-1506, Part II, doc. 180: 18 January 1501–From the diaries of the Venetian Marino Sanudo (1466-1536). Scanderbeg's widow, Donika, is the companion of Naples' queen.

¹²⁷ Petta, *op.cit.*, 137.

fighting even in the heart of the city; no citizen of any age-group escaped without being wounded. Even the girls and the women were not second to the men for courage; watching the son dying at the mother's presence, the husband at the wife's presence dying, the brother laid close to the sister and again their eyes were not there, but always preparing to the strongest warriors the weapons against the enemy, carried every work that were told to do, replaced in many works the warriors, that were resting a little bit or tied their wounds. Nor the cannon, or the weapon or the death frightened them; all were committed to one purpose: to save the city by even shedding the last drop of blood."¹²⁸

After the fall of Drisht (September 1, 1478)¹²⁹ and Shkodra together with its surroundings at the hands of the Ottomans (April 25, 1479),¹³⁰ pensions,¹³¹ provisions,¹³² privileges,¹³³ and the right of asylum¹³⁴ in Venice and Friuli¹³⁵ were granted by the Venetian authorities for the widows and girls of Drisht and Shkodra, whose husbands and family members lost their lives in the war.¹³⁶ The Venetian Seigniori didn't give help and support only to the widows of the commanders or other high military leaders of the army¹³⁷ and of the representatives of the

¹²⁸ Marinus Barletius, *De obsidione Scodrensi* (Venetiis: Bernardinus Venetus de Vitalibus, 1504-1505). This was used after the translation from the original by Henrik Lacaq: Marin Barleti, *Rrethimi i Shkodrës* (The Siege of Shkodra) (Tirana: Naim Frashëri, 1982³), 154; Marin Barleti, *Rrethimi i Shkodrës* (The Siege of Shkodra) (Tirana: Onufri, 2012), 206-7.

¹²⁹ Lucia Nadin, *Shqiptarët në Venedik: mërgim e integrim 1479-1552* (Albanians in Venice: Exile and Integration 1479-1552) (Tirana: "55," 2008), 162.

¹³⁰ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I, 471.

¹³¹ DHS 1479-1506, Part I, doc. 24, 25, 60, 62, 146, 188.

¹³² DHS 1499-1506, Part II, doc. 43, 46.

¹³³ DHS 1479-1499, Part I, doc. 57; DHS 1499-1506, Part II, doc. 33.

¹³⁴ DHS 1479-1499, Part I, doc. 11, 12, 35; DHS 1499-1506, Part II, doc. 26.

¹³⁵ DHS 1479-1499, Part I, doc. 30, 31; DHS 1499-1506, Part II, doc. 24, 25.

¹³⁶ See also Lucia Nadin Bassani, *Migrazione e integrazione: il caso degli Albanesi a Venezia (1479-1552)* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2008); Edmond Malaj, *Historia dhe fizionomia e një qyteti mesjetar shqiptar: Drishti* (History and Physiognomy of an Albanian Middle-Age City) (Tirana: Center for Albanological Studies, Institute of History, 2015), 278-80.

¹³⁷ DHS 1479-1499, Part I, doc. 35, 57, 62; DHS 1499-1506, Part II, doc. 26, 33.

local nobility, but also for eighty families from Shkodra belonging to the middle and lower ranks.¹³⁸

Conclusion

The presentation, the analysis, and the description of the above-mentioned facts explicitly proves that the general panorama of a noble citizen woman's position in 14th-15th centuries' Albania, as regards to the rights, privileges, social-political attributions etc., is similar to the medieval models and practices of the Italian-Dalmatian space and that of the Adriatic and the western Mediterranean realm as a whole.

¹³⁸ DHS 1479-1499, Part I, doc. 29.

Claire Brisby*

**Eugenios Voulgaris and Bulgarian Painters Hristo and Zahari
from Samokov: Their European Perspective 1760-1852**

A European outlook is an intrinsic attribute of the renown of the Bulgarian National Revival icon-painters Hristo Dimitrov (c. 1750-1819) and his son Zahari (1810-53): Hristo is historically alleged to have trained in Vienna while Zahari aspired to academic training in St. Petersburg and vaunted his instruction from French painters in Bulgaria.¹

An outward-bound perspective is a common characteristic of Bulgarian painters, historically perceived as individual personalities, and the correlation of trans-border perspectives and of personal identities hints at the filtering of European Enlightenment notions of self-awareness into conventional icon-painters' consciousness.

Whilst Neofit Rilski acclaimed Hristo Dimitrov from Samokov as a skilful Athonite icon-painter, he considered his son Zahari to have surpassed him, without however articulating the implied western influence that contributed to his acclaim.² The western perspective of the Austro-Hungarian ethnographer Felix Kanitz is alert to the foreign influences of an unnamed Triavna-based icon-painter from his sons' experience in Russia and Vienna.³ The anonymous painter has been identified with another pioneering National Revival icon-painter with attributed western consciousness, Konstantin Vitanov (c.1762-1814).⁴ The local predilection for the prestigious attribution of foreign dimensions to Bulgarian icon-painters is manifest again in the epithet "molera" –German for painter– awarded to yet another eminent National

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¹ Asen Vasiliev, *Български възрожденски майстори* (Bulgarian Revival Masters) (Sofia: 1965), 357-94.

² Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 315, fn. 4 citing Neofit Rilski, *Описание Болгарскаго Священнаго манастиря Рилскаго* (Description of the Bulgarian Holy Monastery of Rila) (Sofia: 1879), 76.

³ Felix Kanitz, *La Bulgarie Danubienne et le Balkan: Etudes de voyage 1860-1880* (Paris: 1882), 187-8.

⁴ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 20-6.

Revival painter Toma Vishanov (c.1760) from Bansko.⁵ However, a generation later Zahari belittled his avowed trans-border outlook by identifying himself professionally with the eastern conventions of painting, styling himself in Greek “zograf” and in Bulgarian “iconopisets.”

Critical assessment of western influence in regard to these painters has been exhaustively concerned with evaluating their engagement with western art in mechanical terms, yet factual evidence of Hristo’s alleged academic training remains elusive and Zahari’s debt to western sources has been comprehensively quantified in his use of western prints. The study of these painters’ western awareness in technical terms is enriched by the exceptional archive of their workshop materials, including large collections of western prints, now preserved in the National Art-Gallery in Sofia and in the Historical Museum in Samokov.⁶

⁵ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 489-506.

⁶ The archive of drawings, prints and other working materials associated with Zahari is compiled with acquisitions from the painter’s descendants (Zahari’s granddaughters) made by the National Archaeological Museum [hereafter HAM] from Anna Rakovska in 1933, which were transferred in 1952 to the National Art Gallery [hereafter HXГ] in Sofia with the transfer code HXГ 5.III.1952 HAM 670г 13 и 143, by the Samokov History Museum (СИМ) from Christina Kuzmanova (also known as Kuzmova) in 1937, Vera Mandel in 1952 and Elizaveta Manova during the 1960s. The common provenance justifies reference to these materials collectively with the term Samokov Archive. The archive is not catalogued and it is only partially published in descriptive surveys by Andrei Protic, “Денационализиране и възраждане на нашето изкуство от 1393-1879 год” (Denationalisation and Revival in our Art from 1393 to 1879), in *България 1000 години 927-1927* (Bulgaria 1,000 years 927-1927) (Sofia: 1930), 383-540; Vasil Zahariev, *Захари Зограф* (Zahari Zograf) (Sofia: 1957); Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 332-43; Doroteya Sokolova, “Националната галерия–етапи и система на формиране на институцията 1892-1948” (The National Gallery–The Steps and Systems of the Formation of the Institute 1892-1948), *Проблеми на изкуството* 1 (1994): 39-50; Doroteya Sokolova, “Критическа оценка на произведенията на изкуството в България до средата на 40-те години” (Critical Assessment of Works of Art in Bulgaria until the mid-40s), *Проблеми на изкуството* 3 (1996): 3-14; Doroteya Sokolova, *Захари Зограф 1810-1853* (Sofia: 2010); For some selected items from the Samokov History Museum by Nevena Mitreva see Liubomir Nikolov, *Захари Христович Зограф 1810-1853* (Zahari Hristovic Zograf 1810-1853) (Samokov: 2010); Nevena Mitreva–Ivan Patev–Liubomir Nikolov, *Димитър Христович Зограф 1796-1860* (Dimitar Hristovic Zograf 1796-

Assessment of the Samokov painters' use of prints has also revealed their greater debt to Orthodox engravings, and research into Hristo and Zahari's work has shown the predominant role of two composite Orthodox prints published in Venice.⁷ These assessments of the Samokov painters' working practices and uses of printed models have established that the prints selected for use as models originate from as early as the late 17th century and from across a broad region of the European continent bordering both the northern Russian and southern Greek Orthodox spheres, with centres of production as dispersed as Lviv and Venice. However disparately located, these centres commonly harboured environments of cultural engagement between eastern Orthodox theological conventions and prevailing western European humanist Enlightenment thought.

Established scholarship of the Samokov painters' working practices and treatment of inherited Orthodox and assimilated western painterly traditions offers the basis to enquire here into the painters' consciousness of the cultural ideas, which conditioned the production of their printed models, and to assess how such awareness informed their approach to their role as icon-painters. Just as painters' self-awareness of their civic status can arguably be attributed to western humanist values of personal self-determination, so painters' awareness of theological

1860) (Samokov: 2011); Olga Yurchyshyn-Smith, "Rare Paper Icons from Mount Athos," *Print Quarterly* xxxii 2 (2015): 143-61, fig. 120; Further drawings of floral ornament in the archives of Institute of Art History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia (БАН) are attributed to Zahari in Anna Roshkovska, *Възрожденска декоративна стенопис от самоковски зографи* (Revival Decorative Wallpainting by Painters from Samokov) (Sofia: 1982), ills 45, 55; Anna Roshkovska–Liliana Mavrodinova, *Стенописен орнамент* (Ornamental Wallpainting) (Sofia: 1985), 287, plates 206, 208; Roshkovska–Mavrodinova, *op.cit.*, 288, plate 209.

⁷ Elena Popova, "Реинтерпретации на чудотворната икона на Св. Богородица от Кикос в българската живопис от края на 18-19 век" (Interpretations of the Miraculous Icon of the Holy Mother of God of Kykkos in Bulgarian Painting from the End of the 18-19th Century), *Проблеми на изкуството* 4 (1998): 32-41 (36, ills 10, 11, 12-5); Elena Popova, *Зографът Христо Димитров от Самоков* (The Painter Hristo Dimitrov from Samokov) (Sofia: 2001), 182-5; Claire Brisby, "Zahari Zograf and Western Consciousness: interpreting working practices in the Samokov painters' archives 1800-1850," *Проблеми на Изкуството/Art Studies Quarterly* 4 (2013): 14-24; idem. "The Role of Orthodox Religious Engravings in the Samokov Painters' Archive: Visual Prototypes?", *Series Byzantina* VI (2008): 87-101.

and cultural concepts responsible for the printed imagery they selected as sources deserves to be assessed likewise, as does the specific question of Hristo and Zahari's awareness of the eminent patronage and purpose of the composite Orthodox print, to which they each referred for mural and panel painting.

This article, therefore, seeks to broaden the scope of enquiry into the painters' cultural consciousness with an explorative investigation of their reference to central European cultural capitals in Hapsburg-controlled territories, inhabited by Orthodox communities coexisting with neighbouring Catholic communities. It enquires into the hitherto underestimated impact of European Enlightenment thought in these painters' consciousness by assessing agencies of transmission in the Ottoman-occupied Balkans and by analysing its reception by the Orthodox Church hierarchy, primarily on Mount Athos, and as particularly evident in the field of education. These enquiries are conducted by reviewing the biographical trajectories of each painter in the fresh perspective of the cultural environment of their native town of Samokov, as it is documented in Zahari's experience of it, reflected in his correspondence with Neofit Rilski, and as it is known in the earliest historical account by Hristo Semerdjiev in 1913.⁸

A starting point for tackling these investigations is a portrait print from the archival material which belonged to the painters Hristo and Zahari (Fig. 1).⁹

As identified in the Greek script visible below the figure, the print represents Eugenios Vulgaris, a Greek theologian with the baptismal name Eleftherios Vulgares (Εὐγένιος Βούλγαρης). The portrait print in the painters' archive matches in both imagery and dimensions the frontispiece portrait of Eugenios' book entitled *Logic*, which was published in Leipzig in 1766.¹⁰ The print, which survives in the Samokov painters' archive, has lost the inscription "J. M. Stock ad viv. del. et sculps. Lipsiae, 1766" under the image, which records that the portrait

⁸ Hristo Semerdjiev, *Самоковъ и околността му* (Samokov and its Surroundings) (Sofia: 1913); Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 359-94; Maria Ogoiska, *Междуписания Захарий Хр. Зограф–Неофит П. П. Рилски* (The Correspondence between Zahari H. Zograf–Neofit P. P. Rilski) (Sofia: 2010).

⁹ Sofia, HXF, Samokov Archive inv. no. II 903 (18 x 12 cms).

¹⁰ Brisby, *Zahari Zograf*, 17 fig. 5 frontispiece plate, *Logic* (20 x 11.5 cms).

was made by the German-named engraver, known to have been active in Nuremberg, Johann Michael Stock (1737-73).

Both the figure portrayed and the methods of portrayal, together with the technical aspects of production relating to this print, represent the cultural engagement in mid-18th-century central Europe. The eastern European theologian is portrayed by Johann Stock with standard conventions of western European portraiture. The bearded male figure dressed in the black habit and tall headdress of the Greek clergy is accessorised with attributes of learning, in the form of the book he is shown holding in his right hand and of the inkwell with a quill pen next to a letter resting by his left hand. The figure is shown under an illusionistic architectural arch, recognised as a conventional device framing the composition.

The Greek inscription incorporated into the architectural frame on an illusory stone plaque, identifying the figure portrayed by name, signals the cultural dimensions of the portrait and alerts us to the cultural diversity of Eugenios' life. The course of his life spans the century chronologically and straddles the European continent geographically, from his birth in Corfu in 1716 to his death in St. Petersburg in 1806. As a Greek Orthodox theologian, his renown for grappling with secular scholarship on the European Enlightenment, manifest, for example, in translations of Voltaire at the Imperial Russian Court, earned him his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society London in 1788.¹¹ The publication of *Logic* in Leipzig in 1766, as the first of several philosophical and religious texts leading to his academic renown, marks the height of his career in Europe before he settled at the Court of Catherine the Great in Russia.

The survival of the frontispiece plate in a Bulgarian painters' archive and its purpose there, divorced from its original frontispiece role in a book, attests to an altered function of the print with trans-cultural implications. The print is therefore a useful tool for illuminating routes of cultural transmission and the transformative consequences of

¹¹ Iannis Carras, "Understanding God and Tolerating Humankind: Orthodoxy and the Enlightenment in Evgenios Voulgaris and Platon Levshin," in *Enlightenment and Religion in the Orthodox World*, ed. Pascalis Kitromilides (Oxford: 2016), 78, fn. 26.

cultural exchange. It sharpens our focus on specific personalities with important contributions to the cultural development of the National Revival not only in Zahari's time but also in the earlier period of Hristo's activity, contemporaneous with Voulgaris' later life. Discussion below begins by uncovering the print's journey to Bulgaria and the circumstances of its acquisition by Samokov painters and then continues to investigate its significance to Hristo and Zahari in turn, in terms of their reception of its formal imagery and their awareness of the figure represented, Eugenios Voulgaris.

Zahari (1810-53) and the portrait-print of Eugenios Voulgaris (1716-1806)

As one of many prints in the painters' archive, the journey of Stock's frontispiece plate from Leipzig in the hands of Bulgarian painters in Samokov exemplifies the story of these painters' collection of western prints, which have been conspicuous to scholars because of their size and diversity. I have discussed elsewhere how from remarks by Zahari in a letter to his mentor Neofit Rilski dated February 25, 1841, about obtaining models from French painters passing through Plovdiv, evidence of the painter's acquisition of the prints, we can assume were of western origin.¹² This documentary evidence of acquisition is also important for explaining the haphazard condition of the collection, not only randomly diverse in content but also haphazardly preserved, gathered in folios or pasted into albums. Such compiled print-albums are typical of western painters' portfolios of model images. Consequently, we can reconstruct the journey of these western prints to Bulgaria, travelling in portfolios carried by western painters seeking opportunities in eastern Europe and handed over to a Bulgarian painter in Plovdiv.

Although Zahari does not identify the painters from whom he acquired prints by name, their presence in Bulgaria is associated with the steady stream of European painters known to have catered for the long-standing desire for portraitists and decorators in the Ottoman capital in Constantinople, lying close to the eastern Bulgarian border.

¹² Brisby, *Zahari Zograf*, 19-21.

Relevant to the issue of naming the anonymous, allegedly French, painters is the recruitment of teachers from western Europe to staff art schools established in newly independent Greece to the south. An eligible candidate for impersonating the anonymous painters is Pierre Bonirote (1811-91), a graduate of the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Lyon in 1824 and Prix de Rome scholar between 1836 and 1839. His appointment to the School of Art in Athens, where he directed instruction in painting from 1840 to 1842, coincides with the date of Zahari's letter in February 1841, in which he mentions encounters with French masters once they had reached Plovdiv from Koprivshtitsa.¹³ Known for leading painters' study tours travelling from Athens to investigate or supervise painting, Bonirote's potential venture to Koprivshtitsa and Plovdiv would help name the painters with whom Zahari engaged.

As for the culminating role of Eugenios' portrait-print on the arrival in the Bulgarian Samokov painters' collection, it is appropriate to explain the case for its function as a model for Zahari's "Self-Portrait," on the basis of formal similarities in the format and construction of the composition (Fig. 2a).¹⁴

Zahari's "Self-Portrait" composition adopts the format of Stock's precedent, portraying the scholar half-length with matching silhouette contours and gesturing, and it diverges only in the choice of attributes, with the literary accessories of the model replaced in the painter's portrait by a paint brush held aloft in his right hand. Zahari's fidelity to the print replicates even the treatment of the folds of the robed sleeves at the wrists. The simple stone sill in Zahari's portrait alludes to the illusory architectural arch seen in the frontispiece plate and Zahari's frontal gaze imitates the virtually frontal representation of the frontispiece portrait, even if the viewpoint is from the opposite side, which suggests Zahari's use of a mirror in the transfer process.

Zahari's portrait then updates the model print by dispensing with the background perspective behind a conventionally draped billowing curtain and by discarding the view into a book-lined interior. Zahari's elimination of distracting elements of composition sharpens the focus

¹³ Brisby, *op.cit.*, 20.

¹⁴ Brisby, *op.cit.*, 19 fig. 6: Zahari, *Self-Portrait*, Sofia, HXT, inv. no. 2 (76 x 50 cms).

on the figure itself, which is brought forward to the viewer's gaze to enhance the monumentality of its impression against a neutral ground.

Zahari's use of Stock's frontispiece adds to the other known case of Zahari's debt to a western print as a source for painting. As discussed in a separate publication, Zahari's representation of the Demoniac in two of his four icons of the Bogoroditsa "Живоносен Източник" (Zoodochos Pigi) of 1837 and 1838 replicates the recumbent figure of Ananias, conspicuous in Raphael's tapestry cartoon composition illustrating the *Death of Ananias*.¹⁵ Zahari's awareness of this composition is evidenced by the preservation amongst the painter's archived working materials of Agostino Veneziano's engraving of the cartoon and it is also attested by the copy-drawing of the composition's recumbent figure, which also survives in the painters' archive. However, in contradistinction to this selective appropriation from a western source for an isolated feature in Orthodox iconography, Zahari's use of Stock's portrait-print of Voulgaris as a template for the novel painting type of portraiture and for the oil-painting technique manifests this painters' conscious engagement with western models and painting formats.

Zahari's interpretation of the portrait-print prompts questions about the Bulgarian painter's knowledge of western portraiture and of the conventions of scholars' portraiture as exemplified in Holbein's portrait of Erasmus (c. 1523) to which Stock's frontispiece plate arguably indebted (Fig. 2b).

Zahari's assured treatment of the structural formalities of western portraiture, evident in his "Self Portrait," implies a conscious awareness not only of the frontispiece plate but also of contextual knowledge, which can confidently be attributed to his engagement with western painters. Remarks in the painters' letter to Neofit, dated April 20, 1840, account for his instruction from French painters during the

¹⁵ Claire Brisby, "An icon of the Theotokos Zoodochos Pighi—Mother of God Life-Giving Spring: Aspects of Later Byzantine Art," *Проблеми на изкуството/Art Studies Quarterly* 4 (2003): 30-44; Print: Sofia, НХГ, Samokov Archive folder II 1192 (26.5 x 40.5 cm), insc. left *invinit Rap.....Roma*; insc. right *Raph. Urbino*, illustrated in Sokolova, *Захару Зограф*, 157; further insc. below; drawing: Samokov, СИМ 3104 Mandel archive, *Recumbent Male* (32.7 x 22 cms overall), illustrated Moskova (2002) 21.

course of three months the previous winter.¹⁶ Early in the following year, Zahari writes in a letter dated February 5, 1841, of further tuition in academic methods such as working with models –presumably prints– and in principles of scale and perspective as applied to composition and anatomical proportion.¹⁷

Related to the reception of Stock's portrait-print in Bulgaria and the issue of Zahari's instruction in European portraiture is the other of Zahari's two portraits. Zahari's portrait of Neofit Rilski pairs closely in scale with his "Self-Portrait" to attribute it to the same time, from which to infer Zahari's concentrated attention to the technique and format of western European portraiture (Fig. 3).¹⁸

The date inscribed on Neofit's portrait of 1838 indicates that it predates the documented references in Zahari's correspondence, dated 1840 and 1841, to encounters with western painters, so that we can establish that Zahari's engagement with western painters can be traced back at least three years prior to the documented date of encounter.¹⁹ Zahari's pioneering use of the oil medium for both portraits is further a material endorsement of his formal education in western portraiture indebted to the instruction he sought from western painters during this period.

In resonant similarities with Stock's portrait-print of Eugenios, presenting the Bulgarian scholar in clerical headdress handling several

¹⁶ Zahariev, *op.cit.*, 46, note 3: Rila Monastery, no. 84: letter dated 20 April 1840.

¹⁷ Ogoiska, *op.cit.*, 211: letter dated 5 February 1841: "при двамина майстори француски зографезимах 3. матими за соразмерението на живописството;" Zahariev, *op.cit.*, 32, 142 transcribes "съразмерението/proportion;" Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 390 transcribes "споразумението/agreement."

¹⁸ Zahari, *Portrait of Neofit Rilski 1838*, Sofia, НХГ, inv. no. 3 (84 x 64 cms).

¹⁹ Plamen Petrov, "За човека, увековечен в картина или няколко бележки върху портрета на Неофит Рилски от колекцията на НХГ (инв. Но. 11 ж 43)" (On the Man Immortalized in a Picture or a few Notes on the Portrait of Neofit Rilski from the Collection of the NAG (inv. no. 11 G 43), in *Наследството на отец неофит рилски: изкъствоведски, богословски и филологически аспекти* (The Legacy of Father Neofit Rilski: Issues of Art-history, Theology and Philology), ed. Svetlana Kyumdzhieva–Ivan Gelev–Rumiana Damianova–Elena Uzunova–Elisaveta Musakova (Sofia: 2012), 175-8, on the basis of related archival documentation portrait originates from 1835.

bound volumes of books beside a quill poised in an inkwell, Zahari's portrayal of Neofit signals his predilection for western appropriation even if the comparatively less assured treatment of the formalities of western portraiture in relation to the "Self-Portrait" suggests that it predates the latter as the Bulgarian painter's initial attempt of the genre.

As concerns the Bulgarian painter's European consciousness, the representation of Neofit's teaching aid –the globe– is emblematic of the global awareness Zahari shared with Neofit, as it is also gleaned from repeated references to geography books in correspondence with the period Neofit's portrait is dated, two years into his teaching master's role at the school in Koprivshitsa. In one letter dated November 7, 1838, there is specific allusion to Konstantin Fotinov's translation (1843) of a Greek geography book: "why Konstantin does not give the Geography book away."²⁰ Their enthusiasm for promoting geography as a subject in the school curriculum reflected the prevailing theological thought addressed in Voulgaris' "Logic," which synthesised Enlightenment philosophy and Orthodox theology in the concept of manifesting God's existence in the Creation and in phenomena of the natural world.

Having assessed the case of recognising Eugenios' portrait-print as the template for Zahari's "Self-Portrait," it is appropriate to continue by questioning the significance of this in estimating the young Bulgarian's awareness of the Greek theologian Voulgaris. How conscious was the Bulgarian of the Greek scholar's intellectual achievements and critical renown?

The survival of the painter's correspondence is an informative source for reconstructing this Bulgarian's cultural consciousness and critical self-awareness. The primary subject of concern in Zahari's letters addressed to Neofit Rilski over the period of eighteen years from 1835 to 1853 is the development of education in schools teaching a Bulgarian language curriculum. In vigorous terms that express his

²⁰ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 369: letter dated 14 June 1836, "Georgi has not agreed to give up his Geography Book" (Ogoiska, *Междуписания*, 98-100); Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 376: letter dated 24 June 1838, "Why Konstantin does not give the Geography Book way" (Ogoiska, *Междуписания*, 137-9); Ogoiska, *op.cit.*, 213: letter dated 6 April 1841, "Zahari refers to Receiving in Plovdiv a Geography Book and Volumes of an Encyclopaedia."

concern for these matters of primary importance to aspirations of national identity, Zahari's letters tell of the tasks expected of the school governor's role he assumed in Samokov and Plovdiv, as they are described by Semerdjiev, being duties to secure teaching staff and teaching materials and to manage schools' finances.²¹ Zahari's appeals to Neofit to accept teaching posts abound in the letters addressed to him in the mid 1830s, anticipating the prelate's appointment as master teacher of the new Bulgarian school in Koprivshtitsa from June 1836 to 1839. They also tell us of Zahari's call on Neofit's intervention to prevent the departure of another schoolmaster, "our Krusholiya (Крушолия)."²²

Moreover, Zahari's personal engagement with school building emerges in his enticing report to Neofit on May 10, 1836: "they have decided where to build the school too. The place is beautiful."²³ Zahari's involvement with school building continues, as a later letter indicates on November 21 of the same year: "Chorbadi Vulko made a Bulgarian church in Filibe St. Petka. It is quite spacious and is in a very good spot and I think there is the best place for our national Slavic school to be opened."²⁴ Two years later, a letter on May 8, 1838, tells us of his ongoing involvement with the building of schools as well as of his efforts to develop school textbooks.²⁵ The following year, Zahari's request in a letter dated February 2, 1839, for "the alphabetical books and primer [...] the one that was translated in Bulgarian from Greek" shows how assiduously he pursued the securing of textbooks.²⁶ Petar Beron's inaugural Bulgarian primer was published a decade earlier, in 1824, and Zahari's reference to translation reflects the prevailing industry of foreign language books' translation, primarily Greek, in order for them to be used for teaching in the Bulgarian language.

Zahari's promotion of book publication responds to the introduction, starting from 1828, of secular printing in Bulgaria by his fellow

²¹ Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 140-55.

²² Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 381: letter dated 7 November 1838.

²³ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 367.

²⁴ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 373.

²⁵ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 375.

²⁶ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 385.

citizen in Samokov, Nikolai Karastoyanov, clandestinely acquiring equipment from abroad and operating from their basement. On June 29, 1839, Zahari suggests to Neofit that he could “include Kara Stoyancheto (the son of Kara-Stoyanov) in the typography,” i.e., the printing of his dictionary – the event aborted for lack of official permit.²⁷

Remarks in Zahari’s letters imply his association with education was publicly recognised, notably as a student grant-giver on a generous scale, as inferred from comments relayed to Neofit about the young Naiden Gerov: “he had heard that all poor young Bulgarians who lived in the schools used to come to me for advice and some financial help so that they would not abandon their studies (some of them still owe me money).”²⁸

Zahari’s engagement with leading Bulgarian teaching masters is gleaned from the mention of names in his letters to Neofit. Several remarks about a certain Chavdar may identify Chavdar Sotirov, a Bulgarian who, having graduated in Athens and as schoolmaster in Bulgaria, introduced class groups by age, segregating older students in a separate room and added geography to the curriculum, teaching with a globe and maps.²⁹ The aforementioned Krusholiya may perhaps be identified with Zahari Krousha (1808-81), a two years senior fellow student of Neofit and teacher in Koprivshitsa, Sofia and Samokov.³⁰ Krusholiya’s extravagant behaviour crops up repeatedly in a lengthy letter in November 1838.³¹ Zahari’s request to Neofit, fifteen years later, on March 29, 1853, to send back his “Aesop’s book” with “Mr. Zakhariya h Gyurova” may well refer to Zahari Krousha’s translation of Aesop’s Fables from Greek.³² Other names peppering the letters include those of younger students of Rilski, Naiden Gerov (1823-1900), Mr. Raina (Popovic?), and Nikolai Tondzharov, all contrib-

²⁷ Ogoiska, *op.cit.*, 175.

²⁸ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 385: letter dated 2 February 1839.

²⁹ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 383: letter dated 12 July 1839; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 389: letter dated 28 October 1845; Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 140-55.

³⁰ Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 190.

³¹ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 379-82: letter dated 7 November 1838.

³² Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 393: letter dated 29 March 1853 postscript; Por Krousha see Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 190 ff.

uting to education in Bulgaria as teachers in Koprivshitsa, Samokov and Plovdiv.³³

Zahari's reliance on Zakhariya Gyurov, as named in the letter of 1853 cited above, demonstrates how his patriotism led him to associate with Bulgarian nationalists. Zahari Gyurov/Gurov (c. 1810-92), was a contemporary in Samokov and fellow student of Neofit who outlived the painter as an activist for the independence of the Bulgarian Church, which was finally achieved in 1871. Zahari zograf was also personally related to Zahari Gyurov, the brother of the wife the painter records marrying on the eighth day of an unspecified month early in 1841.³⁴

The names of leading Bulgarian nationalists sprinkled through Zahari's letters attests to his awareness of acknowledged leaders effectively active in foreign centres in the decades leading up to the Crimean War, such as Vasil Aprilov (1789-1847) and Nikolay Palauzov (1821-99).³⁵ Frequenting Samokov and Plovdiv together with the patronage bases of Koprivshitsa and the principal Bulgarian monasteries in Rila, Troyan and Veliko Turnovo, Zahari's familiar environments were the leading economic and political centres of Bulgarian culture.

Zahari's excitement for Bulgarian education is likely to have eclipsed by his appreciation of Eugenios Voulgaris' contribution to Greek secular education in the previous century. However unfamiliar was Eugenios' renown for Zahari, the painters' letters convey his acknowledgement of contemporary Greek teachers in Bulgaria. The repeated references to Adam can be referred to the Vlach Adam Zapecos, who had introduced Neofit to the Greek language and literature in

³³ For Naiden see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 380: letter dated 7 November 1838; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 385: letter dated 2 February 1839; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 388: letter dated 26 September 1839; For "teacher Nikolaya" Tondsharov see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 383: letter dated 12 July 1839; For "Mr Raina" see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 382-3: letter dated 26 February 1839.

³⁴ For a record of Zahari Zograf's marriage see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 360, "Kaca Tεφρεp" II, 1841 "I got married on 8th" (no name given); For family relationship see Zahariev, *op.cit.*, 134-6, ills: 137, 139; For Zahari Hadji Gyurov see Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 80.

³⁵ For Aprilov see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 376: letter dated 24 June 1838; For Palauzov and Naiden see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 380, letter dated 7 November 1838.

Melnik in the 1820s and whose subsequent inauguration of a Greek school in Plovdiv is reported by Zahari, as are the activities in Koprivshtitsa and Plovdiv of the Greek-named Dimitri Kalambaki and “teacher Hristaki.”³⁶ Zahari’s adoption of Neofit as a personal mentor is the legacy of the latter’s role as his schoolmaster in Samokov and of his teaching there from 1827 to 1831.

It is therefore likely that just as Zahari was indebted to western painters for the acquisition of the model print, his choice of the portrait-print from the collections of miscellaneous western prints for use as template for his first attempts at portraiture was steered by his engagement with the western painters rather than by local renown of Eugenios. Having portrayed the esteemed Bulgarian theologian in mirror image to the portrait-print of theologian Eugenios, Zahari’s “Self-Portrait” models his self-image on those of the venerable educators.

Disappointingly for Zahari’s aspiration, posthumous assessment of him, half a century later, failed to recognise his civic ambition and contribution. Semerdjiev –perhaps conditioned by long-standing social prejudices– categorised him strictly as an artisan, and as such merely a secondary family member to the elder painter Hristo, to whom he gives priority when discussing arts and crafts in Samokov, thereby denying Zahari the biographical outlines other Samokov citizen-teachers and nationalists earned from his pen.³⁷ Accounting for the biblical images printed in Nuremberg in the painters’ possession, Semerdjiev attributes their function as models for the elder painter Hristo.³⁸ This attribution is clearly wrong, since the reverse of the frontispiece title page of the series of plates concerned, *Historiae Ce-*

³⁶ For Adam see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 373: letter dated 21 November 1836; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 375: letter dated 8 May 1838; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 376: letter dated 24 June 1838; For Kalambaki see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 366: letter dated 22 April 1836; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 370: letter dated 1 July 1836; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 373: letter dated 21 November 1836; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 370: letter dated 1 July 1836; Adam’s identity: bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/неофит_Рилски; For “Hristaki teacher” see Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 389: letter dated 28 October 1845.

³⁷ Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 221-7.

³⁸ Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 222; The volume of plates from Christophor Weigel’s *Historiae Celebriores Veteris Testamenti* (Celebrated Old Testament Stories) (Nuremberg: 1712) is accessioned in Sofia, HXF, Samokov Archive II 1191.

lebriores Veteris Testamenti, published by Christophor Weigel in Nuremberg in 1712, is inscribed in Cyrillic with the date and place of its acquisition coinciding with the period Hristo's son, Zahari, undertook a scheme of mural painting at the Grand Lavra monastery on Athos in 1852.³⁹ A series of six copy-drawings of plates from the series preserved in the painters' archive attests to the role of the western plates as models, which were although acquired well after Hristo's death.⁴⁰

Hristo (c. 1750-1819), Vienna, and Athos

If Zahari's awareness of Eugenios Voulgaris was derivatively acquired through his engagement with western European painters and, consequently, not consciously acknowledged, it is likely that his father Hristo had direct experience of the Greek scholar's legacy during his repeated journeys to Mount Athos in his work as an icon-painter. Indeed, we can arguably attribute Zahari's exceptional training in Samokov to Hristo's awareness of the secular orientations in Greek education introduced on Athos by Eugenios. Instead of the elementary reading, writing and mathematics he would have learned by attending a monastery cell-school, Zahari's experience of a scholarly curriculum taught by Neofit reflected the effective impact of Eugenios' role directing the Academy School on Athos in the 1750s, which Hristo encountered on Athos during sojourns on the Holy Mountain during the succeeding decades.

With regard to Hristo's world view and contrary to his son's insular outlook, what is known about his life –which is less coherently known in comparison to his son's, Zahari's, documented biography– is most-

³⁹ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 354.

⁴⁰ Brisby, *Zahari Zograf*, 17-18; Sofia, HXΓ, Samokov Archive II 1191: selected Plates; Sofia, HXΓ, Samokov Archive II 684 *Expulsion from Eden* after Pl. 2, Genesis III 24, illustrated in Sokolova, *Закану Зограф*, 155; Sofia, HXΓ, Samokov Archive II 628 *Lot & daughters flee Sodom* after Pl. 11, Genesis XIX 25-6; Sofia, HXΓ, Samokov Archive II 853, *Joseph interpreting dreams* after Pl. 27, Genesis XL; Sofia, HXΓ, Samokov Archive II 603 *Moses slaying the Egyptian* after Pl. 34, Exodus II 12; Sofia, HXΓ, Samokov Archive II 602 *Samson & gates of Gaza* after Pl. 67, Judges XVI 3; Sofia, HXΓ, Samokov Archive II 854 *Ahijah's prophecy* after Pl. 101, I Kings XIV 4-5.

ly connected with him travelling: to Athos and, allegedly, to Vienna. The pervasive oral family tradition of artistic training abroad was chronicled in the early years of the 20th century by Daskalov from the painter's grandson, also named Hristo, and was repeated shortly after by Semerdjiev in his history of Samokov.⁴¹ The tale of the painter acquiring skills in Vienna led to scholarly notions of him training at the Academy and to the perception of the painter's knowledge as "true academic principles" and "academic draughtsmanship which makes no concession to Byzantine tradition" in his work.⁴²

The notion of Hristo's western training exists in parallel with the belief that most of his activity as a painter was on Athos, predating even his training in Vienna. Despite the lack of confirmed biographical data establishing a firm chronology of Hristo's artistic development, it is possible to map some moments of cultural significance in the geographical and conceptual fields of the painter's artistic formation.

At its longest estimation, Hristo's life covers the period from 1745 to 1819. It starts with his birth in the village of Dospei, close to Samokov, and continues with a period of apprenticeship as a painter on Mount Athos, followed by further training in Vienna. After this, he returned to Bulgaria and taught his sons before taking up commissions on Mount Athos, where he allegedly died. Although recent scholarly consensus dispels Hristo's training in Vienna attributed to the decade of the 1770s and the idea of his death on Athos, it is useful to investigate the factual realities of the legendary allegations. Much of this landscape has already been drawn by Elena Popova in her monograph on Hristo Dimitrov so that the following merely contributes some further relief to the existing picture.⁴³

The journey to Athos from a young man seeking apprenticeship in painting on the Holy Mountain is plausible, given the custom of the period for extended Bulgarian families to have a member take prestigious monastic orders at one of the monasteries favouring Serbian and

⁴¹ Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 221-7; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 314 citing D. Daskalov, "Летописи" (Chronicles), *Изкуството в България* 3 (1901): 117.

⁴² Protic, *op.cit.*, 511-2, 519-20, 515, 517, fig. 157; illustrated: Sokolova, *Захари Зограф*, 44: Bachkovo Monastery, church of St. Nicholas, exonarthex.

⁴³ Popova, *Зографът Христо*, 248-70.

Bulgarian communities, namely the Hilandar and Zograf Monasteries. Semerdjiev's description of Hristo's patron as a relative-monk has led other scholars to identify the young painters' sponsors in the abbot of the Hilandar Monastery, Lavrenti, and the deputy-abbot Paisii Hilendarski (c. 1722-73), renowned as the author of the cataclysmic account of the Bulgarian nation *Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya/History of the Slavo-Bulgarian People*, on the assumption of their acquaintance through shared birthplace in Dospei.⁴⁴ Whatever the merits of these hypotheses are, connections between Bulgarians in Bulgarian lands and on the Holy Mountain were sufficiently developed for us to accept that a promising adolescent from the region of Samokov may have been sponsored by his relatives to go to the Holy Mountain, where his aptitude for painting was developed even if he did not follow convention and take monastic orders.

The debated period of Hristo's youth occupies a time frame of twenty years, starting from the 1740s, which dovetails with Paisii's presence at the Hilandar Monastery from c. 1745-62. Indeed, the legendary attribution to Paisii Hilendarski a role in Hristo's formation on Athos may be factually explained by the impact of Paisii's pilgrimage through Bulgaria promoting his *Istoriya* in manuscript.⁴⁵ Popova's chronological outline situates Paisii in Samokov around 1771 and his presence in Hristo's domestic environment could be accepted as a catalyst for the young painters' orientation to Athos.

It is on Athos that Hristo encountered Eugenios' legacy on the Holy Mountain. The young Bulgarian's arrival there is placed in the two decades following the Greek scholar's directorship of the Academy School during its formative years from 1753 to 1759. It is therefore possible to explain Hristo's youthful journey to Athos with his awareness of the educational opportunities there, not only as traditionally known at the monasteries but also as offered at the academy on Athos since its establishment in 1749. As a new teaching institution based in the Vatopedi Monastery, the Athonias was established with Greek Or-

⁴⁴ Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 222; Bogdan Filov, *Geschichte der bulgarischen Kunst unter der türkischen Herrschaft und in der neueren Zeit* (Berlin, 1933), 31-6; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 314; Popova, "Реинтерпретации," 260 refers to Lavrenti as Paisii's elder brother.

⁴⁵ Popova, "Реинтерпретации," 263.

thodox Patriarchal endorsement to renew ecclesiastical education through the integration of ancient philosophy and modern physical sciences with classical theology. Significantly for us, its charter reflected unprecedented outreach, welcoming both clerical and lay candidates from abroad as well as from Athos, and the extent of its appeal is attested by the attendance numbers that increased from twenty to several hundreds during Voulgaris' tenure.⁴⁶

This opens a perspective in which to assess Hristo's cultural experience on Athos. Popova dates his work on the Holy Mountain to successive spells (1779-87, 1787-93, and again from 1797).⁴⁷ These were critical times for the monastic community; it negotiated the divergencies between the impact of Humanist thought of the Enlightenment manifest in teaching at the Academy School and the traditionalist theologies related with hesychast prayer and ritual practices epitomised by the correct preparation and consumption of "kollyvades" –boiled wheat in commemoration of the dead. This reactionary response to the secular pressures of the European Enlightenment culminated in the *Philokalia*, a compilation of ancient theological texts by Nikodimos of Athos (1749-1809) and Makarios of Corinth (1731-1805) published in Greek in Venice in 1782, when Hristo was located working on Athos.⁴⁸ This reactionary Orthodoxy had its greatest impact on the Slavonic sphere. Paisii Velichkovskii (1722-94) translated many of these texts into Church Slavonic, which were published in Moscow during Hristo's lifetime, in 1793, entitled *Dobrotolublye*.⁴⁹

The effect of these intellectual debates on Hristo's role as an icon-painter calls for applied study and critical evaluation of every aspect,

⁴⁶ Graham Speake, *Mount Athos: Renewal in Paradise* (London, 2002), 136-7.

⁴⁷ Popova, "Реинтерпретации," 309.

⁴⁸ Speake, *op.cit.*, 139-43.

⁴⁹ Kallistos Ware, "St Nikodimos and the *Philokalia*," in *The Philokalia: A Classic Text of Orthodox Spirituality*, ed. Brock Bingaman–Bradley Nassif (Oxford: 2012) DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195390261.003.0001; John McGuckin, "The Making of the *Philokalia*: A Tale of Monks and Manuscripts," in *The Philokalia: A Classic Text of Orthodox Spirituality*, ed. Brock Bingaman–Bradley Nassif (Oxford: 2012), 40-1, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195390261.003.0002>; Andrew Louth, "The Influence of the *Philokalia* in the Orthodox World," in *The Philokalia: A Classic Text of Orthodox Spirituality*, ed. Brock Bingaman–Bradley Nassif (Oxford: 2012) DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195390261.003.0003.

in order to explain how the painter's consciousness of debate may explain the hybrid elements characterising his questioning treatment of inherited iconographies. Hristo's religious painted imagery was instrumental in expressing the nationalist agenda of the local Orthodox Church and realised in programmes of church building and decoration in Bulgarian lands, which were sanctioned by the close relations between the Samokov Diocese and the monastic community on Mount Athos.⁵⁰ Born near Samokov, Hristo was at the centre of Bulgarians' reception of Athonite culture, as epitomised in the iconostasis ordered from Athos to be carved by Antonii the Monk and to be erected in the metropolitan church of the Virgin in Samokov in 1793.⁵¹ On the other side, by fulfilling his commissions on Athos, Hristo also contributed to the cultural developments of the Holy Mountain.

Reflecting on the influence of the "kollyvades" thought on developments in religious imagery not only were the first Greek and Slavonic editions of Nikodim's *Philokalia* published in Hristo's lifetime but also Nikodim's account of Christian martyrs of Turkish oppression, *New Martyrologion*, which was published in 1799 in Venice. The subject chimed with the prevailing Bulgarian cult of Ivan Rilski, which Hristo promoted in innovative imagery, his representations of the newly acclaimed national saint in mural painting in the chapel of St. Luke at the Hermitage of the Rila Monastery being of pioneering iconographical significance (Fig. 4).⁵²

Attributed to 1798-99, at the time of the *New Martyrologion's* publication in Venice, Hristo's mural composition of the Bulgarian monastery's patron saint Ivan significantly is reminiscent of a previous one on Athos. The earliest narrative cycle of the saintly figure in painting is in a chapel dedicated to the saint at the Hilandar Monastery dated 1757.⁵³ Hristo's representation of the Bulgarian national patron saint in the mural scheme in the chapel of St. Luke, as well as the earlier image at the ossuary chapel of the Bogoroditsa *Pokrov* (c. 1795), also

⁵⁰ Popova, "Реинтерпретации," 255-65.

⁵¹ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 477.

⁵² Speake, *op.cit.*, 139-43.

⁵³ Popova, "Реинтерпретации," 184-5.

at Rila, which features the earliest depiction of the saint in full-length, collectively imply that he was aware of its precedent on Athos.⁵⁴

It is appropriate to comment here on the intervention of figures associating with *kollyvades* in the iconographical developments of the next generation. Hristo's son Zahari was to copy images from a graphic print, being sponsored by Stephanos and Neophytos Skourtaios, monks on Athos and friends of Nikodimos, the author of the *Philokalia*, who died in his "kellion" (cell community of monks) above Karyes on Mount Athos in 1809.⁵⁵ Zahari's treatment of the Akathist imagery honouring the Mother of God in the Incarnation of Christ at the Troyan Monastery is derived from the preceding set by the composite engraving of the Theotokos Akathist published in Venice in 1819. Regrettably neglected in scholarship on Zahari, his mural representation of the Akathist canticle in the vaults and upper wall registers of the *katholikon* narthex, inscribed with the date 1848, demonstrates the painter's debt to the Skourtaios brothers' engraving, published at the Giannantonio Zuliani's printing house as one of the five engravings the Skourtaios brothers commissioned when they were in Venice between 1818 and 1820 supervising the publication of further texts by Nikodimos the Athonite.⁵⁶ The debt is evident in Zahari's replication in his mural scene of the distinctive centralised composition distinguishing the printed image of the *Journey of the Three Magi*, in which the figures gaze collectively up at the star. A print of the Skourtaios' engraving survives in the Samokov painters' archive, albeit in fragments which, nonetheless, include the centralised composition of the *Journey of the Three Magi*, to evidence the painter's practical model (Fig. 5).⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Попова, "Рейнтерпретации," 48, narthex, east wall, second register.

⁵⁵ Brisby, *The Role*, 87-102; Ware, op.cit.

⁵⁶ Dori Papastratos, *Χάρτινες Εικόνες: Ορθόδοξα Θρησκευτικά Χαρακτικά 1660-1899* (Paper Icons: Orthodox Religious Engravings) (Athens: 1986) cat. no. 122 (73 x 50 cms).

⁵⁷ Sofia, НХГ, Samokov Archive inv. nos. II 880 *Journey of the Magi*, II 930-42, II 944-45; II 1190/59-62.

Another print survives intact at the Troyan Monastery itself, offering a second source known to Zahari.⁵⁸

Zahari's use of imagery established by the Skourtaios brothers in a strategically conceived engraving raises the question of the Bulgarian painter's awareness of the Skourtaios' brothers connection with Nikodim the Athonite, a connection which may have been diffused by their evidently executive role in Venice supervising the repeated manufacture of prints of their composite "Akathist" engraving and wide distribution to Greek communities in the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor, including school teachers in Kydonia.⁵⁹ How much Zahari was conscious of the Skourtaios brothers' endorsement of innovative imagery for the purpose of promoting traditional liturgical piety is a deserving topic of interdisciplinary attention elsewhere.

Returning to Hristo's experience from cultural environment on Athos, it would also have been shaped by Eugenios' legacy as it was reflected in Paisii Hilendarski's *Istoriya*. The unprecedented treatise-format text compiled on Athos by the Bulgarian monk at the Serbian monastery from 1745 to 1762 acknowledges Eugenios' introduction of academic scholarship on Athos, arguably incentivising Paisii's study of classical sources when he was an envoy from Athos to the Orthodox Bishopric in Sremski Karlovci between May and July 1761.⁶⁰ Paisii's treatise acknowledges his debt to European sources and his text cites Mavro Orbini's *The Realm of the Slavs* (1601) repeatedly, but disparagingly.⁶¹ Paisii's journey to Sremski Karlovci and the intellectual exploration of European historical texts identified as sources for *Istoriya* describe a vibrant route of cultural dissemination and ex-

⁵⁸ Troyan Monastery Museum, inv. no. 139, n. 5; For the Skourtaios' brothers' print production see *Zahari Zograf*, 17.

⁵⁹ Papastratos, *op.cit.*, cat. no. 122; George Golobias–Justino Simonopetritis, "Paper Icons: From Venice to Mount Athos," in *La Stampa e l'illustrazione del libro greco a Venezia tra il Settecento e l'Ottocento*, ed. Chryssa Maltezou, *Atti della Giornata di Studio Convegno* 3 (Proceedings of the Conference Study Day 3) (Venice: 2001), 61.

⁶⁰ Попова, "Реинтерпретации," 263, fn. 34; Dejan Medakovic, *Monastir Chilendar XVIII vek* (Novi Sad: 1976) 86-7; I. Ruvarac, "Ein document zur Biographie des bulgarischen Historikus Paisii aus dem Jahre 1761," *Archive fur slawische Philologie* XXII (Berlin: 1900) 620-1.

⁶¹ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 314.

change, relevant for explaining the Bulgarian painters' alleged foreign training.

Cultural Capitals – European Orientation

Indeed, notions of Bulgarian painters training abroad have some factual basis. A painter –confusingly also named Hristo with the patronymics Dimitur Petrovich– travelled in 1725 from Kalofer to Russia and returned to Bulgaria settling in Samokov to be continued nationally as well as on Athos.⁶² A century later, a Georgi Hadji Mitov from Samokov is known to have graduated from the academy in Florence in 1835.⁶³ A common factor in these isolated cases of Bulgarian painters' travelling abroad is the role of Samokov as their destination on their return to Bulgaria and a centre of their career thereafter. This attests to the status of Samokov in the Ottoman empire as a destination centre and, to the extent of its cultural renown, a description of our painters' cultural outlook.

Hristo and Zahari lived at a time of transformation in Samokov, which was sustained by the financial independence deriving from an iron-ore industry of medieval origin indebted to local mineral resources and agricultural cultivation of cereal crops as well as cotton, leather, and textile production.⁶⁴ Consequently, Samokov's importance as a commercial centre in trade routes linked to new markets in the Austro-Hungarian Empire caters for cultural transmission as a commodity in merchants' caravans.

More specifically, relevant to the question of Samokov's links with centres in Hapsburg lands is the re-location of the Arie family from Vienna to Samokov in 1793.⁶⁵ Coming first to Vidin, the family of the

⁶² Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 315, fn. 6 citing article by D. Katsev-Burski in 1939.

⁶³ Filov, *Geschichte*, 57-61.

⁶⁴ Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 195 ff.; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 485, note 1, 487-9.

⁶⁵ Anna Roshkovska, "Българската възрожденска художествена култура и еврейското население" (Bulgarian Revival Artistic Culture and the Jewish Community), in *Проучвания за историята на еврейското население в българските земи XV-XX век* (Studies on the History of the Jewish Population in the Bulgarian Lands XV-XX Centuries) (Sofia: 1980), 35-52; the Arie Chronicle: Sofia, Bulgarian National Archive, Institute of Balkan Studies, T.1.

Jewish money-lenders chose to settle in Samokov in 1793 to advance the business connections with the Ottoman capital.⁶⁶ Their entrepreneurial skills led them to the role of the controller of the salt and mineral mines around Samokov and the associated tax-collecting, generating a wealth and social prominence, which they marked in material terms by building town houses in Samokov and then Plovdiv, displaying the latest stylistic assimilations from the central European capital.⁶⁷ Whilst the Arie's Sarafska House in Samokov introduced symmetry in plan and proportions, which derived from western examples, the house of the succeeding generation, in Plovdiv and now lost, was renowned for its ostentatious scale and opulent furnishings imported from central Europe, exemplifying the vogue for hybrid *alafraŋga* fashions in Bulgaria.

Although the presence of Bulgarian painters at the Academy in Vienna has not been traced, opportunities for Orthodox painters in the European capital were available in the last decades of the 18th century at Jakob Schmutzer's school of engraving. Hristo's alleged sojourn in Vienna in the early 1770s falls in the decade after Schmutzer had established a school admitting that non-German speaking students were formally barred from the royal painting academy in 1766.⁶⁸ Ultimately preparing students for work as engravers, Schmutzer's curriculum emphasised the importance of drawing skills just like in European academy schools as well as other aspects of the training Schmutzer himself had in Paris. Schmutzer's school attracted candidates from the newly acquired eastern regions of the Hapsburg Empire, famously including the Serbian Orthodox engraver Zaharija Orfelin. With a curriculum modelled on that of the Viennese Academy and receiving imperial funding, Schmutzer's school eventually amalgamated with the Academy itself as part of the Akademie der Bildenden Künste estab-

⁶⁶ Semerdjiev, *op.cit.*, 114-34; Roshkovska, *op.cit.*, 35-52.

⁶⁷ Milko Bichev, *Български барок* (Bulgarian Baroque) (Sofia: 1955) 77-8, ills. nos. 26-33; Roshkovska, *op.cit.*, 84, figs. 68-71; Roshkovska, *op.cit.*, 94-6, figs. 81-3; Sarafska House (of the elder Abraham Arie), Samokov; Roshkovska-Mavrodinova, *op.cit.*, plates 268-9, 377-81; Nina Hristovska-Nevena Mitreva-Desislava Kanasirova-Liubomir Nikolov, *Samokov* (Samokov: 2010), 4-5.

⁶⁸ Angelika Plank, *Akademischer und schulischer Elementarzeichnenunterricht im 18 Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: 1999), 84.

lished in 1772.⁶⁹ Even if Hristo's alleged sojourn in Vienna post-dated the merging of Schmutzer's school with the Imperial Academy, the opportunities for apprenticeships for students coming from the eastern territories of the empire in other artists' workshops in the imperial capital, such as the one offered to Hristofor Žefarović at the engraving studio of Thomas Messmer (1717-77), should be further explored.⁷⁰

Sremski Karlovci

In addition to the Hapsburgs' imperial capital in Vienna, the Danubian seat of the Serbian Orthodox bishopric at Sremski Karlovci, 545 kilometres to the north-west, should be recognised as a primary cultural capital in eastern perspectives, in which the two cities are often conflated. Academic scholarship also confuses Sremski Karlovci with Vienna, known to Bulgarians by the Turkish form Беч, as is the case with the illustrated Slavic heraldry *Stemmatographia* inspired by Mavro Orbini's work on Slavic heraldry, published by Thomas Messmer in Vienna in 1741, which is famously attributed to the Slav Hristofor Žefarović. This is to the serious detriment of the patron in Sremski Karlovci, Patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta in collaboration with the local theologian and poet Pavle Nenadović.⁷¹ The importance of this publication for the development of Balkan national self-awareness, nonetheless, oriented an outlook in Bulgaria to the collective cultural hub of these two central European cities.⁷² With regard to the impact of Žefarović's engravings of religious imagery in the Balkans, it is well discussed by Elka Bakalova in reference to a

⁶⁹ Plank, *op.cit.*, 190.

⁷⁰ Plank, *op.cit.*, 199, fn. 515: citing J. Roca, "Dva stoljeca nastave crtanja u Hrvatskoj" (Two Centuries of Drawing Instruction in Croatia), *Vjesnik* 1-2, 1311-2 (Zagreb: 1986).

⁷¹ [https://orthodoxwiki.org/Arsenius_IV_\(Jovanovic-Sakabenta\)_of_Pec](https://orthodoxwiki.org/Arsenius_IV_(Jovanovic-Sakabenta)_of_Pec) (accessed 23-7-2018).

⁷² Atanas Bozhkov, *La Peinture Bulgare* (Sofia: 1974), 292; Atanas Bozhkov, *Българската икона* (Bulgarian Icons) (Sofia: 1984), 463; Nikola Mavrodinov, *Изкуството на българското възраждане* (Art of the Bulgarian Revival) (Sofia: 1957), 232, use of the portraits of the medieval Tsars Boris, Ivan Asen, Ivan Shishman, Ivan Vladimir and the national emblem of the lion as standard models; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 447, debt of a Samokov painter, Nicola Obrazopisov, to the emblematic motifs.

composite engraving of 1743 and the development of the saint from Ohrid acclaimed as Bulgarian, St. Naum.⁷³

The case of identifying Sremski Karlovci as the actual destination for aspiring Bulgarian painters has already been convincingly argued in regard to Toma Vishanov's achievements.⁷⁴ The city's renown in the Orthodox domain rests on the innovative academic institutions developed by successive patriarchs, building on the city's strategic political importance, having hosted pioneering negotiations between the European Holy League and the Ottoman Empire. These negotiations culminated in the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 resolving the Ottoman territorial claims and temporal security for Serbs and the Orthodox Church in the region. An academic school after the Jesuit model adopted in Kiev was established during the tenure of Metropolitan Mojsije Petrovic from 1726 to 1730.⁷⁵ Then, in 1743, Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta inaugurated a school of painting, formalised as an academy and intended to standardise the religious artistic practice of the Serbian Orthodox Church by mandating professional icon-painters' training at the Academy.⁷⁶ A direction for the Academy's curriculum was brought from Kiev by the first instructors, the painters Jov Vasiljevič and Vasilije Romanovič, whose students inaugurated a national current of Orthodox religious painting.

The role of Sremski Karlovci as a centre of learning for Bulgarians is evidenced by the aspirations of Partenii Pavlovich (1695-1760) leaving his natal Silistra for education in Serbia, which culminated in

⁷³ Elka Bakalova, "Една неизвестна житийна икона на св. Наум от софийския археологически музей" (An Unknown Historiated Icon of St Naum in the Sofia Archaeological Museum), *Проблеми на Изкуството* 4 (1993): 12-20.

⁷⁴ Elena Popova, "Барокът в иконописа на Тома Вишанов Молер" (The Baroque in Painting by Toma Vishanov Moler), *Изкуство* 9-10 (1990): 34-41 (34, fn. 2 Vishanov's icon published in Bansko Artistic Centre Symposium, Sofia, 1985, cat. no.17).

⁷⁵ Jelena Todorović, "Investiture into history: the ideals of the Orthodox Church as represented in the ephemeral spectacle for Bishop Moisei Putnik," *Object-Graduate research and reviews in the History of Art and Visual Culture*, no. 4 (2001/2002), 93-116, fn 12: for *Diploma Leopoldinum* 1691, ref. Sremski Karlovci, Archbishopric Library [P.-19-1691].

⁷⁶ Jelena Todorović, *An Orthodox Festival Book in the Habsburg Empire: Zaharija Orfelin's Festive Greeting to Mojsej Putnik 1757* (Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 22.

his appointment to the patriarch Pavel Nenadović in Sremski Karlovci shortly before the latter's death in 1768 cut short his tenure from 1749.⁷⁷ The case for Vishanov's experience of Sremski Karlovci rests on the formal and stylistic assimilations from Serbian painters of the 1780s-90s, freshly indebted to training at the Karlovci Academy and in Vasiljevič's workshop. Vishanov's foremost models are identified in works by Teodor Kračun (1730-81), whose further training in Vienna in 1769 led to a practicum as a religious painter working for both Orthodox and Catholic patrons equally willing to sponsor his competent assimilation of western Baroque art. Kračun's hybrid art met the demand for extensive decorative schemes of religious painting in new churches and monasteries in Serbia, as represented variously in the central iconostasis of the Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Sremski Karlovci in the 1780s and in individual icons in the Serbian Art Gallery, Novi Sad.

Vishanov's regard for Kračun's professional hybrid style defines a critical perspective in which to re-appraise the western consciousness in Hristo's work. Hristo's handling of hybrid western appropriations of imagery is less formally and stylistically overt than his Bulgarian counterpart from Bansko, as assessed in the latter's treatment of new subjects pertaining to the narratives of Christ and the Virgin and emphasising the Passion and adoption of anatomical composition and expressive rhetorical gesture delineated with notional tonality and decorative ornament.⁷⁸

Hristo's regard for such appropriations is less persuasive of direct experience of central Europe but attests, nonetheless, to awareness of western prints. More particularly, the Samokov painters' archive originating from the time of the elder Hristo attests to the icon-painters' new task of forming print collections –of both eastern Orthodox and western production– for using them as models, outshining comparables in quantity and variety.⁷⁹ In parallel with Kračun, Hristo's

⁷⁷ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 314.

⁷⁸ Elena Genova, "Непознатият Тома Вишанов Молер и модернизацията на православната живопис" (The Unknown Toma Vishanov Moler and the Modernisation of Orthodox Painting), *Проблеми на изкуството* 2 (1995): 6.

⁷⁹ Lascarina Bouras, "Working Drawings of Painters in Greece after the Fall of Constantinople" in *From Byzantium to el Greco*, ed. Myrtali Acheimastou-Potami-

achievement exemplifies the development of the religious painter's role executing both panel and mural painting to meet similar demands for schemes of religious imagery in restored monasteries and new churches in Bulgaria and also on Mount Athos, even if the Bulgarian's approach is comparatively conservative and respectful of the doctrinal principles of the Orthodox iconography and his use of model prints is, as has been found, restricted to Orthodox prints only. Hristo's three images showing St. Luke painting icons of the Mother of God in a mural series of four, attributed to 1799 in the eponymous chapel of St. Luke attached to the Hermitage dependency of the Rila Monastery (Fig. 6a), are modelled on the three narrative compositions of the border cycle of a composite engraving of the Theotokos Eleousa tou Kykko which was published in Venice in 1778 (Fig. 6b).⁸⁰

Two of these printed border scenes exist in fragments in the painters' archive, identifying Hristo's model images.⁸¹ Hristo's respect for the doctrinal prescriptions of icon-painting explains his systematic rejection of the fixed-point perspective scheme for illusory spatial recession created by the converging lines of floor tiling distinctive in the printed model compositions and his substitution of a two-dimensional lozenge shaped pattern (Figs. 7i-iii).⁸²

anou (London: 1987), 54-6, figs. 198-9; Thessaloniki Museum of Byzantine Culture and Holy Community of Mount Athos, *The Treasures of Mount Athos* (1997), 202-5, nos. 3.1-3.5; Andromachi Katselaki–Maria Nanou, *Ανθίβολα από τους Χιονιάδες, Συλλογή Μακρή Μαργαρίτη* (Antivola from Chioniades, Makris Margaritis Collection) (Athens, 2009).

⁸⁰ Popova, "Рейнтерпретации," 36, ills 10, 11, 12-5; Popova, *Зографът Христо*, 182-5 and note 20, ills. 54-5; Ivanka Gergova–Elena Popova–Elena Genova–Nikolai Klissarov, *Корпус на стенописите в България от XVIII век* (Corpus of Frescoes in Bulgaria of the 18th Century) (Sofia: 2006), 237 scenes 1-2, 242 and ill. 245 for inscriptions, 243 scene 4 and ill. 248 for inscription; engraving, Papastratos, *op.cit.*, cat. no. 539.

⁸¹ Print fragments, Sofia, НХГ, Samokov Archive inv. nos. II 906, II 911; these are two fragments from a group surviving from a dismembered print II 905-11, II 913-7, II 949, II 954.

⁸² Brisby, *Zahari Zograf*, 16 discusses Hristo's rejection of fixed-point perspective scheme governing compositions of the printed border images and the conversion of the converging lines of tiled flooring of the printed scenes into a two-dimensional lozenge pattern.

Hristo's treatment of the Theotokos "Zoodochos Pigi" imagery in an icon surviving in the Metropolitan Collection in Plovdiv chimes with the prevailing promotion of this cult in Orthodox imagery but in comparison with Kračun's version shows that Hristo's negotiation of hybrid assimilation drew on earlier central European Orthodox models, as established a generation earlier by Hristophor Žefarović in an engraving attributed to Vienna dated 1744 (Figs. 7a, 7b, 7c).

If Hristo's alleged world view is only diffusely apparent in his achievement, Zahari's is on the other hand visually asserted –most explicitly in the prominence accorded to the globe in Neofit's portrait. Zahari's open outlook is also apparent in the global contextualisation of his own critical self-appraisal, comparing himself with painters across the Christian world mapped through reference to Jerusalem, Turkey, Istanbul, and Mount Athos, as well as Roumelia, even if it does not venture westwards where "I cannot draw comparison with someone who has studied in Europe."⁸³

In relation to Zahari's expansive horizons, the rate at which Zahari and Neofit exchanged letters attests to the speed of communication intensifying cultural transmission between Samokov, Rila, Plovdiv, Melnik, Gabrovo, and Sofia as well as some destinations abroad in Brasov, Bucharest, Odessa, and Istanbul. The letters also illustrate mechanisms of international travel in the third and fourth decade of the 19th century, such as Zahari's report to Neofit in 1839 that one of his students in Koprivshitsa, the sixteen year-old Naiden Gerov, had "taken out a passport for Bucharest" and "could take another [...] for Kraguevats," as well as the young travellers' reliance on "promisory notes," i.e., travellers' cheques, from Neofit to cover his costs together with a supply of rice to sell for petty cash.⁸⁴ Given the increasing mobility of people in the course of two generations, Zahari's aspiration for artistic training becomes a realistic objective and his appeals to Neofit to intercede on his behalf in Odessa to Aprilov and Palauzov for sponsorship to attend the Academy in St. Petersburg manifest the painter's concern about practical aspects of admission, attendance and

⁸³ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 389; Ogoiska, *op.cit.*, 141.

⁸⁴ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 385: letter dated 2 February 1839, "Naiden has been," letter dated September 1839.

financial budgeting.⁸⁵ Although Zahari's project at St. Petersburg was not realised yet, his professional activity in Bulgaria suggests that this aborted ambition was not of great consequence to the painter who compensated for the lack of attendance at a formal Academy with tuition from western –presumably academically trained – painters in Bulgaria.

Conclusion

The foregoing investigation of the Samokov painters Hristo and Zahari's European consciousness explored the scope for assessing their experience of European cultural centres geographically through travel and for defining it derivatively through identified agencies of transmission active through mapped routes of commercial and educational exchange.

It reveals the pathways connecting the painters to the greater European landscape of their time, identifying the focus of their orientation in the central European capitals of Vienna and Sremski Karlovci and also on Mount Athos. It situates Hristo's achievement more closely in the context of his peers in central Europe and estimates Zahari's debt to western prints, with specific reference to his enterprising portraiture. Moreover, the investigation of these painters' assimilation of European values concerning scholarly excellence and academic methods in education as well as in artistic practice broadens the perception of their intellectual capacities through an estimation of their awareness of the Greek and Bulgarian scholars, Eugenios Voulgaris and Paisii Hilendarski.

This focussed discussion of the cultural experiences of two painters from Samokov offers a critical perspective receptive to application to other pioneering painters of the Bulgarian National Revival, thereby enhancing the understanding of the role of art in the formation of Bulgarian national consciousness in Europe.

⁸⁵ Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 376: letter dated 24 June 1838; Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, 389: letter dated 30 June 1838.



Fig. 1: Print, Eugenios Voulgaris, *Logic*, Leipzig, 1766
Sofia, HXΓ, Samokov Archive II 903 (18 x 12 cms)



Fig. 2a: Zahari, Self-Portrait
c. 1838, (76 x 50 cms) Sofia,
HXΓ, inv. No. 2



Fig. 2b: Holbein -Younger,
Erasmus c. 1523, London,
National Gallery, L658



Fig. 3: Zahari, Neofit Rilski,
1838, (84 x 64 cms), Sofia,
HXΓ, Inv. no. 3



Fig. 4: Christo, mural painting, St. Luke Chapel, Hermitage, Rila Monastery 1799, scene 4 St John of Rila with Boy bitten by Snake



Fig. 5: Print fragment *Journey of the Magi*, from engraving *Theotokos Akathist*, Venice 1819, border panel, Akathist Stanza 8; Sofia, HXF, Samokov Archive Inv. II 880



Fig. 6a: Christo, mural painting, St Luke Chapel, Hermitage, Rila Monastery 1799, scenes 1-3: St Luke painting icons of the Theotokos



Fig. 6b: Print, border series *St. Luke painting icons of the Theotokos* from engraving *Theotokos Eleousa tou Kykkou*, Venice 1778; Thessalonika, Museum of Byzantine Culture, BXE177XIX43_2



Fig. 7a: Theodor Kračun,
panel icon, Zoodochos Pigi,
before 1781



Fig. 7b: Christo, panel icon, Bogoroditsa
Живоносен Източник; Plovdiv, Orthodox
Metropolitanate Collection (64 x 44 cms)

Fig. 7c: Engraving, inscr. above:
Zoodochos Pigi;
below printed frame: *Hristophor
Zefar a national painter 1744*;
attrib. Vienna (30 x 292 cms)



*Ioannis D. Stefanidis**

**Fighting in a Foreign Land:
High Politics and Human Experience
during the Greek Campaign in Southern Ukraine, 1919**

The participation of Greek ground troops in the Russian Civil War, which lasted 99 days in the first quarter of 1919 and involved more than 23,000 men, was primarily intended to underpin Greek irredentist claims in view of the peace settlement that followed the Great War. It did succeed on that account, but it did not fail to affect the lives of tens of thousands of Greeks who, over the previous century and a half, had settled along the northern shores of the Black Sea. This event has not merited an academic monograph yet, though this is not due to lack of sources; and it has largely remained unknown to the Greek public, which only recently, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, became aware of the continuing presence of a sizeable population with Greek origins or identity in ‘exotic’ places like Odessa, Kherson and Mariupol.

The Greek Communities of Southern Russia

The first major Russo-Turkish War (1768-74) and the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, that ended it, marked the inception of several waves of Greek immigrants and refugees to Russian territories. By 1918, the numbers involved have been estimated ca. 550,000, excluding some 140,000 russianised Greeks. Their biggest concentrations were found along the littoral of northern Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, from Odessa and Kherson in the West, Crimea to the south, Mariupol, Tangarog and Batumi to the east, as well as in the Caucasus region as far as Kuban and Baku, on the shores of the Caspian Sea. From that number, some 85,000 were recent refugees from Pontus, who had fled at the end of the Russian occupation of Trebizond (April 1916-February 1918).

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The locations where the Greek army saw action in early 1919 included Odessa, Kherson and Nikolayev (Mykolaiv), with an estimated Greek population of 35,000, and the cities of Crimea, chiefly Sebastopol, Simferopol, Yalta, Feodosiya and Kerch, where 60-70,000 lived. Perhaps, half of this population retained Greek citizenship. Unlike the Greek communities in the Caucasus and the Don-Azov regions, perhaps a majority of the Odessan and Crimean Greeks were city-dwellers, busy in trade, shipping and the tobacco industry. Following the Bolshevik seizure of power and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the Greek communities suffered as a result of the German and Ottoman occupation of their regions, and the incessant fighting between Bolsheviks, 'White Russians' and various nationalist movements. In Crimea, in particular, the Germans tolerated widespread persecution of Greeks at the hands of Muslim Tartars, who were seeking to re-establish the pre-eminence they had enjoyed before their annexation to Russia.¹

The French Involvement

As early as 23 December 1917, the Supreme War Council of the Entente Allies decided to assist the Russian forces organized by various generals in their fight against the Bolsheviks. They divided Russia in spheres of operations. The French were allocated Bessarabia, Ukraine and Crimea, while the British would fight the Turks in the Caucasus region. In practice, the Allies were able to intervene only after the Central Powers were defeated in the Balkans, and Bulgaria and Turkey sued for peace, in September-October 1918. It was Lt. General Anton I. Denikin, commander of volunteer forces in the Kuban region, who proposed to Entente representatives in Jassy and Salonika an anti-Bolshevik campaign with the aid of 150,000 Allied troops.

In October 1918, Georges Clemenceau, the French premier, instructed General Franchet d'Espèrey, the Commander-in-Chief of the allied armies in the East, 'to establish a continuous front from Albania to the Black Sea and thence to the Baltic, in order to destroy Bolshevism by economic isolation.' This over-ambitious scheme foundered

¹ Nikos Petsalis-Diomidis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia and the Ukrainian Campaign: Their Effect on the Pontus Question (1919),' *Balkan Studies* 13.2 (1972), 221-4.

on realities on the ground, of which d'Espèrey was well aware: as a result of the recent fighting and the Spanish influenza pandemic, most units were understrength; it was doubtful whether colonial troops, especially the Senegalese, could withstand the harsh climate of the region; and, most importantly, there was the psychological factor: French troops were demonstrably averse to any idea of continuing to serve abroad, let alone of fighting, after the capitulation of the Central Powers.²

On 7 October, Clemenceau appointed General Henri Berthelot in charge of operations in Romania and Ukraine, effectively bypassing d'Espèrey. Before long, Berthelot came to share his colleague's doubts. Then, on 13 November, Denikin's representative in Romania reported that the French had agreed to send 12 divisions, French and Greek, to 'Southern Russia,' in order to take part in a campaign against the Bolsheviks. Their main base was to be Odessa, but they were also to occupy Sebastopol. At about the same time, the British Cabinet decided to give Denikin 'all possible help in the way of military material' and to secure the railway line from Batumi to Baku. This task the British completed quickly, but they refused to send troops in the area earmarked for the French.³

The French-led part of the campaign proved ill-starred from the outset. Berthelot soon discovered that, instead of the twelve divisions originally planned, only three would be actually available. Significantly, planning constantly suffered from poor intelligence or sheer misinformation. This was the responsibility of the Military and Political Bureau for Ukrainian Affairs, which operated as part of the French Legation in Jassy. The head of its military section was the Naval Attaché who would never set foot on Russian soil and who preferred to rely on information from 'Russian aristocrats or rich bourgeois fleeing from Odessa.' These

² J. Kim Munholland, 'The French Army and Intervention in Southern Russia, 1918-1919,' *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, 22.1 (Jan.-Mar. 1981), 44-5.

³ The general idea of a plan that was taking shape in Allied circles was that four armies would attack the Bolsheviks simultaneously: the British from the north, the French and Polish from the west, the Americans and Japanese from the east, and the French with the Romanian –and possibly the Greek– from the south, while the British would hold Transcaucasia: Dendramis' report to Athens, 7.12.1918 in Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 232, n. 12.

sources consistently underestimated the strength of the Bolsheviks, exaggerated the size and popularity of the voluntary army, and misinterpreted the multifaceted Ukrainian separatist movement, which, if properly handled, could prove a valuable ally against Moscow.⁴

The first mistake was the French attack, following disembarkation in Odessa on 18 December, against troops loyal to the Ukrainian People's Republic under Symon Petryura. The French dislodged the Ukrainian nationalists from the city and permitted the re-entry of the unpopular, ill-disciplined and ineffective volunteer army. As a result, they found themselves with the nearly impossible task of policing Odessa, as well as Nikolayev and Kherson, cities with large working class populations, ready to blame capitalism for their ills and with access to arms left behind by the departing German army of occupation.⁵ The food situation was a further source of discontent, from which any authority in these areas was bound to suffer: as much of the crops of the previous summer had been sent to Germany, food was scarce and prices sky-rocketing. 'Food, money and good policing' were essential for any longer-term policy of control, and these the French proved unable to provide. To make things worse, their troops were physically exhausted (Europe was in the grip of the Spanish influenza pandemic) and their morale was sinking. As a result, they were susceptible to anti-war propaganda and prone to insubordination.⁶

⁴ Konstantinos Nider, *Η εκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας* (The Campaign in Ukraine), first published in *Η Μεγάλη Στρατιωτική και Ναυτική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια* (The Great Military and Naval Encyclopedia), vol. 1 (1927), reprinted in Filippos D. Drakontaeidis, *Η εκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας (Ιανουάριος-Μάιος 1919)* (The Campaign in Ukraine, January-May 1919), Athens 2015, 433-4; Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 231-3.

⁵ Genikon Epiteleion Stratou, Diefthynsis Istorias Stratou (Greek General Staff, Directorate of Army History), *Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα εις Μεσημβρινήν Ρωσίαν (1919)* (The Greek Expeditionary Force in Southern Russia), Athens 1955 (henceforth cited as GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*), 24-25; Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 232.

⁶ Munholland, 'The French Army,' 46-47. A summary of Soviet sources on Bolshevik propaganda in Kostas Avgitidis, *Η στρατιωτική επέμβαση των καπιταλιστικών χωρών ενάντια στη Σοβιετική Ρωσία και η Ελλάδα (1918-1920)* (The Military Intervention of the Capitalist Countries against Soviet Russia and Greece), Athens 1999, 235-62.

The Decision to Send Greek Troops to Southern Ukraine

It is fair to say that Paris conceived of the participation of Greek troops as a convenient and possibly more reliable alternative to the use of its own troops: unlike the Greeks, the French conscripts had just emerged from a long and gruelling war of attrition; and perhaps the Greeks were better suited to fight under the inclement Ukrainian winter conditions than the African troops in Berthelot's Army of the Danube. Indeed, at the port of Constanza, Algerian units refused to embark 'when they were told they were leaving for Odessa.' Moreover, Greek troops had performed ably during the last, and decisive, operations on the Macedonian front. Last but not least, the French government and Clemenceau, in particular, were eager to capitalise on Greece's 'blood deficit' – the fact that, owing to its late entry into the world war, Greece had suffered comparatively few human losses, definitely disproportionate to the extensive claims which prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos was planning to submit to the peace conference in Paris.

The diplomatic background to the Greek campaign in the Ukraine has been extensively covered by Nikos Petsalis-Diomidis.⁷ Suffice it to repeat that Venizelos wished Greece not only to establish her credentials as an ally – much in the way Camillo Cavour had done when he committed Piedmontese troops to the Anglo-French campaign in Crimea, in 1855– but also to 'atone' for the 'November events' of 1916: then an attempt by French marines to force their way into Athens was repelled by forces loyal to King Constantine, with considerable loss of life – something that Clemenceau reminded Venizelos upon occasion.⁸ Anxious to secure French benevolence at the forthcoming peace conference, Venizelos instructed Athos Romanos, the Greek minister in Paris, to inform Clemenceau that the Greek army was at the disposal of the Allies and could be 'used for the common cause wherever needed.' He also removed the commander-in-chief of the Greek Army and close associate in the Salonika triumvirate (1916-17), General Panayiotis

⁷ Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 221-63.

⁸ According to Penelope Delta, Venizelos had repeated Clemenceau's jab as follows: "Vous oubliez que vous avez tué nos hommes dans la rue:" Nikos Petsalis-Diomidis, *Ο Βενιζέλος και η πρόκληση της Μεγάλης Ελλάδας* (Venizelos and the Challenge of Greater Greece), I, 424 and note 30.

Daglis, for warning d'Espèrey that his troops 'would refuse to cross the Danube.'⁹ In return, Clemenceau promised support for the Greek claims in Thrace but reserved his position on Smyrna, pending a British initiative.

To be sure, almost immediately after his promise to the French, in late November, Venizelos himself got cold feet on various counts. Although emergency measures imposed after he resumed the helm of reunited Greece and its formal entry into the war, in June 1917, still circumscribed political liberties, Venizelos, a convinced liberal, could not discount domestic political reactions. Indeed, opposition to Greece's involvement in an anti-Bolshevik campaign were voiced by two Socialist members of Parliament, who, in the absence of the anti-Venizelist parties, acted as the only opposition in the Chamber. Already in late November, the socialist daily, *Rizospastis*, rhetorically wondered: 'Is reason entirely absent from [the mind of] our rulers? Or are they so attached to the chariot of secret diplomacy, that they are reduced to blind instruments of its aims?' The opaqueness surrounding the dispatch of Greek troops abroad was also used by the anti-Venizelist press in its, still cautious, effort to question the soundness of the government's policies.¹⁰

The Greek prime minister also repeatedly mentioned the risk of Bolshevik ideas spreading among Greek troops and the influx of politically 'contaminated' refugees into Greece.¹¹ Such fears were not unfounded. Greeks were active among the Bolshevik ranks,¹² and Lenin's propaganda mechanism stood ready to foster discontent among the incoming Allied troops.¹³ Daglis' successor, General Leonidas Paraskevopoulos, also added his own doubts.¹⁴ In fact, Romanos personally withheld a

⁹ Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 234.

¹⁰ Excerpts from parliamentary minutes, 29 Nov./12.12.1918, in Drakontaeidis, *Η εκστρατεία*, 474-85; *Rizospastis*, 16/29.11.1918, *ibid.* 512-3; *Akropolis*, 6/19.1.1919, *ibid.* 518; *Astrapi*, 11/24.1 and 8/21.2.1919, *ibid.* 518-21.

¹¹ Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 235-6, 242.

¹² Orion Alexakis, a young Greek from Balaklava, served in various posts, including that of party committee secretary in Sebastopol, during the period of the Franco-Greek occupation: Avgitidis, *Η στρατιωτική επέμβαση*, 248-9.

¹³ Avgitidis, *op.cit.*, 240-1.

¹⁴ For instance, during ten days in December, the 6th Regiment of the Archipelago Division counted 110 men and 2 officers dying in hospital: *Αρχείο Πηνελόπης Δέλτα*

message from the Greek prime minister, who was in Paris, to d'Espèrey, whereby Venizelos was temporarily freezing Greek participation in a Russian campaign.

Subsequently, Venizelos tried at least to secure adequate provisions for the Greek troops, while still hoping that the project would be aborted. Thus, in his contacts with the French commander-in-chief in Salonika and the British minister in Athens, he demanded that the Greeks be 'clothed and fed exactly like the French' as a condition for their despatch to 'Russia.' The Allies consented. Greek military preparations began on 8 December 1918 and by 4 January 1919 the A Army Corps consisting of three divisions with 42,000 men was ready for departure. This was delayed, as ships were not made available until 15 January. In the event, only two divisions, with a total strength of 23,351 men (roughly ten percent of the Greek Army), would be despatched, in piecemeal fashion and at intervals of several weeks.¹⁵ Still, the Greek force would outnumber the dwindling French troops (belonging to the 156th and 30th Colonial Divisions) by a 5:3 ratio.¹⁶

Meanwhile, in Paris, Venizelos was still trying to secure the material assistance promised by the Allies. As late as 12 January, he authorized the cancellation of the expedition in case the British and the French failed to send the 4,500 beds they had promised in December. Finally, the British did provide 1,040 beds, to which the Greeks added 1,560.¹⁷ 'Made in England' was also much of the winter gear (especially great-coats, socks and boots) distributed to the Greek troops.

Naval Preamble

The first Greek military presence in southern Ukraine consisted of the 1033 ton destroyer *Panther*, which reached Sebastopol on 26 November 1918. The arrival of the ship was warmly greeted by the Greeks of the city. According to a young warrant officer, it was 'an apotheosis.' It was 'impossible to move on the deck' as visitors kept coming until

(Pinelopi Delta Papers), 2, *Νικόλαος Πλαστήρας: Εκστρατεία Ουκρανίας 1919* et al., edited by Pavlos A. Zannas, Athens 1979 (henceforth: Delta, *Πλαστήρας*), 2.

¹⁵ Nider, *Η εκστρατεία*, 435-6.

¹⁶ Colonel Bujac, *Les Campagnes de l'Armée Hellénique, 1918-1922*, Paris 1930, 189.

¹⁷ GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 43.

late at night.¹⁸ Her captain, Commander Ioannis Yiannikostas, sent to his wife a vivid description of his first weeks in the city:

‘As soon as I arrived, there began the ‘hurrah’ (ζήτω) and fêtes (πανηγύρια), lots of Greeks, (lots of) toasting, and speeches over and over again; can you imagine me, being shy, to have to address (people), and, alas, Russia is a place where people are obsessed with toasting, and this is because it gives them an opportunity to drink; you are aware that here water is used for washing only. So, speeches, kissing, enthusiasms, and, most important, invitations to meals, and *jours fixes* – you can imagine how wound up I get. “Do come here, and do come there.” I have spit blood to convince them that we have not come for fêtes.’

Yiannikostas also appraised his hosts from a social perspective, exhibiting no small measure of condescension:

‘The Greeks are mostly of small class, nice people with money and imitating what they see in the Russians, but of course lower class Russians, (they display) an unpretentiousness (*sans-façonism*) beyond description, no distinction of class, sex, age, position, and it is only natural to find ourselves faced with comical surprises, for which we cannot burst into laughter, but have to feign enthusiasm. Imagine then a formal invitation and the house Lady inviting me to tea together with my NCOs; I was obliged to say that “cela ne se fait pas chez nous” [...] whoever can afford eats, whoever cannot (afford) drinks tea, enjoys oneself, goes to the theatre, gets shot in the middle of the street, sells one’s clothes, and God provides!’

Sans-façonism notwithstanding, Yiannikostas considered he had no option but to partake in the small pleasures of the treats on offer:

‘Imagine yourself eating all day, saddled with a pistol and 50 bullets, two vests, woollen underwear, and also drinking. Endless toasting: “Here is to your nice eyebrows!” “Here is to the fine shoe of yours!” and so on. [...] Tell me, have you

¹⁸ Stilianos I. Haratsis, *Η πρώτη επέμβαση: Η άγνωστη δράση του Πολεμικού Ναυτικού στη Μεσημβρινή Ρωσία 1918-20* (The First Intervention: the Unknown Action of the [Greek] Navy in Southern Russia), Athens 1997, 81.

ever imagined such a place? How do they not suffer perforation of the stomach? Eventually, 9/10 of the Russians were drunk and there began a café chantant too, and this is what they call a reception; finally, we parted around three in the morning, having understood nothing, having promised even less, and certain of the bestiality of the men and the right of the people's struggle.'¹⁹

For at least two months, the *Panther* had received no precise order regarding its mission. From his talks with French and British commanders, Yiannikostas realised that they too were wondering about the purpose of their presence in Sebastopol.²⁰ Gradually, three objectives would take shape during the first third of 1919: the seizure of the Russian Black Sea fleet, an obvious prize for the Bolsheviks; support for the Allied ground units; and, with the Allied retreat in sight, the protection and evacuation of refugees.²¹

The *Panther* remained at Sebastopol until 8 March 1919. By that time, Greek ground units were fighting north of Odessa, at the fronts of Nikolayev and Kherson. One day, the destroyer was ordered to Khorly, an idyllic port island off the western shores of the Crimean (Perekop) isthmus. Yiannikostas' mission was to locate a number of tugboats and barges, and prevent them from falling into Bolshevik hands. The Greek captain managed to steer clear not only of the treacherous shoals but also of the Russian and German minefields along the Dzharylgac peninsula. The local maritime pilot was the single Greek of Khorly, who came aboard and helped the ship to moor safely in the small harbour. According to Yiannikostas' description, it took him a good deal of exhortation before the 'drowsy and apathetic' White Russians, whom he had brought along, collected six barges and two tugboats. The barges belonged to a German, who subsequently gave permission for their removal to Sebastopol.

As Yiannikostas found out from villagers, there was a Bolshevik force under a certain Taran some three km away from Khorly. In the following morning, twelve Bolsheviks encircled the village coffee

¹⁹ Haratsis, *Η πρώτη επέμβαση*, 81-2.

²⁰ *Op.cit.*, 79.

²¹ *Op.cit.*, 67, 101.

house and, after a skirmish, took a number of White Russians prisoner. However, one of them managed to snatch a horse after killing its rider and made it to the port. The horse was taken aboard the *Panther*. Its captain was ready to sail with his flotilla of tugboats and barges, when the Bolshevik leader, Taran, used the only telephone in the village in order to warn Yiannikostas that, if he failed to return the horse, he would have his prisoners shot. In a second phone message, he informed the Greek captain that, if the *Panther* did not depart until the following morning, he would 'shoot her to smithereens.' He was resolved, he added, not to let the Greeks meddle in Russian affairs.

Yiannikostas kept his temper. He moved his destroyer into a cove some three miles away from Khorly and waited for the arrival of two sea-planes from Sebastopol. Then, he sent one of them to locate Taran's force and throw leaflets warning the inhabitants of the region that he held them accountable for harbouring a 'gang' of criminals. He stayed moored at night and on the morning, as Taran's deadline expired, had his guns fire three shots to the direction of the isthmus. Half an hour later, a boat conveyed a letter from Taran, accusing Yiannikostas of theft, piracy, looting etc. Yiannikostas dismissed the accusations and responded that the men arrested by Taran's troops were under the protection of the Greek flag. He also professed readiness to take up the gauntlet: for the flag's honour, he warned, he could destroy Taran with the guns, aircraft and every means at his disposal. However, he would prefer it if he and Taran parted ways calmly, on condition that the prisoners were released. It was his turn to give a deadline until 7 of the following morning. Yiannikostas received no reply, and, on the following morning he sent the sea-planes to bombard the Bolshevik positions. He then set off for Sebastopol. Two days later, he was informed that the White Russian prisoners had been released.²²

Ground Operations

The Greek expeditionary force saw action in a theatre of operations hinging on Odessa and extending along the railway line to the north as far as Berezovka and along mainly sea routes to the east, to the cities

²² *Op.cit.*, 83-6.

of Nikolayev and Kherson. The first ground units, 3,600 men of the 34th Regiment, XIII Division, reached Odessa on 20 January 1919. For 38 days they would be the only Greek force in the region. Confirming the haphazard manner in which the entire operation was conceived and executed, the units usually arrived without essential equipment and supplies, from blankets and camp beds to machine-guns, artillery, which, even if they had been shipped, could not be transported owing to the lack of pack animals and vehicles.²³ As a result, not only the men suffered ‘from the bitter cold and snow,’²⁴ but they were also thrown into battle with little cover and reduced firepower.²⁵

To make matters worse, relations between the Greeks and the French military, who had been given overall command of the operation, were never easy. Greek officers and men felt slighted by what they described as French rudeness, arrogance and contempt. Perhaps, there was a tendency on the part of French officers to scapegoat the newcomers: following the evacuation of Kherson, the French commander of the Allied forces attributed the hostility of the local population to ‘anger’ over the presence of Greek troops, which was ‘regarded as a humiliation and an insult to [the people’s] national pride.’²⁶ Franco-Greek antipathy only made worse an already bad situation. As the arrival of reinforcements, equipment, money and the post from home was delayed for weeks on end, officers struggled to maintain morale in an unknown land, surrounded by an alien, often hostile, population. They were assisted by the Regiment’s chaplain, Archimandrite Panteleimon Fostinis, whose memoirs depict Odessa as a sort of contemporary Gomora. Not surprisingly, Fostinis warned against the moral and health hazards associated with ‘corrupt women,’ as well as other forms of corruption, such as

²³ Petros Karakassonis, *Ιστορία τής εις Ουκρανίαν και Κριμαίαν υπερποντίου εκστρατείας τω 1919* (History of the Overseas Campaign to Ukraine and Crimea in 1919), Athens 1933, 32; GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 59-60.

²⁴ *Αρχείο Πηνελόπης Δέλτα* (Pinelopi Delta Papers), 4, *Εκστρατεία στη Μεσημβρινή Ρωσία 1919* (Campaign in Southern Russia), edited by Pavlos A. Zannas, Athens 1982 (henceforth: Delta, *Εκστρατεία*), 91. Cf. Panteleimon Fostinis, *Ο ελληνικός στρατός στη Ρωσία, Ιανουάριος-Ιούνιος 1919* (The Greek Army in Russia, January-June 1919), Athens 1956, 139.

²⁵ Nider, *Η εκστρατεία*, 436-8; GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 47-8, 266-7.

²⁶ Munholland, ‘The French Army,’ 49.

bribery and Bolshevik propaganda, both of which he attributed to the local Jewry.²⁷ If this latter tendency reflected the anti-Semitic reflexes shared by the Orthodox clergy and the Greek merchant class in southern Ukraine,²⁸ Fostinis correctly identified the overlapping and often competing authorities present in Odessa (municipal, Russian, ‘volunteer,’ French) as a major source of what his commander, Colonel Christos Tsolakopoulos-Rebelos, described as ‘total anarchy.’²⁹ Within a month of his arrival, Tsolakopoulos asked for his replacement.³⁰

In these conditions of relative isolation and discomfort, one might have expected the Greek troops to become easy prey for Bolshevik propaganda. Indeed, leaflets distributed in Odessa primarily aimed at sowing doubt in the hearts of soldiers who were not only invited to appreciate the emancipatory message of communism but, even more so, to reflect on the ‘real’ aims of their presence in a faraway land and among a people who had never done them any harm; there could be no explanation other than that all this meant to serve the interests of foreign ‘capitalists and landowners’ and a czarist restoration.³¹ Yet, in late February, the Bolshevik party organisation in Odessa admitted its failure to penetrate the Greek troops. According to a Soviet-trained Greek historian, the Greek soldiers ‘were more reactionary’ than their French and other Allied counterparts: they had been ‘strictly selected’ (this could only be said about their commanders), had been subjected to ‘ideological catechism,’ they had seen very little service on any front, and were much less educated (‘of lower ideologico-political level’) than,

²⁷ Fostinis, *Ο ελληνικός στρατός*, 71-72. Cf. Karakassonis, *Ιστορία*, 38-40, who records at least five men of the 34th Regiment as victims of robbery and murder.

²⁸ Karakassonis, *op.cit.*, 85, 109-10, 140-5. Fostinis was not alone in interpreting Bolshevism as ‘the work of Jews,’ led by Jews, who had managed to rouse the Russians, ‘this beastly people, against the rich and especially the army officers’ (p. 85). Cf. Nider, *Η εκστρατεία*, 365, 412; Christos Karayiannis, *Η ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη (1918-1922): Μια συγκλονιστική μαρτυρία για τις ελληνικές εκστρατείες (A Soldier’s Story: A Breathtaking Testimony on the Greek Campaigns)*, edited by Filippos Drakontaeidis, Athens 2013, 121. The same could be said of the perceived ‘bestiality’ of the Russian populace: Yiannikostas in Haratsis, *Η πρώτη επέμβαση*, 82.

²⁹ Fostinis, *Ο ελληνικός στρατός*, 55.

³⁰ Petsalis, ‘Hellenism in Southern Russia,’ 238-9.

³¹ Avgitidis, *Η στρατιωτική επέμβαση*, 240-2.

especially, French soldiers and sailors.³² As a result, cases of insubordination and defections were comparatively very limited.³³

Perhaps, the most memorable episode of this early phase of the Greek entanglement was the exchange of telegraphic messages between Ilias Matthios, a 27-year old lieutenant commanding the garrison of the Kherson railway station, and Nikifor Grigoriev (Nykyfor Oleksandrovykh Servetnyk, aka Hryhoriv), the 34-year old *ataman* (head) of the Bolshevik forces advancing towards the city.³⁴ This verbal duel took place in the evening of 1 March 1919 and has been reproduced in the official Greek accounts of the campaign as well as a number of memoirs.³⁵ It began with Grigoriev's ultimatum, giving the Greek garrison fewer than 24 hours to lay down its weapons and depart for Odessa. Matthios replied that there was no such precedent in Greek history, whereupon Grigoriev wondered: 'Can you tell me what the devil do you Greeks want up here in Ukraine?' He then launched into a lengthy argument in defence of Bolshevism, berating the Greeks for their part in the Allied intervention. Matthios professed lack of competence to answer questions of a political or ideological nature and focused on his soldier's duty: when asked if he would shoot at the advancing Bolsheviks, the Greek lieutenant confirmed that he would defend the station and invited Grigoriev not to forget Thermopylae.

Grigoriev's army attacked the on 7 March. Abandoning the advanced positions, including the railway station, the 700 men of the 7th Regiment, barricaded themselves inside the old citadel of Kherson. As they were vastly outnumbered and running low on ammunition, their commanders considered a desperate breakout. However, warships carrying a battalion of the 7th Regiment arrived in the nick of time. The Allied force was evacuated in the early hours of 10 March 1919, under the protection of naval guns. However, the cannonade set ablaze a warehouse, where the Greek garrison had confined two thousand local

³² Avgitidis, *op.cit.*, 246-7.

³³ Avgitidis, *op.cit.*, 176, 178-9.

³⁴ Grigoriev, a former captain in the Imperial Russian Army who had risen from the ranks, had joined the Bolsheviks only four weeks earlier, after serving various Ukrainian nationalist factions.

³⁵ Karakassonis, *Ιστορία*, 65-9; Nider, *Η εκστρατεία*, 160-3; GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 306-8; Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 166-8.

people, suspected of aiding the enemy. Perhaps as many as 500 people lost their lives in that incident.³⁶ Obviously, the Greeks had borne the brunt of the fighting: more than one-third of their original force lay hors de combat, counting 120 dead (two of them officers) and 140 wounded (among the latter, Lieutenant Matthios, shot by a woman from inside a house). In sharp contrast, French casualties numbered only four dead and 22 wounded.³⁷

There followed the loss of Nikolayev, on 14 March. Next the Bolsheviks attacked Berezovka, a strongpoint and railway station some 100 km west of Nikolayev and 80 km northeast of Odessa. The situation was becoming so critical that d'Espèrey appeared on the scene and briefly took over command of the campaign himself.³⁸ In order to shore up his defences, the French commander-in-chief counted on the XIII Division, which had just received its 3rd Regiment, in a second wave of reinforcements.

An Infantryman's Experience

Serving with the 3rd Regiment of XIII Division (Chalkis) was a 24-year old conscript, Christos Karayiannis, a newly-wed, poor peasant from Steveniko (Agia Triada), at the foot of mount Elikon, in Boeotia. After being drafted the previous February, he was trained in modern weapons and then sent to the Struma (Strymon) sector of the Macedonian Front where malaria was a more dangerous hazard than enemy fire.³⁹ His division was not deemed trustworthy enough to be assigned to the line of d'Espèrey's final assault. During the general mobilisation decreed by the Venizelos government, conscripts of the 2nd Regiment and artillery units had mutinied at Lamia and Thiva.⁴⁰ In August, a plot was uncovered, allegedly aiming to turn the entire division over to the enemy.⁴¹

³⁶ Munholland, 'The French Army,' 52. Fostinis offers a vivid description of the eight-day battle of Kherson as a kind of 20th century Missolonghi: Fostinis, *Ο ελληνικός στρατός*, 191-233.

³⁷ Munholland, op.cit., 54. A French military author mentions ten dead, including two officers: Bujac, *Les Campagnes*, 199.

³⁸ Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 340.

³⁹ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 50; Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, 6.

⁴⁰ Leontaritis 213; Grigoriadis in Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 139.

⁴¹ Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, 10.

Perhaps, as a ‘reward’ for its questionable record on the Macedonian Front, the XIII Division was earmarked for the ‘Russian’ campaign. The same was the case with II Division (Athens).

As a result, the units sent to Ukraine consisted of conscripts of the 1910-18 classes from Central Greece (Sterea Ellas or Roumeli),⁴² the majority of whom were royalists and had very reluctantly responded to the call to arms. The reaction of the men of the 34th Regiment to the news of their ‘Russian’ mission was probably typical of the general mood: they tended to dismiss it as unfounded rumours, quipping ‘Hell no, next thing we go and takeover China!’⁴³ The same reluctance was shared by many of their officers. Major Konstantinos Vlachos, battalion commander in the 34th Regiment, recalled that many of his colleagues ‘resorted even to (political and military) connections in order to be exempted being transferred from their units.’⁴⁴

As a result, once assigned to the expeditionary force, units were liable to a change of command: officers were invited to participate on a voluntary basis, their immediate reward being an 1,000 drs. special monthly allowance, and a battle record which could expedite promotion. A one-off pay of 1,000 drs. was also allocated to the rank and file, who, however, were offered no opting-out. This process also meant that the servicemen’s political outlook and interpretation of patriotism were very different from that of their commanding officers, veterans of the ‘National Defence Army’ (NDA), i.e. the three divisions which the Provisional Government of Salonika had contributed to the war effort in 1916-17.⁴⁵

The new commander of Karayiannis’ 3rd Regiment was Lt. Colonel Georgios Kondylis, a die-hard ‘Amynite’ (NDA veteran) with a record

⁴² GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 40, 43.

⁴³ Fostinis, *Ο ελληνικός στρατός*, 10.

⁴⁴ Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 103.

⁴⁵ Plastiras described his reaction to the news of the Ukrainian expedition as follows: ‘It was only natural that this news [...] would fire our imagination and inspire us with unrestrained desire for new adventures. I shall never forget the emotion I felt upon receiving this piece of information. I could not contain my joy. I turned into a different man, I recovered my morale, which had been crashed by four months of inaction.’ And at the end of it all, there shone the vision of ‘a great and prosperous Fatherland, which would soon replace the Byzantine Empire.’ Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, 4, 8.

of brutal persecution of draft evaders in Macedonia. Karayiannis offers the following description of his new CO: ‘of average height, a little dark-skinned, his head tilting towards his chest, a hunchback quite visible. His demeanour totally unsympathetic. He did not raise his head to look at us, but we realised that he was sizing us up.’ The following day, Karayiannis had the opportunity to draw a sharp contrast between Kon-dylis (a future dictator) and Major General Konstantinos Nider, the newly appointed commander of A Corps: ‘He was looking at us too,’ Karayiannis observed, ‘but in a fatherly manner.’ Before leaving for their new front, the Regiment received new apparel from allied stock, as Venizelos had requested. ‘English clothes, unworn. We all look like godchildren,’ the simple peasant mused.⁴⁶

Karayiannis had his first taste of Russia aboard the ship *Imperator Nikolai*. From this point onwards, his narrative can be checked against the reminiscences of Iankos Dragoumis, an artist, which Penelope Delta, the foremost Greek author of children’s books, asked him to send her some fifteen years after the events. Dragoumis was serving as platoon commander in company C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment. His recollection of the sea journey differs from Karayiannis’ in that the latter, perhaps on a different route, mentions a stormy second night, which was succeeded by a bright day in the Black Sea. There, he and his comrades went on deck to bask in the winter sun and were served piroshky and blini. Sinfully, they broke their Lent fast and devoured the Russian specialties.

Following their arrival at Odessa, on 12 March,⁴⁷ the men had had very little time to adjust to their new environment. Explaining the security situation, Karayiannis’ company commander gave a stern warning: Men could only leave their barracks under special permit and always in groups of five or six, fully armed and finger on the trigger; they should trust no one as the entire city was teeming with Bolsheviks; women were to be feared most of all; they would ‘definitely’ try to seduce the soldiers and then ‘definitely’ murder them; Greece would not tolerate any such incident, and a Special Court Martial would definitely take action. All

⁴⁶ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 62-3.

⁴⁷ GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 55.

this, said ‘at one go,’ earned the captain the nickname ‘definitely.’ Afterwards, the men turned their backs on him and went to rest.⁴⁸

Officers’ Privileges

Things were rather different for the officers, most of whom were billeted at the Odessa bourse. Dragoumis had time to stroll around the wealthier, resort-like, quarter of the city, which he found nearly deserted. ‘These beautiful houses,’ he recalled, standing fully furnished but lifeless, ‘fill one with gloom.’ His encounters with Russian volunteers verged on the comical. Crossing their barracks, he realised that an entire regiment consisted of officers who served as soldiers. Some of them tried to communicate in French. ‘Bolchevik mauvais’ was a typical phrase, and warm handshakes were always exchanged.⁴⁹ Senior officers were given ample opportunity to meet with the remnants of the upper class and partake in the city’s high culture. A case in point was the head of the Greek medical unit, Major Nikolaos Sbarounis. A surgeon by training, the 31-year old Sbarounis soon found himself at the centre of attention among the wealthier part of the Greek community. His diary records several invitations to the Greek Club and private houses, where tea and dancing parties, dinners and card-games were organised to his honour. He also attended performances at the magnificent Opera Theatre of Odessa.⁵⁰

In the evening of 23 March, Sbarounis escorted Lt. Colonel Nikolaos Plastiras, commander of the recently arrived 5/42 *Evzones* (elite light infantry) Regiment, to a fund-raising gala for the benefit of the families of Greek servicemen fallen at Kherson. The programme included a Russian version of Sophocles’ *Electra*, an act of Puccini’s *Manon Lescaut* and ballet dancing.⁵¹ Plastiras, a brave soldier of simple peasant

⁴⁸ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 70-1.

⁴⁹ Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 40-1.

⁵⁰ Nikolaos Sbarounis, *Ημερολόγιον της εις Ρωσίαν εκστρατείας* (Diary of the Campaign in Russia), edited by Ioanna Papathanasiou, Athens 2013, 31, 43-4, 48-9.

⁵¹ Sbarounis, *op.cit.*, 66.

origins, would later describe the singing and dancing as a once-in-a-lifetime experience. ‘All the star artists of Russian melodrama,’ he recalled, had sought refuge in Odessa, ‘fleeing the Bolshevik scourge.’⁵²

There existed other, more prosaic, forms of entertainment for those who could afford it.⁵³ In the evening of 18 March, Dragoumis escorted Kondylis to a restaurant and then a ‘tavern’ (probably a cabaret). They were joined by a Greek major, ‘soon to be sent to base [...] because he had messed things up.’ At the tavern, where a revelry was in full swing, a Russian officer with one arm in a sling approached them and made a toast to the ‘Греческие офицеры,’ raised his glass, emptied it and then broke it on the floor in tribute. The merriment reached its apex when a female Gypsy band appeared onstage. At that point, Dragoumis was called outside, where he met a messenger carrying an order for Kondylis. When the Colonel read it, his relaxed expression was gone. The front at Berezovka had been broken through and the Allied forces were retreating in disarray – the French by train, the Greek II/34 Battalion on foot. General d’Espèrey was calling upon the two regiments of the XIII Division to stave off a catastrophe.⁵⁴

In the Frontline

The first to go was Kondylis’ 3rd Regiment, despite the fact that it had no artillery and was still waiting for its machine-guns and mules to arrive. Some 1,700 men in all boarded a train on a frosty morning.⁵⁵ They had not had the chance to wash, as the water in their flasks had frozen overnight, but at least they had been served warm tea.⁵⁶ However, after two hours of constant manoeuvring and whistle blowing, their train found itself back at its starting platform. The obvious conclusion was that the engine driver was a Bolshevik agent. The train resumed its route only after the French officer in charge stuck his revolver on the driver’s temple. It was snowing heavily and the big stoves inside the roomy wagons (the Russian track gauge being nearly double the size of

⁵² Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, 21.

⁵³ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 71.

⁵⁴ Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 42-43.

⁵⁵ GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 128.

⁵⁶ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 71.

its European counterpart) were extinct. In Dragoumis' eyes, the men were shivering, hungry and disorientated.⁵⁷

At a small station, the Regiment had to wait for a southbound train, overflowing with 'panick-stricken' French fleeing Berezovka. Kondylis paid a visit to the train, where he was recognised by Lt. Colonel Geay, commander of the Mixed, Franco-Greek, Detachment that had been covering Berezovka. The two men had served next to each other on the Macedonian Front. 'C'est ce vieux brigand de C[ondyli]' said the French officer, half-smiling. Asked to provide information, he appeared at a complete loss, repeating: 'C'est mauvais. C'est très mauvais!' On their way back to their train, Kondylis asked Dragoumis to translate the term 'brigand.' The latter assured him that it was 'a rather friendly, and not at all offensive expression.'⁵⁸

As the train approached the zone of operations, it was the turn of retreating Greeks to appear, following the railway line on foot and back to presumed safety. According to Karayiannis, only a few of them looked 'in one piece.' Suddenly, Kondylis jumped off the train, pistol in hand, and began shouting at them: 'Traitors of your fatherland, turn back. Turn back or I shall have you shot.'⁵⁹ After the fugitives ignored three such calls, Kondylis took aim and shot. Dragoumis saw a soldier near him make a few steps as if there was nothing amiss, and then, all of a sudden, drop dead upon some old railway sleepers.⁶⁰ Most of the strugglers carried on their flight. About a hundred did board the train. Predictably, they spread defeatism: 'Brothers, where are you going? You'd better not go to the Front, the Bolsheviks are scores and you, like us, are lost.'⁶¹

After spending the night at a small station –the officers squeezed inside the premises, the men outside in tents– the Regiment took battle positions around Serbka, a large but nearly deserted village some 35 km south of Berezovka. During the same night, Dragoumis and a number of Greek soldiers escorted five French sappers on their mission to destroy an iron railway bridge north of the village. The plan was to

⁵⁷ Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 44.

⁵⁸ Delta, *op.cit.*, 45.

⁵⁹ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 73.

⁶⁰ Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 45.

⁶¹ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 73.

prevent the enemy from launching a surprise attack, using an armoured locomotive – a trademark assault vehicle of the Russian Civil War.⁶² Low temperatures, perhaps as low as -20°C, tormented the Franco-Greek party. One of them, a Frenchman, turned blue and nearly paralysed, before he was administered a dose of cognac and sent to Serbka. Karayiannis, who also participated in the escort, recalls the men ‘arguing about who would carry the Frenchman on his back, thus benefitting from the warmth of his body.’ The first attempt to blow up the bridge failed. The sappers returned to their task and, at dawn, a massive explosion cut it in two.⁶³

The Bolsheviks responded with an artillery barrage which lasted all day. On the 26th of March, they attacked in force. When the attack began, Karayiannis was roasting a goose. He came to the decision that he would better let his lunch burn than have it eaten by the Bolsheviks. The latter’s tactics of attack, described by Karayiannis as ‘human ocean waves,’ paid off. Fearing encirclement, the 3rd Regiment temporarily withdrew from Serbka.⁶⁴ For Karayiannis, who had felt the Bolsheviks breathing down his neck and come out alive, this particular enemy had displayed the rarest of human virtues: he did not shoot on the back the retreating enemy.⁶⁵ Plastiras and other sources, however, report the wholesale killing of wounded prisoners.⁶⁶

Ironically, on that very day, General Nider arrived at Odessa to try and improve co-ordination between his troops and the French. Having

⁶² Armoured cars were also used, by both the Bolsheviks and their opponents. The French also employed Renault light tanks, apparently to little effect. Some of them may have fallen into Bolshevik hands. Dragoumis mentions that his retreating unit observed ‘very clearly in the horizon two huge grey tanks, like elephants, advancing:’ Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 62.

⁶³ Delta, *op. cit.*, 48-51; Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 78-9. On the debilitating effect of the freezing cold on the men and their weapons, see GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 127.

⁶⁴ Colonel Manetas recalled his encounter with Kondylis, which indicates that the dour commander of the 3rd Regiment was not devoid of self-sarcasm: ‘Do I not look like Napoleon returning from Moscow?’ he quipped when, completely white after retreating in snowfall, he reported to Manetas’ headquarters: Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 86-7.

⁶⁵ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 82.

⁶⁶ Plastiras in Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, 3; Manetas in Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 95; GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 116.

received Tsolakopoulos' reports with considerable delay (as Petsalis notes, throughout the campaign, Venizelos in Paris and his associates in Athens were without accurate information owing to unreliable communications), the Greek prime minister had instructed the A Corps commander 'to ensure, even to the extent of refusing Greek co-operation, that all future expeditions were undertaken by mixed Franco-Greek contingents.' However, when Nider reached Odessa, the Bolsheviks were about to launch their final attack.⁶⁷

On the following day, the 27th, the 3rd Regiment, supported by French and Greek artillery, counter-attacked and retook Serbka. On the 28th it was relieved by the 5/42 *Evzones* Regiment under Plastiras, an 'Amynite' and ardent Venizelist like Kondylis, but of a very different demeanour. After ten days of continuous moving and fighting, Karayiannis recalls:

'Lice were festering, they had reached our eyelashes, and we could barely recognize each other, we all had grown beard, we were all clad in greatcoats with the collars raised, all of us wearing something around our head to keep warm, as if we were suffering of toothache.'⁶⁸

An *Evzone* of Plastiras' regiment also left a vivid account of his experience at the Odessa front. He described, for instance, the high-handed methods used in disarming villages and interrogating suspected Bolshevik sympathisers, before sending them off to Odessa. When they did not march or fight, his fellow *Evzones* helped themselves to food and clothes left behind in abandoned homesteads; nor were they above acts of sexual harassment and random violence.⁶⁹

Retreat

The Serbka line was finally abandoned on 31 March. The regiments of Kondylis and Plastiras undertook to defend a new line, from Kubanka, to the east, to Mal Buyalik, to the west. By then, the Greek military

⁶⁷ Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 239.

⁶⁸ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 84.

⁶⁹ Sotirios Alexopoulos in Drakontaeidis, *Η εκστρατεία*, 556-7.

leaders had good reasons to doubt the French resolve, and were considering an exit strategy. Already on 26 March, Nider had requested his government to prepare transports for the evacuation of Greek troops. As the infantry commander of the XIII Division, Colonel Konstantinos Manetas, put it, the only point for continuing the fight was ‘to keep the honour and prestige of Greek arms high.’⁷⁰ Lacking reinforcements and fearing a local uprising, d’Espèrey finally sent orders for the evacuation of Odessa.⁷¹ The French were the first to go. The protection of the port and the line of retreat was entrusted to the Greek II Division.⁷²

After several days of delaying action, the two regiments of the XIII Division were permitted to disengage. Physically exhausted and dispirited,⁷³ their men reached Odessa on 6 April. Karayiannis recalls the outskirts of the city being decked with red flags, ready to welcome the Bolsheviks. At night, the warships in the harbour were scanning the city with their blinding searchlights – ‘the Eye of Polyphemus,’ as the Greek soldiers dubbed them. Their guns were the principal insurance towards the safe evacuation of troops and civilians. At some point, Bolshevik activists scattered brochures in Greek, calling the troops to give up the fight and leave.⁷⁴ Five days later, the Regiment crossed the Dniester into Bessarabia. In all, 15,000 men and 1,000 vehicles crossed the Dniester, losing only one man and a two-wheel cart.⁷⁵ Among them were the patients, sick and wounded, of the II Military Hospital. For these men’s nursing and safe exit, Eleni Vasilopoulou, Angeliki and Oliga Fikiori, members of the Athenian aristocracy who had volunteered as nurses and possibly were the only female presence in the Greek expeditionary force, were awarded the Greek War Cross.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Manetas in Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 83; GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 162.

⁷¹ According to Bujac (*Les Campagnes*, 209), the order was issued on 2 April. Petsalis (‘Hellenism in Southern Russia,’ 241) dates it a day earlier.

⁷² Munholland, ‘The French Army,’ 57.

⁷³ First-hand accounts record the acute lack of rest and sleeplessness rather than battle fatigue as the main source of physical exhaustion: Plastiras in Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, 42-3; Dragoumis in Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 65-8; Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 80, 96; Alexopoulos in Drakontaeidis, *Η εκστρατεία*, 556-7.

⁷⁴ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 97.

⁷⁵ GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 215-6.

⁷⁶ Karakassonis, *Ιστορία*, 197.

Some thirty thousand civilians also left the city, following the retreating Allies or boarding ships at the harbour. Perhaps one third of them were ethnic Greeks – out of a pre-war population of 25,000.⁷⁷ Despite strong initial reservations, the Greek government eventually accepted them, as well as those who would later leave Crimea. About half of these refugees disembarked in Salonika.⁷⁸

Once again, horses proved their value as an apple of discord, this time between Greeks and French. Amidst the chaos of the river crossing, a Greek private spotted a beautiful, unsaddled Hungarian horse. He mounted it, intending to offer it as a gift to his company commander. Yet French soldiers intervened, forced the Greek to dismount and took the horse. When the incident became known to the Greek soldier's unit, his comrades took up arms and lined up for battle before the French camp. Then Kondylis turned up with a lieutenant as an interpreter. They sought out the French commander, a 'stocky' man who did not reciprocate his visitors' military salute and pretended not to recognise their status. When they told him they were Greek officers, he allegedly grumbled 'Mes couilles' or something similar. This provoked the sturdy Greek lieutenant to punch the Colonel in the head, throwing his kepi several yards away. Kondylis pulled out his revolver and stuck it on the Frenchman's temple, repeating to him his favourite punch line: 'In the name of the law and of Kondylis.' The French officer relented and ordered the horse returned to the Greeks who, according to the narrator of this story, used it as pack animal.⁷⁹

A whole herd of horses was the prize in the case of Plastiras' 5/42 Regiment. Once in Bessarabia, the French sought to sequester the White Russian officers' horses and ship them to Denikin's forces at Batum. Indignant at such treatment, several Russian officers chose to offer their

⁷⁷ Soviet sources give an estimated population of 600,000 in Odessa: Avgitidis, *Η στρατιωτική επέμβαση*, 158.

⁷⁸ Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 241-2; Dendramis, *Akropolis*, 10/23.4.1919, in Drakontaeidis, *Η εκστρατεία*, 578; Konstantinos G. Diogos, *Περί ανοήτου τούτης εκστρατείας: Ο Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος και η συμμετοχή της Ελλάδας στην εκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας (Νοέμβριος 1918-Απρίλιος 1919)* (About this Stupid Campaign: Eleftherios Venizelos and Greece's Participation in the Ukrainian Campaign), *Βαλκανικά Σύμμεικτα*, 14-15 (2003-4), 134-5.

⁷⁹ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 98-9.

beloved animals to the Greeks. Plastiras gratefully accepted. As a result of this offer and a number already seized as spoils of war, his *Evzones* should be able to form a mounted detachment of some 80 horses. Once again, the French intervened and tried to take the animals. Plastiras categorically refused to turn them over and reproached the French emissary for the ‘inexcusable and unkind conduct of [his] general.’⁸⁰

Assessing this phase of the campaign, Petsalis attributed its failure ‘to the casual character, the poor strength and erratic strategy of the allied effort in general, and to the indifference and corruption of the French troops in particular.’ In his view, the Greek troops ‘fought with great bravery but they found themselves greatly outnumbered.’ Petsalis acknowledges that Venizelos and the Greek government were ultimately responsible ‘for the misery and hopelessness’ of the men: they had acceded to the French demand in order to improve Greece’s image in Paris and promote her irredentist claims.⁸¹

Sebastopol

Following the evacuation of Odessa, the only Greek units remaining on Ukrainian soil were those belonging to the 2nd Regiment, XIII Division, under Lt. Colonel Neokosmos Grigoriadis. Based in Sebastopol, the Regiment had to cover far-flung outposts as well as to keep order in Sebastopol which Grigoriadis described as a hotbed of Bolshevik subversion.⁸²

Nearly two weeks after the Regiment’s arrival, the Bolsheviks broke through the White Russian defences of the Perekop Isthmus, threatening to advance on the southern ports held by the Allies. In early April, the pre-dreadnaught battleship *Limnos*, while patrolling the south-east coast of the Crimea, moored outside the port of Feodosiya (Theodosia). A landing party from the ship found itself in ‘a dead city, deserted,’ where ‘only animal sounds were heard and wild cats were roaming the dark streets.’ On the following day, a Greek lieutenant turned up, es-

⁸⁰ Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, 49-50.

⁸¹ Petsalis, ‘Hellenism in Southern Russia,’ 239.

⁸² Delta, *Εκστρατεία*, 150-1.

corted by men of the signal corps and asked to be taken aboard the battleship. Once there, he gave the flag a military salute, kneeled and crossed himself and kissed the deck floor as if it was the soil of the fatherland. He then reported to the captain and asked for the embarkation of his *Evzones*, who had retreated from the railway station of Taganash,⁸³ some 170 km to the north. According to the warrant officer's description, after repeating their commanding officer's ritual, the *Evzones* spent the entire day on the deck, 'sitting around the gun turrets, preferably right under the axis of the 12-inch guns, which offered them the sense of complete safety.'⁸⁴ They were joined by civilians, among them Kleon Triantafyllou, alias 'Attic,' soon to become the most famous Greek popular composer of his day, who had chosen to tour the Greek communities of the region at a rather turbulent time!

A few days later, on 17 April 1919, the Bolsheviks offered a truce. The French High Command decided to accept it and started preparations for the evacuation of Sebastopol.⁸⁵ The city was being defended by 2,000 Greek and 2,400 French troops. On the previous day, the French 175th Regiment had mutinied, leaving the Greeks to hold the line with the aid of Algerian and Senegalese *tirailleurs*. With the Bolsheviks in sight, the 'mutiny virus' spread to the crews of the French fleet, including the battleships *France*, *Vergniaud*, and *Mirabeau*, which lay in a drydock awaiting repair. On the 17th, when ordered to fire against the enemy, the gunners of the *France* refused to man their posts and took refuge in the ship's latrines. Two days later, they declined to uncover before the flag.

On the 19th, Easter Sunday, French sailors joined locals in a demonstration, complete with red banners and Bolshevik slogans. When they reached the Panorama Gardens, at the centre of the Greek Regiment's defence line, they began shouting 'Down with Greece,' 'Down with Romania,' and the like. Then, they passed from the Greek garrison headquarters, where a company of the 2nd Regiment was billeted. According to the Regiment's account, the demonstrators became 'extremely provocative.' The company's orders were to repel crowds even

⁸³ Avgitidis, *Η στρατιωτική επέμβαση*, 164.

⁸⁴ Haratsis, *Η πρώτη επέμβαση*, 88-9.

⁸⁵ GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα*, 241.

with the use of arms, but matters were complicated owing to the presence of French sailors, quite recognisable despite their having removed the red pom-poms from their bonnets and wearing them as red badges on their chest. The Greek captain in charge sought and failed to get instructions from Grigoriadis. He then contacted the French garrison commander, who told him to disperse the demonstrators. As exhortations and warnings were not heeded, the soldiers shot in the air. Thereupon, demonstrators allegedly opened direct fire. In the ensuing melee, Greek fire killed five civilians and three French sailors. The demonstration was eventually broken up, but the mutineers threatened revenge against the Greek units and warships in the port.⁸⁶

Eventually, in the morning of 21 April 1919, the arrival of four British battleships under Vice-Admiral Somerset Gough-Calthorpe, Commander of the British Mediterranean Fleet, helped to restore order. Upon arrival, Calthorpe saw it fit to pay tribute to the discipline of the Greek units. In a cable to the Greek government, he stated: 'Today, the Greek soldiers and sailors can be proud of being Greek.'⁸⁷ On that same day a delegation from the Red Army visited Vice Admiral Kakoulidis on board the *Kilkis*. Professing friendly feelings towards the Greek nation, they sought to dispel anxiety regarding the fate of the Greek communities of Crimea. In fact, Ioannis Stavridakis, the diplomatic agent of Athens in the region, without consulting his government, had already instructed the Greek consular authorities to establish relations with the local Soviets. For their part, the Bolsheviki gave him a signed declaration in which they accepted most of the demands made on behalf of the Greek communities.⁸⁸ By way of reciprocation, Grigoriadis set up a committee of indemnities and agreed to pay the city Soviet the rather symbolic sum of 10,800 roubles (or 1,860 drs.) out of the officers' coffers for damages caused during the recent fighting.⁸⁹ The city was eventually turned over to the Bolsheviki on 29 April.

⁸⁶ GES-DIS, *op.cit.*, 241-2; Haratsis, *Η πρώτη επέμβαση*, 93-8; Karakassonis, *Ιστορία*, 263-6.

⁸⁷ GES-DIS, *op.cit.*, 242.

⁸⁸ Petsalis, 'Hellenism in Southern Russia,' 245-6.

⁸⁹ Nider, *Η εκστρατεία*, 385.

Postscript

Greek warships continued to patrol the Ukrainian coastline. At some point, on 10 May 1919, *Panther*'s sister ship, *Aetos* (Eagle), sent three junior officers ashore in a boat. As one of them later recalled, upon arrival, he noticed two 'Bolsheviks' on higher ground overlooking the Greek sailors – one of them with his rifle at the ready. Lieutenant A. Triantafyllidis got out first to tie up the boat. Then one of the two men addressed him in broken French and the following dialogue ensued:

'What are you?'
'Officers of the Greek Navy. And that over there is our ship.'
'Of the Greek [Navy]?,' asked the other man in puzzlement.
The Greek officer nodded 'Yes.'
'And what do you want here?'

Triantafyllidis did not reply, but simply looked at his fellow officers, who might not understand French.

'Did you come here to wage war against us? Why? What have you got against us? What have we done to you?'

Triantafyllidis did not recall saying anything in reply. The two armed locals stood aside, staring at the Greeks who went about the business for which they had come ashore. Several years later, Triantafyllidis, by then a retired officer with a distinguished career, still remembered the look of puzzlement in the 'Bolshevik's' face.⁹⁰

The accounts of middle-ranking and senior officers who took part in the Ukrainian campaign, all of them with service record in the Venizelist Army of 1916-17, are unanimous⁹¹ that the campaign was ill-conceived and ill-executed, the French attitude abominable, but the Greek army had fought heroically, was not defeated, and its sacrifices⁹² did not go in vain: they were the indispensable price paid for the Allied decision to authorise the Greek landing at Smyrna, in May 1919. Of course, that decision had

⁹⁰ Haratsis, *Η πρώτη επέμβαση*, 100.

⁹¹ Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, ιδ'.

⁹² According to the official estimate, they amounted to 398 dead and missing, 657 wounded. In his account, Petros Karakassonis, commander of the 34th Regiment, speaks of 431 dead and missing: Karakassonis, *Ιστορία*, 205.

actually come as a reaction to arbitrary Italian landings elsewhere in southern Asia Minor. Yet it could be argued that Clemenceau, at least, would not have consented had Venizelos refused to send troops across the Black Sea, six months earlier. All along, however, the Greek prime minister had been fretting about the negative impact of ‘this stupid campaign,’ as he described it, on Greek public opinion.⁹³

More immediate was the impact on the morale of the troops tied down in Bessarabia. As a result of inactivity, home-sickness and Bolshevik propaganda, incidents of insubordination and desertions were on the increase. The A Corps command set up a special service at the port cities of Galați and Brăila on the Danube, with the task of intercepting deserters, in co-ordination with the Romanian authorities. It also sought to enlighten the latter about the need to check the activity of ‘Jewish propagandists,’ apparently in the service of the Bolsheviks, who, in the eyes of the Greek command, were the prime movers of desertions.⁹⁴

According to both official and private accounts of the campaign, the Greek landing at Smyrna, on 15 May 1919, came as a morale booster. A week later, Venizelos notified Nider that his A Corps was soon to sail for the coveted port city. Karayiannis records this ‘Smyrna effect,’ after Nider himself broke the news to the men of the XIII Division:

‘We shall go to Asia Minor. We shall go to Smyrna.’ He had not got the chance to say another word, his troops had seized him, raised him on their arms and shouted: ‘Long live our Corps commander.’ That fixed it (Εκείνο ήταν όλο το φάρμακο).⁹⁵

⁹³ Diogos, *Περί ανοήτου*, 135.

⁹⁴ Nider, *Η εκστρατεία*, 412-4.

⁹⁵ Karayiannis, *Ιστορία ενός στρατιώτη*, 109-110. Plastiras refers to a similar reaction from his *Evzones*, when Nider visited the 5/42 Regiment some time between 23 and 28 May 1919: Delta, *Πλαστήρας*, 52; cf. Nider, *Η εκστρατεία*, 418-9; Karakassonis, *Ιστορία*, 269. The evacuation of the Greek expeditionary force was completed by 17 July: GES-DIS, *Εκστρατευτικών Σώμα*, 260.

*Artan R. Hoxha**

**Transgressing Modernization (or how to become Visible):¹
The Taming of Nature and the Responses in the Countryside
in Interwar Era Albania**

The early morning of July 11, 1927, crowds gathered at the center of the city of Korça, the main urban center of southeastern Albania and one of the major cities of the country. At the event were also present prominent politicians, businessmen, and other representatives of the cultural life of the interwar era. It was an important moment because that Monday the private company *Maliqi*, whose head office was in Korça, started the draining of the shallow lake of Maliqi and its surrounding marshlands –this is why it had been baptized with the same name– located some few kilometers north of the city. There were plenty of reasons to celebrate. This enterprise had for the Albanian political elite and nationalists a profound meaning. The draining of that lake would help them to overcome that sense of inferiority injected by the country’s backwardness and the whole discourse on the assumed inability of the Albanians to develop and modernize. The draining of the lake of Maliq was considered as one of the first steps toward the modernization of the country and its transformation into a European nation.

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¹ The concept of modernization is imbued with ideological prejudices that establish a hierarchy of nations that sets the western model of industrial mass society as an example to follow for the rest of the world. In this spirit, it was also used in the 1960s as a political and ideological program by the American government to respond to the Soviet threat in the “Third World.” Regardless of its more recent use, though, the use of modernization as a term has a longer story that dates back in the late 19th and early 20th century –Japan, Russia, Ottoman Empire, China, Iran, and the newly established Balkan states are cases in point. The way modernization was perceived, interpreted, and used differs from one place to another, something that makes the use of modernization as a generic term even more daunting and problematic. For this reason, I have not used “modernization” as an analytical tool but simply as a descriptive term to which the historical actors gave different meanings.

To start with, *Maliqi* company was founded with 100% of Albanian capital, something that the politicians labeled as the token of the vitality of the Albanians to fearlessly undertake the important challenges of progress. The enterprise in itself, with its very important engineering component and complexities, would demonstrate to the world the ability of the Albanians to subjugate nature and use its resources to build in their country the new modern civilization. The draining of the swamp of Maliq was a symbol of the enlightened self-interest because it was going to promote development and increase the wealth of the entire region; it was also going to address the malaria problem that was devastating the region for centuries and also solve once and for all the bread problem of the area of Korça, which had suffered many famines due to the lack of grains. This is what, in essence, the company's CEO, Selim Mborja, the Prefect, Zef Kadarja, the future Prime Minister of Albania, Mehdi Frashëri, and other personalities spelled out in their speeches at the occasion of the inauguration of the draining.²

Regardless of the euphoria of the participants, not everybody was happy with what *Maliqi* enterprise was going to do. While the company was pretending it was transgressing nature on behalf of modernization and social improvement, others were going to transgress these efforts on behalf of community responsibility. The rural population of the sixteen villages located around the swamp complained and sometimes reacted violently against this undertaking. The Albanian communist historiography considered the tensions between the company and the rural population as part of the class struggle, which, according to it, was taking place in the country during the interwar era. This was a clash between two antagonizing forces: the peasantry and the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the landowning elite.³ The case of Maliq is also considered as an example of how the bourgeoisie invest-

² "Inaugurimi i tharjes së liqenit Maliq" (The inauguration of the reclamation of Maliq's lake), *Zëri i Korçës*, 12 July 1927, 1-2.

³ Agim Muçaj, *Lufta e fshatarësisë shqiptare kundër shfrytëzimit çifligaro-borgjez zogist (1925-1939) dhe qëndrimi i klasave ndaj saj* [The struggle of the Albanian peasantry against King Zog's bourgeois-manorial exploitation (1925-1939)] (Tirana: ShBLU, 1990), 39-41.

ed its capital in agriculture and exploited the peasantry.⁴ These interpretations are biased, though, because they were politically motivated. They were part of the Albanian communist narrative, which used history as an ideological weapon to legitimize its rule. Installed in a country with a very small working class, the communist regime of Tirana tried to highlight the idea of peasant resistance and thus justify the Leninist model of the alliance between peasants and working classes.

The concept of peasant resistance is not although unique in the communist historiographies. Scholars in the West, like Eric R. Wolf, James C. Scott, Eric Hobsbawm, and George Rude, have also used, however in a much more sophisticated way, the Marxist theoretical apparatus to highlight the class struggle between peasants and ruling classes. These authors have argued that a series of activities that range from armed rebellions to banditry, arsons, or even gossiping are part of peasant resistance.⁵ James C. Scott has argued that the venue of resistance is not only the open stage, which many times is controlled by the dominant group, but also the backstage where more refined forms of the hidden transcript are elaborated as part of the everyday resistance.⁶ The main analytical category these authors use is the class and their works explore the way the emergence of capitalism shaped class relations and triggered new forms of peasantry's resistance. They argue that this resistance to the modernizing forces was not an irrational blind reaction of the backward groups that were rejecting progress, but, indeed, a very rational reaction that corresponded to the objective forces that were shaping a reality where the peasants found

⁴ Rinush Idrizi–Beqir Meta, *Lufta e fshatarësisë për tokë, 1925-1939 (Përmbledhje dokumentesh)* [The struggle of the peasantry for land, 1925-1939 (Collection of documents)] (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1987), 16-7.

⁵ Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasants: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Heaven, London: Yale University Press, 1976); James C. Scott, *The Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Heaven, London, 1985); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); Eric J. Hobsbawm–George Rude, *Captain Swing* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).

⁶ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcript* (New Heaven, London: Yale University Press, 1990).

themselves in a disadvantaged position.⁷ Hence, these new Marxist thinkers have tried to debunk Leninist practice by claiming that class conscience does not belong exclusively to the working class.

Resistance is also a central concept of the work of a cohort of other scholars that have worked on the modernization of the Middle East. Debating with important works written in the 1950s, like *The Passing of Traditional Society* of Daniel Lerner,⁸ who, basing his analysis mainly in Turkey, argued that the unstoppable march of modernization would wipe away the traditional social organization and culture in the Middle East. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, when Lerner's deterministic anticipations were largely discredited, different historians started approaching modernization from a different angle, using as their main analytical concepts the juxtaposition of the modernizing state apparatus with the society. According to these authors, in countries like Turkey and Iran modernization was a top-down process promoted by the political elites, whose goal was to westernize and homogenize their respective societies through authoritarian means and ways. Accordingly, the society resisted to the oppression of modernization of state apparatus.⁹

If we turn our attention to the Balkans, the region has mainly been under the scrutiny of social scientists due to its notoriety as the powder keg of Europe. The bulk of the works have focused first on the nation-building and state-building processes, whose goal was to transform diverse societies into homogeneous nation states, and second on

⁷ On the dichotomies constructed by the urban middle classes, which juxtaposed themselves, who they defined as modern, progressive, and future oriented, to the rural, defined as barbarian, vulgar, conservative and backward looking, see Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976); James G. Carrier (ed.), *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford: Calderon Press, 1995).

⁸ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of the Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: The Free Press, 1958).

⁹ See for example Touraj Atabaki–Erich J. Zürcher (eds.), *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004); Touraj Atabaki (ed.), *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007); Stephanie Cronin (ed.), *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014).

the effects these processes have caused. There are authors who argue that the penetration of modernity and western concepts and the distorted way they were applied disrupted the traditional societies and created the bogus of nationalism with all the dramas of the 20th century.¹⁰ There are also works that deal with the social, economic, and cultural transformations that have taken place in the Balkans in the last two centuries.

In the spirit of the theories of modernization, in the 1960s a group of historians coined the recent history of the region as a period of transition. Such an argument implied the movement of the region from the Ottoman to the western modern world orbit, due to the immense political, cultural, and economic influence the latter exerted on the new nationalities.¹¹ In the 1980s, John Lampe and Marvin Jackson argued that in the last four centuries the Balkans have preserved the status of the periphery, first as imperial borderlands and later as developing nations, economically dependent on the West.¹² Lampe, as well as other authors, has also highlighted that the spinning of the Balkans around the West has transformed this region. Agreeing with Mark Mazower, Lampe and other historians have emphasized that the new nation-states of the region, after borrowing the western model, lost their distinct cultural traits and the Balkans were transformed into the south-eastern part of Europe, which means from an Ottoman to a European periphery.¹³

¹⁰ There are authors, though, like Mark Mazower, which argue that modernity is violent. Instead of looking for any propensity of the Balkans for violence, he claims that rather than distorted interpretations, the penetration of modernity, which is inherently violent, caused the dramas of the 20th century in this part of Europe. For more see Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000).

¹¹ Charles Jelavich–Barbara Jelavich (eds.), *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963).

¹² John R. Lampe–Marvin Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1550-1950: From Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982).

¹³ John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe, 1914-2014: A Century of War and Transition* (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Andrew B. Wachtel, *The Balkans in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Despite all that, these works discuss the implementation of western models by the local elites, while the social, political, and cultural dynamics of this complex process at grass root level and the interaction between different actors are often left out. The theoretical approaches mentioned above, whose analysis is based on the framework of the tensions between oppressors and oppressed, either in the form of class antagonism or that of state vs. society, do not give satisfactory answers. The case of the tensions between *Maliqi* company and the social groups, whose interests conflicted with those of the actors who wanted to drain the lake, provide a very good example of the complexities that cut across many categories we use in the social sciences, like class, religion, community, labor vs. capital, or urban vs. rural. With them, the idea of transgression becomes more plastic and complex.

Except for rare cases, it is harder for a historian than for an anthropologist to retrieve the voices of the powerless because of the limited access to the hidden transcript of the past. Weaved in the backstage, where the eye of domination cannot penetrate, the hidden transcript remains encapsulated inside the shell of the intimate sphere. For this reason, it is quite often out of the historian's reach, who generally works with the records produced by those who control the public sphere. To narrate a past with many voices and to fully reconstruct the dynamics of the interactions between different groups and actors is hard. However, this is not an impossible task. Some sources, especially the petitions and complaints from the rural population or different groups involved in a contest of interests, are a very good source to understand the dynamics of social tensions. The petitions that landowners, the rural population, and the company "Maliq" addressed to the state authorities are very helpful to tell a polyphonic story, where the voices do not always comply to the main categories social scientists use.

Located in southeastern Albania, at an elevation of 820 meters above sea level, the plain of Korça is surrounded in the east by the Dry Mountain and that of Morava, both above 2,000 meters of altitude; in the west, it is confined by the highlands of Gora and Opar. In the north, the pass of Plloça separates the plain from the furrow of Ochir-da and the pass of Molla (which means apple in Albanian) divides it

from the highland of Kolonja. When seen from the air, the plain has the shape of a small shark. Approximately twenty-two miles long, its narrow southern tip widens gradually toward the north, where, at the $\frac{3}{4}$ of its length, it reaches ten miles in width and then it narrows again. It was here, in its widest part, that the plain was covered since the Late Glacial era by the perennial shallow lake of Maliq.¹⁴ The tectonic depression and the alluvial sandy fan of the river Devoll, which cuts the northern part of the plain in two halves, were responsible for the location of the lake and its surrounding marshland.¹⁵ Depending on the season and the level of snowfall and rainfall, the surface of the lake of Maliq varied between 40 and 80 square kilometers.¹⁶

The area around the lake of Maliq has been inhabited, with only a few interruptions, since the Early Neolithic by groups that practiced agriculture and fishing. Maliq was the center of a very dynamic prehistoric culture and by the late Iron Age, in the 7th c. BC, the communities living in this area engaged in a trade that covered a large swath of the Balkan area.¹⁷ For thousands of years, the lake was a highly important component of the life and activity of the human communities that inhabited the northern part of Korça plain. The swamp had been a constant source of food for the people and their livestock. The Otto-

¹⁴ Michelle Denèfle et al., "A 12,000-year Pollen Record from Lake Maliq, Albania," *Quaternary Research* 2000, no. 432-433: 21. The lake of Maliq was part of a complex system of four lacustrine basins, also called the system of Dessarettes lakes, that comprised to its east the basin of the Great and Small Prespa, that are on the Albanian, Macedonian, and Greek borders, and to its north the basin of Ochrid on the Albanian–Macedonian border. See Amandine Bordon, "Pollen-inferred Late-Glacial and Holocene Climate in Southern Balkans (Lake Maliq)," *Quaternary International* 200, no. 1-2 (2009): 21.

¹⁵ Jean-Jacque Dufaure et al., "Tectonics and Geomorphological Evolution: The Example of the Korçë Basin (Albania)," *Géomorphologie: Relief, Processus, Environnement* 5, no. 2 (1999): 11-112.

¹⁶ Eric Fouache et al., "Palaeogeographical Reconstruction of Lake Maliq (Korça Basin, Albania) between 14000 BP to 2000 BP," *Journal of Archeological Studies*, 37 (2010): 525.

¹⁷ For more see Frano Prendi, "The Prehistory of Albania," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 3, part I, ed. John Boardman–I. E. S. Edwards–N. G. L. Hammond–E. Sollberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 187-237; N. G. L. Hammond, "Illyris, Epirus and Macedonia in the Early Iron Age," *ibid*, 639-40.

man sources have recorded since the early 15th century a series of villages that still exist today around the lake and their engagement in fishing.¹⁸

The situation remained the same until the end of the 18th century when Korça started growing from a small administrative center into an important economic hub. From this moment, the population of the area lost its self-sufficiency. The demographic expansion and the limited arable land of the plain of Korça created a Malthusian crisis. The city largely depended on the imported grain from outside the region, which exposed its population to the market fluctuations of cereals or the caprices of weather that hindered their transportation along the poorly maintained Ottoman road network. In the late 19th and early 20th century, Korça experienced a series of famines. As a response, in the 1890s, the Ottoman administration flirted with the possibility of draining the lake of Maliq in order to solve the problem of food scarcity and the periodical inundations of the Devolli river.¹⁹ The Ottomans undertook only timid steps and didn't solve any of the problems.²⁰

Serious steps were attempted only after the Ottomans were gone, with the establishment of the Albanian state. In the 1920s, once the existence of an Albanian state was guaranteed, important segments of the Albanian interwar-era political elite started thinking about how to modernize the country. Once the external borders were almost established –although only a few people in Albania were happy with them– many started planning on the inner frontier.²¹ The clearing of the

¹⁸ Archive of the Institute of History [hereafter AIH], *Regjistri osman i Korçës dhe Përmetit, i vitit 1431* (The Ottoman Register of Korça and Përmet), 42-88.

¹⁹ During the same period the Ottomans pursued other similar projects in the Balkan. One of them was the draining of the lake of Shkodra in the Albanian–Montenegrin border, which is also the largest of the Balkans. During the interwar era, the project was discussed by the Albanian and Yugoslav authorities, which were both willing to find ways to find scapegoats for the demographic pressures, especially those of the highlands. Fortunately, none of the governments undertook concrete measures.

²⁰ Andromaqi Gjergji, “Jetesa në një fshat në fushën e Korçës (gjatë shek. XIX–XX)” (Life in a Village in the Plain of Korça), in *Mënyra e jetesës në shekujt XIII–XX (përmbledhje studimesh)* [The Way of Life in the Centuries XIII-XX (Collection of Studies)], ed. Andromaqi Gjergji (Tirana: S. n., 2002), 207-8.

²¹ I have borrowed this concept from the work of the American medievalist Archibald Lewis, who used the concepts of the inner and external frontier to describe the

swamps and marshes was part of this modernizing enterprise, which was based on the confrontation with and triumphs over nature.²² The clearing of the marshlands of Maliq and the draining of the lake was among the first of such enterprises; most importantly, it was a private enterprise. The state fully supported the project. Some of the richest merchants and landlords of the area joined their capital and formed the company *Maliqi*, whose goal was to drain the lake and use the land for agricultural production.²³

In 1925, the Albanian President –and future king– Ahmet Zog, uttered that, for the region of Korça to have a prosperous future, the building of a modern road to connect the district with the Adriatic port of Durrës – which would allow the area to overcome the relative isolation from the rest of the country– and the draining of the marshland of Maliq were necessary.²⁴ Such a claim was not off target. Besides the discourses of modernization, historical contingencies had aggravated the Malthusian pressure the population of the region was facing. The new international context of the post-war era²⁵ did not have an indif-

expansion of western Europe during the High Middle Ages. See Archibald Lewis, “The Closing of the Mediaeval Frontier, 1250-1350,” *Speculum* 4 (1958): 475-83.

²² Neil Smith argues that the confrontation with nature was nothing but the result of the emergent industrial capitalism and the objectification of nature in the labor process. Neil Smith, *Uneven Capitalism: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens, GA: Georgia University Press, 2008), 10-30. While I do not agree with such a categorical claim –man has since the prehistoric times confronted nature– I agree that the modern industrial civilization and the scientific ideology of the Enlightenment increased the importance of such confrontation to a degree never witnessed in history. As a result, all the countries that wanted to catch up the industrialized West loyally applied all the conceptual repertoire that they had already borrowed from their examples, including the idea that development meant confrontation of man with nature and the subjugation of the latter by the former. Albania is not an exception.

²³ The far reaching and ambitious goal of the company was to cultivate beet sugar and produce refined sugar in a factory that Maliq was planning to build in the future.

²⁴ “Çështja e Liqenit Maliq” (The Issue of Maliq’s Lake), *Gazeta e Korçës*, 28-4-1925, 4.

²⁵ The Balkans became a battlefield firstly in 1912 with the First Balkan War, then in 1913 with the Second Balkan War and at the end the with the Great War. The degree of devastation and the difficulties that the populations of the region, which were also very often subject to genocide, had to endure was tremendous. Hence, the

ferent role in the race for new sources of food. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire excluded the district of Korça from some of the markets –like Monastir, in Yugoslavia, and Thessaloniki, in Greece– with which it had traditionally been linked to for centuries. The new national framework oriented the movement of goods, capital, and people toward the Adriatic, opening up new challenges, especially that of transportation. In a country with no modern road network, the region of Korça found itself geographically isolated, from the rest of the nation and, to a good degree, from the rest of the region. Hence, the solution of the problem of cereals' scarcity was deemed, as a local journal argued in 1925, vital for the survival of the city.²⁶

The founders of the company, though, sought desperately an alternative to make a profit. The shareholders were also exploring for other crops, besides cereals, which would allow them to have higher returns, such as sugar beet.²⁷ Profit drives, notwithstanding, did not stop the major shareholders from clothing their enterprise with an ideological garb. They considered their company as the example of the enlightened self-interest, where private and public fitted neatly into a perfect synthesis. According to one of them, besides the profitability, *Maliqi* was going to play a powerful social role because it would fight unemployment and famine²⁸ and heal the economy and health of the whole country.²⁹ A newspaper wrote that draining the lake and its surrounding marshlands was a public necessity because it also meant to root malaria out of the region and, as a consequence, help its further development.³⁰

Things did not go smoothly for the company. To begin with, to its project –drawn by a Greek engineer whose name was Vlamos– the

recovery was more difficult, especially if we take into account the very limited resources that the countries of the region had at their disposal.

²⁶ “Shoqëria Maliq” (Maliqi Company), *Koha*, 20-6-1925, 1.

²⁷ “Shoqëria ‘Maliq’” (“Maliqi” Company), *Koha*, 5-9-1925, 2.

²⁸ Mina Frashëri, “Një shpjegim mbi çeshtjen e Liqenit të Maliqit” (An Explanation on the Issue of the Lake of Maliq), *Gazeta e Korçës*, 2-5-1925: 4.

²⁹ “Lajmë enteresane e Liqenit” (Interesting News Regarding Maliq’s Lake), *Gazeta e Korçës*, 26-8-1924, 2.

³⁰ “Shoqëria ‘Maliq’ dhe qëllimet e saj” (“Maliqi” Company and its Intentions), *Koha*, 12-9-1925, 2

rural population that lived around the lake was totally invisible –in a way very similar to the way that the indigenous were invisible to the European colonizers.³¹ The truth is that the land was not empty and the company learned it as soon as it implemented the project. There were sixteen villages around the lake with a total population, as for 1923, of around 7,500 inhabitants of both Muslim and Orthodox confessions.³² The religious affiliation of the villagers did not affect the structure of propriety and its distribution, their social status, wealth, and access to resources or opportunities. Generally speaking, the peasants were happy with a partial drain of the lake. Its cyclical floods damaged their property, crops, and belongings; moreover, it was also the cause of endemic diseases, like malaria. On the other hand, the lake of Maliq had been the center of to the economy of all the villages located around it for millennia.³³ Fishing and hunting were a constant source of food, while reeds and other types of vegetation were used for feeding cattle. What the villagers wanted was a middle ground solution, which, of course, the company was not so willing to provide.

The land around the lake belonged partially to the villages, in the form of communitarian land, to small landowners, and to landowners who worked their land through sharecroppers. The large landowners, with only a few exceptions, lived in the city of Korça, but their influence in the villages was huge and many times they controlled the local rural authorities.³⁴ Their relations with the peasants were based on a

³¹ For more on this subject see Robert L. Nelson, “Emptiness in the Colonial Gaze: Labor, Property, and Nature,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 79 (2011): 161-74.

³² Teki Selenica, *Shqipëria më 1923* (Albania in 1923) (Tirana: Ministria e P. Mbrendshme, 1923), 98-9.

³³ I am not claiming that the population that lives here has been the same for millennia –I do not want to get involved into to the futile spiral of the debates on the autochthony of the Albanians. Neither do I want to make any statement –which by the way falls outside of my academic competence– on whether or not the Albanians are descendants of the Illyrians, or of any other of the ancient ethnic groups that inhabited the Balkans before the Slavic moved in the region. I am only saying that the lake had been crucial to the life and economy of all the groups that have inhabited the area since the Neolithic. This is true regardless of the origins or the time they settled in.

³⁴ The cities in Albania during these years, likewise the bulk of the cities of the Balkans, were rarely hubs over which the middle classes exercised and radiated their

very complex network of services that each side provided for the other. The borders of the proprieties were very intricate because many times the familial property was divided into many scattered plots. The use of the communitarian land was determined by the natural cycle of the seasons and rainfalls. Some of the pastures were only used during summer when the lake was at its lowest level.

Instead of following the twisted and complicated lines of existing proprieties, which were the result of centuries of social interactions and human intercourse with nature, Vlamos' project pursued rectilinear lines.³⁵ As a result, willy-nilly it included within company's control whole swaths of land already owned. Moreover, the concession determined that the peasants had to pay the company to improve their land, which basically meant the delivering of their land from the periodical advance of the lake.³⁶ The peasants also had to pay for fishing, hunting, and collecting reeds. The conflict was imminent because the

power. In the Ottoman Empire, whose legacy in the Balkans was still very strong in the 1920s and 1930s, the cities were foremost administrative and military centers. The urban centers were also the residence of the landowning elite, which many times also held important military and bureaucratic positions within the power structure. The guilds and merchants played a prominent role in the life of the cities but generally they were not the dominant group, although there are many exceptions and Korça is one of them. First of all, the landlords in this plain of Korça were not exclusively Muslims and, from a religious point, they were a mixed group. Moreover, the Muslim elite had to negotiate its power with the powerful Orthodox middle classes, which held the rein of power in the city.

³⁵ Look for example what James C. Scott says on modernity and its rectangular geometry. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve Human Condition Have Failed* (New Heaven, London: Yale University Press, 1998). In this case, the rectilinear lines were not simply an expression of that tendency to organize the world in a geometric fashion. Rather than the power of the discourse, it was driven by the will of the company to expand its properties.

³⁶ According to the concession, the peasants had to pay to the company with 6 Napoleon (Albanian currency of the era) for dynym (measuring unit equal to 1000 meters square). Albanian Central Archive [hereafter AQSh], Ministry of Justice, number 155, year 1926, file II-854, sheet 6. The exchange course of the Napoleon to Dollar for that period was approximatively 1 Napoleon to 4 dollars. "Kursi i Monedhave në Korçë" (Currencies Exchange Rate), *Zëri i Korçës*, 6-2-1926, 4. It means that the price for 1000 m² square was equal to \$24, which converted in today's currency would be equal to \$325. For populations loosely connected to the market and with a very low standard of living such price was stratospheric.

project of *Maliqi* seriously disturbed the whole base of the rural economy of the sixteen villages around the lake. It excluded the population of the villages from the natural resources that they had always used and ignored all the traditional borders of propriety. The result was a strong reaction that resulted in an alliance between landlords and peasants, Muslims and Christians, urbanites and rustics.

In July 1926, a long telegram, signed by the representatives of the sixteen villages located by the shores of Maliq's lake, arrived at the office of the Prime Minister of Albania. It was a petition against the "injustices of the *Maliqi* company at the detriment of the pauper people." They asked the head of the government to protect the peasants, whose "ownership and miserable bread is endangered" from the "predatory and ruthless tendencies of the capitalists organized around the Anonymous Company," which was robbing the "pastures we have owned without any contestation for hundreds of years." The Turkish regime, they recalled, when it started to partially drain the swamp, did not strip their land away from them.³⁷ In May, the office of the Prime Minister had received other complaints from the peasants against the price they had to pay to the company for improving their properties.³⁸

The first telegram did not hit the target, but the second, crafted in a different language, did achieve its goal. The government in Tirana started moving to see what was happening. The Ministry of Interior confirmed, through the Prefect of Korça, Hil Mosi, that the peasants were telling the truth. Vlamos' project, explained Mosi, had unjustly included within company's control hundreds of already owned hectares. It was obvious that the government had approved the concession without checking first. The project had violated the property of only one part of the villages. The parliament and the government had approved the project under the strong lobbying of the politicians and

³⁷ AQSh, Prime Ministry, number 149, year 1926, file III-4054, sheet 1.

³⁸ AQSh, *ibid*, file III-898, sheet 1-5.

deputies of Korça,³⁹ who played a prominent role in the Albanian politics of the interwar era.

Prefect's office, though, scaled down the alarmism with which the petition depicted the situation when he said that the unjust appropriation of land had occurred only in some of the villages and not in all of them. Moreover, he observed that from 1924, the time that Vlamos drafted the project, to 1926 the villagers did a series of draining works, thus undermining the company's claim and changing the situation in their favor. The Prefect urged the Ministry of Interior to take steps and negotiate the conflict in a way that served the interests of all parts.⁴⁰ In October, the President of the country, Ahmet Zog, and the Council of Ministers decided to create a committee to revise the concession and give an end to the ongoing conflict.⁴¹ The committee that was going to negotiate the dispute was formed only in December 1926,⁴² but it never gathered and the conflict remained latent until it resurfaced again in 1931.⁴³

At first glance, it looks like we are witnessing a class conflict between peasants and capitalists, expressed in the classical dichotomy of countryside vs. city; it seems like this is capitalism in action that is upsetting the tranquil waters of tradition's routine and rural subsistence and the conservative peasants fighting back against exploitation. The state, with its paternalism, looks like it is caught in the dilemma of how to defend the capital while preserving the image of the unbiased negotiator that stands above the partisan interests, devoted to preserve and promote social harmony. Once we identify the actors involved in this conflict and the dynamics of their interactions, however,

³⁹ AQSh, Ministry of Economy, number 171, year 1931, file IV-144, sheet 6. I will elaborate more on the connections between the company *Maliqi* and the local politicians below.

⁴⁰ AQSh, Prime Ministry, number 149, year 1926, file III-898, sheet 20-21.

⁴¹ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 26-27.

⁴² AQSh, Ministry of Justice, number 155, year 1925, file II-854, sheet 8.

⁴³ The archival sources do not explain very well why the committee never gathered and why there was no opened conflict. The peasants sent some telegrams in 1929 but they did not influence the government and nothing happened. AQSh, The Prefecture of Korça, number 317, year 1929, file 111, sheet 1-3.

we find out that the classical dichotomies of antagonist forces do not fully explain what was happening.

After an attentive reading of Prefect's conclusion, some questions rise up. Why did all the villages plead to Prime Minister, while only one part of them is really losing its lands? Where the peasants really cheating? Was the Prefect trying to scale down the size of the problem because he was siding with the *Maliqi* company? Where those representatives really representing their villages? Who wrote those petitions? This latter is an important question because in the 1920s the bulk of the Albanian peasants were illiterate, especially the grown up.⁴⁴

In mid-October, after the decision of the Council of Ministers to create a committee to negotiate the conflict, the Ministry of Infrastructure received another petition on behalf of the whole population of the villages around the lake of Maliq. The senders pretended they were representing the ten thousand people of the sixteen villages – an exaggerated number, of course, in order to raise petition's stakes. The language was identical with the petition of July. The company was considered as the agglomerate of ruthless capitalists while the government as the only salvation of the people. The senders expressed the conviction that the government was not going to sell ten thousand Albanians out to the capitalists of a company, whose goal was only to earn millions.⁴⁵ The telegram, which pretended it represented the whole population of the villages around the lake, was signed by Adem Vila, Emin Pojani and Sadik Qyteza, members of some of the most powerful landowning families of the region, and Thimaq Cali, a prominent Orthodox landlord.⁴⁶

As Partha Chatterjee argues in his work on the politics of governmentality, the mediators are very important for marginalized groups to make their voice heard. As he correctly argues, the mediator should know the political language of the regime and hence speak on behalf

⁴⁴ In the 1920s, at least 85% percent of the population was illiterate, with 15% of the population living in cities and 85% in the villages. Of course not all city dwellers were literate; women were such an exception.

⁴⁵ AQSh, Prime Ministry, number 149, year 1926, file III-898, sheet 35-37.

⁴⁶ AQSh, Ministry of Justice, number 155, year 1926, file IV-182, sheet 4.

of the marginalized.⁴⁷ The language of the July telegram struck the right cords because it was written by people who knew where to place and how to pressure their demands within the bureaucratic machinery. It was written by people with good knowledge of the political conjectures that knew at first-hand how the power structure worked. The authors of these petitions were striving to give a political content to their pleas and give proofs that they were representing a community with moral attributes.⁴⁸ Who were these mediators?

The mediators were the rich landlords who were losing properties from the draining of the swamp and who considered the *Maliqi* company as a dangerous competitor, whose land they sought to appropriate for themselves. In interwar Albania, the landowners were not removed from power and they preserved their mediating role between the population and the central power.⁴⁹ The draining of the lake of Maliq and its surrounding marshlands became a field of political contest, where the borders between the power of the traditional power holders, who were left out of the new power structure, and the power of the Albanian modern state were being tested and negotiated. The vocabulary of the petitions had new nuances and flavor because the landlords were defining their interests by identifying it with those of the people. They did not appeal only to the traditional moral order to

⁴⁷ Partha Chatterjee, "The Politics of the Governed," in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 64-6.

⁴⁸ Chatterjee argues that one of the crucial parts of the politics of the governed is "to give to the empirical form of a population group the moral attributes of a community." Chatterjee, *op.cit.*, 57.

⁴⁹ At this point Albania offers a different picture from the other post-Ottoman nation states of the Balkans, where the landowning elite, mainly Muslim, was removed from power. In Albania, the ruling elite of the Ottoman era consisted exclusively of Albanians and in a country with a Muslim majority they were not considered as the representatives of an alien rule, especially in the face of the contribution that they gave for the independence of the country. Albania would complete this process, thus joining the other Balkan nations only with the communists, who annihilated all the Ottoman era feudal class. For an interesting explanation on the contribution of the Albanian Muslim elite to the Albanian National Movement see George Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1974-1913* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

highlight their rights vis-a-vis the state or other “alien actors.” They also glossed their interests over with a new form of morality: that of the good of the people. They juxtaposed the general wellbeing of the community to the egoistic greed of the capitalists, naked from any morality and social responsibility. They were constructing the ideology of a community, which dismissed the concept of class and opposed the ideology of the capitalist class and individualist selfishness.

The landlords appealed to the central authorities by crafting their petitions as the voice of the peasants –for example, in their complaints they also mentioned the problem of the communal land or their right to fishing and collection of reeds. It did not mean, though, that the mediators were speaking for the peasants. They were simply forced to include the peasants’ requests in their petition for the sake of legitimating their appeal and because such a step would put them under the leadership of their community. These petitions were not the peasants’ voice. It was that of those landlords, whose interests were threatened by the draining of the lake from a new actor in the local economy. The landowners that confronted the activity of the company *Maliqi*, who almost all lived in Korça, had remained out of the power structure of the newly created Albanian modern nation-state.

Resisting to the company was for them a way to factorize themselves and defend their status and wealth in the new context. Such resistance also took an ideological form against transformation, promoted by the *Maliqi* company. The narrative of the landowners who by being negatively affected by the draining of the lake tailored a narrative based on the wellbeing of those who lived by its shores. They were not speaking about improvement but about the preservation of what people had. Rather than a resistance to pre-capitalist moral economy against capitalism, this was especially an ideological garb of the confrontation between the urban powerholders, those who were successful in integrating their interests within the politics of modernization, and those who had not been so.

The landowners that petitioned against the activity of the *Maliqi* company represented only one fraction of this group in the region of Korça. The company was founded with the joint capital of merchants, free professionals, and landowners, either of Christian or Muslim background, who all lived in Korça. Some of the founders of *Maliqi*,

such as Selim Mbroja, Qazim Frashëri, Fazlli Frashëri etc., were among the richest landowners in the region and they held leading positions within the company.⁵⁰ Important shareholders were also members of other feudal families, like Pojani, Qyteza, Zavalani, Panariti etc. Among the shareholders were also the rich Orthodox merchant families of Turtulli, Bimbli, and Ballauri and also politicians like Pandeli Evangjeli, two times Prime Minister of the country, Kostaq Kotta, twice Prime Minister as well, and Vasil Avrami,⁵¹ the mayor of Korça, who was also a member of the administrative council of the company. Thus, the major shareholders of the company were linked to the central government through many threads and were well positioned within the state machine.

The company presented the latter's work as a philanthropic service to the community and a way of saving the peasants from the periodical floods and destruction, from malaria and other misfortunes. They remained loyal to this narrative until World War II.⁵² Both the company and the discontent landlords were legitimizing their interests by investing them with the idea of community's interests and pretended they were speaking on behalf of the people. Unlike the narrative of preservation promoted by those who were resisting to the project of the draining of the lake, the company's narrative was based on the ideology of development and modernization and the concept of improvement, which juxtaposed the miserable past with the better present or future.

The company's contribution to the community would be expressed, according to the leading group of shareholders, in an increased quality of life and more wealth for all in the region. The leading group of the company considered the draining the lake and the building of a sugar factory⁵³ as solutions to cope with the reduction of Korça's hinterland after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the closing of the emi-

⁵⁰ AQSh, Royal Court, number 150, year 1929, file III-60, sheet 30.

⁵¹ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 28.

⁵² AQSh, Anonymous Company Maliqi, year 1943, file 13, sheet 1-7.

⁵³ "Industrija e tanishme në barabijtje me industrinë q'i duhet Shqipërisë" (The Actual State of Industry in Comparison to What Albania Needs), *Shqipëri' e re*, 3-6-1928, 2.

gration in the USA.⁵⁴ Their business was, according to the owners of *Maliqi*, at the service of the community.

Except for few incidents, the situation remained calm until 1930, when another wave of petitions and confrontations started after the government renewed the concession. Since as early as March 1930, the company complained to the local authorities that pyramids that marked the company's property borders were continuously destroyed.⁵⁵ In January 1931, the peasants sent a petition to the Prefect of Korça, Abedin Nepravishta, where they asked him to establish a commission to revise Vlamos' project, which gave the right to the *Maliqi* company to misappropriate their properties.⁵⁶ In April 2, 1931, the landowners –among them Thimaq Cali, Zenel Vila, Koço Papadhopulli, Demir Ali Voskopi, and others, whose properties were located along the southern shores of the lake– petitioned to the King and Prefect against the company.⁵⁷ They claimed that *Maliqi* was using political support to pursue its predatory activity and force the peasants to pay for their own land.⁵⁸ Despite that, King Zog rejected their complaints and did not take them into regard.⁵⁹

The landowners did not loosen their pressure. They kept sending petitions to Zog,⁶⁰ while on the ground the openly defied the government's orders. According to the Prefect of Korça, the man behind all the turmoil was Maliq Frashëri, one of the largest landowners in the region.⁶¹ It is worth noting that Maliq Frashëri's cousins, Eshref, Fazlli and Qazim Frashëri, were among the most important shareholders of the company. In September 1930, the local court had fined and sentenced Maliq Frashëri with one month of jail for infringing the

⁵⁴ AQSh, Anonymous Company Maliqi, year 1943, file 13, sheet 1.

⁵⁵ AQSh, Commune of Maliqi, number 319(12), year 1930, file 13, sheet 1-2; AQSh, Commune of Maliqi, number 319(12), 1931, file 23, sheet 1.

⁵⁶ AQSh, The Prefecture of Korça, year 1931, file 72, sheet 5-6.

⁵⁷ AQSh, The Ministry of Economy, number 171, year 1931, file IV-144, sheet 6-7

⁵⁸ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 16-20.

⁵⁹ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 23.

⁶⁰ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 41-48.

⁶¹ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 8.

borders of the company's land,⁶² but he was not jailed. According to the President of the company, Kristaq Pilika, Maliq Frashëri was encouraging the peasants to occupy company's land by force.⁶³ Pilika complained that armed men who worked for Maliq Frashëri were persecuting the agricultural workers the company had employed to work its land.⁶⁴ In August 1931, the company's administrative council complained also against the communes and other branches of local power, which, according to the former, had done nothing to prevent the abuses against company's property.⁶⁵ The landowners, on the other hand, accused the local authorities of siding with the company.⁶⁶

After the constant pressure and petitions of the large proprietaries, who always spoke on behalf of the people, the central authorities decided to act. In June 1931, Zog drew the attention of the Prime Minister of that time, Pandeli Evangjeli, who was also one of the shareholders of *Maliqi*, to the misbehavior of the company, which kept going with its injustices against the peasants, and ordered him to send a commission and give an end to the whole matter.⁶⁷ Encouraged by the turn of the events, the landowners, speaking, as always, on behalf of all the rural population that lived around the lake, plead Zog and the Minister of Economy to order the preservation of the status quo and not renew the company's concession until the rectification of the borders had been finished.⁶⁸ In the same time, they wrote to the government that politicians in Tirana, connected to the company, were already working to predetermine the outcome of the commission's work.⁶⁹ While such a thing was true, the same is also for the efforts of the landowners to attain the same goal.

The landowners compensated the lack of connections to the center with elaborated appeals, which they weaponized, to achieve their goals. By portraying the company to the state authorities as an entity

⁶² AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 9.

⁶³ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 13.

⁶⁴ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 9.

⁶⁵ AQSh, Prefecture of Korça, number 317, year 1931, file 72, sheet 31.

⁶⁶ AQSh, The Ministry of Economy, number 171, year 1931, file IV-144, sheet 132.

⁶⁷ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 73.

⁶⁸ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 95-96.

⁶⁹ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 174.

driven by greed, defining its actions as illegal rapine of pauper peasants, and calling the King as the father of its people that had always shown care for the peasants,⁷⁰ the landowners were trying to determine the outcome of the settlement before the commission had started its work. Putting pressure from below, landowners like Maliq Frashëri and Thimaq Cali were drawing in the sand the line of their interests. By defining people's expectations, they were actually elaborating and imposing from the periphery what they considered as deemed role of the state and central authorities. These men were articulating an ideology of the state that served their own interests, thus forcing the government to pursue their agenda and not the one of the company.

The company, on the other hand, did not miss the chance to hit back and delegitimize the landowners' claims. In May 1932, it sent to Zog a petition, in which it argued that the peasants were taking by force the land from the company under the inducement of Maliq Frashëri.⁷¹ The new Prefect of Korça, Ismet Kryeziu, shared the same belief.⁷² On June 2, peasants from the village Pirg sent a telegram to the government, admitting that they were pushed by other people to petition to the government against the company.⁷³ On June 4, peasants from the villages of Zvirinë, Pertush, and Leshnicë sent to the Prime Minister's office telegrams, with which they did thank the company for the humanitarian work it had done for the improvement of their lives.⁷⁴ On June 5, peasants from the village of Libonik sent to the government a petition, urging the latter to allow the company to proceed the drainage of the lake.⁷⁵

At the end, when the commission reached the agreement, also thanks to the skills of Ismet Kryeziu who received a special thank from the Prime Minister Pandeli Evangjeli,⁷⁶ it was the company that

⁷⁰ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 132-133.

⁷¹ AQSh, Ministry of Economy, number 171, year 1932, file IV-159, sheet 15.

⁷² AQSh, Ministry of Interior, number 152, year 1932, file 404, sheet 37.

⁷³ AQSh, Ministry of Economy, number 171, year 1932, file IV-159, sheet 33-34.

⁷⁴ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 39-40.

⁷⁵ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 37. Maliq Frashëri tried to debunk these petitions and wrote to the Prefect of Korça that the telegrams sent by the peasants of these villages were all fabricated by the company. See AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 67.

⁷⁶ AQSh, Prefecture of Korça, number 317, year 1932, file 258, sheet 1-2.

lost the most. The state granted to the villagers and landowners the right to own 1,000 hectares from those, which according to the concession based on Vlamos' project, were under the company's management.⁷⁷ The central authorities, as they themselves admitted, sided with the peasants and did not protect the company's interests.⁷⁸ Immediately after the agreement was signed, some of the large landowning families that benefitted from the deal, such as Pojani, Qyteza, Dëshnica, and Pirgu, expressed their gratitude to the company for all it was doing for the wellbeing of the entire region.⁷⁹ Only a few weeks earlier, they were accusing it as a thief.

The deal of 1932 was not the end of the story. Once the agreement was reached, in some villages, like in the case of Rëmbec, landowners and peasants turned against each other and the former expropriated the latter.⁸⁰ Moreover, the agreement appeased only one part of the landowners. Just to mention some, Maliq bey Frashëri, Demir Ali Voskopi, Thimaq Cali, Gani bey Shënepremtja, and others were not happy with the deal and they had their eyes pointed to the new lands the company was delivering from the muddy waters. In 1936, the conflict exploded again and the discontented landowners refused to recognize the 1932's agreement because, according to them, the company had failed to drain the lake.⁸¹ The real reason behind the 1936's tensions lied in the decision of the company to bring agricultural workers to settle in and work the land. In front of the threat of the colonization of the land, old landlords and peasants found again the common language.

The peasants sent petitions to the state authorities and sought to force the company to give that land to them⁸² and to not allow newcomers to settle in.⁸³ In tandem, the landowners asked the Prime Minister to withdraw the concession to this company, which was led by "usurer bloodthirsty capitalists" who were "sucking poor's people

⁷⁷ AQSh, Anonymous Company Maliqi, year 1943, file 13, sheet 2.

⁷⁸ AQSh, Ministry of Interior, year 1936, file 828, sheet 13.

⁷⁹ AQSh, The Parliament, number 146, year 1932, sheet 1-4.

⁸⁰ AQSh, The Royal Court, number 150, year 1937, file III-1084, sheet 8-11.

⁸¹ AQSh, Collection, Prime Ministry, number 149, year 1936, file III-3047, sheet 34.

⁸² AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 6-7.

⁸³ AQSh, Ministry of Construction, number 177, year 1936, file 189, sheet 4-5.

blood,” because it had failed to fulfill its conditions.⁸⁴ Besides petitioning to the state authorities⁸⁵ and trying to manipulate them, both landowners and peasants started to openly transgress company’s land. Landowners did not shy away from exploiting the situation and put their hands over company’s land.⁸⁶ The peasants of the village of Pojan assailed the peasants that worked for the company.⁸⁷ In front of this situation, the Prime Minister, Kostaq Kotta, who was from Korça and was a shareholder of the company, advised the administrative council of *Maliqi* to give the land to the local peasants and not give it to newcomers,⁸⁸ but without success. At the end, the state authorities decided to respect the status quo of 1932 with no change.

Landowners and peasants challenged the decision of the state. Once the petitions failed to bear fruits, they started speaking the language of action. In 1937, Demir bey Voskopi, escorted by armed men, threatened and chased the company’s peasants out of the place they were settled in.⁸⁹ In 1938, the peasants of Pojan attacked the agricultural labors that were installed by the company and destroyed many tools, including also its tractor.⁹⁰ However, no attack was registered against the sharecroppers that the landlords installed in the land they gained from the agreement of 1932. The company, which was abstract and not identified with a specific person, was an easy target also because there were no older loyalties and patronages that could refrain the peasants and villagers from using violence.

The situation was aggravated also by the restrains the company imposed on fishing and reed collection. Now the peasants had to pay a fee of 15% for everything they got from the lake, which scandalized them –they had never paid for them, while fishing and, especially, reeds were vital to their economies. Open acts of disobedience took place. Peasants and landlords kept using the resources of the lake or the land under the company’s control for grazing their cattle of agri-

⁸⁴ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 2-3.

⁸⁵ AQSh, Ministry of Interior, number 152, year 1936, file 828, sheet 14.

⁸⁶ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 56-48.

⁸⁷ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 52.

⁸⁸ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 44.

⁸⁹ AQSh, Prefecture of Korça, number 317, year 1937, file 53, sheet 54.

⁹⁰ AQSh, Ministry of Interior, number 152, year 1938, file 465, sheet 2.

culture. *Maliqi* complained after these violations became a routine and asked the state authorities to take administrative measures and enforce the court's decisions.⁹¹ After the continuous complaints of the company about the routinized transgressions of both peasants and landowners, the government decided to take direct measures to stop them.

The Minister of Interior ordered to not allow anyone to hamper the activity of the private companies because such a thing would harm the country's economy.⁹² The peasants, although they were still important, had descended the ladder of the economic importance. Now they were not considered a segment that would bring development, as it was the case with the capitalist companies. The police intervened and jailed a number of peasants for either property transgression⁹³ or property occupation.⁹⁴ The state was now strong enough to make its voice heard and impose an asymmetric relation with the society. The authoritarian modernization was starting to take place.

In May 1939, after the Italian invasion of the country, the representatives of the sixteen villages requested the Minister of Economy of the Albanian Quisling government to deny the company its concession and revise the decision of 1932. In the telegram they wrote: "Today...with enthusiasm, we will enjoy from Your Excellency, inspired by the valuable principles of Fascism, the justice through the fair application of the law for everybody."⁹⁵ This petition was not written by the peasants or their representatives. The hidden hand of Maliq Frashëri and Thimaq Cale is felt in every line of this telegram. However, to their frustration, their sweet words did not influence neither the Italian nor their Albanian collaborators, who were not so willing to help them out. With the passing of the time, the landowners started to play the state to their advantage. They kept complaining, but, in the end, in 1943, the Ministry of Agriculture rejected their pleas and recognized the concession of 1925,⁹⁶ which was a decision of a regime that the Italians had overthrown.

⁹¹ AQSh, Royal Court, number 150, year 1937, file III-1084, sheet 21.

⁹² AQSh, Ministry of interior, number 152, year 1938, file 465, sheet 10.

⁹³ AQSh, *ibid*, sheet 5.

⁹⁴ AQSh, Ministry of Interior, number 152, year 1939, file 755, sheet 2.

⁹⁵ AQSh, Ministry of Economy, number 171, year 1939, file VIII-18, sheet 16.

⁹⁶ AQSh, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, number 172, 1943, file V-152, sheet 7.

The peasants kept complaining also about the 15% tax they had to pay for fishing, which, as they were saying, ruined them economically.⁹⁷ The answer of the authorities was a long and empty silence. But by 1944 the tables had turned. The Italians were gone and the Germans did not care very much for the interests of an Albanian company and the Albanian collaborators were worried about their survival and the communist resistance. The company complained that the peasants were taking advantage of the turmoil and were not paying the fishing taxes. The President of *Maliqi*, Vasil Kondi, reminded the government the company's contribution to the country.⁹⁸ But this was not enough in those days. What followed was total silence from the government and the peasants kept transgressing the rules in a moment that nobody was thinking about the rules. When the communists came to power, in November 1944, a new era started for the Albanians. Young, energetic, and determined, the communists turned everything upside down, while they continued older projects that the previous regimes had left just on paper. They annihilated the whole group of the old elite, implemented the agrarian reform, drained the swamp, built the sugar factory, and collectivized the land. The time of full-fledged authoritarian modernization had started.

Where are the peasants' voices? It is not so much in the telegrams and numerous petitions the landlords sent to the state authorities. There, the voice of the peasants is crafted to serve landowners' interests. Their voice appears here and there, in the form of the abrupt reactions against the company or when they infringed state's decisions and laws. Were they transgressing modernization? Where they against of the taming of nature? Were both peasants and landowners rejecting change and improvement? Not at all! Peasants and landowners were not resisting to the transformation per se but were resisting to its direction. They were trying to bring the transformation, initiated by other actors, to their own terms. It was a process of negotiation where all the actors involved were giving shape to the project of a modern Albania.

⁹⁷ AQSh, General Vicegerent, number 161, year 1943, file 192, sheet 1.

⁹⁸ AQSh, Prefecture of Korça, number 317, year 1944, file 85, sheet 1.

The Albanian state, fragile and, in many aspects, still amorphous, was testing in many levels its expanding boundaries.

The central authorities were forced to negotiate their power in the periphery with the local actors. The infringement, stretching, and bending of the laws by the local population and notables were a crucial part of the state-building process. Everybody was trying to use the events to their own advantage and carve their niche in the new context. Modernization in interwar Albania was not an authoritarian, top-down project that imposed the vision of the bureaucratic elite over the society but rather a multilateral and very much negotiated and complex process. The infringement of state decisions by both peasants and landowners was part of this process; they used their strategies to use the transformation to their own advantage in order to make their presence felt and become visible to the state authorities and other state-related actors.

The resistance to the draining of the swamp was not a simple class response to the oppression of another class. In the process of the negotiation of the project were involved both peasants and landowners, urban and rural dwellers. What they had in common was their opponent. The company was also an agglomeration of different social groups of different religious affiliation and access to power. The state as well, as not a monolithic entity. It was neither a structure with its own clear interests distinct from those of the society nor a tool of one or another class. The bureaucratic machine was rather a heterogeneous composition, instituted by people with different interests who were trying to use the position within the state hierarchy to further their agendas –at least this was the case in interwar Albania. The company had strong support in the center –despite that it did not control all of it– but it did not have much power over the local branches of government, where the traditional influence of the landowners who were against the *Maliqi* was still great.

The peasants were not a monolithic group as well. Their actions were not concerted but separated in time and space. Some of them participated in the actions against the company and some others supported the company, as it was the case in the village of Sovjan where some of them, against the will of their fellow villagers, took land from

the company.⁹⁹ Some others sided with the company because of their enmity with the landowners.¹⁰⁰ The whole landscape of social interactions was an open and fluid field where the interests were never fixed and they were shaped and reconsidered on a daily basis.

⁹⁹ AQSh, Prime Ministry, number 149, year 1936, file III-3047, sheet 11-12.

¹⁰⁰ AQSh, Ministry of Interior, number 152, year 1936, file 828, sheet 20.

*Despina-Georgia Konstantinakou**

**Selective Diplomacy: Greece and its World War II Enemies
at the Beginning of the Cold War**

During World War II, Greece came under triple occupation by the German, Italian, and Bulgarian forces. When Athens was liberated in 1944, relief reigned that the nightmare of the war was finally over and that better days were ahead. These hopes however would soon prove to be futile. Already in 1943, in the middle of World War II, a bitter, civil conflict had begun to develop in Greece, as the National Liberation Front (EAM), which was primarily controlled by the Greek Communist Party (KKE), and its military branch ELAS were fighting both the Germans and other Greek political parties, with the purpose of covering the power vacuum that arose after the withdrawal of the occupation forces.

At the same time, the beginnings of the global Cold War were becoming increasingly evident. During the Fourth Moscow Conference in October 1944, Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin divided Eastern Europe and the Balkans into spheres of influence between the West and the Soviets, which saw Greece coming massively under the British influence. Still, the British would soon find out that, after the occupation forces' withdrawal from Greece, the EAM had gained control of most of the country. British attempts to organize a coalition government, the gradual integration of ELAS into the Greek army, and the complete disarmament of the communists failed, leading to the Dekemvriana, when the Greek National Army, along with British units, defeated ELAS. The defeat was verified by the Varkiza Treaty signed in February 1945, which however was not end of the controversy but rather its resurgence. Former ELAS partisans, having the KKE's support, by 1946 had organized the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), which aimed to fight for the "People's Democracy."¹ Stalin, unwilling, and Tito, willingly and eagerly, along with the other two neighboring communist states, Alba-

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¹ Nikos Zachariadis, "The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Greece," *Revolutionary Democracy* 27, no. 24 (December 1948).

nia and Bulgaria, offered logistical and general support to the DSE, much to the dismay of the Greek government. The civil war that followed between the DSE and the Greek national army lasted from 1946 to 1949, turning Greece into the first Cold War theatre.²

The Greek Civil War was the first tangible manifestation of the Cold War, being the first of a series of proxy wars that unfolded during an era of global bipolarity. As a result, the official authorities in Athens were faced with multiple fronts: the handling of the civil war, the alleviation of the leveling consequences that the country and its people had suffered as a result of World War II, and the recovery of the shattered Greek economy and monetary system. Added to this of course, there was also the issue of navigating Greek foreign policy and the country's international relations in the murky waters created by the Cold War and the emerging new status quo, with the Greek authorities trying to find and consolidate Greece's position on the global political scene. While Greece's relations with its World War II allies were easier, albeit not free from tensions and difficulties, its relations with its three former World War II enemies, namely Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria, posed obstacles and serious challenges, deriving not only from the war past and the Greek war claims, but also from the new reality that the Cold War was now creating.

This article will examine Greece's relations with its three former occupying powers, Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria, during 1946-1949, try-

² Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War. A Global History* (London: Penguin Books, 2018), 75-6. For the Greek Civil War see among others: Philip Carabott–Thanasis D. Sfikas (eds.), *The Greek Civil War* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2004); Lars Bærentzen–John O. Iatrides–Ole Langwitz Smith (eds.), *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1987); David H. Close (ed.), *The Greek Civil War 1943-1950: Studies of Polarization* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993); Christopher Montague Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* (London: Hurst & Company, 2018); George Margaritis, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Εμφύλιου Πολέμου 1946-1949* (History of the Greek Civil War 1946–1949) (Athens: Bibliorama, 2001); Fillipos Iliou, *Ο Ελληνικός Εμφύλιος Πόλεμος–Η εμπλοκή του ΚΚΕ* (The Greek Civil War–The KKE Involvement) (Athens: Themelio, 2004); Michalis Limperatos, *Στα πρόθυρα του Εμφύλιου πολέμου: Από τα Δεκεμβριανά στις εκλογές του 1946-1949* (On the Brink of the Civil War: From Decemvriana to the 1946-1949 Elections) (Athens: Bibliorama, 2006).

ing to explore the impact the Greek Civil War, and by extension the Cold War, had in the selective diplomacy that Athens decided to adopt.

Greece and Germany

As paradoxical as it may sound, Germany was the country that occupied Athens the least during the first post-war period. This was largely due to the fact that Germany was now under quadruple occupation by the Allies. The Greeks participated in the Allied Control Council for Germany, but their aspirations were limited to the settlement of the issues that the war had caused and mainly the payment of the German war reparations.³ However, as the relations between the Western and the Soviet participants in the Allied Control Council began to deteriorate and rivalries between the Allied and the Soviet occupation zones of Germany increased, things began to change.

The change became more obvious after the founding of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—SED) in the Soviet occupation zone on April 21/22, 1946. On April 23, 1946, the official party published the first issue of the newspaper *Neues Deutschland*. Only days later, on May 9, 1946, the first article on Greece entitled “Monarchist Terror in Greece” appeared.⁴ It was the beginning of the newspaper’s intensive preoccupation with developments in Greece, which was gradually becoming a field of special interest for the USSR and the European communists, as the civil war was already unfolding.

One of the first issues the newspaper dealt with throughout 1946 was the USSR and Ukraine appealing to the UN Security Council against Greece.⁵ The two countries noted that the presence of British troops in

³ On World War II reparations and the Great Powers policy see Despina-Georgia Konstantinakou, *Πολεμικές οφειλές και εγκληματίες πολέμου στην Ελλάδα. Ψάχνοντας την ηθική και υλική δικαίωση μετά τον Δεύτερο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο* (War Debts and War Criminals in Greece. In Search for Moral and Material Vindication after World War II) (Athens: Alexandria, 2015), 40-68.

⁴ “Monarchistische Terror in Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 9-5-1946.

⁵ See “Griechenland vor dem Sicherheitsrat,” *Neues Deutschland*, 25-8-1946; “Griechenland auf der Tagesordnung des Sicherheitsrates,” *Neues Deutschland*, 5-9-1946; “Fall Griechenland vor dem Sicherheitsrat,” *Neues Deutschland*, 7-9-1946; “Zusam-

Greece, even though World War II had long since ended, was a blatant interference in the country's internal affairs, causing extraordinary tension with great consequences in terms of maintaining peace and stability, as the presence of these troops "had been used by reactionary elements against the democratic elements of the country." Therefore, "the quick and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Greece" was imperative.⁶

A series of articles supporting the allegations appeared in *Neues Deutschland* concerning the presence of British troops in Greece and the need for their withdrawal. The articles even reproduced reports from the British newspaper *The Manchester Guardian* calling on London to change its policy of "supporting right-wing terrorism" in Greece, as well as the French newspaper *Humanité*, which stifled "British involvement and the daily terrorism against Greek people."⁷ Statements made by a member of the British delegation to the Security Council that British troops would remain in Greece "until the Greek government is able to take full responsibility for law enforcement" were also published, along with warnings made by the General Secretary of the KKE, Nikos Zachariadis, that if the British "surrender their weapons to the monarchists as requested, they will find the entire Greek people against

menstoß im Sicherheitsrat," *Neues Deutschland*, 18-9-1946; The Greek Question, Consideration of the communication from the USSR dated 21 January 1946, *United Nations, Official Records of the Second Part of the First Session of the General Assembly, Supplement No.1, Report of the Security Council to the General Assembly covering the period from 17 January to 15 July 1946*, New York, 1946, 28-33; Marjorie M. Whiteman, *Digest of International Law*, vol. 5 (Washington D.C.: Department of State Publication 7873, 1965), 611; "Russians ask UNO to act on British in Greece and Java," *The New York Times*, 22-1-1946.

⁶ The Greek Question, 28-30; The British representative to the Security Council denied the allegations, arguing that the Greek government had invited British troops to remain in the country to "assist in obtaining order and economic reconstruction," a move that neither violated the UN Charter nor endangered peace. On the contrary, "the danger to world peace had been the incessant propaganda from Moscow against the British Commonwealth." The Greek Question, 31-2.

⁷ "Britische Politik Griechenland gegenüber," *Neues Deutschland*, 21-9-1946; "Die Tragödie in Griechenland," *Neues Deutschland*, 27-9-1946; "Die britischen Truppen in Griechenland," *Neues Deutschland*, 23-11-1946; "Eine Pariser Stimme," *Neues Deutschland*, 23-11-1946.

them.”⁸ The newspaper was also intensely concerned about the possibility that the British troops stationed in Greece would be joined by American troops, given that according to “semi-official news from Thessaloniki” broadcasted by the *France Presse* news agency “15,000 US troops were expected to be sent to Greek Macedonia.”⁹

Greece’s attendance at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference and more importantly its territorial claims regarding Northern Epirus were also covered. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov’s strong reaction was especially described in detail. Molotov accused Greece, which had been “ravaged by terror,” of attempting to “provoke tensions” against Albania which was “a peaceful democratic state that was friendly towards the USSR” in a part of Europe where peace prevailed. In his opinion however, this was to be expected from a country where “democratic elements cannot breathe.”¹⁰

Internal developments were also of interest to *Neues Deutschland*. On September 1, 1946, a referendum was held on the return of King George II to Greece, who had left the country after it was occupied by German forces in April 1941. The referendum’s result, namely 68.4 percent being in favor of the king’s return, was commented on by the newspaper in an article entitled “Terror Victory in Greece,” which included a thorough analysis of the quantitative characteristics of the vote, as “in Athens about 60 percent of the electorate, in Salonika 65 percent and in rural districts an even higher percentage have voted for the king.”¹¹ The newspaper also reported on the position of the KKE and the other “democratic forces” which strongly questioned the referendum, attributing the result to “monarchist intimidation methods,” even referring to “bloody incidents in various places.”¹² From the end of 1946, as the civil war intensified, the newspaper also provided detailed coverage of the outcome of the battles between the DSE and the government forces, noting that “although the government forces had care-

⁸ “Britische Truppen bleiben in Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 10-9-1946; “Die Bewaffnung der griechischen Royalisten,” *Neues Deutschland*, 31-10-1946.

⁹ “Amerikanische Truppen für Griechenland?,” *Neues Deutschland*, 23-11-1946.

¹⁰ “Molotow über Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 31-8-1946.

¹¹ “Terrorsieg in Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 3-9-1946.

¹² “Der griechischen ‘Volkentscheid,’” *Neues Deutschland*, 5-9-1946.

fully prepared their actions against the units of the Democratic Liberation Army, they were unable to achieve any victories.”¹³

The development however that forced the Eastern Bloc, and consequently *Neues Deutschland*, to focus sharply on Greece, was the US aid announcement regarding Greece and Turkey in March 1947. From this point onwards, the Greek Civil War and the global Cold War became inextricably linked. A few days before US President Harry Truman’s speech, in which he proclaimed his famous doctrine, the newspaper reported that Truman would address the Congress requesting the approval of a 250-million-dollar loan for Greece. The information proved largely accurate, the only mistake being the loan amount. On March 12, 1947, Truman addressed a joint congressional hearing seeking approval for up to 400 million dollars for immediate US financial and military assistance to both Greece and Turkey, which would receive 300 and 100 million dollars respectively. During his speech, the US President stressed that “the very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists, who defy the government’s authority.”¹⁴

The Truman doctrine provoked a strong reaction from Moscow. *Pravda*, the official CPSU newspaper, described the aid as “imperialist expansion” that violated “Greece’s and Turkey’s sovereign rights” through the “direct imposition of American domination” with the sole purpose of “strengthening reactionary elements in Greece,” thereby endangering peace and security.¹⁵ At the same time, the Moscow radio station also stressed that the US aid for Greece would be used “to stifle the democratic movement,” given that “US capitalist circles sought to

¹³ “Die Kämpfen gehen weiter,” *Neues Deutschland*, 23-11-1946; “Schwere Kämpfe in Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 9-3-1947; The newspaper even incorrectly conveyed the information that the DSE General Commander, Markos Vafiadis, had been killed in a battle in the Olympus area: “Schwere Kämpfe,” *Neues Deutschland*, 9-3-1947.

¹⁴ Westad, *op.cit.*, 92.

¹⁵ *Pravda* also labeled the US aid to Turkey as inexplicable, given that the country was “not affected by the war”: “Η Πράβδα για το Διάγγελμα του κ. Τρούμαν” (*Pravda* on Mr. Truman’s Speech), *Eleutheria*, 16-3-1947.

turn Greece into a colony.”¹⁶ The *Neues Deutschland* coverage of developments in Greece would henceforth move along this wavelength, even though the newspaper viewed the information received by “official American circles” that “the President’s emergency aid program for Greece would not consider either the withdrawal of British troops or the use of US troops in Greece” as a silver lining.¹⁷

The initial relief that prevailed from the information that American troops setting foot in Greece was not expected subsided quickly. Two weeks after Truman’s speech, *Neues Deutschland* observed that “the proposed US ‘aid’ to Greece and Turkey looks more like a lavish transaction by American defense industries.” Both the US Secretary of War Robert Patterson and the Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal had “lifted the veil before the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs that had previously hung over the intended million-dollar loan. A flashing arsenal of weapons became visible as, according to Patterson, the Greek government is to be provided with aircraft and other war material on a large scale.”¹⁸

Skepticism was further exacerbated by Truman’s statements about sending US political and military missions to Greece to oversee the financial aid distribution. *Neues Deutschland* noted that the US military mission would be in charge of supplying the Greek army and training Greek soldiers in the use of American equipment. The Greek government had already expressed its desire to acquire amphibious vehicles, tank landing boats, personnel carriers, and other marine vehicles. Turkey had also made a similar request. Regardless, the effects of the Marshall Plan were already apparent, as according to reports reaching the newspaper “the elements for which the aid was intended had intensified terrorism against the freedom movement.” The result of this intimidation was the assassination of thirty-three prisoners in Gythio, Laconia, “because of their democratic spirit,” and most importantly the assassi-

¹⁶ “Η Μόσχα διά το διάγγελμα του κ. Τρούμαν” (Moscow on Mr. Truman’s Speech), *Eleutheria*, 25-3-1947.

¹⁷ “Dollarmillionen nach Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 9-3-1947.

¹⁸ “Die ‘Hilfe’ für Griechenland und die Türkei,” *Neues Deutschland*, 27-3-1947.

nation on March 20, 1947, of the KKE and EAM high-ranking member Giannis Zevgos in Thessaloniki.¹⁹

Throughout 1947, frustration with US aid remained rampant in *Neues Deutschland* publications. The newspaper spoke about the “Middle Ages” that prevailed in the “Greek colony” and hosted statements by British Labor MPs Konnie Zilliacus and T.G. Thomas who argued that “in Greece, judgments are passed without trial and people are beaten to death and beheaded, exactly as in the Middle Ages.” This situation was solely a consequence of the US aid, given that “the overthrow of Greece’s current rulers could be completed within a week if no help came from abroad.”²⁰ The newspaper also focused on the economic situation in Greece, which was described in the darkest possible terms, whereby the Americans were accused of interfering in the drafting of the Greek state budget, by imposing taxes to fund further military spending and increasing the prices of basic living products such as bread, which rose by seventy-five percent. In fact, “in order to secure military spending, certain ministries had to cut their spending by 1.2 billion drachmas, while the War Department’s budget was not cut.”

¹⁹ “Die ‘Hilfe’ für Griechenland und die Türkei,” *Neues Deutschland*, 27-3-1947; On April 4, 1947, the General Secretary of the KKE, Nikos Zachariadis, moving along the same lines as the *Neues Deutschland* article, wrote in the party’s organ *Rizospastis*: “The ‘spring campaign’ has begun. The murder of Zevgos, the massacres in Gythio [...] are just a few examples. [...] This is an easy bloodshed at the expense of the peaceful population. [...] President Truman’s imperialist involvement in our internal affairs, with the hundreds of millions of dollars that accompany it, has emboldened and unleashed monarcho-fascism and its government.” “Αβυσσος ἀβυσσον επικαλείται” (Abyss calls out to Abyss), *Rizospastis*, 4-4-1947. Decades later, *Rizospastis* continued to call Zevgos “The first victim of the Truman Doctrine.” *Rizospastis*, 23-3-1997.

²⁰ The British MPs’ statements were made in Belgrade on their way to the Russian city of Sochi, where they met with Stalin on October 14, 1947. The MPs criticized the Marshall Plan “as designed to start an economic and diplomatic war in Europe and split Europe under Wall Street tutelage.” “Mr. Zilliacus in London,” *The Times*, 18-10-1947 and “Stalin on the Cominform and Trade with Britain,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 24-10-1947. In 1949, Zilliacus was expelled from the Labour Party for voting against the signing of the NATO Treaty.

“Economic chaos” now prevailed in Greece “due to the United States’ continuous interference in the country’s internal affairs.”²¹

Suddenly, at the end of 1947 and for most of 1948, *Neues Deutschland* not only reduced its reports but essentially stopped publishing articles about Greece. This change is explained by the fact that at the end of December 1947 the formation of the Provisional Democratic Government (PDG) was announced, following a decision taken by the KKE Politburo a few weeks earlier. Markos Vafeiadis, the General Commander of the DSE, was appointed Prime Minister. The Greek communists expected the PDG’s immediate recognition by the People’s Republics, a move that would give greater prestige and consolidate support for the DSE struggle. Such hopes were however dashed, as neither the USSR nor any of the Eastern Europe People’s Republics recognized the PDG. They didn’t want to further aggravate their deteriorated relations with the US and most importantly confirm the accusations made by Athens concerning the active support provided by the neighboring Balkan states to the DSE.²²

The refusal to recognize the PDG was a resounding slap in the face of the Greek communists. The prevailing frustration inevitably affected the Greek Communists’ relations with the rest of the People’s Republics at least until the autumn of 1948, when the Yugoslav representative to the UN raised the representation of the PDG issue in the debate held on the “paidomazoma” problem.²³ The SED also moved along the same lines. After all, it could not have recognized Markos’ government as an independent East German state had not been created yet.²⁴ *Neues Deutschland* began to deal with Greece again, when in the autumn of 1948 the SED Central Secretariat, confirming the thaw in relations, decided to proceed with the establishment of an Assistance Committee for

²¹ “Mittelalter in Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 8-10-1947; “Kolonie Griechenland,” 31-10-1947.

²² Andreas Stergiou, *Im Spagat zwischen Solidarität und Realpolitik: Die Beziehungen zwischen der DDR und Griechenland und das Verhältnis der SER zur KKE* (Mannheim: Bibliopolis, 2001), 31; Nikos Marantzidis–Kostas Tsivos, *Ο Ελληνικός Εμφύλιος Πόλεμος και το Διεθνές Κομμουνιστικό Σύστημα* (The Greek Civil War and the International Communist System) (Athens: Alexandria, 2012), 112.

²³ Marantzidis–Tsivos, *op.cit.*, 114.

²⁴ Stergiou, *op.cit.*, 31.

Greece. The committee was set up in early November, with the newspaper announcing the development in an article entitled “Help for Democratic Greece,” noting that “the main task of this committee should be to support democratic Greece with monetary and material donations, especially medicines and medical material.” To this end, a public appeal was made to the East Zone’s people to contribute to the committee’s aims.²⁵

Up until that point, the Greek authorities had been following the reports on Greece published both in *Neues Deutschland* and in other East Zone newspapers, without however paying much attention. The establishment of the Assistance Committee, however, would prove to be the turning point that forced Athens to change this attitude. The SED had stepped up its game and from the simply commenting on what was happening in Greece through its official organ, it was now taking active action that could have an impact on the civil war’s outcome. Tangible assistance to Markos’ government was perceived as a serious threat by the authorities in Athens, with the Greek military mission in Berlin now sending extensive reports on everything written in *Neues Deutschland* regarding Greece.

Athens’ fears were fueled even more by reports that gradually began to appear in newspapers and magazines published in the Western occupation zones with an extensive article in *Der Spiegel*, published in Hanover, in the British occupation zone, further alarming the Greek authorities. The article, which contained multiple inaccuracies, outlined the assistance provided by the USSR to the DSE, most importantly how the “involuntary volunteer” SS-doctor Werner Göstring whilst being held

²⁵ “Hilfe für das demokratische Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 10-11-1948; *Neues Deutschland* also published the Committee’s appeal to the public, which stated the following: “The moral and material support of the Greek democrats and freedom fighters is an essential contribution to the defense of world peace. With the same unyielding determination shown by those who fought against fascism during World War II, the democrats and anti-fascists of Greece are fighting today against the fascist-monarchist minority government and the crushing embrace of American imperialism. A movement is developing all over the world against the fascist regime in Greece, for peace, for security and for the freedom of democracy. We join this movement and support the freedom struggle of the Greek democrats.” “Hilfe für das demokratische Griechenland,” *Neues Deutschland*, 10-11-1948.

in Silent Camp (Schweigelager) 81 in Omsk, Siberia, was evaluated as an “extremist” by the Soviets and, along with other Germans and foreigners, was sent to Greece to fight alongside Markos. According to *Der Spiegel*, Göstring received “People’s Republic of Greece” citizenship, participated in the catalytic battle of Konitsa and remained with Markos in Greece until almost mid-December 1948, when he managed to escape to Trieste.

“In August 1946, a high-ranking Soviet visitor appeared at the Bulkes camp.²⁶ General Popovic, coming from a secret meeting between General Markos and Politburo member Zhadnov in Petrich. [...] Popovic then took Göstring and about a hundred other Germans with him to three new camps on the Bulgarian-Yugoslav border where German legionnaires should set up the cadres of the new Markos units. [...] Göstring and the other German and foreign legionnaires were soon distributed amongst the Greek rebel units. On 30 October 1946, they lined up for the first time to receive orders from General Markos. It was the proclamation of a ‘Greek Democratic Army.’ The legionnaires were sworn in to their new commander and thus automatically became citizens of the ‘People’s Democracy of Greece.’ [...] In the spring of 1947, on orders from the Kremlin, Markos launched the famous attack on Konitza.²⁷ Here on the Albanian border, he wanted to set up the seat of his government and prepare the fatal blow to Athens. [...] Göstring had accompanied Markos for two months, holding the rank of a Greek major as a ‘Sanitation Inspector.’ [...] At the edge of a cliff, Markos worked out the plan for blowing up the Grammos ring with his Russian and German general staff. [...] When Werner Göstring added up the dead, wounded and missing in his diary after twenty months of guerrilla warfare, he calculated approximately 38,000 fallen Greeks, 6,500 fallen foreign legionnaires, including 450 Germans, 55,000 wounded and 25,000 missing. Their ideals had not benefited Markos’ nearly 75,000

²⁶ Bulkes in Yugoslavia was the best-known guerrilla training center in the Balkans.

²⁷ The battle of Konitsa, which took place at Christmas and not in the spring of 1947, as the author of the article erroneously states, was a decisive battle of the Greek Civil War in which the DSE tried but failed to occupy Konitsa, aiming to make it seat of the Provisional Democratic Government.

heavily armed men. The 15,000 foreign legionnaires had never had any ideals anyway.²⁸

The *Spiegel* article was no standalone event. The *Deutscher Pressedienst (dpd)* news agency, also based in the British-occupied zone, broke the news that Volkspolizei units were being sent to the Greek border to fight alongside the Greek guerrillas. Thirty of those men had however fled to the British zone in order to avoid being sent to Greece.²⁹ The newspaper *Der Sozialdemokrat*³⁰ also confirmed that Volkspolizei members were in Greece, going so far as to raise their numbers to 1,200 men in addition to the 8,000 men from the Greek German brigade already based in the city of Tyrnavos, near Larissa.³¹

The reports caused Athens' immediate reaction, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordering for investigations in both Greece and Germany to take place in order to verify whether East Zone Germans formed part of the DSE's ranks. The Greek consul in Hamburg, Dimitris Nikolareizis, visited the East German refugee camp in Uelzen, Hamburg, in an attempt to ascertain whether any of the refugees there had left the East Zone in order to be sent to fight in Greece. The Army General Staff also conducted "persistent investigations" between the army units to determine whether Germans had been spotted in the rebel ranks and whether German citizens were among those arrested by the national army.³² In both cases, answers were negative. Despite their extensive investigations, the Greek authorities failed to substantiate the publications' validity.³³ The opinion that the reports were exacerbated figments of imagination was also shared by the Foreign Office, which was aware of the circulating rumors regarding the DSE reinforcement with German

²⁸ "Wir lieben Extremisten," *Der Spiegel*, 26-3-1949, 3.

²⁹ Nikolareizis to Military Mission in Berlin, 21 May 1949, Service of Diplomatic & Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs [hereafter YΔΙΑ], K.Y. 1949, 25.2.

³⁰ Newspaper of the Social Democratic Party of Germany published in Berlin's British sector between 1946 and 1949.

³¹ Greek Military Mission in Berlin to Foreign Ministry, 24 October 1949, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1949, 25.2.

³² Army General Staff to Foreign Ministry, 17 August 1949, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1949, 25.2.

³³ Ibid; Nikolareizis to Military Mission in Berlin, 21 May 1949, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1949, 25.2.

fighters and even their passage to Grammos and Vitsi. British diplomats made no secret of their “serious doubts about the information transmitted regarding a German mission” in Greece, which aimed much more at impressing both German and Greek public opinion.³⁴

Athens’ relief however would not last long. While all the information seemed to confirm that no Germans were assisting the guerillas, a new article in *Der Sozialdemokrat* in mid-July 1949 became a new source of agitation. The newspaper claimed that Walter Ulbricht, founding SED member and later leader of the German Democratic Republic, had personally arrived at the Greek-Bulgarian border in an effort to boost the DSE fighters’ morale. This time, however, Greek authorities did not have to launch a new investigation, as only days later, Ulbricht himself rushed to refute the rumors, attributing them to the Western press’ attempts to cover the “weaknesses” of the West “through angry hate propaganda:” “For example, the gentlemen [of the opposing press] found out that I was on vacation in Saxony. They immediately fabricated the report that I was no longer in my position and that instead I was active on the Bulgarian-Greek border. They only invented the latter to distract the people of Berlin and West Germany from the fact that Hitler’s old generals were already busy with military issues in West Germany on behalf of the USA and its German accomplices.”³⁵

In October 1949, as the Greek Civil War was coming to an end, with the communists announcing the temporary suspension of hostilities, *Neues Deutschland* sided with Moscow’s and the KKE’s official line that the failure of the Greek communists was the result of “Titos’ Clique’s” betrayal, which “encouraged the Anglo-American imperialists in their determination to hold on to Greece at all costs.”³⁶ The “Monarcho-Fascists” had indeed won but “the imperialists’ hopes of crushing the democratic movement in Greece would remain just an illusion,” as they had suffered “great losses and in the following years they would be forced to spend 3 billion drachmas for military pur-

³⁴ Foreign Ministry to Ministry of the Army, 1 August 1949, ΥΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1949, 25.2.

³⁵ “Jetzt kommt die Zeit der Erfolge,” *Neues Deutschland*, 26-7-1949; Greek Military Mission in Berlin to Foreign Ministry, 26 July 1949, ΥΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1949, 25.2.

³⁶ Nikos Zachariadis, “Titos Clique fällt dem volksdemokratischen Griechenland in den Rücken,” *Deutschland*, 7-8-1949.

poses.” Still, the newspaper itself “openly admitted” that “the democratic movement’s situation in Greece has deteriorated. And the blame for the fact that thousands of democrats have lost their lives again [...] lies solely with the traitor Tito, who let himself be bought by the Anglo-American imperialists for their own selfish ends.” What was certain, however, was that the guerrillas had not said their last word. *Neues Deutschland* warned that “sooner or later people will hear again about the activities of the Democratic Army.”³⁷

Diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany, the legitimate successor of the German Reich, were restored in 1950, with the Greek side maintaining an extremely cordial attitude that surprised even the German diplomats themselves. On the contrary, it took decades for Athens to resume diplomatic relations with the East German state, when in May 1973, the Colonels of the Junta officially recognized the German Democratic Republic.³⁸

Greece and Italy

Following the German troops’ departure from Greece in October 1944, Italy launched a new attack on Greece. This time, however, it was a friendship attack. In November 1944, Ivanoe Bonomi, the Italian Prime Minister appointed by the Allies, sought a meeting with the Greek representative on the Allied Advisory Council for Italy, Georgios Exintaris, in an attempt to sound him out about the possibility of a bilateral relations resumption. Bonomi considered the resumption of relations as “easy over time,” since Italy no longer had any aspirations on the Dodecanese, given that the country had “finally ceased its expansionist policies,” as evidenced by the US, Britain, and the USSR’s decision to restore political and diplomatic relations with Rome.

Exintaris, following the instructions received from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, treated the Italian Prime Minister with “imposed restraint,” ruling out any possibility of an immediate relations resump-

³⁷ “Wie sieht es heute in Griechenland aus?,” *Neues Deutschland*, 16-9-1949.

³⁸ Siegfried Bock–Ingrid Muth–Hermann Schwiesau (eds.), *DDR-Außenpolitik. Ein Überblick. Daten, Fakten, Personen* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2010), 157.

tion.³⁹ Athens' position differed from that of the three powers, as Greece had suffered Italy's unprovoked and unjust attack. Before any serious rapprochement attempt, "the ground would have first to be prepared and a conducive environment would have to be created." This could only materialize if Italy proceeded to tangible moves that would testify to its sincere repentance beyond all doubt.⁴⁰ Internally, Athens had even drawn up a minimum set of prerequisites: the first and most important request was the Dodecanese's integration back into Greece without any reservation on Italy's part. Furthermore, Rome would have to condemn Mussolini's imperialist and expansionist policies and accept –without raising any objection or protest– all measures that the Greek government intended to take in order to "eliminate the bad Italian past in Greece," including the expulsion of "undesirable Italians,"⁴¹ the escrow of Italian property, and the closure of Italian schools. Rome would also have to lift all measures taken against Greek interests in Italy, compensate Greek citizens for the damages they had suffered as a result of the Italian aggression and restore all Greek religious, educational and legal institutions. These were necessary steps that could eventually facilitate a change in the prevailing negative attitude towards Italy, which Greek public opinion considered as the aggressor, who bore sole and entire responsibility for all of the country's subsequent sufferings.⁴²

Indeed, the sentiment for Italy in the Greek press and consequently in public opinion was extremely negative, with Rome's real desire to renounce and shake off its fascist past being heavily questioned. An article published in the newspaper *Eleutheria* in June 1945 was hugely

³⁹ Instructions by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were clear: "If the Italian delegates ask to visit you, you can receive them informally, after informing them in advance that you will not be able to reciprocate their visit [...] you will show them the restraint imposed by the relations of formal acquaintance." Foreign Ministry to all embassies, n.d., YΔΙΑ, K.Y.1945, 13.1.

⁴⁰ Exintaris to Foreign Ministry, 5 November 1944, YΔΙΑ, K.Y.1945, 13.1.

⁴¹ For the Italian community expulsion see Despina-Georgia Konstantinakou, "The Expulsion of the Italian Community of Greece and the Politics of Resettlement, 1944-52," *Journal of Contemporary History* 55, no. 2, (2020): 316-38.

⁴² Foreign Ministry, Note on Greek-Italian relations, 16 December 1945, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1945, 13.1.

indicative of this opinion as it scolded Italy for trying to convince “the whole world that the twenty years it has tolerated, strengthened, admired and practiced fascism are irrelevant and that the Italian people were foreign to the regime and deeply imbued with democratic ideals,” while also calling on Italians to “have the self-respect of the defeated and not whimper in disguise. Because they cause other peoples’ and especially the Greeks’ infinite disgust.”⁴³

The Greeks might have adopted a tough stance, but the USA and Britain were pushing for rapprochement. Already since the summer of 1945, the Americans were making it clear that the Greek-Italian relations resumption was at least “desirable.”⁴⁴ At the same time, the Italians had addressed the Foreign Office asking for “the British government’s good offices” in their effort to “normalize” relations with Greece.⁴⁵ London promised to exert its influence in Athens but pointed out that Rome should also take steps towards normalization. To this end, the Foreign Office suggested that Rome should postpone the recognition of the Albanian provisional communist government proclaimed in October 1944 by Enver Hoxha, which the Western allies were about to recognize with the understanding that free elections would be held,⁴⁶ given that Greece considered Albania as its fourth occupier during World War II and the state of war between the two states was still in force.⁴⁷ The Italians took the British advice, making of course absolutely sure to let Athens know of their “friendly move,” which endangered the “huge Italian interests” in Albania and burdened the already

⁴³ “Οι Ιταλοί” (The Italians), *Eleutheria*, 29-6-1945.

⁴⁴ Greek Embassy in Washington to Foreign Ministry, 26 July 1945, ΥΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1945, 13.2.

⁴⁵ Migone to De Gasperi, 11 December 1945, *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* [hereafter *DDI*], Decima Serie, vol. III, Doc. 3.

⁴⁶ “Enver Hoxha, Mastermind of Albania’s Isolation,” *The New York Times*, 12-4-1985.

⁴⁷ See Office Nationale Hellénique des Criminels de Guerre, *Les atrocités des quatre envahisseurs de la Grèce. Allemands, Italiens, Bulgares, Albanais* (Athens: 1946); Following Italy’s annexation of Albania in April 1939, Albania entered into a “personal union” status with Italy and passed a law in June 1940, under which the Kingdom of Albania would be at war with the states also at war with the Kingdom of Italy. Respectively, after the declaration of war with Italy, Greece declared Albania as a hostile state: *Efimeris tis Kyverniseos* (Official Greek Gazette), 379, I, 10.11.1940. The formal state of war between the two countries is legally still in force today.

“precarious position of Italian citizens” residing in the country. Internally, of course, they noted that they could not postpone Hoxha’s government’s recognition indefinitely because “that could cause reactions in Yugoslavia and indirectly in Moscow, which, in the circumstances we are in, we should avoid.”⁴⁸

Despite the Allies’ interventions and the Italians’ friendly gestures, the Greek authorities remained unmoved. This resulted in the greater involvement of the Allies who, seeing the Cold War intensify, sought the immediate normalization of bilateral relations between two members of the Western coalition. The State Department undertook to put further pressure on the Italians, complaining that they had not done enough to improve relations with Greece, while also stressing that it was absolutely essential the bilateral relations resumption “take place as soon as possible.” Rome, however, complained that its efforts clashed with the Greeks’ “intransigent refusal.”⁴⁹ The British on the other hand dealt with the Greeks, expressing their “eagerness” for positive developments in Athens–Rome relations, in view of the information reaching the Foreign Office that Yugoslavia was ready to restore its relations with Italy. The Greek-Italian rapprochement had become urgent, as it would be, at the very least, “unfortunate if the Greek government adopted a tougher stance than the Yugoslavs.”⁵⁰

The Greek government however remained reluctant, as it could not ignore the public opinion’s strong anti-Italian sentiments. At the same time, it also acknowledged that the resumption of diplomatic relations with Italy could give Tito the perfect excuse for further tightening his ties with Bulgaria and Albania, thereby creating a narrow front of the three states that could intensify the protection and assistance they offered to the Greek Democratic Army, significantly influencing the civil war’s outcome. Developments would soon force Greek officials to abandon their hesitations. In the spring of 1945, Tito recognized the Hoxha government and re-established Yugoslavia’s relations with Bulgaria. These moves scared Athens, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁴⁸ De Gasperi to Migone, 14 December 1945, *DDI*, Decima Serie, vol. III, Doc. 19.

⁴⁹ Tarchiani to De Gasperi, 23 January 1946, *DDI*, Decima Serie, vol. III, Doc. 109.

⁵⁰ Foreign Office, Note, 20 December 1945, *ΥΔΙΑ*, K.Y. 1946, 54.1; Konstantinakou, *Πολεμικές οφειλές*, 218.

emphasizing that the restoration of relations with Italy should not be further postponed, as this could “curb Tito’s momentum, taking into account the concerns that he had always had in the past with the idea of a possible reconciliation between the Greeks and the Italians.”⁵¹

The change in Athens’ course of action was also dictated by the forthcoming conference for the signing of the Peace Treaties with Italy, Bulgaria, and the other Hitler satellites, scheduled to begin in July 1946, which would judge the issues that bore importance for Greece, such as the Dodecanese and war reparations. The time was up for Athens. If the Greek government wanted Anglo-American support, it had to meet their demand, which aimed to strengthen Italy’s international position and at the same time isolate Yugoslavia.⁵² In June 1946, Greece re-established direct diplomatic relations with Italy, initially by appointing representatives. Full diplomatic relations would then be restored after the Peace Treaty’s signing.⁵³

This development marked a new era in relations between the two states, which were now focused on overcoming the difficult war past. At the same time, of course, it provided the Italian authorities with the opportunity to closely follow internal developments in Greece, with the influence of the Cold War becoming absolutely obvious. Italian diplomats noted the special position that American policy now attached to Greece, a fact that was also certified by the Truman Doctrine and the financial assistance provided by the Marshall Plan. While Italy received one of the largest sums from the Marshall plan aid, amounting to twelve billion dollars,⁵⁴ officials in Rome however were in the process of continuously trying to find ways to further assist the Italian economy’s growth and penetration in Europe, and Greece was the perfect candidate. During the Peace Conference, it had already been agreed upon that Italy would pay 105 million dollars in war reparations to Greece through contracts with Italian companies that would undertake to de-

⁵¹ Foreign Ministry, Note on Greek-Italian relations, 16 December 1945, ΥΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1945, 13.1.

⁵² Note, 26 November 1945, The National Archive, FO 371/48404.

⁵³ “Αποκαθίστανται αι σχέσεις μεταξύ Ελλάδος και Ιταλίας” (Relations between Greece and Italy are being restored), *Ελευθερία*, 25 June 1946.

⁵⁴ Francesca Fauri, *Il Piano Marshall e l’Italia* (The Marshall Plan and Italy), (Bologna: Mulino, 2010).

liver products and services to Athens.⁵⁵ Rome believed that the Marshall Plan created even better prospects for Italian industries in Greece, given that Athens intended to implement a national reconstruction plan, in which Italy could participate through third party arrangements.⁵⁶

However, the Marshall Plan and US policy towards Greece created not only opportunities but also significant risks. Italian officials observed that the US' attitude in Greece resulted in making "Moscow's politics in Mediterranean basin increasingly sensitive."⁵⁷ In this context, Italian diplomats in Athens closely followed the civil war's developments, with their interest focused on the effect that the communists' potential prevalence could have on Athens' policy towards Rome. With that being said, the Italian authorities did not seem to lose too much sleep over such a possibility. As Italy's representative in Athens Guidotti complacently noted, "all democratic parties in the Greek Parliament" supported the "sober and gradual reconciliation between Greece and Italy." The only party which continued to maintain a "violently hostile" stance were the communists. Guidotti, however, appeared convinced that this attitude was the result of tactics, commenting that "if there was a revolution, something that is impossible to imagine today, and the KKE came to power, its policy towards Italy would rapidly change. They would definitely send us an invitation for cooperation."⁵⁸

The confidence expressed by the Italian diplomatic authorities in Athens regarding the tangible improvement of bilateral relations was not exactly shared by the Greek authorities. The Peace Conference had relatively positive results for Greece. The Peace Treaty signed on February 10, 1947, had met the basic Greek claim for the Dodecanese integration. However, the 105 million dollars in reparations that had been awarded were assessed as extremely low, with Foreign Minister Panagis Tsaldaris expressing strong complaints about the "Allies' leniency, who in their efforts to protect the Italian economy had awarded Greece only a 'pittance' instead of adequate war reparations for the damages." Public reactions were equally intense, with Greek newspa-

⁵⁵ Konstantinakou, *Πολεμικές οφειλές*, 226.

⁵⁶ Guidotti to Sforza, 11 July 1947, *DDI*, Decima Serie, vol. VI, Doc. 177.

⁵⁷ Carandin to Sforza, 9 August 1947, *DDI*, Decima Serie, vol. VI, Doc. 296.

⁵⁸ Guidotti to Sforza, 10 September 1947, *DDI*, Decima Serie, vol. VI, Doc. 402.

pers even going so far as to write about a fascist revival in Italy.⁵⁹ A “Justice for Greece” rally was also planned to allow the public to protest about “the injustice done against Greece by the Peace Conference.” The Ministry of Public Order, however, banned the rally on the back of “information about the disturbance of public order due to incendiary slogans, which would be used during the rally by EAM supporters.”⁶⁰

Resentment which arose from decisions made at the Conference along with the resurgence of anti-Italian feelings in Greek public opinion forced Athens to freeze the rapprochement process. The two states had agreed that following the Peace Treaty signing, they would make the necessary arrangements for diplomatic relations to be upgraded and for representatives to be replaced by ambassadors. Still, Athens did not seem willing to proceed as planned. At this point, the USA decided that the time for their intervention had come in order to end the stagnation and put the Greek-Italian relations back on track once and for all. It was after all clear that the Western alliance could not afford two of its members states in one of the most sensitive and important areas of the world to continue their feud. The Cold War was spiraling, the Greek Civil War was at a critical juncture and the inability of both Athens and Rome to find a scheme for their postwar cooperation obstructed America’s plans to form a Mediterranean coalition.

During Tsaldaris’ trip to Washington in the summer of 1947, US officials arranged for a meeting between the Greek minister and the Italian ambassador, during which the Americans would be “kept informed” of all exchanges. Upon his return to Athens, Tsaldaris stopped at Rome Airport, where his counterpart Carlo Sforza rushed to meet him. At the one-hour meeting, the two ministers agreed on the immediate exchange of ambassadors. In his statement to the press, Tsaldaris underlined that “the restoration of friendly relations with Italy is one of the main points of Greek foreign policy and takes place within the framework of the general policy pursued by the Great Powers.” He also made sure to hint that the decision was not the result of the Greek government’s will but of American pressure, implying that the “Greek initiative to restore friendly relations with Italy has been influenced by US policy, which

⁵⁹ “Φασιστικά Εκδηλώσεις” (Fascist Manifestations), *Eleutheria*, 29-10-1946.

⁶⁰ Konstantinakou, *Πολεμικές οφειλές*, 223.

seeks to expand the circle of states attached to the sphere of American cooperation.”⁶¹

The US’ intervention was obviously a catalyst. From this point on, rapprochement accelerated with the two countries reaching economic and political agreements aimed at strengthening their cooperation. As part of this newly founded friendship, the Greek government decided in early 1948 to leave the bitter past behind and facilitate the “complete detoxification” of Greek-Italian relations, waiving the prosecution of Italian nationals accused of war crimes in Greece.⁶² The decision, which was initially kept secret, was made public by Tsaldaris in November 1948 during the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, which regulated settlement issues for Greek and Italian nationals, enabling them to “freely enter the territory of the other Party, to leave, travel, settle on the territory and reside there.” The change in the Greek attitude towards Italy was also evidenced by the fact that the Greek press welcomed the waiver announcement and the signing of the agreements, presenting them as a springboard for the new beginning of Greek-Italian relations.⁶³ The Greek authorities after all freely admitted that their decisions were imposed by the “full understanding” shown by Rome “on matters concerning the insurrection and Greece’s international position in general,” as “the Italian government willingly agreed to provide 800,000 missiles and other war materials provided by the Italian army, in order to facilitate us in our fight against the rebels.”⁶⁴

Greece and Bulgaria

Rapprochement efforts with Bulgaria proved extremely difficult, given that the two countries belonged to different spheres of influence. Differences were further exacerbated by both Greece’s claims for realigning its northern frontiers and by the help the Bulgarians provided to the

⁶¹ “Ἦρχισαν Συνομιλῖαι Ἑλλάδος καὶ Ἰταλίας” (Greek-Italian Discussions have begun), *Ἐλευθερία*, 20-8-1947.

⁶² Despina-Georgia Konstantinakou, “The ‘Complete Detoxification of Greek-Italian Relations’: The Prosecution of Italian War Criminals in Greece and the Cessation of Justice,” *Ricerche Storiche*, XLIII, no.2 (2013): 339-64.

⁶³ Konstantinakou, *Πολεμικές οφειλές*, 511-2.

⁶⁴ Kapsalis to Pipinelis, 19 January 1948, ΥΔΙΑ, Rome Embassy, 1953, 15.

DSE.⁶⁵ On December 3, 1946, the Greek government submitted a complaint to the Secretary-General of the UN accusing Bulgaria, along with Albania and Yugoslavia, of providing the Greek guerilla movement with substantial support. A few days later, the UN Security Council established an investigation commission to ascertain the validity of the Greek allegations.⁶⁶

The commission report was signed in May 1947 and found by a majority vote that Bulgaria, Albania, and Yugoslavia had given assistance to the Greek guerillas. However, during its deliberations in the summer of 1947, the Security Council was unable to reach a decision on the issue and on October 21, 1947, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 109. The Resolution called upon Bulgaria, Albania, and Yugoslavia to “do nothing that could furnish aid to the said guerillas” and to cooperate in a dispute settlement. In this regard, the General Assembly recommended that Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, and Greece “establish normal diplomatic and good neighbourly relations amongst themselves as soon as possible.” Furthermore, a special committee was established with the aim of observing compliance and the implementation of the recommendations by the four governments concerned.⁶⁷ The special committee named the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB) held its first meeting in Paris on November 21, 1947, and consisted of representatives from Australia, Brazil, China, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the UK, and the USA, while seats were held open for Poland and the USSR.⁶⁸

In compliance with the Resolution, the Greek government called on Sofia to resume bilateral relations following the ratification of the peace

⁶⁵ For Greece’s claims see Basil Kondis, “Greek National Claims at the Paris Peace Conference of 1946,” *Balkan Studies* 32, no. 2 (1991): 309-24.

⁶⁶ Report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB), General Assembly, Official Records: Third Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/574), Lake Success, New York, 1948, 7.

⁶⁷ Resolution 109 (II) Threats to the Political Independence and the Territorial Integrity of Greece, in United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Resolutions 16 September-29 November 1947, Lake Success, New York, 12-4.

⁶⁸ Report of the UNSCOB, 8; Amikam Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952* (New York: Praeger, 1990).

treaty that Bulgaria had signed in February 1947. Athens' move was not only intended to show that it respected and complied with UN decisions. Improving bilateral relations could secure the 45-million-dollar reparations awarded by the Peace Conference, while Athens also hoped that it could make it more difficult for Bulgaria to provide support to the Greek communists. The Bulgarians avoided responding, even when Athens repeated its request.⁶⁹

In reality, Sofia had indirectly already given its answer by intensifying aid provided to the DSE. The Greek authorities could not hide their annoyance as reports reached the ministries about Sofia's continued assistance to the guerillas. The Foreign Ministry even directly accused Bulgaria of allowing "the guerrillas to use Bulgarian territory to a large extent" and of "assisting guerrillas to enter Greece when it serves their purposes." Furthermore, "the Bulgarian frontier authorities provided shelter to Greek guerrillas when they were pushed to the border by Greek forces and allowed Greek guerrillas to cross from Bulgarian territory into Greece to attack Greek forces," while also providing "logistic assistance in large numbers to the guerillas."⁷⁰

Suddenly, six months after the initial Greek rapprochement, Bulgaria, on the eve of the UN General Assembly, conveyed to the UN Secretary-General that it was willing to re-establish relations with Greece, but under certain conditions. First and foremost, Sofia demanded guarantees from Athens that it would not claim Bulgarian territory. Greece would also have to refrain from interfering in Bulgaria's internal affairs and compensate all Bulgarian citizens who had been affected by the "atrocities" committed by the Greek border authorities. Athens, refusing "to be carried away by the immoral Bulgarian's compromise," vehemently rejected Sofia's demands.⁷¹

The sudden shift in Bulgaria's stance troubled both the Greek authorities and the other Western governments, which were trying to identify the causes of this change. The opinions expressed varied. Greek authorities attributed the "superficial conciliation attempts" to the victories claimed by the government forces against the guerillas as well as

⁶⁹ Foreign Ministry, Note, 28 June 1948, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1948, 116.1.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

to the UNSCOB action. Athens could not hide its distrust, stressing that the Bulgarian proposal was aimed at “neutralizing the Balkan commission and everything that the UN had done since December 1946 on the Greek issue.”⁷²

The Foreign Office observed that “Russian friendship attacks on the West” had intensified in recent years, with the aim of changing the western perspective of the Eastern Bloc, which would allow communist regimes to consolidate their hold. Sofia’s approach, in particular, was the result of the interest shown by the UN on the Greek issue combined with the Bulgarian authorities’ awareness that any attack against Greece “would create a very serious situation for them.” However, British diplomats did not hide their concern about Bulgaria’s “astute” move, warning that Athens would have to carefully decide upon how it would react, as both an acceptance or rejection of the Bulgarian proposal could lead to significant risks: by restoring Greek-Bulgarian relations, Sofia would be able to downplay Greece’s accusations of the guerrillas’ support from its Soviet-influenced neighbors, which would inevitably lead to the UN no longer dealing with the issue effectively, making the UNSCOB irrelevant. The rejection would also allow Bulgaria to propagandistically exploit the negative response to Greece’s detriment.⁷³

Similar assessments were shared by the United States, which linked Bulgaria’s sudden shift to Moscow’s and Sofia’s desire to neutralize the UNSCOB and its impact. The State Department observed, however, that another important factor motivated Bulgaria’s newly founded flexibility: the “psychological preparation” for Bulgaria’s and Albania’s application to join the UN. The opening to the Western world attempted by the socialist democracies, and especially Bulgaria, and the desire to join the UN was attributed to the attempt to limit the Western majority in the Organization’s Assembly and was not bound to the attempt to reach out to Greece but even aimed at the signing of an Italian-Bulgarian friendship pact. Italy was not at all averse to the idea, with Athens closely monitoring the discussions between Sofia and Rome, unable to

⁷² See Kyrou to Foreign Ministry, 20 June 1948, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1948, 116.1.

⁷³ Greek Embassy in London to Foreign Ministry, 22 June 1948, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1948, 116.1.

hide its resentment.⁷⁴ This resentment was further fueled by the information that reached Athens that the new Bulgarian ambassador in Rome, during a meeting with Italian officials, had placed sole responsibility for the lack of Greek-Bulgarian diplomatic relations on Athens, which refused to recognize “the common borders of the two states.”⁷⁵

Only France expressed a different view on Bulgaria’s motives, maintaining that Sofia’s actions actually hid a sincere desire for reconciliation. Paris, after all, put greater pressure than the Anglo-Americans on the Greek authorities to water down their negativity and try to find common ground with the Bulgarians. The French ambassador in Sofia even expressed his belief that Sofia’s initiative should not be attributed to an explicit request from Moscow but rather to the restriction of Soviet interest in Greece, which gave the Bulgarians greater freedom to pursue an independent foreign policy. The Greek authorities, however, were far from embracing France’s opinions, arguing that Paris was in no position to make an educated assessment as “French diplomacy was fully absorbed in the German question and the problems it creates for France; it therefore only displayed a theoretical interest in Balkan issues without following them with due diligence.”⁷⁶

Regardless of the Bulgarian motives, the UN firmly believed that Sofia with its proposal had taken a first step towards Greece, thereby creating an opportunity not to be missed. Pressure therefore was put on Athens to take a seat at the negotiating table. Athens resolutely refused, as it considered the conditions set by Sofia as completely unacceptable, demanding the unconditional restoration of bilateral relations. The Greek stance annoyed the UNSCOB, with the Australian and Pakistani representatives even going so far as to openly accuse Greece of obstructing any reconciliation. In a last attempt to persuade Athens, the UNSCOB suggested that the Greeks should also set their conditions for Bulgaria. The Greek government, realizing that a negative response would automatically make it solely responsible for the failure of the relations resumption, accepted the proposal as proof of its desire not to

⁷⁴ Kyrou to Foreign Ministry, 10 August 1948, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1948, 116.1.

⁷⁵ Greek Embassy in Rome to Foreign Ministry, 14 August 1948, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1948, 116.1

⁷⁶ Raphael to Foreign Ministry, 18 June 1948, YΔΙΑ, K.Y. 1948, 116.1.

“lose even the most improbable hope for the restoration of relations with Bulgaria, which under the current circumstances would have a serious international and domestic significance.” The main condition set by the Greek officials was Sofia’s immediate commitment that it would stop providing assistance to the DSE, which would have to “be verified by UNSCOB observers to be accepted on Bulgarian territory.” They also called for a mutual declaration by Bulgaria and Greece that the borders as set out in the February 1947 Peace Treaty would be respected.⁷⁷

Sofia rejected the Greek terms. However, continuing the blame game between the two parties, the Bulgarians tried to deny any responsibility for the collapse of the rapprochement attempts, with the Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Vasil Kolarov, informing the French ambassador in Sofia that Bulgaria would be content with a statement from Athens renouncing all territorial claims it had presented at the Peace Conference. Then, Sofia would not insist on its other terms. The French ambassador saw Kolarov’s position as the basis on which rapprochement could be built and happily informed the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which in turn hastened to inform the Greek ambassador in Paris about the “compromise” Bulgaria demonstrated, urging Greece to do the same. The Greek ambassador, however, made it clear that Athens did not see any compromise on the part of Bulgaria, given that Sofia did not appear willing to give up its own claims on Greek soil.⁷⁸ It was now clear that the attempt to resume Greek-Bulgarian relations had failed. Bilateral relations stalled with renewed efforts following Stalin’s death in 1953, when, at the urging of the USSR, the two countries signed an agreement in 1954 to restore their relations.⁷⁹

Conclusions

The end of World War II found Greece already involved in a new conflict, the civil war, making Greece the first Cold War theatre. The new

⁷⁷ Foreign Ministry to UNSCOB, 6 August 1948, ΥΔΙΑ, Κ.Υ. 1948, 116.1.

⁷⁷ Greek Embassy in Paris to Foreign Ministry, 10 August 1948, Κ.Υ. 1948, 116.1.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Konstantinakou, *Πολεμικές οφειλές*, 311.

balance formed inevitably influenced Greek foreign policy during the period 1946-1949. Amidst the turbulence, Athens sought to consolidate its position in the international system and redefine its relations with both its allies and its enemies. Greece's former World War II enemies joined different spheres of influence, with authorities in Athens trying to navigate their new post-war policy taking into account Athens' position, challenges, and needs in the new era. In the case of the Allied-occupied Germany and most importantly Italy, the policy of rapprochement was chosen, which was dictated by both Greece's accession to the Western sphere of influence and the country's urgent need to gain support, given its sensitive geographical position, its volatile financial situation, its claims, and the fear of spreading USSR influence. On the contrary, the Soviet occupied part of Germany, which, along with Bulgaria, remained Greece's enemies. Any efforts that could place the bilateral relations on a new footing constantly failed as the suspicion shown by all parties involved and the tactical moves imposed by the Cold War left no room for conciliation, rendering avoidance as the only possible option. The beginnings of the Cold War proved to be a key factor in Greece's decisions in terms of making new friends and maintaining old enemies.

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Historical Dynamics and Environmental Changes: The Case of Three Villages in North-west Highland Greece

The study of a landscape is also the study as it is lived and experienced, and the place is the experience of it – with its paths and passages, its squares and mills, its fields, its threshing floors and pastures, its houses with their ovens and the memories all of these carry. The people who mark the landscape give it logical coherence and attribute content to it.¹ In keeping with this perspective, we will focus on the life histories of inhabitants from three villages in the Gramos mountain range in NW Greece. Our research examined the historically-produced social relations and practices that are inlaid in collective and individual time, in an attempt to understand the dynamics of the landscape. Through the locals' memories emerges the representation of local populations that are constantly interacting with the environment, simultaneously and indiscriminately 'intervening' and 'adapting' to it and organizing their lives in accordance with the environment. In short, they are perpetually in motion, as they are shaped by and formed through a metonymic causality relationship they entertain with the landscape. Rural communities and their places are not stable, relatively isolated entities outside of time and history struggling to survive within a hostile natural environment. Rather, they are societies characterised by change: technological developments, differentiations, and divisions along economic, class and cultural lines, and influenced by wider political and social dynamics. Communities respond to these changes by simultaneously modifying their places, in which natural and human environments are not distinguishable.

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¹ Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros, *Λαογραφικά Μελετήματα* (Folklore Studies) (Athens: Nea Synora, 1988), 14-40.

ble, they are two sides of the same coin. This is point that will be emphasised by the theoretical contribution of this paper. This contribution is consistent with other anthropological studies of highland communities in Greece,² and it is a contribution not limited by barrier of the nature-culture division which dominated the academic discourse and especially social and cultural anthropology for a long time, as influenced by the work of F. Boas and C. Levi Strauss.³ It is worth pointing out that the representation of rural communities in anthropological studies, influenced by structural functionalism until the 1960s and in folklore until the 1980s, insisted on the logic of the self-sufficiency of ‘isolated communities’ and their immediate dependence on their natural environment. Such concepts essentialised both rural communities and their surroundings.⁴ In contrast to this approach, this paper is based on a

² For example, see Stathis Damianakos–Ersi Zakopoulou–Haralampos Kasimis–Vassilis Nitsiakos, *Εξουσία, εργασία και μνήμη σε τρία χωριά της Ηπείρου* (Power, Labor and Memory in three Villages of Epirus), Athens: Plethron, 1997. Nitsiakos offers a similar perspective: Vassilis Nitsiakos, *Οι ορεινές κοινότητες της Β. Πίνδου* (The Highland Communities of the Northern Pindus Range), Athens: Plethron, 1995; the same, “Παραδοσιακές πρακτικές διαχείρισης του ορεινού χώρου” (Traditional Practices of Highland Areas Management), in *Ερημοποίηση* (Desertification), edited by Nikos Beopoulos and Apostolos Papadopoulos (Athens: Gutenberg, 2008), 133-50; the same, *Peclari: Social Economy in a Greek Village* (Berlin: Lit-Verlag, 2016). See also Sarah Green, *Notes from the Balkans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Andromachi Oikonomou, *Φύση, τεχνολογία και κοινωνία στις ορεινές κοινότητες του Κιθαιρώνα* (Nature, Technology and Society in Highland Communities at Kithaironas) (Athens: Odysseas, 2007).

³ Discussing this issue exceeds the priorities of this paper. For a summary of the relevant critique see Raymond Hames, “The Ecologically Noble Savage Debate,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36 (2007): 177-90. Most important is the work of Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

⁴ For a comprehensive critique of Greek folklorists’ approaches to community studies see Vassilis Dalkavoukis, “Μνήμη και κοινότητα. Επαναπροσδιορίζοντας τις έννοιες στην προοπτική της σύγχρονης Λαογραφίας” (Memory and Community. Redefining the Notions in the Perspective of Contemporary Folklore Studies), in *Ελληνική Λαογραφία* (Greek Folklore), edited by Manolis Varvounis and Manolis Sergis (Athens: Herodotus, 2012b), 275-93; Nitsiakos; *Οι ορεινές κοινότητες*; the same, *Peclari*. The emphasis on community studies among British anthropologists dates back to the interwar period and is related to ethnographic studies in Africa. Following WWII, the work of Robert Redfield, *The Little Community* (Upsala and Stockholm: Upsala Uni-

number of theoretical assumptions assembled in the work of P. Descola.⁵

This paper is based on work conducted as part of a wider research project⁶ which studied the landscape not as a static image, but through the dynamics of its changes. It is an interdisciplinary research on the environmental and social history of the landscape in the southern Gramos mountain range. After examining many highland areas in Northern Greece (Northern Pindos, Prespes, Rhodope, Pieria, Vitsi, etc.) the project team chose the area of the southern Gramos, in the upper basin of

versity Publication, 1955) provided a theoretical framework for a global use of the concept of ‘community’ as a research and analytical tool. The critique of this paradigm was many-sided, and focused on the false argument of rural communities’ self-sufficiency, see for example Margaret Stacey’s work “The Myth of Community Studies,” in *The Sociology of Community*, ed. C. Bell and H. Newby (London: Frank Cass and Co, 1974), 13-26, the deconstruction of the concept of cultural isolation, see for example Ardener Edwin’s work “Remote Areas: some theoretical considerations,” in *Anthropology at Home*, ed. A. Jackson (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987), 38-54, and the emphasis on symbolic construction rather than territoriality, see for example, Anthony P. Cohen’s work *The Symbolic Construction of the Community* (London: Routledge, 1985). For a concise critique see Gisli Pálsson, “Human-environmental Relations: Orientalism, Paternalism and Communalism,” in *Nature and Society*, eds. Philippe Descola and Gisli Pálsson (London: Routledge, 1996), 63-82. During the interwar period in Greece, attempts were made to formulate a native theoretical approach for the study of rural societies based on the notion of community. Konstantinos Karavidas was the most prominent scholar leading this attempt. The political and social context from the mid-1930s onwards prohibited any further development of these attempts, see Maria Komninou–Efthimios Papataxiarchis, eds., *Κοινότητα, κοινωνία και ιδεολογία* (Community, Society and Ideology) (Athens: Papazisis, 1990).

⁵ Descola, *Beyond Nature*.

⁶ In the framework of the Action ‘Research–Create–Innovate’ (EPANEK–NSRF), a partnership of institutions and companies including the National Centre for Research and Technological Development, three laboratories from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Laboratory of Folklore and Social Anthropology, Laboratory of Forest Botany–Geobotany, Laboratory of Atmospheric Physics) and the companies SYSTADA and VERUS+, undertook the creation of an innovative 4D application for a tour through the history of the landscape. Through the application, users can travel through time, facing the same landscape at different moments in the past, but also testing alternative scenarios for its course in time or projection into the future. The app is available on-site to visitors to the area (via their mobile devices) and online. The project was titled ‘Eco-TimeMachine: a 4D tour in landscape history.’

the river Sarantaporos, focusing on the valley of Palea Kotyli.⁷ This area, in addition to the ruined settlement of Old Kotyli, includes three other villages, Nea Kotyli, Pefkofyto and Chrysi, together with the zone of crops, meadows and other natural and man-made habitats surrounding it. It is an area in the mountainous area that separates Macedonia from Epirus, an area that has long been far from urban centres and outside the main roads and paths linking west and east in the southern Balkans.

During the 20th century, intense historical, social, and environmental changes have taken place in this area. We do not distinguish between the former and the latter because we consider environmental changes to be an integral part of the historical and social context and we recognise the environmental footprint produced by historical and social changes. Our study of the cultural construction of the landscape was implemented using qualitative research methods: ethnographic participant observation, open qualitative in-depth interviews, life histories. The ethnographic research in the area was carried out in the period October 2018 to January 2020. We collected material focusing on the contemporary landscape as a stimulus which could serve as the background of people's narratives.⁸ The emphasis on the environmental factor inherent in the wider research project led us to prioritise exploration of issues

⁷ The criteria for the selection of this area are explained at <https://ecotimemachine.gr/>. Palea Kotyli literally means 'old Kotyli.'

⁸ There are no published studies focusing on those three villages. The only available brief studies are the work of Andreas Stefopoulos on the village of Chrysi, see Andreas Stefopoulos, "Παιδικά παραδοσιακά παιχνίδια από τη Χρυσή Καστοριάς" (Childrens' Traditional Games at Chrysi Kastorias), *Μακεδονικά* 12 (1972): 361-423. Also, the same, *Τροφές της Χρυσής Καστοριάς* (Foods from Chrysi Kastorias) (Ioannina: University of Ioannina–Publications of the Folklife Museum, 1981). Stefopoulos served as an elementary school teacher in Chrysi in the 1970s. There are relevant studies for nearby villages (Eptachori, Zouzouli, Pefkos, Grammochoria), from which we can draw conclusions for the area under consideration. See Kostas Manos, *Λαογραφικά Επταχωρίου–Βοΐου* (Folklore from Eptachori–Voion) (Athens, 1962); Michalis Raptis, *Τα μαρτυρικά Γραμμοχώρια της Καστοριάς* (The Long-suffering Villages of Gramos at Kastoria) (Athens: Karagkounis, 1997); Angelos Sinanis, *Ο Γράμμος και τα Μαστοροχώρια της Κόνιτσας* (Gramos and the Craftsmen Villages) (Athens: Abnavasi, 2010); Dimitris Tsingalos, "Τα παλιοχώρια του Επταχωρίου" (The old villages of Eptachori), in *Annales of the 2nd Conference of Voiaki Estia* (Thessaloniki: Voiaki Estia, 1979), 77-86.

relating to house and settlement construction, crops, farming, animal husbandry, relationship with the forest, food, the organisation of work and daily life and forms of ownership. However, as is the case in the context of any ethnography, the locals led our discussions on topics they considered most important. We have no doubt that the material we gathered constitutes a presentation of life elaborated by collective and individual memory; one that responds to the questions: ‘what was there then’ and what are the needs of the present and future in terms of ‘what was there then.’

The Area in the 19th and up to the mid-20th Century

References are limited regarding settlements in this valley during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods. Such references provide descriptions of small villages and service stations (hospitals, monasteries) for those crossing the Gramos mountain range. For centuries the nearest towns and cities in the area were Nestorio (SE), Konitsa (W) and Kastoria (SE). Oral collective memory presents data going back to the beginning of the 19th century. The first information about the existence of these three villages is found in the memoirs of travellers in the late 19th century.⁹ Locals acknowledge the creation of their villages at about the

⁹ Kotyli (referred by its Slavic placename, Koteltsi) is mentioned as a village of 150 Christian inhabitants with a church and ‘miserable inn’ in 1886. There are reports explaining that in 1905 or 1910 the village population was about 200 inhabitants and a boys-school with 30 pupils was operating. Chrysi (Sllatina – a Vlach placename referring to the existence of a swamp or stagnant water) during this period had about 500 Christian inhabitants, a church and an inn. It is said that Chrysi was established around 1700 by cattle breeders from Epirus. In 1886, Pefkofyto (Visanskon or Vysanskon) had 170 Christian inhabitants. A school, affiliated to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, existed in the village in 1905. Information is provided by D.M. Brancoff, *La Macédoine et sa population chrétienne avec deux cartes ethnographiques* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1905), 182-3. See also Nikolaos Schinas, *Οδοιπορική σημειώσεις Μακεδονίας, Ηπείρου, νέας οροθετικής γραμμής και Θεσσαλίας* (Travel Notes from Macedonia, Epirus and along the New Frontier Line and Thessaly) (Athens: Messenger d’Athènes, 1886), 224, 816. Also, see Eleftheria Traiou, *Τα μονοπάτια του Γράμου* (The Trails of Gramos) (Kastoria: Municipality of Kastoria, n.d.), 43-4. It is worth mentioning that the data provided for this region in population censuses of the late 19th and early 20th century are rather questionable, often influenced by the national priorities of those who conducted the censuses. However, there is no doubt that the

same period. According to accounts of our informants, Kotyli was gradually constructed between 1820 and 1870 based on pre-existing uninhabited ruins. The village settlement was divided by a small river. On its NW riverbank there was the neighbourhood of Greek-speaking families from southern Aitoloakarnania. On the SE riverbank some Albanian-speaking extended families created their own neighbourhood. They originated from the Epirus region of NW Greece and migrated to Gramos after the destruction of Souli by Ottoman military forces in the early 19th century. Locals refer to them as Arvanites, a term widely used in Greece to connote the Albanian speaking populations of Greek national identity since the 19th century. As one villager mentioned ‘Others came from Albania, others came from here, from the area beyond, from Hasia...’ (Gregory Evangellou, 89-year-old). What is certain, however, is that the populations of all three villages (Kotyli, Pefkofyto, Chrysi) have at some point moved from various places further west of the northern Pindos mountain range. The words of Yannis Thomas, who was born in 1940 in the old village of Kotyli, are revealing. ‘Some came from Epirus, others from Northern Epirus, others, as we say, from the Vio region [...] They were hunted by the Turks from the Peloponnese, from old Greece, people came here to hide, that’s why they are called “Kachaounides,” hunted. This place was deserted prior to their arrival... it was the forest and the mountains.’

The gradual population growth in the early 20th century as well as the broader socio-political and environmental conditions¹⁰ lead to overseas migration to the USA and Canada. The remittances and the donations from the migrants improved the village infrastructure. The church of Kotyli was built in 1916 with donations provided by immigrants.

inhabitants of the region were not involved in the events of 1903-08 Ilinden uprising. This means that they were forming their communities within the Greek national project, see Dimitris Lithoxou, “Τα χωριά της Καστοριάς” (The Villages of Kastoria), <https://www.lithoksou.net/search/label/Μακεδονία.%20Τα%20χωριά%20της%20Καστοριάς> (accessed April 24, 2023).

¹⁰ The degradation of the soil due to overgrazing affected the ability of the fields to provide better harvest.

There are no oral testimonies, written sources, or studies¹¹ mentioning the settlement of refugees in the area after the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1922. During the 1920s a few families of native Muslims from the neighbouring village of Myrovliti migrated to Albania. Most of the Albanian-speaking Muslim families of Myrovliti were exempted from the 1922 exchange by being categorised as Chams.¹² During the same period, the villages in the area were renamed and given their current names¹³ and administrative changes took place. Kotyli, which in the 1928 census is presented as having a police station, a community office and a primary school, formed the *Community of Kotyli* along with Glykoneri (formerly Dr[i]anovo), and Myrovliti (1928).¹⁴ Pefkofyto and Chrysi, where there was also a post office and a primary school according to the 1928 census, formed the *Community of Chrysi*.¹⁵ At the same time, in 1927, the sub-prefecture of Kastoria was upgraded and became the province of Kastoria.¹⁶

¹¹ It is worth mentioning that Efstathios Pelagidis, in his study on the settlement of the 1922 refugees in western Greek Macedonia, makes no reference to the area: Efstathios Pelagidis, *Η αποκατάσταση των προσφύγων στη δυτική Μακεδονία 1923-1930* (The Settlement of Refugees in Western Macedonia 1923-1930) (Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis, 1994).

¹² On the history of Chams in NW Greece see Lambros Baltsiotis, “The Muslim Chams of Northwestern Greece: The Grounds for the Expulsion of a ‘Non-existent’ Minority Community,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 12 (November 2011): 1-31; Eleftheria Manta, “The Chams of Albania and the Greek State (1923-1945),” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 4, no. 29 (2009): 523-35. Laurie Kain Hart, “Culture, Civilization, and Demarcation at the Northwest Borders of Greece,” *American Ethnologist* 26 (1999): 196-220, and Green, *Notes from the Balkans*, offer useful ethnographic insides on the present-day status of native Albanian-speaking and/or bilingual Albanian and Greek rural communities in NW Greece.

¹³ Slatina was renamed Chrysi [Government Gazette 413/22.11.1926], Koteltsi became the community of Kotyli [Government Gazette 206/28.9.1927], Visansko was renamed Pefkofytos [Government Gazette 156/8.8.1928].

¹⁴ Kimon Digenis, “Κοτύλη” (Kotyli), *Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, vol. 15 (Athens: Pirsos, 1934): 18.

¹⁵ Theofylaktos Papakonstantinou, “Καστοριά” (Kastoria), *Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, vol. 14 (Athens: Pirsos, 1934): 17.

¹⁶ Thomi Verrou, *Τοπωνύμια και διοικητική κατανομή οικισμών της Μακεδονίας: Μεταβολές στον 20ό αι.* (Placenames and Administrative Settlement Distribution in Mac-

Despite these developments, the modes of agricultural production, the trade networks and the infrastructure in the region does not present major changes from the late 19th century and until WWII. Local communities were mainly endogamous with limited social relations and marriage exchanges between neighbouring villages. Paparizos mentions that villagers from one village use to go to the folk celebrations of nearby villages. Support between villages were also evident. According to the same author, during the Balkan Wars a delegation from Pefkos went to Kotyli in 1912 and asked for support to their cause.¹⁷ Support was also secured through the local patronage networks established with Nestorio and Kastoria rather than with Konitsa. The results of national and local elections in these villages throughout the interwar indicates the stability of power structures and patronage networks established by Greek nationalists in the area during the late 19th century. These networks became the basis for the support of royalist and conservative local MPs.

The place, as defined by our informants, included the built environment of the settlements, the facilities located outside the villages (water mills, threshing floors, paths and roads, beehives, chapels, sheepfolds, orchards, nearby gardens), the fields, the forest, and special places with a symbolic dimension (the river trough where X drowned..., the ‘tall tree,’ the monk’s passage, etc.). Human presence was organised and framed differently in these zones. It should be pointed out that the forest was not conceived of as an undisturbed wild landscape, but contained places where man, flora and fauna coexisted (forest slopes providing wood, places to hunt, places to avoid, grazing meadows, hillsides where mushrooms were gathered, trees that bore fruit, etc.).

Families were engaged in agricultural production and logging. They also had livestock. The reported practice of the custom of *Perperouna* in the villages of Kotyli and Pefkos, a religious rain ceremony, indicates that irrigation systems were not developed and during the summer months drought was often a problem. Paparizos reports that sometimes

edonia: Changes in the 20th century) (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2008), 182.

¹⁷ Giannis Paparizos, *Ta χωριά του Γράμμου* (The villages of Gramos) (Thessaloniki: Kodikas, 1998).

drought periods lasted for more than sixty days. The consequences were the adverse growth of crops, dried out springs and streams, dry grass.¹⁸ Reforestation and redefying the field divisions in 1928 was also reported in our discussions. These processes started immediately after the region was incorporated into the Greek state. The main crops included beans, leeks, potatoes, onions, cabbage, and wheat for food needs as well as grits, corn, barley, 'tai' (*Avena*) and 'rovi' (*Vicia ervilia*) to provide fodder. The fruit trees existed in the area were walnut, pear, coral, plum, apple, a few cherry and a few quince trees. The fields near the villages were more fertile because they were regularly fertilised by animal dung. The more distant and mountainous fields were used for cereal production. Near the villages there were also areas with cultivated terraces. The fields were subject to crop rotation every year and rarely to fallow. Each family household had, in average, 15 to 20 acres of land. Most of them were barren, due to the cold environment, lack of water and fertilisers, as well as soil exhaustion. An aerial photograph taken in 1945 presents 563 ha of crops in this area. Assuming that a significant part of these were already abandoned or fallow, the remaining area corresponds with the estimated number of family households holding each one 15 to 20 acres of land. The class structure of these villages was composed by few families with large landholdings. The limited total arable land was not sufficient to significantly diversify the socio-economic background. Any class differentiation seems to have resulted from a combination of several factors: income from livestock farming, logging, migrant remittances.

Cultivation was accomplished by using the labour force of all the family household members. The average family could cover the cultivation of 7 to 15 acres. In times of intensive work, families of the same clan cooperated in providing additional labour force. Gender differentiation was applied in a number of activities regarding the care of children, domestic work, the care of animals and hunting. The 89-year-old Grigoris Evangelou recalls: 'the best fields were around the village... But the manure was not enough, there was always need for more. Villagers used to settle the sheep in some fields for a number of days. This offered some manure... There were no other fertilizers back then. We

¹⁸ Papparizos, *op.cit.*, 59-62.

never cultivate the same crop in the same field. Year by year we changed the crop in each field... one year corn, one year wheat. In some cases we applied fallow.’ Mainly because of the location of the fields, wild animals often entered the fields in search of food, so people placed scarecrows or other deterrents. Alexandra Gounti and Panayiotis Efthymiou from old Kotyli recall: ‘Bears often “visited” our fields. Villagers lit the lanterns with oil and put a dog to bark. They'd throw in a little petrol in the field, the smell prevented some animals from coming. Sometimes people would go and stand guard to keep wild animals out.’

Livestock farming offered, apart from meat, the ability to have dairy products such as milk, cheese and yoghurt. They were mainly used for home-consumption. There was rarely enough for sale. Every family had livestock, but the number varied depending on the economic situation and the number of family members. Apart from one or two ‘pairs of oxen,’ each household had an average between 100 and 300 sheep and goats in the 1930s and 1940s. Given that the estimated number of households during the interwar in the area was about 150, the total number of sheep and goats is consistent with the records of the rural Management Studies conducted by the prefecture. Just before WWI, 20,000 goats and sheep belonging to the villagers were present in the area. In addition, until 1946, the area hosted every year the herds of semi-nomad Vlachs and Sarakatsan nomads. They rented mountainous areas, such as the ‘Arenes,’ from late April to late October every year. Trade relations were common between them and the locals: ‘when the Vlachs were coming, we were filling our baskets with fruits and sold them to Vlachs. In exchange we receive wool.’ With such a large animal population, it seems that grazing was the decisive factor in shaping the vegetation and the overall environment of the area. In addition to the extensive grassland (about 17.5 % of the area in 1945), forests played an important role in the diet of these animals, through the practice of branching, i.e., collecting branches, mainly oak, to feed the stabled animals during the winter. As a result, the oak forests in the area were generally sparse and with small trees. The first Forest Management Studies vividly describe the “disaster” that these practices entailed.

In addition to the above activities, some villagers were involved in beekeeping. Young men from Kotyli and Chrysi were also working as craftsmen. As it happened in other mountainous Balkan communities,

these men organised themselves in ‘bouloukia,’ collectivities with ‘bricklayers, charcoal makers, tailors, goldsmiths, potters, conductors, furnace makers, baxevantes (gardeners), painters’ travelling around northern Greece in search of work until the 1940s.¹⁹

The forest was a source of both revenue and risk. The risks relate to attacks by wild animals on domestic animals, crops, herds, and people. The main wild animals mentioned are bears, wolves, foxes, partridges, wild boars, hares, deer, elk, and skunks. All of our informants report that these attacks were part of a larger mode of symbiosis between wild-life and humans. In addition to the techniques of protecting the crops mentioned above, the protection of flocks was based on human presence, by building strong wooden fences in the pens and by building walls around the houses. As a source of income, the forest offered hunting and logging opportunities. Hunting provided food and furs, the latter of which was among the main commodities traded by the inhabitants of Nestorio, alongside dairy and logging products.

Pre-WWII logging differs significantly from post-WWII logging. Until WWII logging was carried out by families for their daily needs. There was limited systematic logging aiming to the market, traders coming from Kastoria. Due to the limited road network, logging was mainly carried out in the most accessible places near the villages, where it sometimes took the form of deforestation. Higher up, at the slopes of the ‘Arenas’ the public forest was managed as a property by various local Cham families from Myrovliti. They leased it to Greek merchants who used water mills to process the wood.

Market relations were not exclusively related to logging. The villagers of Pefkofyto and Chrysi visited the open market (bazaar) of Epitachorio, which ‘may not have had the wealth of Nestorio but was closer in distance.’ The villagers of Kotyli bought the necessary things from the open market of Nestorio every Saturday: ‘on foot and with an animal, on the path, it took about 4-5 hours walking.’ Everyday needs were

¹⁹ Nora Skouteri-Didaskalou, “Από τας κύκλωθεν πολιτείας και χώρας του Άνω και Μέσου Αλιάκμονος: Ο χώρος οι οικισμοί και οι άνθρωποι στο γύρισμα του 20ου αιώνα. Ένα πρόβλημα ανθρωπολογικής προσέγγισης” (From the nearby cities and countries of the Upper and Middle Aliakmon: The place, the settlements and the people at the turn of the 20th century. A problem of anthropological approach) (PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2008), 537.

also covered by the grocers who were regularly coming to the villages. The locals bought oil, wheat, wine and ouzo, tobacco, flour and fish, coal tar, fodder, rarely clothing. They sometimes used money payments but barter was also a common practice: ‘whatever anyone had... wood, goat and sheep skins, livestock. Back then, it was difficult to buy... Anyone who had sheep had jackets’ (testimony of Alexandra Goundi, 82-year-old).

A network of paths, narrow streets and alleys was used for communication between villages and the nearby agro-towns of Nestorio, Kastoria and Konista. The wider path, constructed in the 1930s, follows the current route between the three villages and ends at Nestorio. Parts of this path were available, under certain conditions, be used by lorries in the late 1930s. The oldest path between Kotyli and Nestorio, called ‘Charos’ (death), was shorter in distance but rather rough and dangerous during the winter months. Nikos Antoniou (85-year-old) from Pefkofyto recounts: ‘we lost mules and people. Every year we used to fix it with shovels. It was scary to pass the mule. [...] We suffered.’ These paths gradually disappeared, especially when paved roads were built in the 1970s. Today they are almost invisible, as they have been covered by the woods.

Population growth reached its peak just before WWII. Until the 1940s, a period mentioned by all informants as the heyday of their communities, the population grew gradually. Oral memory accounts refer to 70-80 houses in Kotyli and Chrysi (with 6-10 people in each house) and 50 houses in Pefkofyto in the 1930s-40s.²⁰ Other villagers had smaller populations.

Changes in the mid-20th Century

The prosperity of the region ended in the 1940s. This area was not a battlefield during the 1940-41 war in Greece. The picture changed, however, after 1943, when the area became the main refuge for guerrilla groups and the main theatre of the Greek Civil War from 1946 to 1949.

²⁰ The population growth is confirmed by official state censuses. In the 1928 census Kotyli had 364 inhabitants, Pefkofyto 231 and Chrysi 383. In the 1940 census the number of inhabitants increased.

Undeniably, the villages of the area and the environment suffered various consequences of the Civil War.²¹ One of the events which inaugurated the Civil War was the execution of the Kotyli National Army Gendarmerie detachment by leftist forces.²² The superiority of the leftist Democratic Army (DSE) forces in the area caused reprisals by the National Army. A memo of the DSE states that after the Varkiza Agreement and specifically in the period between the 23rd and 30th of November 1946 a number of violent incidents took place at Kotyli. The National Army Gendarmerie executed a leftist villager named Thanasis Goutis. The Gendarmerie imprisoned and tortured other villagers (Th. Elias, G. Stergios, P. Antoniou, A. Kosmas, N. Nikolaou, H.G. Goutis and Ch. Stergiou). There was also looting of the households of left-wing residents, namely those of the local priest I. Papadopoulos and other villagers such as N. Nikolaou, Th. Stergios ('15 sheep'), G. Stergios ('500 ounces of wheat'), E. Theodorou ('20 ounces of butter'). The village was forced to provide to the Gendarmerie '3,000 ounces of bread' (i.e., 84 kilos).²³ It should be noted that with the exemption of R. Alvanos' monograph, studies related to the events of the Civil War in these areas mainly focus on the military events.²⁴ Therefore little evidence and information is available on the environment of the region.

The most important development during the Civil War was the compulsory evacuation of the villages imposed by the National Army in

²¹ Many of our informants referred to these consequences. Their accounts are confirmed by archival material. A report produced by the Democratic Army in 11-11-1946 outlines the activities of its forces in Kotyli and Pefkofyto, see Democratic Army of Greece [hereafter DSE] "Εκθεση Δράσης 7-7-1946 έως 6-11-1946, DSE/ODEK/Gramos Archive, 11 Νοε 1946". The National Army had also closely monitored the local developments. A number of reports and other relevant documents are available in numerous files at the Archives of the Army History Directorate, Hellenic General Army Staff (see 22/E/681/Δ/29, 4/Δ/1540/108-109, 4/Δ/1540/79, 5/1292/57, 22/E/668/13, 1/A/1037/1, 5/1277/36).

²² DSE, *ibid.* See also Periklis Rodakis–Mpampis Grammenos, *Έτσι άρχισε ο εμφύλιος–Ολόκληρη η έκθεση του Δημοκρατικού Στρατού στον ΟΗΕ τον Μάρτιο του 1947* (That is how the Civil War Started) (Athens: Glaros, 1987).

²³ Rodakis–Grammenos, *op.cit.*

²⁴ Raymondos Alvanos, "Κοινωνικές συγκρούσεις και πολιτικές συμπεριφορές στην περιοχή της Καστοριάς 1922-1949" (Social clashes and political standpoints in the region of Kastoria 1922-1949) (PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2005).

May 1947. Families were transferred to Kastoria, Nestorio and other nearby to Kastoria villages (such as Kolokyntou, Mesopotamia and Maniaki).²⁵ The whole process was part of Operation Terminus implemented during the Civil War to deprive the Democratic Army of material and human resources provided by the rural communities.²⁶ The priest of Chrysi recalls that ‘they took us there, to the church mill we used to call it, and from there they took us to Kotyli. And there were the military jeeps waiting for us... and they loaded us and took us to Dispilio, Argos and Kastoria. There were some elderly women, like my mother, who had never seen a car before that day... They took straw to feed the jeeps, they thought they were eat straw.’ Another villager from Kotyli remembers: ‘the National Army attacked, they were chasing the partisans, the villages were liberated, they told us “follow us” and we followed the army and then they took us down to Kastoria, Nestorio, Mesopotamia, Argos Orestiko. They gave an order and in three days the village was emptied. Each one of us took two or three animals and whatever else was possible to carry.’

The village of Kotyli was bombed by the Democratic Army artillery and the National Army Airforce without suffering significant damage. Ioannis Thomas remembers about his village before it was evacuated: ‘in ’47 the planes came and bombed the village. Kotyli was guerrilla-occupied. Nothing could pass through there. The entire village was blocked, guerrillas and so on [...]. A certain Captain Giannoulis had his headquarters there.’²⁷ Daily life was affected by these bombings and the military operations. Even today, in the forest one can still find bullets in the tree trunks. For many years people digging in the earth accidentally found landmines. In the 1950s and the 1960s some villagers were injured or killed by landmines. Moreover, when the people evac-

²⁵ These movements are also mentioned in Alvanos, *op.cit.* and Paparizos, *Τα χωριά του Γράμμου*.

²⁶ For a comprehensive analysis on the Terminus operation, see Elias Nikolakopoulos–Alkis Rigos–Giannis Psallidas, *Ο Εμφύλιος Πόλεμος. Από τη Βάρκιζα στο Γράμμο* (The Civil War. From Varkiza to Gramos) (Athens: Themelio, 2002).

²⁷ George Giannoulis (1915-1948) was a native of Eptachori, a village located northwest of Kotyli. He was an emblematic political and military personality of western Macedonia during WWII and the Civil War. See Dimitris Tsitas, *Φάκελος Γιαννούλη και άλλα τινά* (The Giannoulis’ Files) (Athens: Anoixi, 1992).

uated their villages, they left not only their homes but also the land uncultivated. Bushes and hornbeams covered the paths, fields were filled with weeds and forest animals destroyed the remaining crops, leaving behind a wild landscape. Some left-wing families secretly remained in the villages in 1947-48 or attempted to move cattle to graze close to the villages. But this was not enough to prevent the land from becoming desolate.

After the end of WWII, in 1951, the villagers of Chrysi and Pefkofyto returned to their villages. The children from Chrysi, who had been transferred to children's safe houses, returned in 1953-54. However, in the case of Kotyli things went differently; some residents returned in 1950-51 and found their houses damaged. These were mainly families of shepherds who intended to re-establish their herds. After a referendum among the villagers and with the encouragement of the local authorities, the villagers decided not to return to Kotyli but to establish a new settlement in the area of today's Nea Kotyli. The 89-year-old Gregoris Evangelou, who was 17 years old at the time, has vivid memories: 'half of them didn't want to return to the old village... They didn't want to! They said we should stay here at the lowlands, make a new home here...' 'A committee was established by the villagers of Kotyli. From Kastoria they were chasing us away, how will it be? Some said we should go to Prespes lake region where there were several abandoned villages, most of them supported the idea of constructing a new village at a place called Gkurousia,' says Yannis Thomas. His first cousin, Georgios Evangellou, elaborated the events: 'those who wanted to go back [to old Kotyli], they did it. They got with them their sheep and goats. My family, for example, wanted to return there [i.e., to old Kotyli] because we had our shepherds' huts up there... About 30 families felt more comfortable to live at the place of the new village. After 1955 we all left the old village...'

Local authorities encouraged the villagers of Kotyli to abandon 'the old village.' Given the post-Civil War political context, the fear that the DA army might return was widespread. Highland villages were perceived as potential supply hubs for leftist guerrillas.²⁸ In addition, the new village was located close to the fields they cultivated and water

²⁸ In this respect see Nikolakopoulos et al., *op.cit.*

sources, but especially closer to the main road to Nestorio and Kastoria. The final decision to establish the new village was supported by the state's granting of a sum of 700 drachmas per family and animals (5-7 goats, 2 mules and 2 cows) to start their life in the new village. Those who were systematically engaged in animal husbandry chose to use the houses of old Kotyli. Gradually, the old village of Kotyli was abandoned and the majority of the inhabitants settled in Nea Kotyli.

On their return to the villages of Pefkofyto and Chrysi, their inhabitants had to face various problems. On top of the devastation wrought by the bombing –especially by the use of incendiary bombs– all over Gramos, the existence of uncharted minefields prohibited access to certain areas (mountain paddocks, paths, etc.). One informant, Yannis Thomas, called it a 'disastrous mistake' to return to the village without checking the area and clearing it of mines. 'Here, this place has all the remains of the Civil War... My son and I went to collect herbs, we brought back some guns, I still have them there. We also brought bomb shells.' As he explained to us, his father and many of his fellow countrymen, including some girls, were killed by landmines. He himself lost his arm after a landmine explosion.²⁹ The overall context of the Civil War – forced relocation, limited support from state authorities for those who returned to the villages, and the political persecution of the leftists during the 1950s, had decisive effects on local communities. They lost their ability to reconstruct their social milieu and their modes of production, and their population was declining due to migration. Fields and pastures were abandoned, afforestation of paths, fields and orchards developed land degradation increased.

As demonstrated through the interpretation of the aerial photographs, crops, while in 1945 covered 5% of the total land available, had almost disappeared by 2015, while grasslands had decreased from 17.3% to 12%, and Forest areas increased by 22% or 1,374 ha. In the same

²⁹ Such experiences were common in rural Greece in the 1950s and the 1960s among villagers living in areas in NW Greece where the most intensive battles of the Civil War took place. They have produced commonly held narrations presenting the decision to return to these areas as a fatal mistake. These narratives justified the migration from these areas to the main urban centers in the 1960s. Vassilis Dalkavoukis–Eleni Paschaloudi–Elias Skoulidas, eds, *Αφηγήσεις για τη δεκαετία του 1940* (Narratives of the 1940s) (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2012a).

period, mainly due to a reduction in grazing, the degree of tree cover increased significantly both in open and forested areas, which leads us to estimate that total tree cover increased by 95%, i.e., almost doubled.

Despite the myriad difficulties, an attempt to rebuild the villages³⁰ and reshape the landscape prevailed in the early 1950s. Agriculture gradually began not only to meet household needs but also generated a surplus, which was channelled into trade. Cereal crops gradually declined, and fodder crops dwindled to the point of nonexistence. At the same time, the use of commercial fertilisers in crops and orchards became widespread. Apiculture/beekeeping was developed from the 1950s until recently, and our informants report that in the 1950s-60s, each household had 10 to 15 beehives that satisfied its needs.

The forest continued to be a source of income for the residents in a variety of ways. The restrictions that were progressively placed on hunting eliminated the possibility of income from the sale of wolf, bear, and pinecone fur. When illegal hunting did take place, it brought in considerable income. 'The skunk had money. Back then it might had a hundred, a hundred and fifty drachmas. It was a lot of money. Four hundred drachmas a skunk was enough... That is, a flock of 150 sheep did not reach the value of one single skunk,' Vaso Evangelou and her brother Athanasios remember. The reduction of cultivated land, the abandonment of the paths, and the decrease in the number of inhabitants contributed to the restoration of the flora and fauna that had been affected between 1946 and 1949. Compared with the pre-WWII period, a decline in the population of wild geese and roe deer was reported after 1950, whereas, in contrast, the population of wild boar and bear rose.

Changes after the 1960s

After the 1960s, the population of the villages rapidly decreased, as (following the trend of urbanization) many residents moved to Kasto-

³⁰ Polymeris Voglis–Flora Tsilaga–Iasonas Chandrinou–Menelaos Charalampidis, eds, *Η εποχή των ρήξεων* (The time of Ruptures) (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2012). See also John O. Iatrides, *Η Ελλάδα στη δεκαετία 1940-1950. Ένα έθνος σε κρίση* (Greece in the Decade of 1940-1950. A Nation in Crisis) (Athens: Themelio, 1984); Mark M. Mazower, *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

ria, to the big urban centres, or abroad (mainly to Germany and Canada). Living and working conditions in the villages were difficult and many people, especially the youth, decided to abandon farming in search of better job opportunities. Georgios Evangelou from Kotyli remembers that he became a shepherd at the age of 14 because there were no other older people in the village. ‘Since the ’60s, people started leaving and moved to Kastoria. There was the furs industry growing, there was money in fur, you understand? And my whole generation moved to Kastoria.’ In 1965, he went down to Kastoria himself where he was initially a worker, before opening his own shop and making furs.

The landscape continued to transform, reflecting the historical and environmental dynamics taking place. In 1964, subsidence occurred in the lands of Pefkofyto and most of the residents moved to the village of Maniaki, 3 km southwest of Kastoria, by decision of the Prefect.³¹ Vasiliki Mantziou (82-year-old) from Pefkofyto, recalls: ‘those who had animals were late to come down... They were given a loan of about 50,000 drachmas.’

Residents of Chrysi, Pefkos, Nea Kotyli, and Zouzouli gradually moved to the same village, creating their own neighbourhoods on the basis of the villages they left behind.³² A little later, in the early 1970s, the villages changed radically. The areas were electrified, and an organised irrigation and water supply system was constructed, while at the same time the road network was completed (approximately the one is still in use today), leaving the paths in the past. Traveling became easier and faster: people had the opportunity to move more frequently between Kastoria and the villages and vice versa. In this way, trade and social contact with the neighbouring villages was facilitated. The post-Civil War social and political context, as well as the dramatic decrease in the population of the three villages of the region led to the

³¹ On soil degradation and its social consequences in mountainous Epirus see Green, *Notes from the Balkans*. On the desertification caused gradually in these cases see Nikos Βεορουλος–Αποστολος Παπαδοπουλος, “Η ερημοποίηση ως ανθρώπινη απουσία και στειρότητα των τόπων” (Desertification as Human Absence and Sterility of Places), in *Ερημοποίηση*, 15-46.

³² *Historica Kastorias, Administrative and population data of the settlements of Kastoria after the liberation (part 2): 1950-2015*, <http://istorikakastorias.blogspot.com/2015/06/2-1950-2015.html> (accessed 17-6-2015).

minimization of the importance of any differences that existed due to the linguistic and cultural origins of the populations. The devastation of Myrovliti resulted in the definitive disappearance of Muslim populations from the region. In the post-WWII decades, marital exchanges extended beyond the social networks that had existed since the 19th and early 20th centuries. The same is true of trade networks. The pre-modern rural household economy comes full circle in the 1960s.

Since the mid-1970s, the cultivation of the fields around old Kotyli has ceased. The houses of the old settlement have been gradually destroyed because the stone was removed and used as building material in Nea Kotyli. Further changes in the landscape were also caused by the great fire of 2007. In particular, on July 18th, 2007, significant areas in the Municipality of Nestori (Kotyli, Kypseli, Giulio, Livadia, and Koziaka), the Municipality of Arrena, and the Municipality of Vitsi were reduced to ashes. The fire raged for 20 days and had a severe impact on some of the forests and mountains of Pindos, along with countless pastures and crops. According to the accurate estimate we made through photo interpretation, 304 ha were burnt in our project's area, mainly in the valley of Kotyli and the surrounding slopes. Elias Efthymiou says of old Kotyli: 'Until 2007, when the Gramos caught fire, a large part of the houses in the far mahala (i.e., neighbourhood) were still standing. There were 5-6 houses that I can say seemed to be normal houses. With flat roofs on top, with their windows of course not glazed, but they were upright.' His neighbour, Georgios Evangelou, adds: 'then came the total destruction...'

The gradual depopulation of the villages is reflected in the changes in the organisation of everyday social relations in the last two decades. Villages are sparsely populated and bear no resemblance to their past vitality. Today there are two grocery stores and two cafes and taverns in Chrysi, one cafe and tavern in Pefkofyto and one cafe and tavern in Nea Kotyli (operating occasionally). Every Saturday and Sunday, villagers go to Kastoria for shopping and entertainment. In the summer months, however, the population in Nea Kotyli and Pefkos triples and the population in Chrysi doubles. The most important annual moment of sociability is the summer festivals, where those who live in the villages and those who come from them but live in other cities in Greece and abroad celebrate together.

Agriculture gradually developed to cover the household's needs, but the large surplus is mainly channeled into local and national markets. The main crops continue to include beans, leeks, potatoes, onions, and cabbages, to which all kinds of fruit and vegetables have been added, which are grown in family bauxite gardens or in the backyard of every home. Cereal crops have been gradually being reduced, and fodder crops have dwindled to the point of extinction. The use of commercial fertilisers in crops and orchards is more widespread. In Chrysi there is a beekeeper with significant honey production and modernised facilities (electric fencing to protect the beehives from bears and other animals). The forest continues to be a source of income for the residents. Due to regulations set by the Forestry Department of the Prefecture and the gradual change in demand for the type of timber, logging practices are changing. The area is divided into three forest clusters, and the preparation of regular Management Logging Plans has been initiated. Large areas that have been abandoned since the 1940s or earlier have been gradually afforested and are now also part of the management regime. The same applies to parts of the area which were inaccessible in the decade that immediately followed the Civil War because of the minefields. Individuals and families practice logging for their household needs and organised groups log for timber that is sold to traders. The merchants buy on the basis of prior agreements and they come not only from Nestorio and Kastoria but also from Neapolis, Kozani, and the rest of Greece. Starting in the 1960s, cooperatives were created in the villages, some of which still exist today. The cooperatives established better prices in trade and simultaneously expanded the model of wage labour by hiring forest workers from neighbouring areas (Nestorio, Kastoria, etc.). The extensions of the forest road network made it possible to log many areas. The type of timber felled is beech and oak firewood, as well as pine and spruce for other uses. As the forests were restored, the total amount of harvested timber increased: according to the Management Studies, from 18,500 tonnes in the 1950s to ten times that amount, i.e., 185,000 tonnes in the last decade.

Livestock farming involves domestic animals and herds. Domestic animals include chickens (which are kept in chicken coops in the yard of the house), pigs, mules, and cattle, whereas flocks included sheep and goats. An informant from Chrysi reports that experienced village

farmers quickly multiplied the animal populations. Her father went from 30 goats and sheep in 1955 to 100 in 1960. Another informant from Chrysi reports that in the 1960s, the village had a total of 12,000 goats and sheep, and 200 oxen. However, the estimates of the present-day management studies of the local forestry authorities present lower numbers (about 5-6,000 goats and sheep). Income from the herds has helped considerably in increasing the living standards of those families who remained in the villages. Herds live near the villages in the winter months, and in more highland areas in the summer months. From the 1990s to the current day, there has been a steady increase in the number of Albanian migrants working as shepherds and living permanently or seasonally in the villages. Nomadic and semi-nomadic livestock farming (Sarakatsans and Vlachs) has been progressively decreasing. To this day, Vlachs and Sarakatsans continue to rent pastures near the ruins of Myrovliiti.

In recent decades, hybrid efforts to create other sources of income for residents have also emerged. The expansion of the road network has contributed to these efforts. A trout hatchery and a small woollen carpet manufacturing industry operated in Chrysi for some years. Some farmers turned not only to production but also to the processing and marketing of special agricultural products (herbs and medicinal plants). Lastly, the forest is an attraction for hikers and with the establishment of the River Party in Nestorio in 1978, there have been efforts to develop ecotourism in the area. Two hotels and a guesthouse operate in Nestorio on an annual basis, and a guesthouse operated in Nea Kotyli until 2016. From 2017 to 2018, refugees were settled in this hostel following an agreement with the International Organization for Migration. After an initial period of awkwardness, the few inhabitants of the village accepted the presence of refugees positively, some of whom even worked occasionally, helping the elderly, and working in gardens, yards, etc. The departure of the refugees from the hostel resulted in its closing down. Of particular interest is the development of a kind of excursion, as well as 'memory meetings,' that take place in the area and that are related to the events of the Civil War. The main factor in the development of this form of historical tourism has been the creation of the National Reconciliation Park (1988). The Park began operating in 2012 and to date has received approximately 40,000 visitors.

Concluding Remarks

Kotyli, Chrysi and Pefkofyto have followed a course similar to that of other highland communities of the southern Balkans over the last two and a half centuries. They were established as settlements seeking a safe distance from the Ottoman state authorities and operated within the framework of what is conventionally called ‘pre-modern economy,’ indicating a specific configuration of and by the environment. Their villagers coexisted with nomadic and semi-nomadic populations who shared the same environmental resources. The social boundaries of the three villages were indicated by the patronage and market networks in which they participated and by the marital exchange relations they maintained with other communities in their immediate geographical vicinity.

Villagers maximised their interaction with the environment by giving it new dimensions, investing in seasonal migration, and reaching a demographically critical point of enlargement in the first decades of the 20th century. As a landscape, the environment has been marked by villagers, who have provided it with a certain ‘logical’ coherence, and have attributed content to it. The case of the Civil War shows that this marking, when imposed externally, became an altogether ominous reality. The forcible entry of these three villages into a version of modernity took place through the ashes of the Civil War, in conditions of structurally forced abandonment of the region and the subsequent social and economic degradation of the countryside. Beginning in the 1950s, villagers from this area engaged in various forms of internal and external migration. The landscape has changed (landslides, fires, roads, etc.), while people continue to enrich it with new social meanings through memory and new productive activities.

Today, the demographic destruction of Kotyli and Pefkofyto appears irreversible. Chrysi still has some families with children and a potential for a demographically positive restart. Regardless of population data, the three villages exist in the rituals of the summer festivals where the sense of community bond is reconstituted, they exist in internet groups, and in the memory narrations established in the villagers’ associations in Kastoria, Athens and abroad. The common element in all these modes of community formation is the indiscriminate context, both as a structure and as a framework of choices, between the people and the environment.

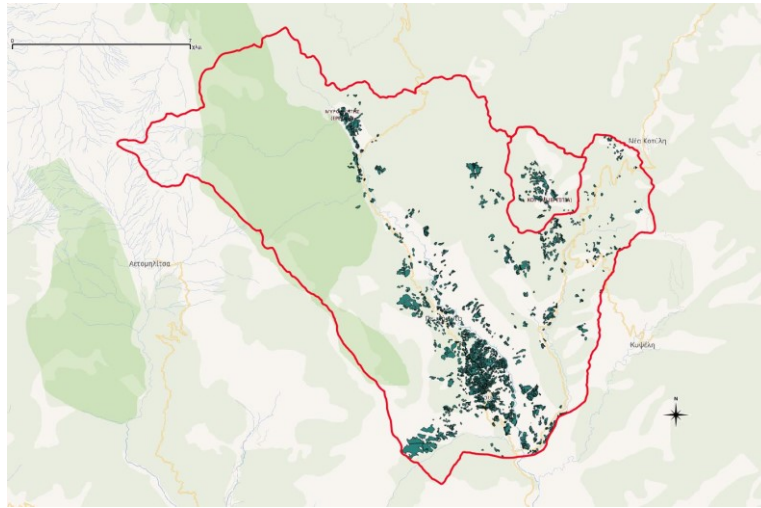


Fig. 1. Cultivated land in 1945

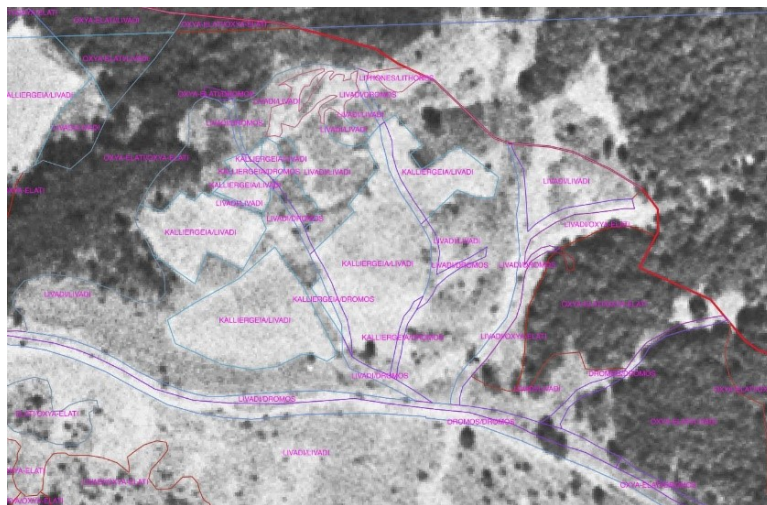


Fig. 2. Crops presented in the 1945 aerial photograph

*Bernardica Milićević**

**Religious Tourism in the Balkans
from the Perspective of Međugorje Marian Shrine**

Introduction

Religious tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism, which as a specific form of tourism (along with health tourism) began to appear in the earliest history when people visited certain places for this purpose –shrines–, and at the same time traveled greater distances. Since it is economically a very useful form of tourism for a particular destination, throughout history such destinations have regularly become centers of religious, commercial, cultural, and other events in certain regions. Pilgrims in such places are provided with various infrastructural, gastronomic, cultural, and other facilities and, therefore, there is increased investment in a particular place. When we think of a tourist destination, we cannot help but wonder what is it that sets it apart from others and makes it recognizable and sustainable. Each tourist product is characterized by specific geographical, cultural or historical features but today this is insufficient for it to be able to survive in a strong market. Throughout history, each shrine has its own story. The small Herzegovinian village of Međugorje is characterized by a spiritual factor and makes up most of the overall tourist potential of this area. Its news was spread all over the world. Opinions are divided from enthusiastic supporters to opponents. The Vatican has not yet officially recognized Međugorje as a Marian shrine, but it has been recognized by millions of pilgrims who come. However, no one has yet testified that the apparitions are not true, but only that there has been no real evidence of the supernatural nature of the apparitions, although numerous healings have been recorded, information about which is in the Parish Archives in Međugorje.

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Only a few terms have such a high frequency of use, while still not needing to be defined precisely. It could be said that there are as many definitions of tourism as there are people working in it. For many, tourism only represents travel, vacations, and relaxation. For others though, those that work in it, tourism represents quite the opposite, associating it with hard work, profits, and professionalism. One side focuses on the many positive contributions of tourism, such as health, cultural, and educational tourism, while the other side focuses on labor productivity, area development, and monetary gain. It's undeniable that tourism represents an extremely complex and heterogeneous phenomenon, hence its different approaches and conclusions represent its heterogeneous nature. Even theories about the origin of the definitions for these terms point to a diversity of views towards this phenomenon. The basic conditions that have to be met for the emergence of tourism are as follow.

First, there needs to be an interested populace that has the needed free time and financial resources to commit to a trip. The second condition is the availability of an appropriate system of transportation followed by a relatively secure system of accommodation. The last condition is the availability of enough information to spark the interest of potential tourists. This represents a voluntary and occasional form of migration, while every other type of migration is forced. Temporary stay in tourist areas is surely the most significant characteristic of tourism. The guest has direct contact with the environment he is visiting, i.e., its culture, the staff that forms his first impressions, and the feeling formed by visiting a new environment. Guests bring their culture, habits, and customs with them. We distinguish specific forms of tourism based on natural resources (health tourism, sports tourism, nautical tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, hunting tourism, naturism, Robinson tourism etc.) and specific forms of tourism based on social resources (congressional, cultural, gastronomic, enophile, event, and religious tourism, tourism created via artificial attractions, casino tourism etc.)

Every day we encounter terms (forms of tourism) that are used to fulfill very specific needs of tourists (niche markets) or that can be part of many other forms of tourism, i.e., shopping tourism, cruises, historical tourism, sex tourism, dark tourism etc.

One of the oldest motives for travel since the times of ancient Greece were religious motives. Religious travels refer to the visitation of religious sites and attractions with the purpose of strengthening one's faith and satisfying cultural and spiritual needs. It should be mentioned that religious destinations do not only attract believers, but they also attract many curious tourists who seek a cultural or adventurous experience. This is also one of the main reasons for the inability to separate religious and non-religious visitors, as it may lead to possible conflicts in managing these locations.

Pilgrimage and its Importance

Religious tourism most often appears in three forms:

1. As a pilgrimage (collective or individual shrine visitations).
2. As mass gatherings on occasions of significant religious dates and anniversaries.
3. As a tour and visitation to significant religious locations and facilities all within the tourist itinerary.

Pilgrimage represents a trip to a religious shrine, regularly on foot, which takes precedence over all other forms of transport. Pilgrimage locations are usually native places or places where saints or religious founders are laid to rest. Locations of Our Lady's apparitions are also among the more visited pilgrimage destinations. Believers of many large religions participate in pilgrimages. A believer that goes on such a journey is referred to as a "pilgrim." Pilgrimages are numerous even outside of Christianity. In India, for example, many pilgrims traverse long trails and expose themselves to danger in order to reach the calm waters of the holy river Ganges. Wise people and common ones, the wealthy and the poor, all of them seek divine liberation and peace. Mecca is also a location to which millions of pilgrims travel annually. Every Muslim wishes to undertake the hajj and visit the Kaaba (Home of God), through his own means or the means of his deputy (bedel?). Many places of pilgrimage are mentioned in the Old Testament. After returning from Exile, the Jerusalem temple became a special place for the Israelites. Pilgrims from all over Palestine came to celebrate grand annual holidays there. An Old Testament man lives from pilgrimages. Even today, Jews perform a pilgrimage to the Wailing Wall. Over six

million believers perform the pilgrimage. Places as goals for pilgrimages, but also pilgrimages as certain travel routes attract other tourists too. El Camino—The way of St. James, a pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela and the shrine of St. James in Spain are one of the most popular religious tourism destinations today in Europe. The 800-kilometers-long pilgrimage attracts many pilgrims but also other travelers motivated by different goals (recreation, challenge, cultural-historical value, attraction, etc.) What makes a pilgrim different from an ordinary tourist is his inner motivation—the pilgrim wishes to meet with God, while a tourist is looking for unusual experiences, not for enlightenment but for distancing from himself, from his daily life. The most visited shrine, the most attractive destination in the field of religious tourism in Southeast Europe is Međugorje.

Marian Pilgrimage in Međugorje

The Marian shrine is a shrine dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Marian shrines are part of the culture and practice of some Christian churches—mostly the Roman Catholic Church. Shrines dedicated to Our Lady usually mark the apparition, which is attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sometimes a Marian shrine was created due to a strong Marian devotion throughout the history of an area. Such places are often destinations for pilgrimages. Some of the largest shrines were created due to Mary's apparitions on distant hills, which were almost unknown before the apparitions (Lourdes etc.) On several occasions, Our Lady personally asked those to whom she appeared to build a church on the site of the apparition. The number of pilgrims who visit some of these shrines every year is very large. For example, Lourdes, with a population of about 15,000 people, receives about 5,000,000 pilgrims each year, and, within France, Paris alone has more hotel rooms than Lourdes. More than a million pilgrims visit the shrine of the Black Madonna at the Chapel of Mercy in Altötting, Germany, every year, where miracles have been attributed for more than 500 years to the intercession of the Virgin Mary in that shrine.¹ Međugorje is one of the Marian shrines and it is not a traditional

¹ https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marijanska_sveti%C5%A1ta (accessed 11-4-2021).

shrine but a Marian shrine of the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pilgrimage and other forms of religious tourism have not yet been scientifically researched or presented to the public with a measure of justification if we observe it (as far as it is allowed) from an economic point of view. For this reason, there is a need to analyze the impact of a visit to Medjugorje through this special form of expression of something that is Holy throughout time. In Medjugorje, the domicile population and pilgrims are connected by religion. What makes a travel religious is the fulfillment of certain religious customs and rites during the day: obligatory prayer, attendance at Masses and other church rites. Looking through history at a religious destination, they have regularly existed as centers of religious, commercial, cultural, and other events in particular regions. Pilgrims in such places are provided with various infrastructure, gastronomic, cultural, and other facilities, so there is increased investment in a particular place. All that are a prerequisite for the development and presence of tourism as an economic activity.

History of Međugorje

Međugorje Parish is located in Herzegovina, twenty-five kilometres southwest of Mostar. Međugorje (the name is of Slavic origin and it means the area between the two mountains), with the villages of Bijakovići, Vionica, Miletina, and Šurmanci, is a Roman Catholic parish, in which today (2021) live about 5,000 inhabitants. It is pastorally cared for by the priests of the Herzegovinian Franciscan Province of the Assumption of Mary.

The whole area is inhabited by Croats who converted to Christianity thirteen centuries ago. The village is first mentioned in historical sources in 1599. The present parish was founded in 1892 and dedicated to St. James the Apostle, protector of pilgrims. Until June 24, 1981, Međugorje lived like other villages in this area: people cultivated the land, planted tobacco and vines, produced wine, and grew vegetables to provide for the humble life of their families. Because of social circumstances, many of its inhabitants went overseas, be it other coun-

tries like Croatia or bigger cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.² The people of the Parish of Medjugorje, encouraged by Our Lady's apparitions, are slowly returning to their homeland. There are three privileged places of pilgrimage in Medjugorje:

1. Apparition Hill – that is the name of the place above the hamlet of Podbrdo in Bijakovići where the visionaries saw Our Lady in the first days. It was the end of June 1981. Since then, pilgrims have gathered at this place to pray the rosary. During both day and night, groups of pilgrims can be found ascending to the site of the first apparition. Only this place is marked by a pile of stones with an inconspicuous cross planted. Reliefs of joyful and sad mysteries of the rosary were placed on the ascending path in 1989, which was a work of the professor Carmela Puzzolo from Florence.

2. Križevac – a hill above Medjugorje. In 1934, the inhabitants of the village of Međugorje erected an eight-meter-high concrete cross to commemorate the 1,900th anniversary of Jesus' death. Groups of believers and individuals in that place perform the devotion of the Way of the Cross going from station to station. In the early years, the stations were marked with wooden crosses. In 1988, bronze reliefs were placed next to these crosses –the Way of the Cross station–, which was a work of the Italian sculptor Carmelo Puzzolo. Križevac developed into a privileged place of worship of Christ's Passion and became the Calvary of the Međugorje sanctuary.

3. The Parish Church and the area around the church – is a place of celebration of the Eucharist and sacramental life. The old Parish Church, built at the end of the last century, was destroyed by an earthquake. The new church was completed in 1969. The church, like the Parish, was dedicated to St. James the Elder, apostle and protector of pilgrims. In 1991, an altar for outdoor celebrations and twenty confessionals were erected next to the church. A chapel for Eucharistic Adoration with rooms for lectures and spiritual talks was also built. Two tents were set up for the occasion as well. There is a great need for new sacral spaces.³ The period of war conflicts from 1991 until 1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Covid-19 pandemic, which first

² <http://www.medjugorje.hr/hr/medjugorski-fenomen/vodic/> (accessed 12-5-2021).

³ <http://www.medjugorje.hr/hr/medjugorski-fenomen/hodocasca/> (accessed 19-6-2021).

appeared in late December 2019 in the megacity of Wuhan in the Chinese province of Hube and spread around the world, reduced the number of pilgrims to Međugorje. However, a daily prayer program is held in the church, followed by hundreds of thousands of believers via the internet and social media networks.

Međugorje as a Tourist Destination

The word “destination” is used in all appropriate forms of Roman-based languages but is also widespread in Anglo-Saxon countries. It entered tourism under the means of transport, especially that of air which uses English terminology. The concept of destination began to spread to research in tourism in the early 1970s and it became more and more synonymous with a tourist locality, zone, region, set of countries, and even a continent.⁴ Destination is a significant element of the holiday decision-making process. The choice of destination can follow different levels: national level, regional level, municipal level, or tourist resort level. Different benefits arise for the guest from each level. The place of “Crystallization” of production and consumption of services is a kind of destination, where a variety of services are provided to tourists. In addition to creating an evaluation of each individual consumed service (accommodation, gastronomic part, sports, entertainment, culture, etc.), the guest experiences his vacation as a whole, and builds his decision on it. However, a significant part of guests of a certain spatial level consumes the essential elements of their vacation outside the boundaries of that level. How important certain components of travel are for a competitive guest is very difficult to determine a priori. Although each person is guided by their own pattern of preferences, it is possible to “filter” typical patterns of satisfaction within large guest populations.⁵ Each destination is individual for its unique features such as: geographical location, history, culture, and the like. From a management point of view, it is important to combine its various components into a separate tourism

⁴ Dragan Magaš–Ksenija Vodeb–Zrinka Zadel, *Menadžment turističke organizacije i destinacije* (Opatija: Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu, 2018), 9.

⁵ Magaš–Vodeb–Zadel, *op.cit.*, 84.

product. The geographical aspects of the study of tourism place emphasis on its spatial component, as space is the main resource of tourism in which tourism activity leaves visible traces. This feedback between tourism and space leaves effects of equal intensity on all parts of the Earth's surface. In addition, tourism development is not of equal intensity in all parts of the world and is characterized by significant differences and specifics. Cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, is the common wealth of humanity in its diversity and uniqueness, and its protection is one of the important factors for recognizing, defining, and affirming cultural identity. The Ministry of Culture and Media develops mechanisms and establishes measures for the protection of cultural heritage in order to ensure its sustainability, which includes the identification, documentation, research, maintenance, protection, use and promotion of its values. In terms of its religious and cultural heritage, Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the richest countries in Europe.⁶ It has three large religious communities, each with its own significant shrines. In this area, the most visited sanctuary of this form of tourism is Međugorje. In the period of 40 years that the apparitions lasted in Međugorje, one whole life was created. Numerous contradictions have never prevented millions of pilgrims from coming to this small place. Due to great interest and the constant arrival of pilgrims in increasing numbers, this little village, until 1981, turned into one of the most important pilgrimage destinations not only in Europe but also the whole world. From a small unknown village, it develops to not only a world-famous Marian shrine but also a world-famous tourist destination, which began to develop rapidly by providing pilgrims with all the necessary facilities during their visit to this world-famous shrine. Boarding houses the size of one guest's bus are being built while restaurants, souvenir shops, post offices, banks and hospitals are opening. It takes on the outlines of a tourist village, a holy place of pilgrimage. Thus, Međugorje was included in the world's largest Marian shrines such as Fatima, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela and the largest and most visited shrine of Guadalupe in Mexico. Marian shrines, as religious tourist destinations, arise suddenly and spontaneously, without the influence or will of either ecclesias-

⁶ Zoran Curić–Nikola Glamuzina–Vuk Tvrтко Opačić, *Geografija turizma*, 27.

tical or civil authorities. Also, natural features, economic development or geopolitical environment are not decisive for the development of such a religious tourist destination.

Tourism Product

A tourism product can be defined as the overall experience of tourists that meet their expectations, including experiences with accommodation, natural and cultural attractions, entertainment, transportation, catering, hosts, etc. It is, therefore, a complex and connected set of individual physical products and services from different commercial and non-commercial domains that the visitor “consumes” during the tourist trip. Tourism products can be of different levels of complexity and it is a question of the strategy of the business entity what kind of product it will develop:

1. Basic product –at the level of the basic product, only the basic needs of visitors are met (e.g., accommodation and food).
2. Expected product –includes additions to the basic product (additional services or physical products) that the guest expects in accordance with some prescribed form of product differentiation (e.g., in a four-star hotel, the guest expects a swimming pool).
3. Supporting product –these are further added elements that provide some extra value for the guest or that are used to differentiate the product from the competitors in order to gain an advantage (e.g., in a four-star hotel the guest does not expect a wellness center, but such a center can further distinguish one hotel from another and create an advantage in the eyes of the guests).
4. Extended product –the intention is to further differentiate from the competitors, whereby an attempt is made to influence the feelings of customers through the atmosphere and services (e.g., decoration, atmosphere in the hotel).

Tourism products and services are the largest “export product” in the world, ahead of pharmaceutical, automotive, chemical, and food products.⁷

⁷ Radmila Živković, *Ponašanje i zaštita potrošača u turizmu* (Beograd: Univerzitet Singidunum, Fakultet za turistički i hotelijerski menadžment, 2007), 5.

While defining the tourism product and its levels, it is necessary to take into account several other important aspects:

- atmosphere (physical environment),
- customer interaction with the service system,
- mutual customer interaction
- customer participation in production,
- creating a brand.

The atmosphere is one of the key elements of the tourist service and often the reason why the client does, or actually doesn't do, business with a particular service provider. The client experiences the atmosphere through his senses, which can affect the consumption of the tourist services. It can serve as a medium to attract attention, send a message to a potential consumer and create an atmosphere.

Customer interaction with the service system consists of three phases: joining, spending, and unbundling. The first stage is to start contact with the initial query. This phase can be improved by giving a sample (if this is possible, depending on the specific storage of a particular tourist service). The consumption phase represents the consumption of the service. Since most tourist services are consumed on the spot, it is necessary to enrich the environment, add specific physical characteristics and signs that will help the client interact with the product. The separation phase represents the time when the client is finished using the service and leaves.

Mutual interaction of clients is one of the tasks of tourism and hospitality organizations. The care of every guest in the hotel is always the same. However, guests from different cultures come to the hotel, speak different languages, have different age groups and different habits, so the hotel must ensure that the interaction between customers does not negatively affect their experiences during their stay at the hotel. A brand represents a name, term, sign, symbol, or a combination thereof, intended to identify a service or goods and differentiate them from the competitors. It is generally legally protected, by recognizing the exclusive rights of the seller or service provider to use the name or brand. From a marketing point of view, a brand represents the most valuable part of a company's assets. The brand represents everything the company does and everything the company is. Brand development in tourism differs in many elements from consumer products.

Loyalty to the product is difficult to achieve because many guests want to see some new destinations, feel some new experiences, but this feature is important. Research on hotel brands shows that apart from the name, in no case is there a complete copy of the “basic specification of the hotel brand,” which is determined by the basic design of the hotel as a product.⁸

Tourist Destination Cycle of Life

According to the theory of the tourist product, the problem of connecting interests in the joint action of various stakeholders in the tourist destination was noticed early on. Namely, during the elaboration of the process of creating a complex tourist product in the destination, the issue of strategic planning for such products arose. For a complex tourist product, a common planning carrier cannot be sought, because planning can be realized only at different levels. One of these levels is the tourist destination.⁹ Its importance is reflected in the fact that it creates the conditions for receptive tourism, which leads the economic development of the area. A tourist destination transitions, from a single point of view, different states of exploitation and development. This phenomenon occurs due to the influence of direct and indirect factors of instability, regardless of whether these factors affect the environment or the destination itself. By marking these conditions with the help of growth indicators, which are usually quantitative–economic, the life cycle (life curve) of a tourist destination is obtained in relation to time. The evolution of tourism was strongly connected with the development of the destination, and especially with individual localities that developed more significantly with the development of communicative factors. These factors have produced a mass of tourist groups, very often of different preferences. The changing market has developed in parallel, and some localities have had to respond in terms of creating a new product.¹⁰

⁸ Paul Slattery, “Hotel Branding in 1990s,” *Travel and Tourism Analyst* 1 (1991): 26.

⁹ Antun Kobašić–Josip Senečić, *Marketing u turizmu* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1989), 35.

¹⁰ Kobašić–Senečić, *op.cit.*, 35.

In other words, we can say that a tourist destination, like any other product, has its own life cycle. This means that it goes through stages of research, inclusion, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline, or rejuvenation. Therefore, the concept of product life cycle is one of the dynamic strategies available to the economic entity in the significantly changing conditions of its environment and business decision-making. In theory, it is still said today that the concept of product life cycle, specifically the current position of the product on the product life cycle curve, is a very solid basis for conducting the overall business policy of the economic entity. There are also some criticisms of the product life cycle concept, especially regarding its practical application. As one of the alternative concepts, therefore, the concept of the evolutionary cycle of the product, which is not based on the beginning and death of the product, but on its continuous growth, appeared as a sequence of gradual and alternating changes.¹¹ The research phase is characterized by a small number of visitors who discover the destination through individual (non-institutional) arrangements –without the participation of travel agencies or other intermediaries. There are no tourist facilities or infrastructure and the number of visitors is limited due to that, as well as due to obstacles in the accessibility of the destination (poor traffic connections). A visitor's contact with the local population is strong, while the overall impact of tourism on the destination is small.¹² Since 1981, the first guests who came to Međugorje were motivated by religious and some other motives. The locals received these guests in their homes and did not charge them for accommodation. Guests–pilgrims sat at a table with the family and had lunch. They were told what was in the house. No one ever objected it was a special time, a special event. The water was exclusively from cisterns. Witnesses to these events today claim that no luxury hotel could provide what was provided to them then by the parishioners. On July 13, 1981, the government banned the ascent to the Apparition Hill and Križevac.¹³ Guards and shifts were introduced to intimidate

¹¹ Marcel Meller, *Osnove marketinga* (Osijek: Ekonomski fakultet u Osijeku, 2005), 194.

¹² Jovan Popesku, *Menadžment turističke destinacije* (Beograd: Univerzitet Singidunum, 2016), 49. 5 izmjenjeno i dopunjeno izdanje.

¹³ Žarko Ivković, *Međugorje: Tajna Gospinih ukazanja* (Zagreb: Večernji list, 2006).

the people. In this first phase, the goal of the guests' arrival was to come on a pilgrimage. Engagement is a phase that implies the existence of an initiative to enrich the tourist offer of the destination. It primarily refers to the catering part of the offer. It is a reaction to the frequency and gradual increase in the number of destination visitors that characterize this stage of the life cycle. There are seasonal fluctuations in visits, as well as the first initiatives towards infrastructure investments. At the beginning of Our Lady's apparitions, the state wanted to put out the news about Međugorje. The media wrote only what was allowed through the sieve, and that was a negative statement about the "Međugorje case." However, as time went on and more and more people from all over the world flocked to Međugorje, the media mostly started to deal with tourism problems. In the reviews, the journalists even called out the then ruling structures for not using the Međugorje miracle for social gain and good earnings, because money knows no borders. This was covered by the media in the late 1980s. The development phase involves the arrival of a large number of tourists. At the peak of the season, there are often more visitors than the domicile population. The control of further development of tourism goes beyond the local framework. At this stage of growth, oscillations in quality are possible.¹⁴ It is necessary to fit into the system of regional and national development planning. Tourism development planning at a local level means planning with associated attractions, and tourism development plans at a local level are based on the following principles:

- tourism development is based on general development goals and priorities determined by the local, resident population,
- the impulses from the tourist market, i.e., the results of studies on tourist demand in the area, should be taken into account,
- development should be harmonized with the development plans of other, non-tourist, activities, physical and visual should be taken into account, i.e., the aesthetic appearance of the site by not building inappropriate facilities and/or carrying out unacceptable activities; in other

¹⁴ Ratko Dobre–Pave Župan Rusković–Mikel Čivljak, *Menadžment turističke destinacije* (Šibenik: 2004), 13.

words, an assessment of the site's reception capacity must be made in regard to its physical, social, and economic capabilities.

This phase in Međugorje can be said that it began in the late 1980s and lasted until the 1992 War. From a small unknown village were developed not only a world-famous Marian shrine but also a world-famous tourist destination, which began to develop rapidly, providing pilgrims with all the necessary facilities during their visit to it. Međugorje takes on the outlines of a tourist village, a holy place of pilgrimage. In order to enable the sustainable development of tourism in the present and the future, it is necessary to ensure a quality development strategy, but also funds for tourism management. The three most important principles of sustainable development should be applied: ecological, socio-cultural, and economic sustainability.¹⁵ In the analysis of the development of the tourism industry, many explore the view of the local population on the tourism industry and their contribution to this activity. Because, apart from the benefits of it, tourism also has some "hidden costs" for the local population, which are certainly inevitably paid by someone and the local population is the only factor that pays those costs.¹⁶ Some examples are the organized reception of guests, usually in groups, the program according to which the guests stayed, meetings with one of the visionaries etc. Although the state did nothing to support Međugorje and its development, it no longer interfered. Međugorje turned its back on the state and the state on Međugorje, respecting each other's unwritten rules of conduct. During this period, Međugorje became a world-famous destination, unstoppable in the arrival of guests. A small village with barely 3,500-4,000 inhabitants received about a million pilgrims a year. In terms of tourism, the offer has already been crystallized according to individual markets and periods when they came and the length of their stay. Međugorje has a high season and an off-season, it is difficult to talk

¹⁵ Mato Bartoluci, *Upravljanje razvojem turizma i poduzetništva* (Školska knjiga, 2013), 17.

¹⁶ Salvatore Bimonte–Valeria Faralla, "Does Residents' Perceived Life Satisfaction vary with Tourist Season? A Two-step Survey in a Mediterranean Destination," *Tourism Management* 55 (August 2016): 199-208.

about before and under the season. During peak season there are dates of high interest, such as Easter, Apparition Anniversary, Pentecost, Assumption, the first Sunday after the Assumption for the Mass on the hill Križevac, and Christmas. Receiving such a large number of guests certainly had its shortcomings in the provision of services. Međugorje is developing at an alarming rate without an urban plan on a private initiative and has not been accompanied by adequate investment in the infrastructure of the place. The regulatory (spatial and urban) plan, made before the war in 1985, was never adopted, and even today it is one of the significant problems and obstacles hindering the further development of the place. Therefore, there are problems today and, unfortunately, they are the same as in 1990. Consolidation means reducing the still present growth rate of arrivals. During the consolidation phase, the rate of increase in the number of visitors decreases, although their absolute number continues to increase and significantly exceeds the number of inhabitants. Tourist business centers are being developed as separate units within the destination. Various companies, both tourist and other ones, are intensively involved in the development. Local efforts to extend the high season and expand the market are noticeable. Most of the local economy is related to tourism. At this stage we can look at the war period and especially the beginning of the war. Pilgrims came but their number was significantly smaller. This was due to the war that broke out in Croatia in 1991. Although in Bosnia and Herzegovina it had not yet begun, the number of pilgrims had decreased significantly. We do not have relevant monitoring of the arrival or overnight stay of pilgrims in Međugorje, while the only relevant number monitored was the number of communions. There are also locals in this number, so a deviation from this number must be taken for the number of domicile population who received communion during the year. In 1990, a record number of 1,304,850 believers received communion, which means that slightly more than a million pilgrims visited Međugorje, while in 1991 the number of communions was 582,300, which is significantly less, leading to this phase being considered a phase of consolidation because of its significantly reduced number of visitors following the start of the war. All major agencies of the former Yugoslavia withdrew from Međugorje. Stagnation is a reflection of the nadir point. The destination loses its attrac-

tiveness. It requires more effort to keep the number of visitors. The presence of significant environmental, social, and economic problems is very often manifested.¹⁷ The stagnation of the arrival of guests can be seen in 1992, when the number of communicants was 245,600 believers. But it must not be forgotten that this number of communion believers also includes the number of the domicile population. Some facilities, like the boarding house and the Pax hotel that originated from the MMM motel, were filled with western European police. The Internacional Hotel was filled with the temporary war government, and the Anamarija Hotel housed journalists covering the state of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From the aspect of accommodation capacities that were left without guests, one economic positivity was in front of them. As they were not entitled to incentives and loans, all investments were exclusively from personal funds free from borrowing, so they had no debts in that sense. Travel agencies have shut down, there is an initiative of private travel agencies, but the market is so narrow that they are waiting for better times. Eucharistic celebrations and devotion continued to be performed in Međugorje as it continued to live its religious life. Decay is the stage when visitors are lost forever and the destination becomes dependent on smaller localities, day trippers, and weekend visitors. Large ownership changes often occur and capacities are earmarked for other purposes. The alternative is for the competent authorities to recognize this phase and decide to rejuvenate. During the war, the number of pilgrims was insignificant compared to the number of pilgrims who once visited this place, but this was not reflected to the capacity of accommodation facilities, because in that period some hotels were filled with the Western European Commission, the new government and journalists. Rejuvenation includes new attractions, new quality, new markets, new distribution channels. More often, these are newly produced attractions, the introduction of new natural resources, alternative forms of tourism, etc. From this we can see that the destination is being renewed and rejuvenated. However, again, in an unusual way. While in tourist places the rejuvenation of the destination is done exclusively by strategy, the organizing process of Međugorje as a tourist destination has been re-

¹⁷ Bimonte–Faralla, *op.cit.*, 14.

generated without a strategy of reviving, managing, and directing the development of the destination. It is during the phase of rejuvenation of the tourist destination of Međugorje that the corona virus appears, which in all countries of the world led to a different kind of war. The global panic has led to the entire tourism industry being affected. Travels not only to Međugorje and Bosnia and Herzegovina but also all over the world were canceled.

Crisis Management in Tourism

Management is, above all, a social function. It includes several aspects and forms of social life and work. Management is “needed by organizations of all types and sizes, at all organizational levels and in all sectors of the organization, worldwide, regardless of the local affiliation of the organization.”¹⁸ The importance of management stems from the fact that only with the help of management can people define and realize the set goals. On the other hand, setting goals allows you to direct all the efforts of the organization towards their achievement. The role of management is to balance and unite the interests of different entities inside and outside the organization. In the absence of management, there is a waste and irrational use of resources, so the importance of management lies in the need to ensure the efficient functioning of organizations, especially economic (profit) organizations.¹⁹ Crisis management is one of the subdisciplines and categories of management.

If problems are ignored and not solved successfully and quickly enough, they will get bigger and eventually turn into crises. In doing so, one should look for reasons why one avoids this word and why it has negative characteristics. It should also be borne in mind that crisis situations do not arise by themselves, and this is one of the reasons why it is extremely important to rise above the causes of the crisis.²⁰ The very word crisis leads us to the first thought that we must be care-

¹⁸ Branislav Mašić, *Menadžment* (Beograd: Univerzitet Singidunum, 2010), 30.

¹⁹ Sloboda S. Župljanin, *Menadžment* (Nezavisni Univerzitet Banja Luka, 2016), 41.

²⁰ Vesna Ivanović, “Pojam krize: konceptualni i metodologijski aspekti,” *Međunarodne studije* 14, no. 2 (2014): 13.

ful, so every tourist or traveler when planning a trip wants that trip to be safe and risk-free. Every country plays a crucial role in eliminating risks through policies and care measures eliminating the threat to the tourists' life, health, property and economic interests within its activities and should develop a national strategy on tourism safety, including all risk prevention that may involve tourists staying in its territory. The crisis has far-reaching consequences for the global socio-economic environment and, consequently, many business entities, the causes of which can be found in factors outside the organizations themselves. On the other hand, there are business crises that arise as a result of internal causes, which relate to the manner and quality of the business and are directly related to the management and implementation of its processes. In any case, a business crisis, caused by external or internal factors, is an unexpected event or series of related events that cause significant disruption to various aspects of the business (e.g., security of people and property, financial stability, reputation) and consequently disrupt the stability and sustainability of the organization. Unless he is in the company of a handful of visionaries, it is extremely difficult for the average manager to predict the onset of a business crisis in a timely manner, especially those caused by external factors.²¹ What he can do is respect the fact that his organization operates in a complex and insecure environment and establish a system that will allow him flexibility and resilience in unusual crisis situations – a crisis management system.

The specificity of crisis management is that the problem (crisis situation) arises unexpectedly. When it appears, he assigns tasks to the management system that do not correspond to the standard mode of operation of the organization and its previous experience. Countermeasures must be taken urgently, but common experience prevents such action for a number of reasons. Existing work plans do not correspond to the new situation, new tasks appear, and at the same time large amounts of information need to be processed and analyzed. In such conditions there is a danger of general panic. If managers at lower levels of management find themselves in an unexpected situation

²¹ <https://apsolon.com/krizni-menadzment-kako-upravljati-u-vrijeme-krize/> (accessed 26-6-2021).

and if they do not have clear guidelines for action from higher levels of management and the whole picture of the situation, they may succumb to this panic and contribute to general confusion with ill-considered decisions. It should also be noted that many executives cannot change their way of thinking and working in the face of abrupt, unexpected changes.²² For the local people, the pandemic caused a great loss. Tourism is perhaps the most sensitive industry; any risky change has consequences either on a larger or a smaller scale; their safety from possible risks, such as fire protection, food safety, sanitary and health requirements, measures against natural disasters, etc. With the advent of the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, crisis management has once again come into the spotlight. Međugorje is an exclusively tourist place and everyone depends on tourists. According to estimates by tourism workers and hoteliers, due to the coronavirus pandemic last year, only ten percent of overnight stays and income were achieved compared to previous years. It is estimated that until the coronavirus pandemic, this world-famous pilgrimage center was visited by about 1.5 million tourists.²³ After-sales services also play a very important role in the process of retaining consumers. Therefore, it is very important for the organization to understand that in addition to the sale of products, it is perhaps more important to take care of consumers after the sale. In addition to measuring the level of customer satisfaction, it is especially important for the organization to measure the rate of customer retention. Measurement of consumer loyalty can also be performed by the test method, but this type of measurement is not able to provide high accuracy results. The organization will retain customers in the best way if it ensures that it is not worthwhile for them to go to another organization. If it is assumed that the virus will subside in the popular months, the sales service field will play an important role in retaining guests because they will have to prove themselves and fight for every guest, even for those guests who

²² Želimir Kešetović–Ivan Toth, *Problemi kriznog menadžmenta* (Velika Gorica: Veleučilište Velika Gorica, Visoka škola za sigurnost s pravom javnosti, Centar za međunarodne i sigurnosne studije, Fakulteta političkih znanosti u Zagrebu, 2012), 64.

²³ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/svijet/medugorje-od-vlasti-trazi-priznavanje-antigens-kog-testa-i-cijepljenja-za-ulazak-turista-u-bih-15063801> (accessed 21-6-2021).

were extremely loyal to certain destinations before the crisis. Because of all the above, managers must work on educating themselves and their employees.

Education of Employees

Since labor, in addition to natural conditions, is a key factor (resource) in the process of production of tourist goods, it is quite certain that tourism is a labor-intensive activity and, as such, is one of the main sources of employment in many (especially receptive tourist) countries. People are a key success factor in tourism. The overall satisfaction of guests with the tourist offer directly depends on the quality of the service provided by the tourist staff, and the success of the business depends on how the business is managed. Without the people and their potentials, there is no success in the hotel industry. Although all resources are important, human resources are the most important ones. The quality of human resources, their ability, motivation and commitment to perform assigned tasks directly affects the success of the organization. Without trained human resources, it is impossible to define the vision of the organization, determine the mission, set goals, choose the appropriate strategy, define business policy, or realize the goals.²⁴ This problem must be approached at all levels. The system of training tourism workers must be planned and coordinated at state level, but without the support of educational and scientific institutions, local authorities, and the investment in staff education in the companies themselves, the effect will be absent. Education should be carefully planned and adapted to each tourism and hospitality industry. It is extremely important to design the structure of education so that it includes modern disciplines, knowledge, and skills, as well as the share of practical training that tourism professionals must undergo. "Learning is a complex and continuous process that arises from experience and cognitive elements of the individual in order to acquire new knowledge, and to strengthen or change his existing behavior."²⁵

²⁴ Lidija Petrić, "Osnove turizma," *Ekonomski fakultet, Split* (2003): 153.

²⁵ Slobodan Čerović, *Upravljanje ljudskim resursima u hotelijerstvu* (Univerzitet Singidunum, 2012), 23.

Training of staff in the tourism sector should be based on a variety of knowledge that will allow them to provide answers to complex questions posed to them by increasingly sophisticated tourists. In a tourism business, the quality of information exchanged and directly provided affects the competitiveness not only of tourism companies, but also of tourist destinations. The process of globalization, characteristic of the modern phase of tourism development, has led to a significant expansion of the geography of tourist flows. The competition is increasing not only between individual tourism companies, but also between individual countries and regions (tourism destinations). Under these conditions, each destination is interested in providing the most comprehensive information about its unique and attractive tourist resources, the level of development of tourist infrastructure, the specifics of culture and customs, etc. Moreover, it is important that this information must be coming from both professional business professionals and end users but also advertising. Internet has become one of the most effective tools for tourists. Traditional printed advertising tools have a limit to both the amount of information contained in them and their importance, so the most effective source of information in this case is the internet. Most foreign tourist destinations create and maintain their own websites that provide comprehensive information in several languages.²⁶ Međugorje has the potential to become one of the leading tourist destinations in the field of religious tourism. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that confidence between tourism supply and demand can easily be lost due to emergencies. Caring for their health is an expected reactions from the tourists. Therefore, tourism will again have to show resourcefulness, creativity, adaptation, and cooperation. This can be achieved only through amenities of high quality, including constant education of staff at all levels of business so that the tourist destination can keep pace with modern trends in the world market.

²⁶ <https://passportbdd.ru/hr/rabota-s-pk/napravleniya-primeneniya-informacionnyh-tehnologii-v-turizme/> (accessed 16-6-2021).

Conclusions

Tourism as a mass economic and social phenomenon has emerged over the last few decades. Today, it represents a global economic phenomenon, an economic branch that, after the oil and chemical industry, contributes the most to the growth and development of the world economy. It improves foreign exchange inflows, enables the improvement of the balance of payments and influences the increase of the country's total employment. The emergence of new destinations and the way of choosing and consuming a tourist product influenced the change in the understanding and orientation of tourism, which included only one-time trips for vacation. In the summer of 1981, when, according to the testimony of six children, the Queen of Peace appeared in the small Herzegovinian town of Međugorje, the poor village received world fame as a gift. Until the appearance of the corona virus, this tourist destination was visited annually by more than a million people from all over the world. Given the specifics of tourism (intangibility of services, demand orientation, characteristics of the tourist product, high risk when buying a tourist product), investing in the education of tourism workers is a prerequisite for a successful tourism and business policy. Tourism companies should be encouraged to improve education, including investing in further educating their own employees, employ young, professionally educated staff, which will then be educated through practice, organize practical classes for high schools and colleges, and introduce tourism as a compulsory subject in the upper grades of primary school. Local education of tourism workers should be organized and financed jointly by local authorities, tourism companies, and professional associations, with maximum coordination of tourism companies in order to make optimal use of the available resources. "For many individuals, accepting changes in their personal and professional lives is a very difficult task. Still, change is inevitable. People are usually unwilling to step out of a familiar space, out of their comfort zone. Turn to old habits and established customs. Because of such an attitude, it is difficult to achieve your goals."²⁷ Given the rapid development of technology and the

²⁷ Marijana Šećibović, *Akaderske vještine* (Beograd: Hesperiaedu, 2015), 114.

growing importance of the creative economy, it is logical that there is a growing need for employees who are able to create new solutions and accelerate business processes.²⁸ Such hard-working and talented people are recognized as a strategic advantage, on the basis of which both companies and entire communities gain a competitive advantage. Medjugorje definitely has something to offer to a modern tourist; it just has to include in its activities all levels of government, population, and the entire staff of the tourist sector in order for the tourist destination to be recognizable, attractive, different, and able to compete with the demanding market.

²⁸ "Jestivo voće i orašasti plodovi," *Infokom 77* (February 2022): 52.