

**The political and social landscape of modern Greece and the symbol
of Yannis Ritsos as conceived by two contemporary Italian authors**

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Abstract

The Modern Greek poet Yannis Ritsos has been especially acclaimed in Italy and received several International Prizes for his work there. His poetry has been highly appreciated and translated in Italy and his biography has become a symbol of endurance, resistance against the Regime of the Colonels, noncompliance and freedom. The poet Fabio Scotto and the writer Simona Vinci are two of the numerous Italian intellectuals who have been inspired by Ritsos's life and used the poet as a symbol in their recent literary works, *La Grecia è morta e altre poesie* (2013) and *La prima verità* (2016) respectively. The above mentioned Italian literary works are of great academic significance, not being translated in Greek or studied before, and reflect crucial aspects of the Greek political and social landscape over the last six decades. Moreover, they highlight a Greek poet's, Yannis Ritsos's, importance in the history of both literature and Greece.

Introduction – Yannis Ritsos in Italy

The Modern Greek poet Yannis Ritsos's work has been translated in Italian by more than twenty Italian or Greek translators over the last fifty years (Tsianas 2000). More than sixty of his poetry collections have been presented to the Italian public and have been so appreciated that he received several International Prizes, such as the “Premio Internazionale Etna-Taormina” in 1976, the “Premio Letterario Internazionale Mondello Città di Palermo” in 1978, the “Premio Biella-Poesia” and the “Premio Internazionale Città dello Stretto” in 1985, the prize “Italia-Grecia” in 1989 and many more (Σκαμάγκα 2012).

Apart from his highly appreciated poetry in Italy, Ritsos's biography has become a symbol of endurance and resistance against the Regime of the Colonels, which was established in Greece in 1967. Ritsos was arrested on the very first day of the coup and sent to various places of exile (Κώττη 2009). Numerous articles appeared in the Italian newspapers from that year and on, highlighting his virtues not only as a poet but also as a human and asking for his release. Poets, writers and other Italian intellectuals tried to express their opposition to the political and social turmoil in Greece during the Dictatorship by condemning such acts of persecution and confinement because of political beliefs.

This tendency of Italian intellectuals to use Yannis Ritsos's life as a symbol of noncompliance and freedom seems to emerge in several contemporary Italian literary works. Two of them are Fabio Scotto's poetry collection *La Grecia è morta e altre poesie (Greece is dead and other poems)* – 2013 and Simona Vinci's novel *La prima verità (The first truth)* – 2016, which have not been translated in English or Greek yet and have not been studied, though reflecting crucial aspects of the Greek political and social landscape from the 1960s up to the present.

Fabio Scotto's *Greece is dead and other poems*

Fabio Scotto, Professor of French Literature at the University of Bergamo, published his poetry collection *La Grecia è morta e altre poesie (Greece is dead and other poems)* in 2013. In these poems, Scotto interweaves the European –or rather anti-European– present and the ancient myth. In two of these poems, written during his trip to Greece in 2010, Scotto selects the example of Greece in order to reflect on European crisis. What is more, in the poem which the whole collection was named after Scotto refers to Yannis Ritsos's confinement during the Dictatorship to indicate one of the “deaths” the country has experienced.

“La Grecia è morta” is a poem which depicts the contradiction between the constant beauty and glorious past of Greece, on the one hand, and the sorrowful poverty and tragic present, on the other. Modern Greece is dead and dirty, it is a country fading away:

*Greece is alone
victim of the bank trickery
shops that close down
signs taken down
tears and anger (Scotto 2013: 11).*

Greece is deceived and mute, it is an imprisoned country and it seems as if it has not been free for quite a long time, since:

*Greece is in a cell
in the colonels' batons*

*in the confinement inflicted upon Yannis Ritsos
in the torture, in the missing students' names* (Scotto 2013: 12).

According to Scotto, who loves Greece and would die for it, the country is beautiful yet trembling and its hungry people are desperate. No doubt it is the politicians' and other "bosses'" fault:

*Greece dies in every word
every time that a satrap
boasts of logos for the wars
Greece loses every beauty
if it is reflected old in the watertight Aegean Sea
infested by the usual marauders' yachts
oilmen, pimps, evaders, bosses
who dip their bread in the wounds of the buboes* (Scotto 2013: 12)

Greece is always Homer's beautiful country, it is always the country of the glorious past, yet it is now a modern moaning country, with whores and seamen struggling for life, whereas hundreds of refugees struggle to survive by reaching its coasts:

*Greece is modern
it counts the corpses on its beaches
feter of the boat-people of every war*

[...]

*Greece is inept
at the too many anonymous deaths* (Scotto 2013: 13).

However, Greek people are still alive even if left alone, they live and produce, they try to be worthy of their ancestors, of the beauty of the Greek blue sea which now turns blood-coloured and the country tries to rise from its ashes, like a phoenix, even if the game is fixed and peace is lost.

Simona Vinci's *The first truth*

The young writer Simona Vinci's novel *La prima verità* (*The first truth*) came out in 2016 and won the Italian literary prize "Premio Campiello" and the "Premio Volponi" of the same year. The title of the novel derives from a verse of the poem «Υποθήκη» ("Mortgage"), written by Yannis Ritsos in 1969 (Ρίτσος 1975⁴: 135).

The story of Vinci's novel unfolds in various places of Italy and Greece but everything leads to Leros, to the Colony of the Mentally Ill, to the place of banishment for political dissenters and, last but not least, to the refugees' camp most recently created there. Once again, Yannis Ritsos's biography inspires the Italian writer, who creates the persona of another poet in exile in Leros, Stefanos Tavlaridis, constrained to spend his time with the psychopaths "next-door". Simona Vinci exposes the past "Europe's guilty secret" (Merrit 1989) which, nowadays, does not really seem to have lost this shameful definition.

Three phases of shame can be attributed to the otherwise beautiful island of Leros. The first lasts from 1958 to 1981, when people from all over Greece considered to be mentally ill or retarded are massively transferred to the "Colony" and live under horrible circumstances (Λουκάς 2006) –some of them until the late 90s– socially excluded and forgotten. The second phase of shame in Leros is entered during the Greek Dictatorship, when thousands of left-

wing political exiles are sent there and the third phase is the current one, when hundreds of Syrian and other refugees reach the coast of the island, dead or alive, and are led to the so-called “hotspots”, specially created for them in Leros and other islands or places of the Greek mainland. Simona Vinci mainly depicts the first two phases of shame, yet concludes her story in the third one, mentioning the sad example of the three-year-old boy Aylan Shenu-Kurdi, young victim of the migrant crisis in 2015 (Vinci 2016: 396).

The main character of the novel *La prima verità*, the Italian researcher Angela, moves to Leros in 1992, in an attempt to help solve the problem of the mental hospital-island, where mentally ill people and political exiles were made to coexist. The poet in exile Stefanos Tavlaridis, Yannis Ritsos’s alter-ego, meets several people who were diagnosed with some kind of insanity or incapability and are constrained to lead their lives in isolation. They are often his only company, the only ones to listen to him, even if they rarely respond.

The writer also talks about the coup in Athens, the arrests, the victims, the exiles and presents Ritsos’s whole story in a literary way. She uses real names of politicians, such as Giorgos Papadopoulos or the king of Greece Konstantinos, real places and dates and the real facts of Ritsos’s biography, his difficult childhood, his family’s diseases or insanity, his political beliefs and persecution. Consequently, she proves him to be one of the martyrs of the history of Greek literature.

The political and social landscape in the 1960s

Fabio Scotto and Simona Vinci present some of the painful aspects of the political and social landscape in the 1960s. They both refer to that black page of the Greek history when the Regime of the Colonels was established in 1967, imprisoning, torturing or, even, leading to death their political opponents. Many people went missing, Scotto reminds us, and others lost their civil rights and individual liberties. This type of politics was a real death for Greece, as Fabio Scotto claims in his above mentioned poem “La Grecia è morta”.

The celebrated poet Yannis Ritsos was one of the numerous people who suffered this lack of freedom and independence, banished to several deserted or remote islands all around Greece from 1948 to 1952 and from 1967 to the 1970s (Κώττη 2009). One of those islands was Leros, where he was sent in 1968 for about a year. What distinguished that island from the rest of the places of exile he was sent to was the fact that political dissenters actually lived next to the so-called “Colony of the Mentally Ill”, which had been created there since 1958. Simona Vinci combines the issues of both political and social exclusion as experienced on the island of Leros at the time and presents its gloomy picture in her award winning novel *La prima verità*. This “islandisation” (Ramsay 1990: 135) led to the deterioration of the medical condition of the people transported there, without helping to solve the problem of their “deviant behaviour”. Besides, that isolation often resulted in people hoping to die instead of trying to live.

The political and social landscape in the 2010s

Both Italian authors take the opportunity to protest against the political and social current situation in Greece and in Europe. Fabio Scotto depicts the financial problems the Greek people face day by day: unemployment, bankruptcy, poverty, hunger, deception and the tragic

sense of being unable to react, to escape, to be saved or, even, to hope for the future. What is more, both Fabio Scotto and Simona Vinci feel obliged to react with their writing against the modern Mediterranean drama, against the war in Syria and the people who exploit refugees and take them to the Eastern Greek islands, promising to them the slight possibility of a better, peaceful life. Both writers realise that this promise is hard to keep, as many of the refugees in distress die during the journey, drown in the sea or just get stuck on Greek islands which struggle to host them but not always manage to offer them a decent daily life.

Conclusions

Two contemporary Italian authors opted to raise public awareness about political and social issues the Greek people have been obliged to deal with over the last six decades. On the one hand, the military Junta and its tactics and the marginalisation of mentally sick people in Leros in the 1960s and, on the other hand, the financial and migrant crisis in the 2010s are the major factors responsible for many of the problems caused.

The main conclusion that can be extracted when reading Fabio Scotto's *La Grecia è morta e altre poesie* and Simona Vinci's *La prima verità* is that the sense of belonging to a group is not always a consolation and a solution to people's problems. Power seems to have taken control of everything; the more powerful people appear to have the prerogative to control weaker people's lives of their group. The wealthy countries decide over the poor ones in Europe and elsewhere, the politically powerful oligarchies decide over their weak opponents' lives, the healthy family members decide over the helpless relatives' future. Deception and exploitation are the key words of every crisis presented; hope and action seem to be the only answer. It has always been people's fate; isn't it up to us to change it?

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An unintended consequence? British propaganda and intercommunal division in Cyprus, 1955-59

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The deterioration of intercommunal relations in Cyprus since the 1950s is well known. Less known is the impact of British propaganda on the local population during the island's decolonisation. Although propaganda is how the government communicated its aims, words cannot be separated from actions. Accordingly, this paper looks at the wider context in which propaganda existed. It argues that the government's conduct often contradicted its propaganda messages, making the latter appear disingenuous. And while exacerbating division was not a goal of propaganda policy, propaganda exacerbated nationalism(s), making division an unintended and lasting consequence.

Background

The history of Greek and Turkish Cypriot relations is a long and tortured one. This paper deals only with the point of departure in their breakdown: Cypriot decolonisation. Cyprus had been insignificant for Britain until 1947, when every British possession that would become independent would add to the island's value. At the same time, and unlike other colonies, a majority of Cypriots were not demanding independence but to be annexed to Greece. *Enosis* – Greek for union – was something the Turkish Cypriot minority was opposed to, yet it is thought to have been a universal aim among Greek Cypriots, who made up over 80% of the population.

The majority were not alone. *Enosis* was backed by Greece, which offered financial, material, and political support. Using that support, retired Colonel Georgios Grivas began planning an insurgency in late 1954 and formed EOKA – the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters. The political front was taken over by Archbishop Makarios III. The result of their four-year campaign was that *enosis* ultimately failed and they settled for independence; Britain abandoned sovereignty and settled for two military bases. In terms of the human cost, the British and EOKA each suffered close to 100 deaths; 51 policemen from both communities died; 62 Turkish Cypriot civilians were killed; while the heaviest loss was suffered by Greek Cypriot civilians – 263 were killed, and an additional 180 suspected 'traitors' are thought to have been murdered by EOKA (French 2015: 160-1, 308).

Historiography

Researching any social aspect of the insurgency is hindered by the nature of the sources available. Although the government did record their experiences, what these show is how a small part of British bureaucracy perceived events. The other side of the coin – the views of the population – remains a hidden dimension. Due to this obstacle, studies on propaganda have focused on effectiveness, not impact: how effective was propaganda in realising British foreign policy aims, not how it impacted Cypriots. The one scholar to have looked at British propaganda in Cyprus was Susan Carruthers, who concluded that, although specific policy goals did succeed – often concerning international opinion as opposed to Cypriot – "a question mark hangs" over the long-term impact (Carruthers 1994: 296-7). More recently, David French analysed the battle between British and EOKA propaganda, and demonstrated how the viciousness of the latter made it impossible for Britain to convince Greek Cypriots to assist the authorities (French 2015). In other words, British propaganda was doomed to fail.

This paper seeks to understand how Cypriots may have perceived propaganda efforts and how those perceptions may have affected the two communities. At its centre is the notion that words and action must be aligned, if propaganda is to succeed (Balfour 1979). For this reason, and although it has only British archives to rely on, the paper examines the wider context in which propaganda existed. Its approach is to divide propaganda into three stages: strategic, tactical, and consolidation. These categories were used in a propaganda lecture to troops in Cyprus in 1958, and, under

similar names, dictated Britain's approach to propaganda since 1939. The argument put forward is that although intercommunal division was not a goal of British propaganda in any of these stages, propaganda was waged through tactics that failed to understand the population, and by a government whose actions did indeed pit the two communities against each other. All of this made propaganda part of a process that ended up deepening division.

Strategy

To be successful, propaganda required two elements: a clear policy to put across and continuity of effort. In terms of the latter, in only six months of 1956, up to seven million leaflets were dropped over Cyprus – that was a quarter the number of leaflets the Allies dropped across enemy territory *throughout* the First World War. Together with leaflets, the main voice of propaganda were government publications, although whisper campaigns and planted stories in the press were also employed on occasion. All these attempted to expose EOKA violence, contrast it with the benefits of British rule, and make Greek Cypriots resist EOKA's tactics. So although propaganda is often taken to indicate a deceptive means to manipulate people in a negative way (Walton 1997), the aims in this case were more benign.

But other than covering the island in paper, propaganda had to be underlined by a firm national policy – would Britain assertively oppose *enosis*, or leave the possibility open? This was not an easy policy to articulate, considering the multiple fronts Britain was trying to appease. Locally were the two communities, each of which supported diametrically opposite solutions. (There were obviously variations and many Greek Cypriots were coerced into passively supporting EOKA.) Cleavages also existed within UK politics. The Conservative majority in Westminster did not want to lose another colony, while Labour was pledging to oppose Tory policy over Cyprus – whatever that was. Public opinion was another consideration: Britons and the Cypriot diaspora had to see British action in Cyprus as a legitimate response to terrorism than as violence against civilians. There was also the rest of the Empire, which could be inspired (further) by developments if those were not dealt with decisively. And then there would be Greece – actively advocating for *enosis*; Turkey – actively opposing *enosis*; and then America and the United Nations Assembly – which had the power to add pressure on all involved.

All these variables meant two things: it was impossible to have a single message acceptable to all parties; and the nature of the emergency made it hard to have a consistent policy over Cyprus altogether. Propaganda could thus not be underpinned by a clear and firm strategy, and was destined to alienate most parties, most of the time.

Tactic

Other than a strategy, propaganda needed specific goals, often to convince Greek Cypriots to give information about EOKA, or to convince them that their future with Greece was looking bleak. But to be able to sway public opinion, Britain had to first grasp it. This required political intelligence. Here again was a crippling obstacle:

Cyprus had no efficient intelligence system. In fact, the main guide of British efforts was the generic assumption that all Greek Cypriots sided with EOKA, and that all Turkish Cypriots sided with its Turkish Cypriot equivalent, TMT.¹ This was despite membership estimates for each not exceeding 2,000.

The irony is that there was no shortage of propaganda staff obtaining intelligence. By 1958, the military, the police, and the government had at least 11 propaganda posts between them, yet there was no consistent coordination between them. While District Commissioners were asked to report on local opinion regularly, for example, neither the Director of Information nor the Cyprus Broadcasting Station asked for their advice on propaganda in the critical months of 1955. It is nonetheless doubtful whether doing so would have been useful – local opinion was grasped by individuals (who often did not speak the local language) than through systematic assessment. Added to the uncoordinated effort was a reluctance to invest in propaganda, with funds having gone from £10,000 to £2,000 by the end of 1957.²

This failure of intelligence meant that evidence was often substituted with opinions. One of Governor John Harding's plans for making Greece stop inciting EOKA violence, for example, was to visit Turkey without announcing why: "...Greek and Greek Cypriot opinion could be left to speculate and draw its own conclusions as to any other objects the visit might have".³ Although telling of the Governor's attitude, this deceptive approach was blocked by a more clear-headed Foreign Office which feared the Governor's idea would result in Greek hysteria; it would occur while Britain was warning NATO that Greco-Turkish relations had to be handled with care; while if he were to visit, Turkey would have expected Harding to have something to say – "what would it be?", they asked.⁴

The visit did not go ahead, but Harding's myopic approach was not a one-off. Opinions and speculation were a regular substitute for intelligence and expertise. Whereas in the Second World War and then in Malaya Britain used psychiatrists and sociologists to measure public opinion and calculate propaganda action, in Cyprus that was left to officials. Yet a commonly-used excuse for the failure of propaganda was not amateurism but the British claim that the Cypriot mind lacked the mental processes of Westerners (Linstrum 2016: 182). Political intransigence would also influence those opinions and defeat propaganda aims. For example, although it was advised that propaganda ought to avoid forcing the Church out of politics, Archbishop Makarios and his staff were duly exiled nine months later.

It follows that whatever a leaflet may have wanted the population to know were the benefits of British rule, the government's conduct would undo it – often based on opinions, and often with a vengeance.

Consolidation

Dealing with an inherently contradictory situation, and doing so more or less in the dark, the final step of propaganda was consolidation. In theory, consolidation

¹ "Volkan", report by Special Branch, 28.12.1956, FCO 141/3840, The National Archives, Kew, TNA.

² Storrs (Director of Public Relations) to Chudleigh (Public Relations Officer), 31.12.1957, FCO 141/3716, TNA.

³ Harding to Colonial Secretary, 23.4.1956, FO 371/123885, TNA.

⁴ Note on Cyprus by JE Galsworthy, 24.4.1956, FO 371/123885, TNA.

was when Britain would publicise the achievements of British rule so far and the prosperity of *both* communities under it. But the government had a very limited understanding of the fragility of intercommunal relations. And this was perhaps propaganda's greatest miscalculation: while in 1955 the Cyprus Intelligence Committee thought that Turkish nationalism could be exacerbated if propaganda attacked Greece, it did not anticipate that tension would spill over between the two Cypriot communities – and so recommended that propaganda did focus on Greece. And when Turkey initially showed no interest, Turkish nationalism was deliberately played up by Britain so that Turkey would side with it against Greece. When Turkish Cypriot nationalism was also exacerbated as a result, a British plan for partition was hastily drawn up in 1956 – complete with maps and a scheme for an exchange of populations – indicative of how Britain prioritised between intercommunal relations and geostrategic goals.

So, despite propaganda not explicitly pitting the two communities against each other, underlying government policies did. One other example of how this was done was the colonial government's treatment of Turkish Cypriot crimes. While TMT attempted to counter EOKA through similarly deathly tactics, the government avoided arresting its supporters. The Colonial Secretary advised the Governor that "to take action against TMT at this moment would have most serious repercussions in Turkey and it is essential that we should do nothing to impair our relations at this time... I must therefore ask you to hold your hand for the time being."⁵ And although many Greek Cypriots wrote to government asking for financial aid to cover damages resulting from EOKA and TMT attacks, the government's policy was to refuse it – so that the population would have (another) incentive to want the insurgency to stop. At the same time, and because Turkish Cypriots accused government for its failure to restrain EOKA, the authorities would often pass disproportionate sentences against Greek Cypriots to show their determination in ending the conflict. With an emergency legal system that made even carrying stones a crime, disproportionate sentences were not hard to come by. And in those trials, the prosecution would often use Turkish Cypriots as witnesses – some of the most high-profile cases, including those deciding the hangings of EOKA members, relied on such testimonies.

On a more institutionalised level, division was exploited through the police. Whereas in 1954, 37% of the force would be Turkish Cypriots, by 1957, and due to incidents of EOKA infiltration, it increased to 67% – for a minority that made up about 15% of the population, that was an extraordinary statistic (Anderson 1993: 190). But in 1959, when the government tried to make public services reflect the ratio of the population again, many Turkish Cypriots were fired, creating unemployment problems in that community.

Combined, and in order to function, British conduct framed all Greek Cypriots as terrorists and Turkish Cypriots as law enforcers. In this context, little could be achieved by leaflets reminding locals that government had poured millions into developing 78 square miles of agricultural land since 1940, for example, even if that was true.⁶

⁵ Colonial Secretary to Governor, 15.7.1958, FCO 141/4342, TNA.

⁶ "Ἰδοὺ ἡ Ἀλήθεια" ["Behold the truth"], undated, FCO 141/3724, TNA.

Conclusion

Propaganda existed in an environment marked by reactive politics, with little intelligence and no experts. That Britain failed to realise its aims was no surprise – clarity and consistency were pre-requisites, neither of which characterised its Cyprus policy. The travails of Cypriots were, of course, not limited to British action. Greece did more than its fair share of inciting violence from a safe distance, with the Athens Radio encouraging Greek Cypriots – the "unselfish fighters who yield before no-one" – to "sweep away all traitors" and help Greece expand from Cyprus to Albania.⁷ Indeed, Greek propaganda not merely exacerbated division but pursued it. In its turn, Turkish Cypriot propaganda would threaten with more violence and more murder. The locals were also subjected to EOKA propaganda and terror, which not only terrified people into submission but also glorified killing and dying – so long as it was for "*enosis* and only *enosis*". This perplexing obsession with Greece must have been "some kind of arrested mental development", thought an official.⁸

It is against this backdrop of nationalist paranoia by all involved that Britain exploited divisions so that it could function, clinging onto an empire that had no place in the post-1945 world – perhaps a sign of its own 'arrested mental development'. It was also in this context that propaganda was supposed to be part of the solution: it was meant to neutralise Greek nationalism and make Britain look good. But propaganda inflamed nationalism(s), making even factual claims look out of place and inconsistent with government behaviour. Leaflets and reality did not match, making Britain appear all the more disingenuous and, in the eyes of each community, as incapable of protecting it from the other.

⁷ Excerpt from Athens Radio, 27.6.1955, FO 371/117641, TNA.

⁸ Reddaway to Proud, 17.3.1957, FCO 141/3724, TNA.

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From Paspates to Sillogos: ‘Heritagization’ of Byzantine Remnants of Istanbul

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Abstract:

Conceptualization of architectural edifice as “heritage” dates long back in history. Yet the modern definition of heritage is much related with the transforming relations with the past that these artefacts belong to and the identity making processes related to that past. The role of the Byzantine past and the Byzantine Heritage for the Greek culture is such an example. Through certain research projects and their outcomes by Paspates and Sillogos this paper will discuss ‘heritagization’ of Byzantine monuments in Istanbul and its larger impact.

Introduction

The mnemonic potential of built environment for the timeframe it belongs is a widely known aspect. However, the meaning attached to them had differed from time to time. Sometimes, juxtaposition of remnants from different periods created a debate on which to put one over the other. Such a debate on preference of a layer in history is strongly tied with the meaning attached to that history and its present day appropriation (Jokilehto 1999). The role of Byzantine Empire within Modern Greek historiography indicates such a case. Although Enlightenment thinkers’ rejection of Byzantine Empire at the expense of Reason and Classical philosophy together with significant rise of Classicism especially after French Revolution had challenged the position of the Byzantine History for the making of the Modern Greek identity especially in the first half of nineteenth century, due to the works of Paparrigopoulos and others (Christodoulo 2012; Hamilakis 2007; Ricks and Magdalino 1998) it was well embedded. This aspect of Byzantine History and its urban remnants within the construction of Modern Greek identity especially around nineteenth century, which is a well-studied subject within contemporary Modern Greek historiography, yet neglects the role of the studies within the former capital of the Empire, Constantinople. As ‘nationalism’ and ‘identity making’ dominates their main perspective, the non-nation state condition of Greeks- yet a religious/ethnic identity based structure under imperial rule- within the context of Ottoman Istanbul hasn’t got enough attention to be included within the discussion. This, not only excluded the attention on these remnants by the Greeks within the Ottoman Empire, but also maybe more critically, the related attitude of the Ottoman State, as the decision maker over those remnants.

Scholarly Interest on the Byzantine Remnants of Istanbul

Early Works

With this respect, one of the earliest scholarly interests on Byzantine remnants among Greeks in Istanbul, started as early as 1820s. The first publication in this regard was the book of Patriarch Konstantinias, ‘Constantinople, Old and New.’ (Konstantinias 1824). Konstantinias’s book, which had been translated and republished 8 times during nineteenth century, was very influential on the following publications. Another study in this track was the 3-volume compilation of Skarlatos Byzantios (Byzantios 1851- 1869; Pesmazoglou 2010). In a similar fashion with Konstantinias, Byzantios also depicted the city, which he had observed very closely, neighborhood by neighborhood, including the Byzantine buildings. Both studies, giving detailed information based on earlier studies as well as observations of their own, provided the ground for a more intensive work on the Byzantine remnants that would come with Alexander Paspates and his institution, Greek Literary Society within the second half of the nineteenth century.

Role of Alexander Paspates and his ‘Byzantine Studies’

Alexander Paspates was a Chios born Greek, studied medicine in Europe and was working at Balıklı Greek Hospital in Istanbul around mid 19th century when he also started his career as a researcher on Istanbul. The first outcome of his research was a book on the patient records of the hospital where he had analyzed the sources of illnesses treated in the hospital and their causes within the urban context of Istanbul. Accordingly he had devoted a chapter on the current urban conditions of the city (Paspates 1862).

What interested him more in Istanbul was, however, the Byzantine structures which were facing the risk of downfall due to lack of maintenance (Paspates 1877). Around the time he had retired from the hospital, he had devoted most of his time for his research on these buildings. Almost as an antiquarian, he was walking in and out of them, gathering information about the both the architectural and structural details in situ and collecting materials for a further analysis of the construction. He had studied the extensive topography of intramural town, from the Land Walls to the Great Palace unearthed during the Roumelian Railway excavations and most of the churches, and mosques converted from churches. He had published the results of his research in his famous work entitled as “Byzantine Studies” (Paspates 1877). His work on those structures was not only a more detailed analysis but also a rather different assessment than the previously mentioned works of Greek authors. Most visibly, he did not include the present urban setting of those structures unless he is giving a minute detail. He rather isolated the Byzantine monuments from the social setting of the current urban context and rephrase them in a new, more “Byzantine” setting with particular references to their relative patrons or saints and underlined major events that signified the importance of those buildings and in a way ‘monumentalize’ (Choay 2001) them in the eyes of its Greek – speaking audience. Re-contextualizing those buildings within Byzantine history, Paspates underlines their mnemonic capacity, and in a sense transform them in to *lieux de memoire* (Nora 1989), thus underlining their role as part of Byzantine heritage (Paspates 1877).

Greek Literary Society of Istanbul

Yet, Paspates' contribution to the field was not limited with his own book. Parallel to his studies, he had found the institutional basis of his antiquarianism, in the Greek Literary Society of Istanbul (hereafter: *Sillogos*), which had been established in 1861 by mostly the Greek Orthodox elite of Istanbul, including the bankers, merchants, diplomats, doctors, professors etc (Exertzoglou 1986; Exertzoglou 2004; Vassiadis 2007). It aimed to gather a scholarly institution for literary and scientific studies within Greek millet, through several events, projects, public lectures and its annual journal which had been distributed not only within Constantinople or the Ottoman Empire, but as far as North America (Anagnostopoulo 1999). Soon after its foundation, *Sillogos* became an attraction point for many intellectuals and hub of an intellectual network in and out of the Ottoman Empire.

Being not only one of the earliest members but at the same time the vice president and president of the *Sillogos*, in its early years, Paspates had carried his passion for Istanbul studies to the *Sillogos* through monthly meetings. He presented to the *Sillogos* members on 29 Nisan 1863 his book of the Balıklı Hospital and its patients and in 1864 and 1865, aforementioned studies on the Byzantine structures (Paspates 1865a, 1865b, 1865c).

It was Paspates' interest and maybe ambitious work that also had invoked a significant interest for the entire intra-mural city among the members of *Sillogos*. This had resulted in the initiation of a project that had aimed to construct a topographical map of Istanbul around the turn of 1870s (*Syngramma Periodikon* 1884). Yet, for practical reasons they decided to execute it step by step. First a map of the walls together with their façade drawings would be produced and then would later come the other monuments. The original outcome of this project became a collective work of almost all members of *Sillogos* and mentioned as 30 mt. in length in the supplement (*Syngramma Periodikon* 1884: 4-6).

Almost a decade later however, in 1880, *Sillogos* decided to bring this work to public light and this time publish the map in a reduced scale from 1/1000 to 1/7500, in a more manageable dimension to be published and distributed as a part of its archeology supplement to the journal in 1884 (*Syngramma Periodikon* 1884: 4 - 6). The supplement, included a short story of the project, a catalogue of the names mentioned in the map, several elevations, which also were drawn for the first map. In the meantime however, a separate map of the walls, again with the elevations of several gates and certain parts and names of locations, in French was published in 1881.

The Ottoman Context of Byzantine Structures

Published few years after the book of Paspates, these maps also contributed to the knowledge and visibility of land walls, the largest (longest) of the Byzantine remnants in the city in terms of scale. Yet, at the same time it was also the most threatened one as they were under rapid loot as source of stone and construction material, especially after the abolishment of Janissaries in 1826, who were responsible for the protection of them. Moreover, this loot, to a certain extent was legitimized by a state declaration in 1864 by the 6th District Municipality which had permitted for the destruction of the land walls of both Istanbul and Galata (Ergin 1995a). There were efforts of preservation Server Pasha, the head of the municipality or there are objections among the intellectuals that could not be enough to stop the destruction

especially for Galata walls (Rosenthal 1980). The land walls could only survive as they were further away from the city center and it was also difficult and expensive to propose a rapid destruction. Yet still they had been seriously damaged within this period.

This would go on for a certain period and only in 1912 with legislation on 'Protection of Monuments' the walls would be declared officially as monuments to be preserved (Ergin 1995b). Yet within this 30 some years, there had been a significant point that was shaped by a decree by Sultan Abdülhamid II, on 28 March 1884 provided a turning point for the history of the walls (Ergin 1995c). Although the decree itself could not be located in the archive, yet a reference could be found in another document dated 10 April 1892 (DH.MKT 1940/18). This document refers to the decree and states that, besides their necessity for the border and customs, as their nature as being 'monuments' were acknowledged recently, destruction (and sale) of the walls should be abandoned. A set of correspondence following that document reveals that actually this decree created confusion among state offices and in order to solve it the Ottoman State also provisioned to document the walls (BEO 126/9382). So it is evident that, before the legal setting for the conservation of the walls, a concern on the walls had already emerged in practice.

The changing attitude of the Ottoman state towards the monuments and the archeology or a scientific study of both antiquities and the Byzantine heritage in particular especially towards the turn of the 20th century is well known (Yıldız 2013). The point here, however is a rather more neglected and to a significant extend earlier phase of that story: The impact of the institutional and scientific environment and body of knowledge created by *Sillogos* and its members on the study of historical remnants in the urban context and on the land walls in particular. So the speculative question is, can there be any flow of influence emerging in the intellectual network around *Sillogos*, might have any possible impact on the acknowledgement of the land walls as part of these monuments appropriated by the Ottoman state, which took place around the same timeframe of 1864 till 1884.

Search for a Network

There is no one single line that connects these two simultaneous developments. Yet, there is a network of connections, which provides a potential ground for such a flow of influence. To begin with, as mentioned above, being a hub for the intellectual network in mid 19th ct. Istanbul, the *Sillogos* had attracted many people from diverse origins. Among the long list of the members of *Sillogos*, there was a significant number of Greek, Armenian or Muslim diplomats, statesmen etc. But as for the concern on the land walls and the dissemination of the knowledge produced on the land walls, several of them are of more importance: such as Philipp Anthon Dethier, or Münif Pasha or Edhem Pasha, For instance, Dethier, German historian archeologist who had been appointed as the head of the imperial archeological museum in 1872 was already a member since 1866 and even became the second vice-president of the *Sillogos*. Another significant figure, (Ibrahim) Edhem Pasha, Minister of Trade and Customs, was among the honorary participants of the society which had been selected by the offer of at least three regular member and the vote of all. Likewise Münif Pasha, who would later be the Minister of Education, was the head of the *Cemiyet-i İlmîyye-i Osmaniyye*, (Ottoman Science Institution) a contemporary intellectual society was another honorary member. Similar to *Sillogos*, *Cemiyet* also had published a journal named as *Mecmua-i Fünun* (Journal of

Science) in 1861 (Budak 2011; Işıl 1986). *Mecmua* was among the earliest scientific journals of the Ottoman intellectual environment, with a diverse interest also including archeology just as *Sillogos*. The interaction between the *Cemiyet* and *Sillogos* was not something due to the simultaneity only. It was rather intentional as we read it from the foreword of the *Sillogos*' journal's first volume. Among the developments of both the Ottoman Muslims and other millets such as Armenians and Jews, *Sillogos* had referred to the *Cemiyet*, as a "half-finished academy" with its public lectures etc. and similar to *Sillogos*, *Cemiyet* also had a set of members from a variety of different backgrounds including those who work at the Imperial Translation Chamber (Vassiadis 2007). *Cemiyet* was definitely another hub of the complex intellectual networks of the Ottoman Empire.

Another aspect of the network that surrounds *Sillogos* might be the connections between the Greek Orthodox elite who financially support and sometimes collaborate with *Sillogos* and their close connections with the Ottoman imperial administration. Especially during the period of Abdülhamid II, this connection is well known, as Yorgos Zarifi, the famous and powerful banker and a member and sponsor of the *Sillogos* was his personal friend and financial advisor (Hulkiender 2003; Kazgan 1991). Also other bankers such as Zografos or his personal medical doctor Karatheodori as close contacts of Abdülhamid were all members and financial supporters of the *Sillogos* (Exertzoglou 1986; Exertzoglou 1999; Issawi 1982).

Although the need for supporting with different other sources still stands there, the evaluation of the intellectual environments beyond their communal boundaries with barriers of language and institutional structure, as in the case of *Sillogos*' and the larger Ottoman milieu helps to reveal a larger potential of integration and impact. Through the agency of a certain monument, a new assemblage is created, beyond the borders of community (Latour 2005), which also extends our vision for re-contextualizing and re-historicizing it from a larger perspective, looking for new relationship models might reveal a more coherent understanding or more a potential perspective for both the intellectual environment and the material approach on the urban context in the late 19th century Istanbul.

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«Politics of Reading and Social Book History in Greece. The case of EKEBI (1992-2012)»

Is there a common concept of European book culture? Does the book transform national identities? Do we need a National Book Centre in Greece? How Greek book promotion functioned abroad during the last two decades, how efficient it was and in which direction?

My thesis will examine Greek cultural politics, an undoubtedly under-researched area, in order to define the contemporary national public policies concerning culture and national cultural identity in the European framework. The Maastricht treaty (February 1992) is the main landmark to be explored in accordance to European cultural policies as formulated by the European Union. Greece will be our case study in order to explore the various ways of implementation of these policies, their successes and their failings.

With regard to the concept of book culture, very few comprehensive scholarly work has been published yet. According to the principle of subsidiarity¹, applied to the cultural policies of the EU, each member state has the responsibility for implementing certain agreed actions, while the initiative in communal level is activated only in case of failure of national politics to meet the objectives. So, communal policy acknowledges the significance of the individual states' bond with their respective national cultures, and subsequently with literature as a prominent part of each culture. After the end of World War II in several European countries now member states of EU, among them Greece and France, National Book Centres were established, in close collaboration with publishers, writers, translators, librarians and booksellers in order to implement a national book policy. Literature is in unquestionable continuous connection with national identity and national language. Raymond Williams in his seminal essay «Keywords, A Vocabulary of Culture and Society», comments about literature: “literature is a complex word, partly because of its current common meaning looking simple at first glance (...) This currently common phrase, «English literature» is a piece of critical procedure in progress by itself. Such was the idea of «Nationalliteratur» that developed in Germany starting 1770 and on, and similar French and Italian aspirations. The affiliation with a nation is crucial socially and culturally and probably politically for a literature”. (Williams 1976) Under the current financial difficulties, the task is ever more demanding. The belletristic, and not only belletristic, book, the cultural function of which is revelatory of each society priorities, is striving for survival and at the same moment its defenders struggle to make it socially acceptable, that book and literature are not a luxury but a necessity, with deeply penetrating roots in the identity of each individual country, and more for the multiply socked financially, politically and culturally, Greece (Karakatsouli 2013). Acknowledging that "our culture is the study of culture" (Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture*) and that, as Dick Stanley notes «culture is crucial for a society in order to confront the changing process», we realise the necessity of a cultural project,

¹ EUR-Lex. Access to European Union law. Available at:
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/subsidiarity_el.htm (accessed 2 April 2017).

reconstructed, in order to promote «the creative social forces in the direction to Express themselves, to undertake initiative and to converge in strategic goals with more efficiency than before (Zorba 2014)». But this reconstruction is not possible before the previous state policy is assessed, before the intrinsic character and structure of cultural policy as public policy, its strategic goals and their connection with contemporary conversation about cultural analysis is clearly defined. Public discussion as well as scientific examination of book-reading policy in Greece is still emerging. We would rather focus on the complex relationship between public policy and the uses of literature in the national cultural life having in mind that texts have an impact even on those who do not get to decipher them (Leontsini 2000). Fathoming the complexity of the matter in the Hannah Arendt figuring that «the confrontation between politics and art could not and should not be resolved (Arendt 2012)», it is worth venturing the historicification and interpretation of the institutional and social structures, along with representations of civilization and culture which transmute in order to construct and legitimize policy per se, so as to decide if we need cultural policy in the first place, and if so, what kind of culture we have in mind and what kind of policy we need.

Our main focus will be on the field of literature, the National Book Centre (EKEBI) and its nearly 20 years of activity. EKEBI is a private non-profit legal entity established in 1994 (and dissolved in 2013) by the Ministry of Culture to implement national policy to promote books. Publishers, authors, translators, librarians and booksellers were all involved in decision-making and worked closely to achieve the Centre's objectives. Through their representatives on EKEBI's board of directors they could intervene in major issues concerning EKEBI's policy, and this is a common feature in most Book Centers in EU.

EKEBI was a state funded institution supervised by the Greek Ministry of Culture. With reference to the common EU cultural policy, we intent to determine the degree of autonomy of EKEBI and whether an implementation of some kind of central communal Cultural Policy can be detected. If so, how did it get implemented in Greece, particularly concerning book and literature, and which was Greece's cultural policy contribution to the development of a European identity. Furthermore, considering that Greek is a peripheral language with a small audience, we would like to study EKEBI's constitutional objectives and whether Greece had a specific national book strategy. By what standards the relevant decisions were taken and which among them could be considered as achieved or not. And finally, how the nature of the particularity of Greek Cultural Policy compared to communal equivalent such as German and French could be defined.

The tasks of EKEBI, as described in Law 2273/1994, article 9, are now HFC's (Hellenic Foundation of Culture) responsibility. For the needs of this thesis, the classification of the yet unexploited EKEBI'S archive is required. Administrative documents, letters, photographs, press articles, publications, and other relevant documentation, are being recorded, filed and processed in order to reconstruct the picture of the work of EKEBI.

More specifically, we will draft a full map of the Greek book policy during the nearly twenty years of EKEBI's activity including an analytical blueprint of

the policies adopted and, common practices in their own as well as in a comparative frame. Literary awards, editions, Greek writers translated abroad, scholarships, festivals and various cultural initiatives of the EKEBI, based in its archives, will be the object of our study, in order to demonstrate the criteria applied to the selection of institutions, books and authors as well as their impact to the culture and the public sphere of Greece.

As far as EKEBI is concerned, it will be attempted to a) distinguish its activities in phases in order to more effectively understand/interpretate its decisions and policies, b) research the genealogy of the basic institutions EKEBI founded (the National Book Observatory Basis, the programme for schools “Filanagnosia”, the digital data base of Greek Books BIBLIONET, etc.) so as to determine the terms of their foundation, their inspiration source, their convergences and deviations according to the settled goals and paradigms as well as their impact on Greek society, c) assess the reception of EKEBI by Greek and foreign mass media, d) evaluate oral interviews and testimonies by EKEBI employees as well as by writers who took part in its various programmes and festivities/or actions, e) evaluate EKEBI in terms with its initial goals as settled by it, f) compare it with the respective European national book institutions and politics in Germany and in France.

Methodologically, and because our case undoubtedly requires interdisciplinary tools, we intend to draw material upon Social History, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Political Science, and also data upon Legal Studies and Statistics. We will survey the documentation of negotiations concerning cultural policy between Greek national and EU institutions, such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the cultural institutions, national and EU's, which participated in programmes funded by the EU.

Besides archives and books concerning cultural policy, the present thesis will collect its data among the relative legal provisions, specialized agencies, newspapers, magazines, specialized editions and statistical data. We shall also interview those persons, whose contribution in the shaping of a European identity in Greece was essential, who motivated state intervention —inspired by similar policies in the EU— to invigorate cultural initiatives, to protect national heritage, to encourage creativity and dissemination of the cultural goods. To achieve the aforementioned objectives, we will exploit the EKEBI's collection, kept in HFC and now open to researchers.

Our goal also is to define the main lines of Greek cultural policy, the degree of EU intervention in it, the way it was implemented, and the main factors that determined its structure. We will especially try to probe the Greek case study about reading and book Policy, comparatively with the German and French paradigms in order to delineate the respective strategic plans and their divergences as well as their contribution to the European cultural and political map, as one of the objectives of this study is the identification of what comprises this European book culture. And, having in mind that, the resultant concept of book culture is expected to be quite complex, we will try to prove that, though no common European book culture is discernible and no comprehensive scholarly work has been published yet, Greek book culture is based on shared characteristics or on a certain regional development of book culture that shows

again the role of the book, as Eric Hobsbawm said, concerning the formation of national identities and nation states (Kurschus 2015).

The time span covered by this thesis will be the period from EKEBI's establishment in 1994 to the first months of 2013, when it was dissolved by the Greek government. Thus, we will also include in our study the consequences of the economic crisis that began in 2008, in public cultural policies in Greece and in EU level, and attempt to make effective proposals about cultural policies, concerning mainly literature in Greece as a member state of the EU –because, “literature provides an opportunity to explore the many faces of normality that people who speak a different language and who live in a different region experience (Kurschus 2015)”. Over and above, though European societies are more and more information societies, the role of the book seems to be underestimated in many senses, so it is necessary to analyze its role and its influence.

The thesis includes eight chapters. The first one discusses historically the Greek cultural policy and book concept from the 19th century till nowadays, in order to define its characteristics. The second one is focused on the post-war cultural paradigm in Europe, and especially in France and in Germany, but also on the Scandinavian example for book policy and the main characteristics of diversity in European book cultures. The third chapter examines critically the main points and goals of EKEBI during the twenty years of its existence. Chapter 4 tries to show the part of success and limited cooperation but also the conflict of interest between EKEBI and the National Library and Greek libraries in general. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 are analyzing the Greek book promotion inside the country but also abroad. Chapter 7 works on the National Book Observatory Basis, its attempts, its failures and, of course, its results. The last chapter will try to present an evaluation of EKEBI's activity, including the dialogue about its closing.

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