

From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society, 1453–1821

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Abstract

In order to understand the Enlightenment's impact on Ottoman Balkan society, we must consider the relationship between class position and ethnicity. In the pre-1820s Ottoman Balkans, most of the urban strata, mercantile groups, and religious and secular elites were either ethnic Greeks or acculturated into the Greek ethnè. Both the peasantry and the literate and urban Greek-Orthodox groups were "Greek" in the sense of being Orthodox. Millenarianism and Orthodox universalism were both common among the Ottoman Orthodox Christians. After 1750, the influence of the Western Enlightenment led to secularization, liberalism, and an undermining of the religious world view of the Eastern Church. With the French Revolution, this trend intensified. Greek-Orthodox intellectuals reconceptualized the Orthodox Rum millet. They argued for a new, secular "Hellenic" national identity. Still, their visions of a future state included all Balkan Orthodox Christians.

Conventionally, Eastern European literature (particularly Balkan national history) gives a broad interpretation of the Enlightenment, identifying it as a general trend toward literacy, social and cultural mobilization, and national assertion. This sweeping interpretation makes the Enlightenment almost synonymous with a "national renaissance" or an "awakening" (see, for example, Dutu 1976; Lencek 1983; Kossev, Hristov, and Angelov 1963; Otetea 1970; Turczynski 1972). In such interpretations of the Enlightenment, different intellectual currents (millenarianism, liberalism, and romantic nationalism) are bound together. To avoid such a conflation, it is necessary to view the Balkan Enlightenment as an expression of intellectual contacts with Western and Central Europe (Kitromilides 1983:51–52). The Enlightenment, a social movement emerging in European societies over the course of the eighteenth century, roughly between 1750 and 1799, sought to replace

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the theocratic and authoritarian culture of the *ancien régime* with a new culture that proclaimed itself secular, rational, and scientifically oriented. In the ideology of the *ancien régime*, societies were composed of corporate groups with distinctive rights and responsibilities; in the Enlightenment ideology, societies were composed of individuals who created social institutions by entering into voluntary contracts (Bendix 1978; Gay 1966: 32–38). These principles were gradually applied to society at large, thus providing the context for the substitution of the rule of kings by the rule of the “people.” The concept of the “nation” emerged in close connection with this important shift in ideology and political legitimacy.

Ethnicity and social structure in Ottoman Balkan society

In most ethnically diverse societies, class and ethnicity are closely associated. Since only the more affluent, urban, and literate strata are in a structural position to be influenced by ideological currents such as the Enlightenment, it is important to establish clearly the relationship between class and ethnicity in Ottoman Balkan society. Additionally, given the fact that national identity is a relatively recent phenomenon (cf. Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Greenfeld 1991; Hobsbawm 1990), the issue of ethnicity should be approached in a non-nationalist manner. To do so, it is necessary to differentiate between modern forms of identity (such as national identity) and premodern forms. The concept of *ethnie* (ethnic community) allows for such a differentiation. An *ethnie* may have the following characteristics to differing degrees: a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, some elements of common culture (e.g., language, religion), an association with a specific homeland, and a sense of solidarity (Smith 1986; 1991:21, 40). Contrary to modern secular nations, characterized as they are by a mass public culture, common economy, and the legal rights and duties of their members, *ethnies* are predominately premodern social formations. Membership in an *ethnie* does not necessarily lead to attributing political significance to ethnic differences.

I would like to suggest that Greeks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Romanians were *ethnies* in the Ottoman Balkans and were clearly aware of their differences. But even if this proposition is accepted, it does not follow that modern nations are born out of an ethnic core. In fact, as this essay hopes to show, this model does not capture the complexity of the historical record, at least not in the case of Greek-Orthodox Christians. The key issue is not only the existence of separate *ethnies* in the Balkans but also how social mobility and the division of labor impacted upon the always fluid nature of ethnic identity.

Prior to the 1850s, social mobility frequently implied acculturation into the *ethnie* associated with a particular niche in the social division of labor. For example, in Macedonia, Serbia, and Bulgaria, class and ethnicity overlapped, resulting in the utilization of the terms “Serb” and “Bulgar” to denote the peasantry *per se*. Since most peasants were Slavs and most Slavs were peasants, class distinctions often became ethnic distinctions (Kofos 1964; Shashko 1973; Slijepcevic 1958: 82–96; Vermeulen 1984). When Slavs moved into the urban world or became members of the middle classes, they generally shifted their identity to Greek. In Belgrade, for example, Serbian townsmen dressed in the Greek style, the Belgrade newspapers included the rubric *Grecia* (Greece), and, at least according to Stoianovich (1994: 294), the local Christian “higher strata” were Grecophone until 1840. In South Albania and Greece during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, thousands of Orthodox Albanians and Vlachs became completely Hellenized (Skendi 1980:187–204). In the Bulgarian lands, during the second half of the eighteenth century, the domination of cultural life by the ecumenical patriarchate led to the promotion of Grecophone culture in liturgy, archives, and correspondence (Markova 1980).

For the Serb and Bulgarian *ethnies*, the Slavic clergy served as repositories of ethnic identity, and religious “cell schools” provided an elementary education in Old Slavonic. In 1762 the Bulgarian monk Father Paisi of Khilendar wrote his (later famous) *Slavo-Bulgarian History*, a call to cultural regeneration and revitalization of Bulgarian ethnic identity (Clark 1954; Hristov 1974; Pundeff 1969). Similarly, during the latter part of the eighteenth century, the Serb monk Dositej Obradović attempted to spread literacy and education among his *ethnie* (Jovanovic-Gorup 1991; Pribic 1983). His involvement with the Serb uprising of 1804, a response to the administrative disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, initiated the cultural mobilization of the Ottoman Serbs, a movement that intensified after 1840. Before the 1840s, national sentiment among the Ottoman Serbs was largely absent (Stokes 1976; Meriage 1977). Major influences toward the formation of a Serb national identity came from the communities of the Habsburg Serbs (Banac 1981; Stoianovich 1989:256–267).

As the Serb uprising of 1804 illustrates, the key difference between the Grecophone and Slavonic cases was one of reception. Obradović and Paisi were at the forefront of sociocultural transformation within the Bulgarian and Serb *ethnies*. The entire eighteenth century produced only five Serbian historians and three Bulgarian historians (with the exception of the chroniclers) (Petrovich 1970). All Serb historians were natives of the Habsburg Empire. Jovan Rajić’s *History of the Various Slavic People, Especially the Bulgarians, Croats, and Serbs* (1794–1795) remained a

seminal work for South Slav historiography over the next fifty years, a testimony to the general low level of historical writing. Similarly, the rise of the Bulgarian national movement is closely associated with the ascent of a nationalist intelligentsia in the post-1825 period (Meininger 1974).

The establishment of secular schools indicates the beginnings of the transformation of the Serb and Bulgarian *ethnies* into modern secular nations. In the *pashalik* of Belgrade, the first Serb school (“Grand School” or *Velika Skola*) was founded by Obradović in 1808 (Pribić 1983:47–48). In Montenegro, the first elementary school was opened by *Vladika* (prince-bishop) Njegoš in 1834 (Lederer 1969:401). In the Bulgarian case the number of traditional religious cell schools rose from 35 in 1800 to 189 in 1834. But most of them continued to teach Old Slavonic (and not modern Bulgarian). Future secular Bulgarian intellectuals received their education from a number of Greco-Bulgarian schools, which taught not only classical and modern Greek, but modern Bulgarian as well.

In the early nineteenth century, the waves of Bulgarians migrating across the Danube and into the Danubian principalities significantly impacted Bulgarian cultural life (Crampton 1981; Nelson 1989; Velichi 1979). Bulgarian pupils received education in Bulgarian in local schools. In 1830 the merchant Vasil Nenovich founded the first Bulgarian school in Bucharest. In 1806 bishop Sofroni Vrachanski published in Rimnik in Wallachia the first printed book in the modern Bulgarian vernacular (a version of the Greek liturgical book *Kiriakodhrómion*). In 1824 Peter Beron published in Brasov the so-called *Riben Bukvar* (“Fish Primer,” a nickname given the book owing to the picture of a dolphin on its cover). This primer was heavily influenced by the *Ekloghárion Ghrékikon* of Dimitrios Darvaris. It helped standardize the language into a literary form (Georgeoff 1982; Lord 1963:260–261; Loukidou-Mavridou and Papadrianos 1980). As these two key examples illustrate, Greek translations had a strong impact on the emerging Bulgarian literature (see also Alexieva 1993; Danova 1980).

Prior to the 1820s, then, most of the middle class Balkan Orthodox Christians were either ethnic Greeks, or largely acculturated into the Greek *ethnie*, or under heavy Grecophone influences. To inquire into the Enlightenment’s impact in the Balkans, one must specify which groups were in a position to be influenced. Only literate middle or upper classes could have been exposed to the new ideas and have an adequate comprehension of them. For even if the peasantry did enjoy a tacit understanding of these ideas, the barrier of illiteracy would not have allowed them to articulate it. Therefore, any examination of the Enlightenment in Ottoman Balkan society should take notice of the

class-based nature of this intellectual movement. This means that the Enlightenment's impact on the Ottoman Balkans was mainly (but not exclusively) among Greek, Grecophone, or Hellenized strata. This argument is bolstered by the peculiar situation that developed in the Danubian principalities. Wallachia and Moldavia were never under direct Ottoman rule and, as a result, their social institutions were different from those of Ottoman society. In the Ottoman Empire all land belonged to the sultan, at least in theory; hence no hereditary propertied aristocracy ever developed (Todorov 1985). In the Danubian principalities, however, an indigenous Christian landowning class emerged. This class, called the *boyars*, was similar in many respects to other Eastern European landowning elites (Chirot 1976; Georgescu 1991:19–43; Stahl 1980). During the period from 1500 to 1700, significant cultural intertwining took place among the local Romanian elites, the post-Byzantine Orthodox Ottoman elites, and the high clergy. The growth of these ties was fostered by the migration of the remnants of the Byzantine aristocracy to the principalities, their intermarriage with the local landowning families, and the desire of the Romanian princes to be benefactors of the ecumenical patriarchate (Borsi-Kalman 1991:7–13; Georgescu 1991:58–72; Iorga 1985; Runciman 1968:360–384; Zakythinis 1976:94–105). In due course, a considerable portion of these elites merged through marriage and became Hellenized. When, in 1711, the two hospodars of the Danubian principalities, Constantine Brincoveanu and Dimitrie Cantemir, aligned themselves with the Russians against the Ottoman Empire, the Porte decided to replace the native princes with appointed ones. The Greek-Orthodox families that benefited from the Porte's decision are known as the "Phanariots."¹

Throughout the Phanariot period (1711–1821), high ranking *boyars* were consistently employed in the administrative positions of the two principalities. But the more numerous lower ranking *boyars* (the *neamurile* and *mazili*) were frustrated (a) because they were only partially exempted from taxation and (b) because they were excluded from the high dignitary offices (Cernovodeanu 1986:253). For them, the desire to overthrow the Phanariot regime was directly related to the desire to advance their own socioeconomic position (Fischer-Galati 1969; Georgescu 1991:73–75, 96; Jewsbury 1979; Oldson 1983).

The political conflict between the *boyars* and the princes was not along ethnic lines since Greek, Hellenized, and Romanian families were often themselves divided between the two sides. Indeed, the Greek influence was so strong that Greek had become the language of the court, of politics, the royal academies, the divine liturgy held at court, and of polite society. Even those of Romanian origin spoke Greek as

their primary language. The influence of the Phanariots and of the Grecophone Enlightenment upon the local *boyars'* reception of Enlightenment ideas was considerable (Borsi-Kalman 1991:12–13; Dutu 1967). During the eighteenth century, there was a clear trend toward secularization with secular books rising from 15.6% of all books published between 1717 and 1750 to 53.2% in the 1790–1800 decade and 74.8% in 1820–1830 (Georgescu 1991:113).

From 1750 to 1830, three generations of authors—members of the high and middle nobility, middle classes, and clergy—raised the issue of administrative reform in the principalities. Between 1769 and 1830, 93% of the petitions for reform programs were signed by members of these elite groups (Georgescu 1970:ix). Among those asking for reforms were intellectuals who articulated a new political ideology. This new ideology did not initially make any connections with the Daco-Roman “cult” of the Latinist School of Transylvania. Instead of the theory of the Latin origins of contemporary Romanians, scholars like Mihail Cantacuzino or Naum Ramniceanu suggested that it was the Dacians (although Romanized), and not the ancient Romans, who were the forefathers of the Romanian nation (Fischer-Galati 1964; Georgescu 1991:115–118). The ideology of “enlightened despotism” reached the principalities in the form of numerous German works, especially those of Karl Wolff. The Phanariots modeled their authority after European “enlightened despotism” whereas the *boyars* opted for either accusing the Phanariots of “oriental despotism” or developing the notions of “fatherland,” “awakening,” “citizen,” and promoting restricted constitutional government, autonomy, and limited sovereignty (Georgescu 1971:67, 106–123).

In 1818 the Transylvanian educator Gheorghe Lazar left Transylvania for Bucharest to take over the school of St. Sava and establish it as a center for the propagation of new national teachings. In Moldavia an analogous task was undertaken by Gheorghe Asachi in 1814 (Borsi-Kalman 1991:29). Prior to these dates, higher education in the principalities had been Grecophone. Nevertheless, the strong Grecophone presence was not (nor could be) eradicated after the end of Phanariot administration in 1821. Even in 1840, 28 out of 117 private schools in Wallachia were Grecophone. From 1820 to 1840, Greek influences were manifested in the intellectuals’ bilingualism, in the manuscripts of this period, and in the plethora of Greek neologisms in the language (Papacostea-Danielopolou 1971:89). But Greek was slowly replaced by French and then by Romanian.

The presence of a local indigenous aristocracy in the two principalities reveals the close relationship between class position and the

articulation of political ideology. The very reason that the Enlightenment's impact on Ottoman Balkan society was confined to the Greek and Romanian cases (cf. Sugar 1975; Djordjevic 1975) is the fact that only members of these two *ethnies* were in a position to be directly influenced by the Western European ideological currents.

The Orthodox Church and millenarianism

To identify the Enlightenment's impact on the Ottoman Balkans, we must outline the preexisting ideological currents. The key cultural institution of Ottoman Balkan society, the Orthodox Church, was traditionally seen as the repository of the Balkan nations' national identity during the Ottoman period. But the Orthodox Church was a guardian of faith alone (Stokes 1979). For the Byzantine world, there was only one emperor and his empire constituted an earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of Heaven.² In fact, the 1453 conquest of Constantinople was explained as God's punishment for the sins of the Orthodox Christians. Post-1453 millenarianism merged the reconstruction of the Christian Empire with the Second Coming, at which time the Ottoman Empire would collapse and God's earthly kingdom would be reconstituted (Daniilidis 1934:113–120). The Second Coming was to take place in 1492; this belief was so strong that even Patriarch Gennadius subscribed to it (Mango 1980:212–214). A later prophecy predicted that only five sultans would reign over Constantinople; another oracle postponed the date until the reign of Mehmed III (1595–1603). In the seventeenth century, prophecies predicted that Constantinople would be liberated 200 years after its fall, whereas in the eighteenth century the years 1766, 1767, and 1773 were cited as possible dates for the Second Coming (Mango 1965:35–36; Stoianovich 1995:93–113).

Among the Greeks, folk myths related the fall of Constantinople to supernatural events. Additional prophecies and oracles proclaimed the future liberation of Orthodox Christians by a fair-haired people (ξανθό γένος) (for an overview, see Clogg 1985). Legend has it that Patriarch Gennadius interpreted an inscription on the tomb of Emperor Constantine to be a sign of this future event. Gaining momentum during the second half of the sixteenth century, this prophecy was widely disseminated in the early seventeenth century during the reign of Mustafa I (1617–18 and 1622–23) as well as throughout the late seventeenth century (Stoianovich 1995:103–104). In the eighteenth century, Russian rulers such as Peter the Great and Catherine the Great became the foci of Orthodox millenarianism. In about 1750 the monk Theoklitos

Poliklidis published a pamphlet (*Agatháγγελος*) foretelling the liberation of Christians by a fair-haired people who, at the time, were generally identified as the Russians (Nikolopoulos 1985).

Similarly, the Serb Church preserved the cult of Prince Lazar following the extinction of his dynasty and the conquest of Serb lands by the Turks (1389). Poetry and oral tradition were gradually codified in the Kosovo legend. In the religious interpretations of that legend, emphasis was placed upon Christian martyrdom: “Lazar’s death on Kosovo [field] was the atonement for all of Serbia’s sins—sins that had called the wrath of God upon them in the first place and caused them to lose their state” (Emmert 1990:121). In 1601, the Italian Mavro Orbini published his work *Il regno degli Slavi*, which included a long passage on the Kosovo legend. In 1722 Sava Vladislavić published a Slavonic translation of Orbini’s history, and over the eighteenth century the legend gained popularity among the Serbs of the Habsburg and Ottoman lands (Emmert 1990:105–123; Mihailovich 1991). In 1690 the Serbian Church canonized the royal Nemanjić lineage (except for Tsar Stefan Dušan) and throughout the eighteenth century the new piety grew in significance among the Serbs. In that century, Stanj, an elder of the Vasojević clan, also foretold the advent of a Serbian messiah, a dark man (*crni čovjek*) who would liberate the Serbs. Other myths popular in Macedonia and Serbia envisioned the return of Kraljević Marko—a fourteenth century Serbian vassal to the Ottomans—who, according to legend, had temporarily withdrawn from earthly life in some secret cavern and would rise, when the right time came, and lead the Christians against the Turks (Banac 1981:46–48; Stoianovich 1994:169). As these examples illustrate, Orthodox millenarianism was a vision that tied together temporal and spiritual regeneration. It should not be confused with nationalism. Millenarianism provided the official church doctrine with a political orientation that led to a *de facto* recognition of Ottoman rule and, at the same time, denied—in principle—the sultan’s legitimacy.

By making all “Romans” (i.e., formerly Orthodox subjects of the Byzantine Empire) members of the Ottoman *Rum millet*, the Ottomans officially sanctioned the Church’s Orthodox universalism, thus facilitating the legitimation of Grecophone ecclesiastical elites over the Balkan *ethnies*.³ Additionally, after 1453, the Church assumed jurisdiction over the civil affairs of the Orthodox communities. Moreover, by virtue of his residing in the capital of the empire, the ecumenical patriarch was able to usurp—in an informal but effective manner—considerable power from the Orthodox patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. In the hierarchical structure of the Eastern Church, the ecumenical patriarch ranked first, followed by the other Orthodox patriarchates, the

autocephalous archbishoprics of Cyprus, Pec, and Ohrid, and the local metropolitans (Papadopoulos 1990:94; Sarris 1990:2.421–524). In the eyes of the higher clergy, the Orthodox Church was the only legitimate bearer of the Christian tradition. For centuries, the enemy was the Roman Catholic Church, which consistently attempted to infiltrate the Orthodox world (Frazee 1983). Most post-1453 Grecophone publications were religious in nature, their major function being to counteract Catholic propaganda (Koumariou, Droulia, and Layton 1986:135–157).

The conflation of Greek ethnic identity with *Rum millet* identity was an indispensable component of the Ottoman social system. This conflation is revealed in the ethnic Greeks' view of their ancient Greek ancestors, the Ἕλληνες (Hellenes), whom they considered mythical beings of extraordinary stature and power, capable of superhuman tasks. Popular folk tales dated the Hellenes' existence to the dawn of time. In sharp contrast to this ancient race, the contemporary Greeks called themselves Ρωμαίοι (Romans) or Χριστιανοί (Christians) (Kakridis 1989). Autobiographical writings of eighteenth-century secular and religious figures testify to the deployment of religious categories as a road map for a person's existence, suggesting a shared religious mentality among the Orthodox Christians (Kitromilides 1996). In the late 1790s, Balkan Orthodox Christians routinely referred to themselves as "Christians" and referred to Catholics as either "Latins" or, more commonly, "Franks" (Arnakis 1963:131). Within the Ottoman Empire, these Greek Orthodox (or "Greek") urban and mercantile strata were referred to by the Ottomans, the Church, and themselves as *reaya*, Christians, or "Romans" (Ρωμιοί)—that is, members of the *Rum millet*.⁴

In European cartography of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, "Grecia" included Dalmatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, the coastal area of Asia Minor, Albania, and the Aegean islands (Karathanasis 1991:9). For the Western audience in Germany, Austria, and Hungary, "Greek" (Greek Orthodox) was synonymous with Orthodoxy (Stoianovich 1960:290). Regardless of their ethnic origins, most Greek Orthodox Balkan merchants of the eighteenth century spoke Greek and often assumed Greek names: they were referred to as "Greeks" in the sense that they were of the "Greek" religion. During the eighteenth century, the geographical dispersion and the urban nature of the Greek *ethnie* in the Balkan peninsula transformed the "Greeks" into a Balkan urban class (Svoronos 1981:58). Hence, "Greeks" were not only ethnic Greeks; the category generally included all Orthodox merchants and peddlers, many of whom were Grecophone or Hellenized Vlachs, Serbs, or Orthodox Albanians.

In 1766 and 1767, Patriarch Samuel, citing huge deficits as his

reasons and the involvement of the local pashas in the election of archbishops, reluctantly subsumed the autocephalous archbishops of Pec and Ohrid under the ecumenical seat. This expansion of the patriarchate's authority has been interpreted as "proof" of Greek "domination" over the other Balkan peoples. However, according to the official documents of the patriarchate, the prime reason for the incorporation of Ohrid and Pec was their decline resulting from widespread conversions in the aftermath of the 1737–1739 Austro-Turkish war (Angelopoulos 1983; Papadopoulos 1990:89–90; Vakalopoulos 1973: 292).⁵ The abolition of the two autocephalous seats further expanded patriarchal authority over the Balkan peninsula and enhanced the prestige and power of the Grecophone elites controlling the patriarchate.

Their Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical culture did not signify national supremacy of one people over another; rather, it signified a political and religious system that recognized the classifications of the Ottoman system alone (i.e., Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Catholic). This mentality was shared by the only other power center within the *Rum millet*—namely, the Phanariots. Although Runciman (1968:378–379) has suggested that the Phanariots attempted to "combine the nationalistic forces of Hellenism in a passionate if illogical alliance with the ecumenical traditions of Byzantium and the Orthodox Church," I believe that the Phanariots' ideological orientation should not be viewed as a precursor of modern Greek nationalism.

At least two main points support this interpretation. First, the Phanariots' world view was mostly dominated by Orthodox universalism. Early eighteenth-century Phanariot princes emphasized an ideology of service to the Ottoman Empire. For example, Nikolaos Mavrokordatos (1680–1730) in his novel *Φιλοθ^οου πάρεργα* (written in 1718 and published in 1800; Mavrokordatos 1989) describes the Ottoman *millet system* in detail and, as a good administrator, emphasizes the system's virtues, including its religious tolerance (Bouchard 1982; Dimaras 1977: 263–281; Henderson 1970:20–27; Kamperidis 1992; Kitromilides 1978:26–32). It is difficult to reconcile this favorable view of the Ottoman *millet* system with a nationalist orientation.⁶

During the second half of the eighteenth century, this vision of "enlightened despotism" was most clearly articulated in the Danubian principalities by Dimitrios Katartzis, an intellectual and administrator in Bucharest. In a series of writings between 1783 and 1791, Katartzis performed the first political analysis of Balkan Christians' situation under the Ottoman occupation. He rejected the argument that the *Romans* (members of the *Rum millet*) did not constitute a "nation" because they did not have an independent political community of their own. He argued that the identity of the Orthodox Christians was that of

the *Rum millet* (Dimaras 1977:177–243; see also Dimaras 1975:330–331 on Phanariot political ideology; and Vranousis 1975). Although they did not participate directly in the government, they did enjoy a number of privileges and rights indirectly (that is, via the Phanariots and the patriarchate). Therefore, the *Rum millet* was not an oppressed people that needed to be liberated; rather, its progress could be achieved under the “enlightened” rule of the Phanariots and religious elites. Even as late as 1824, the Phanariot Theodoros Negris defined Serbs and Bulgarians as “Greeks,” all of them lumped together in one sentence with the inhabitants of Thrace, Macedonia, Epirus, and a number of Aegean islands and Anatolian cities (Skopetea 1988:25).

Second, the Phanariot attitude toward the Enlightenment’s political expressions was not unequivocally friendly. This attitude is exemplified by the Phanariots’ stance after the French Revolution. Following the Russo-Turkish rapprochement of 1791 and the condemnation of liberalism by Russian authorities, the patriarchate proceeded to condemn new “French” ideas. The Phanariots, although familiar with these ideas and seemingly advocating them up to that point, appeared to change their minds. Dimitrios Katartzis did not hesitate to condemn Voltaire. Alexandros Mavrokordatos, founder of Masonic lodges in Vienna and Odessa, followed the trend of anti-liberalism. When Evyenios Voulgaris, ex-liberal turned conservative, protégé of Catherine, the Russian empress, wrote to Mavrokordatos to ask what he believed in, Mavrokordatos replied by sending him the Orthodox declaration of faith (Loukas 1991:66). These developments point to the limits of the Phanariot ideology of “enlightened despotism.”

Nationalism was absent among the members of the *Rum millet* prior to the 1750s. Neither the Phanariots, the high clergy, nor the Orthodox peasantry endorsed or advocated nationalist ideas. Millenarianism expressed the social organization of Ottoman society in terms of the religious-political division between rulers and ruled. The main focus of revolutionary ideology was this division between the Ottoman privileged class of the *askeri*, which by the late eighteenth century was almost entirely Muslim, and the subordinate class of the *reaya*, which was predominately, although not exclusively, Greek Orthodox (Karpas 1973; Sarris 1990).

Secularization, the new intelligentsia, and the Hellenic ideal

While literary activity in earlier centuries was predominately religious in nature, in the post-1750 period Grecophone literary production that was secular rose from 25% of the total in the 1700–1725 period to 47% in the 1775–1800 period (Dimaras 1970:54). This increase was closely

related to the increase in commercial interaction between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe (Kasaba 1988; Stoianovich 1960; on the Greek immigrant communities see Geanakopoulos 1976; Papadrianos 1993; Psiroukis 1983). Throughout the eighteenth century, the rise of a Balkan Orthodox merchant class of intermediaries and other petit-bourgeois professionals provided support for the emergence of a *new* Greek-Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia. Book circulation in particular was greatly facilitated by maritime commerce. Successful editions sold up to 1,500 copies (Koumariou, Droulia, and Layton 1986:203–218). Funding for publishing came primarily from wealthy merchants, but publishers also solicited subscribers for particular editions. Between 1749 and 1832, approximately 200 books were printed by subscription; of these, 150 contained lists of subscribers amounting to 30,000 people (Clogg 1980:125–129) who subscribed to more than 58,000 copies. But only 7% of these subscribers actually resided in the regions that would eventually (1832) become the Kingdom of Greece. The cultural ferment was largely confined to the Greek Orthodox diaspora in Italy, Central Europe, the Danubian principalities, Constantinople, and Smyrna.

Education was provided in a number of schools scattered over the Ottoman Balkans, most prominent among them being the princely academies of Bucharest, founded between 1678 and 1688, and Jassy, founded in 1707 (Camariano-Coran 1974:307–362; Georgescu 1991:112). Their instructors included some of the most influential members of a new Greek Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia that emerged in the late 1750s. In a statistical analysis of 68 Enlightenment intellectuals, Nikolaïdis, Dialetis, and Athanasiadis (1988) identify two clusters of intellectuals with sufficiently distinct profiles. The first consists of Greek Orthodox authors born prior to 1757. These were usually clergy or educators (often both) who had studied philosophy, philology, theology, mathematics, chemistry, and physics. They had been educated mainly in Western Europe, and the medium of their discourse was archaic or Attic Greek. These scholars were primarily employed in mainland Greece, the Aegean islands, and Anatolia. The second group consists of Greek Orthodox authors born between 1757 and 1772. These were mainly merchants or secular intellectuals associated with the merchants. They had studied languages and geography; their place of study was Central Europe, and their medium of discourse was closer to the Greek vernacular. Their major places of employment were the Ionian islands, the Danubian principalities, and cities in Eastern or Western Europe. This younger group was the one most influenced by Western “enlightened reason.”

The new Greek Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia crossed ethnic frontiers. Intellectuals characterized as “Greek” were not necessarily of

Greek ethnic descent. The Bulgarian Nikolaos Pikolos, the Wallachian Iosipos Moisioudax (born in Dobrudja), and the Vlach Dhaniil of Moshopolis are Enlightenment figures of non-Greek descent (Argyropoulos 1984; Kitromilides 1985; Protopsaltis 1980; see also Dutu 1973:110–111 for further examples). Figures like the Vlach Dimitrios Darvaris from Klisura in Macedonia exemplify the fluid boundaries of ethnic identity during the late eighteenth century. Darvaris published grammatical books and translations in Greek, Russian, German, and Serbian (Loukidou-Mavridou and Papadrianos 1980). Within Balkan society, class and ethnic lines overlapped to such an extent that Hellenism became a form of “cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1984) offering access to circles of wealth and prestige. Hellenization implied the acquisition of such capital and its associated benefits. The diffusion of “enlightened reason” proceeded from the Grecophone middle-class stratum to the other sectors of Ottoman Balkan society (see Camariano-Coran 1975; Mackridge 1981; Boissin 1970 for further examples).

In sharp contrast to the representatives of the Enlightenment, the conservative establishment began to attack the very word “philosophy” and its advocates. Again and again an enlightened educator, often schooled in Europe, started teaching the new philosophy and soon became the target of religious reaction. From Methodios Anthrakiotis’s excommunication by the Holy Synod (1723), to Stefanos Doukas’s “confession of faith” (1810), this conflict persisted. Conservative figures like Athanasios Parios and Dositheos Vousilmas served as champions of the reaction (Gedeon 1976:57–96; for discussion of specific cases see Angelou 1988:211–292; Giannaras 1992:179–186; Iliou 1986; Kitromilides 1978:477). The schools of Kidhonies, Smyrna, and Hios—which were at the forefront of the new educational spirit—became targets of the religious opposition.⁷

Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, the reemergence of classical antiquity into the discourse of the Western Enlightenment strongly affected the secularization of the *Rum millet*. During the Enlightenment era, the *philosophes* saw history as the unraveling of human progress. Within this framework, the ancient Greeks were looked upon as the “fathers” of civilization. Reason, philosophy, and freedom to shape one’s personal destiny were the central features of ancient Greek culture. As a result, while the rest of Eastern Europe was depicted throughout the eighteenth century as essentially “backward,” travelers to Greece emphasized and reinforced a romantic, nostalgic view of ancient Hellas (Augustinos 1994:22–36; Gay 1966:72–85; Wolf 1994).

However, the Hellenic ideal was not necessarily connected with the territory of Greece itself; hence, the German intelligentsia, lacking

patrons to finance trips to Greece, developed an extremely academic attachment to ancient Hellenism. Between 1750 and 1820, German intellectuals adhered to the belief, commonplace at the time, that what was worth saving from ancient Greece had been handed on to Rome and was now carefully preserved there (Constantine 1984:85–146; Eisner 1991:76–78). No German of literary note traveled in Greece until shortly before 1800. It was mostly French and British travelers who toured the ruins of the ancient Greek world. Germans, for the most part, read these travelers' accounts, studied classical sculpture in the museums of Dresden or Italy, or looked at pictures included in the travelers' books (Augustinos 1994:91–92; Gay 1966:84; Stoneman 1987:120–127; Tsigakou 1981:19). The Society of Dilettanti founded in 1733–36 in London (see Cecil Smith 1932) financed a series of expeditions that facilitated the Greek Revival. The publication of books such as *Antiquities of Athens*, the first volume of which appeared in 1762, further increased the passion for ancient Greece (Stuart and Revett 1762–1816).

The travelers' perspective evolved significantly over the course of the eighteenth century. For French travelers in Greece from 1550 to 1750, the modern Greeks were already a separate entity set apart from their Ottoman rulers by religion, language, and custom. Whatever sympathy or denigration the modern Greeks received was invariably based on their affinities with or divergencies from the ancient Greeks. This earlier predisposition was transformed in the last third of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth into philhellenism. During this period, philhellenism expanded to encompass the modern Greeks and evolved in a way that resolved the tensions between the present and the past (Augustinos 1994:148–172; Stoneman 1987:136–142, 144). Of course, the modern Greeks needed the guiding light of the West, which was now the repository of antiquity's legacy. The liberation of the Greeks was part of the Europeans' "civilizing mission" (Augustinos 1994:131–132; Nicolaïdis 1992:45–71).

The sentimental attachment to the ancients felt by the French was not the only seed of philhellenism. Of equal importance was the Enlightenment, whose precepts posited a direct relationship between politics and culture. Only a people living under equitable laws administered by a wise ruler could form a progressive society and achieve cultural preeminence. Seen from this perspective, the modern Greeks were an oppressed people. First, they had lost their independence to the Romans; then they were under the theocratic rule of Byzantine emperors; finally, their suffering culminated during their centuries-long subjection to the Ottomans. For example, Voltaire entertained philhellenic sentiments born out of his belief that Greek civilization had declined in the post-classical era as well as his aversion to tyranny. Like the

philosophes, he viewed the Ottoman Empire as a violator of the natural rights of man; thus he hailed Catherine II's efforts to expand Russia to the south and drive the Ottomans out of the Balkans (Augustinos 1994:139–147). Catherine's motives were not identical with Voltaire's, since her plans for imperial expansion were part of a general policy of colonization. She viewed the liberation of the Greeks as a means to gain legitimacy for her wars against the Ottoman Empire (Batalden 1982:94–95; Seton-Watson 1934:153; Venturi 1991:2.769–799).

These Western intellectual currents did not escape the notice of the emerging Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia. For example, Charles Rollin's *Histoire Ancienne* (1730–1738), a sixteen-volume account of ancient peoples focusing particularly on the history of the ancient Greeks, was an extremely influential work that served as the major historical text for Grecophone schools over the next fifty years (Clogg 1985:13; Kitromilides 1978:84–89). Although there was some time lag in the translations, many works appeared relatively quickly (Clogg 1980:111–112). With the proliferation of this historical knowledge, the genealogical, cultural, and intellectual ties between Orthodox Balkan peoples and antiquity became the foci of a critical reevaluation. The influence of the Hellenic ideal among the Greek Orthodox intelligentsia was most pronounced in the works of Moisioudax and Korais. Iosipos Moisioudax, who served as director of the Princely Academy of Jassy, diagnosed a twofold problem within Greek Orthodox culture. On the one hand, knowledge of ancient texts was fragmentary, since the texts were largely unavailable; on the other hand, the ancients were revered without question. To cure these ills, Moisioudax pointed to the West as a place that created new knowledge and could provide a new model for southeastern Europe (see Kitromilides 1985 for an intellectual biography).

This modernist attitude is also revealed in Adamantios Korais's attempt to construct a new language suitable for a new nation. This new language was to be created by purging non-Greek words from the spoken vernacular and replacing them with ancient Greek words. Korais was the protagonist of the movement to transform the role of the classical heritage for the Greek-Orthodox *millet* (Clogg 1985; on Korais see Dimaras 1977:301–389, 1988:193–213; Jeffreys 1985; Henderson 1970; Bien 1972:35–63). He believed that education in the classics would serve to prepare people for a democratic polity. Because he felt that an educated elite needed to emerge before a national democratic state could be successfully established, he did not anticipate the 1821 revolt against the Ottoman state. In 1805 Korais started to publish translations of ancient Greek authors in the *Ελληνική Βιβλιοθήκη* (Hellenic Library) series, a project funded by rich Hiote merchants. In his introductions to the various volumes of this series, he took the opportunity to

comment extensively on the project of reeducation and liberation. Under the influence of the Western Hellenic ideal, he suggested the term *Γραικοί* (Greeks) as the proper designation for Orthodox “Romans” (Romanidis 1975:47). There was an important discontinuity involved in this recommendation. By “Greece,” the Western European intellectuals meant the ancient territory of *Hellas* alone, and not the entire area referred to as “Romania” or *Rumeli* by Greek Orthodox Christians (Romanidis 1975:209). Hence the identification of the “Romans” as “Greeks” was bound to create an important disjuncture between the intellectuals’ version of “Greece” (the so-called Hellenic ideal) and the popular “Romeic” religious and political identity. Not surprisingly, the Phanariot-religious establishment was at odds with Korais’s project.⁸

For Korais, the need for modern Greeks to rediscover their historical origin reflected a broader program of political modernization. By adopting the knowledge of the ancients that was preserved in the West, the modern Greeks could rise again and regain their proper position in the world. Of fundamental importance to such a program was the assumption of continuity between the “ancients” and the “moderns.” In Korais’s writings, this continuity was strategically employed in order to establish the necessity for modernizing the Hellenic world (Clogg 1976; Korais 1971). In order to become worthy of the sacred name they bore, modern Greeks needed to be “enlightened,” an argument justifying Korais’s modernist orientation without directly questioning the traditional ecclesiastical discourse. But even if cultural continuity with Orthodox philosophical tradition was to be preserved in principle, most of the Balkan Enlightenment emphasized Western scientific achievements in order to defeat Orthodox religious conservatism.

In the field of politics, this orientation manifested itself in the Enlightenment thinkers’ employment of the terms “Greek” or “Hellene” versus the traditional “Romeic” vision advocated by the patriarchate. These conflicting visions are also reflected in the employment of the terms *ἔθνος* (race) and *ἰθὺς* (nation) in the writings of various authors during this period (Dimaras 1977:81–90; Xydis 1969:207–213; see also Pantazopoulos 1994:48–51; Romanidis 1975; Zakythinis 1976:140–180). The “race of the Romans” is more or less identical with the *Rum millet*; its employment reveals the utilization of the *Rum millet* as the relevant political and cultural unit of organization. The gradual use of the words “Greek” or “Hellene” and similarly of the word *ἰθὺς* reflects the slow transformation of a religious identity into a secular one.

The era of revolutionary liberalism

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the conflicts between liberals and conservatives intensified. The liberals had grown stronger and the Church could no longer intimidate its opponents into submission. For example, when in 1793 the liberal author Hristodoulos Pambekis was excommunicated, he died without repenting and his friends commemorated him in the public gardens of Leipzig (Dimaras 1988:154). The French Revolution (1789) provided the impetus for a particularly stormy decade of conflict (1790–1800) between conservatives and liberals in the Balkans (Dimaras 1977:245–262; Gedeon 1976:57–96). The “battle of the pamphlets” occurred during this period. Revolving around the publication of a series of texts such as the *Πατρική διδασκαλία* (Anthinos 1798; see English translation in Clogg 1969), *Ο Αν=νυμος του 1789* (Anonymos 1989), and the *Ελληνική νομαρχία* (Anonymos 1980; originally published in 1806), this battle was a manifestation of an intense struggle over intellectual orientation. The proponents of the Enlightenment increasingly called for “liberation”—i.e., the overthrow of Ottoman rule—and this call deeply affected the Church’s role and position. Whereas the vision of the new Orthodox intelligentsia postulated the sovereignty of a people in secular terms, the Church advocated a deliberately non-nationalist, theocratic position. For its liberal opponents, this position amounted to nothing less than *εθελοδοουλεία* (voluntary slavery).

The emerging liberalism was strongly connected with the proliferation of freemasonry, leading the patriarchate to repeatedly condemn the freemasons.⁹ At least since 1776–77, Voltaire was associated with freemasonry in the religious anti-Enlightenment literature. By 1791 various pamphlets placed him among the “shameless, talkative, Godless Franco-masons,” and in 1793 the patriarchate condemned the “infidel, Godless Voltaires, . . . [instruments of the] cunning and misanthrope Demon” (quoted in Loukas 1991:57–58). Gradually, the Church’s position became more austere; by 1816 the Enlightenment teacher and author Stefanos Doukas was forced to submit the manuscript of his *Physics* to censorship, and in 1817 Ignatios Skalioras, one of the patriarchate’s clergy in the West, issued a fierce attack on Korais. When Patriarch Grigorios V, an opponent of secular ideas, returned to the patriarchal seat (1818–21), the pace of the reaction accelerated (Dimaras 1977:60, 261; see also Iliou 1988). In 1819 the Church condemned the novelty of giving ancient Greek names to newborns and created a list of heretical books.

This conflict partially reflects the different positions of the proponents of each side. The Church was part of the Ottoman administrative

system and fearful of ideas that could upset the empire's order, whereas the merchants, peddlers, intellectuals, and other petit bourgeois groups were proponents of new ideas (cf. Iliou 1986). Of course, since support for education and promotion of the new "enlightened reason" did not invariably imply commitment to revolutionary activity (see Clogg 1981; also Anonymous 1980), the ideological conflict cannot be reduced to inflexible categories. Rich merchants were willing to offer money for educational projects but were unwilling to risk their fortunes in an open revolt against the Porte.

The French occupation of the Ionian islands during 1797–1799 and 1807–1814, as well as the occupation of the "Illyrian" region (1806–1814), helped the influx of Western ideas into the Balkans (Kitromilides 1990:29, 45). Starting with Bonaparte's first Italian expedition, the image of Napoleon as the liberator became dominant. Adamantios Korais called on him to liberate Korais's "brothers"; in 1800, the liberal *boyars* of Wallachia and Moldavia addressed a similar call to him, and the Serbs repeatedly requested his help in their ongoing revolt against the Porte (Clogg 1969:87–90; Kitromilides 1990:38–49). Under the influence of French revolutionary ideas, literary societies were formed to promote the new world view and young people were drawn into following the new ideas. From Vienna, thanks to diaspora Greek and Serb merchant communities, French liberal ideas were transported into the Balkans in the form of pamphlets, translations, and secret societies (Botzaris 1962:71–81; Kitromilides 1990:56, 109–138; Koumariou 1995). Following the example of the Jacobins, secret societies were formed in Constantinople (1794) and the Ionian islands (1797).

It is in the context of this generalized emulation of French ideas throughout the region that Rigas Velestinlis's movement took place. Rigas conceived of the idea of an Orthodox revolution among the Balkan peoples that would result in the overthrow of the sultan's authority and the creation of a "Greek" state in its place. Rigas's connection with masonic lodges has never been proved, but there is a clear influence of liberal ideas in his work. He served as professor in the princely academy of Bucharest, as governor of Craiova, and as secretary under Prince Nikolaos Mavroyeni (Camariano-Coran 1974:447; Pantazopoulos 1994:20–35; Vranousis 1957). He produced a series of literary and scientific works, including translations of European books.

Rigas's *Χάρτα της Ελλάδος* (Velestinlis 1797) identifies *Hellas* with the Ottoman Empire's "central lands" (i.e., the Balkans and Anatolia) and calls for the overthrow of the despots by the coordinated action of all Balkan peoples. In effect, Rigas's map transforms the *Grecia* of earlier European cartography (fifteenth to eighteenth century) into *Hellas*. But for Western European Enlightenment thinkers, there was an

implicit continuity involved in the employment of the two terms (ancient Greeks = Hellenes) whereas for Orthodox Balkan society this transformation involved a rejection of the ecclesiastical unit of *Rum millet* in favor of a secular *Hellas*. In Rigas's own work, *Hellas* appears as the secular, liberal facet of the *Rum millet*, the product of an intellectual mutation caused by the reception of the Enlightenment into the Ottoman Balkans.

For the creation of his *Grand Map*, Rigas utilized one of the most famous and honored books of the philhellenic discourse, Jean-Jacques Barthelemy's *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grece* (1788). Barthelemy was a prominent numismatologist, epigraphist, linguist, and Hellenist. His book was translated into several European languages; its successive editions testify to its popularity. The high point of this popularity was the author's induction into the *Académie Française* in 1789 (Augustinos 1994:38–39). The book describes the imaginary travels of young prince Anacharsis in ancient Greece from 363 to 337 b.c.—in effect, providing a panoramic view of the ancient Greek world. Rigas translated five of the eight chapters of the book himself and used the information provided in it to construct his *Grand Map* (Botzaris 1962; Pantazopoulos 1994:68–69; Vranousis 1957).

These Western influences also extended into the realm of politics. Rigas's plans reveal a strong liberal turn, as they freely utilize the slogans of the French Revolution ("liberty, equality, fraternity"). Rigas selected the French constitution of 1793 (the most liberal of the French constitutions) as his own model. In the new federation he envisioned, the idea of citizenship would provide for the peaceful coexistence of all Balkan *ethnies*. In his Constitution of the Republic of Hellas, "all people, Christians and Turks, are . . . equal" (article 3); slavery is prohibited (articles 2 and 18); freedom of religion for Christians, Turks, Jews, and others is guaranteed; and it is recognized that "the sovereign people are all the people of this state without distinction of religion or dialect, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, Vlachs, Armenians, Turks, and every other race" (article 7). Clearly aware of ethnic differences, Rigas endorsed individual rights as a prerequisite for his Hellenic Republic. The constitution provides a system of representative democracy where voting is not restricted to the prelates (articles 21, 28, and 29). Rigas further connected this vision with the existing cultural trends of his time by selecting Greek as the major language of the republic, arguing that "it is the easiest to comprehend and to be learned by all the races of the state" (article 53).

Rigas's vision exemplifies both the strong influence of liberalism among the Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia and the culturally defined nature of the Hellenic ideal.¹⁰ This ideal revitalized the identity of the

Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia. In place of the *Rum millet's* religious Orthodox identity, the new mentality postulated a secular identity based on the knowledge of the West and the ideology of liberalism. The geographical space occupied by Rigas's *Hellas* remains that of Orthodox Balkan society, a feature testifying to the Balkan character of Rigas's thinking. To implement his goals, Rigas organized a Jacobin-style secret society. His efforts were unsuccessful; in 1798 he and his followers were arrested in Trieste. They were tortured by the Austrian authorities only to be turned over to the Ottomans, who promptly executed Rigas and his followers. Rigas's capture and death elevated him to the status of a martyr for his contemporaries, but his plans were condemned by the patriarchate in 1798 (Pantazopoulos 1994:53, 98; Vranousis 1975:450).

Following Napoleon's defeat (1815), the economic crisis of Ottoman trade hurt many petit bourgeois commercial intermediaries and merchants. This frustrated stratum was attracted to French Jacobin-style revolutionary ideas. The medium of these people was the Φιλική Εταιρεία (Friendly Society), a nationalist conspiratorial organization founded in 1814 in Odessa by three Greek merchants. Allegedly all three were freemasons, but this has been corroborated for only one of them, Emanuil Xanthos. Nevertheless, the Society's symbolism and mode of organization reveal heavy Masonic influences (Frangos 1973; 1975). Its members played into the millenarian beliefs still dominating Balkan Orthodoxy, and they strongly implied that their goals were supported by Russia. Thanks to this multifaceted approach, the Society was able to build a coalition among notables, social bandits, clergy, and merchants. Since the "Greeks" constituted a group scattered widely over Ottoman territory and since, for the peasantry, it was religious identity that counted ("Greeks" versus "Latins" or "Turks"), the goal of the Society's members appears identical to Rigas's—that is, to create a Balkan Orthodox Christian movement aiming to replace the patriarchate's religious authority and the Porte's political authority with a new secular, liberal authority inspired by the French Revolution.

A number of conditions and events render this interpretation plausible. First, prior to the 1821 revolution the names "Hellene," "Hellas," and "Hellenic" existed in literary discourse but had not yet prevailed in common discourse. They coexisted with the terms "Greek," "Roman" (Ρωμαίος), and "Grecia" (Politis 1993:33). Second, the "nation" was frequently considered identical to the *Rum millet*. Even as late as 1853, one of the participants in the 1821 revolution in the Peloponnese considered Serbia and the Romanian principalities to be as much a part of "Greece" as the Peloponnese itself (quoted in Skopetea 1988:35). Third, if the scope of the 1821 rebellion is confined to the Ottoman

Empire alone (that is, excluding the 1821 movement in the Danubian principalities), it was religious and not ethnic solidarity that shaped the popular attitude vis-à-vis the revolt.¹¹

Among the other Ottoman Christian subjects, Bulgarian, Serb, and Montenegrin fighters participated in the 1821 revolts in addition to the Greeks (Loukatos 1979; 1980; Papadopoulos 1980; Todorov 1982; Traikov 1980:49). In accordance with the Friendly Society's plan, Bulgarian villages and cities had been infiltrated by the Society's members (Todorov 1977:37–38), who also initiated Bulgarians living in the principalities into the Society as well as those living in colonies throughout Russia, Constantinople, and Bessarabia. They aimed ultimately to provoke a general insurrection among the entire Bulgarian population. Friendly Society member Dimitrios Vatikiotis, a former officer in the Russo-Turkish war of 1806–12, is credited with mobilizing a total of 14,000 Bulgarians. The Friendly Society attempted to gain the support of the exiled Serb leader Karadjordje, and after his assassination in 1817 they tried to gain the support of prince Miloš of Serbia (Botzaris 1962:86–111; Lukać 1979; Papadopoulos 1979; Stojancević 1979). According to their "General Plan," the Bulgarians would be joined by the Serbs (with prince Miloš taking the lead). Although often uncoordinated and unfocused, Society agents exerted considerable effort to prepare for an armed uprising in northern Bulgaria. In January 1821, these plans called for the mobilization of 10,000 Bulgarians with a simultaneous influx of 10,000 Serbs into Ottoman lands.

The conspirators' organizational plans clearly suggest that the 1821 revolts were conceived as a revolution of the Orthodox *millet* against the Ottoman authority structure. Significantly, the same frame of reference in understanding the revolts was employed by both the Ottomans and the Greek Catholic islanders. On 4 April 1821, Patriarch Grigorios V denounced the revolt in the Danubian principalities and excommunicated the revolutionaries Soutsos and Ipsilantis. But he was held responsible by the sultan for the actions of his flock and on 10 April 1821 he was hanged (Frazee 1987:45–52).¹² Whereas Orthodox Christians throughout the Ottoman Balkans identified with the revolt, the approximately 16,000 Catholic Greek islanders living in Naxos, Tinos, Siros, and Thira did not participate in it. Although Ottoman rule was not welcome, they hesitated to identify with a movement that was predominately Orthodox. The Catholic islanders continued to pay the annual tribute to the Porte; the pope's declaration of neutrality with respect to the conflict did not provide them with sufficient incentive to participate (Frazee 1979; 1987:63).

Conclusions

Nationalism was absent in Balkan Orthodox society during the Ottoman era. The sociopolitical organization of Orthodox Christians (the *Rum millet*) was instrumental in highlighting the religious differences among the Balkan peoples. Romanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians, and Greeks were *ethnies* whose identity could shift from one to another without a change in these peoples' status vis-à-vis the Sublime Porte. Ethnicity was also associated with the division of labor and was frequently situational. Middle class and urban Greek Orthodox Christians were generally self-identified as "Christians" or "Romans," while Western sources tended to refer to all Greek Orthodox Christians as "Greeks." The religious and secular elites of the *Rum millet* operated within this frame of reference. Although Grecophone, these elites emphasized their role as leaders of the *Rum millet*; they used religious instead of ethnic identity as their main ascriptive criterion. Concomitant with this Orthodox universalism, millenarianism was also prevalent among Greek Orthodox Christians. The subjugation of the Christians under the Ottomans was considered divine punishment for their sins. "Liberation" was said to occur simultaneously with the Second Coming.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, intense cross-cultural contacts between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe had a significant impact on the *Rum millet*. These contacts can be grouped into two categories: (1) the ideological currents of the Enlightenment, (2) the more diffuse revolutionary expectations that proliferated with the outbreak of the French Revolution. The Enlightenment was transplanted into the *Rum millet* by a group of Orthodox, mainly Grecophone, intellectuals during the second half of the eighteenth century. This new intelligentsia was not composed just of individuals of ethnic Greek descent, yet many were participants in the Grecophone culture of the time. The reception of the Enlightenment into Orthodox Balkan society led to a growing trend toward secularization and critical thinking. Knowledge was valued as an end in itself and tradition was no longer uncritically accepted. The central place of ancient Greece within the Western Enlightenment led to a reconstitution of the relationship between modern "Greeks" (Greek-Orthodox) and ancient Greeks ("Hellenes"). Adamantios Koraïs urged the Greeks to become educated through Western "enlightened reason" in order to become worthy of bearing the glorious name of "Hellene." The ecclesiastical establishment and many Phanariots opposed these new ideas since they correctly perceived that secularization would shift the religious foundation of solidarity among the members of the *Rum millet* and consequently lead to the delegitimation of the Church and the Phanariots.

The French Revolution, which intensified this battle between conservative and liberal Greek Orthodox elites, represented the second main source of inspiration for the new secular Greek Orthodox intelligentsia. In the 1790–1800 decade, a heated conflict broke out between conservatives and liberals during which the Church did not hesitate to condemn Godless “Franco-masonic” ideas, while proponents of “enlightened reason” accused the Church of “voluntary slavery.” This same decade saw the first explicit attempt to theorize an alternative to the Ottoman state and to organize a movement to overthrow it. Rigas Velesinlis conceived of a Grecophone liberal democracy encompassing the Ottoman Empire’s “central lands” (the Balkans and Anatolia) and promising religious tolerance and civic liberty to people of all religious and ethnic affiliations. Although his plans were not successful, his attempt set the stage for the formation in 1814 of the *Filikí Etería*, which built a coalition among different Balkan *ethnies* and organized an Orthodox Balkan uprising in 1821.

Both in Velesinlis’s movement and in the 1821 revolutions, the identity of the Orthodox Balkan peoples was considered “Greek” (Greek Orthodox). However, instead of the religious connotation of this term, a secular interpretation was advanced. This reinterpretation suggests that Hellenism now constituted a new cultural configuration defined in terms of Grecophone letters, Western European “enlightened reason,” and liberalism. The *Rum millet*’s secularization had already proceeded far enough for these new concepts to appear, but it was not deep enough for all the Balkan *ethnies* to be considered equal partners. This is why the considerable ambiguity surrounding the definition of “Greeks” persisted until the foundation of the Greek kingdom in 1832. In the broadest sense, “Greeks” can be all the members of the *Rum millet*.

However, if a secular (as opposed to a religious) interpretation is given to the term “Greek,” then it is inappropriate to use that term to characterize the Orthodox Balkan Christians who were not ethnic Greeks. This contradiction was not apparent prior to the 1830s. As shown in this article, the (Ottoman) Serb, Bulgarian, and Romanian educational mobilizations gained momentum only after the 1821 revolutions. These mobilizations were significantly aided by the secularization of the Greek Orthodox intelligentsia. In transforming the Greeks’ religious identity into a secular one, Greek Orthodox intellectuals of the time also circumscribed the boundaries of Grecophone cultural influence. In addition, with the urban, mercantile, and educated elites endorsing a secular identity, the *Rum millet* lost legitimacy in the eyes of its most prominent members.

The interpretation proposed in this article has two main implications. First, at least until the early nineteenth century it is perhaps more

appropriate to refer to one Balkan Enlightenment rather than to various national Enlightenments. Elements of a significant cultural differentiation among the Greek Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia were not present until this time. Suggesting this reconceptualization also makes it possible to analyze the complex relations between class and ethnicity within the Ottoman *Rum millet*. Second, the absence of serious ideological antagonism among the Balkan intelligentsia during the Enlightenment period suggests that the intense ethnic and national rivalries among the Balkan peoples are a phenomenon that emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century (see Roudometof 1998 for further discussion). I should also point out that the considerable discontinuity between millenarian ideology and modern nationalism suggests that even the power struggle of the Orthodox Christians against the Muslim Ottomans should not be considered an expression of nationalism. That is, during the Ottoman period, Christians may have desired their liberation from Ottoman rule, but this was a religious and not a national dream of liberation.

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NOTES

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¹ Phanariot rule has been a controversial topic in the literature. The very term "Phanariot" in its contemporary connotation owes much to the nineteenth-century historiography that depicted the Phanariots as the source of everything evil in the principalities (Pippidi 1975; see Seton-Watson 1934 for a traditional negative evaluation of the Phanariots). My discussion of the Phanariots draws heavily on Florescu (1968); Mango

(1973); Papadopoulos (1990); Runciman (1968); Ionescu-Niscov (1974); and Papacostea-Danielopolou (1986).

² With their 1204 conquest of Constantinople, the Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade shook this universalist vision. Following 1204, the emperors of Nikea targeted the Greek *ethnie* as their major constituency and once again employed the word “Hellene” (previously used to signify “pagan”) as an instrument for their own legitimacy. The reconstitution of the Byzantine Empire in 1261 put an end to this Greek protonationalist trend. For the next two centuries, the conflict between Orthodox Byzantine universalism and the newborn Greek protonationalism persisted. Two factors helped the resolution of this ideological struggle. First, in 1453, the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans led to the extinction of the secular Byzantine elites who promoted the ecclesiastical union of the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Second, among the Grecophone intellectuals of the time the proponents of ecclesiastical Union with the West (such as the philosopher Gemistus Pletho) failed to gain sufficient popular and institutional support. Both factors helped Orthodox religious mysticism gain the upper hand and establish itself as the main current of thought among Orthodox Christians (Daniilidis 1934; Giannaras 1992; Vakalopoulos 1961).

³ The *Rum millet* included large segments of people who belonged to different *ethnies* (Clogg 1982:185–186). In fact, the considerable variation in local dialects and languages strengthened the religious component of the system. Moreover, what I am referring to in this essay (somewhat anachronistically) as the *millet* system constituted a model of social organization that was developed over the *longue durée*. It is likely that the word *millet* was not in use in the early stages of this system; its widespread employment is a nineteenth century phenomenon (Braude 1982).

⁴ The name Roman was a legacy of history, not a factual identification of race or ethnicity. Even to this day, the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem are referred to as “Roman” patriarchs. The terminological confusion of the terms Romans and Greeks owes much to the political rivalry between Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire, a rivalry that emerged during the Middle Ages. The term Roman originally designated a citizen of the Eastern Roman Empire (since the Western part had collapsed in the fifth century). Since Charlemagne’s reconstitution of the Western Roman Empire in 800, Western Europeans began employing the term Greek to denote the Romans of the Eastern Roman Empire, causing in the process the outrage of the Eastern Romans (i.e. “Byzantines”) (Gill 1980:68; Romanidis 1975:281). The Ottomans employed the term *reaya* to imply all land cultivators regardless of religion; but in practice, in the Ottoman Balkans, this term meant the Orthodox Christians.

⁵ Runciman (1968:376–380) considers this expansion the outcome of Phanariot influence aiming at the restoration of Byzantium. See Hupchick (1993) for a similar interpretation. In the Serb case, successive migrations to the Habsburg territories in 1690 and 1737 reduced the population. In both cases, the Serb clergy aided the Habsburgs against the Ottomans, leading to the 1737 decision of the Ottomans to replace the Serb high clergy with Greeks (Arnakis 1963; Jelavich 1983:1.93–95).

⁶ The same attitude was expressed by Nikolaos’s son, Alexandros Mavrokordatos, who wrote in a letter: “We conform to the prescription of the Gospel ‘Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s’; it is not the custom of us Christians to confuse what is temporary and corruptible with what is divine and eternal” (quoted in Mango 1973:51). See also Daniilidis (1934:165–68, 240–244) and Lazarescu (1975).

⁷ The Church’s objections to Enlightenment included, first, the charge of atheism and the fear that new attitudes would weaken Orthodoxy’s strong anti-Catholic stand. Moreover, the Church feared that new theories such as heliocentrism would shake the Church’s central position in the world view of believers. Additionally, there was a general

perception that antiquity's knowledge was superior to modern knowledge. Lastly, the Church's objections manifested the socioeconomic conflict between the groups associated with science (merchants and other new strata emerging in the course of the eighteenth century) and the established religious elites of the *Rum millet* (Makridis 1988).

⁸ On the bitter conflict between Athanasios Paros and Korais, see Giannaras (1992: 181). Also see Giannaras (1992:215–229) for a negative evaluation of Korais. As already discussed, one of the most prominent Phanariot intellectuals of the time, Dimitrios Katartzis, categorically rejected the Hellenic thesis in favor of "Romeic" identity. Whereas Korais struggled to transform the religious "Romeic" identity into a secular one, the Phanariot Panagiotis Kordikas insisted in 1818 that it was "through the Holy Faith [that] the Hellenic Race was saved from ultimate disappearance," and that national identification via the Christian religion has become "such an essential feature of the Nation that a Hellene ceases to be recognized as a Hellene if he ceases to be recognized as a Christian" (quoted in Politis 1984:30). Kordikas was an educated Phanariot who came into direct personal and ideological conflict with Korais (Dimaras 1977:349–361).

⁹ The first masonic lodge opened in Galata in Constantinople in 1744. In the Ionian islands, Freemasonry was instituted in 1740, while foreign Freemasons existed as early as 1743 in the principalities, and the first Romanian lodge was founded in Jassy in 1772 (Gedeon 1976:104; Georgescu 1971:32 n.3). The fact that both Greek Orthodox and Western merchants were enrolled accelerated the process of acquainting the new Greek Orthodox aristocracy with Western liberalism.

¹⁰ See Daskalakis (1979) and Vranousis (1957) regarding Rigas's life and the information obtained by the Austrian authorities (see Botzaris 1962 for a brief overview). See Kitromilides (1978:265–312) and Pantazopoulos (1994:61–92) for analyses of the liberal nature of Rigas's works. Kordatos (1983) is perhaps the first researcher to advance the notion of Rigas as a visionary of a Balkan federation. For a critical overview regarding this claim, see Pantazopoulos (1994:51).

¹¹ The Friendly Society attempted to build a coalition between its own members and the Romanian free peasantry, many of whom had the same "petit bourgeois" background as many of the Society's members (Constantiniu 1984:235). During the 1806–1812 Russo-Turkish war, many free peasants enlisted in the Russian army (Berindei 1973:33–62; 1979:216–225). Among these soldiers, known as *panduri*, was Tudor Vladimirescu, who proved to be a competent leader during the war. Afterwards, he engaged in commercial activities, was able to buy property, and became a *boyar*. He had strong connections with military leaders in the principalities who in turn were members of the Friendly Society. Vladimirescu entered into secret negotiations with them and quite probably was initiated into the Friendly Society (see Berindei 1973:107 and Camariano 1965 for contrasting perspectives). In 1821, the Society and Vladimirescu attempted to start a revolutionary movement in the principalities. The specific circumstances of this movement and the reasons for its failure cannot be examined in this essay.

¹² Karpatis (1986:150) maintains that this was the result of Sultan Mahmud II "misunderstanding" a national revolt for a religious one. But the Ottomans were not informed regarding the secular trend signified by the rise of Hellenism. In 1826, Iakovos Rizos Neroulos recounted that in the early stages of the 1821 revolution, when the word Hellenes (and not "Greks") was used, the Ottomans did not recognize the name and wondered who these people were (quoted in Politis 1993:34).

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