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### Ορθόδοξη παράδοση και συλλογική ταυτότητα στην οθωμανική βαλκανική κατά τον δέκατο όγδοο αιώνα

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ORTHODOX CULTURE AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY  
IN THE OTTOMAN BALKANS  
DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

I

Thinking in the 1990s about collective identity and ethnic loyalties in the Balkans leads to grim reflections indeed. In the closing decade of the twentieth century we have just witnessed in this region of Southeastern Europe acts of violence and atrocities motivated by nationalism, which most of us wished to hope had been eradicated from the European continent. Disillusionment about this prospect is reflected in the new urgency taken up by the history of nationalism on the old continent and in its Southeastern corner in particular. It is time to look again at origins and processes and to rethink patterns of development in order to place the contemporary disheartening picture in perspective. To do this an act of historical abstraction and imagination is necessary so as to transpose our thinking to the early eighteenth century, an age that witnessed the political unification of the Balkan region within a lingering local version of «Pax Ottomanica», after long centuries of division and shifting frontiers. After the treaties of Carlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) and up to the age of the French Revolution, which initiated the long process of the Empire's break-up, the Ottoman frontier in Europe was stabilized around the Balkan region despite the empire's protracted decline during the same period. Stability of external borders, combined with the declining control of central authority on the provinces, eased considerably the pressures on the empire's Christian subjects in the Balkans. This development tended to sustain traditional patterns of mobility and cultural osmosis within the

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Balkan region and provided the political preconditions for the emergence of many features of a common society among the Christian populations of the area. It is against this background that one might attempt to recover the ethnic profile of the Balkans during the last century of uninterrupted Ottoman rule.

For such an intricate enterprise, fraught with problems of evidence and ideological traps, a conceivable point of departure could be provided by the juxtaposition of two maps depicting the distribution of the languages of Europe in 1730 and 1821 respectively. The first of these maps, entitled *Europa Polyglotta* and published at Nuremberg in 1730 by an anonymous cartographer, depicts the general idea prevailing in the learned circles of Europe at the time about the distribution of the various European languages. So far as Southeastern Europe was concerned the Nuremberg cartographer recorded on his map three linguistic groups: Turkish was recorded as the language of the eastern region of the Balkans running from the lower Danube to the slopes of Mount Olympus. Greek was confined to the classical Greek heartlands, recognized as the spoken language in Epirus, Thessaly, Central Greece and the Peloponnese. The rest of the Balkans was shown to speak «Illirico-Slavonica», which extended over the regions of the South Slavs and the Albanian and Dalmatian coasts.<sup>1</sup>

This obviously simplified version of the linguistic map of the Balkans was considerably revised in the next cartographic survey of the distribution of languages in the area. This was due to Captain F.A.O' Etzel and was published in Berlin in 1821. Etzel's map, regardless of the historical ethnology it presupposed, came close to an empirical record of the linguistic geography of Southeastern Europe: Greek was noted as spoken in the areas and islands that eventually made up the Greek kingdom, along the Northern Aegean littoral and running North-eastward to the Black Sea coast covering the whole of Thrace. To the Northwest and along the Southern Adriatic coast the map noted the speaking of Albanian. To the East of Albanian and to the immediate North of the Greek-speaking coastal regions was located an area speaking Wallachian and between this area and the Danube another zone was identified as Bulgarian-speaking. To the North of the Albanian-speaking area Etzel located an area inhabited by what he described as «pure Illyrians», although his information about their language was rather uncertain. The rest of the Balkans South of the Danube was inhabited by Slavs, divided into three groups, Serbs, Croats and Bosnians. An extensive area

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1. See H.R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics*, Liverpool 1951, pp. 9-11. It is curious but also revealing of the tenacity of ethnological preconceptions that an «Ethnographic Map of Europe» by a Dr. Gustaf Kombst included as Map No 46 in Alexander Keith Johnston's, *The National Atlas of Historical, Commercial and Political Geography*, Edinburgh 1843, reproduces the basic pattern of *Europa Polyglotta* on the ethnography of Southeastern Europe, with a three-fold division of the region between «Turkish», «Greek (Pelago-Grecian)» and «South-East Slavonian» groups.

North of the Danube and South-West of the Dniester was identified as Wallachian-speaking. A final linguistic group in Southeastern Europe without a clearly demarcated territorial basis was identified as Turkish-speaking. This group formed a minority population distributed at different geographical points of the Balkan peninsula but it did not cover a specific region as a solid population mass.<sup>2</sup>

The ethnic picture of the Balkans that emerges from Etzel's map announces the modern ethnography of the region. It does not of course capture many important details and understandably it would be rather excessive to expect particular precision in the visual recording of such a complicated subject as ethnic identity. The choice of language as a criterion of ethnic cartography however allows a more complex picture to be rendered than it might have been the case if religion was selected as the basis of constructing the ethnic map. In that case the whole of the Balkan peninsula would be represented as a compact area marked by the predominance of the Orthodox Church. Some Catholic populations would have been recorded along the Northern Adriatic coast and its Croatian hinterland and if one paid particular attention to details one would have noted as well the sparse Catholic presence on some of the Cycladic islands in the Aegean. Upon the compact body of Orthodox populations the religious cartography would have noted a sprinkling of Jewish Ladino-speaking colonies in major cities like Thessaloniki and more significantly islands of Islamic populations in Central and Northern Albania and Bosnia and in the broad regions of Macedonia and Thrace. Moslem, Turkish or Albanian-speaking populations could be found elsewhere as well among compact Orthodox populations in the Southern Greek regions, in Wallachia and Bulgaria, while Bulgarian-speaking Moslem Pomaks were scattered in the Rhodopi mountain range and Greek-speaking Moslems could be found in Crete and Western Macedonia. These however formed a numerically rather limited presence among the compact Orthodox populations of the areas in question and it would have been impossible to record them visually on any ethnological map.

Another aspect of the Balkan ethnological picture which could not be captured on cartographical representations was the network of interlocking diasporas which covered the whole peninsula and extended beyond the Ottoman borders

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2. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics*, pp. 11-14. The only cartographic source which did manage to capture to a remarkable degree the ethnographic complexities of the Balkans in the nineteenth century is H. Kiepert, *Ethnographische Übersicht des Europäischen Orients*, Berlin 1878. By the early twentieth century in any case the effective pursuit of reason of state in Southeastern Europe had managed to superimpose political borders upon linguistic demarcation lines. See characteristically, *A Sketch Map of the Linguistic Areas of Europe*, London Stanford's Geographical Establishment, 1917, which records the tendency to make political and linguistic borders to coincide; the cartographic technique of course reflected the political trend often put to practice through force by modern states, which tended to impose the concentration of specific linguistic groups within their national borders.

into Central Europe, Italy and Russia. From the point of view of the formation of ethnic identities the network of Balkan diasporas was probably the most critical factor and it was recognized as such in early nineteenth century literary sources.<sup>3</sup> All the linguistic groups which were recorded on Etzel's map in 1821 were essentially diaspora communities, which under the conditions of political unification in the Balkans in the eighteenth century could spread far and wide. The Balkan Turks formed a dispersion of government officials and military guards turned into large landowners in the Balkan plains as well as Turkish-speaking peasants in Macedonia and Thrace, both North and South of the Balkan mountains. The Jews were traditionally a diaspora community and their presence could be found in most Balkan cities. The polyglot Orthodox of the Balkans formed multi-functional diasporas: the Greeks and the Serbs formed diasporas of merchants, scholars and clergymen. The Vlachs, the diaspora people *par excellence* were a mobile community of shepherds, merchants and craftsmen. Their wide dispersion all over the Balkan region since the eighteenth century and the facility with which they crossed linguistic frontiers turned them into one of the deeper unifying webs of Southeast European society. The Albanians formed a parallel diaspora, but whereas the Vlachs followed a pattern of dispersion geared Northward the Albanians extended South and into the Aegean islands. The Albanian diaspora had a further dimension to it on account of the religious division of the Albanians. Thus Moslem Albanians tended to be soldiers in the Ottoman armies who often pursued Albanian-speaking Orthodox rebels in the mountains of Greece. The linguistic diasporas interlocked with «functional» diasporas: merchants, craftsmen, shepherds, students and monks formed wandering groups, whose paths constantly crossed with each other and whose vocational requirements dictated ways of communication that threw bridges over the Babel of their polyglot backgrounds.

These mobile elements were often numerically sparse but not marginal in Balkan society. They constituted the foremost human factor in the internal unity of the broader region and their movements supplied the most effective medium of communication between geographically distant regions and often isolated communities. Furthermore the diaspora groups turned out to be agents of cultural and social changes, that usually followed upon the heels of their primary economic activities. Changes of this character involved over time redefinitions of collective identities that transformed inherited but fluid ethnic traits into more solid and in the long-run militant and inflexible national personalities.

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3. E.g. Daniel Phillipides, *Γεωγραφικόν της Ρουμουνίας*, Leipzig 1816, pp. 29-36; Dionysios Photeinos, *Ιστορία της πάλαι Δακίας*, Vol. I, Vienna 1818, pp. 300-311; Michel Kogalnitchan (Kogalniceanu), *Histoire de la Valachie, de la Moldavie et des Valaques Transdanubiens*, Vol. I, Berlin 1837, pp. 27-41. On the significance of migrations and the resulting diasporas as a central factor in Balkan social history cf. the observations of Jovan Cvijić, *La péninsule balkanique. Géographie humaine*, Paris 1918, pp. 112-152, 255-257.

For most of the Orthodox diaspora networks, with the exception of monks and shepherds, the urban centres and port cities of Southeastern Europe, from Ragusa to Smyrna, supplied the threshold to mobility. Despite the presence of these mobile groups, the bulk of Balkan populations was made up by more or less motionless peasant masses. It was these agrarian masses that had preserved languages whose origins were lost in time and were eventually claimed by the conflicting nationalist movements in the nineteenth century. In the mountains of Greece and the islands of the Greek archipelago, in the valleys of the Danube, Sava and Drina rivers, in the plains North of the Balkan mountains, in the rugged mountains of the Albanian littoral and in the wide plains north of the Danube were living in the inertia of immemorial time the peasant masses that were to form the population bases of the modern nation-states in Southeastern Europe. The Balkan peasantries had preserved the spoken vernaculars that were to form later on the bases of modern literary languages.<sup>4</sup> Despite the incidence of kernels of ethnically homogeneous populations in several geographically isolated regions throughout the Balkans, the more usual picture one can recover from the sources—to the extent this is possible—is one of ethnic mixture and interpenetration of languages. This of course was more true of some areas than others. As a rule however the major Balkan cities, ports and geographical passageways were marked by ethnic pluralism and the coexistence of religions and linguistic groups. It was this trait of Balkan society that made local politics an often lethal affair in the age of nationalism.

## II

Such has been the «archeology», as it were, of ethnic identity in the Balkans. It is now time to turn to a consideration of the patterns of cultural osmosis that held together this mosaic of potential «nations before nationalism»<sup>5</sup> into a formally unified community in the Balkans in the eighteenth century. In a substantive sense such a community could be recognized as holding together the Orthodox groups of Southeastern Europe and Asia Minor under the spiritual and administrative aegis of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. My focus will accordingly be on the Orthodox of the Balkans and their shared cultural experiences.

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4. On the formation of languages in the Balkans cf. the useful survey by Stavro Skendi, «The Emergence of the Modern Balkan Literary Languages – A Comparative Approach», *Die Kultur Südosteuropas, ihre Geschichte und ihre Ausdrucksformen*, ed. by G. Reichenkron and A. Schmaus, Wiesbaden 1964, pp. 303-321.

5. On the pertinent theoretical background cf. John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill 1982, pp. 3-13 and Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford 1986, pp. 21-46.

Within the broader structure of Ottoman society, the Orthodox populations of the Balkans and Asia Minor formed an inner community, whose cohesion was cemented by ideological and spiritual premises which went back to Medieval Byzantium, bridged the linguistic gulfs and kept channels of communication open among the Orthodox over the vast geographical space of their settlements and diaspora offshoots.

The community of the Orthodox was based on three factors: the Church, higher education and commerce. The multiplicity of possible identities connected with the diversity of languages coexisted in the bosom of the Orthodox communities of the Balkans with the shared identity of common religious doctrine and membership in the same Church. All Orthodox regardless of languages worshipped in the same shrines, their hopes focused on the same places of pilgrimage, their sustenance was often provided by the same monasteries that punctuated the Balkan countryside. This religiously defined community cherished as its common exalted symbols the Sacred Places of the Holy Land and the great imperial monastic foundations on Mount Athos and Sinai, as well as the other great monasteries in the Orthodox East from those in the Greek islands to the Northern extremities of Moldavia. The geography of faith provided the content of the shared Orthodox culture not only of Southeastern Europe but of Orthodox Russia as well, as witnessed by the travels of the Kievan monk Vassily Barsky in the first half of the eighteenth century. As a matter of fact the Orthodox culture of the Balkan peoples was sustained and constantly reinforced by the stream of itinerant monks who roamed Southeastern Europe collecting alms for their monasteries, carrying icons, holy relics and other symbols of veneration and distributing engravings and booklets about their great foundations and the miracles associated with them.<sup>6</sup> In this way the shared culture was rekindled and reproduced, by becoming the focus of the pious feeling of the humble and the great alike. Indeed the great monastic foundations, especially those on Athos became over the centuries the foremost symbols of the unity and continuity of Orthodox culture by providing a constant attraction to the benefactions of all those who pretended to carry on the mantle of the Holy Roman Emperors of the East, whether they were the rival emperors of the Serbs, the emperors of Byzantine Trebizond, the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia, distant rulers of Georgia or later Phanariot magnates.

It was upon this foundation of deeply felt piety and faith that the Orthodox Church based its power. Its institutional role in the organization of Ottoman power structures is well known and needs little comment here.<sup>7</sup> I should point

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6. A handy record of this visual evidence which provides important clues about the shared symbols of traditional mentalities in the Balkans is offered by Paul M. Mylonas, *Athos and its Monastic Institutions through Old Engravings and Other Works of Art*, Athens 1963.

7. See H.A.R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part II,

however at one important social dimension of the Church's institutional function: for those Balkan youths, as a rule the sons of the Orthodox peasantry, who opted for celibacy and ordination, the Church provided an important outlet for social, educational and geographical mobility, with prospects which extended as far as the senior sees in the hierarchy and even one of the patriarchal thrones. It was in this sense that the Orthodox Church played such a paramount role in the life of the Balkan Christians in the absence of a Christian state in the region. Because the language of the Church was New Testament Greek and a career in the hierarchy presupposed training in sacred learning which was transmitted in Greek, entry into the ranks of the celibate clergy tended to involve as a rule the adoption of a hellenized cultural identity.

This brings us to the second factor cementing the cohesion of the Orthodox community of the Balkans, the system of higher education. The model for all schools of higher learning in the Balkans was the Patriarchal Academy of Constantinople, which had been extensively reorganised in the course of the seventeenth century with the introduction of the Neoaristotelian curriculum of the School of Padua concurrently with the teaching of Orthodox sacred learning and Greek letters. In the closing decades of the seventeenth century this model was transferred by Sevastós Kyminitis from Constantinople first to Trebizond, where he founded the famous Phrontistirion in 1683 and then in 1690 to Bucharest where at the behest of Prince Constantine Brancoveanu he took the lead for the reform of the Princely Academy.<sup>8</sup> The latter development is of special significance because it suggests that Greek learning became central in the curriculum of the Academy at Bucharest as part of the cultivation of a shared Orthodox culture well before the accession of the Phanariots to the thrones of the principalities. Similar developments were connected with the emergence of the Princely Academy at Jassy as well. Kyminitis himself was aware that his intellectual efforts were addressed to such a broad Orthodox audience when he spoke of a «common system of Orthodox believers».<sup>9</sup>

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Oxford 1957, pp. 207-261 and Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, Cambridge 1968, pp. 165-207. Of special value for an understanding of the inner life of the Church are Philip Sherrard, *The Greek East and the Latin West*, Oxford 1959, pp. 96-107 and Timothy Ware, *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule*, Oxford 1964.

8. For details see Ariadna Comariano Cioran, *Les académies princières de Bucharest et de Jassy et leurs professeurs*, Thessaloniki 1974, pp. 31-34, 362-372. Even an earlier attempt at the organisation of a school of higher learning in Wallachia under Prince Matei Bassaraba involved the creation of a *Schola Graeca et Latina* in which the leading teachers were two Greek clergymen, Panteleimon Ligaridis and Ignatius Petritzis. The school functioned between 1646 and 1655 and the major content of the curriculum was provided by Neoaristotelianism. See Victor Papacostea, «Les origines de l'enseignement supérieur en Valachie», *Revue des études Sud-Est européennes* 1 (1963), pp. 7-39.

9. Sevastos Kyminitis, *Ἐορτολόγιον*, Bucharest 1701, p. xii.



Kyminitis spoke literally: the three leading institutions with which he had been associated were common schools in which the most talented youth of Southeastern Europe became exposed to Orthodox teaching and Greek learning. Other major schools fulfilled a similar cultural function at Ioannina from the middle decades of the seventeenth century onward, at the monastery of Saint John the Theologian on the island of Patmos throughout the eighteenth century, on Mount Athos in the 1740s and especially in the 1750s when the Athonite Academy reached a peak of renown under Eugenios Voulgaris, at Smyrna where the Evangelical School was founded in the early 1750s, at Moschopolis between 1744 and 1767. The network of higher schools in Southeastern Europe provided outlets for more advanced studies to those who wanted to go beyond the local or monastic school in which they had acquired the basic elements of literacy. The content and language of study in the higher schools were meant to sustain the common Orthodox culture of the region. Through the medium of the Greek language nevertheless these schools sustained as well an intellectual culture which became the shared patrimony of educated individuals in Southeastern Europe. This common, Greek speaking intellectual culture of the Balkans, which originally was intimately connected with the work of the Church, later on provided the appropriate channels for the reception of the ideas of the Enlightenment and the gradual secularization of Balkan thought.<sup>10</sup> In fact the common Greek-speaking culture of the intellectual elite of the Balkans did not disappear until both the enumerative heritage of the Orthodox Church and the cosmopolitan humanism of the Enlightenment were destroyed in Southeastern Europe by nationalism later in the nineteenth century.

One further factor that reinforced the unity of Southeastern European society through the use of Greek as a communication medium was the growth of commerce in the course of the eighteenth century. The emergence of a growing commercial economy beyond subsistence agriculture and traditional animal grazing, was a most significant development in Balkan economic history. Although it did not radically alter the basic peasant character of local society, this set of incipient economic changes produced the impressive phenomenon of the «conquering Balkan Orthodox merchant» which meant so much for the future of Balkan peoples.<sup>11</sup> The overland trade with Central Europe and maritime trade all over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea—which intensified after the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainartzi in 1774—created an important diaspora of commercial communities which operated through partnerships and companies of Orthodox merchants. The

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10. For a characteristic case study of the phenomenon see P. M. Kitromilides, «Cultural Change and Social Criticism: The Case of Iosipos Moisiodox», *History of European Ideas* 10 (1989), pp. 667-676.

11. The *locus classicus* is Traian Stoinovich, «The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant», *The Journal of Economic History* 20 (1960), pp. 243-313.

internal communication needs of these groups were served by the use of the common language of literate persons in the Balkans, Greek. This was recognized perceptively by Iosipos Moisioudax, himself quite familiar with the diaspora of Balkan merchants in Transylvania, Hungary and Austria. In order to meet the needs of commerce, Iosipos argued in his pedagogical treatise in 1779, a good knowledge of the Greek vernacular as well as of French and Italian was required.<sup>12</sup> The active participation of the Vlachs of the Southern balkans in the overland trade with Central Europe can explain to a considerable extent the degree of their linguistic and cultural hellenization, which impressed the historian Constantine Koumas in the early nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

### III

The phenomena I have been describing sustained the adoption of Greek culture as an ingredient of a common Balkan identity, but they did not, in themselves, possess ethnic significance. Greek served important communication needs and Greek culture provided access to intellectual resources which unfailingly satisfied those in search of educational development. Non-native speakers of Greek therefore like Dositej Obradović absorbed it enthusiastically in order to enhance their own intellectual assets.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore Greek, as a fully developed historic language, offered the technical outlets, sought by those trying to record and standardize other linguistic media in the region. Thus Greek provided the alphabet for the first recordings of an Orthodox religious literature in Albanian in the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup> It is therefore an anachronism to suggest that the prevalence of Greek oppressed the development of other Balkan cultures: on the contrary it uniformly opened the way to consciousness-raising among all those who were exposed, as a nineteenth century observer put it,<sup>16</sup> to the «lessons of humanism» through an

12. Iosipos Moisioudax, *Πραγματεία περί παιδων ἀγωγῆς ἢ παιδαγωγία*, Venice 1779, pp. 157-158.

13. Constantinos Koumas, *Ἱστορία τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πράξεων*, Vol. 12, Vienna 1832, pp. 530-531. Cf. A. J. Wace and M. S. Thompson, *The Nomads of the Balkans*, London 1914, pp. 206-225, 256-273.

14. *The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradović*, transl. by George Rapall Noyes, Berkeley 1953, pp. 240-247. Cf. P. M. Kitromilides, *The Enlightenment as Social Criticism. Iosipos Moisioudax and Greek Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Princeton 1992, pp. 23-26.

15. See Robert Elsie, «Albanian literature in Greek script: the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Orthodox tradition in Albanian writing», *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15 (1991), pp. 20-34. The practice continued until the end of the nineteenth century. See Emile Legrand, *Bibliographie Albanaise*, ed. by H. Guys, Paris-Athens 1912, nos. 161, 165, 296, 382, 392, 393, 394, 395, 409, 452, 454-457, 488, 489, 599.

16. Stephanos Koumanoudis, *Συναγωγή νέων λέξεων*, Athens 1900, p. 665.

acquaintance with Greek letters. The stories of Father Paisi and Sofroni Vrachanski could be reinterpreted in this light, I believe, to the profit of historical understanding.<sup>17</sup>

It is also an anachronism to ascribe to the Patriarchate of Constantinople a conscious policy designed to promote the «hellenization» of the Balkans in this period. The ascription of this motivation would certainly scandalize the Christian conscience of pious prelates in the patriarchal synod because all they might have understood by it could be an attempt to revive ancient paganism. Yet it is occasionally suggested that the Ecumenical Patriarchate did pursue such a policy in connection with the abolition of the surviving autocephalous churches within the Ottoman Balkans, the patriarchate of Peć in 1766 and the archbishopric of Ochrid in 1767. This claim has been advanced as a rule in nationalist Balkan historiography and from such sources it has been taken up by anthropologists and other modern scholars who pretend to pronounce on ethnic and national issues in the Balkans, past and present, with apparently little understanding of the historicity of both sources and issues. Yet when these two autocephalous churches were abolished by imperial edict and administratively subsumed under the Ecumenical Patriarchate, they were in fact Greek sees: Ochrid had been ruled by Greek-speaking prelates for centuries and at Peć Greek or Serb-speaking patriarchs were appointed from Constantinople since the flight of the Serb Patriarch Arsenije IV in 1739.<sup>18</sup> Their autocephaly was revoked only after the local synods had appealed to the Sublime Porte to this end in order to escape from the problems attendant on heavy indebtedness, which the Patriarchate of Constantinople, albeit reluctantly, agreed to take over.<sup>19</sup> The Patriarchate in its turn acted within canon

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17. What has been conventionally read as anti-Greek invective in Paisi's *History* can be easily connected with the Catholic authorities on which he mainly drew, Caesare Baronius and Mavro Orbini. See James F. Clarke, «Father Paisi and Bulgarian History», in *Teachers of History*, ed. H. S. Hughes, Ithaca, N.Y. 1954, pp. 258-283, reprinted in the same author's *The Pen and the Sword. Studies in Bulgarian History*, ed. by D. P. Hupchick, Boulder 1988, pp. 87-111. For more details on the uses of Orbini's *Il regno degli Slavi* and other works by Croatian Catholic authors by Paisi, see Ante Kadić, «The Croatian Sources of Paisii's *Historia*», *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 10/1 (Spring 1983), pp. 71-82. Paisi has often been interpreted as trying to stir up Bulgarian national feeling against Greek cultural oppression. To a considerable extent, however, he seems to be pointing to Greek achievements as models to be imitated by the Bulgarians in reconstructing a culture of Bulgarian Orthodoxy.

18. The relevant official act of the Patriarchate of Constantinople appointing the first Greek patriarch of Peć in 1739 «because of Arsenions's treachery against the sovereign state and his flight to the lands of the enemies beyond the borders» is published in Kallinikos Delikanis, ed., *Πατριαρχικῶν ἐγγράφων τόμος τρίτος (1564-1863)*, Constantinople 1905, pp. 917-918. This is an important collection of official patriarchal documents on the relations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the Orthodox Churches of Russia, Wallachia and Moldavia, Servia, Ochrid and Peć.

19. The relevant evidence is published in Delikanis, *op.cit.*, pp. 891-898 on Ochrid and pp.

law in accepting the abolition of the autocephaly of the two sees, since the political reason for granting it originally, the existence of independent Christian states claiming their own autocephalous churches, had disappeared since the Ottoman conquest of the Medieval Serbian and Bulgarian states.<sup>20</sup>

Although the flock under its jurisdiction included Greek, Slavic, Vlach and Albanian-speaking Orthodox, Ochrid had over the centuries become a Greek see, following the creation of the Medieval Bulgarian Patriarchate of Tirmovo in the late twelfth century (which became officially extinct in 1456). On the other hand the centre of gravity of Serbian Orthodoxy had since the end of the seventeenth century moved away from Peć, with the great migrations northward in 1690 and in 1737-1739 under the Patriarchs of Peć Arsenije III and Arsenije IV, who had led the exodus of their flock to the southern Habsburg domains to avoid Ottoman rule. Thus the foremost centre of Serbian Orthodoxy in the eighteenth century was the archbishopric of Carlowitz, whose archbishop acted as exarch of the patriarch of Peć and was recognized as the head of all Orthodox in the Habsburg domains.<sup>21</sup> In fact although under the Greek prelates of the mid-eighteenth century Peć had retained its Serbian-speaking flock, its areas of jurisdiction, like those of Ochrid to the South, were in the course of that century under increasing pressures of Islamization either through conversions of Orthodox rural populations to the religion of their Ottoman rulers, or through the spillover of Moslem populations from Albania. It was in order to check the process of Islamization through centralized control, which was expected to protect the local churches and strengthen Orthodox faith, that the synods of Peć, Ochrid and Constantinople took the steps required by canon law for the revocation of autocephaly. That such was the motive behind this rather dramatic act in eighteenth century Balkan ecclesiastical history, can be appreciated in light of a parallel initiative during

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921-923 on Peć. Two eighteenth-century historians of the Patriarchate with intimate knowledge of contemporary ecclesiastical politics, offer similar explanations. See A. Komninos-Ypsilantis, *Tá metá tήn álωσιν*, ed. by G. Aphthonides, Constantinople 1870, pp. 407 and 410 and Sergios Makraios, *Υπομνήματα Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Ἱστορίας (1750-1800)*, in C. Sathas, ed., *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, Vol. III, Venice 1872, pp. 250-252. Makraios notes that the Patriarch Samuel of Constantinople was reluctant to accept the abolition of the autonomy of Peć «taking into consideration the antiquity of this see» (p. 251) but he eventually gave in to the entreaties of the prelates who came thence.

20. The Patriarch of Constantinople Samuel I made sure in 1767 to issue a synodal act, laying down the canonical basis of the decision and confirming the imperial sovereign's (in this case the Ottoman Sultan's) right to legislate for the Church. See Delikanis, *op.cit.*, pp. 898-900.

21. On these developments cf. Charles Jelavich, «Some Aspects of Serbian Religious Development in the Eighteenth Century», *Church History* 23 (1954), pp. 144-152. In this important study, which draws extensively on early twentieth century Serbian sources, the author repeats the charge of «hellenization» (p. 149), which is not borne out by eighteenth century authorities.

precisely the same period in about the same regions of Balkan Orthodoxy: the popular evangelism from 1760 to his martyrdom in 1779 of the charismatic preacher Cosmas the Aetolian, who worked indefatigably with the blessing of three successive patriarchs of Constantinople in order to stem the tide of conversion to Islam in the multi-lingual regions which largely coincided with the former jurisdiction of Ochrid and the southern dioceses of Peć.<sup>22</sup>

Measures of ecclesiastical administration such as those concerning the churches of Peć and Ochrid, formed components in the continuum of a concerted effort to sustain the Orthodox faith. They should be accordingly understood in terms of the ecclesiastical policy of the time, rather than seen through the refracting prism of later national conflicts. The same continuum of Orthodox policy comprised the active popular evangelism of Saint Cosmas the Aetolian and manifestations of pastoral care such as the first complete translation of the Bible into Romanian already in the 1680s by a group of Orthodox clergymen and lay scholars, including Sevastos Kyminitis, under the supervision of the prelate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople Germanos Locros, archbishop of Nyssa.<sup>23</sup> Of parallel significance was the translation of Nikiphoros Theotokis's *Kyriakodromion* into Bulgarian in 1806 by Sofroni, bishop of Vratsa, whose preaching in Bulgarian so much heartened his flock at a time of serious tribulations during the disorders of the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>24</sup> The focus of the activity of the Orthodox Church was therefore on the sustenance of the Orthodox faith, not on some supposed project for the ethnic hellenization of Balkan populations. As a matter of fact later on in the nineteenth century the Church was to be criticized for failing to do just that by the major exponent of Greek

22. Cosmas the Aetolian (1714-1779) is a much misunderstood figure in Greek history, due to the fact that his teaching was variously recorded from memory by his listeners and was transmitted from hearsay for a long time. He did not himself leave a written record of his views and therefore it is very difficult for historical criticism to recover an authentic picture of his thought. The contemporary interpretation of his teaching however, prevalent in Greek nationalist historiography, which interprets his missionary work as a precocious manifestation of Greek national consciousness should be taken with caution and assessed with skepticism, in view of the non-ethnic Orthodox context of his work. For an English version of his teaching see N. M. Vapori, *Father Kosmas the Apostle of the Poor*, Brookline, Massachusetts 1977 and cf. the appraisal by Timothy Ware (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia), *The Orthodox Church*, London 1993, p. 101.

23. See Cléobule Tsourkas, *Germanos Locros, archevêque de Nyse et son temps (1645-1700)*, Thessaloniki 1970, pp. 60-61. For details on the edition that issued from these labours see Ioan Bianu and Nerva Hodoş, *Bibliografia Romanesca Veche 1508-1830*, vol. I, Bucharest 1993, pp. 281-291: *Biblia*, Bucharest 1688.

24. See Sofroni Vrachanski, *Vie et tribulations du pecheur Sofroni*, ed. and transl. by Jack Feuillet, Sofia 1981, pp. 91 and 104. On Sofroni's Bulgarian edition of the *Kyriakodromion*, popularly known as the *Sofronie*, see J. F. Clarke, «The First Bulgarian Book», *The Pen and the Sword*, pp. 199-205.

nationalism, the historian Constantine Paparrigopoulos.<sup>25</sup> Naturally conflicts and cleavages did exist within the Church and between the clergy and the laity, especially the hierarchy and the peasant populations who often suffered the consequences of exploitation and extortion. These conflicts however were social and economic, not ethnic, in nature and their incidence uniformly cut across ethnic and linguistic lines. Things of course changed radically when nationalism became a major factor in Balkan politics in the nineteenth century and brought the local Orthodox churches under its sway. This however is a quite different story and the fact that since the late nineteenth century national and ethnic conflicts in the Balkans are fought out in the religious domain should not be allowed to colour our understanding of phenomena in a pre-nationalist era such as the eighteenth century.

#### IV

In order to penetrate the logic of the configuration of Balkan cultural experience in the eighteenth century in connection with which our understanding has so often been trapped by the cunning of history, I should like in conclusion to look at some individual instances, which as borderline cases, illustrate the pertinent historical problems. The major problem has been, to my mind, the way in which the historicity of intellectual phenomena has been destroyed and their meaning obscured by the projection backwards of the logic of nationalist claims and the super-imposition of nineteenth and twentieth century political frontiers and confrontations upon typical forms of eighteenth century cultural expression.

The way in which the claims of nationalism have destroyed our abilities to grasp the significance of eighteenth century evidence is reflected in attempts to impose national identities on some important representatives of the common pre-nationalist Balkan culture. Three of four concrete examples may illustrate this. A case in point is that of Theodore Kavalliotis, who has been claimed by Albanian historiography under the Communist regime as a precursor of Albanian nationalism.<sup>26</sup> This claim is presumably based on Kavalliotis's attempt to codify the rudiments of Albanian vocabulary in his Greek-Vlach-Albanian glossary, published in 1770.<sup>27</sup> If anything however this initiative, far from indicating a sense

25. C. Paparrigopoulos, *Ιστορία του ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους*, vol. V, Athens 1925, pp. 505-507.

26. See e.g. A. Uci, «T. A. Kavallioti, un représentant albanais des lumières», *Studia Albanica* 3 (1966), pp. 185-196.

27. Theodoros Anastasiou Kavalliotis from Moschopolis, *Πρωτοπειρία*, Venice 1770. Dositej Obradović who had met Kavalliotis in Venice was aware of his attempt to transcribe spoken Albanian in Greek characters but thought that the phonetics of Albanian could be rendered more accurately in the Slavic Cyrillic alphabet. See *The Life and Adventures of*

of distinct Albanian identity, can only be understood as motivated by the prevailing common Orthodox culture of Balkan society, for which Kavalliotis was a spokesman: a senior Orthodox priest and teacher at Moschopolis, with his glossary he essentially extended an invitation to Vlach and Albanian speakers to embark upon the journey of linguistic and cultural hellenization in pursuit of educational and social mobility. His compatriot and fellow clergyman Daniel of Moschopolis was explicit on this issue in his own Greek-Vlach-Bulgarian and Albanian glossary which was published in 1802.<sup>28</sup> Daniel was Vlach-speaking while Kavalliotis's native tongue could have been Vlach, Albanian or Greek. As the name suggests his family's origin was either from the Greek port city of Kavalla on the Macedonian coast or from Kavaja, south of Durazzo in Albania.<sup>29</sup> Neither Daniel nor Kavalliotis however appears to have had a sense of language as an exclusive trait defining an ethnic group of national community, which is the emblem of nationalist thinking.

How fluid and difficult to define by reference to modern national criteria collective identity remained in the Balkans even at the peak of the movement of the Enlightenment in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, is further illustrated by the work of two other authors, Naum Ramniceanu and Dionysios Photeinos. Both lived in Wallachia and wrote in Greek as was standard practice in local intellectual life at the time. Although they both remained skeptical toward the ideas of the French Revolution they did not fail to criticise the inequalities and injustices they perceived in the highly stratified society of the Danubian principalities. Both of them, like Iosipos Moisiodax a few decades earlier, sympathized

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Dimitrije Obradović, p. 251. A modern edition of the work is available in Armin Hetzer, ed., *Das dreisprachige Wörterverzeichnis von Theodoros Anastasius Kavalliotis aus Moschopolis, Gedruckt 1770 in Venedig*, Hamburg 1981 (= *Balkan Archiv*, N.S., Beiheft 1).

28. Daniel of Moschopolis, *Λεξικόν Τετραγλωσσόν*, 1802. The place of publication of the work is not recorded in the original edition. It has been variously attributed by scholars to the Greek presses of Constantinople or Venice. On this and various other bibliographical problems associated with the work of Daniel Moschopolitis see M.D. Peyfuss, *Die Druckerei von Moschopolis, 1731-1769. Buchdruck und Heiligenverehrung im Erzbistum Achrida*, Vienna - Cologne 1989, pp. 54-60. The introductory address is translated by Richard Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence*, London 1976, pp. 91-92. Cf. P. M. Kitromilides, *The Enlightenment as Social Criticism*, pp. 26-27. The glossary itself has been reproduced in modern transcription by J. Kristophson, «Das Lexikon Tetraglosson des Daniel Moschopolitis», *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 10 (1974), pp. 14-89. See also Angeliki Constantakopoulou, «Ἡ ἑλληνική γλώσσα στὰ Βαλκάνια, 1750-1850. Τὸ τετραγλωσσὸ λεξικὸ τοῦ Δανιὴλ Μοσχόπολιτη», Ioannina 1988 [Παράρτημα 39 τῆς Ἐπετηρίδας Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς]

29. See Peyfuss, *Die Druckerei von Moschopolis*, pp. 150-151, with a biographical sketch on pp. 150-158. The latest monograph by Efstathios Kekrides, *Theodoros Anastasiou Kavalliotis*, Kavala 1991, pp. 17-31 makes a strong case in favour of Kavala as the place of origin of the Kavalliotis family.

with the lot of the peasantry, whom they considered the major victim of injustice. Besides a range of other works Naum and Photeinos wrote historical treatises, which essentially laid the foundations for the future construction of basic doctrines of Romanian nationalism: Photeinos in a major three volume work of historical synthesis treated the history of the three principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania as an integral whole, thus introducing the idea of unity of the people inhabiting the three areas, for which he used in the title of his book the collective term «Dacia».<sup>30</sup> Naum on the other hand wrote sketches of the history of the Romanians in which he identified the Dacians with the Romans, enumerated the accomplishments of the «nation of the Romanians» and extolled the blessings of patriotism.<sup>31</sup> Yet all these ingredients of future Romanian nationalist doctrine were enunciated in Greek and Naum felt that despite the newly discovered historical pedigree of his people, the crown of his country's glory was Orthodoxy.<sup>32</sup>

Was Naum then a spokesman for the common Greek-speaking culture of Balkan Orthodoxy or for an incipient Romanian consciousness? And are Naum and Photeinos to be classified in the «Romanian Enlightenment» to whose ideology they contributed or in the «Greek Enlightenment» in whose language they wrote? Or is the whole phrasing of the question in terms of national Enlightenments and national identities rather misleading and we should start rethinking the presuppositions of conventional conceptions of Balkan historiography? Writing while the twentieth century in the Balkans is drawing to a dramatic sunset it would probably not be amiss to ruminate on the fate of the eighteenth century ethnic and cultural pattern under the impact of the eventual transition to new identities, defined by the exclusive logic of nationalism. I suppose that none of the eighteenth century *dramatis personae* we have encountered in this story would either understand or find particularly edifying what has been happening since they wrote. I have a strong suspicion that their worst shock would come at the sight provided by their most sacred treasure and ingredient of shared identity, Orthodoxy, after the ravishes it has suffered from nationalism.

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30. D. Photeinos, *Ιστορία τῆς πάλαι Δακίας, τὰ νῦν Τρανσυλβανίας, Βλαχίας καὶ Μολδαβίας*, Vols. 1-3, Vienna 1818. The three principalities were called by the common name Romania by an author writing in Greek, Daniel Philippides. See *Γεωγραφικὸν τῆς Ρουμανίας*, pp. 7-8 and idem, *Ιστορία τῆς Ρουμανίας*, Leipzig 1816, pp. 464-465.

31. Naum's Greek text accompanied by Romanian translation appears in Constantin Erbiceanu, ed., *Cronicarii Greci*, Bucharest 1888, pp. 245-248.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 248.