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Eugenia Drakopoulou, Εικόνες του Αγώνα στην ιστορική ζωγραφική της Ευρώπης [Images of the Greek War of Independence in European history painting]

Aphrodite Kouria

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I think this is where the exaggeration lies. Mavrocordatos was completely weakened at the beginning of 1826, having also received the consequences of the inability of the Kountouriotis government, of which he was a part, to deal with Ibrahim's successive victories. Accepting British mediation to avoid defeat by retreating from the demand for independence to a form of autonomy was a one-way street for almost the entire revolutionary leadership; this decision no longer depended on Mavrocordatos. And if he did indeed give his consent – information that certainly needs cross-checking – to the creation of an autonomous state with only the Peloponnese and the islands, it reinforces the then widespread fears of many fighters about such a development that would leave Central Greece outside its borders. On the other hand, the process of Anglo–Russian rapprochement had already begun by the end of 1825, as the book points out, so yes, George Canning achieved his main objective, that Russia should not intervene unilaterally in the Greek question, but, as it is also pointed out, without Russian complicity nothing could succeed. Therefore, it was not Stratford Canning's meeting with Mavrocordatos that determined subsequent developments, it was an episode, important of course, in a course now determined by new Anglo–Russian contacts to put some end to prolonged unrest in the Eastern Mediterranean. If Greek endurance caused the intervention of the powers at Navarino, perhaps more emphasis should have been placed, rather than on Greek diplomacy, on the months gained until that intervention took place, with the successes of Karaiskakis in Central Greece and the irregular warfare of Kolokotronis in the Peloponnese – precious months that did not allow Ibrahim and Kütahi to secure full submission in time, as the sultan wanted, and thus cancel the European intervention.

This exaggeration of Britain's decisive role, combined with the projection of the domestic and foreign policy of Mavrocordatos and his collaborators, as well as his Hydra supporters, as the only salvation for the revolution, would perhaps be mitigated if the end of the revolution was not specified at the end of 1827, after Navarino. The last chapter, chapter 18, does indeed deal with the period 1828–1833, but as a sort of epilogue to what preceded it. Had this too been bravely included in the negotiation, I am sure that more would have been gained and some appreciations of what preceded it might have been more refined.

George Canning was not alive when the news of Navarino reached London. Possibly, had he lived, he might have joined with the British fleet in a forceful intervention of forces to compel the Porte to accept the Treaty of London of July 1827, given that Mahmud II, even after the destruction of the Turco–Egyptian fleet, insisted on the subjugation of the rebels, and might have prevented the Russo–Turkish War of 1828–1829. But his successor in power, Wellington, would not only regard the Navarino as an unfortunate event and use pretexts to dismiss Codrington, but he considered that the July 1827 treaty was no longer advantageous to Britain's interests and

(London: Allen Lane, 2021). The extract appears on the same pages in the Greek edition.

was seeking a way of disengaging from it. It was common knowledge that the majority of the British cabinet and the king himself made no secret of their Turcophile feelings and their dislike of the Greek revolutionaries. And here it should be emphasised that we must not confuse the liberal and constitutional sentiments of the British with the brutal and colonial policy of their government when its interests were at stake abroad or when it was asserting its own aims.

Since a release from the July 1827 treaty was not possible, Wellington insisted that the territories of the negotiated Greek autonomous state be limited to the Peloponnese and the surrounding islands and would disapprove of the British ambassador in Constantinople, Stratford Canning, for accepting, together with his colleagues from Russia and France at the Poros Conference (late 1828–early 1829), a border that incorporated a large part of Central Greece into the Greek state.

In the meantime, France's active involvement in the Greek question would add a new dimension to the Anglo–Russian antagonism. The French Expeditionary Force under Maison would drive Ibrahim from the Peloponnese and through its presence would reinforce France's attempt to regain some of its formerly strong naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, which it had lost after the British victories against Napoleon. Finally, only after the victorious advance of the Russian army to the outskirts of Constantinople during the Russo–Turkish War of 1828–1829, the sultan was forced to accept, under the Treaty of Adrianople, the autonomy of Greece as provided for in the July 1827 treaty. Then the British government made a decisive manoeuvre to counterbalance the consequences of the Russian victory in the Greek question. Wellington proposed an independent rather than autonomous Greek state, but with limited borders on the Ionian side, and the election of a hereditary monarch, which meant setting aside President Ioannis Capodistrias. The other powers agreed and in early 1830 the Greeks gained an independent state. Capodistrias resisted the restriction of borders and the imposition of a monarchy without the Greeks. Mavrocordatos and those around him acquiesced unquestioningly, believing that the removal of the president would avoid the danger of perpetuating the centralised model of government he had imposed and the consequent Russian influence. The resignation of Prince Leopold, whom the three powers had elected hereditary monarch of the new state, postponed, with disastrous consequences, the orderly resolution of the Greek question. His resignation was due, among other things, to the insistence of the Wellington government not to yield on the question of the territorial limitation of the new state. The objection to the question of the northern Greek frontier would be lifted by the new British government in the treaty of 1832.

With this in mind, it would be difficult to attribute Capodistrias' corresponding aversion to the British government, which considered him an agent of the Russians, only to the fact that "he was no great fan of the British governing class either, disliking their snobbery and philistinism" (422, English ed.), and not to emphasise that it was difficult for him to forget that, in violation of the relevant treaty, the commissioner of the Ionian Islands was treating the Ionian Islands as colonies, and that he had feared that something of the same kind would happen to embattled Greece if

Britain accepted the petition for protection which in a moment of desperation many Greeks had asked for and Mavrocordatos had not discouraged. Before Stratford Canning met with Mavrocordatos in the Greek territories, he had talked with Capodistrias in Geneva and he had unequivocally heard from him that he did not want Greece to become a colony of Britain like the Ionian Islands. And, as mentioned, the Wellington government was adamantly refusing to extend the borders of the Greek state entity under formation. A small Greece, a French official had said, would inevitably become the eighth island of the Ionian Sea.

The last chapter of the book, the 18th, is entitled "Love, Concord, Brotherhood, 1828–33". If it came, as it seems, from what Georgios Mavromichalis, one of Capodistrias' assassins, is alleged to have said as he faced the firing squad, I think it is unfortunate, to say the least. Mavromichalis, who, it should be noted, sought during his trial to attribute the murder to his now dead uncle Konstantinos, another assassin, does not express the real attempt in this period to "love, concord, brotherhood". The reasons why the Mavromichalis family opposed Capodistrias are well known and indeed he, despite justifiable indignation, demonstrated, with a lack of political tactics, excessive severity towards them. But I think it is limiting to attribute the murder to a simple revengeful feud, common among the Maniots, and not to place it in a general climate of fierce opposition and complete disparagement of Capodistrias where "tyrannicide" could have taken and did take on a different meaning. And Mavrocordatos and his close associates had played an important role in the creation of this climate.

I have dwelt a little more on issues that I like to think I know somewhat better. Let us return to the great book before us. I admired, among many other things, how the author highlighted in his own way the philhellene movement and its qualitative changes over time. How the Greek Revolution, as a reference point and hope of liberals all over Europe who were fighting or dreaming of political freedoms in their countries under authoritarian rule, gradually, after the atrocities of the Turks, Messolonghi, the resistance of the revolutionaries and the attempted "barbarisation" of the Peloponnese by Ibrahim, acquired a new label that embraced individuals and groups from all over the social and political spectrum. Philhellenism inspired not only liberals, but Christians and philanthropists, becoming in the diversity of its reception a powerful weapon in the then-forming public opinion that governments in Europe and North America could not ignore.

Mark Mazower is widely known. His books, some on Greek history, have been hits and have been read, in their English versions and in translation, by many in various countries. It is therefore fortunate that his new study of the Greek Revolution will be more widely known. A historical study rich in every respect that further demonstrates that the triumph of Greek nationalism over a firmly entrenched dynastic power, with the sympathy and solidarity it engendered, had a significant impact on the societies of the time and forced powerful European states into new forms of collective action.

Christos Loukos
Professor emeritus, University of Crete

Eugenia Drakopoulou,
ΕΙΚΟΝΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΩΝΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΖΩΓΡΑΦΙΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΕΥΡΩΠΗΣ
[Images of the Greek War of Independence in
European history painting],
Athens: Institute of Historical Research / NHRF, 2021,
140 pages, 29 illustrations.

In her book, the late art historian and Institute of Historical Research/NHRF researcher Eugenia Drakopoulou examines the multifaceted manifestations of philhellenic artistic production, its reception in the societies of nineteenth-century Europe and its lasting impact to this day.

Philhellenism was a multifaceted and multidimensional movement. Its cultural manifestations cover a broad field and reveal a network of relationships on both a real and a symbolic level. People, ideas, artworks and objects constitute a multifaced landscape with its dynamics, the interweaving of various arts, and multiple mediations as well as references to a timeless Greece. The author approaches this landscape from an expanded and macroscopic perspective, frequently coming at it sideways, turning her lens to secondary or under-illuminated aspects of the phenomenon of philhellenism that contribute to its adequate understanding. Within this context, the connections, extrapolations and extended time spans bring to the fore the importance, the symbolic weight, as well as the resilience of the philhellenic representations, and the powerful echo of philhellenism within historical-political and social contexts that extend beyond the spatial and temporal coordinates that gave birth to these works.

Drakopoulou signals her perspective, as well as how she intends to tackle the subject of her research, in the very first lines of the introduction:

> In April 1979, the president of the Hellenic Republic, Konstantinos Tsatsos, travelled to Paris at the invitation of French President Giscard d'Estaing. At the official dinner held at the Elysée Palace, Delacroix's painting *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi* … held pride of place in the hall. The French president had requested Delacroix's work be transferred from Bordeaux City Hall to the presidential palace especially for this occasion in honour of the Greeks. The French painter's allegorical composition with Greece standing among the ruins had become a symbol. A symbol of nineteenth-century philhellenism as well as of the umbilical cord linking Greece and Europe; in addition, at that particular point in time, it symbolised France's support for the Greek government. (11)

Moreover, as the author subsequently points out, from the moment of its appearance in the historic May 1826 exhibition *Ouvrages de peinture exposés au profit des Grecs*, held at the Galerie Lebrun in Paris, the painting bore a powerful political message.

Drakopoulou interprets the philhellenic works within the context of nineteenth-century history painting with its characteristic features: its visual codes, the documentary dimension, the functionality of the narrative element and anecdotal detail, its rhetoric, its expressive/emotional charge, and symbolic language. At the same time, she also takes into account the crucial role played by the artist's personal inspiration and imagination in the visual rendering of the actual event, especially in the case of the Romantics. Here, the preeminent master is Delacroix, to whom the author understandably pays particular attention. Central to her study is the intersection of the West of classicism, rationalism and antiquarianism and the East of romanticism, the East of exotic otherness but also of violence and blood. This intersection was given shape and symbolised in various classicist and romantic versions of philhellenic works.

In her kaleidoscopic narrative, which also shapes the book's structure, Drakopoulou utilises the informational and, generally, factual material in many ways. Thus, she illuminates from various vantage points the complex phenomenon of philhellenism in Europe with its distinct particularities and qualitative characteristics in the countries in which it developed. Understandably, her attention turns mainly to France, Italy and Germany. As she notes in the introduction, she integrates "the works in the historical context of each country, highlighting the positions and intentions of not only the creators but also of the commissioning clients". She consistently takes into account the political-social parameters that functioned as determining factors for the cultural manifestations of philhellenism: the clash of Liberals and reactionary Ultras in France, the Austrian occupation of Italy, and, in the case of Germany, the catalytic presence of King Ludwig I of Bavaria and the subsequent ascension to the Greek throne of his son Othon.

As regards France, she rightly places emphasis on the artistic institutions and their operation while highlighting the development of the art market there, which resulted in the philhellenic works circulating more freely. In the case of Italy, she focuses on the political role of Italian philhellenic works, a role closely aligned to the historical conditions in the Italian peninsula, as will subsequently become apparent. With regard to German philhellenism, Drakopoulou emphasises, on the one hand, the great importance of its artistic production in documenting the personages and events of the Greek War of Independence[1] and, on the other, philhellenism's institutional dimension, the latter lending high prestige to its monumental cultural manifestations in the post-revolutionary years, both in Othonian Greece and in Bavaria (Munich). These artistic programmes, directly associated with architecture, carried multiple messages. In the spirit of romantic paint-

[1] Tellingly, the author gave the relevant chapter the title "German Documentation".

ings of historical scenes with classicist elements, they were the bridge between ancient and modern Greek history, reflecting the legacy of classical education in German culture and, simultaneously, signalling the intention of the leading actor, the antiquarian and philhellene Ludwig I, to consolidate the newly established bond between the two countries. "In Bavaria, philhellenism was indisputably an affair of state," Drakopoulou writes (64).

The author methodically explores the conditions under which the works (paintings and prints) were created, tracing, apart from the objective data, the artists' fields of reference and sources of inspiration: visual works, historical testimonies, travel texts, literary works as well as objects (costumes, weapons). She observes the reception and the trajectories of major as well as minor works in both the public and private sphere well into the late nineteenth century. Regarding the purchase of Delacroix's painting *Scenes from the Massacres at Chios*, she refers to the correspondence in 1824 between the Comte de Forbin, director-general of the Royal Museums of France, and the Vicomte de la Rochefoucauld, director-general of Fine Arts (20). Forbin, a painter, archaeologist and champion of young painters, had rushed to purchase on behalf of the state Delacroix's work and certain other history paintings at the opening of the Salon de Paris rather than at its close, as was the custom. Indeed, he did so, without waiting for Louis XVIII's approval, in order to prevent private individuals from purchasing those "particularly important paintings", as he wrote in response to Rochefoucauld's protest (20). It should be noted here that the annual Salon largely shaped how the works were received by experts as well as by the public; in the 1820s, artists began to find this particularly important. According to renowned Delacroix expert Sébastien Allard:

> Public recognition then began to interest them [the Romantics] more than that of their peers. It was a modern stance, which the development of the press contributed to. This attitude particularly defined the two Salons of 1824 and 1827, which were labelled "romantic".[2]

The case of Ary Scheffer's painting *Les femmes souliotes* is also indicative of the importance of the Salon. It was purchased by the state after being exhibited and receiving praise during the 1827 Salon.

Prints, which constitute a particularly important aspect of philhellenic artistic production and were occasionally the models for the decoration of utilitarian or decorative objects, occupied the author in various ways, especially in the chapter "Circles of Iconography". She makes a telling reference to the fluctuations in the French production of prints with subjects from the war of independence, fluctuations indicative of the extent of the impact of various events during the Greek struggle. The prints, along with their narrative captions, utilised the information and communication potential of the multi-reproduced printed image, which was also accessible to the general public. More generally, the synergy of text

[2] Sébastien Allard, "Delacroix et Delaroche, deux visions du romantisme," *Grande Galerie: Le Journal du Louvre*, no. 33 (September–November 2015): 102.

and image in its various versions (narrative titles of paintings and captions of prints, descriptions of exhibited works in the various Salon catalogues) is a significant parameter of the production of philhellenic works as regards the signification of the representations and the persons depicted as well as their reception by the public. Drakopoulou also explores this parameter, shedding light on yet another of its aspects, that is, the crucial contribution of written sources as sources of inspiration for the creators of the works. Here, the French diplomat and traveller François Pouqueville, with his book *Histoire de la régénération de la Grèce* (Paris 1824) and its Italian translation (banned in Italy) appears as an important reference point. Lord Byron, of course, was another, particularly glamorous, reference point. His literary heroes (especially "The Giaour"), with the broader cultural/religious connotations of the conflict between the Christian West and Islam, offered themselves as a link to a romantic literary philhellenism, which was variously expressed in French paintings and prints. It should be noted that pictorial as well as verbal references to religion (Orthodox Christianity) are common in philhellenic works; not only to religion as a refuge but also to a religion invested with a greater weight of meaning in the light of the dichotomy Christian/Muslim, civilised/barbarian, with their identity connotations. Relevant examples are presented in the book.

Moreover, the author's thorough research led her to obscure works and sometimes to new readings. One characteristic example is the well-known painting by the Belgian painter Henri Decaisne titled *Failure of a Military Operation* (1826, Benaki Museum), which the author convincingly links to the failed siege of Patras by the Greeks in the first year of the war of independence while an earlier reading of the painting had associated it with Parga in Epirus.[3] Drakopoulou even adds a very interesting angle to the well-worn issue of Markos Botsaris' identification with Leonidas, shedding light on the connection to Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* with Victor Hugo as the "mediator" (see the chapter on "New Ancient Heroes").

Drakopoulou also focuses consistently on individuals (artists, high-ranking patrons and other clients, state officials, writers, playwrights, composers, critics and journalists); this lends a singular dynamic along with nuances to the research, revealing processes, mediations and relationships on an ideological as well as on a practical level with their functionality. In the author's narrative, which differs from a linear, "static" and more conventional treatment of artistic production, what emerges in relief is the philhellenic fever that swept the European societies of the period with its idiosyncratic dimension, with a mobility of ideas, with the convergence of various arts, with a primary and a refracted gaze on a timeless Greece. The author provides various reasons for a multi-layered reading of the representations and, as a result, her text gains in conceptual density and depth.

[3] See Claire Constans and Fani Maria Tsigakou, eds., *Η Ελληνική Επανάσταση: Ο Ντελακρουά και οι Γάλλοι ζωγράφοι 1815–1848* (Athens: National Gallery–Alexandros Soutzos Museum, 1997), cat. no. 14.

In relation to a currently lost painting of monumental proportions on the subject of the refugees of Parga, whose creation, we learn, probably began in the same year they were uprooted, Drakopoulou brings up a point that is crucial for understanding this work as well as the personality and identity of its creators, the Foggo brothers:

> The immediate reaction of these two painters to the events in Parga was not accidental. They came from a liberal family of supporters of the French Revolution that had immigrated to France and returned to London after the Battle of Waterloo … Their political sensibilities in general, as well as their opposition to England's policy towards Christians in the case of Parga, explains the choice of the subject matter of the painting, which was exhibited in London in 1821. Moreover, this might explain the negative reviews the work received in the English press. (89–90)

Despite the reactions, as the author subsequently informs us, the painting was exhibited again in 1862 at the London International Exhibition.

Consistent with her expanded, macroscopic perspective, Drakopoulou discusses the re-exhibition, even many years later, of specific works, with, sometimes, significant title changes, indicative of how they were perceived relative to specific historical-political conditions on a case-by-case basis, as will become apparent below. Thus, she highlights the timeless visibility of many important philhellenic works, and indeed in environments with institutional weight (museums, art galleries, international exhibitions).

In her introduction, Drakopoulou refers to the commissioning clients, who are another issue that emerges in the book as a key component of philhellenism, with various ramifications beyond the Greek War of Independence. Of particular interest here are Prince Metternich and a relative, the Austrian diplomat Rudolf Franz von Lützow, who both commissioned philhellenic works.[4] These commissions were the result of a shift in the hostile feelings of the Austrians, which produced a friendlier stance towards Othonian Greece. However, on this issue, the liberal aristocrats, enlightened collectors, and scholars in Italy held a pivotal position, with their heightened sensitivity and receptivity to the messages of the philhellenic representations. Drakopoulou devotes particular attention to the conceptual, ideological, and symbolic scope of important philhellenic paintings that transcend the locality and events of the Greek War of Independence. In the example of Italy, the author aptly emphasises the political function of history painting, and of the philhellenic works in particular, in the Austrian-occupied Italian peninsula during that period, when the dreams and values of independence, freedom and self-determination had a special gravity and ideological charge. In fact, she underlines the importance of exhibiting works with a Greek subject matter in major Italian cities, where, as she

[4] In 1840, Metternich commissioned one of the paintings on the death of Markos Botsaris from the important Italian painter Ludovico Lipparini (69).

writes, "they functioned by example as tools for the promotion of the patriotic ideal and the formation of a national identity". She specifically refers to an Italian work, which

> contains a double Greek-Italian national message. This is the great work of Cesare Mussini, which is described in an 1854 catalogue as *Greek Subject Matter from 1824 with Two Central Figures; George Rodios Murders his Wife Dimitra to Save Her from the Turks,* 1849 … However, in subsequent exhibitions it was presented under the title *Saremo liberi!*, apparently due to the Greek inscription in the painting "*Θέλει ήμεθα ελεύθεροι*" [We will be free]. (28–29)

Further on, we read that the work

> was exhibited in 1849 in Turin, the seat of the king of Sardinia, and since then has belonged to the city's Palazzo Reale, where it is still located. Given the work's subject matter, date and the place where it was presented and is preserved, it appears to be directly related to the First Italian War of Independence of 1848–1849. Charles Albert of Sardinia, who was based in Turin, moved against the Austrians, while there was unrest in many Italian cities … The message of the painting "Freedom or Death" from the Greek War of Independence is transferred to the Italian uprising of 1848 against the Austrians. (29)

In her study, we read that even nowadays philhellenic works are placed in historical-political as well as cultural contexts that resignify them on their own terms, increasing their conceptual, ideological and symbolic high point. Drakopoulou writes:

> In 2017–2018, an exhibition titled *Opera: Passion*, *Power and Politics* was held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Seven operas were associated with the seven European capitals in which they had premiered, while simultaneously also representing an important moment in the art and history of these cities. The political and artistic atmosphere of nineteenth-century Milan was fleshed out based on Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Nabucco. The Refugees of Parga*, a painting by the Venetian Francesco Hayez … was one of the representative paintings in the section devoted to Milan. The opera was staged at the Teatro alla Scala in 1842. Hayez's work was created in 1831. The historical event it depicts, the departure into exile of the inhabitants of Parga, caused by Ali Pasha's purchase of the town from the British, occurred in 1819. The selection of this particular painting is explained in the exhibition catalogue's commentary on the work: "This painting was inspired by the handover of the city of Parga by the British to the Ottoman Sultan [sic] Ali Pasha at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It addresses the themes of exiled patriots and loss of the homeland, subjects that resonate with the story of *Nabucco* – and, arguably, with the feelings of many Milanese living under Austrian rule after the Vienna treaties of 1815." (14–15)

The fruit of thorough research on many levels and of an in-depth knowledge of European history painting, this work by Eugenia Drakopoulou is yet more evidence of the penetrating gaze she turned to the work of art, its functions and uses within the historical-political and social context of its period and beyond. Thanks to the ways in which she approached and studied the philhellenic artistic production, Drakopoulou broadened the interpretive horizon and provided an example of how to manage visual material in unconventional ways, generating multifaceted readings of the works and their creators. These are readings that revitalise an entrenched work-centred perspective of the historiography of art, as they graft new dimensions and contents upon it in conjunction with the complexity and polysemy of historical phenomena.

Aphrodite Kouria
Art Historian