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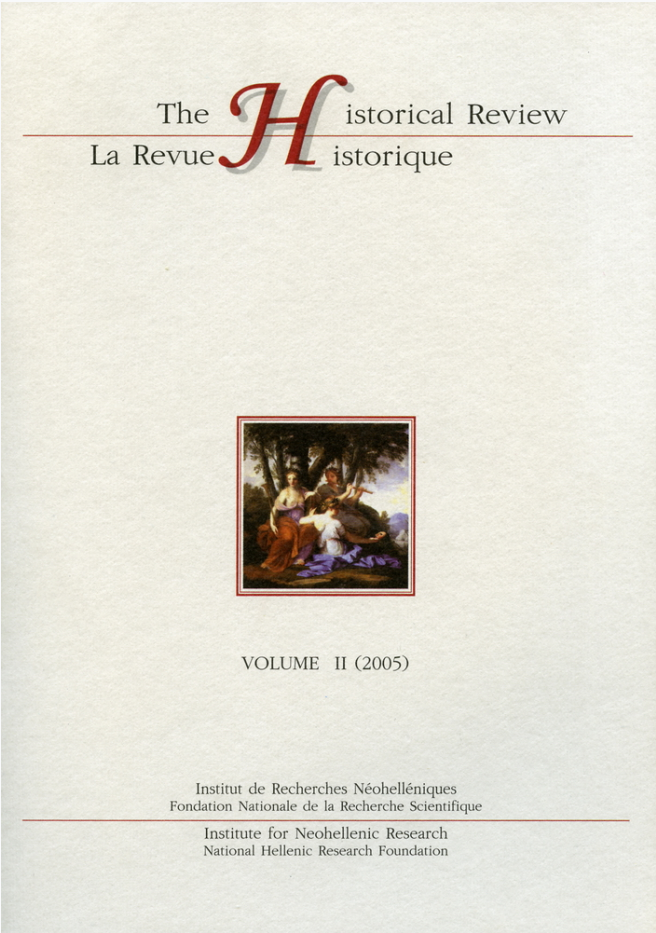

Greek Auditors in the Courses of Jean Lamarck

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GREEK AUDITORS IN THE COURSES OF JEAN LAMARCK

Costas B. Krimbas

ABSTRACT: In the records of Lamarck's audiences, six students of Greek origin could be identified as attending his lectures between 1804-1827. In the catalogue published by Pietro Corsi four of them are listed as Greeks and two as Romanians. All have been properly identified. The Greeks were I. Kokkonis, S. Kanellos, D. Nitsos and D. Taillapierras, while the Romanians were two Greek physicians residing in Romania, I. K. Bouboukis and Th. Georgiades. It is worth noting that after their return to their home country none of them wrote on or advertised Lamarck's doctrines on species transformation.

Biological evolution is not mentioned in the Greek literature of the early nineteenth century. It seems that the 1809 *Philosophie zoologique* of Jean Lamarck had remained unnoticed, as well as the previously taught "Leçon inaugurale" of 1800, where his evolutionary ideas were exposed for the first time. This trend continued afterwards: there was no real interest in Charles Darwin's writings before the publication of *The Descent of Man*, in 1871. It is true, however, that a curious and obscure book, edited anonymously (or rather pseudonymously, since Pelioritis and Ferteklis are pseudonyms of the two authors who signed the Prologos, translated the text and added to it some remarks), had appeared in Greek in 1856, entitled "Kosmosophia, or universal solidarity" [*Κοσμοσοφία ή το Καθολικόν Αλληλέγγυον*], which disguises the French title of the original, *Cosmosophie ou le socialisme universel.*[1] The original book, whose author was an obscure journalist, Henri Lecouturier, is in fact an antireligious and antigovernment pamphlet, which contains also some vague notions of a naive evolutionism, probably *à la* Lamarck. Thus, it was a real surprise to find out that at least six students of Greek origin had followed the courses of Lamarck at the Muséum, in Paris, one in 1804, three in 1817, one in 1822-23 and one in 1827. They are recorded in the "Liste des auditeurs de Lamarck au Muséum national d'histoire naturelle (1795-1823)", which appears as an appendix in the book of Pietro Corsi, *Lamarck, Genèse et enjeux du transformisme, 1770-1830.*

[1] See C. Krimbas, "Η Κοσμοσοφία ή ο Παγκόσμιος Σοσιαλισμός" [Kosmosophia or the universal socialism], *Θραύσματα Κατόπτρου (Δοκίμια)* [Mirror fragments (Essays)], Athens 1993, pp. 109-122.

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Four of them are listed under the section "Grecs", while two others are the only two "Roumains" to appear in this list.[2] Their names are given somewhat transformed, thus it took some research to identify them.

The first auditor mentioned in chronological order, in 1804, is "Taille, Pierre, a native of the island of Zante". His real name was Dionysios Taillapierras (or Taliapieras, or Taliapetros, or Taliapetras) (1777, Zante-1842, Zante).[3] He was a student of Martelaos, from whom he also learned Italian in the Monastery of Graces [Chariton]. He was also known for his democratic opinions. Thus, after the establishment of the Russian-Turkish administration, he was obliged to leave his native island and to stay in Paris, where he studied medicine and painting. Later on, in 1814, in his capacity of medical doctor, he served at the court of Ali Pasha in Ioannina, being a personal physician of Veli Pasha. In Ioannina he became a friend of the poet Ioannis Vilaras, who, in one of his satirical poems, mentions the skill of Taillepierre to cook "tiganites", a kind of sweet desert. After Ali Pasha's fall, in 1820, he left Ioannina and returned to Zante. He became a fervent supporter of the Greek Revolution and for this reason he was imprisoned for six months. During his stay in Zante (1820-27) he belonged to the inner circle of the poet Dionysios Solomos, who in one of his satirical poems, "Iatrosymvoulio", mentions him repeatedly. Subsequently he arrived in Nafplion to serve under the Capodistrian administration, but stayed for a short time, leaving after the assassination of the Governor and returning to Zante. He wrote poems, but no mention of Lamarck is encountered in his writings.

The second auditor mentioned, in 1817, is Stephanos Kanellos, from Constantinople. Stephanos Kanellos was born in Constantinople in 1792 and died in Crete in 1823.[4] He was a Phanariot, who studied natural sciences and mathematics in Paris or, according to another source, medicine. We find some texts by him, from 1816 to 1821, in collaboration with Athanasios Vogoridis,

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[2] Pietro Corsi, *Lamarck, Genèse et enjeux du transformisme, 1770-1830,* Ouvrage traduit de l'Italien par Diane Ménard avec le concours du Centre National du Livre, Paris 2001, pp. 362 (Greeks) and 364 (Romanians).

[3] For biographical information on Taillapierras, see G. Andriomenos' notices in the edition of Vilaras' poems: *Ιωάννη Βηλαρά, Ποιήματα* [Ioanni Vilara, Poems] Νεοελληνική Βιβλιοθήκη, Ίδρυμα Κώστα και Ελένης Ουράνη, Athens 1955, p. 481; I. Polylas (ed.), *Διονυσίου Σολωμού. Άπαντα τα ευρισκόμενα* [Dionysios Solomos: complete surviving works], Athens 1924, p. 241; P. Chiotis, *Ιστορικά Απομνημονεύματα Επτανήσου* [Historical memoirs of the Seven Islands], Athens 1981, Volume VII, p. 218.

[4] For biographical information regarding Kanellos see A. Koumarianou in *Encyclopedia Papyros-Larousse-Britannica* (in Greek), Vol. 31, p. 384 cd, and in Encyclopedia *Ήλιος*;

published in *Ἑρμῆς ὁ Λόγιος*, regarding natural sciences. In 1817 he also published a book review of Kouma's *Σύνταγμα Φιλοσοφίας* [Constitution of philosophy]. After leaving Paris he went to Bucharest and taught natural sciences at the Princely Academy, under the direction of K. Vardachos. It seems that he was an enthusiastic young man, a poet composing revolutionary and patriotic songs, some of which were very popular. It is not surprising that he took part in the uprising and military expedition of Alexandros Ypsilanti. After its failure he travelled to the Peloponnese participating there in the Greek Revolution. We find him in 1823 in Crete accompanying Emmanuel Tombazis, appointed governor of this island by the Greek revolutionary regime. In his capacity of aide to the governor he played an important role in reconciling the local Cretan captains (at the convention of Arcoudena, in 22 June 1823). In July of the same year he died from an infectious disease, at the early age of 31 years. Neither in his texts or poems is mention made of Lamarck.

The third auditor mentioned, also in the 1817 course of Lamarck, is Nizzi, Demetrius. He is Dimitrios Nitsos or Nitzos, a physician from Ioannina.[5] We do not know his birth and death dates. From texts he published in *Ἑρμῆς ὁ Λόγιος* we know that he was in Paris from 1817 until 1819, perhaps even until 1820. He was, indeed, a Paris correspondent for this journal, edited in Vienna. Most of Nitsos' texts deal with chemistry, physics, pharmacology and medicine. One of them is presented in the form of a letter addressed to his brothers, who were pharmacists in Ioannina. There is no mention of Lamarck in these texts.

The fourth Greek auditor mentioned is Cocconi, Jean from Smyrna who attended the courses in 1822 and 1823. He is Ioannis Kokkonis, born in Castri Kynourias in 1796 (not in Smyrna in 1794, as indicated in Corsi's book) and died in Athens in 1864.[6] He was an educator, who first studied in the Evangeliki

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C. Th. Dimaras, *Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας* [History of modern Greek literature], 9th edition, Athens 2000, pp. 236, 319-320; also C. Th. Dimaras, *Ιστορικά Φροντίσματα* [Historical reflections], Athens 1992, Vol. Α΄, p. 150; Ph. Michalopoulos, *Αγγλοελληνική Επιθεώρηση* [Anglo-Hellenic Review], 1948, p. 98 and following; N. Vlachos, "Στέφανος Κανέλλος (1792-1823)", *Παρνασσός* 17 (1975), pp. 257-276; P. S. Pistas, *Ελληνικά* 22 (1969), p. 183 and following; A. Politis, "Ν. Σ. Πίκκολος και Φοριέλ – ένα αυτόγραφο του Στέφανου Κανέλλου" [N. S. Pikkolos and Fauriel: an autograph of Stephanos Kanellos], *Ο Ερανιστής* 11 (1974), pp. 264-295.

[5] For information on Nitsos see *Ἑρμῆς ὁ Λόγιος*, Vol. VII (1817), pp. 325-333, 381-389, 608-638; Vol. VIII (1818), pp. 469-488; Vol. IX (1819), pp. 273-276, 297-304, 921-930; possibly Vol. X (1820), pp. 249-261 but this signed only by N!

[6] For Kokkonis biographical information see M. Amarantou, *Ιω. Π. Κοκκώνης, ο πρώτος μας παιδαγωγός* [I. P. Kokkonis, our first educator], Athens 1893; Ch. Tzikas, *Ι. Π. Κοκ-*

Sholi at Smyrna, then in Paris and finally in Montpellier, where he was in 1826. Before the Greek Revolution he belonged to Korais' circle. Later, when in Greece, he worked during the Capodistrian administration as Inspector of the Elementary Schools in the Peloponnese and he took the leading initiative in establishing schools. In his capacity as chief educator, he applied a variant of the method according to which children teach other children (αλληλοδιδακτική μέθοδος), a variant inspired from the French model. In this he was engaged in a conflict with Neophytos Nikitopoulos, who supported a more liberal method of teaching. Being victorious in this conflict, he imposed the exclusive distribution of his own book to the teachers, a fact that allowed him a considerable financial profit. During the subsequent Regency period he continued his activities participating in the 1833 committee for the amelioration of elementary education. But after a disagreement with the other members of the committee he temporarily withdrew from the field of education. He came back, however, in 1835 as Director of the Teachers School, replacing the German physician and missionary Christian Ludwig Corck. He was also entitled Inspector General of all Elementary Education. He did not participate in the polemic against Corck, as did others, especially the theologian and university professor Misael Apostolides. In 1835 he founded the Philekpaideutiki Etaireia together with G. Gennadius and M. Apostolides, but later, disagreeing with the other founding members, he focused his attention on the education of girls, which was until then in the hands of the missionaries. He also started the journal *Ο Παιδαγωγός* [The educator] and he is considered as the founder of education science and policy in Greece, although by now his proposals are considered outmoded. This important person, with a considerable impact in the modern Greek state as an educator, did not leave any trace of Lamarck's teachings, which he attended during two successive years.

κώνης - Ο ρόλος του στη θεμελίωση και τα πρώτα βήματα της Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα [I. P. Kokkonis: his role in the founding and the first steps of elementary education in Greece], Athens 1999; also Kokkonis' biography in *Encyclopedia Papyros-Larousse-Britannica*, Vol. 34, p. 291 cd; see also A. Dimaras, in *Ιστορία Νέου Ελληνισμού, 1770-2000* [History of modern Hellenism, 1770-2000], Athens 2004, Vol. 4, p. 177 and following. Also two books whose author is Kokkonis: I. P. Kokkonis, *Ὁδηγὸς τῆς ἀλληλοδιδακτικῆς μεθόδου – Ἐγχειρίδιον Η΄* [Guide to the Lancasterian teaching method – Manual H], Egina 1830, 1st edition; Athens 1864, 4th edition); I. P. Kokkonis, *Περὶ Πολιτειῶν, περὶ τῶν εἰς σύνταξιν αὐτῶν, καὶ περὶ πολιτικῆς κυβερνήσεως σύνοψις* [Of states, of their constitution and of civil government], Vols 1 and 2, Paris 1828-1829, and a letter of Adamantios Korais to Kokkonis, Montpellier, the 9-10-1826 in *Αδαμαντίου Κοραή, Αλληλογραφία* [Adamantios Korais: correspondence], Vol. V, Athens 1983, pp. 347-349, letter no. 1216.

The two Romanians are in fact Greek physicians: the influence of Greeks in Valachia and Moldavia is well known and documented at this time period. A Greek intellectual elite was encountered during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the important urban agglomerations of this country. Many physicians were Greek. Thus the first one indicated as auditor of Lamarck, in 1817, is Georgiades, Théodose from Bucarest, Valachia.[7] Theodosios Georgiades was the brother of the Greek bishop of Arges. He was born in Bucharest and studied medicine in Halle. In 1815 he defended his doctoral thesis, *Dissertatio de peste Atheniensum a Thucidide*, in which he supported the claim that this disease was imported from Ethiopia. In 1829, back in Romania, he took an active part during the fighting against the cholera epidemic and for this contribution he was rewarded by the tsar with a diamond ring. In 1832 he became town physician and in 1839 physician at the Sacerdotal School of the bishopric. He died in 1844.

The second Romanian physician is Bouboucky, Constantin, auditor in 1827. He is actually I. K. Bouboukis,[8] who studied medicine in Paris and returned to Bucharest in 1827. He took an active part in fighting against the plague epidemic in 1828 and the cholera one in 1833. For this he was rewarded by the tsar with a diamond ring. We find him in 1834 as a member of a medical commission in Bucharest.

As for the Greeks from Greece, we come to the same conclusion regarding the Greeks from Romania: we are unable to detect a trace, an influence, a single mention by them of Lamarck and his teaching on organic evolution. For the two "Romanians" this could be understood, since they left no writings and all that is known about them derives from their service as physicians. Actually, except for Kokkonis, all other auditors were physicians.

This group of six personalities comprises two poets, Taillapierras and Kanellos. Poetry during the nineteenth century was the usual upper class way to express emotions and convey ideas, at least within the intellectual elite. We have information that two out of six were related to the circle of Korais, either directly (Kokkonis), or indirectly (Kanellos), through *Ἑρμῆς ὁ Λόγιος*, a journal that echoed the ideas of the great man. Actually two of them were correspondents to this journal, Kanellos and Nitsos. Three out of six have some

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[7] For Th. Georgiades biographical information see E. Saraphidou, *Έλληνες Ιατροί εν Ρουμανία* [Greek doctors in Romania], Πραγματείαι της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών, Vol. 12, no. 1, Athens 1940, p. 20.

[8] For I. K. Bouboukis biographical information see E. Saraphidou, *Έλληνες Ιατροί*, p. 23.

ties to Romania (Georgiades, Bouboukis and Kanellos). All these characteristics point to the fact that we are dealing with members of the intellectual elite, members of the circles that gravitated around Korais and belonged to the movement of the Greek Enlightenment and eventually to that of the Greek Revolution.

Some questions, however, remain unanswered: why these auditors and students of Lamarck did not spread his teachings, why they did not inject Lamarckian theories to other Greeks, why they have not left a written trace of Lamarck's influence on them. In examining the contents of all the eleven volumes of *Ἑρμῆς ὁ Λόγιος* we come across several letters and news which discuss natural and medical sciences, but we do not encounter any mention of Lamarck, except for one, which is included in an apparently paid advertisement: it concerns the edition of a Dictionary of Natural Sciences to which several French authors contributed (Brogniart, Cuvier, Geoffroy, de Jussieu, de Lacépède, Lamarck and Humbolt).[9] This is actually the only mention made of Lamarck (introduced as Professor of Invertebrate Zoology at the Muséum) in Greek literature until the time of the discussion of organic evolution in Greece, which was triggered by the books of Charles Darwin, especially *The Descent of Man*, that is after 1871. On the contrary, other French naturalists are mentioned in this journal and their work commented upon. All natural science and medicine letters and news, published in *Ἑρμῆς*

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[9] The announcement in *Ἑρμῆς ὁ Λόγιος* is in Vol. VII, p. 124 (a five-page announcement). Lamarck is presented as academician and Professor of Invertebrates at the Muséum. Other letters in this journal regarding natural sciences etc. (except for those signed by Nitsos, see note 5) are found in:

Vol. I, p. 172 (various - deals with the property of plants to feel and refers to Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles); p. 183 (on de Candolle and the flora of Montpellier);

Vol. II, p. 94 (that agriculture is the most important science for man);

Vol. VII, p. 143 (part of discourse of Lacépède, who encourages the study of natural sciences); pp. 516-520 (gall phrenology is considered as materialistic; studies on insects of Swammerdam, Réaumur, Geer, Bonnet and especially Latreille are considered);

Vol. VIII, p. 105-109 (cultural history is based on scientific discoveries, opinions of Cuvier); pp. 136-142, 181-193, 223-232, 313-319, 440-443 (anthropology, on genius); p. 178 (on Cuvier, the ancients knew the elephant, Aristotle knew it better than Buffon); pp. 217-222 (on chemistry);

Vol. IX, p. 167 (natural sciences, on giants, from Buffon); pp. 360-377 (natural sciences, zoology, translated from German); pp. 585-594, 721-730 (anatomical philosophy, on respiratory system from Geoffroy Saint Hilaire, also a text from Flourens); pp. 804-808 (research on medicinal plants by Sieber); pp. 837-848, 868-871 (on tulips by Wellerman);

Vol. XI, pp. 223-234 (announcement of a botanical book).

ὁ Λόγιος or other contemporary publications, aspire to inform and educate their public on new developments, to prepare them and render them mature in order to participate in the coming political change, which is their primary objective.

We are obliged to accept that two factors may have played an important role in this. The first is that theories that could be considered atheistic, materialistic (*υλόφρονες*, as they were characterised), were put aside. The Greek Enlightenment is, indeed, moderate in its aspirations. The second factor is the question of priorities. The first priority was the establishment of a free state and the Greek Enlightenment was primarily directed to political targets.[10] The formation and survival of a free state was considered dependent on the good will of European powers. At the time the Western European idea of the modern Greeks as descendents of their glorious ancient ancestors was of prime importance. These two concerns penetrated all intellectual preoccupations; no room was left for another subject. The problems posed by the Orthodox religion in relation to the ancient Greek ancestry, the relation between Byzantium and the modern Greek state, the reconciliation between Enlightenment and Eastern Christianity were capital ideological issues and did not leave space for further guests. Only when the Greek state was established, only when the state ideology was formed, could revolutionary scientific ideas be considered, discussed, fought against, rejected or accepted. But all this had to wait until the later nineteenth century.

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[10] P. M. Kitromilides, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός. Οι πολιτικές και κοινωνικές ιδέες* [Neohellenic Enlightenment: the political and social ideas], 2nd ed., Athens 1999.