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The Relevance of the History of Modern Greek Society and Culture for Comparative and International History

Mark Mazower (ed.), Networks of Power in Modern Greece: Essays in Honour of John Campbell

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Mark Mazower (ed.),
*NETWORKS OF POWER IN MODERN GREECE:
ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF JOHN CAMPBELL*,
London: Hurst Publishers, 2008,
278 pages (includes index).

In the closing essay of this Festschrift, Sir Michael Llewellyn Smith observes that, in addition to clear, elegant and jargon-free prose, John Campbell inherited from his mentor, leading British anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard, the “humane view that anthropology is allied to history as part of the story of human beings” (p. 266). This conviction is reflected in much of Campbell’s intellectual legacy, which comprises not only his research and publications but also a long row of supervised doctoral theses, mostly anthropological and historical perspectives of the Modern Greek world. Thirteen contributors to this volume graduated under Campbell’s supervision at St Anthony’s College, Oxford, while a fourteenth, John S. Koliopoulos, acknowledges a considerable intellectual debt to the author of *Honour, Family and Patronage* and co-author (with Philip Sherrard) of *Modern Greece*. History – political, social and economic – is represented by six essays, anthropology by another six, the thirteenth being a biographical sketch, followed by a poem dedicated to the honoured academic. Most historical matter refers to Greece and its shifting regional contexts in time – the Ottoman East, the Balkans of nascent, rival nationalisms, or Cold War Europe. The anthropologists’ interest focuses on communities at the micro-level and at various stages of their historical development – shortly before the advent of modernisation and cultural homogenisation some thirty years ago, but also a study in nineteenth-century icon-worshipping. Campbell’s insights into Sarakatsan demonology inspired a further essay in Brazilian context. The anthropological part is completed by a theoretical venture that, if anything, admits that “social anthropology is in important respects a historical discipline” (p. 147).

The volume commences with Gelina Harlaftis and Sophia Laiou, who present the preliminary findings of a research project on Greek maritime history in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Backed by a wide range of statistics, the authors stress a particular factor behind the meteoric growth of a merchant fleet owned by Orthodox Christian Ottoman subjects: Sultan Selim III’s conscientious effort to terminate a long period of unfettered foreign domination of commerce in the Levant and to claim some of the shipping



John Campbell (1923-2009)

involved for the Ottoman flag. The enlightened sultan's reforms, combined with the rivalries of European powers that culminated in Napoleon's Continental System and the corresponding British blockade, immensely benefited the maritime communities that provided the fledgling Greek nation with a formidable navy. The Greek War of Independence serves as a backdrop for the following two essays. Helen Angelomatis-Tsougarakis attempts to substantiate the role of women in that struggle from references which are not only limited but also riddled with myths and stereotypes. Her insights into the moral change ushered in by the strained circumstances of protracted warfare are pertinent to the double, historical and anthropological, nature of this volume. Equally sensitive to social anthropological concerns is Mark Mazower's incisive account of the historical contingencies that led to the establishment of Greece's most revered Orthodox pilgrimage site, the Megalochari, on, of all places, Tinos, an island with a large Catholic population. It all comes out as a "holy bargain" that provided a unifying cult for both the divided island and the nation as a whole. Before long, the immensely successful precedent

of Tinos was imitated on other islands, where icons began to be uncovered in equally miraculous circumstances. Charles Stewart relates various incidents, particularly on Naxos, which however were frowned upon and eventually checked by a state mindful of the effects of pilgrimage inflation.

The functions of Greek nationalism in Macedonia both as a political movement under Ottoman rule and a strategy of extracting scant resources through patron-client relations after incorporation into the Greek state are central to Basil C. Gounaris' essay, which encapsulates his long and fruitful dealing with this region. The story of registering the participants to the Greek struggle for Macedonia during the 1930s and its post-war use illustrates the author's points, which, among other things, acknowledge Campbell's seminal contribution to the study of clientelism in Greece. John S. Koliopoulos' overview of the "old debate" on the concept of Modern Greece and its relation to its putative ancestors begins decisively modernist ("[i]dentities are constructs"; "when did modern times invade the historical Greek lands?"; p. 130), only to end in a more traditionalist note, stressing linguistic continuity. The historians' contributions conclude with Thanos Veremis' approach to Greek populism in the last quarter of the twentieth century through the remarkable trajectory of PASOK leader Andreas Papandreou's career. Veremis concurs with other critics of the charismatic "Andreas" in that his fifteen-year domination of Greek politics undermined the evolution of civil society and undercut the trend towards modernisation and development. He aptly describes Andreas as modernisation's lost leader.

While acknowledging that Campbell was rather impervious to grand theoretical claims, Michael Herzfeld introduces the reader to the anthropological part of the volume through what he perceives as theoretical implications of his supervisor's work. In common with other authors, he points at Campbell's bold choice to depart from the "Africanist" tradition of his field and deal with a community in the margins of Europe. Then he discerns an "emergent theory of practice" in what he primarily describes as an unpretentious work of ethnography. As a pertinent example, Herzfeld presents Campbell's analysis of calculated risk-taking or restrained violence among men of Sarakatsan communities in the 1950s and the clues it provides for interpreting the kephitic tradition so central to the Greek national myth.

Roger Just's case study is centred on marital failures in Greek rural communities of the late 1970s. After deciphering the relevant local terminology, he proceeds

to reveal a number of factors that handicap a considerable segment of the population, male and female, and cast it to marginal or subordinate social status. Renée Hirschon's essay amplifies widespread attitudes such as the giving and accepting of presents, breaking promises and lack of punctuality in order to establish a common thread: an aversion to obligation and hence to gratefulness, the enduring legacy of a pre-modern society, organised around the family unit, antagonistic, poor and distrustful of state authority and skilled in the art of evasion as a survival strategy. The diffusion of Greek Orthodox liturgical symbolism in the social practice of rural communities is explored by Juliet du Boulay. She compares her own subject matter from a farming community in Evia with Campbell's observations of similar phenomena among his transhumant Sarakatsan hosts. Bread and sheep, respectively, are the staple produce by means of which liturgical symbolism of life, death and resurrection integrates with everyday life. Reflections of Campbell's Sarakatsan microcosm led João de Pina Cabral to take the reader in an escapade among the demonic universe of Brazil.

An apposite final chapter, Llewellyn Smith's biographical essay presents Campbell's life from student days and military service to his long and happy association with St Anthony's College. Haris Vlavianos' poem, "Autumnal Refrain", closes this volume, which should be a source of satisfaction to supervisor and students alike, as well as a token of the breadth and depth of creative inspiration the latter drew from the former.