

## SYNOPSIS

### ARISTEIA I - GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE 20th c.

The historiography of the nineteenth century is a field about which we already know enough. It is the century, in Europe at least, of national historiographies. In its second half, the narrative of a continuous national Greek history was created and articulated. But what about the twentieth century? Our knowledge is comparatively scarce and fragmentary. What was the profile and particular point of historiography during this century? It is apparent that ancient history, Byzantine and medieval history had an important part in its development. They are of particular interest as far as the currents, trends and scientific and scholarly communities that cultivated it are concerned. However, it was the historiography of Modern Greece and the establishment of Modern Greek Studies inside and outside the country that largely formed the physiognomy and character of the historiography of the Greek twentieth century. This new field acquired a key role both in the transformations of national identity and in the modernization process during the twentieth century, i.e. the axes around which this research programme was developed.

The history of historiography is not a distinct field of studies in Greece, but exists only as part of other fields. It has not emerged as a central discipline that concerns what it means to produce historical knowledge in a given historical period. This, of course, does not mean that there were no attempts to create a global vision. In 1918, on the occasion of the impending centenary of national independence, Spyridon Lambros attempted a first mapping of how historical studies in Greece were formed. A new attempt, with the stated objective to write a history of modern Greek historiography, was undertaken during the Second World War occupation by Michail Sakellariou. It was published in the journal *New Hestia*, which was indicative of the broader interest that existed in such an effort. Both texts coincide with moments of adjustment in national consciousness as they were related to the two world wars, which had multiple consequences and implications for Greek history. Since the onset of the transition to democracy – a period marked not only by the fall of the 1967–74 dictatorship but by the end of an era characterized by division and violent regime changes that had started since the wars – a series of historiographical contributions have been published, the first special volumes issued and initial conferences organized (see Bibliography). Building on existing relevant problematizations, the studies conducted within the framework of this programme, which, it should be noted, has been undertaken in a critical moment of Greek history as well, intended to reflect on the existing historiographical field, to attempt to highlight its distinct presence and to enhance its coherence.

So where are we after completing the programme? How can we talk about the historiography of the twentieth century in Greece? The project was built around the following aims: the compilation of a bibliography that will be used for orientation,

the tracing of the developments in historiography through the institutions of history production established over the course of the twentieth century, the preparation of a collective volume on historiographical key debates and controversies, the creation of an audiovisual archive of interviews with historians, the organizing of an international conference on the historiography of the last century, and the research and investigations undertaken by the members of the research team. The research undertaken for the compilation of the bibliography, the detailed text of the "Charter" and all the interviews and the papers produced allow us to attempt a brief depiction:

In our research we discerned three periods: the first concerns the period before the Second World War, on the one hand marked by the gradual strengthening of the presence of modern history at the university and, on the other, the establishment of archives and institutions that would facilitate the collecting of linguistic, folklore and historical material and the development of research infrastructure (dictionaries, archives, museums, etc.) with an emphasis on medieval/Byzantine and, especially, modern history. All of these factors were related to the function of history as contributing to the nation's record in the nineteenth century. The war decade around the First World War also had a long-term catalytic effect, mainly in refugee (Asia Minor, Pontian, Thracian) history and memory. At the same time, new directions were formed, such as the articulation of educational demoticism with new historical perceptions, the dynamic appearance of the Marxist vision of history and the first feminist approaches. These new approaches sparked a wave of controversies and conflicts, many of which reached parliament where they were often dealt with by administrative acts. Developments in historiography before the Second World War could be described as anything but a continuation of the nineteenth century. Despite the yarns that ensure continuity, preserved mainly by the University of Athens, we can observe wider ruptures that flowed through almost the entire century, confirming the original intention to search for the historiographical physiognomy of the twentieth century. An important conclusion, also, is that the development of historiography is not only reflected in changes that occurred in historiographical works, but in changes in practices through which historiography is produced or spread as well, in the context of older or newer institutions. Marxist historiography, for example, expanded the practice of reading history books or pamphlets and cultivated an interest in history among the lower social layers, which did not necessarily belong to the audience of national historiography. The coupling of feminism and history sparked a heated debate about whether the study and teaching of history could be an exclusively male affair. Lastly, the wish of refugees to be included in the national imaginary raised the issue of the organic intellectuals who acted as intermediaries between refugees and the national body.

The second period is the period par excellence for the formation of the field of modern Greek history as part of the modern Greek studies, a framework that connects history with literature. The connection was not new. The connection was already justified in the nineteenth century, due to the emergence of literary methods as the basic methodology of history (in the context of historicism) and the emphasis on classical antiquity as ancestral heritage. In the twentieth century, the

emphasis was placed on the wealth of Greek literature and on the promotion of all written sources concerning contemporary Greek society.

One of the most important characteristics of this period is the division of the historiographical community. This division followed the Civil War and Cold War confrontation and created different, asymmetric and asymptote historiographical communities, sharing only a few – but notable – common points. The spatial distribution of the communities created by the Cold War is also interesting. The ideological core of conservative historiography could be found mainly in Athens and Thessaloniki, while leftwing historiography was developed mainly in Eastern Europe – a region where Civil War refugees were dispersed. Finally a third community was formed in France by exiles and self-exiles, mainly from the Civil War and the post-Civil War period. France would become a space for the reception and formation of a new historiographical current during the dictatorship. The problem of “engaged historians” was important for our research. We did not conceptualize this particular theme as a confrontation between academic and “engaged” historiography, but we examined its multiple versions and shades. Since the nineteenth century, Greek historiography has a public character and Greek historians have had a say in public affairs. If we use Hayden White’s distinction *between* the historical and the *practical* past, the Greek past was more practical than historical. That is to say the past was used to draw conclusions and enhance choices in the present, rather than as an object of pure and unfettered curiosity. At the same time, the invocation of scientificity for practical purposes was evident. The *practical past* could become useful only as a *historical past*. This is also a reason why Greek historiography mainly concerned the history of the Greek nation.

Finally, the third period concerns the last quarter of the twentieth century and is connected with the transition to democracy after the dictatorship. This period witnessed an explosion of modern Greek historical studies. There was an impressive enlargement of the communities of historians, a development of historical education and research, and the founding of new institutions (university departments, research centres, archives, libraries, journals), important state and non-state funding for historical research (such as by banking institutions, the Historical Archive of Greek Youth (IAEN), etc.). Theoretical directions multiplied, with a more obvious focus on social and economic history. Modern Greek historiography, enhancing the study of the late Ottoman period, which had begun with a new approach in the previous period, was extended to then uncharted fields, such as the history of the establishment of the Greek state and the 1940s. The revision of the public image of the 1940s was one of the most important developments in this period and sparked history wars that spilled over into this century.

The community of historians often found itself at the centre of the public scene – a position that made the distance between a large part of public opinion and historians clearer. This distance did not stop expanding throughout the twentieth century. This is also a broader trend that becomes more obvious as historical studies became more ‘academic’ and, therefore, distanced from ‘popular’ national history. However, the position of historians in the public space was strengthened, giving them an audience much larger than in previous periods, although in the critical debates their opinions proved to be in the minority.

Historiographical paths in the twentieth century were shaped both by historiography's responses to major political, social and cultural changes and by the discussions within the historical communities regarding these changes. Indeed, the concept of the historical community itself has changed over time, mostly not in a uniform way. Rather, it consists of different environments with asymptote and asymmetrical relationships. Furthermore, discussions often took the form of debates that were not confined solely to historians. Greece experienced most of the changes that occurred in Europe, such as the two world wars, irredentist aspirations and refugee flows, the Cold War and the long 1960s. Wars have a close, almost constitutive relationship with history. This relationship is not only about recounting the wars as such, but results from the experiences of derivative or related events, and usually has long endings. Both the First World War (which includes the Balkan Wars and the Asia Minor Catastrophe, with threads that end in the historiography of the refugee issue and in the emergence of refugee memory) and the Second World War, which includes the history of the Resistance and Civil War, affect historical approaches and negotiations as well as the emergence and reorganization of national and political identities. It could even be argued that, combined with other developments in society, wars ruptured the areas of agreement in historiography that the nineteenth century had constructed. The historiography of the twentieth century could be written through the history of these confrontations. For this reason, the large discussions and debates over historical issues, the *Key Debates*, were selected as one of the themes of this research project.

The first major confrontation or the mother of confrontations, which continued throughout the twentieth century, was the debate about the genesis moment of the Greek state: the Revolution of 1821. At the end of the nineteenth century, a history canon was formed that regarded the revolutionary struggle as the fulfilment of all previous national expectations. Therefore, references to the social changes that caused the revolution created a storm because they affected the function of national history at its core. National history returned as ethno-folk, according to which national and social causes corresponded with the concept of the people. This approach reached a reading of the period that was contextualized in the conflict between modernity and tradition. The second major controversy concerns the 1940s. If the National Schism that was created because of the First World War did not cause a controversy among historians, the 1940s had a profound impact on historiography and is constantly reproduced with new meanings. Language was also a field of confrontation with a less obvious but steady historical background, from the movement of educational demoticism to the abolition of polytonic orthography in the 1980s. The economic and social profile of Greece was also a field of constant confrontation since the early twentieth century in different environments. The issue whether the Greek social formation was "regular" or "exceptional", compared to the European model, occupied consistently, explicitly or implicitly, historiography and the social sciences. Adjacent and parallel to these major debates were smaller or larger discussions that developed around history and historiography and concerned subfields of research and issues of interdisciplinarity, methodology and theory. All these discussions, reflections and controversies are important episodes in the history of Greek historiography in the twentieth century.

In the course of twentieth century there was a great deviation in the cultivated historiographical genres. After all, even the definition of what is considered historiography is fluid and context dependent. On this basis we chose to follow trends and trajectories rather than to attempt to compile a statistically complete recording of scholarly works with reference to history. Moreover, during the nineteenth century, the distance between academic and popularized historiography was not so big: historiography was aligned to literature, they both opted for epic themes and realistic forms of writing. In the twentieth century, however, this distance grew. Literary genres multiplied, while literature and political texts vied with historiography in the production of images for the past. Although museums, monuments and national holidays began to appear from the nineteenth century, it was in the twentieth century that they expanded (for example, the commemoration of the 1821 centenary), taking the form of public history, particularly after the development of the mass media, cinema and the internet (towards the end of the century). Finally, the concept of memory emerged in relevant research, as did the practices connected to it. All this created a field upon which history and memory wars were conducted, especially towards the end of the century. If we attempt to summarize the changes that occurred in the course of the twentieth century, then, apart from wars, we notice that it was the century during which new paths were inaugurated both towards theoretical pluralism and towards the multiplicity of forms and modes of representing the past. One of the most important changes was the emergence of memory. Memory was imprinted in a wave of testimonies, which were published or viewed, but also a significant number of oral history projects. The Asia Minor Catastrophe and 1940s are the main sites of memory.

The historiography of the twentieth century is traversed, as already mentioned, by two mental threads: the first concerns identities and the second the modernization process of Greek society. Both concepts are conceptualized differently in different periods and environments, although they often become intertwined. The intertwining of identities and modernization is of interest because it is part of the plot. In the nineteenth century, the two concepts were in greater proximity, almost identical, because the consolidation of national identity required and resulted in the modernization of the nation state. This relationship included civilizing the nation and the corresponding mission of historiography. Civilizing meant knowledge of antiquity and awareness of historical legacy. It also coincided with the creation of an image of the world, namely of the Balkans and the Orient, through the perspective of national integration.

A) Concerning Identities. National history was the main field on which Greek historiography developed, not only during the nineteenth century, but also in the most of the twentieth century. National history is an open field, in the sense that it is constructed through constant changes and reconceptualizations or reassessments of its consisting parts. In the twentieth century, the field of modern Greek studies was established, while historiography became internationalized. Some of the fields, such as Byzantine studies, had already been internationalized since the nineteenth century. Other fields, such as ancient history, had always been objects of international interest. Criticism of nationalism during the 1990s led to a generalized revision of the basic assumptions of national history, causing heated debate.

Since the beginning of the century the relationship between historiography and identity had been dynamic and changing. The Macedonian question and the northern border before and during the Balkan wars and the First World War, the investigation of ethnocultural groups that made up the area of the extended Greek state and the dialogue with social anthropology regarding the study of ethnic groups are important historiographical "topoi". The biggest challenge, however, during the first half of the twentieth century was the emergence of the social issue and the configuration of a different perception of the Greek society's past.

The question did not concern the great continuities on which the national narrative was based, but the creation of the nation state. It promoted a 'social' interpretation of the revolution of 1821 instead of a national one. This was at the basis of one of the greatest history debates, which well exceeded the interwar period. The debate over the 1821 Revolution concerns, of course, national identity but has wider ideological dimensions as well. The Revolution, as a national revolution based on the ideal of freedom, was used as the main argument against historical materialism and the notion of history as class struggle. It helped to shape major historiographical and interpretative communities where concepts such as "people" and "nation" acquired new significations and defined new identities. Literature and institutions held important roles in this resignification. For example, the role of the university in the celebration of the centenary of the Revolution was related to the conviction that the university was the guardian of history and its professors and students guardians of the past. This concept of "guardian of history" would become a distinct and important trend in the history of historiography until the major history wars of the 1990s. The debate over the Greek Revolution is an exemplary debate, not only because of the interpretations of a historical event but also because of its consequences regarding the differentiation of identities. This discussion is also exemplary for how the historiographical field is constituted and reproduced, with studies that expand from ideological to historical essays, such as Michail Sakellariou's thesis in the late 1930s on the Peloponnese under the second period of Ottoman rule.

The problematization of collective self-determination would continue in the period of the transition to democracy and with the demand for the renewal of Greek identity and history (marked by long discussions regarding the renewal of Greek historiography, the face of modern Hellenism, tradition and roots in publications such as the journals *Anti* and *Politis*). Finally, identities would become a field of cultural and political confrontation in the 1990s and 2000s on issues such as the name of Macedonia.

B) Modernization. Since its establishment as a discipline, historiography has been an area concerned with the modernization of societies. In the nineteenth century the nationalizing process, as reflected in areas and places that helped to formulate the national culture (history, archaeology, folklore, etc.), constituted a parallel investigation for the modernization processes. In this context, historians functioned metaphorically as "signs of modernity", through which the past could be described and classified. In the early twentieth century the first big wave of modernization was demoticism, the core idea of which is imprinted in a few but emblematic essays. Demoticism is a stream that continues throughout the interwar years. Conflicts such

as the “Marasleika” and the conflict that evolved around Rosa Imvrioti opened a debate over history and language.

From the interwar period until the 1970s we can also follow the evolution and formation of the relationship between academic history and the social sciences. The aim was to understand ‘society’ rather than ‘the nation’, in fact with the contribution of other social sciences, such as anthropology and sociology. This path was halted very quickly by the Metaxas dictatorship and remained blocked until the 1950s. In the 1960s there was a rebirth of interest in the coupling of history and social sciences, manifested by the foundation of research centres and the first turns of historical research towards social history.

Finally the concept of the modernization of Greek society became a key element for narrating modern Greek history from the period of the transition to democracy to the end of the twentieth century. Broad interpretative schemes based on theories of modernization appeared during this period, while individual research followed this scheme as well (history of the Enlightenment, economic history, history of the political system and of political parties). In this period not only was the backbone of modern Greek historiography constituted, but its basic conceptual, analytical and interpretative tools as well. In fields such as the history of national ideology and institutions, the history of minorities and gender history, historiography appeared as an modernizing element for society.

Historiography as a modernizing force for national ideology provoked fierce reaction from the 1960s onwards. Most of them were related to history textbooks, such as the controversy over Kalokairinos’ book in the 1960s, and later those over Lefteris Stavrianos’ book in the 1980s, George Kokkinos’ book in the 1990s and Maria Repousi’s book in 2006. These conflicts did not exhaust themselves in the textbooks, however. They were associated in many ways with the controversy over the issue of identities expressed in the dispute over the name of Macedonia in the 1990s and over the indication of religion on identity cards in the early 2000s.

The research project mapped the above developments in the mosaic of twentieth-century Greek historiography through the historiographical production, the institutions connected to it, the main discussions, debates and research fields as well as through the voice and presence of important historians who contributed to the shaping of historiography mainly in the post-dictatorship period. Through activities such as workshops and the international conference, the programme approached Greek historiography in the international environment and studied its character from the perspective of significant parallel international developments and phenomena. It is thus a “road map” of the large and small paths followed by Greek historiography and its many encounters with crucial social, political, cultural and intellectual phenomena that helped shape modern Greek society. Through the prism of the study of the past and the development of historical studies, the research project attempted to highlight historiography as a preferential field for understanding both the scientific trends and the major and multifaceted issues of national identity and modernization as reflected in the Greek twentieth century.