

Nineteenth Annual Hellenic Lecture



E. DELACROIX, *La Grèce sur les ruines de Missolonghi*
© Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux, France

“The Greek Revolution of 1821 and its Multiple Legacies: 1871, 1921 (1930), 1971”

Professor Gonda Van Steen

Koraës Chair of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature
Director of Centre for Hellenic Studies, King’s College London

Thursday 11 March 2021 at 6pm (GMT) on Zoom

Since the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the Greek people have celebrated three major anniversaries: the 50th, 100th, and 150th anniversary date of the inception of this revolutionary war that led to sovereign statehood after nearly four centuries of Ottoman rule. These three jubilees, each with their own legacies, have come to represent three different ways of celebrating Greek statehood that have, nonetheless, much in common. They posited a linear progression from Greek antiquity through postclassical, Byzantine, and post-Byzantine (Ottoman) times. The lecture explored in what ways the celebrations and re-enactments, with their commemorative events and symbolic images, acquired a prescriptive character, which advanced their aim to educate youth in state-promoted nationalism, and to what extent the present 200th anniversary celebrations differ from the three aforementioned ones.

Slide 1: The Greek Revolution's multiple anniversaries

Since the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the Greek people have celebrated three major anniversaries: the 50th, 100th, and 150th anniversary date of the inception of this revolutionary war that led to sovereign statehood after nearly four centuries of Ottoman rule. These three jubilees, each with their own legacies, have come to represent three different ways of celebrating Greek statehood that have, nonetheless, much in common. The celebrants considered the festivities to be in the best interests of the Greek state and of its younger generations, especially, but many ceremonies—and subsequent state rituals—displayed a more self-serving political culture or nationalist ideology as well. Through 1971, Greek political and religious nationalisms represented two sides of one coin, and they tended to reinforce each other through historicizing parades and other displays of unbroken cultural (if not religious) continuity. They posited a linear and authentic progression from Greek antiquity through postclassical, Byzantine, and post-Byzantine (Ottoman) times. Thus the celebrations and reenactments, with their commemorative events and symbolic images, acquired a prescriptive character, which further advanced their aim to educate youth in state-promoted nationalism.

In anticipation of the bicentennial of Greece's independence, it may prove helpful to study the earlier celebrations, their main themes and agendas, the imaginary nation to which they appealed, and some of the images and reports they left behind. We expect to find the years 1871, 1921, and 1971 as the key anniversary dates, but we are immediately struck by an important exception: the grand celebrations of the centenary of 1921 were 'postponed' due to political and military circumstances. Besides, the Greeks looked forward with great anticipation to a more wide-ranging series of events that was scheduled for 1930, the centenary of the year in which the Greek state was formed. Thus past and present, and even the unknown but projected future, affected the making of the anniversaries of Greece as a product of a revolution and as a nation. Also, the various anniversaries offer up a potent reminder that, on each occasion, the nation's process of becoming was yet to be completed. The year 1871 preceded the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the ensuing territorial gains by a few (turbulent) decades. The crisis of 1921-1922 signaled a reduction in the Greek territorial expanse and an even greater blow to Greek political and cultural self-confidence. The year 1971, which fell about halfway through the dictatorship period of 1967-1974, was used by the military regime to affirm 'revolution' and 'independence', but by the opposition to interrogate the sovereign and democratic nature of the long-suffering state. The question now remains what the anniversary year of 2021 holds in store for a nation that has seen a dozen years of a crisis economy and several natural disasters (the

tragic fires of July 2018 being just one of them). Add to those crises, the protracted Eastern Mediterranean refugee crisis, of which Greece has borne the brunt, and the Covid-19 pandemic, which has cast long shadows over the year 2020 and threatens to affect the anniversary celebrations of 2021 as well.

Slide 2: 1871, the 50th Anniversary (Picture: Statue of Patriarch Gregory V, by G. Fytalis, in front of the Propylaia, University of Athens, right side when looking at the building).

The celebratory year of 1871, or the marker of the fifty years since the Greek Revolution, was much anticipated. A few events raised the stakes in the lead-up to the anniversary year. Russia had been holding the relics of Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V (1746-1821), who, as the leader of the Orthodox Greek religious minority living under the Ottoman Empire, had been killed shortly after the outbreak of the Greek revolt. The Ottoman Porte retaliated against the 'traitors' among the Greek aristocrats who served in prized clerical and administrative positions. It considered the then patriarch, despite his calls for caution and even for submission, to be one of them. Upon his assassination, Patriarch Gregory's remains had been taken to Odessa. Half a century later, the Greek state arranged to bring these relics home to the new nation and to rebury them, with due pomp and circumstance, in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens. The conspicuous involvement of the royal pair, King George I and Queen Olga, marked the interment as a nationalist and Athenocentric occasion. The Greek state also arranged to have the patriarch's honorific statue erected in front of the main official building (the Propylaia) of the University of Athens. This statue was sculpted by Georgios Fytalis but was unveiled with a slight delay.

Slide 3: 1871: Statue of Rigas Velesinlis, by I. Kossos, also in front of the Propylaia (left side).

As a religious symbol, the statue joined that of another ethno-martyr, Rigas Velesinlis or Rigas Feraios (1757–1798). The tribute to this precursor-champion of the revolutionary struggle was the work of sculptor Ioannis Kossos, who acknowledged Rigas's enlightened and secular political philosophy and also the postrevolutionary idealization of his person and aspirations. Historian Thomas Gallant has characterized the ideology behind the 1871 jubilee ceremony and the erection of the statues as 'the wedding of Orthodoxy to the Revolution'. Significantly, too, the plan to create two statues of revolutionary martyrs superseded an earlier proposal to erect statues of ancient deities. The two statues tied the Revolution to the new institutions of the modern, nationalist Greek state,

in particular to the University of Athens with its classicizing ethos. Both statues were executed in a conventional style, which did not assert a new aesthetic but affirmed, rather, an existing code of classicizing.

Slide 4: 1875: Statue of Adamantios Koraes.

In 1875, the statue of Adamantios Koraes (1748–1833) was set up in the same general location, outside the formal building of the University of Athens. Koraes left a rich intellectual legacy to the new Greek state. He had made his permanent home in Paris, where he shared in French Enlightenment theory and in radical thought. He laid the foundations of a Hellenic Library of editions of seminal classical texts, with which to instruct the younger Greek generations. This Hellenic Library functioned as a secular vehicle for transmitting Western cultural ideals, which inculcated in the Greek reading public an awareness of one of its most valued possessions: remnants from antiquity. The concern for the younger Greeks' education was a recurrent theme also in the subsequent anniversary celebrations, whose pageantry was modeled after French revolutionary prototypes. All of these initiatives exemplified the deliberate creation of new cultural and social beings in young (male) Greeks, who would cultivate patriotism. They became identified with the nationalist-didactic ideology of Koraes as the revolutionary Greek expatriate who inspired many others. Subsequent anniversaries' uses of Greek texts and monuments alike, of symbolic imagery and of a normative ideology, strengthened the classicizing ethos that the three statues of the 1871 jubilee had first come to embody. But the anniversary celebrations remained more limited in scope than, for instance, the broader 19th-century Greek impulse to organize knowledge and nationalism: knowledge about (and power over) the ancients and their artifacts began to overlap with the creation of national museums, printed collections, libraries, theater stages, and the educational infrastructure of the modern Greek state at large.

Slide 1 (return to title slide): Koraes (left) and Rigas (right) united in their effort to lift an exhausted Greece (female figure) up from her ruins. Notice the symbol of the phoenix rising from its ashes in the background.

Slide 5: Conception and celebration of continuity (visual, athletic, centrality of Athens and Panathenaic Stadium) 1860-76: K. Paparrigopoulos, *History of the Hellenic Nation* 1835: I. Kolettis, to 1896 Olympics

The three statues, of Rigas Feraios, Patriarch Gregory, and Koraios (in the chronological order of their making), embodied the fusion of antiquity, Byzantium, and the modern era; they captured the power of religion to augment nation-building (and vice versa), as well as the potential of language and patrimony. Taken together and with the University of Athens as their backdrop, the statues showed the Greeks' commitment to the blending of all of these facets of the modern Greek nation. Thus the 1871 anniversary celebration signaled an early call of achieved success, even though major struggles of religious integration, territorial expansion and defeat, linguistic debate and reform, and overall institutional (re)structuring still lay ahead. The seminal model of Greek historical continuity underpinned the five-volume *History of the Hellenic Nation* (1860-1874; 2nd edn 1885-1887), the influential nation-building work of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos. Paparrigopoulos had proposed five eras of Hellenism (the epochs of ancient, Macedonian, Christian, medieval and modern Hellenism), but his work has been remembered in terms of three eras only: ancient, Byzantine and modern Hellenism. These three ages of Hellenic civilization congealed in a 'form of teleology for the Greek state', which underpinned its irredentist and Byzantine ambition of the Great Idea (*Megali Idea*). They became staples of nearly all Greek nationalist celebrations and their visual and verbal rhetoric.

Decades prior to 1871, the initiative had been raised to stage Greek history as a continuum of male athletic prowess inherited from antiquity and to strengthen national reawakening in that manner. In January of 1835, Ioannis Kolettis (1774-1847), Minister of Internal Affairs to King Otho, published a proposal (in French) for athletic games and festivals to commemorate, at public expense, the major events and battle sites of the 1821 War of Independence and also the spirit of national unification that its advocates had propounded. Significantly, the celebration of the 25th of March as the anniversary date of the Greek Revolution (coinciding with the Christian feast of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary) was established in 1838, or three years after Kolettis had issued his plan. The events proposed by Kolettis were modelled after the panhellenic athletic games and other festivals of Greek antiquity, such as the famous Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian Games, but also the classical religious festivals of the Panathenaia, the Eleusinia, the Thesmophoria, the Great Dionysia, etc. Kolettis singled out the particular advantages of such pageants for the new-born Greek state: the international resonance of such festivals, their role in strengthening the royal house, and the tremendous ethical benefits (*'d'immenses avantages moraux'*) that they would deliver and that promised to bring modern Greece closer to ancient Greece. Kolettis summed up: *'Tâchons que le Grec moderne approche de l'ancien, que le fils reproduise le père'*, 'Let us try to make the modern Greek approach the ancient Greek, to make the son reproduce the father'. The vision of Kolettis to re-create

aspects of the athletic competitions and religious feasts that took place in antiquity was instrumental in designing the state-sponsored pageantry of Greece in the 20th century, including its anniversary spectacle. The ideal of bestowing a renaissance on the Greek nation through ancient sports and their ethos drove the 19th-century Zappas Olympics (1859, 1870, 1875, and 1888-1889), two occurrences of which closely met the creation of the three honorific statues in time and space (again in central Athens). However, the 1896 revival of the Olympic Games proved to be the most important catalyst in the process of establishing the Greek heroic pageantry of cultural continuity. Through the pre-WWI era, Greece was eager to claim and secure its guardianship over the 'authentic' ancient athletic tradition, which would become more significant as the modern Olympic movement gained wider local and Western support. Historicizing pageantry, tied to symbolic dates and locations, drew from the Enlightenment philosophy and the praxis of the French Revolution, which espoused the edifying value of mass public spectacles, dynamic bodies moving through dramatic spaces, ancient or ancient-style monuments, and the arts. In Greece, however, the heroic pageantry of continuity and syncretism acquired a life of its own and determined nearly all subsequent types of historical reenactments in the nationalist vein.

Slide 6: 1921 becomes 1930: A Centenary of the Revolution or of Nationhood (left): Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, 1929-32, (right): Statue of the revolutionary and antiroyalist hero Kolokotronis.

The aftermath of World War I and Greece's own political and military predicament prevented the year 1921 from being the celebratory centenary that it could have been. The Cretan statesman Eleftherios Venizelos (1864-1936) was dominating the national and even the international scene. For some, he gave all to the fight against the Greek oligarchy and monarchy of the early years of the 20th century. Leader of a prolonged struggle against the royalist elite, Venizelos's star shone bright through 1920. As Prime Minister of Greece, Venizelos travelled to Paris in 1919, to represent his country at the Paris Peace Conference. There, he secured Allied consent for Greece to occupy the region of Smyrna (Izmir) and its hinterland in Asia Minor. Venizelos then pursued the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres (10 August 1920), which postulated settlement terms between Greece and the Ottoman Empire and sanctioned the Greek occupation of Asia Minor. Thus he became the executor of Greece's irredentist aspirations of the Great Idea. At the peak of his power, Venizelos was proclaimed the architect of 'Greater Greece', or of 'Greece of the two continents and the five seas'. In mid-September of 1920, he staged his partisan-patriotic victory celebrations at the Panathenaic Stadium (that is, the 'old'

Olympic Stadium or Kallimarmaro Stadium in downtown Athens). Venizelos's own 'triumphal procession' provoked reactions that ranged from uncritical adulation to shock and outcry.

Venizelos did not shy away from self-promotion and the relentless quest for 'patriotic' prestige. After he lost the November 1920 elections, however, he went into self-imposed exile and temporarily disappeared from the Greek political scene. By 25 March 1921, the Greek army had suffered the first military setbacks in the battle against the new Turkish nationalist forces. The sense of danger, of loss and catastrophe, would soon be borne out by the Smyrna Disaster of mid-September 1922 (which would entail the burning of Smyrna's quarters that housed ethnic minorities, the resulting compulsory exchange of populations, and the rise of the new Turkish state). The post-1922 era may have been ripe for a reconsideration of the irredentist Great Idea, but, in March of 1921, the time to rethink the propagandistic use of mass pageantry had not yet come. Did 1921 as a jubilee date go by unnoticed then, because of the shadows cast over it by current events? Not at all. The year 1921 saw modest ceremonies that again placed the emphasis on honoring the revolutionary martyrs. As Dora Markatou has noted, Spyridon Lambros spearheaded the centenary commemorating the War of Independence. He envisioned festivals that would be supervised by other historians, archaeologists, and folklorists. The 1921 celebrations offered up a modest blend of historical reenactments, and they prompted the erection of war memorials and the foundation or restoration of monuments and other prestigious public venues (such as the Herodes Atticus Theater). Venizelos himself saw in the muted 1921 anniversary a means to again bolster the political and military project of a Greater Greece, the quest to consolidate Greek territories in Asia Minor, to annex new ones, and to recapture Constantinople. This backdrop transformed the 1921 parade into a Venizelist rally, not unlike the 'triumphal procession' of mid-September 1920. Thus Venizelos tapped a powerful wellspring of personal prestige and (party-)political propaganda, and he tied the performative quality of military expeditions and parades to the spectacle of official representation: both codified patriotism and institutionalized nationalism in his own conception. Classicizing festival pageantry was mined for its 'political capital' as well as for its 'cultural capital' (to use notions established by Pierre Bourdieu). The Venizelist production of the leader's personal triumph marked the public euphoria about the Greeks' military, territorial, and diplomatic gains.

On 25 March 1921, it was far too early to claim victory in the Asia Minor campaign. At Venizelos's instigation, the Greeks had ambitiously occupied Smyrna and its hinterland for many months, during which Turkish ratification of this or any other Greek territorial expansion into Asia Minor had not been forthcoming. The Turkish victory, the Greek rout, and the Smyrna Disaster of September 1922 meant that

the history of 1821 was being reversed, that the centenary of 1921 was unravelling. Venizelos's grand scheme and the entire vision of the Great Idea collapsed in the ashes of Smyrna. The dream of the grand celebration of Greater Greece, of the final realization of the Great Idea, was forever crushed. Critics of the Anatolian adventure had feared the Greek overreach all along. Once the battle sites were no longer those of historical defence but had become those of military hubris, the scars of defeat were harder to explain and took much longer to heal. The surviving ethnic Greek populations of Asia Minor were forced to leave for an uncertain future in Greece, which, as a country with very limited resources or infrastructure, had already been straining under the burden of prolonged war. It took Greece at least through the interwar years to recover.

Venizelists strategically blamed King Constantine I and a group of military commanders for the Smyrna Disaster of 1922. But Venizelos himself had risked Greek territorial integrity and political sovereignty in the historical gamble of the Asia Minor campaign. The consequences were deeply divisive politically and affected culture and commemoration as well. In another act of overreach, the Greeks postponed the big celebrations of their country's centenary, to commence on the symbolic date of 25 March of the year 1930. The delay of the centenary festivities was motivated by the once again unrealistic expectation of new gains to celebrate by 1930. This new centennial would celebrate the actual formation and recognition of the independent Greek state, which was founded in 1830. When the grand centennial of 1930 finally came around, the atmosphere was still subdued in and around Athens, again the geographical center-point of the festivities. Venizelos's last administration of 1928-1932, proclaimed as "The Great Four Years" (Η Μεγάλη Τετραετία) oversaw the celebrations, which explains their self-congratulatory tone and ethos. Once more, politics, the military, religion, and ideology blended together in mass spectacles of the state staging itself. Lambros again inspired the celebrations, which reaffirmed the idea and ideal of national continuity and the medium of outdoor mass festivals emboldened by the contemporary moral and didactic ideology. As in 1921, an organizing committee in which academics and archaeologists, especially, assumed key positions designed and scheduled the events—one month full of events. In addition to historicizing parades, these events included the ceremonial raising of the flag and the firing of cannons, ample occasions for speech-making and for launching publications, and also religious services. Notably, the centennial also re-created the Panathenaic Procession in an archaizing and nationalist spirit. Athena's new *peplos*, however, was substituted by the Greek flag, which, according to plan, would be changed annually on top of the Acropolis, and each year a different Greek city or region would be responsible for this flag ceremony. Thus archaizing public spectacle merged with the modern Greek demand for regional as well as national unification.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Syntagma Square, begun in 1929 and meant to deliver yet another symbolic message of moral strength and continuity, was, unfortunately, not ready to be unveiled in time (not until 25 March 1932). But the completion of the restoration works on the Acropolis was included in the formal centenary program. In 1930, too, Venizelos rededicated the bronze statue of the revolutionary war hero Kolokotronis, who was imprisoned by King Otho's administration, thus placing himself in a popular genealogy that was antiroyalist as well as revolutionary.

Slide 7: Euphoria of 1920-21, prior to the Smyrna Disaster.

The tents of Asia Minor Greek refugees set up in the Ancient Agora in Athens, 1922.

As in 1921, the 1930 centennial celebration of Greek statehood raised reservations about Venizelos hailing his personal return to politics. Also, the prominence of Cretan culture was pervasive, given that the Prime Minister was from Crete. Venizelos further drew extensively from the structure and the aesthetics of the mass events organized by the Lyceum of Greek Women and held at the Panathenaic Stadium. It was the Lyceum that had first added the Minoan age to the parade of the canonical three eras of Greek history, in the 'great national festival' of 1926 at the stadium. The staged representation of the 'Bloodless Sacrifice from the Minoan Period', too, was a creation of the Lyceum. In 1930, it was again the Lyceum that brought the parade of heroes and heroines of the Greek War of Independence to the stadium. Significantly, the embodied display of the four eras in the life of the Greek nation, now including the Minoan age, became part of subsequent mass events. Thus the War of Independence and the formation of the Greek nation were symbolically linked to Byzantium, Greek antiquity, and to Crete. The past had to infuse the present in an unbroken continuum of patriotic spirit and resiliency. The latter, the message of the indomitable spirit of the Greek people and its fighters, and thus of the 'Greekness' of the centenary, was both prominent and poignant given the recent collapse of the irredentist dream and the ensuing mass refugee problem. Notably, too, hyperbolic Greek festival pageantry, held at the Panathenaic Stadium, predated the dictatorship of General Ioannis Metaxas, with whose regime we often associate it.

Slide 8

A commemorative medal struck on the occasion of the anniversary of 1830-1930. The obverse of this brass medal shows the Greek phoenix rising from the flames. The reverse recognizes Greece's territorial gains since 1830 and through 1919, with the annexation of the Ionian islands, ceded by Britain in 1864, and of the northern territories (Thessaly, 1881; Macedonia, 1913; and E. Thrace, 1919). The medal

suggests a strong link between the War of Independence and the more recent wars. It effectively places those recent wars in a genealogy of patriotic struggle and territorial expansion on behalf of the nation, in a linear narrative of unquestioned continuity and destiny. Mementoes like this token helped to disseminate the message of territorial unification and cultural homogenization.

Slide 9: 1971: The Self-Celebration of a Military Regime

Metaxas or the Colonels of the dictatorship of 1967-1974 did not invent their parade festivals and athletic contests, but they made them their own by expanding and militarizing them. The architects of the latter regime's events had before them a series of canonical templates and a performative repertory from which to choose in accordance with the prevailing state priorities. The strongmen of the coup of 21 April 1967 had certain technical advancements working for them as well. Thus Georgios Papadopoulos propped up his public celebrations with 'suitable' (read: censored) television and other media coverage, whose rote praise was the illusionary equivalent of the rote applause in the Panathenaic Stadium.

By 1971, the year of the 150th jubilee of the Greek Revolution, the dictators had sought and found an 'authentic' tradition of origins and a 'valid' genealogy for their own military intervention, their self-styled 'regenerative Revolution'.

Slide 10: Self-celebration of the Military Regime. (left) The artificial 'pedigree' of the Colonels' 'Revolution' made visible: The 'regenerative Revolution' is linked, in a direct line, to 1821, and even to the Greek victories in the Persian Wars, over a continuous line of all the celebrated Greek military conquests. Notice the phoenix in the bottom right corner. (right) Self-celebration of 21 April 1967 in parade float at the Panathenaic Stadium.

Thus the cult of the revolutionary past came to serve a cult of much-advertised new but undemocratic beginnings. The 'Revolution of 21 April 1967' was far removed from the kind of liberalizing sociopolitical reform that Greece badly needed. The Colonels also posited the anniversary date of their own takeover as a new national holiday. On the regime's first anniversary, Papadopoulos concluded his address to the nation with statements that underscored his will to graft the army's intervention onto the Greek tradition of revolution resulting in 'morally superior' victory:

The Revolution of 21 April represents the greatest and most serious attempt to restore, reorganize, and cure Greece since it regained its

National Independence. And the Revolution will succeed, because it bespeaks the necessity of the historical imperative.
(‘21 April Has Proved to Be a Landmark in the History of Our Country’,
To Vima, 21/8/1968)

Papadopoulos’s casting of the Revolution of 1821 as a grand analogue for his own military aggression smacked of propagandistic distortion. The 150th anniversary of the Revolution and the anticipated nationwide festivities were announced with a similar, hubristic degree of fanfare. The jubilee’s specific events were planned at a large meeting held in the Old Parliament, in September of 1970. Papadopoulos himself gave the directions, but top officials of the political and ecclesiastical hierarchy participated as well. The attendees decided that the celebrations should last throughout 1971, which was named as the ‘Year of the Hellenic National Freedom’. The organizers also shared an important concern, to add a series of novel events, many so hyperbolic as to become caricatures.

For the dictators, the theatrical communication through displays of military culture was one of tradition, supremacy, and proven authenticity. The junta relentlessly promoted the values of the country’s rulers, ancestors, and roots by grounding them in a proud, ‘authentic’ history, in an unchanging geo-cultural territory, and in unshaken diachronic time. Moreover, the dictators presented the battles against interior and exterior communists of the past and present alike as interrelated parts of a single ‘holy war’ in defense of the nation. Their official rhetoric, bolstered by the protracted state of martial law, was rife with calls for ‘patriotic’ loyalty to the nation’s ‘protectors’ and for vigilance and suspicion of fellow Greeks. Thus the 1971 jubilee and also other junta festivals emptied out or ‘disappeared’ the past of the Civil War, especially, and the leftist sympathies and forces of resistance that lived on. Not surprisingly, the official rhetoric of ethnic pride and of the strong national family appealed to the patriotic sentiment of those Greeks who sought stability after many years of military and political turmoil. For some, the regime’s stagings of historical continuity were gratifying precisely because they were long familiar. Plenty of others, however, realized that the junta was reducing Greek valor to purebred military character—and, even then, more to muscle power than to military genius. More outspoken critics saw a farcical spectacle and a transparent concoction of propaganda.

Obviously, the monumental junta festivals did not come about without the planning and cooperation of many more people, in other realms of cultural production as well. James Paris, a Greek-American entrepreneur, became the Colonels’ favorite producer of patriotic films, to which the Armed Forces readily contributed.

Slide 9: 1971: The Self-Celebration of a Military Regime. Heroic war epics of Greek cinema under the Greek military dictatorship (*Papaflessas*).

Paris's morale-boosting war epics did their part to support the dictators' 'Revolution' and, like the festivals, they featured the typical purple passages of Greek history and also stories of personal sacrifice for the good of the collective. The genre generated movies such as *The Souliots* (1972, directed by Dimitris Papakostantis) and *Papaflessas, Hero of the Greek Revolution* (1971), which, directed by Errikos Andreou, became the genre's best-known film. Paris himself goes often unmentioned: his work as an architect of the propagandistic junta festivals has not recommended him to posterity. In the late 1960s, however, the experience that Paris had gained in the United States lent a—spurious—legitimacy to his work.

Slide 11: Jenny Karezi as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and as a hero of the Greek Revolution, making fun of historicizing hyper-spectacles and bombastic language (in a Greek movie of 1972, see here for a telling video-clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfkVL0wCGDM&t=216s>).

The regime's exaggerated displays of military prowess at the 1971 jubilee and on many other occasions were meant to (re)shape the people's knowledge of Greek history and to inspire their pride for being 'racial descendants' of the ancient Greeks. Thus the junta festivals picked up where the practice of school history lessons and their nationalizing mission had left off, teaching sacrifice-oriented 'patriotism' and conformism in the name of Greek continuity. From the 19th and well into the 20th century, instruction in Greek history in primary and secondary schools, preferably highly structured, was marked and marred by its relentless emphasis on the 'patriotic' national past. Ancient Greek language and literature, too, were often taught in tedious, ethnocentric ways, presenting the symbols of classical culture as sacred cows. For decades, 'patriotism' had been performed in Greek school teachings, in the teacher's lecturing and in the student's regurgitating of historical content that was to be idealized but never reinterpreted. The junta festivals joined traditional pedagogy in using youths and adults as prime material for nationalist subject formation. To be sure, the nationalization of the masses through formal history lessons or through festivals that display the nation's bodily performance or that invent national 'traditions' is a widely shared process in constructing modern nation-states. However, the Greek dictators' manipulation of the past was an extreme case in the long course of the state's appropriation of national history, whether through the official discourse that addressed the adult

population or through the poor teaching of history in the public school and university system.

Among the sharpest detractors of the regime's spectacles were students and youth, who mocked all officialdom, its bombast, its victory festivals and military parades. They resented the artificial cultivation of 'sound morality', especially. Greek history's heroes appeared as *exempla virtutis* in a morality play, out of touch with the progressive spirit and changing mores of the late 1960s. The spectacle of 1971, too, instilled a rigid essentialism, which proved far removed from the fluidity of Greek history in 1821. The 1971 jubilee was a commemoration of the past; at best, it was a hypocritical legitimization of an undemocratic present. Its events did not leave any notable artistic or architectural legacies;¹ they only affirmed past and outdated commemorative modes. Thus the anniversary was detached from contemporary cultural developments as well as audiences and failed to look forward to a new era. Ever since the collapse of the dictatorship, the critiques of the misuse of history by the Colonels and by other authorities have been more vocal. They have rallied against the historicizing and anticommunist pageantry, especially, which lasted through the early 1980s.

Today's Greek parades and celebrations may well be perceived as more contemporary, but they still contain much antiquated material and rhetoric. They provoke reflections on Greece's public and visual handling of history and on historicity itself.

Slide 12: Commemorative coin 1821-2021: mentions of the phoenix and the drachma.

Slide 13 (right): Cartoon drawn by the popular Kostas Mitropoulos and dating from 14 November 1999.

Mitropoulos's character of the ordinary Greek is somewhat perplexed as he makes the round of Greece's history and its heroic chronology. The date of 1821 stands out in bold lettering. Yet, this innocent man, ready to dedicate his own wreath of honor to the Greek heroes, cannot but sense that he is walking away from the future, or worse, that he is going around in circles and missing out on a real future.

¹ The Colonels' very ambitious plans to finally build and inaugurate the Church of the Savior did not materialize. The infamous project was also known as the Nation's Vow, because, in 1829, the participants of the Fourth National Assembly had decided to construct this church as a token of Greece's gratitude for its liberation from the Ottoman Empire. See further Antoniou (2016).

Slide 13 (left): Kyr, 17 November 2018: cartoon issued on the occasion of the anniversary of the Polytechnio: anniversary exhaustion or fiesta fatigue in the midst of the ongoing economic crisis.

Slide 14: Η ιστορία έχει πρόσωπο. History has a face. Billboards on the streets of Athens, amidst mask-covered current faces.

The productive but also troubled realm of Greek historical celebrations and of mass pageants has, for decades now, been central to the formation of Greek identity. For the greater purpose of instilling national sensibilities, the Greek state has put itself on display on the occasion of landmark anniversaries. The performative dimensions of anniversary parades, with their typical sequences of heroic episodes through the canonical ages of Hellenic civilization, had to model proper ideals and modes of conduct for Greece's young people, especially. Three major events have marked the nation's celebration history of the outbreak of the War of Independence in 1821. The domestic political culture and ideology of the three major anniversary dates, namely 1871, 1921/1930, and 1971, could hardly have been more different. Nonetheless, the execution as well as the objective of these jubilees of the past converged as they resorted to classicizing statues and mass pageantry to mark the Greek state's public and formal use of history. Surveying these anniversaries has proven to be a fruitful exercise in anticipation of a critical evaluation of the bicentenary of the year 2021.

Slide 15: 2021 anniversary paraphernalia amidst the covid-crisis (Lego figure of the ancient Greek goddess Hygieia holding a bottle of hand-sanitizer).

Lots of skeptical voices have gone up in the run-up to the year 2021, and especially to the symbolic date of 25 March 2021. Around this time last year, when the Covid crisis had just necessitated the first drastic action and everyone feared that hospitals would soon be unable to cope, three prominent Greek historians publicly called for NOT spending money on national celebrations but for bolstering the ailing Greek health sector instead. They were Thanos Veremis, Kostas Kostis, and Nikos Theotokas. Their argument was shared by a lot of other Greeks as well, as the following slides may make abundantly clear.

Slide 16: Famous paintings depicting (episodes from) the Greek War of Independence (Vryzakis, *Exodus of Mesolongi*, 1853 on the bottom right) juxtaposed with covid-19 crisis images and sketch by Soloup (top right).

The Greeks of the three anniversaries of the Revolution had not yet reached a consensus about how to present recent Greek history, but many had come to realize that the true interest of the national past lay in how it constituted and conditioned the future. Their monuments and festivals served the national interest and also the goal of political cohesion; they projected the idea of progress along a historical and cultural continuum, and they posited a survival, revival, or even resurrection of a Greek patriotic ethos. The sustained continuity model that linked the past to the present was, undoubtedly, engaged in national mythmaking. Also, this model kept suggesting a paradoxical kind of parthenogenesis of Greek culture, as if Greek culture moved forward in a controlled vacuum, from one military victory to the next, and was only ever driven by male leaders. The last jubilee of 1971, in particular, marked an intense era in Greek politics and culture when truth, authority, Greek history, destiny, and collective identity were the subjects of a public standoff that played out in the old venues. Perhaps for the last time, this jubilee tried to solidify a national master narrative that reasserted the political and socio-economic status quo. In hindsight, it failed to once more crystallize the national myth. Let us hope that the bicentennial celebrations of 2021 will build on a critical reception of the past jubilees and will prove to be meaningfully different.

Thank you for your attention.

Note: Part of the 21 in 21 programme of events (<https://21in21.co.uk/>) celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Greek War of Independence (1821-2021), this lecture will be published in its revised form as “Anniversaries” in *The Greek Revolution: A Critical Dictionary*, edited by P. M. Kitromilides and C. Tsoucalas, 694-707 (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021).

Works Cited and Suggestions for Further Reading

Antoniou, D. (2016). “Unthinkable Histories: The Nation’s Vow and the Making of the Past in Greece.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 34 (1): 131–160.

Athanassopoulos, A., E. Alexiou, N. Anagnostaki, M. Anagnostakis, K. Antypa et al. (1971). ‘Manifesto on the Occasion of the 150th Anniversary of Independence’. In *Free Greek Voices: A Political Anthology*, edited by Helen Vlachos (Eleni Vlachou), 142–143. London: Doric Publications.

Decker, W. (2006). *Praeludium Olympicum. Das Memorandum des Jahres 1835 von Innenminister Ioannis Kolettis an König Otto I. von Griechenland über ein Nationalfest mit öffentlichen Spielen nach dem Muster der antiken panhellenischen Agone. Praeludium Olympicum. The*

Memorandum of the Year 1835 by Ioannis Kolettis, Minister of Internal Affairs, to King Otho of Greece, concerning a National Festival with Public Games after the Model of the Ancient Panhellenic Agones. Hildesheim: Weidmann.

- Diamantis, Konstantinos A. (1973). «Πρότασις καθιερώσεως εθνικών επετείων και δημοσίων αγώνων κατά το πρότυπον των εορτών της αρχαιότητος κατά το έτος 1835». 'Proposal of the Year 1835 for Instituting National Anniversaries and State-sponsored Games on the Prototype of the Festivals of Antiquity'. *Athina* 73-74: 307-325.
- Exertzoglou, Charis (2001). «Πολιτικές τελετουργίες στη νεώτερη Ελλάδα: Η μετακομιδή των οστών του Γρηγορίου Ε' και η πεντηκονταετηρίδα της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης». 'Political Rituals in Modern Greece: The Transport of the Bones of Gregory V and the 50-Year Anniversary of the Greek Revolution.' *Mnimon* 23: 153-182.
- Fournaraki, Eleni (2010). 'Bodies that Differ: Mid- and Upper-Class Women and the Quest for "Greekness" in Female Bodily Culture (1896–1940)'. *International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 12 (August 2010): 2053–2089. Part of special issue 'Sport, Bodily Culture and Classical Antiquity in Modern Greece'. Reprinted in *Sport, Bodily Culture and Classical Antiquity in Modern Greece*, edited by Eleni Fournaraki and Zinon Papakonstantinou, 49–85. London and New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Gallant, Thomas W. (2016). *Modern Greece: From the War of Independence to the Present*. 2nd edn. London and New York: Bloomsbury.
- Gkolia, Paraskevi (2011). *Υμνώντας το έθνος: Ο ρόλος των σχολικών γιορτών στην εθνική και πολιτική διαπαιδαγώγηση (1924-2010)*. *Hymnifying the Nation: The Role of School Festivals in the National and Political Education Process (1924–2010)*. Thessaloniki: Epikentro.
- Hamilakis, Yannis (2007). *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaloudis, George (2019). *Navigating Turbulent Waters: Greek Politics in the Era of Eleftherios Venizelos*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Karamanolakis, Vangelis (2014). 'The University of Athens and Greek Antiquity (1837-1937)'. In *Re-imagining the Past: Antiquity and Modern Greek Culture*, edited by Dimitris Tziouvas, 112-127. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Katsapis, Kostas (2011). 'Perceptions of the Past by the Dictatorship of April 21st: The Concept of "Bravery" and the Exploitation of 1821'. In *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event*, edited by Petros Pizaniyas, 287-294, Istanbul: The Isis Press.
- Kitroeff, Alexander (2004). *Wrestling with the Ancients: Modern Greek Identity and the Olympics*. New York: Greekworks.
- Kitromilides, Paschalis M. (1998). 'On the Intellectual Content of Greek Nationalism: Paparrigopoulos, Byzantium and the Great Idea'. In *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, edited by David Ricks and Paul Magdalino, 25-33. Aldershot, Hampshire, and London: Ashgate; Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London.
- Kitromilides, Paschalis M. (2013). *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

- Koulouri, Christina (2006). 'The First Modern Olympic Games at Athens, 1896 in the European Context'. *European Studies* (Zentrum für Deutschland- und Europastudien, University of Tokyo) 5: 59-76.
- Koulouri, Christina (2012). «Γιορτάζοντας το έθνος: Εθνικές επέτειοι στην Ελλάδα τον 19ο αιώνα». 'Celebrating the Nation: National Anniversaries in Greece of the 19th Century'. In *Αθέατες όψεις της ιστορίας: Κείμενα αφιερωμένα στον Γιάννη Γιανουλόπουλο, Invisible Facets of History: Essays Dedicated to Gianis Gianoulououlos*, edited by Despoina I. Papadimitriou, Serafeim I. Seferiadis, and Dimitris Bacharas, 181-210. Athens: Asini.
- Koulouri, Christina (2020). *Φουστανέλες και χλαμύδες: Ιστορική μνήμη και εθνική ταυτότητα 1821-1930. Foustaneles and chlamydes: Historical Memory and Ethnic Identity 1821-1930*. Athens: Alexandraia.
- Kourniakti, Jessica (2018). 'The Classical Asset: Receptions of Antiquity under the Dictatorship of 21 April in Greece (1967-73)'. Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford.
- Llewellyn Smith, Michael (1998). *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919-1922*. 2nd edn. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Mackridge, Peter (2008). 'Cultural Difference as National Identity in Modern Greece'. In *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, edited by Katerina Zacharia, 297-319. Aldershot, Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate, Variorum.
- Makrides, Vasilios N. (2009). *Hellenic Temples and Christian Churches: A Concise History of the Religious Cultures of Greece from Antiquity to the Present*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Markatou, Dora F. (2008). 'Archaeology and Greekness on the Centenary Celebrations of the Greek State'. In *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in Twentieth-Century Greece*, edited by Dimitris Damaskos and Dimitris Plantzos, 309-320. Athens: Benaki Museum.
- Mykoniatis, Ilias G. (1984). «Οι ανδριάντες του Ρήγα και του Γρηγορίου Ε΄ στα Προπύλαια του Πανεπιστημίου της Αθήνας και το πρώτο κοινό τους». *Ellinika* 33, no. 2: 355-370.
- Paparrigoropoulos, Konstantinos (1860-1874). *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους. History of the Hellenic Nation*. 5 vols. Athens: N. Passaris.
- Skopetea, Elli (1988). *Το «Πρότυπο Βασίλειο» και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα: Όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα (1830-1880)*. The 'Model Kingdom' and the Great Idea: Perspectives on the National Problem in Greece (1830-1880). Athens: Polytypo.
- Travlos, Konstantinos (2020). *Salvation and Catastrophe: The Greek-Turkish War, 1919-1922*. London and New York: Lexington.
- Van Steen, Gonda A. H. (2010). 'Rallying the Nation: Sport and Spectacle Serving the Greek Dictatorships'. *International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 12 (August 2010): 2121–2154. Part of special issue 'Sport, Bodily Culture and Classical Antiquity in Modern Greece'. Reprinted in *Sport, Bodily Culture and Classical Antiquity in Modern Greece*, edited by Eleni Fournaraki and Zinon Papakonstantinou, 117–150. London and New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Van Steen, Gonda (2015). 'Parading War and Victory under the Greek Military Dictatorship: The Hist(ori)onics of 1967-74'. In *War as Spectacle: Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Display of Armed Conflict*, edited by Anastasia Bakogianni and Valerie M. Hope, 271-290. London: Bloomsbury.

- Van Steen, Gonda (2015). *Stage of Emergency: Theater and Public Performance under the Greek Military Dictatorship of 1967-1974*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vovchenko, Denis (2016). *Containing Balkan Nationalism: Imperial Russia and Ottoman Christians, 1856-1914*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Young, David C. (1996). *The Modern Olympics: A Struggle for Revival*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Zervas, Theodore G. (2017). *Formal and Informal Education during the Rise of Greek Nationalism: Learning to be Greek*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

© Gonda Van Steen