The use of history by Greek intellectuals in the formation of Greek national identity during the Greek Enlightenment

Penelope Frangakis

During the Greek Enlightenment efforts were made to rebuild Greek national identity partly through the re-definition of Greek historical heritage. The Greek intellectuals, involved in these efforts, hoped that the restoration of history and the reinforcement of historical self-knowledge would strengthen and shape the new national consciousness. This paper explores how the Greek intellectuals sought to acquaint the Greeks with their historical heritage mainly through various publications such as translations. It shows the difference of opinion over which elements of the historical past should be incorporated into the national context. Furthermore, it looks at the unifying effects and the connection with an historical territory created by the awakening of a common historical memory.

Prior to the arrival of the Greek Enlightenment, traditional chronicles were produced during the seventeenth century combining religious indoctrination with interesting narration, aiming to acquaint the readers with a historical past viewed from a religious perspective. These chronicles, which were reprinted up until the beginning of the nineteenth century, were especially popular for an audience attached to religious tradition. Such chronicles included Βιβλίον Ιστορικόν (Historical Book)\(^1\), which was published for the first time in 1631 and republished at least twenty-four times up to 1818; and Επιτομή τῆς Ιεροκοσμικῆς Ιστορίας (Review of Religious Secular History)\(^2\), first published in the seventeenth century and reprinted during the eighteenth.

Over the course of the eighteenth century a new historical consciousness was cultivated as secular elements were increasingly incorporated into its construction. Amongst the first works that introduced secular elements were those of Constantine-Kaisarios Dapontes\(^3\) who combined historical examples from the Scriptures and with those from the secular past. Dapontes aimed to reach a wide public by using the vernacular, to satisfy their interests, to assist them in correcting their moral flaws and to cultivate virtue.

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\(^1\) Δορόθεος Μονεμβασίας, Βιβλίον Ιστορικόν, επιμ. εκδ. Τζγγαράς Απόστολος, Βενετία, 1631.
\(^2\) Νεκτάριος, Πατριάρχης Ιεροσολύμων, Επιτομή τῆς Ιεροκοσμικῆς Ιστορίας, επιμ. εκδ. Γραδενήγου Αμβροσίου, Βενετία, 1677.
\(^3\) Δαπόντες Κωνσταντίνος-Κασίαριος, Καθρέπτης Γυναικών, Τόμοι Α´-Β´, Λυσία, 1766.
With the advent of the Greek Enlightenment, in the eighteenth century, a turning point in the development of a new perception of history took place. This movement projected the need for the Greeks to become further acquainted with the Ancient Greek civilisation and to become further aware of a link between the Ancient and the Modern Greeks. Such was the influence of the Greek Enlightenment that by the end of the eighteenth century interest in neoclassicism and the ancient world was increasing, paralleling a developing pride in Ancient Greek ancestry.

A current of influence from Europe was partly responsible for this emphasis on the Ancient Greek world and by extension for the formation of a newly historicized national identity. The interest that the Europeans showed for classical history, illustrated the distinctive place of Ancient Greek culture, and propelled Greek intellectuals to promote the study of and acquaintance with history. George Sakellarios for example sought to increase the awareness of the lack of a historical consciousness among Modern Greeks, compared to other Europeans. He writes:

*Βλέποντας τα μεν άλλα γένη να είναι πλουσισμένα με παρόμοια βιβλία της Αρχαιολογίας των παλαιών γενών [...] και ου μόνον οι παιδευμένοι και διδάσκοι αλλά και οι άκρω δακτύλῳ τῆς παιδείας γευσάμενοι, σχεδόν δε και τα παιδιά να έχουσιν ικανίας ιδέας τῆς ιστορίας όλων των γενών, το δε εδικόν μας γένος να μην έχει ουδεμίαν ιδέαν ούτε αυτῶν τῶν προγόνων του (εκτός εκείνων ὅπου έχουσι τρόπον δια να αναγνώσωσιν όλους τοὺς παλαιοὺς συγγραφεῖς)*

*Seeing that the other peoples were supplied with similar books of Archaeology of the old generations [...] and not only the educated ones and teachers but also the ones able to have access to an education, and even the children to have an adequate knowledge of the history of all the peoples, our peoples meanwhile do not have any idea not even of their ancestors (with the exception of those who have the means to study all the ancient historians)*

The movements of the Enlightenment and neoclassicism aided the shift of interest towards the development of a ‘new historiography’ based on Greek antiquity, as they provided a mine

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4 Δημαράς Κ.Θ., Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός, Αθήνα, Νεοελληνικά Μελετήματα, Εκδοτική Ερμής, 1983, σσ. 18-19.
5 Σακελλάριος Γεώργιος, Αρχαιολογία Συνοπτική των Ελλήνων, Βιέννη, 1796: «Προς τους φιλέλληνας αναγνώστας», χ.σ.
of texts and ideas for Greek intellectuals seeking to reorient themselves and the nation towards the ancient Greek past. As such, a circulation of various publications was activated. For example, towards the end of the eighteenth century treatises about the life and civilisation of classical Greek cities, commentaries of classical historical works, and new textbooks of ancient history were produced. A significant part of these philological works were the so called *Αρχαιολογίες (Archaeologies), which constituted reviews of religion, political institutions, military organisation, education, economic practices of everyday life of ancient Athenians and Spartans.6

Greek translations of foreign works were also circulated to instill a new historical consciousness in the wider audience. The translation of the French Abbé Millot’s work *Στοιχεία της Γενικής Ιστορίας (Éléments d'Histoire Générale) by Gregorios Konstantas and Zisis Kavras represented a new perception of history.7 The new history that they promoted surpassed the moralistic pursuits of the previous generations because it also invited critical thought. The translators believed that the study of ancient history constituted the best means for the ethical and political education of their compatriots and were critical of traditional religious chronicles and the translation of Charles Rollin’s *Παλαιά Ιστορία (Histoire Ancienne). The latter translation by Alexandros Kangellarios8, aimed to ethically educate, to familiarise the Greeks with the achievements of their ancient ancestors, and by extension, to encourage an awareness of the bond between the ancient and the Modern Greeks.

Other translations included those by Rhigas Velestinlis, George Sakellarios and Adamantios Korais. Rhigas carried out a number of translations and adaptations of works. In the context of reinforcing the morale of the ‘enslaved’ Greeks, he translated texts which referred to the Olympic Games of Ancient Greece.9 One of his most noteworthy translations

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6 Κηρομπλάδης Πασχάλης Μ., Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός: Οι Πολιτικές και Κοινωνικές Ιδέες, Μετάφραση Νικολούδη Στέλλα, Αθήνα, Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 1996, σ. 100.
7 Millot Abbé, Στοιχεία της Γενικής Ιστορίας Παλαιάς το και Νέας, μετρ. Κονσταντά Γρ. και Κάβρα Ζήση, Βενετία, 1806.
8 Rollin Charles, Παλαιά Ιστορία, μετρ. Καυκέλλαρίου Αλεξάνδρου, Βενετία, 1750, τόμ. Α‘ - ΙΣΓ’. This work dealt with the history of the Ancient Greeks, and became an important history textbook and a reference for many decades amongst the educated Greeks. For fifty years after its first publication in 1730, it became the most widely used history textbook in Greek schools, and copies of it remained available for many decades (Κηρομπλάδης Πασχάλης Μ., Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός: Οι Πολιτικές και Κοινωνικές Ιδέες, σ. 99).
9 In particular, the fourth volume of Νέος Ανάχαρας, includes a chapter entitled «Οδηγορέαν εις Ηλείαν. Ολυμπιακοί Αγώνες» “Journey to Elis. The Olympic Games”, with seventy pages referring to the Olympic Games (Βελεστινλής Ρήγας, Νέος Ανάχαρας, Βιβλίον, 1797, Κωφύλαιο ΛΗ’, «Οδηγορέαν εις Ηλείαν. Ολυμπιακοί Αγώνες», σσ. 252-323). He also translated and printed the Ολύμπια a metrical drama of the Italian Pietro Metastasio 1698-1792, which takes place in Olympia during the time of the organisation of the Olympic Games (Καρμαπερόπολου Δημ., Ο Ρήγας Βελεστινλής Μεταφραστις των Ολυμπίων του Μεταστάσιο, Αθήνα, 2001 and Βελεστινλής Ρήγας, Ο Ιθικός Τρίπος, Βιβλίον, 1797, φωτομηνικά επανδύσεις, Επιμέλεια – Εισαγωγή – Ευρετήριο Καρμαπερόπολου Δημ., Επιστημονική Εταιρεία Μελέτης Φερόν – Βελεστίνου – Ρήγα, Αθήνα, 2001). In this translation, Rhigas adds important information about the preservation of the Olympic...
accompanied by explanatory comments, is that of the famous French antiquarian Abba Barthélemy. The book Anacharsis, which describes an imaginary voyage in Ancient Greece in the middle of the fourth century B.C. based on the accounts of Ancient Greek writers, was translated and published in several European languages, but also because, like Rhigas, he considered the knowledge of ancestral history an inspiring and motivating force for the Greeks. Sakellarios believed that the tool of history could make the Greeks knowledgeable about the actions of their ancestors and by extension enable them to determine what was necessary for social co-existence. Korais, for his part, engaged in the translation and publication of works of Ancient Greek writers, a monumental

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Barthélemy Jean-Jacques, Περί της ηηο Νέοο Ανάγκοος ήοο εηο Ελλάδα, παρά τον Αββά Βαρθολομαίον; μετεπεξερθήσεια δ’ εκ της Γαλλίκης εις την καθ’ ημαίς διαλέκτων και τόπως εκδοθήσα με τους ανήκοντες αυτή πίνακας παρά τον Χρυσοβέρη Κουροπαλάτου, εν Βιέννη, Συνεργάζοντας, 1819.

Bravou υς Λ., Ρήγας: Έρευνα, Συναγωγή και Μελέτη, Αθήνα, «Βασική Βιβλιοθήκη» αριθ. 10, 1953, σελ. 50.

Δασκαλάκης Απ. Β., Κοραίς και Ρήγας. Αθήνα, ανάπτυξη, επετηρίς Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Πανεπιστήμιου Αθηνών ΙΑ, 1961.

The Austrian police confiscated a number of copies of this work that Rhigas was trying to ship to Greece. In their report the Austrian police stated: “This book Anacharsis was meant to show to the Greek nation how great was its fatherland before” (Αμιντος Κ., Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα παρί Ρήγα Βελεστινλή, Αθήνα, Έκδοση Επιστημονικής Εταιρείας Μελέτης «ΦΕΡΩΝ – ΒΕΛΕΣΤΙΝΟΥ –ΡΗΓΑ», 1997).

This work also made an impression on Korais who praised it in his writings (Κοραίς Αδαμάντιος, Τι Πρέπει να Κάνουν οι Γραικοί εις τας Παρόδος Περιστάσεως, Παρίσι, Πρόδρομος Ελληνικής Βιβλιοθήκης, 1805).

George Sakellarios comments: “Considered as the anthology of the general history of the Greeks, the Journey of the Young Anacharsis has been translated in all European dialects and has become common to all people […] Such was the zeal of other people, however, the zeal of the contemporary Greeks was greater, from whom whoever had read from other dialects this “Journey”, bathed the book with tears, seeing in it displayed the actions of their glorious ancestors, and whoever, was unaware of foreign languages, heard others narrating it, and desired with passion to see in their own language such a work […]” ; C.f. (Τιμάσκη Άννα, Παρί δυελληνικού Διαφωτισμού: Ρέματα ιδέων και διάλογοι επικοινωνίας με τη δυτική σκέψη, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις ΕΡΓΟ, 2004).

Σκακέλλαρος Γεώργιος, Αρχαιολογία Συνοπτική των Ελλήνων, Βιέννη, 1796.

Korais’ monumental work of editions of the classics had commentaries written in classical Greek for the students and introductions in Modern Greek for the average reader.: Korais in the following passage declares his interest in the publication of the ancient Greek writers: “καταγίνομαι εις την έκδοσιν των Ελληνικών

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10. Barthélemy Jean-Jacques, Περί της ηηο Νέοο Ανάγκοος ήοο εηο Ελλάδα, παρά τον Αββά Βαρθολομαίον; μετεπεξερθήσεια δ’ εκ της Γαλλίκης εις την καθ’ ημαίς διαλέκτων και τόπως εκδοθήσα με τους ανήκοντες αυτή πίνακας παρά τον Χρυσοβέρη Κουροπαλάτου, εν Βιέννη, Συνεργάζοντας, 1819.

11. Βραννόμος Λ.Ι., Ρήγας: Έρευνα, Συναγωγή και Μελέτη, Αθήνα, βασικη βιβλιοθηκη, αριθ. 10, 1953, σελ. 50.

12. Δασκαλάκης Απ. Β., Κοραίς και Ρήγας, Αθήνα, ανάπτυξη, επετηρίς Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Πανεπιστήμιου Αθηνών ΙΑ, 1961.

13. The Austrian police confiscated a number of copies of this work that Rhigas was trying to ship to Greece. In their report the Austrian police stated: “This book Anacharsis was meant to show to the Greek nation how great was its fatherland before” (Αμιντος Κ., Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα παρί Ρήγα Βελεστινλή, Αθήνα, Έκδοση Επιστημονικής Εταιρείας Μελέτης «ΦΕΡΩΝ – ΒΕΛΕΣΤΙΝΟΥ –ΡΗΓΑ», 1997).

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15. George Sakellarios comments: “Considered as the anthology of the general history of the Greeks, the Journey of the Young Anacharsis has been translated in all European dialects and has become common to all people […] Such was the zeal of other people, however, the zeal of the contemporary Greeks was greater, from whom whoever had read from other dialects this “Journey”, bathed the book with tears, seeing in it displayed the actions of their glorious ancestors, and whoever, was unaware of foreign languages, heard others narrating it, and desired with passion to see in their own language such a work […]” ; C.f. (Τιμάσκη Άννα, Παρί δυελληνικού Διαφωτισμού: Ρέματα ιδέων και διάλογοι επικοινωνίας με τη δυτική σκέψη, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις ΕΡΓΟ, 2004).

16. Σκακέλλαρος Γεώργιος, Αρχαιολογία Συνοπτική των Ελλήνων, Βιέννη, 1796.
series of editions of classical texts (the ‘seventeen-volumed’ *Ελληνική Βιβλιοθήκη* with ethical, political, historical and geographical content and his ‘nine-volumed’ *Πάρεργα της Ελληνικής Βιβλιοθήκης*), which would greatly affect the development of the neo-Hellenic consciousness. With his *Prolegomena*, he too, just like Rhigas, added his personal touch by not only translating texts but also adding commentary of an instructive value.

Rhigas’ works aimed to awaken his compatriots from ignorance and illiteracy, fight superstition and enlighten their minds, in order to transform them into a people capable of thinking critically and making their own judgments.\(^ {18}\) For this purpose, apart from his other works, he also used visual material, depicting elements from the past. For instance, he circulated the picture of Alexander the Great, by printing and publishing his image with depictions of his triumphant victories, in order to inspire Modern Greeks to revive their glorious past. This was also part of his revolutionary plan, to raise the morale of his compatriots and prepare them for revolt. In order to emphasise the great Greek heritage and the historical area for which they would fight he also produced maps and songs (eg. *Θούριος*, *Γέμνος Πατριωτικός*).

In the process of clarifying their connection with their historical past, Greek intellectuals who endorsed the ideas of the Enlightenment, especially the more radical thinkers, turned to the Classical Greek era. They sought the creative incorporation of ancient heritage into the present, the dynamic reconnection with ancestral history and the consolidation of historical continuity. Generally indifferent toward the Byzantium era, they disapproved of Byzantine heritage as part of the historical heritage of contemporary Greek society, considering it as a diversion in the course of Greek civilisation. Byzantium, for such thinkers, was associated with religious dogmatism, superstition and corruption: the very antithesis of the values of the Enlightenment. Consequently, they perceived it as an obstacle in the formation of the new national identity and accordingly pursued the cleansing of the elements of Byzantine obscurantism.

On the other hand, certain intellectuals, referred to both Byzantium and Ancient Greece as sources of inspiration. Even though Korais mocked the Byzantine emperors whom he

characterised as symbols of despotism, inequality, tyranny and obstacles to the spiritual progress of the populace, he nevertheless, admired the Byzantine cultivation of letters, and sought to unite his fellow Greeks in terms of the Christian tradition of Byzantium, which had situated the Ottomans as enemies of the faith. For him, Ancient Greece and Byzantium were partially reconcilable as joint sources of inspiration and culture for Modern Greeks.\textsuperscript{19} Rhigas also used both Ancient Greece and Byzantium as inspirational sources and the majority of his works display elements from both\textsuperscript{20}. He revered Byzantium as part of the Greeks’ heritage and incorporated certain elements of Byzantine tradition in his works (especially his Χάρτα της Ελλάδος).

Amongst the intellectuals who dealt with the dilemma of whether to integrate Byzantium into the narrative of national Greek historical heritage were Anthimos Gazis, Panagiotis Kodrikas and Demetrios Katartzis. In their works, they present the Byzantine heritage as an essential part of historical continuity. Gazis\textsuperscript{21}, for example, produced a biographical dictionary in which he included biographies of writers of the classical Greek, Hellenistic, and Byzantine era. For Kodrikas\textsuperscript{22} the Byzantine period plays an important role in unifying the historical Greek past and its present. In the historical synthesis of Katartzis\textsuperscript{23}, information is provided about Greek history since ancient times, partly through the projection of the achievements of Ancient Greek and Byzantine eminent personalities. Through their works, Gazis, Kodrikas and Katartzis convey that Greek language and Byzantium are major historical links, and by extension prove that there is a connection between Ancient Greece, Byzantium and Modern Greece. They therefore set a foundation for a newly defined history based on the historical continuity of Hellenism.

The promotion of an identification with a common origin, aimed to familiarise the Greeks with their historical heritage and to create a strong bond for the members of the re-defined nation. The notion of an ancestral linkage, the creation of a sense of continuity would make the Greeks gradually come to perceive of themselves as the natural inheritors of the classical Greek civilisation. Korais would use this notion to urge the Greek youth to follow in the

\textsuperscript{19} Κοραής Αδαμάντιος, «Αδελφική Διδασκαλία: Προς τους Ευρισκομένους κατά Πάσαν την Οθωμανικήν Επικράτειαν Γρακούζ», Κοραής: Απαντά τα Πρωτότυπα Έργα, επιμ. Βαλέτας Γ., Τόμος A1, Αθήνα, Δωρίκος, 1964, σσ. 33-60.
\textsuperscript{20} Αξιολός Λουκάς, Ρήμας Βελστνιλής. Σταθοί και Όρα στην Διαμόρφωση της Εθνικής και Κοινωνικής Συνείδησης στην Ελλάδα, Αθήνα, Στοιχατής, 2003, σσ. 455.
\textsuperscript{21} Γιάζης Ανθώνιος, Λειχέν της ελληνικής γλώσσης τριτόμοι, υπό Αρχιμανδρίτου Ανθώνιου Γαζή, Γκαρπολάς Κωνσταντίνος, Ματακάθης Χριστόδουλος, εν Βιενή, Αντώνιος Μπέκκι, 1835-1837.
\textsuperscript{22} Κοδρίκας Παναγιώτης, Μελέτη της κοινής ελληνικής διαλέκτου, Παρισι, 1818.
\textsuperscript{23} Καταρτζής Δημήτριος, Τα Ευρισκομένα, επιμέλεια Δημαράς Κ.Θ., Αθήνα, ΟΜΕΔ, 1970.
footsteps of their ancestors’ glory. He would also recommend the maintenance of a pure descent through the avoidance of intermarriage.

For many Greek intellectuals the connection with the Classical Greek heritage was a measure according to which the Greeks could judge the political present, compare their present state with that of their ancestors and realise the need for drastic changes. Ancestral history was employed in order to demonstrate what could be achieved by individuals, as well as by the collective body. Rhigas was amongst the intellectuals who often mentioned the accomplishments of the ancestors and so contributed to implanting in the public this ‘comparative’ awareness. He writes:

Every judicious patriot is saddened by seeing the wretched descendants of Aristotle and Plato, stripped totally from the idea of philosophy, or as they grew old with rare Greek dialect books, they benefited little or not at all.

24 Korais writes: «Ανεξήγητο λαόν, οι νέοι φιλόσοφοι της Ελλάδος, την προθυμίαν να φωτίσετε την πατρίδα, δια να ανακάλοσον πάλιν εις αυτή την αρχαίαν των πρωγόνων μας δόξαν. Ενθυμηθήκητε, ότι είσθε Ομήρου, Αριστοτέλους, Πλάτωνος, Δημοσθένους, Θουκυδίδου, Σοφοκλέους, και μορίουν άλλοι τουότεν ανόροι απόγονοι. Συλλογισθήκητε πόσους κόπους υπέφεραν οι θαυμαστοί ούτοι ανδρείς, δια να τιμήσουν την πατρίδα, πόσην δέξαν αξέλαβαν όντες απ’ αυτήν, πόσην λαμβάνον έπτι και μετά θάνατον από τα σοφά της Ευρωπίας έδην.»; “Increase, lovers of the arts of Greece, the willingness to enlighten your country, in order to revive the ancient glory in it of our ancestors. Remember that you are Homer’s Aristotle’s, Plato’s, Demosthenes’, Thucydides’, Sophocles’, and of myriads other such men’s descendants. Think of the efforts made by these remarkable men, to honour their country, and how much glory they gained from such efforts diachronically by the wise European nations” (Korais: Αδακάληνο, «Προλεγόμενα Ομήρου», Κοραίος: Απαντα τα Προσότσα Εργα, επμ. Βαλέτας Γ., Τόμος Α1, Αθήνα, Δωρικός, 1964, σελ. 93).

25 Korais writes: «Να μη δελεασθή κανείς από σας από επιθυμίαν γάμου έξών της Ελλάδος, να μη λησμονήσει ότι γεννημένοι από Έλληνας χρεωστεί να γεννήσει όχι Ιταλός, όχι Γάλλος, Αγγλός ή Γερμανός, αλλά γεννήσεις Έλληνας εις αυτήν την πατρική φωλεάν, την Ελλάδαν; “No-one should be tempted to marry a foreigner to Greece, not forgetting that being born Greek should give birth not to Italians, not to French, not to English or Germans, but to pure Greeks in this fatherly nest, Greece.” (Koraiος Αδαμάντιος, «Προλεγόμενα Ομήρου», Κοραιος: Απαντα τα Προσότσα Εργα, επμ. Βαλέτας Γ., Τόμος Α1, Αθήνα, Δωρικός, 1964, σελ. 90.)

26 Βελεστινής Ρήγας, Φυσικής Απάντηση δια τούς Αρχίνους και Φιλολογικές Ελέληνας, ιν ηεο Γερμανικος και Γαλλικής Διεξέτσαν Εξερεύνησεν παρο τού Ρήγα Βελεστινής, Θεταλδόι Ουίνοις Αλλολόιαν Εξεδθή, προς Όφελειαν του Ομογενού, εν Βιέννη, εκ της Τυπογραφία του Ευγενούς Τρατιντ, 1790, Αθήνα, Εκδοση Επιστημονικής Εταιρείας Μελέτης «Φερον – Βελεστινο – Ρήγα», 1991, σελ. ζ.
Likewise, Korais aimed through the portrayal of the past to provide a basis for comparison with the present, inciting the Greeks to carry out reforms. The following passage by Korais\(^{27}\) succinctly depicts how their awareness of association with the past would furnish necessary blueprints for change:

\[\text{Σν έζλνο ηόηε βιέπεη γηα πξώηε θνξά ην θξηθηό ζθηάρηξν ηεο ακάζεηάο ηνπ θαη γεκίδεη από θξίθε ξίρλνληαο ηα βιέκκαηά ηνπ ζηελ ηεξάζηηα απ' ηνπο δνμαζκέλνπο πξόγνλνύο ηνπ. Ωζηόζν απηή ε ζιηβεξή δηαπίζηωζε, θαζόινπ δελ ξίρλεη ηνπο Ύιιελεο ζηελ απειπηζία «θαηαγόκαζηε απ' ηνπο Ύιιελεο έιεγαλ κέζα ηνπο, πξέπεη λα πξνζπαζήζνπκε λα γίλνπκε άμηνη απηνύ ηνπ νλόκαηνο, ή κάλλιο ας μην το χουμε πια.».}\]

\[\text{The ethnos then sees for the first time the horrible scarecrow of its illiteracy and fills with horror by looking at the enormous distance that separates the ethnos from its glorified ancestors. However this sad realisation, does not make the Greeks despair: “we come from the Greeks, they said to themselves, we have to try to become worthy of that name, if not we should not have it any more.”.}\]

The awakening of a common historical memory reinforced the unity amongst the Greeks, their longing for freedom and increased their emotional attachment to the re-defined nation. By the end of the eighteenth century the interest in Ancient Greece, had become most evident. The acquaintance of the reading public with their historical heritage, with the dynamic civilisation of the Ancient Greek cities created the conviction that the political power of ancient democratic Athens was due to its system of social and political institutions as well as its ethical and cultural grandeur.\(^{28}\) This inspired the Modern Greeks to envisage their autonomy as a nation and motivated them to strive for their freedom through a War of Independence. Classical Greece, hence, became a model for political action and cultural development and one of the most significant points of reference for Modern Greek identity.\(^{29}\)

Through their acquaintance with their historical heritage, the Greeks were enabled to make a connection with a historical territory, to visualise a place as their homeland on which the

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\(^{27}\) Κοραής Αδαμάντιος, «Υπόμνημα για τη Σημερινή Κατάσταση του Πολιτισμού στην Ελλάδα», Κοραής: Άπαντα τα Πρωτότυπα Έργα, επιμ. Βαλέττος Γ., Τόμος Α1, Αθήνα, Διορκός, 1964, σελ. 159.

\(^{28}\) Σακελλάριος Γιώργος, Αρχαιολογία Σύνοπτική των Ελλήνων, Βιέννη, 1796.

new nation could be based. The production of maps, such as Rhigas’ Χάρτα τῆς Ἑλλάδος, were to educate them as to what constitutes their natural space\textsuperscript{30} and therefore where they themselves belong in space. The map is composed of twelve large sheets of paper. It comprises all areas where Greeks had lived or were living in the Balkans and Asia Minor and constitutes a monumental study of Greek history. Intending to emphasise the ancestral history and glory, the map is filled with historical, archaeological and geographical details: it is enriched with topographical diagrams of important Greek historical monuments, places, events, battles and victories and is annotated with old and new names of the toponymies of Ancient and Modern Greece. Works such as this, affirmed the association of the Greeks with a particular territory and such verifications by extension played an essential role in reinforcing their national consciousness.

In conclusion, it can be established that the Greek intellectuals played a key role in inculcating in the Greeks a re-defined historical consciousness. For this to happen many works were produced often presenting conflicting views over what constituted Greek historical heritage. The radical thinkers of the Greek Enlightenment, focused on promoting an identification with the Classical Greek era. Other Greek intellectuals, in trying to create an historical continuity, integrated into the historical narrative not only the ancient Greek but also the Byzantine past. These efforts ethically, politically as well as culturally inspired the Greeks, strengthened their social ties and enabled them to make a connection with an historical territory.

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\textsuperscript{30} Λέκκας Παντελής Ε., Το Παιχνίδι με τον Χρόνο – Εθνικισμός και Νεοτερικότητα, Αθήνα, Ελληνικά Γράμματα, 2001, σελ. 254.


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