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SACRED HISTORY, SACRED TIME:
A COMPARATIVE CULTURAL STUDY OF THE COMMEMORATION OF
INDEPENDENCE WARS IN MODERN GREECE AND THE USA

by

EMMANOUIL ANDROULAKIS

Under the Direction of Louis A. Ruprecht, PhD

ABSTRACT

In view of the Bicentenary of the Greek Revolution in 2021, I explore aspects of similarity and difference between Greece and the USA, by looking at how their Wars of Independence or Revolutions (1776-1781 and 1821-1830), respectively have been remembered and commemorated as well as mythologized as origin stories, in the context of national identity-formation, and as events in the framework of modern World History. Such concentration on national myths and commemorations will enable me to develop closer attention to the civil religion and nationalism in both contexts. I focus, in particular, on the Cosmogony of the two nations (Founders and Foundations), Manifest Destiny and the *Megali Idea* (Notions of Exceptional Chosenness and Expansionist Mission), as well as on National Days, Centennials and Bicentennials (Calendar and Ritual).

INDEX WORDS: Modern Greece, USA, Revolutions, Nationalism, Myth, Civil religion,
National Origins, Commemorations

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2020

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DEDICATION

To Aselina, for her endless love and support.

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1 INTRODUCTION

There is no history without dates.
(Claude Levi- Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, p.258)

1.1 Preliminaries.

The endeavor to comprehend how World History progresses, if we believe that it progresses, and whether we believe that it is developing toward some ultimate end or goal, involves us in a fascinating yet extremely complex set of questions. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (offered biennially between 1821 and 1830), G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) argued that by examining the logic of historical progression we can perceive how later stages offer us better concepts and ideas. The Idealist philosopher's conception of World History was characterized by a narrative of stages constituted by specific crises that led the world toward a more expansive conception of freedom, which Hegel took to be the ultimate end of history. If freedom was the end, then abolition of slavery was the political goal, together with the constitution of free subjects who understand that freedom is constrained by responsibility, thereby consciously making choices in agreement with universal principles, situated moral laws, and a clear understanding of collective responsibility.

In his analysis, Hegel perceives World History to develop *dialectically*, whereby any given social and historical arrangement confronts problems and/or contradictions that it lacks the resources to resolve. Confronted with a dilemma, social historical subjects create new distinctions and create new categories; these are the result of what he often calls tragic collisions. Especially at the level of ideas, Hegel sees both creation and destruction in each stage of progress. Ancient Greece, for example, arose after a lengthy war against Persia, and centuries later it was conquered by Rome. According to Hegel, at every stage knowledge and ethical substance become insufficient or inadequate to resolve a pressing problem and then a need to

find new categories and ideas arises. Greece's social norms and viewpoints thus were subsequently not lost in Rome or early Modern Europe, but they were dramatically transformed, which leads us to the conclusion that, what Hegel calls Spirit (*Geist*), moves in a cumulative way, as elements of previous stages are partially preserved while being fundamentally.

More specifically, given his primary interest in *freedom*, Hegel divides World History into three main stages: First, the despotic stage, which was symbolized by the "Eastern" (or "Oriental") world, where people know that only *one* person, the monarch or the king, is free. Second, it was the Greeks and the Romans who first recognized that *certain* persons - the citizens - are free. Crucially, it was in Republican Rome that the rhetoric and reality of slavery became an explicit problem. Finally, in Modern Europe, mainly through the influence of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the idea that that *all* human beings are actually free emerged for the first time, calling for the universal abolition of slavery in the name of a universal regime of rights. In this context, Hegel stresses the importance of Greece, which for him was the first place to have understood freedom as a partial political project; among the Greeks, he "feels himself immediately at home," for Greece is Europe's period of youth, its very literal beginning (Hegel 2001, 243). The Greeks saw their version of democracy as superior to Persian tyranny, but unlike the Roman Republic, they could not see slavery as a problem of cultural and political self-contradiction. We will come back to his treatment of Greece shortly, but before doing so, it is essential to explore Hegel's concept of freedom as a starting point for our discussion on the Age of Revolutions.

If the goal of History is freedom, then Hegel, who could not write outside of the political and historical conditions in which he lived, is the philosopher of modern Revolutions as the logical goal of history in the age of revolutions is freedom; he saw the logical goal of history in

the age of revolutions to be freedom. Despite his reputation as a conservative supporter of order, Hegel defended the emancipatory movements, which he witnessed both from proximity (in France, see Ritter 1982, 43 - 47) and from a distance (in Haiti, see Buck - Morss 2009, 18-19 and in Latin America, see Losurdo 2004, 99), but also experienced their collapse and how their initial aspirations were left unfulfilled. In other words, the contradiction Hegel saw in Ancient Greece appeared again in France (from the Rights of Man to the reign of Terror and the rise of Napoleon) as well as in Haiti (from Toussaint L'Ouverture's Constitution to the fall of Dessalines). And this is why Hegel is not only the philosopher of the Age of Revolutions, but also their harshest critic, as freedom is harder to achieve than to promote. Put differently, there is a paradox to many liberatory movements: they remain blind to their own lingering tyranny.

For Hegel, the nation is the best guarantor of liberties, and the course of history he believed he was witnessing was the movement from empires to nations, because, as we saw above, in the empires, only one was free. Empires were fundamentally tyrannical structures, especially for colonies, and the fact of argument for the nation is the rhetoric of liberty putting an end on empire. This brings us closer to the primary interest of this thesis, namely, the comparison between the Wars of Independence in the USA and Modern Greece. Did the spirit of Freedom animate them, too? Because the achievement of the nation-state is one thing; the achievement of freedom is something else. And for both the USA and Modern Greece, the Age of Revolutions meant national independence movements breaking free of empires, in the name of freedom.

Here, we should be reminded of how the story unfolded: forty-five years following the outbreak of the American Revolution¹ (1776) and thirty-eight after the US was founded (1783),

¹ Technically speaking, the terms "War of Independence" and "Revolution" can have different meanings. The first may denote the struggle to obtain the status of an independent sovereign nation while the second implies may imply a change of political order committed to a greater regime of individual rights. See Ilan Rachum. 1993. "From "American Independence" to the "American Revolution"", *Journal of*

the Greek War of Independence erupted (1821), and nine years later (1830), the modern Greek nation-state was founded. How Hegel saw these two revolutionary causes is quite intriguing, and both cases present certain peculiarities for his analysis. When it comes to Hegel's treatment of the USA, I wish to bring our attention to seven pages of his *Lectures* that he dedicates to the "New World" (2001, 98-104). Here, although he was convinced that its time had not yet come, Hegel was undoubtedly aware of the fact that a new nation had already begun its own historical course on the other side of the Atlantic. Apart from a few references to the civilizations that had flourished there before European colonization (and his problematic views on Africans and Native Americans), he makes the following observations: First, he saw the two continents (northern and southern) going in two opposite directions, "the first in political respect, the latter in regard to religion. A wider distinction is presented in the fact, that South America was *conquered*, but North America *colonized*" (2001, 101).² He then observed that "the fundamental character" of the community in the North lay in the pursuit of profit and gain, as well as the "freedom of worship" (2001, 102). Also, the absence of a direct enemy state, as well as the lack of pressure to determine the "general object of the State" (2001, 103), he took to be advantages. The object of the young North American state, Hegel argued, would be achieved as soon as the expansion into the plains across the Mississippi river would be completed (it was already taking place by the time Hegel was writing these lines), and the citizens would develop new markets, drawing thus our attention yet again to an emerging North American materialism. America therefore "is the

American Studies, 27 (1): 73-81. However, for the purpose of this thesis the two terms will be used interchangeably, in relation to Greece and the US, where the two projects were consistently linked.

² Hegel says this only because the indigenous Americans remained, relatively speaking, invisible to him. This is important to our argument because in the Greek case, the modern Greeks *were* the indigenous people. The Greek claim to indigeneity (we are freeing ourselves from the latest of our occupiers), together with Hegel's implicit linking of ancient and modern Greeks, makes it impossible for them to remain "invisible".

land of the future in the ages that lie before us, where the burden of the World's History shall reveal itself" (2001, 104).

What Hegel implies with these observations is that when it comes to America, there is a kind of incompleteness in its conception of freedom, and as such, it does not yet realize the end of the philosophy of History. Therefore, for a contemporary philosopher there is nothing yet to say, and this work is left for future historical research to investigate. America is not yet fully included in the dialectics of history and is presented primarily as a geographical phenomenon, as it does not possess stable borders, there is only interest for trade and profit as well as a morally individualist Protestant conception of freedom that seems to keep them from having a sufficient connection or a sense of responsibility to one another. It is as if America is not yet worthy of philosophical consideration, just as Hegel argued earlier about Africa, which he saw as unhistorical and not having "movement or development to exhibit" (2001, 117). And this probably "justifies" (in his view) his treatment of both the indigenous populations of the Americas as well as the African populations on both sides of the Atlantic: they were for him invisible, or philosophically irrelevant to the story of freedom; they simply did not have a place in the story of World History Hegel wished to tell. If he saw them, then the American northern hemisphere would also be considered as *conquered* (as its southern counterpart had been) and not simply *colonized*. For Hegel saw slavery in America, or the institution of slavery in general, in, to say the least, an ambiguous way. As Robert Bernasconi (2008, 56) has put it:

If in Africa the distinction between masters and slaves is arbitrary, that marks it off from the Greek idea of slavery, where slaves are slaves by nature. African slavery is natural, but it works in an arbitrary way. There is an implication that one of the reasons why African slavery is 'almost worse' than slavery by Europeans is that in the former the question of who is master and who is slave is arbitrary. It is determined in contingent fashion by victory in war. By contrast, for the Greeks The slave is a slave by nature, which meant that only certain people could properly be enslaved. Hegel in

his Philosophy of History presents freedom for some as a Stage on the way to freedom for all. On Hegel's analysis, it is *only by being enslaved by Europeans that Africans learn this idea of freedom*. (italics mine)

Does this mean that Hegel was as blind as the ancient Greeks and the French Revolutionaries? Most likely, but this is a broad question that requires a more in-depth discussion that lies outside my present purposes. What concerns us here is the contradiction he saw in North America. And if this is the case, then America is as self-contradicting as ancient Rome: proud of being a Republic that recognized the problem of slavery; but blind to its own lingering tyranny. Let us not forget that Roman iconography flourished in the New World's first republic. For American (and French) Revolutionaries, America was the embodiment of Roman virtue: it adopted Roman symbols (the Roman legion's eagle) and quotations in Latin (*E pluribus unum*), American universities acquired their "campus," the government acquired a "Senate" and finally, a "Capitol" was built (Woodward 1968, 63-64).

But as Rome could see its slavery as a problem and yet did not reach the ultimate goal of abolition, modern America could not see the indigenous populations and the Africans who were coercively brought to its shores as free or equal: they were so strongly connected to geographical expansion and the emerging plantation economy, that the new country could not let them go. And that is why it has to be reiterated that Hegel is *the* philosopher of the Age of Revolutions, because he understood that freedom is philosophically complicated, and its modern achievement had been ambiguous. That happened in Ancient Greece, that happened in France, that might happen in America. And now we are brought back to the Greek case.

As implied above, the time frame within which Hegel delivered his lecture course, coincided precisely with the Greek War of Independence (1821-1830). Though Hegel would not live to see Greece liberated, he himself, like most Europeans, supported the Greek cause. And

the question that arises is: How did Hegel see the Modern Greek cause vis-à-vis Ancient Greece? As we saw above, Hegel followed the Revolutions in France and Haiti very closely in the reporting in newspapers and gazettes; it is more than likely that he similarly tracked the events of the Greek Revolution. First of all, as Ruprecht has emphasized³, in his Lectures on World History, Hegel sees Greece as the first home of Europe (as opposed to the East) where we see a “rebirth” (*Wiedergeburt*) of the Spirit. It is remarkable that Hegel uses the word *Wiedergeburt*, which has also been translated as “Palingenesis” (2001, 243), a term that was used in Greece precisely to describe its War of Independence (*παλιγγενεσία* - *rebirth*). Secondly, Greece is described as eternally youthful, in much the same way that America was seen as a “New World” and “land of the future.” Hegel bookends his discussion of Ancient Greece with Achilles and Alexander, both of whom conquered dramatically, but died young. Is this a gesture to the Greek cause, which was largely unsuccessful by 1829?⁴ Thirdly, as Ruprecht rightly observes, Hegel refers to Ancient Greece as a “nation”, which is strikingly anachronistic in reference to ancient Greece, but relevant to developments in the Europe of the early 19th century, when national independence movements were taking their course. And finally, it is likely that, by contrasting Ancient Greece to Persia, Hegel also intended to contrast modern Greece to the Ottoman Empire (Ruprecht 2019, 24).

If Ancient Greece was Europe’s and freedom’s first home, then liberty was returning to its birthplace in the 1820s. As we shall see, Greece did deploy its own ancient past in its rhetoric

³ Louis A. Ruprecht Jr., "Freedom's Course: Hegel's Concept of World History and the Greek War for Independence (1821-1831)", p.21-23, which was first delivered at Emory University's "Europe and Beyond" seminar on March 4, 2019, and then again at the Comparative and Continental Philosophy Circle at the University of Leiden on May 25, 2019. Its publication will be forthcoming. These citations come from the manuscript version.

⁴ Greece did not become a fully independent state until 1830. With the Revolution having taken a bad turn in 1826-1827, it was not until the European intervention against the Ottoman Empire (the naval battle of Navarino on October 20, 1827) that Greek Independence became more likely.

of revolution, but this time it is the Modern Greeks who were enslaved; in a sense, they were the indigenous population of the Aegean world. And in a historical twist, Greece, once again, stood against the East: this time represented by the “sick man of Europe,” the Ottoman Empire that so often served as Europe’s Other (Said 1978). So, in a sense, when he says “Greece,” it is often unclear whether Hegel has the ancient or the modern nation in mind. But he knew that it was not free, and for a philosopher who understood the ambiguity of freedom, but recognized Greece as western freedom’s first home, it would be of great importance to determine whether the cause of modern Greece was going to be different or blind to its own unfreedom, just like the previous national liberation movements in the US, in France and in Haiti. Who can argue that all of this does not make Hegel a political thinker of great relevance and interest to the 21st century?

1.2 Purpose of the Study.

As we saw above, Hegel made some brief but quite prescient comments on the nascent United States, and while he did not live long enough to see modern Greece liberated, his lectures on World History dedicate a disproportionate amount of time to Greece. In order to make sense of the ambiguity, let us return to the American case: With regard to the United States again, American historian David Hollinger complained in 1999 that theorists of nationalism “tended to circle around the United States like boy scouts that have spotted a clump of poison oak” (Hollinger 1999, 116), highlighting that, with few notable exceptions, the American case had generally been neglected. This came as a surprise to him since the USA “was the most successful nationalist project in all of modern history” and thus “it made as much sense as a literature on rock and roll that treats Chuck Berry as just another performer with a guitar and a southern accent” (Hollinger *ibid.*, 117). Similarly, in the 2000 postscript of his captivating *Postethnic America*, Hollinger expanded his previous argument by reminding his readers that the US is not a

young country (politically speaking) since there is no other country in the world that is still operating based on a Constitution adopted in the 18th century (Hollinger 2000, 217). Likewise, Susan - Mary Grant characterizes the United States as “conspicuously absent” from the discourse on nations and nationalism in both earliest scholarly works and more recent ones. And when nationalism is discussed in the American context, she argues that it “tends to be in one of two ways. The first emphasizes the process whereby the thirteen British colonies broke away from the “mother country.” On the other hand, America is mentioned only in passing, either in order to dismiss American nationalism or to suggest that it is in America as well as in Europe that the “roots of modern nationalism are to be found” (1996, 106-107). Similar arguments have been put forward by Bernard Yack who has suggested that we “junk the image of the US as a young nation” (Yack 1997, 101-102), and also by Comer Vann Woodward, who recommends that we stop seeing it as “the eternal youth” (Woodward 1968, 64-83). More recent scholars have stressed the importance of overcoming notions of exceptionalism with regard to the US case, as this approach will enable us to come up with more fresh ideas about nation formation in a comparative manner (Bender 2006; Trautsch 2016). Is this the time, then, to put American independence on the comparative map? And how does Greek independence fit into the comparison?

When it comes to discussion of the “Age of Revolutions” and its international effects, it seems that the Greek War of Independence hardly fits in the overall narrative. Eric Hobsbawm (1961) dedicated merely two-and-a-half pages to the Greek cause (Hobsbawm 1961, 140-141), which he basically sees as an aftermath to the French Revolution. In his *The Age of Democratic Revolution* (1959), R. R. Palmer argues that the democratic revolutions did not expand beyond Poland. More recently, in their analysis of revolutions in a global context, Armitage and

Subrahmanyam (2010) do not even mention Greece. Moreover, their global map (Map 1) of Revolutionary struggles (2010, xx-xxi), which is an adaptation from Bayly (2004, 84-85) and encompasses the entire inhabited world, completely ignores the Greek case, despite the overall attempt to showcase a global pattern of converging revolutions.

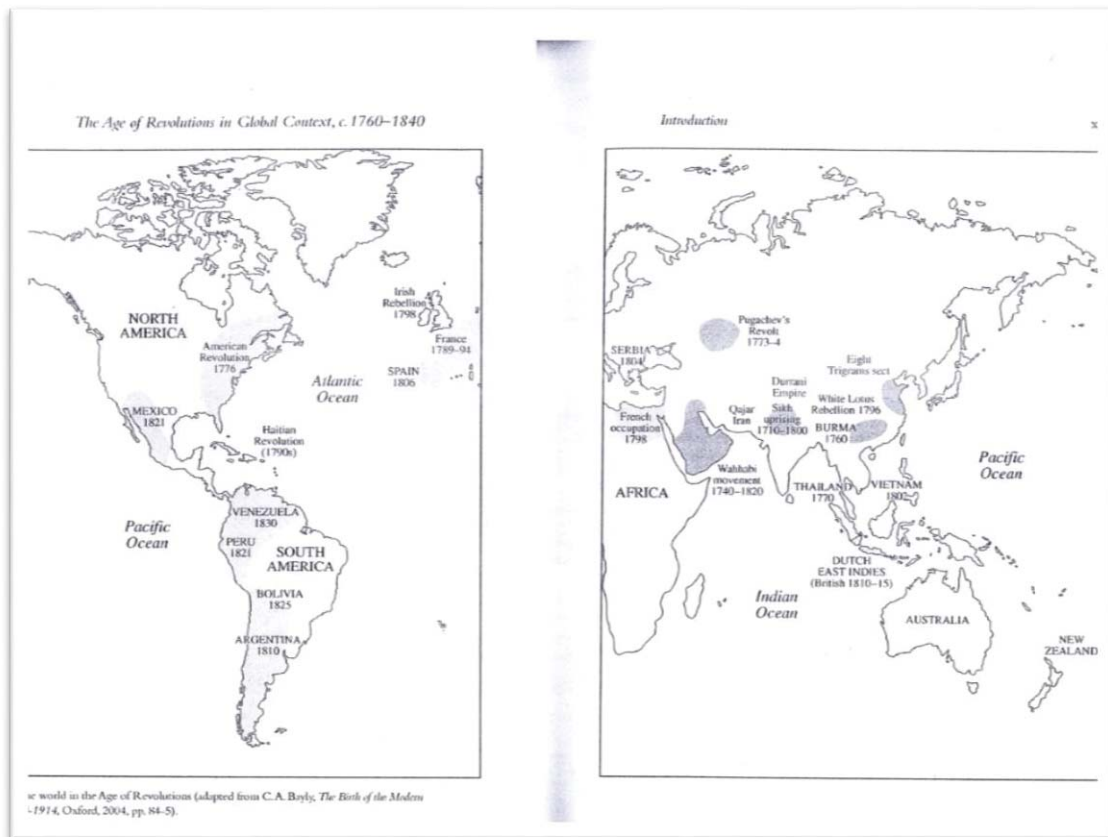


Figure 1 The Age of Revolutions

(The age of revolutions in global context, c.1760-1840, pp. xx-xxi)

Furthermore, in Greek scholarship, only one recent edited volume (Pizanias 2009) attempted to put the Greek cause in a European or Mediterranean context. Finally, in David Armitage's extensive list of Declarations of Independence from 1776 through 1993 (2007, 146-155), the Greek Declaration is absent. In short, both cases have been under-represented both

theoretically and comparatively. It will be illuminating to bring Hegel back into our discussion at this point. Hegel sees both Greece and the US as young countries and eternally youthful. It is possible that this eternal youth is related to their proximity to their origins and therefore both countries invite the exceptional amnesia with which they are treated. If, for example, one is going to have a myth of origins (the Revolution), then must one lift up the cause of freedom and ignore the persistence of slavery? When we come to the myth of origins, the rhetoric of freedom has to be there without any of Hegel's ambivalence. So, by placing America and Greece in comparative dialogue, we also see the ways in which the discussions of Greece and the USA are working in Hegel, and we are also in a position to see how much work the creation of mythic origins has to do to lift up the freedom and forget the slavery. As we saw earlier, one can be extremely idealistic about the Revolution and freedom, and willfully ignorant of the practical shortcomings.

In this context, the task of this thesis is an attempt to compare aspects of ritual memory and concepts of *sacred* history in these two revolutionary nations, namely, modern Greece and the USA. I intend to explore similarities and differences between these two countries, by looking at how their Wars of Independence have been remembered as national founding myths and established in the context of national identity-formation. Such concentration on national myths and historical memory will enable me to develop closer attention to the concept of civil religion and civic nationalism in both contexts. However, the reason for choosing these two countries may not be immediately obvious, and so some further explanation is required.

My goal is to bring the American and Greek cases together and to explore what similarities or differences can be established with regard to their respective notions of sacred memory. Comparisons are not easy, especially when two countries such as the United States and

Greece have rarely, if ever, been compared before now. Both are usually viewed through the lens of exceptionalism, but at the same time they have also been exceptionally neglected: One is seen as the “first new Nation” (Lipset 1963) while the other is burdened with the assertion of national continuity from the Classical Period, through Byzantium to modern times (Liakos 2001, 30-34). One is part of the Atlantic World, while the other is part of the Mediterranean World, “on the margins of Europe” (Herzfeld 1987, 28-30). One is considered multicultural and multiethnic, while the other is thought to display a high degree of ethnic homogeneity. Furthermore (and this is of particular interest for our analysis), the separation of Church and State was established early in the US case, while in Greece, the Church was “nationalized” just a few years after Greek Independence. However, at the same time, both countries arose in what is often called the “age of revolutions” at the critical point when the Great Western Transformation (Hodgson 1993, 44-71) had come to fruition, and gave rise to the new age of nations, a product of both the Enlightenment and Romanticism (Hroch 2007, 4-18).

Moreover, both countries repeatedly altered their national borders, always to obtain a disproportionately larger territory than the one they initially possessed. Also, while it is worth examining each Revolution on its own terms (with its local roots and regional developments), we cannot overlook the fact that, up to a point, both revolutionary causes were influenced by the same modern ideas of liberty and freedom, as highlighted by Hegel. It should be noted, for example, that Greek revolutionaries, just a few months after the outbreak of the War of Independence, in an effort to internationalize the Greek cause, sought help both from the capitals of Europe as well as from the other side of the Atlantic (Kremidas 2016, 79).⁵ It should also be

⁵ The US did not officially recognize the Greek Revolution. (It also did not recognize Haiti as a sovereign nation-state until 1862, when the American position on abolition had changed). However, private American philhellenic societies contributed to the cause materially. On the other hand, while Haiti was unable to contribute financially, it was the first nation to recognize the Greek Independence, in February 1822. In a

noted that the Greek National Anthem (the *Hymn to Liberty*, published for the first time in 1825), acknowledges American philhellenic support in one of its of its one hundred and fifty-eight stanzas (No 22):

*Γκαρδιακά χαροποιήθει και του Βάσιγκτον η γη
και τα σίδερα ενθυμήθει που την έδεναν κι αυτή.⁶*

*Heartfelt sympathy sprang forth also from Washington's land
Remembering the shackles that once bound her.⁷*

1.3 Methodology.

Since the mythological and religious aspects of nationalism are a vast and complex topic, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary. My work is going to be based on library research, more particularly on the comparative discussion of materials drawn from various primary and secondary sources from the disciplines of anthropology, history, and comparative religion. As should be clear, I am not interested in military or diplomatic history. Nor is it my intention to develop a broader discussion on the causes of the Revolutions: firstly because they have been repeatedly interpreted and reinterpreted and secondly because I am concerned not so much in the actuality, as in the construction of the past - not in the past for its own sake, but rather for its role

letter to prominent Greeks residing in Paris, Haitian President Jean-Pierre Boyer wrote:” *Citizens! Convey to your co-patriots the warm wishes that the people of Haiti send on behalf of your liberation. The descendants of ancient Hellenes look forward, in the reawakening of their history, to trophies worthy of Salamis. May they prove to be like their ancestors and guided by the commands of Miltiades, and be able, in the fields of the new Marathon, to achieve the triumph of the holy affair that they have undertaken on behalf of their rights, religion and motherland. May it be, at last, through their wise decisions, that they will be commemorated by history as the heirs of the endurance and virtues of their ancestors*”, see E.G. Sideris and A. A. Konsta.2005. “A Letter from Jean-Pierre Boyer to Greek Revolutionaries”, *Journal of Haitian Studies*, 11 (1) :167-171.

⁶ <http://users.sch.gr/vmentzios/innoseleyueria.htm>

⁷ Translation found in Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou 2002, *Founded on Freedom and Virtue: Documents Illustrating the Impact in the United States of the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1829*. New York & Athens: Caratzas, p. xxiii

in ongoing community-formation. I will attempt to highlight both cases and their diverse elements with a comparative - historical approach, however, given that this is a study that focuses more on mythologization and commemoration, the account of historical developments will aim at providing a general sense of “national time” and direction. In other words, by examining the literature on the early American and Greek historiographies and a selection on revolutionary and post - revolutionary texts, I wish to highlight the landmark changes which the two Independence Wars initiated in their respective cultures and societies, and how they transformed and reshaped the course of History, for both the North American and Greek peoples. More particularly, I am interested in examining the “cosmologies” implicit in these two nationalisms, in the sense that Bruce Kapferer offered in his comparative study of Sri Lankan and Australian nationalisms (1988). According to Kapferer’s anthropological analysis, nationalist cosmologies contain certain forms of “cultural logic” that can be assembled from the cultural elements of these cosmologies: the rituals, traditions, myths, and legends that help make sense of everyday experiences and are “imprinted” in ritual activities and narratives.

Theoretically speaking, apart from Hegel, whose non-metaphysical reading can provide valuable insights on the way we think about history and the world, I will utilize material by Marshall GS Hodgson, who has shown that World History can be done in a way that avoids Eurocentric prejudices and embraces broader theoretical concepts, but can also give us an exceptional view of modern Greece and the US. Furthermore, I will rely on Durkheim’s theoretical work on religion, which is seen as essentially a social creation, one that creates social categories and cultural reality, to explore the selective affinities between religion as a social reality and modern nationalism of a certain kind of cultural form. Other scholars, informed by Durkheim’s approach to religion in the modern period (Catherine Albanese, Robert Bellah, and

Gary Laderman) will provide me with additional tools of analysis: creeds and codes, civil religion, sacredness and sacrality. Also, scholars such as Carlton Hayes, a historian, or Ninian Smart, a comparative religious ethicist, can show us larger templates for examining modern nationalism as “religion-like.” At this point, I want to clarify that the main focus will not be on religion *per se*, i.e., Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity, nor their overall role in identity-formation, but rather on the notion of nationalism as a *form* of religion, which probably is the least developed theme in the relevant scholarship (Brubaker 2012). After all, as Gellner has put it “the problem with nationalism is not the intrusion of the sacred into the political [...] but about the sacralization process and salience of nations in the *modern world*. They attract sacralization as other real or potential political objects do not” (Gellner 1994, 72-73).

Put differently, I am concerned about how conceptions of sacred history and sacred time, and how the Revolutions and their impacts, within the context of the nationalist project, become *sacred* and *canonical*. The question that I want to investigate is this: How were the foundations of both national cosmologies established during and after their Wars of Independence, and why do they still persist? In other words, I am curious as to how the *Revolution* and its aftermath is consolidated in a *sacred narrative*, which later became a national *orthodoxy*. It is my hypothesis that the more *sacred* the nation is, the more telling the story of origins is framed in sacred terms. Sacred history posits a golden period of idealized origins that is more harmonious and absolute than what ambiguous historical facts tend to be. In this context, religion does not go away; it is displaced by nationalism’s sacred time, and for this reason sacred history is commemorated in religious ways.

French historian Marc Bloch once said that “it is too often supposed that the method of comparison has no other purpose than hunting out resemblances”. However, he also pointed out

that “correctly understood, the primary interest of the comparative method is, on the contrary, the observation of differences” (cited in Woodard 1968, 16). Therefore, my intention is to juxtapose the American and Greek case studies and try to present them in a conversation. In summing up, I believe that the Greek and American Revolutions have a lot to offer in an analysis of nationalism as a form of religion, especially when their mythic origins are placed side by side. By doing so, I will be able to obtain a better understanding of national myths in both contexts. Moreover, what I hope to offer is a contribution to the discourse on the development of nationalism and identity-formation.

1.4 Structure of the thesis.

In chapter 2, I am going to survey Marshall GS Hodgson’s take on European hegemony, as well as theories of nationalism, civil religion, and myth. More specifically, those theories that conceptualize nationalism as religion - like. In chapter 3, I am going to focus on the early stages of the national cosmogonies (the Revolutions) in both cases. In this regard, I am going to draw comparisons between their respective Founders and elements of their foundations. In chapter 4, I am going to delineate the origins of the notions of exceptional chosenness and expansionist missions, namely *Manifest Destiny* and the *Megali (Great) Idea*, as they unfolded after the consolidation of the new nation - states. In chapter 5, I am going to look specifically at commemorations and rituals, namely National Days, Centennials and Bicentennials. And finally, in chapter 6, I will recapitulate some of the main motifs of the thesis and will attempt to draw some concluding thoughts. With these clarifications, I proceed with my theoretical considerations.

2 THEORETICAL APPROACH

*[...]there is no way to give us an understanding of any society,
including our own, except through the stock of stories
which constitute its initial dramatic resources.
Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things.
(Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.216)*

2.1 “An accident of time and geography”⁸

In this discussion of the relationship between modern nationalism in relation to religion and myth, I begin with Marshall Hodgson’s analysis of modernity, or what he calls the Great Western Transmutation (GWT) (Hodgson 1993, 44-71), an unprecedented world event, that changed the fate of the globe forever. What Hodgson meant by the GWT was the culmination of a series of Revolutions that took place in Europe between 1600-1800 CE, namely: An *industrial* revolution, which entailed a novel kind of mechanization and specialization, as well as the rise of bureaucracy. A *political* revolution that derived from the exclusivity of sovereignty and the beginning of international law (Treaty of Westphalia 1648), the Glorious Revolution in England in 1688. A *scientific/geographical* revolution that involved the astronomical discoveries (Carl Sagan’s “the great demotions”) and the crossing of the Atlantic. A *religious* revolution, that stemmed from the Protestant Reformation and the wars over religion, as well as the emphasis on individuality against the mysticism of the religious elites. Finally, a *social and philosophical* revolution, central to which was the rise of the language of “rights” and the Enlightenment. All the above gave the Western Europeans “a decisively higher level of social power than was to be found elsewhere” (Hodgson 1993, 45), that led to the emergence of a new kind of individualism, a new respect for autonomy but harnessed in service to the common good.

⁸ This phrase is taken from Bruce Lawrence’s 1989 book, *Defenders of God*, p.42. Lawrence is inspired here by Marshall Hodgson’s account on the coincidental character of the *Great Western Transmutation*.

However, it must be clearly stated that Hodgson did not intend to attribute to the Occident any kind of intrinsic primacy over the rest of the world. Hodgson was committed to World History the same way Hegel was, but he was trying to do it avoiding Hegel's Eurocentric prejudices. As Ruprecht (2010) reminds us, Hodgson considers the GWT partially a matter of chance. *It had to happen somewhere, "it just so happened in Europe."* After all, in an ironic twist of history, many of the tools that contributed to the aforementioned evolution were not European: the compass, the printing press, gunpowder and the civil service exam all originated in China (Hodgson *ibid.*). But how these new tools were used is what contributed to Europe's acquiring of a hegemonic role: the compass, from a location device, enabled Europeans to cross the Atlantic (that just so happened to be three times smaller than the Pacific); the printing press, that triggered a massive production of literature, facilitated by the 24 letters of the Latin language (or other European vernaculars, as opposed to the 4.000 Chinese hieroglyphs); gunpowder, that put enormous power to the individual and could turn his gun against his superior; and the writing exam that enabled talented - not dependent on hereditary titles - people, to be elevated to bureaucratic hierarchies. That said, once the Transmutation happened in one geographical region (Europe), the rest of the world was just trying to catch up.

Yet, Hodgson did not consider the GWT just a matter of technology and economy. At the core of this seismic transmutation was a new conception of humanity and a commitment to liberty that changed social conditions forever and challenged views in relation to religion, authority, and tradition. The new ideology Hodgson calls *technicalization*, which he defines as "a condition of rationally calculative (and hence innovative) technical specialization, in which the several specialties are interdependent on a large enough scale to determine patterns of expectation in the key sectors of as society" (Hodgson *ibid.*, 55-56). Deliberately, Hodgson uses

the term technicalization instead of industrialization, which he sees only as an aspect of the first. It does have a material component, but it also comprises a new set of hopes or beliefs.

In this new world with its “expectation of continuous innovation” (Hodgson *ibid.*, 63), people were encouraged to experiment and challenge authorities; governments were made to meet expectations and change the laws in the name of progress; societies’ lower classes began to participate in the state’s affairs through mass production and consumption and education and finally, a new moral ideal arose: the individual as simultaneously an isolated and cooperative entity, who was bound to be at the same time cultivated and autonomous but also open to social co-operation. This new individual earned respect not on the basis of ancestry or title, but due to his contribution to social development. And for the first time, historical change was conceived in terms of steady progress. New prospects arose for wealth, knowledge, and freedom, and as Hodgson argues, every new generation had to innovate, produce, and expand into a greater level than the previous one (Hodgson *ibid.*, 64-65).

Within this context, a new story of anti-tyranny emerged. The working and innovating individual developed a self - conscious notion of autonomy, that set him or her free from the domination of absolute, and therefore unaccountable authority. As one historian has put it, “to be dependent in a society of interdependence was quite a different thing from being dependent or fearing dependence in a society in which institutions no longer integrated people's lives into a satisfying social order. This new social situation made contemporaries peculiarly sensitive to threats against their personal freedom” (Appleby 1976, 4). All persons were radically free and therefore were held responsible for their choices and actions. Consequently, authorities of all kinds (Kings, Popes, aristocracies etc.), once considered sovereign, mysterious, and sacred, where not only challenged, but in the process, some paid the price with their heads. The seismic

shift that the revolutions provoked, so intensive in time and extensive in space, shaped the world we live today, for another reason: what they did change, it was *how we perceive change*. And when finally, something so grand as a Revolution is achieved, it is also remembered. Thus, the triumph of Revolutions acquires an almost religious notion and value, their narrative histories become sacred, which in turn may develop into an orthodoxy. From then on, the memories of the sacred ancestors are both pressing and motivating.

In the decades that preceded both the American and the Greek Revolutions, these new radical and variously secularized ideas little by little overthrew the established picture of the eternal world of God and the Monarch, as Hegel put it, in the name of individual freedom and leveled against any form of slavery and servility. Hence, by 1776, a series of imposed Acts of Parliament (in which the American colonies were not represented) on the part of the British Empire were seen as a threat to the liberty and equal rights of the American colonies. Similarly, by 1821, this new political ideology of freedom had arrived in the Greek speaking world, that began to see itself as a totally distinct, and therefore unjustifiably dominated, by the Ottoman Empire, Europe's paradigmatic Other (Said 1978). We may read in this light some lyrics by Rigas Feraios, a Greek patriot (precursor to the Greek Revolution) lyrics of his song *Thourios* (War Song):

How long, oh brave young men, are we going to live in chains,
lonely like the lions, on the ridges of mountains?
It is better to have an hour of freedom
than forty years of life in slavery and in prison.

It was not just a matter or a condition of non-freedom. The mere existence of the despotic authority of One, meant slavery. From this viewpoint, the great revolutionary aspect was not the

actual signing of the Declaration of Independence, or the act of raising the banner of war against the Ottomans, but the idea that such revolutionary actions were possible in the minds of people.

Moreover, within these developments, religion was not left untouched: while it was absent from the new technological concepts, it was postulated as the enemy of the new science (Lawrence 1989, 46). However, it must be underlined that the new empiricism did not touch the masses: it was a matter of a group of elites. Therefore, even with the GWT and the Age of Reason, God was not dislodged from the minds of the masses (Lawrence *ibid.*, 51), yet it was at that point in time where the bonds with the Old Regime were shattered and revolutionary mobilization began. However, it has to be noted that secularization did not emerge evenly, especially in revolutionary conditions. For example, the US version of it was a practical response to the fact of religious pluralism, a situation that did not exist to the same degree in France or Greece. In France, the Revolution led to total hostility towards religion, whereas the first Greek Government sponsored religion, which was seen as part of the national identity and the savior of the Greek language.

However, shortly thereafter, a new force arose that ran opposite to the instability that the Revolutions brought: Romanticism, namely the idealization of past times, the glorification of the common, unspoiled by civilization people and their language, land, and history. While the struggles of revolutions were anchored in Enlightenment principles of rights and autonomy, it was the Romantics and their interest in the study and revival of the past who gave nationalism its “purposeful doctrine” (Hayes 1926, 52). As Hroch aptly puts it “the search for a new collective spirit need not necessarily have the character of a revolutionary dream of a new society: it can lead to a community of a new kind-namely, the nation” (2007, 7). A modern, “national character” so intimately tied to the idea of progress emerged as a type of new religion of modern

society, just as “clan totemism” was the religion of primordial societies (Mauss cited in Van der Deer 1999, 18-19).

Romanticism was history oriented. Its writers looked to the past, especially the idealized legends of the national background and its poets gave voice to the feeling of fraternity. In democratic and revolutionary ideals (such those of the Greek cause), romantics found a manifestation of their trust in the moral goodness of mankind. Thus, the future built in the past would not only secure political rights, but also man’s individuality and freedom in living and dying. In this light, history becomes the experience better suited to the confrontation with mortality; the nation (state) is thus bound with a constant historical continuum. Between Living and Dying, the new, in a dialectical-Hegelian sense, motif is Becoming (Marcus 1967, 128) . Prevailing religions were therefore nationalized and became one of the fields of practice in which the modern civil subject is produced, along with language (which has to be conserved), “race” (which is imagined as unique) and the arts (that are fetishized as the only ones in the world). Hence, the focus on the individual is now tied to the Romantic interest in community, and a new kind of nationalism is born, one that looks and feels “religious”. Exactly this notion of nationalism as a form of modern religion will be the topic of the following section.

2.2 Nationalism and Religion: An Overview.

Durkheim is one of the founders of the idea that the categories with which we organize our experience are social, rather than mental. Our experience of the world is not organized in terms of space and time, but in terms of metric units and clocks and calendars. Accordingly, he defined religion as *a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them. The second element thus holds a*

place in my definition that is no less essential than the first: In showing that the idea of religion is inseparable from the idea of a Church, it conveys the notion that religion must be an eminently collective thing (1995, 44). He therefore acknowledges that religion cannot be separated from social, everyday reality and that religion is perpetuated by the repetition of sentiments through myths, rituals, and symbols. And when Durkheim talks about *belief*, he means the inescapable character of religion: how, in other words, religion imposes practices and constructs emotions. And this is the way religion or a more subtle form of it like society, or the nation, endures through time. Take, for example, the French Revolution: Durkheim noted that purely secular things, products of the Age of Reason (Fatherland, Liberty) can be elevated to the level of a Sacred Ideal, i.e., a solution that can provide inner fulfillment (Durkheim *ibid.*, 215-216). In Durkheim's sense, society re-frames the nation as sacred, with its rites and commemorations. So, if God is a creator, then society, too, creates.

Durkheim shows how society provides the categories with which individuals organize their experience of the world. Peter Berger expands upon that idea to create his theory of "the social construction of reality." The idea of perpetuation is of great importance in the construction of any social worldview. This is one of the arguments Peter Berger makes in his work *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (1967). In it, Berger provides a very socially grounded view of religion and the sacred. He argues that religion is the product of shared categories that are perpetuated by constant social reinforcement and ritual practices. Because of the externalizing social nature of the human experience, religion offers a way to make sacred sense of reality and the universe. In this process, natural and/or artificial objects are sacralized and worshipped (which is why Durkheim can claim Totemism as the original, or elementary, form of religion, as a natural thing can stand for a social thing). However, a sacred

object must also be seen as the opposite of chaos as is frequently expressed in cosmogonic myths (Berger 1967, 27-28). When categories stop doing their work or stop making sense, *theodicy* in social terms is translated as the crisis of a breakdown in those social categories. Society gives us the categories of sacred and profane for religion and lends itself to dualistic good-versus evil-cosmogonies. In our case, the age of revolutions found a way to provide a secular version of this fundamentally religious dualistic cosmology.

Furthermore, many authors who have analyzed the similarities between religious traditions and nationalism rightly point out that it has been an under-researched topic. This situation can be explained by the social view of the nature of nationalism. As Anthony Smith points out: “It is usual to see in nationalism a modern secular ideology that replaces the religious systems of pre-modern, traditional societies. In this view, religion, and nationalism figure as two stages in the conventional distinction between tradition and modernity, and in an evolutionary framework that sees an inevitable movement - whether liberating or destructive from the one to the other” (Smith 2003, 9). In other words, scholars of religion have limited themselves to what is recognizable as religious, while progressive secularists refused to talk about it.

As we saw above, when Europeans no longer to promote a common Christian, but rather a distinct national identity, it was the God of the state (or in Llobera’s words “the God of Modernity,” 1999) that becomes the most important guarantor of liberty, justice and human security. Not surprisingly, modernist theorists of nationalism, such as Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson saw the boundaries overlap between the ideologies of religion and nationalism, but nevertheless regarded them as competing and incompatible ideologies because they were hard-core secularists. The reason was that they, mostly Marxists, believed the standard secularization theory that says religion goes away in revolutionary modernity and is replaced by the nation as a

result of capitalist development processes such as industrialization, urbanization, and bureaucratization of the administration.

More particularly, Eric Hobsbawm points out that “modern nationalism has taken religion as a reserve, a force that can challenge the nation's monopoly on the loyalty of its members” (1990, 68). Benedict Anderson (1991), while recognizing that nationalism is born out of the religious environment and was informed by the values of Protestantism in the formation of a new “imagined community,” however, he sees the emergence of nations as an unintended consequence of the Reformation. The link between nation-building and Protestantism is also recognized by Gellner (1983, 22-23), but he emphasizes that religion, like any other element in the life of traditional societies, cannot become part of the “modern nation's idiom.” In the same vein, Liah Greenfeld (2006, 92-114) also opposes to the identification of nationalism and religion, emphasizing the secular nature of modern European nationalism. She stresses that, in the case of nationalism, the highest authority, value and sources of power are secular in nature. In the case of religions, the highest authority and source of values and/or power is supernatural. In the context of nationalism, worldly phenomena may be sacralized, but Greenfeld does not consider sacralization and religion to be mutually reinforcing concepts.

Yet, it seems that the modern theorists quoted above ignore a number of factors. First, their understanding of secularization is simplified. As we saw earlier, religion was seen differently in the US, France, and Greece. Moreover, in most cases, by secularization, they understand the decline of religions as a whole, both public and private. Classical sociological theories, such as Durkheim's represented the view that secularization meant that religious institutions and practices were losing their social significance and control over public space and its resources were less and less affected by religious authority, its meaningful role. However,

more recent studies have shown that religions are still present in the public sphere, despite the institutional separation between state and religious institutions in most Western countries, although they are still primarily viewed as private rather than public. Decreasing the influence of religion in certain areas of social life (such as legislation) does not mean that religion is extinguished (Lawrence 1989; Casanova 1994).

Hvithamar (2009) has also argued that, when it comes to the relationship between nationalism and religion, the overall picture indicates that most researchers take the concept of religion for granted, as something obvious or given. Studies of nationalism tend to focus on the historical, social, and political sides of nationalism. Maybe this is the reason discussions have concentrated on the word ‘nation’ - *when* it came into being, *what* it consists of and *how* it works. What has not been discussed is what a diverse and dispersed concept the word ‘religion’ actually covers. Although there is widespread agreement that secular nationalism is related to religion (whether it involves the demise of religion, the transformation of religion into nationalism, or the political use of religious elements), there is little connection between the scholarship on nationalism and the scholarship on religion.

2.3 Nationalism as Religion.

Theoretically speaking, the topic of identifying nationalism as a religion was introduced by Carlton Hayes (1926,1960), who emphasized that nationalism is not only a political ideology, but also promotes strong emotional experience of intimate relation to the nation and is rooted in widespread generalizations about and references to supernatural external power. Nationalism, in his view, uses religious forms such as proclamations, doctrines and promises of faith, notions of immortality and salvation, feasting and mythology, sacred texts and rituals, etc., calling nationalism a “new religion of the people.” Nationalism, for Hayes, is a religion, both in its

substantive sense (because it involves the idea of collective temporal salvation) and in its functional sense: it functions as a religion with a god (or fatherland), national heroes and founding fathers, the concept of a chosen people, a theology (or mythology), the construction of an “imaginary institution of society” (to use Cornelius Castoriadis’ phrase (1975)), that generates emotional attachments similar to the traditional of theological virtues of faith and hope, all expressed through public rites and pilgrimages to sacred places, all performed in the name of the community martyrs, prophets, and saints, with their holy places, cults, scriptures, and holidays. Nationalism, like any religion, calls into play the intellect, the imagination, and the emotions which, taken together, construct a theology or mythology. But, while most world religions serve to unify, nationalism has proved to be a disintegrating factor that “re-enshrines the earlier tribal mission of a chosen people,” with its “tribal selfishness and vainglory”. It is not concerned with charity and justice and therefore, it is a constant threat to peace (1926, 93-125; 1960, 149).

Similarly, John E. Smith (1994), who, while does not deny the parallels between the symbols and aspirations of nationalism and religion (basing his argument heavily on Hayes’ previous work), suggests that it is no more than a *quasi-religion*, that emerges at times when a secular spirit prevails and religion finds itself subordinated to other interests. Nationalism most closely approaches the character of religion in the sense that it gives people a sense of purpose and a destiny that needs to be emulated through cultural values as a means of advancing. It offers a supreme object, value or ideal which calls forth dedication. But, the transposition of the sacred from its place in the religions proper, to the cult of the nation, its leader, and symbols (flags, anthems etc.), is a divisive and destructive phenomenon. Furthermore, he argues that the major religions also involve a struggle against idolatry, i.e. the replacement of the religious reality by any finite object or feature of ourselves. This struggle against idolatry is absent from quasi-

religions, in that they evoke and demand ultimate loyalty and devotion to a finite reality (1994:82-120). In this context, George Mosse has highlighted the liturgical side of nationalism, underlining the myths and symbols and the rites that appeal “to the longings of a multitude of people, and by drawing them into their orbit transformed a random mass into a cohesive and sometimes disciplined mass movement”. For Mosse, the new, secularized theology and liturgy are part of the participation of a drama and national cult. Historical consciousness was awakened by myths expressed through symbols, but also through public festivals and national monuments (1973, 40).

The more common aspects between nationalism and religion are also explored by Ninian Smart (1986), a comparative religious ethicist, who saw nationalism as the experience of participation in joint performative acts *charged* with strong emotions of belonging. For this reason, Smart paraphrases Renan by arguing that the nation is not “a daily plebiscite” (cited in Bhabha 1990, 19) but rather is “a daily sacrament”. Here once again, we can see how shifting attention from religion to the sacred, in a Durkheimian manner, brings new things into view. National identity is thus communicated through sacred language and celebrated in the making of mythic historiography, where myth is not so much fiction, but rather a *charged* and sacred story (mythos). Other aspects such as the heroic death, sacrifice, commemoration, a victory, or a defeat also enhance the personal experience of this mystical participation. In short, Smart asserts that “the nation as performative construct transcends the individuals who belong to it. This sometimes makes the sense of duty to the nation seem as if it is a duty to something Other. It mimics divine duty”. However, Smart (based his own ‘dimensions of religion’⁹) relates

⁹ **Doctrine/Philosophy** (the analysis of the nature of the Divine being, the formulation of religious teachings in an intellectually coherent form) - **Ritual** (private and public ceremonies) - **Mythic/Narrative** (Revelations that can answer ultimate questions) - **Experiential/Emotional** (the feelings and experience of devotion, liberation, inner

nationalism to “tribal” religion more than religion as it is today, i.e. strong in myth and experience, but weak in doctrine (Smart 1986, 143-153).

From an ethnosymbolist point of view, Anthony D. Smith seems to be more absolute: National identity has deep roots in fundamental sacred sources. This is proclaimed in his book *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National identity* (2003) in which he rejects both modernist assertions that religion plays almost no role in the analysis of nations or that the religious phenomenon is in decline (Smith 2003, 10). Nonetheless, Smith does not equate nationalism with religion or claims that nationalism is a secularized version of traditional religions. He takes a more cautious approach as, on the one hand, nationalism does not seek salvation in an *other-worldly* sphere, but nevertheless uses patterns and content of traditional religion. Therefore, it cannot be rendered to a mere political ideology. In this light, Smith places the emphasis on elements of a belief -system (myths, symbols, traditions etc.), that refer to the community, the territory, the history (a ‘Golden’ Age) and the destiny of the nation. Within this context, a religion of the people emerges: the return to the roots, the cult of authenticity and the sacrificial virtue of heroes and prophets, are simultaneously the ultimate guarantors and commitments of the *sacred communion*, elements that, according to Smith, can be detected in older belief-systems (Smooth *ibid.*, 254-255).

The maintenance of the authenticity of the sacred communion is also treated by Anthony Marx, however from another angle: that of *exclusion*. In his study *Faith in Nation* (2003), Marx seems to agree with Smith that in no case we can speak about the decline of religion. Contrary to that, Marx argues that European nationalism can be found in the religious conflict and intolerance of Medieval Europe, thus departing from analyses that pinpoint the origins of

peace) -**Ethical/Legal** (The Law) -**Social** (The group of people, the collective)- **Material** (creations, art, temples) (Smart 1996, 10-11)

nationalism in the Enlightenment, and ‘self - serving’ hagiographical distinctions of the inclusivity and solidarity of the West. For Marx, nationalism is a sentiment, arguing that rulers (namely kings and elites), required the cohesion and support of the masses (a “tribalistic coherence” amid conflict (Marx 2003, 200) within their efforts of state building and the only available sentiment of the time was religion. He thus analyses three cases of religious persecution that acted as powerful force of mass mobilization: Spain and the persecution of foreigners (Moors, Jews and ‘conversos’, anti-Protestantism in France (Night of Saint Bartholomew), and anti-Catholicism in England. In all three cases, those included were solidified and at the same time, those excluded were separated.

Finally, a different approach on the origins of nationalism in relation to Christianity is given by Adrian Hastings (1996) who argues that nationalism basically means two things: a theory and a practice. As a political theory that each nation should have its own state motivates the few. The more are moved by the belief that ethnic or national tradition is of special value. In this discussion, religion cannot be excluded from our assessment of nation formation and Hastings suggests that the Bible gave, at least in Christian world, the “model for the nation” (Hastings 1996, 4), through the following modes: it sanctifies the starting point, mythologizes and commemorates the threats to national identity, the social role of the clergy, the production of vernacular literature, the provision of a biblical model for the nation, the autocephalous church and the discovery of a unique national destiny (Hastings *ibid.*, 188). What Hastings means is that seeds cannot grow when the ground is not fertile.

Following the above, Michal Luczewski (2005) proposes to consider more thoroughly the analogy of nationalism to religion and he pinpoints several points of affinity such as: “*genetic* - the origins of nations may be traced back to religious roots; *structural* - they both deeply affect

human emotions and resort to similar values, symbols, myths, traditions/ceremonies; *functional*: nationalism - like religion before - may (de)legitimize the contemporary political order and simultaneously serve as a kind of secular healer of everyday anxieties, satisfying our search for immortality, dignity, and togetherness; *processual*: in their development, nations and religions follow similar patterns; processes of religious (de)secularization have their counterparts in the (de)nationalization of states and publics”.

2.4 Interlude: Civil Religion.

Civil religion as a concept describes phenomena related to the sacralization of the nation (Hvithamar and Warburg 2009). It refers to the totality of myths, rituals, symbols, and texts that sanctify the nation (the people) by reference to something transcendental, usually the Divine. While the roots of the term date back to Rousseau and were expanded upon by Durkheim, it was in the United States where scholars began to be interested in several religious aspects of modern nationalism. Terms that underlined American exceptionalism such as “American Creed,” “American way of life,” “Democratic Faith,” etc., began little by little to be used especially in the aftermath of the WWII (Cristi 2001, 48-49). However, it was not until Robert Bellah published his ground-breaking article on the subject in 1966, that the study of “civil religion in America” came of age.

Bellah emphasized the formidable role played in the United States by a religious dimension of nationalism, to which inadequate attention had been given, despite the fact that there was clearly a kind of religion that ran parallel to any particular religious confession, and one that had its own set of prophets, saints, martyrs and holy days. This religion was not aligned with any particular faith tradition (Bellah disconnects private religious belief from this concept), nor did it constitute a new form of religion, but he argued that it drew on both it contained

elements of both. Bellah described this civil religion as a collection of beliefs and rituals that sanctified the national community and bestowed a spiritual purpose to upon America's political processes. He thus showed the connection between politics and religion as intrinsic in the sanctification of certain elements of national community life in America, from the early days of the Republic until his own day (Bellah 1967). In other words, what Bellah was presenting, was the American sense of identity, mission, and destiny. The most fully developed theme of the article is the idea that the American nation fulfills God's will on earth. Central to this ideology are several religious figures (for example the founding Fathers), specific events of the past (the Revolution), places and locations sacred to the American nation (Gettysburg, Arlington) and finally the ritual expression that commemorate the above (Wilson 1974, 127-129). After all, Bellah begins his article by noting how US Presidents refer to God in public speeches, but never qualify that term with any other adjectives. That God is the standard God of the civil religion in America, distinct from the God of other religions (Jewish, Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant).

In Bellah's account, the *prophetic* role of the civil religion is emphasized in order to work against simply sacralizing the nation. Prophetic criticism is its very essence, such as viewing Lincoln in Christ-like terms, whose "salvific" martyr's death overcame the nation's "original sin" of slavery. For our purposes, we must notice how the three "times of trial" that Bellah invokes (the Revolution, the Civil War and the Vietnam War) are remembered in retrospect in the US, with a single meaning, even though they were all controversial at the time: not all colonists supported the Revolution; a civil war is by definition a disagreement; and Vietnam was passionately contested in 1966 when Bellah wrote the article.

In this light, Omer, and Springs (2013) argue that civil religion is not only embodied in rituals and symbols but also reflects certain understandings of “who we are” as a nation or society. Much like confessional religion, civil religion is often preoccupied with a myth of origins which in turn is related to identity and the coherence of a community. Rituals on the other hand generate reverence and commitment: they perpetuate memories of a glorious past and call for a brighter future, commemorate past sacrifices and mythologize a group’s overall historical significance. In that sense, they imply that civil religion is not categorically distinct from nationalism but can be a variety of nationalism.

Contrary to that view, Turner believes that theories of nationalism or civil religion have weak arguments when it comes to proving the unifying power of public rituals. It is not necessary, he argues, that the effects of these public manifestations are integrative. He therefore argues that, at its best, civil religion is occasionally connected with the “reactivation of the conscience collective” (1991, 59). In the same vein, Santiago (2009), following Turner’s argument, believes that social integration in modern societies is not brought about by cultural cohesion. He rejects the idea that religion has the capacity to unite under “a banner of a moral universe” (ibid, p.399). In this sense, he argues that public political rituals or other expressions of “cultural cohesion” do not provide any information regarding their function or effects on social integration.

On a different level, Annika Hvithamar (2009) argues that, whereas scholars of nationalism have not treated the concept of “religion” critically enough or in a sufficiently differentiated manner, scholars of civil religion rarely have considered the historiography of the word ‘nation’ to any great degree. The basic argument of nationalism studies about the origin of nationalism, is not taken much into account by theorists of civil religion. Nor is the debate on the

legitimizing sentiments of nationalism proposed by, e.g., Hayes and Smith. Rather, nationalism is seen as a self-serving ideology imposed from above and without relevance for religious studies, whereas civil religion is something qualitatively different and altruistic, rising from below. Thus, “Bellah and his followers see American civil religion as a concept that is unique to the Americans rather than a concept that characterizes the American kind of nationalism” (ibid., 113).

2.5 On myths and national myths.

In 1980, American historian James O. Robertson expressed his conviction that one could not understand any people without understanding their myths - the non-rational embodiment of their experience as a people, upon which they depended for their vision and motivation (Robertson 1980, xvii). It is true that emotionally charged beliefs, often expressed in the form of myths, have played a crucial role, both in ancient and modern contexts. According to Schorer:

Myths are the instruments by which we continually struggle to make our experience intelligible to ourselves. A myth is a large, controlling image that gives philosophical meaning to the facts of ordinary life; that is, which has *organizing value for experience*. A mythology is a more or less articulated body of such images, a pantheon. Myth is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life, of a primary awareness of man, in the universe, capable of many configurations, upon which all particular opinions and attitudes depend. (1960: 355–56) (italics mine)

Myths are not timeless creations; they are the product of certain historical conditions that serve to legitimize and/or criticize the *existing* order. Sorel (1999, 116-117), who saw myth as a potential generator of radical social change, has argued that “myths must be judged as a means of acting on the present; all discussion of the method of applying them as future history is devoid of sense.” Likewise, Eric Dardel has opined that the mythic is not about the past, but about the present: because the receiver of the myth is transported into the time of happening, becoming a

witness of a world without a past or a future. Also, with repetition and reproduction, the experience of the eternal life is transmitted by the return of known, sanctified narratives (1984, 231). In Durkheimian terms, the idea is that eternal life is a social reality individual die, but the society lives on.

Few scholars of comparative religion took the concept of mythic origins as more fundamental than Mircea Eliade who has argued that the role of myth is rather simple: it narrates a true history that relates an event with primordial time and the origins. And the truth of this cosmogonic truth is the existence of this world. After the creation, “other events occurred, and man as he is today is the direct result of those mythical events, he is constituted by those events. He is mortal because something happened in *illo tempore*” (1963, 5-11). In extending his argument, Eliade asserted that the most significant part of any society's past is its beginning. Formative periods are marked by the attraction and prestige of origins. They incarnate the golden age, the perfection of beginnings, and give rise to the notion that “it is the first manifestation of a thing that is significant and valid” (ibid., 34). “The time of origin,” continues Eliade, is considered to be a “strong time” precisely because it was in some way the “receptacle” for a new creation. Of course, Eliade developed these ideas in his study of primordial myth and religion; however, the same notion has been advanced by researchers of modern society and nationalism. Rubin Gotesky for example, believes that mythmaking is omnipresent [in modern nations]: “every culture will create and value its own myths, not because it may not be able to distinguish between truth and falsity, but because their function is to maintain and preserve a culture against disruption and destruction” (cited in Sebba 1962, 141). For Geertz, too, myth is a part of a people’s culture, just like art and ritual (Geertz 1973, 81).

The whole concept of Myth was contested in the Age of Reason, as it was seen as lacking rationality, which is why the Romantics, such as Hegel, reclaimed myth! It was perceived as a passing phase in the development of the world, similar to the relationship of childhood to adulthood of an adult: as a person leaves childhood behind, so he/she outgrows its mythical period. Contrary to that, the Romantic movement regarded myths as aspects of creative imagination, that resulted in a mythopoeic revival. Myths became a source of inspiration and therefore they were not abandoned as a remnant of a man's, a society's, or a culture's childhood. Mythology and science could go hand in hand as legitimate approaches to truth. In the process of historical development, one could not do without both (Rogerson 1984, 64-65). The shift for began when the Romantics, who showed a great interest in history and folk tales, identified mythical roots in all histories. Thus, the past became the "origins of right": everything was understood and legitimated as soon as its origins could be traced, and therefore history is above all. Consequently, the concept of myth itself also changed. While for the Enlightenment myth and the metaphysical were a mass of superstitions that opposed philosophy, for the Romantics, myth becomes the subject of highest intellectual interest that merits awe and veneration (Cassirer 1946, 181-183), because in the end "myth" tells people who they are, today. It is for this reason that "modern, rational people continue to infuse values, institutions, and even mundane physical locations with the mystery and awe of the sacred. [...] moderns still seek to understand the contingency of everyday life in terms of narrative traditions whose simplicity and resistance to change makes them hard to distinguish from myths (J. C. Alexander 1989: 246). Myths and the sacrality of history and of national time have huge ideological and political importance.

In short, myths remain a powerful mechanism in our societies, despite what is often suggested that it is an attribute of premodern ones. The reason being that historical consciousness

is still permeated, as historian John T. Marcus (1960) has argued, by a sense of what he calls the “*mystique*: the identification of an historical ideal with and historical event and conversely the transmutation of an historical event into an historical ideal” (Marcus 1960, 221-222). For example, the storming of the Winter Palace in 1917, or the fall of Bastille in 1789 were the breakthrough events that acquired a concrete presence but at the same they were endowed with a universal meaning. “At most,” Marcus says, “they generated a common ideal and the vision of a shared goal; at least, they have furnished an essential substructure of historical assumptions about the nature of the world without which purposeful action in our society would become virtually impossible” (ibid., 223). These kinds of “*mystiques*” are to be found everywhere in societies that are conscious of their own historical processes and, given its role in the forging of national identity, the *mystique* has taken on various forms of ethnocentrism. In other words, to the believer, the historical event and the historical myth are one: as a matter of fact, the event is mythic, and as such it constitutes a force that simultaneously drives history and also is manifested by it. Furthermore, the *mystique* is both conservative and revolutionary; on the one hand, it seeks to perpetuate its worldview unchanged and pure from heretics, unbelievers or revisionism, while on the other, it proposes a state of affairs “different from the actuality of the moment” (Marcus 1980, 35-42).

This brings me to what I consider the most important feature of the concept of national myths, namely, the interest in the past and the future of nations. The role of myths is a familiar topic in academic scholarship on nationalism. Myths do play an important role in the development of nationalist ideology, as national myths concretize certain features about a nation and establish the foundations of their own being (Smith 1999). Of course, myths alone cannot create the conditions for the constructions of a nation, however, they do have immense symbolic

power, and when they are repeated, they have exemplary value, regardless of their historical “truth.” A myth of the nation is “a set of beliefs and ideas, ideals and values, which are condensed in a symbolic image that is capable of mobilizing the individual as well as the masses because it stirs up faith, enthusiasm, and action” (Gentile 2003, 2). Myths tell us how a nation sees itself, what it aspires to be, how it differs from other nations, what its deepest values are.

Following the discussion above, George Schöpflin has provided an extensive taxonomy of the most common myths that are used in modern societies and sometimes are interconnected:

- a) Myths of territory, whereby the nation identifies with its land which has to be preserved or expanded, such that soil becomes a sacred space and any attempt of secession or attack against it constitutes a sin;
- b) Myths of collective suffering and maltreatment, where forces (an outside enemy, or history itself) treats the nation unjustly, so that others owe the nation a debt;
- c) Myths of election and military valor, whereby the nation’s moral, cultural and military superiority is repeated as a historical leitmotif;
- d) Myths of birth, renewal and foundation where the nation distinguishes itself from the past, which is rejected as unacceptable as the nation aspires to a new, brighter future;
- and finally e) Myths of antiquity, kinship and descent, which are related to more “organic” or “ethnic” elements, which are transmitted (through blood and kin) to the future generations, and play a pivotal role, again in with a sense of “superiority” against others (1997, 29-35).

With regard to the last classification, it should be emphasized that the idea of myths as elements of national or social coherence is only the one side of the theoretical coin. Kolstø (2014, 1-34) rightly reminds us that myths have certain social consequences that derive from the fact that they are in their nature, boundary-defining mechanisms and are always relational: those who do not share the myths of a collectivity are automatically excluded from it. And this

tendency, Kolstø emphasizes, is not accidental but it is a major driving force behind the formation of myths. In his view, which relies heavily on Frederick Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1970), it is through the interaction and the constant contrast with the "Other" that group identity is constructed and maintained. In this context, he proposes the following typology of mythological genesis: the myth of being *sui generis*; the myth of being *ante murale* (i.e., being part of a larger cultural group and therefore its protector); the myth of *martyrium*; and finally, the myth of *antiquitas*. Especially in the field of politics, Kolstø observes that the maintenance of boundaries is a matter of power relations. In order to justify claims of national difference, groups often select and overemphasize certain signals of identity, while suppressing differences or other cultural *diacritica* (*distinctions*).

Even back at the time of World War II, German philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945) pointed to the dangers which come from the state's manipulative mythopoetics *in extremis*. For Cassirer, though myths are regarded as fundamental elements in human culture, and while in ancient times myths were a product of free unconscious activity, their character in modernity is regulated and exploited (just like weapons are) by political leaders. For Cassirer, to ask about "the truth" of myths is meaningless: one would not ask for the "truth" of a machine gun, as he characteristically says (1979, 237-8). Therefore, myths in the political sphere are not mere narratives, but have an epic dimension to them, a dramatic character that sees the world as a theater, a Manichean struggle between light and darkness, or good and evil. There are always positive and negative poles in myths, Cassirer argues, but the deification of myths is not complete without a parallel process of "devilization" (*ibid.*, 238).

All in all, in the age of nations and nationalism that succeeded the age of kings and divine right, the use of myth for political purposes, especially the glorification of the nation, has

taken on a new dimension. Myths are both elements of cohesion but also foundations for exclusion. And if we take into account that the nation, as a vessel that carries, promotes and perpetuates its myths, is not likely to disappear any time soon, then we can see how myths remain a major source of both material and symbolic security (or insecurity) to its members and still possesses a remarkable ability to be redefined in new historical situations.

3 NATIONAL COSMOGONIES.

*How wonderful the Revolutions, the events of Providence!
We live in an age of wonders. We have lived an age in a few years.*¹⁰

3.1 Introduction.

Revolutionary movements, especially successful ones, take place in several dimensions simultaneously. Apart from creating a new order in the political, social, and economic spheres, revolutions may overthrow and reconstruct the symbolic (and mythic) order of things (Lawson 2019, 5). There is no doubt that the American and Greek Wars of Independence were *the* nation-founding events. These wars not only attempted to break ties with the old regimes but also to transform into new nation-states, on the one hand, the thirteen British colonies and, on the other, a remote Ottoman province. This new reality demanded not only new leadership, borders, and institutions, but also a new, symbolic and mythic orthodoxy, that needed to be consolidated. At this point, I am finding the juxtaposition of the US and Greek cases, as well as the French one, helpful in making sense of this. The French Revolution made an explicit and extreme revolutionary break, even starting the calendar over in Year One. The US and modern Greece did not break with everything (such as religion): they broke with the British monarchy and the Ottoman Sultanate, their respective “others”.

In this light, we should always have in mind that orthodoxies gradually emerge out of initial pluralities that are gradually limited to a narrower set of options. Let us imagine this in the form of an upside-down tree, where the branches come first and the trunk comes later: after agreement and fight against the common enemy, revolutionaries started disagreeing with each

¹⁰ Ezra Stiles, “The United States Elevated to the Glory and Honor, a sermon...at the anniversary election, May 8, 1783” (New Haven, 1783) in Hudson Winthrop S. (ed.) 1970, *Nationalism and Religion in American: Concepts of American Identity and Mission*, New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row Publishers, 67.

other in a series of matters. For the original Independence fighters, there was no US and Modern Greece. There were no founding documents, no founding fathers, no capital cities. There was no one concept of “American” or “Greek”. There were just several versions of all the above, and the question is how all these choices are reduced to a consensus view of the one and only one.

Especially when the issues are ideological or political, the pressure for an orthodoxy is strong, as was in the case with Christianity’s ecumenical councils, which coincided with Christianity’s establishment as the state religion of the empire (Smart 1996, 57). How this orthodoxy began to be formulated in both the American and Greek cases (considering their respective particularities) is the subject of this section.

3.2 Revolutionary Deliberations.

Before the Revolution erupted, Americans were sometimes proud British subjects, bound simultaneously to their own colonial context as well as to the imperial center. Considering that the colonies had a history of being a refuge for European dissidents from an array of ethnic or religious backgrounds, there were not many connections that provided Americans with a sense of identity distinct from the one that tied them to the British Empire. At the same time, the bonds between the American colonies and Britain were traditional and “Britishness” was deeply rooted in the life of American colonists in language, literature, and law. However, a series of unfavorable Acts on the part of the Crown, that needed resources due to its rivalry with France in the middle of the 18th century, undermined these bonds and citizens of the colonies began to feel that their rights were being upheld and their freedom violated. In a sense, “the Anglo - Americans fought England not because they felt themselves as non-English but because they were English.” After all, their inspiration was drawn from the English parliamentary struggle of the 17th century (Kohn 1970:6-9). Even until the last moment, in 1775, with the *Olive Branch*

Petition, approved by the Continental Congress, Americans requested the King's intervention with Parliament and Ministers of the State to obtain a repeal of the unfavorable Acts, the withdrawal of his troops and the renunciation of the King's absolute authority over the colonies. But the King would not accept the role colonial leaders assigned to him and so the last and most important link between the metropolis and the colonies, his legitimacy, was severed. From now on, any action performed in the colonies "in the name of the King" would be considered by many as an act of hostility. To make things even more complicated, Thomas Paine's popular pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776) compared royalty to idolatry or the work of the devil. Gradually, the King also lost the sanctity attached to him. In an almanac published in 1776 by teacher Nathan Daboll one could find a different kind of genealogical account of the Kings of England: "George the Third, grandson of George the 2nd, who was cousin to Queen Anne, the daughter to King James the 2nd, who was son to Charles the 1st [...] the cousin of Stephen, who was nephew to Henry the 1st, the son of William the Conqueror, who was a son of a whore" (cited in Waldstreicher 1997:46-47). The King was no longer seen as the benevolent protector of the people but as the embodiment of tyranny. In short, independence was the last resort to the growing disappointment and disenchantment of expectations.

In the case of Greece, the first major factor that led to the gradual delegitimization of the Ottoman Empire as the only natural order of things, occurred during the economic developments of the 18th century, and by the comparison of the Empire with Western European countries. A second important factor was a series of multifaceted crises during the pre-revolutionary years; these crises caused discontent, they disproved expectations for continuous economic improvement and made various social groups susceptible to violence and, consequently, uprisings. One of the reason for this discontent was the return of European countries to trade and

shipping in the eastern Mediterranean (from which they had been excluded because of the Napoleonic Wars and the vacuum created by Napoleon's dismantling of the Venetian Republic) that brought about a sharp decrease in profits for Greek-Orthodox shipowners.¹¹ Another factor was the revolution, as a form of claiming new political demands: the American and the French Revolutions had provided the exemplary model (see the discussion below on the Declarations of Independence), a very powerful example to follow for most of the movements in the beginning of the 19th century. Furthermore, new forms of organization and preparation for the revolution were made possible by "secret societies" such as the Friends' Society (*Filiki Etaireia* - an equivalent of the Sons of Liberty in the US) with roots in liberal political associations of Freemason origin, as well as in secret groups of Italian revolutionaries known as *Carbonari*. Furthermore, the gradual rise of local elites (such as Ali Pasha of Ioannina, that possessed small armies under their rule) began to substitute the declining Ottoman central power (Kremidas 2016, 25-48). Intricately linked to the economic and social changes occurring during this period were the new political orientations that were beginning to emerge, expressed through the movement of the Modern Greek Enlightenment. This movement came to elaborate the aspirations and perceptions of those new social groups that emerged with great dynamism in the 18th century in the fields of education and social criticism. In other words, the Modern Greek Enlightenment was a movement promoted by those forces that felt strangled within what they saw as the theocratic and authoritarian regime of the Ottoman Empire. Their goal was to move towards the free inquiry into the natural world, into society, and history (Kitromilides 2013, 63-88).

¹¹ According to the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji (1774), signed between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, Greeks were given the right to build big merchant ships and to trade under Russian flag, unharried by the Ottomans.

In both cases, separation from the old regimes was made not only in theoretical or military terms. Certificates of divorce, namely the Declarations of Independence, were issued several months after both wars had erupted. This was a necessary step provoked by a new shift in the way people thought about the legitimacy of government. At the core of this new conception was the philosophy of the Enlightenment where human beings are viewed as possessors of certain natural rights, that governments are obliged to protect and defend. Prior to this period, rulers made no reference to rights as their standard of legitimization. And documents such as the American Declaration of Independence or the French Declarations of the Rights of Man did no more than put the stamp of approval in this new reality.

In the colonies, the Declaration of Independence offers a long list of grievances against the King, and states why Americans felt there was no further possibility of reconciliation. The document made clear that the people were sovereign with the rights of freedom and liberty, that a King on the other side of the Atlantic threatened to abolish. But there was another right, purely revolutionary: the pursuit of happiness, in other words, which was taken to be the end and the goal of both the individual and the State. The language also is strong and clear: truths are “self-evident” and rights are “inalienable,” leaving no room for contestation. Yet, it was not a republican document. Its purpose was to disrupt the ties that connected two peoples and challenged the power of the King to maintain or impose those ties. In short, it defied his authority with the stamp and signature of the people, as representatives of the would-be States.

In Greece, the very first provisional National Assembly of the revolutionaries that convened in Epidaurus in late 1821, issued, among other documents (such as a Constitution), a Declaration of Independence. Relevant to the demands and the language of its time (the

influence of both the American¹² and the French Revolutions is more than obvious), this liberal text proclaimed that “the descendants of the wise and noble nation of the Greeks, contemporaries of the enlightened and civilized peoples of Europe... after years of slavery is waging a war against the Turk... a *national and holy war*, the object of which is to reconquer our rights to individual liberty, property and honor, rights enjoyed by all the civilized neighboring peoples of Europe and which from us alone the cruel and unprecedented tyranny of the Ottomans has tried to violently remove and crush within our very chests.”¹³ Tyranny, slavery, national liberation and rights are the motifs that run throughout the document.

When it came to Republicanism, after the War of Independence, the main question Americans had in mind was how to create a form of Government that looked as different from the monarchy as possible. Thus, the decentralized Articles of Confederation (created in 1777), according to which the States would create no more than a friendly league of small Republics each of which would have its own Constitution), were ratified in 1781. However, despite the fact that they united the States under the umbrella of one federal body (that actually ended the War as a signatory of the Paris Treaty in 1783), it did not work well; the individual confederated states had most of the power. Congress, which was the only federal institution, was not strong enough to enforce laws or raise taxes, making it difficult for the new nation to repay its debts from the

¹² The author of the Greek Declaration of Independence, Anastasios Polyzoidis, preferred the American one. In 1824, he published in Missolonghi (the first ever?) Greek translations of both the American Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution praising both documents and setting them as examples for the Greek cause. See *Προσωρινόν πολίτευμα της Ελλάδος. Και σχέδιον Οργανισμού των Επαρχιών αυτής Αμφότερα επιδιορθωμένα και επικυρωμένα υπό της Δευτέρας Εθνικής νομοθετικής των Ελλήνων Συνελεύσεως εν Άστρει. Οίς έπονται το Πολιτικόν Σύνταγμα της Βρεταννίας και το των Ηνωμένων Επικρατειών της Αμερικής. / μεταφρασθέντα υπό Α. Πολυζωΐδου. Εξεδόθησαν νυν πρώτον Τύποις και αναλώμασι Δ. Μεσθενέως. Προς χρήσιν κοινήν και ωφέλειαν των Ελλήνων* [Temporary Polity of Greece. And Draft Law for her Provinces. Both edited and ratified by the Second National Legislative Assembly of the Greeks in Astros. The Political Constitutions of Britain and the United States follow/ translated by Anastasios Polyzoidis], 1824. Retrieved from <https://anemi.lib.uoc.gr/>

¹³ Translation and italics mine.

Revolutionary War, or afford the creation of a federal army. There was no executive and no judiciary, except within each separate State. In addition, there were a number of conflicts between states that were not settled with ratification, namely over the levying of taxes and the division of opinion over slavery in the Constitutional Convention. An agrarian uprising in western Massachusetts (known as Shay's Rebellion, August 1786–February 1787), and further similar unrests in other States that opposed high taxes and harsh economic conditions, revealed the weaknesses of this first chartering document. Though small in scale and easily suppressed, these unrests offered a persuasive argument for a stronger national government.

So, in 1787 a Constitutional Convention was called to draft a Second Republican Document. Yet, the founding Fathers of the United States were divided into two large camps. The first one was the Federalists who favored a strong central administration, a powerful President, control over the legislature of the States, and most importantly: a regular army under the control of the federal government. Their main argument was that only a regular army could face a possible invasion of the superpower from which it had just been liberated, that is, Great Britain. On the other hand, the logic of the Anti-federalists was that a weak central state is the surest guarantee of the citizens' freedom. They persisted, and despite the strong reaction of the Federalists, they succeeded in incorporating into the Constitution of 1787 into the Charter of Citizens' Rights, which includes the well-known constitutional amendments, now known as the Bill of Rights. The critical point in this dispute was who would have the military power in the new state. Their arguments were based on modern political thought, namely the right of the peoples to rebel when tyrannical governments threaten their freedoms.

In the end, the Federalists and the anti-federalists made a compromise: a permanent army, under the leadership of the President (the Commander in Chief), would be created. Yet, this was

not the end of the debate: as we will see the federalists won the final battle for the formation of the United States seventy years later through the weapons of that very federal army. The question was whether or not US federal law could be enforced in the states that did not want to apply it. After four years of war (1861-1865) and 620,000 dead, the answer was that it could. With the Declaration of Independence, the United States *were* parting from the old regime. With the Civil War, the United States *was* more centralized than ever before. All in all, the Constitution created three federal branches (the legislature first) to check each other. After securing majority rule (rather than royal edict) in this way, they created a list of rights that no majority could vote away. And they placed an amendment process in place because they knew that the Constitution would need to be adjusted. As for the Presidency, the post was held by the former leader of the Continental Army, and President of the Constitutional Convention, George Washington. During his tenure, another tax related insurrection, the Whiskey Rebellion in the western frontier of Pennsylvania (1791-4), would be dealt with through the intervention of a marching federal army.

In a similar vein, Greeks sought to organize themselves at the political and state level immediately after their first military gains. At the beginning of the Revolution local governments were formed in order to organize the struggle, but due to their inability to coordinate the Revolution as a whole, a central political administration was deemed necessary. Thus, during the first three years of the Revolution, two National Assemblies were held, with representatives from the rebelling regions. The First National Assembly was held in Epidaurus in December 1821, where a Constitution was adopted (as well as the Declaration of Independence, as we saw above). This document, better known as the “Provisional Government of Greece,” was based on American and French standards. The freedom of the Greeks was proclaimed and two bodies, the Legislative and the Executive, constituted the central administration. There were three main

points: equality, rights, and the separation of powers. Its main characteristic, however, was the desire to establish a democratic Greek state without the presence of a Monarch or other dynastic authorities. Moreover, the Second National Assembly (1823) met in Astros, Arcadia., where it passed a new constitution and decided to abolish the local centers of power in order to strengthen central government.

However, conflicts between politicians, the clergy and the military over control of power led to the creation of three political parties or factions: The “English” party, which was created by military officers, Western educated intellectuals and merchants supported democratic ideals and the rule of law, as a means to support their activities. They believed that a Greek state would be viable and secure only with the support of the British Empire, which then ruled the Mediterranean. The “French” party, which brought together the *klefts* (bandits) from Roumeli (present day central Greece), and at a later stage, the islanders. It supported, just like the English party, the Constitution, but disagreed on foreign policy matters; it was in favor of a larger military engagement. In fact, it was this party’s leader, Ioannis Kolettis (1773-1847), who coined the term “Great Idea” (*Megali Idea*), that we will examine in the next chapter. Third, the “Russian” party that hoped for Russian intervention against the Ottomans with whom they had fought prior wars, for the salvation of the Greek cause. It was a conservative party, opposed to the ideas of the Enlightenment and in favor of strengthening the role of the Church. Its members came from low ranking officers, small landowners, and members of the clergy.

In addition, the organization of the state under the Second Constitution was democratic and excluded the existence of a supreme monarch. However, the conflicts that broke out between the opposing fractions, the Peloponnesians on the one hand, and the Islanders and Rumeliotes on the other, caused the outburst of two internecine conflicts (1823- 1825) that directly threatened

the overall cause. Eventually, the Peloponnesian party was defeated and dominated by the Islanders and Rumeliotes, led by Alexander Mavrokordatos (1791-1865). The immediate result of this conflict was the inability of Greek forces to cope with the 1825 invasion of Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Mehmet Ali of Egypt, which severely damaged the revolution and brought it to the verge of total defeat. (Kremmidas 2016, 104-144).

In 1827, as political disputes continued and military operations were at a critical juncture, a new National Assembly was convened in Troezen. The Third National Assembly passed a new Constitution, more democratic than the previous ones, and designated Nafplio as the capital of the Greek state. Here, Ioannis Kapodistrias, former Foreign Affairs Minister of the Russian Empire, was elected the new Governor of Greece. This Constitution is referred to as the moribund Constitution since it was virtually never enforced. However, it contained an article that would give a first hint of the subsequent Greek irredentism: In Article 4 it is clearly stated that “Provinces of Greece are those that have taken up or will take up arms against the Ottoman dynasty.”¹⁴ However, it was only after the intervention by the Great Powers at Navarino and the defeat of the Ottoman Fleet in 1827, and the Russian - Ottoman War of 1828-9 that ended with the latter’s defeat, that the road was open for Greek Independence (with the London Protocol of 1830). More importantly, independence was achieved because the international actors of the time were convinced that the Greek cause was a national revival that had nothing to do with Jacobins, or other movements of the time, and also, because they were also convinced that a Greek state, under the guidance of these Great Powers would be the key to the solution of the Eastern Question. All this was enough to invest both materially and spiritually in the struggle for Greek independence.

¹⁴ <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/syn09.pdf>.

The three constitutional texts, which were passed by the Greek National Assemblies, clearly bear the stamp of the democratic and liberal tradition of the great 18th-century revolutions and the Enlightenment. However, already in the first sentence of the Epidaurus Constitution, we read “In the Name of the Holy and Divided Trinity,”¹⁵ the difference from other such revolutionary documents can be detected. In the French constitutions, products of a revolutionary action directed against the authoritarianism of the Kings and against the state's embrace of the Roman Catholic church, such a reference to religion or the any element of the Christian faith was inconceivable. The same is true of Article 1 of the Greek Constitution, which defines the “Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ” as the dominant religion in Greek territory. Moreover, with regards to national identity, it was instituted that “all the indigenous inhabitants of the territory of Greece who believe in Christ are Greeks”, thus underlining the deep break from the Ottoman past. Given the pluralistic ideological and religious background of the colonies of the 13 American states, such articles would be unthinkable on a federal level. On the relationship between the Church and the State, the American Constitution was neutral, where, separation of Church and State was guaranteed, but at the same time it made it clear that there would be no interference by the state with regard to the personal religiosity of the citizens. In this light, the First Amendment to the Constitution was both a practical response to the demographic reality in the Americas and a commitment to religious liberty. In the Greek case, the rivalry was not directed against Christian rulers, who used religion as their instrument of enforcement, but against the Ottomans, who had divided their citizens into “millets” (that is “nations” or ethnic enclaves) on the basis of their faith. The dominant millet, which enjoyed full political rights,

¹⁵ <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/-/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/syn04a.pdf>

were the Muslim Ottomans, that is, those who believed in Islam and all the rest (“Roman”, Jewish, Armenian, etc.) were classified as second-class citizens, deprived of full rights.

Another difference is that the Greek constitutions did not discriminate against citizens, but all residents enjoyed the same rights. In contrast to the original United States Constitution, Native Americans were explicitly excluded from civil rights (on the grounds that they did not pay taxes) while citizens were considered to be only those who were not slaves, provided that they owned property.

3.3 A Nation is Born, a Nation is Reborn.

Let us imagine the following situation, so vividly described by Ray Raphael: “Before the Revolution, angry and animated colonists gathered in taverns and meeting houses to rail against acts of Parliament; after the fighting was done, this same crew downed pint after pint of hard cider while exchanging old war stories. For decades, men and women of the early republic told and retold what had happened, augmenting, and enriching their skeletal memories of actual events, removing what was too painful to recall while embellishing what could be seen as heroic” (2004, 2). It is therefore only when the “children of the Revolution” emerge onto the scene that we are able to begin to evaluate the success of the commemorating and symbolic force of Revolution (Lawson 2019, 88-89). In a period between the Revolution and the American Civil War (1861-1865), the young American nation witnessed a wave of intense cultural activity, propelled mainly by writers, ministers and educators, with a shared commitment to establishing a national consciousness and cohesion in the United States. History (and to be more precise historiography) achieved its institutional status after the Age of Revolutions. As a catalyst in the process of nation building, history enables the nation to have its own voice. It was thus not by chance that the first *History of the Revolution* by David Ramsay (1749 – 1815), a Congressional

delegate during the Revolution, appeared in the year the American Constitution was adopted (1789). We see at the heart of this enterprise the fundamental idea that Americans had a historic mission and that their bond of national identity lay in their common destiny. For political leaders, achieving cohesion was of paramount concern, which was expressed in a massive cultural production, themed around the War of Independence (S. M. Grant 1997, 95). It was clear that by the early 19th century, a large number of patriots were at work at defining an American tradition in literature, history, culture. The goal was of course to arrange space and time into a successive historical narrative where events themselves are elevated as the nation's space and time. Without any symbolic equipment with references to a distant past, they commenced with the creation of a national narrative, based on references to the recent, "usable past," made out of a mixture of heroic episodes, memories, and new national insignia (Commager 1965).

Particularly, historians of this period saw nothing wrong in portraying the revolution for patriotic purposes. The reason was that they were committed to the belief that the nascent science of history had deeper philosophical roots that explained things through the use of examples of virtue and vice (Cheng 2011, 15). As we saw above, Hegel also shared this view of what he called "philosophical history". In this light, they shared with many of their contemporaries, the ideology of commitment to republicanism that saw virtue as a means of preserving liberty, and therefore they wrote their works as if they were preserving these ideals. Thus, they were part of the Revolution, too. Their significant role was recognized in a later period, as they were the first who articulated in historical terms a sense of superiority and the nation's exceptional mission, based on millennialism and the idea that history progressed towards a divinely ordained *telos* (Cheng *ibid.*, 157-158). Though they failed to gain popular support, these historians influenced the next generation of writers, who, though not having immediate relation to the Revolution,

worked in the midst of historical orations given at Fourth of July celebrations and other commemorative occasions that paved the way for them to reach wider audiences (Cheng *ibid.*, 44). This generation developed more confidence in their version of history which became more exceptionalist. At the center of this antebellum generation stands George Bancroft (1800-1891) with his ten-volume *History of the United States, from the Discovery of the American Continent* (1834-1874). According to his account, which begins with the discovery of the New World, the Revolution was the inevitable conclusion of a design of Providence. Nothing was accidental in the course of events; on the contrary, what had come before led towards the Revolution, that acted not as break in the course of History, but as the light that shined in darkness, destined to preserve liberty and the freedom of the mind (Cheng *ibid.*, 160-161).

At the same time, the popularization of newspapers and magazines, which historians often consulted in various ways, took part in the process of memorialization of the War, through articles of all kinds, biographical sketches, accounts of events and military campaigns, coverage of parades and toasts. (Hume 2014:16-17). Their main contribution was the persistence of the Independence lore through repetition of the stories such as the signing of the Declaration, the ringing of the liberty bells, the extraordinary coincidence of the death of Adams and Jefferson on the Fourth of July in 1826 and others. From then on, variations of the above would survive until the present day (Hume *ibid.*, 44-60).

During the first post-revolutionary period (or even earlier than that) one of the main features of the spiritual life of the modern Greek social formation, just like in the US, was the keen interest in the study as well as the writing of history. Regardless of the way in which the historiographical interests are expressed each time, what matters most is the fact that in the intellectual climate of the time, there was a strong appeal to the study of history. The Greeks

have just created the first independent state in modern times and through history they were trying to delimit their national consciousness. Personalities such as Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos (1778 - 1849, Alexandros Soutsos (1803-1863), Ioannis Philimonos (1798/9-1874) and Spyridon Trikoupis (1788-1873) are among the most prominent Greeks who wrote history in order to: a) show the despotic character of the Ottoman Empire; b) show the position of Greek-speaking Christians as a dominated people; c) demonstrate that modern Greeks were descendants of ancient Greeks; and finally d) to explain the reasons why and how modern Greeks achieved their desired national revival and independence. Overall, for them, the outbreak of the Revolution and liberation were predestined, thanks to Divine Providence. In other words, the Revolution was supposed to happen, as the culmination - product of national causality. The Greeks who started the cause for liberation and succeeded in creating the first modern Greek state were seen as direct descendants of the ancients, the direct heirs of ancient glory (Koumpourlis 2009, 352-374). The fate of this effort makes sense for the state itself. The political power of this period is actively involved in the quest for national identity, and the political priorities of the new state have a decisive influence on the “new” ideological structure that began to emerge in the 1830s. After the successful revolution, many people start writing their interpretations of it. The distinctive features of the Greek interpretation become 1) ancestral connection to ancient Greece; and 2) Historical Destiny (a version of Hegel’s history once again). We have seen above, that the Modern Greek version of the Enlightenment had given classical antiquity a dominant place in Greek history. During the post-revolutionary period, this position was not only maintained but also strengthened, with the result that classical antiquity had a decisive influence on the overall formation of the political character of the first modern Greek state. The notion that the Greeks of

1821 were directly descendants of the ancient Greeks is not just a scientific truth, but a “national truth” that no one had the will or the courage to challenge.

The arrival of King Otto I in 1832 and the establishment of a Bavarian monarchy in Greece were another factor contributing to this climate. It is no coincidence that during Otto's tenure in Greece state interest in the ancient world was intense. Otto's father, Ludwig of Bavaria, was a Philhellene and virtually obsessed with everything ancient Greek. He was the sponsor of the Glyptothek Museum in Munich which he built to house his Roman and Greek collection¹⁶. In short, the Bavarians appropriated their Hellenization and tried to create an “ideal” European Kingdom, to use Skopetea's (1988) words.

At the end of the 1830s and at the beginning of the following decade these were the main features of official political ideology in the context of the first modern Greek social formation. The key element that defined Greece within this historical space and time was that it was a continuation of ancient Greece. This established political ideology of the era asserted the newly created state to be as the heir and historical successor of the ancient world, irrespective of anything and everyone who passed through or lived on its Greek soil at any time, whether they were Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Venetians or Turks. Through the colonization of memory and the past, the people who eventually made up modern Greece defined themselves in an ambiguous way by both confirming their overdetermination by a dominant and “undisputed,” often alien, past, as well as refusing to embrace it fully; it is characteristic that modern Greeks today call themselves Neo - Hellenes) implicitly distinguishing themselves from their ancestors who are called *Archaioi Ellines*, the “ancients Greeks.” Moreover, the tripartite view (Ancient

¹⁶ The heart of which was a collection of Aeginetan sculptures, that had been removed from the island of Aegina in 1811. See, *Report on the Aeginetan sculptures: with historical supplements by Johann Martin Wagner with F.W.J. Schelling*; edited and translated by Louis A. Ruprecht , 2017, New York: SUNY Press.

Greece-Byzantium-Modern Greece) of Greek history, was already being introduced in school education, as Christina Koulouri (1992, 327-328) points out, as early as 1836, though within the context of world history. It would not be until the 1880s that, after such historians as Paparigopoulos hit the scene, that Helleno-centrism, and the ideology of the special destiny of Greece reaches its apogee.

3.4 New Capitals, Old Architectures.

If Americans created their federal institutions mostly from scratch, eventually then from scratch they created their capital city. For a decade, the capital was in Philadelphia, the city of the revolutionary Congresses, but in the end, they moved it (in 1800) from the northern Philadelphia to Boston corridor of colonial power to the southern corridor of Northern Virginia. This was symbolically powerful, as both corridors could claim Founding figures: (Franklin and the Adamses in the North) and Washington and Jefferson in the south. Washington DC went on to become the home not only to the Federal Government, but also to many monuments for the civil religion in America. Its expansion has been linked to the advances of the national government and the wealth of the nation, which was actually the plan from the beginning (Reps 1967, 9).

The city's original architect (Pierre Charles L'Enfant) was inspired by the Baroque and Renaissance styles of Europe, and mostly by the palace at Versailles, a fact that is at the very least ironic. As one author wrote: "the plans originally conceived to magnify the glories of despotic kings and emperors came to be applied as a national symbol of a country whose philosophical basis was so firmly rooted in democratic equality" (Reps *ibid.*, 21). Here, it is the central portion of the new capital city that interests us the most in order to distinguish various historical layers. L'Enfant, at the time of the plan's inception, produced 15 urban nodes,

representing the 15 states of the Union. According to Kirk Savage (2009, 26), L'Enfant managed to bring together two dimensions: on the one hand, the vision of expansion and change (imperial motifs), and on the other, modesty and frugality (symbols of a more classical Republican polity). Therefore, "his plan of Washington was at once a street system meant to establish possession of the city and a cognitive map for the new national empire. In his vision, public monuments would play a key role in fueling the city's development and justifying the nation's expansion." (Savage *ibid.*).

The president's residence was built first, and although it was burned by the British in 1812 (during a war that produced the national anthem, the Star-Spangled Banner). The first major buildings in the 19th century were all Rome in inspiration, especially the Capitol building (completed during the Civil War). The 20th century buildings were all Greek in inspiration, especially the Supreme Court and the Lincoln Memorial. We should also notice the presidential memorials in DC: Washington's is an Egyptian obelisk, and Jefferson's is a Roman dome like the Pantheon, inspired by the third President's preference for Palladianism¹⁷. The French model was a gesture to America's common revolutionary heritage, as opposed to British conservatism. After that come all the War Memorials (which we might see as aspects of civil religion) but also the Smithsonian Museums which dominate the Lawn.

It is these places that provide a religious message implicit in the buildings, monuments, and the arts. In order to understand the "religious" dimension to all of this, we might utilize two metaphors, namely that of archaeology and pilgrimage. The first is related to the notions of time and the past as a sacred destination while the second entails an actual physical and temporal investigation of the capital's axial structure (Meyer 2001, 3-12). Both act as a vessel driven to

¹⁷ Thomas Jefferson was interested in architecture and was heavily involved in the planning of the new city. Having served as ambassador to France, he preferred French classicism and pavilion-like buildings.

the past by disclosing sacred symbolic signifiers that reinforce the ideals and national sentiments and civil religion of the United States. Washington, DC, (a unique political unit in the US) recreates a past and works as a point of reference for the American people's uncommon history, therefore it acts as a great sacred space via structures of optical and imaginative visions of the past, the present and the future. In short, "it appropriates perspective models developed in the Renaissance and refined under European despotism and absolutism and transposes them to symbols of a democratic, agrarian republicanism, making of the city a new nature, just as America itself was a new nature and a new, more natural society, and a landscape" (Cosgrove 1984, 182).

In Greece, during the first years of King Otto's reign, several institutions related to Archeology were established with the support of the State (the Hellenic Archaeological Service , the Archaeological Society, the Archaeological Gazzette), and various royal decrees were drafted concerning the preservation of antiquities, excavations and the flourishing of the neoclassical architectural style (Hamilakis 2007, esp. chapter 1). All these events combined with the decision to transfer the capital from Nafplio to Athens as well as the whole climate of worship developed and strengthened by the Bavarians "made the ancient world present in the Kingdom" (Skopetea 1988, 71). After all, if for the Americans, the points of reference were the Founding Fathers and the institutions they produced, then in Greece, the ancient monuments were the only things that could be used as national symbols (Skopetea *ibid.*, 197). The concept was to provide a mixture of the contemporary with the ancient. The design was supervised not only by King Otto himself, but also by his father Ludwig, who commissioned architect Leo von Klenze (who had also designed the Glyptothek in Munich) to help with the endeavor (as well as beginning the "cleansing" of everything non - Hellenic from archaeological sites and the Acropolis, namely

medieval or Ottoman constructions (Hamilakis 2007, 89). The development of the new Athens was carried out exclusively by European - trained architects, thus making the whole planning a “European Affair,” as von Klenze proclaimed (Bastea 2000,105). The most notable buildings developed during Otto’s time were the University, the Academy, the National Library, the National Museum, and the Cathedral. With the advent of a constitutional monarchy in 1843, a Parliament was added. Nowadays, the capital’s street names are taken from the nation’s long history. Among them one can find a Sokratous street (named after the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates), a Palaiologos street (named after the last Byzantine Emperor, Constantine Palaiologos) as well as a Karamanlis boulevard, named after the late Greek Prime Minister and President.

In 1836, King Otto’s administration by special royal decree decided, to establish the first Greek University. Ludwig von Maurer, head of the Regent's Office for Education, in 1835 highlighted the high feasibility of founding a university saying: “Why is Greece destined to one day shine the light of European culture on Asia and beyond, it is helped by its privileged geographical location and the intellectual acumen of its inhabitants. And as the cradle of culture for Europe once stood, which is now repaying her education, she too must return to Asia, Egypt, and other countries of the East what she received and that of those thousands of years ago “ (Kremmidas 2009, 1-2). The words above used by Maurer to describe the function and purposes of the University are particularly revealing. The idea of a Greek state shedding light on the backward East seems to excite and attract both the scientific and -- most importantly -- the political world. After all, it was ancient Athens, after her defeat in the Peloponnesian War, that re-invented herself as a university town; if people made a pilgrimage to Athens, it was to study there. So, in a way it made historical sense to establish a university in Athens, whereas there was

none in Washington, DC (they were located elsewhere in the Philadelphia --to-- Boston and northern Virginia corridors).

3.5 Heroes.

Hegel thought that the revolutionary hero can inspire social and political change (Smith 1989). What interested him, though, was the inconsistency between the intentions of the individual and the consequences of his actions. In a series of analyses, Hegel shows how certain individuals, such as Alexander, Caesar or Napoleon, though chosen instruments of destiny, were often unaware of the greater importance of their actions. Thus, “what Caesar thought he was doing in crossing the Rubicon was one thing. The effect his action had, not only in his own time, but on later history is for Hegel something entirely different and was not part of his conscious intention” (Smith S. *ibid.*, 254-255). With regards to our subject, Hegel appears to praise the revolutionary hero, for serving to advance the cause of human freedom. Hence, he is more willing to forgive the revolutionary for his sins than to express sympathy to the victims of his deeds. While Hegel never actually says that, he nevertheless recognizes, as we saw, that progress toward freedom is not achieved without blame.

In the age of nations, heroes obtained a special mission and purpose (Smith A. 1999, 151-152). They are canonized and destined to embody the self-consciousness of the nation, as well as its hopes for the future. They also personify the continuity with the past by recalling golden eras and suggesting a similarly glorious future. While the former power of a-temporal, impersonal rulers derived from otherworldly divine charisma and, the new power of the hero (whose model is located in a specific historical context) was not over nature or spirits, but it was conceived as a force that controls history and can overcome the nation’s enemies (Marcus 1980, 45). Various resources were deployed in order to immortalize the hero: popular histories, school textbooks,

historical novels, and mythologized biographies. The hero was also painted, engraved, and sculpted in pantheons; the most characteristic of all forms being the one that put him on a pedestal: the statue. The most important locations and phases of their life --birthplace, house, grave possessed cultic features. In this section we shall look at two figures from each case, namely a soldier and a politician.

It seems as if the first revolutionary generation is so documented, so imprinted in the political and political culture of the USA, that “Americans live in the founders’ world, just as the Founders live in theirs” (Schocket 2015: 4). Numerous biographies, analyses, essays, orations, studies, etc. have been dedicated to the Revolutionary generation. Immortalized visually by personal portraits as well as in Trumbull’s popular 1818 painting (commissioned by the US Congress itself), adoration and reverence for them evolved through time. As one writer implied, the only thing left to ask is “which of the class of ’76 was the best dressed?” (Raphael 2004: 131). From early 19th century orations, to modern politics, it is their world and mentality that is often quoted in American politics. More particularly, we shall take a look at George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

One historian said that Washington has become so merged with America “that it is useless for his biographers to separate him from myths and images surrounding him” (Albanese 1976, 146). He was the soldier, the general, the president who has given his name to a national day, a state, and to the district of the national capital. He was never associated with cities or European courts, instead he was the apotheosis of the minuteman, the modest American farmer who, like Cincinnatus, left his retirement to lead the continental army once again. And the greatest deed of all: he refused to be President for life, and by doing so, he left leaving his mark on the American political system. What sets Washington apart from other Founders is that he did

not represent regional interest and was not part of strong ideological conflicts. Even his death became an occasion for national cohesion. Numerous ceremonies, rituals and homilies were dedicated to him in numerous towns in the country, with or without his body: his spirit and its role in the national imagination was more important when it reached its Apotheosis (Laderman 1996:16-18). In a 1825 celebration of the fourth of July, the following toast was said to his memory: “Leonidas was patriotic; Aristides was just; Hannibal was patient; Fabius prudent; Scipio was continent; Caesar merciful; Marcellus courageous and Cato of inflexible integrity. But the virtues which separately distinguished those mighty men of antiquity, were all united in the character of this singular great man” (cited in Friedman 1975, 54). Like Peter, Washington was the Rock, upon which an integral part of the American Civil Religion would be built.

On the other hand, Jefferson, like Adams and Hamilton, is the representative of the younger generation. He too was a planter and slaveholder and the embodiment of the revolutionary spirit. He was instrumental in creating the new nation’s ideas on the Republic, on representation and on democracy as well as for forming the political language of the country. Thus, the USA would possess “territories” and not colonies. Moreover, the President would be called “mister” instead of the royal “your Excellency,” thus transforming the office into the executor of the people’s will. But most importantly, Jefferson was the author of the Declaration of Independence, probably the most revered document of the Revolutionary Era. And his death on the 4th of July 1826 (the second President, John Adams, died the same day) only reinforced his image as a symbol of the Revolution (Robertson 1980: 56-65). He was a writer, first and foremost, and wrote some of the nation’s founding documents. He was also an ambassador to France, a Vice President and a President. He was also the founder of a state university and a library. And he had a long relationship with Sally Hemmings, one of his slaves, which is why

slavery has a more central part in his biography. In the end, though, it seems that he preferred to be remembered for his intellectual achievements, rather than his political career. On his tombstone's epitaph he gave instructions that the following words be written: "the author of the Declaration and the statute of Virginia for religious freedom as well as the father of the University of Virginia".

In Greece, the elevation of the revolutionary to the status of national hero, occurred in most cases, posthumously. After the liberation, many revolutionaries awaited for their sacrifices to be recognized by the Bavarians. Also, in the same period, veterans' associations were created that demanded a fair share for their contribution to the cause. In the end, some achieved recognition, but others died almost marginalized and forgotten. One of the most notable figures of the Revolution was without a doubt General Theodoros Kolokotronis, the so called "Old Man of Morea "(he was already 51 when the Revolution erupted). At his funeral in 1843, one obituary began like this (translation mine): "The hero of (the battles of) Dervenakia, Valtetzi, Old Patras, Tripoli, Korinth, Argos etc. the Field Marshall of Peloponnese, the former Vice President of the Executive, the Counsellor of State, the Lieutenant General, the experienced soldier, the virtuous citizen, the honest friend, the caring father, old Theodoros Kolokotronis is no more".¹⁸ Another orator compared him to Moses, the Judges or the Maccabees that liberated "the New Israel", Greece.¹⁹ Kolokotronis gained his fame on the field of battle, especially in the first years of the War. His charm as a leading figure of the Revolution began to grow even outside of Greece mainly due to reports sent to Europe by Philhellenes or foreign diplomats who resided in the

¹⁸ *Τα κατά την κηδείαν του μακαρίτου Θ. Κολοκοτρώνου Αντιστρατήγου και Συμβούλου της Επικρατείας εις τακτικήν υπηρεσίαν αποθανόντος την 4 Φεβρουαρίου του έτους[sic] 1843* [Texts from the funeral of the late Theodor Kolokotronis, Lieutenant General and Counsellor of the State, deceased on duty on February 4. 1843]. N. Papadopoulos Publications. 1843 .p.3 (retrieved from <https://anemi.lib.uoc.gr/>)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.30-31

Peloponnese (Dimitropoulos 2012, 70). During the last years of his life, Kolokotronis dictated his Memoirs, which were published in 1851 with the title *A Narration of Events of the Greek Race from 1770 to 1836*, and which has been a valuable source with regards to the outbreak of the Greek Revolution. In it, amongst other things, Kolokotronis narrates how his family had always resisted the Ottomans. Especially after his passing, his veneration continued to grow, by a group of writers (known as the “Kolokotronists”), who praised him with a variety of texts both historiographical and fictional and poems that made him into a national, folk hero. He was praised not only for his valor, bravery and wits, but also for his persecution by the Bavarians, a fact that made him the eternal figure of resistance (Dimitropoulos *ibid.*, 83-84). In a survey about the “Greatest 100 Greeks of all time” organized in 2008 by a Greek TV station, Kolokotronis ranked 3rd, losing only to Alexander the Great and the physician George Papanikolaou....

Ioannis Kapodistrias (1776-1831) was elected Governor of Greece in 1827, a few years before Greek Independence, at a very crucial point of the Revolution. Born in Corfu (then under Venetian rule) he had served in the diplomatic service of the Russian Tsar, thus acquiring the credentials of a man who understood the balance of power in post-Napoleonic Europe. When he arrived in Greece, his main concern was to create a durable mechanism of the state, to establish new bodies of power, to pay attention to internal and external security, and to make reforms in education and finances. In his attempt he created a centralized system of government, suspended the Constitution, abolished libertarianism, and appointed high-ranking people of absolute confidence. However, his reforms were met with resistance from older, privileged elites. Not only did they refuse to pay taxes, but they demanded huge sums as compensation for what they had lost during the war. The reaction against him led to his assassination in 1831 and the election

of Otto as the ruler of the new Kingdom. His death was seen as a sacrifice to the greater cause (Koulouri 2015, 98). His memory was contested up until the middle of the 19th century by his followers (the “Russian” party) and adversaries. In the end, in an attempt to portray the Revolution in more homogeneous terms, the causes of his assassination were more or less silenced (Koulouri *ibid.*, 106). What was left was the fact that he died for the good cause of the fatherland, thus securing a place in the pantheon of modern Greek heroes and martyrs. In the survey we mentioned above (about the “100 Greatest Greeks of all time”), Kapodistrias ranked 8th.



Figure 2 John Trumbull's The Declaration of Independence.
 (<https://www.pubhist.com/w11396>)



Figure 3 Theodoros Vrizakis' Bishop Germanos of Old Patras Blesses the flag of Revolution.

(<http://www.nationalgallery.gr/el/zographikh-monimi-ekthesi/painting/ta-hronia-tis-basileias-tou-othona/istoriki-zographiki/o-palaion-patron-germanos-culogei-ti-simaia-tis-cpanastasis.html>)

4 NOTIONS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHOSENNESS AND MISSION.

*Out of all nations in history, only Greeks possess
the peculiar characteristic to be reborn and resurrected.*
(Ion Dragoumis, *Megali Idea*, p.10)

4.1 Introduction.

For the reasons we saw above, one having to do with a noble past and the other having to do with a boundless future, both Greece and the United States were viewed as exceptional, both by Europeans and by themselves. These two “exceptional” nations have experienced more changes of their national borders than many other nations. In this chapter, I attempt to link these two observations and share the weird history of border changes to a large extent. As we will see, their exceptionalism as nations created a language of destiny that created a logic of territorial expansion.

This sense of purpose is what set in motion two *mythomoteurs*, namely Manifest Destiny in the US and the Great (*Megali*) Idea in Modern Greece. A *mythomoteur* derives from the French words for “myth” and “engine”—a term coined by Catalan historian Ramon d’Abadal i de Vinyals, which was used by John Armstrong in his *Nations before Nationalism* (1982) as well as by Anthony D. Smith in his *Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986). It is a “constitutive myth that in the long run is fused with other myths and gives an ethnic group its sense of purpose, it sustains a polity and enables it to create an identity” (see Armstrong 1982, 70). More so, according to Smith it is an “embodying corpus of beliefs and sentiments which the guardians of ethnicity preserve, diffuse and transmit to future generations. Without a *mythomoteur* a group cannot define itself to itself or to others and cannot inspire or guide collective action” (1986, 15). To be aware of a myth is one thing; to consider it as a means for ideological purposes or justification for collective engagement and mobilization is another. This whole complex of myths and symbols that suffuses sacred elements with the being of the community (or in our case, the

nation) is what we should have in mind in this chapter, which attempts to show similarities and differences on how the two nations expanded. As we shall see, “once the mythomoteur is turned on, it is not easily shut down” (Armstrong *ibid.*, 51).

4.2 The Nation Makes Its Destiny Manifest.

As a social construction, nations cannot rely only on mythopoeia. Every dominant myth needs to find fertile ground in order to be believed and utilized. It is only when myth is institutionalized that it can become a powerful tool, namely a matter of power as well as a source of spirituality and ritual. Especially when the “usable past” is problematic, or in the American case, almost non-existent, then what more is there besides a common future, a common destiny that can excite the imagination towards a concrete version of identity? After all, where does one stop having brought down an empire?

The concept of the nation as “the chosen one” can be a powerful catalyst for both coherence and mobilization. When the special mission is infused with the perception that it is God-given, then it creates what Smart (1983) has called a *high positive charge*. In this light, the territorial aspect enters the national imagination as a sacred, magical space because it is our space and we have a duty to it. At this point, it would be crucial to recall Bellah’s (1967) idea that Washington was framed by the civil religion as a new Moses, leading a new chosen people to a new chosen land. While the notion of Americans as chosen people had religious roots, as a Puritan sacred undertaking. After all, the Protestant Reformation saw itself as a re-Judaizing of the faith, claiming that the Roman church was “no better than Greek paganism”. By the time the American Revolution erupted, the notion of destiny had taken a more political, nationalized form. American “chosenness” was no longer viewed as expressly religious; it had exceeded the metaphysical and descended from the heavenly to the worldly realm. Many of the founders of the

new nation believed that America was destined to lead all the nations of the earth to a new era of liberty and democracy. This sense of exceptionalism justified a project of territorial expansion to extend the area of freedom. In this light, the incorporation of the new continent and the unification of the Atlantic and the Pacific” became the “manifest” national destiny. For more than a century, it became the myth that dominated every explanation Americans made of their world. If the Revolution promised freedom from outside interference and oppression, then the result was freedom to move and to determine new economic (Hegel’s worry) or political (Hegel’s hope) purposes. American independence and expansion connected shortly after the creation of the nation.

So, from facing East and calling themselves anti-imperialist Sons of Liberty, newly liberated Americans began facing west as the polished lords of the new “savage” continent (Smith - Rosenberg 2010, 6). This mythology was further enhanced when Napoleon, in desperate need for cash following the Haitian Revolution, sold the “Louisiana” territories and then, in 1819, when Spain ceded Florida to the US. The logic behind these developments was that, if a sovereign government’s responsibility were to defend individual citizens’ pursuit of happiness then the vision of the West was the clearest means to do so (Robertson 1980: 72-3). Moreso, the Americans who went West were a particular type, with a particular notion of freedom. As historian Ray Billington has put it, “those who were willing to trade security for the chance of betterment, with all of the gambles involved... were different from the type of person who stayed in the East. The Westerner was inclined to be more daring, more ambitious, somewhat less bound by tradition; he had a touch of the rebel” (Billington 1970, 253).

This rebel represented an element of triumph, because the West was integrated in a way Britain did not integrate the former colonies, therefore it was also a triumph of the New versus

the Old. Journalist John O' Sullivan was the first to use the phrase "manifest destiny"; he wrote in 1845 "Our national birth was the beginning of a new history. The far reaching, the boundless future: will be the era of American greatness" (cited in Johannsen 1997, 10-11). Divorced from the past by their adoption of a new and untried political system Americans connected only with the future. The past meant tyranny and oppression and advancement in the world would necessitate overcoming it. Thus, one of the weakest elements in America's claim to nationhood--the lack of an ancient past--was transformed into a main virtue. More notably, O'Sullivan invented the phrase that summarizes an essential theme in America's national ideology. It symbolized a doctrine that it was a God-given destiny for settlers to expand Westward thereby ignoring the existence of indigenous peoples and their claims to the territory. Thus, "Manifest Destiny" became a one of the mottos for the expansion of American territory in the war against Mexico that began one year later and in subsequent imperial adventures abroad (Stephanson 1995). The acquisitions of Oregon and the Grant basin frontier in 1846 and California in 1848 signaled the fulfillment of reaching the natural boundary of the Pacific Ocean.

What had been merging early in the nineteenth century was a construction, that exalted the "wild" western frontier, which had several aspects: To some, it was lawlessness, the land of cowboys. To others, it was a land of pristine nature and new beginnings (the West excited the minds, as Americas had done in the past when Europeans were blown away by all the flora and fauna they had found). To a third, it was the land of the indigenous peoples, whether they were romanticized or demonized. These ideas, when given nationalist interpretation, perceived the wild regions of America to be a source of primeval energy and purity, even a prospective source of cultural greatness. Hence the attempt to "naturalize the American nation" (Kaufmann 1998, 669), a process that would begin by bringing onto the scene the notion of the frontier. No one

force did more to Americanize the nation's people and institutions than the repeated reconstruction of society on the western edge of settlement during the 100 years required to occupy the continent. At this point, Frederick Jackson Turner's theory of the frontier [1993 (1893)] needs to be explored. As Slotkin argues, the myth of the frontier is the longest-lived American myth. It originates from the colonial period and it is still persistent and dominant in American history and political tradition (1985, 15). It is the myth that separated the colonies from their European past and enabled them to be redefined on their own terms.

The most unique characteristic of the natural environment when the United States were formed, Turner believed, was the presence of a free zone on the western part of the continent. It was into this *terra incognita* that populations, motivated by economic benefit and a sense of adventure into the unknown, began moving. Westward expansion symbolized the "perennial birth" and the "fluidity" of American life, "the outer edge of the wave is the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Turner *ibid.*, 60). A characteristic of this movement was that settlers came as easterners, changed their ways of life, sought new means for using natural resources, or adapted older practices to the new environment. Other characteristics of frontier life involved a tradition of constant innovation, adaptation, and social organization. This constant advance of people into contact with the simplicity of a wilder environment left traditions, memories, and characteristics which endured long after the frontier was put behind. Those traits were strongest in the newer regions, but they significantly influenced the neighboring interim zones and to a lesser degree the older, eastern political, social, and cultural order. Three factors, Turner believed, contributed to many people's decision to move to the frontier: conditions at home, the challenge of reaching the West and the attractiveness of the region ahead. The

constant progress of transportation created not only new roads and railways, but also a new wave of pluralism and mixing that fed the new frontiers.

Manifest destiny offered both a secular and a religious way of interpreting time and space in America. What unified these two elements was the idea of the new nation as a unique, continuous process. With freedom guaranteed in the minds of people with the independence and the Constitution, what remained was the proliferation of both personal and national growth in space (Stephanson 1995, 30-31). Manifest Destiny was the amalgamation of the *mystique* with the practical consequences of continuous innovation and development. But the acquisition of new territories and the westward expansion would lead to the fragmentation of national identity. Besides the distinction between the “civilized” East and the “adventurous” West, there lay a region which Robertson (1980, 83) has called “peculiar”: the South. In this region, slavery provided an obvious and important difference around which Southern identity was organized. Southern planters with their prosperous plantations saw themselves as the true expressions of independent yeomanry. Slavery then was bound to their own economic and cultural identity, and absolutely normal according to the perception on the inferiority of the enslaved Africans. Any threat against slavery, would automatically mean a threat to their identity. Thus, the westward expansion raised the question of whether slavery would be permitted in new states, that is, whether *slaveholding* would expand. So, in a historical twist, the territories that were added to the nation, almost undermined its unity. This contradiction and conflict between regionalism and nationalism led to America’s bloodiest war.

The American Civil War obliged the US to clarify to its own people, and to the rest of the world, what it was fighting to preserve beyond territorial harmony and economic prosperity. It was only after seventeen months of war, when the fate of the Union seemed at most at risk, that

President Abraham Lincoln linked the war to the abolition of slavery in America. In 1862, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation, at the same time that the US finally recognized the nation of Haiti. The following year, in 1863, in his Gettysburg Address, Lincoln went further to define the Union cause as a continuation of the nation's historic mission. The war, he stated, was a test of whether "that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure" such that a Union victory would determine that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Lincoln fastened the war to the historic origins of the nation, as an experiment in self-rule and a model that would inspire the world. In a sense, he promoted the ideas of the Declaration of Independence by embracing Manifest Destiny by sustaining his efforts to preserve the Union and give the promise of freedom to both the opposing sides as well as those beyond the borders (Johannsen 1997, 18). In a sense, like Hegel, he had come to see the contradiction in an emancipatory politics of freedom linked to human enslavement.

The end of the Civil War brought immense potential for social and economic changes. The quick development of industrialization, the mass production of consumer goods, scientific and technological enhancements in communication and transportation and the arrival of millions of immigrants from Europe, as well as the new opportunities in the West all gave motivation to expressions of Manifest Destiny. And when the limits of western expansion appeared to have been reached it was necessary to redirect the energies of Manifest Destiny. By the 1890s, four decisive shifts had occurred: a) the advent of colonialism (US holdings in the South Pacific); b) American geographical destiny ceased to be continental and went beyond the continent ; c) this continuous US expansion beyond the continental boundaries and d) Christianity which had lost its explanatory power to explain and justify the American expansion, to be replaced by cruder political motives ground for modernizing (Stephanson 1995, 67). The idea of America as a

model republic that would win admiration and imitation from other peoples in the world cohabited with a sense that America had a duty to spread its blessings to other nations, to lift the yoke of tyranny and allow people to follow America's leadership towards liberty, self-rule and wealth. O'Sullivan's evocation of America's "Manifest Destiny" was frequently invoked during the 1898 incursions into Cuba and the Philippines, and the idea of America as a model republic for freedom continued to shape US foreign policy ever since, in both through two World Wars and the Cold War. The doctrine of America's mission became tied to the ideas that expansionism was not only right but natural, as if it was the Creator's plan. Whenever horizons were expanded, the nation became more and more convinced that the only real limit was their own imagination and plan. And after that was over, a full circle was made. Some saw the victory of the American way as "the end of history", a very Hegelian idea. But if this is the end, does this mean that there is no more mission or destiny ?

4.3 The "Great Idea" (of Hellenism).

The geographical area that constituted the first modern Greek state was far smaller than that claimed as Ancient Greek territory. Within the borders of the first Modern Greek state, there were only 750,000 Greeks, which represented almost one third of the number of Greeks living in various other areas. The Greek conquests thus found a realistic base of support for further Greek expansion and was justified by the extent of the Greek populations living and flourishing economically in the contested other places. However, one of the prerequisites for implementing the expansionist perspective was the formation of those ideological shapes that could effectively justify and substantiate this policy. Thus, in the mid-1840s, the need for some ideological reorientations became more apparent than ever when the nation was established one or two decades earlier.

As we have seen above, from the first post-liberation years the demand for the creation of the myth of the modern Greek state was intensified. The basic content of this demand was nothing more than the formation of an established ideology such as to provide the necessary background for the policy of unity that the Greek state pursued within it. When, at the beginning of the 1840s, the struggle for the establishment of a strong and centralized state was completed, and indeed with triumphant results for central power, then national mythology is called upon to play a different role. Interest is now shifted mainly from home to abroad as the dominant class of Greek social formation seeks national unity where the mythic extent of Classical Athenian power and prestige was believed to still be visible. These new aspirations make it imperative to reinforce the national myth with certain elements that respond more effectively to new demands.

At the end of the 1830s, but especially after 1844, a new analogy for the Greek nation began to crystallize. One example of this approach is that of the public intellectual, Markos Ranieris (1815-1897), who seems to be the embodiment of the shift of focus when it comes to the mission of the Greek nation. In his 1841 *Philosophy of History*,²⁰ he proclaimed the historical destiny of Greece: If the East represented the age of the Father, and the West the age of the Son, then Greece, which is situated in between and until recently was bound in slavery, will unite these two extremes, and will lead to the new age of the Holy Spirit, thus leading humankind to its final apotheosis. Behind the political “Eastern question,” he argues, there is a philosophical Eastern question, and Greece is destined to solve both (Ranieris 1841:vii-xiii). In 1842, Ranieris would pose the question: “What is Greece? East or West?” and answer that “Greece by nature,

²⁰ Hegel’s influence on this work is obvious: Ranieris writes that the Holy Trinity is represented by three historical stages: 1) The Father (unity, the Revelation of God through the people, the un-ego), 2) The Son (variety, the Revelation of God through the individual, the ego), and 3) The Holy Spirit (unity through variety, apotheosis). He too, like Hegel, considers Ancient Greece to be the first place in history where “the ego” that is, the individual is liberated from the excessive domination of the whole.

by culture, by its historic mission is the West, not the East.” However, in a subsequent article written one decade later, titled “Greek Dualism,” he revised his views, upgrading the role of religion and the Byzantine past for the Modern Greeks and invited them, with their dual capacity, western and eastern, to play the leading role in the East, civilizing it and even conquering it (Ranieris cited in Louvi 2018).

Yet it was a politician, Ioannis Kolettis, who took the floor publicly in the Greek Parliament and spoke about the mission of Greece: If Ancient Greeks illuminated the West, then the resurrected nation would illuminate the East. It is clear, then, that the shape of the Great Idea (*I Megali Idea*) is an mythic construct with significant internal cohesion and stability that comes to give a meaningful response to the demand of the time to form new ideological desires and aspirations that respond more effectively to new political and/or economic needs. The deliberate ambiguity with which the Great Idea is formulated and the prolonged unwillingness to specify its content will become the ground on which the intellectual pursuits of the time will move. It will quickly turn out that the Great Idea is a multifunctional, multi-faceted scheme. In the context of the Great Idea, it will be possible to assimilate popular and once-resistant religiosity into an official ideology, to satisfy those intellectuals who refused to submit to the West and its ideology, and above all to serve its expansive purposes (Kremmidas 2009, 21-29). In a sense, the Megali Idea was the result of a partial rejection of the West and a turn to the East, and therefore an embrace to religion in rejection to Western secularism.

Thus, the Great Idea will remain a dominant political program throughout Modern Greek history in the 19th and the first two decades of the 20th century. It developed as a *mythomoteur* that aimed at liberating unredeemed territories, where unliberated Greeks inhabited outside the boundaries of the nation-state, and, most of all, at liberating the Byzantine capital,

Constantinople. In 1862, when Otto's successor King George arrived in Greece, he changed his title from *King of Greece* to *King of the Greeks*, thus claiming his authority over his subjects who lived outside the Greek nation state.

Constructing such a story could "prove" that the Greeks were indeed descendants not only of the ancient Greeks but also of the Byzantines, and that Hellenism had not been wiped off the face of the earth despite many years of occupation and suffering. The second field in which evidence was sought for the continuity of the Greeks and the documentation of uninterrupted historical continuity was itself present folklore, a prominent Romantic interest. Here folklore undertook to reveal, or rather to establish, the direct connection of the present with the archaic past, "discovering" elements of antiquity in the customs of the Modern Greek people. The third and simplest way to connect the Modern with the ancient Greeks was by historical comparison. The modern Hellenic term for comparison was the revolution of 1821, the *Palingenesis* which was analogized to the battles of Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea against the ancient Persian empire (a trope in Hegel's *Lectures*, as we have already seen). Viewed comparatively, the successful War of Greek Independence provided the actual proof that the modern Greeks lived up to their heroic ancestral land.

Any attempt to assert Greek unity across space and time needed, in principle, to confront and to solve a key problem: the "restoration" not just of the Classical Greek past in Athens, but also of Byzantium. However, as we have shown above, Byzantine prestige had already been seriously shaken (Edward Gibbon for example saw Byzantine history as "a tedious and uniform tale of weakness and misery", cited in Runciman 1976, 103), both in the pre-revolutionary and during the early post-revolutionary years. However, by the mid-1840s, when the Great Idea was being formulated, those voices that reacted to Byzantium's extermination or erasure from the

field of Greek history began to multiply. Despite the attempts of some lonely pioneers, the restoration of Byzantium and the subsequent formation of the long-awaited Greek continuity over the centuries is a work associated primarily with two names: Spyridon Zambelios (1815-1881) and Constantinos Paparigopoulos (1815-1891).

In 1852, Spyridon Zambelios published a collection of folk songs consisting of 150 pages and accompanied by detailed Predictions, consisting of 600 pages. Here, Zambelios structured Greek history into three periods. Until then, scholars believed that Greek history consisted of two periods, separated by the “gap” that was Byzantium. Zambelios’s above considerations are condensed in a characteristic way to coin the term “Hellene-Christian,” yet another result of his efforts: the combination of Christian Byzantium with Classical Hellenism (Herzfeld 1986, 39-52; Fermor 1966, 96-147).

The “restoration” of Byzantium²¹ comes to fill a major gap in the national ideological edifice of the time and to secure Modern Greek unity across space and time. The profits from such a mythic construction are many. One such is that Christianity regains what the Enlightenment had taken away from it, and the popular religious ideology of the mid-19th century is effectively assimilated by the dominant ideological mythic discourse. Still the Greeks, the mythic heirs of the Byzantine Empire and therefore equally legitimate beneficiaries of a future Greek Christian Empire of the East, are taking the lead over the other Balkan peoples. The most important benefit of the restoration of Byzantium consists in the “documentation” and justification of Greek claims to territory in the Ottoman Empire. For the Greeks, the heritage of

²¹ Characteristically, one of the earliest significant victories of the Greek Revolutionaries, the conquest of the city of Tripolitsa, the Ottoman administrative center in the Peloponnese, is known historically in Greece as Η άλωση της Τριπολιτσάς (*I alosi tis Tripolitsas*) the Fall of Tripolitsa, which is a clear reference to the Fall of Constantinople (Η άλωση της Πόλης) to the Ottomans in 1453. In a sense, it was viewed as a historical payback for the Ottoman destruction of the glories of Byzantium.

the ancient world meant, just a glorious past, but the Byzantine heritage, meant more clear and tangible requirements. The heirs of the Byzantine Empire were entitled to claim the capital and the borders of the old empire, thereby reinforcing political ambition by historical arguments. Paparigopoulos's work came to offer the ideological historical and mythological rationale for Modern Greek social formation through the assertion of historical continuity. It is clear that Paparigopoulos's historical composition is markedly different from the pre-revolutionary tradition of the Enlightenment. The earlier attempts to write secular history were designed to cultivate the collective identity of modern Hellenism in relation to classical antiquity with certain clear political implications: a democratic state, as opposed to an autocratic one; the principle of political equality; and a regime of political rights (Grigoriadis 2013, 25-30).

Paparigopoulos and all Romantic 19th-century historiography maintain a connection to the past as a basic title of national honor but soften the secular stakes of the Enlightenment until they are finally abandoned. The need to open the road leading from ancient times to the modern era goes beyond through, not beyond the theocratic Byzantium to the end of the King Otto's era. At the same time, they met the demand for the cultivation of a national consciousness so as to bring together in a single national community both the social elements and the territories that constituted the independent state, as well as the Greek-speaking South Balkan and Asia Minor overseas populations. As the primary quest for historiographical foundation is unity: unity in space, unity in time, unity in language, unity in national ideology folklores and myths and also in a-historical entities – all products of Divine Providence (Petmezas 2009, 123-135).

This history was effectively established as a new national orthodoxy. The big idea, the triumphant figure of Greek history that Paparigopoulos elaborated and established, came to replace the remnants of an earlier tradition which had been the axis of the intellectual revival of

the Greeks during their pre-revolutionary period and had inspired their quest for freedom during the Revolution. It is obvious, however, that the three-stage theory of Greek history that Paparigopoulos elaborated and established, what Hamilakis (2007, 27) calls “*Indigenous Hellenism*,” not only still exists but is also dominant, constituting the constant outline of one major feature of the dominant historical discourse.

At the same time, throughout the 19th century, parallel to the formation of the new internal national mythopoeia, the interplay with the West, that “tyranny” (Butler 1933) of Hellas over European Romantics (and over modern Greeks themselves) more or less created the ideal of Hellenism that we know. The national independence of modern Greece coincided with the European rediscovery of classical Greece, beginning with Winckelmann and the creation of the Classical Museums a generation before, and crystallized to such a degree that Greece could play the foundational role it played in Hegel’s lectures. Thus, the symbolic importance of antiquity constituted a great symbolic advantage for Modern Greeks, who in their turn claimed to have the exclusive right of being the inheritors of the ancient spirit. So, in a sense, modern Greeks arose, first of all, as a cultural and mythical construct, before their political emancipation. One can only imagine the symbolic or even mythic associations Europeans made in the news that a Greek nation was fighting for its independence. One can only imagine what this could mean for a philosopher like Hegel. It was for this reason that the massive movement of Philhellenism arose, and this is why it was easier for the Greek revolutionaries, to justify their cause as a “national” one, thus avoiding being mistaken for yet another movement similar to the Carbonari one, especially in the age of the Holy Alliance, that was responsible for the crushing of similar movements in Italy and Spain.

At the same time, the notion of a barbaric East is constructed, in a straight contrast to the “historically superior” Western civilization. As Edward Said (1978) has shown in his *Orientalism*, this was the period where the roots of what is called *Eurocentrism* and the subsequent construction of cultural hierarchy between the “eastern” and “western” peoples emerged. Therefore, the internationalization, or to be more precise, the Europeanization of the Greek cause immediately was put on the map of geopolitical arrangements. Because Greek freedom was European freedom, through the opposition against the Ottomans, who just so happened to be the first ones to be on the receiving event of the European Transmutation, to put it in Marshall Hodgson’s terms. “We are all Greeks” was the new motif, where the “we” were western Europeans. Consequently, the discovery of both the Orient and Ancient Greece made the story of Greece “the colonialist condition in the imaginary” (Gourgouris 1996, 6).

In this context, new discoveries at Troy, Mycenae and Tiryns gave new impetus for foreign archaeological schools (German in 1874, American in 1881, British in 1886, Austrian in 1898) to work in Athens or other Greek sites (Hanink 2017:164). Sir Arthur Evans’s discovery of the “Minoan civilization” in Crete in the early 1900s, pushed even farther back in time the origins of the European civilization (Papadopoulos 2005). The flourishing of museums, the arts and travel writing, the connection of philology and philosophy to the classics, and the rise of public spectacles and above all the Olympic games, resulted in an adoption of some kind of religiosity with which modernity embraced the idea of Greece today (Ruprecht 2002, 147-156).

4.4 Destinies, Ideas, and the Others.

In 1793 Thomas Jefferson wrote that “it may be taken for a certainty that not a foot of land will ever be taken from the Indians without their own consent” (cited in Weinberg 1958:72), but this promise, as we saw was betrayed. It has been estimated that by the 1820s and the 1830s,

one hundred thousand native Americans were removed from their homes and transported west of the Mississippi (Friedman 1975: 199-200). Forced to stand up against the Federal Army and the aggression of the frontiersmen, eventually became the only solution. It was either this or annihilation. Every time, the American expansion onto a new frontier and a new wilderness reinforced the concept of the nomadic “Indian” as the savage. Contrary to the civilized expansion of the whites, the mobility of the native Americans was seen as uncivilized and they were perceived to be in no position to have rights of land ownership either because of their color or because they were on the wrong side of the frontier. The irony was that, especially after the Civil Wars, that supposedly had solved the problem of slavery, the largest mechanized army the world had ever seen was created and it was sent to the West. As soon as the problem was assumed resolved, the “indigenous problem” was intensified. That is when the war with the Indians took place. Deprived of legal identity and living in reservations because of their “anomalous tribal status” (Friedman *ibid.*, 176-177), Native Americans would have to wait until the third decade of the 20th century (in 1924) to be granted citizenship by the US Congress.

By the time the new nation drew new lines on the map, other lines had already been drawn within it. Even before the Revolution, universal human characteristics such as hard work, piety, cognitive and physical ability were attributed to a certain racial group, that gained cultural prominence. Whiteness became something more than skin pigmentation, i.e. a visual marker: it became a system of privilege (Babb 1998). By the time the American Revolution erupted, West Africans, who had been brought to the New World involuntarily, were perceived as an ignorant and inferior race. As Higonnet (2007, 130-131) points out, enslaved Africans were forgotten in the context of the American mission, as they were not considered part of the new nation’s destiny, nor as subjects of history. That is the problem with slavery that abolition was designed

to address: a slave is a non-person, politically speaking, and has the legal status of property.

After the Revolution, most white Americans believed that such “primitive” and “native” peoples could not be part of the melting pot. As we saw in the introduction, Hegel had expressed his doubts about that as well.

Others have pointed to the Constitution as the big compromise on the institution of slavery. For example, Waldstreicher argues that although the document never explicitly mentions the institution, “slavery was as important to the making of the Constitution as the Constitution was to the survival of Constitution” (Waldstreicher 2009, 17).²² He argues that slavery had become not just a practical consideration but also one that weighed heavily on the debates over the form of Government, representation, and matters related to taxation. Waldstreicher believes that the founders leveraged slavery in a way that limited government and contained disagreements about the institution itself. What equality would there be, Smith-Rosenberg wonders (2010, 388-412) if, on the one hand, there was the independent and virtuous European and on the other the disenfranchised bondsman? By 1850, a debate was joined about whether slavery was compatible (the southern view) or incompatible (the northern view) with the novel experiment in democratic, rights-based politics.

Of course, the Revolution had opened the discussion of overall abolition. It was a political, humanitarian, and religious demand, promoted by Quakers, Calvinists, and other Congregationalists, who saw slavery as a sin that would provoke the wrath of God. Even though abolitionist groups were calling for immediate termination of slavery in the 1830s and the 1840s based on moral arguments, the national government refused to be converted to new ways of

²² Six of the Constitution's eighty-four clauses are directly concerned with slavery and slaveowners, including Article I, Section 2, the "three-fifths clause"; Article I, Section 9, which prevented Congressional interference with the slave trade until 1808; Article IV, Section 2, the fugitive slave clause; and Article V, which forbade an amendment to the ninth section of the first article for twenty years.

thinking and to reject racist ideology myths. And it had the irrefutable language of Enlightenment (science) to prove it: in the middle of the 19th century, a group of American scientists tried to clarify the origins of humanity and at the same time answer the question whether humans sprang from one creation or many. These scientists, such as Louis Agassiz, Samuel Morton, Josiah Nott and others, went even further and attempted to prove that there is a hierarchy between the human races. Especially from around 1839, when Morton published his *Crania Americana*, all through 1859, when Darwin's the *Origin of Species* was published,²³ this "American School of Ethnology" existed to prove one thing: that the human races are divided into superior and inferior ones (Haller 1970). Nevertheless, abolitionist agitation was winning ground and little by little replaced "science" with the higher morality of equality and respectability. In short, for the blacks there were three problems to overcome: slavery, the South and color -consciousness. Despite the fact that the North abolished slavery and defeated the South, color consciousness (i.e., the visibility of race) persisted (Robertson 1980, 96-97).

Getting from the one experience to the other, the establishment of the Greek State was followed by debates on the definition of the citizen and the alien and notions of indigeneity. This

²³Even after the advent of Darwin and the American Civil War, Josiah C. Nott published a book called *The Instincts of Races* (1866), in which he stated that the practical results of Emancipation are nothing more nor less than the fulfillment of natural laws, long since demonstrated by the science of Ethnology. The "moral instinct" of each race was as permanent as its physical type, and these instincts "drive reason aside or override it in the great majority of mankind." He even gave an example: If you put a hundred children of each race on separate islands, without instruction, the social organization of each race would still work out. The instincts of each race were given by the Almighty and the Caucasian one was the truly progressive, the one that for ages had advanced the sciences. In the progress of mankind and science "the Negro, Indian, and other inferior races, take no part whatever" (8-9). In order to confirm his assertions, he gives the example of how the liberated blacks in Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados had ruined those regions and had shown a disinterest in agricultural labor, had abandoned plantations and left buildings in ruins. In short, the emancipated people of these lands gradually led to their destruction.

new concern with ethnos racial identity will play out throughout the 19th century and culminate in the 20th century when indigeneity became “homogenous”. As early as 1844, and having had a *jus sanguinis* system (the idea that citizenship was passed on by Greek parents only) the debate of *autochthones* (those Greeks living inside the nation-state) and *heterochthones* (Greeks living outside the nation state) arose,²⁴ as it was difficult for the latter to obtain citizenship in the new country. The first- ever Greek constitution (1822) makes the distinction between nation and people, whereas the first denotes the *genos* (race) and the second denotes the citizen. However, after 1832, the term *ethnos* was used for Greeks within the state and the term *genos* for all Greeks, both citizens and members of the Greek diaspora. In the evolution of Greek citizenship law (*ithageneia*, “nativism”), the first group (the *homogeneis*, those of the same *genos*/race) became the crucial standard for Greekness, whereas the *allogeneis* (those of a different *genos*/race), were not seen as Greek, even if they had Greek citizenship (see Christopoulos 2019, 31-108). Thus, ethnicity and citizenship, do not coincide. You can be a Greek ethnically without having Greek citizenship, and you can possess the nationality without being considered Greek.

This paradox was built upon certain characteristics that were taken to define Greekness: namely religion (Greek-Orthodox Christianity), language, “national consciousness” (what I have been calling myth and being “of Greek descent” (the ethnic idea). Therefore, it is easier for someone living in a foreign country, with no real ties to Greece, but who can prove that one of his/her great-grandparents were Greek (which basically means was ethnically Greek), to obtain Greek citizenship, than for a second-generation immigrant living in Greece (see Koundoura 2007, 95-102). Thus, the status of political alien in Greece may be conceived in religious terms

²⁴ It was in the midst of one such parliamentary debate, that Kolletis (a *heterochthon*) made his speech on the Megali Idea.

(Muslims, Jews etc.), linguistic terms (Turkish, Roma, Macedonian) or ethnic terms (Armenians, Turks etc.).

By the time, the Greek state almost had doubled its territory both on the mainland and in the islands after the Balkan wars of 1912-1913, large populations of *allogeneis* were included in the new Greek space. At the same time, a significant number of *homogeneis* were left outside, a problem that was solved with two population exchanges, between Greece and Bulgaria as well as between Greece and Turkey, that brought over 1,5 million of Orthodox Christians (the population exchange was based on religion) to the mainland, thus contributing on the one hand to the nation's homogeneity, but on the other hand putting the final nail in the coffin of the *Megali Idea*. The extermination of Sephardic Jews of Thessaloniki, during the Nazi occupation of 1940-1944 as well as the expulsion Macedonians and Albanians during the Greek Civil War in 1946-1949 minimized the numbers of persons of non-Greek descent within the nation's borders. Today, Greece boasts of having a high degree of ethnic homogeneity, and recognizes no minorities within its borders, except for the Muslim (a recognized religious rather than ethnic category) in Thrace. Throughout the 20th century, tragic dislocations of populations, which have culminated in a much more homogenous Greece.



Figure 4 American Territorial Expansion.

(<https://adamtooze.com/2018/10/02/americas-19th-century-expansion-in/>)



Figure 5 'Civilization' goes West: American Progress, or Manifest Destiny.

(<https://www.britannica.com/event/Manifest-Destiny>)

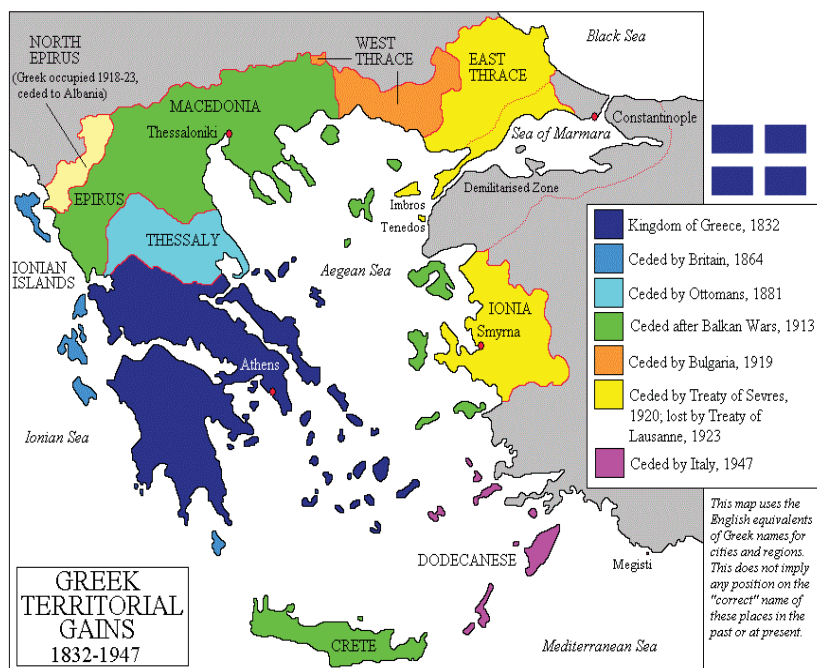


Figure 6 Greek Territorial Expansion.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_modern_Greece#/media/File:Territorial_Expansion_of_Greece_from_1832%E2%80%931947.gif)



Figure 7 The Mother(land) and her bound daughters: Anti-Ottoman propaganda.

(<https://britishinterventionincrete.wordpress.com/2014/05/04/1909-anti-ottoman-propaganda/>)

5 CALENDAR AND RITUAL.

*The past is by definition a datum
which nothing in the future will change.
But the knowledge of the past is something progressive
which is constantly transforming and perfecting itself
(Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, p.58)*

5.1 Introduction.

As we have seen, according to Durkheim, our perceptions of time and space rely on categories that are socially constructed and ritually reinforced. In this light, calendars are one important means of organizing the experience of time, including sacred time. There are many kinds of calendars: political ones (such as the Julian calendar of the Romans, adopted and adapted in the later Gregorian calendar) and religious ones, for example Ash Wednesday, Lent, Easter and Christmas for Christianity and Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Hanukkah for Judaism. In the age of nations, there are also national calendars consisting of a series of national holidays, many of them commemorative by design. The nature of these national calendars in temporal and ritualistic terms as well as their relation to the older, religious ones is the subject of this introductory section (Bellah 1967).

In his *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson made the distinction between the concept of time in pre-modern society (ahistorical, cyclical) and modern society (historical, linear). Modernity, he argued, did not break only with religion (according to one view of secularism), but also with previous approaches to time (1991, 11). Aviel Roshwald, on the other hand, argues that we live in an era where both concepts of time still exist, mutually influencing and overlapping with each other (2006: 51). What Roshwald (who relies heavily on Mircea Eliade's 1971 *Myth of Eternal Return*) specifically refers to is the symbiosis of the cyclical nature of time in agricultural civilizations (where chronological reenactment and symbolism were critical in the religious observances of the people) with the new linear perspective of time

developed by Christianity and Judaism, which is guided by some core concepts of these religions: fate and teleology, concepts that, as we saw, were given new philosophical and historical meaning by Hegel (and appear in our version of “sacred nationalism”). Yet, these two concepts do not exclude each other, as both Judaism and Christianity sustained cyclical patterns of religious practices. This coexistence was due to the gap between elites (who governed) and the masses who sought relief in older sensibilities. As one scholar has put it, “if elite time marched in a more or less linear manner, popular time danced and leaped. Elite time colonized and constructed boundaries... popular time was more local and consolidating” (Gillis 1994, 6).

Therefore, nationalism embraces and glorifies a unilinear notion of historical time, while its mythmaking and imaginings reflect a desire to rise above this time, just like Christianity and Judaism did with their calendars and cyclical ritualistic celebrations. As we saw earlier, Robert Bellah’s essay on civil religion identified these national calendars as religion-like, embodying some conception of the sacred time for the sacred nation. It is this manipulation of time, namely the unilinear-and-cyclical notions of time that, according to Roshwald, can explain the overall acceptance of nationalism (2006, 48-50), as if it is part of the natural order. The narratives of national origin, the stories about national character, and the interpretation of historical events are essential for a nation. And in this regard, acts of commemoration are planned to provide a sense of heritage and identity.

For commemorations, a date is the cornerstone. It validates the event and provides accuracy and historical legitimacy. While anniversaries are shorter and involve the living, commemorations are longer and involve the imagination of collective or social memory. The latter are narratives about past events that give them relevance for the present and the future and are part of the broader political “*mythscape*” (or a *mythomoteur*), connecting the members of the

nation with their ancestors as well as successors, “in a single symbolic and narrative universe” (Bell 2003). Connerton (1989) offers another distinctive conceptualization of temporality in exploring how societies remember. He argues that commemorations are radical breaks between the past and the present, that serve as the basis for collective memory projects performed in ritual activities:

All beginnings contain an element of recollection. This is particularly so when a social group makes a concerted effort to begin with a wholly new start. There is a measure of complete arbitrariness in the very nature of any such attempted beginning. The beginning has nothing whatsoever to hold on to; it is as if it came out of nowhere. For a moment, the moment of beginning, it is as if the beginnings had abolished the sequence of temporality itself and were thrown out of the continuity of the temporal order. (1989, 6)

For such a society, the celebration of beginnings is one of the ways we impose ruptures on historical time and so interpret the past. The birthday of the nation is important and that is why it is celebrated as a national day as well as in the form of different temporal markings such as centennials and bicentennials. Its power lies in the power of social categories: a national celebration is a social get-together, an undivided union of the individual with society, that produces, “collective effervescence, passion and excitement” (Durkheim 1995, 218-220). Thus, commemorations have a distinct social function. At this point, it is essential to underline that while through the act of commemoration, a battle, a Founder’s birthday, or a Revolution transcends the sphere of an *hapax genomenon*, i.e. an event *once done*, to use Eliade’s (1963, 37) wording, their commemorations *per se* are once-only ritualistic events that can have through repetition, therapeutic value and also provide an exemplary model for the future. And as we shall see below, many of them have to reinvent themselves due to overall political and historical circumstances in which they take place.

In plain ritualistic terms, ritual commemorations entail clusters of events and activities (sacred or profane, public, or private, central or peripheral) that introduce a special dimension of time as well as concrete ritualistic structures. These can be, for example, an opening event that “valorizes” the commemoration in time and space (the equivalent of the sacralization of religious events), there can also be rites of purification or display (procession or exposition of sacred objects), rites of passage (participation of the newer generations) and a rite of revalorization, and a closing event that leaves the promise of repetition open in the future (Falassi 1987, 1-10). For the nation (group, collective), speeches, parades, performances, monuments, flag raisings and reenactments are elements that reinforce the notion of continuity which in turn gives back to the participating members both a place and a meaning in the course of time. While these repetitions may become meaningless, it is the requirement of exact ritualistic forms that become effective by themselves (Smart 1996, 73).

In this light, the imagining of what the nation was once, may not totally correspond with what it is today, but it is up to the nation to prove that it will not only bind these two images together, but it will secure their unity in the future. In other words, by emphasizing the past, we determine the present and aspire to the future. And every generation must feel a direct commitment to the events and actions that originally established the nation. Therefore, national time obtains specific calendric value; it becomes *sacred time*. In the two cases we are examining this sacrality begins not at the moment of the actual separation from the old regime (in 1783 and 1830) but the moment the process was initiated, i.e., at the symbolic beginning of the two Revolutions: on July 4th, 1776 in the US; and on March 25th, 1821, in Greece. My intention is not to give a detailed account of these events, nor of how they were organized both centrally and

peripherally, but to see how they were placed within the overall political and historical context in both cases.

5.2 Jubilees in the USA.

The Americans have chosen July 4 (the “Glorious Fourth”) as their Independence Day, but they could as well have chosen July 2 or July 8. It is characteristic that on July 3, 1776 John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that July 2 would be “the most memorable” American anniversary (Warren 1945). The truth was that the Continental Congress voted for Independence on July 2 and proclaimed independence in the Pennsylvania State House on July 8th. However, the document that was distributed to the press and the people, the Declaration of Independence, had the Fourth of July 1776 printed on it, proof of its authentication, complete with its title and signers below. Even though the date gained significance immediately it was not commemorated uniformly (Warren, *ibid.*). A certain level of unity, as we saw above, was achieved in the 1820s in remembrance of the passing revolutionary generation and era. Apart from that, during these years, Americans made special efforts to invite aged revolutionaries to perform special duties, such as toasts or just be present.²⁵ Moreover, the fact that both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on July 4th, 1826, on the nation’s 50th birthday, gave an additional mythic quality to the date. In several cities, the nation celebrated with orations, speeches, cannonades, and processions of aging veterans (Bodnar 1992, 22-23).

On July 4, 1876, the American republic celebrated one hundred years of national independence. This century had been characterized by an expansion of territory, population growth, material affluence and power that appeared almost miraculous. The US had grown from

²⁵ As Kammen (1978: 44) informs us, sometimes mistakes occurred; for example, in 1822 in Indianapolis, one of these aged revolutionaries proved to be a Hessian who had fought against the American Continental Army...

a transatlantic British colony of four million, that had not yet reached beyond the plains of Mississippi (as Hegel had noted), to a nation of forty million, which had now expanded from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In the same year, the United States was in the midst of the worst economic depression in its history, as well as in a cultural crisis since the wounds from the Civil War era had not yet healed. However, the “cult of the Centennial” as Quinault (1998) has shown, or to use Hobsbawm’s (1983) wording, the era of “mass producing traditions,” had already entered national life and had become part of the nation’s calendar of sacred history.

At its heart, the centenary of the Declaration of Independence was celebrated by an international exhibition in Philadelphia. Many nationalistic Americans argued that the Centennial should be a private American affair and that Europeans should not be invited, specifically that "monarchs should not be invited to celebrate" the birthday of a revolutionary republic. This latter argument was denied by proponents of the exhibition who claimed that it would be an excellent way to show how successful a republican way of life was, in comparison to a monarchy. Therefore, it included foreign exhibitions. Another debate that flared up briefly was over the location of the Centennial. The nation's capital, Washington, was considered, but was found to be too small and to have too few lodging places for visitors. New York, on the other, had had its exhibition in 1853 and Boston, despite its historical significance, was considered too small and inaccessible to most Americans. Philadelphians, though, thought their city was the logical choice. It was the birthplace of the nation where the Declaration of Independence had been signed, and it had been the seat of the Continental Congress and the nation’s first capitol (Pizor 1970).

The exhibition was opened by then President Grant. At the opening, specially commissioned works, such as Richard Wagner's “Centennial Inauguration March” were

performed (although to generally mixed reviews, see Overvold 1976). Civil war veterans also participated. It is interesting to note, that the public participation in the centenary celebrations was greatly facilitated by the improvements in public transport, with the development of the railway network. The public's interest in the past, which was encouraged by current developments in literature, art, and politics assisted the growth of centenary commemorations. The Centenary was seen as a milestone on the road to a glorious future. Orators repeatedly proclaimed that General Grant's America was bigger, stronger, and richer than General Washington's had been. It was, after all, the age of capital, of industrialization and the age of international exhibitions (Bodnar 1992, 28-35).²⁶ Accordingly, America's originating events and early leaders are not symbols of national unity because of their priority and importance, but because this priority and this importance have become and remained convenient objects of consensus among later generations (Schwartz 1982), and cornerstones of the civil religion, as Bellah (1967) has described them.

Of course, discussion and celebration of the American nation was not uniform. To the central organizers of the American centennial, the biggest problem of national integration was an enduring regionalism. Having just come out of the Civil War, the regional differentiation between North and South was more problematic to the creation of national centennial celebrations than that between East and West; fewer than one third of the population who lived in the South thought there was much to celebrate (except, perhaps, African Americans). Ten years after the end of the Civil War, political tension was still central to public discourse. Native Americans, a tiny fraction of the total population, were only seen as subjects of "native exhibitions," that gave the chance to visitors to see a "vanishing way of life" (Frost and Laing

²⁶ This story, from freedom to wealth, is also the story so vividly portrayed in Henry Adams's autobiography *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918).

2013: 70). Also, close to the heart of the celebrations, news of the defeat of the American Army by the Sioux in Little Bighorn, Montana on June 25, 1876 stepped up the efforts of the Federal Government against Sitting Bull and the indigenous populations, in general (Philbrick 2010, 117-134). Moreover, the public imagination of the indigenous populations, along with that of the first immigrant waves of the 1850s and the 1860s constituted an ambiguous “other” to American national identity. Even more peripheral to this discussion were the African Americans, who were not included in the centennial celebrations in 1876 ; whenever collective efforts were made to join in the celebration, they were largely ignored, and even patronized. Also, references made to black people in the central national discourse, were rare (Spillman 1997, 37-49) .

At the time of the Centennial, anti-British feeling still endured: Americans still trumpeted New World virtues and denounced Old World vices—especially, British vices. But with the arrival of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, established American norms were intimidated and identification with Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Britain was encouraged. In the 1890s, British restraint in the Spanish-American War and the successful arbitration of the Venezuela-Guiana dispute brought about, increasing amity. During World War I and the common fight against the Central European Powers, made anti-British sentiment seem not merely obsolete, but unpatriotic. A movie about the Revolution, called “The Spirit of 1776” was seized in 1918 and its producer jailed for portraying British allies as adversaries. In the title of the court case, there is a splendid irony: *The United States v. The Spirit of 1776* (Lowenthal 1977).

In 1926, the United States also celebrated its Sesquicentennial in Philadelphia, with an Exposition that did not quite reach the proportions of its Centennial model. Led by the Liberty Bell itself, the year began with bell ringing across the country. Philadelphia encouraged festivity

with a full-costume re-enactment of the signing of the Declaration and culminated in a twenty-one-gun salute and with the singing of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" (Hartje 1975). However, in the same year it was the publication of a short, yet highly influential book, that made a sensation, especially in historiographical circles: J. Franklin Jameson's *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement* (1926), in which he examined the American cause beyond political, military or diplomatic History or any sense of exceptionalism. Focusing specifically on the aftermath of the Revolution on a social level (political democracy, land reform, the rise of businesses and industrialism, education and religion), Jameson's aim was to challenge American historians by opening new ways of studying the American Revolutionary era.

In his 1871, *Democratic Vistas*, Walt Whitman wrote : "long ere the second centennial (1976) arrives, there will be some forty and fifty States, among them Canada and Cuba. The Pacific will be ours, and the Atlantic mainly ours....Can there be any doubt who the leader ought to be?" (cited in Kohn 1970, 7). While Canada and Cuba were not part of the United States in 1976, the rest of Whitman's prophecy strikes the reader with its accuracy. In 1976, the United States which was seen as the undisputed leader of the Western World (or of the entire World), at that time, celebrated its bicentennial, as its centennial, after a "decade of disunity and dissension" (Bodnar 1992, 226-227). There were the recent memories and traumas of the Vietnam War and the protests it stirred, the Civil Rights movement and a President who had resigned because of a political scandal. In other words, the celebration marked the end of an era of intense social unrest that was not yet resolved. For the celebrations, there was not going to be a central event (or international exhibition), but grass roots events were encouraged. Patriotism that had become unfashionable was now the real question, but at the same time, diversity was promoted. After all, the 4th of July celebrations were organized so as to act as an "introduction" to the political

values and the historical pageantry of the USA (Applebaum 1989,159), for the immigrants, who had already begun to arrive in the country in new waves, after the reform of the immigration laws in the 1960s as well as, to the new openness of Asian immigration. Therefore, this date began to serve not only as an opportunity for remembrance, but also as a ritual of pluralistic inclusivity. With television coverage, that included minorities' participation, parades, fireworks, and readings of the Declaration of Independence that symbolized national unity for all, a feeling of participation was reinforced. Special programs, shows and movies were produced especially for the occasion by the major networks, while commemorating stamps, were issued by US Postal Service. Furthermore, a moving exhibition carried by a "freedom train" traveled across the country in the bicentennial year. As for the British, President Ford's remarks in Valley Forge, PA, claimed that they saw their American cousins with envy because of their freedom. Three days later, during Queen Elizabeth's visit, Ford pointed out that "in declaring independence, we looked for guidance from our British heritage," adding that the visit "symbolized the continuing commitment to the common values of an Anglo-American civilization."²⁷ Moreover, serious work was done on the National Mall, including renovation of important historic sites. Big companies, such as Disney, sponsored events (with some newspapers calling the event a "buy-centennial" (see Spillman 1997, 96). Accordingly, parades and reenactments were again organized both in the capital and other cities (Applebaum *ibid.*, 164).

As Bodnar points out (*ibid.*, 234) the American Revolution Bicentennial administration treated the event as "end of history" as it was commemorated because it had produced a nation worthy of being celebrated in the past, present and future. However, with the thrust of the 1960s

²⁷ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Gerald Ford: Containing the Public messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President 1976-1977. Book II – April 9 to July 9, 1976 (pp. 1964, 1982). United States Government Printing Office: Washington 1979.

there were groups that protested (for civil rights, or the Vietnam War) and planners wished to reinforce the feelings of loyalty. The bicentennial celebrated the era of symbolic reconciliation and contained the language of a melting pot. Black history, which was also included in the celebrations highlighted, the sufferings and the contributions of the African Americans, and their role in the Revolution, were highlighted in museums, exhibitions and books. Also included were, the tributes to African Americans in Congress, as well as the sculpture of Martin Luther King Jr. was erected, in Dallas. While the discussion for blacks was about the past, then for the Native American, it was about the future (Spillman *ibid.*, 128). The Native Americans were also included in the national narrative. But they were discussed in describing projects about improving their living conditions, creating jobs and preserving their heritage (Spillman *ibid.*).

Lowenthal (1977) has argued that celebrating and reliving the Revolution has always been a rite of passage for Americans, a symbol of wisdom granting access to the Revolutionary tales. While the Centennial paid little attention to the past, it displayed a new awareness that the nation had a history and a stronger national consciousness than before. The Bicentennial, on the other hand, implied that the nation's greatness lay ahead and not in the past. Furthermore, the year 1976 did not witness the launching of any bold new programs of national social action for the third century. But somehow, Americans in the era of the Bicentennial came to realize that there is a promise of American life fixed in the noble sentiments of the Declaration of Independence, that if they are "glittering generalities," they are also "blazing ubiquities and that these principles are too shiny even for Americans to discredit" (Klein 1977). Jefferson's Declaration established a standard for freedom-loving peoples around the world. Very profound in its announcement, is the equality of men, their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and the obligation of government to secure those rights.

5.3 Jubilees in Modern Greece.

The proclamation of March 25 as Greece's Independence Day signaled the shift of the young Greek nation-state to regarding the position of the "Hellenic-Christian Synthesis", as its mainstream ideology. The first, unsuccessful, act of the Revolution began away from mainland Greece in February 1821, and the second outbreak took place almost two months later in the Peloponnese. On March 21, 1821, Greek rebels entered the town of Kalavryta. But according to the official narrative, the revolution officially began on March 25, when Bishop Germanos of Old Patras, summoned all the leading revolutionaries to the monastery of Agia Lavra, near the town of Kalavryta, where he made them swear under oath, to the cause of the revolution, under the banner of the Revolution (see Fig. 2 above). But such a meeting never happened.

Nevertheless in 1838, through a Royal Decree under King Otto, March 25th, was established as a national holiday. The following reasons were mentioned for the choice: first, the fact that this day in 1821 was the start of the "struggle for independence of the Greek nation"; and secondly, because that day was the Orthodox Feast of the Annunciation. Consequently, joining the secular and religious calendars. Another reason for choosing this date was that the Bavarian King did not want to relate Independence to the liberal Constitution of 1822, which was adopted, as we saw by the First National Assembly of Epidaurus on January 1, 1822. Thus, the legend of the raising of the banner of the Revolution by Bishop Germanos, was essentially created in the second half of the previous century, influenced by various factors, which, were later, ignored or refuted by modern 19th-century Greek historiography. The origin of this myth can be traced back to the description by a French traveler, Pouqueville, who wrote a History of the Greek Revolution in 1824 (Koulouri 1995).

As we have already seen, the powerful element of invention is a constant feature of national anniversaries, which were multiplying across Europe by the end of the 19th century. For a large portion of the 19th century, there was an experiential relationship with the past. As long as the fighters and those who had the immediate experience of the multiple ruptures, brought on by the war, were still alive, then the relationship would be almost prohibitive to historiographical elaboration. Indeed, along with the admiration for ancient Greek culture, that had distinguished Greek and European thought since the Enlightenment, after the creation of the Greek state the emotional relationship with the founders was set in motion. The heroes of the Revolution will thus be portrayed as the most exemplary models of valor and patriotism. This function is more clearly established in school practices, where a gallery of the warriors that make up the national pantheon along with the ancient Greeks. Soon, pictures and paintings of these heroes, would be venerated in classrooms, next to the images and newly formulated maps of Greece.

The annual celebration of the Revolution was aimed at the celebration of national unity, re-represented by commemorating the personalities of the Revolution. However, the institutionalization of the celebration did not obtain a concrete ritualistic form. The annual celebration, nevertheless, allowed the institution to be recognized as a celebration addressed to a wider audience. The celebration was linked from the outset with the promotion of King Otto's power. The national day of March 25th, which continued to represent a potent symbol of the Greek nation state, was also associated with the new dynasty of King George's which replaced that of Otto in 1863. At the same time, the idea of creating a national pantheon was developed by placing statues and busts of Revolutionary heroes in the propylaea of the University of Athens and the Quintennial provided the perfect opportunity. The bust of Rigas Feraios (whose song we cited in the Introduction) was erected in this area in 1871, and about a year later, the statue of the

Patriarch Gregory the Fifth (who had been murdered by the Ottomans for failure to restrain the Revolution, despite having previously condemned it). This pantheon would later be enriched with the statue of Adamantios Korais in 1875 and much later in 1931, with the statue of Ioannis Kapodistrias (the first Governor of Greece who was assassinated in 1831) in the centennial of his death. The fiftieth anniversary celebration, as an extraordinary event in the history of the nation, demanded a certain level of innovation in the form of the ceremony, so as to emphasize its unique character and to ensure massive participation. The decision to translate the relics of Patriarch Gregory the 5th from Istanbul, and the procession during which the bones would be paraded along the streets of Piraeus and Athens in the presence of the political and intellectual elite, was appropriate in this context. As one of the first “victims of Turkish barbarism” the transfer of Gregory’s bones elevated his status as one of the nation’s “neo-martyrs” or “isapostolos” (equal to the Apostles, see Eksertzoglou 2001; Tzedopoulos 2002). Again, we see a mingling of religious and national figures here that would be unheard of in the US (or France).

The 1821 Centennial was celebrated in...1930 (yet some modest and minimal celebrations took place in 1921). Initial celebrations were planned for 1921, however they were postponed as the Greek state was too preoccupied with the Asia Minor campaign (against the soon-to-be Turks, or former Ottomans) in 1919-1922, that ended the *Megali Idea* in a self-styled “catastrophe.” Preparations continued after the war, and there would be three celebrations: first, an exhibition entitle “Greek and International exhibition wealth-producing, intellectual and artistic” with related theatrical and musical performances, medals and postage stamps; second, the erection of monuments, and in particular of a mausoleum in Athens, and of smaller monuments in the provinces; and third, the establishment of a Historical Museum about the pre-revolutionary, revolutionary and post-revolutionary period, the publication of three major albums

(scenes of portraiture, elements of the city, and everyday life), as well as the publication of historical overviews of Hellenism's history from 1800 onwards. The members of the Planning Commission were historians, journalists, painters, sculptors, folklorists, etc. The Commission had all the characteristics of a cultural center: it participated in networks, collaborated with other institutions, had administrative autonomy, and included political and cultural elites aimed at mobilizing individuals and institutions. The two main axes of this vast mobilization (by 1930's Greek standards) was the construction of a new historical narrative for the Greek national past, and the celebration of the nation-state's progress since 1830. Also, after almost ten years of continuous warfare (the Balkan Wars, the First World War and the Greco-Turkish War) and especially after the pending integration of the New Lands (parts of Macedonia, and especially of Thessaloniki) the mobilization of 1929-1930 was a tool in the pro-Prime Minister Venizelos elites' attempt at national reconstruction. More specifically, the above-mentioned new historical narrative comprised the military successes and the territorial gains of Greece in 1912-1922, were directly connected with the 1821 War of Independence. This narrative was disseminated through memorabilia of nationalism (books, stamps, paintings), through historical reenactments, and through the erection of monuments and commemorative rituals (Trianatafyllou 2016).

Ironically, despite the well-prepared anniversary by academics and the state, what finally prevailed was a greater debate (for many years to come) over a landmark publication, that no one had expected: Gannis Kordato's (a Marxist historian) book, *The Social Significance of the Greek Revolution* (published in 1924, around the same time Jameson's *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement* was also issued), that recognized social and class struggles as the fundamental reasons for the Greek Independence War, and also questioned the sacred narrative of "national revival".

The Sesquicentennial of the Greek Revolution found the state ruled by a nationalistic dictatorship (1967-1974) that oversimplified and homogenized Greek history. Thus, 1971 was named “the year of freedom” and the tone that was adopted by the dictators themselves, with regard to the celebrations of the 150 year anniversary, was to give a sense of grandeur both to the typical events (military parades) and also to more original events, such as competitions or the production of Revolution-themed musical records and films, some of which are still shown on Greek National Television on March 25th. For the dictators, the Revolution was the result of combining the (anti-secular) forces of the Greek *klefts* (bandits) and the Church. There would be no Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment governed by the principles of the French Revolution or other “disturbing details” such as Rigas Feraios’s dreams of a multinational Balkan confederation. The events culminated in a grand ritualistic event, on May 3, 1971, in the Panathenaic Stadium (the Classical stadium that was home to the 1896 Olympics) filled with reenactments of heroic events from the Revolution. As Katsapis notes (2009: 402-403), the whole Sesquicentennial was organized primarily with a twofold purpose: a) Propaganda on the part of the military regime that endorsed the mottos “Fatherland, Faith, Family” and “the Greece of Greek Christians”; and b) to promote exemplary models that could counterbalance Western influences that were tempting and corrupting Greek youth.²⁸

5.4 Coda: Greece at 200.

As these lines are being written, the Greek State is almost one year away from celebrating its 200th anniversary. Understandably, the nation has already mobilized towards 2021. It has been announced that this year will serve as an opportunity to “reintroduce a reborn Greece to the

²⁸ By a twist of fate, it was mainly due to demonstrations by that very youth (mostly students) that the regime began to collapse.

world.”²⁹ According to the relevant Decree,³⁰ the 2021 Commission was formed, under the direct supervision of the Head of Government, with the sole purpose of preparing the ritual events for this celebratory year. Its mission is to collaborate with the Hellenic Parliament, the relevant Ministries, Universities, and other government agencies in Greece or abroad (Embassies, Consulates, etc.). Moreover, the Head of the new Committee is a familiar face, Yanna Angelopoulos, who was the head of the Organizing Committee of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games (whose Opening Ceremony was a glorification of the tri-partite Greek history I discussed above). For the time being, such an elaborate event is not planned, however numerous other events are being organized (conferences in Greece and abroad, new publications, research projects, etc.). International involvement is also encouraged. Scholars such as Mark Mazower, Roderick Beaton, Richard Clogg (all experts on Greece), or other scholars from various disciplines will contribute to the planning. As a matter of fact, it is the use of the bicentennial that first inspired me to explore the origins of the modern Greek nation-state, namely its War of Independence. On the other hand, there are voices³¹ that are complaining of the overly patriotic tones that will be attributed to the celebrations and argue that the bicentennial should be instead an opportunity for introspection and dialogue on the varied aspects of the founding event of the state. Already, there are numerous events planned to be held, which are not according to the official planning. Once more, there is no one view when it comes to the celebration of national origins.

Of course, the choice to give to the bicentennial the theme of a reborn Greece is not irrelevant to the country’s recent past, namely the last tumultuous decade, that shook the State

²⁹ <http://www.ekathimerini.com/242044/article/ekathimerini/news/mitsotakis-seeks-to-rebrand-greece-by-2021>

³⁰ See Presidential Decree of the Hellenic Republic 96/2019

³¹ <https://www.kathimerini.gr/978459/opinion/epikairothta/politikh/to-oroshmo-2021>

politically, financially, and socially (see Kozaitis 2021). Some argue that the crisis occurred not only on the ideological or financial level: it was also a crisis of values, morals, and foundations. More so, it was argued that the waves of social change in the country were signs of crisis, both in its relationship with “Europe” (which had “imposed” severe austerity measures in return for the bailout), and in its own national identity. These opinions have been crystallized in some of the most well-known scholarly works that were published in Greece in the last decade. Nikos Kotzias (an international relations professor, who went on to become Foreign Minister from 2015 through 2018), believed Greece was transformed into a “Colony of Debt” (2013, especially see chapter 4), a victim of the German “imperial” and economic domination of Europe. Others, like political scientist Stathis Kalyvas, in his *Modern Greece: What Everyone Needs to Know* (2015), argued that Greece’s modern history (from 1830 onward) has been a series of alternating cycles of catastrophes and triumphs (which is echoed in the Greek title of the book, *Καταστροφές και Θρίαμβοι*), due to the fact that the country is caught between the modern West and the less modern post-colonial states, that began their path towards modernity after the end of WWII (Kalyvas 2015: 18-19). In a more pessimistic tone, Kostas Kostis, in his almost 900-page *History’s Spoiled Brats: The Story of Modern Greece* (2013) concluded that even the Greek achievements of the last few decades (stable democratic institutions, EU and NATO memberships, etc.) were not secure and that, given the calamity of the crisis, the future remains unknown and difficult to predict (Kostis 2013, 869). In the same vein, historian Giorgos Dertilis published a book with the admittedly inspired title *Seven Wars, Four Civil Wars and Seven Defaults* (2016), in which he basically blamed the “half taught, uncultured political elites” of the country for constant demagoguery and for perpetuating syndromes of xenophobia, euro-phobia as well as for prolonging the absence of true democratic dialogue, which was according to him,

the reason, for enduring national divisions (Dertilis 2016, 140-141). It is in this intellectual environment that the State has mobilized. Only time will tell, once again, what is the meaning of a bicentennial and its role on how we perceive the nation's origin story, its present and its future. And it makes one wonder whether the topic of the nation's origins will fall into semi-obscurity again, as it did in the US, after the end of the celebratory year.

6 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.

As we saw above, Hegel thought that the history of freedom experienced its origin and early youth in Greece and attained its adulthood first in Rome and then more fully in modern Europe. He did actually think that the spirit (Geist) of freedom and modernization might one day move to America, but due to the alleged lack of a distant past, a perceived lack thereof that was due to his dismissal of indigenous Americans, America for him still remained on the periphery of World History, or to put it differently, its ultimate trajectory remained in question, as a “land of the future. I do not cite Hegel in order to endorse his idealism or to appropriate aspects of his version of World History that may seem to underwrite Eurocentrist geopolitical views. My approach relies on a more explicitly political reading of Hegel, one that highlights the place of national emancipation and abolition in his version of philosophical history. In this light, I see him as a theorist of the Age of Revolutions, and as a philosopher who saw his own times as a revolutionary moment in the destiny of humanity, as the period in which the liberation from bondage and servitude was beginning to be demanded by the then revolutionaries everywhere, from the US, to France, to Latin America, to Haiti and Greece. He observed this as the historical moment when World History passed from a history of empires to a history of the modern concept of the nation-state. However, the lesson that Hegel took from the French Revolution, the Terror, and their aftermath was that, while the general will toward revolution can destroy the old regime, it cannot easily build a completely new “order”. As we have noted, in the first stages of the revolutions in question, radicality, freedom and the passion for creating new liberal worlds almost immediately became subjects of debate and even civil wars. Therefore, from a world historical perspective, initially emancipatory movements can turn repressive or remain blind to their oppression; revolutions do not begin in as pristine a golden age as they are later

remembered to have been; and nations convinced of their providential purpose or exceptionalism can become imperialistic in their turn.

Contrary to Hegel, who saw the Spirit of World History moving from the East to the West, given his Eurocentric presuppositions, Marshall Hodgson viewed the emancipatory movements, in what he called the fateful “Generation of 1789” (1974, 3: 205-208) as the product of global developments in technology and in morals, as well as having achieved a new kind of “social power” in Europe, culminating by 1800 into the “European World Hegemony.” For Hodgson, the so-called rise of the West was the partial result of the diffusion of technological developments from the east, specifically China; thus, the rise of the West would not have been possible from a global perspective without the East. Hodgson’s account of European modernity encompasses broader themes (such as the expectation of continuous innovation, and material and moral progress) and extends well beyond the European oikumene. If we do not see the Age of Revolutions as crucial transformative events of *world* history, then there is a danger of us being trapped in static simplifications that sustain notions of western exceptionalism. Although Hodgson’s world map focused exclusively on the Afroeurasian landmass, and thus the American hemisphere did not factor much in his study except as a European colonial zone, his intentionally global perspective on the GWT enables us to see both the American and the Greek Revolutions as events happening at the margins of Europe, but fully in accord with the principles of the Great Western Transmutation, namely of freedom from domination and the elevation of the sacred value of the moral individual.

In both cases, we witness a national independence movement aimed against an empire, namely the British and the Ottoman. As we have seen, for the political elites in both countries, there were many routes that might have followed after the Revolution. The two nation-states, as

they ended up being formed and reformed, represented just one among the many possible courses freedom might have taken. Both countries had, and continue to have, a paradoxical relationship with Europe, perceived as somewhat European, but not entirely. Both are in the sense of the term I have been using, peripheral. Greece was viewed in the 19th century as Europe's past, and America as its future. Yet paradoxically, Greece and the US were seen not just as peripheral, but as exceptional too. This rhetoric of exceptionalism created a situation in which both nations expanded their territorial borders in a manner unprecedented in any other national cases (but familiar to the history of empires). And perhaps for that reason, both revolutions, as important as they were at the time, have been under-theorized in most contemporary accounts of the Age of Revolution.

It was in this overall context that both the Greek and US cases, through their overall exceptionalism, generated notions of *sacred history* and *sacred time* for their respective Revolutions, concepts which were then put to use in the creation of public monuments and rituals of commemoration in both countries. By focusing on the manner by which the two nation's founding events (i.e., the declaration of independence, the revolutionary war, and the eventual achievement of independence and a constitutional state) are remembered and commemorated in social and cultural terms, I have attempted to show the religious aspects of such exceptionalist nationalism and the civil religion they generated. Nationalism does suppress time, as Herzfeld has suggested (1987:82), but it does not suppress religion, or forms of the sacred: they can coexist in parallel. Moreover, as Laderman (2009) has pointed out, utilizing Durkheim's social theory of religion, one does not need only "God" in order to pursue the truth or to find anchors of spirituality through which one can access the sacred: the arts, science, medicine, sexuality, death, and even celebrity worship, can also inspire "religious" sentiments and affiliations that are

expressed through certain inspirations activities and behaviors. In this case, despite the regional particularities, I argue that the sacrality of history and time have provided nationalism and civil religion valuable tools specifically, symbolic, calendrical, and ritualistic ones, with which they are perpetuated. Notions of the sacred provide the nation, as Albanese (2013:287-289) has put it, with a creed (the notion of mission and chosenness), and a moral code, in accordance with which the citizens must act and perform their duties, and also a cult of sacred places, sacred figures and sacred history that are meant to be venerated.

And this is where the differences between the two case studies emerge most clearly. My comparison focuses on the concepts of a people (*ethnos*) and of religion, i.e., on the multifaceted relationship between the concepts of an ethnic nation, a religious nation, and what I have identified as “the sacred nation” at the moment of its founding. In the US, the central (Hegelian) contradiction on the one hand lay in the conflict between the language of emancipation, pluralism, and religious freedom, and the lived experience of indigenous peoples and enslaved West Africans on the other. How to add the African American and Indigenous American (“Indian”) story to the national founding narrative has been a challenge. Furthermore, as far as public monuments go, let us note the two latest additions to the Smithsonian Museum (the de facto national museum of the United States): the Museum of the American Indian (2004); and the African American Museum (2016). By contrast, the National Museum of Greece is a museum of antiquities. In Greece, given the emancipatory rhetoric of freedom from domination and enslavement by the Ottomans, and given the dominant influence of ancient Greece on the modern consciousness (in Europe, America and Greece, alike), the Greek people ironically occupied the position of the indigenous people of the Aegean archipelago. That idea hinged upon the assumption of ethnic continuity, “from Pericles to Kolokotronis.” The Greek revolution was

thus framed as a “re-birth,” not as a new birth. Later developments (such as the forced extradition of Muslims in 1922-1923, with the parallel reception of Christian Orthodox from the Ottoman Empire, the extermination of Jews and Albanians in 1940-1944, and recidivist nationalism under the junta in 1967-1973) all led to a more “purist” notion of the ethnic Greek nation.

The American Revolution did, indeed, produce a country that was in substantial ways very dissimilar from any other that the world had ever seen up to that time. Post-independence exceptionalism had to do with creating a democratic society entirely free of the Old-World institutions, a morally regenerating culture, and one staying out of European wars. In this light, the Revolution had come to assume a national rite de passage, the ending of “a season of youth” (Kammen 1978) by breaking away from the mother country and in turn forming a new more mature and virtuous “New World”. And because of the fact that the US was not bound to the past, it could claim an exemption from history. At the end of the 19th century, the Westward expansion and the renewed exceptionalism fueled American imperialism. The sense of mission with which the US entered the new century was even more reinforced by industrial and economic development, as well as from the overall triumph over the destructive forces that shaped the European and World affairs in the 20th century. We have seen this in the years that followed the end of the Cold War, which brought about new --“end of history”-- discourses and notions of “world-wide” responsibilities. As one historian has put it, this exceptionalism is probably why Americans find writing their multicultural history a difficult task: the reason being that “they have never rooted their present in the past. Rather, they have used the past as a springboard for vaulting into a future that promises liberation from the past, a future of novelties -new nationalisms, new deals, new frontiers, new world orders” (Appleby 1992, 431).

On the other hand, what Greece had that the US did not, was a sacralized Classical past. After the creation of an independent modern Greek nation-state, and ever since, one crucial element has persisted in its almost 200-year modern history, which derives from its “special” relationship with the past: Greece at the crossroads between the East and the West (Herzfeld 1986). If for the Americans, the Revolution meant the birth of a new and unprecedented nation, then for the Greeks the equivalent founding story is that of a national revival and rebirth: the event of the Revolution *per se* was thus seen as an Exodus that was predestined to happen in order to initiate the third historical period of Hellenism. Moreover, the early debates on its position between the East and the West are still at the heart of the question of Greek national identity today, especially with regard to its relations with both Europe and the successor of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey. And despite the fact that philhellenism (at least as it was known during the Revolution) died after the formation of the Greek State, Greeks, empowered by the continuous adoration of the “Greco-Roman roots of European civilization” on the part of the Europeans, still use the terms Philhellene or Antihellene, depending on how one stands with regard to modern Greek affairs. As Elli Skopetea (1999:23) has suggested, as a product of European (German) intellect, the revived “Hellene” moves constantly back and forth from being perceived as more European to less so.

Interestingly, the most complex difference between the two countries lay in the realm of secularism. Although the US Constitution was emerged in a self-conscious disagreement with French secularism (which was seen as more hostile to religion and actually promoting state interference in religious practice), the American nation was emphatically secular (by claiming an alleged neutrality on religious matters, and non-interference by the state in personal religious practices). The modern Greek nation never expressed any such an institutional commitment,

quite the opposite. The Greek Constitution invokes the Holy Trinity and supports state sponsorship of the Christian religion.

Finally, as I am putting the final touches to this thesis, the world has been shaken by the global health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At this point (April 2020), literally almost every country in the world is making gigantic efforts to contain the pandemic, which in a sense reminds us of the relevance of the global, or one-world, perspective. It is interesting to note that the nation-state is the primary political unit for organizing the response, together with international organizations, like the World Health Organization. And we see the enduring tensions between national and international interests. With regards to this thesis, I think it would be interesting to see whether (and to what extent) notions of historical and temporal sacrality will be affected, particularly in places (like Greece) where jubilees (the Bicentennial) are on the immediate horizon. But this will be the task for further research, for which, I hope, this thesis will serve as a foundation. Thus, instead of concluding with anticipations of what will be produced on the occasion of the Greek Bicentennial year, I intend to delay and see how this year will unfold and how it may eventually become part of the nation's commemoration of its sacred history and sacred time.

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