

# The Emergence of a Greek Identity (1700-1821)



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By

Stratos Myrogiannis

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P U B L I S H I N G

The Emergence of a Greek Identity (1700-1821),  
by Stratos Myrogiannis

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## NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

Since there is no standard internationally recognized system for the transliteration of Greek names into English, I have often been forced to improvise. Nevertheless, I have tried to be consistent throughout the entire work. Regarding names of authors I have followed a system of transliteration into the Roman alphabet based on the principle of simplification accompanied by the visual resemblance between words rather than simply pronunciation or orthography. Hence *Καταρτζής* became Katartzis rather than Katartzes. The same goes for *Αλεξανδρίδης*, which became Alexandridis rather than Alexandrides. In other cases I have followed a more traditional way as in the case of *Κοραΐς*, which became Koraes instead of Korais. In addition, I have respected the traditional practice of rendering certain Greek consonants in English, such as Angelou instead of Aggelou and Philippidis instead of Filippides.

In the case of the Greek words (such as *γένος*, *έθνος*, *Έλλην*, *Γραικός*, *Ρωμηός*, *Χριστιανός* and others) which were used to denominate the Greek-speaking people of the time, I have tried to keep them in a transliterated form. In this way I do justice to the primary sources. In many cases when there is ambiguity in the use of the terminology, the original phraseology is accompanied by a translation or explanation. This approach enables the reader to follow the lexical and semantic shifts that took place by the use of these words in diachrony. Regarding the translated passages, I relied on existing translations when these were available. All the other translations are mine. In addition, in some cases I have kept both the original and the translated text of some extracts in order to make it easier for the reader to follow the argument. All in all, I have tried to make this study read as easily as possible without, at the same time, distancing myself from long-established conventions.





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A work like this necessarily involves extensive and exhausting research in archives and libraries. I am happy to record my gratitude to Eirini Tsouri, the chief librarian in the Academy of Athens. Without her help this book would be much poorer and less informed. However, the most valuable aspect of her most professional help was her unpretentious friendship and I feel lucky to have gained one more friend during this journey. I am also thankful to both Antonis Saragiotis, librarian at the Central Library of the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki for his unconditional help and Thanassis Fokas, the ex-president of the National Library in Athens, for giving me the opportunity to consult numerous valuable archives and primary sources.

One of the chief delights of studying and writing on the history of concepts is the opportunity it affords for long and stimulating discussions. While working on this project I was more than lucky to enjoy the insightful comments and the unassuming scholarship of Professor Dimitris Gounelas. In addition, various points in this work have been much improved by discussing them with Professor Roderick Beaton, Professor Michael Jeffreys, Professor Dimitris Tziovas, Professor Marc Lauxtermann, Professor David Ricks, Professor Jacques Bouchard, Professor Alexis Politis, Dr Tim Duff and Dr Tassos Kaplanis. A word of thanks to some others I encountered along the way: Dr Tina Lentari, Dr Notis Toufexis, Dr Dimitri Gondicas and Marjolijne Janssen.

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Above all, I would like to thank my parents for their encouragement and unfailing support. Last but not least, I am grateful to my companion throughout this journey, Dr Foteini Lika, who helped me keep my sense of humour and who has made this work infinitely more rewarding. Defending my points against her inimitable common sense was one of the most demanding tasks I had to deal with.

—Cambridge, December 2011

## INTRODUCTION

### OLD WINES IN NEW BOTTLES: ENLIGHTENMENT AND NATION

In recent years debates about nations and national identity have attracted the attention of academics and scholars, who have attempted to explain this protean phenomenon which still triggers insurrections and political upheavals around the globe. Especially in the English-speaking world the debates over nation-formation processes have produced an immense literature from quite different academic fields, most of them sharing intellectual vigour and useful insights despite the disparate and often competing approaches. Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Anthony Smith have contributed much to the understanding of this phenomenon. In the Greek-speaking world and primarily in Greece the theoretical discussions about nation-formation processes have closely followed the international paradigms, while in recent years the relevant specialized literature has proliferated.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, contributions have been made

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<sup>1</sup> It is almost impossible to review the relevant literature in an introduction. Here, I restrict myself to the most recent contributions which deal with nation-formation processes as their main subject. Hence I have put aside works that refer to issues relevant to Greek identity as a supplementary theme of their overall framework. Instead, I will focus on fairly recent studies that address the issue of Greek identity as their main theme. Paschalis Kitromilides's *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy. Studies in the culture and political thought of south-eastern Europe* (1994) was one of the first books to treat nationalist issues in the Balkan Greek-speaking world as part of a broad South-East European phenomenon. Pantelis Lekkas's *Εθνικιστική Ιδεολογία* (1996) is a specialized theoretical discussion of nationalist ideology. He elaborates his views in his second book *Το παιχνίδι με το χρόνο. Εθνικισμός και Νεωτερικότητα*, published in 2001. More recently, interest on this subject has been revived by the vigorous debate which was sparked off by the publication (2004) of Svoronos's much earlier study entitled *Το Ελληνικό Έθνος. Γένεση και Διαμόρφωση του Νέου Ελληνισμού*. Nikos Rotzokos's study *Εθναφύπνιση και Εθνογένεση: Ορλωφικά και Ελληνική Ιστοριογραφία* (2007) dealt with the ideological construction of nationalist *ethnohistories* in Greek romantic historiography, while in her *Εκατό χρόνια νοσταλγίας. Το αυτοβιογραφικό αφήγημα*

from a number of different disciplinary perspectives e.g. history, literary studies, sociology, anthropology and others.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, there exists a well-camouflaged *lacuna* as regards the study of Greek identity and the emergence of a Greek national movement in the last decades of the eighteenth and the first ones of the nineteenth century. It is well-camouflaged due to the fact that in the Greek-speaking world Enlightenment and nationalism have rarely been examined together in detail as interrelated phenomena. Interest, though, in this issue has increased in the last few decades. Most scholars approach the issue of Greek nationalism only with respect to the period after the establishment of the independent Greek state, that is, after 1833. As a result, Greek researchers have traced the development of a Greek nationalist movement to the post-enlightenment period and only within the boundaries of the Modern Greek state and in close contact with the doctrines of Romanticism. Seen in an international framework, the focus of historians has generally been the history of the big European states as Hroch mentions in the beginning of his work.<sup>3</sup> There is a need to study the lesser known countries and their histories in order to enrich our knowledge about significant intellectual movements such as Enlightenment and nationalism.

What this specific viewpoint amounts to is the ideological devaluation and misjudgement of the nationalist aspirations of Greek-speaking intellectuals before the creation of the Modern Greek state and especially during the Greek Enlightenment. A few notable exceptions must be highlighted here. Kitromilides stresses that the idea of ‘national community’ was first conceived by Greek-speaking intellectuals during the Enlightenment, although, according to him, these intellectuals were

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*Έθνος* (2007) Anna Tzouma follows an ethnosymbolic approach to examine the legitimizing means of the Greek nation during the first one hundred years of the Modern Greek state. Last, Panagiotis Noutsos’s *Κόμβοι στη συζήτηση για το Έθνος* (2006) and Antonis Liakos’s *Πώς στοχάστηκαν το έθνος αυτοί που ήθελαν να αλλάξουν τον κόσμο* (2005b) offered a broad introductory discussion of diverse aspects of nationalist ideology.

<sup>2</sup> A timely and representative example is the passionate debate, mainly between Vayenas and Liakos, which erupted in January 2005 after the publication of Svoronos’s much earlier study of the history of the Greek nation (see footnote 1). Liakos attempted to argue in favour of the modern nature and constructed character of the Modern Greek nation after the Enlightenment, whereas Vayenas defended the earlier cultural ties and common bonds of the Greeks, which were developed over the centuries well before the emergence of the Enlightenment and modernity. For this discussion, see Vayenas 2005a and Vayenas 2005b, as well as Liakos’s response in Liakos 2005a.

<sup>3</sup> Hroch 1985: xi.

mainly concerned to identify an ‘ethnic consciousness’.<sup>4</sup> Dimaras is among the first to underline the *desiderata* of research regarding the semantic shifts of already known words, but also the examination of new terms in response to changing social needs.<sup>5</sup> The present study attempts to provide plausible answers to questions posed by two of the most prominent modern scholars working on the Greek Enlightenment. There is a need for a detailed study regarding the process of the ideological transformation of the Greek-speaking people from a *genos* (loosely translated as ‘race’) into a ‘nation’, but also a need to examine the emergence and formation of a Modern Greek identity during the era in question. Historical semantics, or what Dimaras calls ‘ονομάτων επισκευή’, has remained underdeveloped in Greece.<sup>6</sup> Deconstructionist studies, however, which focus on how numerous Modern Greek ideological stereotypes were constructed, have proliferated.<sup>7</sup> By contextualizing nation-formation processes in Greek lands within a European intellectual framework, I set out to contribute to the ‘canonization’ of the study of Modern Greece as an internationally interesting case study.<sup>8</sup>

I mainly examine the role of the Greek-speaking intelligentsia in the process of nation-formation.<sup>9</sup> I explore how the representatives of the ‘high culture’, mainly Christian Orthodox Greek-speaking scholars, used the concept of the ‘nation’ and issues closely related to it in order to enforce their social demands either for educational reform or for ‘national’ independence. In this way, I seek to illuminate the interplay between the ideological discursive strategies and the material interests that created and shaped not only the emergence of a Modern Greek identity, but also the image of Greek ethnicity as a nation.<sup>10</sup> As Koraes put it in his *Mémoire*, I

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<sup>4</sup> Kitromilides 1989: 149, 160.

<sup>5</sup> Dimaras 1977: 3, 35, 466.

<sup>6</sup> This phrase was often used by Koraes, who had borrowed it from Epictetus. The need for studies in historical semantics is also stressed by Sfini (2004: 435).

<sup>7</sup> Two examples of studies of a deconstructing kind are Iliou (2003) and Giannouloupoulos (2003).

<sup>8</sup> Kitromilides (2009: 22-24) notes that Modern Greek studies outside Greece have largely been marginalized unlike other comparable fields, e.g. Turkish studies.

<sup>9</sup> The study of the ‘low culture’ would first require the gathering and examination of items and works representative of the relevant production in the Greek-speaking world during the era in question.

<sup>10</sup> I am only dealing with the relevant concept of ‘Hellenism’ indirectly, to the extent that it is reflected in the writings of Greek-speaking scholars in its relation to issues of nation-formation and the Greek self-image.

seek to explore how ‘la vanité nationale fit place à la contenance d’un peuple qui se prépare à devenir nation’.<sup>11</sup>

More specifically, I explore the construction of a Modern Greek identity in relation to the Greek and European Enlightenment from 1700 up to the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. I examine works of the Greek Enlightenment that projected historical interests such as geographies, histories and political treatises and I seek to trace the ideological uses of history by Greek-speaking intellectuals and the political dimensions of this trend in Greek thought.<sup>12</sup> The theoretical framework I deploy is twofold. On the one hand I exploit the methodological tools provided by the ‘history of concepts’, as formulated by Koselleck, Pocock and Skinner. On the other hand I borrow specific concepts and ideas from the current debates about nation-formation processes in history, especially from the works of Anthony Smith, Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm.

For the needs of the present study I have tried to bring together works which addressed issues of identity, self-image and uses of the past. This selection of criteria allowed me to put under scrutiny both previously unexamined texts but also numerous well-known works. In the latter category Koraes’s correspondence and Rigas’s writings are included. These works could not be left out, since they were highly influential in their time and afterwards. I also took into account greatly ignored works, such as *Ιστορία της Βυζαντίδος* (*History of Byzantis*) and Alexandridis’s translation of Goldsmith’s history. Surprisingly, the examination of these under-researched works yielded rewarding results in relation to the scope of the present study. Inevitably, I had to exclude other works, such as Kyprianos’s history.<sup>13</sup> Although this work matches the criteria I applied, i.e. the examination of works that approximated to geographical treatises, historical studies and political essays, it is only marginally linked with the Greek lands given that its focal point is mainly Cyprus. All in all, I examine in detail those works that, in my view, were the most suitable for the needs of my study.

The present study is divided into four chapters with numerous sub-chapters. In the first chapter I discuss in detail the new theoretical trends and paradigms for the study of nation-formation processes. In reviewing earlier and current approaches to tackling the concept of the ‘nation’ as a cultural and political phenomenon, I set out to show the need to reconsider

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<sup>11</sup> Koraes 1803: 44.

<sup>12</sup> Kitromilides (1982: 7) is one of the first to address this issue.

<sup>13</sup> Kyprianos 1788.

the Greek Enlightenment by taking into account contemporary intellectual trends. So far, terminological issues have not been properly addressed by scholars regarding the Greek case. Vagueness in terminology resulted in methodological inconsistency and dated viewpoints. At the end, my own point of view is described regarding the emergence of nations and nationalism and I specify the concepts I will deploy to address the Greek case.

In the second chapter the development of Greek thought is addressed from 1700 to 1760. This era marks the proto-Enlightenment period when Greek-speaking intellectuals synchronized themselves with Western Europe through commercial and intellectual activity. Educational needs and personal interests set the framework. My main argument is that Greek-speaking scholars drew on European antiquarianism which was developed from the Renaissance onwards. This new approach helped them fill in the gaps their sources left open concerning the Byzantine part of the historical accounts of the Greek lands.

In the third chapter I argue that the second half of the eighteenth century witnessed a transformation regarding Greek self-perception. History became the vehicle which offered Greek-speaking intellectuals the means to distance themselves from earlier religious and pre-modern criteria of social organization. During that time the political language Greek-speaking scholars invoked evolved through close contact with relevant developments in Western Europe, especially after the outbreak of the French Revolution. By viewing the Greek 'imagined community' as an equal member among European nations these intellectuals attempted to legitimize their demands for social and political emancipation from Ottoman rule. *Ethnos*, meaning nation as a political concept, eventually replaced the traditional religion-based terminology expressed in the use of the term *genos*. All these developments enhanced the national sentiment of Greek-speaking scholars, leading to the last nationalistic phase of the Greek Enlightenment.

In the last chapter I explore how political thought related the enlightening messages from Europe to the liberation of the Greeks during the peak of the Greek Enlightenment. The constant demand of Greek-speaking scholars for education closely connected with political emancipation was renewed with the intellectual labours of Koraes. The doctrines of the French Revolution and the impact of the Napoleonic wars had a long-lasting and socially pervasive impact on Balkan populations. A few years later, exploiting the continual disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek War of Independence confirmed that such revolutionary ideas had widespread support. The Greek case, however, differed from the

French. In this section I argue that Greek-speaking intellectuals mixed enlightenment ideas with nationalist aspirations in order to enforce the ideology that had inspired the Greek War of Independence.

In order to do justice to the primary sources and to avoid projecting present-day terminology to an earlier era I clarify right from the beginning that when referring to specific phrases and extracts from works I mainly follow the original Greek terms in a transliterated form throughout the book. Original phraseology is significant because it reflects the diverse perceptions of reality by individuals at the time they were writing their works. The main problem is that Greeks historically used two terms to define their own national or ethnic identity, that is, *genos* (loosely translated as ‘race’) and *ethnos* (meaning ‘nation’).<sup>14</sup> Even today these two terms are still valid, either accompanied by additional words or alone. If the term *ethnos* corresponds to ‘nation’, consequently, the concept of *genos* is excluded from any concept of nationhood. Nevertheless, historically, as my research shows, the Greeks used the term *genos* to denote a culturally separate and distinct community of a people with specific, but not always distinguishable, characteristics.

In the first chapters I use the term ‘Greeks’ and ‘Greek lands’ as well as related expressions in a loose sense, meaning ‘Greek-speaking people’ and ‘regions inhabited by Greek-speaking people’ without implying any pure Greek ‘national’ identity or ‘national territory’ in the modern sense. In the last chapter, though, the terminology I use follows the corresponding shifts in Greek mentality, which reflects the changes in the Greek self-image during the last phase of the Greek Enlightenment. In other words, accuracy in terminology constitutes part of the argument and related issues are addressed and clarified throughout the entire book.

This study attempts to examine the Greek Enlightenment as an intellectual movement through the theoretical framework of nation-formation processes and of nationalism.<sup>15</sup> It goes without saying that I do not adopt a nationalist perspective nor do I think that the nationalist aspirations of the Enlightenment thinkers are related to Romantic

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<sup>14</sup> Dimaras (1977: 81) often uses a similar argument. In the same manner Politis (1993: 32) argues that during the eighteenth century the equivalent of the Latin word ‘nation’ in Greek was *genos*, but in the course of the same century and at the beginning of the nineteenth it was used interchangeably with *ethnos*. This use exhibits the conceptual change in the social imagining of the Greek community.

<sup>15</sup> I hope the present study partially satisfies the needs of the latest research *desiderata*, and is a timely response to Beaton’s (2009: 8) call for a specialized case study of the emergence of modern nationalism with an emphasis on the Greek case.



nationalism. The ‘enlightened nationalism’ I am referring to stems from the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment and it is not linked to Romantic nationalist ideas in any way. The theoretical re-framing of the period in question is crucial since the Greek case furnishes us with new and fresh material about the ways nationalist movements develop over time. I argue that towards its peak (after 1790) the Greek Enlightenment fashioned itself both as an ‘enlightening’ doctrine and as a nationalist ideology. In other words, the Greek case exemplifies the recruitment of enlightenment doctrines to serve nationalist purposes. This ideological blending appears as a unique phenomenon in nationalism debates, although it can be attributed to certain socio-cultural reasons. Consequently, the study of the Greek Enlightenment through the framework of ‘enlightened nationalism’ is a research *desideratum* still to be explored.



# CHAPTER I

## THEORETICAL ISSUES: METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

### 1.1. The history of concepts

The purpose of this chapter is to define the basic concepts I employ to examine the nation-formation processes in the Greek-speaking world during the eighteenth century. I follow an analytic way of reasoning to explain the concepts in question and I offer my own definitions at the end. I could not avoid using loaded concepts and terminology in my discussion since they were also used in the relevant literature, though not always in a clear and unambiguous way. When I use debatable terms such as ‘nation’ in my discussion they must be perceived as concepts-in-motion, which will be explained in the last part.

The methodological tools I deploy are derived from two theoretical frameworks, i.e. the debates about nationalism and the ‘history of concepts’. Below, I outline the specific tools I use and the ways in which I deploy them in order to meet the needs of my research. The theoretical framework of the ‘history of concepts’ furnishes the historical perspective of a diachronic approach. The ‘history of concepts’ as an intellectual movement emerged in the middle of the twentieth century as a reaction towards the ‘history of spirit’ (Dilthey) and ‘the history of ideas’ (Meinecke, Lovejoy) which both involved little social history.<sup>1</sup> Koselleck is the most prominent representative of what can be called the ‘German school’ of *Begriffsgeschichte*.

His approach is usually opposed to the ‘Cambridge school’ of ‘conceptual history’ represented by both Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock and to the French *histoire des mentalités* and ‘discourse analysis’

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<sup>1</sup> Skinner (1969: 3-53) distances himself from Lovejoy’s ‘unit ideas’, which were arbitrarily selected and put together into a single historical narrative. Skinner has been influenced by his teacher, Collingwood, who holds that history should be written as a sequence of episodes, each of them dealing with a different set of questions and answers.

followed by Jacques Guilhaumou and Georges Benrencassa. Koselleck has gradually established an approach of historical semantics<sup>2</sup> by studying the transformation of political and social terminology as evidence of conceptual transformations in time. Dilthey, Meinecke and Lovejoy, Koselleck argues, were not interested in combining the formation of ideas with political, economic and social structures.<sup>3</sup>

According to Koselleck, we shall deal with terms, by examining them as signals of, and factors in, social and political changes and transitions. On the one hand they point to something external to themselves, to the context in which they are used. On the other hand this reality is perceived in terms of categories provided by language.<sup>4</sup> In other words, concepts are like joints linking language and the extra-linguistic world. Koselleck's approach involves not only noting when and for what purposes new and now familiar words were coined, such as liberalism, socialism and nationalism, but tracing the changes in the meaning of older terms such as constitution and revolution.<sup>5</sup> It is a semantic historical interpretation of new and old concepts through the diachronic and synchronic examination of their meanings and uses in relation to social and political reality.

The content of political and social concepts with many facets is clarified by alternating two types of analysis in both synchrony and diachrony. Koselleck uses two terms to describe his approach: *semasiological*, which is the semantic examination of all meanings of a term, word, or concept and *onomasiological*, meaning the analysis and interpretation of all names or terms for the same concept.<sup>6</sup> By adopting the former perspective, I explore how Greek intellectuals used different kinds of terms to describe their perception of the Greeks as a political community, but also their projections on reality as they forged Modern

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<sup>2</sup> Guilhaumou (2006: 207) uses the phrase *sémantique historique*. Koselleck uses the term *semasiological* in his writings. For the needs of this study I use the equivalent English term, 'semantic'.

<sup>3</sup> Sfini 2006: 26. Ball stresses that aside from their differences Koselleck, Skinner and Pocock are representatives of what is called the *linguistic turn*, a term that was first introduced by Gustav Bergmann in 1967. For a short discussion of the origins of this term, see Ball 1998: 76.

<sup>4</sup> Koselleck 2006: 72-74. In analysing the discourse of the Prussian politician Hardenberg, Koselleck exemplifies the historical perspective of his methodology, highlighting semantic shifts and conceptual duration as the twin *foci* of his interests.

<sup>5</sup> Ball 1998: 77.

<sup>6</sup> Koselleck 1996: 64. For the needs of the present study I use the term 'lexical' instead of the original term *onomasiological*.

Greek identity within modernity. The difficulties of the Greek case are well summarized by Dimaras in one of his last writings: 'One of the greatest difficulties a historian of Modern Greek literature encounters is the shifts in the meaning of words'.<sup>7</sup>

Koselleck's approach has triggered a reaction by the so-called 'Cambridge School' represented by both Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock. Pocock deals with the synchronic examination of interactive 'political languages' performed by language-users for the articulation of a world-view or ideology.<sup>8</sup> He studies the language of political discourse as a complex structure which comprises a vocabulary, a grammar, a rhetoric, a set of usages, assumptions and implications existing together in time and employable by a community of language-users for political purposes.<sup>9</sup> Skinner, in turn, reads texts as speech acts, i.e. as perlocutionary actions, and attempts to trace the mechanisms of the social construction of meaning. Speech acts are the accomplishment of some social or political performance through linguistic utterance in the context of linguistic conventions. Skinner is concerned with linguistic conventions and language games as the key to recovering 'what an author could have been up to in writing what he did, rather than something else'.<sup>10</sup> He claims that his method restores the priority of the true historical meaning, an argument which flirts with exaggeration given the multiplicity of potential meanings a text or a word can acquire.

Pocock does not favour studies in the form of a dictionary and focuses on synchronic studies about a specific era, though he has also dealt with the language of the 'ancient constitution and the feudal law' seen in diachrony. Regarding conceptual history he argues that the 'history of discourses', as he prefers to call it, deals with the changes and tensions set up by the actions, perceptions and responses of the human agents acting within and upon several 'languages'.<sup>11</sup> A discourse or language is a complex entity, a system, or even an organism such as, for example, the

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<sup>7</sup> Dimaras 1992: 115.

<sup>8</sup> Pocock (1996: 47) clarifies that a number of such languages can exist concurrently in confrontation or even contestation.

<sup>9</sup> Hampsher-Monk 1998: 46.

<sup>10</sup> Richter 1995: 131.

<sup>11</sup> Pocock 1996: 50-51. Pocock's major work *Barbarism and Religion* exemplifies what he understands as synchronic studies. In the first volume of this significant study he attempts to contextualize Gibbon by charting the contemporary historical and intellectual environments. At the end he shows how Gibbon's historiography was connected with his responses to the various *Enlightenments* he had encountered in his journeys throughout Europe; Pocock 1999: 4-9.

semantic fields of the prophetic or the jurisprudence tradition. In this way Pocock conceives social and conceptual worlds as interrelating contexts.<sup>12</sup> The history of a discourse is composed of many interacting narratives and is the history of something affecting human life in an almost inexhaustible variety of ways. In defending this kind of approach Skinner argues that a 'history of concepts' in a lexicographical way is not possible. He only accepts the uses of concepts and the history of the uses of concepts.<sup>13</sup> Skinner examines what kind of knowledge individuals attain about social reality by studying the vocabulary used in specific contexts. In principle, he disagrees with Raymond Williams's view that language is the mirror of reality, offering as counter-argument an example of how Milton conceived the concept of originality without using the word *per se*, as it was coined more than a century later.<sup>14</sup>

English-speaking historians like Skinner and Pocock, in a particularistic and context-oriented manner, analyse the competing political languages. Pocock examines the political languages of the era of Machiavelli, while Skinner the 'speech acts' of texts written by Nedham, Harrington, Milton and Hobbes. In Pocock's terminology these are specific 'discourses', or in Skinner's terms 'ideologies', which were available from the Early Modern era to eighteenth-century Europe. Their method focuses on specific political discourses and differs from Koselleck's studies which emphasize concepts.<sup>15</sup> In other words, Koselleck focuses on the content and form of a given term, whereas Pocock and Skinner concentrate on the linguistic and

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<sup>12</sup> Pocock (1972: 14-15) argues that individuals communicate using language systems which help constitute both their conceptual and social worlds. These two discourses, in turn, act as contexts to each other.

<sup>13</sup> Skinner (1988: 238) insists 'I remain unrepentant in my belief that there can be no histories of concepts; there can only be histories of their uses in argument.'

<sup>14</sup> Skinner 2006: 97-124 especially 119.

<sup>15</sup> Richter 1996: 16. Regarding the study of the vocabulary of a given era Skinner has clear views. In the second volume of his ground-breaking study *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* he argues that 'the surest sign that a society has entered into the secure possession of a new concept is that a new vocabulary will be developed in terms of which the concept can then be publicly articulated and discussed'; Skinner 1978: 349. The latter example, though, is not in accordance with what he claims about the concept of originality in Milton. We should have in mind that he attempts to trace the historical process of transition to a more abstract use of the concept of the state by examining the various contexts and the uses of relevant vocabulary in scholars of the Medieval Period including Budé and Bodin before rounding off his study with the work of Hobbes. He applies a similar approach to the era of Machiavelli in order to uncover Machiavelli's views on politics and morality; Skinner 1996: 2-7.

social context within which terms were written and used. Nevertheless, both the German and Cambridge schools adopt a historical context-oriented approach to analyse the particular uses of concepts.

Koselleck has replied to his critics that his focal point shifted from the first volumes of his dictionary, the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, and moved towards the uses of concepts as signals of social and political change.<sup>16</sup> He argues that Skinner's and Pocock's approach is a vigorous historicism which considers all concepts 'speech acts' within a context which cannot be replicated. Concepts occur only once; they are not substances, quasi-ideas capable of leading a diachronic life of their own.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, within his theoretical framework, 'history of concepts' is a specialized methodology which focuses on textual sources and on how individuals use social and political vocabulary. According to him, around the time of the French Revolution, all socio-political concepts encountered a temporal tension ('temporalization') which assigned the past and the future in a new way.<sup>18</sup> His goal is to find the way in which language both shaped and registered the processes of change that transformed every area of political and social life around the French Revolution.

The foundation of Koselleck's work rests on the hypothesis of the so-called *Sattelzeit* between 1750 and 1850. The 'naturalization' of older experiences of time was completed during this period. Older concepts such as democracy, freedom, nation and state adopted a new future-oriented perspective, that is, they became concepts in motion.<sup>19</sup> What is typical of the numerous new -isms like liberalism, republicanism, socialism, nationalism etc., is that they were not based on a predefined and common experience; rather they compensated for a deficiency of experience by a future outline which is supposed to be realised.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Koselleck was accused of neglecting the social conditions within which concepts were used. In replying to his critics he has moved towards a history of the uses of terms; Reichardt 2006: 167.

<sup>17</sup> However, Koselleck (1996: 62) struggles to offer an adequate definition of a 'concept' without success.

<sup>18</sup> Koselleck 1997: 20. He adds that the development of the temporalization of time and concepts had already started from the end of the seventeenth century with the circular natural conception of time being replaced by a progressive time in which human reason perfects itself (p. 17).

<sup>19</sup> According to Junker (1996: 5), it was 'historicity' that made Koselleck turn to the examination of changing experiences of time in history by individuals.

<sup>20</sup> The temporalization of basic historical concepts is extended to other kinds of concepts and not only those which explicitly thematize time such as the concepts of 'progress' and 'history'; Koselleck 1997: 21-22.

The reason I adopt the ‘history of concepts’ as expressed by all three ‘schools’ as the general framework of my research is that it offers the theoretical panoply to pursue a threefold historical and textual analysis. My methodology, however, stems from a critical stance towards the ‘history of concepts’ and it is an analysis of the ‘perceptual transmutations’ of concepts. I choose the term ‘transmutations’ since I mainly trace how imported and existing concepts were transformed by writers of the time to suit different needs through the changing of one’s perception of reality.

By treating the works of Greek intellectuals and scholars as specific synchronic ‘discourses’, I can trace the particular ‘languages’ which exist in a given era and the ideological tensions among them. In this context, one can be aware of the different meanings a term acquired in the writings of two or more writers of the same period. Different uses of a term reveal shifts in the conceptual background within which this term was used and the new ideology which this term became part of. This is particularly crucial since in the Greek political vocabulary the terms *genos* (race) and *ethnos* (nation) were variously used by Greek-speaking intellectuals, thus acquiring different meanings and nuances by transforming their inherited ideological background.

By applying a diachronic approach, I explore the semantic development and use of central political concepts in a historical perspective. This approach enables me to trace the semantic shifts made by the adoption or coinage of new concepts, but also the changes in the use of already familiar terms. A representative example of this theoretical approach is the case of the adjective *βυζαντινός* (Byzantine) which was used for the first time in Greek by Koraes earlier than is widely thought.<sup>21</sup> The concept of the ‘nation’ (which was expressed in Greek with numerous terms such as *γένος*, *ἔθνος*, *λαός*) in its perceptual transmutations underwent various semantic shifts over the years from 1700 to 1821, acquiring different meanings, which all played a crucial role in the emergence and formation of a Modern Greek identity. These two examples show that numerous salient ideological developments have been overlooked. These kinds of transformations in the uses of concepts reveal a much deeper transformation. It is the perception of reality which is transformed and eventually leads to a new self-perception and a new ideology. The reason I apply an analysis of the ‘perceptual transmutations’ is not only to signify the different semantic shifts of terms or the plurality of uses, but the ideological transformation of already known concepts and ideas to serve new needs through the changing of the perception of one’s own reality.

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<sup>21</sup> See subchapter 4.4 of the present study.



Through the examination of different mentalities, attitudes and uses of specific concepts and arguments after the French 'history of conceptual uses' I set out to identify the crucial ideological shifts Greek-speaking scholars invoked in order to transform their belief in Enlightenment doctrines into an active pursuit of 'national' independence. The transformation of political vocabulary and the use of imported concepts out of their original context in order to serve newly-felt political needs shows that during the Enlightenment Greek scholars managed to promote a new self-image for the Greeks as a 'nation' through a shift in their self-awareness and self-perception.

Without being too simplistic I argue that all three 'schools' of the history of concepts converge to the point where they are all equally interested in the uses of concepts by individuals.<sup>22</sup> They substantially differ, though, in the customized theoretical routes they follow to examine texts and discourses. For the needs of the present study I focus on their intersecting point, that is, the examination of shifts which affect both the meaning and the uses of specific political and social terms. It is not only the uses of concepts I am interested in; this is my starting point. I actively explore the transformation of concepts which depended on the social and ideological needs they served and the subsequent transformations of perceptions of reality. The highly unstable era I focus on, the Greek eighteenth century, which created the appropriate material conditions for the social and political transformation of the Greeks into a political community, is a suitable field of study given the ideological crisis Greek-speaking scholars were experiencing at that time regarding their self-perception and their place in history.

Closely linked to the historical period I am interested in are the reasons for the choice of the specific dates as boundaries for the present study. Regarding start and end dates, as in all fields of the Humanities, it is always difficult for the researcher to find adequate reasons to justify the strict chronological limits of a study that extends over a wide time span. Apart from significant events which changed the course of world history in an unprecedented way such as the French Revolution or the fall of Constantinople, the link between cause and effect or the echo of events of a specific era cannot be restricted to a relatively narrow chronological framework. Segmentations of time are unjustifiable and can only be adequately explained, if practical reasons are invoked.

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<sup>22</sup> In my view, all three 'schools' of conceptual history focus on the social uses of concepts and not only on the semantic shifts of terms. Reichardt (2006: 168) holds a similar view.

The present study is no exception since some of the crucial changes within the Greek-speaking world had already started well before 1700. The historical period between the battle of Lepanto (1571) and the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji (1774) saw important developments in many fields including the wide distribution of printed books. For example, the foundation of new printing houses (Glykis's in 1670 and Theodosiou's in 1755) within the Greek diaspora of Venice contributed to the 'cultivation' of the Greek language and the proliferation of both secular and religious books.<sup>23</sup> The Greeks gradually started to recover from their inactivity.<sup>24</sup> Kodrikas attributed this recovery to the rise of the Phanariots to influential posts in the Ottoman administration.<sup>25</sup> The first Greek-speaking Phanariot to undertake such a post was Panagiotis Nikousios who became Grand Dragoman to the Sublime Porte in 1661. In contrast, Koraes regarded the publication of certain works by Voulgaris and Theotokis in 1766 as the starting point of the recovery of the *genos*.<sup>26</sup> The beginning of the 'long' eighteenth century initiated an even closer contact of the Greeks with Western Europe through commercial and educational activities. This development facilitated the advancement of the education of the Greeks, setting one of the cultural prerequisites for the Greek revival. The second time limit, i.e. 1821, is less subject to criticism given the landmark of the Greek War of Independence.

The era from 1700 to 1821 is significant for the Greeks since during this period they attempted to provide answers to the problems posed by the advent of modernity. Granted the significance of this era, I will chart the condition of the Greeks and their attempts to synchronize themselves with the 'modernising' developments of Western Europe. In Europe specific events occurred around 1700 which affected the Greek-speaking world in numerous ways. The Treaty of Karlowitz, which concluded the Austro-Ottoman War of 1683-1697, was signed in 1699 and marked the end of the Ottoman incursion into Europe.<sup>27</sup> A relatively peaceful period started for the Ottoman Empire, especially after the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718), lasting until 1730. The Tulip Era, as the first decades of the eighteenth century are usually called, was characterized by an attempt of the Ottoman court to orient itself towards Europe.

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<sup>23</sup> Details about Theodosiou's printing house and its publications can be found in Ploumidis 1969: 92-98, while for Glykis's printing house, see Veloudis 1987: 187-362.

<sup>24</sup> Vitti 1989: 67-73.

<sup>25</sup> Kodrikas 1818: ις.

<sup>26</sup> Koraes 1803: 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Mantran 1984: 171-81.

At the same time the Phanariots acquired leading positions as governors at the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, while they also started to take initiatives regarding the educational needs of the Greeks. Many scholars, such as Meletios and Notaras, who had been educated in the West, transferred their knowledge into the Greek mainland.<sup>28</sup> From the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards the ecclesiastical humanism of the Church sided with the power of the Phanariots and produced the essential economic and cultural prerequisites for an ongoing cultural and commercial development of the Greeks.<sup>29</sup> Merchants and secular intellectuals, such as Pringos and Koraes, continued their support for the cultural development of the *genos* in the last quarter of the eighteenth century,<sup>30</sup> when the Greek Church and some of the Phanariots abandoned their earlier advanced ideas, especially after the execution of Louis XVI. Nevertheless, at the same time other members of Phanariot circles, such as Rigas, attempted to put their radical visions into practice.<sup>31</sup> In the course of the eighteenth century the Greeks gradually dominated the economic and mercantile life of the area around the Aegean Sea while Greek cities were transformed into cultural and economic centres inside the Ottoman Empire.<sup>32</sup>

I will briefly outline below the way I understand and employ the term ‘modernity’ since this concept constitutes a vantage point for the investigation of the era under scrutiny. The use and meaning of the term ‘modernity’ has initiated diverse debates especially from the Renaissance onwards. It was during the Middle Ages that the word ‘modernus’, an adjective and a noun, was coined from the adverb ‘modo’ (meaning ‘recently’) in the same way as ‘hodiernus’ derived from ‘hodie’ (meaning ‘today’).<sup>33</sup> During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most of the ‘moderns’ were involved in the famous *Battle of the Books*,<sup>34</sup> the

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<sup>28</sup> Vacalopoulos 1973: 311.

<sup>29</sup> Dimaras (2000: 109-33) also mentions the printing and publishing initiatives taken by both the Phanariots and the Orthodox Church, which kept the Greeks aware of the European thought of the era.

<sup>30</sup> Dimaras 1977: 27-28.

<sup>31</sup> Rigas’s revolutionary movement was conceived in the Phanariot environment, which was inhospitable to republican and radical ideas; Svoronos 2004: 104.

<sup>32</sup> Svoronos 1988: 51-64.

<sup>33</sup> Whether the appearance of the term ‘modernus’ can be dated to the sixth or the late fifth century is a debatable issue; for a relevant discussion, see Curtius 1963: 251-54 and Rougemont 1975: 90-95.

<sup>34</sup> Calinescu 1987: 3-4 and 13-18. This issue as an aesthetic problem was discussed as early as 1817 when in his *Histoire de la peinture en Italie* Stendhal separated *le beau idéal antique* and *le beau idéal moderne*. Calinescu, though, focuses on the

English counterpart of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, which was inspired by Charles Perrault. This debate was first thoroughly examined by Hippolyte Rigault's study *Histoire de la Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. Whether the epochal threshold of modernity is to be found in the fifteenth or the eighteenth century was a debatable issue from the time when Ranke opposed the division between the Middle Ages and recent history without offering a better historical schema.<sup>35</sup> Depending on the way questions are asked, a very different organization of time can be suggested in order to define a temporal landmark that signifies the commencement of what is perceived as the era of modernity.

The concept of a 'new time' as a periodizing term was generally established after the middle of the seventeenth century, though the chronological threefold historical temporalization schema of Ancient history/Middle Ages/Modern history was a historical division familiar to Leibniz.<sup>36</sup> Koselleck argues that from 1500 to 1800 historical time gained a previously lacking quality, that is, an acceleration which characterized the advent of what is called modernity. New terms such as feudalism were coined and individuals acquired a sense of a transitional period, whereas the perception of the future turned from the traditional circular and eschatological end-of-the-world future to an open linear future liable to progress.

The newly shaped historical perspective facilitated different representations of the same event. The most important shift was what

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issue of the aesthetic modernity, especially as it imposed itself in the arts. He holds that the crucial aesthetic shift took place from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries onwards under the guise of Romanticism. Nevertheless, the simile of the dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, which signifies the knowledge of the Moderns compared to that of the Ancients, has been a commonplace since it was first used by Bernard de Chartres, as John of Salisbury reported in 1159. After that, many others used the same maxim including Michel de Montaigne, Robert Burton, Isaac Newton, Pascal and René Descartes.

<sup>35</sup> Koselleck 2002: 156.

<sup>36</sup> Koselleck 2002: 163. Quinones (1972: 7, 11) argues that the discovery of a new concept of practical time compared to the traditional theological perception of time emerged already during the Renaissance when the threefold division was also suggested. Koselleck carries the time threshold further ahead, arguing that around the second half of the eighteenth century all the above mentioned changes were coordinated with one another in various ways; a view shared also by Hardy, who underlined the role of the 'Enlightenment project' as the means to rationalize time and space; Hardy 1989: 12 and Koselleck 2002: 154-69, especially 165-69.

Koselleck calls ‘the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous’<sup>37</sup> or, in reverse, the non-simultaneity of chronologically simultaneous events. The course of the seventeenth century was characterized by the destruction of interpretations of possible ‘futures’, however they were motivated. Prophecies were replaced by rational prognosis and historical progress,<sup>38</sup> although the Greeks suffered a time-lag, nurturing their hopes for independence with millenarian works such as the *Agathangelos*. In the end, all these changes provided the discipline of history with the framework to start developing a theory of its own. After that, history could become ‘temporalized’ in the sense that it could be changed at each given present, preparing the ground for the subsequent Romantic historicism. In other words, modernity was a question of a self-conscious processing of experiences by a small group of literary figures, critics and *philosophes* who gave the names Enlightenment and Critique to their century.<sup>39</sup> The concept of self-consciousness is also crucial for the main argument of the present study: the emergence of a Modern Greek identity.

Regarding the interrelation of Enlightenment, modernity and nation-formation processes which relate to the present study, Koselleck argues that the Enlightenment was one of the by-products of modernity. In contrast, Wokler believes that the Enlightenment could have sprung from modernity, but it failed since the concept of the nation-state, which arose from the French Revolution, killed the Enlightenment Project, which originated from modernity. The modern nation-state, an invention of the French Revolution, not only distorted but betrayed the Enlightenment Project politically no less than theologically.<sup>40</sup> According to Wokler, Sieyès never failed to oppose Rousseauist notions of republicanism in the National Assembly, because he recognized that Rousseau’s republican ideas could be a threat to the expression of the nation’s general will. Sieyès had a valid point since over the past two hundred years the nation-state has managed to assume the identity of the people. The majority of peoples everywhere comprise nation-states to claim their right to sovereignty. What Sieyès did not foresee is that in the age of modernity a people might not survive except by constituting a nation-state. In other words, in the age of modernity, it has proved possible for the nation-state to become the enemy of the people without a nation-state.<sup>41</sup> In essence,

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<sup>37</sup> Koselleck (1985: 94) characterizes ‘the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous’ as a mode of temporal experience.

<sup>38</sup> Koselleck 1985: 5-12.

<sup>39</sup> Koselleck 2002: 164-68.

<sup>40</sup> Wokler 2000: 162-67.

<sup>41</sup> Wokler 2000: 178.

what Wokler called into question was not the origins of modernity *per se* in the era of the Enlightenment, but the compatibility of the Enlightenment doctrines as they were articulated by the *philosophes* and their application by the French Revolution as a pragmatic answer to the people's needs.

It is exactly this pragmatic aspect of the Enlightenment Project and the social implementation of Enlightenment doctrines that makes the Greek case an interesting field for investigation since Greek-speaking intellectuals transformed Enlightenment doctrines into a practical nationalist ideology to claim their national independence. The Greek case exemplifies the weak points of the naïve Enlightenment cosmopolitanism. The pragmatic needs of the Greeks for national independence were inspired by the modernizing enlightening project. Consequently, Greek nationalism can be viewed as the ideological movement which linked the Enlightenment and modernity.

## 1.2. The nationalism debates

The study of nationalism as an academic field comprises numerous quite contradictory approaches. Scholars from different fields have attempted to grasp the slippery essence of this protean phenomenon by focusing on diverse aspects relevant to the existence of the nation, the nature of nationalist ideology and the processes of nation-formation. Many typologies have been used to isolate and study the diverse approaches proposed by scholars. The genealogical–anti-genealogical opposition<sup>42</sup> or the selective affinities between nationalism and modernity or nationalism and religion<sup>43</sup> are only some of the criteria employed. All the theories suggested from the end of the nineteenth century onwards can be further summarized into four main theoretical paradigms: the primordialist, the

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<sup>42</sup> This typology is suggested by Palti (2001: 324–46) who also takes into consideration certain other factors such as the actual nature of the nation or the representations of it and the distinction between integrative and exclusionist types of nationalist ideology. In essence, he reframes the earlier civic-ethnic dichotomy in a bipolar framework which draws on the distinction between historical descent and social engineering in the formation of the nation.

<sup>43</sup> Kramer (1997: 525–45) attempts to arrange the different approaches thematically by adopting a Eurocentric view. Despite the fact that his analysis draws more on literature about nationalism and less on the original sources and texts, he exemplifies both the cultural fluidity of historical realities and the various attempts to reduce these realities to narrative order.