Writing the history of Greece: forty years on

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Early in 2002 I spent an agreeable three months as Visiting Fellow at the British School at Athens, sometimes erroneously referred to as the British School of Archaeology. I say erroneously because from the School's foundation in 1886 it was never intended that it should focus narrowly on archaeology or the study of the Greek lands in antiquity. Indeed, in the years before the First World War a number of those associated with the School managed to combine their classical and archaeological concerns with a profound interest in the language and culture of the Greek world in modern times. In this context the names of R. M. Dawkins, F. W. Hasluck, A. J. B. Wace, A. J. Toynbee, A. W. Gomme and C. A. Scutt spring to mind.

My 2002 stay was almost forty years after I had first spent time at the School when I was setting out on my career as a student of the history of Greece in modern times. As I am nearing retirement, this recent sojourn at the British School prompted me to take the opportunity of looking back at some of my experiences in attempting to write the modern history of the Greek lands, and of considering some of the changes, very significant changes, and changes very much for the better, that have taken place in recent years in my own primary field of study, the modern history of Greece. The fact that my first stay at the School coincided with the Colonels' coup of April 1967 contributed to a significant shift in the focus of my research. The experience of living through the establishment of a military dictatorship that was nasty, brutish and altogether too long in duration was to precipitate a rather abrupt change in my

interests in Greek history and caused me to receive from Greek friends a crash course in Greek politics.

Perhaps I could begin by quoting from a description of the British School as it appeared in 1915:

> the photographs upon the walls of temples, theatres and mountains: the faded groups of student archaeologists in old-fashioned straw hats, who in bygone years had sojourned here for a while and hence sallied forth to excavate some classic site; the library of Hellenic scholarship and research; the long table in the deserted dining room; the subtle air of learning which permeated the whole place with a faint dusty perfume.

The description is that of Compton Mackenzie, novelist, teller of tall tales, war time πράκτορας, or intelligence agent, and, at the end of his life, grand old man of Scottish letters, in his *First Athenian memories* (1931). At school in Edinburgh in the 1950s I did once meet the great man but, unfortunately, my interest in the Greek world had not at that time developed and I thus missed the chance of hearing Mackenzie's reminiscences of his Athenian adventures and escapades at first hand. All I remember of that distant encounter was that he claimed to have had total recall since the age of two. Compton Mackenzie's description of the British School during the second decade of the twentieth century will strike many a nostalgic chord with those familiar with the School. It certainly held good when my wife and I first spent time in the School some fifty years later, in the mid-1960s. It is, moreover, a description which in substantial measure held good in 2002, not far short of a century after it was first written.

Many will be familiar with Compton Mackenzie's extraordinary stories of intrigue in Athens during the First World War in the service of British intelligence, the "Intelligence Service", which Greeks, against all the evidence, are wont to credit with almost superhuman omniscience and cunning. His tales are certainly hugely entertaining but many, by their nature, are incapable of independent verification. There is one anecdote, however, which, had I the time, I might be able to try

to verify. This is his account of the running aground in Phaleron Bay of a ship carrying frozen sheep carcasses. The ship subsequently broke up and the next day Royalist, anti-Venizelist newspapers had huge banner headlines reporting that headless victims of the "Anglo-French secret police" had been washed ashore in Phaleron. Presumably a search of the newspapers of the time would reveal whether or not this particular anecdote is true. Compton Mackenzie wrote three books on his activities in Greece during the First World War, for much of which Greece was, of course, neutral. For writing one of these, *Greek memories*, he was charged in 1932 with breaching the draconian provisions of the Official Secrets Act and the book was withdrawn and issued in an amended form. The original, unexpurgated edition became a collector's item and very expensive. However, an American publisher issued a reprint a few years ago of the unexpurgated version with the offending passages helpfully highlighted. On perusing these it is difficult to believe that Mackenzie was letting much out of the bag in the book's initial recension but then intelligence services tend to be hypersensitive in matters of security. The trial and the £100 fine that was imposed on the author inevitably served only to enhance the reputation of Mackenzie, who wreaked his revenge on the authorities by penning a novel, *Water on the brain* (1933), in which he mercilessly satirised his erstwhile masters in British intelligence and revealed such sensitive secrets as that "C", the head of MI6, habitually wrote in green ink.

It is not immediately apparent that Mackenzie's tireless intrigues were ultimately of much value to the cause of the Entente Powers, Britain and France. They may, indeed, have been counter-productive as is suggested by the story, not necessarily an apocryphal one, about Mackenzie's arch-rival, the German Baron Schenk, the head of German intelligence. Schenk, of course, was obliged to leave Athens when, in the summer of 1917, Greece entered the war on the side of the Entente allies. His parting words to a group of well-wishers who had come to see him off were apparently: "I am more than

content to leave the interests of the Central Powers in the capable hands of my friend Captain Compton Mackenzie."

When I speak not of modern Greek history but of the modern history of Greece or the history of Greece in modern times, this is deliberate and reflects a growing concern on my part that we should abandon the epithet modern when talking about present-day Greece. Greece, after all, is the only country which, in English at least, we routinely refer to as "modern"; Greek is the only language which we almost always refer to as "modern"; and Greeks the only people who are often referred to as the "modern" Greeks. If we talk about, say, Italy, Italian or Italians, we generally assume that we are talking about the modern country, the modern language and the modern people. If we want to talk about medieval Italy or ancient Rome we say so. It is difficult to think of circumstances in which we would speak of "modern" Italians.

I have written two general books on Greek history. One is entitled *A Short History of Modern Greece* (1979), the other *A Concise History of Greece* (1992). I'm not entirely sure quite what the difference is between a *Short History* and a *Concise History*, save that in its second edition the *Concise History* is rather longer than the *Short*. More to the point, however, my second such venture, the *Concise History*, although it covers a shorter chronological period (roughly from 1700 to the present day) than the *Short History*, omits any reference to "modern" Greece in the title. It is called simply *A Concise History of Greece*. So that I imagine there will have been a few careless purchasers of the book who will have bought it on the assumption that it is about ancient Greece. I can only hope that the booksellers will not have given them their money back when they stormed back to the shop to try to return it.

In my view, by referring so frequently to "modern" Greece, "modern" Greek and "modern" Greeks we simply reinforce the notion that present day Greece continues to lie in the shadow of ancient Greece and is but a pale reflection of "the glory that was Greece". This is of course a perception which is encouraged

by government policies in Greece whichever party is in power. The current campaign over the return of the Elgin Marbles is one instance of such attitudes. Another is that at the new Athens airport at Spata the visitor is greeted by reproductions of antique statuary. In the light of such attitudes it is correspondingly more difficult to project the view that "modern" Greece has a fascinating history and a very rich culture in its own right. Perhaps I am particularly conscious of these nuances because at Oxford where I am based there is such a strong tradition in classical studies. When I last counted there were, at Oxford, twenty-three historians of ancient Greece and Rome and but one of the modern country, myself. And I don't actually have a job. Something of an imbalance I would suggest.

While talking of classics at Oxford I might mention in passing one of my earliest publications, a long article, quite unnecessarily pedantic in nature and of the kind that academics are wont to write early in their careers in an effort to establish their scholarly credentials. This was a study of an attempt made in 1788 to secure a post in Oxford for Adamantios Koraes, who was subsequently, of course, to emerge as the intellectual guru of the movement for Greek independence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the movement that was to culminate in outbreak of the war for independence in 1821.

Koraes's French patron, the classical scholar D'Ansse de Villoison, wrote in 1788 to the Revd Thomas Burgess, a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, to ask whether a position might be found for a young Greek who was a classical scholar of quite exceptional brilliance. No post was forthcoming for him and it was hardly to be expected that the port-sodden backwater that was Oxford in the eighteenth century, so well described by Edward Gibbon in his memoirs, would open its doors to a foreigner, however distinguished. And so, in that same year, 1788, Koraes moved not to Oxford but to Paris where he was to live until his death in 1833. He thus experienced at first hand the turbulent years of the French Revolution and of the revo-

lutionary and Napoleonic wars, an experience that was necessarily to have a profound influence on him, although he was certainly no political radical. It is tempting to speculate how Koraes's career and thinking might have evolved had the dons at Oxford been more open-minded and had Koraes spent his career sequestered among the dreaming, albeit somnolent, spires of Oxford rather than in the turmoil of revolutionary and Napoleonic Paris. Might his interests have been entirely devoted to classical scholarship rather than trying to instil a sense of national consciousness, an awareness that they were the heirs to an intellectual inheritance that was universally revered, into his fellow countrymen under the Turkish yoke? For we sometimes forget that Koraes was among the *koryphaioi*, the most outstanding, of the classical philologists in the Europe of his day. Richard Porson, the great Cambridge classicist, who had nothing but contempt for most of his contemporaries, had high praise for Koraes as a textual critic. However, if no room could be found for Koraes in Oxford, nonetheless it is noteworthy that what appears to be his first publication in the field of classical studies, the "Observationes in Hippocratem", was published by Thomas Burgess in Oxford in 1792 in his *Musei Oxoniensis Litterarii Conspectus*. Koraes had a long association with another Oxford scholar, the Revd Robert Holmes, a Fellow of New College. He collated manuscripts for what Holmes hoped would be the definitive edition of the Septuagint, work for which Koraes was paid but which he found uncongenial and referred to as "*mon collier de misère*".

Increasingly, my interests are turning, or perhaps I should say returning, to the history of the Greeks who have lived outwith the present boundaries of the Greek state and to the history of the Greek diaspora, not necessarily the same phenomenon. It is therefore somewhat frustrating to find that the obvious title for my book, *The Greeks overseas*, was pre-empted many years ago by my Oxford colleague, John Boardman, for his excellent study of the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia. But a book entitled *The Italians overseas* would

surely be about the world-wide emigration of Italians in modern times, what the Italians themselves call *l'altra Italia*, the other Italy. As I shall clearly have to come up with another title for my study of the Greek diaspora, perhaps I should take a leaf out of the Italian book and call it, not *The Greeks overseas*, but *The other Greece*: Η άλλη Ελλάδα. This would not be a bad title at all.

Greeks have of course in modern times settled in many parts of the world. The Earl of Cromer, sometime British High Commissioner in Egypt, in his magisterial two volume anatomy of *Modern Egypt* published in 1907, necessarily wrote of the large Greek community in the country. He was fulsome in his praise for what he termed the "highly respectable" and "high-class" Greeks whose presence in Egypt was "an unmixed benefit to the country". He was less enthusiastic about the "low-class Greeks" but nonetheless wrote somewhat patronisingly that "many of the small Greek traders are fully deserving of respect." "The Greek of this class," he wrote,

> has an extraordinary talent for retail trade. He will risk his life in the pursuit of petty gain [...] the Greek pushes his way into the most remote parts of the Soudan and of Abyssinia. Wherever, in fact, there is the smallest prospect of buying in a cheap and selling in a dear market, there will the petty Greek trader be found.

He recalled having visited in 1889 Sarras, some thirty miles south of Wadi Halfa, at that time "the farthest outpost of the Egyptian army" and "situated in the midst of a howling wilderness".

> The post had only been established for a few days. Nevertheless, there I found a Greek already selling sardines, biscuits, etc., to a very limited number of customers, out of a hole in a rock in which he had set up a temporary shop.

It is precisely the entrepreneurial spirit described by Cromer that has taken Greeks to many parts of the world. One of the

few areas of the planet with only small numbers of Greeks is south-east Asia, for the Chinese in this region have no need of the entrepreneurial talents of the Greeks. In the two-thirds of the world where they have settled, Greeks have striven to recreate, so far as they have been able, familiar aspects of life in the πατρίδα, their homeland; focusing on church, καφενείον (coffee shop) and τοπικά σωματεία, associations of migrants from the same village or region of Greece. The history of Greek emigration, as is so frequently the case with other diaspora peoples, is often the story of chain migration, with migrants from the same village or town in the Greek lands migrating to the same town or city in the new world. There they would have the comfort and support in an alien (and, in the early days, not infrequently hostile) environment of familiar faces (and, very importantly, familiar food), neighbours and relatives, and above all of being able to converse in their own language and worship in their own churches. My wife's family on her mother's side, before they joined the great westward migration of the 1920s, came from Monessen, a town on the Monongahela river in Pennsylvania. We were therefore intrigued some years ago to visit the museum on Chios and to learn that Monessen was a favoured destination of early migrants from the island to the US. So much so, indeed, that there is apparently a saying on Chios, "Έλληνες στην Αμερική, Χιώτες στη Μανέσση" ("Greeks in the United States, Chiots in Monessen").

I have a particular interest in the history of Greek migration to the western states of the United States. Thanks to the pioneering and tireless researches of Helen Papanikolas of Salt Lake City we have a fascinating insight into Greek immigrant life in Utah in the early years of the last century and of the way in which the early immigrants, mainly railroad workers and miners, strove to reconstruct, in many respects successfully, a simulacrum of life in the old country in Utah. Almost without exception these early immigrants to Utah were young men. In the early years their chances of returning to their πατρίδα to

find a bride were minimal. Many of them married local girls, who, in Utah, were of course very often Mormons. When I visited Salt Lake City some years ago I was fascinated to learn that there was a Latter Day Saint, that is to say Mormon, Hellenic Society. This was composed of the children and grand-children of these marriages. They were Mormons by religion, very few of the third and later generations knew any Greek, but they had Greek names and were extremely proud of their Greek ancestry. They had lost not only their language, which was in-evitable, but also their religion. This raises the question of how do we define "Greekness", a big subject that I cannot discuss here.

In parenthesis, however, I might somewhat frivolously add that until the early 1990s there was one simple and straight-forward indicator of "Greekness". In a characteristically popu-list gesture, Melina Mercouri, the flamboyant Minister of Culture in the PASOK government of the 1980s, decreed that entry to Greek museums and archaeological sites would be free to those of Greek ethnicity, whether Greek nationals or Greeks of the diaspora. In practice, not only Greeks but others of broadly "Mediterranean" appearance, e.g. Italians and Spaniards (and even Turks!), provided they had the sense to keep their mouths shut as they approached the ticket kiosk, would be waved through while "barbarians" were required to pay, with the φύλακας acting as the final arbiter of Greek ethnicity. This dis-criminatory practice was ended, however, at the behest of the European Commission, which decreed that either all visitors had to pay or none.

While on the subject of communities of the Greek diaspora I should like to register my regret that we still do not have a comprehensive, scholarly history of the Greek, including of course the Greek Cypriot, community in Britain. A glance at the large Greek churches built in London and Liverpool, in the Byzantine style, and in Manchester, in the neoclassical style, is evidence enough of the extraordinary prosperity of this community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. An interesting aspect of the story of Greek migration to Britain in the nineteenth century is the way in which some of the immigrants, originating mainly from the island of Chios, rapidly assimilated to the ways of the upper-middle class, a process on which A. A. Pallis's *Ξενιτεμένοι Έλληνες* (1954) is revealing. Any study of the Greek presence in Britain would necessarily include the fascinating story of the establishment in Oxford at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of a Greek College. This was established in Gloucester Hall (Aula Glocestrensis) on the site of what is now Worcester College. The College, which was supported by the Levant Company, was the brainchild of the Revd Benjamin Woodroffe and sought to prepare young Greeks as "learned and able preachers and schoolmasters in their own country". The idea was to invite Greek priests and monks to study for a few years in Oxford in the hope, altogether forlorn, that on returning to the Greek lands they might be inspired to initiate an Anglican-style reformation in the Orthodox world. Suspicions were aroused that the Anglicans were seeking to gain control of the Ecumenical Patriarchate through graduates of the College. There were also complaints that Greeks at the College had less freedom to use their own prayers and follow their own usages than they had even in Rome, the seat of the hated papacy. Moreover the damp Oxford climate and dismal food at the College proved unattractive, while the Erasmian pronunciation of ancient Greek in which it was intended that they should converse was unappealing. Had English food been better and Oxford been in a position to offer drinkable wine rather than "nasty" beer, might the Greek Church have experienced the reformation so anxiously wished for by self-deluding Anglican divines? The short-lived experiment came to an end when in 1705 the Ecumenical Patriarchate, worried by the temptations afforded to the students by the flesh-pots of London, decreed that "the irregular life of certain priests and lay-men of the Eastern Church living in London is a matter of grave concern to the Church. Wherefore the Church forbids any to go and

study at Oxford, be they never so willing." One of these alleged reprobates was Serapheim, whose revision of Maximos Kalliou-politis's translation of the New Testament was published by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1703 only, according to Alexander Helladius, to be burnt in the courtyard of the Patriarchate in Constantinople. Another alumnus was Frangiskos Prosalendis of Corfu who published a short book "most useful to the Orthodox" in Amsterdam in 1706 entitled "The Heretical Teacher reproached by the Orthodox Pupil", in which he claimed to expose the sophistries of Woodroffe and his ψευδοφροντιστήριον. While talking about early Greek students in Oxford I should not fail to mention Nathanail Konopios, a Cretan monk with the rank of Patriarchal πρωτοσύγκελλος. He studied at Balliol College in the early 1640s where he is recorded as the first person to have introduced the drinking of coffee to Oxford. Puzzlingly, he subsequently became both chaplain and a Minor Canon of Christ Church, Oxford and, latterly, Metropolitan of Smyrna.

My interest in this other Greece, the άλλη Ελλάδα, the endlessly fascinating world of the Greeks outwith the Greek state, stems from a summer which I spent over forty years ago in the fabled, but in reality nowadays rather grim, city of Trebizond, Trapezounda or Trabzon, on the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea, the last segment of the Byzantine Empire to fall to the Ottoman Turks in 1461, eight years after the Fall of Constantinople itself. Professor David Talbot Rice, one of the pioneers in the study of Byzantine art in this country and a gentleman-scholar of the old school, with whom I was to take a course in Byzantine art as part of my history degree at the University of Edinburgh, invited a student friend and myself to spend a summer assisting in the uncovering of the frescoes, dating from the thirteenth century, in the church of Aghia Sophia, at that time a mosque but now a museum. In recent years there have been calls by Islamists that the museum should revert to being a mosque but so far these have been resisted. On its conversion from a church into a mosque at the

time of the fall of Trebizond in 1461, the frescoes had been covered with whitewash and plaster. One can all too readily imagine the anguish of the Trapezuntine Greeks when, almost exactly five hundred years previously, their much cherished church had been turned into a mosque and the magnificent frescoes covered from sight, seemingly for ever. It would be our task to remove the plaster and whitewash. It was a project that sounded more enticing, for me at least, in prospect than proved to be the case in reality.

After being armed with a cheque about a foot square for £25 drawn on the Ottoman Bank, and following a train journey from London lasting the best part of a week, I duly arrived in Trebizond. I must say that I found the work extremely boring and rapidly abandoned any aspirations that I had to be an archaeologist. Perched atop rickety wooden scaffolding, in the humid summer heat of Trebizond, our job was to scrape off the plaster and whitewash with dental picks. This required an infinite degree of patience that I soon discovered that I simply did not have. Of course it was very exciting to uncover tiny areas of fresco on which no human eye had gazed since the fifteenth century. But in my case that excitement soon wore off.

The tedium of the work, however, was relieved by the excursions that we made at weekends into the fabulously beautiful hinterland of Trebizond, where the Pontic Alps fall precipitately to the Black Sea. These were led by David Winfield, who was in charge of the Aghia Sophia project. One such εκδρομή was to the spectacularly situated monastic ruin of Panaghia Sumelas. This is now visited each year by tens of thousands of visitors, almost all of them Muslims, for whom, as for Christians, it is a place of pilgrimage. But in the summer of 1960 it was not easy of access and was scarcely visited at all and we had the place entirely to ourselves.

In the course of these excursions, and in walks around the rather uninviting city of Trebizond itself, I was surprised to encounter Orthodox Churches, half ruined, or turned into warehouses or barns, that had clearly been built in the nineteenth

century, long after the fall of the Empire of Trebizond. There were also fine neoclassical mansions and school buildings, dating from the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. It was gradually borne in on me that, well within living memory, large numbers of Greeks had been living in Trebizond and in Pontos generally, something of which I had been entirely unaware before that summer. After all, the Greek population of the region had been uprooted and transplanted to Greece, under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, only 37 years previously. In fact, in the year 2002, it is rather longer since my sojourn in Trebizond in 1960 than between 1960 and 1923, when the Greeks had been forced out of a region which they had inhabited since antiquity. I returned to Edinburgh University determined, firstly, not to become an archaeologist, and, secondly, to find out more about this recent Greek community in the region, whose ghostly presence lingered on in the architecture of Pontos.

It is undoubtedly due to that distant Trapezuntine summer that I have always been as much interested in the history of the Greeks who lived outwith the boundaries of the Greek state as in the history of those who have lived within Greece's present-day borders, which might in other circumstances have been very different. One consequence of this interest is that I am now trying to write a large-scale history, not of Greece, but rather of the Greeks, in modern times. This would naturally include the history of the Greeks (and indeed non-ethnic Greeks) of the Greek state but also the Greeks of η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή ("Our" East), to use the evocative Greek expression for the great Greek-speaking Orthodox commonwealth that, until the First World War, stretched from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, from the Carpathian mountains to Egypt. The third strand would be the history of the Greeks of the world-wide diaspora, that is to say the numerous communities arising out of emigration from the generous confines of η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή. I am sure that this is a better way of looking at Greek history than focusing narrowly on the history of the Greek state.

On graduating from university, I was determined to learn more about the Greek communities of Pontos and other parts of Asia Minor in modern times and it was this interest that took me to Athens in 1966-67. By that time I had developed a particular interest in the *karamanlides* (Turkish *karamanlılar)*, the Turkish-speaking Greeks of Asia Minor, who used the Greek alphabet to write Turkish, and for whom an entire and substantial literature was printed in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in *karamanlidika* (Turkish *karamanlıca*), that is to say Turkish printed with Greek characters. One of my prized possessions is a copy of what may be the last ever publication in *karamanlidika* of which copies are known to survive. This was entitled *Aziz Alexiosun ve cümle Azizlerin ve Mahşer Divanının. Nakliyatları ve Cana faydalı Nasıhatlar. Iakov on iki Evlatları ile* (St Alexios and all the Saints and the Last Judgement. Traditions and advices useful to the Soul. Jacob and his twelve sons). It was printed in Thessaloniki in 1929, for books in Turkish in Greek characters were printed in Greece for some years after the 1923 Exchange of Populations for the benefit of the large numbers of monoglot Turkish-speakers who had been included in the transfer. One may sometimes be in a position to possess a copy of the first book printed in a given language but it is rare indeed to be able to say that one possesses a copy of what may be the last book printed in a language or a form of a language.

Like many Greek books published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a good number of these books contain lists of subscribers who contributed in advance to the cost of publication. I was looking the other day at another *karamanli* book, the *Doğru dinin talimi* (the Teaching of the True Religion), published in Constantinople in 1839. This contains such a list of subscribers, from many parts of Asia Minor, many of them rejoicing in such Turcicised names as Karaman Kalaycı Ioannoğlu and Usta Yovan Arzumanoğlu. Among the two hundred or so subscribers is a single woman, one "Elisavet" (Elizabeth) of Ürgüp (Prokopi). Who, I wonder, was this Elisavet?

My own copy has a marvellous handwritten note, likewise in Turkish with Greek characters, on the inside cover. This reads in translation: "If you ask whose book this is, it belongs to Gavriiloğlu Ozalı Giorgos. Whoever takes it let him read and return it. If he does not give it back may he go to hell. If he does give it back, may he rest in holiness. May God protect him and may he find a thousand in the place of one."

I was happily pursuing my interest in this rather obscure aspect of the recent history of the Greek people in Athens, when the Colonels' coup of 21 April 1967 took place. So absurd, crass and anachronistic does the Colonels' dictatorship appear in hindsight that it difficult to appreciate the pall it cast within and without the country. It was not long, however, before the irrepressible sense of humour of the Greeks shone through even in those grim days. They took pleasure in juxtaposing two of the junta's fatuous slogans. The first was that "On 20 April 1967 Greece stood poised on the edge of an abyss." Hence, of course, the need for the Colonels' intervention. The second was that "On 21 April 1967 Greece took a giant step forward."

It was difficult for a historian such as myself to live through a military coup without wanting to know more about how this sad state of affairs had come about. So, as I said earlier, I shifted gear and began to focus, for a time at least, on the recent history and politics of Greece. I think in this connection in particular of the late Nikos Oikonomides, the Byzantine historian, and of his wife, Veta Zakhariadou, the Ottomanist, and likewise of Yanko Pesmazoglou, the economist and banker, and of his wife Miranda. They rapidly inducted my wife, who had been serving as the librarian of the British School, and myself, into the realities and complexities of post-war Greek politics about which until then we had been sadly ignorant. When we returned to Britain I was able to gain an insight into the complex and fascinating world of Greek émigré politics. It is difficult to credit the late and unlamented Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos, the leading putschist, with having had any bene-

ficial effect whatsoever on Greek political life. Paradoxically, however, if Colonel Papadopoulos's influence on Greek politics was an altogether malign one, he did have a positive influence on British political life.

This sounds rather unlikely but it happens to be true. The story is a curious one that I hope to tell at greater length elsewhere. During the επταετία, the seven years of the Colonels' misrule, Eleni Vlachou, the courageous, independent and sharp-tongued owner of *Καθημερινή*, Greece's nearest thing to a newspaper of record and which had been founded by her father, was living in exile in London. She had levanted in disguise from her flat in Athens under the eyes of the Colonels' normally super-efficient security police.

In London she set up an émigré journal, *The Hellenic Review*, which had a rather minimal circulation, although Eleni was an exceptionally skilled performer on television and radio and did much to undermine the Colonels with her caustic wit. I used to write for *The Hellenic Review* and from time to time translated documents for it. One autumn morning in 1968 I was having a καφεδάκι with Eleni in her London office, which was the centre of a spider's web of anti-junta intrigue such as would have delighted that arch-intriguer, Compton Mackenzie. As I was leaving, she said that she had just received a document from Konstantinos Karamanlis, the once and future prime minister and future president of Greece, then likewise living in exile but in Paris rather than London. An anti-junta mole in Papadopoulos's office in Athens had filched it from the dictator's desk, photocopied it and sent it to Karamanlis. He had forwarded it on to his old friend Eleni Vlachou. She asked me to translate the document for publication in *The Hellenic Review*. There was no sense of urgency in her request, but on reading through the document on the bus back to the Library of the British Museum in which, as a graduate student, I practically lived at the time, I almost fell off my seat with excitement. For it appeared to indicate that the junta had, albeit at one remove, a British member of parliament in its pay.

The document was a Greek translation of a report sent to Papadopoulos by the head of the British public relations firm that the Colonels had hired, at very considerable expense, in a desperate but initially not unsuccessful effort to spruce up their battered image in the British and, indeed, European media. I remember dashing into the British Museum to telephone Eleni to ask whether I might take the document round to a friend who worked on the *Sunday Times*. My contact shared my view that the contents of the report were potential dynamite and the *Sunday Times* planned to splash the story in its next edition.

The public relations firm involved, however, got wind of what was afoot and secured an injunction to prevent publication. This proved to be a serious tactical error, for what would probably have proved to be a one-day wonder, or to mix metaphors, a storm in a teacup, turned into a protracted struggle in the courts. In the end, the *Sunday Times*, amid vast publicity, won the right to publish and be damned, or not, as the case might be. The exposure of the numerous, frequently ingenious, activities of the PR man and the revelation that he had a member of parliament on his firm's payroll effectively blew out of the water what had up to that time proved to be a highly successful public relations campaign on behalf of the Colonels. One of these successes was a junket which took five MPs (two Labour, one of whom was the MP on the PR firm's payroll, two Conservative and one Liberal), some accompanied by their wives, to Greece for the first anniversary of the coup in April 1968. They duly accepted Papadopoulos's "word of honour as a man, a soldier and an officer" that the junta intended to move towards democratic government. Another ploy of the PR man was an approach to the Oxford historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, who had written an article deemed favourable to the junta, to try to persuade him to write a history of Greece which would "dismiss the past intellectually", whatever that might mean, a proposal which Trevor-Roper declined. In talking in Cambridge of pro-Colonel propaganda activities I

should mention the famous Garden House Hotel affair when some 400 students sought to break up a pro-Colonel *glendi*. Stavros Papastavrou, a Fellow of Peterhouse, the then Lewis Gibson lecturer in Modern Greek in the University and a stalwart in the campaign to blacken the Colonels' regime, characteristically spoke up for those arrested, as did his Peterhouse colleague, Elias Bredsdorff, Reader in Scandinavian Studies. Bredsdorff, indeed, was described by the ineffable Mr Justice Melford Stevenson, as exerting an "evil influence" over the protesting students.

Such was the storm caused by the revelations of the activities of the Colonels' PR firm and, in particular, that an MP was in its employ as a lobbyist, that the British prime minister of the day, Harold Wilson, felt obliged to set up a parliamentary Select Committee to examine the possibility of requiring members of parliament formally to declare their outside interests. These too often took the form of substantial retainers to MPs from PR firms engaged in burnishing the image of dictatorships and other forms of concealed lobbying. Predictably, perhaps, the Select Committee on this occasion hit the issue into the long grass, failing to come to grips with what was, and indeed remains, a serious problem, and came up with vague and naïve proposals for a voluntary register of interests rather than for the compulsory register that was so obviously needed. Such a compulsory register came into existence a few years later, following another, even greater scandal, the Poulson affair, when the pressure on parliament to put its house in order proved irresistible. Papadopoulos can thus legitimately be considered to be the grandfather, or should I say godfather, if not the father, of the present compulsory register of members' interests in the British parliament. If Papadopoulos is the godfather of the register of members' interests then I might somewhat immodestly claim to be its midwife.

It is instructive to look back at the period of the Colonels' dictatorship and to speculate as to why Greek affairs received so much coverage at that time, particularly given the generally

negative press that Greece has received subsequently in the British, and indeed US, press over issues such as terrorism, the Macedonian issue and, more recently, the British plane-spotters. But to attempt to do that would require another lecture. Suffice it to say that the way in which the Greek Colonels became such hate figures for the liberal intelligentsia in Britain helped in a somewhat paradoxical way to put Greece and its modern history and politics on the map. Publishers were much more willing than in the past to consider books on Greek history and politics for publication. Newspapers and journals were much more inclined to publish articles about the country. An interest in Greece, its recent history and politics, was no longer seen as an eccentric one. I was fortunate, too, in that the development of my interest in Greece in modern times coincided with what, in retrospect, appears as the golden age of the British university system, when there was actually money for new posts in somewhat recondite subjects, thus obviating the need to go cap in hand to potential donors, most of whom have their own agenda in agreeing to fund academic posts. In 1969 a lectureship was created specifically in Modern Greek History at the University of London (yes, alas, it was named "Modern Greek History") and I was fortunate enough to be appointed to it. The post still exists but, somewhat mysteriously, it has metamorphosed into the Cyprus Hellenic Foundation Lectureship in Modern Greek History. At the same time in that bountiful era a lectureship in the History of the Orthodox Church was also created at the University of London. This was held by Philip Sherrard and, unfortunately, lapsed when he took early retirement. As Samuel Huntington's controversial thesis of a "clash of civilizations" edges towards realisation, it is sad indeed that such a potentially significant post was allowed to fall into abeyance.

The μεταπολίτευση of 1974, the return of Greece to the family of democratic nations, also had very positive consequences for the study of the recent history and politics of the country in Greece itself. Over the past thirty years the study of

Greek history and politics in Greece itself has changed beyond recognition. There are no longer any taboo subjects. An interest in social history is no longer deemed to be *prima facie* evidence of communist leanings. It is extraordinary to recall that when Nikos Svoronos published in 1955 in Paris his (extremely concise) *Histoire de la Grèce Moderne*, a Marxist analysis, he was stripped of his Greek passport. Young Greek scholars no longer feel the need to go abroad to work on topics that might be considered too sensitive to be studied at home. Significantly, the study of the modern history of Greece is no longer so dependent on the archives of foreign governments, in particular the archives of Britain, France and the United States. These archives may be seductively well organised but inevitably they give a view of Greece's history as refracted through the eye of diplomats stationed in the country. The observations of these diplomats were, and no doubt continue to be, frequently acute, but inevitably reliance on such sources can give only a partial view of Greek realities.

I remember in particular one gem. Following the Italian attack on Greece in October 1940, Lady Palairet, the wife of the then British minister to Greece, Sir Michael Palairet, organised a knitting circle to knit comforts, scarves, gloves etc. for the Greek troops on the Albanian front, an enterprise in which the German minister's wife was likewise engaged. Lady Palairet was apparently something of a battle-axe and to irreverent junior members of the British Embassy she and her knitting circle were known as the "Four Horsewomen of the Acropolis". I was amazed to learn recently that the British Ladies' Sewing Circle in Athens is, after sixty years, still in existence and, until recently, continued to meet in the British ambassador's residence.

The treasures present in Greek archives, including the very rich, if disordered, archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are now being exploited to the full. One consequence of all this exciting activity is that the centre of gravity in the study of the modern history of Greece has returned to where it

always should have been, to Greece itself. There has been a welcome resurgence of interest in the history of η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή, the Greek East. There has been much fascinating work in establishing the history of the hitherto submerged Greek populations of the former Soviet Union, many of whose members have in recent years migrated to Greece. This is a highly significant development for a country which has, of course, hitherto been an exporter rather than an importer of migrants. Likewise, there is a whole new emphasis on studies of the Greek diaspora proper, that is to say on emigration outwith the generous confines of η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή.

There are, of course, many areas of study still crying out for research. One such would be an academic study of the diaspora constituted by the flight of communist refugees following their defeat in the 1946-1949 civil war to various countries of Eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union and, in particular, to the city of Tashkent in Uzbekistan. These refugee communities kept alive, and passed on to their children, a strong sense of Greek identity, although members of this particular diaspora community were precluded from relying on the establishment of Greek Orthodox churches, which have played, and continue to play, such an important role in preserving a sense of Greek identity in diaspora communities in various parts of the world. The mechanisms by which such a strong sense of identity was preserved in such austerely secular societies certainly merits study. There is still a reluctance on the part of Greek historians to write works of synthesis aimed at a general as well as a scholarly audience. Likewise it is unfortunate that there is not much of a tradition of writing critical political biographies. It is surprising, for instance, that there is no modern life of that great and charismatic statesman Eleftherios Venizelos. Nor is there a modern life of Adamantios Koraes, a man of extraordinary intellect, one of the most significant figures in the Greek national movement and a highly important figure in the history of European classical scholarship.

In the last two or three years we have sadly witnessed the deaths of a number of British people whose connection with Greece goes back to the Second World War, and indeed before: people of the stature of Monty Woodhouse, Nick Hammond and Nigel Clive, some of the last of a generation that not only wrote about the modern history of Greece, but helped, in significant ways, to shape that history. But it is encouraging to report the emergence in Britain, the United States, Australia and elsewhere of a younger generation of historians, born long after the war, some but by no means all, of Greek ancestry, with strong academic interests in the modern history and politics of Greece, even if they remain heavily outnumbered, and outresourced, but hopefully not outgunned, by the classicists and Byzantinists.

There is still, however, a disturbing degree of ignorance in the wider world of the historical forces and events that have helped to shape Greek attitudes and attitudes in the Balkans in general. To take a case in point. At the height of the Macedonian controversy in the early 1990s, Greece generally received a bad press in Britain, Europe and the United States. Greece's partners in the European Union were baffled that a politically stable Greece, with a relatively strong economy, well-equipped armed forces and membership both of the NATO alliance and of the European Union, could view with such apparent apprehension the emergence of an independent Republic of Macedonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and regard it as constituting any kind of threat, given its small size, weak economy and the challenge to its stability posed by a large and increasingly restless Albanian minority.

Official Greek government propaganda, mistakenly in my view, focused heavily on demonstrating that Macedonia as a geographical entity had been Greek since the era of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great and, indeed, earlier. This emphasis on the distant past of the region resulted in there being little appreciation outside Greece that Greek apprehensions, which appeared to many outsiders to be exaggerated,

were occasioned by events which had occurred within living memory rather than in remote antiquity. The greater part of the refugees from Asia Minor and elsewhere had been settled in Greek Macedonia in the 1920s, and as a result many living in northern Greece had parents, grandparents or great-grand-parents whose lives had been turned upside down by the process of uprooting and re-settlement. They were naturally alarmed at any suggestion of claims against the country's territorial integrity, for these might result in further upheavals. Moreover, during the Second World War, western Thrace and a part of Macedonia had suffered from an extremely harsh Bulgarian occupation. Greeks had been killed in considerable numbers by the Bulgarian occupiers or "ethnically cleansed", as we would now say, in large numbers from the region, and Bulgarians settled in their place. Those from countries whose borders have been long established and are unchallenged sometimes find it difficult to appreciate the anxieties of those living in a country whose final borders were established as recently as 1947, when the Dodecanese islands, hitherto under Italian occupation, were incorporated into the Greek state. As I liked to remind my students, in the days when I actually had some, Konstantinos Karamanlis, who retired from the presidency of Greece as recently as 1995, had been born in 1907 an Ottoman citizen in the village of Küpköy or Proti in Macedonia when the region still formed part of the Ottoman Empire and was being bitterly fought over by rival Greek and Bulgarian guerrilla bands.

I well remember how when I was carrying out research in Greece in the 1960s I would often listen to the broadcast by the Greek Red Cross that went out every afternoon at about 3 p.m. Each day there would be a plaintive litany of the names of individuals who had disappeared without trace in the series of disasters that befell Greece during the century that has recently ended. These included the catastrophic defeat of the Greek armies in Asia Minor in 1922 and the consequent uprooting of Greek populations with roots going back to antiquity and their flight or forcible transplanting to Greece. They included the

harsh years of the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation of Greece during the Second World War, years which saw savage collective punishments inflicted by the occupying powers, the wholesale deportation and virtual destruction of Greek Jewry, and appalling famine. In mentioning the terrible famine of the occupation years it is worth remembering an interesting and little-remarked coincidence. At almost exactly the same time that a party of British saboteurs was being parachuted into Greece in late September 1942 by the Special Operations Executive with the mission of destroying, in co-operation with Greek resistance forces, the Gorgopotamos viaduct carrying the railway line between Thessaloniki and Athens, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief was being established for the specific purpose of alleviating the famine in Greece. From this small acorn the subsequent mighty oak of Oxfam was to grow.

The horrors of the occupation were followed by the horrors of civil war, as Greek fought Greek in a vicious internecine conflict. At each of these junctures, besides the large numbers who lost their lives, substantial numbers of people went missing, their fate unknown to relatives and friends. Hence the infinitely sad Red Cross appeals for information about missing children, parents, brothers and sisters. These always ended with the haunting refrain, "Από τότε αγνοείται η τύχη του/της" and the name of the missing person ("Since then nothing is known of the fate of so-and-so"). Not infrequently the τότε ("then") would refer to someone last seen in the chaos of the burning and evacuation of Smyrna in September 1922. Much of this recent historical experience of the Greek people still remains a closed book in the wider world. The task of the historian must be to try to break down the barriers of ignorance that surround such a rich, if in many ways tragic and misunderstood, modern history.

In conclusion, I should say that studying the recent history of Greece has not been without incident. I am in fact writing about some of these curious ups and downs in what will, in effect, be a memoir of life in the academy. These ups and

downs have resulted in part from my interest, a strictly academic one it goes without saying, in the παρασκήνια of academic life, in the events behind the scenes, which are so important in the affairs of academic institutions, but which so seldom see the light of day, let alone get written about. This interest was both reflected in, and stimulated by, my account of the establishment in 1919 and subsequent rapid implosion of the Koraes Chair of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature at King's College, London. This chair can be considered as the progenitor of the now common phenomenon in the English-speaking world of the "ethnic" chair, that is chairs founded with endowments from foreign governments, ethnic and religious communities or rich individuals. When the first incumbent of the Koraes chair, the young Arnold Toynbee, who had a pronounced distaste for educated Greek "black coats", manifested a strong emotional sympathy with the Turkish nationalists in the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922 the rich Anglo-Greeks who had put up the money for the chair were, understandably, not best pleased. The situation became so fraught that it was not long before Toynbee submitted what he himself termed his "involuntary" resignation. But controversy continued to dog this chair even after Toynbee's departure and the subsequent history of the chair will make an interesting and instructive story. This interest in the παρασκήνια of events is one that no doubt derives from my interest in Greek politics, where a knowledge of the παρασκήνια is often the key to understanding of political events.

I shall have to find an appropriate title for this academic memoir. Once again, I find that the appropriate title has been preempted, as it was with John Boardman and his *The Greeks overseas*. This time a Greek author got there first with *Ο πράκτορας που ήρθε από την ομίχλη* – the spy who came in, not from the cold, but from the fog. For no one with an interest in recent Greek history or politics can hope not, at some stage or other, to be denounced as a spy. *Ο πράκτορας που ήρθε από*

την ομίχλη by Solon Grigoriadis is a literally fantastic book. It posits that it was Ellis Waterhouse, the art historian who played a not wholly constructive role in Greek affairs when attached to the British Embassy to the Greek government-in-exile in Cairo during the Second World War, who was the ξένος δάκτυλος, the foreign finger, who controlled with satanic cunning, on behalf of Churchill, British policy towards Greece during the Second World War.

I have to admit that I have occasionally been known to mutter out loud that I wished that, instead of studying the history and politics of Greece, I had chosen to navigate the seemingly calmer waters of, say, Norwegian history and politics. But whenever I have done so my wife has been quick to point out that while the study of the history of Greece may at times be frustrating, even on occasion hazardous to one's academic health, it is never, ever boring. And that is something indeed to be very thankful for.