

Changing Identities in Ottoman Context: The National «Self» and the «Other» in 19th Century Greek Women's Writings

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Abstract: The paper acts as an editorial of the thematic issue «Education in Southeastern Europe: From Empires to Nation-States», in which is included. It explores the constructions/reconstructions of collective national identities within the Ottoman Empire, for the period of the 1840s until the end of the 19th century, focusing on the Ottoman Greek case. Given that women's education emerges as an ethnic/ national project in the discourses throughout the period under research, the study based on the works of three women intellectuals concerning women and women's education, examines the conceptualizations of «nation» and the changing images of national «selves» and «others». The concepts of «East»/ «Orient»/ «Ottoman» and «West» are also studied as connected with the nation and its position in the respective imagined communities. The women whose works are studied as representative of the different discourses and multiple conceptualizations of the notions aforementioned are: Eufrosyne Samartzidou (1820-1877), editor of the first women's journal published in the Ottoman territories [*Kypseli* (1845)], Sappho Leontias (1830-1900), and Kalliope Kehagia (1839-1905), both celebrated educators, writers and intellectual. The paper concludes by associating its analyses and conclusions with the topic of the issue, and presenting the papers included.

Keywords: changing identities; national «self»; national «other»; Ottoman Empire; Ottoman Greek women's identities.

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1. Introduction

A great number of 19th-century Ottoman Greek women's writings, original and/or translated, concerned women's education directly or indirectly: essays on education, pedagogical works, textbooks and public speeches/lectures in the former case; poetry, short stories and articles for or against female emancipation in the latter. In these texts, particularly those of the first category, women's education is presented as the necessary means for the progress of the Greek nation and the construction of a strong national consciousness, reflecting the

ethnic/national – gradually turning into nationalist – discourses emerging at the time. However, the discourses on women's education changed between the early 19th century and the 1860s onwards (up to the abolition) of the institution of the religious/ethnic communities in 1923), in regard to the concept of *ethnos* (nation) or *Genos* (kinfolk) and the aims and collective or individual benefits of women's education, and their associations (Dalakoura, 2008, pp. 307-323).

During the first period (early 19th century-1860s), the dominant discourse on women's education pointed out its significance for society and individuals and to convince people of the necessity of women's education, demonstrating the collective benefits to be gained from it. The arguments were founded on the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the related principles of natural equality, progress (based on knowledge and the cultivation of logic), morality and the ideology of ethnicism/nationalism that took shape in the early 19th century. Women had to be «enlightened» in order to participate in the goods of civilisation, achieve moral edification (the basic principle being that knowledge instils morality), and become socialised in the roles appropriate to their social destiny. Female enlightenment was considered a prerequisite for social progress and human happiness – this link was the dominant motif, the most frequently repeated argument – and also for the renaissance and progress of the «kinfolk», an argument much more rarely met with (Rota, 1846, pp. 3-5; Leontias, 1858, pp. 19-20; Fournaraki, 1987, pp.31-33; Dalakoura, 2008, pp. 268-281, 307-316).

In these less frequent references, «nation» included all Orthodox Christians or all Greek-speakers who had or were willing to have a Greek education. Thus the concept had a cultural content, based on religion and Greek education/language. Geographically it was identified with the East; the concept of homeland did not refer to the newly established Greek state, but to the respective author's land, e.g. Izmir, Istanbul and so on (Dalakoura, 2008, p. 315). The concept of the East was not negatively charged, and the Ottoman religious/ethnic groups were not portrayed as «ethnic others». Any references were positive, connected to the efforts of all populations towards literacy and progress regardless of their ethnicity. The main ethnic other in contemporary discourses on education were the Europeans, collectively or as distinct nationalities. These references, too, were positively charged, referring to the progress and developments demonstrated by these people, whom the «kinfolk» should turn to in order to draw on their knowledge and experience.

From the 1860s onwards, the discourses on education and nation changed. The changes in European policy and the abandonment of the principle of Ottoman territorial integrity by European diplomacy fed the desire of the newly established Balkan states to claim parts of the disintegrating Empire, and intensified their rivalry, which had already emerged in the previous decade.

In the race to expand their borders and incorporate as much Ottoman land as possible in future, education was openly declared to be the most important means to that end. An intensely nationalist discourse arose both within and without the Empire among the competing Balkan nations. Thus the ethnicism of the previous period was transformed into nationalism, and the cultural content of ethnic identity became political in nature. This nationalist discourse became the dominant discourse of the time, permeating the vast majority of writings on education and echoed in educational and cultural activity as a whole (Dalakoura, 2008, pp. 317-318; Dalakoura, 2011, pp. 656-659; Tsoukalas, 1987, pp. 29-52, 364-365; Kitromilidis, 1997, pp. 59-66).

However, there were also secondary discourses, which became ever rarer towards the end of the 19th century. These discourses preserved many of the characteristics of the cultural nationalism/ethnicism of the first period, but also incorporated elements of the new, «pure» nationalism¹, although without portraying the other as an enemy. It appeared in areas (such as Smyrna) where national political ideology made a greater or lesser impression due to their particular cultural and economic circumstances, and in the circles that supported or were influenced by the political ideology of Graeco-Ottomanism which re-emerged by the end of 19th century although with a lesser impact on the members of the Greek-Orthodox community.

The aforementioned different discourses are reflected in the writings of women writers of the Orthodox/Greek Community. Based on their works the paper examines diachronically the conceptualisations of nation/«genos», «East»/«West», and their consequent self-perceptions as members of these «imagined» communities² or their «in-betweenness». Among the aims of the study emphasis is placed on exploring the «Ottoman» element in the «national»/ethnic identity. More precisely, the paper focuses on the works (articles or essays) of Efrosyni Samartzidou (1820-1877), editor of the women's journal published in the Ottoman territories [*Kypseli* (1845)], Sappho Leontias (1830-1900) and Kalliope Kehagia (1839-1905), both celebrated educators, writers and intellectual women of their time, as representatives of the different discourses and multiple conceptualizations of the notions aforementioned.

2. Between East and West: Negotiating the Kinfolk's Position

The work and activity of Eufrosyni Samartzidou, Sappho Leontias and Kalliope Kehagia covers the decade of 1840s until the end of the 19th century, a period

1 The term has been introduced by Tsoukalas (1987)

2 The term is used as defined and analyzed in Anderson (1991).

during which writing and publishing efforts by women appeared in the territories in question, progressively increasing towards the end of the century. Their work and activity corresponds to two the sub-periods aforementioned, during which changes appear in the dominant national, political, and gendered ideological constructs, as a result of the different historical circumstances formed within the Ottoman Empire as well as outside it, in Europe and the newly established Balkan states. Samartzidou's works reflect the ideological constructs of the first period, while the discourses of the other two are placed within the second period. Their biographical details, the particular period and milieu they were brought up and in their communication with the West are quite telling for their elaborations of the notions of nation, East and West, Ottomanness and Greekness, and their self-perceptions as subjects of the corresponding «imagined communities».

At the time Samartzidou (1821-1877) was active, the launching of the major reforms had given rise to a general euphoria and optimism, especially in the non-Muslim communities. The freedom to publish books, translations and printed material, which appeared as soon as the Hatt-ı Şerif, [Imperial Edict] was signed facilitated communication with Europe and the circulation of the new philosophical and political theories/principles, while European Enlightenment ideas on education and progress were particularly well received. More specifically, with regard to the Orthodox community, these ideas connected with the awakening of the Greek nation (and its liberty), through the discourses of the Greek enlighteners, rendered education the primary argument. In this context, women's literacy was presented as a necessity, strongly approved by all Greek enlighteners, whose proposals ranged from home education to co-education, although preserving the restrictions imposed by the new model of female virtue (self-limitation, modesty, rejection of sentiment, etc.), based mainly on Rousseau's gendered philosophy. During this period, the West appeared, either directly or via the enlighteners' discourses, as the modern paradigm of culture and progress, or at least pointed the way towards them.

Eufrosyne Samartzidou was brought up and educated within this ideological and political climate. She was born on the Aegean island of Syros in 1821. At a very early age, in 1837, she got married to Spyridon Samarzidis, a doctor originated from the Ionian island of Zakynthos, and moved away from her birthplace. Her education and reading until she met her future husband were limited: with the support of her father she attended the boys' school of Skyros for four years, as there was no girls' school on the island at the time, while her reading only included books corresponding to the school subjects and some others which eventually came to her hands. Her broad and deep education, her contact with the philosophical (and the most radical) political written production of the Enlightenment, as reflected in her writings, and the development of her intellectual interests were

attained during her marriage with the strong support of her husband³. According to her first biographer, who seemed to have been given biographical details by Samartzidou herself «She passed the first five years of her married life with the works of the ancient Greek writers and poets, and vocabularies in her hands» (Theaititos, 1867, p. 213). For her husband's professional reasons at first, and after his death in 1862, for her own work purposes, as she started working as a headmistress in girls' schools, Eufrosyne Samartzidou moved to and lived in some of the most important educational urban centers of the time (Istanbul, Kydonies [Ayvalik], Syros, Serres) influenced by the ideals and principles of the transferred European Enlightenment and the activity of celebrated Greek Enlighteners. This parameter together with the influence of her teachers (during her education at home), who were well known proponents of enlightenment ideas, and agents of the western intellectual experience, as well as the broad circle of intellectuals, editors and men of letters she was connected with, may explain her broad education, and her attitudes towards the issues in question⁴.

The climate of optimism resulting from Tanzimat is reflected in the pages of *Kypseli*, a journal edited by Efrosyni Samartzidou in 1845 in Istanbul. This was a very early endeavour and not just for female publishing⁵. It was the first Orthodox/Greek female publication (with a woman editor) and probably the first female publication in the Ottoman Empire as a whole.⁶ It was a short-lived journal (only 6 issues were published, totalling 280 pages). Its circulation was limited, though it also appears to have circulated outside Istanbul: in Athens, the island of Syros, in Smyrni, and in Bucharest and Galatsi (a modern-day Romanian city) (Dalakoura, 2012; Droulia & Koutsopanagou, 2008); it is worth noting that women's literacy in the Orthodox community was very low: it was not until 1840 that schools with

3 Such educational support by the male family members was quite common among the well educated women of the early nineteenth century. The undertaking of girls' education by male family members seems to have been common practice in the Enlightenment circles of middle-class scholars, see Dalakoura, 2015, pp. 301-302.

4 For details of her life, education and activity, see Dalakoura & Ziogou-Karastergiou, 2016, pp. 313-321; Denisi, 2014, pp. 144-146; See also Droulia & Koutsopanagou, 2008.

5 At the time of *Kypseli's* publication, only one other Greek publication was in circulation in Istanbul, while it was preceded by only four other Greek publications: three periodicals and one newspaper (Dalakoura, 2012).

6 Indeed, the first Turkish publication addressed to a female readership (the journal *Terakki-i Mubadderat*) entered circulation in 1869, and the first with a woman editor (*Shukufezer*) in 1886; the first Armenian one (*Guitar*) in 1863; the first Bulgarian periodical for women (*Ruzhitsa*) was published in 1871, while there were no Bulgarian female publications edited by women during the Ottoman period; the first such publication was issued within the Bulgarian state in 1901 (the newspaper *Zenski Glac*). Concerning the Serbian community, there were no publications for women or edited by women within the Ottoman Empire, though periodicals for women edited by men appeared within the Serbian principality from the late 1820s onwards (*Talia* in 1829, *Ženski vospitatelj* in 1847 and more (mostly almanacs) during the second half of the century in the areas belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire) (Dalakoura, 2012).

reasonably constant teaching and some systematic organisation appeared. This limited circulation, together with Samartzidou's family circumstances, may have caused the cessation of the journal's publication.

The aim of *Kypseli*, as its editor stated, was to contribute to the social advancement of all the peoples of the East, this wider enterprise of progress declared by the monarch, through the enlightenment of the «women of the East». This grand social aim of total advancement of society could not be fully achieved – Samartzidou argued – unless «[...] the unfortunate female gender», «a part of humanity which, too, is entitled to moral life» (*Samartzidou, 1845a, p. vi*), was also included. The main thematic of the journal is education and women's past and present social status. Through these, it discusses the necessity for female education, attempts to deconstruct the essentialist view of the subservient position of women as a natural condition, and constructs a history of women (in the service of the previous two themes) (Dalakoura, 2012; Fournaraki, 2008).

In the «Preface» and «Dedication» of *Kypseli*, a kind of foreword tribute to the Sultan's mother, as in the corresponding references in her other articles, Samartzidou repeatedly praises the Sultan's initiative, which, according to her, marks a progressive course that the «progress-loving peoples of the East» have already embraced, as they «vie for education». The concept of progress – founded upon knowledge and education –, the positive conceptualisation of labour, the practical ideal of schooling and education, are western in origin. The West was recognised as the model of the new, modern culture. It was not, however, presented abstractly as a unified entity; England for instance is preferred to France – with reference to women's legal status – as the country in which rational discourse and justice most determined its organisation and therefore its progress (*Samartzidou, 1845c*); nor was western progress presented regardless of its historicity; Samartzidou places the progress of the West within the evolutionary course of humanity. This approach does not render western nations superior and the non-developed nations of East correspondingly «inferior». The dipole of «civilisation – barbarity» is replaced in her discourse by that of «civilisation-innocence». The «original» peoples of the East were innocent, not barbarian. Their level of civilisation is compared to the «infantile» (and innocent) period of humanity – a motif also used for the state of the women of the East⁷.

In the entirety of the pages of the publication no differentiation is made between the Orthodox community and the Ottoman peoples as a whole. «Fellow Greeks», who are rarely named, are hinted at within the totality of the peoples of the East. «Glorious Greek antiquity» is not used as an excuse to distinguish the Greek nation or afford it some kind of superiority; she dedicates only one article

⁷ See Samartzidou, 1845a, 1845b.

to the history of the Greeks (Samartzidou Eufrosyne, 1845d), among the histories of the other nations – mainly of the East –, in her attempt to formulate a history of women. On the contrary, the lands of Greece are considered as another state, while the status of education there and the dominant educational philosophy are rigidly criticised, as in Samartzidou's view they entrench the «poverty» of the Greek state. Also no favourable references are made to Orthodoxy or to any other religion, a feature that is particularly telling (Samartzidou, 1845e, pp. 37-42; 1845f, p. 55). Having adopted the most radical philosophical and political Enlightenment ideas – as demonstrated by her views on female education «common to all» and discrimination by social origins, the substantiation of women's right to equality and the interpretation of their social status⁸, she captures the political roles of the churches and their ambitions for power over the governments.

So it emerges that Samartzidou's self-perception is of a subject/citizen of the East; a geographical region identified with the Ottoman territories, praised for its beauty and a country/state moving towards a western type of progress (Samartzidou, 1845a, 1845b, 1845g). Though well aware of the different millets inhabiting the country she does not segregate them; they are addressed collectively as «peoples of the East» governed by the same monarch, the Sultan, a stance reflecting employment of the ideology of Ottomanism. Her rhetoric echoes neither Orientalist views nor ethnic or nationalist narratives.

3. National identities: the National «Self» and the «Other»

From the 1870s onwards a purely nationalist discourse began to be articulated, in the context of the European powers' change of policy towards the Ottoman Empire, competing Balkan nationalisms, and the shift in the political climate during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, with the Islamisation of Ottomanism. However, Ottomanism as a model of sociopolitical existence continues to have its defenders within the Orthodox community (now in the version of Greco-Ottomanism), and not only in the high bourgeoisie and the banking class, although it is by now a secondary socio-political discourse in decline. Against this background, education (and women's literacy in particular) assumed a primary role once more, this time in the service of «national needs». The education network expanded rapidly (as in the other Balkan ethnic communities,

⁸ Her rhetoric reflects the views of Mary Wollstonecraft when she criticises the patriarchal beliefs that question women's intellectual abilities. The notion of gender equality is crucial and is powerfully argued for all women, while women's social position is attributed to the historically male dominated character of the societies; historical written sources portraying women in history are also questioned as written only by men (Dalakoura, 2012).

mainly the Bulgarian, while in the Muslim community it began to be established systematically during this period) and cultural activity intensified within the framework of the *millets*. Gendered social ideology also changed, penetrated by the ideology of «equality in difference» which was constructed during this period. The West at this time was not treated as a single, static concept on the one hand, and acquired ambiguity on the other, in women's discourses. The same is true of the East.

Kalliope Kehagia (1839-1905) is a typical example of the rhetoric reflecting these politico-ideological reversals. Kalliope Kechaga was descended from a noble family (her grandfather and her ancestors were representatives of the Greek community of their area before the Ottoman authorities). Her father followed a commercial career and moved to Athens in 1950, so Kehagia was educated within the formal education system established in Greece for girls of her social origins: She studied at the school of Francis Hill (an American missionary who established the first high school for girls in Athens in 1831) and then at the Arsakeion, a private high school in Athens (established by the Friends of Education Society of Athens in 1837) which also served as the national (though private) teacher training college. In 1857 she went to London where she continued her studies, according to some sources. After her return to Athens, she received her teaching diploma and embarked on her career as qualified teacher. She worked as a schoolmistress in girls' schools in Athens and Istanbul, participated in women's associations (also being among the founders of some of them in Athens), and published a considerable body of educational and literary work (orations delivered at the end of each school year, public lectures, educational works, travelogues). Her more productive period was the years she lived in Istanbul (1875-1888), running one of the most famous Girls' College of the city, the Zappeion High School for Girls, a position which opened a broad path into the public domain and rendered her an important figure of the intellectual life in the Orthodox community as well as Greece once she returned there (Xynogalas, 2011, pp. 14-27; Voutyras, 1925). The fact that she grew up in the Greek state in a period of a growing nationalist and irredentist discourses has to be taken into consideration.

An important work for the issue discussed in this paper is her contribution to the book edited by Theodore Stanton *The Woman Question in Europe: A Series of Original Essays* (1884), where she explicitly describes the «national self and the national others», while her main educational works (Kehagia, 1871, 1880a, 1880b) are taken into account as very indicative not only for the conceptualizations of the notions under research, but also for the role attributed to education in the nation-building course. The volume edited by Theodore Stanton aimed to present women's movements and activity in each European country «that remarkable social

revolution now going on in the old Europe as well as in young America» (Stanton, 1884, p. v), as part of the «women's question». All papers but one and part of another are written by women. Kalliope Kehagia contributed to the volume as a literate woman who had participated in the women's movements of her country, as the editor's concern -according to his preface- was to secure the collaboration of at least one such woman from each European country or region in order to include contributions from all European countries. Her work had been submitted in Greek and was then translated into English (as were most of the papers included in the volume), while it was reviewed by A. Ragavis, a celebrated intellectual, men of letters and politician and Dr. X. Zographos, Greek Ambassador in United States, an important detail indicating the figures who recommended Kehagia as contributor to this international volume (the first being the most probable), and indirectly suggesting approval of the ideas and descriptions expressed in the work.

The chapters were arranged in ethnological order and Kalliope Kehagia was responsible for contributing for the «Orient», identified with the Ottoman Empire, as clarified by its content. It is not not clear however, whether the identification of the two terms and thus the term «Orient» in the title of the chapter was the editor's suggestion -the western constructions of the «orient» were quite ambiguous in regard to the geographical region referred to Asia Minor, Balkans and Asia Minor, Far East etc.⁹ or if the identification of the terms was Kehagia's initiative.

Already from the introductory paragraph, Kalliope Kehagia, notes that she is going to present the women of the Orient according to the ethnic group they belong to, and not as one national group; as «national unity is entirely wanting in the Orient», she cannot treat, as she clearly states, «this portion of Europe» as a «united and homogeneous body» (1884, pp. 457-458). Though the aim of creation of a unified Ottoman nation including all populations sought by the administrative and social reforms of Tanzimat (1839-1876) was not accomplished (on the contrary, within the changing political circumstances the religion-based distinction was turned into national differentiations), nevertheless all religious/ethnic groups had been granted equality before the law and Ottoman citizenship, a detail Kehagia does not mentions. She also makes a very clear and crucial distinction at the very beginning of her essay; she excludes Greek women from the «oriental» ethnicities of the place. According to her argument, «Christian Greek women», as she names the Greeks of the region, constitute with the Greeks of the Greek state one and the same nation based on language and religion «the solid foundation of the Greek nationality» (Kehagia, 1884, p. 458). Thus their inclusion in the chapter was not due to their oriental identity, but to their political status as they lived «still under a foreign yoke» (Kehagia, 1884).

9 See e.g. Dora D' Istria, 1589; Said, 1978; Mills, 1993; Lewis, 2004.

The ethnicities identified with the «orient» and presented in the chapter were the Muslims (she called them Ottomans), Jews, Armenians and Bulgarians. It is remarkable that of the Balkan ethnicities living in the Ottoman territories only Bulgarians are included among the ethnicities considered «oriental». The fact that Bulgarian nationalism by the 1880s had already emerged as the greatest rival to the Greek nationalism and thus as the greatest risk Greek foreign policy in Balkans in the framework of the «Megali Idea» [«Great Idea»]¹⁰ seem to justify the «discrimination». Description of the women of these ethnicities is stated to be short «for their women are in a state of lamentable inactivity which offers almost nothing worthy of record» (Kehagia, 1884, p. 568). Indeed the presentation of the four «oriental» ethnicities is limited to five pages in total, while that of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire as well as of the Greek state, though both are not oriental, extended to nine pages (Kehagia, 1884, pp. 458-463 and 463-472 respectively).

The aforementioned direct or indirect statements ascribe to the concepts of «orient»/Ottoman a negative connotation though this is not yet openly expressed, as it will be in the descriptions that follow in the essay. She ascribes the women of the other ethnic groups the negative qualities repeatedly cited in most of the Greek texts of the time, when referring to the topic; a rhetoric which displays absence of communication between the women of different ethnic groups and thus limited information/knowledge about their social life and activities. In her descriptions there is no hostility towards the oriental national/ethnic others nor are «hostile images» constructed. Women are addressed either with depreciation, a slight contempt, or sympathy/pity depending on the ethnicity she referred to: the Muslim women are presented as «pour souls» – for their marginal and «humiliating» social position, being ruled over by the Koran and the life of the harem –, living on sensation and loving luxury; Armenians, as an odd ethnicity leading a simple life tied to family and indifferent to questions of social or political importance; Jews are concerned only with the people of their community and fanatical about their religion; Bulgarians are «primitive», with very limited interests and non-existent social occupations (Kehagia, 1884, pp. 458-463).

The positive qualities cited are deadened in significance by the social, cultural or religious restrictions of the respective communities imposed on women: «[the Muslim woman] has some good qualities which might make her a worthy member of society; but her ignorance, her humiliating position... Social prejudices and religious fanaticism have rendered the attempt [of establishing

10 The «Megali Idea»: The Greek irredentist ideology that reflects the Greek foreign policy as an answer to the Eastern Question: liberation of the «enslaved» Greeks of the Ottoman Empire and incorporation of all Greek-speaking areas within the bounds of a single Greek state.

girls' schools] abortive; so Ottoman women often remarkable for mental power are debased intellectually...» (Kehagia, 1884, pp. 458-859); «Bulgarian women are not yet fully prepared to assume the new duties of the new order of the things, for it is only since the Treaty of San Stefano that Bulgaria has entered the circle of modern civilized states» (Kehagia, 1884, p. 462). At the same time the description of the oriental women's character and life reveals a distaste for their feminine qualities and habits as they differ from the western-type model of a modern, «civilized» virtuous woman. The orientalist and anti-ottoman stereotypes seem to be activated in these descriptions, and the opposites of «progress vs. regression» or «civilisation vs. barbarity», attributed to West and East respectively, are read between the lines.

Kalliope Kechagia could not overlook the innovations that had already emerged in the «Orient» and the reception of European culture (fashion, education, knowledge of foreign languages, every day habits), by oriental women and families – mostly those of the upper social and administrative classes –, nor could she completely completely disregard the social, educational and intellectual activities within their communities. However when referring to them, she diminishes their significance noting that the innovations were met with little favour and were scant in numbers, while social activity was rather recent and to a certain extent owed its emergence to communication with the Greek/Orthodox community.

Though the Greeks were not included in the oriental ethnicities according to Kehagia's narration, the greatest part of the essay is devoted to them. In describing Greek women she is very much concerned with underlining Greekness in their «national character», as unvarying throughout the course of time, from antiquity to contemporary times. Christian Greek women of the Ottoman Empire are presented as resembling in character, virtue, patriotism and mores the women of Greek antiquity as portrayed by the Greek tragic poets. In this way she distinguishes Greek women from the oriental ethnicities described; Christian Greek women are not of the Orient as the western orientalist fantasy had suggested. Some oriental qualities, one might notice in the modes of their life, are attributed – according to her discourse – to the inevitable effect of «the Ottoman atmosphere which all dwellers in Orient breathe» (Kehagia, 1884, p. 467). The emphasis placed by Kehagia on the unvarying «national Greek character», reflects the dominant Greek historical narration of the continuity of the Greek nation throughout its history, which was first constructed by the historiography of Spyridon Zambelios (1815-1881) in 1852 and further elaborated by Konstantinos Paparigopoulos (1815-1891) and provided a historical grounding for the «Megali Idea» and the Greek political concerns of the time.

In regard to the intellectual and social condition of Greek women, Kalliope Kehagia compared them with the women of western European countries. So, according to her argument, they were almost equally well educated as women of many European countries, as elementary and intermediate education was provided within the Orthodox community and normal and high schools had been established in the very big cities, with the latter being equivalent to the corresponding European establishments; furthermore in regard to the education of the lower social classes, Christian Greek women were in much better condition than those in several European countries (in particular the Latin ones). They were also presented as socially active (participating in societies, establishing schools for girls, hospitals, insane asylums, vocational centers for training and providing work to poor girls and women), and to a certain extent working outside the house, though, as she states, work outside the house was not held in such honor, as in Europe, unless there were no other means of earning a decent life.

Throughout the comparison of Greek with European women a «national other» emerges, on whom her discourse is ambiguous. In her discourse European standards are those which render Greek women «superior» to the other ethnicities of the Orient; but at the same time some cultural characteristics (such as passion, sentimental love, proneness to romance and reverie) are presented as alien to the Greek ethos and as such constitute a «risk» to Greek women who are «sober in mind and heart and devoted to their family and home» (Kehagia, 1884, p. 470) and their national identity.

This emphasis on preserving «the true» Greek national identity, which according to Kehagia can be noticed more clearly in the Greek women of the Greek state (as they have left behind any oriental influence and have progressed very fast since the establishment of the Greek state) as well as on the understanding of «West» as a risk, is also reflected in all her educational works. In these works her nationalist views are expressed openly as they address the Orthodox/Greek community (the majority of her educational works were written during the time she was living in Istanbul) and particularly the girl students of the schools she run. Her rhetoric echoes a highly nationalistic tune: «Hellenism being thus and having this all-embracing character, as we stated, [...] is the star towards which we must steadfastly direct the gaze when educating the younger» (Kehagia, 1880a, pp. 21-22). In this frame the West is nearly demonized: it is presented either as a negative model for women's morals, public behavior, and dress, which would corrupt the Greek character or, in regard to education, as providing educational models, which lacked originality, since all pedagogical fundamentals and theories had already been proposed by the ancient Greeks, European theoreticians merely having rediscovered them.

The method by which knowledge is made accessible to the intellect of the child is defined precisely by Plato in his Republic [...] The Socratic method [...] defeats all dogmatism of idea or creed. I thus refer you today to *The Republic* [...] because the established method (of infant education), being foreign in principle and application, betokens mimicry of alien mores and customs, rather than self-determined national action (Kehagia, 1880b, pp. 256-257).

4. Re-conceptualizations of the Nation, East and West

Sappho Leontias's (1830-1900) discourse, contrary to Kalliope Kehagia, cannot be placed within the intense nationalist climate of the 1870s onwards, a period coinciding with the mature period of her literary output. She rather represents the secondary discourses on the issue with preserved characteristics from the cultural nationalism/ethnicism of the first period, re-conceptualized in the new historical conditions. Born and educated in a progressive enlightenment environment (she was born in Istanbul and educated by her father who was connected with the Greek enlightenment circle of his time); working for the most part of her professional life on the west coast of Asia Minor (Izmir) and on Aegean islands (Samos, Leros) with strong ideological influences from progressive Greek Enlighteners and cultural and economic relationship with the West; being in contact with Western philosophical, pedagogic and historical thought (as her authorial work reflects), she was more in the tradition of Samartzidou, given the different historical periods of their intense writing activity, than of Kehagia (Dalakoura, 2015).

In Leontias' discourse, references to the East or the Ottoman territories are rare. Her discourse is purely engaged with the Orthodox or the Greek Orthodox community, although without creating pictures of rivalry or enmity towards other ethnic communities. But she does not link the Greek Orthodox community with the Greek state, when discussing the subjects she is interested in (namely education, female education, and women's destiny and relation to public sphere) nor does she refer to Greece as a future homeland, as is the case with the dominant discourses during this period, exemplified by Kehagia. The homeland is considered and directly stated to be «this beautiful corner of the East» (Leontias, 1859, p. 23). This is attested not only by express references but also by Leontias' choices in the curricula she proposes and the justifications of her choices: proposing, for example, the courses in the education system of girls and on the base of her principle that every course offered to boys should also featured in the girls' curriculum, she included in it Turkish Language too, arguing that knowledge of Turkish is a useful professional qualification for the students of the Greek/Orthodox community schools irrespective of gender: it could help

boys as employees or officials, and girls could teach at Ottoman Muslim schools for girls (Leontias, 1857). It is also attested by the general appreciation of the eastern nations' history and culture reflected in her women's history project which embraced women of all Eastern nations' history (Leontias, 1877).

Of course, she makes frequent references – especially during the first period of her authorial activity, 1858-1870 –¹¹ to the Greek nation and to Orthodox Christianity, arguably an expression of the Greek nationalist narrative then being formed, if taken out of historical context. This singular nationalist discourse does not emanate from the political nationalism that was beginning to spread, but from the educational competitiveness between the educational institutions of the Greek Orthodox community, mainly of Smyrna (where the texts containing these references are found), and western institutions. The aim was thus to remove the girls of the community from these foreign institutions and bring them into the community schools. This explains the emphatic references to Greekness, defined on the basis of language and Orthodoxy, which is safeguarded, according to this narrative, in the Greek schools (Dalakoura, 2008, pp. 311-316).

In regard to the West, if we exclude the period 1858-1870 afore mentioned, during which western influences indirectly assume a negative connotation as they reduce «Greekness», it is viewed positively but critically. Western countries provide advanced theories and practices for education as well as patterns for women's social roles and life in the modern societies (they enable, e.g., women to go out to world in safety, contrary to the Greek education system which they leave ignorant at need of supervision in every step of their lives). So Greeks of her days should form their modern culture, based on their ancient cultural and intellectual heritage, and Western developments, which however should be selected and adapted to the specific characteristics and needs of the Greek community in Ottoman territory.

In Leontias' discourse the Ottoman Greeks are placed within the sphere of the Ottoman Empire as part of the East (Orient) which emerges to be identified with a broader geographical space than the Empire region. This part of the East is inhabited by different ethnic/cultural groups which she addresses with no disdain and not as inferior on the grounds of the «glory» of the Greek history or western progress. More generally her discourse is marked by a positive presentation of the other nations/ethnic groups, be they ancient, oriental or western nations. Although Leontias appears to have much in common with the discourse of the first half of the 19th century and the ideology of Ottomanism in regard to the approach and conceptualization of the East (Orient), and the placement of the Ottoman Greeks in a sense of belonging within it, she

11 For a more detailed presentation of Leontias' works, see Dalakoura, 2015.

perceives herself primarily as a member of the Orthodox/Greek community. Her references and intellectual, educational preoccupations concern the Orthodox/Greek community, reflecting the period of the constructed religious/ethnic communities (millets) as distinct ethnic/cultural units. Thus Greek national identity is clearly presented while Ottoman citizenship not disputed or discredited. This conceptualization of the Orient, together with Leontias' stance towards West and the adaptation of Western educational and living models, are also found during the same period in the discourse of women from other Ottoman ethnicities, who shared similar educational influences and activities, such as Anastasia Tosheva (1837-1919), outstandingly active in education, Elisaveta Karaminkona (1849-1920), known for her collective and charity work in the Bulgarian community (Alexandrova, 2012, pp. 53-89), and Fatma Aliye (1862-1936), one of the first female Muslim authors of books and articles (Frierson, 2005, pp. 149-150,154). This shared experience is seen in spite of the increasingly negative conceptualization of the «West» in the context of the nationalisms that emerged in the Ottoman territories, from the 1870s onwards among the Christian communities and from the end of the 19th century in the Muslim community (Dalakoura, 2015, pp. 316-317).

5. Nation-Building and Education: From Empire(s) to Nation-States

The transition from empires to nation-states is a chapter of a great interest in the history of Europe, and Southeastern Europe in particular. The nation-states in this part of Europe have emerged *from* and evolved *through* continuous upheaval. From revolutions and the wars against the Ottoman Empire to conflicts amongst the newly established nation-states, characterized by clashes between rival nationalistic ideologies, irredentism and vying for position between «East» and «West», countries in the region experienced more than a century (1815-1923) of strife in the struggle to expand their national living space and territorial boundaries.

In this framework the presentation of the course of constructions and reconstructions of collective national identities and images of the national «others» within the Ottoman Empire, which until the mid19th century occupied the greatest part of the territories of Southeast Europe (if not the entire region – depending on the period), has been chosen as a suitable introduction to the topic of this thematic issue.

The first national movements of the Southeast European ethnicities and the undertaking of the nation-building ideological procedures emerged in the territories of the Ottoman Empire. Even after the establishment of the first

nation-states in the region and until the final designation of their borders, large segments of their populations remained within the Ottoman borders. The ideological communication between the newly established states (which functioned ideologically as national «centers») with their «enslaved» populations fueled reconstructions of national collective identities, rearranged the relations with national «others» and reconfigured the corresponding images, reflecting the dominant political and ideological choices of the respective states, though not being always in clear concordance with them. The imperial context seems to have varied to some extent the processes of the conceptualization of the «nation/national», as well as the negotiations with the «Ottoman» and the East- West ideological placement, as illustrated by the case of the Ottoman Greeks presented above.

The contributors to this thematic issue address the nation-building processes and the role of education in these processes within the nation-states of Southeast Europe descended from Ottoman Empire. Education, as a crucial institution for the ideological construction of the «nation» and the main consolidation mechanism of the nation-state, is a mirror of the shifting politics of continuous constructions and reconstructions of national identities. This is nowhere more apparent than in Southeastern Europe, where Education reflects the policies of cultural and political re-orientation during the long-term transition to national statehood; negotiations with the Ottoman/Oriental past; reactions to the cultural imperialism of the Great Western Powers and the reception of the Western-type paradigm of progress; and the integration of these processes into new, constructed national identities. The nation-state cases explored in the papers included in the issue are Serbia (by Ana Kolaric and Maja Nikolova), Greece (by Charis Athanasiades and Theodore Zervas), Bulgaria (by Krassimira Daskalova and Milka Nikolova Terziyska-Stefanova), and Turkey (by Filiz Meseci-Giorgetti).

The papers focus on different aspects, processes, theories and practices of education, exploring their particular role in implementing political (re) orientations and national objectives: The formulation of national education systems and type of schools as a priority in national education policies (K. Daskalova), school curricula (Th. Zervas), textbooks (Ch. Athanasiades), role of pedagogues/educators (M. Nikolova), educational theories (M. Nikolova Terziyska-Stefanova), school rituals (F. Meseci-Giorgetti), gendered educational theories and nationalism (A. Kolaric). The studies cover the period from the 18th century to the first half of the 20th, and address their subject either diachronically or focusing on periods of transition and transformation of the corresponding nation states; given the long period of struggles and wars till the final set of their territorial boundaries, different time periods are presented in the studies

The research subjects presented and the analyses attempted, depict on the one hand common national strategies and practices among the states in regard to schooling and nation-building, but also differences associated with the course in history of each country, and on the other interesting specificities of the Southeast Europe as a whole. Some of the latter, being particularly significant for the history of Southeast Europe will be presented briefly below. At first, unlike other former colonial dominions in the 19th and 20th centuries, the countries that emerged from the breakup of the Ottoman Empire did not turn towards their former colonial ruler for development paradigms. Instead, all the countries turned to the West renouncing their Ottoman past. The «Ottoman» concept acquires a rigidly negative connotation, while retardations or hindrances in nation-states' development are attributed to its legacy.

The contradictory cultural attitude towards the West is also common. Although West was the paradigm for the development and formation of state structures, and the cultural/ideological space in which there was a will to belong, western culture and social behavior models were considered a risk to their national identity. The rhetoric of preserving «authentic» national identity is dominant in all countries of the region in the late 19th century. Worthy is to be noted here that the primary elements of the «authentic» national identity are language, religion (Orthodox Christian faith), and history. The second element and the emphasis on it seems to constitute another particularity of the region.

In all the countries education was accounted and used as a tool and key mechanism for construction, reconstruction and preservation of collective national identities in the course of their development. Such a strategy is by no means a particularity of the region; however in Southeast Europe the education systems were structured as highly centralized, with the state controlling (or aspiring to) knowledge and ideological edification. Thus curricula, textbooks, and teacher training were under state control, being designed, produced or approved and provided, respectively, by the state, unless institutional or financial conditions limited state control to a degree and/or for certain periods. The preparation and prospect of the most beneficial solution of the Eastern Question for each of the nation-states and in this context the explosion of competing nationalisms in the Balkans seem to have opted for high centralized and thus ideologically controlled education systems.

In conclusion, the papers in this thematic issue entitled «Education in Southeastern Europe: From Empires to Nation-States», exploring Education in different national contexts during the period of transition to national statehood, a historical period crucial for its legacy, make a significant contribution to the literature on the issue, discussing particular national cases and at the same time portraying the region as whole.

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