

Pride, prudence, and the fear of God: the loyalties of Alexander and Nicholas Mavrocordatos (1664–1730)

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In 1664 a medical dissertation with the usual kind of rather cumbersome Latin title was published in Bologna. The name of the author was given as Alexander Mavrocordatos Constantinopolitan.¹ Not a particularly apt appellation, one is inclined to think, for an author who, though born in Constantinople, considered the island of Chios as his native land, the land which bore his ‘πατρῶος οἶκος’ (paternal house).² Yet it seems that the young physician continued to prefer this appellation until the end of his eventful life. The books of his impressive library had bookplates which read: *Ex Bibliotheca Alex[andri] Maurocordati Constantinopolitani*.³ His son Nicholas seems to have had the same enduring affection for Constantinople. In a letter addressed to his tutor in Constantinople, written in 1712 while he was Prince of Moldavia, Nicholas lamented the fact that he was far away from his beloved fatherland: ‘Τῆς ἐπεράστου πατρίδος πόρρω κεχωρίσμεθα’.⁴ Moreover in his ‘novel’ *Φιλοθέου Πάρεργα* (*Leisure Works of Philotheos*) the narrator proudly informs his interlocutors that Constantinople is his fatherland: ‘πατρίς δὲ αὐτῆ ἡ πόλις’.⁵

Was Constantinople then the place they really belonged to, was that city (*the City*) the focus of their loyalties, and how wide was this focus? In what follows, an attempt will be made to explore the ‘national’ world of Alexander Mavrocordatos (1641–1709) and his son Nicholas (1680–1730), the earliest and most prominent members of a distinguished Phanariot dynasty. An investigation of their mentality, their uses of a number of concepts and words, such as fatherland (πατρίς), Hellenes (Ἕλληνας) ‘Latins’ and ‘γένος’, together with a discussion of their views of, and relations with, ‘Europe’, the Danubian principalities and their Ottoman masters, can offer some insight into the content, the form and the relevance of ‘national affiliations’ to the early Phanariot aristocracy from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries.⁶ Within that framework, apart from their major works, particular

attention will be paid to the correspondence of Alexander and Nicholas, a substantial corpus which throws much light on their beliefs and attitudes and has not yet received the attention it deserves.⁷

Although the spectacular careers and *œuvre* of the two Phanariots have attracted considerable (if uneven) interest, the issue of their national affiliations has only rarely been touched on.⁸ Usually, their 'ethnicity' is simply taken for granted, and further discussion thought superfluous. Greek scholars invariably call the Mavrocordatos family 'Greeks', in agreement with most Romanian authors, though some qualify that claim by pointing to the intermarriage of the family with the native Moldavian and Wallachian aristocracy.⁹ But if the 'Romanization' of the family can be determined by their genealogical tree, the analysis of the loyalties of the two Phanariots is a much more difficult task. The world within which they had to operate, although politically united under the Ottomans, was in cultural and 'national' terms neither unified nor homogeneous. So much so, that it seems more appropriate to refer to 'worlds within worlds'; and, as shall be seen, their attachment to each one of them varied considerably in intensity and degree.

A serviceable way to begin the mapping of the intellectual world of the Mavrocordatos family is perhaps to discuss its outer layers: their views of (and their relations with) the 'West'. The inverted commas are appropriate here, for in the seventeenth century that entity was far from being a crystallized geographical area. Rather, it was more of a concept which was shaped by two distinct but equally powerful features. The first was religious: the West was a synonym (mainly) for Catholicism. The second was secular: the West was viewed as the area where the advancement of learning and civilization reigned supreme. Although at that time the term 'enlightened Europe' (Φωτισμένη Εὐρώπη) had not yet gained the wide currency it would enjoy after the first half of the eighteenth century by the exponents of the Greek Enlightenment, Europe had already begun to be acknowledged as the cradle of civilization.¹⁰ As should be expected, the attitude of the Mavrocordatos family towards the West was influenced by both features.

To take religion first, both Alexander and Nicholas were firm opponents of the Catholic 'Latins'. Alexander was a devout Christian, and never tired of reminding his sons that 'the fear of God is the beginning of virtue, wisdom and happiness'.¹¹ However, despite his long stay in Italy for his studies, he remained strictly Orthodox in theological matters. This was no small achievement, for even competent Orthodox theologians who spent some time in the West started reading the eastern theological tradition through 'Latinized' or even 'Protestant' eyes.¹² Alexander resisted that trend, and although he

never really became a lay theologian, a species that flourished in the Orthodox East,¹³ he always defended the Orthodox tradition with vigour and determination. 'I am a zealot', he proudly declared to Cyril, Metropolitan of Kyzikos;¹⁴ in another instance, when Gerasimos, Patriarch of Alexandria (1688–1710), was accused of introducing some dangerous *καινοτομίας* (innovations), Alexander was quick to note that even the smallest and most innocent alteration to orthodox teaching and tradition was deplorable and should be fiercely condemned, for it would be enough to bring about the destruction of the entire eastern Church: when parts start falling down, he warned, the entire building collapses.¹⁵

Consequently, Alexander never concealed his deep anti-Catholic convictions: 'We hope that God will crush the heads of our opponents...', he wrote to Dositheos (1641–1707), Patriarch of Jerusalem, referring to French efforts to acquire the guardianship of the Holy Sepulchre.¹⁶ The question of the Holy Land was indeed an issue that concerned him deeply, and he used his considerable influence and contacts in the corridors of power in Constantinople to frustrate the French drive to strip the Patriarch of Jerusalem of his privileges concerning the Holy Sepulchre.¹⁷ His voluminous correspondence with the Patriarch Dositheos offers ample evidence both for his Orthodox credentials and for the vital help he afforded the Patriarchate in its struggle against the Catholics, thus rendering improbable the speculation that he himself may have been a crypto-Catholic.¹⁸ For Mavrocordatos, that particular aspect of Western tradition was totally unacceptable.

His anti-Catholic stance, however, did not lead him to a parochial and provincial understanding of the western world. Despite the use in his letters of such sweeping and unspecified generalisations as 'οἱ ἐνάντιοι' (the opponents), 'οἱ Δυτικοί' (the Westerners), and 'τὸ δυτικὸν μέρος' (the western part) to refer to the West, his knowledge of languages and European politics (as a high functionary of the Porte), as well as his understanding of their mentality and traditions (after having spent many years in Italy) were deeply nuanced. An interesting instance of his open and unprejudiced attitude towards the West is his attitude towards travel. When a friend of his decided to set off on extensive travels in Europe, he wrote to Alexander asking for advice: he gladly obliged and offered comprehensive and interesting tips. He advised him to avoid the sumptuous dinners that the frivolous Europeans like to offer their guests, and to have little patience with the small talk of the idle rich. Instead, armed with serious travel books, his friend should concentrate on more worthwhile pursuits. He should seriously study the remains of the past and the political system, and try to make sense of the mentality and the ways

of rulers and ruled. Moreover, he did not fail to urge his friend to pay due attention to the rural society of the European states, for even the study of the landscape was not devoid of intellectual benefit.¹⁹

What this letter reveals is an unequivocal acknowledgement of the intellectual profit that a journey to Europe had to offer to the intelligent and enquiring traveller. It also highlights the fact that Mavrocordatos did not consider Europe an alien and far-off region. It is a part of the world he knows well and a subject he feels comfortable commenting on. This view of Europe was not a personal quirk. It should be noted here that at the turn of the eighteenth century, and for a very small elite within the Orthodox East many of whom had studied in the West, the limits of 'Europe proper' were rather porous and fluctuating and could include the East as well. Chrysanthos Notaras (1663–1731), Dositheos' nephew, a clergyman of distinction who succeeded him as Patriarch of Jerusalem, published in 1716 a book entitled *Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὰ Γεωγραφικὰ καὶ Σφαιρικά*.²⁰ The book contains a description of Europe, as a place where the arts and sciences flourish, full as it is with 'energetic, brave, and intelligent' legislators, physicians, artists, philosophers, orators and generals, who 'civilised, educated, and conquered all the nations of the world'.²¹ What is more telling, however, is that, according to Notaras, Europe consisted not only of the Latin 'West' but of the Orthodox 'East' as well. Europe has three Emperors, we are informed: the Ottoman, the German and the 'Muscovite'. It has 'official' ('ἐπιστήμους': i.e. capital) cities, including Vienna, Paris and Constantinople. Last but not least, we are told about Europe's 'most high Bishops': the Pope, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Patriarch of Moscow.²² Notaras was in very close contact with the Mavrocordatos family (he spent much time in the Principalities when Nicholas was Prince, he may have tutored Alexander's sons, and he became Patriarch with his support) and it may safely be said that his ideas about Europe were not alien to his powerful patrons and friends. For them, Europe was not a place that was ring-fenced from the East. The European world could be so wide as to include their own.

Nicholas Mavrocordatos shared his father's view of the West. Although he never studied there, his education was formidably, diverse, and included a mastery of Latin, Italian and French.²³ Of course, devotion to Christianity and adherence to the teaching of the eastern Church remained the basis of his thought. Echoing his father, he advised his own son, Constantine, to be God-fearing, for fear of God was the 'foundation of happiness'.²⁴ However, he found himself well at ease with European intellectual developments: he corresponded with the Archbishop of Canterbury,²⁵ expressed an interest in

acquiring a copy of (the French translation of) Locke's *Traité de gouvernement civil* and in his *Φιλοθέου Παράργα* expressed his admiration for the European philosophers.²⁶ Indeed, it is in this work, written while he was held in captivity in Transylvania by the Austrians, that his intellectual world unfolds unrestricted by political or any other considerations. What is particularly interesting in this work, in connection with Nicholas' attitude towards Europe, is that although a great number of European nations and countries are mentioned and discussed in the novel, including Britain, Italy, Belgium, Poland, France and Spain, not only 'Europe' itself is not discussed but the word is not even mentioned. The narrator and his friends eagerly debate a number of concepts and ideas and discuss the relations of the 'West' with the 'East', but they do so while sharing the same fundamental terms of reference: the 'cosmopolitanism of the European republic of letters'.²⁷ Given this essential framework, there is no need for them to discuss the merits and demerits of 'Europe'. As their common ground, it is just taken for granted.²⁸

Yet a major problem remained. Europe might be the cradle of modern civilization, and the trouble of travel could well be worth the while of the educated traveller. But religion resurfaced as the major divide. Alexander Mavrocordatos did not mince his words: in a letter to Chrysanthos, who had just returned from his travels in the West, he seems glad to see his returning uncontaminated by Latin influences. He also notes that it gave him much pain to see that many who travelled in the West returned with their minds polluted and corrupted by Latin doctrines. If the travellers were to be so influenced during their sojourn in Europe, then it would be infinitely better if they had never set sail at all. Better for them to have suffered shipwreck upon departure, he argued, for moral shipwrecks they already were. He laments the damage to 'paternal traditions', for those who went to foreign parts learned only 'fake' ways, and polluted their minds (and the minds of others) with 'degenerate doctrines'.²⁹ It is evident that the European world was close to that of the Mavrocordatoi but that the two didn't exactly match. But it should be stressed here that, unlike the exponents of the late eighteenth century counter-enlightenment like Athanasios Parios and Michael Perdikaris, who unconditionally rejected the very essence of the 'West',³⁰ Mavrocordatos' approach was more nuanced, though no less polemical. Alexander condemned some European *mores*, but it was, it seems, mainly the religious scruple, rather than a sense of deep cultural separation, that accounted for his disenchantment with (parts of) European cultural heritage.

If Europe belonged to the outer layer of the world of our Phanariots, were Moldavia and Wallachia any closer to its centre? The connections between the

Danubian Principalities and the Mavrocordatos family were quite strong. To begin with, intermarriage between the family and Moldavian and Wallachian notables was the norm rather than the exception and started early on. Alexander's mother Roxandra was before marrying his father, the wife of Alexander Coconul, son of the Moldavian Prince Radu Mihnea. Alexander himself (who also wrote a historical account of the principalities) married Soultana Chrysoskoulaïos, whose Moldavian princely credentials were impeccable. Her mother Cassandra was the daughter of Alexandru Ilias, Prince of Moldavia but her ancestors could be traced back to the House of Petru Rareș, who ruled Moldavia in the early sixteenth century. Alexander's sons did not depart from that tradition. Skarlatos (Skarlatakes) Mavrocordatos married Ilinca Brîncoveanu, daughter of Constantin Brîncoveanu, Prince of Wallachia, to whom Alexander dedicated his work *Ta Moïsika* and whose dominion he coveted for his sons. Nicholas did not fare badly either. His first wife was Cassandra Cantacuzino, daughter of Dumitrașcu Cantacuzino, Prince of Moldavia. Apart from this impressive network, the family's connections with the Principalities were further strengthened when Nicholas became *Hospodar* of Moldavia (1709–10 and 1711–15) and Wallachia (1715–16 and 1719–30), thus starting an almost century-long tradition. Evidently then, by virtue of intermarriage and rulership, Alexander and especially Nicholas had a particularly close connection with the Principalities; but did it develop into a deeper attachment in the course of two generations?

As far as Alexander is concerned, it would appear that he never perceived Moldavia as anything more than another pie to have his finger in. Although his wife was half-Moldavian, Romanian was not one of the many languages he could manage in, and his close involvement in Romanian politics was due to purely personal reasons. For instance, in 1691 he helped to maintain Constantin Brîncoveanu in the rulership of Wallachia, only to abandon him after 1699 in order to put Nicholas at the helm. And this just two years after the marriage of his son Skarlatos to Brîncoveanu's daughter in 1697.³¹ An interesting glimpse into the true extent and nature of his connection with the principalities is afforded in the letters he wrote expressing his (probably sincere) grief after the death of his wife, Soultana. In both cases (indirectly and carefully) he alludes to her princely credentials and emphasizes that all who praised her noted her exceptionally blue-blooded status: they emphasised that she was born into the Bassaraba family, which gave the Wallachians ('Moesians') many rulers; she enjoyed indeed the benefits of a glorious and illustrious ancestry: '... γένος βασιλείων καὶ ... προγονικὴν ... λαμπρότητα'.³²

It may be said that what is hidden behind that seemingly innocent description of a beloved noblewoman is the careful building of a dynastic pride and prerogative over the Danubian principalities which proved to be a recurrent characteristic of the Mavrocordatos family in the years to come. Through his characterization of Sultana, Alexander establishes (and consolidates) the family's Moldavian princely credentials, which would then be passed on to his children. One quite extraordinary example will suffice to illustrate that point. In 1784 another Alexander Mavrocordatos (1742–1812), Nicholas's grandson, was Prince of Moldavia. At that time the Prince was addressed as 'Most Serene Highness'. The Austrian Consul in the Principalities, however, a merchant from Ragusa (Dubrovnik) by the name of Stefano Reicevich, declined to use this title in addressing him. The temperamental Prince, known also as *Delibey* (the mad lord) exploded and answered back: 'Se il Principe Kaunitz [i.e. the Austrian Chancellor Prince Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz] è Principe del Sacro Romano Impero io lo sono del Sacratissimo Impero Ottomano. ... Io sono il Padrone. Sono un Principe nato d' una famiglia che regna da 200 anni ...'.³³ This in 1784, less than eighty years from the day (in 1709) when a Mavrocordatos first became Prince of Moldavia.

The first part of this astonishing outburst, which reveals the extent of the family's identification with the Ottoman dynasty, will be discussed below and need not detain us at this point. The second, equally astonishing, part, however, demonstrates that over the span of three generations the Mavrocordatos dynastic pride, based precisely on our Alexander's wife's pedigree, had reached its apogee. It is significant that *Delibey* thought it beneath him to say that he was merely the son and grandson of Princes, for such a claim could only bring his 'dynasty' back as far as 1709. The remaining one hundred years or so were 'borrowed' as it were from Sultana's family. This dynastic line, first introduced by our Alexander by integrating the Moldavian family of Petru Rareș with his own, had forged a formidable ancestry which in the 1780s *Delibey* was only too happy to make use of. It is at this point that the real significance of the family's intermarriage strategy actually lies: these were dynastic marriages, by virtue of which Moldavia and Wallachia were viewed as hereditary 'fiefdoms', rightfully belonging to the Mavrocordatos family.³⁴

If our Alexander was the builder of a dynasty concerning the Danubian principalities, his son Nicholas was the first sitting tenant. Nicholas was appointed by the Ottomans, after Dimitrie Cantemir (Prince of Moldavia: 1710–11) fled to Russia and Constantin Brîncoveanu (Prince of Wallachia:

1688-1714) was executed, in order to ensure that the principalities would remain under firm Ottoman control. Significantly, the previous Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia were elected, at least in theory, by the local nobility and used the traditional titles for ‘ruler’ (*Domn*, or *Voievod*), whereas the Phanariots were appointed by their Ottoman masters, relegated to the status of a mere governor, and used the title of *Hospodar*. Again, there is no evidence that Nicholas felt a closer identification with the lands he was given to rule, and to which he was bound by blood, marriage, and politics. Called by Reicevich ‘the Nero of Wallachia’,³⁵ Nicholas knew no Romanian when he came to the Principalities, something that earned him the contempt of local chroniclers. Later on, however, he learned the language of his subjects. But not for any lofty reason. His knowledge of the local vernacular was useful because it enabled him to study the history of the country, thus improving his statesmanship; so he can indulge from time to time, not without pleasure, in the reading of the history of the rulers that preceded him, and learn something about the unpredictability of living with his unfortunate subjects.³⁶

For Nicholas, social and political unpredictability (*ἄστατον*), an ‘untameable’ character (*ἀτίθασον*) and a unique tendency for causing trouble and civil strife (*φιλοτάραχον*) were qualities the locals were never short of. In many letters he complained about this troublesome ‘ancient’ quality (*τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῶν Δακῶν ἦθος*), which rendered their management difficult and the life of their rulers miserable, as they had to face unrest and civil conflicts.³⁷ In the same vein, he advised his son Constantine to be careful in his dealings with the local nobility. The *Boyars* were a troublesome lot with many shortcomings, but the wise ruler should be prepared to tolerate their doings for the benefit of the maintenance of public order (*διὰ τὸ εἰρηνικόν*).³⁸ At the same time, it is certain that Nicholas was fully aware of the apprehension that the presence of so many Phanariots in the principalities stirred among the *Boyars* and the peasants. All available evidence suggests that they had few scruples in exploiting the resources of the land, for most Phanariots reigned for short periods, and given the huge bribes they had to pay in order to obtain office, they did everything they could to make a handsome and rapid profit: lucrative offices were sold to local notables at exorbitant prices, thus forcing them to intensify the traditional exploitation of the peasantry. As the chronicler Matthew of Myra had warned in the seventeenth century, the ‘Romans’ were treating the locals ‘like dogs’ (*ὡσὰν σκύλους τοὺς ἔχετε...*) and urged the ‘Roman aristocracy’ not to be too greedy and insatiable towards the Wallachians and the poor: ‘...ὧ ἄρχοντες Ῥωμαῖοι...τοὺς Βλάχους μὴ πειράζετε μὲ τὴν πλεονεξίαν/ μηδὲ νᾶ ἦστ’ ἀχόρταγοι ἔς τοὺς

ἐπτωχοὺς ἀπάνω'.³⁹ Although Nicholas was surrounded by a large entourage and did everything he could to alienate the local nobility, his son need not make the same mistake; he was advised therefore to try to win the support of the locals: 'You should have a small entourage, and few Phanariots. Do what you can to make the locals love you'. At the same time he should never be caught off guard, for the 'enemies never sleep'.⁴⁰ On the whole, Nicholas never felt that Wallachia and Moldavia were anything more than lucrative fiefdoms that his ultimate masters, the Ottomans, gave him to govern. True, he frequently lamented the state of 'poor Moldavia' (Δύστηνος Μολδαβία) and repeatedly assured Chrysanthos that he would rule as a benevolent 'father'. He did not; or at least this was the view of the 'quarrelsome locals', whom he detested and whose allegiance he never won.⁴¹

However, the struggle of the local nobility against the Phanariot princes had another important dimension, for it first brought in the element of the 'national' composition of their rulers. The *Boyars* frequently attacked their overlords for being 'Greeks' and 'foreigners' who exploited their land. As early as in 1690 a group of them complained to the Austrians about the then prince Brîncoveanu, but blamed for their problems 'foreigners, Greeks from Constantinople, who are, like their ancestors, real Turks: the Cantacuzinos'.⁴² Similar complaints were heard throughout the eighteenth century. Although descriptions of that sort should be treated with caution, not least because they reveal *Boyar* resentment at the usurpation of their power by the Phanariot element rather than the true 'national' affiliation of the latter, the question of their 'Hellenism' remained; the *Boyars* were not the only ones who called the Mavrocordatos family 'Greeks'. For Stephan Bergler, the translator of Nicholas Mavrokordatos' book *Περὶ Καθηκόντων Βίβλος* (published in 1722 in Leipzig) into Latin (as *Liber de Officiis*), Nicholas was nothing less than 'Gloria Graecorum'. Alexander received no less 'national' acclamations; according to the first editor of his letters, writing in 1804, he was a 'Greek', and an erudite man who excelled in politics: '...ἤρωσ ... Ἕλληνας ἄνδρας, φιλόμουσος, φιλόσοφος καὶ τὰ πολιτικὰ δεινός'.⁴³ However, the Mavrocordatos family themselves were much less clear about their own approach to terms so easily lavished upon them.

The only instance when the question of nationality was explicitly raised is to be found in the beginning of the *Φιλοθέου Πάρεργα*, where the narrator⁴⁴ is asked, among other things, about his nation (γενος). The answer is no less straightforward: 'γένος μὲν ἡμῖν τῶν ἄγαν Ἑλλήνων'.⁴⁵ Throughout *Φιλοθεος* the term 'Ἕλλην' and its derivatives is used to refer both to ancient and modern Greeks, although Nicholas normally uses the term 'Γραικός' for

modern Greeks. As the alert editor has already noticed, the author ‘a une conscience aiguë de son ascendance hellénique et l’ exprime en des termes singulièrement modernes’.⁴⁶ As the novel demonstrates Nicholas was acutely aware of the past glory of ancient ‘Greece’, with which the narrator openly (and proudly) identifies. ‘Hellas’ still bears the magnificent relics (‘λείψανα πολυτελείας’) of the past. Yet again, some problems remain. The application of ‘Ελλάς’ (which appears only once in the text) is very restrictive. For instance when the company encounter a Greek crypto-Christian from Smyrna, we are informed that ‘τὸ γένος Σμυρναῖος ἦν’. Although he was both a Christian (albeit a ‘secret’ one) and apparently a Greek-speaker, the narrator does not grant him admission to the ‘γένος τῶν Ἑλλήνων’. Moreover, and more confusingly, ‘Ελλάς’ has no territorial basis for the narrator says, as we have already seen, that his ‘πατρίδα’ (fatherland) is Constantinople. Be that as it may, the narrator clearly emerges primarily as “Ἕλληνα” and not as a member of the ‘γένος τῶν χριστιανῶν’. This is in line with the whole setting of Φιλόθεος. The community of believers is now broken up. The text is full of ‘national’ communities, which exist separately from their respective religions. We do not encounter non-national terms of the sort that Alexander Mavrocordatos used in his own letters; instead of ‘Latins’, for example, we see Frenchmen, Britons, and Italians. Within that context it is not difficult for our narrator to present himself as “Ἕλληνα”, instead of using the more general term ‘Christian’.

However, a different pattern emerges if we turn to other written testimony. In his voluminous correspondence with Chrysanthos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Nicholas is not far from the familiar traditions of the eighteenth century. What we encounter in his letters is a Christian ruler, whose ‘Greekness’ is diluted by (and is inextricable from) his Christian faith. Writing in 1715 he declares his firm belief that ‘divine providence’ will again help the ‘Orthodox nation’: ‘...ἡ θεία πρόνοια δὲν θέλει λυπήσῃ τὸ ὀρθόδοξον γένος’.⁴⁷ The community of believers is brought to the fore again. So good news about the health of Chrysanthos will bring joy to everyone who belongs to ‘the people who bear the name of Christ’ (χριστῶνυμο πλήρωμα).⁴⁸ Another interesting example is his approach to the schools of which he was patron in the principalities for the teaching of Greek, ‘Slavonic’, and ‘Moldavian’. Far from making any connection between those languages and the ethnic groups which speak them, he thanks Chrysanthos for his help in promoting the virtuous progress of the ‘local Christians’.⁴⁹ It should be noted here that Nicholas was not the only one to adopt such an attitude towards schools teaching Greek. Chrysanthos sent a letter to the notables in Kastoria, urging them to support the local school. Its purpose was to ‘educate the children of the Christians’.⁵⁰

If a person who is taught Greek is called not 'Greek' but 'Christian', then it follows that 'Greece' itself can be used as a synonym for Christendom. Alexander Mavrocordatos did exactly that when he learnt from his brother that his beloved Chios had fallen to the Venetians. After describing the island as the pure relic of Greece, and the shelter of Orthodox Christianity: ('Χίος τὸ ἀμιγῆς καὶ ἀνόθευτον λείψανον τῆς πάσης Ἑλλάδος, Χίος τὸ ἄσυλον τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου θρησκείας'), he goes on to lament the miserable fate awaiting the island's Christians (χριστῶνυμ[οι]), in the hands of conquerors who claim to be (at the same time) 'φιλόχριστοι καὶ φιλέλληνες'. National distinctions are indeed absent from the letter. For him, the short-lived capture of Chios (September 1694–February 1695) is not a 'national' disaster: it is a personal and religious trauma. What the author sees is not 'Greeks' enslaved to Venetians (to be 'liberated' later on by the Ottomans?), but only his fellow 'Christians killed by those who boast of protecting Christ'.⁵¹ In writing to Gerasimos, Patriarch of Alexandria, he refers to the 'multitude of Christian peoples' ('πλήθος χριστῶνύμων λαῶν'), although he is perfectly capable of naming the peoples who comprise the flock of the Patriarch.⁵² On the other hand, many references to 'Ἕλληνες' can be found scattered throughout Alexander's work and correspondence. But the context within which they are mentioned remains predominantly Christian. His *Ἰουδαϊκά*, for instance, is written for the benefit of his τρισάθλιον γένος, which is also called 'παῖδες Ἑλλήνων'. Yet, the work is in the familiar Byzantine mould of biblical history, and has nothing to do with 'Ἕλλάς' and 'Ἕλληνας'.⁵³ Although the author speaks of 'γένος Ἑλλήνων' what he actually had in mind was the 'γένος τῶν Χριστιανῶν', which could comfortably share its biblical past with the rest of the Balkan Christians.

Even if the context of the words 'Ἕλλάς' and 'Ἕλληνας' has clearly Christian overtones, the use of such words by the Mavrocordatoi certainly invites some comparison with the intellectual climate at the end of the Byzantine Empire, when the term 'Hellene' was brought to the surface, gradually replacing the customary 'Ρωμαῖος', to denote the Byzantine Greek. But are we to conclude that the clock of the intellectual history of the Greek east, which had stopped after 1453 when 'Ρωμαῖος' again upstaged 'Hellene', started to tick anew in the late seventeenth century?⁵⁴ Although definitive answers to such questions are liable to simplify, it can be said that progress had been made since 1453, but not much. The major similarity between the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries and the Mavrocordatoi is certainly the attitude to the classical past. Both Alexander and Nicholas in many cases demonstrated a highly developed awareness of their connection with 'Greek'-classical

antiquity. Nicholas, as has already been noted, expressed those affinities in *Φιλόθεος* and spoke of his ‘Hellenism’ in quite modern terms. We should remember, however, that *Φιλόθεος* remained unpublished for a long time and in many respects it is indeed a Πάρεργον, a work of leisure, which aired feelings and ideas that are totally absent from Nicholas’ more ‘public’ works like the *Περὶ Καθηκόντων Βίβλος*, his correspondence, and the *Νουθεσίαι* to his son Constantine. The *Περὶ Καθηκόντων*, for example, owes as much to the classics as to *Wisdom of Sirach/Ecclesiasticus*, a book strongly recommended by his father as ‘a treasure of good lessons’.⁵⁵ In the same vein, the *Νουθεσίαι*, clearly a κάτοπτρον (‘mirror’) for the Christian prince, is full of Christian, not ‘Hellenic’, teaching. This is not to imply that *Φιλόθεος* should be rejected as a reliable guide to Nicholas’ sentiments. Far from it. It only points to the fact that Nicholas’ choice concerning which work to publish and which to throw into oblivion, might not have been entirely coincidental.

In one recorded case, Alexander Mavrocordatos also may have spoken of the ‘Greek nation’ in modern terms. In 1666 he sent a letter, apparently to Leo Allatius, a distinguished Greek scholar living in Italy, referring to *natione greca* which was once illustrious but now suffers under the long period of servitude. He then asks Allatius to give some of his own books to a library in Constantinople, and to help enlighten *nostra natione*. The crucial fact that Allatius was Roman Catholic may be taken to mean that there were other bonds that ensured that the Orthodox Alexander and the eminent Catholic scholar were members of the same *natione*. If this is so, as Kitromilides has argued, then the term *natione greca* should be translated into ‘Greek nation’ in a modern sense.⁵⁶ This is a plausible argument, although it could be pointed out that Allatius (a fellow Chiot) was asked to contribute books to a Constantinopolitan library, a fervently anti-Catholic centre. Given the circumstances of the letter it would have been at least tactless (not to say utterly counter-productive) if Alexander played the religious card and did not try to convey the impression of a common cause. Always a supreme tactician, Alexander had perfected the fine art of tailoring his language according his addressee of the moment. He understood all too well that the only way of effecting a sense of ‘belonging’ with Allatius would be to emphasise the pitiful state of the *natione greca*, which in this case he (rightly) decided to give a strictly secular meaning.

Even more important was the role that Christianity played in the context of the relations of the Mavrocordatos family with their Ottoman masters. The loyalty of the family to the Ottomans was remarkable and enduring. Reference

has already been made to Alexander Mavrocordatos, the *Delibey*, who in the 1780s boasted of being ‘Prince of the very Holy Ottoman Empire’. That was not his only pro-Ottoman statement. On being approached by the Russians he replied that it is better to be regarded ‘as a friendly Turk, which does not detract from my quality as a Christian, but on the contrary my Christian faith even orders me to be faithful to my Emperor’.⁵⁷ Our Alexander and Nicholas also served the Ottomans loyally, although they refrained from expressing that loyalty in such outspoken terms. Of course, the prime reason for the loyalty they showed to the Ottomans was the lucrative niche they had carved out, as high functionaries in the Porte’s administration, a position which afforded them power, prestige and more than a comfortable living. However, the view that the ‘Christian nation’ was best protected if placed under the ‘mighty Empire’ of the Ottomans, because they thus enjoyed ‘protection and comfort’, was not insignificant in that respect: “Ο ἅγιος θεὸς νὰ εὐδοκήσῃ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ὠφέλιμον τῆς κραταιᾶς βασιλείας, ὁποῦ νὰ ἔχουν καὶ οἱ χριστιανοὶ τὸ σκέπος καὶ ἄνεσιν.” Thus the Grand Dragoman Ioannes Mavrocordatos, Nicholas’ brother, in 1716.⁵⁸ Nicholas himself had reached the same conclusions. In 1728 he informed Chrysanthos of the latest Ottoman victories against the Arabs. He was in no doubt that the Patriarch would rejoice at the news, not least because the Arab menace was now extinguished and therefore Jerusalem and the Patriarchate would again expect peace, protection and tranquillity.⁵⁹ Clearly Nicholas sees himself as part of the Ottoman bureaucracy which is united in its defence of the Holy Land. Full of confidence in his connections, he assures Chrysanthos that, if need be, letters on his behalf could be promptly dispatched to senior Ottoman officials, including the *Şeyhülislam*, for the protection of the Orthodox interests. In short, he remarks, ‘we and our masters are ready’ (‘καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντές μας εἴμεσθιν ὅλως διόλου ἐτοιμότετοι ...’). All the Patriarch had to do was to give the signal and the entire Ottoman establishment (to which, significantly, Nicholas felt that he belonged) would be ready to come to the rescue.⁶⁰ With those remarks Nicholas made a spectacular step backwards in time. Shortly before the fall of Constantinople, the Grand Duke Lucas Notaras had famously said that he would prefer the Ottoman turban to the Latin tiara.⁶¹ Three hundred years later, Nicholas Mavrocordatos could see no reason to find the turban all that uncomfortable.

If the turban could stand next to (and protect) the Cross, how much room was there left for ‘Hellenism’? Precious little, thought Dionysios Thereianos, the nineteenth century biographer of Adamantios Korais, the father of modern Greek nationalism, who coined the word ‘Γραικοτούρκος’ (‘Greek-Turk’)

to describe Alexander.⁶² Given that it attempts to describe a complicated reality, the term is both correct and inaccurate. In the realm of politics, Thereianos is correct. The Mavrocordatoi did not see their political future outside the Ottoman domain, and in *Φιλόθεος* Nicholas duly praised his patron, Sultan Ahmed III, the Sultan of the aptly named ‘Tulip Period’.⁶³ In fact the Phanariots were given the rulership of the Danubian principalities for exactly that reason: to keep the place under a tighter grip, because the local nobility could not be trusted any longer. However, if *Γραικοτοῦρκος* implies any closer identification with the Ottomans, then the term is false. Alexander was perfectly aware that he is serving a master who was *‘ἄλλόφυλος* (‘of another race’), unpredictable and ruthless. Consequently his term in office was always pregnant with danger. Positions of power in the Ottoman administration, he thought, were very dangerous for someone whose masters are ‘of another race’. Consequently, the holder of such posts was in need of good wishes, not congratulations, he reflected to a friend (a sycophant?) who rushed to congratulate him, shortly before his elevation to the post of ‘of the secrets’, *Muharrem-i-esrar*. (Alexander himself rendered this title in Greek as: *ἕξ ἀπορρήτων*).⁶⁴

In an interesting shift of focus, Alexander tried to argue that it was not only the fact that he was *‘ἄλλογενής* (i.e. of another race), but also his religion that accounted for the dangers he faced. Describing ‘the baseness of court life’ (τοῦ ἀύλικου βίου τῆν ἀθλιότητα) he remarked that his position had always been precarious as his Ottoman masters, being *inter alia* ‘unjust’ (ἄδικοι), ‘merciless’ (ἀνηλεεῖς), and ‘arrogant’ (ὑπερόπτα), were extremely unpredictable. Significantly, that was further aggravated by their intrinsic hatred of Christianity. They drew a contempt for Orthodoxy with ‘their mothers’ milk’: *ἄμα τῷ μητρῷ γάλακτι σπᾶσαντες*. Thus their Christian servant was liable at any time to face their wrath and violence.⁶⁵ Indeed, Alexander knew all too well how easy was for the Ottoman wind to change direction: he had his share of misfortune, for example, when he was imprisoned (in 1684) following the ill-fated Ottoman siege of Vienna. However, his statement is obviously an exaggeration. Unpredictability and arbitrary decisions affected all functionaries in the (still multi-ethnic) Ottoman administration, and not only Christians. Moreover those remarks are probably coloured by short-term grievances, not by long-term prospects. The tenor of the letter is the frustration of a loyal but bewildered civil servant in a corrupt administration, not least because, despite the attacks on his masters, he never questions his determination to continue serving them. After all, in his time the Ottoman Empire, just like the Byzantine Empire to which, in fact, the Ottomans

felt that they were successors, was not based on ‘ethnicity’. That said, the letter is testimony to Alexander’s own perception of his precarious state as a Christian serving a government ‘of another religion and race’.

The challenge to survive (and, indeed, thrive on) the ‘misery’ and adversities of ‘court life’ did not find Alexander wanting. He can be credited with hammering out the Phanariot political theory which he laid out in his *Φροντίσματα* and correspondence for the benefit of his sons. It can be summarized in one word: φρόνησις; (roughly: ‘caution’) or in one line: Ποιείτε δὲ οὐχ ὅσα βούλεσθε, οὐδ’ ὅσα δύνασθε ἀλλ’ ὅσα ξυμφέρει (do not what you want to, or what you can, but what is expedient).⁶⁶ ‘Prudence’ was a virtue much praised by Alexander; a sound principle which would guide his sons in the tortuous navigation of the turbulent sea of Ottoman politics, for which he was preparing them. Nicholas, in his own *κάτοπτρα*, which are very much in the Byzantine tradition of the ‘mirror for princes’, elaborated further his father’s teaching. His *Νουθεσίαι* and *Ἐγχειρίδιον*, consisting of hundreds of short chapters, many of which are one-liners, and addressed to his son Constantine (1711–69), are clearly textbooks for the Ottoman Christian Prince, a rather curious hybrid species of which Nicholas was the first and perhaps finest exemplar.

In Nicholas’ ‘mirrors’ the question of loyalty receives brief but unequivocal treatment. The ruler has three masters: God, the Ottomans, and his father, in that order. To all of them he owes unquestioned submission, which is the basis of ordered government: ‘without submission everything is dead’ (‘Χωρὶς τὴν ὑποταγὴν ὅλα εἶναι νεκρά’).⁶⁷ Caution is considered one of the prime virtues. The ruler should not be bold and adventurous, on the contrary he should avoid novelties and cherish tradition and the beaten track: ‘Νὰ λείπης ἀπὸ νεωτερισμούς, νὰ βαδίζης τὴν πεπατημένην ὁδόν’.

On the whole, Nicholas’s advice is a mixture of noble and exalted qualities (firmness, abstention from conspicuous display of wealth and revulsion against flattery and immorality) tempered with cunning temporizing and duplicity: pieces of advice like: ‘Kiss the hand you cannot cut off’, are complemented by an appreciation of the importance of silence, and the need to pretend that you know nothing. Trust is also viewed as a danger, not a virtue: ‘he who plants a tree gets its fruit. Plant a man and he will uproot you’.⁶⁸ Appropriate advice indeed, for a career in the Ottoman administration.

Within this framework, Nicholas thought it necessary to insert some references to ‘race’ (φύλον) between his political tips. These are brief, unconnected with the rest of the text, and rather oblique: ‘Ὁ πλήρης ἀγάπης πρὸς τε θεὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸ ὁμόφυλον, ἐκεῖνος πάντως μεγαλοουργός’

and ‘Ἡ πρὸς τὸ ὁμόφυλον ἀγάπη ἀφ’ ἐστίας ἄρχεται’.⁶⁹ As far as the first is concerned, and if we assume that ὁμόφυλον means ‘our race’, then it should be noticed that again we have religion and ‘race’ together. Whenever Nicholas speaks of religion he does not mention race. In the one instance that he wanted to refer to ‘race’, he felt obliged not to leave the term unqualified. However, it is difficult to see what Nicholas really means here. Certainly the sort of ‘love’ he preached for his race should not be taken literally, for the same author in his *Νουθεσίαι* advised his son to keep the greedy Phanariots (whom he must have considered as being ‘of the same race’) out of his entourage. The second reference, however, may throw some more light on the matter. He speaks of the family (ἐστία: hearth) which should definitely be a focus of loyalty – and for a Mavrocordatos, it certainly was. This reference could lead to the assumption that by ὁμόφυλον what he actually meant was ‘family’, for there was an occasion when he used that term to refer to his family and not to the ‘race’. In his funerary inscription, of which more will be said below, it was stated that Nicholas was a descendant of the ‘Noble family of the Skarlatos’ (...τὸ φῦλον εὐκλεεῶς ἐκ Σκαρλάτων).⁷⁰ Such an interpretation of the word φῦλον put things in their proper perspective: Nicholas praised devotion to the family, and not to any abstract, ‘Hellenic’ or other, ‘race’.

If political handbooks are useful in deciphering notoriously elusive issues such as identity, another sort of text can be even more illuminating. For men with a highly developed sense of time, death gives an opportunity for a final reckoning. The epitaphs of the Mavrocordatos family afforded such an opportunity. Alexander’s epitaph, clearly the work of a man full of himself, is the way he wished to be remembered: an omnipotent statesman who reconciled many powers, father of the treaty of Karlowitz, senior functionary (‘of the secrets’) of the mighty Ottoman Empire, and distinguished servant of one of that Empire’s departments, the Patriarchate.⁷¹ All of these were correct, albeit with varying degrees of accuracy. However, this rather crowded inscription did not have room for even the remotest hint of ‘Hellenism’. But there was a reference to the Great Church of Constantinople. Given that Alexander would not find a sharp distinction between the two, that reference was perhaps more than enough.

The inscription which graced Nicholas’ tomb was much longer, and at the same time much less full. There were no references to political achievements, to the Church of Constantinople, or to his Ottoman connections. Nor there were, as should be expected, any hints at ‘Hellenism’. Nicholas was only called ‘he whom the Muses have crowned with laurels of glory’. It was stressed however that the tomb covers the Prince of Moldavia and Wallachia,

the son of Alexander 'of the Secrets'. It was also stated that his death left his wife, children and the 'throng of his relations' stricken with deep sorrow.⁷³ The last phrase was a vivid reminder of the fact that, although the first Phanariot prince of Wallachia was dead, he had left a dynasty which would carry on. And so they did. The dominant theme in this inscription is dynastic pride and ambition: loyalty belongs to the family and to the (hereditary) right to the throne of the Danubian principalities, not to 'race'. It is here that the ultimate loyalty of the Mavrocordatou actually lies.

There is no doubt that it would be more than simplistic to ascribe just one focus of loyalty to people who stood at the cross-roads of four cultures (Moldavo-Wallachian, Ottoman, Christian/Hellenic, and 'European'), at least three tongues (Romanian, Turkish and Greek) and two cultural tendencies (outright rejection, or qualified acceptance, of the 'West'). What appears to be more appropriate is to speak of a Phanariot *palimpsest* with identities and loyalties forming, layer upon layer, a quite elusive amalgam, with a shifting focus. Yet again, not all layers were of the same strength. Christianity surely emerges as a powerful point of reference. It was a creed sincerely believed in by the Mavrocordatou, but it was never allowed to stand in the way of the relations between the family and the Ottoman Porte. The latter was their only master, and the focus of their political allegiance. Of course the Mavrocordatou were acutely aware of the differences between them and their overlords, and in many cases they resented their position within the Ottoman administration. But these were merely complaints of an aggrieved and (occasionally) frustrated functionary, not an 'ethnic' difference, despite the efforts of Alexander to disguise them as such. 'Hellenism' never became an actual focus of loyalty, not least because there were no political strings attached to it. Christianity covered their spiritual needs and the Ottoman administration their temporal welfare. They found it easy to combine both of them, for the Ottoman Empire was perceived as a benevolent protector of Christianity. So 'Hellenism' could be relegated to the sphere of literature and *Φιλόθεος*.

This was not destined to last. A closer look at the funerary inscriptions of the Mavrocordatou family, over the span of more than a hundred years, is quite telling in that respect, for it affords a rare glimpse into the evolution of the theme of 'Hellenism'. It should be said at this juncture that it is not always easy to determine who wrote those inscriptions, and whether their content was essentially decided *by* them or *for* them. This important distinction, however, does not detract very much from their value or validity as markers of perceptions and identity at a given time, especially when the epitaphs are in accordance with the overall conduct of the person for whom they were written.

Thus, we encounter a reference to ‘Hellas’ in those inscriptions in 1819, two years before the Greek revolution, when another Alexander Mavrocordatos, the aptly named *Firari* (Fugitive) was openly called ‘Ἕλληνα τὸ γένος’. Half a century later the project of the incorporation of the Mavrocordatos family into the Greek nation seemed to be complete and irreversible: yet another Alexander Mavrocordatos (d. 1865), who had been a leader of the insurgent Greeks and a Prime Minister, was mourned, according to one of his inscriptions, by ‘the whole of Hellas’ (πενθεῖ μιν Ἕλλάς πᾶσα κάποδύρεται).⁷³ Although it is still debatable what ‘Hellas’ actually meant to his peasant compatriots,⁷⁴ or indeed to other nineteenth century Phanariots,⁷⁵ Alexander’s epitaph wanted to make sure that his devotion to her was beyond doubt.

But we had to look to the nineteenth century to encounter such a public attachment (and involvement) of the family to the cause of modern ‘Hellas’. Back in the eighteenth century, as far as the realm of politics was concerned, Alexander and Nicholas Mavrocordatos were essentially, although not exclusively, Christian Ottomans, and when in need of a territorial focus they always looked to Constantinople, their true, and only, fatherland. They were indeed two proud, prudent and God-fearing Constantinopolitans.

NOTES

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1 *Pneumaticum instrumentum circulandi sanguinis sive de motu et usu pulmonum dissertatio philosophico-medica auctore Alexandro Maurocordato Constantinopolitano* (Bologna 1664).

2 It is perhaps worth noting that Paisios, Metropolitan of Didymoteichon, in his introduction to Mavrocordatos’ *Φροντισματα* (Meditations) in 1805 thought it appropriate to modify that appellation, and called the author ‘ὁ Χίος’ (The Chiot) instead of Constantinopolitan. K. Amantos, ‘Ἀλέξανδρος Μαυροκορδάτος ὁ Ἐξ Ἀπορρήτων’, *Ἑλληνικά* 5 (1932) 339.

3 C. Dima-Drăgan, ‘La Bibliophilie des Mavrocordato’, in the Proceedings of the conference *L’Époque Phanariote* (Thessaloniki 1974) 211. Cf. P. Mansel, *Constantinople: City of World Desire, 1453–1924* (London 1997) 157.

4 Émile Legrand, *Bibliothèque Grecque Vulgaire*, Vol. iv, *Epistolaire Grec* (Paris 1888).

5 N. Mavrocordatos, *Φιλοθέου Πάρεργα*, ed. and tr. J. Bouchard (Athens-Montreal 1989) 78. Whether we may call that work a ‘novel’ remains a matter of opinion. Cf. K. Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* (Athens 1983 edition) 265; M. Vitti, ‘Ιστορία τῆς Νεοελληνικῆς Λογοτεχνίας’ (repr. Athens 1998) 133. See also the Introduction by Bouchard, *Πάρεργα*, 50–6.

6 For the Phanariots see K.Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* (Athens 1998) 7–10, and ‘Ἑλληνικός Ρωμαντισμός’ (Athens 1982) 221–41; N. Iorga, *Byzance Après Byzance* (Bucharest 1935); Conference: *L’Époque phanariote* (n.5); P. M. Kitromilides, *The Enlightenment as Social Criticism. Iosipos Moisiodax and Greek Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton 1992) 83–94; C. Mango, ‘The Phanariots and the Byzantine Tradition’, in the collection of articles: *Byzantium and its Image* (London 1984) 41–66; S. Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity* (repr. Cambridge

1995) 360–84; R. Florescu, ‘The Fanariot Regime in the Danubian Principalities’, *Balkan Studies* 9 (1968) 301–18; M. de Kogalnitchan, *Histoire de la Valachie, de la Moldavie et des Valaques Transdanubiens*, ed. Andrei Otetea (Bucharest 1946 edition), originally published in 1837; W. Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (London 1820); Le Comte d’Hauterive, *Memoire Sur l’Etat Ancien et Actuel de la Moldavie*. Parallel French and Romanian text (Bucharest 1902); J. L. Carra, *Histoire de la Moldavie et de la Valachie* (Neuchatel 1781); M.P. Zallony, *Essai sur les Fanariotes* (Marseille 1824).

7 I have used the collection of Alexander’s letters ed. T. Livadas, ‘Αλεξάνδρου Μαυροκορδάτου τοῦ Ἐξ Ἀπορρήτων Ἐπιστολαὶ ρ’ (Trieste 1879) [hereafter: Livadas], and the two volumes by É. Legrand, *Bibliothèque Grecque Vulgaire*, Vol. iv, *Epistolaire Grec*, (Paris 1888) [hereafter: Legrand, 4], and Vol. 7, *Recueil de Documents Grecs Concernant les Relations du Patriarcat de Jérusalem avec la Roumanie (1569-1728)* (Paris 1903) [hereafter: Legrand, 7]. For an account of the philological problems of Alexander Mavrocordatos’ letters see: D.G. Apostolopoulos, ‘Ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐπιστολογραφία τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου Μαυροκορδάτου τοῦ Ἐξ Ἀπορρήτων: Ἡ ὀργάνωση μιᾶς ἔρευνας’, *Ὁ Ἐρανιστής* 16 (1980) 151–89.

8 See: N. Camariano, *Alexandre Mavrocordato Le Grand Dragoman: Son Activité Diplomatique, 1673–1709* (Thessaloniki 1970); K. Amantos, *Μαυροκορδάτος*, 335–50; Z. Tsirpanlis, ‘Ἀλέξανδρος Μαυροκορδάτος ὁ Ἐξ Ἀπορρήτων. Νέα Στοιχεῖα καὶ νέες Ἀπόψεις’, *Δωδώνη* 4 (1975) 273–91; Émile Legrand, *Généalogie des Maurocordato de Constantinople rédigée d’après des documents inédits* (Paris 1900); K.Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικὸς Διαφωτισμὸς*, 263–82; A.A.C. Stourdza, *L’Europe Orientale et le rôle historique des Maurocordato 1660–1830* (Paris 1913); J. Bouchard’s many articles on Nicholas Mavrocordatos include: ‘Les relations épistolaires de Nicolas Mavrocordatos avec Jean Le Clerc et William Wake’, *Ὁ Ἐρανιστής* 11 (1974) 67–92, ‘Nicolas Mavrocordatos et l’ époque des tulipes’, *Ὁ Ἐρανιστής* 17 (1981) 120–9, and: ‘Nicolas Mavrocordatos et l’ aube des lumières’, in: *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 20 (1982) 237–246; Börje Knös, *L’Histoire de la Littérature Neo-Grecque* (Stockholm 1962) 467–72; P.M. Kitromilides, *Νεοελληνικὸς Διαφωτισμὸς. Οἱ πολιτικὲς καὶ κοινωνικὲς ἰδέες* (Athens 1996) 33–42; A. Angelou, *Πλάτωνος τύχαι. Ἡ λόγια παράδοση στὴν Τουρκοκρατία* (repr. Athens 1985) 63–81; G.P. Henderson, *The Revival of Greek Thought, 1620–1830* (Edinburgh and London 1971) 20–7; Mansel, *Constantinople*, 133–63. It should be noted here that both Alexander and Nicholas Mavrocordatos still await scholarly book-length biographies that would make full use of the relevant Greek, Ottoman and Romanian material.

9 Cf. V. Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History* (Columbus, Ohio 1991) 74.

10 For the Φωτισμένη Εὐρώπη, see Dimaras, *Ἱστορικὰ Φροντίσματα* (Athens 1992) 115–29.

11 Livadas, 15.

12 For an analysis of that trend see T. Ware, *Eustratios Argenti. A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (Oxford 1964) 5–16.

13 However, he tried his hand at theology, writing a slim volume entitled *Solutions to Theological Issues*, which remained unpublished.

14 Livadas, 123.

15 Ἐὼν γὰρ μερῶν τοῦ οἰκοδομήματος παραρρυνέντων, καὶ τὸ ὅλον συναπορρεῖ καὶ διαπίπτει’. Livadas, 113.

16 Livadas, 171.

17 For details see N. Camariano, *Alexandre Mavrocordato*, 57–82. Cf also Tsirpanlis, *Μαυροκορδάτος*, 286–91.

18 Cf. Runciman, *The Great Church*, 369.

19 Ἔργον γὰρ περιηγητοῦ τὰ ἐν ἐκάστη πόλει μνήμης ἄξια σημειοῦν, τὰ τῆς παλαιότητος λείψανα περιέρχων ἀνιχνεύειν, τὴν κατάστασην τῶν ἀρχόντων, τὰ ἦθη τῶν ἀρχομένων, τὸν τρόπον τῆς διοικήσεως, φιλομαθῶς ἀνερευνᾶν. [For it is the task of the traveller to note whatever is worth remembering in every city, to explore with an enquiring mind the relics of the past, (and) to examine with love for knowledge the condition of the rulers, the mores of the ruled, and the system of government.] Livadas, 84–7.

- 20 For Chrysanthos see: B. Knös, *L'Histoire de la Littérature Néo-Grecque* 458–9.
- 21 See extracts of his work in: *Βασική Βιβλιοθήκη*, Vol. 5, ed. G. Kournoutos (Athens 1953) 119.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 120.
- 23 Alexander Mavrocordatos recorded with satisfaction that ‘when I saw your Latin letters my heart jumped’, Livadas, 22. To these languages, we should add Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. Bouchard, *Φιλοθεου Πάρεργα*, 18.
- 24 See his *Νουθεσίαι* in: E. de Hurmuzaki, *Documente Privitoare La Istoria Românilor*, Vol. xiii, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (Bucharest 1909) 461.
- 25 Bouchard, ‘Les relations épistolaires de Nicolas Mavrocordatos avec Jean Le Clerc et William Wake’, *‘Ο Έρανιστής* 11 (1974) 67–92.
- 26 For the context of this first expression of interest in Locke’s work see: P.M. Kitromilides, ‘John Locke and the Greek intellectual tradition: an episode in Locke’s reception in South-East Europe’, in G.A.J. Rogers (ed.), *Locke’s Philosophy: Content and Context* (Oxford 1994) 221–2.
- 27 Kitromilides, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός*, 41.
- 28 Only twice we encounter the word ‘European’ and only in the context of its relations with the Ottomans: one instance is in connection with its civilizing influence on the Ottomans, and another when the Italian in the novel finds some differences between the Europeans and the Ottomans. Bouchard, *Φιλοθεου Πάρεργα* 92, 188.
- 29 ‘Πολλή δέ τις ἔσθ’ ὅτε ζημία γίνεται τῶν πατρῶων ἡθῶν ... ὁ καὶ πολλὰκις ἐθρήνησα καὶ κατεπένθησα ὡς οἱ παρ’ ἡμῶν εἰς ἀλλοδαπὰς ἀπιόντες οὐ μόνον πολλὴν ἐκέϊθεν ἐξήντησαν τῶν τρόπων μιανίαν καὶ κιβδηλίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν νοῦν αὐτὸν ἐκφύλοις τισι δόγμασιν αὐτοῖ τε κατεμόλυναν, καὶ μυρίους ἄλλους ... εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν βδελυρίαν ἀπέσυραν’. [Much damage is then done to (our) paternal *mores* ... which I much mourned and grieved, for those who had gone abroad from our parts not only did they receive much of the filthiness and of the faked ways prevailing there, but also they heavily polluted their mind with some degenerate doctrines, and dragged many others ... into the same dirtiness.] Livadas, 130–1.
- 30 For Perdikaris and Parios, standard-bearers of the counter-Enlightenment, whose battle-cry was ‘Φεύγετε ὅσον δύνασθε τὴν Εὐρώπην’ [keep out of Europe as much as you can] see Kitromilides, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός*, 429–31, 439–44.
- 31 Athanasios Karathanasis, *Οἱ Ἕλληνες Λόγοι στὴ Βλαχία, 1670–1714* (Thessaloniki 1982) 78, and numerous letters from Nicholas to Chrysanthos in Legrand, vii.
- 32 ‘On her mother’s side she was born to the Bassaraba family from Moldavia, which gave to Moesia many rulers’. Livadas, 45–52.
- 33 ‘If Prince Kaunitz is Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, I am [Prince of] the very holy Ottoman Empire. I am the Master. I am a Prince born of a family which has reigned for two hundred years’. E. De Hurmuzaki, *Documente Privitoare La Istoria Românilor*, vol. 19, part I, ed. Ion I. Nistor (Bucharest 1922) 224, (the whole letter in pp. 223–6), Raicevich to Kaunitz, 30/11/1784. Part of *Delibey*’s outburst is given in English in Mansel, *Constantinople*, 133.
- 34 It should be added here that the ‘dynastic pride’ of the Phanariots stubbornly refused to die a natural death, even at the time when its use became a liability. In 1821, Alexandros Ypsilanti, a member of another distinguished Phanariot family, became leader of the Philiki Hetairia and raised the banner of Greek revolution in the Principalities. Even then, however, he insisted on calling himself (and demanded that others call him) Prince. The evocation of a title given to his father (an *Hospodar*) by the Ottomans earned him contempt rather than respect, but he did not seem to care much about it. See G. Finlay, *History of Greece*, (ed. H.F. Tozer, Oxford 1877), vol. 6, 110.
- 35 See S. Raicevich, *Osservazioni Intorno La Valachia et Moldavia* (Napoli 1788) 21, as cited in Kogalnitsan, *Histoire de la Valachie*, 443.
- 36 ‘The local language is already known to us. Occasionally we read, not with displeasure, Moldavian history, which depicts the lives and fortunes of the rulers who preceded us, and which brings to our attention the unpredictability of life (τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ πραγμάτων τὸ ἄστατον ὑπόψιν τιθεῖσα)’. Legrand, vol. 4, 84–5.

37 Ibid., 59.

38 See his advice to his son: 'Νουθεσία πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ Κωνσταντίνου' in: E. De Hurmuzaki, *Documente Privitoare La Istoria Românilor*, Vol. xiii, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (Bucharest 1909) 462. For the *Boyars* see Vlad Georgescu, 'The Romanian Boyars in the eighteenth century: their political ideology', *East European Quarterly* 7 (1973) 31–40.

39 Despite the tension between the locals and the Constantinopolitan Greeks, Matthew's work also highlights the lack of 'national' feeling among the 'Romans', for in describing the 'Roman nation' he could only say that they are 'a holy, blessed and most Orthodox "nation": "...εἶναι γένος ἄγιον, γένος εὐλογημένον, γένος ὀρθοδοξότατον...'. Consequently, he argued, the Wallachians should stop attacking them. Dan Simonescu, 'Le Chroniquer Matthieu de Myre et une traduction ignorée de son "Histoire"', *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, Vol.4 (1966) 101–2. On the financial position of the Phanariots see: Cyril Mango, 'The Phanariots', 45–7.

40 'Νὰ ἔχῃς ὀλίγον τεβαπὶ, ὀλίγους Φαναριώταις. Νὰ κάμῃς ὅ,τι κάμῃς, νὰ σὲ ἀγαποῦν οἱ ἐντόπιοι.' De Hurmuzaki, *Νουθεσία*, 462; Ibid: *Ἐγχειρίδιον ἐν ᾧ γινώματι καὶ φροντισμάτα περὶ ἡθῆ καὶ πολιτείας* (another handbook of advice): 'Οἱ ἐχθροὶ οὐ καθεύδουσι', 471. Both works are discussed below.

41 For an example of the views of the local chroniclers on Nicholas' rule cf. the *Chronicle* of Nicholas Muster, who accused him of coming 'dans notre pays non en véritable prince, mais en lion farouche'. He was, claimed the chronicler, 'Prince étranger, ... ignorant la langue nationale'. See *Fragments tirés des Chroniques Moldaves et Valaques*, ed. and tr. M. Kogalnicean (Jassy 1845) 16.

42 As quoted in: Karathanasis, *Οἱ "Ἕλληνες λόγιοι*, 64.

43 Livadas, *λέ', λγ', έ'*.

44 On the relation between author and narrator see: Bouchard, *Φιλοθέου Πάρεργα*, 53–4.

45 Ibid., 78. This is rendered by the editor as: '... de nation on ne peut plus hellénique.', 79.

46 Ibid., 217.

47 Legrand, Vol. 7, 162.

48 Ibid., 167.

49 Legrand, Vol. 4, 227.

50 Legrand, Vol. 7, 182.

51 'Χριστιανούς ἀπολλυουσὶν οἱ Χριστοῦ προασιπίζεσθαι γαυριῶντες'. Livadas, 93–4.

52 Livadas, 108.

53 See the observations of Mango, *The Phanariots*, 53 and Kitromilides, *Διαφωτισμός*, 35

54 For the uses of the word 'Hellenē' in the last centuries of the Byzantine Empire see Runciman, *The Last Byzantine Renaissance* (Cambridge 1970) 1–23. See also his article 'Byzantine and Hellene in the fourteenth century', in: *Tomos Constantinou Armenopoulou* (Thessaloniki 1952) 27–31. Cf. also S. Vryonis Jr, 'Byzantine cultural self-consciousness in the fifteenth century', in: S. Curcic and D. Mouriki (eds), *The Twilight of Byzantium: Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Byzantine Empire* (Princeton 1991) 5–14. For the most celebrated (and extreme) case of Byzantine 'Hellenism', see C.M. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon. The Last of the Hellenes* (Oxford 1986).

55 Livadas, 17.

56 The letter was published by Tsirpanlis, who also identified the addressee. Tsirpanlis, 'Ἀλέξανδρος Μαυροκορδάτος', 281–86. See Kitromilides' observations in 'Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ συλλογικὴ ταυτότητα στὴ Νοτιοανατολικὴ Εὐρώπη' in the Proceedings of the conference: *Βαλκάνια καὶ Ἀνατολικὴ Μεσόγειος: 12ος – 17ος Αἰῶνες* (Athens 1998) 135–6.

57 As quoted in Mansel, *Constantinople*, 161.

58 Legrand, Vol. 4, 155. Mavrocordatos to Chrysanthos, 5 June 1716.

59 Legrand, vol. 4, 218–219.

60 Legrand, vol.7, 174.

61 For a discussion of this famous (and somewhat deceptive) remark see D.M. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor. The Life and Legend of Constantine Palaiologos. Last Emperor of the Romans* (repr. Cambridge 1994) 60.

- 62 See entry (and reference): 'Γραικοκυρκος' in: S. Koumanoudis, *Συναγωγή Νέων Λέξεων* (Athens 1980, originally published in 1900), with an introduction by K.Th. Dimaras.
- 63 For that period, which marked the beginning of the Ottoman cultural awakening, see S. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol.1 (Cambridge 1997 edition) 234–8.
- 64 'Αμφίκριμνα γάρ τὰ πολλὰ τῶν ἐν πολιτεύμασιν ὑπουργημάτων, καὶ μάλιστα' ὅποτε τις ἀλλοφύλοις δουλεῦειν...διὰ ταῦτα ...εὐχῶν μᾶλλον χρήζω ἢ συγχαριστηρίων ἐπιστολῶν'. [For many government offices are 'slippery', especially whenever someone is in the service of men of another race ... For this, ... I am in need of good wishes rather than letters of congratulation.] Livadas, 95.
- 65 Ibid., 101–3.
- 66 Livadas, 36.
- 67 Hurmuzaki, Vol. xiii, *Νουθεσίαι*, 461, No. 8.
- 68 Ibid., 'Εγγειρίδιον, Nos. 78, 241, 306, 100.
- 69 'He who is full of love for God and the ὁμόφυλον he excels in everything', and 'Love for the ὁμόφυλον begins at the hearth'. Ibid., Nos. 798, 760.
- 70 Legrand, *Généalogie des Maurocordato de Constantinople*, 35 (Epitaph of Nicholas).
- 71 'Ὁ τὰς συνθήκας θεῖς καὶ διαλλάξας Ὀθωμανοὺς καὶ Γερμανοὺς καὶ Μόσχους καὶ Πολωνοὺς καὶ Ἐνετοὺς ἐνθάδε κείμενος Ἀλέξανδρος Μαυροκορδάτος, ὁ μέγας λογοθέτης τῆς Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἐξ ἀπορρήτων τῆς κραταίας βασιλείας τῶν Ὀθωμανῶν.' [He who set the treaties and brought into agreement the Ottomans, the Germans, the Muscovites, the Poles, the Venetians, here lieth Alexander Mavrocordatos, *Grand Logothete* of the Great Church and 'of the secrets' of the Mighty Empire of the Ottomans.] Ibid., 31.
- 72 Ibid., 35 English translation of the epitaph in Mansel, *Constantinople*, 159.
- 73 Legrand, *Genéalogie*, 37 (epitaph of Alexander Mavrocordatos, the *Firari*), 39 (epitaph of Alexander Mavrocordatos, the politician).
- 74 Writing in the 1830s, Finlay, an informed observer of modern Greece, remarked that 'The Greek rarely speaks of his nation, yet he speaks continually, and with enthusiasm, of his country – an epithet which he applies to his native village'. G. Finlay, *The Hellenic Kingdom and the Greek Nation* (London 1836) 34.
- 75 Theodore Negris compiled in 1824 a catalogue of 'Greeks' which included *inter alia* 'The Serbian, the Bulgarian, ... the Macedonian, ... the Boeotian, the Athenian, the Peloponnesian, ... the Cretan, the Cypriot, the Antiochene, the Syrian ... the Smyrniot...' and many others. E. Skopetea, *Τὸ Πρότυπο Βασίλειο καὶ ἡ Μεγάλη Ἰδέα: ὄψεις τοῦ ἐθνικοῦ προβλήματος στὴν Ἑλλάδα, 1830–1880* (Athens 1988) 25.