

**Naturalizing the Nation:  
Physical Anthropology in Greece, 1880s–1950s**

Angeliki Lefkaditou

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given when reference has been made to the work of others.

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## Abstract

The history of physical anthropology in Greece from the late-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century coincides with a watershed in national and international efforts to redraw national and imperial borders, assert peoples' ancient origins and contemporary belonging, and control demographic changes and human mobility. The thesis draws on the previously unexamined archive of the Anthropological Museum at the University of Athens and a wealth of published sources to narrate a novel story from a history of science perspective. It reveals how the narrative of continuity between ancient and modern Greeks was central and scientifically consequential in national as well as international debates among those scientists who sought to measure and classify human bodies and minds. By paying attention to national and transnational projects that facilitated and controlled the movement of knowledge embodied in people, research products, and things, the thesis makes five contributions. Firstly, it demonstrates the complex negotiations between national and transnational science, which Greek anthropologists tried to navigate by upholding to the ideal of an objective, neutral, and apolitical comparative scientific endeavor. Secondly, it unveils the equal importance of multiple localities—the laboratory, the museum, the press, scholarly societies, meetings, and publications—where racial knowledge was simultaneously produced and communicated. Thirdly, it highlights the creative local appropriations of contemporary theories and methodologies, and how Greek scholars attempted to hold pace with their international peers, but also contribute on equal footing. Fourthly, it illuminates the long coexistence of often presumed contradictory theories of evolution and heredity, newer and older methodologies of measurement, and diverse eugenic styles. Finally, it offers a new appreciation of the link between the science of race and politics, and the enduring presence of power relations in the national and transnational encounters among those who defined human bodies and the bodies which were subjects of research.

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## List of Abbreviations

AMA – Anthropological Museum Archive

ASCSA – American School of Classical Studies at Athens

GLA – Gennadius Library Archives

HAS – Hellenic Anthropological Society

UoA – University of Athens

## Introduction

In 2017, *Nature*, one of the world's most prestigious scientific journals, published an article titled “Genetic Origins of the Minoans and Mycenaeans.”<sup>1</sup> The aim of the study was to provide new information on Bronze Age people, who until then had been mostly studied from archaeological and linguistic perspectives, or with earlier mitochondrial DNA techniques. Its ambitious set of questions included an examination of whether the labels *Minoan* and *Mycenaean* corresponded to genetically coherent or diverse populations, what were the connections between the two groups and other neighboring populations, whether their genetic make-up supported inferences about their origins and the origins of their culture, and finally how these ancient people related to modern Greeks. The study assembled genome-wide data from 19 ancient individuals, labeled “as Minoans from Crete, Mycenaeans from mainland Greece, and their eastern neighbours from southwestern Anatolia.”<sup>2</sup> The analysis suggested two migration events into the Aegean, which affected the genetic composition of the two genetically coherent (i.e. homogeneous) groups. The authors further argued that modern Greeks are not identical to Bronze Age populations due to later admixture, but still confirmed that their results “support the idea of continuity but not isolation in the history of populations of the Aegean, before and after the time of its earliest civilizations.”<sup>3</sup> This twenty-first century article closed with a 1930 quote by John Linton Myres (1869–1954), the British ancient historian, geographer, anthropologist, and archaeologist, who concluded that the Greeks are a people “ever in the process of

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<sup>1</sup> Iosif Lazaridis et. al., “Genetic Origins of Minoans and Mycenaeans,” *Nature* 548 (August 2017): 214–18.

<sup>2</sup> Lazaridis et al., “Genetic Origins,” 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

becoming.”<sup>4</sup> As we will read in Chapter 4 of the thesis, Myres’s theory and this exact same quote featured centrally in the core interwar theory of the Greek race.

The article received unprecedented international publicity, appeared on the front page of the website of the neo-Nazi political party Golden Dawn (whose leadership has been convicted of running a criminal organization), featured in other ultranationalist outlets in Greece and abroad, and also attracted criticism from humanities scholars. The archaeologist Yannis Hamilakis penned a nuanced, public critique questioning the strong narrative of homogeneity, continuity, and indigeneity that emerged from this study.<sup>5</sup> Hamilakis raises important points regarding the research premises such as the *a priori* and antiquated acceptance of the archeologically constructed groupings of *Minoans* and *Mycenaeans* as homogenizing ethnic identities, or the equally unproblematized acceptance of the obsolete ‘pots equal peoples’ hypothesis that assumed changes in culture were congruent with migrations of new people. Similar to other archaeogenetic studies, Hamilakis rightly observes that based on a small number of samples, which the authors do not justify as adequate, the analysis produced sweeping inferences and generalizations, taken even further in press presentations. As he concluded, “whatever its authors’ intentions, this single study, with its small sample, out-dated rationale and circular logic, is being consumed as a rehearsal of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century racial discourse, updated with a modern and seemingly authoritative toolkit.”<sup>6</sup>

My research, which looks at various instantiations of race and racism within society, culture, politics, legal frameworks, and science in contemporary Greece has revealed

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<sup>4</sup> Lazaridis et al., “Genetic Origins,” 218. The quoted phrase comes from John Linton Myres, *Who Were the Greeks?* (Berkeley: University of California press, 1930), 23.

<sup>5</sup> Yannis Hamilakis, “Who Are You Calling Mycenaean?” *London Review of Books*, August 10, 2017, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2017/august/who-are-you-calling-mycenaean>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

similar tendencies.<sup>7</sup> The publication of *The Genetic History of Greece: The DNA of the Greeks* by emeritus professor of genetics and human genetics Costas Triantaphyllidis, and its diverse interpretations and appropriations within and outside academia, served as the platform to explore how genetic studies may recast myths of biological continuity.<sup>8</sup> While Triantaphyllidis acknowledges the intricacies of genetic studies and vehemently disassociates his work from racial science and politics, the recurrent discourse of internal homogeneity and external differentiation, the downplaying of admixture, and the emphasis on continuity with ancestral populations in all kinds of biological material examined produce an account that is both scientifically and politically suspect. Until this day, and through its subsequent reiterations and publications, the content of the book resonates well with xenophobic, nationalistic, and racist discourses within Greece.

Only a couple of months before this thesis came to an end, a new paper published in yet another prestigious science journal, this time *Cell*, argued that “present-day Greeks are genetically similar to 2,000 BCE Aegeans from Northern Greece.”<sup>9</sup> The research team, headed by international experts within the fields of bioinformatics and physical anthropology, analyzed six whole ancient genomes along with eleven mitochondrial genomes, and utilized further published data from ancient and modern individuals, to infer the origin of the people and reconstruct migrations behind the Aegean Bronze Age cultures. The study’s authors use more careful language in the main text of the paper, as they explain that further analysis “suggests that modern populations from northern Greece and Crete could be descendants of Aegean EBA populations, with subsequent admixture

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<sup>7</sup> See, Ageliki Lefkaditou, “Observations on Race and Racism in Greece,” *Journal of Anthropological Sciences* 95 (2017): 329–38.

<sup>8</sup> Constantinos Triantaphyllidis, *Η Γενετική Ιστορία της Ελλάδας: Το DNA των Ελλήνων* [The genetic history of Greece: The DNA of the Greeks] (Thessaloniki: Kyriakides Editions, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Florian Clemente et. al., “The Genomic History of the Aegean Palatial Civilizations,” *Cell* 184, no. 10 (May 2021): 2565–86.

with populations related to the Pontic-Caspian Steppe EMBA.”<sup>10</sup> This conclusion could have been trivial. As anthropologist John Edward Terrell wrote on similar studies from collaborating ancient DNA laboratories, which study migrations of ancient Polynesians, “Sorry, but it isn’t fair or reasonable for anyone to use a word like ‘migration’ without telling us what they mean by it. This leaves way too much to the imagination. It’s like telling a story that asks you fill in the nouns and the verbs. Maybe the adjectives and adverbs, too.”<sup>11</sup> At the same time, this is exactly the kind of storytelling that gets immediately picked up by the popular press. Within a heartbeat from the publication of the paper, Greek and international media headlines of all kinds reported that a new study has revealed that modern Greeks are genetically identical with populations from 2,000 BCE, which were in any case much more genetically homogeneous than anticipated. Reading these reports felt like I could close my eyes and transport myself a century or more ago in the debates on the racial constitution of European nations and their alleged ancestors, albeit conveyed through the methods and language of human genetic variation but still apparently oblivious to the political effects of their accounts.<sup>12</sup>

Human geographer Cathrine Nash, in her rigorous work on the effects of genealogy and genetic research suggests that human population geneticists are aware of and benefit

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<sup>10</sup> Florian Clemente et. al., “The Genomic History,” 2575.

<sup>11</sup> Terrell’s article is a critical response to the all-encompassing genetic narratives attempting to reconstruct global human history, such as the popular and controversial book by leading geneticist David Reich, *Who We Are and How We Got Here: Ancient DNA and the New Science of the Human Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). See, John Edward Terrell, “‘Plug and Play’ Genetics, Racial Migrations and Human History,” *Scientific American*, May 29, 2018, [https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/plug-and-play-genetics-racial-migrations-and-human-history/?fbclid=IwAR1\\_1Cl6sn7KSWPMkpbWb34vp6z8sPuGnE5HyHjQ3QdYvCBa5t\\_1FWR1qZY](https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/plug-and-play-genetics-racial-migrations-and-human-history/?fbclid=IwAR1_1Cl6sn7KSWPMkpbWb34vp6z8sPuGnE5HyHjQ3QdYvCBa5t_1FWR1qZY).

<sup>12</sup> On the ambivalent ancient DNA narratives and the inertia among archaeologists and archaeogeneticists concerning their appropriations by far-right-wing and racist activists, especially in the context of current mass migrations from the Global South, see Cathrine J. Frieman and Daniela Hofmann, “Present Pasts in the Archaeology of Genetics, Identity, and Migration in Europe: A Critical essay,” *World Archaeology* 51, no. 4 (2019): 528–45.

from the scholarly and public attention their studies enjoy, and often develop elaborate strategies to maximize it, but are quick to distance themselves from unflattering interpretations.<sup>13</sup> An emerging literature powerfully scrutinizes the political potency of genetic accounts, especially through the portrayal of DNA as a kind of historical archive that provides unmediated, authoritative, and privileged access to the human past.<sup>14</sup> Many researchers welcome the changing understandings of human history that inter- and transdisciplinary studies, including genetic research, contribute to while offering brilliant interrogations of the language, methods, assumptions, interpretation, communication, and ethical aspects of these projects.<sup>15</sup> My findings from the Greek case demonstrate how

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<sup>13</sup> Cathrine Nash, *Of Irish Descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy, and the Politics of Belonging* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> This literature considers how human genetic diversity, and origins, accounts build on and reshape biocultural categories such as race, ethnicity, and nationhood. See, for example, Cathrine Nash, "Genome Geographies: Mapping National Ancestry and Diversity in Human Population Genetics," *Transactions of the Institute of Human Geographers* 38 (2011): 193–206. Anthropologist Nadia Abu El-Haj turns to genetic history research and its commerce to investigate how the gene and the genome operate as a kind of molecular archive, which provides new, powerful articulations of human history, albeit biologized, see *The Genealogical Science: The Search for Jewish Origins and the Politics of Epistemology* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> For critical accounts of human diversity research in the genomic era and their colonial entanglements see Elise K. Burton, *Genetic Crossroads: The Middle East and the Science of Human Heredity* (Stanford, C. A.: Stanford University Press, 2021); Barbara A. Koenig, Sandra Soo-Jin Lee and Sarah S. Richardson, eds., *Revisiting Race in a Genomic Age* (New Brunswick N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Emma Kowal, Amy Hinterberger, and Joanna Radin, eds., "Indigenous Body Parts and Postcolonial Technoscience," Special Issue, *Social Studies of Science* 43, no. 4 (August 2013); Amade M'charek, *The Human Genome Diversity Project: An Ethnography of Scientific Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Amade M'charek, Katharina Schramm and David Skinner, "Technologies of Belonging," Special Issue, *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 39, no. 4 (July 2014); Jenny Reardon, *Race to the Finish: Identity and Governance in an Age of Genomics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Katharina Schramm, David Skinner and Richard Rottenburg, eds., *Identity Politics and the New genetics: Re/creating Categories of Difference and Belonging* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2012); Marianne Sommer, "DNA and Cultures of Remembrance: Anthropological Genetics, Biohistories, and Biosocialities," *BioSocieties* 5 (2010): 366–90; Peter Wade, Carlos López Beltrán, Eduardo Restrepo, and Ricardo Ventura Santos, eds., *Mestizo Genomics: Race Mixture, Nation, and Science in Latin America* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 2014); Keith Wailoo, Alondra Nelson, and Catherine Lee, eds., *Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The*

genetic history studies attempt to render societies and cultures intelligible through biology, but are simultaneously complicit in reifying and even racializing ethnicity and nationhood by conflating social and cultural categories and portraying them eternal and essential, despite the recurring references to admixtures, movements, and change.<sup>16</sup>

This thesis takes inspiration from the criticisms raised on these international contemporary scientific practices, especially in their multidimensional relations to racial science, as well as from the continuing relevance of the narratives of continuity and homogeneity within Greece. The title of the thesis alludes to the double, and resilient, bond between nature and culture, which in the Greek case has resulted in what anthropologist Peter Wade describes as turning culture into “a second nature of habit and collective consciousness, in which a culture belongs to people and individuals belong to their culture in a relationship of naturalized belonging.”<sup>17</sup> In the following four chapters we will trace the long history of how the idea of continuity, and its counterpart of homogeneity, became biologized from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. Transnational mobilities of data, objects, theories, and people, national scientific and political projects, as well as cross-disciplinary encounters, become the lenses through which we will explore the trajectory of physical anthropology research in Greece as a science of race and the naturalized nation. The thesis contributes a fresh perspective on the historically close entanglement of race and nation, by turning to the complex and tension-ridden relationship between scientific universalism and transnationalism and national appropriations. This history of physical anthropology in Greece reveals the

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*Collision of DNA, Race, and History*, (New Brunswick N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 2012); Alexandra Widmer, and Veronika Lipphardt, eds., *Health and Difference: Rendering Human Variation in Colonial Engagements* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Lefkaditou, “Observations on Race.”

<sup>17</sup> Peter Wade, “Race, Ethnicity, and Technologies of Belonging,” *Science, Technology & Human Values* 39 (2014): 593.

negotiations of local knowledge production taking shape simultaneously at the laboratory, the museum, the local press, and across national borders in international society meetings and publications.

### **I. Historiographical Considerations and Clarifications**

The history of physical anthropology, and its intersections with eugenics, has featured in a wealth of monographs, edited volumes, special journal issues and individual papers during the first two decades of the twenty-first century. What is most characteristic of this emerging literature is an effort to expand our understanding of the relationship between scientific, national, and colonial projects by moving away from the once dominant centers of research of France, Germany, England, and the US to explore the intricacies of new contexts including Russia, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Romania, Hungary, South Africa, Brazil, India, Japan, Poland, Korea, Italy, and many more.<sup>18</sup> This is certainly an indication of the whole field of history of science, and science and technology studies, maturing and expanding. New generations of researchers bring along their own diversity of knowledges and interests. The current attention to racial science in all its guises is further fueled by developments that appear closer to academia such as the contemporary hype for ancient DNA studies and their popular appeal, as well as by troublesome social and political conditions including recurrent violent (and in certain cases normalized) racist incidents, and the rise of extreme rightwing authoritarian regimes.

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<sup>18</sup> In the course of the following chapters I provide detailed and substantial references to these studies, as they have supported my analysis of the history of physical anthropology in Greece both in understanding different national projects in a comparative manner, as well as in tracing transnational connections. Here, I will only mention a special issue that provided invaluable insights at the start of my research, see Susan Lindee and Ricardo Ventura Santos, eds., “The Biological Anthropology of Living Human Populations: World Histories, National Styles, and International Networks,” *Current Anthropology* 53, Supplement 5 (April 2012).



Scholars from Greece have been late to join in, perhaps as a result of a longstanding assumption that science and technology studies could not be as interesting in a context of allegedly delayed modernization. The work of professor of sociology Sevasti Trubeta has been pioneering in examining the history of physical anthropology in Greece, and its relation to nationalism and racism, as well as in a number of initiatives that brought together interdisciplinary panels of scholars to discuss and publish from the perspectives of science, law and politics studies, literary studies, and history of art. Trubeta's book *Physical Anthropology, Race and Eugenics in Greece (1880s–1970s)* is the first, and to this day only, systematic book-length study on these topics.<sup>19</sup> Her account has been an invaluable help in writing this thesis not least in terms of the number of published primary sources consulted, and its rich contextual narrative covering almost a century of Greek history. Many of the protagonists and core episodes examined in this thesis appear in her work, though the approach is significantly different, and the conclusions diverge in several points. Trubeta uses an enriched analytical discourse analysis approach to discern her protagonists' ideas, choices, and ambitions. Her professional training leads her to engage with the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Georges Canguilhem, and Michel Foucault, especially in terms of biopolitics, to advance her own socio-political argument concerning the power relations mobilized and produced in the case of physical anthropology in Greece. Trubeta's approach has inspired my writing especially in identifying the multiple ways in which the claims to scientific neutrality raised by those involved in anthropological debates contrasted with their persistent societal and national commitments.

Unfortunately, the length of the historical period considered and the limited access to unpublished sources have resulted in a broad strokes account, which at times underestimates the sophistication and creativity, or international appeal, of the arguments

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<sup>19</sup> Sevasti Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology, Race and Eugenics in Greece: 1880s–1970s* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

and research produced by Greek physical anthropologists. The book leaves the reader wanting more as to how research was actually carried out both in Greece and outside of it, while it generates several exaggerated dichotomies such as the one between racial hygiene and eugenics, and a deterministic account of a decaying trajectory for anthropological institutions in Greece. This, however, is not the place to go into detailed criticism, which in any case appears in the main text of the thesis.<sup>20</sup> What is important is that despite these weaknesses, Trubeta's work has paved the way for further inquiry, especially research focusing on the history of physical anthropology in Greece from a history of science perspective. This is exactly what the present thesis aspires to do.

Although the focus of the thesis is on physical anthropology in Greece, it places particular emphasis on the transnational aspects of racial science in terms of narratives, research agendas, methods, instruments and standards, exchanges of data, personal relations and scholarly affiliations. My approach draws inspiration from the work of Richard McMahon, which demonstrates how the commitment to scientific transnationalism and the universalist approach of science was not necessarily at odds with nationalist projects, although it affected them in complex and intriguing ways.<sup>21</sup> Despite tensions arising from nationalist appropriations of established racial discourses and patronizing attitudes from scholars affiliated with central anthropological institutions, the

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<sup>20</sup> For a critical review of Trubeta's book, see Jon Røyne Kyllingstad and Ageliki Lefkadiou, "Eugenics and Physical Anthropology in Hungary and Greece," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 49 (2015): 70–74.

<sup>21</sup> McMahon's research is both innovative and demanding as the inductive, ideographic approach he adopts to reconstruct transnational networks and communities assembles a wealth of actors and ideas that range from the most prominent, core and well-studied to the most obscure, peripheral, and contested even by contemporaries. It showcases, however, the mutual dependences of science and politics, and the place of national projects within transnational racial classifications and theories. On the uneasy relationship between nationalism and transnationalism, see especially Richard McMahon, *The Races of Europe: Construction of National Identities in the Social Sciences, 1839–1939* (Portsmouth: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 364–68.

transnational exchanges continued within an international scientific project that relied heavily on comparative studies. Similar to the contributions in McMahon's edited volume, *National Races: Transnational Power Struggles in the Sciences and Politics of Human Diversity, 1840–1945*, we will look at these transnational networks from one of the edges.<sup>22</sup> This perspective offers us a better appreciation of the power relations still at work within these networks, but also allows for a deeper appreciation of historical figures that may otherwise seem marginal in their national contexts. Keeping the transnational patterns at the core of story helps us to understand the strong presence of international references in the narratives of Greek scholars both because their national communities of peers were limited but also as sources of legitimation.

The diverse national and (post-)colonial cases in the special issue “Rethinking Transnationalism in the Anthropological and Genetic Study of Human Populations” show how intricate transnational dependencies mediated the often opposing forces between nationalism and transnationalism.<sup>23</sup> As historian Soraya de Chadarevian notes in the issue's concluding commentary, the focus on single individuals (which is also what the present thesis has chosen as a point of departure), facilitates transnational readings as it permits close attention to how individual itineraries represented negotiations of knowledge between their national contexts and their international circles.<sup>24</sup> Finally, while the nation-state remains at the center of my analysis, the volume *How Knowledge Moves: Writing the Transnational History of Science and Technology* offers valuable insights on how to grasp the

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<sup>22</sup> Richard McMahon, ed., *National Races: Transnational Power Struggles in the Sciences and Politics of Human Diversity, 1840–1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019).

<sup>23</sup> Iris Clever and Jaehwan Hyun, eds., “Rethinking Transnationalism in the Anthropological and Genetic Study of Human Populations,” Special Issue, *Perspectives on Science* (forthcoming).

<sup>24</sup> Soraya de Chadarevian, “Commentary: Nationalism and Transnationalism in Anthropological Research,” Special Issue, *Perspectives on Science* (forthcoming).

evolving nature of these transnational networks, which retained hierarchical structures.<sup>25</sup> Most interestingly, the various chapters in this volume highlight the centrality of travel by putting emphasis on “the movement of knowledge embodied in people (and things) as a *social accomplishment*.”<sup>26</sup> This is an observation to think further with as travel outside Greece, with all the difficulties and opportunities that it entailed, was necessary for all Greek scholars of the period, and constituted an important part of the education and subsequent routines of the thesis’ main protagonists.

When writing about race in Greece, there is always a phrase that comes to my mind, especially since I come from a region where Italian culture and language have had long historical influences. My grandmother used to say, “Una faccia, una razza” [one face, one race,] even when she narrated difficult stories of the Axis occupation of our island, Kefallonia, by Italian forces. The phrase is normally said as a gesture of warmth and points to communal values and ways of perceiving, a kind of unity between Italian and Greek people, which even evokes the early colonies of Magna Graecia in coastal areas of Southern Italy. At the same time, others rightly perceive it as an unproblematic and vernacular, but potentially destructive acceptance of the embodied biological race. *Razza*, which is the word etymologically connected to the English *race*, is not however the word most often used by Greek people. Instead, they use the term *φυλή* [fyli], which merges cultural and ethn racial belonging. As Trubeta writes *fyli*, originally invested with religious and

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<sup>25</sup> One of the most valuable insights emerging from this novel and methodologically rich volume is that taking a transnational approach and abandoning the nation as a research framework should not presuppose that the historical actors could do the same without cost. Mobility is not always encouraged, supported, welcomed, or free. The authors of the case studies explore the demands and affordances of transnationalism through five main themes: “the centrality of travel, the role of the regulatory state, the meaning of “borders” and “networks,” the significance of nationality and political allegiance, and the intersection between the local and the global.” See John Krige, “Introduction: Writing the Transnational History of Science and Technology,” in *How Knowledge Moves: Writing the Transnational History of Science and Technology*, ed. John Krige (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 4.

<sup>26</sup> Krige, “Introduction,” 4–6.

cultural or linguistic meanings, became reinterpreted as a national and biological category during the long process of nation building in the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> In this thesis, I have chosen to translate consequently *fyli* for race, following the historical actors who did not make any distinction between the two terms. Here, I argue that a contextual and close reading of the use of both terms by Greek and international contemporaries suggests that they used them to express naturalistic, cultural, and civic connotations, which have given the concept and practices of race their characteristic undying flexibility and plasticity. By turning to the Greek case, what we gain is an understanding of exactly how significantly coextensive the categories of nationhood, culture, ethnicity, and race are.

As a final consideration, I would like to turn briefly to a point that is often overlooked or not raised explicitly when writing on the history of science in Greece, or even Greece more generally. The case discussed in this thesis invites us not only to consider the tensions between the scientific project of race in its diverse national and transnational interactions, but also trace colonial entanglements. Narratives of the Greek past, and present, were forged and contested as a European colonial imagination built its myths of origins at the same time that Greek nationalism sought to reappropriate and incorporate them in the Greek national project, characterized by an ambivalent relationship with local communities.<sup>28</sup> These processes of European modernity produced both sympathy and contempt, acceptance and paternalistic attitudes toward modern Greece, its political

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<sup>27</sup> On the transformations and diverse uses of *fyli* up to the twentieth century and its relation to eugenic and anthropological discussions in Greece, see Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 145–286.

<sup>28</sup> Yannis Hamilakis has demonstrated how the debates and clashes around the excavations of the Athenian Agora by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens point to a process of double colonization, and double nationalism, from both Greece and the United States. As he explains, this double colonization can be analyzed into “first, the colonization (or crypto-colonization) of the area that we now call Greece by the ideals of Hellenism, and second, the colonization of specific locales, such as the old quarter of Athens, by the apparatus of modernist archaeology, at the service of Hellenism.” See, Yannis Hamilakis, “Double Colonization: The Story of the Excavations of the Athenian Agora (1924–1931),” *The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 82, no. 1, Special Issue: Philhellenism, Philanthropy, or Political Convenience? American Archaeology in Greece (January–March 2013): 174.

representatives, intellectuals, and people on the street. The dominant narrative of genealogical and cultural continuity and unity which integrates the period from the prehistoric past to present times, forms the common thread in the thesis and exemplifies these European and national perspectives. The pioneering work of anthropologist Michael Herzfeld demonstrates how this peculiar identification with the past from the nineteenth century and on has led to the construction of a Greek identity caught between Western imagination and a non-Western self.<sup>29</sup> In subsequent work Herzfeld considers the consequences of this construction and suggests the concept of *crypto-colonialism* to capture the complex phenomenon of a country balancing between “political independence at the expense of massive economic dependence” with an “aggressively national culture fashioned to suit foreign models.”<sup>30</sup> As Hamilakis argues this crypto-colonial constitution of Greece has enabled the reproduction of orientalist and occidentalist stereotypes, which although always present as a reminder of an eternal debt, have resurfaced with great force in the contemporary conditions of the country’s deep social and economic crisis.<sup>31</sup> I hope that the thesis will convey traces of these distinct colonial and national negotiations, but the field is open and ripe for further research, especially one that explores intersections with gender and class.

## II. Thesis Outline

Four questions, which correspond to the broadly chronologically arranged chapters of the thesis and come together again in the conclusion, define the structure of the thesis:

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

<sup>30</sup> Michael Herzfeld, “The Absence Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 900.

<sup>31</sup> Yannis Hamilakis, “Some Debts Can Never Be Repaid: The Archaeo-politics of the Crisis,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 34, no. 2 (October 2016): 227–64.

1. How did the question of continuity between ancient and modern Greeks become enmeshed in international discussions on human evolution and degeneration in the final decades of the nineteenth century?
2. How did physical anthropology become established in Greece and attempt to negotiate concerns and criticisms over modern Greeks' alleged degeneration?
3. How did novel methodologies in blood group research promise to revitalize racial science in Greece and internationally, while they contributed in recasting national identities and projects?
4. How did new understandings of human evolution in the twentieth century become entangled in constructing a new theory for the Greek race that defended both its continuity, homogeneity, and right to act eugenically to preserve its existence?

The thesis starts surprisingly in Victorian Britain instead of the more conventional immediate associations, either with German national romanticism or the widespread questioning of continuity between ancient and modern Greeks promoted by Nordic scholars, but for good reasons. As we will discover in the following chapters, and with most emphasis in Chapter 4, physical anthropologists and other scholars implicated in anthropological discussions in Greece did not only look to Germany when shaping their theories and practices. Instead, the influence of the work of Charles Darwin and Francis Galton, and of course later on Gregor Mendel, which are often disassociated from the history of racial science in modern continental Europe, makes for a richer and less scientifically antiquated, thus even more controversial, narrative. The concluding reflections build exactly on this element to offer a final appraisal on how the tensions between national and transnational scientific and political endeavors remained alive exactly at a moment when racial science appeared to be dying out.

Chapter 1 takes us to Victorian Britain to examine how narratives on Greeks—ancient and modern—became entangled in contemporary debates on human evolution and Western European ancestry.<sup>32</sup> The story unfolds around the works and exchanges of Charles Darwin, Charles Lyell, Francis Galton, and William Rathbone Greg, who all tried to answer in distinct ways the puzzle of ancient Greek’s unsurpassed intellect. The backdrop of these discussions was the long-standing fascination with classical Greece among the British intellectual elites, which reached a climax in the mid- to late nineteenth century, when Britain’s imperial power drew comparisons with their alleged predecessors, the ancient empires of Athens and Rome. While studies of Victorian appropriations of the ancient world have revealed the pervasive influence of classical Greece on a range of discourses from philosophy and religion, to education and aesthetics, this chapter moves further to offer a reappraisal of the relationship between evolutionist racial theory and classical reception. By looking at how these four Victorian gentlemen answered the question of continuity between ancient and modern Greeks, or other Europeans for that matter, the chapter explains how and why diverse perceptions of antiquity foreshadowed and mirrored debates on human progress and degeneration. Their overlapping concerns on morality, migration, social order and development, against the background of human evolutionary change and permanence, will become core features of anthropological discussions in the following decades and thesis chapters.

In Chapter 2 we explore the birth of physical anthropology in Greece in the late nineteenth century and its engagement with the national narrative of continuity and eventual response to established anthropological discourses charting the decline of the

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<sup>32</sup> A shorter version of this Chapter has been published at Ageliki Lefkadiou, “‘This Wonderful People:’ Darwin, the Victorians, and the Greeks,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 36, no. 1 (May 2018), 97–124.



modern Greek.<sup>33</sup> The central figure of this story, Clon Stephanos, was the first to systematically examine the racial origins and constitution of Greece's past and contemporary inhabitants by bringing together anthropometric techniques and a wealth of archaeological findings, historical archives and texts. We follow Stephanos from his island of Syros in Greece and his early interest in archaeology to Athens where he studied medicine, and then to his encounter with French anthropology in Paris. When he finally returned to Greece as an accomplished author, he founded the anthropological museum and laboratory at the University of Athens. Through Stephanos's commitment to objectivist measurement of the human body based on international standards, methods, and instruments, we see how he negotiated the importance of skeletal material for providing a factual, biological foundation to national aspirations. At the same time, the Chapter considers the challenges and resistances that this national anthropological project met in its transnational moments, especially in its defense of a lineal continuity between ancient and modern Greeks rooted in a discourse of primordial indigeneity. What emerges from this first period for physical anthropology in Greece is a complex picture of mutual benefits and tensions. Within the country, dominant intellectual resources for nation building such as history, archeology, and folklore studies did not leave much space for anthropological narratives. The transnational connections both strengthened and benefitted from Greek research, not least in the sharing of data and materials, but core institutions reminded contemporaries their hierarchical positioning when deemed necessary.

Chapter 3 introduces us to the next period of physical anthropology in Greece, an era associated with the medical doctor John Koumaris, Stephanos's successor as director of the anthropological museum, founder of the Hellenic Anthropological Society, and first

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<sup>33</sup> A shorter version of this Chapter is included in the volume *National Races*, see Ageliki Lefkadiou, "Yet Another Greek Tragedy?" 141–74.

professor of anthropology at the University of Athens.<sup>34</sup> The German-educated Koumaris, while he continued the close collaboration with French scholars, was responsible for the rapprochement with a number of influential German-speaking anthropologists, many of them associated with the now infamous Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics in Berlin. Koumaris initially continued in the steps of Stephanos and used anthropometry as the main method of anthropological research, but after the 1920s became attracted to novel methodologies in blood group research as an attempt to revitalize racial science. Although he never gave up his older training, we see in this Chapter how Koumaris supported the emergence of racial serology in Greece through his transnational networks. The research of Greek serologists reveals overlaps between anthropological and medical perspectives, as well as a constant effort to strengthen the national project of internal homogeneity based on the identification of a distinct racial composition. In this attempt, the forced mobilities of the displaced refugees from Asia Minor as a result of the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922 became subjects of racial research and a new addition to the data that strengthened the fabric of the Greek national narrative. In the end, the Chapter demonstrates how politics interpenetrated into this case in a scientifically consequential way and conversely how innovation in research allowed anthropologists to intervene with politically timely questions and answers.

Chapter 4 takes us back to where we started: theories of human evolution, degeneration, social development and social control. This time, however, attention turns to the interwar period and how Koumaris and other members of the Hellenic

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<sup>34</sup> Chapter 3 has resulted in a single-author publication, see Ageliki Lefkadiou, “Blood Affairs: Racial Blood Group Research and Nation Building in Greece, 1920s–1940s,” Special Issue, *Perspectives on Science* (forthcoming), as well as in a coauthored publication, see Elise K. Burton and Ageliki Lefkadiou, “How Turkish Blood Banks Turned Religious Difference into ‘Racial Kinship,’” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (forthcoming).

Anthropological Society mobilized new understandings of heredity for a range of aims: to understand the relationship between nature and nurture, fight back degeneration, control deviant bodies and behaviors, and in the end reconstruct and defend the national narrative. We come to appreciate how heredity—in the case of Koumaris treated as synonymous to Mendelism—operated as both a research question and an assumption or interpretative scheme, which offered the necessary background for applying eugenics as a science of rational social engineering. What strikes us as a peculiar, and yet internationally well-documented, characteristic of anthropological and medical discussions in this period is the co-existence and eclectic use of a rich repertoire of evolutionary and hereditary mechanisms, alongside diverse eugenic styles. The Chapter follows a hardening of positions as the end of the 1930s approached with Koumaris coming closer to more biologized versions of heredity and harsher eugenic suggestions, while trying to keep the associations with Nazi racial science and politics at arm's length. Through a close reading of Koumaris's popular and scholarly texts, we examine the unfolding of a full-fledged, novel theory of the Greek race, which interweaved elements from both older and contemporary anthropological theories with Mendelian discourse.

The final Concluding Reflections section does three things. First it summarizes the highlights and main answers to the four questions raised at the introduction of the thesis. Second, it provides further material that invites us to consider the enduring preoccupation with race beyond the WWII threshold and gain insight on several physical anthropologists' attempts in Greece and internationally to hold on to their core research category amidst devastating political and scientific criticisms. Here, we see how Koumaris defended his conception of the Greek race against alleged contemporary political correctness and a turn to population genetic studies. Third, it makes a strong argument about the impossibility of disentangling racial research from its political counterparts despite scientists repeated appeals to objectivity and neutrality. A few selected episodes from Koumaris's

engagements with, or disengagements from, Nazi and fascist science showcase how he tried to balance between an almost reluctant extreme criticism of racial and eugenic politics and maintaining those ties that could later on benefit Greek science. These incidents ask us to reflect on how scientists adapted their arguments to satisfy their diverse audiences and how power relations between subjects and objects of research, as well as between researchers shaped scientific narratives.

### **III. Some Challenges and Opportunities**

As we have already discussed in Section I of the introduction, the thesis takes a history of science approach, which integrates intellectual history with attention to specific practices and materialities, as well as encounters between world famous and lesser-known individuals. At the same time, it attempts to follow Kristin Asdal's suggestion to treat historical contexts as integral and in action, and thus create new possibilities to grasp and compose collectives, institutional settings, and disciplinary traditions alongside political and social arrangements and cultural understandings.<sup>35</sup> While my intention has been to use diverse historiographical sources and methods to narrate a rich and arresting history, the almost seven decades timespan of the thesis and the worry about readers' unfamiliarity with the broader history of Greece have at times made this project seem too ambitious. I have tried to overcome this pitfall by clearly delineating the theme of each chapter, and thus omitting topics that I otherwise consider of great interest for future research such as the history of the Greek anthropological society or the anthropological museum. This strategy has instead allowed a deeper consideration of the intersections of the work by Greek anthropologists with their colleagues abroad. This close focus has also given me the possibility to capture a sense of Greek society, culture and politics, even if the balance has been decidedly on the side of the history of science. The question of how much more one

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<sup>35</sup> Kristin Asdal, "Contexts in Action and the Future of the Past," *Science, Technology & Human Values* 37, no. 4 (July 2012): 379–403.

needs to write to make the broader historical context intelligible to the reader is one that has no easy answer.

Another challenge with the thesis has been the paucity of archival material both in Greece and in Germany, where some of the main exchanges have taken place. To the best of my knowledge, I am the first historian that has been able to work with the archive of the anthropological museum in Athens, and achieving access was initially difficult. It is often the case that historians of race science are met with certain reservations from the side of especially smaller institutions with direct ownership of their material and concerns that historical research may reveal unpleasant aspects of their past. Nevertheless, I was granted full access to the sources of this key institution for my study, and I am thankful to the staff of the museum for their support and trust. What my research has revealed, however, is that the archive is heavily curated, and important correspondence is missing. This I have verified through my research in other archives both in Greece and abroad, where I located bits and pieces of crucial exchanges. Whether this has been an intended or accidental curation, most possibly by Koumaris, is difficult to assert, but it would be worth trying to figure out if he kept a yet undiscovered personal archive. The thesis utilizes published materials extensively, from research papers, to popular press articles and the proceedings of the anthropological society. I have noticed, however, that especially Koumaris was extremely historically minded and wrote often with full awareness that a historian of the future might show interest in his writings. This is fascinating and important not only for figuring out the true story but as a reminder of the agency of our historical actors in forming how they wished to be remembered. In a future work, I would like to return to this archive and examine it as an ethnographic site, which reveals as much information as it potentially conceals.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> My current reading of the archive is inspired by the historiographical work of Arlette Farge on the tactile, material experience of archival work and the archive's multiple voices and workings,

Lastly, the scarcity of archival sources and new questions emerging during the course of my investigation, required consulting archives in several countries, from the UK to Germany, France, and the US. Unfortunately, and though most of my archival research had been completed, the lock downs imposed by Covid-19 have made it almost impossible to return to any of these archives, consult with archivists and examine or confirm questions that emerged during the writing process. This has also affected the photographic material used in the thesis, which in some cases I use provisionally until formal permission is given. I hope that I will be able to return to those archives, and especially that of the anthropological museum, to take this research further toward the direction of institutional history, or even the history of reading, as the collection of nineteenth and early twentieth books at the library of the museum is priceless. The most promising and demanding, but least explored, future research direction remains the public reception of these scientific discourses, which survive in everyday parlance and continuing practices of racialization in Greece.

Two brief notes related to language are necessary. First, the language in the thesis follows the practices of historical actors and therefore I do not use scare quotes around, for example, *race* unless this was part of the original text. Instead, I endorse the view of scholars who, by turning to material semiotics, argue for the radical relationality of race as a multiply realized object within scientific and other projects, and from there attempt to understand its durability, malleability, and continuing relevance.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, I have kept the disturbingly gendered language of the time where I needed to translate from other languages. Second, the issue of translation has been an interesting puzzle throughout the

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hidden in seemingly mundane documents. See, Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> See for example, Amade M'charek "Beyond Fact of Fiction: On the Materiality of Race in Practice," *Cultural Anthropology* 28, no. 3 (2012): 420–42.

thesis as most of the archival and published material is originally written in Greek, although I have also translated from German, French, Italian, and Norwegian. My strategy has been to remain as close as possible to the original text, choosing literal translation, even when the genre was poetry, and thus allow the reader to discern layers of meaning. This choice is not straightforward, uncontroversial, or unproblematic, but hopefully manages to relay meaning reliably and still present a readable text.

Finally, I would like to share one thought about writing on the history of racial science and eugenics. Despite all our intellectual sophistication and nuances, it is a difficult task that requires confronting some of the darker hours in the history of science, or human history more generally. At times it becomes a haunting and consuming task, especially when we try not to write an objective or neutral history, to genuinely understand our historical actors, who in this case one could easily vilify. In a 2021 interview, historian and broadcaster David Olusoga conveys exactly the feeling I have had when writing this thesis, or curating the exhibition FOLK – From Racial Types to DNA Sequences at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology.<sup>38</sup> He said:

I care deeply about people who were mistreated in the past. I care about the names on slave ledgers, I care about the bones of people in Africa, in mass graves in the first world war and in riverbeds in Namibia. I care about them. I think about them when I read the letters, when I look at their photographs and their faces. No one

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<sup>38</sup> On the asymmetric relations between race scientists and their subjects of study, as well as on the contradictory afterlives of racial science products, see Ageliki Lefkadiou, “Putting history on display,” *History of Anthropology Review*, October 21, 2017, <https://histanthro.org/notes/putting-history-on-display/>. For more information on show, see the exhibition catalogue, Jon Røyne Kyllingstad and Ageliki Lefkadiou, FOLK: From Racial Types to DNA Sequences, (Oslo: Teknisk museum, 2019).

gave a damn about them. That's my job – to care about them. And I will be ruthless in fighting for them.<sup>39</sup>

This care for the people who were subjects of racial science in Greece and elsewhere motivated me to write history with as much empathy as possible for all actors involved. My wish is that one day I will be able to return to my home country and write this history from the perspective of the research subjects.

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<sup>39</sup> David Olusoga, “David Olusoga on Race and Reality,” interview by Aamna Mohdin, *The Guardian*, June 7, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2021/jun/07/david-olusoga-race-reality-historian-black-britishness>.



# 1. Progress, Degeneration, and the Greeks: A Challenge to Darwin's Theory?

## I. Introduction: A Letter on Ancient Greeks Challenging Natural Selection

At the end of a brief letter penned in March 1860, Charles Darwin wrote to his friend and mentor Charles Lyell about an unexpected attack on the concept of evolutionary progress:

By an odd chance (for I had not alluded even to subject) the Ladies attacked me this evening & threw the high state of old Græcians into my teeth, as an unanswerable difficulty; but by good chance I had my answer all pat & silenced them.<sup>40</sup>

As Darwin reminded Lyell, the subject of this friendly debate had come up in an earlier discussion between them. He asked: Did the ancient Greeks' "high state of Intellectual development" and humankind's "little or no subsequent improvement" constitute a challenge for the progressivist slant of evolutionary theory?<sup>41</sup> That is, if natural selection acts on moral qualities and mental attributes in the same ways it acts on physical capacities, would cases such as the ancient Greeks threaten an evolutionary theory seen as inescapably progressive?<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Charles Darwin to Charles Lyell, March 12, 1860, in *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, eds. Frederick Burkhardt and Sydney Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), vol. 8: 128. The "Ladies" referred to here are probably Emma Darwin's friends, Georgina and Ellen Harriet Tollet, and Charles Darwin's sister, Emily Catherine Darwin; see Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 8: 129n3.

<sup>41</sup> Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 8: 128.

<sup>42</sup> This chapter follows the main discussants in differentiating between ancient (most often meaning classical) and modern (usually including Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern) Greece and Greeks.

Darwin appeared confident that the issue posed no danger to his views. Unlike the “doctrines” held by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck or the anonymous author of the evolutionary tract of 1844, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*,<sup>43</sup> corporeal, intellectual, or moral “progression” was not inevitable. The case of ancient Greece could therefore be easily harmonized “with the other facts of progression in corporeal structure of other animals.”<sup>44</sup> For Darwin, intellectual development was not guaranteed, and in certain instances, such as “a state of anarchy or despotism or bad government or after irruption of Barbarians[,] force and strength or ferocity & not intellect would be apt to gain the day.—”<sup>45</sup> In other words, human evolution was influenced by a host of multiple dependent factors, among which the state of government was of major importance.

This is not an issue that Darwin discussed in any of the four chapters of *On the Origin of Species* devoted to countering possible objections to his theory, and published just four months before writing the letter to Lyell.<sup>46</sup> A single phrase in the book has been repeatedly quoted as the only direct reference to human origins: “Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his theory.”<sup>47</sup> Darwin had spent more than twenty years theorizing

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<sup>43</sup> *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* appeared anonymously in 1844; the Edinburgh publisher Robert Chambers was revealed as its author in 1884. The book was a wide-ranging synthesis of contemporary scientific theories about the world and the fate of humanity, as well as a publishing success that transcended the circles of educated elites. For the most comprehensive account of its making and reception, see James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>44</sup> Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 8: 128.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> The relevant chapters are 6–9 in Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859).

<sup>47</sup> Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, 488. In the chapter “Difficulties on Theory” (198–199), Darwin briefly alluded to “our ignorance of the precise cause” of the slight differences between species. There, he used what he saw as apparent differences between “human races” to propose that “some little light can be thrown on the origin of these differences, chiefly through sexual selection of a

what he once called “the highest and most interesting problem for the naturalist.”<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, he was aware that *On the Origin of Species*, the fullest account of biological evolution by natural selection to that day, was bound to cause a complete and turbulent reassessment of the human past, present, and future. Any criticism of his theory associated with its implications for the evolution of humankind could be devastating. This letter to Lyell opens a window onto the omitted issues that took him almost twelve years to explicitly address in *The Descent of Man* in 1871 and *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* in 1872.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, as this chapter will demonstrate, the high status of the ancient Greeks and humanity’s development had been an interesting puzzle for Darwin since the early notebooks period to eventually become an intricate argument in *The Descent of Man*. Putting Darwin’s theoretical worries aside for the moment, we might first ask: How did the ancient Greeks come to occupy his communications with Lyell, as well as a discussion among family friends in a relaxed evening setting?

The significance of these two incidents can be fully appreciated only against the backdrop of a long-standing fascination with classical Greece among the British intellectual elite. The allure of the ancient Greeks reached an apogee in the mid- to late nineteenth century, when Britain’s imperial power drew (sometimes anxious) comparisons with what Victorians understood as their predecessors, the empires of Athens and Rome. This chapter shows that Darwin’s thinking on Greece relied explicitly on the arguments of three other Victorian gentlemen: Charles Lyell, Francis Galton (1822–1911), and W. R. Greg (1809–

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particular kind,” but he did not wish to expand more on the topic without offering a detailed account of it.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Darwin to Alfred Wallace, December 22, 1857, Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 6: 514.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1871); *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, (London: John Murray, 1872).

1881) (fig. 1.1–1.4). Their varied views on and uses of the past became entangled in scientific discussions far beyond the realm of classical scholars. From Darwin's early

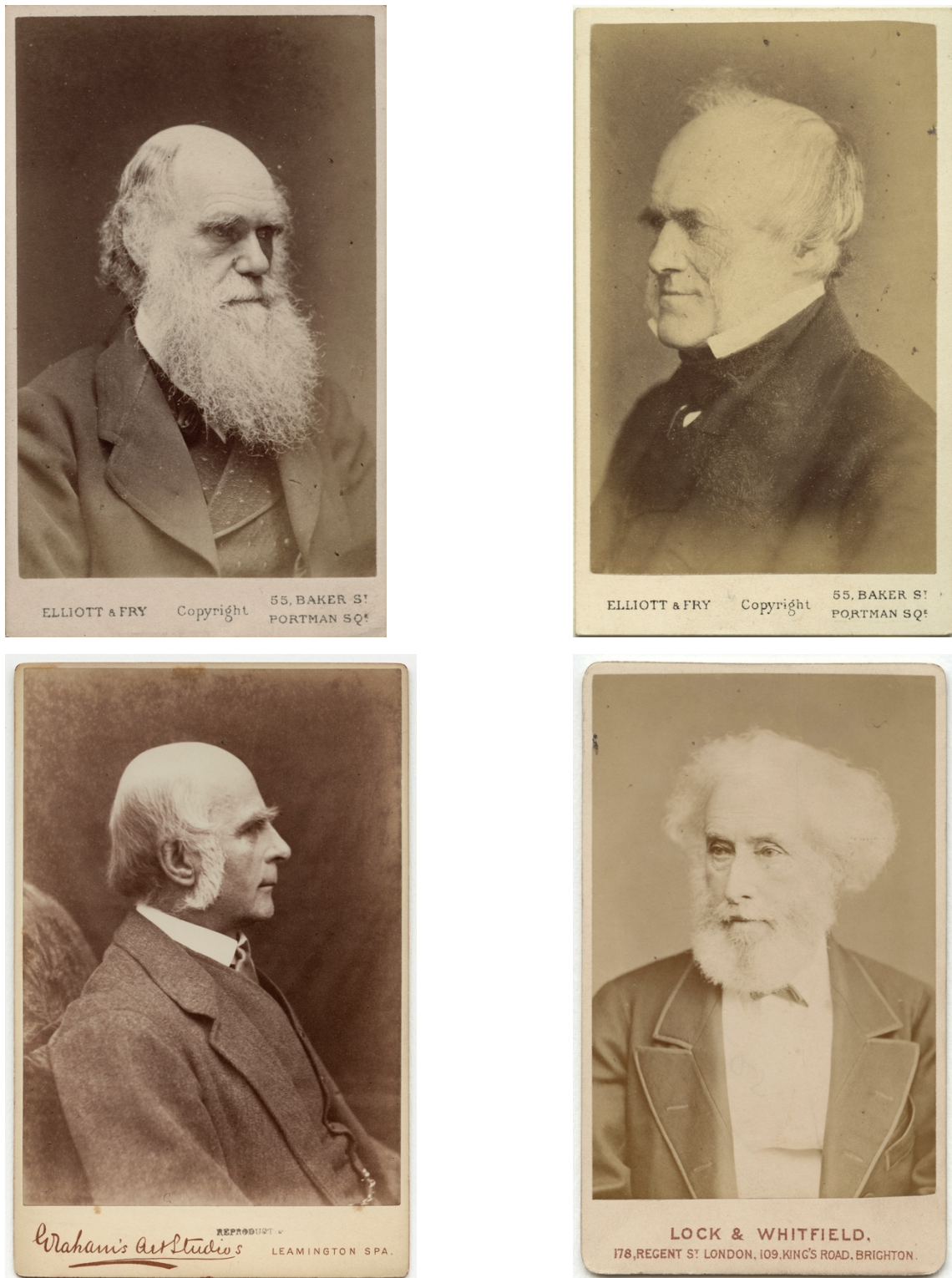


Fig. 1.1–1.4: From top left to bottom right: Charles Darwin by Elliott & Fry, 1874; Sir Charles Lyell by Elliott & Fry, 1860s; Francis Galton by Graham's Art Studios, circa 1890; W. R. Greg by Lock & Whitfield, early 1880s. National Portrait Gallery.

jottings, through his exchanges with Lyell, Galton, and Greg, to his writings in *The Descent of Man*, this chapter explores how evolutionary theorists used antiquity as an intellectual resource to address existing concerns over social development.<sup>50</sup> Thus, we will discuss how these Victorians' views of the Greeks, ancient and modern, reflected their hopes and fears for their own society. One of the surprises in what follows is the prominence of the arguments of W. R. Greg, often remembered for the virulent phrase “the careless, squalid, unambitious Irishman multiplies like rabbits.”<sup>51</sup> Historical analysis reveals that when Darwin came to publish on the topic, he had long been reading and thinking in the public sphere of ideas and, as with his other writings, had accumulated a wealth of diverse considerations. As a record of the state of a discussion, and by highlighting the nuances and differences in the perspectives of these four naturalists, this chapter offers a reappraisal of the relationship between evolutionist racial theory and classical reception. Thus, it expands the discussion on the complexity of Victorian perceptions of antiquity, human progress, and degeneration.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> For a case in point, on June 30, 1860, during the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Oxford, John William Draper (1811–1882), a professor of chemistry at the private New York University, presented a paper just before the now-famous exchange between Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (1805–1873) and Thomas H. Huxley (1825–1895) took place. In the paper, Draper portrayed the Greeks as “the only European nation which thus far has offered a complete and completed intellectual life,” suggesting that “the characteristics of Greek mental development answer perfectly to those of individual life.” See John William Draper, “On the Intellectual Development of Europe, Considered with Reference to the Views of Mr. Darwin and Others, that the Progression of Organisms Is Determined by Law,” in *Report of the Thirtieth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science held at Oxford in June and July 1860—Notes and Abstracts of Miscellaneous Communications to the Sections* (London: John Murray, 1861), 115–16. For a discussion of Draper's understanding of Darwin, see James R. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle with Darwin in Great Britain and America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 19–49.

<sup>51</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1: 174.

<sup>52</sup> The writings on social evolutionism and reception studies are expansive, and ample references to these works can be found in this chapter. These two topics, however, have seldom converged. This chapter builds on current literature, such as Debbie Challis's 2010 essay “‘The Ablest Race’: The Ancient Greeks in Victorian Racial Theory,” in *Classics and Imperialism in British Empire*, ed. Mark

## II. The Greeks, the Victorians, and the Question of Progress and Decline

The eighteenth-century ideological and cultural identification of ancient Greece with Western Europe inspired a host of explanations for Greek achievement and decline, which found their fullest expression in the Romantic era. Since Montesquieu's early writings, republican and rational government, civic manners, and freedom from censorship in the development of arts and knowledge were praised as the foundations of Greek civilization. Conversely, the departure from these principles—political conflict and division—led to Greece's corruption and moral decline. The constant exercise of body and mind aiming to strengthen military prowess morphed into a lack of restraint and physical exhaustion, uncanny adoration of male beauty, and propensity to excess, sensual pleasures, and homosexuality.<sup>53</sup> While the decline of manners, extreme sensuality, and adherence to mysticism became clichéd topics by the early nineteenth century, the Romantics interweaved radical politics against despotism, enslavement, and tyranny, as well as religious and secular arguments, to explain Greek decline and promote their involvement in the War of Independence.<sup>54</sup>

Along with the discourses on progress and degeneration, the rapid development of the historical and social sciences during this period brought Greece to the attention of

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Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Challis explores Galtonian views of the Greeks in the context of Victorian imperialist thought. It also takes inspiration from the pioneering studies of Richard Jenkyns (1980) and Frank M. Turner (1981) on the impact of Greek culture on Victorian intellectual elites and society. John C. Greene's early work on Darwin and social evolution (1977), which discusses the place of Galton's and Greg's arguments in *The Descent of Man*, has also served as a main point of reference.

<sup>53</sup> Damian Valdez, *German Philhellenism: The Pathos of the Historical Imagination from Winckelmann to Goethe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>54</sup> Paul Stock, *The Shelley-Byron Circle and the Idea of Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

physical anthropologists and racial theorists.<sup>55</sup> Greece was interesting not only as the birthplace of European civilization, but also as the border and passage to Europe and, therefore, a terrain of intense ethnic intermixing, with a peculiar landscape that allowed for purity through isolation on islands and high mountains. Within the early Greek state, from around 1830s, the majority of Western-educated local elites and state officials advocated a model of lineal continuity between ancient and modern Greece. However, European audiences were not easily swayed. Paul Stock identifies these tensions and conflicts in the conceptions of Greece “as a European progenitor as well as a corrupted and alien other” among the circles of dedicated philhellenes.<sup>56</sup> Their racialized interpretations saw the Greeks as socially and biologically degenerated by Ottoman rule—and at the same time as direct descendants of the ancients carrying the potential for regeneration.

By the mid-nineteenth century, and as racial theories were becoming a dominant discourse, Western scholars would not abide Greece’s foundational myth.<sup>57</sup> They often contested the suggestion of “the regeneration of Greece and the Greeks, the physical reincarnation of the idea of the ancient past,”<sup>58</sup> and questioned any similarities between the ancient, glorious inhabitants and the contemporary, uneducated, and impoverished populace—among them a figure known to Darwin and his circle, the controversial Scottish anatomist and racial determinist Robert Knox (fig. 1.5). In a series of lectures first

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<sup>55</sup> See Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*; and Ageliki Lefkadiou, “Yet Another Greek Tragedy?,” in *National Races*, 141–74.

<sup>56</sup> Stock, *The Shelley-Byron Circle*, 20.

<sup>57</sup> Yannis Hamilakis explicitly discusses the invention of modern Greece as an interaction between colonial and national processes. See Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007): 58–123.

<sup>58</sup> David Roessel, *In Byron’s Shadow: Modern Greece in the English and American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

published in 1850 under the title *The Races of Men*,<sup>59</sup> Knox suggested that ancient Greeks were a unique amalgam of Scandinavian or Saxon, Celtic, Slavonian, Gothic, and Oriental elements that were mixed with the autochthonous Pelasgi. For Knox, it was the Scandinavian or Saxon race that “contributed mainly, no doubt, to the formation of the



Fig. 1.5: Robert Knox. Lithograph. Wellcome Collection.  
No known copyright.

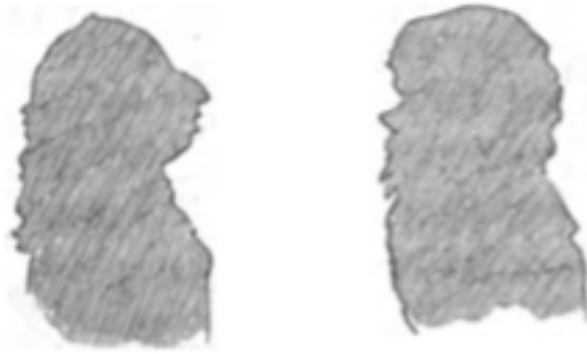
noblest of all men,”<sup>60</sup> and in arguing for the supremacy of his race, he established a clear-cut division between the Greeks of the classical period and the modern occupants of the area (fig. 1.6). “Anti-classic in all things, how Greece has fallen,” he exclaimed.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> On the influence of Greek sculpture on Knox’s work, and especially on the development of a physical conception of English national identity, which made nationalism and Hellenism coextensive, see Leoussi 1997, 1998, 2001.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850), 41.

<sup>61</sup> Knox, *The Races of Men*, 271.





*[The modern Greek and the Muscovite, or Sarmatian; both of the Caucasian race! Mark their resemblance!]*

Fig. 1.6: Comparison between “The modern Greek and the Muscovite, or Sarmatian,” showing how both had fallen from the ancient Greek ideal. Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Influence of Race over the Destiny of Nations* (London: Henry Renshaw, 1862), 44.

Knox’s conceptions of ancient and modern Greece were typical of the Victorian period’s preoccupation with the past and the contested readings of ancient civilizations in terms of progress and decline. Broadly speaking, faith in the inevitability of progress amid rapid societal changes characterized the high-Victorian attitude to a future that was marching toward them.<sup>62</sup> Different and often incommensurate models of progress appealed to diverse social groups, but they all shared a belief in inexorable social improvement. After some of the brightest hopes of the Enlightenment were dashed by the stark realities of rapid industrialization, the prospect of degeneration—of moral, political, intellectual, and racial regress—reared its ugly head. In this newly pessimistic environment, the decline of ancient Greece posed an interesting puzzle. Progress was not inevitable; societies, civilizations, the whole of the human species were subject to unpredictable natural forces. Once again, the Victorians had to reinterpret the past and look for signs of warning in the decaying empires if they did not want to perish as both the

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<sup>62</sup> On the pervasiveness and complexity of the idea of progress in Victorian culture, see Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

Greeks and Romans had done.<sup>63</sup> The intellectual construction of the British Empire was now seen as undoubtedly Greek, and thus Greece was more fitting as “a source of prescriptive values and of illustrative moral and political allusions.”<sup>64</sup>

Notwithstanding the utilitarian and presentist Victorian attitudes toward the past, their society was inordinately fascinated by ancient Greek art, language, philosophy, religion, and political life.<sup>65</sup> Knowledge of the classical world, especially languages, was a privilege reserved for the upper and upper-middle classes, whose children could attend public schools. Indeed, inclusion in the educated elites and intellectual ambition were tied to classical education.<sup>66</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, classics evolved from a symbol of gentlemanly education to a prerequisite for joining the higher ranks of administrative and professional elites.<sup>67</sup> Despite the reign of Greeks and Romans within humanist circles in Oxford and Cambridge, though, classical authority was not uncontested. Darwin’s own relationship with the classics was troubled. Starting at Dr. Butler’s great classical school in Shrewsbury, and continuing with his classical education in preparation for enrolling at Cambridge University in 1828, he found the study of Greek and Latin onerous and uninspiring. He eventually came to support the late-nineteenth century efforts of scientific

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<sup>63</sup> Duncan Bell discusses the disillusionment of British imperial thinkers with the use of the ancient empires of Greece and Rome as exemplars for the British Empire and points to how they instead turned to the present for inspiration. See Bell, “From Ancient to Modern in Victorian Imperial Thought,” *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 3 (2006): 735–59.

<sup>64</sup> Frank M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 4.

<sup>65</sup> See Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980); Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Richard Shanks, *Classical Archaeology of Greece: Experiences of the Discipline* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>66</sup> Stefano Evangelista, *British Aestheticism and Ancient Greece: Hellenism, Reception, Gods in Exile* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>67</sup> Christopher Stray, *Classics Transformed: Schools, Universities, and Society in England, 1830–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

naturalists—many of whom were his own disciples—who campaigned against the iron grip of the classical curriculum on all levels of education to the detriment of sciences.<sup>68</sup>

The following sections show how Lyell, Galton, Greg, and eventually Darwin reworked earlier models of progress and degeneration into new naturalistic explanations. Their arguments intertwine their fascination and disillusionment with ancient Greece with their own commitments to progressive or cyclical change.

### III. Charles Lyell's Grotean Response

The year 1860 was crucial for the reception of Darwin's magnum opus, *On the Origin of Species*. The correspondence between him and Lyell grew more voluminous than ever.<sup>69</sup> As Lyell was preparing his own book on man, he was battling with the obvious implication for human descent that "man is in same predicament with other animals."<sup>70</sup> In an attempt to humor Lyell about the implications of his theory for human ancestry, Darwin wrote:

Our ancestor was an animal which breathed water, had a swim-bladder, a great swimming tail, an imperfect skull & undoubtedly was an hermaphrodite! Here is a pleasant genealogy for mankind.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Darwin's skepticism toward the overpowering influence of the classical system of education is evident in a series of essays edited by Ray Lankester (1918), as well as in his support of a Royal Society fellowship for Rev. F. W. Farrar, a philologist-critic of public-school education (Moore 1979, 95). Waller (2001) mentions Galton's efforts to promote the teaching of science in schools and universities, although his commitment to educational reform was rather weak.

<sup>69</sup> For an account of Lyell's struggle with the implications of evolution for human ancestry and his intense exchanges with Darwin, see Michael Bartholomew, "Lyell and Evolution: An Account of Lyell's Response to the Prospect of an Evolutionary Ancestry for Man," *British Journal for the History of Science* 6, no. 23 (1973): 261–303.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Darwin to Charles Lyell, January 10, 1860, Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 8: 28.

<sup>71</sup> Charles Darwin to Charles Lyell, January 10, 1860, Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 8: 28–29.

Unfavorable reviews were mounting for Darwin's book, and Lyell's support would be of paramount importance. But the idea of erasing the bright line separating man and brute was spiritually offensive to the older naturalist. For Darwin, Lyell's "ever attached disciple,"<sup>72</sup> there was absolutely no need for natural selection to introduce any sharp distinction between man and the rest of nature, even when it came to the issue of intellectual or moral capacities.

In the end, and to Darwin's chagrin, Lyell's book saved man's mind and morals from any association with the apes. Published in 1863, *The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man* suggested a unique mechanism for the appearance of humans, a sudden leap that separated them abruptly from any other animal form.<sup>73</sup> Even so, Lyell's interest in the relationship between natural selection and intellectual powers was genuine, a "knotty spiritual inner debate,"<sup>74</sup> which he recorded as an intense "private dialogue with Darwinism" in a series of seven volumes containing "a rich mix of natural history notes, geological jottings, theological threnes, and metaphysical musings."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Charles Darwin to Charles Lyell, October 20, 1859, Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 7: 354. Darwin's and Lyell's relationship was much more complex—and at times tense—than this valediction implies. For a discussion of specific aspects of their disagreements on human descent, see Bartholomew "Lyell and Evolution," and especially on the issues of slavery and human descent, see Desmond and Moore (2009).

<sup>73</sup> William F. Bynum, "Charles Lyell's 'Antiquity of Man' and Its Critics," *Journal of the History of Biology* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 153–87. As Bynum notes, many of Lyell's scientific contemporaries did not see the book as a grand synthesis, but mainly as a compilation of mostly known facts with no internal unity, which still managed to keep biological and social issues apart contrary to Victorian anthropological fashion.

<sup>74</sup> Bartholomew, "Lyell and Evolution."

<sup>75</sup> Jonathan Hodge, "Sir Charles Lyell's Scientific Journals on the Species Question," *Isis* 62, no. 1 (1971): 119.

It is in these volumes that in March 1860 Lyell kept a record of his discussion with Darwin about the status of the Greeks.<sup>76</sup> Out of Darwin's closest circle of friends, supporters, and frequent correspondents, Lyell probably had the most intimate relationship with the classics, as he had originally graduated with a BA with honors in classics in 1819.<sup>77</sup> But his knowledge and understanding of the ancient world was greatly influenced and augmented by George Grote's (1794–1871) twelve-volume *History of Greece*,<sup>78</sup> in which fifth-century BCE Athenian democracy was reinvented in the image of mid-Victorian democratic, critical rationalism. Grote's history was quoted twice in the few paragraphs considered here.

Lyell began his account with a sharp criticism of powerful, state-sanctioned religious establishments, and the resulting restrictions on civil liberties and freedom of opinion. He explained:

The Greeks were the only civilized people in antiquity who unlike the Egyptians, Chinese, Hindoos, had no regular organized priesthood. Only certain families had oracles & temples, but not the State, so that there was more

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<sup>76</sup> Leonard G. Wilson, ed., *Sir Charles Lyell's Scientific Journals on the Species Question* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

<sup>77</sup> Martin Rudwick, "Lyell, Sir Charles, First Baronet (1797–1875,)" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17243>.

<sup>78</sup> George Grote, *A History of Greece: From the Earliest Period to the Close of the Generation Contemporary with Alexander the Great*, rev. ed., 12 vols. (1846–1856; repr., London: John Murray, 1869–1870). An edited collection by Kyriacos N. Demetriou (2003) documents the reception of Grote's work in its historical and intellectual context, while Turner (1993) provides a brief account of Grote's influence on Victorian science. Alexandra Lianeri also engages with Grote's historiography as indispensably connected to his political pursuits; exalting the benefits of democracy and cautioning against the limits of imperial despotism, see "The Persian Wars as the 'Origin' of Historiography: Ancient and Modern Orientalism in George Grote's History of Greece" in *Cultural Responses to the Persian Wars: Antiquity to the Third Millennium*, eds. Emma Bridges, Edith Hall, and P.J. Rhodes (New York: Oxford University Press 2007), 331–53.

freedom for new schools of philosophy, less Danger in Magna Graecia & Etruria of setting up new opinions & doctrines, moral or political.<sup>79</sup>

Lyell was a deist throughout his life, but his attitudes toward religious institutions were more complex. In 1831, when appointed as a professor of geology at King's College in London, only the first volume of his *Principles of Geology* had appeared.<sup>80</sup> His views on creation and biblical events, such as the Flood, caused some distress among the clergymen in the institution's governing body,<sup>81</sup> but the reasons for his not continuing in his post after 1833 need to be investigated further. While Lyell himself alluded to the bishops being dissatisfied with the content of his lectures, he never openly supported attacks on the clergy or public feeling toward the Church.<sup>82</sup> On the matter of religious practice, however, Lyell as a leading member of the Whig party could not have been but a pluralist committed to supporting the rights of religious minorities.<sup>83</sup> The view of Athenian democracy as an exemplar of enlightened tolerance and rational government—stemming from Grote's radical historical revision—fitted very well with the hostility of liberal thinkers toward the oppressive dogma and practices of Catholicism, of which the Church of Spain was considered to provide the crudest model. The democratic constitution of Athens was in no way comparable to “the Spanish Inquisition selecting every original thinker and burning him.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Wilson, *Sir Charles Lyell's Scientific Journals on the Species Question*, 364.

<sup>80</sup> Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology: Being an Attempt to Explain the Former Changes of the Earth's Surface, by Reference to Causes Now in Operation*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1830–1833).

<sup>81</sup> For example, Rudwick in “Lyell, Sir Charles, First Baronet (1797–1875,” refers to the worries raised by bishop and moral philosopher Edward Copleston (1776–1849).

<sup>82</sup> Bartholomew, “Lyell and Evolution,” 267–68.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Mandler, *Liberty and Authority in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 91.

<sup>84</sup> Wilson, *Sir Charles Lyell's Scientific Journals on the Species Question*, 365.

Echoing once again Grote's celebratory presentation of classical republicanism, Lyell discussed one of the grimmest times for Athens: the execution of Socrates. Instead of focusing on Socrates's final condemnation, Lyell emphasized that it was impossible to find a modern community that would show such tolerance toward someone who taught truths distasteful to the establishment for more than fifty years. This unique balance between constitutional democracy and individual freedom of thought, as well as an openness to new ideas and critique of authoritarian texts, served for Lyell as the context that allowed the high intellectual abilities of ancient Greeks both to flourish and to serve as a paradigm for Victorian emulation. The identification between Grote and Lyell was noticed by Huxley, who wrote that "Grote's 'History of Greece' is a product of the same intellectual movement as Lyell's 'Principles.'"<sup>85</sup> This alignment was a matter not just of political sympathies but also of methodological approach and worldview. Grote and Lyell belonged to the same intellectual tradition that attempted to provide explanations based on the identification of past and present causes. Grote sought to identify the causes for the blossoming and withering of the ancient Greek intellect by closely listening to and observing his contemporaries. In turn, Lyell's scientific endeavor was based on the synthetic principle of uniformity, which posited that past events could be understood in terms of forces operating with the same intensity in the present and that earth's processes do not change in one specific direction.<sup>86</sup> He then used the lenses constructed by this

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<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Francis Darwin, ed., *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin Including an Autobiographical Chapter*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1887), vol. 2: 190.

<sup>86</sup> For example, using uniformity as an interpretive principle, Lyell strove to gather all available evidence on coral reefs without ever seeing one in order to infer their formation as the result of slow processes of elevation and subsidence—both causes discernible in the present, see James Bowen, *The Coral Reef Era: From Discovery to Decline* (Dordrecht: Springer International, 2015), 37–38. Michael Bartholomew discusses the novelty of Lyell's ideas, their contemporary reception, and his vision: "a world in which constant geological forces supply an endless permutation of life-support conditions, and of a creator who constantly slots in appropriate species," see "The Singularity of Lyell," *History of Science* 17, no. 4 (1979): 281.

framework to understand the history of the earth and thus extrapolate social trajectories from that.

Lyell remained elusive, however, on the thorny issue of why human intellect had not managed to surpass that of the ancient Greeks and whether that could pose a problem for evolution by natural selection. He had no doubt that, in the case of the ancient Greeks, a continuous exercise of the mind in an ideal “republican or constitutional form” sustained the whole race for a period long enough—five hundred years—to allow “for craniological & cerebral improvement as well as for increases of beauty of form so much adored by the Greeks.”<sup>87</sup> Even though Lyell alluded to the small size of the population of Greece as a possible explanation for its decline and emphasized the apparent “fitness for improvement” that the northern nations exhibited when they came into contact with classical writers, he offered no explicit reasons for the fall of the Greeks.<sup>88</sup> He did, however, come back to and elevate what he considered to be the most didactic aspect of this story:

The Greeks were disciplined by a keen competition of rival races, much selection owing to that, emulation, freedom of thought, less persecution for new ideas and opinions than elsewhere, a less rich endowment of certain doctrines deemed to be infallible.<sup>89</sup>

As a result of its geographical position—being surrounded by competitors—and probably its ambition to expand into new colonies, the Greek population was constantly under selection pressure, with the strongest and ablest surviving intense warfare. On top of that, liberal Athenian society provided the ideal environment for its citizens to reach their fullest

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<sup>87</sup> Wilson, *Sir Charles Lyell's Scientific Journals on the Species Question*, 364.

<sup>88</sup> Wilson, *Sir Charles Lyell's Scientific Journals on the Species Question*, 365.

<sup>89</sup> Wilson, *Sir Charles Lyell's Scientific Journals on the Species Question*, 365.



capacity and to achieve the high intellectual achievements and beauty that all men would in similar favorable circumstances.

Reflecting the earlier assumption that moral corruption led the classical world to its end, Lyell exalted the “moral dignity & favour” of the Turks, who until recently had occupied the areas of ancient Greece. He suggested that their superior moral character could possibly explain why they had managed to conquer a race possessing a much greater intellect.<sup>90</sup> Modern scholars have written extensively about European perceptions of the Turks and how the association of modern Greece with its Ottoman past had put a taint of barbarism over an idealized Hellas.<sup>91</sup> Greece was “Ur-Europa and humiliated oriental vassal at one and the same time,” as anthropologist Michael Herzfeld has phrased it.<sup>92</sup> But Lyell’s notes do not project this exact sentiment.<sup>93</sup> On the contrary, a certain admiration for the moral qualities and grace of the Turks is evident. It seems that for Lyell, at least, the Turks were a much better option than the Spanish Inquisition. And moral dignity was certainly of great importance; after all, the threat to the dignity of man had been Lyell’s biggest difficulty with Darwin’s theory.

Lyell also provides a rather surprising suggestion with regard to the relationship between ancient and modern Greeks:

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<sup>90</sup> Wilson, *Sir Charles Lyell’s Scientific Journals on the Species Question*, 364.

<sup>91</sup> Ellie Scopetea has written extensively on how Western values and stereotypes have influenced the ways Balkan people perceive one another. Scopetea, “The Balkans and the Notion of the ‘Crossroads between East and West’,” in *Greece and the Balkans: Identities, Perceptions, and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment*, ed. Dimitris Tziouvas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 171–76.

<sup>92</sup> Michael Herzfeld, *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19.

<sup>93</sup> However, Lyell arguably shared in Victorian stereotypes: Bilgili (2017) shows that such images of the Turks circulated widely and even penetrated Darwin’s writings.

Both then, the improved intellect and beauty, remain after 2,000 years . . . .  
 Years of oppression have not prevented the Greek race from retaining their  
 superiority in other respects.<sup>94</sup>

Thus, he saw the “Greek race” as a continuous community with specific characteristics that could be attributed to both culture and biology. Lyell did not, however, offer any further explanation as to how this cultural and/or biological continuity was established. The only possibility would be that another power, higher than nature, was responsible for such qualities as intellect and a taste for beauty. Through the intervention of “the far greater mind ultimately responsible for the intelligibility of all material things,”<sup>95</sup> Lyell could welcome the ancient Greeks as his distant relatives. Retaining a genealogical connection between ancient and modern Greeks made the continuity between the former and the rest of the Europeans appear more plausible. Not disturbing this ancestral line preserved his own—and humanity’s—high genealogy.

#### **IV. William Rathbone Greg: The View of an Insider**

We do not know much about Darwin’s relationship with William Rathbone Greg.<sup>96</sup> Their correspondence indicates that that the two men had met in person; Greg wrote: “as I think I mentioned to you the other day viva voce,”<sup>97</sup> and Darwin replied that by a weird

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<sup>94</sup> Wilson, *Sir Charles Lyell’s Scientific Journals on the Species Question*, 364–65.

<sup>95</sup> Hodge, “Sir Charles Lyell’s Scientific Journals on the Species Question,” 120.

<sup>96</sup> Aspects of Darwin and Greg’s relationship are discussed in Kirsop (1979). For biographical information on Greg, see John Morley, “Essay 7: W. R. Greg: A Sketch.” in *Critical Miscellanies* (London: Macmillan, 1886); and Mary B. Rose, *The Gregs of Quarry Bank Mill: The Rise and Decline of a Family Firm, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). See also Ritchard J. Helmstadter, “W. R. Greg: A Manchester Creed,” in *Victorian Faith in Crisis: Essays on Continuity and Change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Belief*, eds. Richard J. Helmstadter and Bernard V. Lightman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 187–222.

<sup>97</sup> W. R. Greg to Charles Darwin, March 14, 1871, Darwin Correspondence Project, “Letter no. 7581,” accessed on 21 July 2021, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-7581.xml>.

coincidence “a Stranger” wrote to him that very same day making the same suggestions.<sup>98</sup> A couple of other letters suggest some kind of acquaintance but not a close friendship.<sup>99</sup> During their earlier days, they had both studied in Edinburgh and attended meetings of the Plinian Society. At one of those meetings, and in the presence of Darwin, Greg argued the highly materialistic view of the phrenologists that human faculties were “anchored in neural matter” and “animals possess all the human faculties.”<sup>100</sup>

Their time in Edinburgh ended sooner than expected; Darwin left in April 1827, and Greg abandoned his studies in March 1829 after his mother’s death in order to manage one of the family mills in Bury. He soon made a name for himself as a leading publicist and essayist, writing more than 150 essays for major Victorian periodicals, including among others the *Westminster Review*, the *Edinburgh Review*, *Frazer’s Magazine*, the *North British Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, and the *Contemporary Review*.<sup>101</sup>

After his work had been incorporated in *The Descent of Man*, Greg sent a letter of praise to Darwin accompanied by a “broad packet” containing his speculations on “the cause of the varying proportions of male & female births” in London.<sup>102</sup> Greg’s calculations

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<sup>98</sup> Charles Darwin to W. R. Greg, March 21, 1871, *Correspondence*, vol. 19: 201–02.

<sup>99</sup> In March 1871, Greg wrote to Darwin about the decline in height of French army recruits. W. R. Greg to Charles Darwin, March 2, 1871, Darwin Correspondence Database, accessed June 6, 2013, <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-7532>. In 1878, Darwin wrote to Greg about Percy Greg’s (W. R. Greg’s son) criticisms of natural selection and evolution. Charles Darwin to W. R. Greg, December 31, 1878, Darwin Correspondence Database, accessed June 6, 2013, <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-11812>.

<sup>100</sup> Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin’s Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 47, 34, and footnote 18.

<sup>101</sup> A search in *The Nineteenth Century Index* produced 269 results—a number big enough to sustain Greg and his family. By the 1850s, he was a regular columnist in the *Economist* and also held a post in the Board of Customs. Among his most widely read works are *The Creed of Christendom; Its Foundations and Superstructure* (1851); and *Enigmas of Life* (1872).

<sup>102</sup> W. R. Greg to Charles Darwin, March 14, 1871, Darwin Correspondence Project, “Letter no. 7581,” accessed on 21 July 2021, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-7581.xml>.

were mainly of a statistical nature and therefore mentioned Francis Galton as someone who might take interest in pursuing this research further. By the end of the letter, Greg returned to his Edinburgh years of phrenological enthusiasm. He provided Darwin with information from his then craniological observations on the matter of a strongly marked sagittal crest in adult male gorillas and certain other monkeys and the presence of a similar difference between the two sexes in Australians, which Darwin briefly discussed in *The Descent of Man*.<sup>103</sup> What Greg recalled was observing the same difference in a couple of ancient Irish skulls from his collection that led him to the conclusion “that the Irish remained always children, or assimilated more than we do to the lower animals.”<sup>104</sup>

Darwin responded positively to Greg’s letter, offering cautious remarks on this “curious” manuscript, and even his son George Darwin’s mathematical expertise on the matter, along with some encouragement for publication.<sup>105</sup> The opening paragraph of Darwin’s response portrays Greg as “a man who possesses such varied & odd knowledge” and as an “acute reasoner.”<sup>106</sup> Indeed, Greg seemed to effortlessly integrate his early phrenological and natural-history studies with political, economic, social, and even religious questions.<sup>107</sup> His characteristic style of reasoning is evident in an article that appeared in *Fraser’s Magazine* under the title “On the Failure of ‘Natural Selection’ in the Case of Man,” in which Greg dealt with the possible challenge that the high status of

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<sup>103</sup> Darwin, *Descent of Man*, 2: 318–19.

<sup>104</sup> W. R. Greg to Charles Darwin, March 14, 1871, on the top of the letter Darwin noted “Nothing of any consequence for me,” Darwin Correspondence Project, “Letter no. 7581,” accessed on 21 July 2021, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-7581.xml>.

<sup>105</sup> Charles Darwin to W. R. Greg, March 21, 1871, Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 19: 201–202.

<sup>106</sup> Charles Darwin to W. R. Greg, March 21, 1871, Darwin Correspondence Project, “Letter no. 7609,” accessed on 21 July 2021, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-7609.xml>.

<sup>107</sup> Wallace Kirsop, “W. R. Greg and Charles Darwin in Edinburgh and After—An Antipodean Gloss,” *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 7, no. 13 (1979): 376–90.

ancient Greece posed for natural selection.<sup>108</sup> Before turning to this paper, however, it's worth examining what makes Greg's case even more interesting: his early engagement with the Greek context.

In 1831, Greg set off for a year of travel in France, Switzerland, and Italy, but the ruins of Rome left him disillusioned.<sup>109</sup> Lusting for adventure and danger, he decided to venture to Greece—the newly liberated state with its muddy streets crammed by a lively crowd of natives, merchants, travelers, topographers, missionaries, and soldiers. What he saw when he first laid eyes on Athens was no more than a discordant mix of half-built houses, tents, and scattered ruins. Yet upon his return to England, this image of Greece inspired him to publish an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Greece and Turkey: With the Present Condition and Future Prospects of the Turkish Empire*.<sup>110</sup> His sentiments were made clear right on the title page, where he quoted the following verses from John Milton's *Areopagitica*:

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> W. R. Greg, "On the Failure of 'Natural Selection' in the Case of Man," *Fraser's Magazine* 68 (September 1868): 353–362.

<sup>109</sup> For an extensive discussion on traveling and tourism during the Victorian era, see Buzard (1993); and Hulme and Youngs (2002).

<sup>110</sup> W. R. Greg, *Sketches in Greece and Turkey: With the Present Conditions and Future Prospects of the Turkish Empire* (London: James Ridgway, 1833).

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Greg, *Sketches in Greece and Turkey*. John Milton's pamphlet *Areopagitica*, the title invoking the classical court of Athens Areopagus, was his response to the licensing order issued by Parliament in 1663. Milton wrote this dialogic text, which now stands as a hallmark of freedom of expression and civil liberty, to defend the (educated) English public's ability to judge a text without it being republished and thus censored. For a discussion of the role of Milton's text and the more

The metaphor of the nation rising to its past glorious youth attests to Greg's vision of Athens as still possessing something of its former splendor, but more importantly the possibility of revival. He of course saw modern Greeks as degraded, a common theme in most travel narratives of his time.<sup>112</sup> Unlike his fellow Victorians, though, who were interested in the famous sites and the ruins—and careful enough not to mingle with the unfortunate inhabitants of this now poor land—Greg's intentions were distinctively different. He was “much surprised at the deficient and erroneous impressions” that prevailed in his country regarding the Greek people and hoped “to remedy these deficiencies.”<sup>113</sup> Greg's words echo the hopes generated by the Greek War of Independence in “the recollection of what Greece once was, and the prospect of what she may again become.”<sup>114</sup> His belief in this prospect is nowhere more evident than when he argued that in spite of their “painful” current condition, the Greeks “contain in their own character and circumstances the seeds of high intellectual eminence, and extended national prosperity.”<sup>115</sup>

Some of Greg's descriptions betray his previous association with phrenology and his interest in the human condition. With a keen eye for observation, he searched for “true specimens” in “the wilder and remoter places” and “in every variety of circumstance and situation.” In pages full of lyrical narratives, the Greeks—with their “astonishing quickness

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than twenty thousand pamphlets by other authors that were printed during the English Revolution, see Achinstein (1994).

<sup>112</sup> See Robert Eisner, *Travelers to an Antique Land: The History and Literature of Travel to Greece* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); Effie-Fotini Athanassopoulos, “An ‘Ancient’ Landscape: European Ideals, Archaeology, and Nation Building in Early Modern Greece,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 20, no. 2 (2002): 273–305; and Deborah Harlan, “Travel, Pictures, and a Victorian Gentleman in Greece,” *Hesperia* 78, no. 3 (2009): 421–53.

<sup>113</sup> Greg, *Sketches in Greece and Turkey*, v–vi.

<sup>114</sup> Greg, *Sketches in Greece and Turkey*, vii.

<sup>115</sup> Greg, *Sketches in Greece and Turkey*, 205.

of perception,” “facility of acquisition,” “capacity of retention,” “finesse and intriguing spirit”—still carried the hallmarks of their ancestors. Even the riotous chiefs, still fighting against one another, were presented as men with “delicacy” and “confiding kindness” who offered him “unsolicited hospitality” and “generous and liberal assistance.” For Greg, the Albanians, from whom a large proportion of modern Greeks was believed to have descended, stood in stark contrast: “a notoriously wild and savage race of mountaineers,” “a crowd of robbers and plunderers by profession, without discipline, and without restraint.” In these pages, the only other people painted in such unflattering colors were the priests. Their “unlimited influence over the weak minds of the people,” combined with their “gross ignorance” and “blemished character,” ran contrary to Greg’s Unitarian ethos.<sup>116</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, Greg’s *Fraser’s Magazine* article discussed the issue of Greek decline with confidence. After all, his agenda was quite different. Greg’s faith in the principle of natural selection working as a law to check the development of human races was unshakeable. Darwin’s evolutionary theory, the “substantial truth” of which “nearly all qualified men to form an opinion” were convinced, had supplanted his earlier belief that the extinction of aboriginals was an act of Divine Providence.<sup>117</sup> The potential threat that could cause that “righteous and salutary law”—that is, natural selection—to fail was a state of social progress and culture that did not allow the weaker in form, morals, and intellect to perish.<sup>118</sup> Benefiting from a civilized society’s protection, those who “would have been pushed out of existence, jostled aside in the struggle and the race, and left by the way to die” were being “fostered, flattered, married, and empowered to hand down their

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<sup>116</sup> Greg, *Sketches in Greece and Turkey*, 189–206.

<sup>117</sup> Greg, “On the Failure of ‘Natural Selection’ in the Case of Man,” 353. For the differences between Greg’s and Darwin’s views on exterminations, see Desmond and Moore (2009), 145–46.

<sup>118</sup> Greg, “On the Failure of ‘Natural Selection’ in the Case of Man,” 356.

vapid incapacities to numerous offspring.”<sup>119</sup> For Greg, the possibility of degenerates outbreeding their superiors was the real problem—one that required immediate attention.<sup>120</sup>

Greg’s understanding of human evolution allowed him to explain away the Greek decline without posing any threat to the progressivist aspects of evolutionary theory. The Romans, who had a “coarser organization and less developed brain,” managed to overpower “the finest physical and intellectual nature that has yet appeared upon the earth” for two main reasons. First, “the Greeks, when they succumbed, had fallen away from the perfection of their palmier days; they were enervated and corrupt to the very core.” Second, the Romans possessed another competitive advantage; a “robuster will and unequalled political genius.”<sup>121</sup> While Greg subscribed to the overall Victorian fascination with Greece, he also accepted the common assumption of nineteenth-century scholars that the supreme cultural maturity of the fifth century BCE was succeeded by decay and enfeeblement. In turn, this understanding led him to suggest that the Romans similarly declined due to their loss of vitality, taste for extreme luxury, and ultimately self-defeating success. The arguments presented here mirror the general late-nineteenth-century fear of degeneration, but they are also indicative of Greg’s moralist, conservative, and antidemocratic trajectory.<sup>122</sup> His early lyrical descriptions and faith in human possibilities through the beneficial action of natural selection in the competition between races and nations had decisively given way to alarmist bigotry and contempt for the working classes.

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<sup>119</sup> Greg, “On the Failure of ‘Natural Selection’ in the Case of Man,” 359.

<sup>120</sup> Robert J. Richards, “Darwin on Mind, Morals and Emotions,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin*, eds. Jonathan Hodge and Gregory Radick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 104–105.

<sup>121</sup> Greg, “On the Failure of ‘Natural Selection’ in the Case of Man,” 357.

<sup>122</sup> Desmond and Moore (2009) offer evidence of Greg’s journey from his Edinburgh radicalism to conservatism, already evident after he returned to run the Bury mill.



## V. Francis Galton and “a Magnificent Breed of Human Animals”<sup>123</sup>

In the spring of 1840, Charles Darwin’s younger cousin Francis Galton—much like Greg a few years earlier—was feeling overwhelmed by a desire to travel as if he “had been a migratory bird.”<sup>124</sup> Allured by Byron’s poetic descriptions of the East, he set off first for Vienna before finally reaching Istanbul, Smyrna, and Greece. When he landed on the Greek island of Syros, he was placed in quarantine for ten days due to a plague outbreak (fig. 1.7). Galton described his stay at the newly established lazaretto, the quarantine station, as a period of rest, which passed pleasantly, despite his rooms being “like those of a khan, wholly unfurnished,” and the guardian who followed him as a prisoner “supplying bedding and food at moderate cost.”<sup>125</sup> His confinement though did not allow him enough time to visit Athens, where he only “had [a] few, but memorable hours” on his way back to Trieste.<sup>126</sup> One can probably imagine the impact of seeing Athens for someone who as a young boy found great pleasure in reciting verses from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and had his “little head full of Greeks and Trojans.”<sup>127</sup> However, Galton would fully reveal his thoughts and sentiments toward the ancient land of Greece not in his famous travel narratives but almost thirty years later in the book *Hereditary Genius*, which set him on the path to becoming the father, or the “founder of the faith” of eugenics.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> The quotation refers to Galton’s description of the ancient Greek people. Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into Its Laws and Consequences* (London: MacMillan, 1869), 341.

<sup>124</sup> Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1908), 48.

<sup>125</sup> Galton, *Memories*, 53–54. On the lazaretto of Syros, see Enid M. Slatter, “The New Lazaretto at Siros (Syra), Greece, in 1840,” *Medical History* 28 (1984): 73–80.

<sup>126</sup> Galton, *Memories*, 54.

<sup>127</sup> Galton, *Memories*, 16.

<sup>128</sup> See Daniel J. Kelves, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 3. Other widely cited and/or recent biographies of Galton, include Michael Bulmer, *Francis Galton: Pioneer of Heredity and Biometry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *Sir Francis Galton and the Study of Heredity in the Nineteenth*

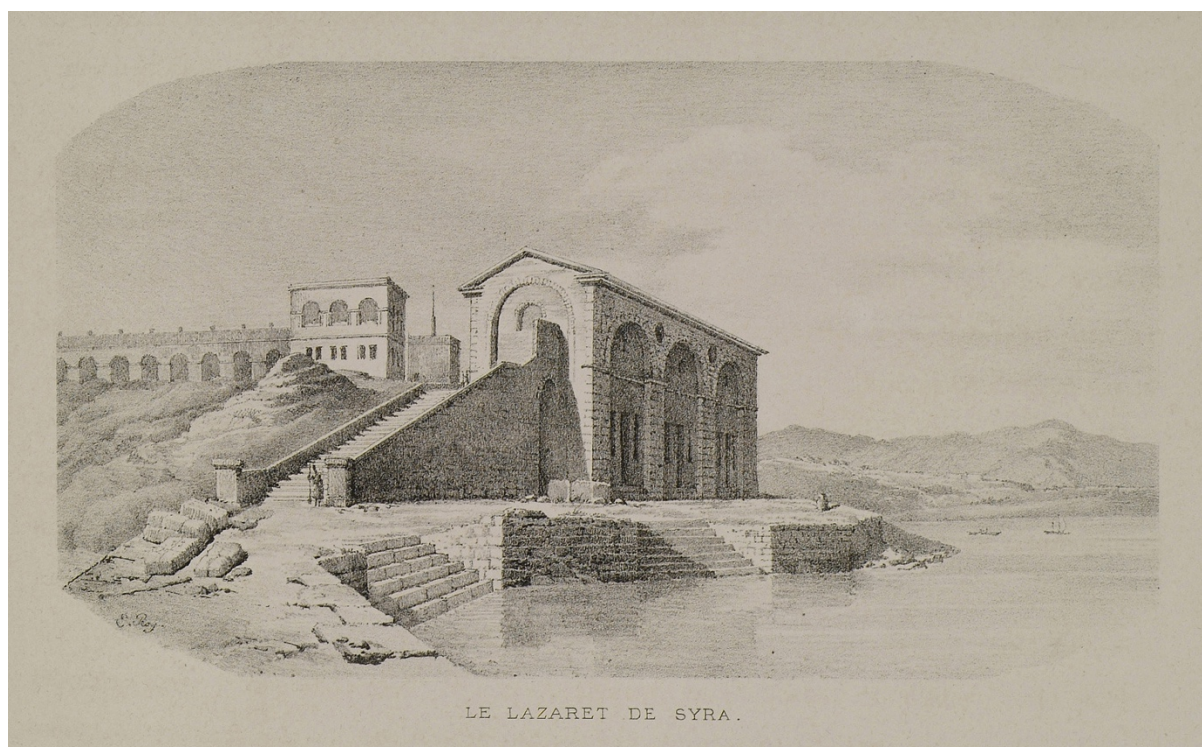


Fig. 1.7: The newly built quarantine station, known as Lazaretto of Syros, around 1840. Published in Étienne Rey, *Voyage pittoresque en Grèce et dans le Levant fait en 1843-1844 par E. Ray, peintre, et A. Chenavard, architecte, Professeurs à l' Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, Membres de l' Académie des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de ladite ville, Correspondants*, vols I-II (Lyon: Louis Perrin, 1867).

As Galton recollected in his autobiography, from the 1860s on, his subjects of investigation were all centered around the “central topics of Heredity and the possible improvement of the Human Race.”<sup>129</sup> Darwin’s scientific naturalism had a profound impact on Galton’s thinking.<sup>130</sup> He expressed his enthusiasm for Darwin’s theory with the following words:

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*Century* (New York: Garland Pub., 1985); Derek W. Forrest, *Francis Galton: The Life and Work of a Victorian Genius* (London: Paul Elek, 1974); and Nicholas W. Gillham, *A Life of Sir Francis Galton: From African Exploration to the Birth of Eugenics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>129</sup> Galton, *Memories*, 288.

<sup>130</sup> For a very interesting discussion of how Galton’s research program took off only after he distanced himself from contemporary traditional biological thinking, see Chris Renwick, “From

I have laid it down in the full enjoyment of a feeling that one rarely experiences after boyish days, of having been initiated into an entirely new province of knowledge which, nevertheless, connects itself with other things in a thousand ways.<sup>131</sup>

Looking back at the reception and impact of Darwinian theory, Galton acknowledged in those writings “a spirit of rebellion against all ancient authorities whose positive and unauthenticated statements were contradicted by modern science.”<sup>132</sup> In this sense, as Turner has suggested, Darwin and other intellectual radicals and cultural apostates of the 1830s and 1840s forged a new faith based on “naturalism, religious experiment, and subjective aesthetic response.”<sup>133</sup>

Galton’s *Hereditary Genius*, based on a two-part essay published in *Macmillan’s Magazine* in 1865 under the title “Hereditary Talent and Character,” envisioned improving the human stock through some form of selective breeding.<sup>134</sup> Charles Darwin had made the analogy between artificial selection and natural selection, metaphorically extending the

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Political Economy to Sociology: Francis Galton and the Social-Scientific Origins of Eugenics,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 44, no. 3 (2011), 343–369.

<sup>131</sup> Francis Galton to Charles Darwin, December 9, 1859, Burkhardt and Smith, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 7: 417.

<sup>132</sup> Galton, *Memories*, 287.

<sup>133</sup> Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*, 72. For a discussion of the uneasy relationship between Galton and the professionalization of his contemporaries in the life sciences, see John C. Waller, “Gentlemanly Men of Science: Sir Francis Galton and the Professionalization of the British Life-sciences,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 34 (2001), 83–114.

<sup>134</sup> For Galton’s life and scientific program, see the classical biography by Karl Pearson, Galton’s friend and associate. Later biographies of Galton include Gillham (2001) and Bulmer (2003). Chris Renwick’s “From Political Economy to Sociology” (2011) sets Galton’s contributions in a broader context, showing how social concerns and questions shaped his program at least as much as biological ones.

familiar everyday practice of the livestock breeder to nature's workings.<sup>135</sup> Galton took an even more challenging step. He turned humans into animal stock and proposed "to produce a highly-gifted race of men by judicious marriages during several consecutive generations."<sup>136</sup> By carefully examining biological kinship among eminent men, he concluded that character and talent follow family lines, and thus had to be attributed to the action of hereditary laws, which act in much the same way with respect to mental and physical features across the entire organic world.

With these convictions in mind, he then set out to measure and classify English men according to their natural abilities. Toward the end of the book, he compared his compatriots with the inhabitants of ancient Athens, "the ablest race of whom history bears record."<sup>137</sup> In the ancient Athenians, Galton saw a perfect case study that would both highlight the advantages of selective breeding for high intelligence and caution his fellow Victorians about the possibility of degeneration, if appropriate measures were not taken.

In a spirit of enthusiasm for quantitative inquiry, Galton ventured to prove the mental superiority of the Greeks. He devoted over two long pages of calculations estimating the number of eminent men in the total population of Athens of the fifth century BCE, and then compared his conclusions to those of English men. The comparison between the projected Athenian standard of ability and that of his "race" and time showed that:

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<sup>135</sup> On how questions related to animal breeding influenced discussions on the regulation of human reproduction, and how Darwin's theory impacted Galton's views and vice versa, see Diane B. Paul and James Moore, "The Darwinian Context: Evolution and Inheritance," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 27–42.

<sup>136</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 1.

<sup>137</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 340.

the average ability of the Athenian race is, on the lowest possible estimate, very nearly two grades higher than our own—that is, about as much as our race is above that of the African negro.<sup>138</sup>

Darwin, impressed by Galton's argument, characterized it as "ingenious and original"<sup>139</sup> and included it in *The Descent of Man*, along with several other references to *Hereditary Genius*. As Darwin wrote to his cousin, "I must exhale myself, else something will go wrong in my inside. I do not think I ever in all my life read anything more interesting and original."<sup>140</sup> For Galton, combining his classical education with pioneering statistical analysis had the potential to transform the study of Greek and Latin from a gentlemanly activity to one of practical, scientific knowledge. The biostatistician Karl Pearson (1857–1936), in his biography of Galton, however, remained largely unimpressed by some calculation errors and "the impressionism of individual personal judgment" that led Galton to equate, for example, Plato and Bacon.<sup>141</sup> For Pearson, the frequent citations of the argument represented nothing more than "a strange illustration of human love of dogmas," in this case cultivated by the judgment of classical scholars dwelling for too long on the study of a single culture.<sup>142</sup> Pearson's response reveals the eventual disillusionment with the classical past as a model for British society but also the intense efforts—dating back to the latter half of the nineteenth century—to abolish the once dominant classical system of education in favor of a more science-oriented curriculum. In any case, he

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<sup>138</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 341–42.

<sup>139</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1: 177.

<sup>140</sup> Francis Darwin and A. C. Seward, eds., *More Letters of Charles Darwin* (London: John Murray, 1903), 41.

<sup>141</sup> Karl Pearson, *The Life, Letters and Labours of Francis Galton*, 3 vols. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1914–1930), vol. 2, 107–09.

<sup>142</sup> Pearson, *The Life, Letters and Labours of Francis Galton*, vol. 2, 108.

observed that Galton introduced this argument “to point out that races could by judicious organization raise their intellectual grade.”<sup>143</sup>

What made the Greek case even more remarkable for Galton was the fact that Greece was a small country bounded by the sea and that “the population that gave birth to the creators of those master-pieces was very small.”<sup>144</sup> In spite of these apparent shortcomings, the high intelligence of the Greeks sustained them—a great case for the possibility of improving the whole human race through selective breeding for this trait. Galton (1869, 341) made this point even clearer by adding that:

Athens opened her arms to immigrants, but not indiscriminately, for her social life was such that none but very able men could take any pleasure in it; on the other hand, she offered attractions such as men of the highest ability and culture could find in no other city.<sup>145</sup>

This “system of partly unconscious selection” that resulted in building up “a magnificent breed of human animals” could go a long way to strengthen Galton’s aspirations.<sup>146</sup> If unconscious selection could maintain a population of the highest intelligence, even among not so favorable circumstances, then a carefully organized system of breeding could have immensely positive effects on contemporary societies.

But if controlled immigration resulted in the finest mix of people, and the Greek case provided evidence of the benefits of an even unconscious social engineering, then the reasons behind Greek decline could also be instructive:

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 340.

<sup>145</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 341.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

Social morality grew exceedingly lax; marriage became unfashionable, and was avoided; many of the more ambitious and accomplished women were avowed courtesans, and consequently infertile, and the mothers of the incoming population were of a heterogeneous class. In a small sea-bordered country, where emigration and immigration are constantly going on, and where the manners are so dissolute as were those of Greece in the period of which I speak, the purity of a race would necessarily fail.<sup>147</sup>

These arguments echo Victorian anxiety over the social, political, and demographic changes taking place during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The parallels between sea-bordered Greece and Britain's overcrowded and filthy cities would have been obvious to Galton's readers. This representation of ancient Greece as falling victim to the dangers of racial mixture echoes once again contemporary concerns over the future of British Empire. The classical past could serve as a warning, and the story of Greek decline could buttress arguments for the strict regulation of population movements to and from colonial centers.<sup>148</sup>

Galton's views, much like Greg's, indeed paint a picture of degeneration characteristic of the late decades of the nineteenth century, but most importantly promote his own rigid naturalistic understanding of social processes. Galton fed on the fears of degeneration to advance the possibility of regeneration. When in 1894 he returned to his original thesis on the unsurpassed quality of the natural faculties of the Greek race, his real preoccupation with improving the British race emerged:

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<sup>147</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 342–43.

<sup>148</sup> See Bell, "From Ancient to Modern in Victorian Imperial Thought"; Challis, "The Ablest Race."

and some future race may be at least the equal of the Greek, while it is reasonable to hope that when the power of heredity and the importance of preserving valuable “transiliencies” shall have become generally recognized, effective efforts will be made to preserve them.<sup>149</sup>

As he wrote, his views were originally “in contradiction to general opinion”,<sup>150</sup> and it took more than two decades after he first published on the topic for his heretical hereditarian ideas to be fully appreciated within scientific circles.<sup>151</sup> Darwin was probably the earliest authority to draw on his arguments.<sup>152</sup> As we will see in the following section, they both shared, after all, the same conclusion as to the fate of the Greeks: the “high Athenian breed decayed and disappeared.”<sup>153</sup>

## **VI. The Greeks from *Notebook N* to *The Descent of Man***

Darwin’s relationship with the classics was, as already mentioned in section II, a complicated one. In his *Autobiography*, Darwin presented the seven years that he boarded at Dr. Butler’s great classical school in Shrewsbury as a complete blank and a waste of

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<sup>149</sup> Francis Galton, “Discontinuity in Evolution,” *Mind* 3, no. 11 (July 1894): 362–72.

<sup>150</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 2.

<sup>151</sup> For the late reception of Galton’s ideas, see, for example, Bowler (1989), 199–200; and Paul (2003), 202. Gökyigit (1994) offers a detailed and balanced account of the immediate reception of Galton’s work and argues for understanding the various responses—generally more positive than what was previously assumed—as reactions to the new era of scientific naturalism that the book represented.

<sup>152</sup> As Diane B. Paul and James Moore argue, the debate Galton sparked had begun several years earlier but “his intervention was the first framing of the issue to be inspired by the Origin: the first to make an evolutionary argument about human nature and to link questions of human breeding to the anxieties about biological decline that Darwin had provoked.” Paul and Moore, “The Darwinian Context,” 29.

<sup>153</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 343.



time.<sup>154</sup> He explained that classical education in those days focused almost exclusively on the grammatical structure of the language without reference to its culture or history. The tradition of learning by heart several lines of Virgil or Homer that were soon to be forgotten did not offer him any pleasure either. Before going to Cambridge, Darwin stumbled once again on the classics. His previous education had all but disappeared, as in two years time he had made no attempt to read any classical book, so he had to hire a private tutor before finally arriving at university in January 1828. By that time, he could easily translate some not very demanding Greek authors like Homer. Darwin recalled his adventures with the classics at Shrewsbury many years later, in 1867, in a letter to the writer and classical scholar Frederic William Farrar, master at the prestigious Harrow School. After Farrar's critical lecture, which focused on reforming the antiquated modes of teaching classics at the expense of learning science, Darwin praised him for his boldness.<sup>155</sup> He then went on to add that he "would leave classics to be learnt by those alone who have sufficient zeal and the high taste requisite for their appreciation."<sup>156</sup> Darwin's discontent with the central position of Greek and Latin in the system of English education was apparent, but this interfered neither with his appreciation for the classics nor for his admiration of Farrar, whom he called "a great classical scholar." Indeed, on board the *Beagle*, in the small cabin he shared with Captain Fitzroy, Darwin managed to bring with

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<sup>154</sup> Nora Barlow, ed., *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin: 1809–1882*, with original omissions restored, edited with appendix and notes (London: Collins, 1958), 27.

<sup>155</sup> Frederic William Farrar, "On Some Defects in Public School Education. [Read February 8, 1867.]," *Proceedings of the Royal Institution of Great Britain* 5 (1866–9): 26–44.

<sup>156</sup> Charles Darwin to Frederic William Farrar, March 5, 1867, Darwin Correspondence Project, "Letter no. 5432," accessed February 14, 2021, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-5432.xml>.

him a copy of the Greek Testament, following his plan to insert a bit of classics on Sundays.<sup>157</sup>

After his Beagle voyage and immersion in the intellectually heady atmosphere of London, Darwin started exploring the ideas that would later become the centerpieces of his books. By looking at his intense theoretical production during 1837 and 1838, one can “read the rest of his life as so many sequels to the brain work of these months.”<sup>158</sup> But unlike the books, his notebooks were meant to be private. They provided a place for him to negotiate and freely speculate, a space to argue with himself, to raise—and then to counter—possible objections to the thoughts he had just begun putting on paper. The study of Darwin’s notebooks, aided by the coming to light of an unprecedented number of letters in which he shared his ideas with various correspondents and at various degrees of intimacy, has truly restored the arrow of causation for historical explanation. From his Edinburgh years, to Cambridge, the Beagle, London and then Down House, we have a much better chance of understanding his intellectual development and theorizing.<sup>159</sup> What remains a challenge, though, is detecting subtle changes in his ideas, as they reveal not only Darwin’s own thought process but also the impact of his circle and social environment on his views. Darwin’s battle with the possible challenge that the ancient Greeks posed for his theory is a case in point.

Indeed, the concern over the unsurpassed intellectual powers of the Greeks that we saw earlier in his letter to Lyell first appeared toward the end of 1838—sometime after

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<sup>157</sup> Richard Darwin Keynes, ed., *Charles Darwin’s Beagle Diary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>158</sup> Jonathan Hodge, “The Notebook Programmes and Projects of Darwin’s London Years,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin*, 44.

<sup>159</sup> Hodge, “The Notebook Programmes,” 41.

November 27—when Darwin jotted down the following lines in his *Notebook N* on *Metaphysics and Expression*:

Man's intellect is not become superior to that of the Greeks.—(which seems opposed to progressive development) on account of dark ages.— «effects of external circumstances» Look at Spain now.—man's intellect might well deteriorate. « [in my theory there is no absolute tendency to progression, excepting from favourable circumstances!】<sup>160</sup>

The case of the Greeks was a puzzle to reckon with, but Darwin's two insertions here emphasize that his theory of evolution is influenced by the workings of external circumstances, and he is not committed to the idea of a linear, irreversible, progressive tendency in nature. On the contrary, his theory allows for reversals; intellect may not improve further or may even decline. Thus, even before reading the works on social evolution by writers such as Greg or Galton or even Herbert Spencer, Darwin had asserted that societal progress is not inevitable.<sup>161</sup> With regard to the reasons for such deterioration, he offered two points that are indicative of his thinking and influences, and merit closer inspection.

First, Darwin suggested that the Dark Ages accounted for why human intellect had never surpassed the quality of the Greek mind. Disdain for the Middle Ages was a hallmark of Victorian scholarship. Indeed, if we look at Reverend William Whewell's description of the great defects of the human intellect in the Middle Ages as including, among other

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<sup>160</sup> Paul Barrett, Peter J. Gautrey, Sandra Herbert, David Kohn, and Sydney Smith, eds., *Charles Darwin's Notebooks, 1836–1844: Geology, Transmutation of Species, Metaphysical Enquiries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 576. The two phrases enclosed in guillemets are insertions made by Darwin, with the second one written across the page margins.

<sup>161</sup> Greene (1977) offers an account of Darwin's influences on issues related to social evolution.

things, indistinctness of ideas, dogmatism, and mysticism,<sup>162</sup> the contrast with the luminous and freedom-loving Greeks of the fifth century BCE emerges clearly. Even more pointedly, in *On the Philosophy of Discovery*, Whewell characterized the Dark Ages as a great detour for the mind, from which the human intellect had to fight to free itself.<sup>163</sup> In this instance, then, Darwin seems to echo the views of his former instructor at Cambridge, or more generally the critical spirit of his time.<sup>164</sup>

Upon his return to London, Darwin became acquainted with Grote, and after a short walk around Chevening Park, he was much pleased by Grote's interesting conversation and "simplicity and absence of all pretention in his manners."<sup>165</sup> Following this first meeting, when writing about Thomas Carlyle's (1795–1881) sneer at Grote's history as "a fetid quagmire, with nothing spiritual about it," Darwin's discomfort was evident.<sup>166</sup> Yet when he came to read Grote's *History* in April 1853, Darwin noted it as "dull."<sup>167</sup> Before reading Grote's account, Darwin had studied William Mitford's widely read history of Greece in the spring of 1845. Darwin was fascinated by Mitford's reference to an ancient tradition followed by the Spartans, who were supposed to choose the most vigorous of their children shortly after their birth and leave the ill or malformed to die,

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<sup>162</sup> William Whewell, *History of the Inductive Sciences: From the Earliest to the Present Time*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857), 1: 185–251.

<sup>163</sup> William Whewell, *On the Philosophy of Discovery: Chapters Historical and Critical* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1860).

<sup>164</sup> For Whewell's epistemological influence on Darwin, see Curtis (1987); and Desmond and Moore (2009), 52–54. Hodge, however, suggests that Curtis's study overestimated Whewell's impact on Darwin; for more details, see Hodge (2003), 68n16.

<sup>165</sup> Barlow, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, 111.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Jon van Wyhe, ed., *The Complete Work of Charles Darwin Online*, 2002–, accessed July 10, 2016, <http://darwin-online.org.uk>.

and thus brought it into *The Descent of Man*.<sup>168</sup> Along with this reference came a footnote containing the only classical text quoted in Darwin's works: a poem by the Greek lyric poet Theognis of Megara, a member of the aristocratic class of the sixth century BC.<sup>169</sup> In the poem, Darwin sees "a well-recognised principle with Greeks, that men ought to select their wives with a view to the health and vigour of their children."<sup>170</sup> This allusion to early population control measures, which later circulated as the earliest application of eugenics, is highly controversial, especially when considering that Theognis was a gnomic poet, discussing mainly morality and politics.<sup>171</sup> As will become evident in the following discussion, however, this perspective fitted well with the anachronistic and moralistic Victorian interpretation of the Greeks.

If Darwin managed to fit Mitford's and Grote's histories together in his readings, the two historians were certainly no social innocents—nor was Darwin, for that matter. Mitford was a vehement defender of monarchy, a severe critic of Athenian democracy, and conversely an enthusiast of Spartan political ethos and society—a true, conservative Tory. In the mid-1820s, Grote was part of a rising movement of intellectuals and philosophical radicals that led to the establishment of a university in which divinity was no longer a subject; London University opened in 1828.<sup>172</sup> Using an apt metaphor, the historian Richard Jenkyns vividly compares the wrath with which Tories and liberals fought over the depiction of Athens in Mitford's *History* with the fight between Greeks and Trojans

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<sup>168</sup> William Mitford, *The History of Greece*, 8 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1814), 1: 282.

<sup>169</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2nd ed. (London: John Murray, 1874), 29.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Ashley M. F. Montagu, "Theognis, Darwin and Social Selection," *Isis* 37, no. 1/2 (May 1947), 24–26.

<sup>172</sup> William D. Rubinstein, *Britain's Century: A Political and Social History, 1815–1905* (London: Arnold, 1998), 64.

over the dead body of Patroclus.<sup>173</sup> In the preface of his version of the *History of Greece*, Grote made his intentions clear; he wanted to amend the erroneous public perception of ancient Greece and the Modern Greek state generated by Mitford's history. Grote's multivolume work served as a political manifesto for the virtues of democracy and—much like the scientific naturalism of Darwin's circle—“constituted an Anglican nightmare of classical studies gone awry.”<sup>174</sup> This liberal, democratic alliance was fueled by the earlier romantic sentiment of the British Philhellenes, who fought for the revival of the ideal democracy during the Greek War of Independence (1821–1832).<sup>175</sup>

Darwin, returning to the factors he considered responsible for reversing societal progress, drew on his liberal, Anglican circle's prevailing views on Catholicism and thus considered Spain as a prime example of intellectual decline. In brief, cultural attitudes toward Spain, Spaniards, and the Spanish Church were predominantly negative.<sup>176</sup> Spanish people were described as lazy and reckless, while the Church of Spain was perceived “as the most extreme and dangerous form of Catholicism.”<sup>177</sup> The Spanish inquisition was seen as European history's severest attack on human intellect and free thought, and the Spanish

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<sup>173</sup> Jenkens, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 14.

<sup>174</sup> Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*, 349. While Goldhill (2011) also demonstrates how classical antiquity had been associated with progressive politics, especially until the mid-nineteenth century, Richardson (2013) offers an account of how it was used as an instrument of social control and to maintain social hierarchies.

<sup>175</sup> Gonda Van Steen's (2010) work on the French diplomat and classicist Comte de Marcellus (1795–1865) is a critical reappraisal of the relationship between Orientalism and philhellenism and challenges us to rethink known categories and travelers' differing motivations, aspirations, discourses, and politics. Stathis Gourgouris's (1996) study also directs attention to the political project of philhellenism and its often-concealed connections with both Hellenism and Orientalism. For an early but classic treatment of British and American philhellenism, see Dakin (1955).

<sup>176</sup> MacKay (2006), Howarth (2007), and Glendinning and Macartney (2011) discuss the British perception of Spain.

<sup>177</sup> Nigel Glendinning and Hilary Macartney, *Spanish Art in Britain and Ireland, 1750–1920: Studies in Reception in Memory of Enriqueta Harris Frankfort* (Rochester: Tamesis Books, 2011), 139.

empire was characterized as the embodiment of cruelty, repression, and fanaticism. Darwin's biographer Janet Browne reports a related story with regard to Darwin's acrimonious debate with St. George Mivart (1827–1900), a young naturalist who promoted a theological compromise, paraphrasing and distorting Darwinian views on evolution. According to Browne, Darwin's hostility towards Mivart was fueled by the latter's adherence to Catholicism, which was regarded with "distaste or horror" by everyone in Darwin's circle.<sup>178</sup> Indeed, in a letter to Hooker, he wrote about Mivart's attack: "I suppose that accursed religious bigotry is at the root of it."<sup>179</sup> This anti-Catholic sentiment seems to bring Darwin closer to the prejudices of the English middle classes, though his agenda was quite different. As a liberal Whig, Darwin's theological skepticism reserved its sharpest venom for all religious signs of backwardness, superstition, oppression, and intolerance.

Darwin's arguments on the subject, along with an explicit acknowledgement of his intellectual borrowings, found their fullest expression almost thirty years later in *The Descent of Man*. Toward the end of Chapter 5, tellingly entitled "On the Development of the Intellectual and Moral Faculties during Primeval and Civilized Times," he discussed the effects of natural selection on civilized nations. This section developed all of the theoretical insights that were already present in outline in *Notebook N* and his letter to Lyell. Over a long paragraph—followed by the now familiar example of Spain, probably reinforced by his exchange with Lyell—Darwin reaffirmed that there is no "innate tendency towards continuous development" because of all of the checks nature imposes on selection.<sup>180</sup> Therefore, "the old Greeks, who stood some grades higher in intellect than

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<sup>178</sup> Janet Browne, *Charles Darwin: The Power of Place* (New York: Knopf, 2002), 329–33.

<sup>179</sup> Charles Darwin to Joseph Hooker, September 16, 1871, *Darwin Correspondence Database*, accessed June 30, 2016, <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-7949>.

<sup>180</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1: 178.

any race” did not rise even higher, as “individuals and races may have acquired certain indisputable advantages, and yet have perished from failing in other characters.”<sup>181</sup>

The use of the terms “higher” and “lower” by Darwin has been a point of controversy. When Darwin read Chambers’s *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, he made the following side note: “Never use word higher and lower.”<sup>182</sup> The evolutionary biologist and historian Stephen J. Gould used this note to argue that Darwin lacked objectivity when discussing the relationship between natural selection and progress.<sup>183</sup> The historian Peter J. Bowler refers to the same note to discuss whether it is an indication of Darwin being aware of the potential of his theory to undermine the idea that progress is inevitable.<sup>184</sup> If one reads the full note, then Darwin’s intentions become clearer:

Never use the word higher & lower — use more complicated, as the fish type (& not a mere repetition of parts) where cartilaginous forms are higher for being nearer reptiles & consequently mammalia. —<sup>185</sup>

The note cautioned him to “never say higher or lower *without specifying in what respect something is higher or lower.*”<sup>186</sup> The passage on the Greeks is, then, a case in point. They stood “higher” in intellect, but that did not guarantee their continued progress; higher in intellect just did not mean higher in fitness. As both Galton and Lyell had suggested earlier, higher intellect did not guarantee continued progress; higher intellect did not mean higher

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Mario A. Di Gregorio, *Charles Darwin’s Marginalia*, vol. 1 (New York: Garland, 1990), 164.

<sup>183</sup> Stephen J. Gould, *Full House: The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 137.

<sup>184</sup> Peter J. Bowler, *Charles Darwin: The Man and His Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 107.

<sup>185</sup> Di Gregorio, *Charles Darwin’s Marginalia*, 1:164–65.

<sup>186</sup> Gregory Radick, “Two Explanations of Evolutionary Progress,” *Biology & Philosophy* 15, no. 4 (January 2000): 480.



overall fitness; changes in the environment could favor strength and cunning over intellectual brilliance, leading to overall regress.

Although *The Descent of Man* unquestionably brought the human race closer than ever to its animal origins and made clear that not only human faculties and morals but also social behavior in general can be explained in naturalistic terms, Darwin's own battle with crude progressivism remained unsettled.<sup>187</sup> As his thinking on the effects of natural selection on civilized nations was unfolding, he sought to ease Victorian worries about the pessimistic thrust of natural selection and the degenerationist rhetoric of the time. For Darwin, the lesson to be taken from the Greeks was a more hopeful one:

we can at least see that a nation which produced during a lengthened period the greatest number of highly intellectual, energetic, brave, patriotic, and benevolent men, would generally prevail over less favored nations.<sup>188</sup>

And in any case, even if decline and extinction were probably a common fate, he did make an important addition to the second edition of his book in this particular chapter: a number of causes, and not merely natural selection, regulated the trajectory of “highly civilized nations”—such as, for example, the British Empire—so that they “do not supplant and exterminate one another as do savage tribes.”<sup>189</sup>

As Lyell, Greg, and Galton did before him, Darwin ventured to survey a number of such causes for the Greek decline without, however, elevating one:

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<sup>187</sup> See, for example, Jones (1978). For a historical account of the construction of *The Descent of Man*, see also Moore and Desmond (2004).

<sup>188</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1: 180.

<sup>189</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1: 143.

The Greeks may have retrograded from a want of coherence between the many small states, from the small size of their whole country, from the practice of slavery, or from extreme sensuality; for they did not succumb until “they were enervated and corrupt to the very core.”<sup>190</sup>

The first two causes seem pragmatic enough. They acted as a cautionary tale whose moral was that the British Empire should improve the coherence between its various colonies and the metropolis.<sup>191</sup> The third cause is a particularly Darwinian one. Slavery ran counter to the prevailing idealized image of Athenian democracy, and Darwin was one of the few prominent intellectuals at the time to consider it. His affiliations with the British antislavery movement, his family’s involvement in abolition campaigns, and his own loathing for every form of cruelty against all human beings converged to form his understanding of slavery as a degrading practice that could lead to moral and intellectual decay.<sup>192</sup>

The fourth cause, however, is “extreme sensuality.” Intellect and sensuality seem to be antagonists here; Darwin reflects the contemporary view that men who spent their energy on pleasures of the flesh have little hope of developing their brains. What is more, extreme sensuality may lead to the failure of even the most advanced intellectual abilities. Elsewhere, he argued that natural selection would certainly benefit tribes (or races) of individuals with high standards of morality.<sup>193</sup> Although Darwin uses Greg as his main reference for this argument, he does not project the familiar stereotype of a prudish,

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<sup>190</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1: 181. Darwin has taken the quotation from Greg’s 1868 article in *Fraser’s Magazine*.

<sup>191</sup> See also Bell, “From Ancient to Modern in Victorian Imperial Thought.”

<sup>192</sup> For the most detailed account of Darwin’s battle with slavery, see Desmond and Moore (2009).

<sup>193</sup> Robert J. Richards, in “Darwin on Mind, Morals and Emotions,” writes extensively on Darwin’s moral sensitivities, the evolution of human morality, and how community selection preserved a human moral core.

sexually repressed Victorian; rather, he expresses a naturalist's worries about energy balance. The association of sexuality with loss of vigor and moral corruption is a way of seeing moral anxieties being brought under the scientific lens. For a rational naturalist, it would not be surprising to view sexuality as just another part of social behavior that should be scrutinized and regulated by science.

Although Darwin's reasons for the decline of the ancient Greeks remain partly elusive, his conclusion about their relationship with Europeans—probably including modern Greeks—appears crystal clear:

The western nations of Europe, who now so immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors and stand at the summit of civilization, owe little or none of their superiority to direct inheritance from the old Greeks; though they owe much to the written works of this wonderful people.<sup>194</sup>

Against Lyell and Greg, but in line with Galton, Darwin did not see in the physical or moral qualities of his fellow Victorians any direct biological association with ancient Greeks.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Two issues—the little improvement, stasis, or even degeneration, of human intellect after the classical Greeks and their decline—tended to become entangled in the minds of these four Victorian men. They all shared the Victorian admiration for classical Greece, and they offered both complementary and contrasting interpretations of this superiority. Lyell invested his answer with Grote's liberal progressivism; Greg infused it with ethnic and racial stereotyping; Galton used it to promote his early eugenic aspirations; and Darwin brought all of these elements together to construct a long naturalistic argument about

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<sup>194</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1: 178.

human affairs. The close reading of their exchanges and viewpoints reveals much more than Victorian prejudice and moralism and is a testament to their prolonged engagement with the evolution of human mind and morals.

Darwin is often portrayed as ambivalent, and the perception of him as a deeply private thinker is still widespread outside the circles of Darwinian scholars. This chapter shows that throughout the thirty or so years that he grappled with these issues, he remained remarkably consistent in his thinking while adding to and refining his initial arguments. But it also contributes to the understanding of Darwin as a scholar who recorded his views in diverse formats and shared them with an extended network of friends, family, and correspondents. Thus, his reflections on Greece reunite the private with the public Darwin through the initial sketchy note in his notebook, his correspondence, family dinner discussions, and his scholarly borrowings to the several paragraphs in *The Descent of Man*.

In this first big book on humans, “the imaginative framing of tentative hypotheses”<sup>195</sup> is coupled with firm arguments about humankind’s common origins and the continuity of human-animal evolution, as well as about the importance of natural selection for the development of human faculties and of sexual selection for human diversity.<sup>196</sup> While *The Descent of Man* reflects the commitment of Darwin and his whole family to the antislavery cause,<sup>197</sup> he nevertheless supported the attempts for eugenic control through selective breeding and competitive struggle in society, which later fell under the rubric of Social Darwinism.<sup>198</sup> Like most of his contemporaries and mentors on

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<sup>195</sup> Ian Hacking, “Why Race Still Matters,” *Daedalus* 134, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 102–16.

<sup>196</sup> Gregory Radick, “Darwin and Humans,” in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Darwin and Evolutionary Thought*, ed. Michael Ruse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 173–81.

<sup>197</sup> As amply documented in Desmond and Moore, *Darwin’s Sacred Cause*.

<sup>198</sup> See Diane B. Paul, “Darwin, Social Darwinism and Eugenics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin*, 219–45; and Naomi Beck, “Social Darwinism,” in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Darwin*

social issues, Darwin undoubtedly upheld a hierarchy of races and cultures but still believed that even peoples existing in the lowest states of improvement bore the potential for positive change.<sup>199</sup> Darwin reflected on progress in both nature and society.<sup>200</sup> However, he also supposed that progress is always checked and often impeded by a host of complex factors and interactions, which may eventually lead to surprising reversals. This is exactly what we see in his use of the Greek example and his arguments for the noncontinuous, progressive development of humans' minds and bodies.

Darwin's straightforward belief that society becomes uniquely intelligible through biology is consistent with Greg's and Galton's efforts to carve out the factors affecting the intellectual and moral qualities of civilized nations. While Greg is an obscure figure, this chapter sheds more light on him and his writings. His pamphlet on Greece reveals an interesting and quite knowledgeable person, while his appropriation of Darwinian theory is paradigmatic of the social thinking of his time. With Greg's contributions, we not only witness his personal transformation into a respectable conservative, but more acutely how the whole theory of evolution through natural selection conformed to accepted middle-class Victorian standards. Last, Galton's discussion provides yet another link to the recent discussion on how his social preoccupations uniquely interacted with his biological understandings. It is in his views that we can more easily identify how the past could act

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*and Evolutionary Thought*, ed. Michael Ruse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 195–201.

<sup>199</sup> Gregory Radick, "Did Darwin Change His Mind about the Fuegians?," *Endeavour* 34, no. 2 (2010): 50–54.

<sup>200</sup> Here I am referring to progress in the sense advocated by Jonathan Hodge and Gregory Radick: "progressive in that adaptation has generally entailed specialisation, so that higher animals have more specialised parts—mouth parts and locomotive limbs where their oldest ancestors absorbed nutrients and moved themselves with their whole bodies," see "The Notebook Programmes and Projects of Darwin's London Years," in *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin*. See also Radick (2000) on the relationship between evolutionary progress, selection, and happenstance.

not just as a lens through which to interpret the present but also as an instructive model for the building of future societies. Finally, in this discussion, Lyell emerges as the well-known polymath who can easily accommodate views on history and the classics, accompanied by his interest in issues of power and success. But his ideas on the possibility of a Greek resurgence also seem to betray his geological education and his beliefs in temporary, local, and reversible revivals. Yet he still appears more reluctant than the others to submit to purely biological explanations for social and political conditions. For Lyell, the utmost guarantee for intellectual and moral development was individual freedom, which would then ensure the liberty for exercising human faculties in a society in which all members were equally free to pursue such endeavors.

The interpretation of the Greek case represented a difficulty for the Victorians, since it required yet another reversal in their understanding of progress. Having finally come to grips with the possibility of an originally primitive state from which society steadily developed, the Greek course presented a challenge to progressivist assumptions. If the Greeks stood at the higher end of the developmental ladder, why did they not progress even more, what led to their decline, and why have humans subsequently not surpassed them? And if the Victorians now stood at the same place on that ladder—albeit for Galton two grades lower—what did the future hold for them? The open-endedness that these questions introduced was very much in accord with the most radical underpinnings of Darwin's theory. But what was a puzzle for Darwin and his circle becomes an opportunity for us to once again appreciate the multiplicity of approaches and voices included in such discussions. The nuances and shifts identified in the four men's arguments point to their intellectual presuppositions about wider changes in Victorian society. Moreover, the exchanges presented here stand as an illuminating example of many more nineteenth-century discussions about Greeks—ancient and modern—and the broader battle over Western European ancestry.

## 2. Physical Anthropology Comes to Greece: Clon Stephanos and the Anthropological Museum in Athens, 1880s–1910s

### I. Introduction: A New Science in the Service of a Young Nation

On March 30, 1881, the Greek scholar and member of Parliament Stephanos Dragoumis (1842–1923)<sup>201</sup> received a letter from Paris seeking assistance in establishing contacts with physicians from his constituency.<sup>202</sup> His correspondent was Clon Stephanos (1854–1915), a young doctor writing an article on Greece to be included in the celebrated *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales*.<sup>203</sup> Encouraged by Dragoumis’s positive response, Stephanos sent a second letter asking for further help with data collection and inquiring “what kind of care has been taken for the skeletons of those who fell at [the Battle of] Chaeronea and whether the bones of each and every one of them are specially kept.”<sup>204</sup> This was the first instance in which archaeological human remains became a shared matter of concern for an anthropologist and a politician in Greece.

Historical interest in the Battle of Chaeronia—fought in 338 BCE and during which the army of Philip II defeated the coalition of Greek city-states led by Athens and Thebes,

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<sup>201</sup> Stephanos Dragoumis was at the time a member of Parliament. His skills in politics and financial management led him to occupy several governmental posts, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1886–1890 and 1892–1893, respectively), and he briefly served as prime minister of Greece in 1910.

<sup>202</sup> American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Archives, Stephanos N. Dragoumis Papers, ASCSA, GLA, Folder 189.2.109, March 20, 1881.

<sup>203</sup> *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales*, ed. Amédée Dechambre (Paris: G. Masson, 1864–82).

<sup>204</sup> Stephanos N. Dragoumis Papers, ASCSA, GLA, Folder 189.2.122, June 1, 1881.

thereby gaining control of Greece—preceded the exchange between Stephanos and Dragoumis. The relationship of the Macedonians to the Greeks of central and southern Greece remained a much-contested issue until at least the mid-nineteenth century. In the diverse historiographic schemata adopted by Greek historians, the battle signified either the beginning of Macedonian hegemony, the enslavement of the Greeks, and, consequently, the end of the glorious classical era; or the historical and cultural continuity of ancient Greek civilization through the achievements of Alexander the Great.<sup>205</sup> For Stephanos, the anthropological examination of the remains could reveal the racial affinity between ancient Macedonians (originally assumed to be a mix of Illyrians and Greeks) and Greeks of the city-states. For Dragoumis, the challenge was to strengthen national coherence and unity, and by extension reinforce claims for the expansion of the Kingdom of Greece to the north.<sup>206</sup> The private communication about Chaeronea's skeletons, then, introduces anthropology and Stephanos as two new actors in the controversial arena of scholarly accounts of national identity and their political counterparts.

This chapter focuses on the work of Clon Stephanos (fig. 2.1), the first and only Greek scholar of his time to systematically research the racial origins and constitution of the country's inhabitants.<sup>207</sup> Initially educated as a medical doctor in Athens and greatly

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<sup>205</sup> For the incorporation of the Macedonias into national history, see Vangelis D. Karamanolakis, *Η Συγκρότηση της Ιστορικής Επιστήμης και η Διδασκαλία της Ιστορίας στο Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών (1837–1932)* [The Formation of Historical Science and History Teaching at the University of Athens (1837–1932)] (Athens: Ινστιτούτο Νεοελληνικών Ερευνών ΕΙΕ [Department of Neohellenic Research NHRF], 2006), 102–05.

<sup>206</sup> With family origins in Macedonia, Stephanos Dragoumis and his diplomat son Ion (1878–1920) were heavily involved in Macedonian affairs and the Macedonian Struggle between 1904 and 1908. For a fascinating account of the conflicts over this territory up to the 1990s Macedonian controversy between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia, see Erik Sjöberg, “Battlefields of Memory: The Macedonian Conflict and Greek Historical Culture” (PhD diss., Umeå Universitet, 2006), 26–40.

<sup>207</sup> On the prehistory of the field in Greece and early Greek contributions, see Trubeta, 159–61.



interested in prehistoric archaeology, Stephanos encountered anthropology in Paris and was determined to secure the establishment of the discipline at the University of Athens. His scientific praxis brought together craniometry, archaeological findings, historical archives, and linguistic analysis. However, for nation-building, the nascent scientific field had to negotiate its place among hegemonic intellectual resources such as history, archaeology, and folklore studies.<sup>208</sup> At the same time, Western European anthropological schools, though an indispensable source of theoretical and methodological innovation, often appeared rather suspicious and critical of local interpretations, especially when these contradicted established authorities and traditions.

Despite Stephanos's positivist approach and adherence to the ideal of scientific objectivity, the inevitable entanglement of anthropology with the defense of the Greek nationalist project affected both the professionalization of this science in Greece and its international credibility.<sup>209</sup> Indeed, it took more than thirty years of continuous effort until a chair of anthropology was established at the University of Athens. Stephanos died before having the opportunity to become a professor and left the discipline at a crossroads. In this chapter, then, we will meet a complex picture of the founding history of anthropology in Greece: one that appreciates its multiple connections to international and national fields and actors, but also acknowledges its difficulties in escaping its peripheral status. Before proceeding any further, however, we will take a brief look at nineteenth-century discussions on Greek national identity.

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<sup>208</sup> For an example of these interactions from Norway, see Jon Røyne Kyllingstad, *Measuring the Master Race: Physical Anthropology in Norway, 1890–1945* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book, 2014).

<sup>209</sup> For similar discussions on the tension between nationalist and internationalist loyalties of anthropologists, see Richard McMahon, "On the Margins of International Science and National Discourse: National Identity Narratives in Romanian Anthropology," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 16, no. 1 (2009), 101–23; Chris Manias, "The Race Prussienne Controversy: Scientific Internationalism and the Nation," *Isis* 100, no. 4 (2009): 733–57.



Fig. 2.1: Clon Stephanos. Portait at the director's office of the Anthropological Museum, University of Athens. Photo: Angeliki Lefkaditou.

## II. From Ancient to Modern Greeks

Even before the advent of the War of Independence (1821–1832), the arguments for the foundation of a Greek national state were based on identification with ancient Greece, and, most notably, classical antiquity. Reflecting the influence of European Enlightenment ideals and the fascination with classical Greece, as well as the need for an exemplar of the administrative, economic, and political organization of the emerging polity, this appropriation was in a sense a historical necessity.<sup>210</sup> Despite the complexities it induced, the revival or rebirth of ancient Greece in the body of the newly established Greek state became its first foundational myth.

The original conception of a resuscitated Greece in its former glory was a product of the educated local and foreign elites, and it largely dismissed or alienated the majority of the Greeks whose direct experience, including their religious feelings, was much closer to that of the Byzantine period or even the Ottoman times (fig. 2.2–2.3). Toward the middle of the century, however, a powerful national narrative was formed that incorporated the classical past, the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the Middle Ages—in the form of the Byzantine Empire—and modern times.<sup>211</sup> This synthetic schema, introduced by Constantinos Paparrigopoulos (1815–1891) in the founding work of modern Greek historiography, the *History of the Greek Nation* (published in multiple volumes from 1860 to 1870), suggested “a cultural and spiritual evolution and continuity.”<sup>212</sup> A new holistic

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<sup>210</sup> Seminal contributions to this discussion include: Georgios V. Dertilis, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Κράτους, 1830–1920* [*History of the Greek State, 1830–1920*], 2 vols. (Athens: Εστία [Hestia], 2010), 331–97; Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, 57–123; and Antonis Liakos, “The Construction of National Time: The Making of the Modern Greek Historical Imagination,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16, no. 1 (2001): 27–42.

<sup>211</sup> See Karamanolakis, *The Formation of Historical Science*, 85–168; and Liakos, “National Time,” 30–35.

<sup>212</sup> Hamilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins*, 116.



Fig. 2.2–2.3: Ottoman Athens. The west front of the Parthenon (top) and the Bazar of Athens (bottom). Published in: Edward Dodwell, *Views in Greece from drawings by Edward Dodwell, ESQ. F. S. A & C.* (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1821), source Bibliothèque nationale de France.

understanding of the national past, which now rested on a genealogical connection between the various historical phases of Hellenism and established a conception of national unity through both difference and similarity.<sup>213</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 1, notwithstanding the romantic sentiment of the great number of Philhellenes who fought during the Greek War of Independence for the revival of Greek democracy and the abolishment of Ottoman occupation, the idyllic image of Greece began to change rapidly shortly thereafter.<sup>214</sup> What was becoming increasingly obvious was that Western Europeans were not willing to leave ancient Greece to what they perceived as the current, unfortunate, degraded inhabitants of the country. Ancient Greece and its glorious inhabitants were appropriated as the root of Western civilization, and the Greek national story became redundant.

The most common reference in such discussions is the work of the Austrian scholar Jakob Phillip Fallmerayer (1790–1861), who, in a number of works from the 1830s, variously asserted that not only there was no cultural link between ancient Greeks and the people of the Greek state but also denied any biological affinity.<sup>215</sup> Or, even more pointedly, for Fallmerayer the Slavic presence in Greece guaranteed that not even a drop of ancient Greek blood was left in the veins of modern Greeks. Though he soon became

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<sup>213</sup> This understanding of the past was not simply dominant; in many ways it was the *only* way to be a Greek nationalist and remain unchallenged even by socialist and Marxist scholars until at least the mid-twentieth century. See Liakos, “National Time,” 37–40.

<sup>214</sup> On the perceptions of modern Greeks by European travelers, see David Constantine, *Early Greek Travelers and the Hellenic Ideal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Deborah Harlan, “Travel, Pictures, and a Victorian Gentleman in Greece,” 421–53; and Robert Eisner, *Travelers to an Antique Land: The History and Literature of Travel to Greece* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

<sup>215</sup> On Fallmerayer’s work and its reception in Greece, see Ellie Scopetea, *Φαλμεράιερ: Τεχνάσματα του Αντίπαλου Δέους* [Fallmerayer: Willes of the Rival Awe] (Athens: Θεμέλιο [Themelio], 1999).

*persona non grata* and an archenemy of the Greeks, Fallmerayer was certainly not the only European scholar who entertained such views. The French diplomat, writer, fallen aristocrat, and (quite ironically) close friend of the Dragoumis family Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816–1882) is yet another one of those who have challenged the Greek narrative.<sup>216</sup> Indeed, in his study *Essai sur l'inégalité des Races humaines* (1853–1855), Gobineau, expressing pessimism over inevitable societal decay, suggested that ancient civilizations perished as a result of extreme miscegenation and ascribed the brilliance of ancient Greece to its superior Aryan aristocracy. Unlike Gobineau, who had no real connections to the world of science and was soon ostracized by French naturalists and anthropologists, several influential nineteenth-century naturalists and physicians variously engaged with the Greek conception of continuity.<sup>217</sup> The following two examples are characteristic of this.

In 1847, the Swedish anatomist Anders Retzius (1796–1860) published a paper titled “On the Round, Brachycephalic Skull from Greece.”<sup>218</sup> The skull under examination belonged to an eight-year-old individual and reached Retzius through a Swedish diplomat in Athens. Following contemporary practice, which ascribed a characteristic skull type to

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<sup>216</sup> On the perception of Gobineau’s racial ideas in Greece, see Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 159–61. But also see Steven Kale, “Gobineau, Racism, and Legitimism: A Royalist Heretic in Nineteenth-Century France,” *Modern Intellectual History* 7, no. 1 (2010): 33–61, on how Gobineau’s ideas have been misrepresented and his influence exaggerated.

<sup>217</sup>Carole Reynaud-Palligot, “The Construction and Circulation of the Notion of ‘Race’ in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Invention of Race: Scientific and Popular Representations*, eds. Nicolas Bancel et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 93–94.

<sup>218</sup> Anders Retzius, “Ueber die runde, brachycephalische Schädelform der Griechen,” in *Ethnologische Schriften*, ed. Anders Retzius (Stockholm: Norstedt and Söner, 1864), 86–89. A few years earlier, Retzius had introduced the division of humans into two main groups, the short-skulled brachycephalic and the long-skulled dolichocephalic, based on the measurement of the cephalic index (i.e., the ratio of the maximum width to the maximum length of a head/skull multiplied by one hundred).

each nation, and after comparing the skull to artistic drawings, ancient sculptures, and observation of living Greeks, he reported: “I think I can assume that the brachycephalic skull shape occurred in both the former Greeks and it is common among the present-day ones.”<sup>219</sup> Though this seems to suggest a line of continuity, Retzius also adopted Fallmerayer’s claims that the current Greek population was mostly of Slavic origin, and, given the prevalence of short skulls among the Slavs, stated that “it would be almost impossible to ascertain a difference between it [a Slavic skull] and a real brachycephalic Greek.”<sup>220</sup>

Mid-nineteenth-century Greek historiography was instrumental in restructuring the originary myths of the newly born nation-state, partly in response to such external challenges. Within this context, archaeology, as well as *laografia*, produced indisputable material evidence in support of the national rhetoric of continuity, either by uncovering and protecting antiquities or by collecting, documenting, and classifying folk legends and songs.<sup>221</sup> Antiquity became the “secular religion” of the nation; ancient monuments were its icons, and archaeologists, the people who could interpret the past and mediate between past and present worlds, were its religious leaders.<sup>222</sup> Indeed, only a year after the establishment of the Greek state, the Archaeological Service was founded, and in 1834 the first archaeological law, which regulated excavation permits as well as the ownership and preservation of antiquities, was enacted. In 1837, the privately funded Archaeological

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<sup>219</sup> Retzius, “Ueber die runde, brachycephalische Schädelform,” 88.

<sup>220</sup> Retzius, “Ueber die runde, brachycephalische Schädelform,” 89.

<sup>221</sup> Here I use the transliterated term *laografia* instead of “folklore studies” in agreement with Greek scholars who argue for the idiosyncratic use of the term in Greece, since it was closer to the German *Volkskunde*. See Evthymios Papataxiarchis, “From ‘National’ to ‘Social Science’: Politics, Ideology, and Disciplinary Formation in Greek Anthropology from the 1940s till the 1980s,” in *The Anthropological Field on the Margins of Europe, 1945–1991*, eds. Aleksandar Bošcović and Chris Hann, (Zurich: LIT Verlag, 2013), 31–64: 32.

<sup>222</sup> Hamilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins*, 39 and 99–103.

Society in Athens became the second-most important pillar of archaeological activity, and a number of foreign schools followed its path.

From the side of *laografia* studies, the great majority of nineteenth-century Greek scholars saw modern culture and identity as rooted in ancient prototypes, and in a circular move constructed their taxonomies and analyzed their carefully gathered data starting from the idea of cultural continuity.<sup>223</sup> In doing so, Greek scholars reinforced the identification with antiquity by reinstating it not as a purely intellectual construct but as a constitutive part of people's imagination and tradition.<sup>224</sup> An indispensable partner in the formation of national science, *laografia* represented “a disciplinary hybrid, a blend of romantic historicism, methodological evolutionism, and philological scholasticism.”<sup>225</sup>

But even though the alliance between historiography, archaeology, and *laografia* was powerful, Greek scholars were presented with challenges that went beyond mentality or culture and addressed the physical body, or, even more pressingly, made culture coextensive with biology. And this is where Greek anthropology endeavored to find its niche in discussing national origins and identity.

### **III. The Early Years between Archaeology and Medicine**

Clon Stephanos was born in 1854 on Kea, a small island of Cyclades in the Aegean Sea, where his father, Stephanos Gr. Stephanos, was appointed as headmaster.<sup>226</sup> After the birth of Clon's younger brother Kyparissos in 1857, the family returned to their place of origin,

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<sup>223</sup> The founding and still most comprehensive work on the history of the field in Greece is by Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*. On this topic in particular, see page 121.

<sup>224</sup> Hamilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins*, 72–74.

<sup>225</sup> Papataxiarchis, “From ‘National’ to ‘Social Science’,” 32.

<sup>226</sup> Markos N. Roussos, *Επιφανείς Συριανοί* [Prominent People of Syros] (Athens: Κίνηση Καθολικών Επιστημόνων και Διανοούμενων Ελλάδος [Movement of Catholic Scientists and Intellectuals of Greece], 1986), 29.



the nearby island of Syros. Clon and Kyparissos were brought up in a household of considerable means involved in commerce, administration, and politics. Their father, from a very young age, had exhibited great interest in learning and soon became one of the foremost scholars in his circle.<sup>227</sup> His love of nature is said to be reflected in the choice of names for his children, which were indeed rather unusual, especially when compared to the tendency to choose ancient-sounding names in the spirit of the Greek rebellion and Greeks’ “yearning for a renewed relationship with their ancestors.”<sup>228</sup> The two names, along with a third one for a daughter who was born after Clon but died during infancy, were allegedly inspired during a walk in nature when Stephanos saw “a pupae (Chrysallida) sitting on a cypress (Kyparissos) branch (Clon).”<sup>229</sup> Though the story is difficult to confirm, it ties in well with the profile of a romantic, mid-nineteenth century intellectual—an individual of great virtue and diligence who showed great concern for and engaged effectively with his children’s education.<sup>230</sup>

Aside from this nurturing familial background, the young Stephanos experienced a unique social milieu. Within four decades of the first Greek immigrants’ arrival at the small port of Hermoupolis seeking refuge during the Greek war of independence, it had turned into a burgeoning commercial, shipping, and shipbuilding hub.<sup>231</sup> By the mid-

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<sup>227</sup> From Stephanos Gr. Stephanos’s obituary, unknown author, “Νεκρολογία [Obituaries],” *Ηλιος* [Sun], October 25, 1875, 4. Library of the Hellenic Parliament, Digital Library, Newspapers and Periodicals.

<sup>228</sup> Christos Loukos, “Οι Κάτοικοι της Ερμούπολης τον 19ο αιώνα [The Inhabitants of Hermoupolis in the Nineteenth Century],” in *Σύρος και Ερμούπολη: Συμβολές στην ιστορία του νησιού, 15<sup>ος</sup>–20ος αι.* [Syros and Hermoupolis: Contributions to the History of the Island, 15th–20th Century], eds. Christina Agriantoni and Dimitris Dimitropoulos (Athens: Ινστιτούτο Νεοελληνικών Ερευνών ΕΙΕ [Department of Neohellenic Research NHRF], 2008), 105–25, 110.

<sup>229</sup> Roussos, *Επιφανείς Συριανοί* [Prominent People of Syros], 30.

<sup>230</sup> “Νεκρολογία [Obituaries],” *Ηλιος* [Sun].

<sup>231</sup> Apostolos Delis, “A Mediterranean Insular Port-City in Transition: Economic Transformations,

nineteenth century, the population of Hermoupolis had exceeded twenty thousand inhabitants,<sup>232</sup> plus a swarm of merchants, travelers, builders, and workers traveling between Odessa, Istanbul, Smyrna, Alexandria, Marseille, Trieste, and London. In 1864, when King George I of Greece visited Hermoupolis, the second-biggest town of his kingdom, he exclaimed that he had seen “the Liverpool of Greece.”<sup>233</sup> Such accumulation of wealth and expertise led to an unforeseen growth in infrastructure. Printing houses, schools, orphanages, markets, a hospital, a court house, a quarantine station, a theatre, and a magnificent city hall—all combined to create a portrait of a truly cosmopolitan urban center (fig. 2.4–2.6).<sup>234</sup>

The local elite, to which Stepanos’s family belonged, “wore the latest fashions, dined off imported china and decorated their mansions with *objets d’art* from around the world. Moreover, they were a very mobile group. Some families had homes (and businesses) in other cities, and they moved freely and frequently between them. It would not be going too far to speak of there being a transnational Greek elite.”<sup>235</sup> This constant flow of people, ideas, goods, and cultures created a uniquely “extrovert” society and ideology, a complex meeting ground of contesting realities between the east and the

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Spatial Antagonism and the Metamorphosis of Landscape in Nineteenth-Century Hermoupolis on the Island of Syros,” *Urban History* 42, no. 2 (May 2015), 225–45.

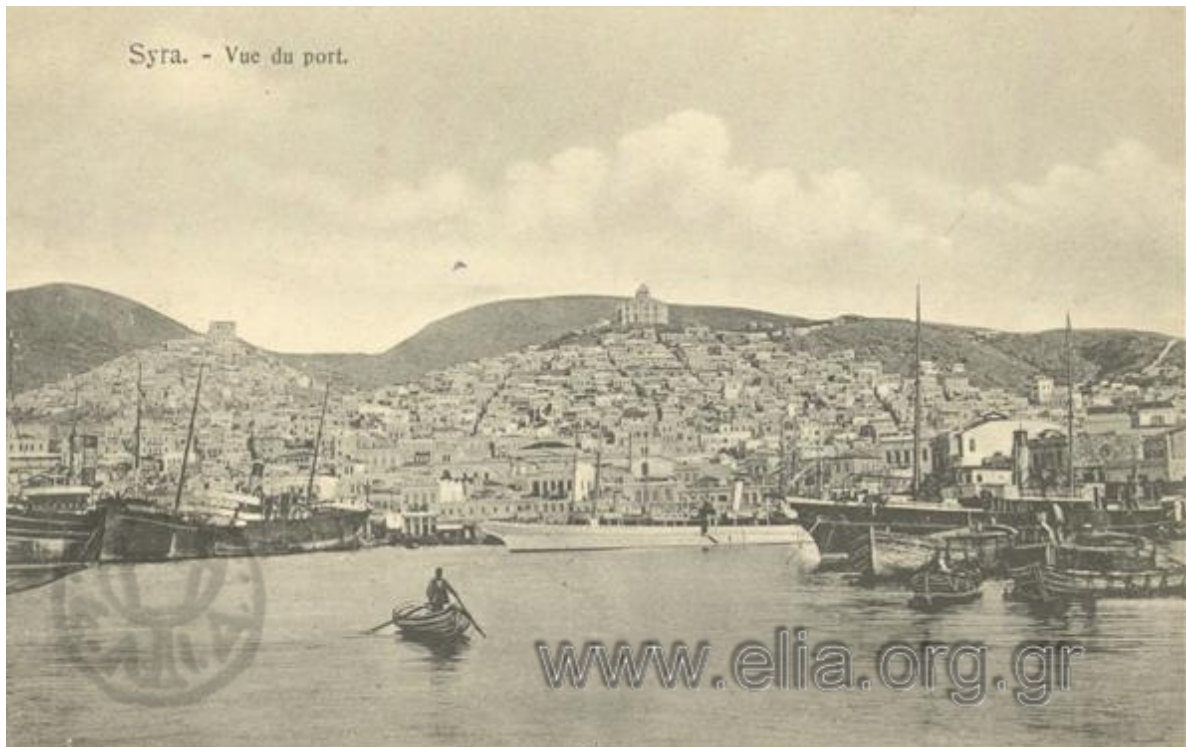
<sup>232</sup> Dertilis, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Κράτους [History of the Greek State]*, 295.

<sup>233</sup> Quotation from Christos Loukos, *Πεθαίνοντας στη Σύρο τον 19<sup>ο</sup> Αιώνα [Dying in Syros in the Nineteenth Century]*, (Herakleion: Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης [Crete University Press], 2000), 20.

<sup>234</sup> Ioannis Travlos and Angeliki Kokkou, *Ερμούπολη: Η Δημιουργία μιας Νέας Πόλης στη Σύρο στις Αρχές του 19ου αιώνα [Hermoupolis: The Creation of a New Town in Syros in the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century]*, (Athens: Εμπορική Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος [Commercial Bank of Greece], 1980).

<sup>235</sup> Thomas Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks: The Long Nineteenth Century*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 218.

west.<sup>236</sup> Hermoupolis and its people belonged at once to a wealthy regional community, an emerging national state, and a wide transnational community.



<sup>236</sup> Dertilis, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Κράτους* [History of the Greek State], 144.



Fig. 2.4–2.6: Postcards from Syros c. 1900: View from the port with the hill of Ano Syros to the right (top), the central Miaoulis Square (middle), and Lazaretto opposite of the port (bottom), ed. Elias Kyriazopoulos, source Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive (E. L. I. A.). [Watermarked images published with permission].

But there is another side to the uniqueness of Syros, or *l'Isola del Papa* (the Island of the Pope), as it had been known since the seventeenth century. When the Greek Orthodox immigrants arrived at Hermoupolis, a small, wealthy, mainly Catholic community had been there for centuries. Stephanos's family was one of the most prosperous among them, living at the inland settlement of Ano Syros.<sup>237</sup> What guaranteed safety at the beginning of the war was a cautious strategy of neutrality and French protection, the traditional patron of Greek Catholics. Eventually, and under the force of Greek arms, Syros abandoned its

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<sup>237</sup> The total population of Greek Catholics around the beginning of the War of Independence is estimated at around sixteen thousand, with most of them settled on the island of Tinos and Syros. Charles Frazee, "Catholics," in *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a plural society*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), 33.

neutrality and reluctantly joined the rebellion. The postwar sentiments of the Catholics become clear in the following dispatch to Rome from 1829: “The Greeks have revolted against their sovereign. Three Christian powers [Great Britain, France, and Russia] have decided to make a portion of the country of Greece independent and we have learned with deep sorrow that our island is included in this part. We will be forced to abandon our homeland or to change our religion in order to live with people so intolerant.”<sup>238</sup>

The worries of the Catholics were not confirmed, though for years to come the two communities went through various phases of disputes, mutual suspicion, and resentment. Especially skeptical of the secularism and excessive lifestyle of Hermoupolis, most Catholics of Ano Syros chose to remain within their old settlement and thus maintain their ways of life.<sup>239</sup> Yet not everyone abstained from the enthusing changes that the new era had brought. Though Stephanos’s family home was originally located in Ano Syros, several members of the paternal side of his family had moved to Hermoupolis and actively participated in its economic, political, and social life. For example, his great uncle Grigorios Stephanos, one of the most successful merchants during the early decades of the nineteenth century, economically supported the Greek rebellion and in 1833 received as guests the royal couple, King Otto and Queen Amalia.<sup>240</sup> Once again, it seems like Stephanos was caught between different worlds that provided him with unique opportunities in the west, most obviously in France. At the same time, his religious denomination was a factor that could influence how his devotion to the Greek state was perceived, since Greek nationalism and irredentism were gaining momentum.

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<sup>238</sup> Frazee, “Catholics,” 35.

<sup>239</sup> Loukos, *Πεθαίνοντας στη Σύρο τον 19<sup>ο</sup> Αιώνα* [Dying in Syros], 19.

<sup>240</sup> Roussos, *Επιφανείς Σύριοι* [Prominent People of Syros], 29.

The economic growth and prosperity, however, also resulted in Hermoupolis becoming an important educational center for the Greek-speaking populations, with hundreds of students being enrolled in the numerous public and private institutions. Following in their father's footsteps, Clon and Kyparissos Stephanos attended one of the most prestigious public schools of nineteenth-century Greece, the Gymnasium of Hermoupolis, established in 1834.<sup>241</sup> Shortly after finishing school, and accompanied by their father, they left Syros to continue their education at the University of Athens.

Despite his early historical and archaeological interests,<sup>242</sup> Clon chose to study medicine, while Kyparissos pursued a degree in mathematics.<sup>243</sup> But it did not take long for the former's interests to resurface, and in 1875, while still a medical student, he published his first full-length treatise on mostly unpublished inscriptions from Syros, supplemented by a wealth of topographical and historical information.<sup>244</sup> The research was made possible with the support of the *Εν Αθήναι Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία* (Archaeological

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<sup>241</sup> Student registers 1871–1872, high-school of Hermoupolis, General Archives of Cyclades, General State Archives.

<sup>242</sup> In 1870, Clon Stephanos contributed a short piece on a roman inscription to the local newspaper *Πατρίς* [Fatherland], June 4, 1870, no. 223. Library of the Hellenic Parliament, Digital Library, Newspapers and Periodicals.

<sup>243</sup> In 1878, the Department of Mathematics was still part of the School of Philosophy at the University of Athens. An autonomous School of Mathematics and Physics was established only in 1904.

<sup>244</sup> Clon Stephanos, *Επιγραφαί της Νήσου Σύρου το Πλείστον Ανέκδοτοι, μετά Τοπογραφικόν και Ιστορικών Παρατηρήσεων περί της Αρχαίας Σύρου και Δύο Λιθογραφικών Πλακών* [Mostly Unpublished Inscriptions from the Island of Syros, with Topographical and Historical Observations about Ancient Syros, and Two Lithographic Plates], (Athens: Εκδόσεις Αδερφών Βαρβαρρήγου [Varvarrigou Publications], 1875). The work originally appeared as a two-part essay in the periodical *Αθήναιον* [Athinaion] in 1874 (vol. 3, 513–514) and 1875 (Vol. 4, 3–32), which was coedited by Stephanos Koumanoudis (1818–1899), one of the foremost Greek archaeologists, philologists, and epigraphists, and secretary of the Archaeological Society of Athens (1859–1894). Clon Stephanos was one of the frequent contributors to the journal during its short publishing life (1872–1881).

Society of Athens). Stephanos proceeded with great care, convinced that “for a complete knowledge of ancient Hellenism, what is undoubtedly required . . . is the knowledge of the social life of all small Greek towns, in the sum of which we can discover the character of the Greek nation.”<sup>245</sup> The publication received quite positive reviews, not only from the local press,<sup>246</sup> but also abroad, as it was distributed in places outside Greece such as Paris and Leipzig. Due to the excellent relationships between Greek and French archaeologists, it got reviewed in *Revue archéologique* as a work that was “impossible to be researched with more zeal [and in which the texts] have been transcribed with such extreme care and have been explained with an erudition both precise and abundant.”<sup>247</sup> Though for the most part Stephanos remained very close to the text and avoided extensive commentary, a footnote reveals his views on the issue of Greek identity: “The toponyms and these relics [of ancient Greek language] are very worthy, as besides all else that they teach us, they prove without doubt that from the ancient Greek times until today Syros has not stopped being inhabited even for a generation; while the people living on it, whether national, or eastern, or western in religion, never stopped being Greek.”<sup>248</sup> For the rest of his life, the inclusion of the people of Syros within the Greek nation would become one of Stephanos’s major preoccupations, either through anthropometric measurements or prehistoric excavations.

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<sup>245</sup> Stephanos, *Mostly Unpublished Inscriptions*, (prologue).

<sup>246</sup> An extensive review in the newspaper *Ηλιος* [Sun] commends Stephanos for his thoroughness and critical thinking in a manuscript that represented a perfect example of what archaeological research outside the city of Athens could contribute to the study of Hellenism. Unknown author, “Επιγραφαί της Νήσου Σύρου [Inscriptions of the Island of Syros],” *Ηλιος* [Sun], July 31, 1875, 3–4. Library of the Hellenic Parliament, Digital Library, Newspapers and Periodicals.

<sup>247</sup> Unknown author, *Revue Archéologique*, n.s. 31 (1876): 68.

<sup>248</sup> Stephanos, *Mostly Unpublished Inscriptions*, 13. Also quoted in Roussos, *Επιφανείς Συριανοί* [Prominent People of Syros], 34, albeit with some slight changes, and accompanied by Roussos’s own interesting comment: “These are in response to those who, from time to time, have questioned the Greekness of the indigenous Catholics of Syros.”

After this first publishing venture, Stephanos continued with his studies in medicine and, in 1877, scored one of the two highest grades in a class of almost a hundred students, and qualified for a doctorate degree.<sup>249</sup> Meanwhile, he had prepared a second publication on the Russian occupation of Cyclades during the Russo-Turkish war (1768–1774).<sup>250</sup> The study, published in 1878, meticulously brought to light previously unpublished documents sent to the people of Cyclades from the beginning of the Russian occupation in October 1770 until its end in August 1774, and was this time reviewed in France for the *Revue des questions historiques*.<sup>251</sup> That same year, Kyparissos also excelled in his doctorate exams in the Department of Mathematics, while Clon successfully completed the practical exams required for becoming a licensed doctor.<sup>252</sup> Yet neither entered their respective professional arenas. Like most members of the educated higher class with ambitions of entering the academy, they soon left for Paris to continue their studies. The initial means for starting their lives in the French capital were provided by wealthy

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<sup>249</sup> Unknown author, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν του Ακαδημαϊκού Έτους 1875–1876 και την του 1876–1877 Πεπραγμένα Εκδιδόμενα Κατ' Απόφασιν της Ακαδημαϊκής Συγκλήτου* [Yearly Reports for the Academic Years 1875–1876 and 1876–1877 Published at the Request of the University Senate], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Λαού [Laou Printing House], 1880), 142. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.

<sup>250</sup> Clon Stephanos, *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα Αποσταλλέντα προς τους Κατόικους των Κυκλάδων κατά την υπό των Ρώσων Κατοχήν Αυτών* [Unpublished Documents Sent to the Inhabitants of Cyclades during the Russian Occupation], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Ερμού [Ermou Printing House], 1878). First published in *Αθήναιον* [Athinaion], vol. 6 (1877): 202–243. Stephanos's archives for this study are now kept at the General State Archives.

<sup>251</sup> Unknown author, *Revue de questions historiques* 24 (1878): 704.

<sup>252</sup> Andreas Anagnostakis, *Λόγος εκφωνηθείς εν τω Εθνικώ Πανεπιστημίω την Εικοστήν Έκτην Νοεμβρίου 1878* [Speech Delivered at the University of Athens on November 28, 1878], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Πέτρου Περρή [Petrou Perri Printing House], 1879), 43–44. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.



members of their father's side of the family,<sup>253</sup> though Kyparissos also had to work as an archivist at the Société Mathématique de France.<sup>254</sup>

#### **IV. From Athens to the Anthropological World of Paris**

Once in Paris, Clon Stephanos entered the world of anthropology. The apartment he and Kyparissos rented on 28 Rue de l'Arbalète was strategically situated within walking distance of the Musée d'histoire naturelle and the Faculté de Médecine, the two main sites for anthropological research in the city.<sup>255</sup> At the museum, Jean Louis Armand de Quatrefages de Bréau (1810–1892) was appointed the world's first professor of anthropology in 1855. At the medical school, the Société d'anthropologie de Paris, founded in 1859 under Paul Broca's (1824–1880) leadership, had managed to establish a laboratory space, a library, a museum, and the first private school for anthropology, the École d'anthropologie de Paris (fig. 2.7). Both settings allowed interested members of the public

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<sup>253</sup> Personal communication with the historian and Stephanos's biographer Dr. Markos N. Roussos, September 24, 2014.

<sup>254</sup> Christine Phili, "Thomas Archer Hirst: Ο Άγγλος Μέντορας του Κυπάρισσου Στέφανου [Thomas Archer Hirst: The English Mentor of Kyparissos Stephanos]," in *Proceedings of the Academy of Athens*, 89, no. A, (Athens: Ακαδημία Αθηνών [Academy of Athens], 2014), 17–18.

<sup>255</sup> Studies on the history of anthropological institutions in France include Alice L. Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850–1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Jennifer M. Hecht, *The End of the Soul: Scientific Modernity, Atheism, and Anthropology in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Claude Blanckaert, ed., *Les politiques de l'anthropologie: discours et pratiques en France, 1860–1940* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001); Nélia Dias, "The Visibility of Difference: Nineteenth-Century French Anthropological Collections," in *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*, ed. Sharon Macdonald, 31–45 (London: Routledge, 1998); Elizabeth A. Williams, "Anthropological Institutions in Nineteenth-Century France," *Isis* 76, no. 3 (1985): 331–48; Joy D. Harvey, "Races Specified, Evolution Transformed: The Social Context of Scientific Debates Originating in the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris 1859–1902," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1983).

to attend courses without fees or any other entrance requirements, and the school's library was open to everyone.<sup>256</sup>



Fig. 2.7: The Faculté de Médecine and at the back the Réfectoire des Cordeliers, in which Broca established the first anthropological laboratory in Paris, and where Stephanos attended laboratory demonstrations. René-Louis-Maurice Béguyer de Chancourtois, *Place de l'École de Médecine ou l'on voit encore les restes de l'Eglise des Cordeliers*, dessiné sur les lieux par L. Chancourtois (1802), source Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Stephanos's medical background—typical of most physical anthropologists at the time—and his interest in prehistoric archaeology and history aligned nicely with the

<sup>256</sup> Paul Broca, Paul Topinard, Théophile Chudzinski and G. A. Kuhff, “Laboratoire d’anthropologie,” in *Rapport sur l’École Pratique des Hautes Études, 1877–1878, 1878–1879* (1877), 125–29. Stephanos does not appear among those who regularly attended the courses and practical exercises at Broca’s laboratory from 1877 to 1879, though he could have done so at a later time or not on a regular basis.

original French conception of anthropology, which encompassed the history of nations.<sup>257</sup> It seems, however, that Stephanos had already made a name for himself within the French scholarly community well before his arrival in Paris thanks to the excellent reviews of his archaeological treatises in French journals. Even so, we know very little of Stephanos's actual encounters in Paris. One of his letters to Dragoumis, however, leaves no doubt that he had access to Broca's laboratory or the museum's facilities. "I beg you," Stephanos wrote to Dragoumis, "to take the time to inform me, if—in the case that the local Anthropological Society, or the 'Muséum d'histoire naturelle,' asks for crania from Megara from modern times—it would be easy for you to see that the French Embassy in Athens would assume responsibility for their shipment."<sup>258</sup> The task was complex. The involvement of a government official in such a situation could only be made possible by complying with the law, but also, and most important, it required assuring the high level of expertise and public profile of the individuals and institutions involved. In any case, Dragoumis responded positively on the basis of their common understanding, and a number of skulls were sent to Paris for anthropological study.<sup>259</sup>

As a means of establishing himself within the network of French learned societies, in 1879 Stephanos joined the Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques, through which he already kept close contact with French and Greek intellectuals.<sup>260</sup> Surprisingly, though, he never became a member of the Société d'anthropologie. This organization was an ideal meeting ground for younger scholars, especially medical doctors

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<sup>257</sup> Paul Broca, "Anthropologie," in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales*, ed. Amédée Dechambre, première série, tome cinquième (Paris: G. Masson, 1870), 276.

<sup>258</sup> ASCA, GLA, Stephanos N. Dragoumis Papers, Folder 189.2.137, September 21, 1881.

<sup>259</sup> ASCA, GLA, Stephanos N. Dragoumis Papers, Folder 189.2.138, September 26, 1881.

<sup>260</sup> "Liste générale des membres au 31 décembre 1890" [*General List of Members on December 31, 1890*], *Revue des études grecques* 3, no. 10 (1890): 61.

like himself. However, Stephanos's more conservative Catholic background may have conflicted with the outspoken republicanism, extreme materialism, and anticlericalism of many of the society's members.<sup>261</sup> In any case, Stephanos was elected a member of the more inclusive Association française pour l'avancement des sciences.<sup>262</sup> Given the close relationship and interaction between the two societies, we can safely assume that Stephanos was well positioned in the network of medical doctors that dominated the anthropological society and was familiar with contemporary anthropological debates.

In this context, Stephanos put together his magnum opus, the most comprehensive study of Greece to date and the only such work written by a Greek scholar: *La Grèce au point de vue naturel, ethnologique, anthropologique, démographique et médical*, published in 1884.<sup>263</sup> The monograph appeared as an extract from the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales*, to which Stephanos had contributed this remarkably long entry on Greece, as well as a few other shorter articles.<sup>264</sup> The dictionary itself was a massive undertaking of a hundred volumes edited by the French physician Amédée Dechambre (1812–1886) and printed over a period of twenty-five years, from 1864 to 1889. With over 250 authors appearing in the list of contributors, including the names of founding

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<sup>261</sup> Harvey, "Races Specified, Evolution Transformed," 7–112.

<sup>262</sup> *Association française pour l'avancement des sciences, Congrès La Rochelle, Comptes-rendus de la 11e session, 1882* [French Association for the Advancement of Science, La Rochelle Congress, Proceedings of the 11th Session, 1882] (Paris, 1883), 817; *Association française pour l'avancement des sciences, Congrès Rouen, Comptes-rendus de la 12e session, 1883* [French Association for the Advancement of Science, La Rochelle Congress, Proceedings of the 12th Session, 1883] (Paris, 1884), 814–15.

<sup>263</sup> Clon Stephanos, *La Grèce au point de vue naturel, ethnologique, anthropologique, démographique et médical* (Paris: G. Masson, 1884).

<sup>264</sup> Also published in, Clon Stephanos, "La Grèce" in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences Médicales*, quatrième série, tome dixième, ed. Amédée Dechambre (Paris: G. Masson, 1884), 363–581.

members of the Société d'anthropologie such as Paul Broca, Eugène Follin, Charles Robin, and Aristide Verneuil, this publication ultimately constituted a map of the whole of the medical world of Paris.<sup>265</sup>

A footnote by Dechambre—truly an unexpected and unique insertion in the whole dictionary—provides both an explanation for Stephanos's lengthy piece and a hint as to how he was perceived by his French peers. The importance of this contribution (written by “one of the most educated” young doctors from Greece) for the field of medical geography, noted Dechambre, excused its length.<sup>266</sup> He went on to express regret at having asked the author to omit some of the data and stated that he wished that the omitted material would find a different venue for publication. Dechambre's assessment was not exaggerated. Stephanos's thesis was the result of a concerted effort to weave together an unprecedented amount of data on the country's geography, geology, flora, fauna, ethnology, anthropology, demography, hygiene, and pathology. Most of the included measurements came from published international research or Greek scholarly sources, but Stephanos had also managed to establish a local network of informants who provided him with original data on areas not previously studied.

## **V. The Greeks of *La Grèce***

Drawing inspiration from the intellectual tendencies of the time, *La Grèce* provided an entirely numerical description of Greece in line with contemporary excitement for the positive method. The crucial influence of the French school of anthropology on Stephanos's work is nowhere more evident than in the two chapters devoted to ethnology and anthropology. It is here that he fully embraced the school's characteristic “cult of facts”

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<sup>265</sup> Harvey, “Races Specified, Evolution Transformed,” 15.

<sup>266</sup> Stephanos, *La Grèce*, 363. For an overview of the field of medical geography and its influence on Greek anthropology, see Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 31–40.

and the subsequent dismissal of anything that could be perceived as subjective interpretation or mere speculation.<sup>267</sup> His accounts of Greek prehistory and the racial composition of ancient and modern populations are also marked by Broca's early assertion that there is probably no other question "of such interest for us than the origins of our nation."<sup>268</sup> In this sense, the anthropological endeavor to study the past and present of European nations was necessarily intertwined with national historiographies and the processes of national identity formation.

Indeed, in keeping with contemporary anthropological views, which presented European nations as mixtures of diverse racial elements and ethnic groups, Stephanos argued for a modern Greek nation that incorporated Frankish and Albanian elements alongside the Greek populations. Yet according to Stephanos, the trajectories and fortunes of the Franks and Albanians had been quite distinct. The first, a mix of Francophone crusaders, after having lost most of their medieval settlements, were completely assimilated and Hellenized, while some had even adopted Greek Orthodoxy.<sup>269</sup> The integration of the Albanians, on the other hand, was a much slower process, only recently enabled by common military conscription, the development of public education, and the expansion of methods of communication. In any case, Stephanos suggested that the Albanians of Greece, though not as great in numbers as often assumed, fought during the Greek War of Independence as if "for their own country" and were "flattered to be considered Greeks."<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Dias, "The Visibility of Difference," 34.

<sup>268</sup> Paul Broca, "Recherches sur l'ethnologie de la France," *Mémoires de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris* 1 (1860–61): 1–56.

<sup>269</sup> Recent studies on the history of Latin Greece include Nikolaos G. Chrissis and Mike Carr, eds., *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204–1453* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014); and Nickiphoros I. Tsougarakis and Peter Lock, eds., *A Companion to Latin Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

<sup>270</sup> Stephanos, *La Grèce*, 430.

Even if their racial descent, often associated with the prehistoric Illyrians, was different, their presence in the country since at least the fourteenth century, as well as their patriotic feelings, firmly established them as part of the national community.

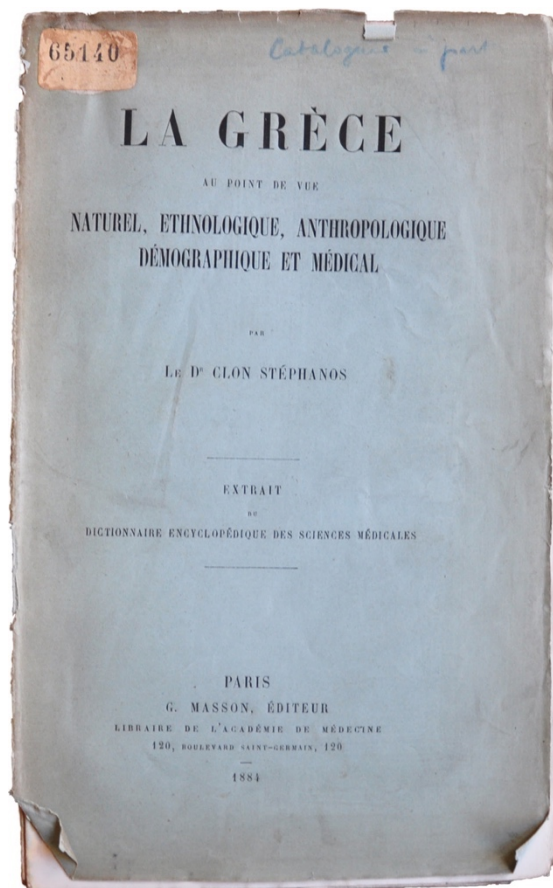


Fig. 2.8: Cover of *La Grèce*, photo Angeliki Lefkaditou.

This same discussion of population movements during the Middle Ages and modern times, however, brought Stephanos’s ethnological account even closer to the predominant national responses with regard to Slavic influences on Greece. Following the national agenda set by historians, archaeologists, and folklorists, as well as his own empiricist inclinations, Stephanos took issue especially with the validity of Fallmerayer’s historical sources. He did not deny, however, that when those sources were considered literally and in isolation, they did point to significant Slavic incursions toward the south of the Balkan Peninsula. A “general trend for exaggerations dominated the work of Byzantine chronographers,” Stephanos wrote, but if their work is supplemented by an

analysis of toponyms and language traits, it has the potential to clarify the extent of the Slavic presence and interactions with the locals.<sup>271</sup> Researching along these lines, he found not only that Slavic toponyms were restricted to specific localities in the Peloponnese—in which, nonetheless, the Greek element remained numerous even during the heyday of invasions—but also that words of Slavic origin were extremely limited, even among agricultural populations that had certainly mixed with the Slavs. So, he concluded, “the influence that these tribes exerted on the population of Greece, generally considered, in fact appears to be restricted.”<sup>272</sup>

But the reconstruction of the distant ethnological past of Greece was also one of Stephanos’s main concerns. Though he shared anthropologists’ skepticism about philological accounts of prehistory and the tendency to align prehistoric peoples with modern races, he consistently linked the majority of the prehistoric inhabitants of the Greek peninsula to a dolichocephalic or Mediterranean race: a branch of the Aryan family.<sup>273</sup> And he went even further to propose that the primitive Pelasgians—consisting of various tribes and often considered autochthonous populations—were most likely of Aryan origins even though their place in the European family had not yet been identified. While this model is largely reminiscent of the mid-nineteenth-century Aryan doctrines that were then taken up by turn-of-the-century Germanic or Nordic nationalism, Stephanos remained vague about the birthplace of the Aryan race and avoided any references to Aryan superiority. By contrast, he acknowledged Semitic influences through established Phoenician and Egyptian colonies and infusions dating back to the sixteenth century BCE.

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<sup>271</sup> Stephanos, *La Grèce*, 423.

<sup>272</sup> Stephanos, *La Grèce*, 427.

<sup>273</sup> Manias, “The Race Prussienne Controversy,” 743–44.



Thus, the prehistoric peoples of the Greek peninsula represented a mixture, albeit one with predominantly Aryan characteristics.

For Stephanos, this mixing of peoples continued well after the advent of the tribes recognized as the first Greeks, originally coming from the north or the east and settling on the coasts around the Aegean Sea and in mainland Greece. By further combining mythological genealogies with linguistic variations, which he saw as reflections of the varied and fragmented physical environment, Stephanos suggested common origins and kinship among the various Greek tribes. The indigenous, peaceful, and agrarian Pelasgians were either easily conquered or forced to migrate, and the ones who remained behind mixed with the Greeks and were slowly absorbed. Nowhere in his writings, however, does he refer to the relative worth of the elements that mixed; unlike early racial classifiers, he avoided stereotypes related to mentality or psychology.<sup>274</sup> Even when referring to the Dorians, antiquity's "Greeks par excellence," Stephanos decidedly stated that they fused from the start with other Greek and foreign tribes.<sup>275</sup>

Nevertheless, he was not fully committed to an idea of complete fusion. As Stephanos emphasized repeatedly, geographic isolation, as well as laws and traditions that either prohibited or discouraged marriages between locals and foreigners, curbed intermixing. Consequently, foreign influence on indigenous elements was not as profound as the number of non-Greeks living in Greek areas might suggest. This idea of checks on mixing, and the relative attenuation of such checks as we move away from prehistoric times was, as we will see shortly, key in establishing a lineal continuity between ancient and

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<sup>274</sup> The only derogatory term used by Stephanos was in his description of the Slavs as "barbarians" (e.g., *La Grèce*, 422), which betrays the influence of national sentiments on his otherwise rather detached account.

<sup>275</sup> Stephanos, *La Grèce*, 418.

modern Greeks. Though Stephanos, like many of his contemporaries, referred rather vaguely to the terms *race*, *tribe*, and *variety* and to the relationship between language, culture, and physical type, his ethnological work decidedly supported the national community's understanding of Greece as one of the first indigenous nations. But it also categorically belonged to the tradition of Western European scholars, who saw "impurity" of blood not as a characteristic of degraded nations, but rather as the driving force of biological and cultural improvement.<sup>276</sup>

In the anthropological chapter of *La Grèce* that followed, Stephanos aimed at dissolving the uncertainties of the ethnological storyline introduced by the somewhat ambiguous sources it was based on. Once again, Stephanos's understanding of anthropology's scope followed the French tradition, which by the 1880s was focused on rigorous measurements of physical characteristics, predominantly skulls and heads (fig. 2.9).<sup>277</sup> The comparison of measurements of ancient and modern skulls, supplemented by those on living inhabitants from various regions of Greece, became his main object of study.<sup>278</sup> The whole venture rested on the routine assumption that, although human groupings were susceptible to evolution and change, and all historical and existing populations had resulted from considerable admixture, certain features remained sufficiently fixed to indicate lineage. But it also rested on accumulating masses of data. Anthropologists all over Europe—having rejected the earlier idea of representative samples

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<sup>276</sup> For a seminal contribution on the importance of the idea of mixing in European race classifications, see Joshua Goode, *Impurity of Blood Defining Race in Spain, 1870–1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009).

<sup>277</sup> Dias, "The Visibility of Difference," 31.

<sup>278</sup> Following standard international practice, the main point of comparison for ancient and modern populations was the cephalic index. Stephanos, however, also discussed other indices suggested by French and German anthropologists, though he only briefly considered insufficiently researched characteristics such as eye, hair, or skin color.

and deductive theorizing—were thrown into a relentless pursuit of measurements, which were transformed into indices and finally arranged in statistical seriations.<sup>279</sup> The Balkan Peninsula, and especially Greece, was of immense interest to these soldiers of facts as both the historical route area of European civilization and a terrain of intense ethnic intermixing, chiefly within the confines of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>280</sup>

SÉRIATIONS DE CRANES ORIENTAUX D'APRÈS LEURS INDICES CÉPHALIQUES<sup>1</sup>

INDICES.	CRANES GRECS ANCIENS (70).	CRANES GRECS MODERNES (112).	TÊTES GRECQUES MODERNES (366).	SLAVES DU NORD. (130).	SLAVES DU SUD (91).	ROUMAINS (40).
67	1	»	»	»	»	»
68	1	1	»	»	»	»
69	2	1	»	»	»	»
70	1	1	»	»	»	»
71	3	2	»	»	»	»
72	2	5	5	»	2	»
73	6	2	5	»	»	1
74	6	5	4	2	2	»
75	12	4	10	2	2	»
76	10	7	14	2	1	2
77	7	9	17	2	1	2
78	8	11	25	8	4	2
79	4	4	25	7	1	1
80	1	6	26	9	8	1
81	»	9	54	15	7	7
82	4	7	45	14	8	4
83	2	6	51	16	7	5
84	»	9	58	19	11	5
85	»	5	21	15	9	4
86	»	5	22	9	5	5
87	»	5	20	6	5	5
88	»	4	15	5	9	2
89	»	1	6	3	1	»
90	»	2	4	1	1	»
91	»	»	5	»	1	1
92	»	2	»	1	1	»
93	»	1	2	»	2	»

Fig. 2.9: Review of cephalic index measurements of “oriental skulls” of ancient and modern Greeks, slaves, and Romanians, including Stephanos’s own data. Published in *La Grèce*, 435.

In most of his analysis of ancient skulls, Stephanos relied on studies conducted by esteemed international colleagues like Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) in Berlin, Giustiniano

<sup>279</sup> For an example of the German case on this theme, see Andrew D. Evans, *Anthropology at War: World War I and the Science of Race in Germany*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 66–69.

<sup>280</sup> See Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 38.

Nicolucci in Naples (1819–1905), and Armand de Quatrefages and Sigismond Zaborowski-Moindron (1851–1928) in Paris. However, by exposing the limited numbers of skulls and areas on which these studies were based, Stephanos undermined the validity of their individual conclusions and their effectiveness in actually representing a population living in such historically and geographically diverse regions. “Thus, we see,” he wrote rather polemically, “that for the majority of Greek lands, science does not know even a single skull.”<sup>281</sup> This statement, of course, not only cast doubt on the shared belief that all ancient Greeks were dolichocephalic, but also argued for the necessity of Stephanos’s work. By collectively considering available data and using Broca’s divisions of the cephalic index, he managed, albeit barely, to demonstrate the existence of short skulls among classical Greeks.<sup>282</sup> Nevertheless, in a most interesting turn from the empirical reality of skull measurements, Stephanos looked at artistic monuments as further evidence of short-skulled ancient Greeks. Even though art had featured prominently in anthropological accounts of the early and mid-nineteenth century, his contemporaries were rather skeptical of such associations. So was Stephanos. His conviction that “according to the testimony of ancient authors and monuments of art, it is beyond doubt that a large part of the ancient population of Greece was brachycephalic and especially sub-brachycephalic” could, however, be linked to its importance for the national theme of continuity, as we will see in Stephanos’s anthropological treatment of modern populations.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Stephanos, *La Grèce*, 432

<sup>282</sup> The total number of ancient skulls measured did not exceed seventy, but according to Broca even a series of twenty skulls, randomly collected, was enough to offer secure conclusions (see Dias, “The Visibility of Difference,” 36).

<sup>283</sup> Stephanos, *La Grèce*, 439.

So what did the measurements of modern skulls and living Greeks reveal?<sup>284</sup> In a sentence, modern Greeks appeared predominantly brachycephalic. The obvious puzzle for Stephanos was, therefore, how, on one hand, to confirm the continuity between ancient and modern Greeks; and, on the other, to differentiate modern Greeks from neighboring populations, especially the Slavs, who were assumed to have completely dominated ancient elements. So far, we have seen that the strategy he followed with regard to the first issue was to suggest that brachycephaly was common in ancient times. To tackle the second question, Stephanos compared averages between both Greeks and Slavs, but also proceeded to a detailed region-by-region analysis to rebut theories of intense local Slavic influence. By way of example, Stephanos focused on the population of the Peloponnese, a region Fallmerayer considered Slavicized from early on, and reported that its mean cephalic index was lower by one unit compared to that of the Slavs. Based on such minute differences, Stephanos suggested that “although the Greek population had experienced the influence of numerous foreign elements during the Middle Ages, sometimes even to a considerable degree, these various influences did not in general succeed in accumulating and profoundly changing the elements of the country.”<sup>285</sup> Echoing familiar anthropological narratives, he concluded that the populations living on fertile plains were much more susceptible to the ravages of epidemics and conquest, while those living on infertile land, such as mountainous areas or islands, retained the Greek racial elements and carried them to the rest of the country through their migrations.<sup>286</sup> Thus, upon his return to Greece, he traveled all around the country, not just to determine the racial composition of modern

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<sup>284</sup> For data on modern skulls, Stephanos used studies by authoritative figures such as Quatrefages, Nicolluci, and Augustin Weisbach (1837–1914). Measurements on living inhabitants of the country were taken by the Greek naturalist Nikolaos Apostolides (1856–1919) and Stephanos.

<sup>285</sup> Stephanos, *La Grèce*, 439.

<sup>286</sup> See for example McMahan, “On the Margins of International Science and National Discourse,” on Romanian narratives about Transylvanians replenishing the plains after invasions.

Greeks, but also to identify these indigenous elements among the people of remote villages, especially inhabitants of high mountains and islands.

The reception of Stephanos's ethnological and anthropological account nicely illustrates the international potential of anthropology as a science that studied humans by objectively accumulating facts, as well as the possible tensions arising from their interpretation. In 1885, Joseph Deniker (1852–1918), the Franco-Russian naturalist and anthropologist, used Stephanos's anthropological data, along with that of Broca, Topinard, Virchow, Retzius, Nicolucci, and others, as a source for a *Grande encyclopédie* entry on the races of Europe.<sup>287</sup> By splitting European populations into seven groups according to their physical form, Deniker confirmed that the majority of the current population of Greece belonged to “a dark, large in [body]-size, meso-, or sub-brachycephalic” race.<sup>288</sup> Again, in agreement with Stephanos's results, he acknowledged the existence of “a dark, dolichocephalic race of very small size,” to which the ancient people of the Peloponnese belonged.<sup>289</sup> Even if not explicitly accepting Stephanos's larger scheme, Deniker entertained the possibility of continuity between ancient and modern Greeks, and, most interestingly, kept Slavs and Greeks apart. In his subsequent study of the cephalic index of the races of Europe, Deniker not only fully endorsed Stephanos's results, but also adopted his argument about the likely existence of short-skulled ancient Greeks.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Joseph Deniker, “Anthropologie et ethnologie,” in *La Grande encyclopédie: inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts*, eds. Andre Berthélot et al. (Paris: Lamirault, 1885–1902), 810.

<sup>288</sup> Deniker, “Anthropologie et ethnologie,” 811.

<sup>289</sup> Deniker, “Anthropologie et ethnologie,” 811.

<sup>290</sup> Joseph Deniker, *Les races de l'Europe: l'indice céphalique en Europe* (Paris: Association française pour l'avancement des sciences, 1897).

However, the reception of *La Grèce* by Paul Topinard (1830–1911), who had taken over as head of the society and the *École d'anthropologie* after Broca's death, was more complex. In 1885, he published a paper on the necessity of adopting a common methodology that would allow comparisons between different sets of craniometric measurements.<sup>291</sup> According to Topinard, in the present situation there was too much discordance between different schools, which disrupted international communication. To strengthen his arguments and demonstrate the advantages of his suggestion, Topinard focused on Broca's method for the measurement of the cephalic index. Stephanos's conclusions from the comparison of the cephalic index of ancient and modern Greeks served as one of the examples he used to prove that the older nomenclature obscured the presentation of data. For Topinard, it was evident that there was "profound difference between the ancient and modern population of Greece," especially since Stephanos had not found extremely short-skulled individuals among the former.<sup>292</sup> "This conclusion is too obvious to have escaped Mr. Clon Stephanos," wrote Topinard, but "his nomenclature, modeled on that of Broca and his averages, did not demonstrate it with such sharpness."<sup>293</sup> He went even further, almost completely dismissing Stephanos's main work on measuring the heads of living inhabitants. Topinard suggested that there could be no comparison between cranium and head measurements, as there was no fixed rate of conversion between the two.<sup>294</sup> Considering that this was not only a much-contested issue with central figures

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<sup>291</sup> Paul Topinard, "Du principe général à adopter dans les divisions et nomenclatures de caractères et en particulier de la nomenclature quinaire de l'indice céphalique," *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris* troisième série, tome 9 (1886): 91–108.

<sup>292</sup> Topinard, "Du principe général," 102.

<sup>293</sup> Topinard, "Du principe général," 102.

<sup>294</sup> Topinard, "Du principe général," 101.

in the field adopting various solutions, but also standard practice, Topinard's dismissal appears even harsher.<sup>295</sup>

Topinard's motives for choosing to comment on Stephanos's results are unclear. Was he intrigued by Stephanos's interpretation, and did he want to demonstrate that, stripped down to bare numbers, the only thing it proved was how different ancient and modern Greeks were? Was it easier for him to attack someone outside the society, given its polemical internal workings, in order to establish his own authority? Whatever the answers to these questions, Topinard's reaction exemplifies how anthropological facts about humans were not simply discovered; their veracity depended on intricate systems of measurements and observations. But it is also an excellent reminder of the ruthless, patronizing attitude of anthropology of the great centers toward what was perceived as scientific peripheries. Stephanos was as empiricist as his international colleagues; his work depended on their authority both in using the facts they had already collected and in modeling his own research methodology after it. For the interpretation of his results, he again relied on available scientific sources, taking every possible caution against ambiguous inferences. The Greek scholars he cited also belonged to this same positivist tradition. From his perspective, whatever the apparent tension between his scientific and nationalistic vocation, it was paradoxically resolved by a deep commitment to the objective ideals of the former.

To be sure, when Stephanos returned to Athens, he was not an unfamiliar face. While still in Paris, he had made a point of sending a copy of *La Grèce* to Dragoumis, as

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<sup>295</sup> For a contemporary account of the divergent opinions regarding the relationship between cranial and head indices, see Joseph Deniker, *The Races of Man* (London: Walter Scott, 1900), 73.



well as a short article to be published in a local newspaper.<sup>296</sup> The political situation was also favorable, as Prime Minister Charilaos Trikoupis (1832–1896), who had himself studied in Paris and spent the early years of his life in England, was determined to modernize all sectors of the Greek state by emulating the countries of Western Europe. Stephanos had an important publication and a network of connections to French learned societies. But what is more, he was someone who combined the much-desired scientific expertise and rigor of a Western scholar with the unique interests and alliances that allowed him to be reintegrated into Greek academia. At this point, he was himself a bridge between the transnational world of anthropology and the local arena that looked to the new science for “positive” answers concerning national identity and origins.

## **VI. Finding a Role for Anthropology at the University of Athens**

It did not take long for Stephanos to reap the fruits of his labors. On June 21, 1886, the rector of the University of Athens presented to the university senate an application arguing for the “plausible usefulness of the establishment of an anthropological laboratory.”<sup>297</sup> The senate concluded in favor and “worthy of being the director of the laboratory was judged the applicant himself: Mr. Clon Stephanos.”<sup>298</sup> With the approval of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Education, the newly appointed Stephanos became the head of the Anthropological Laboratory and Museum.

At the time, almost half a century after its establishment in 1837, the University of Athens was enjoying what most scholars would characterize as its golden age: an era of continuous expansion and a high public profile. Around the main four schools of theology,

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<sup>296</sup> See Stephanos N. Dragoumis Papers, ASCA, GLA, Folder 190.1.134, October 5, 1883. We do not know, however, if Dragoumis did send the article to an Athenian newspaper.

<sup>297</sup> UoA Historical Archive, Proceedings of the Senate meetings 1883–86, vol. 14, 275.

<sup>298</sup> UoA Historical Archive, Proceedings of the Senate meetings 1883–86, vol. 14, 275.

law, medicine, and philosophy, a constellation of scientific collections and units had become principal loci for the development of scientific disciplines.<sup>299</sup> As historians of modern Greece have amply documented, the University of Athens, its academic personnel, and its students were from the start intimately intertwined with the country's adventurous modernity.<sup>300</sup> This engagement included a decisive role in the construction of *Greekness*. Likewise, Greek scholars, and, even more so, the new generation of scientists, promoted and encouraged their portrayal as soldiers of science, patriotic and humble teachers, or tireless and selfless workers.<sup>301</sup> In this context, the scientific ethos of Western Europe and the appropriation of the national past became powerful resources that Greek academics actively used for the legitimization and promotion of their aspirations.

Having experienced the difficulties of anthropology's institutionalization abroad, Stephanos knew early on that the burden of proof for its scientific credentials and national relevance lay with his ability to use both resources. The establishment of the museum was, of course, an important occasion and the single most critical episode in the early history of the discipline in Greece. But anthropology's position still remained precarious. Compared, for example, to the flamboyant ceremony accompanying the founding of the university's observatory, which included gunboat salutes and fervent public speeches, anthropology's inaugural act was rather modest.<sup>302</sup> In response, Stephanos set up a lifelong program that

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<sup>299</sup> Vangelis D. Karamanolakis, "The University of Athens and Greek Antiquity (1837–1937)," in *Re-imagining the Past: Antiquity and Modern Greek Culture*, ed. Dimitris Tziouvas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 112–27.

<sup>300</sup> See, for example, Kostas Lappas, *Πανεπιστήμιο και Φοιτητές στην Ελλάδα κατά τον 19ο Αιώνα* [University and Students in Greece during the Nineteenth Century] (Athens: Ινστιτούτο Νεοελληνικών Ερευνών ΕΙΕ [Department of Neohellenic Research NHRF], 2014).

<sup>301</sup> Kostas Tampakis, "Onwards Facing Backwards: The Rhetoric of Science in Nineteenth-Century Greece," *British Journal for the History of Science* 47, no. 2 (2014): 226.

<sup>302</sup> Tampakis, "Onwards Facing Backwards," 217–18.

endeavored to balance nationalist and scientific inclinations but also argued for Greek anthropology's importance for the national interdisciplinary and the international disciplinary communities.

In doing so, Stephanos's research continued on the path paved in *La Grèce*, which was mainly inspired by the French model of physical anthropology. He used Broca's anthropometric nomenclature and, despite limited funds, ordered the standard laboratory equipment from the renowned French instrument maker Collin.<sup>303</sup> His orders for the museum's library, however, also suggest an important influence by liberal German anthropologists and ethnologists, which would become more evident in the years to follow.<sup>304</sup> Though mainly focusing on measurements and observations on skulls and heads, Stephanos reported that anthropological investigations required not only "anthropological material in the narrowest sense of the word," but also "auxiliary ethnological material," including predominantly written sources. "For the anthropological and ethnological investigation of the Greek regions, like every other country," he later wrote, "modern science requires a broad work agenda, including whatever possible to shed light or simply contribute to the solution of such issues."<sup>305</sup> With the support of the state, he measured thousands of people, mainly Greek and foreign military conscripts and schoolchildren, but

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<sup>303</sup> Collin's response to Stephanos's order, UoA Historical Archive, Anthropological Museum, 1886–1887, Folder 315–21, July 8, 1887. For Broca's and Topinard's liaison with specific instrument makers, see Lucile Hoyme, "Physical Anthropology and Its Instruments: An Historical Study," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 9, no. 4 (1953): 420.

<sup>304</sup> Clon Stephanos's Report to the University, UoA Historical Archive, Anthropological Museum, 1890–91, Folder 315–21, n.d.

<sup>305</sup> Panagiotis Pavlidis, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν Παναγιώτου Παυλίδου, Τακτικού Καθηγητού της Θεολογίας, Πρυτανεύσαντος κατά το Ακαδημαϊκόν Έτος 1893–1894* [Report for the Rectorship of Panagiotis Pavlidis, Professor of Theology, during the Academic Year 1893–94], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Π. Δ. Σακελλαρίου [Printing House P. D. Sakellariou], 1895), 152. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.

also inhabitants of remote villages both within and outside the borders of the Greek Kingdom. Provided with human remains from Greek and foreign archaeological excavations and graveyards, he also measured numerous skulls, from prehistoric to modern. Finally, while traveling across the country, he collected archival sources on toponyms, genealogy, linguistics, and population movements.

His first report to the university suggested that, through anthropometric research on crania and living inhabitants from all corners of the country, he had been “able to prove anthropologically the preservation of the ancient Greek [dolicocephalic] element, relatively pure” in a number of locations around Attica, on Greek islands such as Naxos and Kefallinia, and in the Peloponnese.<sup>306</sup> At the same time, Stephanos argued that the settlements of peoples belonging to “the great brachycephalic race” during the Bronze Age were responsible for the appearance of short-skulled Greek populations of the purest form, mainly in the northwest of the country. As already discussed, the rest of the population descended from mixing between these early peoples and, to some degree, from foreign invaders. In the same letter, Stephanos also argued that a great percentage of the long-skulled Albanians living in areas of Central Greece were of “Greek origins that with time were Albanized.”<sup>307</sup> On the contested issue of Slavic influence, he stressed that, according to the anthropological data, its “effect on the Greek population is presented as very limited.”<sup>308</sup>

Stephanos displayed his initial results on a cephalic index map based on ten thousand measurements—a figure, he suggested, that only very few other European

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<sup>306</sup> Stephanos’s Report, July 24, 1887, UoA Historical Archive, Anthropological Museum, 1886–87, Folder 315–21.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

countries could match, and certainly neither France nor Germany. “This map of Greece surpasses the ones constructed elsewhere,” wrote Stephanos, “because of the numerous observations on which it is based, but also because the anthropological data are presented independently of administrative divisions, though these are taken into account for the conclusions.”<sup>309</sup> His arguments were convincing enough that the Greek committee for the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris, headed by Dragoumis, decided to include it among the exhibits of the Greek pavilion.

The map received a silver medal accompanied by an anonymous, lukewarm review in the *Revue d'anthropologie*, which found the map difficult to read and not very informative on the methods employed.<sup>310</sup> What most puzzled Stephanos’s French colleagues, however, was the nonobvious interpretation of the results. In Greece, the reviewer wrote, “it is difficult to establish a general rule, except that brachycephaly is more frequent or higher in the north, where it confirms the influence of the brachycephalic Albanians and Montenegrins.”<sup>311</sup> The reviewer continued: “The ethnic elements clashed on all sides and are distributed without any order; perhaps the brachycephalic are more frequent in the west and the dolichocephalic in the east, which would be the opposite of what logic would dictate.”<sup>312</sup> But even if Stephanos’s results did not provide an easily discernible pattern, or at least one that aligned with the more commonly accepted account

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<sup>309</sup> Theodoros Afendoulis, *Λόγοι Θεοδώρου Αφεντούλη Πρυτάνεως του Εθνικού Πανεπιστημίου κατά το Ακαδημαϊκόν Έτος 1887–1888* [Speeches of Theodoros Afendoulis, Rector of the National University during the Academic Year 1877–88], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Παλιγγενεσία Ιω. Αγγελόπουλου [Palingenesia Printing House Io. Angelopoulos], 1890), 138–39. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.

<sup>310</sup> Unknown author, “Expositions des Sciences Anthropologiques,” *Reveu d'anthropologie*, série 3, tome IV (1889): 732–33.

<sup>311</sup> Unknown author, “Expositions des Sciences Anthropologiques,” 733.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

of a dominant Slavic influence from the north and a Mediterranean influence in the west, the large empirical basis of his work and the use of internationally endorsed methods facilitated its acceptance.

Within the national university, the most explicit endorsement of anthropology as the specialist discipline that could authoritatively substantiate Greek origins can be found in the words of the professor of Greek letters at the University of Athens, Georgios Mistriotis (1840–1916):

But it is already time that the government and the archaeological society take care for the salvage of the remains of the Sacred Band of Thebes, who fell at [the battle of] Chaeronea,<sup>313</sup> and which, to our shame, are deteriorating under the influence of the soil and the atmosphere. But even if no one else takes care of these, we think that the National University can provide Mr. Clon Stephanos the resources required for the preservation of the remains of those heroes, which after having been slaughtered while bravely fighting for the freedom of the Greeks, can now to be called upon as undeniable witnesses in the craniological examinations of the ethnological courts to testify for the identity of the Greek race.<sup>314</sup>

For an extreme archaist and a scholar who most vigorously opposed the dominant synthetic narrative of Greek history such as Mistriotis, the anthropological examinations could settle the question of the relationship between Macedonians and the Greeks of the city-states

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<sup>313</sup> Recall the Battle of Chaeroneia, and its importance for the construction of Greek national identity, mentioned in this chapter's introduction.

<sup>314</sup> Georgios Mistriotis, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν Γεωργίου Μιστριώτου, Τακτικού Καθηγητού των Ελληνικών Γραμμάτων, Πρυτανεύσαντος κατά το Ακαδημαϊκόν Έτος 1890–1891* [Report for the Rectorship of Georgios Mistriotis, Professor of Greek Letters, during the Academic Year 1890–1891], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Παλιγγενεσία Ιω. Αγγελόπουλου [Palingenesia Printing House Io. Angelopoulou], 1892), 84–85. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.

once and for all. Marching toward the end of the century, as Balkan irredentisms clashed (especially in areas such as Macedonia), Stephanos's portrayal of anthropology as the study of "the whole nation,"<sup>315</sup> and an indispensable science for understanding "the origins and the subsequent fortunes of the Greek nation," was gaining momentum.<sup>316</sup>

On a more practical level, however, there is very little evidence of the museum acting as more than a repository for anthropological research. The 1893 university guide encouraged "students of medicine, who wish to study their fatherland from an anthropological or ethnological perspective" to visit the museum.<sup>317</sup> Two years later, following a generous donation to its library and the systematic growth of its collections, the museum opened its doors to everyone.<sup>318</sup> While we cannot speculate whether any students took up the task, or how many visitors used the library or viewed its collections, Stephanos often referred to distinguished foreign visitors who studied those collections.<sup>319</sup> We know of two such cases.

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<sup>315</sup> Panagiotis Pavlidis, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν* [Report for the Rectorship], 154.

<sup>316</sup> Anastasios Kyriakos, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν Α. Δ. Κυριακού, Τακτικού Καθηγητού της Εκκλησιαστικής Ιστορίας και της Συμβολικής, Πρυτανεύσαντος κατά το Ακαδημαϊκόν Έτος 1895–1896* [Report for the Rectorship of A. D. Kyriakos, Professor of Ecclesiastic History and Symbolism, during the Academic Year 1895–1896], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Π. Δ. Σακελλαρίου [Printing House P. D. Sakellariou], 1898) 261. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.

<sup>317</sup> A. Koli Alexis and K. Xanthopoulos, *Οδηγός των Φοιτητών του Εθνικού Πανεπιστημίου* [Student Guide to the National University] (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Π. Δ. Σακελλαρίου [Printing House P. D. Sakellariou], 1893), 38.

<sup>318</sup> The donation of 1,430 volumes was made by the family of Alexandros Paspatis (1814–1892), an internationally educated Greek scholar who had carried out extensive linguistic, archaeological, and historical studies. Pergamos DL, *Rector Speeches*, Kyriakos, 259–260.

<sup>319</sup> Anastasios K. Christomanos, *Λόγοι και Ευθύναι Αναστασίου Κ. Χρηστομάνου, Καθηγητού της Χημείας, Πρυτάνεως του Εθνικού Πανεπιστημίου κατά το Ακαδημαϊκόν Έτος 1896–1897* [Report for the Rectorship of Anastasios K. Christomanos, Professor of Chemistry, during the Academic Year 1896–1897], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο των Καταστημάτων Ανέστη Κωνσταντινίδη [Anesti Konstandinidi], 1898),

In an announcement to the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1893, Rudolf Virchow mentioned that, during one of his visits to Greece, Stephanos showed him “a skull from Tiryns and five from Chaeronea.”<sup>320</sup> In 1897, Achilles Rose (1839–1916), an American medical doctor and Hellenist, wrote an enthusiastic report on the museum. Rose related that he had recently returned from his travels to Greece, where, in one of the vast halls of the Academy in Athens (fig. 2.10), he had discovered the museum: “a treasure . . . the praise of which cannot possibly be exaggerated.”<sup>321</sup> The collection of numerous skulls and skeletons acquired by the museum “under the strictest control of men of science,” combined with “thousands of archives, documents, deeds, ecclesiastical, fiscal, and family papers . . . and personal inquiries,” could uniquely provide an answer to “the most important part of Hellenic ethnography . . . a comparison of the ancient type with all the later types of Greece.”<sup>322</sup>

Rose’s description echoes Stephanos’s insistence on the importance of the anthropological museum—an emphasis that should not be understood as exclusively directed toward a national audience, but, most important, as an act of emancipation from Greek anthropology’s perceived peripherality. For Stephanos, European anthropological accounts were mostly based not only on limited material but also on skulls of disputable origins. By contrast, his results stemmed from direct, unmediated access to anthropological material. In 1893, he wrote: “The anthropological museum had only few additions this year,

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269. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.

<sup>320</sup> Rudolf Virchow, “Über griechische Schädel aus alter und neuer Zeit und über einen Schädel von Menidi, der für den des Sophokles gehalten ist,” *Sitzungsberichte der königlich preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* 34 (1893): 677–700.

<sup>321</sup> Achilles Rose, “Greek Anthropology,” *New York Medical Journal*, September 18, 1897, 434.

<sup>322</sup> Rose, “Greek Anthropology,” 434–35.



since only material from verified and unquestionable origins is being accepted; to that effect no other similar museum is superior to ours.”<sup>323</sup> Carefully documenting the acquired



Fig. 2.10: The neoclassical building of Sinaia Academy, later Academy of Athens, designed by the Danish Architect Theophil Edvard von Hansen (1813–1891), housed the Anthropological Museum from 1896 until the end of the 1920s. Photo Aristotelis Romaidis, ca 1900, source E. L. I. A. [Watermarked images published with permission].

<sup>323</sup> Before the establishment of the museum, the acquisition of crania—often associated with grave robbery, disputable processes of exportation, or even gifts—by museums, collections, and individual scholars outside Greece was a common phenomenon related to the increased anthropological interest in ancient Greece and the populations of the Balkan peninsula. See also Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 37–39; and Ioannis Pandazidis, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν Ιωάννου Πανταζίδου, τακτικού καθηγητού της Ελληνικής Φιλολογίας, πρυτανεύσαντος κατά το Ακαδημαϊκόν Έτος 1892–1893* [Report for the Rectorship of Ioannis Pandazidis, Professor of Greek Philology, during the Academic Year 1892–1893], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Π. Δ. Σακελλαρίου [Printing House P. D. Sakellariou], 1894), 227. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.

material in close cooperation with the most prestigious contemporary archaeologists, he boasted that he brought together “scientific material that the anthropological museums of Europe looked at with envy.”<sup>324</sup> It is not difficult to detect the same kind of attitude when Stephanos variously stressed that, either out of necessity or a spirit of innovation, he did not simply emulate foreign anthropological traditions but actively sought to contribute to international scientific efforts. Thus, he worked extensively to determine new points on the skull that would either complement or simplify existing methods,<sup>325</sup> and was the first who sought to associate the frequency of hair and eye color with skull shape among Greek populations.<sup>326</sup>

In a fashion rather typical of anthropologists of his time, he was, however, hesitant to publish any of these results or reach hasty conclusions.<sup>327</sup> Especially as Stephanos’s rapprochement with German liberal anthropology grew ever stronger, either through his readings or personal contacts, he increasingly became less assertive and vaguely promised to solve issues of “highest anthropological importance” in future publications.<sup>328</sup> Adhering to his German colleagues’ principle “to keep their science out of the tumult of politics,” Stephanos, though a committed nationalist, refused to enter the realm of day-to-day

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<sup>324</sup> Anastasios Kyriakos, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν* [Report for the Rectorship], 61.

<sup>325</sup> Ioannis N. Hatzidakis, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν Ιωάννου Ν. Χατζιδάκι, Τακτικού Καθηγητού των Μαθηματικών, Πρυτανεύσαντος κατά το Ακαδημαϊκόν Έτος 1894–1895* [Report for the Rectorship of Ioannis N. Hatzidakis, Professor of Mathematics, during the Academic Year 1894–1895], (Athens: Τυπογραφείο Π. Δ. Σακελλαρίου [Printing House P. D. Sakellariou], 1894), 260, 318. Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Rector Speeches.

<sup>326</sup> Ioannis Pandazidis, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν* [Report for the Rectorship], 225–27.

<sup>327</sup> Evans, *Anthropology at War*, 66.

<sup>328</sup> Ioannis Pandazidis, *Τα κατά την Πρυτανείαν* [Report for the Rectorship], 227.

politics.<sup>329</sup> Indeed, when in 1892 his compatriots put his name up for election to the Greek Parliament,<sup>330</sup> he issued a statement urging his supporters to champion those candidates who “wish to serve the interests of the country the most during these critical circumstances.”<sup>331</sup>

Notwithstanding Stephanos’s commitment to “apolitical objectivity,”<sup>332</sup> a royal decree issued in 1899 acutely reaffirmed the museum’s national importance by changing its official designation to Museum of Anthropology and Ancient Ancestral Relics.<sup>333</sup> In the aftermath of the humiliating defeat in the 1897 Ottoman-Greek War and the social unrest that followed, the change in the museum’s name symbolized the yearning for a renewed connection with ancestral roots.<sup>334</sup> In the same way that antiquities came to symbolize holy relics and were sanctified, human remains represented the genealogical threads that connected the nation to its past.

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<sup>329</sup> Evans, *Anthropology at War*, 67.

<sup>330</sup> Stephanos’s name appeared in the elections list as an independent candidate, which is quite remarkable given the extreme polarization between the modernist party of Trikoupis and the more traditional and conservative party of Theodoros Deliyannis (1820–1905). The news appeared in two local newspapers: see unknown author, “Βουλευτικά [Parliamentary],” *Ηλιος* [Sun], April 13, 1892, 1; unknown author, “Οι Ανακηρυχθέντες Υποψήφιοι Βουλευταί [The Nominated Members of Parliament],” *Πατρίς* [Fatherland], April 14, 1892, 2; and unknown author, “Untitled,” *Ηλιος* [Sun], April 28, 1892, 2.

<sup>331</sup> Clon Stephanos, “Δήλωση προς τους Εκλογείς της Επαρχίας Σύρου [Statement to the Voters of Syros Periphery],” *Πατρίς* [Fatherland], April 30, 1892, 2. The newspaper fervently supported Trikoupis’s party and disparaged various independent candidates for secretly working in favor of Deliyannis’s election.

<sup>332</sup> Evans, *Anthropology at War*, 68.

<sup>333</sup> *Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως* [Government Gazette] 51, no.1 (March 19, 1899), 2.

<sup>334</sup> Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 286–326.

This alignment of anthropology with archaeology was particularly reinforced after the 1900s, when Stephanos turned almost exclusively to excavating prehistoric settlements in the Aegean under the auspices of the Archaeological Society in Athens. The extreme empiricism of Greek archaeology, coupled with Stephanos's loyalty to inductive methods, led him to produce reports that closely resembled documentations of archaeological excavations. Anthropology was all but lost in pages filled with details about the excavated tombs, the position of the skeletons, and the contents of the graves. The bond between anthropology and archeology was further strengthened when, in 1905, Stephanos, as an authority on ancient inscriptions, became an advisor to the society.<sup>335</sup> It was during these years that he published his second and final book.

In 1911, after almost three decades of research, Stephanos published a thin, unimpressive monograph of a mere sixty-seven pages entitled *Contributions to the Physical Anthropology of Greece: The Transverse Cephalic Index* (fig. 2.11–2.12).<sup>336</sup> The contrast to *La Grèce* is striking. The booklet is devoid of any interpretative conclusions or inferences and limited to the absolutely necessary textual descriptions. The short introduction explains that his results were solely based on head measurements from soldiers and workers aged eighteen to thirty years old and treated according to the internationally acknowledged method of the French school of anthropology. After paying homage to Topinard's taxonomy for presenting variations more clearly, Stephanos went on to meticulously document all measurements arranged in seriations.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Λεύκωμα της Εκατονταετηρίδος της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας 1837–1937 [Centenary Book of the Archaeological Society in Athens], 47.

<sup>336</sup> Clon Stephanos, *Συμβολαί εις την Φυσικήν Ανθρωπολογίαν της Ελλάδος: Ο Εγκάρσιος Κεφαλικός Δείκτης* [Contributions to the Physical Anthropology of Greece: The Transverse Cephalic Index], (Athens: Τυπογραφείον της Β. Αυλής, Α. Ραφτάνη [Printing House of the Royal Court A. Raftani], 1911).

<sup>337</sup> Recall Topinard's harsh critique of Stephanos's results in *La Grèce*.

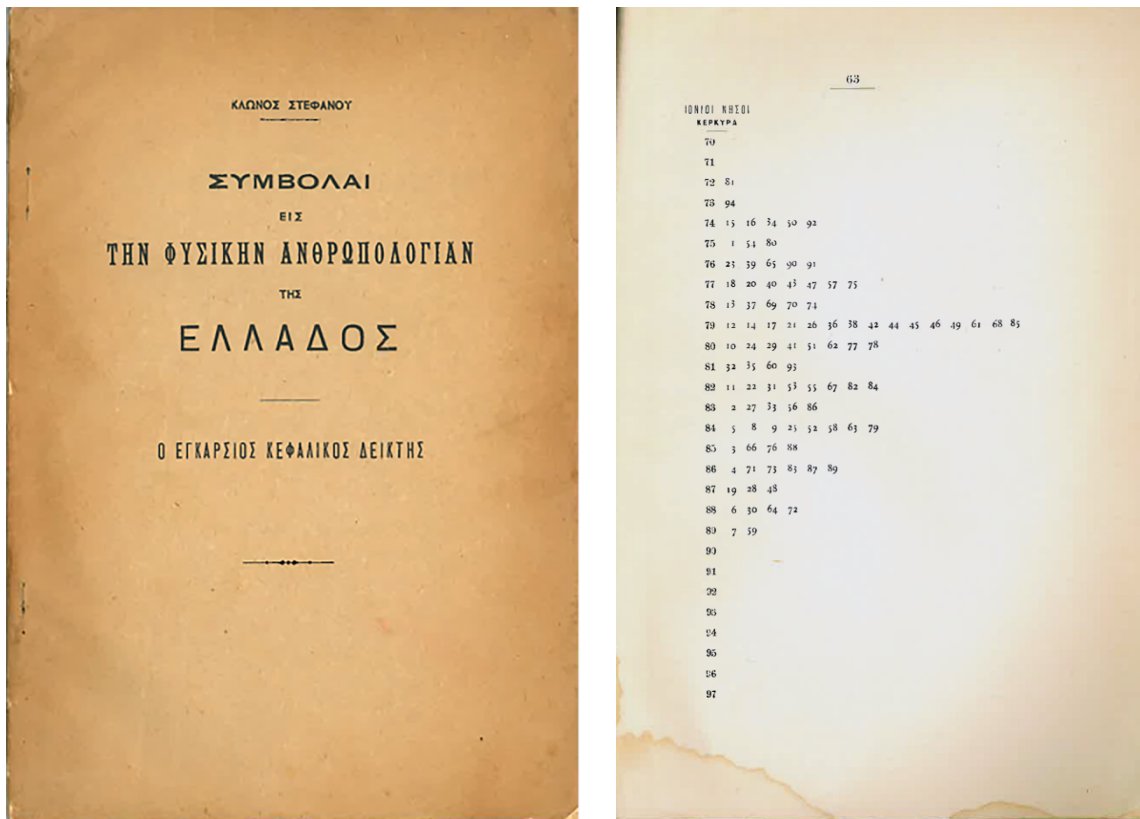


Fig. 2.11–2.12: Cover of *Contributions* (left), and Stephanos’s cephalic index measurements of skulls from the island of Corfu (right), photos Angeliki Lefkaditou.

But the book’s preface perfectly captures his intentions. Stephanos wrote, “After many years of anthropological researches in Greece, I now publish them, as objectively as I can, and as contemporary *Biometrics* [emphasis in original] demands. To combine these researches with ethnological issues would be unworthy of the great times ahead and Anthropology of the future.”<sup>338</sup> His rejection of ethnology only strengthened his faith in what later came to be known as the exact sciences. Stephanos saw his endeavors as belonging to a new, emerging trend: the combination of the doctrines of the biometric school with demographical studies that led to the rise of mathematical statistics. In the end, the underwhelming book was the most decisive point in Stephanos’s lifelong battle with

<sup>338</sup> Stephanos, *Contributions*, preface.

the elusive ideal of objectivity. Yet the fact that the publication was in Greek meant that it was not cited by his colleagues abroad, and thus it never achieved the status of *La Grèce*.

## VII. Conclusion

On November 10, 1896, Stephanos sent a letter to his “dear and well-respected master,” Rudolf Virchow, asking for a response with his opinion on “the necessity of the existence of a university chair of anthropology, especially in the medical school.”<sup>339</sup> The timing seemed excellent. The University of Athens was about to reform its organization, and the museum had just been relocated to “a beautiful south-facing hall of the Sinaia Academy, and thus made accessible to all interested visitors.”<sup>340</sup> However, although the rector of the university and celebrated professor of chemistry Anastasios Christomanos (1841–1906) eagerly endorsed this claim for a chair of anthropology that same year,<sup>341</sup> it took more than ten years for the school of medicine to submit an official request.<sup>342</sup> This was finally granted by royal decree in 1912.<sup>343</sup> Another two years passed before the medical school finally decided that anthropology belonged to its own area of expertise.<sup>344</sup> In a tragic turn of

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<sup>339</sup> Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, NL Virchow, Nr. 2009. Because Stephanos’s personal archive was lost after his death, this is the only correspondence between the Greek anthropologist and Virchow, or any other German intellectual, that the author has discovered. However, given the German scholar’s fascination with ancient Greece, and especially the tension-ridden interest of classicists, prehistoric archaeologists, and anthropologists, one may assume more exchanges took place, even though they cannot be documented at this time. See Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>340</sup> Anastasios K. Christomanos, *Λόγοι και Ευθύναι* [Report for the Rectorship], 138–39.

<sup>341</sup> Christomanos, *Λόγοι και Ευθύναι* [Report for the Rectorship], 70–71.

<sup>342</sup> UoA Historical Archive, Proceedings of the Meetings of the Faculty of Medicine, March 17, 1912.

<sup>343</sup> *Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως* [Government Gazette] no. 121 (April 21, 1912), 1.

<sup>344</sup> UoA Historical Archive, Proceedings of the Meetings of the Faculty of Medicine, January 17,

events, Stephanos died a year later, on January 11, 1915, without ever becoming a professor at the university.

The following day, the newspaper *Acropolis*, known for its dramatic coverage, wrote:

A great figure of Modern Greece passed away. Great and unknown. . . . In any other civilized nation a chair would have been established for the Greek sage. . . . He was the great, unacknowledged altruist of Greece. A wonderful philosophical character. A wonderful philosophical genius with a wonderful philosophical ethos. All this, the State—the barbaric and criminal state—failed to put in use. But this overly kind, overly Greek, overly philanthropic man did not complain. He fought. He studied. He wrote.<sup>345</sup>

Many such brief obituaries followed; all exalted Stephanos's industriousness, devotion to science, and patriotism. But the one from *Acropolis* is, in all its exaggerations, unexpectedly useful in summing up this chapter.

From a certain perspective, after thirty years of continuous effort, Greek anthropology, much like Stephanos himself, remained underappreciated and marginal within Greek scholarship and intellectual discourse. The pervasive and overpowering reach of history, archaeology, and *laografia* in producing the country's identity narrative pushed anthropology to the margins. The initial state support and the existence of a large, educated elite—despite Greece's fragile economy—did not result in further backing for anthropological research. The university's resources were mainly devoted to the education of doctors, teachers, and lawyers, who staffed the developing public and private sector, and

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1914.

<sup>345</sup> Unknown author, "Κλων Στέφανος," *Ακρόπολις* [Acropolis] (January 12, 1914), 2.

the incentive for students to follow a purely academic—and largely underpaid—pursuit in the style of Stephanos was weak. Yet this is just one side of the story.

Before his death, Stephanos had secured the establishment of two anthropological institutions—a museum and laboratory—and a university chair. His early work in Paris put Greek anthropology on the map of international science, while his later rapprochement with the German tradition foreshadowed its decisive influence on later developments in Greece. Far from being indifferent to theory, he researched, appropriated, and reconstructed theories on the origins and identity of the Greeks and firmly defended the idea of continuity against alternative interpretations. Stephanos's commitment to a positivist scientific model that was highly suspicious of unsupported speculation was not necessarily at odds with the national importance of anthropology. Yet his attempts to professionalize the discipline by adhering to the imperatives of scientific objectivity, which accompanied a growing reluctance to hastily publish his findings, further distanced him from the national mission and ultimately delayed its full institutionalization.

Thus, the story of nineteenth-century Greek physical anthropology is one of both failure and success. As a novel scientific project, it exhibited a remarkable resilience in negotiating the demands of international science and local nationalist endeavors, but Stephanos's death left it with no obvious way forward. His successor, the medical doctor Ioannis Koumaris (1879–1970), inherited a working museum, the possibility of a university appointment, and a strong scientific program. Koumaris would have to convincingly reassert the importance of anthropology for the national interdisciplinary community and reconfigure its place in the international disciplinary terrain.



### 3. Blood Affairs: Racial Blood Group Research and Nation Building in Greece, 1920s–1940s

#### I. Introduction: From Bones to Blood

“Not just one drop, but whole rivers of ancient blood’ must be running in the veins of contemporary Greeks,” wrote the Greek anthropologist John Koumaris, quoting one of his older statements on the Greek race.<sup>346</sup> This was his last sentence in a long entry on blood group research for a popular and trusted Greek encyclopedic dictionary. Before concluding, he apologized for his fervency and polemical tone, which he probably thought crossed the boundary of impartial science, an ideal held high by his contemporaries.<sup>347</sup> Koumaris informed his readers that science was finally in a position to refute the naivetes of past authors regarding the relationship between ancient and modern Greeks. For him, blood research had given a definite answer to a century-old challenge. In 1830, as we saw in Chapter 2, the mid-nineteenth-century Austrian scholar Jakob Phillip Fallmerayer famously wrote: “Not a drop of unmixed Hellenic blood flows in the veins of the Christian population of today’s Greece.”<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> John Koumaris, “Αίματος Ομάδες [Blood Groups],” *Νεώτερον Εγκυκλοπαιδικόν Λεξικόν* [Newer Encyclopedic Dictionary] (Athens: “Helios”), 826.

<sup>347</sup> Jon Røyne Kyllingstad, “The Norwegian Association for Heredity Research and the Organized International Eugenics Movement. Expertise, Authority, Transnational Networks and International Organization in Norwegian Genetics and Eugenics (1919-1934),” Special Issue, *Perspectives on Science* (forthcoming).

<sup>348</sup> Jakob Phillip Fallmerayer, *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart: Tübingen, 1830), iv. Koumaris patently avoided referring to the wide scholarly acceptance of contemporary Nordic race theories, which focused on racial miscegenation and questioned the autochthony of Greeks, see Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 149–59; Lefkadiou, *Yet Another Greek Tragedy?*, 143–46. Trubeta in *Physical Anthropology*, 171–77, further argues that Koumaris’s racial

By 1948, Koumaris had worked with blood group research aimed at racial classification for almost twenty years. This was the first new research direction that he initiated in the mid-1920s, once he had his power base in place as lifetime secretary of the Hellenic Anthropological Society (HAS) and holder of the only university chair of anthropology (fig. 3.1). His name had become synonymous with anthropology in Greece, and thus the time had come to expand the repertoire of anthropological research from anthropometric studies to blood group research.

In this chapter, we will examine the transnational exchanges associated with the first new research direction that Koumaris initiated: the emergence of racial blood group studies (also known as racial serology) in Greece. We will explore both the overlap between anthropological and medical perspectives as well as the concurrences and tensions between national and transnational concerns. We are going to see how politics interpenetrates this case study in a scientifically consequential way and, conversely, how innovation in research allows anthropologists to intervene with politically timely questions. By following how people, data, methods, books, and instruments traveled within Greece and across borders, we end up interacting with a multiplicity of actors, some of whom are rather peripheral to the history of anthropological sciences. However, their work and collection of data reveals their explicit acknowledgement of the cumulative nature of blood group research that would be impossible without its transnational completion. We will discuss how the nation remains central in these transnational scientific enterprises by directing attention to how (forced) wartime mobilities generated new subjects of serological research. Blood group samples from army recruits, prisoners of war, refugees, and internal immigrants from various corners of Greece are brought together to weave and strengthen the fabric of the Greek national narrative. But before we get to Koumaris's new research agenda, the

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theories were formulated in an effort to accommodate a possible Ottoman legacy, as well as a response to the Nordic racial myth.

following section will introduce us to the period directly after Stephanos's death, to Koumaris's life, and to his efforts to revive anthropological investigations in Greece.

## II. A New Era for Physical Anthropology in Greece

“Know thyself” begins the introduction of Koumaris's autobiography written over a period of twenty years, from 1951, when he retired from the university, until his death in 1970.<sup>349</sup> Most of the autobiography's text is austere and formal, dedicated to full lists of his publications and how they were cited, but the first chapters offer lucid insight in how he understood his lifework, his place at the university, the organisation of the museum, the work of HAS, and his teaching. While the use of autobiography as source material raises certain theoretical and methodological difficulties, Koumaris's writings have a distinct quality that facilitates historical interpretation.<sup>350</sup> Driven by his own interest in history, Koumaris wrote explicitly for the historian of the future, a point that he returned to on

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<sup>349</sup> Koumaris published his autobiography, which he described as an autobiographical and scientific note, in three parts during the years following his retirement from the university and until his death in 1970. See, John Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years] (Athens: self-pub., 1951); *50ετηρίς Συνέχεια* [Fifty Years Continuation] (Athens: self-pub., 1961); *50ετηρίς Συνέχεια Β.* [Fifty Years Continuation B] (Athens: self-pub., 1970).

<sup>350</sup> In this thesis, I have read Koumaris's autobiography as a historical source material that allows for an empathetic perspective on one of this story's protagonists. I agree with Lynd Forguason's conclusion that despite all the caution we should exercise when approaching autobiographical source material, extending to letters and diaries, “autobiography is history, even if like other forms of history, it is often biased, distorted, inaccurate . . . In reading it we may learn, as we learn from other forms of history, what human existence can be.” See, “Autobiography as History,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (Winter 1979/80): 155. In describing literary autobiography as a “peculiar genre” caught between history and literature, Jennifer Jensen Wallach makes a similar argument by arguing that “life writing has the potential to enrich our historical understanding in ways that cannot be replicated in any other single source material.” See, “Building a Bridge of Words: The Literary autobiography as Historical Source Material,” *Biography* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 446. For newer approaches on history and autobiography, see Jaume Aurell and Rocio G. Davis, eds. “History and Autobiography: The Logics of a Convergence,” Special Issue, *Life Writing* 16, no. 4 (2019).

several occasions, but expressed more fully when he argued about the value of biography as a genre:

But if the life and work of the great few are a beacon of light for younger generations, every modest effort of those who walked straight and upstream, with persistence and selflessness, as well as joy, could be also useful as an example, for at least learning and avoiding their mistakes and imperfections.<sup>351</sup>

He was concerned about his posthumous reputation and disliked the idea of being perceived as arrogant or vain. This is how his autobiography began, “during the academic year 1896–97, the writer of these lines entered as a volunteer soldier the service of the scientific army of his country and left active duty in 1950.”<sup>352</sup> Koumaris’s colleagues at the Faculty of Medicine described his character along similar lines: devoted, conscientious, inquisitive, keen intellect, diligent, with broad knowledge and passion for anthropology, an ideal scientist.<sup>353</sup> His niece, the folklorist Rodoula Stathaki-Koumari, in a short essay in his memory, portrayed Koumaris as a caring and lonely man, who “never married because he wanted nothing to distract him from his science.”<sup>354</sup> He was loyal to his family and few friends, a man whose character was closer to laboratory life, and lived by the principle “science requires dedication and continuous study.”<sup>355</sup> Narratives of noble commitment to

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<sup>351</sup> Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 9.

<sup>352</sup> Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 7.

<sup>353</sup> See for example the characterizations used by Koumaris’s colleagues at the meeting related to his election at the extraordinary independent chair of anthropology, UoA Historical Archive, Proceedings of the Faculty of Medicine meetings March 20, 1925, 76–91.

<sup>354</sup> Rodoula Stathaki-Koumari, “Κούμαρης. Προσωπικές Αναμνήσεις [Koumaris. Personal Memories],” *Ανθρωπολογία* [Anthropology] 1 (March 1993): 10.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.* In a personal communication during my archival research in 2014, the director of the Anthropological Museum, associate professor Theodoros Pitsios, narrated that Koumaris avoided

science, even sacrifice, combined with military metaphors and gallant dedication to scientific curiosity proliferated in contemporary discourses. Nevertheless, it is still fair to argue that Koumaris was indeed a person who lived for his science, which he defended against all criticism until the very end, as will see in the concluding section of the thesis.

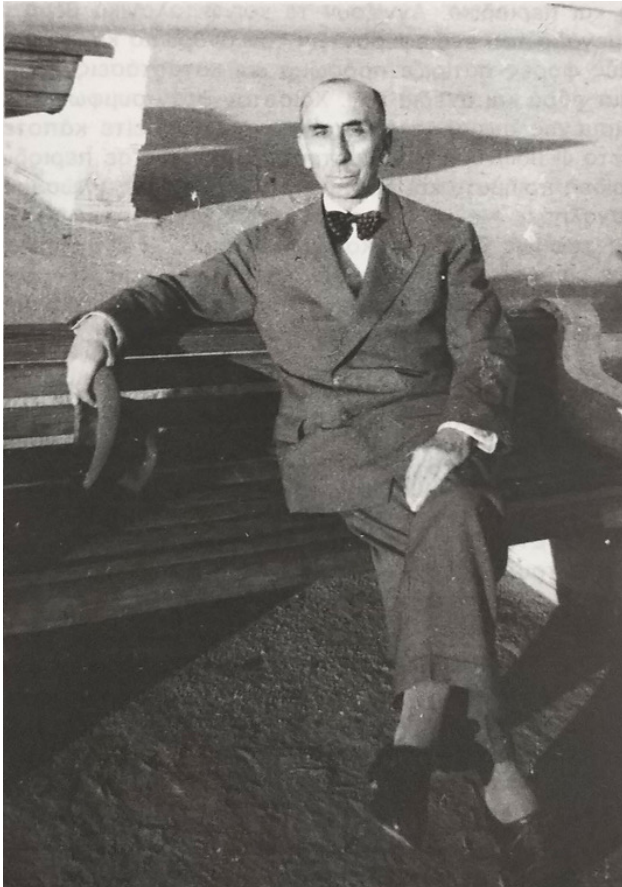


Fig. 3.1: John Koumaris, unknown date and photographer, published in Stathaki-Koumari, “Κούμαρης. [Koumaris.]”: 11.

The firstborn of a doctor, Koumaris originally followed in the footsteps of his father and got medical education at the University of Athens. He received his doctorate in 1901, and after a short period of training in the Greek capital’s hospitals and clinics, he moved to Berlin (1906–08) and Paris (1908) to continue with his specialization in surgical anatomy and anatomical variations. During his time in Berlin, Koumaris volunteered in the clinics

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to use any means of transportation or hire a car and instead preferred to walk to all nearby destinations to save money for the museum.

of professors Josef Rotter (1857–1924), August Bier (1861–1949) – who belonged to the circles of German racial scientists – and Rudolf Klapp (1873–1949), who like Bier was later among the many physicians with close ties to the Nazi regime.<sup>356</sup> As Koumaris narrated, anthropology came late in his life through his travels to anthropological laboratories and museums in European capitals.<sup>357</sup> Upon his return to Greece, he tried to work as a surgeon without much enthusiasm for a professional career. An unsuccessful application for the chair of surgery—when the Faculty of Medicine acknowledged his substantial education, observational and study skills, but lack of clinical and teaching experience—convinced him to grasp the opportunity opened by Stephanos’s death (Chapter 2).<sup>358</sup> He wanted to “follow a purely scientific idea, which was just growing inside him inspired by selfless workers in all great scientific centers.”<sup>359</sup> Koumaris expressed satisfaction that he found the passion of his student years later, but it was common for most contemporaries to come to anthropology by winding routes.

The Faculty of Medicine had a difficult decision to make when on May 30, 1915, it met to discuss who could fill the extraordinary independent chair of anthropology,

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<sup>356</sup> For biographical information on Bier and Rotter, see Ernst Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer war was vor und nach 1945?* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2003), 49, 312, and 511, respectively; on the involvement of Bier in decisions related to German racial science, see Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics, 1927-1945: Crossing Boundaries* (Berlin: Springer, 2008), 87; finally, on Bier’s and other German physicians’ close ties to the Nazi regime, see Robert N. Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 64–94.

<sup>357</sup> Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 12.

<sup>358</sup> Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Proceedings of the Faculty of Medicine meetings, vol. 9, May 22, 1915, 52–66.

<sup>359</sup> Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 12.

originally meant for Stephanos.<sup>360</sup> The professor of anatomy Georgios Sklavounos (1869–1954) introduced five candidates, including Koumaris, but emphasized that none of them had either studied anthropology or could show any relevant research. He, however, advised his colleagues to choose among those five men, who had all worked with him in anatomy, “the basis and starting point for all anthropological studies,” and thus give a chance to “this productive tree” to develop.<sup>361</sup> Sklavounos argued in favor of Koumaris, who he said was not only characterized by studiousness and zeal, but had better skills as an anatomist and had already worked with a detailed analysis of bone anomalies, which resembled anthropological research. While several members of faculty raised concerns, and some even suggested to abolish the chair, in the end the great majority of twelve out of seventeen members voted for Koumaris. Ten months after the death of Stephanos, in October 1915 the University of Athens Senate decided to act and offer a permanent solution to the directorship of the orphaned anthropological museum.<sup>362</sup> Although they did not approve of the proliferating number of extraordinary chairs at the Faculty of Medicine, including the one of anthropology, they suggested Koumaris for the museum’s directorship.<sup>363</sup> From November 12, 1915, he would have the sole responsibility for all the activities around the museum.<sup>364</sup> Clon Stephanos’s brother, the mathematician Kyparissos Stephanos, together

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<sup>360</sup> UoA Historical Archive, Proceedings of the Faculty of Medicine meetings May 30, 1915, 124–29.

<sup>361</sup> UoA Historical Archive, Proceedings of the Faculty of Medicine meetings May 30, 1915, 124–29: 125.

<sup>362</sup> Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Proceedings of the Senate meetings, vol. 28, October 10, 1915, 74.

<sup>363</sup> Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Proceedings of the Senate meetings, vol. 28, November 28, 1915, 90–94.

<sup>364</sup> Anthropological Museum Archive (AMA), Folder 1915–1916, Document 1, November 12, 1915.

with the university rector and vice-rector, were the ones who delivered the museum to Koumaris.<sup>365</sup>

The first years, however, were far from uneventful for the whole country and disrupted any sense of normality within Greek institutions. At the same time that Koumaris was assuming his new role, Greece was descending into deep social and political divide, known as the National Schism, the first civil war for Greece in the twentieth century.<sup>366</sup> The head of government, prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936), and the head of state King Constantine (1868–1923) clashed over the country's commitment to the First World War alliances, the Triple Entente or the Central Powers.<sup>367</sup> The dramatic events of the period—multiple government resignations and new elections, military and paramilitary mobilisations, open revolt and establishment of two centres of power in Athens and Thessaloniki, heavy-handed political and military interventions of the allies leading up to the King's abdication—resulted in Greece abandoning its position of neutrality and joining the Entente in its final battles since the summer of 1917 (fig. 3.2). The Great War ended with the country on the side of the victors but left the Balkans in a state of unrest with new borders and reinvigorated irredentist visions. For Greece, the dream of even greater territorial expansion towards the east ended with the absolute defeat of the Greek army during the Greek-Turkish War (1919–1922). The toll of years of conflict

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<sup>365</sup> Pergamos, UoA Institutional Repository / Digital Library, Proceedings of the Senate meetings, vol. 28, November 28, 1915, 94.

<sup>366</sup> On the dramatic events that followed the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, see Roderick Beaton, *Greece: Biography of a Modern Nation* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2020), 199–232.

<sup>367</sup> While Venizelos predicted the victory of the Triple Entente and wished for their support in securing the northern borders of Greece against Bulgaria, the King foresaw the victory of Germany and wanted the country to remain in permanent neutrality. As Beaton writes this division was deep and involved different visions for the country and what it meant to be free and Greek. The side of Venizelos wanted to free the Greek nation in all territories possible, the side of King Constantine wanted to secure an intact state. See, Beaton, *Greece*, 204–05.



and divide was heavy on the whole of Greek society and economy, and activated all kinds of clashes from the level of the family to the regional and ethnic levels (fig. 3.3–3.4).



Fig. 3.2: French soldiers at the Acropolis after the British and French naval forces arrived in Athens to demand that Greece joins the Entente. Original photo title: “Athenes. Sur les marbles des Propylees 26-6-17,” photo Section Photographique de l' Armée Française, source E. L. I. A. [Watermarked images published with permission].

While the political turmoil and instability continued for decades, the impact of this initial period on the re-establishment of the small museum is evident in the modest and often ill-fated efforts of its director to gather momentum for anthropological researches. During this period, Koumaris spent much of his time on military service either as physician

in active duty or in reserve.<sup>368</sup> Many of the people that he could have collaborated with in archaeological excavations or in the transfer of skeletal material to the museum did the same. Therefore, from 1915 and until 1923, his efforts concentrated on preparing the institution to re-emerge as a working anthropological museum and laboratory.



Fig. 3.3: The territorial expansion of the Greek state (1832–1920). The areas in pink are those acquired after the Balkan Wars, while the areas in green are those envisioned as new territories of the Great Greece, (London: Esperia, 1920), source E. L. I. A. [Watermarked images published with permission].

<sup>368</sup> AMA, Folder 1916–1917, Document 22, October 22, 1916; AMA, Folder 1918–1919, Document 71, October 25, 1919.

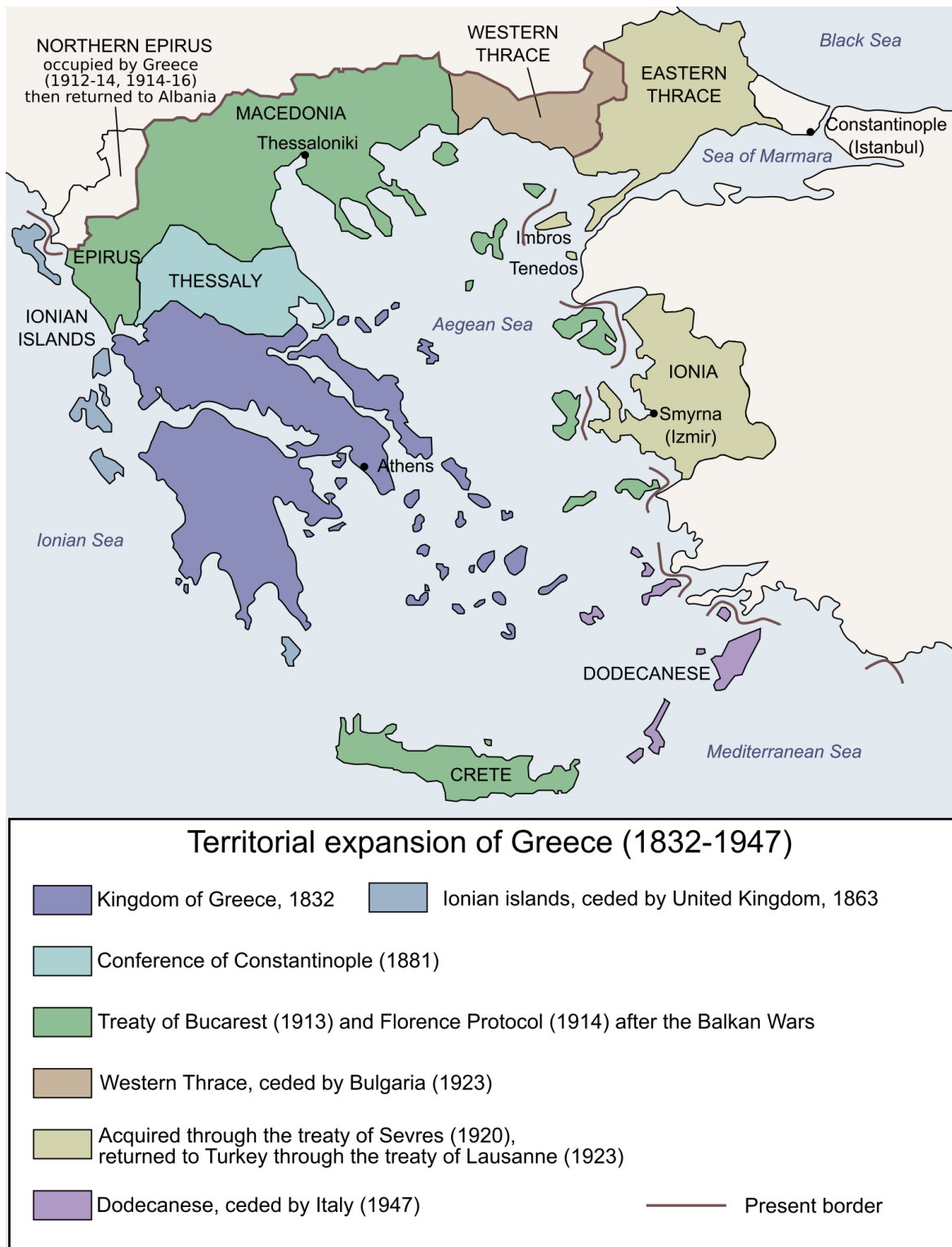


Fig. 3.4: The territorial expansion of the Greek state (1832–1947), source Wikipedia commons.

The archive of the museum is replete with requests to the university administration to approve small amounts for basic construction works and renovations, with registers of furniture and other mobile property items, as well as with receipts of book purchases. A mountain of bureaucracy followed every action of the director and possibly left little time for anything else. All this material points to Koumaris's wish to continue in the anthropological tradition and initiatives of his predecessor. The quest for a bigger space to order and exhibit "the overwhelming number of precious artefacts accumulated by the zeal and care" of Stephanos was long and started from the first month that Koumaris took over.<sup>369</sup> As he wrote in his first report to the university rector, he "would, first of all, like to express his deepest gratitude to the Respected Senate and the Respected Ministry for the honour to entrust him with the continuation of the work envisioned and started by the internationally renowned Greek sage."<sup>370</sup> On a symbolic level, this continuity was established by hanging a natural size portrait of Stephanos, with the inscription "the founder" on its wooden frame, in the newly separated office and laboratory space of the museum.<sup>371</sup>

But the continuity with the practices of Stephanos was put to the test, when the director of the General State Archives and historian, Ioannis Vlahoyannis (1867–1945), visited the collections of the museum. He sent an urgent letter to the Ministry of Ecclesiastic Affairs and Public Education to complain about the condition of the plaster casts of faces of many important men of Greece, whose names were written on paper or gauze, which had sometimes fallen off, therefore the faces had become anonymous. To his view, "these important monuments of our modern history that have lingered for far too

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<sup>369</sup> AMA, Folder 1915–1916, Document 2, December 22, 1915.

<sup>370</sup> AMA, Folder 1915–1916, Document 2, October 1, 1916.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

long in a collection to which they have no relation, among prehistoric and other skulls, where they are in danger of getting destroyed or completely deformed” should be donated to the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece.<sup>372</sup> Koumaris fired back immediately.<sup>373</sup> The casts had been collected by Stephanos since 1894–1895 on the assumption of their great potential for scientific investigations and teaching. His predecessor had visited sculpture workshops and acquired these valuable and high-quality casts of faces of remarkable men, which would otherwise have been destroyed. Koumaris explained that he was in the process of identifying all figures that had not been registered and requested instead that the collection be enriched by the tens of casts deposited at the Historical and Ethnological Museum.

This kind of collecting was indeed established practice for anthropological and ethnographic museums. While reminiscent of phrenological investigations, it rested on the assumption of an objective reproduction of the face—in this case of people who had died naturally—for the purposes of anthropological observation. Unlike paintings or sculptures by artists, the casts were allegedly devoid of subjective interpretation but still dependent on the skill of the maker. The casts, however, did not allow direct access to the bone structure of the individual for anthropometric measurement, but together with casts of whole heads, feet, hands, as well as dried skin and hair samples, they were assumed to capture basic racial characteristics.<sup>374</sup> Both Stephanos and Koumaris were well-acquainted

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<sup>372</sup>AMA, Folder 1915–1916, Document 4, March 19, 1916. Koumaris was in stark opposition to the use of the term *ethnological* in the title of the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece, established in 1882, and the associated museum. As he wrote repeatedly to the University of Athens administration and the popular press, the term was confusing and against international standards, since both this Society and its museum were dedicated to the study of modern Greece.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

<sup>374</sup> The cases of nineteenth-century European museums collecting plaster casts of either famous people or people from the colonies or those deemed abnormal are countless, and especially in the latter cases, the casts could be taken while people were alive, a process that was painful and caused

with the use of such objects in European museums and acknowledged their value for display, research, and even more so for exchanges, especially when it came to subjects from the colonies. Koumaris not only defended the collection's worth but sought to expand it by the systematic acquisition of casts from men assumed to exhibit exquisite intellect. He requested from the university rector to establish this practice for all deceased university professors and thus with "a minor cost preserve an imprint of the university's history whose ethnological significance could not be emphasized enough."<sup>375</sup> Indeed, for the coming years, new casts were added in the collection. The first recorded addition was the head of Kyparissos Stephanos.<sup>376</sup>

One of the most valuable resources for the museum was its library, which until today holds unique anthropological and ethnological publications from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Clon Stephanos had invested much effort in establishing it, but after his death, his sisters who had little means to survive sold all his privately-owned books and archives instead of donating them to the university. Despite the limited budget of the museum, Koumaris argued consistently for subscriptions to the main European anthropological journals and bought the latest publications, mainly in French. In the long-term, his purchases ultimately reveal his continued affiliation to the French anthropological

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great discomfort. Andrew Zimmerman documents how casts of people assumed to be primitive, or *Naturvölker*, circulated in Imperial Germany, became collectables by museums and laboratories, and subjects of anthropological racial classification, see *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Ann Fabian shows how collecting and measuring brains of eminent and celebrated men became a core activity of anthropometrists from the nineteenth to the turn of twentieth centuries based on the assumed relationship between intellect and brain size, see *The Skull Collectors* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 205–08.

<sup>375</sup> AMA, Folder 1916–1917, Document 35, April 24, 1917; AMA, Folder 1917–1918, Document 47, October 1, 1917.

<sup>376</sup>AMA, Folder 1918–1919, Document 72, October 1, 1918.

tradition of Stephanos, as well as his slow movement towards German anthropology and eugenics research.<sup>377</sup> Probably one of the highest points of these early years was Koumaris's rediscovery and purchase of Stephanos's library from a second-hand bookstore in Athens; about a hundred and fifty book titles and an equal number of dissertations and flyers enriched the collection of the museum (fig. 3.5–3.6).<sup>378</sup>

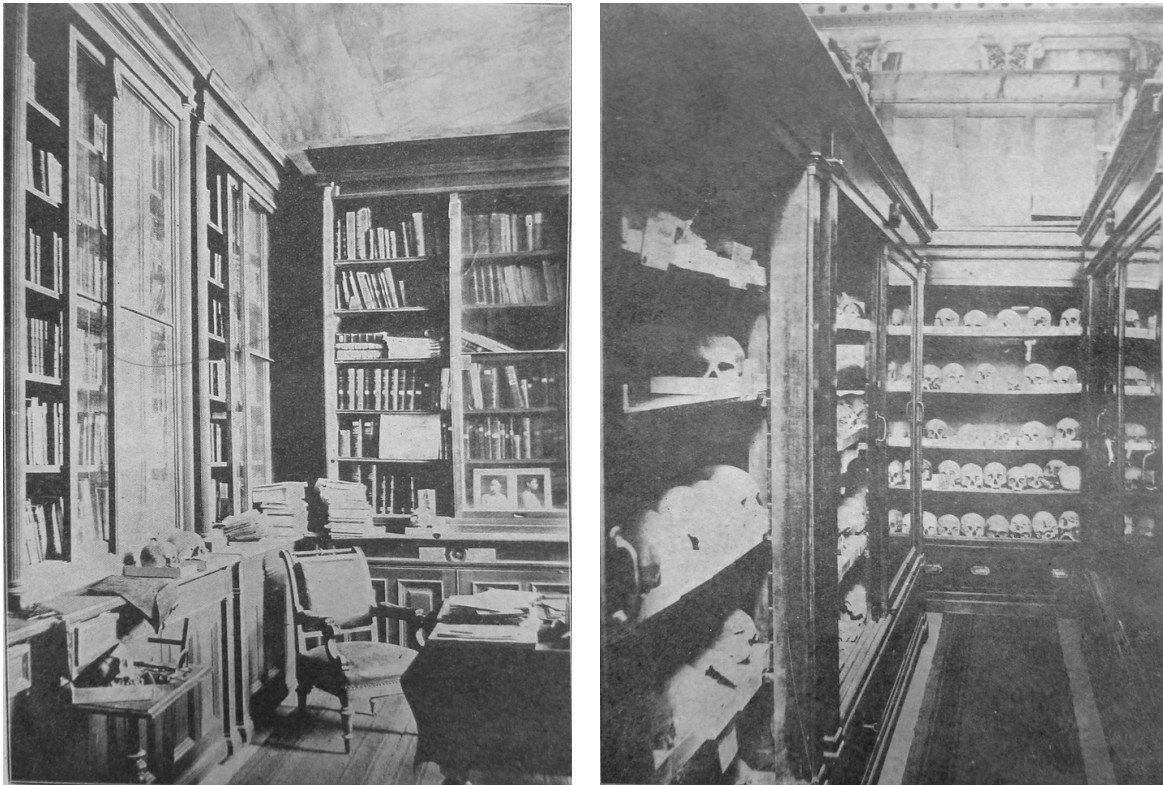


Fig. 3.5–3.6: The director's office and collections room at the Anthropological Museum, published in «Το Αθήνισι Πανεπιστήμιον 1923–24» [The University of Athens 1923–24] (Athens: P. G. Markis and co., 1924), photo: Kakouli Brothers, source: UoA Historical Archive.

The most urgent aim for the director of the museum was, however, to gather the human bones dispersed in various collections and storages, as well as the ones continually unearthed from archaeological excavations. To achieve this goal, he needed support not

<sup>377</sup> See for example, AMA, Folder 1917–1918, Document 46, September 14, 1917; AMA, Folder 1922–1923, Document 152, November 23, 1922.

<sup>378</sup> AMA, Folder 1918–1919, Document 78, March 18, 1919.

only from his peers but also from the highest ranks of the government and university administration. “I have the honour to ask for your help to achieve the scientific aims of the Anthropological Museum” wrote Koumaris to the rector “by reminding when appropriate about rescuing and systematically collecting the ancient and newer human remains of our country, especially the skulls, during archaeological excavations.”<sup>379</sup> He further instructed that the bones of each individual should be packed together and accompanied by the most detailed description of the burial possible, including an estimation of its date. His plans were well-received by the university authorities and the relevant ministries who forwarded his requests and gave permission and funding for the transfers. New, even if limited, additions to the collection arrived from Greek and foreign excavating teams. These included a skeleton from the excavations of the German Archaeological Institute at the ancient cemetery of Kerameikos on the western boundaries of Athens and an ancient skull from the same area that had been described by Rudolf Virchow.<sup>380</sup> Despite the difficulties of war, Koumaris was hopeful that such organized collecting would turn “the Anthropological Museum into a unique treasure, and would contribute immensely to the scientific aims of the institution.”<sup>381</sup> One of the most interesting instances of collection, gives a taste of the period.

The discovery of one of the oldest mass burials in Greece at Phaliron, the port of Athens during the classical period, became a sensation in 1915.<sup>382</sup> The grave, originally assumed from the fifth century BCE, contained shackled skeletons, known as *the captives*

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<sup>379</sup> AMA, Folder 1916–1917, Document 29, March 1, 1917.

<sup>380</sup> AMA, Folder 1919–1920, Document 71, October 25, 1919.

<sup>381</sup> AMA, Folder 1919–1920, Document 106, August 3, 1920.

<sup>382</sup> The excavations, study, curation and conservation of the human remains at the necropolis of Phaliron is still under way and is considered one of the most important cases for understanding the rise of city-states.



of *Phaliron*. The Greek Archeological Service had been excavating in the area for several years, but when the archaeologist Efstratios (Stratos) Pelekidis (1880/82–1958) brought to light the cuffed individuals, “the tram carried hundreds of people of all classes, ages and genders, from Athens and the surrounding areas, to pay homage to these mysterious ancestors, whose grave was found at the coast of Phaliron.”<sup>383</sup> Feverish speculation grew on whether the dead were slaves, criminals, prisoners of war, captives or political prisoners, and several scholars joined the discussion. The skeletons of the seventeen men, who had been buried without any offerings, bore iron rings around the neck, hands and ankles. The brutal manner suggested for their execution—being stretched on a wooden upright board, held still by the iron rings nailed on it and left to die in public view—contributed to the controversies as it was seen as incompatible with the aesthetics or the ethos of ancient Athenians.<sup>384</sup>

Koumaris contributed to the discussion with a newspaper article and an anthropometric study of the skeletons, which were indeed his first anthropological publications. In the newspaper article, he wrote prophetically “the issue of the iron rings, the burial, the preservation of the skeletons, the manner of death, who these people were etc, will be discussed for long within international archaeological circles.”<sup>385</sup> Koumaris initially endorsed the suggestion by Pelekidis that the skeletons should remain in their original location, to form a “rare Sehenswürdigkeit for the future,” a park analogous to those of ethnological museums abroad. His first observations suggested that the skeletons belonged to the Graeco-Latin branch of the Aryan race, commonly found among the

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<sup>383</sup> Stratos Pelekidis, *Ανασκαφή Φαλήρου* [Excavation of Phaliron] (Athens: Hestia, 1916), 49.

<sup>384</sup> Pelekidis, *Ανασκαφή Φαλήρου* [Excavation of Phaliron], 57–64.

<sup>385</sup> John Koumaris, “Οι Σκελετοί του Παλαιού Φαλήρου [The Skeletons of Old Phaliron],” *Εστία* (Hestia), July 16, 1915: 1.

people of Southern Europe.<sup>386</sup> What he could infer with certainty was that the skeletons did not belong to the clearly separated African race, but had the characteristics of the older, purer Greek type that endured despite the many admixtures with people coming from the Near East.<sup>387</sup>

He was much more restrained and technical in his scientific report. As he noted in the introduction, he was weary of hasty conclusions and in this case, he wished “to follow in the footsteps of the wise and meticulous, but also so cautious true scientist, Clon Stephanos.”<sup>388</sup> Nevertheless, he could confirm that the skeletons belonged to men of young age but not children or very young adults. His examinations of the few skulls that were almost complete were detailed and followed the latest anthropometric research protocols to the degree of accuracy that was possible by the difficult location. Koumaris trusted in the potency of the archaeological evidence to clarify the issue of whether these people were “Greeks or Barbarians, in the broadest sense of the word.”<sup>389</sup> Still, the lead archaeologist, Pelekidis, questioned how the writings of doctors could contribute in this discussion and challenged the usefulness of “the knowledge of anthropological types, as it was known that in the ancient cities there were many cases of transition between slave and free citizen and

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<sup>386</sup> Koumaris’s observation reminds the specific version of Aryanism that developed in Italy, based on arguments for the primordial presence of Aryan racial elements in the area, see Maria Sophia Quine, “Making Italians: Aryanism and Anthropology in Italy during the Risorgimento,” in *Crafting Humans: From Genesis to Eugenics and Beyond*, ed. Marius Turda (Goettingen: V&R unipress, 2013), 127–52.

<sup>387</sup> Koumaris’s racial theories are discussed in Chapter 4.

<sup>388</sup> John Koumaris, *Κρανιολογικαί Παρατηρήσεις επί των εν Κοινώ Τάφω Κλοιφόρων Σκελετών του Π. Φαλήρου* [Craniological Observations on the Common Grave of the Shackled Skeletons of O. Phaliron] (Athens: P. D. Sakellariou, 1915), 6.

<sup>389</sup> John Koumaris, *Κρανιολογικαί Παρατηρήσεις επί των εν Κοινώ Τάφω Κλοιφόρων Σκελετών του Π. Φαλήρου* [Craniological Observations on the Common Grave of the Shackled Skeletons of O. Phaliron], 38.

vice versa.”<sup>390</sup> This disagreement did not influence Koumaris’s plans to transfer some of the remains of the skeletons to the museum.<sup>391</sup> Indeed, in June 1917 several skulls and skeletons from Phaliron were added to the anthropological collections.<sup>392</sup>

For decades to come Koumaris continued to collect skulls from all possible excavation sites around Greece, and to a large degree his own research continued in the anthropometric direction that Stephanos had initiated. When he retired from the museum in 1950 Koumaris left behind around more than one thousand skulls and plenty of other skeletal material.<sup>393</sup> The majority came from Greece, but a significant number demonstrated the transnational exchanges of skulls and their travels across national borders, as a result of Koumaris’s continuous efforts to enrich the museum collections with specimens that would showcase human diversity. The handwritten museum delivery protocol from 1950, found in the drawer of a wooden desk, when one of the rooms was evacuated, mentioned: two skulls from Australia, five from Egypt, one negro skull, one Slav, and one Turk, and twenty-one from Austria, children skulls from a donation, and twenty skulls labeled thieves.<sup>394</sup> The labels attached to these scientific objects are characteristic of mixed categorization practices and at the same time of the need to attach even the minimum possible information to gain research value, or else they risked ending

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<sup>390</sup> Pelekidis, *Ανασκαφή Φαλήρου* [Excavation of Phaliron], 50.

<sup>391</sup> AMA, Folder 1915–1926, Document 3, January 7, 1916.

<sup>392</sup> AMA, Folder 1916–1917, Document 39, June 14, 1917.

<sup>393</sup> For a comparison of the Greek skull collection’s size, the infamous Philadelphia physician and anatomist Samuel George Morton (1799–1851) collected around a thousand human skulls from the 1830s through the 1840s, Fabian, *The Skull Collectors*.

<sup>394</sup> AMA, Loose and unnumbered documents, Handwritten Delivery Protocol, 1950.

up in the bulk of “diverse other in the basement.”<sup>395</sup> The casts of “eminent men” were also among the museum objects.

Enriching the museum collections, establishing alliances, and purchasing instruments required movement and exchanges, even if these were difficult to achieve for economic or bureaucratic reasons. Koumaris lived a life deprived of excessive luxury, but he spent his only income, the university salary, on travelling to Western Europe for long periods. As Stathaki-Koumari recollected,

he prepared his suitcase several days in advance with great order and took with him as little as possible. The travels were many. He was not fond of the airplane—he never boarded one—and the sea was not his favorite means of transportation. The train was the only convenient alternative. From every place he traveled he sent us postcards accompanied by just few words. When he came back in September, he wanted us to welcome him at the station.<sup>396</sup>

Koumaris invested in these movements, which allowed him face-to-face contact with international peers, becoming inspired by museum exhibitions, following new scientific developments, and at the same time separated him from his family, and mobilized the university’s bureaucratic apparatus for the relevant authorizations. In one of his many reports to the dean of the faculty, who inquired about his absence, Koumaris reported on a busy itinerary during the summer months of 1928.<sup>397</sup> He had visited the paleolithic site of Grimaldi at the French-Italian border, the accidentally discovered and controversial finds at Glozel in France, the anthropological institutes in Italy, France, and Belgium,

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Rodoula Stathaki-Koumari, “Κούμαρης,” 12.

<sup>397</sup> AMA, Folder 1928–1929, Document 248, November 22, 1928.

while he worked on his writings in Paris and Brussels. Koumaris returned reinvigorated from these travels, with new connections and objects, and new visions for anthropology.

Indeed, during the 1920s the museum's collections became enriched with donations and purchases from several European institutions. These included, for example, two hundred photos of Chinese people after correspondence with the director of L'Ecole d'anthropologie de Paris, a series of prehistoric instruments and casts from the Musée royal d'histoire naturelle de Belgique after personal communication with archaeologist and paleontologist Aimé Louis Rutot (1847–1933), as well as human and animal skeletons from Strasburg from the director of the institute of normal anatomy Andre Forster (1878–1957).<sup>398</sup> The museum's archive shows, however, that Koumaris did not always have the means to reciprocate by providing casts of findings in exchange, and in some occasions the orders had to be cancelled. As the collections expanded, the need for comparative studies and further research of the Greek material grew bigger. At various occasions Koumaris ordered internationally standardized instruments from the famous Dr. F. Krantz, Rheinisches Mineralien-Kontor in Bonn.<sup>399</sup>

Another effect of this expansion was the need for more space, which coincided with Koumaris's vision for the museum inspired by his European travels. What he envisioned was to create a "Museum of Man" with three main departments, "physical anthropology,"

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<sup>398</sup> The Museum's archive includes several documents on donations and purchases of artifacts. For the three mentioned here, see, respectively, AMA, Folder 1921–1922, Document 132, October 25, 1921; AMA, Folder 1922–1923, Document 158, March 9, 1923; AMA, Folder 1925–1926, Document 218, March 4, 1926.

<sup>399</sup> For example, Koumaris sent a detailed list for purchases of casts and instruments as part of war reparations, which Germany should pay according to the Treaty of Versailles after WWI, AMA, Folder 1922–1923, Document 168, May 24, 1923.

“human prehistory and paleontology,” and “ethnology.”<sup>400</sup> To his dismay, this arrangement became possible only after all university museums housed at the Academy of Athens were evicted from the building (fig. 3.7). For a period of five years, from 1927–1932, and despite Koumaris’s efforts to find a new space, even at the building of a prospective natural sciences museum at the Faculty of Sciences, the collections remained crammed in the unsafe conditions of “a few broken cabinets . . . and two small dark storage rooms” at the building of anatomy.<sup>401</sup> Finally, the museum opened again when all medical laboratories got transferred to the new campus of the Faculty of Medicine in the eastern part of Athens and has remained there since. Koumaris arranged the spaces based on his three-part scheme and continued his efforts to acquire an ethnological collection through personal contacts, visits to international exhibitions, and addresses to Greece’s embassies abroad. While the establishment of the paleontological and physical anthropology parts of the museum progressed, the ethnological collections remained limited even at the time of his retirement.

These drawbacks aside, Koumaris took great pride in how Greek and foreign researchers studied the museum’s collections, which he called a “treasure.” Among those foreign colleagues he mentioned the German anthropologist Isle Schwidetzky (1907–1997), who visited the museum in 1937, the German human biologist Emil Breitingner (1904–2004), and the British-American anthropologist John Lawrence Angel (1915–

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<sup>400</sup> On Koumaris’s vision and adventures to find a new space for the museum, see *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 23–28.

<sup>401</sup> Koumaris was in contact with professor Constantinos Ktenas (1884–1935), director of the University’s Zoological Museum, also housed at the Sinaia Academy, for a possible integration of the two museums, see AMA, Folder 1923–1924, Document 185, February 12 and April 25, 1924. On the storage conditions of the museum, see AMA, Folder 1929–1930, Document 257, October 4, 1929.

1986).<sup>402</sup> Angel, who devoted decades of his research in the anthropological study of Greece and Eastern Mediterranean, spent several months at the museum from 1937 to 1939 and developed a friendly relationship with Koumaris.<sup>403</sup> When after WWII, Angel contacted the aging Greek anthropologist concerning the prospect of further work at the museum, Koumaris replied,

You can of course study again the skulls at the Anthropological Museum, since you have a scholarship for research abroad. You will not misunderstand me, however, if I tell you that the Museum has collapsed because of the war and the skulls are stored in piles in one room. The skulls also got damaged. When the Germans left, the Greek army occupied the Laboratories, which have now become a war hospital. Nobody knows when they will be evacuated to establish again the beautiful small Museum.<sup>404</sup>

Between the two world wars, the civil war in the 1940s, and the university's changing plans, Koumaris had little time to realize his vision. For almost half of the thirty-five years that he was the museum's director, the collections were stored away in boxes.

Nevertheless, Koumaris pursued his goals through two other positions; his lifetime post as secretary of the Hellenic Anthropological Society (HAS), which he established on June 1, 1924, and the chair of anthropology at the University of Athens, which was finally

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<sup>402</sup> Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 23–28.

<sup>403</sup> Angel's anthropological publications from Greece and his rich archive make for an important future research avenue. For a first approach on his work in Cyprus, with some references to Greece, see Nathan K. Harper, "Short Skulls, Long Skulls, and Thalassemia: J. Lawrence Angel and the Development of Cypriot Anthropology," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 71, no. 1 (March 2008): 111–19.

<sup>404</sup> John Lawrence Angel Papers, Box 16, Folder Correspondence L, Miscellaneous (L–Le), July 7, 1948, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. The museum, and all spaces at the Faculty of Medicine, were evacuated for use by the Axis occupying forces (1940–1944), while after the end of WWII and during the civil war (1943–1949), it became part of the war hospital.

awarded to him on March 20, 1925, with nineteen out of twenty professors supporting his candidature.<sup>405</sup> The study of HAS and Koumaris's university teaching deserve full consideration, which is outside the scope of this chapter.<sup>406</sup> What is important for our purposes is that at the core of both activities was a holistic approach to anthropology, which sought to integrate the study of the physical body with the study of culture understood as the mental or psychological expression of a race. Koumaris communicated his intentions at the Greek Society's founding session, when he explicitly called for a broader coalition of all scholars working in areas related to anthropology, beyond the narrow circle of physical anthropology. His program included the annual publication of studies "concerned with **physical anthropology** .... and others concerned with **psychical anthropology** as a whole."<sup>407</sup> This inclusive perception of anthropology was compatible with the approach of the French Institut international d'anthropologie in Paris of which HAS was the Office hellénique.<sup>408</sup> Interestingly, as we will read in Chapter 4, Koumaris's perspective also resonated well with German racial anthropology, despite the polemical climate between the anthropological circles of the two countries. Koumaris was in the privileged position of having contact with both sides.

In his inaugural lecture, on May 22, 1925, he delivered a virtuosic tour de force account of the history of anthropology from the classificatory practices of Linneaus and

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<sup>405</sup> HAS, *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1924* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1924] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1924), 1–31; UoA Historical Archive, Proceedings of the Faculty of Medicine meetings March 20, 1925, 76–91.

<sup>406</sup> Sevasti Trubeta offers a first approach to both institutions from a discourse analysis perspective, see *Physical Anthropology*, 79–120.

<sup>407</sup> HAS, *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1924* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1924], 12, emphasis in the original.

<sup>408</sup> HAS, *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1924* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1924], 19.



Buffon, to the anatomical excellence of Vesalius, the craniologists Blumenbach and Broca, and closed with Darwin's and Wallace's evolutionary synthesis. Standing on the shoulders of the people he portrayed as intellectual giants and anthropological pioneers, he reiterated his holistic approach.<sup>409</sup> Anthropology should include “the study of the morphology of groups, i.e. their ‘nature’, and the diversity of the expressions of their ‘soul,’ i.e. their mind.”<sup>410</sup> By the mid-1920s, Koumaris could continue in Stephanos's steps, as well as initiate a new research agenda, racial blood group studies.

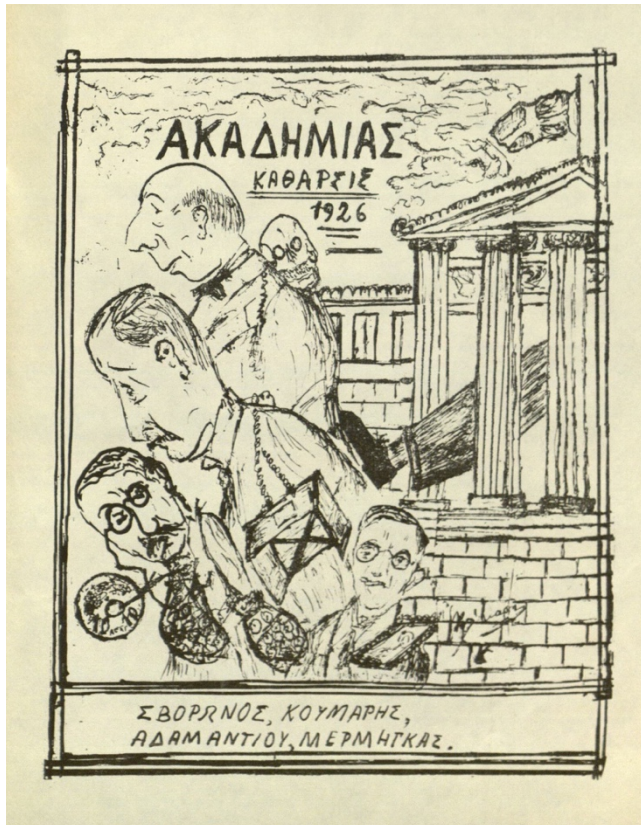


Fig. 3.7: Caricature titled “Academy, cleansing 1926,” drawn by Koumaris on how the four university museums housed at the Sinaia Academy building were forced to move out when the Academy of Athens was established there, published *50ετηρίς Συνέχεια Β.* [Fifty Years Continuation B].

<sup>409</sup> John Koumaris, “Η Ανθρωπολογία ως Πανεπιστημιακόν Μάθημα [Anthropology as University Lesson],” *Ιατρική: Ελληνική Ιατρική Επιθεώρησης* [Medicine: Greek Medical Review] 3, no. 3 (1925): 71–77; and no. 4 (1925): 99–105.

<sup>410</sup> Koumaris, “Η Ανθρωπολογία ως Πανεπιστημιακόν Μάθημα [Anthropology as University Lesson]”: 73.

### III. Establishing Racial Blood Group Research in Greece by Looking at Germany

It was at the meeting of the newly established Hellenic Anthropological Society on April 12, 1927, that Koumaris first introduced blood group research for the purposes of racial mapping.<sup>411</sup> He began his speech by lamenting the lack of a decisive and indisputable method to distinguish human races.<sup>412</sup> As he explained, science has long always tried to achieve this aim by using several external bodily characteristics such as the shape of the skull or hair and skin color, but none of these racial classifications has been completely satisfying. However, he continued, human groups should be categorized on the basis of several morphological characteristics; therefore, anthropology has never ceased searching for the best candidates. In this endless and elusive quest, “the study of **‘the properties of blood serum’** may lead to a more scientific sorting of human varieties” in the so-called “‘biochemical races’ or ‘serological races.’”<sup>413</sup>

Koumaris was not alone in this new endeavor, either internationally or within Greece. At the dawn of the century, the Jewish-Austrian biologist, physician, and immunologist Karl Landsteiner (1868–1943), at the time assistant at the Institute for Pathological Anatomy at the University of Vienna, observed that human blood serum

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<sup>411</sup> John Koumaris, “Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The ‘Serological’ Distinction of Human Races],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1927* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1927] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1927), 5–40.

<sup>412</sup> Such statements of dissatisfaction were common among leading European race classifiers despite years of efforts to standardize both their instruments and practices, as well as extensive traveling and communications in international conferences and journals. However, they continued to produce narratives that brought nation and race together and claimed continuity in their research, regardless of changing—and often incompatible—methods and results, see McMahon, *The Races of Europe*, 93–168; Iris Clever, “Miriam Tildesley and the Anthropological Politics of Standardizing Racial Measurements,” Special Issue, *Perspectives on Science* (forthcoming).

<sup>413</sup> Koumaris, “Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The ‘Serological’ Distinction of Human Races],” 7, emphasis in the original.

agglutinates red blood cells of other healthy individuals and suggested the existence of characteristic differences in human blood.<sup>414</sup> He proceeded to divide human blood into three groups (then called *A*, *B* and *C*) and set the basis for forensic applications and successful blood transfusions. Almost thirty years later, in 1930, and after emigrating to the United States, Landsteiner received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of human blood groups. In 1910, the Jewish-Polish physician and immunologist Ludwik Hirszfeld and the German director of the Heidelberg Institute for Experimental Cancer Research Emil von Dungern published their seminal work, which suggested a Mendelian mode of inheritance for blood groups.<sup>415</sup> Meanwhile, they had renamed the system *ABO* by adding an *AB* group and changing Landsteiner's group *C* to *O*. Around the same time, in 1907, the Czech serologist Jan Janský had also discovered the existence of four blood groups, for which he used the Roman numerals *I*, *II*, *III*, and *IV* for the *O*, *A*, *B*, and *AB* groups.<sup>416</sup> Across the Atlantic, the American physician William L. Moss used the same Roman numerals for the four groups he had identified, but not in the same order as Janský.<sup>417</sup>

If one looks at the sheer number of original publications by the 1930s, the picture is overwhelming, with around three thousand articles on blood group research, almost a

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<sup>414</sup> Karl Landsteiner, "Über Agglutinationserscheinungen normalen menschlichen Blutes," *Wiener Klinische* 61, no. 14 (1901): 1132–1134.

<sup>415</sup> Emil von Dungern and Ludwik Hirszfeld, "Über Nachweis und Vererbung biochemischer Strukturen," *Zeitschrift für Immunitätsforschung* 4 (1910): 531–46.

<sup>416</sup> Jan Janský "Haematologicke studie u psychotiku," *Sbornik Kliniky* 8 (1906–7): 85–139.

<sup>417</sup> See William L. Moss, "Studies on Isoagglutinins and Isohemolysins," *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital* 21 (1910): 63–70. When Koumaris entered the field, he used Moss's classification but changed the numbering to correspond to Hindu-Arabic numerals. All these adventures in nomenclature may have been responsible for the late establishment of safe pretransfusion testing protocols for blood compatibility before World War II.

thousand of them focusing on testing and distribution of blood groups in world populations.<sup>418</sup> Although the connection between blood groups and race stimulated such research, it made up only 12 percent of the papers published on blood group studies after 1920.<sup>419</sup> The majority of these latter papers originated in continental Europe, especially in Germany, where they contributed to the literature connected to the *völkisch* or Aryan/Nordic movement. It is among these later, racially motivated studies that Koumaris's research belongs.

Given the diversity of interests among the Greek Society's members, however, he emphasized the relevance of serology in medical practices such as paternity examinations, forensics applications, blood transfusions, and studies of immunity. Before he proceeded to present his own blood group research, he lectured at length on the achievements of the researchers mentioned above and sought to draw on their authority and scientific credentials. It was then the right time for Koumaris to suggest that the study of this phenomenon was so important as to warrant the establishment of a specialized scientific center in Germany, the German Society for Blood Group Research (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Blutgruppenforschung). During the summer of 1926, which he spent, as usual, visiting anthropological laboratories and museums in Europe, Koumaris attended the founding of the German Society in Vienna and became one of its honorary members. The aim of the Society and such biological examinations was to shed light on human phylogeny and give

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<sup>418</sup> William H. Schneider, "Blood Group Research in Great Britain, France, and the United States Between the World Wars," *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 38 (1995): 87–114.

<sup>419</sup> Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, "Blood and Soil: The Serology of the Aryan Racial State," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 64 (1990): 188.

anthropologists “a safer tool for racial division” and thus illuminate “the basic, original, prehistoric . . . division of humans,” as he explained to his colleagues back in Greece.<sup>420</sup>

The German Society for Blood Group Research was the brainchild of German ethnologist and anthropologist Otto Reche, who took the initiative together with the Navy physician Paul Steffan (1885–1957).<sup>421</sup> Reche had been professor and chair of the Institute for Anthropology and Ethnography at the University of Vienna since 1924 and had cofounded the Viennese Society for Racial Hygiene (Wiener Gesellschaft für Rassenpflege) in 1925. He had joined nationalistic and revanchist circles by the end of World War I, and although he became a member of the National Socialist Party in 1937, he had contacts with several party organizations from the mid-1920s and was closely associated with the Racial Policy Office (Rassenpolitisches Amt).<sup>422</sup> In 1926, Reche became the editor of the journal *Volk und Rasse*, where he remained on the editorial board until 1944.<sup>423</sup> The journal was published by J. F. Lehmann of Munich, known for its attachment to the *völkisch* movement and a devoted publisher of propagandist books. Blood group research provided Reche with a new way to promote his racial agenda and connect with like-minded scientists across Europe.

Much like previous anthropological endeavors, blood group research under the auspices of the German Society became a vehicle for racial politics and nationalist

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<sup>420</sup> Koumaris “Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The ‘Serological’ Distinction of Human Races],” 14.

<sup>421</sup> Rachel E. Boaz, *In Search of “Aryan Blood”: Serology in Interwar and Nationalist Socialist Germany* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012).

<sup>422</sup> Katja Geisenhainer, “‘War in Particular Offers Exceptionally Favourable Opportunities for Surveying Foreign Racial Material’: The Effects of World Wars on Anthropologist Otto Reche’s Activities,” *Anthropological Notebooks* 15, no. 2 (2009): 35–49.

<sup>423</sup> Mazumdar, “Blood and Soil”: 198.

aspirations. There were forty-nine founding members in total, all well-regarded people in their respective fields, including anthropology, prehistory, law and police, and medicine and forensic medicine. The Society also included eighteen honorary members.<sup>424</sup> Despite the group's specific German and Austrian outlook, several of the honorary members came from Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>425</sup> Koumaris's membership in the German Society was not exceptional, but extended beyond a narrow interest in serology. He shared the vision of discovering the original, pure racial elements of a nation; an aversion to mixed marriages, which blurred those clean lines; and a faith in racial hygiene as a means of protecting the nation from further miscegenation. Koumaris did not communicate Reche's agenda to HAS but emphasized that a real impetus for serological investigations came from the Hirszfelds' landmark study toward the end of WWI.

Ludwik Hirszfeld and the Polish physician Hanna Hirzfelowa, (1884–1964), had both joined the Serbian Army in 1915. By 1917, they were trapped together with Allied forces at the Macedonian (Salonika) front, or what the Germans facetiously called their largest Prisoners of War camp. While the front line stretched from the northernmost borders of Greece all the way to the west toward the Adriatic Sea, the Hirszfelds were based in Salonika. The city itself had a fascinating, centuries-long history of coexistence and controlled tolerance among its Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities that came under Greek rule after the end of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and the violent rise of nationalisms in the area.<sup>426</sup> The arrival of a large number of Entente soldiers, especially

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<sup>424</sup> Mazumdar, "Blood and Soil," 191.

<sup>425</sup> Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling, "Eugenics, Race and Nation in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900–1940: A Historiographic Overview," in *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900–1940*, eds. Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 9.

<sup>426</sup> Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950* (London: HarperCollins, 2004). Despite promises to respect the rights of all communities, the Greek

from Africa, added to the diversity of languages, customs, and, not least, appearances of people who walked the streets of the city. These arrivals, however, also prompted criticism for turning the country into a French colony, often accompanied by rumors of atrocities committed by the “primitives” from Africa and Asia.<sup>427</sup>

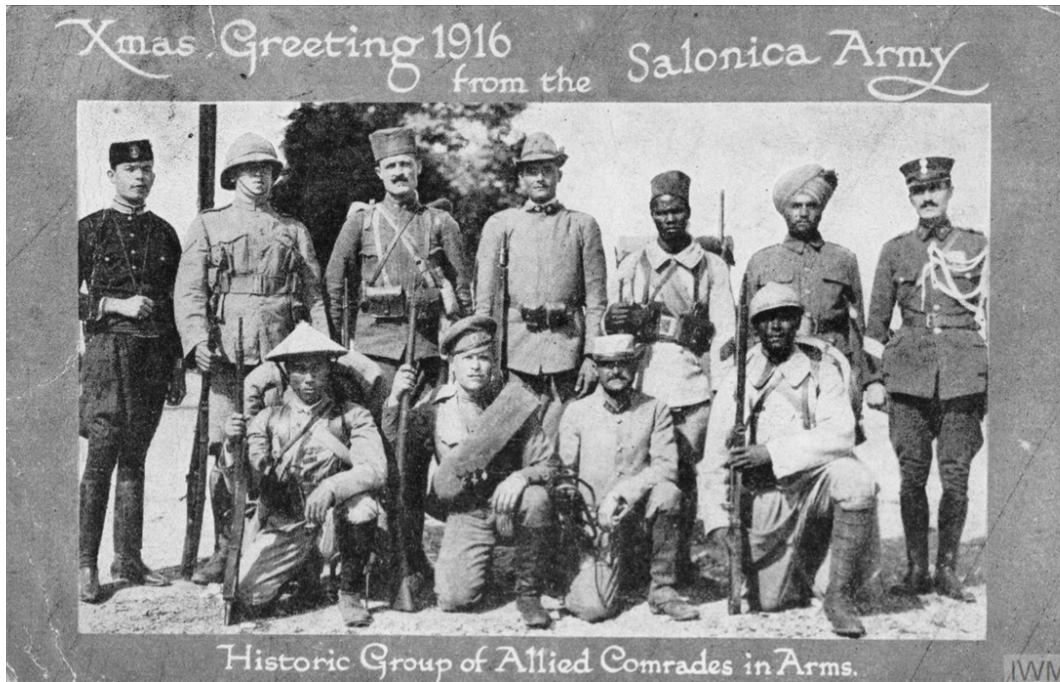


Fig. 3.8: Postcard from Salonika showing soldiers of all Allied nations taking part in the campaign: Montenegrin, British, Serbian, Italian, French Colonial Zouave, Indian, Greek (from left to right standing) and French Colonial Cochin Chinese, Russian, French, French Colonial (from left to right kneeling), copyright IWM Q 67857.

authorities followed policies of “hellenization,” which, together with non-favorable legislation, a great fire, destruction, and looting of property, had transformed the formerly Ottoman city.

<sup>427</sup> Efi Gazi, “Αγγλοι, Γάλλοι και Σενεγαλέζοι: Αντιλήψεις για το Ελληνικό Έθνος, τη Φυλή και τις Αυτοκρατορίες στην Ελλάδα κατά τον Α΄ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο [English, French and Senegalese: Perceptions of the Greek Nation, Race and Empires in Greece during WWI],” in *Φυλετικές Θεωρίες στην Ελλάδα: Προσλήψεις και Χρήσεις στις Επιστήμες, την Πολιτική, τη Λογοτεχνία και την Ιστορία της Τέχνης κατά τον 19ο και 20ο Αιώνα* [Racial Theories in Greece: Understandings and Uses in Sciences, Politics, Literature and the History of Art during the 19th and 20th Century], eds. Efi Avdela, Dimitris Arvanitakis, Eliza Anna Delveroudi, Eugenios D. Mathiopoulos, Sokratis Petmezas, and Tasos Sakellaropoulos (2017), 253–57.

In Salonika, the place often referred to as a city of ghosts and refugees, the Hirszfelds decided to “attack the human race problem on serological lines” and therefore “designate biochemical races.”<sup>428</sup> They soon realized that what they had readily available was a perfect laboratory for blood group research, since most of their subjects were soldiers from various regions of the world who were mostly unrelated; therefore, family connections could not skew the results (fig. 3.8). As the Hirszfelds noted:

Through the accident of the war we happened to come to a part of the globe where more than elsewhere races and peoples are brought together, so that the problems we are discussing, which otherwise would have necessitated long years of travel, could be brought in a relatively short time nearer to solution.<sup>429</sup>

This would not be the first or last time that war—and the bodies of soldiers, recruits, prisoners, or refugees—would become a favorable circumstance for anthropological race investigations.<sup>430</sup>

Looking for patterns of difference in the blood of various groups, which the Hirszfelds collectively and invariably labeled either as different races or nationalities, what they first discovered was similarity. They wrote: “We wish to point out as the first important fact that we found the Groups *A* and *B* present in all races examined.”<sup>431</sup> When analyzing the proportion of the different blood groups, however, they concluded that Group *A* was prevalent among (Western and Central) Europeans and that its frequency

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<sup>428</sup> Ludwik Hirschfeld and Hanna Hirschfeld, “Serological Differences Between the Blood of Different Races: The Results of Researches on the Macedonian Front,” *The Lancet* (1919): 676.

<sup>429</sup> Hirschfeld and Hirschfeld, “Serological Differences”: 677.

<sup>430</sup> Marius Turda discusses how the military body, and specifically the bodies of war prisoners, became subjects of scientific research and national–racial classificatory practices, see “In Search of Racial Types: Soldiers and the Anthropological Mapping of the Romanian Nation, 1914–44,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 47, no. 1 (February 2013): 1–21.

<sup>431</sup> Hirschfeld and Hirschfeld, “Serological Differences”: 677.



diminished eastward and southward, while the opposite was the case for Group B. To capture these differences in frequencies with just one number, they devised an index called “biochemical race index,” which was no more complicated than the ratio of the percentage of Group A to Group B. This index allowed them to classify the peoples of diverse nationalities, ethnicities, and religions into three types: European, Asio-African, and intermediate types (fig. 3.9). Although they saw no effect of the anthropological characteristics on these biochemical races, the Hirszfelsds suggested a clear correspondence between geography and blood group patterns. This led them to propose a theory of a possible double origin for the human race: a group A with its origins in the West and a group B with its origins in the East. While this suggestion for human origins and evolution did not attract much anthropological attention, and the race index was subsequently revised, the Hirszfelsds had delivered a new technology for race classification that promised to breathe new life into a field exhausted by the idiosyncrasies of anthropometry.

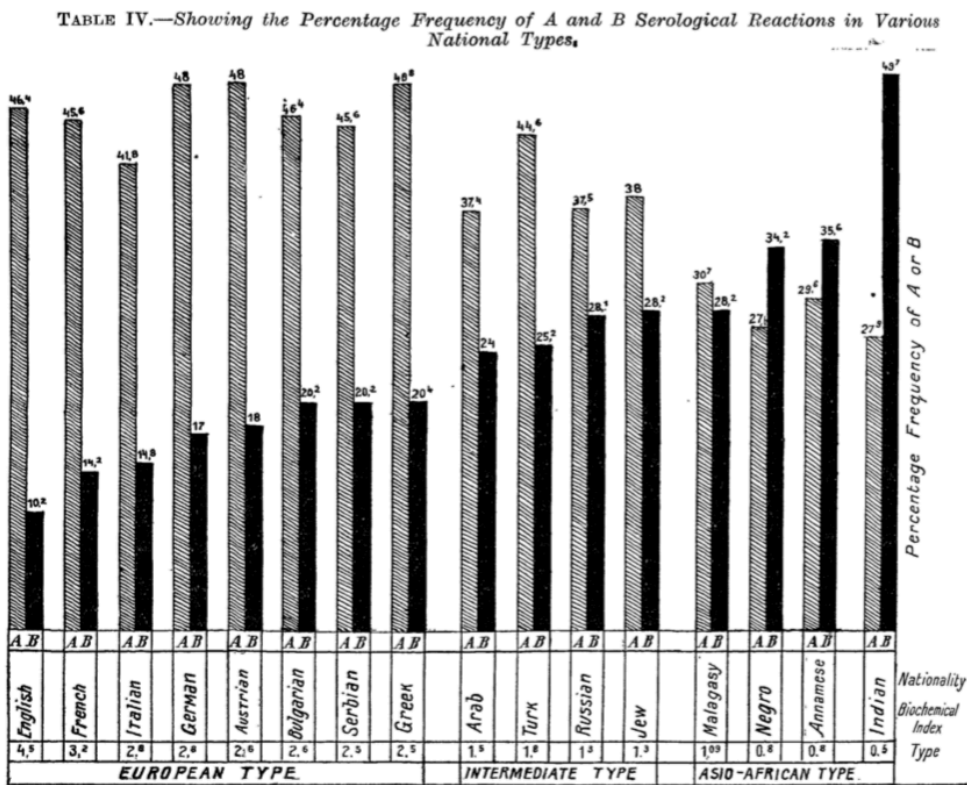


Fig. 3.9: The biochemical index graph, published in Hirschfeld and Hirschfeld, “Serological Differences”: 678.

#### IV. One Blood and One Nation

For Koumaris, the Hirszfelds' study had made it possible to move away from comparisons of the rather homogenous blood of Central European countries to the diversity of the different armies found together in Northern Greece. Despite his admiration for their work, Koumaris presented the Hirszfelds as siblings (actually brothers) instead of a married heterosexual couple, which is the same mistake that Reche made in a letter to Württemberg's Medical Research Office seeking state assistance for the Society's purposes.<sup>432</sup> Although the Hirszfelds were geographically based rather close to Koumaris, who himself had served in the military during WWI, they obviously never met in person, and it is unlikely that he knew much about their blood group research, at least in relation to race, before he joined the German Society. Koumaris, however, had a more specific reason to refer enthusiastically to the Hirszfelds' study. This was the first blood group research conducted on Greeks, as they called their subjects. In the French version of their paper, which gives more detailed and different numbers on the origins of their research subjects, they noted that they examined "120 officers and soldiers from an aviation school; next 250 refugees from Thrace and Asia Minor; and last 130 patients from a military hospital." They commented that the differences between the Greeks of Asia Minor and those of Old Greece were insignificant. What they considered an important result was that while blood group *B* was prevalent among Turks in Macedonia (as in Turkey), it did not prevail among Greeks of Asia Minor, therefore confirming that blood depended on origins and not on climatic conditions.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> See Koumaris, "Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The 'Serological' Distinction of Human Races]," 14; and Boaz, *In Search of "Aryan Blood,"* 80.

<sup>433</sup> While the Greek serologists studied the blood of refugees from Asia Minor, the Muslim minority that remained in the northern part of the country was ignored until the 1950s. For blood group research on these populations, see Burton and Lefkadiou, "Race in Circulation"; and for the attitudes toward racialized minorities in Greece, see Lefkadiou, "Observations on Race and Racism

Although for the Hirszfelds creating a single group out of the refugees and Greeks from various areas of the country might have been unproblematic—or, rather, typical of anthropological traditions that simply lumped together local populations—their choice became socially and politically invested in the local context.<sup>434</sup> The “Greek” refugees whom the Hirszfelds included in their study had arrived in Salonika from Asia Minor, the southern coast of the Black Sea, and Eastern Thrace during a decade of conflicts, which also led Muslim populations from the Balkans to Turkey and Slavophone populations from Greece to Bulgaria.<sup>435</sup> These forced mobilities marked the final years of the Ottoman Empire and culminated in the Greek-Turkish War (1919–1922) and the invasion and defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor. Attacks and massacres of vulnerable civilian populations fleeing to save their lives were commonplace; ethnic cleansing was employed by both sides.<sup>436</sup>

Already in late summer of 1922, hundreds of thousands of Orthodox Christians had arrived in Greece, while thousands had perished on their way to Greek islands and ports

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in Greece”. Thiago Pinto Barbosa also discusses the initial exclusion of Muslims from anthropological studies in India, see “Racializing a New Nation: German Coloniality and Anthropology in Maharashtra, India,” Special Issue, *Perspectives on Science* (forthcoming).

<sup>434</sup> See Lisa Gannett and James R. Griesemer, “The ABO Blood Groups: Mapping the History and Geography of Genes in *Homo sapiens*,” in *Classical Genetic Research and Its Legacy*, eds. H-J. Rheinberger and J-P. Gaudillière (London: Routledge, 2004), 141. The authors describe the Hirszfelds’ “national types” as contested identities, which—especially for the Balkans and Salonika—had only recently become available as national identities and concealed centuries of religious, linguistic, and ethnic interactions.

<sup>435</sup> For new critical perspectives on processes and events on both sides of the Aegean before and after the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor, and the constitution of refugee memory, see Antonis Liakos, ed., *Το 1922 και οι Πρόσφυγες: Μια Νέα Ματιά* [1922 and the Refugees: A New Perspective] (Athens: Νεφέλη [Nefeli], 2011).

<sup>436</sup> Haris Exertzoglou, “Children of Memory: Narratives of the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Making of Refugee Identity in Interwar Greece,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 34, no. 2 (2016): 344.

or had been killed by the victorious Turkish army. The language of blood was mobilized by political commentators when the news of defeat began reaching the country. Although both the Liberal and Royalist parties, which dragged Greece into decades of conflicts, had variously but consistently supported the vision of territorial expansion of the Greek state, they were reluctant to accept the consequences of the irredentist project's failure. National ideologies contributed to transforming these dramatic events into powerful *lieux de mémoire* on both sides of the Aegean, with Greece memorializing them as the Asia Minor Catastrophe and Turkey celebrating them as its Day of Independence.<sup>437</sup>

What followed was the international Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, signed in 1923 at Lausanne by the new Republican Turkish government, the Kingdom of Greece, four other European countries, and Japan. The Greek-Turkish population exchanges were defined according to religious identity: about four hundred thousand Muslims in Greece were forced to move to Turkey, while almost 1.5 million Orthodox Christians were expelled from other previously Ottoman Lands to Greece, regardless of their language and familial or ethnic affiliations (3.10).<sup>438</sup> In the name of national homogeneity and international peace and stability, this enforced exchange was a move that “corrected a wrong as Muslims and Greek Orthodox were sent to where they supposedly actually belonged.”<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> Antonis Liakos 2007, “Historical Time and National Space in Modern Greece,” in *Regions in Central and Eastern Europe: Past and Present*, eds. Hayashi Tadayuki and Hiroshi Fukuda (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2007), 218.

<sup>438</sup> See Onur Yildirim, “The 1923 Population Exchange, Refugees and National Historiographies in Greece and Turkey,” *East European Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2006): 46–69; and Exertzoglou, “Children of Memory.”

<sup>439</sup> Asli İğsiz, *Humanism in Ruins: Entangled Legacies of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), 12. İğsiz shows how the population exchange dictated by the Treaty of Lausanne became the reference point and legal precedent for a kind of



Fig. 3.10: Refugees onboard a ship transferring them to Greece, original title “Entassement des refugies à bord d' un bateau,” 1922, unknown photographer, source E. L. I. A. [Watermarked images published with permission].

As national, ethnic, religious, and racial identities became coextensive, the populations forced to move did not automatically become part of the recently established national bodies. The defeated Greek side, however, having experienced decades of internal political divisions and economic instability, did not welcome the refugees back to their supposed ancestral land. The political establishment, as well as a large part of Greek society, treated them with indifference, suspicion, and even hostility. The *Mikrasiates*, as the refugees from Asia Minor are known in Greece, were resettled in areas with little access to health care, often malaria-ridden swamps, where epidemic diseases thrived. They rarely received the promised financial compensation for their lost livelihoods, lacked proper housing and opportunities for earning a living, and therefore faced extreme poverty, even

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“segregative biopolitics,” which “relies on a racialized human taxonomy, and translates this taxonomy into policies of spatial (re)distribution and (im)mobility.” *Ibid.*, 14.

hunger.<sup>440</sup> Diverse cultural practices, subtle linguistic discrepancies, and the refugees' almost uniform support for the Liberal party contributed to further suspicion on the part of the majority population.

Dominant discourses presented the refugees as a threat to the national body and a source of foreign ethn racial elements. The biological connotations of the slur *Tourkosporoi* (Turkish seeds)—still used today to characterize Greeks with eastern refugee ancestry—captures the racialization of kinship and the objectification of difference in this context.<sup>441</sup> However, other narratives emphasized not only the biological affinity between *Mikrasiates* and Old Greeks, but also how the first contributed to the social, cultural, and economic revitalization of a decadent Greek society.<sup>442</sup> This discourse argued in favor of racial homogeneity and continuity, but assumed that the refugees contributed to both and was thus of vital importance for their integration. Koumaris appears to support a national narrative that included the refugees, celebrated the Hirszfelds' results, and sought to replicate and expand their study.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Exertzoglou, "Children of Memory": 344.

<sup>441</sup> Correspondingly, the Muslim refugees were referred to as *Yunan dölü* (Greek seeds) in Turkey. Burton and Lefkadiou (forthcoming) discuss the entangled legacies of forced mobilities and the history of blood group research in Turkey, using Greece and Cyprus to draw comparisons.

<sup>442</sup> Exertzoglou explains how accounts of the Asia Minor Catastrophe, including articles published in the refugee press, involved various and even contested narratives, with a major distinction between narratives of victimization and empowerment. The latter emphasized the positive impact of the refugees and their patriotic sentiments, which were even more pronounced than those of the rest of the Greeks and served as a strategy for social integration. See "Children of Memory": 349–354.

<sup>443</sup> Trubeta discusses how several ethnological and sociological studies, mostly preceding 1922, examined the composition of Asia Minor communities and argued that the diversity found there was an important resource for the ambitions of the Greek state. However, she misses the point that Koumaris supported the racial affinity of the refugees as early as in the 1920s. See *Physical Anthropology*, 156–58. Gazi shows how in certain political quarters, criticism toward Western powers' imperialism and the danger of Greece becoming their protectorate coexisted with the

During his 1927 speech to the members of the Greek anthropological society, Koumaris built up the homogeneity claim both by drawing on the authority of the Hirszfelds as acknowledged foreign researchers and by highlighting Greek contributions to the field. The first blood group research study by a Greek doctor had been presented at the Academy of Athens in March 1927. Constantinos Savvas, professor of hygiene and microbiology, public health reformer, and founding member of HAS, announced the results from his examination of the frequencies of blood groups in Greece.<sup>444</sup> His group categories included five hundred Greek refugees and fourteen Armenians. Savvas, who had studied in Athens, Vienna, and Berlin, was one of the most influential health reformers of the early twentieth century and a court physician. He was one of the professors of medicine who supported Koumaris throughout his career, and not least in getting the University Chair of Anthropology. In his original presentation to the Academy, Savvas focused on the vital importance of the identification of each patient's blood group for blood transfusions and described becoming familiar with these methods as an ethical responsibility for every doctor. He went on to mention that several international medical journals often reported tantalizing paternity cases resolved through blood group analysis. Along with his own investigations, Savvas read to the members of the Academy Koumaris's early results, which explicitly referenced the Hirszfelds' new terminology in racial studies.<sup>445</sup> Savvas's results,

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ambition of the country expanding toward the east. Such a move would result in Greece establishing its own Eastern empire, "a great eastern state" that would include all the populations of the Near East carrying with them Greek elements in their bodies or cultures. See "English, French and Senegalese," 253–69.

<sup>444</sup> Constantinos Savvas, "Μικροβιολογία. — Περί της εν Ελλάδι Συχνότητος των Ομάδων του Αίματος [Microbiology. — On the Frequency of Blood Groups in Greece]," in *Πρακτικά της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών Α 1927* [Proceedings of the Academy of Athens of 1927] (Athens: Γραφείον Δημοσιευμάτων Ακαδημίας Αθηνών [Academy of Athens Publications Office], 1927), 143–47.

<sup>445</sup> John Koumaris, "Συμβολή εις την Μελέτην των «Ορολογικών Φυλών» [Contribution to the Study of 'Serological' Races]," in *Πρακτικά της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών Α 1927* [Proceedings of the Academy of

together with the work of Koumaris, encouraged the former to suggest that the Academy conduct extensive anthropological blood surveys throughout the country with the help of his numerous microbiology students.

Continuing with the presentation of his own research, Koumaris emphasized that he had followed Moss's simple method because it could be implemented by nonexperts even if limited technical resources were available. This was an important comment given Savvas's ambition to extend such studies nationwide, which also reflected the ambitions of German serologists. In line with international practices, Koumaris bought standardized *A* and *B* sera, called "Haemotest," from the State Serotherapeutic Institute in Vienna.<sup>446</sup> Overall, Koumaris had analyzed blood samples from 745 individuals, mostly coming from the clinics of Andreas Syngros Hospital, which specialized in venereal and skin diseases. Koumaris's friends and family members provided samples as well, since it was important for the study "to include individuals with the widest possible diversity of origins from the different parts of the freed and enslaved Greece."<sup>447</sup> This resulted in a slightly more detailed categorization than the Hirsfelds', which included all Greek territories at the borders and the center of the country.

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Athens of 1927] (Athens: Γραφείον Δημοσιευμάτων Ακαδημίας Αθηνών [Academy of Athens Publications Office], 1927), 183–88.

<sup>446</sup> The "Haemotest" serum used Moss's nomenclature and was rather costly compared to other museum expenses. Koumaris requested and received the amount of 1216,60 drachmas for what he referred to as an experimental study, AMA, Folder 1926–1927, Document 226, November 5, 1926. William H. Schneider suggests that standardized sera bought in Warsaw, Berlin, and Paris contributed to the diffusion of blood group studies, see "The History of Research on Blood Group Genetics: Initial Discovery and Diffusion," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 18, no.3 (1996): 286. McMahon in *The Races of Europe*, 41, argues that the circulation of sera was part of the international effort to standardize techniques and instruments as a result of the rising prestige of positivist experimentation and the need for comparative measurement.

<sup>447</sup> Koumaris, "Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The 'Serological' Distinction of Human Races]," 18.



Koumaris took great care to ensure that the people tested were of Greek origin, and therefore removed from the original group those whose family origins, and especially the paternal origins, were not from Greece, ending up with 716 individuals. The results, presented in different tables for men and women following anthropometric conventions, showed a predominance of blood type 4 (or O) in the Greek samples, which he collectively identified as Mediterranean. He noted that any conclusions about the distribution of blood types in the world based on the current studies were premature, although there was a tendency for a higher frequency of type 2 (or A) in Central Europe. Koumaris created a common table to compare his results with those of the Hirszfels and Savvas, thus placing serology in Greece side by side with the most celebrated achievements in the field. However, he further divided the samples in “the most important and historically and racially somewhat distinct parts of Hellenism”.<sup>448</sup> From this more detailed investigation, he drew one of the strongest conclusions of the study:

In general, we see an obvious uniformity in the distribution of types between the *Mikrasiates* and the Old Greeks, which the Hirszfels also emphasize and this without us wishing to raise nationalistic issues.<sup>449</sup>

Given the unsettled political context and the ongoing controversies around the refugee issue, it is not surprising that Koumaris tried to tone down the political implications of his statement, while remaining mindful of the potential ramifications of his conclusion.

## **V. Travelling Data of Blood and Bones**

Koumaris, however, remained an anthropologist trained in the tradition of anthropometry. In March 1927, he wrote again to the university senate to request that the

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<sup>448</sup> Koumaris, “Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The ‘Serological’ Distinction of Human Races],” 18.

<sup>449</sup> Koumaris, “Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The ‘Serological’ Distinction of Human Races],” 22.

museum should acquire from the Berlin-based Alig und Baumgärtel instrument makers the most basic anthropological instruments such as an anthropometer, goniometer, craniometer, and hair- and eye-color scales.<sup>450</sup> He was successful in acquiring them, since the 1950 delivery protocol lists among these Martin's eye color scale, Fischer's hair color scale, Luschan's skin color scale, Mollison's goniometer, and a variety of skull measuring instruments and anthropometers (fig. 3.11–3.14).<sup>451</sup> A few months earlier, in January 1927, he had purchased the first three volumes of the journal *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, established by Swiss anthropologist Rudolf Martin in 1924 with the aim of contributing to unifying anthropological examination methods.<sup>452</sup> The task of identifying a possible relationship between blood types and morphological traits that could provide clues about racial identification was serology's challenge, and Koumaris addressed it literally head-on.

He collected head measurements from most of the individuals examined, which he considered a more accurate method of study as opposed to simple somatoscopic observation, especially in relation to future research. The popular, and often contested, cephalic index and the facial index were calculated on the basis of those findings, complemented with observations on hair and eye color. All results were presented in detailed, carefully constructed—and always difficult to read—anthropometric tables.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> AMA, Folder 1926–1927, Document 231, March 11, 1927.

<sup>451</sup> AMA, Loose documents and unnumbered, Handwritten Delivery Protocol, 1950.

<sup>452</sup> AMA, Folder 1926–1927, Document 234, April 25, 1927. For Martin's role in the standardization of anthropometric techniques and methods, see Amos Morris-Reich, "Anthropology, Standardization and Measurement: Rudolf Martin and Anthropometric Photography," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 46, no. 3 (2013) 487–516, as well as Pinto Barbosa "Racializing a New Nation"; Jaehwan Hyun, "In the Name of Human Adaptation: Japanese American 'Hybrid Children' and Racial Anthropology in Postwar Japan," Special Issue, *Perspectives on Science* (forthcoming); and Clever, "Miriam Tildesley."

<sup>453</sup> In their introduction to a special issue on the roles of diverse images in physical, serological, and molecular anthropology publications, Veronika Lipphardt and Marianne Sommer argue that diagrams may "turn out to be technologies of persuasion not only of 'lay publics' but also of

Once again, he issued a disclaimer about the small sample size (not more than a few hundred subjects), but he also expressed doubts about the possibility of using serology for racial studies. On this specific issue, Koumaris added that he agreed with the reservations of the Portuguese physical anthropologist António Mendes Correia, whom he described as excessively pessimistic. Mendes Correia, the influential professor of anthropology at Porto University, was indeed among those who insisted on using the older techniques, even if alongside possible new research methods.<sup>454</sup> Koumaris concluded that “science has still not found a superior biological method for racial classification that can substitute the old methods.”<sup>455</sup> He asserted that this was most importantly the result of still-unstable technical solutions and the limited material, which must have also been responsible for the small discrepancies between his results and those of Savvas and the Hirtzfelds. However, Koumaris did not wish to part with the efforts of his German colleagues and quoted Reche’s call at a recent conference for “no longer abandoning [such research] to only specialized serologists who may quite naturally overlook issues of great anthropological significance.”<sup>456</sup> He was convinced—or at least tried to appear so—of a future value for serological investigations.

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members of the scientific community.” This seems to apply to the use of anthropological tables, which both allowed for the exchange of data and served as evidence of meticulousness and reliability. See Lipphardt and Sommer, “Visibility Matters: Diagrammatic Renderings of Human Evolution and Diversity in Physical, Serological and Molecular Anthropology,” *History of the Human Sciences* 28, no. 5 (2015): 11.

<sup>454</sup> Ricardo Roque, “The Blood That Remains: Card Collections from the Colonial Anthropological Missions,” *British Journal for the History of Science: Themes* 4 (2019): 29–53.

<sup>455</sup> Koumaris, “Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The ‘Serological’ Distinction of Human Races],” 36.

<sup>456</sup> Koumaris, “Η «Ορολογική» Διάκρισις των Φυλών [The ‘Serological’ Distinction of Human Races],” 37.

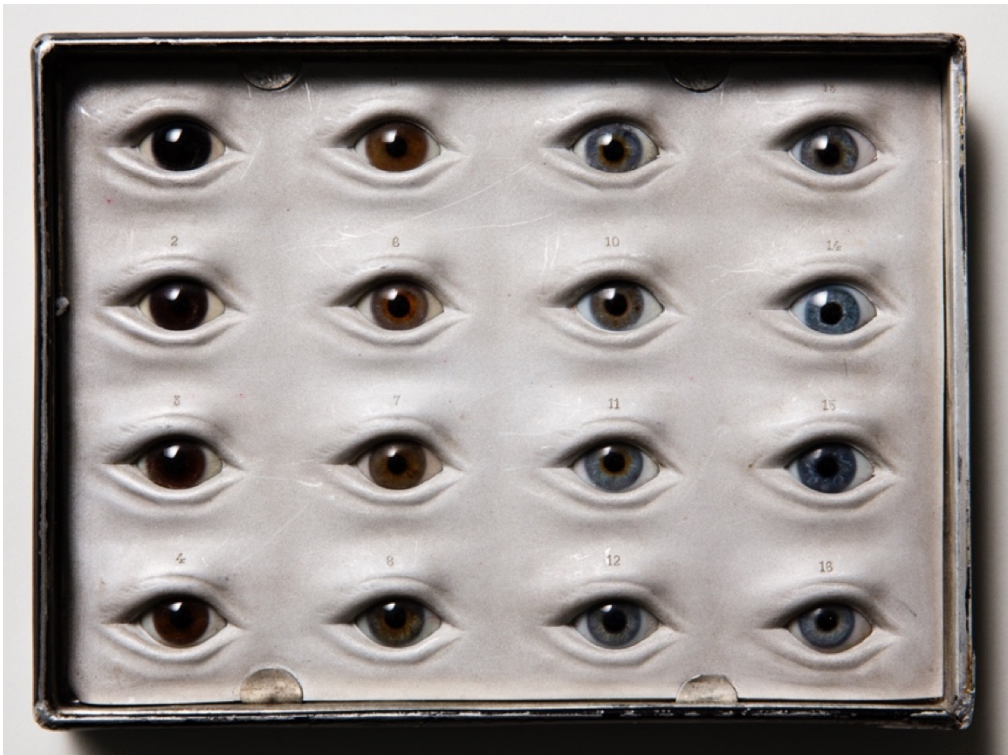
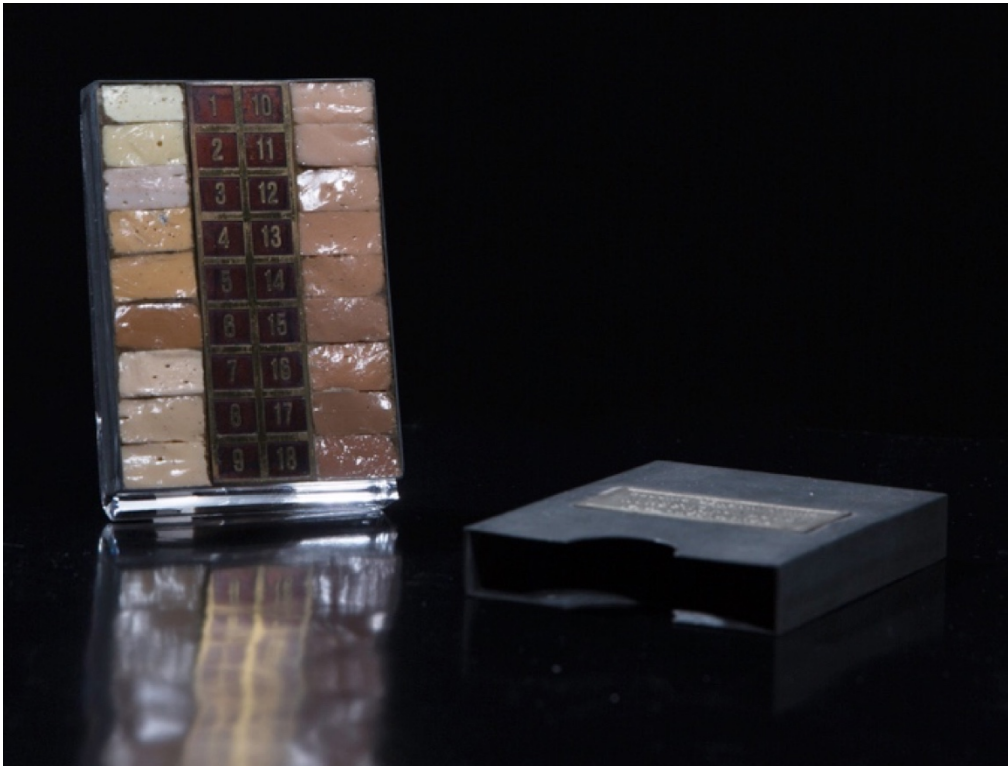


Fig. 3.11–3.12: Luschan's skin color scale (late-nineteenth century) and Martin's eye color scale (early-twentieth century), photographed for the exhibition "FOLK – From Racial Types to DNA Sequences," University of Oslo, photo: Teknisk Museum / Håkon Bergseth.



Fig. 3.13–3.14: Fischer's hair color scale (early-twentieth century) and Broca's occipital goniometer (mid-nineteenth century) photographed for the exhibition "FOLK," instruments from the University of Oslo, photo: Teknisk Museum / Håkon Bergseth.

The conference Koumaris mentioned was the September 1926 convention of the German Anthropological Society in Salzburg, which he had attended for four days. There we can assume that he became even more alert to the skepticism toward blood group studies expressed among the highest ranks of German anthropologists, including Eugen Fischer (1874–1967), whom Koumaris often acknowledged as his mentor.<sup>457</sup> When writing the major German-language textbook *Menschliche Erblchkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene* (1927) with his close friend and geneticist Erwin Baur (1875–1933) and his student Fritz Lenz (1887–1976), Fischer and his coauthors commented positively on the promising new serological method. They noted that blood group frequencies vary according to race, and continued:

Even within Europe there seem to be differences between Nordic, Alpine and Mediterranean races. More detailed research is only just beginning, but it is promising. The clearest contrasts seem to be between Europeans and Mongolians, while Indians appear to be closer to Europeans. The results are extremely interesting, but should be used with great care.<sup>458</sup>

Despite these encouraging comments and Fischer's membership in the German Society for Blood Group Research, he was never convinced that blood groups had much to do with anthropological studies.<sup>459</sup> But nor was he in favor of continuing in the exact same style of anthropometry that Rudolf Virchow or Felix von Luschan had practiced before him.

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<sup>457</sup> The central role of Fischer in anthropological discussions becomes evident in the cases of Norway and India as shown by Kyllingstad in "The Norwegian Association for Heredity Research and the Organized International Eugenics Movement" and Barbosa in "Racializing a New Nation".

<sup>458</sup> Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer, and Fritz Lenz, *Grundriss der menschlichen Erblchkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene* (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1927): 128–29.

<sup>459</sup> Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute*, 82–91.

Fischer was outspoken about his vision of an anthropology that would unify the study of humans from a multiplicity of perspectives. In 1927, as the newly appointed director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics, and Eugenics, Fischer put his vision into action when he became involved in designing new research initiatives in Germany and allocating funding resources. He was adamant that the mass statistical studies of the past were to be avoided in favor of compiling detailed genealogical studies of specific populations. For these studies, classical anthropometric characteristics such as head, nose, and body shape, along with hair and eye color and photographs, were deemed absolutely necessary, while information on blood group was described as highly desirable. Given Koumaris's affinities to Fischer's school of anthropology, we can imagine that he found himself in a position of split loyalties, even if he did not communicate more of these mixed signals and criticisms to his colleagues in Greece.

In 1928, a year after his speech to the Greek society, Koumaris published the aforementioned blood group study in the first issue of the German Society's journal, *Zeitschrift für Rassenphysiologie*. The journal was published by J. F. Lehmann of Munich, making explicit the intellectual and institutional continuities between the Society's research project and *völkisch* anthropology. Koumaris confirmed:

the clear similarity between the two main areas of dispersal for Hellenism, Asia Minor and present-day Greece. In this regard, the findings are certainly consistent with L. and H. Hirzsfeld's results.<sup>460</sup>

However, he wrote that he departed from the somatoscopic method—the qualitative visual observation and assessment of bodily features—suggested by the German Society. Instead, Koumaris used classical anthropometric measurements of head shape calculating the

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<sup>460</sup> John Koumaris, "Die Blutgruppen bei den Griechen," *Zeitschrift für Rassenphysiologie* 1, no. 1 (1928): 17.

much-touted cephalic index—the ratio of maximum skull width to maximum skull length multiplied by 100—, and recorded hair and eye color (3.15–3.16). This way, he suggested, the collected data could support further anthropological work not reliant on the subjective estimations of untrained personnel. Indeed, for those who have held anthropometric instruments in their hands and have tried to replicate measurements on a human skull, it is obvious that tacit knowledge and extensive training are essential for handling even what seems to be the crudest of such devices, a simple caliper. Based on these measurements, Koumaris found no correlation between blood types and morphological characteristics.

**Tabelle 2. ♂**

♂	1		2		3		4		(432 - 2) = 430
	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	
Kleinasien	1	0,9	31	29,5	14	13,3	50	56,1	105
Griechisches Festland	8	4,9	28	17,3	22	13,6	103	63,9	161
Macedonien-Thrakien	—	—	7	46,6	2	13,3	6	40	15
Aegäische Inseln	2	4,7	13	30,9	5	11,8	22	52,3	42
Kreta	1	2,2	9	20,4	6	13,6	27	61,3	43
Epirus	—	—	4	16,6	2	8,3	18	75	24
Jonische Inseln	2	6,2	10	31,2	2	6,2	18	56,2	32
Zypern	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	100	4
Ausland	—	—	2	50	—	—	2	50	4

**Tabelle 7. (Haarfarbe)**

		1		2		3		4		Im Ganzen
		Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	
♂	Braun	12	3,2	90	24,7	46	12,6	216	59,3	364
	Blond	2	3,5	14	25	7	12,5	33	58,9	56
	Rot	—	—	—	—	2	20	8	80	10
♀	Braun	17	6,7	111	43,8	32	12,6	93	36,7	253
	Blond	1	3,7	10	37	5	18,5	11	40,7	27
	Rot	—	—	3	100	—	—	—	—	3
♂ + ♀	Braun	29	4,7	201	32,5	78	12,6	309	50	617
	Blond	3	3,6	24	28,9	12	14,4	44	53	83
	Rot	—	—	3	23	2	15,3	8	61,5	13

Fig. 3.15–3.16: Blood group frequencies and hair color tables, published in “Die Blutgruppen bei den Griechen”: 17 and 19 respectively.



The Greek anthropologist's approach prompted a reaction from the journal's editors, Reche and Steffan, who decided to add their own footnote to the paper.<sup>461</sup> Koumaris had completely misunderstood the aim of Reche's method, they wrote. Their view was that somatoscopy as a non-mathematical approach could obviously not calculate dolichocephaly and similar attributes; the whole point was to give researchers a simple overview of the head shapes in any population, even with the help of observations made by laypeople. They continued to point out that Reche had suggested that these traits may be influenced by environmental conditions, and observed that, for example, the categories dolichocephaly and long skull do not coincide. The footnote ended with the warning that the cephalic index is a number that can only be used with caution for racial diagnosis. Reche, although trained in the old anthropological tradition of detailed, painstaking measurements, had previously written about the frustration on the part of many anthropologists over the futility of such methods for race classification.<sup>462</sup> Balancing between the new demands of serology and the older anthropometric standards, Koumaris brought the two lines of inquiry together in the same order from the historical Fantz Deuticke bookstore in Vienna. He bought both Martin's revised manual *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie*—the golden canon of anthropological methods and techniques—and the *Zeitschrift für Rassenphysiologie* in November 1928.<sup>463</sup>

While the footnote to Koumaris's article is a reminder of changing research agendas within anthropology and the distrust of previously established methods, such patronizing attitudes toward anthropologists belonging to the perceived periphery of the discipline

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<sup>461</sup> Koumaris "Die Blutgruppen bei den Griechen": 16n2.

<sup>462</sup> Boaz describes the trajectory of Reche's research from physiognomic studies to seroanthropology and his disappointments with the first. See *In Search of "Aryan Blood"*, 76–79.

<sup>463</sup> AMA, Folder 1928–1929, Document 247, November 10, 1928.

were not uncommon.<sup>464</sup> The editors' rather harsh note, although centered on methods of measurement, demonstrates the urgency of establishing serology's priority in racial science as criticism was mounting. What they objected to was not simply the lack of methodological alignment; they also wanted to point out that Koumaris's conclusion that no correlation existed between body measurements and blood data was a result of his confusion, and did not imply that serology was inadequate for racial classification. Even if Koumaris did not respond to this commentary, he was aware that the success of the German Society's project rested on the ability to link blood group data with older anthropometric measurements and observations.<sup>465</sup>

At the same time, news that Fischer had recently dismissed the value of focusing on simply one hereditary characteristic, in this case blood group, as no better than supporting nose research was circulating and provided grounds for open debate.<sup>466</sup> Indeed, while by 1928 the German state refused to fund anthropological research that focused primarily on blood group research, Fischer's large-scale research agenda at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics was supported. The seroanthropologists collaborated on blood collection, but measurements of external physical characteristics, despite decades of criticism over its ineffectiveness, remained at the core of the

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<sup>464</sup> In Chapter 2, we saw how Topinard commented on Stephanos's research in a similar manner. See also Lefkaditou, *Yet Another Greek Tragedy?*, 156.

<sup>465</sup> Reche published an article in *Volk und Rasse* entitled "Blood Group Research and Anthropology" that aimed at responding to criticisms and supporting serology's anthropological mission. He argued that blood groups may not be coupled with other important racial characteristics as a result of the racial mixture that has previously taken place. He encouraged further investigations that might reveal this link. But he also entertained the idea that it could be physiological and not morphological characteristics that correspond to blood types.

<sup>466</sup> See Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute*, 85. Before WWI, Reche's research focused on the nasal index and he had proposed that the nose could be used as the main characteristic for racial differentiation. See Boaz, *In Search of "Aryan Blood"*, 73–4.

investigations and Reche's plans had to be modified accordingly. While the debates within anthropological circles continued, so did the efforts to collect blood group results from around the world and plot them on elaborate tables and maps drawing new borders between racialized blood types.

As so often with anthropological disagreements about methods and standards, the objections to Koumaris's research routines did not prevent other researchers from harvesting his data for the purposes of broader comparative studies. Siegmund Wellisch, a Jewish-Austrian engineer and a prolific writer on blood group research was one of them.<sup>467</sup> He and Steffan used Koumaris's results in several publications, including their seminal summary on the geographic distribution of blood groups.<sup>468</sup> Still, in another paper on the evaluation of research methods, Wellisch criticized Koumaris's results as pretty unlikely for suggesting a significant serological difference between men and women, i.e., a link between sex and blood groups, and therefore diverging from the Hirszfelds' findings.<sup>469</sup> In calculating the race index, Wellisch wrote that present-day Greeks presented a mix of the predominantly Near Eastern races with the Mediterraneans and Dinarrians, a racial type assumed to be common in Eastern Europe with strong oriental influences.<sup>470</sup> This statement, which emphasizes recent admixture and places modern Greeks closer to their Eastern neighbors, cast doubt on the Greek continuity argument and aligned with predominant Nordic racial views on how the ancient Greek mind and body decayed and

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<sup>467</sup> See Boaz, *In Search of "Aryan Blood"*, 126–48.

<sup>468</sup> Paul Steffan and Siegmund Wellisch, "Die geographische Verteilung der Blutgruppen," *Zeitschrift für Rassenphysiologie* 1 (1928/29): 46–60.

<sup>469</sup> It is not obvious how Koumaris's results differed from the Hirszfelds', especially since they had not included any women in their investigations. However, as discussed earlier, invoking the Hirszfelds' authority was a common strategy.

<sup>470</sup> Siegmund Wellisch, "Blutsverwandtschaft der Völker und Rassen," *Zeitschrift für Rassenphysiologie* 1 (1928/29): 21–34.

disappeared exactly because of inferior intermixing. On a methodological level, it is unclear how Wellisch reached this conclusion, since Koumaris only presented percentages of blood groups and not indices. Yet Wellisch had devised his own obscure mathematical formulas for deciphering the racial composition of each group under examination, and it seems that this is a case where he put them to use.

**Tabelle 5.**  
Blutsverwandtschaft einiger arischer Völker  
mit der nordischen Rasse.

Volkgruppen	Komponenten		Abstände $\Delta$
	$p - P$	$q - Q$	
(A-Rasse)	+ 0,147	- 0,585	- 0,732
Deutsche in Angeln	+ 0,394	- 0,046	- 0,440
Schweden	+ 0,623	+ 0,222	- 0,401
Norweger	+ 0,468	+ 0,198	- 0,270
Deutsche in Nordamerika	+ 0,244	+ 0,176	- 0,068
Skandinavier in Nordamerika	+ 0,425	+ 0,429	+ 0,004
Engländer	- 0,110	- 0,069	+ 0,041
Holländer	+ 0,044	+ 0,108	+ 0,064
Belgier	- 0,215	- 0,073	+ 0,142
Schleswig-Holsteiner	- 0,096	+ 0,172	+ 0,268
Franzosen	- 0,124	+ 0,185	+ 0,309
Oesterreicher	- 0,100	+ 0,252	+ 0,352
Tschechen	- 0,082	+ 0,406	+ 0,488
Serben	- 0,058	+ 0,527	+ 0,585
Griechen	- 0,093	+ 0,546	+ 0,639
Nord-Italiener	- 0,212	+ 0,482	+ 0,694
Süd-Italiener	- 0,736	+ 0,305	+ 1,041
Polen	- 0,099	+ 1,032	+ 1,131
West-Russen	- 0,270	+ 1,072	+ 1,342
Inder	- 1,291	+ 2,329	+ 3,620
(B-Rasse)	- 2,782	+ 2,344	+ 5,126

Fig. 3.17: Blood group results on consanguinity of some Aryan people with the Nordic race, published in Wellisch, "Blutsverwandtschaft der Völker und Rassen": 32. The results on Greeks come from Koumaris's publication in the same journal.

This time, however, Koumaris responded, and he did so by using Wellisch's own argument for the need for further investigations to clarify such issues.<sup>471</sup> He

<sup>471</sup> John Koumaris, "Zur Frage der Geschlechter Gebundenheit bei der Blutgruppenvererbung," *Zeitschrift für Rassenphysiologie* 4, no. 1 (1931): 6-7. Koumaris included his response, along with the results of Diamantopoulos and Pangalos, in a report of HAS's main publications (1928-30)

avoided going into the details of Wellisch's evaluation methods, but instead used the results from other Greek blood group researchers, which he thought should become available to international serological circles and which were consistent with his own findings.<sup>472</sup> He further pointed out that other Greek researchers had also not found any correlation between blood types and hair and eye color. Koumaris refrained from commenting on his contemporaries' racial-composition theories. He seems always to have been rather careful about directly contesting the racial theories of his fellow German anthropologists related to the Greek continuity thesis, and instead preferred to attack what he saw as the root of such ideas in the accounts of Fallmerayer and other nineteenth-century thinkers. These paradoxical endorsements and differentiations demonstrate serologists' faith in the objectivity of numbers as well as their use of judgment on issues they deemed essential for their narrative constructions and scientific workings, either those that were related to their classifications and graphical representations or to the future of the field of serology as a whole, along with its political implications.<sup>473</sup> What everyone seemed to agree on was that the jury was still out and more studies were required.

## **VI. Greek Doctors in Search of Blood Relations**

There were few Greeks who responded to this challenge after the initial publications by Savvas and Koumaris. The first, and known mostly for his achievements within science and

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published in *Revue anthropologique*, the official journal of l'Institut international d'anthropologie. See Koumaris, "Comptes rendus de la société hellénique d'anthropologie," *Revue anthropologique* (1931): 70–80.

<sup>472</sup> Of the three other studies published in Greek and included in Koumaris's response, the one differed considerably from the rest, but he assumed that this was an effect of the small sample size. He noted, however, that even that study had shown differences in the percentages between men and women within each blood group.

<sup>473</sup> On the interplay between objectivity and judgment in blood group research, and how the latter is indispensable in scientific work and contributes to the production of the first, see Gannett and Griesemer, "The ABO Blood Groups."

politics, was Iakovos Diamandopoulos (1905–1993). In 1928, he was one of HAS’s newest members. He had pursued doctoral studies at the University of Berlin and had worked at the same Greek hospital where Koumaris had conducted his own blood group research.<sup>474</sup> Diamandopoulos explained to the HAS members that he had used Moss’s method and the A/B Haemotest serum just like Koumaris, but he was able to enroll 1,293 individuals, mainly family friends and hospital patients. He noted that his findings were the closest to the average for Greece “probably because the number of individuals examined was higher than those studied by previous researchers”.<sup>475</sup> Although he mentioned that his interest was anthropological, he avoided using any known classifications and instead arranged the differing blood group frequencies by latitude. The resulting table was unique in that it placed geographical areas of varying sizes and statuses next to researchers’ names—for example, America (Moss), Zurich (Müller), India (Hirszfelts), Hungary-Romania (Wesczecksky), and Greece (Diamandopoulos)—without any further explanation for the choice of categories. Diamandopoulos examined the relationship between eye and hair color with blood types and found no correlation, and thus he suggested that Koumaris’s results were absolutely confirmed. On the issue of refugees from Asia Minor, he also agreed with Koumaris and the Hirszfelts, who found uniformity in the frequencies of blood groups of Mikrasiates and Old Greeks. Koumaris welcomed the study as a valuable addition

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<sup>474</sup> Diamandopoulos later joined liberal and centrist political parties and became a member of Parliament and Minister of Hygiene and Education in the 1960s. During the Nazi occupation, he was active in the resistance and cofounded the resistance organization *Τρίαινα* (Trident). The dictatorship of the Regime of the Colonels put him under house arrest in May 1968 and later sent him into exile on the island of Naxos. He was a prolific writer whose books included discussions of medicine, politics, and even poetry.

<sup>475</sup> Iakovos Diamantopoulos, “Επί της Συχνότητος των Ομάδων Αίματος εν Ελλάδι [On the Frequency of Blood Groups in Greece],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1928* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1928] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1928), 69–77: 75.

to the statistical numbers from Greece and hoped for further similar investigations from other researchers. Diamantopoulos remained a member of HAS until its dissolution in 1970, but never returned to serology.<sup>476</sup>

Next to engage with serology was the microbiologist and member of HAS Georgios Pangalos, who, following Savvas's recommendations, recorded the blood group of every person tested in his laboratory. His findings, based on 266 individuals, differed from those of all previous researchers, a fact that probably led him to comment: "I don't think that this minor statistical survey is important in itself but by being added to the already existing ones may contribute to the study of blood groups in Greece."<sup>477</sup> Koumaris reacted to the presentation by translating his response to Wellisch's criticisms for the benefit of HAS's members. The response included Pangalos's study as one based on a limited number of cases, and Koumaris promised to continue gathering results from Greece with the aim of producing a broader picture of blood group frequencies in the country.<sup>478</sup> When compared to earlier anthropometric studies based on few ancient skulls, the argument on sample sizes becomes important as statistics and biometrics increased in popularity.

Several years later, Petros Sfetikopoulos, from the Maternity Clinic of the University of Athens Hospital, presented to HAS a summary of his doctoral dissertation on the

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<sup>476</sup> His only contribution to the Society's workings, as recorded in the proceedings, was a short commentary unrelated to anthropological concerns in 1943.

<sup>477</sup> G. I. Pangalos, "Συμβολή εις την Κατανομήν των Ομάδων Αίματος εν Ελλάδι [Contribution to the Distribution of Blood Groups in Greece]," in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1930* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1930] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1930), 13–14: 14.

<sup>478</sup> John Koumaris, "Επί του Ζητήματος της Γεννητικής Εξαρτήσεως κατά τον Καθορισμόν των Ομάδων Αίματος [On the Issue of Genetic Dependence in the Definition of Blood Groups]," in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1930* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1930] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1930), 14–17.

relationship between the blood groups of newborns and infants and that of their parents.<sup>479</sup> He focused on what he considered the most salient anthropological findings and, based on 1,743 cases (1,133 of whom were adults), corrected the serological index to 1.68 instead of 2.5, as suggested by the Hirszfelds. This correction brought the Greeks closer to the East and what Wellisch had suggested as the correct biochemical index, but the finding was not commented on further, either by Sfetikopoulos or any other member of the Greek Society. He concluded with a brief comparison of blood group percentages between women of Asia Minor and Old Greece as a way of satisfying the scientific interests of Koumaris, and found absolutely no differences.

The most extensive serological study until then was presented to HAS in 1941. The microbiologists Ploutarhos Papamarkou and Pigi Sklepa analyzed the blood of ten thousand patients from 1931–7 and found minor discrepancies between their results and those of previous researchers.<sup>480</sup> But Koumaris was not only interested in the confirmation of the general blood group frequencies, which he welcomed especially from such a large number of cases. In his comments to Papamarkou and Sklepa’s presentation, he explicitly asked if they could also verify that there was no difference between Old and New Greeks. Papamarkou responded that they had not examined that specific point, but since their results were consistent with previous findings from Greece and more general statistics from

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<sup>479</sup> P. D. Sfetikopoulos, “Ομάδες Αίματος Νεογνών και Βρεφών [Blood Groups of Newborns and Infants],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1938* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1938] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1938), 20–23.

<sup>480</sup> Ploutarhos Papamarkou and Pigi Sklepa, “Η Συχνότης των Ομάδων του Αίματος εν Ελλάδι [The Frequency of Blood Groups in Greece],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1941* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1941] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1941), 28–32.



other European countries such as Germany, they could safely assume that the refugees' blood did not differ from that of the other Greeks. He promised, however, to return to this important point in subsequent studies. Although Papamarkou never published again on serology, Sklepa continued to work on the topic at the Laboratory of Hygiene of the University of Athens.

In 1948, Sklepa concluded her doctoral dissertation on the homogeneity of the Greek race based on the distribution of blood groups. Her main findings, and further investigations, were presented in the journal *Elliniki Iatriki* (Greek Medicine) in two papers coauthored with Gerasimos Alivizatos (1889–1976), the chair of Hygiene, Epidemiology, and Medical Statistics and head of the Laboratory of Hygiene.<sup>481</sup> Their analysis included the blood group frequencies found by previous researchers together with several thousand new samples, and their primary aim was to identify differences between indigenous Greeks, refugees from various areas, and mixed individuals, and therefore to assert any foreign impacts on Greek race. Their conclusion suggested minor admixture with other races. The blood groups of the Greeks demonstrated uniformity regardless of where, among whom, or how they lived.

Alivizatos and Sklepa hoped that their painstaking studies would contribute to the total dismissal of unsubstantiated theories, such as those of Fallmerayer, who once more appears as a debunked national enemy. It seems as if the authors believed that blood could actually have the last word in this century-old debate, but this time to counter accusations of miscegenation with neighboring peoples on the Greeks. Although they did not present

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<sup>481</sup> See Gerasimos Alivizatos and Pigi Sklepa–Ioustinianou, “Η Κατανομή των Ομάδων Αίματος παρ’ Ελλήσιν από Εθνολογικής Απόψεως [The Distribution of Blood Groups in Greeks from an Ethnological Perspective],” *Ελληνική Ιατρική* [Greek Medicine] 10 (1948): 873–909; and Alivizatos and Sklepa–Ioustinianou, “Η Κατανομή των Ομάδων Αίματος παρ’ Ελλήσιν από Εθνολογικής Απόψεως (Μέρος II) [The Distribution of Blood Groups in Greeks from an Ethnological Perspective (Part II)],” *Ελληνική Ιατρική* [Greek Medicine] 11 (1949), 969–82.

their findings to HAS, they extensively referenced the serological researches of Koumaris and the other HAS members, and their arguments, conclusions, and wishes echoed those expressed within Greek anthropological and other scholarly circles since the mid-nineteenth century. The timing of the publication, toward the end of the Greek civil war, may explain both the nationalist discourse and the urgency to delineate a space for Greeks away from their neighbors to the north.

## VII. From Blood to Face, and from the Medical to the Anthropological Once Again

Koumaris's final research project brings us back to the medical dimensions of anthropology and reconnects us with the refugee question. In 1936, he set out to examine the relationship between different kinds of anemia and what he called "pseudomongoloid traits." He first studied twenty young people, many of whom were children, with various cases of anemia including erythroblastic anemia, which was then assumed to be a "**racial, hereditary** disease."<sup>482</sup> He examined these patients using anthropometric methods such as the calculation of various head indices; hair color and type; and nose, lip, and eye shape; but not blood groups. After presenting his findings to HAS, he asked two questions that he considered of chief importance for anthropological investigations: What is responsible for the racial character of the disease? What can the so-called mongoloid face be attributed

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<sup>482</sup> John Koumaris, "Ανθρωπολογικές Παρατηρήσεις επί Αναιμιών [Anthropological Observations on Anemias]," in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1936* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1936] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1936), 3–20: 3, emphasis in the original. The disease is today known as Cooley's anemia or beta thalassemia. Ruth Schwartz Cowan writes that Thomas B. Cooley, the American physician specializing in pediatrics and hematology who discovered the disease, was opposed to eugenics and therefore reluctant to confirm that the disease was hereditary and/or racial. Others, however, could not disregard its hereditary aspect revealed via pedigrees and blood tests. The disease was later called thalassemia, a compound for thalassic—from the Greek word *thalassa* for sea—anemia. See Schwartz Cowan, *Heredity and Hope: The Case for Genetic Screening* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008): 191–92.

to? The answers were not yet easy. Koumaris assumed that the prevalence of the disease among mainly Greeks, Italians, and Syrians, which he collectively called “**Mediterranean groups,**” was evidence of the close racial affinity between them, not least due to the presence of Greeks around the Mediterranean since ancient times.<sup>483</sup>

Koumaris was obsessed with language and therefore took issue with the term “mongoloid,” which he suggested pointed incorrectly to an association with mongoloid races and therefore assumed ancestry or mixture with such peoples. Instead, he preferred the term “pseudomongoloid” to denote that the presence of facial characteristics often associated with people of mongoloid origin gives a false racial association, when the most possible explanation seemed to be an accompanying bone disorder. Even the more-often-than-expected presence of the epicanthal fold in such patients, one of the characteristics associated with the mongoloid race, could be misleading. He quickly reminded his audience of “the value of the anthropological axiom stating that **‘the presence of one or several traits of foreign origin does not necessarily imply a possible racial connection.’**”<sup>484</sup> How, then, does this discussion relate to the refugee question?

A series of publications by Greek physician and director of the Medical Laboratory at the Hellenic Pasteur Institute John (Ioannis) Caminopetros (1898–1963) called attention to the racial aspects of anemia, the field of his medical expertise.<sup>485</sup> In a long treatise on erythroblastic anemia of the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean region published by the

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<sup>483</sup> Koumaris, “Ανθρωπολογικές Παρατηρήσεις επί Αναιμιών [Anthropological Observations on Anemias],” 16–17, emphasis in the original.

<sup>484</sup> Koumaris, “Ανθρωπολογικές Παρατηρήσεις επί Αναιμιών [Anthropological Observations on Anemias],” 18, emphasis in the original.

<sup>485</sup> John Caminopetros, “Η Ερυθροβλαστική Αναιμία των Λαών της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου [Erythroblastic Anemia of East Mediterranean People],” in *Πραγματεία της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών* [Monographs of the Academy of Athens] vol. 6: 3. (Athens: Γραφείον Δημοσιευμάτων Ακαδημίας Αθηνών [Academy of Athens Publications Office], 1938), 1–150.

Academy of Athens in 1938—printed in both Greek and French—Caminopetros suggested that the mongoloid eye of his patients should be attributed to racial intermixing, especially in the case of three individuals from Asia Minor who had self-reported mixing with mongoloid people in Turkey. Caminopetros, a member of HAS, had given Koumaris access to seventeen patients, had previously endorsed the latter’s results, and had promised to present his studies to the members of the Society. Koumaris lamented what he perceived as disregard toward the Society and his research from a colleague who “had reached hasty conclusions, excused only by the fact that [he] is not an anthropologist.”<sup>486</sup> Therefore, Koumaris told the members of HAS that he felt obligated to reconstruct this point before any objections to the study arrived from abroad.

In his first corrective move presented at HAS, Koumaris relied on foreign anthropological expertise to argue that assumed mongoloid traits, even eyeshape, may appear in totally unrelated races. He further questioned the very validity of Caminopetros’s observations, which were ironically mostly based on an erroneous table that Koumaris had published in 1936. He was convinced that although Greeks from Asia Minor probably had more opportunities for mixing with mongoloid—or mixed mongoloid—races, it would have been extremely risky to overgeneralize such issues. Koumaris concluded:

Without a broad comparative study of Greeks from both sides of the Aegean, and especially of healthy individuals, **it is of course not allowed to proclaim the Greeks from Asia as mixed.** Nationalistic feelings have undoubtedly no place in cold scientific research; and “it would have been inferior to our times to bring them

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<sup>486</sup> John Koumaris, “Ψευδομογγολοειδές Πρόσωπον και Μογγολικός Οφθαλμός επί Αναιμιών (2α Ανακοίνωσις) [Pseudomongoloid Face and Mongolic Eye in Anemia (2nd Presentation)],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1938* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1938] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1938), 2–13: 2.

in” as our predecessor Clon Stephanos used to write. But great reserve is also required when drawing conclusions from cursory research.<sup>487</sup>

He finished by reminding his audience that previous blood group research had demonstrated “the relative, of course, preservation of racial purity among Greeks of Asia Minor through the centuries.”<sup>488</sup> The same year, Koumaris published a summary of this report in the *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde*, where he noted again the premature nature of any conclusions regarding a possible mongoloid influence on Greeks from Asia Minor, especially in light of the consistency of blood group studies. He repeated that “we still believe that there is no way to justify the assumption of such a large expansion of the yellow wave,” although he did not want any nationalistic feelings to interfere with pure science.<sup>489</sup>

In 1942, Koumaris presented to HAS members the results of the broader comparative study on the presence of pseudomongoloid characteristics in the Greek race he had hoped for earlier.<sup>490</sup> He reported with satisfaction that the study was based on almost half a million (447,873, to be exact) somatoscopic observations made by him and other researchers, and despite their diverse training and motivations, the sheer quantity of data gave him confidence in the conclusions. Going back to the old controversy with Reche

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<sup>487</sup> Koumaris, “Ψευδομογγολοειδές Πρόσωπον και Μογγολικός Οφθαλμός επί Αναιμιών (2α Ανακοίνωσις) [Pseudomongoloid Face and Mongolic Eye in Anemia (2nd Presentation)],” 12, emphasis in the original.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> John Koumaris, “Das ‘pseudomongoloide’ Gesicht und das ‘mongoloide’ Auge bei Anämien,” *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde und die gesamte Forschung am Menschen* (1938): 335.

<sup>490</sup> John Koumaris, “Τα Ψευδομογγολοειδή Χαρακτηριστικά στην Ελληνική Φυλή [Pseudomongoloid Traits in the Greek Race],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1942* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1942] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1942), 54–72.

on the advantages of somatoscopy over detailed anthropometric measurements, it seems as if Koumaris finally surrendered to the power of numbers produced through quick observation. Once again, however, he concluded that there was no difference in the frequency of “pseudomongoloid characteristics”—including what he called the “pseudomongoloid face” and the “pseudomongoloid fold”—between Greeks coming from Old Greece, the new territories, and Asia Minor. There was no doubt, based on the study, that although the presence of these traits was rare in the Greek race, there had been some odd cases of mongoloid mixture, but certainly not more pronounced among the refugees. Interestingly, in a turn that recalls the anthropology of the previous century, Koumaris looked at ancient Greek statues for further evidence and noted that finding a “pseudomongoloid face” among them would be unthinkable, since “the tendency of the Greek artist towards beauty and the ideal is known.”<sup>491</sup>

To further ease any anxieties, he referenced contemporary discussions on the racial composition of the Turkish people with whom the refugees could have been in contact, and clarified that anthropological views were changing, with several anthropologists assigning the majority of Turks to the white race.<sup>492</sup> While it is difficult to assert the impact of Koumaris’s writings outside the context of HAS, Henri V. Vallois, the editor of the prestigious journal *L’Anthropologie* and leader of the French anthropological school from the 1930s on, reviewed the study rather favorably.<sup>493</sup> Vallois concluded his review by commenting that Koumaris’s findings—specifically the absence of the epicanthal fold—

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<sup>491</sup> Koumaris, “Τα Ψευδομογγολοειδή Χαρακτηριστικά στην Ελληνική Φυλή [Pseudomongoloid Traits in the Greek Race],” 70.

<sup>492</sup> On the role of Turkish serologists in promoting as real Turks those populations whose race index classified them closer to Europeans, see Burton and Lefkadiou (forthcoming).

<sup>493</sup> Henri V. Vallois, “Les traits pseudo-mongoloïdes (dits mongoliques) de la race grecque,” *L’Anthropologie* (1949): 538–39.

were not surprising, since even the Turks of the interior of Anatolia do not carry it and should be anthropologically considered more related to Europe than to Asia. In any case, what comes across powerfully is the entanglement of anthropological methods, from anthropometry to somatoscopy and blood group research, to substantiate the Greek national narrative under the watchful eye of international scientific allies.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

The engagement of Greek physicians with racial blood group research remained rather limited, even if the relatively simple techniques and the usefulness of blood testing for other medical purposes allowed researchers unfamiliar with anthropological methods and debates to make a passing appearance in the field. Koumaris's central role in HAS, along with his international connections (which he never failed to mention), made him both a central contributor of serological papers and the ultimate commentator and evaluator of all such studies produced in Greece.<sup>494</sup> This becomes evident in the efforts of other Greek physicians to address Koumaris's main matters of concern, i.e., the contentious relationship between blood groups and morphological racial characteristics, and the uniformity of blood group frequencies within the country.

Koumaris and the other Greek serologists explained away what they often called minor discrepancies—a remarkable characterization given that minuscule differences in anthropometric measurements were sufficient for discriminating between races and racial types—by constantly appealing to the need for more statistical data. In the case of the refugees, the small differences in blood distributions were made into similarities instead of divergences as Greek serologists allowed their data to coincide with the pragmatic need for

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<sup>494</sup> Trubeta comments on the debate around the assumed mongoloid characteristics of people with anemia and Koumaris's reaction as characteristic of his dominant role in HAS. She further argues that his unquestioned authority, at least until the end of WWII, was evident in other members' efforts to conform to his views and interests. See Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 110–15.

the refugee's social and national integration. Through this story, we see how domestic nationalist aspirations have aligned with anthropological concerns negotiated within international scientific circles, even between competing German- and French-speaking anthropological milieus. Koumaris used the scientific space opened up by the establishment of scientific societies and conferences, as well as the movements of instruments, data, and publications, to claim authority for his own research and position anthropology in the service of the nation. This was his constant concern from his first engagement with anthropometric skull measurements to the period of serology. At this same time, he appropriated this national and transnational space to push back against paternalistic attitudes coming from unequal power relations with actors in Central European institutions.

Serological studies, however, did not achieve the prestige that Koumaris's German colleagues had envisioned—neither in Greece nor in Germany.<sup>495</sup> As other historians of science have noted, despite the inextricable bonds between blood and soil in racial discourses, seroanthropology remained marginal even in Nazi Germany.<sup>496</sup> While, as historian Jenny Bangham argues “blood groups offered a newly scientific way of articulating human difference” in the face of growing racial nationalisms, blood typing could not address racial classification on the level of the individual, and thus was difficult to implement as part of Nazi racial policies.<sup>497</sup> At the same time, although it allowed for

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<sup>495</sup> Boaz suggests that unlike the Greek case, *volkisch* researchers in Germany lost faith in serology because it yielded not only unpredictable but also undesirable results that showed extensive blood mixtures. See *In Search of “Aryan Blood”*, 226.

<sup>496</sup> See Mazumdar, “Blood and Soil”; Boaz, *In Search of “Aryan Blood”*, 225–241; and Amir Teicher, *Social Mendelism: Genetics and the Politics of Race in Germany, 1900–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020): 79–86.

<sup>497</sup> Jenny Bangham, *Blood Relations: Transfusion and the Making of Human Genetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 37. Sheila Faith Weiss describes a research project initiated at KIW-G in 1943 that aimed to investigate serum proteins that would result in the most reliable



the reconstruction of long evolutionary histories, it was limited to studying living individuals. Given the importance of establishing continuity between ancient and modern Greeks, this may have undermined Koumaris's vision of promoting anthropology as an objective national science.

International scientific debates and border crossings of all kinds of anthropological data allowed Koumaris both to critically engage with this new kind of blood research and to still opt for methodological pluralism. Therefore, blood group research did not replace morphological observations but remained available in a repertoire of methods for diagnosing and protecting racial purity, even if now defined as a relative quality. These same methods ensured that anthropology could confidently support the homogeneity and distinctiveness of the Greek race. The large refugee population, originally perceived as a threat to the boundaries of the national body, became an opportunity for redrawing its borders and demarcating its limits from neighboring populations. The transnational mobilities of people, turned into diverse anthropological data, seemed to challenge established boundaries (be they disciplinary or national), as well as to cement them.

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serological racial diagnostic test. The two leaders of the project were Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer—Eugen Fischer's successor at Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics, and Eugenics, who had earlier worked with blood groups in relation to paternity cases—and the notorious Josef Mengele (1911–1979). More than two hundred inmates from Auschwitz served as the research subjects. See Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis: Human Genetics and Politics in the Third Reich* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010): 112–13.

## 4. Heredity Mobilized: From Mendelism to Eugenics in the Name of the Greek Race

### I. Introduction: When Anthropology Met Mendelism

For as you began, so shall you remain,

And though need

And nurture leave their mark,

It all depends on birth,

On the ray of light

The newborn meets<sup>498</sup>

John Koumaris, a passionate admirer of German Romanticism, chose to open his first and only publication on Mendelism in 1937 with verses from Friedrich Hölderlin's (1770–1843) verses. The lyric poet, known as “the most German of Germans,”<sup>499</sup> was among the Romantics who glorified ancient Greece through the Hellenic ideal while at the same time presenting Greece as inherently double and divided, rooted as much in the orient as in

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<sup>498</sup> John Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” *Η Βραδυνή* [Evening], March 10, 1937, 1. The verses quoted in Koumaris's article come from Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hymns and Fragments*, trans. and ed. Richard Sieburth (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984): 71. Koumaris translated the poem into Greek choosing slightly different wording than Sieburth's now-canonical translation. Here, I provide a translation closer to Koumaris's, which does less justice to the original poem but better conveys the intentions of the Greek anthropologist, not least by substituting the word “need” with “misery”: *For as you began, so shall you remain / And though misery may leave a mark / And nurture, the most important / Is done by birth / And the ray of light / That falls on the newborn*. Hereditary science and eugenics enthusiasts, as we will see in this chapter, attempted to remove degenerative factors by controlling marriage and childbearing, and therefore to lift the hereditary burden from society and put individuals deemed “unfortunate” out of their misery.

<sup>499</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, “Breathing in Verse,” *London Review of Books*, September 23, 2004, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v26/n18/theodore-ziolkowski/breathing-in-verse>.

classical Athens.<sup>500</sup> Koumaris did not comment on this poetic choice; instead, he continued emphatically: “Mendelism’ is a word that means nothing and is unknown to the broader public, but is of foremost importance for the science of biology. . . . It is almost identical with the concept of ‘heredity.’”<sup>501</sup> His aim was to fill this gap with a six-part lesson entitled “Mendelism and Humanity,” published in the column “Popular University,” which appeared in the conservative, anti-communist and nationalist newspaper *Evening* (fig. 4.1).<sup>502</sup>

Most university professors of the time, especially the ones working with medicine and public and mental health issues, wrote for this column. Koumaris contributed several articles from the mid-1930s on. As he noted in a footnote to his article on Mendelism, this was almost “a chapter from an unpublished monograph.”<sup>503</sup> This book was never published, but his production of popular writings increased exponentially. In his autobiography, Koumaris described his writings for the popular press and encyclopedias as “scattered leaves,” which “constitute real ‘book chapters’” even if he never managed to write “the book.”<sup>504</sup> Despite the bitterness hidden behind these words, Koumaris was indeed engaged in communicating science with broader publics. For this he “considered the use of serious popular press as invaluable and took advantage of every opportunity to

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<sup>500</sup> Vassilis Lambropoulos, *The Rise of Eurocentrism: Anatomy of Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993): 162–89.

<sup>501</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότης [Mendelism and Humanity],” 1.

<sup>502</sup> Despoina Papadimitriou, s.v. “*Η Βραδυνή* [Evening],” in *Εγκυκλοπαίδεια του Ελληνικού Τύπου 1784–1974* [Encyclopedia of the Greek Press 1784–1974], eds. Loukia Droulia and Gioula Koutsopanagou (Athens: Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών [National Hellenic Research Foundation], 2008), 393–95.

<sup>503</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότης [Mendelism and Humanity],”, 1.

<sup>504</sup> John Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years] (Athens: self-pub., 1951): 8.

disseminate as much as possible the societal goals of science.”<sup>505</sup> His choice was pragmatic and visionary. Anthropology, especially physical anthropology, was a rather marginal research field within the university; therefore, such public dissemination attempts could garner it support. At the same time, Koumaris seemed genuinely convinced of anthropology’s social and political importance, even though he repeatedly criticized any associations between science and politics. Connecting anthropology with heredity and practical applications—notably through eugenic measures—for the betterment of society was a way out of a narrow niche and toward the holistic vision that Koumaris had promoted since the early 1920s.



Fig. 4.1: Front page of newspaper *Evening* with the “Popular University” column, and Koumaris’s lesson on Mendelism to the right, source: Library of the Hellenic Parliament.

<sup>505</sup> Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 34.

In Greece, as in other Central and Southeast European countries with relatively recently established national borders, Koumaris was not alone in trying to connect new scientific understandings of heredity with social hygiene, public health measures, and eventually eugenics. Discussions on population regulation and quality—especially in relation to bodily and mental degeneration—that started in the beginning of the twentieth century intensified after the end of World War I, not least because of the refugee situation described in Chapter 3. This public debate is evident in numerous publications in the scholarly and popular press, parliamentary and public discussions, and the establishment of multifarious health-care and educational institutions. The rather uniform legislation and social policies adopted by successive liberal and authoritarian Greek governments showcase how efforts toward national rejuvenation intersected with arguments for the rational management of social and individual bodies. The protagonists of these events were medical doctors, educators, jurists, psychologists, psychiatrists, politicians, and other intellectuals educated abroad who carried with them rich influences ranging from the French emphasis on puericulture and environmental impact to hardcore racial hygiene and biological perspectives. Even if negative eugenic measures were never adopted in Greece, recent studies have revealed that eugenic thinking flourished exactly at the moment when expert knowledge mattered for building the modern Greek national state, instituting welfare policies, and cultivating a national eugenic consciousness.<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> The history of eugenics in Greece has only recently attracted the attention of historians. Vassiliki Theodorou and Despina Karakatsani examine the eugenic arguments and practices of pediatricians and other medical professionals involved with social and public policies, with an emphasis on the welfare of children and mothers. See, for example, “Eugenic Concerns, Population Policies and Puericulture in Interwar Greece,” *The Historical Review / La Revue Historique* XVII (2020): 53–90; and, by the same authors, “Eugenics and ‘Puericulture’: Medical Attempts to Improve the ‘Biological Capital’ in Interwar Greece,” in *Health, Hygiene and Eugenics in Southeastern Europe to 1945*, eds. Christian Promitzer, Sevasti Trubeta, and Marius Turda (New York: Central European University Press, 2011), 299–323. The edited volume *Φυλετικές Θεωρίες στην Ελλάδα* [Racial Theories in Greece] includes several comprehensive studies of eugenics in Greece, which showcase the multiplicity of discourses, actors, and institutions involved in these debates. The relationship

As we have seen in Chapter 3, Koumaris and others involved in serological examinations attempted a turn toward combining racial anthropology with genetics and medicine through blood group research. In this chapter we will examine the multifold connections between hereditary thinking, eugenics, and race as they crisscrossed within an anthropological framework and in correspondence with the wider Greek and international context. From the first meeting of the Hellenic Anthropological Society (HAS) in 1925 to Koumaris's 1937 newspaper article on Mendelism and eugenics, the following three sections explore the pluralism and idiosyncrasies of heredity thinking and eugenic styles among several actors who participated in anthropological discussions during the interwar period. Mobilizing hereditary knowledge for the benefit of society led a number of these actors, including Koumaris, to suggest eugenic measures as the long-term solution to social ailments. A close reading of Koumaris's public lecture, in section four, reveals the symbiotic relationship between Mendelism and eugenics, as hereditary studies became the necessary background for applying eugenics as a science of rational social engineering. The Greek anthropologist presented a full-fledged eugenics program, which, even if it never materialized, took inspiration from—and vaguely criticized—applications of eugenics internationally. By the end of the chapter, we will discuss how Koumaris brought together all these different strands of thinking in his theoretical essays to eventually construct a theory of the Greek race, and suggest measures to protect it.

## **II. A Non-Mendelian Beginning**

The first-ever meeting of HAS on May 11, 1925 opened with two lectures. Koumaris presented results from his anthropometric research and Stavros Zurukzoglou (1896–1966),

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between eugenic ideas and the concept of race in Greece, with an emphasis on the juxtaposition between French-inspired puericulture and racial hygiene, is the main theme in Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 145–286.

a new member of the Society with strong international academic credentials, followed with an introductory lecture on eugenics (fig. 4.2).<sup>507</sup> Originally from the city of Izmir (Smyrna) in Asia Minor, Zurukzoglou studied medicine in Berlin, Geneva, and Bern, where he received his doctoral degree in 1921.<sup>508</sup> He continued his studies on bacteriology and hygiene in Munich, where he worked with professors Max von Gruber (1853–1927) and Ignaz Kaup (1870–1944). Munich had long been the epicenter of racial hygiene in Germany, and Bavaria would soon become the stronghold of the Nazi movement. Within this nationalist-conservative and eugenics-dominated (albeit tension-ridden) academic environment, Zurukzoglou developed his own eugenic outlook, as well as a strong understanding of diverse hereditary theories and the ensuing conflicts around the role of natural selection and the environment.

Indeed, one of Zurukzoglou’s mentors, the Austrian Gruber, director of Munich’s Institute of Hygiene since 1902, who also supported Pan-Germanist manifestos for the

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<sup>507</sup> Stavros Zurukzoglou, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1925* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1925] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1925), 14–43. Trubeta notes that Zurukzoglou mainly used the term “eugenics” in his Greek lecture, while the term “racial hygiene” barely appeared, unlike in his publications in German; see “Η Φυλετική Υγιεινή στην Ιατρική Σχολή τον Μεσοπόλεμο [Racial Hygiene at the School of Medicine in the Interwar Period],” in *Φυλετικές Θεωρίες στην Ελλάδα* [Racial Theories in Greece], 117. However, here I agree with other researchers who emphasize that despite the differences in eugenic strands between the German model initiated by Alfred Ploetz (1860–1940), which has national and racial ideas at its core, and the Galtonian model with its greater focus on social policies and reform, the terminological distinction is not important. The term “eugenics” was in any case Greek and was later adopted in Anglophone countries, whereas in German-speaking territories and Scandinavia “racial hygiene” was common, while both ideas and practices overlapped. On this point, see for example Kyllingstad, *Measuring the Master Race*, 91. Throughout these chapters, I employ these terms interchangeably, unless the historical actors in question insist on a specific distinction.

<sup>508</sup> On Zurukzoglou’s biography, see Trubeta, “Η Φυλετική Υγιεινή στην Ιατρική Σχολή [Racial Hygiene at the School of Medicine],” 113–27; and, by the same author, *Physical Anthropology*, 246–58.

annexation of new territories through war, was a fervent supporter of racial hygiene.<sup>509</sup> Together with the psychiatrist Ernst Rüdin, whose later work weaved together Mendelism and eugenics in the service of the Nazi regime,<sup>510</sup> Gruber led the Munich branch of The German Society for Race Hygiene (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene), founded in 1905. Rüdin served as the section's business manager, while Gruber chaired it until his death. The two men were ardent advocates of racial-hygiene propaganda and thus became involved in developing the concept and contents of a special exhibit on reproduction, heredity, and eugenics at the First International Hygiene Exposition in Dresden in 1911.<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>509</sup> The limited historical information on Gruber comes from Mathias Schütz, "After Pettenkofer. Munich's Institute of Hygiene and the Long Shadow of National Socialism, 1894–1974," *International Journal of Medical Microbiology* 310, no. 5 (2020): 151434; Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 150–1, 172; Faith Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 41.

<sup>510</sup> On Rüdin's role in bringing together psychiatry, Mendelism, and racial hygiene, see Teicher, *Social Mendelism*, 63–73.

<sup>511</sup> The First International Hygiene Exposition, held from May to October 1911 in Dresden, was a watershed moment in terms of novel efforts to popularize knowledge of the human body and health care. It attracted a record number of more than five million visitors and its unprecedented success paved the way for establishing Deutsches Hygiene-Museum a year later. For an early discussion on health museums and expositions, read Bruno Gebhard, "The Changing Ideology of Health Museums and Health Fairs since 1850," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 33, no. 2 (March–April 1959): 160–67. An illustrated exhibition catalogue of the race-hygiene section edited by Gruber and Rüdin, with the support of the race-hygiene exhibition group consisting of leading eugenicists from Germany, the US, Scandinavia, Great Britain, Switzerland, France, Italy, and elsewhere, provided detailed explanations of the numerous tables and panels on display. As the two authors wrote in their introduction, they hoped this catalogue would offer a first look at the current state of knowledge in this area. Indeed, the book includes an exhaustive number of illustrations and state-of-the-art eugenic knowledge seamlessly combining ideas and practices from animal husbandry with human reproductive regulation, a staple of contemporary eugenic thought. See Gruber and Rüdin, *Fortpflanzung, Vererbung, Rassenhygiene: Illustrierter Führer durch die Gruppe Rassenhygiene der internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung 1911 in Dresden* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1911).



Zurukzoglu's second mentor in Munich, the Austrian Ignaz Kaup, was an equally early enthusiast of racial hygiene. Kaup's eugenic writings attracted the attention of Gruber, who made him an extraordinary professor of social hygiene.<sup>512</sup> While Kaup's views echoed international eugenic demands for state intervention to protect the nation from the burden of "inferior" elements, he was critical of racial hygiene programs solely inspired by natural selection and Mendelism. His own position was closer to Lamarckian views of heredity, which emphasized economic approaches for the betterment of social and environmental conditions. Kaup ended up in bitter debates with other prominent racial hygienists such as Fritz Lenz, whom Gruber made a full professor of racial hygiene in 1923, leading to a falling-out between the two erstwhile collaborators.



Fig. 4.2: Stavros Zurukzoglu (or Tsourouksoglou), second from left, unknown date and photographer, source: <https://www.facebook.com/tsourouksoglou>, used with permission.

<sup>512</sup> On Kaup's involvement in the race-hygiene movement in Germany, and the controversies surrounding his professional ambitions, see Schütz, "After Pettenkofer," 151434; Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, 336; and Sheila Faith Weiss, "The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904–1945," in *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, ed. Mark B. Adams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11–29.

It was during his 1924–1925 research stay in Athens—a period devoted to the study of hygiene among people in the Mediterranean—that Zurukzoglu finished writing his German book on issues related to racial hygiene and civilization.<sup>513</sup> The core ideas presented at the HAS meeting came from this monograph, which Zurukzoglu closed by exclaiming, “Nothing prevents us, not even fate, from trying what is humanly possible. The work will succeed only if the need for a racial hygiene policy is deeply felt.”<sup>514</sup>

Promoting eugenics as necessary work for all modern and civilized nations was the connecting theme in Zurukzoglu’s presentation at HAS. From the beginning of his talk, he placed eugenics, which he also called “hygiene of the nations,”<sup>515</sup> at the epicenter of scientific discussions in those countries producing the most innovative research. Eugenics, with its primary aim being the flourishing and preservation of nations, was the antidote to the losses of war. “The need to apply the demands of eugenics has been felt by those countries which are still bleeding from the war and struggling for their survival,” he added.<sup>516</sup> “Unfortunately, in Greece, which has been suffering from the disasters of war more than any other state,” Zurukzoglu lamented, “the hygienic effort is limited to mainly fighting epidemics.”<sup>517</sup> Therefore, and given the general interest of his audience and Greek politicians in broader issues related to hygiene, he first sought to clarify the relationship between “**individual hygiene**, which protected and promoted any individual regardless of

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<sup>513</sup> Stavros Zurukzoglu, *Biologische Probleme der Rassenhygiene und der Kulturvölker* (Munich: J. F. Bergmann, 1925). Zurukzoglu contributed a number of articles on eugenics to the popular medical press, where he developed further some possibilities for introducing eugenic measures. See Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 249–54.

<sup>514</sup> Zurukzoglu, *Biologische Probleme*, 174.

<sup>515</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 14.

<sup>516</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 14.

<sup>517</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 14.

their worth from a biological or cultural perspective, and **eugenics**.<sup>518</sup> The latter he identified as the branch of hygiene

which, taking under consideration the whole, either a nation or the whole of humanity, seeks that those who will be preserved and reproduce will be, if not solely but mostly, the ones who have true biological and cultural value.<sup>519</sup>

This distinction between the two branches of hygiene lay at the core of Zurukzoglu's program. His aim was to show that individual hygiene and eugenics were at odds only under the influence of a rigid Darwinian view. When emancipated by absolute selectionist assumptions, the two could complement and strengthen each other both institutionally and as research and political projects.<sup>520</sup>

Zurukzoglu's views of the relationship between health and the external environment are crucial for understanding how he perceived both the interaction between individual hygiene and eugenics, and the internal debates within the eugenics movement. With the external environment on one side of the spectrum and heredity on the other,

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<sup>518</sup> Zurukzoglu, "Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics]," 15, emphasis in the original.

<sup>519</sup> Zurukzoglu, "Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics]," 15.

<sup>520</sup> This point echoes the debates on the role of natural selection and the environment in human evolution and heredity, which by the beginning of the twentieth century had taken the form of a dichotomy between neo-Darwinism and neo-Lamarckism. The first, also known as ultra-Darwinism, became particularly popular among German-speaking anthropologists under the influence of August Weismann's work, which in its most basic form promoted natural selection as the only explanatory principle in evolution and rejected the concept of heredity of acquired characteristics. For a nuanced discussion of the intricacies of this scheme, see Jean Gayon, "Natural Selection, Regression, and Heredity in Darwinian and Post-Darwinian Evolutionary Theory," in *Heredity Explored: Between Public Domain and Experimental Science, 1850–1930*, eds. Staffan Müller-Wille and Christina Brandt (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 174–83; and Veronika Lipphardt, "The Emancipatory Power of Heredity: Anthropological Discourse and Jewish Integration in Germany, 1892–1935," in *Heredity Explored*, 116–19.

Zurukzoglu identified individual hygiene as “**hygiene of the environment,**” having as its aim to improve all those external physicochemical and social conditions that may affect the lives of individuals.<sup>521</sup> While his views about the influence of the external environment, especially on health, were rather complicated, he initially positioned eugenics toward the other side of the spectrum by calling it “**hygiene of heredity.**”<sup>522</sup> In this sense, Zurukzoglu understood eugenics as inseparable from hereditary considerations. He wrote:

Eugenics rests on knowledge that the external environmental conditions are not the only factor that determines health, but many health disorders derive from biologically negative, hereditary predispositions, i.e. from heredity which is incurable, and therefore tries in diverse ways to hinder the reproduction of hereditarily undesirable elements, as a counter balance to the protection they enjoy through individual hygiene, and on the other hand [eugenics] tries to support the bodily and mentally able with the ultimate aim to preserve the nation, humanity and civilization.<sup>523</sup>

Echoing international eugenics discourse, Zurukzoglu subsumed under the valuable hereditary mental and physical qualities the capacity to produce culture—and thus emphasized the need to protect and promote gifted individuals. However, he quickly distanced himself from theorists who championed a direct link between eugenics and the evolution of humanity based on the theory of evolution by natural selection. For Zurukzoglu, Darwinism exerted such a strong and powerful influence on eugenic thinking because it stood by the cradle of eugenics when it was born. In that period, general hygiene

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<sup>521</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 16, emphasis in the original.

<sup>522</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 17, emphasis in the original.

<sup>523</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 16.

was merely developing and therefore became an easy target for those who saw it as antagonistic to the struggle for survival.

Zurukzoglu mapped the debate between neo-Darwinians and neo-Lamarckians onto eugenics. He identified and juxtaposed two currents within the international eugenics movement, one that stressed the Darwinian origins of eugenic thinking and the other, closer to neo-Lamarckian perceptions that emphasized the influence of the environment—parental, familial, or social—on hereditary factors. This trademark thesis becomes clear in his attempt to historicize eugenics as a science. Indeed, he chose to place the birth of eugenics at the end of the nineteenth century, balancing between the selectionist Galton and his alleged environmentalist opponent, the Swiss botanist Alphonse de Candolle (1806–1893).<sup>524</sup> This double origin corresponded to two branches of eugenics. The Darwinian eugenicists who followed “the selectionist current” asserted that “the main driver of the evolution of organisms is natural selection, and so also artificial selection, and suggested that through the latter they could fight back against degeneration.”<sup>525</sup> Their aim, Zurukzoglu suggested, was the evolution of humanity toward a perfected being, much like what Nietzsche called an “**Übermensch**.”<sup>526</sup> The second eugenic strand, which he dubbed “the prophylactic current,” sought to emancipate eugenics from the grip of Darwinism,

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<sup>524</sup> In 1873, Candolle published his *Histoire des sciences et des savants depuis deux siècles: suivie d'autres études sur des sujets scientifiques, en particulier sur la sélection dans l'espèce humaine* (Genève: Georg, 1873) as a response to Galton's *Hereditary Genius*. Candolle claimed a much more important role for environmental conditions in the development of higher intellect and social positioning. Galton responded a year later in his *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1874). Candolle's criticism pushed Galton to acknowledge the difficulty of separating the effects of external conditions versus innate capacities in this early iteration of the nature/nurture debate. See Raymond E. Fancer, “Alphonse de Candolle, Francis Galton, and the Early History of the Nature-Nurture Controversy,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 19, no. 4 (October 1983): 341–52.

<sup>525</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 19.

<sup>526</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 19, emphasis in the original.

with Ignaz Kaup and the cell biologist Oscar Hertwig (1849–1922) as its main proponents.<sup>527</sup> Zurukzoglu agreed with Kaup’s critique of selectionist racial hygiene in the style of Fritz Lenz. They both considered it unrealistic and impossible to achieve. As the Greek eugenicist commented, they were still far from being able to “identify which mutations were hereditary and have an overview of the laws of heredity.”<sup>528</sup>

Taking the ideas of his mentor Kaup as a starting point, and openly siding with views that promoted a social-hygienic eugenic approach, Zurukzoglu first set out to explore whether eugenics could contribute to further improvement of the human species. But when he asked himself if the theory of evolution and heredity had actually reached an agreement on the factors influencing human evolution, he was unsure. Neither the Lamarckian experiments on the inheritance of acquired characteristics, nor the Darwinian hypotheses that suggested humans were progressively evolving through the accumulation of positive mutations, as the negative ones seemed to be prevalent, offered convincing and stable grounds for the implementation of eugenics. Therefore, and based on the ensuing anthropological debates related to changes in human brain capacity, Zurukzoglu concluded:

**No matter how much we support evolution, we think that the human species is at a relatively stable stage for the moment. . . . Thus, eugenics should rule out the birth of any unsubstantiated hopes.**<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> Oscar Hertwig—once Ernst Haeckel’s favorite disciple—later turned into a fierce critic of mechanistic Darwinism and natural selection in favor of an organicist approach. For an earlier but comprehensive study of Hertwig’s work, see Paul Weindling, *Darwinism and Social Darwinism in Imperial Germany: The Contribution of the Cell Biologist Oscar Hertwig (1849–1922)* (Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer, 1991).

<sup>528</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 21.

<sup>529</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 26, emphasis in the original.

Despite this negative response on the prospects of eugenics contributing to the evolution of humanity, he still thought that degeneration and culture were the major issues that eugenic research and policies should focus on.

The phantom of degeneration had dominated eugenics narratives from the start and became even more urgently articulated during and after World War I. However, Zurukzoglu attempted a broader and more programmatic framing of degeneration that aimed at clearing the landscape around the term, its causes, and the means to fight against it. Thus, he began by clarifying that degeneration as **“any deviation of the organism from its normal type”** could be distinguished as either **“hereditary degeneration”** or **“degeneration of the environment”** of either a certain individual or the whole of humanity and nations.<sup>530</sup> The target of all eugenics currents was hereditary degeneration, but the introduction of the idea of a “normal type” is important because it connected anthropometry, which still endeavored to identify that type, with eugenics.

For Zurukzoglu, this was exactly a point of contestation with selectionist eugenicists, who in all their talk about a continuously evolving type, missed the benefit of establishing a stable point of reference for diagnosing degeneration. His rapprochement with neo-Lamarckian views, or at least ideas that considered environmental plasticity, however, becomes evident when referring to the causes of degeneration. Zurukzoglu moved quickly from what he called internal factors that might directly influence the reproductive cells, and about which little was known,<sup>531</sup> to the better-studied and more important external factors. The latter included everything from changing environmental

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<sup>530</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 26–27, emphasis in the original.

<sup>531</sup> Here he referenced among others the works of the Austrian-Hungarian eugenicist Geza von Hoffmann (1885–1921), who focused on connecting the American style of eugenics with its European (mainly German) counterparts, and the Munich Mendelian psychiatrist Oswald Bumke (1877–1950).

temperature to the effects of various chemical substances and drugs on reproductive cells, alcohol consumption, exposure to X-rays, toxins from the spirochete of syphilis and the malaria plasmodium, and malnutrition. Without justification of the biological mechanisms causing such effects, Zurukzoglou came to the final part of his account of degeneration, which was also at the core of the prophylactic current's argument.

Selectionists, Zurukzoglou believed, should not fear that unfit people would reproduce excessively. These degenerate individuals were already disadvantaged in their efforts to propagate either because of diminished fertility or medically induced infertility, or simply because they were physically and mentally undesirable as partners. The real problem, according to Zurukzoglou, was the continuous production of new degenerate individuals because the external factors that led to negative mutations remained uncontrolled. Here, Zurukzoglou, speaking as a representative of the prophylactic line of thought, was in agreement with the selectionists. The struggle for existence and natural selection alone were not a guarantee against degeneration. Therefore, he supported “the implementation of a kind of selection under the guidance of rationality and science.”<sup>532</sup> To this end, he also agreed with measures such as the physical isolation of degenerate individuals, changes in the penal code (especially regarding eugenically sanctioned abortions), and premarital consultation, provided that these were gradually implemented and only after educating the public.<sup>533</sup> Despite this momentary rapprochement with

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<sup>532</sup> Zurukzoglou, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 31.

<sup>533</sup> Zurukzoglou further discussed practical eugenic applications in his Greek popular writings. Such applications included isolation and even sterilization (albeit voluntary) of degenerate individuals, as well as voluntary abstinence from childbearing. However, after 1933, when the Nazi state passed legislation for the forced sterilization of sick and disabled individuals—including persons suffering from Huntington's chorea and others characterized as congenitally schizophrenic, feeble-minded, blind, deaf and mute, epileptic, and alcoholic—Zurukzoglou endorsed such extreme eugenic measures and his positions remained unchanged even after the war. See Trubeta, “Η Φυλετική



selectionist thinking, Zurukzoglu's preoccupations with improving the environmental conditions returned with added emphasis in his conclusion: **“the first step towards the application of eugenics may be achieved through the implementation of individual hygiene, and especially its most important branch social hygiene.”**<sup>534</sup> In a manner consistent with contemporary reformist hygienic movements around Europe, which responded to fears of depopulation following lowering birth rates from the end of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth, Zurukzoglu championed advancing both the quality and quantity of the overall population.<sup>535</sup>

Zurukzoglu fought the last battle against the selectionist current on the grounds of culture. For him, there was no doubt that mental qualities followed the same laws of heredity as physical qualities. But he took issue with the selectionist hypothesis that suggested that creative geniuses were exclusively born to gifted parents through new syntheses first subjected to positive mutations. Instead of relying on speculative changes, Zurukzoglu proposed that the centuries-old social practices of arranged marriages offered better evidence. He called the mechanism at work *admixture*, and explained:

**By this we mean the establishment of certain syntheses through marriage between individuals who do not only belong to the same class, but most often**

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Υγιεινή στην Ιατρική Σχολή [Racial Hygiene at the School of Medicine],” 121–23; and Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 253–55.

<sup>534</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 32–33, emphasis in the original.

<sup>535</sup> Marius Turda and Aaron Gillette write characteristically that by the end of the First International Eugenics Congress in 1912, “in spite of the diversity of eugenic ideas . . . all these authors had something in common: they aimed to contribute to their nation’s population growth, along with restoring its racial strength. They stressed the need to observe both the population’s eugenic *quality* and its numerical *quantity*.” See Gillette and Turda, *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 47.

to similar professions, and after their permanent union, a superior synthesis between two or more genealogical branches is achieved.<sup>536</sup>

If such social practices continued unhindered, the superior qualities of the parents would then be transmitted to their children and carried through future generations. However, Zurukzoglu introduced a new threat: “**the obliteration of certain admixed branches before they achieve the desired results.**”<sup>537</sup> This he attributed to contemporary social ideals and conditions that discouraged childbearing and thus called for natalist reforms, which he believed should support all social classes. On Zurukzoglu’s view, the selectionist obsession with higher classes was misplaced, since geniuses could also be found among the working class. In any case, the elites could never reproduce enough to guarantee the preservation of whole nations.

From there, Zurukzoglu moved on to attack yet another central argument of the German selectionist eugenic camp in particular: Nordicism. While generally referring to the supporters of Gobineau, whom in his German monograph he explicitly identified as Fritz Lenz and his followers, Zurukzoglu dismissed the doctrine of superiority of the blond race by invoking another authority, Rudolph Martin.<sup>538</sup> He developed this thesis further and agreed entirely with Martin’s conclusion that all judgments of characteristics and talents of different peoples were based on “superficial observations and more or less

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<sup>536</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 34–35, emphasis in the original.

<sup>537</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 35, emphasis in the original. He described this phenomenon using the Greek term ‘γενεοκτονία’ [*Geneoktonie*, in its German translation], which was a neologism meaning “the murder of a generation.”

<sup>538</sup> Zurukzoglu, *Biologische Probleme*, 126–27. Lenz responded to Zurukzoglu’s critique with an angry review of the book. See Trubeta, “Η Φυλετική Υγιεινή στην Ιατρική Σχολή [Racial Hygiene at the School of Medicine],” 120–21.

dogmatic and speculative considerations.”<sup>539</sup> He even quoted Lenz to show how the German racial hygienist contradicted himself when, on one hand, he wrote that there was no standard according to which races could be situated within a hierarchy, and, on the other, supported the core of Gobineau’s racial theories. Zurukzoglu argued that such views were oblivious to the achievements of great ancient civilizations, such as the Egyptians or Chinese, and adopted a Eurocentric criterion as a standard of civilization that hindered a deeper understanding of other cultures. Addressing his HAS audience, he focused more closely on Greek history and suggested that it was a good example of how of how keeping the nation’s population high might allow for regeneration and new geniuses to emerge when favorable conditions arose again. He added:

No statistical study is in a position to prove the higher creativity of the blonde race. Besides that, history teaches us that at least all great races have created superior civilizations, depending on their material environment and there is none that can predict what the contemporary primitive races may achieve.<sup>540</sup>

Zurukzoglu was correct in asserting that this was a crucial point for his Greek audience. Throughout these chapters, we have repeatedly seen how Greek intellectuals tried to counter as Nordicist assumptions that the decline and fall of ancient Greece was the result of the disappearance of the blond race and its substitution by a mixed population from the surrounding regions. Zurukzoglu’s research did not reveal any significant differences in the presence of the blond race between Greece and the core contemporary cultural European areas of South Germany, Central France, and Italy.

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<sup>539</sup> Zurukzoglu, *Biologische Probleme*, 126.

<sup>540</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 38.

Zurukzoglu finished the presentation without ever referring to the work of Mendel. However, his lecture is an eloquent illustration of how even as late as the 1920s, and at least in fields other than biology, it was possible to combine both “hard” and “soft” heredity views. He was simultaneously critical of neo-Darwinians’ insistence on natural selection as the overriding force of human evolution, as well as of the core element of Lamarckian thinking, i.e., the inheritance of acquired characteristics. The latter was immediately picked up in the discussion that followed his presentation, as well as in an otherwise positive review of his German monograph.<sup>541</sup> It is likely that his Greek colleagues would have endorsed an even stronger neo-Lamarckian framework. Georgios Sklavounos, the physician and professor of anatomy, invited Zurukzoglu to explicitly distance himself from Weismann’s theory of the germ plasm—in short, the idea that all hereditary information for the formation of a new organism was already found in a substance called “germ plasm”—as well as to remain open to the possibility of acquired characteristics being inherited.<sup>542</sup> While Zurukzoglu maintained a cordial relationship with his Greek colleagues, and even presented via correspondence newer research on hereditary finger deformations, his involvement with Greek academia was scant.<sup>543</sup> He soon returned to

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<sup>541</sup> For further details on the reception of Zurukzoglu’s approach, especially outside HAS, see Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 249–50.

<sup>542</sup> Zurukzoglu, “Περί Ευγονίας [On Eugenics],” 40–43. The reference includes Sklavounos’s comments. It is true, however, that several contemporaries, as well as later scholars, have adopted a simplistic presentation of Weismann’s theory. Rasmus Winther shows that Weismann held a much more complex view on the role of external conditions during development and how they might affect the germ plasm, which was often self-contradictory and characteristic of late-nineteenth-century speculative hereditary thinking. See Rasmus G. Winther, “August Weismann on Germ-Plasm Variation,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 34, no. 3 (2001): 517–55.

<sup>543</sup> While in Bern, Zurukzoglu conducted research on the phenomenon of *clinodactyly*, or the phenomenon of having an unusually bent or curved little finger, which was considered an inherited condition. He opened his paper with a reminder of the importance of heredity research on the physical and mental abilities of humans for its practical scientific applications, on which he did not elaborate but could be connected to the assumed relationship with Down Syndrome. He closed the paper by confirming that this was certainly a case of a dominant Mendelian trait, even

Switzerland, where he took up duties as state advisor on alcohol consumption. Nevertheless, as we will see in the rest of this chapter, similar ideas had already found fertile soil among like-minded members of HAS. Even Koumaris, though closer to a neo-Darwinian style of heredity thinking and eugenics, endorsed several of Zurukzoglu's ideas in his 1937 article and beyond.

### III. Heredity and Eugenics in Growth Studies and Criminal Psychology

In Greece as elsewhere, the repercussions of demographic changes, several decades of war, and changing ways of life in the big urban centers turned heredity and eugenic hopes of social control into ever-present themes of public discussion in the interwar periods. This section discusses the contributions of two members of HAS who came from different academic backgrounds who maintained a consistent presence in the Greek anthropological society, which they also served as council members: the physician and health administrator Emmanouel Lambadarios (1885–1943) and the prominent psychologist Georgios Sakellariou (1888–1964). Both were educated within academic environments enmeshed in these controversies in Greece, as well as internationally.

In 1928, Lambadarios (fig. 4.3) contributed a new perspective on issues related to heredity and eugenics by examining Greek schoolchildren's somatic growth and development.<sup>544</sup> Thus his lecture introduced the members of HAS to anthropological

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if his results did not coincide exactly with the predicted percentages based on Mendel's laws. See Stavros Zurukzoglu, "Περί Τινός Κληρονομικής Παραμορφώσεως του Μικρού Δακτύλου (Κλινοδοακτυλία) [On the Possible Hereditary Deformation of the Little Finger (Clinodactyly)]," in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1929* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1929] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1929): 80–84.

<sup>544</sup> Emmanouel Lambadarios, "Η Σωματική Ανάπτυξις του Έλληνοσ Μαθητού (Ανθρωπολογική Αυξολογία) [The Physical Evolution of the Greek Student (Anthropological Auxology)]" in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1928* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year

*auxology*—the study of growth—a field that since the nineteenth century had been entwined with the rise of public-health and child-welfare movements.<sup>545</sup> Lambadarios identified the “study of the physical and intellectual growth of children” as one of the most important pillars of school hygiene.”<sup>546</sup> He extended the origins of such research to the early ideas of the philosophers, political reformers, and pedagogues John Amos Comenius, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi.<sup>547</sup> However, his project was different from a theoretical one, and inspired by the possibilities of application emerging from new quantification methods within psychology, anthropometry, and education. As Lambadarios had written earlier, experimental research using instruments that measured child physiology and psychology in laboratories, including well-known anthropological indices and instruments such as the cephalic index and the diverse calipers, intelligence, and other psychometric tests (and, to a lesser degree, subjective qualitative methods), formed the toolkit of growth studies.<sup>548</sup>

The work presented at HAS was based on the measurement of more than three thousand Greek children from a variety of schools, social classes, and geographical areas over a period of eight years. Lambadarios’s intellectual borrowings are evident in his

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1928] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1928): 19–39.

<sup>545</sup> To this day, the landmark publication on the study of the physiology of human growth is by James M. Tanner, *A History of the Study of Human Growth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>546</sup> Lambadarios “Η Σωματική Ανάπτυξις του Έλληρος Μαθητού [The Physical Evolution of the Greek Student],” 19.

<sup>547</sup> Lambadarios “Η Σωματική Ανάπτυξις του Έλληρος Μαθητού [The Physical Evolution of the Greek Student],” 19.

<sup>548</sup> Emmanuel Lambadarios, “Αι Παιδολογικαί Επιστήμαι και η Σημερινή Αυτών Αποψις [The Pedological Sciences and Their Perspective Today],” *Παιδολογία* [Pedology] 1 (1920): 3–14: 11.

reliance on the classifications and anthropometric techniques of Belgian mathematician Adolphe Quetelet (1796–1874), German psychologist and experimental pedagogue Ernst Meumann (1862–1915), and last but probably most influential for his expertise on child anthropometry, French army doctor Paul Godin (1860–1935), collaborator of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva. The interest in the works of all these individuals from the late nineteenth century was not simply related to degeneration concerns, which loomed large especially after WWI, but also to a growing trust in precise measurement for the purposes of population management.<sup>549</sup> Lambadarios, like most of his physician contemporaries who worked with children, subscribed to both tendencies. Therefore, before analyzing his contribution to HAS in more detail, it will be useful to consider his background and activity within Greek academic and political circles.

Lambadarios was educated at the School of Medicine in Athens, and after receiving his doctorate in pediatrics in 1904, he continued his studies in France, Switzerland, and Germany with a special focus on *pedology*, the study of children’s development and behavior. Upon his return to Greece, he was already a fervent advocate of school hygiene and became one of the first school doctors, and in 1914 was appointed Head of the Office of School Hygiene at the Ministry of Education.<sup>550</sup> Along with professor of hygiene and microbiology Constantinos Savvas, in whose laboratory he had worked as an assistant,

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<sup>549</sup> For the internationally growing interest in measurement and quantitative research from the end of the nineteenth century, see Elise Smith, “‘Why Do we Measure Mankind?’ Marketing Anthropometry in late-Victorian Britain,” *History of Science* 58, no. 2 (2020): 142–65. Classic treatments of this topic can be found in Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Theodore M. Porter, *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>550</sup> For biographical information on Lambadarios, see Aristotelis P. Kouzis, *Εκατονταετηρίς 1837–1937: Εθνικόν και Καποδιστριακόν Πανεπιστήμιον Αθηνών Γ’ Ιστορία της Ιατρικής Σχολής* [Centennial 1837–1937: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens C History of the School of Medicine] (Athens: Pyrsos, 1939): 68; Theodorou and Karakatsani, “Eugenic Concerns,” 67–68.

Lambadarios was a leading intellectual behind several reforms in the Greek public health-care and hygiene system.<sup>551</sup> The two men were also founding members of HAS, and were as responsible for pedology and racial hygiene and eugenics in its bylaws.<sup>552</sup> When Lambadarios appeared before the members of HAS, he was already a highly respected researcher and administrator. Since the early 1910s, he had argued tirelessly for the development of pedology studies similar to other European countries and the US through the application of specific techniques that measured and analyzed the physical, intellectual, and ethical condition and development of children.<sup>553</sup> He was active in the Greek pedology movement and, together with other prominent physicians, psychologists, and educators, founded the Hellenic Pedological Society and its journal, *Pedology*, in 1920.

Through this activity, Lambadarios was central in drafting a memorandum for the establishment of the Ministry of Hygiene and Social Welfare, which stated:

The need for a most intense and deliberate State intervention for the benefit of the Nation though the regulation of Public Health and Social Welfare has become extremely imperative at the onset of the deep social crisis generated by the world war.

Especially for Greece, the dilemma is clear: we will either prove worthy of the miracle in our foreign policy, which has led to Greece quadrupling in size, and thus reorganize internally to preserve and strengthen the Greek blood by adopting the

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<sup>551</sup> On the relationship between Savvas and Lambadarios and their contributions to social hygiene reforms in Greece, see Theodorou and Karakatsani, “Eugenics and ‘Puericulture,’” 302–03.

<sup>552</sup> *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1924* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1924] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1924): 31.

<sup>553</sup> Lambadarios, “Αι Παιδολογικάί Επιστήμαι [The Pedological Sciences],” 5.



most essential measures of Health and Welfare, or we will let Greeks be plagued and degenerate by malaria, tuberculosis, infectious diseases, food deprivation and social injustice, infants dying of preventable diseases and children in general physically and ethically unprotected, so that the vast freed Greek lands will contribute minimally to the achievement of the aim of our race, the creation again (for the third time) of a new Greek civilization.<sup>554</sup>

This draft became a law of the Greek state in 1922 after a period of controversy and suspicion on the part of medical professionals, who were mainly reacting to a possible bureaucratization of their profession.<sup>555</sup> The instability that followed the Greek army's defeat in Asia Minor did not allow the envisioned changes to be implemented. However, it is an important moment that brings together hygiene, degeneration, and racial anxiety as a backdrop for several health conditions, which were deemed hereditary.

Indeed, the pedologists were both familiar and concerned with discussions on heredity and eugenics, modeled after the French style of eugenics, which prioritized the care of children and mothers at all stages.<sup>556</sup> It comes as no surprise, therefore, that in the

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<sup>554</sup> The pediatrician and publisher of *Pedology*, Kostis Charitakis (1888–1956), reported on the contents of the memorandum in the pedologists' journal; see “Ἡ Ἰδρυσις Ὑπουργείου Δημόσιας Ὑγείας καὶ Κοινωνικῆς Πρόνοιας [The establishment of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare],” *Παιδολογία* [Pedology] 5 (1920): 145. On the debates that preceded the establishment of the ministry, see Theodorou and Karakatsani, “Eugenic Concerns,” 60–61.

<sup>555</sup> The law provided for the establishment of the Ministry of Hygiene and Social Welfare, as it was finally named, and among other roles included a Directorate of Hygiene responsible for infectious diseases, tuberculosis, malaria, hygiene of urban areas and the countryside, professional medicine, medical statistics; and publications; as well as a Directorate of Social Hygiene responsible for infant hygiene, school hygiene, labor hygiene, and therapeutic hot springs. See *Εφημερίς τῆς Κυβερνήσεως* [Government Gazette] 122: 1 (July 22, 1922): 577–83.

<sup>556</sup> Similar to other contemporaries, Lambadarios did not sharply distinguish between the care of mother and children and more general eugenic aims. From his only lecture on eugenics, Theodorou and Karakatsani quote the following definition: “a science whose purpose was to seek and apply the relevant knowledge for the multiplication, preservation and improvement of the

first issue of *Pedology*, Lambadarios's introductory article was followed by an extended discussion of the relationship between pedology and eugenics written by Apostolos Doxiadis (1874–1942). Doxiadis was a prominent pediatrician, director of the Pediatric Polyclinic of Athens, and liberal politician. In other words, Lambadarios and Doxiadis shared a common medical background that informed their perspective on social issues, an interest in administration, and a liberal political outlook. Both argued that biology should be the basis of pedological sciences, with Lambadarios identifying school hygiene (based on physiology and anthropometry), child psychology (based on general psychology) and medical pedagogics (based on neurology and psychiatry) as the biological and experimental disciplines that informed pedology.<sup>557</sup> Doxiadis, in turn, pointed out that although it was difficult, or even undesirable, to apply directly to humans the observations resulting from Mendel's experiments, we should strive to curtail or extinguish pathological traits. The suggested measure was the establishment of a health certificate showing the hereditary history of every individual and therefore allowing them to make informed and ethical decisions on their unions without sacrificing their freedom of choice.<sup>558</sup> Doxiadis concluded that “only the awareness of the individual's obligations to society, and the adoption of defensive measures by the authorities, are able to remove the imminent danger from the new generation that will then carry all the healthy sperms from which new life, new strength will blossom.”<sup>559</sup> Lambadarios addressed eugenic issues explicitly only once

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human species.” Included therein was the study of inherited traits, implementation of new eugenic theories, hygiene during gestation, and hygiene during both nursing and early childhood. See Theodorou and Karakatsani, “Eugenic Concerns,” 68–69.

<sup>557</sup> Lambadarios, “Αι Παιδολογικαί Επιστήμαι [The pedological sciences],” 6; Apostolos Doxiadis, “Παιδολογία και Ευγονία [Pedology and eugenics],” *Παιδολογία* [Pedology] 1 (1920): 14–21; 14. On Doxiadis and eugenics, see Sevasti Trubeta, “Eugenic Birth Control and Prenuptial Health Certification in Interwar Greece,” in *Health, Hygiene and Eugenics in Southeastern Europe to 1945*, 277–81; and Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 217–23.

<sup>558</sup> Doxiadis, “Παιδολογία και Ευγονία [Pedology and Eugenics],” 16–17.

<sup>559</sup> Doxiadis, “Παιδολογία και Ευγονία [Pedology and Eugenics],” 21.

in a meeting of the Lyceum of Greek Women, but this gives us no grounds to doubt that he supported Doxiadis's views.<sup>560</sup> On the contrary, Lambadarios and his close colleagues, despite their different emphases, converged on the understanding that physical and mental qualities followed the same rules of heredity and showcased how pedologists arguing for the betterment of society assumed that biology set the framework of possibilities. When Lambadarios presented his research at the HAS meeting, he clarified two important aspects related to these issues.



Fig. 4.3: Professors of the Faculty of Medicine: Koumaris in the middle of row one, and Lambadarios on the left of row three, Kouzis, “Εκατονταετηρίς 1837–1937 [Centennial 1837–1937], IB, source UoA Historical Archive.

<sup>560</sup> In this lecture at Lyceum of Greek women Lambadarios discussed the eugenic control of individuals who had a hereditary predisposition to give birth to physically or mentally impaired children, see Theodorou and Despina Karakatsani, “Eugenics and ‘Puericulture,’” 311.

First, even though the specific lecture did not expand on psychometric evaluations, Lambadarios commented that knowledge of the variation of the dimensions of the child's body and its functions is fundamental for understanding how these affect mental development.<sup>561</sup> The old idea expressed in the “healthy mind in a healthy body” maxim, and shared by physicians and lay people alike, assumed that poor or “abnormal” bodily constitution was a sign of a weak or impaired mind.<sup>562</sup> By the time Lambadarios was writing, the identification of individuals with mental impairments—among them the feeble-minded or idiots, favored categories of the eugenicists—rested, of course, on more than observations of physical defects. However, the mind-body connection, with its arrow of causality from the physical to the mental, was difficult to shake. The previous century's “avalanche of printed numbers” produced a wide repertoire of technologies in the form of indices, classifications, instruments, and tests used to surveil deviancy, which in all their sophistication strengthened the priority of the physical.<sup>563</sup> In his textbook *Lessons of School Hygiene* (1928), published in its second edition before the HAS lecture and from which he borrowed extensively, Lambadarios advocated for the use of all relevant psychometric technologies for identifying “abnormal” students, offering them appropriate treatment

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<sup>561</sup> Lambadarios, “Η Σωματική Ανάπτυξις του Έλληνοσ Μαθητού [The Physical Evolution of the Greek Student],” 22.

<sup>562</sup> Although the idea that physical exercise was important for mental and psychological health goes at least as far back as the ancient Greeks, theories that connected certain physical traits with reduced intellectual ability flourished in the nineteenth century, especially when conditions such as “cretinism” and “idiocy” attracted the attention of doctors and educators. On this new connection between body and mind with a special emphasis on children, see Michèle Hofmann, “A Weak Mind in a Weak Body? Categorising Intellectually Disabled Children in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries in Switzerland,” *History of Education* 48, no. 4 (2019): 452–65.

<sup>563</sup> The “avalanche of printed numbers” refers to the efforts of European states and the related sciences of numbers during the first decades of the 1800s to collect and disseminate statistical information about everything that could be measured. See Ian Hacking, “Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Numbers,” *Humanities in Society* 5 (1982), 279–95.

and opportunities for special education, again with biology as principal cause and the medical as his vantage point (fig. 4.4).<sup>564</sup>

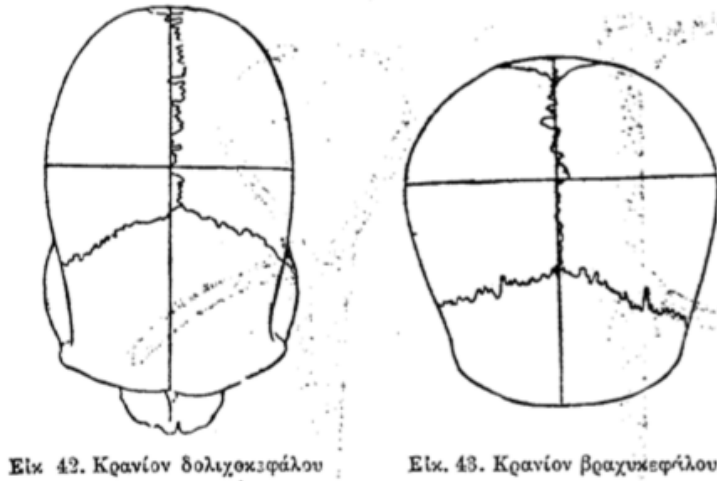


Fig. 4.4: Drawing of a long and a short skull from Lambadarios's *Σχολική Υγιεινή* [School Hygiene], 114. He commented that all civilized peoples of antiquity, such as the Greeks, had mostly long skulls, while intellectually inferior and primitive peoples, such as the Mongols, had mostly short skulls, even though the shape of the skull did not have the importance originally attributed to it.

Second, in his lecture Lambadarios moved the discussion from the arena of school hygiene to the center of anthropological concerns on heredity and racial characteristics.

He wrote:

As every individual has a certain innate predisposition for somatic development only slightly affected by the conditions of life, in a similar manner every race and every nation exhibit the same type of development, which is characteristic of each

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<sup>564</sup> Emannouel Lambadarios, *Σχολική Υγιεινή* [School Hygiene] (Athens: Sfendonis, 1928). On Lambadarios's contributions to special education, see Dimitris Anastasiou, Sophia Iliadou-Tachou, and Antonia Harisi, "The Influence of the School Hygiene and Paedology Movement on the Early Development of Special Education in Greece, 1900–1940: The Leading Role of Emmanuel Lambadarios," *History of Education* 44, no. 4 (2015): 437–59.

race, and is transmitted hereditarily from generation to generation (the type of the Anglosaxon, the Japanese, the Eskimos etc).<sup>565</sup>

Although he did not elaborate on this issue in his HAS lecture, the textbook version suggested that race and nationality were merely two of the many factors influencing the physical growth of children. Lambadarios argued that a child's individual constitution was the core factor and stressed that although this innate capacity may be externally affected, "it always remains the basis and substrate" of further development.<sup>566</sup> Gender, social conditions (chiefly nutrition, and in the Greek case malnutrition caused by lack of knowledge that could potentially lead to degeneration), internal secretions of various glands, puberty, and lastly other physical and cultural parameters such as climate, season of the year, physical exercise, schooling, diseases, and agricultural life all affected growth. Even though Lambadarios emphasized that "**we are mainly interested in the course of the somatic development of the Greek child and especially the student,**" he devoted part of his lecture to a comparative analysis of growth statistics from several European countries.<sup>567</sup>

The summary statistical tables that Lambadarios constructed were mainly based on measurements of the same schoolchildren by students he supervised at the School of Middle Education—dedicated to the training of teachers—and supplemented by data his students sent him from various areas of the country after their graduation. Therefore, Lambadarios appeared rather confident about the measurements' precision, representativity, and quantity, which made them directly comparable to classical studies

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<sup>565</sup> Lambadarios, "Η Σωματική Ανάπτυξις του Έλληρος Μαθητού [The Physical Evolution of the Greek Student]," 23–24.

<sup>566</sup> Lambadarios, *Σχολική Υγιεινή* [School Hygiene], 129–146: 130.

<sup>567</sup> Lambadarios "Η Σωματική Ανάπτυξις του Έλληρος Μαθητού [The Physical Evolution of the Greek Student]," 24, emphasis in the original.

from France, Belgium, Germany, South and North Italy, Sweden, and South and North America. The detailed tables and statistical studies he used for his comparisons did not appear in Lambadarios's HAS lecture proceedings, but his textbook displays his familiarity with the world of international doctors, hygienists, and pediatricians involved in growth studies. In ways similar to anthropologists, for whom the amassment of data was a priority, and despite his usual attention to precision, he glossed over issues related to differences in standards and measurement techniques. His overall conclusion was unequivocal, even if provisional, and as always required more research and more numbers:

**The development of the Greek student by height, weight and thorax circumference (which are the main elements of the student's auxologic [growth] index) is almost not at all less than that of the other Greco-Latin nations, but it is obviously lower than the one of the Anglo-Saxon and in general Germanic races.<sup>568</sup>**

Neither Lambadarios nor any other member of HAS commented on these results or tried to explain the variations. It is of course interesting that he referred to both nations and races, which may indicate that he thought of the Greeks and other Southern Europeans and French people as mixtures of races, and the Germanics as more homogenous entities.

In his textbook, however, Lambadarios made an interesting observation, which he omitted from the HAS lecture. He argued that there is a great difference between the height and weight of *Old Greeks*, i.e. those coming from pre-1912 territories of the state, and those from the new territories, and especially from Asia Minor. The reason, he commented, is, first, biological; they came from taller and more robust progenitors, who also had access to nutritious food. But, he continued, the Asia Minor race was in general more physically

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<sup>568</sup> Lambadarios, "Η Σωματική Ανάπτυξις του Έλληνος Μαθητού [The Physical Evolution of the Greek Student]," 36, emphasis in the original.

developed as “continuous and multiple mixtures with newer and stronger races strengthened it and thus halted its fall and degeneration.”<sup>569</sup> Lambadarios asserted that for the same reasons the people from South America are superior to their European counterparts, “as they are descendants of the mixture between the worn-out Spanish race, which was as drained as all other old Greek-Italian races, and the indigenous sturdy and younger Indians.”<sup>570</sup> These observations would have been of great interest to the members of HAS, not least in light of the accusations of possible degeneration and fall of modern Greeks because of frequent admixtures. At the same time, these findings challenged Koumaris’s results, which, as we saw in Chapter 3, found no significant differences between Old Greeks and the refugees from Asia Minor. Koumaris was indeed absolutely supportive of Lambadarios’s research and, in a short comment after the presentation, he lamented the fact that such studies, which thrived in all anthropological institutions abroad, could not be supported by the limited resources of the Anthropological Museum. Therefore, he encouraged Lambadarios to continue his research with “scientific and high social importance for the issue of classifying children based on their physical and mental ability and maturity” and so contribute to “the relevant international tables, in which results from the Greek races are rare.”<sup>571</sup> Lambadarios remained a member of HAS and presented his empirical results only once again in 1941, but the pedologists were also well represented by the other member of the movement, Georgios Sakellariou.

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<sup>569</sup> Lambadarios, *Σχολική Υγιεινή* [School Hygiene], 131–132.

<sup>570</sup> Lambadarios, *Σχολική Υγιεινή* [School Hygiene], 132.

<sup>571</sup> See the comment by Koumaris in the discussion section of Lambadarios, “*Η Σωματική Ανάπτυξις του Έλληνος Μαθητού* [The Physical Evolution of the Greek Student],” 37–38.



Sakellariou opened the 1932 HAS meetings with a lecture on crime in Greece from a psychological perspective.<sup>572</sup> Koumaris introduced him as a “distinguished pedagogue and psychologist” and thanked him for bringing a new area of study, “**Criminal Anthropology**,” under the general umbrella of anthropology.<sup>573</sup> He explained that this showcased not only the breadth of the discipline but also the way in which recent advancements in medical and biological sciences could impact how societies thought about criminals. Sakellariou, in turn, started his lecture by arguing for a holistic approach to the social phenomenon of crime, which should include the study of mental constitution and consider the complex interactions between biological and environmental factors.<sup>574</sup> The meeting took place at the Athenian Philological Society Parnassos, where discussions on hygiene, eugenics, heredity, and the Greek race had a long history.<sup>575</sup> Among the

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<sup>572</sup> Georgios Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος εν Ελλάδι από Ψυχολογικής Απόψεως [On crime in Greece from a psychological perspective]” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1932* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1932] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1932): 3–24.

<sup>573</sup> John Koumaris, “Untitled,” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1932* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1932] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1932): 1–3: 2, emphasis in the original. Despite Koumaris’s enthusiasm, the term “criminal anthropology” had already been replaced by “criminal psychology,” and after WWI became “criminal biology,” which however still betrayed the biological orientation of the field and the dominant position of psychiatrists internationally. See for example Richard F. Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 125–27.

<sup>574</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime],” 3.

<sup>575</sup> The society was established in 1865 and quickly became a cultural center for the Athenian educated elite and middle class. Programming included lectures, exhibitions, and competitions on a wide range of topics, from arts to sciences. Parnassos was known as the first academy of the Greeks, and among its membership list one can find the most important Greek intellectuals and politicians. In June 1933, Parnassos mounted the first hygiene exhibition with the support of Hellenic Pasteur Institute and the Office of School Hygiene at the Ministry of Education, which was a stronghold of the pedology movement. Koumaris became a regular member of Parnassos

attendees were two men responsible for redrafting the Greek Penal Code and influential in shaping the emerging field of criminology. The first was the vice-minister of justice, Petros Thivaos (1867–1943), a liberal politician, who had studied law internationally, the second was the session chair Timoleon Iliopoulos (1856–1932), an emeritus professor of penal law, politician, founding member of HAS, and Parnassos’s president since 1921. Unlike other countries where psychiatrists and doctors exerted great influence on the study of crime and the criminal, in Greece the stage was dominated by legal experts.<sup>576</sup> Sakellariou knew this was a rare opportunity to carefully promote his views on the causes, recession, and prevention of crime, and praised the chair’s and participants’ generosity in allowing a speaker from outside the legal community to present on the topic. The truth, of course, is that similar to his colleagues promoting criminology abroad, Sakellariou believed that any penal reform should be based on positive scientific evidence emerging from criminal psychology and sociology.

The lecture’s humble start may be misleading as to Sakellariou’s reputation and achievements. Not only is his name synonymous with establishing the foundations for experimental psychology in Greece, but he was one of the truly international Greek scholars, with studies and research in both Europe and the US.<sup>577</sup> Sakellariou studied

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after 1948. See Konstantinos Vovolinis, *To Χρονικόν του «Παρνασσού» (1865–1950)* [The Chronicle of “Parnassos” (1865–1950)] (Athens: Parnassos, 1951).

<sup>576</sup> Avdela, “Φυλετισμός και Ευγονική [Racialism and Eugenics],” in *Φυλετικές Θεωρίες στην Ελλάδα* [Racial Theories in Greece], 148.

<sup>577</sup> The main source of biographical information on Sakellariou is the first history of psychology in Greece; see Panayiota Kazolea-Tavoulari, “Η Ιστορία της Ψυχολογίας στην Ελλάδα (1830–1987)” [The history of psychology in Greece (1830–1987)] (PhD diss., Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, 2001), 163–84. Additional information can be found at the website of the Sakellariou Foundation; see “Ιδρυτές: Γεώργιος Σακελλαρίου [Founders: Georgios Sakellariou],” *Εκπαιδευτικό Ίδρυμα Γεωργίου και Άννης Σακελλαρίου* [Education Foundation of Georgios and Anne Sakellariou], accessed April 15, 2021, <https://www.idrymasakellariou.gr>.

philosophy at the University of Athens at a time when psychology was still under the tight embrace of philosophy within a rather nationalistic, conservative, moralistic, and even suspicious-to-Western-liberal-ideas intellectual climate. After working as a teacher in several schools, he received a scholarship to study abroad and soon found himself at the forefront of experimental and child psychology, educational research, and pedagogy at the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva.<sup>578</sup> In this environment infused by an internationalist and progressivist ethos under the leadership of Swiss psychologists and educators Edouard Claparède (1873–1940) and Pierre Bovet (1878–1965), Sakellariou was introduced to positivist quantitative methodologies, state-of-the-art psychotechnology, and a desire to reform society through applied science. This first year in Switzerland was followed by a short stint at Princeton, and then three years at Teachers College at Columbia University, from which he received a master’s degree in psychology.<sup>579</sup> During those years, Sakellariou came into contact with the most influential philosophers, pedagogues, and psychologists involved in the progressive education movement—people like John Dewey (1859–1952), Edward L. Thorndike (1874–1949), Leta S. Hollingworth, William H. Kilpatrick (1871–1965), and even the Stanford psychologist Lewis M. Terman (1877–1956). This is where—amid debates on heredity and its prevalence over environment—Sakellariou’s interest in quantifying student merit through intelligence testing and identifying gifted children flourished.<sup>580</sup> Among his teachers and mentors were some of

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<sup>578</sup> Edward Claparède, “The Psychology of the Child at Geneva and the J. J. Rousseau Institute,” *The Pedagogical Seminary and Journal of Genetic Psychology* 32, no. 1 (1925): 92–104.

<sup>579</sup> For a history of Teachers College, with a special emphasis on curriculum changes that contributed to its transformation from a philanthropic institution to an internationally accredited academic and professional training school, see Catriel Fierro, “From Philanthropy and Household Arts to the Scholarly Education of Psychologists and Educators: A Brief History of the University of Columbia’s Teachers College (1881–1930),” *Revista de Historia de la Psicología* 40, no. 4 (2019): 11–23.

<sup>580</sup> The most nuanced study of the history of intelligence testing in the context of degeneration thinking and the heredity/environment debate, especially during the early decades of the twentieth

the strongest proponents of reform eugenics, who promoted comprehensive IQ testing from schools to the military, curriculum reforms and eugenic propaganda campaigns, and selective breeding, as well as scientifically informed social improvement, efficiency, and control.<sup>581</sup>

Upon his return to Greece in 1924, Sakellariou received his doctorate from the University of Athens and was appointed a professor of psychology at the Pedagogical Academy of Athens. He collaborated with Lambadarios in establishing the Pedagogical Institute and extensively researched the intelligence of children with the help of schoolteachers, whom he introduced to various psychometric techniques. A year later, in 1926, Sakellariou became professor of pedagogics at the University of Thessaloniki; from then on, he continued with his studies of child psychology and efforts to establish schools based on students' scientifically assessed capacities. To achieve such allegedly objective measures of mental ability, he deployed the revised Stanford version of the Binet-Simon intelligence test. After years of experimental research and a Fulbright fellowship in the US, he developed the Terman-Sakellariou Scale, or Sakellariou Personality Scale, which included measurements for intelligence, sympathy, pity, and mental fatigue, and also

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century when the controversy was still unsettled, is Leila Zenderland, *Measuring Minds: Henry Herbert Goddard and the Origins of American Intelligence Testing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). In one of the earlier and more polemical histories of eugenics, Daniel Kevles writes on the development of a hereditary view of intelligence in relation to mental testing, Terman's introduction of the concept of "IQ," and the debates around IQ tests and innate abilities. See Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 70–84 and 129–47.

<sup>581</sup> On the intersection of eugenics thinking with modern American education and the reform ideals and practices of several of these progressive educators and psychologists, see Ann Gibson Winfield, *Eugenics and Education in America: Institutionalized Racism and the Implications of History, Ideology, and Memory* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

provided vocational guidance.<sup>582</sup> Throughout his career, Sakellariou shared Thorndike's faith in quantification: "Whatever exists at all exists in some amount. To know it thoroughly involves knowing its quantity as well as its quality." This credo figured on the cover of Sakellariou's early work *The Measurement of Intelligence with Applications in Education, the Army, the Penal Courts and Vocational Guidance*.<sup>583</sup> While it is difficult to assess the influence that Thorndike or Terman had on Sakellariou's thinking, it is interesting that for all their progressivism they shared the view that women were not intellectually equal to men and thus not as gifted to work in science. This despite the fact that Hollingworth, an ardent supporter of women's rights, was Thorndike's colleague and Sakellariou's teacher, and seems to have supported several women in developing their research careers as their supervisor or collaborator.<sup>584</sup>

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<sup>582</sup> Sakellariou's test was presented by Koumaris in one of his reviews of anthropological work in Greece, see John Koumaris, "An Anthropological Review for 1952–1954," *Yearbook of Anthropology* (1955): 478.

<sup>583</sup> Georgios Sakellariou, *Η Μέτρησης της Ευφυΐας: Μετ' Εφαρμογών εις την Εκπαίδευσιν, τον Στρατόν, τα Ποινικά Δικαστήρια και την Επαγγελματικήν Κατεύθυνσιν* [The Measurement of Intelligence with Applications in Education, the Army, the Penal Courts, and Vocational Guidance] (Athens: Lambropoulos, 1927).

<sup>584</sup> In July 2020, after several protests, Thorndike's name was removed from a building at Teachers College. The announcement stated: "The Board of Trustees of Teachers College, Columbia University unanimously voted today to remove Edward L. Thorndike's name from the building that has held his name since its dedication nearly 50 years ago. While Thorndike's work was hugely influential on modern educational ideas and practices, he was also a proponent of eugenics, and held racist, sexist, and antisemitic ideas." See "Important Announcement from the President & Chair of the Board of Trustees," Teachers College, Columbia University, July 15, 2020, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/articles/2020/july/important-announcement-from-the-president-chair-of-the-board-of-trustees>. On Thorndike's attitude toward women and intelligence, and how this affected Hollingworth's research, see Rose A. Rudnitski, "Leta Stetter Hollingworth and the Speyer School, 1935-1940: Historical Roots of the Contradictions in Progressive Education for Gifted Children," *Education and Culture* 13, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 1–6: 1. Trubeta observes a similar paradoxical attitude around Sakellariou and his research on women's capabilities. See *Physical Anthropology*, 104–05.

The core of Sakellariou's lecture at HAS addressed exactly the nature of criminality swinging on the pendulum between heredity and environment. Although he started with international physiological research, which suggested that criminals diverged from the normal bodily constitution because of pathological, neurological, or other developmental causes, his emphasis was on the effects of "**mental retardation** and generally mental deficiencies."<sup>585</sup> Once again, he repeated that the latter—including feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, psychopathy, and other emotional disturbances—were results of both heredity and social life but had received little attention compared to the emphasis on the physiological "stigmata" of the "criminal" type.<sup>586</sup> Echoing the views of the great majority of his contemporaries, Sakellariou criticized the Italian psychiatrist and founder of criminal anthropology Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909) and his school for their narrow focus on anthropometry, but he did not refer directly to the concept of the "born criminal."<sup>587</sup> Instead, he used international research in prisons and on degenerate families to argue that what the Lombrosians had failed to see was that the abnormal

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<sup>585</sup> Sakellariou, "Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime]," 7–8, emphasis in the original.

<sup>586</sup> Sakellariou, "Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime]," 8.

<sup>587</sup> Lombroso's criminal anthropology, developed in the late nineteenth century, combined insights and methods from medicine, physical anthropology, psychiatry, psychology, and sociology to study the criminal in a way that could establish criminology as a science. In his classic book *L'uomo delinquente*, published in 1876, Lombroso changed the focus of the study of crime from the action to the person behind it: the criminal. The core concept was that of the "born criminal," later understood not only as a degenerate, atavistic individual, whose criminal physical and mental traits surfaced on their body, but also as a hereditary criminal. The theory promoted and benefited from the emphasis and new techniques devised to measure the human body, both normal and pathological or deviant. While initially met with great international enthusiasm and canonized as one of the founding perspectives in the positivist school of criminology, the rigidity and complexity of measurement, as well as its exclusive focus on biological explanations, became central points of criticism. By the time Sakellariou was writing, the whole theory and Lombroso's school belonged to criminology's past. See Cesare Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, trans. Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); and David Horn, *The Criminal Body: Lombroso and the Anatomy of Deviance* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

physiological/morphological traits of criminals were first and foremost outcomes of mental deficiencies.<sup>588</sup> Therefore, he elevated psychological and moral abnormality as causes for crime and concluded that the feeble-minded had a greater predisposition toward criminal behavior, and at the same time could not be held ethically accountable for their actions, just like children.<sup>589</sup>

The connection between criminality and intellectual inferiority, or more generally degeneracy, became the central debate on diminished responsibility from the early twentieth century on, and a main point of dispute between medical and legal experts internationally, as well as in Greece.<sup>590</sup> This element of Sakellariou's approach had profound implications for his analysis of crime and its prevention, which did not simply substitute a physiological approach with a psychiatric one, but proposed a more nuanced multicausal etiology of crime reminiscent of the German positivist school of

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<sup>588</sup> Sakellariou, "Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime]," 8. Here, Sakellariou insisted on the connection between body and mind, but the difference with how he interpreted Lombroso's theory was that deviant bodily traits were not direct signs of criminality.

<sup>589</sup> Sakellariou, "Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime]," 8–9.

<sup>590</sup> Richard Wetzell, for example, writes on the debates over the treatment of inferior degenerate criminals in Germany and describes the broad spectrum of positions, from medical treatment and full exemption from punishment to more hybrid forms of care and punishment or indefinite detention. See *Inventing the Criminal*, 83–96. In the Greek case, Efi Avdela argues that jurists were skeptical of psychiatrists' attempts to override the penal code based on a biological assumption of degeneration. Avdela writes on Konstantinos Gardikas (1896–1984), the most celebrated Greek jurist and criminologist, and a member of HAS, who often presented on issues related to crime, race and eugenics in Greece, see "Φυλετισμός και Ευγονική στη Συγκρότηση της Ελληνικής Εγκληματολογίας: Η Περίπτωση του Κωνσταντίνου Γαρδίκια [Racialism and eugenics in the establishment of Greek criminology: the case of Konstantinos Gardikas,]" in *Φυλετικές Θεωρίες στην Ελλάδα* [Racial theories in Greece], 145–71.

criminology.<sup>591</sup> Indeed, both in the HAS proceedings and in the extended version of the presentation, which Sakellariou published as an independent book, he referenced the work of Gustav Aschaffenburg, the most influential Jewish German criminologist, who was forced to leave his position at the University of Cologne in 1933 and two years later the editorship of the important German-language criminology journal *Monatsschrift für Kriminalpsychologie*. Aschaffenburg, although critical of Lombroso's work, chose to distance himself from the numerous critiques of the old theory and instead substitute it with his own, which focused on the complex interactions between environmental and biological factors. This kind of feedback loop between biological degeneration and social conditions, which also treated crime and its prevention as a biocultural phenomenon, lay at the core of Sakellariou's views.

From Sakellariou's perspective, crime was an indication of lack of moral judgment resulting from mental deficiencies, epilepsy, various kinds of psychopathy, and the emotional nature and instability of certain people, especially women and teenagers. These defectives, Sakellariou believed, should be protected and cared for by society. At the same time, Sakellariou argued that all these characteristics were to a large degree hereditary, which raised the question of the relationship between crime and heredity. Public opinion, he thought, was unequivocally in favor of a strong hereditary influence upon criminal behavior, similar to how other physiological and mental traits are passed down from generation to generation through marriage. Sakellariou added that the American sociologist Richard Dugdale's (1841–1883) pioneering study of the infamous Jukes family, which traced the lineage of eight hundred criminals back to a single degenerate individual

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<sup>591</sup> For Aschaffenburg's biography and contributions to criminology, see "Aschaffenburg, Gustav: German Criminology," in *Encyclopedia of Criminological Theory*, vol. 1, eds. Francis T. Cullen and Pamela Wilcox (London: SAGE Publications, 2010), 59–62; and Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal*.



who married women of a similar caliber, pointed to the hereditary nature of crime.<sup>592</sup> “What is inherited,” he wrote, however, “is not the crime of, for example, murder or lewdness, but physiological or mental traits which can, under certain favorable conditions, lead any individual to crime.”<sup>593</sup> Sakellariou used another reference to American studies of criminology, this time *The Individual Delinquent* by psychiatrist William Healy (1869–1963), to validate his claim.<sup>594</sup> Healy supported a multifactor approach to crime etiology and suggested that behind the majority of criminal youths are families with all sorts of defects and retardations, and that only 20 percent of the deviant youths he examined were beyond correction.<sup>595</sup> Sakellariou’s conclusion was that crime in itself was not inherited. Hereditary factors might be contributing to crime but did not act alone, and thus their impact was indirect. To emphasize the point, he quoted from Shakespeare’s play, *Timon of Athens*:

Crimes,  
  
Like lands are not inherited. Therefore,  
  
Approach the fold and cull th’ infected forth,  
  
But kill not all together.<sup>596</sup>

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<sup>592</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On Crime],” 10.

<sup>593</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On Crime],” 10–11.

<sup>594</sup> William Healy, *The Individual Delinquent* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1915).

<sup>595</sup> For an early work on William Healy’s approach, see Jon Snodgrass, “William Healy (1869–1963): Pioneer Child Psychiatrist and Criminologist,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 20, no. 4 (October 1984): 332–39.

<sup>596</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime],” 10–11. This was one of the rare occasions that a quote was published in English in the Society’s proceedings.

Sakellariou borrowed this quote, and several of his arguments, from the book *The Young Delinquent*, especially the section called “Hereditary Conditions.”<sup>597</sup> The author of the book was the foremost British educational psychologist and supporter of eugenics Cyril Burt (1883–1971), who devoted his life to studying intelligence and pioneered intelligence quotient (IQ) testing methods, similar to Sakellariou. Unlike what this passage may suggest, Burt promoted hereditary explanations to the point of being posthumously accused of fabricating part of his data, although he assigned a secondary role to environmental effects on human ability and behavior.<sup>598</sup> For Sakellariou, as for most of his contemporaries, such seemingly opposing tendencies coexisted with slight changes in emphasis. Indeed, after this brief reference to heredity, Sakellariou considered at much greater length the effects of various social factors on crime, including a prevailing materialist ethos, family, changing gender roles, education, alcoholism, geographical environment and climate, cars and modern urban ways of life, religion, and even the role played by courts and prisons.<sup>599</sup> But as he suggested again, society and the specific social environment in which an individual develops may lead to crime insofar as they control a person’s life by limiting or enhancing innate tendencies and impulses.

This back-and-forth between biological (in the sense of innate, physiological, and mental properties) and environmental factors became further evident in the crime-prevention measures Sakellariou proposed.<sup>600</sup> His scheme was modeled on the work of the

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<sup>597</sup> Cyril Burt, *The Young Delinquent* (New York: D. Appleton, 1925).

<sup>598</sup> On Burt’s collaboration with Fischer, see Theodore M. Porter, *Genetics in the Madhouse: The Unknown History of Human Heredity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018): 340; and on the controversies around Burt’s data after WWII, see Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800–1960* (Basingstroke: Macmillan, 1984): 184–88.

<sup>599</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime],” 11–17.

<sup>600</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime],” 17–23.

pioneering American sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross (1866–1951), whom Sakellariou met at the University of Wisconsin, where Ross had found refuge after being fired from Stanford on the grounds of his crude public remarks on immigration and support of eugenics.<sup>601</sup> Sakellariou elaborated at length on a series of measures, such as more effective and appropriately strict penal processes and system; reforms of the correctional system, including both the police and prisons; and the role of the family, church, and schools in the moral development of the Greek citizen. However, he departed somewhat from the views of American eugenics ideologues and placed the need for eugenic measures in the long-term perspectives of a century. Sakellariou asserted that according to criminological research, only one-quarter or even fewer crimes had hereditary causes, given other favorable circumstances. In these cases, he identified two possible strategies. The first was “the sterilization of those proven to be feeble-minded, epileptics and other defective persons, as practiced in the US”; the second was “their segregation from society by gathering and confining them in large agricultural areas and forbidding them to marry.”<sup>602</sup> Sakellariou disagreed with sterilization and presented three main reasons for not recommending the measure:

- a) it is in itself cruel, when applied to human beings,
- b) it is necessary to be absolutely sure that the disabled person about to be sterilized is indeed such an individual, and

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<sup>601</sup> On Ross’s career and biography, see Sean H. McMahon, *Social Control and Public Intellect: The Legacy of Edward A. Ross* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1999).

<sup>602</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime],” 21.

c) we should not forget that not all feeble-minded persons have a criminal nature—there are harmless feeble-minded people as well as evil ones.<sup>603</sup>

Therefore, he instead promoted the idea of creating appropriate asylums, where such people would be able to spend their time working the land. The psychological examination of criminals, Sakellariou continued, should be at the core of penal procedures, assessing their past life, present condition, and future prospects, and should contribute to the “moral correction of the Greek sinner.”<sup>604</sup>

Sakellariou continued to be active in Greek anthropological circles and presented further research after the 1940s, during the country’s occupation by the Axis powers. The topics examined were still relevant to heredity and human differences. His first study, presented in 1942, addressed the issue of “school retardation” and the establishment of a method for the diagnosis and “treatment” of “problem” students.<sup>605</sup> Sakellariou and his colleagues at the Psychological Laboratory in Thessaloniki examined students coming from extremely impoverished and unhygienic environments. Their results showed that a combination of physiological, psychological, and environmental factors was responsible for the students’ poor performance, and thus suggested that any support measures should be specific to each child based on the examination results shared with the school, and the appropriate class should be determined accordingly. In the 1943 presentation, Sakellariou discussed the differences between men and women in conducting scientific research as part of a broader research project on the psychology of women. The conclusion was that the

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<sup>603</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime],” 21.

<sup>604</sup> Sakellariou, “Περί του Εγκλήματος [On crime],” 23.

<sup>605</sup> Georgios Sakellariou, “Γυνή και Επιστημονική Έρευνα [Woman and Scientific Research,]” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1943* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1943] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1943), 80–85.

ratio between men and women in academia should be 2:1 because men better fulfill the criteria and demands for laboratory work and scientific work in general.<sup>606</sup>

#### **IV. Bringing Mendelism and Eugenics to the Public**

When Koumaris decided to educate the public on heredity and Mendelism through his “Popular University” columns in 1937, two other university colleagues had preceded him. In 1936, during the summer and autumn, Georgios Pantazis (1906–1973), professor of zoology and director of the Zoological Laboratory and Museum of the University of Athens, published a detailed fourteen-part lesson called “Popularized Heredity.”<sup>607</sup> Pantazis, who had originally studied medicine before deciding to pursue a doctorate in zoology in Leipzig, had been a member of HAS since September 1934.<sup>608</sup> His interest in human heredity was therefore hardly surprising, and that is exactly how he started his lesson.

Pantazis suggested that the human species is divided into races that differ from one another and steadily bequeath their diverse traits to their descendants, so that it is not only the species characteristics but also racial traits that are passed on, and even the traits of smaller groups belonging to the same races, as well as individual mental and bodily

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<sup>606</sup> Georgios Sakellariou, “Μία Συμβολή εις την Κλινικὴν Ψυχολογίαν Σχολικὴ Καθυστέρησις [A Contribution to Clinical Psychology: School Retardation],” in *Ελληνικὴ Ανθρωπολογικὴ Ἐταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικὰ Συνεδρίων τοῦ ἔτους 1942* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1942] (Athens: Γενικὴ Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικὸν Μουσεῖον τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1942), 2–6.

<sup>607</sup> Georgios Pantazis, “Ἐκλαϊκευμένη Κληρονομολογία [Popularized Heredity],” *Ἡ Βραδυνή* [Evening], July 25–November 21, 1936.

<sup>608</sup> Michail K. Stephanidis, *Ἱστορία τῆς Φυσικομαθηματικῆς Σχολῆς: Ἐκατονταετηρίδες 1837–1937, Τεύχος Β'* [History of the School of Sciences: Centenary 1837–1937, Volume B] (Athens: Ἐθνικὸ Τυπογραφεῖο [National Printing House], 1952), 72–73.

differences.<sup>609</sup> Pantazis's lesson, however, primarily focused on explaining in detail the genetic mechanisms behind heredity with reference to plants and animals, and only rarely returned to humans. On one such occasion, he emphasized that the bodily and mental traits of every person result from both the person's hereditary constitution and external impacts during development, the latter being acquired characteristics and therefore not heritable. To illustrate his thesis, Pantazis referred to "the blacks living in the USA, who have managed to improve as individuals because of better nurture and closer connection to civilization, but have not improved their inferior constitution, compared to the white race."<sup>610</sup> Another example he gave was that of the children of criminals, who might indeed improve under strict, ethical life conditions but would never manage to escape completely their predisposition toward crime, which would unfortunately reappear in their own descendants.

After a long introductory section on the laws of heredity, Pantazis suggested that breeders or farmers who wanted to improve a specific breed of animal or plant would have better and faster results if they were able to understand these laws.<sup>611</sup> At this point in the lesson, Pantazis returned to humans to note that studying heredity in a species with so few offspring was difficult. Nevertheless, he thought it necessary as "the basic truths found in the simple cases, are also found in the complex ones which are only variations of the same basic theme."<sup>612</sup> After rattling off a long list of characteristics and conditions ranging from the shape of human bones to mental health and intelligence, Pantazis concluded that

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<sup>609</sup> Pantazis, "Εκλαϊκευμένη Κληρονομολογία [Popularized Heredity]," July 25, 1.

<sup>610</sup> Pantazis, "Εκλαϊκευμένη Κληρονομολογία [Popularized Heredity]," August 1, 7.

<sup>611</sup> Pantazis, "Εκλαϊκευμένη Κληρονομολογία [Popularized Heredity]," November 14, 3.

<sup>612</sup> Pantazis, "Εκλαϊκευμένη Κληρονομολογία [Popularized Heredity]," November 21, 1.

“especially for humans it has been proven that the most important hereditary qualities are Mendel-like”.<sup>613</sup>

In his newspaper series, Pantazis clarified that although some instances of diseases with severe consequences for the individual and society may appear hereditary, closer examination of family trees has proven that this is not the case. Following contemporary interest in venereal diseases and in behaviors deemed promiscuous, immoral, or deviant, he used the examples of syphilis or the consequences of being born to alcoholic parents to explain that these were not related to genuine inheritance but rather to the impacts of external factors, which may diminish over ensuing generations.<sup>614</sup> Indeed, a few months after the end of Pantazis’s lesson, another doctor, Ioannis D. Maroudas, the head of the pediatric department at Evangelismos hospital, contributed a two-part lesson on the hereditary aspects of certain diseases.<sup>615</sup>

Although Maroudas mentioned various candidates such as tuberculosis, neuropathies, alcoholism, and other “chronic poisonings,” as he called a series of conditions and substances thought to adversely affect the body and mind, his main focus was on syphilis. International studies of child mortality and sickness related to syphilis had revealed worrisome numbers that convinced him of the necessity to enlighten the public and thus make them more aware “of the consequences of their recklessness.”<sup>616</sup> He noted in a footnote, however, that acquired conditions like syphilis cannot be inherited, so this was not a real case of heredity, but rather of the transmission of the disease-causing agent

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<sup>613</sup> Pantazis, “Εκλαϊκευμένη Κληρονομολογία [Popularized Heredity],” November 21, 1.

<sup>614</sup> Pantazis, “Εκλαϊκευμένη Κληρονομολογία [Popularized Heredity],” August 8, 1.

<sup>615</sup> Ioannis D. Maroudas, “Η Σημασία Νόσων Τινών από Κληρονομικής Απόψεως [The Importance of Certain Diseases from a Hereditary Perspective],” *Η Βραδυνή* [Evening], February 6, 1937, 1.

<sup>616</sup> Maroudas, “Η Σημασία Νόσων Τινών [The Importance of Certain Diseases],” 1.

from parents to their offspring, while in other cases of disease and poisoning (meaning alcoholism or drug addiction) what might be inherited was a predisposition. Indeed, contemporary contributions to the Greek and international medical press often debated the heritability and mode of transmission of syphilis, as well as other diseases or conditions such as tuberculosis, leprosy, and epilepsy. Legislative initiatives sought to impose marriage and reproductive restrictions between people with syphilis or other conditions both as part of social hygiene and as eugenic measures, even if the understanding of what constituted a eugenic trait was gradually changing.<sup>617</sup>

Koumaris was a regular reader of the “Popular University” column and a friend of its editor. The latter asked him to contribute a new lesson on heredity, but Koumaris had no desire to repeat the basic elements of the new, big science that his distinguished colleague, as he described Pantazis, had already covered.<sup>618</sup> Instead, he chose to focus on heredity in relation to humans only, and more specifically on two points that he considered

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<sup>617</sup> The eugenic emphasis—or even obsession—with reproduction and its intersections with changing hereditarian ideas has a long history of attempts to document population health and demography, and thus control marriages between the unfit, that extends at least to the beginnings of the nineteenth century. See, John C. Waller, “Ideas of Heredity, Reproduction and Eugenics in Britain, 1800–1875,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 32, no. 3 (2001): 473–75. In Greece, the police were tasked with the duty of hindering marriages between people with leprosy long before such legislation was in place in 1920, while debates on marriage restrictions for those affected by contagious diseases appeared in the Greek parliament from the mid-nineteenth century. Although the first written reference to eugenics in relation to health screening and reproduction appeared in 1917, these early concerns related to communicable diseases nevertheless addressed the qualities of future generations. For a detailed examination of the controversies around disease, hygiene, and eugenic policies in Greece, see Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 223–46.

<sup>618</sup> Koumaris did not refer to Maroudas’s article, even though the latter’s contribution was more recent than Pantazis’s. This may have been a deliberate choice on the part of Koumaris, who wanted to move the discussion away from such diseases and conditions whose heritability was controversial and toward what he deemed cases of real inheritance.



the most interesting for contemporary society.<sup>619</sup> First, he would examine the hereditary aspects of both physical features and mental characteristics; second, he would discuss the application of knowledge of heredity for the improvement of human society.<sup>620</sup> Throughout this chapter, we will see how the acknowledgement of the importance of mental traits along with bodily traits for the formation of an individual's character and abilities, and their common treatment under the umbrella of Mendelian inheritance, were necessary for eugenics projects.<sup>621</sup>

Despite his admiration for Gregor Mendel, whom he described as the first person to discover the rules of heredity in his isolated garden at the monastery of the Augustinians of Brunn, Koumaris was quick to assert that “others perfected that study and it is ‘higher Mendelism’ that satisfies well enough the demands of Science today.”<sup>622</sup> This reference to the new science of “higher Mendelism” again reflects Koumaris’s familiarity with German discussions of Mendelian genetics, as well as with Anglo-Saxon and German perceptions of eugenics based on Mendelian heredity principles. By the end of the 1930s, when Koumaris was writing this article, the idea that hereditary traits were passed on in a simple recessive/dominant fashion had given way to more complex understandings of possible interactions between multiple genes, or even between genes and the external environment. Geneticists at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics (KWI-A) coined the term “higher Mendelism” to describe this complexity; as we

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<sup>619</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 10, 1937, 1.

<sup>620</sup> Here I follow Koumaris’s terminology and use the term “mental” to include a variety of psychological and cognitive traits.

<sup>621</sup> For the importance of treating mental and physical characteristics from a common Darwinian perspective, and therefore as subjected to the same forces of selection, within even the earliest Galtonian conception of eugenics, see Robert A. Wilson, “Characterizing Eugenics,” in *The Eugenic Mind Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018): 25–49.

<sup>622</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 10, 1.

saw earlier, the majority of them were skeptical about the importance of single-trait genetic research, such as the blood group research advocated by serologists.<sup>623</sup> Koumaris was thus mindful of the negotiations between an ever-increasing understanding of genetic complexity and the requirement for its simplified application in the first half of the twentieth century.

The difficulties and complexities of human heredity notwithstanding, Koumaris devoted about half of his lesson to communicating the basic idea that Mendelian rules applied to humans in the same way that they applied to every other living organism. Mental functions, in which he included instincts, learning, judgment, and consciousness, developed within bodily structures, such as bones or nerves, and therefore humans should be understood from a holistic perspective that brought together mental, morphological, and physiological aspects. Koumaris further asserted that “the inheritance of mental attributes in humans is theoretically certain” and that it followed “Mendelian rules,” either when related to mental functions or more generally to personality traits.<sup>624</sup> He acknowledged, however, that finding scientific evidence for the heredity of mental traits had been a challenge ever since the time of Galton and his experiments on hereditary genius and the choice of professions in families.<sup>625</sup> But in the next line, he wrote:

Despite this difficulty, it is accepted today that the mental properties are inherited in the same manner as the bodily ones. This becomes more obvious in the case of

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<sup>623</sup> See Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, “Two Models for Human Genetics: Blood Grouping and Psychiatry in Germany between the World Wars,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 70, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 609–57; Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute*, 245–51; and Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 107–10.

<sup>624</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 10, 1.

<sup>625</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, discussed in Chapter 1.

exceptional intelligence, musical talent and other abilities, as well as, in the of course more difficult case of genius (multiple inheritance).<sup>626</sup>

This back-and-forth between insufficient knowledge and certainty was a common rhetorical device even among the most well-regarded geneticists of the time. In his speech at the meeting of the German Society for Genetic Science in 1934, the KWI-A geneticist Günther Just (1892–1950), after a critical presentation of higher Mendelism, exclaimed that “it is actually more about a specialized cladding of our ignorance.”<sup>627</sup> Fritz Lenz, who was at the time one of the most respected German geneticists and the director of the Department of Eugenics at KWI-A, endorsed this position. Lenz commented further that it was impossible to unambiguously analyze in genetic terms all clinical conditions.<sup>628</sup>

Leading geneticists were keen to change positions between a simple one-factor-for-one-trait thesis and a view that promoted multiple genetic, developmental, and environmental interactions.<sup>629</sup> Although such issues were weighted toward the side of complexity by the end of the 1930s, historian Theodore Porter describes how, in 1930, Eugen Fischer employed exactly this double language to communicate his results on the gene for feeble-mindedness in one publication, and to question the fashion of speaking of

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<sup>626</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 10, 1. Again in this case, Koumaris refers to one of the basic ideas of “higher Mendelism” as developed at the KWI-A and elsewhere—that a single attribute may be the result of multiple gene influences, known as *polygeny*.

<sup>627</sup> The quote is cited in Baur, Fischer, and Lenz, *Menschliche Erblehre und Rassenhygiene*, 625. See also Mazumdar, “Two Models for Human Genetics,” 637.

<sup>628</sup> When Baur, Fischer, and Lenz publish the *Grundriss*, the overwhelmingly positive reviews were marred only by criticisms of Lenz’s considerations on the inheritance of mental traits, and his clear favoring of the Nordic race. See Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 47–48.

<sup>629</sup> Gregory Radick, “Making Sense of Mendelian Genes,” *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 45, no. 3 (2020): 299–314.

a given factor for a given condition in another one.<sup>630</sup> “Again and again, geneticists acknowledged the inadequacy of single-gene explanations in one breath and then proceeded in the next as if heredity could mean nothing else,” Porter writes emphatically.<sup>631</sup> Koumaris followed their example and continued changing positions between classical and higher Mendelism. With about a thousand genes identified alongside a list of several hundred diseases assumed as hereditary at the time,<sup>632</sup> he repeated Pantazis’s claim that “the main hereditary traits of humans are ‘Mendel-like.’”<sup>633</sup> He then laid out a list of hereditary traits, conditions, and pathologies that included the shape and angles of the skull; the face and its characteristics; the height and shape of the body and bodily constitution in general; the special characteristics of the bones, muscles and organs; the chemical qualities of blood (human blood groups); the color and shape of hair and eyes and the color of skin; certain mental advantages and disadvantages; mathematical and musical genius; longevity or premature aging; diseases such as arthritis, diabetes, neurological and mental diseases, and hemophilia; deformities (of the fingers), shortness, morbidity, deaf-muteness, and finally giving birth to twins. This exhaustive list was no different than the main research areas of KWI-A and other German institutions related to eugenics research before World War II.<sup>634</sup>

What was the aim, then, of communicating to the public the immensely complex laws of heredity? How could society benefit from knowing that the discovery and use of Mendel’s laws in the scientific reproduction of plants and animals had been of great service

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<sup>630</sup> Porter, *Genetics in the Madhouse*, 321.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute*, 251.

<sup>633</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 10, 1.

<sup>634</sup> Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute*, 167–202.

to applied practices such as horticulture and animal husbandry—especially the ability to produce artificial varieties, which, in their homozygous condition, could continue exhibiting desirable characteristics in future generations? Koumaris was explicit about his intentions. “Until recently, humans have been strangely left to perpetuate weak and inferior generations. But humans’ greatest interest is in their own faith. And for this aim the importance of heredity for the new fields of Social and Racial Hygiene and Eugenics is great.”<sup>635</sup> From the time of Galton, Koumaris continued, the observation that among “civilized humans, as opposed to primitives, the wilds, neither the useless is removed nor the one with inferior (undesirable) body structure is prohibited from reproducing his disadvantaged lineage” set the course for the practical applications of anthropology.<sup>636</sup> Given that there are people who believe that degenerate traits are actually on the rise, he added, the task of eugenics is to stop this trend and instead promote reproduction that will lead to progress. Koumaris proceeded to define eugenics as “the hygiene of the hereditary origins, the genealogical lineages,” which seeks to support “‘biological selection’ (the increase of useful traits)” and fight “‘biological counter-selection’ (the dominance of harmful traits).”<sup>637</sup>

From here, Koumaris moved to a discussion of the most appropriate racial-hygiene measures, starting with a reminder that ancient Greece, and more specifically Sparta, was

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<sup>635</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 12, 1. In the following sections, we will look at possible reasons for Koumaris’s differentiation between racial hygiene and eugenics. The term “eugenics,” however, has been associated with versions more moderate than the extreme Aryanist “racial hygiene,” but we should not forget that it is this same word that appeared in the very title of KWI-A. For a political maneuver by Fischer to satisfy the more liberal climate of the Weimar Republic, in which his institution came to life, see Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 76–77.

<sup>636</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 13, 1.

<sup>637</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 13, 1.

the homeland of eugenics. As we saw in Chapter 1, this had been a common international trope since the nineteenth century, and a preferred reference for German eugenicists.<sup>638</sup> In a much earlier newspaper article on eugenics, Koumaris had suggested avoiding punishment and instead giving incentives, such as tax relief and reimbursement for wedding expenses, to couples who had agreed to a prenuptial health certificate, and who after that gave birth to healthy children.<sup>639</sup> In this lesson Koumaris expressed his agreement with the program of the most internationally acknowledged Scandinavian racial hygienist, the Norwegian Jon Alfred Mjøen, (1860–1939) in his appeal for biological control of all migrants to ensure that no damaging and unwanted individuals could enter a new country.<sup>640</sup> Other suggestions echoing Mjøen’s mix of positive and negative eugenic measures included raising the living and cultural standards for the whole population, combating the spread of poisonous substances such as alcohol, and in the end sterilization of inborn criminals, alcoholics, and persons with hereditary pathological traits. Koumaris’s leading examples on practical eugenic solutions originated in countries such as the US, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Germany, and Sweden. The only direct quote he used came from the Norwegian member of the parliament: eugenicist and Nazi collaborator under Norway’s occupation, Erling Bjørnson (1868–1959), who wished to apply such

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<sup>638</sup> On the correlation between eugenic thinking and Greek antiquity, with special emphasis on German perceptions, see Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 205–07.

<sup>639</sup> Koumaris added that despite the initial difficulties in implementing such measures, “the material expenses for the State are worth it, since the improvement of race should never really be seen as a cost.” See John Koumaris, “Δια την Ευγονίαν: Ένα Εθνικόν Ζήτημα [On Eugenics: A National Issue],” *Εστία* [Hestia], March 1, 1931, 1.

<sup>640</sup> On Mjøen and the Norwegian eugenics movement, see Kyllingstad, *Measuring the Master Race*, 98–113.

measures “on the one hand to secure a eugenic race, and to get rid of the parasite on the other.”<sup>641</sup> Still, Koumaris argued:

The most beautiful measure, auxiliary to non-reproduction [sterilization], for those individuals who cannot be subjected to the more radical solutions, is their (almost) lifelong segregation in work facilities in the countryside not as punishment of irresponsible individuals (exactly because they cannot be punished), but to ensure the well-being of these disadvantaged miserable creatures, who should be deprived of one thing only, to transmit their individual misery to their descendants. This is what the common good demands, and it is not a huge expectation from society.<sup>642</sup>

In a popular article published a few months later, Koumaris acknowledged that such negative measures are often met with criticism, but noted that if members of society followed the laws of heredity, they would finally have a chance “to interrupt the reproduction of these innocent unfortunate creatures.”<sup>643</sup> “For certain individuals,” he continued, “science had one emblem ‘no children!’”<sup>644</sup> All other measures were welcome, but either temporary or difficult to implement, except what he described as “an

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<sup>641</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 16, 7. In 1936, Bjørnson nominated Alfred Ploetz, “the founder of eugenics in Germany,” for the Nobel Peace Prize “because he issued a warning against the biological consequences that war inflicted upon human reproduction.” See “Nomination Archive,” The Nobel Prize, accessed July 5, 2021, [https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/archive/show\\_people.php?id=7294](https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/archive/show_people.php?id=7294); and “About Yale: Yale Facts,” Yale University, accessed May 1, 2017, <https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts>.

<sup>642</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 16, 7.

<sup>643</sup> John Koumaris, “Δια την Καλλιτέρευσιν της Φυλής μας [For the Betterment of Our Race],” *Η Βραδυνή* [Evening], June 23, 1937, 5.

<sup>644</sup> Koumaris, “Δια την Καλλιτέρευσιν [For the Betterment of Our Race],” June 23, 5.

insignificant and harmless surgery.”<sup>645</sup> The model was none other than the German Sterilization Act of 1933.

Toward the final part of his lesson, Koumaris’s views on heredity hardened. “They are fatal and relentless for humans too, the laws of heredity first discovered by the monk Gregor Mendel,” he wrote.<sup>646</sup> It is exactly this view of heredity as destiny that would come to characterize and lead to its extremes the symbiosis between genetics and eugenics internationally. Koumaris mobilized once again a martial vocabulary and advised “knowledge of the enemy,” which would provide the “weapons to hinder the spread of these [hereditary disadvantages] in future generations by getting rid of . . . the undesirable traits and taking measures to limit the union of disadvantaged organisms.”<sup>647</sup> This language of war and internal enemies is reminiscent of both pre-Nazi antisemitic propaganda and Nazi racial policies portraying the Jews as the internal and eternal enemy of everything German.<sup>648</sup> But, as the narrative continued, this war was a defensive one, dictated by inescapable biological laws and therefore excused in its seeking to purify the national body from the inferior, but well-hidden, recessive Jewish genes.<sup>649</sup> Indeed, Koumaris had already referred to Jews as the exemplar of endogamy’s dangers, which had led to unusually high numbers of recessive hereditary diseases like deaf-muteness.<sup>650</sup> Although such

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<sup>645</sup> Koumaris, “Δια την Καλλιτέρευσιν [For the Betterment of Our Race],” June 24, 5.

<sup>646</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 17, 1.

<sup>647</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 17, 1.

<sup>648</sup> On the construction of the Jews as the enemies of the German people, see Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>649</sup> On how the Jews became a prime example of Mendelian heredity, especially associated with recessive factors and degenerative phenomena, see Teicher, *Social Mendelism*, 109–16.

<sup>650</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 16, 1.



interpretations could imply that perceived signs of degeneration among Jews were only a matter of cultural factors and not immutable biological traits, the image of the Jews as carriers of diseases, this time disguised in their heterozygous condition, made them anew the target of racial policies. The concern of contemporary anthropologists, geneticists, and eugenicists was indeed not with ancient admixtures—they all more or less accepted that races were the results of past interbreeding—but with recent racial interbreedings. Koumaris, however, appeared surprisingly liberal in observing that heredity research had led to the collapse of several myths, one of which was that the mixture of different races resulted only in the inheritance of inferior traits.<sup>651</sup>

Around the time Koumaris was writing this article, the US, the country that he looked up to as a pioneer of eugenics, had sterilized about twenty thousand individuals. By 1941, the number had reached thirty-six thousand—thirty-six thousand people deprived of the right to reproduce.<sup>652</sup> At the same time, his scientific idols at KWI-A were offering their expertise in the implementation of Nazi racial politics. In the short span of five years, from 1933 to 1939, approximately four hundred thousand people were sterilized, with more than five thousand women and six hundred men not surviving the operation, and in most cases having not even been diagnosed with a hereditary genetic disease.<sup>653</sup> So to whom was he referring when, by the end of his lesson, he managed to raise some vague criticism of eugenic applications of genetics as “the par excellence slippery ground, which many leaders with modernizing social tendencies hastily test, in the otherwise commendable and noble effort to improve ‘races,’ by invoking ex cathedra anti-scientific axioms about mixture,

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<sup>651</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 13, 1.

<sup>652</sup> Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 115–16.

<sup>653</sup> Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 99–100.

preservation, improvement etc of races to support their political aspirations”?<sup>654</sup> One might think of both the US and Germany as the obvious targets of his criticism, if he were not so quick to cite the elite of mainstream eugenicists as producing the few real studies of racial mixture.

Koumaris referenced first Fischer’s 1913 standard (and now infamous) study on the Mendelian inheritance of human traits based on the racial examination of the “Rehobother bastards,” the offspring of Boers (Dutch settlers) and Hottentot women in German Southwest Africa (today’s Namibia). Fischer’s main conclusion was that racial traits were not inherited as groups, but instead segregated following Mendel’s laws, and as they combine again in future generations, they produce new types, which are not intermediate to the previous ones.<sup>655</sup> Koumaris then cited the 1929 study of the renowned American physical biologist and eugenicist Charles Davenport (1866–1944) and physical anthropologist Morris Steggerda (1900–1950) on racial crossings in Jamaica, which, through a combination of anthropological examinations and intelligence testing, concluded on the overall inferiority of racially mixed individuals. While Fischer’s study attracted early criticism on its simplistic argumentation, and the Davenport-Steggerda research raised contemporary criticism for its racist conclusions, they both became foundational for subsequent work on miscegenation in relation to degeneration.<sup>656</sup> Koumaris did not fail to reference the German tropical medicine specialist Ernst Rodenwaldt (1878–1965), who in 1922 published a classical study on the Mestizos of Kisar,

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<sup>654</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 17, 1 and 5.

<sup>655</sup> On Fischer’s study as one of the first efforts to bring together physical anthropology and Mendelian thinking, see Hans-Walter Schmuhl, “‘Neue Rehobother Bastardstudien.’ Eugen Fischer und die Anthropometrie zwischen Kolonialforschung und nationalsozialistischer Rassenpolitik,” in *Anthropometrie. Zur Vorgeschichte des Menschen nach Maß*, ed. Gert Theile (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2005), 277–306; and Teicher, *Social Mendelism*, 35–41.

<sup>656</sup> On the reception of Fischer’s study, see Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute*, 26.

the fair descendants of Dutch and Kisarese parents in the Dutch East Indies (today's Indonesia). Rodenwaldt's work was rather favorable on the effects of hybridization, even if, when appointed professor of hygiene in 1930s Germany, his positions changed to accommodate the new political climate.<sup>657</sup> "Bastard research" intensified at KWI-A after 1933 under Fischer's leadership. Indeed, Koumaris mentioned the study of Yun-kuei Tao, Fischer's student, on the effects of marriages between Chinese men and European women, which appeared at the end of his dissertation on the "Chinese Male-European Female Hybrid." The Greek anthropologist acknowledged that the most recent of these studies pointed to other than Mendelian forms of inheritance, but the results were still limited and therefore did not allow for broad generalizations.

For Koumaris, problems arose when scientific discussions hastily reached the public, or when politics took precedence over science. The issues most sensitive to such political abuses, he wrote, "are primarily the ones associated with heredity, the purity of blood and races, the superiority of certain races, and those connected to the eugenic racial improvement, the sterilization of individuals etc."<sup>658</sup> Once again, he warned that the state might not be able to reap the fruits of serious research through the deliberate application of racial hygiene for the improvement of certain groups (and even the whole of humanity) if limits were crossed and scientific facts were misrepresented. "The issues of 'race' mixing or purification," he added, "as well as the advantages or harm resulting from them, should only be studied from a real biological perspective and under the cold lenses of science, and not, as usually, with prejudice and emotion."<sup>659</sup> We have seen before how references to

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<sup>657</sup> Hans Pols and Warwick Anderson, "The Mestizos of Kisar: An Insular Racial Laboratory in the Malay Archipelago," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 49, no. 3 (October 2018): 445–63.

<sup>658</sup> Koumaris, "Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity]," March 17, 5.

<sup>659</sup> Koumaris, "Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity]," March 17, 5.

scientific objectivity abounded in all debates and between all sides of arguments. Fischer himself was well-versed in “playing the ‘science card’” and thus wrapping his decisions and actions in a veneer of scientific rationality supposedly detached from any political influences.<sup>660</sup> Could it be that Koumaris, like many of his contemporaries, managed to differentiate completely between scientific contributions and political positions, or even that he accepted Fischer’s defense of scientific neutrality as late as the end of the 1930s?

Koumaris continued his lesson with added emphasis: “**Politics**, i.e. expediency, and **Science**, i.e. the search for truth, are difficult to combine.”<sup>661</sup> He concluded that “the ‘purification’ of families, races and humanity, with the appropriate caution that this serious task demands, as well as the possible improvement of social groups and even their elevation, are required beyond any doubt.” Such seemingly inconsequential intellectual acrobatics were made possible by an understanding of the symbiosis between human heredity and eugenics as one that put science first—a kind of rational scientific politics. Regardless of whether Koumaris’s concerns were genuine or not, adopting this outlook was an attempt to preserve his scientific respectability and allowed him to deal with what otherwise would appear as split loyalties. The final word in his lesson was given to Nietzsche. Koumaris explained that biologists’ optimistic belief in a continuous, progressive evolution had now been tempered by indications of decline, which necessitated working eugenically without searching for the *Übermensch*, or superhuman. To this aim, he quoted from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, changing the order of the verses to suit his purpose:

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<sup>660</sup> Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 65.

<sup>661</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 17, 5, emphasis in the original.

“Marriage: so call I the will of the twain to create the one that is more than those who created it. . . . Not only onward shalt thou propagate thyself, but upward!”<sup>662</sup>

### **V. Mendelizing the Greek Race: Between Relative Purity and Racial Mixing**

After a long stay in Germany during the summer and early autumn of 1938, Koumaris returned to Greece inspired to contribute yet another article to the “Popular University” column. This time the title of the piece was “Race – Health,” and it focused on issues that had recently attracted a fair amount of attention, like “‘race purity’ or better ‘race purification,’ ‘eugenics’ and ‘social hygiene’ . . . whose recent blossoming is due to the famous ‘Laws of Mendel’ on the heredity of the properties of parents to their descendants.”<sup>663</sup> Although much of the content of this new lesson was similar to “Mendelism and Humanity,” both its context and emphasis were different. Koumaris commented that he was wary of burdening readers by repeating himself, but he concluded that this was knowledge worth disseminating as often as necessary. He seemed even more worried, however, about the conflation of his message with what he characterized as “the possible exaggerations on this issue [racial hygiene] of German national socialism aiming at racial purification.”<sup>664</sup>

Indeed, what the whole world had experienced in 1938—and what Koumaris had probably witnessed firsthand during his stay in Germany—was an escalating German expansionism and extreme persecution of Jewish people. The annexation of Austria in March was followed by the occupation of regions of Czechoslovakia in September. Nazi sympathizers unleashed unprecedented violence against Jewish people, which led to

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<sup>662</sup> Koumaris, “Μεντελισμός και Ανθρωπότητα [Mendelism and Humanity],” March 17, 5. The English quote comes from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Random House, 1917): 73.

<sup>663</sup> John Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – health],” *Η Βραδυνή* [Evening], October 13, 1938, 1.

<sup>664</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – Health],” October 16, 2.

hundreds of thousands of Jews fleeing the country. Until the early 1930s, various futures seemed possible to the adherents of eugenics and racial science—but only a few years later, no special imagination was required to foresee developments under the Nazi regime.<sup>665</sup> Back in Greece, Koumaris was writing for a newspaper friendly to the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas, which lasted from 1936 to 1941 and resembled in some ways and attempted—even if inconsequentially—to imitate German Nazism and Italian fascism (fig. 4.5).<sup>666</sup> Above all, though, he was writing for a lay audience who he thought needed more racial and eugenic propaganda through alternative best-practice models such as those of “the extremely civilized states of the Scandinavian countries.”<sup>667</sup> He argued that hereditary science provided guidance to two separate but interconnected issues: the protection of race and the protection of a race’s health.

The first he called “the race problem,” pertinent to *raciology*, the branch of anthropology that focused on the study of races and race mixing.<sup>668</sup> Koumaris admitted that this issue was the most hotly debated and susceptible to political influence. Purity or purification of races and the uncertain results of admixture were the main points of contention.<sup>669</sup> His view, though, was that “we cannot deny a somehow homogeneous group its right to safeguard the relative purity of its race,” and thus objected to the tendency of marrying outside one’s own race.<sup>670</sup> He based this aversion toward extensive cross-

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<sup>665</sup> On the possibility of imagining all kinds of futures in the pre-1933 era, see Lipphardt, “The Emancipatory Power of Heredity,” 128–29.

<sup>666</sup> On the special characteristics of Metaxas dictatorship, see Constantine Sarandis, “The Ideology and Character of Metaxas Regime,” in *The Metaxas Dictatorship: Aspects of Greece, 1936–1940*, eds. Robin Higham and Thanos Veremis (Athens: Hellenic Foundation for Defense and Foreign Policy and Speros Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism, 1993), 147–77.

<sup>667</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – Health],” October 16, 2.

<sup>668</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – Health],” October 13, 1.

<sup>669</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – Health],” October 13, 1.

<sup>670</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – Health],” October 13, 5.

breeding on the suggestion that the happy coexistence of a group of people depends on not only bodily but more importantly psychic unity, which, he believed, was not possible to achieve among people of different races. “Since ‘race’ and ‘heredity’ are the same,” he wrote, “and the differences between races mean differences in hereditary substance, it is not odd for someone to believe that only hereditary offspring of the same or closely related races may constitute a really physically and mentally harmonious hereditary group.”<sup>671</sup>

The second issue, which Koumaris considered less controversial, related to the improvement of health for the whole group based on racial hygiene and the principles of heredity regardless of race or origin. He encouraged Greek scholars and the public to leave aside their skepticism and instead profit from the scientific advances made by “the greatest geniuses of Germany, dedicated to the study of man” in understanding how heredity worked.<sup>672</sup> He added that “man has the right to multiply as much as possible the good hereditary offspring by uniting the healthiest and best individuals, and conversely withdraw from the hereditary line any bad or weak element.”<sup>673</sup> These two lines of thought, purity and mixture of race, along with their eugenic applications, merged into a full-fledged racial theory, which Koumaris developed in several subsequent scholarly and popular publications, from an initial lecture at HAS in May 1939 through various iterations until the 1950s. Hereditary thinking provided the framework for his theoretical ideas; international research in anthropometry, blood groups, heredity, and racial psychology were mobilized to provide supporting evidence.

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<sup>671</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – Health],” October 16, 1. The idea that racial mixing led to disharmonious combinations was a trademark of Davenport’s thinking, but it spread widely among eugenicists in Europe and beyond. The Norwegian physical anthropologist and proponent of Nordicism and racial hygiene, Halfdan Bryn, (1866–1933) held similarly extreme views against such “unnatural” crossings, which he thought led to societies so heterogenous that they were destined to collapse. See Kyllingstad, *Measuring the Master Race*, 126–30.

<sup>672</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – Health],” October 15, 1.

<sup>673</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή – Υγεία [Race – Health],” October 15, 1 and 5.

Koumaris's racial theory first depended on adopting a broad concept of race, not least one that could connect it to heredity. Rather remarkably, however, in his 1939 HAS lecture entitled "The Problem of Race,"<sup>674</sup> he referenced as satisfactory and consistent with the most recent achievements of hereditary studies a forty-year-old definition by the German philosopher and ethnologist Ernst Grosse (1862–1927).<sup>675</sup> Koumaris chose the following words from Grosse's treatise to describe how anthropology understood race as "a larger group of people who are connected to one another and separated from other groups of this kind through the hereditary common property of a certain innate physical and mental disposition."<sup>676</sup> Grosse was the only German scholar mentioned in Koumaris's lecture. Whether this was a conscious attempt on Koumaris's part to avoid association with other often-cited German colleagues who were by then affiliated with the Nazi regime is difficult to assert. Nevertheless, the early history of heredity and anthropology research in Germany connected Grosse to racially minded academics like Fischer, Baur, Lenz, and others at the University of Freiburg who sought to promote Weismann's concepts of heredity, and shared an interest in evolutionary explanations of social behavior.<sup>677</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> John Koumaris, "Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race]," in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1939* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1939] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1939), 10–26.

<sup>675</sup> Ernst Grosse, *Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1900), 117.

<sup>676</sup> Koumaris, "Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race]," 11. The original German text reads as follows: "[Unter einer Race versteht die Anthropologie] eine größere Gruppe von Menschen, welche durch den hereditären Gemeinbesitz eines bestimmten angeborenen körperlichen und geistigen Habitus untereinander verbunden und von anderen derartigen Gruppen getrennt sind." Other research suggests that Grosse's works stressed the shared biological and mental capacities of humankind and directed attention to the interactions between environmental, economic, and other sociocultural factors in classifying world populations. See, for example, Wilfried van Damme, "Ernst Grosse and the Birth of the Anthropology of Aesthetics," *Anthropos* 107 (2012): 497–509.

<sup>677</sup> On the Freiburg group gathered around Weismann's work, see Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, 96–101.





Fig. 4.5: *Life* article on the similarity between ancient and modern Greeks. Nelly's— Elli Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (1899–1998), the Greek favorite photographer of Metaxas's regime— showed the photographic series "Parallelisms," to which these pictures belong, at the Greek pavilion of the New York World's fair in 1939, published in *Life* July 14, 1947, 20–22.

Koumaris continued to cite Grosse's work until the 1950s because it had the potential to synthesize findings from all human sciences, from ethnology to medicine, accommodating his expansive approach to anthropology. At the same time, this definition spoke to the core of Koumaris's—and German speaking anthropologists'—racial thinking, which as we have already seen in Section IV, treated body and mind as equivalent and integrated expressions of race.<sup>678</sup> Indeed, as Koumaris explained multiple times, "race

<sup>678</sup> In November 1934, Koumaris bought the newly published *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1934), AMA, Folder 1934–1935, Document 394, November 19, 1934. The author, Egon von Eickstedt (1892–1965), was a student of Felix von Luschan, and between 1931–1945 became professor and director of the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnology at the University of Breslau. Eickstedt was the editor of *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde*, where Koumaris contributed as well. Similar to Fritz Lenz at KWI-A, Eickstedt supported an academic style of race

includes individuals connected through **blood relations, common origins**, common **hereditary dispositions** and most important of all, hereditary traits stubbornly **inherited** further. These ‘racial’ characteristics are in more detail, **bodily, anatomical, physiological** (functional) and **psychical** (mental).<sup>679</sup> This holistic view applied to individuals as much as to groups, and, as Koumaris wrote many years later, it allowed anthropologists to detect race through diverse avenues, even if the concept remained slippery.

This approach was far from naïve. Koumaris was pragmatic in trying to save from perishing under shattering criticism what he perceived as the core concept of his discipline. In one of his final statements on the problem of race, Koumaris wrote: “I would like to believe, that there is no doubt that the author of these lines has full knowledge of the instability of the criteria on which the concept of race is based when it comes to humans. The distinct characteristics from one to the other [race] are confused and classification can lead to several groups.”<sup>680</sup> But as was the case with most anthropologists who still defended the existence of race, this acknowledgement was fleeting. *Race psychology*, or the study of the persistent inheritance of mental traits that only a local anthropologist studying his or her own group could detect with appropriate scientific accuracy, remained the solution to the race problem. As Koumaris emphasized, racial “diagnosis is sometimes assigned with unbelievable certainty, through a kind of ‘intuition,’ if being so vague can be allowed

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psychology and in 1936 published *Grundlagen der Rassenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1936), which Koumaris bought immediately (AMA Folder 1936–1937, Document 441, April 22, 1937). Although he does not cite Eickstedt, the views he expresses are undoubtedly inspired by these two publications. For Eickstedt’s research on race psychology, see Egberg Klauke, “German ‘Race Psychology’ and its Implementations in Central Europe: Egon von Eickstedt and Rudolf Hippius,” in *Blood and Homeland*, 23–40.

<sup>679</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 12, emphasis in the original.

<sup>680</sup> John Koumaris, “Φυλή Ελληνική [Greek Race],” In *Παναηγυρικός Τόμος, Επί τη Εβδομηκονταετηρίδι Μαθιού Μακκά* [Celebratory Volume on the 70 years of Matthios Makkas] (Athens: Ελληνική Εκδοτική Εταιρεία [Elliniki Ekdotiki Etairia], 1951): 34.

within a positive science.”<sup>681</sup> One could “feel” race, he argued, concluding that “racial intuition helps there where anthropometric instruments and statistics miss the target or complicate things.”<sup>682</sup>

As much as Koumaris insisted throughout his career that “we are obliged to accept the existence of race” as a biological reality, he also extended a major caveat: pure races did not exist.<sup>683</sup> As we have already seen, this was a position widely accepted by race scientists since the beginning of the twentieth century. Koumaris, however, invested his observation with hereditary language, arguing that despite apparent permanence, races gradually changed and acquired new traits through “mutations” and mixtures that “have already bastardized the supposed original purity of the primordial groups.”<sup>684</sup> These prehistoric racial crossings were responsible for meddling with once-pure hereditary lines, and therefore any attempts to find pure races were not only utopian, but also naïve.<sup>685</sup> Koumaris further argued that although the distinctive characteristics of a race may be altered, they do not disappear completely. “Races,” he summarized, “are daughters of heredity and the environment, with the latter acting implicitly by affecting the chemical constitution of the living being, which may then lead to morphological changes.”<sup>686</sup> In this sense, races were

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<sup>681</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή Ελληνική [Greek Race],” 38–39.

<sup>682</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή Ελληνική [Greek Race],” 39.

<sup>683</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 12.

<sup>684</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 12.

<sup>685</sup> This was a view that Koumaris adhered to even after WWII, when he continued to argue for the classificatory relevance of race. Koumaris, “Φυλή Ελληνική [Greek Race],” 34–35.

<sup>686</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 12. Koumaris’s references were the French anthropologist Paul Lester (1891–1948) and physiologist Jacques Millot (1897–1980), who had just published a new synthesis on racial classification; see Lester and Millot, *Les Races Humaines* (Paris: Colin, 1936). Lester and Millot were both affiliated with the Musée de l’homme and the French Société d’anthropologie. Historian Alice L. Conklin suggests that although they both belonged to a circle of antiracist scholars who opposed scientific racism and German-style

fixed in a kind of primordial synthesis carried on into the present through hereditary mechanisms, and at the same time existed in a state that Koumaris described as “**fluid constancy**.”<sup>687</sup> While the possibility of identifying pure races was becoming minimal, the new term pointed to a kind of relative purity and led to a redefinition of race as “the autonomous, or nationally co-existing contemporary groups when these exhibit a clear, age-old biological cohesion, bodily and mental similarity.”<sup>688</sup>

This new definition of race gave Koumaris the opportunity to expand on a second caveat: races could not be hierarchically organized. He stated that from the very beginning, racial issues were confused with the idea of superior and inferior races, which dated back to antiquity and was reaffirmed by Gobineau’s theories. This “arrogant theory of racial superiority,” endorsed by the Germans with their insistence on the existence of the “Aryan race” and the Americans who substituted it with the “Nordic race,” was responsible for distorting the real aim of *racialism*, meaning the study, identification, and preservation of race in its current (not idealized) state.<sup>689</sup> At the very moment that he suggested that all races were equal—although he maintained some skepticism that “it would be possible for the Pygmies of Africa, for example, under any conditions and with any allowance of time to reach the intellect of other races”—Koumaris supported the “**diversity of races**.”<sup>690</sup> This rationale also allowed him to clarify the contested relationship between “race” and “people” or “nation,” a controversial issue even for the most fervent German race

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anthropology, they nevertheless researched similar questions and were in contact with Nazi-friendly, ethnoracist French anthropologists, making their positions difficult to separate. See Conklin, *In the Museum of Man*, 165–70 and 282–325.

<sup>687</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 13, emphasis in the original.

<sup>688</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 13.

<sup>689</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 18.

<sup>690</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of race],” 18.

propagandists.<sup>691</sup> Contemporary nations did not exhibit any kind of racial unity; they were instead conglomerations of different races brought together artificially through political processes. As Koumaris wrote in the aftermath of WWII, bloodshed and hostility could be avoided if borders were based on anthropological knowledge and the acceptance of racial difference provided that we could “teach in schools not conquest but the collaboration of races, not racial hatred but the special value of each race, not the superiority of any race but their differences, not the extermination of other races but the relation of each to the soil which is sacred for it.”<sup>692</sup> These intellectual acrobatics continued, and Koumaris managed in the same breath to denounce the “Aryan race” as a mistaken linguistic construct and endorse the existence of an English, Japanese, or Jewish race. What then made these, or any other groups mentioned, into a “race”?

Here, Koumaris introduced a new concept: the *racial nucleus*, which included the typical traits of a race, or what one could call a “racial type” or “variety.”<sup>693</sup> This nucleus did not include the characteristics of all of the citizens of a nation; several such nuclei could coexist within one people, but the dominant nucleus was the one that produced the characteristic physical and mental complexion of the whole group. Another important attribute of these racial nuclei was that they could gradually mix, as in Great Britain, where the different types were quite similar; or be kept fully apart through repulsive powers, as in the US or Poland, where the initial racial components were completely foreign to one another. Koumaris insisted, however, that even among closely related races, “the voice of

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<sup>691</sup> Egberg Klauke refers to the efforts of individuals like Günther to dispel the myth of a “Germanic” race and instead refer to the primordial European races that made up the German nation. See Klauke, “German ‘Race Psychology,’” 26.

<sup>692</sup> John Koumaris, “On the Morphological Variety of Modern Greeks,” *Man* 48 (November 1948): 126–27.

<sup>693</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 14.

blood' is heard sooner or later" and may lead to repeated separations and unifications such as between Swedish and Norwegian people. But he was quick to add: "I cannot imagine that anybody would support that miscegenation, for example, between Swedes or Norwegians with the Lapps is preferable, i.e. between two absolutely different races both bodily and mentally, than the purification of the first, and the salvation of the latter from certain extinction."<sup>694</sup> In Koumaris's narrative, the 'Lapps'—the Sami indigenous people living in Scandinavia and Russia—did not belong to the white but to the Mongoloid race, which, if not inferior, was at least so distinct that the two should avoid mixing. However, his suggestion of "protecting" the "Lapps" from extinction echoes the widespread contemporary assumption that encounters between assumed primitive and civilized people would inevitably lead to the disappearance of the first. In the racial theories of Scandinavian anthropologists who belonged to the circle of Jon Alfred Mjøen, with which Koumaris seemed to be familiar, the hybrids with Sami people were thought to be inferior to both races, and therefore any efforts of assimilation should be avoided in favor of segregation.<sup>695</sup> As he explained, the processes of "assimilation or purification of biologically diverse related or foreign racial nuclei" that had been going on for centuries or millennia allowed anthropologists to talk about a people as a race.<sup>696</sup> He further argued that "in the

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<sup>694</sup> Koumaris, "Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race]," 14.

<sup>695</sup> The attitudes of ethnographers, historians, and physical anthropologists, as well as of the official state toward Sami people within Norway and Sweden (and between the two countries themselves), were far from uniform. The debates ranged from the Sami people's indigenous status and prehistoric migrations to their cultural and racial makeup, and from seeing them as an inferior primitive relic of the past to an idealized people of nature. From the mid-nineteenth century and for more than a hundred years, the policies in Norway and Sweden were derogatory, paternalistic, and colonial, including stripping the Sami people of their rights to land, livelihoods, and cultures. While in Norway the core strategy was assimilation, Sweden changed its policy from assimilation to include the segregation of Sami reindeer herders. For the most updated work on the history of racial science in Norway and Sami people, see Kyllingstad, *Measuring the Master Race*.

<sup>696</sup> Koumaris, "Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race]," 15.

basis of nations there is a racial nucleus, the dominant one, which allows fairly easily even a lay observer to distinguish at first glance the type of the ‘Greek,’ meaning the ‘Greek race’ with its diversity, the type of the ‘French,’ from the type of the ‘Russian,’ or the type of the ‘Italian’ from the type of the ‘English’ or the ‘Jew’ etc.”<sup>697</sup>

In many ways, Koumaris’s idea was not novel. In Chapter 2, we already explored how late-nineteenth-century anthropologists introduced the concept of racial type as a glimpse into the primordial past.<sup>698</sup> While the burden of proof was still on racial anthropologists, who then needed to demonstrate that these types were not pure idealizations and specify which markers constituted them, the idea of a type, or a nucleus in this case, emerged as a life raft for those who wanted to hold on to race but give it a Darwinian or Mendelian makeover. The nucleus, which was both constant and shifting and therefore, as we will soon see, should be protected, perfectly captured the tensions that hereditary thinking, at least among anthropologists, carried within it well into the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>699</sup> Just as Fischer, in his Rehoboth study, argued that

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<sup>697</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 22.

<sup>698</sup> Historian George W. Stocking was the first to draw attention to how French anthropologist Paul Topinard introduced the concepts of “racial types” and “varieties” to counter contemporary conceptions of racial purity and constancy. See Stocking, *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968): 56–63. Claude Blanckaert takes this discussion even further back to the early decades of the nineteenth century to explore how French ethnologists and anthropologists adopted the concepts of “race” and “variety” to denote both constancy and perpetuity. See Blanckaert, “On the Origins of French Ethnology: William Edwards and the Doctrine of Race,” in *Bones, Bodies, Behavior: Essay on Biological Anthropology*, ed. George W. Stocking (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988): 18–55. For an analysis of the “racial nucleus” concept in the Greek case inspired by Stocking’s work, see Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology*, 162–64.

<sup>699</sup> Historians Staffan Müller-Wille and Christina Brandt write that heredity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century “at one and the same time . . . drew attention to phenomena involving variation and constancy, deviance and permanence, divergence and common origin—hence the increasing political significance of the concept in the context of emerging European nation states

none of the original races were dominant in all aspects, homozygosity acquired new significance if the aim was for the independently inherited but typical traits that composed a racial nucleus to persist.

But the language of heredity, or more accurately the attempt to connect the older anthropological discourse with hereditary theories, became even more evident in Koumaris's suggestion that racial nuclei could purify themselves. He noted that "mixing produces random and 'abnormal' varieties and types which are fortunately purified in future instances through a process of **regressive heredity towards the one type** which re-emerges persistently after a long time out of this chaotic hodgepodge."<sup>700</sup> This way, the dreaded regression of hybrids toward a supposed original type, most often associated with degeneration and a failure to improve plant and animal breeds, could acquire positive values in the efforts to preserve human races. "This type," declared Koumaris,

is the one that science today seeks to preserve, improve, purify, i.e. to reveal from the depths of ancient mixtures as the science of heredity teaches us. And this we cannot regard as a utopia. Because hereditary science, as we have already said, teaches that any mixtures, any crossings, a perfect merger, is temporary. The mongrels "resolve" in time, to put it this way, and one of the original forms reappears through a kind of "**unilateral regression.**"<sup>701</sup>

There can be little doubt that Koumaris's views on this point were influenced by earlier theories on natural selection and heredity, which assumed a kind of retrogressive evolution, not in the sense of producing harmful deviations from the core type but instead

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and their imperial ambitions." See Müller-Wille and Brandt, "From Heredity to Genetics: Political, Medical, and Agro-Industrial Contexts," in *Heredity Explored*, 4.

<sup>700</sup> Koumaris, "Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race]," 17, emphasis in the original.

<sup>701</sup> Koumaris, "Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The problem of Race]," 23, emphasis in the original.



suggesting the reappearance of ancestral-type traits.<sup>702</sup> Already in 1892, Felix von Luschan—a mentor figure for most anthropologists trained in the German style of anthropology and ethnology like Koumaris—urged his colleagues to embrace heredity and the law of nature that allowed firmly established traits to reoccur in offspring despite generations or even millennia of race mixing. Koumaris’s own writings reflect an amalgam of diverse strands of early hereditary thinking. While ascribing to natural selection a dominant role in organic evolution, his references to regression borrowed Weismann’s theory of *panmixia* as a rhetorical scheme to warn of the chaos that would ensue if people were left to reproduce freely outside of natural selection’s constraints.<sup>703</sup> At the same time, his insistence on the typical racial core is reminiscent of Galton’s typological conception of heredity as a conservative force that retained core racial characteristics amid indefinite modifications.<sup>704</sup> Mendelian genetics seems to have reinvigorated this kind of atavistic thinking, where the recurrence of expression of ancestral traits was associated not only with the concept of recessive and dominant characteristics, but also with the idea that one could control the course of evolution and maintain the frequency of characteristics in a given population through an initial selective breeding, which could purge the group of the deviant, unwanted characteristics that were assumed to be recessive.

Although Koumaris had previously appeared at least agnostic, if not positive, about the effects of racial mixture, his position hardened toward the end of the 1930s; he came to understand the mechanism of retrogressive selection as a clear sign against miscegenation. “This is what has hindered the appearance of an absolute human mixing,

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<sup>702</sup> Veronika Lipphardt discusses Felix von Luschan’s early engagement with hereditary thinking, and especially the idea of the persistent inheritance of groups of physical characteristics. See Lipphardt, “The Emancipatory Power of Heredity,” 111.

<sup>703</sup> Gayon, “Natural Selection, Regression, and Heredity,” 174–78.

<sup>704</sup> Gayon, “Natural Selection, Regression, and Heredity,” 178–80.

and there is no fear for that in the future. And is this not nature's guiding us?" he wondered.<sup>705</sup> As we will soon read, he grew more insistent about the harmfulness of racial mixture in the Greek case. Even before that, though, Koumaris questioned several of Fischer's conclusions, never directly mentioning his name but only his most famous research study, *Die Rehobother Bastards*. The Greek anthropologist absolutely mistrusted the assertion that the great achievements of ancient and contemporary civilizations could have resulted from hybridization, or that such mixing could bring new vigor to existing groups. But because he, or any other anthropologist, could not prove that such hybrids were biologically inferior, Koumaris turned to the fuzzier mental qualities and suggested that the disparities between even closely related races were so great that any such union would be disharmonious and soon collapse.<sup>706</sup> As he emphasized:

**Anatomical similarity, physiological similarity, psychical similarity and psychological similarity cannot but constitute a harmonic whole.** The discovery, purification and support of this harmony pursue today a few people, maybe creating some fuss, but soon all people will follow . . . for the benefit of humans and their progress. Because this harmonic whole cannot but be superior of any mixture of individuals belonging to different races, with different nature and different soul. No theory can convince us of the opposite. . . .<sup>707</sup>

Although others struggled to prove a natural aversion to mixing, Koumaris did not lose faith in what he saw as the noble cause of maintaining racially distinct peoples.

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<sup>705</sup> Koumaris, "Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race]," 17.

<sup>706</sup> On the contradictory and coexisting notions of "racial purity" and "hybridization" among German racial thinkers in the context of Mendelian thinking, see Teicher, *Social Mendelism*, 90–102.

<sup>707</sup> Koumaris, "Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race]," 22.

Humans, he thought, have been correct to instinctively see miscegenation as disadvantageous. He asked: “But is it not, if nothing else, a natural and instinctive . . . phenomenon for a human to protect their family, tribe, or race? And is not cosmopolitanism the opposite?”<sup>708</sup> The juxtaposition of “the feeling of pride and satisfaction” experienced by an individual for their “imaginary or real” “pure origin” and the “feeling of desperation,” “the feeling of inferiority of the really racially mixed person who could not hide their percentage of nigger blood” was evidence of the misery that racial mixture brought to both individuals and societies.<sup>709</sup> In his scholarly and public interventions, Koumaris continued to move in the always murky waters of ideology and science, with his anthropological appropriation of Mendelian thinking suspended between purity and mixture. As he concluded in 1951, “the existence of this beautiful mosaic of races should not become an obstacle to the happiness of people. As long as they remember that they are ‘humans.’”<sup>710</sup> The question, then, is how Koumaris’s racial theorizing applied in the Greek case, and how he found the balance between, on one hand, admitting morphological variety and, on the other, still advocating for protecting a uniform Greek race.

Koumaris’s consistent answer to the existence of the Greek race from the early 1940s until well into the 1950s can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The Greeks were a primordial mix of closely related indigenous races found around the Mediterranean; this primordial mix had occurred so far back in time that one could still speak of “pure” or “unmixed” races.

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<sup>708</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 19–20.

<sup>709</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The Problem of Race],” 22.

<sup>710</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή Ελληνική [Greek Race],” 52.

2) They became an identifiable and distinct stock with their own physical, mental, and cultural characteristics, which in recent years had been protected through relative religious isolation.

These core theoretical elements, which are in many ways reminiscent of Stephanos's arguments on Greek indigeneity and mixture, were enveloped in a Darwinian and Mendelian framework that rejected absolute racial purity and stability, to reestablish them through the notion of ancestral types and relatively permanent crosses. Koumaris relied on portraying the Greeks—and all human races—as an evolutionary group, adapting to geographical and cultural conditions or constraints, and emphasized historical processes of racial mixing, while at the same time trying to disentangle the long lines of descent to control further mixing.

In one of his first full treatments of the subject, presented at HAS in 1942, Koumaris suggested that even though “**the relative variety of the Greek race**” may appear strange, “only inferior races are characterized by relative uniformity,” while “**the variety of Greeks is ancient . . . and adapted to the variety of its soil.**”<sup>711</sup> The present diversity could be explained in terms of long, historical isolation imposed by the fragmented and ragged geology of the landscape around the Aegean Archipelago. Koumaris agreed with John Linton Myres (1869–1954), the British ancient historian, geographer, anthropologist, and archaeologist often referred to as the “Father of Cypriot Archaeology,” who approached the question *Who are the Greeks?* as first and foremost a geographical problem.<sup>712</sup> In Myres's

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<sup>711</sup> John Koumaris, “Η Ποικιλομορφία των Ελλήνων [The Variety of Greeks],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1942* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1942] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1942), 7–28: 7–8, emphasis in the original.

<sup>712</sup> Myres, *Who Were the Greeks?*, 23.

history, the Aegean “cradleland” acted both as a “recipient of all the three primary breeds of the White Race of mankind” as well as a space “sufficiently aloof and self-contained to impose its peculiar controls on each and all, selecting the strains best fitted for acclimatization.”<sup>713</sup> The Greek anthropologist adopted to a large degree Myres’s ambitious *longue-durée* synthesis of the prehistory of Greece, which reached a much-desired double conclusion: a) the Greeks of all epochs were a significantly hybridized lineage; they had emerged from “mongrel ancestry” but through “quiescence and segregation” achieved “the relative re-establishment of pure-bred strains” in secluded areas, and b) they and their land exhibited an innate capacity to absorb, assimilate, and Hellenize any “unconformable, uncongenial traits,” while retaining their own distinct character, “as a physical variety of man, a Greek type is always emerging in Greek lands.”<sup>714</sup> As Koumaris quoted from Myres’s epilogue, the unity of the Greek people had always been elusive. They were never “one people,” but “ever in a process of becoming.”<sup>715</sup>

On the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of HAS, Koumaris declared:

**[W]e are a varied race. Such has always been our race.** Our variety is fundamental, and does not come from extensive newer mixtures. If we expect to find today the ancient Greeks “pure,” or as others imagine them, then let’s despair. . . . Only some savage isolated races could ever be considered “pure.” The variety of the Greeks is age-old, prehistoric, indigenous, as well as “familial.” . . . But what kind of purity are we really looking for? What do we consider the ancient Greek Race to be, of which we are the descendants? We are obviously searching for the

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<sup>713</sup> Myres, *Who Were the Greeks?*, 531.

<sup>714</sup> Myres, *Who Were the Greeks?*, 531–32.

<sup>715</sup> Myres, *Who Were the Greeks?*, 531, quoted in Koumaris, “Η Ποικιλομορφία των Ελλήνων [The Variety of Greeks],” 9.

artistic ideals of the Greek nose, the blonde hair color etc. But these are ideals, exactly because they were rare. They existed and can still be found but they are always more unusual. We have, however, so many other characteristics typical of the Greek race.<sup>716</sup>

Once again, purity and impurity, change and permanence met in Koumaris's words, and the search for identifying those allegedly primordial, "pure lines" from which Greeks emerged continued.

In his reconstruction of Myres's narrative, Koumaris surveyed physical anthropological findings from his own research together with anthropological literature from the first decades of the twentieth century and Luschan's early anthropometric research, Wellisch's blood groups, as well as from Fischer's and Eickstedt's most recent publications. Previous hesitation coming from the acknowledgement that empirical proof of historical mixing was scarce gave way to an account that, in its obscurity, attempted to provide order and coherence. The Greek race included "three principal racial types," all of which were "indigenous" and "related," emerged in the southeast corner of Europe and covered the Euphrates region in Asia, and formed one anthropogeographic circle.<sup>717</sup> According to Koumaris, the following three types formed the dominant racial nuclei of the Greek race:

1. The "**Mediterranean' race**," which formed the basic racial stock of the Prehellenes, or Pelasgi, as Stephanos also called the people who inhabited

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<sup>716</sup> John Koumaris, "Ελληνική Φυλή και Φυλετισμός [Greek Race and Racialism]," in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1944* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1944] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1944), 44–53: 46, emphasis in the original.

<sup>717</sup> Koumaris, "Η Ποικιλομορφία των Ελλήνων [The Variety of Greeks]," 9.

the prehistoric prairies. Modern Greeks retained most of those characteristics, including their long skulls (dolichocephaly), coloration, height, and blood types.

2. The “**Anterioasiatic**’ race,” a broader but equally ancient racial type, which exhibited similar characteristics to the Mediterranean type and included the Hittites. The tendency toward short skulls (brachycephaly) and the blood group distributions observed among modern Greeks were evidence of interbreeding between the Mediterranean and the Anterioasiatic races, even if distinguishing between the two was difficult.
3. The final core racial nucleus was the so-called “**Northern**” type, which Koumaris, however, again connected to the Prehellenes and other Paleolithic peoples who descended from the broader geographic area of Greece and could therefore be considered indigenous.<sup>718</sup>

Koumaris added that it was possible to identify several secondary racial nuclei, but the most striking conclusion was that characteristics such as brachycephaly, which were often used as evidence for modern Greeks’ recent miscegenation and degeneration, derived from prehistoric times, while later mixtures were few and insignificant.

The development of the racial theory of the Greek race accompanied passionate arguments for its protection. Koumaris asserted that all racial politics in Greece should aim at “the preservation and improvement of the eternal material of our race” by “supporting healthy marriages and children, through the adoption of eugenic measures in general, as well as the prevention of any mixing.” These measures, he repeated, should be first positive and mild, proceed carefully and with understanding, mainly through outreach campaigns

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<sup>718</sup> Koumaris, “Η Ποικιλομορφία των Ελλήνων [The Variety of Greeks],” 9–21.

on the value of race and the establishment of counseling services. In time, applied eugenic measures could include **“a prenuptial certificate, isolation, sterilization.”**<sup>719</sup> While his suggestions were in line with the social hygiene and eugenic measures supported by other members of HAS and circulating in various academic and political circles, as we have discussed in previous sections of this chapter, his fear of mixing intensified.<sup>720</sup> Koumaris anticipated uncontrollable mating brought about by legislative changes within Greece that would allow marriages between individuals of difference races, but most of all by emigration abroad. Although he was confident that **“one day mixed marriages will be forbidden . . . for purely ‘racial’ reasons,”** he worried that for Greeks who lived outside of the country, and where the Greek state had little control, the situation was already almost irreversible.<sup>721</sup> Allowing the loss of Greek blood, language, religion, and national consciousness, and becoming absorbed in another race through mixed marriages, was “a crime against their own descendants.”<sup>722</sup> Koumaris hypothesized that continuous miscegenation could alter the basic composition of a race, as hybridization led to further heterozygosity and made it even more difficult for the typical traits of the racial nuclei,

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<sup>719</sup> Koumaris, “Ελληνική Φυλή και Φυλετισμός [Greek Race and Racialism],” 53.

<sup>720</sup> Besides the lectures at HAS, Koumaris published a number of articles in the popular press warning against mixed marriages. See, for example, “Οι Ξενιτευμένοι και η Φυλή μας [The Emigrants and Our Race],” *Η Βραδυνή* [Evening], October 14–16, 1940; “Δια να Σωθή η Ελληνική Φυλή [For the Salvation of the Greek Race],” *Εστία* [Hestia], March 10, 1945; “Τα Μεγάλα Κοινωνικά Ζητήματα: Οι Μικτοί Γάμοι [The Great Social Issues: Mixed Marriages],” *Έθνος* [Nation], September 19, 1945.

<sup>721</sup> John Koumaris, “Η Ελληνική Φυλή εκτός της Ελλάδος [The Greek Race outside Greece],” in *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1940* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the Year 1940] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1940), 3–7: 4–5, emphasis in the original.

<sup>722</sup> Koumaris, “Η Ελληνική Φυλή εκτός της Ελλάδος [The Greek Race outside Greece],” 7.



which remained hidden for generations in such unions, to become homozygous again and express themselves.

When, in 1948, Koumaris presented a summary of his racial theory in the journal *Man*, his views had not changed. He argued that the Greek race, with all its morphological variety, existed, as all races continued to exist. It produced “a characteristic type, though one that escapes exact anthropometric definition,” but still adhered to the commonly accepted definition of a race with “almost uniform characteristics, physical and psychological, inherited in its descendants.”<sup>723</sup> Koumaris tried to rehabilitate this notion of race, which by the end of the 1940s might have sounded antiquated, with his construction of “fluid constancy” and called for protecting this kind of semipermanent state from “every infusion of ‘new blood’ . . . because children of mixed parents belong to no race.”<sup>724</sup> This position was supposedly consistent with Koumaris’s rejection of interracial hatred in favor of promoting the value of each and every race, as long as they remained separated.<sup>725</sup> He concluded the article with an unequivocal statement:

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<sup>723</sup> Koumaris, “On the Morphological Variety,” 126.

<sup>724</sup> Koumaris, “On the Morphological Variety,” 127.

<sup>725</sup> As a case in point, Koumaris published a celebratory essay upon learning of the peaceful negotiations in London for the full independence of the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan from Great Britain. As he wrote, “**the independence of races**’ is the basis for racial peace.” And: “A race is entitled to demand to become a social group, nation, state, etc, and live based on its customs and traditions” provided that “it wishes to do so, **is in a position to do so**, exists as an entity in its fatherland, is alive and has been preserved from time immemorial.” See, “Ἡ Αυτοτέλεια των Φυλών [The Independence of Races],” *Πολιτική Επιθεώρησις* [Political Review] 2, no. 1–2, 42–44: 42–43, emphasis in the original.

The Greek race was formed under the Acropolis Rock, and it is impossible for any other to keep the keys of the sacred rock, to which the Greek soul is indissolubly linked.<sup>726</sup>

In spite of conceptual adjustments and efforts to Mendelize racial thinking toward less static and purity-driven representations, Koumaris's final metaphor portrayed a Greek race that was essential, idealized, sacred, unchanging, and connected not only to bones or blood but to the ancient ruins of a glorious past and to the stable rocks of its homeland. This metaphor is the ultimate embodiment of racial anthropologists' obsession with the unity of body, soul, and culture.

## VI. Conclusion

She is bound to the eternal rocks, she is bound to the transparent soil, the eternal race is still alive. And she will continue to live as long as she has enough blood.

...

The blood remains the same. But even if foreign seeds are ever sown, they will only be weeds. The weeds do not survive for many generations. And will never manage to produce a flower.

...

It is the race which has taught the world, with the pen, the weapon, the chisel. And the lips sign hymns to her for the new paths she has paved.

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Such race will live forever. Such race will never die!<sup>727</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> Koumaris, "On the Morphological Variety," 127.

<sup>727</sup> Koumaris wrote this poem under his literary pseudonym. See Ion Mistras, "Φυλή [Race]," in *Στην Ελλάδα! Και Κάποια Άλλα* [To Greece! And Several More] (Athens: Petros Dimitrakos Publishing House, 1957, third edition), 32–35.

Koumaris published the poem entitled “Race,” from which these verses come, in 1946, in the middle of a civil war that tore the country apart. The nationalistic and romantic sentiment for the personified and idealized Greek race is unambiguous in these lines. But what really shines through these verses is a condensed version, a thick summary, of Koumaris’s theory of race. Similar to the quote from his *Man* article, which must have been inspired by this poem, Koumaris portrayed the Greek race as indigenous, primordial, and existing on a continuum from the ancient times that brought civilization to the world up to the era of the modern Greeks, who took up arms, fought for their freedom, and resisted foreign invasion. It was a race that could purify itself by controlling any foreign influences, absorbing them in its core, and keeping its blood unaltered. In this poem, as in Koumaris’s theory, the whole nation, Greece, is coextensive with the Greek race.



Fig. 4.6: Koumaris’s drawing for the poem “Race,” published in *Mistras*, “Φυλή” [Race], 35.

A drawing by Koumaris that accompanies the poem depicts the goddess Athena, protector of the city of Athens and goddess of wisdom, sitting next to a female religious figure at the stairs of the Acropolis as they read their books. The unity of Greece appears

unquestionable, from the ancient Gods to the Christian Orthodox religion—but in their respective roles they also signify the Greek race as a mixture of ancient elements protected by Christian faith against recent miscegenation (fig 4.6).

As the cases of Zurukzoglu, Lambadarios, Sakellariou, and especially Koumaris show, their narratives of the Greek race relied on various appropriations of heredity and eugenics to resist accusations of degeneration and miscegenation, and instead promote a more hopeful alternative for their country. References to concepts and processes such as “regeneration,” “hybridization,” “dominance,” “inverse regression,” and “purification,” as well as the recurring tension between environmentalist and biological explanations, betray not only the influence of hereditary theories, but also the efforts of these actors to rehabilitate their accounts by making use of contemporary scientific discourse. Veronika Lipphardt’s concept of the “emancipatory power of heredity,” originally used to describe how German-Jewish anthropologists attempted to rewrite their history by calling on biology, effectively captures how Greek scholars tried to benefit from applying the flexible concepts and metaphors of heredity.<sup>728</sup> Indeed, even in Koumaris’s most deterministic accounts, heredity and eugenics joined forces to argue that the Greek race could regress to its original mixture of types and achieve homozygosity within its individual members, which could then be preserved through endogamy between healthy individuals, since eugenic measures would have ensured the removal of those carrying inferior traits. Such interpretations highlight how heredity became the necessary counterpart for applying eugenics as a science of rational social engineering.

None of the actors included in this chapter pursued genetics research. All remained mostly within the framework of anthropometry, which continuously expanded to include new properties to measure everything from blood to intelligence, and reinterpreted old

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<sup>728</sup> Lipphardt, “The Emancipatory Power of Heredity,” 127–28.

traits as hereditary. The authors' eugenic suggestions remained mostly unfulfilled, except in the case of limited social-hygiene measures. They all, however, theorized on heredity, reappropriated knowledge produced outside and within Greece, and engaged in eugenic debates balancing between the pragmatic demands set by the limited resources of the Greek state and their aspirations to reform the system under the guises of scientific rationality and objectivity. The transdisciplinary exchanges presented here suggest an intellectual atmosphere of unity and common cause despite diverging views, or the constant reminder that more research was needed, and that separating nature from nurture was a complex question. This chapter shows that neo-Lamarckian, environmentalist, and neo-Darwinian mechanisms of human evolution and heredity, puericulture and eugenics, coexisted in exchanges within HAS well into the 1930s, even though the positions gradually hardened in favor of explanations that championed the biological part in otherwise assumed biocultural phenomena. In its rapprochement with heredity, anthropology in Greece remained a science in the service of the nation, but now looking inside the community, the individual, and even—figuratively and literally—under its skin and beyond its physical body, in its soul and mind, to discern, improve, and preserve its qualities.

## Concluding Reflections

Writing the history of physical anthropology, or more generally race science, is a constant effort to make sense not only of why certain questions became important in certain contexts, but, most interestingly, also of answers that are endlessly contradictory, frustratingly eclectic, and in many cases painfully consequential. This thesis tells the history of physical anthropology in Greece through such tensions and contradictions. We have looked at the efforts to naturalize the physical body and the soul of the Greek nation as a racial group from the end of the nineteenth century until after the end of WWII.

The common thread in this story is continuity; either in the narratives of Greek scholars or in their methods of inquiry, national and transnational exchanges. While the core anthropological and national narrative of the lineal continuity between ancient and modern Greeks remained the same, it got continually adapted, took different shapes and was reiterated through different media and materials. The thesis has turned to research papers, society proceedings, encyclopedia entries, newspaper articles, and literary texts, as well as to the material and immaterial elements, from bones, to blood, and the psyche, which anthropologists used to produce and disseminate racial knowledge.

The underlying assumption of this work is the inescapable link between the science of race and politics. The harder these actors tried to refute their political engagements and aspirations, the greater the rapprochement of their work with political stakes of national integration and control. Seven decades of anthropological inquiry in Greece demonstrate the opportunities and limitations that all scholars involved in discussions of race, and later on eugenics, encountered in their attempts to prove the national and social relevance of their research. We have seen how in the almost uninterrupted transnational circulations of people, data, methods, and instruments, national concerns remained central as Greek anthropologists negotiated their particular stories both in tandem with or, in opposition

to dominant discourses. Before the thesis closes, the common thread of continuity and the link to politics come together for a last time in the events narrated after the “Questions and Answers” section.

## **I. Questions and Answers**

Here I will briefly summarize my answers to the four questions I set out to examine in the introduction of the thesis:

1. How did the question of continuity between ancient and modern Greeks become enmeshed in international discussions on human evolution and degeneration in the final decades of the nineteenth century?

In Chapter 1, we explored this question through the writings and exchanges of Charles Darwin, Charles Lyell, Francis Galton, and William Rathbone Greg. Their discussions centered around two related issues: first, how could the theory of natural selection explain the little improvement, stasis, or degeneration, of human intellect after the ancient (classical) Greeks, and second, what could the decline of ancient Greeks mean for the modern inhabitants of Greece and Europe. While their responses varied, and certainly revealed Victorian prejudices and moralist discourses, they also captured contemporary engagement with questions related to human evolution, specifically the evolution of human mind and morals, and not least with debates on human progress and degeneration. In their exchanges, the case of ancient Greece became a reminder of the contingency of evolutionary progress, a cautionary tale for their own society, and a record of their concerns over societal changes, such as urbanization, and migration. This Chapter showed how closely entangled classical perception and evolutionary thinking were, and provided critical background regarding the place of Greeks—ancient and modern—in nineteenth-century discussions about Western European ancestry.

2. How did physical anthropology become established in Greece and attempted to negotiate concerns and criticisms over modern Greeks' alleged degeneration?

Chapter 2 introduced us to the work of the first Greek physical anthropologist, Clon Stephanos, as he tried to measure and define the national body alongside dominant discourses from history, archaeology, and folklore studies. Stephanos's early interest in archaeology, his knowledge and connections with the anthropological world of Paris, and his lobbying with high-profile Greek politicians and academics were key for the establishment of the Anthropological Museum in Athens and for receiving further research support. In turn, he continued to work across disciplinary boundaries, accumulating bones from excavations, archives, and ethnological material, and across national borders negotiating bones, data, instruments, and publications. The Chapter followed these mobilities and documented how transnational connections operated as a source of knowledge and legitimacy, and as controlling mechanisms of disobedient narratives. Indeed, Stephanos reinforced the national narrative of continuity between ancient and modern Greeks against traditional anthropological wisdom with measurements on material that he considered unique. He suggested a theory of indigeneity and local, primordial mixture of races, which departed from references to the idealized classical body and instead embraced the racial diversity of his contemporaries. At the time of his untimely death, Stephanos was celebrated within and outside Greece as a uniquely dedicated and diligent man of science.

3. How did novel methodologies in blood group research promise to revitalize racial science in Greece and internationally, while they contributed to recasting national identities and projects?

In Chapter 3, we examined John Koumaris's efforts to reinvigorate anthropological research as the new director of the Anthropological Museum both by following in the path of his



predecessor, Clon Stephanos, with a close focus on physical anthropology, as well as by expanding the research repertoire to include racial serology. The Chapter demonstrated how Koumaris attempted to achieve a broader national collaboration among all those working with issues related to anthropology, and how he balanced between two spheres of international influence, France and Germany. When he had his institutional basis in place with the establishment of the Hellenic Anthropological Society and the chair of anthropology at the University of Athens, Koumaris introduced blood group research as a viable alternative to tired and debated anthropometric examinations. The cumulative and comparative aspects of serological research made movements of data, often based on human mobilities, a core characteristic of this new transnational endeavor for racial science, while minor discrepancies in methodologies, standards, and results were explained away in favor of national narratives. As we discussed in this Chapter, the nation remained central in these transnational exchanges. In the Greek case, this meant that racial blood group research done on inhabitants from various territories of the country and refugees from Asia Minor turned small differences in distributions to similarities instead of divergences and thus again supported a story of homogeneity and continuity.

4. How did new understandings of human evolution in the twentieth century become entangled in constructing a new theory for the Greek race that defended both its continuity, homogeneity, and right to act eugenically to preserve its existence?

The final Chapter 4 presented us with a complex picture of the relationship between twentieth century theories of heredity, their appropriations in anthropological discussions, and their connections to diverse eugenic visions. The Greek scholars who took part in these debates turned to hereditary concepts and processes to fight back against accusations of degeneration and miscegenation. Their simultaneous references to permanence and change, diversity and homogeneity, normality and deviancy, nature and nurture, showed how debates originating in the nineteenth century continued uninhibited and unresolved

into the twentieth century when the research subjects were humans. While eugenic arguments appeared throughout the interwar period, and did not lead to relevant political decisions, the Chapter showed that these discussions hardened toward the end of the 1930s. Even if Koumaris, who was inspired both by German style Mendelian genetics and eugenics, tried to distance his arguments from morally tainted science, his views became radically biologized and he endorsed several of the most extreme eugenic programs internationally. All these national and transnational exchanges led him to suggest a new theory of the Greek race, which relied on Stephanos's early conception of indigeneity and primordial mixing, albeit redressed in Mendelian terms and explanations, and suggesting an inescapable unity of body, soul, and culture.

## II. Disturbing Continuities

After Koumaris published his paper in the journal *Man*,<sup>729</sup> the South African anthropologist, colonial administrator and at the time lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Witwatersrand, Mervyn David Waldegrave Jeffreys (1890-1975), sent a sharp response to the editor:

Sir,—Professor Koumaris, in his recent article on 'The Morphological Variety of Modern Greeks,' writes: 'This race is distinguished today ..,' meaning thereby the 'Greek Race.' Is he really offering such a statement to scientists of today? What is it that distinguishes the Greek race from the Jewish race, from the Catholic race and from the Mohammedan race? Has he studied such books as Klineberg's *Race*

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<sup>729</sup> *Man* was the journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland and published articles from all fields of anthropological inquiry.

*Differences*; Ruth Benedict's *Race and Racism*; Ashley Montagu's *Man's Most Dangerous Myth—The Fallacy of Race*?<sup>730</sup>

Jeffreys's letter captured the political and intellectual spirit of the time – or at least, the majority movement among anthropologists, and other researchers of human diversity, who wished to be done with racism and certain varieties of the concept of race. Ironically, one year earlier, in 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations had adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, while in South Africa where Jeffreys lived and worked the government had enacted the apartheid laws.<sup>731</sup>

As we have already seen in this thesis, criticisms around the concept of race, its science and politics had been accumulating for decades. After the mid-1930s, however, scholars from both sides of the Atlantic wrote monographs that openly challenged Nazi science as driven by nationalist politics, rejected racial hierarchies, and questioned connections between physical characteristics, mental capacities, and cultural achievements. Among the most outspoken, were indeed the ones that Jeffreys mentioned. The American anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1887–1948) published not only for academics, but also communicated her anti-racist agenda through illustrated books, pamphlets and in film. The British-born anthropologist Ashley Montagu (1905–1999) first published *Man's most*

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<sup>730</sup> Mervyn David Waldegrave Jeffreys, "The Greek Race?" *Man* 49 (March 1949): 36.

<sup>731</sup> Jeffreys was known for his erratic style. He is quoted to have made the following statement in front of the all-white audience of South Africa's Roodeport Club: "If you can swallow it, the Negro is the true human . . . Man's common ancestor was dark-skinned . . . You are just bleached specimens of original, dark-skinned primitive man . . . While we [whites] were still dark-skinned, the Negro sprang from our dark ancestor. He is the newest species of man . . ." The reporter wondered, "Was the doctor merely pulling the legs of South Africa's Negrophobes?" but Jeffreys reassured them that he was perfectly serious. "Science: Negroes are Newest," *Time*, August 18, 1952, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,816726,00.html>.

*dangerous myth* in 1942 and started with the famous sentence “The idea of ‘race’ represents one of the greatest errors, if not the greatest error, of our time, and the most tragic.”<sup>732</sup> From the side of the psychologists, the Canadian born Otto Klineberg (1899–1999) was among those who had long argued that Nazi racial theories had no scientific validity and no innate intellectual differences between races had been found. All this would make Jeffreys outburst justified. However, newer scholarship has now shown that despite their indignation for the misuse of science by politics, their anti-racist activism, commitment in the unity of humans, and praise for cultural diversity, most of these scholars did not actually reject the biology of race. As historian Tracy Teslow convincingly demonstrates, biological essentialism and cultural relativism overlapped and co-existed in the works of these mid-twentieth century scholars.<sup>733</sup> She explains that they “argued strenuously that although hereditary, genetic differences existed among people, their manifestations were minor compared to the overwhelming similarities among human beings,” therefore irrelevant in a democratic society.<sup>734</sup>

But Koumaris answered back immediately in a way that betrayed his surprise for the unexpected attack. His answer is so fascinating that deserves full quotation:

SIR,—Dr. M. D. W. Jeffreys meditating a little ironically upon the existence of a 'Greek Race,' to which I referred in a short article in MAN recently (I948, 14I), ventures a comparison between that race and a 'Catholic' one. This reminds us of

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<sup>732</sup> Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 1.

<sup>733</sup> Tracy Teslow, *Constructing Race: The Science of Bodies and Cultures in American Anthropology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>734</sup> Teslow, *Constructing Race*, 349.

Max Müller and his suggestion that it was as absurd to talk about an imaginary 'Indo-European race' as about a 'dolichocephalous language.'

Yet, if the 'Indo-European race' is a fallacy, the 'Greek race' is undoubtedly not so, notwithstanding the current stability (as we call it) of this eternal world, and all the books indicated by Dr. Jeffreys for study. And we are not by any means chauvinists in insisting that the Greek world also should be considered as a separate 'race,' as many well-known authorities accept.

Finally, I would like to venture to make a proposal to Dr. Jeffreys, viz. to gather together, in one and the same hall, one hundred Scots (or better one hundred Russians who belong to the same Greek Catholic race), and another hundred Greeks; if Dr. Jeffreys does not at first glance distinguish the former from the latter with 95-per cent. success, I will sincerely accept that the 'Greek race' is a fallacy, like the English, the Russian or any other so-called 'race.'<sup>735</sup>

To Koumaris's dismay, it is certain that Jeffreys would have equally objected to the English or the Russian being called a race. He, on the other hand, belonged to a still viable group of anthropologists who still fused together the categories of race and nation in what Richard McMahon has called "national races," a kind of proxy for nations which bound together glorious historical narratives with physical, psychological, and cultural characteristics.<sup>736</sup> Indeed, we have already discussed how for Koumaris, and Stephanos before him, the Greek nation became naturalized as a primordial racial mixture with distinct traits. While Stephanos attempted this kind of naturalization through the accumulation of detailed anthropometric measurements, and their juxtaposition with

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<sup>735</sup> John Koumaris, "The Greek Race," *Man* 49 (December 1949): 140.

<sup>736</sup> McMahon, *National Races*, 1.

linguistic and ethnographic evidence, Koumaris added to all this the more obscure domain of race psychology. As he wrote in his original *Man* article, the Greek race has a characteristic type, but one that is difficult to assert using anthropometric methods. Even if Jeffreys were not Greek—which based on Koumaris's views would have given him a better understanding of those scientifically slippery traits that made the Greeks into one race—he should still be able to rely on common sense. For Koumaris the result of that thought experiment was obvious for any person, not least for someone with a supposedly trained professional eye.

The reality of race underwent further significant criticism just a year later, when Montagu served as *rapporteur* and principal editor of the first UNESCO's *Statement on Race* signed by world respected authorities within anthropology and genetics.<sup>737</sup> The ambitions were high. This document was supposed to disseminate state-of-the-art scientific understandings and consensus on human diversity and combat once and for all the scientific racism of the past. The summary statement and the longer text accompanying it, entitled "The Scientific Basis for Human Unity," acknowledged among other things that all humans belonged to the same species, *Homo sapiens*, there was no scientific evidence to support innate differences in intellectual and cultural achievements, instead all humans possessed the traits of educability and plasticity, and finally race mixture was harmless from a biological point of view and therefore objections to intermarriage could not be biologically justified. At the same time race was redefined as "a group or population characterised by some concentrations, relative as to frequency and distribution, of hereditary particles (genes) or physical characters, which appear, fluctuate, and often

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<sup>737</sup> UNESCO, "Fallacies of Racism Exposed," *UNESCO Courier* III, no. 6–7 (July and August 1950): 1 and 8.

disappear in the course of time by reason of geographic and/or cultural isolation.”<sup>738</sup> The statement highlighted three major human divisions “**Mongoloid, Negroid, Caucasoid,**” and asserted that these were not static but changed over time following dynamic biological processes.<sup>739</sup> The authors of the statement suggested to substitute the term ‘race’ by ‘ethnic group’ since lay people already used the first in the sense of the latter. Two further points, often attributed to Montagu’s editing, became crucial points of controversy. First, “the biological fact of race and the myth of ‘race’ should be distinguished. For all practical social purposes ‘race’ is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth.” And second, using a quote from Darwin, the text concluded that “the whole of human history shows that a co-operative spirit is not only natural to men, but more deeply rooted than any self-seeking tendencies.”<sup>740</sup>

When one reads the Statement, in which all but the last point were rather carefully phrased to ensure that new evidence might overturn some of these conclusions and did nothing to undermine the biological reality of human differences be they called ‘race,’ or ‘ethnic group,’ it is difficult to imagine the backlash they elicited among contemporaries. Yet, as Michelle Brattain shows the scientific criticism that followed initial enthusiasm turned even these hesitant scientific revolutionaries into “an increasingly embattled minority.”<sup>741</sup> Before the ink on the first statement had dried, UNESCO succumbed to the

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<sup>738</sup> UNESCO, “Fallacies,” 8.

<sup>739</sup> UNESCO, “Fallacies,” 8, emphasis in the original.

<sup>740</sup> UNESCO, “Fallacies,” 8.

<sup>741</sup> See, Michelle Brattain, “Race, Racism, and Anti-Racism: UNESCO and the Politics of Representing Science to the Postwar Public,” *American Historical Review* 112 (2007): 1388. Other critical approaches to the history of UNESCO statements and UNESCO’s antiracist campaigns include Jenny Bangham, “What is race? UNESCO, mass communication and human genetics in the early 1950s,” *History of the Human Sciences* 28, no. 5 (December 2015): 80–107, Jean Gayon, “Do Biologists Need the Expression ‘Human Races’? UNESCO 1950–1951,” in *Bioethical and Ethical Issues Surrounding the Trials and Code of Nuremberg: Nuremberg Revisited*, ed. Jacques J. Rozenberg

pressure generated by mainly physical anthropologists who had already made their criticisms public in *Man*, and called for a new expert group to revise the document. It was obviously difficult to reconcile the initial ambitions with characterizations such as “misguided opinions,”<sup>742</sup> “philosophical and ideological doctrine,”<sup>743</sup> or Vallois’s conclusion that it included “contradictions, overly categorical affirmations, poorly justified negations.”<sup>744</sup> In June 1951, a new draft statement appeared, which not only removed the exalted human tendency to cooperation and the references to ethnic groups instead of races, but made it even more obvious that the target was racism and not race science. But the disagreements among the panel of experts and the physical anthropologists and geneticists invited to comment on it were so incommensurable that the final product was a five-page statement accompanied by more than seventy pages of comments.<sup>745</sup> Brattain notes, “the second statement project revealed how much the categories, premises, empirical records, and authority of an older, supposedly discredited body of work once dedicated to measuring difference continued to influence the science of race.”<sup>746</sup>

Back in Greece, Koumaris was rejoicing in these developments. He interpreted the opposition to Montagu’s thesis and the first UNESCO statement as a vindication and a proof that his was not an antiquated and peripheral voice as Jeffreys’s comment insinuated. Instead he thought of himself as at the forefront of physical anthropologists and expressed

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(Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2003), 23–48; Perrin Selcer, “Beyond the Cephalic Index: Negotiating Politics to Produce UNESCO’s Scientific Statements on Race,” *Current Anthropology* 53, Supplement 5 (2012): S173–84.

<sup>742</sup> William C. Osman Hill, “U.N.E.S.C.O. On Race,” *Man* 51 (January 1951): 16.

<sup>743</sup> Kenneth L. Little, “U.N.E.S.C.O. On Race,” *Man* 51 (January 1951): 17.

<sup>744</sup> Henri V. Vallois, “U.N.E.S.C.O. On Race,” *Man* 51 (January 1951): 16.

<sup>745</sup> UNESCO, *The Race Concept: Results of an Inquiry*, (UNESCO: Paris, 1952).

<sup>746</sup> Brattain, “Race, Racism, and Anti-Racism,” 1388.



his satisfaction for “no longer being alone in protesting against these modernist theories.”<sup>747</sup> Koumaris even referred to a private letter from Vallois on the “famous, but misguided UNESCO Statement” in which the latter confided, “your views and my views are identical on this point, and it is deeply saddening that a group of sociologists, even with the best of intentions, are coming to disturb an issue already quite complex.”<sup>748</sup> Indeed, right after the publication of the *Statement*, Koumaris had identified certain similarities with Montagu’s *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth*, which he otherwise characterized as wise.<sup>749</sup> The most striking and incomprehensible for Koumaris was the insistence to eradicate the concept of ‘race.’ But he contended that the reaction to the atrocities of the “idiotic” German racialism, which were justified, resulted to an equally exaggerated counter-reaction that threatened what he perceived as biological reality.<sup>750</sup> Koumaris remained convinced that if there was a fallacy related to race, then this would be to throw out the baby with the bath water. As he wrote, the upheaval against race was the obvious result of “the morbid exploitation of the idea of ‘race’ by German science” and the “appropriation of ‘superiority’ by German people.”<sup>751</sup> Interestingly the list of the scholars asked by UNESCO for feedback on the revised ‘Montagu’ statement included all the main protagonists of German racial science, including Fischer, Lenz, and Eickstedt, who were continuing with their academic careers in various German universities.

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<sup>747</sup> Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 88.

<sup>748</sup> John Koumaris, *Ο Άνθρωπος και η Ιστορία του* [Man and his history] (Athens: Petros Dimitrakos, 1954), 145.

<sup>749</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή Ελληνική [Greek race],” 34–35.

<sup>750</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή Ελληνική [Greek race],” 35–36.

<sup>751</sup> Koumaris, “Φυλή Ελληνική [Greek race],” 35–36.

This brief history around the publication of the UNESCO statements, now also seen from a Greek perspective, reveals the attempts to distance scientists, or Science with capital S, from certain concepts, methods, and practices during the transformation period that followed WWII.<sup>752</sup> A final point is worth mentioning, however, especially since in all previous chapters we have discussed the efforts of race scholars to distance themselves from politics, and instead present ‘objective’ scientific facts. Brattain writes that UNESCO’s attempts to build consensus provoked “renewed hostility to mixing science with politics,” while several scholars compared them “to the political machinations of the Nazis and the Soviets.”<sup>753</sup> Such criticisms came from people who had promoted and, in many cases, continued to promote eugenic and anti-immigration policies, expressed explicitly racist views, and had collaborated with Nazi, fascist, and other governments in nationalist, colonialist, and racial hygiene projects.<sup>754</sup> When Koumaris, and others, put on the one side of the scale Nazi science and on the other the anti-racist activists of the 1930s and 1940s, they were certainly doing politics trying once again to present it as objective, impassionate concern for science. Before closing this epilogue, therefore, we will briefly examine a few

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<sup>752</sup> Newer histories of race science have emphasized not only the ruptures but also the continuities characteristic of the period after WWII, see for example Conklin, *In the Museum of Man*; Lisa Gannett, “Racism and Human Genome Diversity Research: The Ethical Limits of ‘Population Thinking,’” *Philosophy of Science* 68, no. 3 (2001): 479–92; Veronika Lipphardt, “Isolates and Crosses in Human Population Genetics; Or, A Contextualization of German Race Science,” *Current Anthropology* 53, Supplement 5 (2012): S69–S82; Veronika Lipphardt, “‘Geographical Distribution Patterns of Various Genes’: Genetic Studies of Human Variation after 1945,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 47 (September 2014): 50–61; Nancy L. Stepan, “Science and Race: Before and After the Genome Diversity Project,” *Socialist Register* 39 (2003): 329–46.

<sup>753</sup> Brattain, “Race, Racism, and Anti-Racism,” 1402.

<sup>754</sup> For approaching the UNESCO statements and anti-racist science from a perspective that highlights the connections with developmental discourses in the global South, see Sebastián Gil-Riaño, “Relocating Anti-Racist Science: The 1950 UNESCO Statement on Race and Economic Development in the global South,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 51, no. 2 (2018): 281–303.

instances that showcase the continuous shifting of boundaries between science and politics.

### III. Doing Race and Politics

In May 1947 Frederica de Laguna (1906–2004), the pioneering archaeologist and ethnographer who dedicated her career to the study of the Arctic and the American Northwest Coast, contacted Larry Angel to ask his advice on anthropology in Greece.<sup>755</sup> De Laguna wrote as a member of the National Research Council Committee of International Cooperation in Anthropology, a committee emerging from the American Anthropological Association and established in 1945 with the aim to foster international collaboration and public outreach.<sup>756</sup> She inquired about contacts in Greece that could be added to a revised version of the International Directory of Anthropologists, or even a possible contributing editor.<sup>757</sup>

Angel's response, after first writing down Koumaris's address from memory, reads like a summary of the history of physical anthropology in Greece through the eyes of a non-European scholar:

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<sup>755</sup> John Lawrence Angel Papers, Box 16, Folder Correspondence L, Miscellaneous (L–Le), May 5, 1947, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

<sup>756</sup> As Mark Goodale writes this committee was particularly involved in establishing cooperation with international institutions such as the United Nations, and its chairman, anthropologist Melville Herskovits, was involved in discussions on the UN "Statement of Human Rights." See *Surrendering to Utopia: An Anthropology of Human Rights* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 19–25.

<sup>757</sup> On the initiative to establish a new Directory, see A. Irving Hallowell and Charles W. Bray, "Annual Report, 1946-1947. Division of Anthropology and Psychology, National Research Council," *American Anthropologist* 50, no. 1, part 1 (January–March 1948): 175–77.

I have been told that Koumaris is alive still, but for some reason (laziness or shame at being well-fed or uncertainty as to his politics) I have not written to him. I will do so.

Koumaris was and presumably is still Secretary of the Greek Anthropological Society ... which is of course devoted mostly to physical anthropology (i.e. “anthropology” in the continental sense). Other members of the society are doctors, dentists, anatomists, pathologists, an archaeologist or two but so far as I know no cultural anthropologists or ethnologists. Koumaris himself took some interest in ethnology and of course in prehistory. But since even he is a made-over surgeon the society which he founded and led never took in the study of society, except I think for some articles on criminology. K’s predecessor, Dr. Clon Stephanos, was a brilliant pioneer, an M.D. whose 1880 survey of the health of the Greeks in relation to geography left out nothing and established an example which I imagine Koumaris has tried to copy. I do not know of any young man who K. may have trained. He teaches in the medical school and is in his sixties (or seventies) though he used to boast of his health and never wore an overcoat. Koumaris is very shy, especially of women (calling himself a misanthrope), and he speaks French and German but no English. Better to write in French.

A good man to contact about all this would be Professor George E. Mylonas, Department of Archaeology, Washington University, St Louis, Missouri. ... One reason I have not written people is the general political mess in Greece. I am pretty sure that Mylonas cannot be a Royalist.<sup>758</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> John Lawrence Angel Papers, Box 16, Folder Correspondence L, Miscellaneous (L–Le), May 8, 1947, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

It is surprising that Angel speaks in a rather condescending manner about Koumaris and his work since their relationship had been quite friendly and cordial. But WWII and what followed changed much.

It is difficult to do justice to what Angel meant by Greece being in a “general political mess,” or why he would avoid talking to a royalist. When he was writing this letter, in May 1947, Greece was descending to the final and cruelest period of the civil war that had split the country in two since the summer of 1943.<sup>759</sup> The country had entered WWII in October 1940, initially fought and won against the Italian forces. When the German forces invaded Greece in April 1940, it was impossible for the exhausted Greek army or their collaborators to resist. The occupation lasted until October 1944 and led to the death of tens of thousands of civilians and the total collapse of the Greek State. However, the resistance movement that developed in the cities and the countryside, in which Greek communists and their supporters were protagonists, ended in six years of civil war. The involvement of the British was crucial in their attempts to hinder a supposed communist takeover of the country and in trying to reinstall political order under a royalist regime. Under conditions of terror inflicted by an authoritarian monarchist Greek government that prosecuted, tortured, sent to exile, and murdered anyone with alleged ties to communism, the final acts of the civil war included US intervention. A few months before Angel’s letter, in March 1947 President Truman announced financial and military support to every country fighting against communism, or what came to be known as the ‘Truman Doctrine.’ Greece was one of the first such experiments. The Greek government, its official army and armed militias received

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<sup>759</sup> For an introductory but nuanced account of this period, see Beaton, *Greece*, 268–305. On Greece under Axis occupation, and especially on its Jewish population, see Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler’s Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941–44* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 235–61.

enough support that two years later and after more civilian bloodshed the civil war was over. But for the time Angel was referring to, and many years after, the split was between communist and anti-royalist on the one side, and anti-communist and royalist on the other. All other positions were impossible.

Given Angel's familiarity with Greek political affairs and society, it is unsurprising that he was suspicious of Koumaris's sympathies within Greece. Koumaris's writings for popular press aligned with royalist and anti-communist interests, his sustained contacts with German anthropologists, and his endorsement of rather extreme styles of eugenics certainly strengthened Angel's uncertainty. Most of this we have already discussed. Here, we will turn to one final example, which highlights how Koumaris's objectivist scientific ethos mixed with political concerns either by choosing to engage with politics, or ignore it.

It was the day of Greece's liberation, 12 October 1944, when the Hellenic Anthropological Society held its autumn meeting. Koumaris called for all members to join in the celebrations and wrote "there are no words to describe the unreserved joy that overwhelms the soul of every Greek for the liberation of Athens from even the last of the invaders."<sup>760</sup> As Sevasti Trubeta observes "criticism of the occupation forces was voiced only after the liberation and revealed the need for rehabilitation."<sup>761</sup> She continues to

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<sup>760</sup> HAS, *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1944* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1944] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1944), 54–61: 54.

<sup>761</sup> Trubeta devotes a chapter to discuss the implications of anthropology's role as a "disinterested science" in wartime with several examples from the actions, or non-actions, of Koumaris and other members of HAS. While this topic requires further research, especially from hitherto unexplored archives, the general conclusion that HAS exhibited more patriotic vigor after than during the occupation, seems to be justified. See, *Physical Anthropology*, 121–38.

observe that involvement in the workings of the anthropological society constituted a political statement when the whole academic community was divided in the same way as the rest of the country.

This is true. Koumaris had often voiced his discontent with what he described as a misguided and arrogant theory of the superiority of the Aryan race, and its applications in the case of ‘the Jewish question.’ As he communicated in *La Difesa Della Razza*, the journal of Italian fascism which harbored explicit anti-Semitic views, marriage with a person of non-European race, such as Jews, was a non-issue as religious custom safeguarded from unions outside the Christian Orthodox faith and it was only religious marriage that had civil effect in the Greece.<sup>762</sup> His lecture to HAS in 1939 expressed some discomfort in the solutions to “the Jewish problem” and “the manner and intensity” of racial politics against the “Jewish race,” or else “the real contemporary nightmare,” which obscured the benefits and importance of both the racial question and eugenics.<sup>763</sup> Koumaris insisted that he could never imagine that there was hardly one Jew who would support the miscegenation of their race. He even argued that the denial of several governments to accept the hundreds of “the unfortunate exiled Jews” who fled Germany on board of SS St Louis, “the flying Dutchman,” in 1939 and became once again “the wandering Jews” was evidence of deeper motives against racial mixing in the new countries disguised as economic difficulties.<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> Unknown author, “Questionario: Politica della Razza in Grecia,” *La Difesa della razza* 2, no. 1 (November 1938): 46. For the close relations between the journal and Italy’s fascist regime, see Mariana Aguirre, “*La Difesa Della Razza* (1938–1943): Primitivism and Classicism in Fascist Italy,” *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 16, no. 4 (2015): 370–90; Francesco Cassata, “*La Difesa Della Razza*,” *Politica, Ideologia e Immagine del Razzismo Fascista* (Turin: Einaudi, 2008); Meir Michaelis, “Mussolini’s Unofficial Mouthpiece: Telesio Interlandi, Il Tevere and the Evolution of Mussolini’s anti-Semitism,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 3, no. 3 (1998): 217–40.

<sup>763</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The problem of race],” 18 and 20.

<sup>764</sup> Koumaris, “Το Πρόβλημα της Φυλής [The problem of race],” 12.

He, however, emphasized that the religious fanaticism of the past, which had condemned millions of people to torture and death, should not be replaced by racial fanaticism and extreme measures. A new publication in *La Difesa Della Razza*, towards the end of 1939, in which Koumaris commented on racial politics in Italy and the world, confirms his alignment with the racial theories presented in the “Manifesto degli Scienziati Razzisti” [Manifesto of Racial Scientists], but also offers chilling arguments in defense of racial politics against Jewish people.<sup>765</sup> While he once again admitted that the methods of racial purification in Germany were not optimal and therefore Italy should follow its own politics, he asked:

who can accuse a government for wanting to purify its people and others, dependent on it, from foreign elements, when these foreign elements, in one way or another occupy the positions of the Italians, the Germans, and so on, and moreover the highest and most delicate positions? ... But this is another question, which escapes the scientific field. For what it concerns me, I observe with the utmost indifference how many argue and complain that with the latest emigration of some celebrities, German science has dismissed the best scientists and so on. But apart from the fact that this is not true up to this point, why forget that the expelled

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<sup>765</sup> The “Manifesto,” clearly influenced by German racial science and Aryan ideals, was published a year earlier, in July 1938, in the newspaper *Giornale d'Italia*, signed by ten Italian scientists, endorsed by several others and edited in collaboration with Mussolini himself as fascist Italy’s formal declaration on the problem of race. It was reproduced in the first issue of *La Difesa Della Razza*, “Razzismo Italiano,” *La Difesa Della Razza* 1, no. 1 (August 1938): 1. On the debates around this declaration and Mussolini’s involvement, see Aaron Gillette, “The Origins of the ‘Manifesto of the Racial Scientists,’” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 6, no. 3 (2001): 305–23. While recent scholarship has demonstrated that fascist race science in Italy included diverse and contrasting currents, Koumaris was associated with the ones who took initiative for writing the “Manifesto” and supported biological racism and hereditarian eugenics. On the different schools of race science in Italy, see Francesco Cassata, *Building the New Man: Eugenics, Racial Science and Genetics in Twentieth-Century Italy* (Budapest and New York: Central European University, 2011), 223–84.



were Jews, and what matters is not Jewish science but German, for the glory of this people? What were we supposed to say if, for example, the tide of this foreign element occupied, to the detriment of the Greeks, the most important scientific or other positions in the country?<sup>766</sup>

Koumaris did not want to comment on the legislation enacted to “eliminate” this element, it was an embarrassment that amidst all this controversy men of science like him could not find “a radical solution to the vexing Jewish question.”<sup>767</sup> All these comments and reactions, even the ones that suggested some genuine empathy, either remained within an abstract academic sphere or expressed the generic criticism of politics taking precedence over science. When the deportations of the majority of Greek Jewry started in 1943, Koumaris and HAS remained silent. Greece lost around 90 per cent of its Jewish population from its estimated 70,000–80,000 Jews.<sup>768</sup>

The day of liberation for Athens, however, was a day of revelations for HAS. Before the meeting continued with new lectures, Koumaris revealed that in December 1940, when Greece was under attack by the Italian forces, he had contacted eleven anthropologist colleagues in Germany through the newly established Office for Intellectual Mobilization.<sup>769</sup> Among them were all the actors we have already met in this thesis; Fischer,

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<sup>766</sup> John [Giovanni] Koumaris, “La Politica Della Razza in Italia e nel Mondo,” *La Difesa Della Razza* 3, no. 1 (November 1939): 39–40.

<sup>767</sup> Koumaris, “La Politica Della Razza,” 40. In his autobiography, Koumaris took distance from the two publications in *La Difesa Della Razza*, an excerpt which appeared in the fascist weekly review *Quadriovio*, and two related articles that appeared in German Nazi press, either by referring to the editors insistence to receive some information from Greece or as unsolicited reproductions. See, Koumaris, *50ετηρίς* [Fifty Years], 86–87.

<sup>768</sup> Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, 235.

<sup>769</sup> I have not been able to locate these letters at the archive of the anthropological museum, but this is not surprising as it seems that most of Koumaris's correspondence is not there. The letters are, however, reprinted in the HAS proceedings in both German and Greek, see *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων*

Lenz, Eickstedt, Verschuer, Reche, and Günther.<sup>770</sup> The letter was an appeal to their philhellenism. Koumaris was convinced that “the brave Germany and kind German scientific world” will support “the small, peaceful, but glorious Greece” in her fight for freedom.<sup>771</sup> None of those colleagues, whom he knew personally, answered. As Koumaris explained to HAS, the reason was obvious since Germany would soon attack Greece as well, even if Mussolini had initially acted alone. “Political and national issues do not belong in the sacred spaces of Science, where the truth is only examined,” he repeated and continued, “but this case is different. We believe that German Science did not only come out of that space and lost its good fortune, but even after that it was still possible to react and save much.”<sup>772</sup> Therefore, he decided to send the same people a second open letter. After expressing his disappointment for being so naïve to expect a response, Koumaris asserted that in this case it was obvious that “politics had dried up the pen of Science.”<sup>773</sup> He went on to praise the bravery that the Greeks showed against much stronger invaders and lamented the disregard the occupiers demonstrated for the ancient monuments or the university spaces. With trucks, trains and airplanes the occupying forces grabbed all

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*του έτους 1944* [Proceedings of the year 1944], 55–61. The Office for Intellectual Mobilization was established by law in December 1940 with the aim organize all intellectual efforts, not least war propaganda, during the time that Greece was under war, see See, *Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως* [Government Gazette] 423:1, December 7, 1940, 3117–18.

<sup>770</sup> The other German scholars to whom Koumaris addressed the letter were the prehistorian and archaeologist Hans Reinerth (1900–1990), the racial hygienist and custodian of the skull collection at KWI-A Hans Weinert (1887–1967), the Munich anthropologist Theodor Mollison (1874– 1952), the anthropologist and mid-level SS commander Wilhelm Gieseler (1900–76), the prehistorian and Oswald Menghin (1888–1973). For biographical information on these actors, before and after 1945, see, Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich*.

<sup>771</sup> HAS, *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1944* [Proceedings of the year 1944], 56.

<sup>772</sup> HAS, *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1944* [Proceedings of the year 1944], 57.

<sup>773</sup> HAS, *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1944* [Proceedings of the year 1944], 60.

resources and thousands were left to die of hunger on the streets of the capital and the rest of the country, others were put to jail or murdered. Koumaris concluded,

Science cannot excuse what has happened. We are deeply saddened as Greeks, as intellectuals, as humans. The German intellect had unusually many admirers in our country, as well as in the whole world. It was very unfortunate that all those would be scattered in the wind.<sup>774</sup>

Three years later, in December 1947, Koumaris announced with some satisfaction that three of the leading German anthropologists, Fischer, Lenz, and Verschuer had finally replied and presented their letters to the HAS members.<sup>775</sup> He commented that in those responses he could read the personalities of the three men. Fischer was absolutely honest and apologized sincerely, Verschuer was diplomatic but expressed his regrets, while Lenz stubbornly protested that Koumaris had wronged German scientists. Indeed, Fischer wrote a rather emotional letter asking for forgiveness and hoping that one day young Germans would be able to look at Acropolis again and pay their respects after having done all the work required to repair the damage caused by the war. But he refused any responsibility for the crimes committed and insisted that scientists had absolutely no power and were threatened with prosecution, even ending up in a concentration camp, if they raised any criticism. “And today, among the ruins, shivering and hungry, we can honestly confirm that we were all cheated, lied to, deceived by invisible and cunning propaganda, governed by vile madmen, and only now we discover what actually happened,” wrote the 73-year-

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<sup>774</sup> HAS, *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1944* [Proceedings of the year 1944], 61.

<sup>775</sup> This correspondence is again printed in the proceedings, albeit only in Greek, and has not been located in the archive. See, *Ελληνική Ανθρωπολογική Εταιρεία 1924: Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1947* [HAS 1924: Proceedings of the year 1947] (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία: Ανθρωπολογικόν Μουσείον του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών [General Secretariat, Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens], 1947), 11–14.

old Fischer.<sup>776</sup> Verschuer expressed his sympathy in a similar manner and added that many Germans stood by the side of the brave Greek people and felt great grief when German soldiers were obliged to fight against Greece. Lenz, on the other hand, after securing Koumaris that he had just received his open letter, insisted that he had protested against the war on all possible grounds, but the authoritative regime was absolutely indifferent to the pleas of German science. Lenz instead wrote to his Greek colleague that he could not hold Koumaris responsible for what happened to Germany after the war as he “knew how weak the voice of Reason and Science in this world is.”<sup>777</sup> But Koumaris would have none of that. As he reminded his colleagues in Greece, others had chosen to resist and protest Hitler’s regime. Instead all three anthropologists “had accepted German hegemony with much apathy,” Lenz taught the theory of German superiority for years, and “most of them were Hitler’s advisors during the savage, exterminating anti-Semitic struggle.”<sup>778</sup> Even so, in 1954, Koumaris was one of a handful of international anthropologists who contributed a paper in an anniversary issue of *Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Anthropologie* celebrating Fischer’s 80th birthday.<sup>779</sup>

Since I began writing this thesis, a kind of revolution seems to have happened especially relating to issues of racist, sexist, nationalist, and colonial science. Protest

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<sup>776</sup> HAS, *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1947* [Proceedings of the year 1947], 12.

<sup>777</sup> HAS, *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1947* [Proceedings of the year 1947], 13.

<sup>778</sup> HAS, *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων του έτους 1947* [Proceedings of the year 1947], 11.

<sup>779</sup> John [Johannes] Koumaris, “Die Homöomorphie in der Entwicklung der Menschen,” *Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Anthropologie* 46, no. 2 (June 1954), 184–88. Weinert and Verschuer were among the contributors to the celebratory issue, while Koumaris was one of the few non-German authors. In the article, Koumaris repeated his conviction in the reality of races and wrote that “other creatures grow and thrive under the oak compared to the olive tree, and still others under the palm.” However, the main point of the article was the existence of certain homeomorphisms in human development despite certain physical and psychological similarities.

movements demand and succeed in removing the statuses of once celebrated scientists, buildings are renamed, and museum labels are rewritten. My wish is that this research will support a much-needed, well-informed and respectful public dialogue on these issues in Greece and elsewhere.

I have thought much about how I would like to finish this work that has been with me for years, that I care and will continue to care for. And I could not think of a better way than the words of the Norwegian-Gambian artist Camara Lundestad Joof, when a journalist asked her what she wants with her art:

It is politics first, and art comes second. This is why I am so disloyal to genres. First, I look at what I want, and sometimes it is theater that fits, other times a column in *Dagbladet*. I am often criticized for having an instrumental approach to art.<sup>780</sup>

History could take the place of art in this quote and it would capture perfectly how I relate to researching the past. I hope that we will write history that can make this world better, or that we will do what else it takes to achieve this.

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<sup>780</sup> Aslak Borgersrud, “Både Ubehagelig og Gøy [Both uncomfortable and a joy,]” *Dagsavisen*, March 28 2021, <https://www.dagsavisen.no/oslo/navn-i-nyhetene/2021/03/27/bade-ubehagelig-og-goy/?fbclid=IwAR32ZXaEzXNgJ6X7c7jDXphFz8MJQsX8e07Lc4qS9CSnovPR5p5LTEAMNIU>

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