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VISIONS

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3



1

Balkan Studies Seminars Summary Report by Kristin Fabbe

The Olympia Balkan Studies Seminars are the result of the collaboration of the universities of Patras and Macedonia with the Kokkalis Foundation, and a product of the understanding that complex social phenomena require an interdisciplinary and comparative approach. The Seminars bring together the full spectrum of social sciences and give the opportunity to eminent scholars from the Balkans, Europe, North America and the world at large to interact in a relaxed atmosphere conducive to critical thinking. The success of the 2003 program makes us hopeful that Olympia, the birthplace of the celebrated classical ideal of peaceful competition and coexistence, will become an international center of scholarship.

Dimitris Keridis, Director
The Kokkalis Foundation

The first annual Balkan Studies Seminars took place from July 21 to August 3, 2003 in Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games. Bringing together students, scholars, and professionals from around the world, the seminars marked the beginning of an important new educational initiative by the Kokkalis Foundation. Working in collaboration with the University of Patras, the University of Macedonia, and the Interscientific and Intercultural Center of Olympia, the Kokkalis Foundation has launched the Olympia summer program with the objective of establishing a permanent and evolving regional network. It is hoped that by providing an open-minded educational forum for the discussion of historic and current developments, the Balkan Studies Seminars will become an established and integral part of the Kokkalis Foundation's efforts towards its overall mission: the promotion of peace and prosperity in Southeastern Europe.

The seminars consisted of two distinct, yet inter-related, programs. Program one, "Southeastern Europe and the Great Ideologies," examined the birth and the propagation of the modern era's dominant ideologies in Southeastern Europe. In a concerted attempt to transcend the typical international relations-based curriculum and to debunk uninformed theories of "ancient hatreds," the seminar organizers embraced an interdisciplinary and historically minded approach to Balkan studies. The second program, "Contemporary Ethnomusicological and Anthropological Issues in Perspective," explored ethnographic reflexivity and the study of music culture in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean regions. By juxtaposing relevant theoretical concepts with anthropological case studies from Kosovo, Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece, and various Roma communities, students and professors examined the role that music plays in the formation of identity, culture, and ritual. In accordance with the Kokkalis Foundation's aim of promoting regional cooperation and understanding, participants hailed from a wide variety of backgrounds. Twenty-three students representing eight different countries, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, and the United States, took part in the seminars. Among the attendees were academics, graduate students, journalists, and young professionals from the non-profit sector. Likewise, the participating professors represented a wide variety of disciplines and

institutions. The faculty for the Great Ideologies program included: Larry Wolff, distinguished professor of History at Boston College; Paschalis Kitromilides, professor of Political History at the University of Athens; Stathis Kalyvas, professor of Political Science at Yale University; Ahmet Evin, professor of International Relations at Sabanci University; and Halil Berkay, professor of History, also at Sabanci University. For Program 2, the faculty included: Donna Buchanan, professor of Musicology at the University of Illinois; Sonia Seeman, faculty fellow in Ethnomusicology at the University of California; Svanibor Pettan, assistant professor of Ethnology and Folklore Research at the University of Ljubljana; Daphne Tragaki, an ethnomusicologist from the University of Macedonia; and Pavlos Kavouras, associate professor of Music Studies at the University of Athens.

Program 1: Great Ideologies

Professor Larry Wolff opened the "Great Ideologies" program on July 21 by introducing students to the "drama of identity in Southeastern Europe." Wolff's four-day lecture series addressed the ideological implications of the Enlightenment for Southeastern Europe, focusing specifically on issues of identity and on how the region was perceived by Western thinkers. To illuminate the ascribed and constructed aspects of identity in Southeastern Europe, Wolff turned to the story of the Morlacchi, a supposedly ferocious group of "Slavicized Vlachs" residing in the mountainous region of Dalmatia. The Morlacchi achieved anthropological celebrity in eighteenth century Venice only to disappear into ethnographic extinction two centuries later. According to Wolff, the popular depiction of the Morlacchi as the uncivilized barbarians of the Adriatic must be understood within the political, geographical and cultural context of enlightened Venetian rule. Although the Morlacchi were often assumed to be the source of all political and economic trouble in Dalmatia, they also provided imperial Venice with a civilizing mission, and thus with a certain legitimacy.

In addition to his analysis of the Morlacchi phenomenon in Dalmatia, Wolff also addressed the issue of how Orthodoxy was perceived from a Western point of view in the eighteenth century. By examining Western travelers' encounters with Orthodox icons, rituals, and clergy



2

Balkan Studies Seminars

members, Wolff pointed out that religious criticism of the Orthodox world was not necessarily religiously motivated. Rather, the travelers' religious concerns were framed in terms of secular values and based on Enlightenment concepts of civilization, thus revealing the West's secular agenda for dealing with Eastern Europe. Following Wolff's lectures, the "Great Ideologies" seminar shifted gears and came under the direction of Yale political scientist Stathis Kalyvas. With his dynamic and engaging lecture style, Dr. Kalyvas advocated a rigorous and methodologically informed approach to the study of social sciences. Drawing from a large cross-section of political science literature in his lecture series, including relevant pieces on nationalism, party systems, voter alliances, and war, Kalyvas dissected the various theoretical frameworks presented in the readings and critically assessed the merit and implications of each. Kalyvas gave specific attention to Ernest Gellner's persuasive theory of nationalism, dividing the argument into its macro and micro levels of analysis for the sake of clarity. Charles Tilly's work, which describes how the motivation of capital accumulation shaped political conflict and thus influenced the formation of European nation-states, was also addressed in detail. Kalyvas used Tilly's analogy between war making and state making to open-up a wider discussion on the mechanisms of collective action, institutionalized obedience, and individual agency. Kalyvas spoke from experience, for his own research has always been based on strong theoretical foundations. Addressing the precarious relationship between democracy and religious politics, Kalyvas' earlier work builds on the new institutionalism school of thought and explores the conditions under which autocratic political actors are able to integrate into emerging democratic institutions, rather than corrupting them, as is typically assumed. In his final lecture, Kalyvas turned his attention to his current field of interest, the study of rational actors and the logic of violence in civil wars, positing the counter-intuitive argument that geography -not ideology- is the fundamental determinant guiding the political loyalties of individuals during such conflicts. Renowned Greek historian of ideas Paschalis Kitromilides delivered two separate talks to the "Great Ideologies" program. In the first lecture, "Images of Progress from the Margins of

Europe," Dr. Kitromilides drew extensively from a paper-in-progress that he intends to publish in 2004. The second lecture, entitled "Orthodoxy and Nationalism," provided an introduction to the genre of research that has earned Kitromilides his international acclaim over the years. Examining the concepts of secular statehood and nationality that accompanied the evolution of Enlightenment thinking, Kitromilides argued that Western rationalism came to disrupt Ottoman rule and Orthodox unity in the Balkans, giving rise to conflicting nationalisms. In Kitromilides' opinion, the emergence of the nation-state, replete with its control over military and educational institutions, proved to be a decisive factor in the politicizing of "the facts and myths of cultural ethnography." Contrary to the popular assumption that Orthodoxy was the unfettered champion of nationalism, Kitromilides highlighted the "inescapable antinomy" between Orthodoxy and nationalism, drawing particular attention to the "radical interruption" to the Orthodox religious tradition that resulted from the nationalization of the churches.

Two professors from Sabanci University, Ahmet Evin and Halil Berktaý, made the final contributions to the "Great Ideologies" seminar. Lecturing on the intellectual history of the Enlightenment in relation to Europe and Turkey, Professor Evin probed concepts of democracy, community, individualism, civilization, and westernization through an interdisciplinary approach that utilized excerpts from pertinent philosophical texts and literature. First, Evin drew attention to the advent of the modern novel, otherwise known as the "inward turn of the narrative," which took place during the Enlightenment era. This "inward turn," combined with the move towards individualism as encapsulated in the ideas of the Enlightenment philosophes, inevitably led to secularization. Yet, as Evin pointed out, a crucial question remained: how was one to reconcile the role of the individual with the greater societal order in the Enlightenment era?

To further develop these ideas, Evin turned to the topic of the evolution of modern-day Turkey, urging seminar participants to look beyond the nation's most immediate historical antecedents and into its Ottoman past. Evin undertook a critical examination of the characteristics of communities during the Ottoman period and highlighted the factors that have continued to rein-



force communitarian structures in present day Turkey. This section of the lecture series not only appraised how the sociology of Durkheim influenced modern Turkish thought, but also analyzed the ways in which Durkheim's ideas became Turkicized in the process of interpretation. Evin drew his lecture series to an end by briefly delving into the concept of "selective borrowing" and by outlining how Turkish reformists discerningly employed Western ideas of modernity, rationality, and sovereignty. According to Evin, adopting a discriminating approach to Western ideas allowed reformists to find a viable alternative to the Ottoman sociopolitical order, which offered no promising role for the intellectual.

To conclude the "Great Ideologies" seminar, Prof. Halil Berktaş delivered a number of riveting lectures on the topic of Kemalism. Arguing that modern Turkey is still very much a product and an embodiment of Mustafa Kemal's legacy, Berktaş assessed Kemalism within the broader frameworks of modernization and revolutionary ideology. Berktaş complemented his chronological depiction of Kemal's life and accomplishments by commenting on the nebulous concept of historical memory and on the issues surrounding the construction of grand historical narratives and political "cults of personality." Highly critical of the trends in revisionist history that have permeated academic circles in the U.S. and elsewhere, Prof. Berktaş adamantly contended that the Turkish war of 1919-22 was a "war of independence" and not a "war of national liberation." Furthermore, the lectures alluded to the historical foundations of the modern Turkish state. In the case of Turkey, explained Berktaş, the trajectory from historical backwardness to rapid modernization was imposed through violence, leading to an immense concentration of power and creating an ideology that exalts the military as the maker and last remaining protector of the nation-state. To close, Berktaş emphasized that, like all historical phenomena, Kemalism is fraught with contradictions, making it dangerous to try to construct an entirely homogenous and consistent moral account of the legacy of Atatürk.

Program 2: Ethnomusicology

Sonia Seeman and Svanibor Pettan began the Ethnomusicology program with a five-day, joint teaching session. Seeman, who has conducted fieldwork in both FYROM and Turkey, gave a

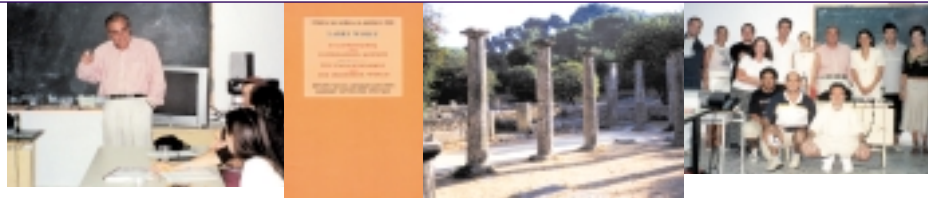
detailed presentation of her assessment of Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutics. Drawing on her experience of living with Roma communities in Turkey, Seeman outlined the fundamental concerns associated with approaching a piece of music and the context in which it is embedded. Through a series of student-professor discussions, questions were raised regarding the nature and status of music as an object of interpretation and the role of the observer in producing cultural meaning.

Elaborating on Seeman's theoretical framework, Svanibor Pettan lectured on the realities and responsibilities associated with being an applied ethnomusicologist. Dr. Pettan became involved in the field of applied ethnomusicology as a direct result of the wars that ravished the disintegrating Yugoslav state in the 1990's and he has since researched music in Croatia, Slovenia and Kosovo. Looking at music in relation to politics (especially the politics of nationalism), war, and exile, Pettan addressed the nature of the ethnomusicologist's role as a cultural mediator in times of turmoil.

Dr. Donna Buchanan, a specialist in the musical styles of Bulgaria and the Balkans, led week two of the ethnomusicology seminars. Having spent over 10 years conducting intensive ethnographic research in Bulgaria, Buchanan was well poised to enlighten conference participants with the findings of her personal research. Through an interdisciplinary analysis of the impact of political transition on socialist music making in Bulgaria, Buchanan explained the ways in which musicians have assimilated, or have failed to assimilate, into the nation's new, more uncertain post-socialist landscape. Buchanan's lectures incorporated these specific research findings into a more general assessment of the politics of musical culture and the relationship between music and power.

Conclusion:

Both programs were condensed, rigorous, and highly demanding; yet this intensity helped to fortify strong personal ties amongst the participants. Seminar alumni are connected by an email list through which they can forward relevant professional and academic information and maintain an on-going dialogue about developments in Southeastern Europe, thus enlarging the Kokkalis Foundation's network of regional cooperation.



4

The Politics of Religion and the Origins of Western Misperceptions About Eastern Europe*

by Monica P. Carlos

Wolff, L. (2001) *The Enlightenment and the Orthodox World*. Athens: Institute for Neohellenic Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation.

The author reevaluates the East-West European divide present in Enlightenment literature and makes a well-founded critique of ideological and intellectual self-centeredness of Western culture and identity. The origin of Western (mis)perceptions about Eastern Europe and of its concomitant East-West divide, Wolff argues, lie at the crossroads of religion, nationalism, and political power and mark the birth of modern international politics. The scholarly research contains important policy lessons for the Eastern part of Europe. On the basis of an array of literary and archival sources it reveals that rather than primordial, unavoidable, and irresolvable, the differences between East and West are modern and are construed, and makes the case for the integrity of European civilization and European identity.

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The University of Athens' Department of Music Studies

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In our times, Western perceptions of Eastern Europe are marked by the idea of difference. Describing the contours of this difference is a thorny task, but religion, tradition, and culture are most often evoked. In recent years, prominent scholars like Samuel Huntington have argued for a historically distinct Orthodox civilization, in stark opposition to that of the West. Larry Wolff, an Enlightenment scholar from Boston College with expertise on Eastern Europe, disagrees with such interpretations. In *The Enlightenment and the Orthodox World*, a publication supported by the Kokkalis Foundation, the author reevaluates the presence of the Enlightenment in the Orthodox world and the Enlightenment's vision of Orthodoxy.

This vision, he argues, must be understood in the context of a East-West division of Europe that can be traced to Enlightenment scholarship, a new idea of difference that replaced the North-South European cultural divide found in Renaissance literature. In his studious and incisive interpretation of Enlightenment literature, Wolff makes a well-founded and pungent critique of the ideological and intellectual self-centeredness of Western culture and identity as reflected in the Enlightenment scholars' perception of the Orthodox world and in the contemporary perceptions emerging thereafter. Basing his argument on an array of literary and archival sources, the author makes a thorough and compelling case for the integrity of European civilization and European identity.

What was the Enlightenment's vision of Orthodoxy and, conversely, what should we make of the presence of the Enlightenment in the Eastern part of Europe? The Enlightenment literature belittled the Orthodox world as backwards, isolationist, and self-sufficient, and such disparagement cut across religious, social, and cultural lines. As can be evinced from the extensive travel literature of the period, literature that often strikes the reader as an old form of modern propaganda, the essence of the religion was viewed as superstitious pagan rituals devoid of spiritual essence and performed by an illiterate and barbarous clergy. The Enlightenment scholars were not so much interested in the religious aspect of difference between the two worlds but rather in the secular perception of backwardness, of which Orthodoxy was a part. Customs and traditions were perceived as awkward and oriental, and societies were seen as plunged in primitiveness and ignorance, with their people living almost in state of nature.

As for the presence of the Enlightenment in the Orthodox world, the author argues that this presence was positive. Contrary to widespread belief about the social, intellectual, and cultural isolation of southeastern and central Europe and the absence of an Enlightenment in the Orthodox world, literary history shows there was both knowledge of, and interest in the Enlightenment. Further, despite the anti-theological bias of Enlightenment thought, a few educated clergymen were the first intellectuals to learn about the new Western ideas of rationality, emancipation, political participation, and renewal.

Orthodox clergy, however, gave the Enlightenment message an Orthodox spin. As with every living culture, inasmuch as there is assimilation of new ideas, there is always something original in the process of assimilation. Plato viewed Greek culture and Greek intellectual life as being under constant influence from the outside but such influence, rather than hurting Greek identity, strengthened it. Likewise, a small religious elite used Enlightenment ideals to further the political interests of the Orthodox Church. The author gives a rich and absorbing account of how Enlightenment perceptions about Eastern Europe developed hand in hand with the new political role of Orthodoxy in eighteenth-century international relations, and elegantly drives home the argument that the Enlightenment vision of the Orthodox world played a fundamental role in the formation of the modern religious and political map of Europe. Because Orthodoxy was perceived as possessing a national significance, the intensity of Orthodox sentiment was promoted or contained according to political criteria and facilitated alliance-building between nations in the Eastern part of Europe.

The political significance of Orthodoxy becomes obvious in the author's meticulous and detailed scrutiny of literary narrations of the Russian-Ottoman War and especially in this war's reverberations in the Adriatic, a region gathering Italian, Greek, and Slavic cultural elements and both Orthodox and Roman Catholic religious communities. Here, the educated clergy created its own interpretation of the Enlightenment movement, preaching the political wisdom of the Enlightenment concerning Peter and Catherine as an instrument towards the construction of a national identity. Catherine's peace settlement with the Ottoman empire and her hostility to the French revolution provided a further incentive for the Orthodox church to disseminate the idea of a distinct Orthodox nation beyond geographic boundaries. Thus, in Eastern Europe the dissemination of the contents of Western Enlightenment was subject to strategic calculation, and nationalism was the conservative reaction of religious actors with political leverage against Western modernization.

Rather than primordial, unavoidable, and irresolvable, the differences between East and West are, as Wolff demonstrates in his monograph, modern and construed. The origin of Western (mis)perceptions about Eastern Europe and of its concomitant East-West divide lies at the crossroads of religion, nationalism, and political power and marks the birth of modern international politics. Larry Wolff's analysis is shrewd, learned, and readable to boot. His enlightened argument for the integrity of European civilization and European identity leaves us a message of hope and optimism for the resolve of the present conflicts in Southeastern Europe and the Balkans and for a future, truly united, Europe.

*Reprinted from the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* Vol. 20, no. 2, October 2002, pp. 438-441. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.