

GREECE AT THE PARIS UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION IN 1878

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“Greece is part of the Orient”, one can read in a letter by Jules Ferry, the French ambassador in Athens at the turn of the 1870s¹. Ferry’s vision of Greek “otherness” was all but exceptional. The uprising of Greeks against the Ottoman rule in the 1820s aroused waves of sympathy throughout Romantic Europe of the time. It even gave birth to a movement known as Philhellenism, which fought for the cause of the people whose forebears “shaped the mind of Europe”². But Philhellenism was doomed to live a rather short life, at least as a strong and influential movement³. Indeed, Greece eventually gained its independence in 1832, but the young nation proved unable to honour the expectations vested in it by the Philhellenists’ imagination: to be the equal of Plato, Aeschylus or Pericles was for sure a tough business for the 800.000-odd inhabitants of the Kingdom of Greece, painfully emerging out of a devastated post-war landscape⁴. Though Philhellenists were not to disappear completely from the European stage, Philhellenism soon lost much of its initial momentum. It was rather the numerous contemptuous observers of Modern Greece

1 Quoted by BASCH, Sophie (1995) *Le mirage grec. La Grèce moderne devant l’opinion française (1846-1946)*, Athens, Éditions Hatier, 201-202.

2 See JEBB, Richard C. (1901; 1st ed.: 1880) *Modern Greece (Two lectures delivered before the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, with papers on ‘The Progress of Greece’ and ‘Byron in Greece’)*, London, MacMillan and Co., 48.

3 On Philhellenism, see among others: St. CLAIR, William (2008; 1st ed.: 1972) *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence*, Cambridge, Open Book Publishers; BARAU, Denys (2009) *La cause des Grecs: une histoire du mouvement philhellène (1821-1829)*, Paris, Honoré Champion; ESPAGNE, Michel (2005) *Philhellénismes et transferts culturels dans l’Europe du XIXe siècle*, Paris, CNRS Éditions. Concerning the life of a Romantic Philhellenist, see : ASSIMACOPOULOU, Fotini; CHATZIS, Konstantinos (2010) “Dutrône (1796-1867), ‘défenseur des faibles et des opprimés’, un faiseur de projets à l’âge romantique”, *Neoellinika Istorika*, vol. 2, 229-269.

4 For an introduction to the history of Modern Greece, see GALLANT, Thomas (2001) *Modern Greece*, London, Arnold.

that progressively had pride of place within western public opinion. Not too long after the end of the Greek war of Independence, the idea that Modern Greece rather belonged to the “Orient” than to the civilized West started gaining increasing currency among elites in Europe⁵.

Even if, in comparison with prosperous and powerful western countries, she seemed a backward place without many of the attributes of the developed world of the time, Modern Greece was part and parcel of the West, replied a chorus of Greek voices, a claim echoed by the remaining Philhellenists. In fact, from the 1860s on, one can witness the publication of several books and brochures in French and English, entrusted with the national mission to confront the dismissive gaze of people claiming that Modern Greece failed to become a member of the European family⁶. Replete with information on the political, social, and economic conditions of the country, these publications used statistical evidence to show that the Greek Kingdom had made creditable progress since its foundation, while insisting that many of the remaining deficiencies of Modern Greece could be explained by a series of historical circumstances that was not of her own making, such as the extremely small size of the country. Indeed, in 1870, despite a steady increasing trend, the population of Greece was estimated to be only 1.500.000-odd inhabitants.

To analyze Greece’s participation in the different Universal Fairs, including that held in Paris in 1878, one has to bear in mind this general historical setting. In fact, by accepting to taking part in the Universal Exhibitions, the Greek state was pursuing two interrelated aims. On the one hand, it was trying to become acquainted with the technological “weapons” it needed for the desired, by the Greek elites at least, westernization of the country⁷. On the other, it wanted to be compared with, and to inform the industrialized coun-

5 See especially BASCH (1995).

6 ee, for example: MANITAKY, Emmanuel (1869; 1st ed.: 1866) *Aperçu sur les progrès matériels de la Grèce*, Athènes; MORAITINIS, P. A. (1877) *La Grèce telle qu'elle est*, Paris, Firmin Didot et Cie; VIKELAS, D. (1868) “Statistics of the Kingdom of Greece”, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, vol. 31, n° 3, September, 265-298; JEBB, Richard C. (1878-1879) “The Progress of Greece”, *Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. XXXIX, November 1878-April 1879, 419-430, republished in *The Living Age* (1879), Fifth Series, vol. XXVI, April-June, 195-204.

7 On the “technological modernization” of Greece in the 19th century, see : CHATZIS, Konstantinos (2004) “La modernisation technique de la Grèce, de l’indépendance aux années de l’entre-deux-guerres: faits et problèmes d’interprétation”, *Études balkaniques*, n° 3, 3-23; ASSIMACOPOULOU, Fotini; CHATZIS, Konstantinos; MAVROGONATOU, Georgia (2009) “Implanter les ‘Ponts et Chaussées’ européens en Grèce: le rôle des ingénieurs du corps du Génie, 1830-1880”, *Quaderns d’història de l’enginyeria*, vol. X, 331-350.

tries about the progress the young state had accomplished since its foundation, and to convince them, but also to convince itself, of the “europeanness” of the Greek Kingdom⁸.

This brief article deals with Greece’s participation in the Universal Fair held in Paris in 1878. It has a two-part structure. After giving a general view on Greece’s participation in this event and the various reactions which it generated in Greece as well as abroad, we shall focus on two specific documents which encapsulated the “knowledge transfer aim”, and the “Greece’s europeanness aim”.

1.- A general view.

Compared with the involvement of the Greek state in the previous Universal Exhibitions, the participation of the country in the 1878 Fair was particularly rich regarding exhibits. While, at the fair of 1851 in London, Greece was represented by less than two score exhibitors, more than 530 attended the Paris event⁹. As a result, the total floor space allotted to Greece by the organizers was 1245 square meters, around seven times the surface the country was given in London. For the sake of comparison, let us recall that Russia was represented in Paris by 1179 exhibitors, and she was allotted 6308 square meters¹⁰.

Rich in exhibits, the Greek participation was carefully prepared as well. Several reports, all written in French, were, in fact, produced before the event. Alexandros Mansolas signed a lengthy document entitled “Greece in the 1878 Universal Exhibition in Paris” – we shall take a closer glance at this text in the second section of the article –, while Andreas Kordellas, a mining engineer who had studied in Germany, produced a report on the geology and the mineralogy of the country. Theodor von Heldreich (1822-1902), a

8 As already mentioned, statistics also were entrusted with this “mission”. See CHATZIS, Konstantinos (2007a) “Sous les yeux de l’Occident’. Statistiques et intégration européenne au XIXe siècle, l’exemple de la Grèce”, *Histoire et sociétés. Revue européenne d’histoire sociale*, n° 21, March, 8-17.

9 On Greece’s participation in the Exhibition of 1851, YAGOU, Artemis (2003) “Facing the West: Greece in the Great Exhibition of 1851”, *Design Issues*, vol. 19, n° 4, Autumn, 82-90.

10 AUBAIN, Laurence (1996) “La Russie à l’Exposition universelle de 1889”, *Cahiers du monde russe: Russie, Empire russe, Union soviétique, Etats indépendants*, vol. 37, n° 3, July-September, 349-368 (especially 353).

German botanist – who settled permanently in Greece where, among other duties, he served as director of the Botanical Garden –, produced a report that dealt with the fauna of Greece, while an essay by Alexandros Tombazis was dedicated to the agriculture of the Greek Kingdom. A catalogue of the various mineral waters that could be found in Greece at that time was also printed in Paris¹¹.

Not surprisingly, the authors of these reports didn't hesitate to stress, every time they were able to, the European character of the country. The inclusion of the Greek Kingdom in the civilized West was also displayed to the visitors through the Greek Pavilion, significantly named "The Pericles House". Designed by two French architects, its facade was supposed to reproduce a typical artist's workshop frontage of the classical period of Ancient Greece¹². Given the various comments it received, the Greek house obviously was appreciated differently by the public. For the journalist of Paris Journal and the Philhellenist Queux de Saint-Hilaire, then secretary of the Society for the Encouragement of Greek Studies in Paris, the frontage was nicely designed and successfully symbolized the firm anchoring of Modern Greece in the West¹³. But, for Charles Blanc, a professor of aesthetics at Collège de France, the frontage was, on the contrary, "graceless" and was "lacking any sense of proportionality": in the author's opinion, its flaws marked the distance which separated Modern from Ancient Greece¹⁴. References to the latter could be

11 MANSOLAS, Alexandros (1878) *La Grèce à l'Exposition universelle de Paris en 1878: Notions statistiques, catalogue des exposants*, Athens, Imprimerie de la Philocalie; CORDELLAS, Andreas (1878) *La Grèce sous le rapport géologique et minéralogique*, Paris, Imprimerie de A. Parent; TOMBASIS, Alexandros (1878) *La Grèce sous le point de vue agricole*, Athens, Imprimerie de 'L'Indépendance hellénique'; *Catalogue des eaux minérales de la Grèce* (1878), Paris, Imprimé chez Alcan-Lévy; HELDREICH, Theodor de (1878) *La faune de Grèce: rapport sur les travaux et recherches zoologiques faites en Grèce et revue sommaire des animaux qui s'y trouvent naturellement*, Athens, Imprimerie de la Philocalie.

12 Newspaper *Efimeris*, 3 May 1878.

13 *Ibid.*; LAMARRE, Clovis; QUEUX DE St-HILAIRE (1878) *La Grèce et l'Exposition de 1878*, Paris, Librairie Ch. Delagrave: "Une logette tout unie, d'un blanc laiteux, encadrée entre quatre colonnes d'ordre corinthien, décorées de couleurs variées, surplomb un autel votif aux lignes pures et élégantes [...]. Cette façade si simple et si modeste nous reporte à l'instant, par la pensée, dans la Grèce ancienne [...]. Félicitons donc les Grecs de nous avoir donné dans la façade si restreindre et si étroite de leur exposition un souvenir de leur architecture antique, qui est notre architecture classique [...]" (134-136).

14 BLANC, Charles (1878) *Les Beaux-Arts à l'Exposition universelle de 1878*, Paris, Librairie Renouard: "La Grèce, qui jadis a donné au monde tant de modèles exquis d'architecture et de sculpture, n'a su nous donner cette fois qu'un édifice sans grâce et sans proportion, une petite loge en encorbellement, portée par d'énormes modillons romains! et, sous le nom de polychromie, un bariolage de tons crus et indigestes" (62).

found even in the exhibits: thus, those of the French Company of Laurion mines showed a collection of the tools used by the ancient Greeks and found in Company's workings¹⁵.

Fortunately, for Greece's commissioners and for the numerous people visiting the Exhibition, Modern Greece was able to show many more "products" than the country's too-illustrious past. The Greek exhibits were, in fact, largely composed of contemporary productions of the country¹⁶.

About a score of artists exposed their production within Group I, that is the "Works of Art" Group. Almost all major Greek artists of the era had accepted to send specimens of their work to the Paris Fair. Thus, visitors got acquainted with the genre paintings of Nikiphoros Lytras (1832-1904) and Nikolaos Gyzis (1842-1901), main representatives of the so-called "School of Munich" in Greece; they could also look at the paintings of Periclis Pantazis (1849-84), more influenced by the French realists and pre-impressionists, and they walked around the carvings by Giannoulis Chalepas (1851-1938) and Georgios Vroutos (1843-1909)¹⁷. Architectural design was also part of the "Group I" exhibits, and this art was represented by a few examples sent by the Department of Public Works within the Ministry of Interior¹⁸, the municipalities of Hermoupolis (Syros) and Corfu, and by Ernst Ziller (1837-1923), the renowned German-born architect who designed major neo-classical royal and municipal buildings and houses in Athens, Patras and other Greek cities¹⁹. The intellectual land-

15 THE SOCIETY OF ARTS (1879) *Artisan Reports on the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 638.

16 All the Greek exhibits are listed in: MANSOLAS (1878).

17 Concerning Modern Greek art in the 19th century, see, among others: LAMPRAKI-PLAKA, M.; KOURIA A.; PANSELINOU, N. (1990) *Anotati Scholi Kalon Technon. Ekaton peninta chronia 1837-1987 (The Athens School of Fine Arts, 1837-1987)*, Athens, Anotati Scholi Kalon Technon; CHRISTOU, Ch.; KOUMVALAKI-ANASTASIADI, M. (1982) *Neolliniki Glyptiki 1800-1940 (Modern Greek Sculpture, 1800-1940)*, Athens, [Emporiki Trapeza tis Elladas]; MISIRLI, N. (1993) *Elliniki zografiki 18os-19os aionas (Modern Greek painting 18th-19th centuries)*, Athens, [Adam-Pergamos]. For additional references, see MATTHIOPOULOS, E. (1999) "Eikastikes technes (Visual arts)". In: CHATZIOSIF, Ch. (ed.) *I Istoría tis Elladas tou 20ou aiona, 1900-1922. Oi aparches (The history of Greece in the 20th century, 1900-1922. The beginnings)*, Athens, Vivliorama. See also: KIPRIANOS, Pandélis; VAOS Antonis (2009) "Le poids du passé: Beaux-arts et éducation formelle en Grèce au XIXe siècle", *Romantisme*, n° 144, 115-127.

18 On the Department of Public Works within the Ministry of Interior, at that time staffed and run by military engineers, see CHATZIS, Konstantinos (2003) "Des ingénieurs militaires au service des civils (1829-1878): les officiers du Génie en Grèce au XIXe siècle". In: CHATZIS, Konstantinos; NICOLAIDIS, Efthymios (eds.) *Science, Technology and the 19th Century State: the Role of the Army*, Athens, Center for Neo-Hellenic Research/NHRF, 69-90.

19 Concerning the works by Ziller, see the recent book by KARDAMITSI-ADAMI, Maro (ed.) (2006) *Classical Revival: the Architecture of Ernst Ziller, 1837-1923*, Athens, Melissa.

scape of the country was also well represented in Group II: “Education and Instruction-Apparatus and Processes of the Liberal Arts”, with 50-odd exhibitors. Among them was featured the Polytechnic school of Athens, founded in 1837²⁰, and several printing houses, such as the Coromilas shop, which, since its foundation had published more than one thousand titles in millions of copies, bought essentially by the members of Greek Diaspora networks in the Middle East.

As one might expect, “classic” Greek products, such as marble, cereals and dried grapes, wines, oils, honeys, tobaccos, processed leather skins and silk embroideries, not to mention the world-famous aprons from the Ionian Islands, were massively present at the Paris Fair. In fact, a lot of Greek exhibitors displayed their production within Group VII: “Alimentary Products” (139 exhibitors), Group IV: “Textile Fabrics, Clothing and Accessories” (133 exhibitors), and Group V: “Mining Industries, Raw and Manufactured Products” (132 exhibitors).

Several signs of the industrial take-off that the country underwent in the late 1860s and over the next decade were also visible among the exhibits²¹. Thus, the establishment Basileiades and company, an engineering workshop in Piraeus specialized in land machines, boilers construction and other millwright’s works, exhibited a boiler of its own, which, according to a French engineer, compared favorably with its “competitor”, the boiler Baxter made by the American Colt’s Arms Company and also exposed at the Paris Fair²². The Hellenic Company of Steam Boats, located in the island of Syros, sent a four-cylinder steam engine of its own. Among the Greek exhibitors, the Brothers Retsinas and the Brothers Volonakis in Piraeus featured two big cotton spinning factories, employing at the time about 320 and 170 operators,

20 The book by MPIRIS, Kostas (1957) *I Istoría tou Ethnikou Metsoviou Polytechniou (The history of the National Technical University of Athens)*, Athens, Ethnikon Metsoviou Polytechnion, still remains the best available account of the history of Athens Polytechnic School in the 19th century.

21 Though it was published in the 1980s, the book by AGRIANTONI, Christina (1986) *Oi aparches tis ekviomichanisis stin Ellada ton 19on aiona (The beginnings of the industrialization in 19th century Greece)*, Athens, Emporiki Trapeza tis Ellados (Istoriko Archeio), still remains the classic study of the industrialization of Greece in the 19th century. See also : CHATZIIOSIF, Christos (1993) *I giraia selini. I viomichania stin Elliniki oikonomia, 1830-1940 (The old moon. The Industry within the Greek Economy, 1830-1940)*, Athens, Themelio.

22 BERETTA, C.; DESNOS, E. (1881) *Les nouvelles chaudières à vapeur, notamment celles qui ont figuré à l’Exposition universelle de 1878*, Paris, E. Bernard et Cie, Libraires-Éditeurs, 117.

mostly women, respectively²³.

As we have already seen, the participation of Greece in the Exhibition triggered several reactions and generated heated discussions in and beyond the borders of the country: one can find, indeed, several reports by the Greek and foreign press devoted to the event, numerous comments on the Greek exhibits published in books and periodicals, and even a ten-page length poem by Marquise Blanche de Saffray, entitled *La Grèce à l'Exposition*²⁴. For reasons of space, we cannot describe in detail all these reactions. Let us give here a small sample of them.

Commenting on the Greek paintings, the painter Ch.-L. Duval expressed a rather pessimistic view of the future of Modern Greek art, to say the least: "[...] nous sommes bien forcés de constater que les beaux temps de son antique supériorité dans les arts sont passés, et que pour elle une renaissance ne semble pas près encore de se manifester"²⁵. Alfred Grandidier in his report for the "Group II-Class 16" pointed out that "depuis le carte de Morée, levée par les officier français de 1827 à 1845 et établie en 1852 à 1/200 000 en 20 feuilles, dont on a eu une réduction à 1/600 000, il n'y a pas eu aucune nouvelle publication géographique importante sur le royaume de Grèce"²⁶. In the opinion of H. Mourceau, the author of a report on "Carpets, tapestry and other stuffs for furniture", the "produits de ce pays n'avaient aucun cachet indiquant le style grec: les dessins étaient ordinaires et ne pouvaient soutenir la comparaison de leurs concurrents de l'Inde, de la Perse et de la Turquie". Nathalis Rondot expressed his disappointment with the quality of the silk

23 Retsinas corporation has been studied recently by PAPASTEFANAKI, L. (2009) *Ergasia, technologia kai fylo stin Elliniki viomichania. I klostoiïfantourgia tou Peiraia, 1870-1940 (Work, technology, and gender in Greek industry. The cotton industry in Piraeus, 1870-1940)*, Herakleon, Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis.

24 SAFFRAY, Blanche de (1878) *La Grèce à l'Exposition universelle*, Vire, Imprimerie de Rivet-Barbot. References to Greek participation can be found in several Greek newspapers; see, for example: *Byzantis*, 7 April 1878; *Deltion tis Estias*, 11 June 1878; *Efimeris*, 3 May 1878, 5 April 1878, 12 April 1878, 18 April 1878, and 21 April 1878; *Laos*, 2 May 1878, 3 May 1878, 30 May 1878, and 31 May 1878; *Neologos*, 4 April 1878, 29 May 1878, and 25 July 1878.

25 DUVAL, Ch. L. (1878) *Les Beaux-Arts à l'Exposition universelle de 1878: Impressions et notes d'artiste*, Meaux, Librairie Ch. Cochet, 100. Charles Blanc seems to be less critical and more optimistic about the fate of Modern Greek art than Duval: "Le modèle en petit du fronton de l'Académie par M. Drossis, et celui des Lutttes olympiques par M. Vroutos, sont des œuvres importantes qui annoncent un prochain développement de la nouvelle sculpture hellénique, encore voisine de son enfance" (BLANC (1878), 312-313).

26 GRANDIDIER, Alfred (1882) *Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris. Rapport sur les cartes et les appareils de géographie et de cosmographie, sur les cartes géologiques, et sur les ouvrages de météorologie et de statistique (Groupe II, Classe 16)*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 138.

products of the country: “Une douzaine de fileurs ont représenté la Grèce à l’Exposition de 1878. Leurs soies n’ont pas donné une bonne opinion de la production hellénique”²⁷.

Other observers of the “state” of Greece in the 1870s were more favourably disposed toward the country’s production. For the chemist A. Robinson, the

*“exposition des vins de Grèce était très remarquable; on y voyait figurer toutes les qualités les plus renommées. Cette exposition était particulière aussi, en ce sens, qu’elle donnait la preuve, de la part des viticulteurs du pays, d’un progrès marqué et incessant, d’une amélioration qui porte sur tout: cépages, vendange et manipulation des vins”*²⁸.

According to Gustave Heuze, the author of the report on “Cereals, farinaceous products, and products derived from them”, Greece “[...] avait exposé du maïs, du blé et de l’orge, récoltés dans 60 communes. Ces collections étaient très intéressantes. Les blés les plus lourds pesaient 82 et même 84 kilogrammes l’hectolitre”²⁹. In Hervé’s view, a professor at the Polytechnic Association, the Greek musical instruments displayed at the Paris Fair “sont [...] tout à fait semblables aux nôtres”³⁰. For Adolphe Violet, a civilian engineer (ingénieur civil, in French), Greece “[...] renferme les plus beaux marbres connus pour les emplois de l’art statuaire ainsi que d’autres marbres très-remarquables, tels que le marbre pentélique, le rouge antique, le marbre de Sparte, le vert des Crocées, le cipolin etc. etc.”³¹. Several authors stressed in their reports the growing importance of the mining sector in Modern Greece, an importance acknowledged by the Fair’s jury as well, which awarded a gold medal to the Société française de Laurion, employing about 1.300 workers at the time, and to the Société des usines de Laurion that employed about 1.600 people³². The industrial take-off that the country underwent at the turn

27 RONDOT, Natalis (1885) *Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris. Rapport sur les soies (Groupe IV, Classe 34)*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 121.

28 ANNALES ET ARCHIVES DE L’INDUSTRIE AU XIXe SIECLE (1878) *Études sur l’Exposition de 1878*, Paris, Librairie scientifique, industrielle et agricole Eugène Lacroix, t. VIII, 299.

29 HEUZE, Gustave (1881) *Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris. Rapport sur les céréales, les produits farineux et leurs dérivés (Groupe VII, Classe 69)*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 34.

30 ANNALES ET ARCHIVES DE L’INDUSTRIE AU XIXe SIECLE (1878), t. VII, 66.

31 VIOLET, Adolphe (1879) *Rapport sur les marbres et les machines à travailler le marbre de l’Exposition universelle en 1878*, Paris, Librairie scientifique, industrielle et agricole Eugène Lacroix, 66.

32 ZEILLER, R. (1881) *Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris. Rapport sur les produits*

of the 1870s didn't pass unnoticed by some observers:

“L’industrie, en Grèce est encore à l’état d’enfance, mais d’après ce que nous avons pu voir, ce pays commence à progresser et les usines surgissent rapidement. Il y a dix ans, la Grèce ne comptait qu’une dizaine de fabriques travaillant le coton; aujourd’hui, 18 filatures et 2 tissages fonctionnent et emploient un personnel de 1 400 ouvriers environ”³³.

And, according to the members of the famous Society of Arts, if

“[...] Greece, and some other countries call for no particular remark from an engineering point of view, although their exhibits are not without interest, and their educational models demonstrate that they are fully aware of the importance of engineering machinery”³⁴.

As the aforementioned comments amply demonstrate, not surprisingly, the various observers of Greece's participation in the Paris Fair were not on the same wave length. For the friends of Modern Greece, the country's exhibits, as “indigent” as many of them might appear when compared with the production of the developed countries of the time, showed the substantial progress Greece had made since its independence. On the contrary, for people less convinced of the “europeanness” of the young Kingdom, the same exhibits threw a rather distressing light on the numerous shortcomings of the country, thus functioning as the unwitting witnesses of the inexorable decay of contemporary Greeks, especially when compared to their glorious ancestors.

2.- Two documents.

As already mentioned in the introduction, the second part of this article

de l'exploitation des mines et de la métallurgie. Section I: Substances minérales et métaux précieux (Groupe V, Classe 43), Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 19-20, 33-34, 38; ANNALES ET ARCHIVES DE L'INDUSTRIE AU XIXe SIECLE (1878): t. III, “La Métallurgie”, 420-426.

33 ANNALES ET ARCHIVES DE L'INDUSTRIE AU XIXe SIECLE (1878): t. VI, “Chimie Industrielle”, 458.

34 THE SOCIETY OF ARTS (1879), 281.

is devoted to two documents generated by Greece's participation in Paris Exhibition of 1878. Both of them encapsulate the two inter-related aims the Greek state was pursuing by participating in the Universal Fairs: "the knowledge transfer aim" and "Greece's europeanness aim".

The first document we shall deal with was signed by Emmanuel Manitakis (1808-1883), a military engineer strongly influenced by the Saint-Simonian ideal of progress, and a former Head of the Department of Public Works within the Ministry of Interior for many years³⁵. Manitakis was in Paris during the 1878 Fair as a member of the Greek Commission, when he was asked by the Chairman of the Society for the Encouragement of Greek Industry to take advantage of his stay in the French capital in order to study the water and sewer systems in Paris and other European cities, and to transform the foreign experience into a workable system for Athens³⁶. Manitakis produced, in fact, an up-to-date description of the water and sewage systems of the French capital; he also took a glance at the systems adopted by other major cities of the time, the geography of which was, in the author's opinion, closer to Athens' shape³⁷. As many visitors to the Paris Fair, Manitakis was amazed by Auguste Mouchot's solar motor, which, running on nothing more than sunbeams, was able to generate enough power to pump thousands of gallons of water³⁸. Given the climatic conditions prevailing in Athens, Manitakis expressed a particular interest in this engine; he even paid a call on the solar motor's inventor as well as on his right-hand man, Abel Pifre, a young engineer who graduated from the *École centrale des arts et manufactures* in Paris.

35 For a brief "portrait" of Manitakis, see: CHATZIS (2003), 81-83; ASSIMACOPOULOU; CHATZIS; MAVROGONATOU (2009).

36 Concerning the water network in the Athens of the time, see : CHATZIS, Konstantinos (2007b) "Le maire, le premier ministre et l'ingénieur: la difficile mise en place du réseau d'adduction d'eau à Athènes (1830-1930)". In: BOCQUET, Denis; FETTAH, Samuel (eds.) *Réseaux techniques et conflits de pouvoir. Les dynamiques historiques des villes contemporaines*, Rome, École française de Rome, 71-102; CHATZIS, Konstantinos; MAVROGONATOU, Georgia (forthcoming) "Technologia kai dimosia sfaira stin Ellada. To zitima tis ydrodotisis tis Athinas mesa apo to prisma tis 'dimopoiisis', 1880-1914 (Technology and public sphere in Greece. The issue of water provision in Athens through the lens of the 'municipalism' mouvement, 1880-1914)", *Ta Istorika*.

37 MANITAKIS, Emmanuel (1879) *Promitheia kai dianomi ydaton en tais polesi (Provision and distribution of water in cities)*, Athens, General Greek State Archives (GAK/Archeio G. Blachogianni Katigoria: Kytia D', Kytio D: 13 (Athinaïka B'), F. 1: "Entypa Katalogou 15β").

38 KRYZA, Frank T. (2003) *The Power of Light. The Epic Story of Man's Quest to Harness the Sun*, New York, McGraw-Hill, chapter 6.

As with other technical reports of the period, in Manitakis' document technical descriptions – in the current, engineering and restrictive sense of the term – were interwoven with observations of a sociological brand. Indeed, Manitakis filled his report with ethnographic details of the outlook and behavior of Parisians and Athenians concerning water and other urban issues. He praised, for example, the civilized attitude of Parisians regarding the drinking fountains of their city, an attitude which he contrasted with that of Greek “magges” – a Greek term to design urban marginal dwellers – who, apparently, were not very respectful of public property, and thus relentlessly damaged municipal fountains in Athens. Another “urban scene” depicted by Manitakis in his brochure was that of all too often sloppy Greek policemen, who were unable or unwilling to enforce state and municipal regulations for building and urban design and construction. Here again the comparison with Paris was embarrassingly unflattering to Athens. Fortunately, there was one domain in which the Greek capital could compare favourably with Paris and other developed cities. Thanks to donations by well-heeled Greeks belonging to the various Diaspora networks, Athens had been beautified by a series of large neoclassic buildings, such as the Observatory, the Polytechnics School, the National Library and the University. By virtue of these constructions, the Greek capital could, in Manitakis' opinion, align itself with the “finest” European cities of the time³⁹.

The second document we would like to refer to was signed by Alexandros Mansolas⁴⁰. Director of the Greek Office of Statistics during the 1864-1882 period, and author of now classic studies on the “state” of Greece in the second half of the nineteenth century, Mansolas is considered the founding father of Greek Statistics. As a member of the Greek Commission for the 1878 Fair, Mansolas produced in French a lengthy document entitled *Greece in the 1878 Universal Exhibition in Paris*. Despite its title, the brochure by no means boiled down to a mere list of the Greek exhibits. On the contrary, it constitutes a first-rate introduction to the Greece of that time. In fact, the catalogue was preceded by a thorough presentation of the various aspects of the country. Apart from the catalogue, the book is divided into eight sections, each one dealing in turn with the following items: 1) the geography, the geology and

39 BASTEIA, Eleni (2000) *The Creation of Modern Athens: Planning the Myth*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

40 MANSOLAS (1878).

the climate of the country, 2) its demography, 3) the intellectual landscape of Greece, 4) its charitable institutions, 5) agriculture, 6) industry, 7) trade, and, lastly 8) State government finances.

Even if the bulk of information contained in the book concerned mostly Greece's profile in the 1870s, the numerous excursions into the past of the country constantly pointed out the progress the young, and in Mansolas' opinion not yet full-fledged, Kingdom had made since its foundation. In his book, Mansolas also tried to reply to the various criticisms the country was facing at that time. For example, Greek statistics showed a disproportionately large number of University graduates exercising the liberal profession in Greece. For critics, this was a clear and all pervasive sign of the contempt that contemporary Greeks expressed for manual occupations in agriculture and industry. For Mansolas, the true reason for these high figures was the fact that a great deal of University degrees in Greece had been conferred on Greeks coming from beyond the limits of the Kingdom, and who, once graduated, decided to stay and work in Greece. Mansolas also resorted to comparisons with developed countries to stress the affinity of the Greek Kingdom with the West. For example, he informed the reader that national laws and regulations concerning trade were based upon French legislation, and he established parallels between the periodical edited by the society "Parnassos" under the title "Neoellinika analekta" and the French folklore journal "Melusine".

Did Mansolas succeed in convincing the European reader to see Greece's state and evolution in the author's way? We cannot measure the exact impact of the document on the reader's mind, but we know that Mansolas' book was widely circulated throughout the world. Indeed, one can find copies of the book in many Libraries, such as the Library of the British Statistical Society and the Library of the École polytechnique, to mention just two⁴¹. The book was also praised by numerous authors in Greece and abroad, who drew extensively upon it to build their own account of Modern Greece. In just the two years following its release, Mansolas' book was quoted and extensively used by Clovis Lamarre and de Queux de St-Hilaire in their book *La Grèce et l'Exposition de 1878* (1878), by Lewis Sergeant in his essay called *Greece*, edited in London in 1880, by Richard C. Jebb in his "The Progress of Greece" that first appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1879, by Attilio Brunialti in his "La

41 THE ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY (1908), 103; ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE (1881) *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque de l'École polytechnique*, Paris, Gauthier-Villars, 333.

Nuova Grecia" (1879), by N. Kasasis in his article "Political and Intellectual Life in Greece", published in *The Contemporary Review* in 1879, and by the author of the entry "Greece" for the *The Statesman's Year-book* in 1880⁴².

3.- Conclusion.

Although this article focuses on a rather "local" event, the participation of Greece in the Universal Exhibition held in Paris in 1878, it aims at contributing to a series of contemporary debates revolving around the modern nation-building process and 19th century "globalization".

Officially established as an independent state in 1832, Greece, according to the view of the elite of the day, was destined to be modern and part of the advanced West. By steadily participating in the Universal Exhibitions, as well as in other international forums such as the successive sessions of the International Statistical Congress (1853-1876)⁴³, the Greek state tried, on the one hand, to be acquainted with the tools it needed for its modernization, and, on the other hand, to demonstrate the progress the young country had accomplished since its foundation and to be compared with the industrialized countries of the time⁴⁴. In our opinion, this twofold aim pursued by the Greek State through its involvement in various international forums illustrates more general procedures whereby modern nations came to birth and were crafted through time. Indeed, during the 19th century, nations were built in a transnational arena, against a backdrop of many sorts of circulation (of people, ideas, institutions and artifacts). They were also constructed by comparing themselves to one another. Their various achievements (and failures) that were displayed, *inter alia*, at the Universal Fairs and in statistics-ridden books, were an essential part of this process of comparison.

42 LAMARRE; QUEUX DE St-HILAIRE (1878), 143; SERGEANT, Lewis (1880) *Greece*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, vi; JEBB (1879), 419; BRUNIALTI, Attilio (1879) "La nuova Grecia, le sue lotte, l'idea ellenica et il suo avvenire", *Nuova Antologia di scienze, lettere ed arti*, II series, vol. XLV, 15 July, 213; KASASIS, N. (1879) "Political and Intellectual Life in Greece", *The Contemporary Review*, vol. XXXVI, September-December, 173; MARTIN, Frederick (1880) "Greece". In: Id. *The Statesman's Year Book. Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the Civilised World for the Year 1880*, London, MacMillan and Co., 294.

43 CHATZIS (2007a).

44 For the case of Mexico, TENORIO-TRILLO, Mauricio (1996) *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation*, Berkeley, University of California Press.

By participating in the various international forums of the day, Greece incorporated, or tried to, through circulation and comparison, a series of elements of developed nations of the time into her own identity. Simultaneously, she became a part, a tiny one but a part all the same, of an increasingly “global” world, made up of many entangled components. Indeed, the numerous comments, whether positive or negative, that the Greek exhibits as well as the documents generated by the country’s participation in the Paris Fair of 1878 called forth bear witness to the fact that for a small but soaring number of people the universe they were living in was stretching beyond national borders and was began to comprise nations locating on the edge of the “developed” world⁴⁵.

45 BAYLY C.A. (2004) *The Birth of the Modern World: 1780-1914. Global Connections and Comparisons*, Oxford, Blackwell.