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The social history of modern Greece: a roundtable

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How is social history written and practiced in differing political and geographical contexts? As a journal, *Social History* has encouraged reflection on trajectories in different parts of the world through special issues on, most recently, Spain, the Caribbean, Hungary and the Czech and Slovak Republics.¹ This round-table discussion builds on this series of conversations by examining the social history and historiography of modern Greece – as written both within and outside of the country – and its contribution to wider European and global histories. Five social historians, at different career stages with contrasting biographies, participated in the roundtable through an exchange of views during the spring of 2017. The aims were to reflect on academic influences and trajectories; to identify future directions for the social history of modern Greece, including ways to better link it with the study of wider regions; and to analyse the very real effects of political change and financial crisis for the types of history that are produced and the choices that social historians of Greece make.

Influences

Where did you study and how has this affected your approach to historical research on Greece? Do you regard your itinerary as exceptional in relation to that of other historians working on Greece from the perspective of social history? What influences have shaped your work? How has the financial crisis affected those who work on social history in Greece?

Efi Avdela: I studied in France. My first studies in the 1970s were on plastic arts and art history at Pantheon-Sorbonne. Then, I went, back in the 1980s, to do gender social history at what was then Paris 7-Jussieu University (now Paris Diderot University). My PhD was on the process of feminization of the Greek civil

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¹For 'Spain and Spanish Historiography' see *Social History*, 29, 3 (2004); for 'Hungary', *Social History* 34, 2 (2009); for 'Caribbean Emancipations', *Social History*, 36, 3 (2011); for 'The Czech and Slovak Republics', *Social History*, 37, 4 (2012).

service during the first half of the twentieth century, focusing on the changing place of women and their relations with men during a period of political, military and social upheaval. Influenced by feminist theory, I asked how women's subordinated place in the labour market was related to their subjugation in the family. At the time, most Greek historians of economic and social history barely considered topics such as this as 'serious'. Since then, of course, gender history has flourished in Greece, a large part of which is social history. Becoming a historian at a mature age and doing gender history marked my itinerary as somewhat exceptional. I was lucky enough to find a university position right after I obtained my PhD in 1989, although I remained for many years in departments of education before I joined the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Crete in 2002. Intellectually, I followed closely developments in gender history and in social and cultural history abroad and they have greatly affected my research. Since the 2000s I have turned to the post-war period, exploring a variety of new topics, which have been influenced by social theory and by social and cultural anthropology especially: these include crimes of honour, violence and emotions, delinquent youth, the scientification of the social and public sociality.²

Tom Gallant: I can safely say that my intellectual formation differs radically from everyone else on this panel. Not only I am the only non-Greek, but I suspect that I am the only non-historian. All of my degrees, including my PhD from the University of Cambridge, are in archaeology. But the move to social history, and especially modern social history, was not as dramatic a departure as it might sound. My dissertation was a study of rural settlement and society in areas on two Greek islands from antiquity to the present using the methodologies of survey archaeology, environmental reconstruction and textual analysis, with the emphasis being on ancient times. In my first two books, one on an ancient fishing and the other on risk and the rural economy in ancient Greece, I explored what role maritime resources played in the diet and how Greek farmers coped with the high levels of subsistence risk inherent in Greece's environment.³ For all three of those works, I examined primary and secondary social history sources from the modern period as analogues for studying the more distant past. But the deeper I dug into the modern social historical literature, the more I discovered how relatively underdeveloped it was. So, I shifted my intellectual focus completely to the study of the social history of the Greek world over the last 300 years. This change occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, when 'new social history' was still

²E. Avdela, *'Neoi en kindyno'. Epitirisi, anamorfosi kai dikaiosyni anilikon meta ton polemo* (Athens, 2013); E. Avdela, S. D'Cruze and J. Rowbotham, *Problems of Crime and Violence in Europe, 1780–2000: essays in criminal justice* (Lampeter, 2010); E. Avdela, *Le genre entre classe et nation: essai d'historiographie grecque* (Paris, 2006); E. Avdela, *Dia logous timis. Via, synaisthimata kai axes sti metemfyliaki Ellada* (Athens, 2002).

³T.W. Gallant, *A Fisherman's Tale: an analysis of the potential productivity of fishing in the ancient Mediterranean* (Gent, 1985); T.W. Gallant, *Risk and Survival in Ancient Greece: reconstructing the rural domestic economy* (Stanford, 1991).

in vogue, and I had the good fortune to be a junior professor at the University of Florida, one of the leading bastions of ‘new social history’ in North America. So, I got to learn from some of the leading social historians in the world, such as Darrett Rutman and Robert F. Berkhofer Jr.⁴

Nikos Papadogiannis: I do not regard my case as representative of what most historians have done or what they should do, but, rather, one out of the many paths they have followed. In particular, I have found myself influenced by and in close contact with historians dealing with youth identities in conjunction with gender and through the medium of oral history, such as Efi Avdela and Kostis Kornetis.⁵ Still, I would refrain from defining myself as part of a specific generation, as I do not necessarily share the same formative experiences with those historians whose work has been meaningful to me. Overall, having studied history in Thessaloniki, London and Cambridge (for my PhD that I obtained in 2010, with an external advisor from the University of Crete) and having worked in Berlin, St Andrews and Bangor, I also regard my work as a bricolage containing elements to which I have been exposed in these places, especially the social/cultural history of youth lifestyles (Crete and London), the cultural history of politics (Berlin and Bangor) and transnational history (St Andrews, and the transnational Graduate Interdisciplinary Network for European Studies in which it participates).⁶ I have also benefitted a lot from activities organized by the Contemporary Social History Archives in Athens (Arheia Synhronis Koinonikis Istorias or ASKI), the Society for the Study of the History of Left-wing Youth, EMIAN (Etaireia Meletis tis Istorias tis Aristeris Neolaias or EMIAN), and the journal *Historein*.⁷

Leda Papastefanaki: I studied history at the University of Crete, from which I also obtained my Master’s and PhD degree in 2002. The scientific environment in the 1980s and 1990s at the University of Crete under the influence of French historiography, including the *Annales* school, favoured the study of economic and social history, the comparative perspective and the incorporation of European and Ottoman history in an attempt to challenge the nationalistic historiography. Since 2003, I have been teaching modern Greek economic and social history in the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Ioannina. I do not consider my personal itinerary as exceptional in relation to that of other historians working on Greece in social history, although I could refer to my personal interest in economic history and political economy, which is a different perspective from that of other social historians who focus more on societal or cultural aspects.

⁴D.B. Rutman and A.V. Rutman, *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650–1750* (New York, 1984); R.F. Berkhofer Jr., *Beyond the Great Story: history as text and discourse* (Cambridge MA, 1997); R.F. Berkhofer Jr., *Fashioning History: current practices and principles* (New York, 2012).

⁵See, for instance, K. Kornetis, *Children of the Dictatorship: student resistance, cultural politics and the ‘long 1960s’ in Greece* (New York & Oxford, 2013).

⁶N. Papadogiannis, *Militant around the Clock? Left-wing youth politics, leisure and sexuality in Greece, 1974–1981* (New York & Oxford, 2015); K. Kornetis, E. Kotsovili and N. Papadogiannis (eds), *Consumption and Gender in Southern Europe since the Long 1960s* (New York, 2016).

⁷On ASKI, see <http://www.askiweb.eu/index.php/en/> (last accessed: 30 October 2017). On EMIAN, see <http://www.emian.gr/> (last accessed: 30 October 2017).

Intellectually, I am interested in combining the gender approach with economic and social history in my research on industrialization and labour in modern Greece.⁸

Polymeris Voglis: I studied at the University of Athens in the 1980s, at a time when history courses were mainly about political and diplomatic history and social history was still unknown. The conservatism of the university back then pushed me to search for intellectual stimuli outside of academia. In the 1990s the intellectual environment at the University of Athens began to change and I enrolled in the MA programme. It was then that I met and joined a group of young historians who were interested in historiography and the theory of history; some years later, that group would launch the journal *Historein*. After finishing my thesis on German historiography, I began my PhD studies at the European University Institute (in Florence). My doctoral dissertation concerned the experience of political prisoners in the Greek Civil War and I was particularly interested in the question of subjectivity. Based on archival research and memoirs I studied the process of the formation of political prisoners' collective identity and the relation between the individual and the collective. At the time, academic interest in the 1940s had not reached its climax and the fact that I was at an international academic institution helped me to put my research topic in a broader perspective. After obtaining the PhD in 1999, I continued my research in the United States and returned to Greece in 2002. Since then, I teach post-Second World War history and social history in the Department of History, Archaeology and Social Anthropology at the University of Thessaly. My research interests have remained in the 1940s, but my approach has changed since, in my recent work, I have been more interested in questions of territoriality and social engineering.⁹

My itinerary is typical of many historians, who finished their first degree in Greece and continued their PhD studies in other European countries, mostly in France, the UK, Germany and Italy. The change, however, that has happened in the last 15 years is that there is a growing number of historians who receive their PhDs from Greek universities. This change has not brought a 'narrowing' of their intellectual interests; on the contrary, there is a strong presence of Greek (social) historians in European associations, conferences and research programmes. One of the positive characteristics of the Greek historical community is that it has been 'open' (at least since the 1980s) to influences and trends from other European countries and the United States.

History in Greece is apparently blooming, despite the financial crisis. Lots of history books are published every year, several conferences and workshops are being organized, promising historians finish pathbreaking PhDs, while questions

⁸L. Papastefanaki, *Ergasia, technologia kai fylo stin elliniki viomichania I klostoyfantourgia tou Peiraia (1870–1940)* (Athens 2009); L. Papastefanaki, *I fleva tis gis. Ta metalleia tis Elladas, 190s–200s aionas* (Athens, 2017).

⁹P. Voglis, *Becoming a Subject: political prisoners during the Greek Civil War* (New York, 2002); *I elliniki koinonia stin Katohi 1941–1944* (Athens, 2010); P. Voglis, *I adynati epanastasi. I koinoniki dynamiki tou Emfyliou Polemou* (Athens, 2014).

about the past remain high on the agenda of public discussion. The crisis, however, is here and has hit the universities through a severe cut in their budgets and the cessation of new openings for academic/research posts, and has affected young researchers, especially in the humanities, most of whom are unemployed or very poorly paid for doing all kinds of jobs. Moreover, the long-term consequences of the crisis are already visible. Fewer students are interested in doing a PhD in history and there is a 'brain drain' since many promising Greek historians seek to pursue an academic career abroad. One may argue that the crisis in the humanities is not a Greek peculiarity but a general situation in the European and US universities (cuts in the budgets, closing of departments, increase in non-tenured positions, etc.). This does not make me feel better; on the contrary, it shows how grave is the threat for the future of the humanities and the university in general.

Leda Papastefanaki: The current crisis has affected historians' work in multiple ways. For example, because of the cuts in funding for Greek academic libraries, it is more difficult for researchers to follow the recent trends in historiography, to travel abroad for doing research or present papers in conferences. Historians, and researchers in humanities in general, experience permanent financial insecurity, while many of them, especially the younger, have to resort to flexible and part-time academic (or, worse, non-academic) work.

Efi Avdela: The recent economic crisis is a disastrous factor for the Greek historical community in general. With the universities closed to new academic appointments for more than seven years now, fewer students venture into a doctoral thesis in history, even less in social history. Many young brilliant social historians who have opted to stay in the country are obliged to make a living by a variety of means, not necessarily academic. At the same time, those already abroad – such as Nikos Papadogiannis – if they are lucky enough to find a position, are often the best mediators between local historiographical developments and international historiography, and they promote more systematically transnational, entangled and comparative approaches. Young historians are also more ready to unite their forces and organize collectively, as the initiatives of the Social History Forum, which was set up in 2010 and which has contributed lately in driving forward social history, testify.¹⁰

Social history and Greek historiography

How distinct has the social history of Greece been as a field, both within and outside of Greek academia? How have historians dealing with Greece understood and practised social history and in what (shifting) ways have they approached 'the social'?

¹⁰The Social History Forum was the initiative of seven young historians (including Polymeris Voglis) with the goal to 'form an open space of dialogue and research, of exchange of ideas and information, of communication and reflection about what is happening in social history': see Forum Koinonikis Istorias (Social History Forum) <https://forumsocialhistory.wordpress.com/about/> (last accessed: 10 September 2017). They have organized several conferences, workshops and book presentations and published three edited volumes.

Polymeris Voglis: For many decades, Greek historiography was dominated by the traditional historicist paradigm and by nationalist ideology. In the 1970s questions of social and, mainly, economic history began to attract the interest of scholars. Yet most of them were not historians but rather sociologists, economists and political scientists who had studied mainly in France, but also in Great Britain and the United States. Moreover, one has to take into account that in the years after the Second World War, historiography was deeply influenced by political developments, that is the Greek civil war (1946–1949) and the military dictatorship (1967–1974). These political developments created a very conservative environment outside and inside academia that impeded the development of social history in Greece. In short, only after the fall of the dictatorship and the establishment of democracy in 1974 was academic freedom guaranteed and humanities and social sciences able to flourish.

Social history, as a distinct field, emerged in Greek historiography during the 1990s.¹¹ Yet, in general, historical writing in Greece remained to a large extent closely related to the study of the ‘political’, in the narrow sense of politics. Since 2000, there has been an explosion of academic and public interest in the 1940s, namely the years of the Nazi occupation and the civil war.¹² However, despite the fact that the 1940s is perhaps the most well-studied period of Greek history, very few scholars have sought to analyse the ‘social’ in an innovative way, paying instead closer attention to the transformation and articulation of relations, practices, discourses and imaginaries at times of war. Most historians have approached the ‘social’ as a product of political decisions and conflicts, and sometimes the debate has ended up in defending or condemning the political actors of the past.¹³

Nevertheless, social history has innovated historical research in Greece in many ways. To begin with, new methods, like oral interviews, were adopted that provided new insights into individual experience and collective memory. Second, the cross-fertilization between social and cultural history has enabled historians to address the ‘social’ from various and different perspectives. To put it differently, most Greek historians today have to take into account in their work the categories of social history. Finally, more historians are willing to problematize the categories they use (‘women’, ‘students’, ‘guerrillas’ etc.) and not treat them as something given.

Tom Gallant: As a distinct field of academic inquiry, the social history of Greece emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and this was the case both inside and outside of Greece.¹⁴ There had been before, of course, work that focused on what

¹¹For example E. Avdela, *Dimosioi ypalliloi genous thilykou. Katamerismos tis ergasias kata fyla ston dimosio tomea, 1908–1955* (Athens, 1990); A. Liakos, *Ergasia kai politiki stin Ellada tou Mesopolemou. To Diethnes Grafeio Ergasias kai i anadysi ton koinonikon thesmon* (Athens, 1993).

¹²For a recent overview of this vast academic literature see P. Voglis and I. Nioutsikos, ‘The Greek historiography of the 1940s: a reassessment’, *Südosteuropa*, 65, 2 (2017), 316–33.

¹³The most recent example of this trend is the book by S. Kalyvas and N. Marantzidis, *Emfyilia pathi. 23 erotiseis kai apantiseis gia ton emfylio* (Athens, 2015), in which the authors held the Left responsible for all the negative developments in Greece during the 1940s.

¹⁴A. Liakos, ‘Modern Greek historiography (1974–2000). The era of tradition from dictatorship to democracy’, in U. Brunnbauer (ed.), *(Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after socialism* (Münster, 2004), 351–78.

could be considered social history, especially if we add economic history into the mix – something that was quite frequently done at the time. Some of that scholarship appeared in Greece, but much of it was produced by historians outside of the country. There were, for example, some foundational works that were written by historians, political scientists, and political philosophers based professionally at French universities and working within a broadly Marxist structuralist paradigm.¹⁵ In Greece, we can see hints of the shift to this style of social history in the activities of the Society for the Study of Modern Hellenism (SSMH) and in the pages of the journal *Mnimon*, which the society has published since 1971. Founded as the Greek Paleography Society, its membership soon expanded to include scholars whose interests transcended just the study of paleography and were more in contemporary historiography, including ‘new social history’. Reflecting this shift in emphasis and responding to their desire to play a greater role in the public sphere, the members changed the name of the organization to the Society for the Study of Modern Hellenism in 1975. The next significant development in Greece was the appearance of the journal *Ta Istorika* in 1983, which provided a venue for the publication of works in social history. Established by historians, many of whom had been trained by the founders of the SSMH, it was intended to be a forum for the dissemination of newer historical research reflective of the contemporary historiographical trends. It was also expected to be independent of ties to any specific organization. Among Greek historians based in the US and the UK, older, more traditional modes of historical scholarship prevailed with their long-standing focus on narrative political history. The few who did work in social history by-and-large came from a background in anthropology.

By the 1990s, the historiographical landscape shifted and social history took off, particularly under the influence of the new cultural history that had emerged primarily in the USA. Symptomatic of the sea-change was the establishment in Greece of the Cultural and Intellectual History Society, and the publication of its journal *Historein* (since 1999). According to its mission statement, *Historein* provided a forum for the publication of scholarly articles that contributed to the study of the historical formation of social collectivities and representations of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nation; to the operation of social institutions, such as the university, the trade union, the prison, psychiatric centres; and to the ideological discourses that support, produce or negate these operations (disciplinary ones as well as popular discourses of the self, the body and the social/public sphere). Emphasis was to be put on the national, international and global structures and dynamics that code, ‘write’ and determine these phenomena and processes in the modern era.¹⁶ That social history had arrived as a distinct field was

¹⁵Y.B. Dertilis, *Koinonikos Metaschimatismos kai Stratiotiki Epemvasi, 1880–1909* (Athens, 1977); C. Tsoukalas, *Koinoniki Anaptyxi kai Kratos. I Sygrotisi tou Dimosiou Horou stin Ellada* (Athens, 1981).

¹⁶The full title of the journal is *Historein: a review of the past and other stories*. For the journal's current aims and goals, see <https://ejournals.publishing.ekt.gr/index.php/historein/index> (last accessed: 27 October 2017).

clear from the fact that it elicited powerful, mostly negative, responses from the larger community of historians; as it had done earlier elsewhere, the ascendancy of social and cultural history triggered a history war.¹⁷

Efi Avdela: Greece being a small country, its historical community (although one of the largest and most dynamic of academic communities in the country) is still limited and specializations are fragmentary and 'patchy'. There is no tradition in Greece of social history in the British-US American sense. Political circumstances as well as the established nationalist and ethnocentric historiography for a long time impeded any reference to the social – in history and the social sciences – as a suspect of affinities with the Left and Marxism. In the 1980s Marxist historical sociology and historical anthropology were the first to examine the social relations of the past. In history, references to the social gradually started to appear at around the same time, but as the subordinated component of 'economic and social history', the new paradigm that set out to modernize Greek historiography first from outside and later from inside academic institutions. Using a materialist, structural approach, this new history focused on the processes which fashioned the socioeconomic profile of modern Greece and more particularly on the factors that have determined the 'incomplete' development of its socioeconomic formation and put their mark on social relations as well as on politics. Social history started to emerge as a distinct field in the late 1990s, in other words long after it had come under attack elsewhere in the context of the linguistic and cultural turn. Research in three interconnected historical fields contributed to this development and bore the marks of its timing: (a) gender history, (b) the history of work and (c) the history of the 1940s.

- (a) Searching into the past for the presence of women as historical subjects, women's and gender history was from the start interested in the dynamics of social transformation, in the ways in which gender differences were inscribed in the specific interplay of class, nationalism and gender in Greek society and politics, in how dominant definitions of gender were challenged, appropriated or negotiated. The studies published since the late 1980s centred on social relations, social subjects and agency, but also on changing gendered cultural practices and meanings. Since then the field has come a long way and today many more social historians incorporate the concept of gender in a variety of topics and historical periods.
- (b) The existence or the absence of a Greek working class became a contested issue among Greek labour historians in the 1990s. Especially at stake were interpretations of the extent of class relations in Greek society, but also methodologies, on the one hand structural and on the other emphasizing agency. Work has been an important theme of gender history where cultural practices and meanings were also studied. Insulated from each

¹⁷A. Liakos, 'History wars: questioning tolerance' in G. Hálfdanarson (ed.), *Discrimination and Tolerance in Historical Perspective* (Pisa, 2008).

other for a long time, communication between labour and gender historians is nowadays flourishing.

- (c) By the 2000s, the social history of the War, the Occupation and the Civil War came dynamically to the forefront of academic and public interest and continues to be the most attractive historical theme for young scholars. Initially, historians and anthropologists approached this period asking how different categories of people experienced it. Extensive use of oral history produced histories 'from below'. However, after a first wave of innovative research, the 1940s became the battlefield of diverging interpretations with strong political references that fed into public debates. This had negative consequences on the methodological vitality of the field where nowadays descriptive and positivistic approaches predominate.

The fierce debates on historical methodology that in the early 2000s split the Greek historical community – again some 20 years later than Anglo-American historiography – did not contribute, in my view, to theorizing about the social – or the cultural for that matter. This was due to the lack at the time of controversial empirical studies which made these debates abstract. Important social history research is still produced, although for most historians 'society' continues to be viewed as a given entity. The most innovative studies are inspired by conceptualizations that go beyond dualities, draw from the social sciences and are placed at the interface of the social, the cultural and the political.

Leda Papastefanaki: I would add the following to Efi's points about gender and labour history. A gender perspective has been adopted in studies which, by combining social with economic history and making use of archives from industrial enterprises, have examined crucial aspects of the process of industrialization, such as the composition of the workforce, the organization and division of labour, wages, occupational hierarchy and the practices of management of the workforce.¹⁸ Indeed, the economic, social and cultural history of industry and business has been enhanced during the past decade by the adoption of women's and gender perspectives within a more 'social' approach.¹⁹

Nikos Papadogiannis: I find it more difficult to pinpoint beginnings than other participants in this discussion. There are no specific events or texts that historians largely recognize as having marked the birth date of the social history of Greece. Writing about the 'social' in Greece gained momentum after the collapse of the dictatorship in 1974, as Efi and Polymeris explain. Yannis Yannitsiotis has described this development as producing a 'historiographical discourse'.²⁰ Nevertheless, I feel that this label is somewhat narrow, since what appeared were

¹⁸For instance, Papastefanaki, *Ergasia, technologia, op. cit.*

¹⁹For a historiographical account, see L. Papastefanaki, 'Labour in economic and social history: the viewpoint of gender in Greek historiography', *Genesis. Rivista della Società Italiana delle Storie*, 15, 2 (2016), 59–83.

²⁰Y. Yannitsiotis, 'Social history in Greece: new perspectives', *East Central Europe/L'Europe Du Centre-Est*, 34/35, 1–2 (2008), 105. See also D. Lambropoulou, A. Liakos and Y. Yannitsiotis, 'Work and gender in Greek historiography during the last three decades' in B. Waaldijk (ed.), *Professions and Social Identity: new European historical research on work, gender and society* (Pisa, 2006), 1–14.

interdisciplinary syntheses that drew on sociology, political science and history. Such syntheses took a holistic approach, aiming to analyse social, political and economic developments across Greece and in the Greek diaspora over long periods of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They claimed that Greece deviated from the path to ‘modernity’ followed elsewhere in the ‘West’: they asserted that no significant industrialization occurred in Greece in comparison to other European countries, which resulted in no clear demarcation of social class boundaries, at least in the nineteenth century.²¹ Whilst they accepted that social inequalities existed, especially in urban centres, these syntheses maintained that there was no remarkable social inequality in the majority of rural areas; that the educational system did not totally exclude young people from the lower classes; and that mass mobilization largely did not occur along class lines. The late 1970s also saw the development of what was primarily economic and secondarily social history; and in exploring how industrialization unfolded in Greece, references were made, albeit briefly, to the formation of class boundaries in industrial workplaces.²² A further tendency that appeared at that point and continued during the subsequent decade was to address the making of brigands as a social group in Greece in the nineteenth century, subordinating, however, their analysis to that of Greek politics.²³

In the 1980s historical research on the formation of social divisions in Greece gained momentum.²⁴ These historians initially focused on gender, social class and often – but not always – their conjunction. The work of Efi Avdela on female civil servants and of Antonis Liakos on the working class is emblematic in this respect. Such work initially appeared in the mid-1980s in journals, such as *Mnimon* and *Istorika*, and then as monographs in the 1990s.²⁵ Meanwhile, the 1980s also witnessed the emergence of research institutions, such as the Historical Archive of Greek Youth (*Istoriko Arheio Ellinikis Neolaias*, IAEN), dedicated to

²¹Examples of such syntheses are C. Tsoukalas, *Exartisi kai Anaparagogi. O koinonikos rolos ton ekpaideytikon michanision stin Ellada (1830–1922)* (Athens, 1976); Dertilis, *Koinonikos Metaschimatismos, op. cit.*; N.P. Mouzelis, *Politics in the Semi-Periphery* (London, 1986). Note, however, that these works were not based on the same concepts; for instance, Tsoukalas, in contrast with Mouzelis, rested the argument upon the notion of ‘dependency’.

²²C. Agriantoni, *Oi aparhes tis ekviomichanisis stin Ellada ton 19o aiona* (Athens, 1986). For an example of work on the era prior to the Revolution of 1821, see V. Kremmydas, *Sygyria kai emporio stin proepanastatiki Peloponniso (1793–1821)* (Athens, 1980).

²³J. Kolipoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: brigandage and irredentism in modern Greece, 1821–1912* (Oxford, 1987).

²⁴Still, the view that social class divisions in Greece were fluid did not vanish in relevant historiography in the subsequent decades: see, for instance, P. Pizaniias, *Oi ftohoi ton poleon. I tehnognosia tis epiviosis stin Ellada ton Mesopolemo* (Athens, 1993). Moreover, prior to the 1980s there were isolated works that addressed class formation and relevant collective action in Greece. See A. Kitroeff, ‘Syneheia kai allagi sti synchroni elliniki istoriografia’ in Thanos Veremis (ed.), *Ethniki Tayotita kai Ethnikismos sti Neoteri Ellada* (Athens, 1999), 315–18.

²⁵E. Avdela, ‘Misthotes sheseis kai fylitikos katamerismos tis ergasias: Oi gynaikes dimosioi ypalliloi stin Ellada, sto proto miso tou 20ou aiona’, *Mnimon*, 11 (1987), 234–46; Avdela, *Dimosioi Ypalliloi, op. cit.* A. Liakos, ‘I allilexartisi politikon kai metodologikon proseggiseon stin istoria tou ergatikou kinimatos’, *Mnimon*, 11 (1987), 247–54 deals with methodological approaches to the history of the working-class movement and addresses diverse contexts in the ‘West’, also referring to Greece; A. Liakos, *Ergasia kai Politiki, op. cit.* A. Dialeti, E. Fournaraki and G. Gotsi (eds), *To fylo stin istoria. Apotimiseis kai paradeigmata* (Athens, 2015) provides an overview of historical research since the 1980s on gender and class relations in modern Greece, including a useful bibliography.

the historical study of the social divisions (based on age) of childhood and youth in Greek society.

Efi Avdela: Other research institutions, which were active from the mid-1970s to the late-1980s and were pioneering in the study of social divisions in Greece were the historical archives of various banks. These included the National Bank of Greece, the Commercial Bank of Greece and the Agricultural Bank of Greece.

Nikos Papadogiannis: Of course, thanks for pointing this out, Efi. Moving forward in time, we find that since the 1990s historians of Greece have formulated varying understandings of the 'social' in tackling the relationship between culture and material conditions. This can be characterized in four ways.²⁶ The first has involved the study of *associations* that were conducive to the formation of middle-class identities in Greece and the Greek diaspora in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁷ Such works initially focused on formal associations in fields such as leisure and charity, treating them as crucial to the construction of middle-class identities, which were not, in their view, a mere epiphenomenon of relations of production. A more recent approach to associations draws on the concept of sociality, underlining the malleability and diversity of social bonds in the study of both formal and informal ties.²⁸ A second focus has been on the *emotions* attached to social ties, producing analyses of the ways in which they underpin notions of gender, class and age and relevant power asymmetries. For example, Pothiti Hantzaroula has examined the emotions through which female domestic workers in early-to-mid twentieth-century Greece experienced their subjugation, which was itself shaped by class and gender.²⁹

A third aspect of the study of the 'social' is linked with the consideration of *memory*. Social historians have explored various ways in which social divisions are experienced and remembered, often using oral testimonies and demonstrating how experiences are constantly re-signified in collective and individual memory. Those social historians have been influenced by the work of scholars such as Luisa Passerini, Alessandro Portelli and Paul Thompson.³⁰ For instance, in his study of student resistance against the dictatorship in Greece (1967–1974), Kornetis has discerned the emergence of two distinct generations of students who struggled against the militaristic regime, exploring their social ties and cultural practices and demonstrating how events following the dictatorship's collapse in 1974 (such as

²⁶Yannitsiotis, 'Social history in Greece', *op. cit.*, identified some of these configurations, such as the interest in emotions. However, these configurations have multiplied since he wrote in 2008.

²⁷For instance, C. Koulouri, *Sport et société bourgeoise: Les associations sportives en Grèce 1870–1922* (Paris, 2000); Y. Yannitsiotis, *I koinoniki istoria tou Peiraia. I sygrotisi tis astikis taxis, 1860–1910* (Athens, 2006); H. Exertzoglou, *Oi 'hamenes patrides' pera apo ti nostalgia. Mia koinoniki-politismiki istoria ton Romion tis Othomanikis Aftokratorias (mesa 19ou-arches 20ou aiona)* (Athens, 2010).

²⁸E. Avdela, H. Exertzoglou and C. Lyrintzis (eds), *Morfes dimosias koinonikotitas stin Ellada tou eikostou aiona* (Rethymno, 2015). This is an interdisciplinary volume, co-edited by two historians (Avdela, Exertzoglou) and a political scientist (Lyrintzis).

²⁹For instance, P. Hantzaroula, *Smilevontas tin ypotagi: Oi emmisthes oikiakes ergatrics stin Ellada to proto miso tou eikostou aiona* (Athens, 2012).

³⁰For example, Hantzaroula, *Smileyontas, op. cit.*; D. Lambropoulou, *Oikodomoi. Oi anthropoi pou ehtisan tin Athina 1950–1967* (Athens, 2009); M. Haralampidis, *I empeiria tis Katohis kai tis Antistasis stin Athina* (Athens, 2012); Kornetis, *Children of the dictatorship, op. cit.*; Papadogiannis, *Militant around the Clock, op. cit.*

the arrest of terrorists in the early 2000s) have affected how individual members of these generational groups remember their activities as students. There is a fourth category of works – for example the work of Nikos Potamianos on artisans and shopkeepers in Athens – which clearly places a premium on *material conditions*.³¹ In aiming to explain social class formation in Greek urban centres, such works do not ignore culture, but stress the relations of production as the decisive parameter. Similarly, studies addressing associations, emotions and memory do not necessarily fail to consider material conditions. Rather, they demonstrate how emergency conditions, war or financial crises are interlinked with social bonds and cultural practices.

Leda Papastefanaki: I agree with Nikos that, in dealing with the relationship between material conditions and culture, social historians have articulated diverse notions of the ‘social’ through the study of *associations*, *emotions* or even the interconnection of culture with the *relations of production*, which is exemplified in the work of Potamianos. An excellent example of diverse articulations of the ‘social’ is the research on engineers as a new elite professional group; derived mainly from the field of science and technology studies, it has also fertilized social history by adding new material and perspectives. New research has demonstrated that those engineers who studied in Europe and Greece in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were not simply bearers of scientific knowledge, but historical agents who, through their multiple scientific activities, contributed to the process of technological appropriation and industrial modernization in the context in which they were active. New research has also shown the interaction between scientific and technical professional activities and the participation of engineers in political and social affairs.³² It is noteworthy that many economic historians have also turned to much more ‘social’ approaches, studying social groups like industrialists, merchants or ship-owners.³³

New directions

What periods and topics have dominated to date within the social history of Greece? Which new directions would you encourage social historians of Greece to pursue in the future?

³¹For instance N. Potamianos, *Oi Noikokyraioi. Magazoteres kai viotehnes stin Athina 1880–1925* (Heraclio, 2015); N. Potamianos, ‘Moral economy? Popular demands and state intervention in the struggle over anti-profiteering laws in Greece 1914–1925’, *Journal of Social History*, 48, 4 (Summer 2015), 803–15.

³²See for instance Y. Antoniou, *Oi Ellines michanikoi Thesmoi kai idees 1900–1940* (Athens, 2006); Y. Antoniou, M. Assimakopoulos and K. Chatzis, ‘The national identity of inter-war Greek Engineers: elitism, rationalization, technocracy, and reactionary modernism’, *History and Technology*, 23, 3 (2007), 241–61; L. Papastefanaki, ‘Mining engineers, industrial modernization and politics in Greece, 1870–1940’, *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, 13 (2016), 71–115; L. Papastefanaki, ‘Oi michanikoi stin Ellada tou Mesopolemou: spoudes, epaggelmatikes stadiodromies, diasyndeseis’, *Mnimon*, 35 (2016), 233–64.

³³See for example C. Agriantoni, ‘Oi michanikoi kai i viomichania. Mia apotyhimeni synantisi’ in C. Hadziiossif (ed.), *Istoria tis Elladas tou 20ou aiona. O Mesopolemos 1922–1940*, v. B1 (Athens, 2002), 268–93; C. Agriantoni, ‘A collective portrait of Greek industrialists’, *Entreprises et histoire*, 2, 63 (2011), 15–25.

Leda Papastefanaki: Social historians are mainly doing research on the twentieth century, particularly from the 1920s onwards. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the early modern period, are not well researched. Urban history, dealing with different aspects of the social, including poverty, public health and benevolence, developed significantly in the 1990s and 2000s.³⁴ Other well-covered topics include state institutions and social policy, women's education, Asia Minor Greek refugees after 1922, aspects of Jewish history (especially in the case of Thessaloniki)³⁵ and the experience of the Second World War. In terms of women's and gender history, women's labour is a thematic field that has developed significantly since the 1980s. There are many lacunae: the life and experience of people in the countryside, family history, migration, labour and leisure in urban and agrarian contexts, minorities' social history, sexuality and the history of health and disease. I would encourage young researchers to turn their focus on these topics and to use more systematically comparative, entangled or transnational approaches.

Tom Gallant: There are four thematic areas where we can speak of there being a body of Greek social historical scholarship: labour and class; gender; memory and identity; historical cultures. This is not to say that there are not many other social historical topics that have been examined for Greece; there are. The difference is that to have a body of scholarship means that there are numerous works on a topic and, more importantly, that these works are in dialogue and debate with one another. In terms of time period, that depends on the subject. Certainly, the 1940s has garnered much attention. Certain phases of the nineteenth century have likewise been the subject of social and economic history, albeit all too often from a top-down rather than bottom-up perspective. More recently, the era of the 1960s and 1970s has become a site for social historical research.

For me, the lacunae are the most glaring. As others have mentioned already, Greek social history really only emerged in the 1990s, after the cultural turn. The intellectual movement known as the 'new social history' that had burst on the scene in the 1960s and then developed through the 1970s and into the 1980s, has had little impact in Greece.³⁶ 'New social history' revolutionized western historiography and opened up entirely new vistas for historical research. For instance, family history, urban history, rural history, microhistory, the histories of everyday life, of emotions, of childhood, of poverty, of crime and violence, of material culture, of collective action, of sex and sexuality became subjects of enquiry, many for the first time. While we have a few studies on some of these

³⁴On these fields, see for instance V. Theodorou, 'Peitharhika systimata kai ergasia sta orfanotrofeia to b' miso tou 19ou aiona', *Mnimon*, 21 (1999), 55–85; C. Loukos, *Pethainontas sti Syro ton 19o aiona. Oi martyries ton diathikon* (Heraclio, 2000).

³⁵For example, R. Molho, *Oi Evraioi tis Thessalonikis, 1856–1919. Mia idiaiteri koinotita* (Athens, 2001); M. Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430–1950* (London, 2004); G. Margaritis, *Anepithymitoi Sympatriotes. Stoiheia gia tin katastrofi ton meionotiton tis Elladas: Evraioi, Tsamides* (Athens, 2005). See also E. Ginio, A. Molho and P. Papamichos Chronakis (eds), Special Issue, 'Salonica's Jews', *Jewish History*, 28, 3–4 (2014).

³⁶T.W. Gallant, 'Long time coming, long time gone: the past, present and future of social history', *Historiein, A review of the past and other stories*, 12 (2012), 9–20.

topics, we do not have extensive bodies of scholarship on any of them and many more have scarcely been covered at all, such as prostitution, domestic violence, domestic social space and material culture, and urban ‘underworld culture’. This means that important gaps remain.

If, however, we move beyond the strict domain of social historical topics and look at how social historical approaches more broadly have revised the ways in which scholars examine the two most important events in the country’s history – the Greek War of Independence (Greek Revolution) of 1821 to 1832 and the Greek Civil War (1946–1949) – then we can draw a more up-beat conclusion. I shall focus my comments here on the Greek Revolution, which traditionally has been treated as a national event with the main focus being on its political and military dimensions. This has changed. Under the influence of recent historiographical trends, especially transnationalism, the insurrection is being examined in a broader European and even global context.³⁷ Topics relating to gender, violence, popular culture and law, have now also been explored in the context of the Revolution.³⁸ So, while there are still some specific gaps in the social history of Greece, approaches drawn from social and cultural history have deeply influenced Greek historiography more broadly in ways that have led to significant revisions in our understanding of the past.

Efi Avdela: The time gap between international and Greek social history did not allow the latter to develop as it could have, and many topics remain either unexplored or with only one or two studies, irrespective of the period in question. However, I believe that we cannot reproduce the ‘lost moment’ of social history, even if this means that gaps in our knowledge of Greek society remain, making more difficult to place it in larger contexts. As I suggested before, this ‘thin’ historiography does not concern only social history but also other historical fields, not least political or institutional history. Be that as it may, I agree with Tom that top-down approaches and – I would add – a rather descriptive and restrained notion of both the social and the political predominated until recently. Today historians interested in social history have turned from Marxist or structuralist sociology to other kinds of social theory with extremely fruitful results. Recent studies have brought individuals, agency and subjectivities more to the fore, approaches much needed in Greek social history.

In my view, social historians of Greece should develop even further the bottom-up approaches of classical social history enriched with the best legacies of the cultural turn. Indeed, many do, following international developments. However, significant lacunae in national history remain. We still know very little about the life of the majority of the Greek population for the whole period

³⁷P. Pizantias, (ed.), *I Elliniki Epanastasi tou 1821. Ena evropaiko gegonos* (Athens, 2009. English edition: *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event* (Istanbul, 2011); L. Frary, *Russia and the Making of Modern Greek Identity, 1821–1844* (New York, 2015); A. Karakatsouli, ‘Mahites tis eleftherias’ kai 1821. *I elliniki epanastasi sti diethniki tis diastasi* (Athens, 2016).

³⁸See T.W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768–1913: the long nineteenth century* (Edinburgh, 2015), 51–106 for a discussion of these newer approaches and for citations to the relevant scholarship.

since the foundation of the Greek State, especially the peasantry but also the urban poor. It is noteworthy for example, that even with the coming bicentenary anniversary of the Greek War of Independence (1821), our knowledge of this period from the point of view of social history is still rather limited. Microhistorical approaches for periods other than the 1940s are sparse. I would welcome studies on topics such as those that Tom and Leda mention, and many others. I am aware, however, that these are at odds with current international historiographical trends that favour macroscopic, top-down and time and space sweeping approaches.

Nikos Papadogiannis: I agree with a point that Tom has recently made that 'there are many advantages [for social historians] to adopting a microhistorical approach.'³⁹ I would like to add that this might also further sharpen analytically the shift of some social historians of Greece to transnational perspectives as well as to the notion of sociality. Such transnational microhistories could examine the concrete (un-)making of sociality in specific contexts, considering the agency of those involved and the particular transnational flows that affected them. It could, ideally, illuminate multidirectional flows between Greece and other countries, contributing to the social history of areas wider than the former. Such work could certainly benefit from and enrich the effort to combine global/transnational history with microhistory, which has very recently appeared in the UK and the USA.⁴⁰ Simultaneously, this approach would be extremely timely in terms of impact beyond academia. It could complement already existing publications which show that state borders and national identities have been recent constructions rather than the perennial fixtures that are portrayed in nationalist discourses that have been proliferating within politics and the media in the West.⁴¹

Transnational dimensions

To what extent, then, have social historians dealing with Greece situated their work within wider regional and international contexts? To what extent have they probed social relations through transnational flows of people, ideas and cultural forms? How has the transnational approach affected the ways in which historians conceptualize the 'social' and the study of Greece?

Tom Gallant: In an article that I published 20 years ago, after a review of some of the best of the new scholarship that was appearing in Greek social history, I concluded:

³⁹Gallant, 'Long time coming', *op. cit.*, 18.

⁴⁰See, for instance: F. Trivellato, 'Is there a future for Italian microhistory in the age of global history?', *California Italian Studies*, 2, 1 (2011), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq>; J.-P.A. Ghobrial (2014), 'The secret life of Elias of Babylon and the uses of global microhistory', *Past & Present*, 222, 1 (2014), 51–93; B. Struck, K. Ferris and J. Revel, 'Introduction: space and scale in transnational history', *International History Review*, 33, 4 (2011), 573–84.

⁴¹On works that demonstrate the constructed character of Greek national identities, see notes 45–47 below.

what all of these works have in common is that they address themes and issues of interest to social historians generally. All, either explicitly or implicitly, adopt a comparative approach, thereby placing the Greek case in a broader context. I strongly believe that this is the way forward.

But, I noted, ‘threatening to strangle the baby of progress in its crib, however, are the calls that are beginning to be heard about “Greek exceptionalism”’.⁴² Social and cultural history by its very nature lends itself to a comparative, cross-cultural approach; unlike, for example, political history which can be written within a single national or country frame. The point I was trying to make at the time was that the emergence of social history provided an opportunity for Greek history to be mainstreamed into the wider discipline in a way that it had never been before, and that appeals to exceptionalism threatened to perpetuate the parochialization that the field had suffered for a long time. What I want to emphasize here is that this trend toward writing Greek history into broader historiographies persisted, despite the, at times, stiff opposition that it encountered.

Recently, however, that has begun to change. Along with the discipline more generally, we are moving from an analytical mode whereby we compare and contrast our Greek case studies within regional or international contexts to an approach that focuses on interconnections across space and between societies and cultures. Broadly speaking, that approach has been labelled as transnationalism. This shift in the way we contextualize our studies is to be welcomed because it offers us new insights and interpretations of the past. One might cite two examples that exemplify the promise of this trend. The excellent collection of essays published by Isabella and Zanou shows how adopting a transnational and microhistorical approach can bring to light an entirely new way of understanding how new ideas, and the men and women who propounded them, spread across the Mediterranean during the Age of Revolution.⁴³ My second example is the multi-volume *Edinburgh History of the Greeks* that I have the privilege of editing. The series starts from the premise that the history of Greek society cannot be told during any period solely within the spatial boundaries of what is now Greece. In my volume on the long nineteenth century, for example, I trace the social history of the greater Greek world that encompassed southern Russia, the Ottoman Empire and the new kingdom of Greece and I show that, because of the flows of people, ideas and cultural forms, its history has to be told as a unitary, integrated narrative.⁴⁴

Polymeris Voglis: For a very long time historians approached Greek history as ‘exceptional’ according to the Western European paradigm. Greece was ‘less’ or ‘late’ (modernized, industrialized, urbanized, developed etc.) in comparison with France, Great Britain or Germany and many of the characteristics of Greek society were attributed to this ‘backwardness’. This approach had an impact on

⁴²T.W. Gallant, ‘Greek exceptionalism and contemporary historiography: new pitfalls and old debates’, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 15, 2 (1997), 213.

⁴³M. Isabella and K. Zanou (eds), *Mediterranean Diasporas: politics and ideas in the long 19th century* (London, 2015).

⁴⁴Gallant, *Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, *op. cit.*

social history as well and for that reason one of the main questions back in the 1980s was whether there was a working class in Greece in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The 'backwardness' approach waned under the impact of two developments. The first was the growing historical research on the Ottoman empire and the Balkan peninsula.⁴⁵ The departure from the territory of nation-state proved to be very fruitful in order to understand, on the one hand, social relations and changes in a much broader and different framework, and, on the other, the ways in which nationalism reconfigured practices and ideas. The Ottoman empire is no longer perceived as a polity based on repression and discrimination against the Christians but also as a site of multiple exchanges and interactions among different regions and social groups. The second was the study of the diversity and mobility in Greek society.⁴⁶ Historians shed light on the fact that the making of modern Greece was, in fact, a long process of ethnic homogenization that entailed the inclusion and exclusion of populations. The exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey after 1922, the extermination of the Greek Jews by the Nazis and the expulsion of the Slav Macedonians in the late 1940s revealed a much more complex history, which was unexplored (especially the question of minorities) by historians until the 1990s. The same goes for the two huge waves of migration, at the turn of the twentieth century and in the decades immediately after the Second World War, and the study of diaspora that also became topics of historical research after the 1990s.⁴⁷

Thus, nowadays social historians are well aware of the fact that the dividing line between 'inside' and 'outside' the nation-state is constructed and porous. This is more than obvious when historians study global events, like the two world wars. But it is also pertinent in the analysis of the 'social' in Greece. Social historians have criticized older approaches that viewed Greek society as either 'torn' between the modern West and the backward, traditional East or as 'receiver' of Western ideas, habits, etc., and sought to examine the Greek case in a broader European, Balkan or Mediterranean context.

Efi Avdela: In my view, this question has two aspects. One concerns the historical work produced: the nature of the questions asked and the references used; the other is about the extent to which this work becomes known to the international community of social historians.

In respect to the first aspect, many of the initial followers of economic and social history having studied abroad, their studies bore the mark of the historiographical

⁴⁵H. Exertzoglou, *Ek dysmon to fos? Exellinismos kai orientalismos stin othomaniki autokratoria, mesa 19ou-arhes 20ou aiona* (Athens, 2015); E. Kanner, *Emfytes koinonikes diekdikiseis apo tin othomaniki autokratoria stin Ellada kai tin Tourkia. O kosmos mias ellinidas hristianis daskalas* (Athens, 2012).

⁴⁶R. Benveniste, *Autoi pou epezisan. Antistasi, ektopisi, epistrofi. Thessalonikeis Evraioi sti dekaetia tou 1940* (Athens, 2014); S. Karavas, *Mystika kai paramythia apo tin istoria tis Makedonias* (Athens, 2014).

⁴⁷For instance, L. Venturas, *Ellines metanastes sto Velgio* (Athens, 1999); Ioanna Laliotou, *Transatlantic Subjects. Acts of migration and cultures of transnationalism between Greece and America* (Chicago, 2004). See also L. Korma, 'The historiography of the Greek diaspora and migration in the twentieth century', *Historiein, A review of the past and other stories*, 16, 1-2 (2017), 47-73.

influences they brought with them – for a long time French more than anything else – adapted to local concerns. In their attempts to explain what was perceived as the country's 'incomplete' social transformation lurked an implicit comparison with an often essentialized 'West'. The subsequent generations of historians studying social relations in one way or other, while focusing on the case of Greece, followed international historiography in their field and went beyond Greek exceptionalism. Most social historians today situate Greece within the Balkans, the Mediterranean or the Ottoman past or place it in terms of the European context. However, systematic comparative, transnational or entangled histories remain rather rare, although a growing trend in studies on Greece published abroad by younger historians.

Things have changed more significantly in respect to the second aspect. Language has been an important barrier for a long time. You may well know your literature and use it in your historical work in order to place your Greek case study into a wider historiographical context; if it is written in Greek nobody is the wiser and you can hardly have any effect in the relevant debates. This is one of the reasons why studies in non-Greek history are not sufficiently developed in Greek universities. However, younger historians have been especially open to interactions with the international historical community and they publish abroad much more often than their predecessors. The need to publish in peer-reviewed international journals, to attend international conferences and to participate in scholarly international networks has obliged most professional historians to follow and incorporate broader – although especially English-speaking – historiographical developments in their specific fields, which is made more possible by the growth of air travel, electronic communications etc. since the mid-1990s. Research on transnational flows of people, ideas and cultural forms, which while still scarce, has indeed developed in recent years, should be seen as an aspect of these processes.

Leda Papastefanaki: Since the 1980s more and more historians in Greece have been trying to avoid ethnocentric perspectives and to put their research into wider contexts (Ottoman, Balkan, Mediterranean or European). Although transnational or comparative history is far from being a rule in Greek historiography, there is a growing trend among Greek historians in following transnational or comparative approaches, and this is evident mainly among historians of the younger generation publishing or studying abroad. Research on topics like tourism, youth, material culture and consumption, Jewish or Greek-Christian diaspora, professional and educational networks, labour and appropriation of technology could contribute to a transnational, entangled, global history or to an *histoire croisée* 'made in Greece'; that means a comparative/entangled social history approach with a constant emphasis on methodological issues.

Flourishing research in Greece and abroad on the multiple historical contexts in which diverse Jewish communities in the Mediterranean developed, should

fertilize an entangled history, while a micro-level analysis of Jewish survival in Thessaloniki reflects the dynamism of Shoah studies in Greece.⁴⁸ An example of a complex methodological approach, which could contribute to an *histoire croisée*, is the recently published edited volume on Jewish communities between the 'East' and 'West', in the fifteenth to twentieth centuries, which has involved the participation of historians and social scientists from Greece, Israel, Canada and the US.⁴⁹ This collection, combining the micro-level with the medium and macro level of analysis, explores diverse aspects of the economic, social and cultural history of Jewish communities in Greece, the Mediterranean and the Balkans. The geographical area of the volume title ('East and West') is a reminder of the mobility of the Jewish diaspora as well as of the various historical cultural characteristics that Jewish communities developed within different social, political and cultural frameworks, both in the 'East' and the 'West', as well as in the 'North' and 'South' of Europe and the Mediterranean. By investigating the development of the Jewish diaspora, the ways in which Jewish communities were established, their settlement, occupations and economic activities, their cultural identities, their integration into the broad array of cities and multiple borders of social, political and cultural contexts, the volume seeks to avoid gross generalizations about the Jewish past that ignore the class, gender and religious differences that cut across multiple Jewish communities. By highlighting the connections and relations between Jewish communities themselves, the research puts an emphasis on the diversity and the tensions that characterized the Jewish populations over time.

Nikos Papadogiannis: Efi, Leda, Polymeris and Tom have already demonstrated that historians probing social relations in Greece have moved beyond Greek exceptionalism by demystifying the wider contexts into which they situate the study of Greece. I would be slightly more optimistic than Efi about the spread of systematic transnational and comparative approaches to the social history of Greece. In terms of comparison, modern Greece has also been analysed as part of social histories of Europe authored by historians based in northern Europe.⁵⁰ Moreover, I agree with Polymeris that transnational approaches to the social history of Greece since the 1990s have challenged the 'backwardness' approach that was dominant in the 1970s and 1980s. I would like to add that, in contrast to the 'backwardness' approach, the transnational approach no longer views the diaspora as an extension of what happened in Greece, but, rather, has illuminated occasions of cultural/ideological syncretism transpiring both in Greece and in diasporic communities due to transnational interaction. This transnational approach has become popular among diverse historians and not necessarily younger ones, but also across themes and topic areas. Key examples within labour history include the work of Antonis Liakos on labour relations and politics in interwar

⁴⁸See 'Salonica's Jews', *op. cit.*; Benveniste, *Aftoi pou epezisan*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹A. Mahera and L. Papastefanaki (eds), *Evraikes koinotites anamesa se Anatoli kai Dysi, 15os-20os aionas: oikonomia, koinonia, politiki, politismos* (Ioannina, 2016).

⁵⁰B. Tomka, *A Social History of Twentieth-Century Europe* (London, 2013).

Greece, which examines both state intervention and the role of international organizations, and that of Lina Venturas on Greek migrants in Belgium, which demonstrates that the cultural forms they pursued should be seen as a continuum with those of indigenous populations as each affected the other.⁵¹ Similarly in business history, Gelina Harlaftis's study of Greek-owned shipping probes how the activity of relevant entrepreneurs transcended the borders of the Greek nation-state.⁵² Moreover, research on youth in Greece since the 1950s has stressed the links between local and international youth lifestyles.⁵³ I would mention here the interdisciplinary volume I have co-edited with Leonidas Karakatsanis, which touches upon a hitherto under-researched topic – the study of the Left in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus since the 1960s – from a transnational and comparative perspective and includes contributions from social/cultural historians.⁵⁴

Thus a further definition of the 'social' is emerging in these *transnational* works: one that considers how social ties transcend national boundaries. This probing of the impact of transnational social bonds has far from exhausted its potential. For example, the relationship between labour migration (including that of subjects of Greek origin) and shifting sexual patterns in West Germany awaits examination, as Atina Grossmann aptly remarks.⁵⁵

Conclusions

What are your final reflections?

Leda Papastefanaki: I want to stress the need for more systematic comparative, transnational, transcontinental and entangled social histories, as well as more micro-historical approaches that open up the view from below. The shared past between Greece, Turkey and other Balkan or Mediterranean countries can facilitate these approaches and serve as a methodological point of departure for new research.

Efi Avdela: There is no doubt that Greek social history is flourishing as never before. There is a growing integration of the Greek case in European historiography. Important contributions foster transnational and entangled histories, thus offering increased visibility to Greek social history research in international fora. The contribution of scholars based abroad to these developments is important. It is unfortunate that at home this coincides with budget cuts, limited number of

⁵¹Liakos, *Ergasia kai Politiki*, *op. cit.*; Venturas, *Ellines Metanastes*, *op. cit.*

⁵²Gelina Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping. The making of an international tramp fleet, 1830 to the present day* (London, 1995).

⁵³For instance K. Katsapis, *Ihoi kai apoiohi. Koinoniki istoria tou rok en rol fainomenou stin Ellada, 1956–1967* (Athens, 2007); Avdela, 'Neoi en kindyno', *op. cit.*; Kornetis, *Children*, *op. cit.*; Papadogiannis, *Militant Around the Clock*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁴L. Karakatsanis and N. Papadogiannis (eds), *The Politics of Culture in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus: Performing the Left since the Sixties* (London & New York, 2017).

⁵⁵A. Grossmann, 'Continuities and ruptures: sexuality in twentieth-century Germany: historiography and its discontents' in K. Hagemann and J.H. Quataert (eds), *Gendering Modern German History. Rewriting historiography* (New York & Oxford, 2007), 222.

academic posts and severe cuts in research funding. Be that as it may, much needs to be done, of which the most crucial is a more systematic theorizing of the social.

Polymeris Voglis: Social historians should work in three directions. They should be more theoretically informed and should question and problematize established categories and ideas. They should also address the question of power and scrutinize the relation between the social and the political. Finally, they should address the public. In times of crisis and with the humanities targeted by neoliberalism, historians need to move outside academia and address a wider public in order to argue that history (still) matters.

Tom Gallant: Reflecting on our conversation here and on my experience of having worked in the field for close to 40 years, I can say that the study of the social history of Greece and the Greek world has never been stronger or more vibrant. The volume and high quality of the publications appearing every year, many written by younger scholars, is truly impressive. As is the fact that many of them utilize approaches and methodologies that allow them to engage in contemporary historiography. The parochialism that dogged the field in the past is long gone. In spite of the crisis of the Humanities in higher education globally and in spite of the crippling financial crisis in Greece, history continues to attract bright young scholars, and so I remain optimistic about the future of our field.

Nikos Papadogiannis: Ideally, a combination of transnational history with microhistory will help produce more social histories not of Greece as a sealed container, but of Greek subjects in movement and interaction with others. Hopefully these histories will enrich understandings of social relations and cultural practices not only in Greece, but also in other countries/regions and will be seriously considered by historians of both the former and the latter.

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