Ἔχεις μοι εἰπεῖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἄρα διδακτὸν ἢ ἄρετή; ἢ οὐ διδακτὸν ἂλλ’ ἀσκητὸν; ἢ οὔτε ἀσκητὸν οὔτε μαθητὸν, ἄλλα φύσει παραγίγνεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἢ ἄλλῳ τείνι τρόπῳ

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RELIGION, EDUCATION AND THE CONFIGURATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE OTTOMAN MILLET’S CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY OF THE BLACK SEA ORTHODOX COMMUNITIES (1453-1923)

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Abstract

The present research focuses on the relationship between religion, nationalism and education in the Greek-Orthodox communities of the Rum millet during the period 1453-1923, within the framework of the Ottoman Empire. The research period extends until the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), when the visions and high expectations of modern Greek nationalism were lost. The choice of the ottoman Black Sea area as a field of research is related to the fact that it is one of the few areas where it is possible to follow the conversion process of the Rum millet’s identity into a national one on a broader scale. The present study uses the historical interpretive method. Finally, the study discusses the conversion process of the “Rum millet’s” identity into a Greek national identity through the mechanisms of education, and attempts to interpret the impact on the goals of Orthodox education, within the Black Sea communities.

Keywords: religion, education, national identity, Greek Orthodox community, millet

1. Introduction

This research is based on the rational assumption that both nations, and the elements of their cohesion and continuity, are structures that characterize modern societies (Anderson 1991, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990). Therefore, we do not use nations as instantiated entities but prefer to use identities as a research tool (Brubaker 2004: 115-127). When referring to identities, it is worth noting that these are treated as social constructions (Jenkins 1994: 197-223, Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 1-47) and as a subject of negotiation concerning their constitutive elements, that is to say their values, symbols and stereotypes. Consequently, our historical process refers to the identities’ construction, reconsideration, reconfiguration and reconstruction, since it is assumed
that the latter are in constant redefinition, according to the prevailing circumstances.

The main objectives of this research are: a) the interpretation of education’s structures and functions within the ottoman context of the millet, with a focus on the Greek-speaking Black Sea communities b) the monitoring of the processes that led to the establishment of the Greek-Orthodox communities and to the development of Greek-Orthodox education during the Tanzimat period c) the description of the nationalization process within the Greek-Orthodox communities that paved the way for the conversion of the Rum millet’s identity into a Greek national identity and consequently strengthened the demand for a Greek national school to be established in the Black Sea region d) the identification of the main parameters (as regards social strata, their influence and their strategic choices) that contributed to the dissemination of the demands and claims of Greek nationalism among the various levels of organized society in the early 20th century.

Thus, according to the above, the structure of this study is organized as follows: at first, we refer to the Orthodox Grecophone education promoted by the Greek-speaking Orthodox ethnie of the Rum millet; next, we describe the education of the Greek-Orthodox communities during the Tanzimat period; and finally, following the Young Turks’ revolution (1908), we examine Greek national education within the Greek communities (Exertzoglou 1996).

As regards our focus on the Black Sea Orthodox communities, it is important to note that they were chosen in order for us to observe the relationship between religion, education and identity formation on a wider scale (Scott 1991, Brunder & White 1997: 161-208). In fact, it is accepted that in the case of the Black Sea communities, this review can cover the period from the establishment of the Byzantine Empire of Trebizond (1204) to the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), when the Black Sea refugees began their journey back to the Greek state burdened with their “traumatic memories” (Agtzidis et al. 2010).

By the Empire of Trebizond, we refer to the successor state of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) founded in 1204, as a result of the capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade, which later fell into the hands of the Ottomans in 1460. An attempt to identify the most famous intellectuals of the Empire of Trebizond from the 11th to the 15th century leads us to the following few names: John Xifilinos from Trebizond (Miller 1969), who was the most famous intellectual of the Empire during the 11th century, and Patriarch Georgios Xifilinos, who was its best known representative in the 12th century (Balsamon). In addition to these, the scholars that left their mark on the 14th century were Georgios Chrysokokkes, an astronomer and physician (Pingree & Scarborough 1991), and Michael Panaretos, “the chronicler writer” (Vasiliev 1940-41: 333-338).

After the capture of Trebizond and the dissolution of the Empire, serious dilemmas faced the scholars who originated from the Empire of Trebizond, since they had to choose between the eastern or western model of Christianity and culture. The most renowned scholars of the 15th century were Georgios Amiroutsis (Chasiotis 1974: 248-253), Cardinal Bessarione (Geanakoplos 1962), who was born in Trebizond, and Georgios of Trebizond. It is a fact that the process of assimilating the millet’s values was rejected by the last two scholars, who chose to embrace the Catholic doctrine and serve the
values of western humanism. Their choice is worth noting as of particular interest, but requires no elaboration, since it bore no further consequences.

2. The Education of the Rum Millet’s Greek-speaking Ethnie (1453-1856)

Right after the fall of Constantinople, conditions were ripe for the foundation of Greek schools. More specifically, Sultan Mehmed II, also known as the Conqueror, granted the veratia, i.e. privileges (Runciman 1968), to the Orthodox Patriarch, and the latter was recognized as the highest religious and political leader of all Orthodox subjects (Hammer-Purgstall 1834, Kardaras 1996, Karpat 2001). Consequently, the fact that the religious communities of the millet all lived together under the framework of ottoman legality, meant that the populations of the former Eastern Roman Empire acquired the identity of Rum (Daniilidis 1934, Yannaras 1992, Vakalopoulos 1961), that is to say the identity of the Orthodox population who were subject to the religious jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch (Turczynski 1971: 468-486). The Rum millet included large segments of people who belonged to different ethnies (Clogg 1982: 114-134, Roudometof 1998: 1-48, Smith 1986, Smith 1991).

As a result, from the 15th to the 19th century, religion was the essential criterion for the Christians’ differentiation, following their enslavement to the ottoman throne (Horowitz 1985, Kitromilides 1996” 163-169). It is of course taken for granted that, within this framework, the Word of God and the Holy Books had created the conditions for the establishment of an ‘imagined’ Orthodox community, which one could only join with the mediation of the Orthodox clergy, who were part of a secularized social hierarchy.

In fact, regarding the field of ideology, from the 15th to the early 19th century, it is important to note that the western version of Christianity had already acquired the dimensions of a sect, while Greek-speaking scholars had come to the conclusion that the survival of “Orthodoxy” presupposed the context of an ottoman millet, which would not only preserve the religious identity of the Rum millet, but the principles of Greek-speaking Orthodox education as well. Consequently, within this spiritual context, Orthodox scholars were raised according to a secular education based on Orthodox values that accepted the millet’s structures, and which awarded the role of head of the Orthodox millet to the Ecumenical Patriarch.

More specifically, the Patriarch’s privileges included his competency to organize the Orthodox Grecophone education that served the purposes of the Orthodox Church. This Orthodox Grecophone education (Exertzoglou 2010) would ensure the successful operation of the Orthodox Church, since not only were the members of the Orthodox clergy trained in the schools founded, but also the teachers who would teach future generations to read, i.e. the New Testament written in Hellenistic Koine (Sidney 1987, McLean 2014) or who would train the clergy and cantors in performing their ecclesiastical duties.

In what concerns the prevailing conditions in our area of research, namely in the Black Sea region, what we also need to include are the flourishing schools of the Black Sea monasteries that promoted the intellect and contributed to the creation of educated men, such as clergymen, scholars and priests (Kyriakides 1897, Paranikas 1867). More
specifically, thanks to the schools founded at Virgin Mary’s Soumela monastery (Sümela Manastırı) (Kyriakides 1898, Talbot 1929-1930: 72-77, Filippides 1933: 468-480, Janin 1975, Bryer & Winfield 1932, Lymeropoulos 1999, Russell & Cohn 2012), Vazel monastery (Alexakis & Mavromatis 2009:151-166), Panagia Theotokos monastery, Goumera monastery, Saint George Peristereota monastery (Kuştul Monastery) (Bryer & Winfield 1985) and Houtoura monastery (Bryer 1980), young people living in the Black Sea region were educated and trained, and later worked at the schools and Orthodox churches of the area, thus forming a class of intellectuals with a Greek Orthodox education who contributed to the spiritual progress of the region (Kyriakides 1897).

As regards the parameters that favored the operation of the Greek Orthodox schools in the Black Sea region, we should also take into account the adjacency of the area with the intellectual centers of the Danube Hegemonies, that had been ruled by Phanariots (Greek officials of the Rum Patriarchate), who had established, supervised and encouraged the operation of the Greek Orthodox schools under their jurisdiction. This fact, in conjunction with the financial growth of the empire, had shaped the prospects for the development of the educational system.

Furthermore in the 18th century, of particular importance was the economic rise of Chaldea’s Greek Orthodox community (Fotiadis & Iliadou-Tachou 2007), which was owing to the privileges granted to the local metallurgists, who contributed to the economic support and dissemination of education to the urban centers of the Black Sea and its neighboring communities (Triantafyllides 1961). This regional elite was under the spiritual influence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which had acquired the dimensions of an intellectual Orthodox version of Christianity, known as the “Orthodox commonwealth” (Kitromilides 2007), and had begun to spread throughout Asia Minor.

The first form of primary education, established between the 17th and 19th century, were the monks’ elementary schools (Monasteries of Peristereota, Houtoura and Soumela), which used a specific curriculum in order to achieve three goals: practice the alphabet using wooden plates, teach the holy books (the Apostles and the “Gospel”) and provide training on the liturgical books (“Octoihos”, “Psaltiri”). In contrast to the lower classes, the bourgeois class used to provide home tutoring to their offspring. The level of study and the subjects taught varied greatly. Prior to 1870, primary schools (named “Paidagogeia” or “Grammatodidaskalia”) were founded in the Black Sea in order to socialize Greek Orthodox students and teach them the Greek language. These first elementary schools did not have any pre-defined structure or qualified teachers. The primary schools in the region were ‘mutual instruction” schools and bore the burden of elementary education for over 10 years in the towns and cities, while providing a low-cost educational system.

2.1. From Orthodox Grecophone Education to the Education of the Greek Orthodox Communities (1830-1908)

According to Anthony Bryer, the re-opening of the ‘Trebizond-Tabriz” route in 1830 and the resulting favorable impact on external trade can be considered far more significant than the reforms, since the former were the primary factors that contributed to a change in circumstances for the Greeks of the Black Sea: thanks to the new state of affairs, a bourgeois class began to take shape, and by 1856 the region had already
emerged from the rather feudal conditions of the previous century and had started to enter the modern world (Bryer 1980).

A few years after 1830, a period of reforms, also known as the Tanzimat period, began for the Black Sea Greek Orthodox communities (1860-1908). Through legislative provisions, such as Hatj-serif (1839) and Hatj-Houmagjoun (1856), special privileges were given to non-Muslims by the Sultan, who was economically dependent on the west (Lafi 2007). In essence, the ottoman reforms aimed to integrate the various cultural and religious millet communities under the umbrella of “ottomanism”, in order to discourage the creation of any future nationalist movements within the Empire (Reid 1999: 173-208). In the case of the Black Sea communities, which were subject to the ecumenical throne of Constantinople, the institutional educational framework was defined by the National Regulations. According to the latter, the educational structures of the Greek Orthodox community would be determined by the Sublime Porte, which exercised a supervisory role, by the Patriarchate, which would oversee compliance with the National Regulations and, by the local elites, who would enforce the implementation of the regulations voted within the framework of the organized communities (Papastathis 1984).

More specifically, the role of the Sublime Porte could be considered an administrative one, since it was responsible for the appointment of the regional administrators. On the other hand, the Patriarch’s intervention in the communities of the Black Sea was mitigated, whenever the bishops, who belonged to the intellectual milieu of the Patriarchate, had the required influence to take their own initiatives to support their flock. Moreover, on a social-community level, the bishops of the Black Sea acted jointly with the middle and higher social strata, and served the objectives of modern Greek nationalization.

During the Tanzimat period, societies responded to the demand for a modern educational system through the emergence of a variety of schools and administrative models (Dalakoura 2011). Moreover, the implementation of the relevant reforms within the recognized communities required the support of the whole of society. The middle class of the Black Sea communities played a decisive role in this direction. The establishment of the middle class should be attributed to its members’ migration to Russia, who went there to find work. The money they saved was then sent back to the families they had left behind, through the Greek banks of Kapagiannidis, Theophylaktos or Fostiropoulos. Thanks to these savings, the middle class created a strong social presence (Fotiadis & Iliadou 2007). Within this context, it should be noted that the social and economic context of the Black Sea communities was characterized by a constant downward mobility. Nevertheless, the middle class very quickly managed to develop its social consciousness, build its national self-determination and strengthen its position within the community (Triantafyllides 1961).

An equally decisive role in the organization of Greek Orthodox education was played by the upper class. It consisted of those who had settled earlier in tsarist Russia and had made money through trade, the exploitation of raw materials and productive resources, or by renting land. The contribution of its members involved sponsoring the establishment of schools, churches, charitable institutions, and also undertaking special large-scale initiatives for charity, that added to the prestige of the members’ families
(Kanner 2004). It is believed that during the era of nationalism, the upper class within the Greek Orthodox communities agreed to cooperate with the lower classes in the management of the educational system and in all other community functions.

During the period 1860-1870, the number of ‘mutual instruction’ schools grew rapidly. These schools were later transformed into primary schools for boys, thanks to Konstantinos Xanthopoulos, a scholar of the Trebizond community who studied at Athens University and applied the ‘lecture model of instruction’ for the first time at the Frontistirion of Trebizond in 1846. Another example is the ‘mutual instruction’ school which operated at Akritas monastery (Kandilaptis-Kannis 2002) before 1866, and was financially supported by the local residents. The final category includes the Black Sea seminary schools. During the first period (1872), Theoskepastos Seminary was founded by an association and directed by Chrysanthos N. Hierocles (Hierocles 1883). The school operated until 1876. Another seminary also operated in 1910 at the monastery of Prasareos (Fotiadis & Iliadou 2007: 284, 287) and had four grades, according to the regulations.

Schools in rural areas were divided into two categories: a) central schools established at the centre of an extensive area, and b) schools which were sponsored and supervised by associations and fraternities, like Xenophon (Fotiadis & Iliadou 2007: 230-237), where the supervision was carried out by inspectors from Trebizond.

During this period, most of the primary schools in the Black Sea were community schools. Their functions were defined by community regulations, and they were supported by associations and fraternities or by wealthy individuals who belonged to the Greek Orthodox community. For example, the Frontistirion of Trebizond operated according to the new community regulation, which resulted from the opposing parties’ reconciliation in the community in 1897 (Chrysanthos 1933: 468-480) and later in 1909 (Fotiadis & Iliadou 2007: 119-120). The regulation of 1909 dictated the establishment of the following community institutions: a) a 12-member School Council, which was responsible for the school programme, the school regulations, the budget and for hiring school personnel, and b) the School Board, which was elected annually. The School Board was in charge of the schools’ administration. Most were urban schools founded after 1880, when the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople (Stavrou 1967, Giannakopoulos 1998, Vassiadis 2007) decided to abolish the intermediate level of the Greek schools (which consisted of the first 3 grades of present-day Gymnasium) and to establish the conditions for a self-reliant elementary education. In the period 1884-1885, during a meeting of Petros Konstantinidis and Konstantinos Xanthopoulos, the creation of a full 6-grade urban school was decided (Grammatikopoulos 1885c). This school first operated at the Frontistirion of Trebizond in October 1885, aiming to prepare students to join the production system after completing the first 3 grades. It also provided its graduates with the option of entering secondary education after the initial 6 years of schooling.

Certain primary schools of that period were charity schools: These schools were sponsored by wealthy Greek patrons, associations or fraternities (Triantafyllides 1961: 134). For example, Psomiadios School in Ordu (Kotiora) was one of the best known schools of this type (Fotiadis & Iliadou 2007: 126, 479). The institutional framework of this school was determined by a Patriarchal sigillum, as regards its supervision and
RELIGION, EDUCATION AND THE CONFIGURATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE OTTOMAN MILLET’S CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY OF THE BLACK SEA ORTHODOX COMMUNITIES (1453-1923)

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administrative status. Another example was the Girls’ School of Sinop (Sinopi) founded by a merchant named George Souvaltsis (Fotiadis & Iliadou 2007: 194). There were also private schools operating in the region. To this category belong the Catholic school of Freris in Trebizond and the American College of Merzifon (Merzefounta) (Erhan 2015: 49-89, Iliadou-Tachou 2005: 23-47) which was established in 1867 and was renamed Anatolia College of Thessaloniki after 1922. It was a primary and secondary school that also included a primary school for girls (Anonymous 1901).

The first model of a secondary school was the tuition center of Trebizond (Frontistirion of Trebizond). The term “tuition center” is given to a primary school which includes some grades of secondary school, with the aim to operate as a full six-grade Gymnasium. This school type was replaced by a four-grade Gymnasium in the period 1880-1883 and only reached a six-grade status in 1883 (1885c). A full six-grade Gymnasium was established in Samsun (Amisos) in the first decade of the 20th century, when the bourgeois decided to develop the “urban school” model, in order to address the practical requirements of everyday life. In contrast, the tuition center of Gümüşhane (Argyroupolis) never became a full 6-grade Gymnasium, but included instead a primary school, a secondary “Greek school” and some grades of high school (Kandilaptis-Kanis 1970). The number of grades increased or decreased depending on the local community’s financial situation. In 1863 (Kyriakides 1895: 199), the tuition center of Giresun (Kerasounta) was established, which consisted of 5 grades in 1870 and a 6-grade High School. In 1880, the gradual abolition of Greek schools in the Black Sea region began, since the model of the 6-grade urban primary school and 6-grade Gymnasium model prevailed. The reasoning behind the Gymnasium being instituted was that, along with curriculum courses, schools should also teach essential vocational skills to children, such as foreign languages and commercial courses. The pragmatic orientation of secondary education was noted by the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople.

After the abolition of the Greek schools, 3-grade (semi-) high schools were maintained, particularly in areas where it was impossible to create a 6-grade Gymnasium (Grammatikopoulos 1880a). The former tuition center of Trebizond was also downgraded to a 3-grade (semi-) Gymnasium in 1880-1881, and remained a 5-grade Gymnasium due to the downgrading and decline of trade (Grammatikopoulos 1880b). In Samsun (Amisos), the secondary School was a 6-grade school; the first 3 grades functioned like a Greek school and the other three were Gymnasium grades (Fotiadis P.A.). This special type of 6-grade high school was known as “Greek school”, according to the school regulations of Samsun (Amisos) for the year 1890.

Pre-school educational institutions were founded in the Black Sea area around 1880: i.e. in Sinop (Sinopi) in 1875-76, in Trebizond in 1880, Theofylakteio Nursery in the same area in 1897, and one in Gümüşhane (Argyroupoli) in 1906. Nursery schools proliferated in the late 19th and early 20th century. So, while in 1880 there were only nursery schools in Trebizond in the parish of Jesus Christ and Exoteichon (Ierocles 1880), in 1897 the Theofylakteio nursery school was established there at K. Theofylaktou’s own expenses, while a nursery school was founded in Gümüşhane (Argyroupoli) only in 1906. It is stated that this nursery school operated according to a system used by relevant schools in Greece, namely the methods of Frobel; it is unknown who and under what circumstances brought these methods to the Black Sea. The disadvantages of pre-school

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education in the Black Sea were the housing of many infants in an inappropriate environment and the use of memorization as a teaching method. The expansion of pre-school education took place from the late 19th to the early 20th century (Christakou 1919).

The necessity for women to be educated became clear in the second half of the 19th century and served the social and cultural needs of the community’s urban class. Indeed, by providing education for young girls, the Greek urban class attempted to strengthen its ethnic Greek identity (Dalakoura 2011). The first period of girls’ education in the Black Sea was influenced by the economy’s growth and western principles concerning gender equality and social progress. Within this framework, the Greek Orthodox millet was transformed into a state mechanism which was self-administrative, decentralized and autonomously organized. As a result, a girls’ school network was founded (Kami 1964: 378-380). Girls’ schools were named Parthenagogeia and were established between 1846-1870 in the urban centers of the Black Sea, such as Trebizond (1846), Gümüşhane (Argyroupolis) in 1873, Giresun (Kerasounta) prior to 1873, while educational fraternities were founded in remote communities, whose objective was the establishment and maintenance of girls’ schools (Greek Philological Association of Constantinople 1872-1873). Through the 1870s, the girls’ schools evolved into secondary girls’ schools and prevailed in the urban centers of the Black Sea. The second period of the girls’ schools’ operation began in 1870.

The central girls’ schools of Trebizond, Sinop (Sinopi) and Gümüşhane (Argyroupolis) represented examples of secondary girls’ schools. The structure of the secondary girls’ schools in the Black Sea first included a preparatory class, which both boys and girls attended. It was in fact a kind of nursery school for students to prepare for the Greek language courses taught at primary school. Next, the secondary girls’ schools included a primary four-grade ‘mutual instruction’ school for girls, which after 1880 was replaced by a six-grade primary school; it also included a secondary Greek school ranging from one to three grades, depending on the circumstances (Triantafyllides 1961: 134). In some cases, a boarding house was added to the girls’ school, where the interns were not only taught their lessons according to the curriculum but also learned dressmaking and embroidery. At times of crisis, as happened in the case of Gümüşhane (Argyroupolis), the boys’ and girls’ schools were consolidated and they all attended classes together.

A secondary girls’ school was never established in the Black Sea area in the common sense of the word, i.e. as a school that included a six-grade Gymnasium and pedagogical training classes. Consequently, the secondary girls’ schools in the Black Sea region included a pre-school level, a primary school level and the first level of secondary education, namely a Greek school.

In terms of the administration and management of the girls’ schools in the Black Sea, we can distinguish them into two main categories: a) community schools, run by organized community bodies, i.e. the girls’ school in Argyroupoli and the girls’ school in Trebizond were both community schools, as their operation was determined by community regulations, and b) private schools, founded mainly by foreign religious missions, such as the American College of Anatolia for girls in Merzifon (Merzefounta) (Mc Grew 2015:49-89).

Greek national press first appeared in the Black Sea in the late 19th century.
Between 1880 and 1920, twenty-nine newspapers, seven magazines and some annual calendars were issued (Agtzidis1996: 267-293). Various pedagogical considerations, frequently noted in the newspapers of the Black Sea, reflected what was expected of education. These can be grouped into the following thematic categories: a) the purpose and objectives of schools b) the language issue and “educational demoticism” (the use of popular Greek in the framework of the school curriculum) c) the meaning of “educational demoticism” d) the training of teachers in the East e) educational textbooks f) the social question in relation to school textbooks g) education and the ideal of the modern Greek. The most crucial views concerning the purpose and goals of the schools were influenced by modern Greek nationalism and used the popular Greek language as an instrument to achieve their objectives. These arguments corresponded to the ideological movement that dominated the modern Greek state, which was represented by a large number of progressive intellectuals.

More specifically, Efkinos Pontos magazine had already published in successive issues, from 2 August 1880 (Grammatikopoulos 1880a) to 11 October 1880 (Grammatikopoulos 1880e), articles on primary schools, on welfare for the schools of the Homeland (Grammatikopoulos 1880d), on girls’ schools (Grammatikopoulos 1880c), on the Greek Tuition Center (Grammatikopoulos 1880e), which were attributed to Theodoros Grammatikopoulos, and also suggested that children’s education begin from infancy. Such training, according to the writer, would enable a young person to fulfill their highest destination in life. This statement should be interpreted within the context of the Greek nationalism of that period. The primary school curriculum, promoted by the authors of these newspaper articles, included reading, writing and mathematics, ‘language technology’, the memorization of elementary geography and indoctrination in religious education and Greek history. These suggestions were also linked to modern Greek nationalism, since the said courses belonged to those described by the relevant literature as national configuration courses (Ranum 1975).

For a long period –almost until 1880- the mutual instruction system, also known as the Bell-Lancaster method, was implemented in the Black Sea due to its low cost. However, in 1880, the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople expressed the view that the former should be abolished in favor of the lecture model of instruction, delivered to passive students grouped into classes by age, without regard to differences in aptitude (Grammatikopoulos 1880a). The considered advantages of this system were: on the one hand, the creation of more jobs for professional teachers and, on the other, its correspondence to the needs of the new urban-nationalized strata, as regards their higher education prospects and the establishment of a national elite. According to the Association, the introduction of six-year primary education and six-year secondary education were necessary preconditions for achieving the educational objectives set by the nationalized Greek Orthodox communities. Consequently the abolition of the first level of secondary education, namely the Greek school, which operated until that time, was deemed essential. The result of this intervention to the community’s education was the introduction of ancient Greek language courses in the sixth grade of primary school and a review of the secondary education curriculum towards a more practical dimension, through the introduction of both commercial and foreign language courses. However, according to the surviving primary sources, the goals of the nationalized Greek
Orthodox communities were thwarted by the lack of suitable teachers and textbooks.

At the same time, we should also mention the particular importance of Bishop Chrysanthos Filippides’ references to the objectives that must be achieved through primary and secondary education, as reflected in Commeni newspaper, which he published in Trebizond (Filippides 1916b) The special significance of his views is attributed to his dual capacity as religious and political leader of the Greek Orthodox Black Sea communities (Lampsides 1995-1996: 239-265). In reference to the purpose and character of secondary education in his article High schools and the Greek language (Filippides 1916a), Chrysanthos argued that a redefinition of secondary education’s objectives should be taken seriously into account, based on the connection between the ancient Greek language and culture and the modern achievements of western civilization. In addition to his views regarding the need to adapt to the western model of development, the professors and students of the American College also envisioned the establishment of a Greek western elite in a modernized ottoman society (Cage 2015).

Furthermore, the association between the progress in education and the modernization of the economic structures of ottoman society was expressed in the Greek-speaking press of the Black sea and went along with the demands of the nationalized groups within Orthodox society. More specifically, Theodoros Grammatikopoulos (Grammatikopoulos 1880a) believed that developments in education were dependent on the growth of trade, since economic prosperity could create the necessary conditions to provide financial support for schools (Grammatikopoulos 1880a).

Moreover, as regards the prevalent views on the nature and importance of early childhood education, it is worth highlighting a relevant article in Astir of Black Sea (1885) magazine. The article underlined the contribution of nursery schools to children’s development, while stating that there was a need for nursery schools to be established in the Black Sea region; a precondition for this, however, was to secure adequate and stable resources (Grammatikopoulos 1885a).

Also of particular interest were the various discussions on the character and purpose of women’s education in the Black Sea Greek Orthodox communities. An insight into the educational discourse and pedagogical philosophy related to women’s education in the Black Sea is provided in the following documents on education: a) the texts of great male educators who taught in the schools of the Black Sea (K. Xanthopoulos, George Kyriakides, P. Triantafyllides), b) indirectly through the anniversary addresses of women educators (Aspasia Zisis, Zoi Melisova Helen Efstratios), c) directly through the pedagogical positions expressed in lectures conducted by professors of the American College of Anatolia (Miss Cage, Krikorian) (Krikonian 1914) d) through articles concerning women’s education published by the newspapers of the Black Sea; such as the original texts of N. Kapetanides, Theodoros Grammatikopoulos, Ioannis Parcharides or reprinted articles focusing on Greek pedagogical thinking and philosophy.

Of particular importance were the pedagogical aspects of women’s education. The views expressed in 1885 in the article Women’s education (Parcharides 1885) concerning the nature of women’s education belonged to the director and editor, I. Parcharides. According to him, female education was necessary both to achieve harmony between men and women, as well as husbands and wives, and in order for
future generations to be well-educated. Similar attitudes were reflected in Pontos magazine, and represented the ideas put forward by the Professors of the American College of Merzifon (Mc Grew 2015: 49-89) during their lectures. According to them, the education of women should differ from that of the men in order to conform to the different social roles that have to be performed by women and men in the urban community. Their ideas can be summed up into one sentence: women have to be educated according to their destination in life (Iliadou-Tachou 2008: 153-172).

Consequently, according to the schools’ regulations and pedagogical discourse, the main objective of women’s education was to focus on moral issues and their national integration, according to the dominant stereotypes in society. The teaching staff were also selected and checked according to specific criteria. As a result, women’s education in the Black Sea aimed to encourage an appropriate conduct, characterized by modesty, commitment to family values and respectfulness. During the nationalization period in particular, women’s education had to take into account the indoctrination of girls in Greek Orthodox ideals in order to prepare future generations to construct their national identity. According to the women educators’ point of view, the girls’ schools in the Black Sea were national schools that should not be operating as store window displays (Kapetanides 1919).

2.2. From the Education of the Greek Orthodox Communities to Greek National Education

After 1908, the ideological movement of Turkism evolved into a dominant ideology in the Ottoman Empire; under this ideological framework, the conditions were created for the pursuit of Turkish nationalism (Arnakis 1960: 21-32, Berkes 1959, Georgeon 1980, Zurcher 1984). Turkish nationalism was considered a top priority in order to deal with other emerging nationalisms within the empire; it targeted the non-Muslims in an attempt to force them to become integrated.

These changes had an impact not only on the field of ideology but also on state structures. The promotion of a modernized model of westernization by the Young Turks led to a secular constitutional state, which attempted to re-define the Orthodox millet’s status (Anagnostopoulou 1998) and contributed to the direct questioning and progressive suppression of the Patriarch’s privileges, which were related to the millet’s traditional ethno-religious differentiation. In fact, the process of institutionally restricting the Patriarch’s jurisdiction began in 1910, through the establishment of legal provisions concerning the operation of schools and teachers’ professional rights (Anagnostopoulou 1998: 462-464). Within the new state, education had to be claimed as the civil right of each individual nation.

Right after the emergence and spread of Turkish nationalism, the defense reflexes of modern Greek nationalism were activated. Within organized communities, initiatives were undertaken to rally all Greek Orthodox members, and for this purpose, various competences were also assigned to people belonging to the lower social strata. The increased number of community members who undertook educational responsibilities contributed significantly to strengthening the national cohesion and solidarity of the community. The educational and charity associations founded during this period could be considered an outcome of this cohesion.
Within the field of ideology and under the influence of the concepts of nationalism, the idea of a Greek national school was born. The principal representative of the idea of founding a national school was Nikos Kapetanides and his newspaper “Epohi” (Trebizond 1919). Kapetanides seemed to be influenced not only by modern Greek nationalism but also by the Greek educational reformists, as he took into account the issue of reforms in education and particularly in the language of education.

3. Conclusions

This research focuses on the relationship between religion, education and the shaping of national identities within the Black Sea Greek Orthodox communities in the Ottoman framework of the millet. It is obvious that in this context, the relationship between religion, nationalism and education is particularly important. This is because the religious cultural identities of the Rum millet in the Ottoman Black Sea determined the nature of the type of education established in that area; its main components were Greek-speaking culture and Orthodoxy in its cultural and religious dimension. Consequently, at the outset, primary schools were founded in the region by officials of the Orthodox Church or intellectuals who belonged to its spiritual environment and mainly served its liturgical needs. Furthermore, the secondary schools established in the urban centers of the Black Sea region created a useful, popular and clerical elite, which was integrated within the millet’s context and also served the goals of the Church.

While the conditions for the institutionalization of the reforms were being created, the schools’ responsibilities were assigned to representatives of all social strata within Orthodox society. It is obvious that the needs of modern Greek nationalism required the participation of the lower classes also in all community functions, and especially in community education. By referring back to ancient times, this education strengthened the concept of national continuity, which could be considered as the most crucial factor in the nationalization process. Within this new framework, the nationalized communities supported the demand for a national school to be established that would not serve the purposes of the Church but those of Greek nationalism.

The regional or local elite in the communities of the Black Sea, which could be considered the product of the Greek Orthodox education system established during the reform period, were primarily responsible for this nationalization process. In fact, the members of this elite took a critical view of the past and created a national self-consciousness, while accelerating developments not only on an ideological but also on a political level and in the diplomatic field.

It is therefore easy to reach the conclusion that the main supporters of modern Greek nationalism in the Black Sea communities were: a) the bourgeoisie, whose financial interests coincided with the potential foundation of a Greek state in the region b) the elite of teachers, scholars, journalists and columnists who had been influenced by Greek educational demoticism and could bring contemporary ideological content and historical depth to the ideology of modern Greek nationalism, and c) political authority figures, such as Bishop Chrysanthos, who considered the foundation of a Greek state in the Black Sea region as the most important goal of modern Greek nationalism, and envisaged himself as its potential leader within the new state of affairs.
Based on the above, we must accept that the educational system of the Greek Orthodox communities in the Black Sea and in the Ottoman Empire was broadly transformed into a national Greek system during the Tanzimat period and became a product of modern Greek nationalism, until the end of the Asia Minor campaign. Nevertheless, the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) put an end not only to such strategies shaped by Greek nationalism, but also to the education of the Greek Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire as a whole.

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