

Commerce and Identity in the Greek Communities

Livorno in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

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The Greek Diaspora

In the eighteenth century a large scale emigration of the most enterprising strata of mainly mercantile Greeks from their homelands in Asia Minor, Greece and the Balkans' area, then under Ottoman rule, resulted in the creation of Greek merchant communities in the most important commercial and financial centers of the Mediterranean and Western Europe.

This Greek diaspora came into being through the political, economic, and social circumstances of the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century onwards. The gradual enfeeblement of that Empire vis-à-vis its Western allies resulted in a series of diplomatic and military defeats; problems of internal administration and economic performance, deriving, among other things, from the exigencies of Muslim law, allowed the creation of non-Muslim spheres of economic power and political influence. Jews, Armenians and Greeks – none of them bound by the restrictions of Muslim law on speculation – came to monopolize the Empire's commercial and financial transactions, and take advantage of an unstable commodity market and constant devaluations of currency. In the course of their activities, they became involved with the international commercial networks that were operating in the Levant, and established close business relations with representatives of the European commercial interests there.

The accumulation of capital, expertise and foreign protection as well as connections within the Ottoman administration, allowed

the Greek merchants to play an important role in the Ottoman economy. By the eighteenth century, a rich and industrious Greek middle class of entrepreneurs was operating prominently in all the commercial centers of the Ottoman Empire. To better realize their ambitions some of them emigrated and, once settled abroad, embarked on new international careers. The knowledge of local markets within the Empire and their business connections enabled the Greek merchants to become international leaders in the Levantine trade. From the eighteenth century onwards, Greek enterprises specializing in commerce and trade established business connections with similar enterprises elsewhere, and opened branch offices in the Balkans, the Levant, the Black sea area, and western Europe. There were Greek merchant communities in commercial and financial centers all around the world.

Towards the second half of the nineteenth century, the international economy that had bred the Greek diaspora entered a phase of quick and radical transformation. The industrial revolution rode roughshod over the traditional ways in which the Greek trading firms were conducting business. Those who failed to catch up with the change were gradually forced out of the market. In order to survive, Greek merchants had to become more efficient, adapt, modernize and diversify, and perhaps orient their business towards banking or shipping. In its new role the Greek diaspora remained in existence until the late nineteenth century.

It was during that period of transformation that many of those living abroad moved back to Greece, where in 1833 independence had crowned a long and painful uprising against the Turks. Back in their homeland, the Greek merchant-entrepreneurs became an organic part of the new Greek society now being formed after four hundred years of foreign occupation. Furnished with the experience they had gathered abroad, they invested their capital in Greece mainly in the sectors of banking and finance. Those Greeks that chose to remain abroad were gradually assimilated into their host countries.

The Greeks of Livorno and the Brotherhood of the Holy Trinity (1760-1900)

Livorno was one of the principal hubs of Greek trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A duty-free port since the sixteenth century with an important international market economy and facilities for longer-term storage of levantine goods and grains, until the late nineteenth century Livorno enjoyed a strong strategic position with respect to Greek entrepreneurial interests in the Black sea, the Mediterranean, and the North Atlantic. From the late eighteenth century onwards, more and more merchants, manufacturers, and shop-keepers from Greece and Asia Minor came to join the previously fairly insignificant Greek community of Livorno, expanding their activities. Between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries the number of Greek commercial houses in Livorno increased significantly. Prominent Greek merchant families established themselves in the cosmopolitan Tyrrhennian port, and formed the nucleus of a Greek presence that soon acquired the same status and privileges that, ever since the sixteenth century, had been granted by the Tuscan rulers to other important foreign merchant communities. As the city was undergoing political, economic and social transformation, the Greeks maintained their role as an important element of Livorno's life and economy.¹

The analysis of the multifaceted dynamic of interrelations and practices of the members of the Greek Orthodox community in Livorno – their international business, their family and social life – brought to light a factor that imposed an identity on the members of the Greek community, reflecting its religious, cultural, political and socio-economic concerns. This identity was, on the one hand, a sentiment of affiliation towards values that were determined by religious, geographico-territorial, psychological, historical, and cultural variables: the Orthodox faith and practices, geographical origin, the memory of a common past, Hellenic culture and language. On the other hand, it was an identity of which the expression and the function were determined by the historical context, and operated by means of a number of variables impinging on the shared socio-economic origins and evolution of the Greek merchants, a

foreign Catholic society that hosted them, the practices of international commerce they operated prominently, political and economic contingencies, strategies of social ascendancy and integration.

However, this was not a one-way relation. As it was gradually shaped by adoptive practices, the Livornese Greeks' perception of identity also influenced their integration into Livornese society, their business practices and their communal life. In other words, it had a major role in the organization and structure of the community's administration; it inspired loyalties and solidarities that bound together the members of the Greek community; it determined the organization of their international business; and it influenced their marriage choices, kinship relations and their everyday sociability.²

A potent symbol of this identity, and a major factor in shaping and preserving the cohesion of the Greek community was the Greek Orthodox Brotherhood founded in Livorno in 1775. The initial purpose of the *Confraternita della SS. Trinita* – officially founded after a Greek Orthodox Church dedicated to the Holy Trinity had been inaugurated in the city – was to provide the Orthodox Greeks with an authority to conduct their religious life. Since it was the only mechanism that legitimately administered the community however, it quickly became a wider civic body, responsible for the representation of the Greek community vis-à-vis the local and the central authorities.

The political relevance that the Brotherhood came to acquire was largely due to the fact that it represented an ethnic group settled in a foreign country. Although when the *Confraternita* was founded the majority of the Greeks had Ottoman nationality, their relation to the Turkish authorities was that of an occupied people under a foreign ruler. The Brotherhood, on the other hand, provided them with an institutional representation they could recognize as legitimate since it was elected by themselves and through more or less democratic procedures. For many years, the elected administrative council of the *Confraternita* (an executive council composed by sixteen members of the Brotherhood's General Assembly elected by majority vote) like any other political or diplomatic authority, was responsible for officially representing the Greek *nazione* established in Livorno.

For the Brotherhood to function efficiently as a political, educational and welfare institution, as well as a religious association, it was imperative that its administrative system reflect the fact that it was an association of people who, along with a distinctive religious culture, shared also the same geographical origins, a common history and language, and similar economic interests. The system chosen for the administration of the *Confraternita* had thus three distinctive characteristics: as with many other diaspora communities it resembled traditional forms of Greek communalist administration; it allowed an administration that was informal, flexible and direct, thereby making administrative procedures subject to contingent practical concerns rather than formal rule, and it was a system that allowed authority within the organization to be allocated in accordance with social and economic parameters.³

The Brotherhood carried out a complex set of activities improving the quality of life of the Greeks in Livorno and assisting the poor members of the community. It also took a strong and active interest in cultural and especially educational activities promoting such activities in Livorno and back in Greece. As a voluntary religious association and an institution of strong political-administrative character, the *Confraternita* played a long and important role in the life of the community. Even after the foundation of a Greek state in the 1830s and its establishment of a diplomatic representation in Tuscany, the Brotherhood retained its central position. It was not until the early twentieth century, with the demographic decline of the Greek community in Livorno, it too, lost impact. But until then, however, its activities strongly supported the distinctive culture both secular and religious of the local Greeks.

The Religious Identity of the Orthodox Greeks in Livorno

Orthodoxy remained a fundamental label of the Livornese Greeks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the means, from the very beginning of the Greek community, of publicly identifying itself. In that sense religious affiliation was a basic, yet not the sole, component of Greek identity. The importance of that religious

identity was to some extent related to the role of Christian Orthodoxy in a Muslim-ruled Ottoman empire. Greeks leaving the Ottoman Empire in search of economic success and social and economic security brought with them their religion as it had developed under foreign and non-Orthodox rule. To understand the special role Christian Orthodoxy had as a main component of the Greek identity outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire requires an examination of how it functioned within the Ottoman borders.⁴

As mentioned earlier, the Ottoman administration used religious affiliation, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, as the primary and overriding criterion in the organization of civic life. Its *millet* system⁵ grouped the populations governed by the *Porte* into religious units under the jurisdiction of their respective religious leaders. This organization allowed the segregation of the Christian-Orthodox populations and their formation into a single religious unit under one religious authority. The ecumenical patriarchate was in fact the only institution assigned by the *Porte* extensive ecclesiastic and civic competencies over its flock. The patriarchate represented all the Orthodox ecclesiastic authorities under Ottoman rule. Together with the Holy Synod he exercised supreme control over religious affairs, ecclesiastical property, the whole body of clerics and all the sanctuaries, over which he had disciplinary and penal jurisdiction. His civic privileges consisted primarily of the administration of justice and the organization of some form of education.

After the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, the Greek communities abroad declared their subjection to the ecumenical patriarchate, and since then it was organizations such as the Livornese Brotherhood that were the original and for some time the only form of Greek Orthodox communities abroad. Within the *millet* system, Orthodoxy developed into an "ethnic" religion in the minds of the Orthodox Greeks, the attitudes and sentiments of its adherents affecting the organization of the communities.

The very first Greek community known to have founded a religious Brotherhood was that of Venice, which in 1498 solicited permission from the Venetian authorities to set up the *Confraternita di S. Niccola*. In 1593 the Neapolitan Greeks established the *Confraternita degli SS. Apostoli Pietro e Paolo*. In Hungary, thirty Greek Orthodox Churches had been founded in various cities by the end

of the eighteenth century; in Vienna the Brotherhood of St. George was founded in 1776. Ancona, and Trieste followed suit.

Their specifically religious identity continued to play a major role in the life of the nineteenth century immigrants in Livorno, and elsewhere, even after the formation of the Greek State and the establishment of diplomatic representation abroad. Orthodoxy continued thus to group the members of the Greek Diaspora around institutions organically linked to local Greek churches. When the Greek immigrants began to acquire citizenship in their host country, for reasons that until the late nineteenth century had much to do with the appropriation of legal and fiscal privileges, religious affiliation was the most appropriate means for identifying a group of people who shared the same language and historical past. The Greek communities formally organized towards the second half of the nineteenth century in southern Russia, but also those in Great Britain and Egypt are the most representative examples. The immigrant communities of prominent Greek merchant and banker families conceived the construction of local Orthodox Churches as the first step towards becoming organized. In London, and Manchester, as in Cairo, Alexandria and Odessa, administration of the Orthodox Churches was one of the principal responsibilities of Greek self-administration.

Official recognition of the religious autonomy of the Orthodox in Livorno ⁶ did not come quickly or easily.⁷ When Greeks arrived in Livorno during the second half of the sixteenth century to be employed in the fleet of the Order of *Santo Stefano*, the district of *San Iacopo* in *Acquaviva* was offered to them by the Medici to settle in. The *San Iacopo* Church in *Acquaviva*, a former Augustinian monastery, was resanctified as an Orthodox Church where they could celebrate their services. In later years the Greeks were transferred to the *Borgo dei Greci*, constructed with the authorization of Ferdinando I of the Medici. On 10 June 1593 the Grand Duke, who had conceded religious and juridical privileges to all foreign merchants in Livorno, authorized the construction of an Orthodox Church. In the years thereafter, *SS. Annunziata*, which was inaugurated on 25 March 1606, became the scene of religious conflicts among the members of the Greek community. These concerned ecclesiastical and dogmatic issues, and were initiated

with the arrival to Livorno of a number of Greeks Uniats, Greek Catholics coming from Syria.⁸ Given the considerable differences in the practices of the Orthodox ritual, and the willingness of the Greek uniats to accept coming under Catholic ecclesiastical authorities and the Archbishop of Pisa, the supreme ecclesiastical authority in Tuscany, the Orthodox Greeks were “expelled” from the church of *SS. Annunziata*.

The controversy between the Orthodox majority and the Greek Uniats was nevertheless important because it represented, somehow, an indirect confrontation between the Greek Orthodox community and the Catholic Church.⁹ The Lorraine government in its long negotiations with representatives of the Orthodox Greeks was represented by the Archbishop of Pisa. Throughout these negotiations the Greek side presented Orthodoxy as a practice and affiliation essential to the life of the Greek community of merchants which by the late eighteenth century had settled in Livorno. Finally on 14 July 1757 an edict was signed by the Tuscan authorities confirming the right of the Greeks to practice their religion and specifying all duties and obligations deriving from this right. Among these was a strict prohibition of any outward sign or activity that gave evidence of the presence and the practices of the Orthodox Church.

While the process for official recognition of the religious autonomy of Greeks attested to Orthodoxy as one of the fundamental elements in their lives, it also became established as a strong element of differentiation or even exclusion of the community. For many years this was explicit in the collective name given to the Greeks: until the late nineteenth century the Orthodox Greeks in Livorno were known as either *Greci schismatici* or *Greci non-Uniti* and *Greci di Rito Orientale*. These denominations had quite precise ideological overtones; they publicly expressed the geographical-ethnic origin of the Greeks in terms of their religious beliefs. *Greci schismatici* was the term most often used by the Tuscan authorities, but because it gave a negative interpretation of the Orthodox dogma, it was not particularly approved by the Greeks themselves, who generally used *Greci non-Uniti* or *Greci di Rito Orientale*. In 1839 the Greeks even presented a petition to the Livornese authorities that their church should be called *Non-Unita* instead of

Schismatica. Although this seems to have been granted, some years later, in the 1841 census, 132 Greek residents in Livorno were registered as *schismatici* and only three as *acattolici* (non-Catholics). Orthodoxy, therefore, was a means for identifying the overwhelming majority of Greeks in Livorno, and through its common religious practices was instrumental to the cohesion of the Greek community, especially through the religious-*cum*-secular organization of the Greek Orthodox Brotherhood.

After the 1757 edict recognizing their religious autonomy, the Greeks proceeded to request further religious liberties. On 7 August 1760 another edict confirmed their religious liberty. The edict largely duplicated its 1757 predecessor, and still placed considerable restrictions on the Greeks openly celebrating their religious services, funerals in particular. In August of 1770, in a memorandum presented to the Tuscan authorities, the representatives of the Greek *nazione* vindicated their right to celebrate their services fully according to Orthodox practice, and requested religious concessions like those granted to other foreigners established in the city, to Protestants and to Jews.¹⁰

Several years earlier Greek merchants had organized themselves into an informal organization, one of the first initiatives of which was the construction of a new independent Orthodox Church in the city, dedicated to the Holy Trinity. When the church was finished in 1760, the community gathered to celebrate its consecration service with a grand mass. This initiative marked a very important moment in the life of the Greek community. Here they were able to come together in the religious and social life that consolidated their common consciousness and their traditional practices. The registers of baptisms, marriages, and funerals of Orthodox believers from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth centuries offer valuable evidence of the importance of religious events in the life of the Greek community abroad. They show that the services associated with these events brought relatives, friends, and business acquaintances of members of the Livornese Greeks to participate in the celebrations.

Religious occasions of a special solemn or honorific character also played major role in representing the views of the Greek community to the wider public. It was understood that celebrations in the Greek Orthodox Church were a statement of the official posi-

tion of the Greek community. So in 1827 the victory of the Great Powers – Britain, France and Russia – against the Turkish fleet in the battle of Navarino was marked with a *Te Deum* in the Orthodox Church by the Greeks in Livorno. Such political gestures were appreciated by the city's public, so that when, in 1787, a commemorative mass was celebrated in the Holy Trinity in honor of Vittorio Emanuele, articles about the event appeared to the Livornese newspapers. In the same year another *Te Deum* was celebrated in the church in honor of Italy's royal family.

The construction of the church of the Holy Trinity was in due cause followed by another event of major significance: the official foundation of the Greek-Orthodox Brotherhood in 1775, and publication of its internal laws shortly afterwards. In the preamble to its constitution, the *Confraternita* was declared an autonomous religious institution governed by a secular authority. The right to membership to the Brotherhood extended to all Greek Orthodox men whether a resident of Livorno or "passing through the city" However, the right to vote and to stand for election to the Brotherhood's administrative body belonged only to members over eighteen years old and residents of Livorno for longer than a year. Moreover, those who were about to espouse or already married to non-Orthodox women were excluded, although they could participate in the Brotherhood's general assemblies.¹¹

One of the Brotherhood's chief responsibilities under its act of constitution was the administration of the Greek-Orthodox Church. Its governing body also issued certificates of marriages, baptisms, and funerals for the members of the Greek community, as well as for any other Greek or non-Greek wishing to celebrate a service in the church of the Holy Trinity. In addition, the Brotherhood administered the ecclesiastic assets and revenue that formed part of its overall assets, and consisted of both donations from the Orthodox and of revenue from the Brotherhood's annual budget. A proportion of this was invested in real-estate acquisitions in the name of the *Nazione Chiesa Greca Non-Unita di Rito Orientale*, as can be seen in the municipal inventory of immovables (*catasto*) for the years 1860-1890. The Brotherhood used the money that accrued from these investments, from donations and from the tax that continued to be paid by the Greek merchants, to finance its various

activities, to purchase whatever was required for the church to function as such, to pay the salary of clergy and lay employees, and for further work done in the church.

A special article in its constitutional act referred to the incompatibility of the sacerdotal role of the Orthodox priest with any civil responsibility or authority. Greek-Orthodox priests in Livorno were excluded from membership and participation in the *Confraternita* and their correspondence with any ecclesiastical authority was subject to the general assembly's prior approval. Although the independence of the Brotherhood was jealously guarded in its constitutional law as one of the fundamental principles of its organization, it seems that some Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities did succeed in exerting some influence on its activities. While the frequent correspondence between governing council and the heads of the patriarchates in Constantinople, Jerusalem and Alexandria as well as with other ecclesiastical authorities usually contained no more than an exchange of formalities, at times it served the purposes of a clientelism promoted by the various patriarchates.

Their common religion and the effort to retain religious independence in their host countries resulted in a kind of solidarity between the different communities of the Greek diaspora. Attesting to this relationship we have for example the correspondence of the Livornese Greeks with the communities in Trieste and Ancona. So in 1762 the Greek community in Livorno had an exchange of opinions with Archbishop Omiros Damaskinos of the Greek-Orthodox Church in Trieste. In 1820, the Greek community in Ancona, in a letter to the Brotherhood, described their problems with the Roman-Catholic authorities of the city, and asked for the assistance of the Greek community in Livorno.

The church of the Holy Trinity was a point of reference for Orthodox-Greeks living in the other cities of Tuscany, Rome, Genova, and, Novara, and the priests employed in Livorno went to these places to celebrate services for the Greek communities there. Greek residents outside Livorno but with relatives and friends in the city frequently visited for the purpose of celebrating various occasions in the Greek-Orthodox Church there.

Common belief and a similar ritual seem to have allowed the establishment of strong relations between Orthodox Russians and

Greeks in Tuscany. It was to the Greek-Orthodox church in Livorno that the Orthodox Russians came for baptisms, marriages and funerals, celebrated with the permission of the Brotherhood administration after a request by the Russian diplomatic authorities.

The Educational and Cultural Activities of the Livornese Greeks

By the end of the eighteenth century a small but influential segment of Greek society adopted and propagated the new cultural ideas of the West. Elaborated by an emerging Greek intellectual class, these ideas related Greek ethnic identity to the language, literature, history and territory of ancient Greece.¹² The process owed much to the Greek intellectuals in different European cities adopting the territorial concept and civic model of French revolution. Their efforts for an educational, cultural, and eventually national revival were initially patronized by the Orthodox Church. When it became evident, however, that these ideas were undermining the spiritual and the secular authority over the Greek populations given by the *Porte* to the Greek Orthodox Church, the clergy got cold feet. As a result, a cultural and eventually social schism split the Greek people both within and outside the Ottoman Empire, dividing them into two factions according to their interpretation of national resurrection. Hellenic Enlightenment ideals as adopted by members of the Greek diaspora – merchants, intellectuals and professionals – questioned especially the traditional hegemony of the Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities, and challenged the rigid conservatism of some of its highest ranking members. Yet even for the most hardened of the religious skeptics, Orthodoxy remained a fundamental aspect uniting the Greeks. During the final decade preceding the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821, this cultural conflict subsided again as plans were made for the liberation of Greece and the revolutionary sentiment gathered momentum.

Greek merchants, intellectuals, and scientists in the diaspora, who were in direct contact with the political and cultural movements of eighteenth-century Europe, promoted a variety of educa-

tional and cultural projects for the schooling and further education of Greeks still under Ottoman rule. The leading personalities in this movement firmly believed that the result of such education would be a national revival and ultimately the independence of the Greek nation from the Turkish rule. These were the ideas underlying the Brotherhood's activities in educational matters. Concurrently, one of its priorities from the early years of its existence was to establish a Greek school where the young members of the community would be taught their mother tongue, and their country's history and culture.

In 1775 the teacher Panajiotis Thomas was engaged to teach the young Greeks in Livorno "the demotic language, the Greek language, and arithmetic." He was provided with living quarters in the *Confraternita* premises in Via del Giardino, and received an annual salary of 62 sequins.¹³ In subsequent years the Brotherhood continued to employ Greek teachers to instruct their children. That this educational project met with much acclaim is confirmed by the fact that in 1804 thirty-one young Greeks and their parents wrote a letter to the Brotherhood's executive to express their gratitude for the initiative the organization had taken, and at the same time to protest against the decision to suspend the appointment of the current Greek teacher Theodosios.¹⁴

In 1806 plans for a Greek school were realized, and the Brotherhood could appoint its first school supervisor. He was chosen from among the members of the *Confraternita*, and entrusted with the task for one year. The first school supervisor was the merchant Mihail Zosimas.¹⁵ Thereafter, school matters such as financing and the appointment of teachers were frequently discussed by the Sixteen and in the organization's general assemblies. The importance the Brotherhood attached to the school is borne out by the mass of reports and correspondence on the issue, the budgets, and the receipts for purchases of school materials.

The method of instruction used by the teachers in the Greek school resembled the already mentioned system of reciprocal instruction so popular in Europe at the time. In 1822 the Greek school in Livorno was attended by forty-two students. They were divided into three classes, and instructed by one teacher and one assistant. Eighteen of them were at the elementary stage, the other

twenty-four had lessons in Greek culture that included ancient Greek (language and literature), ethics, history, and religious instruction. According to Zerlendis, the nineteenth century scholar who wrote about the Greek school in Livorno, the teachers there were following a program based on the model of the Chios School of Philosophy. This was one of the most important educational institutions operating in Ottoman times on the island of Chios, and maintained a close relationship with the Brotherhood in Livorno.¹⁶

The expenses of the Greek school, including its library, were of course met by the Brotherhood. It must be stressed that not even in periods of serious economic difficulties was there any curtailment in the acquisition of school books and materials. In the period between 1822 and 1826, for example, the organization found itself in a difficult economic position after having made major contributions to the Greek revolution. A report in 1822 of its governing council announced that it had to reduce the salaries of the Brotherhood's employees, and Panajiotis Pallis, the current governor, requested the Greeks in Livorno to make some special donations. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the various receipts found in the Brotherhood's archives show that at the same time the school supervisor was authorized to proceed with the purchase of books and school material.

Which teacher to appoint was a choice of the highest importance. The records show that the Sixteen thoroughly checked the *curriculum vitae* of every candidate for this office, and to collect additional information on the personal qualities and the character of the person they thought of employing, they contacted people and authorities in Greece and abroad. The Brotherhood regularly used its connections with other Greek diaspora communities and with intellectuals living in Greece to obtain recommendations of Greek teachers. It corresponded frequently with the two Schools of Philology in Ioannina, capital of Epirus, and with members of the Greek communities in Vienna, Naples, and Ancona.¹⁷ This meant that some of the teachers employed in the Livorno school had had previous experience in schools of Greek diaspora communities elsewhere. Kalinikos Kreatzoulas, for instance, came to Livorno from Ancona; Nikolaos Kaloudis had been teaching in

Ancona, Trieste, and Vienna before he came to Livorno; and Ioannis Andreadis' previous appointment had again been in Vienna.¹⁸

Almost from the very start of its existence the Brotherhood wished to award a limited number of scholarships to young Greek students. In 1775, a report by the Sixteen to the general assembly actually announced their decision to grant five-year scholarships to three young Greek men who wished to pursue their studies at Italian universities. The project was put into practice only many years later, however. In a letter of 1792 to the merchants Demetrios Kondaxis and Ioannis Kostakis, *epitropoi*, the writer – one Anastasios Arghiris Vrettos, the brother of Ioannis Arghiris Vrettos who was a leading Greek merchant and an active member of the Brotherhood – actually mentions the realization of the project. Describing it in greater detail, he wrote that three five-year scholarships were to be given to young people, one from the Peloponnese, one from Epirus, and one from Chios or the city of Smyrna in Asia Minor. The criteria for the final selection of the students were financial circumstances, intellectual qualities, age, and what studies they wished to pursue. They would be expected to be between 20 and 25 years old, to come from a family without means, have a good knowledge of the Greek language and grammar, and be interested in studying any modern discipline except medicine. The final selection of the students would take place in their home region, supervised by representatives of the Brotherhood. After the award was announced to them, the students would receive a money grant to finance their studies at the Universities of Pisa and Florence, and also covering their living expenses.

The project enjoyed much active support among the Greeks. The writer of the above letter, Anastasios Arghiris Vrettos, himself supervised the selection of students in Ioannina, and personally defrayed the travel expenses of the young men from Ioannina to Livorno. But although the measure had great success, it appears to have been discontinued some years later for some reason not discernable today.

In 1816 some members of the executive Sixteen proposed to revive the project.¹⁹ The reaction in the assembly of the *Confraternita* was very positive, and the issue received much publicity outside the Greek community in Livorno. The report presented by the members of the Sixteen to the assembly was published in its

entirety in "Hermes o Logios" (one of the best-known Greek journals at the time, published in Vienna by members of the city's Greek community), and the Greek merchants in Livorno were congratulated on their initiative. Another enthusiastic article on the issue was written by S. Theotokis and appeared on 11 January 1817 in the *Gazzetta Ionia* published in Corfu.²⁰ Following these events, the project was launched in Livorno once again, and the Brotherhood continued to award scholarships for many years thereafter.²¹ A number of documents in the Athens archives suggest that the selection of students was not always impartial. References and recommendations from members of the Brotherhood or connections of theirs in support of specific candidates could carry undue weight. In 1792, for example, Ioannis Arghiris Vrettos personally recommended to the *Confraternita* the candidature of a young student. A list prepared in 1797 of the names of all students from the Chios School of Philosophy awarded university scholarships by the Brotherhood, is eloquent evidence that the School was warmly supported by Livorno merchants of Chian origin who were now active leading members in the *Confraternita*.

Part of the Brotherhood's educational program was to sponsor the publication of books. So in 1807 it financed the publication of a History of Greece by Grigorios Paliouritis, a teacher at the Greek school in Livorno.²² The book was bought out by the Greek publishing house of Nikolaos Glikis in Venice.²³ Some years later, in 1815, Grigorios Paliouritis published his *Greek Archaeology*, also with Nikolaos Glikis and again financed by the Brotherhood of the Holy Trinity.

In the earlier part of the nineteenth century many rich merchants of the Greek diaspora sponsored the publication abroad of Greek books that were then sent to and distributed in Greece. It was an educational activity within the Greek Enlightenment movement, and had a quite deliberate purpose: to instruct the Greeks about their history, language and culture, so as to develop pride in their heritage and to awaken the ideal of independence. Among the Greek merchants in Livorno who were active in this book traffic were the Zosimas brothers, Thomas Spagniolakis, and Alexandros Patrinos. In 1836, the Zosimas, who were among the most active members of the Greek diaspora anywhere, donated a large

number of books to the library of the Brotherhood in Livorno. Thomas Spagniolakis and Alexandros Patrinos also financed various works by Adamantios Korais, one of the leading Greek intellectuals of the diaspora during this period.²⁴

One of the reasons the Brotherhood sponsored the publication of books was of course to equip its Greek school and library, but above and beyond to send many books to Greece. There is a letter of 1811 to the *Confraternita* in which a Fragulis Rodokanakis mentions receipt of books sent from Livorno to Chios. We know that in 1812 books from the Brotherhood were sold in Smyrna by the commercial house of D. Rodokanakis & Co.; the bill of exchange was sent back to Livorno, and is now among the administrative documents in the archives of the Brotherhood in Athens.

The financing of educational projects in Livorno as well as in Greece was, therefore, a permanent and committed feature of the Brotherhood – especially as far as schools of any kind were concerned. In 1803, the administration of the Chios School of Philosophy sent a letter to the *Confraternita* in Livorno asking for financial help; and a letter of 1805 expresses the School's gratitude for the Brotherhood's assistance. Even after the Greek State had been founded in 1833, schools and educational institutions in Greece continued to send requests to the Livorno Brotherhood for its financial support of schools in different parts of Greece.

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In his remarkable study, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Antony Smith considers the main features that distinguish an ethnic group from other collectivities: an ethnic group, according to Smith, is characterized by a sense of history, a perception of cultural uniqueness and individuality that differentiates populations from each other, and that endows a given population with a definite identity both in its own eyes and in those of the outsiders. The generic features of an ethnic group, he says, are derived from the meaning conferred by a number of men and women in the course of several generations on certain cultural, spatial, and temporal properties of their interaction and shared experiences. These interpretations and experiences are crystallized over time and handed on to the next generation, that modifies them before passing them on in turn.²⁵

Based mostly on source material referring specifically to Livorno, we have attempted to reveal the main components of Greek ethnic identity: In other words, to present the content, the expression and the persistence of a religious-cultural identity that, until the late nineteenth century, united the Greeks of the diaspora into a distinct group, despite the fact that in the 1830s the foundation of a Greek State had provided the ideological, psychological and practical prerequisites for the formation of a national identity at home.

In fact, outside the sphere of influence of the Kingdom of Hellenes – where the Greeks had for centuries devised administrative structures that gave them institutional expression in public while preserving and reproducing their religious-cultural identity – the transformation of Greek ethnic identity into a national identity was not automatic. Furthermore, in no case was it interwoven with the acquisition of Greek citizenship, something that not all the Greeks of the diaspora were ready for. Hence, until at least the late nineteenth century, the communal organization of the Greeks abroad survived, attached to practices and determined by beliefs and sentiments that maintained the same values and ideas that had signified the group's ethnic character for centuries.

Notes

1. On the Greek merchant community in Livorno, see N. Tomadakis, "Temples and Institutions of the Greek Community in Livorno," *Epetiris Eterias Vizantinon Spoudon*, 1940, 16, pp. 81-127 (in greek); K.N. Triandafilou, *The Kostakis family in Achaia and in Livorno*, Athens, 1968; G. Panessa, *Le Comunita Greche a Livorno*, Livorno, 1991 (in greek); D. Vlami, *International Business, Community, Identity: the Greek Merchants in Livorno (1700-1900)*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, European University Institute, Florence, March 1996.
2. See D. Vlami, (note 1 above), pp. 97-128 and 240-306.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 165-233.
4. See in particular B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, New York, 1982.
5. From the Arab *millah*, religion, designating in Turkey a group of coreligionists.
6. The paragraphs below are based on material provided by archival research in the State Archives of Livorno and of Florence, in the National Library of Greece, Manuscript Department, in the Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and post-Byzantine studies in Venice, and in the Research Institute of Medieval

- and Modern Greek Studies of the Academy of Athens. Research was conducted between 1988 and 1993, see D. Vlami, (note 1 above).
7. See M.G. Biagi, "Le Comunità Eterodosse di Livorno e di Trieste nel Secolo XVIII," *Quaderni Stefaniani*, 1986, V, pp. 95-128 for an account and a comparison of the problems encountered by the Livornese Greeks with those of the Orthodox Greeks in Trieste.
 8. The Greek Catholics or Roman Catholics of the Eastern Church, known also in the Middle East as Melchites, were Eastern Christians of the Orthodox faith as defined by the Councils of Ephesus (AD 31), and Chalcedon (AD 451). On the Greek uniats in Livorno, who celebrated the services in latin and under the protection and the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church, see G. Schialhub, *La Chiesa Greco-Unita di Livorno. Memorie Storiche*, Livorno, 1906 and N. Ula-cacci, *Cenni Storici della Chiesa Nazionale Greco-Cattolica di Livorno sotto il titolo della SS. Annunziata*, Livorno, 1856.
 9. In 1766, according to Pardi, the Greek population in Livorno counted 63 Orthodox and only 9 Uniats, in G. Pardi, "Disegno sulla Storia Demografica di Livorno," *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 1918, I, p. 51.
 10. M.G. Biagi, (note 7 above), pp. 119-24.
 11. While this rule showed the strong interest of the Greeks in safeguarding their religious identity, it did not prevent some Greek Orthodox marriages to non-Orthodox partners, who were mostly Catholics. In fact the number of such marriages went up between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and when the constitution of the Brotherhood was modified in 1873, one of the articles amended was that which referred to "mixed marriages."
 12. On the Hellenic Enlightenment movement see in particular: K.Th. Dimaras, *La Grèce au Temps des Lumières*, Geneve, 1969 and by the same author *The Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment*, Athens, 1985 (in greek). On the ideological background of the movement see P. Kitromelidis, *Tradition, Enlightenment, and Revolution. Ideological Change in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Greece*, Cambridge-Massachussets, 1978. On the Hellenic concept of the Greek nation which originated in the Hellenic Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century, see in particular R. Demos, "The Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, 1750-1820," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1958, 19, pp. 523-541.
 13. The teacher's first salary was paid by five Greek merchants, members of the Brotherhood.
 14. See also P. Zerlendis, "The Greek School in Livorno 1805-1837," *Parnassos*, 1889, pp. 324-25 (in greek).
 15. See N. Tomadakis, (note 1 above), pp. 106-07 and also K. Triandafilou, (note 1 above), p. 84.
 16. P. Zerlendis, (note 14 above), p. 336.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 323-40. In 1802, the Brotherhood corresponded with the teacher and Reverend Neofitos Kiriakidis in Naples and Messina. The Livorno school supervisor Mihail Zosimas corresponded with the merchants Christodoulos Efthimiou and Ioannis Stamatakis, who were the Brotherhood's contacts in Ioannina, Epirus. Letters were also exchanged with the Balanos and the Athanasios Psalidas schools in Ioannina, asking for references on the teacher Grigorios Palioutitis (1804-1805). In 1827 the Brotherhood wrote to Neofitos Vamvas, a well-known Greek intellectual who at the time was teaching in Kephallonia, asking him to recommend a Greek teacher for the community's school.

18. See also G. Panessa, (note 1 above), pp. 69-71, and P. Zerlendis, (note 14 above), p. 340.
19. N. Tomadakis, (note 1 above), p. 125.
20. K. N. Triandafilou, (note 1 above), pp. 86-87.
21. In 1873 Anneta Perdikaris, daughter of the Brotherhood's psalmist, was awarded a scholarship to study at the Arsakion College in Athens. For the names and the lives of the young Greeks who studied at the University of Pisa between 1806 and 1861, often with the financial support of the Greek Orthodox Brotherhood in Livorno, see A. Sideri, *Greek Students at the University of Pisa 1806-1861*, Athens, 1989 (in greek).
22. See also G. Panessa, (note 1 above), pp. 64-69.
23. On the very important activities of this editor, see A. Koumariou, L. Droulia, and E. Layton., *The History of Greek Books*, Athens, 1986, pp. 135-157 (in greek).
24. For the correspondence of Adamantios Korais see K. Th. Dimaras, et al. (eds.), *Adamantios Korais. His Correspondence*, 6 vols., Athens, 1967-1987 (in greek), which includes correspondence with members of the Greek community in Livorno such as Alexandros Patrinos and Thomas Spagniolakis.
25. A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, London, 1986, p. 15.