# UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Modern Paganism?
Nations, Nationalism and the Greek Theological Paradigm

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No portion of the work referred to in the Thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Τοῖς πατράσι
εἰς μνήμην

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The thesis examines the issue of the interconnection of nations and nationalism with Christianity, arguing that nationalism should be conceived as a form of paganism, at odds with Christian theology. It offers an interdisciplinary perspective, despite being essentially a theological work.

After examining the modern theories on nations and nationalism, as well as nationalism and religion, the thesis suggests that nations can exist without nation-states or nationalism and can be pre-modern, even ancient. It then suggests that nationalism should not be understood as an abstract religion replacing traditional religions, but, particularly, as a form paganism, which co-exists with traditional religions.

Theologically, the thesis presents the features that distinguish paganism and then argues that these features were overcome in the Old Testament, and, ultimately, in the New Testament. In doing so, the thesis argues that nationalism-as-paganism comes in conflict with the essence of Christianity, a conflict already understood by modern theologians. Finally, the thesis traces the features of paganism in modern Greek nationalism, by examining some of its aspects.

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Preface

As a beginner in the study of nationalism and Orthodoxy, I paid a social visit to a Greek bishop to whom I expressed my intention to turn my research interests to theology and nationality. The bishop seemed astonished for a moment, but then he knowledgeably remarked: 'this is a live and burning issue'. Authoritatively he added: 'Do not touch it!' Despite the deep impression his words left on me, I, nevertheless, acted disobediently and embarked on my journey.

The journey was proved indeed a difficult and eventful one both in terms of research and in my personal life. For the latter I only need to confess that, against my will, I repeatedly reached the point of failure. God did not allow it, however. In terms of research, I faced various challenges. In the initial stages of my research, for instance, I brought together with much zeal and enthusiasm history and political science with theology. However, a brilliant scholar urged me not to lose my theological identity, reminding me that the importance of an interdisciplinary approach rests on the contribution of the author, the author's own perspective. I need to clarify, therefore, that the thesis at hand constitutes a research enterprise that takes into serious consideration the findings of history, sociology and political science on nations and nationalism, as well as religion and nationalism, while remaining, I hope, an essentially theological work. Needless to say, that my plans changed significantly numerous times. They took a sudden and unexpected turn in summer 2017, when they assumed their present and final form.

My supervisors' constant care and efforts as well as my clumsy struggles finally brought this journey to an end. I only hope that, as with every ending, this too, will be the beginning of something yet to come.

19 May 2018

1.  Introduction

This thesis has a main task to accomplish, one main question to answer, and this needs to be clarified from the very beginning. In our times the interconnection between nationalism and religion constitutes a reality that appears very often so that it seems rather natural: it does not come as a surprise. Particularly Orthodox Christianity is so often and profoundly intertwined with nations that this relationship seems to be inherent in Orthodoxy. Is this statement true? This interconnection is a historical reality no doubt. Can the same be stated in terms of theology? Only a return to the theological foundations of Christianity can affirm or deny the inherence and theological acceptability of this relation. By doing exactly this, it is hoped that this thesis will demonstrate that theologically nations are acceptable and endorsed, though nationalism constitutes a return to paganism, which Christianity has been always at pains to avert.

Scholars have often conceived nationalism as the religion of modernity or the modern substitute for pre-modern religions (cf. Hayes 1926, 101). Indeed, this is the case from Rousseau's civil religion (1762) till Hayes's *Nationalism as Religion* (1960). This is a point well taken. However, Steven Grosby, in his very short introduction to nationalism (Grosby 2005), proceeded in an analysis of nationalism as a form of paganism. This is what matters more nowadays: not to understand nationalism as the modern *substitute for religion*, an alternative religion as it were, but to examine the *kind* of religion nationalism is. If it is a form of paganism, as this thesis suggests, following Grosby among others, then it effectively negates monotheistic religions, as is proved by Christianity's difficulty in coming to terms with nationality, and Islam's persistent refusal to accommodate nationality which is often viewed as an impediment to its global expansion (Grosby 2005, 80-97). This thesis is attempting to do precisely this: to define the pagan functions of nationalism and to show in which ways these functions are at odds with Christian theological principles. This by *no means* suggests that nationalism is not understood here as a political reality with social implications. Nationalism is primarily a political issue with political and not religious goals. However, it often functions as a religion enabling the emotions of individuals. In this repsect, the Orthodox understanding of Christianity will be often taken into consideration in the thesis at hand, and the Greek example will be used in the last parts of the thesis. However, it is hoped that this thesis will serve as a starting point of a Christian, general, evaluation of nations and nationalism.

1.1. Introductory remarks

The popular Greek caricaturist, known by the nickname 'Arkas', wrote recently that 'to be born a Greek is a great fortune; to die a Greek is a great fortune; the in-between, however, is a great misfortune'! No doubt, his humorous approach is connected with the recent financial problems, which made Greece well known worldwide. He simultaneously, however, chose to use the modern Greek experience in order to harshly criticise modern Greek nationalism in the framework of which such slogans as 'to die a Greek is a great thing' or 'to be born a Greek is a great fortune' are well known. Besides, the current financial depression in Greece has a contradictory effect. On the one hand, it brought to the government a radical left-wing party

which was restricted to a mere 3-5% of the votes in the Greek legislative elections prior to 2012. On the other hand, it established as the third political power in parliamentary representation the extreme right-wing, neo-Nazi nationalist party of the Golden Dawn, which had never managed to exceed the 1% of the votes prior to the groundbreaking elections of 2012 (Kalyvas 2015, 188-90). The difficult financial occasion is by no means a Greek phenomenon; nor is the rise of extreme nationalism. Financial depression expanded in Europe and, together with the growing problem of the migration of refugees from the Middle East and Central Asia to Europe, mobilised the nationalist European reflexes. In the United Kingdom the 2016 referendum showed that approximately 52% of the citizens desired the exit of their country from the European Union. In Austria, France and the Netherlands the rise of the far-right to power was averted at the last moment. Particularly in Austria, despite losing the presidential elections, the far-right party is participating in the current coalition government of the country. In Poland and Germany, despite the rule of right-wing political parties, an unusual rise of far-right powers has caused great distress among political analysts (cf. Lazaridis et als. 2016). However, these phenomena taking place within modern nation-states that radicalise their citizens do not conclude the case for nationalism. The Italian autonomist movements in Lombardy and Veneto, expressed through the 2017 referendums which voted in favour of autonomy by 95-98%, show that long established nation-states face separatist movements which put their unity to the test. More serious than the Italian problem has been proved the Belgian political crisis of 2007-2011 when the division of the inhabitants between Francophone Walloons and the Flemish was brought to the fore. More recently the illegal separatist referendum of Catalonia showed that a significant part of the province's population (92% with a 43% turnout) favours the independence of Catalonia from Spain, a development that caused the violent reaction of the Spanish government and the judicial authorities.

The modern world appears rather bewildered with the existence of such phenomena, which, at first glance, do not seem to coincide with the legacy of the Enlightenment and modernity, a legacy so precious to the West. The latter often boasts about its way of life established upon great principles such as the natural human rights, democracy, equality and the like. Modern nationalisms and nationalistic separatist movements put such principles to the test, for they endorse them only as far as the *us* concept is concerned. The members of *our* nations possess rights, the *others* do not; they do too in their own motherlands. The natural human rights are, therefore, rather limited and not so natural after all. Nationalism causes something of an embarrassment and is often rejected as a backward phenomenon bound to vanish.

> After all, the very fact that historians are at least beginning to make some progress in the study and analysis of nations and nationalism suggests that, as so often, the phenomenon is past its peak. The owl of Minerva which brings wisdom, said Hegel, flies out at dusk. It is a good sign that it is now circling round nations and nationalism (Hobsbawm 1990, 192).

Nothing could be proved more wrong. The late Eric J. Hobsbawm, a leading authority in nationalism studies, was a far better historian than a prophet. Only the events, following the

dissolution of Yugoslavia and the wars between Serbs, Croatians, Bosnians, and Kosovars (1990-2003) were enough to prove him wrong. Nationalism is not a modern phenomenon, as will be argued below,[1] but it acquired a new and dynamic form through national movements in modernity, becoming thus strongly intertwined with modernity. It turns to the past in order to move forward. This is why Tom Nairn used the image of the two-faced Roman deity of Janus to describe nationalism as a phenomenon that turns to the - often mythical or invented - past, while it endorses the modern development envisaging a future of progress and freedom (Nairn 1997, 71). Nationalism, therefore, combines the past with a vision for the future. It is probably this combination that makes nationalism such an enduring phenomenon, despite the contemporary globalisation.

Indeed, modern nationalism has survived as a driving force in modern politics, as well as modern societies. The issue has problematised modern scholarship. Their ideas vary from an anticipation of the demise of nationalism and the nation-state to the search for the roots of the endurance of nationalism in the modern globalised world (Smith 1998, 214). A precise answer naturally escapes the scope of this study, let alone this introduction, which aims at showing the contemporary character of nationalism and its importance. It probably suffices to suggest that in a global world the search for identity has turned people to the ethnic ties, as more enduring and concrete, so that the rise of globalisation goes hand in hand with the strengthening of ethnic ties (Smith 1998, 215; cf. Smith 1995. Osterhammel 2013, 694-707).

Another form of ties that seems strong enough to survive the modern globalised environment seems to be the religious ones. Religion was another phenomenon which was considered rather irrelevant in the modern world and its demise was announced by scholars of the caliber of Peter L. Berger (Berger 1967). It was precisely Berger, however, that negated his previous thesis in order to examine the reasons for the resurgence of modern religion (Berger 1999). This resurgent religion has, in many ways, intertwined with nationalism. For instance, the role religion played in the Wars of Yugoslavia was significant. Bosnian, Croatian, and Serb nationalists believed that their respective national identities were deeply interconnected with their religious ones: a true Bosnian can be nothing but a Muslim, a true Croatian can be nothing but a Roman Catholic Christian, a true Serb can be nothing but an Orthodox. This last case acquires some significance for this thesis, as the Greek example, which will be used here, is equally Orthodox. The difficulty that arises rests with the fact that Orthodoxy is not really known in the West.

Modern Orthodoxy is better known in the West through Russia, the largest and politically most important Orthodox country. Russia's political reality brought to the fore an entirely different image of leadership. Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, appears as a profoundly religious leader who does not hesitate to publicly speak and act using religion not only as a tool to make politics both at home and abroad but also as an entity that helps him to put forward a different form of governance, which can be characterised as counter-modernist. If the religiously indifferent modernism of secular politics constitutes the model followed by the West,

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[1] See chapter 2.1.

the religiously designated counter-modernist model of religiously inspired politics is what Putin seems to pursue. At the Valdai Forum on 19 September 2013, he underlined that people in many European states are rather ashamed of their religious affiliations, as Europe abandons the moral values rooted in Christianity.[2] Putin has forged a strong Church-state bond which has turned Orthodoxy in Russia into a crucial factor for making Russian politics both at home and abroad. This, in its turn, has profoundly affected inter-Orthodox relations, as the renewed Russian Patriarchate questions the place of the Ecumenical Patriarch at Constantinople as the *first among the equal* prelates of Orthodoxy on the grounds that it represents the largest Orthodox nation. For first time in Orthodox history a national quantitative criterion is initiated in the hierarchy of the Orthodox leaders.

The current conflict in Ukraine seems to be an important field where this religious form of politics is taking place. The country, divided to its pro-Russian East and the pro-Western West, is accordingly divided in religious terms. The Eastern part, historically part of the Russian empire, remains Orthodox, as it belongs to the canonical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. The Western part, historically connected with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, is divided between Roman Catholics of Eastern rite (Uniates) and Orthodox of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is the national Orthodox Church of Ukraine, independent from Moscow but isolated from the Orthodox community which maintains ties only with the Moscow Patriarchate. Putin obviously supports eastern Ukraine, where his supporters are to be found. Apparently, therefore, Orthodoxy has become a way to make politics, submissive as it is to national rivalries and aspirations for power and dominance (cf. Krawchuk-Bremer 2016).

The cases of Russia and the Ukrainian conflict are not the only cases that so effectively demonstrate the existing strong bond between Church and the nation in modern times. The Orthodox Church of Greece entered the twenty-first century headed by the then archbishop Christodoulos (1939-2008). He envisioned the establishment of a national Greek Church that was to include all the lands of the Greek State. These aspirations brought him to direct conflict with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which also possesses jurisdictions in the Greek state and is headed by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (b.1940). The latter, though stationed at Constantinople -nowadays Istanbul, Turkey - and a Turkish national, is no less of Greek origin than his counterpart at Athens. The Patriarchate of Constantinople most emphatically and decisively safeguarded its canonical rights against the archbishop's offensive, not hesitating to cut off the communion with the archbishop and those following him. It is interesting that the crisis was resolved by the direct involvement of the Greek State, through its ministry of educational and religious affairs. It is also very suggestive that this was not the first time the archbishop bothered the Greek government with his initiatives, as he had already opposed the governmental decision to remove the religious designation from the state-issued identity cards, arguing that Orthodoxy was a fundamental identity marker for Greeks. For him Orthodoxy and

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[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4I7Cnpirw8 accessed on 08/12/2017.
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24170137 accessed on 08/12/2017.

Greekness were strongly intertwined: to be Greek is to be Orthodox (Paraskevaides 1997, 44-50; cf. Printzipas 2004, 113-33,182-209. Vlachos 2000. Zeses 2000).

The Orthodox Patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem are currently in conflict over the issue of Qatar. The issue of which Church possesses canonical rights over the Orthodox flock of Qatar is an issue that concerns Canon Law and, therefore, is not examined in this thesis. Important for this thesis are the nationalistic motives that dictate the actions adopted by the two Churches, the Arab-speaking Patriarchate of Antioch and the Greek-speaking Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The antagonism between the two ancient Patriarchates is rather connected with the hostility, on the one hand, caused to Arab-speaking Orthodox Christians by the fact that the Church of Jerusalem is headed by Greek prelates, though the majority of its flock consists mainly of Arabs. On the other hand, it is connected with the fact that the mostly Greek-speaking Orthodox flock of Qatar desires connection with Jerusalem rather than Antioch (cf. [Yazigi] 2013, 317-8).

These are only some of the recent events that demonstrate the interconnection between the ecclesial and the national in the Orthodox world. The cases presented above do not constitute merely political problems; they rather involve issues concerning the ways the national and the ecclesial are understood by the members of the Church or the citizens of different states. What is more, the above cases show the need for a theological evaluation not only of the relationship between Church and state, but also, and more importantly, the deeper examination of the association between Church and nation/nationalism. Despite this need, apparently the Orthodox theologians have not concerned themselves with a theological evaluation of nations and nationalism. They have dealt with the above problems from a rather canonical/legal point of view or from the point of view of Church-state relations. On the other hand, modern theorists of nations and nationalism have brought together sociology, political science, and history, recently even religious studies, but have persistently neglected theology. In this respect, religions are viewed as uniform phenomena and their different theological essences are neglected. However, as nations are not uniform phenomena and differ significantly, so are religions. Theology is absolutely necessary if a view from within is considered important for the understanding of the ways in which religion interconnects with nations and nationalism.

## 1.2. Definitions

Modern scholars have repeatedly noted that the bibliography on nationalism presents a significant terminological obscurity (Connor 1990, 92-103. Connor 1994, 89-143. Guibernau-Hutchinson 2004, 3. Puri 2004, 182,184). What is more, as noted above, the West does not appear adequately familiar with the concept of Orthodoxy. It is, therefore, necessary to clarify some key-terms in order the main argument of this thesis to become clear too.

By the term *Orthodoxy* or *Eastern Orthodoxy* this thesis refers to that part of Christianity

which maintains the doctrines of the seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787).[3] Orthodoxy constitutes a community of Churches with the primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople-Istanbul, as first among equal (primus inter pares) prelates, among whom those of Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch (i.e. Damascus) in Syria, and Jerusalem in Palestine, are most notably included. Orthodox Christianity is related with the majority of Belorussians, Bulgarians, Greeks, FYROMacedonians, Romanians, Russians, Serbs, and Ukrainians. There are also minorities in other European countries and the rest of the globe. Theologically, Eastern Orthodoxy adheres to the principles set by the Councils listed above. God is one and triune. The second person of the Trinity, the Son, Logos and Wisdom of God, was incarnated assuming the full human nature. Christ's two natures mean that He maintained two wills and energies – divine and human – while his appearance in history makes Him able to be depicted in icons. He was crucified and buried. He was risen from the dead and ascended to Heaven sending the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit, as the new comforter, to lead those who live in Him in the fullness of the truth. Orthodox Christians adhere to these doctrines, expressed here in all brevity, despite lacking an international head, an Orthodox pope, as it were, to unite the Orthodox peoples and authoritatively express their faith. This is so, because Orthodox tradition assigns this role to no human but to the Church as a whole united by the Holy Spirit.

The way the nation is defined by different scholars varies according to the theories to which they adhere. This is true for this thesis too. For reasons that will be explained below, when these definitions will be further analysed,[4] the thesis at hand understands the nation in a perennial way - to adopt the terminology initiated by Anthony D. Smith in his influential *Nationalism and Modernism* (Smith 1998, 159-65; cf. Özkirimli 2000, 58-60) - as an abstract community formed by multipolar and equal relationships to other nations, forming, in its turn, a structure of traditions educational, religious and legislative/political, connected with a distinct territory (cf. Hirschi 2012, 47. Ziakas 2003, 167). This signifies that nations are considered here as communities-structures of traditions that tend to be self-defined. They constitute, therefore, human constructs and not 'natural' entities. However, the above definition contains political independence as a claim of the nation without particularly connecting the nation with politics. The nation does not need to have such a claim, or, what is more, to possess this quality in order to exist. As a structure of traditions, the nation is mainly a cultural entity, which changes over time, as its traditions change. Nations do not tend to remain the same.

National consciousness is the belief of the individuals that they belong to a certain nation, as they identify themselves as adherents to the nation's traditions and consider themselves members of the community.

Nationalism, moreover, is that discourse which 'preserves the nation as an autonomous

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[3] The affirmation of the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431) by the Eastern Orthodox Church distinguishes it from the Assyrian-Orthodox (Christian minorities in mainly Iraq, Syria and Turkey), while the equal affirmation of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) distinguishes it from the Syrian- and Armenian-Orthodox, as well as the Copts (the majority of Armenians and Ethiopians and minorities in Egypt, India, Iraq, and Syria) (Binns 2002).

[4] See below chapter 1.4.2.

value, autonomous meaning not subordinate (but neither necessarily superior) to any other community' (Hirschi 2012, 47). This broader sense of nationalism includes also the national ideologies and movements which demanded one state for each nation. The successful outcome of the ensuing struggle led to the formation of the modern nation-states that correspond to the above principle: one state, politically independent and territorially clearly delimited, for each nation. The ideology which considers the nation as the superior value of society and clearly distinguishes between *our* superior nations and *other* nations is understood here as an extreme form of nationalism. By referring to nationalism in this thesis, this latter form of nationalism is mostly taken into consideration. This rather perennial understanding of the main terminology of the thesis at hand remains to be explained, a task that will be undertaken particularly in the first chapter of the thesis.

The above terms are derived from the Latin verb *nascere*, to be born. Nation, therefore, is initially a community of individuals sharing common ancestry. The similar terms *ethnicity*, *ethnic*, and *ethnie* are derived from the Greek noun *éthnos*, which, according to the most widely accepted theory, is derived from the noun *éthos*, habit. The beings who belong to an *éthnos*, according to the Greek understanding, share the same habits. In Homer's *Iliad*, for instance, a group of soldiers is described as 'the nation of the soldiers'. The same goes with insects: 'the nation of flies' (Liddell-Scott 1997, 2:22. Babiniotes 2002, 553).[5] Modern usage has turned things upside-down. The terms derived from Latin have been bestowed with a political meaning, whereas the terms derived from Greek are mistakenly connected with a sense of origin by birth. As it was explained here, the understanding of this thesis is more Greek- than Latin-minded. However, only in order to follow the current stream and avoid further obscurity, the thesis at hand will adopt the Latin terminology with the definitions clarified above. As a result, the use of the derivatives of the word *éthnos* will be generally avoided as not entirely necessary.

The clarification of the core concepts of this thesis will help, it is hoped, in the understanding of the existing research in the field of theology and nationality issues. Therefore, attention must be turned to the existing bibliography on the issue in order that its status be examined.

## 1.3. Literature Review

Since the research at hand concentrates its efforts in examining theological treatises on nations and nationalism in the Greek theological context, it is necessary to present a fair, though brief, analysis of the existing production of the Greek theological thought. In doing so, it is necessary to classify these views in three main categories, according to the orientation of the scholars, whose ideas are here presented. Needless to say, this arrangement is by no means either restrictive or normative; it only intends to serve the needs of this thesis in an effort to present the ideas of the Greek scholars. However, there have been recently written theological

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[5] I have used the Greek translation of Lidell-Scott dictionary, as it is enriched with words and meanings from the Scriptures and the Byzantine literature. In reference to the above Homeric passages, Lambros Kamberides believes that the Greek term understands the *nation* as a herd or flock that destroys individualism and the freedom of the human person (Kamberides 2006, 84).

works on nationality issues and, though they do not come either from the Orthodox or the Greek theological framework, they will be briefly presented due to their obvious and profound kinship with the thesis at hand.

### 1.3.1. Nationality issues in the Greek theological thought

The Greek theological thought on nationality issues was brought about as a series of responses to certain important developments in the modern Greek state. According to these responses three categories of Orthodox thinkers have emerged. First, there are the thinkers who produced their thoughts in accordance with the nationalist ideology of *Hellenochristianity*. Secondly, the *Hellenorthodox* thinkers developed their ideas inspired by the particularity of the Orthodox Christian tradition, especially as experienced in Greece. Finally, the *(post-)modernists* expressed their views in the late twentieth – early twenty-first centuries in an effort to respond to modern developments, such as European integration and multiculturalism. Each one of these categories will be examined here in some detail.

### 1.3.1.1. Theology and *Hellenochristianity*

The theologians who developed their ideas in accordance with the state-promoted *Hellenochristian* nationalism in the nineteenth and the first three quarters of the twentieth century did not comprise a solid and uniform intellectual group. They responded differently to contemporary issues. The basic similarity in their way of thinking rests on their loyalty towards the state, its national ideology and the existing social order and social status. They often functioned as tools of the state for the gradual enforcement of state-promoted ideology. In order to understand this current of thought, a clarification of the term *Hellenochristianity* is needed.

According to this *Hellenochristianity*, the modern Greeks are the bearers of the ancient Greek culture and of the Christian culture developed in Byzantium. The Greek nation was conceived as an entity with an extraordinary continuity: it started in the rather obscure times of Mycenae and the ancient world at large and, through the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires, it reached the modern times. Therefore, the Greek nation is based on two pillars: the ancient Greek legacy (the Hellenic element) and the Byzantine heritage (the Christian element). The model was suggested by the nineteenth-century folklorist Spyridon Zambelios (Zambelios 1852. Zambelios 1857) and his contemporary historian Constantine Paparrigopoulos (Paparrigopoulos 1843. Paparregopoulos 1860-1877). The *Hellenochristian* model dominated Greek scholarship and politics since it was introduced, reaching its peak during the seven-year dictatorship in Greece (1967-74). Greek theologians formed their ideas within this context.

### 1.3.1.1.1. State versus Church: The two main trends

Two trends in the theological thought on nations can be identified: the first consists of the theologians who understood themselves as state agents and believed that their role was to help the dissemination of the state ideology; the second trend is more religious in nature, as it

emerged within the framework of the para-ecclesiastical organisations[6] and tended to approach all aspects of life from the point of view of faith. Undoubtedly, both groups expressed their loyalty to the state and the state-promoted *Hellenochristian* model (Bratsiotes 1925. Bratsiotes 1930. Balanos n.y., 3-5). They endorsed without difficulty the bond between Hellenism and Christianity. As a result, they understood the Orthodox Church as a national Church, deeply intertwined with the nation, so that one's national identity depended on one's religion: a Greek abandoning Orthodoxy was Greek no more.

Despite these similarities there are important differences between the two groups. The state-orientated theologians – often serving the state apparatus – believed in the pre-eminence of the nation through the nation-state, over the Church, for the Church constituted a state institution. They acknowledged, then, that the Church functioned entirely as a national Church not only in Greece but also in any other country with the Orthodox Christians being the majority of the population. The national identity of the individual, according to this view, was the most important form of human identity; religious identity, as a result, was of secondary importance. This view can be branded as a form of *religious nationalism* or a kind of *nationalist Christianity*. The main representatives of this line of thought were the nineteenth-century academic Anastasios Diomydes-Kyriakos (Diomydes-Kyriakos 1905), and the twentieth-century academics Dimitrios Balanos (Balanos 1936a, 73-4. Balanos 1936b, 91-2. Balanos 1938, 214-7. Balanos 1947) and Hamilcar Alivizatos (Alivizatos 1936, 111-4).

There was, however, one scholar among the academics of the post-War period, John Karmires (1903-1995), whose open-mindedness allowed him to think in purely theological terms and form a solid theological bedrock in his criticism of nationalism. Karmires believed that nationalism, as the discourse that prioritises the nations, puts at stake the catholicity of the Church.[7] Karmires accused the Church of 'becoming the unwilling instrument of chauvinistic pursuits of the national states' (Karmires 1978, 470), understanding the relationship of Church and nationalism more in the sense of the *handmaiden*, which will be presented here below.[8] He considered, on the other hand, that there was a form of 'correctly conceived nationalism', a feeling of belonging to a nation that was compatible with the catholicity of the Church, as the latter 'does not disregard the values of national cultures of different nations ... to whom it preaches the sacrament of salvation in the language of each people in which every one may worship God freely' (Karmires 1978, 473). Obviously this idea led him to believe that Church cannot be separated from the nation-state but the two need to co-operate harmoniously

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[6] The term *para-ecclesiastical* is used here to describe the Orthodox Christian organisations, which were established to promote the spiritual life of individuals, but always functioned independently of the Church hierarchy. The term *extra-ecclesiastical*, suggested by Chr. Yannaras (2007, 243), is not adopted here, for the followers of these organisations belonged to the Orthodox Church, despite their rather Protestant-orientated theology.

[7] For his understanding of the term *catholicity* and the distinction between *esoteric*/qualitative and *geographical*/quantitative, as well as temporal, catholicity see Karmires 1978, 459-69.

[8] See chapter 2.2.

(Karmires 1978, 472).[9]

The second trend emerged from the para-ecclesiastical organisations and had a different point of departure. For them, religion mattered more than anything else, especially in identity issues. The nation was then of secondary importance, as, despite being a natural entity, it should be understood within the framework of fallen human nature. The this-worldly national identity contradicts the heavenly-orientated spirituality. The necessarily secular state was, for them, of even minor significance; they were in favour of the separation between Church and state, as the connection of the Church with any this-worldly institution was problematic (Gousides 1996, 54-6). They considered this principle as a necessary presupposition for the renewal of the individual and of socio-political life on religious grounds. National ideology was conceived as a Western ideological trend, alien to the Eastern Orthodox tradition: it seemed to signify a return to a pre-Christian paganism, misdirecting the mind of people away from their spiritual faith to earthly considerations. The first representative of this line of thought was the nineteenth-century religious thinker Apostolos Makrakes (Makrakes 1965; cf. Andronis 1966). Other scholars that supported this line were Balanos's and Alivizatos's contemporary Athens University professors Christos Androutsos (Androutsos 1964) and Panayiotes Bratsiotes (Bratsiotes 1936a, 81-3. Bratsiotes 1936b, 98-9; cf. Nikolaides 2013, 63-4,207-9). The latter constitutes the most interesting case. A member of the *Zoe* (Life)[10] para-ecclesiastical organisation, he developed his views in a debate with Balanos and Alivizatos (Karamouzes 2004).[11]

Although *Hellenochristianity* reached its peak during the seven-year military dictatorship in Greece (1967-74), after which it was abandoned by the state and rejected by the intelligentsia, it was maintained by members of the declining para-ecclesiastical organisations (cf. Vasileiades 2007a) and, to an extent, in the exuberant personality of the late Archbishop of Athens Christodoulos (Praskevaides 1997. Paraskevaides 2005).

According to Polykarp Karamouzes, the state-orientated trend constituted the most *progressive* and *modern* school of thought among its contemporary theologians. The theologians that emerged from the para-ecclesiastical organisations, on the other hand, belonged to the *conservative* wing, as Karamouzes suggested (Karamouzes 2004, 277). According to modern criteria, this is a paradox: the conservatives expressed views closer to the modern anti-nationalist trends, whereas the progressives developed a rather conservative nationalist way of thinking. The state-orientated scholars, however, were *modern* only according to the nationalist ideas of the Mid-War period; they were eager to respond to the contemporary environment by adjusting theology to nationalist imperatives and turning theology into a handmaiden of the

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[9] Thomas Hopko criticised Karmires's views on Church-state relations. See Hopko's comment on Karmires's paper (Karmires 1978, 486-7).

[10] Founded by Eusebius Matthopoulos (1849-1922) in 1907 the *Zoe* para-ecclesiastical organisation became very influential in Greek society in the aftermath of World War II until 1960. It experienced a renewal during the dictatorship (1967-74) and irrevocably declined in post-1974 Greece (Maczewski 1970).

[11] Karamouzes established a different terminology in his effort to describe the above views. He, thus, named the organisations-orientated scholars *conservatives*, while terming the state-orientated ones *liberals* or *nationalists* (Karamouzes 2004, 277). This distinction is not effective. Both groups of scholars were equally conservative. What mattered was their priority: religion or state.

state. Their views are rather based on non-theological considerations. The so-called *conservatives*, on the other hand, drew more from the Orthodox theological tradition. They showed considerable loyalty to strictly theological principles. They could, therefore, envisage Orthodoxy as a broader reality that transcends human divisions, including national divisions. Their views, therefore, are of significance in terms of theology and will be used critically in this thesis.

### 1.3.1.1.2. St. Paul: prisoner or warden? The case of Alexander Tsirindanes

The *Zoe* para-ecclesiastical organisation saw the end of World War II as an opportunity for the re-Christianisation of Greek society. The person who mainly undertook this task was Alexander Tsirindanes (1903-77), a very distinguished professor of law and member of the Christian Association of Scientists ([Tsirindanes] 1946; cf. Gousides 1996, 86-91. Yannaras 2007, 232-7). Tsirindanes constitutes a very special case that needs to be considered separately within the *Hellenochristian* model.

For Tsirindanes, Christianity serves as the starting-point for every thought on modern society and politics, and every potential reform (Tsirindanes 1949. Tsirindanes 1950. Tsirindanes 1975. Tsirindanes 1977). The programme of the re-Christianisation of Greek society was, therefore, a national programme, inspired by the *Hellenochristian* model and by the understanding of Christianity as a worldview. In Tsirindanes's thought Christianity has to be conceived as a whole, without the doctrinal differences of the various Christian denominations. He considered the re-Christianisation of Greece central to the re-Christianisation of the rest of Europe. In other words he promoted a Christian - not necessarily Orthodox - culture in accordance with his contemporary movement of *Kulturchristentum*, which emerged in Europe to counterbalance socialism, and was connected with the foundation of the Christian-Democratic European parties (Yannaras 2007, 235). According to the *Hellenochristian* model, Europe was the natural home of Greece, as Greek classic culture is at the core of modern Europe and Christianity its common religion.

The understanding of Christianity as a worldview dictated Tsirindanes's views on nations, nationalism or patriotism, and the nation-state. The nation is, for Tsirindanes, a natural category. National consciousness always constituted a significant part of human identity. Despite its immense value, nevertheless, the nation cannot stand on its own. The Christian worldview, which promotes the value of *holiness* through *love*, is necessary in order for the nation and the related entities to acquire an ontological meaning with a deep and considerable impact. Without loving holiness, love for the nation is transformed into a selfish, aggressive and catastrophic *chauvinism*. In the perspective of the Christian worldview, on the other hand, love for the fatherland - even death for it - constitutes a form of evangelical sacrificial love, an act of holiness that transcends the individual. Tsirindanes called this form of love for the nation as *patriotism*. He then clearly differentiated between *chauvinism* (selfishness) and *patriotism* (transcendental sacrificial love).

This Christian worldview made Tsirindanes develop a straightforward notion of the

nation-state. The nation, for him, possesses a collective *soul*, that of the individuals who constitute it. The state, on the other hand, possesses a *soul* only when it is democratic and defends the interests of the nation. When the nation is Christian, the state has to promote the Christian worldview. Only then does it serve the nation and can be said to have a *soul*. Tsirindanes, therefore, makes a very significant distinction between the nation and the nation-state. The nation always possesses a positive meaning. This does not always happen with the state - even more so as the state necessarily possesses the 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force' (Weber 1978, 54). According to Tsirindanes, the Church is deeply intertwined with the nation, but not with the state. He believed that whenever the Church is connected with the state, its own spiritual foundations are undermined, as it depends on the state's oppressive mechanisms in order to influence society. As he put it, St. Paul turns from prisoner for Christ to warden of Christ. The state will cease to support the Church, when the purposes of the former are not served by the latter. The Church then will not be able to turn to its own foundations, as they have been already undermined (Tsirindanes 1967. Tsirindanes 1978a. Tsirindanes 1978b. Tsirindanes 1979).[12]

Tsirindanes's deep religiosity, as well as his understanding of Christianity as a worldview, can interpret his way of thinking, and locate him in the line of the scholars of the para-ecclesiastical organisations. His non-theological education, however, and his connection with the state apparatus - he had served repeatedly as advisor to ministers and briefly as a minister himself - also bring him close to the state-orientated scholars. Tsirindanes met a deadlock when he encountered the issue of reconciling the two identities: Christian and national. For the state-orientated scholars, as presented above, national identity was pre-eminent and the Christian identity should adjust to its demands. For the theologically-orientated scholars, the Christian identity was more important. Tsirindanes, combining elements from both perspectives, seemed unable to respond effectively. He restricted himself to pointing out that some kind of synthesis was needed in this respect without attempting to define what this synthesis may be (Tsirindanes 1979, 225). The above views, as well as Tsirindanes's deadlock, manifested the limitations of the theological thought produced within the *Hellenochristian* model. This reality made fresh looks at the issue inevitable.

### 1.3.1.2. Theology and *Hellenorthodoxy*

The intellectuals of *Hellenorthodoxy* offered a model alternative to *Hellenochristianity* to address nationality issues. The emergence of this model is connected with - though not restricted to - some of the theologians designated as the 'generation of the 60s' (Yannaras 2007, 273-308; cf. Kalaitzidis-Papathanasiou-Ampatzides 2009, 367-514,661-94). Their theological contribution is connected with the revival of patristic studies, the re-evaluation of the importance of the liturgical experience, and, above all, the promotion of the significance of the distinct Orthodox tradition. In this context they also turned their interest to Hellenism as a

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[12] Tsirindanes's reference to St. Paul as prisoner or warden paraphrases Eph. 4:1 (Tsirindanes 1979, 84-5,198).

cultural and philosophical category and understood it precisely through the Orthodox tradition. This is why the term *Hellenorthodoxy* is used here. Although their suggestions seemed to influence certain elements of Greek society, it was not comparable to the dominance of *Hellenochristianity*, as the former was never promoted by the state.

It can be stated that the man that most stimulated and deeply influenced the *Hellenorthodox* ideas on nationality issues was the Greek-American clergyman and academic John S. Romanides (1927-2001), who introduced the term *Romaiosyne* and analysed it in the way that will be presented below. There were thinkers that strictly followed his path-breaking contributions (Constantine Sardeles, George Metallinos, Theodore Zeses, Ierotheos Vlachos, among many) and others that, though influenced by his ideas, followed more independent trends and formed distinctive views (such as Basil Gontikakes, Lambros Kamberides, Christos Yannaras).

As happened with *Hellenochristianity*, *Hellenorthodoxy* too built on trends and ideas developed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, drawing heavily on the theological revival ('patristic/philokalian renaissance') of the late Ottoman era (Metallinos 1988, 155-6. Yannaras 2007, 121-37; cf. Papadopoulos 2000. Podskalsky 1988, 372-4,377-83. Randovich 1984) and the movements in Greece that resisted the administration of the Bavarian king Otto of Greece (r.1833-62) and the independence (autocephalous) of the Church of Greece from the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Metallinos 1983). *Hellenorthodox* intellectuals were inspired by nineteenth-century politicians, faithful to the imperial Byzantine past, such as George Typaldos-Iakovatos (1813-82) (Metallinos 1990), and thinkers that based their ideas on the Orthodox popular and monastic tradition, such as the famous novelist Alexander Papadiamantes (1851-1911), or the novelist, essayist, and iconographer Photios Kontoglou (1895-1965). In the thought of such thinkers the *Hellenochristian* model of the continuity of Greek history did not seem to play any particular role. What really mattered to them was the Orthodox tradition, which survived not among secular scholars who admired the ancient Greek legacy (Metallinos 1986, 149-90), but among the simplicity of the folk tradition and monasticism, which was genuinely experienced by the people and the ascetics (Metallinos 1992, 87-219). Based on this legacy, the generation of the '60s, together with the theologians influenced by it, stressed the importance of Orthodox tradition and waged a *war* on the above described *Hellenochristian* model. People supporting *Hellenochristianity* came into conflict with the thinkers supporting *Hellenorthodoxy*. Apart from insisting on the priority of the Orthodox tradition, what the *Hellenorthodox* thinkers simultaneously stressed was the Hellenic cultural character. The ideas expressed by the Russian émigré cleric and academic Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) served as a source of inspiration for the *Hellenorthodox* thinkers. At a conference in Athens in 1936 Florovsky had called for the abolition of Western influences in Orthodox theology and the re-examination of the Greek Church Fathers (neo-patristic synthesis), while speaking about Hellenism as the eternal category of Christianity (Alivizatos 1939, 212-31,238-42; cf. Kalaitzidis 2010a, 380-8). To return to where we started, it is worth noting that Romanides was Florovsky's student at Harvard University, his colleague at the Holy Cross Greek-Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, and remained always his loyal friend.

1.3.1.2.1. The Return of the Eagle: Hellenism as Romaiosyne

Writing his theological contributions mostly in English, Romanides made his mark in Greece, where he served as a professor of Thessaloniki University, through his contributions on history with mainly his famous *Romaiosyne, Romania, Roumele*, originally published in 1975. It has to be made clear right from the beginning that Romanides was concerned neither with the nation as a concept, nor with the phenomenon of nationalism generally. He cared only about the Greek nation and its nationalism, while offering some insights on the issue of Church-state relations. He focused on a reinterpretation of the Byzantine history and attempted an approach to modern Greek identity through this prism. For Romanides, the Byzantine Empire, with the eagle as its emblem, constituted the continuation of the Roman Empire in the East. The Eastern Empire was called *Roman* by its inhabitants, who called themselves *Romaioi* or *Romioi*. The term *Byzantium* was invented by the sixteenth-century German historian Hieronymus Wolf (1516-80) (Rosser 2012, 2). This Roman Empire expanded from the times of Octavian Augustus to Constantine XI in 1453, when Constantinople, the New Rome, eventually fell at the hands of the Ottomans. The Christian Romans were not distinguished according to national or linguistic criteria, but according to religious ones. Indeed, the imperial environment, within which they developed, rather discouraged any categorisation of the imperial subjects other than the religious one. The Greek-speaking *Romioi* revolted against the Ottoman Turks in 1821 and formed the modern Greek nation-state. This development marked the spread of national ideology among the Romans of the Balkans, and national identities replaced the unified Roman one (Romanides 1971. Romanides 1976a. Romanides 1976b. Romanides 1988, 75-88. Romanides 1989, xv-xxiv. Romanides 1992, 219-23. Romanides 2002a; cf. Metallinos 1988, 51-101,173-81. Metallinos 1992, 7-29,253-97).[13]

Romanides approached the Orthodox Church as a body that cures the sickness of the human soul, which unsuccessfully seeks earthly happiness. The Orthodox Church transcends this pursuit by offering the experience of the God's glory (glorification/deification), through selfless love. This pattern of the therapeutic role of the Church is very significant for the understanding of Romaiosyne. The Roman emperors from Constantine the Great onwards were, according to Romanides, able to realise the therapeutic role of the Church and allowed it to operate freely in order to improve society. The emperors of Romaiosyne protected the Church by endorsing its teachings and turning the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils into state laws (Romanides 1992, 423-50. Romanides 1996a, 67-87; cf. Vlachos 1996, 32-40).

According to these main principles it is clear that Romanides understands Romaiosyne as an entity broader than the Greek nation, being multi-national and multi-lingual, though the Greek language was its official *lingua franca*. The uniting force was the Orthodox Christian faith of the inhabitants. Romanides uses the term *nation* in this broader sense that designates

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[13] For criticism on Romanides's thought see Halleux 1984, 54-66. Kalaitzidis 2009, 439-53. Kalaitzidis 2010a, 408-12. Kalaitzidis 2012a, 81-9. Kalaitzidis 2013a, 144-50. Psomas 2011, 26-35. Yannaras 2007, 275-8. Considerable parts of the criticisms of Romanides's work are due to the fact that he remains an enigmatic figure in modern Greek theological reality, either admired and entirely endorsed or disliked and ultimately rejected, while his main theological contributions, written in English, remain mostly unknown in Greece.

Romaiosyne. By contrast, modern Greek national ideology, loyal to the modern Greek nation-state, even in its dominant *Hellenochristian* model, constitutes, for Romanides, a *Western* 'sickness' that seeks earthly happiness. Following the example of nineteenth-century German national ideology - 'a Teutonic form of racism' (Romanides 1976a, 22. Romanides 2002a, 69-70,173) - and the declarations of the French Revolution, modern Greek national ideology seeks to establish a link of ethnic kinship with ancient Greece, through Byzantium. For Romanides, this is impossible, as for Byzantium ethnic features did not matter; all the imperial subjects were united in the common religion and not the common ethnic ancestry. National ideology, therefore, constitutes a purely imaginative concept (Romanides 2002a, 20,237), which penetrated the Balkans and the Middle East by being deliberately imposed by European governments in order to prevent a unified Romaiosyne re-emerging from the ruins of the rapidly declining Ottoman Empire (Romanides 1976a, 22-3,27-8). Romanides's anti-Westernism led him to believe that the misfortunes of Romaiosyne were due to the machinations and conspiracies of the West. As a result, the reason why Romanides rejects national ideologies is that they constitute Western constructions, based on fantasies, which contaminated the East, destroying the Roman identity of the Balkan and Middle-Eastern peoples, alienating them from their past, and while weakening them, obscuring their future. Romanides suggested ways to return to the Roman past by abolishing the nation-states and forming a political union, which - in its latest version - was to include even the West, but not the Russians and the Slavs at large, as he maintained a bitter suspicion towards them, excluding them from his model. For him, by claiming the succession of the Byzantine Empire, the Russians only restricted the imperial Christian legacy, which transcended nationalities, to a national Russian exclusivity. This reality damaged the ecumenicity and inclusivity of Romaiosyne (Romanides 2002a, 57,297-323).[14]

Romanides influenced thinkers who were willing to promote the distinctive Orthodox identity of Greece and the Greeks and criticise the dominant state-promoted mentality, which envisioned Greece as part of the West, not only adopting the achievements of the West but also imitating its ways of living and its values (Sardeles [2002], 64-7. Sardeles 2008). Romanides's devoted followers - chiefly Metallinos and Vlachos - believed that Romaiosyne overcomes national ideologies, almost identifying Romaiosyne with Orthodoxy (Vlachos 1992, 23-59. Vlachos 1996, 186). Romaiosyne, as a multi-national and multi-lingual entity, could overcome nationalist exclusivities. These views influenced Romanides's and the like-minded scholars' political preferences. Romanides and his followers have been accused of being active in politics with extremely conservative trends. This is true for Romanides who, born and raised in fiercely anti-Communist America, studied theology in the framework of McCarthy's 'Red Scare' and was involved in Greek politics through the extreme right 'National Wing' (1977). Though none of his supporters cared to get involved in politics, some influenced by him, developed conservative ideas, an almost violent opposition to the idea of Church-state separation and any form of secularism, and a scepticism, to put it mildly, about the arrival of immigrants and refugees in

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[14] For Romanides himself, his suggestions, far from being 'ambitious and grandiose plans' (Kalaitzidis 2009, 449), constituted a non-realistic utopia (Romanides 2002a, 321-2).

Greece during the last almost thirty years. Such a thinker is, for instance, Theodore Zeses (Zeses 1993. Zeses 1994. Zeses 1995. Zeses 2000. Zeses 2006).

To return to Romanides and his views on the nation-state, it is necessary to remember that he considered Romaiosyne as a nation in a very broad sense of the term. The modern Greek nation-state, which emerged in the aftermath of the Greek Revolution, included only a very small part of Romaiosyne, while the other nation-states formed in the Balkans in the nineteenth century included other parts of it. It goes then without saying that Romanides and the theologians influenced by him clearly differentiated between nation and the state. National ideology is seen as a primary evil, as, for Romanides, it constituted a Western tool used to manipulate the small and weak nation-states in the Balkans and the Middle East. The rejection of national ideologies by the council of Constantinople in 1872, on the occasion of the Bulgarian schism, allowed Romanides's followers to view national ideology as an ecclesiological heresy (Metallinos 1983. Metallinos 1986, 227-58. Vlachos 1996, 212-7. Vlachos 2002, 125-244).

The denunciation of national ideology and the distinction between nation and state would have led Romanides and his followers to disapprove, as Tsirindanes had earlier done, of the close bond between Church and state. However, what motivates Romanides's and his followers's thought is their idealisation of Romaiosyne, the Byzantine past. Byzantium was characterised by a close bond between Church and state described as *symphonia* (agreement) or *synallelia* (togetherness), based, according to Romanides, on the acknowledgement by the state of the therapeutic role of the Church. The state, thus, protected the Church. The Church, in return, supported the state and promoted political and social stability. This ideal, for Romanides, is the state of affairs that needs to be restored in the modern Greek nation-state. Once more, the concept of separation is viewed as an alien Western phenomenon, by Romanides and his followers, which Westerners and their 'puppets' in Greece (politicians and pro-Western thinkers) try to impose on  the Greek people. Evidently, such views want the Church free from any kind of state control, and the state willing to succumb to ecclesiastical demands (Metallinos 2000, 38-41,55-71. Zeses 1994, 94. Zeses 2006).

As a result, for Romanides and his followers, the return to the idealised Byzantine past, where the Church was respected as a cure for the sickness of the soul, constitutes a necessity. Apart from the fact that one can maintain important doubts as to whether this view is historically correct, the effort to identify the Orthodox theology with the entity of Romaiosyne constitutes a problematic suggestion both historically and theologically. Historically, Orthodox theology influenced at times peoples and cultures beyond the limits of Romaiosyne. Moroever, it is not possible theologically to identify the theology of the Church, let alone 'the earthly realisation of the kingdom of God', i.e. the Church (Zeses 1994, 85), with any earthly political or social entity. This is so because the Church is characterised by an ecumenical and eschatological perspective. Thus, Romanides's historical argumentation seems theologically unjustified. Since Romaiosyne does not exist anymore as a political entity, the devotion of Romanides and his followers necessarily turns to the Greek nation and its features (Greek culture, Greek traditions, Greek language and so forth), as well as the Greek motherland. Any reform advancing the

modernisation and secularisation of the state is considered negative, for it escapes the model of the return to the idealised past of Romaiosyne. The rejected narrow national ideology of the modern Greek nation-state thus returns via the backdoor as nationalism for the supposedly broader Romaiosyne, despite Vlachos's contrary suggestions (Kalaitzidis 2012a, 87-8. Psomas 2011, 26-35; cf. Vlachos 1996, 186). The idealisation of Romaiosyne recalls also what will be described below[15] as *chosenness*, or what Kalaitzidis describes as 'the temptation of Judas' (Kalaitzidis 2002b, 357-79. Kalaitzidis 2009, 450). Contrary to Romanides, Vlachos was one of his supporters that attempted a theological approach to national ideology, based on its incompatibility with the principles expressed in the New Testament (Vlachos 1996, 217-25). Kamberides expressed himself more clearly as he criticised Jewish chosenness as an idea, which neglects the fact that for God all humans are strangers and sojourners (Kamberides 2006, 47).

The nationalism of Romaiosyne in either a moderate form (e.g. for Vlachos), or in more extreme patterns (e.g. for Zeses), is deeply intertwined in modern Greece with the people's inclination towards monastic spirituality (Yangazoglou 2009, 618-23). The elders that enjoy popular admiration, due to their spirituality, are often understood as prophets foreseeing the future of the Greek nation and the Greek motherland. Elder Paisios the Athonite (1924-94) is the most well known such example. His alleged *prophecies* about the Greek nation appear timidly in the first books published posthumously about him (Angeloglou 1994, 209-12. Tatses 1995, 217-8. Isaac 2004, 316,697-704). Progressively, however, the became almost dominant (Zournatzoglou 2015, 1:397-455. 2:369-87). The nationalism of Romaiosyne, especially in its more conservative forms, and the alleged national prophecies have led to a new form of national ideology in modern Greece, containing a religious element.

1.3.1.2.2. The Gospel incarnated: Hellenism as cultural-philosophical category

The idealised view of Byzantium, brought to the fore by Romanides, influenced other scholars of the generation of the '60s, such as Yannaras (b.1935) and Gontikakes (b.1935). They too did not analyse the notion of the nation systematically and did not concentrate on nationalism studies. They evaluated the importance of the distinct Orthodox theological tradition and promoted it. Kamberides, on the other hand, followed the same line of thought, despite making his contribution on a more theological level, as he based his approach on the notion of *alienation*.[16] Identity issues are not entirely connected with nations, motherlands and the like, but with the alienation of people from God. It is characteristic that Kamberides understands motherland as the land where the people live as sojourners (Kamberides 2006, 12-5,71-2).

Deeply influenced by Florovsky's idea about Hellenism as the eternal category of Christianity, Yannaras and Gontikakes turned their attention to Hellenism as a cultural entity and

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[15] See chapter 2.1.2.2.

[16] Inspired by an ecclesiastical hymn of the Orthodox service of matins of Holy Saturday, which refers to Christ as the 'alien' or 'foreigner' for humans, the concept recalls that for theology humans remain foreign or alien to this world belonging to the future kingdom of God (Kamberides 2006, 49-53,66-7).

philosophical category, what Yannaras termed the 'flesh of Christ's Gospel' (Yannaras 2001b, 82-3; cf. Gontikakes 2001, 61-4). Yannaras wrote extensively on identity issues through both books and his weekly newspaper articles, while Gontikakes expressed his thoughts in only few rather short studies (Gontikakes 1999. Gontikakes 2000. Gontikakes 2001.[17] Gontikakes 2002. Yannaras 1983. Yannaras 2001a. Yannaras 2001b. Yannaras 2003. Yannaras 2007).[18] In their effort to oppose the *Western* influences on the academic and para-ecclesiastical theology, Yannaras and Gontikakes stressed the importance of the distinctive Orthodox tradition drawing heavily on Romanides's historical insights.

Yannaras and Gontikakes emphasised the continuity of the Greek language and culture. For them, this continuity was secured by Romaiosyne as a cultural entity, in the framework of which Orthodox theology developed. This theology - distinctive from, and superior to, its Western counterpart - constitutes essentially the continuation of ancient Greek philosophy and art, as it provided answers for the quests of ancient Greek thought. This is why Christianity was embraced by Hellenism. The latter, as a result, became the cultural flesh acquired by Christianity, the way that Christianity appeared in the world and expressed itself. The New Testament is a Greek book, while the fundamental teachings of the Christian Church were expressed with the use of Greek philosophical terminology. This happened precisely because the Greek culture and philosophy were able to understand the meaning of life, the important existential message that Christianity brought to the world. This is why, for Yannaras, to be a Christian is to become a *Greek* in the cultural sense of the word. If one fails to become a Greek, one fails to become a Christian too. 'Barbarian tribes and races', who did not comprehend the sophisticated Hellenic Christianity of the East, overwhelmed the West from the fifth century onwards. The schism between East and West was then inevitable; Christians of the West adhered to the Church Councils, but interpreted them in a non-Greek and, therefore, heretical way. It is very suggestive that, for Yannaras, Christian mission in other continents constitutes a problem, as it is doubtful whether people in the Far East or Africa are able to comprehend the essentially Hellenic Christianity (Yannaras 2003, 11-7).

However, Yannaras's and Gontikakes's Hellenism, even in the above extreme version, remains a cultural entity, the eternal philosophical category of Christianity. It does not imply any kind of national ideology. To comprehend Yannaras's rejection of national ideology, it is necessary to turn to his distinction between *national* and *cultural* identity. The national identity consists of common elements, such as language or religion or race, but it does not necessarily imply the existence of a dynamic and distinctive culture; it maintains national folklore only for preserving collective memory and social cohesion. The cultural identity, on the other hand, constitutes a way of life, the meaning, that is, that people give to existence and life, the criteria they set for prioritising their needs, the way they set their norms or make politics. The

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[17] This book, originally issued in Greek by the Holy Community of Mount Athos, is attributed to Gontikakes (Kalaitzidis 2009, 456. Kalaitzidis 2012a, 78,f.75).

[18] For criticism on Yannaras see Kalaitzidis 2009, 479-513. Kalaitzidis 2010a, 393-408. Kalaitzidis 2012a, 60-77. Kalaitzidis 2013a, 144-60. On Gontikakes see Yannaras 2007, 297-9. Kalaitzidis 2009, 453-78. Kalaizides 2012, 77-80.

internationally highly esteemed Greek culture has nothing to do, for Yannaras, with the modern national Greek identity, but with the significance of the Greek culture, which gives meaning to life and prioritises needs (Yannaras 2001b, 27-30; cf. Gontikakes 2001, passim). Modern Western culture has misinterpreted the Greek one, as the latter was understood only in terms of the ancient Greek legacy. The continuity established by the Orthodox legacy of Romaiosyne was wrongly neglected. Thus, for Yannaras, as for Romanides, the modern Greek nation-state, which imitated the West and adopted its national ideologies, harms Hellenism as a cultural entity.

Moreover, the Church of Greece - together with the other national Churches in Orthodoxy - which has succumbed to national ideology contradicts the catholicity of the Church. Yannaras is, therefore, adopting the view that national ideology constitutes a heresy, which harms the Church's ecumenicity (Yannaras 1968, 42-9,107-9. Yannaras 2001b, 109-20,158-68. Yannaras 2007, 157-92; cf. Bartzis 2013, 4,7). For Yannaras, only the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul) maintains today the importance of Hellenism as 'the Greek cultural flesh of the ecclesial event', the Hellenism of theology, worship, and art that represent the historical flesh of the 'global ecclesial hope' (Yannaras 2001b, 207; cf. Kamberides 2006, 73-9,81-7).

Despite Yannaras's analyses of nationalism and the nation-state it is clear that Yannaras, together with Gonikakes, favours the model of the continuity of cultural Hellenism (Gontikakes 2001, passim. Yannaras 2001b, 49-105; cf. Kamberides 2006, 81-2), a model that often obscures ideas of catholicity and ecumenicity. How catholic and ecumenical is a Church that requires its members to adjust to a certain cultural paradigm and fails to absorb other cultures, peoples, and nations (Gounelas 1997, 358)? Is the Church, thus, bound with Hellenism or bound by Hellenism? It is evident that despite the explicit condemnation of national ideology by Yannaras, both Yannaras's and Gontikakes's ideas can lead to dangerous paths, harming the mission of the Church to the world, its catholicity, and ecumenicity, while tacitly, and perhaps unwillingly, encouraging conservative trends.[19]

It comes then as no surprise - considering both trends within the *Hellenorthodox* approach - that international events, involving Orthodox peoples, such as the War of Yugoslavia (Bulovich 1993. Zervos 1993),[20] or, more recently, the Civil War in Syria are viewed through this nationalism of Romaiosyne or the superiority of cultural Hellenism. It is, therefore, important to be cautious with, as Evaggelos Bartzis pointed out, 'Romaiosyne as a political entity, the return to Christian Hellenism as a cultural model, and the retrieval of a monastic spirituality ...' (Bartzis 2013, 9). At any rate, the modern global developments of multiculturalism and immigration caused new responses to the issue at hand.

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[19] This said, it is necessary to point out that analyses, which view Yannaras's ideas as close to fundamentalism, comparable with similar trends in modern Islam and Judaism (Kalaitzidis 2009, 509-10. Kalaitzidis 2012a, 89-99), are considered here overstatements, which do not do justice to him.

[20] For an interesting dialogue between Orthodox Christians of Western Europe and an Orthodox Serbian bishop see Cleman et al. 1993 and Yevtich 1993.

1.3.1.3. Theology and (post-)modernity

In recent years, a modernisation process has been initiated within the theological milieu. A new generation of scholars matured in the framework of a changing Greece, part of the European Union since 1981. The sense of constituting part of a community of free and democratic states caused an optimism among Greeks, which allowed them to think in ways different from, and critical towards, the past. Influenced by the European reality of the promotion of human rights, particularly the rights of minorities, and endorsing multiculturalism, they formed their ideas by criticising nationalism and national ideology (cf. Tsetsis 2004, 148-58), the very notion of the *nation*, and the strong interconnection between Church and state. On the other hand, they accused the Church hierarchy of abandoning its own evangelical foundations.

Many of these modern theologians have based their ideas on the thought of John Zizioulas (b.1931), an influential Orthodox thinker. Though Zizioulas did not develop a concrete theology of nations and nationalism, his core concepts concerning the eschatological dimension of Orthodox theology (and its relation with history), the importance of the catholicity of the Church (universality and locality), the otherness of the human person (human freedom) and the Eucharist as the 'identity of the Church' were extensively used, by other scholars, for the formation of their ideas on nations and nationalism (cf. Kalaitzidis 2010a, 388-93,417). Probably the most important of these scholars, who worked on nations/nationalism and the nation-state, is Panteles Kalaitzidis (b.1961). Kalaitzidis's major contribution, in this respect, is that he used theology, especially in its biblical roots, to scrutinise and analyse the notion of *nation* and the phenomenon of nationalism or Church-state relations. Moreover, he is the first Greek theologian, who examined and analysed the case of, in the words of Anthony Smith (whom Kalaitzidis sadly ignores), politicisation or nationalisation of religion, which he described as 'the temptation of Judas' (Kalaitzidis 2002b, 357-79).[21]

There were, moreover, some more scholars who also expressed their thoughts on nationality issues, such as Loudovikos, Papathanasiou or Pinakoulas, whose thought will be presented below, but, despite their brilliant ideas, their work is rather scattered and fragmented. They mostly expressed their views in the three-monthly journal *Synaxis*, the sole journal in Greece that gives the opportunity to scholars to respond to modern theological, political, social, even financial, issues. More specifically, modern Greek theologians expressed their views in response to modern developments in Greece, such as Church-state relations (1988, 2000-1), modern issues concerning migration and refugees, and the rise of the extreme right in the political milieu of the country.

As was mentioned above, Kalaitzidis - perhaps more than anybody - built on Zizioulas's theology extensively in his attempt to develop his theological ideas concerning nations and nationalism. He did so by concentrating primarily on the importance of eschatology for the understanding of the ecclesial community and the world at large. Kalaitzidis, and others that followed Zizioulas's way of thinking, blamed the Orthodox Church for its interconnection with

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[21] Anthony Smith's relevant views will be discussed in chapter 2.1 of this thesis.

the nation and the nation-state, as this-worldly realities. For them, the Church has thereby abandoned its theological essence, while neglecting its eschatological orientation (Arkadas 2001, 89. Kalaitzidis 2002b, 357-79; cf. Nikolaides 2006, 204). In a theological-eschatological perspective, the individual's real motherland is the *Upper Jerusalem*, the anticipated Kingdom of God, while the term *nation* refers to the eschatological community, i.e. the Church. This reality emanated from the New Testament and the early Church (Kalaitzidis 2003, 341-50,352-4. Kalaitzidis 2005a, 52-64; cf. Arkadas 2001, 91. Loudovikos 2012, 132). It is precisely in the Church that human divisions, which are the results of the original sin and the subsequent fall of humanity, are overcome. God's creation is characterised by unity and harmony; it is the original sin and the subsequent fall which cause division and conflict. This is why humans are called to re-unite, as Pentecost implies (Acts 2:1-13). The entire world is, thus, united in the body of Christ, of which all humans are invited to partake, as the Eucharistic experience is of fundamental importance to the Church, constituting a form of realisation of the eschatological anticipation (Kalaitzidis 2003, 363-5; cf. Kalaitzidis-Asproulis 2012, 70-5. Nikolaides 2006, 205. Papathanasiou 2008b, 58-9. Papathanasiou 2010a, 4-5. Pinakoulas 2001, 38-9).

The above view is not as clear as it seems at first glance. Indeed, nations remain historical realities and a Church so close to human society as the Orthodox Church cannot overlook this. An eschatology that refutes history seems alien to the Christian tradition at large, the Orthodox included. Besides, the Church has been nationalised to such a degree, that it seems to have forsaken the unity in Christ, preferring the divisions of human current fallen status.[22] As a result, for the scholars influenced by the thought of John Zizioulas, eschatology does not refute history but gives a meaning to it. This is something that Orthodoxy often neglects, deeply intertwined as it is with history and this-worldliness (Kalaitzidis 2002b, 374-5; cf. Arkadas 2001, 91-4. Thermos 2001, 86-7).

This interconnection of the Church with history, rather than eschatology, is to be found at the core of a phenomenon against which modern theologians turn their (often harsh) criticism: the strong Church-state ties. This issue has caused much discussion in Greece among scholars, as well as politicians. Contributing to this discourse, modern theologians criticised the Church hierarchy for failing to adapt itself to modern changes and respond to modern reality. A distinction concerning the phases of Church-state relations has been suggested: the *local* phase of early Christianity, when the Church was not at all intertwined with the pagan Roman emperors, the *imperial* phase, when the Church was intertwined with the Christian Roman (Byzantine) emperors, and the *national* phase, when the Church was intertwined with the nation-state, following the Byzantine example (cf. Thermos 2001, 75. Loudovikos 2012, 132), becoming a national Church. This modern inclination towards the Byzantine example indicates a refusal of the modern Orthodox Church to part from temporal authority, as is evident from certain features of the ecclesiastical sermon, which often refer to the golden age of the imperial past of the Church (cf. Thermos 2001, 76-7). In the current modernised and globalised world,

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[22] Worse still, according to Loudovikos, political theologies supporting the interconnection between the Church and the imperial authority constitute a dangerous form of historisation of the Christian eschatology, which easily justifies totalitarianism (Loudovikos 2012, 137-8).

where multiculturalism develops rapidly, the Church refuses to adapt, remaining unswervingly loyal to the recent past and the close Church-state ties. It, thus, not only loses its capacity to change the world, but also anachronistically refuses to be creatively changed by the world. As a result, the state is progressively denationalised, while the Church is progressively more nationalised (Arkadas 2001, 94-6. Kalaitzidis 2002b, 357-79. Kalaitzidis 2005a, 68-71. Kalaitzidis 2005b, 10-1. Kalaitzidis 2013b, 479-501. Kalaitzidis-Asproulis 2012, 75-8. Metallinos 1987, 15-8. Metallinos et al. 1987, 23-4. Thermos 2001, 79-80,82-3,85-6. Ziakas 2000, 78-9; cf. Ramiotes 2000, 65-7).

Orthodox prelates have often resisted any Church-state separation attempt, in an effort to avoid the secularisation of society. By considering the Byzantine past as the ideal to which Greece has to return, modern Orthodox hierarchs envisage the return to a pre-modern reality. This obviously leads to an unrealistic refusal of modernity. The maintenance of strong Church-state ties secures the conservation, as it were, of a pre-modern reality and prevents the secularisation of Greek society. What really happens, however, according to modern Greek theologians, is exactly the opposite: intertwined with the modern secular state, the Church is itself secularised. Within this secular framework 'instead of understanding the national through the ecclesial, the Church understands the ecclesial through the national: the Church is identified with the nation and the ecclesial with the national identity and national life' (Kalaitzidis-Asproulis 2012, 77). As a result, the Church-state separation constitutes an imperative need (Agourides 2000, 69-71. Arkadas 2001, 89-97. Gounelas 2000, 89-94. Konidaris 2000, 51-7. Kyriakides 2000, 95-7. Loudovikos 2012, 132-7. Metallinos et al. 1987, 24. Petrou 2000, 28. Thermos 2001, 76; cf. Kitromilides 2004, 183-8).[23]

As will be suggested below,[24] the modern world has experienced a return to religion. Many modern Orthodox thinkers believe that Orthodoxy should not endorse the modern return of religion, as it has nothing to do with its theological essence; it rather constitutes an effort to replace secular ideologies with religious ones. This phenomenon leads to the formation of a new national ideology with strong religious bedrock or even a violent fundamentalism (Kalaitzidis 2005a, 71-2. Kalitzides-Asproulis 2012, 81-2. Kamberides 2007. Papathanasiou 2013, 23-37. Thermos 2001, 74. Zoumboulakes 2013a, Zoumboulakes 2013b). It is necessary not only to return to the theological biblical, patristic and canonical principles of the Orthodox tradition, but also to follow a necessary process of modernisation, an adaptation to the modern context. A mere return to the pre-modern local or imperial ecclesiological paradigms does not suffice to provide an ecclesiological paradigm in the modern globalised world. Thinking only in terms of nations and nationalities, the Orthodox Church seems unable to put its relationship with society into the modern framework of multiculturalism. Kalaitzidis, for instance, often underlines the fact that

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[23] Modern theologians thus agree with, though they persistently ignore, Tsirindanes in observing that the state possesses the monopoly of legitimate physical violence (cf. Weber 1978, 54), whereas the Church renounces violence altogether (cf. Kalaitzidis 2005b, 9-10). For others, the separation is a more complex issue that ignores important canonical and legislative considerations (Ramiotes 2000, 58-68). Alternative view in Ziakas 2000, 72-9.

[24] See chapter 2.1.2.4.

Orthodoxy did not meet modernity, so that it is now impossible for it to meet post-modernity. He poses the question: 'did Orthodoxy stop (its evolution) before modernity?' (Kalaitzidis 2007a, passim. Kalaitzidis 2007b, 79-166). For Kalaitzidis, it did indeed. In this respect he attempted to give another interpretation to the term *identity*, which is often used in order to fit Orthodoxy into the national framework - Orthodoxy constitutes essential part of Greek national identity. Thus, Kalaitzidis suggests that *to identify* does not only mean *to recognise*, but also *to be closely connected* or *to coincide*. In this line of thought, identity does not distinguish humans, but rather unites them. The theology of unity allows the Church to understand identity in a new way, more compatible to the modern globalised world (Kalaitzidis 2004, 95-7. Kalaitzidis 2013b, 479-501).

Probably the most important symptom of this reality is the politicisation/ nationalisation/ etatisation of the Church, as it was termed by modern nationalism scholars, such as Anthony Smith (Smith 2000, 799; cf. Brubaker 2012, 8-12). This constitutes Kalaitzidis's most essential contribution in the pertinent discourse in Greece, though Kalaitzidis, apparently, has no knowledge of Smith's contribution.[25] For Kalaitzidis, the Orthodox Church today has succumbed to the 'temptation of Judas'. This idea, in Kalaitzidis's mind, stems from an interpretation that sees Judas's actions against Jesus as based on national criteria. The latter did not use his extraordinary powers to defeat the Romans and restore the kingdom of David. What happened to Judas was a distortion of soteriological criteria. In other words, Judas's priorities were national-political rather than theological-soteriological. Jesus was to establish a Heavenly Kingdom for all men and not merely an earthly kingdom only for Jews. According to Kalaitzidis, modern Orthodoxy suffers from the same distortion of soteriological criteria. The history of divine economy, i.e. the history of the salvation of humanity, gave way to the history of the national awakening (or renaissance). In a striking example - Kalaitzidis uses many more - Greeks celebrate the anniversary of their 1821 Revolution together with the religious feast of the Annunciation on 25 March. Thus, the Orthodox Church, in its effort to combine religion and politics, eventually conceives its role in society in a national-political, rather than theological, way. It looks towards the nation and not towards the Gospel (Kalaitzidis 2002b, 358,364-5,370-1. Kalaitzidis 2003, 373. Kalaitzidis 2005a, 64-8. Kalaitzidis-Asproulis 2012, 69,76-7). Kalaitzidis observes that Christ, and therefore the Church, referred to the individual and not to collectivities, such as the nation. Christ does not save nations, but human beings. By introducing collectivities in its sermon, the Church initiated features that the original kerygma of Christ and the apostles did not have (Kalaitzidis 2005a, 74-8. Kalaitzidis-Asproulis 2012, 84).

It is within this framework of the distortion of criteria that modern theologians view modern nationalism as paganism, a point especially interesting for this thesis. Nationalism became the *god of modernity*, developing a rather peculiar adoration for the ancestors. By becoming intertwined with nationalism, the Orthodox Church succumbed to this form of paganism (Kalaitzidis 2002b, 362. Kalaitzidis 2003, 372-3. Loudovikos 2012, 131,142. Metallinos et al. 1987, 24,29. Thermos 2001, 74. Tsetsis 2006, 260-3). Unfortunately, modern Orthodox theologians have examined this aspect of nationalism as a form of paganism at times without

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[25] See chapter 2.2.

analysing it and attempting to locate its consequences for the Church. Few scholars have tried to move a step forward (cf. Nikolaides 2006, 199-212) and mostly through a criticism of old (Moschos 2013, 38-46) or modern forms (Papathanasiou 2013, 23-33) of national socialism. Apparently, it is within the limits of national socialism that this paganism became obvious as never before.

Based on these main theological lines, other theologians, more independent from Zizioulas's eschatological-Eucharistic perspective, expanded their thinking to more areas of Orthodox practice. They cared, for instance, for the much debated issue of the liturgical language of the Church, supporting the gradual or entire replacement of ancient by modern Greek. They accused national ideology of preventing the development of the missionary dimension of Orthodoxy. They expressed a fierce criticism of the use of theological or ecclesiastical argumentation for the justification of war. They questioned the issue of the balance between locality, as opposed to the catholicity, ecumenicity and globalism of the Church. They scrutinised the importance of culture and tradition for the Church and the extent to which these elements can influence Orthodox theology. They attempted a purely theological approach - away from political or nationally sentimental considerations - on the burning modern issue of migration and the arrival of refugees in Greece from war-torn countries. Finally, they attempted to evaluate and theologically criticise the modern nationalistic and neo-fascist inclinations of the Christian flock in Greece. Through all these approaches, they attempted to use theology in order to respond to modern challenges, criticising and persistently rejecting nationalism, national ideology, and racism (Nikolaides 2006. Papathanasiou 2008a. Papathanasiou 2008b. Papathanasiou 2010b, 866-74. Pinakoulas 2001, 36-50. Thermos 2001, 36-50. Tsetsis 2006).

These theologians attempted, for first time in Greece, to scrutinise and theologically evaluate the nationality issues in theological terms. Purely theological criteria - such as Eucharist, eschatology, the human person and its freedom as well as catholicity - were brought to the fore. Moreover, for the first time, important aspects of the ecclesial life - such as the liturgical language, mission, self-criticism and the discourse on modernity - were discussed. The criticism of the past theological schools of thought is thus proved to be of paramount importance.

Their views, however, remain fragmented, scattered in different works. None of them, with the exception of Kalaitzidis, has attempted to present a systematic work on the issue. Even Kalaitzidis seems to concentrate his efforts in criticising other thinkers rather than systematising his own views in a concrete body - he is critical rather than constructive. Much of his thinking has been mobilised by his, often harsh, criticism of the works of the *Hellenorthodox* thinkers, mainly Romanides, Yannaras and Gontikakes (Kalaitzidis 2010b, 249-76).

The modern Greek theologians remain largely ignorant – apart partly from Tsetsis – of the contemporary path-breaking Anglo-Saxon literature on nationality issues, which will be examined later in this thesis,[26] so that their otherwise acute observations are not well grounded nor

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[26] See chapter 2.

sufficiently analysed. For instance, Kalaitzidis's views on the 'temptation of Judas' would be better shaped and expressed if they were contextualised within the thought of modern scholars, such as Adrian Hastings and Anthony Smith. This is also the reason why Kalaitzidis never attempts to define the terms that he uses, such as nation, nationalism-patriotism (he condemns both: Kalaitzidis-Asproulis 2012, 69), and the nation-state or to distinguish between them. In a striking example, Kalaitzidis refers to the fourth-century thirty-fourth canon of the Apostles and the use of the term *nation* made there, and he rejects the modern understanding of the notion in its pre-modern context, without however suggesting an alternative understanding. Even worse, Kalaitzidis contradicts himself when he considers modern nations as products of the Biblical and pre-modern Babel (Kalaitzidis 2003, 368-9,371-2). In other words, he considers nations modern phenomena, but he uses the same term to refer to pre-modern similar entities.

Many of the modern Orthodox thinkers affirm the modern changes that globalisation causes - some of them without expressing the necessary criticism - and seek for a way for Orthodoxy to adapt to (post-)modernity. This argument, however, has certain disadvantages. First, ideas criticising Orthodoxy for not adapting to modernity, expressed mainly by Kalaitzides (cf. Kalaitzides 2007a, passim), view Orthodoxy and modernity unevenly. Orthodoxy enters the comparison with a handicap: as a pre-modern religion it constitutes the weak party and is required to meet the needs of modernity. Any failure to do this makes it irrelevant for the modern world. It may be, however, that what Orthodoxy can offer nowadays is precisely its criticism to modernity. The nation-state, on the other hand, and its nationalism are indeed modern phenomena. If Orthodoxy is accused for being intertwined with the state, being particularly prone to modern nationalism, it should necessarily follow that Orthodoxy has successfully adapted to modernity. To be accused for being nationalist and for failing to adapt to modernity simultaneously is a rather contradictory point. As far as globalisation is concerned, the ideas expressed above seem to neglect the fact that globalisation is exactly what modern societies, or parts of them, often resist. They also ignore modern thinkers, who believe that 'democratic opinion- and will-formation' was secure within the nation-state, the only political entity able to guarantee the 'already achieved level of justice and freedom', while calling for the transformation rather than the abolition of the nation-state (cf. Habermas 1998, 111-27. Habermas 2015, 29-62. Kondylis 2011, 71-86).

Finally, the significance of eschatology in the thought of Zizioulas's followers results to a rather un-historical way of approaching the issue of nations and nationalism. This is probably because of the fact that it is exactly eschatology that is neglected and overlooked in dealing with nationality issues. However, this form of eschatology-monism has certain implications. It is often repeated, by modern scholars, that nations should be overcome within the Church, but no explanation is given as to what this means exactly and why the Church is intertwined with nationalism from the first place.

Nicholas Loudovikos constitutes an exception to the above scholars. In an article written in 2012 he worked thoroughly on the issue of nations and nationalism from a theological point of view. He endeavoured to study and criticise the current socio-historical views on nations and

nationalism and not only those developed in the Anglo-Saxon literature (e.g. Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, or Anthony Smith), but also the Greek one (he is significantly influenced by Contogeorgis). He concluded that, despite modern changes, national identity keeps influencing the modern world enormously. Loudovikos also criticises the above theological views, which he terms *ethno-nihilistic*, and their source, that is Zizioulas's theological considerations, though he seems to reject nationalistic theological viewpoints too. However, by rejecting Zizioulas's eschatological understanding and the negative - towards nationalism - attitude adopted by his followers, Loudovikos suggests a differentiation between a positive and a negative aspect of national ideology. The positive aspect 'offers the possibility of a community to the separated individuals of the modern state, without losing individuality. The negative aspect has to do with the idolisation of nation, and of national collective self', which leads to 'totalitarianisms and aggressive nationalisms'. What he obviously has in mind here is the example of Nazi Germany, where the ancestors, the motherland, and the nation's psyche were worshipped in a rather pagan way. This differentiation creates the need to interpret the aggression of the negative aspect of national ideology and explore ways to endorse its positive aspect, which is seemingly not an easy task to achieve. He finds totalitarianism and aggression at the core of western Christianity and uses Horkheimer and, more importantly, Lacan to interpret it. On the other hand, he suggests a theology of 'national charismata' in order to affirm the positive aspect of national ideology and achieve the ecclesisation of nations (Loudovikos 2012, 135-6,138-46).

Loudovikos's ideas are, without doubt, genuinely original. Contogeorgis's influence and the rejection of a point of view altogether negative towards nations is a line of thought that seems to be on the right path, as will be suggested below. However, the differentiation of two forms of national ideology seems to be a problematic one. There are many forms of community for humans and Loudovikos does not sufficiently explain why the nation should be taken so seriously from the point of view of theology. Moreover, in terms of theology, no other community beyond the Church is of ontological importance for the people of God. If the Church then suffices, there is no reason whatsoever to *ecclesise* the nations. Theologically, humans find their *we* aspect in the Church; they do not need to seek for it elsewhere. In order to understand this, it is necessary to think in biblical and patristic terms: neither Christ nor the apostles nor the Fathers referred to any form of salvation of humans through nations. It is the Church that plays this significant role and Loudovikos does not seem to take any note of this. Thus, it seems difficult - if not impossible - to speak about national charismata; only the charismata of the human nature and the distinctive charismata of each human hypostasis possess any real meaning in theology. It seems that Loudovikos goes too far with the affirmation of nations and a positive aspect of national ideology, though his thought seems to offer an interesting, original and important contribution.

If theology, in its eschatological perspective, refutes the importance of nations and other this-worldly realities, why did it become so closely intertwined with them? Why did theology not suffice to prevent the Church from such an undesirable development? On the other hand, if nations and nationalism can be theologically affirmed, how far can this go in order to safeguard

the essence of Orthodox theology? There are modern thinkers that have placed their thought on exactly these lines; their work will be examined immediately below. Though they do not belong entirely to the Orthodox and Greek framework of this study, they should be examined separately, for they examine precisely the issues that concern this thesis.

### 1.3.2. Other works on nationality issues and theology

This review on literature has so far revealed a shortage of an Orthodox concrete theology on nations and nationalism, despite the scattered and fragmented contributions presented above, at least as far as Greek Orthodoxy is concerned. This observation, however, does not seem to constitute an Orthodox feature only. Indeed, Christian theologians do not tend to turn their attention to nationality issues. Theological reflexes do not seem to respond to such challenges coming from political science, sociology and history. There are very few responses to the rise of national ideology and the nation-states in the nineteenth - early twentieth centuries. Before approaching those responses, it has to be noted that they came from the main Western European forms of Christianity, i.e. Roman Catholicism and various forms of Protestantism.

As far as the first is concerned, it is natural to see the Church opposing nationalism and national ideology, for Roman Catholicism has always viewed national ideology as a force threatening its unity, doubting its universality, attempting to suppress its independence within the framework of the nation-state. Historically, the Roman Catholic Church attempted to prevent the expansion of nationalism. Indeed, the Papal States constituted a serious impediment for Italian unification (cf. Breuilly 1994, 96-115). It comes then as no surprise that the English historian and political thinker John Dalberg-Acton (1834-1902), a devout Catholic, became a staunch critic of what he called 'nationality theory', the theory that understands the nation as coterminous with the state. Neither Acton nor the Catholic Church seemed to consider nations as modern constructs and did not turn against the very existence of nations. Nationality theory, in Acton's terms, is what threatens the unity of the Church and tends to suppress its independence. Acton developed his ideas on the 'absurdity' or 'insanity' of nationality as part of his magnum opus, the *History of Freedom*. Nationality theory, for him, constitutes a form of freedom restriction (Acton 1949, 166-95; cf. Lang 2002, 129-49).

On the other hand, different forms of Protestant theology have been proved to be more nationality-friendly. Indeed, it was the Reformation that gave an impetus to the development of vernaculars and advocated nations and national identities.[27] It comes then as no surprise that liberal Protestant theologians, of various denominations, advocated nationalism and national ideology, as it happened, for instance in Prussia (cf. Fichte 2008, 195) and Denmark, where references to divine providence played a significant role in nationalist rhetoric. In a more extreme line of thought, the German National Church advocated nationalist and anti-Semitic policies in Nazi Germany.[28] However, this nationality-friendly Protestant environment did not prevent the emergence of robust Protestant thinkers, who fiercely criticised nationalism and

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[27] See chapter 2.2.3.

[28] See chapter 3.4.

national ideology. Given that in the nineteenth century the national movements were interconnected with liberalism and the demand for representation, the critical voice of the Danish Lutheran philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55) seems a prodigious voice of a solitary genius. In the twentieth century, in the light of the World Wars, criticism of nationalism and national ideology, such as that voiced by the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968), seems more natural, though it turned against the totalitarian regimes of the Mid-War era not without consequences.

Søren Kierkegaard's approach criticised that slide to national ideology which characterised the Lutheran theologians of his time. Kierkegaard's work on national ideology was brought recently to the fore by the seminal work of Stephen Backhouse (Backhouse 2011). Karl Barth, influenced by Kierkegaard, responded to Nazi nationalism. Again, Barth's contribution was brought to the fore by the important work of Carys Moseley (Moseley 2013a). These two modern authors, Backhouse and Moseley, expressed their modern views on nations and nationalism based on the work of Kierkegaard and Barth respectively; their views will be presented here as modern Protestant responses to nationality issues, together with that of Nigel Biggar (1955-). The latter's work has expanded to areas that do not concern this thesis, but his account of what is a nation interests this thesis greatly.

The modern Roman Catholic response to nationalism and national ideology was not based on Acton and does not seem to be as negative to *nationality theory* or opposed to the nation-state as Acton was. This modern Catholic response is Dorian Llywelyn's effort to form a Catholic theology of nationality. He initially wrote with a focus on Christianity and nationalism in Wales (Llywelyn 1999), but later attempted a more theological approach (Llywelyn 2010), which is interesting here.

From an Orthodox point of view, two approaches have appeared recently, both of them from theologians originating outside the traditionally Orthodox countries. The first was written by the American theologian Daniel Payne (Payne 2011) and the second by the Canadian Alexander Tefft, whose work remains unpublished (Tefft 2010). Payne's and Tefft's contributions will be considered separately, as they do not belong to the Greek theological framework. The works, of the above Christian scholars will be critically presented below.

### 1.3.2.1. Protestant approaches

Backhouse's book concentrates on Kierkegaard's response to the nationalistic theologies propounded by theologians of the Church of Denmark, such as Hans Martensen (1808-84) and Nicholas Grundtvig (1783-1872). Backhause approaches his subject not only through Kierkegaard's own theological project but also through modern theories on nationalism, and religious nationalism in particular. Apparently, Backhouse turns to Kierkegaard's thought in order to understand theologically and criticise modern Christian nationalism. According to him, Kierkegaard's critique of Christian nationalism seems to rest chiefly on anthropology as it opposes the idea 'first human-then Christian' (the priority of the group over the individual or, to put it differently, the 'culture-relation' over the 'God-relation') that led Grundtvig to believe

that nations, like individuals, are related to God and to each other in a way that prioritises national identity over the faith (Backhouse 2011, 90). Nationalist theologians believed that God's revelation is expressed through national cultures. Kierkegaard, on the contrary, believed that God meets the individual in a historical context. Although, however, such contexts necessarily change over time, the essentials of the human condition do not: 'each person faces the same task (i.e. to meet God) no matter when or where they are situated' (Backhouse 2011, 127). The individual exists primarily as a being in communion with God and is not based on a group or a nation. Christ's command for one to love one's neighbour precludes national love in the sense that a neighbour is the 'very first' individual that one meets after opening one's door to the world (Backhouse 2011, 196-7). Love for the neighbour, any neighbour, is the Christian model of social relations, for Kierkegaard. The model of the Church, therefore, is a communion of neighbours, a neighbourhood, rather than a congregation. This model necessarily transcends the model of the nation-state, which is restricted to fellow nationals (Backhouse, 2011, 208-10,218. Backhouse 2013, 56-7).

In an effort to criticise the above views it is necessary to point out that Christianity, since its very beginning, was organised in communities. For Danish nationalist theologians a nation is the ultimate form of community. Churches, therefore, should be national Churches. Each Church community should include a certain nation only. The importance Christianity ascribes to community was thus used by Danish theologians in order to cloak their nationalism. Indeed, Kierkegaard actively unmasked this attempt by stressing the *neighbourhood* concept to demonstrate the fact that the only devotion established in the Gospel by Christ in the level of human relations is that to the *neighbour*. By choosing this term, Kierkegaard underlines the lack of any kind of presupposition in meeting the neighbour or any form of definition as to who the neighbour is: the neighbour can be defined neither ethnically, nor linguistically, nor even religiously. This perspective brings to the fore the very concept of the individual and the individual's responsibility towards divine revelation. How viable is it to refer to any form of grouping in relation to God? How consistent is it, theologically, to speak of any kind of *ecclesisation* of nations? Is it not the individual who enters the new reality of God's Kingdom, a result of the individual's free choice? In this respect, the concept of 'ecclesisation of nations' can be not only an essentially misleading, but also a fundamentally perilous, thesis, as it seems to negate or neglect the freedom of the individual. It recalls the rather fictitious medieval cases, such as the Christianisation of the Russians following their Prince Vladimir or the forced Christianisation of the Saxons ordered by Charlemagne. On the other hand, Orthodox theology does not at all reject the concept of the *neighbour* as conceived by Kierkegaard. This does not, by any means, indicate that the community, the Church, is in any form neglected. The Kierkegaardian antipathy for human groupings cannot, in Orthodox terms, include the Church, as a community, where individuals meet God. No theology of love or freedom turns against ecclesiology, in Orthodox terms; it only confirms it. Kierkegaard turned his criticism against the Church - or Christendom, as he put it - as a secularised institution which has largely neglected its own spiritual foundations. In Orthodox terms, however, the individual is ecclesised and, as a

member of the charismatic ecclesial community, the individual meets the neighbour in love and care, for all beings are created according to the image and likeness of God.

Stephen Backhouse, in his own contribution, used Kierkegaard's concept of the *neighbour* in order to further support the modernist argument on nations and nationalism: he seems to be influenced by Benedict Anderson's imagined communities, as well as the thought of Eric Hobsbawm and, only secondarily, by Anthony Smith's ethnosymbolism.[29] He essentially identifies nationalism with any form of patriotism as they both share the same core ideas of 'particularity, sentiment, and selective memory' (Backhouse 2013, 46). He then goes on to state that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, locating its first expressions in such historical events as the First Partition of Poland (1775), echoing Acton (Acton 1949, 171), or the French Revolution (1789). How right is this? Since nationalism is rather identified with patriotism and the former is considered a modern phenomenon, is patriotism equally modern? If it is, how do we describe pre-modern phenomena of allegiance to the motherland? By endorsing the modernist paradigm on the novelty of nations, Backhouse inherits the weaknesses that this view entails. He is right, however, in stressing that theology was used in order to support and ascribe a meaning to nationalism and 'it is theology that it can be best engaged'. As a result, Kierkegaard's critique can provide important theological bedrock (Backhouse 2013, 58).

Another Protestant theologian who wrote on nations and nationalism is Karl Barth. His relevant thought was discussed by Carys Moseley in accordance with modern thought on the issue. This is Moseley's first book on nationalism and theology. It is based on her PhD thesis, parallels Backhouse's work on Kierkegaard, and expresses Barth's thoughts on nationality issues. Moseley underlines the theological principles on which, according to her view, a theology of nations and nationalism should be founded. In her second book, following Barth's theology on Israel as a chosen nation, she postulates the argument that a consistent, as she believes, providential reading of the Bible will accommodate recognition of all nations, even the ones who have lost their political independence. It then follows that what Moseley has in mind is a clear distinction between nation and state founded on Barth's relevant thought. Her positive view of nations and her distinction between nation and state secures her opposition to modernist views and Backhouse's ideas. As Kierkegaard functions as a source of inspiration for Backhouse to affirm theologically the modernist views on nations and nationalism, Barth helps Moseley to affirm a perennial understanding of nationhood: 'Nations are neither grounded in the Spirit, nor products of the state, nor orders of creation, but are the products of human moral agency which operates under divine providence' (Moseley 2013a, 169). In this sense, nations are post-lapsarian and definitely not God-given, but certainly God-inspired. Israel as an elect nation apparently plays a central role in this argument. For Barth, Israel plays a central role in God's providence not only in the Old but also in the New Testament. Israel never ceased to constitute God's elect people. Turning against Israel is the same as turning against God: a blasphemy. Moseley goes as far as to claim that 'Barth's doctrine of providence makes the nations' treatment a defining criterion of divine judgement upon them' (Moseley 2013a, 176). Moseley also follows Barth in

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[29] These views will be discussed in chapter 2.1.1.

criticising national ideology as anti-Christian idolatry, though she later expresses the view that anti-nationalism often goes hand in hand with anti-Zionism, something that negates, as she believes, the chosenness of Israel and the necessary providential reading of the Bible (Moseley 2013a, 98-133. Moseley 2013b, xxvi; cf. Biggar 2014, 8). Finally, it is interesting that, for Barth, the procession of the Holy Spirit also from the Son (Filioque) safeguards the connection of the third person of the Holy Trinity with the Son only. If the Spirit is the Son's Spirit, then the Spirit applies God's providence and works for the salvation of humanity. No human construct or ideology, including the national one, can be in any way connected with it (Moseley 2013a, 53).

Similar to Moseley's perennial ideas are those of Biggar. Biggar wrote independently in the sense that he did not develop his ideas by analysing the thought of another scholar. Having the persistence of nations and nationalism as his starting point (Biggar 2014, xiii) he makes an analysis that endorses the notion of the nation, the national culture, even the nation-state. His work is based on Christian ethics and in this sense he believes that Christianity does not come at odds with neither of them (Biggar 2014, 1-25). He focuses very much on the state and believes that Christianity is the worldview which should be adopted by states with Christian majorities, such as the United Kingdom (Biggar 2014, 26-52). The book expands to issues which do not concern this thesis, as they are either out of its scope - such as immigration (Biggar 2014, 18,25,51) and the case of intervention of states in the affairs of other states (Biggar 2014, 53-72) - or too British - such as the importance of the monarchy (Biggar 2014, 31-2,38) and the maintenance of empires (Biggar 2014, 73-96). Despite this, it is necessary to point out that when Biggar manifests the perennial character of a nation is, as this thesis will show below, in the correct path. Besides, the persistence of nations and nationalism is a very important issue, which seems to escape the notice of the modernist scholars.[30]

In an effort to understand better the views expressed above, two historical points have to be taken into serious account. The first is connected with Barth and the second with Moseley. Regarding Barth, it has to be noted that he expressed his ideas on the providential reading of the Bible and Israel in the framework of Adolf Hitler's rise to power (1933). Barth, as a leading member of the Confessing Church, together with the distinguished German theologian Dietrich Bonhöffer, drafted the Barmen Declaration of 1934[31] criticising the Nazis and their idolatrous nationalism, as well as the nationalistic, pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic German Christian Movement. Barth believed that the key to a criticism of Nazi nationalism, from a Christian point of view, was exactly the importance of Israel in God's providence, as chronicled in the Bible. Apparently, for Barth, a true Christian could never be anti-Semitic. Barth probably used the Filioque argument as a response to the view of the German Christian Movement, which connected the Spirit with nationhood, while rejecting the Catholic doctrine on the Spirit. As far as Moseley is concerned, it has to be taken into account that her effort to prove the importance of affirming nations - even stateless ones - is probably connected with her Welsh origin (Moseley 2013b, 75-113). This is not wrong in itself; it should be treated carefully, however. It is similar to Barth's

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[30] See chapter 2.1.1.

[31] See chapter 3.4.

view of the just state which allows for reconciliation between nations; being a Swiss himself, he considered Switzerland such a state, due to the latter's ability to forge a harmonious co-existence for the various linguistic and religious groups of the country (Moseley 2013a, 1).

Moseley's aforementioned statement that anti-nationalism and anti-Zionism are often two sides of the same coin (Moseley 2013b, xxvi) seems to be an over-simplification; it is only that a consistent anti-nationalism should necessarily be anti-Zionist, though not anti-Semitic. Every kind of nationalism and national ideology, as a form of idolatry, including Zionism, should be criticised. This does not signify the rejection of any nation, the Jewish included. This is a very significant point: Barth's distinction between nation and nation-state/nationalism is on the correct path. Anti-Zionism or any other form of anti-nationalism does not disapprove of the nation of Israel or any other nation; it only disapproves of national fanaticism expressed through a rhetoric of particularistic superiority and, even, aggressiveness. In this light, as is claimed below,[32] any understanding of Israel as a chosen nation does not help to recognise and affirm other nations, for Israel's chosenness historically contained a very strong nationalism that helped modern nations to claim chosenness and a theologically unjustifiable special place before God. Given that the historical reasons that led Barth to give a special place to Israel in his writings are not present any more, criticism of any form of nationalism, Zionism included, is now necessary, without this indicating anti-Semitism. The modern imperative to condemn anti-Semitism and secure that as massive a slaughter as the Holocaust will never happen again, cannot forge any form of protective canopy for particularistic and aggressive nationalist rhetoric. Again, Barth's idea that the Spirit is nothing but the Spirit of Christ is a very brilliant theological view to help disconnect the Spirit from human constructs. However, the maintenance of the Filioque doctrine is not at all necessary, for the Spirit does not *belong* to somebody or to a collectivity; the Spirit, divine in nature, remains absolutely free from any human understanding or necessity.

### 1.3.2.2. A Roman Catholic approach

The modern Catholic theologian that responded to nationalism is Dorian Llywelyn, who attempted to form a Catholic theology of nationality. His effort makes use of modern theories of nationalism before embarking on the formation of his theological suggestion. After endorsing Anthony Smith's ethno-symbolism, he is able to acknowledge the importance of nationality for the Church, as the former helps the latter to remain historically consistent. For him, whenever the Church is separated from nationality two negative consequences take place: the first is the emergence of national ideology as a substitute of religion and the second is the understanding of the Church as an otherworldly institution, irrelevant to earthly affairs (Llywelyn 2010, 121). Cases of chosenness,[33] or forms of devotion to Mary by certain peoples, are viewed rather positively as examples of the interconnection of the Church with nationality. In biblical terms his thesis is mostly based on Old Testament, where the dialectic between the particular and the universal is demonstrated, but he expresses the view that, even in the New Testament, nations

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[32] See chapter 3.2.

[33] See chapter 2.2.1.

are not repudiated but rather affirmed and redeemed in Christ. He is backed in this idea by Duns Scotus's incarnational idea of *thisness,* the fact that, by His incarnation, Christ affirms 'all human experiences of cultural specificity, ethnicity, and nationality' (Llywelyn 2010, 200). Apparently, Llywelyn takes national sentiment into serious consideration from a theological point of view, which, together with his adoption of Smith's ethno-symbolism, makes him a critic of the constructivist-modernist approach. This does not mean that he endorses national ideology, for he considers it a false substitute of religion. It does not mean that he rejects the universality of the Church either. It only means that nations should be approached as cultural rather than political entities and that their existence makes the Church historically relevant despite its role as an ark containing different nations in unity. For Llywelyn, otherness and uniformity make unity important. His focus on Christology and the Incarnation strengthens his argument on the affirmation of nationality, but the lack of any robust argument on ecclesiology makes the point concerning otherness and unity a rather neglected issue.

Llywelyn's thesis seems to be a very insightful approach on nationality. His concern about history and culture and the Church's relevance to human categories is theologically important. To understand the nation as a cultural rather than political entity is at the core of a serious and realistic approach to nationality. On the other hand, Llywelyn's claim that, in the New Testament, nations are not erased but redeemed constitutes a subjective interpretation of the Bible. Apparently, human beings are redeemed across gender, social class, tribe or nationality.[34] That much is certain in the New Testament. That Christ saved nations, that is certain human groupings, seems to be a rather arbitrary conclusion. Llywelyn admits that the patristic tradition has little to offer on nationality issues. This is important in itself: apparently, to refer to the salvation of national collectivities is a demand connected with the modern world of nation-states and not a patristic concern. The attempt to refer to national salvation based on either the New Testament or patristic theology runs the danger of becoming a procrustean effort. Duns Scotus's incarnational teaching seems rather vast and can be applied to almost anything that relates to human identity; nationality is only one such case. Moreover, any understanding of chosenness or Marian national devotions in the positive way that Llywelyn suggests produces certain dangers: people use such arguments to promote their respective national identities; nations are thus directly connected with God and acquire a certain role within God's providence. Theologically, no nation possesses such a role apart from Israel in the Old Testament. Such views make sense simply as efforts to prove not only the importance but also the priority of a given nation over other nations. This is where the seeds of nationalism and national fanaticism or extremism are to be found.

### 1.3.2.3. Orthodox approaches

There is something peculiar about Orthodox works on nationality issues. Both Daniel Payne and Alexander Tefft come from countries (the USA and Canada respectively) not traditionally Orthodox. Finding themselves in nationally organised Orthodox Churches

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[34] See chapter 3.3.

established by immigrants from Orthodox countries, the two scholars attempted to bring the issue to the theological fore. They did not share the same starting point, however. Payne's view is based on theological considerations and their interplay with modern social theory. Tefft on the other hand cares more about ecclesiastical affairs and their interconnection with history and politics.

Daniel Payne, an American ex-Lutheran Orthodox academic and cleric, approached the thought of the main Greek thinkers - termed here as *Hellenorthodox* - John Romanides and Christos Yannaras. He engaged with their thought on identity and Romanity and approached it through the perspective of what the Russian historian Gelian Prokhorov termed as *political hesychasm* (Lourié 2010, 215). According to Prokhorov, the late Byzantine period (mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries) witnessed a turn of hesychasm - an originally spiritual ascetic practice - to a social issue, which profoundly influenced politics. According to Payne, this *political hesychasm* returned in the thought of, initially, Romanides and, then, Yannaras. Both of them profoundly valued the hesychast theology of St. Gregory Palamas and both of them based on it the formation of their wider project concerning the modern Greek identity and the Orthodox Church at large. Unlike Kalaitzidis - who understands Romanides's and Yannaras's thought in nationalist terms - Payne conceives it as a social constructivist project, a phenomenon of religious nationalism that opposes modernity and globalisation theories (Payne 2011, 2-4,22-31). Unlike Kalaitzidis, Payne finds it an important and much needed critique of modernity and globalisation with great potential for the future.

Payne dedicates a lot of space in his introduction analysing the social constructivism of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, whereas not much attention is paid to nationalism theory, apart from the works of, mainly, Benedict Anderson and, less importantly, Anthony Smith (Payne 2011, 7-21). Most of the main part of his thesis is dedicated to a genealogical approach on hesychasm (Payne 2011, 81-194), so that his engagement with the thought of Romanides (Payne 2011, 195-232) and Yannaras (Payne 2011, 233-58) seem rather neglected. Overall spiritual hesychasm is fairly analysed; political hesychasm, however, seems to be underdeveloped. Both Romanides and Yannaras formed their ideas in the Greek theological and socio-political framework of post-War Greece. The impact of Romanides's and Yannaras's ideas about Greek theological thought, the modern Greek Church, or the Greek society are not at all discussed. Though thorough and insightful Payne's work develops a plan that has little to do with nationality issues - despite what the title may promise. It is, therefore, of limited importance for this thesis.

Alexander Tefft, a Canadian cleric in the United Kingdom, has undertaken what seems to be a purely theological work. Entitled 'Phyletism as an Anthropological Heresy' Tefft's unpublished thesis attempts to undertake a doctrinal approach to nationality issues. He initially sets some important general principles and then he examines some case-studies in order to ascertain how these principles are to be found in particular examples. Tefft adopts the Greek-originated term *phyletism* to describe national ideology, a term that was used by the Constantinople Council of 1872 to condemn the Bulgarian schism. He sets three main principles

for his thesis: the first makes clear, from the beginning, that nationalism and national ideology oppose the Church's anthropology (Tefft 2010, 24-32) and ecclesiology (Tefft 2010, 32-40); the second explains that the ideology of the Roman Empire (Pax Romana – a Rome of many races) was transformed by the Church Fathers to a Christianity of many races (Pax Christiana) (Tefft 2010, 41-70); the third principle explains that national ideology was a phenomenon born in the Protestant West and transferred to the East (Tefft 2010, 71-110).

However, Tefft's examination of modern nationalism theories categorises them - Smith's (Smith 1998) or Özkirimli's (Özkirimli 2000) works, which he ignores, would have enormously helped him in this respect - as follows: the primordialists that he rejects and the *subjectivists* that he endorses.[35] After making the interesting point of understanding phyletism as ecclesiastical primordialism, Tefft refers to the works of Hastings, Myhill, and Smith - whom he considers primordialists, for ethno-symbolism is for him coterminous with primordialism - as well as Anderson, Gellner, and Hobsbawm. These references, however, do not indicate a fair grasp of their ideas. Tefft makes rather fragmented, underdeveloped and misunderstood references to the above scholars he chooses to examine. To mention but one example, though Anthony D. Smith is a proliferate author, he uses only one of his works (Smith 2004). Based on it, he reaches the conclusion that for Smith nations are *natural* entities and if this is so they should live *naturally*; how then ethnic conflicts can be explained? (Tefft 2010, 20-1). However, Smith does *not* consider nations natural, but modern human constructs, which may - or may not - be connected with pre-modern ethnic communities. The latter are again human constructs which emerge at different times in history (Smith 1991, 19-42).[36] The formation of ethnic communities is connected, contrary to what Tefft assumes, precisely with warfare (Smith 1991, 27). Besides, *natural being* does not equal to *peaceful being*. Tefft appears to adopt the ideas of the *subjectivists* but Gellner and Hobsbawm consider nations as modern entities stemming from the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of the middle class and not from Protestantism, as Tefft suggests. Returning to his main argument, based on the three principles, Tefft then examines how they were applied in different cases within the Orthodox Christian milieu (Tefft 2010, 117-235).[37]

His overall work and his suggestions are interesting and they set foundations for necessary further discussions. Theologically speaking, his work is the first such attempt from an Orthodox theological point of view and this makes his contribution of seminal importance. Indeed, his first principle, referring to anthropology and ecclesiology, constitutes a theological issue. His second principle, referring to what he terms 'Pax Christiana', constitutes, however, rather an issue of political-theological ideology of the Christian Roman Empire - it would have helped him to study Romanides, but he makes no significant reference to his work - which is an issue of political theory rather than theology: it definitely does not constitute a doctrinal issue.

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[35] By subjectivists he obviously means the modernists or constructivists (Smith 1998. Özkirimli 2000).

[36] For more see chapter 2.1.1.

[37] In his appendix he examined in the same framework the Sourozh crisis of 2006 (Tefft 2010, 236-44).

His third principle on nationalism as emanating from Protestantism, extremely interesting - though not original (cf. Gorski 2000, 1428-68) - as it may be, constitutes a purely historical issue. The case studies that he makes are historical rather than theological. His thesis, therefore, does not seem to be the theological work that he promises in his introduction (Tefft 2010, 1-7), where he does not examine very deeply issues such as anthropology, which remain underdeveloped, or mission, which is not at all examined in the main body of his thesis. He elevates the political ideology of the Christian Roman Empire to a doctrinal issue, so that nationalism appears a heresy, a Protestant one to be precise, as it first appeared, according to Tefft, in the Protestant framework. The political is thus transformed to theological/doctrinal. This has further implications, as he understands the Ottoman millet system as an adoption of the Orthodox doctrine by the Muslim Ottoman administrations, the Christian equivalent of the Muslim umma (Tefft 2010, 111-7,147-51). As a result, all the peoples to whom he refers (in his order, Bulgarians, Serbs, Romanians, Greeks, Russians, Ukrainians) are criticised for abandoning Orthodox doctrine (i.e. Byzantine political ideology) for heresy (nationalism). This, however, is not an issue of doctrine, but of political ideology, a dilemma of Empire versus the nation-state. Though Tefft urges a doctrinal approach - without explaining, however, why this is urgent especially now - he does not seem to cover the gap he identifies.

### 1.3.2.4. Conclusion

The literature review on modern studies on nations and nationalism has shown, so far, that the Protestant and Orthodox approaches present a rather contradictory view: Backhouse and Tefft adopt the views of the modernists or constructivists and reject nations and nationalism. Moseley and Payne are more moderate in their approaches and seem more favourable to ethno-symbolism. Moseley affirms nations while rejecting nationalism, while Payne views nationalism as a social constructivist programme and understands it as a reaction to globalisation. Llywelyn's Catholic view endorses ethno-symbolism too and affirms nations, while rejecting nationalism. These different views effectively demonstrate that there is no uniform theological attitude towards nations and nationalism. Theology is viewed differently by theologians even of the same Church, confession or denomination, and different theological principles are used in order to reach different conclusions. The same biblical principles are interpreted differently, assisting and not guiding the main argument.[38] The present research, therefore, merely aspires to employ effectively modern theories on nations and nationalism, combine it with the appropriate theological principles and attempt to discuss questions that currently remain unanswered. Theologically speaking, nation formation is something that follows original sin and the subsequent fall. Theologians seem to agree thus far. Is it, therefore, a sinful situation bound to be overcome in the anticipated eschatological Kingdom of God, or is it rather a necessary human construct in partnership with God? Does it oppose or accord to divine will? Does theology value more the individual or collectivities, such as nations? Are nations damned

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[38] See, for example, the Balanos-Bratsiotes debate above in chapter 1.3.1.1.1 and more analytically in chapter 3.4.

and redeemed, or is this issue - damnation and redemption - an individual issue? Barth's and, subsequently, Moseley's theological views have set, additionally, the issue of supersessionism: does Israel remain the elect nation in the New Testament? If it does, what is the place of the Church in the world? If no, is it theologically possible to have another people to replace Israel? More importantly, is the Church merely Israel's replacement or something more than that? If it is, what exactly?

Again, this thesis cannot aspire to answer all these questions. It will rather attempt to put the whole issue of theology and nationality on a basis that will help to address these and relevant questions. This attempt engages with certain methodological concerns which need to be discussed and clarified.

## 1.4. Methodological considerations

To begin with, it is important to make a point of clarification. A thesis on nationality issues needs to be undertaken within the modern context of nationality theories. It needs to follow one certain way and explain why it does so. It is necessary to start by critically and briefly presenting the modern nationalism theories and then to put forward the relevant argument of this thesis. Only by doing so can the development towards the theological evaluation of nationality issues, which constitutes the main focus of this thesis, be achieved effectively and in accordance with modern considerations.

On the other hand, this research engages with the *why* and *how* of the interconnection between Orthodoxy and nation/nationalism, rather than the *what*, *where* or *when*. This is why this thesis will be based on theological foundations, attempting to understand the reasons and the nature of this interconnection. As will be shown later in this thesis,[39] more often than not, modern scholarship has treated religions, and, therefore ('thereforw' corrected), Christianity as a whole, as a coherent group of social factors and uniform phenomena, not allowing for the possibility of differences in their theological essence. Despite the informative examination of the forms in which religion in general is interrelated to nationalism, it has to be pointed out that theology often influences the attitude of certain religions or forms of Christianity towards nations and nationalism. Studies, therefore, from the point of view of theological principles, are imperatively necessary, as they take into consideration the distinctiveness and peculiarities of different religions. This distinctiveness can be helpful in our understanding of nations and nationalism in various areas. However, despite being engaged with Orthodox theology, especially that produced in Greece, this thesis will attempt to approach the issue based on the Bible, which constitutes the common foundation of all forms of Christianity. Therefore, despite the Orthodox origins of this thesis it can be understood as a form of *Mere Christianity*, as it were, to use C. S. Lewis's famous title. These point needs to be further analysed.

## 1.4.1. Methodological concerns on political sociology and social history

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[39] See chapter 2.2.

In its interdisciplinary approach, this thesis will be based on modern theories on nations and nationalism, as well as nationalism and religion. A study on nationalism cannot, by any means, ignore or neglect the long bibliography on the matter, though this is exactly what has taken place in the modern Greek theological literature, as was shown above. It is also necessary to adopt a clear view on it and make clear which method is considered most effective for our subject. The thought of two modern scholars, Caspar Hirshi and Theodore Ziakas, will be used here, as it sheds more light on the issue at hand.

Although the analysis of modern theories on nations and nationalism will be undertaken later in this thesis,[40] some remarks are necessary here in order to elucidate, right from the beginning, the relevant methods to be used as interpretative tools. As will be shown, it is not possible to form a general theory on nations and nationalism applied globally. The perennialist school of thought is here considered more effective, as, indeed, different nations in different areas emerged at different times in history - and keep emerging - constituting thus human constructs, though not necessarily modern; they can be pre-modern - or even ancient - modern or even (why not?) post-modern. An approach, therefore, to the phenomenon should be made according to the case upon which one focuses, its particular circumstances and conditions, and not on the basis of general theory. This indicates that no particular theory will be used as a basis for any interpretation or analysis attempted here. It also means that this thesis will attempt to avoid the use of any theory as a norm, to which historical data, political analyses, theological ideas or sociological findings should adjust. Far from it, this thesis will turn to Hirschi's and Ziakas's contributions only inasmuch as they constitute methods to approach the issue at hand. This alternative perspective emanates from a different understanding of the nation.

It is an intrinsic feature of nationalist primordialism to look at nations inwards, to understand them using *objective* criteria, such as linguistic or cultural. The modernist literature on nationalism, despite being critical to this view, looks at nations again inwardly, understanding them as political entities. It thus entirely identifies them with the modern nation-state, which, according to the modernist school of thought, produces the modern nation. Nationalism theories, therefore, understand nations as modern entities but they affirm them as they are today, strongly intertwined with the modern nation-state. Probably both approaches carry inherently the feature of modernity: the interconnection between the individual's very birth with politics. Nationalist rhetoric, on the one hand, promotes this principle, while modernist nationalism theories affirm it in the way they treat modern nations. Since the French 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen' (1789) ,natural life constitutes a major concern in politics. The Declaration can attribute sovereignty to the *nation* (according to the third article: 'the principle of all sovereignty resides essentially to the nation') precisely because it has already inscribed this element of birth in the very heart of the political community (Agamben 1998, 128).

While clarifying the definitions of the terms used earlier in this thesis,[41] it was shown

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[40] See chapter 2.1.

[41] See above chapter 1.2.

that the Greek term *éthnos* implies a group of beings performing the same habits. Nations are, therefore, formed, as every group, in their contact with other groups and definitely not by birth. An alternative perspective, therefore, would be to look at nations outwardly, based on their otherness and multipolarity as groups.

In this respect, the work of Hirschi and Ziakas is of importance. Both start their analysis by stressing the importance of this *external design* as it was termed by Hirschi (Hirschi 2012, 36). Though the two scholars are seemingly not aware of each other's work, their starting point is quite similar. They both consider it more important to understand how the nation constructs the world beyond its borders, for nations are formed by their relations with, and in juxtaposition to self-perceptions of, other nations, as well as through negotiations and discourses with members of the same nation (Hirschi 2012, 36,39-40. Ziakas 2012, 23-4,34-7). This relationship is described by Hirschi as based on different yet equal terms. He goes on to suggest that nationalism was brought about in late medieval and early modern Europe as a product of the failure of medieval imperialism, the emergence that is of medieval monarchies of equal strength and equal claims - *rex est imperator in regno suo* (Hirschi 2012, 40-7). This argument, despite its importance and its centrality in the discourse on nations and nationalism, seems to be of limited importance for this thesis, as it draws its conclusions from the study of only those European areas which are connected with the Catholic-Protestant world. It totally neglects Greece and Eastern Europe, as well as the world of Eastern Christianity. In this respect, Hirschi's contribution seems to be another perennialist theory. Its importance rests on its approach and its method. This is exactly the way it will be used here.

As a result, Hirschi's *external design* is of cardinal importance for this thesis. It absorbs the reality of nations as pre-modern entities, while initiating a fresh approach based on the otherness and multipolarity of nations, as well as their inclination to be related to each other. The theory Hirschi propounds allows him to give a definition of the nation that overcomes the terminological obscurity that prevails in the field of nationalism studies. The clarity and consistency of this definition is important. For him, therefore, the nation is an abstract community formed by multipolar and equal relationships to other nations, 'from which it separates itself by claiming singular qualities, a distinct territory, political and cultural independence and an exclusive honour' (Hirschi 2012, 47).

Ziakas would have agreed with this short and consistent definition. His contribution was, however, weighted towards the centrality of traditions, which, according to him, are formed by nations in their relationship with other nations. He categorises these traditions in a three-fold way: metaphysical, educational and legislative-political. Though these traditions tend to change, influence and get influenced, over time, they also function together. The nation forms different traditions in these three levels both in its centre and its periphery, while one of them becomes the dominant one, characterising the nation. Therefore, the nation for Ziakas is a *structure of traditions* (Ziakas 2003, 167). This understanding of the nation can be applied in the Greek case and Eastern Orthodoxy, as a metaphysical tradition, perfectly well. As a result, Hirschi's *external* definition of the nation as an entity in relationship with other nations, together with Ziakas's

equally *external* understanding of the otherness of nations as structures of traditions, will be used in this thesis.

As a result, this thesis will also adopt Hirschi's understanding of nationalism as 'the discourse that creates and preserves the nation as an autonomous value, autonomous meaning not subordinate (but neither necessarily superior) to any other community' (Hirschi 2012, 47). It should also be noted that Hirschi correctly emphasises that nationalism should not be always treated as an analytical category that needs to repress other loyalties in order to be powerful. On the contrary, nationalism 'became so powerful and widespread because it easily co-existed or even amalgamated with other loyalties and doctrines, using their symbolic resources without necessarily devaluating them'. Hence, Hirschi selects the term *autonomous* to describe the nation as a value, for nationalism, being pliable and adaptable, peacefully and harmoniously coexists with other loyalties insofar as such loyalties do not restrain it (Hirschi 2012, 48). Indeed, numerous such loyalties co-existed and deeply intertwined with nationalism. One of them is definitely religion.

As in the case of nations and nationalism, there is no general theory to describe the interconnection between nation/nationalism and religion, as will be argued in the relevant part of this thesis.[42] The way such theories will be presented below will hopefully demonstrate amply that this interrelation differs according to the historical conditions in which it develops, its presuppositions, or the researcher's point of view. Most methods are considered useful, for most of them offer insightful remarks. However, the theory that views religion as a central element at the core of nations is considered here more useful. As a result, Ziakas's approach, which views religion as the metaphysical tradition of nations and, what is more, as the most important - the core - tradition of nations is considered here as more functional, as it attempts to understand fully and from every angle the role religion historically played in the formation and evolution of nations. Needless to say, the metaphysical tradition of a given nation can be shared by other nations too. Thus, Eastern Orthodoxy constitutes the metaphysical tradition - it is to be found at the core - of the modern Greek nation, while it is also shared by other nations, such as the Russian or the Bulgarian. It can be also considered as a metaphysical tradition in the periphery of other structures of traditions, such as the Albanian nation, which contains at its core Suni Islam.

### 1.4.2. Methodological concerns on theology

While trying to explain his thesis on mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis pointed out the importance of the common ground of Christians in the process of defending Christianity, while he also admitted his Anglican convictions (Lewis 2012, vii-xii). In this sense, this thesis can be considered as *mere Christianity*. It attempts neither to present a study theologically neutral nor to claim that it moves entirely away of Orthodoxy. Despite being an Orthodox Christian study intending to engage with Orthodox theology on nationality issues, this thesis turns to the Bible, while trying to theologically approach the problem. The research led to paths, which apparently concern

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[42] See chapter 2.2.

every Christian, since the Bible constitutes the common ground for all Christians. Indeed, 'Christian faith and morals may differ in detail, depending on whether they are interpreted by Catholic pope and bishops, by Orthodox Church Councils, or by Protestant reading of the Scriptures. There is nevertheless a common Christian heritage … sorely beset and critically threatened … by aggressive and antagonistic nationalism' (Hayes 1960, 181). Moreover, if, as Hayes implied (Hayes 1960, 180; cf. Llobera 1994, 144-5), and this thesis seeks to put forward, this nationalism constitutes a form of paganism, then it is a *threat* to the very core of Christian faith. However, in a second level, the thesis engages with mainly Orthodox, Greek to be sure, theology and draws examples from the Greek experience, using parallels from other cases, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox, only occasionally. This is done for purely practical reasons. There is no available space to engage in a scientifically satisfactory way with all the relevant views of Orthodox thinkers, across nationality, let alone Christian thinkers at large.

The attention of this thesis is, therefore, primarily turned to the Bible. This is due to two reasons. First, a theological evaluation of nationality issues should necessarily commence from the Bible, which constitutes the fundamental text for the formation of Christian theology. More specifically, the study will first consider the Bible and the relevant references will be made to the English Standard Version. However, as this thesis is a study of Christian theology, it has to be made clear that the term *Old Testament* does not coincide absolutely with the Bible, since it includes books and parts that are not included in the Hebrew Bible. It is a very useful term in terms of Christian theology, as the term necessarily anticipates a *New Testament*. As a result, the theological part of this thesis will commence from the Old Testament and a theological evaluation of nationality issues in the New Testament will naturally follow.

Second, the way that the Bible treated nationality influenced later the Christian world. This was done in two ways: first by the way it treated nations in general and second, most importantly, by the way it understood and presented Israel (cf. Aberbach 2005, 223-42). Israel thus becomes an exemplar nation with a structure of traditions which developed around its religious-metaphysical core, to use Ziakas's understanding of the nation.

An effort to approach the biblical understanding of nationality issues should be founded on a strong theoretical basis in order to be able to approach the issue at large and put it in a context consistent with its historical background and the different views expressed in the Bible. This basis is offered by the Axial Age theory, developed by the twentieth-century influential German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969). He defined the Axial Age in the following way:

> … a point in history, which gave birth to everything which, since then, man has been able to be, the point most overwhelmingly fruitful in fashioning humanity; its character would have to be … so convincing to empirical insight as to give rise to a common frame of historical self-comprehension for all peoples … It would seem that this Axis of history is to be found in the period around 500BC, in the spiritual process that occurred between 800 and 200BC. It is there that we meet with the most deepcut dividing line in history. Man, as we know him today, came into being. For short we may style this the 'Axial Period' (Jaspers 1953, 1).

According to Jaspers this is the historical period in which 'the fundamental categories within which we still think today, and the beginnings of the world religions, by which human beings still live, were created. The step into universality was taken in every sense' (Jaspers 1953, 2; cf. Armstrong 2006, xi-xviii).

Jaspers's idea on the Axial Age has been contested. Similarities that he locates between cultures, have been considered simplifications, personalities that he included in his model are considered older than the Axial Age, while new theories have emerged concerning the cultures that he includes in his model, which do not exactly fit with his theory. Lately, Proven (Proven 2013) included the Axial Age in the 'world that never was'. The thesis does not intend to discuss the main issues concerning Jaspers's theory. According its biblical concerns, however, it turns its interest to Israel, whose history and religion possessed a fundamental part for the formation and development of Jaspers's Axial Age theory. Indeed, from around the eighth century BC onwards, monotheism emerged, developed and subsequently prevailed in Israel; God was conceived as a transcendental being, while religion acquired a more ethical sense. This development is expressed in the Bible ultimately through the denunciation of idolatry by the work of the great and exceptional personalities of the prophets. Among the biblical scholars, the early part of this era is known as the Deuteronomistic reform.

In his studies on ancient Israel, Steven Grosby was able to prove that it was precisely the Deuteronomistic reform, in the framework of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian conquest of Israel and Juda, and the, subsequent, experience of captivity, that initiated the nation-formation process in ancient Israel (Grosby 2002, 40-7,52-9). It is no accident then that Israel developed as a nation in a process starting around the eighth century BC, the very beginning of the era that Jaspers termed the *Axial Age* (cf. Armstrong 2006, 96. Smith 1986, 118-9). What interests this thesis is the fact that Israel entered its nation-formation process in the same, more or less, era when it progressively, through a struggle with paganism and polytheism, adopted monotheism. Both the nation and monotheism will preserve elements of polytheism and paganism. This is why Jaspers's Axial Age theory is considered significant in this thesis and will be used as an interpretative tool while dealing with nationality issues in theology.

It has to be noted that the Axial Age theory is equally based on developments, which took place in the Greek world. These developments profoundly influenced the New Testament and the way such notions as *nation* were conceived there. However, this thesis will restrict itself on the world of ancient Israel for two main methodological reasons. First, it is on the basis of Israel that the unity of the Bible is better established. Secondly, there is not enough space in this thesis to treat justly and effectively such an important issue.

René Girard's theory on violence and the sacred is enlightening. According to Girard human communities came into being through conflicts, which occur within groups. During the conflict the group passes through a state of crisis. The party that loses the conflict is victimised. It is considered the scapegoat, responsible for the conflict. The death of the scapegoat brings to the group the necessary peace, which transforms it to a concrete community, with social cohesion. The scapegoat, thus, is considered the bringer of peace and is divinised, it becomes

sacred. This, according to Girard, is the origin of religion in primitive societies, which are characterised by paganism and myth. Religion, in this respect, institutionalised the scapegoat mechanism through sacrifices and relevant myths in order to pacify society and push away the possibility of a new conflict (Girard 1979, 9-19). For instance, Remus's death at the hands of Romulus, a death commemorated in Rome through sacrifices, was part of the founding myth of the city of Rome. However, this mythology points at the guilt of the victim. Society needs to know that the collective death was just. According to Girard, this is overturned in the Bible: all the victims 'from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Baruch' were innocent victims (Lk 11:50-1). Indeed, according to the Bible, it was after the death of Abel at the hands of Cain that the first city was built (Gn 4:17), but, to be sure, Abel was an innocent victim. The climax of this biblical understanding is of course the death of Jesus, who, Himself an absolutely innocent victim, commemorated the innocent victims before him, while entering Jerusalem, where many of these collective murders had taken place. Jesus, moreover, was the scapegoat of the world, as was foreseen by the prophetic tradition (Is 53:7), according to the understanding of the New Testament (Acts 8:30-4; cf. Jn 1:29. 1Pt 1:19). This acknowledgement, which rehabilitates the victims, takes place in the framework of Biblical monotheism that ultimately turns against idolatry:

> Certainly there must be, behind the biblical account, myths in conformity with the universal norms of mythology; so the initiative of the Jewish authors and their critical reappraisal must undoubtedly be credited with the affirmation that the victim is innocent and that the culture  founded on murder retains a thoroughly murderous character that in the end becomes self-destructive, once the ordering and sacrificial benefits of the original violence have dissipated … There is an inconclusiveness in the Old Testament … only the texts of the Gospels manage to achieve what the Old Testament leaves incomplete (Girard 1987a, 149,158).

As will be argued below,[43] nationalism mobilises the collective murder and institutionalises it in a religious fashion (cf. Stevens 1997, 248-58). The way this takes place is a matter that concerns the relevant chapter. It is enough here to pinpoint the importance of Girard's theory as a basis for putting forward the argument of nationalism as paganism.

Indeed, from different points of view, both Jaspers and Girard have understood the Bible as a way to overcome paganism and mythology. It is in this respect, to return to the point made above, that the theological part of this thesis constitutes mere Christianity. The Bible initiates monotheism and overcomes polytheism: in this simple aphorism the foundations of Christianity, in its every form, are to be located. This does not mean that certain examples will not be used in order to clarify the relevant points. For reasons of space, such examples will be drawn from the Orthodox and, to be more precise, the Greek experience. However, apart from the fact that it is impossible for the vast material coming from modern theologians of various nationalities to be entirely mastered, the Greek theological identity of this thesis's author turns it towards the Greek theological paradigm. Indeed, if the Orthodox approach is what this thesis can offer to the

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[43] See chapter 2.2.

study of nationality issues and religion in general, it is the Greek approach what it can offer to the study of nationality and Christianity. The merely-Christian basis is necessarily combined with the Greek-Orthodox identity. Despite the limitations connected with this truth, it is hoped that there are also certain advantages. Thus, modern Greek theology possesses two rather interesting features, as it is inspired from two sources: the Orthodox tradition as it is lived and understood in the Greek-speaking world, as well as the Russian émigré theology, part of which influenced modern Orthodox theological thought profoundly.[44] A work focusing on Greek theology possesses the double privilege of being based on the peculiarities of Greek thought as well as modern Orthodox thinking in general. This dual feature of Greek theology makes it function as a kind of crossroads of Orthodoxy and will be used here as a way to approach indirectly Orthodox theology, and Christianity, at large. Thus, this necessary methodological restriction can be proved, rather than an impediment, a mere but necessary first step to approach the issue of nationalism and Christianity or religion in general.

In this effort the assistance of non-Orthodox theologians will be sought. Indeed, Christian thinkers - Orthodox or otherwise - have already viewed nationalism in this way. However, their relevant thoughts are rather scattered and non-systematic. It is the aim of this thesis to argue in a more systematic and concrete way, which has seemingly never been done before. This aim will be undertaken in an analysis that will move from the general to the particular. This analysis is sketched immediately below.

## 1.4.3. An outline of the thesis at hand

The thesis at hand attempts to approach its main question of the theological evaluation of nationalism by critically presenting the recent developments in the study of nations and nationalism as well as nationalism and religion. It then proceeds on its main issue, arguing the connection of nationalism with paganism and the former's incompatibility with Christian theology. This last point is made by setting the biblical principles first and then by presenting relevant examples. Both ways constitute, it is hoped, the originality of the thesis. It, thus, follows the following plan. First, socio-historical and socio-political analysis on nations and nationalism, as well as, nationalism and religion. Second, theological analysis on paganism, nationality issues in the Bible, and nationalism as paganism. Third, analysis of nationalist pagan features in the Greek example.

More analytically, in the second chapter (the first being the introduction), a wide-ranging account of the modern theories on nations and nationalism is presented in an effort to show more emphatically why the above choices on Hirschi and Ziakas are made. A clear distinction is made between nation and nationalism. This distinction is necessary in order to demonstrate that nations emerged long before modernity. This also provides the necessary basis for understanding

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[44] For reasons of scientific precision, it has to be pointed that only a part of the Russian émigrés influenced Greek theology. Although Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff, Alexander Schmemann, to name but few, have been extensively translated to Greek, the works of other emblematic personalities of Russian twentieth-century theology, such as Sergius Bulgakov, Pavel Florenski, Vladimir Solovyov - probably due to the problems concerning Sophiology (for example Bulgakov 1993) - Nicholas Afanasiev, Paul Evdokimov remain partly or entirely neglected.

nations as human constructs that constitute ways with which humans create groups. This does not include nationalism, however. National antagonisms, exclusivities, and the nationalist system of principles which places the nation above everything else, are issues which create significant problems. This distinction is necessary if a realistic theological evaluation is desired. Theologically, the Church has the task of becoming the ark to include different nations, to build a unity in difference. Nationalism prevents this goal. Theology affirms nations but rejects nationalisms.

In the same chapter an analysis is made on the ways in which modern scholars attempt to approach the issue of the interrelation between religion and nations/nationalism. Thus, certain phenomena that influenced national ideologies and theologies emerge and Ziakas's understanding of religion as the core of nations is put into perspective. Simultaneously, it is hoped to show that a theological - beyond the socio-political and historical - perspective in the analyses of nations and nationalism, despite being necessary, is rather neglected.

Theologically, furthermore, it is necessary to begin by defining paganism and presenting the importance of mythology for the peoples of the Middle East, which constitute the biblical ethnographical environment. This allows the engagement with nationality issues in the Old Testament. It is hoped to demonstrate that nationality considerations constitute forms of pagan-mythical survivals within the monotheistic Axial-Age development. Thus, two forms of biblical theology emerge: an exclusive and an inclusive. As a result, the New Testament necessarily emanates as a way to entirely overcome mythical paganism and, with it, nationalism and national discriminations. The Gospels and the theology of St. Paul will constitute the two main pillars of the relevant analysis. Useful parallels are be drawn from other books of the New Testament. It is hoped that the argument of the New Testament decision is clarified: between the two Old Testament theologies, the New Testament choses the inclusive one decidedly and straightforwardly. Having set these biblical foundations, the thesis then treats modern nationalism as anti-Christian mythical paganism. However, it is hoped to argue that modern nationalism meets the criteria of the definition of mythical paganism put forward in this thesis.

Finally, the problem of the survival of mythical paganism in modern nationalism will be further pushed with an analysis of certain examples derived from the Greek experience. The first concerns the sacrificial mechanisms in the rituals of the national feasts in Greece. The second concerns the cult of the land and the ancestors, as experienced in the monument of the Unknown Soldier in Athens. Finally, the way the Virgin Mary is treated in modern Greece through paintings and ecclesiastical services. This analysis will focuses on the two national feasts of 25 March, commemorating the Greek Revolution (1821), and of 28 October, commemorating the events, which led to the Greek involvement in World War II (1940).

Theology is too important to be neglected. Modern nationality issues are too influential not to be dealt with by theology. Hopefully, this thesis achieves a small contribution to this end: a theological contribution to the issue of nations and nationalism. Such a contribution needs to be effectively contextualised. It, therefore, needs to turn to the modern literature on nations and nationalism and constitute part of the relevant discourse.

2.Nation, nationalism and religion in political sociology and social history

2.1.Nations and nationalism

*A nation's existence is,*
*if you will pardon the metaphor,*
*a daily plebiscite,*
*just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life*
(Renan 1990, 19)

The nation, as a collective entity, and nationalism as that discourse that 'reserves the nation as an autonomous value' (Hirschi 2012, 47) - and not merely as an extreme phenomenon - constitute issues that scholars have looked upon with growing interest, so that a distinct interdisciplinary field has emerged, that of nationalism studies. Particularly in modernity, nations and nationalisms played a significant part, triggering a series of important social and political developments, causing the violent collapse, or forceful transformation of *ancien régimes*. Thus, nineteenth-century nationalism almost coincided with the liberal political movements of the same century, which were distinctive for their optimism. Indeed, they were confident that the problems of this world could be solved, if people with prodigious training and intelligence, as well as 'exceptional grasp of the facts, will-power and capacity for effective thought', were allowed to visualise the solutions and apply them (Berlin 2002, 59-60). Nationalism, liberalism, and republican representation moved hand in hand as generally acclaimed and widely acknowledged, noble and modern ideologies. In the twentieth century, however, this impression changed significantly. Nationalism was accused of being the driving force behind the conditions and causes of two enormously catastrophic World Wars, among other ones.

This change paved the way for scholars to look upon nationalism not as a given reality but as a research field. Historians, political scientists, and sociologists analysed the phenomenon and formed various theories in an effort to comprehend it, explain it and even suggest ways to overcome it. These theoretical approaches are very significant, for they broaden the perspectives of humanities scholars beyond the long established ideas, which viewed nations as natural entities and nationalism as the historical awakening of nations. This development came progressively and not without considerable difficulty. Indeed, the 'fathers of sociology', such as Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) or Karl Marx (1818-83)[45] - with the partial exception of Max Weber (18641920) - and in general pre-World War II scholarship, treated nations and nationalism as given realities rather than a research field. However, the unprecedented catastrophe of the two World Wars paved the way for scholars to place nations and nationalism under scholarly scrutiny. More than simply examining historical studies on events connected with national movements, such as the Italian or the German unification, scholars addressed more general questions and attempted to suggest solutions to the emerging related problems. 'When is a nation' (Connor

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[45] We are to return to Durkheim later. It is worth noting that both Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820-95) developed contradictory ideas, as their thought evolved from the times of the *Manifesto* in 1848, Hegelian determinism, and the declaration that the proletariat has no motherland to the First International (1864-76), when nations and national movements were seen more sympathetically. These contradictory views formed different, often conflicting, approaches within Marxism (Connor 1984; cf. Smith 1983, 19-38. Ziakas 1988, 57-89.).

1990, 92-103)? How and why? What is nationalism? What caused its emergence? How is it to be overcome? These were questions that had never been asked before. The way scholars responded to such questions formed different schools of thought, which, despite varying significantly, provided pioneering and path-breaking insights.

The differences which one can observe in these theories, which will be examined immediately below, are due to the presuppositions, scholarly backgrounds or points of departure of the scholars who examined the issues in question. They are also connected with the areas on which they focused. These theories will be used here according to the specificities and the peculiarities of the Greek example, which constitutes the focus of this thesis. Following the critical, though necessarily brief, discussion of these approaches, a certain line of thought will appear, which will be adopted for the needs of this thesis and will explain the definitions of its key notions given above.[46] This implies by no means that other theories are of no importance. Many of their insights are profound and thoughtful and will be used critically. A clear line of thought, however, is necessary in order to ensure that the study at hand presents a coherent whole.

### 2.1.1. 'Do nations have navels'? From primordialism to modernism and ethno-symbolism

Nationalism has been often understood in two ways: in its civic and its ethnic form. Civic nationalism is characterised by its focus on freedom, individual rights, and the loyalty to the state. Ethnic nationalism conceives of the nation according to ethnic and racial, as well as cultural, features. These forms of nationalism are often intertwined, however, and it is frequently difficult to distinguish between the two (Nikolas 1999). At any rate, nationalist thinkers, particularly the *national historians*, have always understood their respective nations as ancient ones, and their history as a struggle for self-realisation and awakening. This trend has been termed *primordialism* (Smith 1998, 146-53) and considers nations as *natural* entities, which exist since time immemorial. They are primordial human ties, fundamental in human societies. In Ernest Gellner's (1925-95) witty words, 'a man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears' (Gellner 1983, 6). This form of *physiocratic* primordialism was expressed primarily through the thought of *national historians*, who conceived of the past as a long collective process, which, eventually, led to a peak, i.e. the national struggle for freedom. Such was the case, to use but one example, of the German historian Heinrich Gotthard von Treitschke (1834-96) with his *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century* in five volumes (1879-95). Primordialism became the main argument - together with the Hegelian understanding of the destiny of nations and the role of war in their sustainability (Smith 1983, 22) - used by nationalist ideologies, such as Fascism and Nazism. This nationalist primordialism, however, did not go unquestioned.

Historians, who experienced both World Wars, started working on nationalism as a phenomenon, and tried to produce typologies according to the several forms of nationalism (Hayes 1926. Kohn 1944. Seton-Watson 1965. Seton-Watson 1977). These historians, however, did

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[46] See chapter 1.2.

not attempt to form theories on the origins and spread of nations and nationalism, but rather to present an historical anatomy of the formation of nations, the process of state building, the activities of nationalist movements, and their relationship with durable, emerging or failing states (Seton-Watson 1977, xii). Despite lacking a theoretical bedrock, these contributions led to the demythologisation of nationalist primordialism, treating nations as historical phenomena, which could be examined using scientific methodology.

There were theoreticians, however, who, having also experienced the World Wars, belonged to a generation that questioned the very principles on which human society seemed based until then. In this framework they scrutinised the notion of *nation* and criticised nationalism. Their thoughts did not emerge in a vacuum, however; they based their contributions on criticisms and ideas expressed sporadically before them. For instance, Ernest Renan (1823-92), who is often regarded among the pioneers of civic nationalism, considered the nations as recent phenomena and membership in them a fragile reality that needs to be confirmed in 'a daily plebiscite' (Renan 1990, 8-22). Moreover, the general neglect of nations and nationalism by the *fathers of sociology* does not apply to the cases of Weber and the socialist Otto Bauer (1881-1938).

Weber concerned himself with the concept of *ethnic groups*, including in this term not only nations but all the 'human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both, or because of memories of colonisation or migration' (Weber 1978, 1:385-98). For Weber, the common ethnic features in themselves do not really matter; what matters is the subjective belief of the members of ethnic groups in these features; he called this *presumed identity* (Weber 1978, 1:389; cf. Smith 1983, 31-4). Common features may or may not apply to ethnic groups or nations. The presumed identity implies that people maintain a subjective belief in the existence of such features and this is what brings them together in a coherent group.

Bauer, motivated by the problems that the Austrian socialist party faced in the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Hapsburg Empire, believed that the nation is not a natural entity, but a community that emerged out of changes that modernity introduced: new social mobilisation within a given state, brought about by the emergence of capitalism, which required the adoption of a *high culture* and a *high language* by the new centralised nation-state. Such developments forged uniformity, and homogeneity. In this way, Bauer did not restrict himself to the idea of the nation as a new entity, but attempted to pinpoint what engendered it (Bauer 2000a, 19-36,55-158).

Renan's, Weber's and Bauer's ideas were rather neglected at the time of their publication, but stimulated scholars in the aftermath of World War II. Two of these writers acquired immense importance, for trying to deepen the arguments described above on the emergence of nations, the processes that engendered them and the subjective way, following Weber, to approach national identities: the Czech social and political scientist Karl W. Deutsch (1912-92) and the British historian Elie Kedourie (1926-92). The former suggested that nations emanated from a process connected with modernism that was characterised by urbanisation,

social mobility, literacy and the communication mechanisms that invented new roles for the members of the society, working across the lines initiated by Bauer (Deutsch 1966, 97-105). On the other hand, Kedourie suggested that nations were formed by the revolutionary legacy of the French Revolution and the rapid decline of traditional habits and religious beliefs, due to the predominance of Enlightenment and German Romanticism, rather deepening Renan's thought (Kedourie 1966, 92-117). Despite criticism, Deutsch's and Kedourie's contributions gave a 'fresh impetus to the debate on nationalism' (Özkirimli 2000, 52), as their thought influenced the scholars that formed the so-called *modernist* school of thought.

The modernist or *constructivist* school produced scholars whose theories vary significantly. They constitute *a school of thought* only insofar as they worked on the lines of thought expressed above: the idea of the recent emergence of nations (recalling Renan, Bauer, Deutsch and, to a lesser extent, Kedourie) and the idea that nations are not formed by objective criteria, as primordialism would have it, but by the subjective belief in such criteria (recalling Weber). For modernists it is modernity and its financial, political, social and cultural changes (Industrial Revolution, French Revolution, the rise of the middle class and capitalism, Romanticism) that engendered nationalism and, eventually, nations. These views can be better summarised in Gellner's famous aphorism: 'the great but valid paradox is this: nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism, rather than, as you might expect, the other way round … It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round' (Gellner 1983, 55). Some scholars endorsed this in sharper terms (Hobsbawm 1992, 10), while others were more moderate, such as Miroslav Hroch (b.1932), for whom 'the relation between the nation and national consciousness (or national identity or nationalism) is not one of unilateral derivation but one of mutual and complementary correlation' (Hroch 1998, 104; cf. Hroch 1985, 175-91). At any rate, their agreement can be restricted in the following three principles: First, that nationalism is recent and novel; second, that nations are recent and novel; third, that nationalism and nations are products of modernity (Smith 2003c, 358). According to modernists, nationalism is the ideology that produced nations by demanding a nation-state. The formation of a nation-state reinforces the formation of a nation, through its mechanisms, such as the educational system, which imposes upon its citizens one spoken vernacular, that of the culture it promotes, the *high culture*, and the military service, which include all people from different classes of the society.

A more detailed analysis of these views is beyond the scope of this thesis. For our purposes, it is enough to bear in mind that the modernist approach regards nations as entities that appeared with the economic, social, political and, eventually, even cultural changes initiated by modernity, though not always evenly and in the same way. It is, therefore, absolutely impossible, according to the modernist approach, to find entities resembling to nations or ideas parallel to nationalism in pre-modern societies: nations 'do not have navels' (Gellner 1996, 366-70) of any kind.[47] The main contribution of the modernist approach, despite the variety of the views expressed by its representatives, is that it examined and

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[47] Though Gellner believed in the above idea, in the related article (Gellner 1996, 366-70) he expressed himself more moderately.

analysed rationally nations and nationalism, effectively proving the erroneousness and absurdity of nationalist primordialism. However, certain questions remained unanswered. If we are to assume that there were no nations or nationalisms before modernity, how are we to comprehend similar phenomena in pre-modern societies? Moreover, if we are to accept the recent emergence of nations and nationalism, how are we going to interpret the almost epidemic world-wide diffusion of nations and the immense persuasiveness and tremendous influence of nationalism? If it is true that nationalism as an ideology is strongly connected with the nation-state, does this necessarily mean that nations did not exist prior to modernity? Is this not a logical gap (cf. Ziakas 1988, 66-7)? It can very well be that modern nationalism and the modern nation-state built on pre-existing national identities. Finally, why did nationalism not vanish, as the modernists had predicted? To reverse Eric Hobsbawm's (1917-2012) Hegelian prophecy (Hobsbawm 1992, 192), the owl of Minerva did not fly out at dusk this time. Why?

Before proceeding to alternative views it is necessary to point out that the modernist/ constructivist view seems to be the prevailing one in the relevant literature. This is probably not alien to the modern sociopolitical, even financial, reality. Indeed, the modernist theory, based as it is in the idea of the novelty of nations, nationalisms, and nation-states, demythologises the nation, overturns it from its place as the supreme value of society, deconstructs nationalism as an ideology, and relativises the nation-state, which does not appear as the decisive factor in making politics any more. In so doing, the modernist school of thought becomes the meeting point of the internationalist left and the globalised capitalism (cf. Ziakas 1988, 67).

An attempt to address the questions left unanswered by the modernist school of thought was made by John A. Armstrong (1920-2010), Anthony D. Smith (1939-2016) and the group of scholars that followed them, the ethno-symbolists. Armstrong suggested that modern nations have their foundations in the past and only a journey to history, to the *longue durée*, as he termed it following the French *Annales* School, enables scholars to comprehend the persistence of the *mythomoteur*; the mechanism, that is, of myths, symbols, traditions, patterns, beliefs that distinctively constitute an ethnic group or are used by modern nations to support their putative continuity in time. Smith went even further by examining this *longue durée* of modern nations at length, concluding that pre-modern, even ancient, ethnic groups or *ethnies* were transformed to modern nations through certain socio-political processes that led to the emergence of modern nation-states. Nations as concrete entities do not fully exist without their political expressions, the nation-states. These views were followed and further developed by other scholars, whose common features can be summed up in two postulates. First, ethno-symbolists did not form a coherent theory of *ethnogenesis*, a grand narrative as it were, alternative to the aforementioned modernism. They strongly maintained that the multiplicity and diversity of the cases involved negate any globally applied general theory, though such a theory, as Smith admitted, is 'desirable in principle' (Smith 2003c, 359). Armstrong, in his turn, considered ethno-symbolism as 'highly appropriate for the modern European heirs of Hellenism', connected as it is with the Greek, Jewish and Christian traditions, and cannot always have an impact beyond the West (Armstrong 2004, 11,13). Second, the modern nation is not a

construction *ex materia non-pre-existente*, 'forged out of thin air' (Puri 2004, 182), but it refers to the pre-modern *ethnie*. For ethno-symbolists, therefore, nations do have navels that connect them to the past, to the *ethnie* (Armstrong 1982. Smith 1986. Smith 1991. Smith 1998, 170-98. Smith 2010; cf. Özkirimli 2000, 167-89). This does not mean that these navels are always real. There are frequent cases in which nations invent or construct their navels retrospectively (Eriksen 2004, 58-9). It is, therefore, significant to point out that nationalism changes nations; it also changes the way in which people understand themselves as members of a certain nation or conceive the meaning of the nation. At any rate, ethno-symbolism attempted to understand the endurance of nations and the persuasiveness of nationalism based on the *longue durée*. However, Smith and his followers maintained one fundamental modernist view. Though modern nations stem from pre-modern *ethnies*, the latter, despite their importance, do not overlap with the former. This is why the *ethnie* becomes a nation only when it acquires a political identity. Such a process, as the modernists originally suggested, indisputably belongs to modernity.

Modernism and ethno-symbolism achieved a fresh look at nations and nationalism, a look that effectively negated nationalist primordialism. They suggested new ways to conceive nationalism, national consciousness and national identity. Though ethno-symbolism does not constitute a master narrative, Armstrong's observation that it suits the modern heirs of the Hellenic-Judeo-Christian culture makes it important for this thesis. Orthodox Christianity, especially in Greece, is included in this broad culture. Indeed, most nations, according to Smith, have emerged out of heterogenous populations and have amalgamated through precesses that took place in the Middle Ages. However, there are some which are capable of referring to a dominant *ethnie* as the source of their modern community, national ideology, and state. Such nations can be considered the most influential and sociologically the most successful, characterised by sustainability and stability (Garvin 1990, 20-3. Guibernau-Hutchinson 2004, 2). Greeks and Jews are among these nations. It is not coincidental, therefore, that these nations are almost entirely absent from modernist analyses, while constituting significant parts of the ethno-symbolist approaches (cf. Armstrong 1982, 93-128. Smith 1986, 21-108).

However, the study of nations and nationalism is not complete. One of the features inherent to modernism, especially ethno-symbolism, is the terminological obscurity created by the above complex and ornate theories (Connor 1990, 92-103. Connor 1994, 89-143. Guibernau-Hutchinson 2004, 3. Puri 2004, 182,184). At the same time, numerous areas of history and various cases of countries and peoples were necessarily neglected. Is every historical period in any place, even if it is restricted to Europe, covered by modernism or ethno-symbolism?

2.1.2. The revenge of the evidence: Scientific primordialism and perennialism

The modernist-ethnosymbolist disagreement is not the sole discourse on nations and nationalism. Anthropologists and historians developed quite different ideas. Some of the anthropologists, for instance, developed ideas resembling primordialism. This primordialism did not aim at supporting any form of nationalism as nineteenth-century primordialism had previously done; it only supported the view that groups resembling modern nations existed even

in antiquity. Such nations, according to primordialist anthropologists who oppose the modernist paradigm, developed a sense of kinship, common linguistic forms, and a belief of being bounded with a certain land. This primordial idea of belonging does not coincide with the idea of belonging developed by members of modern nations. This is why other terms have been invented in order to describe these groups' development in antiquity, such as *ethnicity*, or Smith's *ethnie*. However these groups may be named, they resemble modern nations in many ways; this allows us to speak of nations in antiquity. Such views were developed on a biological or cultural basis by scholars, such as Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) (Geerrtz 1973, 234-310), Pierre L. van den Berghe (b.1933) (Berghe 1987, 13-82), and, more recently, Steven Grosby (b.1951) (Grosby 2002, 13-91. Grosby 2005, 7-56; cf. Goodblatt 2006, 18-26).

Moreover, numerous historians doubted the findings of modernists. Medievalists, for instance, or specialists studying early modern Europe, found it difficult to 'bring the modernist portrayal of their periods into line with their own perceptions' (Hirschi 2012, 7), realising that their fields of expertise were ostentatiously neglected. Indeed, the majority of modernists tended to form and enunciate their theories, and subsequently to use historical data to support their views. Historians, however, who had based their research chiefly on primary sources, found it difficult to compromise with the above theories. They presented research, according to their area of expertise, pointing in the same direction with the above primordialists: nations and nationalisms existed before modernity. According to Smith, their common view is that nations are perennial entities, branding them as *perennialists*, distinguishing them from primordialists inasmuch as they did not consider nations as primordial groups of kinship, but, rather, as either continuous or recurrent entities (Smith 1998, 159-65,167-9; cf. Özkirimli 2000, 68-70,80-3). For Llobera, himself a perennialist, perennialism constitutes an evolutionary approach, which conceives of nations as medieval entities, and 'in some cases much earlier' (Llobera 2003, 15) that evolved to modern nations. Additionally, perennialists consider the nations as constructed entities, but place their emergence in pre-modern times, or even attempt to promote one case among many as the 'first nation of the world' or the *prototype*, which others followed (Greenfeld 1992, 29-87. Hastings 1997, 35-65). Other perennialists do not attempt to place the origins of nations in time. They restrict themselves to suggesting the pre-modernity of nations and nationalism – very effectively, to be sure. In a seminal analysis, for instance, Philip Gorski (b.1963) proved the early modernity of the Dutch national consciousness and nationalism, using precisely the criteria of the modernist school of thought, turning their arguments upside down (Gorski 2000, 1428-68). Moreover, Caspar Hirschi's (b.1975) weighty contribution traces the origins of European nationalism to late medieval Europe (Hirschi 2012, 34-49).

The perennialist thought made two major contributions to the debate. At first, they proved the pre-modernity of nations and nationalism, without negating their constructed nature. Constructivism, therefore, is not necessarily modernist. Second, the terminological obscurity vanishes in their works as is the case with primordialists. Obviously, they do not feel the modernist imperative need not to term as *nation* anything that looks like it in pre-modern times. The same is true for nationalism. Apparently, however, these are often the only features that

group perennialists together. Their approaches differ significantly. Despite their common conclusion on the pre-modernity of nations and nationalism they point at different cases. This of course is due to their need to focus on certain cases in order to use the often vast primary material effectively. Their varying views are often conflicting as a result.

Despite the priority of the Anglo-Saxon bibliography on the matter, it is necessary to briefly summarise some thoughts on the relative Greek bibliography, as it influenced, or was influenced by, the Greek theologians. The Greek bibliography, thus, is lengthy but limited in perspective, for the vast majority of Greek scholars endorse the modernist school of thought, attempting to apply the modernist principles to the Greek case.[48] There are some scholars who have been more creative and informative in their approaches, such as George Contogeorgis (b. 1947) (Contogeorgis 2006a. Contogeorgis 2006b. Contogeorgis 2014) and Theodore Ziakas (b. 1945) (Ziakas 2001. Ziakas 2003. Ziakas 2005. Ziakas 2012. Ziakas-Korovines 1998). Although they can be considered perennialists, their different - compared to the above views - understanding of nationhood points to two systems of thought that cannot strictly follow the above pattern of priamordialism - modernism - perennialism. For the time being, and before proceeding to a brief sketch of Ziakas's theory only, it is necessary to point out that the limitations of all the above approaches, from modernism to perennialism, lead to the conclusion that apparently none of the above approaches fully negates the others. Clearly, each one of them stresses its own advantages, while manifesting the weaknesses of the others. With perennialism the impossibility of a general theory, applied globally, is further accentuated. No grand narrative can be adopted. It is, hence, imperative to choose the approach that, its limitations notwithstanding, best fits the case which is going to be examined in this thesis. In this light the insights of Hirschi and Ziakas were brought to the fore in the methodology section. In particular, Ziakas's contribution underlines the importance of the part religion played in the formation of nations; this is why it is necessary, for the needs of this study, to present the main points of his theory briefly.

Indeed, Ziakas's theory on nations and nationalism is based on his main idea that the modern individualism is declining to nihilism in the post-modern world (Ziakas 2001. Ziakas 2003. Ziakas 2005). He understands nations as structures of traditions and he analyses this in his 2012 *Fatherland-Ego-Consumer*.[49] In this book Ziakas presents the modernist/constructivist paradigm as a symptom of the modern nihilism, as a part of a modern process of deconstructing notions prevalent in the past. His starting-point is the outward project, as presented in the introduction above,[50] i. e. to look at nations as communities that understand themselves by coming in contact - occasionally in conflict - with other communities (Ziakas 2012, 23-4). Through this process, the community becomes a collective subject aware of its otherness towards other communities when it possesses a distinctive culture which differentiates it from the culture of another community

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[48] For a Greek criticism of the views of the modernist school of thought and its Greek adherents see Tahopoulos 2009, 11-85,137-212.

[49] This concerns only the first part of his book (Ziakas 2012, 23-149). The second part, irrelevant for this thesis, is an interesting analysis of the modern political system in Greece (Ziakas 2012, 151-250).

[50] See chapter 1.4.1.

with which it comes in contact (Ziakas 2012, 34-7). Every culture is formed as the result of the effort of humans to elevate themselves from *mere living* (ζῆν) to *living well* (εὐ ζῆν). This is from where tradition comes: tradition forms the distinctive culture of each nation, as a collective subject, since tradition is the social mechanism of creativity in every aspect and level of social life. Thus, modernity, which is often understood as the opposite of tradition, is nothing else than a form of tradition which, in its turn, forms a distinctive culture (Ziakas 2012, 32-4,47-9). This is why Eisenstadt's approach of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt 2003), or Schmidt's suggestion of the varieties of modernity (Schmidt 2006, 77-97), fits well with this approach; modernity comes in contact with different cultures within which different traditions are at work, they connect and produce distinctive results, despite their modernity. Thus, traditions, according to Ziakas, are mechanisms that tend to change over time, through processes which are either conflictual or peaceful, despite maintaining features of the past. Traditions, therefore, possess a dynamic character and are not entirely connected to maintenance and conservation (Ziakas 2012, 58-61).

Ziakas distinguishes three main kinds of traditions at work within the nations as collective subjects: the metaphysical, the educational, and the legislative-political ones. Each member of the national community participates in the formation of the traditions, while being influenced by them. In pre-modern societies the central tradition was the metaphysical, because a society tended to ascribe a meaning to the divine and according to this meaning the society formed its ideas about what is right and what is wrong, as well as which is its anthropological model. According to Heraclitus, 'all human laws are fed by only one, the divine'. Divinity becomes thus the metaphysical head of the relevant tradition of each nation (Ziakas 2012, 52-3). However, the most fundamental tradition of a nation is its educational one, for it is the one that moulds the language and influences more directly the members of the nation (Ziakas 2012, 75). The nation, therefore, is a structure of metaphysical, educational, and legislative-political traditions (Ziakas 2012, 73-6,103). Ziakas seems to endorse Renan's idea about the daily plebiscite when he claims that patriotism signifies acceptance by the individual of the models set by the traditions of a given nation. Lack of patriotism means that the individual rejects the models thereof (Ziakas 2012, 105).

The traditions are not sets of concrete blocks. Within a nation different traditions emerge. One of them usually becomes central, while others remain peripheral. For example, the Greek nation forms its structure from Orthodox Christianity, which acquires the place of the metaphysical tradition and informs the educational and legislative-political ones. Nowadays, modernity tends to influence more the other two traditions and turn against the metaphysical one. This alliance of two traditions against a third within the same nation proves, for Ziakas, the inclination of traditions to change, and it is termed as *threefold bond* (Ziakas 2012, 77-81). Such mechanisms, however, are developed also in the periphery of the Greek nation, where different metaphysical traditions are at work - Muslim, Jewish, and Roman Catholic - and inform accordingly distinct traditions (Ziakas 2012, 81-4).

For the needs of this thesis, Ziakas's theory escapes from the modernist paradigm not inheriting its disadvantages, while considering the cultural factor more important than the political one. As Ziakas propounds, early at his study, there is no need to think of nations only through states (Ziakas 2012, 25-7). Of great significance, however, is the fact that Ziakas brings to the fore, through his ideas on the importance of the metaphysical tradition, the religious factor, which has been very often neglected in modern literature, especially the prevailing modernist one. Indeed, religion has played an important part in the formation and development not only of nationalisms, but also of nations themselves. It is precisely religion that will concern the analysis of this thesis immediately below.

## 2.2. Religion and nationalism

The importance of religion did not escape the attention of the scholars who worked on nationalism. Some of the above mentioned scholars showed a peripheral interest in religion; others, however, focused precisely on the interrelation between religion and nationalism. The following lines will be based on precisely the latter category of scholars, attempting simultaneously to focus on Christianity and, to be more precise, Eastern Christianity.

Christianity seems, at first sight, to be at odds with what we see in nations and nationalism: as a religion, it is characterised by other-worldliness, it refers to a universal God, believes in a universal truth and maintains a universal brotherhood of members. These features paint an inflexible image. If the Christian doctrines contradict nationalism, then there cannot be such a thing as Christian nationalism, or such an individual as a Christian nationalist. Inevitably, nationalist thinkers, who did not renounce their religious affections, such as Johannes Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), found it difficult to combine their nationalism with Christianity. Fichte, however, found a modus vivendi by considering Christianity a religion that overcomes the regular order of the pursuit of happiness in this life, in anticipation of a heavenly one. Since the nation inspires the desire for freedom and happiness, Christianity should be considered as an amplification and not an impediment to this end. The Christian anticipation of a heavenly kingdom does not contradict, according to Fichte, the pursuit of happiness and freedom in this life (Fichte 2008, 100-1). Conversely, Christian thinkers who became staunch critics of nationalism, such as Acton (Acton 1949, 166-95;[51] cf. Massey 1969, 495-508) or Kierkegaard (Backhouse 2011), found it easier to accommodate their anti-nationalist ideas to their Christian beliefs. For Acton, for instance, 'in the ancient world idolatry and nationality went together, and the same term is applied in Scripture to both. It was the mission of the Church to overcome national differences' (Acton 1949, 186; cf. Massey 1969, 501. Wood 1967, 257). On the contrary, nationalist Christians need to balance between two contradictory views: in-clusive Christianity and ex-clusive nationalism.

Despite this incipient inconsistency between Christianity and nationalism, history proved that the two intermingled in a rather unforeseen way. A striking proof of this interconnection is the fact that probably the first use of the term *nationalism* in English was in 1746 by a cleric in a

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[51] Acton's essay on nationality was first published in *The Home and Foreign Review* 1 (1862), 1-25.

theological context: Nicolaus Zinzendorf (1700-60), the prominent pioneer of the Protestant Mission Movement, while addressing a religious audience in London, celebrated the value of national differences in Christianity, despite regretting 'the absence of what he called "nationalism" among his fellow Germans' (van Kley 2008, 252), probably because of lack of German political unity. Religion has played a significant part in the public domain and, therefore, it engaged with political and social developments. Moreover, Christianity has been characterised by a vacillation or ambivalence between the particular, traced back to the ethnic understanding of Judaism, and the universal, initiated by early Christianity. In other words, there is a tension in Christianity 'between its localised embodiment and its universal ideal' (Kokosalakis 1993, 144-5; cf. Hastings 1999, 389-90. Hastings 2001, 248-9. Kalaitzidis 2015, 119-21. Ziakas 2012, 70-2). This is so because religions have always provided much of the myth-symbol complexes of ethnic or national identities (Armstrong 1982, 238-40). As a result, either by examining the elites and their role in the formation of national movements, following the modernist school of thought, or by exploring the beliefs and motifs influencing the folk, according to the ethno-symbolic approach, or by examining religion as the core of the structure of traditions that constitute a nation, to follow Ziakas's paradigm, it is evident that Christianity provided rich material, which could be used for political ends.

Indeed, Christianity interacted with nationalism in three ways: first, as a model, secondly, as its support or handmaiden and, thirdly, as an operational core for nationalism. Additionally, it has been suggested that there is a certain distinctive form of religious nationalism. What is meant here by the term *model* is what has been said about nationalism as the *god of modernity*: religion constituted a pattern that nationalism followed, the latter becoming the former's substitute. As a *handmaiden* of nationalism, religion seemed to offer its beliefs and ideas to the service of the nation. Some modern nations, for instance, adopted the Hebrew model of the *chosen people*, understanding themselves as nations with a particular role in the world assigned to them by God himself. Moreover, religion can be found at the *core* of certain modern nationalisms, as it constitutes a part of the structure of multipolar and equal traditions, namely the nations. The existence of a distinctive modern religious nationalism is considered here as an important analytical category, which needs, however, to be treated with extreme caution, as will be explained below.[52]

## 2.2.1. Model

Influential modern thinkers, as prominent as Max Horkheimer (Horkheimer 2004, 12), understood nationalism as the modern substitute of pre-modern religions, and the nation as the *god of modernity*. This understanding originated from Rousseau's ideas on civil religion and the incompatibility of *true* Christianity of the Gospels with the state - the democratic state in particular; for Rousseau Christianity can never be a national or state religion, since Christianity refers to all humans (Rousseau 1997, 142-51; cf. Llobera 1994, 144). Durkheim was inclined to

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[52] The analysis presented here is mainly based on Rogers Brubaker (Brubaker 2012, 2-20). Some scholars presented this interrelation between religion and nationalism in slightly different ways (Kedourie 1974, 1-152. Smith 2000, 791-814).

apply his argument on the tendency of societies to create gods, even secular ones, to Rousseau's idea on the 'purely civil profession of faith' or the 'civil religion' and to the French Revolution (Durkheim 2001, 161; cf. Mitchell 1931, 87-106. Smith 1983, 21,29-31. Llobera 1994, 145-6). Inspired by Durkheim's approaches, the influential American historian Carlton Hayes (1882-1964) transferred these thoughts to nationalism studies (Hayes 1926, 93-125. Hayes 1960, 53-6,164-81; cf. Smith 2000, 792,797. Brubaker 2012, 3-4. Santiago 2012, 4-12).

More particularly, nation-states have adopted a certain cult for the motherland, or those who have died defending it, the heroes. This signifies that nationalist imagination is particularly concerned with death and immortality, salvation (for heroes) and damnation (for traitors), issues which are expressed in a quasi-religious way. Apparently, the religious mentality deeply influences nationalist thought and practice. For instance, the cult of the saints of religion serves as a paradigm for the cult of the saints of the nation. National heroes were canonised by the Church, as in the case of the French king Louis IX (r.1226-1270), or the Bulgarian tsar Peter (r. 927-969) - cases of *messianisation of politics*, according to Smith - while, conversely, certain saints were considered patrons of certain nations, such as Sava (1174-1236) for the Serbs or Patrick (c.387-c.460) for the Irish - cases of *politicisation or nationalisation of religion* (Smith 2000, 799). The catalogue of similarities carries on almost endlessly: veneration of icons - veneration of flags, Church Fathers - Fathers of the nation, to mention but few (Anderson 2006, 9-12. Greenfeld 1996, 169-91. Grosby 2005, 87-8. Hastings 1997, 189-90. Hayes 1960, 165-8. Hobsbawm 1992, 72. Hutchinson 2004, 112. Hutchinson 2005, 51. Smith 2000, 799-800,807-8,812). It appears then that the nation is conceived as a soul, a spiritual reality as it were, uniting the past with the present and the future. It inspires, as in the case of the heroes, a Christian-like sacrificial love, which transcends natural human selfishness and exalts them in the eyes of the yet unborn generations, securing for them the positive verdict of history (Anderson 1999, 197-204. Bauer 2000b, 23. Hayes 1960, 165. Smith 2000, 808-13). This is probably why nationalism, following the example of Christianity, values not so much those who killed, but, rather, those who were sacrificially killed for the nation (Smith 1989, 362). Such features can be found among nationalist thinkers, such as Fichte and Renan (Fichte 2008, 35-46. Renan 1990, 17-9).

This inclination of nationalism to emulate religion can be attributed to fundamental inherent similarities between the two of them, because both nationalism and religion are modes of self-identification and social organisation and ways of contextualising political claims (Brubaker 2012, 3-5). To conceive nationalism as a modern religion constitutes probably part of a process of rationalisation of religion in modernity, as, for those who support this thesis, religion, in its traditional form, cannot really survive in modern societies (Berger 1967; cf. Lambert 1999, 309). Perhaps, this also explains why some of the most ardent ideological supporters of nationalism were either critical of traditional religions or adopted anticlerical attitudes or became even agnostics and atheists (cf. Sanabria 2009). Nationalism, therefore, appeared as a secular phenomenon, contradicting religion, despite religion's inability to realise this (cf. Klausner 1960, 135-7,143). The schema that emanates is, therefore, rather obvious: nationalism

as a religion replaces traditional religions, which have no place in modern societies (cf. Casanova 1994, 11-39. Lambert 1999, 309-10). Constructivists, such as Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm 1992, 192), backed by globalisation theories, expanded this idea of decline to nationalism itself, envisaging a world without religions, either the pre-modern ones or their modern substitutes.

However, Horkheimer was able to point out that nationalism, as the religion of modernity, could not cover the gap that the absence of traditional religion left (Horkheimer 2004, 79; cf. Lambert 1999, 310-1), while Thomas Luckmann believed that religion never vanished; it was only restricted in the private sphere of the individual (Luckmann 1967, 116; cf. Beckford-Luckmann 1989, 1-2. Robertson 1989, 10-23). *Prophecies* for the decline and fall of both religion and nationalism were proved false. Modernisation and secularisation theories often functioned as doctrines and norms rather than theories: religion in particular was considered a relic of pre-modern societies and modernity, despite guaranteeing the freedom of religion, treated it more as an enemy or a danger and desired its decline. The new globalising world is a rapidly changing, rather chaotic, one that generates feelings of anxiety and insecurity in humans. As a response to precisely this reality, people turned again to religion. Traditional religions performed an unpredicted vitality, an unexpected readiness to adapt to modern societies and an ability to influence societies and individuals, belying contrary expectations. Modernisation and secularisation theories do not hold fast any more (Berger 1999. Eisenstadt 2003, 953-79. Huntington 1993, 22-49. Huntington 2002. Jürgensmeyer 2003. Jürgensmeyer 2008. Moseley 2013b, 1-13,16-24,26-31. Spohn 2003, 265-86).[53] Recently, modern political theorists expressed the view that religions and their theologies were falsely neglected, thus starting a very interesting discourse on the role of religion in shaping modern politics (Asad 1999, 178-96. Cavanaugh 2009. Friedland 2001, 125-52. Friedland 2002, 381-425. Kinnvall 2004, 741-67. Kokosalakis 1993, 135,138-42. Lambert 1999, 314-5,328-30. Philpott 2007, 505-25. Smith 2000, 813-4. Toft-Philpott-Shah 2011). Even recent quantitative studies on the role of religion in modern societies point towards the same direction (Fox 2004a, 715-31. Fox 2004b, 55-76. Fox-Sandler 2005, 317-35. Katzenstein-Byrnes, 2006, 679-94. Kunovich 2006, 435-60). Nationalism, on the other hand, still appears as a significant force mobilising masses. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, scholars refer to a renaissance of traditional religions and a rebirth of nationalism. Probably, the return to nationalism is also strongly related to the anxiety and sense of lack of freedom that emerges in the modern globalising world, as the end of the nation-state seems to imply the simultaneous fall of liberal democracy, as it was experienced within the nation-state (cf. Biggar 2014,26-52. Habermas 2011, 15-6). At any rate, religion has never ceased to be a salient feature ('feature' added) vitally contributing to such processes as identity formation, nation building and the like. Religion and nationalism seem to vigorously return to the public domain.

Some scholars have suggested that secularisation maintains its importance and influence in the West, as it has always been a western phenomenon, later exported beyond the West.

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[53] The issue has been discussed in Greece too (Abatzides 2007, 211-62. Kokosalakis 2007, 371-406. Lipovats 2007, 15-37. Vasileiades 2007b, 39-54).

Therefore, the resurgence of religion is, according to them, a Third-World phenomenon and appears only when religion functions as a political factor and not when it restricts itself in its metaphysical concerns (Haynes 1997, 713-5; cf. Schmidt 2006, 77-97). The modern phenomenon of Islamism, for instance, constitutes such an example (cf. Moseley 2013b, 24-6. Mozaffari 2007, 17-33). But this idea is of very limited value. To mention only one, among many examples, the modern rise of Protestantism and Protestant fundamentalism in the United States is anything but a Third-World phenomenon (cf. Hauerwas 2011, 3-20. Moseley 2013b, 13-6. Wood 1967, 268-9).

Resurgent religion and the reborn nationalism, apart from falsifying the *prophecies* of their fall, prove also the limitations of viewing nationalism as the religion of modernity. Such an approach, valuable as it may be for the understanding of nationalism per se and the institutionalisation of modern societies, fails to comprehend the independent role of religion and its function in society. Traditional religion satisfies, in its essence, the ontological security of its adherents, while easing their existential anxiety. Scholars who maintain their views on the domination of the secularisation paradigm, at least in the West, fail to evaluate the above problems that the modern globalised world causes to humans. The transcendence of nationalism, moreover, is a pseudo-transcendence inasmuch as it lacks an other-worldly eschatology; nationalism can give a meaning to death, it cannot explain it as an inevitable destiny for its citizens; it serves the idea of the immortality of the nation rather than that of the individual.[54] Its sacredness is a pseudo-sacredness, as it lacks any reference to divine providence sanctifying earthly things. Indeed, though it draws on motifs, symbols and rituals from the resources of religion, nationalism remains a this-worldly anthropocentric ideology, contradicting the other-worldly God-centric mentality of religion, its transcendental aspect. Moreover, nationalism, as a secular phenomenon, rejects religious transcendence: 'while modern nationalisms often incorporate motifs from earlier, traditional religions, they also reject many of their ideas and practices, particularly those that hold out the prospect of seeking salvation from a cosmic, other-worldly source' (Smith 2003a, 17). This is why Grosby conceived nationalism more as a survival of pagan religiosity than the substitute for traditional religions (Grosby 2003, 12. Grosby 2005, 88-91; cf. Santiago 2012, 12-18. Kinvall 2004, 746,759,762-3). He was not the first to do so. This is precisely what Hayes meant, as early as 1960, when he claimed that, despite its connection with Christianity, nationalism as religion constitutes a large-scale tribalism (Hayes 1960, 180). Religion survived perfectly well in its own account often serving nationalist ends.

### 2.2.2. Handmaiden

Rogers Brubaker (b.1956) termed this relationship of religion with nationalism in a rather neutral way as 'a way to explain nationalism' (Brubaker 2012, 3-5). However, nationalist intellectuals, nationalist rhetoric and nationalist ideology actively used religion to achieve their targets. This is why the term *handmaiden* is used here. The initiative belongs to the nationalist side, while religion remains a rather passive tool at the hands of nationalists.

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[54] Horkheimer's idea that people do not struggle any more for their own immortality but for the this-worldly happiness of the coming generations 'for whom they know how to die' (Horkheimer 1972, 130) is here reversed.

Modern nationalism and, eventually, the modern nation-state, have often used religion to encourage uniformity. The kind of religion used was normally the one bounded with the people and the territory controlled by the state, despite the existence of religious minorities. This engendered the phenomenon of national Churches. Conversely, among linguistic groups within monarchical states, religion was used as a solid basis for opposition to the monarchy if the latter was identified with another religious group, as it occurred with Protestantism against Catholicism in the Holy Roman Empire (Breuilly 1994, 76-81; cf. Wood 1967, 262-3,265)[55] or with Orthodox Christianity against Islam in the Ottoman Empire (Breuilly 1994, 140-3. Grosby 2005, 24,68,82-3). Moreover, the Judaic foundations of Christianity allowed for the adoption of the two core notions of ancient Judaism: that of the chosen people and that of the Promised Land. Thus, European peoples often understood themselves as groups with a particular sacred role in history, while inhabiting a sacred land, expressly protected by God, or the Mother of God, or certain saints (Hastings 2003, 29-54).  They also developed ideas of kinship with the actual Holy Land (Moxnes 2012, 39-59,154-5). Another early use of the term *nationalism* comes from 1836 in again a religious context, where 'the doctrine that certain nations are divinely elected' was expressed (Smith 2010, 5; cf. Cauthen 2004, 20). This idea was termed *chosenness*.

Modern scholars attempted to categorise *chosenness*, according to the particular ways in which it was expressed. Thus, Adrian Hastings (1929-2001) identified two types of chosenness, a western and an eastern. Hastings's approach is not merely geographical; it is profoundly cultural and, what is more, theological. Western chosenness is inspired by ancient Israel and the Old Testament legacy and influenced mostly Catholic and, more profoundly, Protestant peoples. Eastern chosenness was rather inspired by the political theology of the Byzantine Empire and the relevant legacy of Church-state relations. It, therefore, influenced Orthodox peoples (Hastings 1997, 195-8. Hastings 1999, 386-7). Anthony Smith, on the other hand, identified two forms of chosenness, a missionary and a covenantal one. Missionary chosenness describes the behaviour of peoples who perform an expansionist, proselytistic attitude, such as the medieval Byzantines. Covenantal chosenness, on the other hand, refers to those peoples who, like the ancient Israelites, believe in their special relationship with God, based on a certain agreement with Him, which ascribes them a particular divine role (Smith 1999, 334-9. Smith 2000, 804-7,812. Smith 2003a, 44-65,95-130; cf. Cauthen 2004, 21-5. Roshwald 2006, 165-252). This covenantal form of chosenness was termed by Philip Gorski as *Hebraic* or *holy* nationalism (Gorski 2000, 1435). As it appears, Smith's typology is not far from Hastings's; the former develops and deepens the latter. These distinctions, however, are often obscure and an effort to categorise attitudes according to them can prove a rather complex process.The two forms of chosenness do not seem to be mutually exclusive. For instance, Dutch Protestant nationalism, deeply inspired by ancient Israel, belongs to the western, according to Hastings, or covenantal, according to Smith, type of chosenness. Similarly, Serb nationalism, strongly connected with the Byzantine legacy and the strong bond between the Church and the state, follows the eastern or missionary chosenness.

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[55] This is why some Catholic scholars viewed Protestantism as the triumph of nationalism over the universal Church (Burke 1928, 74). Catholic Uniatism, however, was accused for playing precisely the same role in Orthodox countries (Turczynski 1972, 469-70).

However, setting aside the doubts raised by the Serb example - which, though eastern, does not seem to be missionary but rather covenantal - the example of Russia proves the obscurity - despite their significance in principle - of the above typologies. Russia is undoubtedly an eastern country which develops both types of chosenness. The idea of Moscow as the *Third Rome* can be understood as missionary chosenness, as it inspired the expansionist policies of the Russian empire, following the Byzantine legacy of the Church-state strong union, while the belief that one can be redeemed only if one is born in the holy land of Russia is rather connected with a form of covenantal chosenness, inspired rather by the Old Testament (Dutch chosenness: Gorski 2000, 1436-52. English chosenness: Gorski 2000, 1452-5. Hastings 1997, 35-65. Greek chosenness: Smith 1999, 341. Russian chosenness: Cherniavsky 1969. Hastings 2003, 39-41. Johnson 2003. Zernov 1944).

Obviously, chosenness is a rather Eurocentric idea, as both Hastings's and Smith's typologies are fairly based on examples from the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, it has to be stressed that such phenomena go often beyond the West, as the example of modern Islamism proves. For instance, Islamist Egyptians believe that the religionisation of politics and the state constitutes the will of God - something that is reminiscent of Smith's covenantal chosenness - and the role of such a state is to spread the word of God - missionary chosenness (Friedland 2011, 68-74). Such examples, however, require further examination - which goes beyond the scope of this thesis - as such Islamists do not seem to have national but rather religious motives; apparently, it is the Islamic *umma* that overcomes nations and nationalities, and this, not nationalism, is what inspires them.

Modernist scholars rather neglected the issue of chosenness, as they considered it a concept adopted by political elites, which was imposed on the masses to mobilise them. Its importance, nevertheless, requires a much more meticulous approach, since the Bible, from which the idea of chosenness emanates, deeply influences Christians, while chosenness is important for the formation and survival of communities and their national-political mobilisation (Smith 2000, 803-4,810-1).

However, as suggested above, these ideas were not really compatible with Christianity itself, as a monotheistic world religion. Chosenness is rooted in the Judaic tradition and not Christianity. Hastings made the significant distinction between the two Testaments: chosenness is in accordance to the Old Testament, but at odds with the New (Hastings 1999, 389-90; cf. Kalaitzidis 2015, 116-7).[56] This is why the model of *handmaiden* has been stressed here. This model intends to show that, as Gellner put it, 'it is more a case of a secular nationalism using a faith than the other way round' (Gellner 1997, 78). Moreover, with this interrelation with secular nationalism, Christianity itself was eventually in danger of being secularised (Gellner 1983, 78. Gellner 1987, 16). It comes then as no surprise that Christianity can be found at the core of nationalism.

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[56] Hastings believes that, unlike modern Christianity, early Christianity disengaged from Judaic tradition and was characterised by a lack of nationalism (Hastings 2001, 248-9). He also pointed out that ethnic cleansing, strongly connected with chosenness, is also to be found in the Old Testament connected with the chosenness of ancient Israel (Hastings 1999, 395).

### 2.2.3. Core

Weber, followed by the ethno-symbolists, considered the role of religion for the formation of *ethnic groups* of cardinal significance, 'especially since the intelligibility of the behaviour of others is the most fundamental presupposition of group formation' (Weber 1978, 1:390-3; cf. Gellner 1983, 71-2. Grosby 2005, 66-72. Hann 1997, 27-45. Smith 2000, 795-6). This view found even *orthodox* modernists in total agreement.[57] However, in the model adopted here religion plays a role that places it in the very foundations of nationhood. It is precisely religion that is found at the core of the traditions formed by the communities in their multipolar contact with other equal communities (nations). It follows then that nationalism and nationalist rhetoric were often formed by religious initiatives. Christian initiatives often formed national demands or led to national developments, while Christian leaders often became the protagonists of national movements that led to the formation of modern nation-states. More particularly, the Christian Churches were able to influence the masses through their - especially limitedly educated or uneducated lower - clergy profoundly. The role of the latter has been persistently neglected by modern scholarship, but it was this part of the clergy which was able to lead the people and spread the national visions to the society (cf. Grosby 2005, 69. Hastings 1997, 191-3). For instance, after the abolition of the Patriarchate of Pec (1766), Orthodoxy became a popular religion in Serbia, instrumental in the diffusion of myths and symbols. In a far more suggestive example, modern scholarship has underlined the importance of Protestantism, with its inclination to spoken vernaculars, in the formation of linguistically identified high cultures, a practice already known in Eastern Christendom, as the example of the medieval Slavs clearly suggests (Anderson 2006, 39-41. Gellner 1997, 76-7. Hastings 1997, 187-9,193-5. Hastings 2001, 253-4. Safran 2008, 174-6).

Benedict Anderson (1936-2015) noted that prior to Protestantism the existence of a holy language, the lingua franca, in Catholic Europe prevented the developments triggered later by Protestantism (Anderson 2006, 39-41; cf. Gellner 1983, 76-7). Hastings expressed his disagreement by noting that the translation of the holy texts characterised Christianity since its very beginnings and definitely not only since the Reformation. Despite the fact that this is undoubtedly true, Hastings seems to underestimate the fact that Latin was rather imposed in the medieval West by Rome, by stating that these were simply 'periods of intransigence or linguistic conservatism on the part of the authority' and that the 'attempt to make Latin … into a sort of "sacred" language, on the part of Roman clerics' was nothing but 'a deviation from the Christian norm' (Hastings 1997, 193-5; cf. Hastings 2001, 253-4. Smith 2003b, 27). The deviation lasted for so long in the West that it allowed modern non-theologically orientated scholars, such as Anderson, to consider it rightly the norm rather than the deviation. Indeed, the way spoken vernaculars functioned in Western and Central Europe from the sixteenth century onwards constitutes a later example of the importance of spoken vernaculars in Eastern and South-

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[57] 'Religion is a paradoxical cement for proto-nationalism, and indeed modern nationalism' (Hobsbawm 1992, 68).

Eastern Europe, especially in the medieval kingdoms of the Serbs and the Bulgarians. The innate feature of Christianity, to which Hastings refers, was maintained as such by Eastern, rather than Western, Christianity. This is precisely why Vasileios Makrides recently described this preference of Orthodox traditions for spoken vernaculars as one of its inherent features, which make it 'particularly prone to nationalisation and even nationalism' (Makrides 2013, 338-42). In a rather remarkable way Orthodox Christianity, by encouraging spoken vernaculars, fundamentally contributed to the formation of nations, even nationalisms, which eventually turned against it doubting its universality.

The centrality of the role of religion in nation-formation and the national movements has been rather overlooked by modern scholarship in forming theories of nations and nationalism, despite some notable exceptions, such as Anderson, Hastings and Smith. But it is Ziakas's understanding of religion as a part of the structure of traditions that built a nation, which offers a realistic framework to comprehend the role of Christianity as an active factor in national movements and nationalisms, and not merely as a passive tool at the hands of nationalist awakeners. The insistence of the constructivists to focus on the role of the political elites allowed them to understand religion in its role as a handmaiden of nationalism. Their inclination to underestimate the role of the masses, whose behaviour is not at all easily examined, led them to neglect religion as an active player in nation formation. The Christian Churches historically have proven to be very efficient in influencing the masses, though this reality has often not been stressed effectively enough (Hastings 1997, 191-3). Ziakas's suggestion can also account for the fact that religion does not suffice to draw national lines, because different nations may follow the same religion (e.g. Greeks and Serbs) or one nation may contain different religions (e.g. Albanians). This is because religion is not the sole tradition of a nation; it develops together with educational and political/legislative ones. What is more, different traditions may be formed at the centre and the periphery of nations, even if one of them usually becomes the dominant one.

This Christian contribution often led to forms of religious nationalism. Greek or Serbian nationalism and the respective nation-states, for instance, are strongly intertwined with Orthodoxy in such a way that they are often referred to as cases of *nationalisation* or even *étatisation* of religion (Brubaker 2012, 8-12). Despite the secularisation process, which tends to neglect religious traditions, a resurgence of both nationalism and religion took place, belying contrary expectations. The combination of the two brought about the resurgence of religious nationalism too.

2.2.4. God, help this nation: The case for modern religious nationalism

While examining above the case of religion as the model for nationalism, it was suggested that both of them are resurgent in the modern, otherwise globalised and secular world. There is no doubt whatsoever that forms of religious nationalism appeared in the past and still function today. However, this seems to be a difficult point, as modern literature finds it difficult to distinguish between religious nationalism and religious fundamentalism. Before analysing this point even further, it is first necessary to underline the fact that religion often returns in our

modern world in a rather violent form or indirectly encourages violence. Despite the erroneousness of the idea that the resurgence of religion is a 'Third-World phenomenon', it is true that religion does not achieve most of its effect with its strictly theological teachings, unless it responds to political issues and demands (Haynes 1997, 713-5). But this is a rather obvious point and definitely not a new one. Religion is a social phenomenon and it is actively involved in politics. In Christianity there is such a thing as *political theology* at least since the fourth century and the works of Eusebius of Caesarea in Palestine, let alone the Islamic lack of separation between religion and the state. Therefore, Haynes's statement does not seem to offer any significant insight. The issue here is to examine how far the claim for a resurgent modern religious nationalism - and not simply resurgent religion and nationalism - can go. Roger Friedland (Friedland 2001, 125-52. Friedland 2002, 381-425), who postulates the existence of modern religious nationalism, points at cases in the United States, the Middle East, India and elsewhere. Many of these cases, however, seem to be closer to religious fundamentalism than nationalism. The latter, as defined above, preserves the nation as an autonomous value. Its priority, therefore, is the nation and not any of its constituent traditions, such as religion. Fundamentalism, on the contrary, prioritises religion. This is a profoundly significant element that should be taken seriously into account, for nationalism 'cannot be extended to encompass all forms of politics that work in and through nation-states' (Brubaker 2012, 14).

This does not by any means imply that there is no religious nationalism nowadays. It only calls for caution in the examination of such issues. The re-emergence of religion and nationalism in ex-communist countries of Eastern- Southeastern-Europe, to mention but few examples, the strict Hindu character of modern nationalism in India, as well as the renewed vitality of Protestant nationalism in the United States and elsewhere are only the most striking examples of modern religious nationalism. Religion often remains at the core of modern nationalisms. A resurgent religion, what is more, maintains its ability to give a meaning to modern nationalisms and transfuse them with fresh vigour and strength.

2.3. 'Summing the things we have spoken of' (Hb 8:1): Threshold

More often than not modern theologians, especially the Orthodox Greeks, have ignored modern theories on nationality issues. Yet, the relevant modern literature, the product of thorough investigations from different angles, has become indispensable for any study connected with the issues at hand and cannot be ignored. On the other hand, the issue of the interrelation between religion and nationalism in forming a theory of nations and nationalism, and its different aspects and implications, appears as one of the most under-researched areas. Very few studies are written focusing exclusively on this issue, apart from some focusing only in case studies (cf. Colley 2009), with the exception of few scholars, such as Hastings and Smith. Again, most of these contributions - apart from Hastings who was a theologian and addressed this issue occasionally - refer to the relationship of religion, and not theology, with nationalism. To treat religions as uniform phenomena, however, ignoring their different theologies is a serious problem, as it leads to approaches that cannot really conceive of different attitudes,

developments, and events connected with both religion and nationalism among different peoples. It is as if one attempts to study nuts - hazelnuts or walnuts - based entirely on their identical structure - husk or kernel - and similar shape without trying to taste them. This thesis, therefore, had to be interdisciplinary. It had to start with a critical evaluation of modern theories of nations and nationalism, as well as religion and nationality, before proceeding to the theological essence.

By doing so, this thesis attempted first to substantiate the definitions of the key-concepts of *nation* and *nationalism* given above.[58] Moreover, it set and clarified the necessary principles on which this thesis is based. These principles concern the two major issues of nations and nationalism, on the one hand, and the interrelation between religion and nationality, on the other.

The critical examination of the modern literature on nations and nationalism suggests four points. The first is that the modernist/constructivist school of thought, though prevailing no doubt, especially in Greece, cannot address many of the relevant serious questions which remain unanswered. Despite the fact that modernists tried to present their theories as applicable globally, they clearly did not manage to do so. As Smith suggested, an overall theory, though desirable in principle, cannot exist 'partly because the subject is so baffling and multi-faceted, and partly because … others in their theories have answered only some of the questions which a study of nationalism raises, and have omitted others' (Smith 2003c, 359). As a Christian, particularly Orthodox, theological study, this thesis is interested in the world that historically emanated from the Judeo-Greco-Christian tradition. What the thesis suggests, therefore, is connected with Europe and the West at large. The clear choice of this thesis to put forward the argument suggested by Ziakas functions within these limits. It is considered the most useful for the study of the Judeo-Greco-Christian world, which methodologically concerns the study at hand.

The second point is that the nationalist primordialism formed a mentality conceiving of nations as natural categories. It is impossible for an individual not to have a nationality, as it is impossible for an individual not to have one nose or two ears. Modernism or constructivism suggested that nations constitute constructs, and, what is more, modern ones. Therefore, constructivism was intertwined with modernism. The modernist school of thought emerged as the opposition to nationalist primordialism. As a result, if one is not a modernist, one cannot be a constructivist either. Scientific primordialism, perennialism, or ethno-symbolism proved that this is not the case. Nations are social constructs no doubt: to paraphrase a motto favoured by Arianism, 'before they were, they were not'. This does not mean, however, that nations are necessarily modern. It is, therefore, important to underline that constructivism does not coincide with modernism, despite the fact that the modernists were the ones that first put forward the constructivist argument (cf. Goodblatt 2006, 18,26).

Third, according to the theory we suggested as more relevant to the Judeo-Greco-Chrstian tradition, nations can be pre-modern even ancient, without excluding the possibility of

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[58] See chapter 1.2.

having modern nations, or even post-modern ones. The example of the Greeks and the Jews becomes then of primary importance. Both emerged in antiquity with features which made them resemble to modern nations extremely. Modernists avoided referring or studying both of them. Their theory functions as a norm. It takes for granted that nations did not exist before modernity; they do not need to examine the particular cases either of ancient Greeks or of ancient Jews. The researchers who understand that entities resembling modern nations existed before modernity are the only ones to refer to both examples, as the studies by anti-modernists clearly demonstrate (cf. Armstrong 1982, 102-4. Goodblatt 2006. Grosby 2002, 13-119,166-90. Grosby 2003, 10. Grosby 2005, 2-3,83-4,93-4. Smith 1986, passim. Smith 1991, 24-38. Smith 2003a, 48-65. Smith 2004, 127-53. Smith 2008, 56-60,72-4. Smith 2010, 110-5. Smith 2013, 23-6). This does not mean that they remain unchanged through time. They do change, as they change their traditions and culture, while their members change their idea of belonging and the ways they conceive of their nation. This is why Brubaker's idea which rejects 'the tendency to represent the social and cultural world as a multi-chrome mosaic of monochrome ethnic, racial or cultural blocks' (Brubaker 2002, 164; cf. Brubaker 2006, 8) is endorsed here. Indeed, every piece of the jigsaw puzzle is multi-chrome and dynamically changes overtime (Ziakas 2001, 151-2).

Finally, the main problem of modernism and anti-modernism seems to be political. The modernist argument seems to concentrate on those developments in modernity which eventually led to nationalism as a political ideology and a political movement. Nationalism then conceived of the nation as a political unity and demanded a nation-state: one state for each nation. The inescapable outcome of this approach was to set aside any pre-modern collectivity, which did not develop any form of nationalism as a political demand. Then how are we to understand the pre-modern collectivities which resemble to modern nations? The terminological chaos involving *ethnies*, *ethnic groups*, *ethnicities* and the like emerged (cf. Goodblatt 2006, 3-14). What is an ethnicity or an ethnic group and what is a nation? Which are their common features and which are their differences? As Goodblatt rightly pointed out, to clarify the terms is an impossible task, because it is historically wrong and artificial: 'One wonders if we seek a precision that does not exist and never existed in reality. If so, then trying to impose artificially fine distinctions distorts rather than clarifies' (Goodblatt 2006, 13). Politics, however, does not necessary assume the form of a state. As we are to see below,[59] Jews in Hellenistic and Roman times developed a political identity either through a state or under Roman rule. In a similar example the military alliances of the Greeks against the Persians or their obligation to participate in Pan-Hellenic games, constituted political expressions of their idea of belonging to the same nation. What is more, if we downplay the political imperative and put forward more cultural criteria for the existence of a nation - such as the idea of belonging that emerges among groups, when they come in contact with other groups - then there is no need to hesitate to term as *nations* pre-modern collectivities, provided that we take into serious consideration that such collectivities change through time.

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[59] See chapter 3.3.

As a result, the modernist tendency to consider the terms *nation*, *nationalism*, and *nation-state* as strongly interconnected is necessary no more. The way this thesis defined nations as multi-polar collectivities and structures of traditions paves the way to understand them as pre-modern entities. The same goes with nationalism, as it is the discourse that maintains nation as an autonomous value. Both ancient Greeks and Jews developed such discourses. Others possibly did not. Then the existence of nations without nationalism is acceptable. It follows that the modern nation-state does not constitute a necessary presupposition for the existence of a nation. There were - and still exist - stateless nations (cf. Guibernau 1999). Gellner's great paradox that nationalisms, even nation-states, according to Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm 1992, 10), make nations is valid no more (cf. Gellner 1983, 55). What is important for this thesis in this respect is that nations existed before modernity and that they should not be analysed in connection with nationalism and the nation-state. Nations are human collectivities, ways of humans to create social groups based on their accepted similarities. Christian theology does not seem to raise any objection to this. Nationalism, however, which maintains the nation as an autonomous value and can reach its peak in functioning as an autonomous religion is a different issue altogether.

In this respect the above chapter attempted to categorise the ways in which religion, particularly Christianity, intertwines with the emergence and developments of nations and nationalism. It raises no claim of being a complete and comprehensive theory; it only attempts to promote the argument of this thesis. Thus, two points need to be stressed from it.

The first is that it should be clear by now that the secularisation theory which foresaw the fall of religion has been proved false. The dusk of the previous century and the dawn of the twenty-first brought a different unanticipated development, as religions, the traditional ones in particular, not only survived but also returned in the public domain influencing society and politics. For Christian theologians these are not necessarily good news. Resurgent religion often assumes the image of a violent fundamentalism, while a popular para-theology develops, alien to the theological tradition of mainstream religions (cf. Haynes 1997, 718). Despite its immense significance the first point does not concern this thesis. The second, however, is very important for the study at hand. If this popular para-theology of resurgent religions, Christianity included, has nothing to do with mainstream traditional theology, which features does it assume? Which are the sources to which it turns? How Christian are they? Which is their relevance to modern nationalism?

The second point to be stressed is that not only religion but also nationalism appears resurgent too. This simultaneous resurgence of phenomena once declared half-dead allows modern scholars to speak about neither the eminent fall of nationalism nor nationalism as the modern substitute for religion. If indeed nationalism functions as a religion, then it does so autonomously possessing its own features. It is the intention of this thesis to adopt the idea expressed by scholars, such as Grosby (Grosby 2003, 12. Grosby 2005, 88-91), who believed that nationalism constitutes a form of paganism, and develop this idea even further by suggesting

which are the particular pagan features of nationalism and in which way they are irrelevant to Christianity. These issues will be addressed in the next chapter of this thesis.

3. Paganism, Christianity and the nations

*Paganism is the ultimate Christian dream*
(Žižek 2003, 48)

Slavoj Žižek (b.1949), in his *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, expressed his belief that paganism, with its optimism for life and happiness, paradoxically found its full expression in Christianity, which, though appearing as the religion of guilt and renunciation, managed to overcome the pagan this-worldly melancholy by offering the future other-worldly everlasting happiness: 'Is not Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* the ultimate proof of this paradox? Only a devout Christian could have imagined such a magnificent pagan universe, thereby confirming that *paganism is the ultimate Christian dream*' (Žižek 2003, 47-8).[60] It is doubtful whether paganism can be traced in Christianity by examining Tolkien's highly imaginative and extraordinary tales. The same goes with the analysis of the most celebrated and award-winning Robert Wise's musical *The Sound of Music* (1965), expressed through the beautiful song *Climb Every Mountain* (Žižek 2003, 48-9). Indeed, it is doubtful whether the analysis of a fiction and a musical can lead to the understanding of paganism as 'the ultimate Christian dream'. Žižek's aphorism, however, is profoundly intriguing for the theme of the thesis at hand: if indeed Christianity is so inextricably bound with paganism and nationalism constitutes a form of paganism, then it goes without saying that Christianity is equally inextricably bound with nationalism. The main question, put forward from the very beginning, is then promptly answered: Christianity is intertwined with nationalism because it is intertwined with paganism.

The most important hindrance, which complicates things, is that the Bible itself is at pains to show the erroneousness of paganism, its false nature. The Christian this-worldly optimism, expressed by abbess Virgilia (Peggy Wood, 1892-1978) in the afore-mentioned musical does not stand alone; it goes hand-in-hand with the sorrow of sin that keeps humans away from God, as the abbess's black cassock clearly reminds. Paganism could constitute precisely this way of living which Christianity fought against. When seen from another angle, therefore, the same paganism is not Christianity's ultimate dream but Christianity's ultimate enemy. It is necessary, therefore, to seek for an approach that will define paganism in accordance with nationality, and then will attempt to trace these features in the Bible and examine how they are treated there. The Bible, as a continual point of reference for Christians, provides an often-conflicting picture; a concrete understanding of it is therefore necessary (cf. Llywelyn 2010, 174). This thesis by no means claims to offer this understanding and solve this long-standing issue. It is hoped, however, that, with the help of the theories of Jaspers's Axial Age and Girard's violence and the sacred, such an approach will help to comprehend the way Christianity evaluates nationality issues.

### 3.1. The God of Israel: Paganism and the concept of the national god

The definition of paganism has constituted a problem in modern scholarship, as it appears in antiquity as an all-embracing term, or, to be more precise, as a term that includes all those who were not Christians. It is a term invented by Christians to describe those who were not Christians; the term, therefore, possessed a derogatory sense (Davies 2011, 1). Different etymologies have been produced. Others have claimed that the word derives from the classic

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[60] Italics in the original.

Latin *pagus*, i.e. *rustic* or *hick*, hence, *paganus* is the country man or the country dweller. Others have observed that, in the early imperial Rome, the term *paganus* meant the civilian, as opposed to the soldier (Riddle 1870, 456). Religiously, the first etymology shows that Christians considered pagans as country dwellers, a view that coincides with the historical development of Christianity in the urban centres, while, apparently, the old gods were worshipped in the countryside long after the Christianisation of the Roman emperors. The second etymology sharply distinguishes between the civilian unbelievers and the soldiers of Christ, the believers (O'Donnell 1977, 163). It has to be noted that though the term derives from Latin Christianity, the Greek East adopted different terms for the pagans, that is *Hellenes* (Greeks) or *ethnikoí* (nationals), terms adopted from the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Bible; this stems from the Jewish understanding of the monotheism of the nation of Israel, as opposed to the polytheism of the other nations (cf. Goodblatt 2006, 15-6). The views on idolatry also stem from the Jewish tradition: the Jewish belief that the other gods of the other nations were false and an affront to the true God led to the subsequent belief that worshiping their statues was an unreasonable and ineffective worship of mere inanimate matter. Polytheism, finally, describes a religion that venerates a multiplicity of gods sharply distinguishing it from the monotheism that describes Judaism and Christianity - even Islam. The usual terms, therefore, stem from the Judeo-Christian tradition and, as has been repeatedly noted, do not do justice to the vast set of religious beliefs and practices termed *paganism*, *idolatry* or *polytheism*.

This thesis adheres to this view not only because modern paganism or neo-paganism claims equal treatment in the modern landscape of religious freedom and tolerance (York 2003, 1-7), but also because the term does not suffice to describe the various forms of ancient paganism, let alone modern paganism, together with its transformations and developments (e.g., Eisenstadt 1986b, 29-39). By way of example, to describe Plato as a *paganus*, i.e. merely a country dweller, who adheres to old false deities, is an obvious failure (cf. Humphrey 1986, 92-110). Nevertheless, this thesis will use the term *paganism*, because it has been established in scholarship and is used even by those who adhere to paganism nowadays. This said, it is necessary to clarify that the term will be used in the way the Jews used *idolaters* or *Greeks*, i.e. as the term that describes the religions of the nations surrounding Israel. More particularly, the term will describe here some of the common features of Middle Eastern religions: worship of ancestors and the importance of blood kinship, as well as the importance of one, often warrior, god connected with the land of the people. Another feature that characterised pagan religiosity - the Middle Eastern included - was the formation of myths concerning the gods and their relation to humankind, as well as the founding of societies. According to René Girard this is a very significant feature, as it is indeed connected with the mechanisms at the foundations of societies, and, more particularly, religions themselves (Girard 1977, 1-38).

Indeed, the peoples of the ancient Middle East developed a strong sense of belonging to the land they denizened, for they constituted agricultural civilisations that depended on the cultivation of the land. We know little or nothing about pastoral nomadic peoples, as their mobility has left us poor archaeological evidence. We are better informed about agricultural

societies, which developed a religious system of beliefs and a pantheon connected precisely with their agricultural structure. They worshiped the land, the sun and the rivers, as well as the changes of the weather. Humans' very existence depended on precisely these elements. Agricultural societies developed also a sense of blood kinship. Coming in contact with neighbouring peoples, by commercial routes or wars of expansion or defence, they developed a sense of defining the collective *self* as opposed to the collective *other*. This distinction was often understood as a matter of blood kinship. The connection with the land and the blood kinship were deeply intertwined with ancestor worship. The fact that they honoured their kin who had died in the same land further strengthened their sense of kinship and, what is more, gave them the strong belief that they rightly dwelled in a given land, as their ancestors had done long ago. It was not, therefore, right for foreign peoples to take their land, while it was the obligation of their kin to defend the land of their ancestors (Grosby 2002, 13-51). Therefore, they developed, as a result, a genuine love for the land. As will be discussed below, Herodotus, while presenting the Athenians' answer to the Spartans as far as their attitude towards the Persians was concerned, summarised precisely these features as common among all Greeks: the obligation of all those bounded by a blood kinship to defend the beloved land of their ancestors.[61]

For centuries the Hebrew Bible was considered the ultimate monotheistic book and Judaism the ultimate monotheistic religion. Modern scholarship has shown that this was not the case. The Israelites developed their unquestionable monotheism progressively and as a part of a process of mutual co-existence with neighbouring peoples and peoples who inhabited Palestine prior to them. This is the idea to which the Axial Age pattern, followed in this thesis, adheres and thoroughly substantiates (Eisenstadt 1986c, 127-34; cf. Smith 2001, 10). The ancient Israelites believed that they were not natives in their land. They were fully aware that they were influenced by the natives. One of the most notable relevant influences was that of the national god. Despite possessing a variety of deities, the ancient peoples of the Middle East chose a certain god, who was also a warrior, the protector of the king, the people, and the land. The *national god* or *god of the land* accompanied the king and his army in battle, and fought not only against the enemy king and people, but also against the national god of the enemy. The victory of the king and his army in battle meant that his god was victorious not only over the enemy king and army, but also over the enemy god (Ahlström 1982, 6-9. Armstrong 2006, 96. Firestone 2008, 12-5). In a revealing example the Assyrian emissary Rabshakeh demanded the submission of the people of Judea to his sovereign lord Senacherib, the Assyrian king, by assuring the Judeans that Yahweh would not deliver them from the Assyrian assault, as no gods had ever delivered their own peoples:

> Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of

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[61] See chapter 3.3.

the lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? (2Kgs 18:33-35)

Indeed, Kemosh was the god of the Moabites, Milkom of the Ammonites, Qaus of the Edomites, Dagon of the Philistines, Ashur of the Assyrians, Marduk of the Babylonians, and Tarhunt or Tershub, 'king of heaven' and 'lord of the land of Hatti', was the national god of the Hettites (Ahlström 1982, 1-9. Grosby 2002, 29-30,36-9,58-9. Grosby 2005, 82). This is why the victorious peoples believed that it was their right not only to destroy the cities of their enemies, but also to burn the temples of their defeated gods. The famous Mesha Stele commemorates such an event when the Moabites defeated the Israelites and the Moabite king Mesha 'took the vessels of Yahweh' and 'presented them before the face of Kemosh' (Firestone 2008, 16-8).

The cult of Yahweh developed within this framework. Despite being a monotheistic book, the Hebrew Bible alludes to beliefs and practices referring to pagan Israel (Hoffman 1994, 66-84). Such practices survive especially in the Pentateuch or the Law of Moses and the books of Joshua and the Judges. Yahweh was then Israel's national God: 'and He (Yahweh) will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven. Nobody will be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them. The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire' (Dt 7:24-5). Yahweh even directly intervened in battle, while the Amorites, defeated by Joshua and his Israelites, were fleeing in panic: 'the Lord threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah and they died. They were more who died because of the hailstones, than the sons of Israel killed with the sword' (Jsh 10:11). Apparently, Yahweh even delayed the sunset - 'the sun stopped in the midst of heaven' - in order to allow the Israelites to complete the massacre of the Amorites (Jsh 10:13). In this understanding of Yahweh as the national God, Yahweh is often mentioned as the 'God of Israel' (e.g., Gn 33:20; cf. Smith 2001, 157-63). This does not mean, however, that Israel did not worship other deities, as it is implied by the repeated warnings of the Pentateuch against the Israelites who worship gods other than Yahweh: 'You shall not make yourself a carved image … You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God' (Ex 20:4-5; cf. Ex 34:14. Dt 4:24, 5:9, 6:15. Jsh 24:19. Ezk 36:5-6. Na 1:2). In a more clear example Yahweh appears presiding in the council of gods: 'God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement' (Ps 82:1; cf. 1Kgs 22:19. Grosby 2002, 40-1. Armstrong 2006, 45-8,95-6).[62] It is within this framework that the Hebrew Bible develops the idea of the chosen people. This idea will be further analysed in the next chapter. Here it suffices to say that Israel's chosenness is connected with the fact that, despite their pagan practices, Yahweh, the mightiest of the gods, chooses Israel and protects it (cf. Armstrong 2006, 41,63-9).

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[62] For the Ugaritic texts concerning the council of gods and their influence on the Hebrew Bible see Smith 2001, 41-53; cf. Armstrong 2006, 42-3,63-7. Heiser 2001, 52-74. There is also an indication that Dt 16:21 refers to Asherah, a western Semitic deity, as a goddess worshipped together with Yahweh. About the relevant textual issues and the related problems see Emerton 1999, 315-37. Park 2011, 553-64; cf. Armstrong 2006, 63. King Manasseh of the Southern Kingdom of Juda carved an image of Asherah and placed it in Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem (2Kgs 21:7; cf. Armstrong 2006, 157). I refrain from understanding Ps 82:6 as alluding polytheism because the verse can accommodate a variety of interpretations, including the Christian understanding of human deification through Jesus. See for instance Mosser 2005, 30-74. Neyrey 1989, 647-63. Pinsloo 1995, 219-28. Trotter 2012, 221-39.

What is more, Israel formed a collectivity connected with the land of Palestine, which constituted Yahweh's promise for Israel, the land, as it appears in the Hebrew Bible, from Dan to Beersheba. It is this land that belongs to all the people of Israel, all twelve tribes which formed the collectivity termed as Israel: 'Then all the people of Israel from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation assembled as one man to the Lord at Mizpah' (Jg 20:1; cf. 1Sm 3:20. 2Sm 3:10, 17:11, 24:2. 1Kgs 4:25. 1Chr 21:2. 2Chr 30:5). Finally, all Israel is bound together by the blood kinship, constituting the offspring of Abraham. It is this blood kinship with certain ancestors that gives the right to Israel to dwell in the land from Dan to Beersheba: 'And the Lord said to him [i.e. Moses], this is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, I will give it to your offspring' (Dt 34:4, alluding to Gn 17:9, 26:3, 28:4,13, 35:12; cf. Grosby 2002, 23-4).

Therefore, according to the Axial Age theory, before developing monotheism, Jews were indeed pagans, as were all the people surrounding them. This is more thoroughly understood if the interest is turned to Girard's theory of mimetic rivalry. According to him, the religious prohibitions and taboos are not absurd phenomena based on irrational fears, as modern social anthropology or psychoanalysis would have it, but probably ineffectual, or even misguided, but definitely strenuous efforts to prevent mimetic rivalry from spreading throughout society (Girard 1979, 9). Despite the fact that precisely this mimetic rivalry is the phenomenon that leads to the formation of societies, it has to be prevented from spreading simply in order not to lead to their eventual destruction. At the core of the Bible one locates the story of this founding conflict, this founding murder: it is the story of Abel's assassination at the hands of his brother Cain (Gn 4:8), which eventually led, so the Biblical narrative has it, to the foundation of the first city (Gn 4:17). Such founding murders constitute part of many mythologies, such as the founding myth of Rome concerning the death of Remus at the hands of his brother Romulus (Girard 1987, 143-6). Indeed, violence is to be located at the core of mythologies (Girard 1977, 89-118). Following the pattern that Girard has located in many other pagan cultures, the Bible dedicates a decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) and two books, Deuteronomy and Leviticus, to strict and detailed prohibitions. Precisely these prohibitions keep Israel together and prevent the spread of mimetic violence from threatening its existence. In order to keep Israel clean from any possible violation of the law that can potentially lead to mimetic conflict, the well-known scapegoat ritual of the Day of Atonement is described in detail in Leviticus 16 (Girard 1979, 9-19). This of course does not prevent Israel from turning its mimetic violence against other peoples. In this turn Israel, as suggested above, Yahweh is conceived as an ally issuing promises of victories rather than an impediment issuing prohibitions. The inclination to violence is expressed not only through sacrifices and rituals but also through conflict with other neighbouring peoples.

Paganism, in conclusion, understands the deity as an entity connected with the land of a given people. The people, bound to the land of their ancestors by means of blood kinship, view their gods - essentially the one that becomes their national supreme god - as their protector, who is also bound with their land. This concept of the national god, the god of the land, is precisely the one that forms a sense of particularism and exclusivity for the ancient peoples,

even nations. The national god, extremely powerful and victorious in battle, belongs ultimately to a certain people and its land. It is also this national god who, through restrictions and prohibitions, keeps the society together not allowing it to slide into the mimetic violence which would lead to its demise. This is how Israel conceived of Yahweh. It is the turn to monotheism, as will be suggested below, that profoundly changed the idea about both Yahweh and chosenness. In the story of Cain and Abel, the victim, contrary to other similar myths of other cultures, is innocent and Yahweh is not responsible for his death. For if Yahweh is the sole God, then He is the creator of the whole world and, eventually, cares for the whole world, even for Israel's enemies. As such, He is the One who neither requires the death of Israel's enemies nor is satisfied with their disaster. If this is the case, then Israel's chosenness is important for the whole world and not only for Israel.

## 3.2. The original chosen: Nationality issues in the Old Testament

The engagement with modern nationalism and religion/nationalism theories so far has illuminated the way this thesis understands nations. Nations constitute structures of traditions, with the religious-metaphysical tradition located at their very core, around which legislative-political and educational traditions develop. It has also been stressed that nations develop their self-consciousness through their contact with other peoples. Finally, it has been pointed out that nations are connected with certain territories, in which they feel bounded, while their members possess a sense of kinship. These ideas of kinship and land seem to be connected with ancient, even primordial, pagan practices that valued the blood kinship of tribes and clans, while being inextricably connected with the land they inhabited, a connection often expressed through ritual practices.

This definition led to the understanding of nations as human constructs which emerged at different historical periods from antiquity to modernity without conceiving their traditions in the same way or without maintaining the same traditions at all in the course of their history. What remained the same was the people's sense of belonging in the same named group, the nation. It also led to a necessary distinction between nations and nationalism. For what follows here, it is helpful to point out that although nationalism has been generally thought to be a secular phenomenon, religion is frequently found at the very core of nations, and, thus, it comes as no surprise that nationalism is often intertwined with religion (cf. Grosby 2002, 252).

Following this recapitulation, and in the light of the Axial Age theory, this chapter will examine two issues: first the way that the Bible treats Israel as a nation both theologically and politically-historically, and second the way the Bible treats the other nations in these two respects. Before embarking on the relevant analysis, it is necessary to pinpoint that, following the era of paganism and understanding Yahweh as a national god, the Bible constitutes a book that explores, rather than postulates, the consequences of monotheism. If Yahweh is the only God, then what is His behaviour towards Israel and the other nations? As will be argued below, there is no uniform answer in the Bible, since different relevant views emerge in their historical

context. In this respect, the Bible constitutes the next step, the first of the Axial Age, following paganism. More steps will necessarily follow.

This reality is further accentuated if the Bible is approached from the point of view of Girard's mimetic rivalry theory. The Bible overcomes paganism in many relevant ways. Indeed, it was suggested above that a founding murder is to be located at the beginning of the biblical narrative, that of Abel by Cain. Indeed, sacrifices and rituals were initiated to prevent the spread of mimetic rivalry. Thus far the Bible makes no difference with other pagan religions. Its originality rests on the victim. Pagan myths of the scapegoat victim and the foundational murder tell us that the victim was responsible. Remus was guilty for violating the law (Wiseman 1995, 6-11,117-25). Oedipus had indeed killed his father and married his mother, so he was responsible for the plague befalling Thebes. Only the punishment of these victims was able to lift the curse (Kershaw 2007, 207-11). On the contrary, the Bible tells us that Abel was innocent. So was Joseph who was sold by his brothers to Egyptian merchants (Gn 37:12-35). So was Judah who was tested by Joseph and was willing to die in order to save the life of his brother Benjamin (Gn 44:33-4). So was Job who suffered greatly at the hands of Satan (Jb 1:6-2:9. 4:1-6:30) (Girard 1987b, 5-6). According to Girard, the innocence of the victims is of fundamental importance, for it unveils the truth of the mimetic rivalry: humans desire the same things, often power and glory, and turn violent against each other. Turning against a surrogate victim eases their tension and religion, through sacrifices and rituals, prevents the violence from spreading, veiling the violent nature of human society, which expresses its violence on victims that cannot react; there cannot be any mimetic rivalry with oxen, sheep and goats. Besides, according to pagan mythology, the sacrifice is the demand of bloodthirsty and violent gods. On the contrary, the innocence of the victims in the Bible unveils the true violent nature of human societies. The unique Yahweh, who is the creator of the universe, does not like victims: 'What have you done?' Yahweh asked the fratricidal Cain 'Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground' (Gn 4:10). More profoundly, life appears as something holy, blessed by Yahweh. Cain considers himself a potential victim; after committing violence he is exposed to violence. Mimetic rivalry will turn others against him. 'Not so!' said Yahweh 'Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance'. According to the book of Genesis, Yahweh put a mark on Cain, so that no one would kill him (Gn 4:15). The Axial Age Deuteronomic reform realised precisely this: people should not turn against each other. If they desire it, no law can prevent them from doing so: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Lv 19:18) (Girard 1979, 9-19. Girard 1987a, 144-51). However, as will be shown below, the relationship of Israel to other nations does not really clarify the innocence of the victim. Israel, itself, is a victim at the hands of other mightier nations, but Israel considers itself responsible before Yahweh. One significant step has been made. More will necessarily follow.

The biblical view of the history of Israel cannot be considered straightforwardly as a historical source, as many parts of it cannot be confirmed by external sources and archaeological evidence. Its importance, therefore, is primarily theological. However, a brief historical account is necessary for an attempt to understand Israel. The primeval story concerning the creation of

the world and the first humans on earth, described in the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis, has nothing to do with Israel and its history. The narrative for Israel begins only later with the appearance of Abram – to be renamed Abraham – the son of Tharrha (Gn 11:26) and especially with Yahweh's revelation to him in Gn 12:1. Instructed by Yahweh, Abraham moved to Palestine and his grandson, Jacob's offspring, moved to Egypt at the time of Joseph, with whose death the book of Genesis ends. The story goes on with Moses who leads Israel out of its Egyptian captivity back to Palestine. This central event is connected with the covenant with Yahweh and the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. The children of Israel are given a Law by Yahweh who delivered them from Egypt in order to keep blessing the nation He had chosen. After their arrival in Palestine the twelve tribes settled there under the auspices of Moses's successors, the Judges.[63] The era of the Judges is ended with the election of the first king, Saul of the Benjamin tribe, who ruled over a kingdom unifying all twelve tribes. The apogee of this kingdom was reached at the time of Saul's successor David of the tribe of Judah, and his son Solomon.[64] The first book of Kings states that Solomon's kingdom was divided posthumously: the Northern, consisted of ten tribes, the most important being that of Manasses, in the area of which its capital Samaria was located, and the Southern, consisted of two tribes, the most important being that of Judah, in the territory of which its capital Jerusalem was located.

Apart from a mere reference of Israel, as a people dwelling in Palestine, destroyed, among other peoples, by the expedition of pharaoh Merneptah (1213-1203BC) in the homonymous Stele - which combined with archaeological evidence suggest the existence of Israel in Iron I, 1200-1000 BC (Bloch-Smith 2003, 401-25. Miller 2004, 55-68) - the important evidence comes from the period of the two kingdoms and not earlier. Accordingly, a picture can be formed about the Northern Kingdom of Israel as larger, stronger and overall more important, which at times participated in coalitions against the Assyrians, or at times paid tribute to the Assyrian Empire. The Southern Kingdom of Judah appears smaller, and of lesser importance, though it outlived the Northern. Israel was subjugated to the Assyrians and Judah to the Babylonians, when the inhabitants of Jerusalem were transferred captives to Babylon.[65] Indeed, Israel faced Assyrian expansionism and aggression, progressively losing areas to the Assyrian Empire, while, according to established Assyrian practice, parts of the population were transferred to the East, where they were assimilated into the local populations and lost their identity, which was the intention of the Assyrian administration. This started in c.740BC, as a result of the expansionist policies of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727BC). Israel finally fell at the hands of the Assyrians with the destruction of its capital Samaria in 722BC by the Assyrian king Sargon II (722-705BC), who resettled its inhabitants. It is worth noting that some of the people of the kingdom fled to Judah (Brettler 2010, 18-21).

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[63] See mainly the books of Exodus and Judges.

[64] See mainly the two books of Samuel.

[65] See mainly 2 Kings.

Judah survived an initial Assyrian invasion and a siege of Jerusalem in 701BC, following the Judaic rebellion against the Assyrians, by Senacherib (705-681BC), only to subsequently fall at the hands of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabuchadnezzar II (c.605-562BC). According to the Bible, Jerusalem was captured, its inhabitants and king were transferred to Babylon and the temple was destroyed. It is probable, however, that the fall of Jerusalem and the deportation of its inhabitants and king took place in 597BC and the destruction of the temple about ten years later (587-6BC). The captivity lasted until the Babylonian empire was overthrown by the Persians, and their king Cyrus (r.559-30BC) allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem (Ezr 1:1-2). The great personalities of Zerubabel and Ezra are connected with the events of the return. The Bible is also concerned with the Hellenistic Seleucid control of Palestine, the revolt of the Maccabees and the foundation of their independent state. Indeed, the Persian Achaemenid emperor Cyrus the Great (559-530BC) allowed the Jews to return from exile in 539BC. Palestine fell at the hands of the Greek king Alexander the Great in 333BC. The Jews, initially under Ptolemaic control, were subsequently ruled by the Seleucids. Their king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164BC) followed a policy of involvement in Jewish affairs, which caused the Maccabean rebellion of 167BC. Simon, the last of the Maccabees, founded the independent Hasmonean kingdom in 142BC. The Romans effectively controlled Palestine in 63BC, allowing it, however, to maintain its kings (Brettler 2010, 21-2. Lapin 2010, 58-9. Segal 2010, 34-6,38-41. Smith 1986, 56-7. Smith 2004, 163). This brief historical account serves to provide the framework within which nationality issues are treated in the Bible.

The Bible presents Israel as a distinct nation containing four main features: chosenness, covenant, land, and centre. To be more precise, Israel is a nation chosen by God, bound to him by a God-established covenant, possessing, by God's decree, a certain land around a visible centre. These four elements form the identity of Israel in its historical course always in connection with God.

Israel's relationship to God passes through many phases: Israel is born out of God's love; it is saved and commanded to obedience by Yahweh; it disobeys Yahweh and is scattered to exile; it is saved again and regathers to obedience and hope (cf. Brueggemann 1997, 447). These phases manifest Israel's special relationship to Yahweh 'in sickness and in health' in eternity. Two elements are of theological significance in this point: first, God is not understood merely as an absolutely transcendental being, but as a being adopting a people, Israel in particular; second, Israel's response to this approach obeying God's commandments. The significance of these elements follows the order they are presented here.

Indeed, Yahweh chooses Israel and not the other way round. This is described in the Old Testament in powerful words: Israel is a holy nation, exclusively chosen by God, Yahweh's possession (Dt 7:6, 14:2. Ps 135:4. Is. 44:1. Ezk 20:5), a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6, 23:22), a nation serving God exclusively (Is 44:1-2). For Israel, Yahweh is the one God, the holy one, the mighty, of Israel (Is 1:4,24, 5:19,24, 30:11-12, 31:1), who has set his heart on Israel (Dt 7:7, 10:15), 'enthroned in the praises of Israel' (Is 1:4, 5:19), 'the God who has bound himself to Israel' (Zimmerli 1978, 191). As a result, Israel, in the theology of the Old Testament, becomes

Yahweh's key 'partner': 'Yahweh is never without Israel, and Israel is never without Yahweh' (Brueggemann 1997, 413,f.2). God's initiative to reveal himself to Abraham brings Israel into existence. Abraham lived in Mesopotamia; he belonged to a certain people, clan, or tribe, or even family. The Bible does not attribute significance to any of that. What is important is that Yahweh reveals himself to a certain individual, Abraham, and promises to make him and his descendants a 'great nation' (Gn 12:2; cf. 18:18, 21:13,18, 46:3). This promise brings Israel into existence. The very existence of Israel is, therefore, rooted solely in Yahweh's commitment (Firestone 2008, 4).

Theologically, this special relationship between Yahweh and Israel stems directly from the experience of exodus, when Israel conceives itself as a concrete group, distinct from the Egyptians - for Israel is enslaved by the Egyptian pharaoh - seeking its freedom. It is through the experience of exodus that Israel understands that a single God, and not a multitude of powers, is at work, to Whom Israel entirely owes its deliverance. Yahweh is neither a local, national, god connected with the people through a cult, nor a national hero, bound with the people in blood ties, but the only God, a cosmic being, the creator of heaven and earth. This God looked upon Israel at the time of the people's dire need. The experience of the exodus makes Israel accept Yahweh as its own mighty king, who liberates Israel through the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, accompanies it on its way to Palestine, and leads it in victorious battles (Ex 15:3, 17:15-6, 23:27-8. Dt 7:20,23, 25:17-9. Jsh 10:11-3, 24:12. Jg 4:15, 5:20-1,31, 7:18-20. Is 34:56. Am 2:9). It is also primarily this experience that teaches Israel that Yahweh is free, not restricted within the borders of the land of Israel, as a national god would be, and His intervention is connected with Israel's obedience. In cases of disobedience Yahweh grants victories to Israel's enemies, despite Israel's bravery (Nm 13-4). Victory is not connected with human bravery but solely with Yahweh's will. Finally, through the experience of the exodus, it is well understood that God did not restrict His benevolence to mere individuals or their clans; He rather extended it to a whole nation that He chose to be His own (Ex 19:5-6, 23:22. Dt 7:6, 10:15, 14:2). Yahweh revealed Himself to certain individuals - the patriarchs and the prophets - to use them as tools to address His chosen nation: 'not because Israel chose Him voluntarily or because Israel has a "primary relationship" with Yahweh, but simply because by a free act He delivered those who dwelt in the house of servitude in Egypt - therefore He is their God' (Zimmerli 1978, 25; cf. Bright 1972, 144-6,150. Uffenheimer 1986, 151). The above views on chosenness acquire even greater importance, if they are seen in the perspective of the paganism that predated monotheism in Judaism. As argued above,[66] the national god, or god of the land, constituted a feature of pagan peoples in the Middle East. People chose a deity to be their warrior protector. The above views probably show how this idea developed in the monotheistic turn of Judaism. If Yahweh is the unique God and not merely the leading deity, He is the one that chooses the people and not the other way round. It is assumed, thus, that chosenness is the monotheistic development of the pagan idea of the national god. If this is true, it is theologically important that Yahweh choses to reveal Himself to this particular nation only.

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[66] See chapter 3.1.

Historically, the idea of the chosenness of Israel is connected with the tradition of the book of Deuteronomy (8th-6th centuries BC) or the Deuteronomic reform, as noted above, and, therefore, with what Jaspers named the *Axial Age*. This idea is connected with the monotheism that started developing and departs from the pagan idea of the *national god*. Yahweh is the exclusive God of Israel no more; He is the sole God who chooses Israel among the nations. However, if we consider the fact that the prophets of Israel, who wrote before the Babylonian captivity (587-6BC), mention nothing about chosenness, it becomes possible to consider that this important idea is connected with another profound experience of Israel as a nation, that of the exile, in the early 6th century BC, the last period of the formation of the Deuteronomic tradition (cf. Grosby 2002, 52-9. Zimmerli 1978, 45,47). It should be remembered that the Babylonian captivity was only the end of a process of crisis, destruction, and deportation, which had already started in the Northern Kingdom around 740BC, and that, following the fall of Samaria, some of its inhabitants fled to Judah. As a result, the Deutoronomic reform, which started in Israel, with the northern prophets, passed to Judah. Therefore, the experience of destruction and resettlement, and, what is more, the exilic feeling of divine abandonment, following the Babylonian captivity, turned Israel back to the exodus memory and then, subsequently, to the memory of the patriarchs. God's love for the patriarchs - 'for the sake of your beloved Abraham, and Isaac your servant, and Israel your holy one' (Dn 3:35; cf. Dt 7:8) - led Him to choose Israel and deliver it from the captivity of Egypt, and would, eventually, secure God's favour to save Israel, once again, from the Babylonian captivity. It is the tradition of certain prophets, Isaiah being the most prominent, that maintains, despite the division, a national identity concerning 'all Israel' (Zimmerli 1978, 191). The experience of exile seems to bring Israel together to an unprecedented scale (Grosby 2002, 40-7; cf. Smith, 2003a, 62-3. Smith 2015, 408-9).

Politically, it is worth noting that Yahweh reveals himself neither through a messenger, such as an angel, nor exclusively to an individual, a patriarch or a prophet, but, through patriarchs and prophets, Yahweh addresses a whole nation. His act of deliverance is directed towards a whole group of people, which is specially chosen by Him. Chosenness, therefore, does not refer to an individual, a spiritual personality or a prophet, but a particular nation, formed by Yahweh and delivered by Him. Individuals do not lose their importance as Yahweh's partners (Brueggemann 1997, 450-91), but they function and communicate with Yahweh as members of the chosen nation and through this very nation (Smith 2003, 51). What keeps Israel together is its faith in the unique God and God's commitment to Israel by means of chosenness. This statement is manifested in the Old Testament in the numerous occasions on which Yahweh address Israel as a single person (Hs 9:1. Dt 9:1. Ex 23:17. Ps 129:1) (Robinson 1956, 184-5).

God sets his heart on Israel and promises to protect and deliver it as long as Israel remains faithful to Him by keeping His commandments. That is why the Law acquires such an immense significance in the Hebrew tradition: it safeguards the particular relationship between God and Israel. This relationship between the two is theologically known as 'the covenant'. It is what Smith termed *covenantal chosenness* (Smith 2003a, 49). This becomes clearer by turning to the term *particular*: it is derived from the Latin term *particula,* diminutive of *pars* (part), which

means small portion. Theologically, the term *particularism* means that salvation and redemption concern only a small portion of humanity, an idea originally applied to Israel, the elect nation (cf. Park 2003, 10). However, this salvation, since it is based on a covenantal basis, should not be taken for granted. God's commitment is, of course, beyond question; it is Israel that needs to perform an equal commitment to the covenant. Yahweh sets a covenant between Himself and His people, which designates the latter as the former's partner. Obedience is the form of relationship that characterises God and His people.

The first time that the idea of the covenant appears in the Old Testament is in the case of Noah, following the flood, where Yahweh makes a covenant with Noah not to repeat a 'flood to destroy all flesh' (Gn 9:9-17). This covenant is set without conditions, it is a voluntary obligation that God undertakes with Noah, and does not concern Israel, which has not emerged yet. The events of the Noahan covenant belong to the primeval pre-Abrahamic part of Genesis (cf. Smith 2003a, 52).

The covenant connected with the birth of the nation of Israel is Yahweh's promise to His chosen Abraham: 'I will make of you a great nation' (Gn 12:2). In the following chapters God promises a land to Abraham and his numerous descendants (cf. Gn 17:1-9). Yahweh confirmed the promises with a ritual described in Gn 15:9-20 (Zimmerli 1978, 51). The covenant, therefore, is not only between Yahweh and Abraham, but extends to his descendants. This reality becomes apparent from Yahweh's commandment concerning circumcision under penalty of being cut off from the nation united with Yahweh by covenant (Gn 17:10-4). Apparently, the individuals who are not circumcised cease to belong to the people of God, the nation of Israel, according to the late deuteronomic understanding (Davidson 1989, 338. Smith 2003a, 52-4. Smith 2015, 406-7).

Despite the obligation concerning circumcision, the covenant with Abraham is one of 'divine initiative that is unconditional', whereas that made with Israel at Mount Sinai is characterised by 'human obligation' (Brueggemann 1997, 418). The Sinai covenant is the central covenant in the Old Testament and is strongly connected with the Deuteronomic tradition following a certain formula: 'Yahweh, the God of Israel' and 'Israel, the people of Yahweh' (Zimmerli 1978, 50; cf. Robinson 1956, 186-90). The Sinai covenant is further affirmed after the period of the wandering in the desert and just before Israel enters the Promised Land (Dt 5:2-3); it was based on the Ten Commandments given by Yahweh to Moses for the whole people to keep (Ex 20:1-17; cf. Dt 5:6-21). This new covenant is, therefore, strictly conditional and thoroughly connected with the Law (cf. Jsh 24). The obligations of the people of Yahweh are not restricted to circumcision only; their obligations are rather extended to a strict Decalogue. From this Decalogue stems a whole Law, central to the existence of Israel, though not as a strict legal code but rather as a sense of justice based on certain legal ideas summarised in the Decalogue (Grosby 2002, 78-81,86-7. Halberstam 2017, 19-47). By keeping the Law, Israel shows that it deserves the deliverance Yahweh offered, leading them out of the Egyptian captivity, an act showing how Yahweh, for the sake of the patriarchs, whom He has chosen, delivers the whole nation. It is a whole nation now that is chosen and the Commandments constitute what Yahweh asks in return in order to keep His blessing and protection of the nation 'to the

thousandth generation' (Dt 5:10). The positive, not without hesitation though, response of the people is what sets the covenant in motion for the generations to come. Israel listened to Yahweh and obeyed Him (cf. Smith 2003a, 54-60. Smith 2015, 408-9).

Modern scholarship has suggested that the covenant follows the pattern of inter-state agreements, such as those established by the Hittites and their neighbouring peoples (Mendenhall 1955, 164-88. Weinfeld 1970, 184-203; cf. Bright 1972, 146-9. Davidson 1989, 325-9. McCarthy 1973, 10-40. Uffenheimer 1986, 151). This suggestion aims at showing the relationship between Yahweh and Israel as that of the overlord and the vassal. Yahweh, like the mighty Hittite kings, dictates the contract, which Israel, the vassal nation, has no choice but to obey or face the consequences. This idea, which understood Israel in its historical context, gained significant momentum in modern scholarship. Despite the unquestionable similarities, this view tends to omit that the peculiarity of the Moses covenant is to be found in its very nature: it is a covenant with the one and only God and not with a monarch, no matter how strong and important. Apparently, the strongest part of the covenant, Yahweh, is bound, as will be underlined below, by it and will always remain faithful to it. The covenant needs the consent of the weak party, Israel, without which it cannot exist. Despite the threats in the latter case, this is indeed what happens: it is the *weak* Israel and not mighty Yahweh, who abandons the covenant; in an inter-state treaty the opposite would be expected. Though free, God remained faithful to the covenant, while Israel freely chose to abandon it. The covenant of Moses is therefore a dynamic, energising covenant between two active parties that needs their consent to be affirmed. It resembles more the daily plebiscite that defines what the nation is in Renan's thought (Renan 1990, 8-22). Moses's covenant, to be sure, is conditional followed by threats in case of disobedience. Yahweh does not make idle threats: Israel's disobedience led to its punishment. Grosby amply demonstrated the implications of this conditional covenant that overcomes the Hittite paradigm, and became an original Jewish thought: 'If the conception of the covenantal relation had remained unconditional, then the military defeat of Israel could have only signified the defeat of its god, Yahweh, by the evidently more powerful Assyrian deities' according to the pagan understanding of the national god. It is the conditional covenant with the above features, which emanates from monotheism, that allowed Israel 'to understand the Assyrians as Yahweh's rod (Is 10:15) used to punish an unworthy Israel' (Grosby 2002, 98-9; cf. Smith 2003a, 60-1). This covenant between, almost functionally equal - although unequal in essence - parties, safeguarded God's transcendence and, simultaneously, this-worldliness in the sense of a being not indifferent about history and mankind. In this genuine understanding of the covenant, beyond functional contractual approaches of the Hittite form, the Axial Age development in ancient Israel is to be located.

Along the same line of thought the more *political* covenant between God and king David should be perceived, for it is founded on the Mosaic covenant that unshakeably established the particular relationship between Yahweh and Israel (Davidson 1989, 339). David's house will be preserved and his kingship will be eternal (2Sa 23:5; cf. Ps 89:4. Jr 33:20-2). However, this covenant appears to be conditional too, despite the promises for its eternity. The kings of Israel,

who sit on David's throne, are able to obey or disobey the Lord. Yahweh will respond accordingly: with protection and victories for His obedient servants on the one hand, and with destruction and desolation for those who disobey Him on the other hand (Jr 22:4-5). The pattern of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Dt 27) appears also in this covenant. In this Davidic covenant too, this does not mean that Yahweh abandons the covenant. The repentance of the kings brings the covenant back on its proper track. Therefore, the Davidic covenant follows the conditions established by the Sinai one. God creates a covenant not only with the nation but also with its political leaders, for they are the ones that keep the nation together (cf. McCarthy 1973, 45-52. Smith 2015, 410).

The nation's failure to obey the commandments led to Yahweh's wrath and subsequent punishment: 'Israel came into existence by the sovereign freedom of Yahweh, and by the same sovereign freedom Israel perishes' (Brueggemann 1997, 434). Again, this by no means implies that Yahweh ceases to consider Israel his chosen nation. On the contrary, all He does is to bring His own nation back to the covenant and to the direct relationship with Himself. Yahweh's commitment to the covenant is absolute, unshakable, and enduring (Is 54:7-10). It is the relationship with Yahweh that keeps Israel together. Yahweh does not act without Israel, for the latter's disobedience and recalcitrance do not imply any kind of similar attitude on behalf of God. Despite being free, Yahweh voluntarily and eternally bounds Himself by the covenant. By His own free will, Yahweh restricts His freedom, bound as He is by the covenant: 'God's freedom is now more supremely a freedom for the world, not a freedom from the world' (Gnuse 2000, 116). Thus, apart from calling for obedience and repentance, the prophets proclaim forgiveness and restoration. Israel's repentance causes God's immediate forgiveness. It is this gracious act of forgiveness that ascertains the eternal character of the covenant. Israel's disobedience, punishment and, subsequent pardoning constitute a difficult pattern. Despite Yahweh's commitment to the covenant, Israel proved an unstable partner causing Yahweh's wrath. Obviously, a new covenant was required, one that was to secure the people's faithfulness and Yahweh's reaction.

As a result, Israel awaits a new covenant, which will bring the absolute end of Yahweh's wrath and an everlasting righteousness to people. This can only take place through the king of righteousness (Zc 9:9-10), the true servant of God, who will bear the sin of many (Is 52:13-53:12). Two points have to be made here on the new covenant. The first is that it will be made by the God's servant, who, though innocent, will become a victim and will bear the sin of many. Apparently, the tension between humans - Israel and the other nations included - needs to be eased through one more innocent victim, who will, conclusively, unveil the reality of human violence behind sacrificial practices and will call humans to overcome their pagan mythology (Girard 1987, 155-8). The second is that the term *many* appears for the first time in the Bible and is peculiarly vast and vague, making no mention of Israel. Apparently, the new covenant will concern more nations beyond Israel (cf. Dn 9) (Robinson 1956, 190-202). To this we are bound to return while referring to the other nations.

The third element that characterises Israel as a nation is the land it inhabits. After promising to Abraham to turn his descendants to a great nation, Yahweh promises to bestow on him and the nation, which will come from him, a certain land (Gn 12:1,7, 13:14-5, 15:18. Dt 1:8,35). This land, the land of Canaan, is clearly defined in the Bible as a land having certain borders: 'from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates' (Gn 15:18). Later it is famously defined as the land from Dan (in the north-Naphtali area) to Beersheba (in the South-Simeon area) (2Sm 3:10, 17:11, 24:2; 1Kgs 4:25). Canaan is not only the land that Abraham and the other patriarchs inhabited but also the one to which Israel returned following its deliverance from the Egyptian captivity and its wandering in the Sinai wilderness, according to Yahweh's explicit promise to Moses (Ex 3:7-8). However, the possession of the land, together with the rest of the blessings bestowed on Israel, are subject to the obedience to God's commandments (Ex 20:12. Dt 11:8. 1Ch 28:8). Any failure to obey the commandments implies potential loss of the land. The land is, therefore, a gift from Yahweh and should not be taken for granted. It will remain Yahweh's gift as long as Israel remains the people of Yahweh. This reality is further clarified by the characterisation of the land not only as 'patrimony of Israel' but also, what is more, as 'patrimony of Yahweh', His personal possession: 'the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants' (Lv 25:23). As a result, Israel is bound to the land as long as Israel is bound to Yahweh (Grosby 2002, 52-91,191-212). However, loss of the land, as a punishment of Israel's iniquities, does not imply loss of the status of chosenness. Israel remains the chosen nation no matter where Israel dwells. However, possession of the land signifies Yahweh's blessing and approval (cf. Hastings 2003, 31. Smith 2015, 409-10). This particular relationship between Israel and the land is a key element needed to 'understand the course of Israel's history down to the present' (Zimmerli 1978, 65). As argued in the previous chapter,[67] the importance of the land is a primordial feature deeply connected with the paganism that predated Jewish monotheism. The above ideas, therefore, seen from the Axial-Age point of view, constitute remnants of pre-monotheistic paganism interpreted and developed in the monotheistic era.

Connected with the promised holy land of Israel is the last element that characterises Israel, the holy city, Jerusalem. The particular role of Jerusalem is connected with the presence of the Lord, as king David decided to transfer the ark of the covenant to Zion, the hill overlooking his capital city. This signifies for Israel the fact that Yahweh dwells in Zion. This is why the Bible often uses the name of the hill to refer to the city. Jerusalem is Zion and Zion is Jerusalem, for it is in Zion that Yahweh dwells (cf. Is 8:18). The temple built later in Zion by Solomon became the symbol of Yahweh's presence among His people. Indeed, when the Neo-Babylonians occupied the holy city and destroyed the temple, it became apparent to Israel that Yahweh was no longer among them, Zion was empty of the Lord's presence (Grosby 2002, 77-8,87-8. Hastings 2003, 32-3). On the contrary, when Yahweh pardoned his people and Cyrus liberated the Jews from Babylon, Yahweh allowed his people to both return to the holy land and rebuild their temple in the holy city (Ezr 6:14).

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[67] Chapter 3.1.

In his effort to describe what keeps together the modern Jews as a nation, Nicholas de Lange (b.1944) wrote: 'a strong sense of a common origin, a shared past and a shared destiny' (Lange 2000, 26). This is equally the idea one gets from the study of the Bible (Grosby 2002, 46,67; cf. Smith 1991, 33). Israel is the offspring of Abraham that dwells in Canaan, the holy land. However, this reality is not unconditional, as we have seen, and is directly connected to Yahweh and the Law He initiates, through the covenant. The circumcised ones, who accept the covenant and obey it, constitute the people of Yahweh and possess the right to inhabit the holy land. This land possesses a visible centre, where Yahweh is to be worshiped and in which Yahweh dwells, Jerusalem. These circumcised, inhabiting the holy land, around its holy centre, constitute the nation, Israel, which God has chosen to be His own. This is, in short, the self-consciousness of biblical Israel as a nation, bound with its territory and its God. To bring back the perennial argument of this thesis concerning nations, Israel indeed superseded forms of collectivities such as family, clan or tribe to form a nation with features common with those of modern nations, such as common language, religion, territory (Grosby 2002, 13-119; cf. Eisenstadt 1986c, 131).[68] Modern scholarship has given such qualities - not without reservations or strong disagreements though - to other nations such as the Egyptians, the Aramites or the Armenians (Grosby 2002, 30-2,120-65).[69] To be sure, this is the way that the Bible viewed such nations, included the Assyrians and the Neo-Babylonians. This idea of biblical Israel is an idea of the Axial Age, when the prophets of Israel, and later Judah, developed their views of exclusive monotheism, or Yahwism as it were, the religious Deuteronomic reform, which was strongly connected with the fall of Israel and the subsequent equivalent fall of Judah (Armstrong 2006, 159-66. Grosby 2002, 43-7). It is no coincidence, therefore, that what Smith terms as 'characteristic mechanisms of ethnic self-renewal' are primarily connected with religious reform and the formation of 'myths of ethnic election' (Smith 1991, 35-6,48-9. Smith 2015, 408). Obviously, Israel leads the way.

The previous chapter critically discussed and rejected the modernist school of thought that considers nations as exclusively modern phenomena. In doing so, it avoids any reference to ancient collectivities, such as Israel, which resemble nations, as it has programmatically rejected such a possibility. According to the definition of the nation provided here, this is not the case and Israel constitutes an example of an ancient nation. It is only necessary here to address Smith's ethnosymbolic view, for he pinpoints that ancient Israel constitutes the 'closer approximation' to what he called 'the ideal type of the nation' (Smith 1991, 51). According to Smith, ancient Israel was not a nation but an ethnic community or ethnie. Smith discussed only

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[68] Steven Grosby published his relevant view in certain articles that he gathered in one volume, to which we make references: 'Religion and nationality in antiquity' (Grosby 2002, 13-51), 'Kinship, territory, and the nation in the historiography of ancient Israel' (Grosby 2002, 52-68), 'Sociological implications of the distinction between locality and extended territory' (Grosby 2002, 69-91), and 'The chosen people of ancient Israel and the Occident: Why does nationality exist and survive?' (Grosby 2002, 92-119).

[69] See the remarks of the above footnote and follow the articles: 'Borders, territory, and nationality in the ancient Near East and Armenia' (Grosby 2002, 120-49), and ''*Aram Kulloh* and the worship of Hadad: A nation of Aram?' (Grosby 2002, 150-65).

the Hasmonean kingdom of the Maccabees without clarifying why (Smith 1991, 48-50).[70] According to his definition of nations (Smith 1991, 14), which included the common economy factor as necessary for the existence of a nation, Israel cannot be considered a nation because, although it possessed common territory, myths and historic memories and, later in the Mishnaic era, legal rights and duties for all members, it did not possess a common economy and its idea about its own land was not stable (Smith 1991, 49-50). However, later in his career he gave a different definition of a nation, according to which the 'ideal type of the nation' is that of 'a named community possessing an historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs', with the economic factor having been removed, and the legal rights and duties for all members having been changed to common laws and customs (Smith 2002, 15). However, in his early definition of the nation, Smith attributed to the nation complex features and mechanisms that should be attributed to the state (Guibernau 2004, 127-9). Carefully, he later removed these attributes from his definition of the nation. This later definition resembles almost entirely the ethnic community and most clearly corresponds to Israel not only in the Hasmonean age, but also, as argued above, in the late pre-exilic and exilic periods. This is probably the reason that made Smith later to refer to a Jewish nation immediately after the destruction of the second temple around the synagogues and the Pharisees of Galilee, an area from which, as will be noted later, the rabbinic movement emanated. He hesitated though to refer to nationalism, fearing to view the phenomenon retrospectively. It is true, however, that there was a national liberation ideology and movement, no matter how this will be termed by modern scholarship (Smith 2004, 143-6). According to the definition of the nation as a structure of traditions, Israel is a nation and no terminological obscurity – nation, ethnic community, ethnicity, ethnie – is necessary. What is more, according the definition of nationalism as the discourse that maintains the nation as autonomous value, Israel is characterised by nationalism, provided, however, that its nationalism depends on Yahweh and on keeping the covenant.

The Bible looks at other nations in a similar fashion. God is not coterminous with Israel. The beliefs of Israel that there is only one God, who remains essentially free, despite His commitment to Israel, and that He is the creator of the whole world, made Israel think about Yahweh in connection with other peoples too. Apparently, in the very texts that concern the uniqueness of Israel before Yahweh and its status as the chosen nation, the seeds of a universal understanding of Yahweh can be found. In this respect, Yahweh's providence extends to all the peoples on earth. It should be noted that the term *universality* derives from the Latin *universus*, a composite word from *uni/unus* (one) and *versus/vertere* (to turn), so it literally means to turn everything to one. Thus, theologically universality is the idea that the entire universe constitutes God's realm and nothing escapes God's care. As the one God creates everything, He also saves and redeems everything (cf. Park 2003, 9-10). It is, therefore, an important step for the Jewish mind, one that belongs to the Axial Age, to understand Yahweh in a universal way.

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[70] Smith later also referred to the kingdom of Judah under Josiah (r.640-09BC), the monotheistic-Deuteronomic reformer king, as a formation characterised by ethnic solidarity, identity, and consciousness (Smith 2004, 132-3,162-3).

This step is undertaken not without some hesitation, but it is a clear step. The story of Abraham in Genesis starts unexpectedly after the book has presented the world as a place of sin, trouble, and vexation (Gn 12). Moreover, when Yahweh asserts to Moses that Israel is the nation He has chosen, He reminds him that 'indeed, the whole earth is mine' (Ex 19:5). Apparently, 'the call of Israel is juxtaposed to the crisis of the world, a crisis that arises because the nations have not accepted their role in a world where Yahweh is sovereign' (Brueggemann 1997, 431). Israel is, therefore, connected with the world as a form of mediator between God and humans in a 'missionary chosenness' (Smith 2003a, 49-51), according to which the role of the elect nation is to point the right path towards Yahweh to all the nations. This biblical idea is striking in the example of Jacob, who blesses the pharaoh of Egypt, an initiative that the pharaoh accepts (Gn 47:7,10). This view clearly contradicts ideas of exclusivity and chosenness, which depict Israel as a chosen nation, exclusively favoured by God, who destroys and brutally annihilates Israel's enemies, sacrificing other nations in order for Israel to live and prosper (Is 43:4, 48:14. Hs 14:4). Then how does the Bible understand the other nations and their relationship with Yahweh and His chosen nation in different historical periods?

To begin with, the multitude of nations seems to be a negative element. It follows, to be sure, the fall from Heaven and, therefore, theologically, cannot be considered as a *natural*, God-created, reality. The phenomenon is connected with the events concerning the tower of Babel (Gn 11). Until then, there was 'one people and they have all one language' (Gn 11:6) performing deeds of sin and hybris, to borrow a term from the Greek tradition, wishing to reach God through their own efforts. To punish their sin, Yahweh 'confused their language' in order for them not to comprehend each other and they were subsequently dispersed 'over the face of all the earth' (Gn 11:7-8). The story goes on presenting a catalogue of peoples that constituted humanity (Gn 11:10-32). The multitude of nations constitutes, according to the biblical narrative, the result of a sin that resembles the original one; humans' desire to reach God, without Him and through their own efforts. Despite this negative aspect of the story, the multitude of nations appears again in another case, that of Moses speaking, before his death, to the people: 'When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He divided mankind, He fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God' (Dt 32:8). This has become a controversial issue. The phrase 'sons of God' has been understood as implying other deities - this is not the only time this happens in the Bible[71] - and does not exist in the Hebrew Bible, which reads: 'sons of Israel', a reading followed by the Vulgata ('filiorum Israelis'), ancient Greek translators (Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion), and the Samaritan Pentateuch. The phrase 'sons of God' has been accepted by modern criticism, and stems from the Qumran scrolls, appearing on one of the manuscripts with Aquila's Greek translation.[72] Many modern scholars consider it direct proof of polytheistic connotations in the Bible (cf. Armstrong 2006, 46-7,63-4. Uffenheimer 1986, 145. Firestone 2008, 22). Others have understood it in

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[71] Consider, for instance, Ps 82:1: 'God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement'.

[72] Codex 85. For the alternative readings see Field 1875, 320.

monotheistic terms, in the sense that the term 'gods' implies deities created by the only omnipotent, omniscient and transcendental Yahweh (Heiser 2001, 52-74). What is interesting for our study here is that the Septuagint, based on the Qumran scrolls, has provided a unique translation, which simultaneously constitutes an interpretation; it reads: 'angels of God'. The Septuagint understands the term *gods* of the original as beings beyond the human world, yet created by God, the angels. The problem is one of literary criticism and does not concern this thesis. It suffices to point out that theologically the Masoretic reading implies that Israel is an entity constituting a category in its own right, whereas, the second category contains all the peoples, a view in line with the idea of exclusivity in ancient Israel. The Qumran reading is in line with negative connotations of nations in the primeval story of Babel. Israel belongs to Yahweh, whereas the other nations belong to lesser deities, who are understood negatively in the Bible. What concerns us here more is that the Septuagint, which has influenced Orthodox theology - the Vulgata that influenced the West follows the Masoretic text - considers the nations as groupings according to the number of the angels of God. This has given ground to consider the nations as guarded by angels and that their borders are fixed by God. This Septuagint reading gives a different direction. God punished the nations, elected Israel to be His own, but assigned with the angels the task to guard the other nations. A special treatment is reserved for Israel, but the other nations do not escape His providential will. As will be argued, this is in line with other similar approaches in the Bible.

Such understandings can be summarised in three ways: the first is through the concept of the covenant, as, apparently, God makes covenants with other nations besides Israel; the second is through their relationship with the chosen nation; the third is through an independent understanding, for Yahweh as the unique free God cares for and blesses other nations besides Israel.

The fact that covenants are made with nations other than Israel is founded, as discussed above, on the covenant between God and Noah, the progenitor of all creation. Yahweh blesses Noah and his family; therefore, Yahweh blesses all humanity and, through it, all creation saved in the ark (Davidson 1989, 343-4). In the table of nations, which follows, Israel is absent (Gn 10), as Abraham, Israel's progenitor, has not appeared yet. It is obvious, therefore, that Israel comes from the nations and not the other way round. The importance of this fact has been effectively pointed out by Gerhard von Rad (1901-71):

> How easy it would have been to draw the line directly from creation up to Israel as the focal point of the nations. But in the biblical primeval history the historical line drawn as it is from the creation of the world leads first to all the nations … It was no longer possible for her (i.e. Israel) to derive herself in direct line and legitimate herself from the divine world, for between her and God lay all the nations … when Israel looked back, she found herself merely one member of the historical nations. In her beliefs about Creation

there was nothing that distinguished Israel from the other nations (Rad 1975, 162; cf. Llywelyn 2010, 133,136-7).[73]

All humanity, therefore, belongs to Yahweh and not only Israel; in a similar vein, not only the Promised Land, but the whole earth belongs to Yahweh (Ex 19:5). As Yahweh granted Canaan to Israel, He similarly granted Caphtor to the Philistines, and Kir to the Arameans (Am 9:7; cf. Aberbach 2005, 226-7). Moreover, as is the case with Israel, other nations too have the choice to obey or disobey Yahweh, to endorse or reject the covenant. Yahweh responds accordingly: He blesses the nations who remain faithful to Him and destroys the ones who move away from Him. It should be noted that though Yahweh does not destroy Israel, He annihilates other nations. The capital punishment applies only to other nations and not to Israel. Nations which historically act in an unacceptable manner, by destroying other nations, violating their boundaries, demolishing their cities, executing the prisoners, raping their women or, what is more, abusing Israel, the elect nation, are doomed to be punished, usually, by termination (Brueggemann 1997, 494-504). The latter case, the case of a nation abusing Israel, brings us to the next point, the relationship of other nations to Israel.

One form of relationship of other nations to Israel, of rather minor importance, is through the concept of the *stranger* or *alien*, the non-Jew, that is, who happens to dwell in the land of Israel. The clear definition of the land and the identity of the people inhabiting it, Israel, forms - by negative definition - the stranger. The way strangers are treated in the Old Testament is based on the foundation provided by the experience of the exodus, connected as it is with the era of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian invasions and the new captivities, as well as the Deuteronomistic reform and the Axial Age. Indeed, Yahweh orders Israel to treat strangers respectfully by recalling their experience of alienation in Egypt: 'You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt' (Ex 23:9; cf. 22:21). In similar verses the law demands equal treatment to aliens and the obligation of offering hospitality to a stranger (for example: Dt 27:19. Jg 19). Yahweh will punish the violation of the relevant laws (Jr 7:5-6). Modern attempts to date the relevant texts showed their interconnection with Babylonian exile (Laffey 1991, 31-45).

Of major importance is another relation of Israel to other nations, that of the covenant. Indeed, Yahweh assigns nations with certain missions as part of their covenant, especially missions concerned with Israel. Israel is punished for violating the covenant with Yahweh, through other nations, with which Yahweh makes a covenant in order to bring Israel back to its proper relationship with Him. This, however, necessarily means that nations are Yahweh's tools and their role is strictly limited. Nations cannot move beyond the limits set by the covenant and go unpunished. This understanding appears in Yahweh's relations with certain nations, especially those that appear as the super-powers of their time and possess a special relationship to Israel. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Neo-Babylonians and the Persians are the mighty nations to which Israel was related. Israel appears to be the scapegoat victim of the violence of these

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[73] See also the interesting idea concerning the end of primeval history and the story of Abraham as the beginning of the history of God's relationship with the nations (Rad 1975, 163-5).

nations. The cases of the Egyptians, the Assyrians and the Neo-Babylonians follow the same pattern: Yahweh blesses them, they become powerful and arrogant, disobey and defy Him by destroying other nations and by abusing Israel, so Yahweh punishes them by subjugating them to other nations or totally annihilating them (Aberbach 2005, 227-8. Brueggemann 1997, 504-12,518-23. Weinfeld 1986, 169-82). It has to be stated here that the Egyptians, despite following the above pattern in principle, constitute a different case inasmuch as they enslaved and abused Israel prior to the Mosaic covenant. Therefore, their role as punishers of Israel is not confirmed by Yahweh. As Jacob blesses the Egyptian pharaoh, and the latter accepts this act (Gn 47:7-10), the Egyptians make a covenant with a man, a patriarch, specifically chosen by Yahweh and, through him, with Yahweh, to protect Israel and not to enslave it. In this respect their case is worse than those of the Assyrians and the Neo-Babylonians who acted as Yahweh's tools. The Egyptians are doomed to be subjugated by other nations and every effort of theirs to re-establish their kingdom is condemned. This is why the prophets of Judah disapprove of their kings' efforts to establish an alliance with the Egyptians against the Assyrians (Ez 29-32; cf. Brueggemann 1997, 504-6). The might and powerful position of great nations as great as the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and the Neo-Babylonians, is followed by the drama of their demise and destruction. The most exceptional case, however, is certainly that of the Persians. They too make a covenant with Yahweh, but an entirely different one; their role is not to punish but to liberate the elect nation from the Babylonian captivity. The Persians act as Yahweh's agents; they allow Israel to return to the land of its forefathers, to rebuild its temple, and to restore the proper worship of Yahweh. Historical personalities such as those of Cyrus and the later Persian king Darius (522-486BC) appear favourably in the Bible. There are no dramatic events whatsoever about them, as they constitute the only super-power that was not destroyed, for the Persians remained faithful to Yahweh's covenant (Brueggemann 1997, 515-8). The above cases show the particular relationship between Yahweh and certain powerful and mighty nations, which is founded on their role as Yahweh's agents respecting Israel. However, Yahweh, as the only God and creator of the whole world, establishes an independent relationship with these nations.

Yahweh responds positively to repentance. As with Israel, this is the case with other nations as well. The prophetic book of Jonah, as has rightly been pointed out (Park 2003, 12-6), constitutes a very peculiar case. Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, which appears often in the prophetic books as the city of evil, is viewed in a totally different light in Jonah's account. Nineveh is a sinful city, no different from many other cities, which, however, readily responds to Yahweh's call, through Jonah His prophet, for repentance. Yahweh decides not to destroy Nineveh and it is this very attitude that had previously compelled Jonah to avoid preaching in Nineveh, as he desired the destruction of the city. The story of the squash plant is revealing for Yahweh's relationship with other nations beyond Israel. While at the outskirts of Nineveh, Jonah suffered from the heat and the Lord ordered a squash plant to develop and offer its shadow to Jonah, so that Jonah slept comfortably. A warm, sent by the Lord at night, destroyed the plant and Jonah was exposed to the multiplied heat. Jonah expressed his grave sorrow for the loss of

the plant: 'and the Lord said, you pity the plant, for which you did not labour, nor you did make it grow … and should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons … and also much cattle?' (Jn 4:10-1). Yahweh is the creator of the world and cares for it. His prophet, His own nation, cannot ask for the destruction of their enemies without the opportunity of repentance, an opportunity that Yahweh clearly grants to everybody and not only to His chosen nation. It is apparently difficult for the prophet to conceive of Yahweh as a being who is not violent and refuses to exterminate Israel's enemies. Despite their murderous nature, Assyrians, according to the story of Jonah, are, like the fratricidal Cain, protected by Yahweh. Besides, this is what Yahweh had previously done with the prophet himself. Despite being responsible for disobedience before Yahweh, and being thrown into the sea for Jonah's sojourners not to perish, Yahweh had delivered His prophet (Jn 1:1-2:10; cf. Girard 1977, 312-4). Yahweh is a benefactor, protector, and deliverer not only of Israel but also of all nations, even Israel's enemies (Am 9:7. Is 19:20-1). Yahweh does not hesitate to call the Egyptians His people and the Assyrians works of His hands, as Israel constitutes His heritage (Is 19:24-5; cf. Brueggemann 1997, 520-5). Yahweh is equally the God of the other nations, a reality that appears particularly in the 'more universalistic' apocalyptic literature (Zimmerli 1978, 227-8,238-9; cf. Llywelyn 2010, 136).

The great things that happen to Israel, through Yahweh's intervention, are meant to lead the other nations to repentance. Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty king of Babylon, praised Yahweh, after the miraculous deliverance of the three young men from the fire (Dn 3:28-9), while Darius, the Persian king, issued a doxological decree acknowledging Yahweh's greatness (Dn 6:26-7). It is through Israel, Yahweh's chosen nation, that the other nations will follow in praising and obeying Yahweh (Brueggemann 1997, 499-502. Zimmerli 1978, 220-1,224). As a result, the anticipated king of righteousness that will make 'the new covenant' (Zc 9:9-10) will concern 'all the people' and will not be restricted to Israel (Zimmerli 1978, 240; cf. Robinson 1956, 196-7).

The picture depicted above concerning Israel, the chosen nation, gave an idea of exclusivity, a sense of nationalism with a strong religious character. On the other hand, a clear picture of the other nations also emanates. It is based on the idea of universalism of a God who does care for all humanity, which He created. The overall picture appears harmonious: Yahweh elected Israel, but cares for the whole world; He made a covenant with Israel, but the other nations do not escape His providence. Besides, the salvation of the other nations in the Bible passes through Israel, in the *missionary chosenness*, and this reinforces and does not weaken Jewish nationalism (O'Brien 1988, 5-6). As the book of Jonah clearly depicts, however, this co-existence between particularism and universalism was an uneasy one in the Jewish mind and perplexed even a prophet. This uneasy co-existence should not be underestimated, therefore. Jewish practice, what is more, was not ultimately exclusivist. There was the phenomenon of the converts to Judaism, despite the strict ritual process of entering, connected with becoming members of God's elect nation (Smith 2003a, 63-4).

From the treatment of nationality issues in the Bible, two main conclusions can be drawn. The first is a political-social-historical and the second theological. Politcally-socially-historically,

Israel was formed as a nation in the era between the fall of the Northern Kingdom and the fall of Judah. In this sense there was never a Jewish nation-state, apart perhaps from the later short-lived Hasmonean kingdom. This nation was based on primordial elements of kinship and territory and, what is more, on features of religious and legislative-political traditions: Israel appears as God's chosen people, bound by a covenant, on which the Law is based, gathering around a centre, Jerusalem. This self-understanding of Israel goes beyond the primordial features, and is connected with the developments of the Axial Age. It is worth noting that other nations appear with similar primordial features, lacking, however, the traditions and, therefore, the culture of Israel. That is the biblical narrative.

Theologically, Yahweh appears as the only true God, who cares especially for Israel, which is His own possession, bound by the covenant He initiates. Disobedience to the covenant causes Yahweh's wrath and violent reaction through other nations. These novel ideas, compared to other religions and cultures, constitute the Jewish developments of the Axial Age, which make Israel's monotheism unique and pioneering. However, Yahweh appears to extend His providential will over all the peoples of the earth, although this cannot be easily observed at first glance. Besides, He seems to readily pardon every guilty party and despise violence. Despite the fact that this understanding perplexed part of the Jewish tradition, it appears vividly and with clarity in another part of the same tradition. This reality is strongly connected with the anticipated new covenant which will be unconditional, will show the way to overcome pagan mythology together with the violent foundations of society and will concern *many*. This later idea shows the development in the Jewish theology of the Axial Age (cf. Eisenstadt 1986c, 131-2). Based on the transcendence and uniqueness of God, the universal idea comes necessarily as a result. Therefore, a theological antithetical schema appears. First, a pattern of particularism and exclusivity - reminiscent, as this thesis suggests, of the pagan national god - expressed in late Biblical literature in books such as Ezra, Nehemiah or the Chronicles, which bears the seeds of discrimination and violence, connected as it is with the attitude of the people, the Jews. Second, on the other hand, a pattern of universalism and inclusivity expressed in late literature in books such as those of Jonah and Daniel, which unveils the truth about human violence and tends to overcome national discriminations, connected as it is rather with Yahweh's attitude (cf. Llywelyn 2010, 136,138). Which of the two will develop and how? The Axial Age was followed by other, so called secondary, breakthroughs: more steps are to follow.


3.3. The true offspring of Abraham: Nationality issues in the New Testament
This tension between the particular and the universal is overcome in the New Testament. The particularity of human existence makes this development difficult for human initiative. Universality is a feature that the Bible attributes to Yahweh, the sole God. Humans seem bound with particularism, as presented above: the locality with its god of the land or the people, the nation, the very land itself, and the common descent, which refers to the holiness of the ancestors. Violence and sacrificial practices are strongly connected with this form of particularism as practices that the people develop to ease the mimetic rivalry or direct it

against neighbouring enemies. The experience of the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions put this particularism to the test. Universalism, on the other hand, is the product of the prophets' monotheism. Yahweh appears as a global God, the sole God of all creation. He is the creator of all nations and is voluntarily bound with His chosen ones. He overcomes localities and their features, violence and sacrifices - 'for I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings' (Hs 6:6. Mic 6:6-8; cf. Mt 12:7) - by showing the innocence of the victims. This is already foreseen by the biblical prophets, but is bound to be fulfilled in the New Testament and, particularly, in the person of Jesus, who is understood there as the Christ (Girard 1979, 9-19). As Girard put it, the Old Testament 'is a first step outside the sacrificial system' (Girard 1987a, 205-6). This happens because it is also a decisive step out of paganism, and towards God's universality. Only a first step, however. The fulfilment of the way towards overcoming the old order is to be accomplished by Jesus through His earthly work from His Nativity to the Ascension and Pentecost. His Passion and Resurrection, more particularly, are the points in which the old order is fully overcome and a new order is created.

Since universality is God's feature it is possible only for God to show the way, as, for theology, only God can show the way to life away from death, to light away from darkness, to truth away from lie, to peace away from violence. For Girard and his theory on mimetic violence, it is important that Jesus is both divine and human (Girard 1987a, 216,219). This idea is by no means a stranger to theology. For Christian tradition up to the Reformation it was an idea inherent in the Gospels expressed in the First Council of Nicaea (325AD) only to turn against Arius, who doubted it. According to these Christian traditions, this reading remains fundamental. Pre-Reformation traditions, also proceed to identify Jesus with the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Word of God, according to John (Jn 1:1). Especially according to Orthodox Christian tradition acting as such, as Logos, He is also identified with the Yahweh of the Old Testament (cf. Romanides 1996b, 431-8). This is why Christian tradition has interpreted the famous four songs of the Servant of God (Is 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-11, 52:13-53:12) Christologically. The servant - *pais* in the Hellenistic translation of the Old Testament, which means both *servant* and *son* (Liddell-Scott 1997, 3:407-8; cf. Morris 1992, 310-1) - is the Son of God, the Logos, Jesus Christ, the new chosen one, who is led, as described in the Day of Atonement, to sacrifice not as a goat but as a silent lamb bearing the iniquities of all humans (Is 53:6-12). This is why, as the New Testament insists, 'Jesus also suffered outside the city gate' (Hb 13:12). Before completing this brief analysis on the centrality of Jesus it is important to point out that Christian theology, guided by Matthew, has viewed Jesus as the new chosen, who, after referring to the multitude of miracles Jesus performed, made reference to Isaiah's prophecy on the elected *pais* (Is 42:1) (cf. Llewelyn 2010, 101). The *pais* as both servant and son, is also the beloved one as Jesus appears in the stories of His baptism and Transfiguration (Mt 3:17. 17:15. Mk 1:11. 9:7. Lk 3:22. 20:13) (cf. Andreopoulos 2005, 37-66,96-9,174-8).

According to Girard, Jesus reveals the truth of human violence: all the victims up to His time were innocent. He repeated this especially in what is known as 'the curses against the Pharisees'. The nowadays widely accepted term *curse*, however does not seem to be the

appropriate one. It expresses condemnation and a wish to inflict harm or punishment to someone.[74] But the English translation of the text prefers the exclamation *woe*, which expresses lament, sorrow or even anger.[75] Similarly, the Greek original reads *ouai* which expresses sorrow and anger (Liddell-Scott 1997, 3:375). Instead of cursing the Pharisees, Jesus expresses His anger and sorrow revealing the truth about humans and their violence by saying that all the bloodshed on earth since Abel was 'righteous' (Mt 23:35-7). He even predicted His own death in the parable of the tenants (Mt 21:33-46) in which the tenants kill all the servants sent by their master until they finally kill the master's son after throwing him 'out of the vineyard', like a genuine scapegoat victim (Mt 21:39). In Jesus, therefore, the lie of all the religions is revealed and the order of all previous religions is turned upside down. This is why Girard thinks that Christianity is not a religion (Girard 1987a, 117-8), a thesis very much in harmony with the one expressed by Karl Barth (Moseley 2013a, 124-30) on the revelation of the absolutely transcendental God, which refuted natural theology, and made Christianity religionless, according to Dietrich Bonhöffer (Kelly-Nelson 1995, 40,502-3). The thesis was supported by numerous modern Greek theologians and philosophers, such as Romanides (Romanides 1996a, 67-87) or Yannaras (Yannaras 2013).

There are fundamental differences, however, between Christ and the scapegoat. Despite being an innocent victim in the same line with Abel, or even John the Baptist (Girard 1993a, 126), Jesus willingly accepts the death plotted by His enemies and, in His divinity, dissolves the power of death. Jesus, thus, opens up a new way to life, to deification, as the Christian tradition has it, as humans are freed from iniquity and its consequences. This is, and that is the crucial point for this thesis, a reality that concerns all humans and not only the Jews, as will be suggested again below. That is why Jesus warned the Pharisees not to exclude themselves from the acts of violence their forefathers inflicted on the prophets. In so doing, Jesus, though himself a Jew, distances himself from them. Violence, therefore, concerns all humanity (Mt 23:30). Deliverance, in the same vein, concerns all humanity too.

In order to see this in more detail it is necessary to make again a brief historical sketch of the New Testament. The Romans entered Palestine in 63BC; it was Pompey (106-48BC) that intervened in the Hasmonean Civil War (67-63BC). The Romans were deeply interested in the region, following the fall of the Hellenistic Seleucid state, for it bordered on the Parthian empire - the new important eastern power, threatening Rome's eastern dominions. The conflict between the pro-Roman and pro-Parthian factions in Palestine - which developed simultaneously with the Roman Civil Wars that led to the establishment of the empire - was ended with the installation, by the Romans, of the Idumean Herod I the Great (37-4BC) as king of the Jewish client kingdom. The balancing effect of this choice, coincided with the end of the Roman Civil Wars and the rule of Octavian Augustus (27BC-14AD), who pacified and stabilised the empire. The Jews were allowed to practise their religion freely and the Second Temple remained the centre of their

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[74] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/curse accessed on 04/04/2018.

[75] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/woe accessed on 04/04/2018.

religious life. Following Herod's death, however, the Romans subdivided Palestine into smaller units, in an effort to exercise more effective control over them, appointing Herod's family members as rulers and changing them at will often taking advantage, if not encouraging, their petty quarrels. The most important of these smaller units was undoubtedly Judea with its capital Jerusalem. These administrative reforms effectively turned Palestine into a Roman province, a development viewed negatively by parts of the local Jewish population, which caused significant unrest in the following decades (Aberbach 2000, 353-4. Lapin 2010, 58-60).

Following the Babylonian captivity, the unification of the Middle East under the Persians and the emergence of the Hellenistic world following Alexander's conquests (6th-3rd centuries BC), the Jews moved freely in the East and did not restrict themselves to Palestine. This is known even from the time of Cyrus: many Jews chose to stay in Babylon. This imperial framework led to the creation of the Jewish diaspora. Apart from Mesopotamia, Jews moved to Egypt and Asia Minor, Cyrenaica, Libya, Greece and Italy. The Jewish contact with the Greek and, subsequently, the Roman culture, led to the emergence of the historically and culturally profoundly interesting phenomenon of Hellenistic Judaism, which produced the most famous Jews, in the West: Philo of Alexandria, Josephus and Paul. It was the meeting, to use Axial Age terminology, of two primary Axial Age cultures, which fundamentally influenced the world. The meeting of these fundamental cultures produced two new cultures, the importance of which, though being post-Axial Age, equals that of the Axial Age and were termed by Axial-Age literature as *secondary breakthroughs*: post-Temple Judaism and Christianity (Aberbach 2000, 355. Eisenstadt 1986d, 227-8). Seen from a purely theological point of view, therefore, this meeting, which produced Christianity, constituted, to use von Balthasar's words, 'absolutely, and in a traditional sense, a *praeparatio evangelica*' (Balthasar 1989, 43, alluding Eusebius of Caesarea).

What appears as the major feature of Judaism at the time was the Law (cf. Schwartz 2017, 48-75). The Pentateuch was written down and this event had consequences of paramount importance. The kings had ceased to exist since the Babylonian captivity, and the prophets progressively vanished. Only the priests of the Temple resumed their elite role in Judaism; this elite is known in Roman Jerusalem as the Sadducees (Segal 2010, 44-5). A new elite, however, emerged. The written Law led to the emergence of two phenomena: its public reading - which developed together with community prayers - and its interpretation. Both practices are connected with the emergence of the synagogues, as places of public prayer, and of the Pharisees and the Scribes, as readers and interpreters of the Law (Segal 2010, 45-6,55). These synagogues also functioned as schools. Jews were known for their knowledge of the Law of Moses, though the majority was illiterate. Although later sources refer to a network of schools all over Palestine for teaching the Law to the children, such a network did not exist in all probability. The knowledge of the Jews, their education, stemmed from the fountain of the synagogue (Goodblatt 2006, 31-4). The Law took thus its final form as the most important identity marker of the Jews. The Law was given by Yahweh in order to safeguard His covenant with His chosen people Israel. If Israel wished to remain the chosen people, the Law should be

applied faithfully (Goodblatt 2006, 28-48. Stone 1986, 241-5). This understanding of the Law as the most important identity marker of the Jewish nation, the key-element of the covenant with Yahweh, and the necessary presupposition of chosenness led to a later criticism - emerging already in the Gospels - of a dry, pointless, and pedantic legalism (see for example: 'the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath' Mk 2:27). This idea characterised Christianity. It has to be noted, however, that it was the devotion to the covenant, according to the prophets, that directed, in the Jewish mind, this legalism; Jews sought to remain faithful to Yahweh by keeping the Law and did not keep the Law for its own sake (Sanders 1977, 419-22; cf. Smith 2015, 407-8).

There were other sects within Judaism, which, though mainly religious, had an interest in political matters, the Essenes - for some coinciding with the Qumran community (Segal 2010, 46-8), for others not (Kippenberg 1986, 263-5) - and the Sicarii. The latter were often involved in political assassinations and deeply engaged in the revolts against Rome. These sects too adhered to the uniqueness of the Jewish nation, the chosen one. But in Palestine, at the time, the linguistic factor that we saw as a feature - though not a decisive one - of Jewish nationality in pre-exilic Israel, hardly appears in the Second Temple era. The Hebrew language was progressively replaced by Aramaic, as spoken and documentary language, though Hebrew remained the literary language of the Jews. This was a development initiated in the Achaemenid Persia and was reinforced in the following Hellenistic and Roman periods, when the Greek language also penetrated. Israel became trilingual. This, however, did not prevent them to continue thinking of their Hebrew as the language of their own nation (Goodblatt 2006, 44-7,50-69. Sim 2002, 172-3. Smith 2004, 163).

The strict observance of the Law and the devotion to the covenant, in order to safeguard chosenness, deeply marked Jewish identity. Jews in Palestine maintained this identity in both Hellenistic and Roman times. Since the observance of the Law safeguarded chosenness, inevitably Jews viewed themselves as superior to their conquerors, both Greeks and Romans, a factor that strengthened their nationalism. This idea is established in the Old Testament, as mentioned above, which viewed people categorised in the nation Israel, the chosen ones, and the rest of the nations (cf. Barclay 1996, 405-6. Llywelyn 2010, 137-8). In later prophets, the other nations are often termed *Greeks*, following Alexander's conquest. The superior Jews were to be clearly distinguished from the inferior *Greeks*, i.e. all the other nations. It has to be noted that a certain hatred towards the actual Greeks existed among the Jews, especially connected with the events that led to the Maccabean Revolt. This was mirrored in the prohibition of mixed marriages by Ezra and Nehemiah, immediately after the return from the Babylonian exile (Ezr 9:1-10:44. Ne 13:1,23-29). This event in the Old Testament does not seem to possess a historical importance in itself; it refers to the wishes of the post-exilic religious elites, rather than people's practices at the time, while its historicity has been doubted (Southwood 2012). What is of importance for the purposes of this thesis, however, is that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah express the views of the elites, who, using their influence in society, forged the way Jews imagined themselves from the immediate post-exilic era to that of the Second Temple (cf.

Armstrong 2006, 246-8). Although mixed marriages did happen, their prohibition by the new elites of Judaism marks the construction of the idea of Jewishness at the time, as a distinct nation, with clearly demarcated mental/imagined borders. In this framework certain provisions of the Law, distinctive of the Jews, acquired immense importance: mainly, circumcision and the Sabbath holiday. These particularistic ideas were further reinforced by the Jewish belief in blood kinship and ancestor reverence, based also on the Law. The Jews were the descendants of the patriarchs - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - God's beloved ones and this blood kinship with their ancestors, Yahweh's chosen ones, made them superior to any other nation. Their chosenness was deeply rooted in blood descent (Goodblatt 2006, 20-7. Sim 2002, 171-2).

This reality characterised not only the Jews of Palestine, but also those of the diaspora. Diaspora Jews argued against mixed marriages, urged for the observance of the Law - especially circumcision and the Sabbath holiday - and instructed Jews to avoid heathen practices, habits popular among the pagans who surrounded the Jewish diaspora communities, such as the consummation of meat used in sacrifices to their idols. Though clearly demarcated, however, the imagined borders of the Jewish nation were not impenetrable - as it is the case with all nations, even modern ones, which develop practices of acquiring nationality. The phenomenon of proselytism developed especially in the diaspora communities. Certain individuals became Jews and adopted the distinctive Jewish monotheism. This led modern scholars to consider Judaism as a *hybrid* entity (Leander 2014, 61-83. Wan 2000, 191-215). This idea, though correct in its historical considerations (cf. Southwood 2012, 191-212), downplays the equally historical fact that these proselytes were not immediately welcomed. Certain practices, connected with one's conversion to Judaism, aimed profoundly at changing the individual to such an extent as to constitute a member of the Jewish chosen nation. For instance, one's previous identities were abandoned entirely. It was required from the proselyte to cut off his previous links - such as, family, and friends - and establish new ones among Jews only. Thus, Jews maintained their idea of superiority even away from Palestine, where they constituted only minority communities (Barclay 1996, 408-12. Sim 2002, 174-7. Stanley 1996, 111-3). Needless to say, the old priestly elite had nothing to do with diaspora Jews, as it was connected with the Temple's worship and Jerusalem. The Sadducees were people of Jerusalem only. The point uniting the diaspora Jews was the Synagogue of the common prayer, the reading of the Law and its interpretation. As a result, diaspora Jews maintained their distinctive national identity around the Synagogue and the new elite of the Pharisees (Goodblatt 2006, 37-40. Smith 1986, 64).

The ideas of distinct Jewish identity, chosenness, nationalism, and superiority made the Jews less and less tolerant towards Roman practices. The changing of Palestine to a Roman province, the census of Roman proconsul of Syria Quirinus (c.51BC-21AD), the Roman legislation concerning taxation, the administrative division of the province into smaller units, and other Roman reforms were viewed as hostile and humiliating by many Jews and led to significant unrest. This culminated in a series of revolts against Roman rule, known as the Roman-Jewish Wars: the first, and probably the most important, took place between 66-73AD, the second, also known as the Quietus War, took place between 115-117AD in Egypt, Cyrenaica and Cyprus rather

than Palestine, and the third was the Simon Bar Kosiba or Kokhba War of 132-135AD. The first of these revolts, significantly undermined by Jewish civil conflicts, had the most devastating effect on the Jews. The Roman general - later emperor - Titus (r.79-81AD) besieged the rebels in Jerusalem (70AD) and, despite tenacious and determined resistance, occupied it, almost entirely demolished its walls, set fire in the Temple, destroying it completely, and transferred many of its religiously important artefacts in Rome for his triumph. Many of the population were massacred, while others were enslaved. The rebellion did not end until the fall of the last rebel stronghold, the Masada fortress in 73AD. However, it is the fall of Jerusalem and the second and final destruction of the temple that caused a deep and lasting effect in Judaism. The central worship of the Temple was entirely abandoned, and the Sadducees ceased to exist. Especially after the Bar Kokhba War the return of Jews to Jerusalem was prohibited. This, on the other hand, strengthened the role of the Synagogues and the Pharisees, leading to the rabbinic movement, which is connected with the crystallisation of Law interpretation through its written form in the Mishna and, much later, the Talmud. Despite defeat, the Jewish distinct identity was further reinforced around precisely those institutions that had most profoundly contributed to its preservation in the Hellenistic and Roman eras: the Synagogues, the Law and its interpreters. It was a new Jewish nationalism formed, again, by defeat (Aberbach 2000, 347-51,356-9. Goodblatt 2006, 129-39. Lapin 2010, 58-82. Segal 2010, 48-9,55-6).

The diaspora was also strongly connected with unrest and riots. There was a significant conflict between Greeks and Jews not only in Palestine but also in the diaspora. Greeks and Jews viewed each other with mutual hostility and dislike especially from the first century BC onwards. Riots took place in Egypt, Libya, and Asia Minor. The Jewish sense of superiority towards Greeks, as idolatrous heathens, came into conflict with the Greek sense of superiority that viewed the non-Greeks as barbarians (cf. Park 2003, 11-2). Herodotus (fifth century BC) understood this in terms of blood descent, connection with the land, and common gods:

> ... there is not enough gold on earth, or any land of such outstanding beauty and fertility, that we would accept in return for collaborating with the enemy and enslave Greece ... we are all Greeks - one race[76] speaking one language, with temples to the gods and religious rites in common, and with a common way of life (Histories 8, 144; cf. 9, 7).[77]

Later Isocrates (fourth century BC) gave a different meaning: 'the name "Greek" seems to be not that of the people but of a way of thinking; and people are called Greeks because they share in our education (paideusis) rather than in our birth' (Panegyricus 51).[78] There is a rather long bibliography on these passages, which has been involved in a series of disputed issues that do not concern this thesis (cf. Hall 2000, 44-7. Hall 2002, 189-94,209). For this thesis's purposes, it suffices to say that the ancient Greeks had formed an idea of themselves, as opposed to

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[76] The term *race* of the English translation refers to the term *hómaimon* of the Greek original, meaning *same blood*.

[77] Herodotus 1998, 539; cf. 543.

[78] Papillon 2004, 40.

barbarians, either based on blood descent and connection with the land or culture and education (cf. Goodblatt 2006, 16-20). This view allowed them to possess their own sense of superiority with their own version of twofold categorisation - Greeks as opposed to barbarians, analogous of Jews as opposed to Greeks/pagans. This sense of superiority, the Roman protectionism over the Jewish diaspora by granting Roman citizenship to prominent Jews which doubted Greek control of the cities' administration, and the instability caused by the Roman Civil Wars, led the Greeks into frequent conflicts with the Jews (Aberbach 2000, 351-5. Stanley 1996, 101-24).

The picture depicted above shows that Judaism developed its own nationalism in the era in question. In doing so, it adhered to the particularistic/exclusivist tradition of the Old Testament, as presented in the previous chapter, particularly the traditional understandings of the covenants with Abraham and Moses and, what is more, the Davidic one, with which the anticipation of the Messiah was connected (Ps 110:4). The events following the anti-Roman rebellions reinforced this particularism even deeper and made Judaism more exclusivist. These were the developments that decisively pushed towards the complete split of Christianity from Judaism. Jewish Christians did not participate in the rebellions and their choice of universalism and inclusivism was in progress. Eisenstadt has supported the view that Judaism's political national inclinations led to its stronger particularism, unwelcome in the imperial Roman environment. Christianity, with its adherence to universalism and inclusivity was better suited to precisely this environment and, despite initial problems, finally prevailed. Judaism was defeated (Eisenstadt 1986d, 234-7; cf. Eisenstadt 1962, 271-94. Kippenberg 1986, 279). It is indeed important to underline that adherence to universalism was close enough to the Pax Romana vision and that this became progressively more and more important, as Constantine's (324-37AD) reforms proved in the fourth century AD. But to consider the Jewish particularism as a defeat is a questionable conclusion. Judaism adhered to particularism and it was precisely this particularism that preserved Judaism under difficult circumstances and brought it to modernity. Judaism remains a limited religion with a relatively small number of adherents; the comparison with Christianity makes the latter look gigantic. But it is the small number that seems to satisfy modern Jews, since, despite modern concerns about their decreasing numbers, never developed practices of mass proselytisation (cf. Aberbach 2000, 347-62). On the other hand, particularism in Judaism did not go uncontested. Ideas of universality existed in Judaism in the Middle Ages and even modernity. As a result, to speak of Judaism's defeat or even to absolutely identify Judaism with particularism, though tempting, as particularism is the prevalent idea in Judaism, constitute oversimplifications that misrepresent Judaism (cf. Park 2003, 16-9). Christian universality, it should be remembered, is an equally Jewish product that Christianity consciously adopted.

However, there was a different approach in the anticipation of the future Messiah and the role of Israel, within Israel itself; a universalist/inclusivist one (Eisenstadt 1986d, 234-5). This approach was expressed particularly in the so-called *apocalyptic literature* in Judaism (Kippenberg 1986, 268-9. Segal 2010, 51-3). Any engagement in the debate on whether Jesus was himself an *apocalyptic prophet* or not (Ehrman 2000, 153-66. Sanders 1985. Sanders 1993) is

outside the scope of this thesis. However, this thesis seeks to argue that it is the universalistic/ inclusivist tradition which anticipates the servant of God who will save many, while expecting the nations to join Israel in worshipping Yahweh. It also seeks to argue that this tradition is a tradition within Judaism, as mentioned in the previous chapter, and was not invented either by Jesus or His disciples, so that His audience was familiar with the references He made in His otherwise innovative kerygma (cf. Armstrong 2006, 383-5).

From the very beginning of the Gospels, placed first in the New Testament canon for expressing Jesus's kerygma and actions, the way this pattern is conceived in the New Testament becomes apparent. It is the universalistic/inclusivist pattern of the Old Testament and Jewish tradition on which the New Testament is built. In other words, Israel and its special place before Yahweh as his elect nation has a purpose: to serve the salvation of all nations. Obviously, the Gospels follow the pattern expressed in such books as that of Isaiah, the prophet who spoke of the great events, which are to take place in Israel and which will make all nations to join Israel in praising Yahweh (Is 61; cf. Ps 66, 86:8-10). This understanding of the Gospel is pronounced in a programmatic, as it were, way in the second chapter of the Gospel according to Luke in the story of the new born Jesus brought before Simeon: 'Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence *of all peoples*, a light for revelation *to the Gentiles*, and for glory to *your people Israel*' (Lk 2:29-32 - my italics). The new light brought before the eyes of the elder Simeon, the infant Jesus, will not be only for the glory of Israel, Yahweh's own people, but also a revelation to the Gentiles before all peoples; precisely this reality, that Jesus is the revelation to all peoples, constitutes the glory of Israel. Jesus, understood as the anticipated Messiah, the anointed one - *Khristòs* in Greek - constitutes part of the story of Israel, while including all nations (Bock 2012, 282).

Jesus's story, to begin with, is Israel's story. This becomes apparent in Jesus's clear statement that appears in the more Jewish Gospel of Matthew, where the pattern of Jesus as the fulfilment of the old prophecies appears mostly (Morris 1992, 2-3): 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Mt 15:24). Despite coming in conflict with the authorities of Israel of His time - both the traditional ones, the council (Sanhedrin) and the Sadducees, and the newly formed interpreters of the Law, the Scribes and the Pharisees - Jesus moved always within the borders of Palestine referring only to Jews. Moreover, this was what He instructed His disciples to do: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Mt 10:5-6). Jesus referred, in even harsher terms, to a Gentile woman, who came to him to be delivered from her illness; He refused her His healing power, telling her: 'It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs' (Mt 15:36. Mk 7:27). By the word *children* Jesus refers to the children of Yahweh, Yahweh's own people, Israel. The term *dogs* refers to the other nations to those who do not acknowledge Yahweh as their Lord. The elect nation is not in the same level with the other nations. The comparison is striking: humans as opposed to animals. Whatever Jesus does and says refers only to Israel. He saves those who come to Him and endures the martyrdom His compatriots have

plotted against Him, but He does not move away from them. His Crucifixion and final Resurrection take place in Jerusalem referring only to Jews; the Romans seem to play a secondary role, in the background of the story. This insistence on Israel, the elect nation, is, according to the Gospels, a reality that stems from the unity of Jesus with Israel's patriarchs and prophets. Following Jesus's Resurrection, and before His appearance to the twelve apostles, Jesus talked with those travelling towards Emmaus. The bewildered disciples expressed their disappointment, following the death of their teacher, as they hoped that He was the one to 'redeem Israel'. In response, Jesus explained that these events were necessary and according to God's plan expressed through the prophets: 'And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself' (Lk 24:27). This idea, expressed by Jesus, constitutes a pattern in the Gospels, where events of Jesus's life are presented as fulfilment of the Old Testament prophesies (for example Mt 2:17. Mk 14:49. Lk 22:37. Jn 12:38). This unity of Christ with the Old Testament legacy is strongly connected, in the Gospels, with the Davidic covenant. As noted above, the Davidic covenant referred to the eternal character of David's kingship. The Gospels understand this promise fulfilled in Jesus. Announcing the birth of Jesus to Mary, Gabriel the angel proclaimed: 'He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end' (Lk 1:32-3). That is why the evangelists put forward another pattern: Jesus is often called 'son of David' (for example Mt 9:27. Mk 12:35. Lk 18:38-9). Finally, it is stressed that Jesus is the son of Abraham and David, a Jew 'according to the flesh' (Rm 9:5). This is pointed out most particularly by Matthew's choice to start his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus 'son of David, son of Abraham' (Mt 1:1-17), which puts forward the argument that Jesus was a member of the tribe of Judah, a direct descendant of king David and, through Judah, a descendant of the patriarchs. This statement is further underlined by the story of the Nativity, which took place in the city of Bethlehem (Lk 2:4; cf. Mt 2:1-6. Mc 5:1), David's home-city (1Sm 17:12).

However, Jesus's story, despite being the story of Israel, is meant to expand to all nations. The pattern followed here by the Evangelists is the universalistic/inclusivist one of the Old Testament but only in a primitive initial stage. This openness is foretold - rather than fully manifested - through stories in which Jesus showed His universalistic/inclusivist nature. It has to be noted that Matthew's genealogy is not the only one in the Gospels. There is another one offered by Luke (3:23-38), where Jesus appears as the descendant not only of the patriarchs and Abraham, the progenitor of Israel, but beyond them of Adam, the progenitor of all mankind, and of God, the creator. This is a striking case of showing Jesus's unity with all mankind and not only with Israel. Moreover, as stated above, Jesus instructed His disciples to refer neither to Gentiles nor to Samaritans; however, the instruction is violated exactly by Him. The Gospel according to Matthew, despite considered the *Jewish* one, presents such events vividly, such as the incident of the Persian kings, the Magi, which is included in the Nativity narrative (Mt 2:1-12). Luke presents Jesus reminding Jews that Elijah and Elisha, prophets of Israel, blessed finally only two Gentiles, the widow of Zarephath and the leper Neeman the Syrian (Lk 4:25,27). What is more,

the Gospels stress the fact that Christ's sermon is initiated in the 'Galilee of nations' (Mt 4:15), an area away from the strict priestly influence of Jerusalem. It is this 'Northern Jesus' (Edwards 2002, 18) who performs miracles to non-Jews. One such case is that of the servant of the Roman centurion healed by Jesus. The special interest of the story is that the centurion's faith caused Jesus's admiration: 'truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith' (Mt 8:5-13). In this extract, the faith of the non-Jew is placed above the faith of the members of the chosen nation. A similar story is that of the foreign woman, who was paralleled to *dogs*. It was a Phoenician woman from the area of Tyre, who asked Jesus to heal her sick daughter. Jesus finally healed her daughter, expressing again His admiration for her faith: 'O woman, great is your faith!' (Mt 15:21-8; cf. Mk 7:24-30) (Morris 1992, 6. Edwards 2002, 18). Apart from turning to the Gentiles, Jesus turned to the Samaritans too. In a parable interpreting the term *neighbour*, Christ explained that a Jewish priest and a Levite passed by a Jew who was wounded by robbers; only a Samaritan showed compassion (Lk 10:25-37). In accordance with this story Jesus entered the area of Samaria and sat by Jacob's well in Sychar, considered a holy place by the Samaritans, where he met a woman. In the latter's question, which is the appropriate place to worship Yahweh, the Mount Gerizim or the temple of Jerusalem, Jesus rejects both, speaking for a future reality soon to come:

> Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father … the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (Jn 4:21-4).

The Samaritan woman replied that the anticipated Messiah was to explain all these, only to receive a direct answer never before pronounced in the Gospels as such: 'I, who speak to you, am He' (Jn 4:26). It is striking that the future reality of the world that will follow Jesus's work, as well as His Messianic role, are never before expressed in such straightforward manner as in the case of Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman. It is an event that 'marvelled' (Jn 4:27) His disciples.

Great things were to happen to Israel, Yahweh's chosen nation, which were to make all nations join Israel in the praise of Yahweh. These great things are personified, according to the Gospels, in Jesus. The Jewishness of Jesus 'according to the flesh' (Rm 9:5), as well as His insistence to restrict Himself to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel', have a purpose: when the work of Jesus will be completed, the good news will be of such a magnitude that the whole world will recognise Yahweh as its sovereign Lord. These great things refer to the completion of Jesus's work on earth, with the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and His Ascension to Heaven. For the time being, Jesus confines Himself within Israel, only pointing at the future reality.

This conclusion, reached by the study of the Gospels, is more clearly manifested in the Gospel according to John in the occasion of the Greeks, who wished to see Jesus. The Greeks were probably not converts to Judaism, but non-Jews, as the non-Jews were termed generally *Greeks*. The presence of Greeks in Jerusalem and the temple for the Passover was not something unusual. Many non-Jews showed interest in Judaism and used to visit the temple, welcomed in

the *court of the nations* in the second temple (Middoth 1:1f.11).[79] There were some Greeks 'among the ones who went up to worship at the feast' (Jn 12:20), the last Passover before the Passion, asking to see Jesus. When Jesus's disciples announced to Him the desire of the Greeks, Jesus made a rather odd answer referring to His glorification and the story of the grain of wheat that needs to die in order to bear much fruit. Obviously, Jesus referred to the events of His volitional Passion and subsequent Resurrection, when He was to draw all people to Himself (Jn 12:20-32). As it has rightly been pointed out, Jesus's pronouncement about the future time, when He was to draw all people to Himself, constitutes an indirect answer to the Greeks. It was not the time yet for them to see Him. Their very approach meant that the time of the completion of the *great things* was imminent. Because it was only after the completion of these *great things* that all the people were to be drawn to Him, i.e. all the kinds of people, both Gentiles and Jews (Kostenberger 2009, 231-3,463; cf. Girard 1987a, 167-70,206-15).

These great deeds justify a move of the early Church towards the nations, outside Israel, the elect nation. This is announced by Jesus Himself, following the Resurrection: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations' (Mt 28:19; cf. Lk 24:47. Acts 1:8) (Sim 2002, 184-96). It is the book of the Acts of the Apostles, a text attributed to Luke, that describes this turn. It is there that we learn about Peter's initial kerygma in Jerusalem (1-12), expanded to Samaria by Philip (8:4-25), and, subsequently, to the Gentiles by Peter, Barnabas and, eventually and principally, Paul from Antioch of Syria to Rome (10-28). Particularly, Paul considered his mission as something that started from Israel; he always preached in synagogues. However, it is Israel's reaction to his sermon that made him to declare thrice that he was to abandon Israel and 'turn to the nations', first in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:46, 18:6, 28:28). He saw this as his obligation stemming from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the 'light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth' (Is 49:6. Acts 13:47). The light illumines the dark path; the people dwelling the land of darkness are to see a great light (Is 9:2). Paul follows a pattern that Jesus used to refer to Himself as the light of the world (Jn 8:12). However, Jesus called Himself light of the world as long as He was in the world (Jn 9:5); He, eventually, attributed this characteristic to His disciples (Mt 5:14). Following this tradition, Paul has this self-consciousness, that he too is the light, and a light to bring salvation to the end of the earth. His work constituted 'an extension of the work' of Jesus (Bock 2012, 298-9). This mission to the nations challenged idolatry and superstition, as in the case of Lystra of Lycaonia (Acts 14:8-20), Athens (17:16-34), and Ephesus (19:23-7).

This choice of the early Church, particularly Paul, to start the kerygma from the Jews and not to hesitate to turn to the other nations formed a new community nationally mixed. The place of the different nationalities in the new community constituted a problem that Paul overcame with his idea of 'putting on Christ'. For Paul, Christ founded a new world, characterised by those who have put on Christ:

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[79] Danby 1980, 589.

> For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have *put on Christ*. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise (Gl 3:27-9; cf. Cl 3:10-2).

The passage has constituted the topic of an almost endless number of relevant studies and it is very important for the purposes of this thesis on nationality issues in the Bible. The thesis's interest will focus on two points concerning *putting on Christ*, which indicates that, first, human discriminations are overcome, and, second, all humans – not only the Jews – constitute the offspring of Abraham, or, according to a parallel verse, the chosen ones (Cl 3:12).

The first point concentrates in the new world established by Jesus, within which human discriminations are overcome. The sharp distinction of the Old Testament between the Jews, God's chosen people, and the other nations, the Greeks, the non-Jews, is now overcome. Elsewhere in the same letter, as well as the first letter to the Corinthians, an alternative verse is to be found: 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision in nothing, but obeying God's commandments is everything' (1Cr 7:19. Gl 5:6, 6:15). Should we then understand these verses in religious and not national terms? Do these verses refer to the different religious background of the faithful to whom Paul addresses his letters? It has been already argued that there were two categories of nations: Israel constituted one category and all the other nations belonged to the second category. The same pattern is followed in the New Testament. Israel constituted a distinct nation, possessing certain features, its faith to Yahweh as the unique God, and to themselves as a chosen nation included. These features made the Jews adopt an idea of superiority. An analogous sharp distinction characterised the Greeks too, as shown above. It is in this historical context that this verse should be examined, for the order that the letter follows - Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female - does not seem to be accidental:

> In the Jewish morning prayer, which Paul must have used all his pre-Christian life, a Jewish man thanks God that 'you have not made me a gentile, a slave or a woman'. Paul takes that prayer and reverses it. The old distinctions have gone; all are now one in Christ (Barclay 2002, 39).

Indeed, this morning prayer is found in the Babylonian Talmud:

> A man is obliged to recite three blessings every day, and they are the following: [Blessed be the One] Who has made me a Jew; Who has not made me a woman; Who has not made me a dolt. Rav Acha Bar Yaakov heard his son reciting the blessing of 'Who has not made me a dolt'. He said to him: 'Is it proper to recite blessings to this extent?' He (his son) said to him: 'Then what blessing should one recite instead?' He replied: 'Who has not made me a slave' (Menachot 44a).[80]

From the Talmud, this prayer passed into the book of prayers, which is used in modern Jewish liturgical practice, not without disagreements and reservations though. The earliest known version was found in the famous Genizah of the synagogue in Old Cairo, Egypt: 'Praised are You,

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[80] Fogel 2014, 147.

Adonai our God, King of the Universe, Who made me a person and not a beast, a man and not a woman, an Israelite and not a gentile… free and not a slave' (Kahn 2001, 19). Apparently, this version, transferring the Egyptian - once Hellenistic - and not the Babylonian tradition of Judaism is closer to Paul's verse. Modern Jewish thought has located the origins of this prayer in a similar Greek idea. Allegedly, Socrates was grateful to fortune for three things: that he was born a person and not a beast, a man and not a woman, a Greek and not a barbarian (De Vitis 1,7,33).[81] Probably this aphorism became a slogan within the Hellenistic world, in the framework of which Hellenism met Judaism, echoing the barbarian/Greek distinction of classical times. According to modern Jewish scholarship, therefore, the Jewish prayer constituted a response to the Greek slogan (Kahn 2001, 18-20).

In his letter to the Galatians Paul refers to Christians with both a Jewish and a gentile, or Greek, background. Having in mind these nationalistic, elitist or particularistic and exclusivist ideas, Paul reverses them to an all-inclusive understanding. All the baptised, despite their national, religious, gender or social status, have put on Christ, are one in Christ. As put by Sanders, 'it is one of Paul's main themes … that Jews and Greeks must have equal access to salvation' (Sanders 1977, 457). Modern scholarship has often made efforts to trace Paul's relevant ideas in Judaism. As has been repeatedly pointed out universalist and inclusivist ideas are not at all alien to the Jewish tradition. However, modern scholars have connected Paul's choice with the information provided by Luke that he constituted a disciple of Gamaliel the Pharisee (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel the Elder was a well known and very influential Pharisee (cf. Acts 5:34), grandson of the Pharisee Hillel, leader of a moderate school of interpreting the Law of Moses. Hillel's school opposed the Shammai school which appeared more conservative and more particularistic. However, there is nothing in the Bible affirming the connection of Gamaliel of the Acts with Gamaliel the Elder, Hillel's grandson and follower. There is nothing in the Acts to connect the person intervening in the Sanhedrin in favour of the apostles with Paul's teacher. Nothing, therefore, is certain. The only point that can be made and seems probable is to assume that both, Gamaliel and Paul, adhered to Jewish traditions that favoured universalism and inclusivity as opposed to particularism and exclusivity (Park 2003, 27-9).

The verse from the epistle to the Colossians is similar. There Christians are reminded that they have put on a new self: 'Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all' (Cl 3:11). The main elements of the Greek aphorism and the Jewish prayer are maintained - Greek/Jew/barbarian, slave/free. The man/woman pattern is missing, and the circumcised/uncircumcised pattern is added to further stress the Greek/Jew one. The man/woman pattern does not concern this study, despite its importance; what is of interest here is the addition of the Scythians. The term - the only time to be found in the New Testament - is used to add a nation notorious for its savagery. According to Josephus, the Scythians 'take pleasure in murdering people and are little better than wild

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[81] Socrates's aphorism has made a rather difficult journey: it was attributed to him by people in the third century BC; the tradition was written by Hermippus of Smyrna, a biographer of philosophers and himself a peripatetic philosopher; Diogenes Laertius copied it, oddly enough, in his life of Thales of Miletus. Laertius 1895, 15.

animals' (Contra Apionem 2, 269).[82] The term is used here to stress the racism of his fellow Jews and the Greeks and to underline that this form of national discrimination is entirely overcome in Christ. As a result, this verse of the letter to the Colossians expands, in this respect, and somewhat interprets the similar verse in the letter to the Galatians. Paul's intention is to push forward an argument of overcoming, in Christ, national discriminations. This is the argument reached by the historical, contextual understanding put forward here, which recent bibliographies seem to often omit. This point will be examined again below.

A final problem connected with this first point of Paul's reference is the question of how far this overcoming of discriminations goes. It can be claimed that the national differences cannot be overcome, as the male/female difference is not overcome. Being baptised does not indicate a change of sex. The differences are, therefore, maintained. What happens is that the Church is inclusive and does not endorse any form of discrimination. Before attempting any further analysis on this point, it has to be made clear that the patterns mentioned in the letter of the Galatians - despite following their Jewish-Greek context - do not carry the same weight in terms of theology. The gender issue belongs to the order of creation, to the very nature of human beings, as created by God. The Jew/Greek and the free/slave patterns do not refer to creation. God created, according to the Biblical understanding presented here, neither nations nor social status. As was noted above, the national differences concern the world after the fall from Eden and not before. This is a very significant theological argument that should not be omitted. Although the baptised ones are not called to change their language, or customs, based on the Old Testament, it has to be pointed out that they are indeed called to overcome their national, and other, discriminations in order to constitute a new people. Paul does not criminalise national differences, but turns against discriminations, national or otherwise. This idea leads the analysis to the next point.

The second point made by Paul is that all humans baptised have put on Christ and constitute the new seed of Abraham, his 'heirs according to the promise' (Gl 3:29), the chosen ones (Cl 3:12). Paul goes back to the covenant with Abraham because, as underlined above, this was the covenant that brought Israel into existence; Abraham is the progenitor of Israel. The Jews were proud of being the children of Abraham, his offspring (Ps 105:6; cf. Lk 3:8. Jn 8:39). Paul refutes this idea; people do not constitute the children of Abraham, the chosen nation, just because of blood kinship, but only because of faith in God and His Messiah, Jesus Christ. In this context, it is necessary to recall that, in the Gospels, the chosen is an individual, Jesus, proclaimed as such by the Father most prominently in the Transfiguration narrative (Lk 9:35; cf. Mt 12:18 alluding Is 42:1) (Andreopoulos 2012, 23-42). Abraham himself was chosen by Yahweh precisely because he believed in Him. The events concerning Abraham's obedience, circumcision and the covenant follow Yahweh's initial revelation to Abraham, which was due to his faith. What is more, the law followed much later, connected as it is with the Mosaic covenant. Paul,

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[82] Mason 2007, 321. See also Mason 2007, 321 f.1079: 'Ever since Herodotus, the Scythians could stand for the wild, savage, uncivilised "other" on the North-Eastern boundary of the Greek and Roman world. They had become a byword for inhospitality, cruelty, and the primitive life'.

himself a Pharisee (Phil 3:5), was aware of the immense importance of the Law in his contemporary Israel of the Second Temple, the Jewish institutions and the sects connected with it (Eisenstadt 1986d, 229-34. Segal 2010, 42-8. Stone 1986, 241-5). He chose, however, to turn against this understanding using this very Law against its interpreters. According to Paul, it is this very Law that points at the priority of the faith (Rm 4:3-25.; cf. Jm 2:21-3). Besides, through Abraham's offspring, all the nations of the earth were blessed (Gn 18:18, 22:18, 26:4). Paul further analysed this point by recalling Abraham's two sons, Ishmael from his servant Agar, and Isaac, from his wife Sarah. Jews claimed blood kinship through Isaac, Sarah's son. Paul reminds his readers that Ishmael, and not Isaac, was Abraham's firstborn. However, Yahweh said to Abraham that 'through Isaac your offspring shall be named', while another nation - though not the chosen - will come from Ishmael, 'for he is your offspring too' (Gn 21:12-3). What gives Isaac the chosen status is that he was born out of Yahweh's promise; blood kinship is of no importance (Gl 4:21-31. Rm 9:7-8; cf. Firestone 2008, 66-8. Kalaitzidis 2015, 117). As a result, it is faith in God and His elect Messiah, Jesus, that forms the members of the new chosen nation, Abraham's true offspring. This new nation does not follow the features of nationalities as known from the Old Testament, features of land, blood kinship, chosenness, covenant, Law, and language, but possesses only one feature: faith in God and His Christ (cf. Llywelyn 2010, 132-3. Sanders 1983, 17-27. Sanders 1991, 44-64). It is not accidental then that neither Paul nor Peter, as will be argued below, associate the new elect people with any particular holy land (cf. Hastings 2003, 33-4).

Recent scholarship has attempted to show that, though it overcomes nationalities, Paul's idea possesses an 'ethnic reasoning' which shows that, in the end, this oneness in Christ is a Jewish reality (Buell 2001, 449-76. Buell 2005. Buell 2014, 33-51. Buell-Hodge 2004. Hodge 2007. Leander 2014, 61-83. Schellenberg 2015, 16-29). Such views are pushing further the argument of modern interpretative scholarship, known as *the new perspective on Paul*, which understands the apostle as merely a Jew and definitely not a Christian (cf. Gager 2000. Sanders 1977. Sanders 1983. Sanders 1991. Stendahl 1963, 199-215). As a result, what appears, at first glance, as an overcoming of nationalities constitutes in itself an 'ethnic reasoning' (Buell 2005, 1-34) that encapsulates Paul's idea of the priority of Judaism. The scholars who have adopted such views have programmatically argued that the classic view of Judaism as particularistic and Christianity as universalistic is a misleading and dangerous one, which has justified anti-Semitism (Buell 2005, 166-70; cf. Cranford 1993, 27-8). The main weaknesses of this literature, as seen by this thesis, are mainly three: their anachronistic view of history, their broad understanding of ethnicity, and the fact that they tend to underestimate the importance of spirituality and faith.

First, the fact that shamefully Christianity has historically developed anti-Semitic rhetoric and practices does not suffice to change our scientific understandings of Judaism. Despite the well-intended and certainly welcome concern against anti-Semitism, which has indeed haunted Christianity reaching its climax in the first half of the twentieth century, this view entails a visible danger of understanding history retrospectively: to put it simply Hitler was not Paul's problem, only ours. This does not mean, nevertheless, that particularistic and

exclusivist ideas did not exist in Judaism. On the contrary, as suggested above, the idea of chosenness constitutes precisely this: a strong uncompromising particularism and exclusivism. It is equally a fact, however, that the universalistic/inclusivist reasoning constitutes no less a Jewish reality too. And it is precisely to this genuinely Jewish understanding that Christianity adhered, for Christianity is based on the Jewish tradition. The Hebrew Bible - even the Septuagint canon includes texts that belong to the Jewish tradition - constitutes the foundation of the faith in Jesus, Jewish according to the flesh, as the Messiah of the Jewish Davidic covenant and was preached by a number of Jewish teachers, the apostles, most prominent of whom was definitely Paul, the Jewish Pharisee. It is precisely this Jewish universalist/inclusivist mentality, within which the Jews indeed possess a priority, as will be argued below, undermining its own foundations.

Secondly, the understanding of ethnicity, based on modern sociological theories, between 'fixity and fluidity' (Buell 2005, 63-93) is rather odd as it attempts to apply fixity to texts that seem to turn to fluidity and too readily rejects the possibility that the *ethnic reasoning* in Paul is more a metaphor and a rhetorical strategy than a real commitment to any form of ethnicity. The result is such a broad understanding of ethnicity that expands to include almost everything; the distinction of nationality and religion becomes rather obscure (cf. Gruen 2010, 365-7). The way nation and nationality is understood in this thesis has been already clarified and need not be repeated here.[83] It is necessary, however, to repeat that numerous theories are first formed sociologically and then draw on history for examples. The use of such theories by historians and, indeed, theologians must be done with extreme caution.

Finally, such a broad understanding of ethnicity does not do justice to spirituality and faith. For instance, to claim that putting on Christ is a Jewish reality for Christ was a Jew, and thus 'being in Christ means being part of Israel' (Hodge 2007, 106), is an uneven thought that throws its weight on the fact that Jesus was a Jew 'according to the flesh' and not on the equal reality that he also was 'the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness' (Rm 1:3-4). To put on Christ is a spiritual, rather than *ethnic* reality, which is based on the faith in Christ (cf. Kalaitzidis 2015, 118-9). This faith is not a national but a spiritual reality. It is important to point out that newest perspectives on Paul underestimate the immense significance and absolute centrality of the person of Jesus not only for Christians at large, but also particularly for Paul. Jesus is the anticipated Messiah no less, who formed a 'new creation' (2Cr 5:17). What Paul had in mind was the prophecy: 'For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; *the former things shall not be remembered*' (Is 65:17, my italics). Paul believes that old discriminations are valid no more in the new creation of Christ Jesus. Salvation for humans does not depend on other nations becoming Jews, through the relevant distinctive practices of circumcision and the Sabbath holiday, as the *former things* would have it, but becoming new people, clothed with Christ, a new creation. To think otherwise, in Paul's terms, means to say that Christ dies in vain (Gl 2:21). Despite being a Jew and 'not a Christian' (Stendahl 1963, 199-215; cf. Buell-Hodge

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[83] See chapter 2.1.

2004, 241), Paul was aware that he preached good *news*, asking people to put on a *new* humanity and create a *new* self, thus establishing a *new* reality (Rm 6:4, 7:6, 10:15. 1Cr 3:6, 5:17. Gl 6:15; cf. Eph 2:15, 4:17,24. Cl 3:1,10. Heb 10:20, 12:24). The way this newness is to be named - Christianity or otherwise - is of secondary importance, for Christianity refers to a religion, an established reality with different versions, which possesses a history that Paul could never have foreseen. Undoubtedly, however, it is precisely Paul's choices that eventually formed Christianity upon the figure, the works and the kerygma of Jesus, as the Christ. Paul, therefore, does envisage a new people, indeed formulating a new reality, Christian or otherwise (cf. Park 2003, 29-32,55. Sanders 1983, 171-90. Sanders 1991, 63. Contra Buell-Hodge 2004, 249).

The understanding of the letter to the Galatians, as presented here, is historically more consistent. Simultaneously, an effort has been made for these nationality remarks not to be seen away from their spiritual connotations. As a result, the image depicted here is one of Paul appearing amidst an exclusivist/particularistic discrimination reasoning of two forms of nations, either Greeks vs. barbarians, or Jews vs. Greeks (cf. Cosgrove 2006, 273-8). This suggests, by using this very reasoning and turning it upside down, that an entirely new reality has emerged, a new nation, as it were, which has nothing to do with the previous ones, as it is entirely a spiritual universalistic and inclusive reality based on faith alone and not on common blood descent, law or language, or even sharing a common holy land. Paul, according to the understanding of this thesis, does exactly the opposite of what some of the modern scholars claim: instead of possessing an *ethnic reasoning* behind his misunderstood universalist façade, he rhetorically uses *ethnic reasoning* in order to negate precisely this very *ethnic reasoning* by the faith in Christ. Early Christianity continued in the same line of thought, since it parted its way with Judaism breaking 'with the main ambiguity in Jewish religion: the tension between a universal God and a chosen people'; the idea of the *tertium genus* stems from this reality, which sought to break national - among other forms of - discriminations (Stroumsa 1986, 254-5; cf. Kalaitzidis 2015, 116-8). Paul is precisely in harmony with Gospels, where Jesus warns the Pharisees that to claim any Abrahamic ancestry has no particular meaning, for 'God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham' (Mt 3:9; cf. Lk 3:8). This is why he insisted so much on faith in Christ; this is the sole identity marker of the new creation. Furthermore, the fact that, as Buell claimed, this faith is particularistic too has nothing to do with nationality issues, and constitutes a purely theological matter. One does not belong to a given national community, as long as one fails to meet the criteria of belonging. In terms of nationality the individual is considered a foreigner as long as the individual fails to meet the criteria of belonging to the national community, the chosen nation. Theologically, the individual does not belong to the community as long as the individual freely chooses not to do so by not believing in Christ, the sole criterion of belonging. In the first case the national community keeps the individual out; in the second case the individual, by exercising the prerogative of free will, rejects the community of the believers.

This idea of the new people and the new reality was also skilfully presented by Peter in his first letter. The letter emphasises the importance of the faith in Christ, as opposed to the

lack of it. It is this very faith that forms the new 'chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people of his (i.e. God's) own possession' (1Pt 2:9). The text underscores this point by using verses from the book of Exodus (19:6) and that of Isaiah (43:21): all the qualities attributed once to Israel belong now to those who have faith in Jesus. The ESV uses the term *race* to translate the word *yénos* of the original text. The Greek term was used by Jews in order to describe people sharing both common ancestry and common customs (Green 2007, 61). The term *nation* is also very specific to indicate Israel, as the elect people. Additionally the term *royal priesthood* refers to Israel as 'a kingdom of priests' (Ex 19:6). In this context, the terms seem to be used entirely out of their original meaning; the only common feature Peter's audience share is faith. It is done deliberately, however, to achieve two things: the new meaning ascribed to these terms, which refer to common features of the new people, is summarised in one common feature only, common faith. It is precisely this common faith that places the new people in line with the story of Israel. Peter's view does not reject Israel; it gives it the new perspective of the faith in Christ. This faith enables the faithful to share with Christ's ultimate chosenness. In this line of thought, the new nation, the new chosen people, has nothing to do with any kind of *ethnic reasoning*. There is no need to belong to a certain nation, in order to be part of the new creation. This indicates, moreover, that as in ancient Israel, here too, being chosen, being God's own people, entails responsibility towards the non-believers to be called to the light (cf. Firestone 2008, 61. Green 2007, 61-3. Kalaitzidis 2015, 118). What is more, the community of believers are not chosen in an-Old-Testament fashion. They rather share with Christ's chosenness. But Christ is at once human and divine. He, therefore, unites the whole world. In His person the uneasy co-existence between particularism and universalism is thus resolved.

This idea of chosenness both in Paul and Peter, possesses a certain implication: there is a new covenant at work. This covenant is established by Jesus at the Last Supper before the Passion: 'this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood' (Lk 22:20; cf. Mt 26:28.[84] 1Cr 11:25). Jesus establishes a new covenant by shedding His blood. The importance of Jesus's blood has paramount theological implications that need not concern us here (cf. Bock 2012, 203-4). The issue of chosenness, connected with a new covenant, raises the question: why is a new covenant needed in the first place? The question is dealt with in the letter - more likely a homily than a letter - to the Hebrews, an anonymous early Christian text attributed to Paul by ecclesiastical tradition (Ehrman 2000, 438-9). 'If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second' (Heb 8:7). However, God promised a new covenant (Jr 31:31-4). Since, there is a new covenant, the previous has become old and obsolete, soon to vanish (Heb 8:13). The disobedience of Israel made the new covenant necessary. This new covenant by far supersedes the old one, as it is made by Jesus, who is superior to Moses (Heb 3:1-6). As a result, the old covenant, together with the Law that came from it and the old chosen ones, have been ended. God initiates a new covenant and a new

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[84] The ESV reads *covenant* in Matthew and not *new covenant* following the critical edition of the New Testament (Westcott-Hort 2007, 86). The text used in Orthodox theology and liturgical practice is the Byzantine and includes the word *new* (Ibid. f.28. Robinson-Pierpont 2005, 60).

chosen people, the new Israel 'by the Spirit, not by the letter (i.e. of the Law)' (Rm 2:29; cf. Firestone 2008, 69-70). The new chosen ones are chosen precisely because they partake in the life of the ultimately chosen Jesus Christ. Abraham is the progenitor then not of a particular nation, as defined in this thesis, but of an *ethnos* in the ancient  Greek sense of the word, people, that is, sharing the same feature: believing in Christ (cf. Moseley 2013a, 116,122). Abraham is the progenitor of Israel no doubt. But for this new covenant Abraham is the progenitor of the believers, as the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews text clearly signifies. The believers or the righteous were the chosen people of the Old Testament - which included even non-Jews, such as Job - foreseeing the ultimate chosenness that was to follow in Jesus Christ (cf. Moseley 2013a, 154-6). More particularly, Orthodox Christian theology has viewed the righteousness of the people of the Old Testament as a quality stemming from the not yet historically applied Cross of Christ. The mystery of the Cross was at work since the times of the righteous of the Old Testament (Romanides 1989, 85-6,f.1).[85] Of course, this is possible only if the divinity of Jesus Christ is fully endorsed.

The above considerations in the ideas expressed by Paul, Peter and the Hebrews text, essentially challenge Israel. The reason is that Israel appears as a divided nation. Few followed Jesus, while the majority rejected Him. This is a problem in the early Church. Instead of joining Israel in praise of Yahweh, according to the prophetic literature, nations seem to praise Yahweh without Israel. Though Israel is the elect nation with the extraordinary history of its particularistic relationship with Yahweh (Rm 9:4-5), Israel alone is responsible for accepting or rejecting this salvation (Rm 9:30-10:21; cf. Kruse 2012, 29-31); apparently Israel chooses the second. Initially, Jesus's disciples and followers did not understand themselves as a distinct group, but as the true Jews who remained faithful to the prophecies delivered in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Bock 2012, 280-1,f1). This is most notably the case in the speech Paul delivered in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia: starting from Abraham down to John the Baptist, he presented Jesus as the end of the story of Israel and himself, together with Barnabas, as the preacher of the salvation offered by Christ, according to the prophets (Acts 13:19-41). It is the reaction of established Judaism that brought Jesus's followers to the point of rapture. This was foretold by Simeon upon holding the infant Jesus in his arms: 'behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed' (Lk 2:38). Jesus's kerygma is resisted right from the beginning and Jesus paralleled Himself to Elijah and Elisha who blessed the Gentiles, due to the hostility of their compatriots. Thus, Israel is to be divided; from the *remnant* (Rm 9:27) - a term mentioned repeatedly especially by Paul, in this verse alluding to Is 10:22 - a new people will be born, who will include the nations. Jesus paralleled Israel to a desolate house (Mt 23:28. Lk 13:35), while using the parable of the tenants of the vineyard to refer to the Jewish reaction against Him and its result: 'the kingdom of God

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[85] Despite its significance, this idea was doubted by the modern Orthodox theologian Panayiotes Trembelas. However, Romanides was able to defend it effectively (Metallinos 2009, 139,166-73; cf. Sopko 1998, 56-8).

will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits' (Mt 21:43; cf. Mk 12:12. Lk 20:18).

So, is this the end for Israel? Is Israel replaced and lost? The problem occupies the early Church, particularly Paul, both as he is depicted by Luke in the Acts and in his letters. To understand the way this problem is conceived in the early Church an examination of Acts is necessary. In the beginning of the book the disciples asked resurrected the Jesus, just before his Ascension, 'will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?' In answering, Jesus instructed his disciples not to care about things that escape their grasp (Acts 1:6). This question has been traditionally treated as an irrelevant one, asked by disciples who seem not to comprehend Jesus's mission. Some modern scholars have rather treated it as a misplaced question (Bock 2012, 285,f21). There is a future for Israel within the reality that Jesus established. Though the Gospels are full of conspiracies against Jesus's life, and, in a similar vain, the Acts are full of conspiracies against Paul's life (cf. Acts 23:12-22), Paul appears faithful to Israel respecting the Law, the prophets, and the high priest (Acts 23:3-5, 24:14, 25:8, 26:5-7, 28:17,23), while insisting on his Jewish national origin (Acts 22:3, 23:1, 26:4. Rm 11:1. Phil 3:5). The enmity against Christ or even Paul is not new; the prophets of the Old Testament were persecuted by their own kin, and God was repeatedly forsaken. However, for Paul, Israel is nothing evil in itself; 'the Jews have one fault, but only one; rejecting Jesus as the Christ' (Sanders 1991, 122). However, as this faith is of paramount importance, this sole fault is so fundamental that cuts them off the 'olive tree' to which they inherently belonged. They are the 'seed of Abraham' no more (Rm 11; cf. Sanders 1983, 29-43). Nevertheless, this does not conclude the case for Israel. Paul strongly believes that there is a future for Israel. As in the times of Elijah, a faithful remnant remains from Israel. This remnant, which includes Paul himself, is chosen by the grace of God and not the old Law. It has the purpose of bringing the nations to God (Rm 11:1-6). This is what the example of the allegory of the olive tree is manifesting (Rm 11). In Paul's thought, therefore, it is possible to claim that Israel possesses, on the one hand, the priority of the teacher over the student in salvation 'to the Jew first and also to the Greek' (Rm 1:16). Moreover, Israel possesses a priority of honour, as it were, for it is the nation to whom belongs 'the adoption, the glory, the covenant, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises … the patriarchs' and from whose 'race, according to the flesh, is Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever' (Rm 9:4-5). Besides, following the conversion of the nations, Israel will follow to be saved entirely, for, according to Paul, as for the Old Testament prophets, Israel remains 'beloved for the sake of their forefathers' (Rm 11:25-8). It is necessary, therefore, to repeat at this point that Paul does not seek to Judise people. It is to be kept in mind that *Gentiles* means *nations*, and nations do not possess a collective identity (Cosgrove 2006, 272-3,280). Israel does. Paul does not require people to enter a Jewish way of being; that is why he is at pains to prevent them from circumcision and the Sabbath holiday, so distinctive of Jews, especially in the diaspora (cf. Cranford 1993, 27-41). Nations should not be *Judised*. He does not ask Jews not to observe these provisions of the Law, however. He equally does not ask Jews to *gentilise*, as it were, themselves, to become something nationally different from what they are. They are free

to maintain their national identity markers. Besides, they are, according to Paul, in priority for the reasons given above. It is the faith in Jesus, the Christ, that makes the difference for both categories and allows them to enter the new reality in Christ. This new reality is a multi-national and spiritual one, but adheres to true Judaism. Hence, the Jewish priority.

The problem of completion and supersession is one that has concerned Christian theology. Does Christ complete the Old Testament or replace it (cf. Llywelyn 2010, 140-3)? What is suggested here is that Christ establishes a new reality by fulfilling the mission of Israel towards all nations. Indeed, Jesus establishes a new multi-national reality, a new covenant, with a new chosen people, those who believe in Him. This idea is a Jewish one, to be sure. The New Testament is a Jewish text - strongly connected with Hellenistic Judaism, but Jewish nonetheless. It also possesses the self-identification of belonging to the true Israel, as in it the Old Testament is fulfilled. Thus, though being a multi-national one, the new reality gives a priority to Jews, to whose tradition it adheres. In so doing, however, the New Testament deliberately and energetically overcomes the discriminations predominant in its historical environment. To put it in the hard terms Paul chose, it is a shift from signs to a stumbling block (contra Judaism) and from wisdom to folly (contra Hellenism) (cf. 1Cr 1:22-3).

Before concluding this chapter, it is necessary to remind that the New Testament connects the problem of exclusivity not only with Judaism but also secondarily with paganism too. Indeed, there are three incidents in the book of Acts that show this anti-pagan stance of the early Church. In all three Paul appears to be the protagonist. The first case is that of Lystra of Lycaonia, where Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the inhabitants as gods (Zeus and Hermes respectively) (Acts 14:8-18). The second is Paul's sermon on the *unknown god* before the Athenians, where Paul was interrupted when he referred to Jesus's Resurrection (Acts 17:22-34). The third is the trouble with Artemis at Ephesus. In this case Paul created animosity between craftsmen of the city of Ephesus that his sermon was moving people away from paganism, not only in Ephesus, but also in all Asia Minor, and this harmed their trade which was connected with the worship in the great temple of Artemis at Ephesus. The craftsmen, among whom most prominent was a said Demetrius the silversmith, mobilised the whole city against Paul. They refused to listen to other Jews either. Their repeatedly cried out: 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians' (Acts 19:21-41). The case of the Artemis at Ephesus is the most indicative for this thesis's purposes. The temple, built in the form that Paul new, in the end of the fourth - beginning of the third century BC was a famous and very popular religious centre in ancient Asia Minor. It gathered pilgrims from different areas and the spring festivities in the city to honour the goddess expanded to a whole month, about a century after Paul's visit, by imperial decree (Strelan 1996, 58,133). Despite, however, this importance of the cult of Artemis for the whole Roman empire, it is clear that the Ephesians connected the goddess with their place, and their existence was bound with the cult of the goddess (Strelan 1996, 143-4). The financial concerns set aside, it is important to underline the exclusivity of the goddess 'Artemis of the Ephesians'. This fact corresponds with the idea of pagan exclusivity as presented here. Historical events were to test the Christian adherence to its own principles, however. Since the nationalism

dominated the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was then that the Christian principles were to be put to the test, due to the social, financial, and political developments of the modern world.

## 3.4. The swastika, the star and the Cross: Neo-paganism, neo-Nazism, and the Greek theological paradigm

Modernity, with the rise of the national movements and the prevalence of the nation-states, especially the twentieth century with its two World Wars, fundamentally challenged the biblical principles of Christianity. The examination of the theological reaction to these challenges is absolutely necessary for a theological study on nations and nationalism. Since this does not constitute the main scope of this study, however, the vast material available dictates an approach through one example only. Thus, this thesis will attempt to approach the issue by examining the Greek theological response to the problem of nationalism as paganism.

Greek theological thought reacted in two specific challenges, in which nationalism as paganism was traced: Nazism and neo-Nazism. Indeed, Greek theologians responded to the rise of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) and the Nazi ideology, especially as expressed by Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946), in Germany in 1933. They also responded to the events that followed Hitler's rise to power and concerned the German Protestants and the efforts for the formation of a united German Church. The second case in which Greek theologians reacted is the emergence of neo-Nazism in Greece following the financial crisis of 2009-10. The two responses took place in historical circumstances which possess fundamental similarities and differences.

To begin with, on both occasions the world was in a difficult state of financial crisis, which strengthened nationalism and made it more aggressive and violent. Following the financial crisis of 1929 in the United States, the European countries which depended on foreign funding and loans for securing development collapsed financially. Germany, the Weimar Republic, was among the first to collapse in 1931-2. Greece was in a state of deep crisis in 1932. The political systems of both countries were very unstable. Germany had suffered a humiliating defeat in World War I and was forced to sign the Peace Treaty of Versailles (1919). Greece, despite being among the victors of World War I, chose to continue the war against Turkey pursuing absolute victory. What it actually got, however, was the disaster of 1922, which brought hundreds of thousands of refugees from Asia Minor to Greece. Again, in the recent financial crisis, Greece suffered greatly, though not to the extent of the interwar period. It possesses a stable political system, while it has been implicated in no war since the end of World War II in 1945. As a reaction in the interwar crisis in Germany, the Nazi party assumed authority in 1933, whereas in Greece such a phenomenon did not exist. The current financial crisis found Greece with a stable political system, as part of the European Union, but with conflicts and wars in the neighbouring Middle East - in Iraq and Syria - which caused an unprecedented wave of refugees and immigrants. They started arriving in Greece, via Turkey, mainly as a first stop towards a journey to more prosperous countries, such as Germany or Sweden. These two factors, the financial crisis and the arrival of refugees and immigrants, caused unrest and dissatisfaction in Greece,

which eventually led to a radical change of the political status quo. Long established political parties suffered important losses in their influence or even vanished, while others were reinforced. One of the most prominent latter cases was the rise of a, until recently marginalised, neo-Nazi political party, the Golden Dawn. In four legislative elections between 2012 and 2015 the party gained around 6.3-7% of the votes, becoming the third political party in number of elected members of Parliament (cf. Kalyvas 2015, 188).

In the interwar period the Greek theological response was caused by events which took place in Germany and not in Greece; Greek theologians followed the theological responses of German Christians. The political parties in Greece were divided between liberals and conservatives. Despite nationalism prevailing in the Greek mentality of the time, its extreme forms did not find effective expression in Greece. There was nothing influential resembling to Nazism in Greece. In 1936 a royalist dictatorship was established under John Metaxas (1871-1941) which adhered to many Fascist political practices and ideas. However, the ideology of the regime was rather thin, lacking a robust theoretical foundation, and solely depended on the personality of the leader. Metaxas put forward the idea of the three Greek civilisations - ancient, byzantine, modern - which was positive towards the Orthodox Church, endorsing its national role (Koliopoulos 1978, 358-453. Oikonomou 1978, 304-26. Petrake 2014, 108-15). On the other hand, Orthodox Christian theologians concerned themselves with Bolshevism, rather than Fascism or Nazism. The reason was not only the fact that Bolshevism had come to power long before Fascism - let alone Nazism - but also the equally important fact that it prevailed in Russia, the majority of the population of which was Orthodox Christian. The Stalinist persecution of the Orthodox Church in Russia had alerted the reflexes of the Orthodox Christians in Greece. Moreover, the Communist party in Greece was influential with members in Parliament. Greek theologians had turned their attention to what they consider to be a Bolshevik threat, rather than any Fascist one (Moschos 2013, 42). Besides, Greek theologians at the time were influenced by western theologians, particularly German, rather than their own tradition. The demand for a return to the Orthodox theological tradition emerged precisely in the 1930s in the First International Congress of Orthodox Theology, which took place in Athens in 1936, and was expressed in Greece by the influential University Professor Hamilcar Alivizatos (Alivizatos 1939).

The rise of neo-Nazism, on the other hand, challenges Orthodox theology directly, as it is taking place in Greece. There is no *Bolshevik threat* any more. On the contrary, communism has fallen in Russia and has been replaced by a conservative and nationalist regime, which harmoniously collaborates with the Orthodox hierarchy. Greece does not follow this pattern. As a part of the European Union, the Greek state pursues the secular model of multiculturalism and the protection of minorities. This goes hand-in-hand with a modern intellectual departure from old mentalities that conceived of the nation as a natural entity. As suggested above,[86] modern Greek intellectuals, in their vast majority, follow the modernist school of thought. In the theological milieu, similar developments have taken place. The demand for a return to Orthodox theological tradition was fulfilled in the years following World War II, especially with the

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[86] See chapter 2.1.2.

theological generation of '60s.[87] Modern theologians, despite the existence of many conservative ones, develop ideas which respond to modern challenges. In such a vein Greek theologians sought to respond to the neo-Nazi rise. In this respect, a return to the first response of the interwar period is considered of importance.

### 3.4.1. Nazism and the Orthodox theological response

German Nazism expressed its ideology through the notorious *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930) by Rosenberg, as well as Hitler's infamous *Mein Kampf* (1925). Nazism appears as an ideology with strong pagan features. Nazis believed in blood and soil, i.e. the German nation and the German land. It is worth noting that in making references to paganism and neo-paganism, the thesis seeks to establish the argument that nationalism is a form of paganism. This does not mean that all neo-pagans are nationalists or even Nazis for that matter.[88] Nazism constitutes a phenomenon of modernity and functions within the nation-state - a modern phenomenon too - with modern programmes. In this effort it turns not only to paganism, but also to the Bible. The fact, for instance, that Nazis often considered the people, the idealised Volk, as the elect of God, to whom God revealed Himself (Moseley 2013a, 110-2) is a form of paganism changed accordingly to fit monotheism. They often dreamt of a return to the pagan pre-Christian past of the Germanic tribes of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. A strong religious pagan aura characterised the way Nazis expressed their respect and devotion to their leader or the ritualistic way in which Nazis burned the books in Germany (1933) (Metaxas 2010, 163). Nazism was, therefore, anti-Christian. Hitler did not express himself directly against Christianity - at least not in the beginning of his rule - but other influential Nazis, such as Rosenberg, Heinrich Himmler (1900-45), or Reinhard Heydrich (1904-42), clearly denounced Christianity and became devout pagans. However, the official line of the party was not anti-Christian. Nazis adopted the notion of *positive Christianity*. The idea did not constitute a Nazi innovation. What Germans meant by this is rather obscure, as the term seems to be very vast (Koehne 2014, 28-42). What they applied, however, was effective state control over the fragmented Protestant Churches of Germany, implementation of the Aryan principle by Church law, as well as the abolition of certain Christian principles, most prominent of which was the suggested rejection of the Old Testament as totally incompatible with the Germanic peoples (Moseley 2013a, 113). In this line of thought, Paul's teachings were considered unnecessary for the Church, while Christ was conceived as an Aryan killed at the hands of the Jews, the 'sons of the devil'. Such ideas where not entirely  novel in Germany, as thinkers of the nineteenth century, working in the environment of German Unification and German nationalism had already developed thoughts, which were to lead eventually to the Nazi understanding of Christ (Moxnes 2012, 61-120,esp. 89-90,118). There were of course cases of purely pagan Nazis who rejected Christ and Christianity, as the religion of the weak, incompatible with the love of the German race for

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[87] See above chapter 1.3.1.2.

[88] Probably, this is why Yangazoglou characterises the paganism of (neo-)Nazis as pseudo-paganism (Yangazoglou 2013, 62-3).

strength and power (Metaxas 2010, 165-75. Redles 2005, 60). Apparently, these views constituted part of Nazism's persistent, aggressive and violent anti-Semitism.

After Hitler assumed the office of the chancellor of Germany, he sought to settle all issues concerning the Christian Churches of Germany. Despite the anti-Nazi criticism of the Roman Catholic Church, Hitler manifested his will for a compromise, which resulted in the Reichsconcordat of 1933. The agreement between the Vatican and Germany allowed many liberties to the Roman-Catholic Church in Germany, but secured the oath of loyalty of the Catholic clergy to the Head of the German State (article 16) (Stehlin 1983, 431-47). Obviously, it was an agreement that settled Church-State relations in Germany. The fact that the Catholic Church constituted a concrete body did not allow any interference with theological matters. This was not the case with the Protestants of Germany, however.

Hitler's purpose was to unite all the German Protestant Churches to one *Reichskirche* (state Church) under the leadership of a sole *Reichsbischoff* (state bishop). His purpose was to exercise full control over the Church and a united leadership would best serve his task. He also attempted to make his racial Aryan laws part of ecclesiastical legislation too, securing thus the expulsion from the German Churches of any laymen or even pastors of Jewish origin. Hitler's ideas and policies were actively supported by a movement within the German Evangelical Church, the *German Christians*. With Hitler's active support, their leader Ludwig Müller (1883-1945) was appointed bishop of the united Protestant Churches of Germany. Under his guidance and the help of his chief advisor Emanuel Hirsch (1888-1972), professor at Göttingen University, the state Church adopted a constitution in which Hitler's Aryan ideas were included, so that non-Aryans were not accepted as members of the Church and the racially mixed marriages were prohibited (Metaxas 2010, 188).[89] The Church coincided with the state and membership in the Church implied membership in the nation. Church belonging coincided with nation belonging, so that baptism became a ritual that signified one's membership in the Church and the nation at once (Bergen 1996, esp.85-95. Metaxas 2010, 150-64).

Apparently the majority of German Protestants remained silent and never actively expressed any disagreement either against the regime or the German Christians' leadership, for the latter movement was considered 'a modern and dynamic youth movement at the core of the society'. Any opposition to it was considered an 'old-fashioned and conservative' reaction (Holze 2013, 17-8,21; cf. Yangazoglou 2013, 49-50). What is more, Protestants themselves were considered modern, as opposed to conservative reactionary Catholics. The disagreements between the German Christians and other leading theologians and pastors concerned only the concessions to the state and not the essence of the totalitarian government with its expressed racism and anti-Semitism (Holze 2013, 14). Only a minority of German theologians and pastors opposed to the German Christians' initiatives. The most consistent opposition came from the so called *Confessing Church*, which was established in 1933 as a movement within the Evangelical German Church. Their most important weakness, however, was that they themselves 'were

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[89] Apparently such ideas have been resurrected by neo-Nazis in the USA (Jürgensmeyer 2003, 19-43; cf. Moseley 2013b, 68).

truthfully enthusiastic with the Third Reich' (Metaxas 2011, 211). The statement belongs to one of the leading members of the Confessing Church, Martin Niemöller (1892-1984). Indeed, the members of the Confessing Church disagreed only with some of the most extreme ideas of the German Christians, such as the exclusion of Jewish Christians (Kelly-Nelson 1995, 136-8. Metaxas 2010, 183-94). At least during the first stages of Hitler's administration, German Protestant pastors and theologians, thoroughly conservative, were happy with the Third Reich. Some of the members of the Confessing Church were simultaneously members of the Nazi party (Holze 2013, 15). Only some years later some of them were disillusioned and persecuted by the regime. Barth was deported in 1934 (Metaxas 2010, 61) and Niemöller was arrested in 1937 (Metaxas 2010, 295-8). Very few of them were persistently against the regime from the beginning such as Barth and the German theologian and pastor Dietrich Bonhöffer (1906-45). It was expressed through the famous Barmen Declaration (1934), which was mainly drafted by Barth (Metaxas 2010, 222-9). Bonhöffer, what is more, got involved later in the plot to assassinate Hitler, was arrested (1943) and eventually executed (Metaxas 2010, 358-544; cf. Yangazoglou 2013, 51-2).

There were two Greek theologians that reacted to theses events. The first was Yerasimos Konidares (1905-87), professor at Athens University from 1939, who was in Berlin for postgraduate studies between 1930 and 1933. He was an eyewitness to many of the initial events described above, concerning Hitler's rise to power and the *German Christians'* control over the Protestant Churches. The second was Panayiotes Bratsiotes (1889-1982), professor at Athens University since 1924. Bratsiotes too had studied in Germany, though long before Hitler's rise to power; he completed his theological studies in Greece in 1911 and left for Leipzig shortly afterwards. His acquaintance with the German language and German reality, as well as his adherence to Professor Christos Androutsos's ideas of Church-state separation made him sensitive to the events in Germany after 1933.

Before proceeding to Konidares's more important contribution, it is necessary to point out that Bratsiotes showed his interest about in events in Germany in his theological discourse with Dimitrios Balanos (1877-1959) and Hamilcar Alivizatos (1889-1969) concerning the Church, the nation and the state.[90] Bratsiotes considered the state control of the Church as dangerous for the latter, for the state possessed the privilege of legitimate violence, a feature, according to Bratsiotes, at odds with Christian principles (Bratsiotes 1936a, 81. Bratsiotes 1936b, 98; cf. Nikolaides 2013, 207,208). Furthermore, he rejected the idealisation of the Volk and the nation, which he considered an unacceptable form of paganism (Bratsiotes 1936a, 82; cf. Nikolaides 2013, 207). In his effort to clarify his position, he stated that the egoistic nation constitutes an 'anti-Christian force … leading to auto-apotheosis and paganism' or even Judaism (obviously referring to chosenness). He even asked Balanos: 'if you were in Germany, to which Church would you belong: the Confessing Church or the German Christians?' (Bratsiotes 1936a, 83. Btatsiotes 1936b, 99). The very question in itself proved Bratsiotes's awareness of the importance of the events taking place in Germany and the need to deal with them theologically. He finally accused Balanos that he believed in the state as the supreme regulator of all the

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[90] See chapter 1.3.1.1.1.

authorities and that he agreed with Hitler eventually (Bratsiotes 1936b, 99). His opponent Balanos did not show similar awareness. Although he rejected any form of pagan-like nationalism (Balanos 1936a, 74), he defended the state as a deeply Christian body and answered Bratsiotes's question by simply stating that he neither was concerned nor liked to be concerned with the events in Germany (Balanos 1936b, 92). Balanos too was educated in Germany (1899-1903), but he was a conservative theologian who believed that the Church was inextricably bound with the nation through the nation-state. For him, the Orthodox Churches are 'national Churches, having shared the fortunes of their peoples, suffering and being glorified with them' (Balanos 1936a, 74). Any idea of separation was to damage the Church, which was to lose its influence on the 'national soul' (Balanos 1936a, 74. Balanos 1936c, 114-5). As stated in the introduction, Balanos was connected with the state apparatus and reasonably enough sought to maintain the existing status quo in Church-state relations, which he obviously considered ideal for both, the Church and the state. Professor Alivizatos, himself a postgraduate in Germany (1908-12), did not realise the importance of the issue. He accused Bratsiotes for relaying on foreign theological issues and German theological production instead of following the renaissance of the Orthodox theological tradition, which was already, according to Alivizatos, underway (Alivizatos 1936, 112). Although a very acute and highly intelligent man, Alivizatos strangely disconnected the return to the Orthodox theological tradition, a contemporary reasonable demand, with any theological encounter with issues of his modern world.

Konidares was not involved in the above debate. He expressed his views being obviously profoundly affected by the events in Germany, for he admitted that his work did not claim scientific excellence, but was entirely based on his personal experience (Konidares 1937, 5). It is true, however, that Konidares was able to express his significant anti-Nazi and anti-racist views by working on the basis of Orthodox theology 'political science on the modern state and the historical context' in which he lived (Moschos 2013, 45). His study starts with an exposition of the historical emergence and evolution of Protestantism in Germany, as well as with the theological developments in the country, together with the very peculiar structure of the German Churches. He did so briefly but acutely in order to familiarise Orthodox readers with issues and problems which were totally alien to the Orthodox world, though they characterised Germany. He then presented the events concerning the Protestants of Germany, which he criticised from an Orthodox point of view, he translated and published the constitution of the State Church, presented the events concerning the Roman Catholics of Germany and, finally, translated and published the concordat between the Holy See and the German State. The whole effort Konidares put in order to make this very important and innovative, by Orthodox standards, contribution proves the importance he ascribed to the matter.

Konidares believed that the Protestantism of Germany under the Nazis was not only non-Protestant (Moschos 2013, 43) but also non-Christian. He formed his criticism along three lines: first, against national socialism, second against the *German Christians*, and, last but not least, against the disadvantages he considered as inherent in Protestantism, from an Orthodox perspective. As far as national socialism is concerned, Konidares built his criticism based on

Rosenberg's work rather than Hitler's. He considered the former a more robust analysis of Nazism compared to the latter, about which he thought it was so naive and unimportant that did not deserve any form of criticism. Based on Rosenberg's work, therefore, he considered Nazism an anti-Christian ideology, mainly because it promoted the racial idea of the priority of the Aryan race (Konidares 1937, 53-66). This made Nazis to turn against St. Paul, whom they considered a Jewish Pharisee who corrupted Jesus's kerygma. However, Paul's theology is at the very core of Christianity; a Paul-less Christianity is inconceivable. Again, such racial views made Nazis to turn against even Christ - only occasionally, however - as was the case with prominent Nazis, such as Rosenberg and the neurologist and psychiatrist Mathilde Ludendorff (1877-1966), wife of the prominent German general Erich Ludendorff (1865-1937), who wrote *Deliverance from Jesus Christ* (1931) (Konidares 1937, 114-5). Nazism appeared to possess religious features. Konidares considered it a phenomenon of religious syncretism, as it combined Christian and pagan features. In general - the purely pagan Nazis set apart - Nazis were faithful to the principles of Martin Luther, as they interpreted them. As far as paganism is concerned, Konidares agreed with Bratsiotes that Nazism deified the nation. He added, however, that it almost deified the leader, as they developed a cult for Hitler. Finally, the most dangerous, according to Konidares, Nazi feature was racism, the belief in the superiority of the Aryan race, which made them anti-Semites in an aggressive and violent way (Konidares 1937, 105-15).

Against the German Christians Konidares turned his most fierce criticism. For him, the problem with the German Christians was not that they were not really Protestants, but actually that, like the Nazis themselves, they were not Christians at all. His argument was supported by the fact that they adhered to the syncretistic Nazi understanding of Christianity, which contained both pagan features, the apotheosis of the nation and the leader cult (Konidares 1937, 85), despite the fact that the *German Christians* attacked Ludendorff's views of Christ (Konidares 1937, 88). Konidares rejected as outrageous the racial criteria of belonging to the Church, which made baptism coincide with nation-belonging. The Aryan criterion was an anti-Christian innovation. It had nothing to do with Jesus's kerygma and the Christian tradition. The Church is a communion of believers and not of people belonging to the same race (Konidares 1937, 86,102). Similarly he rejected the Aryan criterion for marriages for the same reasons (Konidares 1937, 87). The enforcement of such legislation by the state was wrong, as it excluded the German Jews, who had performed their devotion to the German state repeatedly - more notably during World War I - and had made Germany proud with their scientific and intellectual contributions (Konidares 1937, 53-66,86). However, the secular state was free to implement the racial laws. There was no reason why the Church should endorse such anti-Semite and racist legislation, however. On the contrary, the Church had every theological reason to reject it. Though not stated explicitly, the way Konidares refers to the anti-Christian ideas of the *German Christians* compels us to believe that he thought of anti-Semitism as the supreme evil. It was anti-Semitism which was responsible for the distortion of the criteria of belonging to the Church, for distorting baptism and ecclesiastical wedding. It was precisely anti-Semitism that was responsible for that odd and definitely anti-Christian rejection of the Old Testament, either

partly or in its entirety, and the Pauline theology. Not only the Old Testament (Konidares 1937, 87) and Paul but also the Jewish tradition itself are to be found at the core of Christianity. Konidares made the acute observation that the German Christians often referred to the divinity of Christ but made no reference to His humanity. This form of *monophysitism* was precisely because of anti-Semitism. Openly admitting Jesus's humanity necessarily signified admitting His Jewishness 'according to the flesh' (Rm 9:5), something that they desired to avoid being devout Nazis (Konidares 1937, 88). Finally, for Konidares, the fact that the *German Christians* prevailed in Germany was an unfortunate event, but, to their shame, it happened through state oppression (Konidares 1937, 66-82). He was even ironical with Hisrch's assurance that there was freedom of speech within the Church in Germany (Konidares 1937, 105). He used the term *tasty (nóstimos)* for Hirsch's statement, a term metaphorically used for something which is said with style and elegance and has a pleasant effect to the audience (Babiniotes 2002, 1194). His irony was harsh.

Konidares criticised even the reaction against the German Christians. He found the initial reaction of the *New Reformed Church* - the initial reaction against the *German Christians*, from which the *Confessing Church* emerged - as too lukewarm and not really serious (Konidares 1937, 90-4). He excluded the criticism expressed by the Confessing Church and more notably the one expressed by Barth. He considered Barth's reaction as courageous and his theological attacks against the German Christians as devastating for the latter (Konidares 1937, 89-90,94-101). However, Konidares believed that Protestantism possessed some inherent features that made it vulnerable and placed it at the mercy of movements like the German Christians, which possessed no theological seriousness. Both disadvantages were connected with the fact that Protestantism emerged as a reaction to Roman Catholicism. First, rejecting the international ecclesiastical head that the latter possessed made their devotion to their respective nations and states look natural. They were prisoners of the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*. Hitler believed that he possessed the right to intervene in ecclesiastical affairs and the Germans found nothing wrong in that. They were conservative people in their majority and accepted their emperor as the rightful leader of the Church. The emperor's abdication, following the defeat in World War I, effectively orphaned them. They felt comfortable when, following the death of the German president Paul von Hindeburg (1847-1934), Hitler, until then the chancellor of the German government, assumed also the office of the president and became the sole leader (Führer) (Konidares 1937, 10-50). Second, rejecting the supreme authority of the pope and the ecclesiastical hierarchy made them suffer from lack of a strong bond to unite the Churches in Germany and keep the Church out of state control in theological issues. They possessed no bishops, united in an ecclesial body, a synod, to decide on matters of faith. Any Hitler, any Müller, was able to interfere and control the Church using the state means of oppression (Konidares 1937, 94-101).

The criticism of the Orthodox thinkers in the interwar period was able to appreciate the pagan character of Hitler's German nationalism (cf. Moschos 2013, 40-2). Konidares and Bratsiotes were able to specify it more particularly to the apotheosis of the nation, while Konidares added the cult of the leader (cf. Thermos 2013, 70-1). Both theologians did not profoundly analyse their views. Their contributions, however, were very significant, since, for

first time, such ideas were formed and publicly stated in the Orthodox Christian framework of Greece. This is why modern theologians in Greece, responding to current events, turned to their contributions (cf. Moschos 2013).

### 3.4.2. Neo-Nazism and neo-paganism

Neo-Nazism and neo-paganism seem very thoroughly intertwined in modern Greece. However, this was not true in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Neo-paganism has always been a marginalised religious movement in Greece. A significant renaissance took place in 1990s together with some important publicity (cf. Yangazoglou 2013, 61-2). It moved in the religious sphere demanding a return to the ancient Greek past, which had been violently destroyed by advancing Christianity in Late Antiquity condemning the Greeks to backwardness ever since. For neo-paganism a return to ancient Greek philosophy and culture is not enough. In order to gain back the ancient Greek strength and vigour it is necessary to return to the cult of the traditional Greek Olympian deities (Metallinos 2003, 15-48). Some marginalised political parties adhering to such views appeared at times in Greek politics. They performed extremely poorly in the legislative elections and vanished. Only one of them, however, appeared persistent, despite its very limited electoral influence (around 0,2-0,3% of the votes). That was the nowadays notorious *Golden Dawn*.

Golden Dawn's neo-paganism was also connected with neo-Nazism. Apparently, no other political party or neo-pagan religious expression connected the two. Other neo-pagans maintained nationalistic ideas, strongly believing in the superiority of the Greek nation, but had nothing to do with German Nazism. The Golden Dawn publishes a magazine, in the issues of which one can find many references to and analyses of German Nazism. For instance, the magazine released its September 1987 issue with Rudolf Hess's (1894-1987) photograph at the front page and the inscription 'Immortal!', following Hess's suicide on 17 August 1987 at Spandau prison in Berlin. The main article dedicated to Hess was signed by the leader of the party Nicholaos Michaloliakos (b.1857).[91] This issue was preceded by an issue on Hitler, published in May 1987, with his photograph in the front page and the leading article 'Hitler for 1.000 years' signed again by Michaloliakos.[92] Golden Dawn's leadership now claims that it is a Greek nationalist party having nothing to do with German Nazism, but Nazi issues appeared until just before its unprecedented success in the  legislative elections of May 2012. For instance, another issue dedicated to Hess appeared in July 2006[93] and an issue dedicated to the end of World War II with Hitler saluting in the Nazi way appeared in May-June 2007.[94] Neo-paganism, thus, is a feature of the Golden Dawn but it is not restricted in it; it is something that includes people who do not belong to the party and adhered to neo-paganism long before the rise of the party. Only

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[91] http://xa-watch.blogspot.gr/2012/04/blog-post_16.html accessed on 10/04/2018.

[92] http://xa-watch.blogspot.gr/2012/04/blog-post_29.html accessed on 10/04/2018.

[93] http://xa-watch.blogspot.gr/2012/03/65.html accessed on 10/04/2018.

[94] http://xa-watch.blogspot.gr/2012/03/blog-post_25.html accessed on 10/04/2018.

in the ideology of the Golden Dawn the two - neo-paganism and neo-Nazism - intermingle (Zoumboulakes 2013b, 39-43).

In one of the initial issues of its magazine (no 5 of May-June 1981), the Golden Dawn published an article that declared its ideology entitled 'We'. There one finds the basic principles of the party, which are centred around paganism and Nazism, together with anti-Semitism. Concerning paganism the magazine declares:

> We are pagans because we are Greeks, because it is impossible for us to accept principles other than the ones which emerge from the uniqueness of the Greek Spirit. We are pagans because we can never replace our heroes and philosophers with the dark prophets and the bloodthirsty kings of an uncivilised nomadic people.[95]

Similarly, on Nazism it declares:

> We are Nazis … we were able to see, in the miracle of the 1933 German Revolution, the Force which will liberate humanity from the Hebrew rottenness, we were able to see the Force which will lead us to a new European renaissance, we saw the bright rebirth of the primordial instincts of race, we saw the dynamic flight from the nightmarish industrial type of the massive man towards a new and simultaneously ancient and Eternal type of man, the man of philosophy and war, the man of Soil and Blood, the man of heroes and semi-gods, the pure, naive and violent man of Myths and instincts.[96]

The text continues with similar declarations:

> We are anarchists because we are uncompromising and fanatics … and we shall remain so until the moment when the Principle of National-Socialist Authority will prevail … We are extremists because we believe in Virtue and not in Morality, in war and not in peace. We are extremists because history is written by daring, creative men with metaphysical impulses and not by peaceful doormat people who serve the Hebrew rottenness.[97]

The leadership of the party, which remain under Michaloliakos, mainly responsible for the above declarations, has declared that the party is a Greek nationalistic one and has shown positive attitude towards the Orthodox Church. The turn has taken place without explicit abolition of the above principles, however, and after the electoral success of 2012, which established the party in the modern political forefront. Obviously, adherence to the neo-pagan and neo-Nazi principles would not be able to keep the party in the third place of the preferences of the electorate. Whereas, references to Greek nationalism and Orthodoxy would be more favourable to the conservative citizens (Argyriades 2013, 58-63). In this respect, the Golden Dawn follows the paradigm of German Nazism by claiming Christian behaviour to conceal its anti-Christian essence (Pavlos 2013, 34-5). On the other hand, the Orthodox hierarchy,

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[95] http://xa-watch.blogspot.gr/2012/05/blog-post_03.html accessed on 10/04/2018. My translation from Greek.

[96] http://xa-watch.blogspot.gr/2012/05/blog-post_03.html accessed on 10.04/2018. My translation from Greek. Capitals in the original.

[97] http://xa-watch.blogspot.gr/2012/05/blog-post_03.html accessed on 10.04/2018. My translation from Greek. Capitals in the original.

thoroughly conservative, has impressively failed to openly distance itself from politics or expose the pagan and anti-Semitic features of the Golden Dawn (Zoumboulakes 2013a, 77-91. Zoumboulakes 2013b, 45-78). This also happens because anti-Semitism is not alien to the Orthodox Church of Greece (cf. Zoumboulakes 2013b, 87-99).

As seen above with the Golden Dawn's declarations against the 'dark prophets' and the 'bloodthirsty kings' of the 'uncivilised nomadic people', it is of paramount importance, for neo-pagans and neo-Nazis to reject the Old Testament. Neo-pagans in Greece have always considered it as an anti-Greek text (referring mainly to the books of Maccabees), which should be rejected. They have also followed the Nazi paradigm by accusing it of being responsible for the inclination of Christianity towards love for the weak and charity, instead of the Greek pagan love for strength and justice. They, thus, consider Judaism, and then Christianity, as the 'bolshevism of antiquity' (Metallinos 2003, 35-7,92-3).[98]

Modern theologians have reacted in Greece against such views but their reaction has been rather fragmented and not robust. This is due to the fact that numerous theologians who adhere to the Hellenorthodox model described in the introduction[99] have proven reluctant to take part in a discourse against neo-paganism or anti-Semitism, although they have been very active in criticising ecclesiastical affairs, such as the Pan-Orthodox Synod of Crete (2016). Among them, Rev. dr. George D. Metallinos was the one who criticised neo-paganism though before the rise of the Golden Dawn. Metallinos formed his theological ideas in an apologetic way: he defended Orthodox theology and concentrated his efforts to the points raised by neo-pagans. He supported the *Hellenorthodox* idea that Hellenism was Christianised and continued its existence in Romaiosyne (Metallinos 2003, 191-262), which constitutes a main thesis in Metallinos's thought, since he adheres to Romanides's thought concerning Romaiosyne. He defended theology and liturgical practice of neo-pagan accusations particularly expressed by the monthly *Davlos* (Torch), published by the journalist Dimitrios Lambrou with a Greek-centric and anti-Christian orientation (first published in 1982) (Metallinos 2003, 78-92,150-90,264-93).

More interesting for the needs of this thesis is Metallinos's effort to defend the Old Testament. *Davlos* magazine, in its 132 issue, published a demand to the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece to 'dismiss the Old Testament in its entirety or, at least, those parts that turn against Hellenism' (cited in Metallinos 2003, 35). The demand referred mainly to Zc 7:13, which is part of the Old Testament but not of the Hebrew Bible. Metallinos expresses the view that the text is an addition of the Hellenistic era, when Jews were mistreated by their Seleucid overlords. The same goes with the books of the Maccabees. However, he does not seem to defend the Old Testament for what it is: a work that emerged out of the Jewish culture and tradition. He insists wrongly that the anti-Greek passage is not read in the Church. He lists the occasions in which passages from Zachariah are used in liturgical practice to prove that the anti-Greek passages are not included (Metallinos 2003, 107). He omits, however, the Vespers of Palm Sunday when Zc 7:13 of the Old Testament is indeed read with all its anti-Greek fervour.

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[98] http://xa-watch.blogspot.gr/2012/04/blog-post_18.html accessed on 10/04/2018.

[99] See chapter 1.3.1.2.

Furthermore, he differentiates anti-Semitism from anti-Zionism, for he considers Zionism a nationalist phenomenon (Metallinos 2003, 92-5). Though this idea seems correct, one cannot really understand what is its connection with the Old Testament. Does Zionism find expression there? If yes, how? If chosenness is implied, it cannot be described simply as Zionism; it has theological implications, as shown above. Although he defends the Old Testament as the foundation of the Christian faith (Metallinos 2003, 98-100) and clarifies that the Christian criticism against the Jews is restricted in not endorsing Christ (Metallinos 2003, 97-8), he speaks of the Old Testament as the hellenisation of the Bible. This argument is linguistically correct, though theologically definitely incorrect, since it is precisely the Old Testament, and not the Hebrew Bible, that includes the majority of the anti-Greek texts. Metallinos gives the impression that he is interested in defending the Hellenism of Christianity rather than its adherence to the Jewish tradition. Indeed, to speak of the hellenisation of the Bible in the framework of Metallinos's defence against neo-pagans, seems to indicate that he shares with them their idea of the superiority of the Greek culture compared to the Jewish one. In other words, he seems embarrassed that Christianity is founded in such a Jewish text, so he needs to put forward his hellenisation argument.

Another theologian who has occasionally turned his criticism against neo-pagans is Thanases Papathanasiou. Papathanasiou belongs to the modern theological trend referred to in the introduction.[100] His anti-pagan criticism was combined with his criticism against neo-Nazism in an issue he published as the editor of the influential among theologians *Synaxis* journal.[101] The issue was a response to the rise of the Golden Dawn and included articles of intellectuals, well informed and structured. What interests this thesis is Papathanasiou's own contribution. The point that he makes and is of importance for the analysis made so far is that Christianity can never accept the priority of descent in one's system of values: 'Allowing the priority to nativism is the basic mentality of a very ancient and perennial phenomenon: paganism' (Papathanasiou 2013, 29). This is also the mentality of Nazism in its 'Blood and Soil' principle. For Papathanasiou, Christianity cannot find its ultimate meaning away from the Gospel. He points out that Christians have repeatedly turned to nativism for meaning, but he clarifies that this is not Christian. Therefore, they are not Christians, either they are clerics or laymen (Papathanasiou 2013, 23-6,30-3). Finally, he considers anti-Semitism the vehicle that pushes Christians towards racism. Indeed, Christians, the Orthodox included, are ready to collectively blame the Jews for the death of Christ and use passages from the Gospels, such as the expulsion of the merchants from the temple of Jerusalem (Jn 2:16), to support their anti-Semitism (Papathanasiou 2013, 35-6. Papathanasiou 2011, 17-25). *Synaxis* journal referred to such an example through a short story by Alexander Papadiamantes titled 'The Impact of Mind' (Papadiamantes 2013, 65-9), according to which a dead girl found in Corfu on Holy Saturday mobilised the Greek Orthodox mob against the Jewish quarter of the city. In the ensuing violence superstition about ritual killings of Christian children the day before Easter

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[100] See chapter 1.3.1.3.

[101] Issue no. 125 of January-March 2013.

intermingled with the belief in the collective Jewish guilt for Christ's death. It was finally proved that the victim was a Jewish girl. The violence which caused international reactions against Greece is known as *the Jewish events of 1891* (cf. Katsaros 2003, 432-5). Apparently, anti-Semitism is strongly connected with the pagan need for a scapegoat victim (cf. Moseley 2013b, 68. Thermos 2013, 68-9).

### 3.4.3. On anti-Semitism

Neo-paganism in Greece and (neo-)Nazism have brought to the fore the question of anti-Semitism. For them the Jewish culture is something inferior, of an inferior race of desert nomads who turned the society to those in need and thus managed to control the strength and vigour of the European peoples. The road to progress for the latter passed through the return to ancient paganism and the violent rejection of Judaism. Such ideas fed violence against the Jews from the nineteenth century and the rise of modern nationalism and climaxed with the Holocaust. The theological reaction of Christianity was either non-existent or inadequate, to say the least. For instance, to use again the Greek example, Stavros Zoumboulakes (b.1953) has repeatedly pointed out the lack of straightforward and explicit condemnation of anti-Semitism by the Greek Orthodox hierarchy. He has attempted even to explain this behaviour by referring to the inherent conservatism of Greek prelates and their inclination towards totalitarianism. The same is valid for the Greek theologians. By referring to the above examples - such as Konidares or Papathanasiou - this thesis has *almost* exhausted the list. Even in the case of Metallinos, the condemnation of anti-Semitism was not as explicit as one would expect from a theologian defending the Old Testament against neo-paganism.

In response to exactly this reality, modern, non-Greek to be sure, biblical interpreters have accused the New Testament of giving ground to arguments against the Jews (e.g. Buell-Hodge 2004, 236-7,243) or of encouraging anti-Jewish attitude or, worse, of being a purely anti-Semite text (Arnal 2005, 24-54. Crossan 1996, 31-8,86-95. Marshall 2005, 68-82). Such studies became imperative following the shock of the Holocaust. If theologians form their ideas in their contemporary context and they tend to respond to it, a theological response to anti-Semitism is required.

Historically, Palestine is the place where important steps were taken in the formation of the way humans think until today. Among the Greeks, the Persians, the Chinese and the Indians, the Jews played a pivotal role in antiquity. Despite their small numbers, they fundamentally contributed in human development. For Christianity their role was of unprecedented magnitude. Indeed, Christianity is based on the most important achievement of Jewish culture, the Bible. These remarks, however, although undoubtedly true, do not touch the essence of the analysis this thesis has made so far. More profoundly, therefore, according to Jaspers's Axial Age theory, the Jewish prophets and their monotheism turned the interest of their contemporaries to injustice. For the prophets, their contemporary society was to suffer at the hands of their external enemies, because their injustices - connected with paganism - had offended Yahweh, the sole God. Their land, their holy city, their temple were at stake, because of their inability to

be faithful to Yahweh by performing deeds of righteousness. This development was taken to the extreme in the New Testament, where Christ seems to move among the poor and the outcasts, to help the lepers and those in need. Love in the sense of caring for others, even empathy, were initiated for first time in such a level.

In the light of Girard's theory of mimetic violence, the prophets exposed the lie of victimisation of certain groups of people. The victims, such as Abel, were innocent. Yahweh was not pleased by their sacrifices and the blood of the sacrificial victims. He was pleased by righteousness and repentance: 'For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices for God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise' (Ps 51:16-7). But the burned offerings did not cease to exist: '… then you will delight in right sacrifices … then bulls will be offered on your altar' (Ps 51:19). The Old Testament needed the New in order for all these to be overcome entirely. Christ, God and man simultaneously, offered Himself as the necessary, for humans, scapegoat in order no other scapegoat to be ever needed again (Hb 7:27. 9:12). When Jesus revealed the innocence of the victims 'since the foundation of the world' (Lk 11:50), He did not reveal the truth about Jewish history. According to Girard's theory, he revealed the truth about humanity. By referring to Abel, it should not be omitted, He did not go back to the progenitor of the Jews - that was Abraham - but to the progenitors of all humanity, not since the foundation of the Jewish nation, but of the whole world (Girard 1993a, 125-6).

It is of crucial importance then that Jesus considers the Pharisees hypocrites for saying: 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets' (Mt 23:30). He blamed them warning them that they were to do precisely the same thing (Mt 23:34). The interpretation that considers these accusations as restricted only to the Pharisees is a narrow-minded one. Actually, it is a trap (cf. Girard 1987a, 209). Such an interpretation is very close to anti-Semitism. Jesus refers to the Pharisees as hypocrites and, through them, to the hypocrites to follow in the future. These hypocrites are the ones who keep victimising innocent people, acting in the old pagan way. Christians are not an exception to this rule of hypocrisy. The anti-Semites constitute such an extreme example: they fall into the trap by victimising the very people they accuse for victimising Christ. The term *holocaust* is derived from the Greek word *ολοκαύτωμα (olokáftoma)*, which signifies the whole burned offering. In an unprecedented and ultimate way, the neo-Nazi neo-pagans made whole offerings of millions of people they accused as hypocrites and apostates from God. Pagans avoided sacrificing people, by sacrificing animals. The modern man, who considers the sacrifice of animals backwardness, witnessed to the sacrifice of humans themselves in millions with the Holocaust. If the New Testament calls for the end of the victimisation of the innocent, as this thesis maintains, then anti-Semitism constitutes the very ancient crime the New Testament condemns. Anti-Semitism then is a genuinely anti-Christian phenomenon which turns against the New Testament itself (cf. Girard 1993b, 339-52).

3.5. 'Summing the things we have spoken of' (Hb 8:1): Threshold

The previous chapter of this thesis on nation and nationalism, as well as nationalism and religion, suggested that nationalism is not the modern substitute of pre-modern religions, but, rather, that it constitutes a form of religion in its own right. Nationalism, in this understanding, is a form of paganism. This chapter attempted to designate the features of nationalism which correspond to paganism and, by turning to the Biblical foundations of Christianity, suggested the ways these features are overcome in the Old Testament at first and in the New Testament ultimately. Modern forms of paganism in nationalism - such as (neo-)Nazism - added more, and more extreme, features in understanding nationalism as a form of paganism. Any theological dealing with these phenomena has to take place under the light of the Holy Scriptures, which reject and overcome them.

Despite the inadequacy of the term *paganism*, as shown above,[102] this thesis adopted it in order to include four features. First, the term includes the mythology which develops around what Girard termed as *the founding murder*, the death of the scapegoat, which is eased by pagan religiosity through the repetition of sacrifices (Girard 1977, 309-18). Second, paganism includes the process of worshipping a multitude of deities, one of which is understood as the *god of the land* (cf. Grosby 2002, 248) or the *national god* (Firestone 2008, 12,15,20; cf. Grosby 2002, 171). Third, it includes the idea of human connection with a certain land (Grosby 2002, 191-212). Fourth, it includes a sense of kinship between members of a group, which refers to common worshipped ancestors (Grosby 2002, 52-69).

In the eighth century BC the Axial Age emerged, which, for Israel, signifies the emergence of the prophetic phenomenon and monotheism. Together with it, it signifies the era of the formation of the nation of Israel as it appears in the Bible. Biblical monotheism could not be compatible with the pagan paradigm any more. This main breakthrough was brought to the fore by the Biblical stories concerning the process of victimisation. Though the mimetic rivalry was still averted by the sacrificial practice, the innocence of the victim was declared in such stories as that of Abel's murder by Cain or that of Job. In a similar vein, the Jewish nation is conceived. Though it suffers justly at the hands of its oppressors - Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians - it will be finally redeemed, for God is not satisfied by victims - human or otherwise - and burned offerings. The second pagan feature, what is more, is turned under monotheism to the idea of chosenness, which, more than anything else, forms the Jewish nation. The people do not choose their god, as in paganism. God chooses the people and establishes a special relationship with them. The other pagan features change accordingly: the chosen people is bound with a certain holy land promised and granted as a gift by God, while the bond that keeps the chosen people together is the sense of kinship they share by referring to the first chosen: Abraham and his immediate descendants, the patriarchs. In this process, however, the monotheistic motivation of pagan principles raises two problems. The first is that everything in the Old Testament is based on the covenants between God and His chosen ones. The main covenant is that of Sinai, following the exit from Egypt, which is conditional. God's blessing bestowed on His

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[102] See chapter 3.1.

chosen nation is secured as long as the nation faithfully observes the Law that God established. The element of *faith* is, therefore, effectively initiated. The second implication is that the unique God cares about all the peoples of the earth, since He is their creator. This last implication endorses the uneasy and unresolved co-existence of *particularism* and *exclusivity* connected more with the people, the Jews, on the one hand, and *universalism* and *inclusivity* connected more with God, on the other. This co-existence anticipates a resolution yet to come.

The thesis argues that this resolution is achieved in the New Testament by the personality of Jesus, God and Man, and the Christian secondary breakthrough. More completely, compared to the Old Testament, the innocence of the victim is revealed in the person of Jesus, Himself an innocent victim. In Jesus the victimisation of humans was proved a crime that no sacrificial practice could ever conceal. What is more, His dynamic resurrection, breaks up the circle of violence. God was revealed as a caring father and not a bloodthirsty deity demanding alive offerings. Human aggressiveness was revealed as the instigator of violence. Jesus, as the Christ, acted in the New Testament as the new ultimate chosen one, becoming the paradigm to be followed by His *faith* in God the Father (Jn 5:19,30, 8:28). As the second person of the Holy Trinity, Christ manifested the divine way of the Old Testament, that of *inclusivity* and *universality*. In so doing, He paved the way towards overcoming all sorts of discriminations - the national included - without violating human differences, for He is also human, a Jew according to the flesh (Rm 9:5). National differences do not constitute a problem; national discriminations do. The apostles saw in Him the chosen by *faith*. As a result, they understood all those having *faith* in Him as sharing in His chosenness beyond nationalities. They also saw the righteous of the Old Testament from Abraham onwards (Hb 11:4) as having the same feature: *faith*. Then chosenness was interpreted as a quality by *faith* only: in the Old Testament *faith* by observing the Law of Moses - in the New Testament *faith* by the grace of God (Gl 3:25). Bound to no particular land, the apostles claimed the true ancestry of Abraham, that of *faith in Christ*. Then they saw no fault, no collective guilt in Israel. The apostles could see but one disadvantage, either to Jews or to Greeks: the lack of faith in Christ. As a result, after Christ there is no nation that can claim chosenness in the way of Israel in the Old Testament.

Modern Greek theological scholarship, by responding to (neo-)Nazism, saw nationalism as a form of paganism for a variety of reasons, most of which were novel and have nothing to do with paganism, or even neo-paganism. They were phenomena connected more with modernity than pre-modernity. These features can be summarised under four headings. First, the double value of blood and soil, which refer to pre-modern pagan characteristics of ancestry and land. Second, the novel deification of the nation not only as the supreme social value, but also as the object of a cult with certain ceremonies and rituals. The third feature, equally novel, was the deification of the leader, again as an object of a cult with certain rituals. Last but not least was the pre-modern anti-Semitism, which in modernity became violent in an unprecedented way, reaching massive extermination in the Holocaust. By these features nationalism, in the form of Nazism, pushed paganism to the extreme, especially by going back to the victimisation-scapegoat mechanism in the case of anti-Semitism.

To suggest that (neo-)paganism and Nazism coincide would have been an overstatement, doing injustice to (neo-)paganism. Nazis have demonstrated pagan features and claimed paganism as their conviction. Paganism, however, is a broader entity, which has never shared the violence and victimisation mechanisms of Nazism. On the other hand, this does not mean that nationalism - even not in its extreme Nazi form - does not constitute a pagan phenomenon. All four features this thesis traced in paganism - victimisation, national god, connection with the land, kinship in common worshipped ancestry - are to be located in many forms of nationalism. In order to further support this argument, the thesis will use the example of Greek nationalism and will attempt to demonstrate how these features are to be located in particular expressions of modern Greek nationalism.

## 4. Greece of Greek Christians: An example

> The Cover of our Lady, Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary
> has always and in an extraordinary way
> covered our pious Nation
> (Menaion 1980, 10:171)

Greece is a modern nation-state which seems to possess the characteristics described above as paganism. This does not mean that these features are to be found only in Greece and the Greek nation. It is impossible, however, to analyse all forms of paganism in modern nationalisms, due to lack of space and the vast material to be mastered. The thesis will restrict itself to presenting the Greek example.

The first chapter of the thesis suggested two points. First, that it is possible for nations to exist before modern nation-states. This point was analysed in the case of Israel in the second chapter. The Greek example equally applies to this principle. Indeed, the Greek nation existed in antiquity as a structure of traditions, according to Ziakas's theory put forward here. This by no means implies that Greeks maintained always the same traditions. They changed over time, especially as far as their metaphysical tradition is concerned: Greek antiquity is connected with paganism, whereas from late antiquity through the Middle Ages, Christianity prevailed. An analysis of the process of this fundamental change and its implications escapes the scope of this thesis; it constitutes Ziakas's main concern in his *Becoming my Self-Image* (Ziakas 2005, 115-291). What concerns this thesis is that indeed Christianity, in its Orthodox version, constitutes the metaphysical tradition of modern Greeks and has deeply influenced their culture. The Greek state, however, is the outcome of modernity. It emerged with the Protocol of London of 3 February 1830, following the Greek Revolution of 1821 against Ottoman rule (Despotopoulos 1975b, 536-7). Greek nationalism expressed as a state ideology was described above[103] as *Hellenochristianity* and prevailed until 1974 and the fall of the Greek military junta. This ideology emerged progressively.

The second point suggested in the first chapter of this thesis is that modern nationalism is intertwined with religion in various ways and, what is more, nationalism constitutes a pagan form of religion. This chapter intends to further clarify this point by attempting to trace it in the modern Greek example.

Before proceeding, however, in the relevant analysis, it is necessary to note nationalism constitutes a setback, according to the model adopted here, which views paganism as a phenomenon that was progressively overcome in the Axial Age breakthrough of prophetic monotheism and the Christian secondary breakthrough of Jesus Christ's revelation. If nationalism constitutes a form of paganism - and this thesis argues that it does - then the pattern adopted here reveals nationalism as an anthropological regression and a theological negation of the main Christian principles. Modern nationalism is a product of a process that enables the rise of the middle class, the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution and so on. However, the world of

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[103] See chapter 1.3.1.1.

modernity, progressively moving away from Christianity and entering the secularisation process, found ways to return to paganism. The modern phenomena of the cult of the nation, its land, its ancestors, together with the cult of the leader and the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, presented in the previous chapter[104] effectively manifest this point, without the need to turn to (neo-)Nazism. Modern nationalism, even in more moderate forms, presents pagan features.

It has to be remembered that this thesis has identified four such features: the sacrificial mechanism, the national god or god of the land, the connection with the land, and, finally, the blood kinship through the cult of the ancestors. Greek nationalism has been expressed in many ways, but only recently in a neo-Nazi way. The thesis will attempt to trace these four features to the more classic forms in which Greek nationalism was expressed.

## 4.1. Seeking for barbarians: The sacrificial mechanism and the national feasts

To begin with, modern nation-states reproduce the pagan sacrificial mechanism through their national feasts. These festivals usually commemorate important events of the history of nations in which a certain *other* is always designated as the enemy. On the American Independence Day, for instance, it is the British, and in the Turkish Victory Day it is the Greeks. Similarly, in the Greek anniversary of the Revolution of 1821 (25 March) the Turks are designated as the enemies. What is more, on 28 October Greeks commemorate their country's entry into World War II and the memories recalled turn against the Italians and the Germans, or, more specifically, against the Fascists and the Nazis. The festivities include memorial services in churches, speeches, school festivities and parades of students and the armed forces all around the country. Whether inside or outside churches, around war memorials erected in all cities, towns and villages of the country, the festivities often acquire a religious aura. The aim of such festivities is to create feelings of community among the members of the nation, as remembering important common events of the past creates a commitment for doing similar things together in the future (Renan 1990, 19). Such a mentality obviously helps the consolidation of the state and discourages disintegrating tendencies or mechanisms, thus securing the positive result of the 'daily plebiscite' (Renan 1990, 19). The designation of the *other* as the enemy serves this end, for the real or imagined *enemy* keeps *us* together. It is not surprising, therefore, that in national feasts an enemy should be definitely designated. This designation imitates the pagan sacrificial mechanisms. In pagan societies a scapegoat was necessary to stop the circle of mimetic violence. Pagan religion, through sacrificial rituals, helped to ease the tendency of violence by repeating in a symbolic way the sacrifice of the scapegoat, the founding murder (Girard 1979, 9-11). National feasts commemorate precisely such founding murders, easing the tendency to violence and keeping together the nation and the state (Stevens 1997, 252-3; cf. Nikolaides 2002, 190-1).

Indeed, the *founding murder* of the modern Greek state is the Greek Revolution of 1821. The subsequent victory over the Turks secured independence for the Greeks. The Turks constitute, thus, the scapegoats on the shoulders of whom every evil is placed. The annual

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[104] See chapter 3.4.

repetition of the relevant festivities secures the perpetuation of the scapegoat mechanism. Greeks are annually and ritually cleansed from every responsibility by remembering the violence responsible for the foundation of their state. Turks are constantly presented as the responsible party. Acts of extreme violence of Greeks against Turks, such as the massacre of Tripolis on 23 September 1821, are not mentioned and tend to be forgotten (cf. Renan 1990, 11). The festivities of the 28 October have a similar function, as the violence of World War II was unprecedented and was connected with the occupation period of 1941-4; in the Greek imagination it is a minor for the Ottoman occupation. The end of this period was, therefore, conceived as a sort of rebirth. The ensuing Civil War (1946-9), however, obscured and overshadowed it. Understandably enough, the Greeks turned to the time when they faced the enemy together and defeated it. It was a time that allowed them to be redeemed from their time of fragmentation (cf. Karapostoles 2012, 211-77,esp.223-38). In France or Russia, for instance, festivities concern the end of World War II. The day that constitutes the official liberation of Greece from the Germans was the day the latter abandoned the country (12 October 1944). However, no festivities take place on that date. Greece commemorates her *entrance* in the War (28 October 1940), rather than her *exit* from it. The anniversary of the latter was absorbed by the anniversary of the former, since both took place conveniently in the same month.

This pagan scapegoat mechanism mobilised by the national festivities, in Greece is covered under a Christian cloak. Priests offer prayers both in churches or before monuments commemorating those who died defending the motherland (cf. Nikolaides 2002, 193). A Christ-like form of sacrifice is put forward in order to Christianise the occasion. However, the ones who died for the motherland did not constitute innocent victims in the way Jesus did. They were indeed murdered by their enemies, but not before murdering, or attempting to murder, their enemies. The martyrs of Christianity - those who died because of their faith in Christ - followed Jesus's example; the national heroes did not. This peculiar situation is owed to the fact that the Orthodox Church has been always proved willing to adjust to state demands. This issue in itself is connected with the problem of Church-state relations in Greece and in other Orthodox countries, which is a rather complex issue and need not concern this thesis. What is of interest in this respect is that the Orthodox Church endorsed essentially pagan practices. It should not be ignored that religious national festivities were established by the ancient Greeks, such as the *Elefthéria* (Liberation Festivities) in honour of the Greek hoplites who died defending their motherland, during the Persian invasion of 481-479BC (Nikolaides 2002, 162). Even Biblical festivities, such as the Hebrew Passover, which signified the liberation of the elect nation from the land of servitude in Egypt (cf. Nikolaides 2002, 162-3), can be understood as pagan remnants of the Jewish tradition, according to the way this thesis understands chosenness. In a rather pagan way, prayers in the Orthodox Church are made in order to supplicate God to fight with *us* and subjugate the enemy (Nikolaides 2002, 162). Finally, it cannot escape the attention of this thesis that the Church has often changed its essential traditions in order to meet modern state needs. For instance, during formal thanksgiving prayers (doxologies) in national feasts in the

Cathedral of Athens, in the presence of the country's political leadership, the entrance of the people is not allowed, for security reasons (Nikolaides 2002, 164). The theological validity of such an action need not be discussed. What pushes these mechanisms, however, is the need of the modern members of the nation to feel close to their ancestors who died fighting for their land. This closeness makes them feel that they have the right to inhabit this land. It is a right shared by all those who refer to the same land and the same ancestors, so that all the members of the nation can share a sense of kinship. It is to these elements of the land and the ancestors that the thesis will turn its interest presently.

## 4.2. Before the unknown ones: The land and the cult of the ancestors

These two elements are vital for any form of paganism, as this thesis has suggested. As they are interconnected - for the ancestors inhabited a certain land and were bound with it - they will be examined together. As presented above,[105] modern scholarship has shown that certain peoples promoted the idea that they inhabited holy lands. The land of Greece was never widely understood as a sort of Holy Greece, after Russia's fashion. The quest and question in Greece was what constitutes Greek land and what does not. This was also connected with who the ancestors were. This uncertainty has been examined by modern scholarship and will be presented here briefly, before concentrating on the cult of the ancestors.

### 4.2.1. Which land, which ancestors?

Adamantios Korais (1748-1833) was a Greek merchant and intellectual who spent a considerable part of his life in Paris, and came in contact with the French Enlightenment, the philosophes' ideas, and the shuddering events triggered by the French Revolution. He believed in a movement for the liberation of the Greeks from the Ottomans. This idea was definitely not his. There were other thinkers that suggested it before him; what was entirely his, was his view of how such a task could be accomplished. He strongly believed that the Greeks should first be educated and then rise. The far more popular among his contemporaries Rigas Velestinles (1757-98), for instance, payed no attention to such a necessity and actively, though unsuccessfully, attempted to push towards a revolt in the Balkans envisaging a multi-national state that would replace the tyranny of the Ottoman sultans (Kitromilides 2013, 212-29). For Korais this was an untimely initiative. Greeks did not have any idea who they were, what their past was, who their ancestors were: they were not aware they were Greeks, let alone suspect what this entailed. How then was it possible for them to revolt? He believed that their collective *self* should be constructed by a persistent and effective educational process (Kitromilides 2013, 266-90).

For Korais, therefore, to construct the Greek idea entailed an effort to connect modern Greeks with their true past. Living in Western Europe and being able to come in contact with the love and admiration his contemporary Europeans entertained for ancient Greece and the classic legacy in general, he came to believe that this legacy constituted the Greeks' national past. This

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[105] See chapter 2.2.2.

thought, combined with a genuine detestation for Byzantium, which he inherited from Montesquieu and Voltaire (cf. Herrin 2007, 321), especially after reading Edward Gibbon, led him to undertake a large-scale programme for the publication of the works of the Greek classics. He transferred the classic text to the linguistic idiom he proposed as appropriate for modern Greeks, the *kathareúousa* (Kitromilides 2013, 269-73). In the rather lengthy introductions to each volume he put forward his ideas concerning Greek nationality, the ancient past and the modern Greek language. His views were not compatible with the self-identification of his fellow Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, hence his insistence on the importance and priority of education. Korais's way of thinking can be understood if one considers his idea of the collective name of his compatriots. The term used by them at the time to designate themselves was *Romioí*; we are to return to this later.[106] He strongly believed that this should change. He proposed the names used by the classics: either Hellenes or Greeks. He even preferred the latter, for 'this is the way that the enlightened European nations call us' (Korais 1805, 37). Korais's Greek vision was, therefore, influenced by his contemporary Europe, especially France. This vision attempted to present the modern Greeks as heirs of the classical heritage. This vision was timely placed in the contemporary European environment of liberalism and romanticism that idealised the Greek heritage: 'We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their roots in Greece. But for Greece… we might still have been savages and idolaters' (Shelley 1822, viii-ix).

These ideas seemed to be at odds with the way Korais's compatriots in the Ottoman Empire perceived themselves. Greeks of his time called themselves *Romioí*, a popularised term of the formal *Romaíoi*, i.e. *Romans*. The term is historically connected with the Roman – Byzantine – empire of the East, an entity that constituted the uninterrupted historical continuation of the classic Roman Empire (Demaras 1975, 348-50. Herrin 2007, 24-5), which was exactly the part of the historical past of the Greeks that Korais despised (Korais 1805, 33; cf. Tahopoulos 2009, 91-4). Clearly, the Greeks of the Ottoman state, largely uneducated or poorly educated, adhered to their Byzantine rather than to their ancient Greek legacy. This legacy was transferred to them through their poor education connected with ecclesiastical books – a product of Byzantium – or, more often, through popular myths and legends. Any connection with the classical past made little or no sense. European travellers were astonished to find out that the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the Ottoman empire possessed no knowledge about ancient Greece, its important philosophers and thinkers, or the great events of ancient Greek history. Besides, European travellers cared more for the dead rather than the living Greeks (Gourgouris 2007, 185). On the other hand, some of them, happily found out that the modern Greeks readily sold off parts of ancient ruins, of which Greece was full (Voudouri 2017, 78).

However, Korais's vision was the one that influenced the educational system of the modern Greek nation-state that emanated from the 1821 Revolution, despite reactions (Demaras 1977a, 457). Greek schools put forward the study of the ancient past and acquainted the first students with people such as Pericles and the Athenian republic or the history of the ancient Greek city-states. This was the result of state practice concerning the school books: they

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[106] See also chapter 1.3.1.2.1.

constituted translated, sometimes shortened, versions of French or German originals (Pandoulas 2006, 49). Two elements emerged from this educational system: ancestor worship and blood kinship. The ancient ancestors were worshiped as ideal people and the past they lived in as an ideal reality. These ancestors were also viewed as the modern Greeks' ancient kin. The fact that modern Greeks were descendants of Pericles, Plato, and Aristotle made them rightful heirs not only of their culture but also of their land. It was not difficult to imagine such an idea. Greeks were surrounded by ancient monuments that survived to their days and often maintained names of the places that were to be found in ancient texts: like their ancestors, they too lived in Athens, Corinth or Thebes, and there were located Pericles's Acropolis and the temple of the Corinthian Apollo. In a more striking such example, the book that became very popular as school handbook in Greece in the second half of the nineteenth century was Leo Melas's (1812-79), *Old Stathes: Memories of My Childhood* (1858). Through the discussions of an old man with the Greek teenagers in Ioannina, then part of the Ottoman empire, Melas put forward the model of the Greek he considered ideal for the future. Although he considered his work inspired by both Christianity and Hellenism (Athanasiades 2015, 258-9), he made very few references to Jesus's teachings and, secondarily, St. Paul's quotations, though somewhat more than his references to pagan mythology (Athanasiades 2015, 255,260). The bulk of his ideas was inspired by ancient Greek history. His influence from Korais is such, that he often referred to the archaic-classic Greek legacy in Korais's own words. He followed Korais in dismissing Philip and Alexander as non-Greeks (Athanasiades 2015, 259-67), and made only one reference to Byzantium, which was considered an era of foreign occupation (Athanasiades 2015, 260,267-73. Demaras 1977a, 458-9). True ancestors were only the ancient Greeks and the importance of the land inhabited by the modern Greeks was based on the fact that it had been inhabited by the glorious and famous ancient personalities. Indeed, Melas flirted with pagan Hellenism rather than Christianity.

It is this fact that made archaeology so important for modern Greek identity. Lovers of classicism from England, France, and Germany arrived in Greece and visited still standing classical monuments. Many of the artefacts were transferred away from Greece. To avert this, the newly established Greek kingdom founded the Archaeological Service in 1833 and in 1834 enforced a law that mirrored Korais's mentality: 'All the antiquities in Greece, as works of the ancestors of the Greek people, shall be regarded as national property of all the Greeks in general' (Voudouri 2017, 78). Despite the establishment of the Archaeological Service, the main excavations initiated by Greeks were carried out by the Archaeological Society, founded in 1837, while the foreign missions were organised in the form of Institutes protected by their respective governments. The first such Institute was the French, established in 1846, followed by the German in 1876, the American (1881), the British (1886), the Austrian (1908), and the Italian (1909) (Voudouri 2017, 81). The first organised archaeological museum was erected in the Acropolis, by the Parthenon, in 1874, and the National Archaeological Museum, the foundation of which had been announced in the aforementioned 1834 law, was finally opened in 1889 (Voudouri 2017, 81). The Greek land was not a holy land in the Jewish fashion. Its importance was connected with the fact that it hid the glorious past of the Greek ancestors. In a sense, the

ancestors, themselves, were hidden under it. Their return to the light was a task that reinforced modern Greek identity. Connection with the newly independent land signified connection with the ancient ancestors (cf. Peckham 2001, 115-36).

This narrative was seriously shaken when the Austrian historian Jacob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790-1861), a renowned critic of neo-classicism, argued that the modern Greeks had no blood ties whatsoever with their ancient ancestors in his much-contested *History of the Peninsula of Morea (i.e. Peloponnesus) in the Middle Ages* (1830): 'The race of the Greeks has been wiped out in Europe… Not the slightest drop of undiluted Greek blood flows in the veins of the Christian population of present-day Greece' (Fallmerayer 1830, v-vi). Fallmerayer's view turned directly against German philehellenism and shook the romantic imagination of the Bavarian king Louis I (r. 1825-1848), who was preparing his son Otto (r. 1832-62) to undertake the task of ruling the newly established independent kingdom of Greece. Fallmerayer's thesis was not well received in Bavaria, in Greece or among the philhellenes at the time (Gourgouris 2007, 196-7,207. Pandoulas 2006, 50-1). But only in 1843 another historian, the Greek Constantine Paparrigopoulos (1815-1891), responded effectively to Fallmerayer's thesis (Paparrigopoulos 1843; cf. Pandoulas 2006, 52-4), by abandoning Korais's dominant vision. The key of the Greek continuity was to be found in the Middle Ages. In his study, Paparrigopoulos stressed the importance of the Hellenistic and Byzantine empire, an idea he further developed and fully shaped in his monumental *History of the Greek nation,* his 6-volume magnum opus (Paparrigopoulos 1860-77), which constituted for many decades the foundation for understanding Greek history in modern Greece (Demaras 1977a, 469-70,473-5; cf. Stamatopoulos 2009, 63-71). It would have been unfair to consider Paparrigopoulos's work as merely a product of romanticism which fed the Greek ancestor worship and the connection with the land. Such a view would overlook his important insights and breakthroughs, especially when considered in their historical context. Paparrigopoulos was undoubtedly an important and robust thinker. However, it is equally true that his work constituted the basis for the idea of Greek continuity, which was promoted in the Greek educational system in the twentieth century, replacing that of Korais's, and prevailed among the academics for about a century (Kitroef 1997, 272). Even then Apostolos Vakalopoulos essentially continued Paparrigopoulos's model (Kitroef 1997, 277). Actually, his work became the foundation for *Ekdotikē Athenōn* Publication House, which published its monumental Greek-Academy-award winning (1980) *History of the Greek Nation* in fifteen volumes (Hristopoulos-Bastias 1970-78; cf. Kitroef 1997, 278).[107] This system promoted the worship of the ancestors together with the connection with the national land - though it rejected blood purity (Veremis 1997a, 20) - for Paparrigopoulos's ideas developed simultaneously with the development of the Greek *Greater Ideology* popounded by the Kolettis, as will be shown below. The importance of medieval Hellenism was also stressed by another scholar, who wrote after Paparrigopoulos's response to Fallmerayer, but before the former's great study of history, and, therefore became the first Greek who wrote an extensive study on Byzantium: Spyridon Zambelios (1815-81) (Zambelios

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[107] The publication concerned a wide period from pre-history to 1941AD. A sixteenth volume was published in 2000 that reached 1990s.

1852. Zambelios 1857). Zambelios is the one who fathered the term *Hellenochristianity* (Pandoulas 2006, 9) and probably even modern Greek historiography (Pandoulas 2006, 56; cf. Voutsaki 2017, 8-9).[108]

Zambelios and Paparrigopoulos, therefore, brought to the fore what Korais despised: Byzantium. But the former achieved the target of continuity not only by composing the first substabtial study on Byzantium ever written in Greek, but also by the publication of Greek folk songs (Zambelios 1852). Indeed, Zambelios's first extensive study on Byzantium was only the introduction to a collection of folk songs. What is more, while Zambelios built the bridge to unite antiquity and modernity, Paparrigopoulos, in his aforementioned *History*, amply demonstrated the course of the Greek nation from antiquity to modernity. These achievements brought to the fore two more significant changes in understanding the land and the ancestors. The first is that the land was not only connected with the ancient ancestors but also with the medieval ones, whose monuments often stood more visible and in a better shape than the ancient ones. The second is that so far Greek thought, imitating the philhellenes, had enormously concentrated into the dead Greeks. The living ones, however, were there and could provide with material, through folk traditions, which could unite the past with the present. The latter task was undertaken by Nicholas Polites (1852-1921), the pioneering folklorist who connected the modern Greek folk traditions with the ancient ones. Perhaps it is worth noting that Polites, while studying in Germany, was befriended by the German pioneering Byzantinist Karl Krumbacher (1856-1909). The renaissance of Byzantine studies in Greece did not essentially take place before Spyridon Lampros (1851-1919), while by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century archaeological research was concerned also with Byzantine monuments. In 1914 the Byzantine and Christian Museum was established in Athens, while the first folklore museum appeared in 1918 (Voudouri 2017, 83).

At any rate, the idea of continuity became the theoretical basis of the Greek *Greater Ideology*. In order to comprehend this, it is necessary to approach the issue of the tug-of-war between natives and non-natives in the first Greek state. As *Romioí*, the revolutionaries of 1821 revolted aiming at the restoration of the Byzantine Empire. Following Velestinles's vision (Kitromilides 2013, 212-29), they desired a revolution in the Balkans that would liberate the entire peninsula from the Ottomans (Despotopoulos 1975a, 16-7). That vision proved to be a utopia. Eventually, only Peloponnesos, parts of mainland Greece, the Cyclades and the North Sporades islands constituted the independent Greek state. However, the majority of the administrative positions of the new state were occupied by the non-native Greeks, Greek-speaking people who were born in areas which still belonged to the Ottoman empire and had come to Greece after the independence of 1830. Non-native Greeks usually came from important administrative centres of the Ottoman empire, such as the capital Istanbul, Smyrna (nowadays Izmir), Bucharest and Iasi (in modern Romania), as well as the British-occupied islands

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[108] John Tahopoulos has pointed out that other Greek thinkers, prior to Zambelios and Paparrigopoulos, had already developed the idea of continuity (Tahopoulos 2009, 85-91). However, such ideas are rather scattered and not well grounded. It was the response to Fallmerayer that led to the idea of continuity as the grand narrative of Greek historiography.

of the Ionian Sea, such as Corfu. These non-native Greeks were well educated, cultivated, and administratively experienced. Many of the native Greeks, who were born in the liberated areas and took active part in the battles against the Ottomans, did not share the advantages of the non-natives and rarely occupied posts in state administration. This infuriated the natives, who pressed the National Assembly, discussing a constitution for Greece (1844), to sharply distinguish between natives and non-natives and ensure constitutional privileges for the natives. The attempts of national delegates who tried to reach a compromise failed. The decisions favoured mostly the natives (Demaras 1977a, 456-7,461-2. Papageorgiou 2005, 416-8. Vogle 2008, 297-348).

However, the influential politician Ioannis Kolettis (1773-1847), himself a non-native physician who played a significant, though dubious, role during the Revolution, deeply impressed and influenced the delegates of the Assembly. According to his position, Greece was destined to influence both the West and the East, due to its geographical position. The fall of Greece - he obviously meant the Eastern Roman Empire - had served the first purpose. By this, Kolettis implied the flow of Byzantine intellectuals from the falling Byzantium to Italy, where the process of Renaissance had already commenced. The rebirth of Greece was destined 'to enlighten the East'. This was a task yet to be achieved, not only by the state of Greece but by all the Greeks whether inside or outside the new state. Therefore, it was the obligation of the natives and the state to liberate the non-natives still living under the Ottomans. This was the so-called *Greater Ideology*, which influenced Greek ideologues and politicians for decades (Demaras 1977a, 464-5,468. Papageorgiou 2005, 420-4. Vogle 2008, 346-7). According to the natives, the land was connected with the achieved freedom and with those who achieved it. For Kolettis, the Greek land was far larger and was connected with the Greek nation - both natives and non-natives - or the 'Greek race', as Kolettis put it (Papageorgiou 2005, 422). Kolettis's speech before the Assembly profoundly impressed his audience. The philosopher and judge George Tertsetis (1800-1874) stated that he held his breath to be able to listen to him (Demaras 1977a, 467). Although Bavarian, king Otto adhered to this ideology together with 'the greatest part of the Greek politicians and intellectuals, almost all the military officers, and the vast majority of the Greek society' (Papageorgiou 2005, 421). Two points are of special interest here: the idea of the unity of the Greek nation and its lands, and the idea for the nation's mission.

The way in which the Greek nation and Byzantium intertwined in Kolettis's thought implied that the completion of the Greater Idea was connected with the former Byzantine lands. The lands inhabited by Greeks, who were connected with their Byzantine ancestors, were obviously Greek. This point further proves the interconnection of the Greater Idea with Paparrigopoulos's theory of the continuity of the Greek nation. It comes than as no surprise that Kolettis was Paparrigopoulos's political protector and the former's first historical work on negating Fallmerayer's theory was published one year before Kolettis's speech on the Greater Idea (cf. Stamatopoulos 2009, 66-7).

It is of great importance here to also highlight the idea of the mission of the Greek nation. Kolettis believed that it was the destiny of Greece to enlighten the East. He did not

believe that this was a mission imposed on Greece by God, but rather by its geographical position. Constantine Demaras believed that Greek nationalism in the nineteenth century was very much influenced by the ideas of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), who believed that every nation possessed a special role in the world. Greek state nationalism searched for its own special role. Kolettis identified it as the enlightenment of the East. This enlightenment was connected with the European Enlightenment and it was very much a secular idea. It comes then as no surprise that this idea was never taken by the Church. This, however, did not prevent non-theologians attributing this Greek mission precisely to God, bringing up the issue of missionary chosenness (Demaras 1977a, 464-4,468,477-8). It is doubtful, on the other hand, how deeply this idea influenced Greek society. Repeated failures and disappointments from the European countries made the Greeks think of themselves in lesser terms. Probably, the Crimean War (1853-6), during which Greece was humiliated for expressing positive attitude towards Russia, played a significant role to this end. Even shortly before that Zambelios had already expressed his detestation for the idea of the special role of Greece to the world (Demaras 1977a, 478).

At any rate, the idea of Greek continuity and the Greater Ideology prevailed in Greece until its defeat in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-22). A general observation needs to be made and concerns this thesis. Either according to Korais's mentality of the importance of ancient Greek culture or according to Paparrigopoulos's idea of continuity, antiquity played a pivotal role in the modern Greek ideological arena. Byzantium, however, was vital only for the idea of continuity. This did not mean that its importance went uncontested (Demaras 1977b, 401,403,408-9). The importance of antiquity, on the other hand, was never doubted. In any form of Greek imagination, modern Greeks were indubitably heirs of the classical legacy. What is more, after the defeat of 1922, Byzantium played no role in the Greek imagination about the possibility of a Greater Greece that would include Asia Minor. Classicism, however, was geographically connected with the smaller Greek state, This classic legacy, more than anything else, defined the Greek idea about the ancestors and their land both before and, especially, after the fall of the Greater Idea. This ideological importance of antiquity and the secondary role of Byzantium was mirrored in the most expressive monument of modern Greek nationalism, the monument of the Unknown Soldier.

### 4.2.2. The Unknown Soldier

The monument of the Unknown Soldier is located in the central Square of the Constitution (Syntagma) before the Greek Parliament in Athens. The monument constitutes by no means a Greek innovation. Such monuments, honouring the dead of certain wars, exist all around the world and constitute examples of the profound interrelation of nationalism with religion (Grosby 2005, 86). These monuments, so strongly intertwined with the emergence and the struggles of the modern nation-states, are the places where certain rituals to honour the nation's dead take place which often resemble the religious rituals. Probably, the first such monument appeared in Denmark: it is the *Landsoldaten* in Fredericia, erected in 1849 to honour the unknown Dane soldiers who died in the First Schleswig War (1848-52) (Tselios-Makrypoulias

n.d., 8). One of the early such examples is also the Civil War (1861-5) Unknowns Monument in Arlington, Virginia, in the United States, constructed in 1865. These monuments became widespread following the First World War. The relevant initiative belongs to the British and the French and is connected with the shock and the trauma that war caused. Never before had a four-year war resulted in so many millions of dead, many of whom were unidentified mainly due to the technologically advanced artillery guns used, as well as the artillery strategies involved. The monuments in both London (Westminster Abbey, 1920) and Paris (Arc of Triumph, 1921) contain the remains of dead soldiers who were not possible to identify. Religiously emotional the British monument reads 'the Lord knoweth them that are His' (alluding Jn 10:14). In the American equivalent the inscription reads '… known but to God'. Reference to God seems to help to ease social collective guilt and heal its trauma.

Greece possesses one of the earliest examples, since a monument to honour the unknown revolutionaries who died during the Greek Revolution of 1821 was erected in 1889 in Hermoupolis in the island of Syros, probably the wealthiest Greek city at the time (Tselios-Makrypoulias n.d., 8-9). Ironically, though included within the borders of the first Greek independent state, the island of Syros had not revolted against the Turks. Having no distinguished revolutionaries to commemorate, Hermoupolis erected a monument to the *unknown*. The lack of any participation of the inhabitants of the island in the Revolution was thus overcome. Indeed, forgetfulness, as Renan pointed out, is as important as remembrance for a nation (Renan 1990, 11). The current monument in Athens followed the pattern established by the United Kingdom and France. It was sculpted between 1930 and 1932 and was inaugurated on 25 March 1932, on the anniversary of the Revolution. The monument was erected in front of the Greek Parliament and at a lower level symbolically pointing out the foundation of the modern Greek Republic on the Greek people's national struggles.

The monument's role is to be the focal point of festivities for the two national anniversaries of the Greek state (25 March and 28 October). Surprisingly enough, though Greece is a country that maintains strong Church-state relations (Fox-Sandler 2005, 326), its monument is far more secular than its British or American equivalents, despite the presence of some religious symbols of secondary importance for the monument. It has to be remembered that the American state, for instance, has no formal relation with any Christian Church, despite numerous allusions to God as in the aforementioned monument or the inscription 'In God we trust' in the American currency (cf. Fox-Sandler 2005, 326-8). Even the official ceremonies, taking place there, are not religious at all. During the national anniversaries, the president of the country heads the ceremonies, but no clergy are involved. The honoured are not gods or saintly humans. Still, though secular, a form of a cult is developed. The Greek monument is, for that matter, somewhat pagan in nature.

To begin with, the sarcophagus (image 1) contains no remains of any person; the relevant explanation is given by an inscription at the left of the observer: 'There is likewise borne an empty hearse covered over for such as appear not' (Tselios-Makrypoulias n.y., 12; images 1 and 2). The inscription constitutes an extract from Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War* and the latter's

reference to the burial of the Athenian dead after the first year of the war (Hobbes 1989, 108).[109] The classical pagan legacy is apparent through many more elements. First, the main sculpture depicts an ancient Greek hoplite laying naked still having his helmet on and holding his shield, his hoplon – probably inspired by the sculptures decorating the pediments of the sixth century BC temple of Aphea at Aigina (compare images 3 and 4). Second, another inscription, at the right of the observer, reads: 'To famous men all the earth is a sepulchre' (Tselios-Makrypoulias n.y., 12; images 4 and 5) again alluding Thucydides's description of the burial; the extract is from the oration attributed to Pericles by Thucydides (Hobbes 1989, 113).[110] This inscription seems to constitute the Greek pagan equivalent of 'known but to God', through which Greek collective conscience is eased. Third, the inscriptions all around the monument imitate ancient Greek writing (e.g. images 2 and 5). Fourth, the monument is surrounded by a number of shields and names of battles of the Greek army. The shields imitate the classic Greek hoplon, while by them ancient style inscriptions commemorate the battles the Greek army has fought. The shields are decorated with war symbols inspired mainly by the classical legacy: an ancient Greek warship, the trireme (image 6), a Corinthian style helmet (image 7), the most popular ancient symbol for the shields, the gorgonion, aiming at creating fear to the enemy (image 8), and a sword similar to the Roman gladius, with the inscription: 'either with it or on it' (ἢ τὰν ἢ ἐπὶ τᾶς), an expression allegedly repeated by mothers in ancient Sparta when they used to give the shield to their sons, before they left for battle. This expression can be translated as 'either come back victorious, not having thrown your shield fleeing the battlefield, or come back dead, carried on your own shield' (image 9). Even the World-War-I French style helmet, used by the Greek army in the same war, is decorated with laurel leaves (image 10). As symbols of Apollo, laurel leaves were awarded to the winners of the Pythian Games at Delphi. Finally, the entrance to the monument is decorated with two classical-style incense burners - one on each side - decorated with meanders, and two shields depicting triremes (image 11).

The Christian or Byzantine references are far fewer. Above the empty sarcophagus a small cross is placed (image 12), whereas another shield bears a cross, within which the inscription reads: 'to the heroic defenders of the fatherland' (image 13). The only Byzantine symbol is the shield bearing the double-headed eagle, connected with the last Byzantine dynasty of the Palaeologos family (image 14). There is only one symbol that refers to the Revolution of 1821: one shield bears the mythical bird of phoenix, looking at a cross, which was used in the first revolutionary flag (image 15). Finally, the monument is guarded by the Presidential Guard, dressed in uniforms inspired by the traditional dresses of the Greek revolutionaries of the early nineteenth century (image 16). The overall analysis of the monument, therefore, suggests a Greek-pagan, rather than a Byzantine-Christian orientation. The most visible and striking points of the monument are definitely the ancient-style inscription, the sculpture of the Greek hoplite, and the modern Presidential Guard. This rather odd combination would have probably satisfied Korais, as it underlines the connection of modern Greece directly with antiquity. This seems to

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[109] Thucydides 2.34.

[110] Thucydides 2.43.

be the prevailing idea of the monument. The few references that do not come from antiquity serve the purpose of Paparrigopoulos's continuity. What stresses the *Greater Ideology* is the commemoration of the battlefields in which the Greek army fought, some of which are located in Turkey, just before Ankara (images 17, 18 and 19). However, this very vision was defeated in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-22. Greek antiquity maintains its prestige. Byzantium, however, which supported the *Greater Ideology* and the territorial expansion of the Greek state, seems to fade away because of the defeat of 1922. It can be probably claimed that Paparrigopoulos provided only the canvas on which Korais's vision was primarily depicted.

More importantly, the reference to Thucydides's work underlines the veneration of the ancient ancestors. According to Thucydides, the Athenians buried their dead following not their 'ancient customs', as Hobbes translated it (Hobbes 1989, 107), but their ancestral laws.[111] Moreover, Pericles started that very speech, to which the monument alludes, by referring to the ancestors: 'for they, having been always the inhabitants of this region, by their valour have delivered the same to succession of posterity hitherto in the state of liberty' (Hobbes 1989, 109).[112] The ancestors are the ones who inhabited the same land and delivered it free to their offspring. As the above shield put it, they are 'the defenders of the fatherland' (image 13). This gives their descendants the right to inhabit the same land and defend it in the same manner. Aeschylus in his *Persians* presents the Greeks shouting, while their fleet moved towards the Persian fleet at Salamis, that it was important for them to liberate their 'native land … the fanes of your fathers' gods, and the tombs of your ancestors' (Smyth 1963, 142-5).[113] The very religion, the gods, worshiped by the ancient Greeks, were important not only in themselves but also as the gods of their ancestors and it was their duty to fight for the tombs of the latter, for they had inhabited the native land. This primeval pagan understanding of the interconnection between land and blood kinship, as personified by the ancestors, is apparent in the monument of the Unknown Soldier. In a very suggestive way the Greek monument almost entirely departs from the Christian connotations of other equivalents in order to focus on the pagan ancestral worship inherited by classic Greece. As a whole, the monument constitutes a form of cult dedicated to the ancestors since antiquity – through the whole appearance of the monument – to the present – through the commemoration of the battles of the modern Greek armed forces. It constitutes, as it were, an indirect answer to Fallmerayer, even without really referring to the Byzantine past, from which no such ancestral worship could be used. The Byzantine legacy, as will be shown immediately below, inspired other expressions of modern Greek nationalism.

4.3. Virgin Mary, the national goddess: Protecting the Greek nation and its land
The lack of a pantheon in monotheistic Christianity turned the interest of nationalist thinking to the multiplicity of saints venerated in Christianity, not as other-worldly beings, but as humans of

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[111] Thucydides 2.34.

[112] Thucydides 2.36.

[113] Aeschylus, *Persians*, 402-5.

this world who managed to reach other-worldliness. As has been noted above,[114] such saints are historically connected with certain nations or certain areas. For instance, St. Savva contributed in the foundation of the Serbian kingdom and the Serbian independent Orthodox Church, becoming ever since the patron saint of Serbia, its *national god*, as it were. Similarly, Alexander Nevski is the *national god* of Russia and St. Patrick of Ireland. The Virgin Mary, however, despite belonging to the Jewish nation, constitutes a person of no nationality for Christians. Having given birth to Jesus, simultaneously man and the Son of God, she belongs to all humanity, following her Son's divine universality. Christ was considered the protector of the new chosen nation of the faithful. Indeed, icons of Christ were considered as protectors of the Christians against the idolaters, as in the case of the protection of Edessa (nowadays Urfa of Turkey) from the Persians (544 AD) (Kitzinger 1954, 103-4). Gradually, however, the emerging veneration of the Virgin (Smith 2008, 600) replaced Christ, as her maternity, theologically stressed (Mother of God - Theotokos), brought her closer to humans. Though the transcendental divinity of Christ kept Him beyond national particularities, the this-worldly humanity of the Mother of God makes her applicable to every national particularity. Thus, being human and, simultaneously, the Mother of God, Mary belongs to everybody. As Llywelyn put it, she is the 'Mary of all nations' (Llywelyn 2010, 228).

Through certain historical events, in which Mary was understood as the miraculous deliverer of certain peoples, she has become their special patron. In certain cases, she has been considered as a supreme general, who led her victorious forces in battle, as their victorious Asherah or their warrior Athena. Following this model, the Polish king John II Casimir Vasa (r. 1648-68) proclaimed, in 1652, the Virgin Mary of Częstochowa, the famous Black Madonna, as the Queen and Protector of Poland. The proclamation was followed by the coronation of the icon by Pope Clement XI (r.1700-21) in 1717. These events were connected with the famous siege of the monastery of Jasna Gora in 1655, when about 3,000 Swedes failed in occupying the monastery, defended by about 300 Poles. The Polish victory was attributed to the protection of Mary, whose icon is shrined in the monastery. Mary has been considered the protectress of the Polish nation and the Polish lands ever since (cf. Grosby 2005, 85). It is worth noting that Mary's role as protectress of Poland was not the result of some sort of apparition - which would have led to a form of Jewish Old-Testament-like chosenness - but a choice of the Polish king John II, who chose her as his own patron 'and as Queen of all my states and offer my kingdom of Poland' (Llywelyn 2010, 253). This human initiative leads directly to paganism, where the people chose one of the multiplicity of their gods as their national one. Here Mary becomes, by royal decree, the goddess of the land of Poland and is worshiped there ever since as such (Llywelyn 2010, 235-6,251-5).

Mary is connected with different peoples - *our Lady of N*, as Llywelyn termed the phenomenon (Llywelyn 2010, 239) - through apparitions of national importance in which she predicts the gloomy future of a given nation and mourns for it, or expresses her support for a given nation at hard times especially in areas which were considered the last bulwark of either

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[114] Chapter 2.2.

Roman Catholicism or Christianity as a whole. Llywelyn considers a number of such cases particularly connected with the above forms of apparitions, such as the case of the Virgin of Medjugorje. Though connected with the land of Herzegovina, she is considered the exclusive protectress of the 'beautiful and special' Croatian nation, following stories of apparitions of national importance, which have also fed the Croatian hostility against the Serbs (Skrbiš 2005, 443-61. Llywelyn 2010, 245). In a similar fashion she is protecting the Roman-Catholic Ukrainians against the Orthodox Russians (Llywelyn 2010, 241-3,250-1). Mary predicted the gloomy future of France, when the revolutionary country came in conflict with the Church and thus abandoned its role as devout daughter of the Church. Punishment was inevitable in the form of the internal unrest that followed the fall of Napoleon I Bonaparte (r. 1804-14) and the humiliating defeat at the hands of the Prussians (1871) (Llywelyn 2010, 246-50). The pattern recalls Israelite chosenness: blessings for obedience, punishment for disobedience. This pattern is also apparent in the apparition of Mary of Guadeloupe in Mexico (Llywelyn 2010, 256-60). Similar apparitions and protections are also connected with the Virgin of Lujan in Argentina (Llywelyn 2010, 242,244-5) and the Virgin of Fatima in Portugal (Llywelyn 2010, 248-9).

### 4.3.1. The Virgin as Palladium

These cases are only examples of Mary's national exclusivity and are, apparently, connected with nations adhering to Catholicism. In Orthodoxy, however, similar cases have emerged. Historically, Orthodoxy is connected with the Byzantine Empire, where the cult of Mary was of primary importance. Theologically, this is connected with the insistence of the Orthodox Christian tradition that Mary is venerated as the Mother of God, a doctrine which was challenged directly by Nestorianism in the fifth century AD (Norris 2007, 87) and indirectly by Iconoclasm in the eighth century AD (Louth 2008, 51). This doctrine, however, was affirmed by the Council of Ephesus (431AD) (Edwards 2007, 377) and the theologians defending icons, such as Theophanes the Confessor (c. 758/760–817/818), so that the first large mosaic following the iconoclastic controversy was that of Mary with the baby Jesus (Louth 2007, 58-9,127. Louth 2008, 62). More particularly, Mary was considered the deliverer of Constantinople during the first important joined siege of the city by the united armies and fleets of the Sassanid Persians, the Avars, and their Slav vassals (626AD) (Grosby 2005, 84. Llewelyn 2010, 233. Smith 2008, 600). Following the Byzantine victory, the Akathist hymn was celebrated, a long poem consisted of twenty-four parts with an introduction dedicated to Mary as the supreme general, to whom thanks were due by the city that belonged to her. The deliverance of the city was particularly connected with the icon of Blachernae, a church dedicated to Mary by the palace of the same name within the city walls, where, it should not be omitted, the veil of the Virgin was also kept. There are two interesting points connected with this tradition, both of which are connected with the icon (Andreopoulos 2013, 85-6).

First, the icon allegedly belonged to the Orans type where Mary appears praying alone. There is an icon in Moscow, Russia, that is said to be that of the church at Blachernae, which belongs to the type of Hodegetria, the one who leads the way. According to the latter type, the

Virgin raises her right hand which points to the infant Jesus whom she holds with her left hand. The theological interpretation of the icons underlines the fact that, either by praying or pointing, Mary demonstrates that it is Jesus who offers deliverance to the people and not herself. Theologically, Jesus is God in essence and not His mother; He alone delivers in the sense of the full theological salvation. However, the faithful Byzantines considered Mary their deliverer, not by mediation to God but as a military leader, who defended them from the attack of the Avaro-Slav idolaters. The Virgin's deliverance is connected with particular *banal* issues, *banal nationalism* as it were (cf. Billig 1995), and not global deliverance, which is granted by Christ. Seeking deliverance away from the Deliverer, constitutes, in terms of theology, a distortion of criteria, a loss of the way, towards which the very Virgin herself points. Even considering Christ, or even Mary, as the victimiser, to use Girard's terminology, and not as the victim who accepts Crucifixion constitutes a turn from Christianity back to paganism. This distortion of criteria turns the Virgin to a form of a *goddess* connected with a certain land, that of Constantinople, and a certain people, the Byzantines (cf. Smith 2008, 600). Obviously then, Mary emerges as a form of a national goddess exclusively protecting her own people, her own chosen ones. The connection to particularistic/exclusivist paganism is quite obvious.

Second, following the events of 626AD, the icon of the Virgin of Blachernae was often named the *Palladium* of Constantinople, alluding to Greek pagan mythology (Kitzinger 1954, 112). According to the latter, the Palladium, a small wooden image (*xóanon*), allegedly made by Athena was the protector of Troy. As long as the Palladium was kept within the walls of Troy, the city was safe (Kershaw 2007, 238). The theft of the Palladium by the Greek heroes Odysseus and Diomedes condemned Troy and forced Athena to change sides from protectress of Troy to helper of the Greeks (Kershaw 2007, 355). Similarly, the Virgin of Blachernae, deeply intertwined with the land of Constantinople, constituted its Palladium: as long as she was with her people in their land, they were safe. The icon was allegedly destroyed during the fall of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 (Runciman 1990, 146). Again, the Virgin is understood in a pagan way as a form of national goddess, a warrior Athena (cf. Nikolaides 2013, 195-6), an exclusive Yahweh, connected with the land and its people. The connection to particularistic/exclusivist paganism is again quite obvious.

This Byzantine particularism-exclusivism was - at first glance strangely enough - the result of the universal mission of the Christian Roman Empire (Byzantium). As Roman emperors, the rulers reigning from Constantinople, the New Rome, inherited the ideology of the universal empire from their pagan predecessors, who had reigned from the Old Rome. The latter vision, as Tefft suggested (Tefft 2010, 47-50), was expressed by Roman writers such as Aelius Aristides (117-181AD) of the Second Sophistic, in his *Roman Oration* (Jarratt 2016, 213-29). This ideology did not simply intermingle with the Christian doctrine in the thought of the Church Fathers, as Tefft suggested (Tefft 2010, 63-76). Even if we 'need to stop treating Eusebius (i.e. of the Palestinian Caesarea [260/5-339/40]) as the Founding Father of Byzantine thought' as Anthony Kaldellis recently suggested (Kaldellis 2015, 177), it is true that the empire considered itself the *only* Christian state, the Christian community on earth, with the mission to expand Christianity.

Despite its various successes it ultimately failed dramatically (Florovsky 1974, 67-100).[115] As the only Christian empire, Byzantium possessed an idea of chosenness that need not concern us here (Magdalino 2016, 19. Rosser 2012, 8-10. Smith 2003, 98-9). This sense of chosenness, however, was connected with Mary, as the palladium of the imperial capital. Constantinople could not fall at the hands of barbarians, as it was under the special protection and care of Mary, the Mother of God.

Additionally, the presence of the veil in the Blachernae Church (Andreopoulos 2013, 89) was connected with the vision of a late-tenth-century saint, Andrew the Fool for Christ, who saw Mary spreading her veil over the people in protection. The apparition seems to be connected with a rather spiritual understanding of protection for all the people or the faithful, for St. Andrew pointed at the vision of the Virgin saying to his disciple Epiphanios 'Do you see, my brother, the Queen and Lady of all, praying for the whole world?' However, it has also been associated by the people specifically with the siege of Constantinople by the Russians of Kiev (Andreopoulos 2013, 87). The protecting veil, therefore, was connected with the palladium. The final fall of Constantinople to its enemies (1453), was, allegedly, due to its sins and corruption. This interpretation existed in modern Greek thought, such as in Panayiotes Bratsiotes (Nikolaides 2013, 197), and recalls the Jewish idea of chosenness and the conditional covenant.

Despite the destruction of the icon of the Virgin of Blachernae, a legend mentions that it was transferred to Mount Athos and from there to Russia. Paul of Aleppo (1627-69), who accompanied his widowed father, the patriarch of Antioch Macarios III Zaim (r. 1647-72) on his journey to the Balkans and Russia, witnessed that the alleged Virgin of Blachernae was placed before the Emperor of Russia Alexis I (r. 1645-76) in the royal sledge, while marching against the Poles in 1654 (Paul 2003, 60). The latter, however, were to be protected in the next year (1655), and during the same war, by 'another' Virgin, that of Częstochowa. Mary was, therefore, connected with the land and the people of Russia, too. This, rather pagan understanding and veneration of Mary, made her the protector, patron, or national goddess, as it were, of two conflicting nations. Since she was supposedly exclusive to both of them, to whom did she really belong? Whose land did she really protect? In a more pagan understanding it would be the battle of *our* Virgin against *theirs*. In any case, the Virgin emerges victorious!

### 4.3.2. The Greek Virgin and the Revolution of 1821

The same exclusivist and particularistic understanding of Mary, as a form of national goddess, was adopted by the modern Greek nation as a part of its modern nationalism. Both modern Greek national feasts are connected with Mary. This exclusive and particular understanding of Mary in the modern Greek nation is vividly presented in the beautiful and expressive writing of one of the most important twentieth-century Greek novelists, Strates Myriviles (1890-1969). Myriviles is one of the most prominent representatives of the famous 'generation of '30s' in Greek literature and poetry, among the features of which was a genuine

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[115] Despite referring to Florovsky and his neo-patristic synthesis, Tefft does not make use of Florovsky's *Christianity and Culture*, especially the essay 'Antinomies of Christian history: Empire and desert' (Florovsky 1974, 67-100), which would theologically have helped fundamentally.

love for the folk traditions, the way of life of the Greek people and Orthodox Christianity as the people's religion (cf. Theotokas 1975, 13-37). Myriviles, in particular, expressed his love for the folk tradition in his *Our Lady the Mermaid* (1948), a novel inspired by the traditions and way of life in the Aegean island of Lesvos, his birthplace. Referring to Mary's little chapel in a small cove of his island he wrote the story of a sailor, Elias, who panted an icon of Mary as a mermaid. In an extraordinary passage, Myriviles remarked that the people of his island saw nothing peculiar in the way the Virgin was depicted. As a result, the novelist painted on a remarkable canvas on which Mary was connected with the people, their traditions, and way of living as far back as the times of paganism in a whole that finally depicted the modern Greek nation:

> It was called Virgin the Mermaid, and it is still called thus, and since then both the Church and the cove are called thus. And nobody thought that on that day a new Greek deity jumped out of the old man's [i.e. the sailor-painter] head, as from Zeus's head, who was established on that rock by the Aegean and connected together in a most marvellous way all the eras and the meaning of the race [i.e. the Greek race]. A race that lives and struggles with the ghosts and the storms of this world, one half in the land, and another in the seas, either with the plough or with the keel, always under a warrior deity, female, virgin (Myriviles 1956, 16).[116]

The Greek race, according to Myriviles, who follows the continuity pattern, is a concrete entity with a long history and a particular way of life, which always moved under the guidance of a 'warrior, female, virgin' deity. He obviously implies the goddess Athena, the protectress of classical Athens, who is replaced by Mary. The unity of this understanding is successfully, according to Myriviles, depicted by the folk iconographer who depicted Mary as a mermaid, holding a trident and a sailing ship (image 24). The icon unites the ancient deities of Poseidon and the Mermaids with Mary. Myriviles added Zeus and Athena to point to the continuity of the Greek race, the nation, under the auspices of the same deity, always 'warrior, female, virgin', named Athena or Mary. Thus, Mary acquired her significance not from her role in the Gospels or the theology of the Orthodox Church, but by the way the nation needs to exist under the guidance of the same deity. The Christian Virgin, thus, simply replaces the ancient Athena as the national goddess of the Greeks - always 'warrior, female, virgin'.

Mary is the one, according to the collective Greek memory, who led the Greeks to their recent wars, from which the modern Greek state emerged and passed through its difficult experience of World War II. The main national feast on 25 March coincides with the feast of Mary's Annunciation. The secondary feast on 28 October is connected with St. Andrew's vision at Blachernae, celebrated as the protection of Mary. Before analysing the latter, which relates to this thesis more directly, some observations must be made about the former.

The Greek clergy and dignitaries plotting an uprising in early 1821 suggested alternative dates for initiating a concerted action against the Ottoman Turks (Allamane 1975, 79). It was not a coincidence that the earliest date suggested was 25 March, the feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin, which, according to Orthodox hymnology, constitutes the 'beginning' of human

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[116] My translation. My gratitude goes to Dr. Evaggelos Bartzis for drawing my attention to the passage.

salvation (Menaion 1980, 3:210). According to Lk 1:26-38, the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to give birth to the Messiah, initiating thus the process that eventually led to the salvation of humanity. This salvation, achieved through the rebirth of humanity in the resurrected Christ, the incarnated God, was thus paralleled by the anticipated deliverance of the Greek nation to be achieved through its rebirth by the Revolution. Therefore, it is again no coincidence that alternative dates were 23 April, the day of St. George, a warrior saint, very popular in the Orthodox Church, and 21 May, the feast of St. Constantine, the first Christian Roman Emperor connected with the end of the Christian persecution, again very popular in Greece. The latter, was also connected with the aforementioned *Roman* identity (Allamane 1975, 79). Despite the fact that the revolutionary activity in Peloponnesos, the main centre of the Revolution, took place few days before the 25th of March, the revolutionaries considered that date as the day marking the beginning of their revolution. In 1836, the then king of the newly independent Greece Otto celebrated his wedding to the German princess Amalia of Oldenburg (1818-75) by minting a bronze medal depicting the bishop of Patras Yermanos, on the one side (image 21a), who had blessed the revolutionaries, and the same bishop again, in the other side, holding the revolutionary banner with two fighters giving an oath before him. The following inscription was read: 'my father's God, and I will exalt him' (Ex 15:2), alluding to the hymn sung by the delivered Israelites following their passing through the Red Sea and the demise of the Egyptian army (image 21b). As then it was Yahweh who delivered the Israelites from the Egyptian captivity, now too God had delivered the Greeks - His new chosen ones? - from the Ottoman captivity. As a result, two years later (1838) 25 March was officially proclaimed the annual anniversary of the Greek Revolution, celebrated as such ever since (Petropoulos-Koumarianou 1977, 72).[117]

These interesting historical points can lead us to the conclusion that the deliverance of the Greek nation was paralleled by different events: the deliverance of the Jews from the land of servitude in Egypt and the salvation of humankind by Jesus Christ. The first point can be seen in Kolettis's speech of 1844 about the Greek nation's special mission. Although such ideas did not become dominant in Greek thinking, they were still part of it. The Greek nation acquired thus a form of Jewish chosenness. God did not decide to save the nation for no reason. He did it so that it could carry out its special mission, according to Kolettis, to enlighten the East. Obviously, Kolettis's idea did not emerge out of thin air, but as a result of a process probably triggered by Fallmerayer's ideas. On the other hand, despite the Mariological importance of the feast of the Annunciation, the importance of the event rests on the fact that the Logos was incarnated and brought salvation to humankind. He did it of course through the Virgin who gave birth to Him. But Mary plays a secondary role: it is Jesus who brings salvation to humans and not Mary. It can, therefore, be claimed that the deliverance of the Greek nation was connected with Jesus through His mother and not by His mother herself.

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[117] The first anniversary of the Revolution was celebrated in its second year on 25 March 1822 in Corinth (Gritsopoulos 1973, 314). However, this event did not acquire yearly repetition. At any rate, the information strengthens the argument that the revolutionaries themselves wanted to connect their revolt with the Virgin's Annunciation.

It should not be ignored at this point that in the cases brought to the fore by Llywelyn, Mary was connected with certain nations through particular apparitions and visions. According to the Greek equivalent tradition, in three apparitions in July 1822, while the Revolution was in progress, to the nun Pelayia in the Kehrovouni Convent in Tenos island in the Cyclades of the Aegean, Mary asked that her icon be revealed, an icon of the Annunciation buried for several years. After much effort the icon was finally found on 30 January 1823 (Apparitions 1996, 67-71). So far nothing in the story indicates anything of a *national apparition* so to speak. However, according to this tradition, after the apparitions and before the finding of the icon, Pelayia went to the local bishop Gabriel who interpreted the apparition in his own terms:

> Your vision is very significant. Our Lady is the defender General, who always protects us, she saw our misfortunes so that she now brings to our servant nation the good news of its liberation from the barbarian yoke. So she is revealing to us her holy icon, to strengthen our nation in this struggle (Apparitions 1996, 69).

According to the story, therefore, it is the bishop that interpreted the apparition according to the times: Mary appeared during the Revolution; she, therefore, implies that she is supporting the Greek struggle. Indeed, revolutionaries started arriving on the island after the icon was found and the apparition became widely known, to give thanks to Mary for blessing the Revolution in such a manner and thus securing the final victory (cf. Nikolaides 2013, 198). Besides, conveniently enough, the icon found depicted the Annunciation, the very event, with which the beginning of the Revolution was inextricably connected.

### 4.3.3. The Greek Virgin and the Greco-Italian War of 1940-1

The national feast of 28 October is also connected with Mary. There are certain events, both religious and historical, that one has to take into account in order to understand this anniversary better. Religiously, the Dormition of Mary is traditionally celebrated on 15 August each year. In Greece, the centre of festivities has become the island of Tenos, where Mary's icon is shrined in the church, dedicated to her. Although the icon depicts the Annunciation, the main festivities in the island take place at the feast of the Dormition, the *summer-Easter* (cf. Kontoglou 1990, 1097-102). Mary of Tenos is well-known in Greece as the *Megalochare*, i.e. of great grace. On 15 August 1940, during the festivities at Tenos, an Italian submarine torpedoed the light cruiser *Helle* of the Greek fleet, which anchored at the port of the island so that its crew would participate in the festivities by carrying the icon during the procession. Greece was entirely taken by surprise, as Italy and Greece at the time were not in a state of war. Although the Greek government at the time, led by the dictator Metaxas, was well-informed on the identity of the submarine, it did not respond to the aggression trying to avert a war with Italy and concealed the truth about the instigators of the attack (Vranas 1980, 525). However, Italian troops finally invaded Greece on 28 October 1940 through Albania, which had been already occupied by the Italians in April 1939. Only few hours before the Italian troops crossed the Albanian-Greek borders, the Italian ambassador to Greece, Emanuel Grazzi (1891-1961), had delivered an untenable ultimatum which was immediately rejected by Metaxas. The latter

believed that he had done everything in his power to avert the war. Though he believed that it was a just cause, he was convinced that the eventual defeat of Greece was inevitable not only due to Italy's might but also, even more, due to Germany's anticipated intervention in favour of its Axis ally (Vranas 1980, 524-5,748).

However, Metaxas was a capable propagator and, with the help of the press, he connected the Greek just cause with the events of August at Tenos, which were revealed by the press following the proclamation of war on 28 October. The Italians were shamed as the cowards who had attacked a peaceful country and, even worse, had insulted Mary on the very day of her feast.[118] Inescapably, Mary was at the side of the Greeks as their supreme general, who, having previously led the Byzantines to victorious battles, now led the Greeks to their successive victories against the Italians. Several references to the help of Mary as the *Megalochare* were made in the Prime Minister's announcements on the war, in the press, as well as in the general correspondence of the people implying that they referred to that very Virgin of Tenos, who was insulted by the Italians. Despite Greece's initial victories against the Italian troops and its advance deeply into Albanian soil, the German intervention, which was rightly foreseen by Metaxas, finally took place in April 1941 resulting in a three-year occupation of Greece (Koliopoulos 1978, 411-53. Koliopoulos 2009, 141-264).

Following the end of World War II (1945), it was decided by the Greek government that the 28 October was to be celebrated as a national feast together with that of the 25 March. The first unofficial celebrations took place during the Occupation (1941-3). The first official celebration took place in the recently liberated Athens on 28 October 1944. Adhering to this decision, in 1952, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece decided to transfer the feast of Mary's Protection, i.e. St. Andrew's vision of the Virgin's veil, from the 1st to the 28th of October (Menaion 1980, 10:164). Apparently, St. Andrew's vision was connected with Constantinople, which was repeatedly saved by the Virgin of Blachernae. In the same line of thought, the Greeks were protected by Mary's veil not only from the Italian assault, but also from the German occupation, which came to an end on 12 October 1944. October, marked by the feast of the Veil on its first day, became thus a symbolic month of deliverance and freedom, connected with Mary. Modern Greeks viewed themselves as the new chosen ones, following the Byzantine paradigm, maybe not chosen by God in a Jewish fashion, but by Mary, since she was their exclusive *national goddess* leading them to victorious battles. Moreover, she was their exclusive protector spreading her veil over them. Needless to say, the fact that the Italians were fellow Christians piously venerating Mary was conveniently set aside by the Greeks, for the Italians had offended her. The idea of Mary protecting and leading the troops in battle was expressed in contemporary texts and war posters. The idea of Mary protecting Greece with the spread of her veil, moreover, was explicitly manifested in the relevant service composed in 1956 by the

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[118] See, for instance, the newspapers: *Asyrmatos* 2:496 (28 October 1940), 1: 'We know them well! They are the coward murderers of Tenos'. *Hellenikon Mellon* 9:2910 (30 October 1940), 1: 'Sailors! Avenge "Helle" - We unveil you cowards! You have torpedoed "Helle"! We have found the pieces of your torpedoes'. My translation.

Athonite Elder Yerasimos of the Scete of Little St. Anne (1905-91) and was approved by synodical decree (Menaion 1980, 10:164-74).

In recalling the events of 15 August 1940 in Tenos, the distinguished Greek academic Spyros Melas (1882-1966) followed Myriviles's example in paralleling Mary with the ancient Greek Athena:

> The sacred temple of the Virgin became the psychological military headquarters of the nation. A divine daughter always leads the Greeks to their great battles. Athena helped the heroes of the Iliad. The Megalochare of Tenos acted in the same fashion for our troops and fleet in this struggle for liberty … Gazing at Delos from a mountain on Tenos you can see the white marbles of the ancient city of Apollo. Ancient Hellenism, which hated darkness and slavery, used to send the sacred ships 'Paralus' and 'Salaminia'[119] to carry the Greeks' piety and gifts to the god who symbolised the light. Those ships were sacrosanct and inviolable. Whoever dared harm them should expect divine justice. The pseudo-caesar of Rome [i.e. Mussolini] had forgotten how close Delos is to Tenos; how Greece remains always unchangeable under its different faces; how immortal its deities are. He had forgotten that a *deity* is worshipped in Tenos, the Lourdes of the Aegean, and that the ship sent each year in the feast of the Megalochare, whichever it may be … is for us sacred, a Paralus, a Salaminia (Melas 1972, 36-7).[120]

The interpretation of the events was given by the bishop of Syros and Tenos on that same day during the service in the Church of the Megalochare. For the bishop, it was a sacrilege: 'The cursed sinner, hidden in the deep sea, sealed by steel, a few hundred meters away from the port, invisible and secure, like a common murderer, sent fire and death against innocent Christians on the day of a great feast. Divine punishment will fall heavy upon his head' (Melas 1972, 51).[121] The people of the island, upset by the events, reacted in a similar manner. As if referring to an ancient deity, people tried to appeal to Mary too: 'A hybris was made against Your grace by the Frankish dogs; they sunk the ship which came to honour You; O Megalochare take revenge!' (Melas 1972, 51; cf. Nikolaides 2013, 195).[122]

At around 5am in the early morning of 28 October 1940 the Greek Premier, while signing the royal decrees of calling conscripts to arms, stated before his ministers: 'I am deeply religious and I think Mary will protect our arms' (Vranas 1980, 748).[123] Obviously, the Prime Minister, admittedly deeply religious, strongly believed that Mary was going to protect not only the Greeks in general, but also, more particularly, their arms. The source of this certainty was the belief that the Greek cause was a just one. The reference to Mary was related not merely to the widespread piety of Orthodox Greeks especially directed to her but more specifically to the

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[119] The author refers to the sacred Athenian triremes.

[120] My translation.

[121] My translation.

[122] My translation.

[123] My translation.

insult made against her at Tenos. In a more expressive such example, a Greek citizen, having recently received the sad news of his son's death at the front, wrote a letter, addressed to the Prime Minister, expressing his confidence that the Megalochare of Tenos was at work helping the struggling nation. Metaxas repeated in his reply the reference to the Megalochare of Tenos protecting 'all of us'.[124] In the above correspondence the mere reference to Mary does not suffice; she is referred to as the Megalochare of Tenos for the sacrilege to be underlined and the just cause of Greece to be manifested. According to this mentality, it was impossible for Mary not to be at the side of the Greeks, as they defended her honour. Dramatic stories of apparitions were often described by soldiers and officers at the front:

> At the front, in the whole line, from the blue Ionian Sea to the heights of the frozen Prespes Lakes, the Greek army started seeing the same vision: It saw a woman at night, tall and slim, with a tender step, moving ahead of the troops with her veil on her head and her shoulders. The army recognised her, they already knew her … It was the Mother, generous both in pain and in glory, the *wounded Lady of Tenos*, the defending general (Angelos Terzakes cited in Apparitions 1996, 173).[125]

Such apparitions were repeated in many cases with the soldiers testifying to her presence in battle: how she led them at night to the Italian encampments to surprise the enemy and utterly defeat it (Apparitions 1996, 174-5); how she pointed at the direction of the enemy's hidden artillery so that the Greek artillery would spot and destroy it (Apparitions 1996, 175-6); how she brought provisions to starving troops after prayer (Apparitions 1996, 178-9). The soldiers appeared confident of her help, despite fighting a Christian enemy, because she was the *wounded Lady of Tenos*.

Mary's protection was more dramatically expressed through the war posters of the time. In the first relevant example (image 22), Mary is depicted as accompanying a Greek soldier marching to the front. She is depicted larger than him, with a calm expression looking straight ahead with her left hand holding her veil under her chin and with her right hand embracing the soldier. The soldier is depicted smaller, looking straight ahead too and, despite the calmness of his expression, he looks resolute. His decisiveness is further underlined by his leaning posture. The soldier is marching towards the front and therefore the initiative belongs to him. Mary is merely accompanying him. His look straight ahead implies his certainty that Mary is next to him. The inscription at the top left reads: 'Victory, Liberty'. The inscription at the bottom reads: 'The Virgin with him'. That inscription constitutes a very common short prayer especially expressed by mothers to their children. It can be implied that the mother, who cannot follow her son at the front, is replaced by Mary, something like the mother of all humans, since she became the Mother of God. To sum up, the poster underlines the resoluteness of the army and the certainty that Mary accompanies it. The initiative, to be sure, belongs to the army. Overall, it is a poster that circulates an aura of calmness in a humane way, together with resoluteness for and certainty about the just cause.

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[124] Newspaper *Nea Hellas*, 2:444 (24 December 1940), 1. My translation.

[125] My italics. My translation.

In another example (image 23) Mary is given a more active role. Recognisably depicted in the manner of the Byzantine icons, she dominates the whole image, among rays underlining her sanctity. She raises her right hand pointing straight ahead. Underneath, a soldier, with his gun at fighting position, runs towards the direction to which she points, while a second soldier runs towards the observer in a way that shows his intention to turn and follow the previous one. Once again the resoluteness and bravery of the army is stressed. However, Mary is not on the same level with the soldiers. The motherhood expressed at the previous poster, is not shown here. More transcendental, this Mary is depicted here as the supreme general, who guides the troops to battle. This image seems more compatible with the Byzantine original of the supreme general who defeats the enemies who threaten her people. She also corresponds to the idea of the *national goddess*, who fights with the troops of her people defending the land that she protects. The pagan allusion is quite obvious.

The third example is a colour lithography, very popular in the Balkan Wars and World War I in Greece, which lacks the simplicity of the previous posters (image 24). Numerous soldiers, both Greeks and Italians, mountains, a river, a fire, explosions, clouds, angels, Mary and the infant Jesus coexist in a colourful synthesis. At the bottom of the lithography, the Greek troops in an orderly manner advance against the fleeing Italians. The Italians run in panic towards the river which has only a narrow bridge. The majority of the Italians are either killed by the Greeks or drown in the river. The few Italians running towards a city for refuge find it consumed by fire from heaven. There the figures of Mary with the infant Jesus in her lap are dominating the space, surrounded by clouds and angels. Mary's arms are open in protection. The originality of the image rests on her wings. This is an uncommon image in the Orthodox tradition. Very rarely, the winged Mary appears in icons where she protects the faithful opening her arms above them, in reference to the New Testament (Rev 12). The only such case this thesis was able to locate is the fresco in the fifteenth-century Govora Convent near the town of Baile Govora in southern Romania, where the winged Virgin protects the faithful (image 25). The winged Mary is more popular in the Catholic tradition, especially in South America, with the famous Virgin of Quito, Ecuador (image 26). Indeed, according to Rev 12, a battle takes place between good (angels) and evil (demons), while the woman of this Apocalyptic scene, after giving birth to a child who is to rule all nations, is given wings to flee to the wilderness. Indeed, in this lithography a battle is taking place between good (Greece) and evil (Italy). The presence of the winged Lady with the infant Jesus, surrounded by angels and clouds provides the image with Apocalyptic connotations. Another source of inspiration for the lithography can be the pagan Greek statues of the winged goddess of Victory. Two such monumental examples were very familiar to Greeks. First, there is the second-century BC Victory of Samothrace, prominently displayed at the Louvre Museum since 1884 (image 27). Second, there is the fifth-century BC Victory of Paionios, excavated in 1875-6 by German archaeologists, and displayed at the Olympia Museum in Greece (image 28). Conveniently, an impressive copy of the latter was erected as the angel of peace in 1895-6 as part of a complex of sculptures, imitating classical originals and commemorating the German peace established after the end of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1) (image 29). The location of

the monument is the Bavarian capital of Munich, the royal dynasty of which had sent Greece its first king Otto (r. 1832-62). It is uncertain, for this thesis, whether the rare, though relevant, Apocalyptic iconography or the more familiar classical sculptures of Victory constituted the source of inspiration for the unknown artist of the lithography. It is probable that the text of Revelation, together with the winged Victories, well-known in Greece, influenced the lithographer. However, either as protector or as Victory, the winged Virgin, according to the Greek popular mentality, was present during the war at the side of the Greeks intervening in battle in their favour, in the fashion of a pagan warrior goddess.

The last example (image 30) is better connected with the image of Mary as protector spreading her veil. Again, a battle between Greeks and Italians constitutes the theme of the lithography. Fighting from a higher place, the Greek troops have put the Italians under heavy fire, while the latter, trying to defend themselves at a lower level are devastatingly defeated. Mary's figure above does not dominate the image. Depicted according to the Orans type, in a rather small size, alluding to the icon of the Platytera, usually placed in the apse of the holy place of Orthodox Churches, she is praying for the final victory of her people. Indeed, the Platytera, according to the iconographic programme of a typical Orthodox Church, is placed in the apse of the altar as an intercessor to God (Andreopoulos 2013, 91,100). Apparently, in this image too, her capacity as intercessor between the transcendental God and humans is stressed. The artist placed in his lithography a very familiar image. Mary is here supplicating to Christ to give the victory to her chosen ones, the Greeks.

The latter idea of Mary as protector of people is better expressed through the above-mentioned transfer of the feast of her veil from the 1st to the 28th of October. The very transfer implies that her protection, once extended to Constantinople and the Byzantines, is now restricted to the Greek nation. The change is based on the idea of the continuity of the Greek nation, and the particular legacy of Byzantium. The relevant service was composed by Elder Yerasimos and manifests this turn of understanding. According to the main hymn of the feast, the so-called apolytikion, the Virgin provides a cover for her people, protecting them from the plots of the enemies (Menaion 1980, 10:167-8). It has to be noted that the service refers to Mary's protection for the whole world yet, particularly, for all the Orthodox. This protection is spiritual, against passions, and concerns the spiritual life of all Christians. However, many points refer to the protection of the Greeks and their country, on which the discussion will focus. Before doing so, however, it is worth noting that the use of the terms *Greece* and *Greeks* (i.e. Hellenes) in the service is rather odd. In most of Orthodox hymnography, composed in the Byzantine era, the word *Greeks* means *idolaters*. This Byzantine attitude is better explained by Gennadios, patriarch of Constantinople (r. 1454-6, 1463, 1464-5): 'Though I am a Hellene by speech, yet I would never say that I was a Hellene, for I do not believe as the Hellenes believed. I should like to take my name from my faith and if anyone asked me what I am, I would answer "Christian"' (cited in Kedourie 1966, 71). The Greek national identity which developed after 1830, however, allows this hymnographic oddness to take place - something that reflects the evolution of the meaning of the word. At any rate, in order to better analyse the service, four

categories of features can be traced in it. First, Mary extends her protective veil over the Greeks, who praise and thank her. Second, she saves them from enemies and helps them during war. Third, the veiled protection over the Greeks constitutes a continuation of the same Byzantine protection. Fourth, the Greeks constitute a chosen nation particularly related to Mary.[126]

Indeed, the Greeks are portrayed to be under Mary's protective veil, as they are pious and Christ-like. In return to the Virgin's protection the Greeks offer to the Virgin their thanks and praise:

> Rejoice in the Lord, Christ-named Greece, for you are covered by the Cover of the most praised Mother of God … [the Virgin] spreads her Cover full of light, covering our nation as a mother; come, children of the Greeks and observe with a pure mind the care of the Mother of God spreading to us from above … Untainted Virgin, the people admire the multiplicity of the ways you have expressed your saving Cover … Rejoice, graceful Mother of God for saving our nation and safely securing it and leading it to paths of salvation … Today Greece commemorates joyfully glorifying and praising your holy miracles … Pure Virgin set from above your cover as a wall around your nation … guard the Greek nation unharmed in your mighty Cover and sleepless intercession (Menaion 1980, 10:166,167,173)

Moreover, the Lady took the part of the Greeks and actively helped them in their battles against their enemies, which are never named in any of the hymns of the service:

> Covering us in your mighty Cover, you saved [us] from a multiplicity of misfortunes and allying [with us] invisibly with your mighty hand you made the enemy battalions tremble … you have saved your nation from every difficult situation and enemy invasion … and now you are covering us and leading us to straight paths, relieving us from invading enemies, fulfilling with joy our souls … Your pious people, taking unquestionable courage from your Cover, full of light, and your mighty protection, oh pure One, vanquished the audacity of the enemies … gaining a bright victory … Rejoice, for appearing, covering your Nation, Rejoice for providing your camp with victories … Rejoice, as, through you, we defeat the enemies (Menaion 1980, 10:164,165,167,171).

Mary's protection does not seem to be something new. The modern Greek nation constitutes the continuation of the Byzantines and, therefore, has inherited the protection the Virgin performed for the latter (cf. Nikolaides 2013, 195).

> Exactly as you had once saved Byzantium, Virgin Mother of God, by your holy Cover, from a multiplicity of dangers, you have relieved the new people of your Nation from the invasion of foreigners … Once you covered miraculously the queen city [i.e. Constantinople] and now you saved from the coming threat the Christ-named people by the grace of your bright Cover … We commemorate the Cover of our Most Holy Lady Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, who always and in an extraordinary fashion covers

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[126] The passages that will be used constitute my translations from ancient Greek to English and claim neither poetic precision nor consistency with the structure of the original service. It is only hoped that the meaning of certain hymns will be explained in order to serve the needs of this thesis.

and protects our pious Nation, as she once covered the queen of the cities (Menaion 1980, 10:164,165,171).

Finally, this protection does not appear out of thin air. As one can detect from the above references to 'your Nation', Mary herself has selected the Greek nation - as Yahweh in the Old Testament had selected the Jews - to bestow her special care and protection from Byzantine to modern times. The Greek nation constitutes, thus, her special portion and legacy:

> O Virgin, we, the children of the Greeks, declare your care for us, praising your motherly guardianship, because from the beginning you placed us under your Cover compassionately and you manifested our well-brought Nation as your chosen legacy … Cover and protect, oh Virgin, by your Cover those who yourself selected as your own portion … Because you have elected us as your own people [alluding Ps 135:4; cf. 1Pt 2:9] and always protect us as you are among us and you save us from sorrows … (Menaion 1980, 10:165).

The above analysis does not aim at doubting the Mary as the Mother of Christ, both divine and human. Neither does it aim at deconstructing popular piety for her, which is so important among Greeks, Orthodox Christians in general, and many other Christians throughout the world. It only intends to distinguish between the ideas of exclusivity and the inclusive religiosity that is grounded in theological thought. As the Mother of God, Mary belongs to the whole world. Nevertheless, this thesis has shown certain cases where she is claimed by one nation only. This has been criticised in this thesis as a form of paganism. Indeed, both the Byzantines and the modern Greeks, according to the examples mentioned here, understood Mary as the new Athena, a protective palladium. The direct reference to paganism leads to the conclusion of understanding related phenomena as pagan. Llywelyn considered this reading as 'seductively easy' and rejected it, because it obscures the newness of Christianity (Llywelyn 2010, 233). But on this particular point, it is precisely the newness of Christianity which is at stake. We are bound to return to this below, while criticising Llywelyn's theological views. For now it suffices to point out, as Llywelyn himself admits (Llywelyn 2010, 236), that it is theologically impossible to affirm alleged apparitions where God appears as a ruthless, though just, punisher, contradicted by Mary's loving care (Apparitions 1996, 21-2). To put it simply, Mary neither created nor died nor was risen for the world; Christ did and was. Mary does not save the world; Christ does. By freely accepting to give birth to Christ she fundamentally served this salvation.

It is worth noting that in the Greek case discussed above no national apparition was seen. Mary does not speak anywhere about the nation and its future. Marian apparitions are probably interpreted as such by humans. Mary herself makes no such reference. In the case of the Greek-Italian War things seem different; but again no apparition can be directly connected with the situation of Greece. The Lady appears only in the battlefield. The explanation is readily given: she is offended, wounded, by the Italian insult of the events at Tenos. Therefore, for the Greek case, the *national apparition* needs to be explained; it does not come naturally as in the case of Lourdes (Llywelyn 2010, 246-50) or Guadeloupe (Llywelyn 2010, 256-60).

Again Llywelyn has claimed that the Jewish form of chosenness - Hebraic according to Gorski (Gorski 2000, 1428-68) - is a Protestant feature, because Mary does not have the place in Protestant piety that she has in Orthodox and Roman Catholic spirituality (Llywelyn 2010, 244). By referring to the examples of Armenia and Ethiopia, Smith proved that this is not entirely true (Smith 2003, 66-77). In the example of modern Greece, it was suggested that Smith is probably more correct. More specifically, the Greek example showed that Mary possesses a special role in Greece, something that affirms Llywelyn's idea. However, it was shown that a form of Jewish chosenness was not alien to Greece in the case of Kolettis's speech on *Greater Ideology* and that even this Jewish chosenness was eventually connected with the Mother of God. As chosenness, in its Jewish form, according to this thesis, it is a remnant of pre-Old Testament paganism, and it should be understood as a form of paganism in nationalism too.

Finally, the modern Greek example manifested its adherence to the ancient Greek and Byzantine paradigms in two ways: first, in the continuity of the Greek nation from antiquity, through Byzantium, to modernity, and, second, in the continual chosenness from the ancient virgin goddess Athena, through the Byzantine Virgin, to the modern Virgin of the Greeks. This idea adheres to the pagan idea of particularity as maintained in Byzantium, which is also inherited by the modern Greek nation. The pagan particularism and exclusivism that was first doubted in the Old Testament and eventually rejected in the New, returns by the back door not through Christ - for Whom there is neither Jew nor Greek - but through Mary.

Llywelyn attempted to justify theologically the particularism of Mary in two ways. First, he did it by referring to the Latin principle *lex orandi lex credendi*. According to this, the way Christians practise their piety is a rule of faith and prayer at the same time. Theology is not be separated from religious practice, though popular belief does not always coincide with the truth (Llywelyn 2010, 263-4). A distinguished modern Roman Catholic theologian, George Henry Tavard (1922-2007), believed that a sharp distinction should be made between official theology and popular practice in referring to Mary (Tavard 1996, 247-8), but, for Llywelyn, this is impossible in practice (Llywelyn 2010, 238). This thesis considers Tavard's distinction as certainly useful, for the Latin principle of *lex orandi lex credendi* is probably valid only when prayer and worship is made appropriately. Several passages in the New Testament demonstrates this, such as Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman, who posed a very particularistic and exclusivist question, but Christ replied in a universalist and inclusivist manner. The attempt to particularise the universal constitutes a return to a pagan past. Μαρυ belongs to this universal and inclusivist reality founded by Christ. Llywelyn is definitely correct when he claims that Mary's role is understood only in connection with Christology (Llywelyn 2010, 264-5,269). But he is not correct when he attempts to balance this with the particularistic practice of popular piety, which refers to Mary's maternity (Llywelyn 2010, 240-1). Mary's particularisation by popular practice turns her from a universal personality with reference to a universal God, to a particular pagan female deity, patroness of certain nations in the form of *mystical nationalism*. The term belongs to James Preston, who warned that it may become a 'divisive force, perpetuating parochialism, regionalism, and fragmentation' (Preston 1982, 333). In terms of this thesis, it perpetuates

nationalism as paganism. The way Llywelyn attempted to balance between theology and popular practice did not bear fruit, because it neglected that occasionally the latter involves pagan practices and superstition.

The second way Llywelyn uses to justify particularism is by attempting to balance between particularism and universalism, despite admitting that it is difficult to harmonise particular election with universal salvation (Llywelyn 2010, 266). If Mary is particular for a certain nation, she is for many others (Llywelyn 2010, 238-9,265). If a nation claims divine election, this nation should be aware that other nations are also elected. According to Llywelyn, election is therefore a universal quality and involves human responsibility in responding to this call. This is how Llywelyn justifies election theologically (Llywelyn 2010, 267). Again this attempt is a very difficult one. Llywelyn does not seem to make the fundamental distinction between the *personal* and the *collective*. Christ initiated a new reality, the community of the faithful, the members of which embrace it freely. It would have been very Old-Testament-like to think that we believe en masse, in nations, and not personally and freely. Then the community of the faithful, the Church, constitutes the new chosen entity. What space is left for any other form of chosenness? This thesis adheres to the view that every other understanding of chosenness is a pagan remnant of the Old Testament overcome in the New. Moreover, a balance between Old-Testament particularism and universalism, Old-Testament exclusivity and inclusivity, as understood in this thesis, is not possible. Once particularism as chosenness is endorsed, universalism is doomed to vanish. The exclusivism of the chosen and the New-Testament inclusivism cannot coexist peacefully. The attempt to endorse particularism in reference to Mary leads to the trap of the exclusive. Mary cannot be particular because she becomes exclusive. If she belongs to one nation she does not belong to the others. Exclusivism necessarily emerges, as in the case of Poland against Russia described above, whose people believed that Mary was their particular patron and fought their battles with her icons. This thesis cannot see any theological justification for this away from paganism.

It cannot escape the attention of the Orthodox - let alone the Protestant - reader that, as Llywelyn points out, Mariology is connected with Christology and should not lead to Mariolatry (Llywelyn 2010, 267). Indeed, the problem of particularising Mary is a problem that concerns the Christians who hold a special place in their theology for her. As such, it is not a Protestant problem. However, Mariology, as a separate set of theological ideas, does not exist in Orthodox theology, because Mary is connected with Christ and can be considered only through Him. By understanding her in a pagan way against theological tradition, Orthodox Christians made it an Orthodox problem too. In this case, it is necessary to clarify that the particularisation of Mary is a pagan distortion and has nothing to do with Orthodox theology.

Finally, according to Llywelyn, the ethno-symbolic understanding, which he endorses, allows for the Virgin to be part of the national symbols and myths connected with a nation (Llywelyn 2010, 268). This is precisely why Mary becomes part, very often inseparable, of a certain nation. Then, it is the nation that contains a very particular Mary, worshipped as a pagan female deity, and not the Virgin who extends her motherly care to all people. However, if we

consider Ziakas's understanding of the nation as structure of traditions, put forward in this thesis, then Mary is part of the *metaphysical traditions* of all Christian nations, and yet particular to none.

Conclusion and theological thoughts for further engagement

The main question of this thesis has been how inherent to Christianity is its interconnection with nationalism, at least from a theological perspective. This thesis argues that it is not inherent theologically. Nationalism is a form of paganism and as such it comes in conflict with Christianity's core message. Popular piety, which has maintained a pagan strand, has made this interconnection, possible, albeit necessary for historical reasons that need not concern this thesis.

In order to put forward this argument, this thesis was based on two pillars: the first is the interdisciplinary perspective offered by an examination of nation and nationalism in political sociology and social history; the second is the theological perspective drawn by an examination of paganism, the Old Testament and the New Testament. At the end, the example of Greece was used as a case study, where the issues discussed appear in a concrete example.

Interdisciplinarity

The interdisciplinary approach helps the thesis to set its foundations on the firm ground of modern interdisciplinary scholarship on nations and nationalism, something that modern theological bibliography has mostly neglected. This chapter distinguishes the terms *nation*, *nationalism,* and *nation-state*, before examining the interconnection of nationalism with religion in order to show that nationalism functions as a religion in its own right, i.e. paganism. More analytically, the thesis argues that constructivism does not necessarily imply modernism. In other words, nations and nationalisms can exist without the modern nation-state, and definitely did before it. This means that a clear distinction between nation, nationalism, and the nation-state is possible and that the political structure in the form of the state is not necessary for the existence of nations. Nations, thus, may be conceived in a more cultural manner as structures of traditions, with a metaphysical tradition at their core, and educational and legislative-political traditions around it. Such nations are formed in their contact or conflict with other similar and equal - in terms of category - groups. As traditions change over time, nations also tend to change. This external understanding of the nation is based mostly on Ziakas (Ziakas 2012) and secondarily on Hirschi (Hirschi 2012). Interdisciplinarity sets the foundations for understanding the ways religion intertwines with nationalism, and demonstrates that, despite contrary expectations, based on modern theories of secularisation and globalisation, neither religion nor nations have ceased to exist, but both appear resurgent. The thesis follows Grosby (Grosby 2005) in claiming that nationalism constitutes a form of paganism. In doing so, this thesis argues that nationalism does not constitute a modern substitute for pre-modern religions, but it functions as a religion in parallel with other religions.

The theological argument

The next chapter constitutes the main argument of the thesis and focuses on nationalism as paganism, while, by examining how paganism was overcome in the Old and, more profoundly, the New Testaments, arguing that Christian theology fundamentally opposes nationalism as

paganism. Using the Greek theological paradigm, the thesis argues that theologians have already understood nationalism as paganism, although in the extreme form of (neo-)Nazism.

More analytically in this main chapter, the thesis argues that paganism in antiquity - especially in the Middle East - possessed certain features, discernible in the Bible: first, the sacrificial mechanism which repeated the founding murder and concealed the social guilt of violence, according to Girard's theory of violence and the sacred (Girard 1977). Second, paganism maintained the belief in a certain god, selected from the multiplicity of pagan deities, as the god protecting the nation and its land (Firestone 2008. Grosby 2002). Third, in paganism humans are connected with a certain land (Grosby 2002). Fourth, in paganism humans maintain a sense of shared kinship based on common worshipped ancestors (Grosby 2002).

The Axial Age - according to Jaspers (Jaspers 1953) - altered these features in Israel. Indeed, Israel, through its pioneering prophets, promoted the idea of monotheism. This idea put the former pagan features to the test. This thesis argues that the Old Testament, far from constituting a coherent whole that resolves the problem, explores instead the implications of passing from paganism to monotheism. The four features listed above are changed. First, the sacrificial mechanism does not conceal the truth of human violence anymore. The Old Testament presents the victims as innocent and rejects the idea of a violent God that demands living sacrifices. Second, the national god is not chosen by the nation; on the contrary, the sole God apparently chooses the nation. Since God is one, He must care for all nations. More particularly, however, He protects His chosen nation, Israel. Yahweh, the god of the Jews and their land, becomes thus Yahweh the unique God, the creator of the universe, who has elected the Jewish nation among the other nations, from which Israel emerged. Third, the connection with the land is expressed through the idea of the Promised Land which is bestowed as a gift to Israel by God. The centre of this land, Jerusalem, is where Yahweh dwells. Fourth, the idea of kinship through common worshipped ancestors is maintained, even though the ancestors are not worshipped. Their importance rests on the fact that they were chosen by God, starting from Abraham, and, according to His promise, they fathered a nation, the elect nation. They are the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Israel then constitutes the seed of Abraham and, thus, God's chosen nation. This turn to monotheism, however, leaves one issue unresolved. The co-existence of a unique and, therefore, universal all-inclusive God with a nation which claims particular and exclusive chosenness is an uneasy one.

It is only the New Testament and the person of Jesus Christ that resolve what in the Old Testament is incomplete. Humans are named as the instigators of violence and collective murder in the Old Testament. In the New Testament Jesus Christ appears first as yet another innocent victim, but His divine and human natures united in one person, puts an end to the circle of violence. God is the friend (Jn 15:13-5) or the caring father (Rm 8:15. Gl 4:6) for humans and not the bloodthirsty pagan deity that demands living sacrifices. No humans can be justly murdered after Christ. As Christ is human and divine simultaneously, He puts an end to the idea of the *national god*. He thus resolved two issues. First, He becomes the new chosen, so that no nation can claim chosenness any more. Second, He resolves the problem of the contrast between

universalism and particularism, inclusivity and exclusivity, in favour of the former. The new chosen ones are those who participate in His ultimate chosenness by faith. The faithful to God and to Jesus as the Christ, are the new chosen ones regardless their nationality. National discriminations and particularisms are thus resolved. No single land can claim holiness and no city can be understood as the place of God's presence. God is everywhere and any place is His place: not Jerusalem, Mount Gerizim, Rome, or Constantinople, but everywhere. Finally, the sense of kinship connected with the worship common ancestors acquires a new character. True ancestors, with whom the new chosen shares kinship, are the ancestors in the faith. It is not a particular nation that possesses the quality of chosenness, but only the faithful from Abraham onwards. Trust in the God of the ancestors, therefore, instead of genetics constitutes the real seed of Abraham, his heirs according to promise (Gl 3:29).

Modern Greek theologians in general responded to nationalism and viewed it as paganism, but did not analyse this theme further. They also saw pagan features in extreme forms of nationalism, such as (neo-)Nazism. They saw four main features of paganism in modern extreme nationalism: first, devotion to blood and soil, i.e. connection with the motherland and blood kinship through common ancestors. Second, they discerned the deification of the nation, which became the object of a cult beyond its ultimate social value. Third, they list the deification of the leader, who likewise became the centre of the cult that developed around him. Fourth, they saw the significance of anti-Semitism, which became the ultimate pagan feature of extreme nationalism, as it turned precisely against the anti-pagan features of the Old Testament. By refusing what the Old Testament propounds concerning the human collective violence, extreme nationalism employs collective murder once again, not only against its enemies in general, but also, more particularly, against the Jews themselves.

The Greek example

The last chapter of this thesis presents the Greek example in an attempt to prove further the main argument of understanding nationalism by tracing the four features of paganism in modern Greek nationalism. More analytically, the thesis argues that a concrete analysis of nationalism as paganism does not necessarily need to turn its attention to extreme forms of nationalism. Modern forms of nationalism are defined by the four main features of paganism the thesis at hand has identified. By adhering to these features, modern Christians suffer a return to paganism, moving away from core Christian beliefs. The thesis puts forward the Greek example, where all four features can be identified. The sacrificial mechanism returns in the form of national anniversaries which portray the national enemies - the necessary barbarians - as guilty victims and, therefore, purify the national community. Land-boundedness and the sense of kinship in ancestral worship, return in the form of the Greek idea of national continuity, formalised in the Greek *Great Ideology* that prevailed in the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. This idea is reflected in the monument of the Unknown Soldier in Athens, which this thesis has presented and analysed. Finally, the idea of the *national god* returns in the way Greeks understand Mary as their special patron and protector. These

features are highlighted in the thesis by understanding Mary as a new version of the pagan Palladium, something that may be seen in the two main Greek national feasts of 25 March and of 28 October. However, the above analysis, by doing something fundamental, that is by understanding nationalism as paganism, raises further theological issues.

Theological implications

Indeed, if nationalism as paganism distorts or refutes the basic biblical Christian theological principles, it goes without saying that it influences negatively the different aspects of Christian theology: such as Christology, Anthropology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, and, finally, Eschatology. The brief examination of each aspect aims to point towards the direction which future studies can take if nationalism is considered a form of religion, paganism in particular.

God, for Christian theology, is a universal transcendental being, the creator of all things and all beings, whose providence expands to the whole world and cares for everything and everybody, the One who includes all creation. As argued above,[127] this is the development of the monotheistic Axial Age breakthrough. Nationalism's adherence to pagan beliefs and practices contradicts this monotheistic breakthrough. The transcendence of God, His universalism, His inclusivism, and His uniqueness constitute impediments to nationalistic particularism and exclusivity. Any reference to God, within a nationalistic framework, is reduced or removed; it is not convenient. On the other hand, the preference for Mary offers the necessary particularism and exclusivism convenient for nationalism. Although it escapes the scope of this thesis, and cannot be analysed any further, the thesis considers possible to assume that although it is a genuinely modern phenomenon, nationalism negates the Axial Age breakthrough, revealing the primitive-pagan foundations of modernity. In this way, modernity appears not quite progressive after all.

The removal of God as a transcendental being, in the framework of nationalism, implies a secular understanding of Jesus, which essentially diminishes His divine nature and, as a result, the fullness of His Incarnation. Indeed, several modern scholars have understood the Christian theology of the Incarnation as a fundamentally pagan idea, which essentially negates the transcendence of God (cf. Uffenheimer 1986, 135-69). Other scholars thought that the theology of the Incarnation is at the core of the Christian secondary breakthrough, that gave a fresh impetus to the development of several civilisations (cf. Stroumsa 1986, 252-61). Theologically, these views do not take into serious consideration the fact that the Incarnation is not so much an idea, as it is an actual move of the transcendental God Himself towards humankind, Who, by His incarnate revelation to the world, sets a target for humanity. To put it briefly, and use the words of Athanasius of Alexandria, God 'was made man that we might be made God' (Robertson 1891, 93).[128] Through the Incarnation, therefore, humanity is called to share God's divinity. This reality, however, is possible only if in Christ the two natures, both divine and human, are united in one person. Christ, the divine Logos, assumes the entire human nature and, therefore,

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[127] See chapter 3.2.

[128] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*, 54, 3.

becomes the *recapitulation* of all humanity rather than of a particular nationality (cf. Hitchcock 1914, 128-31,156,173-82). Therefore, the this-worldliness of humanity inclines towards the divine other-worldliness. For these reasons, early Christian theology resisted monophysitic theological views, according to which, Jesus's human nature was particularly absorbed by His divinity. Nationalism as paganism, constituting a strictly this-worldly ideology, understands Christ in a reverse monophysitic, or perhaps Arian, manner where the divine nature of Jesus withdraws in favour of His human nature. Instead of the this-worldly humanity which moves towards other-worldly divinity, the divine is understood as a this-worldly reality. As a result, instead of a deified humanity, at the core of nationalist pagan theology a secularised divinity is to be found. The danger for Christology, posed by nationalism, is to refute the very essence of the Incarnation of the Logos. On the other hand, it was shown in the case of Nazism that the omission of any reference to Christ's human nature constitutes an odd kind of monophysitism which served the anti-Semitic extreme nationalistic goals of Nazism in its ecclesiastical version, the *German Christians* (Konidares 1933, 88). Conveniently, Christ is expelled from the world in this way, as his Jewish *this-ness* is embarrassing for those Christians that choose to turn against their Christianity by becoming anti-Semites. It is, therefore, essential to balance and accept Christ's divine and human nature at the same time, in order to achieve a balance between the affirmation of national otherness and the rejection of national discriminations.

In a similar vein, the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, is not understood as the being that enables humans to receive the benefits of the Incarnation, but as the Hegelian Geist, as in the case of German nationalism, the spiritual expression of a nation. Having realised this danger, coming from Hegelian philosophy, Barth insisted in the necessity of the doctrine of the double procession of the Holy Spirit, not only from the Father but also from the Son (Filioque). According to Barth, the Spirit is only the Spirit of Christ and not of nations or other collectivities (Moseley 2013a, 97). However, if the divinity of Christ is compromised, to claim that the Spirit is only the spirit of Christ has no real meaning. If Christ is understood as divine and human at the same time, then the Spirit, as also a Person of the Trinity, is the Spirit of God and belongs to nobody (cf. Jn 3:8). As a result, there is no need for any theology of double procession, which, it should be reminded, is persistently rejected by Orthodox theology, because it confuses the inner life of the Triune God. The transcendence of the Spirit keeps away the Hegelian idea of the national Geist, which raises suspicions about paganism.

Understanding Christ as both divine and human, and the Spirit as the divine person that enables humans to participate in divine life, gives meaning to missiology. The divine Logos acquired the human nature and the Spirit dwells in every being in a manner known only to God Himself. It is precisely these ideas which make mission important. The message of the mission, the good news of salvation, the Gospel, constitutes for its audience the light, to use prophetic terminology, that enlightens those who live in darkness and shadow (Ps 107:14. Is 9:2). Mission makes sense, therefore, as a move for the spread of the good news of the salvation of all creation, as a spiritual reality (cf. Papathanasiou 2008b) and not a colonial effort of culturally advanced Christians to *civilise* the *uncivilised* inferior races. This is what one observes in the

efforts of the apostles. The New Testament was written in Greek, an international language at the time. When the Gospel traveled beyond the imperial borders it was translated to the language of the peoples who wished to receive it. The practice of teaching the missionaries' language to the natives so that they could understand the Gospel started in the Medieval Frankish Kingdom of Charlemagne[129] (cf. Flierman 2016, 181-201) - where Latin, together with Hebrew and Greek, were considered the sacred languages - and connected with colonisation and, later, colonialism. In pagan terms, the insistence in he sacred languages suggests that the Gospel of Christ concerns other people only indirectly, as it was not part of their national identity. Jesus Christ, in this way, is part of the identity of certain nations only. Non-Christian peoples possess their own *national gods*. It is, nevertheless, a racist thought that their defeat was a result of their inferiority, the inferiority of their false gods. The supremacy of European culture was connected, thus, with the superiority of Christianity and of Jesus Christ, understood as a European *national god*. It is not a coincidence that those who advocated European imperialism and colonialism in a pagan understanding of Christianity turned to the Old Testament for inspiration, rather than to the New, for inspiration. This is where aspects of Yahweh as a national god, and also chosenness, the monotheistic development of the above idea, could be found. Colonists and colonialists, furthermore, believed it was their obligation to *civilise* the *savages*: this process included their Christianisation in their acculturation *advanced* European mother tongues. It was an effort to impose their *national God* over the *gods* of others (cf. Smith 2003a, 78-85).

The particularity and exclusivity of nationalism identifies the nation as the ultimate value of the human being. All other identities that a human being chooses to possess, any other collectivity to which the human being chooses to belong to, are of secondary importance or should be subject to national identity. Then, a fundamental theological problem arises. Theology views humans as beings created in the image and the likeness of God. Since freedom is a basic feature of divine nature, humans are, likewise, fundamentally free. The priority of the collectivity of nation, for nationalism, seeks to subjugate this freedom to nationalist ends, in the same way that among ancient pagan peoples identity was defined by the ruler and the national god. Likewise, in modern nations, nationalism demands from people to draw their personal identity from the national identity. Individuals are not completely self-defined, but to a certain extent, defined by their national group. In the same way, individuals do not receive the meaning of their existence from their Creator God, but primarily from their national collectivity. Even salvation, as the task set by the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, is replaced by a this-worldly realisation of the national identity, ultimately expressed by sacrifice for the nation, i.e. heroism. The life of the individual does not matter as such but only as will be viewed and judged by the nation's future generations (cf. Anderson 1999, 197-204). This understanding is fundamentally important, because the ideal of nationalism is national freedom. Christianity often viewed this rather positively and made its own rhetoric part of the nationalist rhetoric. Yet, from a stricter theological point of view, the freedom promised by nationalism is a pseudo-

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[129] See chapter 2.2.3.

freedom that negates human freedom. It is worth noting that nationalist freedom was more strongly propounded in totalitarian regimes. To be more precise, the term *freedom* was not alien to Hitler's passionate orations that moved so much his audience (cf. Hitler 2014, 93-8).

Saints are a peculiar case for nationalism. Having often lived in their own freedom striving to derive meaning for their existence from God Himself, and wishing to fulfil the task of salvation, obviously their lives do not correspond to national criteria. However, as Hirschi was able to point out, nationalism rejects what does not fit to its criteria or distorts it to make it fit in these criteria (cf. Hirsch 2012, 48). Saints have often been deified in a this-worldly nationalist pagan way, becoming *national gods* as was shown above in the case of Virgin Mary.[130] Theologically, this is an idea that recalls original sin: according to Genesis, Eve succumbed to the snake's call to taste the forbidden fruit, because she was promised to become like a god, something which God Himself allegedly did not approve (Gn 3:1-7). Theology has often viewed this story as an example of the wrong way of exercising the gift of freedom, as a form of deification that does not include God. More particularly, in the Orthodox understanding, this is precisely what constitutes original sin (Romanides 1989). The nationalist pagan understanding of saints as *national gods* reflects this reality. Against the will of Mary herself, who, as the New Eve, cured Eve's sin, Mary became *goddess* without God.

The Church constitutes a community bound by faith, the result of individuals' free choice (cf. Kalaitzidis 2015, 120-1). In this understanding, the Church has always conceived of itself as an ark that carries people who travel in a troublesome world, towards the safe haven of Christ, Who has 'overcome the world' (Jn 16:33). Since nationalism demands the absolute devotion of individuals, faithful and unfaithful alike, any devotion to the Church should be either secondary or eliminated. To use the imagery of the ark, it asks individuals to abandon the ark and concern themselves with the tribulations of this world. The destination and the point of departure are lost. Historically positively disposed towards nations and to the variety of human identities, the Church found itself intertwined with modern nationalism, which, as a form of paganism, tried to turn the Church to a useful tool to serve its own purposes. Instead of an inclusive institution, the Church became divided according to national - and confessional - identities, even at the point of conflict, following national rivalries. Instead of understanding itself as a multinational and multicultural community of the faithful, the Church follows national criteria of belonging. This is true for many forms of Christianity. It is particularly true, however, for the Orthodox Church, which lacking a strong international administrative head, such as a Pope, it appears fragmented and reduced to a nationalist rather than theological understanding of faith. As the recent synod in Crete (2016) very expressively proved, it is difficult to speak of an Orthodox Church as a concrete body, but rather as Orthodox Churches designated nationally: Russian Orthodoxy, Greek Orthodoxy, Romanian Orthodoxy, and so forth. Designated by modern Orthodox theologians as the problem of jurisdictions, this division in Orthodoxy is the most visible and well-known implication of modern nationalism, strongly connected with the problem of the relations between the Church and the nation-state. This is a rather complicated issue connected with

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[130] See chapter 4.3.

historical, political, and theological considerations. For instance, the Church-state relations in the Orthodox Christian world have been conceived as the legacy of the Byzantine caesaropapism (cf. Kaldellis 2015, 173,250-1) or the Byzantine *Symfonia* or *Synallelia* model (cf. Leustean 2008, 422-4) - depending on the view of the scholars approaching the issue - without considering the implications of important events which occurred between the Byzantine era and the modern Church-state relations. To put it simply, it is as if it is claimed that Protestantism never happened, or that it had no implications for Christianity beyond the countries it influenced directly. Similarly, it is as if claiming that Peter the Great of Russia (1682-1725) never pressed any kind of reforms concerning the Church in his empire, or that these reforms did not have any impact in the Orthodox world. On the other hand, the inclination of Western European scholars to adopt a Western European historical perspective, has led them to neglect or fail to appreciate peculiarities of others. For instance, they do not seem to appreciate the lack of religious wars in Eastern Christianity, where there is no Reformation, no dissolution of the empire due to the Reformation, no Thirty-Year War not Treaty of Westphalia. At a more abstract theological level, furthermore, the issue of the Church-state relations raises the theological issue of power and authority, an issue which, as Andrew Louth has pointed out, has not been sufficiently addressed by Orthodox theology (Louth 2012, 101). For Kalaitzidis there is no Orthodox political theology at all (Kalaitzidis 2012b, 9-10). Moreover, the modern state changes rapidly and turns from national to multi-cultural. At any rate, the complex nature of the issue hinders any further engagement with it at this point.

It should be clear, up to this point, that nationalism-as-paganism views with enmity any idea of spiritual transcendence. On the other hand, the theological extensions of the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit do not fit well within a nationalist context. The same applies to the theological understanding of the human being (as all humans were created by God) and also a theological approach of the Church. Nationalism as paganism cannot compromise with this transcendental perspective, particularly with the Church's confidence that it constitutes the eventual realisation of the future Kingdom of heaven on earth. Nationalism as paganism writes a theology of its own, a transcendental idea concerning the salvation of national heroes and damnation of traitors, and develops an eschatology of a national ideal future. It has been already claimed that this system constitutes a pseudo-theology, a pseudo-transcendence, a pseudo-eschatology - an eschatology without transcendence. Considering nationalism as paganism makes this statement clearer. To be more precise, nationalism's rejection of monotheistic transcendence, specifically in the way expressed by Christian theology, shows that humans lose their other-worldly, transcendental perspective. Nationalism's insistence on this-worldliness allows no space for any eschatological perspective. Paganism has often been associated with the cyclical understanding of history. The world dies and is reborn in an endless cyclical manner. However, Christian theology gave to the world another perspective, an end to anticipate, after which there will be no other beginning understanding history in a linear manner. Nationalism as paganism pushes the world back to the cyclical understanding removing any other-worldly perspective.

This thesis understands itself as a first step of an Orthodox theological treatment of nations and nationalism. The above thoughts constitute some potential steps to follow the understanding of nationalism as paganism. As indicated above, while considering Church-state relations, each of these thoughts can constitute a future thesis. This thesis adheres to the view that such steps are necessary and should be undertaken in the future.

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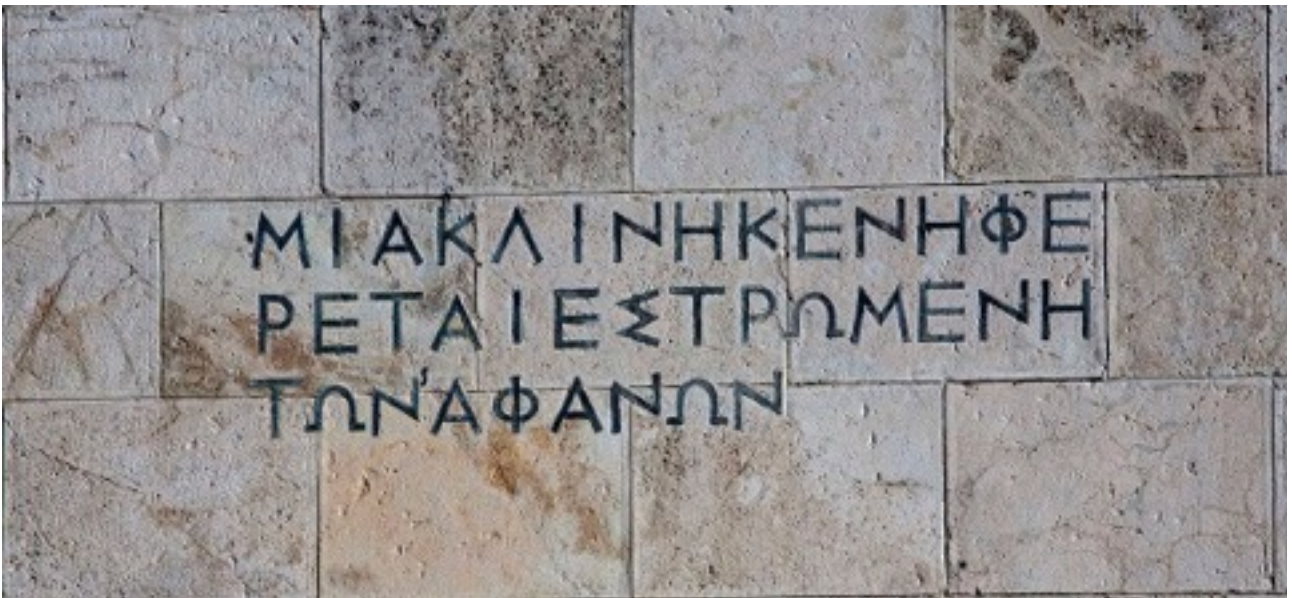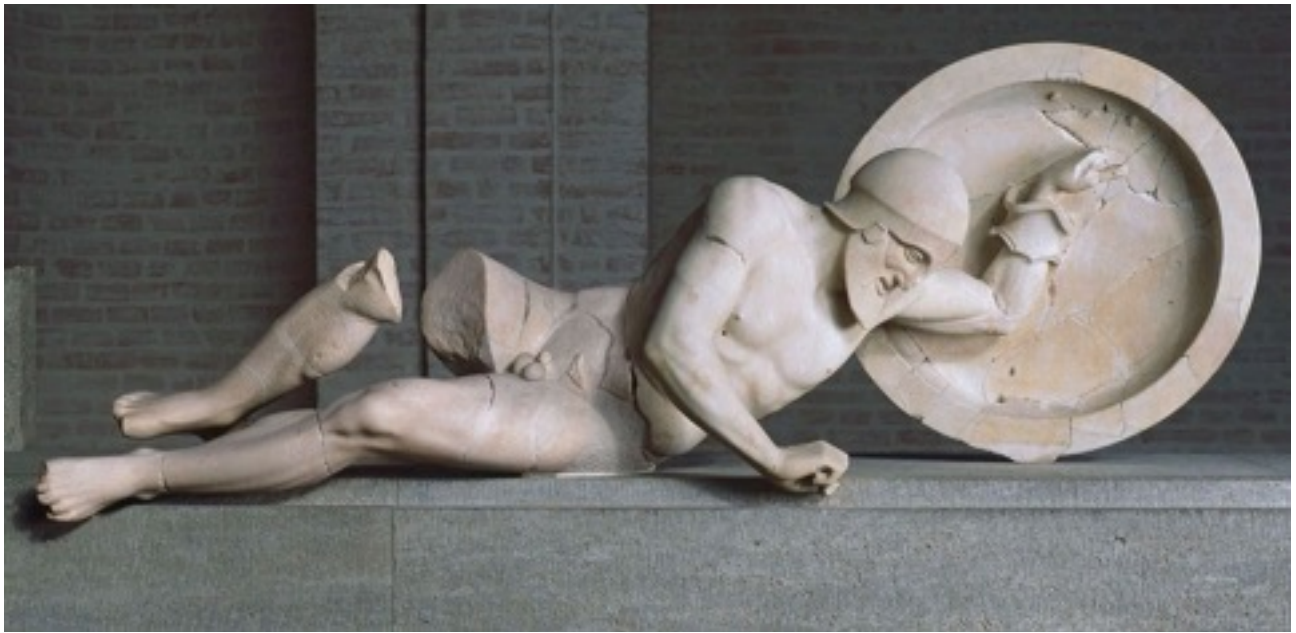Image 1



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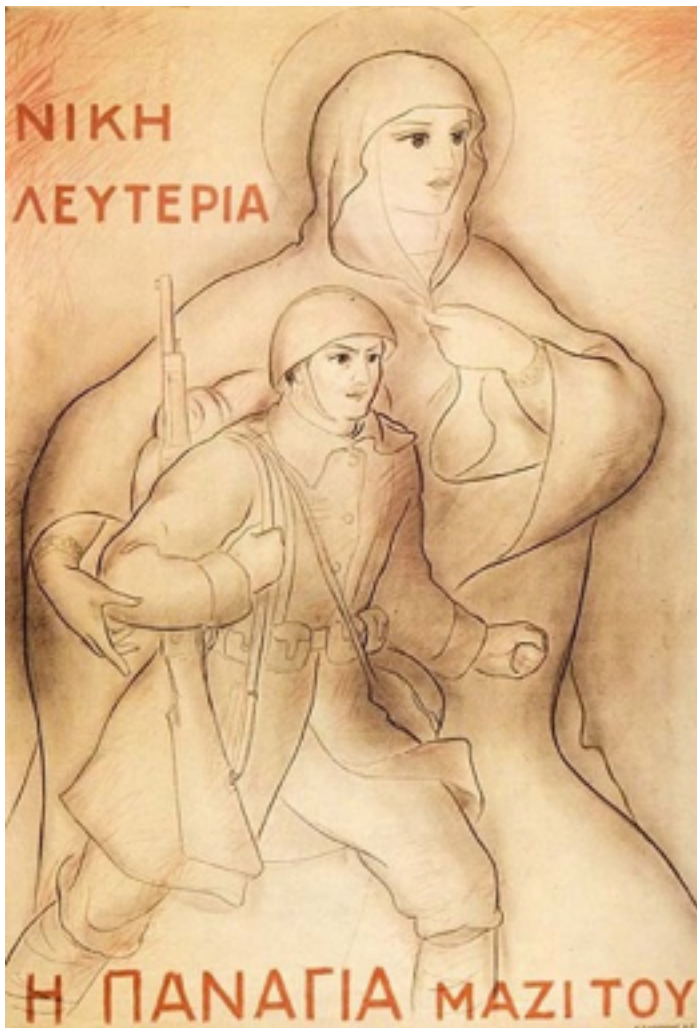Image 20

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