

The Benaki Museum in Interwar Greece: Constructing Greek Art & the Greek Nation After the Fall of the Ottoman Empire

by

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I investigate the formation of the Benaki Museum, founded in Athens, Greece in 1931, which exhibited a wide variety of Ottoman art and material culture. The museum, which continues to be a pre-eminent institution in Greece today, was largely the work of the Greek collector and founder Antonis Benakis (1873 – 1954) and its first director and curator Theodore Macridy Bey (1872 – 1940). By analyzing the museum’s early acquisition policy, its curatorial strategies, and its publications, I argue that it contributed to the formulation of Greek national narratives at a pivotal moment in Greek history: the museum opened to the public in the years after the crushing Greek defeat in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 – 1922, which signaled the failure of Greece’s expansionist vision, the final dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the Turkish Republic. The consequent Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey (1923), also contributed to the country’s ethnic homogenization and brought over a million Ottoman-Christian refugees from Asia Minor into Greece.

I argue that the Benaki Museum constructed a highly ideological image of Ottoman art and of the recent Ottoman past. It portrayed Ottoman art as an integral and venerable part of Greek culture, and, in doing so, overtly rejected some of the Orientalist narratives inherent in earlier and more dominant constructions of Greek nationalism. These saw the classical period as the pinnacle of Greek cultural and aesthetic achievement and rejected the Ottoman period as one of cultural decline.

At the same time, I also argue that the museum forged a Greek *national* history of the Ottoman past. Benakis and Macridy portrayed the material culture of Greeks of the Ottoman Empire – which were products of a multiethnic society – as distinctly “national,” culturally pure and largely free of Turkish influence.

Moreover, the museum, which was built following a period of major territorial and demographic changes, made telling statements about *who* constituted the Greek nation and *what* constituted Greek culture. Importantly, the museum insisted on the notion that the art of Asia Minor, from regions only recently forfeited to the newly founded Turkish Republic, was an integral part of Greek culture.

Finally, I underline Benakis' and Macridy's reliance on Ottoman bodies of knowledge, as well as exchanges with intellectuals in Republican Turkey who were also promoting the aesthetic appreciation of their shared Ottoman past. I thus highlight intellectual continuities and connections that are largely ignored in scholarship on modern Greece, in large part due to the very success of national narratives created by institutions like the Benaki Museum.

I elaborate on these arguments over the course of three chapters, each of which is dedicated to one of the Ottoman-period collections in the Benaki Museum. I first engage with the museum's large collection of Islamic ceramic and textiles produced in Ottoman Asia Minor. I then turn to the collection of late-Ottoman ecclesiastical objects, brought to Greece by the refugees of the Exchange of Populations. Finally, I turn to museum's collection of Ottoman-period Greek folk costumes.

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INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I study the formation and influence of the Benaki Museum, founded in Athens, Greece in 1931. Unlike other Greek cultural institutions, which predominantly privileged the material traces of the classical past, and to a lesser extent Byzantium, the Benaki Museum, in its original iteration, exhibited a wide variety of Ottoman art and material culture. The Benaki continues to be one of the pre-eminent museums in Greece today; however, its early history has been overlooked by scholars. As I demonstrate in this dissertation, the museum represents a little known but impactful episode in Greek intellectual history. Largely the work of the Greek collector and founder Antonis Benakis (1873 – 1954) and his director and curator Theodore Macridy Bey (1872 – 1940), the Benaki Museum constructed a highly ideological image of Ottoman art and of the recent Ottoman past, in the decade that followed the final dissolution of the Empire. In doing so, the museum contributed to the formulation of Greek national narratives at this pivotal moment in Greek history, characterized by large territorial and demographic changes, with a lasting impact on the country. Some of the nationalist myths that the Benaki Museum forged through its Ottoman collections were eventually eclipsed, and are alien to current understandings of Greek civilization. Others, however, though unexamined, are now integral to current conceptions of Greek history and culture. The dissertation thus contributes to our understanding of modernity outside the Euro-American context, and

specifically to the process of nation building in states that emerged from the Ottoman Empire, as well as the role that material culture played in that process.

My interest in the origins of the Benaki Museum was initially driven by a fascination with its collection of Ottoman Islamic art, which, since 2004, has been exhibited in the Kerameikos district of Athens in the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art. This museum, which houses Antonis Benakis' original Islamic collections, is one of eight buildings that now make up the Benaki Museum. The very existence of a museum of Islamic art in Greece suggested to me that its creator – who clearly appreciated Ottoman aesthetic production – must have resisted what I found to be the most objectionable parts of Greek nationalism as I had experienced it, namely the deeply Orientalist attitudes that undermined Ottoman/Turkish culture and rejected any association with it. This collection indicated to me that there must be a gap in our understanding of Greek cultural attitudes vis-à-vis the Ottomans and the country's own Islamic history. I thus set out to understand why this prominent Greek collector amassed a collection of Ottoman/Islamic art, to analyze the narratives that the museum put forth in its original iteration, and to explore the ideological underpinnings of these narratives.

Indeed, scholars writing about modern Greece have largely overlooked Greek engagement with Ottoman culture, assuming that Greeks ignored or even actively demolished the material remains of the Ottoman past. Instead, they have largely focused on the critical role that classical antiquity, and to a lesser extent Byzantium, played – and continue to play – in the formation of Greek national narratives. As scholars have noted, with the emergence of Greek nationalism in the eighteenth century, modern Greek intellectuals portrayed themselves as “Hellenes,” or as the cultural descendants of the Ancient Greeks – an identity that co-existed

alongside their pre-national collective identity as Orthodox Christians – and as originators of European civilization.¹ The decades following independence from the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Greek state (1832), in particular, were characterized by an almost exclusive emphasis on the classical past, referred to as *progonolatria* (ancestor worship). This identity was forged through various means, including through the management of the material remains of the past. As scholars have underscored, this Greek identification with the classical past was heavily influenced by the reverence that Western Europeans had, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for ancient Greece, which they constructed as the glorious genealogical foundation of Western civilization.² It was also motivated by a contempt for Ottoman culture and a desire to distance themselves from it.

In *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece* (1982, the latest edition published in 2020), for example, Michael Herzfeld expounds upon the function of Greek folklorists, active in the first century of statehood, in bolstering the “Hellenic” image of Greek identity.³ He demonstrates that these early scholars primarily concerned themselves with locating traces of ancient customs and values in the rural populations of Greece, the country’s largest demographic element. They thus portrayed the modern Greeks as the cultural descendants of the ancients and the very source of European culture and “scraped away” the

¹ As Mackridge explains over the last two centuries or so, Greek identity has usually been defined in terms of language and religion, with territory and landscape as additional factors; Peter Mackridge, *Language and National Identity in Greece, 1766-1976* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–12.

² For the idealization of classical antiquity in Western Europe from the eighteenth century onwards see: Ian Morris, ed., *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³ Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (New York: berghahn, 2020).

“shamefully Turkish patina” that they had accrued over the centuries of Ottoman rule.⁴ In doing so, Herzfeld argues, Greek elites sought to satisfy European expectations about Greece to allow the emergent nation-state to secure political support from European powers.

In *Language and National Identity in Greece, 1766-1976* (2009), on the other hand, Peter Mackridge elaborates on the crucial role that the Greek language played in the articulation of this “Hellenic” identity. As he explains, one of the primary debates among Greek intellectuals – starting in the late eighteenth century and extending into the twentieth – known as the “*glossikó zítima*,” revolved around the form that the written Greek language should take in order to best exhibit the cultural descent of modern Greeks from the ancients.⁵ Importantly, as Mackridge further notes, in defining themselves as Europeans and heirs of classical civilization, Greeks conceived of themselves as culturally superior to their non-European Turkish “masters.”⁶

The “musealization” of the material remains of the classical past – and the concomitant neglect or even destruction of the traces of the intervening centuries, particularly in the

⁴ Herzfeld refers to this dual function of the Hellenic identity as the “twin concepts of Hellas and Europe.” Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 9, 15.

⁵ This debate was made up of two rival “camps,” the archaists/purists and the vernacularists (known as demoticists starting in the late nineteenth century). The archaists/purists claimed that the best way to exhibit the modern Greek cultural descent from the ancients was by imitating Ancient Greek linguistic models. The vernacularists, on the other hand, argued that this would be best achieved by maintaining written Greek as close as possible to the spoken language, which – as they emphasized – was the outcome of the natural and continuous development of the Greek language from ancient to modern times. The most intense phases of the Greek language debate took place during periods of crucial social transition. The first of these was the period from the 1760s to 1821. The second, a century later (1880s–1920s), coincided with the consolidation of the Greek bourgeoisie, the beginnings of industrialization, and the growth of the national expansionist movement, all of which demanded a more efficient education system. Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 1–2. For a succinct survey of the language question see also: Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (London: Longman, 1997), 344–62.

⁶ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 15

nineteenth century – also played an integral role in the construction of this “Hellenic” identity.⁷ In *The Creation of Modern Athens: Planning the Myth* (2000) Eleni Bastea emphasizes the role of the selection of the new national capital, Athens, as well as the design of its built environment in forging this national image.⁸ The city was built in the nineteenth century with the Acropolis at its center, its public buildings were designed in neoclassical style, and its streets and squares were re-named after distinguished figures or episodes from classical antiquity, as well as from the Greek war of independence. During this process of urban renewal, Ottoman, Frankish, and Byzantine monuments were also often destroyed to reveal classical monuments, thus creating a “lieu de memoire” where collective memory and history were rewritten, linking modern Greeks to their classical ancestors.

In *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* (2007), Yannis Hamilakis demonstrates how the field of archeology – broadly construed as the discipline entrusted with the task of revealing, preserving, interpreting, and presenting monuments to the public — was integral to forging the “Hellenic” national imaginary.⁹ Hamilakis also emphasizes the involvement of Western European agents in the construction of these Greek national narratives – dubbing their creation a “colonial-cum-national project” – and suggests that they reflected Western European values and visions of Greece. As he explains, administrators, scholars, and bureaucrats associated with the early Bavarian kings of Greece were heavily

⁷ Shaw uses this concept of the “musealization;” Wendy M.K Shaw, “Islamic Art in Islamic Lands: Museums and Architectural Revivalism,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gulru Necipoğlu (Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2017), 1150.

⁸ Eleni Bastéa, *The Creation of Modern Athens: Planning the Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁹ Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece*, Classical Presences (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

involved in establishing the institutions and infrastructure for the preservation and study of the classical monuments of Athens, which were instrumental to the formation of this “Hellenic” national identity.¹⁰ The first legislation to protect antiquities was written by the Bavarian administration as early as 1834, the Archaeological Service was set up in 1837, and the Chair of Archaeology was among the first to be established in the newly founded University of Athens (1837). Plans for the National Museum were also initiated in the 1830s, although it was not completed until 1889. As he further notes, some of these actors, who clearly privileged Greece’s classical past, saw modern Greeks as the “fallen from grace” degenerate forms of their glorious ancestors.¹¹

Greeks continued to draw on classical Greece as their main source of identity into the twentieth century. Several edited volumes focused on that century have likewise explored the role of archeology – and its continued privileging of the material traces of the classical past – in constructing an imagined Greek past. These include *Ancient Monuments and Modern Identities: A Critical History of Archaeology in 19th and 20th Century Greece* (2016), edited by Sofia Voutsaki and Paul Cartledge, and *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in Twentieth-Century Greece* (2008), edited by Dimitris Plantzos and Dimitris Damaskos.¹² With few

¹⁰ Both the first professor of archaeology and the designer of the first archaeological law in Greece were Bavarian, belonging to the entourage of the first king, Otto; Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, x and 26–31.

¹¹ Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, 20–21.

¹² Dimitris Damaskos and Dimitris Plantzos, eds., *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in Twentieth-Century Greece*, 3rd ed. (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008); Sofia Voutsaki and Paul Cartledge, eds., *Ancient Monuments and Modern Identities: A Critical History of Archaeology in 19th- and 20th-Century Greece* (London: Routledge, 2017).

exceptions, all the chapters in these volumes emphasize, as Plantzos put it, the “political-cum-national” role of archeology in perpetuating the nation’s cultural and political identity.¹³

Although less well explored in modern scholarship, later in the nineteenth century the Byzantine Empire also became central to Greek national identity. As scholars have noted, the mid-nineteenth century saw the creation of a romantic narrative of cultural continuity which, importantly, resulted in the inclusion of Byzantium into definitions of “Hellenism.” The formulation of this scheme of linear continuity through the ages was largely the creation of romantic historian and folklorist Spyridon Zambelios (1815 – 1881) – who wrote about the “national character” of the Greek people, a nation with a three-thousand-year long history – and even more so the work of historian Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos.¹⁴ In his *History of the Hellenic Nation*, which appeared in many editions and revisions in the 1860s and 70s, Paparrigopoulos laid out a tripartite scheme which described the persistence of the Greek “spirit” through the

¹³ Damaskos and Plantzos, *A Singular Antiquity*, 14.

¹⁴ Konstantinos Th. Dimaras, *Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos: I Epohi Tou - I Zoi Tou - To Ergo Tou* (Athens: Morfotiko Idrima Ethnis Trapezis, 1986); Paschalis M. Kitromilides, “On the Intellectual Content of Greek Nationalism: Paparrigopoulos, Byzantium and the Great Idea,” in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino, vol. 4, Centre for Hellenic Studies, Kings College London, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 25–33; George Huxley, “Aspects of Modern Greek Historiography of Byzantium,” in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino, vol. 4, Centre for Hellenic Studies, Kings College London (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 15–23; Ioannis Koubourlis, “European Historiographical Influences Upon the Young Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos,” in *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797–1896)*, ed. Roderick Beaton and David Ricks, vol. 11, Centre for Hellenic Studies, Kings College London (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 53–63; Ioannis Koubourlis, *La Formation de l’Histoire Nationale Grecque: L’Apport de Spyridon Zambélios (1815-1881)*, vol. 87, Collection Histoire Des Idées 5 (Athens: Institut De Recherches Néohelleniques, Fondation Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 2005); Antonis Liakos, “Hellenism and the Making of Modern Greece: Time, Language, Space,” in *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Katerina Zacharia (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 201–36.

ages, from the classical past to Byzantium and into the modern Greek state. The formulation of this narrative – which represented Greek history and civilization as originating in antiquity and extending into the present – was, in part, a reaction to the claims of Austrian historian Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790 – 1861), who cast doubt on the descent of modern Greeks from the ancients. Importantly, this narrative resulted in the integration of Byzantium in Greek nationalist historiography. Indeed, Paparrigopoulos conspicuously encompassed Byzantium within his definition of “Hellenism,” thus eroding the *exclusive* focus on the classical past. Hamilakis has dubbed the creation, by Greek intellectuals, of such narratives that resisted “Western Hellenism,” that is, European visions of Greece, the creation of an “Indigenous Hellenism.”¹⁵

Once conceived of as part of the modern nation’s past, the material traces of Byzantium also gained renewed importance, particularly in the twentieth century. In a series of articles including “Byzantine Houses and Modern Fictions: Domesticating Mystras in 1930s Greece” and “Byzantium and the Avant-Garde: Excavations at Corinth, 1920s-1930s” Kostis Kourelis has elucidated the role of Byzantine archeology in the construction of national narratives as well as its importance to modern artistic production.¹⁶ Others, like Nikolaos Magouliotis, have also shown that as early as the first decade of the twentieth century there was also a conscious and ideological use of Byzantium as a challenge to Neoclassicism as the basis for modern architecture

¹⁵ Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, vii–viii and 21–27.

¹⁶ Kostis Kourelis, “Byzantine Houses and Modern Fictions: Domesticating Mystras in 1930s Greece,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 65/66 (2011): 297–331; Kostis Kourelis, “Byzantium and the Avant-Garde: Excavations at Corinth, 1920s-1930s,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 76, no. 2 (2007): 391–442.

in Greece.¹⁷ The Byzantine style was used in ecclesiastical buildings, public buildings, as well as residential interiors of the Athenian bourgeoisie. Perhaps the most notable example of modern architectural expression via Greece's Byzantine heritage is Ernest Hebrard's reconstruction of Thessaloniki in 1917, which included boulevards framed by Byzantinesque facades.¹⁸ By the 1930s, as Magouliotis notes, Byzantium had been ingrained in the local artistic milieu as a profound constituent of what Greek artists considered as their heritage.¹⁹

Overlooked in modern scholarship, however, is the Benaki Museum, which conspicuously emphasized Ottoman-period art. The museum was initially formed out of the private collections of Antonis Benakis (1873 – 1954). Benakis (who also went by the anglicized first name “Antony,” and the French “Antoine,” and originally spelled his last name “Benachi”) was born into one of the most prominent and wealthy Greek families in Alexandria in 1873, at a time when there was a large Greek population in Egypt.²⁰ His family had made its money in the cotton business.

¹⁷ Nikolaos Magouliotis, “Byzantium, To and Fro: The ‘Pavillon de La Grèce,’ from the Paris 1900 Expo to Athens,” *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 15, no. 2 (2018): 47–60.

¹⁸ Alexandra Yerolympou, *Ochyrōmeno Stratopedo, Anochyrōtē Polē: Katastrophē Kai Anamorphōsē Tēs Thessalonikēs Meta Tēn Pyrkagia Tou 1917*, Thessalonikē Ston Prōtō Pankosmio Polemo 8 (Thessalonikē: University Studio Press, 2016).

¹⁹ See also: Dimitra Kotoula, “Arts and Crafts and the ‘Byzantine’: The Greek Connection,” in *Byzantium/Modernism: The Byzantine as Method in Modernity*, ed. Roland Betancourt and Maria Taroutina, vol. 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 75–101.

²⁰ By the First World War Greeks were the largest foreign colony in Egypt, totaling about 100,000 people. Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, Third edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 78–79; Michael Haag, *Alexandria: City of Memory* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 72; Ευθύμιος Θ. Σουλογιάννης, *Αντώνης Εμμ. Μπενάκης, 1873-1954: Ο Ευπατρίδης, ο Διανοούμενος, ο Ανθρωπιστής* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 2004), 68 (the Greek-language biography of Benakis by Euthimios Soulogiannis entitled *Antonis Benakis: The Patriot, the Intellectual, the Humanist* (2004)); Alexander Kitroeff, *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt* (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2019); Matoula Tomara-Sideris, *Alexandrian Families: Choremi, Benachi and Salvago*, 3rd ed. (Athens: Kerkyra, 2013).

Antonis' father, Emmanuel Benakis (1843 - 1929), who was a merchant born on the island of Syros, moved to Alexandria in 1865, where his marriage to Virginia Choremi (1848 - 1928) sealed the business alliance that made the export firm Choremi Benachi and Company one of the largest cotton exporters in Egypt and one of the three or four largest in the world.²¹ Antonis began collecting in Alexandria and housed his collections in his home in the Quartier Grec, on 11 Rue des Fatimides at the corner of the Rue des Abbassides.²² He often exhibited his works of art in expositions organized by les Amis de l'Art of Alexandria, an organization of art enthusiasts that also included many other wealthy Greeks and Levantines of the city.²³

In 1926, however, Benakis moved to Athens and in 1929, the year of this father's death, he announced the founding of the Benaki Museum. He bequeathed his collections to the Greek state, and alongside his surviving siblings, also donated his parents' neoclassical mansion on Koumbari street in central Athens to the Greek nation, to house the collections. The museum was presented to the state in 1929 and inaugurated in 1931, when Eleftherios Venizelos was in power, with whom Benakis and his family were closely associated. In 1910, at the very beginning of his first term in office, the Greek statesman, who was in power for a large part of early twentieth century (administrations: 1910 – 1915, 1915, 1917 – 20, 1924, 1928-1932, 1932, 1933)

²¹ Choremi Benachi and Company evolved out of one of the oldest and biggest exporters, Choremi, Mellor & Company, established in 1858 with Joseph Mellor being the partner based in Liverpool and Ioannis Choremi based in Alexandria, though he also owned houses in Liverpool. Other Greeks were also prominent in the cotton exporting business. Kitroeff, *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt*, 65.

²² Haag, *Alexandria: City of Memory*, 132

²³ Kitroeff, *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt*, 162; Haag, *Alexandria: City of Memory*, 132 – 133.

put Antonis' father, Emmanuel, in charge of the newly founded ministry of national economy.²⁴

Emmanuel also became mayor of Athens in 1914, during a Venizelos government.²⁵

Benakis financed the museum and managed and expanded its collections, alongside its first director and curator Theodore Macridy Bey (1872 – 1940). Benakis was intimately involved in every aspect of his museum's management, notably taking a leading role in expanding its already substantial collections. Indeed, his surviving correspondence, which covers the period from 1929 – 1954, namely starting with the year that he decided to found his museum through the end of his life, primarily concerns the acquisition of his collections.²⁶ It includes exchanges with his large network of dealers, who were located primarily in Cairo, Istanbul, Paris, and London. These antiquaries, with whom he corresponded in French, English, and Greek, sent Benakis written offers by post, photographs of the objects they recommended to him, and sometimes even sent him the objects themselves for his consideration, which Benakis would then return by mail if he decided not to acquire them for his collections. Others also paid him visits in Athens. Benakis also often travelled to Paris, London, and Egypt, where he would have visited their shops.²⁷

²⁴ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 78–79 and 92–93.

²⁵ Kitroeff, *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt*, 73.

²⁶ Many of these letters are housed in the Benaki Museum's Byzantine department and were generously made available to me by the museum's Byzantine curators. They represent Benakis' correspondence from 1929 – 1954, namely starting with the year that he decided to found his museum through the end of his life. They do not cover the formation of his collections in Alexandria. They are organized roughly chronologically. They preserve both the letters that Benakis received as well as, in many cases, copies of those that he sent out. Many of these letters are handwritten while others are typewritten, including those written by Benakis himself, who divulged in one of his letters that he opted to use a typewriter because his penmanship was illegible.

²⁷ Antonis Benakis to Gaston Migeon, November 10, 1929, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

In addition to his dealers, Benakis was also in touch with scholars, private collectors, as well as curators at some of the major museums, both in Europe and the Middle East, many of whom are still well-known today, discussed further below.²⁸ In their exchanges, they often advised Benakis on what to collect, sometimes even selling him objects.

The sheer number of letters in this archive (sometimes Benakis negotiated with dealers over several months over a single object) attest to the effort that it took him to build up his collections, as well as his involvement and dedication to creating his museum. The letters also demonstrate that Benakis was aesthetically discerning, knowledgeable about the objects he collected, and convey his love of art and enthusiasm for his work at the museum. In a 1929 letter to the Islamic art scholar F. R. Martin, Benakis announced that he would be founding a museum, expressing his excitement for the enterprise and elaborating on the central role that he would play in its creation: “I have the thing so much at heart that I can think of nothing else now, and shall spare no trouble and expense to make it a really interesting Museum. I shall manage it myself while I live...”.²⁹ When Benakis served as Minister of Agriculture, on the other hand, a position he held for only a brief period of six months between 1935 and 1936, he complained to numerous people that he had been “obliged” to accept the position, and begrudged that it forced him to neglect his work at the museum, which he clearly conceived of as his real occupation and passion.³⁰

²⁸ Benakis’ interactions with local agents in Greece are less prominently reflected in these correspondences. This is likely because interactions with them did not require written correspondence.

²⁹ Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, September 17, 1929, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

³⁰ Antonis Benakis to Lieut. Colonel R. H. H. Brocklebank, Alveston House Stratford-on-Avon, August 11, 1936, “Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department

Although Benakis was intimately involved in running the museum and in expanding its collections, he was an amateur collector, not a trained art historian or curator. Benakis therefore hired Macridy (Theodoros, Todoraki Makridi) (1872 – 1940), one of the leading archeologists and museum professionals of the late Ottoman era and early republican Turkey, to be the director and curator of his museum. Macridy was an Ottoman-Greek, born in the Fener neighborhood of Istanbul, into a family whose origins were said to be in Ottoman Macedonia.³¹ His father, Constantine ‘Ferik’ Macridy Pasa, was a military doctor who rose to the rank of Brigadier General. The senior Macridy was also an avid collector of Byzantine coins and presided over the Ottoman Imperial Museum’s numismatics committee. He sold his personal collection, made up of over a thousand Byzantine coins to the Imperial Museum at a nominal price.³² Macridy was educated initially at the Phanar Greek High School (Μεγάλη του Γένους Σχολή), the leading Ottoman Greek educational institution, and in 1884, at the age of twelve, entered the Galatasaray Imperial School, graduating from there in 1889.³³ Although he briefly worked for the Ottoman Public Debt

Archives; Antonis Benakis to Lillian Barnhart, West Virginia, USA, August 11, 1936, “Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to R.S. Cooke, Marston Lodge Harrow-on-the Hill, December 9, 1935, “Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Benakis was likely granted the position of Minister of Agriculture thanks to his family’s experience in the cotton business. Benakis explained to the archeologist and art historian Marguerite Van Berchem that he was interested in increasing the cultivation of cotton in Greece in order to reduce the country’s dependence on imported cotton. Antonis Benakis to Marguerite Van Berchem, Rome, July, 16, 1935, “Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

³¹ His family is said to be from the village of Belatch (Blatzi, present-day Vlasti, Greece) near the town of Soroviçe (Sorovich, present-day Amyntaion, Greece). Ioannis Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology in the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, and Greece: Théodore Macridy, an Ottoman Greek ‘Liminal Scientist’,” *European Journal of Archaeology*, 2022, 4.

³² Uğur Cinoğlu, “Türk Arkeolojisi’nde Theodor Makridi (Unpublished MA Thesis)” (Turkey, Marmara University, 2002); Constantine Macridy Pacha, *Medailles Grecques, Romaines, Byzantines et Musulmanes* (Constantinople: Imprimerie Neologos, 1887).

³³ Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 4.

Administration, in 1892, at the age of twenty, Macridy started working for the Ottoman Imperial Museum (later the Istanbul Archeology Museum), where he would spend the next thirty-eight years, almost the entirety of his career.³⁴ At the museum, Macridy initially worked under the directorship of Osman Hamdi Bey (1842 - 1910), the pioneering Ottoman archeologist and museum curator, who headed the museum until his death in 1910. Macridy also worked under Hamdi Bey's lesser known but equally influential brother, Halil Edhem Bey (1861 - 1938), who served first as deputy director and, after his brother's death in 1910, as director of the museum.³⁵

Macridy quickly rose through the ranks of the museum, apparently through the encouragement of Osman Hamdi and Halil Edhem, becoming an accomplished museum curator and archeologist.³⁶ His first position at the museum was secretary to the French Language Secretariat.³⁷ At this time, while also performing his administrative duties, he also learned to be an archeologist and museum curator largely through a process of apprenticeships, working alongside some of the most accomplished foreign and local practitioners of his time. He served as an apprentice to established museum archeologists including Demosthene Baltazzi, for example, whom he helped identify, classify, and record the moveable archeological items shipped to the museum from provincial authorities.³⁸ Macridy also occasionally guided and

³⁴ On the history of the Ottoman Imperial Museum see: Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

³⁵ For Macridy's correspondence with Halil Bey See: Edhem Eldem, "Theodor Makridi Bey ve 1907 Boğazköy Kazısı," in *The Discovery of an Anatolian Empire*, ed. M. Doğan Alparslan, A. Schachner, and M. Alparslan (Istanbul: Türk Eskiçağ Bilimleri Enstitüsü, n.d.), 163–68.

³⁶ Grigoriadis, "Developing Archaeology and Museology," 4–5.

³⁷ Aziz Ogan, "Th. Makridi'nin Hatırasına," *Bellekten* 5 (1941): 163–69.

³⁸ Ogan, "Th. Makridi'nin Hatırasına," 163; Baltazzi was one of the first Ottoman archaeologists and a senior member of the Ottoman Imperial Museum administration, who belonged to a

escorted foreign delegations or significant visitors to the museum.³⁹ During his time as secretary to the French Language Secretariat he also served as commissioner on excavations organized by foreign missions, including ones organized by Austrian and German archeologists, on behalf of the Ottoman Imperial Museum.⁴⁰ This position nominally entailed facilitating the excavations from a logistics perspective and ensuring that the Ottoman legislation on antiquities was observed, namely that the share of artefacts belonging to the Ottoman state were shipped to Istanbul for display in the museum.⁴¹ Macridy, however, also became involved in the excavation themselves, learning from some of the most prominent archeologists of his time, including the German archeologists Otto Puchstein and Hugo Winckler.

By 1902, ten years after entering the museum service, Macridy directed his first excavation (between 1902 – 1905), in Sidon. He then went on to lead and to participate in several digs in diverse locations of the Ottoman Empire, unearthing Hellenistic, Byzantine, Roman,

leading Greek-Levantine family in Izmir. Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 5.

³⁹ Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 5.

⁴⁰ Macridy served as commissioner on the following excavations: The Austrian archeological mission, under Otto Benndorf, in Ephesus (Ayasoluk) (1897, 1898, 1902 – 1903, 1905 – 1906); The German excavations conducted by Otto Puchstein in Baalbek and Palmyra (1900 – 1902) and Sidon (1902); Excavations at Boğazköy near the central Anatolian town of Çorum, led by the German archeologist Hugo Winckler (1906 – 1907 and 1911 – 1912). Grigoriadis suggests that Macridy particularly distinguished himself at these latter excavations. Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 5–6.

⁴¹ Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 5.

Ancient Greek, Hittite, Phoenician, and Islamic finds.⁴² He also published extensively on these archeological findings.⁴³

Although Macridy spent a considerable amount of his time at excavations in far-flung regions of the Ottoman Empire, he also worked at the Ottoman Imperial Museum, as a curator. Though his curatorial activities are less well documented than his career as an archeologist, scholars have recently noted that he worked on the museum's Islamic collections, discussed further below.⁴⁴ In 1907, he was promoted from his position as secretary to the French Language Secretariat to conservator, and in 1919 to the position of Office of Classification of Ancient Objects.⁴⁵ An obituary written by the archeologist Charles Picard, who had excavated alongside

⁴² Macridy led excavations at the following sites: Sidon (1902 – 1905, 1913); Raqqa; Notion, Claros, and Colophon (1897 and 1904, and in Notion again in 1910); Alacahöyük near Çorum (1907, 1913); a sanctuary of Artemis on the Aegean island of Thassos (1909); A Hellenistic tomb (known today as the Tomb of Macridy Bey) near the town of Langaza (Langadas) in the outskirts of Thessaloniki (1910); the Byzantine ruins of Hebdomon in Makrıköy/Bakırköy, a suburb of Istanbul (1910, 1914, 1916), Daskyleion on the southern coast of the Marmara Sea (1911); the site of the Apollo Clarios sanctuary between Colophon and Notion, alongside Charles Picard (1913); in 1921, during the Allied occupation of Istanbul, Macridy also participated in the excavations of the French archaeological mission in Istanbul, particularly at the Golden Gate at Yedikule and at Seddülbahir in the Dardanelles. Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 6–8. On the excavations in Raqqa see: Aysin Yoltar-Yildirim, “Raqqa: The Forgotten Excavation of an Islamic Site in Syria by the Ottoman Imperial Museum in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Muqarnas* 30, no. 1 (2013): 73–93; Filiz Tütüncü Çağlar, *From Raqqa with Love: The Raqqa Excavations by the Ottoman Imperial Museum*, Dissertation, Department of Art History and Visual Studies (British Columbia, Canada: University of Victoria, 2017).

⁴³ For a comprehensive list of Macridy's publications see Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 15–16.

⁴⁴ Macridy had been involved in the classification and curation of the Imperial Museum's Islamic art collections in 1908, when they was moved to the Tiled Pavilion, one of the Imperial Museum's buildings, and then again in the late 1920s. Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 7–8.

⁴⁵ Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 8.

Macridy in 1913, indicates that Macridy also served as deputy director of the museum, under Halil Bey.⁴⁶

Macridy continued to excavate and to work as a curator after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, in Republican Turkey, and retired from the museum in 1930. He then took up his position as founding director of the Benaki Museum, where he worked until his death in 1940.⁴⁷

The Benaki Museum, which was privately funded and administered, and carried the Benaki family name, could be viewed as a vanity project, in the tradition of collectors who, as Hans Haacke aptly puts it, built “pyramids to themselves.”⁴⁸ However, as I argue, the museum functioned to a great extent as a national museum. Benakis bequeathed both the museum building as well as the works of art that it contained to the Greek state and, as I elucidate in this dissertation, his museum also played a significant role in crafting national narratives. Indeed, Benakis often referred to his museum as a national institution, underlining in a letter to Martin, for example, that “At my father’s death my sisters and I decided to present the *Nation* with his house to be used as a Museum”⁴⁹ (my emphasis). Benakis’ contemporaries also perceived the museum in this way. The German dealer Jacob Hirsch (1874 – 1955), for example, who donated

⁴⁶ Charles Picard, “Theodoros Macridy-Bey († 1941),” *Revue Archéologique* 21 (1944): 48–50.

⁴⁷ Grigoriadis suggests that Macridy moved to Athens “following permission from the Turkish government,” and that he “benefitted from the Greek-Turkish rapprochement, which was underscored by the signature of the 1929 – 1930 Ankara Agreements.” He does not however elaborate on this point. Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 8.

⁴⁸ Hans Haacke, “Museums: Managers of Consciousness,” in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 408.

⁴⁹ Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, September 17, 1929, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

a series of Byzantine ceramics to the museum, noted that he would be happy to be able to contribute to “your great patriotic work, that is to enrich your homeland with a museum.”⁵⁰

As scholars have noted, museums have been widely used as effective tools for propagating ideology, including by states. In “Museums: Managers of Consciousness,” Hans Haacke underlines that these institutions have been used by governments, private individuals, or corporations to broadcast their systems of belief.⁵¹ As he notes, while museums may seem to be engaged in ostensibly harmless and trivial activities – covered in newspapers under sections with innocuous titles such as ‘culture,’ ‘entertainment,’ ‘lifestyle,’ ‘arts and leisure,’ – they are in fact deeply political and by no means inconsequential. He suggests that governments and corporations, which frequently fund museums, “have understood, sometimes better than the people who work in the leisure-suits of culture, that the term ‘culture’ camouflages social and political consequences... .”⁵²

Haacke maintains that museums, as well as other institutions that stage exhibitions, belong to what he calls “the consciousness industry.”⁵³ They are in the business of inculcating opinions and attitudes or, as he puts it, “of molding and channeling consciousness.”⁵⁴ As he further notes, this form of indoctrination is pervasive in liberal societies, despite the popular myth that only totalitarian regimes behave in this way. However, according to Haacke, in

⁵⁰ Jacob Hirsch to Antonis Benakis, November 6, 1929, Binder 2 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

⁵¹ Haacke, “Museums: Managers of Consciousness,” 406–408, 411.

⁵² Haacke, “Museums: Managers of Consciousness,” 405–406.

⁵³ Haacke, “Museums: Managers of Consciousness,” 401.

⁵⁴ Haacke, “Museums: Managers of Consciousness,” 406, 411.

nondictatorial regimes, the induction into and the maintenance of a particular way of thinking and seeing must be performed with more subtlety in order to succeed.

In “The Exhibitionary Complex,” Tony Bennett similarly argues that museums, as well as other institutions of exhibition, have played a pivotal role since the nineteenth century in the formation of the modern nation state: they were remarkably influential cultural technologies used as channels for articulating and propagating the “messages of power.”⁵⁵ As Bennett points out, before the nineteenth century, collections were largely privately owned and their access was restricted: they were largely reserved for the private pleasure of princes and aristocrats.⁵⁶ In the nineteenth century, however, significant quantities of objects – of both cultural and scientific nature – were increasingly transferred into more public arenas and opened up to progressively larger and undifferentiated audiences.⁵⁷ Many collections also came to be owned, administered (albeit often indirectly, through boards of trustees, and by virtue of their control over appointments) and funded – and thus regulated – by the state.⁵⁸

Indeed, Bennett suggests that museums are one of the fundamental tools of the state that escaped Foucault’s notice. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault analyzes the asylum, the clinic, the prison, and the school as key modern institutions used by governments to manifest their

⁵⁵ In addition to museums, Bennett also analyses other institutions of exhibition such as galleries and national and international exhibitions; Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 419.

⁵⁶ Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” 426.

⁵⁷ Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” 426.

⁵⁸ Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” 419, 426; see also: Nicholas Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts: A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760-1981* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1982), 8–13, 46–47.

power.⁵⁹ In Bennett's estimation, museums too, are "vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power," and that they worked in conjunction with these other instruments of authority.⁶⁰ Unlike the institutions that Foucault analyzes, however, whose primary goal was to make the populace governable, museums addressed the need of bourgeois democratic polities to "enlist active popular support for the values and objectives enshrined in the state" and to "win their hearts and mind."⁶¹ Their methods were also different: rather than by pedagogy or punishment, their hold over their publics depended on their voluntary participation, working by example, entertainment, with subtlety, and through encouragement.⁶² Public museums, which provided a context for permanent or lasting displays, offered the modern state an enduring medium for communicating its narratives throughout society.⁶³

The Benaki Museum stands apart from most "national" museums in that it was privately funded. However, as Benakis explained to the Belgian Byzantine historian, Henri Gregoire, in Greece private benefactors like himself often acted on behalf of the near-bankrupt state: "You know Greece well enough to know better than I that, unfortunately, there is a lot to be done here: We have urgent needs everywhere, and, the government, being too poor to help us, all financial aid must come from a few individuals, including myself."⁶⁴ Martin, on the other hand,

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 115–116.

⁶⁰ Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 413, 439; see also: Douglas Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins," in *The Anti-Aesthetic; Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Washington: Bay Press, 1985), 45.

⁶¹ Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 415–416, 439.

⁶² Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 419, 438–439.

⁶³ Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 414.

⁶⁴ Antonis Benakis to Henri Gregoire, May 5, 1930, Binder 2 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

who evidently recognized that Benakis acted in the interest of his homeland, concluded one of his letters to him by imploring him not to overwork himself anymore because “You are necessary for Your country.”⁶⁵

The Benaki Museum was created at a decisive moment in history, a time that saw the final dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the Turkish Republic, which has had a lasting impact on Greece to this day. In the decades before the inauguration of the Benaki Museum, the Greek state gained substantial territories from the Ottoman Empire, while also failing to integrate other regions that it had long coveted, into its national borders. Indeed, the late nineteenth century saw the growth of the Megali Idea or “Great Idea,” the national expansionist movement and irredentist vision whose aim was to “liberate” the large number of “unredeemed” Greek populations still living under Ottoman rule. Advocates of this ideology sought to conquer and integrate large swaths of Ottoman territories into a “Greater Greece,” and to “reinstate” Constantinople/Istanbul, which had been the capital of the Byzantine Empire, as its capital.⁶⁶ The greatest champion of this ambition to create a “Greater Greece” was prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos.⁶⁷

Venizelos aggressively pursued the romantic vision of the ‘Great Idea.’⁶⁸ During the Balkan Wars (1912 – 1913) the Greek state increased its territories by seventy percent, acquiring lands that came to be known as “New” Greece – including Macedonia and Epirus to the north of the existing Greek state – and some of the Aegean islands, and grew its population from

⁶⁵ Fredrik Robert Martin to Antonis Benakis, June 14, 1929, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

⁶⁶ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93.

⁶⁷ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93.

⁶⁸ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 75–79, 83, 104–106.

approximately 2,800,000 to 4,800,000.⁶⁹ Antonis and his brother Alexandros (Alexander, “Alec”) also participated in Greece’s expansionist project: like hundreds of Egyptian Greeks, they volunteered to fight for Greece in the First Balkan War against the Ottoman Empire (as well as the earlier, short-lived, and ultimately failed Greco-Turkish War of 1897).⁷⁰

During the First World War, Venizelos pursued further territorial gains, turning his attention to Asia Minor, which had large Greek populations. The main areas of Greek settlement (through 1922) were in Constantinople, on the coastal regions of the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean, in Cappadocia, and in the Pontos region on the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea.⁷¹ In 1919, following the Ottoman defeat in WWI, but before any agreement on the partitioning of the Empire could be reached, the Greek army occupied Smyrna and its surrounding regions, thus making – if only incompletely – the ambition of creating a “Greater Greece” a reality.⁷² Smyrna had been the most important center of Greek life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a Greek population larger than that of Athens.⁷³ As such, it had been a major focus of irredentist ambition. When the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) formally extended the Greek

⁶⁹ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 81, 83.

⁷⁰ Σουλογιάννης, *Αντώνης Εμμ. Μπενάκης*, 77; Kitroeff, *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt*, 72. Mansel suggests that the names of the Alexandria Greeks who fought in these wars are inscribed on memorial tablets in the courtyard of the city’s Orthodox patriarchate; Philip Mansel, *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012), 139.

⁷¹ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93.

⁷² In the first year of the Paris peace conference (1919 – 1920), at the end of WWI, before any agreement could be reached, the Italian army landed in Antalya and was headed for Smyrna/Izmir. Britain, France and the United States – apprehensive of Italian aspirations in the area – agreed to the Greek occupation of Smyrna/Izmir, ostensibly in order to protect the local Greek population from Turkish reprisals; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93. See also: Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919-1922* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

⁷³ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 104–106.

administration of the Smyrna region for a further five years, Venizelos was hailed by Greeks as the triumphant architect of a Greece of “the two continents and the five seas,” the two continents being Europe and Asia and the five seas being the Mediterranean, the Aegean, the Ionian, the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea.⁷⁴

Within a few years, however, these territorial gains were reversed and any hopes of fulfilling the “Great Idea” were quashed. The occupation of Smyrna had instigated the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 – 1922, in which the Greek army vied with Mustafa Kemal’s forces – who saw this battle as their war of Independence – for control of Asia Minor. In 1922 the war ended with Greek defeat and the creation of the new Turkish Republic: the Greek army was forced to withdraw and the Greeks of Smyrna, the city at the center of the battles and the site of a major fire, evacuated the city.

The Treaty of Lausanne (1923), signed by Greece and Turkey at the end of the war, disentangled the two nations. The two states agreed to exchange the Orthodox Christians of Turkey with the Muslim populations of Greece, as a means of solving Greek-Turkish antagonism.⁷⁵ A momentous enterprise – which took place in 1923 and 1924 – it involved the compulsory relocation of almost a million and a half people.⁷⁶ It resulted in an immense influx of refugees – some 1,100,000 Orthodox Christians from Turkey – into the kingdom of Greece and

⁷⁴ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–95.

⁷⁵ This included the large Orthodox populations on the coastal regions of the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean, Cappadocia, and the Pontos region on the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea and the large Muslim populations from the island of Crete.

⁷⁶ Clogg notes that the exchange of populations was not an entirely novel solution to Greek-Turkish antagonism. He suggests that Venizelos had proposed such a measure, albeit on a more limited scale, on the eve of the First World War. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 99.

the transfer of some 380,000 Muslims from Greece to Turkey.⁷⁷ Only the Orthodox Christians of Constantinople/Istanbul and the islands of Imvros and Tenedos, as well as the Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace, were exempt from the exchange.⁷⁸

The Greek defeat in the war that ultimately ended Greek presence in the East was regarded, from the Greek perspective, as a tragic loss. The towns that the refugees left behind were conceived of as “lost homelands,” and the outcome of this war is still referred to in Greek simply as the “catastrophe” of Asia Minor.⁷⁹

The Exchange also contributed significantly to the state’s ethnic homogenization, making Greece one of the most ethnically uniform countries in the Balkans.⁸⁰ Many parts of the country, particularly those parts of “new” Greece gained during the Balkan Wars (1912 – 1913), were extremely diverse into the twentieth century, including many ethnically and linguistically diverse populations.⁸¹ In addition to Greeks, who were the minority in most of these regions, there were also many Slavs, Muslims (mainly Turks), Vlachs, and Ladino-speaking Sephardic Jews.⁸² This reality, however, changed following the Exchange of Populations and the consequent expulsion

⁷⁷ These numbers also reflect refugees that came to Greece because of the war. In this period there were also approximately 100,000 Greek refugees from revolutionary Russia and from Bulgaria. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 99–101.

⁷⁸ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 91–99. Exceptions to the compulsory exchange were also the Albanian-speaking Chams of Epirus; Giorgos Margaritis, *Anepithymētoi Sympatriōtes: Stoicheia Gia Tēn Katastrophē Tōn Meionotētōn Tēs Helladas: Eurairoi, Tsamēdes* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2005), 133–215.

⁷⁹ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 101.

⁸⁰ As Clogg notes, Greece still had a small Muslim (predominantly Turkish), Jewish, Slav Macedonian, Vlach and Albanian minorities which remained a sensitive issue; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 104.

⁸¹ Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2005), 1 – 12.

⁸² Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 81, 83.

of the Muslim populations of Greece and the arrival of the Christian populations of Turkey. The refugees were predominantly resettled in these regions, thus making Greeks the majority population in some of these territories for the first time.⁸³

At the same time, however, the large number of refugees who arrived in Greece from Asia Minor also presented the challenge of integration to the Greek state. Even though the Greek army had waged a war in the name of these Ottoman-Greeks, once they arrived in their new homeland, they encountered considerable prejudice, and it took decades before they were brought into the mainstream of Greek society.⁸⁴ Seen to carry with them evidence of Turkish culture, their Greek identity was often questioned by “native” Greeks.

The Benaki Museum was created at this pivotal moment in Greek history. At this time, the museum’s collections included objects from the Greek war of Independence, Byzantine art, Coptic art, Hellenistic art from Egypt, Chinese art, and a very small collection of ancient Greek art. However, Ottoman art represented a large part of the museum’s holdings. These included ceramics and textiles from Ottoman Asia Minor, which formed part of the museum’s Islamic collections. Additionally, there was an assemblage of late-Ottoman ecclesiastical objects, brought to Greece by the refugees of the Exchange of Populations, as well as an expansive collection of Ottoman-period Greek folk costumes.

⁸³ At the end of the First World War, Greeks had constituted less than 20 percent of the population of western Thrace, with its large Muslim element. On the completion of the exchange, they made up over 60 per cent. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 103–104.

⁸⁴ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 101; see also: Bruce Clark, *Twice a Stranger: The Mass Expulsions That Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 1 - 20.

As I argue, the museum carefully selected the objects within these collections and framed them in a manner that produced a highly ideological image of Ottoman art and of the recent Ottoman past in an effort to sustain certain nationalist myths crucial to nation building. Many of these myths have had a lasting impact on Greek perceptions of history and culture. As I elaborate below, the museum employed its Ottoman collections to make a case for the diachronic persistence of a Greek *national* culture, for the “Greekness” of the large number of Ottoman-Christian populations who were recently integrated into the Greek state, as well as for Greek rights over Ottoman territories.

My approach to the Benaki and its collections is informed by an understanding, explored by various theorists, that museums, though seemingly neutral, are ideological institutions, and the objects they house do not have an objective or static meaning. Rather, museums construct narratives about and with objects that are inevitably partial and biased. As Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago argue in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, museums are evidentiary institutions that disseminate knowledge. They do not, however, represent ‘natural’ historical truths or consensus, nor are they neutral institutions. Rather, they construct such truths: they are staged environments in which museum objects - dismembered from other contexts – are reassembled in new configurations within a museum, labelled, classified, and staged or framed by museum curators to be ‘read’ in specific ways.⁸⁵ As they further argue, museums are thus key sites for the construction and perpetuation of cultural realities and of modern identity with active agency to “ground, establish, and transform” the lives of individuals and communities.⁸⁶ In

⁸⁵ Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, “What Are Museums For?,” in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. D. Preziosi and C. Farago (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 2.

⁸⁶ Preziosi and Farago, “What Are Museums For?,” 1.

museums, objects come to serve roles in the generation of narratives of origins and descent, of cultural hierarchies, and of imagined pasts, and give form to memory.⁸⁷

As Haacke also argues, every museum is perforce an ideologically partial institution. He rejects the nineteenth-century doctrine, under whose guise many museums still operate today, of “art for art’s sake,” which postulates that art is self-sufficient, that it is impervious to the social environment, and that it does not (and should not) reflect the squabbles of the day. Blatantly rebuking this notion, he states that “obviously,” adherents of this doctrine “are mistaken in their assumption that products of consciousness can be created in isolation.”⁸⁸ Rather, he maintains that art works themselves are ideological and, crucially for the purposes of this study, so are the way these works are presented to the public.⁸⁹

In *Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting*, Mieke Bal elaborates on the mechanics of *how* collections produce certain narratives or bodies of knowledge.⁹⁰ She argues that, when a collector, who is the meaning-producing agent or narrator, inserts an object into a collection, the object is “radically deprived” of its original function and inherent value or nature and gains *new* meaning.⁹¹ Within a collection an object is inserted into relations – or a *syntagm* – with other objects, where it functions as a sign. This syntagm of signs is the body of the “narrative” that emerges.⁹²

⁸⁷ Preziosi and Farago, “What Are Museums For?,” 1.

⁸⁸ Haacke, “Museums: Managers of Consciousness,” 406.

⁸⁹ Haacke, “Museums: Managers of Consciousness,” 405–406.

⁹⁰ Mieke Bal, “Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting,” in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁹¹ Bal, “Telling Objects,” 96–97.

⁹² Bal, “Telling Objects,” 97.

As Bal points out, this contingent meaning of objects and the function of collections of objects as “narratives,” is thrown into relief if we consider how changes in the ordering of extant collections result in the creation of different meanings. If a collection of objects that remain virtually the same is reordered and set up in a different manner, it conveys through this replotting an entirely different conception. In other words, while objects as *things* remain the same, the objects as *signs* – once inserted into a different syntagm in relation to the rest of the collection – become radically different.⁹³ Similarly, an object may serve two entirely different meanings or functions if placed in two different collections.⁹⁴

Hayden White’s analysis of the writing of history as a form of “fiction-making,” in *The Fictions of Factual Representation*, has also informed my methodology.⁹⁵ Although White engages with historiography – the *writing* of history – his assessment is also pertinent to the creation of collections and museums, which also participated in the construction and representation of history. Indeed, as Bennett points out history (as well as art history) are among the “disciplinary knowledges” deployed within museums.⁹⁶

White argues that the idea that one can write history free of ideology, to remain “true to the facts,” to arrive at an “objective” truth and knowledge, is an illusion.⁹⁷ Indeed, he contends that the idea that fiction is the antithesis of fact, which is commonplace in Western thought

⁹³ Bal, “Telling Objects,” 98.

⁹⁴ Bal, “Telling Objects,” 100.

⁹⁵ Hayden White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 23.

⁹⁶ Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” 413, 428, 432.

⁹⁷ White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” 25, 35.

today, only arose as recently as the nineteenth century.⁹⁸ As White points out, facts, or the fragments of the past, exist only as a “congeries of continuously related fragments.” The historian extracts these fragments from the unprocessed historical record and fashions them into an ordered whole to constitute the historical discourse, namely the “story.”⁹⁹ In other words, past facts do not speak for themselves but rather the historian speaks on their behalf.

Crucially, White compares the way that historians put these past facts together to the way that imaginative writers – poets, novelists, playwrights – put together figments of their imaginations. As he points out, historians and imaginative writers both provide verbal images of ‘reality,’ and in doing so utilize precisely the same linguistic tools, techniques, and strategies.¹⁰⁰ Although novelists might be dealing only with imaginary events, whereas historians are dealing with real ones, in both cases – although historians rarely make this explicit – the process of fusing these events into a comprehensible totality, capable of serving as the object of a representation, is a poetic one. As he further notes, the enabling “matrix” – the “story” – that allows historians to relate past facts is inevitably fictional and ideological.¹⁰¹ As he explains, there is no value-neutral mode of emplotment, explanation, or description of any field of events, in part, because all interpretation but also all language is politically “contaminated,” and entails a specific posture before the world.¹⁰²

Just as Bal argues that collections convey different meanings and narratives if they are reordered or reorganized, White similarly points out that different ways of hypotactically

⁹⁸ White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” 23, 25.

⁹⁹ White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” 26.

¹⁰⁰ White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” 22–23, 26.

¹⁰¹ White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” 27.

¹⁰² White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” 29–31, 34.

ordering the same ‘facts’ forth different meanings.¹⁰³ In other words, alternative, mutually exclusive, but equally legitimate descriptions of historical events or a field of facts are possible.¹⁰⁴

Just as historians deal with “facts” that they extract from the historical record, Benakis and his curator dealt with material fragments of the Ottoman past that they acquired on the market as well as through other means. They then fashioned a primarily visual representation of the historical past within the museum, and in some cases in publications, which, as my research shows, was just as fictional, partial, and ideological as any verbal historical narrative. Indeed, all of the curatorial choices they made, including the very objects they selected, the manner in which they staged them in the museum galleries, and the language they used to describe them in the galleries and in museum publications, were politically “contaminated.”

Through some of its Ottoman collections – primarily its collection of costumes and ecclesiastical objects (Chapters 2 and 3) – the museum made the case that Greek culture and art flourished under the Ottomans, both in territories that were integrated into the Greek state as well as regions of Asia Minor, recently forfeited to the Turkish Republic. In other words, the museum demonstrated that Ottoman art was an integral and venerable part of Greek culture and that Greek art persisted in the centuries that followed classical antiquity, including in the centuries of Ottoman rule. In doing so, the museum overtly rejected some of the Orientalist narratives inherent in earlier and more dominant constructions of Greek nationalism. Namely, it dismissed the notion that the recent Ottoman past was one of “shameful” cultural decline, that

¹⁰³ White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” 28.

¹⁰⁴ White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” 30.

the classical period was the pinnacle of Greek cultural and aesthetic achievement, and that modern Greeks were the debased versions of their celebrated forefathers.

Importantly, the museum also produced a highly ideological image of these objects, reframing Ottoman material culture – which was the product of an imperial past and of a multiethnic society – as distinctly “national,” as culturally pure and largely free of Turkish influence. In other words, the museum artificially divorced Greek culture from Ottoman/Turkish culture and forged a *national* history out of the recent Ottoman past. In doing so, the museum helped create and perpetuate the fiction that Greeks had a *national* culture during the Ottoman period that was distinct from the Turkish one. Though largely unexamined in modern scholarship, this understanding persists to this day.

In some cases, particularly in its collections of Ottoman objects that belonged to the refugees from Asia Minor (Chapter 2), the museum also included items that exhibited elements of Turkish culture as an integral part of “Greek” national culture. I demonstrate that the museum employed these collections to make claims about the “Greekness” of these large populations, who had only recently been Ottoman subjects and who faced significant prejudice in their new homeland. In other words, it contributed to the process of forging national subjects out of these new populations and integrating them into Greek society.

The museum also employed its collections to make claims about the “Greekness” of Ottoman territories, including regions that were incorporated into Greek national borders as well as regions in Asia Minor that, though once coveted by the Greek state, had been forfeited to the Turkish Republic. Through the framing of its costume collections (Chapter 3), for example, the museum created an idealized image of Greece as an exclusively Greek and religiously Christian

territory. While this vision of ethnic and religious homogeneity conformed to a great extent with the realities of Greek society post-exchange, many parts of Greece had been extremely diverse into the twentieth century. The museum however anachronistically projected this fiction back into the Ottoman past, thus asserting the “Greekness” of regions, many of which had only recently been gained by the Greek state.

The museum also insisted on the premise of the “Megali Idea,” sustaining the myth that large swaths of the Ottoman Empire that the Greek state had only recently relinquished to the newly founded Republic of Turkey were predominantly, historically and – by implication – rightfully Greek. The museum did so primarily through its collections from Ottoman Asia Minor (Chapter 1 and 2), employing them to emphasize the historical presence of Greeks in these regions, and by portraying the culture of these territories as heavily Greek and Christian. Importantly, in doing so, the museum also included Islamic art in its conceptions of Greek culture, thus forging a narrative that was eventually eclipsed.

Importantly, Benakis hired Macridy to be the director and curator of his museum to help forge these narratives. Macridy had spent his entire career at the Ottoman Imperial Museum, an institution that had amassed vast holdings of the Empire’s artistic heritage, including collections of Islamic art and Ottoman costumes, and also produced scholarship about this art. Benakis likely chose Macridy to direct his museum, in part, because he was intimately familiar with the Ottoman museum’s collections, which corresponded with the Greek museum’s own holdings, as well as with the Ottoman government’s scholarly output. As I demonstrate, however, once employed by the Greek museum, Macridy significantly diverged from these earlier

collections and art historical studies, selectively acquiring objects and staging them in a manner that served Greek, rather than Ottoman, political ambitions.

In the dissertation, I highlight the extent to which Macridy reframed the narratives that the Ottoman government had forged via its collections. I thus demonstrate that the Greek museum's own narratives, many of which still shape current conceptions of Greek history, were indeed constructions, and that the Benaki Museum played an integral role in forging and perpetuating them. At the same time, however, (particularly in Chapter 3) I also underline the extent to which the Greek institution relied on Ottoman studies and collections as a source of knowledge. This is particularly significant to note because scholars writing about Greek modernity, such as those cited above, have almost unanimously assumed that Greek cultural elites relied on European bodies of knowledge, cultural narratives, and historiography. While these scholars have demonstrated that European visions of Greece had an immense influence on Greek self-perception, they have largely overlooked Greek engagement with and dependence on Ottoman sources. Indeed, the very fact that scholars have ignored these intellectual continuities is a result of the relative success of Greek national narratives that have created the impression that Greeks had little to do with the Ottoman Empire. In other words, these nationalist narratives have permeated the very scholarship that purports to unpack their construction.

Importantly, Macridy, because he was from Constantinople/Istanbul and was thus exempt from the Exchange of Populations, continued his archeological, curatorial, and scholarly work in republican Turkey.¹⁰⁵ After the war of 1919 – 1922 and Istanbul's Allied occupation, he

¹⁰⁵ Grigoriadis, "Developing Archaeology and Museology," 8–9; Picard, "Theodoros Macridy-Bey († 1941)."

faced a disciplinary investigation by the new Kemalist administration. As he was found not to have cooperated with the occupation forces or to have been involved in any anti-Turkish activities between 1918 and 1923, his position at the museum was confirmed in January 1923.¹⁰⁶ During the decade he spent in Athens working for the Benaki Museum, Macridy continued to travel to Istanbul and to work with colleagues in Turkey.¹⁰⁷ He would have thus been acquainted if not actively involved with Turkish scholars and institutions that were forging Turkish nationalist interpretations of Ottoman art. In the dissertation (particularly in Chapter 2) I demonstrate how, in his work at the Benaki Museum, Macridy diverged from these Turkish nationalist interpretations, while also suggesting that he may have been informed by Turkish scholars who were promoting the artistic heritage of this shared Ottoman past. Although less well documented than the museum's reliance on Ottoman sources, I draw attention to these possible intellectual exchanges that have likewise been obscured by nationalist histories.

In analyzing the narratives that the museum put forth in the first decades of its existence, I relied heavily on sources that allowed me to examine the objects that the museum chose to amass, and the way that it presented them to the public in the museum galleries and through publications. Importantly, these differ vastly from the museum's current acquisition policy and curatorial strategies, and locating the types of sources that allowed me to glean the narratives the museum put forth in its original iteration, was not an entirely straightforward process. While considerable material from the first decades of the museum's foundation survives in the Benaki Museum, these records reside in various museum departments and buildings, many of them

¹⁰⁶ Grigoriadis, "Developing Archaeology and Museology,"8.

¹⁰⁷ Grigoriadis, "Developing Archaeology and Museology,"9.

uncatalogued and not publicly accessible. In assembling my sources, I therefore depended to a great extent on the generosity and guidance of curators and administrators in the museum today, as well as on their knowledge of the early history of their institution, which is inevitably partial.

I initially spent a considerable amount of time reading Benakis' correspondence, which makes up the bulk of the museum's archival holdings from this early period and is an invaluable resource particularly for understanding Benakis' expansive roster of international contacts. Ultimately, however, I relied more heavily on sources that I assembled over time, which more effectively allowed me to glean the narratives that the museum put forth, including ones that allowed me to recreate the museum's collections and installations from the 1930s. These included the first guidebook of the museum, whose English language edition was published in 1936, which includes a meticulous inventory of the Benaki Museum's works of art and spatial arrangements. I also employed an undated album of archival photographs, housed, though uncatalogued, in the Benaki Museum's library, which depict the first installations of the museum. By analyzing these sources in detail, and in conjunction with one another, I was able to reconstruct with relative precision the museum's original collections as well as the curatorial strategies and organization of the collections.

I also located in the Benaki Museum library publications produced by the museum in the first decades after its inauguration. These publications, as well as the museum guidebook, represent an important avenue through which the institution disseminated its collections, thus allowing me to further interpret how the museum framed its works of art, both visually – through illustrations – and through descriptions and more expansive historical narratives. As Benakis' correspondence indicates, the *Guide* was intended to be read by visitors as they perused the

museum exhibits and thus played an integral role in shaping the reception of the objects on view.¹⁰⁸ Benakis also used his guidebook as a way of disseminating knowledge of his collections, regularly sending it to people, such as other collectors, with whom he corresponded.¹⁰⁹ The Greek edition of the *Guide* was published first, in 1935, and was then followed by the English and French translations which were published in 1936.¹¹⁰ In Benakis' correspondence numerous references are made to the preparation of a German translation of the guidebook, though this does not seem to have ultimately been published.¹¹¹ Benakis also relayed in some of his letters the sheer effort that went into producing the translated editions, in particular, thus also indicating the importance that was accorded to these volumes. As he noted in one of his letters, the French and English editions were taking a long time to produce as they required innumerable

¹⁰⁸ Antonis Benakis to M. Chevallier, Paris, August 29, 1935, "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

¹⁰⁹ Antonis Benakis to Burton Y. Berry, Tehran, December 23, 1935, "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to Lieut. Colonel R. H. H. Brocklebank, Alveston House Stratford-on-Avon, August 11, 1936, "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to M. Chevallier, Paris, August 29, 1935, "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to Lillian Barnhart, West Virginia, USA, August 11, 1936, "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to R. Devonshire, Cairo, July 27, 193[5], "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹¹⁰ The guidebook was translated into English by Shirley Atchley, a British diplomat located in Athens. Antonis Benakis to Shirley Atchley, January 2, 1936, "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

¹¹¹ Antonis Benakis to Burton Y. Berry, Tehran, December 23, 1935, "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to R. Devonshire, Cairo, July 27, 193[5], "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

corrections because the workmen who set the type in the printshop did not know French and English.¹¹²

After reconstructing Benakis' milieu and identifying the more prolific collectors and scholars within it, in part via Benakis' correspondence, I also located scholarship produced by these intellectuals. This allowed me to gain further insight into the politics that motivated the museum's choices.

In each of the following chapters, I focus on one of the Ottoman-period collections in the Benaki Museum, including the collection of Islamic art, that of late-Ottoman ecclesiastical objects, and that of folk costumes.

Chapter 1 engages with the Benaki Museum's collection of Islamic ceramics and textiles from Ottoman Asia Minor. The museum defined these collections as part of the cultural heritage, not of the Ottoman Turks, but of Greeks and other Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire. In doing so, the museum resisted dominant notions of Greek identity and culture that privileged the antique past, which were premised on the presumed cultural superiority of the classical – read “European” – past, and the relative inferiority of Ottoman culture. It also resisted existing constructions of Ottoman art, which variably defined it as “Islamic” or “Turkish,” as promoted by institutions like the Ottoman Imperial Museum, and later the Istanbul Archeology Museum. However, in elaborating on these revisionist narratives, the museum continued to rely upon existing notions of Turkish cultural inferiority. The museum's framing of the material culture of Ottoman Asia Minor as part of Greek culture was informed, in part, by the Greek occupation of

¹¹² Antonis Benakis to R. Devonshire, Cairo, November 11, 1935, “Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

Asia Minor during the Greco-Turkish war of 1919 – 1922. After the Ottoman defeat in WWI Greek control over Asia Minor – and its integration into a “Greater Greece” – was within the realm of possibility. Indeed, through its collections the Benaki Museum, which portrayed the culture of Ottoman Asia Minor as heavily Christian, continued to bolster the vision of a “Greater Greece” in the decade that followed the Greek defeat in the Greco-Turkish war, the ultimate failure of the Greek expansionist project, and the integration of Asia Minor into the new Turkish state.

Chapter 2 investigates an assemblage of late Ottoman ecclesiastical objects, dating from the latter half of the seventeenth century through the nineteenth century, that originally belonged to Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire – from regions of modern-day Turkey once coveted by the Greek state – which were brought to Greece by the refugees of the Exchange of Populations of 1923. The museum, which exhibited these objects as art, questioned the decline of Ottoman-period production, which was once fundamental to Greek cultural narratives. In doing so, however, the museum reframed these objects as distinctly “national” objects, in part by representing them as a continuation of Byzantine art and attributing them predominantly to Greek authors. By representing the culture of these regions as an integral part of Greek heritage, the museum preserved the memory – while also insisting on the premise – of the “Megali Idea:” that these regions, which had been inhabited by Greeks, constituted part of the Greek “nation.” At the same time, by demonstrating that the traditions of the recently arrived refugees – who were seen to carry with them evidence of “Ottoman/Turkish” culture, and whose Greek identity was often questioned by “native” Greeks – was constitutive of Greek civilization, the Benaki Museum also contributed to the process, important at the time, of forging national subjects out of these new Greek populations. Finally, in forging these nationalist narratives, the Benaki

Museum may have been informed by Turkish scholars – such as Celal Esad Arseven (d. 1971) – who were also questioning narratives of late-Ottoman artistic decline – which were also central to the historiography of Islamic art – while concomitantly also making a case for the “Turkishness” – rather than the “Greekness” – of this shared Ottoman past. The chapter thus highlights intellectual channels between Turkish and Greek cultural elites, which are otherwise obscured by the very nationalist histories that artificially divorced Greek culture from Ottoman/Turkish culture, which are the legacy of institutions like the Benaki Museum.

Chapter 3 examines the museum’s collection of Greek folk costumes – which date predominantly to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – as well as their framing in *Hellenic National Costumes*, a two-volume compendium and study of the costumes, published by the museum in 1948 and 1954, which was illustrated by Nicolas Sperling and written by Angeliki Hadzimichali. Through these collections, the Benaki Museum reified the notion that Greeks had a venerable artistic tradition in the recent Ottoman past – one that, however, the museum defined as *distinctly* “national,” a continuation of antique and Byzantine traditions, and free of Turkish influence. In doing so, the museum relied on, but also amended, existing understandings of the Greek peasantry as repositories of antique traditions. Furthermore, through a process of selective collection and presentation, the museum anachronistically projected the fiction of an exclusively Greek and religiously Christian territory, and indeed the very existence of the Greek “nation,” back into the Ottoman past, thus asserting the “Greekness” of regions, many of which had only recently been gained by the Greek state. In making these arguments, the Benaki Museum reframed – but also heavily relied upon – the narratives of an earlier Ottoman study of costumes, the *Elbise-i Osmaniyye: Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie*, produced by the

Ottoman state for the 1873 World Exposition in Vienna. The chapter thus highlights the intellectual continuities between Ottoman and Greek bodies of knowledge that have otherwise been severed, a consequence of the very nationalist histories – constructed by institutions like the Benaki Museum – which have artificially distanced Greek culture from Ottoman/Turkish culture.

CHAPTER ONE

ISLAMIC ART OF OTTOMAN ASIA MINOR

When the Benaki Museum opened to the public in 1931, it included a large collection of Islamic art, with a conspicuous emphasis on ceramics and textiles produced in Ottoman Asia Minor. The museum defined this art primarily as the cultural heritage, not of the Ottoman Turks, but of Greeks and other Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire. In doing so, the Benaki Museum resisted dominant notions of Greek identity and culture that privileged the antique past, that were premised on the presumed cultural superiority of the classical – read “European” – past, and the relative inferiority of Ottoman culture. It also resisted existing construction of Ottoman art, which variably defined it as “Islamic” or “Turkish.” In elaborating on these revisionist narratives, however, the museum continued to rely upon existing notions of Turkish cultural inferiority. The museum’s framing of the material culture of Ottoman Asia Minor as part of Greek culture was informed, in part, by the Greek occupation of Asia Minor during the Greco-Turkish war of 1919 – 1922. Following the Ottoman defeat in WWI, this was a period when the Greek ownership over Asia Minor – and its integration into a “Greater Greece” – was within the realm of possibility. Indeed, through its collections the Benaki Museum, which portrayed the culture of Ottoman Asia Minor as heavily Christian, continued to bolster the vision of a “Greater Greece” in the decade that followed the Greek defeat in the war, the ultimate failure of the Greek expansionist project, and the integration of Asia Minor into the new Turkish state.

Benakis first began collecting Islamic art in Alexandria in the first half of the twentieth century, at a time of growing appreciation of this art. Private individuals as well as museums in

Europe had begun forming collections of Islamic art in the nineteenth century.¹¹³ Within Benakis' lifetime, museums and departments of Islamic art were also formed within the Islamic world including in French North Africa, in the Ottoman Empire – where Theodore Macridy, the Benaki Museum's director was active – as well as in Egypt, where Benakis was located.¹¹⁴ As Benakis' correspondence from Athens indicates, the Greek collector was in touch with many if not all the towering figures of Islamic art, including both scholars and curators, who advanced the understanding and appreciation of Islamic art.

One of these was the Swedish-born Fredrik Robert Martin (1868–1933), who combined the roles of art historian, collector, curator, and dealer, as at the time these divergent roles were not clearly delineated.¹¹⁵ He is widely known today as one of the organizers of the landmark exhibition of Islamic art, the *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst*, held in Munich in 1910, that displayed around 3600 items and advocated for the understanding of objects of Islamic art as “masterpieces.”¹¹⁶ Benakis' library included the lavishly illustrated commemorative catalogue published for that exhibition.¹¹⁷ Benakis' numerous letters to Martin clearly indicate that they knew each other well, updating one another on their latest artistic and scholarly endeavors and

¹¹³ Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art in the West: Categories of Collecting,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gulru Necipoğlu (Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2017), 1172–1195; Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850 – 1950,” in *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850-1950*, ed. Stephen Vernoit (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

¹¹⁴ Shaw, “Islamic Art in Islamic Lands,” 1150–1171.

¹¹⁵ David J Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur Des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880-1910,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 9–38.

¹¹⁶ Andrea Lerner and Avinoam Shalem, eds., *After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition “Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst” Reconsidered* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

¹¹⁷ Friedrich Sarre and Fredrik Robert Martin, eds., *Die Ausstellung von Meisterwerken Muhammedanischer Kunst in München*, 3 and supplement vols. (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1912).

exchanging opinions about other prominent figures in the field of Islamic art.¹¹⁸ It is possible that Benakis met Martin as early as 1896, as the Swedish scholar had excavated at Fustat in Egypt in the winter of that year.¹¹⁹ One letter between Benakis and Martin indicates that Martin had also been to Emmanuel Benaki's house, in Athens presumably, where he had also seen the collection of "Rhodian" Iznik pottery, a type of Ottoman pottery, amassed by Alexander Benakis, Antonis' brother, discussed further below.¹²⁰ Martin advised Benakis on curatorial matters. When the Greek collector announced to Martin that he would be founding his museum, he expressed his hope that the Swedish scholar will "give me some precious advice in the matter when you come through Athens again."¹²¹ Martin was also seemingly going to be involved in an exhibition of Islamic art, one that never materialized, however, that he had repeatedly encouraged Benakis to organize in Athens.¹²² Martin also advised Benakis on what to acquire both for his Islamic and his Byzantine collections alerting him when interesting objects were on the market, and also acted as his dealer, sometimes also travelling through Athens to show him objects.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, May 17, 1930, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, April 21, 1930, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹¹⁹ Vernoit, "Islamic Art in the West," 1185.

¹²⁰ Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, September 17, 1929, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹²¹ Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, September 17, 1929, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹²² Fredrik Robert Martin to Antonis Benakis, June 14, 1929, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹²³ Fredrik Robert Martin to Antonis Benakis, 1930, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Fredrik Robert Martin (from Cairo) to Antonis Benakis, January 18, 1930, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

Benakis was also closely associated with Gaston Migeon (1861 - 1930) and Raymond Koechlin (1860 - 1931), who were curators at the Louvre Museum. They were among the most respected figures of their generation to advance the appreciation and understanding of Islamic art, and like Martin also combined the roles of scholar, dealer, and curator.¹²⁴ Migeon wrote the introductory essay for the catalog of an exhibition of Islamic art that Benakis had organized in Alexandria in 1925, discussed further below.¹²⁵ The two men also shared scholarly resources with one another: in one letter for example, Benakis promised to send Migeon a series of photographs of Byzantine ceramics from his collections.¹²⁶ Benakis also invited Migeon and Koechlin, as well as Madame Migeon, to the inauguration of his museum noting that he hoped that all three of them “will give [him] the honor of being his guests at that event,” and elaborated on what a real joy it would be for them to attend.¹²⁷ Though Migeon passed away in 1930, Koechlin evidently attended as he wrote a review of the museum in the journal *Revue Archéologique*.¹²⁸ Koechlin also advised Benakis on what to collect. In their numerous exchanges, Benakis shared his enthusiasm with Koechlin over new acquisitions, noting for example that he

¹²⁴ On Migeon and Koechlin see: Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur Des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880-1910,” 9 – 38.

¹²⁵ Gaston Migeon, “L’Exposition D’Art Musulman à Alexandrie En 1925,” in *Exposition D’Art Musulman: Les Amis De L’Art, Alexandrie, Mars 1925* (Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1925), 5–8.

¹²⁶ Antonis Benakis to Gaston Migeon, November 10, 1929, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹²⁷ Antonis Benakis to Gaston Migeon, November 10, 1929, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to Raymond Koechlin, November 14, 1929 Binder 2 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to Raymond Koechlin, May 24, 1930 Binder 2 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to Raymond Koechlin, June 25, 1930, Binder 2 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹²⁸ Raymond Koechlin, “Le Musée Bénaki à Athènes,” *Revue Archéologique* 33 (1931): 307–8.

looked forward to showing him some Greek jewelry as well as a “Rhodian” Iznik plate that he had recently bought when he attends the inauguration of his museum. Benakis also updated him on his latest artistic endeavors, sending him photographs of the Delphic Festivals, for example, which he organized in Greece in 1930.¹²⁹

Others he was acquainted with, though apparently less closely, include Arthur Upham Pope (1881 - 1969), the American archeologist and historian of Persian art.¹³⁰ As Benakis correspondence indicates, the Greek collector was invited to join the Persian Exhibition Committee in preparation for the influential International Exhibition of Persian Art organized by Pope in London in 1931, though ultimately he did not lend any objects for the exhibition due to the imminent opening of the museum.¹³¹ Benakis was also a member of the Institute for Persian Art, which was founded by Pope in 1928, and was also invited to subscribed to the multi-volume *Survey of Persian art* (1938 - 1939), edited by Pope and his wife Phyllis Ackermann.¹³²

¹²⁹ Antonis Benakis to Raymond Koechlin, May 24, 1930 Binder 2 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to Raymond Koechlin, June 25, 1930, Binder 2 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹³⁰ Kishwar Rizvi, “Art History and the Nation: Arthur Upham Pope and the Discourse on ‘Persian Art’ in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 45–65.

¹³¹ Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, June 24, 1930, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Barry D. Wood, “‘A Great Symphony of Pure Form:’ The 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art and Its Influence,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 113–30.

¹³² Ethel C Elkins, Secretary of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology to Antonis Benakis, September 18, 1935, “Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

Benakis was clearly also familiar with senior members of the Ottoman Imperial Museum (est. 1846), which had housed Islamic collections since 1891.¹³³ This included both Macridy, who had served at that institution for most of his life, as well as Halil, the director of the museum, although Benakis seems to have known him only indirectly, through Macridy. Macridy had been involved in the classification and curation of the Imperial Museum's Islamic art collections in 1908, when it was moved to the Tiled Pavilion, one of the Imperial Museum's buildings, and then again in the late 1920s.¹³⁴

Unsurprisingly, given that Benakis had spent over five decades of his life in Egypt, the Greek collector was also in touch with many connoisseurs and scholars based in that country, particularly in Cairo where there was a greater interest in Islamic art than in his hometown of Alexandria. Indeed, Benakis continued to travel there even after moving to Greece.¹³⁵ Benakis, for example, corresponded with the Cairo-based Englishman, Keppel Archibald Cameron Creswell (K. A. C. Creswell) (1879 - 1974), who was a pioneering figure in the study of Islamic art and architecture, particularly known for his work on Egypt's medieval monuments as well as his work on early Islamic architecture.¹³⁶ Benakis supported Creswell financially to conduct his scholarly research, promising him one hundred pounds per year, a significant sum at the time, for a period of two years (1930 – 1931), to support “the completion of a great work,” which was likely his

¹³³ The Museum of Pious Foundations (Evkaf Muzesi), a separate collection of Islamic art, was also formed in Istanbul 1914. It was later renamed the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Works (Turk ve Islam Eserleri Muzesi); Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 172.

¹³⁴ Grigoriadis, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 7–8.

¹³⁵ Benakis mentions travel to Egypt in numerous letters: Antonis Benakis to Gaston Migeon, November 10, 1929, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; Antonis Benakis to R. Devonshire, Cairo, November 11, 1935, “Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹³⁶ Oleg Grabar, “K. A. C. Creswell and His Work,” *Muqarnas* 8 (1991): 1–3.

multivolume book, *Early Muslim Architecture* (1932 and 1940).¹³⁷ Creswell also likely advised Benakis on the literature to include in his library, as the Greek collector thanked Creswell in one of his letters for sending him some bibliographies and list of books.¹³⁸

Benakis was also well acquainted with the staff at the Arab Museum in Cairo, including its director, Gaston Wiet. In Egypt, the government's interest in preserving local Islamic visual culture emerged as early as the 1860s, largely in response to the destruction of Cairo's urban fabric during modernization projects undertaken by the Khedive Ismail (1863 – 1879).¹³⁹ The Museum of Arab Art in Cairo, however, was inaugurated in 1883.¹⁴⁰ Benakis was clearly intimately familiar with that institution discussing with Martin, for example, who would be fit to become director at the museum, after Wiet.¹⁴¹ Other connoisseurs in Cairo, like the Cairo-based British textile collector Mrs. Russell Pacha, would also update Benakis on the developments at that institution, including Wiet's new acquisitions, and even the prices he paid for them.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Antonis Benakis to J. Home, Cairo, January 7, 1930, Binder 2 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives; J. Home, Cairo to Antonis Benakis, January 12, 1930; Binder 2 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹³⁸ Antonis Benakis to Keppel Archibald Cameron Creswell, Cairo, January 22, 1930, Binder 2 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹³⁹ Nezar AlSayyad, *Cairo: Histories of a City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 206; Donald M. Reid, "Islamic Art, Archaeology, and Orientalism: The Comité and Ali Bahgat," in *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 213–57; Nezar AlSayyad, Irene A. Bierman, and Nasser O. Rabbat, *Making Cairo Medieval* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).

¹⁴⁰ Donald M. Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 235.

¹⁴¹ Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, September 17, 1929, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹⁴² Mrs. Russell Pacha to Antonis Benakis, June 18, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives. Russell Pacha was the wife of Sir Thomas Wentworth Russell or Russell Pacha (1879–1954) who was a police officer in the

As Benakis' correspondences indicate the Greek collector also worked with many of the same dealers as the Arab Museum of Cairo, as they often offered the same objects both to the Greek and the Egyptian institution. In one letter, Benakis thanks either Phocion Tano or his nephew Nicolas Tano, the Cairo-based Cypriot dealers, for sending him photographs of two fabrics with coats of arms on them [οικόσημα επί υφάσματος], that had, however, evidently been bought in the meantime by the Arab Museum. Benakis noted that their sale to the museum was unfortunate as he would have been very interested in them.¹⁴³ The Istanbul and Paris based dealer, Guerson, on the other hand, noted that a friend had brought him "a very precious piece" asking him to show it to the museum in Cairo, but that he was willing to show it to Benakis as well, "as it may interest You as much."¹⁴⁴ Finally, Martin also offered Benakis a Fatimid falcon made of rock crystal, noting that if he is not interested "...the museum seems to be very keen [illegible] because they have nothing."¹⁴⁵ Martin evidently gave Benakis priority in the sale, however, as a few weeks later he followed up with him asking whether he should show the rock crystal to Wiet.¹⁴⁶

Egyptian service. Though Mrs. Russell Pacha is not well known today, her collections were evidently admired by other connoisseurs. Martin, for example, who rarely had a good word to say about anybody, noted that he has gone through her collections several times and opined that "she has some good things and she understands a great deal, which is rare in Cairo. They talk and talk too much, even at the arab museum." Fredrik Robert Martin (from Cairo) to Antonis Benakis, January 18, 1930, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹⁴³ Antonis Benakis to [Phocion or Nicolas] Tano, February 28, 1936 Binder 7 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹⁴⁴ Guerson to Antonis Benakis, 1930, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹⁴⁵ Fredrik Robert Martin to Antonis Benakis, December 31, 1929, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

¹⁴⁶ Fredrik Robert Martin (from Cairo) to Antonis Benakis, January 18, 1930, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

Importantly, the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo generally excluded the recent centuries of Ottoman rule in favor of the “medieval” period, including the Fatimid (969 - 1171) and Mamluk (1250- 1517) eras. Indeed, in Egypt – as in Greece, and many other parts of the Ottoman world – dominant narratives deemed the Ottoman period as a period of “foreign” Turkish rule and one of cultural decline.¹⁴⁷ The guide to the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo, published in 1939, for example, – which was roughly contemporary with the founding of the Benaki Museum – suggested that with the Ottoman conquest of 1517 “Egypt lost its independence and its personality.”¹⁴⁸

The Benaki Museum’s Islamic collections, on the other hand, were dedicated to a large extent to promoting the aesthetic value of Islamic art, including Ottoman art. The brief introduction to Islamic art published in 1936 in the museum’s guidebook explained that it houses important specimens of all the categories of Islamic art, “from which the visitor will be able to realize the degree of perfection attained by the Muhammadan craftsmen.”¹⁴⁹ These included all the branches of “decoration,” including the “arts of the potter, the metal-worker, the wood-carver, the goldsmith, the arts of the stone-carver, the glass-maker, the carpet-weaver, etc.,” which “flourished all over the Islamic world,” and were brought to an “unsurpassed degree of perfection.”¹⁵⁰ Elaborating particularly on ceramics, the guidebook noted that its “rich and

¹⁴⁷ Shaw, “Islamic Art in Islamic Lands,” 1150–1171.

¹⁴⁸ Gaston Wiet, *Musée National de l’Art Arabe: Guide Sommaire* (Cairo: Ministère de l’Instruction Publique, 1939), 13.

¹⁴⁹ *Guide* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1936), 52.

¹⁵⁰ *Guide*, 52.

variegated decoration, the harmony and happy combination of colours, the splendour of its metallic lustre, was raised to a pitch of perfection never surpassed by its contemporaries.”¹⁵¹

Despite the guidebook’s claim that the museum almost encyclopedically represented Islamic art, the Greek institution emphasized Ottoman art produced in Asia Minor. The Benaki Museum’s collections of Islamic art were exhibited in six galleries: two large galleries on the ground floor of the museum and four smaller ones on the first. Notably, one of the large galleries on the ground floor of the museum – gallery E (Fig. 34) – as well as three smaller galleries on the first floor of the museum – Λ, Μ, and Ν (Fig. 47) – were largely devoted – with some notable exceptions, discussed below – to ceramics and textiles produced in workshops in various centers of Ottoman Asia Minor.

In Gallery E were exhibited ceramics – both tableware and wall tiles – from two centers of production: Kutahya (seventeenth - nineteenth centuries) and Iznik (sixteenth – seventeenth centuries). The exemplars of Iznik pottery represented two decorative varieties: the “so-called Rhodian” and the “so-called Damascus” types, which as the guidebook notes, were misattributed to these locations and were really “of Asia Minor.”¹⁵² Although Benakis acquired many of these ceramics – like most of his collections – on the market, many also came from the collection of his late brother Alexander E. Benaki, who had died unexpectedly of a heart attack in Alexandria.¹⁵³ Alexander’s collection was primarily made up “Rhodian” ceramics, although it also included some exemplars of “Damascus” pottery as well as wares from Kutahya.¹⁵⁴ After his untimely death, his

¹⁵¹ *Guide*, 52.

¹⁵² Case 61, *Guide*, 83–84.

¹⁵³ Kitroeff, *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt*, 162.

¹⁵⁴ *Guide*, 75, 77–78, 81–84.

father Emmanuel A. Benaki purchased his collection from his widow and bequeathed it to the Benaki Museum.¹⁵⁵ A few ceramics were also gifted to the museum by Helen Euclides as well as Stephanos Lagoniko, another Greek collector in Alexandria.¹⁵⁶

Four cases in the center of this gallery were given over to ceramic tableware (Fig. 44 - 46).¹⁵⁷ While one of them was dedicated to tableware made in Kutahya, the remaining three exhibited dishes made in Iznik: two of them exclusively displaying plates (Fig. 46), one of them only of the “Rhodian” type.¹⁵⁸ The museum guidebook, which elaborated on the formal qualities of the objects in the collections, also singled out certain items in these cases as being particularly beautiful or worthy of note. It drew attention, for example, to the “more beautiful” Iznik plates in one of these cases which were decorated with floral decoration, including carnations, roses, tulips and hyacinths.¹⁵⁹ It also suggested that the “so-called Damascus ware” – distinguished by its beautiful patterns and colors – is the most “perfect” ware of Asia Minor.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, it drew attention to a series of plates in the collection that represent “the highest point” in the development of this decorative type, as well as two that were apparently well known among connoisseurs of Islamic art as they had been illustrated in most publications on Islamic pottery.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ *Guide*, 75, 81–82.

¹⁵⁶ Stephanos Lagoniko gifted two plates that depict vine branches and grapes that were attributed to either Asia Minor or Constantinople (seventeenth century). Helen Euclides gifted a Kutahya bowl (seventeenth century) See: Case 60, *Guide*, 85; *Guide*, 78.

¹⁵⁷ The tableware included funnels, bowls, plates, coffee pots, flower vases, water flaks, jugs, mugs, bottles, fruit dishes and “a decorative ball for suspension.”

¹⁵⁸ Case 66, *Guide*, 77–78; Case 63, *Guide*, 81–82; Case 61, *Guide*, 83–84; Case 60, *Guide*, 84–85. A few seventeenth century wares in these cases were also attributed to “Eyoub in Constantinople,” to “Constantinople,” and to “Asia Minor or Constantinople.”

¹⁵⁹ Case 61, *Guide*, 83–84.

¹⁶⁰ *Guide*, 84.

¹⁶¹ *Guide*, 84.

More ceramics – specifically wall tiles – from these same artistic centers, were exhibited on the walls on the far end of Room E (Fig. 39 – 42). Here too, they were organized by center of production: while most of the walls were given over to tiles made in Iznik, almost exclusively of the “Rhodian” type, tiles from Kutahya were exhibited on the inside of the pilasters (See A and B in Fig. 42). These wall tiles were displayed around a seventeenth century mosaic floor with a fountain (*faskieh*) at its center. As the guidebook explains, it originally formed part of a reception room of an upper-class “Muhammadan” house in Cairo, though similar rooms could also be seen in upper-class Muslim houses across the Islamic world, “whether in Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, or Spain, i.e. in all those countries, in which the Muhamaddan conquerors established themselves.”¹⁶² Notably, it allowed the museum visitor to view the museum’s Ottoman wall tiles within an architectural context that may have approximated their original settings.¹⁶³ The mosaic floor was exhibited complete with a cascade (*salsabile*) on one end, and two original niches, that were all built *into* the floor and the walls of the museum, thus creating for the museum visitor the effect of entering an architectural interior.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, the niches of the reception room also had a variety of dishes, vases, and jars, casually placed within them without frames or cases, further creating for the museum visitor the effect of entering a domestic space (See C in Fig. 42).¹⁶⁵

The walls of the remainder of Gallery E were given over to velvet fabrics made in Bursa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Fig. 46). As the guidebook notes, these were originally

¹⁶² *Guide*, 74–75.

¹⁶³ *Guide*, 74–75.

¹⁶⁴ The cascade would have originally trickled water into the small reservoir at its base.

¹⁶⁵ These objects included tinned copper dishes of the fifteenth century, Aegean Peasant Island art and vases, “Rhodian” pottery vases, and Syrian jars.

manufactured for use as sofa coverings, sofa cushions, and bedspreads, while the thinner varieties were originally used for dresses, cloaks, and vestments. Within the galleries, however, they were exhibited as objects of aesthetic appreciation: they were displayed in rectilinear frames and were mounted on the walls, leaving few traces of their original functions.¹⁶⁶

More textiles from Bursa – specifically silks made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – were exhibited in three adjacent galleries – Λ, M, and N – on the first floor of the museum (Fig. 47). In galleries M and N were predominantly exhibited Ottoman silk fabrics and brocades (Fig. 51 – 55).¹⁶⁷ Like the velvets in Gallery E, these too were exhibited in frames on the walls of these galleries, as flat rectilinear formal abstractions. Those in the latter gallery, as the guidebook notes, were of “exceptional beauty,” and among the “choicest and finest” of the Bursa textiles in the museum’s possession.¹⁶⁸ In Gallery Λ (Fig. 50), on the other hand, was exhibited a sixteenth-century Ottoman woman’s dress made of silk brocade.¹⁶⁹ Exhibited on a mannequin, it was encased in glass and placed in the center of the room.

That Benakis was driven by an aesthetic passion for the objects he collected, particularly for Ottoman art, also comes across on numerous occasions in his correspondence. In a letter to Koechlin, to cite just one example, Benakis reported that he recently acquired a “Rhodian” dish which he described as a “real wonder,” from a family in Greece, noting that it was of “an

¹⁶⁶ *Guide*, 85.

¹⁶⁷ *Guide*, 128–132. Two of the silks exhibited in this room are identified as potentially being made in Chios in the seventeenth century; Nos 839 and 846, *Guide*, 129.

¹⁶⁸ In Gallery N – in four cases mounted on the walls and an additional four in the center of this gallery – were also exhibited jewelry and other related objects from a variety of Mediterranean cultures and periods. One of these cases also displayed exemplars of Islamic jewelry from divergent time periods and geographies. See Case 106, *Guide*, 147–149; *Guide*, 133–134 and 152.

¹⁶⁹ No 822, Case 97, *Guide*, 127.

extraordinary white [color] and luster” and is decorated with flowers like those on the highly prized “Damascus” dishes. Further expressing his enthusiasm and aesthetic admiration for his new acquisition, he added that he does “not remember having seen one like it before,” and that he is “delighted” to show it to his French colleague when he comes to Athens for the inauguration of his Museum.¹⁷⁰ In an exchange with Martin, on the other hand, Benakis disparaged Wiet for his interest in history at the exclusion of aesthetics, thus further revealing his aesthetic sensitivities. Martin complained to Benakis that Wiet is only interested in ancient inscriptions, rather than objects of art, noting that he is “...sorry that Wiet is transforming the arab museum into a collection of epigraphy,” and that he is glad that he has abandoned the idea of making a large scale exhibition of Islamic art in Cairo because “That would be a mess only....[Wiet] is not the man for such an undertaking. He may read cufic inscriptions but that is all. He has no interest in art. He hates it. To make an exhibition is necessary enthusiasm!”¹⁷¹ Clearly aware of Benakis’ passion for art and aesthetics, he added that Benakis should be the one to organize an exhibition of Islamic art, in Athens. Although Benakis was not keen on organizing an exposition, as he was in the midst of building his museum, he agreed with Martin that Wiet “...takes no interest in Art for the sake of Art, and that the historical side of any object is the only one that appeals to him.”¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Antonis Benakis to Raymond Koechlin, May 24, 1930 Binder 2 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

¹⁷¹ Fredrik Robert Martin to Antonis Benakis, June 14, 1929, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

¹⁷² Antonis Benakis to Fredrik Robert Martin, September 17, 1929, Binder 1 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

The Benaki Museum's conspicuous emphasis on Ottoman art, and its insistence on its aesthetic value, are particularly noteworthy because scholars have generally assumed that Greek cultural elites overlooked, or even destroyed, the material remains of the Ottoman past, which they associated with "foreign" Turkish rule and which they deemed to be culturally inferior to their own antique heritage. Indeed, as scholars such as Peter Mackridge have noted, Greek cultural leaders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries deployed "European criteria" – namely by promoting their links to the classical past – to assert that their people were superior to their non-European masters.¹⁷³ Significantly, however, the Benaki Museum presented a novel vision of Greek culture that also included the material remains of Ottoman past. It did not define the Ottoman ceramics and textiles on display as "Turkish" or as "Islamic." Rather, it portrayed the cultural production of Asia Minor as part of Greek culture, as well as of other Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire.

In doing so, the Benaki Museum resisted existing constructions of Ottoman art. For example, in the late nineteenth century, when the collections of the Ottoman Imperial Museum were first constituted – and were largely made up of religious objects derived from Muslim pious foundations – the museum emphasized the *Islamic* nature of the objects on display.¹⁷⁴ In the twentieth century, on the other hand, the same institution was making a case for the "Turkishness" of Ottoman art. Writing in 1938, only a few years after the opening of the Benaki Museum and only two years after the publication of its guidebook, the director of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum (the former Imperial Museum), Aziz Ogan, cast the Islamic collection as

¹⁷³ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 15.

¹⁷⁴ Halil Edhem, "Müze-yi Hümayun," *Tercuman-i Hakikat/Servet-i Funun*, no. 1313 (numero special et unique) (1895): 104–17; Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 176.

integral to a nationalized Turkish aesthetic rooted in the Ottoman legacy. He explained that the goal of the collection was to present “the artistic value of the work on hand” and that the dominant idea in the organization of the collection “above all has been to clarify the evolution of Turkish national art.”¹⁷⁵

Indeed, the Benaki Museum entirely eschewed the ethnic identifier “Turkish,” as well as the dynastic term “Ottoman,” almost exclusively referring to the collections of ceramics and textiles using their centers of production (eg. “Kutahya (Asia Minor),” “Asia Minor (Bursa”). On rare occasions the museum guidebook also referred to these collections as being of “Eastern work.”¹⁷⁶ Indeed, the museum also sparingly used the term “Islamic” only to describe the overall collections, but avoiding its use in the description of the objects in the museum guidebook.¹⁷⁷ This use of language was certainly intentional as dynastic terminology, the designation “Islamic art,” as well as ethnic identifiers were used to describe other objects in the museum’s Islamic collections. The guidebook, for example, consistently employed the terms “Abbasid,” “Fatimid,” and “Mamluk” as well as the designation “Islamic art” to describe a group of tiraz textiles displayed in Gallery Z (Fig. 49).¹⁷⁸ The museum also employed the ethnic identifier “Persian” to describe certain ceramics, textiles, and other objects exhibited in the museum.

¹⁷⁵ M.A. Ogan and E. Kühnel, *Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Şaheserler: Cild III Çinili Köşkde Türk ve İslam Eserleri Koleksiyonu/Meisterwerke Der Archäologischen Museen in Istanbul: Die Sammlung Türkischer Und Islamischer Kunst Im Tschinili Köschk* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1938), 30; Shaw, “Islamic Art in Islamic Lands,” 1163.

¹⁷⁶ No 894, *Guide*, 152.

¹⁷⁷ *Guide*, 102.

¹⁷⁸ In Gallery Z were exhibited textiles predominantly from Egypt and “Mesopotamia” (ninth – fifteenth centuries) and included Abbasid (ninth – eleventh centuries), Fatimid (tenth – twelfth centuries) and Mamluk (thirteenth – fourteenth centuries) tiraz textiles. This room included linen, silk, woolen, and cotton textiles as well as embroideries and reed mats. *Guide*, 186–188. For a brief introduction to tiraz textiles see: Maryam Ekhtiar and Julia Cohen, “Tiraz: Inscribed

Indeed, the museum even employed the designation “Turkish,” however, it did so *only* to describe a series of fifteenth- to seventeenth-century metallic military objects on display in Gallery E. Most of these – a series of helmets and horse chafrons – were exhibited on either side of one of the windows of the gallery (See A in Fig. 41), as well as on either side of a seventeenth-century silk hanging from Bagdad or Damascus (See A in Fig. 43). A fifteenth-century coat of chain mail with a helmet was also exhibited in a case in the middle of the gallery (this is barely visible in the archival photographs).¹⁷⁹ Most of these belonged to Turkish nobles,¹⁸⁰ though one – a Byzantine-period iron “Turkish” helmet from the fourteenth century with inlaid silver Arabic inscriptions – likely belonged to one of the so-called “Turkopouli,” who were Turkish converts to Christianity who worked in the service of the Byzantine Emperors.¹⁸¹ The museum identified most of these items as “Turkish art” or as “Turkish work.”¹⁸²

Most importantly, however, Benakis and his curator included in the museum galleries a plethora of objects that were clearly associated with Greeks and other Christian communities of the Empire, including Armenians. In doing so, they reminded their museum visitors that Ottoman art was not only the heritage and culture of Turks/Muslims, but also of Greeks and Armenians.

Textiles from the Early Islamic Period,” in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tira/hd_tira.htm (July 2015).

¹⁷⁹ Case 64, *Guide*, 80.

¹⁸⁰ Those exhibited by the window also bore the seal (*djouban*) of the Sultan’s arsenal. The Turkish nobles mentioned include Hafiz Ahmed Pasha (1631), Grand Vizir under Sultan Murad the IV and the Grand Vizir Hassan Pasha Hadim, “the eunuch – notorious for his cruelty, who was assassinated in the reign of Sultan Murat the IIIrd in the year of the Hegeira 1007 (AD 1598);” *Guide*, 78 and 81.

¹⁸¹ The guide notes that this helmet was found on the battlefield of the Boeotian Kiphisos, where a body of Turkopouli had aided the Catalans to defeat the army of the Megaskyr of Athens, Gautier de Brienne in 1311; *Guide*, 81.

¹⁸² *Guide*, 78 and 80–81.

Indeed, the collections of Ottoman ceramics and textiles were largely made up of secular objects and were predominantly decorated with floral or abstract geometric designs, thus giving few indications of their religious or ethnic affiliations.¹⁸³ The museum also included within its collections a few objects that were associated with the Ottoman/Turkish ruling classes or with Muslim communities. Among the ceramics exhibited on the wall surrounding the Cairene mosaic floor, for example, were displayed exemplars that – by virtue of their representations – were clearly associated with Muslim communities. These were an eighteenth-century Kutahya tile which depicted the footprints of the Prophet Muhammad and was inscribed with prayers.¹⁸⁴ Above this tile, was also displayed a panel made up of six tiles that represented the mosque of Mecca and the Kaaba, which as the guidebook puts it, was “the sacred black stone of the Muhammedans” (See B in Fig. 42).¹⁸⁵ In the silk galleries, on the other hand, were a few fabrics that, as the guidebook indicates, were associated with the Ottoman ruling classes. In Gallery M (Fig. 51 – 52), for example, was a portion of a silk brocade which, as the guidebook notes, was manufactured especially for a Sultan’s robe.¹⁸⁶ In Gallery N, on the other hand, were also exhibited two silk brocades made in the Imperial factories of either Bursa or Constantinople.¹⁸⁷ Finally, the museum also ascribed the decoration of the Bursa velvets exhibited in Gallery E –

¹⁸³ Some objects were also decorated with animals, humans, or ships. These included, for example, a small Iznik bottle “with figures of wild beasts pursuing hares and partridges and two ibex fighting,” an Iznik plate with ships, and one with human figures. Case 61, *Guide*, 83–84.

¹⁸⁴ No 406, *Guide*, 75.

¹⁸⁵ No 407, *Guide*, 75.

¹⁸⁶ No 838, *Guide*, 129. Exhibited in Gallery M, above the doorway, was also a “portion of a so-called “holy carpet” sent every year from Egypt to Mecca to form the covering of the Kaaba, the sacred stone of the Muhammadans.” The guidebook does not state, however, whether this textile was of the Ottoman period. No 841 *Guide*, 129.

¹⁸⁷ No 894, *Guide*, 152.

which were “strictly confined” to floral designs – to Sunni Islam, the religion to which the Turks ascribed.¹⁸⁸ As the guidebook explained, the art of velvets was originally introduced into Asia Minor by Persian workers who were invited there from Tabriz by Selim I, around the beginning of the sixteenth century. As, however, the “Turkish conquerors” were Sunites, human figures and animals were eschewed in favor of floral and foliate patterns – including conventionalized carnations, roses, tulips and hyacinths – sometimes in combination with geometrical designs.¹⁸⁹

However, Benakis and his curator included in the museum galleries many more objects that were associated with Greeks and Armenians. In the silk galleries, for example, were displayed at least eight silk brocades derived from churches, that were clearly associated with Christian communities of the Empire, specifically Greeks and Armenians. These were made, according to the guidebook, “expressly for a Christian church.” Two of them also featured “Christian representations,” while two were also inscribed in Armenian and one of them in Greek.¹⁹⁰ While most of these were exhibited in Gallery M (Fig. 51 – 52), one was also exhibited in Gallery N (Fig. 53 – 55).

Similarly, among the museum’s ceramic collections were also exhibited many objects that clearly belonged – by virtue of their ecclesiastical functions and their inscriptions – to Greek and other Christian communities. In one of the cases in the center of Gallery E, for example, which was largely dedicated to “Rhodian” ceramic plates, were exhibited two seventeenth-century plates, likely made in Kutahya, with Greek inscriptions on them (See A in Fig. 44). The inscription

¹⁸⁸ *Guide*, 85.

¹⁸⁹ *Guide*, 85.

¹⁹⁰ Two of these were gifted to the museum by Mr. J. Damala and Helen A. Stathato. Nos 828, 829, 832, 843, 852, 851, 836, *Guide*, 128–132; No 885, *Guide*, 154.

on one of these plates, which also depicted a kiosk between two cypresses, read: “Lord save the faithful and hearken unto us, May 25th 1666.”¹⁹¹ The inscription on the other plate – which depicted a standing doe with a cross – is illegible, the guidebook suggested it was likely “rapidly written Greek text copied by an illiterate workman.”¹⁹² In another case in Gallery E, dedicated to Kutahya wares, were also exhibited a series of objects that belonged to Christian communities, though their ethnic identity is not specified. These included a church lamp as well as more than ten decorative “eggs” used, as the guidebook notes, for hanging lamps in Christian churches (these are barely visible in the archival photographs).¹⁹³

Finally, among the ceramics exhibited on the wall surrounding the Cairene mosaic floor – across from the tile with footprints of the Prophet and the panel with the Kaaba – was also exhibited an octagonal tile (seventeenth century) that depicted a Christian monastery (See A in Fig. 39).¹⁹⁴ The guidebook calls attention to the Christian imagery on this tile and, significantly, (and uniquely among these collections) attributes it to a specific ethnicity, noting that it was “probably Armenian.”¹⁹⁵

Many of these same ceramics – which conveyed the ethnic and religious diversity of the Ottoman Empire and suggested that Ottoman art was also part of the cultural heritage of Greeks and other Christians of the Ottoman Empire – were also included in the *Exposition D’Art Musulman*. This was an ambitious exhibition of Islamic art that Benakis had co-organized in Alexandria in 1925 (Fig. 9 – 32). He had organized this exhibition under the auspices of the arts

¹⁹¹ No 17, Case 61, *Guide*, 84.

¹⁹² No 16, Case 61, *Guide*, 84.

¹⁹³ Case 66, *Guide*, 77–78.

¹⁹⁴ No 382, *Guide*, 75.

¹⁹⁵ No 382, *Guide*, 75.

organization *Les Amis de l'Art* together with Christopher A. Nomico, another Alexandrine Greek, and a collector of Kutahya and other Ottoman pottery, who had also published several books on the subject.¹⁹⁶ The exhibition brought together 470 objects from twenty private collections, primarily from Alexandria. Organized by medium, the exhibition represented a wide spectrum of Islamic art including carved wood, ivories, bronze and copper objects, and enameled glass. Textiles and, even more so, ceramics, were however the best represented in the exhibition: almost 300 of the 470 exhibited objects were ceramics.¹⁹⁷ A catalog of the exhibition, published in France, photographically illustrated a select number of objects from the exhibition and also included a short introductory essay that provided a brief overview of each section of the exhibition, written by Migeon (1861 – 1930).¹⁹⁸

Benakis' collection, the largest, made up about a quarter of the exhibited objects.¹⁹⁹ Many of the other collectors who lent objects to the exhibition were wealthy Greek and Jewish Alexandrines who were members of *Les Amis de l'Art* and formed part of Benakis' social circle. Some of the largest collections among these belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Tortillia – who collected thirteenth-century Persian ceramics – and Edwin Goar, who collected lusterware from Islamic Spain. Two Cairene collectors, who are also the better-known figures among the lenders today, also contributed pieces from their collections to the exhibition: the dealer Maurice Nahman and

¹⁹⁶ The two men first conceived of the idea of organizing the exhibition in 1924; Migeon, "L'Exposition D'Art Musulman," 5.

¹⁹⁷ Migeon, "L'Exposition D'Art Musulman," 5; and R. L. Devonshire, "An Exhibition of Moslem Art in Alexandria," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 47, no. 269 (1925), 100.

¹⁹⁸ Migeon, "L'Exposition D'Art Musulman," 5–8.

¹⁹⁹ R. L. Devonshire, "An Exhibition of Moslem Art," 99.

Ralph Harari, who specialized in dated metal work pieces.²⁰⁰ Harari (1893 - 1969), who was a merchant banker and belonged to a prominent Anglo-Jewish family in Egypt, became an authority on Islamic metalwork, contributing a chapter on the subject in Pope's *Survey of Persian Art*.²⁰¹ Martin, however, who evidently rarely had a kind word to say about anybody, suggested to Benakis that "what Harari has is either false or of little or no importance. He is in too great hurry and then he wants the things for less than the dealers. He has been fortunate to have paid very little for all his things. I don't know how he manages it."²⁰² Maurice Nahman (b. 1868 – 1948), on the other hand, was a purveyor to Egyptian museums, and also catered to many foreign curators and scholars of Egyptian, Byzantine, Coptic, and Islamic archaeology and art history, as well as collectors, consuls, and political figures. The top European and American museums were among his clients, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Migeon, "L'Exposition D'Art Musulman," 5–7 and R. L. Devonshire, "An Exhibition of Moslem Art," 98-101.

²⁰¹ Ralph Harari, "Metalwork after the Early Islamic Period," in *Survey of Persian Art: From Prehistoric Times to the Present*, ed. A. U. Pope and P. Ackerman (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 2466–529; Maurice S. Dimand, "A Review of Sasanian and Islamic Metalwork in 'A Survey of Persian Art.,'" *Ars Islamica* 8 (1941): 192–214; Stephen Vernoit, "Harari, Ralph," *Grove Art Online*, 2003, <https://www.oxfordartonline.com/groveart/view/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oa0-9781884446054-e-7000036605>. Harari's collection is now housed in the Museum of Islamic Art (formerly the museum of Arab Art) in Cairo.

²⁰² Fredrik Robert Martin to Antonis Benakis, December 31, 1929, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

²⁰³ Elizabeth Dospěl Williams, "'Into the Hands of a Well-Known Antiquary of Cairo': The Assiut Treasure and the Making of an Archaeological Hoard," *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 21, no. 2 (2014), 259 – 260; Iman R. Abdulfattah, "A Forgotten Man: Maurice Nahman, an Antiquarian- Tastemaker," in *Guardian of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honor of Zahi Hawass*, ed. Janice Kamrin et al., vol. I (Prague: Charles University, Faculty of Arts, 2020), 105–23.

Significantly, like the Benaki Museum, this exhibition also had a conspicuous emphasis on Ottoman ceramics.²⁰⁴ Almost 130 of the 470 exhibited objects were exemplars of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pottery attributed to Kutahya and others identified in the exhibition catalog simply as “Art of Asia Minor” (Fig. 9 – 14). They were predominantly from the collections of Nomico, as well as from the collection of Antonis’ late brother, Alexander.²⁰⁵ Reproduced in the accompanying exhibition catalog was also a series of Ottoman ceramics that conveyed the ethnic and religious diversity of the Ottoman Empire, many of which were later exhibited in the Benaki Museum. These included, for example, the panel with the depiction of Mecca (Fig. 33), the “Armenian” octagonal tile that depicted a Christian monastery (Fig. 5), as well as one of the plates with Greek inscriptions (Fig. 6).²⁰⁶ Although the museum’s guidebook attributed this latter plate simply to Kutahya, in the Alexandria exhibition it was identified as “Turkish or Armenian.”²⁰⁷ The Alexandria exhibition and its catalog also featured another plate – from Nomico’s collection – that also had Greek writing and the date 1666 inscribed on its rim (Fig. 7). This was also identified as “Turkish or Armenian.”²⁰⁸ As the catalog only featured a small subset of the exhibited objects, the inclusion of these specific objects suggests the importance accorded to them and also

²⁰⁴ *Exposition D’Art Musulman: Les Amis De L’Art, Alexandrie, Mars 1925* (Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1925).

²⁰⁵ There were also a few objects in this group from the collections of S. Lagonico (5), and M. C. Salvago (2) and C. Bacos (1). See: *Exposition D’Art Musulman*.

²⁰⁶ No 382 *Guide*, 75

²⁰⁷ *Exposition D’Art Musulman*, 41.

²⁰⁸ *Exposition D’Art Musulman*, 13. In an article published in 1957, after Benaki’s death, Manolis Hatzidakis, the second director of the Benaki Museum suggests that the inscription on this plate reads: “sun of Justice Christ our God.” He also suggests that this plate belonged to the Benaki Museum, although I could not find any record of this in the 1936 museum guidebook; Manolis Hatzidakis, “Κεραμουργήματα Με Ελληνικές Επιγραφές,” *Ζυγός* 16 (1957): 6–7.

indicates that demonstrating that Ottoman art was also the cultural domain of ethnic minorities of the Ottoman Empire was a priority for Benakis and Nomico.

Indeed, Nomico also explicitly argued that Ottoman art of Asia Minor was part of the cultural heritage of Greeks and other Christians of the Ottoman Empire in his scholarship. His work suggests that this view was not limited to Benakis but was more widely held among the Greek intelligentsia. Nomico had written three books, in Greek, on various subjects pertaining to Islamic history including *Arabic Stories* (1920), *East and Islam* (1925), and *Introduction to the History of the Arabs* (1927). He had also authored three books on Ottoman pottery including *The So-Called Rhodian Pottery* (1919), *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (1922), and *The Tiles of Candiana* (1924), which was about a type of imitation Iznik ware produced in northern Italy in the seventeenth century.²⁰⁹

In *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (1922), Nomico went even further than Benakis, making the case that Ottoman art was not the cultural achievement of the Turks, but rather of Greeks and other ethnic minorities – particularly Christian artisans – of the Ottoman Empire. Although his book was nominally about a group of eighteenth-century Kutahya tiles located in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Nomico largely devoted its pages to advancing his thesis that Ottoman art was characterized by a Christian “essence,” and was not “Islamic” or “Turkish” in nature. Focusing particularly on the art of ceramics, and on the

²⁰⁹ Christopher A. Nomico, *The So-Called Rhodian Pottery* (Alexandria: Κασσιμάτη & Ίωνα, 1919); Christopher A. Nomico, *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (Alexandria, 1922); Christopher A. Nomico, *The Tiles of Candiana* (Alexandria: Κασσιμάτη & Ίωνα, 1924). The Benaki Museum also housed a mug of imitation Iznik ware made in Candiana which it describes as “unsuccessful;” Case 61. *Guide*, 83–84.

Armenian contribution to that art, he gave little consideration to Turkish artistic agency, attributing it instead to Christian subjects and to the Christian forebears of the Ottoman lands.

In making these arguments, Nomico relied on the notion – common to Greek nationalist narratives – of Turkish cultural inferiority.²¹⁰ He also employed a host of Orientalist narratives, including the view that the Turks were a “military race,” as well the understanding, prevalent in the historiography of Islamic art, that Ottoman art was derivative of other artistic traditions.²¹¹ Furthermore, in contradistinction to Benakis – who promoted the aesthetic appreciation of Ottoman art – Nomico also evoked the notion of Ottoman artistic decadence – including the relative inferiority of Turkish art in comparison to earlier Islamic – particularly Arab – arts.²¹²

Nomico begins his book by describing the Turks as a military people – a common Orientalist trope – entirely lacking in “artistic sensitivity” and cultural creativity, particularly in comparison to earlier Arab civilizations.²¹³ He explains, for example, that with the conquest of Egypt in the early sixteenth century, the Ottomans seized the Caliphal title, thus becoming the “leaders of Islam.”²¹⁴ With this title, as he maintains, they came to believe that they were the inheritors and sole representatives of the “glorious” traditions of Muslim civilization in all its manifestations.²¹⁵ Nomico, however, opined that the Ottomans were not worthy inheritors of the traditions of Islamic art: while their military conquests made them leaders of the Islamic

²¹⁰ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 15.

²¹¹ On the conception of the Turks as a military people see: Cemal Kafadar, “Introduction: A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 8. On the notion of Ottoman art as derivative see: Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture,” 6–7, 19, 22, 40–41.

²¹² Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture,” 6–7, 19, 22, 40–41.

²¹³ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 5–7.

²¹⁴ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 5.

²¹⁵ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 5.

world and nominally gave them the right to portray themselves as heirs and representatives of the artistic achievements of that world, they had not demonstrated any indication of cultural creativity.²¹⁶ He argued that this “military race” was incapable of advancing Islamic art, or even of simply understanding and keeping the artistic traditions that it inherited alive.²¹⁷

Nomico suggests, by contrast, that Ottoman subjects – particularly Christians – made the art on behalf of the Ottomans, describing them as cultivated and cultural superior to their Turkish “masters” (αφέντες). He explains that the “artistic inadequacy” of the Ottomans forced them to “continuously resort to the knowledge (φώτα) of *foreign* artisans for the execution of the works they desired.”²¹⁸ Although Nomico briefly mentions Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire – noting that the Turks conquered “ancient peoples” – both Christians and Muslims – who had longstanding cultures (πολιτισμό) and artistic traditions – the Greek scholar emphasizes the artistic contribution of non-Muslim subjects – the *ragiades* (ραγιαδες υπηκόους) – and particularly Christian artisans.²¹⁹ He states, for example, that “the conquerors who were busy with their military campaigns and later with their court and political hostilities (εμπάθειές), did not feel the need to dedicate themselves (επιδοθούν) seriously to the projects of peace and of culture. For these (i.e., peace and culture), they counted on their *ragiades*.” He then specifies that Christians were the most skilled craftsmen of the Ottoman Empire. Presumably referring to the well-known role that Christians held as dragomen and diplomats of the Empire, he notes that “Christians excelled in Turkish politics” adding that Christians too, were “the best artisans of the

²¹⁶ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 5–6.

²¹⁷ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 5–7.

²¹⁸ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 9–10.

²¹⁹ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 10; “Ragiades,” is a term used for non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire. It is a derogatory term used to refer to someone who is enslaved.

Turks.”²²⁰ He then specifies that “Greeks, Syriacs (Συριανοί) and Armenians,” who he specifies were Christians or “εξωμότες,” (which means converts, presumably from Christianity to Islam), “were their most capable architects, their most skillful gun-makers, and their most original ceramicists.”²²¹ He also names drawing, textiles, and carpet-making “and generally... all those branches of art in which the older Muslims excelled” among the arts that “foreign” artisans made on behalf of the Ottomans.²²²

Importantly, – given the Benaki Museum’s emphasis on ceramics – he highlights the role of Christians in the making of Ottoman ceramics in particular, noting that “this Turkish branch of Islamic ceramics,” which was produced since around the fifteenth century in all of the important centers of Asia Minor is the work of Turkish Muslims as well as Christian *ragiades*, and that “to this common collaboration must be attributed the curious evolution of its ornament.”²²³

The Greek author also expanded on the prominence of Armenian artisans in the ceramic arts, including in Kutahya. This claim is also highly significant, given the Benaki Museum’s particular focus on Kutahya production, as well as the museum’s attribution of one of its ceramics to Armenian authors.²²⁴ Nomico argued that “among the *ragiades* who made ceramics alongside the Turks” and out of all of the people of Asia Minor (Μικρασιάτες), Armenians were “the most equipped to understand and to appreciate the beauty of ceramic decoration and the subtlety of

²²⁰ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 10. Later in his book, in a different context, Nomico mentions the Greek leader of Walachia Mavrokordato and the “great translator” Ioannis Gika. These are examples of Christians who, as Nomicos puts it, “excelled in Turkish politics;” Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 18.

²²¹ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 10.

²²² Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 9–10.

²²³ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 11.

²²⁴ No 382, *Guide*, 75.

this art,” and that they had “the strongest inclination towards this art.”²²⁵ Nomico also refers to the practice of decorating walls with colorful glazed ceramic tiles as the “old *national system*” of Armenians, noting that many of their old churches were decorated in this manner, and that Armenians frequently dedicated their ceramic production to churches.²²⁶ He further notes that Armenians were “leading figures” (πρωτεργάτες) of ceramic production in two specific centers of Ottoman ceramic production: Sivas (Σεβαστεία) and in Kutahya, where even at the time of Nomico’s publication (i.e. the 1920s), as he points out, the principal ceramic factories were controlled by Armenians.

Further disputing the notion that Ottoman art was the cultural domain of the (Muslim) Turks, Nomico suggested that Ottoman art even lacked a certain “Islamicness,” precisely because it was made by Christians.²²⁷ Notably, this argument also aligns with the Benaki Museum’s spare use of the term “Islamic” in the descriptions of its Asia Minor collections. Nomico attributes a certain (Muslim) religiosity to Islamic art; however, he exempts Ottoman art from this

²²⁵ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 12–13.

²²⁶ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 16–17, 20.

²²⁷ The notion of a distinctly “Islamic” tradition of art and architecture and the terminology used to identify it was a product of both European Orientalists as well as late Ottoman authors active in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sibel Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu, “Preface: Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist And Nationalist Legacies In The Architectural Historiography Of The ‘Lands Of Rum,’” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 3; See also: Wendy M. K. Shaw, *What Is “Islamic” Art?: Between Religion and Perception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). Heghnar Watenpaugh also explains that Islam-as-culture and Islam-as-religion constitute two poles of Islamic art’s historiography. While some scholars emphasize religion’s agency in producing art or in rendering it meaningful, others have minimized it, going as far as arguing that Islamic art has no religious content. Most interpreters, however, fall between these two positions. However, as she argues the category hinges on a religious definition noting for example, that the rise of Islam marks the origin of Islamic art. Heghnar Watenpaugh, “Resonance and Circulation: The Category ‘Islamic Art and Architecture,’” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2017), 1223–44.

characterization. According to Nomico, most Islamic art has a unified and characteristically “Muslim” aesthetic character, noting that any Muslim monument in all of the lands that Muslims conquered and to which they introduced their arts anywhere in the “vast old state of Islam” – that extended from Spain to India – belongs “without any hesitation to the artistic mentality of Islam” and has a “Muslim substance.”²²⁸ At the same time, however, he explains that Muslim monuments also have a unique regional aesthetic character in different parts of the Islamic world, conferred on them by the indigenous populations who made the art. The conquered people integrated the Islamic arts while also giving the art “natural modifications in accordance with their character.” He cites the Alhambra of Granada, the Great Mosque of Kairouan in Tunisia, the mosque of Sultan Hassan in Cairo, the mosque of Omar in Jerusalem and the mosque of Mashhad in Persia noting that they are “all Muslim works even though infinite artistic regional differences distinguish them from each other.”²²⁹

According to the Greek scholar, however, Ottoman art lacked the “Islamic-ness” that otherwise made Islamic art so great, precisely because – as he argues – it was predominantly made by Christians. He states that, unlike Arab art – which adapted to all of the places that it spread but still maintained “its initial, namely Muslim, substance” – the Turks did not create a

²²⁸ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 6. Nomico had similarly noted that Islamic art had a unified and characteristically “Muslim” aesthetic character in his book *The So-Called Rhodian Pottery* (1919). Nomico writes, for example, that “The flowering of Islamic art throughout the states of the Caliphs, from Persia and Mesopotamia to Spain in the West and India in the East displays a unity.” He adds that the Muslim “type” asserted itself everywhere, elaborating that ceramics – whether from Spain, Egypt, Syria or Persia or from “elsewhere in the Caliphate” – resemble the “character” of this family. He also notes that the “comprehensiveness” of the religion that connected different races (φυλάς) of the Muslim world and people of different ethnicities, also imprinted everywhere in the vast state of the Caliphs the “stamp” of comprehensive good taste (καλαισθησίας) and methods of art; Nomico, *The So-Called Rhodian Pottery*, 7–8.

²²⁹ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 6–7.

uniquely “Turkish” branch of Muslim art that “preserved the unique mentality of the conquered peoples without ceasing however to be of “Islamic” origin.”²³⁰ According to Nomico Muslim art under the Ottomans “loses *the stamp of Islamic originality*, and the artistic harmony that was its brightest feature,” (my emphasis) in part because the *ragiades*, who “are the leading figures (πρωτεργάτες) of Turkish art” were “not of the Muslim faith.”²³¹

Finally, capitalizing on the existing notion that Ottoman art was derivative of other artistic traditions, a narrative common in the historiography of Ottoman art, the Greek scholar elaborated on the reliance of the Ottomans on the artistic heritage of the Christian forebears of the Ottoman lands.²³² Specifically, Nomico argued that mosque architecture in Constantinople, which had been the capital of the Byzantine Empire before it became the Ottoman capital, was imitative of Byzantine churches.²³³ Nomico points to the use of domes and cross-shaped floor plans in Ottoman mosques, which were common features of Byzantine churches, as evidence of this reliance on Greek precedents.²³⁴ Further, he highlights the extent to which the Turks copied Byzantine architectural practices by comparing Ottoman mosque architecture to that of the Seljuks, the Empire from which – as Nomico reminds the reader – the Ottoman dynasty originated

²³⁰ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 6–8.

²³¹ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 10.

²³² Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 7; On the notion of Ottoman art as derivative see: Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture,” 6–7, 19, 22, 40–41.

²³³ Recently scholars like Cigdem Kafescioglu have also explored continuities between Byzantine and Ottoman architecture, however in Nomico’s scholarship these continuities are cited as evidence of the derivativeness of Ottoman art; Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

²³⁴ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 8.

and whose capital was in Konya.²³⁵ Nomico states that the Ottomans were influenced to such an extent by the art of the Byzantines “...that when they arrived in Constantinople (στην Πόλη²³⁶) they abandoned the old and familiar to them shape of mosques of Konya,” which were built in the characteristic four-sided design of Arab architecture, and instead, “slavishly mimicked the designs of the Byzantines.”²³⁷

Indeed, any artistic innovation not attributed to Christian artisans or to the Christian forebears Nomico ascribes to the Persians. The Greek scholar suggests that Ottoman mosques deviated from their Byzantine models only in their interiors, as their walls were clad with glazed ceramic tiles, a craft, and a tradition that he explains originated in Persia. As Nomico explains in an earlier passage, “it had become a national tradition in the Middle Ages in Persia to cover the walls of mosques with colorful and glazed ceramic tiles.”²³⁸ Accounting for this departure from an otherwise near-total reliance on Byzantine models, Nomico explains that this was due to “religious reasons,” presumably referring to the Muslim prescriptions against figural representations, which usually decorated Byzantine church interiors. Indeed, he also points out that the Armenians first learned the craft of glazed ceramics from the Persians, their neighbors “in the edge of Asia Minor,” having been introduced to it before the “remainder of the people of Asia Minor,” and importantly before “the Turkish Muslims flooded the East.”²³⁹

²³⁵ Nomico refers to the Seljuks of Konya as “Oi Seltzouk sto Ikonion,” using the Greek name for Konya; Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 8.

²³⁶ Throughout Nomico refers to the Ottoman capital as “tin Poli,” the colloquial name for the city which simply means “the City” and is an abbreviation of the Greek/Byzantine name of the city, Κωνσταντινούπολη (“City of Constantine,” named after the Byzantine Emperor Constantine I). The city was not officially renamed Istanbul until 1930.

²³⁷ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 8.

²³⁸ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 8.

²³⁹ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 13.

Nomico elaborates on many of these themes – including the Christian authorship of Ottoman art, as well as its lack of “Islamicness” and “Turkishness” – in his discussions of a group of tiles located at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, the main subject of his book. These were a set of thirty-seven multicolored glazed ceramic tiles that depict scenes of the Old Testament and from Christ’s passion, and many of which also had Armenian inscriptions (Fig. 59 - 62).²⁴⁰ Nomico presents an elaborate theory about the origin of these tiles, explaining that they were originally commissioned in 1719 by “pious Armenians,” for a renovation of the Holy Sepulcher. However, after the ceramics had already been commissioned, the Porte determined that the Armenian community of Jerusalem did not have the right to repair or reconstruct this church, as this was the exclusive right of the Greek Orthodox community of Palestine. And so, the tiles never made their way to the Holy Sepulcher as they were originally intended and were instead placed in the Armenian Patriarchate.²⁴¹ Specifically, most of them were built into the walls of the southern chapel of the church of Saint Jacob of the Patriarchate.²⁴²

Importantly, Nomico suggests that the tiles, which originally constituted a set of one hundred and fifty, were made “without any doubt” by “god-fearing” Armenian artisans working in Kutahya in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Addressing the possibility that these

²⁴⁰ The inscriptions were located both above the depicted scenes and below them. Nomico suggests that these tiles were originally intended to be placed next to each other on the walls of a church. The inscriptions on the bottom of each tile each constitute part of a phrase and would originally have formed a continuous narrative. Nomico credits his friend G. Sarkisian (Γ. Σαρκισιάν) for translating these inscriptions for his publication; Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 15–16.

²⁴¹ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 17–19.

²⁴² While most of these tiles were built into the walls of the southern chapel (parekklisi) of the church of Saint Jacob of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 7 (of the 37) are located in a monk’s cell (not in the church). The tiles are about 18 cm in height and about 18 cm in width. Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 15–16, 19.

ceramics were “made by Muslims based on designs that Christians gave them,” the Greek author – citing little substantial evidence – simply rebuts this claim, stating that the “destination of the tiles,” presumably referring to their Christian patronage, and “the spirit of the inscriptions,” presumably referring to their religious content, “excludes – in our opinion - that possibility.”²⁴³ Elsewhere in the text Nomico also notes that in the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate is preserved a handwritten diary of a monk that states that the tiles were sent by “the Armenians of Kutahya” for the Church of the Resurrection (Holy Sepulcher).²⁴⁴

Indeed, Nomico broadens his argument, suggesting that objects – like these tiles – that were clearly used by Christians were made by Christian artisans, thus circumventing the very real possibility that these objects – that had formed part of the material culture of Christian communities – were made by Turks. He asserts that Ottoman objects with Christian inscriptions – whether in Greek, Armenian, or Arabic – or a “Christian date,” presumably referring to the use of the Julian rather than the Islamic calendar, can be attributed to Christian artisans “with certainty.”²⁴⁵ Additionally, he notes that the “destination of the object” or “its shape,” presumably referring to Christian patrons who would be commissioning objects with Christian symbols, could also distinguish Christian-made objects from “genuinely Muslim ones.”²⁴⁶

Nomico similarly suggests that the tiles that constitute the central subjects of his book differ from Turkish/Muslim works of art by suggesting that they had a certain “Christianness” to

²⁴³ When Nomico refers to the “spirit of the inscriptions” he may alternatively be referring to the fact, mentioned elsewhere in this text, that the inscriptions on several tiles refer to a renovation of the Holy Sepulcher to which the Armenians were going to contribute; Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 20–21.

²⁴⁴ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 17–19.

²⁴⁵ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 12.

²⁴⁶ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 12.

them. Creating an artificial distinction between the *materiality* of the tiles and their *essence*, he argued that they were “Muslim” merely in their technique and were otherwise thoroughly “Christian” in nature. He noted that they are “the most important works of Christians realized *with materially Muslim methods, but with a Christian spirit*” (my emphasis).²⁴⁷ Further elaborating on the ostensible Christian character of the ceramics in spite of their Muslim materiality, he explains that:

The effect of the *Christian mentality* in this art is obvious, indeed it is so important that besides the production of the clay and the layering of the glazing *which are the only genuinely Muslim attributes* on these tiles, the observer could easily characterize them as *absolutely Christian works*.²⁴⁸

Reiterating the familiar narrative about the decline of Ottoman art, he also notes that the imagery on the tiles were not aesthetically very good (*kalaisthitiki*), adding, however, that one can discern in the work of the artisan, a “pure faith” that gives a certain naiveté and grace to the images.²⁴⁹ Further differentiating these works from Turkish/Muslim works of art, he adds that the faces and the clothes on the depicted images “are anything but Turkish.”²⁵⁰

While the Benaki Museum – save for one occasion – did not explicitly ascribe authorship to Christian artisans of the Ottoman Empire, nor did it endorse the narrative of Ottoman artistic

²⁴⁷ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 15.

²⁴⁸ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 15.

²⁴⁹ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 15.

²⁵⁰ The suggestion that the faces of the human figures depicted on the tiles “are anything but Turkish” also suggests that Nomico believed that there were physiognomic distinctions between Armenians and Turks; Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 20–21.

decline, Benakis and Nomico were clearly aligned in their aims to demonstrate that the artistic production of Asia Minor was not only the cultural domain of the Turks, but primarily of Greeks and Armenians. As noted earlier, the Benaki Museum primarily made this argument by including in its collections a plethora of objects that were clearly associated with Greeks and other Christian communities of the Empire, and by eschewing terminology such as “Turkish,” “Ottoman,” and “Islamic.” Indeed, Benakis also adopted a series of other collecting and exhibition strategies – which closely resemble notions that Nomico elaborated on in his scholarship – whose aim was to diminish any claims to Turkish artistic innovation and authorship over Ottoman art. In other words, while the museum rejected the Orientalist conception of *Greek* cultural decline in the Ottoman period, to make this argument it promoted the equally Orientalist view of Turkish cultural inferiority.²⁵¹

Notably, this included the notion that the Turks were a “military race” devoid of cultural creativity. The Benaki Museum’s choice to portray the Turks in its galleries *only* via a series of military objects – helmets, horse chafrons, and coat of chain mail – was clearly informed by the understanding – also taken up by Nomico in his book – that the Turks were a military people, lacking in artistic sensitivity (See A in Fig. 41 and A in Fig. 43).

Furthermore, the Benaki Museum evidently endorsed the notion – also adopted by Nomico – that implicitly diminished Turkish claims to originality, that Ottoman art heavily relied on the innovations of previous cultures, including notably the Persians. Indeed, the Benaki Museum made numerous references to the influence of Persian art on Islamic art generally and on Ottoman art specifically. Benakis also included several Persian objects alongside his Ottoman

²⁵¹ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 15.

collection likely in order to invite the viewer to explore the artistic transfers between these objects. The brief introduction to Islamic art published in the museum's guidebook noted, for example, that starting in the late eighth century, when Islamic art established its own aesthetic character, it was shaped almost exclusively by Persian art.²⁵² Furthermore, the guidebook also drew attention to the Persian origins of the Ottoman velvets exhibited in Gallery E, explaining that this art was originally introduced into Asia Minor by Persian workers who were invited there from Tabriz by Selim I, around the beginning of the sixteenth century.²⁵³

In two of the galleries dedicated to Ottoman silks, Benakis and his curator also exhibited several Persian textiles likely to visually demonstrate the continuities between these bodies of work. Benakis and his curator included in these galleries, among the Ottoman silks, exemplars of silks and velvets made in a variety of regions and ranging in date from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries.²⁵⁴ However, on the walls of Gallery Λ (Fig. 50) were exhibited primarily Persian silk fabrics and brocades (sixteenth – eighteenth centuries), while the on the walls of Gallery N (Fig. 53 – 55) – intermixed with the Ottoman silk – were also exhibited many Persian silk fabrics, brocades, and velvets (sixteenth to seventeenth centuries).²⁵⁵ (These latter textiles, like the Ottoman ones exhibited in the same galleries, were also deemed to be of “exceptional beauty” and “choicest and finest” in the museum's possession.²⁵⁶)

²⁵² *Guide*, 52.

²⁵³ *Guide*, 85.

²⁵⁴ In Gallery Λ, for example, were also exhibited two contemporary silk sashes of Polish manufacture. In Gallery M, were displayed two Rhodian embroidered bridal bed curtains (*sperveri*) and two Italian velvets. Finally, in Gallery N were also included a “Hispano-Moresque” silk brocade, two Byzantine silk textiles, and several silks and velvets from various parts of Italy. See: *Guide*, 126–132, 152–154.

²⁵⁵ *Guide*, 133.

²⁵⁶ *Guide*, 133 and 152.

Finally, alongside the Ottoman ceramic wall tiles exhibited in Gallery E of the museum, were also displayed a group of wall tiles from Persia – from Kashan and Raghes (Ray) (thirteenth – fourteenth centuries) (See B in Fig. 41 and D in Fig. 42).²⁵⁷ These too were also likely placed there to invite the viewer to explore the Persian influences on Ottoman glazed ceramic, which was a craft, as Nomico had explicitly noted, that originated in Persia, as was the very practice of cladding walls with such ceramic tiles.

There is evidence to suggest that Nomicos' and Benakis' attempt to integrate Ottoman art of Asia Minor into narratives of Greek culture – and conversely to demonstrate that Ottoman art was heavily “Christian” – was motivated by the geopolitical realities of the interwar period in Greece. At the end of WWI, the Greek army had occupied parts of the defeated Ottoman Empire – including Smyrna and its surrounding regions – thus instigating the Greco-Turkish war of 1919 – 1922 in which the Greek army vied with Ataturk's forces for control of Asia Minor.²⁵⁸ The Greek state – and particularly supporters of the Megali Idea, which included the Benaki family – had coveted these territories, which they conceived of as rightfully Greek, based on the Greek presence in these lands, since the nineteenth century. Indeed, Nomico's book was published in 1922, in the last year of the Greco-Turkish war, suggesting that he sought to integrate Ottoman art into narratives of Greek art precisely because, at this time, it seemed conceivable that Asia Minor was to become part of a Greater Greek state.

Indeed, during the war, the Greek army had also occupied the towns of Bursa and Iznik (in 1920) and Kutahya (in 1921) – the three Ottoman cities whose material production was

²⁵⁷ *Guide*, 74–77.

²⁵⁸ Smith, *Ionian Vision*, 86 - 101.

represented in the Benaki Museum (Fig. 63).²⁵⁹ This further suggests that the heavily Christianized view of Ottoman art presented by the Benaki Museum was informed by the Greek expansionist project, which had almost integrated these centers of production – famous for their artistic output – into Greek national territories.

In 1922, however, the war ended with Greek defeat, the Greek army was forced to retreat, and Asia Minor conclusively became part of the new Turkish nation state. The Exchange of Populations of 1923, mandated by the Treaty of Lausanne that was signed at the end of the war, also ended Greek presence in these regions.²⁶⁰ Even though any hopes of integrating these lands into the Greek state were foreclosed, the Benaki Museum – inaugurated less than a decade after these cataclysmic events – continued to portray the cultural production of these regions as part of Greek culture, as well as of other Christians of the Ottoman Empire.

Indeed, there is also some indication that underlying Nomico's – and Benakis' – insistence on the Christianity of Ottoman art was a territorial argument, namely the desire to demonstrate that Asia Minor was heavily – and by implication rightfully – Christian. In his text, Nomico consistently refers to Christians – Greeks and Armenians – as the *original* inhabitants of the region, frequently referring to them as “people of Asia Minor,” (Μικρασιάτες), while simultaneously drawing attention to the *later* arrival of the Turks, referring to them – as did the Benaki Museum – as “conquerors.” Indeed, Nomico specifically underscored their later arrival in Constantinople, the city at the heart of the Greek expansionist project and used evocative expressions like “when the Turkish Muslims flooded the East,” to conjure their belated arrival.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Smith, *Ionian Vision*, 124–128, 225–228.

²⁶⁰ Clark, *Twice a Stranger*, 42 - 64.

²⁶¹ Nomico, *The Christian Tiles*, 13.

Through its collections, the Benaki Museum similarly insinuated that Asia Minor had been heavily Christian, thus also making a case for the “Greekness” of these lands. While the Greek army had failed to realize its vision of a Greater Greece, by bearing testament to Greek/Christian presence in these territories, the Benaki Museum continued to bolster the premise that had driven the Greek expansionist project. By including in its collections objects that were associated with diverse populations of the Ottoman Empire, with a conspicuous emphasis on its Christian populations, the museum also conjured within its galleries the strong presence of these populations in Asia Minor, reminding the museum visitor that Greeks and other Christian had also inhabited this territory. Indeed, the museum insisted on the geographical origin of the ceramics and textiles – many of which clearly belonged to Christians – exclusively and repeatedly referring to their derivation from Asia Minor. As the guidebook reiterated on multiple occasions, the exemplars of “so-called Rhodian” and “so-called Damascus” pottery were misattributed to these locales and were really “of Asia Minor.”²⁶² Indeed, in some instances, the museum also employed the Greek names of these centers of production, thus subtly implying their “Greekness.” In Gallery E, for example, the museum referred to Bursa as “Brusa,” the Greek name of the city.²⁶³ The guidebook to the museum also specified that so-called “Rhodian” ceramics were really made in “Nicaea,” using the Greek/Byzantine appellation of the city of Iznik.²⁶⁴

Indeed, even some of the Persian fabrics exhibited in the museum’s Ottoman galleries were deployed to evince the multiple communities that inhabited Asia Minor, including notably

²⁶² Case 61, *Guide*, 83–84.

²⁶³ *Guide*, 75 and 85.

²⁶⁴ *Guide*, 75.

Greeks. In Gallery N, for example, were exhibited a few Persian textiles which were evidently commissioned or acquired by diverse communities of the Ottoman Empire. One of these was a portion of a sixteenth-century Persian velvet from the internal decoration of the tent of the Turkish General Kara-Ahmed. In this same gallery, however, were also exhibited three early seventeenth-century Persian fabrics – two brocades and a silk curtain – that, as the guidebook notes, came from churches in Asia Minor, the curtain coming from the Monastery of the Panagia Spileotissa at Sille (Pamphylia, near Iconion).²⁶⁵ These fabrics were among “the relics preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor,” an assemblage of objects, discussed in depth in Chapter 2, that were brought to Greece by the refugees displaced from Turkish territories in 1923.

The Benaki Museum, as well as intellectuals in Antonis Benakis’ milieu, presented a novel vision of Greek culture that included within its definitions the artistic production of Ottoman Asia Minor. In doing so, they rejected the Orientalist notion that Greek culture declined in the centuries following antiquity – particularly under Turkish rule – adopted by most Greek nationalists. At the same time, however, Benakis and his collaborators continued to bolster the notion of Turkish cultural inferiority that underlies these more dominant narratives. Indeed, this attempt at integrating Ottoman art into narratives of Greek culture was informed, in part, by the deeply nationalist project of expanding the Greek state, and underlying its insistence that Ottoman art was heavily Christian was the ideological understanding that Greeks and other Christians were the original and rightful inhabitants of Asia Minor.

²⁶⁵ Nos 883, 872, 873, 863, *Guide*, 153–154.

CHAPTER TWO

HOLY RELICS OF THE REFUGEES OF ASIA MINOR, PONTUS, AND THRACE

Though historians of Greece usually focus on the national narratives created after the foundation of the Greek state in the nineteenth century, this dissertation tells the story of how Greeks narrated aspects of their culture and their history in an equally pivotal moment of nation building: after the final dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Greece's failure to realize its territorial ambitions in the East, and the consequent arrival of over a million Ottoman-Greek refugees into the Greek nation state. This chapter engages with an assemblage of late Ottoman ecclesiastical objects, from regions of modern-day Turkey, brought to Greece by the refugees of the Exchange of Populations and exhibited at the Benaki Museum from 1931. The chapter argues that the Benaki Museum included the material culture of Greeks from regions once coveted by the Greek state – but now beyond its territorial boundaries – as part of Greek culture, thus reifying its failed geopolitical ambitions within the walls of the museum. It also questioned existing hierarchies of Greek art, namely the privileging of the classical past and the concomitant rejection of Ottoman-period production, which was once fundamental to Greek cultural narratives. In doing so however, the museum reframed the material culture of Greeks from the Ottoman Empire as distinctly “national” objects, thus forging a *national* history out of the Ottoman imperial past and contributing to the process of nation building at this pivotal moment in Greek history. These narratives, created during a period of heightened nationalism, have had a lasting impact on the historiography of Ottoman art.

Historical context

Within his lifetime Benakis saw the near realization and complete annihilation of the Megali Idea or the “Great Idea,” the irridentist ideology popular since the late nineteenth century, that saw large swaths of Ottoman territories, based on Greek presence in these lands (both historic and contemporary), as rightfully Greek. Champions of this ideology sought to conquer these territories in order to integrate the large number of “unredeemed” Greek populations still living under Ottoman rule into a “Greater Greece,” and to “reinststate” Constantinople, which had been the capital of the Byzantine Empire, as its capital.²⁶⁶ The main areas of Greek settlement in the Ottoman Empire (through 1922) were in Constantinople, on the coastal regions of the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean, in Cappadocia, and in the Pontos region on the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea.²⁶⁷

This ambition to create a “Greater Greece” was almost realized in the 1920s, largely due to the aggressive efforts of the Greek prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos (administrations: 1910 – 1915, 1915, 1917 – 20, 1924, 1928-1932, 1932, 1933). Venizelos persistently opposed the king and his supporters, who instead advocated for ‘a small but honorable Greece,’ thus instigating during the First World War the massive cleavage in Greek society known as the *Ethnikos Dikhasmos*, or National Schism, that dominated Greek politics and split the country into two rival, and at times warring, camps.²⁶⁸ In 1919, following the Ottoman defeat in WWI, but before any

²⁶⁶ Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, Third edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 92–93.

²⁶⁷ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93.

²⁶⁸ The ‘Great Idea’ was only one of the sources of the National Schism. The king also advocated neutrality in the World War, while Venizelos wanted to join the war on the side of the Entente Powers (in large part because he saw Britain and France as the powers most likely to look with favor on the achievement of the country’s remaining territorial ambitions). Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 83–91.

agreement on the partitioning of the Empire could be reached, the Greek army occupied Smyrna and its surrounding regions, thus making – if only incompletely – the ambition of creating a “Greater Greece” a reality.²⁶⁹ Smyrna had been the most important center of Greek life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a Greek population larger than that of Athens.²⁷⁰ As such, it had been a major focus of irredentist ambition. When the Treaty of Sevres (1920) formally extended the Greek administration of the Smyrna region, Venizelos was hailed by Greeks as the triumphant architect of a Greece of “the two continents and the five seas” (the two continents being Europe and Asia and the five seas being the Mediterranean, the Aegean, the Ionian, the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea).²⁷¹

Within a few years, however, these territorial gains were reversed and any hopes of fulfilling the “Great Idea” were quashed. The occupation of Smyrna had instigated the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 – 1922, in which the Greek army vied with Mustafa Kemal’s forces – who saw this battle as its war of Independence – for control of Asia Minor (Fig. 1). In 1922, however, the war ended with Greek defeat and the creation of the new Turkish Republic: the Greek army was forced to withdraw and the Greeks of Smyrna, the city at the center of the battles and the site of a major fire, evacuated the city.

²⁶⁹ In the first year of the Paris peace conference (1919 – 1920), at the end of WWI, before any agreement could be reached, the Italian army landed in Antalya and was headed for Smyrna/Izmir. Britain, France and the United States – apprehensive of Italian aspirations in the area – agreed to the Greek occupation of Smyrna/Izmir, ostensibly in order to protect the local Greek population from Turkish reprisals. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93. See also: Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919-1922*.

²⁷⁰ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 104–106.

²⁷¹ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–95.

As part of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), signed at the end of the war, the two states agreed to exchange the Orthodox Christians of Turkey with the Muslim populations of Greece, as a means of solving Greek-Turkish antagonism.²⁷² A momentous enterprise – which took place in 1923 and 1924 – it involved the compulsory relocation of almost a million and half people and significantly contributed to the ethnic homogenization of both states.²⁷³ It resulted in an immense influx of refugees – some 1,100,000 Orthodox Christians from Turkey – into the kingdom of Greece and the transfer of some 380,000 Muslims from Greece to Turkey.²⁷⁴ The Greek refugees were primarily from Asia Minor, the Pontus/Black Sea region, and Eastern Thrace. Only the Orthodox Christians of Constantinople/Istanbul and the islands of Imvros and Tenedos as well as the Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace were exempt from the exchange.²⁷⁵

The collection

The late Ottoman ecclesiastical objects, which now form part of the Benaki collections, made their way to the museum as direct consequence of this history. In addition to decreeing the population exchange, the Treaty of Lausanne – specifically Article 8 of that agreement – also stipulated that “moveable communal property” could be transported by the people who were

²⁷² This included the large Orthodox populations on the coastal regions of the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean, Cappadocia, and the Pontos region on the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea and the large Muslim populations from the island of Crete.

²⁷³ Clogg notes that the exchange of populations was not an entirely novel solution to Greek-Turkish antagonism. He suggests that Venizelos had proposed such a measure, albeit on a more limited scale, on the eve of the First World War. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 99.

²⁷⁴ These numbers also reflect refugees that came to Greece because of the war. In this period there were also approximately 100,000 Greek refugees from revolutionary Russia and from Bulgaria. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 99–101.

²⁷⁵ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 91–99. Exceptions to the compulsory exchange were also the Albanian-speaking Chams of Epirus; Giorgos Margaritis, *Anepithymētoi Sympatriōtes: Stoicheia Gia Tēn Katastrophē Tōn Meionotētōn Tēs Helladas: Eurairoi, Tsamēdes* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2005), 133–215.

subject to the settlement.²⁷⁶ Ana Ballian, curator at the Benaki Museum, has described how some of this “communal property” made its way from Turkey to Greece and eventually to the Benaki Museum. As she notes, several surviving testimonies by refugees describe gathering their most valued possessions, particularly from their churches, before departing for Greece.²⁷⁷ One Cappadocian, for example, recounts how he collected and packed the belongings of his church into crates – including new icons, books, vestments, chalices, patens, and lamps – and went to his village over a period of three days with fifteen carts to pick up these belongings.²⁷⁸ After 1923 over 250 of such crates of objects as well as other large-scale items, such as icons and church furniture, gradually reached Greece from various provinces of the former Ottoman Empire.²⁷⁹ They were gathered in the storerooms of the Academy in Athens, which at that time housed the Byzantine Museum, and – when space in the Academy became scarce – in the royal stables.²⁸⁰ Then, in 1928 – once the refugee communities had been re-settled in Greece – the Fund for Exchangeable Community and Public Welfare Assets was established to collect and distribute this communal property to these communities.²⁸¹ That same year, it was decided that the objects

²⁷⁶ Anna Ballian, “Relics of the Past: Treasures of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Population Exchange,” in *Relics of the Past: Treasures of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Population Exchange: The Benaki Museum Collections*, ed. Anna Ballian (Milan: 5 Continents Editions, 2011), 36.

²⁷⁷ Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 36.

²⁷⁸ Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 36. See also: Paschalis Kitromilides and Giannes Mourellos, *Hē Exodos: Martyries Apo Tis Eparchies Tēs Kentrikēs Kai Notias Mikrasias*, vol. 2 (Athens: Kentro Mikrasiatikōn Spoudōn, 1982), 202.

²⁷⁹ Ballian notes that some of the objects in the Benaki collection retained evidence of the exodus. In the flyleaves of a gospel from Andrianople/Edirne, for example, was a handwritten reminder that read: “Last liturgy presided over by the bishop Sunday 9 October 1922. Then exile.” (Benaki Museum object number: 34154). Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 38.

²⁸⁰ Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 36.

²⁸¹ The refugees that arrived in Greece were principally resettled in the lands of “New” Greece that had been acquired during the Balkan Wars. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 105. The

with “archeological, historical or artistic value” would be preserved in three Athens museums: the Benaki Museum, the Museum of Folk Art, and the Byzantine and Christian Museum.²⁸²

Around 1,500 of the objects sent to Greece by the communities subject to the Exchange entered the Benaki Museum collections.²⁸³ They were all derived from churches and monasteries from many different parts of present-day Turkey. They included liturgical objects, ecclesiastical vestments and accessories, jewelry, architectural fabrics and church furnishings, but few icons, as most were given to the Byzantine and Christian Museum.²⁸⁴ In a journal article published in French in *Mouseion*, Theodore Macridy, the director of the Benaki Museum, noted that the most “precious” ecclesiastical objects brought to Greece by the exchangeable populations had been

museum publications refer to this committee as the “Managing Committee of the Property of the Exchangeable Populations.” As the guidebook explains, for example, the “relics” were entrusted to the Benaki Museum by the Managing Committee of the Property of the Exchangeable Populations. *Guide* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1936), 3.

²⁸² Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 36, 38.

²⁸³ Theodor Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” *Extrait de la Revue Mouseion* 39–40 (1937), 161–163. Note however that Ballian suggests that “the Exchange Fund collection in the Benaki Museum includes some 1,100 objects;” Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 36, 38.

²⁸⁴ On the Byzantine Museum see: Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 36, 38. The liturgical objects included: crosses including small processional crosses, gospels, holy shrouds, chalices and chalice veils, pyxes, processional disks, patens and paten covers, vessels for holy water, sprinklers (for holy water), candelabra, crowns used at marriage ceremonies, “rings for lunatics,” vessels for the breaking of the communion bread, communion cups, communion spoons, cover of a communion plate, censers/thuribles, asterisks, myrophore, polos (medallion), banners, a font, reliquaries. The ecclesiastical vestments and accessories included: Epigonatia, archiepiscopal pectorals, belts and clasps, pastoral and archiepiscopal staffs, archbishop’s mitres, archiepiscopal palliums, archiepiscopal sakkos (Dalmatic), stoles, maniples. The architectural fabrics and church furnishings included: polykandilon (chandelier), lamps, “Horiai Pyli” (sanctuary curtains), a pair of carved wooden doors of an Hieron (Sanctuary).

Many of the objects also had Christian imagery, including figures of angels and cherubim, figures of saints, prophets, the four evangelists, the Virgin Mary, Christ, canopy of the Holy Sepulchre, the Holy Trinity, as well as representations of the Annunciation, the Resurrection, and the Creation of Adam. *Guide*, 19–26.

entrusted to the care of his institution.²⁸⁵ Indeed, most of the textiles were made of satin, silk, or velvet and were embroidered with gold or silver thread. The liturgical vessels, on the other hand, were made of precious metals like gold, solid or gilt silver as well as other materials like alabaster, and were ornamented with precious stones including emeralds and pearls, or with enamel.

Most of these objects were of the Ottoman period, dating from the latter half of the seventeenth century through the nineteenth century.²⁸⁶ There were, however, also a few older – specifically Byzantine – items as well as objects made in different regions.²⁸⁷

One of the primary functions of this collection was to preserve the “Megali Idea,” if only virtually, and to demonstrate the eastward expanse of Greek culture. The Greek defeat in the Greco-Turkish war (1919-1922), ending Greek presence in the East, was regarded from the Greek perspective as a tragic loss. The towns the refugees left behind were conceived of as “lost homelands,” and the outcome of this war is still referred to in Greek simply as the “catastrophe.”²⁸⁸ Although these territories had now conclusively been forfeited to the Turkish state and – with the exception of Constantinople/Istanbul – were no longer inhabited by Greeks,

²⁸⁵ Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 161–163.

²⁸⁶ Note that the objects itemized in the guidebook range in date from 1667 – 1887 even though the guidebook states that the objects date from “the last quarter of the 17th century to the beginning of the 19th,” *Guide*, 19. Macridy on the other hand, suggests that the objects in the collection date from the second half of the 16th century through the beginning of the 19th century. This earlier start date may suggest that older pieces in the collection were not referenced in the guidebook or may simply be a mistake; Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 161–163.

²⁸⁷ Objects made in different regions included three early seventeenth-century Persian textiles, including a silk curtain on a silver ground from the Monastery of the Panagia Spileotissa at Sille (Pamphylia, near Iconion), and two gold and silver brocades. See: Objects No 863, No 872 and No 873 in *Guide*, 153.

²⁸⁸ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 101.

many Greeks (even to this day) continued to view these lands as rightfully Greek. By exhibiting the material culture of Greeks from these territories, once coveted by the Greek state, Benakis reified within the walls of his museum what had otherwise been lost on the battlefield: a vision of Greek culture that also included these “lost homelands.” With this collection, Benakis also made a case for the “Greekness” of these regions: the objects — which were clearly associated with Greek communities by virtue of being Christian liturgical objects — demonstrated that almost all of the regions that now made up the modern Turkish state had once been inhabited by Greeks.

Importantly, Benakis and his family were closely associated with Eleftherios Venizelos who, as noted earlier, had been the greatest champion of the Megali Idea.²⁸⁹ In 1910, at the very beginning of his first term in office, the charismatic and popular leader put Antonis’ father, Emmanouil Benakis, in charge of the newly founded ministry of national economy.²⁹⁰ Notably, he also supported the creation of the Benaki Museum: the Greek politician was in power when the Benaki siblings bequeathed their parents’ home — and Antonis collections — to the Greek state in 1929. He also donated several objects to the institution and attended its inauguration in 1931.

The notion that the culture of Anatolian Greeks was an essential part of Greek culture also permeated other parts of the museum. Benakis included objects associated with Ottoman-Greek communities from regions that were now part of the Turkish state in several of his museum’s other collections, thus including within his definitions of Greek culture the artistic remains of these regions that were now beyond the territorial boundaries of the Greek state. The museum’s large collection of seventeenth- to nineteenth-century Greek embroideries for

²⁸⁹ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93.

²⁹⁰ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 78–79.

example included exemplars from various parts of Greece as well as from the coast of Asia Minor.²⁹¹ The collection of Ottoman-period Greek adornments, exhibited alongside the large collection of Ottoman-period Greek folk costumes in the basement of the museum, on the other hand, included pieces from what had become Greek territories – Epirus, Macedonia and the Ionian islands – as well as regions that were now part of modern Turkey, namely Constantinople and Asia Minor.²⁹² (These are discussed more extensively in Chapter 3)

Benakis' close collaborators also made a case for the "Greekness" of Ottoman territories in their scholarship. Christopher Nomico's Islamic art scholarship (discussed in Chapter 1), which was undertaken during the Greco-Turkish war, argued that Christians, including notably Greeks and Armenians, were the original inhabitants – and by implication rightful owners – of these regions.

The crates of objects that came to Greece – and eventually to the Benaki Museum - because of the Treaty of Lausanne, however, contained the most extensive collection of artefacts that had belonged to the "unredeemed" populations and most convincingly preserved the memory of the "Megali Idea." Benakis and his director dedicated an entire gallery – Room B of the museum – which was made up of three rooms, exclusively to exhibiting this collection. In

²⁹¹ Besides the coast of Asia Minor, the objects in the embroidery collection were otherwise from the Islands of the Aegean Sea, Anaphi, Amorgo, Milos, Naxos, Skyros, Thasos, Mitilini, Chios, Patmos, Cos, Rhodes, Astypalea, Karpathos, Crete, and the Ionian islands, and Epirus. Macridy, "Le Musée Bénaki d'Athènes," 149.

²⁹² In his summary of the museum collections, Macridy evidently felt the need to substantiate that the items made in these latter regions were Greek (rather than Turkish). He explained that the collection was made of "Hellenic" work of Epirus, Macedonia and the Ionian islands as well as pieces made in Constantinople and in Asia Minor, adding that the object made in these latter regions were "always made in tune with Hellenic style of dress and hairstyles." Macridy, "Le Musée Bénaki d'Athènes," 153.

this room were exhibited a selection of the Ottoman period objects (Fig. 2 - 4). (The Byzantine objects were displayed across the museum's other rooms, including in Gallery Γ.²⁹³) They were carefully exhibited in frames or in cases placed along the walls or in the middle of the room, or atop these cases.

Benakis and his curator included a sign on the wall, on the far end of the gallery, that identified the exhibits as the “Holy relics of the refugees of Asia Minor, Pontus, and Thrace” (ΙΕΡΑ ΠΡΟΣΦΥΓΙΚΑ ΚΕΙΜΗΛΙΑ ΜΙΚΡΑΣ ΑΣΙΑΣ, ΠΟΝΤΟΥ, ΚΑΙ ΘΡΑΚΗΣ) (Fig. 5). Although the term “holy relics” refers, in part, to the original religious use of these objects, it also connotes that they were valued as historical vestiges and testaments – “relics”- of a civilization that, with the uprooting of Greeks of these regions, had now vanished and were thus accorded divine – “holy” – status.

It is significant that the museum exhibited these objects as a unified collection, as it allowed Benakis to visually make a case for the Megali Idea, by demonstrating that Greeks inhabited many of the territories that now made up the Turkish state. Many of the objects in the collection represented media, like Ottoman-period Greek embroideries (including vestments) and jewelry, that were represented in the remainder of Benakis' museum. Rather than dispersing these objects across the museum's other galleries, however, the Greek collector exhibited them as a unified collection, thus materially recreating within the space of the gallery the Greek geopolitical imagination.

Indeed, Benakis included in the galleries objects from the entire expanse of modern day Turkey and from a variety of regions, ranging from its westernmost coast all the way to its eastern

²⁹³ These included, for example, the eleventh-century Byzantine cross from Andrianople/Edirne; *Guide*, 32. See: Laskarina Bouras, *The Cross of Adrianople: A Silver Processional Cross of the Middle Byzantine Period* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1979).

border, thus visually communicating that Greek culture extended eastward to almost all of the regions that now made up the Turkish state.²⁹⁴ Indeed, the locales from which the objects were derived were explicitly noted, thus lending specificity to these claims. Beyond noting in the title of the galleries that these objects came from the regions of Asia Minor, Pontus, and Thrace, the guidebook and some gallery wall labels also noted the exact cities or towns and Greek communities from which the objects came. In some cases they even recorded the precise churches from which they were taken or the Archbishops and Metropolitans (the senior-most members of the Orthodox church hierarchy) to whom they had belonged.²⁹⁵ Indeed, while the museum guidebook consistently referred to the communities to which these object belonged as

²⁹⁴*Guide*, 19–26. Objects in Gallery B came from the following towns and regions, (which I have organized by geography): Eastern Thrace: the communities of Eucarion of Kirk Kilisseh and Adrianople/Edirne; Pontus region: the communities of Trebizond/Trabzon, Bafra, and Argyropolis; Asia Minor: from the communities of the town of the Dardanelles, Angora/Ankara, and Eghin, as well as Iconium/Konya, and Caesarea/Kayseri, including from the community of Kermyra near Caesarea. A few objects also came from further east, from the community of Amida (Diarbekir). Included are also the following regions/communities/monasteries: Chalcedon (Gabriel, Metropolitan of Chalcedon), the community of Moutagassa, the Monastery of Choutaris, Metropolitan Meletios. Finally, there was also a silk and linen altar-cloth (1735) in the collection from the church of the Patriarchate of Antioch (located in Damascus, Syria since the fourteenth century, namely not in Turkish territories). See: No 35 in *Guide*, 21.

²⁹⁵ The objects that belonged to Archbishops and Metropolitans included vestments – such as palliums, sakkos (Dalmatic), and gold-embroidered stoles – and accessories – such as mitres, staffs, and pectorals. The churches/monasteries and archbishops and metropolitans mentioned include (organized by region): Eastern Thrace: Metropolitan Church of Adrianople; *Guide*, 22-23. Pontus region: Church of St. Marina in Trebizond, Monastery of Soumela in Trebizond; *Guide*, 22-23. Sylvester: Metropolitan of Argyropolis/Chaldeia; Sylvester is identified both as the “Metropolitan of Argyropolis” and as the “Metropolitan of Chaldea.” Iconium/Konya: Monastery of the Panagia Spileotissa at Sille (Pamphylia, near Iconion); *Guide*, 153. Region of Caesarea: the monastery of Djidji Dere; *Guide*, 20–23. The Church of St. Basil in the village of Tavlou, in the province of Caesarea; *Guide*, 20–21. The Monastery of St. John the Baptist; *Guide*, 25. The Church of St. John: the Cathedral Church of Caesarea; *Guide*, 24. Parthenios of Santorin: the Archbishop and later Metropolitan of Caesarea. Angora/Ankara: the Metropolitan Church of Angora; Archbishops and Metropolitans of Angora including the Metropolitan Ioanikeios of Angora.

“Greek,” Macridy also often referred to them a “Hellenic,” thus reaffirming their status as part of the Greek nation.²⁹⁶

Benakis and Macridy made an explicit effort to represent in the galleries objects from cities that were particularly important to the Greek irredentist ideology. The two Greek connoisseurs, for example, made a point to include an artifact from Smyrna/Izmir in the galleries, which was otherwise not represented among the original corpus of objects administered by the Managing Committee of the Property of the Exchangeable Populations and sent to the Benaki. As Ballian has noted, as the circumstances of the exchange differed in each community – ranging from peaceful to extremely violent – not all the regions of Anatolia were equally well represented in the original collections. Objects from Smyrna were likely absent because of the dire circumstances under which the Greeks of that region left, as well as the damage that was incurred by the fire that engulfed the city.²⁹⁷ Benakis and his curator, however, exhibited a large segment of a carved wooden screen from the Church of St. Photeini in Smyrna, that according to the guidebook records was bequeathed to the museum by Professor Nicholas A. Petsalis (Fig. 6). This was one of only two objects included in the galleries that were not directly acquired from the Managing Committee, suggesting that Benakis and his curator explicitly sought to represent an

²⁹⁶ Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 149–163.

²⁹⁷ Ballian suggests that objects from this region made their way to Greece through a different trajectory: “Such heirlooms as could be saved from the flames and the violence were smuggled out to neighboring Aegean islands, and those which eventually reached metropolitan Greece now decorate refugees’ churches.” Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 38. See also: Kitromilides and Mourellos, *Hē Exodos: Martyries Apo Tis Eparchies Tēs Kentrikēs Kai Notias Mikrasias*, kg–l; and Paschalis Kitromilides and Alexis Alexandris, “Ethnic Survival, Nationalism and Forced Migration: The Historical Demography of the Greek Community of Asia Minor at the Close of the Ottoman Era,” *Bulletin of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies* 5 (1984-85): 30–33.

artifact from Smyrna in the galleries.²⁹⁸ They evidently deemed this city, which had been such an important center of Greek life as well a major focus of irredentist ambition, as too important to be omitted in a gallery that attested to the presence of Greek culture in lands that Greeks had claimed as their own.

Benakis and Macridy also made a point to include items from Constantinople in the galleries, the city that supporters of the Megali Idea had conceived of as originally and rightfully Greek and had imagined could become the capital of an expanded nation state. Importantly, none of the objects that came to Greece as a result of the Treaty of Lausanne belonged to the Greek communities of the Ottoman capital, as the Greeks of that city had been exempted from the exchange. There were, however, a few pieces *made* by Greek artisans in that city that made their way to Greece – and eventually to the Benaki Museum – as they had belonged to communities that *were* subject to the exchange. One of these was prominently exhibited in the galleries: a “holy shroud” that, as a gold-embroidered inscription on it made clear, was made in Constantinople in 1682 by a Greek artisan, an embroidress named Despoineta.²⁹⁹ Reflecting the important standing of the city in the Greek cultural and political imagination, the museum exhibited the shroud in the most prominent position in the galleries, in center of Gallery B, and – uniquely among the objects in this gallery – devoted an entire case only to this object (Fig. 7). By including a shroud made by a Constantinopolitan-Greek artisan in the galleries, the Benaki

²⁹⁸ The guidebook records do not specify what the second object was, beyond noting that it was also bequeathed to the museum by Petsalis. No 1815 and No 1814, *Guide*, 21. This same patron had also donated several objects to the museum’s Islamic collections; see: *Guide*, 196–197.

²⁹⁹ Case 251, *Guide*, 23.

Museum also included Constantinople within the “landscape” of Greek culture, while also attesting to the presence of Greeks in a city so fundamental to Greek nationalist aspirations.

This shroud was one among a handful of objects that had belonged to the Greek community of Angora (Ankara), the city that in 1923 Mustafa Kemal had chosen as the capital of the new Turkish Republic, in part, because it was supposedly a “tabula rasa,” and lacked the “cosmopolitanism” of the old Ottoman capital.³⁰⁰ It is likely that the Benaki Museum showcased the shroud not only because it attested to Greek presence in Constantinople, but also because – by virtue of belonging to the Greek community of Angora/Ankara – it also undercut the “Turkishness” of the new Turkish capital.

With this collection of late Ottoman ecclesiastical objects, the Benaki Museum also integrated Ottoman-period art into narratives of Greek art history, questioning existing art historical hierarchies and cultural narratives, notably the privileging of classical art at the expense of later periods of Greek art history. As noted earlier, the title of Gallery B referred to these objects as the “Holy relics of the refugees of Asia Minor, Pontus, and Thrace,” thus drawing attention to the original religious use of these objects, while also valuing them as precious historical remnants of the now extinguished Greek civilization in the East (Fig. 5). At the same time, however, the museum also conceived of these objects as art. The guidebook elaborated on the aesthetic qualities and materials of the objects on display. Macridy also contended that

³⁰⁰ There were also other objects from Angora/Ankara in the collections (primarily objects belonging to Archbishops and Metropolitans of Angora) including staves and a mitre, although these were not as prominently displayed. One of these, a staff from 1788, belonged to the Metropolitan Ioanikeios of Angora. On the transfer of the Turkish capital to Ankara see: Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 67-68.

“the vast majority” of the diverse pieces that made up the collection are very “rich” and that some also have “a real artistic value.”³⁰¹ Among the objects that he deemed to be particularly aesthetically significant was an eighteenth-century enameled and bejeweled archiepiscopal pectoral that belonged to Parthenios of Santorin, the Archbishop of Caesarea. Macridy photographically illustrated both sides of this small item of jewelry in his *Mouseion* article (Fig. 8), and the guide to his museum also described it as being “exceptionally fine.”³⁰²

The manner in which the objects were exhibited also suggests that the museum conceived of them as art. Certain display strategies closely approximated the way that these objects would have been placed in their original church settings, thereby highlighting their status as liturgical objects. In Gallery B, diverse media – including embroideries and silverware – were shown together and in two of the central vitrines a plethora of ritual devices – made of divergent media – were exhibited together, just as they would have been when they were used in the Christian liturgy (Fig. 9 - 10). However, in many cases the museum administration also followed conventions usually adopted for displaying art, notably by segregating the objects by medium or type of object, thus decontextualizing and aestheticizing them. One case, for example was dedicated to liturgical objects made of silver (Fig. 11), another to crosses (Fig. 12), and yet another to archiepiscopal staffs (Fig. 13).³⁰³

³⁰¹ Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 163.

³⁰² This archiepiscopal pectoral belonged to the Church of St. John, the Cathedral Church of Caesarea. Dated to 1738, it was enameled with illustrations of saints, angels and cherubim. Its center portrayed the Holy Trinity. The guidebook highlights its use of rich decoration and precious stones including emeralds, rubies, diamonds, and sapphires. *Guide*, 24.

³⁰³ Wall-case 21, dedicated to silver liturgical objects included chalices, paten covers, pyxes, processional crosses, and processional discs, patens, sprinklers, candelabra, marriage crowns, “rings for lunatics,” reliquaries, as well as a vessel for the breaking of the communion bread. See: *Guide*, 25–26. As the guidebook notes, some of the exhibited archiepiscopal staffs bear, below

Importantly, the museum also highlighted objects signed by Greek artists, thereby affirming the existence of Greek artisans active in the Ottoman Empire. The guidebook to the museum recorded a number of objects in the collection that were signed by Greek authors including an embroidery made by Theodossia Kasimbouri, an embroidered *eikon* of St. George made by a nun named Agatha, and a communion cup made by the “artificer” Georgios Chrysochos.³⁰⁴ One of these signed objects, the holy shroud made by Despoinetta also mentioned above, was given pride of place in the museum galleries.³⁰⁵ In his *Mouseion* article, Macridy also illustrated another object made by Despoinetta as well a work made by Theodossia Kasimbouri, thus further attesting to Greek authorship at that time.

The framing of these Ottoman-period objects as art, as well as the identification of Greek artisans active in the Ottoman Empire, is highly significant because it demonstrates that the Greek institution resisted dominant cultural and art historical narratives, namely the privileging of the classical past at the expense of later periods of Greek history. With the emergence of Greek nationalism in the eighteenth century, modern Greeks portrayed themselves as “Hellenes” or as the cultural descendants of the Ancient Greeks, an identity that co-existed alongside their pre-national collective identity as Orthodox Christians.³⁰⁶ Accordingly, Greek cultural institutions

the head, the name of the owner. These belonged to Gabriel Metropolitan of Chalcedon, Metropolitan of Angora (1774), Parthenios of Santorin, Metropolitan of Caesarea (1735), the Metropolitan Meletios (1835), and the Metropolitan Ioanikeios of Anogra (1788). See: Case 15, *Guide*, 21–22.

³⁰⁴ For the embroidery made by Theodossia Kasimbouri see: *Guide*, 19. For the embroidered *eikon* by Agatha (1729) see: *Guide*, 24. For the communion cup made by Georgios Chrysochos (1726) see: *Guide*, 20–21.

³⁰⁵ Case 251, *Guide*, 23.

³⁰⁶ As Mackridge explains, over the last two centuries or so, Greek identity has usually been defined in terms of language and religion, with territory and landscape as additional factors; Peter Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 1–12.

and scholars primarily valued and preserved the material remains of the classical past. As Yannis Hamilakis has argued, these national narratives and cultural values were influenced by and often forged by Western European agents, a process that Hamilakis has dubbed a “colonial-cum-national project.”³⁰⁷ The Greek identification with the classical past was heavily informed by the value that Western Europeans had placed on ancient Greece. As Hamilakis explains, Western Europeans – in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – had constructed classical antiquity as the glorious genealogical foundation of western civilization; antiquity was only *then* deployed by Greek intellectuals in the formation of a Hellenic national imagination.³⁰⁸ He further suggests that Western European agents – including administrators, scholars, and bureaucrats – were also heavily involved in establishing institutions, like the archaeological service and university archeology departments, that were instrumental to the formation of a “Hellenic” national identity.³⁰⁹

Underlying the clear privileging of and identification with the classical past was the notion that Greeks lacked any cultural production worthy of note in the more recent (Ottoman) past. Hamilakis gestures towards this problem noting for example that some Europeans, including ones who were instrumental in shaping the Greek cultural institutions noted above, saw modern Greeks as the “fallen from grace” degenerate forms of their glorious ancestors.³¹⁰ He also suggests that Greek intellectuals negotiated some of the narratives of “Western Hellenism,”

³⁰⁷ Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, 26–31.

³⁰⁸ For the idealization of classical antiquity in Western Europe from the eighteenth century onwards see: Morris, *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies*.

³⁰⁹ Both the first professor of archaeology and the designer of the first archaeological law in Greece were Bavarian, belonging to the entourage of the first king, Otto. Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, x.

³¹⁰ Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, 20–21.

producing their own versions of their history, or what Hamilakis refers to as an “Indigenous Hellenism.” Notably they “rehabilitated” Byzantium, created a narrative of unbroken, national historical continuity, and reconciled nationalism with Greek Orthodoxy.³¹¹

Evidently – although this has escaped Hamilaki’s attention – some Greek institutions also inserted the Ottoman past into narratives of Greek art history. With its collection of Ottoman ecclesiastical art – which demonstrated that Greek cultural production persisted into the Ottoman period – the Benaki Museum resisted the understanding of the Ottoman period as one of Greek cultural decline, as well as the privileging of classical art at the expense of later periods of Greek art history. Indeed, the entire institution – which also including collections of Byzantine, Coptic, and Islamic collection – was devoted to representing later periods of Mediterranean art history - in a country that almost exclusively preserved the material remains of the classical past.

It is important to point out that late Ottoman aesthetic production was not only overlooked by Greek scholars and institutions but was also marginalized by historians and connoisseurs of Islamic art. This was in large part due to the Western influence exhibited on the Ottoman aesthetic production of this time, which was also evinced in the objects in the Benaki collection. With his collection – that represented a significant body of late Ottoman material – Benakis thus also resisted these narratives of decline.

Historians have recently noted that the negative aesthetic judgement of late Ottoman art was politically motivated. As Ünver Rüstem has succinctly put it, this assessment was the aesthetic corollary of the narrative – widespread in both Western and Turkish historiography – that held that the Ottoman Empire entered a long and ultimately fatal period of political and

³¹¹ Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, vii–viii and 21–27.

military decline after its sixteenth-century zenith, that earned it the appellation of the “Sick Man of Europe.”³¹² The period was characterized by territorial losses, and a weakened position vis-à-vis Europe, as well as a series of ultimately fruitless attempts at reviving the Empire’s fortunes through European-inspired military reforms. According to these dominant narratives, Ottoman artists also succumbed to European hegemony and created what were seen to be poor imitations of Western art and architecture.

Finbarr Barry Flood, focusing predominantly on the American and European collectors and scholars who shaped the nascent field of Islamic art history in the nineteenth century, has noted that this negative judgment of late Ottoman art, in fact, extended to most art produced in the Islamic world in the modern period, which was similarly seen to have declined due to the “inappropriate” reception of European “influence.”³¹³ Early scholars of Islamic art consistently

³¹² Ünver Rüstem, *Ottoman Baroque: The Architectural Refashioning of Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 5; see also: Shirine Hamadeh, “Westernization, Decadence, and the Turkish Baroque: Modern Constructions of the Eighteenth Century,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 185–97. For a critical unpacking of the decline paradigm, see: Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Review* 4, no. 1–2 (1997–1998): 30–75.

³¹³ Flood also mentions India, Iran, Egypt, and Morocco among the parts of the Islamic world whose art was similarly seen by early historians of Islamic to decline in the modern period. He also suggests that the emphasis on artistic autonomy and authenticity as anterior to contact with European culture is also common to the reception of other forms of “non-Western” art history. Finbarr Barry Flood, “From Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art,” in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and Its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (London: Routledge, 2007), 31–53. Oleg Grabar similarly noted that the bias for the historical in the field of Islamic art “suggests that Islamic creativity may have meaning for Westerners only if it dates from before 1700.” Oleg Grabar, “Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art,” *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 5. Nasser Rabbat has also observed that Islamic art history relates a tradition of art-making that “...inexplicably fizzled out with the dawn of the colonial age in the late eighteenth century;” Nasser Rabbat, “Islamic Architecture as a Field of Historical Enquiry,” *Architectural Design* 74, no. 6 (2004): 19. For a study of Islamic Art in the nineteenth century see: Stephen Vernoit, *Occidentalism: Islamic Art in the 19th Century*, vol. 23, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of

located the “golden age” of arts in the Islamic world at a moment before the advent of modernity and the rise European colonialism. According to these scholars, in the modern period – variably pinpointed between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries – art in the Islamic world was corrupted through the influence of European culture and art.³¹⁴ Later Ottoman artistic and architectural production – like the art of other Islamic cultures produced in the modern period – was thus excluded from narratives of Islamic art. As Flood point out, the receptivity to European artistic forms and media in the Islamic world was nothing new and the “hybridity” of earlier Islamic arts (fifteenth – seventeenth centuries) was appreciated by many of these same scholars, as was the engagement with non-indigenous Asian traditions, like the Chinese.³¹⁵ Engagement with European art-making traditions in the modern period, however, particularly in the nineteenth century, were seen as signs of aesthetic decadence and a loss of artistic autonomy, authenticity, and purity.³¹⁶

Benakis would have certainly been aware of these narratives of artistic decline as his library included various books that espoused them. The *Fundamentals of Ottoman Architecture* (Uşûl-i Mi'mārî-i 'Oşmānî or *L'architecture ottoman*), for example, the first treatise on Ottoman architecture which was produced by the Ottoman government for the 1873 Vienna World

Islamic Art (New York: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1997).

³¹⁴ Flood, “From Prophet to Postmodernism?,” 36–39. In colonial Algiers of the 1930s, for example, the decline of Islamic art was attributed to ‘foreign’ imports and their corrupting influence on the purity of ‘local’ forms; see: Zeynep Çelik, “‘Islamic’ Art and Architecture in French Colonial Discourse: Algeria, 1930,” in *The Experience of Islamic Art on the Margins of Islam*, ed. Irene A. Bierman (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2005), 106.

³¹⁵ Flood, “From Prophet to Postmodernism?,” 37.

³¹⁶ For example, as Flood notes, while the art produced in Iran under Mongol rule has traditionally been seen as a breakthrough for Iranian artists, Qajar art has been less enthusiastically received; Flood, “From Prophet to Postmodernism?,” 34–39.

Exposition, located the “classical” period of Ottoman architecture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, particularly under the architect Sinan.³¹⁷ It suggested that the mid-seventeenth century ushered in a period of artistic stagnation, and apart from a short-lived reflowering during the reign of Ahmed III (r. 1703–30), held a negative view of art of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. Specifically, it accused French artists, sculptors, painters, and decorators who were active in the Ottoman Empire of altering the stylistic “purity” of Ottoman architecture “to the point of complete debasement” and referred to their works as “bastardized” and exhibiting an “alien” style.³¹⁸ Celâl Esad Arseven’s (d. 1971) *Constantinople, de Byzance à Stamboul* (1909), an architectural history of Istanbul, similarly disparaged eighteenth-century Ottoman architecture as mere copies of Western models.³¹⁹

Although Benakis resisted these narratives of Ottoman artistic decline, his museum distanced its collection of ecclesiastical objects – that originally formed part of the material culture of the late Ottoman Empire – from any associations with Turkish or Ottoman culture,

³¹⁷ Marie de Launay, *Uşûl-i Mi'mârî-i 'Osmânî: L' Architecture Ottomane* (Constantinople: Imprimerie et Lithographie Centrales, 1873). Benaki Museum library catalog number: AA1460 A67. For a discussion of the *Uşûl* see: Ahmet Ersoy, “Architecture and the Search for Ottoman Origins in the Tanzimat Period,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 117–39 and Ahmet Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire* (Farnham Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2015). On the Ottomans’ participation at the Vienna World Exposition, see Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 63–67 and 106–7. This book was also published alongside the *Costumes Populaires de la Turquie*, which as Chapter 3 demonstrates the Benaki Museum was also thoroughly familiar with; Osman Hamdi Bey, Marie de Launay, and J. Pascal Sébah, *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie En 1873* (Constantinople: Imprimerie du “Levant Times & Shipping Gazette,” 1873).

³¹⁸ The *Uşûl* cites the Nuruosmaniye and Laleli Mosques as examples of this debasement. The treatise then pinpoints a revival of the “classical” manner after the 1860s, under Abdülaziz (r. 1861–76), the sultan during whose reign the *Uşûl* was written.

³¹⁹ Celâl Esad Arseven, *Constantinople, de Byzance à Stamboul* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1909), 179–80. Benaki Museum library catalog number: HG200 E78c

constructing them instead as “Greek.” In other parts of the museum, Benakis similarly interpreted Ottoman-period production closely associated with Greek communities through a nationalist lens, distancing them from associations with the Ottoman Empire and inserted them instead into the lineage of Greek art.³²⁰ Here too, Benakis and Macridy inserted the museum’s collection of Ottoman liturgical objects into the lineage of Greek – rather than Ottoman – art history, by representing it as a continuation of Byzantine art, whose canon at the time constituted primarily religious objects, and a period of history that, importantly, had already been integrated in Greek national historiography. More precisely, the few objects that were identified in the guidebook using a stylistic descriptor were described as “Byzantine.” One paten, for example, was described as being “of Byzantine style,” and an Archbishop’s mitre as being “of Byzantine shape.”³²¹ While these objects did share certain stylistic features with Byzantine art, by describing them in this manner the museum framed them *not* as the artistic production of the Ottoman Empire, but rather as a continuation of Byzantine art. The collection of ecclesiastical objects was also exhibited adjacent to the museum’s Byzantine galleries (Gallery Γ) thus further

³²⁰ In Chapter 1, for example, I demonstrate that Benakis and his close collaborators negotiated the designation of Ottoman-period ceramics commissioned by Greek or other Christian communities of the Empire as objects of “Islamic art,” suggesting instead that they had a Christian “essence” or attributed them to Christian – specifically Armenian - artisans. In Chapter 3, I also demonstrate that the museum reframed its collection of Ottoman-period Greek folk costumes – many of which had originally been exhibited by the Ottoman government as exemplars of “Ottoman” costume – as quintessentially *national* and “Hellenic” objects that attested to the continuation of classical artistic traditions among the Greek peasantry.

³²¹ *Guide*, 20–21. The guidebook also mentions an archiepiscopal sakkos (Dalmatic), a Byzantine type of dress also mentioned in the Costume book discussed in Chapter 3, although it is not explicitly described as “Byzantine” in this collection. See: No 11, Wall-case 16, *Guide*, 22.

reinforcing the suggested relationship between Byzantine art and these Ottoman-period objects (Fig. 14).

In another area of the Benaki, the museum administration used the term “post-Byzantine” in order to emphatically portray objects – also often derived from church settings and invariably produced under “foreign” domination – as a continuation of Byzantine art in order to integrate them into the narrative of Greek art. Notably, the museum used the term in its guidebook, for example, to describe a related assemblage of ecclesiastical objects that included icons, crosses and encolpia made of carved wood, various liturgical objects primarily made of silver, as well as embroideries (Fig. 15 - 20).³²² Macridy categorized this collection together with the corpus that belonged to the Exchangeable populations under the larger umbrella of “Icons, ecclesiastical and religious objects,” and described them as being “of the same kind.”³²³ This body of work included both seventeenth- and eighteenth-century objects from Ottoman lands, (that unlike the collection of the Exchangeable Populations were acquired on the market or were donated to the museum by individuals), as well as a series of eighty religious icons made between the sixteenth and the end of the eighteenth centuries by Greek artists who were active predominantly in Italian-dominated Crete and the Ionian Islands.³²⁴

³²² Macridy notes that the silver objects in this collection included artophorions that represent in miniature Byzantine churches, reliquaries, communion cups, censers, “goupillons,” church lamps, and vases for holy water, all of which “are finely crafted and embellished, for the most part, in enamel and gilding.” The embroideries, as he notes, included epitaphios, antiminsia, chalice veils, embroidered icons, and accessories of priestly costume such as stoles, *epigonatia*, and maniples. Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 159.

³²³ Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 157–161.

³²⁴ Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 157-159.

Macridy particularly elaborated on the supposed “Byzantine” character of the icons from the Italian-controlled regions. As a means of demonstrating their “Greekness,” he described them as impervious to the artistic practices of the Italian Renaissance, arguing rather that they strictly adhered to Byzantine practices and principles. He explains that even though the development of this art dates to a period shortly after the Italian Renaissance, “the Greek artists were keen not to deviate from the severe Byzantine tradition, to take advantage of the models that Italian art offered them. The Greek iconographers seem to have wanted to...limit themselves to the reproduction of conventional subjects.”³²⁵ He draws attention to the absence of perspective, the “naïveté,” the lack of knowledge of anatomy, the lack of realism, as well as the use of egg tempera – rather than oil paint, otherwise employed by Renaissance artists – noting that these decisions were all deliberate and “dictated by convention.”³²⁶ Macridy also refers to the artists as the masters of “Hellenic” iconography, thus further signaling the Greekness of this art.³²⁷ Finally, these ecclesiastical objects were predominantly exhibited in Gallery Γ of the museum, alongside the museum’s Byzantine collections, thus further reinforcing the notion that they were the artistic descendants of Byzantine prototypes. (Fig. 14).

In addition to suggesting the Byzantine character of the ecclesiastical objects exhibited in Gallery B, the museum also attributed them to Greek authors, thus further “nationalizing” the collection. As scholars have noted, late Ottoman guilds were often multiethnic and multi-

³²⁵ Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 157–161.

³²⁶ The museum also possesses various icons from the second half of the 16th century that, as Macridy points out, do exhibit Italian influence, including the adoration of the Magi by Greco (1560-1561). This, however, was not exhibited in the “post-Byzantine” gallery, but rather in Room K (Fig. 21 and 22). Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 158–159; see also: *Guide*, 125.

³²⁷ Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes,” 157-159.

confessional, meaning that many of the objects in this gallery would have been made by artisans of other ethnicities or religions, not only Greeks.³²⁸ The museum however, almost entirely eliding the existence of authors of other ethnic or religious origins, highlighting only, as noted earlier, objects signed by Greek authors. Only one object in the collection was described as being “of Turkish work.” Notably, this was originally a large “Turkish” prayer carpet that was only subsequently converted into a sanctuary curtain (“Horaia Pyli”) by the addition, as the guidebook notes, of an embroidered figure of Christ in the chalice between flying Cherubim.³²⁹

While the museum sought to insert these Ottoman-period objects into the lineage of Greek art, it did not universally insist on their cultural “purity.” Benakis and his curator exhibited in Gallery B several objects with inscriptions in languages other than Greek. As the exchange of populations was predicated only on religion, many of the communities subject to the exchange did not speak Greek and their recent material culture was thus inscribed with their native tongues. Many among the Ottoman-Greek populations, for example, spoke only Turkish.³³⁰ These Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians were primarily from the western Pontus region in

³²⁸ Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire*, 116.

³²⁹ In the collection, there was a second large, embroidered sanctuary curtain (“Horaia Pyli”) that was originally a “Turkish” prayer carpet and was subsequently used in an Orthodox church, although the guidebook does not comment on its authorship. See: No 37, *Guide*, 26; and wall-case 14, No 4, *Guide*, 20–21.

³³⁰ Likewise, many of the Muslims of Greece who were deported to Turkey, particularly those from Crete, were Greek speaking; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 99-101. Muslims, most of them native speakers of Greek, formed a slight majority of the population of Crete in the early nineteenth century. The vast majority of these were descended from Christians who had voluntarily converted to Islam in the period following the Ottoman conquest of the island in 1669. The largest number of Muslims from Greece who were subject to the exchange agreement came from Crete. Some communities of Greek-speaking Muslims also lived in Macedonia; Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 65.

northeast Turkey, as well from central and southern Asia Minor, popularly known as “Karamanlides.”³³¹ Others, like those from the Black Sea/Pontos region, spoke local dialects of Greek, which was scarcely intelligible to the inhabitants of the Greek kingdom. Others spoke *katharevousa* a “purified” and stilted version of Greek, taught in schools.³³²

Some objects exhibited in Gallery B had Armenian inscriptions including a crimson silk sanctuary curtain (an “Horaia Pylī”), as well as a large Armenian gospel – a manuscript bound in silver – whose cover bore two languages: an Armenian inscription in the middle, and the names of pilgrims, written in Greek, on the four corners. As the guidebook explains, these originally belonged to the Armenian-speaking Greek community of Eghin.³³³

The two connoisseurs also installed in Gallery B several objects, dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that had dedicatory and other inscriptions that were written in Turkish using the Greek alphabet. This “hybrid” written language was used by the Turkish speaking

³³¹ The term “Karamanlides” is used to refer to the Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians from central and southern Asia Minor, even though this term properly refers to the inhabitants of Karaman province, in south central Turkey; Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 64.

³³² Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93 and 101.

³³³ No 13, Case 20, *Guide*, 25 and No 56, *Guide*, 26. There is a holy shroud (1723) in the collection that also belonged to this same Armenian-speaking community of Eghin although the guidebook makes no mention of inscriptions on this object (Armenian or otherwise); No 54, *Guide*, 26. Exhibited was also a holy shroud from Amida (Diarbekir) that was inscribed with the date 1336, which the guidebook explains is “probably an Armenian date,” equivalent to AD 1887. (Fig. 2, at the end of the Room on the right). No 28 *Guide*, 25.

There were also a series of other objects in the collection with inscriptions on them in languages other than Greek (specifically Arabic and Georgian), although there is no indication that the communities that owned them spoke those languages. For example, several objects had Arabic inscriptions on them. These included two small silver processional crosses that had votive inscriptions in Arabic and two lamps with incised Arabic inscriptions; see: wall-case 17, *Guide*, 19–20, and No 1 and 3 in wall-case 14, *Guide*, 20–21 (Fig. 4). The collection also included an archiepiscopal sakkos (Dalmatic) that belonged to Sylvester, Metropolitan of Argyropolis, on the front and back of which an embroidery with figures of saints and an inscription in Georgian had been added; No 11, wall-case 16, *Guide*, 22.

“Karamanlides.” Developed in the eighteenth century, it is often referred to as *karamanlidika*.³³⁴ Mackridge suggests that the publication of books in *karamanlidika* was promoted by the patriarchate in order to discourage Turkish-speaking Christians from converting to Islam but also to counteract Catholic propaganda in the areas where they lived.³³⁵ The objects exhibited in Gallery B included a silver communion cup, a censer, a sprinkler for holy water, an embroidered chalice veil made of crimson satin (from Kermyra near Caesarea), as well as a paten cover and a chalice (the latter two belonged to the Church of St. Basil in the village of Tavlou, in the province of Caesarea).³³⁶

Benakis made a point of showcasing these objects with *karamanlidika* inscriptions on them, as only a select number of items from the original collections were put on display. Ballian has noted that artifacts from the region of Cappadocia, including of the Karamanli populations, were well represented among the objects that came to Greece as a consequence of the exchange, likely because their evacuation from Asia Minor occurred in a relatively peaceful manner.³³⁷

³³⁴ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 304–305. There is a significant body of printed texts from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century in *karamanlidika*. The first book printed in *karamanlidika* dates from 1718, while the last was printed in Salonica in 1929; Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 64–65. See also: Sévérien Salaville and Eugène Dalleggio, *Karamanlidika: Bibliographie Analytique D’Ouvrages en Langue Turque Imprimés en Caractères Grecs*, vol. 47, Collection de l’Institut Français d’Athènes (Athens: Institut Français d’Athènes, 1958) and Evangelia Balta, *Karamanlidika: XXe Siècle: Bibliographie Analytique* (Athens: Centre d’Études d’Asie Mineure, 1987).

³³⁵ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 64–65.

³³⁶ No 7 in wall-case 14 (dated 1840), *Guide*, 20–21; wall-case 16, *Guide*, 22; No 15 in wall-case 16, *Guide*, 22; No 33 (embroidered on the chalice veil was the date 1750, March 2), *Guide*, 19; No 14 and 15 (dated 1825) in wall-case 14 (Fig. 4), *Guide*, 20–21.

³³⁷ Ballian suggests that Eastern Thrace was also well represented in the collections, as the exchange also took place there in a relatively peaceful manner. The Greeks of Eastern Thrace left their homes as early as October 1922 after the Treaty of Mudanya, which obliged the Greek army to evacuate the area. Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 38; Kitromilides and Mourellos, *Hē Exodos: Martyries Apo Tis Eparchies Tēs Kentrikēs Kai Notias Mikrasias*, kg–l; Kitromilides and Alexandris,

Specifically, of the 250 crates that were gathered in Athens (before they were dispersed across the three Greek museums), thirty-eight were from Cappadocia, containing around 2,833 objects.³³⁸ Nonetheless, exhibiting several objects with *karamanlidika* inscriptions on them was a considered choice as the original collections were not put on view in their entirety.

That Benakis and his curator exhibited objects belonging to the Karamanli communities – which evinced Turkish influence in Greek culture – is particularly noteworthy, as many of Benakis’ contemporaries discriminated against these Turkish-speaking Karamanlides, and the government also suppressed their use of the Turkish language. Indeed, as scholars have demonstrated, all of the refugee populations, to some extent, faced discrimination because of their cultural differences. Even though the Greek army had waged a war in the name of these Ottoman-Greeks, once they arrived in their new homeland as refugees they encountered a considerable degree of prejudice and it took decades before they were brought into the mainstream of Greek society.³³⁹ “Native” Greeks derisively referred to the newcomers, for example, as *giaourtovaptismenoi*, or ‘baptized in yoghurt,’ a reference to their extensive use of yoghurt in their cuisine.³⁴⁰

The Turkish-speakers among them, however, were considered particularly contentious. As Peter Mackridge has argued, the Greek language was central to Greek national identity. The cultural elites who first conceptualized Greek national identity in the eighteenth century, saw language – alongside their traditional collective (pre-national) religious identity as Orthodox

“Ethnic Survival, Nationalism and Forced Migration: The Historical Demography of the Greek Community of Asia Minor at the Close of the Ottoman Era,” 30–33.

³³⁸ Ballian, “Relics of the Past,” 36.

³³⁹ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 101; Clark, *Twice a Stranger*, 1 - 20.

³⁴⁰ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 101.

Christians – as the defining characteristic of the nation.³⁴¹ In particular, the Greek language was fundamental to their formulation of a “Hellenic” identity, the notion (fundamental to Greek identity) that modern Greeks were the cultural descendants of the ancient. Indeed, one of the primary debates among Greek intellectuals – starting in the late eighteenth century and extending into the twentieth – known as the “*glossikó zítima*,” revolved around the form that the written Greek language should take, in order to best exhibit this cultural descent.³⁴²

Although they were not the only linguistic minority in Greece, the Turkish-speaking Karamanlides were among the most ideologically contentious because, as Mackridge puts it, they spoke the language “of the age-old enemy of Hellenism.”³⁴³ Among these Turkish-speakers, the

³⁴¹ As Mackridge explains, over the last two centuries or so, Greek identity has usually been defined in terms of language and religion, with territory and landscape as additional factors; Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 1–10.

³⁴² This debate was made up of two rival “camps,” the archaists/purists and the vernacularists (known as demoticists starting in the late nineteenth century). The archaists/purists claimed that the best way to exhibit the modern Greek cultural descent from the ancients was by imitating Ancient Greek linguistic models. The vernacularists, on the other hand, argued that this would be best achieved by maintaining written Greek as close as possible to the spoken language, which – as they emphasized – was the outcome of the natural and continuous development of the Greek language from ancient to modern times. The most intense phases of the Greek language debate took place during periods of crucial social transition. The first of these was the period from the 1760s to 1821. The second, a century later (1880s–1920s), coincided with the consolidation of the Greek bourgeoisie, the beginnings of industrialization, and the growth of the national expansionist movement, all of which demanded a more efficient education system. Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 1–2. For a succinct survey of the language question see also: Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (London: Longman, 1997), 344–62.

³⁴³ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 302–305. Many linguistically diverse populations had been incorporated into the Greek state in earlier moments in history, particularly during the Balkans Wars (1912 - 1913). During these wars, the Greek state increased its territories by 70 percent, acquiring Ottoman lands that came to be known as “New Greece” – Macedonia and Epirus to the north of the existing Greek state – as well as some Aegean islands. Because of these territorial expansions, Greece’s population increased from approximately 2,800,000 to 4,800,000 and included ethnically and linguistically diverse populations including many Muslims (mainly Turks), Slavs, Vlachs, and Sephardic Jews, and speakers of Slavonic, Albanian, Aromanian, Turkish,

two poles of nationalism - language and religion – were in conflict with one another.³⁴⁴ As Mackridge further notes, they were also sometimes taunted with the allegation that they were of Turkish racial stock.³⁴⁵

Current opinions on the origins of the Karamanlides, who have received a considerable amount of scholarly attention, are divided: some argue that they descended from Greek-speaking Christians who changed their language, others contend that they originated from Turkish-speaking Muslims who changed their religion, and still others maintain that they originated from a mixture of the two.³⁴⁶ Importantly however, scholars have demonstrated that before they came to Greece they did not necessarily identify as Greek and they largely – though with some exceptions – did not espouse the Greek national cause.³⁴⁷ According to Evangelia Balta, for example, the authors of books written in *karamanlidika* in the late nineteenth century addressed their readers as ‘Christians,’ ‘Orthodox Christians,’ or ‘Christians of Anatolia,’ but never ‘Hellenes.’ In one book, published in 1896, the author identified their community as a fusion between Rum/Greek and Turkish, explaining that “though we are *Rum* we don't know our language, but speak Turkish. Yet we don't read and write Turkish [i.e. Arabic script], just as we don't speak Greek. *So we are a mixture*. Our alphabet is Greek but we express ourselves in

and Judaeo-Spanish (Ladino). In fact, Greeks were a minority in Greek Macedonia in the immediate aftermath of the Balkan Wars and, at the end of the First World War, Greeks constituted less than 20 percent of the population of western Thrace, which was otherwise largely Muslim. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 81–83 and 103–104.

³⁴⁴ Turkish was also spoken by most members of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace, who were exempt from the exchange and remained in Greece after 1922. Mackridge, however, suggests that the speaking of Turkish was particularly contentious among Turkish-speaking *Christian* communities; Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 303–305.

³⁴⁵ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 64–65 and 303–305.

³⁴⁶ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 64.

³⁴⁷ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 92–93.

Turkish” (my emphasis).³⁴⁸ Furthermore, in 1921, during the Greco-Turkish war, priests and members of the congregation of some Karamanli communities sent telegrams to Mustafa Kemal’s provisional government in Ankara claiming that they were patriotic Turks.³⁴⁹ Indeed, during negotiations over the exchange agreement, Turkish authorities even considered exempting these Turkish-speaking Christians from the exchange.³⁵⁰

Following the Exchange, the Greek state adopted a policy of linguistic conformity, suppressing the use of languages other than Greek. Dimitris Livanios has argued that in the interwar period the Greek state did not tolerate any “minority” languages, considered a threat to the nation.³⁵¹ Mackridge suggests that the Greek authorities made systematic efforts to assimilate the country’s Christian populations in particular, including the newly arrived Turkish-speaking populations.³⁵² Others have demonstrated that this policy of linguistic assimilation also extended to other religious communities including, notably, the Judaeo- Spanish (Ladino)

³⁴⁸ Evangelia Balta, “Oi Prologoi Ton Karamanlidikon Vivlion Pigi Gia Ti Meleti Tis ‘Ethnikis Syneidisis’ Ton Tourkofonon Orthodoxon Plithysmon,” *Mnimon* 11 (1987): 232.

³⁴⁹ A letter from Johannes Kolmodin to the Swedish Foreign Minister dated May 9, 1921, mentions telegrams from Havza (south-west of Samsun), Kayseri [Caesaria], Gümüş- Hacı-Köy (west of Amasya), Isparta and Tosya (in the *vilayet* of Kastamonu); Elisabeth Özdalga, “Excerpts From the Diplomatic Reports,” in *The Last Dragoman: The Swedish Orientalist Johannes Kolmodin as Scholar, Activist and Diplomat*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga (Istanbul: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet Istanbul, 2006), 152–3.

³⁵⁰ Mackridge also notes that a significant proportion of the Orthodox Christians who were exempted from the exchange and remain in Istanbul until the present day come from a *Karamanlí* background; Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 303–305.

³⁵¹ Livanios suggests that in the interwar years, like Greece, no other Balkan state tolerated “minority” languages that were considered a threat to the nation; Dimitris Livanios, “The Quest for Hellenism: Religion, Nationalism and Collective Identities in Greece (1453-1913),” *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 3 (2007): 67.

³⁵² Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 302–303.

speaking Jewish community.³⁵³ This policy of linguistic homogeneity represented a marked deviation from the more tolerant attitudes Greek authorities had exhibited towards minorities in the preceding decades, particularly in the territories acquired during the Balkan Wars. As Eyal Ginio has argued, this strategy was aimed at impressing the Western powers and furthering Greek territorial ambitions in Asia Minor, and was swiftly reversed with the foreclosure of these ambitions and the arrival of the refugees.³⁵⁴

Even more repressive policies vis-à-vis language were enacted under Ioannis Metaxas (in power 1936 – 1941), whose aim, as Anastasia Karakasidou puts it, was “the construction of Greek linguistic hegemony.”³⁵⁵ Under Metaxas, the public use of languages other than Greek was prohibited, in the words of one directive “...for the reconstruction of a universal language and our national glory.”³⁵⁶ In some places, failure to comply with these laws was penalized with imprisonment and corporal punishment.³⁵⁷ Although Turkish-speaking communities were victims of these laws, Karakasidou suggests that in practice they were chiefly applied to the Slavonic-speaking populations, another linguistic group that was suspect as they too were

³⁵³ In the 1920s and 1930s, Greece’s Jewish community, which was primarily located in Salonica was encouraged to adopt a “Greek consciousness.” Toward this pursuit, successive Greek governments made Greek language, as well as history, and geography obligatory subjects in community schools, while Greek books were translated into Judaeo-Spanish (Ladino) for the benefit of the older generations. Eyal Ginio, “‘Learning the Beautiful Language of Homer:’ Judeo-Spanish Speaking Jews and the Greek Language and Culture between the Wars,” *Jewish History* 16, no. 3 (2002): 239.

³⁵⁴ Ginio, “‘Learning the Beautiful Language of Homer:’ Judeo-Spanish Speaking Jews and the Greek Language and Culture between the Wars,” 235–62.

³⁵⁵ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages To Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

³⁵⁶ Karakasidou, 187.

³⁵⁷ Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 303.

Orthodox Christians who spoke a language associated with enemies of Greece, in this case the Bulgarians.³⁵⁸

Unlike many of his contemporaries who questioned the “Greekness” of the Karamanli populations, Benakis accounted for their heterodox linguistic culture, without casting doubt on their Greek identity. The brief text in the museum guidebook introducing the contents of Gallery B, attributed the use of the Turkish language to the political and economic circumstances of Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, noting that:

it will seem strange to the reader of this catalogue that certain objects exhibited in this room bear Turkish inscriptions, either in Greek or in Turkish characters. In certain villages of Asia Minor, whether for financial or political reasons, the Greek inhabitants found it impossible to keep schools of their own. The Greek children were consequently educated

³⁵⁸ For example, whereas descendants of immigrants from Western Europe have been permitted to preserve their foreign names, Slav speakers living in the Greek state were obliged to Hellenize both their baptismal names and their surnames and have not been allowed to use their Slavic names in public. Mackridge notes that the Greek authorities operated a policy of linguistic assimilation on the Slav speakers (on the grounds that an individual's language was inextricably bound up with their national consciousness) as early as the 1920s. Among other measures, night schools were provided for adults. There was a significant amount of resistance from members of the Slav-speaking population who saw their language as a central feature of their group identity. Mackridge, *Language and National Identity*, 303–305. For state language policy towards the Slav speakers of Greek Macedonia in the inter-war period see: Lito Apostolakou and Filippou Carabott, “‘Omileite Ellinika’: Slavomakedones Kai Kratos Stin Ellada Tou Mesopolemou,” in *O Ellīnikós Kósmos Anámesa Stīn Anatolí Kai Tī Dýsī, 1453-1981: Proceedings of the First European Conference of Modern Greek Studies*, ed. Asterios Argyriou, Konstantinos Dimadis, and Anastasia Danai Lazaridou, vol. 2 (Athens: Ellīniká grámmata, 1999), 121–32. For more details of the efforts to Hellenize the Slav speakers of Greek Macedonia see: Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages To Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990*.

in Turkish, which was the common language of all the inhabitants whether Turkish, Greek or Armenian.³⁵⁹

The Benaki Museum's account resembles a nationalist myth formulated to explain away the use of the Turkish language among the Christians of the western Pontus region, another Turkish-speaking community who, as noted earlier, came to Greece with the exchange. This myth represented these populations as unequivocally Greek, suggesting that they were originally Christian *and* Greek-speaking but were forced to choose between abandoning their language and renouncing their religion by their Turkish conquerors, whereupon they decided to preserve their Christianity at the expense of their native tongue.³⁶⁰

Benakis' inclusion of objects that evinced Turkish "influence" in the culture of some Greek populations was certainly motivated by a desire to integrate the recently arrived refugees – who still carried with them evidence of "Ottoman" culture – into Greek society and into the Greek national body. By framing the linguistic cultures of Turkish speakers as constitutive of Greek culture and describing them as "Greek" the Benaki Museum would have contributed to the process, important at the time, of forging national subjects out of the recently arrived refugees – who were otherwise rejected by Greek society – and ultimately to the process of nation building. Tellingly, the museum offered no explanation of the Armenian speaking populations,

³⁵⁹ The guidebook suggests that these Turkish inscriptions were written, "either in Greek or in Turkish characters." However, all of the objects I have come across were written in Turkish language in Greek script. *Guide*, 19.

³⁶⁰ Nikos Marantzidis and Giasasin Millet, *Zito to Ethnos. Prosfygia, Katochi Kai Emfylios: Ethnotiki Taftotita Kai Politiki Symperifora Stous Tourkofonous Ellinorthodoxous Tou Dytikou Pontou* (Herakleio: Crete University Press, 2001), 46–7.

likely because their use of the Armenian language was not perceived to be ideologically contentious, as their language was not associated with enemies of Greece.

At the very same time as Benakis was re-evaluating the perceived decline of late-Ottoman artistic production and integrating ecclesiastical objects of that time into narratives of Greek art, Turkish scholars were embarking on a similar project. They also sought to rehabilitate late Ottoman art – primarily focusing on architecture from Muslim religious and imperial contexts – and to integrate it into narratives of Turkish art. Indeed, in 1928, the same year that it was decided that some of the objects that came to Greece as a consequence of the Exchange would be preserved in the Benaki Museum, Celal Esad Arseven (d. 1971) published the first edition of his famous survey of Turkish art *Türk Sanatı* (1928), in which he included eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ottoman architecture.³⁶¹ In 1952, he published a second edition of this same book.³⁶² In 1954 Doğan Kuban also published *A Study on Turkish Baroque Architecture (Türk Barok Mimarisi Hakkında bir Deneme)*, a more in-depth study of this same period of Ottoman architecture that examined buildings produced in Istanbul between about 1725 and 1825.³⁶³

These Turkish art historians were predominantly concerned with justifying the Western influence in late Ottoman buildings, seeking to define them as decidedly “Turkish.”³⁶⁴ In *Türk Sanatı* (1928), for example, Arseven argued that Ottoman buildings of the eighteenth and early

³⁶¹ Celâl Esad Arseven, *Türk San’atı* (Istanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1928).

³⁶² Celâl Esad Arseven, *Türk San’atı Tarihi: Menşeyinden Bugüne Kadar Mimarî, Heykel, Resim, Süsleme ve Tezyîni Sanatlar* (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1952).

³⁶³ Doğan Kuban, *Türk Barok Mimarisi Hakkında Bir Deneme* (Istanbul: Pulhan Matbaası, 1954). For a summary in French see: Doğan Kuban, “Influence de l’Art Européen Sur l’Architecture Ottoman Au XVIIIème Siècle,” *Palladio* 5 (1955): 149–57. For discussion of Kuban’s study and its influence, see Hamadeh, “Westernization, Decadence, and the Turkish Baroque.”

³⁶⁴ For a summary of this historiography see also: Rüstem, *Ottoman Baroque*, 4-7.

nineteenth centuries were not merely copies of Western models.³⁶⁵ While he acknowledged that Turkish artists incorporated forms derived from Western Baroque models, he made the case that they also included details specific to a Turkish taste, terming what he viewed to be a distinctively local architecture “Turkish Baroque” (*Türk Baroku*).³⁶⁶ The term “Turkish baroque” could perhaps be seen as the Turkish equivalent of the Greek term “post-Byzantine.” Just as the Benaki Museum employed the term “post byzantine” as a means of signaling the “Greekness” of certain ecclesiastical objects, Arseven coined the term “Turkish baroque” as means of signaling the “Turkishness” of late Ottoman architecture. While he always considered the buildings of this period to be frivolously ornamental when compared with classical Ottoman works, in a later edition of *Türk Sanatı*, published in 1952, Arseven further argued that buildings of this period should be accepted as part of “our national history of Turkish art.”³⁶⁷

Kuban similarly sought to integrate eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ottoman architecture into narratives of Turkish art and to “defend” its use of Western artistic forms. Kuban acknowledged the decline of the empire’s political and economic situation and the lack of favorable conditions for the emergence of great artists in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, he also argued that Turkish artists at that time were able to “absorb outside influences and recast them in a completely original mold. They produced attractive works using the possibilities they were given, conforming to the spirit of the time.”³⁶⁸ Kuban, like Arseven before him, also maintained that this period of Ottoman architectural production “must be given

³⁶⁵ Arseven, *Türk San’atı* (1928), 169–71.

³⁶⁶ On Arseven’s evolving and influential viewpoint, see: Hamadeh, “Westernization, Decadence, and the Turkish Baroque,” 185–198.

³⁶⁷ Arseven, *Türk San’atı* (1952), 405.

³⁶⁸ Kuban, *Türk Barok Mimarisi Hakkında Bir Deneme*, 23.

an honorable place in [Turkish] art history.”³⁶⁹ Interestingly - unlike Benakis, who almost exclusively mentioned Greek authors as makers of Ottoman ecclesiastical objects - Kuban emphasized the extensive role played by Greek and Armenian artists in making of late-Ottoman “Turkish” architecture.³⁷⁰ This is telling of the different dynamics that shaped the cultural narratives of the two nation states. Greek cultural elites were concerned with differentiating themselves and their culture from that of the Ottoman Turks, the Empire from which they had gained independence, and accounting for instances of Turkish “influence.” Turkish art historians, on the other hand, were primarily sensitive to the “accusation” of Western influence, which had traditionally been seen as an indication of their cultural as well as political and military inferiority vis-a-vis Europe.

On the one hand, this concurrent nascent re-evaluation of late Ottoman art taking place on both sides of the Aegean, is significant because it suggests that these Greek and Turkish scholars and collectors may have informed each other in questioning the cultural narratives that had deemed their shared Ottoman past as one of cultural decline.

The Benaki Museum library included Celâl Esad Arseven’s *Türk Sanatı* indicating that Benakis and Theodore Macridy were aware of their Turkish contemporary’s revisionist narratives.³⁷¹ Furthermore, Macridy would have personally known Arseven, as Macridy worked in republican Turkey and maintained his contacts there during his tenure at the Benaki Museum.³⁷² Although Macridy’s career in republican Turkey has hardly been explored, Ioannis

³⁶⁹ Kuban, *Türk Barok Mimarisi Hakkında Bir Deneme*, 133.

³⁷⁰ Rüstem, *Ottoman Baroque*, 6.

³⁷¹ Benaki library catalog number: 51153.

³⁷² Piçard, “Theodoros Macridy-Bey († 1941).”

Grigoriadis has recently noted that while still an employee of the Istanbul Archeology Museum Macridy excavated various sites around Istanbul, continued his curatorial work at the museum, and pursued archeological and museological projects in the nation's new capital.³⁷³ He further notes that during his tenure in Athens, Macridy continued to travel to Istanbul and to pursue scholarly research with colleagues in Turkey.³⁷⁴ Notably, Grigoriadis also points out that Macridy's funeral was organized by his former coworkers at the Istanbul Archeology Museum, thus clearly indicating that Macridy maintained connections with Turkish intellectuals though the end of his life. Macridy fell ill and passed away while he was on a trip to Istanbul in 1940. As his family was in Athens during his illness, and Greece had entered the Second World War, his former colleagues at the museum organized his funeral.³⁷⁵ It took place at the Greek Orthodox church of Bakırköy, his neighborhood church, and was attended by representatives of the Istanbul Archeological Museums, the Turkish Ministry of Education, the Topkapi Saray Museum, and the German Archeological Institute.³⁷⁶

³⁷³ In Istanbul Macridy excavated the Monastery of Constantine Lips (Fenari Isa Camii) (1925); the Hippodrome, the Golden Gate and the Monastery of Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) (1926); Joshua's Hill (Yûsa Tepesi) at Beykoz (1927); the Forum of Theodosius (Forum Tauri) (1928). In the museum, in the late 1920s, he was involved in the organization and arrangement of the Islamic art collection. In Ankara, Macridy excavated the railway station's tumuli (1925), and also took part in discussions about the conservation of Ankara's cultural heritage and the establishment of museums planned for Turkey's new capital. Grigoriadis, "Developing Archaeology and Museology," 8.

³⁷⁴ Macridy collaborated with the Turkish art historian Tahsin Öz on a study of the Topkapi collection of Ottoman textiles. This work was published in an expanded form by Öz after Macridy's death. Tahsin Öz, *Turkish Textiles and Velvets, XIV-XVI Centuries* (Ankara: Turkish Press, Broadcasting and Tourist Dept, 1950). On his trips to Istanbul Macridy would visit excavations in and around the city. On his last visit to Istanbul, he visited the archeological excavations at Küçükçekmece (Rhegion). Grigoriadis, "Developing Archaeology and Museology," 9.

³⁷⁵ Grigoriadis, "Developing Archaeology and Museology," 9.

³⁷⁶ Ogan, "Th. Makridi'nin Hatırasına," 168–69.

Benakis' correspondence also evinces Macridy's continued contact with Turkey throughout his career in Athens, including with the intellectual and archeological community there. In a letter dispatched from Istanbul in 1930, for example, a year before the Benaki Museum was opened to the public, Martin references Macridy's unique position, working both in Greece and in Turkey. In this letter, the Swedish-born scholar was evidently trying to sell Benakis a group of Byzantine ceramics found underground on a historical site in Istanbul, noting that "The only difficulty is to get it out [of the country]." He suggests that the help of a legation may allow the archeological finds to be exported, but also encourages Benakis to either go to Istanbul himself or to send some money to a friend, presumably in Istanbul, to whom the collection could be delivered. Importantly, he warns Benakis to act swiftly, and above all not to share the news with Macridy, who was still working for the Turkish state and evidently would have intervened to prevent their export: "do it quickly because ...here the walls have ears. To morrow whole Constantinople may know about and then it is too late. It will never leave the country. *Not a word to your director.* Whole C-le [Constantinople] knows that he will go to Athens."³⁷⁷ (my emphasis)

³⁷⁷ Martin notes that several of these Byzantine ceramics were intact and that he deemed them to be "perhaps the most important collection of byzantine pottery that I know of since the one that was destroyed thirty years ago." Evidently attempting to convince Benakis to buy the lot, he emphasized that "for the history of ceramic art [they are] of capital importance," and that "its place is Athens." Martin suggested, however, that if Benakis does not purchase it, he would "immediately write to Europe to get some Museum to Buy it," that the Arab Museum would be interested in many pieces because "it clears up many questions about coptic ceramic art," and that "Eumo," the London-based Greek collector George Eumorfopoulos may also be interested. Fredrik Robert Martin (from Istanbul) to Antonis Benakis, May 27, 1930, Binder 1 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

In a letter from 1935, on the other hand, Benakis reported to the archeologist and art historian Marguerite Van Berchem that Macridy had told him that Halil Bey was senile, thus demonstrating that the two men were still in close contact with one another well into his time in Athens.³⁷⁸ A series of receipts among Benakis' correspondence also indicate that Macridy was acquiring objects for the Benaki Museum in Istanbul, thus further suggesting that he travelled there and maintained links in that city.³⁷⁹

Finally, in 1937 a Turkish journalist, Halil Neset Atay, visited the Benaki, and Macridy guided him through the museum, further demonstrating the open channels of communication between the two countries that had only recently gone to war with one another. Atay reported on his visit to the museum upon his return to Turkey, publishing his article in the Turkish newspaper *Ulus*. Benakis' correspondence preserves a translation of this article, as the press office of the Greek foreign ministry, that was clearly monitoring the Turkish press, translated it into Greek and forwarded it to Benakis.³⁸⁰ In addition to highlighting the museum's collections, the author of the article noted that he "returned from the beautiful and friendly country with the

³⁷⁸ Van Berchem was evidently looking for a file with her father's manuscripts that Halil supposedly had, although the Turkish scholar insisted otherwise. Benakis advised Van Berchem to wait until Halil's death to retrieve them, as according to Macridy, Halil was senile. Antonis Benakis to Marguerite Van Berchem, Rome, July, 16, 1935, "Αλληλογραφία ξένη 1935 - 1936," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives

³⁷⁹ Unfortunately, these receipts rarely specify what types of objects Macridy was buying, and from which dealers. See Binder 4 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,"-Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

³⁸⁰ The article was published on April 30th, 1937 and was entitled "In the Benaki Museum are objects worth a million and a half British Pounds." Press Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Antonis Benakis, May 18, 1937, Binder 7 of "Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων," Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

decision to support Greek-Turkish friendship.”³⁸¹ He also elaborated on Macridy, drawing attention to the “Turkish” aspects of his career and identity. He noted for example, that Macridy was the son of Makridi Pasha, that he had previously worked at the Archeology Museum in Istanbul where he had collaborated for over thirty years with its director Halil Bey and also shared that Macridy had lost his son in the Great War, fighting in the Ottoman army.³⁸²

As Macridy was part of both the Greek and the Turkish intellectual spheres, he may have acted as a conduit between the two realms. In other words, his re-evaluation of the decline of late Ottoman art at the Benaki Museum may have been informed by similar revisionist narratives constructed by his Turkish contemporaries. That the Benaki Museum may have relied on bodies of knowledge created by Turkish intellectuals is important to note because scholars writing about Greek modernity - including for example Yannis Hamilakis and Michael Herzfeld – have almost unanimously assumed that the Greek cultural elite relied on European bodies of knowledge and expertise in forging their cultural narratives.

Although the Greek museum and the Turkish scholars may have informed each other and may have been aligned in their efforts to promote the aesthetic appreciation of late Ottoman art, they also created national art histories out of what was essentially a shared material culture, that

³⁸¹ Although the author’s attitude to the museum and to his visit to Greece was overwhelmingly positive, Atay disapprovingly mentions that the museum housed objects that came from former Ottoman territories, specifically a candlestick from Medina as well as an eikon from the church of Christ in Galata, noting that both were bought from antiquaries in London. Tempering his tone, however, he notes that his criticism is directed primarily at employees of the mosque and the church who sold these objects to the London antiquities dealers. Press Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Antonis Benakis, May 18, 1937, Binder 7 of “Αλληλογραφία για Αγορά Αντικειμένων,” Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives.

³⁸² Macridy’s son had been enlisted in the Ottoman army and died in the Baghdad front. Grigoriads, “Developing Archaeology and Museology,” 7; Ogan, “Th. Makridi’ nin Hatırasına,” 168.

shared stylistic features and was often made by the same artisans. As Benakis was inserting late Ottoman ecclesiastical objects into narratives of Greek art, Turkish scholars were making a case for the “Turkishness” of this same period of art, primarily architecture from Muslim religious and imperial contexts.

Indeed, these Greek and Turkish cultural elites who forged the histories of late Ottoman art during a period of nationalism – after the dissolution of the Empire and the consolidation of the modern nation states – played a foundational role in the reception of late Ottoman art through national or ethnic categories.³⁸³ This period of art had little to no established historiography, and they quite literally created the earliest histories and collections of this period of aesthetic production, historicizing the material culture of their respective communities as separate traditions.³⁸⁴ They thus contributed to the process of forging *national* histories out of

³⁸³ Sibel Bozdoğan, “Reading Ottoman Architecture through Modernist Lenses: Nationalist Historiography and the ‘New Architecture’ in the Early Republic,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 199–221.

³⁸⁴ In many ways this bifurcation of Ottoman artistic production can be compared to the distinction made between “Islamic” and “Coptic” material by museum administrators and preservationists in Egypt. The two artistic traditions coexisted temporally and spatially in medieval Cairo (i.e., within the same Islamic society) and also featured formal similarities. Arts professionals however, treated them as two separate categories, placing them in distinct museums dedicated to each category and concealing the fraught separation of the artistic traditions. Rather than exploring the interconnections between them, they abhorred visual materials they considered “hybrid,” that deviated from the normative categories, or that showed characteristics of more than one category. These distinct categories were first formed and codified in nineteenth century European historiography, but they resonated with Egyptian society’s negotiation of internal differences and were also endorsed by the contemporary Egyptian state and continue to inform the interpretation of the past. See: Irene Bierman, “Urban Memory and the Preservation of Monuments,” in *Restoration and Conservation of Islamic Monuments in Egypt*, ed. Jere L. Bacharach (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1995), 1–12; Irene Bierman, “Disciplining the Eye,” in *Making Cairo Medieval*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad, Nasser Rabbat, and Irene Bierman (Lanham [Md.]: Lexington Books, 2005), 9–27; Nezar AlSayyad, *Cairo: Histories of a City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011); Watenpugh, “Resonance and Circulation: The Category ‘Islamic Art and Architecture,’” 1230–

the material culture of the multiethnic Ottoman Empire, that today still distorts our understanding of the Ottoman past.

1231; Donald Preziosi, *Brain of the Earth's Body: Art, Museums, and the Phantasms of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 125–140.

CHAPTER THREE

HELLENIC NATIONAL COSTUMES

When the Benaki Museum opened to the public in 1931, one of its main attractions was its expansive collection of Greek folk costumes and related embroideries (Fig. 2 - 15). These costumes, which were valued as objects of art, had been commonly worn in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – and in some villages into the twentieth century – namely predominantly when Greeks were subjects of the Ottoman Empire. They were gradually supplanted, starting in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, by Western European forms of dress.

The Benaki collection of costumes was part of Antonis Benakis' broader mission to elevate the arts of the post-classical Eastern Mediterranean. In doing so, Benakis countered commonly held cultural narratives established by foundational art historians like Johann Winckelmann (1717 - 1768), and adopted by Greek nationalists, that the pinnacle of artistic achievement was located in the classical past. Although Greek museums were almost exclusively dedicated to classical art, the Benaki Museum introduced the Greek public to later periods of the region's art history, including Islamic and Byzantine art, and made the case that Greek art – and the art of the Eastern Mediterranean more broadly – did not decline in the centuries that followed classical antiquity.

This mission also included demonstrating that Greeks had a venerable artistic tradition in the recent Ottoman past. This ambition was predominantly achieved through the collection of Greek “popular” art, or the art of the Greek peasantry. Benakis collected folk art of various media

– including weaving, metalwork, pottery, and woodcarving – but his primary focus was costumes and their embroidered decorations.³⁸⁵

Benakis was not alone in promoting the aesthetic appreciation and understanding of Greek dress. Related collections were formed, and scholarly studies were conducted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These were produced both by British collectors and, notably, by the Ottoman state – at a time when many Greeks were still part of the Ottoman Empire – which touted the Greek costumes as emblematic of Ottoman craft. On the one hand, Benakis relied on these earlier studies. A comparison with these earlier collections, however, also reveals that Benakis reframed these costumes as “purely” Greek. The costumes in the Benaki collection thus made the case that Greeks had a *distinct* “national” artistic culture in the Ottoman period, which had little to do with the Ottoman Empire and was free from Turkish influence.

This important collection of folk art throws into question existing theorizations of Greek identity as well as the role that folklore played in the construction of Greek historical and cultural narratives. Specifically, this chapter takes issue with aspects of Michael Herzfeld’s *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece* (1982, the latest edition published in 2020), which theorizes the Greek interest in their folk traditions.³⁸⁶ Herzfeld argues that, after gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire and founding the Greek state (1832), Greek intellectuals and the Greek administration put forth two “mutually opposed” images of Greek identity: the “Hellenic” and “Romeic,” creating what I conceive to be a false dichotomy. The

³⁸⁵ *Guide* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1936), 200–201.

³⁸⁶ Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*.

“Hellenic” image as Herzfeld explains, which was the more prominent one in the first century of statehood, was “avowedly antiquarian” and portrayed modern Greeks as the cultural descendants of the ancient Greeks and the very source of European culture.³⁸⁷ This model, as Herzfeld argues, sought to “scrape away” the “shamefully Turkish patina” that Greeks had accrued over the centuries of Ottoman rule.³⁸⁸ The “Romeic” model, on the other hand, which derives its name from the self-designation of the Greeks as “Romii” drew from the Byzantine (East Roman) Empire and Orthodox Christianity and did not necessarily conceive of Greeks as central to the category of Europe.³⁸⁹ Herzfeld describes this model as a “catch all” for many aspects of Greece’s “Eastern” cultural heritage, explaining, for example, that it also accommodated aspects of Turkish culture, such as the use of Turkish vocabulary in the Greek language.³⁹⁰ Herzfeld also describes this aspect of Greek identity as more “immediate,” “familiar,” and “in tune with reality.”³⁹¹

Herzfeld argues that Greek folklorists predominantly bolstered the Hellenic image of Greek identity and were thus crucial to the process of Greek nation building. Herzfeld focuses

³⁸⁷ Herzfeld refers to this dual function of the Hellenic identity as the “twin concepts of Hellas and Europe.” Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 9.

³⁸⁸ Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 15.

³⁸⁹ While Greeks sometimes use the term “Evropi,” either in its geographical sense or in its cultural sense, to include themselves, at other times they use Evropi to exclude themselves from the category (i.e. “pame stin Evropi”). This latter usage, according to Herzfeld, expresses the “Romeic dimension” of their identity. Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 19.

³⁹⁰ Herzfeld notes that the debate between these two aspects of Greek identity – the “Hellenic” and the “Romeic” – was also played out in the realm of language. Greek intellectuals debated the form that the modern Greek language should take. Proponents of the archaizing “Katharevousa,” vied against the proponents of the vernacular “demotic” language, that also included “Turkisms.” On the language debates see also: Mackridge, *Language and National Identity in Greece, 1766-1976*.

³⁹¹ Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 20.

on early Greek folklorists, who predominantly investigated *immaterial* folk traditions, such as folk songs and stories, but were not particularly engaged with material culture. These early scholars primarily concerned themselves with locating traces of ancient customs and values in the rural populations of Greece, the country's largest demographic element. Herzfeld argues that the "Hellenic" image of Greek identity was dominant in the first century of the state's existence because it satisfied European expectations about Greece and thus allowed the emergent nation-state to secure political support from European powers.³⁹² By the end of the first century of statehood, however – around the time that Benakis was active – Herzfeld claims that Hellenism became less politically necessary because the modern Greek nation state had become an "irreversible reality of world politics."³⁹³ As a consequence, the prominence of folklore studies also waned and the "Romeic" model of Greek identity – that Herzfeld deems to be more authentic – was allowed to develop more freely.³⁹⁴

However, the Benaki Museum did not present these two aspects of Greek history and culture as two conflicting alternatives, nor was folklore used exclusively to bolster a "Hellenic" image. Rather, the museum adopted a linear narrative of Greek (art) history that began in antiquity, continued through Byzantium, and into the Ottoman period. The museum employed the material culture of the Greek peasantry to demonstrate that Greeks had an artistic culture during the Ottoman period, one that was a continuation of both Byzantine and ancient Greek artistic traditions and was largely – but not entirely – impervious to Turkish influence.

³⁹² Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 20–21.

³⁹³ Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 21.

³⁹⁴ Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 20–21.

Herzfeld overlooks the fact that the Ottoman state also produced bodies of knowledge about Greek folklore. He limits his investigation to Greek folklorists, while also citing certain European studies and compilations of folk songs and stories that preceded Greek studies of their own folklore.³⁹⁵ He does not, however, cite any equivalent Ottoman sources. This omission is itself a vestige of Greek nationalism and the idea that Greeks have little to do with the Ottoman Empire - namely the types of narratives that Benakis was creating – and the silo-ing of academic disciplines into national categories. Although Benakis certainly relied on European sources, his knowledge of rural dress – that ultimately allowed him to claim that Greeks had a *national* artistic culture in the Ottoman period – extensively relied on Ottoman studies, and the very people that Greeks were defining themselves against.

Finally, this chapter also takes issue with Herzfeld’s assertion that, by the end of the first century of statehood, namely when Benakis was active, the process of Greek nation building was largely complete, and that Greeks could thus develop their more “authentic” Romeic identity more freely. Although the Greek state had existed since 1832 and Herzfeld rightly asserts that by the 1930s it had become an “irreversible reality of world politics,” the anthropologist overlooks the fact that the majority of Greeks continued to be Ottoman subjects through the first

³⁹⁵ Herzfeld cites several European studies and compilations that Greek folklorists, in their turn, often relied upon in building their own studies. For example, he cites the French historian Claude Fauriel’s two-volume compendium of Greek folksongs published in France in 1824 and 1825, which was later also published in English by C. B. Sheridan. Herzfeld suggests that this compendium was the first substantive collection of Greek folksongs to appear in print. He also references the German historian Theodor Kind’s shorter collections of folksongs (published in 1827), as well as Niccolo Tommasea’s collection of Tuscan, Corsican, Greek, and Illyrian folksongs (published in 1841 and 1842). Finally, he also notes that Goethe had expressed particular admiration for Greek songs after meeting another collector Werner von Haxthausen, in 1815. Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 16.

decades of the twentieth century and were only incorporated into the Greek state following the First and Second Balkan Wars (1912 – 1913), the First World War (1914 – 1918), and as a consequence of the Exchange of Populations (1923). Benakis, who began forming his collection of costumes in the year of the Exchange, contributed significantly to the process of nation building by producing a highly ideological image of the recent Ottoman past. Notably, his collection reified the notion that Greeks – many of whom had only recently been Ottomans and whose culture had been “claimed” by the Ottoman state – had an identifiable “national” artistic culture that was distinct from the Turkish.

This chapter begins with a description of the Benaki collection of costumes. It then outlines important European and Ottoman collections and bodies of knowledge about Greek embroideries and costumes that informed Benakis’ own understanding of this body of material. Finally, it demonstrates how Benakis diverged from these existing collections and, through a process of selective collection and narrative construction, re-framed these costumes as a body of “national” art.

The Benaki Collection of Costumes

Benakis first began collecting Greek costumes in 1923,³⁹⁶ and aimed to comprehensively collect the most “characteristic” styles of rural dress from every region of Greece. He continued to expand his collection – through purchases as well as gifts³⁹⁷ – over the remaining three decades

³⁹⁶ I state that Benakis began collecting Greek folk costumes in 1923 because in 1948 he wrote that his collection “has taken 25 years of systematic work to form.” Antonios Benaki, “Foreword,” in *Hellenic National Costumes*, ed. Antonios Benaki, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948), 11.

³⁹⁷ “This collection which it has taken twenty-five years of systematic work to form has brought together through purchase and gifts a large number of complete costumes...” Benaki, “Foreword,” 11.

of his life, even after the Benaki Museum was opened to the public in 1931.³⁹⁸ By 1948 his collection included 161 “complete” costumes, made up of multiple articles of clothing and replete with all their attendant accessories, and was the result, as Benakis explained, of twenty-five years of “systematic” work.³⁹⁹ The collection focused largely on the costumes of rural populations, and particularly on women’s dress. It did, however, also include some exemplars of male costumes and clothes of the urban upper classes. Today the Benaki Museum houses the largest extant repository of Greek costumes in the world.⁴⁰⁰

The Greek collector dedicated the entire basement level of his museum – a total of nine galleries – to these costumes (Fig 2 – 15). The clothes were mounted on mannequins and exhibited in glass vitrines that lined the walls of these galleries, alongside other exemplars of

³⁹⁸ I state that Benakis continued to expand the collection over the remaining three decades of his life because Hadzimichali writes that “This collection has been continually enriched since 1930.” Angeliki Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” in *Hellenic National Costumes*, ed. Antonios Benaki, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948), 21. Further, in Volume II, published in 1954, the director of the museum writes “Since the publication of volume I [in 1948] the museum has been enriched by fresh gifts of National Costumes...” Antonios Benaki, ed., “Foreword,” in *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 2 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1954), 14.

³⁹⁹ I have calculated that the Benaki Museum included 161 costumes because in 1948, in the first volume of *Hellenic National Costumes*, a two-volume illustrated compendium of Greek costumes selected largely, but not exclusively, from the Benaki Museum’s collections (discussed further below), Benakis wrote that “Out of a total of 112 plates 86 are reproduction of costumes belonging to the museum while the rest are costumes kindly lent for the purpose by the owners. The costumes included in the present edition do not, however, represent the total of the Museum’s collection. The Museum possesses 75 other costumes, some of them exhibited and other in store, which have been omitted...” Benaki, “Foreword,” 11.

⁴⁰⁰ The Historic and Ethnological Society and the Greek Women’s Lyceum, formed in Athens in 1911 and 1882 respectively, also had Greek costume collections, though they were not as expansive or comprehensive as the Benaki Museum collection. According to the Greek folklorist Angeliki Hadzimichali the Historic and Ethnological Society “led to the preservation of national costumes, particularly those of an historic character for museum purposes, but the collection in question is far from complete.” Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

Greek folk art.⁴⁰¹ The museum, which also showed a particular interest in the embroidered decorations of these costumes, also collected embroidered parts of dress, like aprons, sleeves, and towels. These were exhibited on the walls of the basement galleries, as well as in Room O (Fig 16 – 19), a large gallery at the far end of the first floor of the museum which was exclusively dedicated to embroidery. This latter gallery predominantly exhibited seventeenth- and eighteenth-century embroideries, the majority of which came from the Aegean Islands, Crete, Cyprus, the Ionian Islands and Epirus, and included embroideries made for costumes as well as for household use.⁴⁰² As the guidebook explains, these embroideries were made by women.⁴⁰³

Sometime after 1923, though certainly before 1930, Benakis also began working on *Hellenic National Costumes*, a large format (52 cm x 25 cm), two-volume illustrated compendium and study of his collection.⁴⁰⁴ A monumental endeavor in its own right, the *Hellenic National Costumes* took over two decades to complete. The first volume was published in 1948 and the second, completed in 1954, was published posthumously, a few months after Benakis' death. This edition, which was edited by Benakis himself and published by his museum, carefully

⁴⁰¹ For an exhaustive inventory of the Benaki Museum's folk art collection, see: *Guide*, 198–240.

⁴⁰² According to the guidebook embroideries intended for household uses included “bed curtains (sperveri), bed and sofa valances, bedspreads, cushions and towels.” The guidebook further notes that “It is difficult to fix the exact date of Greek embroideries, owing to the length of time during which the same decorative designs were retained,” but it specifies that certain examples exhibited in Gallery O “doubtless belong to the 17th century” but that most are “not earlier than the 18th century.” *Guide*, 170–171.

⁴⁰³ *Guide*, 170.

⁴⁰⁴ Antonios Benaki, ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, 2 vols. (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948-1954). I believe that Benakis began working on *Hellenic National Costumes* in 1930 at the latest because in Volume 1 of the book Benakis writes that Nicolas Sperling, the artist who produced the images for the two volumes, “was brought from Egypt in 1930 for the purpose.” This is the earliest date that is mentioned in association with the production of the book. Benaki, “Foreword,” 11.

documented – both visually and textually – the sartorial practices of the Greek peasantry. The two volumes illustrated a total of 112 costumes, selected largely, but not exclusively, from the museum’s collections.⁴⁰⁵ Like the collection itself, the *Hellenic National Costumes* primarily represented female peasant costumes, including many exemplars of bridal dresses and “festival” dresses.⁴⁰⁶ Of the 112 costumes, only 28 were male costumes, and only 18 belonged to the urban upper classes.

In addition to a first section dedicated to “Gala and Town Dresses,” Benakis dedicated a section to every region of Greece. Volume I included the costumes of Continental Greece, the Peloponnese, Thessaly, Euboea, Epirus, and Macedonia, while Volume II included additional costumes from Macedonia, Thrace, Crete, the Aegean Islands, the Ionian Islands, and the Dodecanese.⁴⁰⁷ A final section in Volume II was also dedicated to Cyprus; while the island was

⁴⁰⁵ In 1948, in the first volume of *Hellenic National Costumes* Benakis wrote that “Out of a total of 112 plates 86 are reproduction of costumes belonging to the museum while the rest are costumes kindly lent for the purpose by the owners.” Benaki, “Foreword,” 11.

⁴⁰⁶ Bridal Dresses are illustrated in Plates: 13, 41.A, 65, 75, 79, 80, 82 of *Hellenic National Costumes*. Festival Dresses are illustrated in Plates 14, 17, 23, 32, 49, 66, 67, 74.A of *Hellenic National Costumes*.

One exception to the use of the term “peasant” to describe these costumes is Plate 63, which represents a man wearing a costume from the Island of Skyros. He is simply identified as a “Shepherd.”

⁴⁰⁷ For almost all of the costumes, the *Hellenic National Costumes* specifies the exact location/village each costume was from. The section on Continental Greece includes costumes from the regions of Attica, Eleusis, Megara, Boeotia (Tanagra), Mount Parnassus, Livanates (Lokris), Desphina (Mount Parnassus), Naupactos, Missolonghi, Salamis. The section on the Peloponnese includes costumes from the regions of Corinth, Argos, Leonidion. The section on Thessaly includes costumes from the regions of Trikeri, Halmyros, Pilion. The section on Euboea includes costumes from Aghia Anna, Kymi, and Aidipsos. The section on Epirus includes costumes from Metsovon, Souli, Pogoni, Kurenta, Zagori, Dryinupolis. The section on Macedonia (which is divided between Volume I and Volume II) includes costumes from Naoussa, Verria, Siatista, Rumluki, Kavakli, Asvestochori, Kaputzides, Chalcidice, Episcopi, Hasia, Baldza, Kastoria, Bufi, Antartiko (Florina District), and the Island of Thassos. In the section on Thrace are represented costumes from Makra Gephyra and Soufli. In the section on Crete costumes are represented

not part of Greece – in Benakis’ lifetime it was a British colony – it was likely included because the Greek state pursued its union with Greece.⁴⁰⁸ Each of these sections varied in size, representing anywhere from two to twenty costumes from each region.⁴⁰⁹

Written in Greek, English, and French, the book was intended to disseminate the corpus of Greek folk costumes to a local as well as an international audience. As Benakis explained in the forward to the first volume, the *Hellenic National Costumes* aimed “...to illustrate the principal Greek national costumes” and “to make known to the general public the treasures of this branch of Greek popular art, as well as to stimulate interest in and love of the national dress which is gradually falling into disuse.”⁴¹⁰ The two volumes were printed in an edition of 300 numbered copies. 25 additional copies, which were printed on luxurious Whatman handmade paper, were not for sale and were likely distributed as gifts to important institutions.⁴¹¹

The illustrations in the two volumes were executed by the Egypt-based Russian miniaturist Nicolas Sperling (Fig 20 and 25 - 35).⁴¹² Sperling first created these illustrations using

from Anogia and Sfakia. In the section on the Aegean islands are represented costumes from Island of Skyros, Skiathos, Skopelos, Hydra, Spetzia, Psara, Chios (Pyrgi and Kalamoti), Mytilene, Samos. In the section on the Ionian islands are represented costumes from the islands of Corfu (including from Lykursi (now Garitsa)) and Leukas. In the section on the Dodecanese are represented costumes from the islands of Astypalea, Calymnos, Nisyros, and Castellorizo. The section on Cyprus represents two costumes from Carpasi.

⁴⁰⁸ Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*.

⁴⁰⁹ The total number of costumes represented in each section: Epirus 20; Continental Greece 18; Macedonia 17; Aegean islands 15; Gala and Town Costumes 11; Ionian islands 6; Dodecanese 5; Thessaly 5; Euboea 4; Crete 4; Peloponnese 3; Thrace 2; Cyprus 2.

⁴¹⁰ Benaki, “Foreword,” 11.

⁴¹¹ Volume I of *Hellenic National Costumes* states that: “The first edition of Hellenic National Costumes is limited to 300 copies numbered 1-300 which are for sale. In addition, 25 copies numbered A to KE have been printed on “Whatman” handmade paper and are not for sale.” Benaki, “Foreword,” 11.

⁴¹² Benakis identifies Nicolas Sperling as a “White Russian miniaturist” presumably to clarify his political affiliations. Benaki, “Foreword,” 12.

watercolor; the Aspioti-Elka Company in Athens then reproduced and printed them as full-page color plates. Each illustration represented a single figure, predominantly upper-class Athenians who belonged to Benakis' social circle, dressed in one of the traditional costumes standing in rural landscape. Amusingly, Benakis himself also appears in the volume dressed in Cretan garb (Fig 20).

As the volume made a case for the aesthetic valuation of these costumes, great attention was paid to the execution of these images. The costumes in these illustrations were rendered in precise detail and took Sperling a total of nine years to complete.⁴¹³ Though extremely labor intensive, the process of miniature painting was specifically chosen in order to effectively record the aesthetic qualities of the costumes, down to their minutest features.⁴¹⁴ Benakis brought Sperling to Greece for the express purpose of creating these illustrations, because, as the collector explained, there was no other specialist in the country.⁴¹⁵ As he elaborated:

This technique was the best way of ensuring that full justice would be done not only to the brilliance and harmony of the colors but also to the texture of the materials – wool, silk, cotton – as well as to the ornamentation – silver trinkets, gold-threaded embroidery, gauze veils – as it was desired that all these should be reproduced in full details and in such a manner as to bring out the characteristic features of each type of decoration. Any other process, whether photography, monochrome line-drawing or other, would have failed to achieve the above purpose.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹³ The publications indicates that the plates in Volume I were produced between 1933 and 1940, while those in Volume II were printed between 1933 and 1952. Benaki, "Foreword," 12.

⁴¹⁴ Benaki, "Foreword," 12.

⁴¹⁵ Benaki, "Foreword," 12.

⁴¹⁶ Benaki, "Foreword," 12.

Volume I also included a scholarly introduction, while Volume II included detailed descriptions of each of the costumes represented across both volumes. These were written by the Greek folklorist Angeliki Hadzimichali. The director of the museum emphasized the novelty and scholarly value of Hadzimichali's contribution, noting that "for the first time...we are given, from an authoritative pen, a description of the principal and most distinctive dresses drawn from the great and varied treasure-house of Greek national costume."⁴¹⁷

Greek (and Turkish) Embroideries in European collections

There was an existing aesthetic appreciation of these costumes and embroideries that interested Benakis, as well as a few pioneering studies conducted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A few decades before Benakis formed his own collection, a group of British intellectuals – a diplomat, a designer, and a pair of archeologists – amassed significant quantities of Greek embroideries. These collectors were variably motivated by an ethnographic interest in these objects or as models for contemporary design. All of them eventually sold or bequeathed their embroideries to British museums.

Unlike Benakis, these collectors also acquired Turkish embroideries. Their collections were all created before the Exchange of Populations, and the embroideries were often derived from villages that were inhabited both by Greeks and by Turks. It is important to note that they

⁴¹⁷ The Foreword to Volume II is written by the "Director of the Benaki Museum." One can assume that this was Manolis Hatzidakis, who was the second director of the Benaki Museum and director at the time when this volume was published. "Foreword," in *Hellenic National Costumes*, ed. Antonios Benaki, vol. 2 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1954), 14.

amassed both Greek and Turkish embroideries because it serves to demonstrate that Benakis was very deliberate in his choice to acquire only Greek embroideries, discussed further below.

The earliest of these collections, as Mary Greensted has demonstrated, was formed by Thomas Sandwith, British consul in Ottoman Crete between 1870 and 1885, during which time he helped negotiate the Treaty of Halepa (1878) which granted the island semi-autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire.⁴¹⁸ During his years in Crete Sandwith amassed a collection of traditional embroidery and lacework – primarily items of traditional dress – from that island.⁴¹⁹ 160 pieces from his collection were sold to the South Kensington Museum (today’s Victoria and Albert Museum) in London in 1878.⁴²⁰ Items from this collection were employed by William Morris and other younger designers of the Arts and Crafts Movement as models for contemporary textile design and, as Greensted argues, sparked a broader enthusiasm for Greek folk art among members of the movement in Britain in the 1880s.⁴²¹

Ann French has also brought to light two important British scholar-collectors, with whom Benakis corresponded, who formed the largest collections of Greek and Turkish embroideries, as well as wrote the earliest studies on the subject. Between the years 1902 – 14, when they were based at the British School at Athens, the archaeologist A.J.B. Wace (1879 - 1957) and the philologist R.M. Dawkins (1871 - 1955) – who largely worked collaboratively – collected over 1200

⁴¹⁸ Mary Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops and Their Links with the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain,” *The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850 - the Present*, no. 35 (2011): 49.

⁴¹⁹ Sandwith’s collection included items such as skirts, trousers, and koleta (Shawls). Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 47–49.

⁴²⁰ Greensted names two conflicting dates (1876 and 1878) for the sale of the Sandwith collection to the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is unclear which date is the correct one. Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 47–50.

⁴²¹ Sandwith, as Greensted notes, also gave a number of Cretan embroideries directly to William Morris. Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 50.

pieces of embroidery.⁴²² Unlike Benakis, the British scholars focused on embroidered textiles made for household use and did not collect items of clothing. Dawkins' collection was the larger of the two, aiming to comprehensively represent every available type of Greek embroidery.⁴²³

In addition to acquiring embroideries through dealers, Wace and Dawkins also sourced embroideries directly from their owners; in 1906 they travelled through a number of the Dodecanese islands, almost all of which were under Ottoman jurisdiction,⁴²⁴ and in 1907, through the islands of the Cyclades, where these embroideries in many cases were still in household uses.⁴²⁵

Wace and Dawkins' collections served as the basis for their research and publications, which offered the earliest classifications of Greek and Turkish embroideries and attempts to trace the origins, influences, and evolution of their various patterns.⁴²⁶ Their collections and studies, as French notes, were part of a larger ethnographic interest in Greece. The two men were

⁴²² Wace also served as director of the British School at Athens (1914-1923). Dawkins later became Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Language and Literature at Oxford from 1919. Ann French, "The Greek Embroidery Collecting of R.M. Dawkins and A.J.B. Wace," *British School at Athens Studies* 17 (2009): 87.

⁴²³ Dawkins and Wace predominantly collected while they were in Athens. By the late 1920s, both Dawkins and Wace largely stopped buying embroideries. While they were the most prolific and scholarly among the group, a number of their contemporaries, who were also associated with the British School at Athens before 1914, also collected Greek embroideries in this same period. These included the School's Director, Professor Carr Bosanquet, Dickins, and Tillyard. As many of their collections were either bequeathed or sold to British institutions, museums in the United Kingdom now have some of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Greek embroideries outside of Greece. French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 86-89.

⁴²⁴ They travelled to Amorgos, Astypalea, Telos, Nisyros, Cos, Kalymnos, Leros, Samos, and Patmos. See: French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 79-80.

⁴²⁵ On these trips the two scholars record the provenance, measurements, loom widths, colors, pattern and stitch types of the embroideries. French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 79.

⁴²⁶ Wace and Dawkins created a classification system that took into account the various patterns, stitches, dyes, and material used in these embroideries. French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 79.

encouraged to pursue observation of contemporary life in Greece and the amassing of ethnographic material by two senior academics at Cambridge and Oxford, Sir William Ridgeway, and J.L. Myres, at the forefront of promoting anthropology as an academic discipline.⁴²⁷ While embroidery was their main area of focus, Dawkins and Wace also collected and studied other aspects of Greek folklore, notably also documenting local dialects.⁴²⁸ In 1914 the two men organized an exhibition of Greek and Turkish Embroideries at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London.⁴²⁹ In 1950 Dawkins bequeathed his collection to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Wace's collection, on the other hand, is divided between the V&A, the Liverpool Museum and the Textile Museum in Washington D.C.⁴³⁰ In 1925, Wace also became Keeper of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁴³¹

A substantial collection of Greek and Turkish embroideries was also formed by the British embroiderer Louisa Pesel (1870 - 1947), a contemporary of Benakis as well as of Wace and Dawkins. In 1902, she was appointed designer, and later served as the second director (1903 – 1907), of the Royal Hellenic School of Needlework and Lace in Athens. As Mary Greensted has demonstrated, the school, founded in 1897, was perhaps the most prominent of a series of craft

⁴²⁷ Sir William Ridgeway was Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge University, 1892 – 1926. Ridgeway was also interested in Turkish material: he wrote an article, for example, on the origins of the Turkish Crescent. J.L. Myres was Wykeham Professor of Ancient History at Oxford University, 1910–39. French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 80–82.

⁴²⁸ Among other ethnographic material that Dawkins and Wace collected or documented, French mentions: shadow puppets, amulets, folk songs, and accessories for performing at carnivals; French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 77–84. On Dawkins' work on local dialects see also: Peter Mackridge, "'Some Pamphlets on Dead Greek Dialects': R.M. Dawkins and Modern Greek Dialectology," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 85 (1990): 201–12.

⁴²⁹ French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 86.

⁴³⁰ French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 77.

⁴³¹ French, "Greek Embroidery Collecting," 86.

schools and workshops that were established in Greece in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These schools were aimed at providing skills and a means of employment to the large number of destitute girls and women who were displaced, predominantly from rural areas, by the series of wars fought between Greece and the Ottoman Empire (and later Turkey).⁴³² The Royal Hellenic School of Needlework and Lace, for example, was founded as a direct consequence of the war of 1897 between Greece and the Ottoman Empire. The school's goal was to provide the thousands of refugee women who arrived in Athens, predominantly from Thessaly, with craft skills and to connect them with markets to sell their wares, both locally and abroad.⁴³³ Starting in the last decades of the nineteenth century and through the 1930s, a plethora of exhibitions dedicated to contemporary crafts were also organized for similar reasons in various cities in Greece.⁴³⁴ A series of other craft workshops were also founded following the

⁴³² Among the craft schools and workshops that Greensted mentions are the Royal Hellenic School of Needlework and Lace (founded in Athens in 1897 and active into the 1930s), the school of Domestic Science in the convent of St. John the Baptist at Korakies in Chania, Crete (founded in 1903 and later named the Lady Edgerton School) and Proodos, a school of embroidery for girls and young women (founded in Athens in 1907). Greensted further notes that the Amalion, an orphanage founded by the Greek royal family in the 1850s, by 1914 also offered classes in spinning, weaving, dressmaking, embroidery and straw-plaiting. Attique, a School of Peasant Embroidery set up during WWI, provided free classes for peasant women and girls. After WWI the "Mother's Corner," a craft workshop and retail outlet, was also founded in Athens. Greensted, "Greek Craft Workshops," 53–57.

⁴³³ In 1898, for example, Lady Olga Edgerton, the first director of the Royal Hellenic School of Needlework and Lace, persuaded Liberty's, the well-known department store located in London to mount an exhibition of the school's embroideries. Louisa Pesel, on the other hand, the second director of the school developed outlets throughout Europe, Greece, and in Cairo. Greensted notes that by 1904 outposts of the school were also set up on the islands of Aegina, Spetsai, Hydra, and Kefallonia, in Corinth, and in Koropi on the outskirts of Athens. Greensted, "Greek Craft Workshops," 52–54.

⁴³⁴ Greensted notes that particularly influential were the exhibitions of craft - mainly embroidery, lacework and costume – organized by the Lyceum Club in Athens and held annually between 1921 and 1925, as well as the exhibition of crafts organized at Delphi in 1927, by the Greek poet Angelos Sikelianos and his wife Eva Palmer. Greensted, "Greek Craft Workshops," 55–59.

First World War (1914 - 1918), the conflict between Greece and Turkey (1919 - 1922), and the ensuing Exchange of Populations (1923).⁴³⁵ As Greensted further demonstrates, many of these craft workshops and schools were influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain, that likewise sought to revive traditional rural crafts as a means of sustaining rural communities.⁴³⁶ Pesel, for example, had been a student of Lewis F. Day, an important designer of the Arts and Crafts movement.

During her years in Greece, Pesel formed an extensive collection of Greek and Anatolian embroideries, the bulk of which – 116 items – was donated to Leeds University in 1947.⁴³⁷ As Greensted notes, Pesel had a broader interest in historic textiles, often using the British School at Athens libraries to research ancient Greek and Byzantine textiles.⁴³⁸ This interest largely informed her needlework, which often revived historic designs and techniques. It also informed her highly technical needleworking publications – which catered to practitioners – as well as her teaching.⁴³⁹ As Greensted notes, part of her teaching methodology involved asking her needleworking students to copy old models as a means of cultivating technique and design skills, including the use of color.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁵ Greensted names two examples of workshops founded in this later period: “Mother’s Corner,” a workshop and retail outlet founded in Athens by Anna Papadopoulos, as well as craft workshops that operated on the grounds of the old Royal Palace and provided employment and training for refugees from Asia Minor. Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 52–57.

⁴³⁶ Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 47.

⁴³⁷ Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 59.

⁴³⁸ Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 53–54.

⁴³⁹ Greensted notes that in 1913 the Victoria and Albert Museum published a series of Louisa Pesel’s stitch samplers which were based on embroideries of the Mediterranean and the Near East. Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 59.

⁴⁴⁰ Greensted notes that Lady Edgerton, the first director of the Royal Hellenic School of Needlework and Lace, who like Pesel was also English, also studied historic exemplars of lace and embroidery, often employing them as models for new designs to be produced by the school.

Greek Costumes Before Benakis: Ottoman Collections

There is a long history of Western fascination with the types of costumes Benakis collected. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Europeans documented the sartorial habits of various “exotic” cultures in the form of costume albums; hundreds of these albums, that often also portrayed Greeks, survive today in libraries across Europe. Starting in the eighteenth century, at a time of increased contact between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, many costume books, produced by Europeans or by Ottomans themselves, also specifically documented – for European audiences – the fascinating sartorial habits of Ottoman subjects. Some well-known examples of such albums are August Racinet’s *Le Costume Historique* (Paris, 1888) and Louis Dupré’s *Voyage à Athènes et à Constantinople* (Paris, 1825).⁴⁴¹

However, the largest collections and studies of Greek folk costumes had been created, when Greeks were still part of the Empire, by the Ottoman state. At the 1873 World Exposition in Vienna, the Ottoman commission mounted, among other displays, an exhibition of 250 traditional Ottoman costumes, among which were Greek costumes. The exhibition was organized by the well-known Ottoman painter Osman Hamdi Bey and Victor Marie de Launay, a French artist and amateur historian who resided in Istanbul.⁴⁴² As historian Ahmet Ersoy has

Edgerton travelled to Constantinople, Venice, and to various Greek Islands in order to study lace and embroidery of various periods, including the Byzantine. Greensted, “Greek Craft Workshops,” 55.

⁴⁴¹ Elisabeth A. Fraser, “Skin of Nation, Body of Empire: Louis Dupré in Ottoman Greece,” in *Mediterranean Encounters: Artists Between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, 1774-1839* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2017).

⁴⁴² Victor Marie De Launay worked in the Ministry of Trade and Public Works under Ibrahim Edhem Pasa, Osman Hamdi’s father. See Ahmet Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute to Late Tanzimat Ottomanism: The *Elbise-i’Osmaniyye* Album,” *Muqarnas* 20 (2003): 200.

explained, this costume exhibition was one of the most ambitious of its kind and the most expansive of a series of such expositions mounted by the Ottoman state.⁴⁴³

Although the exhibition was only temporary, the costumes were also documented in the widely circulated *Elbise-i Osmaniyye: Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie*,⁴⁴⁴ which was also commissioned by the Ottoman state on the occasion of the Vienna exhibition. The *Elbise* was a large (29 x 37 cm) photographic album and a scholarly study of Ottoman costume. It exhaustively documented the clothing of the religiously and ethnically diverse subjects of the vast Ottoman Empire, that at the time extended from Eastern Europe all the way to the Arabian Peninsula. Co-created by Hamdi Bey and de Launay, the authors devoted a section to each of the 22 administrative units of the Ottoman Empire and included 74 photographic plates taken by the renowned photographer Pascal Sebah. Each of these plates depicted a group of live models dressed in traditional clothing. Like Benakis – who appears in his own volume, as mentioned earlier, in Cretan dress (Fig 20) – De Launay also appears in the *Elbise* dressed as a “Hodja from Skodra” in one instance, and as a “Turkish man from Bursa” in another (Fig 21).⁴⁴⁵ Although by the 1870s traditional forms of dress were already being replaced by Europeanizing fashions, particularly among the Westernized urban populations of the Empire, the album exclusively portrayed traditional forms of dress. The album represented both rural and urban populations of various ethnic backgrounds, and of various classes, as well as clerics from multiple religions

⁴⁴³ The Ottoman state had also exhibited Ottoman costumes in the 1863 Istanbul Exposition, as well as in the 1867 Paris Exposition. Although Ersoy does not specify whether these exhibitions included Greek costumes it is possible that they did. Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 190–191.

⁴⁴⁴ Hamdi Bey, de Launay, and Sébah, *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie En 1873*.

⁴⁴⁵ Nolan has identified the man posing as a “Hodja from Skodra” and as a “Turkish man from Bursa” in the *Elbise* as Victor Marie de Launay. Erin Hyde Nolan, “You Are What You Wear: Ottoman Costume Portraits in the *Elbise-i Osmaniyye*,” *Ars Orientalis* 47 (2017): 194.

including the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian faiths. The authors described the costumes in meticulous detail, both in French and in Ottoman Turkish, elaborating on the different materials, production methods, and functions of each costume.⁴⁴⁶ This volume stood apart from the majority of existing costume albums in its scholarly character, its almost encyclopedic documentation of Ottoman dress, its focus on the Ottoman “commoner,” as well as in its use of photography, which avoided the formulaic depictions of Ottoman subjects and “exotic” gestures common to most costume albums.⁴⁴⁷

Importantly, the album represented many Greeks, also identified as Orthodox Christians across the various chapters of the Ottoman volume. They were represented in regions that only a few decades later – following the Balkan Wars and the First World War – would become part of the Greek state and would be represented in the *Hellenic National Costumes*. These included, for example, the Vilayet of Yania (Janina) (Fig 22), the Vilayet of Selanik (Salonique) (Fig 23), the Vilayet of Krid (Crete) (Fig 24), and the Vilayet “Des Iles” (Djezair I Bahri Sefid). Greeks were also represented in other parts of the Empire, including Constantinople, Edirne, Bursa, Aydin, Konya, Angora, Sivas, and Trabzon. Interestingly, the *Elbise* also attests to the multi-ethnic make-up of the soon-to-be Greek territories. The section devoted to the Vilayet of Yania for example, was represented by many Albanians (Arnaout), as well as one Wallachian (Valaque) woman (Fig 22), the part devoted to Crete was represented both by Christians and Muslims (Fig 24), and the segment devoted to the Vilayet of Selanik (Salonique) represented Jewish, Bulgarian, and Muslim women, as well as a Rabbi and a Hodja (Fig 23).

⁴⁴⁶ The costumes exhibited in the Vienna Exposition were mounted on mannequins and had detailed descriptive texts attached to the base of each figure. Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 193.

⁴⁴⁷ Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 191–194.

Like all of the costumes in the *Elbise*, the Greek costumes were promoted as exemplars of Ottoman craft. As Ersoy explains, the *Elbise* and the Vienna exhibition more broadly were part of a state-led effort, effective in the 1860s and 70s, to revive local Ottoman crafts and industries that were gradually disappearing due to the increased popularity of Western fashions and industrially produced Western goods. The authors of the *Elbise* and the curators of the Vienna exhibition sought to offset this decline by cultivating an appreciation for various vanishing Ottoman crafts, including traditional clothing, as well as other decorative and architectural techniques.⁴⁴⁸

The costumes in the *Elbise*, as Ersoy has explained, were also pressed into the service of promoting the late Tanzimat political ideal of multiethnic Ottoman citizenship. Starting in 1862 the Ottoman state had made certain novel – albeit restricted and ultimately unsuccessful – overtures towards giving some rights of representation to certain ethnic and religious groups in the Empire. These reforms were part of a broader effort on the part of the government to curtail potential nationalist movements by bringing these groups under the central authority of the

⁴⁴⁸ This effort to revive local Ottoman crafts and industries is also evinced in another publication produced on the occasion of the Vienna exhibition of 1873, the *Uşûl-i Mi'mārî-i 'Osmânî: L'Architecture Ottomane*. This was the earliest scholarly work on the history and theory of Ottoman architecture. In the *Uşûl*, Marie de Launay, who was also one of the authors of this volume, explicitly attributes the decline of Ottoman crafts to the prevalence of Western goods in the Ottoman Empire writing, that “scarcely more than a hundred years ago” (i.e. late eighteenth century), Ottoman art was still alive in Istanbul. He attributes this decline of the arts to “the passion of the Ottoman rich for the things they call a la Franka.” Cited in Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 190. Ersoy argues that Osman Hamdi Bey’s paintings were part of this same effort to reroute an “avidly materialistic” bourgeoisie to local crafts. The Ottoman painter used the technical precision and photographic realism of the orientalist genre to display the splendor of traditional Ottoman arts and commodities. His paintings, as Ersoy points out, usually featured a carefully selected architectural décor which offered a rich display of traditional arts and crafts and figures clad in glistening local costumes, belonging to various time periods and geographies. Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 199.

Ottoman state. Between 1863 and 1865, for example, the three major millets, the Greek, Armenian, and the Jewish religious communities, were allowed to form their own constitution. While in practice, these reforms were severely impaired and did not approach the realities of a constitutional democracy, the *Elbise* is one example of how this novel political vision was expressed – in its idealized form – in official state rhetoric, art, and ceremonial.⁴⁴⁹

Traditional dress conventions in the Ottoman Empire often signified the social, religious, and ethnic identity of the wearer. In the nineteenth century, this attribute of Ottoman dress had made traditional costume a subject of increasing scrutiny. In 1829, for example, in an effort to eliminate visual distinctions between people of different ethnicities conveyed through traditional dress, Mahmud II issued a dress code that required all Ottoman officials to wear the “stambouline,” a European-style black frock coat, and the fez.⁴⁵⁰ The authors of the *Elbise*, however, employed Ottoman dress – these visual signifiers of difference – in order to *accentuate* the diversity, the “abundant variety,” as the authors put it, of the Empire and to represent it as a harmonious multiethnic society.⁴⁵¹ By classifying this “syncretic tableaux” of Ottoman subjects under the uniting theme of “Ottoman costume,” and organizing them according to the

⁴⁴⁹ Ersoy cites another example of how this new syncretic Ottoman identity was promoted, namely through the reinvention of imperial ceremonial dress. The Ottoman royal guard (Silahsoran-i Hassa), established in 1864, consisted of the children of selected Muslim and non-Muslim notables from around the Empire who escorted the Sultan wearing the traditional costumes of their places of origin. This strategy was adopted to evoke images of imperial inclusivity. Although Ersoy does not specify, it is possible that Greeks – dressed in their regional attire – were also part of this guard. Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 206.

⁴⁵⁰ Although the regulation was enforced only for state employees, the new style was adopted by various segments of society, including the Westernized upper classes. Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 196–197. For more on this dress code see also: Donald Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720–1829,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 3 (1997): 403–25.

⁴⁵¹ *Elbise* cited in Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 196.

administrative divisions of the Empire, the diverse Ottoman subjects collectively created an image of the Ottoman Empire as a supra-ethnic, supra-religious political entity.⁴⁵² Interestingly, while the authors of the *Elbise* lamented the fact that Western attire was stamping out traditional dress and homogenizing the world with its “strict and cold uniformity,” they also appreciated that it collapsed markers of difference between people of different ethnicities. They acknowledged that Europeanized clothes could make an “efendi, bey, or pasha” out of anyone, whether Greek, Armenian, or Levantine, and helped dispel “age-old hatreds nurtured by some intolerant Muslims.”⁴⁵³

Although the political ideals that motivated the creation of the *Elbise* ultimately failed – and indeed, the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist – the bodies of knowledge that the Ottoman state produced continued to inform later generations. Importantly, Benakis likely relied on this Ottoman volume as a source of information on Greek costumes, as it was the most substantive extant compilation and study of Greek costumes, many of which in the intervening decades had become increasingly scarce. Similarities between the *Elbise* and the *Hellenic National Costumes* – in the imagery, in the descriptions, and in organization of the two books – suggest that Benakis was intimately familiar with the Ottoman edition and used it as a model for his own publication. Indeed, the Ottoman album had circulated widely, including in libraries in Greece. The Gennadius Library in Athens, for example, owns a copy which, according to its records, was part of the original collections of Ioannis Gennadius, the founder of the library.⁴⁵⁴ Additionally, Theodore Macridy Bey, an Ottoman-Greek from Istanbul and the director of the Benaki Museum in the

⁴⁵² Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 195–197.

⁴⁵³ *Elbise* cited in Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 196.

⁴⁵⁴ The Gennadius library houses a large collection of costume books.

1930s, had also been deputy director – under Halil Bey – at the Ottoman Imperial Museum, and would have been aware of the Ottoman state’s publications.⁴⁵⁵ This intellectual continuity is particularly important to note because scholars have generally assumed that, in creating their cultural and historical narratives, Greeks largely relied on European bodies of knowledge, while ignoring any potential Ottoman sources.⁴⁵⁶

The Benaki Collection of Costumes: Building A Body of “National” Art

Although Benakis relied on these earlier Ottoman and British collections and bodies of knowledge, he made certain deliberate choices – in the objects he collected and in the manner in which he framed them – producing a highly ideological image of the recent Ottoman past. The Benaki collection created the impression that Greeks were a distinct nation that, during the Ottoman period, had a *distinct* art, one that had little to do with the rest of the Ottoman Empire or with Turkish aesthetics. On the one hand, traditional Ottoman dress conventions were often, as Ersoy has argued, visual signifiers of difference.⁴⁵⁷ It is this attribute of Ottoman dress that allowed Benakis to conceive of these Greek costumes – despite being products of the Ottoman period – as characteristically Greek. However, Benakis further framed these costumes as a product of “purely” Greek art. Key differences between the *Hellenic National Costumes* and the *Elbise* particularly bring this to the fore. There is no doubt that the *Elbise* was an ideological project in its own right, but these modifications demonstrate that Benakis very deliberately

⁴⁵⁵ Picard, “Theodoros Macridy-Bey († 1941).”

⁴⁵⁶ Herzfeld for example, writes that modern Greeks turned to Western Europe in their endeavor to acquire “Hellenic virtues,” because Europe had been the repository of Greek learning during the centuries of Ottoman rule. Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 15.

⁴⁵⁷ Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 195.

sought to “extract” the Greek costumes from their Ottoman context and to present them as a distinct and unified corpus of national art.

Benakis anachronistically projected the existence of the Greek “nation” into a period before its actual existence. The costumes in the Benaki collection were largely produced and worn in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, namely predominantly when Greeks were part of the Ottoman Empire. The Greek collector, however, for the most part limited his collection to costumes from within the modern territorial boundaries of the Greek state – which were consolidated in the twentieth century – and organized his collection according to the modern administrative units of Greece, not their Ottoman counterparts.⁴⁵⁸

The museum also described the costumes as the collective artistic product of the Greek “nation.” This conceptualization of the costumes – as a body of “national” art – is expressed in the title of the Benaki volume – *Hellenic National Costumes* – but it also underscored in Hadzimichali’s essay. The Greek folklorist described the costumes as a unified body of work, like the oeuvre of a singular artist whose “author,” however, was the Greek nation. She emphasized the great variety exhibited in Greek costume noting for example that the “wide and varied range of Greek costume, with its distinctive local styles and ornamentation, serves to reveal the fertility of the people’s creative genius.”⁴⁵⁹ The author clarified, however, that these distinctive styles

⁴⁵⁸ The Greek collector largely limited his collection to costumes from within the modern territorial boundaries of the Greek state. There are two exceptions to this: he also collected costumes from Cyprus and from Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). The costumes from Asia Minor, however, were not included in the *Hellenic National Costumes*.

⁴⁵⁹ Hadzimichali spends a considerable amount of effort accounting for the variations of form and quality in costumes across Greece and explaining why even within individual communities one comes across profoundly different styles of dress, citing reasons such as “trade and contact with the outer world,” the degree of economic and social development, customs, social divisions, and sumptuary regulations. Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21–23.

are simply regional variations of a *national* art. Greek costume, as she puts it, “is the living and aesthetic expression of a *single large national group*, and particular local types are but the various manifestations of this group.”⁴⁶⁰ (my emphasis). Hadzimichali further underscored the communal and national character of this body of work by explaining that Greek costume is predominantly the product of “collective” taste and convention, rather than individual artistic expression. As she explains, Greek costume “is also a work of art, expressing *up to a certain point* the particular taste of the individual who wears it,” underlining, however, that “the individual does not lead an isolated existence but forms part of a *single uniform whole*.”⁴⁶¹ (my emphasis)

The Benaki Museum also whitewashed the fact that Ottoman Greece had been ethnically and religiously diverse. Ethno-religious homogeneity was the tacit goal of twentieth-century Greek nationalism, and the Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey (1923) certainly contributed to that goal.⁴⁶² The Benaki Museum, however, exaggerated this new reality and importantly anachronistically projected the fiction of an exclusively ethnically Greek and religiously Christian territory back into the recent Ottoman past. In her essay, Hadzimichali insists that the Benaki collection of costumes forms a “*complete series* in which all the most characteristic styles of Greek dress are fully represented – that of the peasants of the plains, of the shepherds of the mountains, of the townsfolk and of the islanders.”⁴⁶³ The organization of

The variety exhibited in Greek folk art was also emphasized in the guidebook to the museum. The guidebook notes that “every province, even every village, presents some individual feature and peculiar character from the point of view of popular artistic production.” *Guide*, 200.

⁴⁶⁰ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁶¹ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁶² Paschalis M. Kitromilides, “‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans,” *European History Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1989): 149–92.

⁴⁶³ Hadzimichali suggests that it was a “complete” series both on page 22 and 24; Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 22; Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 24.

the *Hellenic National Costumes*, which dedicates a chapter to every region of Greece, as well as the landscape imagery in the background of Sperling's illustrations (Fig 20 and 30 - 35), also create the impression that the volume thoroughly represents the costumes of the Greek territories. If one compares Benakis' collection to the costumes brought together by the Ottoman state in the *Elbise* however, it becomes clear that the museum collected a highly selective subset of the costumes of the Greek territories. Benakis excluded from his collection any *identifiably* Jewish or Muslim costumes, like those belonging to a Rabbi, a Hodja, or a veiled Muslim woman, that were included in the section devoted to the Vilayet of Salonika in the *Elbise* (Fig 23). Sperling also included churches in the background of some of his illustrations, thus further asserting that Greece was a Christian nation (Fig 25 - 26). Finally, although the Ottoman volume also specified the ethnic or religious identities of the wearers, the Benaki Museum masked any evidence of ethnic diversity by omitting this information. One costume from the Epirus region (Vilayet of Yania) that was included both in the *Elbise* and in the *Hellenic National Costumes*, illustrates how ethnic plurality was explicitly glossed over by the Benaki Museum. In the *Elbise* this costume is identified as belonging to an Upper-class Albanian ("Arnaout") woman of Ioannina (Yania), while in the *Hellenic National Costumes*, the very same costume is simply identified as belonging to an upper-class woman of Epirus, with no reference to her ethnic identity (Fig 27). There are only two exceptions to this discounting of ethnic identity: the Saracatsani nomadic tribe and the Albanian Vlachs (Karagounis) are overtly singled out in the Benaki volume. These are discussed further below.

Benakis also recast these costumes – not as products of the time and place in which they were produced, namely not as products of *Ottoman* art – but rather as modern manifestations

of sartorial traditions that originated in the distant past – either in antiquity or in Byzantium – and survived into the present largely “unscathed” by Turkish influence. This conceptualization was similar to that of the earlier folklorists, whom Herzfeld highlights in his study, with the exception that the Benaki Museum demonstrated continuities with both antique and Byzantine forms of dress. In the *Hellenic National Costumes*, for example, Hadzimichali explained that, while Greek costume “at first sight does not convey the impression of being related to the distant past,” a careful analysis and examination of these costumes, like her own, reveals a tradition whose “roots go very deep,” and that “a study of the different stages of its evolution” brings to light their development from ancient prototypes.⁴⁶⁴ Many parts of Greek costume, as she specifies, “...are but a continuation, in form and decoration, of Ancient Greek or Byzantine types of dress.”⁴⁶⁵

Hadzimichali also elaborated on the antique origins of the *fustanella* (Fig 33 and 35) which, as the author explains, was the most ubiquitous form of male dress, worn by men of all classes throughout Continental Greece and the Peloponnese.⁴⁶⁶ The folklorist analyzes each item of clothing that made up the complete costume, pointing out the ancient garments from which they originated and at times also tracing their evolution through their Byzantine manifestations.

⁴⁶⁴ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁶⁵ Among the parts of Greek costume that Hadzimichali claims are a continuation of Ancient Greek or Byzantine types of dress, are: “the *dimita*, *anderi*, *dzoubes*, *kavadi* or *kavadion*, *sayiaki* or *sagion*, *sakkos*, *doulamas*, *salvari* and *broumanika* (maniples) as well as the richly decorated head-dress and shoes, not to mention many silver trinkets and other ornaments....” Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁶⁶ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21. Hadzimichali later explains that the *fustanella* was also worn by the Greek guerilla “capetans” and by generals and diplomats down to the end of the 19th century, and points to Plates 1, 5-7 of *Hellenic National Costumes* as examples. Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 24.

For example, Hadzimichali explains that the pleated shirt of the *fustanella* – also called the *fustanella* – originated as the ancient Greek tunic, the *chiton* and *cheiridoton himation*, which sometimes also had pleats; it subsequently developed into the Byzantine dalmatic, a type of tunic, before ultimately evolving into its modern form.⁴⁶⁷ She further explains that the waistcoat (*median*) and the embroidered sleeveless coat (*fermeli*) of the *fustanella* resembles ancient breast-plates.⁴⁶⁸ Hadzimichali then singles out the sheepskin cape, called the *kapa* or *flocata*, as the item of clothing that appears to have most closely retained its antique form, suggesting that it recalls the “Homeric *χλαιναν ουλην*,” the hide worn by Ulysses.⁴⁶⁹ (Fig 34) Finally, she also draws the reader’s attention to a specific variety of the *fustanella*, worn by the peasants of Megara, that, in her estimation, was closest in form to its ancient original (Fig 35).⁴⁷⁰

The guidebook to the museum also expanded upon one particular costume in the collection, a bridal dress worn in the villages of Rumluiki (Fig 28 – 29), near present day Thessaloniki, that also demonstrates this conceptualization of Greek dress as the remnant of antique traditions. The unnamed author of the guide explains that this costume occupies a distinct place among the costumes of Greece because of its archaizing headdress, which was reportedly a vestige of a tradition established by Alexander the Great.⁴⁷¹ Crowned by a fringe

⁴⁶⁷ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁶⁸ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁶⁹ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁷⁰ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁷¹ This costume was object number 16632 of the collection, exhibited in wall-case 236 in Room Omega. *Guide*, 235. In *Hellenic National Costumes* this costume is illustrated in Plate 49, although here it is identified as a “Festival Dress” of a Peasant of Rumluiki. This same costume is also highlighted in an article written by Macridy Bey, the director of the museum; Macridy, “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes.”

Plate 48 of *Hellenic National Costumes* also depicts the costume of an “unmarried peasant girl,” while Plate 49A depicts a “Recently Married Woman’s Dress” from the same district.

made of silk, the headdress resembles an ancient Greek helmet of the type with a horse-haired crest. The guidebook claims that the tradition of wearing this helmet-like headdress during wedding ceremonies in the Rumluki district was established following a battle in antiquity, in which Alexander the Great ordered his soldiers to hand over their helmets to the women of that district in order to reward them for the courage that they exhibited during the battle.⁴⁷² The guidebook asserts that following this event, the women in the Rumluki continued to wear the helmet-like headdress into the present day (i.e. 1940s).⁴⁷³

The Benaki Museum also largely denied any Turkish influence on these costumes. The museum guidebook explicitly asserted that “Turkish influence did not succeed in changing the character of Greek popular art,” and that Greek folk art was a continuation of Byzantine artistic traditions.⁴⁷⁴ The guidebook compared this purported aesthetic continuity, and attendant lack of Turkish influence, to the supposed endurance of the Greek nation explaining that, “just as in the years following the fall of Constantinople the whole race persisted in its devotion to the national ideals, Greek popular art retained its faith in its Byzantine tradition.”⁴⁷⁵ Hadzimichali, however, often uses Turkish terminology to describe items of clothing, suggesting that the impact of Turkish culture was not categorically denied. The author makes numerous references to the nomenclature used for these costumes and their various component parts, implicitly suggesting that their association with antique forms of dress is also revealed through this vocabulary. She

⁴⁷² *Guide*, 235.

⁴⁷³ The guidebook also notes that the waistband typical of and unique to this costume, which was sewn with silver spangles and resembling scale armor, is also “doubtless of most ancient origin.” *Guide*, 235.

⁴⁷⁴ *Guide*, 200.

⁴⁷⁵ *Guide*, 200.

unselfconsciously notes, however, that not all the garments retained their ancient names. While she does not explicitly specify the cultural origin of terms that did not maintain their antique appellations, she often employs terms also used in Turkish, as for example, the *salvari (salvar)*, a type of baggy trouser.⁴⁷⁶

Benakis predominantly collected rural costumes – and women’s dress in particular – because these were seen best to preserve their “traditional” character. 94 of the 112 costumes represented in the *Hellenic National Costumes* belonged to rural populations and 84 belonged to women. This clear focus on female and peasant dress was also a marked deviation from the Ottoman compilation, which also represented many urban as well as many male costumes. In her essay, Hadzimichali delineates a clear distinction between peasant and female attire, on the one hand, which was homemade and was thus seen to retain its “traditional” qualities, and male and urban attire, on the other hand, which was made by specialized craftsmen, the tailors and gold-embroiderers. The rural populations, as Hadzimichali further explains, were distanced from the towns where, it is implicitly suggested, “foreign” influence was located. According to the Greek folklorist, these rural populations also maintained their own customs and were largely unaffected by Turkish rule and Turkish influence.⁴⁷⁷

Hadzimichali’s description of the costumes of the Pindus mountain villagers (Fig 30) conveys this understanding of the rural populations as isolated communities impervious to Ottoman governance and “foreign” influence. The author makes a particular point of distinguishing these mountain dwellers from the “townsfolk,” explaining that the entire

⁴⁷⁶ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁷⁷ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 22.

mountainous region, “obstinately maintained its spiritual and economic independence from the towns.”⁴⁷⁸ Hadzimichali further explains that the villagers preserved their own traditions and draws attention to the “purity” of their clothing. Although, as she mentions, the rural Christian populations of the Pindus were subject to Ottoman sumptuary rules, she insists that their austere style of dress was a result not of these sumptuary laws, but rather of local (Greek) customs. She explains that the whole region was “very retentive of [their] own individual character and forms of expression” and makes multiple references to their “unwritten law, obeyed by all” and the “customs” that compelled them, particularly women, to avoid luxurious and richly adorned dress.⁴⁷⁹ As she further explains, their clothes were made and embroidered at home and “everything of foreign origin was banished.”⁴⁸⁰

Hadzimichali also elaborates on another example, the costumes of the Saracatsani tribe, whom she exalts for their “conservatism,” insularity and resistance to Turkish influence (Fig 31). The Saracatsani, as Hadzimichali explains, were nomadic shepherds who lived, depending on the season, either in the mountains or in the plains, and were in her estimation a “race of pure Hellenic stock.”⁴⁸¹ Even though they were a nomadic people who “wander all over the Greek Peninsula,” Hadzimichali notes that their style of dress was unchanging and is “the same throughout the whole of Greece from Attica to Epirus and Macedonia.”⁴⁸² She contrasts this tenacious quality of Saracatsani attire against the clothing of another nomadic tribe, the Albanian

⁴⁷⁸ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 22.

⁴⁷⁹ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 22.

⁴⁸⁰ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 22.

⁴⁸¹ The Sarakatsani costumes were exhibited in Room Ro(P) of the museum. See: *Guide*, 204–205. The guidebook also draws attention to the fact that that Sarakatsani frocks were “made by the women themselves.” *Guide*, 205.

⁴⁸² Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 22.

Vlachs (Karagounis), which was deemed to be subjected to outside influence. The folklorist explains that their dress “varies from place to place,” exhibiting differing styles in Epirus (Fig 32), Thessaly (Fig 25) and Aetolia - Acarnania. In Thessaly, in particular, their dress exhibits “garish colors” and “showy ornaments” and “is not in the Greek taste,” an unfortunate reality that Hadzimichali implicitly attributes to the fact that, unlike the Saracatsani, the Karagounis enjoyed privileges from Ali Pasha of Jannina (1740 – 1822), the Ottoman ruler of northern Greece.⁴⁸³

Benakis likewise focused on women’s costumes because these too – by virtue of being homemade – were seen to preserve century-old artistic and sartorial traditions. Hadzimichali explains in her essay that women preserved *all* traditional customs.⁴⁸⁴ Suggesting that women’s costumes were as old as the Greek nation itself, Hadzimichali notes that the study of women’s attire – its several component parts, its nomenclature and its distinctive local ornamentation – “throw light on the historical evolution of the Hellenic race.”⁴⁸⁵ The embroidered decorations on Greek costumes were also seen to be remnants of ancient customs that were passed down through the ages by women. In an introduction to the embroidery collection exhibited in Gallery O, the guidebook explains that the most common designs of Greek embroideries have “undoubtedly” been handed down “from one generation to another,” from mother to daughter “for *centuries*.”⁴⁸⁶ Hadzimichali similarly deemed the embroidered decorations on costumes to be “among the most interesting characteristics, not of costume alone but of Greek popular art in

⁴⁸³ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23.

⁴⁸⁴ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁴⁸⁵ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23.

⁴⁸⁶ *Guide*, 171.

general” because, as she explains, some of their patterns, which she describes as “pure,” have been applied to the same part of the dress “from very ancient times.”⁴⁸⁷

Female and peasant attire were clearly given pride of place in the collection, as they were homemade and seen to preserve ancient traditions that were free of Turkish influence. However, Benakis also collected male and urban attire – made by specialized craftsmen: tailors and embroiderers – and these too were highlighted for their “Greekness.”⁴⁸⁸ Although these were fewer in number, they were represented across many chapters of the *Hellenic National Costumes*, including, in the case of urban costumes in the first section dedicated to “Gala and Town Dresses.”⁴⁸⁹ It is particularly important to note that their “Greekness” was highlighted, despite being made by craftsmen. In the *Elbise*, craft guilds were advertised as religiously and ethnically diverse organizations and this claim was used to bolster the Ottoman volume’s larger goal of promoting a multiethnic Ottoman identity.⁴⁹⁰ In *Hellenic National Costumes*, however, these guilds were reframed as paragons of Greekness.

⁴⁸⁷ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23.

⁴⁸⁸ Hadzimichali notes that many island costumes are also “town” costumes; Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 22. As Hadzimichali explains, urban and male costumes were also more elaborately ornamented and made of more sumptuous fabrics; Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23.

⁴⁸⁹ Male costumes were represented in the following sections: Gala and Town Dresses (7), Continental Greece (7), Epirus (6), Crete (2), Aegean islands (3), Ionian islands (2), Cyprus (1). There were no men represented in the sections devoted to the Peloponnese; Thessaly; Euboea; Macedonia; Thrace; Dodecanese. “Upper Class” costumes, which are variably also identified as “Town Dress,” “bourgeois” dress, or as belonging to a “Lady” are represented in the *Hellenic National Costumes* in the following regions: Peloponnese (Plate 25a), Thessaly (Plates 28, 34, 35, 36, 37, 37A), Macedonia (Plates: 46A, 47, 46, 56), Aegean Islands (68, 69, 70, 71). In Crete the majority of the represented costumes are “town” costumes (Plates 59, 60, 62).

⁴⁹⁰ Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 196.

Hadzimichali paints a picture of two prolific industries. She notes that the crafts of tailoring and embroidery were among the most widespread professions in Greece.⁴⁹¹ Various “wealthy merchant tailors” ran large establishments that dealt in textiles, and also housed tailoring and embroidery workshops.⁴⁹² These establishments were predominantly located, as she elaborates, in Epirus, in Macedonia and in many of the islands, territories that were not ceded to Greece until the First and Second Balkan Wars (1912 – 1913) and the First World War (1914 – 1918). Hadzimichali explains that these establishments often employed as many as 30 or 40 craftsmen and apprentices and also catered to a large export market.⁴⁹³ Their wares – which included coats, capes, hats, entire gold-embroidered outfits, and other embroidered accessories – were so renowned and in such high demand that they could be found “as far afield as Cairo and London.”⁴⁹⁴ She draws particular attention to Epirus, explaining that Ali Pasha (1740 – 1822) established many successful tailoring and embroidery workshops and that in the eighteenth century and into the middle of the nineteenth century this region exported many woolen and embroidered garments: “to the whole of Albania and the Balkans as far north as Bosnia as well as to Egypt and Tunis.”⁴⁹⁵ Noting that tailors, in particular, were held in high esteem, she explains that in Epirus – even to this day (i.e. 1940s) – the designation “tailor” was given to “any outstanding man regardless of his calling.”⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹¹ Tailors are also referred to as cape-makers, cloak-makers and embroiderers are also referred to as gold-embroiderers.

⁴⁹² Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23.

⁴⁹³ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23.

⁴⁹⁴ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23.

⁴⁹⁵ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23–24.

⁴⁹⁶ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 24.

Hadzimichali does not draw attention to the fact that these crafts flourished in regions that were under Ottoman jurisdiction, portraying them instead as self-evidently Greek. Nor does she mention the multiethnic make up of guilds, a feature of these organizations that was highlighted in the *Elbise*.⁴⁹⁷ Indeed, the only two merchant tailors that Hadzimichali cites by name have characteristically Greek names.⁴⁹⁸ She mentions a workshop in Ioannina owned by a certain Costas Bitsios of Syrrakos, which was famous for its suits and cloaks, and another, owned by Michael Chitsos of Krousovo, which was making the gold-embroidered robes for the Emperor of Abyssinia and his court into the 1900s.⁴⁹⁹

Further emphasizing their “Greekness,” Hadzimichali also points out that many of the merchant tailors were members of the *Philiki Hetairia* (the “Friendly Society” or “Society of Friends”) the clandestine organization that initiated the Greek War of Independence in 1821. She writes that “From the ranks of the great merchant tailors.... there sprang some of the leading figures of the *Philiki Hetairia* who prepared and fought for the liberation of Greece.”⁵⁰⁰ She specifically names John Colettis, Rizaris, Skoufas, Krommydas, Zois Kaplanis, and Zalokostas, all of whom were important figures in the Greek War of Independence.⁵⁰¹ This same association between sartorial crafts and figures of the War of Independence is further emphasized in the museum galleries. In galleries PI and Ro(P) (Fig 2 – 3), for example, among various “town”

⁴⁹⁷ Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute,” 197.

⁴⁹⁸ The fabrics that were used to make these costumes were often imported from Russia, Italy, Genoa, Venice, Padua, Austria (Trieste) and France, as well as from other parts of the Ottoman Empire including Chios, Cyprus, and Constantinople. Although Hadzimichali notes that these fabrics were often of “foreign” origin, she presents the craftsmen who sewed and embroidered the clothes as unequivocally Greek. Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23.

⁴⁹⁹ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 24.

⁵⁰⁰ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23–24.

⁵⁰¹ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 23–24.

costumes were also exhibited, on shelves and on top of display cases, a series of plates depicting scenes of the Greek War of Independence which were inscribed, as the guidebook notes, with the names of various Greek and Philhellenic “heroes” of the War.⁵⁰² While the guidebook does not specify which “heroes” were named, it is likely that those mentioned by Hadzimichali were included.

Conclusion

The Benaki collection of Greek folk costumes was the latest chapter in a long and often contentious history of Ottoman dress that tells the story of how Greeks transitioned from subjects of the Ottoman Empire to citizens of their own nation state. Ottoman-period Greek costumes and embroideries had been admired and collected by various Western collectors. They had also been promoted by the Ottoman state as exemplars of Ottoman craft and pressed into the service of promoting the late Tanzimat political ideal of multiethnic Ottoman citizenship. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey (1923), Benakis continued these earlier efforts to promote Ottoman costumes. However, he employed these costumes to demonstrate that Greeks had a venerable national artistic tradition in the recent Ottoman past that, significantly, was *distinct* from the Ottoman and was largely free of Turkish influence. Benakis made various deliberate choices in forming

⁵⁰² There were a total of sixteen such plates. These plates had been manufactured in France (some in Choisy) at the time of the Greek War of Independence and were inscribed in French. Some of the scenes they depicted included, as the guidebook notes, “the death of a Greek, a Greek at the grave of his friend, capture of a Turkish fortress by the Greeks, the liberation of a Greek girl from the hands of the Turks.” For Room Ro(P) see: *Guide*, 202–203. For Room Pi see: *Guide*, 207.

and framing his collection that served to “extract” Greek dress from its Ottoman context and to insert it into a continuous narrative of Greek history. In making this argument, this chapter serves as a corrective to Herzfeld’s theorization of the use of folklore in the construction of Greek historical and cultural narratives. It demonstrates that Greeks continued to employ folk culture as a tool of nation building well into the twentieth century, and in doing so also relied on Ottoman bodies of knowledge.

It was specifically Turkish influence that was rejected, not Islamic or other Eastern influences more broadly. In fact, the museum celebrated the impact from “foreign” sources, particularly from the “East,” that increased the wealth of “artistic elements” – the form, ornamentation, and “variety” – of Greek popular art generally, and of costume and embroideries specifically.⁵⁰³ The guidebook clearly states that Greek popular art, “owing to the geographical situation of the country,” has been shaped both by the East and by the West.⁵⁰⁴ Contact with Western culture is ascribed primarily to the period of “Frankish domination.”⁵⁰⁵ The effect of the East, on the other hand, is foregrounded: as the guidebook explains, it “dates from most remote ages” and can be found in products of popular art of “all periods until the present day.”⁵⁰⁶ In

⁵⁰³ The museum also refers to the costumes, and to Greece for that matter, as “eastern.” In the *Hellenic National Costumes*, for example, Hadzimichali notes that the increased contact and trade “between East and West” – Greece being in the East – starting in the end of seventeenth century, resulted in the decline of Greek popular art. Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 22.

⁵⁰⁴ *Guide*, 200.

⁵⁰⁵ *Guide*, 200.

The period of Frankish domination refers to the period after the Fourth Crusade (1204) when a number of primarily French and Italian states were established on what would later become Greek lands. This period lasted through the Ottoman conquest of these same territories, variably between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries, though in some parts, like the Ionian islands, it lasted through the nineteenth century.

⁵⁰⁶ *Guide*, 200.

Hellenic National Costumes, Hadzimichali similarly explains that certain types of Greek costume, particularly in the islands, “are not untouched by Western influence.”⁵⁰⁷ However, she particularly emphasizes their Eastern sources, explaining that certain types owe their origin to Byzantine artistic styles that were “themselves influenced by the Orient.”⁵⁰⁸ Finally, the guidebook also calls attention to the Eastern roots of Greek embroideries, explaining that while the origin of the “usual designs” of Greek embroideries, which have been handed down “for centuries,” is unknown, they “must be derived from the East.”⁵⁰⁹ The guidebook even invites the visitor to examine the similarities between the designs of certain Cycladic embroideries and Mamluk embroideries – both exhibited in different parts of the museum – that evince these cultural transfers.⁵¹⁰

Benakis’ concurrent rejection of Turkish culture and acceptance of other Eastern influences further demonstrates that Herzfeld’s binary view of Greek identity, as two “mutually opposed” images – one Westernizing and the other Oriental – does not accurately portray the Greek conception of their history and culture. Through his collection of costumes, Benakis distinguished Ottoman-period Greek culture from the remainder of Ottoman artistic production. At the same time, however he actively investigated the Greek cultural relationship to the East and to other parts of the Islamic world.

⁵⁰⁷ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁵⁰⁸ Hadzimichali, “Introduction,” 21.

⁵⁰⁹ *Guide*, 171.

⁵¹⁰ Specifically, the guidebook calls attention to the similarities between a Cycladic bed-curtain exhibited in Case No 128 in Gallery O, and a series of Islamic embroideries made in Egypt in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries exhibited in the 2nd drawer of Case 95 in Room Z. *Guide*, 171.

EPILOGUE

This dissertation sheds light on an episode in modern Greek intellectual history that has been overlooked in the existing scholarship. As I demonstrate, the Benaki Museum, an important cultural institution founded in Greece in 1931, resisted dominant Greek cultural narratives, namely the identification with and the privileging of the antique past at the expense of later periods of Greek history and culture, particularly the more recent Ottoman past. The association of modern Greeks with their classical ancestors – and their concomitant distancing from Ottoman culture – was founded on deeply Orientalist notions, including the presumed cultural superiority of ancient Greek culture, conceived of as the foundation of Western civilization, vis-a-vis later Ottoman culture.

Although scholars have noted that some Greek intellectuals resisted this privileging of and exclusive association with the classical past, they have largely overlooked the Greek valorization of the Ottoman past. Rather, they have primarily focused on the integration of the Byzantine period into Greek nationalist historiography. Indeed, the mid-nineteenth century saw the creation of a romantic narrative of cultural continuity that represented Greek history and civilization as originating in antiquity and extending into the present. This narrative primarily resulted in the conspicuous inclusion of Byzantium into conceptions of Greek national identity.

The Benaki Museum, however, also integrated the material and artistic culture of the more recent Ottoman past into understandings of Greek culture. Through many of its collections, the Greek institution resisted the dominant understanding of the Ottoman period as one of Greek cultural decline, demonstrating instead that Greek art flourished under the Ottomans. At the same time, however, the museum continued to endorse many of the Orientalist tropes that underpinned earlier constructions of Greek culture, including, for example, the notion of Turkish cultural inferiority. Indeed, the museum artificially divorced Ottoman-period Greek from Turkish culture, represented it as largely free of Turkish influence, as “pure,” and Christian in “essence.” The Benaki Museum thus reframed Ottoman material culture – which was the product of a multiethnic society and was culturally “hybrid” – as distinctly “national.”

The Benaki Museum also constructed a highly ideological image of the recent Ottoman past in order to sustain myths that were crucial to nation building in the interwar period in Greece. Indeed, the museum opened its doors to the public less than a decade after the Greek defeat in the Greco-Turkish war (1919 – 1922), the integration of Asia Minor into the new Turkish state, and the ultimate failure of the “Megali Idea,” the irredentist vision of creating a “Greater Greece.” It also opened in the aftermath of the Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey (1923), agreed upon by the two states at the end of the war, which ended Greek presence in Asia Minor, brought over a million Ottoman-Greek refugees into the Greek nation state, and largely dispelled the country’s Muslim populations.

The museum insisted on the premise of the “Megali Idea.” Through its collections – heavily representing the material culture of Asia Minor – the Benaki emphasized the historical presence of Greeks in Asia Minor and also claimed, through its acquisition and exhibitions

strategies, that the culture of these regions was profoundly Greek and Christian. The museum thus sustained the myth that large swaths of Ottoman territories, only recently forfeited by the Greek state to the newly founded Republic of Turkey, were predominantly, historically and – by implication – rightfully Greek.

The museum also contributed to the process of forging national subjects out of the million Ottoman Christian refugees who arrived in Greece from Asia Minor because of the Exchange of Populations. It did so by framing the material culture of these recently arrived refugees – which evinced elements of “Turkish” culture – as distinctly “national” objects.

Today, the Benaki Museum continues to promote some of the narratives put forth by the institutions’ original founders, including notably the persistence of Greek cultural production under Ottoman rule. Over the nine decades since its founding, the Benaki Museum collections have greatly expanded, primarily through donations.⁵¹¹ The institution now comprises the original Benaki Museum building as well as eight additional satellite buildings dispersed throughout Athens. After a major reorganization of the museum installations between 1989 and 2000, the original neoclassical mansion in central Athens was rebranded the “Benaki Museum of Greek Culture” and its enlarged collections were organized chronologically. The museum website notes that in this building the museum represents Greek culture “in all its manifestations,”

⁵¹¹“Museum of Greek Culture,” Benaki Museum, 2016, https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_buildings&view=building&id=11&Itemid=532&lang=en.

namely the “historical and cultural development of Hellenism from Prehistory to the 20th century.”⁵¹²

In this historic building, the museum continues to argue that Greeks had a venerable – and distinctly *Greek* – artistic culture, including under Ottoman rule. Indeed, the museum exhibits many objects from the museum’s original collections, including late-Ottoman ecclesiastical objects from Asia Minor as well as Greek folk costumes. Referring to these collections as “Post-Byzantine” and “Neo-Hellenic Art,” to signify their “Greekness,” the museum website notes that they cover the historical period from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century and “provide evidence of the high level of culture in the Greek world” during the Ottoman occupation.⁵¹³ In this central museum building are also exhibited many of the Benaki’s original Ottoman Islamic collections, although these are largely limited to Ottoman ceramics, primarily with Greek inscriptions on them, that were intimately associated with Greek communities of the Ottoman Empire.

Interestingly, the museum now also includes large collections of ancient Greek art which are displayed on its ground floor. Like the remainder of the museum’s collections, these were primarily donated to the institution by private individuals over the course of the twentieth and the twenty first centuries and are indicative of the value that Greeks continue to place on the art of classical antiquity. Indeed, despite the persistence of many of the museum’s original narratives, the dominant “Hellenic” image of Greek identity and culture continues to eclipse the

⁵¹² “The Museum at a Glance,” Benaki Museum, 2016, https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_buildings&view=landing&Itemid=568&lang=en.

⁵¹³ “Post-Byzantine and Neo-Hellenic Art,” Benaki Museum, 2016, https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_collections&view=collection&id=35&lang=en.

vision of Greek culture put forth by the Benaki Museum in the 1930s, which highlighted later periods of Greek history and culture.

Finally, although the museum continues to attest to the persistence of Greek cultural production under Ottoman rule, it is less invested in bolstering Greece's failed expansionist project, nor does it prioritize the cultural integration of Greeks of Asia Minor, as neither of these political projects – which had been crucial in interwar Greece – have political currency or relevance today. The material culture of Asia Minor still makes up an important segment of the museum's exhibits, however, unlike the original Benaki Museum, which dedicated significant gallery space exclusively to these geographies, the collections today are organized chronologically, thus emphasizing the historical *progression* of Greek culture, rather than its eastward expanse into Asia Minor.

These changing priorities are also reflected in the organization of the museum's Islamic collections. As noted above, many ceramics from the museum's Islamic collections associated with Greek communities of the Ottoman Empire are exhibited in the "Benaki Museum of Greek Culture." These Ottoman objects thus attest to Greek culture under Ottoman rule. The majority of the museum's Islamic collections, however, including its large Ottoman holdings, were removed from the institution's central building and have been exhibited, since 2004, in a new and separate "Benaki Museum of Islamic Art" (one of the nine buildings that now make up the Benaki Museum ecosystem). The curators of this museum no longer portray the culture of Ottoman Asia Minor as heavily Greek and Christian, as their predecessors once did in order to bolster the vision of a "Greater Greece." Rather, today, they categorize the museum's Islamic collections – like its collections of Chinese and Pre-Columbian Art – as part of the Benaki's

holdings of “world cultures,” thus entirely obscuring the Greek nationalist aspirations that had once motivated Benakis’ interest in these objects.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹⁴ “The Museum at a Glance,” Benaki Museum, 2016, https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_buildings&view=landing&Itemid=568&lang=en.

FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE FIGURES

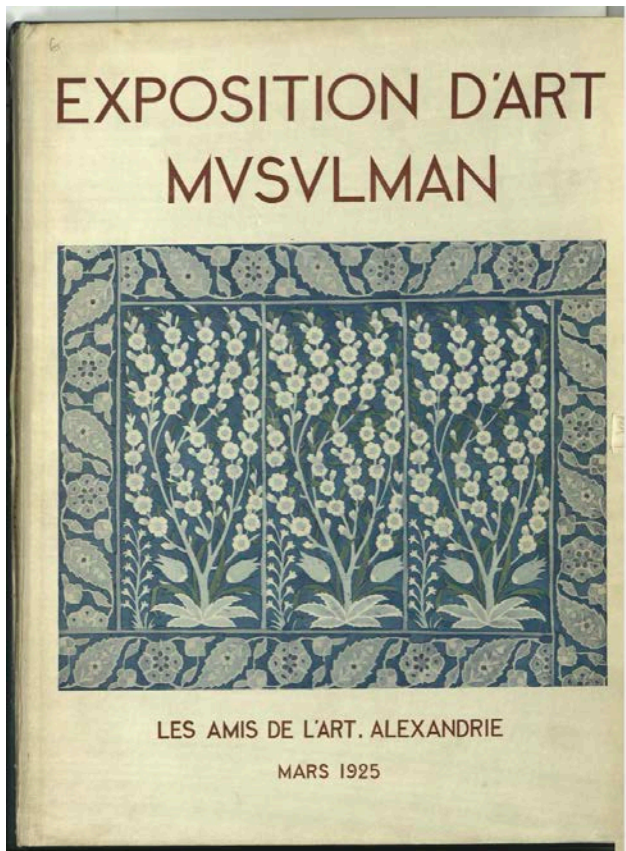


Fig. 1. Catalog of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: *Exposition D'Art Musulman: Les Amis De L'Art, Alexandrie, Mars 1925*. Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1925.



Fig. 2. Seventeenth-century ceramic plate with illegible Greek inscriptions in the Benaki Museum collections. Source: Manolis Hatzidakis, "Κεραμουργήματα Με Ελληνικές Επιγραφές." *Ζυγός* 16 (1957): 6–7.



Fig. 3. Seventeenth-century ceramic plate with Greek inscriptions. Source: Manolis Hatzidakis, "Κεραμουργήματα Με Ελληνικές Επιγραφές." *Ζυγός* 16 (1957): 6–7.



Fig. 4. Seventeenth-century ceramic plate with Greek inscriptions in the Benaki Museum collections. Source: Manolis Hatzidakis, "Κεραμοουργήματα Με Ελληνικές Επιγραφές." *Ζυγός* 16 (1957): 6–7.



Fig. 5. Seventeenth-century ceramic tile with imagery of a Christian monastery. Source: *Exposition D'Art Musulman: Les Amis De L'Art, Alexandrie, Mars 1925*. Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1925.



Fig. 6. Seventeenth-century ceramic plate with Greek inscriptions. Source: *Exposition D'Art Musulman: Les Amis De L'Art, Alexandrie, Mars 1925*. Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1925.

Fig. 7. Seventeenth-century ceramic plate with Greek inscriptions. Source: *Exposition D'Art Musulman: Les Amis De L'Art, Alexandrie, Mars 1925*. Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1925.

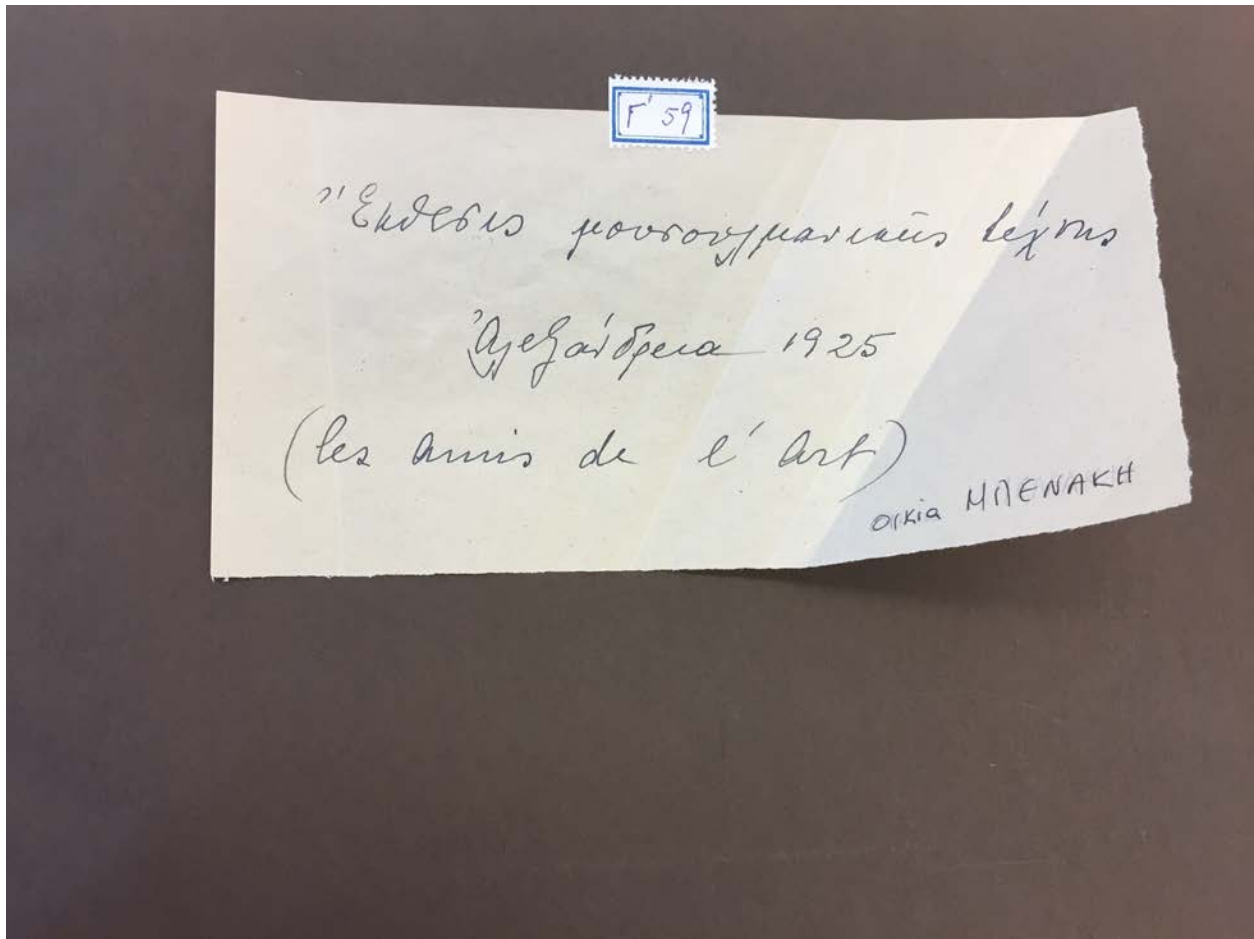


Fig. 8. *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 9. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 10. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 11. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 12. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 13. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 14. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 15. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 16. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 17. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 18. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 19. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 20. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 21. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 22. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 23. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 24. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 25. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 26. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 27. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 28. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 29. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



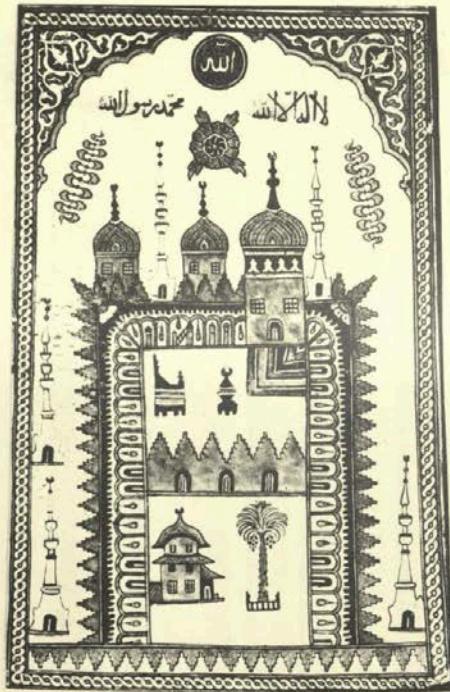
Fig. 30. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



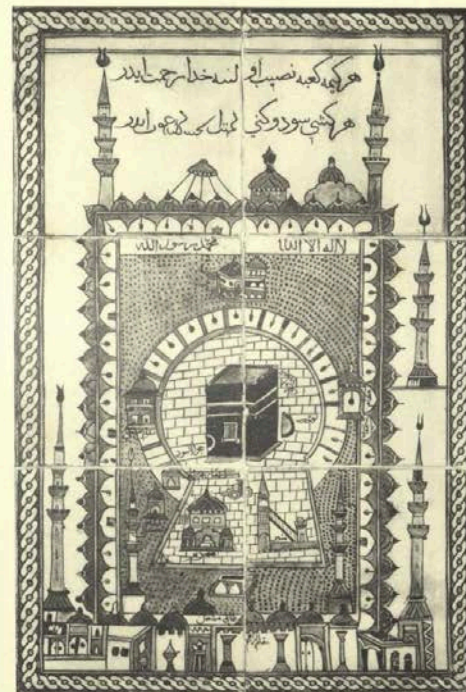
Fig. 31. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 32. View of the *Exposition D'Art Musulman* held in Alexandria, Egypt in 1925. Source: Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



PLAQUE DE REVÊTEMENT
ART D'ANS WINEURE, XVI^e SIÈCLE



PANNEAU POLYCHROME
ART D'ANS WINEURE, XVI^e SIÈCLE

Fig. 33. A panel of sixteenth-century Ottoman ceramic tiles depicting Mecca (right). Source: *Exposition D'Art Musulman: Les Amis De L'Art, Alexandrie, Mars 1925*. Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1925.

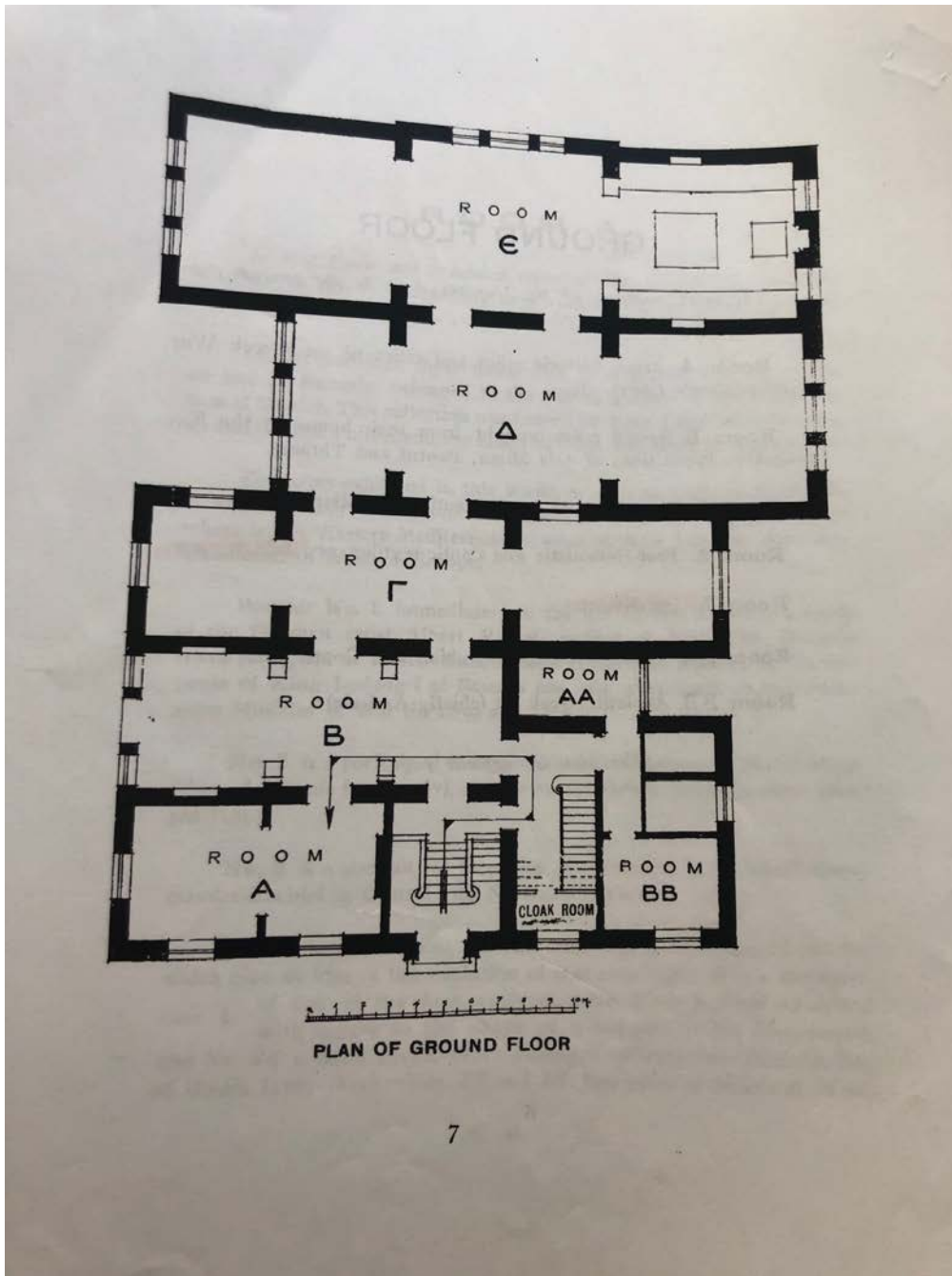


Fig. 34. Floorplan of the ground floor of the Benaki Museum. Source: *Guide*. Athens: Benaki Museum, 1936.



Fig. 35. View of Gallery Δ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 36. View of Gallery Δ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 37. View of Gallery Δ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 38. View of Gallery Δ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.

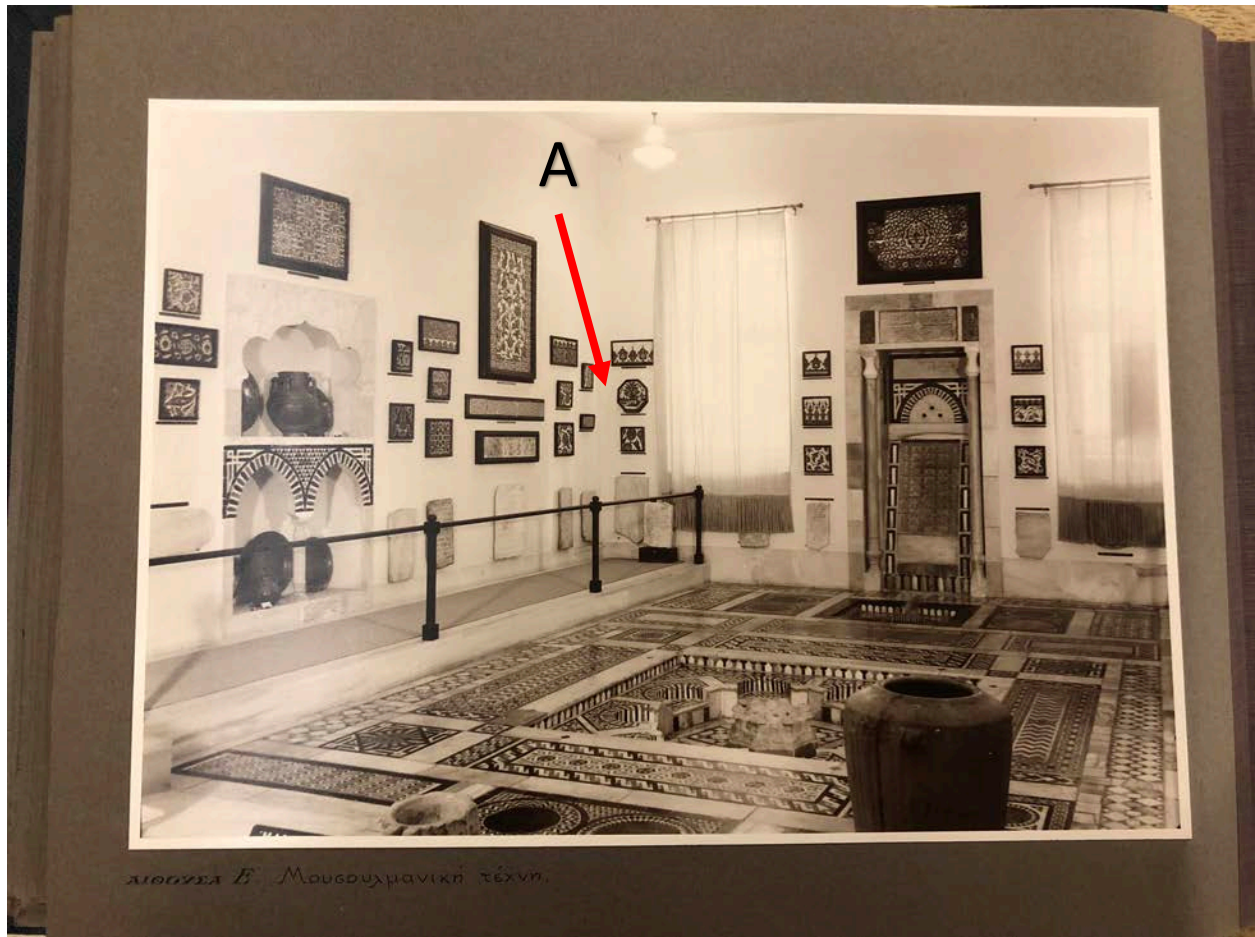


Fig. 39. View of Gallery E of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 40. View of Gallery E of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 41. View of Gallery E of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.

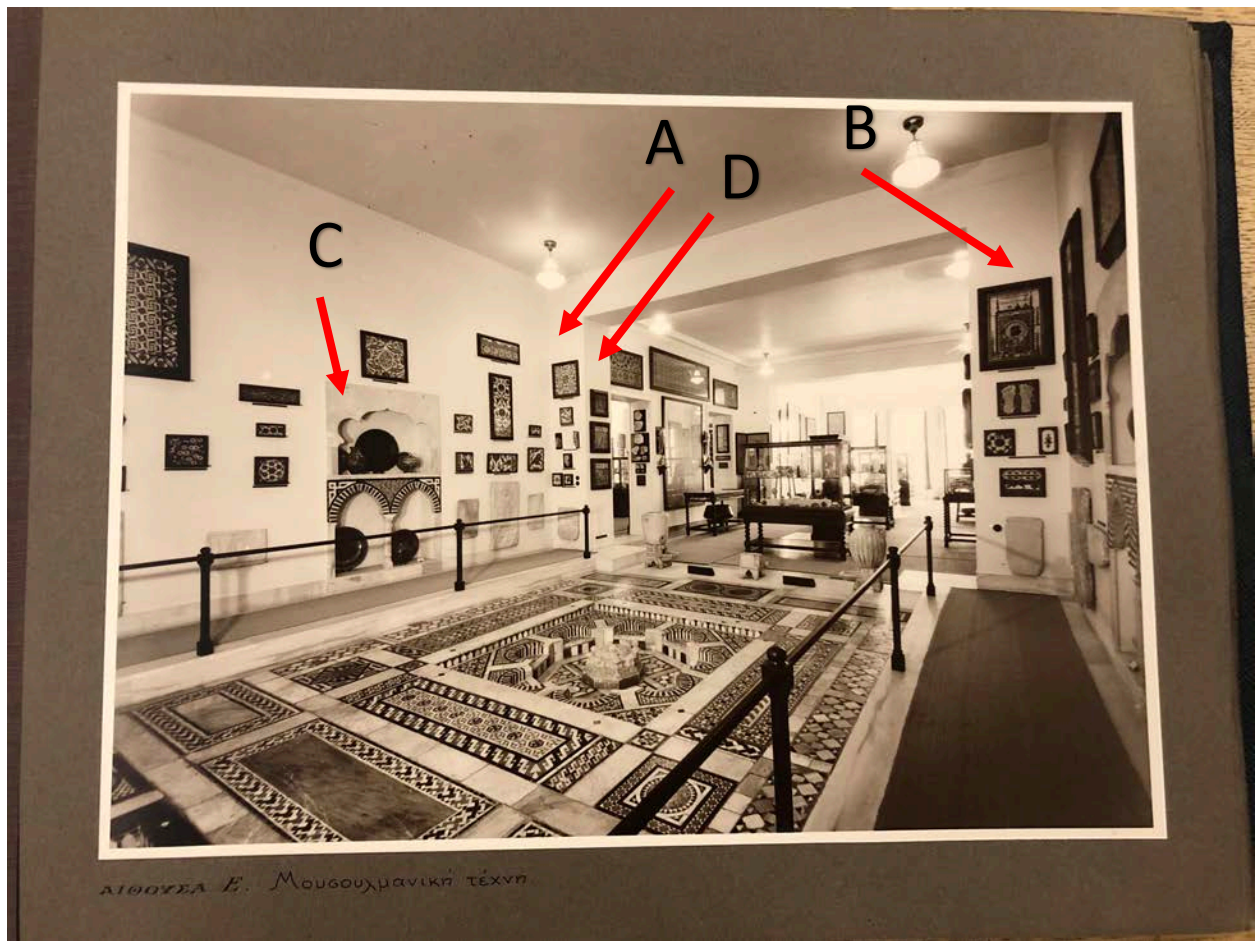


Fig. 42. View of Gallery E of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 43. View of Gallery E of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 44. View of Gallery E of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 45. View of Gallery E of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 46. View of Gallery E of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.

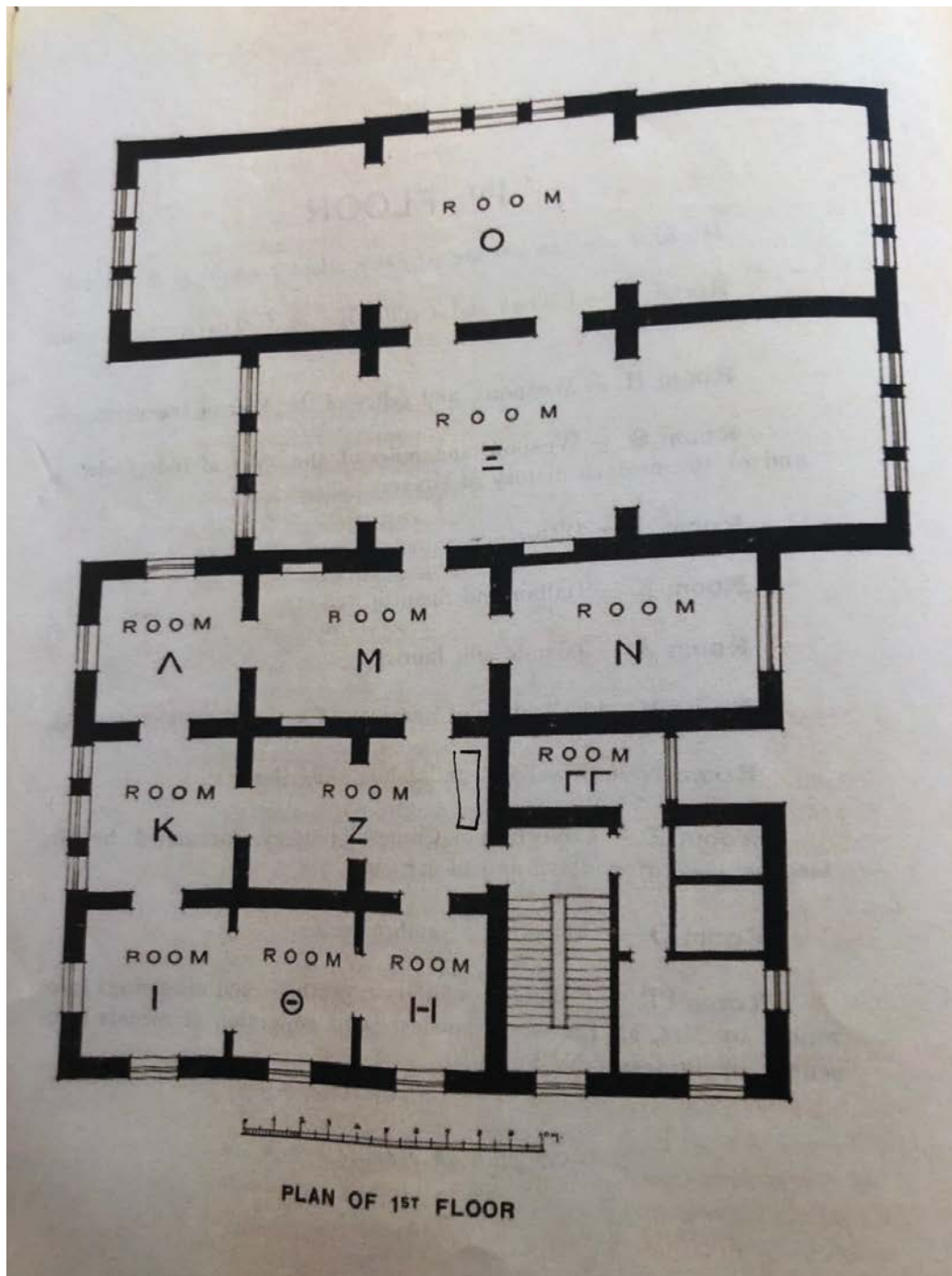


Fig. 47. Floorplan of the first floor of the Benaki Museum. Source: *Guide*. Athens: Benaki Museum, 1936.



ΛΙΘΟΥΣΑ Ζ. Εικόνας καί ύφασματα Έλληνο-ρωμαϊκής, Κοπτικής καί Μουσουλμανικής τέχνης.

Fig. 48. View of Gallery Z of the Benaki Museum c. 1931. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



ΛΙΘΩΝΙΑ Ζ. Είκοσι και Ψάσματα Έλληνο-ρωμαϊκής Κοπτικής και Μουσουλμανικής τέχνης

Fig. 49. View of Gallery Z of the Benaki Museum c. 1931. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 50. View of Gallery A of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 51. View of Gallery M of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 52. View of Gallery M of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 53. View of Gallery N of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 54. View of Gallery N of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 55. View of Gallery N of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Islamic art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.

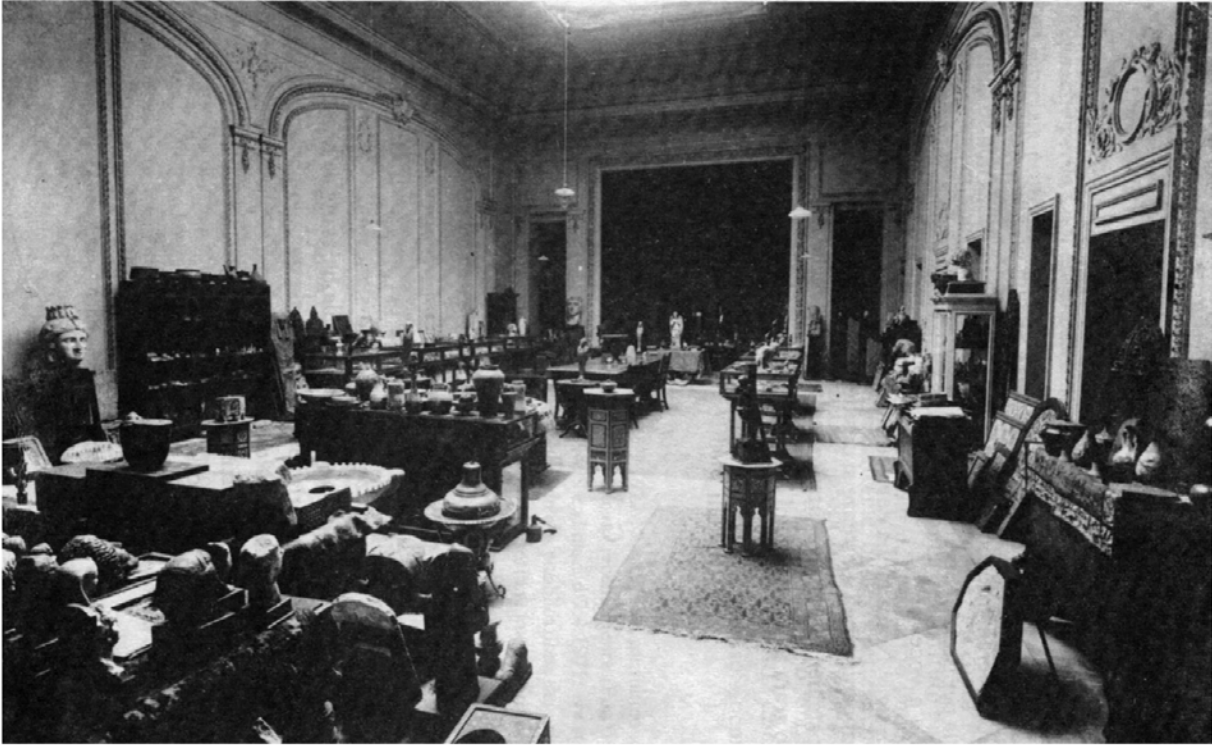


Fig. 56. Interior of the Casa Nahman, Cairo. Source: Rosario Pintaudi, "Documenti per una storia della papirologia in Italia," *Analecta Papyrologica* 5 (1993): 169.

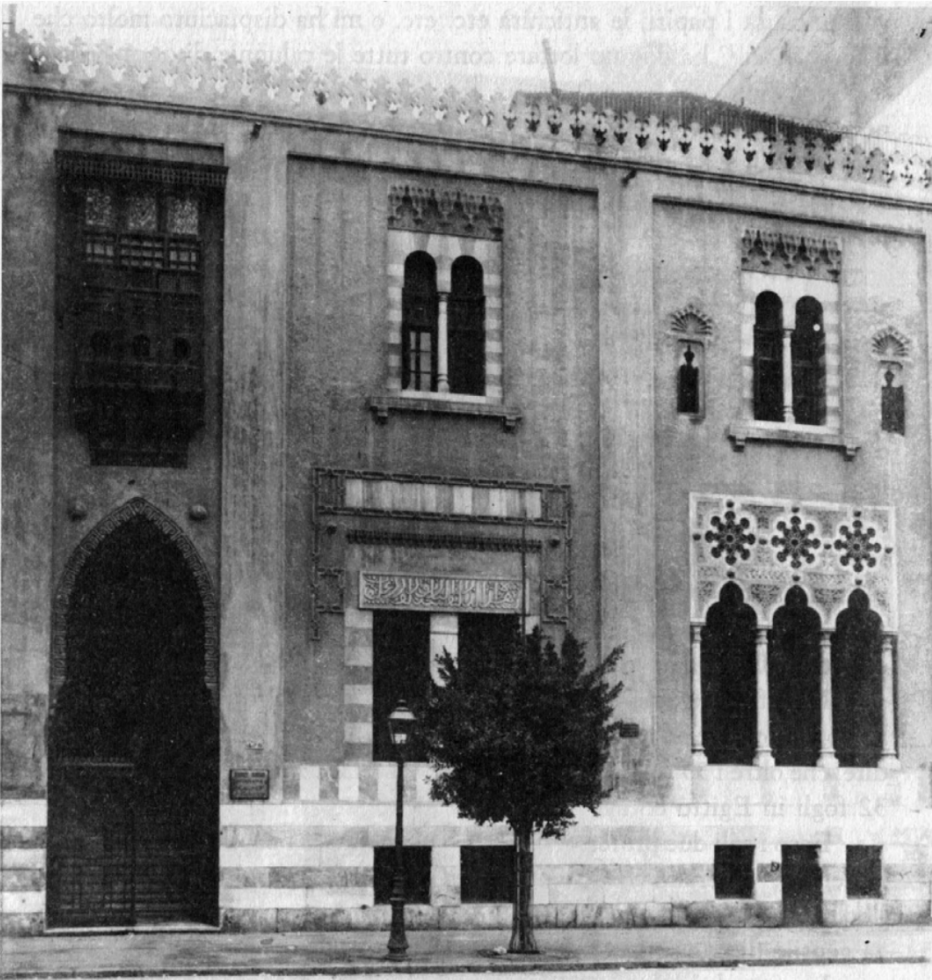


Fig. 57. Exterior of the Casa Nahman, Cairo. Source: Rosario Pintaudi, "Documenti per una storia della papirologia in Italia," *Analecta Papyrologica* 5 (1993): 165.

Treaty of Sèvres



Fig. 58. Map of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920). Source: Wikipedia.



Fig. 59. Illustrations of a group of Kutahya tiles located at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, the main subject of Christopher Nomico's *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (1922). Source: Nomico, Christopher A. *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem*. Alexandria, 1922.



Fig. 60. Illustrations of a group of Kutahya tiles located at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, the main subject of Christopher Nomico's *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (1922). Source: Nomico, Christopher A. *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem*. Alexandria, 1922.



Fig. 61. Illustrations of a group of Kutahya tiles located at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, the main subject of Christopher Nomico's *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (1922). Source: Nomico, Christopher A. *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem*. Alexandria, 1922.



Fig. 62. Illustrations of a group of Kutahya tiles located at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, the main subject of Christopher Nomico's *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (1922). Source: Nomico, Christopher A. *The Christian Tiles of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem*. Alexandria, 1922.

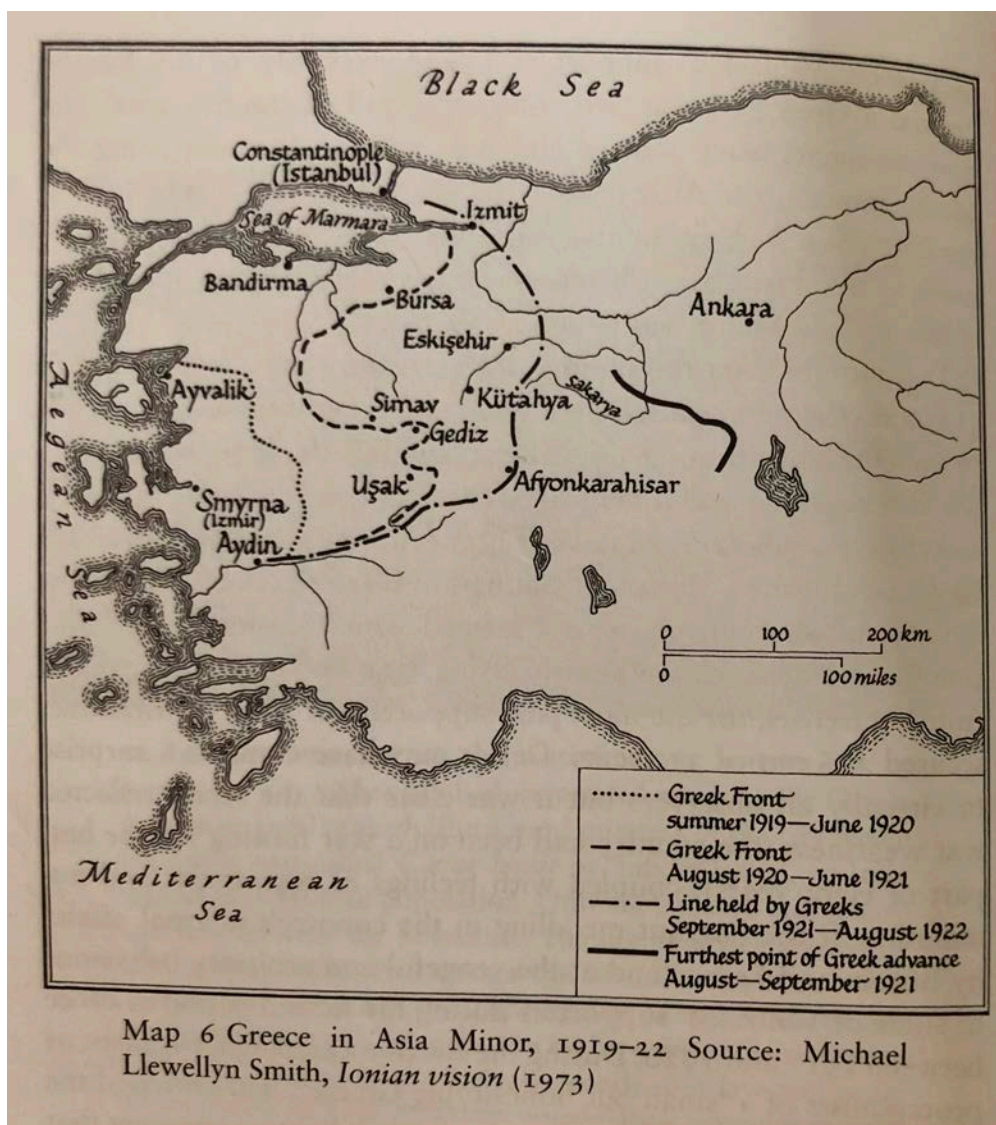


Fig. 63. Map showing the advances of the Greek army in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 – 1922. Source: Clogg, Richard. *A Concise History of Greece*. Third edition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

CHAPTER TWO FIGURES

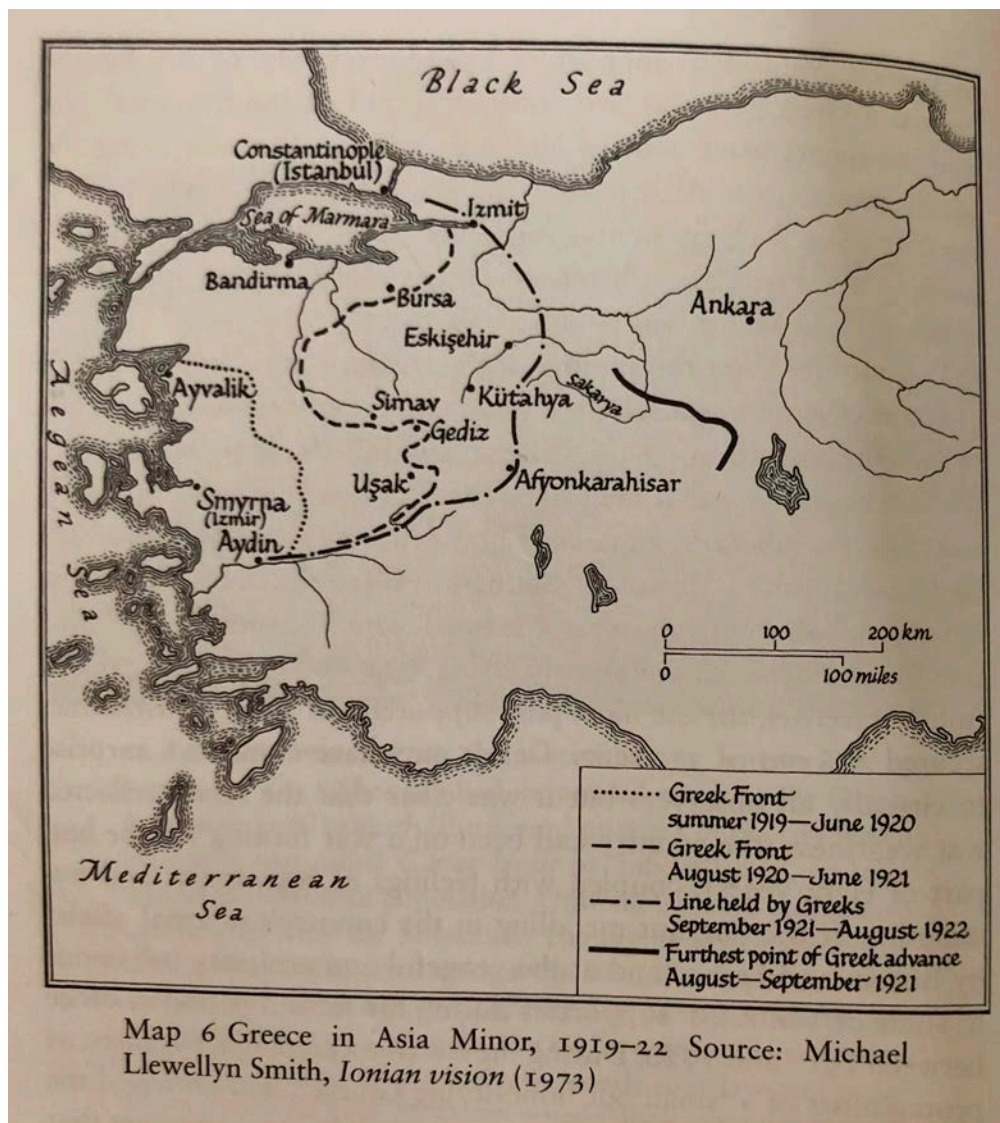


Fig. 1. Map showing the advances of the Greek army in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 – 1922. Source: Clogg, Richard. *A Concise History of Greece*. Third edition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.



Fig. 2. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



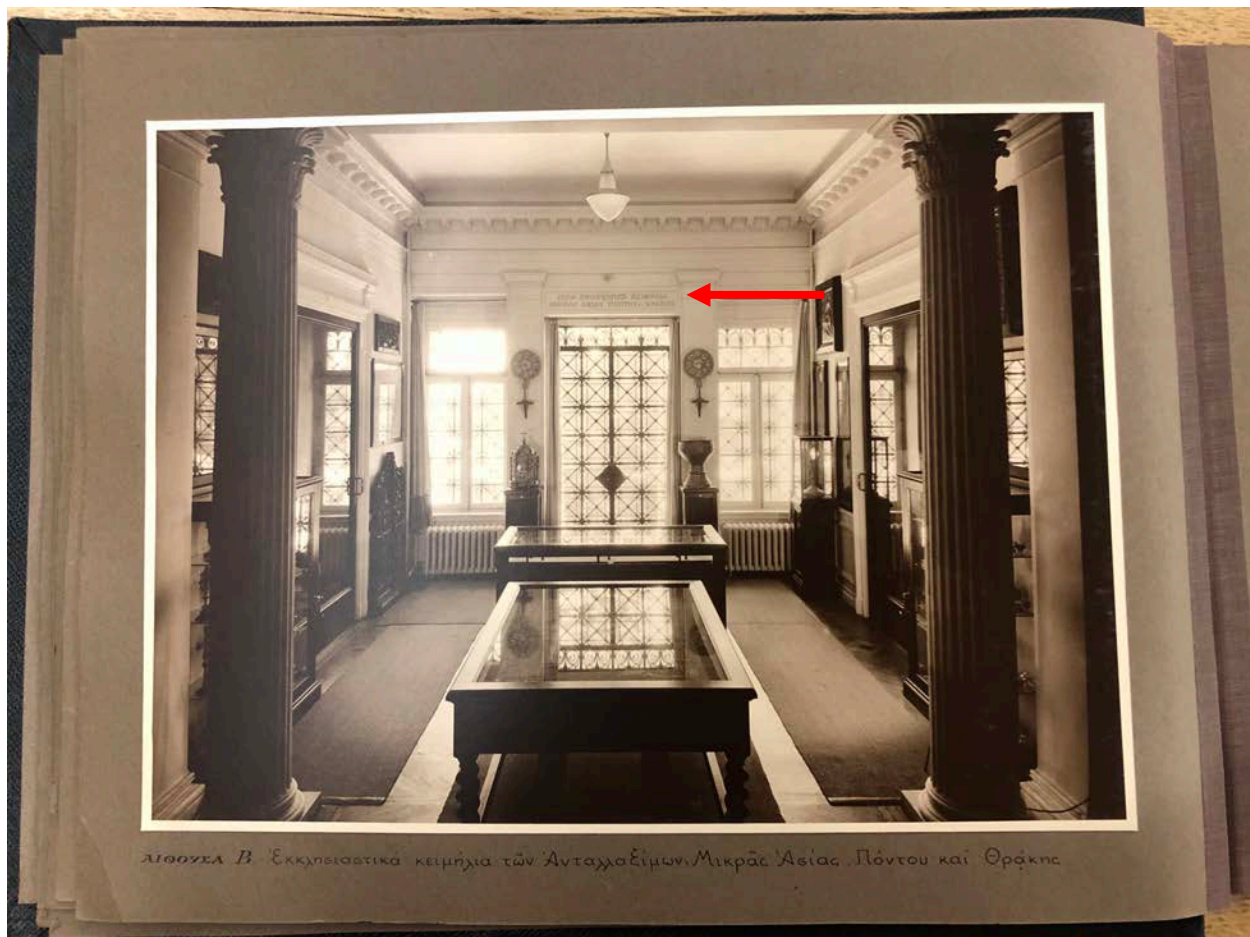
ΛΙΘΟΣΕΛ Β. Εκκλησιαστικά κειμήλια τῶν Ἀνταλλαξίμων Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας, Πόντου καὶ Θράκης

Fig. 3. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



ΛΙΘΩΤΑ Β. Ἐκκροισαστικά κειμήλια τῶν Ἀνταλλαξίμων Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας, Πόντου καί Ὀρῶνης.

Fig. 4. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



ΛΙΘΟΣΕΛ Β Έκκλησιαστικά κειμήλια τῶν Ἀναττοχόιμων Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας Πόντου καί Θράκης

Fig. 5. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 6. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.

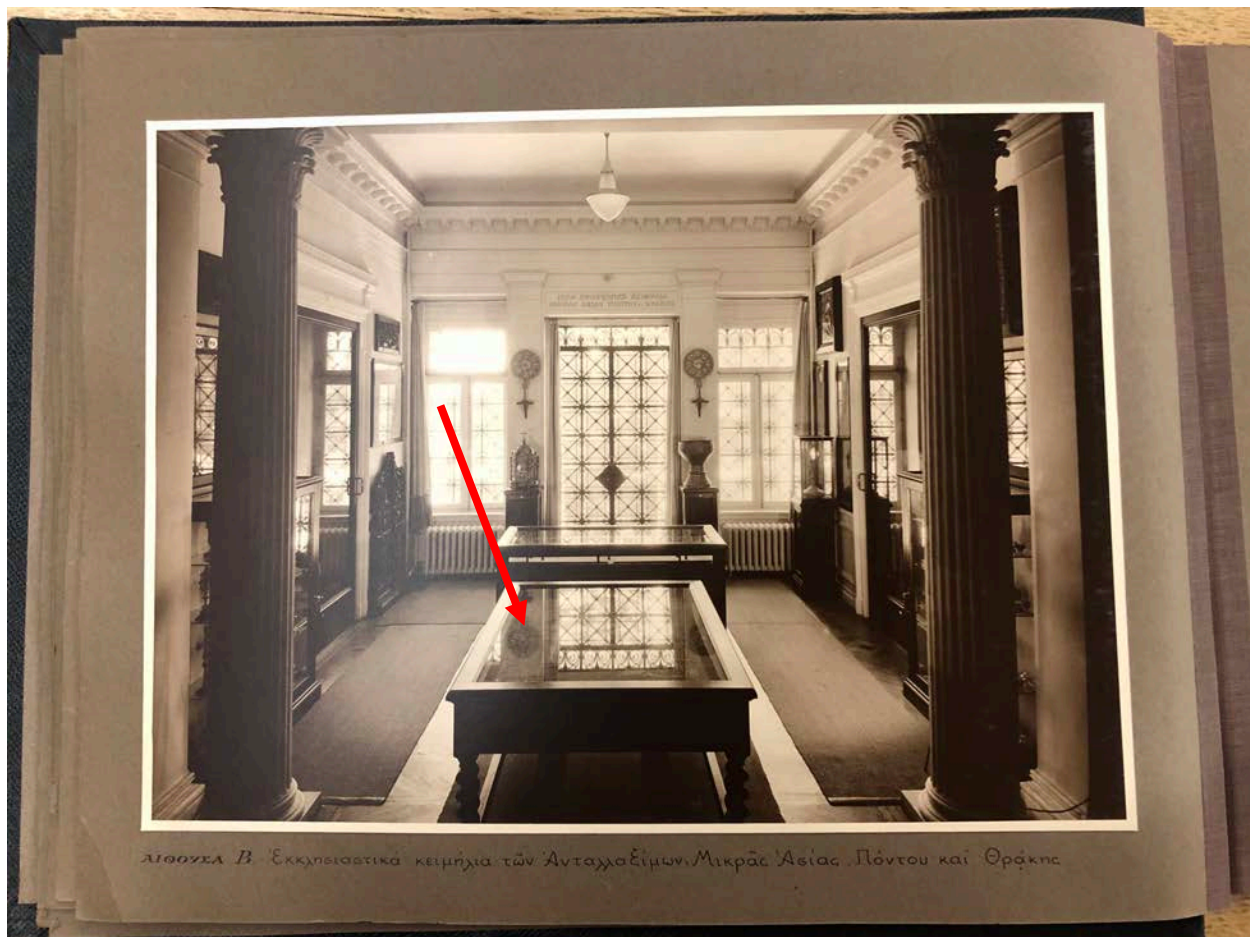
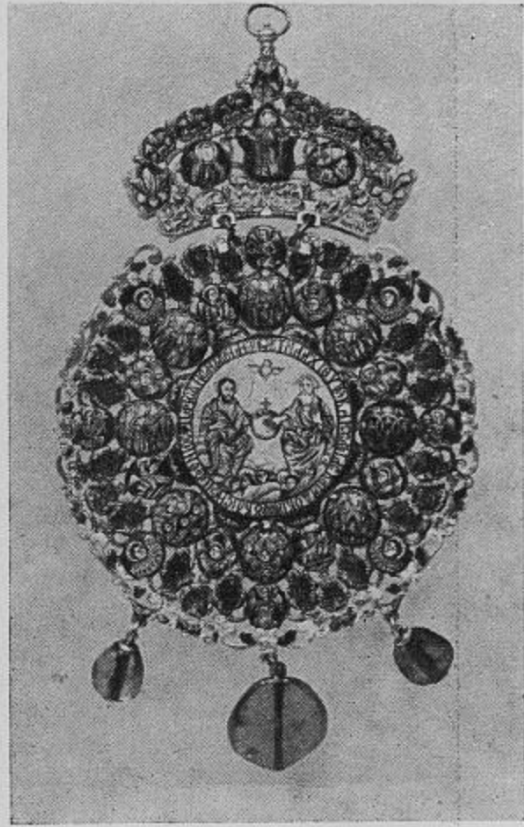
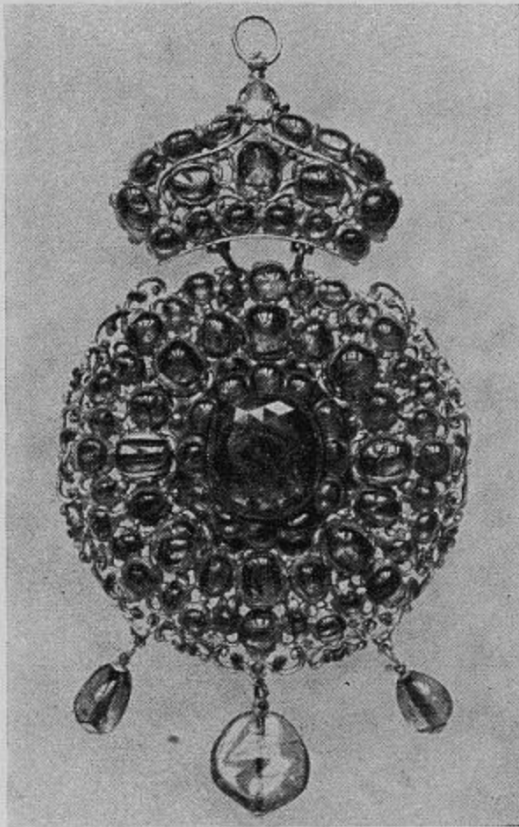


Fig. 7. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



MUSÉE BENAKI.

ENCOLPION ÉMAILLÉ ET INCRUSTÉ DE PIERRES PRÉCIEUSES, AYANT APPARTENU AU MÉTROPOLITE DE CÉSARÉE PARTHÉNIOS (1738) (H. 0 m. 17).

Fig. 8. Pectoral of Parthenios of Santorin, Archbishop of Caesarea (1738). Source: Macridy, Theodor. "Le Musée Bénaki d'Athènes." *Extrait de la Revue Mouséion* 39–40 (1937).



Fig. 9. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 10. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Macridy, Theodor. “Le Musée Bénaki d’Athènes.” *Extrait de la Revue Museion* 39–40 (1937).



Fig. 11. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 12. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 13. View of Gallery B of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting the “relics” preserved by the Exchangeable Populations from Asia Minor. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.

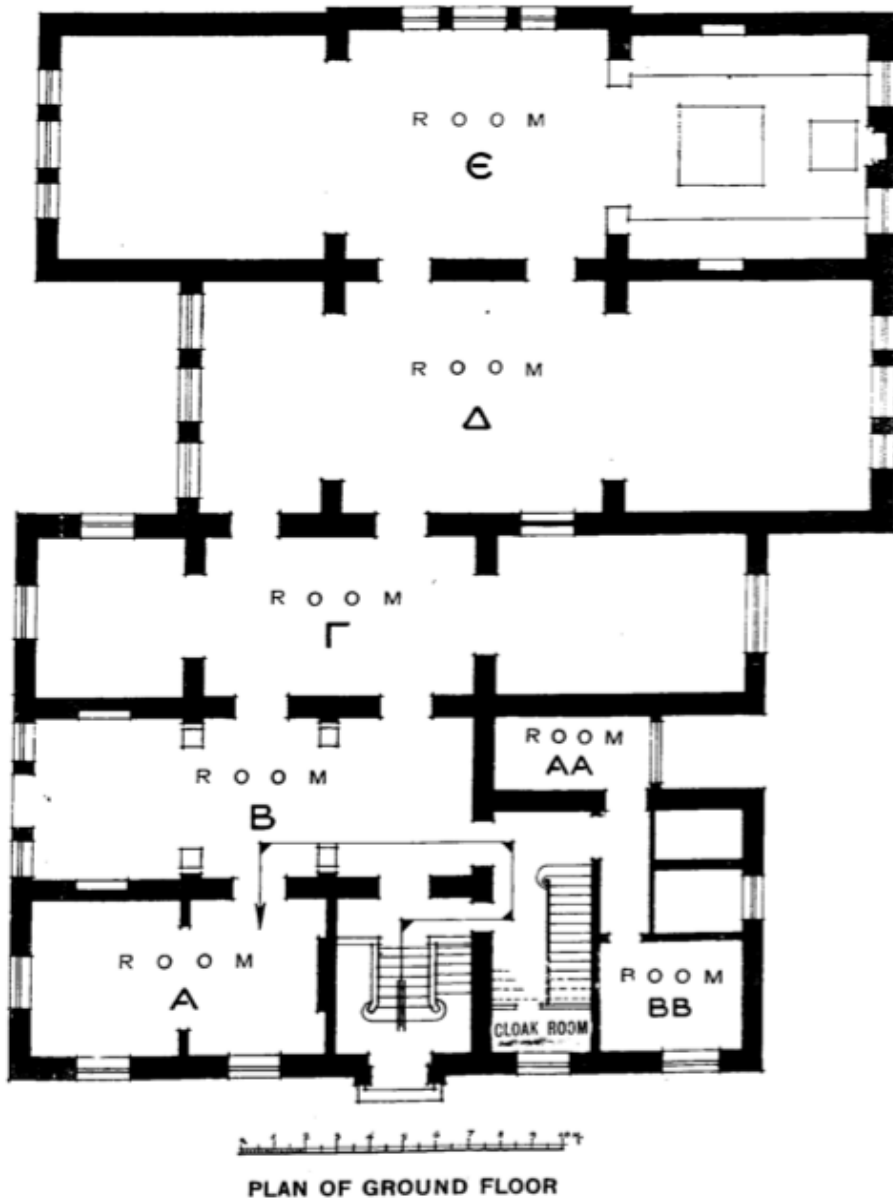


Fig. 14. Floorplan of the ground floor of the Benaki Museum. Source: *Guide*. Athens: Benaki Museum, 1936.



Fig. 15. View of Gallery Γ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Byzantine and “post-Byzantine” art. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 16. View of Gallery Γ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Byzantine and “post-Byzantine” art. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 17. View of Gallery Γ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Byzantine and “post-Byzantine” art. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 18. View of Gallery Γ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Byzantine and “post-Byzantine” art. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 19. View of Gallery Γ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Byzantine and “post-Byzantine” art. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



ΛΙΘΟΣΕΛ Γ. Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή τέχνη.

Fig. 20. View of Gallery Γ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Byzantine and “post-Byzantine” art. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 21. View of Gallery K of the Benaki Museum c. 1931. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



MUSÉE BENAKI.

D. THEOTOCOPOULO : ADORATION DES MAGES (VERS 1560-1561) (H. 0 m. 40).

Fig. 22. El Greco, *Adoration of the Magi*, (1560 - 1561) Source: Macridy, Theodor. "Le Musée Bénaki d'Athènes." *Extrait de la Revue Mousseion* 39-40 (1937).

CHAPTER THREE FIGURES



Fig. 1. Map of territorial gains of the Greek state between 1832 and 1947. Source: Wikipedia.



Fig. 2. View of Galleries Π and Ρ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 3. View of Galleries Σ and Ρ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 4. View of Gallery Σ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 5. View of Gallery Σ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 6. View of Gallery T of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 7. View of Gallery Y of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 8. View of Gallery X of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 9. View of Gallery Φ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 10. View of Gallery Ψ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 11. View of Gallery Ψ of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 12. View of Gallery Ω of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 13. View of Gallery Ω of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



ΛΙΘΟΣΤΑ Ω. Ἑλληνικὴ λαϊκὴ τέχνη

Fig. 14. View of Gallery Ω of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 15. View of Gallery Ω of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting costumes and Greek folk art. Source: Album of photographs “ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ,” Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.

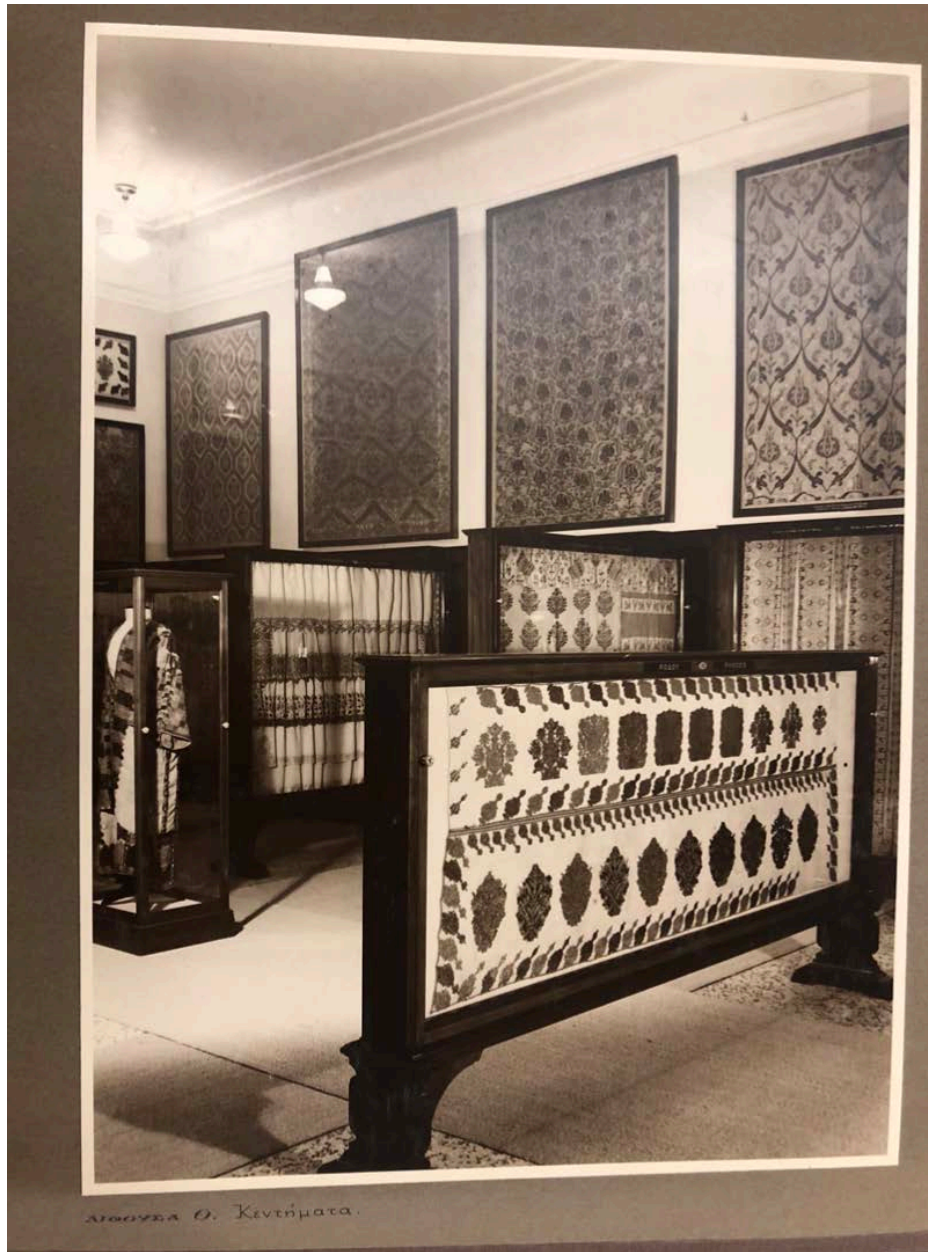


Fig. 16. View of Gallery O of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Greek embroideries. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 17. View of Gallery O of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Greek embroideries. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 18. View of Gallery O of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Greek embroideries.
Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 19. View of Gallery O of the Benaki Museum c. 1931 exhibiting Greek embroideries. Source: Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece.



Fig. 20. Illustration of Antonis Benakis dressed in upper class Cretan dress. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 2 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1954).



Fig. 21. Marie De Launay dressed as a “Hodja from Skodra” and as a “Turkish man from Bursa” Source: Osman Hamdi Bey, Marie de Launay, and J. Pascal Sébah. *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie En 1873*. Constantinople: Imprimerie du “Levant Times & Shipping Gazette,” 1873.



Enfant Arnaout de Famille Riche;
Riche Arnaout De Yania;
Riche Dame Arnaout De Yania.



Paysan Des Environs de Yania;
Arnaout de Yania (Classe Pauvre);
Arnaout de Yania (Classe Moyenne).



Paysanne Des Environs de Tirhala;
Chretienne De Preveza;
Femme Valaque De Yania.

Fig. 22. Photographs representing costumes from the Vilayet of Yania (Janina).
Source: Osman Hamdi Bey, Marie de Launay, and J. Pascal Sébah. *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie En 1873*. Constantinople: Imprimerie du "Levant Times & Shipping Gazette," 1873.



Haham-Bachi De Selanik;
Bourgeois de Monastir;
Hodja De Selanik.



Dame Juive de Selanik;
Femme Bulgare de Perlepe;
Dame Musulmane de Selanik.

Fig. 23. Photographs representing costumes from the Vilayet of Selanik (Salonique).
Source: Osman Hamdi Bey, Marie de Launay, and J. Pascal Sébah. *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie En 1873*. Constantinople: Imprimerie du "Levant Times & Shipping Gazette," 1873.



Cavalier Chretien De Hania;
Dame Musulmane De Hania;
Bourgeois Chretien De Hania.



Villageois Chretien De Hannoia
Villageoise Chretienne De Hannoia
Habitant D'Isfakia.

Fig. 24. Photographs representing costumes from the Vilayet of Krid (Crete).
Source: Osman Hamdi Bey, Marie de Launay, and J. Pascal Sébah. *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie En 1873*. Constantinople: Imprimerie du "Levant Times & Shipping Gazette," 1873.



Fig. 25. Illustration of “Peasant of the North” from Thessaly. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948).

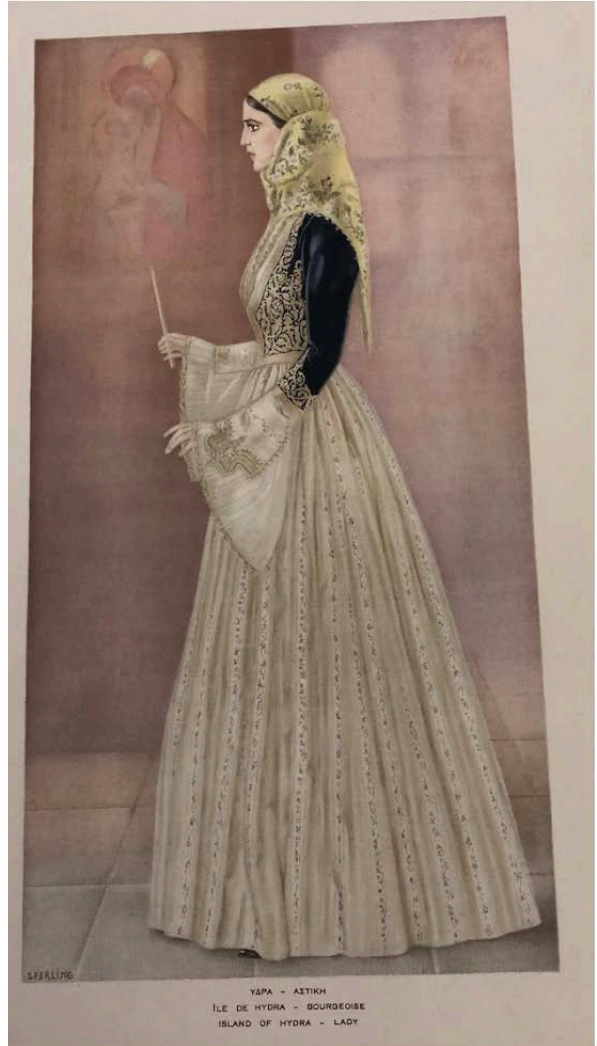


Fig. 26. Illustration of a Lady from the Island of Hydra. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 2 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1954).



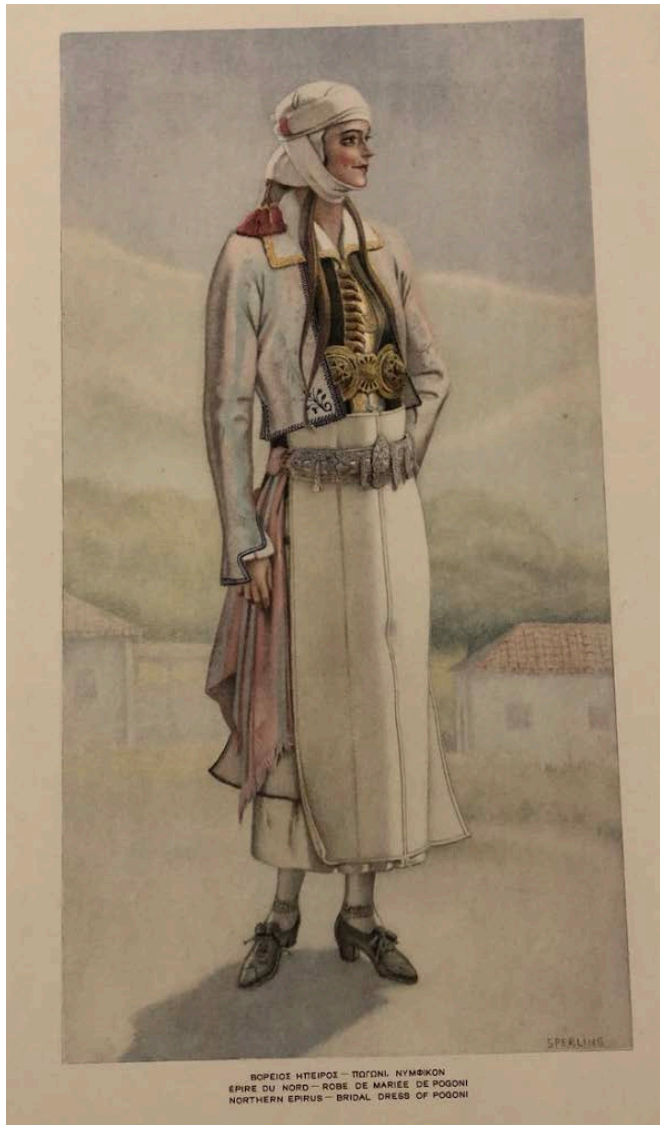
Fig. 27. Two upper class women from Epirus wearing similar costumes as pictured in the *Elbise* (left) and *Hellenic National Costumes* (right). Sources: Osman Hamdi Bey, Marie de Launay, and J. Pascal Sébah. *Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie En 1873*. Constantinople: Imprimerie du "Levant Times & Shipping Gazette," 1873 and Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948).



Fig. 28. Illustration of a bridal dress worn in the villages of Rumluiki.
 Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948).



Fig. 29. A bridal dress worn in the villages of Rumluiki in the Benaki Museum collections.
 Source: Macridy, Theodor. "Le Musée Bénaki d'Athènes." *Extrait de la Revue Mousseion* 39–40 (1937).



ΒΟΡΕΙΟΣ ΗΠΕΙΡΟΣ - ΠΟΓΟΝΙ, ΝΥΜΦΙΚΟΝ
EPHRE DU NORD - ROBE DE MARIÉE DE POGONI
NORTHERN EPIRUS - BRIDAL DRESS OF POGONI

Fig. 30. Illustration of a costume from Northern Epirus. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948).



Fig. 31. Illustrations of costumes of the Saracatsani tribe. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948).



Fig. 32. Illustration of Karagouni costume. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948).



Fig. 33. Illustrations of the *fustanella*. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948).

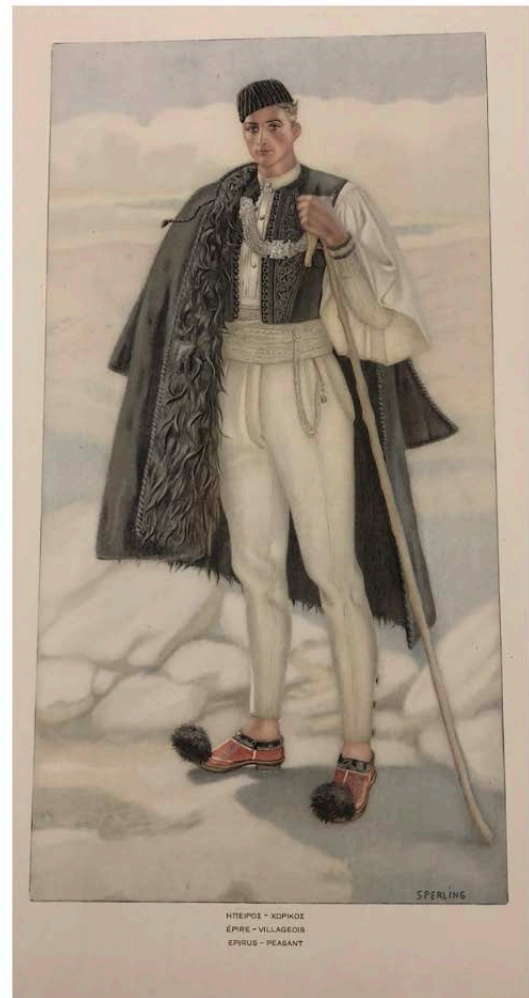


Fig. 34. Illustration of the *kapa* or *flocata*, a type of sheepskin cape. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 1 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948).

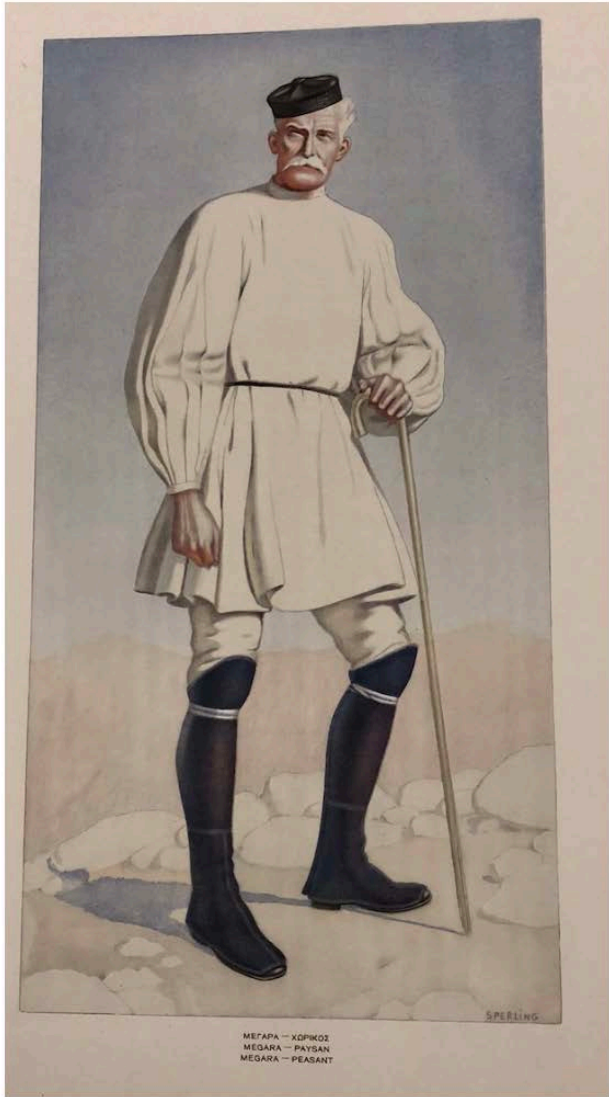


Fig. 35. Illustration of the *fustanella* worn by the peasants of Megara. Source: Antonios Benakis ed., *Hellenic National Costumes*, vol. 2 (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1954).

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

This dissertation employs both visual and textual archival sources. Unpublished visual archival sources include a series of uncatalogued albums of photographs housed in the Benaki Museum's library which depict the first installations of the museum (Album of photographs "ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ," Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece) as well as exhibitions organized by Antonis Benakis (Album of photographs, Benaki Museum Library, Athens, Greece). Photographs from these albums are reproduced in the figures section. Unpublished textual archival sources include Antonis Benakis' correspondence (Benaki Museum Byzantine Department Archives).

This dissertation also relies on published sources, including publications produced by the museum in the first decades after its inauguration, as well as other contemporaneous publications. These are cited in the bibliography section and visuals from these publications, where relevant, are reproduced in the figures section.

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