

THE BURDEN OF TRANSLATION: Eugenios Voulgaris and the circulation of knowledge in eighteenth-century Europe

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Received approaches to travel literature are more preoccupied with physical mobility, ongoing out and reporting back, while the emphasis here is on the *interaction* between mobile figures — taken in a broad sense to cover cultural, intellectual and disciplinary displacement — and “other” cultures, in order to examine the types of knowledge or inflections in accepted knowledge practices that result from this process. Indeed, the contributions to this book stress the historical contingency and mutation of these practices introduced by movement itself. The go-between in this sense is thus not just a passer-by or a simple agent of cross-cultural diffusion, but someone who articulates relationships between disparate worlds or cultures by being able to translate between them.¹

ABSTRACT

Eugenios Voulgaris (1716-1806) was one of the most erudite 18th-century Greek-speaking scholar. In Greek historiography he is known as the person who decisively contributed to the revival of Greek philosophy and the director of some of the most in-fluential schools of the time. Deciphering his scientific thought, however, is not a simple task. Along with his works in metaphysics and logic (literature, religious studies and many other topics) he authored a number of scientific treatises where the attainment of the Enlightenment merged with the neo-Aristotelian philosophy that dominated the Greek intellectual life since the early 17th century. The scientific discourse resulting from Voulgaris’ synthesis was primarily contemplative rather than empirical and formed one of the many diverging epistemic endeavors, which marked the early life of modern natural philosophy. What assigns this discourse a particular character is that it epitomizes the life and the career expectations of a man who crossed a variety of intellectual environments trying to bridge different philosophical and political visions and not the mission of a narrowly trained and acutely oriented “scientist”. From this point of view, the travels of Eugenios Voulgaris may broaden our understanding of how the circulation of people contributed to the production of new knowledge and the institutionalization of modern science.

¹ Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj, James Delbourgo (eds.), *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2009), p. xiv.

This perspective is particularly relevant to the European periphery as it brings forth the importance of the networks built by the actors and shows that, contrary to the received view, locality played an instrumental role in knowledge production not as a static confinement but as a condition of circulation.

Keywords: knowledge circulation, intellectual networks, locality, translation, Eugenios Voulgaris, Greece

Introduction

Recent scholarship in the history of science has placed emphasis on the notion of circulation. True, that the circulation of scientific ideas and practices had always been a favourite topic for historians of science. The “dissemination” of science or the “spread” of scientific ideas, especially from the “centre” to the “periphery”, has occupied a prominent position in reception studies since the early 1970s. However, the way circulation was implemented in this context was greatly affected by the positivist perception both of science and of geography. For much of the received historiography of science, scientific ideas, methods and practices represented parts of an ecumenical and indisputable truth and, in this capacity, they were (or, better, they ought to be) transmitted from the place of their original conception to the rest of the world. The crossing of boundaries between different geographical entities activated different responses depending on the local cultural proclivities. The degree of the positive disposition of a local society towards science was a measure of this society’s cultural maturity and of its preparedness to partake in modernity.²

Overcoming this positivist perception requires, first of all, the critical reassessment of the centre-periphery dichotomy upon which it is based. In the last 15 years a number of publications and conferences have stressed the importance of removing such Manichean distinctions from the toolbox of historians of science.³ Especially at the intersection of the

² Indicatively: Thomas F. Glick (ed.), *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974); Paolo Casini, “Les débuts du newtonianisme en Italie, 1700-1740”, *Dix-huitième Siècle*, 1978, 10: 85-100; Thomas F. Glick (ed.), *The Comparative Reception of Relativity* (Dordrecht: Reidel [Boston studies in the philosophy of science], 1987); Anthony Pagden, “The reception of the “new philosophy” in 18th-century Spain”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1988, 51: 126-140; David Wright, “John Fryer and the Shanghai Polytechnic: making space for science in nineteenth-century China”, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 1996, 29: 1-16; Celina Ana Lértora Mendoza, Efthymios Nicolaïdis and Jan Vandermissen (eds.), *The Spread of the Scientific Revolution in the European Periphery, Latin America and East Asia: Proceedings of the XXth International Congress of History of Science (Liège, 20-26 July 1997)*, vol. V, (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1999).

³ The international collaborative group of historians of science, STEP (Science and Technology in the European Periphery) paid special attention to the center-periphery dichotomy. The issue kept recurring, for many years, in every formal or informal meeting of the group and was extensively discussed in most of its publications. For an overview see Kostas Gavroglu, Manolis

history of science in the European periphery with post-colonial studies, the idea of a metropolitan centre from which scientific truths and cultural values emanated in parallel flows gives gradually way to the more elaborate notion of polycentric communication networks with “multiple layers of authority and interaction”.⁴

Two other developments also favoured the turning of historians of science towards a different perception of the circulation of scientific ideas and practices. One such development is closely related with the trend that became widely known as social constructivism.⁵

Moving away from a conception of science as a system of formal propositions or discoveries, these recent studies understand it as the construction, maintenance, extension, and reconfiguration of knowledge, focusing equally on its material, instrumental, corporeal, practical, social, political, and cognitive aspects. Systematically opting for detailed case studies of the processes through which knowledge and associated skills, practices, procedures, methods, and instruments are created in preference to “big picture” accounts, they have investigated the negotiated, contingent, and situated nature of the sciences. This new scholarship has convincingly shown that scientific research is not based on logical step-by-step reasoning but on pragmatic judgment, much like that involved in practical crafts, and is thus historically and geographically situated. In concert with, and indeed in significant measure inspired by, ethnomethodology and microhistorical approaches, on the one hand, and anthropological insights into the ever-local nature of knowledge across cultural divides, on the other, contingencies of place have thus come to acquire key importance in recent sociological and historical studies of science.⁶

The other development is connected with the radical revision of the notion of geographical or cultural “area”.

As scholars concerned with localities, circulation, and comparison, we need to make a decisive shift away from what we may call “trait” geographies to what we could call ‘process’ geographies. Much traditional thinking about “areas” has been driven by conception of geographical, civilizational, and cultural coherence that rely on some sort of trait list — of values, languages, material practices, ecological adaptations, marriage patterns, and the like. However sophisticated these approaches, they all tend to see

Patiniotis, Faidra Papanelopoulou, Ana Simões, Ana Carneiro, Maria Paula Diogo, José Ramón Bertomeu Sánchez, Antonio García Belmar, Agustí Nieto-Galan, “Science and Technology in the European Periphery: Some historiographical reflections”, *History of Science*, 2008, xlvii: 153-175.

⁴ Mark Harrison, “Science and the British Empire”, *Isis*, 2005, 96: 56–63, p. 63. See also, Lissa Roberts, “Situating Science in Global History: Local Exchanges and Networks of Circulation”, *Itinerario*, 2009, xxxiii: 9-30 and Manolis Patiniotis, “Between the local and the global: History of science in the European periphery meets post-colonial studies”, *Centaurus*, 2013, doi: 10.1111/1600-0498.12027 (where also further bibliography about the de-centralization of Europe and of Western cultural patterns in the context of post-colonial studies).

⁵ For an overview see Jan Golinski, *Making Natural Knowledge: Construction and the History of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Mario Biagioli (ed.), *The Science Studies Reader* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999).

⁶ Kapil Raj, “Beyond Postcolonialism ...and Postpositivism: Circulation and the Global History of Science”, *Isis*, 2013, 104: 337-347, p. 341.

“areas” as relatively immobile aggregates of traits, with more or less durable historical boundaries and with a unity composed of more or less enduring properties. [...] In contrast, we need an architecture for area studies that is based on process geographies and sees significant areas of human organization as precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction, and motion. [...] Put more simply, the large regions that dominate our current maps for area studies are not permanent geographical facts. They are problematic heuristic devices for the study of global geographic and cultural processes. Regions are best viewed as initial contexts for themes that generate variable geographies, rather than as fixed geographies marked by pregiven themes.⁷

Hence, in the context of issues raised by post-Kuhnian history of science and by recent developments in the broader field of social anthropology the notion of circulation has been radically reconsidered. Circulation is no longer about the mobility of scientific “commodities” from one context to another nor about the cultural adaptation of particular scientific “products” to particular social “needs”. As opposed to the notions of dissemination and diffusion of scientific ideas and practices, it implies mutually transformative encounters between different localities. No doubt such encounters involve cultural conflicts and power games but the assumed global validity of science is not capable of settling these matters. Quite the contrary, the universality of science is the outcome of the transformations undergone by both scientific achievements and their respective intellectual apparatuses in order to be able to circulate from one locality to another.⁸ A second point concerning the revised notion of circulation is the obvious idea that the kind of motion involved in circulation is repeated and tends to return to a point of origin. As a result, circulation affects in equal degrees all the points of the inscribed trajectory, giving rise to stories of “local production, interpretation, appropriation, and use”. In order to link these stories “we need an approach that enables us to think about circulation, not as movement that has a designated centre — that is, a clear and privileged point of origin and return — but as a continuous path whose formative trajectory is constituted out of multiple points of local contact and exchange”.⁹

The emphasis placed on circulation as a knowledge-making process brought up a new kind of historical actor. Much of the positivist historiography of science drew on the work of the great thinkers who conceived of or definitely shaped the great scientific discoveries. The turn to circulation as a *site of continuous knowledge production* makes visible the work of those intercultural subjects who move across disciplinary *and* territorial borders “by juggling possibilities and

⁷ Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *Globalization* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 7-8.

⁸ Patiniotis, “Between the local and the global”, pp. 18-19.

⁹ Roberts, “Situating Science”, pp. 17-18.

constraints, construct spaces tailored to their own activity, cultivate solutions of continuity, and function through networks”.¹⁰ Apparently, the aim of such a reconfiguration is not to do justice to the unsung heroes of science (although this is the favourite version of many historians of the European and colonial “periphery”). Bringing the intercultural agents to the fore and confirming their role in the production of scientific knowledge primarily allows us to tell more nuanced stories about the complex cultural encounters, social negotiations and material potentialities that participated in its making.

As noted in a recent collection, these figures are usually absent from the official histories of the Enlightenment and when they are not, they are typically treated as intellectually parochial scholars, unable to fully embrace the ideal of modernization through reason and science.¹¹ In this paper we will be concerned with such a figure, whose contemporaneous fame was counter proportional to later historiographical appraisals of his scientific work. Eugenios Voulgaris (1716–1806) was one of the most erudite eighteenth-century Greek-speaking scholars. According to contemporary evidence, he was the person who decisively contributed to the revival of Greek philosophy and the director of some of the most influential Greek schools of the time. In 1803, three years before Voulgaris’ demise, Adamantios Korais (1748–1833), the person who is considered by modern Greek historiography as the major representative of the Enlightenment in the Greek intellectual life of the time, noted:

This most honourable prelate is today the foremost figure among the learned people of the nation. He is one of the first who actively contributed to the moral transformation, which is still in progress among the Greeks. And I wish to emphasize the debt of the nation to him as eagerly as I wish to eternally remember the excitement caused by the publication of his logic in my soul when I was still young; and it is to this excitement I actually owe the few lights I currently possess.¹²

Voulgaris’ fame remained intact for more than a century. Quite plausibly so, since his work brought a new spirit into a wide variety of domains. He authored books on metaphysics and logic, literature and theology, history and politics, and, above all, he wrote some of the most

¹⁰ Raj, “Beyond Postcolonialism”, p. 347.

¹¹ Schaffer et al., *The Brokered World*, p. xxx.

¹² Αδαμάντιος Κοραΐς, *Υπόμνημα περί της παρούσης καταστάσεως του πολιτισμού εν Ελλάδι, συνταχθέν μεν Γαλλιστί και αναγνωσθέν εις την εταιρίαν των ανθρωποτηρητών (τη 6 Ιανουαρίου 1803), μεταφρασθέν δε υπό Αναστασίου Κωνσταντινίδου* [*Memoire sur l'état actuel de la civilisation dans la Grèce, lu a la Société des Observateurs de l'homme, le 16 Nivose, an XI (6 Janvier 1803)*] (Athens, 1833), pp. 15-18 (quote on p. 18). Another author who testifies to Voulgaris’ importance is Constantinos Koumas (1777–1836), also a major representative of the Enlightenment in the Greek intellectual life of the time. See: Κωνσταντίνος Μ. Κούμας, *Ιστορία των Ανθρωπίνων πράξεων* [*History of human affairs*], v. 12 (Vienna, 1832), pp. 559-564.

influential scientific treatises of his time, in which he attempted to merge the attainments of modern European thought with the neo-Aristotelian philosophy, which dominated Greek intellectual life from the early seventeenth century.¹³ However, when in the late 1940s historian Constantinos Dimaras (1904–1992) invented the notion of “Neohellenic Enlightenment” as a period that marked the linking of the eighteenth-century Greek society with the European (particularly French) Enlightenment, the place of Voulgaris on the intellectual map changed drastically. For Dimaras himself, Voulgaris was a progressive scholar who gradually turned conservative as he was becoming older and more established,¹⁴ whereas for other historians he was a transitional figure unable to fully appreciate the scientific progress taking place in Europe due to his unwillingness to take distance from the philosophical and theological commitments of his native cultural context.¹⁵ Voulgaris was the hero of an unfulfilled modernization.

On closer examination, however, Voulgaris turns out to be quite typical of an era characterized by “multiple engagements” and the agency of “polycentric communication networks”. His work epitomizes the life and the career expectations of a man who crossed a variety of intellectual environments trying to bridge different philosophical and political visions, rather than the mission of a narrowly trained and acutely oriented “scientist”. Voulgaris was a “go-between”, like many other scholars of his time. Thus, placing his story in the historiographical context of circulation, we shall try to elucidate some aspects of his intellectual agenda, which usually go unnoticed by contemporary historians. To do so, we need to loosen the tight frame of traditional historiography, particularly in the following three points:

- We must take seriously the fact that until well into the 19th century, the disciplinary divisions we are now familiar with had not yet been established. Philosophy, science, theology, history and literature could be parts of the same knowledge endeavours. As a

¹³ Γεώργιος Αιτιάς, *Συλλογή ανεκδότων συγγραμμάτων του αοιδήμου Ευγενίου του Βουλγάρως και τινων άλλων μεταυποθθέντων* [A collection of unpublished writings of the most unforgettable Eugenios Voulgaris and some more of his writings reprinted], 2 vols., (Athens, 1838); Κωνσταντίνος Ν. Σάθας, *Νεοελληνική Φιλολογία: Βιογραφία των εν τοις γράμμασι διαλαμψάντων Ελλήνων (1453–1821)* [*Neo-Hellenic Literature: Biographies of Greeks who shone in letters (1453–1821)*] (Athens, 1868), pp. 566-571.

¹⁴ Κωνσταντίνος Θ. Δημαράς, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* [*Neohellenic Enlightenment*], (6th edition) (Athens: Ερμής, 1993), p. 15.

¹⁵ Παναγιώτης Κονδύλης, *Ο Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός: Οι φιλοσοφικές ιδέες* [*Neohellenic Enlightenment: The philosophical ideas*] (Athens: Θεμέλιο, 1988). See, also, indicatively: Ευάγγελος Π. Παπανούτσος (ed.), *Νεοελληνική Φιλοσοφία* [*Neohellenic Philosophy*], vol. 1, (Athens: Αετός, 1953), p. 28; Νίκος Ψημμένος (ed.), *Η Ελληνική Φιλοσοφία από το 1453 ως το 1821* [*Neohellenic Philosophy from 1453 to 1821*], vol. 2, *Η επικράτηση της νεωτερικής φιλοσοφίας* [*The prevalence of modern philosophy*] (Athens: Γνώση, 1989), p.32.

result we will focus on Voulgaris' *knowledge* quests rather than on a supposedly well-delimited *scientific* enterprise.

- Speaking of circulation in a pre-nationalistic era we must place networks over the geography of fixed borders. Networks are dynamic systems encompassing multiple *asymmetrical* flows, which connect disparate intellectual and political environments. In what follows we shall see how Voulgaris' knowledge quests were motivated and shaped by his movement across networks spanning three different empires and a variety of cultural contexts.
- We shall focus on the notion of locality as opposed to the notion of location. Location indicates a more or less immutable entity on the map. Locality, at least in the sense we will use it in this paper, is a set of locally defined cultural qualities, but essentially disengaged from the institutional and social structures that engendered them. Moreover, locality is the ability of the actors to *perform* distinct cultural identities in the course of their travels, informed by, but not necessarily identical with those assigned by their native environment. In this particular sense, locality is movable and apt to transformation. Voulgaris' crossing of a variety of intellectual and political environments represents such a *moving locality*, which turned out to be a most suitable context for new knowledge production.

The Greek context

The scientific travels of the eighteenth-century Greek-speaking scholars display some particular features when compared to those of other European scholars. The Greek intellectual space did not coincide with a specific geopolitical territory, let alone a national state. Greek education and Christian Orthodox religion unified a wide and heterogeneous range of populations spread in various areas of the Ottoman Empire and of central Europe.¹⁶ It is indeed interesting to notice the absence of nationalistic sentiments in the largest part of such populations. Contrary to the received views of many Greek historians, the collective identity of most Greek-speaking people was a composite consisting of loyalty to the Sultan, a steady commitment to the practice of the Orthodox Church, a deeply rooted aversion for Catholicism and a culturally guided admiration for the achievements of Greek antiquity. Clear nationalistic

¹⁶ Γιώργος Τόλιας, "Η συγκρότηση του ελληνικού χώρου 1770-1821" ["The construction of the Greek national space 1770-1821"] in Βασίλης Παναγιωτόπουλος (ed.), *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού, 1770-2000* [*History of New Hellenism, 1770-2000*], vol. 1, (Athens: Ελληνικά Γράμματα, 2003), pp. 59-74.

sentiments and the first uncertain claims for a political unity that would transcend the nostalgia for the revival of Byzantium did not appear before the late eighteenth century, when Greek-speaking merchants of various central European communities felt compelled to strengthen their ties against the economic competition of other “nations”.¹⁷ Thus, a basically religious term “έθνος” (nation), came to signify for them a political and economic association, which gradually appropriated a glorious past (Ancient Greece) and projected itself into the future as part of an alternative arrangement of the Eastern European space. Quite naturally, the course of these developments was not rectilinear, but an investigation of such matters falls outside the scope of this paper. What is important for our study is that Eugenios Voulgaris not only moved across a changing Europe but also experienced the uncertainties of the emerging Greek national identity. This is an essential difference from other travelling scholars, the Spanish *pensionados*¹⁸ and the Portuguese *estrangeirados*¹⁹ for example, who had or envisioned a well-formed state apparatus to place the results of their intellectual undertakings.

Another point that should be stressed has to do with the intellectual context from which Voulgaris emerged. Many historians take it for granted that by the mid-eighteenth century the experimental and mathematical culture of modern science had been adopted by the majority of natural philosophers. However, in many cases this is not true. Until quite late in the eighteenth century there still were extended areas of the European intellectual landscape occupied by the traditional patterns of scholarship oriented towards education and text commentaries.²⁰ The Greek intellectual life was one of these cases. Although we should not mistake Greek-speaking scholars for mere pedagogues, it is a fact that their cognitive pursuits were almost exclusively placed in the context of the educational structure. And the means for the achievement of their intellectual goals were basically discursive, viz. teaching and writing for teaching purposes. Even pieces of knowledge representing the attainments of modern natural philosophy

¹⁷ Όλγα Κατσιαρδή-Hering, “Η Ελληνική Διασπορά: Το εμπόριο ως γενικευμένη εθνική εξειδίκευση” [Greek diaspora: Commerce as national expertise] in Παναγιωτόπουλος, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού*, v. 1, 87-112; Όλγα Κατσιαρδή-Hering, “Η Ελληνική Διασπορά: Η γεωγραφία και η τυπολογία της” [Greek diaspora: Its geography and its typology] in Σπύρος Ι. Ασδραχάς (ed.), *Ελληνική Οικονομική Ιστορία, ΙΕ'-ΙΘ' αιώνας* [Greek economic history, 15th to 19th centuries] (Athens: Πολιτιστικό Ίδρυμα Ομίλου Πειραιώς, 2003) v. 1, 237-247.

¹⁸ Antonio García Belmar, José Ramón Bertomeu Sánchez, “Constructing the Centre from the Periphery: Spanish Travellers to France at the Time of the Chemical Revolution” in Ana Simões, Ana Carneiro, Maria Paula Diogo (eds.), *Travels of Learning: A Geography of Science in Europe* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), pp. 143–188.

¹⁹ Ana Carneiro, Ana Simões, Maria Paula Diogo, “Enlightenment Science in Portugal: the Estrangeirados and their communication networks”, *Social Studies of Science*, 2000, 30: 591-619.

²⁰ See, for example: Christia Mercer, “The Vitality and Importance of Early Modern Aristotelianism” in Tom Sorell, (ed.), *The Rise of Modern Philosophy: The Tension between the New and Traditional Philosophies from Machiavelli to Leibniz* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 33-67; Christoph Lüthy, “What to do with seventeenth-century natural philosophy? A taxonomic problem”, *Perspectives on Science*, 2000, 8: 164–195.

entertained a discursive reception by Greek-speaking scholars, not in the sense that they were passively and unalterably repeated by them, but in the sense that they were appropriated in an intellectual structure, which was trained to produce new knowledge about nature by means of contemplation and written commentaries. Here again, from a comparative point of view, we can observe significant differences from other European scholars. Besides the differences in the methods of knowledge production, the confirmation and the practical application of such knowledge seem to be absent in the Greek case. Lacking the economic and institutional background that would profit from the appropriation of particular pieces of scientific and technological knowledge, Greek-speaking scholars got involved with the new natural philosophy with a view to extending the limits of traditional philosophy and upgrading its application in humanistic education.

In what follows, we will accompany Voulgaris on his travels keeping in mind the above clarifications. Like so many other European scholars of his time, as Voulgaris travelled, he brought along a whole set of intellectual pursuits. These pursuits altered through space and time (and, depending on the circumstances, became more or less ambitious), but they were never restricted to a simple search for scientific truth. As a matter of fact, neither the acquisition of scientific knowledge nor its circulation had ever been deliberate purposes of Voulgaris' travels. They both, rather, resulted from his efforts to establish himself in a variety of social, intellectual and political environments throughout a changing Europe.

Westwards

Voulgaris travelled a lot and wrote a lot. Interestingly enough, the first important scientific travel of Voulgaris is a controversial one. According to the sources, Voulgaris spent some time between 1738 and 1742 at the University of Padua where he familiarized himself with modern philosophy. However, since his name does not appear in the university registers, this information remains unconfirmed. At the same time, it is a confirmed fact that upon his return to the Greek-speaking areas of the south-western Balkans, he launched his educational career backed by his reputation as a systematic exponent of modern philosophy.²¹ This ambiguity is quite telling not only for Voulgaris himself, but also for the majority of his contemporary scholars: whether Voulgaris studied in Padua or not, that particular university

²¹ Κούμας, *Ιστορία των Ανθρωπίνων πράξεων*, pp. 559-561; Αιτιάν, *Συλλογή*, pp. ιγ'-ιδ'; Σάθας, *Νεοελληνική Φιλολογία*, pp. 567; Κωνσταντίνος Χατζόπουλος, *Ελληνικά σχολεία στην περίοδο της οθωμανικής κυριαρχίας (1453-1821)* [*Greek schools in the period of the Ottoman rule (1453-1821)*] (Θεσσαλονίκη: Βάνιας, 1991), p. 94.

was the main channel through which modern natural philosophy was introduced into the Greek intellectual life.²² So, quite a few nineteenth-century historians took it for granted, without closely questioning the sources, that Voulgaris' acquaintance with modern philosophy took place in Padua. In a certain sense, by most probably *not having studied* in Padua, Voulgaris became representative of his generation who had mostly studied there.

After travelling to Venice, for studies or otherwise, Voulgaris became a renowned teacher of higher philosophical courses in schools founded and funded by rich merchants in Epirus and western Macedonia. He moved among the largest cities of the area, pursuing better contracts but also pressed by the hostility of the established neo-Aristotelian teachers. In the mid-1750s he gained the consent of the main social powers of the emerging Greek society to establish and direct a higher school at Mount Athos. During the short period of its function, the school became one of the most prominent educational experiments in the Ottoman Balkans gathering a great number of students and providing the most elaborate philosophical and scientific training of the time.²³ After its closure due to disagreements among the involved parts, Voulgaris' ambitions were aimed at the Orthodox Patriarchate itself. He moved to Constantinople and attempted to establish himself as director of the Patriarchal Academy.²⁴ However, contrary to many of his contemporaries who saw their careers culminating in Constantinople, Voulgaris was unable to settle down for a long time. After intense disagreements with the Patriarchal environment, he departed for Central Europe to initiate a second career.

Voulgaris was a representative figure of a new generation of scholars, who claimed social power on the basis of their intellectual skills. This endeavor required overcoming the limitations of traditional philosophical teachings and compiling a new discourse where the attainments of the new natural philosophy would come to terms with the intellectual requirements of the local philosophical and religious traditions.²⁵ During the period from 1742 to 1762, when eventually he departed for Leipzig, Voulgaris produced the greatest part of his scientific work. Translation was one of the most important means he employed to shape his

²² Manolis Patiniotis, "Scientific Travels of the Greek Scholars in the 18th Century" in Ana Simões, Ana Carneiro, Maria Paula Diogo (eds.), *Travels of Learning. A Geography of Science in Europe*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), pp. 49-77, on pp. 58-60.

²³ Άλκης Αγγέλου, *Των Φώτων* [*Of the Lights*] (Athens: Ερμής, 1963), pp. 111-132.

²⁴ Αιμιάν, *Συλλογή*, pp. ια'-ιζ'; Τάσος Α. Γριτσόπουλος, *Πατριαρχική Μεγάλη του Γένους Σχολή*, [*Patriarchal Academy*] (Athens: Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Φιλεκαπαιδευτικής Εταιρείας, 1966), vol. 1, pp. 388-390.

²⁵ Patiniotis, "Scientific travels", pp. 68-69; Manolis Patiniotis, "Textbooks at the Crossroads: Scientific and philosophical textbooks in 18th-century Greek education", *Science and Education*, 2006, 15: 801-822.

intellectual agenda. Indeed, in a time when copyright ethics was still extremely loose and professional writing took great advantage of its scholastic past, translation (as a form of “commentary”) was inseparable from genuine creation. This also made Voulgaris representative of his age in another manner: According to Anthony Pym, the most important feature of translator's identity is its cross-cultural character. Translators themselves, as well as their patrons and audiences aim at crossing certain kinds of boundaries. It is the translator, however, that is the figure who most typically personifies this aim by standing among cultures as an intermediate individual. In this sense, the study of translators' own practices, career choices and social strategies can provide a broad picture of the cultural exchange of their time — significantly broader than that drawn from the mere textual analysis and the emphasis placed on the “circulation of ideas”.²⁶

Drawing on his Italian years, Voulgaris carefully chose a number of well-known treatises to work on. Among others, he translated Willem's Gravesande's *Physices elementa mathematica* and *Introductio ad philosophia*, Antonio Genovesi's *Elementa metaphysicae* and André Tacquet's *Elementa geometriae*. He also compiled his own treatises based on the above books as well as on works such as Petrus van Musschenbroek's *Elementa physicae*, Samuel Clarke's annotated translation of Jacques Rohault's *Physique*, Mme du Châtelet's *Institutions Physiques*, John Locke's *Essay* and Voltaire's *Éléments de la philosophie de Neuton [sic]*.²⁷

Voulgaris' intellectual production primarily aimed at securing him a position at the patronage networks of the emerging Greek society. The commercial social groups of the southwestern Balkans, as well as the conservative but Europeanized Phanariots of Constantinople, were willing to sponsor scholars who got involved with modern philosophy and experiment with educational programs transcending the narrow Aristotelian curricula that dominated Greek education by the mid-eighteenth century. However, neither scholars themselves nor their intended patrons had yet reached a consensus about a new intellectual agenda. They rather

²⁶ Anthony Pym, *Method in Translation History* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1998), pp. ix-xi.

²⁷ Willem Jacob van's Gravesande, *Physices elementa mathematica, experimentis confirmata. Sive introductio ad philosophiam Newtonianam*, 2 vols. (Leyden, 1720-1721); idem, *Introductio ad philosophiam: metaphysicam et logicam continens* (Leyden, 1737); Antonio Genovesi, *Elementa Metaphysicae. In usum privatorum adolescentium Mathematicum in morem adornata* (Naples, 1743); André Tacquet, *Elementa geometriae planae ac solidae, et selecta ex Archimede theoremata. Summa cura emendata... a Guilelmo Whiston* (Antwerpen, 1672); Jacques Rohault, *System of Natural Philosophy illustrated with Dr. Samuel Clarke's Notes, taken mostly out of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, 2 vols. (London, 1723) (or one of the Latin editions that came out between 1697 and 1713); Petrus van Musschenbroek, *Elementa physicae conscripta in usus academicos* (Leyden, 1734); Gabrielle-Émilie le Tonnelier de Breteuil, Marquise du Châtelet, *Institutions Physiques, adressées à Mr. son Fils* (Amsterdam, 1742); François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Éléments de la philosophie de Newton* (Amsterdam, 1738). For John Locke's influence on the Greek philosophical thought see: Paschalis M. Kitromilides, “John Locke and the Greek Intellectual Tradition: An Episode in Locke's Reception in South-East Europe” in Graham Alan John Rogers (ed.) *Locke's Philosophy: Content and Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 217-235.

contested over a variety of educational patterns that reflected the different visions they had about the future of the decaying Ottoman Empire. Under such circumstances, the production of a new philosophical discourse involved the sensitive issues of cultural and religious identity, which would mark the course toward a new social arrangement. Within this atmosphere, Voulgaris did not simply translate or compose scientific works. Like many of his contemporaries, he deliberately focused on the production of a new philosophical discourse that would reflect the inquiries of his time. But he did not use the new natural philosophy to overthrow the outmoded Aristotelian tradition, as is generally believed. He rather aimed at enriching the Aristotelian worldview with the new findings and revamping its exegetical power through the methodological attainments of modern empiricism. He seemed to believe that such a reenactment of the Aristotelian philosophy would enable Greek culture to play a unifying role in the highly diversified landscape of the European philosophy.²⁸

One of the many examples of this attitude is the way Voulgaris dealt with modern atomism. In his *Philosophers' Favorites* (*Τα ἀρέσκοντα τοις φιλοσόφοις*, published in 1805 but written much earlier), he clearly endorsed Newton's views on the constitution of matter. Speaking of the "first principles of natural body" he explained that the building blocks of all material bodies were the immutable and indivisible minute particles created by God for this purpose. Reviewing a variety of opposite views, "ancient and modern", he found himself against the objection of the Peripatetics who claimed that the first principles of natural body were *matter* and *form* rather than atoms. Surprising as it may sound, Voulgaris did not seize the opportunity to dispose of the outmoded Aristotelian hylomorphism, but he patiently explained that there were, actually, two kinds of principles, the natural and the metaphysical ones. In this regard, matter and form were indeed the first principles of natural body, but they belonged to the metaphysical genre. Atoms, *which also consisted of matter and form*, were the first *natural* principles of body, but metaphysically speaking they were second order principles. Through this explanation, the Aristotelian hylomorphism retains its exegetical power without contradicting the Newtonian atomism. There is more, though. In his *Elements of Metaphysics* (*Στοιχεία της Μεταφυσικής*, also published in 1805 but written earlier), Voulgaris resumed the discussion and completed the synthesis in a highly elaborate way: in a language, which wavered between the traditional and the modern natural philosophy he explained that the *form* of the atoms was

²⁸ Manolis Patiniotis, "Eclecticism and Appropriation of the New Scientific Methods by the Greek-speaking Scholars in the Ottoman Empire" in Feza Günergün, Dhruv Raina (eds.), *Science between Europe and Asia: Historical Studies on the Transmission, Adoption and Adaptation of Knowledge* (Dordrecht-Heidelberg-London-New York: Springer, 2011), pp. 193-206.

the set of primary qualities characterizing them and distinguishing them from each other. And the *form* of a natural body was nothing else than the macroscopic combination of these qualities resulting from a certain arrangement of atoms. Thus, Voulgaris bridged the metaphysical Aristotelian hylomorphism with the Newtonian atomism, concluding with the acute remark that even Aristotle himself when he came to physical problems preferred to explain the phenomena through the arrangement of the elementary parts of bodies rather than by employing the metaphysical categories of matter and form.²⁹

As will become clearer in what follows, Voulgaris was an intermediate individual in religious terms, as well. Although his Orthodox faith was deep and stable (himself an ordained deacon, from pretty early), his loyalty to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople was rather loose. His involvement with modern natural philosophy clearly reflected this ambiguous attitude. As a matter of fact, one reason for his frequent arguments with the patriarchal circles was his effort to displace the Orthodox Church-sanctioned teachings of the early 17th-century neo-Aristotelian philosopher Theophilos Korydaleus (1563/1574–1646). Voulgaris was aware that the adoption of the particular version of Aristotelianism by the Orthodox Church was based on mutual toleration, but it did not reflect a real dogmatic synthesis between natural philosophy and theology.³⁰ Thus, when he came to translate and compose his naturalistic and mathematical works, he displayed a strong preference towards authors and ideas originating in the tradition of natural theology, hoping that baptizing the traditional natural philosophy in Newtonian waters would restore its lost connection with religion.³¹

In this respect, it is hardly surprising that one of the first books Voulgaris translated and annotated when he launched his journey to central Europe was a book on religious tolerance. True faith was one of Voulgaris' main concerns, so when he translated *Essai historique et critique sur les dissensions des églises de Pologne* (originally published in Basle in 1767) his intention was to subscribe to Voltaire's denunciation of Catholic Church's anti-Orthodox policy. But he apparently took the chance also to initiate an approach to Catherine II, who in 1768, the very

²⁹ Μανώλης Πατηνιώτης, *Στοιχεία Φυσικής Φιλοσοφίας: Ο ελληνικός επιστημονικός στοχασμός τον 17ο και τον 18ο αιώνα* [*Elements of Natural Philosophy: The Greek scientific thought in the 17th and the 18th centuries*] (Athens: Gutenberg, 2013), pp. 322-333.

³⁰ Μανώλης Πατηνιώτης, “Οι Pestifarae Questiones του Κυρίλλου Λουκάρεως και η ανάδυση του κορυδαλικού προγράμματος” [“Kyrillos Loukari's *Pestifarae Questiones* and the emergence of Theophilos Korydalea's philosophical program”] in Γιώργος Ν. Βλαχάκης and Θύμιος Νικολαΐδης (eds.), *Proceedings of the conference Βυζάντιο-Βενετία-Νεότερος Ελληνισμός. Μια περιπλάνηση στον Κόσμο της Ελληνικής Επιστημονικής Σκέψης* [*Byzantium-Venice-Modern Hellenism. A wandering in the world of the Greek scientific thought*] (Athens: Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών, 2004), pp. 211-244.

³¹ Μανώλης Πατηνιώτης, “Ευσεβής επιστήμη: Ο Νεύτωνας στην Ορθόδοξη Ανατολή του 18ου αιώνα” [“Pious Science. Newton in the Orthodox Orient of the 18th century”] in the conference proceedings *Ορθοδοξία, Έθνος και Ιδεολογία* [*Orthodoxy, Nation and Ideology*] (Athens: Σχολή Μωραΐτη, 2007), pp. 63-81.

same year Voulgaris' translation was published in Leipzig, invaded Poland in order to guarantee the safety of the country's Orthodox populations. The Greek translation of the *Essai historique...* is a typical example of Voulgaris' translational strategy. Like many translations of his time it is not primarily a faithful transfer of a person's ideas from one language to another; it is rather a vehicle elaborately used by Voulgaris to convey his own theological and political agenda. Addressed to Catherine the Great—to whom Voltaire also addressed the original work—Voulgaris complemented the original tract with an equally long text exploring the limits of religious tolerance from the Orthodox point of view. The *Essay on religious tolerance* (Σχεδιάσμα περί της ανεξιθρησκείας) he appended to Voltaire's text, as well as the many documentary and explanatory notes with which he enriched the translation throughout aimed at outlining a context for the reception of Enlightenment's critique against religion in a time of uncertainty for the Eastern Orthodox world. Contrary to Voltaire, Voulgaris did not perceive religious freedom as a political issue; he rather intended to show that it was an expression of Christian piety and forbearance towards dissenters aiming at protecting Church from their eroding influence. Absolute freedom of thought is acceptable only as far as arts and sciences are concerned, he argued. But concerning matters of faith, the nature of which transcends the capacity of mere logical thinking, it is a foolish thing to practice unlimited tolerance. And it is the task of the wise monarch to safeguard the limits of such spiritual exercises.

It is clear that Voulgaris had already started perceiving Catherine the Great as an alternative center of power in the sensitive balance of the Orthodox world. As already happened in the past, his travels were guided by his search for the proper patronage scheme to set himself at its service. In the course of time it turned out that the Russian court was the most promising such environment. But in order to fully understand Voulgaris' incentives we should keep in mind that this realization was not clear at the beginning of the second phase of his travels. When he left Constantinople, he spent a year in Bucharest, hosted by the Orthodox ruler of Wallachia. Bucharest was the seat of one of the most important Greek higher schools, but it seems that Voulgaris, already laden with his past philosophical disputes, did not gain chances to be a candidate for the directorship of the school. According to some indication, he also visited Jasy, to get in contact with one of his major patrons, who was soon to be appointed ruler of Moldova. Neither this visit, however, had any significant outcome concerning his involvement with the prestigious high school of the city.³² So in 1764 we find him in Leipzig supervising an

³² Γριτσόπουλος, *Πατριαρχική Μεγάλη του Γένους Σχολή*, p. 404.

ambitious publishing project. Education was still his focus and the first books he put forward were intended for the use of teachers and students of the Greek higher schools. His *Logic*, published in 1766, was a major outcome of his philosophical inquiries and its manuscript version had already been widely used in the Greek schools of the Balkans. Apparently its printed form consolidated its authority and provided Voulgaris with wider acknowledgment. But, surprising as it may sound, he did not continue with the publication of his already completed translations and original natural philosophical treatises. He preferred to translate and publish a rather complicated mathematical work, written by the Hungarian mathematician Johann Andreas von Segner (1704–1777). Although in the course of time the book gained some recognition in Greek education, when it was first published Voulgaris' contemporaries perceived it as an ostentatious exercise on his part.³³ It seems, though, that Voulgaris' plans involved more complicated calculations.

The reason he preferred Segner's *Elementa arithmeticae et geometriae* to his ready philosophical works relates to the fact that upon his arrival in Leipzig he started building a new network of patrons who would lead his career outside the limits of the Ottoman Empire. Voulgaris' *nation* was not Greece; it was Orthodoxy. And the most promising leader of the emerging (out of the Ottoman Empire's decay) Orthodox world was Catherine II. Segner, with whom Voulgaris got connected with close friendship soon after his arrival in Leipzig, was part of the network that could introduce him to the Empress' circles. A professor at Göttingen and, later, in Halle, he had received important awards for his scholarship, some from Frederick the Great himself. When some years later Voulgaris departed for Catherine's court, Segner provided him with a letter of recommendation addressed to his friend Leonard Euler (1707–1783), a renowned member of Saint Petersburg Imperial Academy.³⁴

Thus, it seems that while in Leipzig, Voulgaris developed a double strategy concerning his future steps. On the one hand he still kept an eye on his former career in Greek education and the patronage system on which he relied. The publication of the two textbooks and the devotion of his *Logic* to his former patron Gregorios Ghikas (1724–1777) provide evidence in support of this strategy. On the other hand, though, he had started carefully elaborating the possibility of an *exodus* towards the Russian court. As we already saw, the choice of Segner hid a

³³ Άλκης Αγγέλου (ed.), *Ιωσήπου του Μοισιόδακος, Απολογία [Apologia of Iosipos Misiodax]* (Athens: Ερμής, 1992), pp. 42-43.

³⁴ Stephen K. Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate. Eugenios Voulgaris in Russia, 1771-1806* (New York: Columbia University Press., 1982), p. 15.

certain calculation. The choice of Voltaire most probably hid the same calculation to the extent that Voulgaris used him (and his relationship with the Empress) to discuss Catherine's role in the emerging Orthodox *nation*.

While in Leipzig, Voulgaris displayed a variety of intellectual interests reflected in the variety of his publications. Voltaire also served him in launching a thread of philological work, which proved crucial in the later phases of his career. So, a couple of years before the work on religious tolerance, Voulgaris had also published his rhymed translation of Voltaire's short story *Memnon ou la sagesse humaine* (originally published in 1749). But, quite surprisingly, the work, which eventually marked his new orientation, was a legal code. Around 1770, Voulgaris met the Orlov brothers (Grigory Grigoryevich Orlov, 1734–1783 and Alexei Grigoryevich Orlov, 1737–1808), Catherine's military courtiers, who had prepared at that time an uprising of the Ottoman Empire's Christian populations. Through them Voulgaris became aware of the Empress' desire to have her *Nakaz* translated into Greek. *Nakaz* was Catherine's plan for the new legal code she wished to put into effect in the new Russian Empire that would result from the Russian–Ottoman wars. Voulgaris not only translated the *Nakaz* (from French) but he also enriched it with a preface addressed to the Greek-speaking Orthodox populations of the Ottoman Empire. Making clear his translation's political intentions he not only praised the virtues of enlightened despotism, but also described Catherine the Great as the mother who would unite under her auspices the Orthodox *nation* irrespective of the *ethnic* differences between the various populations.³⁵

Eastwards

Voulgaris' well-paid translation was published in St Petersburg in 1771. The real pay-out of his work, however, was the invitation he received from Catherine to join her intellectually thriving court. At last, his search for a new patronage network came to an end. Provided with Segner's recommendation letter he moved, that same year, to St Petersburg hopefully to resume his scientific work, which he had set aside during the uncertain Leipzig period. Until that time Voulgaris had produced his major natural philosophical works, which enjoyed wide reception by the Greek schools of the Balkans. However, all these works had for a long time remained in manuscript form and it is quite plausible to suppose that during his stay in Leipzig he planned

³⁵ Άλκης Αγγέλου, *Των Φώτων Β': Όψεις του Νεοελληνικού Διαφωτισμού* [*Of the Lights, B: Aspects of the Neohellenic Enlightenment*] (Athens: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 1999), pp. 68-69; Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate*, p. 29.

to prepare them for the press. But the uncertainties of his search for a new patronage scheme and the unexpectedly successful *finale* left his project incomplete. As we shall see, and most probably as Voulgaris himself wished, the conclusion of the project would take place in the new environment but much later than he had hoped.

Voulgaris spent the rest of his life in Russia. He travelled within the Empire, but never went back to Central Europe or to the Greek-speaking regions of the Ottoman Empire. One important development soon after his arrival in St Petersburg was his quick ascension to the office of Archbishop of Slavensk and Kherson; the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate created the new diocesan seat especially for him. In 1776, he travelled to Poltava to undertake the running of the diocese and to supervise the establishment of the Greek-speaking populations, who had moved there after the unsuccessful uprising in the Peloponnese incited by the Orlov brothers. Due to political disagreements, he resigned three years later but remained in the area, most probably to support his close friend and successor Nikiphoros Theotokis (1731–1800). In 1781, he was ordered to move to Kherson to settle a riot of the Greek-speaking populations against the Russian state. According to all the evidence, he stayed in Kherson until the late 1780s, when he returned to St Petersburg to spend the rest of his long and prolific life.³⁶

Although during his second career in Russia Voulgaris seemed to have abolished his scientific interests, we should not mistake his difficulty to deal with such issues for lack of genuine interest. There are at least three instances that testify to the contrary. Firstly, we remember that when he left Leipzig, he took advantage of his friendship with Segner to obtain a recommendation letter to the famous mathematician Leonard Euler. It seems that his initial idea was that in St Petersburg he would be able to further his scientific pursuits in the fertile environment of the famous local academy. Presumably, he did not manage to realize this ambition, or at least it is unknown to what extent he managed to do so. But we do know (and this is the second instance attesting to his interest in the sciences) that in 1776, the same year he departed for Poltava, he was elected *in absentia* as an honorary member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.³⁷ The third instance is an enigmatic one, the exact circumstances of which it has been difficult, so far, to trace. In 1788, and while he was still in southern Ukraine, he was

³⁶ A detailed exposition of Voulgaris' life and travels in the Russian Empire in Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate*.

³⁷ Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate*, p. 63. Important detail: Voulgaris was notified about the election by Johann Euler (1734–1800), Leonard Euler's eldest son, also a famous mathematician and astronomer, and a member of St Petersburg Academy himself.

elected a foreign member of the Royal Society of London – when the president of the society was Sir Joseph Banks (1734–1820).³⁸

So, Voulgaris was beyond doubt an acknowledged “man of science”. Moreover, all three instances provide evidence for his intention to remain active in this area, as it would be difficult to believe that his designation as a member of the Russian Academy and of the Royal Society of London would have happened without his incitement. However, during the years he spent in Russia, Voulgaris did not produce any scientific work. Before his departure for Poltava, he mainly translated and composed a number of short political treatises, intending to promote Catherine's image as an Enlightenment persona and as a powerful ruler guaranteeing the post-Ottoman European distribution of power.³⁹ While in Poltava, he turned his attention, once again, toward religious issues, apparently related with the ideological consolidation of the Greek-speaking populations who had moved there. At the same time, he established a Greek school assigning its directorship to his future successor Nikiphoros Theotokis. Theotokis, like Voulgaris, had been a renowned teacher of natural philosophy and mathematics. After a journey quite similar to Voulgaris' own in Eastern and Central Europe, Theotokis settled at Catherine's court and joined Voulgaris' project. While Theotokis was dealing with teaching, Voulgaris translated into Greek Feofan Prokopovich's (1681–1736) *Spiritual Regulation*, the guiding text of the Russian Holy Synod. *Spiritual Regulation*, among other things, discussed issues of jurisdiction of the Russian Patriarchate over the Orthodox lands gained by the Russians from the Ottoman Empire. The text was eventually published in 1916, bearing witness, on the one hand, to the uninterrupted contemporaneity of such issues, and on the other, to Voulgaris' prophetic understanding of Russian expansionism.⁴⁰

When Voulgaris moved to Kherson he resumed the philological interests he had initiated through Voltaire's translations in Leipzig. This time, however, he turned to Roman antiquity, translating Virgil's *Georgics*. The translation was eventually published in 1786 and was devoted to the powerful man of Novorosiya and Catherine's protégé Grigorii Potemkin (1739–1791) as part of Voulgaris' attempt to gain his support for the revival of the Greek communities

³⁸ Γεωργία Πέτρον, “Ο Ευγένιος Βούλγαρης (1716–1806) και η Βασιλική Εταιρεία του Λονδίνου” [“Eugenios Voulgaris (1716–1806) and the Royal Society of London”], *Νεώσις*, 2001, 10: 181–198. As far as is known Voulgaris was the first Greek elected a member of the Royal Society.

³⁹ Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate*, p. 29 and note 71. According to all the evidence, these translations were commissioned by Catherine herself.

⁴⁰ Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate*, pp. 45–46.

in the Russian Empire.⁴¹ At the same time, though, through Virgil's translation Voulgaris prepared his return to St Petersburg. The so-called Russian classicism was an important dimension of the city's intellectual life and, when Voulgaris returned there, in 1789, he was already well integrated into it. Two years later, the Russian Academy published his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. The poem narrates the adventures of Aeneas after the Trojan War, providing an illustrious historical background for the Roman Empire; but it is highly improbable that Voulgaris had *that* empire in mind when addressing his translation to a Greek-speaking audience with the eulogies of the Russian state.⁴² During the last years of his life, along with some religious translations and some historical writings, Voulgaris attempted his first translation from Greek to Russian. He translated word for word Anacreon's poems and subsequently Nikolai Aleksandrovich L'vov (1751–1803) gave them poetical form. The outcome of this unusual cooperation was published in 1794 and had a deep impact on the Russian poetry of the time, which had already made extensive use of the Anacreontic ode's pattern.⁴³

Being undoubtedly until the end of his life a ‘man of science’, Voulgaris had been, however, indulging for a long time into theology, philology and above all politics. It would thus be reasonable to assume that his impact on Greek scientific life was pretty limited. But, quite surprisingly, this was not the case. And it is especially important to notice that *it was the development of his particular profile, as a leading political and religious figure, that awarded his scientific work its special significance*. Voulgaris' works retained an outstanding position in the Greek scientific and philosophical education of the eighteenth and the early 19th centuries. Most of them remained until quite late in manuscript form, but were widely reproduced all the time. As we already saw, Voulgaris was considered the most important educational renovator of the eighteenth century, the philosopher who effectively helped Greek intellectual life overcome the restrictions of the neo-Aristotelian natural philosophy. And, most importantly, the most renowned scientifically minded scholars of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, even those who opposed him, were proud to state that they had studied under him in Jannina, in Mount Athos, or in Constantinople.

⁴¹ Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate*, p. 72

⁴² Αγγέλου, *Τον Φώττον Β'*, pp. 248-249; Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate*, p. 80.

⁴³ Batalden, *Catherine II's Greek Prelate*, pp. 81-82.

Conclusion of a career

Voulgaris, through his career and his recognition by the patrons of the Enlightenment, became a kind of symbolic figure. Indeed, what made Voulgaris especially representative of his time was his function as an intermediate individual. He crossed (*he travelled through*) a variety of social environments bridging different philosophical and political visions. In the realm of philosophy and the sciences he assimilated the attainments of the Enlightenment in his native neo-Aristotelian context depriving them from their inherent empiricism, but linking them with the major stake of securing the unity and the continuation of philosophy. In the realm of politics he linked his native cultural heritage with the vision of an Orthodox empire, where the Greek culture and language would enjoy a distinctive position. In the realm of religion, finally, he joined his Orthodox faith with both his philosophical and his political concerns. On the one hand, he attempted to revive the religious dimension of natural philosophy by linking the traditional philosophical views of Nature with his contemporary natural theology; on the other, he crossed the borders between two different Churches in order to achieve a higher degree of state-guaranteed integrity for his Orthodox faith. After all, it was this highly intermediate state that allowed Voulgaris to best express the intellectual and political ambiguities of the emerging Greek society.

In this respect, it is hardly surprising that in 1805, being almost 90 and just one year before his demise, he saw all the major natural philosophical works he had compiled or translated between 1742 and 1762 going to press. The publication of most of them was funded by a family of rich merchants and was intended for free delivery to the Greek-speaking students of the Balkans. We are in a position to know that the members of Zosima family were not the first who attempted to convince the aged scholar to present the *nation* with his philosophical syntheses. Voulgaris had resisted another similar proposal some ten years earlier, but it seems that approaching the end of his life he became more compromising.⁴⁴ What is more important, however, is that there were, indeed, people who insisted on the publication of his scientific and philosophical works considering them important for the consolidation of contemporary Greek culture. As soon as Voulgaris stopped traveling, his works started inscribing their own trajectories on the intellectual firmament, contributing to the formation of a national

⁴⁴ Κούμας, *Ιστορία των Ανθρωπίνων πράξεων*, p. 563, note 2.

consciousness, undoubtedly beyond the intentions of Voulgaris himself, but in accordance with the expectations of the social groups, who gradually got the lead of the emerging Greek society.