

P. KITROMILIDES

**THE IDENTITY OF A BOOK.  
EUROPEAN POWER POLITICS AND IDEOLOGICAL  
MOTIVATIONS IN AGAPIOS LOVERDOS'S  
*ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΔΥΟ ΕΤΩΝ*  
(VENICE, 1791)**



Ἀνάτυπο

ἀπὸ τὰ «Θησαυρίσματα», τ. 28 (1998), σσ. 433 - 449

Βενετία 1998



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I

Another European war, bringing about another wave of heightened expectations among the subject Greeks, were imprinted upon Greek cultural life at the close of the eighteenth century in a very specific way: the production of a new source of contemporary history narrating the diplomatic background and the early stages of the outbreak in 1787 of the war in question, the third Russo-Turkish war of the century.<sup>1</sup> The importance of the three Russo-Turkish wars of the century of the Enlighten-

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The research for this paper was completed and the final draft of the text was written while I was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Hellenic Institute in Venice during the period November 1996 – February 1997. I am grateful to the Institute's former Director, the late Professor N. M. Panayiotakis, for his hospitality and help throughout my stay in Venice. Research for this article has stretched over a period of many years, during which I incurred a number of debts to friends and colleagues which I am glad to acknowledge here. In particular I wish to thank Dr. Theodoros Stavridis, for his assistance.

1. *Ιστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν 1787-1788. Περιέχουσα τὰς πράξεις τῶν παρόντων πολέμων μέσον τῶν Ἀουстро-Ρώσων καὶ τῶν Ὀθωμανῶν συλλεχθεῖσα ἐκ τῶν διαφόρων εἰδήσεων, ὅπου ἐκδίδονται εἰς τύπον εἰς τὴν Ἱταλικὴν καὶ Γαλλικὴν διάλεκτον καὶ μεταφρασθεῖσα εἰς τὸ κοινότερον τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἑλλήνων ἰδίωμα*. Παρὰ Α. Α., Venice: Printed by D. Theodosiou, 1791. The book is recorded by Emile Legrand, *Bibliographie Ionienne*, Paris 1910, Vol. I, p.156, no. 503 and by G.G. Ladas-Ath. D. Chatzidimos, *Ἑλληνικὴ Βιβλιογραφία 1791-1795*, Athens 1970, p. 62, no. 19. The publication is noted by A.A. Papadopoulos-Vretos, *Νεοελληνικὴ Φιλολογία*, Vol. II, Athens 1857, p. 87, no. 217. and by I. De Kigalas, *Σχεδιάσμα κατόπτρου τῆς Νεοελληνικῆς Φιλολογίας*, Ermoupolis 1846, p. 4, no. 16. For its significance in the evolution of Modern Greek historiography cf. the comments by C. Th. Dimaras, *Ιστορία τῆς νεοελληνικῆς λογοτεχνίας*, 8th ed., Athens 1987, p. 158 and P.M. Kitromilides, *Νεοελληνικὸς Διαφωτισμός. Οἱ πολιτικὲς καὶ κοινωνικὲς ἰδέες*, Athens 1996, pp. 117-118.

ment in shaping the Greek mind could be appreciated if it is recalled that in eighteenth-century Greek literary history each one of them is connected with the production of a major historiographical landmark. The first Russo-Turkish War (1736-1739) formed the object of a voluminous account by Constantine-Caisarios Dapontes in *Ephemerides Dakikai* (*Ἐφημερίδες Δακικαί*), essentially the first attempt at diplomatic history in modern Greek historiography.<sup>1</sup> The second Russo-Turkish war (Catherine the Great's first war against the Ottomans) of 1768-1774 provided the motivation for the publication of the first major work of contemporary history to appear in Greek, the six-volume translation by Spyridon Papadopoulos of Domenico Caminer's *Storia della guerra presente tra la Russia e la Porta Ottomana*.<sup>2</sup> That war, which had stirred up –with Russian probing of course– a revolutionary wave among the Greeks, had resulted in bitter disappointment to them after their abandonment by Russia with the conclusion of the peace of Kuchuck-Kainardji in 1774.<sup>3</sup>

Yet educated Greeks remained attentive to developments in Eastern Europe. They, like other Balkan, especially Serb, observers, had lost neither interest nor hope in Russia's designs in Southeastern Europe. Among Balkan observers of international politics in Eastern Europe, the Greeks in Venice were probably the best informed. This was largely due to the uninterrupted publication in that major seat of printing and learning of an annual survey of international events, which appeared anonymously under the title *Storia dell' anno*. Initiated in 1737 with a survey of the year 1736 originally with an Amsterdam imprint in order to evade Venetian censorship, the *Storia* continued to appear regularly until 1810.<sup>4</sup> Since its early years of publication, the survey provoked the

1. This important source remained unpublished in the author's life-time and was not published until the end of the nineteenth century. See *Δακικαί Ἐφημερίδες. Ephémérides Daces ou chronique de la guerre de quatre ans (1736-1739)* par Constantin Dapontes, ed. by Emile Legrand, Paris 1880-1881, Vols. I-III.

2. Spyridon Papadopoulos, *Ἱστορία τοῦ παρόντος πολέμου ἀναμεταξὺ Ρουσίας καὶ τῆς Ὀθωμανικῆς Πόρτας*, Vols. I-VI, Venice 1770-1773. On this work, its ideological significance and place in Greek historiography, may I refer to P.M. Kitromilides, «Ἰδεολογικὲς ἐπιλογὲς καὶ ἱστοριογραφικὴ πράξις: Σπυρίδων Παπαδόπουλος καὶ Domenico Caminer», *Θησαυρίσματα*, Vol. 20 (1990), pp. 500-517. See also Mario Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana nel '700*, Milano 1989, p. 268.

3. Cf. the testimonies recorded by a contemporary observer, A. Komninos - Ypsilantis, *Τὰ μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωσιν*, ed. by G. Aphthonidis, Constantinople 1870, p. 534.

4. For more details see Rosanna Saccado, *La stampa periodica Veneziana fino alla caduta della Repubblica*, Trieste 1982, pp. 36-37 and Mario Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana nel '700*, pp. 128, 149, 190. The well-known censor Angelo Calogera noted that the *Storia dell' anno* published «le solite cose contrarie ai diritti de' principi». See *ibid.*, p.80. The earlier history of the annual survey is recapitulated in two documents submitted to the *Riformatori* on the occasion of the transfer of ownership of the series from Francesco Pitteri to Giuseppe Rossi. See A.S.V. / *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova* No. 363: *Giornalismo*, 4 Marzo 1793 and 19 Ottobre 1796.

interest of Venetian Greeks. Some, like the learned priest, freemason and Russian agent Antonios Catiforos, contributed to its writing in the 1730s. Many more, among them Spyridon Papadopoulos and Agapios Loverdos, read it. Spyridon Papadopoulos, a scholar, teacher at the Flanginian College in Venice and a leading professional proof-reader in the local Greek printing workshops, in the 1770s based upon the survey of the year 1772 the sixth volume which he added to his translation of Caminer's work.<sup>1</sup>

## II

Among Spyridon Papadopoulos's colleagues on the faculty of the Flanginian College in Venice and in the small group of professional proofreaders for the Greek presses in the city, was Agapios Loverdos, a clergyman scholar and prominent member of the community. A Cephalonian from a hieratic family, the son of an Orthodox priest and the nephew of a bishop whose clerical name he assumed upon his own ordination, Agapios Loverdos had been living in Venice since 1763. As a regular preacher in the church of San Giorgio dei Greci,<sup>2</sup> he was well known and respected in the Greek Orthodox colony in the city.<sup>3</sup> He was well connected in the broader Venetian society as well. From the 1760s to his death on 22 January 1795, his presence and activity in Venice are extensively documented in the records of the Greek Confraternity and in the archives of the Venetian republic. Yet with the exception of some older biographical accounts<sup>4</sup> and incidental references in broader studies of the Greek community in Venice and its educational history,<sup>5</sup> his life and work have not received special attention in modern scholarship.

1. See P. M. Kitromilides, «Ίδεολογικές επιλογές και ιστοριογραφική πράξη», pp. 508-509, note 3.

2. See A. Karathanasis, «Ἡ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ρητορικὴ στὸν Ἅγιο Γεώργιο τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῆς Βενετίας (1534-1788)», *Θησαυρίσματα*, Vol. 9 (1972), pp. 172-173. Apparently Loverdos had made a name for himself as a preacher before coming to Venice. This had secured him an invitation to preach in Corfu in 1758. See G.N. Moschopoulos, «Τρεῖς ἀνέκδοτες ἐπιστολὲς γιὰ τὴν παρουσία τοῦ Ἀγαπίου Λοβέρδου στὴν Κέρκυρα σὰν ἱεροκήρυκα (1758-1761)», *Κερκυραϊκὰ Χρονικά*, Vol. 20 (1976), pp. 120-129. A surviving specimen of Loverdos's rhetorical skill is his funeral oration to his patron, the Metropolitan of Philadelphia Gregorios Phatzeas in 1768. See *Orazione funebre in morte di Monsignore Gregorio Facea da Cerigo arcivescovo di Filadelfia in Venezia*, Venice 1768.

3. Cf. the testimony of another active scholar and member of the Confraternity, Spyridon Vlantis, *Ἀποθήκη τῶν παιδῶν*, Venice 1788, Vol. I, p. 28.

4. Most notably I. Tsitselis, *Κεφαλληνιακὰ Σύμμικτα*, Vol. I, Athens 1904, pp. 315-317, but also A. Mazarakis, *Βιογραφίαι τῶν ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν τῆς νήσου Κεφαλληνίας*, Venice 1843, pp. 313-319.

5. Among these the most substantial are A. Karathanasis, *Ἡ Φλαγγίνειος Σχολὴ τῆς Βενετίας*, Thessaloniki 1985, pp. 128-132 and G. N. Moschopoulos, *Οἱ Ἕλληνες τῆς Βενετίας καὶ τῆς Ἰλλυρίας (1768-1797)*, Athens 1980, pp. 123-125. The latter work on p. 123, note (2) cites the earlier bibliography on Loverdos and his work.

Shortly after his settlement in Venice Loverdos sought permanent employment. An attempt to be elected parish-priest of the church of San Giorgio dei Greci failed. His learning, however, especially his command of literary and vernacular Greek, made his services valuable to the local Greek printers, who needed proof-readers and editors for their books. A further function, necessary for the completion of the publication process of a book in republican Venice at the time, was that of the reviewer, the *revisore*, of the contents of the manuscript before a work could receive the official sanction of the Overseers of the University of Padua [Riformatori allo Studio di Padova] to be printed. The position of censor of Greek books at the time was vacant and the printer and publisher Dimitrios Theodosiou was facing serious difficulties in expediting the publication process of his books. The availability of Loverdos's services pointed toward a solution to the publisher's problem. He applied to the Riformatori and suggested, with all due respect and humility, the appointment of Loverdos to the position of the censor. To strengthen the case a recommendation was requested from the Metropolitan of Philadelphia Gregorios Phatzeas, resident archbishop of the Orthodox community in Venice. The archbishop obliged and in his letter, dated 24 January 1766, he underlined Loverdos's competence in literary and vernacular Greek and his «honest, moderate and religious habits». The archbishop's recommendation strengthened the printer's argument about the importance of the commerce of Greek books printed in Venice «throughout the Levant», and the bid proved successful. Loverdos got the job of censor of Greek books with a decision of the Riformatori on 28 January 1766.<sup>1</sup> On 11 June 1766 he is attested for the first time to review the contents of a Greek book submitted for approval by Dimitrios Theodosiou.<sup>2</sup>

Soon after his appointment Loverdos himself submitted directly a second application to the Riformatori. In May 1766 he applied for the position of rector and teacher of the Flanginian College in Venice, the higher Greek educational institution in the city. The position had just fallen vacant with the resignation earlier in the same month of the rector and teacher Antonios Moschopoulos for reasons of health. On this occasion too Loverdos's application was supported by the Metropolitan of Philadelphia Gregorios Phatzeas with a recommendation of 15 May 1766 and by a group of notables from the Confraternity (Sp. Capetanachi, Andrea Teodosio, Lambro Saro, Juane Pasco). Loverdos got that job too with the decision of the Riformatori

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1. Archivio di Stato di Venezia (=A.S.V.), Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 33: *Decreti, scritture, terminazioni dei Riformatori dal 5 Marzo 1765 al 7 Agosto 1766*, ff. 292r-294r. Cf. G. Veloudis, *Τὸ ἐλληνικὸ τυπογραφεῖο τῶν Γλυκῆδων στὴ Βενετία (1670-1854)*, Athens 1987, p. 82 and Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, p. 68, note 14. For his collaboration with the press of D. Theodosiou as proofreader see G.S. Ploumidis, *Τὸ Βενετικὸν Τυπογραφεῖον τοῦ Δημητρίου καὶ τοῦ Πάνου Θεοδοσίου (1755-1824)*, Athens 1969, p. 66.

2. A.S.V./Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 341. *Registro Mandati di Licenze Stampe 1759-1768*, p. 279, no. 1772, 11 June 1766.

dated 28 May 1766.<sup>1</sup> For the next three decades, in his double capacity as rector of the College and as censor of Greek books he played a crucial role in the life of Venitian Greeks and more generally of the broader Greek world, for which the Greek community in Venice with its educational institutions and printing establishments was the foremost channel of contacts with European culture. It is in this double capacity that Loverdos's presence can be traced with remarkable frequency in the Venitian state archives. For the period 1766 to 1791 the records of the *Riformatori* are replete with references to Loverdos's approbations for the granting of the formal permission necessary for the printing of Greek manuscripts at the three presses publishing Greek books in Venice.<sup>2</sup> Most of these books were of liturgical character or of broadly religious content and their approbation by official censorship was a rather routine business. Loverdos had to check the contents of secular works as well. Occasionally he was confronted with critical and quite outspoken works of controversial authors, such as the manuscript of the *Pedagogy* by Iosipos Moisiodax, which was duly sanctioned for publication on 22 April 1779.<sup>3</sup>

In his capacity as rector of the Flanginian College Loverdos appears in the records of the *Riformatori* in a more formal way whenever their approval is sought for the admission of a new student in the school. This process had to take place whenever a vacancy presented itself at the school with the graduation or withdrawal of a student. In that case Loverdos as rector and teacher of the school had to give an attestation concerning the vacancy and to recommend the admission of the new applicant.<sup>4</sup>

### III

As censor of Greek books Loverdos must have been the first reader of the manuscript of Spyridon Papadopoulos's great work *Ἱστορία τοῦ παρόντος πολέμου*,

1. A.S.V./Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 503: *Collegio Greco Paleocopa e Cottuneo in Padova. Collegio Flangini in Venezia*, 28 May 1766. Cf. Karathanasis, *Ἡ Φλαγγίνειος Σχολή*, pp. 128-129.

2. A.S.V./Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, Nos 341 (1759-1768), 342 (1769-1780) and 343 (1781-1791): *Mandati per licenze stampe*.

3. A.S.V./Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 342: *Registro Mandati di Licenze Stampe 1769-1780*, p. 403, no. 1481. On the sharp social criticism disguised behind pedagogical theory in Moisiodax's work, see P. M. Kitromilides, *The Enlightenment as Social Criticism. Iosipos Moisiodax and Greek Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Princeton 1992, pp. 153-165.

4. See e.g. A.S.V./Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 44: ff. 212 and 219 and No. 57, ff. 242r-245r and 393r-402r. Loverdos had also to add his attestation to petitions by Flanginian graduates who applied for admission to the University of Padua. One such document is appended to this study on account of the human interest of the story it relates and for the record of the content of instruction at the Flanginian during Loverdos's tenure.

which he approved for publication on 28 November 1770.<sup>1</sup> As a colleague of the author in the school and in the Greek printing workshops, he was certainly familiar with the project and with deacon Spyridon's method of work. It is possible that in the circumstances of war and anxiety in the early 1770s the deacon's work became a publishing success. The original from which he had translated anyway had a considerable impact, with three Italian editions (1770, 1771, 1776) and a German and a Greek translation within a year of the original edition.<sup>2</sup> Although literary testimonies about Spyridon Papadopoulos's work are scanty and surviving copies are rare, the six-volume history remained a standard source on the war of 1768-1774 in Greek historiography for half a century.<sup>3</sup> Twenty years later, Loverdos's initiative to replicate Papadopoulos's project upon the occasion of a new international upheaval affecting directly the fate of his compatriots, may be interpreted as indirect evidence of the success of the earlier publishing venture.

The declaration of Catherine II's second war against the Ottoman Empire in 1787 and its quick escalation with the entry of the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II into the conflict, provoked still another revolutionary wave among the Greeks. Once again the major incidents took place at sea, with the naval operations of Lambros Katsonis in the Aegean in 1788-1792.<sup>4</sup> Through the maritime routes the excitement must have been felt intensely in Venice, by Venitian Greeks in particular. The republic might have declined as a Mediterranean power and in the eighteenth century was a negligible factor in international politics, the political slumber, however, had not undermined the vitality and vivacity of intellectual life. The influences and controversies of the Enlightenment were intensely felt in Venice and political interests and

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1. A.S.V./Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 342: *Mandati di Licenze Stampe 1769-1780*, p. 51, no. 416, 28 November 1770.

2. For details see P. M. Kitromilides, «'Ιδεολογικές επιλογές και ιστοριογραφική πράξη», pp. 503-505. Caminer himself tried to promote the book he had published anonymously, by inserting notes underlining its success in the journal he edited at the time, *L' Europa letteraria*, February 1771, pp. 60-63 and October 1771, pp. 58-61.

3. Cf. the testimony in *Έρμης ὁ Λόγιος*, Vol. II (1812), p. 111.

4. G. Kollias, *Οἱ Ἕλληνες κατὰ τὸν ρωσοτουρκικὸν πόλεμον (1787-1792)*, Athens 1940. The high expectations provoked by the new conflict among the Greeks were characteristically reflected in the dedication to General Potemkin included by D. Phillippides and G. Constantas in *Γεωγραφία Νεωτερική*, Vienna 1791, pp. [3-10] and in the adulatory address to Catherine II by Athanasios Psalidas in *Ἀληθὴς Εὐδαίμονία*, Vienna 1791, ff. [3r-11r]. Psalidas also published the pamphlet, *Αἰκατερίνη Β'*, Vienna 1792, in which he exalted the benefactions bestowed by Catherine to the Greeks of the Ninza area and the Crimea during her tour of the region in 1788. On the same events cf. the account in *Storia dell' anno 1787*, pp. 220-230. On the broader historical background of the war see Franco Venturi, *Settecento Riformatore*, Vol. IV. 2: *Il patriotismo repubblicano e gli imperi dell' Est*, Milano 1984, pp. 780-969 and Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the age of Catherine the Great*, London 1981, pp. 393-412.

curiosities occupied the epicentre of cultural expression. Besides the war in Eastern Europe new excitements were caused by the news from France, where the convocation of the Estates General in 1787 was provoking a different, more ominous sense of expectancy. The outbreak of war in the East and the ferment in France occupied almost entirely the *Storia dell' anno* for 1787.<sup>1</sup> In the next volume, the survey of 1788 was taking up a more dramatic tone. As Europe was approaching the last decade of the eighteenth century, it was becoming apparent that the drama of a whole historical epoch was drawing toward a climactic *finale*. Agapios Loverdos, a clergyman, establishment educator, censor, proof-reader and experienced editor, saw his opportunity. It was time, in his old age, to write his own book,<sup>2</sup> to bring to his Greek reading compatriots the exciting news of the dramatic age they were living through – a dramatic age that could change their own collective future. It was time to take the Greeks out of their orientation toward their ancient past, to expose them to the lessons of contemporary history and «Political Science».<sup>3</sup> The aging Loverdos set to work with an ambitious project in mind: to produce a multi-volume work on current international history, obviously modeled on the Venitian series *Storia dell' anno*. For the annual surveys of *Storia dell' anno* he substituted a two-year survey, focusing primarily on events of more direct political relevance to the interests of the Greek-reading public. Beginning with a survey of the first two years of the new Russo-Turkish war – hence the title of the work, *History of the two years 1787 and 1788* – he projected a second volume on the next two years (1789-1790) immediately to follow. He then planned to produce continually one volume each year.<sup>4</sup> Obviously his ambi-

1. *Storia dell' anno 1787 divisa in Quattro Libri*. In Venezia: A spese di Francesco Piteri, pp. 5-49, 279-282 on the convocation of the Estates General and politics in France; pp. 231ff on the outbreak of the war in Eastern Europe, making up essentially the whole of Book IV of the survey.

2. Until then, Loverdos had acted mostly as editor of books. His major publishing achievement had been his editorship of *Βιβλος χρονική περιέχουσα τήν ιστορίαν τῆς Βυζαντιδος*, Venice 1767, Vols. I-VI. This was a collection of Byzantine chronographical sources translated into the Greek vernacular by Ioannis Stanos. Loverdos added a remarkable preface, discussing issues of historical knowledge. The continuity between the historiographical concerns voiced by Loverdos in his two prefatory discourses between 1767 and 1791, is an interesting indication of his intellectual preoccupations. See *Βιβλος χρονική*, Vol. I, Foreword, n.p. and cf. *Ιστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν*, pp. ε'-ι'. Authorship of the latter work is hinted at by the initials A. Λ. on the title page but it is nowhere mentioned in the sources. Attribution to Loverdos is based on the authority of G. Zaviras, *Νέα Ἑλλάς*, Athens 1872, p. 137, a serious contemporary observer with good and reliable information on Greek literary history at the close of the eighteenth century. The appearance of *Ιστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν* is recorded anonymously in A.S.V. /Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 351: *Libri Stampati 1790*, f. 46r, no. 143: Demetrio Teodosio di Venezia. *Istoria delle guerre fatte <fra> gli Austro Russi e la Porta Ottomana 1791*.

3. *Ιστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν*, p. στ'.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. θ'-ι'.

tion was to produce a Greek counterpart of the influential Venitian serial *Storia dell' anno*. His hope was that his compatriots for whose instruction and satisfaction he had laboured, would sustain his project. By the time the first volume appeared in 1791, nevertheless, events had overtaken the author and his project. The scale of developments in France since 1789 had confounded the interest provoked by the war in the East – and the second volume of the project never saw the light of day.

#### IV

Yet the published first volume of the project is a significant and interesting work and deserves a closer note of attention. It is significant because jointly with Spyridon Papadopoulos's Greek version of *Storia della guerra presente* represent the earliest Greek attempts at the writing of contemporary history and at a modern analysis of international politics. Furthermore this is a text of special interest for the study of Greek intellectual history in view of the author's striving to develop the conceptual structures and vocabulary necessary for the written expression of his subject-matter in vernacular Greek. It is therefore worthwhile to look at his manner of work.

The explanatory subtitle on the title page of the book indicates that the material for the composition of the history of the two years 1787 and 1788 had been collected from Italian and French sources and duly translated into the Greek vernacular with the purpose to narrate the history of «the present wars» between the Austro-Russians and the Ottomans. The definition of the object of the treatise in this subtitle recalls clearly the title of the earlier work by Spyridon Papadopoulos and points to the affinity between the two projects, which Loverdos obviously desired to underline. The somewhat cryptic reference to his sources, however, creates some difficulties. As it will be shown below the work is based in its entirety on one source in Italian and it is rather difficult to understand why Loverdos attempted to create the impression of a more diffused array of sources, including works in French as well as Italian. This was taken literally and repeated by his major biographer at the end of the nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> without an attempt to trace these alleged sources however. Subsequent research, including studies of Greek historiography, usually notes the work bibliographically without nevertheless commenting on its contents or its sources. One explanation for this might be the scarcity of surviving copies. The leading authority in Greek bibliography, Emile Legrand, has characterised the work as «*rarissime*»<sup>2</sup> and

1. Tsitselis, *Κεφαλληνιακά Σύμμικτα*, p. 317.

2. *Bibliographie Ioniene* I, p. 156, no. 503. Legrand mentions only one copy of the book, that of the library of Docheiarion Monastery on Mount Athos. A few more copies have been identified since Legrand wrote. One is in the valuable collection of the Public Library of Kozani. See N. Delialis, *Κατάλογος ἐντύπων Δημοτικής Βιβλιοθήκης Κοζάνης, 1494-1832*, Thessaloniki 1948, p. 3. no. 7. Four more Athonite copies have also been noted by Th. A. Papadopoulos, *Ἑλληνική Βιβλιογραφία (1466-1800)*, Vol. I, Athens 1984, p. 267, no.

apparently very few modern scholars have read it, let alone have attempted to trace its models and sources.

An attempt to situate the book in the immediate historical and literary context of its production, nevertheless, readily points to its source. If the subtitle is somewhat confusing, the title itself provides the key for tracing the original from which Agapios Loverdos drew the passages that he translated into the Greek vernacular. Rendered back into Italian the title would read *Storia di due anni 1787, 1788*. This immediately points to the annual surveys of the two years in question provided in the volumes surveying the years 1787 and 1788 respectively of *Storia dell' anno*. The author's preface supplies a further clue: the volume he put together, he tells the reader, contains a history of «the things of the world» from the «end of the year 1787 through the end of the year 1788». This is a very helpful statement indeed. It, in fact, supplies a guess as to where precisely to look in *Storia dell' anno* for 1787 in order to trace the sources of the initial sections of Loverdos's work. The guess does work. The first part of Loverdos's *History* up to page 88 is a Greek adaptation of «Libro Quatro» of *Storia dell' anno 1787*.<sup>1</sup> The sections of the original that are selected by Loverdos for inclusion in his own work are more or less faithfully translated with some variation in nuances of emphasis and some abbreviations and omissions of paragraphs and sections in order to reduce the text to manageable proportions. In the same manner from page 88 onward the Greek author draws on Books Two and Three of *Storia dell' anno 1788*, translating, abbreviating at points and omitting a few lines or paragraphs as the case may be, for the completion of his own narrative.<sup>2</sup>

The author's choices are not arbitrary. They are dictated by a criterion stated in the preface and consistently followed throughout the Greek text: the *History* is not a universal history as the surveys in *Storia dell' anno* attempted to be. The Greek work was a selective history of war, international antagonisms and imperial conflicts, in

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3621 in the following monastic libraries: Great Lavra, Vatopedi, Koutloumoussi, Xenophontos. Paradoxically the Marciana Library in Venice does not have a copy but a copy survives in the Old Library of the Istituto Ellenico in Venice, no. 1392. This was probably Loverdos's own presentation copy to the library of his school, which later passed to the Greek community and eventually to the Institute. A further copy is in the National Library of Greece, no. Ἱστορ. 2241.2241α and another, under Catalogue No. Slav. 1020.3 in Houghton Library at Harvard University. Two more copies have been recorded in libraries connected with the Greek-Orthodox communities in Hungary. See I. Hajnóczy, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ τοῦ Kecskemét*, Budapest 1939, p. 45 and O. Füves, «Κατάλογος τῶν ἐλληνικῶν ἐντύπων τῆς βιβλιοθήκης τοῦ Ἑλληνορθοδόξου Σερβικοῦ Ἐπισκοπάτου στὸ Σαϊντ-Ἐντρε τῆς Οὐγγαρίας», *Ὁ Ἑρα-νιστής*, Vol. 3 (1965), p. 101.

1. *Ἱστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν 1787, 1788*, pp. 1-27, 28-80, 81-86, 86-88. Cf. *Storia de l'anno 1787*, pp. 233-250, 251-282, 285-289, 295-296 respectively.

2. *Ἱστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν 1787, 1788*, pp. 88-96, 96-144, 144-209, 209-331. Cf. *Storia dell' anno 1788*, pp. 96, 98-99, 99-102, 102-127, 128-161, 164-165, 165-225 respectively.

short a case-study in power politics in Eastern Europe from the point of view of the interests of the Greek readership of the book: «Not everything is narrated, but those things that might be curious and appealing to our nation».<sup>1</sup>

## V

The substantive result of the application of this principle is a monograph on contemporary history in the Greek language, characterized by much tighter unity than its Italian original. Coherence, however, is achieved at the price of losing the much broader, indeed global, horizon of the original. Of the broader drama of international history codified in the pages of *Storia dell' anno*, the Greek version loses a considerable part. The two volumes on which Loverdos draws for the composition of his own work provide detailed surveys of the origins of the French Revolution<sup>2</sup> and an account of the drafting of the federal constitution of the United States of America, whereby the Founding Fathers attempted to apply Montesquieu's principles to actual institutional arrangements.<sup>3</sup> All this is lost to the Greek reader. What remains, nevertheless, of the narrative of the processes leading up to the convocation of the Estates General and the eventual outbreak of the Revolution in France is a significant text: it constitutes, in fact, even in the form of a brief digression, the earliest account in Greek or in any other Balkan language, of the inception of the process that was to transform European politics and society over the next decade.<sup>4</sup> Another quite interesting digression that remains from the original is a description of politics and society in Egypt in the closing decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> This too is the earliest such account in Greek historical writing.

Of particular interest in the Greek text is the translating style of Agapios Loverdos, who seeks to find in the Greek vernacular of his time the vocabulary and terminology necessary to express the notions and key concepts of international relations. Advancing further along the path opened by Spyridon Papadopoulos in the 1770s, this is the earliest such attempt in the Greek language. The difficulties facing the author are multiple. On the one hand he needs to write in a style and vocabulary that would make his work understandable to its Greek readership. On the other hand he is faced with a quite elaborate terminology in the analysis of international politics and inter-state conflict, which had developed in the major European languages since the seventeenth century as part of the effort to develop controls and checks on state behaviour. The growth of a terminology of international relations was a parallel process to the evolution of international law and of the theory of the balance of

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1. *Ιστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν*, p. θ'.

2. *Storia dell' anno* 1787, pp. 278-282 and *Storia dell' anno* 1788, pp. 3-53, 228-235.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-74.

4. *Ιστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν*, pp. 74-78, 79-80.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-28. Cf. *Storia dell' anno* 1787, pp. 233-251.

power.<sup>1</sup> All this remained foreign to Greek political and intellectual experience. This is evident in Loverdos's linguistic experiments and conceptual gropings in rendering his Italian original. On the whole he comes out well: his prose is perfectly intelligible even though he improvises a terminology, which was not eventually canonized in Greek. The secret of his stylistic success in making his translation intelligible is his recourse to *periphrasis* in rendering abstract terms and concepts.

Some of his translating modes are noteworthy. For quite a long time in elaborating his text, he is unable to render the terms for «neutrality» and «neutral powers» with Greek equivalents. He circumvents his difficulty with the use of periphrasis such as «ἀλλή ἀδιάφορος», «βασιλεῖς ἀδιάφοροι»<sup>2</sup> until later, after he is half-way through his own text, he manages to coin the terms «οὐδέτεροι δυναστεῖται».<sup>3</sup> For the conclusion of peace and the cessation of hostilities he uses the word «ἁγία», a much broader in its connotations evangelical term.<sup>4</sup> He finds a quite charming way of rendering the term *Grande Amiraglio*: «Θαλασσάρχης»<sup>5</sup> and he is particularly precise in his rendering of the term *Repubblica* when it is used to describe the political system of Poland: «Ἀριστοκρατία τῶν Πολόνων».<sup>6</sup> He is also shrewd enough in making the text conform to the predilections of his Greek readers. The terms *Sommo Pontifice* and *Santo Padre* used in the original for the Pope are inoffensively rendered with the conventional term Πάπας (the Pope) in Greek.<sup>7</sup>

Inevitably inaccuracies and minor errors crept in and like every other publishing venture, this too, even though the work of an experienced editor and proofreader, did not remain immune to misprints. Bulgakov, the Russian minister to the Porte, is rendered in the Greek text as Βουλγαρώφ, the Russian name succumbing to a more familiar Balkan phonetic form. An important date is misprinted in the Greek version. In this case, however, the author did his best to correct the information that was

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1. For the relevant conceptual background see M. S. Anderson, «Eighteenth-Century Theories of the Balance of Power», *Studies in Diplomatic History. Essays in Memory of David Bayne Horn*, ed. by R. Hatton and M.S. Anderson, London 1970, pp. 183-198. Cf. also Guido Quazza, «La politica dell' equilibrio nel secolo XVIII», in *Nuove Questioni di Storia Moderna*, Milano 1966, Vol. II, pp. 1181-1215, esp. pp. 1181-1190 on the theory of balance and the evolution of the idea from empirical practice to «value». Classic contributions to the subject are the essays by H. Butterfield and M. Wight in *Diplomatic Investigations. Essays in the Theory of International Politics*, ed. by Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, London 1966, pp. 132-148, 149-175 and by F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, Cambridge 1963, Part I and passim. Among recent works see T. L. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, Manchester 1992, pp. 84-86, 92-98, 99-127.

2. *Ιστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν*, pp. 17 and 73.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 1 and passim.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 144.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

7. *Storia dell' anno 1787*, p. 287. Cf. *Ιστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν*, p. 83.

going to reach his pupils at the Flanginian College: on the copy he presented to the library of the school he noted by hand in the margin the correct date.<sup>1</sup> This was indeed the mark of a good and conscientious proof-reader.

## VI

In this way a whole world of international conflict and power politics is refracted into Greek thought in the late eighteenth century. The Greek public is given a taste of current diplomatic conventions and practices with the faithful translation of official declarations and counter-declarations stating the reasons of the various powers in entering the conflict. The requirements of the balance of power, the ever-present need of empires and states to safeguard their vital interests, the expansionist logic disguised behind official declarations, the invocation of the rules of war and the need to respect diplomatic immunity in civilized humanity become part of the conceptual baggage that forms the substantive content of the monograph. The author in his own narrative often points to the substantive motivations deriving from the logic of power politics, behind formal appeals to international justice. A good illustration of this comes with the account of diplomatic moves by Britain and Prussia which close the book.<sup>2</sup>

All this is novel and unconventional for Greek political thought. Although analysis is minimal and the narrative is throughout a straight-forward exposition of the factual record, the mode of thinking all this brings to the readership of the book is quite unprecedented. A whole new sense of the world and of their immediate international environment is laid out before the Greek readers. The distance from the Byzantine chronographical sources and their cosmology, which Loverdos himself had edited about a quarter of a century earlier, could not have been greater. It was through such windows to the world and to the logic of secular politics that the Greeks were gradually acquiring a sense of the possibilities offered to them by contemporary international relations and conflicts. To convey this sense was no doubt among the stronger inducements of Loverdos's project.

The official neutrality of the Venitian republic in the conflicts made the author of the original and the Greek translator quite careful in their matter-of-fact account of the events.<sup>3</sup> In this Loverdos, a censor of the Venitian republic himself, is much more

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1. Istituto Ellenico di Venezia, Old Library, no. 1392, p. 127. The date is corrected to xix April 1788, according to the text in *Storia dell' anno 1788*, p. 118.

2. *Ἱστορία τῶν δύο ἐτῶν*, pp. 309-315.

3. Cf. *Storia dell' anno 1788*, pp. 290-292 on the neutrality of Venice. Loverdos must have been a careful censor and self-censor for that matter. A lesson at exactly the opening of his career as «revisore» of Greek books could not have been lost on him. At that time the *Riformatori* had relieved of his duties a previous censor, the widely respected scholar Angelo Calogera, who had allowed the printing in the *Gazetta Veneta* of a report originating in Rome, in which a Stuart pretender was called king of Great Britain. This could cause embarrassment

circumspect in crafting his own text that Spyridon Papadopoulos twenty years earlier.<sup>1</sup> Yet the message is clearly audible between the lines of the text: Ottoman power is no longer unconquerable, the awesome empire of the House of Osman is now under seige by Christian powers, somewhere in the future, through the cracks left behind by the wars, a ray of hope may shine upon the Orthodox subjects. To get this message accross was, I believe, the deeper motivation of the whole project. The fact that the hopes nurtured by the wars of the Christian empires were to be eclipsed by the vaster tremours soon to emanate from revolutionary France, should not obscure the significance of Loverdos's project in the evolution of Greek political thought in the century of the Enlightenment.

## VII

This brings up a final issue to be considered in recovering the identity of Agapios Loverdos's little-read book. If his Greek version, appearing under his own initials, had a semi-anonymous character, the original on which it was based, remained indeed an anonymous source. The anonymity of *Storia dell' anno*, like the Amsterdam imprint of its first thirty volumes, was a mechanism to evade the censorship of the *Riformatori*. In other words the anonymity was part of the battle of the Enlightenment in the Venitian domains. Subsequent researches, led on by Gaetano Melzi's evidence in the nineteenth century, have established the identity of the authors-compilers of *Storia dell' anno*, among them Domenico Caminer, who compiled the survey from 1776 (or from 1788 according to one view) to his death in 1796.<sup>2</sup> Thus the *Storia* was more than an impersonal almanach. It was in fact, like the rest of the periodical press that burgeoned in Venice at the time, one of the instruments of the secularization of politics and mentalities. This contributed to the opening up of the Venitian mind, which the *Riformatori* wanted to keep at peace under their censors' control, to the broader world, a world of change and conflict. It would appear accordingly reasonable to interpret the late eighteenth-century content of *Storia dell'anno* under Domenico Caminer's authorship-editorship, as a contribution in this general direction.

The significance of Caminer's role in Venitian cultural politics has been recognised only comparatively recently, thanks to the researches of Gianfranco Torcellan and Franco Venturi.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore unnecessary to belabour the point at any greater

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for the Republic in her relations with Britain and the censor was summarily dismissed. See A.S.V./Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 33: *Decreti, scritture, terminazioni dei Riformatori* (5 Marzo 1765-7 Agosto 1766), f. 290r, 31 Gennaio 1765 (1766).

1. Cf. P.M. Kitromilides, «Ἰδεολογικὲς ἐπιλογὲς καὶ ἱστοριογραφικὴ πράξις», pp. 511-512.

2. Gaetano Melzi, *Dizionario di opere anonime e pseudonime di scrittori italiani*, Milano 1859, p. 102.

3. On Caminer's place in the Venitian Enlightenment cf. most notably Gianfranco Torcellan, «Giornalismo e cultura illuministica nel Settecento Veneto», *Settecento Veneto e altri scritti storici*, Torino 1969, pp. 194-198 and Franco Venturi, *Settecento Riformatore*, Vol. II:

length here. It might just be relevant to add a detail to the record of Caminer's activities, a detail concerning the last project of his life. Just before his death, on the eve of the Republic's fall, Caminer had put together a new work, *Rivoluzioni nuove di Francia e d' Italia*. This work was registered for publication under the names of the former *Sudditi* transformed into *Cittadini* Caminer as author and Giuseppe Rossi as printer amidst that incredible production of revolutionary literature that marked the year 1797 in Venice.<sup>1</sup> Citizen Domenico Caminer was no longer alive, but the presence of his name in a veritable ledger of the new republican spirit of liberty and equality, was a fitting epitaph for his life and work on behalf of the Enlightenment.

A concluding comment is perhaps called for in order to round up the line of research followed through in the present paper. Domenico Caminer's work can be seen through the prism of Greek Enlightenment historiography and political thought to take up a new significance. An unexpected new role can now be ascribed to this almost forgotten activist of the Venitian Enlightenment, in connection with the transmission of the ideas of power politics and the writing of contemporary history as a specifically political pursuit in Southeastern Europe. The two most important such sources in Greek eighteenth-century historiography, the works of Spyridon Papadopoulos and Agaprios Loverdos, are now identified as adaptations of Caminer's writings. It was through processes of intellectual transmission and reception such as those reconstructed above that the broader osmosis of cultural reorientation and the transformation of identities was in the long-run brought about in Southeastern Europe. Venice had been for centuries the threshold for intellectual change in the Levant and continued to contribute in this direction down to the very end of the Republic's history –and beyond.

PASCHALIS M. KITROMILIDES

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*La chiesa e la repubblica dentro i loro limiti 1758-1774*, Milano 1976, pp. 119-121, 189-190. On his place in Venitian publishing see Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, pp. 195 and 347. For general appraisals see Natali, *Il Settecento*, Milano 1964, Vol. I, p. 403, Paola Zambelli, «Dibattiti culturali nel Settecento a Venezia», *Studi sull' Illuminismo* (Quaderni Critici di Storia della Filosofia, 1) Florence 1966, pp. 148-182, esp. pp. 172-174 and the profile by C. De Michelis in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 17 (1974), pp. 234-236, with a complete record of available printed sources and earlier bibliography.

1. A.S.V./Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, No. 354: *Registro di Opere da Stamparsi (1797-1798)*, R/26 Maggio 1797.

## APPENDIX

**Request by Gerasimo Salamon from Cephalonia for admission  
to Paleocapa College, University of Padua, countersigned  
by Agapios Loverdos, Master and Rector of Flanginian College, Venice.**

[Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, b. 503]

*Illustrissimi ed Eccellentissimi Signori Riformatori dello studio di Padova. Atrovandomi io Gerasimo Salamon quondam Atanasio di Ceffalonia umilissimo servo di Vostre Eccellenze in educazione a questo Seminario Greco Flangini per estremo mio infortunio rimasi orfano avendo perduto in poco tempo il Padre, e la*  
 5 *Madre, e per conseguenza abbandonato d'ogni speranza per la perdita del Padre, che colla sola industria manteneva poveramente la sua casa, e somministrava anche a me qualche cosa per supplire a miei bisogni. Sono due anni dopo la perdita de' Genitori, che mi trovo nell'indigenza pure non ho mancato mai di attendere con la dovuta applicazione ne' miei studij, e a merito del nostro amabilissimo Signor Maestro, ho*  
 10 *avanzato a grado che li giorni passati sostenni unitamente ad altri tre de' miei condiscipoli in Pubblico un esame rigoroso in tutta la Geometria di Euclide Piana e Solida, nella soluzione de' Problemi del Globo, nella Geografia e nella Lingua Latina con comune compatimento di tutti. Sonno in età di anni 16 e al fine del mio sessennio in questo Seminario, non avendo modo di continuare il corso de' miei studij per poter*  
 15 *// intraprendere qualche civile professione a formare il mio stato, mi rassegnò umilmente alla carità di questo Eccellentissimo Magistrato implorando la grazia di esser rimpiazzato in qualche posto di Alunno nel Collegio Paleocappa di Padova vacante, o da vacare giacche la carità del magistrato Eccellentissimo sopra Ospitali compatendo la mia disgrazia mi manterrà per sopranumerario in questo Seminario*  
 20 *fino che io possa entrare nel sudetto Collegio, e li miei Nazionali mi provvederanno del necessario vestito. Della carità poi tanto meritoria a Dio, non mancherò di porgere voti incessantemente al cielo per la conservazione di Vostre Eccellenze. Grazie.*

*Dottor Agapio Maestro e Rettore.*

[a tergo] *Memoriale di un alluno del Collegio Flangini per entrare in Paleocappa  
fù licenziato.*

## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

**Πασχάλης Μ. Κιτρομηλίδης: 'Η ταυτότητα ενός βιβλίου. Εύρωπαϊκοί πολιτικοί ανταγωνισμοί και ιδεολογικά κίνητρα στην 'Ιστορία των δύο έτων του 'Αγαπίου Λοβέρδου (Βενετία 1791).**

Παρά την πρόοδο των σπουδών για τη διανοητική ιστορία του ελληνισμού κατά τον αιώνα του Διαφωτισμού, πολλά ζητήματα εξακολουθούν να παραμένουν έκκρεμη, τόσο ως προς τη βιογράφηση των φορέων της πνευματικής ζωής όσο και ως προς την ταυτότητα των έργων τους. Πολλά απομένουν να γίνουν ιδίως ως προς τη συγκριτική τοποθέτηση των ζητημάτων και την ένταξη των εκδηλώσεων του ελληνικού πνευματικού βίου στα ένδεικxμένα πλαίσια της ευρωπαϊκής παιδείας και πνευματικής δημιουργίας. Μία χαρακτηριστική περίπτωση είναι εκείνη του 'Αγαπίου Λοβέρδου (Κεφαλληνία 1720-Βενετία 1795), ο οποίος υπήρξε σημαντικός παράγοντας της 'Ελληνικής 'Αδελφότητας της Βενετίας ως κληρικός, ιεροκήρυκας, κοσμήτορας του Φλαγγινιανού Κολλεγίου, λογοκριτής ελληνικών βιβλίων στην υπηρεσία των Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, επιμελητής εκδόσεων στα ελληνικά τυπογραφεία της Βενετίας και συγγραφέας. 'Η δράση του Λοβέρδου από την εγκατάστασή του στη Βενετία το 1763 έως τον θάνατό του τεκμηριώνεται από πολλές αρχειακές μαρτυρίες που αναμένουν ακόμη τον μελετητή τους.

'Η παρούσα μελέτη ασχολείται κάπως αναλυτικότερα με το σημαντικότερο έργο του 'Αγαπίου Λοβέρδου, *Ιστορία των δύο έτων 1787, 1788*, που εξέδόθη το 1791 από το τυπογραφείο του Δημητρίου Θεοδοσίου. Το έργο εκδόθηκε μόνο υπό τα αρχικά Α.Α. αλλά ή απόδοση στον Λοβέρδο μπορεί να γίνει με αρκετή ασφάλεια βάσει της μαρτυρίας των Γεωργίου Ζαβίρα και 'Ηλίας Τσιτσέλη. Κίνητρο για τη σύνταξη του έργου ήταν όπωσδήποτε το ενδιαφέρον και ο αναβρασμός που προκλήθηκε μεταξύ των 'Ελλήνων από τον δεύτερο πόλεμο της Αικατερίνης Β' κατά της οθωμανικής αυτοκρατορίας, που κηρύχθηκε το έτος 1787. 'Ο Λοβέρδος βασίστηκε για τη σύνταξη του έργου του στην έτήσια επισκόπηση διεθνών γεγονότων *Storia dell' anno* που εκδιδόταν στη Βενετία από το τυπογραφείο Giuseppe Pitteri. 'Η λεπτομερής αντιβολή του ελληνικού κειμένου του Λοβέρδου με τους δύο τόμους της *Storia dell' anno* για τα έτη 1787 και 1788 αποκαλύπτει ότι το ελληνικό κείμενο αποτελεί πιστή διασκευή του Τρίτου Βιβλίου του τόμου του 1787 και του Δεύτερου και Τρίτου Βιβλίου του τόμου του 1788 της *Storia dell' anno*, με κάποιες συντμήσεις και περιλήψεις που ο Έλληνας συγγραφέας προφανώς θεωρεί αναγκαίες για να κάνει το κείμενό του συνεκτικότερο. Το κριτήριο της επιλογής των τμημάτων του πρωτοτύπου που μεταφράζεται στα 'Ελληνικά δηλώνεται ρητά από τον συγγραφέα: επιλέγονται μόνο όσα γεγονότα θα μπορούσαν να προκαλέσουν το ενδιαφέρον και να κινήσουν την περιέργεια του γένους του. Το τελικό προϊόν αποτελεί αφήγηση της έκρηξης του ρωσοτουρκικού πολέμου, με πυκνές αναφορές στο ευρύτερο διπλωματικό πλαίσιο και με άδρή σκιαγρα-

φία τῶν διεθνῶν ἀνταγωνισμῶν καὶ τῆς πολιτικῆς τῆς ἰσχύος τῶν μεγάλων εὐρωπαϊκῶν δυνάμεων. Ὡς παρεχβάσεις στὸν κύριο αὐτὸ κορμὸ τῆς ἀφήγησης προστίθενται σχετικὰ σύντομες ἐξιστορήσεις τῆς σύγκλισης τῶν Γενικῶν Τάξεων στὴ Γαλλία τὸ 1788 καὶ τῆς πολιτικῆς κατάστασης τῆς Αἰγύπτου. Μὲ τὴν ἀναπαράσταση τῶν διεθνῶν ἀνταγωνισμῶν καὶ τῶν ἀλληλοσυγκρουομένων συμφερόντων στὸ θέατρο τῆς Εὐρωπαϊκῆς πολιτικῆς, ὁ Ἀγάπιος Λοβέρδος προφανῶς ἐπεδίωκε νὰ ποδηγετήσει τοὺς ἀναγνώστες του νὰ σταθμίσουν τίς πολιτικὲς προοπτικὲς ποὺ ἡ ρευστότητα τῶν διεθνῶν σχέσεων διάνοιγε στὸ ἑλληνικὸ ἔθνος.

Αὐτὸ ἀκριβῶς τὸ ἔμμεσο ἀλλὰ σαφὲς μήνυμα καθιστᾷ τὸ ἔργο τοῦ Λοβέρδου, ἓνα ἀπὸ τὰ πρωϊμότερα ἔργα σύγχρονης ἱστορίας στὴν ἑλληνικὴ φιλολογία τοῦ Διαφωτισμοῦ, ἰδιαίτερα σημαντικὸ σταθμὸ στὴν ἀνέλιξη τῆς νεότερης ἑλληνικῆς πολιτικῆς σκέψης. Ἡ σημασία αὐτὴ διευρύνεται καὶ ὑπογραμμίζεται σὲ συσχετισμὸ μὲ τὴν πατρότητα τοῦ πρωτοτύπου κειμένου στὸ ὁποῖο βασίζεται τὸ ἑλληνικὸ κείμενο. Τὸ πρωτότυπο ἐκδιδόταν ἀνώνυμα γιατί ἡ *Storia dell' anno* περιεῖχε συχνὰ πληροφορίες «contrarie ai diritti de' principi» κατὰ τὸν λογοκριτὴ Angelo Calogera. Ἡ συγγραφή τῶν δύο τόμων ἀπ' ὅπου ἀντλεῖ ὁ Λοβέρδος ὀφειλόταν στὸν Domenico Caminer, πρωταγωνιστὴ τῆς προοδευτικῆς δημοσιογραφίας στὴ Βενετία τοῦ δευτέρου μισοῦ τοῦ 18ου αἰῶνα. Ἔτσι τὸ ἀνώνυμο κείμενο τοῦ Caminer στὴν ἑλληνικὴ διασκευή του ἐμφανίζεται νὰ ἀποκτᾷ μιὰ εὐρύτερη λειτουργία στὴ σύνθετη ὁσμωση τῆς ἰδεολογικῆς, διανοητικῆς καὶ πολιτικῆς ἀλλαγῆς ποὺ μεταμόρφωνε τὸν εὐρωπαϊκὸ κόσμο στὸν φθίνοντα δέκατο ὄγδοο αἰῶνα καὶ μὲ δίαυλο τῇ Βενετία σταδιακὰ ἄγγιζε καὶ τοὺς λαοὺς τῆς Νοτιοανατολικῆς Εὐρώπης.





