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in memoriam
εις μνήμην**

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„LIGHT FROM THE SOUTH“: The Neapolitan Enlightenment and Greek thought.

Paschalis M. KITROMILIDES

The title of this paper represents an adjustment of a corresponding heading in Paul Hazard's classic work on the crisis of the European conscience. In that fountainhead of modern critical scholarship on the Enlightenment the author pointed to the significance of British empiricist philosophy, especially the work of John Locke, for laying the foundations of Enlightenment thought on the European continent. That was what Paul Hazard meant with the phrase „the light from the North“.¹

In the present article I would like to propose a revision of his thesis by pointing to the many levels and the multiple channels through which the Enlightenment tradition became a shared European heritage. My argument suggests that besides the „North“, whence light radiated mostly to France and the Netherlands, other sources of light were located to the South of the continent and sent their rays to the East and Southeast of Europe and through those regions to the Mediterranean world and the Near East. The picture of cultural change in eighteenth-century Europe, therefore, appears much more complex than that conventional impression emerging from older histories of the Enlightenment and of the „Europe Française“.²

One aspect of this more complex and nuanced picture I should like to present in what follows by looking at the reception of the Enlightenment in Southeastern Europe.

Greek thought and Greek intellectuals came into contact with the Enlightenment and the Europe of the lights gradually, and usually by way of side paths, often indirectly and in ways that are now difficult to imagine. Knowledge of secularized Western views of the world and society frequently reached the Greek East as a consequence of educational initiatives, that were not designed to bring about intellectual or moral changes. In the labyrinthine network of links between Greek culture and thought and the Latin West, the Italian channels were without doubt the most important, both in the time before the Enlightenment and during the long period that saw the formation of the new ideas and views that are conventionally described by that term. One of the most significant in the entire spectrum of relationships between Greek philosophical speculation and Italian thought that helped to lay the foundations of the Enlightenment in the Balkans was, in my view, the influence exercised upon Evgenios Voulgaris by the leading exponent of the Neapolitan Enlightenment, Antonio Genovesi (1712–1762) — Genouensios, as his name is

rendered by Evgenios, in a translation of the Latin version of the Italian intellectual's name, under which his early philosophical treatises were published.

Tracing the content of this intellectual relationship poses a number of complex historical and methodological problems for the scholar, despite the fact that the influence exercised by Genovesi on the work of Voulgaris seems to be a direct and quite evident one. It is my belief that the intellectual affinity between the two was at once more extensive and more varied than it has been hitherto considered by scholarship. I also believe that, given the importance of Voulgaris's work for the general formation of the thought of the Enlightenment in the case of Greek culture, it is well worth investigating the broader content of his contact with the philosophical writings of Genovesi, in order to retrieve it as accurately and systematically as the available sources allow.

Voulgaris is known to have made extensive use of the philosophical works of Genovesi in both his teaching and writing. He used Genovesi as a basis for his teaching of metaphysics at the Athonite Academy, according to the explicit testimony of Iossipos Moisiodax³, while the third volume of his *Elements of Metaphysics*, which, as the „overseer“ of the publication, Spyridon Vlandis notes, contains the lectures given by Evgenios „while he was yet a deacon...“, is richly annotated with references to Genovesi.⁴

As we shall see, his debt is not confined to these references, but goes much deeper. Finally, one of the many translations made by Voulgaris, mainly for teaching purposes, was of the *Elementa Metaphysicae* by the Italian scholar.⁵

Despite the fact that Evgenios's work is substantially interwoven with the philosophical thought of Genovesi, and despite, therefore, the important indirect contribution made by the Neapolitan thinker to the formation of the intellectual climate in which the Greek Enlightenment developed, the substantive relationship between their respective intellectual worlds has remained essentially unexplored. Moreover, the mechanical identification of „influences“, and „models“ with which Greek comparative philology has for the most part been content, is not conducive to the formulation of hypotheses concerning the ideological motives and concerns underlying the very choice of the authors and works from which these influences emanate. The investigation of the subject as a whole may be given specific form by the posing of two substantive questions: first, why did Voulgaris choose Genovesi from amongst a series of treatises on metaphysics that were available in the European intellectual and undoubtedly accessible to him, and second, how did he select from the work of the Neapolitan thinker. A third question that might be added to this list would undoubtedly refer to the extent of his debt: at what point, and why did Evgenios cease to draw material and ideas from Genovesi's work?

I have already suggested elsewhere an hypothesis to answer the first of these three questions: as a representative of the „enlightened Catholicism“ of the first half of the eighteenth century, Genovesi was ideally suited, through his philosophical oeuvre, to serve Voulgaris's intentions, which were to promote rationalism and the philosophical views of the moderns without attacking doctrines of the faith.⁶

In the metaphysical aspect of his work, Genovesi belongs to the last effective current of metaphysical speculation in modern philosophy, before metaphysics was

finally transcended as a philosophical mode by the Enlightenment; the main feature of this current was its endeavour to bring Christian metaphysics into harmony with the latest philosophical and scientific ideas. As a metaphysical thinker, Genovesi thus represents for Catholicism what Voulgaris represents for Orthodoxy: the attempt to produce a synthesis of Christianity and philosophical rationalism.⁷ This, I believe, explains the attraction of Genovesi's work for Evgenios.

The second question, referring to the basis on which Voulgaris selected from Genovesi's work, can, of course be answered on the evidence of the texts themselves. The first observation to be made involves a necessary point of clarification with regard to Voulgaris's translation of Genovesi's treatise on metaphysics. This work was translated and used by Evgenios as the basis for his lectures in Ioannina and Kozani, and was published half a century later in Vienna. The translation was not a rendering of Genovesi's complete four-volume treatise, but only of the single-volume first edition. This observation, of a rather technical bibliographical nature, should serve as a corrective to the hitherto prevailing view amongst students of Voulgaris, that the 1806 edition was a Greek translation of Genovesi's *Elementa*.

A second feature to emerge from the comparison of Voulgaris's text with that of Genovesi enables us to identify the wider debt owed by the former to the latter. In addition to the detailed borrowings, which are in any case identified in the notes accompanying Voulgaris's text, comparison of his two main philosophical works, the *Logic* gleaned from the ancients and the moderns (1766) and the *Elements of Metaphysics* (1805), with *Genovesi's Element Metaphysicae*, reveals the extent of the methodological debt owed by Evgenios to the Italian philosopher in the organisation and exposition of the philosophical material. The comparison also leads to a widening of the spectrum of possible models for the most interesting section of Evgenios's *Logic*, which is the „Preliminary narration on the origin and progress of philosophical debate. And on the various schools of philosophy and on the most notable among them.“⁸

This review of the history of philosophical speculation prefaced to the study of a particular branch of philosophy, may be regarded as deriving from the works of Pourchot and Brucker, amongst other models, and bears a clear affinity to the „Disputatio physico historica de rerum coporearum origine e constitutione“, prefixed by Genovesi as an introduction to the first volume of the *Elementa Metaphysicae*.⁹

Despite the fact that Genovesi's „discourse on natural history“ focuses mainly on cosmology, whereas the „preliminary narration“ of Voulgaris has a broader philosophical, mainly epistemological content, the same view of the history of philosophy as a dialogue between ancients and moderns pervades both works. Genovesi divides the history of cosmology into two parts: (a) „De veterum sententia circa mundi originem“, in which he sets forth the views of the Eastern peoples (Jews, Chaldaeans, Persians, Indians, Syrians, Phoenicians, Egyptians and the Thracians Orpheus, Mousaios and Linos) and, to a noticeably greater extent, those of the Greeks (the Ionians, the Italian School and Pythagoreans, the Socratics, the Platonic Academy, Aristotle and the Peripatetics, the Stoics and the Eleatic School);¹⁰ and (b) „De physiologia recentiorum“, in which, having briefly noted the

degeneration and renaissance of arts and letters at the beginning of the modern era, he sets forth the views of the moderns on nature and cosmology, classified by the following national schools: Italians, French, English and German.¹¹

The reader is in this way informed about the history of natural philosophy down to the author's contemporaries since, at the end of this review of the national schools, reference is made to early eighteenth century figures such as Newton and Wolff.¹²

Indeed, the entire section of Genovesi's *Disputatio* devoted to the moderns is in essence a proclamation of the ideas of modern science as formulated by Galileo, Descartes and Newton, and their followers. We are here moving, that is, in the climate of the early Enlightenment that was so familiar to Voulgaris. With unusual boldness, Genovesi also mentions Giordano Bruno amongst the Italian innovators of natural philosophy, though not, of course, without anticipating suspicion and misinterpretation, and thus vaguely describing him as „pietate nefarius“.¹³

The cultural climate and intellectual attitude that inform Genovesi's *Disputatio* will be very familiar to readers of the philosophical writings of Voulgaris. Evaluations, priorities, selection criteria and the general approach to the internal logic of the history of philosophy, all display correspondences and affinities that cannot fail to be noticed by anyone who reads both texts. The conflict between ancients and moderns is used as the framework for the renewal and progress of philosophy, though the contribution of the ancient Greeks is not underestimated. As for the rehabilitation of philosophy, attention is drawn to the role played by the leading figures of Italian philosophy themselves: Tommaso Campanella¹⁴ and Girolamo Cardano¹⁵.

The assessments that form the basis on which the galaxy of the Enlightenment is set up are also shared by two writers: Descartes is considered by Genovesi „de gallorum philosophorum post restauratas literas corippeo“¹⁶, while of the English „iam ventum est ad virum summum Newtonum“.¹⁷

With regard to German philosophy, finally, „dicendum nunc est de Leibnitio e Woflio Germanorum omnium celebrimis philosophis“.¹⁸

This praise of modern philosophical values finds a direct echo in one of Voulgaris's *loci classici*:

On that basis there have appeared before us Gassendi and Descartes, Gallileo and Newton, and furthermore Leibniz and Wolff and all others, thanks to whom philosophy in our times has flourished more than in any previous epoch and has progressed from strength to strength and has enriched human life with much and good knowledge and devices and arts, which the whole time has hitherto ignored.

It could be claimed, indeed, that the final paragraph (no: 70) of Voulgaris's review of the history of philosophy is nothing more than a masterly resumé of Genovesi's account of the progress of the philosophy of the moderns. In Genovesi's pages the reader encounters the canon of modern philosophy and the vocabulary of the new philosophical discourse. These are precisely the features that are recast in Greek by Voulgaris for the purposes of his own approach. Therefore and until research is able to locate a model closer to Voulgaris's text we can, I believe, consider Genovesi's work, and especially the introduction to the *Disputatio* to be amongst the models for one of the most significant texts in modern Greek philo-

sophy. In his own synthesis, of course, Voulgaris places much greater emphasis on the importance of ancient Greek philosophy, and adds a feature that testifies to the personal nature of his assessment of the history of later philosophy: a detailed account of the late Byzantine and post-Byzantine contribution to the study of philosophical questions.²⁰

His zeal for his own cultural community leads Voulgaris to enrich his own account with a wide range of detailed information of special interest to his Greek readership. Genovesi, too, had showed himself not lacking in ethnic pride when he gave prominence to the contribution to the revival of natural philosophy made by Italians, particularly the minor forerunners of Galileo.²¹

Despite the sensitivity with which both Voulgaris and Genovesi promoted the contribution of their countrymen to the formation of the philosophical thought of the moderns, their attitude to the task of philosophizing was marked by a professional rigidity, which prevented them from conforming to the vernacular speech of their respective ethnolinguistic communities when it came to the choice of the linguistic instrument for their treatises. In the first stage of his career as a writer, which coincides with the composition of the *Metaphysics* Genovesi followed the tradition of academic philosophy and wrote in Latin, while Voulgaris, imitating both his European models and his predecessors in post-Byzantine philosophy, insisted on the use of Attic Greek, and censured, in another locus classicus of text, any attempt to adapt the language of philosophy to the idiom of his contemporaries: "the booklets, therefore, that pretend to philosophise in the vulgar idiom, ought to be whistled at".²²

On this technical point, Evgenios may have drawn some satisfaction from the fact that he did live up to the standards set by the devotion to Latin evinced by European academic philosophy.

Voulgaris's espousal of Genovesi's method and manner of exposition went beyond the „preliminary narrative“ of the *Logic*. When, after the four introductory „preliminary discourses“ he moved on to the specific material of logical analysis, he again turned to Genovesi as the model for the composition of his prolegomena. Directly after the *Disputatio* in the first volume, Genovesi prefaced his account of the material of metaphysics with ten pages of prolegomena entitled „Prolegomena de natura, origine, utilitate, partibus mataphysicae“.²³

Voulgaris, too, follows his preliminary discourses by ten pages of prolegomena to his exposition of logic, to which he gives the title „What customarily prefaces Logic, that is origin, nature, appellation, utility and division of Logic.“²⁴

The differing subject matter in the matter in the main body of each of the two treatises naturally gives rises to divergences of treatment, and this certainly makes unnecessary a search for further affinities between Voulgaris's *Logic* and Genovesi's *Elementa Metaphysicae*. The foregoing account has, I hope, made clear the methodological debt owed by Voulgaris to Genovesi in his handling of the philosophical material.

Genovesi's systematic classification of the material of philosophy by national schools is another methodological model faithfully followed by Voulgaris. This can be seen in the *Logic*, but pervades the *Elements of Metaphysics* to an even greater extent. The close affinity between the material handled in this work of Voulgaris

and in the corresponding word by Genovesi justifies us in seeking to identify much more extensive coincidences in their contents, beyond this formal manner of exposition.

Despite all the above, Voulgaris's *Elements* is certainly not a translation, or even a reworking of Genovesi's work. It is his own synthesis of the object of metaphysical speculation; on this, despite the definitive influence exercised by Genovesi on the formal method of exposition and classification of the philosophical material, Evgenios has set his own personal stamp. As in the *Logic*, the predominant feature here is his philosophical eclecticism. Voulgaris's debt to Genovesi's „enlightened Catholicism“ is clear from the frequency of references to the Italian's work in the notes to the text, but Evgenios also followed the Neapolitan thinker in a further choice that places his work firmly within the intellectual climate of the eighteenth century and, in the last analysis, connects it with the end of metaphysics. This choice is, of course, his predilection for the empiricism of Locke which, while it can be detected in the *Logic*, is particularly evident in the *Elements of Metaphysics*. The unity of Voulgaris's two philosophical treatises is apparent from the frequent references to *Logic* included in the *Elements*. Moreover, according to the clarificatory subtitle appended to the *Elements* by Spyridon Vlandis, both works belong to the same phase of Voulgaris's writing, despite the half century separating their respective dates of publication. They belong that is, to his period as a teacher in the Greek East, which furnishes a *terminus ante quem* in the year 1761.

Voulgaris's main substantive debt to Genovesi in the *Elements of Metaphysics* resides in his considerable exposure to the broader philosophical currents of the eighteenth century. This accounts for the preeminent position occupied by Locke, the leading philosophical influence on the eighteenth century, amongst the authorities cited by Voulgaris in this treatise. The entire pantheon of modern philosophy finds its place in Voulgaris's classification of the material. Descartes and Malebranche, Leibniz and Wolff, as well as Gassendi and a host of lesser thinkers are all there. Aquinas and the Scholastics are, naturally, present, and Aristotle is always the „great philosopher“. However, whereas Voulgaris does not hesitate to express his disagreement with both Descartes²⁵ and the German philosophers who were so dear to him²⁶ he invariably refers to Locke, „the English metaphysician“, as he calls him, with respect, and never censures him. This observation of the role played by Locke in Voulgaris's metaphysical thought indicates another point of close affinity between his philosophical thought and of Genovesi, whose pages, out of the vast flood of the philosophy of the century of the Enlightenment, were to serve as the channel for Evgenios's contact with the writings of Locke. It is true, of course, that in the *Disputatio* Genovesi singles out the work of Newton, and does not refer to Locke's contribution to the forging of the cognitive foundations for modern philosophy. In the following pages of the main body of the work, however, Genovesi devotes several substantial paragraphs to an account of Locke's cognitive philosophy,²⁷ and it was precisely this version by Genovesi that served as Voulgaris's first introduction to the philosophy of Locke.²⁸

Since we have now already broached the of our initial questions with regard to the intellectual between Voulgaris and Genovesi, we should perhaps proceed beyond the limits of the intellectual affinities between them that we have detected,

and examine briefly the broader repertoire of Genovesi's thought in which Voulgaris was unable or unwilling to follow him. Antonio Genovesi established himself in the intellectual firmament of Italy through the publications between 1743 and 1752 of the four volumes of the *Elementa metaphysicae*, a work through which he discharged his conventional professional obligation to the academic community as holder of the chair of Ethics in the University of Naples. His career as a writer, however, and his interests went beyond the publication of this academic treatise, written in Latin. Neither Genovesi's leading position in the movement of the Enlightenment in Italy, nor his subsequent fame, are due to the composition of this early imposing opus. They were secured rather by shorter studies on political and social philosophy and criticism, and works on political economy, written in the decades following upon the publication of his treatise on metaphysics, which placed him in the vanguard of the movement for social and political reforms in his native country.²⁹

Two years after the completion of the first edition of the *Elementa*, Genovesi published the *Discorso sopra il vero fine delle lettere et delle scienze* (1753). This work constitutes a manifesto for the spirit of social utilitarianism that was characteristic of the Enlightenment; shortly afterwards the Neapolitan abate and disciple of Vico made his own contribution to the debate that inspired the most important work of political thought of the period, with his observations on Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*.³⁰

This direction in this thinking continued with his speculation on political economy during the following decade, which culminated in a programme of social reform of more general implications. The stimulus for these speculations now stemmed from the demand for social justice and the youthful metaphysician was transformed in his maturity into a critical social and political philosopher.³¹

These developments in Genovesi's thinking remained outside Voulgaris's range of vision. In social thought and in visualizing a new type of political community, Evgenios could no longer follow Genovesi, despite being the younger of the two. It is at this precise point that are to be found the limits of his intellectual affinity with the pioneering representative of the Neapolitan Enlightenment. These limits coincide with the boundaries of Evgenios's political thought, which remains anchored in the ideal of Christian monarchy and „enlightened absolutism“, and proved unable accordingly to comprehend the power of the dynamic processes of change, largely of an economic nature, that were transforming European society from within.

NOTE

1. Paul Hazard, *The European Mind [1680–1715]*, New York 1963, pp. 53–79.
2. Cf. Louis Reau, *L'Europe Française au siècle des lumières*, Paris 1938 and the commentary in René Pomeau, *L'Europe des lumières. Cosmopolitisme et unité européenne au dix-huitième siècle*, Paris 1966, pp. 49–70.
3. Iossipos Moisiodax, *Απολογία*, Vienna 1780, p. 121.
4. E. Voulgaris, *Στοιχεία της Μεταφυσικής*, ed. by Spyridon Vlandis, Venice 1805, Vols. I–III.
5. Γενουησιού *Στοιχεία της Μεταφυσικής εξελληνισθέντα* [...] εκ της Λατινήςδος φωνής υπό του πανιερωτάτου Αρχιεπισκόπου Κυρίου Ευγενίου του Βουλγάρεως, Vienna 1806.

6. P. M. Kitromilides, *The Enlightenment as Social Criticism, Iossipos Moisiodax and Greek Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Princeton 1992, pp. 30–31.

7. Genovesi is a towering figure in the history of eighteenth-century Italian thought. His position in the culture of the Italian Enlightenment is extensively appraised by Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore da Muratori a Beccaria*, Torino 1969, pp. 523–644. See also the editor's introductory note in Antonio Genovesi, *Scritti*, ed. by Franco Venturi, Torino 1977, pp. VII–L (= *Illuministi Italiani. Riformatori Napolitani*, Vol. V, ed. by Franco Venturi, Milano — Napoli 1962). Specifically on the significance of Genovesi's „Disputatio“ see Eugenio Garin, *Del Rinascimento all'Illuminismo*, Pisa 1970, pp. 223–240 and on his more general philosophical background, Paola Zambelli, *La formazione Filosofica di Antonio Genovesi*, Napoli 1972. See also Vincenzo Ferone, *The Intellectual Roots of the Italian Enlightenment. Newtonian Science, Religion, and politics in the early Eighteenth Century*, transl. by Sue Brotherton, New Jersey, 1995, pp. 248–268 and passim and the pertinent comments by Claudio Manzoni, II „Cattolicesimo illuminato“ in Italia tra Cartesianoismo, Leibnizismo e Newtonianismo nel primo Settecento (1700–1750), Trieste 1992, pp. 52–57.

8. E. Voulgaris, Η λογική εκ παλαιών και νεωτέρων συνεραλισθείσα, Leipzig 1766, pp. 1–45.

9. Antonio Genovesi, *Elementa Metaphysicae*, Napoli 1751, Vol I. pp. 1–84.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 2–22: „De veterum“; pp. 22–56: „De Physiologia Graecanica“.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–84.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 74–79 (Newton), 79–84 (Wolff).

13. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60. On Campanella cf. Voulgaris, Η λογική, p. 45.

15. Genovesi, *Elementa Metaphysicae*, pp. 60–63. Cf. Voulgaris, Η λογική, p. 45.

16. Genovesi, *Elementa Metaphysicae*, I, pp. 65–70.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

19. Voulgaris, Η λογική, p. 45.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–44.

21. Genovesi, *Elementa Metaphysicae*, I, pp. 57–65.

22. Voulgaris, Η λογική, p. 49. On Voulgaris's views on language see also his introductory comments in his translation of Εισήγησις της Αυτοκρατορικής Μεγαλιότητος Αικατερίνης Β', Moscow 1770, pp. 42–44.

23. Genovesi, *Elementa Metaphysicae*, I, pp. 1–8. The full subtitle is found only in the table of contents of the work.

24. Voulgaris, Η λογική, pp. 135–144.

25. Voulgaris, Στοιχεία της Μεταφυσικής, Vol. I, p. 28.

26. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 30.

27. Genovesi, *Elementa Metaphysicae*, I, pp. 47–48, 74–77, 162–164. On the role of Locke in Genovesi's philosophy cf. Paola Zambelli, *op. cit.* pp. 122–125, 308–319, 340–342, 581–591, 718–720.

28. Cf. P. M. Kitromilides, „John Locke and the Greek intellectual tradition“, *Locke's Philosophy: Content and Context*, ed. by J. G. A. Rogers, Oxford 1994, pp. 217–235, esp. pp. 222–224.

29. See esp. Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, loc. cit. and Richard Bellamy, „Da metafizico a mercatante“ — Antonio Genovesi and the development of new language of commerce in eighteenth-century Naples“, *The Languages of Theoty in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by A. Pagden, Cambridge 1987, pp. 277–299.

30. On Genovesi's place in Italian economic thought note the appraisal by the leading nineteenth-century liberal, Giuseppe Pecchio, *Storia dell' Economia pubblica in Italia*, ed. by G. Gaspari, Carnago 1992, pp. 94–101. See especially, *Spirito delle leggi del signore di Montesquieu con le note dell' abate Antonio Genovesi*, Napoli 1777. Genovesi's great admiration for Montesquieu is recorded repeatedly in his correspondence. See Antonio Genovesi, *Autobiografia, Lettere et altri scritti*, ed. by G. Savarese, Milano 1962, pp. 63, 79, 93, 176.

31. On these aspects of Genovesi's thought see especially the notable work by Eluggero Pii, *Antonio Genovesi dalla politica economica alla „politica civile“*, Florence 1984, but also Francesco Corpaci, *Antonio Genovesi. Note sul pensiero politico*, Milano 1966.