

Adamantios Korais and the dilemmas of liberal nationalism

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i. Changing fortunes of Korais' political thought

In considering the broader subject of Korais' political thought, which is quite complex both in its development and in its content,¹ an appropriate point of departure would be a brief examination of its changing fortunes and reception in the last two centuries. Tracing this intellectual trajectory will reveal on how many levels Korais' ideas can be seen to respond to the basic questions of collective life and to fundamental political issues. Among his contemporaries Korais was primarily known as a classical scholar, on account of his authoritative editions of ancient Greek texts.² His reputation, however, was not limited to this recognition of his professional status. Increasingly, as the decades wound up, to his fame as a classicist a reputation as a political thinker was added. This subsidiary reputation grew among his Greek compatriots, who looked up to Korais for guidance in their movement for emancipation from Ottoman despotism.³ As a spokesman for the Greek liberation movement Korais acquired recognition as a man involved in serious political reflection on the conditions of freedom in modern society initially in France, especially following his appearance at the Société des observateurs de l'homme in 1803,⁴ and later in Britain through his

1. May I refer on this broad subject to P. M. Kitromilides, *Neoellinikos Diaphotismos. Oi politikes kai koimonikes idees* [Modern Greek Enlightenment. The political and social ideas], 3rd edn (Athens, 2000), p.381-427 and idem, 'Oi phaseis tis politikis skepsis tou Korai' [The phases of Korais' political thought], in *Diimero Korai* (Athens, 1984), p.102-12. Earlier contributions on Korais' political thought include the essays by St. Papafrangos and M. Volonakis in *I ekatontaetiris tou Adamantiou Korai* [The centennial of Adamantios Korais] (Athens, 1935), p.107-23 and 124-39 respectively and especially Th. Kokkaliadis and G. Moutafis, *O Adamantios Korais peri politeias kai dikaiou* [Adamantios Korais on the state and law] (Chios, 1935).
2. See Raoul Baladié, 'La place de Coray dans la philologie du début du XIX^e siècle', in *Korais kai Chios I*, p.17-27.
3. Kitromilides, *Neoellinikos Diaphotismos*, p.422.
4. For details see Aik. Koumarianou in *Diimero Korai*, p.113-42. See also Jean-Luc Chappey, *La Société des observateurs de l'homme (1799-1804). Des anthropologues au temps de Bonaparte* (Paris, 2002), p.444-45. See also the contribution by Roxane D. Argyropoulos in this collection.

correspondence with Jeremy Bentham and contacts with other Philhellenes involved in Philosophic Radicalism,⁵ in Germany, where his political reflections on the construction of a liberal democratic state were translated by Karl Iken as an essay in political theory⁶ and even in the USA through his correspondence with Thomas Jefferson⁷ and Edward Everett, the President of Harvard University.⁸ Korais' status as a political theorist representing an expanding horizon of liberal thought in Europe was exalted in the earliest authoritative biographical account of his life and work published by Louis de Sinner in *Biographie universelle* in 1836.⁹ Whereas Korais' fame as a classicist was canonised in major works of classical scholarship, including the writings of Georg-Friedrich Creuzer¹⁰ among his contemporaries and later on of Wilamowitz,¹¹ his reputation as a liberal political thinker was confirmed by the French translation of his letters on the French Revolution,¹² which were used by Hippolyte Taine in his historical writings.¹³

Thus one could suggest that the reception of Korais' political thought remained a part of the liberal canon throughout the nineteenth century. Things changed in the twentieth century. The origin of the change in Korais' reception could be traced to his changed ideological status within Greece itself. Whereas earlier in the nineteenth century Korais had

5. See Fred Rosen, *Bentham, Byron and Greece. Constitutionalism, nationalism and early liberal political thought* (Oxford, 1992), p.224-25, 248. Also P. M. Kitromilides, 'Jeremy Bentham and Adamantios Korais', *The Bentham newsletter*, No. 9 (1985), p.34-48; *Enlightenment, nationalism, orthodoxy, 'Variorum'* (Aldershot, 1994), Study no.VIII].
6. Karl Iken, transl., *Vom Alten und Neuen Hellas. Worte an die Griechische Nation [...] Zugleich als Einleitungsschrift zur Politik des Aristoteles* (Leipzig, 1823).
7. The Jefferson-Korais correspondence has been published repeatedly. The most recent reproduction in the original languages is by A. Moulakis in the conference proceedings *Korais kai Chios* I, p.269-84. For a complete listing of earlier versions and thoughtful commentary see I. D. Evrigenis, 'A founder on founding: Jefferson's advice to Korais', *The Historical review / La Revue historique* I (2004), p.157-81.
8. See George Soulis, 'Adamantios Korais and Edward Everett', in *Mélanges offerts à Octave et Melpo Merlier*, vol.2 (Athens, 1956), p.397-407.
9. Louis de Sinner, 'Coray (Diamant)', *Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne. Supplément*, vol.61 (Paris, 1836), p.358-75.
10. G.-F. Creuzer, *Aus dem Leben eines alten Professors. Deutsche Schriften* (Leipzig and Darmstadt, 1848), vol.I, p.157. On Creuzer's influence on other contemporary hellenists in France, including Edgar Quinet, see Roxane D. Argyropoulos, 'L'esthétique du paysage grec chez Edgar Quinet', *The Historical review / La Revue historique* III (2006), esp. p.178-79.
11. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998), p.5.
12. *Letters de Coray au protopsalte de Smyrne Dimitrios Lotos sur les événements de la Révolution Française, 1782-1793*, transl. by the Marquis de Queux de Saint Hilaire (Paris, 1880). Also *Lettres inédites de Coray à Chardon de la Rochette (1790-1796)*, ed. Emile Egger and Marquis de Queux de Saint Hilaire (Paris, 1877).
13. Hippolyte Taine, *Les Origines de la France contemporaine, la Révolution II: la conquête jacobine* (Paris, 1881), p.138-92.

occupied a prominent place as a liberal theorist of the Greek revival and a staunch spokesman for republicanism, by the 1870s when his remains were transported from Paris to a mausoleum in Athens and his statue placed in front of the University of Athens next to that of Ioannis Capodistrias, whom he had so strongly opposed in his last years, he was transformed into a prophet of national emancipation and regulator of the purist Greek language.¹⁴ This image, especially that of a prophet of nationalism, spilled over from Greek and philhellenic perceptions into European scholarship in the twentieth century. Korais appears in writings on nationalism with a remarkable regularity as one of the nationalist visionaries, who in the early nineteenth century articulated their peoples' aspiration to modernisation through national emancipation and independent statehood: Arnold Toynbee,¹⁵ Carlton Hayes,¹⁶ Hans Kohn¹⁷ all refer to Korais as a nationalist prophet. Carlton Hayes, nevertheless, with more perceptiveness includes him in his distinguished list of liberal nationalists along with Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi in Italy, Guizot, Michelet, Victor Hugo and Ledru-Rollin in France, Austin, Grote and John Stuart Mill in England, Kossuth in Hungary, Palacky in Czechoslovakia and Daniel O'Connell in Ireland, to mention just a few of the most illustrious among those listed.

Korais' reputation as a prophet of nationalism has been enhanced and established on a firm foundation in contemporary scholarship by Elie Kedourie's discovery and translation of the *Mémoire sur l'état actuel de la civilisation dans la Grèce* in his anthology of foundational texts of nationalism in Asia and Africa.¹⁸ Kedourie extolled the importance of Korais' text as a precocious example of the process of transmission of western ideas into non-western contexts, a process that set in motion the worldwide expansion of western ideas and values.¹⁹ From Kedourie's translation and commentary Korais' views became quite well known in the

14. See characteristically C. Sathas, *Neoelliniki philologia* [Modern Greek philology] (Athens, 1868), p.662-72 and also in *Neoellinikis philologias parartima* [Appendix to Modern Greek philology] (Athens, 1870), p.236-70. Sathas remarks, nevertheless, that after the Independence of Greece, Korais' views on language were neglected even by his followers. Also A. Goudas, *Vioi paralliloi* [Parallel lives], vol.II (Athens, 1870), p.81-121. See also the contribution of Peter Mackridge in the present collection for a broad appraisal.

15. Arnold Toynbee, *The Western question in Greece and Turkey. A study in the contact of civilizations* (Boston, MA and New York, 1923), p.332; 'Korais, the first modern Greek man of letters to be treated as an equal by western intellectuals', p.335, 337-38.

16. Carlton Hayes, *The Historical evolution of modern nationalism* (New York, 1955), p.158.

17. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of nationalism. A study in its origins and background* (New York, 1967), p.539-43.

18. *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*, ed. Elie Kedourie (New York, 1970), p.153-88.

19. *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*, p.37-48.

field of studies in nationalism, and were noted by Benedict Anderson²⁰ and many others.

The rather paradoxical result of the success of Korais' ideas, in remaining an object of interest and debate in a lively field of research such as the study of nationalism, has been the loss of the breadth and complexity of a many-sided corpus of ideas and its reduction to simply a one-dimensional understanding as an early doctrine of national assertion. My task in this paper will be to suggest that in Korais' political thought the doctrine of national self-determination was integrated in a broader theory of liberal rights and a moral theory of the person as an integral whole, a theory that was furthermore cognisant of the antinomy between the claims of the community and personal autonomy. In other words I should like to suggest that Korais' nationalist doctrine did not involve an unconditional recognition of the primacy of the national community over the individual, but remained aware of the tensions immanent in this relationship and ultimately sought the moral justification of national claims on the basis of their contribution to the freedom of the individual.

ii. Moral theory

Korais' liberal political theory can be considered on three levels (a) on the level of moral reasoning, his understanding of the individual self as a person, endowed with rights and duties (b) on the level of institutional conceptualisation, his prescriptions for the arrangements appropriate for the collective existence of such moral personalities (and c) on the level of the antinomy between individual autonomy and the claims of the national community.

Korais' moral theory centres upon a conception of the integrity of the human self, understood as a composite entity of soul and body and therefore subject to passions over which reason rules.²¹ This composite creature is the subject of ethics. The passions are an integral part of human nature and under the rule of reason they are so far from impediments to virtue as the wind could be considered unnecessary to his task by the captain of a boat.²² In the use of the metaphor of the passions and the sea captain Korais could be drawing on the views Voltaire attributes to the wise hermit in *Zadig*²³ but there is no record of

20. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 1983), p.70, 76.

21. A. Korais, *Prolegomena to Marcus Aurelius* (1816), in *Prolegomena* II, p.394.

22. Korais, *Prolegomena to Marcus Aurelius* (1816), p.396.

23. Voltaire, 'Zadig ou la destiné', in *Romans et contes* (Paris, 1967), p.195: 'On parla des passions [...] Ce sont les vents qui enflent les voiles du vaisseau, reprint l'ermite; elles le submergent quelquefois; mais sans elles il ne pourrait voguer.'

his source at this point in the text. Considering how meticulous Korais was as a rule in acknowledging the sources of his ideas and arguments, the metaphorical language used here in talking about the interconnection between the passions and virtue could very well reflect the extent of his integration into the moral discourse of the Enlightenment through the adoption and repetition of some of its *loci classici*. Korais follows Marcus Aurelius in approving of stoicism as the most appropriate moral theory precisely because it professes to turn humans into gods if they respect right reason and follow it faithfully in all their actions.²⁴ These integral and rational beings are also by nature social and political animals and they are following the precepts of nature whenever they solidify the bonds of society. The contrary behaviour turns individuals into filthy abscesses of the body politic.²⁵ For human society to work, human behaviour needs to conform to two principles: mutual toleration as a component of justice²⁶ and respect for equality.²⁷ This was the model of liberal ethics derived from ancient stoicism that Korais visualised in 1816, as the appropriate moral basis for a free and law-abiding community. The selection of Marcus Aurelius as the model by reference to whose ideas Korais attempted to construct his own moral theory was an eloquent testimony of the extent to which he had internalised Enlightenment moral sensibility. Montesquieu considered Marcus Aurelius' moral reflections a masterpiece of antiquity and confessed that he 'should have liked to make of him a saint'.²⁸ The translation of the *Meditations* of the Stoic Emperor by Frances Hutcheson and James Moor on the other hand was one of the hallmarks of the ethics of the Scottish Enlightenment. Korais' contribution completes the picture of Enlightenment stoicism by adding a Greek dimension to it, a dimension which characteristically illustrates the reorientation towards practical ethics in Enlightenment moral thought.²⁹

The model of liberal morality had to be taught and solidified through the socialisation of youth into its principles through education. This was Korais' unshaken conviction and the cornerstone of his social and cultural theory. To become capable of living in a free society people needed an appropriate education. First and foremost they needed to be taught what Korais calls the 'science of freedom'³⁰ [ἐπιστήμη τῆς ἐλευθερίας] following Montaigne in the essay on the education of children:

24. *Prolegomena* II, p.394.

25. *Prolegomena* II, p.423.

26. *Prolegomena* II, p.405.

27. *Prolegomena* II, p.408.

28. Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment. An Interpretation I: the rise of modern paganism* (New York, 1966), p.50-51.

29. Gay, *The Enlightenment. An Interpretation I*, p.165.

30. Korais, 'Address to the Reader in Plutarch's Politics' (1824), in *Prolegomena* III, p.114.

‘Entre les arts libéraux commençons par l’art qui nous fait libres.’³¹ Korais thought that the science of freedom could be taught primarily through politics and political ethics. This should be the primary content of the education of free citizens. Then, on the precedent of Montaigne, there could follow logic, physics, geometry, rhetoric etc.³²

These essentials of liberal ethics could be attained only after a protracted battle of removing obstacles to the moral development of individual personalities so as to make them fit and mature for liberty. Considering this question was the essence of Korais’ theory of cultural change and the major object of his reflections in the extensive prolegomena he added to his authoritative editions of ancient Greek texts. We can follow the relevant arguments in considerable detail in the ‘improvised reflections on Greek culture and language’ which Korais prefixed to the six volumes of Plutarch’s *Parallel lives* between 1809 and 1814. What we can see in this corpus of paraenetic and occasionally polemical essays is a blueprint for the reform of Greek education and cultural life on the models of the Enlightenment and a crusade for the ‘correction’ of modern Greek so as to purify it from massive foreign accretions – the living linguistic evidence of the long centuries of enslavement – and to make its grammatical affinities with classical Greek more readily recognisable. These are essays in cultural criticism but their significance for moral theory is unmistakable: in pointing to the obstacles and impediments that should be removed in order to allow the creation of the preconditions for a truly enlightened education to become possible in Greek society, Korais’ cultural criticism in essence involves an argument for the removal of obstacles to individual development.³³ His theory of cultural change was a passionate call for the release of the creative energies of the integral and rational personalities he visualises in his moral theory so as to enable them to engage in active self-development. This deeper motivation of his moral theory places Korais in tune with the new theory of man as a ‘progressive being’ taking shape in liberal European thought in the post-revolutionary period.³⁴

iii. Institutional preconditions

The institutional conceptualisation entailed by Korais’ liberal theory is considerably easier to reconstruct because he is much more explicit and affirmative in discussing the institutional arrangements and political

31. Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, ed. Albert Thibaudet (Paris, 1939), p.170.

32. Montaigne, *Essais*, p.171.

33. See Kitromilides, *Neoellinikos Diaphotismos*, p.394-402.

34. On this see Wendy Donner, *The Liberal self. John Stuart Mill’s moral and political philosophy* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1991), p.131-40.

structures required for the practice of liberty as a way of life. The fundamental prerequisite for all this is of course national emancipation. The overthrow of alien despotism and the construction of a free and autonomous political community is the *sine qua non* for even imagining the substantive goals of liberal moral theory, maturity, personal cultivation, self-development. In this Korais follows faithfully the logic of the critique of despotism that had unfolded in Enlightenment thought since Montesquieu³⁵ and was consistently voiced among his contemporaries by Benjamin Constant.³⁶ The critique of despotism comprised the argument concerning the stifling of the individual personality and its creative energies, which acquired critical significance in view of the claims of liberal moral theory. The overthrow of despotism and its replacement with political autonomy was therefore a necessary condition for the attainment of the goals of personal liberty and self-development. In substantive terms this was also the justification of national independence on the level of moral theory.

To serve its substantive moral purposes national independence had to be inextricably intertwined with a liberal political order, which for Korais possessed a pronounced democratic character, defined by the primacy of equality as the foremost political value and the republican shape of institutional arrangements. The emphasis on equality is clearly audible in his moral essays, as has already been noted above, and it is repeatedly made explicit in his political writings. Equality had remained foremost on Korais' agenda of political values since the radical phase of his political thought at the close of the eighteenth century, when he had announced his intention to translate Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social contract*.³⁷ The flirtation with Rousseau's ideas, nevertheless, did not cancel Korais' earlier critique of Jacobinism, which he had voiced in his commentaries on the French Revolution in the 1790s.³⁸ In his critique of Jacobinism he had insisted that liberty without justice is pure banditry³⁹ and the same emphasis on justice had tempered his

35. On Korais' admiration of Montesquieu's ideas see *Allilographia* I, p.279 where he characterises the author of the *Spirit of the laws* as 'the foremost political thinker' of France.

36. Korais does not refer to Benjamin Constant as extensively as he does to other liberal thinkers but he did possess, read and annotate his writings, which still survive in his library in Chios. He was especially interested in B. Constant, *De la Religion, considérée dans sa source, ses formes et ses développements*, vols I-III (Paris, 1824-1827).

37. See *Peri amartimaton kai poinon politikos theoroumenon Syggramma Kaisaros Vekhariou* [Of crimes and punishments from a political point of view written by Cesare Beccaria], translated by D. Korais (Paris, 1802), p.210.

38. For a survey see P. M. Kitromilides, "'Témoin oculaire de choses terribles". Adamantios Korais, observateur de la Révolution française', *Dix-huitième siècle* 39 (2007), p.269-83.

39. *Allilographia* I, p.247.

understanding of equality as a precondition of liberty, as he makes clear at several points in his prolegomena.

This matrix of political values is repeated at length in the extensive prolegomena to Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean ethics*, published in 1821 and 1822, which could be considered the chartered texts of Greek independence. In these essays, which were appropriately retitled by their translator into German as 'Political Exhortations to the Greeks',⁴⁰ Korais outlines the political ethics whose practice could, alone, supply substantive content to the newly acquired national emancipation, brought about by the overthrow of the despotic yoke. At this stage in the evolution of his political thought one can observe the ordering of priorities that define the basic dilemma of liberal nationalism over the tensions immanent in the complex relation between personal and communal autonomy. The dilemma inevitably arises once communal or national autonomy is accomplished. In 1821 with the initial success of the Greek Revolution and the subsequent declaration of Greek independence on the first of January 1822, Korais with his 'soul shaken by a great earthquake'⁴¹ became convinced that national independence had been achieved. A very moving testimony by the English Utilitarian liberal John Bowring has captured the emotion with which the ageing sage of Paris was receiving the news of the Greek victories, which had assured the independence of his homeland:⁴² 'I saw him in August 1821. The sons of Greece were gathered round him, and he was listening to the different tales they brought of the struggle against the Turks. "I foresaw all this, but I believed it would take place when my pilgrimage was over. I foresaw it", and tears flowed fast from the "old man's" cheeks...'

Despite this emotion and the enthusiasm it brought for the prospects of a free Greece, it is obvious from the textual evidence we possess from the same period that serious reasoning over these prospects convinced Korais that the achievement of national independence was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the safeguard of genuine individual freedom and the creation of a free society in liberated Greece. For this purpose constitutional guarantees were necessary and these could only be supplied by a genuinely republican political order. This message comes across in his detailed commentary on the political constitution of Greece voted by the First National Assembly at Epidaurus on 1 January 1822.⁴³

40. See note 6 above.

41. *Aristotelous Politikon ta sozomena*, ed. A. Korais (Paris, 1821), p.cxliv [*Prolegomena* II, p.746].

42. John Bowring, *Autobiographical recollections* (London, 1877), p.323.

43. A. Korais, *Simeioseis eis to Prosrinon Politevma tis Ellados* [Notes on the Provisional Constitution of Greece], ed. Th. Volidis (Athens, 1933). This remarkable work of political theory remained unpublished in Korais' own lifetime and throughout the nineteenth century.

Korais' commentary is a remarkable monument of liberal constitutionalism and as such it can be favourably compared with the commentary devoted to the same constitutional model by Jeremy Bentham.⁴⁴ The thrust of Korais' argument is upon the solidification of the republican character of the regime,⁴⁵ the limitation of the executive and the guarantee of the prevalence of the legislature,⁴⁶ the active promotion of all forms of political equality⁴⁷ and the protection of individual rights.⁴⁸ Only by means of such institutional arrangements could national independence acquire substantive liberal content and meet the requirements of a free society in which each and every citizen could enjoy the blessings of freedom and personal development. In other words only in such a republican context could Korais' liberal moral theory be vindicated.

iv. The dilemmas of liberty

Korais' agenda remained clear on the priorities of political morality that ought to guide the liberation of Greece. But the turn of events in the fledgling new state soon after the early 1820s fed his worries and obscured the prospects of liberty he had initially thought so bright and hopeful. The new concerns, however, acted as catalysts for the clearer articulation of his political judgement over the tensions raised by the dilemmas of liberal nationalism. Clearly the record of political experience convinced Korais that national independence, while important and necessary as a precondition, still could not by itself bring about genuine political and civil liberty. This was the message of the political dialogues Korais published in the last decade of his life on 'Greek interests'. In these texts he counselled against discord and self-seeking in public life and warned of the lurking danger that might bring recently liberated Greece under the sway of 'Christian Turks'.

An attempt to include it in Korais' posthumous writings published in 1881 was cancelled on account of its strong antimonarchical tone. The work finally appeared in print only in 1933 after Greece had become a republic in 1924.

44. See Jeremy Bentham, *Securities against misrule and other constitutional writings for Tripoli and Greece*, ed. Philip Schofield (Oxford, 1990), p.207 seq. Bentham had read the Provisional Constitution of Greece, voted by the First National Assembly at Epidaurus on 1 January 1822 in a French version in C. D. Raffanel, *Histoire des événements de la Grèce* (Paris, 1822), p.429-40. An English translation was published by the London Greek Committee in 1823.
45. See Korais, *Simeioseis*, p.38-40: 'the future constitution of Greece should be modeled on that of the "Anglo-Americans", which is the most perfect of all those in existence'.
46. Korais, *Simeioseis*, p.48-109. Note especially p.50-64, 69-70, 74-77.
47. Korais, *Simeioseis*, p.20-30, 135-36.
48. Korais, *Simeioseis*, p.3-20, 30-37. His concern for the protection of basic civil liberties is mostly reflected in his comments on the administration of justice. See Korais, *Simeioseis*, p.118-26.

This ingenious expression referred to Greeks who had adopted the mentality of their former masters and were ready to turn the independence of Greece to their own private advantage through the imposition of new forms of tyranny. What Korais feared most in these 'Christian Turks' were the habits of despotism that could stifle in the bud the new freedom of Greece, which had been conquered with so much blood and sacrifices. As it turned out, in his final years Korais had the bitter experience of being led by political events to single out as foremost among these 'Christian Turks' the first head of state of free Greece, Governor Ioannis Capodistrias. Korais' opposition to the Governor came after the initial enthusiasm he expressed at Capodistrias' election in 1827. In his prolegomena to his edition of Epictetus' *Discourses* Korais had called Capodistrias 'a true statesman in theory and practice, of whose virtues Greece could rightly be proud and from whom she can reasonably hope salvation and prosperity'.⁴⁹ On his way to Greece Capodistrias had thanked him for these words in a letter sent to him from Ancona on 2 December 1827.⁵⁰

Such had been Korais' initial feelings toward Capodistrias, whom he described as a new Timoleon, recalling the ancient Corinthian general's struggles against the tyrants but also his strivings for the reconstitution of democratic regimes in the Greek cities of Sicily.⁵¹ Later on, however, disappointment set in. Korais disapproved of Capodistrias' initiative to suspend representative government and to govern dictatorially for a period until public order could be established in the new state. This development turned Korais actively against Capodistrias, whom he now denounced as a new tyrant.⁵² This was probably a failure of judgement on the part of Korais, due to misinformation by the many enemies gained by the Governor's effort to impose due processes of government in a totally chaotic situation. In fact many of the Governor's enemies, especially local oligarchs craving for the perpetuation of their sectional interests, could be considered closer to the model of 'Christian Turks' than the Governor himself, even in Korais' own terms. Nevertheless Korais' attitude illustrated his devotion to the more general principle of political and civil liberty as an essential corollary that alone makes national independence meaningful. This I think supplies quite import-

49. *Prolegomena* III, p.559.

50. *Thereianos*, III, p.92. The letter *in extenso* in *Allilographia* VI, p.64-65.

51. *Prolegomena* III, p.586-87, 588, 595. Note his appeal to Capodistrias in *Prolegomena* III, p.589-91.

52. Korais' open attack on Capodistrias came in two dialogues published under the pseudonym G. Pantazidis, entitled, *Ti sympherei eis tin eleftheromenin apo Tourkous Ellada na praxeï [...]* *dia na mi doulothi eis Christianous Tourkizontas* (Paris, 1830 and 1831).

ant evidence of the consistency of Korais' unwavering position on the normative primacy of individual and civil liberty.

The depth of his commitment to individual rights and civil liberty also emerges, in a revealing initiative of these same years, over a Greek translation of one of the most articulate texts of French liberalism at the time, the *Essai sur les garanties individuelles*, which François Daunou published in 1819. This work, which contemporaries judged as 'the best book on politics to appear since Montesquieu', had become 'the manual of all peoples who aspired to liberty'.⁵³ In 1822 it had been translated into Spanish and published in Buenos Aires and as early as 1823 Korais had conceived the project to have it translated into Greek, a task eventually carried out by one of the closest associates of his final years, Philippos Fournarakis.⁵⁴

Korais' liberal commitment is confirmed by an equally important and revealing statement in his autobiography, published posthumously shortly after his death in 1833. Writing in 1829, Korais appears appalled at the 'most senseless and crazed behaviour of many of those involved in politics in Greece', whom he considers responsible for the tribulations of the Greek people. He ascribes the misfortunes to the lack of education of those involved in public life and goes on to put forward a truly momentous judgement: 'had the revolution happened thirty years later' the nation would have had better educated leadership, it would have conducted its liberation struggle with greater precaution [*πρόνοιαν*] and it would have inspired greater respect in foreigners, which might have spared it all the evils it had suffered from the Holy Alliance.⁵⁵

What Korais is saying in this judgement is that national independence is not an end in itself if it cannot guarantee responsible leadership, wise politics and civil liberty. These blessings of free government in fact constitute the justification of independence. In the classic dilemma, therefore, that often arises between civil liberty and personal autonomy on the one hand and the claims of nationality and the ambitions of nationalism on the other, Korais appears to ascribe moral priority to liberty and the rights of the individual. This is an important contribution towards the evaluation of the difficult dilemmas posed by liberal nationalism, and it makes Korais' political thought appear much more sophisticated, complex and nuanced than merely the vision of a prophet of nationalism.

53. See *Documents biographiques sur P. C. F. Daunou*, ed. M. A. H. Taillandier (Paris, 1847), p.254-55.

54. Korais' project for a Greek translation of Daunou is studied in detail by Ph. Iliou, 'Stin trochia ton Ideologon', *Chiaka Chronika* 10 (1978), p.36-68. See also Roxane D. Argyropoulos, 'La pensée des Idéologues en Grèce', *Dix-huitième siècle* 26 (1994), p.423-34.

55. *Prolegomena* I, p.xxix.

