

When Greeks and Turks Meet: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Relationship since 1923

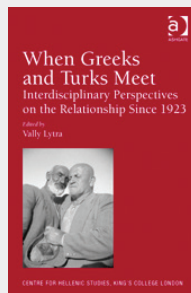
Edited by Vally Lytra

Ashgate and Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London, 2014, 342 pages, £80.00, ISBN: 9781472406187.

Reviewed by Nikos Christofis

WHEN GREEKS AND TURKS MEET, a collection of essays compiled under the editorship of Vally Lytra, who pens also the historical and theoretical introductory essay of the volume, is the product of collaboration between the Centre for Hellenic Studies at King's College London and the Turkish Studies programme at SOAS. The volume is a strong, successful move forward in de-mythologizing the dominant historiographical narratives of Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus, whose intertwined histories have led the countries to see each other as natural enemies engaged in a perpetual state of conflict. The fourteen essays in the volume are divided into three parts, and the essays take up varying perspectives ranging from history and international relations to linguistics and literature.

The first part of the book begins with Rene Hirschon's essay, which traces the interactions of history, memory, and emotion in the Greek-Turkish context and shows how this interaction has affected and influenced the relations of the two countries, to be complemented by Olga Demetriou, who adds to the examination of memory and loss, employing the latter concept as a distinct analytical category and opening up the way for further endeavours in the field. The concept of "loss" is masterfully utilized by Demetriou in her account of Greek-Turkish encounters and in particular as regards to



Cyprus. Hercules Millas' essay adopts a comparative analysis of history textbooks and literature and seeks to highlight and promote to his students what he refers to as 'self-knowledge.' In the last essay of the first part, Panagiotis Poulos argues in favour of revisiting the shared Ottoman musical heritage

of Greece and Turkey within the scope of modernity. Although the *Rum* musicians of Istanbul may have vanished, Poulos rightly argues that their disappearance was the result of "an outmoded world that both Greeks and Turks strived urgently to change." (p. 99)

The second part of the book presents three essays on Cyprus. In the first essay, James-Ker Lindsay takes up the vantage point of international relations and asks whether "a Cyprus solution still matters." The author states that in order to comprehend and "solve" the issue, all of the relevant actors should agree to take action in that regard by trying to understand each other. In the subsequent essay, Yiannis Papadakis presents a comparative analysis of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot textbooks on the history of Cyprus to skilfully demonstrate the shifts imposed upon the narratives of history textbooks depending on the political parties that have been in power. Thus, Hellenocentric and Turkocentric paradigms tend to dominate in the two communities of the island. In the last chapter on Cyprus, Constandina

Charalambous provides an engaging account of “us” and “them” through observations of and participation in Turkish-language classes at a Greek Cypriot school. Taking up a linguistic approach, Charalambous identifies the difficulties and complexities the teacher had to deal with when the issue at hand concerned Turks and Turkish Cypriots. Charalambous’ contribution is also significant because its methodological approach could be expanded to all Greek Cypriot schools that teach Turkish as a foreign language and thus offer up a way to examine and deconstruct dominant stereotypes of Turks/Turkish Cypriots. Also employing a linguistic framework, Peter Mackridge investigates the Turkish linguistic elements that exist in the Greek language and concludes that there are two coexisting and contradictory Greek attitudes regarding linguistic borrowings from Turkish. One exists on an intellectual and ideological level (as regards “shameful stains on the Greek language”), and the other is on an emotional level (Turkish loanwords that speak directly to people’s hearts). (p. 164) In the final essay in this section, Natasha Lemos compares two popular works from Greek and Turkish literature: Elias Vanezis’ *Number 31328* and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’s *The Outsider*. The author examines how the two authors present not images of the “other” but employ a relatively neglected method, that of representations and images of the self.

The third and final section of the book focuses on the discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Through analyses of the Lausanne Convention and the population exchange that followed soon after it was signed, Konstantinos Tsitselikis discusses how the ‘unmixing’ carried out between the two countries has been seen in public and academic discourses through a diachronic perspective from 1923 to contemporary times. The next three chapters

deal with the Greek-Orthodox (*Rum*) minority in Istanbul, which as eloquently summarized in the introduction, existed in relation “to three key minority institutions: the Church, the media and schools in Turkey in diachronic perspective.” (p. 15) Dimitris Kamouzis deals with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its incorporation into modern Turkey and presents a diachronic account of the Patriarchate through official/unofficial practices and the negotiations undertaken between Greece and Turkey. Eylem Yanardağoğlu’s chapter offers up a critical account of the development, transformation and decline of the media sector run by the Greek-Orthodox minority from the early twentieth century until today. This examination sheds light on how the Greek minority responded to state policies and found ways to fund minority media institutions as they sought to increase the size of their target audience and “open up” to ethnic Turkish-speaking groups. Yanardağoğlu’s contribution is more relevant than ever, given the fact that the Greek-language newspaper *Apoyevmatini*, which was published in Turkey, closed down last year. In the next chapter, Ayşe Özil focuses on the legal and administrative aspects of minority educational institutions, and she concludes that the education framework in Turkey, as well as legislation in general concerning non-Muslims, did not offer long-term solutions or accord them status of legality. However, the author notes that there have been some improvements in the past decade marking a new outlook on the minority question in Turkey. Remaining in education but in the context of Greece and in particular the Muslim minority in Western Thrace, Thalia Dragonas and Anna Frangoudaki present their findings in the last chapter of the book based on a fifteen-year program aimed at reforming the education

of Muslim minority students. The authors discuss the initial prejudices and suspicions of the Muslim minority and the changes that came about after lengthy interactions and the establishment of stronger relations between the majority and minority in the region. The positive outcomes of the on-going process of transformation in Thracian society cannot be denied, and they testify to the fact that such initiatives must continue and it is through education that social actors can be empowered and build “bridges over troubled water.” (p. 309)

While some contributions make stronger cases than others and there could have been a more even ratio of Greek and Turkish contributors, overall *When Greeks and Turks Meet* offers a well-written, balanced, and engaging study. It is a welcome contribution to the field, especially because of the interdisciplinary and comparative approach that many of the contributors employ. Along with other studies in the field I am sure that this work will be useful for both professionals and non-professionals alike, including students and researchers, as an indispensable resource.

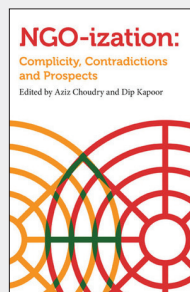
NGOization: Complicity, Contradictions and Prospects

Edited by Aziz Choudry and Dip Kapoor

London & New York: Zed Books, 2013, 245 pages, £65.00, ISBN: 9781780322582.

Reviewed by Barış Gençer Baykan

NGOs (non-governmental organizations) are proliferating dramatically in number (3.3 million in India, 1.5 million in the US), and they are present in virtually in every country in the world. They are involved in diverse issues, and their increasing impact on national and international politics has generated a vast literature on NGOs.



book’s main argument is that the process of *NGOization* frequently undermines local and international movements for social change and environmental justice and/or oppositional anti-colonial and anti-capitalist politics, in complicity with state and private sector interests.

Based on previous work by the co-editors, *NGOization: Complicity, Contradiction and Prospects* takes a highly critical stance toward the “professionalization of dissent,” which is how they define the term, *NGOization*: “Professionalization, depoliticization and demobilization of movements for social and environmental change.” (p. 1) The

The book’s chapters discuss a wide range of NGOs operating in developing and transition countries such as South Africa, Kyrgyzstan, India, Canada, Serbia and the Philippines and also in different communities, including Indigenous People, fishing communities, feminists, farmers, and the urban poor. There is a common thread to all this. NGOs are the favored institutional form of address-