

***Performances of Ancient Greek Tragedy and Hellenikótita:
The Making of a Greek Aesthetic Style of Performance
1919-1967***

Ioanna Roilou-Panagodimitrakopoulou
M.A. in Theatre Studies
M.A. in Modern Drama

Submitted for a Ph.D thesis
Department of Theatre Studies
Lancaster University

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Abstract

This thesis studies the phenomenon of the production of tragedy in Greece during the period 1919-1967 in relation to the constitution of Greek culture during this period and the ideologem of *hellenikótita*. It argues that theatre in Greece through the productions of tragedy proposed an aesthetic framework of performances of tragedy that could be recognised as 'purely Greek' within which the styles of productions moved.

The whole issue is discussed using Bourdieu's model of the development of the 'field of cultural production'. Particularising this model in the field of theatre, the thesis argues that, due to the lack of Greek dramatic plays rich in symbolic capital, the productions of tragedy became the area where the 'sub-field of theatrical restricted production' was developed in Greece. This development, however, presupposed that the field of performance had to meet the two crucial challenges that Greek culture faced during this period. The first one consisted of the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the frame

of the aesthetic ideology of the capitalist class which claimed the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages placing emphasis on the use of *demotiki* and the Byzantine and more recent phases of what is considered ‘Greek’ culture.. The second consisted of the unavoidable reference to the European theatrical tradition in such a way that it would lead to styles of performances that could be characterized as ‘purely Greek’ and face Europe as a rival. Both these issues touched heavily on the issue of *hellenikótita*, which during this period consisted of a principal qualitative criterion to assess the symbolic capital of cultural products.

The main argument of the thesis is discussed in relation to the work of five directors, the Sikelianoí, that is, Ággelos Sikelianós and his wife Eva Palmer-Sikelianoú, Fotos Politis, Dimitris Rondiris and Károlos Koun. These directors are the main representatives of what is considered in this thesis to be the first and the second phase in the history of the ‘sub-field of restricted theatrical production’ in Greece. It is argued that these directors proposed aesthetic styles of performances renegotiating, on the one hand, the European theatrical tradition in Greek cultural terms and creating, on the other, a ‘Greek’ aesthetic style/s of performance by drawing from the entirety of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture. The body of the productions of tragedy during that period in combination with the articles and other material, for example speeches, provided by the directors themselves constitute a discourse on *hellenikótita* and Greek performance. Within that framework it is argued that Greek theatre through the productions of tragedy participated equally and dynamically as other cultural field in the constitution of Greek culture during that period.

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I also want to thank my friend, Associate Professor Katerina Kaleri, who helped me to understand how I should think and express myself as a scientist in a time when I was full of ideas but had no idea of how to put them in order and present them.

In addition, I want to thank the Director of the National Theatre, Nikos Kouřkoulos for allowing me to study the National Theatre's Archives. I want especially to thank Dimitris Dimarakis, who was in charge of the National Theatre's Library and Archives at the time I was researching, for his help and his willingness to provide me with all the material I needed. I also want to thank the KΘBE (State Theatre of Northern Greece) and ΘOK (Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus) for supplying me with the material of their performances of tragedy that I asked for. Although in the end I did not use it, I intend to use it in future works. Finally I should mention that, unlike the state theatres, the Théâtre Technis was unwilling to provide me with the information and material I asked them for.

I want to thank my friend, director Eleni Triantafillaki, for the conversations we had on performances of tragedy and for helping me to contact the KΘBE.

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All Greek texts are translated by me unless otherwise stated.

In the transliteration of Greek names and words I decided to follow Linos Politis' example and accentuate all names or words that are stressed on their final or antepenultimate syllable, which are not normally accentuated in English language.

In regard to the accentuation of the Greek texts I decided to follow the mode of accentuation of the edition from which I was quoting. Thus for a large number of them I used the multi -accentuated system and for the small, as it proved, number of the rest of them the single-accentuated one. In the titles of the books, however, I used the official single-accentuated system so as to have a unified form in the bibliography. Furthermore I followed the spelling of the editions from which I was quoting despite the typographical mistakes that sometimes occurred.

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Introduction

The inseparable link between twentieth-century performances of ancient tragedy in Greece and the notion of ‘Greekness’ has been often pointed out or implied by both theorists and artists.¹ It has not been, however, thoroughly discussed and explained in relation to particular aesthetic styles of production. Nor has there been a study that brings together in discussion and examines the interrelations between the issues of performances of tragedy, Greek national identity and the constitution of Greek culture. This comprises the subject of this thesis and I intend to elaborate on it in relation to the constitution of a ‘sub-field of restricted production’ in Greek theatre, using Bourdieu’s model of the ‘field of cultural production’ to explain the developments that occurred in Greek theatre between 1919-1967.

I limit my study of the phenomenon of the production of ancient tragedies in the period 1919 to 1967. During this period the phenomenon presented a dynamic and solid development. It acquired systematisation and regularity regarding the consistency with which it appeared and the aesthetic approaches proposed by the Greek theatre directors working during this period. Productions of tragedy moved

¹ See for example Bakopoulou-Halls, Aiki, “Greece”, in: Michael J. Walton, *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1987, p.p. 261-296; Βαροπούλου, Ελένη, «Οι περιπέτειες του σκηνοθετικού βλέμματος» (“Adventures in Directing”), in: Spyros Mercouris (ed.), *Αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο, η επίδρασή του στην Ευρώπη (Greek Classical Theatre: Its Influence in Europe)*, Athens: Πνευματικό Κέντρο του Δήμου Αθηναίων (Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Athens, in Greek and English), 1993, p.p.67-79; Μινωτής, Αλέξης, *Το αρχαίο δράμα και η αναβίωσή του (Ancient Drama and its Revival)*, Athens: Αστρολάβος/Ευθύνη, 1987; and Χουρμούζιος, Αιμίλιος, *Το αρχαίο δράμα (The Ancient Drama)*, Athens: Οι Εκδόσεις των φίλων, 1978.

within the aesthetic framework of the 'revival of ancient tragedy' that drew from the entirety of what was considered to be 'Greek' culture in order to render the particularity of the genre of tragedy in modern times in a way that could be characterised as 'purely Greek'. Both the year 1919 and the year 1967 define the limits of this period signifying changes that directly, in the first case, and indirectly in the second affected the phenomenon.

The year 1919 may be considered as a symbolic starting point of this period. It is the year that Fotos Politis translated and directed Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which was performed in the Theatre Olympía, an indoor theatre in Athens. This production was the first production of ancient tragedy that was the outcome of a more serious and systematic approach to the issue of the production of ancient tragedy than the previous attitude which was expressed from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards.² And by serious and systematic I mean an approach that, recognising aesthetically the particularity of tragedy as a genre, faced the issue of its performance in contemporary aesthetic terms drawing on the European theatrical tradition whilst seeking at the same time to satisfy the Greek aesthetic and cultural needs of the time. On the other hand, in 1967 the Greek colonels seized political power in a *coup d'état*. The 'sub-field of restricted theatrical production' in Greece was affected, as indeed all fields of cultural production, in a catalytic way by the enforcement of dictatorship.³

² Ancient Greek tragedies were performed from the nineteenth century onwards. Moreover the number of productions increased from the beginning of the twentieth century. However, we cannot speak of any serious and systematic approach to the whole issue. See Chapter II, p. 73 and footnote 8 on the same page.

³ On the term 'sub-field of restricted production' and fields of culture see Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Johnson, Randal (ed. and intro.), Cambridge: Polity

The period 1919-1967 signified major changes that involved not only the issue of the production of tragedy but the entire field of theatrical production. It is within this framework that I intend to pursue my argument. The production of ancient tragedy acquired a particular position in the field of theatrical production in Greece that depended on and at the same time affected the development of the field itself. As I will argue, ancient tragedy acquired the position of ‘consecrated’ Greek drama and consequently the productions of tragedy the position of ‘consecrated’ Greek theatre. This development allowed the constitution of a ‘sub-field of restricted production’ in Bourdieu’s terms from 1919 onwards.

The placing of ancient tragedy in the position of ‘consecrated’ Greek drama presupposed the accession of the productions of tragic plays in the discourse on *hellenikótita* and ‘Greek’ art and culture. This discourse had already been developed in a very dynamic way in literature and to some respect in painting and music also.⁴ I intend to argue that a similar discourse was articulated and developed dynamically in theatre with regard to productions of tragedy. In that sense theatre contributed in an

Press, 1993. I will elaborate on Bourdieu’s theory and the way I intend to use it later on in this Introduction.

⁴ The discourse was first articulated in the field of literature. See among others Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο (The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period)*, Athens: Οδυσσεύς, 1989; Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973; Dimaras, C. Th., *Modern Greek Literature*, Gianos, Mary P. (trans. in English), London: University of London Press, 1974. On painting and music the main body of the discourse was articulated almost in the same period as the one articulated in theatre. On painting see Παπανικολάου, Μιλτιάδης Μ., *Ιστορία της τέχνης στην Ελλάδα Ζωγραφική και γλυπτική του 20ου αιώνα (History of Art in Greece: 20th Century Painting and Sculpture)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Αδάμ, 1999; Καρακατσάνη, Αγάπη and Στέλιος, Λυδάκης (eds.), *Οι Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι (The Greek Painters)*, vol. II, *20ος Αιώνας (Twentieth Century)*, Athens: Εκδοτικός Οίκος «Μέλισσα», 1998; Μαθιόπουλος, Ευγένιος (ed.), *Λεξικό Ελλήνων Καλλιτεχνών. Ζωγράφοι-Γλύπτες-Χαράκτες, 16ος-20ος αιώνας (A Dictionary of Greek Artists: Painters-Sculptors- Engravers, 16th-20th Century)*, vol. I-IV, Athens: Εκδοτικός Οίκος «Μέλισσα», 1998; and Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου (Modernism and “Tradition” in the Greek Art of the Interwar Period)*, Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 1993. On music this issue has not been researched thoroughly until now. Only Ρωμανού has discussed it. See Ρωμανού, Καίτη, *Εθνικής Μουσικής Περιήγησης 1901-1912 (A Journey into National Music 1901-1912)*, vol. I and II, Athens: Εκδόσεις Κουλτούρα, 1996 and *Ιστορία της έντεχνης*

equally dynamic way as other kinds of art to the constitution of ‘Greek’ culture during this period.

Within this framework I intend to discuss the issue of the production of ancient tragedy in Greece, basing my argument entirely on contemporary terms of the twenty-first century.⁵ I understand Greek tragedy, and indeed ancient Greek civilisation, as a ‘text’, in Julia Kristeva’s explanation of the term, which involves multiple productions of meaning and is inseparably linked with the interpretative praxis.⁶ And in fact the issue of tragedy as a ‘text’ in modern cultures may be better approached within the framework of intertextuality, that is, perceived as an ongoing construction from other

νεοελληνικής μουσικής (*History of the Artistic Modern Greek Music*), Athens: Εκδόσεις Κουλτούρα, 2000.

⁵ The issue of ancient tragedy is of course a vast area of research of the classical studies. My intention in building my argument was to focus exclusively on the contemporary productions of ancient tragedy in Greece. I did, however, include in my literature research a number of theoretical works on Ancient Greek theatre in Ancient Greece. The most significant of them are: Aristotle’s *Περί Ποιητικής* (*Poetics*) in the edition of the Academy of Athens, Athens: Εστία (no date of publication is noted); Sir Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb-Tragedy-Comedy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, (second edition, revised by T.B.L. Webster); Kitto, H.D.F., *Form and Meaning in drama: A Study of Six Greek Plays and of “Hamlet”*, London: Methuen, 1956; Webster, T.B.L., *Greek Theatre Production*, London: Methuen, 1970 (second edition); Webster, T.B.L., *The Greek Chorus*, London: Methuen, 1970; Taplin, Oliver, *Greek Tragedy in Action*, London, Methuen, 1978; Arnott, Peter, *Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre*, London and New York: Routledge, 1989; Rehm, Rush, *Greek Tragic Theatre*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992; Green, J.R., *Theatre in Ancient Greek Society*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994; Silk, M.S. (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996; Wiles, David, *Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; de Romilly, Jaqueline, *Αρχαία Ελληνική Τραγωδία (Ancient Greek Tragedy)*, Δαμιανού-Χαραλαμποπούλου, Ελ. (trans. in Greek), Athens: Εκδόσεις Καρδαμίτσα, 1976; Λιγνάδης, Τάσος, *Το ζώον και το τέρας: Ποιητική και υποκριτική λειτουργία του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος (The Animal and the Monster: The Poetic and Acting Function of Ancient Greek Drama)*, Athens: Ηρόδοτος, 1988; and Χουρμουζιάδης, Νίκος, *Όροι και μετασχηματισμοί στην αρχαία τραγωδία (Conditions and Transformations in Ancient Tragedy)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Γνώση, 1991 (2nd edition). Above all Vernant, Jean-Pierre and Vidal-Naquet, Pierre, *Μύθος και τραγωδία στην αρχαία Ελλάδα (Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece)*, Τάττη, Αριάννη (trans. in Greek), Athens: I. Ζαχαρόπουλος, 1991 and Meier, Christian, *Η πολιτική τέχνη της αρχαίας ελληνικής τραγωδίας (The Political Art of Ancient Greek Tragedy)*, Μανακίδου, Φλώρα (trans. in Greek), Athens: Εκδόσεις Καρδαμίτσα, 1997, which discuss Ancient Greek tragedy in terms of the socio-cultural Ancient Greek context.

⁶ Kristeva’s understanding of civilisation as ‘text’ is based on Michael Bakhtin’s theory. See Kristeva, Julia, “Le mot, le dialogue, et le roman”, in: *Σημειωτική*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969. Understanding Ancient Greek civilisation and ancient tragedy as a ‘text’ led me to consider the idea that ancient tragedy and especially tragic heroes formed a common field of reference in each given European or Western society, functioning in a way as cultural symbolic qualities. This line of thought brought me quite close to Cassirer’s notion of symbolic forms. Despite, however, the interest this line of research

texts and recasting fragments from a range of discourses on which it depends for its intelligibility rather than as a self-contained, individually-authored whole.⁷ At each given socio-historical time, the production of meaning and the interpretative praxis involved in the approach and understanding of the ‘text’ of tragedy are bound to the specific socio-cultural environment within which they take place.

In that sense my argument will be formed on the basis of the theories discussing the socio-cultural base of theatre and theatre communication and cross-culturalism. This approach presupposes that every playscript is a cultural product of the specific historical and socio-cultural environment within which it is produced. A playscript incorporates more or less prescriptively in its very texture the ‘hypothesis of presentation’, to borrow de Marinis’ expression.⁸ It complies, therefore, with the theatrical conventions of the time of its original production as these ensure its communicability with the audience it aims to address.⁹

had, it was not directly linked with the subject of this thesis. Thus I will not refer to it in the discussion of my argument, although I consider it to be one of the theoretical backgrounds of this research.

⁷ See, Kristeva, Julia, “Le mot, le dialogue, et le roman”, in: Julia Kristeva, *Σημειωτική*; and Barthes, Roland, *S/Z*, Miller, Richard (trans.), Oxford: Blackwell, 1970.

⁸ De Marinis, Marco, *The Semiotics of Performance*, O Healy, Áine (trans. in English), Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993, especially the first chapter “Dramatic Text and Mise en Scène”. See also Elam, Keir, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, London: Methuen, 1980. It is also interesting that Aristotle in his *Poetics* points out that a good playwright has to take into consideration the presupposition of a virtual performance during the process of writing the play. He writes, “One should reconstruct plots, and work them out in diction, with the material as much as possible in the mind’s eye. In this way, by seeing things most vividly, as if present at the actual events, one will discover what is apposite and not miss contradictions”. [Δεῖ δὲ τοὺς μύθους συνιστάναι καὶ τῇ λέξει συναπεργάζεσθαι ὅτι μάλιστα πρὸ ὀμμάτων τιθέμενον· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ἐναργέστατα ὁρῶν, ὥσπερ παρ’ αὐτοῖς γιγνόμενος τοῖς πραττομένοις, εὐρίσκοι τὸ πρέπον καὶ ἥμιστ’ ἂν λαμβάνοι [τό] τὰ ὑπεναντία.] Aristotle, *Poetics*, XVII 1-2, Halliwell, Stephen (ed. and trans.), Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995 (Halliwell’s translation).

⁹ The simultaneity of the production and interpretation of the theatrical signs, a process upon which communication in theatre is based, presupposes, as Fischer-Lichte among others points out, that “fundamental elements of a code shared by both the producers and the recipients must exist prior to the beginning of the performance”. Fischer-Lichte, Erika, *The Semiotics of Theater*, Gaines, Jeremy and Jones, Doris, L. (trans.), Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992, p. 138. This ‘shared code’ denotes the inseparable link that exists between a theatrical artistic product and the historical socio-cultural context within which it is produced.

It follows then that the production of a classical play in modern times, as in the case of productions of tragedy in Modern Greece, denotes an act of transferring the classical playscript from its original socio-cultural environment to another, contemporary, socio-cultural context. Patrice Pavis and Maria Shevtsova have discussed the act of transferring a playscript from one socio-cultural environment to another within the framework of the theory of cross-culturalism and the sociology of theatre. According to Pavis this transference is achieved through a series of concretisations of the original source-text, which culminates in the reception of the performance by its target audience, the 'mise en scène', in Pavis' use of the term. The 'mise en scène' consists of the final concretisation in the process of transferring the play to a target-culture.¹⁰ The process of concretisations, which intervenes between the source and the target cultures, involves necessarily the act of interpretation of the playscript by the target-culture, as Shevtsova argues.¹¹

This interpretation constitutes part of a wider interpretation of the source-culture by the target-culture, which is directly affected by the socio-cultural environment within which it takes place and tends to meet specific cultural needs of the target-culture. In a sense the target-culture renegotiates the playscript and all it represents, that is, its cultural origin, the values it holds, the aesthetic forms it adheres to, according to its own aesthetics and cultural needs. Moreover this process of interpretation and renegotiation is reiterative. It may be said that it takes the form of dialogue between a

¹⁰ Pavis, Patrice, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, Kruger, Loren (trans.), London: Routledge, 1992, p.p. 29-30, on classical plays and contemporary performances, see p.p. 48-56.

¹¹ Shevtsova, Maria, "Interaction-Interpretation, The *Mahabharata* from a socio-cultural perspective", in: David Williams (ed.), *Peter Brook and the Mahabharata, Critical Perspectives*, London: Routledge, 1991, p.p. 206-27. See also Shevtsova, Maria, "The Sociology of the Theatre, Part Three: Performance", *New Theatre Quarterly*, vol.V, no 19, August 1989, p.p. 282-300 and *Theatre and Cultural Interaction*, Australia: Sydney Studies, 1993.

given target-culture and the source-culture in the pretext of the play, which involves, however, and renegotiates the dialogues that have already been manifested between the previous phases of the target-culture and the source-culture as well. In that sense the renegotiation of a classic play by a target-culture involves also the interpretation and renegotiation of the play and the source-culture within which it was produced as this was manifested by the previous phases of that target-culture. The form that the latter kind of renegotiation may take depends on the relation between the target-culture and its previous phase/s. Sometimes it may appear as an agreement/building upon and sometimes as a denial. In the second case it approaches the classic play from a different perspective from that of the previous phase; the new perspective, however, depends to a lesser or a greater degree on the act of denial. I will argue that this was the case of the renegotiation of tragedy during the period I discuss.

The outcome of this process of interpretation and renegotiation produces a common ground, a general field of reference, both for the artists and the audience which constitute the framework within which the aesthetic form of the performance of a classic play moves. Moreover this process is affected by the 'symbolic capital' the source-culture represents within the target-culture. Thus when it comes to the production of classical playscripts, the specific position that these may acquire in the entire theatrical production of the target-culture and the 'symbolic capital' they represent affect and are affected by the structure and development of the 'field of theatrical production' itself, using Bourdieu's term.

As I will argue, the production of Greek tragedy in Greece during the period 1919 – 1967 moved within the framework of this process of interpretation and renegotiation

of Greek tragic plays and Ancient Greek civilisation by the Modern Greek culture as this was manifested during this period. The process involved also the renegotiation of these plays and their performances with regard to their previous renegotiation by the nineteenth-century Greek culture.

The process evolved primarily around the following factors, a) the constitution of the Modern Greek socio-cultural environment during the period I discuss and the constitution of its relation to Ancient Greek civilisation, particularly in what concerned the social and cultural needs that this relation tended to meet, b) the constitution of the Modern Greek national cultural policy and the position of Ancient Greek civilisation and its cultural products within it and, c) the constitution of a field of Greek theatrical production and the position that the performances of ancient tragedy held within it.

I will base the construction of the argument of my thesis on the study and analysis of these three factors elaborating first on the issues of the constitution of Greek national identity and national culture, which followed the norms of the structuring of national identities and cultures in the periphery of the capitalist world. This elaboration, apart from a brief literature review of the general argument on the subject, will be mainly based on the theoretical arguments of Greek sociologists. The last two decades have seen in Greece an important growth of sociological research especially on issues that concern nationality and Greek national identity based on the wider international debate on the subject.

I intend to concentrate on the particular features that Greek national culture developed during the period 1919-1967. I will discuss these features in relation to the social and cultural environment in Greece, that is, to the ascendance in power of the capitalist class.¹² This class proposed a new aesthetic that re-defined the relationships between Ancient and Modern Greece. Without denying the importance of Ancient Greek heritage, this aesthetic ideology drew on all the phases of what is considered to be 'Greek' culture and especially the Byzantine and the following phases of what is considered to be 'Greek' culture, that is, Greek culture during the period of the Ottoman Empire and nineteenth-century art and literature written in *demotiki*, claiming the unity of the Greek nation through the ages.¹³ In practice, however, this signified a new approach towards Ancient Greek civilisation and its function in Modern Greek culture. Firstly, Ancient Greek civilisation lost its monopolising importance within Modern Greek culture. Secondly and more importantly, Ancient

¹² By the term 'capitalist class' I refer to the class that adhered to the political transformation of Greece into a liberal democratic state. It is juxtaposed to the nineteenth-century pre-capitalist class that adhered to monarchy. Besides their political differences the pre-capitalist and the capitalist classes expressed two different concepts of 'Greece' that adhered to different nationalistic aspirations and concepts of 'Greek' culture. In reference to Greek social classes, I chose to use the terms 'capitalist' and 'pre-capitalist' instead of the terms 'bourgeois' and 'aristocratic'. For historical reasons the class division in Greece has not followed the norms of class division in Northern and Western Europe. It has to be noted that the capitalist class' struggle to wrest political power from the pre-capitalists from the 1880s on and their ascension into power in the second decade of the twentieth century coincided with the formation of the social group of capitalists as a class.

¹³ This aesthetic ideology drew on the principle of the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages. This principle characterised the nationalistic ideology of the capitalist class and recognised as inseparable parts of Greek history and culture: the Ancient Greek period, the Byzantine period and the period during which the Greeks were under Turkish rule. The pre-capitalist nationalistic ideology, formed during the period of Greek enlightenment, was based on the principle that Modern Greeks are the natural heirs of Ancient Greeks and that their historical past stopped at 338 BC, while their historical present started again in 1832 AD, when the Greek State was constituted. During the period between 338 BC and 1832 AD the Greek nation was enslaved. The differences and oppositions of these two approaches to the Greek nationalistic ideology became prominent from the middle of the nineteenth century. On this issue see Δημαράς, Κωνσταντίνος Θ., *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός (Modern Greek Enlightenment)*, Athens: Ερμής 1998 (7th edition); Πολίτης, Αλέξης, *Ρομαντικά χρόνια: Ιδεολογίες και νοστροπίες στην Ελλάδα του 1830-1880, (Romantic Years: Ideologies and Attitudes in Greece between 1830-1880)*, Athens: Μνήμων, 1993; Κιτρομηλίδης, Πασχάλης, «Ιδεολογικά και πολιτικά αιτήματα» («Ideological and Political Requests»), in: Γιώργος Δερτιλής and Κ. Κωστής (eds.), *Θέματα νεοελληνικής ιστορίας (18ος-20ος αιώνας) (Issues of Modern Greek History; 18th to 20th century)*, Athens-Komotini: Αντ. Σακκουλά, 1991, p.p. 59-72; and Petropoulos, John, "The Modern Greek State and the Greek Past", in: Speros Vryonis Jr. (ed.), *The "Past" in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture*, U.S.A.: Undena Publications, 1978, vol. I, p.p. 163-177.

Greek civilisation was approached and understood through the drawing on the Byzantine and the demotic poetry or the following phases of what is considered to be 'Greek' culture. I will argue that it was precisely on this base that theatre directors approached the issue of the production of tragedy in order to propose an aesthetic style that could be characterised as 'Greek' and could also address contemporary Greek audiences. Thus their work presupposed the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the contemporary Greek culture.

Within that context the ideologem of *hellenikótita* acquired a defining position in the new aesthetic ideology and consequently in the constitution of a culture that could be recognised as national.¹⁴ From the end of the nineteenth century and especially from the beginning of the twentieth the notion of 'Greekness', conceived as a defining aesthetic quality, consisted of a principle that could ideologically unite all the phases of what was considered as 'Greek' history and culture and their products as well as the 'Greek' cultural products that were to be produced in the future. It is not surprising therefore that, within the framework of the new aesthetic ideology and the ideologem of *hellenikótita*, a demand was expressed for a production of artistic works that could be characterised as 'purely Greek'.¹⁵ This production would concentrate on aspects

¹⁴ I chose to use the term *ideologem* transcribing it from Greek as no adequate equivalent exists in English. *Ιδεολόγημα (ideologem)* is a derived word from the word *ideology* denoting something which is a product of an ideology. In that sense the ideologem of *hellenikótita*, for example, is a product of the ideology of Greek nationalism. In contrast to ideology that presupposes a system of ideas and social beliefs, an ideologem does not denote a system. It rather refers to an idea or set of ideas, which derive from a source-ideology, and denotes the quest for and a principle of evaluation in defining cultural products or actions as expressing this idea or set of ideas. In that sense although the ideologem is firmly interrelated with the ideology it sprang from, it may seem as if it functions at times independently. The definition of a particular ideologem, although it is declared to be perennial and unchangeable in time, depends, however, on the socio-cultural conditions of a given historical time as is so with an ideology.

¹⁵ It has to be noted that the ideologem of *hellenikótita* has been linked with the literary generation of the 1930s. However, as I will argue in the rest of this thesis, the notion of *hellenikótita* and consequently of what can be recognised as 'Greek' work of art within the framework of the capitalist aesthetic ideology was expressed from the literary generation of the 1880s onwards. Especially from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards there is a growing concern in regard to the production

that promoted the idea of ‘Greek uniqueness’ and faced Europe as a rival proposing ‘Greek *Hellenism*’ as opposed to ‘European *Hellenism*’.¹⁶

Despite the ideological character of the origin of this position, a discussion was developed on the definition of *hellenikótita*. And actually this discussion in the fields of literature, painting and music was developed in such a systematic way during this period that it allows us to speak of the development of a discourse on *hellenikótita* and ‘Greek’ language, art and culture. The most known form of this discourse is to be found in the field of literature due precisely to the expressive means of literature as a form of art. The discourse was articulated in linguistic terms and at the same time the ‘Greekness’ of the Greek language itself became an object of quest. I will argue that an analogous discourse was developed in regard to the productions of tragedy that focused on the issue of *hellenikótita* and consequently on the quest for styles of performances that could be recognised as ‘purely Greek’ and thus they could be legitimised as a ‘national theatre’ in Loren Kruger’s use of the term.¹⁷ Furthermore I intend to discuss the discourse on *hellenikótita* and tragedy in relation to that of literature. I will argue that not only a correlation can be seen in what regards the interpretation/s of *hellenikótita* and the use of cultural sources in the quest for aesthetic styles that could be recognised as ‘purely Greek’, but also that Greek theatre faced some central issues of Greek culture slightly earlier than literature. The most

of ‘national art’ and the constitution of a ‘Greek’ national culture. I will argue that this was more evident in the case of theatre and specifically the productions of ancient tragedy, which were forced to face the challenges that the literary field met in the generation of the 1930s slightly earlier. Thus I chose to use the term *hellenikótita* referring to the aesthetic quests of cultural generations prior to that of the 1930s, acknowledging that there are shifts in the understanding and definition of the term from generation to generation.

¹⁶ See Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο (The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar eriod)*, p.p. 40-1 and 52-3. On the use of the expression by George Seferis see also Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου (Modernism and “Tradition” in Greek Art during the Interwar Period)*, p. 86.

important of these issues were, first, the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the framework of the new aesthetic ideology of the progressive capitalist cultural circles and, second, the unavoidable reference to the European theatrical tradition in such a way that it would lead to styles of performances that could claim an originality which would be characterised as ‘purely Greek’ and thus they would face Europe as a rival. Therefore it is my contention that theatre contributed dynamically and explicitly to the constitution of a ‘Greek’ national culture during this period.

The new aesthetic ideology and the interpretation/s of *hellenikótita* denoted a new *taste* and a new *habitus*, in Bourdieu’s terms, that affected the field of cultural production. Bourdieu ponders on the dual meaning of the word *taste* which, on the one hand, signifies “the faculty of immediately and intuitively judging aesthetic values” linking it with its other significance “the capacity of discern the flavours of foods which implies a preference for some of them”.¹⁸ In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, he elaborates on the relation between social origin, aesthetic taste, and life styles. Although in the discussion of my thesis I will use the concept of *taste* mainly in its aesthetic denotations, I consider Bourdieu’s argument as a general background of the tendencies and life-styles of the Greek dominant class during the period I discuss.

Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* refers both to the “generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification (*pincipium divisionis*) of these

¹⁷ Kruger, Loren, *The National Stage: Theatre and Cultural Legitimation in England, France, and America*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

¹⁸ Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Nice, Richard (trans. in English), London: Routledge, 1989, p. 99.

practices”.¹⁹ Bourdieu defines *habitus* as a system of “durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them”.²⁰ As Randal Johnson points out in his explanation of Bourdieu’s concept, *habitus* is a “set of dispositions which generates practices and perceptions. It is the result of a long process of inculcation, beginning in early childhood, which becomes a ‘second sense’ or a second nature.”²¹ The notion of dispositions as ‘structured structures’ “accounts for the similarity in the habitus of agents from the same social class and authorises speaking of a class habitus”.²²

The *taste* of the Greek capitalist class from the end of the nineteenth century was geared, on the one hand, towards the choice of Byzantine and the following phases of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture as sources to draw from and, on the other, towards the creation of cultural/artistic products that complied with the new aesthetic ideology and the capitalist class’ interpretation/s of *hellenikótita*. The emphasis of both the cultural sources used as well as of the artistic products that were created was laid on the expression of a style of life and thought of Modern Greece without denying the classical heritage. This heritage, however, was approached and understood

¹⁹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, p. 170.

²⁰ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Logic of Practice*, Nice, Richard (trans. in English), Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. Quotation taken from Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, p. 5.

²¹ Johnson, Randal, “Introduction”, in: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, p. 5.

²² Johnson, Randal, “Introduction”, in: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, p. 5.

through more recent cultural references.²³ Thus the concept and content of tradition changed within the framework of the *taste* of the capitalist class.

These changes were combined with a new *habitus* that pressed for a presence in culture that would dynamically break away from the dominant aesthetic ideology of the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century aesthetic ideology aimed at the ‘revival’ of Ancient Greek glory and was geared towards the ‘purification’ of Modern Greek culture from all elements which were considered alien to the Ancient Greek *Geist*. The new *habitus* denoted a dynamic and explicit way of experiencing the Greek national identity, as I will explain in the first chapter, following Tziovas’ argument on the subject. At the same time the capitalist class’ *habitus* evolved around the notion of *hellenikótita*. The *taste* and the *habitus* of the capitalist class were manifested first in literature in the literary generation of the 1880s. One of the most characteristic features of the *habitus* of the capitalist class was that of cosmopolitanism which involved, besides studies and trips abroad, a continuing contact with artistic and theoretical movements in Europe. The contact of Greeks with European culture was always prominent in Greece even before the constitution of the Greek State. The Greeks of the Diaspora in many ways enhanced this contact. The accession of the capitalist class to power, however, signified a different, dynamic attitude towards European culture. They reworked in a creative and interpretative way European artistic and theoretical movements appropriating them and expressing them in a way that was considered ‘Greek’ in the sense that it expressed the ‘Greek way’ of seeing

²³ I have in mind the short novel of Kostís Palamás *Θάνατος Παληκαριού* (*Death of a Lad*) (1901) where the main theme deals with the ideal of beauty, an Ancient Greek ideal. The writer, however, placed his story in a village near Messologi towards the end of the nineteenth century and chose as his characters simple people of the province. Thus the ideal of beauty was approached through Greek contemporary popular life. It has to be noted, however, that the turn towards the recovery of the contemporary popular life and the Greek demotic poetry had been inspired by European and especially

and experiencing the world. This process also involved a contrast between the way Greeks saw and expressed themselves and the way Europeans, and Greeks that adopted a European lifestyle and attitude, saw them. It is within this context that I understand Tziouvas' remark, cited earlier, that the cultural production of this period faced Europe as a rival proposing 'Greek *Hellenism*' against 'European *Hellenism*'.²⁴

The developments in the field of cultural production created tensions in the field of theatrical production, which, as I will explain in the first chapter, presented problems in its structure and development. It is my contention that tragedy acquired the position of 'consecrated Greek drama', in Bourdieu's use of the term, as a means to overcome these tensions and as a way of satisfying the need for the structuring and development of the field.²⁵ Within this context, as I will argue in the second chapter, tragedy's symbolic capital as a classical text was transferred in theatre through the use of tragic plays as dramatic texts-in-performance. Thus tragedy came to acquire the position of 'consecrated Greek drama' within contemporary Greek theatrical production. I will discuss the structuring and development of the field of theatrical production in Greece using Bourdieu's theoretical model about the structure and development of fields of cultural production. As the use of this theoretical model comprises the basis of my explanatory approach and a constant field of reference I will briefly elaborate on it.

According to Bourdieu's model a field of cultural production is a hierarchically structured field. Each cultural/artistic section of the field, such as literature, painting,

German Romanticism and enhanced by the need for the quest for the 'roots' of the nation in the Byzantine and the demotic tradition as a way to assert the nation's continuity through the ages.

²⁴ See above p. 10.

²⁵ See Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p. 82 and 242-3.

music, education, is structured through a space of ‘positions’ (corresponding to genres and/or sub-categories within the genres) and a space of ‘position-takings’. With regard to the ‘positions’, each one of them “depends for its very existence, and for the determinations it imposes on its occupants, on the other positions constituting the field”.²⁶ Thus the structure of the field is in essence “the structure of the distribution of the capital of specific properties which governs success in the field and the winning of the external or specific profits (such as literary prestige) which are at stake in the field”.²⁷

The space of ‘position-takings’, that is, the positions that agents in the field acquire or aspire to acquire, is structured in relation to the space of ‘positions’.²⁸ Furthermore it is developed through the forces and struggles to defend or improve one’s ‘position-taking’.²⁹ Usually the consecrated ‘position-takings’ in the field are recognised and promoted through the several institutions of art, which aspire to promote the constitution of cultural tradition. In the process of the field’s development some of the ‘avant-garde position-takings’ evolve in their turn to ‘consecrated position-takings’, allowing the evolution of new ‘position-takings’ in the avant-garde. Thus in Bourdieu’s words “the history of the field arises from the struggle between the established figures and the young challengers.”³⁰ The concept of generational struggles should not be seen in regard to biological generations, but to cultural ones, that might be sometimes almost simultaneous in their existence.³¹

²⁶ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 30.

²⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 30.

²⁸ I use the term ‘position-takings’ as Johnson does to distinguish between ‘positions’ and ‘position-takings’. Moreover the term ‘position-taking’ denotes the intervention of an agent/artist who acts in relation to it and thus it allows me to discuss agency and action.

²⁹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 30.

³⁰ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 60.

The stakes in the field, the outcome sought in the struggles within it, revolve around the acquisition of symbolic capital. In fact the acquisition of symbolic capital defines the particularity of the 'field of cultural production' in comparison to the 'fields of power and economy'. Bourdieu argues that the 'field of cultural production' constitutes an 'economic world reversed' in the sense that, rather than an economic profit, a symbolic one is sought, at least by the artists themselves. This is based on the ideology of the field which "directs attention to the *apparent producer* [...] suppressing the question of what authorises the author, what creates the authority with which authors authorise".³² Thus the importance of other factors such as critics, editors of periodicals, publishers and gallery directors is understated.

Within this framework the 'field of cultural production' is structured around two poles, one autonomous from and one dependant on the economic capital. The autonomous pole of the 'field', which consists of the 'sub-field of restricted production', is based on symbolic capital, is subject only to internal demands and is marked positively. Its autonomy "can be measured by its power to define its own criteria for the production and evaluation of its products".³³ The opposite pole, which consists of the 'sub-field of large-scale production', is based on dependence on the demands of the economic capital and is marked negatively.³⁴

Symbolic capital expresses, therefore, the core of the field, the axis around which the field is hierarchically structured. Works of art, however, "exist as symbolic objects only if they are known and recognised, that is socially instituted as works of art and

³¹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p. 53, 65, 107.

³² Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 76.

³³ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 115.

³⁴ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p. 37-43.

received by spectators capable of knowing and recognising them as such”.³⁵ Thus we may speak of a production of the value of the work. In that sense we have to take into consideration as “contributing to the production not only the direct producers of the work in its materiality (artist, writer, etc.), but also the producers of the meaning and value of the work –critics, publishers, gallery directors and the whole set of agents”.³⁶

Symbolic capital is mostly sought after and bestowed in works that are produced in the ‘field of restricted production’. These works are ‘pure’, ‘abstract’ and ‘esoteric’, that is, ‘high culture’. Bourdieu points out that:

They are ‘pure’ because they demand of the receiver a specifically aesthetic disposition in accordance with the principles of their production. They are ‘abstract’ because they call for a multiplicity of specific approaches (...). They are ‘esoteric’ for all the above reasons and because their complex structure continually implies tacit reference to the entire history of previous structures, and is accessible only to those who possess practical or theoretical mastery of a refined code, of successive codes, and of the code of these codes.³⁷

Important to the functioning of the ‘field of restricted production’ is the process of ‘consecration’. This is accomplished on the one hand by “institutions which conserve the capital of symbolic goods”, such as Museums or National Theatres. At the same time these institutions negotiate what can or cannot be consecrated by including the works of some agents and excluding the works of others.³⁸ On the other hand

³⁵ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 37.

³⁶ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 37.

³⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 120.

³⁸ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p.105-7.

“institutions (such as the educational system)” ensure “the reproduction of agents imbued with the categories of action, expression, conception, imagination, perception, specific to the ‘cultivated disposition’”.³⁹

The field’s emergence as an autonomous field of artistic production was linked with the invention of the ‘pure’ gaze, which signified the field’s capability to impose its own norms on both the production and consumption of its products.⁴⁰ Thus the development of the field becomes “more and more linked to the field’s specific history and to it alone”.⁴¹ Despite, however, the field’s claim on its autonomy, its implicit connection to the ideologies of the dominant class and to the class division within a specific socio-cultural context is evident. The constitution of ‘Greek’ culture during the twentieth century is an example of this implicit connection, as I will argue in the first chapter of this thesis.

This is so because, firstly the institutions that conserve the capital of symbolic goods and the institutions that ensure the reproduction of agents are either constituted and run by the State, which promotes the dominant class’ ideology and aesthetic taste, or by agents who belong to the dominant class and thus have the economic funds, the power and the recognition to run such institutions (for example privately owned Museums). Secondly, both the producers and the consumers of the cultural products are also the product of their education and social origin, which in essence define and refine their *taste* and render them a *habitus*.⁴²

³⁹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 121.

⁴⁰ Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, p.p. 3-5.

⁴¹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 266.

⁴² See also how economic capital provides the conditions for freedom from economic necessity and allows the propensity towards the economically most risky positions in the field and above all the capacity to persist in them. These positions are strongest in symbolic capital. Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p. 67-8.

Bourdieu points out that the homology that exists between institutions of producing and marketing cultural goods and the field of fractions of the dominant class, from which the greater part of their clientele is drawn, is most evident in the case of theatre.⁴³ In fact the close relation between theatre and the audience, which takes the form of economic dependence, places theatre in the less autonomous pole in Bourdieu's model of the field of cultural production. In that sense the constitution of a 'sub-field of restricted production' in theatre is subject to more complicated norms than other fields of culture. These norms derive from the particularity of theatre as an art form *per se*.

Bourdieu does not systematically elaborate on the issue of theatre in his discussion on the field of cultural production. He refers to drama as a genre of literature and he uses the term 'theatre' when he refers to performances.⁴⁴ This is a rather classic theoretical distinction whose roots may be traced back to Aristotle's *Poetics* and which is usually combined in literary criticism with the implicit or explicit assumption of the priority of the written text over the performance.⁴⁵ Recent theatre studies theorists, however, have shifted their attention also to performance. Both Keir Elam and Marco de Marinis, for example, discuss performance as a phenomenon that can consist of a 'text' that can be decoded and analysed in itself and in its relation to the 'dramatic text'.⁴⁶ Other theorists have also stressed the innovative presence of performance with

⁴³ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 84.

⁴⁴ Bourdieu actually places drama in the less autonomous pole of the field of literature. See Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p.47-8.

⁴⁵ See Elam, Keir, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*.

⁴⁶ De Marinis, Marco, *The semiotics of performance* and Elam, Keir, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. See also Πατσαλίδης, Σάββας, *Θέατρο και Θεωρία (Theatre and Theory)*, Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2000 and Τσατσούλης, Δημήτρης, *Σημειωτικές Προσεγγίσεις του Θεατρικού Φαινομένου: Θεωρία και κριτική ανάλυση της Σύγχρονης Θεατρικής Πρακτικής (Semiotic Approaches of*

regard to theatre during the twentieth century, which in many cases is regarded as being more decisive than that of drama.⁴⁷

Taking into consideration these more recent approaches and discussing it from a sociological point of view, it is my contention that Bourdieu's model needs to be extended in order to function better as an explanatory base from which to discuss theatre works. The positioning of drama in the field of literature is limiting and in many ways misleading. Drama is one part of what we recognise as 'theatre', the other one being performance, and although the modes of its production/creation maybe similar or identical to those of literature the mode of its transmission is not.

The transmission of a dramatic text, that is, performance, engages a number of different artists, that is, agents. If in the distant past these different artists worked under the umbrella of the dramatic writer, who in many cases was actively involved in the performance of his play, this is not the case in today's theatre.⁴⁸ In fact, from the end of the nineteenth century the realm of performance consists of its own artistic world, with its own positions of avant-garde and 'consecration' and its own producers of the value of the work, mainly theatre critics, venues, and editors of periodicals on performance.

the Theatrical Phenomenon: Theory and Criticism of the Contemporary Theatre Practice), Athens: Εκδόσεις Ελληνικά Γράμματα, 1999.

⁴⁷ See for example Brockett, Oscar G. and Finlay, Robert R., *Century of Innovation: A History of European and American Theatre and Drama since 1870*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1973 and Huxley, Michael and Witts, Noel, "Twentieth-Century Performance: The Case for a New Approach" in: Michael Huxley and Noel Witts (eds.), *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*, London: Routledge, 1996.

⁴⁸ The recognition of performance artists and the discussion on the individuality of their craft independently of dramatic texts may be traced back to the eighteenth century in the acting of David Garrick and the writings of Diderot and Lessing.

Within that context it is my contention that we have to distinguish a field of theatrical production which is independent of that of literature and which develops according to its own norms. This field is in essence a double field. The dynamic of its development depends on the development of two fields, the field of drama (by this I mean specifically the literary script) and the field of performance. Each of the two fields consists of a different set of artists.⁴⁹ The combination of a dramatic product with its performance product/s constitutes what we may call a theatrical product. There are also cases, however, of playscripts, which are not performed, and performances, which do not necessarily use a playscript.

The relation of the fields of drama and performance is rather perplexed because it takes a complicated, problematic form in what regards the 'sub-fields of restricted production' of the fields. The 'sub-field of restricted production' of performance functions, on the one hand, as producer of the value of the work of the 'sub-field of restricted production' of drama, since theatre directors in the 'sub-field' have usually a decisive opinion on the plays they will produce. This choice depends of course on the 'position-taking' they possess or they aspire to acquire within the field. Thus a director who possesses an avant-garde 'position-taking' will choose a playscript which agrees aesthetically with his/her approach to theatre or a playscript that she or he will produce within the framework of his/her own avant-garde style. In both cases she/he functions as a producer of value either by recognising that a play belongs to the avant-garde, or by widening the limits of the 'performability' of a playscript. At the same time, however, the performance she/he produces is a work of art and instigates the process of the production of its value on its own merit.

⁴⁹ I have to note that there are cases where artists of one field (drama or performance) have produced works in the other field. The production of this artistic work, however, follows the norms of the field in

Within this framework it is evident that the two fields depend on and affect one another. The structuring of a dynamic field of theatrical production is characterised by the co-existence of equally dynamic fields of drama and performance and the evolution of a strong relation, or rather of a positive interdependence, between them. There are, however, cases where the development of the two fields is not equally strong. In these cases the field which presents the prospect of a dynamic development proceeds in accomplishing it in a way that allows it to transcend the problems that the non-development or the less dynamic development of the other field causes.

Such, I will argue, is the case of the structuring of the Greek field of theatrical production, where the structuring and development of a dynamic field of performance had to transcend the inability of the field of drama to produce works rich in symbolic capital. As I will explain in the first and second chapters of this thesis, the specific history of Greek theatre lacked a 'tradition' on which to draw. In addition the dominant aesthetic tendency of the pre-capitalist class that was in power during the nineteenth century involved the 'purification' and 'cleansing' of Greek culture from anything that was considered foreign to the Ancient Greek *Geist*. This tendency touched all aspects of Greek culture, especially language and, consequently, literature and drama. Thus theatre production in Greece found itself in a difficult position. This position was further perplexed by the tensions that were exercised in the field by the demand for the creation of theatrical works rich in symbolic capital, which could be characterised as 'Greek'.

The catalytic parameter to the development of a field of Greek theatrical production, which I will elaborate on later, was the field of performance. From the nineteenth

which it was produced.

century performance in Greece presented continuity and volume of work. A number of theatre companies performed regularly from the 1860s onwards. Although we cannot speak at that stage of the production of works that could be characterised as 'Greek' the field of performance by the end of the nineteenth century succeeded in creating an implicit notion of continuity with regard to actors/actresses and practices. Thus the field of performance presented the prospect of its dynamic development and therefore it is not surprising that, as I will argue, the structuring and development of a field of theatrical production in Greece was based on the structuring and development of a field of performance.

The structure and development of a field is based in terms of Bourdieu's model on two fundamental oppositions; the opposition of the 'sub-field of restricted production' to the 'sub-field of large-scale production' and the opposition of the agents within the 'sub-field of restricted production'.⁵⁰ He observes that theatre in France was situated in the 'sub-field of large-scale production' until about 1880 when the director appeared on the scene, "notably Antoine and Lugné-Poe, who by their opposition, led to the rise of the whole space of possibles which would be manipulated by the subsequent history of the theatre sub-field".⁵¹

In essence this is what happened in the field of theatrical production in Greece. In the second chapter of this thesis I will argue that a 'sub-field of restricted theatrical production' was structured and developed in Greece with regard to the productions of tragedy. I will explain that this development was accomplished in Greece when two

⁵⁰ See Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p. 53 and 115.

⁵¹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 186. Despite this observation Bourdieu does not proceed in examining further the constitution of a field of theatrical production, relating drama and

artists engaged in the direction of tragic plays, Fotos Politis and Ággelos Sikelianós, who worked with his wife Eva Palmer-Sikelianou, promoted Ancient Greek tragedy as the area where a ‘Greek’ contemporary aesthetics of performance and theatre could develop drawing on the European avant-garde’s notion of performance and ‘Greek’ culture. It is my contention that within this framework, tragedy came to acquire the ‘position’ of ‘consecrated’ ‘Greek’ drama satisfying the need for drama works rich in symbolic capital that the field of drama had failed up to then to produce.

I will further argue in this chapter that two factors played an important part in the successful accomplishment of this development. The first one was that both Politis and Sikelianós already held ‘consecrated position-takings’ in the field of literature and thus by transferring the prestige of their positions they consequently created equally prestigious positions in the field of performance. The second factor was that their productions were the outcome of a serious and systematic approach to the issue of the performance of tragedy in contemporary times. This approach raised the issue of the quest for a ‘Greek’ aesthetic style of performance. In that sense the production of tragedy was accessed in the discourse on *hellenikótita* and Greek art that consisted of the core of the ‘sub-field of restricted production’ in all the fields of cultural production in Greece at that time.

Productions of ancient tragedy during the period I discuss moved within the aesthetic form that came to be known as ‘revival of ancient tragedy’. This aesthetic form was considered as the ‘Greek’ way of performing tragedy and functioned, as I will argue, as a set of criteria for the legitimisation of aesthetic quests rendering them the quality

performance. He elaborates mainly on the conditions of the production of the work and the value of the work in French theatre. Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p. 84-6, 126-7.

of 'purely Greek'. The issue of the opposition between agents concerned their claim to orthodoxy with regard to the approach and practice which best expressed the specificity of the form of 'revival'.

I intend to discuss the issue of the production of tragedy in Greece between 1919-1967 with regard to the work of five directors, the Sikelianoí, that is, Áγγελος Sikelianós and his wife Eva Palmer-Sikelianού, Fotos Politis, Dimitris Rondiris and Károlos Koun. I chose these directors firstly because they are the main representatives of what I consider to be the first and the second phase in the history of the 'sub-field of restricted production'. Secondly, because it is their work on tragedy that decisively contributed to the shaping and development of the aesthetic form of 'revival' thus affecting the work of the other artists in the field. Thirdly, because it was due to their work, and especially the work produced during the second phase of the development of the 'sub-field' by Rondiris and Koun that Greek productions of tragedy were recognised also outside the borders of Greece as the 'Greek' style of performing Ancient Greek drama.

I will elaborate on the work of each individual director starting with the work of the Sikelianoí and continuing with the work of Politis, Rondiris and Koun. I will discuss their approach to the issue through their written and theatrical work focussing on their interpretation of *hellenikótita* and the way this was manifested in the aesthetic style of performance they proposed. The aesthetic styles of these directors will be elaborated on by detailed reference to one of their productions, although comments will be made on the entire body of their work on ancient tragedy. The productions that will be discussed in detail are the Sikelianoí's production of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* in

1927, Politis' production of Aeschylus' *Persae* in 1934, Rondiris' production of Sophocles' *Electra* in 1959 in relation also to his 1936 production of the same play and Koun's production of Aeschylus' *Persae* in 1965. I chose these particular plays for reasons that relate to the directors' work as well as the type and quantity of source material available. Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* set the basis for the Sikelianoí's work. Their second production of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* followed the lines already set by the *Prometheus Bound* production. Aeschylus' *Persae* was the last production of Politis and his most innovative in terms of style. The choice of this production in contrast to his other productions of tragedy presents also a unique opportunity to juxtapose Politis' performance to Koun's production of the same play in 1965. Rondiris had also produced Aeschylus' *Persae* a number of times, but unfortunately the material available for his productions of this play are insufficient in comparison to the one available for his productions of Sophocles' *Electra*. Furthermore *Electra* was Rondiris' favorite play and the 1936 production of this play was his first production of tragedy. Thus it provided me with a unique opportunity to compare it with his 1959 production of the same play with the Peiraikó Théatro, which was filmed by the BBC in 1962. For this 1959 production Aspasia Papathanassiou was awarded the first prize for her acting in the part of Electra in the *Théâtre des Nations* Festival in 1961. Finally the 1965 production of Aeschylus' *Persae* was Koun's only production of ancient tragedy with the Théatro Technis until 1967, with the exception of a rather unsuccessful, as Koun himself had stated, production of Aeschylus' *Choephorae* in 1945.

The discussion of the aesthetic styles of performances is based on material available about these productions, which consists of photographs, promptbooks, extracts of

film, video, CD, programmes and reviews on the performances. The retrieving of this material involved also research in archives of the National Theatre Library, the National Film Library of Greece, the Benákios Library and the National Library of Greece. Furthermore in my research material there are included an interview with the actress Maria Alkaïou, a family friend and a student of Politis, a lecture that Aspasia Papathanassiou gave in the department of Theatre Studies of the University of Patras as well as conversations with Christos Kelantonis and Dimitris Oikonomou, both actors of the Théâtre Technis. The former participated as a chorus member in the 1965 Théâtre Technis production of Aeschylus' *Persae*. For a full listing of the material used in this research see the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

Discussing in detail the work of these five directors I will argue that during the period 1919-1967 a 'sub-field of restricted production' was structured and developed in Greece in relation to performances of ancient tragedy. I will explain the 'position-taking' of each of these directors within the field in relation to their aesthetic approach. I will further argue that within the framework of the aesthetic styles of these productions a discourse on *hellenikótita* and a 'Greek' style of performances of tragedy was structured and developed during this period in Greece. Finally I will suggest that a tradition of 'Greek' performance was constituted with regard to productions of tragedy. Within that framework, in the work of Rondiris and especially that of Koun we can observe that the development of the 'sub-field of restricted theatrical production' in Greece during this period reached the point where it could present itself as being "more and more linked to the field's specific history and to it

alone” raising the *hellenikótita* itself of a production as the pivotal issue of the opposition within the field.⁵²

⁵² Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 266.

Chapter I

Aspects of Greek culture from 1900 to 1967: The ideologem of 'hellenikótita' and the constitution of a 'Greek' national culture

The first half of the twentieth century signified a huge change in the production of tragedy in Greece. The historical moment that this change was accomplished was not random. The first of a series of productions, Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which Fotos Politis translated and directed, took place in 1919. The year 1919 is in one of the most crucial periods of Modern Greek history. It was almost immediately after the end of WWI, when the most ambitious nationalistic aspiration of Greece, to be once again the land of the five seas and of the two continents, seemed most tangible. And just three years away from the 1922 Asia Minor catastrophe that shattered this dream and affected Greece in a catalytic way, because it forced the energy and dynamism, which were expressed up to then mostly in relation to Greece's nationalistic aspirations, to be turned inside the State in an attempt, the most serious ever to be made, to modernise Greece.

Besides the historical events that formed the context within which this change took place, the year 1919 was only a breath away from the most mature expression of a cultural change that had started with the literary generation of the 1880s and reached its most complete form in the literary generation of the 1930s. The distinguishing elements of this change were defined by the principal axiom of the use of *demotiki* and by an increased emphasis on the Byzantine and the following phases of what was considered to

be ‘Greek’ culture, that is, Greek culture during the Ottoman Empire and nineteenth-century art and literature written in *demotiki*.¹ Within this framework Greek culture during that period renegotiated, on the one hand, Greece’s position in the world and, on the other, its relation with Ancient Greece. It is within this context that I will discuss the work of Fotos Politis, Άγγελος Sikelianός and Eva Palmer-Sikelianού, Dimitris Rondiris, and Κάρολος Koun arguing that their work in tragedy expressed the cultural changes of this period in the field of theatre. And furthermore that this work signified also a change in the entire field of theatrical production because it led to “the rise of the whole space of possibles in theatre”.²

Finally, socially and politically the year 1919 was also ten years after 1909 when, after the military *coup d’ état* in Goudí and the coming of Elefthérios Venizelos in Greece from Crete, the dominant power passed from the pre-capitalist strata to the capitalist strata.³ The pre-capitalist strata supported monarchy politically and promoted a more

¹ *Demotiki* is a form of the Greek language, which was based on the Greek language as it was used within the oral demotic literary tradition, prominent since the ninth century, and was spoken by the majority of the Greek people. The fact that *demotiki* during the period that I discuss was not the official language of the Greek State in relation to the different Greek dialects spoken all over Greece accounts for the lack of the codification, systematisation and regularisation of its form.

² Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 186. See also Introduction, p. 18.

³ It has to be noted that the accession of the capitalist class into power coincided more or less with its formation as a social class. On the issue of the constitution of social classes in Greece, see Κοντογιώργης, Γιώργος Δ., «Οι Ελλαδικές κοινωνικές και πολιτικές δυνάμεις στην ύστερη τουρκοκρατία. Οι συνθήκες διαμόρφωσης της κοινωνικής και πολιτικής πάλης και οι μεταπελευθερωτικές συνέπειες» (“The Hellenic Social and Political Powers in the Late Ottoman Empire: The Conditions of the Shaping of the Social and Political Struggle and their Consequences after the Liberation”), and Ρήγος, Άλκης, «Πολιτικές εκφράσεις στη Β’ Ελληνική Δημοκρατία» (“Political Expressions during the Second Greek Democracy”), in: Γιώργος Δ. Κοντογιώργης, (ed.), *Κοινωνικές και Πολιτικές δυνάμεις στην Ελλάδα (Social and Political Powers in Greece)*, Athens: Εξάντας, 1977, p.p. 3-38, 175-216 respectively. In what regards the change of the dominant class see Σβορώνος, Νικόλαος Γ., *Ανάλεκτα Νεοελληνικής Ιστορίας και ιστοριογραφίας (Analecta of Modern Greek History and Historiography)*, Athens: Θεμέλιο, 1987, and also by him *Επισκόπηση της Νεοελληνικής Ιστορίας (A Review of Modern Greek History)*, Athens: Θεμέλιο, 1994; Μαυρογορδάτος, Γιώργος Θ., and Χατζηιωσήφ, Χρήστος (eds.), *Βενιζελισμός και αστικός εκσυγχρονισμός (Venizelism and Capitalist Modernisation)*, Crete: Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης, 1998; and Μουζενίδης, Νίκος,

personalised notion of a Greek State based on clientele relations. The capitalist strata on the other hand supported democracy and promoted a more impersonal notion of a Greek State based on the ideas of liberalism. Thus what had appeared as the progressive literary artists' cultural propositions in the 1880s became the dominant class's aesthetic ideology in the twentieth century and the base of what was promoted as Greek national culture.⁴ It constituted the core of the dominant class's *taste* and it was combined with the dominant class's *habitus*.

At the centre of all this cultural change stood the concept of *hellenikótita*, that is, a set of ideas and aesthetic principles which functioned as a criterion of evaluation in defining the 'Greekness' of cultural products.⁵ *Hellenikótita* not only constituted a qualitative criterion, a principle of evaluation of cultural products, during this period, it also became the aim of a quest and as such the subject of a constant discussion on what is or can be characterised as 'Greek'. Thus the issue of Greekness and consequently of Greek national identity became the heart of a creative discussion and was explicitly expressed in Greek cultural production during the twentieth century.⁶ Tziovas, whose work on *hellenikótita* and Greek literature during the Interwar Period is one of the most systematic and comprehensive studies on the issue, observes that during this period the central point of reference in the definition of Greek national identity became the national identity itself

Νεοελληνική κοινωνία: όψεις υπανάπτυξης (*Modern Greek Society: Perspectives of Underdevelopment*), Athens: Εξάντας, 1978.

⁴ See Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature*.

⁵ I use the term "*hellenikótita*" following Tziovas, who by this term refers to a specific cultural orientation that appeared in Greece in the period mentioned.

⁶ In many ways this discussion assumed in newspapers the form of a dialogue with answers to someone's work or ideas, and I have in mind Politis' articles, Rotas' criticisms and Varnalis' approaches among others. It actually assumed the form of a written dialogue on *Hellenism* between George Seferis and Konstantinos Tsatsos, then professor of philosophy in the University of Athens. The dialogue started from an article

and emphasis was laid on characteristics which distinguished the Greek nation from other nations.⁷ Tziouvas discusses these issues in relation to the literary generation of the 1930s, when the concept of *hellenikótita* was promoted as an ideologem. The quest, however, for a new definition and the issues that came to be connected with this quest are to be found, as I will discuss, dynamically expressed right from the turn of the century especially in regard to Greek theatre. Both the Sikelianoí's and Politis' work in theatre are dynamically and explicitly concerned with these issues.

Cultural production became concerned with the recovery and reclamation of an indigenous culture that would serve as a tradition from which contemporary 'Greek' culture could draw. It was shaped around the demand for the creation of cultural products that could be characterised as 'purely Greek' because they promoted the idea of 'Greek uniqueness' and 'Greek *Héllenism*' and expressed a positive, dynamic and explicit notion of the concept of *hellenikótita* and the Greek national identity.⁸ Within that framework the *hellenikótita* of a product consisted of its symbolic capital, because, perceived as an aesthetic quality, *hellenikótita* rendered them 'pure', 'abstract' and 'esoteric', in

published by Tsatsos in the periodical *Προπύλαια* (*Propýleia*) in 1938 and continued until 1939. Seferis replied in the literary review *Νέα Γράμματα* (*Nea Grammata*).

⁷ Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο* (*The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period*).

⁸ The term *Héllenism* from the middle of the nineteenth century refers to the intellectual and moral unit of all the Greek people, that is, not only of the citizens of Greece but also the Greeks that lived under Turkish rule or elsewhere in the world. The distinctive principles of the unity of these people were the use of the Greek language and the consciousness of Greek national/cultural identity. In this sense the term *Héllenism* denotes a spiritual and intellectual dimension that according to Tziouvas does not seem to be very different from the concept of *hellenikótita*. The generation of the 1930s, which was linked with the ideologem of *hellenikótita*, preferred the use of the term *Héllenism* to the term *hellenikótita*. Although they used *Héllenism* in the sense of *hellenikótita* one has to take into account that the former term denotes a dynamism in its conception since it refers also to the Greek people. For a historical account of the use of the terms *Héllenism* and *hellenikótita* see Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο* (*The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period*), p.p. 31-42.

Bourdieu's terms.⁹ A 'purely Greek' cultural product was recognised as a "national heirloom", using Tziouvas' words, and thus extremely rich in symbolic capital.¹⁰ Within this context Greek culture during this period was created and promoted in a way that was conscious of its function as a national culture, the distinctive culture of a particular nation, becoming itself the centre of its own quest.

This cultural development in Greece coincided historically with a rise of nationalism on an international level.¹¹ This was a period when the nation-state came to be seen as Anderson observes as "the legitimate international norm".¹² My intention is not to speak about nationalism. There have been many arguments and debates already on the issue.¹³

⁹ See, Introduction, p. 17.

¹⁰ Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο (The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period)*, p. 14.

¹¹ See among others Hobsbawm, Eric J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1990 and Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 1991 (rev. edition).

¹² Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, p. 113

¹³ Ernest Gellner explains nationalism via the transformation of society from agrarian to industrialist and argues that nationalism is oriented towards the autonomous political existence of a nation within the framework of an independent nation-state. See Gellner, Ernest, *Nationalism*, Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997. Within that context he sees national identity as an invention, see Λέκκας, Παντελής Ε., *Η Εθνικιστική ιδεολογία: πέντε υποθέσεις εργασίας στην ιστορική κοινωνιολογία (The Nationalistic Ideology: Five Hypotheses of Discussion in Historical Sociology)*, Athens: Κατάρτι, 1996 (second edition), p. 120. Castells debates Gellner's argument about the orientation of nationalism towards the autonomous political existence of a nation, pointing out that contemporary nationalism at the end of the twentieth century does not always aim at the constitution of a nation-state. He also does not agree with Gellner's de-constructivist approach which explains national identity as an 'invention'. He points out that any construction of a national identity presupposes the existence of specific conditions such as common language, common religion, common history and a shared experience. See Castells, Manuel, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, vol. II, *The Power of Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997. Hobsbawm also distinguishes a proto-nationalist period and recognises the existence of specific conditions prior to the construction of national identity. He does, however, relate nationalism with political and economical historical developments, Hobsbawm, Eric J., *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*, New York: Mentor books, 1962. Elias discusses nationalism within the framework of the change of the dominant class from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie. Elias, Northrop, "“Civilisation” and “Culture”: Nationalism and Nation-State Formation": an extract from *The Germans* (1989), in: John Rundell and Stephen Mennell (eds.), *Classical Readings in Culture and Civilization*, London: Routledge, 1998, p.p. 225-40. Breuilly is concerned with nationalism as politics and stresses the modernity of the ideology of nationalism. Breuilly, John, "Approaches to Nationalism", in: Gopal Balakrisham (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 1996, p.p. 146-74. Lekkas also discusses nationalism as a modern ideology and he proceeds in discussing what nationalism as an ideology pertains to and how it develops in relation to a nation and/or a nation state's aspirations, Λέκκας, Παντελής Ε., *Η Εθνικιστική ιδεολογία: πέντε υποθέσεις εργασίας στην ιστορική*

My intention is to draw attention to the issue of culture within the framework of nationalism in an attempt to stress and explain some of the characteristic features of the cultural change that took place in Greece during that period. And I will argue that theatre was one of the important cultural fields where this change was expressed.

The point accepted by the majority of scholars in the field, if not unanimously, is that culture constitutes the point of cohesion of a nation. Thus it underlines the cohesive characteristics of a nation and at the same time distinguishes this nation from other nations. It provides, therefore, the symbolic content for the construction of a collective identity within the framework of the notion of nation.¹⁴ This symbolic content is

κοινωνιολογία (The Nationalistic Ideology: Five Hypotheses of Discussion in Historical Sociology).

Anderson suggests that the nation is an imagined community and discusses the development of vernacular languages in relation to 'print culture' and capitalism, Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*. Hroch is more concerned with the process from the national (as he calls it) movement to the fully-formed nation distinguishing three phases. Hroch, Miroslav, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building process in Europe" in: *Mapping the Nation*, p.p.78-97. Chatterjee discusses nationalism in colonial states arguing that the "most creative results of the nationalist imagination are posited not on an identity but on a *difference*". She divides the world of social institutions and practices into two domains- the material and the spiritual; the material is the domain of the economy, statecraft, science and technology where the West had proved its superiority; the spiritual is 'an 'inner' domain bearing the 'essential' marks of cultural identity. She then proceeds to discuss the construction of a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western in relation to Anderson's argument on 'imagined communities' and vernacular languages. Chatterjee, Partha, "Whose Imagined Community?", in: *Mapping the Nation*, p.p. 214-225. And finally Tsoukalás discussing the issue of Greek national identity focuses on the rupture between the concept of 'modernisation' and 'tradition' in the periphery of the capitalist world. His argument is quite close to that of Chatterjee, although he places emphasis on the more or less continuous struggle of these poles within which culture is structured. I personally prefer Tsoukalás' positioning of the argument in the periphery of the capitalist world, since it may then incorporate in the discussion pre-colonialist countries, like India, as well as countries that did not belong to that group, like Greece or Serbia, Τσουκαλάς, Κωνσταντίνος, «Παράδοση και Εκσυγχρονισμός: Μερικά γενικότερα ερωτήματα» ("Tradition and Modernisation: Some General Questions"), in: Δημήτρης Γ. Τσαούσης (ed.), *Ελληνισμός – Ελληνικότητα: Ιδεολογικοί και Βιωματικοί Άξονες της Νεοελληνικής Κοινωνίας (Hellenism – Hellenikótita: Ideological and Empirical Axes of Modern Greek Society)*, Athens: Εστία, 1983, p.p. 37-50, and also by him *Ταξίδι στο λόγο και στην ιστορία, Κείμενα 1969-1996 (A Journey into Discourse and History, Texts 1969-1996)*, vol. II, Athens: Πλέθρον, 1996.

¹⁴ See among others Gellner, Ernest, *Nationalism*, p. 29; Castells, Manuel, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, vol. II, *The Power of Identity*, p. 27-28; and Hroch, Miroslav, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building process in Europe", in: *Mapping the Nation*, p. 79.

necessary for the creation of a system of social beliefs that the ideology of nationalism requires.

One other notion, which is invaluable in the discussion of national cultures, is that of 'historicity'. A crucial point in nationalism is its claim that nations are perennial.¹⁵ Part, therefore, of a nation's claim of being a 'nation' lies in its capability of invoking, constructing, and declaring a 'history'. This forms part of what Hroch suggests as being "the construction of a personalised image of the nation. The glorious past of this personality comes to be lived as part of the individual memory of each citizen, and its defeats resented as failures that still touch them."¹⁶ The field where a nation's historicity is traced, proved, and re-asserted is culture within the context of 'national culture'. It is 'national culture' that provides the 'proof' for a nation's continuity and 'uniqueness' through the ages.

In discussing and explaining the particular features of Greek national culture during this period there are two observations to which I want to draw attention. The first is Tsoukalás' argument, which is based on the differences of the constitution of culture in the countries of the capitalist centre and those of the periphery. He argues that contrary to the capitalist centre, in the nation-states of the periphery the concepts of 'modernisation' and 'tradition' are conceived and experienced in the bipolar polemic relation of two

¹⁵ See among others, Λέκκας Παντελής Ε., *Η Εθνικιστική ιδεολογία: πέντε υποθέσεις εργασίας στην ιστορική κοινωνιολογία (The Nationalistic Ideology: Five Hypotheses of Discussion in Historical Sociology)*, especially chapter 2 «Η ιστορικότητα έθνους και εθνικισμού» (The Historicity of Nation and Nationalism") and Gellner, Ernest, *Nationalism*, p.p. 5-9.

¹⁶ Hroch, Miroslav, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe", in: *Mapping the Nation*, p.p. 90-1.

concepts that cannot be but engaged in conflict.¹⁷ ‘Tradition’ is conceived and based on a real and selective cultural past, which the state “is forced to typify, to elevate to a central symbol and to ‘historicize’” and it assumes the form of the ‘quest’ and of the ‘revival’ of this ideologized past.¹⁸ ‘Modernisation’, on the other hand, is conceived and experienced as the rupture with this past and the *ex nihilo* construction of a modern ‘ideal’ structure. Thus both the concepts of ‘modernisation’ and ‘tradition’ are experienced in an ideologized context that places them in a confronting position. The second is Chatterjee’s argument that in the post-colonial world “the most powerful as well as creative results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa are posited not on an identity but rather on a *difference* with the ‘modular’ forms of the national society propagated by the modern West”.¹⁹

Both these observations are invaluable on a first level in understanding the mode in which Greek national culture was constructed during that period. On the one hand, a rupture between ‘modernisation’ and ‘tradition’ in the form of ‘revival’ is easily observed during that period. It is prominent in politics, in economy, even in some areas of culture like education.²⁰ On the other hand, Greek national culture does stress its *difference* in Chatterjee’s concept facing Europe as a rival.

¹⁷ Τσουκαλάς, Κωνσταντίνος, «Παράδοση και Εκσυγχρονισμός: Μερικά γενικότερα ερωτήματα» (“Tradition and Modernisation: Some General Questions”), in: *Ελληνισμός-Ελληνικότητα (Hellenism-Hellenicity)*, p. 38.

¹⁸ Τσουκαλάς, Κ., *Ταξίδι στο Λόγο και στην Ιστορία, Κείμενα 1969-1996, (A Journey into Discourse and History, Texts 1969-1996)*, vol. II, p. 261.

¹⁹ Chatterjee, Partha, “Whose Imagined Community?”, in: *Mapping the Nation*, p.p. 216.

²⁰ On the political and economical conflicts during this period see Αλιβιζάτος, Νίκος, *Οι πολιτικοί θεσμοί σε κρίση, 1922-1974. Όψεις της ελληνικής εμπειρίας (The Crisis of the Political Institutions: 1922-1974, Aspects of the Greek Experience)*, Athens: Θεμέλιο, 1995; Μουζενίδης, Νίκος, *Νεοελληνική κοινωνία: όψεις υπανάπτυξης (Modern Greek Society: Perspectives of Underdevelopment)*; Μαυρογορδάτος, Γιώργος Θ., and Χατζηιωσήφ, Χρήστος (eds.), *Βενιζελισμός και αστικός εκσυγχρονισμός (Venizelism and Capitalist Modernisation)*; and Clogg, Richard, *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University

On a second level, however, I have to draw some points of differentiation from both Tsoukalás and Chatterjee that explain, I believe more accurately, aspects of Greek national culture during this period. Tsoukalás builds his argument focusing on education, which is his field of research and on more general aspects of history and politics. And in these fields a rupture may be observed between ‘modernisation’ and ‘tradition’ in the way he perceives it, ‘modernisation’ being the *ex nihilo* construction of a modern ‘ideal’ structure, ‘tradition’ the ‘revival’ of an ideologized past.

If, however, one focuses on literature and theatre, as I will argue, the concept of ‘modernisation’ is engaged in conflict with ‘tradition’ by invoking another ‘tradition’. And actually it invokes a ‘tradition’ that chronologically and culturally is closer to the twentieth century. Thus it is fairly close to the mode in which ‘tradition’ is experienced in the capitalist centre and it is far from being an *ex nihilo* construction. Although ‘modernisation’ is still experienced as a ‘rupture’ in literature, it is a ‘rupture’ from the ‘devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors’ in the form of ‘revival’, which was prominent in nineteenth-century Greek culture and socially related to the pre-capitalist class.²¹ To

Press, 1992. On the attempts for an educational reformation which were realised between 1903 and 1929 see Φραγκουδάκη, Άννα, *Εκπαιδευτική μεταρρύθμιση και Φιλελεύθεροι Διανοούμενοι: άγονοι αγώνες και ιδεολογικά αδιέξοδα στο μεσοπόλεμο (The Educational Reformation and the Liberalist Intellectuals: Fruitless Attempts and Ideological Deadlocks during the Interwar Period)*, Athens: Κέδρος, 1990 and Δημαράς, Αλέξης, «Αστικός Φιλελευθερισμός και εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα» (“Capitalist Liberalism and Educational programmes”), in: *Βενιζελισμός και αστικός εκσυγχρονισμός (Venizelism and Capitalist Modernisation)*, p.p. 21-32.

²¹ The ideological base of nineteenth-century concept ‘tradition’ in the form of ‘revival’ of Ancient Greek glory and *Geist* and consequently the ‘devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors’ was based on the historicity that the Greek nation claimed during the period of Greek Enlightenment when it was first constructed. At that period Modern Greeks claimed that they were the natural descendants and heirs of classical Ancient Greece. Part of this claim was that their historical past stopped at 338 BC, when Alexander the Great conquered the cities of Greece and forced their participation in a unified kingdom. Their historical present, as the natural continuity of that past, started again in 1832 AD, when Greece was recognised as an independent kingdom. Thus at the beginning neither the Macedonian period nor the Hellenistic nor the Byzantine periods were considered as inseparable parts of the history of the Greek nation. For a bibliography in this issue see Introduction, footnote 12, p. 9.

this concept of ‘tradition’ the literary generation of the 1880s counter-proposed a ‘tradition’ that drew on the Byzantine and the more recent Greek cultural tradition and a form of language, *demotiki*, which was the form the Greek population spoke instead of the artificial *katharévousa*.²² Furthermore the subsequent history of the field of literature was developed following the norms that Tsoukalás ascribes to the capitalist centre. As he argues in the capitalist centre, “the new springs up from the old and modernisation respects the tradition and builds on it the basis of its perennial developing course. ‘Tradition’ is conceived as what is still in existence and ‘modernisation’ is conceived as the process of its (the tradition’s) transmutation and reasoning”.²³ This is precisely the way literature was developed in Greece from the 1880s onwards. One can very easily perceive the history of the literary field unfolded in the oppositions between generations and artists in a way that, in Bourdieu’s words, becomes “more and more linked to the field’s specific history and to it alone”.²⁴ And I will argue in this thesis that this was also

²² The ‘rupture’ between these two concepts of Greek culture involved also the clash between the pre-capitalist class, dominant during the nineteenth century, and the capitalist class’ aspiration to ascend into power. And furthermore it denoted two distinct perceptions of ‘Greece’. The one was limited in the territorial borders of Ancient Greece and was ‘trapped’ in its aspiration to ‘revive’ an ideologized ancient glory. The second was engaged in a vision of Greece’s territorial expansion to reach the borders of the Byzantine Empire, which proved to be fruitless, and placed emphasis on the Byzantine and the following phases of ‘Greek’ culture. See among others Πολίτης, Αλέξης, *Ρομαντικά χρόνια: Ιδεολογίες και νοοτροπίες στην Ελλάδα του 1830-1880 (Romantic Years: Ideologies and Attitudes in Greece between 1830-1880)* and Κιτρομηλίδης, Πασχάλης, «Ιδεολογικά και πολιτικά αιτήματα» (“Ideological and Political Requests”), in: *Θέματα νεοελληνικής ιστορίας (18ος-20ος αιώνας) (Issues of Modern Greek History: 18th to 20th Century)*, p.p. 59-72. Despite the limitations of this second perception of Greece it was characterised by a distinctive dynamism that succeeded in shifting Greek culture from the pondering of the past to the action for the future.

²³ *Στις περισσότερες από τις ευρωπαϊκές κοινωνίες το νέο φυτρώνει επάνω στο παλιό, και ο εκσυγχρονισμός σέβεται τις παραδόσεις και οικοδομεί επάνω τους τις βάσεις της άενης εξελικτικής του πορείας. Σάν «παράδοση» νοείται το ύφιστάμενο, και σάν εκσυγχρονισμός ή διαδικασία μεταλλαγής του και εκλογίκευσής του. Τσουκαλάς, Κωνσταντίνος, «Παράδοση και Εκσυγχρονισμός: Μερικά γενικότερα ερωτήματα» (“Tradition and Modernisation: Some General Questions”), in: *Ελληνισμός - Ελληνικότητα (Hellenism – Hellenikotita)*, p. 38.*

²⁴ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 266.

the form of the development of the Greek theatre between 1919 and 1967 with regard to the productions of tragedy.

In what concerns Chatterjee's observation it has to be noted that the actual point where Greek culture stressed its *difference* from Europe was the concept of *Hellenism* itself. In many ways the *difference* concealed also the concept of dispute over a cultural reference, which Europe also claimed as its own, that is, ancient Greek civilisation and its cultural 'survival' within the framework of its re-negotiation by contemporary Western cultures. Tsoukalás observes that the heritage of Ancient Greek civilisation primarily gave the impression to Greeks that the new Greek State could occupy a respected position within the capitalist world, due to the respect held universally for Ancient Greece.²⁵ However, it found itself in a position where it had to dispute for its right to use Ancient Greece as its own symbolic and cultural past, precisely because of the position that Ancient Greek civilisation held within Western European culture.

This concealed dispute explains in a way the tensions inherent in the construction of Greek national culture. From 1880 onwards the aim of Greek culture was to stress its *difference* by constructing a contemporary cultural present which would draw on all the phases of what was considered 'Greek' culture and would express in a dynamic and explicit way the Greek way of seeing and experiencing the world. The notion itself of the 'Greek way' would implicitly underline and 'prove' the continuity of the nation from antiquity to the modern times. As Tziovas argues the tensions inherent in the

²⁵ Τσουκαλάς, Κωνσταντίνος, *Ταξίδι στο Λόγο και στην Ιστορία, Κείμενα 1969-1996 (A Journey into Discourse and History, Texts 1969-1996)*, p. 276.

construction of ‘Greek’ culture involved primarily two issues.²⁶ The first one concerned the particular mode in which Ancient Greek civilisation would be creatively incorporated into what was considered as contemporary ‘Greek’ culture. The second one concerned the basis upon which the relationship between Greece and Europe would be formed. Both these issues were considered to be the catalytic points where Greek culture could stress its *difference* from Europe. Both issues also touched heavily on the issue of *hellenikótita*.

Initially, that is from the 1880s to the beginning of the twentieth century, Greek culture projected its *difference* from Europe through the emphasis drawn on the Byzantine and the following phases of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture. This emphasis also stressed the notion of Greece being at the crossroads of West and East underlining the eastern qualities of Greek culture and thus creating a basis upon which Greek culture could promote a notion of ‘Greece’ that claimed its *difference* from Europe’s notion of ‘Greece’. This ‘Greek’ notion of Greece being at the crossroads of West and East is frequently met in the writings of the entire period from the 1880s to 1967 and it was again raised from 1974 onwards. Both the Byzantine and the following phases of ‘Greek’ culture were historically and culturally linked with the geographical territory of the Balkans, Asia Minor, and the Christian Orthodox part of the Middle East. These areas consisted of an ideologized ‘Greek’ East in what concerned Greece and were considered as ‘East’ in what concerned Europe. The phases of ‘Greek’ culture that were historically

²⁶ Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο* (*The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period*), p.p. 39-40.

and geographically linked with the ‘Greek’ East, and especially the Byzantine and the following phases of Greek culture formed a huge body of rich tradition that was considered to be ‘Greek’. More importantly, however, they formed a body of tradition that had not been ‘renegotiated’ in Western European terms, at least not in the way Ancient Greek civilisation had been.²⁷ Thus the emphasis on the phases of Greek culture that were related to the ideologized concept of this ‘Greek East’ directly stressed the *difference* between the ‘Greek’ culture and the European notion of ‘Greece’.

Sooner or later, however, Greek culture had to resolve the issue of the creative incorporation of Ancient Greek civilisation within its own tradition, that is, to use it as tradition in the creation of new cultural products, in a way that it stressed its *difference* from Europe’s ‘Ancient Greece’. It also had to stress its *difference* from the notion of Ancient Greece as this was used within the framework of the nineteenth-century ‘devotion to Ancient Greek ancestors’. Thus Ancient Greek civilisation had to be approached, interpreted and creatively used in a way that would be recognised as ‘purely Greek’.

This could be achieved through the cultural appropriation of Ancient Greece within the Modern Greek culture that would be based on the renegotiation of Ancient Greek civilisation through the Byzantine and the following phases of ‘Greek’ culture. The

²⁷ Historically Europe’s relationship with what was considered to be the ‘Greek East’ was hostile. In many cases the ‘Greek East’ consisted of the ‘Other’ in what concerned European thought. This concept can be found as late as the nineteenth century in movements of anthellenism. One of the most known representatives of this approach was Fallmerayer. See Σκοπετέα, Έλλη, *Φαλμεράνερ: Τεχνάσματα του αντίπαλου δέους* (Fallmerayer: *Devices of the Opponent*), Athens: Θυμέλιο, 1997 and Vryonis, Speros Jr., “Recent scholarship on Continuity and Discontinuity of Greek Culture: Classical Greeks, Byzantines, Modern Greeks”, in: *The ‘Past’ in Medieval and Greek culture*, vol. I, p.p. 237-56.

notion of the 'Greek East' provided a central point in this renegotiation and furthermore in its legitimisation. One of the main points stressed in the discourse on the relationship between Ancient and Modern Greece was that Ancient Greece like Modern Greece was situated in the crossroads between the West and the East.²⁸ It is my contention that this geographical and cultural positioning of Ancient Greece in the 'Greek East' provided two very necessary conditions in the renegotiation of Ancient Greek civilisation. On the one hand, it allowed Modern Greek culture to include Ancient Greek civilisation in its indigenous 'past' using as its base the notion of the 'Greek East' as a qualitative criterion consisting of the 'Greekness' itself of Ancient Greece. Thus emphasis was placed on the eastern qualities of Ancient Greek civilisation. At the same time these eastern qualities created a cultural bridge that linked Ancient with Modern Greece. Within this framework *hellenikótita* as the 'Greek' way of seeing, experiencing and expressing the world could be traced in works from antiquity to the present time. Thus the renegotiation of Ancient Greek civilisation within contemporary 'Greek' terms was not only legitimate but it also claimed its authenticity and uniqueness in modern times since all phases of 'Greek' culture were characterised by their *hellenikótita*. On the other hand, this renegotiation of Ancient Greece within Modern Greek culture directly stressed its *difference* from Europe's renegotiations of Ancient Greek civilisation because the emphasis on the eastern qualities of Ancient Greece and consequently of its renegotiation 'proved' almost automatically its *difference* from the European ones. Moreover the emphasis on the eastern qualities of Ancient Greece provided the necessary conditions for Modern Greece's claim to the authority of its renegotiation of the antiquity in comparison to

²⁸ Sikelianós and Koun explicitly referred to this issue, see Chapters III and IV. Politis and Rondiris had implicitly built on that notion.

European ones precisely because this renegotiation took into consideration qualities of Ancient Greek civilisation that Europe being the West could not recognise. In this sense Greece faced Europe as a rival proposing a ‘Greek’ Ancient Greece in opposition to a ‘European’ Ancient Greece. These principles consisted of the basis upon which the cultural appropriation of Ancient Greek civilisation within the Modern Greek culture stressing at once its authenticity, its authority and its *difference* from Europe became feasible. As I will argue in the second chapter, the first stage in this cultural appropriation may be seen in the literary appropriation of tragic plays in *demotiki* during the first decade of the twentieth century. The full development of the cultural appropriation of Ancient Greece was completed in literature, according to Tziouvas, by the literary generation of the 1930s with the creative reference to Ancient Greek mythology and history.²⁹

In theatre, however, the challenge of the creative incorporation of Ancient Greek civilisation in the production of Modern Greek culture had to be met slightly earlier than the 1930s. Because the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the contemporary cultural

²⁹ “The literary generation of the 1930s experiencing intensely the double nature of the national identity attempted to bridge the historical gap between the Greek and the *Romiós*, to balance the schizophrenia of the Greek national identity using in literature the Ancient Greek mythology and pushing forward the popular, *Romeic* element in the work of Makriyiannis and Theóphilos.” [*Έχοντας έντονη τη συναίσθηση του διuισμού της εθνικής ταυτότητας η γενιά του '30 προσπάθησε να γεφυρώσει το ιστορικό χάσμα ανάμεσα στον Έλληνα και στο Ρωμιό, να ισορροπήσει τη σχιζοφρένεια της ελληνικής ταυτότητας με το να αξιοποιήσει λογοτεχνικά την αρχαία ελληνική μυθολογία και με το να αναδείξει το λαϊκό, ρωμείο στοιχείο στο έργο του Μακρυγιάννη και του Θεόφιλου.*] Τζιούβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο (The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótiita in the Interwar Period)*, p. 42. See also Σεφέρης, Γιώργος, «Ένας Έλληνας - ό Μακρυγιάννης» (“Makriyannis”), in: Γιώργος Σεφέρης, *Δοκιμές (Dokimés)*, vol. I, Athens: Ίκαρος, 1974, p.p. 228-63. *Romiós* was one of the three names that were used to denote a Greek person in the period of Greek Enlightenment, the third one being *Grekós*. *Romiós* is a derived word from *Romean* and it was linked to the Byzantine Empire being the continuance of the Roman Empire. It was used during the Ottoman Empire before the word *Héllenes* was introduced by the Greek Enlightenment. *Romiós* is still widely used in the Greek vocabulary implicitly denoting the part of the Greek national identity that derived from the period of

and aesthetic terms was a *sine qua non* condition if the productions of tragedy were to form part in the constitution of Greek culture during that period. As I will explain in the next chapter the cultural appropriation of Ancient Greece and the renegotiation of tragedy within contemporary cultural and aesthetic terms constituted the basis of the aesthetic style/s of the performances of tragedy that were proposed from 1919 onwards. This renegotiation was not fixed or static but it became part of the quest for the *hellenikótita* itself. And thus it shifted as each cultural generation or each theatre director within a cultural generation drew emphasis and creatively ascertained its or his/her link with different aspects of Modern Greek and Byzantine culture. These shifts actually comprise the basis upon which the discourse on the issue of the production of tragedy stood between 1919 and 1967 since they consist of the basis on which the aesthetic proposition of each of the five directors, on whose work I will elaborate in the following chapters, were grounded. It is my contention, therefore, as I will explain in the next chapter, that the creative incorporation of Ancient Greek civilisation in the production of Modern Greek culture was accomplished slightly earlier in the theatre than in literature, from 1919 and especially from 1927 onwards.

Greek theatre, however, also had to solve the second problematical issue that Greek culture faced during that period, that of the relationship of Greece with Europe, again slightly earlier than Greek literature. Attitudes concerning the relationship of Greece to Europe were extremely diverse from the 1880s to the 1930s. They ranged from a desired complete denial of European influence in Greek culture, in the case of Ion Dragoumis for

the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires and connoting a particular way of experiencing the Greek national identity.

example, to a messianic perception of Greece leading Europe and the other nations to a way of life based on the principles of humanism, which in their thought was identified with Greece, in the cases of Periklís Yannópoulos and Áγγελos Sikelianós.³⁰ In between there was of course the main body of cultural products which were recognised as ‘Greek’ and which were influenced by European movements and European artists. The question was that if Modern Greece accepted European artistic and intellectual hegemony, what could it then culturally juxtapose to Europe facing it as an equal.³¹ In literature the challenge was met by the literary generation of the 1930s that, as Tziovas among others points out, accepted European hegemony, but faced at the same time Europe as an opponent by searching for originality in works that would make them be recognised as ‘purely Greek’.³² As I will argue in the next chapter, this development in theatre occurred from 1919 onwards in regard to productions of tragedy due to the specific conditions of theatre in Greece. These led to the creative use of European theatrical movements of the time, proposing, however, an original style of performance that could be recognised as ‘purely Greek’.

Another characteristic element of this cultural change, which was manifested in Greece during the period I discuss, is the dynamism and the explicitness in which it experiences and expresses the Greek national identity. In fact Tziovas points out, referring to

³⁰ See Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο* (*The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period*); Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature*; and Dimaras, C. Th., *Modern Greek Literature*.

³¹ See Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο* (*The transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period*), p. 40.

Tsaousis' notion of 'cultural' and 'political' identity, that during this period Greek national identity is experienced as a 'political identity' instead of a 'cultural' one.³³

Tsaousis explained the phenomenal duality of Greek national identity from an historical perspective and attributed the nature and character of each type of Greek national identity according to the conditions that prevailed during the time that each type was formed.³⁴

The first type derived from a sense of 'ethnic consciousness', defined rather loosely in terms of elements of differentiation between the Greek 'ethnic group' and other 'ethnic' groups. This type of 'ethnic consciousness' prevailed amongst the Greek people from the eleventh century onwards, that is, during the last four centuries of the Byzantine Empire and all through the period of the Ottoman Empire.³⁵ Tsaousis calls this type of identity 'cultural identity'. This identity defined the Greek population as a socially organised

³² See Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο (The transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period)*, p. 41.

³³ Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο (The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period)*, p.p. 51-3. Generally on the construction of Greek national identity see Τσουκαλάς, Κωνσταντίνος, *Ταξίδι στο Λόγο και στην Ιστορία, Κείμενα 1969-1996 (A Journey into Discourse and History, Texts 1969-1996)*, especially «Η Ελληνική εθνική ταυτότητα στην ενωμένη Ευρώπη και τη μεταβαλλόμενη παγκόσμια τάξη» ("Greek National Identity in an Integrated Europe and a Changing World Order"), p.p. 267-90; Βερέμης, Θάνας, «Από το Εθνικό κράτος στο έθνος δίχως κράτος. Το πείραμα της Οργάνωσης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως» ("From the Nation State to the Nation without State: The Experiment of the Organization of Constanistople"), and Κιτρομηλίδης, Πασχάλης, «'Νοερές κοινότητες' και οι απαρχές του εθνικού ζητήματος στα Βαλκάνια» ("Imagined Communities' and the Beginning of the National Issue in the Balkans"), in: Θάνας Βερέμης (eds.), *Εθνική ταυτότητα και εθνικισμός στη νεότερη Ελλάδα (National Identity and Nationalism in Modern Greece)*, Athens: Μορφωτικό ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 1997, p.p. 27-52 and p. p. 53-131 respectively.

³⁴ Τσαούσης, Δημήτρης, Γ., «Ελληνισμός και Ελληνικότητα», ("Hellenism and Hellenikótita"), in: *Ελληνισμός-Ελληνικότητα (Hellenism – Hellenikótita)*, p.p. 15-26.

³⁵ Xydis recognizes at the late Byzantine era a proto-nationalistic phase especially in the works of such people as George Gemistós Plethon. See Xydis, Stephen G., "Modern Greek Nationalism", in: Peter F. Sugar, and Ivo J. Lederer (eds.), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969, p.p. 218-9.

population within the framework of a united multinational political organisation, as both the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empire were.³⁶

In the course of time and because of the conditions of dominance by an 'exogenous' ruling class, which prevailed especially within the period of the Ottoman Empire, this 'cultural identity' had developed characteristics of an introverted nature in an attempt to preserve the self-existence of the Greek population within a hostile environment. It had been based on a tendency of isolation and seclusion, which discouraged intermixing with other social groups, considered to be hostile, as well as cultural influences, from nations also considered hostile. Intermixing and cultural influences, therefore, which up to a degree were unavoidable, were either disregarded, when possible, or condemned. The definition of the national distinction within this type of identity, the distinction of elements characterising nationality, remained within the Greek population itself asserting its difference inside the entirety of the population.

The second type of Greek national identity was introduced during the period of Greek Enlightenment beginning in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and lasting until the beginning of the Greek War of Independence in 1821.³⁷ Greek Enlightenment intellectuals observed that what appeared as politically united and culturally homogeneous within the framework of Christian Orthodoxy and the Byzantine tradition

³⁶ Both the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires were multinational political organisations. A number of different populations subdued under a central government.

³⁷ For a thorough study of this period see Δημαρας, Κωνσταντίνος Θ., *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός (Modern Greek Enlightenment)* and Κιτρομηλίδης, Πασχάλης Μ., *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός: Οι πολιτικές και κοινωνικές ιδέες (Modern Greek Enlightenment: The Political and Social Ideas)*, Νικολούδη, Στέλλα (trans. in Greek), Athens: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 1996 (original title: *Tradition, Enlightenment and Revolution*, Harvard University Ph.D Dissertation, 1978).

was rather a complex mosaic of different nations. In order, therefore, to distinguish and construct a Modern Greek identity these intellectuals stressed the relationship between Ancient and Modern Greece, claiming Modern Greeks to be the descendants and natural heirs of Ancient Greek history and civilisation, thus ignoring a large part of what later was regarded as ‘Greek’ history. The connection between Ancient and Modern Greece was based primarily on the use of the Modern Greek language, which is the descendent of Ancient Greek.³⁸

Tsaousis calls this type of identity, which is of a national type, ‘political’, aiming at the founding of a self-existent, independent Greek national state, which would acquire a position within the world spectrum of countries. This type of identity required a dynamic and explicit character. This character would allow the nation to participate in a world which although it was divided into ‘small’ independent and relatively equal Nation States it seemed to obey a common system of principles of liberalism and democracy and to reveal some kind of unity regardless of its multiplicity.

Within this framework Tsaousis explains the phenomenal duality of Greek national identity by proposing that the ‘cultural identity’, instead of retreating after the constitution of the Greek State, “formed the foundation of the ‘political identity’”.³⁹ Thus “the concept

³⁸ It is interesting, bearing in mind Anderson’s notion of print-capitalism, to note that the Greek language was already by then a print-language. In 1476, in Milan, appeared the first book entirely in Greek, the grammar of Konstantinos Laskaris. The first book in Modern Greek appeared in Venice in 1526, it was a paraphrase of Homer’s *Iliad* by Nikolaos Loukanis, see, Xydis, Stephen G., “Modern Greek Nationalism”, in: *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, p.p. 212 and 226-32.

³⁹ Τσαούσης, Δημήτρης, Γ, «Ελληνισμός και Ελληνικότητα» (“Hellenism and Hellenikótita”), in: *Ελληνισμός-Ελληνικότητα (Hellenism - Hellenikótita)*, p. 21-2. *Hellenism* means the entirety of the Greek people, *hellenikótita* means Greekness.

of *hellenikótita* in whatever way it was defined each time comprised the distinctive element, the criteria for the definition of *Héllénism* and not the other way round”.⁴⁰

Tziovas observes that during this period the relationship between *Héllénism* and *hellenikótita* was reversed. It was *Héllénism* that defined *hellenikótita*. In general I agree with Tziovas’ observation that the reversal of this relationship combined with the explicit and dynamic expression of the Greek national identity during this period indicates that what Tsaousis defines as ‘political identity’ prevailed in the way Greek national identity was experienced. I disagree with him on his point that this is to be observed as a characteristic of the literary generation of the 1930s only. I will argue, in the rest of this thesis, that we can find evidence of this dynamic and explicit type of Greek national identity in the work of theatre directors as early as 1919.

To be fair critics of literature generally stress the importance of the literary generation of the 1930s and its difference from the generations that preceded it.⁴¹ If one of the characteristic features, however, that as it is argued the generation of the 1930s expresses, is the notion of artists as active, dynamic and explicit participators in the definition of *hellenikótita* and consequently in the definition of Greek national identity, then this characteristic is to be found from 1900 onwards. Moreover if we interpret Greek culture from a sociological point of view using Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* then both the

⁴⁰ Μέ άλλα λόγια ή έλληνικότητα, όπως κι αν όριζεται κάθε φορά τό περιεχόμενό της, αποτελεί τό διακριτικό στοιχείο, τό κριτήριο προσδιορισμού του έλληνισμού. Όχι αντίστροφα. Τσαούσης, Δημήτρης, Γ., «Έλληνισμός και Έλληνικότητα» (“Héllénism and Hellenikótita”), in: *Έλληνισμός-Έλληνικότητα (Héllénism - Hellenikótita)*, p. 22.

⁴¹ See Vitti, Mario, *Η γενιά του τριάντα, ιδεολογία και μορφή (The Literary Generation of the 1930s: Ideology and Form)*, Athens: Ερμής, 1977 and also by him *Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας (A*

dynamism and the explicitness can be seen as characteristic features of the capitalist class *habitus*. Especially from 1909 with the rise of the capitalist class in power, identity is explicitly and dynamically expressed in all the fields of culture and in politics if one takes into consideration the attempts for an educational reformation in the second decade of the twentieth century and Venizelos' policy in many issues of Home and External Affairs.⁴² And certainly if we focus on the issue of Greek performance from 1919 onwards, the proposition of the aesthetic styles of the productions of tragedy reveal the dynamism and the explicitness in the quest for a style of performance that could be characterised as 'purely Greek'. The work of the Sikelianoí and Politis in theatre, both belonging to literary generations prior to the 1930s, as I will explain in later chapters, account for this. In this sense the dynamic, explicit and even positive in its essence expression of national identity is to be found expressed in styles of performances of tragedy from 1919 onwards and actually, in its most dynamic and active form, that of a continuous developing process.

Finally I want to draw attention to another observation that Tziovas makes with regard to literature within the framework of 'national culture' during this period and which explains the importance that literature acquired not only in the beginning of the twentieth century but even later on. He points out that,

History of Modern Greek Literature), Athens: Οδυσσέας, 1978. Also Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature* and Dimaras, C. Th., *Modern Greek Literature*.

⁴² On the educational reformation see, above, p.p. 36, and footnote 20, p.p. 36-7. On the political presence of Venizelos in Greece see Μαυρογορδάτος, Γιώργος Θ., and Χατζηιωσήφ, Χρήστος, (eds.), *Βενιζελισμός και αστικός εκσυγχρονισμός (Venizelism and Capitalist Modernisation)*. Although the majority of the discussions on the political issues of this period focus on the political appearance of Venizelos it is also apparent that the dynamism with which Venizelos faced the several issues of Greek politics was also encountered in his collaborators. In fact the dynamism expressed from the first decade of the twentieth century by the capitalist class is one of the most striking elements of this period.

Literature [...], because of the instability or the insufficiency of political institutions appears as the most suitable institution that can express and strengthen the *hellenikótita*. Thus literature products are considered as national heirlooms and writers are incited to underline their nationality. Literature thus assumes the position of the trustee of tradition, since the chaotic political institutions cannot correspond to that role.”⁴³

Bearing in mind the artistic production in other cultural fields, such as painting and sculpture, music and of course theatre, it could be argued that Tziouvas’ observations in literature may be applied in the entire field of cultural production and, of course, in the theatre of that period. Furthermore they can explain the tensions exercised by the need to present a strong contemporary Greek culture that would express a positive, dynamic and explicit notion of *hellenikótita*.⁴⁴

I have elaborated on literature discussing the issue of the construction of a national culture not only because literature is often discussed in relation to nationalism, but also because literature in Greece constituted a very dynamic field of cultural production if we explain its structure according to Bourdieu’s model.⁴⁵ Thus it is easier to observe in this

⁴³ [η λογοτεχνία...] λόγω της αστάθειας ή της ανεπάρκειας των πολιτικών θεσμών φαίνεται τελικά ο πιο κατάλληλος θεσμός για να εκφράσει και να τονώσει την ελληνικότητα, με αποτέλεσμα τα λογοτεχνικά κείμενα να αναγορεύονται σε εθνικά κειμήλια και οι συγγραφείς να προτρέπονται έντονα να υπογραμμίζουν την εθνικότητά τους. Η λογοτεχνία έτσι αναλαμβάνει το ρόλο του θεματοφύλακα της παράδοσης εφόσον οι χαώδεις πολιτικοί θεσμοί δεν μπορούν να ανταποκριθούν σε αυτό το ρόλο. Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο (The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period)*, p. 14.

⁴⁴ For bibliography on painting and music during this period see, Introduction, footnote 4, p.p. 3-4.

⁴⁵ See Bhabha, Homi, K. (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge, 1990 and Said, Edward, W., *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage, 1993.



Photo 1 Athanásios Marikos in the part of Constantine the Great in Dimítrios Vernardakis' Fafsta

field the tendencies, needs, solutions, propositions and tensions that are manifested in the entire field of Greek cultural production.

As I argued earlier, aesthetically the quest for and promotion of the ideologem of *hellenikótita* focused culturally on two principles. The first one concerned the use of *demotiki* as the language of works that belonged to the sub-field of ‘restricted production’. In fact *demotiki* became during this period an aesthetic and an ideological criterion *sine qua non* for all the works classified and recognised as ‘restricted production’ in literature and generally in culture.⁴⁶ The second principle concerned the literary and/or cultural reference of this ‘restricted production’ on the Modern Greek demotic and literary tradition and the Byzantine tradition. Thus each agent in the field traced the historicity of his/her own work in cultural moments or in individual artists or writers that preceded him. Sikelianós bore and was conscious of the Greek poetic tradition before him, especially the quests and ideas of the literature generation of the 1880s. Politis referred to Dionýssios Solomós and Aléxandros Papadiamantis. Giorgos Seferis discovered the language of general Makriyiannis and recognised the poetic work of Sikelianós. Thus the development of the literary field from 1880 onwards became in Bourdieu’s words “more and more linked to the field’s specific history and to it alone”.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See Λαδογιάννη, Γεωργία, *Κοινωνική κρίση και αισθητική αναζήτηση στο μεσοπόλεμο. Η παρέμβαση του περιοδικού Ιδέα (The Social Crisis and the Aesthetic Quest in the Interwar Period: The Intervention of the Periodical “Idea”)*, Athens: Οδυσσέας, 1993; Lambropoulos, Vassilis, “The aesthetic ideology of the Greek quest for identity”, *Journal of Modern Hellenism*, No 4, autumn 1987, p.p. 19-24; Σεφέρης, Γιώργος, «Ἡ γλῶσσα στὴν ποίησή μας» (“Language in our poetry”), in: *Δοκιμές (Dokimés)*, Vol. II, p.p. 162-81.

⁴⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 266.

Bearing in mind this framework of quests and aesthetic propositions in literature and culture during this period I will now focus on theatre. This cultural change placed theatre in a very difficult position. On the one hand, the need to present a strong and compelling contemporary artistic production of works was more intensely felt in theatre because of the existence of the Ancient Greek theatre. Thus it intensified the demand for dynamism and explicitness that characterised generally cultural production during that period. It urged the creation of ‘purely Greek’ theatrical products whose symbolic capital was to be recognised not only within Greece but also in Europe itself. On the other hand, the aesthetic principle of this period that concerned the cultural reference of ‘restricted production’ on the Modern Greek demotic or theatrical tradition and/or the Byzantine tradition could not be satisfied.

Firstly, such a tradition did not exist. From the early Byzantine period when theatre had been banned in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius until 1832, there are only three periods that presented some kind of theatrical production. These are the ‘Cretan Renaissance’ period at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, the Ionian Islands’ period in the middle of the eighteenth century and the period of Greek Enlightenment.⁴⁸ All these periods, however, were isolated in time and space. Their

⁴⁸ I have to note, however, that there are three different opinions on the survival of theatre during the Byzantine period. The first one is that of Alexis Solomós who maintains that Ancient Greek theatre survived in the ritual of the Orthodox church, see, Σολομός, Αλέξης, *Ο Άγιος Βάκχος (Saint Bacchus)*, Athens: Πλειάς, 1964. Ploritis argues that theatre in Byzantium survived in the form of mime and pantomime. See Πλωρίτης, Μάριος, *Το θέατρο στο Βυζάντιο (Theatre in Byzantium)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1999. Kiriakidis on the other hand is of the opinion that the themes of Greek tragedies survived and developed in Greek demotic poetry and especially in the *παραλογές (paralogés)* of the ninth century, see, Κυριακίδης, Στίλπων Π., *Το δημοτικό τραγούδι (Greek Folk Song)*, Athens: Ερμής, Νεοελληνικά μελετήματα, 1990, especially «Αι ιστορικά αρχαί της δημόδους Νεοελληνικής ποιήσεως» (“The Historical Beginnings of Modern Greek Folk Poetry”), p.p. 169-207 (originally published in Thessaloniki in 1954). Finally Puchner attempts to trace a Greek theatrical tradition that goes back to the mimes of Herondas in the second century BC, see Πούχγερ, Βάλτερ, *Ανιχνεύοντας τη θεατρική παράδοση*

theatrical production did not instigate theatrical production in other parts of the country neither did it form some kind of model for later production in Greece.⁴⁹ Furthermore it was modelled more or less on the European theatre of the time.⁵⁰

(*Tracing the Theatrical Tradition*), Athens: Οδυσσεύς, 1995. Nevertheless there is no evidence of a theatrical production following the models of drama-based Ancient Greek and Roman theatre during the Byzantine period. See, Πλωρίτης, Μάριος, *Το θέατρο στο Βυζάντιο (Theatre in Byzantium)*, p. 15. On the Cretan Renaissance and the Ionian Islands theatre see Βάλσα, Μ., *Το Νεοελληνικό θέατρο από το 1453 έως το 1900 (Modern Greek Theatre from 1453 to 1900)*, Μπακονικόλα-Γεωργοπούλου, Χαρά (trans. in Greek), Athens: Ειρμός, 1994; Σολομός, Αλέξης, *Το Κρητικό θέατρο: από τη φιλολογία στη σκηνή (Cretan [Renaissance] Theatre: from Literature to Stage)*, Athens: Πλειάς, 1973; Πούχγερ, Βάλτερ, *Μελετήματα θεάτρου: Το Κρητικό θέατρο (Studies on Theatre: The Cretan Renaissance Theatre)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Χ. Μπούρα, 1991 and also by him *Ελληνική Θεατρολογία (Greek 'Theatrology')*, Athens: Εταιρεία Θεάτρου Κρήτης, Θεατρική Βιβλιοθήκη, 1998, and *Ανιχνεύοντας τη θεατρική παράδοση (Tracing the Theatrical Tradition)*; Ευαγγελάτος, Σπύρος, «Το κρητικό και επανησιακό θέατρο» ("Theatre in Crete and the Ionian Islands"), in: Ελένη Γραμματικοπούλου (ed.), *Νεοελληνικό Θέατρο(17ος-20ος), Επιστημονικές Επιμορφωτικές Διαλέξεις (Modern Greek Theatre (17th-20th century): Scientific, Educational Lectures)*, Athens: Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών, 1997, p.p. 2-19. On theatre during the period of Greek Enlightenment see again Βάλσα, Μ., *Το Νεοελληνικό θέατρο από το 1453 έως το 1900 (Modern Greek Theatre from 1453 to 1900)*, p.p. 265-310; Ταμπάκη, Άννα, «Ο Διαφωτισμός και ο ρομαντισμός στο νεοελληνικό θέατρο» ("Enlightenment and Romanticism in Modern Greek Theatre"), in: *Νεοελληνικό Θέατρο(17ος-20ος), Επιστημονικές Επιμορφωτικές Διαλέξεις (Modern Greek Theatre (17th-20th century): Scientific, Educational Lectures)*, p.p. 37-58, and also by her, *Η νεοελληνική δραματολογία και οι δυτικές της επιδράσεις (18ος-19ος): μια συγκριτική προσέγγιση (Modern Greek Dramaturgy and its Western Influences, 18th-19th Century: A Comparative Approach)* Athens: Αφοι Τολιδή, 1993.

⁴⁸Puchner argues that theatrical production in the Ionian Islands presents continuity from the eighteenth century onwards. Πούχγερ, Βάλτερ, *Ελληνική Θεατρολογία (Greek 'Theatrology')* and *Ανιχνεύοντας τη θεατρική παράδοση (Tracing the Theatrical Tradition)*. This production, however, could not affect the issues I am discussing in this session since the genre developed in this theatrical production was comedy.

⁴⁹Historians of Greek theatre are divided as to whether or not especially the Cretan Renaissance and the Ionian Islands' plays should be considered as the beginning of the history of Modern Greek theatre. See Βάλσα, Μ., *Το Νεοελληνικό θέατρο από το 1453 έως το 1900 (Modern Greek Theatre from 1453 to 1900)*; Βαλέτας, Γιώργος, *Ο άγνωστος θεατρικός πρόδρομος Επιφάνιος Δημητριάδης ο Σκιάθιος κι η ανέκδοτη τραγωδία του Πέρσας ή Ξέρξης (The Unknown Theatrical Pioneer Epiphanius Demetriades from Skiathos and its Unpublished Tragedy «Perses or Xerxes»)*, Athens, 1953; Πούχγερ, Βάλτερ, *Ανιχνεύοντας τη θεατρική παράδοση (Tracing the Theatrical Tradition)*; Ταμπάκη, Άννα, «Ο Διαφωτισμός και ο ρομαντισμός στο νεοελληνικό θέατρο» ("Enlightenment and Romanticism in Modern Greek Theatre"), in: *Νεοελληνικό Θέατρο(17ος-20ος): Επιστημονικές Επιμορφωτικές Διαλέξεις (Modern Greek Theatre (17th-20th century): Scientific, Educational Lectures)*; and Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνικού Θεάτρου: 1794-1944 (The History of the Modern Greek Theatre: 1794-1944)*, Athens: Καστανιώτης, vol. I, 1990. It has to be noted, however, that the first productions of Cretan Renaissance drama from 1832 onwards are the National Theatre's production of *Abraham's sacrifice*, directed by Fotos Politis in 1933 and the Laiki Skené's production of Chortatzis' *Erophili* directed by Károlos Koun in 1934. Thus in terms of theatre practice the historicity of these plays was actually recognised in the twentieth century, but only after the promotion of performances of tragedy as 'purely Greek' theatrical products rich in symbolic capital.

⁵⁰This is specifically true for the Cretan Renaissance tragedies. Both Crete and the Ionian Islands during these periods were under Venetian rule, which allowed the contact of these places with European civilisation. Indicative of the cultural importance of Venetian rule is that any theatrical production in Crete ceased with the Turkish conquering of the island in 1669. Greek Enlightenment, on the other hand, was developed through the contact of Greek intellectuals with Western Europe. The theatrical production of this period is mostly confined within the framework of translations of classic theatre playwrights like Metastasio and Goldoni and a little later of Molière and Shakespeare. Very few attempts were made to write Greek

Secondly, nineteenth-century theatrical production presented problems and it could not be used in the form of tradition. Greek culture during the nineteenth-century, as I mentioned discussing Tsoukalás notion of ‘modernisation’ and ‘tradition’, was shaped around the aim of the ‘revival’ of Ancient Greek glory and *Geist*.⁵¹ This aim was expressed on the one hand, by initially denying the Byzantine period and aspects of the following phases of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture, categorising them as non-Greek.⁵² On the other hand, it was geared towards the ‘purification’ of Modern Greek culture from anything that was perceived as foreign or non-Greek to the Ancient Greek *Geist*. The concept of ‘purification’ touched on all the aspects of Greek culture during the nineteenth century, but most importantly language. It legitimised the use of an artificial form of language called *katharévousa*, which was shaped on the model of Ancient Greek, instead of the form of language that almost all people used at that time, the *demotiki*. This is the ‘linguistic issue’.⁵³ The legitimisation of *katharévousa* affected the literary and dramatic

plays, the number rising towards the turn of the century. Although I speak of theatrical production, these observations concern more drama than performance. Professional performances especially during the last period of Enlightenment although they did occur, were very few. There is hardly any information on performance during the Cretan Renaissance. And finally, we may speak of some kind of performance in the Ionian Islands. Actually in the Ionian Islands a form of popular performance, the *Omilies (Talks)* has survived. However, it was not legitimised as ‘theatre’.

⁵¹ See among others Πολίτης, Αλέξης, *Ρομαντικά χρόνια: Ιδεολογίες και νοοτροπίες στην Ελλάδα του 1830-1880 (Romantic Years: Ideologies and Attitudes in Greece between 1830-1880)* and Κιτρομηλίδης Πασχάλης, «Ιδεολογικά και πολιτικά αιτήματα» (“Ideological and Political Requests”), in: *Θέματα νεοελληνικής ιστορίας (18ος-20ος αιώνας) (Issues of Modern Greek History: 18th to 20th century)*, p.p. 59-72.

⁵² Although from 1853-1854 onwards the Byzantine and the entirety of the following phases of what is considered to be ‘Greek’ culture were recognised as indisputably Greek, the orientation towards the ‘purification’ of ‘Greek’ culture on the model of Ancient Greece continued to characterise the pre-capitalist class aesthetic ideology.

⁵³ The ‘linguistic issue’ was brought about in the middle of the eighteenth century and concerned the official form of Greek language. *Katharévousa* prevailed as the official Greek language all through the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, whilst in a milder form it lasted until 1974 when *demotiki* was established as the official form of the Greek language. On the history of the linguistic issue see Browning, Robert, *Medieval and Modern Greek*, London: Hutchinson, 1969, especially Chapter 6, “The development of a national language”, p.p.103-18; Petrunias, Evangelos, “The Modern Greek Language and Diglossia”, in: *The “Past” in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture*, vol. I, p.p. 193-220; Φραγκουδάκη, Άννα, *Η Γλώσσα και το Έθνος 1880-1980: Εκατό χρόνια αγώνες για την αυθεντική ελληνική γλώσσα (Language and the Nation 1880-1980: One Hundred Years of Struggle for the Authentic Greek*

production in a catalytic way since, on the one hand, there was no literary and linguistic tradition to draw from, and on the other, it excluded the use of the long and rich demotic tradition as well as the literary tradition written in *demotiki* which was not so rich, but was important.⁵⁴

As *katharévousa* was the official language during the nineteenth century and the dominant language in literature until the 1880s, all serious dramatic texts were written in it. Thus they could not be used within the aesthetic framework of twentieth-century culture, which claimed the unity of the Greek nation through the ages, emphasised the Byzantine and the following phases of what is regarded as ‘Greek’ culture and drew from the Greek demotic and literary tradition that was produced in *demotiki*. Furthermore, as I already mentioned, Greek culture from the 1880s onwards was experienced as a rupture from the nineteenth-century aesthetic ideology of the ‘devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors’ and *katharévousa*.

Besides the cultural issue nineteenth-century serious dramatic texts were not proposing a genre or a style that could be characterised as ‘Greek’, as they usually imitated European

Language), Athens: Εκδόσεις Αλεξάνδρεια, 2001; Κοπιδάκης, Μιχάλης, Ζ. (ed.), *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Γλώσσας (The History of the Greek Language)*, Athens: Ελληνικό Λογοτεχνικό και Ιστορικό Αρχείο, 1999; Μέγας, Α.Ε., *Ιστορία του Γλωσσικού Ζητήματος (The History of the Linguistic Issue)*, part two «Αιώνες Γλωσσικών συζητήσεων (1750-1926)» (“Centuries of Discussion on Language”), Athens: Δωδώνη, 1997 (first published in 1927 by Ι. Δ. Κολλάρος & Σια); and Δημαρας, Κωνσταντίνος Θ., *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός (Modern Greek Enlightenment)*.

⁵⁴ On *katharévousa*’s effect on literature see Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature* especially Chapter IX, and Dimaras, C. Th., *Modern Greek Literature*.

ΘΕΑΤΡΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

ΕΑΡΙΝΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΩΝ ΠΑΡΑΣΤΑΣΕΩΝ
ΕΤΟΣ 1882

ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟΣ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΙΚΟΣ ΘΙΑΣΟΣ

ΠΑΡΑΣΤΑΣΕΙΣ ΣΥΝΔΡΟΜΗΣ 24

ΦΙΛΟΙ ΕΡΜΟΥΡΩΙΤΑΙ.

ΠΡΟΣΩΠΙΚΟΝ

ΚΥΡΙΑΙ: Πηνελόπη Βονατσέρα, Φαίνη Βονατσέρα, Έβρα Χίμα, Σοφία Αλεξιάδου, Άννα Λαζαρίδου, Φωτεινή Δρακοπούλου (---)

ΚΥΡΙΟΙ: Δημήτριος Αλεξιάδης, Ελευθέριος Βολιούρας, Γεώργιος Τσιγγός, Νικόλαος Ζακός, Παναγιώτης Λαζαρίδης, Κωνσταντίνος Παναγιώτης, Λαζαρίδης Δημητριάδης, Φίλιππος Παναγιώτης, Πρωτόδικος Χαλασπίδης, Βασίλειος Αβδίου, Ηλιόναος Στυλιασσοπούλης, Αντώνιος Βασιλείου, Σπυρίδων Καταξιάς (---)

ΔΙΔΑΧΘΗΣΟΜΕΝΑ ΕΡΓΑ. (ΟΛΑΣ ΝΕΑ)

Όδυσσεύς Βασιλείου Δέρβ., Άλκιβιαδής Παναγιωταράκης, Τυταίος Έβρα Χίμα, Ραδάμανθος Γεωργιάδης, Διόδοτος Αλεξιάδης, Πρωτοδικός Χαλασπίδης, Δούρειος ΰψικλος Δεσφύνης, Δία Δεσφύνης, Γίγνη Μανιάνης, Ταπεινότης της Γενεύης, Κόρη του Τιντορίττου, Οι Στρατιώται του Τυταίου, Τυταίος, Ανώγειος Γεωργιάδης, Η Κόρη του Έσπερου, Μολόχ ή Μεταφύλαξ του Αβδίου, Ο Έσπερος Μίχου, Σάββατος του Αβδίου, Η Κωνσταντία Ραδάμανθου, Ο Βασιλεύς, Ο Άγγελος του Μανωλάκου, Αϊδώς, Τυταίος, Ο Μολόχ, Η Πύρρος ή ο Νότος της Γενεύης, Πυρραία, Η Αϊδώς του Αβδίου.

Α να γίνει εν άκρην εν βραχίονι εν ης έρηνι ενθουσι εν ήμιν.

Καθή Φασίση, Βρωτός, Νύκτις, Ερωτός, Λαζαρίδης, ή σε διο Βασίλειου, Ο Άγιος της Βιθυνίας, Ιουλιός ή Λαζαρίδης, Η Ερωτός του Πηγά, Η Πύρρος και Κίλιος, Ο Ιβραήμ, Κόρη Λαζαρίδης, Εβραίου, Αρκατοπούλου, Παναγιώτης Σαταξιάς.

ΝΕΟΤΑΤΑΙ ΚΩΜΩΔΙΑΙ ΕΙΣ ΜΙΑΝ ΠΡΑΞΙΝ ΠΡΩΤΗΝ ΦΟΡΑΝ ΔΙΔΑΧΘΗΣΟΜΕΝΑΙ ΕΝ ΕΡΜΟΥΡΩΙ

Ο Αρκατοπούλου, Έβραος εν σκηνή μετ' Έβραος τή πρόβρατιν, Τα πύρρος του πύρρος, Ο Αρκατοπούλου ή Κόρη, Ο Αρκατοπούλου, Ο Αρκατοπούλου, Πυρραία και Κίλιος, Ο Άγιος με τήν Τ2 πρόβρατιν, Η Κόρη ή η εν Κόρη, Έβρα ή η εν Κόρη, Ο Αρκατοπούλου ή Κόρη, Τά ή η εν Κόρη, Πυρραία, Αϊδώς ή η εν Κόρη, Ο Αϊδώς ή η εν Κόρη, Τα ή η εν Κόρη, Η Κόρη ή η εν Κόρη, Ο Αρκατοπούλου.

ΤΙΜΑΙ

ΣΥΝΔΡΟΜΗΣ		ΕΣΠΕΡΙΝΑΙ.	
Αριθμ. εντάξης	Αριθμ. Έκταξης	Αριθμ. εντάξης	Αριθμ. Έκταξης
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10
11	11	11	11
12	12	12	12
13	13	13	13
14	14	14	14
15	15	15	15
16	16	16	16
17	17	17	17
18	18	18	18
19	19	19	19
20	20	20	20
21	21	21	21
22	22	22	22
23	23	23	23
24	24	24	24

Η Διαβίωση
Δ. Κ. ΑΛΕΞΙΑΔΗΣ.

Photo 2 Poster of the programme of the “Greek Dramatic Company” of Vonasseras and Alexiadis, Apollo Theatre in Syros 1882

models and moved within the literary framework of romanticism.⁵⁵ Moreover, despite the large number of ‘serious’ dramatic texts written during this period, very few of them were actually performed. Thus they functioned more within the framework of literary texts regardless of their writers’ aspirations. The only exceptions were the plays of Dimítrios Vernardakis, but these were also written in *katharévousa* and therefore they could not be used even as an aesthetic reference within the capitalist class’ aesthetic ideology.⁵⁶ (See photo 1)

Performance, however, presented a different image from drama. The systematic presence of Greek actors began around the 1850s, whilst the first professional theatre company was constituted in 1862.⁵⁷ Performance developed within a framework of the contempt that upper and middle class intellectuals and playwrights felt for Greek actors not entrusting them with their ‘serious plays’ and preferring Italian Opera.⁵⁸ This affected the repertoires

⁵⁵ On nineteenth century drama see Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνικού Θεάτρου: 1794-1944* (*The History of the Modern Greek Theatre: 1794-1944*), vol. I and Πούχγερ, Βάλτερ, *Η ιδέα του εθνικού θεάτρου στα Βαλκάνια του 19ου αιώνα: Ιστορική τραγωδία και κοινωνιοκριτική κωμωδία στις εθνικές λογοτεχνίες της Νοτιοανατολικής Ευρώπης* (*The Idea Of National Theatre in The Nineteenth-Century Balkans: Historical Tragedy and Socio-Critical Comedy in the National Literatures of South-Eastern Europe*), Athens: Πλέθρον, 1993. Contrary to serious drama, comedy had a very different development during the nineteenth century. Not only are the comedies written during that period quite interesting, but also comedy was developed to the point of presenting right at the end of the century a Greek genre, the *komeidillio*. Comedy, however, was written in *demotiki*. On the *komeidillio* see, Χατζηπανταζής, Θεόδωρος, *Το Κωμειδύλλιο (The Komeidillio)*, Athens: Ερμής, 1981.

⁵⁶ Dimítrios Vernardakis’ most known plays are *Μαρία Δοξαπατρή (Maria Doxapatri)* written in 1857, *Μερόπη (Meropi)* written in 1866, and *Φάστα (Fafsta)* written in 1893.

⁵⁷ See Χατζηπανταζής, Θεόδωρος, *Το Κωμειδύλλιο (The Komeidillio)*, and Βάλσα, Μ., *Το Νεοελληνικό θέατρο από το 1453 έως το 1900 (Modern Greek Theatre from 1453 to 1900)*.

⁵⁸ Usually these plays were read in gatherings of literary circles or in the drawing rooms of rich Athenian houses. The need, however, to see their plays performed led two playwrights, Dimítrios Koromílās and Áγγελος Vlachos to write their plays in French and to ask a French theatre company to perform them. As Hatzipantazís notes, this is probably one of the best incidents, which reveals the attitude of the middle and upper middle classes towards the Greek actors of the nineteenth century. It has to be noted that the genre of *komeidillio* was the product of collaboration between these pre-capitalist upper and middle class intellectuals and playwrights, a collaboration that did not take place in serious drama. See Χατζηπανταζής, Θεόδωρος, *Το Κωμειδύλλιο (The Komeidillio)*, p. 26 and Μπακουνάκης, Νίκος, *Το φάντασμα της Νόρμα: η υποδοχή του μελοδράματος στον ελληνικό χώρο το 19ο αιώνα (Norma’s Phantom: Opera in Greece during the Nineteenth Century)*, Athens: Καστανιώτης, 1991.

of the theatre companies, since in order to survive financially, Greek actors searched for their audiences among the masses of the population and among the Greek population that lived outside the borders of the Greek State. And thus they had to include in their repertoires many popular plays moving in what Bourdieu defines as the ‘sub-field of large scale production’.

Regardless of these unfavourable conditions which did not allow their performances to be recognised as a ‘legitimate’ form of art, the presence of Greek professional theatre companies from 1862 to the end of the century is quite remarkable. Greek companies performed during two of the three theatre seasons each year, in the Winter and the Spring seasons.⁵⁹ Usually they performed in Athens during one season and toured during the next in other major cities - Patras, for example, or Ermoúpolis, within Greece, or in major cities with a large Greek population outside the Greek borders like Konstantinople, Smirna and Alexandria.

They performed a different play every two or three days. If a play was successful it was performed a gain during the season. Thus the repertoire of a company for a theatrical season was quite large.⁶⁰ During this period, that is from 1862 to the end of the century,

⁵⁹ The winter season ran from October to January-February, the spring season from March to May-June. The third season, that is the summer season, covered the period of the summer months. During the latter more popular forms of theatre and spectacle were performed, such as shadow theatre, circus attractions and café-santan.

⁶⁰ The “Ménandros” theatre company’s repertoire (the theatre company of Soutsas and Tavoularis) comprised for the spring season of 1874-75 in Patras a total of 36 plays. Not all of them were actually performed, but it seems that the actors could perform at any given time any play out of this rich repertoire the actor-manager(s) thought appropriate. An average number of plays performed in a season were 20 to 30. The theatre company “Próodos” (Kotopoulos) performed during the winter season 1895-1896 in Patras 26 plays, two of them as a double bill. These data are based on unpublished research that I have done for the performances in the theatre “Apollo” in Patras from 1872 to 1900. Patras, Athens and Ermoúpolis comprised the three larger theatrical centres within the Greek State.



Photo 3 Athanássios Peridis, in Aristomenis Provelélegios' *The daughter of Lemnos* first performed in 1894

a gradual change may be observed with regard to the choice of the plays that comprised the repertoire. During the first decades of this period repertoires generally inclined to include mostly foreign plays, ‘novel dramas’, but also classic plays by Molière, Goldoni and Shakespeare. (See photo 2) In many cases the actor–managers themselves translated the foreign plays sometimes adapting them to emphasise aspects that were more familiar to Greek audiences. Towards the end of the century, however, the presence of Greek plays in the repertoire was quite dominant.⁶¹ (See photo 3)

I have elaborated slightly more on nineteenth-century performance because the research on Greek performance during that period has not tackled the issue as thoroughly as the research on the dramatic literature has done. The most useful arguments about the performance tradition that I encountered in the study of this thesis are those of Sideris, Hatzipadazís, and recently Glytzourís.⁶² I have presented a more elaborate image of performance here because, regardless of the conditions within which it appeared, performance during the nineteenth century presents a continuity and a volume of work that was bequeathed as a ‘tradition’ to the Greek actors of the twentieth century. (See photos 4 and 5) This ‘tradition’ does not refer aesthetically to a style or a form of performance but rather to a continuous line of theatre practitioners especially actors and actresses and actor and actress-managers. Fotos Politis first accomplished the

⁶¹ Looking at the repertoires of “Ménandros” in 1873-74 and “Próodos” in 1895-96 that were mentioned above, we see that the repertoire of “Ménandros” included 28 foreign plays, translated or adapted in Greek and only seven Greek plays. The repertoire of “Próodos” included nine foreign plays and seventeen Greek plays. These repertoires are typical of the repertoires during these periods. See also Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνικού Θεάτρου: 1794-1944* (*The History of the Modern Greek Theatre: 1794-1944*), vol. I.

⁶² Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνικού Θεάτρου: 1794-1944* (*The History of the Modern Greek Theatre: 1794-1944*), vol. I; Χατζηπανταζής, Θεόδωρος, *Το Κωμειδύλλιο* (*The Komeidillio*); Γλυτζουρής,

legitimation of this 'tradition', which at the beginning of the century functioned more implicitly within the art itself. In a way Politis attempted to construct the historicity of theatrical production in Greece, recognising the actors of the nineteenth century and their craft.⁶³

Thus at the beginning of the twentieth century, within the framework of this cultural change, theatrical production in Greece was in a very difficult and tense position. Theatre artists felt 'trapped' between their need to present a contemporary strong production with works that belonged to 'restricted production' and that were rich in symbolic capital, and the lack of such works. Drama continued to be poor in works of symbolic capital despite the presence of Grigorios Xenopoulos and Pantelis Chorn. Performance, on the other hand, was at a very crucial point. (See photo 6) The artistic work of actors and actresses was beginning to be recognised and praised. Performance, however, was not yet entirely recognised as a form of art *per se* despite the presence of the Nea Skené and the Royal Theatre right at the beginning of the century that attempted implicitly to press for that recognition.

Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα (The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece)*, Athens: Ελληνικά Γράμματα, 2001.

⁶³ See Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἡ γιορτή τοῦ Ταβουλάρη» ("A Celebration for Tavoularis"), and «Ὁ κίνδυνος τοῦ θεάτρου» ("The danger for theatre"), in: Νίκος Πολίτης (ed.), *Φώτου Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis; A selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, Athens: Ἴκαρος, 1983, p.p. 392-3 (originally published in *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα*, 19-5-1928) and p. p. 244-6 (originally published in *Πολιτεία* 8-10-1926) and «Ἐὐαγγελία Παρασκευοπούλου» ("Evagelia Paraskevopoulou"), in: Νίκος Πολίτης (ed), *Φώτου Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis; A selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, Athens: Ἴκαρος, 1983, p.p. 99-101 (originally published in *Πρωία*, 22-11-1930).



Photo 4 Nikólaos Lekatsás in the part of Hamlet towards the end of the nineteenth century



Photo 5 Evagelia Paraskevopoulou in the part of Hamlet towards the end of the nineteenth century



Photo 6 The theatre company of Dionýssios Tavoularis in Alexandre Dumas' *The Actor Kean*

At the same time the development of theatrical production in Europe underlined the inability of Greece to present its own contemporary theatrical production, a production which would be recognised not only inside the country, but also abroad. It is my contention that the 1919 production of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, translated and directed by Fotos Politis, met the challenge of the creation of a 'Greek' contemporary theatrical production by proposing the promotion of Ancient Greek tragedy as the area of theatre aesthetics from which contemporary Greek production could draw, develop and present 'purely Greek' works of theatre.

Thus the evident deficiency of Modern Greek tradition and the demand for a foundation stone and a starting point of a creative dynamic force in the area of theatre resulted in diverting the search for creativity towards the historical reference of antiquity. If in literature, therefore, the promotion of the ideologem of *hellenikótita* referred to the more recent sources of modern Greek tradition, it is my contention that, in the field of theatrical production, due to the lack of strong recent sources, the promotion of the ideologem of *hellenikótita* was realised by reference to Ancient Greek theatre. This realisation was made possible through the concept of 'heritage'. Thus, as I will argue in the following chapter, a 'sub-field of restricted production' was constituted in Greece with regard to productions of tragedy. This development, however, presupposed, as I will explain, that the field of performance had to meet the two crucial challenges that Greek culture faced during this period. The first one consisted of the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the framework of the aesthetic ideology of the capitalist class. The second consisted of the unavoidable reference to the European theatrical tradition in such a way that it would lead to styles of performances that could be characterised as 'purely Greek' and face

Europe as a rival. Both these issues, as I will explain in the second chapter, touched heavily on the issue of *hellenikótita*.

Chapter II

Productions of Greek tragedy and ‘hellenikótita’: the constitution of a ‘sub-field of theatrical production’ and a Greek style of performance

Three performances act as landmarks, I will argue, marking the beginning of the constitution of a ‘sub-field of restricted production’ in Greece, in Bourdieu’s terms. The first one is Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus*, translated and directed by Fotos Politis and performed in the indoor theatre Olýmpia in Athens in 1919. The second is Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*, directed by Áγγελος Sikelianós and his wife Eva Palmer-Sikelianoú and performed in the Ancient Greek theatre of Delphi in 1927. Finally the third is Euripides’ *Hecuba* directed by Fotos Politis and performed in the Panathinaikó Stádio in Athens also in 1927, shortly after the Sikelianoi’s production. It is my contention that these three productions established Ancient Greek tragedy as the area of theatre aesthetics where a style of performance that could be recognised as ‘Greek’ could be created and developed. Furthermore they proposed, as I will explain, the basis of the aesthetic frame within which productions of ancient tragedy moved from thence onwards. This development was based on the use of the symbolic capital of tragedy as dramatic text in the Greek contemporary theatre.

The use of tragedy's symbolic capital, however, presupposed, as I will argue, the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the context of the new aesthetic ideology of the progressive capitalist cultural circles. I have already discussed in the first chapter that the nineteenth-century pre-capitalist aesthetic ideology moved within the framework of the 'devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors' and aimed at the 'revival' of the Ancient Greek glory and *Geist*.¹ I have furthermore elaborated on the issue that the progressive capitalist circles opposed this aesthetic ideology fiercely by proposing a new aesthetic ideology. The capitalist class' aesthetic ideology was based on the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages and placed emphasis on the Byzantine and the following phases of what was considered to be 'Greek' culture, that is Greek culture during the Ottoman Empire and nineteenth-century art and literature written in *demotiki* as well as Greek popular culture stressing at the same time the eastern qualities of Greek culture. The *sine qua non* principle of this new aesthetic ideology was the use of *demotiki*, the spoken language of the Greek people, as opposed to *katharévousa*, the artificial language that the pre-capitalists used. The fierceness of the progressive capitalist class' opposition to the pre-capitalist aesthetic ideology was expressed as an absolute erasure of all cultural products created within the framework of the aesthetic ideology of the 'devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors'. Within this context the potentiality of the use of the symbolic capital of tragedy had first to transcend the cultural problem of the symbolic capital that tragedy already possessed within the framework of the nineteenth-century 'devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors'.

¹ See Chapter I, p.p. 56-7 and footnote 21, p.p. 37-8

Although the number of nineteenth-century productions of Greek tragic plays was relatively small, tragedy as an Ancient Greek cultural product possessed an important symbolic capital in the nineteenth-century aesthetic ideology.² This symbolic capital was furthermore established in those cases where productions of tragic plays formed part of celebrations organised by the State such as the celebration of twenty-five years of King George I on the throne of Greece.³ In these cases tragedy was promoted as the ‘consecrated Greek theatre’ of the nineteenth-century Greek culture. The symbolic capital that tragedy represented within the framework of the ‘devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors’ became even more intensely declared towards the end of that century and the beginning of the twentieth, when the fierce advocates of the ‘Ancient Greek Glory’ insisted that these plays should be performed exclusively in Ancient Greek.⁴ The timing was not coincidental, since during that period the progressive capitalist artistic circles have begun to manifest their interest in appropriating tragedy’s cultural capital within their own aesthetic ideology.

² The majority of nineteenth-century productions were amateur productions. The amateur companies consisted of members of the high society pre-capitalist class or more frequently of students under the instruction of university professors of classics or archaeology who again promoted tragedy through the framework of the ‘devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors’. Sometimes professional actors were also employed. On the whole nineteenth-century productions moved aesthetically in what Sideris calls ‘historic revival’ and aimed at a ‘faithful’ reproduction of the style of the ancient performances, although the term ‘ancient style’ used for these performances was defined rather loosely. See Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932)*, Athens: Ίκαρος, 1976.

³ Other similar cases were the celebration of the fifty years of Athens University and the first Olympic Games in 1896.

⁴ The attitude towards the issue of the language used in the productions varied in the course of the century. Until 1887 tragic plays were mostly performed translated into *katharévousa*. From 1887 they were performed in Ancient Greek. Professor George Mistriotis fiercely advocated this last mode of performing the plays in their original Ancient Greek language. Mistriotis’ productions of tragedy with his students dominated this field of performance during the last decade of the century. See Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932)*.

The transcendence of the cultural problem, which was created by the symbolic capital that tragedy possessed within the framework of ‘devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors’, became feasible through the literary translation of tragic plays into *demotiki*. The enterprise began at the start of the twentieth century, just twenty years after the appearance of the literary generation of the 1880s, which initiated the new aesthetic ideology of the progressive artists. This literary translation was accomplished quite systematically in the sense that during the first decade of the twentieth century a number of progressive literary artists were engaged in the translation of these plays.⁵ The enterprise was, furthermore, supported by some of the most ‘consecrated’ literary artists of the progressive literary circles, like Kostís Palamás.⁶ And moreover, crucial to the success and the attribution of importance to the enterprise was the involvement of the progressive literary periodicals of the time and especially that of *Noumás*, which published these translations.⁷

It is my contention that the involvement of both ‘producers of the work’, translators, and ‘producers of the value of the work’, periodicals and ‘consecrated artists’, in Bourdieu’s

⁵ Among the first to be involved in the translation of tragic plays into *demotiki* was Konstantinos Christomanos. The opening play of his Nea Skené was Euripides’ *Alcestis*, which was translated and directed by him. Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* directed by Thomás Oikonomou and produced by the Royal Theatre in 1903 was translated into a mixed dialect, that is, into *katharévousa* with elements of *demotiki*.

⁶ Kostís Palamás was one of the main representatives of the literary generation of the 1880s and the most important pioneer of the new aesthetic ideology. Palamás exercised an immense influence on Greek literature and culture for more than fifty years.

⁷ *Noumás* was considered to be the most recognised periodical of the progressive literary circles and a fierce advocate of the new aesthetic ideology and *demotiki*. Thus its active and systematic engagement in the publishing of translations of ancient tragedies, which were accomplished by its literary contributors from 1901 to 1909, attributed a significant cultural importance to the enterprise. One of *Noumás* literary contributors in the translation of tragedies was Ioannis Gryparis whose translations will be used later on by the Sikelianoí as well as Fotos Politis and Dimitris Rondiris in the National Theatre. Besides *Noumás* other literary periodicals were also engaged in publishing translations of Ancient Greek tragic plays, such as *Diónysos* (Διώνυσος) and *Fos* (Φως), or supported this movement like *Asty* (Άστυ). See Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, «Οί ἀντάρτες τοῦ ‘Νουμᾶ’ μεταφράζουν τραγωδίες στὴ δημοτικὴ» (“The Rebels of ‘Noumás’

terms, allows us to understand this literary translation not only as a literary appropriation but also as the initial stage of the cultural appropriation of these plays within the framework of the new aesthetic ideology of the progressive circles.⁸ The translation of tragedies into *demotiki* by those progressive artists, who were the main representatives of this new aesthetic ideology, introduced ancient tragedy and made it a part of the aesthetic linguistic quests and the linguistic and literary ‘tradition’ that the progressive artists invoked. Thus it allowed and legitimised the cultural ‘transference’ of tragedy from the framework of the ‘devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors’, within which it was used before, to the framework of the new aesthetic ideology of the progressive cultural circles. This new aesthetic ideology with regard to the production of art consisted of the basis of the national culture as this was to be understood and constructed by the capitalist class from the second decade of the twentieth century onwards, that is from the period that it ascended into power.

The fact that the literary appropriation of tragedy denoted unmistakably its cultural appropriation within the framework of the new aesthetic ideology may be seen in the students’ riot that occurred on the occasion of *Oresteia*’s performance by the Royal Theatre in 1903. *Oresteia* was translated into a form of a mixed dialect, that is, into *katharévousa* with elements of *demotiki*. The Royal Theatre’s performance caused a

Translate Tragedies into *Demotiki*”), *Θέατρο*, Νίτσος, Κώστας, (ed.), vol. 6, no 31 (January-February), 1973, p.p.47-56.

⁸ It has to be noted for the record that the international importance and recognition of ancient tragedy as well as the rise of European theatre’s interest in tragedy towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century played an instigating even provoking role in Greek literature agents’ interest during that period. See Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932)*.

students' riot which remained in history under the name *Oresteiaká*.⁹ The main argument of the students was that the Royal Theatre, which by its institution was expressing the official theatrical policy of the State in tragedy, could perform those plays only in the “holy language” in which they were written and for which the Greek nation “had shed [its] blood”. This was the last time that such an approach to tragedy would be expressed and in such a violent form.¹⁰

In essence the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the context of the new aesthetic ideology of the progressive cultural circles provided a unique opportunity to manifest in practice the ideology's doctrine, the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages. It used an Ancient Greek cultural product within the framework of a literary language that claimed its tradition in the Byzantine and especially the most recent phases of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture. Thus in the translation of an ancient tragic play all phases of ‘Greek’ culture were immediately present. I will argue that the full extent of this manifestation was to be accomplished in the style of the productions of tragedy from 1919 onwards that moved within the aesthetic framework of what became known as the ‘revival of ancient tragedy’.

The possibilities that the literary appropriation of tragedy presented for Greek theatre, especially with regard to performance, appeared very early. Tragedy in the form of its literary appropriation in *demotikí* started to be used as a performance text on a more

⁹ The riot was instigated by professor George Mistriotis, who at the end of the nineteenth century saw the whole issue of the performance of Ancient Greek tragic plays as his own personal enterprise.

¹⁰ . On *Oresteiaká* see Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, «Τά Όρεστειακά: ταραχές για νά μήν παίζονται οι τραγωδίες σέ μετάφραση» (“ The *Oresteiaká*: Riots Against the Performance of Tragedy in Translation”), *Θέατρο*,



Photo 7 Evagelia Paraskevopoulou in the part of Medea

Νίτσος, Κωνσταντίνος (ed.), vol. 6, no 33 (May-June), p.p. 51-61 and no 34-36 (July-December), 1973, p.p. 89-99.

regular basis by professional theatre companies.¹¹ (See photo 7) It has to be noted, however, that the term ‘tragedy’ in Greek performance referred until 1919 not only to the ancient Greek plays, but also to contemporary adaptations of ancient tragedies such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *Elektra* or even Goethe’s *Ifigeneia*. In these performances the symbolic capital that tragedy possessed *per se* as a form of high art started to be related to the field of performance. At this stage, however, this relation singled out individual actors and actresses who excelled in the performance of the genre. The title ‘great tragedian’ as the highest form of ‘consecration’ of performance artists, mainly actresses, appeared at that period, that is, towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Marika Kotopouli was the first to be recognised as a ‘great tragedian’. (See photo 8)

The full extent of the potentialities that the symbolic capital of tragedy presented for Greek theatre were first realised in the 1919 production of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus* translated and directed by Fotos Politis. This production and especially those of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*, directed by the Sikelianoí and Euripides’ *Hecuba* directed by Fotos Politis, both in 1927, were the first to use the symbolic capital of tragic plays as ‘Greek’ dramatic play-texts in performance. Furthermore these performances claimed their aesthetic base on the recognition of the particularity of the genre, thus implicitly claiming the extension of the symbolic capital of tragedy as a dramatic play-text to

¹¹ Based on the data Sideris provides from 1900 to 1919 there were twenty-three performances of Ancient Greek tragedy (some of them were repetitions) and eighteen performances of adaptations of tragic plays or contemporary plays based on Ancient Greek tragedies, like Goethe’s *Ifigeneia*. See Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή, 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932)*.



Photo 8 Marika Kotopouli in the part of Electra in Hugo von Hoffmannstal's *Electra*

include the performances themselves. In its turn the aesthetic style of these performances, as I will argue, drew on all the phases of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture from antiquity to modern times stressing implicitly or explicitly the eastern qualities of the Greek culture. Thus they moved within the new aesthetic ideology’s doctrine, the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages, and claimed in themselves a symbolic capital as cultural products that could be considered to be ‘purely Greek’. It is my contention that the combination of these two kinds of symbolic capital provided the necessary conditions for the promotion of the performances of tragedy as highbrow ‘Greek’ theatre. And that furthermore the discourse on the production of tragedy was inseparably linked with the discourse on *hellenikótita* and thus the aesthetic styles of the productions were conceived in relation to the artists’ individual interpretation of the ideologem of *hellenikótita*.

The important parameter in this development was, of course, the performances themselves, for they suggested a different concept of ‘performance’ to the one that already existed. To the amalgam of separate elements, that is, individual acting achievements, stage decoration designed to please the spectator’s eye, lighting and music effects, these productions proposed a form of performance where all its elements were aesthetically combined in a unified whole.¹² Their aesthetic style was the outcome of a

¹² On styles of performances before the 1919 production of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus* see Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνικού Θεάτρου: 1794-1944 (The History of the Modern Greek Theatre: 1794-1944)*, vol. I, 1990 and III (1999); Ηλιάδης, Φρίξος, *Κοτοπούλη: Βιογραφικό corpus (Kotopouli: Biographical Corpus)*, Athens: Δωρικός, 1996; Τσούχλου, Δήμητρα and Μπαχαριάν, Ασαντούρ, *Η σκηνογραφία στο ελληνικό θέατρο (Set Design in the Greek Theatre)*, Athens: Άποψη, 1985; Φωτόπουλος, Διονύσης, *Σκηνογραφία στο ελληνικό θέατρο (Set Design in the Greek Theatre)*, Athens: Έκδοση της Εμπορικής Τράπεζας της Ελλάδος, 1987; and Γλυτζουρή, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα (The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece)*.

serious and systematic approach to the issue of tragedy and it presupposed the interpretation of the tragic dramatic text within the terms of contemporary times.

In this sense these productions put forward a change in the terms of the reception of performance. Instead of being understood as a stage execution of a dramatic text, performance started to be perceived as an aesthetic whole, the creative interpretation of a play, possessing its own aesthetic value and obeying its own aesthetic rules. In other words, as I contend, performance came to be recognised as an art form *per se*. This development coincided with the appearance of the theatre director in the Greek theatre. The 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* was the first Greek performance where the presence of the theatre director as a creative entrepreneur of the dramatic text was recognised.¹³

Using Bourdieu's model of analysis this difference in the concept itself of 'performance' that these productions proposed may be explained as an opposition to the 'sub-field of

¹³ See references and quotations of reviews about *Oedipus Tyrannus* production in Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932)*, p.p. 266-78; in *Εκκόκλημα*, no 13, April-June 1987, p.p.52-3; and in Γλυτζουρίης, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα (The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece)*. In this last book, which is based on his Ph.D. thesis, Dr Glytzouris discusses thoroughly the issue of theatre direction in Greece. He refers among other issues to the issue of performances of ancient tragedy in relation to theatre direction. However, as the book was published at the end of March 2001 it was impossible for me to take it into consideration in the construction of my own approach to the issue of the performance of ancient tragedy since this approach had already been constructed in detail. I have to note that Dr Glytzouris discusses the issue of theatre direction using methodologies of empirical historiography studying a huge corpus of sources that are limited, however, in the field of theatre. And although he attempts to connect in the last part of his book the issue of the performance of ancient tragedy with the concept of nationalism he does so within the context of empirical historiography and based on sources of theatre. The difference of approach between his work and mine is that I proceed to a hermeneutic systematic analysis using methodologies from the sociology of theatre and sociology discussing developments in theatre in relation to cultural tendencies during that period and this allows me to understand these developments in a different way. Thus I intend to use Dr Glytzouris' book for reference in issues of historiography until 1940, which is the period that his book covers, taking into account that there are similarities but also differences in our approach.

large-scale production'. As I have already pointed out in the Introduction, this opposition for Bourdieu consists of one of the two fundamental oppositions for the structuring of what he calls the 'sub-field of restricted production', that is, 'highbrow theatre'.¹⁴ Within this framework the 1919 production of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and the 1927 productions of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and Euripides' *Hecuba* generated the creation of 'positions' and 'position-takings' within the 'field of performance production' and proposed performances of tragedy as the area where a 'sub-field of restricted production' in theatre could be structured.

The appearance of the director and the recognition of performance as an art form *per se* which was combined with the constitution of a 'sub-field of restricted theatrical production' in Greece were instigated by the analogous recent developments in European theatre.¹⁵ Greek intellectuals and artists were usually quite well informed on the recent European ideas and movements.¹⁶ This consisted of a characteristic feature of their *habitus*, as they claimed themselves to be cosmopolitans and usually studied and travelled abroad.¹⁷

¹⁴ See Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p. 53 and 115, and Introduction, p.p. 16-8.

¹⁵ On the contemporary to this period developments in European theatre see Brockett, Oscar G. and Finlay, Robert R., *Century of Innovation: A History of European and American Theatre and Drama since 1870*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1973.

¹⁶ I have to note, however, that the adequate to the European movements tendencies in Greek thought and art were slightly belated in their manifestation.

¹⁷ The contact of Greek intellectuals and artists with European movements and ideas was also strengthened from the period of the Greek Enlightenment onwards through the Greeks of the Diaspora that played an active part in the constitution of the Greek culture. For example, the campaign for *demotikismós*, the use of *demotiki*, which was linked to the literary generation of the 1880s, was launched among others by Ioannis Psicharis who at that time was teaching Modern Greek at the École des Hautes Études in Paris. Psicharis was born in Odessa of Chiot origin and educated in Constantinople. At the age of fifteen he went to Paris. He studied philology in Paris and Germany. His contribution in the movement of *demotikismós* involved

The fact that the appearance of the director and the recognition of performance as an art form *per se* occurred in Greece in relation to performances of tragedy is in itself not surprising. A long discussion on the issue of performances of ancient tragedy had already preceded between artists, critics, and intellectuals.¹⁸ The discussion focused on the problems of the rendering on the contemporary stage of the chorus and the interchange of chorus songs and episodes, that is, the rendering in performance of the genre itself.¹⁹ In

the use of *demotiki* in prose. Its use had been already established in poetry. See Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature*, and Dimaras, C. Th., *Modern Greek Literature*.

¹⁸ The discussion had started in the middle of the nineteenth century and continued systematically until 1919 and carried on even after this date.

¹⁹ The general approach to the issue of the performance of ancient tragedy until 1919 and even as late as 1930 focused on the concept that the genre of tragedy presented problems in its contemporary transmission in performance. One does not fail to distinguish a feeling of awkwardness, or embarrassment even, with regard to the issue. I will refer to some characteristic approaches. In the winter season of 1874-75 Avgerinou, a young actress who toured with the Theatre Company “Ménandros”, gave a lecture in Smirna about ancient tragedy. She said, “Ancient tragedies have a plot which in its composition does not arouse any interest and it does not help the actor to develop a varied and natural acting style. The intervention of the chorus songs, the length of the monologues and the length of tragic narration render the action of the play and the art of the actor ineffective. (...) Tragic characters are indeed elevated yet they are vague and lack naturalness.” [*Αἱ ἀρχαῖαι τραγωδίαι ἔχουσιν ὑπόθεσιν ἐν τῇ πλοκῇ μὴ διεγείρουσαν σπουδαῖον ἐνδιαφέρον οὐδὲ βοηθοῦσαν τὸν ὑποκριτὴν εἰς τὴν ἀνάπτυξιν ποικίλης καὶ φυσικῆς ὑποκρίσεως. Ἡ τῶν χορικῶν παρεμβολή, τὸ μῆκος τῶν μονολόγων καὶ τῶν τραγικῶν ἀφηγήσεων παραλύουν τὴν δρᾶσιν τῆς ὑποθέσεως καὶ τὴν τέχνην τοῦ ὑποκριτοῦ... Οἱ χαρακτήρες τῶν τραγωδιῶν εἶναι ὄντως ὑψηλοί, πλὴν ἀόριστοι καὶ ἐστερημένοι φυσικότητος.*] A summary of this lecture was published in the newspaper *Ἰωνία* on the 15 of February 1875. (Quotation taken from Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το ἀρχαῖο ἐλληνικὸ θέατρο στὴ νέα ἐλληνικὴ σκηνὴ 1817-1932*, (*Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932*), p.p. 61-62.) This feeling of awkwardness in relation to the form of tragedy can still be traced in twentieth-century articles. However, as these articles had been written in a period when the cultural appropriation of tragedy had already started, we can easily distinguish a difference in the approach to the subject. The articles noted the problems of the performance of the genre taking however into consideration the fact that contemporary solutions had been proposed. In one of his articles, written in 1910, Grigoris Xenóopoulos, one of the recognised playwrights of the beginning of the twentieth century, noted the difficulty that contemporary audiences felt to be fully moved by the form of tragedy. He wrote, “We are so far away from these feelings [of Antigone], we can be little affected by the technique [...] of ancient drama. [*Πόσον εἴμεθα μακρὰν ἀπὸ αὐτὰ τὰ συναισθήματα [τῆς Ἀντιγόνης], πόσον ὀλίγον ἠμποροῦμεν νὰ εἰσέλθωμεν εἰς τὴν τεχνοτροπίαν [...] ἐνὸς ἀρχαίου δράματος.*] The article, however, ended by praising these performances of ancient tragedy that used the text translated into *demotiki*. (Quotation taken from Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το ἀρχαῖο ἐλληνικὸ θέατρο στὴ νέα ἐλληνικὴ σκηνὴ 1817-1932* (*Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932*), p. 242.) A little later, in 1927 and 1930, Alkis Thrilos pointed out “how a play that is now a ruin can be revived? [...] The majority of the elements that consisted of its unity have been lost. The music, even the pronunciation of the text, the prosody, in one word the entire emotiveness of the sound, is unknown to us... And yet it has been certified that the music and the text are unified in the ancient drama in a way much tighter than that of the contemporary opera.” [*Πῶς θὰ ξαναζωντανευθεῖ τώρα ἓνα ἔργο ποὺ ἐγινε ἐρείπιο; [...] Τὰ περισσότερα ἀπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα ποὺ ἀποτελοῦσαν τὴν ἐνότητά του ἔχουν χαθεῖ. Ἡ μουσικὴ, αὐτὴ ἀκόμα ἢ προφορὰ τοῦ κειμένου, ἢ*

the course of this long discussion, the difficulty, even the impossibility in some instances, of rendering the ancient genre in contemporary times had been repeatedly underlined. In this sense, however, implicitly next to the importance of the tragic plays as dramatic texts this discussion had distinctively raised the issue of their performance placing it at the centre of aesthetic quests in relation to the search for an adequate to the genre contemporary aesthetic form of performance.

Within this context tragedy as a text-in-performance seems to have been satisfying the necessary conditions to be promoted as the theatrical area where a ‘sub-field of restricted production’, could be structured.²⁰ On the one hand, as a dramatic text, it already possessed a rich symbolic capital and thus it could acquire the position of ‘consecrated’ ‘Greek’ drama. On the other hand, the issue of its performance was inseparably linked with the issue of aesthetic forms and thus it could orient what Bourdieu observes as “production towards the cult of form for its own sake”.²¹ Finally, on the basis of what I have already explained in the first chapter, within the framework of its cultural appropriation, which stressed the ‘Greekness’ of tragedy emphasising the eastern qualities of both the genre and its contemporary performances, the issue of the production of tragedy provided an area of aesthetic quests, the products of which could be characterised as ‘purely Greek’.

προσωδία, με μιὰ λέξη ὅλη ἢ ὑποβλητικότης τοῦ ἤχου, μάς εἶναι ἀγνωσθη... Κι ὁμως ἔχει ἐξακριβωθεῖ ὅτι ἡ μουσική καὶ τὸ κείμενο ἐνώνονται στὸ ἀρχαῖο δράμα πολὺ πιδ σφιχτὰ παρὰ στὴ σημερινή δπερα.] Θρύλος, Ἀλκης, «Τὰ ἀρχαῖα δράματα στὸ θέατρο τῶν Συρακουσῶν», (“Ancient Dramatic Plays in the Theatre of Syracuse”) (15 May 1927), in: Ἀλκης Θρύλος, *Τὸ Ἑλληνικὸ Θέατρο (The Greek Theatre)*, Athens: Ἀκαδημία Αθηνῶν, Ἰδρυμα Κώστα καὶ Ελένης Ουράνη, vol. I, 1977, p. 30.

²⁰ The opposition to the ‘sub-field of large-scale production’ consists for Bourdieu of one of the two fundamental oppositions in the structuring of a ‘sub-field of restricted production’. See Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.p. 53 and 115.

²¹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 127.

A final parameter that was a catalyst in the constitution of the ‘sub-field of restricted theatrical production’ in Greece was the particular artists that instigated the development. Both Fotos Politis and Ággelos Sikelianós already held recognised ‘position-takings’ in the field of literature, in Bourdieu’s terms. By 1927 Sikelianós had already published four great poetic compositions that earned him recognition as the greatest poet in Greece since Palamás.²² Politis, on the other hand, had already acquired since 1915 one of the riskiest ‘position-takings’ in the field of literature, in Bourdieu’s terms, as a critic exercising a negative criticism, demanding “a higher ethical approach from the intellectuals”, and attacking “falsity, *cabotinage*, and shallow literature without any real grip of life”.²³ Both Politis and Sikelianós had been dynamically involved through their work in the discourse on *hellenikótita* during this period and had already proposed their concepts on *hellenikótita* and Greek art. Thus, it is my contention that in their engagement in the direction of tragedy they expanded the discourse on *hellenikótita* and Greek art into the aesthetic styles of the performances of tragedy. Furthermore they transferred the prestige of their ‘position-takings’, in Bourdieu’s terms, to the field of theatre.

²² In 1907 Sikelianós published *Αλαφροσκοπιωτος* (*The Light Shadowed*), between 1915 and 1917 *Πρόλογος στη ζωή* (*Prologue to Life*), in 1917 *Μήτηρ Θεού* (*Mother of God*), and between 1918-1919 *Πάσχα των Ελλήνων* (*The Easter of the Greeks*). See Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature*, and Dimaras, C.Th., *Modern Greek Literature*.

²³ Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature*, p. 218. Fotos Politis was deeply influenced by Giannis Apostolakis and like him he denounced all Greek poetry except demotic song and Dionýssios Solomós. See Dimaras, C. Th., *Modern Greek Literature* and Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου* (*Modernism and ‘Tradition’ in the Greek Art of the Interwar Period*).

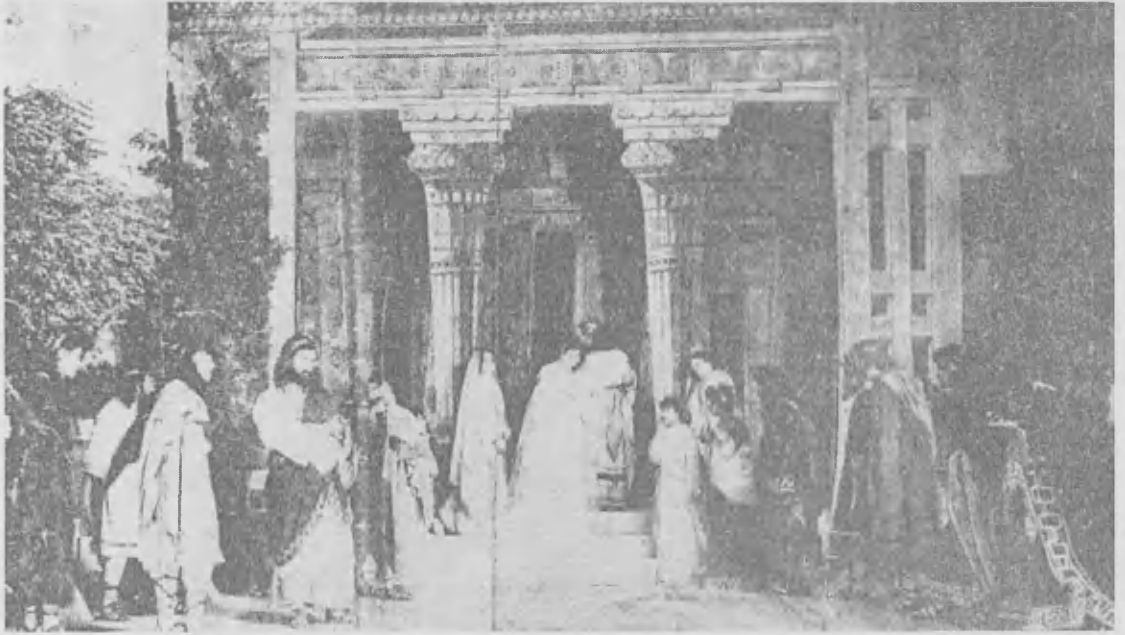


Photo 9 Euripides' Alceste, the Nea Skené 1901

The fortunate coincidence of all these parameters allowed the constitution of a ‘sub-field of restricted theatrical production’, in Bourdieu’s terms, which in Greece was developed in the area of the productions of tragedy. The constitution of a ‘sub-field’ provided the necessary conditions for the creation of a ‘Greek’ highbrow theatre rich in symbolic capital that could contribute to the creation of ‘Greek’ national culture during this period. The failure of previous analogous attempts to create a ‘Greek’ serious theatre may be attributed precisely to the fact that they did not satisfy the conditions to allow for such a development. Thomás Oikonomou, for example, and Konstantinos Christomanos right at the beginning of the century had recognised the symbolic capital of tragedy and its importance for Greek theatre. Christomanos had produced Euripides *Alcestis* in 1901, translated and directed by him, as the opening play for his newly founded Nea Skené.²⁴ (See photo 9) Oikonomou, as artistic director of the Royal Theatre, had directed the Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* in 1903 that caused the *Oresteiaká*, a student riot that opposed the translation of ancient plays in Modern Greek.²⁵ (See photo 10) The aesthetic styles of both the productions of *Alcestis* and *Oresteia*, however, did not take into account the particularity of the genre and moved in the usual style of performances of the time, in other words they handled tragedy like any other of the plays produced. Also neither the former nor the latter linked the aesthetic styles of their productions with the discourse on

²⁴ The Nea Skené, founded on the model of European Independent Theatres, was a theatre company that promoted the new aesthetic ideology of the progressive circles in theatre. See Σαρροπούλου, Κατερίνα (ed.), *Ο Κωνσταντίνος Χρηστομάνος και η εποχή του: 130 χρόνια από τη γέννησή του (Constantinos Christomanos and his Times: One Hundred and Thirty Years After his Birth)*, Minutes of One-Day Congress, Athens: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρή Χορν και Αστική Εταιρεία Θεάτρου και Μιμικής «Αιωρία», 1999; Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνικού Θεάτρου: 1794-1944 (The History of the Modern Greek Theatre: 1794-1944)*, vol. I and III, and also by him, *Το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932)*; and Γλυτζουρής, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα (The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece)*.

²⁵ See above footnote 7, p.71.

hellenikótita.²⁶ Furthermore both these attempts did not instigate a constitution of a ‘sub-field of restricted production’.²⁷ Their attempts in tragedy were not followed up and productions of tragedy from 1919 do not in any way refer aesthetically to them.²⁸

Contrary to Christomanos’ 1901 production of *Alcestis* and Oikonomou’s 1903 production of *Oresteia*, the 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* by Fotos Politis and the 1927 productions of *Prometheus Bound* by the Sikelianoí and *Hecuba* by Politis set the bases for the constitution of a ‘sub-field of restricted production’ in Bourdieu’s terms. The fact that such a ‘sub-field of restricted production’ was structured and developed from 1919 to 1967 becomes apparent in the subsequent history of the performances of tragedy. From 1919 to 1967 tragedy became an area of aesthetic quests where agents disputed for the

²⁶ One has to note, however, that the literary appropriation of tragedy was just beginning during this period. and Christomanos took an active participation in it with his translation of *Alcestis*. Furthermore both Christomanos and Oikonomou functioned as actor-managers and did not possess ‘position-takings’ in the field of Greek culture -they had both just returned from abroad- and they did not succeed in creating ‘position-takings’ in the field of theatre. The Nea Skené closed in 1905 having first compromised in its repertoire in order to survive financially. Christomanos later became involved in literature publishing *To βιβλίο της αυτοκράτειρας Ελισάβετ (The Book of the Empress Elizabeth)* in 1907 (first published in German) and *Η Κερένια Κούκλα (The Wax Doll)* in 1911, and writing the dramas *Τα τρία φιλιά (The Three Kisses)* in 1908 and *Κοντορεβυθούλης (Kontorevithoulis)* in 1909. After the closure of the Royal Theatre in 1908 Oikonomou continued to work as an actor-manager and a teacher in theatre mostly in the Théâtreon Odeiou.

²⁷ Some Greek theatre historians, like Alikí Bakopoulou-Halls and Platon Mavromoustakos place implicitly the beginning of the development with regard to productions of tragedy in these two productions. See Bakopoulou-Halls, Alikí, “Greece”, in: *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*, Μαυρομούστακος, Πλάτων, «Το αρχαίο ελληνικό δράμα στη νεοελληνική σκηνή: από τους Πέρσες του 1571 στις προσεγγίσεις του 20^{ου} αιώνα» (“Ancient Greek Drama on the Modern Greek Stage: From the 1571 *Persae* to the Twentieth-Century Approaches”), in: Πλάτων Μαυρομούστακος (ed.), *Παραστάσεις Αρχαίου Ελληνικού Δράματος στην Ευρώπη κατά τους νεώτερους χρόνους (Productions of Ancient Greek Drama in Europe during Modern Times)*, Minutes of the Third International Scientific Meeting, April 1997, Athens: Καστανιώτης, 1999, p.p. 77-87. This implicit suggestion, however, has to be attributed to the fact that the productions of tragedy by both Christomanos and Oikonomou were twentieth-century productions rather than to their importance for the subsequent development of the issue.

²⁸ An indirect relationship between Christomanos, Oikonomou and some of the theatre directors that followed can be traced. Άγγελος Sikelianós was a member of the amateur cast of Christomanos’ production of *Alcestis*. Politis attended as an adolescent Oikonomou’s productions in the Royal Theatre, and part of Rondiris training in theatre was under the supervision of Oikonomou. Besides these indirect relations, however, there are no implicit or explicit aesthetic references in the work of these three directors to Christomanos and Oikonomou with regard to the styles of their performances of tragedy.



Photo 10 Marika Kotopouli in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, the Royal Theatre 1903

rightness of their approach and consequently for the symbolic capital that was at stake in the 'sub-field'.

In addition to their opposition to the 'sub-field of large-scale production' in Bourdieu's terms, the 1919 and 1927 productions of tragedy inaugurated also an opposition between the artists themselves concerning the orthodoxy of the aesthetic styles of their performances themselves. This kind of opposition is for Bourdieu the second fundamental opposition in the structuring of a 'sub-field of restricted production'.²⁹ The opposition between the artists on the orthodoxy of their aesthetic form inaugurated by these three first productions was to be carried forward during the period 1919-1967. Thus the 'sub-field of theatrical restricted production' in Greece during this period presented itself also as what Bourdieu calls a 'field of forces and struggles' where agents disputed the rightness of their approach.³⁰ The dispute involved the aesthetic style of the productions of tragedy in relation to the issue of *hellenikótita*, in other words the orthodox 'Greek' style of performances of tragedy.

Aesthetic quests and styles of the productions of tragedy from 1919 to 1967 moved within an aesthetic form that became known as 'revival of ancient tragedy'. The form itself was not questioned or challenged and was considered to be the 'Greek' way of performing tragedies. The diversity and dispute over the orthodoxy of approaches and styles implicitly or explicitly denoted a dispute with regard to the legitimisation of the proposed modes of expression of the form of 'revival'. Thus the form of 'revival' functioned during

²⁹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 53.

³⁰ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. p. 30 and 184.

this period in the terms of what Bourdieu observes as “a structural law [...] that imposes limits within which the quest [for distinction and difference] may be carried on legitimately. [...] The principles of differentiation regarded as most legitimate by an autonomous field are those that most completely express the specificity of a particular type of practice.”³¹

The existing research and discussion on the issue of performances of ancient tragedy has often necessarily touched on the issue of ‘revival’. The references, however, with regard to this form are more or less limited in descriptions and approaches of individual artists and/or schools.³² Only Eleni Varopoulou in her article “Adventures in Directing” attempts to present us with a broader definition of the term ‘revival’. She argues that ‘revival’ declares “at once the restoration of a national poetic heritage and the steady recourse to certain models of presentation, in order to validate an authentic manner of staging, undisturbed from the distant past to the present day”.³³ She does not, however, proceed in elaborating further on the subject, as she is more interested in discussing the

³¹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 117.

³² See among others Bakopoulou-Halls, Alikí, “Greece”, in: *Living Greek Theatre, A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*; Βαροπούλου, Ελένη, «Οι περιπέτειες του σκηνοθετικού βλέμματος» (“Adventures in Directing”), in: *Αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο, η επίδρασή του στην Ευρώπη (Greek Classical Theatre; Its Influence in Europe)*; Μαυρομούστακος, Πλάτων, «Το αρχαίο ελληνικό δράμα στη νεοελληνική σκηνή: από τους Πέρσες του 1571 στις προσεγγίσεις του 20^{ου} αιώνα» (“Ancient Greek Drama on the Modern Greek Stage: From the 1571 *Persae* to the Twentieth-Century Approaches”), in: *Παραστάσεις Αρχαίου Ελληνικού Δράματος στην Ευρώπη κατά τους νεώτερους χρόνους (Productions of Ancient Greek Drama in Europe during Modern Times)*; Χουρμούζιος, Αιμίλιος «Ἡ ἑλληνική ἐρμηνεία τῆς Ἀττικῆς τραγωδίας» (“The Greek Performance of Ancient Tragedy”), in: Αιμίλιος Χουρμούζιος, *Το αρχαίο δράμα (The Ancient Drama)*; Μινωτής, Αλέξης, *Το αρχαίο δράμα και η αναβίωσή του (Ancient Drama and its Revival)* and also by him *Εμπειρική Θεατρική Παιδεία: Δοκίμια (Empirical Theatrical Education: Essays)*, Athens: Οι Εκδόσεις των φίλων, 1988.

³³ Βαροπούλου, Ελένη, «Οι περιπέτειες του σκηνοθετικού βλέμματος» (“Adventures in Directing”), in: *Αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο, η επίδρασή του στην Ευρώπη (Greek Classical Theatre: Its Influence in Europe)*, p. 67 (The quotation is translated by Alexandra Doumas). A similar definition is also given by Minotis, see Μινωτής, Αλέξης, *Το αρχαίο δράμα και η αναβίωσή του (Ancient Drama and its Revival)*.

work of non-Greek theatre directors, especially those who belong to the experimental theatre.

The term 'revival of ancient tragedy' refers to an aesthetic form of performances of ancient tragedy, which suggests a style of performance that aimed at rendering the ancient genre in contemporary performances without 'betraying' the dramatic aesthetic form in which these plays were handed down to us in favor of contemporary theatre aesthetics. On the contrary, any interference which exceeded the restricted limits set could be considered a sacrilege. That meant that the form of the genre, that is the interchange between episodes and chorus songs, was left intact.³⁴ The main purpose of each performance was to reveal and transmit the 'deeper meaning' of the tragic play, which, as it was considered, transcended the limits of the historical period within which it was written and therefore it was 'eternal' and 'universal'. The entirety of the semiotic systems of the performances was defined by an 'analytical relationship', whereby all the other semiotic systems were subordinate to and analysed the linguistic one.³⁵ The style of all issues and features of the performances, interpretation, acting, set and costume designs, music, choreography and theatrical spaces, drew aesthetically from the entirety of what was considered to be 'Greek' culture with an emphasis, in the majority of cases, on the Byzantine and the following phases of what is regarded as 'Greek' culture.

³⁴ It is worth noting that faithfulness to the form of genre was the only common aesthetic element between Greek productions of ancient drama in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. It could be suggested that the preservation of the form was implicitly and silently bequeathed from the nineteenth-century approach to the twentieth-century one.

³⁵ On relationships of sign systems see Pfister, Manfred, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, Halliday John (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Within that framework I argue that the form of ‘revival’ consisted of the constitution of a style of performance that could be characterised as ‘purely Greek’ and implicitly or explicitly was based on meeting the two challenges that the constitution of ‘Greek’ culture faced during that period, which I explained in the previous chapter. The first one concerned the particular way in which Ancient Greek tragedy would be creatively incorporated in Modern Greek theatre. The second was the unavoidable reference to the European theatrical tradition in such a way that it would lead to styles of performances that could claim an originality which would be characterised as ‘purely Greek’ and thus they would face Europe as a rival.

I have already explained in this chapter that the first challenge was met through the cultural appropriation of tragedy in performance by drawing aesthetic elements from the entirety of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture. In order to appreciate fully, however, the extent of the originality of this enterprise as it was experienced in theatre and consequently of the form of ‘revival’, we have to take into consideration that prior to Politis’ 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* we cannot speak of the existence of a ‘Greek’ tradition of performance or drama from which artists could draw.³⁶ Thus to

³⁶ The only exception to the lack of an existing tradition of ‘Greek’ performance was that of the Greek Shadow Theatre, Karagiozis. It is interesting to note that despite its Turkish origin and its Balkan and multi-cultural nature, Karagiozis in its hellenized form was considered to be the most characteristic form of Greek popular theatre at the beginning of the twentieth century. The importance of Karagiozis’ oral tradition was stressed by Fotos Politis, whilst Koun drew from the Greek Shadow Theatre his aesthetic approach to ancient comedy. The tradition of the Greek Shadow Theatre could not, however, be used in serious theatre. On Karagiozis see Χατζηπανταζής, Θόδωρος, *Η εισβολή του Καραγκιόζη στην Αθήνα του 1890 (Karagiozis’ invasion in Athens in 1890)*, Athens: Στιγμή, 1984; Myrsiades, Linda, *The Karagiozis Heroic Performance in Greek Shadow Theater*, Myrsiades, Kostas (trans.), Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1988; Πούγνερ, Βάλτερ, *Οι βαλκανικές διαστάσεις του Καραγκιόζη (The Balkan dimensions of Karagiozis)*, Athens: Στιγμή, 1985; Μυστακίδου, Αικατερίνη, *Karagöz: Το Θέατρο Σκιών στην Ελλάδα και στην Τουρκία (Karagöz: The Shadow Theatre in Greece and Turkey)*, Athens: Εκδοτική Ερμής (Νέα Ελληνική Βιβλιοθήκη), 1982; Καϊμη, Τζούλιο, *Καραγκιόζης ή η αρχαία κωμωδία στην ψυχή του Θεάτρου σκιών (Karagiozis or Ancient Comedy in the Soul of Shadow Theatre)*, Μέκκας,

propose a 'Greek' style of performance, Greek directors necessarily had to refer to the European tradition of performance, implicitly accepting the European hegemony in this issue.³⁷ The work of each of the directors that I will discuss in the following chapters draws aesthetically on the work of one or more European directors and dramatists. And, in fact, it draws from the 'consecrated avant-garde', in Bourdieu's terms, European movements of the time that promoted the concept of non-realistic theatre. The choice of European aesthetic references of Greek productions of tragedy was based on the common avowal of all the directors that worked in the Greek 'sub-field' from 1919 to 1967 that tragedy was non-realistic theatre. In that sense the aesthetic styles of the performances of tragedy in Greece referred to the framework of European movements and tendencies during this period. And thus the 'consecrated' 'Greek' theatrical production moved in a corresponding way to the European one.

Thus, as I will explain in the following chapters, the course of the aesthetic history of the productions of tragedy in Greece moves along with the aesthetic history of theatre in Europe. The work of Ággelos Sikelianós and Eva Palmer-Sikelianού drew on Wagner's concept of the art of theatre, Nietzsche's understanding of tragedy and Isadora Duncan's dance, which aesthetically referred to Greek antiquity.³⁸ Fotos Politis and Dimitris

Κώστας and Μηλιάς, Τάκης (trans.), Athens: Γαβριηλίδης, 1990 (originally published in French under the title: *Karaghiozi ou la Comédie Grecque dans l'âme du Théâtre d'Ombres*, Athens: Ελληνικές Τέχνες, 1935); and Δαμιανάκος, Σταθης (ed.), *Θέατρο Σκιών: Παραδοση και Νεωτερικότητα (Shadow Theatre: Tradition and Modernization)*, Athens: Πλέθρον (Λαϊκός Πολιτισμός/ Τοπικές Κοινωνίες), 1986.

³⁷ I have already mentioned earlier that Greek intellectuals and artists were in constant contact with European movements of thought and art. This is apparent in the articles of periodicals and newspapers of the time where frequently European movements were presented, interpreted, discussed, argued for or debated. This constant contact instigated analogous movements in all fields of culture in Greece.

³⁸ See Chapter III.

Rondiris' work drew mainly on the work of Max Reinhardt.³⁹ And finally Koun drew initially from the work of Konstantin Stanislavsky and Yevgeny Vakhtangov, whilst after the Second World War his work, especially in ancient drama, referred to Bertolt Brecht and the Theatre of the Absurd, thus bridging the gap between the theatrical movements of the interwar period and those proposed after the Second World War.⁴⁰

These aesthetic references, however, were put in a context that stressed the difference between Greek productions of tragedy and Europe's notion and practice with regard to ancient tragedy. The difference was stressed in two ways. The first one concerned the principle itself of the issue of the contemporary production of ancient tragedy. European culture had mainly approached ancient tragedy in the context of an ideal form of art that could inspire, as it actually did, new forms of art. This is the case of French classicism, of Goethe, or of Richard Wagner's concept of 'musical drama'. In some instances this approach was even more emphasised by the denial of the possibility of tragedy's contemporary performance. This was particularly the case of Richard Wagner's and Isadora Duncan's approaches to tragedy.⁴¹ The emphasis on the concept of tragedy as an ideal form of art rather than text-in-performance was also in general the principle of the German culture's approach to Ancient Greek civilisation; German culture exercised a deep influence on Greek culture from the nineteenth century to the 1930s. Furthermore performances of tragic plays, like those of Reinhardt, in the entirety of European theatrical production during this period are comparatively quite few in number.

³⁹ See Chapters IV and V.

⁴⁰ See Chapter VI.

⁴¹ On Wagner's approach to tragedy see Borchmeyer, Dieter, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre*, Spencer, Stewart (trans.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. On Isadora Duncan's approach see

Moreover they do not form any kind of tradition and they do not seem to oppose the main European approach to tragedy as an ideal form to inspire future forms of art.

In contrast Greek directors stressed the performability of these plays in contemporary terms. This is a point raised by all the directors in the field as well as by critics. They repeatedly refer to tragedy as ‘living theatre’.⁴² Thus by using tragedy systematically as play-text in performance, which led, as I will argue, to the constitution of a ‘tradition’ of performance, they directly stress their difference from the main line of European approach to tragedy.

The second way Greek productions stressed their difference from Europe’s notion and practice with regard to ancient tragedy was the way they approached European theatrical movements and used them as aesthetic references in their work. For, European theatrical movements were approached, interpreted, and reworked through each Greek director’s concept of *hellenikótita*. This did not consist of a particular trait of Greek theatre but, as I argued in the previous chapter, characterised all the production of culture during that period. In all fields of Greek culture European movements were discussed, accepted or debated, interpreted, and expressed in analogous Greek movements in a mode that promoted what was considered to be the ‘Greek’ way of life and the ‘Greek’ way of

Duncan, Isadora, “The Dance of the Future” and “The Dance of the Greeks”, in: Sheldon Cheney (ed.), *The art of Dance: Isadora Duncan*, New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1969, p.p. 54-63 and 92-6 respectively.

⁴² See for example Μινωτής, Αλέξης, *Το αρχαίο δράμα και η αναβίωσή του (Ancient Drama and its Revival)*; Χουρμούζιος, Αιμίλιος, *Το αρχαίο δράμα (The ancient Drama)*; Ρώτας, Βασίλης, «Η παράσταση του Προμηθέα, Α΄» (“The Performance of *Prometheus bound*, I”), in: Βασίλης Ρώτας, *Θέατρο και γλώσσα (1925-1977) (Theatre and Language: 1925-1977)*, Δαμιανάκου, Βούλα (intro), Athens: Εκδόσεις «Επικαιρότητα», 1986, vol. I, p.p.33-5 (originally published in *Βραδυνή*, 1-1-1926); and a research entitled «Προβλήματα της Αρχαίας Τραγωδίας» (“Problems [in the Performance] of Ancient Greek Tragedy”)

seeing the world.⁴³ In theatre the aim sought was to use the European ‘tradition’ of performance in such a way that it would lead to styles of performances that could be characterised as ‘purely Greek’. Thus, as I will argue discussing the individual work of the Sikelianoί, Politis, Rondiris and Koun, although one can trace their references to European movements or to the work of particular directors, one can also easily identify their differences. These differences are formed precisely on the interpretation of these movements through their understanding of the ideologem of *hellenikótita*. Thus, to take as an example the work of Rondiris who was austerey criticised by his opponents in the field for following very closely on Reinhardt’s style, I will argue that he reinterpreted this style in ‘Greek’ terms drawing from the Byzantine Liturgy. And he created a style of performance based on the elocution of the Greek language in a way that was recognised as ‘purely Greek’. In fact he has remained in the history of Greek theatre as the great teacher of the Greek language.⁴⁴

Within this framework European theatrical references functioned in a sense as initial stimuli that were then incorporated into a style of production that was based on the use of aesthetic elements drawn from the entirety of what was regarded as ‘Greek’ culture. To

conducted for the periodical *Επιθεώρησις Τέχνης, Επιθεώρησις Τέχνης*, vol. XIV, no 80-1, August – September 1961, p.p.209-21.

⁴³ In the field of literature and painting where there is a sufficient body on the subject see Politis, Linos, *A History of Modern Greek Literature*; Dimaras, C. Th., *Modern Greek Literature*; Κιουρτσάκης, Γιάννης, *Ελληνισμός και Δύση στο στοχασμο του Σεφέρη (Hellenism and the West in Seferis' Thought)*, Athens: Κέδρος, 1979; Βαγενάς, Νάσος, *Ο ποιητής και ο χορευτής. Μια εξέταση της ποιητικής και της ποίησης του Σεφέρη (The Poet and the Dancer: A Study of Seferis Poetics and Poetry)*, Athens: Κέδρος, 1979; Φλώρου, Ειρήνη, *Γιάννης Τσαρούχης, Η ζωγραφική και η εποχή του: Ο Τσαρούχης ζωγράφησε τη μητέρα μου το 1936 (Giannis Tsarouchis, his Painting and his Times: Tsarouchis Painted my Mother in 1936)*, Athens: Λιβάνης – «Νέα Σύνορα», 1999; Παπανικολάου, Μιλτιάδης Μ., *Ιστορία της τέχνης στην Ελλάδα Ζωγραφική και γλυπτική του 20ου αιώνα (History of Art in Greece: 20th Century Painting and Sculpture)*; and Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου, (Modernism and "Tradition" in the Greek Art of the Interwar Period)*.

⁴⁴ See Chapter V, p.p. 243-4.

understand the mode in which the directors in the field used the entirety of 'Greek' culture as a source to draw from in the constitution of their styles and consequently of the basis of the opposition within the field we have to take again into consideration the prior non-existence of a 'Greek' tradition of performance. In this sense each director felt free to approach and interpret tragedy through any period of 'Greek' culture -mostly from the Byzantine period onwards- he or she saw as more adequate; the adequacy depended on and reflected his concept of *hellenikótita*. Politis, for example, who regarded the poetic language of tragedy as its defining aesthetic element to be used in contemporary productions, understood the form of this poetic language through the form of the language of the Greek demotic song.⁴⁵ Moreover each director also felt free to draw aesthetic elements to constitute his or her style of production from the entirety of 'Greek' culture, that is, ancient vase-paintings and sculpture, the form of Byzantine Liturgy and Byzantine music, demotic songs and dances, contemporary popular 'Greek' culture, 'primitive' Greek painting, contemporary 'Greek' music, painting and literature. In practice, as I will argue, each director in the 'sub-field' created an aesthetic style of performance placing emphasis on aesthetic elements chosen from a more or less particular period of 'Greek' culture. Thus, to use as an example the work of the five directors I will discuss in the following chapters, the Sikelianoí drew emphasis on ancient vase-paintings and Byzantine Orthodox Christian religion and music, Politis on the Greek demotic song, Rondiris on Byzantine Liturgy and the elocution of the Greek language and Koun on contemporary popular 'Greek' culture. Elements used from other phases of 'Greek' culture were blended aesthetically in their primary aesthetic approach. The aesthetic style of each director consisted of his/her mode of expression of the form of 'revival'.

⁴⁵ See Chapter IV, p.p. 193-4

Within this context the aesthetic form of ‘revival’ was the outcome of a ‘discussion’ between the ancient genre and the Byzantine and the following phases of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture. It is my contention that in the period 1919-1967 the body of the productions of tragedy in combination with articles and other material, for example speeches, provided by the directors themselves consisted of a discourse on *hellenikótita* and Greek performance analogous in importance, extent and depth to that of literature with regard to *hellenikótita* and Greek poetry.⁴⁶

The common ground of this discourse was the interpretation of the ‘Greekness’ of tragedy through the emphasis drawn on the eastern qualities of Ancient Greek civilisation. As I explained in the previous chapter, this emphasis was based on the idea of a ‘Greek’ notion of Greece that stressed the signifying importance of the geographical, cultural, and historical position of the country and its civilisation through the ages at the crossroads of West and East.⁴⁷ The notion of a ‘Greek Greece’ directly stressed the *difference* of the ‘Greek’ culture from the European notion of ‘Greece’. The emphasis on the eastern character of tragedy was explicitly argued by Sikelianós and Koun and implicitly suggested by Politis and Rondiris. This emphasis legitimised on the one hand the ‘renegotiation’ of ancient tragedy in contemporary ‘Greek’ terms, completing thus the process of its cultural appropriation within the doctrine of the ideology of the capitalist class, the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages. On the other hand it

⁴⁶ It is not coincidental that Károlos Koun raises the issue of *hellenikótita*, the most characteristic issue of the generation of the 1930s to which he belongs, exclusively in relation to ancient drama and especially to tragedy. See Chapter VI, p.p.261-2.

⁴⁷ See Chapter I, p.p. 40-3.

provided the necessary conditions for the recognition of the authenticity and the authority of these styles of production as the 'Greek' way of performing tragedy. Because they promoted the notion of a 'Greek Greece' as opposed to the notion of a 'European Greece' - I have already explained the two terms in the previous chapter- and thus they faced Europe as an opponent. In that sense these productions could be recognised as 'purely Greek' works of art. It is my contention, therefore, that the development in Greek theatre during that period with regard to the productions of tragedy successfully met the two challenges that the constitution of Greek culture faced during that period. It presented an aesthetic form of performance, within which the aesthetic styles of the individual directors moved, that drew from European movements to produce works of art that claimed a 'Greek' originality based on the renegotiation of ancient tragedy within contemporary 'Greek' terms.

The constitution of a 'sub-field of restricted production' in Bourdieu's terms based on the productions of tragedy allowed in essence the hierarchical structure of the field of performance. It provided the axis upon which the 'positions' and 'position-takings' of the field could be structured, with the 'autonomous pole' being the performances of tragedy and the 'less autonomous pole' being performances that belonged to the 'large scale production', mainly boulevard theatre and *epitheórisis*. The 'position-takings' of agents involved in the production of tragedy possessed the highest symbolic capital in the field. The involvement of an artist in productions of tragedy was considered to be the crowning of a long and successful career in theatre during which an agent had not only refined his/her craft but had also reached the point of having to present an overall aesthetic

approach to the issue of tragedy.⁴⁸ A more detailed picture of the way the ‘sub-field of restricted production’ was structured, developed and functioned within the entire field of theatre has to take into account the work of the other directors who also worked in tragedy or in ancient drama in general, like Alexis Minotís, Takis Mouzenidis and Alexis Solomós. Furthermore it also has to consider the work of directors who did not usually work in tragedy, but who directed other plays, classics, or modern Greek plays, like Pelos Katselis, Spyros Melás and Sokratis Karantinós.

In the argument of this thesis I chose to concentrate on the work of the Sikelianoí, Politis, Rondiris and Koun because through their oppositions they dynamically shaped the structure of the ‘sub-field’. They constitute the main representatives of what I consider to be the first and the second phases of the development of the ‘sub-field of restricted production’. Within this framework, as I will argue in the following two chapters, the first opposition occurred between the Sikelianoí and Politis with the latter acquiring the ‘avant-garde position-taking’ in the ‘sub-field’ in Bourdieu’s terms. In the second phase of the development of the ‘sub-field’ the main opposition, as I will explain in the last two chapters, vented between Rondiris and Koun. The former possessed the ‘consecrated position-taking’ in the ‘sub-field’. The latter acquired initially the ‘avant-garde position-taking’ and from the 1950s onwards a ‘consecrated avant-garde position-taking’ in Bourdieu’s terms.

⁴⁸ Although I mainly refer to theatre directors, the same conditions were valid for all the artists who were involved in productions of tragedy.

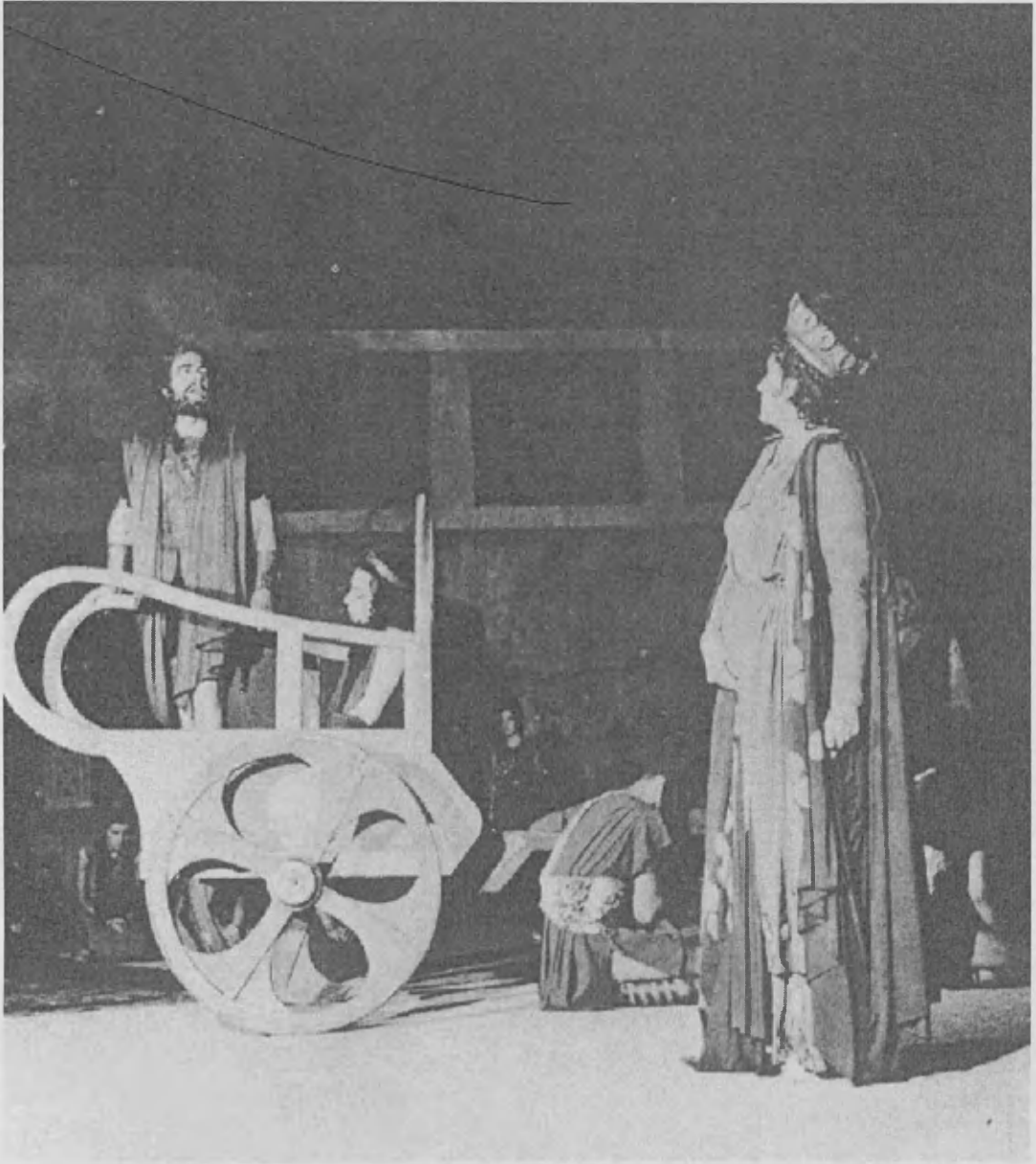


Photo 11 Katina Paxinoú and Thanos Kotsópoulos in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the National Theatre 1965, directed by Alexis Minotís

More importantly, however, as I will argue in the last two chapters of this thesis, the work of the directors of the second phase in the development of the ‘sub-field’, especially Rondiris’ and Koun’s productions, evolved drawing implicitly or explicitly on the tradition of the performances of tragedy that both the Sikelianoí and Politis bequeathed. Within that context the shaping of the structuring of the ‘sub-field’ developed in a way that continually referred to itself. Thus its history became “more and more linked to the field’s specific history and to it alone”.⁴⁹ It was experienced as a continuous process, which referred to what had already been achieved in order to underline the differences between what was at each moment at stake. The process involved not only the artists themselves but also the critics who frequently referred on the occasion of a review of one production to previous productions. Furthermore periodicals were engaged in discussions regarding the developments on the aesthetics of productions of tragedy.⁵⁰

This kind of history of the field experienced as a continuous process that always refers back to itself in order to develop forwards may be understood in the terms of what Tsoukalás observes as ‘tradition’ in the countries of the capitalist centre. According to Tsoukalás in these countries “ ‘tradition’ is conceived as what is still in existence”. The process “of [the] transmutation and reasoning” of this ‘tradition’ consists of the concept of ‘modernisation’.⁵¹ Within that context the ‘sub-field of restricted theatrical production’ in Greece functioned during that period within the framework of ‘tradition’

⁴⁹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 266.

⁵⁰ One such discussion was held in the pages of the periodical *Επιθεώρησις Τέχνης*, vol. ΙΔ’, no 80-81, August-September 1961. Besides that, periodicals like *Επιθεώρησις Τέχνης* or *Θέατρο*, edited by Kostas Nitsos, frequently published intellectuals’ and artists’ views on the development of performances of tragedy or criticisms and comparisons on the work of individual artists.

and ‘modernisation’ as these were understood and experienced in the capitalist centre. I have already argued in the first chapter that this was also the case regarding literature.⁵² Taking into consideration that similar developments occurred during that period in painting and in music it is my contention that the fields of art in the field of Greek cultural production functioned in a mode analogous to the artistic fields in the capitalist centre. And I have to stress the difference between the norms of development of these fields in comparison to other Greek fields, like these of education, politics and economy. The development of these latter fields was defined by the bipolar polemic relationship between the concepts of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernisation’, which Tsoukalás, as I explained in the first chapter, observes as characteristic of the periphery of the capitalist world.⁵³

Part of the dynamic development of the field of performance during this period was the constitution of two schools; the school of the National Theatre and the School of the Théâtre Technis. Both schools expressed a different approach not only regarding tragedy but also theatre in general. In what concerned the aesthetic style of tragedy the school of the National Theatre was based on Politis’ and especially Rondiris’ approach which was carried on and developed by the other directors of the company like Minotís and Mouzenidis. (See photo 11) The School of the National Theatre drew emphasis on the poetic language of tragedy which, as Minotís claimed, “preserves it [tragedy] fully alive [...] and it is the essence of the essence. It is the form of live passion.”⁵⁴ The School of

⁵¹ Τσουκαλάς, Κωνσταντίνος, «Παράδοση και Εκσυγχρονισμός: Μερικά γενικότερα ερωτήματα» (“Tradition and Modernisation: Some General Questions”), in: *Ελληνισμός - Ελληνικότητα (Hellenism - Hellenikótita)*, p. 38

⁵² See Chapter I, p.p. 37-9.

⁵³ See Chapter I, p.p. 37-9.

⁵⁴ *Ὁ ποιητικὸς λόγος [...] τῆ διατηρεῖ ὀλοζώντανη [...]. Εἶναι ἡ οὐσία τῆς οὐσίας. Εἶναι ἡ μορφή τοῦ ζωντανοῦ πάθους.* Μινωτής, Αλέξης, *Το αρχαίο δράμα και η αναβίωσή του (Ancient Drama and its*

the National Theatre aimed at “the rendering of the *Geist* and also the poetic broadness of the Poetic Language and the probing deeply in the tragic message of the poet”.⁵⁵ It promoted the human element of tragedy, which consisted of the rendering of human passions and emotions in the dimension and intensity in which these are depicted in tragedy. Within this context the ‘School of the National Theatre’ formed a different concept of the rendering of the religiousness of tragedy. (Religiousness and the issue of the rendering of the chorus were the two main issues of dispute concerning the rendering of the genre of tragedy, as I will explain in the following chapters.) According to Hourmouúzios, “a religious sense was recreated within an absolutely legitimate transference of tragedy from its religious beginning to the level of religiousness which is claimed by the metaphysical conception of the tragic element”.⁵⁶ On the whole the School of the National Theatre focused on the individual and in many cases one gets the feeling

Revival), p. 29. Minotis was one of leading actors and theatre directors of the National Theatre and was also Director of the National Theatre from 1964 to 1967 with Elias Venezis and again in 1974 to 1980. On the importance of the poetic language of tragedy in contemporary performances see also Χουρμούζιος, Αιμίλιος, «Μερικαὶ ἀπόψεις γιὰ τὴν ἐρμηνεῖα τῆς τραγωδίας» (“Some views about the performance of tragedy”), in: *Απόψεις, Εβδομάς Θεάτρου 1960 (Views, A Week of Drama, 1960)*, Athens (no publishing house nor a publication date are mentioned, the book comprises the Minutes of two congresses, the Artistic Congress and the Professional Congress organised by the Greek Union of Actors within the frame of *A Week of Drama*, in 14th to 21st November, 1960), p.p. 68-76.

⁵⁵ Ὅ,τι κυρίως προέχει εἶναι ἡ ἀπόδοση τοῦ πνεύματος ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ ποιητικοῦ πλάτους τοῦ Λόγου καὶ ἡ ἐμβάθυνση στὸ τραγικὸ μῆνυμα τοῦ ποιητῆ. Χουρμούζιος, Αιμίλιος «Ἡ ἑλληνικὴ ἐρμηνεῖα τῆς Ἀττικῆς τραγωδίας» (“The Greek Performance of Ancient Tragedy”), in: *Τὸ ἀρχαῖο δράμα (The ancient Drama)*, p. 82. Hourmouúzios was Director of the National Theatre from 1955 to 1964. I chose to translate the word *Λόγος* as ‘dramatic speech/ language’ or in other parts of this thesis as ‘dramatic poetic speech’ or ‘poetic speech/ language’ because I think that it renders more faithfully the meaning of the word *Λόγος* in texts that discuss the issue of tragedy and more generally of theatre. The word *Λόγος*, however, carries with it its use in St John’s Gospel «*Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος*» which denotes an absolute, metaphysical dimension of the meaning. The way the word *Λόγος* is used generally in texts and articles on tragedy, although it refers to the dramatic poetic speech, denotes this metaphysical dimension, which in the case of tragedy is explained by the metaphysical conception of the tragic element.

⁵⁶ Θὰ μπορούσε, μάλιστα, νὰ ὑποστηριχθῆ ὅτι ὁ ἱερατικὸς αὐτὸς χαρακτήρας ἔχει ἀναπλασθῆ σὲ μιὰ ἀπολύτως νόμιμη μετάθεση τῆς τραγωδίας ἀπὸ τὴ θρησκευτικὴ τῆς ἀφετηρία στὸ ἐπίπεδο τῆς ἱερότητας ποὺ διεκδικεῖ ἡ μεταφυσικὴ ἀντίληψη τοῦ τραγικοῦ στοιχείου. Χουρμούζιος, Αιμίλιος «Ἡ ἑλληνικὴ ἐρμηνεῖα τῆς Ἀττικῆς τραγωδίας» (“The Greek Performance of Ancient Tragedy”), in: *Τὸ ἀρχαῖο δράμα (The Ancient Drama)*, p. 83.



Photo 12 Euripides' *Hecuba*, the National Theatre, Epidauros 1957, directed by Alexis Minotís

that the main weight of the performance was placed on the protagonists that were singled out. (See photo 12)

The school of the Théâtre Technis on the other hand was based on Károlos Koun's approach to theatre and tragedy. Koun's approach to tragedy, as I will thoroughly elaborate in the last chapter, placed emphasis on the ritualistic, Dionysiac, element of the genre which for him also emphasised its collective character. His conception of the collectivity of tragedy led him to focus on the rendering of the chorus that in his productions becomes the protagonist. In his performances he also stressed the political dimensions of the plays thus engaging ancient drama in a dialogue with the socio-political context of his time. Finally, contrary to the National Theatre, he used masks for the chorus.

The productions of ancient tragedy was one of the most important, if not the most important, part of the Greek State's national cultural policy on theatre. The insertion of productions of tragedy within the framework of the State's policy formed part of the process of the 'consecration' of these performances and of the agents involved in them. From 1932 onwards we can observe a growing systematic promotion of performances of tragedy in a number of ways both inside and outside the country. The National Theatre itself, the Institution that mainly represented the official national theatrical policy, considered performances of Ancient Greek tragedy to constitute one of its most principal concerns.⁵⁷ Indicative of this policy is the fact that the opening performance of the

⁵⁷ It is worth pointing out that the importance attributed to performances of tragedy is clearly stated in the Statute of the Constitution of National Theatre published on the 5th of May 1930. It proclaimed: 1. The aim

National theatre in 1932 was Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.⁵⁸ From 1953 onwards it produced an average of two to three plays of ancient drama per year, of which one at least was necessarily a tragic play.⁵⁹ These productions were promoted as one of the most important and prestigious parts of the repertoire of the National Theatre.

Another action that reveals the position that the performances of ancient tragedy acquired within the Greek national cultural policy as this was exercised inside the country was the

of National Theatre is the cultivation of the aesthetically Beautiful and the promotion of the Greek dramatic and theatrical (performance) production. 2. National Theatre should seek to accomplish this aim through several means and according to the judgement of its Administration, especially through: a) the organisation and function of the theatre conceded to it... *to put on performances of plays mainly those that belong to the total Greek dramatic production (ancient, medieval [renaissance] and modern)* as well as the most recognised plays of the foreign theatrical production... d) *the organisation of a period of important international literature and artistic celebrations in the survived ancient theatres with main emphasis placed on performances of the masterpieces of ancient Greek theatre.* [1. Σκοπὸς τοῦ Ἐθνικοῦ Θεάτρου εἶναι ἡ καλλιέργεια τοῦ αἰσθήματος τοῦ Καλοῦ, καὶ ἡ προαγωγή τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς δραματοποιίας καὶ θεατρικῆς τέχνης. 2. Τὸν σκοπὸν τοῦτον τὸ Ἐθνικὸν Θεάτρον θέλει ἐπιδιώξει διὰ τῶν κατὰ τὴν κρίσιν τῆς Διοικήσεως αὐτοῦ προσφῶρων μέσων, ἰδίᾳ δε: α') διὰ τῆς ὀργανώσεως τῆς λειτουργίας τοῦ παραχωρουμένου θεάτρου [...] πρὸς διδασκαλίαν ἔργων κυρίως ἐκ τοῦ συνόλου ἑλληνικοῦ δραματολογίου (ἀρχαίου, μεσαιωνικοῦ καὶ νεωτέρου) καθὼς καὶ τῶν ἀρίστων τῆς ξένης θεατρικῆς φιλολογίας, [...] δ') διὰ τῆς ὀργανώσεως περιόδου μεγάλων φιλολογικῶν καὶ καλλιτεχνικῶν διεθνoῦς χαρακτήρος ἑορτῶν εἰς τὰ σωζόμενα ἀρχαῖα θεάτρα μὲ κύριαν βᾶσιν τὴν διδασκαλίαν τῶν ἀριστουργημάτων τῆς ἀρχαίας ἑλληνικῆς δραματοποιίας.] Νόμος 4615, *Περὶ ἰδρύσεως Ἐθνικοῦ Θεάτρου* (Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the 2nd article of Law no 4615 "About the Constitution of National Theatre"), Athens: Ἑλληνικὴ Δημοκρατία, *Ἐφημερὶς τῆς Κυβερνήσεως*, 5 May 1930. (Italics mine) In practice the National Theatre produced an average of two plays of ancient drama, of which one at least was necessarily a tragic play, per year. The leading parts of the plays were always played by the leading actors of the company. See *60 Χρόνια Ἐθνικὸ Θεάτρο, 1932-1992 (60 Years of National Theatre, 1932-1992)*, Σολομός, Αλέξης (intro), Athens: Κέδρος, 1992.

⁵⁸ *Agamemnon* was performed as a double bill with the newly written for the occasion *Θεῖος Ὀνειρὸς (Uncle Dream)* by Grigorios Xenopoulos, a play whose subject referred to Ancient Greece. See Κανάκης, Βασίλης, *Ἐθνικὸ Θεάτρο, Ἐξήντα Χρόνια Σκηῆ καὶ Παρασκήνιο (National Theatre: Sixty Years of Stage and Backstage)*, Athens: Κάκτος, 1999; the newspaper *Πρωΐα* on the 20th and 21st of March 1932; the newspaper *Καθημερινή* on the 13th of March, 1932; and the newspaper *Ἐστία* on the 20th of March, 1932.

⁵⁹ Until 1953 the National Theatre produced at least one ancient play per year, by tradition a tragic play, with the exception of the period during the Second World War and the civil war that broke out afterwards, when the production of ancient drama was not systematic. The importance that the National Theatre attributed to tragedy is also evident in the fact that the first production of ancient comedy by the National Theatre occurred in 1956. See *60 Χρόνια Ἐθνικὸ Θεάτρο, 1932-1992 (60 Years of National Theatre, 1932-1992)*.

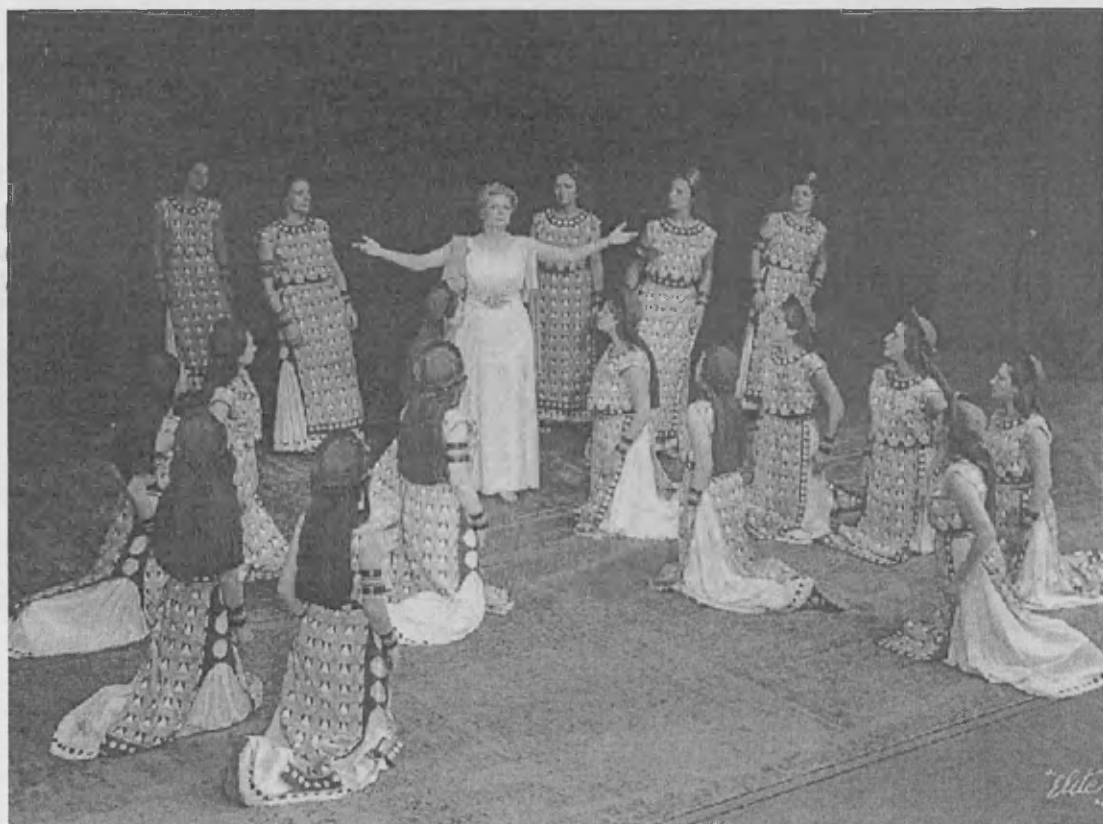


Photo 13 Euripides' *Helen*, the National Theatre, Epidauros 1962, directed by Takis Mouzenidis

founding of Arts Festivals.⁶⁰ The Athens and the Epidaurus Festivals inaugurated in the middle of the 1950s were internationally recognised. The latter, the Epidaurus Festival was exclusively dedicated to ancient drama and until 1974 the participating performances were exclusively those of the National Theatre. (See photo 13) During the 1960s it was customary to invite foreign theatre personalities to attend the opening of the Festival.

In what regarded the planning and promotion of a Greek national theatrical policy outside the country the performances of ancient tragedy became one of the most important theatrical products, if not the most important, which the State could and did export in the West as well as the East. Greek theatre companies frequently toured abroad performing ancient tragedy. Besides the National Theatre, the Peiraiκό Théatro, founded by Rondiris when he left the National Theatre, toured abroad performing exclusively ancient tragedy. The Théatro Technis held traditionally the opening nights of its productions of ancient drama in major European cities, a practice that Koun stopped in 1967 as a protest against the *coup d' état*. Both the Peiraiκό Théatro and the Théatro Technis participated in the Théâtre de Nations and were awarded first prizes. Within this framework from the 1950s onwards the 'Greek' way of performing tragedies became internationally known and respected.⁶¹

⁶⁰ See *Επίδauρος: 40 Χρόνια Φεστιβάλ (Epidaurus: 40 Years of the Festival)*, Athens: "Νέα Σύνoρα", ΔΕΠΔΑΑΣ, 1994 and *Το Χρονικό των Επίδauρίων, 1954-1976 (The Chronicle of the Epidaurus Festival, 1954-1976)*, Athens: periodical *Θεατρικά*, no date of publication is given.

⁶¹ On reviews of Greek productions of tragedy performed abroad see Αντωνούλα, Ισμήνη (ed.), *Κατίνας Παξινού Αλέξη Μινωτή Πολύχροнос πηγαίμος για μιαν Ιθάκη (Katina Paxinou Alexis Minotis A Long Journey to Ithaca)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Επικαιρότητα, 1989 and the programme of the Theatro Technis' production of Aeschylus *Persae* in 2000, a performance which was a revival of the 1965 production. Kott refers to the Euripides *Medea* production of Peiraiκό Théatro that he had attended in Italy, see Kott, Jan, *Θεοφαγία: δοκίμια για την αρχαία τραγωδία (Theorhagia: Essays on Ancient Tragedy)*, Βερυκοκάκη-Αρτέμης, Αγγέλα (trans. in Greek), Athens: Εξάντας, 1976, p.p.283-8.

Chapter III

Ággelos Sikelianós and Eva Palmer-Sikelianού: Aeschylus' "Prometheus Bound", Delphi 1927

*Easter,
respected by all Easter,
Bacchus!
Apollo!
Jesus!
How as an infant you reached your hand for the vine!
How as a man you harmonized the lyre with joy!
And You the last one,
Bread-slicer
Sharer of your heart!'*

The aesthetic styles of productions of tragedy in the beginning of the history of the 'sub-field of theatrical production', in Bourdieu's terms, evolved from the fundamental question "how can the form of tragedy be rendered in performance in contemporary Greece?" This question had formed the basis of the long ongoing discussion from the nineteenth century onwards, of which I have spoken in the previous chapter.² From Politis' 1919 production of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, however, the question or rather the proposed answers to this question were related to particular approaches and aesthetic styles of performances of tragedy.

¹ Ω Πάσχα,/ πανσεβάσμιο Πάσχα!/ Ω Ήακχε!/ Απόλλωνα!/ Ήσοσ!/ Πώς βρέφος άπλωσες τὸ χέρι στὸ σταφύλι!/ Πώς άρμόνισες τὴ λύρα, άντρίτης, στὴ χαρά!/ Κ' Έσύ στερνέ,/ Άρτοκόπε,/ τῆς καρδιάς Σου μεραστή! Σικελιανός, Άγγελος, «Διόνυσος - Ήσοϋς» ("Dionysus-Christ"), in: «Η Συνείδηση τῆς Πίστης» ("The Consciousness of Faith"), *Πρόλογος στη ζωή (Prologue to Life)*, *Λυρικός Βίος (Lyric Life)*, vol. III, Athens: Ίκαρος, 1965, p. 213.

² See Chapter II, p.p. 78-9, and footnote 17, p.78.

From 1919 to 1934, during the first phase of the structuring of the 'sub-field', there were two main issues around which the propositions of aesthetic styles were formed: the rendering of the religiousness of tragedy and the rendering of the chorus.³ Consequently the attitudes of theatre directors towards these issues make up the core of the oppositions expressed in the 'sub-field of restricted production'. The two issues were interrelated. The tragic chorus, the descendant of the dithyramb, rendered in antiquity the religious roots of tragedy.⁴ Thus the choice of the rendering or not of the religiousness of tragedy affected directly the aesthetic treatment of the chorus and consequently the entire aesthetic style of the performance. As I will argue, the rendering of the religiousness of tragedy in contemporary performances aimed at creating the atmosphere of a ritual and placed emphasis on the presence of the chorus. Besides the fact that the chorus historically was perceived as evolving from Ancient Greek religious rituals, it was considered to be fundamental in the creation of a ritualistic atmosphere because it signified and enhanced the concept of collectivity. This concept was regarded as primary in the creation of the atmosphere of ritual. The non-rendering of the religiousness of tragedy, on the other hand, as I will explain in the two following chapters, shifted the emphasis from the collective to the individual. Thus these different approaches led to different aesthetic styles. The principle of the

³ Fotos Politis died in 1934. The Sikelianoí, after the second Delphi Festival, were not involved in productions of tragedy. The year 1934 also marked the beginning of the second phase of the development of the 'sub-field'. Károlos Koun founded his first company and produced two plays during that same year, the second one was Euripides' *Alcestis*. In the middle of 1935 Dimitris Rondiris was appointed Director of the National Theatre.

⁴ Besides the philological tradition on this issue, which is extremely rich as I have already pointed out in the Introduction, I want also to draw attention to the fact that at the beginning of the twentieth century the issue of the religiousness of tragedy being symbolised and rendered by the tragic chorus was heavily stressed by scholars all over Europe. As an example I will refer to the Cambridge School of Cultural Anthropology. At the same time the issue of ritual was at the centre of theatre quests.

difference between these styles was a matter of aesthetic balance between the protagonists and the chorus.

The main opposition between the directors of the first phase of the development of the 'sub-field' arose between Ággelos Sikelianós and Eva Palmer-Sikelianou, on the one hand, and Fotos Politis, on the other, and involved precisely these issues. It is interesting to note that this opposition led them to acquire specific 'position-takings' within the 'sub-field' in Bourdieu's terms that actually corresponded to the sequence of generations they belonged to in the literary field. Despite the fact that Politis' 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* is the first in this line of development, the productions by the Sikelianoí of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *Suppliants* were in essence the first proposition on the discourse on ancient tragedy and *hellenikótita*. As I will argue, not only did the Sikelianoí not refer at all artistically to Politis' first production, but also the latter particularised and refined his own aesthetic approach to tragedy by opposing the approach and style of performance of the Sikelianoí. In that sense it is my contention that the Sikelianoí, especially Ággelos Sikelianós, acquired a 'consecrated position-taking' in the sub-field in Bourdieu's terms whilst Politis took the 'avant-garde position-taking' in the 'sub-field'.⁵ These 'position-takings' in the field of theatre actually corresponded to the ones they already held in the literary field. I have already

⁵ Eva Palmer-Sikelianou does not seem to acquire an independent 'position-taking' in the field. She shared that of Ággelos Sikelianós. From 1905 to 1933 when she lived in Greece her work revolved around the work and concepts of Ággelos Sikelianós. It was after her return to the U.S.A. that Eva Palmer-Sikelianou worked independently. It is rather difficult at this point to explain her *habitus*. That would involve the study of the American socio-cultural environment and the study of gender issues during that period which is beside the point in this thesis. On the one hand, she was a very creative and capable woman in that she had a strong personality; on the other hand, she was completely devoted to Ággelos Sikelianós to the point that she engaged all her creativity in furthering his ideas for a period of almost thirty years when she lived in Greece.

mentioned in the previous chapter that Áγγελος Sikelianós held a ‘consecrated position-taking’ in the field of literature as a poet, whilst Fotos Politis held a risky ‘avant-garde’ position as a critic.⁶ Thus, in essence both Sikelianós and Politis transferred their ‘position-takings’ from the field of literature, transferring as well their *habitus* as this had already been expressed in the literary field. That meant that they implicitly transferred the symbolic capital they already possessed in the field of literature to the ‘position-takings’ created by their engagement in the direction of tragedy in the field of theatre. Moreover they transferred their aesthetic positions in the discourse on literature and *hellenikótita* to performances of tragedy.

In terms of their theatre practice the difference between their approaches reflected also a difference of choice concerning the European theatrical movements they drew from. The productions of the Sikelianoí moved within the framework of late German romanticism drawing mainly on Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche. This

⁶ Áγγελος Sikelianós (1884-1951) began writing when he was very young and continued to write until his death. His first major poetic work was *Αλαφροΐσκιωτος* written in 1907 and published by him for the first time in 1909 in a luxury edition (*Αλαφροΐσκιωτος* literally means “one having a light shadow”; in Greece people who are characterised as having “a light shadow” are people who allegedly can ‘see’ and/or ‘contact’ beings of the spiritual world.). There followed *Πρόλογος στη ζωή* (*Prologue to Life*), in 1915-17, *Μήτηρ Θεού* (*Mother of God*), in 1917, *Πάσχα των Ελλήνων* (*The Easter of the Greeks*), in 1918-1919, a series of independent poems called «Ορφικά» (“Orfics”), between 1927 and 1942 and *Επίνικιοι Β* (*Victorious II*), in 1940-41. In 1938 he compiled all the written poetic work he had produced until then in three volumes under the title *Λυρικός βίος* (*Lyric Life*). He was also fascinated by theatre. When he was very young he took part in Christomanos’ production of Euripides’ *Alceste* performed in 1901. Besides the Delphi Festivals he wrote five tragedies influenced by the antiquity and the Byzantine period. *Ο τελευταίος Ορφικός διθύραμβος ή ο διθύραμβος του ρόδου* (*The Last Orfic Dithyramb or the Dithyramb of the Rose*), published in 1932, *Σιβύλλα* (*Sibylla*), written in 1940 and published in 1944, (the work foresaw in a sense the war that was to follow in a few months), *Ο Δαίδαλος στην Κρήτη* (*Daedalus in Crete*), published in 1943, *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη* (*Christ in Rome*), published in 1946 and *Ο θάνατος του Διγενή* (*The Death of Digenis*), written in 1947 (Digenis, is the fictional central hero of the folklore poetic Greek Byzantine tradition, created between the ninth and the eleventh century). Sikelianós’ plays, however, do not reach the high level of his poetry and they are extremely rarely performed. Besides the corpus of his creative work there is also a corpus of lectures and articles he wrote over the years published in 1981 under the title *Πεζός Λόγος* (*Prose*) which consists of five volumes.

approach was combined with a reference to Isadora Duncan's dance.⁷ Politis, on the other hand, drew on the movement of eclecticism and especially on the work of Max Reinhardt. Thus following the historical development of the field in relation also to their European references, it is more plausible to discuss first the work of Ággelos Sikelianós and Eva Palmer-Sikelianού.

Ággelos Sikelianós and Eva Palmer-Sikelianού produced two tragic plays, Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *Suppliants* in 1927 and 1930 respectively. Both productions were performed in the ancient theatre of Delphi and were an integral part of the Delphic Festivals (*Δελφικές Γιορτές*) which were devised and organised to promote Ággelos Sikelianós' *Delphic Idea*. The Delphi productions are considered today to be more Eva Palmer-Sikelianού's work than Ággelos Sikelianós since she produced and directed the plays.⁸ I will argue, however, that it is very difficult to extol the work of the one over

⁷ Although I will discuss the work of those five directors in relation to specific European movements one has to keep in mind that the issue of influence on a work of art is quite complicated. Firstly, one cannot exclude the possibility of other minor or indirect influences expressed in a work of art which sometimes are difficult to trace. Secondly, one cannot be certain where each director drew his influence from. In the case of the Sikelianoi, for example, although one can be more or less certain that their deep knowledge of Duncan's form of dance derived, if not from Isadora Duncan herself, from her brother Raymond, in the case of Wagner and Nietzsche it is more difficult to establish how the Sikelianoi formed their understanding of them. The idea that they may have read their work is the strongest possibility since both of them seemed to be familiar with it and both were very learned. One, however, has to take into consideration other factors as well. Greek culture was generally influenced by German culture, thus ideas and concepts that were related to Wagner and Nietzsche might have influenced the Sikelianoi, especially Ággelos Sikelianós, before they became acquainted with their work. The Greek intellectual and artistic elite was very well informed on European movements during that period. Moreover, in the course of their career, discussions on Wagner's and Nietzsche's ideas with other Greek artists and intellectuals might also have shifted their own understanding of them. After all, art is a world of ideas that are in a constant motion of ever-changing forms. Thus, although I will discuss specific European movements in relation to the work of each director, it should be kept in mind that the existence of other influences cannot be excluded.

⁸ Eva Palmer-Sikelianού was born in America in 1874 into a rich upper middle-class family. From a young age she was interested in theatre and she had received private tuition from actors of La Comédie Française in Paris. She met Ággelos Sikelianós in 1905 in the house of Isadora Duncan in Athens and they fell in love at first sight (Isadora Duncan's brother, Raymond, was married to Ággelos Sikelianós' sister, Penelope). They were married in 1907 and they stayed together until 1933 when she returned to the U.S.A. because of financial problems. Although Ággelos Sikelianós married again later, the relationship

the work of the other. Although Eva Palmer-Sikelianού's creative talent, her understanding of performance and her competence in organisation made the idea of the Delphi Festivals feasible, the realisation of the Festivals could not have been achieved in the way it was achieved without Άγγελος Sikelianός. Not only the *Delphic Idea* and the use of Festivals to promote it have to be attributed to Άγγελος Sikelianός, but also the concept of *hellenikótita* which constituted the core of both the Festivals and the production of tragedy. It is evident from the written material that Eva Palmer-Sikelianού's concept of *hellenikótita* and the ideological aesthetic framework concerning tragedy coincided completely with that of Άγγελος Sikelianός.⁹ Furthermore, despite today's general avowal that the Delphi performances were Eva Palmer-Sikelianού's work, Άγγελος Sikelianός seems to have been actively involved in the enterprise. Not only did Eva Palmer-Sikelianού discuss with him issues concerning the organisation of the performance, abiding sometimes by his decisions, like for example the issue of the performance of the play in Modern Greek, but also, as I will argue later, it seems that the interpretation of both the *Prometheus Bound* and the *Suppliants* texts, which consisted of the directorial interpretative frame of the performances, have to be attributed to Άγγελος Sikelianός.¹⁰ In that sense I think that, in practice, the work of the one supplemented the work of the other.

between them was never disturbed. (For a chronology of Eva Palmer-Sikelianού's life see *Ήώς*, No 98-102, 1966 and No 103-108, 1967, printed in one volume, Athens: Εκδόσεις Παπαδήμα, 1998 (thence the references), p.p. 1-7.)

⁹ On Eva Palmer-Sikelianού's ideas on *hellenikótita* see Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός (Upward Panic)*, Anton, John, P. (trans. in Greek), Athens Εξάντας, 1992, especially p.p. 98-9, 152 and 190. The degree of the identification of her approach to the issue of Ancient Greek theatre with that of Άγγελος Sikelianός is clearly shown in her English-written article "What is great theatre" published in *Ήώς*, p.p. 300-5.

¹⁰ Eva Palmer-Sikelianού records her discussion with Άγγελος Sikelianός on the possibility of performing *Prometheus Bound* in Ancient Greek. It was Άγγελος Sikelianός' decision that the play should be performed in the Modern Greek translation of Ioannis Gryparis. See Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός (Upward Panic)*, p. 125. She also records her disagreement with Άγγελος Sikelianός on the

The productions of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *Suppliants* were both linked organically to Ággelos Sikelianós' *Delphic idea* and the *Delphic* Festivals, which in their turn evolved from his concept of *hellenikótita*. The Sikelianoí were not interested in producing tragic plays *per se*. As I will explain later in this chapter, they saw these productions as an integral part of the *Delphic Idea* and of the Festivals which were organised to promote it.¹¹ Despite the success of their productions that led to a proposition for the organisation of a regularly run Festival of performances of ancient tragedy in Delphi, they were against the idea of performing tragic plays independently of the *Delphic idea*. Regardless of the attitude of the Sikelianoí, however, their two Delphi productions were recognised as a 'Greek way' of performing ancient drama.¹² Furthermore the organisation of the Delphi Festivals as international Festivals gave an international dimension, on the one hand, to the productions themselves and, on the other, to the symbolic capital that tragedy had and that the 'Greek way of performing' could acquire. As Sideris notes, without the Delphi Festivals "what followed

issue of the choice composer in regard to the production of *Prometheus Bound*. She states that she had difficulty in persuading him to prefer Konstantinos Psachos to Dimitris Mitropoulos or Manolis Kalomoiris who were Ággelos Sikelianós' choice. See Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, *Εὔα, Ιερός Πανικός (Upward Panic)*, p.p. 124-5. Both these examples indicate that Ággelos Sikelianós was quite involved in the practical side of the Delphi performances.

¹¹ The programme of the two *Delphi* Festivals comprised athletic games, exhibitions of popular Greek handicraft, and Greek folklore dances and songs. The highlights of the Festivals, however, were the performances of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *Suppliants*.

¹² See among others Ροδάς, Μιχαήλ, «Ἀπὸ τὰς Δελφικὰς Ἑορτὰς: Τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Ἄγγελου Σικελιανοῦ πρὸς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, Ἰδιωτικὴ πρωτοβουλία καὶ κράτος ἐθαυματούργησαν, Ὁ χορὸς τῶν Ὠκεανίδων καὶ ἡ ἀκουστικὴ τοῦ ἀρχαίου θεάτρου» ("From the Delphi Festivals: Ággelos Sikelianós' Work for Greece; Private and State Initiative Worked Miracles; The Chorus of Oceanids and the Acoustics of the Ancient Theatre"), *Ἐλευθέρον Βῆμα*, 12-5-1927; Τσαμό, « Τὸ ζωντάνεμμα τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν παραδόσεων: Ἡ παράστασις τοῦ Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτου: Τὸ θαῦμα τῶν Δελφῶν» ("The Revival of Greek Traditions: The Performance of *Prometheus Bound*: The Miracle of Delphi"), *Πρωτῖα*, 12-5-1927; Θρύλος, Ἀλκης, «Ὁ Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης στοὺς Δελφοὺς» ("*Prometheus Bound* in Delphi"), in: *Το Ἑλληνικὸ Θέατρο (The Greek Theatre)*, vol. I, p.p. 43-52. Thrilos raises again the issue of the success of the production with regard to Politis' 1932 production of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, see Θρύλος, Ἀλκης, «Ἡ ἔναρξις τοῦ "Ἐθνικοῦ Θεάτρου": Αἰσχύλου, Ἀγαμέμνων, μετάφρασις Ἰ. Γρυπάρη. *Θεῖος Ὀνειρος*, μονόπρακτο Γρ. Ξερόπουλου» ("The opening of 'National Theatre':

...(Hecuba, Cyclops, and the pushing forward for the constitution of the National Theatre) would not have taken place”.¹³ Thus using Bourdieu’s model of analysis the Sikelianoi’s productions constitute an important link in the development of the history of the ‘sub-field’.

Both the 1927 production of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* and the 1930 production of Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* moved within Greek culture’s quest for ‘purely Greek’ works of art, prominent during the period that I discuss. Within this framework I will argue that the aesthetic style of the two productions met the two fundamental challenges that Greek culture faced during that period. The first one, as I have already explained in the previous chapters, concerned the renegotiation of Ancient Greece within Modern Greek cultural terms and the cultural tradition of Byzantine and the more recent ‘Greek’ culture. This renegotiation may be portrayed in Eva Palmer-Sikelianou’s words that also refer to the ‘Greekness’ of the aesthetic style of the productions. At the time of the production of *Prometheus Bound* she was quoted as saying that her intention was for everything to be presented “cleared from every foreign element. Only what is purely Greek would appear. On the one side the ancient art and life and on the other side the Greek popular art and life”.¹⁴

Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, translated by I. Gryparis. *Uncle Dream*, one-act play by Gr. Xenopoulos”), in: *Το Ελληνικό Θέατρο (The Greek Theatre)*, vol. I, p.p. 336-45.

¹³ Χωρίς τις Έορτές δ,τι έπακολουθει, [...] («Εκάβη», «Κύκλωπας», έπίσπευση της ίδρυσης του «Έθνικοσ»), δέ θα είχε συντελεστεί. Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή: 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage: 1817-1932)*, p. 361.

¹⁴ Όλα θα παρουσιασθούν ξεκαθαρισμένα από κάθε ξένο στοιχείο. Θα εμφανισθί μονάχα δ,τι είναι άγνό ελληνικό. Από τδ ένα μέρος ή αρχαία τέχνη και ζωή, από τδ άλλο ή λαϊκή τέχνη και ζωή. Έλεύθερον Βήμα, 16-1-1927. (Quotation taken from Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαίο θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή: 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage: 1817-1932)*, p. 347.)

In the aesthetic style of the productions the aesthetic references to Ancient Greece, as I will explain further, were still quite dominant. This dominance is not only depicted in an exemplary way in the main structural poses of the chorus dance, the use of masks, and of course the use of the ancient theatre of Delphi as the site for the performance. The choice of more recent cultural references that were used in performances was also based on the Sikelianoi's understanding and recognition that the roots of these references were to be traced back to Ancient Greece. For example they asked Konstantinos Psachos, an expert in Byzantine music, to compose the music of *Prometheus Bound*, because Eva Palmer-Sikelianou believed that Byzantine music originated from Ancient Greek music.¹⁵

Neither of the Sikelianoi, however, were interested in creating a performance that would be 'archaeologically correct', a principle that refers to the nineteenth-century

¹⁵ Psachos himself wrote that he composed the music of the chorus songs "according to the ancient modes (τρόποι)" applying also many ancient rhythms. Ψάχος, Κωνσταντίνος, «Ἡ μουσικὴ στὶς Δελφικὲς Ἑορτὲς» ("Music in the Delphi Festivals"), *Ἡώς*, p. 136. Rodás noted that the music of the performance was a "combination of Ancient, Byzantine and more recent [Greek music]". Ροδάς, Μιχαήλ, «Ἀπὸ τὰς Δελφικὰς Ἑορτὰς: Τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Ἄγγελου Σικελιανοῦ πρὸς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, Ἰδιωτικὴ πρωτοβουλία καὶ κράτος ἐθαυματούργησαν, Ὁ χορὸς τῶν Ὠκεανίδων καὶ ἡ ἀκουστικὴ τοῦ ἀρχαίου θεάτρου» ("From the Delphi Festivals: Ἄγγελος Σικελιανός' Work for Greece; Private and State Initiative Worked Miracles; The Chorus of Oceanids and the Acoustics of the Ancient Theatre"), *Ἐλεύθερο Βῆμα*, 12-5-1927. Tsamo wrote it reminded him of Byzantine music. Τσαμό, «Τὸ ζωντάνεμμα τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν παραδόσεων: Ἡ παράστασις τοῦ *Προμηθέως Δεσμώτου*: Τὸ θαῦμα τῶν Δελφῶν» ("The Revival of Greek Traditions: The Performance of *Prometheus Bound*: The Miracle of Delphi"), *Πρωΐα*, 12-5-1927. The creative team of the 1927 production of *Prometheus Bound* was: Ioannis Gryparis: translation; Eva Palmer-Sikelianou: Direction, Choreography, and Costumes; Fóskolos: Set Design; Konstantinos Psachos: composition of music; F. Oikonomidis: conductor of the orchestra; P. Kalogerikos: assistant director (for the actors); El. Santró: mask design. The cast was: Geórgios Bourlos: Prometheus; Orestis Kontogiannis: Kratos; Elias Destounis: Hephaestus and Hermes; G. Mavrogenis: Oceanus; Katerina Marouli (Kakouri): Io; Marika Velouídiou: Bia. Chorus of Oceanids: Chorus Leaders: Koula Prátsika and Giagaki; Chorus members: Elli Kavadia, Elli Margariti, Anetoula Kolivá, Élena Kantoni, Nina Delivoriá, Nella [Kouk] Proestopoulou, Vetta and Viki Raftopoulou, Maria Mamoná, Anna Psilianou, Kaiti Psilianou, Natalia, Tsarlabá, Elli Seferlí and Roussa Mavromati. Also in the chorus without speaking participated: Eirinoula Leoni, Dionyssia Drini, Evaggelia Mamoná, Tasoula Lantadiou, Nitsa Kokkini, Katina Andronikou, I. Tsaousi, Maria Kantoni, Margarita Xanthaki, Falina Skorou, Maria Hrisí, Violetta

productions. As Eva Palmer-Sikelianού wrote, the choice of the aesthetic elements that were used in the production and the whole aesthetic conceptualisation of the style aimed at revealing the play's "axis" so that it would be "emotionally true, or almost true".¹⁶ This 'emotional truth' would render the play accessible to contemporary audiences. In this framework she incorporated Ancient Greek references in her style of performance. As she explained in a series of letters to Mrs. Joan Vanderpool written between 1935 and 1936, the references to Ancient Greek cultural elements were a way for her to understand and transmit to contemporary audiences the emotional quality and essence of a play as she understood them.¹⁷

One might suppose that perhaps it was easier for Eva Palmer-Sikelianού, being an American, to approach Greece through the cultural tradition of Ancient Greece, although this speculation might be slightly unfair as she had lived in Greece since 1905. Her whole conceptualisation, however, of the use of Greek cultural elements to create the aesthetic style of the performances and the aesthetic emphasis on the Ancient Greek references drew from and in a sense was legitimised by Ággelos Sikelianός' concept of the integral unity of Greek culture. Thus the Sikelianoi's approach to tragedy was based on and promoted the doctrine of the capitalist aesthetic ideology, the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages. As I will explain later, Sikelianός' concept of *hellenikótita* focused on recovering and expressing once again in a dynamic way the

Papaioannou, Tití Nteventa. See Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή: 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage: 1817-1932)*, p.p. 349-50.

¹⁶ Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός (Upward Panic)*, p. 130.

¹⁷ Anton, John, P. (ed.), *Επιστολές της Εύας Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού για το αρχαίο δράμα (Eva Palmer-Sikelianού's Letters about Ancient Drama)*, Τσοκοπούλου, Λουκία (trans. in Greek), Athens: «Νέα Σύνορα»-Α.Α. Λιβάνη, 1997, (the letters are edited in the English original as well as translated into Greek), p.p. 145-220 (in the English original).

Greek *Geist* which conveyed for him a universal value and importance. The first and most dynamic and complete expression of the Greek *Geist* was manifested in the Ancient Greek civilisation. Thus Ancient Greece had for Sikelianós a significant position in the entirety of ‘Greek’ culture. Within that context Eva Palmer-Sikelianou’s insistence on referring to ancient cultural elements corresponded to Sikelianós’ ideas on *hellenikótita*.

Ággelos Sikelianós understood *hellenikótita* as a spiritual entity, which he perceived as the Greek *Geist*. It was within this concept of the Greek *Geist* that he conceived the unity of the Greek culture through the ages. This concept was based on his belief that the core of the Greek race, its “blood”, remained unchangeable, “a black un-ridden horse”.¹⁸ Thus the “palpitation” of the Ancient Greek *Geist* being Greek was still “beating” within the Greek race. The expression of the Greek *Geist* in all its completeness and dynamism was to be found in antiquity, when the Greek *Geist* managed to conceive and express through the Ancient Greek civilisation the ‘universal principles of Life’. That is why he believed that the Greek race was superior. This superiority drew on the identification of Humanism and of the Human-being with Greece and the Greek man respectively.

Ággelos Sikelianós’ notion of the Greek race and its superiority seems to be of a Wagnerian origin although, as I will explain later on, there is a difference on the way they perceive the concept of the ‘superiority’ of the race. Sikelianós’ understanding of

the Greek race and Greece's position in the world bear a striking similarity to Wagner's ideas on the German race and Germany's importance for the future of the world. Initially, however, Sikelianós, influenced by the poet Periclís Giannópoulos, explained the superiority of the Greek race in terms of physiological criteria; it was the particularity of the Greek land that accounted for the physiology of the Greek man and of the Greek race.¹⁹ In the course of time Ággelos Sikelianós' explanation of the superiority of the Greek race shifted, as Papadaki observes, from the invocation of physiological criteria to an explanation based on reasons of ancientness.²⁰ Thus the Greek race was superior because it was the first one to manifest the 'universal principles of Life'. Here Ággelos Sikelianós seems to take after Wagner's mysticism expressed in the latter's understanding of German nationalism. As the core of the Greek race remained unchangeable through the ages, the Greek *Geist* which was still "beating" in it would inevitably lead Modern Greece to acquire its leading spiritual position in the world. This idea was central in Sikelianós' perception and it was also expressed in his *Delphic Idea*.

The *Delphic Idea* was Sikelianós' answer to the problems that humanity all around the world and Greece itself faced. It aimed at the foundation of a purely spiritual centre where intellectuals from all over the world –the international intellectual elite - would

¹⁸ Μαύρο άνεπίβατο άτι! Σικελιανός, Άγγελος, «Άίμα τής φυλής μου» ("Blood of my Race"), in: «Η Συνείδηση τής Φυλής μου» ("The Consciousness of my Race"), *Πρόλογος στη ζωή (Prologue to Life), Λυρικός Βίος (Lyric Life)*, vol. III, p. 71.

¹⁹ See Γιαννόπουλος, Περικλής, *Η Ελληνική γραμμή και το Ελληνικόν χρώμα (The Greek Line and the Greek Light)*, Athens: «Νέα Σύνορα» Α. Λιβάνη, 1992. On Giannópoulos' influence on Sikelianós see Dimaras, C. Th., *Modern Greek Literature* and also, Παπαδάκη, Λία, *Το εφηβικό πρότυπο του Άγγελου Σικελιανού και η Δελφική προσπάθεια (The Adolescent Model of Ággelos Sikelianós and the Delphic Attempt)*, Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία Νέας Γενιάς κι Αθλητισμού, 1995, p. 80.

meet in order to define and to impose the universal principles that should determine the ruling of humanity.²¹ This international intellectual elite would be characterised by a consciousness superior to the confusion of our times and by a will to assume responsibility for the contemporary problems in order to resolve them.²² In essence the international intellectual elite would function like the ancient *Eroptai* of Delphi observing the tendencies of the nations and pressing for the completion of each nation and the harmonious and peaceful coexistence of all the peoples.²³ Greece was to play an important part in this movement precisely because the Greek *Geist* was the first one to manifest in the Ancient Greek civilisation the universal principles of Life.²⁴

Sikelianós' notion of *hellenikótita*, which was expressed among other things in his *Delphic Idea*, points, as I will explain, to the second challenge that Greek culture met during that period: the appropriation of European aesthetic and cultural influences in such a way that this would lead to an originality that could be characterised as 'purely

²⁰ Παπαδάκη, Λία, *Το εφηβικό πρότυπο του Άγγελου Σικελιανού και η Δελφική προσπάθεια (The Adolescent Model of Áγγελος Sikelianós and the Delphic Attempt)*, p. 80.

²¹ As Papadaki notes, the *Delphic Idea* aimed at the finding of a first spiritual centre, the revival of traditional principles, and the organic relationship of this spiritual centre with contemporary problems, which it would solve. Παπαδάκη, Λία, *Το εφηβικό πρότυπο του Άγγελου Σικελιανού και η Δελφική προσπάθεια (The Adolescent Model of Áγγελος Sikelianós and the Delphic Attempt)*, p. 89. Sikelianós visualised the eventual foundation of many spiritual centres all over the world. See Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός, (Upward Panic)*, p. 81.

²² See among many of Sikelianós' articles, «Ἡ Προσπάθειά μου στοὺς Δελφοὺς: Τὰ πραγματικὰ κίνητρα» ("My Delphi Attempt: The Real Motives") and «Δελφικός Λόγος: Ἡ πνευματικὴ βάση τῆς Δελφικῆς Προσπάθειας» ("Delphic Speech: The Spiritual Base of the Delphic Attempt"), in: Άγγελος Σικελιανός, *Πεζός Λόγος (Prose)*, vol. II, Athens: Ἴκαρος, 1981, p. 27- 37 and 67-118 respectively.

²³ The *Eroptai* was one of the institutions founded by the ancient Delphi Oracle to promote the idea for a Greek politics instead of city-states politics. According to Sikelianós the *Eroptai*, who were also called Guardians of the Sacred Archives, were high priests that observed the contemporary historic tendencies of the peoples of all the known (then) world in order to attract them beyond the dark fanaticism towards a hearth of knowledge of the Universe and the 'Know thyself'. See, Σικελιανός, Άγγελος, «Ἡ ἀποστολὴ τῆς κοινότητας» ("The Mission of the Community"), in: *Πεζός Λόγος (Prose)*, vol. II, p. 173.

²⁴ See, Σικελιανός, Άγγελος, «Ἡ Δελφικὴ Ἑλλάδα» ("Delphic Greece") and «Ἡ ἀποστολὴ τῆς κοινότητας» ("The Mission of the Community"), in: *Πεζός Λόγος (Prose)*, vol. II, p.p. 38-46 and 163-83 respectively.

Greek'. In his interpretation of *hellenikótita* and of the superiority of the Greek *Geist* Sikelianós re-echo Richard Wagner's mystical conception of German nationalism.²⁵ Sikelianós constructs an analogous mystical ideologized concept of 'Greece' and of the 'Greek race'. In fact, the extent to which his ideas re-echo Wagner's is striking. Wagner's concept of 'Germanness', as he wrote in a letter to Nietzsche, was 'purely metaphysical'. As Borchmeyer notes, Wagner believed that the "German spirit" is "called upon" to "bring happiness" to the nations of the earth.²⁶ The principle of "happiness" linked in Wagner's thought the Ancient Greeks with the Germans. "Happiness" according to Wagner and to a wider Germanic tradition that can be traced to Schiller and even earlier, was also what Ancient Greeks taught the world.²⁷ Thus, within the framework of Wagner's understanding of German nationalism, Germans in a sense were to take the position that Ancient Greeks held in antiquity in the contemporary world.

Sikelianós transfers Wagner's ideas of the destiny of the German nation to the Greeks. In fact it seems as though he used Wagner's exact expression, erasing the word "Germans" and replacing it with the word "Greeks". However, he justifies and appropriates what he borrows from Wagner by filling them with his own image of Greece instilled in him since childhood, on the one hand through his contact with the Ionian Literature School (Aristotelis Valaoritis, one of the representatives of this School

²⁵ On Wagner's concept of 'German nationalism' see Borchmeyer, Dieter, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre*; Large, David, C., "Wagner's Bayreuth Disciples", in: David C. Large, and William Weber (eds.), *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984, p.p.72-133. On German nationalism in general see Hughes, Michael, *Nationalism and Society: Germany 1800-1945*, London: Edward Arnold (Hodder & Stoughton), 1988.

²⁶ Borchmeyer, Dieter, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre*, p. 27.

²⁷ Borchmeyer, Dieter, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre*, p. 77.

was a family friend) and, on the other, through his own personal mythology of Greece and Greeks, especially Modern Greeks, generated by his family's history and especially the involvement of his forefathers in the War of Independence against the Turks. The emphasis of the Ionian Literature School on the Greek demotic oral tradition inspired his own fascination with the Greek popular culture in which, as I will argue later on, he saw the survival of the Ancient Greek *Geist*.

Besides the 'unity of the Greek race' through the ages, this connection of Ancient with Modern Greece through the Greek *Geist* also justified a second equally important claim, the eastern character of Ancient Greece. Within the context of the emphasis on the eastern qualities of 'Greece' and, consequently, of Ancient Greek civilisation, Ancient Greece and its *Geist* were rendered essentially hermetically sealed for the Europeans and thus they could be claimed exclusively as the Greek race's glorified past. As Sikelianós argued, although Western European civilization claimed that it was partially based on Ancient Greek civilization, it was, however, foreign to the essence of the Greek principles.²⁸ He based this argument on the ideological and cultural difference between the West and the East, which for him would lead to an unavoidable collision. The West for Sikelianós insisted on ignoring the fact that "History is created by the *Geist*" contrary to the historical peoples of the East who respected the *Geist*.²⁹ Thus, as I argue, Sikelianós placed Greece, Ancient and Modern, in the ideologized concept of

²⁸ See Παπαδάκη, Λία, *Το εφηβικό πρότυπο του Άγγελου Σικελιανού και η Δελφική προσπάθεια (The Adolescent Model of Áγγελος Sikelianós and the Delphic Attempt)*, p. 92.

²⁹ According to Sikelianós, Western civilisation judging from "the Greek-Latin civilisation which is headless from the absolute spiritual principles (in the way that they [Westerners] present it)" does not respect the "historical completion of the peoples" and the historical peoples of the East. Σικελιανός, Άγγελος, *Πεζός Λόγος (Prose words)*, vol. I, p. 155. (Quotation taken from Παπαδάκη Λία, *Το εφηβικό*

‘Greek East’, as I explained it in the first chapter.³⁰ Within this framework he could explicitly claim that the ‘real Ancient Greece’ is a concept fundamentally unapproachable to European culture. Europe can never understand the eastern qualities of ‘Greece’, only Modern Greeks can do that due to the Greek *Geist*. In this way he set a context within which he could promote the idea of a ‘Greek *Hellenism*’ versus a ‘European *Hellenism*’.

Sikelianós traced the existence of the Greek *Geist* in the survival of the Ancient Greek civilisation in Modern Greece, especially in the Greek oral tradition, in the consciousness of those Greeks that were aware and promoted the idea of ‘Greekness’ as Sikelianós understood it, in the Greek people and in the Greek language. These elements gave Sikelianós hope that Greece could assume again the regulating mission that according to him it always had in history. For that to be accomplished Modern Greece had to creatively re-digest its ancient past.³¹ This re-digestion involved the deep and thorough research and study of the Ancient Greek civilisation, both in what has survived from antiquity but also in what remained ‘vivid’ from the ancient culture in the more recent Greek tradition. He believed that the Greek *Geist* should be “awakened” in the consciousness of the Greek people. The use of those elements drawn from the entirety of what is regarded as Greek culture that remained ‘vivid’ from the ancient culture could lead to that end. The ‘awaking’ of the Greek *Geist* would lead to the

πρότυπο του Άγγελου Σικελιανού και η Δελφική προσπάθεια (*The Adolescent Model of Ággelos Sikelianós and the Delphic Attempt*, p. 87.)

³⁰ See Chapter I, p.p. 41-3.

³¹ Παπαδάκη, Λία, *Το εφηβικό πρότυπο του Άγγελου Σικελιανού και η Δελφική προσπάθεια (The Adolescent Model of Ággelos Sikelianós and the Delphic Attempt)*, p.p.92-3.

creation of a new artistic production equivalent in its importance to that of Ancient Greece.

Within this context Sikelianós was not interested in ‘reviving’ the ancient glory, again a nineteenth-century Greek ideal, but to culturally appropriate Ancient Greece within Modern Greek culture in such a way that it was based on and emphasised his concept of ‘the unity of the Greek culture’. This appropriation would lead to an artistic production that could be recognised as ‘Greek’. Such a production would be transmitted in the Greek language, would express the Greek *Geist* and would convey the ‘universal principles of Life’ not only to Greece, but also to the whole world. It is within these principles that he understood tragedy since for him Ancient Greek tragedy consisted of a Greek form of art, which expressed in a complete way the ‘universal principles of Life’. And it is my contention that the style of the performances was based on this ideological concept of the unity of the Greek culture and of what a ‘Greek artistic product’ meant for Sikelianós. Within the framework of this view there were no boundaries set between the several phases of what is considered to be ‘Greek’ culture. One phase was used in order to illuminate the other underlining the perception of the entirety of what is regarded as ‘Greek’ culture as an ‘organic whole’.

In that sense the Sikelianói’s performances of Ancient Greek tragedy followed the principles upon which Modern Greek culture was constituted during the period because even the aesthetic emphasis on Ancient Greece, which is apparent in the style of the productions, took into consideration and was approached through the cultural unity of Ancient and Modern Greek culture. Thus it is my contention that their work in tragedy

expresses a fundamental change of concept from the nineteenth-century ‘devotion to the Ancient Greek ancestors’. It is not Modern Greek culture that has to be ‘modified’ so as to approach and ‘reproduce’ the principles of Ancient Greek civilisation, but it is Ancient Greek civilisation that approaches, illuminates and legitimises Modern Greek culture. And at the same time Ancient Greek civilisation is itself legitimised by Modern Greek culture as an exclusively ‘purely Greek’ culture. This is the fundamental principle of the cultural appropriation of Ancient Greece by Modern Greece, which formed the basis of all productions of ancient drama from 1919 onwards and allowed the constitution of the aesthetic style/s of the performances to draw from the entirety of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture. The Sikelianoi’s productions established this principle, as I will argue in this and the following chapter.

One of the most notable examples of how Ággelos Sikelianós perceived the unity of Greek culture is his concept of religiousness, which was expressed as a basic aesthetic principle of the productions; the Sikelianoi’s approach to tragedy was based on the rendering of the religiousness of the genre. To this end contributed not only precise signs within the performance, especially those signs that signified a correlation between the personae of Prometheus and of Christ in *Prometheus Bound*, as I will explain later, but the fact itself that the chorus sang and danced. The idea was to create the atmosphere of a ritual, a ritual that could be recognised as ‘purely Greek’.

The ‘Greekness’ of the ritualistic atmosphere stemmed from Ággelos Sikelianós’ concept of ‘religiousness’, which was inseparably linked with his notion of *hellenikótita*. It was through his concept of religiousness that he conceived the

“essence” of *hellenikótita*, but it was the fact that he was Greek that allowed him to feel and to interpret religiousness in the particular way that he did. Religiousness was for Sikelianós the most basic principle towards a way of life that would be in harmony with the universal principles of Life, Nature and God, initiating man in the major demand for Life³². Sikelianós’ religiousness, however, was not bound to a particular God or to a particular church. It was in a sense a construction of his own religion that took the form of a mystical contact with a divine Eternal Being. In the course of Greek history and culture this divine Eternal Being had assumed many names, the most prominent of which were Dionysus, Apollo, and Christ. For Sikelianós all three of them revealed to man the path towards his/her completion. Thus they reflected the same power and they used common symbols, wheat and the vine.³³

The starting point of Sikelianós’ concept of religiousness is to be found in Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*. Sikelianós’ concept of religiousness implies the distinction between Dionysus and Apollo as Nietzsche explained it. Nietzsche’s concepts are, however, renegotiated in the frame of Sikelianós’ ‘Greekness’. Where Nietzsche sees a “tremendous opposition in origin and aims” between the ‘Apollinian’ and the ‘Dionysian’, Sikelianós emphasises their secret unity, as manifestations of the same Eternal God and adds to them the Christian Orthodox Christ, forming thus a new Holy

³² Παπαδάκη, Λία, *Το εφηβικό πρότυπο του Άγγελου Σικελιανού και η Δελφική προσπάθεια (The adolescent model of Aggelos Sikelianós and the Delphic Attempt)*, p. 81.

³³ One of the best examples of this internal unity and durability of the eternal symbols of Dionysus-Bacchus, Apollo and Christ is best expressed in the poem «Διόνυσος - Ίησοῦς» (“Dionysus-Christ”), in: «Ἡ Συνείδηση τῆς Πίστης» (“The Consciousness of Faith”), *Πρόλογος στη ζωὴ (Prologue to Life)*, *Λυρικός Βίος (Lyric Life)*, vol. III, p. 213. See page 107 and footnote 1 in the same page.

Trinity.³⁴ The concept of unity itself can also be traced back to Nietzsche's 'Dionysian' perception of 'the unity of man and nature'. It is my contention, however, that Sikelianós' 'nature' is Greek and thus the unity of Nietzsche's 'man and nature' is transformed in his thought in the 'unity of Greek man with Greek nature' incorporating and emphasising the unity also of Greek culture. The implicit link of this concept must, I think, be sought in the faint survival of Giannópoulos' initial influence on Sikelianós.³⁵

Following Nietzsche, Sikelianós favoured the state of 'Dionysianism'. Actually the perception of the world being in a state of 'Dionysianism' consists of an essential part of his *habitus*. Contrary, however, to Nietzsche's concept it was the state of 'Dionysianism' that led Sikelianós to action.³⁶ In this state he saw himself as a new Orpheus and felt impelled to initiate the Greeks and the world in a new way of life that would lead to their completion.³⁷ As a "prophet, a priest and an athlete" he felt he had to share his perception of the world.³⁸ The world Sikelianós perceived, however, being in a state of 'Dionysianism' was very different from the one Nietzsche perceived and it consisted of the essence of Sikelianós' *hellenikótita*. It is a world that did not make him

³⁴ See Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, Kaufmann, Walter (trans.), New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

³⁵ See above p. 117.

³⁶ Nietzsche argued that in perceiving the world through the 'Dionysian', man gains knowledge which "kills action", for man feels it is "ridiculous or humiliating" to be "asked to set right a world that is out of joint". Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, p. 60.

³⁷ All the poetic work of Sikelianós reflects his fascination with the Orphic mysteries. Furthermore one of his tragedies, *Ο τελευταίος Ορφικός διθύραμβος ή ο διθύραμβος του ρόδου* (*The Last Orfic Dithyramb or the Dithyramb of the Rose*), is about the re-appearance of Orpheus in contemporary times bearing a message for humanity.

³⁸ "The same if I offered heart to raise it to its top, / -a great offering- as an athlete, a priest and a prophet" *Την ίδια αν έταξα καρδιά, να σώσω στην κορφή της, / -τάμα τρανό-, σαν άθλητής, ιερέας και προφήτης. Σικελιανός, Άγγελος, «Δελφικός Λόγος Ι» ("Delphic Speech")*, in: *Λυρικός Βίος (Lyric Life)*, vol. IV, p. 145.

feel either “terror” or “horror”.³⁹ It led him to a concept of life expressed through very bright images which emphasised the joy of life.⁴⁰ It is my contention that the way

³⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*. The “terror” or “horror” that this world creates in the heart and mind of the genius is a recurrent theme in Nietzsche’s thought in *The Birth of Tragedy*. See, for example, p.p. 42, 60 and 67.

⁴⁰ An example of the way Sikelianos perceived the world in this state of “dionysianism” can be seen in this small extract from his introduction in *Λυρικός Βίος (Lyric Life)* which refers to his conception of *Πρόλογος στη Ζωή (Prologue to Life)*, a poetic work referring to the poet’s quest for the particularity of the Greek land, the Greek race, of Woman and of Faith, the central problems that for Sikelianós define Life.

The poem [...] begins with my humble and pious participation, as the last of the rowers, on the journey of Dionysus, until the hour [...] that the tempest of antinomies unexpectedly bursts out all around us [...] This is the hour that for the first time I participate in my entirety [...] in the passion and size of Life. And then with the criteria of this new *μέθεξις* (participation) in the meaning of the whole Biological God inside me, I proceed lighting these same problems which were torn away from the core of my adolescent unity – the problem of “my Land”, of “my Race”, of “Woman” the problem of “Faith” -, until I feel them again moving like planets around the one central dominant demand of my whole “consciousness”: the demand for Creation.

Thus now, and at the exodus of my work, when after all this course that I have mentioned I was coming again in a unified and genuine “existential” contact with Dionysus, all the symbols- that, as I wrote before, gleaming the eternity of the Myth, came above the flow of my whole quest - “as they moved for some time behind me, like dolphins which rival in speed a boat sailing in the deep sea”, in the end they left me alone again, or if they appeared at times as a great memory in my mind, “ they accompanied the great sailing of my boat, but only to a point, dancing all around the keel”.

Thus, and at the end of my “Prologue to Life”, the Dionysiac journey started to enter, in this last phase, into its pure, liberating Rhythm. Some shores were still there perhaps, even in the furthest distance, but already the sails of my boat faced bravely with its course the winds of antinomies, and the sky and the abyss started to reflect each other symmetrically in front of me, whilst the vine, which clutched the mast, little by little surpassed it in height and revealed in my thought: the central direction and the polarisation of my inner self towards the “Dimension of Intensification”...

[Τὸ Ποίημα ἀρχίζει μὲ τὴν ταπεινὴ κ' εὐλαβικὴ συμμετοχὴ μου, ὡς τοῦ στερονοῦ ἀπ' τοὺς κωπηλάτες, στὸ ταξίδι τοῦ Διονύσου, ὡς μὲ τὴν ὥρα ποῦ [...] ἀνεπάντεχα ξεσπάει ὀλόγυρά μας ἢ τεράστια τρικυμία τῶν αντινομῶν [...]. Ὁρα ποῦ, ἀκριβῶς, πρῶτη φορὰ μετέχω ὀλόκληρος [...] στὸ πάθος καὶ στὸ μέγεθος τῆς Ζωῆς. Καὶ τότε πιά, μὲ τὸ κριτήριο τῆς νέας μου μέθεξης στὸ νόημα τοῦ καθολικοῦ Βιολογικοῦ Θεοῦ βαθιά μου, προχωρῶ φωτίζοντας τὰ ἴδια αὐτὰ προβλήματα ποῦ ἀποσπασθήκανε ἀπ' τὸν ἀρχικὸ πυρήνα τῆς ἐφηβικῆς ἐνότητάς μου - πρόβλημα τῆς «Γῆς μου», τῆς «Φυλῆς μου», τῆς «Γυναίκας», πρόβλημα τῆς «Πίστης»- ἐωσότου τὰ αἰστανθῶ καὶ πάλι νὰ κινούνται σὰν πλανῆτες γύρω ἀπὸ τὸ ἓνα κεντρικὸ κυρίαρχο αἴτημα τῆς δλης μου «συνειδήσης»: τὸ αἴτημα τῆς Δημιουργίας.

Ἔτσι πιά τώρα, καὶ στὴν ἐξοδο τοῦ ἔργου, δταν ἐπειτα ἀπὸ δλη τὴν πορεία ποῦ προάνεφερα ξαναρχόμουν καὶ πάλι σὲ ἐνιαία καὶ καθαντὸ «ὑπαρξιακὴ» μὲ τὸ Διόνυσο ἐπαφή, δλα τὰ σύμβολα - ποῦ, ὡς ἔγραφα πρῶτύτερα, ἀντιφῆγγοντας τὴν αἰωνιότητα τοῦ Μύθου, ἐξέβγαιναν ἀπάνω ἀπ' τὴν ροὴ τῆς δλης ἀναζήτησής μου- «ἀφοῦ κινούντανε γιὰ κάμποσο ξοπίσω μου,

Sikelianós perceived and expressed the 'joy of life' is the principal point where Sikelianós appropriated both Nietzsche's and Wagner's concepts within his own complex of ideas on what is 'purely Greek'. For, the 'joy of life' was not perceived as a lost in the past ideal to be found again in the (distant) future, as in Wagner and Nietzsche, but as a here and now experience, a way of life, the 'Greek way' of life.⁴¹ The principle of 'the joy of life' is probably best expressed in the *Prometheus Bound* production in the tragic chorus of the Oceanids. The aesthetic presence of a group of young women that sang and danced alluded to a light, bright world filled with compassion. This, in my opinion, was Sikelianós' 'true' world of man and it was juxtaposed to the heavier world of the characters that wore masks and represented the false order, that is the world that man was forced to live in, a world full of antinomies.⁴²

It is not that Sikelianós did not accept or understand the difficulties or the hardships of life. (Although one could say that, from Bourdieu's sociological point of view, he

ὅπως τὰ δελφίνια ὁποῦ παραβγαίνανε στὴ γλιγοράδα μὲ καράβι ποῦ ἀρμενίζει
στ' ἀνοιχτά», στὸ τέλος μ' ἄφησαν μονάχο μου καὶ πάλι, ἦ, ἄν ξαναφαινόταν
κάποτε ὡς μεγάλη ἀνάμνηση στὸ νοῦ μου, «συνοδεῦαν πλέον χορεύοντας
ὀλόγυρα ἀπὸ τὴν καρίνα, κ' ἴσαμ' ἓνα μοναχὰ σημεῖο, τὸ μεγάλο ἀρμένισμα τοῦ
καραβιοῦ μου».

Ἔτσι λοιπόν, καὶ μὲ τὸ τέλος τοῦ «Προλόγου» μου «στὴ Ζωή», τὸ
Διονυσιακὸ ταξίδι μου ἄρχιζε νὰ μπαίνει, μὲ τὴν τελευταία αὐτὴ του φάση, στὸν
καθάριο λυτρωτικὸ Ρυθμὸ. Κάποιες ἀχτὲς ἀκόμα ὑπῆρχαν ἴσως, ἔστω καὶ σὲ
μακρινότατην ἀπόσταση, ἀλλὰ ἤδη τὸ πανὶ τοῦ караβιοῦ μου περικλοῦσε
θαρρετὰ μὲ τὴν πορεία του τὶς ἀντίνομες πνοές, ὁ οὐρανὸς κ' ἡ ἄβυσσος ἀρχίζανε
ν' ἀλληλοκαθρεφτίζονται συμμετρικὰ μπροστά μου, ἐνῶ τὸ κλῆμα ποῦ
πιανόνταν τυλιγμένο στὸ κατάρτι, ἀγάλι ἀγάλι τὸ ξεπερνᾶ σὲ ὕψος κι
ἀποκάλυπτε στὴ σκέψη μου: τὴν κεντρικὴ κατεύθυνση καὶ πόλωση τοῦ
ἐσώτατου ἑαυτοῦ μου πρὸς τὴ «Διάσταση τῆς Ἔντασης»...]

Σικελιανός, Ἄγγελος, *Λυρικός Βίος (Lyric Life)*, Athens: Ἰκαρός, 1946 (1981) vol. I, p. 30-1.

⁴¹ Nietzsche argues that man may feel in the Dionysian perception of the world a joy in existence, but only for a brief moment. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, p. 104. For Sikelianós, however, this was a way of life

⁴² The chorus of Oceanids did not wear masks.

could financially afford to live and experience the world and himself as he did drawing on the financial security of Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's fortune.) In fact his *Delphic Idea* was conceived as a way of solving the world's difficulties and hardships. One of the main principles that would secure the successful materialisation of the *Delphic Idea* was the principle of contact. Contact had to be achieved between the members of the international intellectual elite themselves and between this elite and the rest of the world. In the achievement of this contact, in his vision, tragedy was to play a vital part. As a high form of art, tragedy would function as a bridge to erase the differences between nations and peoples, thus paving the way for them to contact each other.⁴³

In this sense Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* expressed the essence of Sikelianos' *Delphic Idea* and the role of tragedy, at least in the way the Sikelianoí approached and interpreted the play. Prometheus symbolised man's "final conscious reconciliation and collaboration with the real creative hierarchy and cause". This reconciliation was to be achieved "not only by the resistance of the Titan or his prophetic power but with the complete Initiation (of man) in the Mysteries of this and the other world". Through the

⁴³ Tragedy had, for Sikelianos, a tremendous power which "could hold the attention of fifteen, twenty, thirty thousand people fixed into high poetry, high music, high dance". [τό μέγα δράμα πού κρατούσε τά πλήθη, δεκαπέντε, είκοσι, τριάντα χιλιάδες ανθρώπους, προσηλωμένους στή μεγάλη ποίηση, τή μεγάλη μουσική, τό μεγάλο χορό.] It used and united harmoniously all the human expressive abilities, poetry, music, dance, theatre, architecture, painting, sculpture. Its major achievement was that in tragedy "spiritual understanding became genuine beauty". He argued that "it is so big that States which are hostile to each other and religions which are hostile to each other can sit together in the same large theatre and silently suckle the warm milk of love and pity at its rich breast". [Είηαι τόσο μεγάλη πού αντιμαχόμενα κράτη και αντιμαχόμενες θρησκείες μπορούν νά καθίσουν μαζί στό ίδιο εύρύ θέατρο και άθόρυβα νά βυζάζουν τό ζεστό γάλα τής άγάπης και του έλέους άπό τόν πλούσιο μαστό της.] Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός πανικός (Upwards panic)*, p.p. 83-4. Again Sikelianos' ideas on tragedy re-echo Wagner's concept of the 'future work-of-art'. Their main difference lies in the fact that Wagner believed that ancient tragedy cannot be performed in contemporary times. Sikelianos, on the contrary, not only believed that tragedy could be performed in our times but also that it could inspire different nations and people in a way that contemporary art could not.

“sacred and undisturbed *contact of the pure soul with the eternal Word*” man will discover “the power to internally overcome fate and to create around him the human evolution of life”.⁴⁴ This interpretation of *Prometheus Bound* is entirely based on the whole complex of Sikelianós’ concepts on *hellenikótita*, religiousness, the completion of man and the world and the *Delphic Idea*. At the same time it reveals the way these concepts were organically linked to each other.

⁴⁴ The entire passage runs as follows, “Prometheus expresses the conscious buying of human kind by the curse of its political and narrowly theocratic governing, and its final conscious reconciliation and collaboration with the real creative hierarchy and cause – with this same cosmic harmonizing principle of which Bia, Kratos or Hermes are the arbitrary and mandatory interpreters. [And] This reconciliation is not possible to achieve only by the resistance of the Titan or his prophetic power but with the complete Initiation (of human kind) in the Mysteries of this and the other world; and in its (human kind’s) final and victorious exodus from all the pits full of trials to the point, finally, of the sacred and undisturbed *contact of the pure soul with the eternal Word*, this huge contact that the Eleusinian Hierophants called Epiphany or *Eropteia* and which gives man the power to internally overcome fate and to create around him the human evolution of life.” [Ο Προμηθέας εκφράζει τη συνειδητή έξαγορά του ανθρωπίνου γένους από την κατάρα της πολιτικής και της στενά Θεοκρατικής διακυβέρνησής του, και η τελική συνειδητή του συμφιλίωση και σύμπραξη με την πραγματική δημιουργική ιεραρχία κι αίτια – μ’ αυτήν την ίδια κοσμική έναρμονική αρχή, της οποίας η Βία, τὸ Κράτος ἢ ὁ Ἑρμῆς εἶναι οἱ αὐθαίρετοι ἐντολοδόχοι καὶ ἐρμηνεῖς – καὶ τὴν ὁποία συμφιλίωση δὲν εἶναι δυνατὸν νὰ τὴν κερδίσει μονάχα μὲ τὴν Τιτανικήν ἀντίσταση ἢ τὴν προφητική του δύναμη, ἀλλὰ καὶ μ’ ὀλόκληρη τὴ Μύση του στὰ μυστήρια αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου κόσμου καὶ στὴν τελική καὶ νικητήρια ἐξοδὸ του μες ἀπ’ ὄλες τὶς κατὰβρες ὁποῦ περιέχουνε δοκιμασίες, ὡς τὸ σημεῖο τῆς ἱερῆς καὶ ἀδιατάρακτης σὶτὸ τέλος ἐπαφῆς τῆς καθαρῆς ψυχῆς μὲ τὸν αἰώνιο Λόγο, τῆς τεράστιας ἐπαφῆς ποῦ οἱ Ἐλευσῖνιοι Ἱεροφάντες ἐκαλοῦσανε Ἐπιφανία ἢ Ἐποπτεία, καὶ ποῦ δίνει πιὰ στὸν ἄνθρωπο τὴ δύναμη νὰ ὑπερνικᾷ ἐσωτερικὰ τὴ μοῖρα καὶ νὰ δημιουργεῖ γαλήνια τὴν τριγύρα του ἀνθρώπινη ἐξέλιξη τῆς ζωῆς.] Σικελιανός, Ἄγγελος, «Ἡ πνευματική βάση τῆς Δελφικῆς Προσπάθειας» (“The Spiritual basis of the Delphic Attempt”), in: *Πεζός Λόγος (Prose)*, vol. II, p. 112. (Sikelianós’ underlining) One may find that Sikelianós’ interpretation of the play re-echoes Nietzsche’s, although again there is a shift in the way Sikelianós reads the play. The confrontation between the world of the Olympian gods and that of man, which is stressed in Nietzsche, is downplayed in Sikelianós. The reconciliation, a common theme in both interpretations, is to derive in Sikelianós’ interpretation through the initiation of man in the ancient rituals, thus gaining a mystical knowledge. Furthermore it does not presuppose the desire to destroy the world of the gods as Nietzsche implies. Finally, in Nietzsche’s reading, *Moirai* will be “enthroned above gods and men as eternal justice”. In Sikelianós’ interpretation man in an esoteric way transcends *Moirai*. See Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, p.p. 69-72. On the position and role of theatre and especially *Prometheus Bound* within the whole concept and promotion of the *Delphic Idea* see also Σικελιανός, Ἄγγελος, «Ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς παραστάσεως τοῦ Προμηθέως» (“The aim of *Prometheus Bound* Performance”), (Sikelianós’ speech was delivered at the first Delphi Festival), *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα*, 9-5-1927.

The universality of the *Delphic Idea* underlined the international dimensions of the symbolic capital of tragedy. And consequently it underlined the possibility of the international dimensions of the Greek contemporary performances of tragedy. To promote the *Delphic Idea* the Sikelianoi referred to and used the symbolic capital of tragedy stressing in particular the international dimensions of this capital. Consequently the aesthetic proposition of the Sikelianoi productions that promoted the ‘Greek way’ of performing tragedies stressed also the international dimension that aesthetic styles that could be recognised as ‘Greek’ could acquire. The organisation of the Delphic Festivals as international Festivals enhanced the notion of the international dimensions of the symbolic capital of tragedy and consequently of their ‘Greek way’ of performing them.

The ‘Greek way’ of performing tragedies in the Sikelianoi productions was based on Ággelos Sikelianós’ concept of the unity of the Greek culture which inspired Eva Palmer-Sikelianou’s creation of an aesthetic style that combined elements from all the phases of Greek culture into an organic whole. The most important element of this aesthetic style was the way Eva Palmer-Sikelianou rendered the chorus based on the unity of words, music and dance.



Photo 14 Eva Palmer-Sikelianou in a characteristic posture of the 1927 *Prometheus Bound* chorus members

The issue of the unity of words, music and dance was one of the most discussed issues concerning the performance of ancient tragedy, not only in Greece, but also internationally. It was considered to be the most characteristic trait of the particularity of the genre. And furthermore both Wagner and Nietzsche, who, as I have explained, had influenced the concept and the work of the Sikelianoí, had repeatedly stressed the impossibility of finding a way to achieve this unity in contemporary performances of tragedy. And they were repeatedly set against such enterprise.⁴⁵ Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's attempt therefore to render the element of unity in performance is the central point of the originality of the Sikelianoí's work. At the same time the particular way that she rendered the unity of words, music and dance adhered to the recognition of the 'Greekness' of the production.

Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's aesthetic rendering of the chorus drew on the entirety of 'Greek' culture. She derived her understanding of the tragic chorus, as she explained, from two short phrases.⁴⁶ The first one was from Plato's *Republic* and noted that "The tragic chorus is the union of poetry, music and gymnastics". The second one was from Aristotle's *Poetics* and explained that "the tragic chorus expresses with movement the character, the adventures and the actions of the actors". She transferred this understanding into contemporary 'Greek' aesthetic terms basing her perception of the chorus on Byzantine music, gymnastics and the different postures of the body depicted in the ancient vases. Then she tried to combine phrase by phrase the main points or the main tones in meaning and in music with movements suitable to them, choosing each

⁴⁵ Borchmeyer, Dieter, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre*, p. p. 84-5.

⁴⁶ Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός (Upard Panic)*, p. 123-4.

movement from a large number of sketches she had drawn copying ancient vase paintings from the Athens Archaeological Museum.⁴⁷ As I will explain later the main postures of the body in the chorus dances in the *Prometheus bound* and *Suppliants* productions refer to ancient vase-paintings. (See photo 14)

The use of ancient vase paintings as the basis of the chorus movement reflects Isadora Duncan's perception of dance. Duncan, who was also influenced by Wagner and Nietzsche, drew on Ancient Greek sculpture and vase painting in order to create a form of dance that would be based on the movement of nature.⁴⁸ Duncan's work most probably focused Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's attention on the issue of form and design. She was among the first modern dancers to stress the need for the correspondence of rhythm to the form and the design in movement.⁴⁹ In terms of the use of Byzantine music, although Duncan had also used, for a short period in her career, Byzantine music in her dancing, it was Penelope, Ággelos Sikelianós' sister, that acquainted Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's with this kind of music.⁵⁰ Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's fascination with Byzantine music resulted in studying it for years under the supervision of Konstantinos

⁴⁷ Koula Prátsika, one of the chorus leaders, noted that underneath each drawn copy of postures from vase-paintings Eva Palmer-Sikelianou had written the verse of the chorus song which was to be combined with it. See Πράτσικα, Κούλα, «Αναμνήσεις από τις πρώτες Δελφικές Έορτές του 1927» ("Memories from the first Delphi Festival in 1927"), *Ήώς*, p. 126-30.

⁴⁸ See Duncan, Isadora, "Terpsichore", "The Great Source" and "Fragments and thoughts", in: *The Art of Dance: Isadora Duncan*, p.p.90-1, 101-4, and 128-43 respectively.

⁴⁹ See, Duncan, Isadora, "The dance of the Future", in: *The Art of Dance: Isadora Duncan*, p.p.54-63.

⁵⁰ Duncan became acquainted with Byzantine music during her visit to Greece in 1903-4. She stayed in Greece for some months and she actually built a house with her brother Raymond. Inspired by boys' choirs singing Byzantine psalms, in 1904 she made a tour with them in Europe dancing to their psalms. See, Ντάνκαν, Ισαδώρα, *Η Ζωή μου (My Life)*, Σικελιανού, Άννα (trans. in Greek), Athens: Εκδόσεις Νεφέλη, 1990, p.p.112-3. On Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's acquaintance with byzantine music see Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός (Upard Panic)*, p.p. 63-71.

Psachos.⁵¹ It was through this relationship that she entrusted him with the composition of the music of the performance. From Duncan's dance, however, Eva Palmer-Sikelianou could have first come into contact with the idea of using this type of music in dance.

The fact that Eva Palmer-Sikelianou knew Isadora Duncan's approach to dance quite well, especially in what concerned the latter's inspiration by the Ancient Greek civilisation, is not surprising. The Sikelianoí were personally acquainted with the Duncan family. Ággelos' sister Penelope was Raymond Duncan's first wife. Penelope had spoken to Eva of her brother when they met in Paris and it was in the house of the Duncans in Athens that Eva met Ággelos. Thus taking into consideration Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's close acquaintance with the Duncan family, it is plausible to speculate that she drew the principles of the aesthetics of performance, especially in what regarded the chorus, mainly from Isadora Duncan's form and concept of dance.⁵² She used, however, those principles in a way that led her to a style of movement quite different from Duncan's.

Reconstructing Duncan's style of dance, Ann Daly notes that "the force of her movement –outward/inward, forward/backward, upward/downward, side to side, tension/release – was an intensely rhythmic wave, which she and the others saw as the

⁵¹Eva Palmer-Sikelianou met Psachos in 1908 and studied Byzantine music under his supervision from 1915 to 1920.

⁵² The tradition of the Comédie Française, where Eva Palmer-Sikelianou had taken classes of acting when she first came to Europe, in my opinion, could not have served at that time as a performance tradition for her to draw her style of the chorus rendering from.



Photo 15 Characteristic posture of the 1927 *Prometheus Bound* chorus members



Photo 16 Characteristic posture of the 1927 *Prometheus Bound* chorus members

fundamental structure of nature”.⁵³ The essence of her style was the continuous flow of the movement. Within this continuous movement sometimes she “appeared to bring” a specific figure from an ancient vase painting or a Greek statue “into life”.⁵⁴ But, as Daly argues, “her dancing was not vocabulary-intensive”.⁵⁵

Contrary to this, it is my contention that Eva Palmer-Sikelianou constructed for the rendering of the tragic chorus a vocabulary of movements based on Ancient Greek vase-paintings. The principal aesthetic element of this vocabulary was a body posture where the head and legs were turned to the side whilst the chest looked to the front (see photos 15, 16). This body posture was combined with bent knees, flexed wrists, the bending of the body or the neck. In a small, filmed extract of the 1927 *Prometheus Bound* production it can be seen that her movement vocabulary consisted of a series of different rather still poses.⁵⁶ The essence of the style of this dance lay in the interchange of these poses giving the impression of a stylized movement. She joined the poses together by a simple walking or using the rhythmical steps of *Balos* and *Syrtós* as Rotas and Tsarouchis noted.⁵⁷ It is my contention that the conceptualisation of Eva Palmer-Sikelianou’s aesthetic style of the movement of the tragic chorus could not have

⁵³ Daly, Ann, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 65.

⁵⁴ Daly, Ann, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*, p. 109.

⁵⁵ Daly, Ann, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*, p. 64.

⁵⁶ The film was made by *Dag Film* and Eva Palmer-Sikelianou had paid for its cost. It was filmed as a silent movie. Sound was added to it in 1971 by Octave Merlier. The Delphi performance actors spoke the leading parts of *Prometheus*, *Io*, *Oceanus*, *Hephaestus* and *Hermes*. For the parts of *Kratos* and *Bia* actors from the National Theatre were used. Also the leading chorus members were different while some of the chorus members were the same. The film is located at the National Film-Library of Greece.

⁵⁷ *Balos* and *Syrtós* are traditional folklore Greek dances. See Ρώτας, Βασίλης, «Μετά την παραζάλη το αντίκρουσμα της πραγματικότητας» (“Facing Reality after the Dazzle”), in: *Θέατρο και γλώσσα (1925-1977)* (*Theatre and Language: 1925-1977*), vol. I, 1986, p.p. 39-52 (originally published in the periodical *Ελληνικά Γράμματα* in 1927), and Τσαρούχης, Γιάννης, «Θὰ μποροῦσα νὰ γράψω σελίδες ἀτελείωτες γιὰ τὴν Εὐὰ Σικελιανοῦ», (“I could write countless pages about Eva Sikelianou”), *Ἡώς*, p.p.234-7.



Photo 17 The entrance of the chorus in the 1927 *Prometheus Bound* production



Photo 18 The chorus in the 1927 production of *Prometheus Bound*

been achieved without taking into consideration a fundamental understanding of the principles of dance, and more especially of modern dance, in contemporary times, which Eva gained from Isadora Duncan.

Contrary to Duncan's form of dance, however, the flow in Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's tragic chorus was not to be found in the movements. It was created by the combination of words and music. The rhythmical, lyrical music of the songs was aesthetically blended with the rather static stylised movement in a way that created the rhythmic continuity of the chorus songs. It is my contention that in this principle we may understand Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's aesthetics of the presence of the chorus as the ultimate synthesis of words, music and movement.

Eva Palmer-Sikelianou composed the whole movement of the chorus herself. She then worked with the women members of the chorus for two summers and one winter. The last part of the rehearsals took place in the ancient theatre of Delphi itself. The result was a fully trained and well prepared chorus that sang and danced during the chorus songs and sat in the orchestra during the episodes (see photos 17,18). During the dance the chorus frequently broke into two or more smaller groups forming circles, triangles and squares all aesthetically combined with each other.⁵⁸ The aesthetic result adhered

⁵⁸ Keramopoulos, a Professor of Archaeology in the University of Athens, gives a quite detailed description of the 1927 *Prometheus Bound* tragic chorus. He writes that the Oceanids were forty young women "sixteen of them comprised the main acting part [of the chorus] in the orchestra, the remaining part joined them at particular moments as in the parodos [see photo 17]. Immediately, however, after the parodos, they sat down in pairs upon wooden seats placed at the edge of the orchestra. During the dialoguing parts of the play [...] the chorus sat down being a spectator of the development of the action [see photo 18]. When its turn came, however, it sang, it danced and made various movements of the body and especially of the hands changing movement with each phrase. [...] The chorus did not make any violent movements or leaps. Immediately as it came into action [in the chorus songs] the music started

to an archaic style of dance that gave the impression of figures from vase-paintings coming to 'life'.⁵⁹

This archaic style of the aesthetic presence of the chorus that sang and danced adhered to the rendering of the religiousness of the genre. The unity of words, music and dance was based on and carried within it a long intellectual tradition that had argued that this precise element symbolised more than anything else did the religiousness of the genre. Thus Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's tragic chorus was a central part in the creation of a ritualistic atmosphere during the performance.

while the chorus within the rock [the hidden choir] sang harmoniously with the chorus of the Oceanids who were in the orchestra, but with a very controlled voice [low]; the chorus danced in accordance with the rhythm, bending their body, their hands, their neck, flexing the wrist of the one or both hands, bending the one or the other knee, composing imitating expressions through the movements, expressing aesthetically the meaning of the verses, always in absolute accordance, forming at the same time lines and assemblages, filling the orchestra with aesthetic decorous and the auditorium [...] with mystic religious divine possession which charmed and captivated the souls of the spectators as powerfully as the chains held the body of Prometheus." [ὤν 16 ἦσαν τὸ κυρίως δρών μέρος ἐν τῇ ὀρχήστρᾳ, αἱ δὲ λοιπαὶ προσετίθεντο εἰς αὐτὰς ἐνίοτε ὡς ἐν τῇ παρόδῳ. Ἀμέσως ὅμως μετὰ τὴν πάροδον ἔλαβον θέσιν ἀνὰ δύο ἐπὶ καθισμάτων ξυλίνων τεθειμένων εἰς τὴν παρυφὴν τῆς ὀρχήστρας. Κατὰ τὴν διάρκειαν τοῦ διαλόγου... ὁ χορὸς ἐκάθητο χαμαί, θεατῆς τῆς ἐξειλισσομένης δράσεως. Ὅταν ὅμως ἦτο ἡ σειρὰ του, ἔψαλλεν, ὠρχεῖτο καὶ ἔκαμνεν ποικιλωτάτας κινήσεις τοῦ κορμοῦ καὶ μάλιστα τῶν χειρῶν πάντοτε εἰς τὰς αὐτὰς ὄλας καὶ εἰς ἐκάστην φράσιν ἀλλασσομένης... Ὁ χορὸς οὐδεμίαν βιαίαν κίνησιν ἔκαμνεν οὐδὲ πῆδημα. Εὐθύς ὡς προήρχετο εἰς ὄρασιν, ἤρχιζεν ἡ μουσικὴ, ὁ δὲ χορὸς ὁ ὑπὸ τὸν βράχον [ἢ κρυμμένη χορωδία] μετὰ τῶν Ἰσκειανίδων τῆς ὀρχήστρας ἦδον συμφώνως [χωρὶς παραφωνίαν], ἀλλὰ μὲ πολὺ συγκρατημένην φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν ρυθμὸν δὲ τῆς ὠδῆς ὠρχεῖτο ὁ χορὸς ἠρέμα, ἔκαμπε ποικιλοτρόπως τὸν κορμὸν, τὰς χεῖρας, τὸν λαιμὸν, τὸν καρπὸν τῆς ἐτέρας ἢ ἀμφοτέρων τῶν χειρῶν, τοῦτο ἢ ἐκείνο τὸ γόνυ, συνέθετε ἐκφράσεις μιμικὰς διὰ κινήσεων, αἰσθητοποιεῖ τὴν ἔννοιαν τῶν στίχων πάντοτε ὅλος ἐν ἀπολύτῳ συμφωνίᾳ, σχηματίζων συγχρόνως διαφόρους γραμμὰς καὶ συμπλέγματα καὶ πληρῶν τὴν ὀρχήστραν αἰσθητικῆς εὐκοσμίας, τὸ δὲ κοῖλον τοῦ Θεάτρου [...] μυστικῆς θεοκαταληψίας, ἣτις συνήρπαζε καὶ ἐδέσμευε τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν θεατῶν τόσον ἰσχυρῶς ὅσον ἐκράτουν αἱ ἀλύσεις τὸν Προμηθέα.] Κεραμόπουλος, Αντώνιος, Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα, 23-5-1927. (Quotation taken from Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το αρχαῖο ἐλληνικὸ θέατρο στὴ νέα ἐλληνικὴ σκηνή: 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage: 1817-1932)*, p. 353.)

⁵⁹ On the archaic style of the chorus movement see Μηλιάδης, Γιάννης, « Ἐδῶ καὶ σαράντα χρόνια » ("Forty years ago"), *Ἡώς*, p.p. 95-9.

The conceptualisation of performance as a form of ritual, which was intended in the productions of the Sikelianoi, can be traced back to Wagner's concept of theatre.⁶⁰ It was, however, also in agreement with Ággelos Sikelianós' complex of concepts and ideas. The Sikelianoi, as I have explained above, had interpreted *Prometheus Bound* in a way that underlined their mystical understanding of it and thus stressed its religious content. This interpretation was signified in two central elements of the performance which, in combination with Eva Palmer-Sikelianού's aesthetic rendering of the chorus, formed the basis of the creation of the ritualistic atmosphere in the performance. The first element was the correlation of the personae of Prometheus and Christ. The second was the use of masks.

The correlation of the personae of Prometheus and Christ was a frequent theme in Ággelos Sikelianós' entire body of work.⁶¹ It seems, however, that this correlation

⁶⁰ Borchmeyer, Dieter, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre*. See also, Symons, Arthur, "The Ideas of Richard Wagner", in: Eric Bentley, (ed.), *The Theory of the Modern Stage*, London: Penguin Books, 1990, p.p. 283-321.

⁶¹ See, for example, "as Prometheus is between *Kratos* and *Bia*, they [the few men who have an initiated consciousness and the collective popular Greek subconscious] put now Christ, the perfect Teacher [...], the perfect Man, the perfect Just Person in front of *Caesar*". [Καθώς τὸν Προμηθέα ἀνάμεσα ἀπ' τὸ Κράτος κι ἀπ' τὴ Βία, βάζουν τώρα τὸ Χριστό, τὸν τέλειο Παιδευτή, Καθηγητή, τὸν τέλειον Ἄνθρωπο, τὸν τέλεια Δίκαιο, ἀντίκρου στὸν Καίσαρα.] Σικελιανός Ἄγγελος, «Ξεκινώντας ἀπὸ τὸ σημερινὸ ἐθνικοπνευματικὸ πρόβλημα πρὸς κάποιες ἄμεσα ἐπιβαλλόμενες προβλέψεις» ("Starting from the Contemporary National and Spiritual Problem Some Directly Dominating Anticipations"), in: *Πεζὸς Λόγος (Prose)*, vol. V, p. 23. And in 1948 commenting on the work of Katerina Kotelnikov, he wrote "The horizons of Paradise itself, which distinguishes already the image of a Christ in Crucifixion, where, as a pure creator, has ascended one by one the steps – of which only a small part has each one of us ascended– and achieved in making out of all these steps one staircase, Golgotha, and at its top the all embracing Resurrection. There, around this staircase and the resurrectional top [...], Christ on His cross, which would be fixed on a small hill, would have His face bent towards the earth, and around Him the "crying women" and some of His disciples would look at Him..." [Τὸς δρίζοντες τοῦ ἴδιου τοῦ Παραδείσου, ὅπου ξεχωρίζει κιόλας τὴν εἰκόνα ἐνὸς Χριστοῦ στὴ Σταύρωση, πού, ἀληθινὸς δημιουργός, ἔχει ἀνέβει ἕνα-ἕνα τὰ σκαλιὰ – ὅπου ὁ καθένας ἀπὸ μᾶς ἀνέβηκε ἀπ' αὐτὰ ἕνα μικρὸ μόνο μέρος – καὶ κατόρθωσεν ἀπ' ὅλα τὰ σκαλιὰ νὰ κάμει μιὰ μονάχα κλίμακα, τὸ Γολγοθᾶ, καὶ στὴν κορφὴ του τὴν καθολικὴ Ἀνάσταση. Ἐκεῖ, ὀλόγυρα ἀπὸ αὐτὴν τὴν κλίμακα καὶ τὴν ἀναστάσιμη κορφή, [...] Ὁ Χριστὸς θά' χει ἀπὸ τὸ σταυρὸ του, καρφωμένο σ' ἕνα λόφο

formed part of the directorial framework of the performance. There is evidence that suggests that Áγγελος Sikelianós had discussed this intention prior to the performance.⁶² From the reviews on the production it appears that this correlation was depicted in a series of theatrical signs that drew on images and qualities that are related to the persona of Christ, and actually to the Greek Orthodox Christ. Alkis Thrilos, for example, wrote that Prometheus' costume, his mask "which was very mild and passive" and the style of acting of Bourlos, who acted the part of Prometheus, "tended to depict the kinship of

χαμηλό, τὸ πρόσωπο σκυμμένο πρὸς τὴ γῆ, ἐνῶ τριγύρα του θὰ τὸν κοιτοῦνε οἱ «κλαίουσες» καὶ κάποιοι μαθητές ...] Σικελιανός Ἄγγελος, «Ὀλόγυρα σ' ἓνα ὄνειρό της» ("All around one of her Dreams"), in: *Πεζός Λόγος (Prose)*, vol. V, p. 192

⁶² This is implied in Hovart's criticism on the production quoted by Tsamo in his review of the play. Hovart is quoted saying, "I find [...] important similarities between the personas of Christ and Prometheus Bound. Both of them suffer unjustly, they willingly suffer and they suffer because they love man. [...] The freedom of the soul and the moral magnitude of man is revealed in the rock and the cross. Prometheus Bound is the link that joins pagan *Hellenism* with the Greek Christian. The Geist and the moral freedom defeats the body and its pains, liberates man – it is the same idea which is presented in Dionissios Solomos' *Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι (Free Besieged)* [...]. I want to prove and to stress that the idea of Prometheus is Greek, and it is presented continually in Greek creations, but it is also a generally human idea that elevates all that are or want to be human. [Ἐγὼ [...] βρίσκω καὶ σημαντικὲς ὁμοιότητες μεταξύ τῶν προσώπων τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τοῦ Προμηθέα Δεσμώτη. Καὶ οἱ δυὸ ἀδίκως πάσχουν, ἐκουσίως πάσχουν καὶ πάσχουν γιὰ τὴ φιlanθρωπία τους. [...] Ἡ ἐλευθερία τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τὸ ἠθικὸ μέγεθος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φανερώνεται στὸ βράχο καὶ στὸ σταυρό. Ὁ Προμηθέας Δεσμώτης εἶναι κρῖκος ποὺ συνδέει τὸν εἰδωλολατρικὸν Ἑλληνισμὸ μὲ τὸν Χριστιανὸν Ἕλληνα. Τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ἠθικὴ ἐλευθερία νικά τὸ σῶμα καὶ τοὺς πόνους του, ἀπελευθερώνει τὸν ἀνθρώπο – ἡ ἴδια ἰδέα ἢ ὁποία παρουσιάζεται στὸν Σολωμοῦ τοὺς Ἐλευθεροὺς πολιορκημένους [...]. Θέλω νὰ ἀποδείξω καὶ νὰ τονίσω, πῶς ἡ ἰδέα τοῦ Προμηθέα εἶναι ἐλληνικὴ, ἢ ὁποία παρουσιάζεται ὀλοένα στὰ ἐλληνικὰ δημιουργήματα, ἀλλὰ εἶναι καὶ συγχρόνως γενικὰ ἀνθρώπινη ἰδέα, ποὺ μᾶς ἐξυψώνει ὄλους ποὺ εἴμαστε ἢ θέλουμε νὰ εἴμαστε ἀνθρώποι.] Τσαμὸ «Τὸ ζωντάνεμμα τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν παραδόσεων: Ἡ παράστασις τοῦ Προμηθέως Δεσμώτου: Τὸ θαῦμα τῶν Δελφῶν» ("The Revival of Greek Traditions: The Performance of *Prometheus Bound*: The Miracle of Delphi"), *Πρωία*, 12-5-1927. Another text, however, is even more revealing. It consists of a letter of congratulation on the success of the Delphi Festivals, signed by twenty-two Greek intellectuals and reporters. "When Mr. Sikelianós and Mrs. Eva Sikelianού decided to present Aeschylus' tragedy in the extremely inspiring place of Delphi, with archaic and contemporary means, uniting the myth of Prometheus and the Christian tradition in a unifying symbol, in the eternal image of superior man who fights and is crushed underneath his ideal, the success of this monumental effort was almost accomplished" [Ὅταν ὁ κ. Σικελιανὸς καὶ ἡ κυρία Εὔα Σικελιανοῦ ἀπεφάσιζαν νὰ παρουσιάσουν, στὸ ἄκρως ὑποβλητικὸ περιβάλλον τῶν Δελφῶν, μὲ μέσα ἀρχαϊκὰ μαζὶ καὶ σύγχρονα, τὴν τραγωδίαν τοῦ Αἰσχύλου, ἐνώνοντας μάλιστα τὸ μῦθον τοῦ Προμηθέως καὶ τὴ Χριστιανικὴ παράδοσιν σὲ κάποιο ἐνιαῖο σύμβολον, στὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ὑπερτέρου ἀνθρώπου ποὺ ἀγωνίζεται καὶ συντριβεται κάτω ἀπὸ τὸ ἰδανικόν του, ἢ ἐπιτυχίαν τῆς μνημειώδους αὐτῆς προσπάθειας εἶχε σχεδὸν συντελεσθεῖ.], *Ἡώς*, p. 145.

Prometheus with Christ”.⁶³ “Prometheus ascended the rock bend, defeated, and with his courage lost in front of the pain that awaited him, in a Christian style.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Δὲν παρουσιάστηκε γυμνὸς ἀλλὰ ντυμένος μ’ ἓνα μακρὸν καφὲ φόρεμα ἐπίσης καὶ ἡ μάσκα του, ἢ πολὺ ἦπια καὶ παθητικὴ, καὶ γενικὰ δὴ ἡ διδασκαλία τοῦ παιξίματός του, ἔτειναν νὰ δεῖξουν τὴ συγγένεια τοῦ Προμηθεῖα μὲ τὸν Χριστό. Θρύλος, Ἄλκης, «Ὁ Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης στοὺς Δελφοὺς» (“Prometheus Bound in Delphi”), in: *Το Ἑλληνικὸ Θέατρο (The Greek Theatre)*, vol. I, p. 49.

⁶⁴ Ὁ Προμηθεὺς ἀνέβηκε στὸ βράχο σκυμμένος, νικημένος, δειλιασμένος ἀπὸ τὸν πόνο ποὺ τὸν περιέμενε, χριστιανικὰ. Θρύλος, Ἄλκης, «Ὁ Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης στοὺς Δελφοὺς» (“Prometheus Bound in Delphi”), in: *Το Ἑλληνικὸ Θέατρο (The Greek Theatre)*, vol. I, p. 50. The correlation of the personae of Prometheus and Christ was also depicted by critics in the 1930 repetition of the production. In that case Bourlos was not wearing a mask. Dionýssios Devaris, for example, wrote in *Πατρίς*, “Prometheus with his glistening tunic, his long blond hair and his beard without a mask looked like the Nazarene. The column upon which he was tied, with his hands stretched at the sides, brought immediately in mind the cross. He was a Nazarene, but a Greek Nazarene”. [Ὁ Προμηθεὺς μὲ τὸν χρυσιζοντα χιτῶνα του, τὴν μακρὰν ξανθὴν κόμην του καὶ τὰ γένεια, χωρὶς προσωπεῖον ὠμοίαζε πρὸς τὸν Ναζωραῖον. Ἡ στήλη ἐπὶ τῆς ὁποίας ἐκαθελώθη μὲ τὰ χέρια ἀπλωτά, ἐνθύμιζεν ἀμέσως τὸν σταυρόν. Ἦταν ἓνας Ναζωραῖος, ἀλλ’ ἓνας Ἑλληὴν Ναζωραῖος.] Devaris, Dionissios, *Πατρίς*, 3 May 1930. (Quotation taken from Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το ἀρχαῖο ἑλληνικὸ θέατρο στὴ νέα ἑλληνικὴ σκηνή: 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage: 1817-1932)*, p. 407.) Alkis Thrilos also noted “Prometheus” “resemblance” to Christ. She wrote, “Prometheus, although this year fortunately was not nailed but chained, bore with his pale figure and very submissive attitude a striking resemblance with Christ”. [Ὁ Προμηθεὺς, ἄν καὶ ἐφέτος δὲν σταυρώθηκε ἀλλὰ μόνον ἀλυσσοδέθηκε, παρουσίασε πάλι μὲ τὴ χλωμὴ μορφὴ του καὶ τὴν πολὺ ὑποταγμένη του στάση καταπληχτικὴ ὁμοιότητα μὲ τὸ Χριστό.] Θρύλος, Ἄλκης, «Οἱ Δελφικὲς Παραστάσεις καὶ οἱ Ἰδέες τῆς Μητέρας Γῆς», (“The Delphic Performances and the ‘Mother Ideas’ of Mother Earth”), in: *Το Ἑλληνικὸ Θέατρο (The Greek Theatre)*, vol. I, p. 304. It has to be noted, however, that in comparison to the chorus the Sikelianoi’s work with the production’s actors was not as thorough and systematic. From the reviews and articles about the performance it does not become clear who was responsible for directing the actors. The direction of the play is attributed to Eva Palmer-Sikelianou. She was responsible however, only for the chorus. Panos Kalogerikos, who is mentioned as assistant director in the cast, might have been responsible for the training of the actors. From Bourlos’, who acted Prometheus, however, it does not seem that Kalogerikos had actually directed the actors in the way we understand direction today. *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα* also gives the information that Kalogerikos had undertaken the direction of *Prometheus* shortly before the performance and that it was not possible for him to surpass the great difficulties that he had met. «Σημειώσεις καὶ σκίτσα ἀπὸ τὰς Δελφικὰς Ἑορτὰς» (“Notes and Sketches from the Delphi Celebrations”), *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα*, 15-5-1927. One way or another the preparation of the production was heavily based on the training of the chorus. In contrast, the attention paid to the training of the actors was minimal. Indicative of this was the fact that Bourlos who played the part of Prometheus was entrusted with the part a few days before the performance. See Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το ἀρχαῖο ἑλληνικὸ θέατρο στὴ νέα ἑλληνικὴ σκηνή: 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage: 1817-1932)*, p.p. 350-1. Within this framework the difference in the training of the chorus and the actors must have been striking and it would have led to Rotas’ impression of the lack of a “unified plan”. Ρώτας, Βασίλης, «Μετὰ τὴν παραζάλη το ἀντίκρουσμα τῆς πραγματικότητας» (“Facing Reality after the Dazzle”), in: *Θέατρο καὶ γλώσσα (1925-1977) (Theatre and Language: 1925-1977)*.



Photo 19 The set of the 1927 *Prometheus Bound* production with Prometheus tied on the artificial rock

Besides the signs in the acting of the part of Prometheus, it is my contention that the 'Greekness' of the image of Christ that the depiction of Prometheus denoted has to be attributed also to the set of the performance. The set comprised an artificial rock, which was constructed by Fóskolos from papier-maché and painted by Germenis. As can be judged from photographs and the film the style of the rock was based on Byzantine painting, an essential aesthetic element of which is the two-dimensional rendering of three-dimensional sculpture (see photo 19). In that sense it adhered to Christ's Golgotha. Thus the image of Prometheus tied on the rock with his hands open at the side directly referred to Byzantine icons depicting Christ on Golgotha. The only thing missing was the cross.

In addition to the correlation of the personae of Prometheus and Christ the use of masks also contributed to the creation of the ritualistic atmosphere of the performance. The masks were essential to the Sikelianoí's concept of performance because in their unchangeable expression they erased the particular and the individual. (See photos 20, 21) Thus they connoted the Universal 'truth' of the myth. Within this framework the religiousness of tragedy was rendered through the ritualistic atmosphere created by the style of the tragic chorus, the correlation of the personae of Prometheus and Christ and the use of masks. The correlation of the personae of Prometheus and Christ rendered the ritualistic atmosphere of the performance in a way that it would be culturally and emotionally closer to Modern Greeks. The juxtaposition of this correlation to the archaic style of the tragic chorus and the use of masks, also adhering to antiquity, seems that materialised on stage the Sikelianoí's idea of the unity of Greek culture. Ancient Greek, Byzantine and more recent Greek cultural references were blended together in



Photo 20 Kratos, Via, Hephaestus and Prometheus, the 1927 production of Prometheus Bound



Photo 21 Io, the 1927 production of Prometheus Bound

one aesthetic organic whole. Thus by the end one has the feeling that the ritual the audience was asked by the Sikelianoί to participate in emotionally during the performance was none other than the ritual of initiation in the ‘Mystery’ of *hellenikótita* as they conceived it.

I cannot close this discussion on the aesthetic style of *Prometheus Bound* without a reference to the costumes of the production, which were designed and woven in the loom by Eva Palmer-Sikelianού. Their style was based on the Ancient Greek style of dressing. Eva Palmer - Sikelianού’s intention was to depict in each costume the impression of the character that would wear it, as she understood him/her. The costumes of Kratos, Bia, Hephaestus, and Oceanus had interwoven motives that created the impression of richness, which in Eva Palmer-Sikelianού’s opinion, expressed their non-human origin which placed them beyond human pain. In contrast the costumes of Io and Prometheus were plainer expressing Eva Palmer-Sikelianού’s understanding of them as being “tortured and exposed to the pain of the mortals”.⁶⁵ The highlight, however, of the costumes was those of the chorus of Oceanids. These were woven in heavy silk, in different tones of blue depicting different colors of the sea, “the green of the shallow waters, the dark blue [of the sea] of the archipelago, the violet tones that the sea takes during the dusk, the milky color that it takes when it sleeps in the morning”.⁶⁶ Each

⁶⁵ Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός (Upward Panic)*, p. p. 126 and 163-9.

⁶⁶ Αιγινήτης, Νίκος, «Δελφικές Έορτές» (“Delphi Festivals”), *Ηώς*, p. 210. This is also reminiscent of Duncan’s description of dance where she frequently used images of the sea and of its different colors and waves. If Eva Palmer-Sikelianού was influenced by Duncan at this point, she incorporated these images in her own perception of the chorus, in the principle of the synthesis of elements. Within this framework the different images of the sea came out of the combination of costume and movement, thus not from a single element but from the synthesis itself of the aesthetic elements.

costume was decorated with sea motives- shells, fishes, seagulls- and took sixty days to complete.⁶⁷ Concerning the costumes of the Oceanids, Eva Palmer-Sikelianou took special care to finish them quite early so that they could be used during rehearsals. Thus the costume aesthetically became part of the dance.⁶⁸

It is my contention that within this framework the Sikelianou's *Prometheus Bound* moved within the modern concept and terms of performance. The performance was based on their interpretation of the play and the translation of this interpretation into theatre signs. In this sense the performance was itself an artistic text in Lotman's definition. All of its elements bore meaning.⁶⁹ Furthermore the way the particular features of the genre itself were rendered in the performance presupposed their understanding in contemporary terms. The issues of the rendering of the religiousness of the play and of the tragic chorus were both based on modern notions of the production and transmission of meaning in performance and modern dance. Thus the performance of *Prometheus Bound* could claim and acquire a symbolic capital *per se* not as a mere staging of the ancient play, but as the particular artistic product of text-in-performance.

The production of these plays and even more so the whole organisation of the Delphi Festivals were a huge and financially expensive enterprise. In that period Delphi, apart from the ancient site, was nothing but a small village, named at that time Kastrí, situated

⁶⁷ Ηλιάδη, Κάκια, «Ἡ Εὔα μοῦ ἀνοιξε τὴν πόρτα πρὸς τὸ φῶς» (“Eva Opened for me the Door to Light”), *Ἡώς*, p.p. 371-8

⁶⁸ Πράτσικα, Κούλα, «Ἀναμνήσεις ἀπὸ τὶς πρῶτες Δελφικὲς Ἑορτὲς τοῦ 1927» (“Memories from the First Delphi Festival in 1927”), *Ἡώς*, p. 126.

on a quite secluded mountain. Transport was extremely difficult since roads were dangerous, unsealed and full of holes. The mail and the telephone were irregular. Water was hard to find. For the few days that the Festivals lasted, however, the area of Delphi was transformed. The roads were widened and paved, daily postal deliveries to Delphi were arranged, the telephone line was open all day and actually the telephone company provided Delphi with a second line for the days of the Festivals in order to satisfy the needs of the Festival guests. Traffic-policemen and scouts regulated the traffic since the Festival guests came from Piraeus to Itea by boat and ascended to Delphi each day by car.

Eva Palmer-Sikelianou covered the total cost of the first Delphi Festival. This, however, proved to be greater than expected and left her financially bankrupt to the point that she did not have the means to organise a second Festival.⁷⁰ The success of the First Festival, however, impelled two years later Antonis Benakis and a group of rich Greek-Egyptians to sponsor the Second Festival. They also volunteered to help in the organisation.⁷¹

A crucial parameter that increased the importance of the Delphi Festivals was that they were organised as International Festivals. European intellectuals and critics were invited to attend the events together with Greek intellectuals and critics. The international

⁶⁹ See Fischer-Lichte, Erica, *The Semiotics of Theatre*, p. p. 174-6.

⁷⁰ The tourist agents in Athens were afraid that the Festival was not going to succeed and did not promote the trip to the tourists that were in Greece. Thus the ships rented by Eva Sikelianou remained empty. In the end she sent telegrams inviting everyone, covering the cost of 2.000 more people. The theatre was full, but the total cost of the Festival rose to the sum of \$130.000, \$ 30.000 of which was debt. See Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός*, p. 133

⁷¹ Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού, Εύα, *Ιερός Πανικός*, see chapter 17, «Η δεύτερη Δελφική Γιορτή», p.p. 143-55

dimension has to be attributed to the Sikelianoi's intention to promote the *Delphic Idea* on an international level. One feels, however, that what was actually promoted was the Sikelianoi's concept of *hellenikótita*. Visitors, Greeks and foreign, were invited to attend a series of events each of which seems to have been inspired by a different period of what was considered to be 'Greek' culture. The athletic games and the *Septíria*, a dance representation of Apollo's duel with Python, referred to Ancient Greece.⁷² The Byzantine concert referred to the Byzantine period. The exhibition of Greek popular handicraft referred to Modern Greek popular culture. And finally the *Prometheus Bound* performance was the event that seemed to crown them all since its aesthetic style drew on all phases of what was considered to be 'Greek' culture. Within this context the Sikelianoi's Delphi Festivals and especially the *Prometheus Bound* production may be read in essence as an attempt to legitimise their notion of *hellenikótita*, that is the manifestation of the Greek *Geist* in all the phases of 'Greek' culture. Moreover the international dimension of the enterprise denotes the Sikelianoi's intention to legitimise this notion of *hellenikótita* not only in regard to Greece but also especially in regard to Europe. This is where the cultural importance of the enterprise lies, because this legitimisation denoted also an unmistakable intention to propose a Greek *Héllenism* versus European *Héllenism*. The interest of Antonis Benakis and the group of rich Egyptians to sponsor the second Festival is indicative of the fact that the cultural importance of the Delphi Festivals was actually perceived within the framework of the legitimisation of a Greek *Héllenism* that could face European *Héllenism* as an equal.

⁷² Vasos Kanellos and Tanagra Kanellou danced the *Septíria*. Both of them have been famous not only in Greece but also abroad, especially in America, for devising a style of dance that referred to Ancient Greek dance. In fact in the programme of the First Festival Vasos Kanellos is mentioned as a famous dancer of Ancient Greek dances. Kanellos at the beginning of his career had studied with Isadora Duncan.

Within that context the Sikelianoí were the first to express in a dynamic and explicit way not only inside, but also outside Greece, the notion of *hellenikótita* within the aesthetic framework proposed by the capitalist class, presaging thus the literary generation of the 1930s. At the same time, in regard to tragedy, they were the first ones to approach, interpret and creatively use a cultural product of Ancient Greek civilisation in a way that could be recognised as ‘purely Greek’. Despite the 1919 production of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannous*, directed by Fotos Politis, the Sikelianoí were the first ones to introduce performances of tragedy in the discourse on art and *hellenikótita*, which was prominent in literature from the literary generation of the 1880s. They were the first to explicitly approach tragedy through Modern Greek culture and to propose an aesthetic style that drew, on the one hand, on the European tradition of performance and, on the other, on what was considered to be a ‘Greek’ cultural tradition within the aesthetic ideology of the capitalist class. In that sense they actively affected the way the symbolic capital of tragedy was conceived until then. Building on the symbolic capital that tragedy already possessed as an Ancient Greek cultural product, they put forward the potentiality of the symbolic capital that performances of tragedy could acquire within the constitution of a Modern Greek national culture by being promoted as ‘highbrow’ ‘Greek’ theatre.⁷³ In that sense the Sikelianoí’s production of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* opened the way for the constitution of a ‘sub-field of restricted production’ in Greek theatre.

After that he seems to have devised a style of dance that used Duncan’s style with postures and movements that clearly referred to Ancient Greek motifs.

⁷³ In theory the use of the symbolic capital of tragedy in contemporary performances had been already discussed. The Sikelianoí’s productions showed the way to do it.

Finally, in regard to the subsequent performances of tragedy, the Sikelianoí's proposition of an aesthetic style that presupposed the cultural appropriation of Ancient Greece and drew on all phases of 'Greek' culture created a 'Greek' aesthetic reference of performance. I will argue in the following chapter that this notion of a 'Greek' aesthetic reference of performance of tragedy explains the difference between Politis' 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannous* and his subsequent productions of tragedy, since the Sikelianoí's aesthetic approach surpassed the lack of an existing 'Greek' theatrical tradition by proposing as a tradition to draw from the entirety of 'Greek' culture. The use of this tradition in the creation of the aesthetic style of performances of tragedy could legitimise the recognition of these performances as 'Greek' theatre. Thus they opened the discourse on the 'Greek style' of performing tragedy. The next phase in this discourse focused on a different concept of the rendering of the chorus that led to a different aesthetic style. This is the work of Fotos Politis.

Chapter IV

Fotos Politis: Aeschylus' "Persae", the National Theatre, 1934

Each word has a solid value and demands to be brought out clearly. The [demotic] poem itself urges you, even against your will, to a solemn expression. Although you feel what is real, you see it raised in an atmosphere of eternal immovable truth.

But this is also the rhythm of ancient tragedy. [...] Within the finite, the eternal duration, the generally human, the eternal "present". Each of her words [Antigone's] has its source in the most sacred human sanctuaries, and it is like the inextinguishable, holy light.¹

The Sikelianoí's productions of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *Suppliants* proposed, as I argued in the previous chapter, an aesthetic style of performances of tragedy that could be recognised as 'purely Greek'. Their approach was based on and promoted the capitalist ideological axiom of the unity of 'Greek' culture through the ages, which was prevalent during the period that I discuss. The aesthetic style of these performances drew on the entirety of what was regarded as 'Greek' culture. Within that framework the 1927 *Prometheus Bound* production and the 1930 *Suppliants* production legitimised the use of the entirety of 'Greek' culture as a 'Greek' theatrical tradition to draw from in the

¹ Κάθε λέξη του έχει άτόφιαν άξία, κι άπαιτεί νά προβληθεί φωτεινή. Τό ίδιο τό ποίημα σάς ώθει, κι άθελά σας άκόμα, σέ μιάν έκφραση έπίσημη. Ένώ νιώθετε τό πραγματικό, τό βλέπετε όμως ύψωμένο σέ άτμόσφαιρα αιώνιας, άσάλευτης άλήθειας. Άλλ' αυτός είναι κι ό ρυθμός της άρχαίας τραγωδίας. [...] Μέσα στό πεπερασμένο, ή αιώνια διάρκεια, τό γενικώς άνθρώπινο, τό αιώνιο "παρόν". Κάθε της λέξη έχει τήν πηγή της στά πιό ιερά άνθρώπινα άδυστα, κι είναι σάν άσβυστο, άγιο φώς. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Η Άντιγόνη εις τό θέατρον του Ήρωδου», ("Antigone in the Herod Atticus Theatre"), in: Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. II, p.p. 10-11 (originally published in *Έλεύθερον Βήμα*, 11-6-1928).

creation of ‘Greek’ aesthetic styles of performances of tragedy thus inaugurating the discourse on ancient tragedy and *hellenikótita*.

It was, however, the work of Fotos Politis in his capacity as a critic and a theatre director who set, as I will explain, the presupposed conditions for both the inauguration of these issues and the structuring of the ‘sub-field of Greek theatrical restricted production’ in Bourdieu’s terms. In their turn the Sikelianoí’s productions, forced Politis to particularise his own approach to tragedy, refine his aesthetic style of performances of tragedy and thus dynamically propose his own views on tragedy and *hellenikótita*. In this sense, it is my contention that on the whole it was the creative contribution and oppositional interdependence of the work of both the Sikelianoí and Politis that pushed forward the promotion of the performances of tragedy as the area where a ‘sub-field of restricted theatrical production’ in Bourdieu’s terms could be structured in Greece.

Until the Sikelianoí’s 1927 production of *Prometheus Bound* Politis’s work both as a critic and as a theatre director had established two fundamental notions in regard to Greek theatre, the notion of the quest for “acting in its Greek form” and the notion of performance as an art form *per se*. The establishment of these notions was crucial not only because it gave rise to these issues, but mainly because it provided a set of criteria by which “acting in its Greek form” and ‘performance’ could be critically assessed and recognised. In regard to acting, since 1915 Politis in his capacity as a critic had repeatedly explained that a ‘Greek’ style of acting should draw on the musicality of the modern

Greek language and the specific Greek way of gestural expression.² In that sense he transferred the principles of the literary discourse on *hellenikótita* and ‘Greek’ art in theatre pressing for the quest of a style of acting that could be characterised as ‘Greek’. In terms of performance, his 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* established, as I have argued in the second chapter, the concept of performance as a particular form of art in which all its elements were aesthetically combined in a unified whole.³ It is my contention that both these notions were fundamental in providing the conditions for the structuring of a ‘sub-field of restricted production’ in Bourdieu’s terms and had prepared the ground for the recognition of the Sikelianoi productions as ‘purely Greek’ works of art.

Fotos Politis’ whole presence played a catalytic role in the structuring of the ‘sub-field of theatrical production’ in Greece. He continually pressed for the creation of ‘highbrow’ ‘Greek’ theatre but even more so he insisted on establishing a set of criteria by which theatrical production in Greece could be critically assessed. This set of criteria was conceived within the framework of his views on ‘highbrow’ theatre and they contributed immensely in providing a framework of conditions for the creation of a ‘restricted production’ in Bourdieu’s terms. Despite the extremely high standard of work these criteria demanded, their conception, as Dimaras observes, “was useful [...] for a society that never was distinguished by the severity of its critical criteria”.⁴

² See Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τό θέατρον εις τήν Ἑλλάδα Γ’», (“Theatre in Greece III”) and «Οἱ σημερινοί μας ἠθοποιοί» (“Our Contemporary Actors”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p.p. 26- 31 (originally published in *Νέα Ἑλλάς*, 15-2-1915), and p.p. 55-7 (originally published in *Νέα Ἑλλάς*, 4-8-1916) respectively.

Politis' work abruptly ceased due to his death in 1934, when he was 44 years old. It influenced, however, in many ways the work of the subsequent generations of directors in the 'sub-field', even more than they cared to admit. His influence stemmed from the fact that he combined an extremely thorough and wide knowledge of European literature and art, an acute theoretical mind and a vivid artistic imagination. These characteristics interacted with his *habitus* which impelled him against all odds to press with all his might for the creation of an artistic production in Greek theatre of extremely high standards. The dynamic interaction of these elements of his personality explains, in my opinion, the catalytic importance of his presence in the structuring of the 'sub-field of theatrical production' in Greece.

Politis was not only the first theatre director in Greek theatre, he was also in a sense the first theatre theoretician in Greece. The articles he wrote and published frequently in national newspapers, like *Πρωία (Proia)* and *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα (Eléftheron Vima)*, from 1914 to 1934 constitute the fragmented body of an otherwise very round and solid theory on theatre, art and aesthetics, which unfortunately has not been as yet critically assessed. This theory consists of different ideas and concepts that he drew from the entirety of European culture and especially German theatre from the late eighteenth century to the 1930s and a very thorough knowledge of Greek literature and art expressed many times in a very opinionated manner. These different ideas and concepts were linked, and combined with his own personal views to provide a framework within which, on the one hand, he negotiated and criticised the work of others, and, on the other, he produced his

³ See Chapter II, p.p. 76-7.

⁴ Dimaras, C.Th., *Modern Greek Literature*, p. 457.

own work. In fact, his work as a theatre director, especially in tragedy, was integrally linked with his theoretical approach in theatre. Thus it is impossible to elaborate on his productions of tragedy without elaborating first on his theoretical views.

Politis had a very concrete approach to theatre which touched on all issues, theatre aesthetics, dramaturgy, tragedy, acting, directing, performance, audience, theatrical tradition, theatre management, and the function of state theatres. His approach to all these issues created a complex of interdependent and interacting ideas that, although in the course of time might seem to shift or even alter at times, nevertheless stand on a very firm base, the necessity he felt for the production of 'highbrow' theatre in Greece. To discuss the entirety of his theory in theatre is beyond the scope of this thesis. I will elaborate on his ideas that are relevant to the issue of tragedy in the full knowledge that these are part of a much wider complex of ideas and thus in this elaboration might appear to be less integral than they really are. As yet there is no critical analysis of Politis' work, so what I present below is my attempt at the first critical synthesis of Politis' ideas on art and tragedy.

Politis discussed theatre in Greece exclusively in relation to 'highbrow' theatre. It is precisely this constant reference to the want of 'Greek' 'highbrow' theatre and the terms and conditions that would allow a piece of theatre to be characterised as 'highbrow' that provided a set of criteria to assess works of art. There are two notions that are central in his perception of 'highbrow' theatre. The first one consists of Politis' insistence on 'objective art' as opposed to 'subjective art'. His ideas on this issue were shaped around

Goethe's notion of 'objective art'.⁵ In his article «Υποκειμενική Ποίησης» ("Subjective Art") Politis quoted Goethe in distinguishing these two forms of art and noted that "if the poet merely expresses his personal feelings he cannot be called a poet. When, however, he succeeds in making the world his own and expressing it then he is a poet."⁶ Based on Goethe's distinction and following also Goethe's principles on art, Politis insisted on "ideal models" of art and "ideal models" of poets, like Aeschylus, claiming that the "real poet [...] raises himself in the sphere of the eternal ideal".⁷ The "need for poetry" was, for Politis, synonymous with the "need to express higher desires".⁸ Thus in his thought

⁵ On Goethe see Lamport, F. J., *German Classical Drama*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; Fischer-Lichte, Erika, *History of European Drama and Theatre*, Riley, Jo (trans.), London: Routledge, 2002; Nagler, A. M., *A Source Book in Theatrical History: Sources of Theatrical History*, New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1959 (first edition); Carlson, Marvin, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993 (expanded edition); Πατσαλίδης, Σάββας, *(Εν)τάσεις και (Δια)στάσεις: Η ελληνική τραγωδία και η θεωρία του 20ου αιώνα (Tensions and Dimensions: Greek Tragedy and Twentieth-century Theory)*, Athens: Τυποθήτω, 1997.

⁶ Έφ'όσον έκφράζει άπλώς τά όλίγα ύποκειμενικά συναισθήματά του, δέν ήμπορεϊ άκόμη νά κληθεϊ τοιοϋτος. Μόλις όμως κατορθώσει νά κάμει ιδιόν του τόν κόσμον και νά τόν έκφράσει, εϊναι τότε ποιητής. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Υποκειμενική ποίησης» ("Subjective Poetry"), in: Νίκος Πολίτης, Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. III, Athens: Ίκαρος, p. 94 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 16-5-1922). Politis' opposition to subjective poetry explained also his opposition to romanticism, at least in the way romanticism was expressed in Greek literature towards the end of the nineteenth century. See Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου (Modernism and 'Tradition' in Greek Art during the Interwar Period)*, p. 72.

⁷ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ό Γκαίτε και κάποιοι άλλοι» ("Goethe and Some Others"), in: Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. III, p.p. 96-99 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 21-5-1922). «Υποκειμενική ποίησης» ("Subjective Poetry"), «Ό Γκαίτε και κάποιοι άλλοι» ("Goethe and some others"), and, «Οί χάρτινοι και οί ζωντανοί» ("The Paper-made and the Alive") (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 30-5-1922), all in: Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. III, p.p. 93-6, 96-9 and 100-3 respectively, consist of Politis' part in a dialogue with Kostas Varnalis on art. Politis' and Varnalis' approaches represent two of the main positions on this issue of the literary generation of the 1920s. See Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου (Modernism and 'Tradition' in Greek Art during the Interwar Period)*, p. 72. ... άληθινός ποιητής εϊναι άκριβώς έκείνος, ό όποιος [...] ύψώνεται προς τάς σφαίρας του άιωνίου ιδεώδους. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τά θέατρα Β'» ("The Theatres, II"), in: Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. I, p. 197 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 26-6-1925).

⁸ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Υποκειμενική ποίησης» ("Subjective Poetry"), in: Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. III, p. 95 (Politis' underlining).

poetry, and that included theatre, ought to express the universal, the eternal human values and truths hidden behind the everyday reality.

The second central notion in Politis' perception of 'highbrow' theatre concerns the concept of "aesthetic truth". The aesthetic concept of the integral unity of the work of art, for him, was one of the principal criteria in assessing a work of art. Moreover it is precisely the concept of aesthetic truth that, above everything else, defined his understanding of performance as an art form *per se* and his style as a theatre director. Politis perceived performance as a stage image, all the elements of which, including the dramatic text, as I will maintain later, were aesthetically combined into a unified whole. In that sense it is not surprising that he was the first director in Greece who opposed the concept of performance that had existed as an amalgam of aesthetic elements. With his 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* he established the recognition of the performance as an art form *per se*.

It has to be noted that Politis seems to have extended the function of the concept of the 'aesthetic truth' of a work of art to define not only the creation of an artistic product but also the way the audience should receive it. Studying photographs from the entirety of his productions in tragedy, it becomes apparent that Politis created an imaginary boundary between the stage and the audience so as to allow the spectators to perceive the performance in an aesthetic way. In his National Theatre productions the edge of the stage signified the limit of the aesthetic world of the performance consisting, in my opinion, of an imaginary boundary between the stage and the audience. This intended separation of the two worlds can be seen even more clearly in his first production of

tragedy, the 1919 *Oedipus Tyrannus*. In this performance the imaginary boundary was physically manifested by a low 'wall' which separated the 'orchestra' from the audience. (See photo 22) Within this context it is my contention that performance consisted for Politis of an entirely aesthetic event in both its creation and its reception. In fact, the perception of performance as an aesthetic event comprised, in my opinion, one of the main principles that set Politis against the creation of a ritualistic atmosphere in his performances of tragedy. And thus it led him to differentiate his approach from the approaches of both Max Reinhardt, from whom, as I will explain, Politis drew the concept of performance as an art form, and the Sikeliarioí. The performance of tragedy, for him, should be received as an aesthetic event that had no immediate reference to the subjective experience that the audience's personal involvement in a ritualistic atmosphere might adhere to. Politis here seems to follow once again Goethe, who claimed that the reconciliation of opposing elements that constituted the harmony of the play and brought about catharsis should occur on stage and not within the audience.⁹ Probably the finest example of the perception of the performance strictly as an aesthetic experience was his 1934 National Theatre production of Aeschylus' *Persae*.¹⁰

In *Persae* Politis based the entire aesthetic style of the play on an aesthetic form that created the impression of Ancient Persian bas-relief. (See photo 23) This aesthetic impression was achieved by the use of a vertical set which emphasised the idea of two-

⁹ See Carlson, Marvin, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*, p. 182.

¹⁰ The creative team in the production of *Persae* was: Ioannis Gryparis: translator; Antiohos Evaggelatos: composition of the music. The cast included: K. Paxinouí: Atossa; Al. Minotís: Messenger; N. Rozan: The ghost of Darius; G. Glinós: Xerxes; I. Avlonitis: first chorus leader; T. Karoussos: second chorus leader; A. Kotsopoulos; third chorus leader. The names of Politis (director) and Klonis (set designer) are not written in the programme, nor the names of the members of the chorus. Source: the programme of the production.

dimensionality. Within this vertical set, three horizontal planes were developed. The lowest and the highest of these planes consisted of the acting spaces of the chorus. The middle one was the acting space of the protagonists and of the chorus leaders. The impression of bas-relief was further emphasised by the costumes, beards and wigs of both the actors and the chorus, which referred aesthetically to Ancient Persian costumes. The highly stylised movement especially of the chorus, which was conceived as an interchange of static archaic postures, created the impression of sculpture contributing thus to the style of bas-relief. Thus all the visual aesthetic elements of the production were conceived to create the impression of bas-relief. The aesthetic style of *Persae* therefore was based on the creation of a stage image, which functioned in a figurative way.

The main aesthetic principles of the 1934 production of *Persae* are reminiscent of Georg Fuchs' ideas on theatre and his 1908 Munich experiment with Goethe's *Faust* with actors playing against a two-dimensional set, as well as the early stages in Meyerhold's career where he experimented with Fuchs' ideas.¹¹ It is interesting to note that although Politis followed Goethe in constructing his theoretical approach to theatre, in terms of his work as a director he drew from the contemporary European theatre and actually from the work of those directors who were considered pioneers during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In that sense Politis' theoretical and practical work brought into

¹¹ As Jelavich observes, "he [Fuchs] contended that the relief-stage would constitute an ideal embodiment of visual principles that were at once archaic and contemporary". Fuchs also argued that the lack of stage depth would lead to the development of an extremely stylised form of acting, which would emphasise "rhythmic and symbolic movements that would stand against a planar backdrop". Jelavich, Peter, *Munich and theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance 1890-1914*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 196.

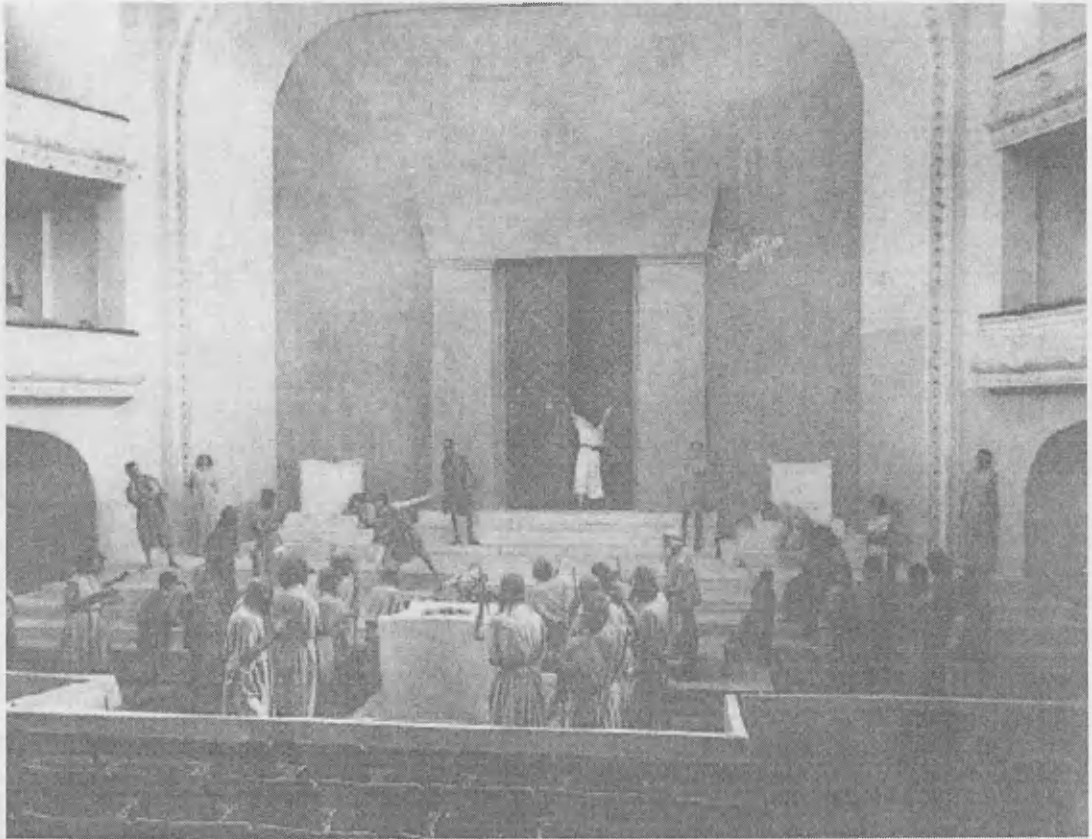


Photo 22 Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus, Olýmpia Theatre 1919

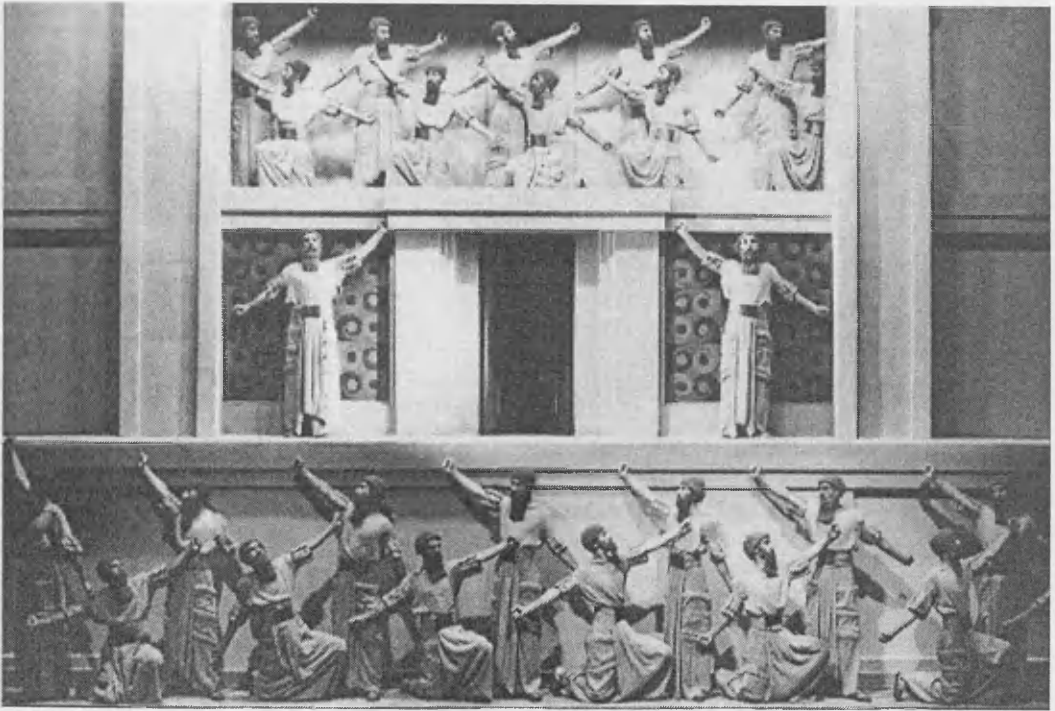


Photo 23 Aeschylus' Persae, the National Theatre 1934

dialogue two different periods of European theatre. Moreover, as I will maintain, he re-negotiated these theatrical periods in contemporary ‘Greek’ cultural terms discussing them within the framework of a Greek “national” theatrical production.

The production of a “national creation” in theatre, that is, a theatrical production that could be characterised as ‘Greek’ was Politis’ major concern. His ideas on this “national creation” are exclusively discussed in relation to ‘highbrow’ theatre; no other form of theatre could be characterised, in his view, as ‘Greek’. The quest for a ‘Greek’ ‘highbrow’ theatrical production should be sought, for him, in the combination of the notion of “national” to the concept of “aesthetic truth”. “[...] The concept of a ‘national’ creation”, he wrote, “is defined by the *aesthetic truth* of the plays which are performed”.¹² The national quality of the aesthetic truth of a work of art lay, according to Politis, in the use and development of aesthetic elements drawn from the ‘Greek’ tradition and language so that a form of theatre would be created which aesthetically could be recognised as ‘Greek’.¹³ The concept of tradition was crucial in his thought, because it satisfied “the tendency of the individual to act and to think as a member of a group, of a community [...], which seeks to form a total social consciousness”.¹⁴ In this sense tradition provided

¹² [Ζωντανό μουσείο είναι ένα επίσημο θέατρο, όπου κατεξοχήν] τήν έννοια τοῦ "έθνικοῦ" δημιουργήματος τήν όρίζει ή αισθητική αλήθεια τών παιζομένων έργων. «Παρεξηγήσεις» (“Misunderstandings”), in: Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. II, p. 77 (originally published in *Πρωία*, 18-3-1930) (Italics in the English translation mine). It is interesting to note that Politis’ definition of a “national creation” here presages Koun’s notion of ‘Greekness’ and theatre.

¹³ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τό θέατρο τοῦ Καραγκιόζη» (“The Theatre of Karagiozis”), in: Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. II, p.p. 183-8 (originally published in *Πρωία*, 7-10-1932).

¹⁴ Στην τάση τοῦ άτομου νά δρά καί νά σκέπτεται σά μέλος ενός συνόλου, μιᾶς κοινότητας [...] [πού] λαχταρά τή διαμόρφωση συνολικής συνειδήσεως. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Θεατρική κρίσις» (“Theatrical Crisis”), in: Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (*Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*), vol. II, p.p. 111-2 (originally published in *Πρωία*, 20-5-1931).

for Politis the necessary conditions for the creation of objective art. ‘National’ ‘highbrow’ theatre as ‘objective art’ should be rooted deep in the national and social life of the people and express “what lies unshaped in their moral life, not conceived yet and undefined as a desire, as a shared feeling, as a beginning of faith, as a ray of truth”.¹⁵

Politis’ views on the production of a “national creation” in Greek theatre were mostly oriented towards drama. He did, however, explicitly discussed the notion of ‘Greekness’ in relation to acting and directing. In terms of acting, as early as 1915 Politis had argued that its ‘Greek’ form should be based on “the thorough aesthetic study of the language” and of the “[gestural] expression or simply the intuitive artistic exploitation of these national features”.¹⁶ This was for Politis the task of the actor. “The truth and aesthetic importance of this task” led to the creation of a particular style of acting, which would be based on the musicality of the Greek language and a Greek rhythm of movements.¹⁷ In this sense it could be characterised as ‘Greek’.

¹⁵ [...] νά συλλαμβάνει καί νά δίνει έκφραση καθάρια σ’ ὅ,τι ἄμορφα κυμαίνεται στήν ἠθική ζωή τοῦ λαοῦ, ἀσύλληπτο ἀκόμη καί ἀκαθόριστο, σάν πόθος, σά συναίσθημα κοινό, σάν ἀρχή πίστεως, σάν ἀκτίνα ἀλήθειας. Πολίτης, Φῶτος, «Ἡ κριτική» (“Criticism”), in: *Φῶτος Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p. 50 (originally published in *Πειθαρχία*, 20-10-1929).

¹⁶ Ἡ βαθυτέρα αἰσθητική μελέτη τῆς μουσικῆς καί τῆς ἐκφράσεως αὐτῆς [μέ κινήματα] ἤ καί ἀπλῶς ἡ διά διαισθήσεως καλλιτεχνική ἐκμετάλλευσις τῶν ἐθνικῶν αὐτῶν ἰδιοτήτων εἶναι ἀκριβῶς μία ἀπό τὰς σπουδαιότερας καλλιτεχνικάς ἐργασίας τοῦ ἠθοποιοῦ, τῆς ὁποίας τό ἀποτέλεσμα ἔχει γενικήν ἀξίαν. Πολίτης, Φῶτος, «Τό θέατρον εἰς τήν Ἑλλάδα, Γ’» (“Theatre in Greece, III”), in: *Φῶτος Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p.30.

¹⁷ Διότι ἡ ἀλήθεια καί ἡ αἰσθητική σημασία τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῆς συντείνουν εἰς τήν δημιουργίαν ἑνός ὀρισμένου στυλ ἀπαγγελίας. Πολίτης, Φῶτος, «Τό θέατρον εἰς τήν Ἑλλάδα, Γ’» (“Theatre in Greece, III”), in: *Φῶτος Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p.30. See also Πολίτης, Φῶτος, «Οἱ σημερινοί μας ἠθοποιοί» (“Our Contemporary Actors”), in: *Φῶτος Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p.p. 55-7.

Along the same lines Politis discussed also the issues of theatre directing and ‘Greekness’. A ‘Greek’ theatre direction, especially of a foreign and/or a classic play involved, for him, on the one hand, the thorough understanding of the play and its writer’s intentions and, on the other, the scenic interpretation of this play in the Greek way of seeing and experiencing the world and life. “Theatre direction recreates the masterpieces within a contemporary, Greek understanding of life.”¹⁸ He believed that once again the element that conveyed most of all the “Greek understanding of life”, was language. Theatre direction, he wrote, “renders even to the finest particles of a language their final significance within the general style [of the performance of a play]”.¹⁹ The ‘Greekness’ of a theatre direction lay in the rendering of the meaning that the poetic language conveyed based on the particular musicality of the Greek language. In that sense a director should understand “the rules and the possibilities of the music of the infallible elocution, the linguistic music”.²⁰ Politis’ principle here became the core of Rondiris’ aesthetic style in tragedy, a point I will discuss in the following chapter.

Politis’ views on theatre direction present on one level a paradox, or rather an inconsistency, in relation to his own work as a theatre director. In theory he insisted that the creative work of the theatre director depended on the intention of the playwright and

¹⁸ [...] ἡ σκηνοθεσία ξαναπλάθει τ’ ἀριστουργήματα μέ μιὰ σύγχρονη, ἐλληνική νόηση τῆς ζωῆς. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τό Ἐθνικόν Θέατρον» (“The National Theatre”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.80 (originally published in *Πειθαρχία*, 30-3-1930).

¹⁹ Ἡ σκηνοθεσία ἡ ἐσωτερική παρέχει καί στά λεπτότερα μόρια μιᾶς γλώσσης τήν ὀριστική σημασία τους μέσα στό γενικό ὕφος. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τό Ἐθνικόν Θέατρον» (“The National Theatre”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.80.

²⁰ [...] ἡ μουσική τῆς ἀλάνθαστης προφορᾶς, ἡ γλωσσική μουσική, ἔχει κανόνες καί δυνατότητες, πού κανεῖς ξένος δέν μπορεῖ νά τίς συλλάβει. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τό Ἐθνικόν Θέατρον» (“The

the dramatic text. The predominance of the aesthetic value of drama in theatre is prominent in the entirety of his theoretical approach. A director's main aim, he argued, should be "to penetrate the *Geist* of the playwright [...] to see with him [the poet] the deeper dramatic or comic quality of the several episodes and of the life of the dramatic characters".²¹ Within this framework his theoretical approach seems to be quite anchored still to the dominance of the poetic language over the entire aesthetic style of a performance. Hence language bears and conveys the concept of theatre and theatricality itself. He wrote, "within our contemporary social environment the director, taking first of all into consideration the fact that POETIC LANGUAGE, the language of the dramatic person, creates the concept of theatre, will render a scenic expression to the great masterpieces of the centuries- that are 'theatrical'- and thus he will cast in our hearts the seed of poetry".²² These views on theatre, which also characterised Politis' approach to tragedy, a point I will elaborate on later, has led scholars like Sahinis to argue for the

National Theatre"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.80.

²¹ "Έτσι, ό σκηνοθέτης [...] κύριο σκοπό του πρέπει νά έχει τήν διείσδυσιν εις τό πνεύμα του δραματικού ποιητού. [...] Γ' αυτό πρώτο καί κύριο του σκηνοθέτου έφόδιο πρέπει νά είναι τό πνεύμα τό κριτικό. [...] γιατί μόνο ή κρίσις θά του άνοιξει τούς κόσμους του ποιητού καί θά τον βοηθήσει νά δει μαζί του τή βαθύτερη δραματικότητα ή κωμικότητα των διαφόρων έπεισοδίων καί τή ζωή των χαρακτήρων των δραματικών. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Θεατρικότης», ("Theatricality"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p.278-9 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 16-7-1927) (Politis' underlining).

²² *Μές στό σημερινό κοινωνικό μας πλαίσιο, ό σκηνοθέτης, έχοντας πρωτίστως ύπ' όψιν, πώς Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ Ο ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΟΣ, ό λόγος του δραματικού προσώπου, δημιουργεί τήν έννοια του θεάτρου, θά δώσει σκηνική έκφραση στά μεγάλα δραματικά άριστουργήματα των αιώνων- πού είναι όλα τους "θεατρικά" - κι έτσι θά ρίξει μέσα στις καρδιές τό σπόρο τής ποιήσεως*. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Θεατρικότης» ("Theatricality"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p.278. See also Πολίτης Φώτος, «Σκηνοθεσία» ("Theatre Direction"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p. 272-5 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 12-7-1927).

predominance of the dramatic text over the performance in Politis' theoretical approach to theatre.²³

It is my contention, however, that it is the aesthetic styles of his performances that best explain how Politis understood the predominance of the play and the poetic language in theatre. One of the most notable examples of his attitude towards dramatic text and performance is to be found again in the 1934 production of *Persae*. The principal characteristic of the aesthetic style of the performance, the Persian bas-relief, originated from the aesthetic form of this particular dramatic text. *Persae*'s aesthetic form is based on the emotional impact that historical facts exercise on people and people's attempt to understand the reasons for their catastrophe. The action of the play concerns the emotional impact itself of the catastrophe of the Persian army and the narration of action that had already taken place somewhere else. This form of action in combination with the dominance of the chorus and the use of only two protagonists creates the impression of a rather static dramatic aesthetic form. It is my contention that Politis 'translated' the particularity of the aesthetic form of this play in performance terms using the idea of bas-relief to render theatrically the static aesthetic element of the *Persae* text.

Having conceived the principal aesthetic element of his performance, however, Politis went back to the dramatic text and reworked it in relation to the aesthetic principle of the performance. From the three books of this production, the *régie* book, the prompt book

²³ Σαχίνης, Απόστολος, «Η λογοτεχνική κριτική του Φώτου Πολίτη» ("Fotos Politis' Literary Criticism"), *Νέα Εστία* 135, issue no 1605, 1994, p.p. 635-45.

and the composer's book, it is obvious that Politis made cuts in the text.²⁴ Although the cuts are not significant in number they show the way in which the text was affected by the performance. There is one particular kind of cut that suggests this. This kind of cut involves lines that interfere, in passages of the text where action is expressed, by elaborating in a descriptive way on what has just been said.²⁵ Thus the remaining text after the removal of these lines places emphasis more dynamically on the action of the play at each particular moment. It is my contention that these cuts represent the way the dramatic text was reshaped to be integrated in the aesthetic style of the total performance. The core of the aesthetic form of the production of the 1934 *Persae* lay, in my opinion, in the juxtaposition of the static, highly stylised scenic image to the dynamic projection of the action of the play through language. In this sense the dramatic text was integrally incorporated, as one of the aesthetic components, within the aesthetic style of the total performance.

Within this framework I maintain that the work of the director, for Politis, began with the understanding of both the content of the dramatic text, that is, the meaning or the intention of the writer, and of its form, that is, poetic language. Probably this is why he stressed the importance of the dramatic text and the poetic language. The understanding of the dramatic text, for Politis, led the director to conceive an aesthetic style for the performance which would best suit this particular text. However, the conception of the aesthetic style of the performance was based entirely on the norms of performance as an

²⁴ The promptbook, the régie-book, and composer's book of the 1934 *Persae* production are in the Archives of the National Theatre.

²⁵ These cuts may be seen in various parts of the text. For example, in Atossa's last speech in the first episode eleven lines are cut. The remaining text makes Atossa's speech more decisive and strictly focused on her intention of going to pray to the gods and her concern for Xerxes.

art form *per se*. In its turn the dramatic text as text-in-performance, this time, became one of the components of the performance and was integrally incorporated in the style of the performance following Politis' principle of the aesthetic truth of a work of art. The integral incorporation of the dramatic text within the total aesthetics of the performance, which conveys the extent to which Politis had understood the norms of performance as an art form *per se*, is not discussed anywhere in his articles and can be understood only by studying his productions.

The origin of Politis' approach to dramatic text and performance is to be found in the work of Max Reinhardt. The principle of the relationship between the dramatic text and its performance characterised also Reinhardt's approach to theatre and is for me of Reinhardt's most important influence on Politis.²⁶ It led Politis to understand the defining principles of theatre direction and revealed to him the force of the freedom of the creative imagination of the director. Along these lines Politis argued, referring to Reinhardt that "the director sets the tone of the play, lightens some of its parts, darkens other parts, animates details, creates atmosphere; he sets, that is, expression in the entire creation of the poet, using his theatrical means."²⁷ Politis also followed Reinhardt's principle that

²⁶ On Reinhardt see Saylor, Oliver M. (ed.), *Max Reinhardt and his Theatre*, New York and London: Benjamin Blom, 1924 (reissued 1968); Wellwarth, George E. and Brooks, Alfred G. (eds.), *Max Reinhardt 1873-1973: A Centennial Festschrift of Memorial Essays and Interviews on the One Hundredth Anniversary of His Birth*, New York: Max Reinhardt Archive/ Binghamton, 1973; Carter, Huntly, *The Theatre of Max Reinhardt*, New York: Benjamin Blom, 1914 (reissued 1964); Styan, J.L., *Max Reinhardt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982; Patterson, Michael, *The Revolution in German Theatre: 1900-1933*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981; and Jelavich, Peter, *Munich and theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance 1890-1914*.

²⁷ "Ο σκηνοθέτης δίδει τόν τόνον τοῦ ἔργου, φωτίζει ὀρισμένα σημεῖά του, ἀμαυρώνει ἄλλα, ζωηρεύει λεπτομερείας, δημιουργεῖ ἀτμόσφαιραν, χαρίζει, μ' ἓναν λόγον, ἔκφρασιν εἰς ὀλόκληρον τό δημιούργημα τοῦ ποιητοῦ, ἐκμεταλλεύομενος τά θεατρικά του μέσα. Πολίτης, Φῶτος, «Μάξ Ράινχαρντ, ὁ Γερμανὸς σκηνοθέτης» ("Max Reinhardt, The German Theatre Director"), in: *Φῶτος Πολίτη*,

there was not a single appropriate method in staging plays. Each play, therefore, had to be approached in a different way that best suited its specificity. This principle allowed Politis the freedom to experiment aesthetically in tragedy basing the aesthetic style of each performance on the specific play produced. In this sense we can place Politis in the European theatrical movement of eclecticism, as Reinhardt expressed it.

Despite his own work as a theatre director and his views on acting and directing in their “Greek form”, Politis, as I mentioned above, believed that the quintessence of a “national creation” in theatre was the creation of a “national dramaturgy”. It is within this framework that he first approached the issue of performances of tragedy. He argued that a “national dramaturgy” in order to be recognised as ‘Greek’ had to draw on ‘Greek’ theatrical tradition. Since, however, there was not a ‘Greek’ tradition of ‘highbrow’ ‘Greek’ theatre to draw from, this dramaturgy had to draw on two other distinct bodies of tradition.²⁸ The first consisted of other areas of ‘Greek’ culture. He specifically referred to the shadow theatre of Karagiozis and actually his views presaged in a sense the work of Károlos Koun in ancient comedy.²⁹ The second consisted of ‘high forms of theatre’, classical masterpieces such as Ancient Greek tragedy, Shakespeare and Goethe among

επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews), vol. I, p. 249 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 12-11-1926).

²⁸ Politis repeatedly argued that neither a dramatic production nor a performance production that could be characterised as “Greek” or “national” existed in Greece. He believed that the dramatic production existing during his time was not only very poor, but it imitated foreign models. See Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Μία τριακονταετηρίς» (“Thirty Years”), «Ἡ θερινή περίοδος» (“The Summer Season”), in: *Φώτος Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p.p. 200-2 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 2-9-1925) and, p.p. 209-13 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 2-5-1926) respectively, and «Ἡ δραματική τεχνοτροπία» (“Drama Technique”), in: *Φώτος Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.p. 101-6 (originally published in *Πρωία*, 20-10-1929).

²⁹ Karagiozis as “a living remnant of a pure popular form of art” conveyed, for Politis, a theatrical rhythm, which could be considered ‘Greek’ and from which a playwright could draw. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Το θέατρο

others, that for him were the finest examples of objective art. Among these masterpieces tragedy held the highest position.

Within the framework of Politis' views on 'objective art' it is not surprising that he considered tragedy to be "the highest form of Theatre". Tragedy conveyed for him what he called the "generally human", that is, the creative expression of the characters of the play, the way these were conceived and expressed through dialogue and verse.³⁰ In tragedy "theatre," he stated, "is the living person that became poetic language".³¹ Tragic poetic language rendered "all the 'actions' of the passionate persons" in such a way that "within the dramatic poetic language lies the essence, the true image of 'actions' ".³² He argued that Ancient Greeks conceived the characters of the tragic plays as "typical forms" expressing human unhappiness, pain, hubris or other emotions or attitudes that conveyed

του Καραγκιόζη» ("The theatre of Karagiozis"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II.

³⁰ Politis defined the 'generally human' as that "which exists in all the great poetic compositions" and it "is exactly what makes them eternal. The 'generally human' in its broadest meaning; not only the characters, [...] but most of all the expression of these characters through dialogue. That is, the artistic expression, the artistic form of passion." [*Τό "γενικῶς ἀνθρώπινον" τό ἐνυπάρχον εἰς ὄλας τὰς μεγάλας ποιητικὰς συνθέσεις, εἶναι ακριβῶς ἐκεῖνο, τό ὁποῖο τὰς διατηρεῖ αἰωνίως. Τό "γενικῶς ἀνθρώπινον" εἰς τήν εὐρυτάτην του σημασίαν. Οὐχί μόνον οἱ χαρακτήρες, [...] ἀλλά πρό πάντων ἢ διά τοῦ διαλόγου ἔκφρασις τῶν χαρακτήρων τούτων. Δηλαδή ἡ καλλιτεχνική ἔκφρασις, ἡ καλλιτεχνική διαμόρφωσις τοῦ πάθους.*] Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τό ἀρχαῖον θέατρον» ("The Ancient Theatre"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p. 16 (originally published in *Νέα Ἑλλάς*, 11-1-1915) (Politis' underlining).

³¹ *Τό Θέατρο εἶναι ὁ ζωντανός ἄνθρωπος ποῦ ἔγινε λόγος.* Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἀγαμέμνων καί δραματικός λόγος» ("Agamemnon and Dramatic Speech"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p. 153, (originally published in *Πρωία*, 21-3-1932) (Politis' underlining).

³² *Ὅλες οἱ "πράξεις" φλογερῶν ἀνθρώπων, πρέπει ν' ἀποδοθοῦν μέ τό ὑλικό αὐτό [τῆ γλώσσα]. [...]* *Ἐκεῖ, μέσα στό λόγο, ὑπάρχει ἡ οὐσία, ἡ ἀληθινή ὄψη τῶν "πράξεων".* Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἀγαμέμνων καί δραματικός λόγος» ("Agamemnon and Dramatic Speech"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.p. 154 and 155.

the ‘tragic’ in human life.³³ Within this context as the characters of tragedy expressed reflections of the human soul, their symbolism for Politis remained eternal.

Politis, however, insisted on a contemporary approach and interpretation of the genre of tragedy that, as I will argue, consisted also of the core of his own aesthetic style and consequently the main point of his opposition both to the Sikelianof’s’ aesthetic approach and to Reinhardt’s style of performances of tragedy. Politis’ approach and interpretation of tragedy put emphasis on the “tragic man” whom he understood within the framework of *Sturm und Drang*’s concept of the ‘tragic hero’. The dramatic emotional impact of tragedy was based, according to Politis, on the “unavoidable conflict of the tragic man [...] with forces more powerful than him or with other persons equal to him”.³⁴ In this sense Politis conceived ‘tragic man’ within the titanic dimensions of the dramatic heroes of Goethe attributing individual characteristics to the tragic heroes. He stated explicitly that the tragic heroes were not conceived in antiquity as characters having individualistic traits since, as he explained, “Ancient Greeks in the entirety of their civilisation ignore the concept of the individual.”³⁵ In contemporary society, however, where ‘man’ is conceived as ‘individual’, the ‘tragic hero’ could be understood only in an individualistic

³³ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τά προσωπεία» (“The Masks”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.p. 87- 90 (originally published in *Πειθαρχία*, 8-6-1930).

³⁴ ...ή δραματική συγκίνηση προκαλείται από τή μοιραία, τήν αναπόφευκτη σύγκρουση του τραγικού ανθρώπου, [...] προς ανώτερες δυνάμεις ή προς άλλους ομοίους του. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Η μάσκα» (“The Mask”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p. 250 (originally published in *Πρωία*, 17-8-1934).

³⁵ ‘Ο αρχαίος [...] Έλληνας, στή συνολική εμφάνιση του πολιτισμού του, άγνοεί το άτομο. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τά προσωπεία» (“The Masks”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p. 88.

way.³⁶ Within this framework Politis' approach to tragedy and his aesthetic style revolved around and stressed the concept of the 'tragic hero' as an individual. This is why he was against the use of masks, so as to allow the face of the actor to render individual characteristics to the tragic hero.³⁷ Even more so, as I will explain later, he extended the concept of the individual in the rendering of the tragic chorus, an issue that differentiated Politis' own approach from that of Reinhardt.

Puchner, among other scholars, has stressed Reinhardt's influence on Politis work.³⁸ And it is generally accepted that his 1919 *Oedipus Tyrannus* production followed aesthetically very closely the 1910 Reinhardt's *Oedipus Rex*.³⁹ As I have argued earlier, Reinhardt's major influence on Politis consisted of his understanding of the concepts of performance and theatre direction themselves. Politis understood through Reinhardt the norms of performance and how he could function himself as a theatre director. Besides this more general framework of influence, it is true that particular aesthetic references to

³⁶ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἡ μάσκα» ("The Mask"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.p. 249-53.

³⁷ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἡ μάσκα» ("The Mask"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II.

³⁸ See Πούχνερ, Βάλτερ, «Ο Φώτος Πολίτης ως σκηνοθέτης αρχαίας τραγωδίας, οι επιδράσεις του Max Reinhardt στο ελληνικό θέατρο του 20ου αιώνα» ("Fotos Politis Directing Ancient Tragedy, Max Reinhardt's Influences on the Twentieth-Century Greek Theatre"), in: Βάλτερ Πούχνερ, *Ιστορικά νεοελληνικού θεάτρου: έξι μελετήματα (History of Modern Greek Theatre: Six Essays)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Παρίδη, 1984, p.p. 121-37.

³⁹ Although Politis did not state so, it is not impossible that he had attended Reinhardt's 1910 *Oedipus Rex* in Berlin and probably even the 1911 production of *Oresteia*, when the plays were first produced. At that time he was studying law in Germany. He went to Germany in 1908 and stayed there until 1912 when he dropped out of his studies in order to return to Greece and serve in the Greek military during the Balkan wars. Given his interest in theatre -he had acquired a diploma in acting from the Drama School of Odium in 1908- it is difficult to believe that he did not seize the opportunity to attend the German theatrical production and especially Reinhardt's performances since during this period he was at the peak of his career. There is no evidence, however, to suggest safely his personal acquaintance with Reinhardt's work. See, Γλυτζουρή, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα (The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece)* and Πούχνερ, Βάλτερ, «Ο Φώτος Πολίτης ως σκηνοθέτης αρχαίας τραγωδίας, οι επιδράσεις του Max Reinhardt στο ελληνικό θέατρο του 20ου αιώνα» ("Fotos Politis Directing Ancient Tragedy, Max Reinhardt's Influences on the Twentieth-Century Greek Theatre"), in: *Ιστορικά νεοελληνικού θεάτρου: έξι μελετήματα (History of Modern Greek Theatre: Six Essays)*.

Reinhardt's work can be traced in Politis' productions of ancient tragedy.⁴⁰ On the whole, however, I agree with Puchner that Politis renegotiated Reinhardt' style.⁴¹ I will argue that the basis of this renegotiation was Politis' own views on tragedy and especially his emphasis on the individual. In that sense it is my contention that Politis chose very critically the aesthetic elements he took from Reinhardt. Both in his productions of tragedy and in his articles Politis explicitly stressed the difference between his style and that of Reinhardt.

In essence the aesthetic elements that Politis took from Reinhardt involved those elements that allowed him to lay the emphasis of the style of the performance on the individual tragic hero. Within that framework the most prominent of these aesthetic elements consisted, on the one hand, of the juxtaposition of the chorus to the singled out image of the protagonist and, on the other, of the arrangement of the entire acting space in a way that the acting space of the protagonists was higher than the acting space of the chorus. In order to juxtapose the chorus to the protagonists, Politis, like Reinhardt, employed a large number of chorus members using them to create on stage the latter's concept of 'crowd'. In the 1927 production of Euripides *Hecuba*, for example, the chorus consisted of about

⁴⁰ A notable example of such a specific reference is to be found in the entrance of Agamemnon on a chariot pulled by horses in the 1932 National Theatre production of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* which is reminiscent of Agamemnon's entrance in Reinhardt's 1911 production of *Oresteia*. On Politis' *Agamemnon* see Κανάκης, Βασίλης, *Εθνικό Θέατρο, Εξήντα Χρόνια Σκηνή και Παρασκήνιο (National Theatre, Sixty Years of Stage and Backstage)*, p.p.25-6. Kanakis notes that this mode of Agamemnon's entrance was abandoned after the opening night due to the 'non- theatrical' behaviour of the horses. On Reinhardt's 1911 production of *Oresteia* see Jelavich, Peter, *Munich and theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance 1890-1914*.

⁴¹ Πούχνερ, Βάλτερ, «Ο Φώτος Πολίτης ως σκηνοθέτης αρχαίας τραγωδίας, οι επιδράσεις του Max Reinhardt στο ελληνικό θέατρο του 20ου αιώνα» ("Fotos Politis Directing Ancient Tragedy, Max Reinhardt's Influences on the Twentieth-Century Greek Theatre"), in: *Ιστορικά νεοελληνικού θεάτρου: έξι μελετήματα (History of Modern Greek Theatre: Six Essays)*, p. 136.

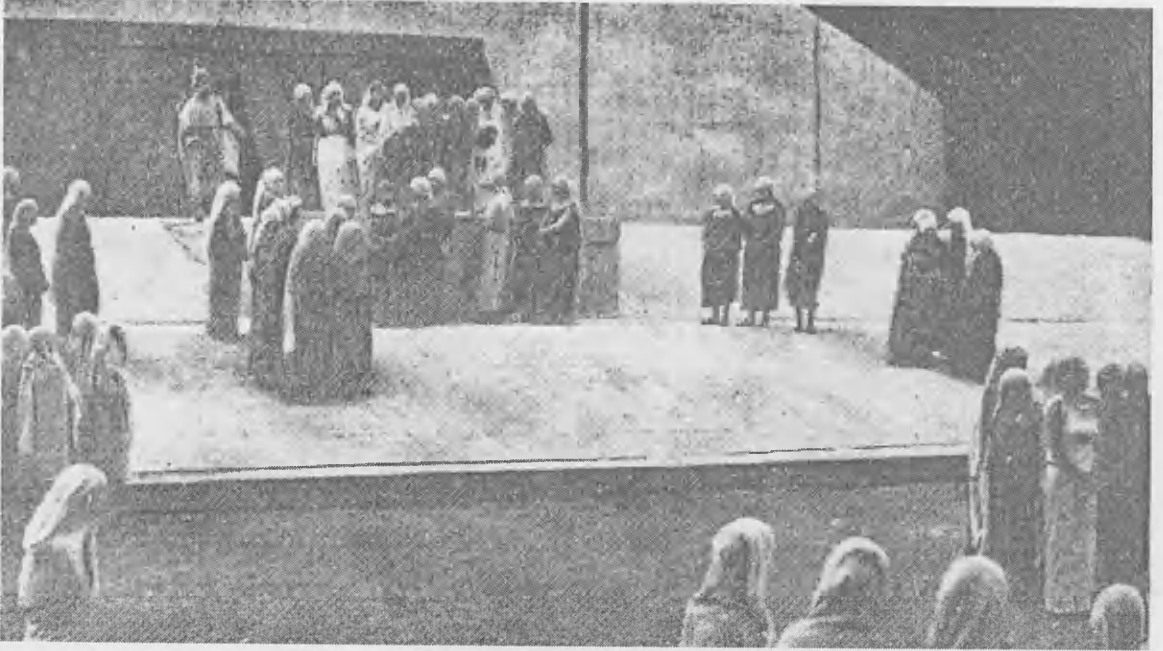


Photo 24 The chorus in Euripides' *Hecuba*, Stadium 1927



Photo 25 Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus, the National Theatre 1933

eighty members.⁴² (See photo 24) This large number of chorus members was aesthetically juxtaposed to the secluded figures of the protagonists thus stressing their individuality in the way Reinhardt achieved the same effect in his own production of *Oedipus Rex*.

Politis followed this principle even in his later productions with the National Theatre, despite the more confined space of the in-door theatre stage. He still managed to create the image of a numerous crowd juxtaposed to the individual tragic hero using a mode of placing the chorus or the crowd on stage which is reminiscent of Reinhardt's dynamic use of crowd. A notable example of the way Politis positioned the chorus and the crowd on stage is to be found in his 1933 National Theatre production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* (see photo 25).

Politis was also influenced by Reinhardt's arrangement of the acting space that allowed him to distinguish the protagonists by placing them higher than the chorus. In fact, the arrangement of the acting space as well as the set in Politis' 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which included the construction of an orchestra within the proscenium arch in the Theatre Olympia, is almost identical to Reinhardt's set and arrangement of the acting space in the *Oedipus Rex* performance in the Covent Garden Opera House.⁴³ The usual stage arrangements of the acting space in all Politis' productions of tragedy except *Persae* consisted of the development in depth of a vertical axis within a horizontal in width

⁴² See μ.ρ., «Ἡ Ἐκάβη» (*Hecuba*), and Ὁ παρατηρητής, «Σημειώσεις καί σκίτσα ἀπό τήν Ἐκάβην» (*Notes and Sketches from Hecuba*), *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα*, 6-8-1927 and 20-9-1927 respectively. See also Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, *Το ἀρχαῖο ἐλληνικό θέατρο στη νέα ἐλληνική σκηνή 1817-1932 (Ancient Greek Theatre on the Modern Greek Stage, 1817-1932)*, p.p. 372-3.

⁴³ On the description of Reinhardt's set and arrangement of the stage in the *Oedipus Rex* performance in Covent Garden, see Carter, Huntly, *The Theatre of Max Reinhardt*, p.p. 217-9.

arrangement of space. This arrangement allowed Politis to single out the protagonists because it facilitated the hierarchical positioning of the actors and the chorus members on stage. The horizontal arrangement, or rather the horizontal axis, was usually further stressed through the use of small planes developed on different levels upon the vertical axis; thus there was an aesthetic co-existence of the three dimensions on stage. The three-dimensional scenic and acting area was aesthetically harmonised with the three-dimensional presence of the actors' body on stage, an idea that Politis had discussed in his articles since 1915 and which is reminiscent of the scenic and set arrangements of Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig.⁴⁴ In fact, the sets of his 1932 National Theatre production of *Agamemnon* and the 1933 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* seem to have been conceived by the set designer of the performances Kleovoulos Klonis along the lines of the Appia's 'Rhythmic Spaces'. (See photo 25 above and photos 26, 27)

However, even in the two-dimensional set of *Persae* Politis placed most emphasis on the individual tragic hero. The set of the production was structured in such a way that the focus of the audience's attention would be directed mostly towards the middle plane, the acting space of the protagonists and the chorus leaders. This was accomplished partly by the difference in the set design of the second plane. Instead of the neutral background of the higher and lower level, the door situated in the middle and the painting designs on the door's left and right, which were based on a spiral motif, distinguished visually the

⁴⁴ Politis had indicated in one of his 1915 articles the aesthetic disagreement between the real three-dimensional presence of the actor/s and the representation through painting of the three dimensions on a two-dimensional set. This aesthetic disagreement destroyed for him the "illusion", the atmosphere, of the play. See Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Τό Θέατρον εις τήν Ἑλλάδα, Α'» ("Theatre in Greece, I"), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p.p.19-22 (originally published in *Νέα Ἑλλάς*, 1-2-1915).



Photo 26 Set model for Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the National Theatre 1932

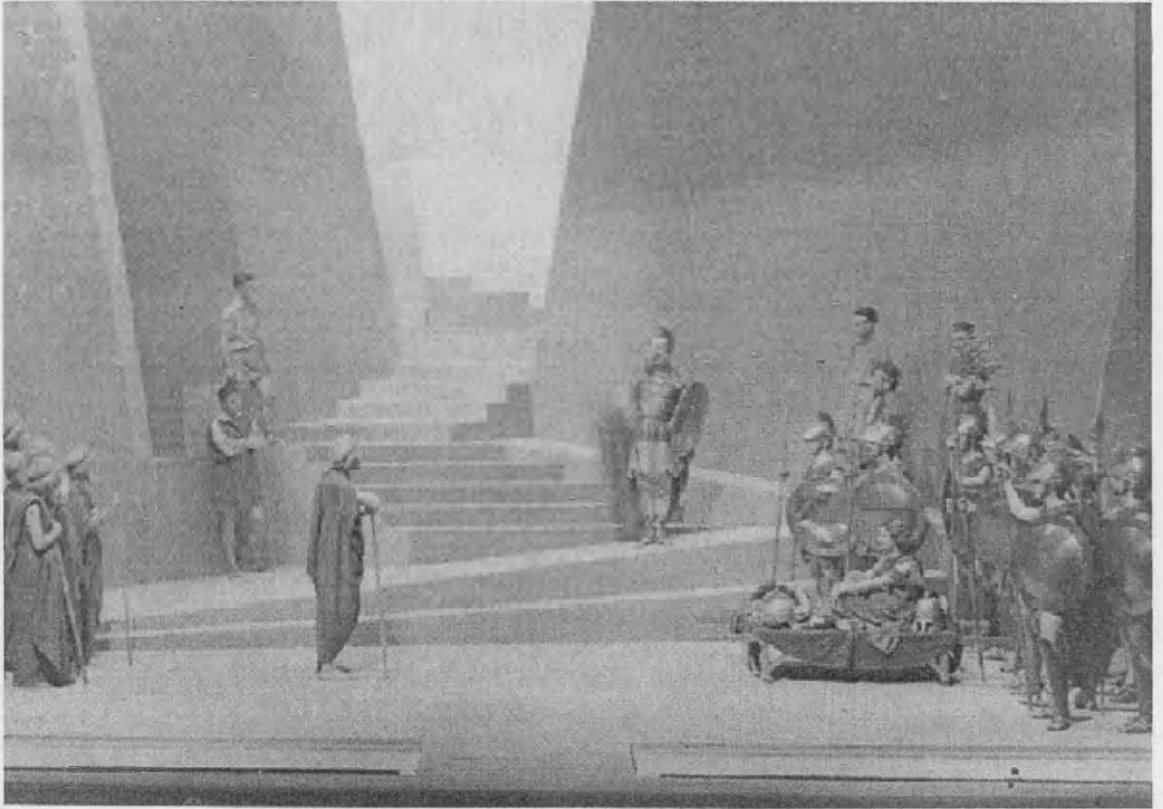


Photo 27 Aeschylus' Agamemnon, the National Theatre 1932

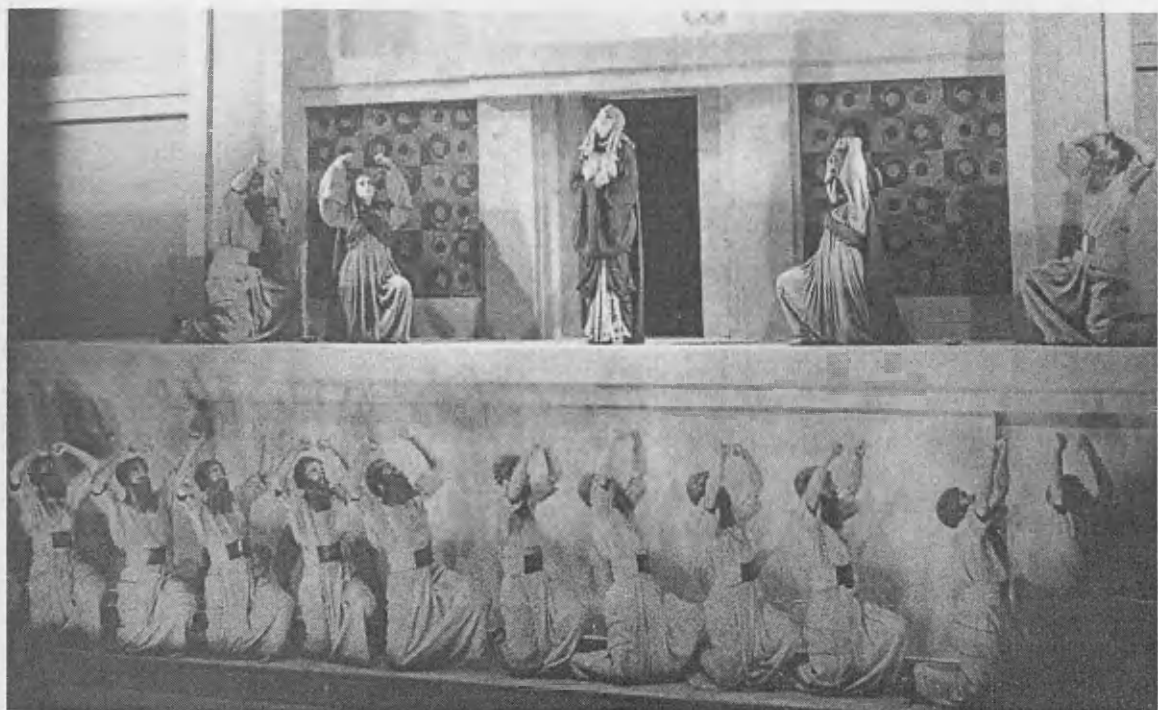


Photo 28 Aeschylus' Persae, the National Theatre 1934

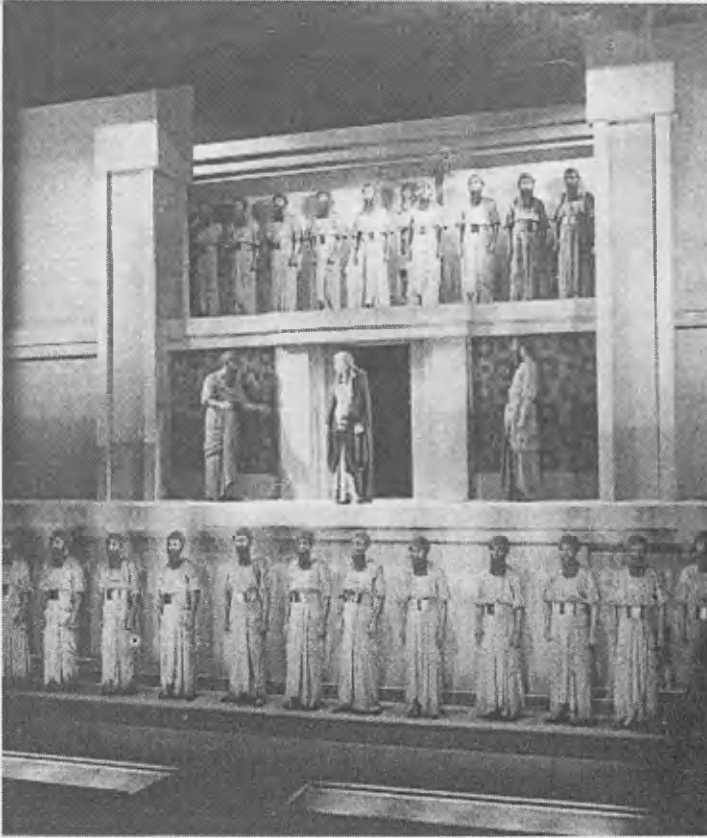


Photo 29 Aeschylus' Persae, the National Theatre 1934

middle plane. (See photo 28) Moreover the secluded figures on this plane, juxtaposed to the number of chorus members on the first and third plane combined with their stylised movement, placed emphasis on and singled out the actors on the second plane. (See photo 29)

Despite, however, the closeness of Politis' arrangement of the acting space to that of Reinhardt, Politis did not follow the latter's ideas about creating an atmosphere of intimacy between the actors/actresses and the audience which was partially achieved precisely through the arrangement of space in Reinhardt's productions of tragedy. This idea of intimacy was one of the characteristic aesthetic features of Reinhardt's 1910 and 1911 productions of *Oedipus Rex* and *Oresteia*. In both these productions Reinhardt used light and the theatre-in-the-round space "to erase the boundaries between the crowd and the audience", and there were moments, like the exit of Oedipus, when these boundaries were physically erased through the use of the auditorium as part of the acting space.⁴⁵ His aim was to create an atmosphere within which, as Jelavich argues, the public "would more easily succumb to the illusion of the performance and the primitive emotions that it sought to evoke".⁴⁶ As I have argued, Politis intended his performances to be perceived as aesthetic events. In fact, in his productions, as I have explained, an imaginary wall separated the stage image from the audience. In that sense Politis disagreed with Reinhardt' principle of intimacy, which consisted of a principal aesthetic element of the

⁴⁵ Jelavich, Peter, *Munich and theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance 1890-1914*, p. 215. See also Carter, Huntly, *The theatre of Max Reinhardt*, p.p. 210-1.

⁴⁶ Jelavich, Peter, *Munich and theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance 1890-1914*, p. 215. This atmosphere created for Fergusson the sense of a "ritual expectancy", Styan, J. L., *Max Reinhardt*, p. 83.

latter's productions. The crucial point, however, where Politis stressed his difference to Reinhardt's style was the rendering of the tragic chorus.

Reinhardt's chorus, as Nilson notes, was a "spoken chorus" which he built up "like a composer". "The speakers" were "divided into groups which correspond to the singing voices of the chorus."⁴⁷ Politis in his own description of Reinhardt's style noted that the latter conceived the chorus "as one body, one soul, one consciousness". And thus, "he made the chorus enter the stage in thick lines, walking in the same rhythm, moving simultaneously and speaking/reciting all together (*sprech-chor*)".⁴⁸

Politis agreed with Reinhardt's idea about the common consciousness of the chorus, but he totally disagreed with the depiction of the chorus as 'one body'; thus he rejected the chorus' uniformity of voice and movement. In fact, Politis went even further extending his idea about individuality to the rendering of the chorus. As Maria Alkaiou remembers, Politis visualised the chorus as people who are talking to each other and who at some moment may all say simultaneously the same thing.⁴⁹ To express this perception of the chorus, he usually divided the chorus into two semi-choruses. He entrusted the reciting of the chorus-songs to the chorus leaders with the exception of some phrases, which were recited by the entire body of the chorus. These phrases in combination with gestural

⁴⁷ Nilson, Einar, "Music under Reinhardt", in: *Max Reinhardt and his Theatre*, Saylor, Oliver, M. (ed.), p. p. 129-30 (Nilson's italics).

⁴⁸ 'Ο Μάξ Ράινχαρντ [...] ἐζήτησε νά ἐμφανίσει τόν χορόν ὡς ἓνα σῶμα, μίαν ψυχήν, μίαν συνείδησιν. Τόν εἰσήγαγεν εἰς πυκνάς τάξεις, μέ ὁμόρρυθμον βάδισμα, μέ ταυτόχρονες χειρονομίες, μέ ὁμαδικήν ἀπαγγελίαν σύγχρονον. Πολίτης, Φῶτος, «Ἡ Παράστασις τῆς Ἑκάβης» ("The Performance of *Hecuba*"), in: *Φῶτον Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p. 286 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 26-9-1927).

⁴⁹ The information was given by Maria Alkaiou in an interview with her in November 2000. Alkaiou was a family friend of Politis and his student in the Drama School of the National Theatre.

movement rendered, in his view, the idea of the common consciousness of the chorus members without erasing their individuality.

It is my contention that Politis' most innovative approach to the issue of the tragic chorus was manifested in the 1927 production of *Hecuba*. In this production Politis visualised a tragic chorus comprised of individuals that suffered with Hecuba. The individuality of the chorus was stressed in the use of seven chorus leaders between whom Politis divided "in logical sequences" the words of the chorus songs.⁵⁰ Moreover it was further enhanced by the chorus members' costumes that were made in different tones of yellow.⁵¹ The idea of the chorus' common consciousness and suffering which was also stressed in the production was rendered usually in the beginning, the middle or the end of a chorus song where such phrases that could express common feelings, for example a sigh, a feeling of nostalgia for their lost city, or a curse, were recited by the entirety of the chorus members. Thus Reinhardt's perception of the chorus as a 'mass' became in Politis' *Hecuba* more than any other of his productions a group of individual persons. It is worth noting that the rendering of the chorus in *Hecuba* presaged the chorus in Koun's 1965 production of *Persae*, as I will explain in the last chapter.⁵²

⁵⁰ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Η Παράσταση της Έκάβης» ("The Performance of *Hecuba*"), in: *Φώτων Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p. 287. See also Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, «Ο Φώτος Πολίτης άνθρωπος του Θεάτρου» ("Fotos Politis Man of the Theatre"), *Νέα Έστία*, vol 56, no 658, 1st December 1954, p.p. 1682-701.

⁵¹ Maria Alkaiou remembers that Politis also used the idea of different colors in the chorus costumes in other productions of ancient tragedy and especially in the 1933 *Oedipus Rex* production. This can be seen also in the photographs of the production.

⁵² See Chapter VI, p. 291.

The synthesis of Politis' ideas about theatre and tragedy that I have presented and within which I have discussed up to this point Politis' approach and style in tragedy is not historically based, but hermeneutically. Some of his ideas about theatre and tragedy appeared very early in his articles. The majority, however, of his most refined concepts on tragedy, its performances, and the issue of theatre direction and 'Greekness' are to be found in articles that Politis wrote after the Sikelianoí's 1927 production of *Prometheus Bound*. This supports my hypothesis that Politis, feeling impelled to express his aesthetic opposition to the Sikelianoí, proceeded in refining and particularising his own approach to tragedy and to the issue of theatre direction and *hellenikótita*.

Politis' opposition to the Sikelianoí's aesthetic style was fiercely expressed in two of his articles, «Ὁ τραγικός χορός» ("The Tragic Chorus") and «Μερικὲς λεπτομέρειες» ("Some Details"), written immediately after the *Prometheus Bound* performance. Politis did not attend the Delphi performance and based his argument about the production on the reviews of other critics, especially those of Vassilis Rotas. The basis of his opposition to the Sikelianoí's approach was the rendering of the religiousness of tragedy and consequently the rendering of the chorus. Politis explained that he accepted that tragedy was characterised by a religious content, which had shaped its dramatic form and its performance in antiquity. This religious content, however, of a tragic play was not for him a founding factor that externally affected the form of tragedy and thence of its performance. It was contained within the drama itself, in the tragic vision/concept of the

world, which the dramatic text of tragedy expressed.⁵³ Thus the religiousness of tragedy was expressed through the dramatic form of the plays; the emotional impact of tragedy was in its essence dramatic.⁵⁴ This concept of the genre of tragedy led Politis to disagree entirely with the Sikelianoi's rendering of religiousness. Furthermore his perception of the performance as an aesthetic event excluded any idea of creating a ritualistic atmosphere, which was Sikelianoi's intention in the performance of *Prometheus Bound*, as I explained in the previous chapter.

Politis insisted that tragic plays should be performed in a way that could best address contemporary audiences. In fact Politis never used the term 'revival' in reference to performances of tragedy. Not only did he argue against the rendering of the religiousness of tragedy placing emphasis on the individual, but he also interpreted the text in a way that was for him more relevant to contemporary spectators. And he actually tampered with the text through cuts in order to project his interpretation more clearly. In the 1934 production of *Persae*, for example, Politis cut lines in two parts of the play that refer to the hubris committed by Xerxes.⁵⁵ By cutting those lines the reasoning for Xerxes' behaviour seems to be attributed to Xerxes' foolishness and arrogance of youth that was encouraged by his friends. Thus a more contemporary interpretation of hubris seems to have been promoted by Politis' text-in-performance, which was based on an

⁵³ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Γιά τήν ἀρχαία τραγωδία» (“About Ancient Tragedy”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p. 220-4 (originally published in *Πρωία*, 24-11-1933).

⁵⁴ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἡ μάσκα» (“The Mask”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p. 250.

⁵⁵ The two parts of the play are in the first episode in the beginning of Atossa's speech and in the third episode in Darius' speech.

understanding of contemporary life and people, instead of an interpretation which would put emphasis on the hubris and *attis* (blindness) as understood in antiquity.⁵⁶

Besides the rendering of the religiousness of tragedy, Politis opposed forcefully the Sikelianoi's style in regard to the rendering of the tragic chorus as a chorus that danced and sang. Politis agreed that the dancing movement of the tragic chorus expressed in antiquity a religious faith or an emotional state, especially a state of unhappiness. He argued, however, that dance in Modern Greek culture could not express either a religious sentiment or an emotional state of unhappiness. He wrote,

To speak bluntly: there is no way today that you can say, for example, that 'God is mighty' and in order to become more expressive to raise your leg in the air. Nor to shed tears, to cry and to mourn by jumping around with or without rhythm. Nor to comfort your fellowman for his misfortune by dancing *kalamatianos*.⁵⁷

Within this framework Politis explicitly expressed his opposition to Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's dancing chorus. Although he did not attend the performance, he stated in his

⁵⁶ The only theological reference regarding Xerxes' behaviour which is given by Atossa and admitted by Darius is that a god must have taken away his mind. This, however, is a common saying and as a figure of speech may still be used today. It is rather interesting that in the programme of the play there is a note written by Ioannis Gryparis, the translator of the play and the General Director of the National Theatre at that time, which refers to the subject of the play. In this note Gryparis elaborates on the theme of *hubris* committed by Xerxes and of the *attis* that blinded him and led to his destruction.

⁵⁷ *Γιά να μιλήσουμε καθαρά και ξάστερα: δέν μπορείς κατ' ούδένα λόγον σήμερα να λές λ.χ. ότι "ὁ Θεός εἶναι παντοδύναμος", καί, γιά να φανείς ἐκφραστικότερος, να σηκώσεις τό ποδάρι σου στόν ἀέρα. Οὔτε να δακρῦξεις καί να κλαῖς καί να μοιρολογεῖς σαλτάροντας ρυθμικά ἢ ἄρρυθμα. Οὔτε να παρηγοῖς τόν πλησίον σου γιά τή συφορά του, χορεύοντας καλαματιανό. Πολίτης, Φῶτος, «Ὁ τραγικός χορός» ("The Tragic Chorus"), in: *Φῶτος Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p. 281 (originally published in *Πολιτεία*, 6-8-1927).*

Kalamatianos is one of the most popular Greek demotic dances.

poignant way that he did not find any kind of integral relationship between the dancing movements of the chorus and the words of the Oceanids. He concluded, therefore, that he did not believe that the Sikelianoí had solved the issue of the rendering of the chorus.⁵⁸

Politis' own proposition of the rendering of the tragic chorus was an issue of constant experiment for him. His basic approach to the issue was based on the idea of rhythmical movements, which were related to the chorus words and corresponded "to what we feel today as real and true".⁵⁹ The aesthetic style of these rhythmical movements, as can be seen in photographs of productions, seems to have been based on large, expressive, movements depicting gestural reactions to what was said.⁶⁰ (See photo 30) Within this framework of rhythmical movements slight differences of gesture depicted in the movement of the chorus members stressed visually the "many bodies" of the tragic chorus expressing the concept of individuality.

In the highly stylised movement of the *Persae* chorus, however, Politis seemed to have arrived at an idea of chorus movement, which was very close to dance in terms of its conception since it was based on a gestural vocabulary of static postures. These were used either as isolated gestures or in a combination of several gestures together. For

⁵⁸ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ο τραγικός χορός» ("The Tragic Chorus"), in: *Φώτον Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p. 280- 3. Politis is very strict, even ironical, when he discusses Eva Palmer-Sikelianou's approach.

⁵⁹ Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Η Παράσταση της Έκάβης» ("The Performance of *Hecuba*"), in: *Φώτον Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. I, p. 287.

⁶⁰ From the photographs of Politis' productions prior to *Persae* it is apparent that there is a common framework of movement which defines, a) the expressive character of the movement (for example movement of fear, horror, awe and joy), b) the direction of the movement (towards the leading actors' action or away from it, towards or away from other members of the chorus) and, c) the aesthetic schema of the entirety of the chorus. Characteristic of Politis' perception of chorus movement is the movement depicted in the photographs of the 1933 production of *Oedipus Rex*. (See photos 25 and 30)

example, there are notes in the promptbook and the *régie* book describing isolated gestures like turning the head left or right, raising the right or left hand with the fist turned outwards, crossing the hands, kneeling down. There are also notes where a series or a combination of gestures is described. These sequences of more complicated movements usually correspond to those points in the chorus songs where a strong emotional state is expressed.⁶¹ It is in these sequences of more complicated gestural movements that Politis

⁶¹ A notable example of this combination of movements is the movement of chorus in the entrance of the messenger. In the first and second stanza of the chorus, the movement sequence is noted as follows,

1
Ὁ μαῦρες μαῦρες συμφορές
 2
 ἀνήκουστες φριχτές ὦϊ γῶ!
 βρῦση τά δάκρυα μου ἄς χυθοῦν
 3
 στό τέτοιο πένθος πού γοιγῶ.

1. All step with the left foot to the left and slightly behind. The right hand with a reversed fist on the heart, the left (hand) down slightly towards the left with the back of the fist towards the front. The head turns left and looks slightly upwards.

2. Head turns upwards and to the front. The two hands stretched above the head with the fist showing outwards. The weight of the body on the right foot.

3. Hands and head down, left foot in its position.

Ἀλήθεια μακροζώητα
 4
χρόνια μου γράφονται, ἄχ κι ἄχ!
 ν' ἀκούσω τέτοια ἀνέλπιστη
στά γερατειά μου συμφορά.

4. The hands on the chest crossed (slight inclination of the body left and right twice in *Αχ* / *Αχ* ἀνέλπιστη στα γερατειά μου, at the word συφορά return to the same position.

Grievous, grievous disaster, all unlooked-for and cruel. Alas, ye Persians, weep now that ye hear of this calamity. Too long, in sooth, hath this our life proved to us, aged as we are, that we should hear of this unlooked-for misery. [Translated from the ancient original text by Herbert Weir Smyth, see Goold, G.P. (ed.), *Aeschylus I: Suppliant Maidens, Persians, Prometheus, Seven Against Thebes*, Smyth, Herbert, Weir (trans.), The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973 (emended edition), p.p.131-3.] [*1.- δλοι βῆμα ἀρ. ποδιοῦ πρὸς τ' ἀρ. καί λίγο πίσω. Τό δεξι χέρι ἀνάποδη*



Photo 30 Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the National Theatre 1933

γροθιά στή θέση τῆς καρδιάς, τό ἀριστ. κάτω ἐλαφρά πρὸς τ' ἀριστ. μέ τή ράχη τῆς γροθιάς πρὸς τὰ ἔμπρῳς. Τό κεφάλι στριμμένο ἀριστ. καί κοιτάζοντας λίγο πρὸς τὰ ψηλά. 2.- κεφάλι πρὸς τὰ ἔπάνω καί μπρῳς. Τά δύο χέρια τεταμένα ἀπάνω ἀπ' τό κεφάλι πυγμή πρὸς τὰ ἔξω. Τό βάρος τοῦ κορμοῦ στό δεξιὸ πόδι. 3.- κάτω τὰ χέρια καί τό κεφάλι τό ἀριστ. πόδι στή θέση του. 4.- Τά χέρια στό στήθος σταυρωτά κλίσι ἐλαφρά τοῦ κορμοῦ ἀριστ. καί δεξ. δύο φορές στό Αχ / Αχ ἀνέλπιστα στά γερατειά μου, μέ τή λέξι συφορά ἐπάνοδος στήν ἴδια θέση.]

came very close to the idea of dance in the sense of an almost continuous interchange of movement. One has the feeling that had he lived longer he would have continued to experiment with the chorus movement, although I do not believe that he would have been led to the idea of dance in the sense of Eva Palmer-Sikelianoú's dancing chorus.

Although Politis had not finally resolved the issue of the movement of the chorus he had reached a style in regard to the deliverance of the chorus songs. Again in this issue he disagreed with the Sikelianoí's singing chorus. In Politis' productions the chorus songs were recited mainly by the chorus leaders with the exception of some phrases which were recited by the entirety of the chorus. The reciting followed the rhythm of the music, which was conceived, however, on the basis of the rhythm of the elocution. As can be seen in the production-books of *Persae*, the rhythm of the reciting was combined with the rhythm of the music, which was based on the rhythm of the text itself, that is on the punctuation of the text, and on the meaning that the text conveyed according to Politis.⁶² Thus the rhythm developed through the stressed syllables and the points where the chorus broke off the reciting to breathe and it was conceived in such a way that it could bring out every single word of the text.⁶³ The markings on the production book of the composer

⁶² There are no sound documents of Politis' productions. These observations are based on the production book of the composer depicting the rhythm of the reciting on the text.

⁶³ A notable example of this was the chorus song of the evocation to Darius' ghost. The first stanza is marked as follows,

/ / / / /
 Μά ᾧ τοῦ κάτω τοῦ κόσμου τρισάγιοι θεοί /
 // / // // //
 / Γῆ / κ' Ἑρμεία / καί σύ τῶν νεκρῶν βασιλιᾶ,
 / / / /
 / τή ψυχῇ του ἀνεβάσετε πάνω στό φῶς, /
 / / / / /
 / γιάτ' ἄν κάποια γνωρίζει πιό κάλιο ἀπό μᾶς
 / /
 στά δεινά μας γιατρεία,

lead to a style of reciting that was based on prosody, that is on the structure of the rhythm based on the stressed syllable of the words which was emphasised either dynamically or musically. This rhythm was combined with the meaning of the text. These are the three principal characteristics of Greek prosody, which is mostly related to the work of Rondiris.⁶⁴ Hence it seems that Politis used prosody as the basis of elocution at least in the chorus songs of *Persae*, before Rondiris did.⁶⁵

Despite Politis' fierce opposition to the Sikelianoi's aesthetic style, however, it is my contention that the latter's production provided a 'Greek' aesthetic reference to Politis' concept of tragedy. It was through this aesthetic reference that Politis understood that the 'Greekness' of his approach to tragedy could be based on the drawing on Modern Greek culture in order to appropriate tragedy. In that sense it is not coincidental that in 1928, a year after the Sikelianoi's *Prometheus Bound*, Politis published in *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα* (*Eléftheron Vima*) his article «Ἡ Ἀντιγόνη εἰς τὸ θέατρον τοῦ Ἡρώδου», («*Antigone*

/ / / /
/ μόνο αὐτός / θά μᾶς ἔλεε τὸ τέλος.

Ye holy divinities of the nether world, Earth and Hermes, and thou, Lord of the dead, send forth to the light the spirit from below; for if, beyond our prayers, he knoweth any further remedy for our distress, he alone of mortals can declare how to bring it to accomplishment. [Translated from the ancient original text by Herbert Weir Smyth, see Goold, G.P. (ed.), *Aeschylus I: Suppliant Maidens, Persians, Prometheus, Seven Against Thebes*, The Loeb Classical Library, p.p.161] The double stress upon the words “Γῆ” (Earth), “σύ”(You), “νεκρῶν” (of the dead), “ βασιλέα” (king), and further down “ἀκούει” (listens) and “τάφος” (grave) might indicate a stronger emphasis accomplished either by a longer pronunciation of the stressed vowel, or by a stronger stress or by a musical change of tone. If the latter were the case then the musical change might have been that of a lower tone since all these words address the world of the dead. The breathing breaks in relation to the stressed syllables shape a rhythm in the chorus song which is based on the interpretation of the content of the chorus song and aims at bringing out and communicating the meaning and the atmosphere of the text.

⁶⁴ See Chapter V, p. 230.

⁶⁵ Rondiris in his autobiography wrote that Politis had entrusted him completely with the rehearsals of the chorus in *Persae*. It seems difficult, however, to accept that Rondiris worked without Politis' full consent on the elocution of the chorus.

in the Herod Atticus Theatre”), where he referred to tragedy and *hellenikótita* and explained the way he appropriated tragedy within Modern Greek culture.

In this article Politis explicitly argued that Greeks are more familiar than other nations with the form of ancient tragedy. To support his argument he drew analogies between the aesthetic form of the poetic language of tragedy and that of the poetic language of Greek demotic songs. He wrote, “it [the demotic song] has the same atmosphere and the same aesthetics that ancient [dramatic] poetry has”.⁶⁶ In this form of poetic language “each word has a solid value and demands to be brought out clearly. The poem itself urges you, even against your will, to a solemn expression.”⁶⁷ Drawing thus on the analogy of the poetic language of the Greek demotic song and of tragedy, Politis appropriated tragedy within Modern Greek culture and transferred tragedy from the more general framework of the ‘masterpieces of universal theatre’ to the framework of ‘Greek’ theatre. In this way, in my opinion, he manifested in practice the doctrine of the capitalist aesthetic ideology, the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages. The fact that he used the Greek demotic song as the body of ‘Greek’ tradition within which he appropriated tragedy complies with his more general views on literature. Politis discerned the quality of the

⁶⁶ Έχει [τό δημοτικό τραγούδι] τήν ἴδια ἀτμόσφαιρα καί τήν ἴδια αἰσθητική τῆς ἀρχαίας ποιήσεως. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἡ Ἀντιγόνη εἰς τό θέατρον τοῦ Ἡρώδου», (“*Antigone in the Herod Atticus Theatre*”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p. 9. A comparison between Greek demotic songs and ancient tragedy is discussed also in his article «Στοχασμοί γιά τό δημοτικό τραγούδι, Α΄» (“*Contemplations on Demotic Song I*”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. III, p.p. 251-4, (originally published in *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα*, 6-6-1928). In this latter article, however, Politis does not elaborate on this comparison, he simply refers to it.

⁶⁷ Κάθε λέξη του ἔχει ἀτόφια ἀξία, καί ἀπαιτεῖ νά προβληθεῖ φωτεινή. Τό ἴδιο τό ποίημα σᾶς ὠθεῖ, καί ἄθελά σας ἀκόμα, σέ μιάν ἐκφραση ἐπίσημη. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἡ Ἀντιγόνη εἰς τό θέατρον τοῦ Ἡρώδου», (“*Antigone in the Herod Atticus Theatre*”), in: *Φώτου Πολίτη, ἐπιλογή κριτικῶν ἀρθρῶν (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.10.

Greek demotic song and used it as an ideal model of ‘Greek’ poetry in order to prove the lesser quality of Greek contemporary poetic production. Thus I argue that Politis transferred his notion of *hellenikótita* and ‘Greek’ art as this was expressed in his literary criticism to theatre. By appropriating tragedy within Modern Greek cultural terms he combined its symbolic capital as a classical masterpiece with the symbolic capital of a ‘purely Greek’ cultural product.

Politis’ appropriation of tragedy within the Modern Greek cultural tradition was based on different principles from the Sikelianoí’s. The latter, as I argued in the previous chapter, based their appropriation of tragedy on the principle of the integral unity of ‘Greek’ culture through the ages, since in all its phases it was a manifestation of the Greek *Geist*. Politis approached the genre through the more recent ‘Greek’ tradition, that is, through his own cultural ‘present’ implicitly recognising the ‘Greekness’ of tragedy. It was in this cultural ‘present’ that he sought the aesthetic ‘keys’ to approach the issue of the contemporary productions of tragedy. Thus it is not surprising that Politis is the only Greek theatre director working in tragedy during the period I discuss that did not use the term ‘revival’. For him the symbolic capital of tragedy was completely transcended within the contemporary approach and performance of tragedy and it did not stem from tragedy’s value as an Ancient Greek cultural product. In fact, Politis’ insistence on the contemporaneity of the performances of tragedy set him against the use of ancient theatres, which he thought suitable only for “archaeological representations”.⁶⁸ He

⁶⁸ Politis based his argument on the style of acting the ancient theatre required and the differences between this style and contemporary styles of acting and their expressing modes. He argued that the use of the ancient theatres in contemporary performances required a strong tone of voice and a slower rhythm of elocution, which diminished the expressive ability of the actors. Furthermore the use of very strong lighting was imperative in order that the facial mimic expressions of the actors should become apparent to the

practically preferred the use of indoor proscenium arch theatres, although, as Sideris notes, he was not against the use of open-air theatrical spaces.⁶⁹

Within this framework we can understand the way in which Politis' performances of tragedy could be recognised as 'purely Greek' works of art. They presupposed the appropriation of tragedy within Modern Greek cultural terms. They were regarded as contemporary performances not attempting in any way to 'revive' the ancient glory. They drew from European movements but they also stressed their differences from them in a very critical and distinct way, as, for example, in the issue of the chorus, thus presenting an original work. Finally, his quest for an acting style that would be based on the musicality of the Modern Greek language and on the Greek way of gestural expression applied to tragedy emphasised the 'Greekness' of the performances.

Unfortunately there are no sound or film documents of Politis' productions of tragedy to allow us to understand the particular features of what he understood as the musicality of the Greek language. In his productions he worked with actors and actresses that were recognised even in their own time for the 'Greekness' of their elocution and movement. One of the most notable examples was that of Aimílios Veakis who acted the part of

audience. This excluded the possibility of an aesthetic use of lighting that could contribute to the creation of an atmosphere, which was Politis' style of lighting in theatre. Πολίτης, Φώτος, «Ἀρχαῖα Θέατρα» ("Ancient Theatres"), in: *Φώτος Πολίτη, επιλογή κριτικών άρθρων (Fotos Politis: A Selection of Articles and Reviews)*, vol. II, p.p. 164-8 (originally published in *Πρωία*, 20-5-1932).

⁶⁹ In fact, Sideris argues that in theory Politis preferred productions of tragedy to be performed in the open-air, because this space served the creation of a unity between the action of the play and the audience. See Σιδέρης, Γιάννης, «Ὁ Φώτος Πολίτης ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Θεάτρου» ("Fotos Politis Man of the Theatre"), *Νέα Ἑστία*, p. 1694. Apart from *Hecuba*, however, which was performed in the Stadium, all his other productions were performed in indoor theatres. Moreover, contrary to Sideris' argument, Maria Alkaiou claims that Politis firmly believed that in contemporary times ancient tragedy had to be performed within indoor theatres. This testimony agrees with Politis' own practice and in my opinion it seems to be closer to what Politis actually believed.

Oedipus in both the 1919 and 1933 productions of *Oedipus Tyrannus* and the part of Agamemnon in the 1932 production of *Agamemnon*. Also Katina Paxinoú who acted the part of Atossa in the 1934 *Persae* came to be recognised as a ‘great tragedian’, and one of the greatest actresses, if not the greatest, in contemporary ‘Greek’ theatre. One of Paxinoú’s characteristic principles of acting was the *hellenikótita* of her elocution.

Politis’ presence in the Greek theatre was catalytic. As I have argued, he pressed with all the force of his personality for the creation of ‘highbrow’ theatre in Greece. And furthermore he provided a set of criteria to assess a work of art. The fact that as an artist himself, he produced a work of extremely high standards implicitly justified the austerity of his criteria and established the conditions within which ‘restricted’ theatrical production in Greece should and did move. It is interesting to note the way Politis used his capacity as a critic in relation to his work as a theatre director. He usually published one or more articles on the play he was producing just before the opening night. In these articles he discussed in detail the play as he interpreted it, its importance and its writer. In that way he used his own prestige as an austere critic to promote the recognition of the symbolic capital of the play placing it within ‘highbrow’ theatre and also promoting implicitly the symbolic capital of his own performances.⁷⁰

As the first Director of the National Theatre Politis also set the framework in which the productions of the state theatre should move. In the two and a half years that he worked

⁷⁰ This attitude is reminiscent of the way Ezra Pound used publication in periodicals to establish the symbolic capital of his own work and of the work of T.S. Eliot. See Rainey, Laurence, “The Cultural Economy of Modernism”, in: Michael Levenson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.p.3-69.

there Politis produced thirty-four plays, the majority of which were classical masterpieces. His productions were distinguished for their aesthetic quality. Actually it was Politis' 1932 and 1933 productions of *Agamemnon* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* that triggered off Koun's career in theatre. As Koun confessed he owed the decision to be professionally engaged in theatre directing to these two productions.⁷¹

Politis' catalytic presence has to be attributed mostly to his *habitus*. His fierce insistence on criteria for the assessment of works of art and the passionate and forceful way in which he criticised the works of others, especially when they did not meet his standards, reveal in a sense that Politis had somehow adopted in his *habitus* the notion of the individual as a *Sturm und Drang* 'tragic hero'. It is probably this trait of his *habitus* that led him to acquire risky positions in the field of literary criticism as well as in theatre. One of the most notable manifestations of his *habitus* was the issue of opposition. Politis usually opposed other people's work when it did not meet his standards and he explained very thoroughly the basis of his opposition. The attitude of opposition based on a thorough criticism and debate originated from Politis' family background. His father, Nikólaos Politis, who was the founder of the studies of Greek popular culture, had instilled this attitude in Politis since his early adolescence.⁷² In a sense this characteristic trait of his personality may also explain the influence he exercised on others and on the 'sub-field of restricted production' in Bourdieu's terms.

⁷¹ See Koun's interview with Giorgos Pilichós, *Ta Néa*, February 24th, 1987.

⁷² Giorgos Politis, Fotos' brother, noted that from the age of fourteen their father, who was at that time a member of the committee in the Annual Contest for new Modern Greek plays, used to give them to read the plays submitted. Then he would have long discussions and debates on the quality of the plays with his sons expecting from them a thorough well-thought out criticism. Πολίτης, Γιώργος, «Τά πρώτα βήματα στην κριτική και στο θέατρο» ("The First Steps in Criticism and in Theatre"), *Νέα Έστία*, vol 56, no 658, 1st December 1954, p.p. 1707-11.

The work of the directors in the first phase of the structuring and development of the 'sub-field of restricted production' in Bourdieu's terms is completed with Politis' presence in the field. This work consisted of two distinct propositions of an aesthetic style in tragedy that did, however, move within a common base. This consisted of the aim of the performances being to render the ancient genre of tragedy without 'betraying' its form, the transmission of the 'deeper meaning' of the tragic plays, which was considered to be 'eternal', the use in performance of literary translations of the plays in *demotiki*, and, finally, the proposition of aesthetic styles that drew from the entirety of what was considered to be 'Greek' culture, emphasising the use of more recent cultural references in order to understand and transmit the 'meaning' of the play. Thus the basic principles of the aesthetic framework that became known as the 'revival of ancient tragedy' were established by Politis' and the Sikelianoí's productions. Furthermore their productions of tragedy had established the notion of 'purely Greek' works of art, meeting the two fundamental challenges that the constitution of 'Greek' culture faced during that period, as I explained them in the previous chapters. The first consisted of the particular way in which Ancient Greek tragedy would be creatively incorporated in Modern Greek theatre. The second consisted of the unavoidable reference to the European theatrical tradition in such a way that it would lead to styles of performances that could claim an originality which would be characterised as 'purely Greek' and thus they would face Europe as a rival. In that sense it is my contention that Politis and the Sikelianoí established the ground upon which stood the production of the theatre directors of the next stage in the development of the 'sub-field'. As I will argue in the next two chapters, the work of both

Dimitris Rondiris and Károlos Koun drew from and referred implicitly or explicitly in the work of Politis and the Sikelianoí.

Chapter V

Dimitris Rondiris: Sophocles' "Electra", the National Theatre, 1936 and Peiraiκό Théatro 1959 as filmed in 1962

The Mystery of Eucharist offers a wealth of ideas with which we can emphasise the ceremonial character of Ancient Greek tragedy. [...] We think we have been able to take from Christian religion what we judge can serve our theatrical purpose, transmitting it to fit the tragedy we proposed to interpret.¹

The beginning of the second phase of the development of the 'sub-field of theatrical restricted production' in Greece can be set in the year 1934. The sudden death of Fotos Politis in 1934 led Dimitris Rondiris, a few months later, to undertake the position of Theatre Director of the National Theatre.² Károlos Koun, on the other hand, founded his first professional theatre company, the Laikí Skené, in 1934. The opposition of Dimitris Rondiris and Károlos Koun characterised the second stage of the development of the 'sub-field of theatrical restricted production'.

This second stage of the development of the 'sub-field' was based on the principles that were established by both the Sikelianoí and Politis. This involved the production of

¹ From Rondiris' interviews for IASTA (Institute for Advanced Studies in the Theatre Arts), 1961, 1965. Quotation taken from Bakopoulou-Halls, Alikí, "Greece", in: *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*, p. 271. Rondiris' views on this issue were previously expressed in Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Σκηνική έρμηνεία του αρχαίου δράματος» ("Stage Interpretation of Ancient Drama"), in: *Απόψεις, Εβδομάς Θεάτρου 1960 (Views, A Week of Drama, 1960)*, p.p. 77-80.

² The National Theatre was renamed the Royal Theatre after the restoration of monarchy in Greece in 1935 and it was called again the National Theatre in 1974 after a plebiscite that abolished monarchy. I will, however, use the name National Theatre even when I refer to the periods when it was named Royal in order not to confuse the reader.

performances of tragedy that could be characterised as ‘purely Greek’ works of art. These works of art promoted, as I explained in the first chapter, the idea of ‘Greek uniqueness’ and ‘Greek *Hellenism*’ and met the two challenges that Greek cultural production faced during that period. Thus the productions of tragedy of both Rondiris and Koun, as I will explain in the last two Chapters of this thesis, were based on the creative cultural appropriation of Ancient Greek tragedy within Modern ‘Greek’ culture and theatre and on the appropriation of European theatrical movements so as to produce aesthetic styles that, drawing on the entirety of ‘Greek’ culture, could claim an originality which could be characterised as ‘purely Greek’. In that sense, performances of tragedy were considered as ‘highbrow’ ‘Greek’ theatre and, by promoting ‘Greek *Hellenism*’, they faced Europe as a rival.

Rondiris’ and Koun’s performances developed and refined the aesthetic framework of the ‘revival of ancient tragedy’. In fact, it was during the second stage of the development of the ‘sub-field’ that the term ‘revival of ancient tragedies’ was widely established in reference to this aesthetic framework of performances especially by the National Theatre. The principles of this aesthetic framework, as I have argued in the previous chapters, were bequeathed by the work of the Sikelianoí and Politis. Within this context, as I will maintain, Rondiris’ and Koun’s work evolved, drawing implicitly or explicitly on the tradition of the performances of tragedy that both the Sikelianoí and Politis bequeathed.

The aesthetic styles of both Rondiris’ and Koun’s performances, like those of the Sikelianoí and Politis, were based on the way each one interpreted *hellenikótita* drawing on particular elements of what is regarded as ‘Greek’ culture and tradition. I will further

argue that their perception of *hellenikótita* also functioned as a cultural filter of the stylistic features that they took from European theatre. The core of their aesthetic quests, therefore, was inseparably linked with the issue of *hellenikótita* and actually even more so than the Sikelianoí's and Politis' was. In fact, the principle of the 'Greekness' of the aesthetic style of the performances became the issue of dispute over the orthodoxy of the approach to tragedy, especially, as I will argue in the next chapter, on behalf of Koun. In that sense it is my contention that we can observe a shift of principle regarding the main issue of the opposition as this was vented between the Sikelianoí and Politis on the one hand, and Rondiris and Koun on the other.

As I explained in the previous chapters, the opposition between the Sikelianoí and Politis involved the issue of the orthodox way to render the genre of tragedy in contemporary 'Greek' terms. Thus it focussed on the issues of the rendering of the religiousness of tragedy and of the tragic chorus. In the second phase of the development of the 'sub-field', the opposition between Rondiris, Koun and the other agents in the 'field' involved directly the issue of the 'Greekness' of the performance. Thus the debate and dispute over the aesthetic styles of performances, especially on behalf of Koun's 'avant-garde' position, was explicitly linked with the ideologem of *hellenikótita*.³ In that sense the ideological relationship between the performances of tragedy in Greece and *hellenikótita* was explicitly manifested in the 'field'. It is my contention that this shift of principle towards a form of dispute which was more ideologically based makes apparent the

³ It is not coincidental that Koun introduced the issue of the *hellenikótita* of the aesthetic style of a performance of tragedy as his main principle of opposition to Rondiris' work. Koun, as I will argue in the next chapter, belonged in the cultural generation of the 1930s, which was linked with the issue of *hellenikótita* and 'Greek' art.

ground that had already been conquered and established in the 'sub-field' through the work of the Sikelianoí and Politis. This ground involved the notion that there is a 'Greek' way of rendering the genre of tragedy in contemporary Greek terms using European theatre tradition and drawing on the entirety of 'Greek' culture in order to approach tragedy aesthetically. Furthermore this 'Greek' way, although it moved within the aesthetic framework of 'revival', nevertheless allowed the freedom of a multiplicity of approaches. Thus, as I will argue, in the second phase of the development of the 'sub-field' the question raised was "what is the more 'Greek' way to perform tragedies". Within this context both Rondiris and Koun continued and developed further the discourse on tragedy and *hellenikótita*. In fact they raised the importance of the discourse and the symbolic capital it implied in relation to performances of tragedy by raising the stakes in the 'sub-field'.

The major contribution of Rondiris and Koun in the development of the 'sub-field of restricted production' in Bourdieu's terms, besides the aesthetic quests of each director, consisted of three issues. These issues, as I will maintain, raised the stakes in the 'sub-field'. The first issue involved the promotion and recognition of the performances of ancient tragedy as a 'Greek' cultural product outside the borders of Greece, in Europe, the U.S.A. and elsewhere. From the 1950s onwards the National Theatre, the Peiraikó Théatro and the Théatro Technis frequently toured abroad with productions of tragedy and ancient comedy and participated in international festivals thus achieving international recognition. It is my contention that the 'export' of 'Greek' performances of tragedy abroad raised the stakes in the 'sub-field' because the symbolic capital that a theatre

director could acquire was raised by his international recognition.⁴ The rise in the stakes in the 'sub-field', however, was also enhanced by the establishment of the Athens and the Epidaurus Festivals. The participation in these Festivals was a form of legitimisation of the participant theatre company and the director. In fact from 1955 to 1974 the National Theatre performed exclusively in the Epidaurus Festival that was dedicated to performances of ancient drama. Finally, the third issue of Rondiris' and Koun's contribution involved the creation of two Schools of performance, especially in relation to acting style, and the creation in both Rondiris' and Koun's capacity as theatre teachers of a long line of apprentices, actors as well as directors, who in due course made successful careers. In that sense the stakes in the field involved not only the symbolic capital of a director's own work but also the legacy that he left behind. Within this framework, however, the development of the sub-field progressed in a way that was more and more linked to the field's own specific history in Bourdieu's terms. It is my contention therefore that in this second phase of the development of the 'sub-field' we can distinguish the structuring of an implicit history of the field as a form of continuity between the recent past, the present and the future.

The structure of the field presented an anomaly in its passage from the first to the second phase of its development in terms of Bourdieu's model of the structure of a 'sub-field of cultural production'. The sudden death of Fotos Politis in 1934 signified the sudden closure of the first stage of the development of the 'sub-field'. This sudden closure occurred before the 'sub-field' had reached the point where it clearly prepared the ground

⁴ During this period, that is from 1934 until 1967, all theatre directors of performances of tragedy were male.

for the future ‘position-takings’ in relation to the proposed approaches and styles of performances. Politis’ sudden death enforced the absence of the opposition that would normally have been vented in Bourdieu’s model between him and Rondiris with Politis holding the ‘consecrated position-taking’ in the ‘sub-field’ as Theatre Director of the National Theatre.⁵

Rondiris not only did not embark on a dispute with Politis over the orthodoxy of his approach to tragedy from an ‘avant-garde position-taking’ but his undertaking of the position of Theatre Director of the National Theatre after Politis’ death placed him in a sense automatically in the ‘consecrated position-taking’ of the ‘sub-field’. Thus it is my contention that Rondiris through his positioning as Theatre Director of the National Theatre inherited both Politis’ ‘consecrated position-taking’ and the symbolic capital that this position already held, a capital which would ‘normally’ have belonged to Politis.

The coincidental movement of Rondiris to this ‘consecrated position-taking’ was fortunately met with the necessary credits and *habitus* on behalf of Rondiris which enabled him to represent and defend the possession of such high symbolic capital bequeathed to him. Before 1934 Rondiris had not only already presented the profile of an artist who seriously sought aesthetic perfection in his work, but as a theatre director he had had the best formal training available at the time in comparison to the other agents in the field. This, besides his training as an actor, involved studies in Germany and Austria

⁵ In the course of his long career Rondiris served in the National Theatre as the leading theatre director from 1934 to 1942, and as theatre director and general director of the company from 1946 to 1950 and from 1953 to 1955.

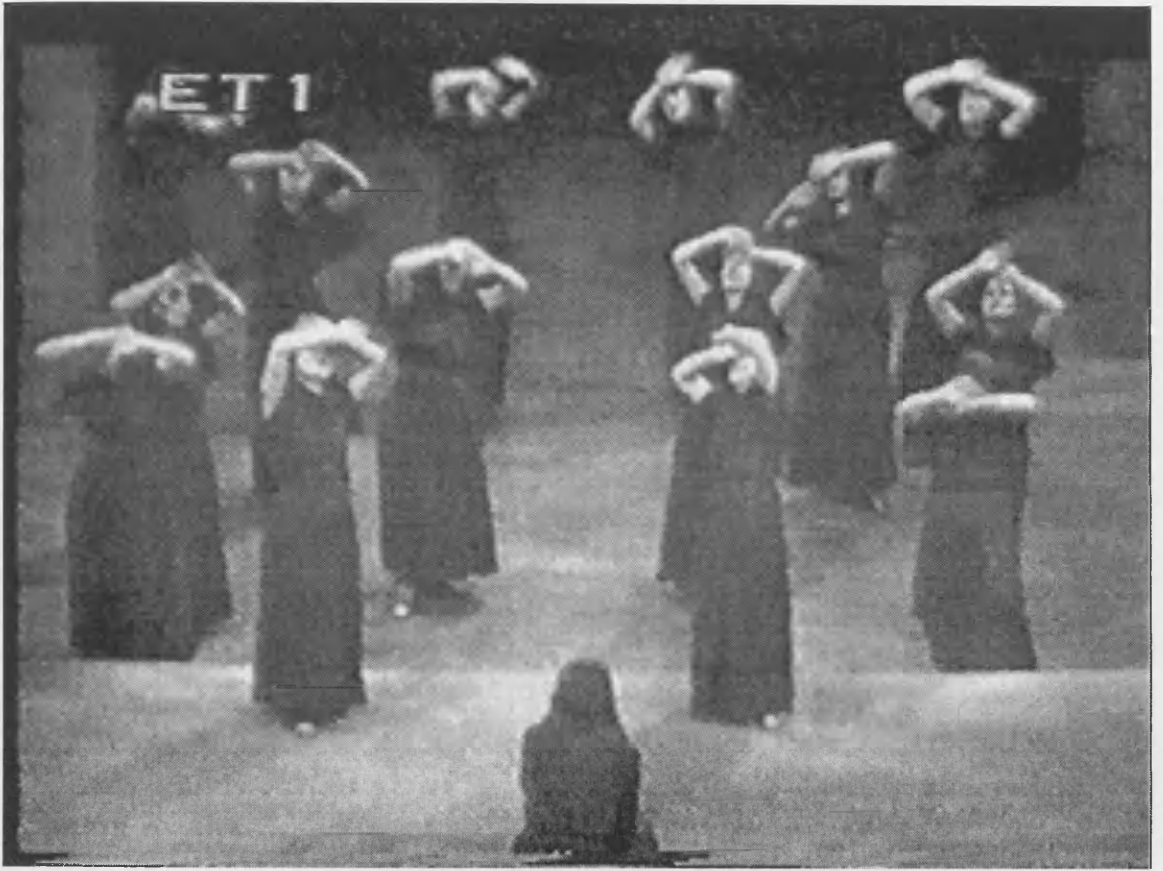


Photo 31 Chorus, Sophocles' *Electra*, the Peiraiikó Théatro

from 1930 to 1933 where he attended classes in the History of Art Institute in the University of Vienna and theoretical and practical classes in Max Reinhardt's Seminar.⁶ Georgoussópoulos notes that Rondiris worked as the chief Assistant to Reinhardt in the Salzburg Festivals.⁷ The Academy of Athens and the National Theatre subsidised his studies in Germany and Austria.

Returning from his studies abroad in 1933, Rondiris was employed by the National Theatre as an assistant director to Fotos Politis and after Politis' death he was proposed for and undertook the position of Theatre Director of the National Theatre, assuming also the 'consecrated position taking' in the 'sub-field'.⁸ From 1933 onwards Rondiris turned completely to theatre direction, abandoning acting. From his first productions in the National Theatre it became apparent that he had already formed a completely personal

⁶ Dimitris Rondiris was the youngest son of the judge Achilles Rondiris and Kostoula Levantí. Unknown to his family he started his studies in theatre in 1918, when he was nineteen years old. He began his training in the *Etaireia Ellinikou Theatrou* where Politis was a founding member and the theatre director. Rondiris disagreed, however, with the Drama School's decision to shorten the completion of the training studies, offering their students the opportunity to participate in Politis' 1919 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus*. He believed that his training was not sufficient to allow him to act. He continued his training in the *Théatron Odeiou* where he worked as an actor under the direction of Thomás Oikonomou who, as Rondiris claimed, essentially initiated him in the art of acting. Besides this training, between 1923 and 1927 he worked as an actor with the theatre company of Marika Kotopouli, one of the two most respected theatre companies of the time. In 1928 and 1930 he directed Manolis Kalomoiris' musical dramas *Mother's ring* (*To δαχτυλίδι της μάνας*) and *The Master Builder* (*Ο πρωτομάστορας*) respectively. Dimitris Mitrópoulos, the orchestra conductor of the second production, impressed by his work, proposed him for the scholarship he was eventually granted by the Academy of Athens. Fotos Politis supported Rondiris' candidacy for the scholarship and arranged for its extension until 1933. One may notice that Rondiris' training has a lot in common with Politis' path to theatre. Whereas, however, in the case of Politis, as far as we know, we may speak of an indirect training in the form of influence, or rather, inspiration especially in regard to Max Reinhardt, Rondiris completed a more formal theatre training as a theatre director. Rondiris' training also included Politis' teaching, but Rondiris himself referred to Politis as a friend rather than a teacher and he did not acknowledge Politis' influence on his work. See Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, *Σελίδες Αυτοβιογραφίας* (*An Autobiography*), Καγκελλάρη, Δηώ (ed.), Athens: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1999.

⁷ Γεωργουσόπουλος, Κώστας, «Δημήτρης Ροντήρης (1899-1981)» ("Dimitris Rondiris, 1899-1981"), in: Ασπασία Παπαθανασίου and Κάτια Αρφαρά (eds.), *Η σκηνοθετική προσέγγιση του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος από τον Δημήτρη Ροντήρη: 100 χρόνια από τη γέννησή του* (*The Directorial Approach to Ancient Greek Drama of Dimitris Rondiris: 100 Years after his Birth*), Athens: Κέντρο Έρευνας και πρακτικών εφαρμογών του αρχαίου δράματος «Δεσμοί», 1999, p.p. 6-10.

style in theatre direction. And even more important was the fact that he had formed the conception of an aesthetic approach and style in performances of tragedy. Rondiris' work consists of the core of what became known as the School of the National Theatre. His views on tragedy dominated the style of the performances of this company and formed the stylistic base for the aesthetic approaches to tragedy of other directors of the company like Alexis Minotis and Takis Mouzenidis.⁹

The fact that during this period the School of the National Theatre evolved has to be attributed also to Rondiris' impact as a theatre teacher. He is considered today to be one of the most important Greek theatre teachers. In fact it is worth noting that Rondiris proposed the framework of the curriculum of studies that the current law anticipates for theatre training.¹⁰ He worked as theatre teacher in the Drama School of the National Theatre from 1933, when he came back from abroad, to 1954 that he was forced to leave the National Theatre and from then on in the Drama School of the Odion Athinón. Rondiris was the first theatre teacher in Greece to provide his students with a method of acting. The central axis of this method was the training of the actor's/actress' voice, because the voice, as an instrument, was responsible for the elocution of dramatic speech which for Rondiris was the essence of theatre. The training of the voice was based not only on a series of demanding breathing and voice exercises, but also on the training of the whole body to be able to support and enhance the force of the voice required in strong

⁸ In its beginning the National Theatre employed only one theatre director who directed all the plays of the company.

⁹ Although differences in the style of individual directors may be noticed, the emphasis on the individual, the dramatic poetic language and the style of elocution can be attributed to Rondiris' style.

¹⁰ Γεωργουσόπουλος, Κώστας, «Μακαριά για το Δάσκαλο» (“*Makariá* for the Teacher”), in: Θανάσης Λάλας (ed.), *Με τους μαθητές του Ροντήρη για τον Ροντήρη* (*With Rondiris' Students about Rondiris*), Athens: Εκδόσεις, 2001, p.p. 9-13.

dramatic scenes, especially those of tragedy.¹¹ Next to voice training, almost of equal importance, was the teaching of the elocution of the Greek language itself. Rondiris paid a lot of attention to the right punctuation and the right colorization of the language so that the elocution of the dramatic speech would convey the meaning of the text in an infallible Greek way. And finally came the “technique of the movement and of emotions”. As Alekos Alexandrakis records, Rondiris insisted not only in “finding and feeling” the character’s right emotion in a scene, but also in “finding a way to transmit it”.¹² Among Rondiris’ students are some of the most famous Greek actors and actresses, such as Melina Merkouri, Dimitris Chorn, Alekos Alexandrakis, Anna Sinodinou, Aspasia Papathanassiou, Vasso Manolidou, Titos Vandis, and Aliki Vougiouklaki.

It is worth noting that Rondiris preserved one of the most ‘consecrated position-takings’ in the ‘sub-field’ throughout his career even after he was forced to leave the National Theatre in 1954 due to the aspirations of other directors like Alexis Minotis.¹³ He founded the Peiraikó Théatro in 1957 and was soon devoted almost exclusively to productions of

¹¹ The majority of Rondiris’ training exercises were most probably devised by him. Rondiris’ interest in training the voice and the body to support the voice started at the beginning of his career as an actor. As Veakis recorded, Rondiris was exceptionally passionate in his acting, like “a volcano that boiled inside him”, which “in order to find a crater to explode, could crush beyond repair his slim, young body”. To counterbalance the weakness of his physical characteristics with his inner passion in acting, Rondiris devised a series of training exercises which he kept improving on with the years and which formed part of his theatre teaching. Βεάκης, Αιμίλιος, «Ο Αιμίλιος Βεάκης για το μαθητή και δάσκαλό του Ροντήρη» (“Aimilios Veakis for his Student and his Teacher, Dimitris Rondiris”), in: Θανάσης Λάλας (ed.), *Με τους μαθητές του Ροντήρη για τον Ροντήρη (With Rondiris’ Students about Rondiris)*, p. 15.

¹² Αλεξανδράκης, Αλέκος, «Αλέκος Αλεξανδράκης» (“Alekos Alexandrakis”), in: Θανάσης Λάλας (ed.), *Με τους μαθητές του Ροντήρη για τον Ροντήρη (With Rondiris’ Students about Rondiris)*, p. 20.

¹³ See Κανάκης, Βασίλης, *Εθνικό Θέατρο, Εξήντα Χρόνια Σκηνή και Παρασκήνιο (National Theatre: Sixty Years of Stage and Backstage)*, p.p. 174- 80 and Συνοδινού, Άννα, *Πρόσωπα και Προσωπεία, Αυτοβιογραφικό Χρονικό (Persons and Masks: An Autobiography)*, Athens: Αδελφοί Γ. Βλάσση, 1998, p.p.87-91.

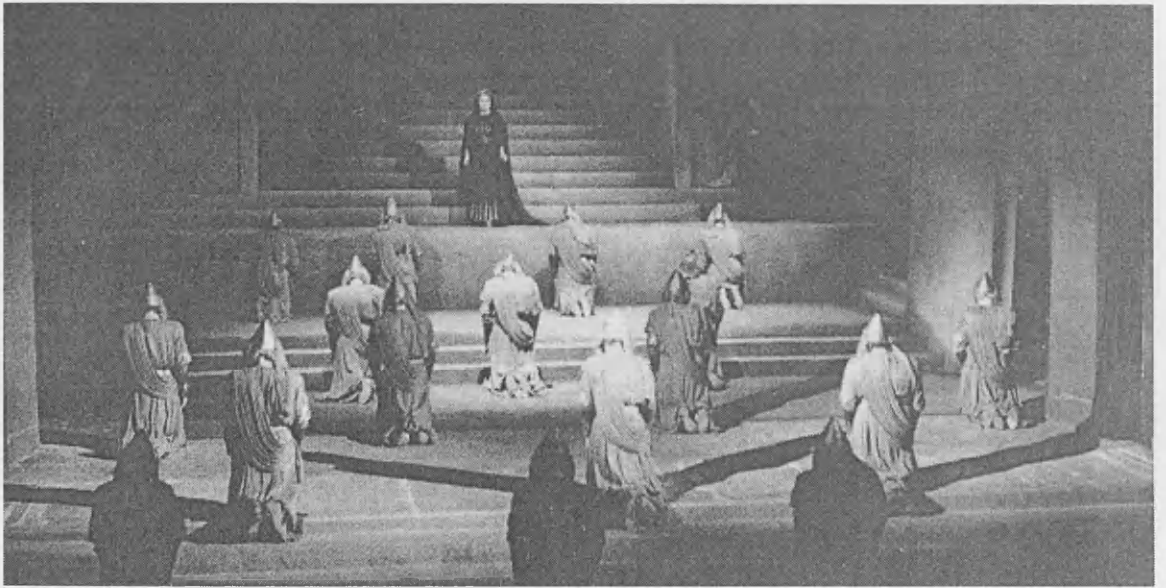


Photo 32 Aeschylus' *Persae*, the National Theatre 1946

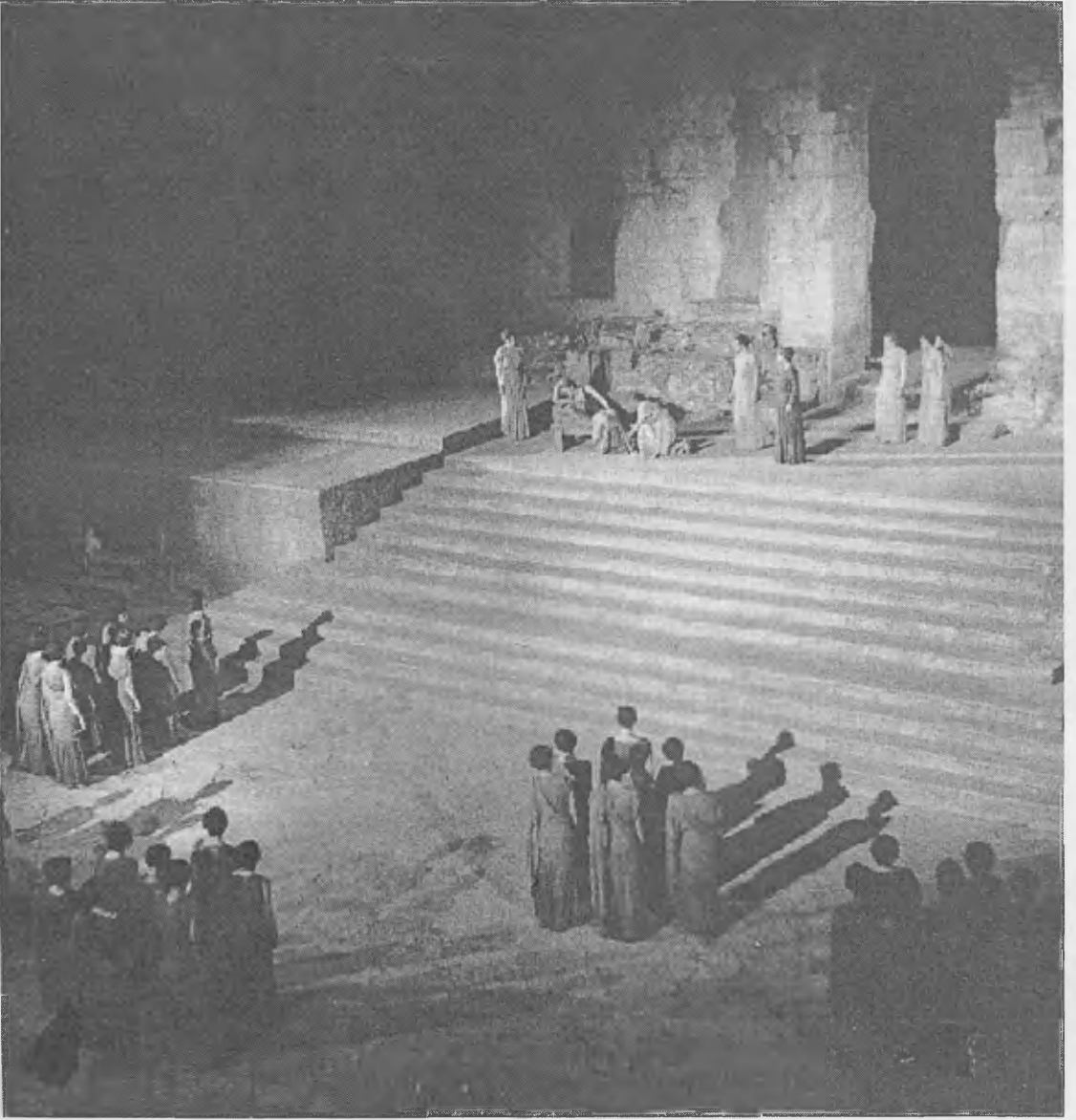


Photo 33 Euripides' Hippiolytus, the National Theatre 1937

ancient tragedy. With the Peiraikó Théatro Rondiris systematically toured abroad, performing his productions of tragedy literally all over the world and participating in International Festivals.¹⁴ His productions, together with Koun's, were recognised worldwide as the 'Greek' way of performing tragedies. In this sense Rondiris in the entirety of his career managed to raise the symbolic capital of his work due to the international recognition of his performances, raising also the stakes in the field.

Rondiris' dominance in the 'sub-field of restricted theatrical production' reveals some of the particular traits of his *habitus*. Although in his *Autobiography* he usually tried to present himself as a modest person, who was surprised by the impact of his work on others, Rondiris firmly believed in the importance and value of his work. He was very critical of the work of others and placed himself in the position of someone who had very high standards of work. In that sense Rondiris' *habitus* bears some similarities with that of Politis as far as his self-image was concerned and his interaction with others, although Rondiris did not have Politis' wide range of interests and he did not leave a substantial body of written work on theatre theory.¹⁵ It is also partially due to his *habitus* that Rondiris never admitted explicitly or implicitly drawing on the work of other artists, although there are also other explanations for this attitude, as I will explain later on. And

¹⁴ See Κρίτας, Θεόδωρος, «Ἡ μοναδικότητα του Δημήτρη Ροντήρη» ("Dimitris Rondiris' Uniqueness"), in: Θεόδωρος Κρίτας, *Το θέατρο στον κόσμο (Theatre all Around the World)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1997, p.p. 32-9.

¹⁵ Even in his *Autobiography* Rondiris was more concerned with personal material than providing an insight into his approach to theatre and tragedy.

at times he even seemed surprised to be accused of introducing German aesthetic traits in his style.¹⁶

Rondiris did not seem to experiment or fundamentally change his aesthetic style in the course of his career. The main aesthetic features of his style were prominent from his very first production, the 1936 National Theatre production of Sophocles' *Electra*. In a comparison between this production and the 1959 Peiraikó Théatro production of the same play, it becomes clear that Rondiris worked within the same interpretative approach to the play, refining some of the aesthetic elements of his style. For example, he cut down the number of chorus members and chorus leaders, and he developed the reciting mode of the first stasimon and the closing lines of the chorus at the end of the play into singing.¹⁷

¹⁶ See, for example, Ποντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Με αφορμή τη σκηνοθεσία του *Ιππόλυτου*» (“On the Occasion of Directing *Hippolytus*”), in: *Η σκηνοθετική προσέγγιση του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος από τον Δημήτρη Ποντήρη: 100 χρόνια από τη γέννησή του (The Directorial Approach to Ancient Greek Drama of Dimitris Rondiris: 100 Years after his Birth)*, p. 14 (fragment from a Rondiris interview originally published in *Βραδυνή*, 17-3-1954).

¹⁷ In the programme of the 1936 production there are six chorus leaders and fifty-eight chorus members recorded. Rodás in his review of the performance notes that the chorus members were more than sixty, Ροδάς, Μιχάλης, «Ἡ χθεσινή τῆς *Ἠλέκτρας*» (“Yesterday’s Opening Night of *Electra*”), *Ἐλεύθερον Βῆμα*, 4-10-1936. The creative team of the 1936 National Theatre production of Sophocles' *Electra* was: I. Gryparis: translator; D. Mitrópoulos: composition of music; D. Rondiris: direction; Kl. Klonis: set design; A. Fokás: Costume design; G. Likoudis: conductor of the orchestra; Áγγελος Grimanis: responsible for the chorus; The cast was: N. Rozán: Pedagogus; Th. Kotsópoulos: Orestes; K. Paxinoú: Electra; Vasso Manolidou: Chrysothemis; Eleni Papadaki: Clytemnestra; G. Glinós: Aigisthus; Ath. Moustaka: first chorus leader; T. Vandís: Pylades; The chorus comprised: Nelli Marselou-Glikofridi, Thalia Kalligá, Maria Alkaiou, Nitsa Zafiriou, Titika Nikiforaki, Mary Lekkou: chorus leaders, F. Konstantinidou, Lia Kapetanaki, K. Papaleonardou, L. Apsouri, El. Avlonitou, Efi Palamidou, A. Parisi, Mel. Mitsaki, D. Ladopoulou, Ant. Várvogli, Asp. Dessilla, St. Gavriel, Ism. Várvogli, El. Drakaki, Aik. Georgakopoulou, M. Xanthopoulou, El. Pashali, K. Schiná, Anna Pils, Kl. Tsaliki, Ath. Dimitrea, S. Krakofska, G. Papageorgiou, Ir. Zóúkova, Th. Panagiotopoulou, Z. Rizou, Elli Douka, El. Skitsou, Tz. Despouni, G. Basiliadou, P. Papadea, Rita Anagianni, Ath. Kalogridou, Ivi Razí, Dion. Koumariotou, V. Boura, S. Notará, Th. Alexopoulou, Diana Fournaraki, M. Halkiá, N. Bartzopoulou, Am. Panagiotopoulou, N. Halkiá, Dora Grispu, Am. Servou, R. Pagoulatou, M. Vasiliadou, Koula Servou, M. Pagoulatou, Ath. Fameliari, Nitsa Sourso, H. Poulίου, M. Papaleonardou, Litsa Roussou, P. Lantiniotou, El. Fameliari, N. Memou, M. Spíliou: chorus members, and ten more attendants to Clytemnestra. Source: the programme of the 1936 Sophocles' *Electra* production of the National Theatre. In the 1959 production the members of the chorus were fourteen divided into two semi-choruses with two chorus leaders. The text in the 1962 BBC film of the production underwent a great number of cuts to the point that the duration of the performance did not exceed fifty-three minutes. The promptbook of the 1936 production however, has very few cuts and the

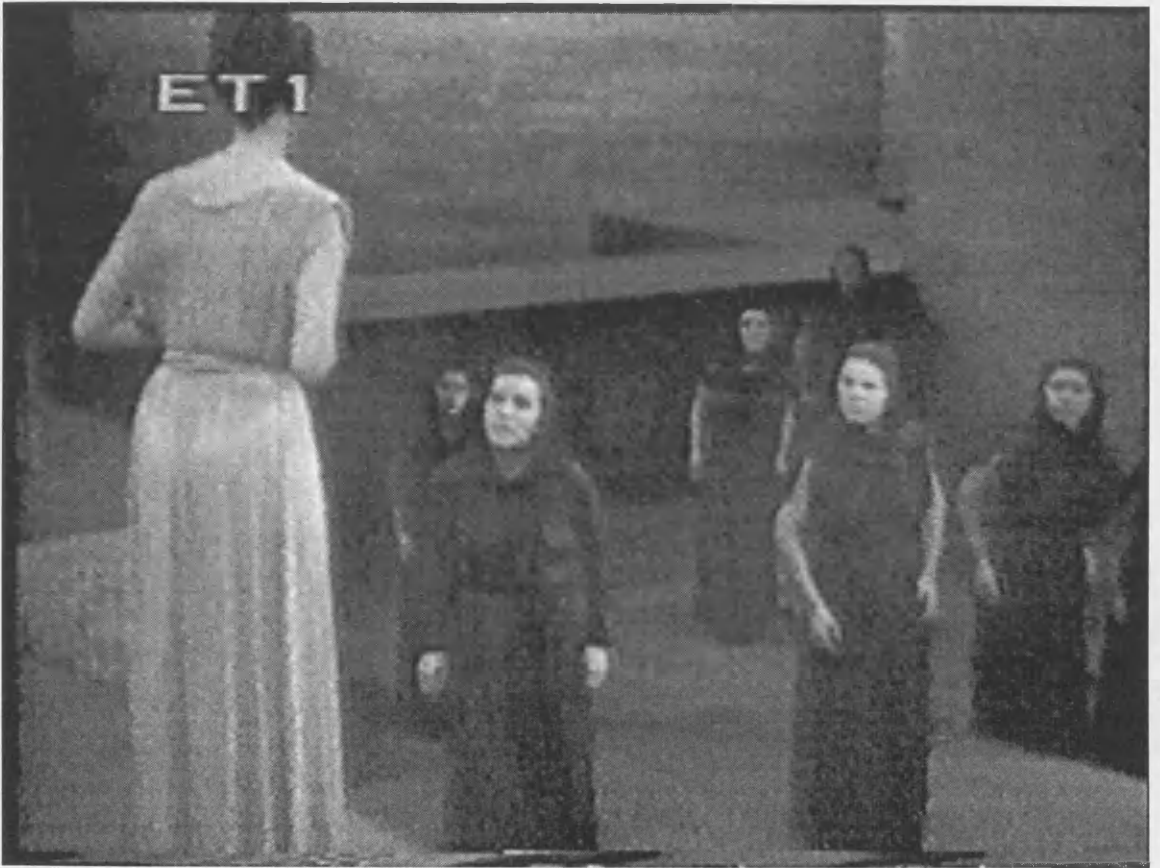


Photo 34 Chrysothemis, Electra, Chorus, Sophocles' *Electra*, the Peiraikó Théatro

performance, as stated in newspapers comments, lasted two hours. See «Τὸ Βασιλικὸν θέατρον, Ἡ χθεσινὴ τῆς Ἡλέκτρας» (“The Royal Theatre, Last Night’s Performance of *Electra*”), *Πρωία*, 4-10-1936. The creative team of the 1962 film of the Peiraikó Théatro production was: Ioannis Griparis: translator; Dimitris Rondiris: direction; Loukia: choreographer; Konstantinos Kidoniatis: composition of music. The cast was: Antónios Xenakis: Paedagogus; Dimitrios Veakis: Orestes; Giannis Males: Pylades; Aspasia Papathanassiou: Electra; Anthí Kariofilli: Chrysothemis; Georgia Sarrí: Clytemnestra; Dimitris Malavetas: Aigisthus; Dora Volanaki, Eleni Zerra, Eleni Papadmopoulou: chorus leaders. The names of the chorus members are not mentioned. Source: the BBC film of the Peiraikó Théatro production of Sophocles’ *Electra*.

Both productions, however, were based on Rondiris' basic principle of the rhythmic elocution of the poetic language. The rhythm of the elocution in the two productions is similar and at times identical.¹⁸ Within this framework the principal aesthetic characteristics of Rondiris' aesthetic style of productions of tragedy had been more or less set from the beginning of his career as a theatre director.

Rondiris' approach to tragedy followed Politis' principles about the importance of the poetic language of tragedy and the emphasis on the individual.¹⁹ Rondiris' performances aimed at the adequate artistic projection of the tragic poetic language in contemporary 'Greek' terms. The aesthetic axis of his style of the performances of tragedy was the

¹⁸ This was so for both the chorus and the protagonists. In terms of the chorus, the most notable example of this similarity between the two productions was the reaction of the chorus to the news of Orestes' death in the second episode. In both performances the reaction was manifested by the entire body of the chorus, although usually in the episodes only the chorus leaders participated in the dialogue. More importantly, however, the rhythm of this scene was identical in the two performances; it was a very slow rhythm emphasising each syllable within a count of eight or four beats with the rhythmic accompaniment of drums. The text in the 1936 promptbook is marked as follows,

8/ ὦ̄ / 4/ ὦ̄ / 6/ (̇) ἄλ/ λίμνο/ νό/ - / μου/ - / (̇) /
 (̇) ἄλ/ λί/ μο/ νο/ - / (̇) λοι/ πὸν/ σύρριζα/
 /χάθηκε/ (̇) / ὄπως/ φαίνεται/ (̇) / (̇) /
 /ὄλο/ τῶν παλαι/ ὦν κυ/ ρίων/ μας τὸ/
 /γέ/ - /νος/ - /

Alas, Alas! The whole family of our ancient masters, it seems, is destroyed root and branch. [Translated from the original ancient text by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, see Lloyd-Jones, Hugh (ed. and trans.), *Sophocles I: Ajax, Electra. Oedipus Tyrannus*, The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994] The elocution of the 1959 production, as it was filmed in 1962, was rhythmically identical. In terms of the protagonists there is a striking similarity between Katina Paxinou in the recording of the *parodos* and the first episode in the 1936 production and Aspasia Papatthanassiou in the corresponding scenes in the 1962 film of the 1959 production. The two sections are acoustically so similar in terms of the rhythm, the intonations and colorizations of the text and the emotions depicted to the point that we may easily speak of the existence of a common musical 'score' in both productions. The astonishing similarity of these two documents reveals that the elocution in these scenes in both productions was based on the same interpretation and the same stylistic/aesthetic concept of rendering the text. Moreover these similarities make apparent the fact that the acting style of the two actresses in the part of Electra evolved within Rondiris' very precise directorial perception of the way these parts should be played.

¹⁹ See, Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Σκηηνική ἐρμηνεία τοῦ ἀρχαίου δράματος» («Stage Interpretation of Ancient Drama»), in: *Απόψεις, Εβδομάς Θεάτρου 1960 (Views, A Week of Drama, 1960)*, p.p. 77-80.

conception of the performance as a ‘musical composition’ which was based on a particular mode of rhythmic elocution of the dramatic poetic language, which he invented based on the rhythm and musicality of the Greek language.²⁰ Within this aesthetic framework he focused on the juxtaposition of the individual protagonists to the collectivity of the chorus which was expressed both in terms of acoustics and movement. He drew the particular aesthetic elements that composed his aesthetic style from the entirety of ‘Greek’ culture and he combined them into an aesthetic whole in such a refined way that it is difficult, even impossible, to isolate specific aesthetic or cultural references.

I will elaborate on Rondiris’ aesthetic style in relation to two of his productions, the 1936 National Theatre production of Sophocles’ *Electra*, and the 1962 BBC film of the Peiraikó Théatro production of the same play in order to show the mode in which he conceived the issue of *hellenikótita* and the style of the performance of tragedy.²¹ The second production of *Electra* (originally performed in 1959) became internationally famous, since in 1961 Aspasia Papathanassiou won the first prize for her acting in the part of Electra in the International Festival of *Le Théâtre des Nations*. My sources

²⁰ The term ‘musical composition’ was used by Aspasia Papathanassiou in the lecture she gave in the Department of Theatre Studies in the University of Patras in May 2000 and it is my contention that it is the best definition of Rondiris’ conception of performance.

²¹ Sophocles’ *Electra* was first produced by the Peiraikó Théatro in 1959. With this production the Peiraikó Théatro toured abroad. The cast altered in different performances with the exception of Aspasia Papathanassiou who acted the part of Electra. However, as Papathanassiou implied in her lecture in the University of Patras, the aesthetic concept of the performance remained the same despite the changes in the cast. This thesis discusses the production as it was filmed by the BBC in 1962. Sophocles’ *Electra* was one of Rondiris’ favorite plays. It was the first ancient tragedy he directed and one he produced frequently in his career. Among the nineteen times he produced this play two are considered to be the most important, the 1936 National Theatre production and the 1959 Peiraikó Théatro one. The time distance between these two productions allowed me to examine whether and in what way Rondiris’ style evolved through the years. One other play that Rondiris also produced quite frequently in the course of his career was

include the promptbook of the 1936 National Theatre production of *Electra*, an acoustic document of Katina Paxinoú acting the part of *Electra* in the first episode of the play, photographs, and the 1962 BBC film of the 1959 Peiraikó Théatro production.²²

Rondiris' aesthetic style in tragedy drew on some of Reinhardt's concepts on theatre - especially those expressed in his giant productions of *Jedermann* and *as Grosse Welttheater* performed in the Salzburg Festivals, in which Rondiris participated as Reinhardt's first assistant- and developed along some of Politis' principles on the performances of tragedy. However, Rondiris renegotiated both Reinhardt's concepts and Politis' principles within his own notion of *hellenikótita* and performance to create an original aesthetic style that could claim its 'Greekness' by drawing on 'Greek' cultural references. Thus Rondiris' work in tragedy met the two crucial challenges that Greek culture faced during this period, the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the contemporary Greek cultural terms and the use of the European theatrical tradition in such a way that it would lead to original 'Greek' styles of performances that faced Europe as a rival. In this sense his performances could be recognised as 'purely Greek' and take part in the constitution of 'Greek' culture during this period.

Rondiris drew mainly from Reinhardt his fascination with the sensuous quality of the Catholic Church rites, the principle of the juxtaposition of the protagonists to the mass of the chorus, the mode of *sprechchor* for the chorus songs, and the importance of music and

Aeschylus' *Persae*. There are not, however, sufficient documents to allow me to study thoroughly Rondiris' development in directing as there are with the productions of *Electra*.

²² This acoustic document has been recorded and published in a compact disk produced by PolyGram Records S.A., Greece, executive producer, Manos Chatzidakis (Original production 1975, reproduced in 1994).

rhythm.²³ He renegotiated, however, as I will argue, and transubstantiated these aesthetic references in ‘Greek’ cultural terms. Reinhardt’s fascination with the sensuous quality of the Catholic Church rites became Rondiris’ use of the Greek Orthodox Liturgy in order to approach and render the religious element of tragedy. As Rondiris stated in an interview he gave for IASTA (Institute for Advanced Studies in the Theatre Arts) the typical ritual of the Mystery of Eucharist provided for him sufficient elements to underline the ritual element of tragedy.²⁴ In this sense the particular structure of the ritual of the Mystery especially the *Anaphora* in combination with its subject, the Sacrifice of Christ and His Resurrection constituted for him a more recent ‘Greek’ cultural ritualistic reference through which to approach and understand the religious content of tragedy.²⁵

Within this context most probably via Reinhardt, Rondiris introduced again the issue of the rendering of the religiousness of tragedy in the performance. In that sense he drew near the Sikelianoi’s approach and understanding of the genre.²⁶ And like the Sikelianoi,

²³ On Reinhardt’s fascination with the rites of the Catholic Church see Styan, J.L., *Max Reinhardt and Reinhardt, Max*, “The Theatre through Max Reinhardt’s eyes”, in: Oliver, M. Saylor (ed.), *Max Reinhardt and his theatre*, p.p.57-66. On Reinhardt’s use of music see Carter, Huntly, *The Theatre of Max Reinhardt*. On the issues of the juxtaposition of the protagonists to the mass of the chorus and *sprechchor* see previous chapter, p.p. 174-7 and 183-4.

²⁴ See Bakopoulou-Halls, Aliko, “Greece”, in: *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*, p. 271.

²⁵ In the content of the liturgy of Eucharist Rondiris probably found an equivalent to Ancient Greek rites in the framework that George Thomson understood them. Rondiris was quite influenced by George Thomson’s interpretation of rituals in Greece in relation to tragedy. See Γεωργουσόπουλος, Κώστας, «Τζωρτζ Τόμσον και Ροντήρης» (“George Thomson and Rondiris”), *Το Βήμα*, 9-3-1986. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* the liturgy had four major parts: 1) the *prothesis* rite or the preliminary preparation of the bread and wine; 2) *enarxis*, or introductory service of three antiphons, litanies and prayers; 3) the Liturgy of the Word, which opened with the Little Entrance and *Trisagion*, comprising scripture lections interspersed with psalmody and concluding with litanies and prayers; 4) the liturgy of Eucharist, which opened with the Great Entrance and included the preanaphoral rites, anaphoral dialogue, anaphora, precommunion, Communion, thanksgiving, and dismissal. *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Kazhdan, Alexander, P. (chief editor), New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

²⁶ There is no published document to account for Rondiris’ views on the Sikelianoi’s productions. Thus we do not know whether this reminiscence of the Sikelianoi’s approach regarding the religiousness of tragedy originated from the Sikelianoi’s productions, or from Reinhardt’s fascination with religion or both.

albeit in a more discreet manner, Rondiris also stressed the unity of ‘Greek’ culture through the ages, laying emphasis on Greek Orthodox religion. He argued, “studying the development of the Mystery of Eucharist we discover a substantial number of analogies and remnants of the [Ancient] Greek religion”.²⁷ Contrary to the Sikelianoí and to Reinhardt, however, Rondiris was not interested in exploring religiousness in order to create a ritualistic atmosphere in his performances of tragedy. He rather followed Politis’ principle on the perception of the performance as an ‘aesthetic whole and event’. He insisted on the “truly aesthetic pleasure of these performances”.²⁸ Thus, on a first level, he used the reference on the Greek Orthodox Liturgy in aesthetic rather than ritualistic terms to provide him with a more recent ‘Greek’ cultural reference within which he could culturally appropriate the genre of Greek tragedy within contemporary ‘Greek’ culture. In that sense Rondiris used as the basis of his approach to tragedy the doctrine of the capitalist aesthetic ideology, that is, the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages, as the Sikelianoí and Politis had before him.

It is my contention, however, that within the framework of its use as an aesthetic reference Rondiris also used the Greek Orthodox Liturgy as a Greek cultural reference within which he understood and transubstantiated in ‘Greek’ terms Reinhardt’s principle of the juxtaposition of the individual protagonists to the mass of the chorus. In the acoustic counterpoint of the reciting/chanting voice of the priest or priests to the chanting

²⁷ From Rondiris’ interviews for IASTA (Institute for Advanced Studies in the Theatre Arts), 1961, 1965. Quotation taken from Bakopoulou-Halls, Alikí, “Greece”, in: *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*, p. 271.

²⁸ Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Όχι μουσειακή αναπαράσταση, άμεση συγκίνηση του θεατή. Το βάρος στο καθαρά ανθρώπινο στοιχείο.» (“Not an Archaeological Representation. Direct Emotional Impact of the Audience. The weight on the Human Element”), *Θέατρο, Νίτσος, Κώστας* (ed.), vol. X, issue no 55-56, January-April 1977, p. 77.

voices of the church chanters Rondiris found a 'Greek' way to juxtapose acoustically the protagonists against the chorus. Within this context he conceived the interchange between actors and chorus as a musical counterpoint between individual voices that "tell or act" the story and collective voices that "comment" on the story or express a communal emotional impact in a similar way to the priests and chanters of the Orthodox Liturgy. One of the best examples of this musical counterpoint is the *kommos* in his 1959 *Electra* as filmed in 1962. In this scene the voice of Papathanassiou as Electra explored a wide range of tonalities in its lament and forms a counterpoint to the collective normal, bass tone of the chorus which expressed its lament in a range of different rhythms. On the whole, the way Rondiris used the Orthodox Liturgy is one of the most notable examples of the way he transubstantiated 'Greek' cultural references in purely aesthetic terms in such a way that these references were completely aesthetically integrated in the aesthetics of the total performance. Thus not only they were not singled out but also they contributed in the artistic pleasure of the performance.

The juxtaposition of individual characters against the chorus as a group was also stressed in the difference of movement between the protagonists and the chorus and the aesthetic counterbalance of this difference. As can be seen in the 1959 production of *Electra*, filmed in 1962, the movement of the chorus was collective and stylised. (See photo 31) The chorus members were usually divided into two semi-choruses, which between them created a constant change of aesthetic shapes according to the rhythm of elocution. In contrast the protagonists' movements were sparing save for these moments where they



Photo 35 Clytemestra, Paedagogus, Chorus, Sophocles' *Electra*, the Peiraikó Théatro

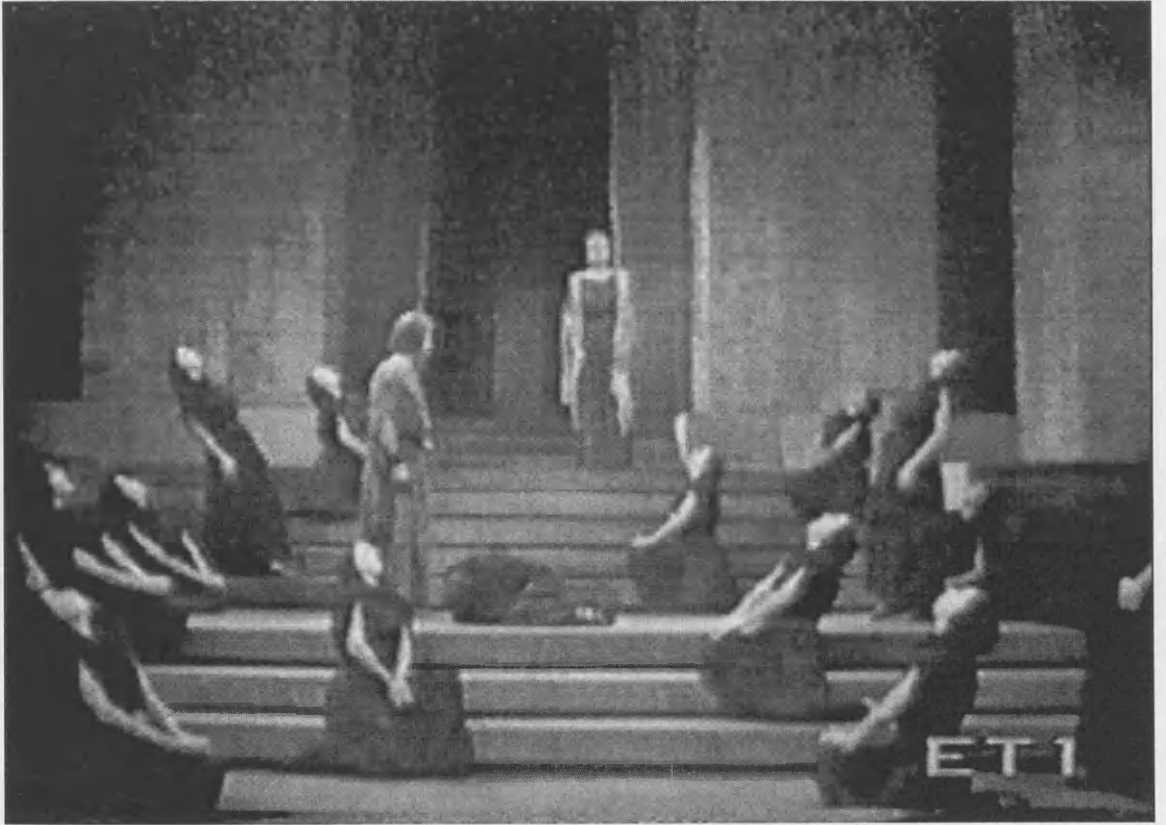


Photo 36 Clytemestra, Paedagogus, Electra, Chorus, Sophocles' *Electra*, the Peiraikó
Théatro

signified either the characters' emotional state or his/her relation to other characters.²⁹

Besides voice and movement, another aesthetic element that contributed to the juxtaposition of individual characters against the chorus was Rondiris' use of set. In all his productions Rondiris' sets referred aesthetically to Leopold Jessner's 'steps'.³⁰ A series of steps were placed in the centre of the stage that led to a palace or in the case of *Persae* to the tomb of Darius (see photo 32). With the use of one or two middle terraces the set provided five or seven acting levels (taking into consideration the steps). (See photo 33) As can be seen from photographs of productions and the production of the 1959 *Electra* filmed in 1962 the chorus was situated on the lower level, that is the level of the orchestra, the middle level and the steps. In all the performances of tragedy the protagonists usually used the higher levels and the top of the steps, although they could move on all levels in relation to the action. (See photo 34) Within this type of set Rondiris could first of all single out the protagonists from the chorus and place them almost in a hierarchical relationship with the protagonists in a higher position, especially the leading parts, and the chorus at the lower levels. (See photo 35)

This type of set provided also a wide range of possibilities to signify the protagonists' relationships between themselves and between them and the chorus. Rondiris used the hierarchical arrangement of this type of set to signify the protagonists' relations, their

²⁹ See also Bakopoulou-Halls, Alikí, "Greece", in: *Living Greek Theatre; A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*, p. 273.

³⁰ On Jessner's 'steps' see Styan, J.L., *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 3: Expressionism and Epic Theatre*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.p.74-5; Patterson, Michael, *The Revolution in German Theatre 1900-1933*; and Λυγίζος, Μήτσος, *Το νεοελληνικό πλάι στο Παγκόσμιο Θέατρο (Modern Greek Theatre next to World Theatre)*, vol. II, Athens: Εκδόσεις «Δωδώνη», 1980, 447-8.

status or feelings, and to render semantically actions within the play. Electra, for example, as depicted in the 1962 film of the 1959 production of *Electra*, used as her acting space mostly the steps and slightly less frequently the lower level. (See photo 34 above) The use of this acting space underlined in a sense her feelings of not belonging to the palace and thus of being closer to the 'common people' of the chorus. Clytemnestra, on the contrary, used the highest three of the seven levels of acting spaces underlying her royal dominance. (See photo 36) Moreover the schemes against Clytemnestra were discussed and planned on the lower level away from the palace and close to the people of the chorus. Thus in the prologue Paedagogus, Orestes and Pylades discuss their plans while positioned on the lower level. (See photo 37) In the first episode the scene in which Electra persuades Chrysothemis to disobey Clytemnestra and not to offer *choes* in her name was placed again in the orchestra. (See photo 38) Finally in the third episode, the scene where Electra, Orestes and the Paedagogus decide to assume action and kill Clytaemestra and Aigisthus was positioned again on the lower level. (See photo 39) In the first and the third case this positioning is explained by the characters taking measures not to be heard by the palace people. In the second case it is further justified by Chrysothemis being on her way to the grave of Agamemnon. Within that framework the positioning of action within the hierarchical arrangement of the stage was not abstract or symbolic, as in Jessner's case, but was confined within the logic of the play.

This hierarchical arrangement of actors and chorus on 'steps' was one of Rondiris' principal aesthetic elements of the stage image of his style in tragedy. He always conceived the visual image of the performance in relation to this hierarchical arrangement probably because it provided him with a wide range of semantic possibilities. At the same

time it contributed to the simplicity and frugality of the stage image that Rondiris believed were absolutely essential in regard to performances of tragedy.³¹ Rondiris' insistence on the use of this type of set can be seen in the 1939 National Theatre production of *Persae*. This production was in essence a repetition of the 1934 Politis production. Rondiris, however, placed the action on his usual set of steps and acting levels, cancelling Politis' dominant aesthetic principle of his 1934 *Persae* production. Furthermore, Rondiris used the technique of *sprechchor* in the elocution of the chorus.³² The aesthetic result of the 1939 *Persae* was so different from the original 1934 production that Alkis Thylyos reviewed the performance as a completely new one.³³

Rondiris' use of the mode of *sprechchor* in combination with the collective movement he employed in the chorus songs were mostly responsible for his being accused of introducing a German style in his productions. Rondiris' conception of the chorus is reminiscent of Reinhardt's tragic chorus conceived as a collective soul, body and voice that expressed itself always within the framework of its collectivity. He used chorus leaders only in the dialogic parts of the play, probably to retain the rhythm as the protagonists' elocution shaped it. In the chorus songs, however, the elocution was always

³¹ See Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Για μια σύγχρονη ερμηνεία του χορού, λυρικού στοιχείου της τραγωδίας» (“For a Contemporary Presentation of the Chorus, the Lyrical Element of Tragedy”), in: *Η σκηνοθετική προσέγγιση του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος από τον Δημήτρη Ροντήρη: 100 χρόνια από τη γέννησή του (The Directorial Approach to Ancient Greek Drama of Dimitris Rondiris: 100 Years after his birth)*, p. 12.

³² At least as Alkis Thylyos notes in the review of the performance. Θρύλος, Άλκης, «15 Ὀκτωβρίου 1939: Μία πλούσια θεατρική εβδομάδα» (“15th October 1939: A Rich Theatrical Week”), in: *Το ελληνικό θέατρο, (The Greek Theatre)*, vol. II, p. 433-442.

³³ Θρύλος, Άλκης, «15 Ὀκτωβρίου 1939: Μία πλούσια θεατρική εβδομάδα» (“15th October 1939: A Rich Theatrical Week”), in: *Το ελληνικό θέατρο, (The Greek Theatre)*, p.p. 438-9. It has to be noted, however, that Rondiris' original plan was to perform the play in the Herod Atticus Theatre late in October. Weather conditions forced him to transfer the performance in the indoor theatre of the National Theatre. Politis' set would not have worked aesthetically in an open-air theatre. It was designed for an indoor theatre where the width and height of the set covered completely the width and height of the opening of the stage. In an open-air theatre it would aesthetically be out of place.



Photo 37 Orestes, Paedagogus, Pylades, Sophocles' Electra, the Peiraikó Théatro

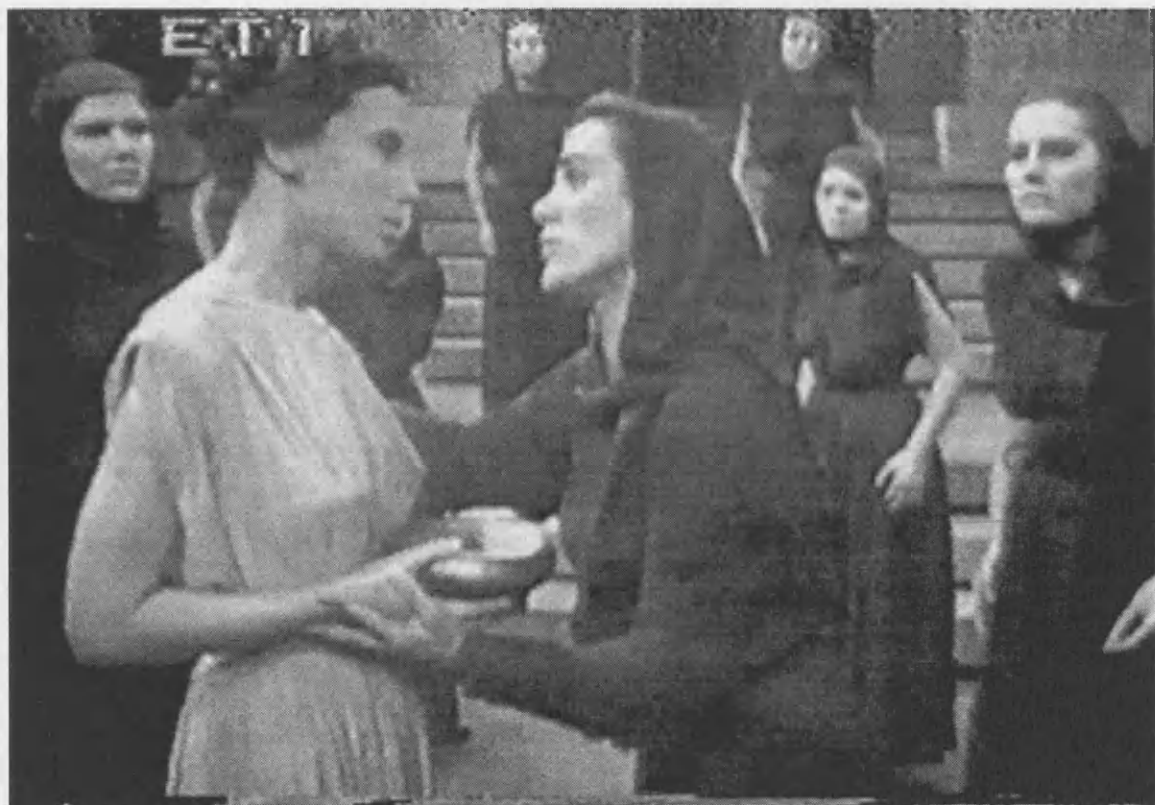


Photo 38 Chrysothemis, Electra, Chorus, Sophocles' *Electra*, the Peiraikó Théatro



Photo 39 Electra, Pedagogus, Orestes, Sophocles' Electra, the Peiraikó Théatro

within the framework of the *sprechchor*, which was very strictly rhythmically confined.

Although the mode of *sprechchor* most probably originated from Reinhardt's perception of chorus, Rondiris defended its use attributing it to 'Greek' cultural references.³⁴ He wrote, "they accuse me [...] that the system I use is German, the *sprechchor*, but I believe, and I can prove it, that I draw only Greek elements from everywhere, from the *orchesis*, the movements, the popular demotic song, nature, from everywhere, only Greek elements and I transubstantiate them [...] in order to attain the result in my performance".³⁵ And I have argued earlier that one of the 'Greek' references to *sprechchor* transubstantiation may be traced in the chanters of the Greek Orthodox Liturgy. This is the core of Rondiris' renegotiation of Reinhardt's aesthetic references.

³⁴ Glytzouris and Mavromoustakos have recently argued that Rondiris' use of *sprechchor* does not refer aesthetically to Reinhardt's style, but to Wilhelm Leyhausen's. See Γλυτζουρή, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα (The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece)* p.p. 400-2; Μαυρομούστακος, Πλάτων, «Συγγένειες εκλεκτικές και μη: η σκηνοθεσία του αρχαίου δράματος κατά τη δεκαετία του '30» ("Kinship Eclectic and Non-Eclectic: Theatre Direction of Ancient Drama during the 1930s"), a paper announced in the 2nd Greek Conference of Theatre Studies "Relationships Between Modern Greek and European Theatre: Processes of Perception in the History of Greek Dramaturgy from Renaissance to Contemporary Times" organised by the Department of Theatre Studies in the University of Athens in April 2002. Leyhausen, a German professor of phonetics in the University of Humboldt in Berlin, performed in the Herod Atticus Theatre with his students his production of Aeschylus' *Persae* in 1934 about the same period that Politis' production of the same play was performed in the National Theatre. Both Glytzouris and Mavromoustakos emphasise Leyhausen's work on *sprechchor*, a system of group reciting with crescendo, antiphonies and pauses that were combined with rhythmical movement. Both Glytzouris and Mavromoustakos argue that Rondiris based his perception of the ancient chorus on this technique, although they both admit that there are no testimonies to affirm it apart from the fact that critics of the time noticed some similarities. My opinion is that further research is needed before we can arrive safely at such a conclusion. Reinhardt also used *sprechchor* and I am more inclined to render Rondiris' aesthetic perception of the chorus in Reinhardt's work since we know that Rondiris had attended his Seminar for a year. Furthermore the technique of *sprechchor* which was used by Rondiris was part of his conception of the performance as an 'orchestration' where rhythm played a very important part; this conception clearly refers to Reinhardt's perception of performance.

³⁵ Με κατηγορούν για τον τρόπο της ερμηνείας του Χορού, μου λένε ότι το σύστημα που χρησιμοποιώ είναι γερμανικό, το «σπρεκχόρ» (ομιλών χορός), ενώ εγώ πιστεύω απόλυτα, πιστεύω και το αποδεικνύω, πως μόνον ελληνικά στοιχεία παίρνω από παντού, από την όρχηση, τις κινήσεις, το λαϊκό τραγούδι, τη φύση, από παντού, μόνον ελληνικά στοιχεία και τα μετουσιώνω [...] για να φθάσω στο αποτέλεσμα που δίνω. Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Με αφορμή τη σκηνοθεσία του Ιππόλυτου» ("On the Occasion of Directing *Hippolytus*"), in: *Η σκηνοθετική προσέγγιση του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος από τον Δημήτρη Ροντήρη: 100 χρόνια από τη γέννησή του (The Directorial Approach to Ancient Greek Drama of Dimitris Rondiris: 100 Years after his Birth)*, p. 14.

He understood Reinhardt's theatrical aesthetic elements in 'Greek' cultural terms and transubstantiated them, drawing on the entirety of 'Greek' culture in a style of performance that could claim its 'Greekness'. The most notable example of this transubstantiation is Rondiris' perception of the performance as a "musical composition", which was primarily expressed in his style of elocution.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly the background references of Rondiris' thorough understanding and awareness of rhythm. Reinhardt's notion of rhythm and music, and his perception of the chorus songs as a composer, might have functioned as a reference to Rondiris' insistence on rhythm. There were, however, other sources that could have functioned as references; Rondiris' work with Mitrópoulos in musical dramas, for example, and Politis' insistence on the musicality of the Greek language in combination with his emphasis on the poetic language of tragedy. These probably gave Rondiris a 'Greek' basis for the rhythm of elocution. Most probably it was the combination of all these background references that led Rondiris to a deep understanding of rhythm and music. However, he far transcended the limits of these background references making music, as I will argue, the aesthetic core of his performances of tragedy.

The most dominant element of Rondiris' performances was rhythm. Rhythm brought out the poetic language of tragedy, one of the main principles of Politis. In Rondiris' aesthetic style of tragedy the meaning of the play, the emotions expressed, the relations of the protagonists, the chorus songs were all conceived in terms of rhythm. The rhythm was based on the study of the rhythm of the text itself, which also included the study of the meter of the ancient text, and on a thorough understanding of the feelings and emotions

expressed in the play at any given moment. The colorization of speech, the stress of words within the text and the timing, which constituted this rhythm, were founded on Greek prosody.³⁶ Prosodic rhythm is based on three principles: the stressed syllable of each word that is enhanced either dynamically or musically, the meaning of the text and the punctuation.³⁷ Prosody is considered to express the musicality of the Greek language. A more musical form of prosody is the basis of Byzantine music, which claimed its origins in the Ancient Greek elocution.

Rondiris' style of elocution used prosody in a way that stressed the limit between elocution and singing. In the case of characters it never became singing, but it enhanced a musical quality in the elocution to the point that the totality of each character's expressions and existence was conveyed first of all musically. As Georgoussópoulos notes, Rondiris studied the emotional state of the character and the way this was presented through the dramatic language until he reached the point of conceiving its 'rhythm' almost in the sense of a musical score.³⁸ This rhythm consisted of Rondiris' direction of the actors/actresses, his interpretation of the play and the characters. It was this rhythm, this score, he then presented to the actor/actress as the key to the approach to

³⁶ See Συνοδινού, Άννα, «Δημήτρης Ροντήρης: Ὁ δάσκαλος τοῦ δραματικοῦ λόγου» ("Dimitris Rondiris: The Teacher of the Dramatic Language"), in: Άννα Συνοδινού, *Άίνος στους άξιους (Praise to the Worthy)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 2000, p.p. 216-31.

³⁷ Prosody consists of the elocution of the speech in relation to the stressed syllable of the words and the duration of time each syllable takes to be delivered. In the elocution of the Greek language the syllables that are stressed will usually last longer than the ones that are not. The interplay between stressed syllables and non-stressed syllables consists of the basis of the meters in the Greek language. Prosody in Ancient Greek was based on the interplay between the short and long vowels of the words. As the quality of the time in the deliverance of vowels was lost quite early during the Byzantine period, prosody was developed as an interplay between stressed and non-stressed syllables whereby the stressed syllable may be delivered as a 'long' syllable.

³⁸ Γεωργουσόπουλος, Κώστας, «Δημήτρης Ροντήρης, ο πρακτικός της γλώσσας» ("Dimitris Rondiris, the Practitioner of Language"), in: Κώστας Γεωργουσόπουλος, *Τα μετά το θέατρο (After Theatre)*, Athens:

his/her part.³⁹ The actor or actress had then to reconstruct the opposite process to that of Rondiris, which led him/her from the rhythm to the emotions the dramatic language expressed. The rhythm, therefore, functioned as the base upon which the actor or actress constructed his/her part having as her/his objective to reach the point whereby she/he 'lived' the character within him/herself and expressed the internal emotional state of the character.

Within that framework Rondiris' aesthetic style of production was firmly based on the acting style of his actors and actresses. Using rhythm he directed them in the precise way he wanted them to act a particular part. One very notable example is the astonishing similarity of the acting styles of Katina Paxinou and Aspasia Papathanassiou in the part of *Electra*. Despite the fact that they are two different actresses acting the same part with a difference of twenty years between them, the rhythm of the elocution and the colorization of speech in the way they expressed the emotions of *Electra* are almost identical.

Katina Paxinou and Aspasia Papathanassiou were extremely talented and highly trained actresses who expressed Rondiris' style of elocution in its most powerful mode. The rhythm, as Rondiris conceived it, became an integral part of the rendering of the character filled and justified by the emotional state of the character at each given moment. In both Paxinou's and Papathanassiou's *Electras* the rendering of the dramatic poetic language

Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1985, p.p.119-23. The information was also given in the lecture Papathanassiou gave in the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of Patras, May 2000.

³⁹ Γεωργουσόπουλος, Κώστας, «Δημήτρης Ροντήρης, ο πρακτικός της γλώσσας» ("Dimitris Rondiris, the Practitioner of Language"), in: *Τα μετά το θέατρο (After Theatre)* p.p.119-23.

assumed a rare clarity that enlightened and brought forward even the smallest details of the emotional state of the character, details that sometimes were rendered by a single word.⁴⁰

There were cases, however, where the actor or actress did not succeed in filling and justifying the rhythm through the rendering of the emotional state of the character. The rhythm, then, became the dominant element of the rendering of the character making apparent its enforcement by an external factor, which was, of course, Rondiris. Such an example is the confrontation scene between Clytemnestra and Electra in the 1959 production of Sophocles' *Electra* by the Peiraikó Théatro, filmed in 1962, where Georgia Sarri as Clytemnestra did not fill and justify the rhythm in all the moments of the scene contrary to Aspasia Papathanassiou who played the part of Electra. In these instances the rhythm lost its semantic and aesthetic power and sounded almost inflexible, heavy and false.

Rondiris' emphasis on the elocution placed the human voice in a very important position within the aesthetics of the total performance. For Rondiris the human voice was an instrument that should be trained so as to reach the full capacity of its expressive range. He had actually devised a demanding system for the training of the voice, which he used to train both his students and his actors/actresses.⁴¹ The voice for Rondiris should be able to reach as high or as low as possible while still retaining its strength and musicality.

⁴⁰ Bakopoulou-Halls, Alikí, "Greece", in: *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*, p. 270.

⁴¹ See Γεωργουσόπουλος, Κώστας, «Δημήτρης Ροντήρης (1899-1981)» ("Dimitris Rondiris, 1899-1981"), in: *Η σκηνοθετική προσέγγιση του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος από τον Δημήτρη Ροντήρη: 100 χρόνια από τη γέννησή του (The Directorial Approach to Ancient Greek Drama of Dimitris Rondiris: 100 Years after*



Photo 40 Photo 31 Chorus, Sophocles' *Electra*, the Peiraikó Théatro

his Birth), p.p. 6-10 and Aspasia Papathanassiou in the lecture she gave in the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of Patras, May 2000.



Photo 41 Sophocles' *Electra*, the National Theatre, Epidaurus 1938

Besides the hard training, however, Rondiris looked also for the musical qualities of the actors and actresses he cast in his productions of tragedy. The acoustic quality of the voice of the actors and actresses was one of the most important aesthetic elements of the performance.⁴² The way different qualities of voices were combined in particular moments of the performance contributed to the aesthetic pleasure and also to the rendering of the characters' emotions, their opposition or their agreement. In the scene of recognition in the 1962 film of *Electra*, for example, the bass voice of Orestes, played by Dimitrios Veakis, contrasted with the soprano voice of Electra, played by Aspasia Papathanassiou, adding a clear musical quality of artistic pleasure to the scene.⁴³ The same quality was also probably achieved in the 1936 production of the same play. Thanos Kotsópoulos who played Orestes also had a characteristic bass voice, Paxinoú's voice was not soprano like that of Papathanassiou, but as she had been musically trained she could reach quite high tones. Thus the acoustic contrast or agreement of the quality of the voices of the actors aesthetically enhanced the intensity of scenes during the performance. It is my contention that it was in those moments that the rhythmic elocution of speech combined with the musicality of the voices reached the peak of its expressive possibilities.

The emphasis on the musicality of the human voice defined also Rondiris' use of music in his performances of tragedy. Music was used principally to accompany the speech and keep the rhythm in the chorus songs. Thus it was composed in such a way that it was

⁴² It is not coincidental that in both the 1936 and 1959 productions he used for the part of Electra two actresses that excelled in the use of their voice; Katina Paxinoú had been trained in music prior to becoming an actress and Aspasia Papathanassiou was Rondiris' student.

⁴³ Nikos Hatziskos who played the part of Orestes in the 1959 tour of the production also had a bass voice. Thus the same acoustic musical result would have been achieved in the scene of recognition.

strictly confined to the rhythm of the text as this was conceived by Rondiris and never assumed a more important semantic role. Characteristic is Hamouldópoulos' review of Mitrópoulos' composition of the 1936 production of *Electra*'s music. He wrote that the music functioned within the framework of a simple musical accompaniment and it was conceived on the basis of rhythm instead of a musical score. The rhythm was dominant from the beginning to the end of the production and regulated the movement and the elocution of the chorus.⁴⁴ A similar conception of music characterised the 1959 production of *Electra*. Kydoniatis, the composer of the production's music noted, "when I worked with Rondiris I composed his music. [...] I could not use my initiative next to him. I followed the melody and the feeling that he gave me."⁴⁵

Rhythmic elocution was the basis of the chorus songs too. As with the characters, the rhythm of the chorus songs was also based on a thorough study of the emotional situation that the chorus expressed at each given moment.⁴⁶ It differed, however, from the rhythm of the individual characters in that it was far more formalised. As can be seen from the 1959 production of *Electra*, filmed in 1962, the elocution of the chorus did not expand to use the full range of the human voice's tonalities. The differences of tone in the delivering of the speech of the chorus were very small. The chorus retained a normal to low, bass tone throughout the play that is reminiscent in an abstract aesthetic way of the keeping of

⁴⁴ Χαμουλδόπουλος, Δημήτριος, «Ἡ Μουσική τῆς Ἥλέκτρας» ("The Music in *Electra*"), *Πρωΐα*, 4-10-1936.

⁴⁵ *Όταν συνεργάζόμουν με τον Ροντήρη, τη δική του μελωδία έγραφα. [...] Πλάι του δεν είχα καμία πρωτοβουλία. Ακολουθούσα τη μελωδία και την αίσθηση που μου έδινε εκείνος. «Ντίνος Κυδωνιάτης (μουσικός)»* ("Dinos Kidoniatis, musician), in: Θανάσης Λάλας (ed.), *Με τους μαθητές του Ροντήρη για τον Ροντήρη (With Rondiris' Students about Rondiris)*, p.p. 54-5. Kidoniatis also stated that Mitrópoulos worked with Rondiris under the same conditions.

⁴⁶ As Papatthanassiou stated in the lecture she gave in the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of Patras.

tone by the chanters in the Orthodox Liturgy. Differences of content within the speech that adhered to differences of emotions, for example agony or fear, or a change of mood or subject were expressed mainly through a change of rhythm. Timing, therefore, in the chorus songs was the most principal characteristic of the style of the rhythm of the chorus' elocution, because the meter of the elocution itself rendered the meaning of the chorus song text. This is prominent in all the chorus songs of the 1962 film of the 1959 production of *Electra*. From the promptbook of the 1936 National Theatre production of *Electra*, we can deduce that the conception of the chorus songs followed exactly those principles. Rondiris had devised a system of annotating the rhythm of the elocution on the text.⁴⁷ Thus signs denoting the rhythm annotate each chorus song in the 1936 *Electra* promptbook. Studying the annotations in the *Electra* promptbook in comparison to the corresponding scenes from the 1962 film, it can be argued that the chorus songs were conceived in the same mode in both productions. In that sense it becomes apparent that Rondiris had conceived in detail the main principles of his approach in regard to the elocution chorus songs from his very first production of the play.

In the course of his career Rondiris refined this approach by developing some of the chorus songs in the form of a song. Rondiris considered this development 'natural', in the sense that the rhythmical elocution could evolve in intense moments into a song. He wrote, "the rhythmical collective elocution of the chorus in those parts where the lyrical content of the text augments in intensity, through the continuing interchanges and differentiations of rhythm reaches the limits of song to result in the end clearly in a

⁴⁷ Rondiris' system of annotation marked the beats of the rhythm, the places where pauses or breaths should be taken and also where the stress of each rhythmical phrase laid.

song”.⁴⁸ It was not, however, a ‘real’ song as Kydoniatis, the composer of the 1959 production of *Electra*, said in an interview with Thanassis Lalas. “It was something between song and speech.”⁴⁹ “ He did not want the song in tragedy to be rendered as a song. He wanted it rather to be heard as a whisper, though rhythmically, to stress the dramatic quality of the play, to follow its tones.”⁵⁰ The aesthetic basis of the elocution and the singing of the chorus were the Byzantine hymns and the monophonic demotic Greek songs, especially songs of lament, although again these references were not singled out but were organically transubstantiated within the total aesthetic of the performance.⁵¹

Along the same lines as the elocution of the chorus songs, Rondiris conceived also the chorus movements which were more or less confined to the chorus songs. Contrary to Politis, Rondiris attempted to find a way to render the element of *orchesis* in Greek contemporary cultural terms. He believed that in intense moments of the play the rhythmical movement of the chorus reached the limit of dancing, approaching thus the essence of *orchesis*.⁵² As with elocution Rondiris based the chorus movement on the

⁴⁸ Η ρυθμική ομοφωνία του Χορού στα μέρη εκείνα όπου το λυρικό περιεχόμενο του κειμένου αυξάνει σε έξαρση, φτάνει με τις συνεχείς εναλλαγές και τις διαφοροποιήσεις των ρυθμών στα όρια του άσματος, για να καταλήξει τέλος σε τραγούδι. Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Το πρόβλημα της ερμηνείας της αρχαίας τραγωδίας» (“The Problem of the Performance of Ancient Tragedy”), in: *Σελίδες Αυτοβιογραφίας (An Autobiography)*, p. 214 (originally published in *Η Λέξη*, May-June 1999).

⁴⁹ [...] ήταν κάτι μεταξύ τραγουδιού και ομιλίας. «Ντίνος Κυδωνιάτης (μουσικός)» (“Dinos Kidoniatis, musician), in: *Με τους μαθητές του Ροντήρη για τον Ροντήρη (With Rondiris’ Students about Rondiris)*, p. 60.

⁵⁰ Δεν ήθελε το τραγούδι στην τραγωδία να βγαίνει σαν τραγούδι. Το ήθελε να ακούγεται μάλλον ψιθυριστά, αλλά ρυθμικά, να τονίζει τη δραματικότητα του έργου, να ακολουθεί στους τόνους. «Ντίνος Κυδωνιάτης (μουσικός)» (“Dinos Kidoniatis, musician), in: *Με τους μαθητές του Ροντήρη για τον Ροντήρη (With Rondiris’ Students about Rondiris)*, p. 58.

⁵¹ Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Το πρόβλημα της ερμηνείας της αρχαίας τραγωδίας» (“The Problem of the Performance of Ancient Tragedy”), in: *Σελίδες Αυτοβιογραφίας (An Autobiography)*, p. 212-3.

⁵² Ροντήρης, Δημήτρης, «Το πρόβλημα της ερμηνείας της αρχαίας τραγωδίας» (“The Problem of the Performance of Ancient Tragedy”), in: *Σελίδες Αυτοβιογραφίας (An Autobiography)*, p. 214 and «Για μια σύγχρονη ερμηνεία του χορού, λυρικού στοιχείου της τραγωδίας» (“For a Contemporary Presentation of the Chorus, the lyrical Element of Tragedy”), in: *Η σκηνοθετική προσέγγιση του αρχαίου ελληνικού*

steps of Greek demotic dances, which, however, were used in a codified stylistic manner that transubstantiated them. It is clear from the 1962 film of the 1959 production of *Electra* that the movement of the chorus was a choreographed stylistic movement that almost reached the point of dancing and aimed at creating shapes and aesthetic visual images. It is interesting to note that in the 1959 production of *Electra*, as filmed in 1962, some of gestural movements of the chorus especially in very intense moments are reminiscent of the stylistic movements in Politis' 1934 production of *Persae*. For example there are patterns of movement like placing the right hand on the left shoulder (or the left hand on the right shoulder depending on the semi-chorus), leaning the head back and placing the other hand on the forehead, which expressed the chorus' feelings of pain and concern with the disastrous story of the house of Pelops, or the leaning backwards of the body placing both fists on the top of the head to express despair. (See photo 31 above and photo 40) These patterns, however, were incorporated in his total conception of a more continuous movement and functioned aesthetically.

It becomes clear from the above that Rondiris did not share Politis' opposition to the uniformity of the chorus. Furthermore he tended towards a representation of the chorus which in essence is reminiscent of the Sikelianoi's rendering of a tragic chorus that sang and danced. Moreover, as I have already mentioned, Rondiris' approach also drew near to that of the Sikelianoi in relation to the issue of the religiousness of tragedy. On the other hand it seems that he followed and blended in his approach to tragedy three of Politis' most central principles, his perception of the performance as an 'aesthetic whole

δράματος από τον Δημήτρη Ροντήρη: 100 χρόνια από τη γέννησή του (*The Directorial Approach to Ancient Greek Drama of Dimitris Rondiris: 100 Years after his Birth*), p. 12.

and event', the emphasis on the individual and the poetic language of tragedy. Within that framework it appears that Rondiris' work implicitly referred to both the Sikelianoí and Politis and also implicitly legitimised their performances as a 'tradition'. Thus, as I explained in the second chapter, the history of the 'sub-field' started to become "more and more linked" to its own "specific history and to it alone".⁵³ Moreover Rondiris used this 'Greek tradition' of performance as one of the cultural bases on which he renegotiated Reinhardt's work

Two other characteristic principles, which Rondiris drew most probably from Reinhardt but which are also reminiscent of the Sikelianoí's views on tragedy, concern the particular context and space within which performances of tragedy should be performed. He believed that a suitable context for the performances of ancient drama was that of Festivals and the suitable theatrical site was that of the Ancient Greek theatres. The inauguration of the Athens and Epidaurus Festivals by him and the establishment of the regular and systematic use of ancient theatres for the performances of ancient drama were the manifestation of his approach regarding the context and site for the performances of tragedy.⁵⁴ His views on these issues were expressed as early as 1936 in his National Theatre production of *Electra*.

Sophocles' *Electra* was performed in the Herod Atticus theatre within the framework of an event that was called "A week of ancient drama" and which took place between 3rd and

⁵³ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 266. See Chapter II, p.p. 97-9.

⁵⁴ The use of ancient theatres as the theatre site for these events or festivals dictated the time of their organisation towards the beginning of autumn, since the weather conditions were suitable for open-air performances and it was not so hot as to strain the vocal capabilities of the actors. Συνοδινού, Άννα, *Πρόσωπα και Προσωπεία, αυτοβιογραφικό χρονικό (Persons and Masks: An Autobiography)*, p. 48.

8th of October 1936.⁵⁵ The “Week of ancient drama” was also organised the following year comprising the repetition of Sophocles’ *Electra* and the production of Euripides’ *Hippolytus*. In 1938 Rondiris repeated the production of Sophocles’ *Electra* in the theatre of Epidaurus using this ancient theatre for the first time in modern times. (See photo 41) Although performances of ancient tragedy were still performed in the main indoor theatre of the National Theatre, it became a custom of the National to use the Ancient Roman Odeion of Herod Atticus and later on the theatre at Epidaurus for the production of these plays. The placing of these first performances within the framework of the “Week of ancient drama” and the use of ancient theatres expressed thus Rondiris’ views on the context and site for productions of tragedy. Rondiris achieved the full materialisation of these principles some years later, in 1954, with the inauguration of the Festivals of Athens and of Epidaurus.⁵⁶

As I have mentioned earlier, Rondiris did not speak about nor admit his aesthetic references to the work of others. An explanation for this lack of explicit reference can be traced in the usual ‘Greek’ attitude of not accepting easily the influences of or references to the work of others. One has to take into account, however, the fact that Rondiris was never forced to oppose his work to the work of others and in that sense he never had to defend his work in relation to other people’s work. Although there were opponents of his

⁵⁵ It is worth noting that the National Theatre and the Odeion Athinón had undertaken the cost of the temporary reconstruction of the part of the rows of seats of the Roman Odeion that had been destroyed. This is stated in the performance’s programme.

⁵⁶ The Festival of Epidaurus opened officially the following year, in 1955, when Rondiris’ collaboration with the National Theatre had ceased and Aimílios Chourmouúzios was the General Director of the company.

own work, Rondiris never found himself in a position of being himself an opponent of someone holding a 'consecrated position-taking'. His was from the beginning the 'consecrated' approach to tragedy. Despite his attitude, however, Rondiris' work referred aesthetically not only to Reinhardt, but also to Politis and the Sikelianoí. In a sense these three bodies of work became the soil in which Rondiris' work grew and flourished. Nonetheless Rondiris' relation to these bodies of work was not based on opposition, as Politis, for example, was, but rather on a creative dialogue that allowed him to choose aesthetic elements, combine them and develop them in a way that led him to create his own original style, a style that used the 'Greek' tradition of performances of tragedy, renegotiated Reinhardt's principles on 'Greek' cultural terms and, very dynamically, literally promoted the idea of 'Greek uniqueness' and of 'Greek *Héllénism*' as opposed to that of Europe.

Rondiris established the idea of international tours with productions of tragedy. In his capacity as the Director of the National Theatre he inaugurated the touring of productions of tragedy abroad, in Europe and in America. Later on as the artistic director of the Peiraiκό Théatro he founded a company that toured each year all over the world, performing exclusively productions of tragedy. These performances, which were very well received by foreign audiences, established internationally the concept of a 'Greek' aesthetic approach to the issue of tragedy.⁵⁷ This was a practice that, as I will argue in the next chapter, was also followed by Károlos Koun. To this end contributed also the constitution of the Athens and especially the Epidauros festivals, which during the 1960s

became internationally recognised. Within that frame Rondiris raised the stakes in the ‘sub-field’ by legitimising this style of performances as the ‘Greek’ way of performing tragedy both in Greece and abroad.

The fact that Rondiris achieved and established the rise of the stakes in the ‘sub-field’ is explained by his insistence on being involved exclusively in ‘highbrow’ theatre productions. Within his frame he continued on the tradition that Politis had already set in the ‘sub-field’ and he established that tradition. Although Rondiris, especially during the period he worked in the National Theatre, had directed a substantial number of classics from Shakespeare to Pirandello, his fame and position in the Greek theatre has been identified with his productions of tragedy. Tragedy held an important position in the entirety of his work and, in addition, he proposed an aesthetic style of performances of tragedy, which could be considered and in fact was recognised as purely Greek’. Besides the fact that Rondiris’ style drew very distinctively on what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture, it was based on one of the most distinct ‘Greek’ national elements, the Greek language itself, rendering it in a way that promoted its ‘Greekness’. The mode of elocution in his performances of tragedy, using prosody, explored a wide range of intonations and colorizations in the rendering of the content of the text, which were based exclusively on the possibilities the Greek language offered. Thus he achieved an artistic conception concerning the elocution of the Greek language, which even today is

⁵⁷ Kott in *Θεοφαγία (Theophagia)* actually gives a description of Rondiris *Medea* that he attended in Italy, Kott, Jan, *Θεοφαγία: Δοκίμια για την αρχαία τραγωδία (Theophagia: Essays on Ancient Tragedy)*, Βερυκοκάκη-Αρτέμη (trans. in Greek), Athens: Εξάντας, 1976, p.p.283-8.

considered as infallibly ‘Greek’. It is not surprising, therefore, that Rondiris has remained in the history of Greek theatre as the great teacher of Greek language.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See, Γεωργουσόπουλος, Κώστας, «Δημήτρης Ροντήρης, ο πρακτικός της γλώσσας» (“Dimitris Rondiris, the Practitioner of Language”), in: *Τα μετά το θέατρο (After Theatre)*, p.p.119-23. Part of Rondiris’ influential presence in the field of theatrical production has to be attributed also in his teaching career. Besides his work as a theatre director he taught acting in the Drama School of the National Theatre and in 1969 he founded the School of Theatre Studies of the Peiraikó Théatro. In the course of his teaching career Rondiris had trained a significant number of actors and actresses some of whom came to acquire important positions within the field like Anna Synodinou, Aspasia Papathanassiou, with whom he worked in the Peiraikó Théatro later on, and Vassoula Manolidou. See Συνοδινού, Άννα, *Πρόσωπα και Προσωπεία, αυτοβιογραφικό χρονικό (Persons and Masks: An Autobiography)*, and, also by the same author, *Αίνος στους άξιους (Praise to the Worthy)*; Κριτάς, Θεόδωρος, *Το θέατρο στον κόσμο (World Theatre)*; and Μανωλίδου, Βάσω, *Αναμνήσεις (Memories)*, Athens: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 1997.

Chapter VI

Károlos Koun: Aeschylus' "Persae", the Théâtre Technis, 1965

I, that is, as a Greek, would not proceed in innovations that are alien to the Greek climate, the Greek geographical shape [of the land] and do not relate to hellenikótita. [...] but I, within myself, as a Greek, set some limitations which derive from the Greek nature itself, the Greek measure, the soberness that exists in the [natural] environment.¹

Károlos Koun's production of Aeschylus' *Persae* opened at the World Theatre Season in London in 1965. The second performance of *Persae* was given seven days later in *Le Théâtre des Nations*, where three years earlier Koun had been awarded the first prize for his production of Aristophanes' *Birds*.² The play opened in Greek territory in July of the same year in Thessaloniki and was performed in August in the Athens Festival at the Herod Atticus Odium. The openings of the production denoted that Koun not only responded to the stakes raised in the field by Dimitris Rondiris, but he took them a step further by introducing the practice of holding the first openings of his ancient drama performances in major European Festivals.³ The production of ancient drama was no

¹ Έγώ, δηλαδή, σάν Έλληνας, δέν θά προχωροῦσα σέ ἀνανεώσεις πού εἶναι ἐκτός τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ κλίματος καί τῆς ἑλληνικῆς γεωγραφικῆς διαμόρφωσης καί πού δέν ἄπτονται τῆς ἑλληνικότητας. [...] ὅμως ἐγώ στόν ἑαυτό μου, σάν Έλληνας, θέτω, ὀρισμένους περιορισμούς, οἱ ὁποῖοι προέρχονται ἀπό τήν ἴδια τήν ἑλληνική φύση, τό ἑλληνικό μέτρο, τήν λιτότητα πού ὑπάρχει στό περιβάλλον μας. Koun, Κάρολος, «Γιά τήν ἀρχαία τραγωδία» ("About Ancient Tragedy"), in: Θανάσης Καστανιώτης and Θανάσης Νιάρχος (eds.), *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1994, p. 155, (originally published in *Καθημερινή*, 9-9-1984).

² Aristophanes' *Birds* was first performed in 1959.

³ Koun abandoned this practice during the dictatorship as form of political protest.

longer an issue confined within the borders of Greece. It had become a ‘Greek’ cultural product that could be and was exported abroad promoting the ‘Greek’ way of performing tragedies and consequently ‘Greek’ theatre in the major European cultural cities.

The 1965 Théâtre Technis production of *Persae* was Koun’s third production of tragedy. It was, however, his first serious and mature attempt.⁴ *Persae* manifested Koun’s approach to tragedy, which was integrally linked with his interpretation of the ideologem of *hellenikótita*, and completed, crowned, and consecrated his opposition to the National Theatre and Dimitris Rondiris. This opposition had raised a wide range of issues in theatrical production, because Koun had proposed a different approach to theatre in general that explicitly disputed the National Theatre’s practice as well as that of the ‘sub-field of large scale production’ in Bourdieu’s terms. In fact, in terms of ancient drama, the dynamic presence of Koun and the Théâtre Technis in the ‘sub-field of restricted production’ led the ‘sub-field’ to include productions of ancient comedy as well as tragedy. By the time *Persae* was produced, Koun already held a ‘consecrated avant-garde position-taking’ in the ‘sub-field’ in Bourdieu’s terms.

Károlos Koun’s presence in the theatrical affairs of Greece completed the structure and development of the Greek ‘sub-field of theatrical restricted production’ during the period I discuss.⁵ His work in ancient drama was the last phase in the articulation of the

⁴ The other two productions of tragedy were the 1934 one of Euripides’ *Alcestis* and the 1945 one of Aeschylus’ *Choephorae*.

⁵ Károlos Koun was born in Bursa in 1908 of a Greek Christian Orthodox mother and a father who was half Greek Christian Orthodox and half Polish-German-Jew. He was brought up in Constantinople. Graduating in 1928 from the American-sponsored school Robert College, he came to Greece and immediately afterwards he went to Paris where studied aesthetics in the Sorbonne for one year. He then returned to Greece and in 1930 he was employed as an English teacher in the American College where he worked until

discourse on tragedy that, as I have argued, had started in 1919 and had mainly been constituted until Koun's presence through the work of the Sikelianoí, Fotos Politis, and Dimitris Rondiris. Koun's contribution to this discourse consisted of the introduction of the concepts of Greek modernism on *hellenikótita* and art, which were linked with the literary generation of the 1930s. It has to be noted that the principles of the literary generation of the 1930s in regard to *hellenikótita* and art were also expressed in painting, music, and, as I will argue, theatre to the point that we may speak of a cultural or artistic generation of the 1930s.⁶

The approach to tragedy in the Modernist movement in Greece shifted the basis of the aesthetic quests both in what could be recognised as a 'Greek' style of performance and in the way such a style could be conceived. The reason for this shift is to be found in the renegotiation of *hellenikótita* within the framework of "the autonomy of the aesthetic experience" of modernism, using Kotidis' words.⁷ *Hellenikótita* was conceived, as Tziiovas argues, as a "style" rather than a "rule" which could be traced in all the cultural production that was recognised as 'Greek' from antiquity to modern times.⁸ In this sense

1938. During this period he produced plays with his students, among them Aristophanes' comedies. In 1934 he founded the Laiki Skené which was forced to close in 1936 with the exception of the production of Chechov's *The Cherry Orchard* in 1938. He then worked as a theatre director in privately owned companies, like Katerina's and Kotopouli's. In 1942 he founded the Théâtre Technis where he mainly worked from then on with the exception of three years, 1950-1953, when he worked in the National Theatre.

⁶ On painting see Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου (Modernism and "Tradition" in the Greek Art of the Interwar Period)*. On music see Ρωμανού, Καίτη, *Εθνικής Μουσικής Περιήγησης 1901-1912 (A Journey into National Music)*, vol. I and II, and *Ιστορία της έντεχνης νεοελληνικής μουσικής (History of the Artistic Modern Greek Music)*.

⁷ Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου (Modernism and "Tradition" in the Greek Art of the Interwar Period)*, p. 89.

⁸ Τζιόβας, Δημήτρης, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο (The Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideologem of Hellenikótita in the Interwar Period)*, p.p. 137-8.

the modernist concept of *hellenikótita* presupposed a shift of importance from the ‘Greekness’ of historical and cultural references in a ‘Greek’ work of art to the ‘Greekness’ of the artist who produced it. The ‘Greek’ artist did not feel any more the ‘need’ to prove in an ‘objective’ way the ‘Greekness’ of his/her work. On the contrary, the aim of Greek artists should be, using Giorgos Seferis’ words, “to seek the truth, [...] not asking how to be Greeks, but believing that since they are Greeks, the works that their soul will truthfully create cannot be but Greek”.⁹ In this sense the new concept of *hellenikótita* was constructed on the acceptance that ‘Greekness’ comprised in a sense an ‘innate’ characteristic feature of the personality itself of the artist, or, in Bourdieu’s terms, a characteristic feature of the artist’s *habitus* more explicitly expressed than that of the previous generations.

It is precisely the re-conception of *hellenikótita* within the framework of “the autonomy of the aesthetic experience” of modernism that denoted and allowed a sense of freedom in the quest for the ‘Greekness’ in a work of art and consequently of ‘Greek’ styles. At the same time Greek modernism as an artistic movement, on the one hand, placed emphasis on the ‘Greek’ popular culture and primitive art and, on the other, it re-textualized the ‘Greek’ cultural tradition and artistic past. It is precisely this fusion of the personal/individual with the collective experience of *hellenikótita* that characterised

⁹ Καί ἄς τούς συμβουλευσοῦμε νά γυρεύουν τήν ἀλήθεια [...] ὄχι ρωτώντας πῶς νά εἶναι "Ἕλληνες, ἀλλά πιστεύοντας πῶς ἀφοῦ εἶναι "Ἕλληνες, τὰ ἔργα πού πραγματικά θά γεννήσει ἡ ψυχή τους δέν μπορεῖ νά μὴν εἶναι ἑλληνικά. Σεφέρης, Γιώργος and Τσάτσος, Κωνσταντῖνος, *Ένας διάλογος για την ποίηση (A Dialogue on Poetry)*, Κούσουλας, Λουκάς (ed.), Athens: Ερμής, 1975, p.30. (Seferis’ underlining) Giorgos Seferis, poet and Nobelist, was the main representative of the literary generation of the 1930s. On Seferis and *hellenikótita* see Κιουρτσάκης, Γιάννης, *Ἑλληνισμός και Δύση στο στοχασμό του Σεφέρη (Hellenism and the West in Seferis’ Thought)*; Βαγενάς, Νάσος, *Ο ποιητής και ο χορευτής. Μια εξέταση της ποιητικής και της ποίησης του Σεφέρη (The poet and the Dancer: A Study of Seferis’ Poetics and*

Greek modernism. I will argue that Koun's work in tragedy moved within the frame of Greek modernism. It drew on the 'Greek' popular culture and primitive art and it reflected the history of the 'sub-field' more openly and integrally than Rondiris' did, pressing also for the creation of a 'Greek' theatrical tradition.¹⁰ Most of all, however, it was based on the new concept of *hellenikótita*, which was also the pivotal issue of Koun's opposition to Rondiris and the National Theatre' style.

Koun challenged the theatrical affairs existing in his time twice, initially in 1934 with the foundation of the Laikí Skené and later on, in 1942, with the foundation of the Théâtre Technis.¹¹ In fact, the dynamism, force and form of Koun's theatrical challenge placed him in what Raymond Williams defines as the 'avant-garde'.¹² As Williams argues, the

Poetry); and Δημηρούλης, Δημήτρης, *Ο ποιητής ως έθνος. Αισθητική και ιδεολογία στο Γ. Σεφέρη (The Poet as Nation: Aesthetics and Ideology in G. Seferis)*.

¹⁰ See Καλλέργης, Λυκούργος, «Τὸ πρῶτο ξεκίνημα» ("The First Beginning"), in: *Καρόλος Κουν, 25 χρόνια θέατρο (Karolos Koun, 25 Years of Theatre Work)*, Athens: Θέατρο Τέχνης, 1959, p. 21.

¹¹ The aesthetic aims of the Laikí Skené were stated in the programmes of the company's first two productions, Hortatsis' *Erophili*, and Euripides' *Alcestis*. The aesthetic aims of the Théâtre Technis were presented in Koun's speech to the "friends of Théâtre Technis" a year after the foundation of the company. His speech was entitled, «Ἡ κοινωνική θέση καί ἡ αισθητική γραμμὴ τοῦ Θεάτρου Τέχνης» ("The Social Position and the Aesthetic Quests of the Théâtre Technis").

¹² Williams, Raymond, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, London and New York: Verso, 1996. Tziouvas distinguishes the modernists from the avant-gardists in Greek literature. He argues that modernists such as Seferis and Elytis, for example, were attached to Greek tradition and the past which "shaped and restrained to some extent their experimental impulses". Moreover modernists "celebrated the Greek light and landscape, creating the impression that life was more important than art". The avant-gardists, on the other hand, such as Costas Cavafy and the surrealists, for example, "though socially non-conformists [...] preferred the closed space, making only rare references to nature and looking at poetry as a kind of personal remedy". They ignored Greek tradition "or adopted a critical attitude toward it by referring to marginal historical events and figures". Tziouvas, Dimitris, "Introduction", in: Dimitris Tziouvas (ed.), *Greek Modernism and Beyond*, Lanham, New York, Boulder, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997, p.p. 6-7. Tziouvas bases this distinction on Russell's observation that the work of modernists "deny the possibility of discerning within the flow of modern history anything but the record of meaningless chaos or evident cultural decline". The avant-garde, on the other hand, "attempts to sustain a belief in the progressive union of writer and society acting within history [...] they are little more able than the modernists [...] to find in modern, bourgeois society hope for either art or humanity". Russell, Charles, *Poets, Prophets, and Revolutionaries: The Literary Avant-garde from Rimbaud through Postmodernism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 7. (Quotation taken from Tziouvas, Dimitris, "Introduction", in *Greek Modernism and Beyond*, p. 6.) It is interesting to note that Koun's work, as I will explain later, combined the Greek modernists' attachment to Greek tradition "celebrating" the Greek light and the

‘avant-garde’ “as a fully oppositional formation” was “determined not only to promote their own work but to attack its enemies in cultural establishments”.¹³ With the foundation of the Laikí Skené, Koun proposed a completely new aesthetic theatrical style named Laikós Expressionismós (Popular Expressionism). With the foundation of the Théâtre Technis he proposed a new concept of theatre and theatre practice. The production of both companies became linked with the issue of *hellenikótita*.

The issue of *hellenikótita* and performance was first expressed as a founding principle of the Laikí Skené productions.¹⁴ As stated in the programmes of the two first productions of the company, its aim was to create “a theatre with Greek tradition” because “each People can create and produce only when it feels itself rooted in tradition”.¹⁵ Under the influence of the aesthetic ideology of the painter and writer Fotis Kóntoglou, who preached against the influence of Western European culture and in favor of a return to Byzantine and popular Greek tradition, Koun and the co-founders of the company,

landscape with the avant-garde’s “belief in the progressive union of writer and society acting within history”.

¹³ Williams, Raymond, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, p. 51.

¹⁴ Laikí Skené was founded in 1934. It was not an entirely professional theatre company in the sense that its members did not perform during a full season nor they did perform in regular periods. Usually they hired a theatre space for a few days to perform their new production and then they stopped until their next one was ready. From 1934 to 1936 the company produced five plays. Finally it was forced to close in 1936 for financial and political reasons, since the fascist government of Ioannis Metaxas was not only censoring political plays but considered plays such as Aristophanes’ *Ploutos* and Molière’s *Le Malade Imaginaire* to be communist plays. On Laikí Skené see Koun, Κάρολος, «Σαράντα χρόνια θέατρο» (“Forty Years in Theatre”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p.p. 85-90, (originally published in *Τό Βήμα* 12-12-1971); *Κάρολος Κουν, 25 χρόνια θέατρο (Karolos Koun, 25 Years of Theatre Work)*; and Koun, Κάρολος, «Μισός αιώνας θέατρο» (“Half a Century of Theatre”), in: Μάριος Πλωρίτης (intro), *Κάρολος Κουν για το θέατρο: Κείμενα και Συνεντεύξεις (Karolos Koun [speaking] about Theatre: Texts and Interviews)*, Athens: Ιθάκη, 1981, p.p. 107-18 (originally published in *Το Βήμα*, 4-10-1981).

¹⁵ *Erophili*’s programme, 23rd April 1934. A fragment of this programme can be found in Καλλέργης, Λυκούργος, «Τό πρώτο ξεκίνημα» (“The First Beginning”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν, 25 χρόνια θέατρο (Karolos Koun, 25 Years of Theatre Work)*, p. 21, and *Alcestis*’ programme, 19th December 1934. A fragment of this programme can be found in Γλυτζουρή, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα (The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece)*, p. 542.

Dionísios Devaris and Giannis Tsarouhis, proposed a completely new aesthetic style of performance named Laikós Expressionismós.¹⁶ Laikós Expressionismós, as it was stated, drew on the “material of our own land, [...] the Cretan Renaissance drama [...], Karagiozis [...], other representative art forms, dances, naive painting, songs, music – and [...] poetry.”¹⁷ Besides these, Koun also referred to “the customs and the human types that can still be found in Greece as symbols of the soul and the life of our days” as a source to draw from.¹⁸ In that sense Laikós Expressionismós was an aesthetic style that moved ideologically within the framework of modernist quests in Greece since it placed emphasis on the ‘Greek’ popular culture and re-textualized the ‘Greek’ theatrical and cultural past.¹⁹

¹⁶ Fotis Kóntoglou was a writer, a painter and the most important hagiographer of the 20th century. His approach to hagiography has deeply influenced hagiographers even today. Kotidis argues that Kóntoglou in painting “selects and mingles typological elements from different periods of the artistic tradition of *Hellenism*.” The ideological axis of Kóntoglou’s painting aimed at the demonstration of the diachronic character of Greek civilization. He used Byzantine morphology as the central axis of his style introducing within it elements that go as far back as the Hellenistic and Roman period and as forward as the late Byzantine and popular art. As Kotidis notes the aesthetic references to the styles of different periods are characterized “by Kóntoglou’s interpretation of these styles”. See Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου*, (*Modernism and “Tradition” in the Greek Art of the Interwar Period*), p.p. 106-7. Generally on Kóntoglou see, Παπανικολάου, Μιλτιάδης, Μ., *Ιστορία της τέχνης στην Ελλάδα Ζωγραφική και γλυπτική του 20ου αιώνα* (*History of Art in Greece: 20th Century Painting and Sculpture*); Καρακατσάνη, Αγάπη and Κοψίδης, Ράλλης, «Φώτης Κόντογλου», in: Αγάπη Καρακατσάνη and Λυδάκης Στέλιος (eds.), *Οι Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι* (*The Greek Painters*), vol. II, *20ος Αιώνας* (*Twentieth Century*); and Ματθιόπουλος, Ευγένιος (ed.), *Λεξικό Ελλήνων Καλλιτεχνών. Ζωγράφοι-Γλύπτες-Χαράκτες, 16ος-20ος αιώνας* (*A Dictionary of Greek Artists; Painters-Sculptors- Engravers, 16th-20th century*).

¹⁷ Θα κατάζουμε μόνο να δουλέψουμε με υλικό του τόπου μας, παρμένο πρώτα από το Μεσαιωνικό Κρητικό θέατρο που είναι πιο κοντά μας, από τον Καραγκιόζη, που όσο κι αν έμενε παραγνωρισμένος είναι όμως πολύ πλούσια πηγή, από άλλες τέχνες αντιπροσωπευτικές, χορούς, λαϊκή ζωγραφική, τραγούδια, μουσική – κι απ’ την ποίηση. *Alcestis’ programme*, 19th December 1934. (Quotation taken from Γλυτζουρή, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα* (*The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece*), p. 542.)

¹⁸ Μαζύ μ’ αυτά θα μας οδηγήσουν οι συνήθειες κι οι τύποι που βρίσκει κανείς ακόμα στην Ελλάδα σα σύμβολα της ψυχής και της ζωής των μερών μας. *Alcestis’ programme*, 19th December 1934. (Quotation taken from Γλυτζουρή, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα* (*The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece*), p. 542.)

¹⁹ It is interesting to note that Fotos Politis first attempted the re-textualization of a Greek theatrical past. As I have already mentioned in Chapter I, Politis recognized the need to recover an idea of historicity, to construct even a historicity, of Greek theatre from the nineteenth century onwards, especially in regard to performance. In a number of articles he referred and commented on the work of actors and directors prior to his time. See Chapter I, p. p. 62-3, and footnote 63, p. 63.



Photo 42 Set model for Euripides' *Alcestis*, the Laikí Skené 1934



Photo 43 Euripides' *Alceste*, the Laikí Skené 1934

In practice Laikós Expressionism consisted of a style, which can be described as an amalgam of Greek cultural popular elements where Byzantine hagiography stood, for example, next to the traditional figures of Karagiozis. The 1934 production of Euripides' *Alcestis*, Koun's first production of tragedy, was characteristic of this style. The set of the production was based on popular Greek woodwork of the 16th and 17th century and followed the stage/set arrangement of the Karagiozis shadow theatre.²⁰ (See photo 42) Death was presented as a Byzantine angel wearing tsarouchia (traditional folklore Greek shoes) whilst Hercules as a drunkard, bawler Uncle-Giorgos, a traditional figure of Karagiozis.²¹ (See photo 43) Greek folklore songs were used to supply the music of the performance.²²

The use of the term Expressionism in regard to Koun's aesthetic style during the Laikí Skené period might imply an intention to counter-propose a Greek Expressionism versus the German one. However, he never stated this and it is quite difficult to draw significant analogies between German expressionism and Laikós Expressionism. Laikós Expressionism seems to work in an iconoclastic way where stage images are almost superimposed on the text, an aesthetic element which is reminiscent of some of the tendencies of German Expressionism as well as the emphasis on primitive art. Besides these elements, however, it is very difficult to trace other similarities except the more general emphasis on the expression of the artist's soul and experience, which is

²⁰ The stage/set arrangement of the Karagiozis shadow theatre consists of two 'buildings' placed on the left and the right of the stage leaving the stage centre free for the puppets' acting.

²¹ See Γλυτζουρή, Αντώνης, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα (The Art of Theatre Direction in Greece)*, p. 589.

²² See Φωτόπουλος, Διονύσης, «Κάρολος Κούν» ("Károlos Koun"), in: Διονύσης Φωτόπουλος, *Παραμύθια πέραν της όψεως (Fairy Tales beyond the Performance)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1990,

characteristic also of modernism in general. On the whole Laikós Expressionism aimed at creating on stage the mood of Greek popular Festivals as an actual manifestation of the Greek people's 'soul' which is, of course, very different from what German Expressionism aimed at expressing.²³

In regard to the basis of Laikós Expressionism's opposition to other Greek theatrical aesthetic styles or approaches at that time this lies in three principles which also consisted of fundamental principles of Greek modernism. The first one concerned the application of a 'Greek' aesthetic approach in all kinds of theatre. Thus its aim was the quest for a 'Greek' style of performance, regardless of the genre or the national origin of the play performed. The second one consisted of an emphasis placed on popular 'Greek' theatre, like, for example, Karagiozis, art and life.²⁴ Finally both these principles were combined and simultaneously promoted a third ideological principle, the notion of a 'Greek' Greece that emphasized the eastern qualities of the 'Greek' culture through the ages. As I explained in the first chapter, the notion of a 'Greek' Greece stressed the ideological importance of the geographical position of the constitution of all the phases of 'Greek' culture from antiquity to contemporary times, that is the Balkan Peninsula, Asia Minor and the Middle East. This ideological importance placed all phases of what was considered to be 'Greek' culture within the ideological borders of a geographical

p. 53. One can easily observe the similarity of principles between Koun's work and Kóntoglou's opinions on Greek art.

²³ On German Expressionism see Patteson, Michael, *The Revolution in German Theatre: 1900-1933*; and Styan, J.L., *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 3: Expressionism and Epic Theatre*.

²⁴ The reference to Karagiozis, besides its aesthetic dimension as a popular 'Greek' theatre, served also as a reference that enabled Koun to express in a theatrical way his left political ideas, because, as Hatzipantazis points out, in the helenized form of Karagiozis one could find "a picture of the popular life in its entirety, a picture that did not hide the basic class differences". [μιά εικόνα της λαϊκής ζωής στο σύνολό της, μια

crossroads between the West and the East, implicitly and explicitly denoting a notion of a ‘Greek’ East identified with ‘Greek’ culture. In that sense it explicitly connoted its ideological *difference* from the notion of ‘Europe’s Greece’.

Although the closure of the Laikí Skené signified also Koun’s abandonment of the style of Laikós Expressionismós, these three principles can be still traced as a basis of his work with the Théâtre Technis combined, however, and expressed within the frame of a new concept of theatre that characterised the Théâtre Technis productions.²⁵ Founding the Théâtre Technis in 1942, in the midst of the German occupation, Koun expressed a more general conception of theatre and art as a ‘mission’ that presupposed the “absolute faith” and the “absolute sacrifice of ourselves to a higher idea”.²⁶ This higher idea involved creating “theatre to enrich ourselves, the audience that attends our performances and all together to contribute in the creation of a wide, psychologically rich and integral culture in our land”.²⁷ Right from its beginning the Théâtre Technis set itself in the place of opposition to the National Theatre. Although privately owned, in a few years’ time it reached the point of competing and being compared with the National Theatre supplementing also the National’s insufficient policy in modern Greek drama.²⁸

εικόνα που δὲν ἀποσιωποῦσε τὶς βασικὲς ταξικὲς ἀντιθέσεις.] Χατζηπανταζής, Θόδωρος, *Η εἰσβολή του Καραγκιόζη στην Αθήνα τον 1890 (Karagiozis’ invasion in Athens in 1890)*, p.p. 100-1.

²⁵ It has to be noted, however, that the aesthetic style of Laikós Expressionismós formed the basis of Koun’s later productions of ancient comedy.

²⁶ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἡ κοινωνικὴ θέση καὶ ἡ αἰσθητικὴ γραμμὴ τοῦ Θεάτρου Τέχνης» (“The Social Position and the Aesthetic Quests of the Théâtre Technis”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p. 11.

²⁷ *Κάνουμε θέατρο για νά πλουτίσουμε τούς ἑαυτούς μας, τό κοινό πού μάς παρακολουθεῖ κι ὅλοι μαζί νά βοηθήσουμε νά δημιουργηθεῖ ἕνας πλατύς, ψυχικά πλούσιος καὶ ἀκέραιος πολιτισμός στὸν τόπο μας.* Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἡ κοινωνικὴ θέση καὶ ἡ αἰσθητικὴ γραμμὴ τοῦ Θεάτρου Τέχνης» (“The Social Position and the Aesthetic Quests of the Théâtre Technis”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p. 12.

²⁸ The issue of the unwillingness of the National Theatre to promote Modern Greek contemporary playwrights had been frequently discussed in the periodical *Θέατρο (Theatre)*, Νίτσος, Κώστας (ed.).

The Théâtre Technis was promoted from its foundation as a ‘progressive’ theatre company both artistically and politically. It was founded as an ensemble theatre where all the members of the company were treated as equal and were paid almost the same salary.²⁹ The idea of an ensemble theatre aimed at the creation of a group that would learn to think and work in unity; a group especially trained and “subdued” to a new approach to theatrical expression.³⁰ It is important to note that simultaneously with the Théâtre Technis, Koun founded a Drama School from which he recruited actors for the company. The result was a company whose members had no other theatrical reference than their training with Koun, a fact which contributed to the company’s unity.³¹

Regardless, however, of Koun’s and the company’s declaration that the Théâtre Technis’ was structured as an ensemble theatre, the artistic leadership of Károlos Koun was

Among the many articles written about this issue see Νίτσος, Κώστας, «Ἐπί τέλους, ἔργο ἐλληνικό!» (“At Last, [Do Produce a] Modern Greek play!”), «Ἡ ἔνοχη σιγή» (“The Guilty Silence”), «Ἄξια καλύτερης μοίρας» (“Worthy of a Better Fate”), in: Κώστας Νίτσος, *Αστερίσκοι (The Editor’s Opinions)*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1996, p.p. 67-9, 78-9, 157-8 respectively (originally published in the periodical *Θέατρο* edited by Κώστας Νίτσος). See also Κουν, Κάρολος, «Υπάρχει κρίση στό θέατρο;» (“Is There a Crisis in Theatre?”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p.p. 37-9 (originally published in *Ταχυδρόμος*, 29-4-1961). Between 1942 and 1967 the National Theatre produced 198 plays of which only 38 were Modern Greek, including plays that belong to the Cretan Renaissance drama. The majority of these plays were written at the beginning of the twentieth century. Data from *60 Χρόνια Εθνικό Θέατρο, 1932-1992 (60 Years National Theatre, 1932-1992)*.

²⁹ See Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἡ κοινωνική θέση καί ἡ αἰσθητική γραμμὴ τοῦ Θεάτρου Τέχνης» (“The Social Position and the Aesthetic Quests of the Théâtre Technis”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p.p. 17-8. Although the idea of an ensemble theatre is reminiscent of Bertolt Brecht, it is not certain whether Koun knew Brecht’s ideas on theatre as early as 1942. Within that framework the idea of an ensemble theatre might more broadly be referred to leftist ideas on art.

³⁰ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἴσως ν’ ἀνήκω στό κατεστημένο, ἀλλά συχνά λειτουργῶ ἐναντίον του» (“I May Belong to the Status Quo, but I Frequently Work Against It”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν για το θέατρο: Κείμενα και Συνεντεύξεις (Károlos Koun [speaking] about Theatre: Texts and Interviews)*, p.p. 49-60 (originally published in *Τά Νέα*, 4-10-1973). Within that framework the organisation of the new company, at least in the way the company itself proclaimed it, differed both from the hierarchical structure of the National Theatre and the structure of other privately owned theatre companies which revolved around their leading star/s.

unquestionable. Koun's theatrical policy was the Théâtre Technis' theatrical policy. In fact, the Théâtre Technis was the first privately owned theatre company in Greece that was structured around the name and the importance of a theatre director whose artistic conception was the value of the company's productions in the theatre market.

In regard to its artistic profile the Théâtre Technis proposed a repertoire that promoted modern classics, especially Ibsen, Chekhov, Shaw, and contemporary playwrights like Pirandello and introduced new aesthetic trends, like the Theatre of the Absurd. Moreover from the beginning of the 1950s onwards it produced systematically Modern Greek plays contributing essentially in the production of Modern Greek drama. From 1945 onwards and especially from 1959 it became involved in productions of Ancient Greek drama proposing a new aesthetic approach and style.

The 'progressive' repertoire signified also the company's addressing to a 'progressive' audience that during this period, especially after World War II, was identified with a politically 'progressive' audience belonging mostly to the left.³² In a sense the Théâtre Technis came to represent the 'highbrow' theatre of the then 'progressive' portion of the Greek theatre audience and became linked with the ideology of leftist artists and audiences that had comprised a vital section of intellectuals and artists in Greece since the

³¹ The recruitment of actors originating from the Théâtre Technis Drama School may explain the degree to which Koun was unwilling to compromise his aesthetic ideals and quests by working in his company with actors and actresses that may have been trained in seeking different aesthetic quests.

³² The political opposition between the pre-capitalist and the capitalist class which, was prominent from the beginning of the century to the middle of the interwar period, gave its position to a political opposition between capitalists and communists.

1920s.³³ Within that framework the aesthetic opposition of the Théâtre Technis to the National Theatre reflected also a political opposition.

The Théâtre Technis never officially promoted itself as a politically left communist theatre. It rather referred to itself as a politically ‘progressive’, democratic theatre although at times it used a leftist vocabulary when it referred for example to its members as ‘workers’ of art.³⁴ Many of its members, however, belonged to the communist or other parties of the left, in a historical period when actors and actresses could not find work at the National Theatre if they did not belong to right wing political parties or at least had no connection with the left.³⁵ Nevertheless the Théâtre Technis never became artistically a politically ‘recruited’ theatre company. Its ties to the left were mostly defined by the company’s adoption of more broad left-originated and oriented ideas the most prominent of which was the political interpretation of the plays performed.³⁶

³³ See Κόκορης, Δημήτρης, *Όψεις των σχέσεων της αριστεράς με τη λογοτεχνία στο Μεσοπόλεμο: 1927-1936 (Aspects of the Relations of the Left with Literature during the Interwar Period: 1927-1936)*, Patras: Αχαϊκές Εκδόσεις, 1999.

³⁴ Although the expression “workers of theatre” was used before Koun, the context in which Koun used it echoed a communist or at least a politically left ideology. See Κουν, Κάρολος, «Τά δύσκολα χρόνια» (“The Hard Years”) (originally published in *Τα Νέα*, 21-9-1976) and «Η κοινωνική θέση και η αισθητική γραμμή του Θεάτρου Τέχνης» (“The Social Position and the Aesthetic Quests of the Théâtre Technis”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p.p. 119-21 and 11- 28 respectively.

³⁵ Characteristic is the case of Aimílios Veakis who, despite his brilliant career, was in a sense forced to leave the National Theatre in 1941 (with the exception of one production in 1950 that proved to be his last). He was also expelled from the position of drama teacher in the Hellenic Odium because of his political beliefs, and he died poor and neglected. On Veakis see Κυπαρίσσης, Πάνος, *Βεάκης, για την ιθαγένεια στην υποκριτική (Veakis, about Indigenity in Acting)*, Athens: Ρόπτρον, 1991; Πατρίκιος, Τίτος, «Ένας Άνθρωπος (Αιμίλιος Βεάκης) (“A Human Being (Aimilios Veakis)”), *Επιθέωρηση Τέχνης*, vol. 6, No 33, September 1957, p.p. 179-81; Κοτζιάς, Κώστας, «Ο Βεάκης και το θέατρο» (“Veakis and the Theatre”), *Επιθέωρηση Τέχνης*, vol. 6, No 33, September 1957, p.p. 177-8; and Πλωρίτης, Μάριος, «Αιμίλιος Βεάκης, Ο ανεπανάληπτος», in: Μάριος Πλωρίτης, *Της σκηνής και της τέχνης (About the Stage and Art)* Athens: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 1990, p.p. 235-40 (originally published in *Το Βήμα*, 31-5-1981).

³⁶ One has to note, however, that given the political situation in Greece the promotion of a theatre company as a straight forward communist company would have simply resulted in its closure.

This political interpretation involved the interpretation of the message/meaning of the play in contemporary political terms and context.³⁷ A most notable example of this practice was Koun's political interpretation of Aeschylus' *Persae*. Although, as I will explain, he claimed that the play conveyed 'human truths' thus accepting its eternal and universal value, Koun approached the play within the context of the political issues of that time. Actually it may well have been the pressing political situation of that time, as well as his broader preference for Aeschylus as a playwright, that led Koun to choose Aeschylus' *Persae*. *Persae* is characterised by an anti-war message that Koun felt represented this period both in terms of what was happening in Greece as well as globally.

In 1965 in the midst of the cold war peace movements were being organised all around the world. In Greece the peace movement was politically supported by ΕΔΑ (EDA, United Democratic Left), the legal fraction of the left. In 1963, two years before the *Persae* production, one of the pioneers of the Greek peace movement, Grigoris Lambrakis, an ΕΔΑ member of the Greek Parliament, was assassinated in a peace demonstration in Thessaloniki.³⁸ It was a political assassination that shook the Greek people, especially the progressive portion of the population drawing emphasis on the unmistakably political dimensions of the peace movement, since ΕΔΑ was supporting

³⁷ The emphasis on the political dimensions of a play was based on Koun's more general concept that every work of art is necessarily political and linked to the reality of each given time. He believed that the artist cannot disregard the socio-political environment within which he lives and works in the same way that he cannot disregard himself. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Πάντα πολιτική και ύπαρξιακή ή έκφραση του καλλιτέχνη κι απόλυτα δεμένη με τη ζωή του ανθρώπου» (The Artist's Expression is Always Political and Existential and Inseparably Linked with the Life of Man"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (Károlos Koun: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake*), p.p. 123-4 (originally published in *Άκρόπολις*, 17-12-1978).

³⁸ See Clogg, Richard, *A concise History of Greece*.

these kinds of movements.³⁹ Within that context the anti-war message of *Persae* could express the strong political tendencies and feelings in Greece, alluding at the same time to the more universal social and political tendencies of the peace movements all over Europe where the play was first performed.

In fact, as Nelli Aggelidou, who acted the role of Atossa, noted, it was the universality of the anti-war message of the play that was stressed in the performance. She wrote that the impression she had formed was that “Koun had evaded the archaic framework of *Persae* and had replaced it with the essence of the anti-war feelings and ideology [characteristic] of the period in which we gave our performance”.⁴⁰ Koun directed the play so that its message could address any cultural group and nation. As Koun himself stated, the central theme that was promoted in the production was that of “the violence of conquerors”. The notion of this violence and its outcome “is not limited to the destruction of the Persians, but it extends itself in every land, even in Athens warning that the Greeks ‘are not slaves, they do not have a master’, a warning against any possible tendency towards dominance and conquering [that the Athenians themselves may have]”.⁴¹ Within this framework the

³⁹ Communism as such was declared politically illegal in Greece during that period. EDA as the legal fraction of the left did not openly support communist beliefs and ideas, but supported movements which originated from the politically left and in a broad way were opposed to capitalism without, however, openly promoting communism. One of the most notable examples of this policy was the peace movement.

⁴⁰ Παραμένω ακόμα με την αίσθηση ότι ο Κούν είχε παρακάμψει το αρχαϊκό πλαίσιο των «Περσών» και τό είχε αντικαταστήσει με την πεμπτουσία της αντιπολεμικότητας, της εποχής ακριβώς που δίναμε την παράστασή μας. Αγγελίδου, Νέλλη, «Ελάχιστες μνήμες από μεγάλη κληρονομιά» (“Few Memories from a Great Inheritance”), *Η Λέξη*, issue no 62, February-March 1987, p. 119.

⁴¹ Κάνοντας αρχή με τον Αισχύλο, έχουμε στοχο στους «Πέρσες» την κατακτητική βία, που δέν περιορίζεται μόνο στην καταστροφή των Περσών, αλλά επεκτείνεται σε κάθε χώρα, ακόμα και στην Αθήνα, προειδοποιώντας πως οι Έλληνες «δέν είναι δούλοι ανθρώπου, δέν έχουνε αφέντη», προειδοποίηση για κάθε δυναστευτική και κατακτητική τυχόν τάση τους. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Πάντα πολιτική και ύπαρξιακή ή έκφραση του καλλιτέχνη κι απόλυτα δεμένη με τή ζωή του ανθρώπου» (The Artist’s Expression is Always Political and Existential and Inseparably Linked with the Life of Man”),

interpretation of the play might well have denoted an even stronger political message against capitalism, its leaders and the power exercised by them, both in Greece as well as globally, warning against any excess in the use of their power. Thus one may speculate that the contemporary Persians and Athenians could well have been in 1965 the imperialist capitalist states.

Despite, however, this explicit manifestation of leftist ideas, the Théâtre Technis did not break its ties with the capitalist aesthetic ideology. Besides the fact that the company was subsidised by the Ford Foundation in a period when Anti-American feelings were quite intense amongst the left, Koun's notion of *hellenikótita* and performance continued to move within the framework of Greek modernism as this was expressed by the literary generation of the 1930s, which was a capitalist aesthetic ideology.

The issue of *hellenikótita* was pivotal in Koun's Théâtre Technis productions. It is interesting to note, however, that Koun raised and discussed this issue, the most representative of his artistic generation, almost exclusively in relation to ancient drama and especially tragedy.⁴² This alludes to the importance tragedy had acquired within the 'sub-field of restricted production' in Bourdieu's terms and supports my argument that the stakes in the 'sub-field' involved the performances of tragedy. In fact, Koun expanded the limits of that production to include also Ancient Greek comedy. It should be noted that Koun's work in ancient drama is more generally linked by theoreticians as well as artists with ancient comedy rather than tragedy, especially in what regards the aesthetic

in: Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake*), p.p. 123-4.

style of the performance.⁴³ His work, however, in tragedy, as I will argue, consists of an aesthetic proposition equally important to the one in comedy.⁴⁴

I have maintained in the previous chapter, that Koun's opposition to Rondiris' and the National Theatre's style of performances of tragedy was structured precisely on the issue of *hellenikótita*. He 'accused' the National Theatre and especially Rondiris of promoting a style that "moved within the German school of *sprechchor*". He repeatedly opposed this style which, as he argued, was characterised "by an austere, geometrical movement of the chorus" and the 'reciting of Dramatic Speech' using the "crescendo-diminuendo of voices" all modes of style that Koun considered alien to Greeks.⁴⁵

⁴² I refer mostly to the period of the Théâtre Technis.

⁴³ Koun's productions of ancient comedy were considered to propose a solution to the way these plays should be performed in contemporary times. However, I think that we have to take into consideration the fact that the systematic production of comedies by the Théâtre Technis coincided with the opening of the National Theatre's repertoire including ancient comedy. Productions of ancient comedy are included systematically in the National Theatre's repertoire from 1956 onwards. Prior to that date there was only one production, Aristophanes' *Clouds* in 1951. It is worth noting, however, that the next artistic generation's opposition was in comedy. One of the principal representatives of this generation was Alexis Solomós, his student when Koun was teaching in the American College.

⁴⁴ For the sake of my argument I have to state that the two productions that established the Théâtre Technis in ancient drama during the period I discuss were Aristophanes' *Birds* and Aeschylus' *Persae*. The total number of productions of ancient drama that the Théâtre Technis produced up to 1967 was five, two tragedies and three comedies: Aeschylus' *Choephorae*, 1945, Aristophanes' *Ploutos*, 1957, Aristophanes' *Birds*, 1959, Aeschylus' *Persae*, 1965, Aristophanes' *Frogs*, 1966. From 1967 onwards Koun's productions of tragedy augmented in number and surpassed that of comedies. Through his texts and interviews Koun does not seem to prefer one genre to the other; on the contrary it seems he chose plays rather than genres. Furthermore he discussed both comedy and tragedy on a common aesthetic cultural basis. One has to take into account, however, that Koun seemed to be more concerned with the issue of the production of tragedy because his references to this issue surpassed the number of references to comedy in his interviews and texts. This of course may be explained by the fact that the issue at stake in the 'sub-field of restricted production' was traditionally the production of tragedy.

⁴⁵ «Ολόκληρη η ζωή του Κάρολου Κουν στο θέατρο όπως ο ίδιος την αφηγήθηκε λίγο πριν πεθάνει» ("The Entire Life of Karolos Koun in Theatre as he Narrated it himself Shortly Before his Death"), an interview with George Pilichós published in the newspaper *Ta Néa* from the 16th to the 27th of February 1987. The reference to Rondiris is from the 24th of February 1987 issue. Characteristic of the central position that tragedy and ancient drama held in the artistic opposition of the two directors is the fact that Koun when asked his opinion about Rondiris he immediately referred to the latter's style in productions of tragedy expressing his opposition. The same opinion he also expressed on other occasions. See, for example, Koun, Κάρολος, «Αισθάνομαι πιά ελεύθερος και πιά ετυχημένος όταν μπορώ νά έχω επαφή μέ τούς ανθρώπους» ("I Feel More Free and More Happy when I Can Be in Contact with Human Beings"), (from a research of the German television), «Γιά τήν ἀρχαία τραγωδία» ("About Ancient Tragedy"), and «H

The focus of Koun's opposition to Rondiris and the National Theatre over the European references in the style of their productions denoted the difference of concept in regard to the issue of European artistic influences on Greek art within the framework of Greek modernism. As I have explained in the first chapter, Greek modernism openly accepted the European artistic and intellectual hegemony.⁴⁶ European artistic movements, however, were approached and used within the "the autonomy of the aesthetic experience" of modernism. Furthermore the 'Greekness' of the artist presupposed their renegotiation within 'Greek' cultural terms in the process itself of seeking "the truth" in the production of a work of art. It is in this context that I understand the way Greek modernists did not hesitate to accept openly European artistic hegemony whilst at the same time facing, as I explained in the first chapter, Europe as a rival by searching for originality in works of art that would make them recognized as 'purely Greek'.

I have argued all through this thesis that the Greek directors of the 'sub-field of restricted theatrical production' were forced to accept the European artistic hegemony and to search for a 'Greek' originality in works slightly earlier than the Greek literary field did. This development was due to the specific conditions of Greek theatre, namely the lack of a 'Greek' tradition of performance from which contemporary 'Greek' theatre could draw. They could not, therefore, but refer to European artistic movements renegotiating them

τραγωδία απαιτεί αναζήτηση και ειδική εκπαίδευση» ("Tragedy Requires Exploration and Special Training") (originally published in *Ταχυδρόμος*, 2-10-1975), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (*Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake*), p.p. 92-9, 155-6 and 103-9 respectively. Although the name of Rondiris is not always mentioned, the reference to the latter's style is unmistakable. In fact, his opposition to Rondiris was first expressed in the inauguration speech of the Théâtre Technis where Koun mainly explained the aesthetic position and aims of the Théâtre Technis as a kind of aesthetic manifesto of the company. See Koun, Κάρολος, «Η κοινωνική θέση και η αισθητική γραμμή του Θεάτρου Τέχνης» ("The Social Position and the Aesthetic Quests of the Théâtre Technis"), in: *Κάρολος*

within ‘Greek’ cultural terms and using them as theatrical tradition. What differentiated Koun’s attitude in regard to that of the Sikelianoí, Politis, and Rondiris was, on the one hand, the explicitness with which he referred to the European artistic movements that influenced him, and, on the other, the elusiveness in the way these references were reflected in his work. Koun considered himself an empirical director in the sense of working on ideas as these appeared in the process of rehearsals. He said “besides a general instinctive concept of form and rhythms, every detail reveals itself in the process of work.”⁴⁷

During the first period of his work from 1938, when he produced Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, to the 1950s, Koun worked within the artistic framework of the naturalistic theatre of Stanislavsky and the ‘imaginary realism’ of Vachtanghov.⁴⁸ Although Koun never entirely abandoned naturalistic theatre, in the course of his career he did turn to other foreign theatrical movements especially in relation to the plays he was producing each time. In regard to his Théâtre Technis productions of ancient drama, from 1959 onwards, Koun referred to the use of the Epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht and the Theatre of the Absurd as a means to understand and approach ancient drama in contemporary terms.

Κουν: *Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (Károlos Koun: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake*), p.p. 11-28.

⁴⁶ See Chapter I, p. 40.

⁴⁷ *Εκτός από μία γενική ένστικτώδη σύλληψη μορφής και ρυθμών, ή κάθε λεπτομέρεια αποκαλύπτεται κατά τη διάρκεια της δουλειάς.* Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ίσως ν’ ανήκω στο κατεστημένο, αλλά συχνά λειτουργώ έναντίον του» (“I May Belong to the Status Quo, but I Frequently Work Against It”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν για το θέατρο: Κείμενα και Συνεντεύξεις* (Károlos Koun [speaking] about Theatre: *Texts and Interviews*), p. 59. An elaborated account of the mode Koun directed is given by Mágia Lympferopoulou. See Λυμπεροπούλου, Μάγια, «Άφαντος και πάντα μελλοντικός» (“Unseen and Always in the Future”), *Η Λέξη*, issue no 62, February-March 1987, p.p. 109-14.

⁴⁸ On Stanislavsky and Vachtanghov see Brockett, Oscar G. and Finlay, Robert R., *Century of Innovation: A History of European and American Theatre and Drama since 1870*; Magarshack, David, “Stanislavsky” and Bentley, Erick, “Emotional Memory”, in: *The Theory of the Modern Stage*, p.p. 219-274 and 275-8

In fact, through his work Koun bridged the gap between the theatrical European movements of the beginning of the twentieth century and the interwar period and those proposed after World War II.

The Epic Theatre, through the theory and practice of ‘alienation’, gave Koun insight in regard to chorus, because “the direct contact with the audience and the critical opinion”, that Brecht’s theatre creates through the ‘alienation’ effect was achieved in antiquity, in Koun’s opinion, through the chorus.⁴⁹ Furthermore Brecht and the Theatre of the Absurd “have replaced man in the open space and the unfenced time, face to face with the great questions of his existence: life, death, love, hatred, passion, war and conquest, fate and predestination, happiness, grief, justice, injustice, the few, the masses, I and thou, all that disconcerts humanity as a whole now and then”.⁵⁰

The Theatre of the Absurd provided Koun with an understanding and use of time and space different from that of the naturalistic theatre within the framework of which he had worked until then.⁵¹ This understanding of time and space was more compatible with the non-realistic style of the genre of tragedy. At the same time Koun probably

respectively, and Carlson, Malvin, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*.

⁴⁹ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Μαγεία, πάθος και συγκίνηση κυρίαρχα στοιχεία της τραγωδίας» (“Magic, Passion and Emotion, [the] Dominant Elements of Tragedy”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p. 110-8 (Koun’s speech in the International Conference on Theatre held in Athens in 6-7-1976, originally published in *Θέατρο*, issue no 51-52, May-August 1976).

⁵⁰ Quotation taken from Bakopoulou-Halls, Alikí, “Greece”, in: *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production*, p. 284 (the quotation is translated by Alikí Bakopoulou-Halls).

⁵¹ On Theatre of the Absurd see Esslin, Martin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, London, Penguin Books, 1980 (third edition); Hinchliffe, Arnold P., *The Absurd*, London: Methuen, The Critical Idiom, 1969; Jacquart, Emmanuel C., *Le Théâtre de dérision: Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1974; Ionesco,

perceived a kinship in the way both the Theatre of the Absurd and Ancient Greek tragedy place at their thematic center Man and his/her relation and place in the world.

In the Epic Theatre, on the other hand, Koun found a contemporary theatrical way to understand and approach the issue of collectivity.⁵² The issue of collectivity in relation to the chorus and its place in Ancient Greek drama comprised, as I will discuss later in this chapter, the core of his approach to tragedy. At the same time the issue of collectivity was understood within the more general concept that every work of art is necessarily political and linked to the reality of each given time, a concept common also to the Epic Theatre. The stress on the political dimensions of a play, which also characterised Koun's approach to *Persae*, was, as I have explained, an essential characteristic of the Théâtre Technis productions.

However, despite these concepts that refer to the Epic Theatre and the Theatre of the Absurd, it is very difficult to trace in Koun's work on tragedy specific stylistic references to European artistic movements. Even these concepts drawn from the Epic Theatre and the Theatre of the Absurd are renegotiated in *Persae* within his notion of *hellenikótita* and performance. Thus they comprise an integral part of an aesthetic whole organically linked and interpreted through Koun's 'Greek' way of seeing and understanding the world.

Eugene, *Notes and Counternotes*, Watson, Donald (trans.), London: John Calder, 1964; and Fletcher, John and Spurling, John, *Beckett: A Study of his Plays*, London: Methuen, 1978 (expanded and revised edition).

⁵² On Brecht see Willet, John (ed. and trans.), *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, London: Methuen, 1978; Esslin, Martin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, London: Methuen, 1984; Bryant-Bertail, Sarah, *Space and Time in Epic Theatre: The Brechtian Legacy*, New York, Camden House, 2000; Patterson, Michael, *The Revolution in German Theatre: 1900-1933*; and Styan, J.L., *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 3: Expressionism and Epic Theatre*.

Koun conceived *hellenikótita* within the framework of Greek modernism as a defining feature of his own experience of the world and his art. It is not therefore coincidental that it is the first time in all this discourse on *hellenikótita* and tragedy that we meet in one of Koun's texts the phrase "I as a Greek" as a defining criterion of understanding what should or should not be done in ancient tragedy.⁵³ Furthermore again expressing the tendencies of Greek modernism in theatre Koun, without disregarding the different historical phases of what is regarded as 'Greek' culture, drew primarily from popular Greek culture as this was experienced in everyday life, especially life in the village and on the islands, in order to understand tragedy and to form his aesthetic style.⁵⁴ This culture, as he argued, was never influenced by the West and thus it best expressed the particularity of 'Greek' culture stemming from the notion of Greece being at the crossroads between the East and the West.⁵⁵ Within this framework Koun was convinced that in order "to know and perform our ancient poets" "we have to know first the Greek person of today".⁵⁶ He explained that by referring to the Greek landscape which did not

⁵³ Koun, Κάρολος, «Γιά τήν ἀρχαία τραγωδία» ("About Ancient Tragedy"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*. For the full quotation see above, p. 245 and footnote 1 in the same page.

⁵⁴ Koun's notion of *hellenikótita* was much influenced by Κόντογλου in the period of Laikí Skené. I will not, however, elaborate on this first phase of his notion of *hellenikótita* since he had abandoned this notion and the aesthetic style of Laikós Expressionism which represented it by the time he founded the Théâtre Technis. There were elements that had remained from this first notion of *hellenikótita* like, for example, the emphasis on popular 'Greek' culture, but even these moved in a freer and more flexible framework than that of Laikós Expressionism.

⁵⁵ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Αισθάνομαι πιό ἐλεύθερος καί πιό εὐτυχισμένος ὅταν μπορῶ νά ἔχω ἐπαφή μέ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους» ("I Feel more Free and more Happy when I Can Be in Contact with Human Beings"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p.p. 92-9.

⁵⁶ *Εἴμαστε πεπεισμένοι πὼς πρέπει νά γνωρίσουμε πρῶτα τόν Ἕλληνα τοῦ σήμερα, ἂν θέλουμε νά γνωρίσουμε καί νά παραστήσουμε τοὺς ἀρχαίους μας ποιητές.* Κουν, Κάρολος, « Αἰσθάνομαι πιό ἐλεύθερος καί πιό εὐτυχισμένος ὅταν μπορῶ νά ἔχω ἐπαφή μέ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους » ("I Feel more Free and more Happy when I Can Be in Contact with Human Beings"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p. 95. And elsewhere he writes, "It is today's Greece that we Greeks have to close inside us in order to know our ancient poets". [*Τήν Ἑλλάδα πού ὑπάρχει σήμερα, πρέπει νά κλείσουμε μέσα μας ἐμεῖς οἱ Ἕλληνες, γιά νά γνωρίσουμε τοὺς ἀρχαίους μας ποιητές.*] Κουν, Κάρολος, «Τό ἀρχαῖο θέατρο» ("Ancient Theatre") (Koun's

change through the centuries. Thus the everyday day life of the people who lived in the Greek countryside presented “an astonishing similarity” in terms of “rhythms, shapes and sounds” with the everyday life in Ancient Greece.⁵⁷ It was the Greek landscape that constituted the core of Greekness for Koun and the connecting ‘tissue’ between Ancient and Modern Greece. Furthermore it was he “as a Greek” living in the Greek landscape and experiencing a ‘Greek’ way of life who could understand and define the measure of what could or could not be done aesthetically in the productions of tragedy.⁵⁸

Koun’s phraseology in regard to *hellenikótita* and performance of tragedy as well as the ‘Greekness’ of the artist as a defining criterion for the ‘Greekness’ of his/her (the artist’s) work echoes that of Seferis, who was the main representative of Greek modernism. Furthermore the issue of Greek landscape as a parameter that lay behind the ‘Greekness’ of Greeks and connected in a ‘live’ way Ancient with Modern Greece was also a central theme in Seferis’s thought.⁵⁹ Moreover Koun begun his aesthetic quest for a style in the

speech in the International Meeting of Theatre in the Herod Atticus Theatre, 4-7-1957), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Τό ἀρχαῖο θέατρο» (“Ancient Theatre”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p. 34

⁵⁸ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Γιά τήν ἀρχαία τραγωδία» (“About Ancient Tragedy”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake)*, p. 155.

⁵⁹ Seferis referred to the Greek light as a defining principle of ‘Greekness’. This concept of Greek nature and Greek light first appeared in Periklís Giannópoulos’ thought as a defining principle of the superiority of the Greek race. See Γιαννόπουλος, Περικλῆς, *Ἡ Ἑλληνική γραμμὴ καὶ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν χρῶμα (The Greek Line and the Greek Light)*. Áγγελος Sikelianós adopted Giannópoulos’ ideas in the first phase of his work, as I have already discussed in Chapter III. Seferis’ approach referred to Giannópoulos without, however, placing emphasis on the superiority of the race. He used it to explain the particularity of the race. Within this framework Seferis understood Greek nature as a connecting ‘tissue’ that kept Ancient Greece alive within Modern Greece. He wrote, “none of our traditions has really died. Frequently, when I go to the Good Friday mass, it is difficult for me to decide whether the God who is buried is Christ or Adonis. Is it the climate, is it the race, I do not know. Deep down I think it is the light. Something must be within this light, that makes us like that.” [*Καμὶὰ ἀπὸ τὶς παραδόσεις μας, χριστιανικὲς ἢ προχριστιανικὲς δὲν ἔχει πραγματικὰ πεθάνει. Συχνά, δταν πηγαίνω στὴν ἀκολουθία τῆς Μεγάλης Παρασκευῆς, μοῦ εἶναι δύσκολο ν’ ἀποφασίσω ἂν ὁ Θεὸς ποὺ κηδεύεται εἶναι ὁ Χριστὸς ἢ ὁ Ἄδωνης. Εἶναι τὸ κλίμα, εἶναι ἡ φυλὴ, δὲν τὸ ξέρω. Κατὰ βάθος νομίζω πὼς εἶναι τὸ φῶς. Κάτι πρέπει νὰ ὑπάρχει μέσα στὸ φῶς, ποὺ μᾶς κάνει ἔτσι.] Σεφέρης, Γιώργος, «Γράμμα σ’ ἕναν ξένο φίλο», in: *Δοκιμές**



Photo 44 Darius, Atossa, and the Chorus, Aeschylus' *Persae*, the Théâtre Technis 1965

(*Dokimés*), vol. II, p. 14. Some of Seferis' texts in *Δοκιμές* were published in English, Warner, Rex and Frangopoulos, Th. D., (eds. and trans.), *On the Greek Style*, Athens: Denise Harvey, 1982.



Photo 45 Messenger and the Chorus, Aeschylus' *Persae*, the Théâtre Technis 1965

production of tragedy from a point also observed by Seferis “if we want really to understand the Ancient [Greeks] we must always explore the soul of our people”.⁶⁰

Koun conceived the dimensions of the message of tragic plays also within the framework of Greek modernism. This message, the truths that a tragic play denotes, and the image of man it depicts were understood and conveyed within human limits and measures, rather than being positioned within the framework of a high ideal, a conceptualisation characteristic of all the three directors before Koun. Tragedy for Koun depicted “man within the universe”.⁶¹ This universe, however, was understood through human dimensions. As he argued, the core of ancient drama was «man facing life and death, power and the gods».⁶² This approach referred directly to the literary generation of the 1930s’ notion of “man within the height of man”. This notion expressed for Seferis an idea basically ‘Greek’ that of “man as a scale of life” and thus it was inseparably linked with the issue of *hellenikótita*.⁶³ This idea, again according to Seferis, was born at the dawn of Greek thought and it was expressed in all the major, live, moments of ‘Greek’ literature.

⁶⁰ Τοὺς ἀρχαίους, ἂν θέλουμε πραγματικὰ νὰ τοὺς καταλάβουμε, θὰ πρέπει πάντα νὰ ἐρευνήσουμε τὴν ψυχὴ τοῦ λαοῦ μας. Σεφέρης, Γιώργος, «Ἕνας Ἕλληνας - ὁ Μακρυγιάννης», in: *Δοκίμés* (*Dokimés*), vol. I, p. 257.

⁶¹ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Οἰδίποδας» (“Oedipus”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (*Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake*), p. 79 (originally published in *Τό Βῆμα*, 17-10-1967).

⁶² Βασικός του στόχος [τοῦ ἀρχαίου θεάτρου] εἶναι ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀπέναντι στή ζωὴ καί στό θάνατο, στήν ἐξουσία καί στους Θεούς. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἐπτά ἐπὶ Θήβας: Ἡ ἀντίδραση τοῦ ἐλεύθερου ἀνθρώπου» (“Seven Against Thebes: The Reaction of the Free Man”), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (*Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake*), p. 100 (originally published in *Τό Βῆμα* 27-7-1975).

⁶³ Σεφέρης, Γιώργος, «Ἕνας Ἕλληνας - ὁ Μακρυγιάννης», in: *Δοκίμés* (*Dokimés*), vol. I, p.256.

It is probably this understanding of the human dimensions of tragedy that led Koun to a different stage arrangement from the ones used by the previous directors, because Koun abandoned the hierarchical arrangement of the stage and transferred all the action of the play into the orchestra. The chorus and the protagonists acted in the orchestra, denoting, in my opinion, the common human level on which the action of the play takes place. The only exception was the appearance of Darius' ghost in front of his 'tomb' which was slightly elevated.⁶⁴ (See photo 44) A difference of hierarchy was signified by the arrangement of the chorus in regard to the protagonist. For example, the chorus moved around the protagonist leaving a wider empty space around Atossa, which could adhere to a signification of respect, in contrast to the Messenger and Xerxes. (See photo 45) The distance between the chorus members and the Messenger was shorter than that in Atossa's case. This may be understood as an expression, on the one hand, of a feeling of 'familiarity' between the Messenger and the chorus since they all belonged to the Persian people and, on the other, of the desire of the chorus to learn about the outcome of war. In the case of Xerxes, the short distance kept between him and the chorus may to some degree indicate the loss of respect after his *hubris*. The only protagonist positioned in a clearly distinct way from the others was Darius' ghost, who was supposed to come from the world of the dead.

The core of Koun's aesthetic style in tragedy consisted of the positioning of the chorus at the aesthetic centre of the performance, emphasising the element of collectivity, and of

⁶⁴ It has to be noted that Koun designed his productions to be performed mainly in ancient open-air theatres. In none of his texts and interviews does he discuss the idea of designing a production exclusively for an indoor theatre even in a negative way. In that sense he never questioned aesthetically the performance of ancient drama in open-air theatres, an idea that Rondiris had systematically put in practice.

the stylistic importance he attributed to the movement of the body in space. These two elements are also constitutive of the main differences between Koun's style and that of Rondiris and the National Theatre. The positioning of the chorus at the aesthetic centre of the performance and the emphasis on the collective stemmed from the emphasis on the ritualistic, Dionysiac element of tragedy. Koun's approach began from the basis that ancient drama originated from "rituals, festivities and fairs".⁶⁵ Thus "tragic poetry and the whole sensual Dionysiac spell that [tragedy] transmits and has to enrapture the spectator, is inseparably linked with the ritualistic form of theatre".⁶⁶ Within the "ritualistic spell" of tragedy the chorus "forms the atmosphere of the play, illuminates the heroes, and brings out through its passion the messages of the poet".⁶⁷

Koun's understanding of the religiousness of tragedy within the framework of "rituals, festivities and fairs" allowed him to draw from the ritualistic and festive remainings of contemporary popular 'Greek' tradition, which reflected a collective character.⁶⁸ And from this point he proceeded in understanding ritual in such a way that it was not necessarily related to religiousness since it referred to modes of expression of the Greek people in particular situations, like lamenting, mourning or bidding farewell.

⁶⁵ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Μαγεία, πάθος και συγκίνηση κυρίαρχα στοιχεία της τραγωδίας» ("Magic, Passion and Emotion, [the] Dominant Elements of Tragedy"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (Károlos Koun: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake*), p. 117.

⁶⁶ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Μαγεία, πάθος και συγκίνηση κυρίαρχα στοιχεία της τραγωδίας» ("Magic, Passion and Emotion, [the] Dominant Elements of Tragedy"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (Károlos Koun: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake*), p. 117.

⁶⁷ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Μαγεία, πάθος και συγκίνηση κυρίαρχα στοιχεία της τραγωδίας» ("Magic, Passion and Emotion, [the] Dominant Elements of Tragedy"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (Károlos Koun: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake*), p. 117. The aesthetic dominance of the chorus might be another reason for Koun's preference of Aeschylus as well as his choice to produce *Persae*. *Persae* is considered to be among the oldest plays of Aeschylus. The structure of the play is based on the dominance of the chorus and the use of only two actors.

In these ‘Greek’ modes of expression Koun found the expression of the individual within the context of collectivity because they preserved “the margins of a spontaneous movement within the framework of ritual”. In that sense he noted that one could observe next to the expression of the particular situation, the shape of a more general expression, “uncertain still, yet collective that does not release its individual and particularized elements”.⁶⁹ Within that context Koun’s understanding of collectivity allowed in its expression the depiction of individual differences. Thus in his productions the chorus never acquired the formalistic shape of the group that it did in *Rondiris*. The chorus members did not express a unity of soul and body. They were individuals who shared the same cultural modes of expression and understanding; these placed them in the framework of collectivity.

The aesthetic presentation of the chorus in the 1965 *Théatro Technis* production was characteristic of Koun’s approach. Aesthetically the chorus dominated the whole style of the performance, as the old Persians acted and suffered as a protagonist. To this contributed also the fact that the action of the play took place on one level, the level of the orchestra. As I explained earlier, the presence and action of the protagonists took place among the members of the chorus. This physical proximity between the members of the

⁶⁸ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Μαγεία, πάθος και συγκίνηση κυρίαρχα στοιχεία της τραγωδίας» (“Magic, Passion and Emotion, [the] Dominant Elements of Tragedy”), in: Κάρολος Κουν: *Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (Károlos Koun: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake*), p. 115.

⁶⁹ Στίς έκδηλώσεις του λαού μας, τό μοιρολόι και τό πένθος διατηρούν συχνά μέ τόν τρόπο της διατύπωσης τους, τά περιθώρια της αυθόρμητης κίνησης μέσα στά πλαίσια του τελετουργικού και όταν κατευθύνουν κάποιον πού φεύγει ταξίδι, υπάρχει στίς κινήσεις του αποχαιρετισμού, μαζί μέ τήν συναίσθηση της καταστάσεως, τό σχήμα μιās γενικότερης διατύπωσης, άβέβαιης ακόμα αλλά ώστόσο ομαδικής, πού δέν άπελευθερώνει τά άτομικά και τά έξειδικευμένα της στοιχεία. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Η Ελλάδα και ή τραγωδία (Μ’ αφορμή το ανέβασμα των *Περσών*)» (“Greece and Tragedy: On the Occasion of the Production of *Persae*”), in: Κάρολος Κουν: *Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας* (Károlos Koun: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake*), p. 66.

chorus and the actors denoted, in my opinion, the positioning of the chorus as one of the protagonists.

The chorus members created a strong group feeling while its members retained, however, individual characteristics. (See photo 46) Koun's comments on the chorus of *Persae* clearly underlined this point, relating it to *hellenikótita* itself. He used the image of the statue of Heniochus "where each fold of [his dress] is different, his feet are differently shaped", juxtaposing it to Rondiris' more formalist approach to the chorus moving and speaking simultaneously, which Koun considered to be alien to Greeks.⁷⁰ Koun's chorus stood together or broke into smaller groups, in two halves, or in groups of five, but not in the formalized way Rondiris used. The chorus broke into smaller groups in an almost 'casual', everyday way, as Greek people do when something important has occurred. This kind of breaking into smaller groups was used especially during the episodes and it is probably one of the best examples of the use of 'Greek' modes of expression that Koun spoke about. In this way the chorus denoted the feeling of a group through the common/similar reaction of the members in the action without, however, losing the element of their individuality, especially when they broke into smaller groups. The element of individuality was also enhanced by the costumes and the masks of the chorus, which were designed by Tsarouhis, whose work in theatre was linked, especially in the beginning, with Koun's productions and the quest for a 'Greek' style of performance. The

⁷⁰ Ἀρκεῖ νά δοῦμε τόν Ἡνίοχο, πού κάθε του πτυχή εἶναι διαφορετική, τά πόδια του πού εἶναι διαφορετικά σχηματισμένα, γιά νά προσέξουμε ὅτι ἕνα παρόμοιο μονολιθικό πνεῦμα, δέν τό βρίσκει κανεῖς οὔτε στά πιό πρωτόγονα ἑλληνικά ἔργα τῆς ἀρχαιότητος. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἡ Ἑλλάδα καί ἡ τραγωδία (Μ' ἀφορμή τό ἀνέβασμα τῶν Περσῶν)» ("Greece and Tragedy: On the Occasion of the Production of *Persae*"), in: Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο γιά την ψυχή μας (Κάρολος Κουν: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake*), p. 66.

chorus members wore half masks whilst the rest of their faces was covered by beards of different colors, white, brown, black and blond. The same principle was followed in the costumes. The style and the dominating color of the costume were the same but the sleeves were of various colors, blue, red or dark brown, and designs. (See photo 47 and 48)

In the 'Greek' modes of expression which functioned as a framework for ritual and enhanced the notion of collectivity, Koun sought the rendering of the size, the volume, of tragedy, attempting to express the situation the play presents through the body, "its freedom, its unity, its homogeneity".⁷¹ The movement of the body for Koun was "the connecting link with ancient tragedy" because it allowed him to render a 'primitive', 'zoic', character in the style of the performance of a genre whose basic element, the tragic element, is, using Koun's word, "savage".⁷² The body and the entirety of its expressive movements, as he argued, brought back "on the surface the zoic element as first expression, as contact of one person with the 'other', as an element of communication".⁷³ For this reason Koun's quest for the style of a performance of tragedy, or ancient drama in general, began with the movement of the body in space.

⁷¹ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἡ Ἑλλάδα καί ἡ τραγωδία (Μ' ἀφορμή τό ἀνέβασμα τῶν *Περσῶν*)» ("Greece and Tragedy: On the Occasion of the Production of *Persae*"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p. 65.

⁷² Κουν, Κάρολος, «Θέατρο, Παιδεία καί Συνδικαλισμός» ("Theatre, Education and Syndicalism") (originally published in *Ἡ Καθημερινή*, 8-2-1981) and «Ἐπτά ἐπί Θήβας: Ἡ ἀντίδραση τοῦ ἐλεύθερου ἀνθρώπου» (*Seven Against Thebes: The Reaction of the Free Man*"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p.p. 141 and 102 respectively.

⁷³ Μέσα ἀπό τό σῶμα καί τήν ὁλότητα τῆς ἔκφρασης του ἐπανερχεται στήν ἐπιφάνεια τό ζωικό στοιχείο ὡς πρώτη ἔκφραση, ὡς ἐπαφή τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μέ τόν «ἄλλο», ὡς στοιχείο ἐπικοινωνίας. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἡ Ἑλλάδα καί ἡ τραγωδία (Μ' ἀφορμή τό ἀνέβασμα τῶν *Περσῶν*)» ("Greece and Tragedy: On the Occasion of the Production of *Persae*"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p. 67.



Photo 46 Chorus, Aeschylus' *Persae*, the Théâtre Technis 1965



Photo 47 Chorus, Aeschylus' *Persae*, the Théâtre Technis 1965



Photo 48 Chorus, Aeschylus' *Persae*, the Théâtre Technis 1965

The movement of the body in space was aesthetically the most striking characteristic of the chorus in the 1965 production of *Persae*. Maria Kinigoú was responsible for the training of the chorus, but it seems that Koun himself was decisively involved in it.⁷⁴ He taught the movement insisting on referring to situations of the body in the space and not the meaning the text expressed at that point. Mágia Limperopoulou gives an example saying that Koun impelled the members of the chorus to move as if they were walking on the bottom of the sea, to feel the resistance of the body in the water. He did not use to explain the reason for this kind of movement. It was the actor's job to find the reasons.⁷⁵ Thus the feelings and the meaning the text expressed were translated in a code of movement based on the movement of the body in the space, every space. Each body, however, was quite free to express in its own way the situation in which it supposedly was. The only criterion was the 'truth' expressed in the movement; a truth that had to be felt within the body, literally the guts of the actor. It is my contention that the emphasis on the movement of the body to express the 'truth' of the play and the particular way he 'searched' for that 'truth' in the movement convey Koun's interpretation of the "autonomy of the aesthetic experience" of Greek modernism in theatre. The result was a movement that denoted a sense of freedom, which, however, expressed the situation and the meaning of the play. Within that context the movement of the chorus rendered its collectivity as a group without losing the elements of the individuality of the members.

⁷⁴ In a discussion with Christos Kelantonis, who participated in the 1965 production of *Persae* as a chorus member, he told me that it was Koun who devised and taught the movement of the chorus in the process of the rehearsals not agreeing with Kynigoú's initial conception of movement.

⁷⁵ Λυμπεροπούλου, Μάγια, «Άφαντος και πάντα μελλοντικός» ("Unseen and Always in the Future"), *Η Λέξη*, issue no 62, February-March 1987.

The most prominent example of chorus movement in the 1965 production of *Persae*, which best expressed what Koun understood as the ‘zoic’ element of tragedy and portrayed in its most complete form Koun’s aesthetic perception of the chorus, was the chorus song of the evocation of Darius’ ghost. The movement of the chorus members was reminiscent of a Dervish dance, adhering at the same time to something which was more primitive and savage. Without moving in a continuous circular way as the Dervishes do, the movement of the chorus created the impression of a circular movement as the body performed one full or a half circle at a time. (See photo 49) This circular movement was combined with movements towards the earth, which the members of the chorus hit with their hands. This last movement adhered to the action of the chorus song, which was the calling of the dead Darius. Although the movement was the same for all the members of the chorus, it seemed as if each member performed it in its own time and mode. (See photo 50) The result was the impression of an ancient, in the sense of primitive, ritual that could be performed even today.⁷⁶

The “savage” character of tragedy was also expressed by the use of screams, the inarticulate human voice before it became articulate speech. Koun believed that the screams should be rendered “in zoic tones, which are primitive”.⁷⁷ These screams in combination with movement provided the basis for the dramatic speech of the play.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ These observations are based on the revival of the production in 2000 that I attended in the Epidaurus theatre.

⁷⁷ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Επτά επί Θήβας: Η αντίδραση του ελεύθερου ανθρώπου» (“Seven Against Thebes: The Reaction of the Free Man”), in: Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Κάρολος Κουν: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake), p.102.

⁷⁸ Movement and sound were for Koun the basis of theatre. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ήχος και κίνηση» (“Sound and Movement”), in: Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Κάρολος Κουν: We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake), p.162-7 (originally published in the periodical *Η Λέξη*, issue no 46, July – August 1985). In this interview Koun referred to the sounds that make up speech. The purest expression of these

Dramatic speech, for Koun, emerged from this aesthetic basis when the inarticulate human voice became articulate and was united with the movement of the body. This is why Koun argued that in tragedy and in ancient comedy the utterance of speech and sound were inseparably linked with the expression of the body's movement within the space.⁷⁹ In this inseparable link Koun sought the rendering of the Dionysiac ritual element of tragedy and thus proposed a style which aesthetically referred to the origins of tragedy themselves as he understood them: the emergence of the poet's speech, his vision, his philosophy his political and social position within the Dionysiac rituals and festivals.⁸⁰

Decisive for the artistic expression of this approach in the 1965 production of *Persae* was Koun's collaboration with the composer Giannis Christou. In fact, Christou's conception of the music comprised the base upon which Koun 'built' the aesthetic style of the entire production.⁸¹ Christou composed music for the play that did not function as an accompaniment but was a fundamental element in the aesthetic style of the play. He focused on the chorus songs and he wanted to use the chorus "as a means to re-produce

sounds was for Koun "the sounds that animals make [...]. They have the range of a rich [...] vocabulary where the primary components of our desires, our aspirations, our 'will' and our 'being' are imprinted." [*Η πιο γνήσια έκφραση, για μένα, είναι οι ήχοι που βγάζουν τα ζώα [...]. Έχουν την γκάμα ενός πλούσιου [...] λεξιλογίου, όπου αποτυπώνονται τα αρχικά συστατικά των επιθυμιών μας, των επιδιώξεων μας, του «θέλω» μας και του «είμαι».*] Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ήχος και κίνηση» ("Sound and Movement"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p. 163.

⁷⁹ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Μαγεία, πάθος και συγκίνηση κυρίαρχα στοιχεία της τραγωδίας» ("Magic, Passion and Emotion, [the] Dominant Elements of Tragedy"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p. 116.

⁸⁰ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Μαγεία, πάθος και συγκίνηση κυρίαρχα στοιχεία της τραγωδίας» ("Magic, Passion and Emotion, [the] Dominant Elements of Tragedy"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p.p. 110-8.

⁸¹ In an article that Christou wrote about the music in *Persae* it becomes apparent that Koun's aesthetic starting point in *Persae* was the former's concept of the chorus music. Χρήστου, Γιάννης, «Συνθέτοντας για το χορό» ("Composing Music for the Chorus"), in the programme of the revival of the 1965 production of *Persae*, July 2000, p. 29. Christos Kelantonis also confirmed that Koun had not a definite idea of how to

the first material of tragedy – the primitive, basic emotions”.⁸² To achieve this he used words and phrases in such a way that they created “shapes of absolute, self-sufficient vocal sound”. “ ‘Psalmody’ [...] was just one of the many acoustic events in the play. For example, there are frequently parts in the ‘accompaniment’ that require some of the members of the chorus to pronounce different parts of the text –simultaneously– and with a different dynamic.”⁸³ Thus the text was divided and shared in an uneven way between the nineteen members of the chorus.⁸⁴ Rarely was the text uttered by one person alone or by all the chorus members together. “And when [...] the silence is too much to hold the voice of a single person then it is shared by the rest of them, [...] as if they

approach the play aesthetically and especially the chorus before he listened to Christou’s music. It was Christou’s music that inspired in him the way he would present the chorus.

⁸² *Εκείνο που με τράβηξε ήταν η δυνατότητα να χρησιμοποιήσω το Χορό σαν μέσο αναπαραγωγής της πρώτης ύλης της τραγωδίας – των πρωτόγονων, βασικών συγκινήσεων. Χρήστου, Γιάννης, «Συνθέτοντας για το χορό» (“Composing Music for the Chorus”), in the programme of the revival of the 1965 production of *Persae*, p. 29.*

⁸³ *Η καθαυτό «ψαλμωδία» [...] αποτελεί ένα μόνο από τα τόσα ακουστικά συμβάντα στο έργο. Για παράδειγμα, υπάρχουν συχνά μέρη στην «υπόκρουση» που απαιτούν από ορισμένα μέλη του χορού να προφέρουν διαφορετικά κομμάτια από το κείμενο – ταυτόχρονα – και με διαφορετική δυναμική. Χρήστου, Γιάννης, «Συνθέτοντας για το χορό» (“Composing Music for the Chorus”), in the programme of the revival of the 1965 production of *Persae*, p. 29.*

⁸⁴ Koun did not give an exact number of the chorus members, he noted they were fifteen to twenty. In the periodical *Θέατρο*, 1965, edited by Θόδωρος Κρίτας and Αντώνης Βουσβούνης, where the translation of the play was published, the cast of the chorus comprises nineteen members, including the chorus leaders. The creative team of the production was: Panos Moullás: translator; Károlos Koun: direction; Giannis Tsarouhis: set and costume design; Giannis Chistou: composition of music; Maria Kinigou: Chorus movement. The cast was: Stelios Kafkaridis: Xerxes; Neli Aggelidou: Atossa; Dimitris Chatzimarkos: Darius; Giorgos Lazanis: Messenger; Spyros Kalogirou: First Chorus Leader; Nikos Charalambous: Second Chorus Leader. Chorus members: Kostas Aristopoulos, Nektarios Vouteris, Giorgos Dialegmenos, Nikos Kouros, Mimis Kougioumtzis, Giannis Mortzos, Timos Perlegas, Kostas Styliaris, Christos Tsagas, Antonis Antypas, Antonis Antoniou, Nikos Bousdoukos, Giannis Degaitis, Antonis Katsaridis, Elias Logothesis, Polykarpos Polykarpou and Antonis Theodorakopoulos. In a booklet published on the occasion of a symposium on Koun and his work on ancient drama the cast comprises fourteen members of the chorus, including the chorus leaders. (Stelios Kafkaridis: Xerxes; Neli Aggelidou: Atossa; Dimitris Chatzimarkos: Darius; Giorgos Lazanis: Messenger; Spyros Kalogirou: First Chorus Leader; Nikos Charalambous: Second Chorus Leader; Nektarios Vouteris: Third Chorus Leader; G. Mortzos, K. Styliaris, D. Asteriadis: Chorus Leaders; and Chorus members: N. Bousdoukos, E. Logothesis, A. Antypas, Ch. Papakostas, G. Degaitis, A. Katsaridis, Ch. Kelantonis and B. Kyritsis). Μαυρομούστακος, Πλάτων (ed.), *Η σκηνοθετική προσέγγιση του αρχαίου ελληνικού του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος από τον Κάρολο Κουν (Karolos Koun’s Approach of Ancient Greek Drama)*, Athens: Κέντρο Έρευνας και πρακτικών εφαρμογών του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος «Δεσμοί» in collaboration with the Θέατρο Τέχνης Κάρολος Κουν, 2000, p.p. 34-5. The difference in the number of chorus members might suggest a difference between the cast in the performances in London and Paris and those in Greece.

support it with songs or with whispers or with broken sounds.”⁸⁵ The result was a style where music and text was one solid aesthetic ‘body’.

Koun did not disregard the importance of dramatic speech and its utterance. On the contrary he believed that dramatic speech was the most important element in theatre direction because it constituted the myth of the play.⁸⁶ He used everyday speech as the basis of the utterance of dramatic speech. The coloring in the elocution and the tone of voice was drawn from the way Greek people spoke in their everyday life. This mode of elocution “in combination with the poetic speech preserved the gist of reality”.⁸⁷ He applied this concept in an empirical way that provided him with the notion of the way dramatic speech should be uttered.⁸⁸ Contrary, however, to Koun’s innovative conception of the chorus, the style of the protagonists’ elocution and presence was not as innovative.

⁸⁵ Κι όταν [...] ή σιωπή είναι πολύ μεγάλη, για να κρατήσει τό βάρος της φωνής ενός και μόνο προσώπου, τήν μοιράζονται τότε οι υπόλοιποι [...] σάν να τήν υποβοηθοῦν εἴτε μέ τραγούδια, εἴτε μέ ψιθυρίσματα, εἴτε μέ σπασμένες κραυγές. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἡ Ἑλλάδα και ἡ τραγωδία (Μ’ ἀφορμή τό ἀνέβασμα τῶν Περσῶν)» (“Greece and Tragedy: On the Occasion of the Production of *Persae*”), in: Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Κάρολος Κουν: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake*), p.p. 65-6.

⁸⁶ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἥχος και κίνηση» (“Sound and Movement”), in: Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Κάρολος Κουν: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake*), p.162-7.

⁸⁷ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Οἰδίποδας» (“Oedipus”), in: Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Κάρολος Κουν: *We Create Theatre for Our Soul’s Sake*), p. 79.

⁸⁸ Mimis Kougioumtzis notes some of Koun’s ‘tips’ in regard to the utterance of speech and acting in tragedy. “*Poetic speech should not be spoken as prose. You have to be full inside you and have alternating rhythms. *A person who is in deep thought does not make a lot of movements. When you move you lose the continuity [of your thoughts]. *The great truths are understood by the pure popular audience and by those who are cultivated in a right way. *Do not take care the phrase only but also over its meaning. *Intellectualism deprives the actor sensitivity. *Tragic does not want many transitions in the voice because it becomes dramatic. *Do not surrender yourself to the feeling only. It is too small for tragedy. *Reciting is bad because it beautifies feelings. [*Ο ποιητικός λόγος δέν πρέπει να είναι πεζός στην ὁμιλία. Πρέπει να ἔχεις γέμισμα μέσα σου και ρυθμούς πού να ἐναλλάσσονται. *Ο ἄνθρωπος πού ἔχει σκέψεις δέν κάνει πολλές κινήσεις. *Όταν κινεῖσαι χάνεις τήν συνέχεια. *Οἱ μεγάλες ἀλήθειες πιάνονται ἀπό τό ἀγνό λαϊκό κοινό και ἀπό τούς σωστά καλλιεργημένους. *Νά μήν περιποιεῖσαι τή φράση ἀλλά και τό νόμά της. *Ο διανοουμενισμός στόν ἥθοποιό τοῦ στερεῖ τήν εὐαίσθησία. *Τό τραγικό δέν θέλει πολλές μεταπτώσεις στη φωνή γιατί γίνεται δραματικό. *Μήν ἀφήνεσαι μόνο στό συναίσθημα. Είναι λίγο για τήν τραγωδία. *Ἡ ἀπαγγελία είναι κακή γιατί



Photo 49 Chorus, The evocation to Darius, Aeschylus' *Persae*, the Théâtre Technis 1965

ώραιοποιεί τὰ συναισθήματα.] Κουγιουμτζής, Μίμης, «Άγαπημένε μου φίλε» (“My Dear Friend”), *Η Λέξη*, issue no 62, February-March 1987, p. 156.



Photo 50 Chorus, The evocation to Darius, Aeschylus' *Persae*, the Théâtre Technis 1965

Koun's direction came quite close to the existing practice of a more solemn, formalized utterance of speech without reaching Rondiris' level, but still not fundamentally different. Manthos Krispis, reviewing the production in the London performance, focused primarily on the Messenger who reminded him of "the worst moments of conventional acting" with his "explicit and fake colorings of the voice". "In some scenes of the play", Krispis continues, "the protagonists descended to the level of a correct realistic rendering" which did not agree with the text or the style of the direction as this was represented in the chorus.⁸⁹

On the whole Koun's approach to tragedy moved within the aesthetic framework of 'revival' as this is discussed in Chapter II.⁹⁰ Not only did he respect the form of the genre but he also believed that it would be an "alien" action to tamper with the play's poetic form "because the play finds in this form its completion".⁹¹ It is my contention, however, that he did open the limits of the 'revival' by shifting the emphasis from the elocution of dramatic speech to the movement of the body in space and its combination with the utterance of speech. Furthermore he introduced a different concept of the form of 'revival' itself. He argued, "if the clear and frugal manifestation of thought is one of the many virtues of the Ancient Greeks, that does not mean that there is only one single shape for this expression [the expression of the manifestation of this thought]".⁹² Thus he was

⁸⁹ Κρίσπις, Μάνθος, «Ο Κούν δέν τόλμησε στους Πέρσες» ("Koun Was Not Brave Enough in *Persae*"), *Θέατρο*, Νίτσος, Κώστας (ed.), issue no 20, March-April 1965, p. 70.

⁹⁰ See Chapter II, p.p. 86-8.

⁹¹ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ήχος και κίνηση» ("Sound and Movement"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p. 164.

⁹² Ἄν ἡ καθαρή καί λιτή ἐκδήλωση τῆς σκέψης εἶναι μία ἀπό τίς πολλές ἀρετές τῶν ἀρχαίων Ἑλλήνων, αὐτό δέν σημαίνει πῶς ὑπάρχει ἓνα καί μόνο σχῆμα γιά τήν ἐκφραση αὐτή. Κουν, Κάρολος, «Τό ἀρχαῖο θέατρο» ("Ancient Theatre"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*, p. 35.

opposed to the concept existing until then that was geared towards the assumption that there is more or less one single most appropriate aesthetic approach in regard to performances of tragedy.⁹³

Koun's approach and aesthetic style in tragedy reflected the history of the 'sub-field'. Besides his opposition to Rondiris' and the National Theatre's style, which can be understood within the framework of the development of the 'sub-field' as a 'field of forces and struggles' in Bourdieu's terms, Koun's aesthetic style in tragedy referred aesthetically to both the Sikelianoí's and Politis' work. In fact, it is my contention that Koun referred to the Sikelianoí's and Politis' work as a 'Greek' theatrical tradition in a more complete and integral way than Rondiris did. Within that context his work reflected ideas that were first expressed in the earlier history of the 'sub-field'. However, these ideas were developed and taken aesthetically further.

Koun's emphasis on the ritualistic, Dionysiac element of tragedy reflected the Sikelianoí's approach to tragedy. This emphasis led Koun, as it had led the Sikelianoí, to place the chorus at the aesthetic centre of the performance and to use masks in order to erase the small movements and the details of the face and preserve the volume and the impersonal character of tragedy.⁹⁴ Koun, however, approached and expressed these principles in a different way from the Sikelianoí. In terms of the emphasis on the

⁹³ This approach is reflected in Koun's broader approach to theatre and it is implied in many of his discussions on ancient drama. See Koun, Κάρολος, «Μισός Αιώνας θέατρο» ("Half a Century of Theatre") (originally published in *To Βήμα*, 4-10-1981), in: *Κάρολος Κουν για το θέατρο: Κείμενα και Συνεντεύξεις* (Karolos Koun [speaking] about Theatre: Texts and Interviews), p.p. 107-18.

⁹⁴ Κουν, Κάρολος, «Ἡ Ἑλλάδα καὶ ἡ τραγωδία (Μ' ἀφορμὴ τὸ ἀνέβασμα τῶν *Περσῶν*)» ("Greece and Tragedy: On the Occasion of the Production of *Persae*") and «Ἥχος καὶ κίνηση» ("Sound and

ritualistic character of tragedy, Koun was not interested in relating it with religiousness and thus to approach it and aesthetically express it through the principles of Christianity or another religion, as the Sikelianoí did. Although he based the chorus dance especially in the evocation of Darius' ghost in the Dervishes' dance, it is important to note that this aesthetic reference did not in any way denote in the performance a reference to the Muslim religion. On the contrary, it created the impression of a paganistic and primitive ritual, which was not confined in time. Within that framework the reference to the Dervishes' dance was used as an aesthetic basis of the movement of the body in ritual and, in fact, an eastern ritual.

In the same way the aesthetic dominance of the chorus in the productions of the Sikelianoí and Koun also differs both aesthetically and in terms of principle. In the Sikelianoí's production of *Prometheus Bound* the chorus of the Oceanids created the atmosphere of the ritual by singing and dancing, but the meaning/message of the play was transmitted and conveyed through the action of the protagonists. In Koun's production of *Persae*, on the contrary, the interpretation of the meaning/message of the play was aesthetically transmitted and conveyed through the movement of the body of the chorus. It was not the action of the play, as it was unfolded through the episodes, that transmitted the meaning, but the way the body of the chorus received and expressed in movement the action of the play that transmitted the meaning in the performance. It is probably this difference of principles that accounts for the difference in the use of masks. Although both the Sikelianoí and Koun used masks in order to convey the volume and the

Movement"), in: *Κάρολος Κουν: Κάνουμε θέατρο για την ψυχή μας (Károlos Koun: We Create Theatre for Our Soul's Sake)*.

impersonal character of tragedy, in the Sikelianoí's production it is the protagonists who wore masks whilst in Koun it is the chorus members.⁹⁵

The emphasis on the preservation of individual characteristics in the presentation of the chorus is reminiscent of Politis' approach to the tragic chorus.⁹⁶ This approach was expressed in its most complete form in the 1927 production of *Hecuba* where Politis used seven chorus leaders. Koun did not attend that performance since at that time he was still a pupil at Robert College in Constantinople. In *Persae*, however, he used seven chorus leaders, as Politis had done in *Hecuba*. Also similarly to Politis, Tsarouhis, with Koun's consent, used slight differences in the costumes of the chorus members to denote individual characteristics within the group of the chorus. This idea first appeared in the 1927 *Hecuba* production, but Politis also used it in his productions of tragedy in the National Theatre, especially in the 1933 production of *Oedipus Tyrannus*. We know that Koun had attended these performances. In fact, he confessed that he owed the decision to become professionally engaged in theatre directing to Politis' 1932 production of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and the 1933 production of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ It is interesting to note that in the photograph no 44 which depicts Darius' ghost, it is shown that Dimitris Chatzimarkos, who acted the part, also wore a mask similar to the one the chorus wore. In that sense Koun preserved the distance of Darius but created an aesthetic unity between Darius and the chorus which enhanced the way the chorus feels and talks about him.

⁹⁶ It is interesting to note the difference of Politis' position in the field of literature and in the field of theatre. In literature the literary generation of the 1930s was strongly opposed to Politis' views on literature. See Κωτίδης, Αντώνης, *Μοντερνισμός και «παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου (Modernism and "Tradition" in the Greek Art of the InterwarPeriod)*. However, in theatre Koun referred to Politis in a positive way. The difference has to be sought in a different categorization of generations. For the literary generation of the 1930s Politis belonged to the immediately previous artistic generation. In theatre the presence of Rondiris between Politis and Koun placed Politis in the position of the artistic 'grandfather' of the latter. On the relations between artistic generations see Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 58.

⁹⁷ See Πηλιχός, Γιώργος, «Ολόκληρη η ζωή του Κάρολου Κουν στο θέατρο όπως ο ίδιος την αφηγήθηκε λίγο πριν πεθάνει» ("The Entire Life of Karolos Koun in Theatre as he Narrated it himself Shortly Before is Death"), *Τα Νέα*, February, 24th, 1987.

Finally, also reminiscent of Politis' ideas, is Koun's drawing from Karagiozis both during the period of the Laikí Skené as well as in his Théâtre Technis productions of ancient comedy. As I discussed in Chapter IV, Politis argued for the use of the popular shadow theatre of Karagiozis as a basis for a 'Greek' style of theatre.⁹⁸ In that sense Koun materialised Politis' cultural suggestion using as the basis of his productions of ancient comedy the shadow theatre of Karagiozis.

Within that framework Koun's work in tragedy completed the development of the 'sub-field of restricted theatrical production' in Greece during the period I discuss. Koun's aesthetic references to Politis and the Sikelianoí as well as Rondiris' less explicit references to them denote, in my opinion, the function of the first phase of the development of the 'sub-field' as a 'Greek' theatrical tradition to draw from. Within that context it is my contention that, during the second phase of the development of the 'sub-field' and especially with Koun's presence, the 'sub-field's' history became "more and more linked to the field's specific history and to it alone".⁹⁹ This development, that reached its most dynamic moment in the 1960s, ceased abruptly with the 1967 *coup d'état* that forced theatre directors to change their aims in theatre. Instead of aesthetic quests they sought ways to express theatrically their political opposition to the dictatorship.

⁹⁸ I have to note, however, that Politis referred to the use of Karagiozis as a source to draw from in drama rather than in performance.

⁹⁹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The field of cultural production*, p. 266.

Conclusions

The making of a 'Greek' aesthetic style of performance: Schools and tendencies

The first half of the twentieth century was a period during which the constitution of Greek culture revolved around the concept of 'Greekness' and 'Greek' art. Cultural production became concerned with the recovery and reclamation of an indigenous culture that would serve as a tradition from which contemporary 'Greek' culture could draw. Within that framework the 'Greekness' of an artistic product consisted of its symbolic capital.

The issue of 'Greekness' and the production of 'Greek' art has been thoroughly discussed in literature and painting. In contrast the analogous discussion in theatre has not until now touched seriously on this issue. Firstly, because research in Greece until recently placed weight on the dramatic texts rather than performance. However, dramatic texts during the period I discuss in this thesis had not reached the point of presenting works of art rich in symbolic capital. Secondly, because the production of ancient tragedy that was linked with the issue of 'Greekness' and 'Greek' theatre was also charged with a suspected relationship to the 'worship of antiquity' which expressed the nineteenth-century pre-capitalist aesthetic ideology. Thus, although the notion of the inseparable link between performances of ancient tragedy and the ideologem of *hellenikótita* in the twentieth century had been at times pointed out or implied both by theorists and artists, it had not been thoroughly discussed and explained in relation to particular styles of production. Nor had there been a study that brought together in discussion and examined the

interrelations between the issues of performances of tragedy, Greek national identity and the constitution of Greek culture. It is precisely those issues that this thesis has discussed and it has maintained that the performances of ancient tragedy during this period constituted a 'Greek' aesthetic style of performance and participated equally with works of art in other cultural fields in the production of 'Greek' culture.

In order to explain the development of the phenomenon of producing ancient tragedy in Greece during the period 1919-1967, I used Bourdieu's model of analysis in the field of cultural production. However, I revised this model in view of more recent theoretical approaches to theatre that, besides drama, shifted the attention of their study to include the subject of performance. Within that framework I understood theatre as consisting of an independent field which is essentially a double field since it comprises both fields the field of drama and the field of performance. Each of the two fields consists of its own 'positions' and 'position-takings'. The structuring of a dynamic field of theatrical production is characterised by the co-existence of equally dynamic fields of drama and performance and the evolution of a strong relationship, or rather of a positive interdependence, between them.

Using Bourdieu's model of analysis within the framework of its revision in terms of the particularity of the field of theatrical production, I have explained that, due to the inability of the field of drama to produce new works rich in symbolic capital, Greek theatre used the symbolic capital of ancient tragedy as dramatic text. Thus I argued that during the period 1919 to 1967 tragedy acquired the 'position of consecrated Greek drama' in

Bourdieu's terms. This was combined with the appearance of the theatre director in Greece and the recognition of performance as an art form *per se*, which denoted the comprehension of performance in contemporary aesthetic terms. In their turn these developments enabled the structuring and development of a 'sub-field of theatrical restricted production' that, as I have argued, in Greece became linked with productions of tragedy.

The promotion of tragedy in the position of 'consecrated Greek drama' and the subsequent structuring of a 'sub-field of restricted production' on the axis of productions of tragedy presupposed the cultural appropriation of tragedy within the framework of the aesthetic ideology of the capitalist class. This aesthetic ideology, which was first expressed by the literary generation of the 1880s and reached its most mature expression in the literary generation of the 1930s, was based on the claim of the continuity of the Greek nation through the ages. It adhered to the constitution of a Greek cultural production that was shaped around the demand for the creation of cultural products that could be characterised as 'purely Greek'. Furthermore in its most mature expression it promoted the idea of 'Greek uniqueness' and 'Greek *Hellenism*' facing Europe as a rival and expressing a positive, dynamic and explicit notion of the Greek national identity. Thus cultural production in Greece became inseparably linked with the issue of *hellenikótita*. However, as the concept of *hellenikótita* was not fixed or static, a discourse on *hellenikótita* and Greek art was articulated and developed in the field of Greek cultural production during this period.

The cultural appropriation of tragedy within the contemporary cultural and aesthetic terms was a *sine qua non* condition in order that the productions of tragedy could participate in the constitution of Greek culture during that period. It involved the approach and understanding of tragedy through the Byzantine and the more recent period of what was regarded as ‘Greek’ culture. The process of cultural appropriation of tragedy within contemporary cultural and aesthetic Greek terms was accomplished initially in the literary field via the literary translation of tragic plays in *demotiki*. I have argued that the cultural importance of this literary appropriation was that it introduced ancient tragedy and made it a part in the aesthetic linguistic quests and the linguistic and literary ‘tradition’ that the progressive capitalist artists invoked. The process of tragedy’s cultural appropriation was completed in the field of performance through the productions of tragedy, where, in fact, the cultural appropriation of Ancient Greece and the renegotiation of tragedy within contemporary cultural and aesthetic terms constituted the base of the aesthetic style/s of the performances of tragic plays that were proposed from 1919 onwards.

The primary issue of the proposed aesthetic styles of performances of tragedy was their claim to *hellenikótita*, since their ‘Greekness’ consisted of their symbolic capital. It is not surprising, therefore, that the issue of *hellenikótita* was pivotal in the structuring of the ‘sub-field of theatrical restricted production’ and the stakes in the ‘sub-field’ involved precisely the question of which could be characterised as a ‘purely Greek’ aesthetic style of performance. The lack, however, of an existing ‘Greek’ theatrical tradition to draw from forced the constitution of aesthetic style/s from scratch. Thus the constitution of aesthetic style/s was based on the use, on the one hand, of the entirety of what was

regarded as 'Greek' culture and, on the other, of European theatrical movements and tendencies, which, as I have argued, were renegotiated within Greek cultural terms. Within that framework the production of tragedy met the two challenges that the constitution of 'Greek' culture faced during that period. The first one consisted of the particular way in which Ancient Greek tragedy would be creatively incorporated in Modern Greek theatre. The second consisted of the unavoidable reference to the European theatrical tradition in such a way that it would lead to styles of performances that could claim an originality which would be characterised as 'purely Greek' and thus they would face Europe as a rival. It is my contention that it is precisely the constitution of aesthetic style/s within these terms that allows us to speak of the constitution of 'Greek' style/s of performance.

The aesthetic styles of performances during the period I discuss moved within an aesthetic form which became known as the 'revival of ancient tragedy'. This consisted of a set of aesthetic principles that were based on and promoted the claim of the unity of the Greek nation through the ages. In that sense this form was considered to be the 'Greek' way of performing tragedies and it ascertained the 'Greekness' of a style of a performance. The form of 'revival' functioned during this period as 'a structural law', in Bourdieu's terms that imposed the limits and rules of the legitimisation of a style of performance. The claim on the 'Greekness' of an aesthetic style of performance involved also the dispute over the orthodoxy of the understanding and expression of the form of 'revival'. Both claims were inseparably linked to the way each director conceived and expressed his notion of *hellenikótita*, which led to the approach to and re-negotiation of tragedy through specific 'Greek' cultural references each time, the constitution of

aesthetic style/s based on the drawing of particular aesthetic elements from the entirety of what was considered to be ‘Greek’ culture and finally the re-negotiation and use of particular European theatrical movements. Within this context we may speak of the articulation and development of a discourse on *hellenikótita* and performances of tragedy equivalent to similar discourses articulated in the other cultural fields, especially that of literature, during this period. It would be interesting in a future study to discuss whether this discourse on *hellenikótita* and performances of tragedy and the ‘Greek’ aesthetic styles of these productions influenced the style of productions of other theatrical genres in Greece during this period and especially productions of classic theatre and of Modern Greek Renaissance theatre.

Central to the development of the ‘sub-field’ was the aesthetic interrelation of the work of the directors that acquired ‘position-takings’ in the ‘sub-field’. Although part of the *habitus* of these directors was the denial of such aesthetic interrelations as a means to underline the uniqueness of their approach and thus to support their claim over its orthodoxy, a closer study of their work proved otherwise. I have argued, discussing the work of the five directors most representative of the tendencies in the ‘sub-field’ that from Politis onwards the aesthetic proposition/s of each artist evolved in dialogue in the work of others. In that sense the work of each director in the ‘sub-field’ consisted of a ‘Greek’ theatrical reference and functioned within the framework of a ‘Greek’ theatrical tradition. Thus it is my contention that during this period the history of the ‘sub-field’ became “more and more linked to the field’s specific history and to it alone”.¹

¹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *The field of cultural production*, p. 266

It is a common acceptance that in the course of this history, especially in the second phase of the development of the 'sub-field', we may speak of two Schools in regard to styles of performances of tragedy: the School of the National Theatre and the School of Théâtre Technis. It is my contention, however, that studying the entirety of the development of the field and taking into consideration the cohesion of its structuring and development we can distinguish two main artistic tendencies that were prominent from the beginning of the constitution of the 'sub-field'. These tendencies adhere to two different conceptions of artistic creation; that of 'objective art' shaped initially around Goethe's ideas on art and that of aesthetic experience that refer to Wagner and modernism. Each of these two tendencies signified a different approach to the genre of tragedy and led consequently to a primary difference of aesthetic styles. Moreover these tendencies formed the basis of the creation of the two Schools in the second phase of the development of the 'sub-field'.

The tendency of 'objective art' was expressed in the work of Fotos Politis and Dimitris Rondiris and formed the basis of the School of the National Theatre. The styles that moved within the framework of this tendency focused on the concept that the eternal and diachronic truths that tragedy expressed had to be presented in an aesthetic way that would bring forward the idea of tragic man as the individual that creates freely and responsibly his or her own life. In that sense they placed emphasis on the secular character of tragedy claiming that the emotional impact of tragedy was in its essence dramatic since its religiousness was expressed through the dramatic form. Thus the pivotal issue in the proposition of these styles was the quest for the 'aesthetic truth' of a performance of tragedy that characterised not only the creation of a style, but also its

reception. Performance was conceived as an 'aesthetic event'. This approach characterised also R ondiris' work despite his reference to the religiousness of t ragedy. This reference, as I have argued, was conceived and rendered in an aesthetic way that did not question the comprehension of performance as an aesthetic secular event. The main principle of these styles was the emphasis on the individual, thus no masks were used. The emphasis on the individual stylistically led to the creation of a 'Greek' style of acting that focused primarily on the elocution of the Greek language.

The tendency of aesthetic experience was expressed in the work of t he Sikelianoí and Károlos Koun and consisted of the basis of the School of the Théâtre Technis. The aesthetic styles that moved within this tendency placed emphasis on the religious, ritualistic character of tragedy. They aimed at rendering this character in contemporary times either by approaching tragedy through Christianity and the Orthodox Mass, as the Sikelianoí did, or through the Greek popular festivities and rituals, as Koun did. Within this context the creation and reception of the aesthetic styles was geared towards the conception of the performances of tragedy as a collective experience. This was expressed, on the one hand, in the aesthetic dominance of the chorus, since its presentation consisted of the core of these aesthetic styles, and, on the other, in the use of masks which were considered to erase the small movements and the details of the face and to preserve the volume and the impersonal character of tragedy.

These two aesthetic tendencies represented by the Schools of the National Theatre and of the Théâtre Technis created two blocks of a 'Greek' performance tradition whose influence may be seen even today. Within that framework it is my contention that Greek

theatre during the period 1919-1967 succeeded in creating a 'Greek' style of performance in regard to productions of tragedy. These styles drew from the entirety of what was regarded as 'Greek' culture and used European theatre as their theatrical tradition, re-negotiating it, however, in 'Greek' cultural terms. In that sense the Greek performances of tragedy during the period I have discussed moved within the aesthetic frame of European theatrical movements and tendencies from the end of the eighteenth century to the second half of the twentieth and consist of the Greek part of European theatre history.

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