

‘And thus a shared marriage bound us to Germany’: the image of Wilhelmine Germany in the Kingdom of Greece (1889–1914)

Konstantinos S. Papanikolaou
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
konstpapanik@yahoo.gr

After unification in 1871 Germany became, for some of Greece’s intellectuals, politicians, and journalists, a model for the organization and national integration of their own country. This article examines perceptions of the Second Reich between the accession of Wilhelm II and the start of the First World War. It traces the role played by the German model in public discourse within the Kingdom of Greece in relation to the importance of the monarchy, the dynasty, and the army in the realization of the Megale Idea, and in the choice of the country’s political orientation between East and West.

The present article examines the image of the German Empire in Greek public discourse from the accession of Wilhelm II to the Prussian and Imperial German thrones to the beginning of the First World War. While both the perception of the newly established Empire in the period 1871–88 and its image after the outbreak of the Great War have been treated in other contributions,¹ there nonetheless remains a gap to be covered: the years 1888–1914.² This period has been chosen as the focus of study because the

1 For perceptions in Greece of the Franco-Prussian War and the establishment of the German Empire, see K. S. Papanikolaou, ‘Der ‘eiserne Staat’. Der Deutsch-Französische Krieg und die Gründung des Deutschen Reiches im griechischen öffentlichen Diskurs’, in A. Kyrtis and M. Pechlivanos (eds), *Compendium der deutsch-griechischen Verflechtungen* (Berlin 2021) <https://comdeg.eu/compendium/essay/103300/> (accessed 20.9.2023). For the image of Germany during the Great War, see S. Dordanas, *Οι αγυρόνητοι* (Thessaloniki 2021); D. Papadimitriou, *Ο Τύπος και ο Διχασμός* (Athens 1991); and Z. Laliouti and G. Giannakopoulos, ‘Nationale Spaltung und Propaganda: Bilder des deutschen Feindes (1917–1918)’ in Kyrtis and Pechlivanos (eds), *Compendium der deutsch-griechischen Verflechtungen* (Berlin 2021) <https://comdeg.eu/compendium/essay/102492/> (accessed 20.9.2023).

2 Although elements of Germany’s image in the period under consideration have been treated by various scholars, they cover peripheral aspects of the question, focusing on individuals and not on the wider

young Kaiser's rise to power marked the beginning of developments that would alter the international political landscape and consequently the image of Germany in the Kingdom of Greece. The ending of German colonial isolationism, Berlin's decision to become actively involved in the Eastern Question by lending its support to the Ottoman Emperor, the marriage between Crown Prince Constantine and Sophia of Prussia, and the growing influence of the Germanic North on Greece's scientific and artistic circles all contributed to the shaping of a clearly different framework for Greek perceptions of Germany, both in relation to the earlier period, when Germany followed developments in the Balkans from afar, and to that of the Great War, when Berlin was using every possible means to try to influence political developments in Greece. It is this intermediate period and the cultural mediations of many different 'Germanies' that this article seeks to describe and analyse.

The creation of the German Empire in 1871, following the victorious wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870–1, did not leave Greek public opinion indifferent. With the Great Idea in abeyance and all the unredeemed territories still under the sovereignty of the Sultan, the Greeks stood by and watched as first the Italians and then the Germans realized their visions of nationhood. After 1871 Germany and the Kingdom of Prussia appear more and more frequently in Greek public discourse and the German example recurs with increasing frequency to the lips and pens of conservative, anti-liberal politicians, columnists, and editors. In essence the Germanophiles displaced the Russian party after St Petersburg narrowed and confined its support for the Orthodox in the Balkans to the Orthodox Slavs. Friendless and disillusioned, those opposed to English liberalism found in Bismarck's 'revolution from above' the rival contender they were looking for, and during the Franco-Prussian War the newspaper *Aion* became a quintessentially pro-German publication. German organization, administration, education, and above all the German army were held up as models and the Second Reich remained exceptionally popular up to the time of the marriage of Crown Prince Constantine and Sophia of Prussia in 1889.

Germany and the Hohenzollern dynasty were the subject of countless books, articles, and social columns over the following years. The authors of these works, among them Vlasios Skordelis from Stenimachos, stressed the nation's historic bonds with the Germans, as far back to the marriage of the Byzantine princess Theophano to the emperor Otto II: 'And thus a shared marriage bound us to Germany (‘Καὶ οὕτω τῷ τρόπῳ ἐσυμπεθεριάσαμεν μὲ τὴν Γερμανίαν’). Now, 917 years later, Greece has taken a bride from the powerful German state, the Emperor's own sister.’³ This wedding

phenomenon. See T. Bochos, *Η ριζοσπαστική Δεξιά. Αντικοινοβουλευτισμός, συντηρητισμός και ανολοκλήρωτος φασισμός στην Ελλάδα 1864–1911* (Athens 2003) on the Germanophilia of Neocles Kazazis, and M. Sechoroulou, 'Αναζητώντας νέους ορίζοντες: Η 'βορειομανία', ο 'ψευδογερμανισμός' και η σύνδεσή τους με τον δημοτικισμό στα τέλη του 19ου αιώνα', in A. Tabaki and O. Polykandrioti (eds), *Ελληνικότητα και ετερότητα: πολιτισμικές διαμεσολαβήσεις και 'εθνικός χαρακτήρας' στον 19ο αιώνα* (Athens 2016) 269–81 on the 'Boreofanatics' Giannis Kampyses and Konstantinos Chatzopoulos.

3 V. Skordelis, *Η πατρίς της ηγεμονίδος Σοφίας* (Athens 1889) 17.

theme proved resilient and resurfaced with some frequency until the outbreak of the Great War.⁴ Other reporters emphasized the bride's name – surely a good omen, since the groom, who bore the name of the last Byzantine emperor, was predestined to enter Constantinople and Haghia Sophia as victorious hero.⁵ The people responded with letters and poems and expressed their expectation that the Princess Sophia 'would speak feelingly to her brother (Wilhelm II)', so that he, with his stature, might champion Greek ambitions in the international arena.⁶ On the other hand, Parliament's response to the Throne Speech on the occasion of the royal wedding, welcoming 'the birth of hope that the presence in the Greek royal family of the sister of the powerful Emperor of Germany will work in Greece's favour and win us more positive political sympathy from the great German nation',⁷ was actively resented by members of the Greek parliament with pro-French or anti-monarchist sentiments.

Discourse in the Greek Parliament also records a positive image of Germany. In reply to a question from the Opposition about the proportion of the population receiving basic schooling, the Minister for Public Education, Georgios Theotokis, held up Germany as a model state, with the highest literacy rate among European nations.⁸ Kyriakoulis Mavromichalis commented derisively on the lack of provision for filling vacant pastoral positions, citing Germany as an example. The success of the German people, he said, was inseparable from the German monarchy's interest in its subjects' grounding in the catechism:

Let us however turn our eyes to Kaiser Wilhelm and see what great significance he has even latterly ascribed to the shaping of the German fatherland through Christian religious education. If the powerful Emperor of the Germans, ruler of an on the whole educated state, decides and does such things, what then should we do, who are in the infancy of cultural and political cultivation?⁹

Even a decade later, in a speech delivered on 15 May 1899, Theotokis' successor at the Ministry of Education, Athanasios Eftaxias, was still pointing to Germany's education system as responsible for its victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1. If the Greeks attached the same weight to education, national integration could not be long in coming:

If at the time of France's war with Germany it was said that Germany's schoolteachers defeated the French, what might not be said about our own teachers, were we now to give them the means and the opportunity to rise to the occasion?. . . This single administration in public education enabled

4 *Ελληνική Επιθεώρηση*, March 1913.

5 *Καιροί*, 14 October 1889.

6 *Καιροί*, 11 December 1889.

7 *Εφημερίς Συζητήσεων Βουλής*, 15 October 1888.

8 *Εφημερίς Συζητήσεων Βουλής*, 4 December 1889.

9 *Εφημερίς Συζητήσεων Βουλής*, 6 February 1891.

Prussia to cultivate national ideals in the people and to prepare the subsequent unity and grandeur of Germany. In such-like administration of public education lies a hope that we may properly cultivate our own national ideals.¹⁰

German solutions would be proposed more generally in the Greek Parliament as the best answers to a whole range of questions: during the Currant Crisis of 1899 MPs Konstantinos Karapanos and Leonidas Deligeorgis spoke of ‘German prudence’ and the cartel system that could save the situation in Greece; Miltiades Goulimis proposed that German officers should assume the training of the Greek army; and Georgios Theotokis recommended Berlin’s sewerage system as the most appropriate template for redesigning the one in Athens.

Without question, the resurgence of the Cretan Question and the ‘ill-starred’ war with Turkey in 1897 marked a turning point in Greek-German relations. While it cannot be claimed that an ideal climate was completely reversed, it is nonetheless true that between 1890 and 1914 the intensification of Germany’s presence and intervention in Balkan affairs marred that country’s image and prestige in Greek eyes. The diplomatic rapprochement between Berlin and the Porte, which had begun in the late 1880s, the dispatch of German experts to re-organize the Ottoman Army,¹¹ and the steady flow of German capital, both through loans and through investments in major projects like the Baghdad Railway, made the integrity of the Ottoman territorial conquests a matter of vital importance to Germany’s long-term interests in the region. Germany had by now supplanted England in the role of protector of the Porte. For Greece, the German doctrine of the integrity of the Sultan’s acquisitions was incompatible with the achievement of the *Megale Idea*. The crushing defeat of the Greek forces in 1897 by an Ottoman Army trained by the Prussian General Colmar von der Goltz was tangible evidence that the Kaiser’s self-styling as protector of Islam at Saladin’s tomb in Damascus¹² was something more than another piece of imperial showmanship. The second factor responsible for the tarnishing of the Second Reich’s lustre in Greek public opinion has to do with the leading role played by Germany in the establishment of the International Financial Control. Germany was at that time the country’s largest creditor, with most Greek Treasury bonds held by the Nationalbank für Deutschland and the Bankhaus Bleichröder.¹³ The German Committee for the Protection of Holders of Greek State Securities managed to impose its will on the imperial government, which in turn pressed for and in 1898 succeeded in imposing the International Financial Control on a Greece that was both defeated and diplomatically isolated.¹⁴

10 *Εφημερίς Συνζητήσεων της Βουλής*, 15 May 1899.

11 J. Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe. Die preussisch-deutschen Militärmissionen in der Türkei 1835–1919* (Düsseldorf 1976) 58.

12 T. Benner, *Die Strahlen der Krone. Die religiöse Dimension unter Wilhelm II. vor dem Hintegrung der Orientreise 1898* (Marburg 2001) 302, 327.

13 K. Loulos, *Η γερμανική πολιτική στην Ελλάδα 1896–1914* (Athens 1990) 40.

14 Loulos, *Η γερμανική πολιτική στην Ελλάδα*, 45.

Meanwhile, the classicism and humanism that had formed the cornerstones of German education had been dealt a severe blow by the accession of Wilhelm II, who supported the associations of those who sought to reduce the hours allotted to ancient Greek and Latin in Germany’s classical high schools.¹⁵ At the same time Philhellenism, as a factor in the shaping of German public opinion, had been fading since the beginning of the nineteenth century, while the diplomatic stunts and general unreliability of the new Greek kingdom subverted the expectations of the last representatives of German Romanticism and much of the country’s academic world in general, from the Slavist Gustav Weigand to the Hellenist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf. Greece had become a *Piratenstaat* (land of pirates), said the *Kölnische Zeitung*, which also opined on 14 April 1897 that the Greeks were ‘a small people which lives off other people’s money. It can easily be overpowered by any of the lesser European states, even though, despite its weakness, it thinks it is the designated defender of important traditions.’¹⁶

The Greek press did not remain silent: condemnation of the German political leadership’s new strategic choices filled the front pages. Both there and in Parliament the Greece defeated in 1897 was now compared not to Germany and Prussia, as had been the case, but to France in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. The newspaper *Kairoi* pointed out that the German Empire used its leading position in Europe ‘to the detriment of the spirit of liberalism and civilization’.¹⁷ The same line was adopted by the journals *Embros* and *Scrip*, where the leading article on 3 January 1898, headlined ‘Blackmail’, described Germany as the prime mover in the imposition of the International Financial Control; while on 15 March 1900, Konstantinos Papamichalopoulos, Deputy for Epidaurus, expressed to the House his concern that German companies were ‘taking our bread away from our country, from our hands’.¹⁸ Again, the editors of *Kairoi* were well-informed about German financial penetration into the Ottoman-ruled Macedonian vilayets: in an article titled ‘Economic Domination’, the anonymous author wrote that ‘in Berlin a large German company has already been created to buy up the rich mines in Macedonia, both working and prospective, and to establish German colonies for that purpose. We Greeks must therefore make haste to save Macedonia from foreign influence, businesses, and claims.’¹⁹

Such articles, in conjunction with parliamentary references to Germans ‘who measure everything with an apothecary’s scales’ and to the demands of German bankers, led to the appearance of a new term in Greek public discourse, with its own

15 M. Kraul, *Das deutsche Gymnasium 1780–1980* (Frankfurt am Main 1984) 100.

16 F. Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege im zivilisierten Europa? Die Balkankriege und die öffentliche Meinung in Deutschland, England und Irland 1876–1913* (Paderborn 2008) 100.

17 *Kairoi*, 1 January 1897.

18 *Εφημερίς Συζητήσεων της Βουλής*, 15 March 1900.

19 *Kairoi*, 14 August 1898.

particular sense both for the study of anti-Germanism and for that of anti-Semitism: the ‘Judaeo-German’ (Εβραιογερμανός).²⁰ The fact that the Bleichröder Bank belonged to a banking family of Jewish descent,²¹ and even more so the eagerness of the Zionists to work with Germany in pressing their demand for an independent Jewish homeland in the Middle East,²² were the two main reasons for the emergence of this enduring type. We encounter ‘Judaeo-German’ in, among other places, Demetrios Anastasopoulos’ book *Panslavists, the Great Enemies of the Nation*, in which Jews and Germans always go together. The author dwells on the complicity of the two peoples, both of them hostile to the Greeks, and focuses on control of the press as their chief anti-Greek activity: ‘The German-Austrian Press, for example, is for the most part in the hands of the Jews. A Jewish newspaper publisher is incapable of pairing the voice of his Shylock’s soul [. . .] with the serious (voice) of his country’s politics. . . Both Germany, says the Jewish journalist, and our purse! Both Austria and our purse!’²³ Ion Dragoumis (1878–1920), otherwise largely indifferent to German affairs, confirmed the ‘partnership’ and worried about the Jewish presence in Thessaloniki. In *Blood of Martyrs and Heroes* he spoke of ‘German-Jewish interests’²⁴ while in his 1908 *Proclamation to the Enslaved and Liberated Greeks* he said that ‘the Austro-Germans have set the Jews to strike at us in Macedonia. A nation of bankers and merchants, they compete with us everywhere in Turkey. The Austro-Germans make use of them to spread their trade and sell their goods and at the same time to weaken us.’²⁵

In the same spirit of placing blame for defeat elsewhere, Georgios Konstantinides spoke of the application of the idea of the so-called ‘Gothic party’ (γοτθαϊκή μερίς) followed by Bismarck and Wilhelm II as a means to increasing German influence in the Ottoman Empire ‘through the descent of German settlers’.²⁶ The fear of German economic competition had also spread to the Greek Parliament. Theodoros Retsinas, a businessman and deputy for Attica from the Trikoupis party, presented German training and meticulous diligence as dangerous qualities, capable of driving all competitors from the major European stock exchanges;²⁷ while Ion Dragoumis’ father, Stephanos, shared his son’s worries about the dominance of German trading houses in Asia Minor, which was ‘awash with German commission agents who were driving out

20 *Νέος Αριστοφάνης*, 26 November 1894, 25 March 1899.

21 B. Barth, ‘Weder Bürgertum noch Adel. Zwischen Nationalstaat und kosmopolitischem Geschäft Zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der deutsch-jüdischen Hochfinanz vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 25 (1999) 94–122 (107).

22 T. Herzl, *The Jewish State* (Vienna 1896) 1.

23 D. Anastasopoulos, *Πανσλαβισταί. Οι μεγάλοι εχθροί του έθνους* (Athens 1907) 256.

24 I. Dragoumis, *Μαρτύρων και ηρώων αίμα* (Athens 1907) 88.

25 I. Dragoumis, *Κοινότης, έθνος και κράτος* (Thessaloniki 1967) 59.

26 G. Konstantinidis, *Ευρώπη και Ανατολή. Κατακτητικά βλέψεις και σχέδια ευρωπαϊκών κρατών κατά της ελληνικής Ανατολής*, (Athens 1898) 105.

27 *Εφημερίς Συνζητήσεων Βουλής*, 26 June 1899.

the Greeks and the French and the English.'²⁸ In the end, even the most admired of German institutions, the German school and German education, were described by Ioannis Kountouriotis, a deputy for Hydra, as an insuperable menace: in his view, the Germans 'by their commercial training have succeeded in stealing a march on everyone.'²⁹ The Germans, then, were undergoing a metamorphosis. The guileless and impulsive German Philhellene of 1821 had been forgotten, his place taken by the predatory German capitalist whose only aim was to leech upon Greece. Essentially, the decade 1897–1907, the period between the Greek defeat and the start of talks between Theotokis and von Bülow in Corfu on Greece's entry into the Triple Alliance, marked the nadir of Greek-German relations.

Neither this reversal in Greek public opinion nor the strengthening of Anglo-French influence in Greece went unremarked in the German Foreign Ministry. Efforts were duly made to restore relations between Athens and Berlin, with the ultimate aim of drawing the two countries closer together. The endeavour did not start from nothing. Crown Prince Constantine, who had gone to Berlin to complete his education at the famous Prussian military academy at Lichterfelde,³⁰ was an admirer of German discipline and especially of the German political regime which made the monarch sole arbiter of the political game. His support, however, and that of his circle, the 'little court' of Germanophiles and German-trained military officers, men such as Ioannis Metaxas and Victor Dousmanis, but also including public figures – some of German descent, like the banker Georgios Streit and the lawyer Konstantinos Esslin – was not enough to tip the balance while George I retained control of the Greek royal house, as noted by German ambassador Ratibor in a report from Athens.³¹ The situation improved slightly after the King's visits to Vienna and Berlin in 1899, the fruit of which was a commercial treaty between Greece and Romania (1901),³² the outcome of Berlin's geopolitical plans for an alliance of the non-Slav Balkan states (Turkey, Romania, Greece), as a bulwark against Russia's Pan Slavist designs. In exchange, Germany would undertake to mediate between Athens and Constantinople to facilitate the resolution of outstanding disputes between them, notably the Cretan question and Greece's rail link with Central Europe.³³ The Corfu agreements between the von Bülow and Theotokis governments in 1907–8, a prelude to closer future collaboration with the Central Empires, were also aided by international developments. The Young Turk revolution jeopardized the future of the substantial German investments in the Ottoman Empire and made finding a Balkan counterweight a dire necessity. German penetration had little chance of success, however, in a region where the British and French presence

28 *Εφημερίς Συζητήσεων Βουλής*, 31 January 1902.

29 *Εφημερίς Συζητήσεων Βουλής*, 11 February 1902.

30 G. Tsokopoulos, *Ο Βασιλεύς Κωνσταντίνος Β'*, (Athens) 65.

31 Loulos, *Η γερμανική πολιτική στην Ελλάδα* 52–4.

32 Loulos, *Η γερμανική πολιτική στην Ελλάδα* 65.

33 Loulos, *Η γερμανική πολιτική στην Ελλάδα* 106.

had deep roots and a commanding institutional position, and indeed German capital never managed to displace or compete with French and British investments. Although German exports to Greece doubled in the 1890s, Germany's foreign trade balance with Greece remained negative owing to the country's low level of industrialization and consequent inability to absorb the machinery and capital equipment that were Germany's chief export goods.³⁴ The same proved true in the arms sector where, despite the intervention of the Kaiser and the support of part of the Greek press, Krupp was unable to displace either the French Schneider-Creusot or the Austrian Mannlicher-Schönauer.³⁵

In this difficult period the main voice promoting a positive image of Germany was that of Neocles Kazazis (1849–1936), professor of philosophy and president of the *Hellenismos* society. The man who to a considerable degree monopolized the irredentist ideology until the outbreak of Great War was not a typical 'Boreofanatic' (βορειομανής), subservient to 'chromatic and literary pangermanism', his head filled with 'Teutonic ideas' in the manner of the German-educated intelligentsia described by Pericles Giannopoulos.³⁶ The salient features of Kazazis' thought are anti-parliamentarianism, neo-romanticism, political irrationalism, racism, and social Darwinism. Kazazis was captivated by the mythology of this eclectic imitation of Western European models: England for the aristocratic nature of its political system and Germany for the processes of achieving national unification, for the decisive role of the monarchy and for the organization of its economic life. Kazazis looked to irredentism and recourse to national solidarity for ways to overcome Greece's misfortunes. His case is important, because on the one hand he brought contemporary intellectual and political currents to Greece almost immediately while on the other one may reasonably assume that, given the prevalence in his day of the national organization *Hellenismos* and its periodical of the same title, these would have reached a wide audience.³⁷

All these things are present in the wealth of articles Kazazis wrote, but it is in *Out of Germany. Pages from the Struggles for German Unity*, the book he published in 1898, that they are clearly and unmistakably linked with the hitherto unavowed reference point of his ideology: Germany. In this massive volume the Greek reader is – in the manner of a catechism – instructed in German history, so that 'we may receive multiple lessons for meditation and correction' and so that 'the Greek nation, enlightened by the experiences and lessons of other peoples, may in future conduct its own struggle more intelligently and more expediently'.³⁸ The striking thing is that the

34 Loulos, *Η γερμανική πολιτική στην Ελλάδα* 39.

35 *Σκριπ*, 3 April 1905.

36 P. Giannopoulos, *Απαντα*, (Athens 1963) 58.

37 G. Kokkinos, *Ο πολιτικός ανορθολογισμός στην Ελλάδα. Το έργο και η σκέψη του Νεοκλή Καζάζη (1849–1936)*, (Athens 1996) 12–13

38 N. Kazazis, *Εκ Γερμανίας. Σελίδες εκ της Γερμανικής Ενότητος* (Athens 1898) 1.

writer's object is not a *per analogiam* comparison of Greek and German history, but a linear narration of the quest for and achievement of German unity from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, from there to modern times, and so to his own day. Taking Machiavelli and Hegel as his guides, Kazazis seeks the 'armed prophet' and the incarnate *Weltgeist* in five emblematic heroes of German history: Frederick Barbarossa, Luther, Frederick the Great, Queen Louise of Prussia, and Bismarck. All were charismatic leaders, but what makes them enduringly relevant, the particular characteristic which Kazazis holds up in admonition to the Greek public, is the notion of rupture and their aversion, in astute awareness of the spirit of their time, to any form of collective process. From Barbarossa who, crushing internal reaction, created a strong central authority before setting out to subdue the city-republics of Lombardy, to Bismarck's disdain for parliamentary institutions and liberal revolutions like that of 1848 there runs a common thread of sidelining representative institutions. If Hegel saw the *Weltgeist* on horseback in the person of Napoleon in 1806, Kazazis as a student in Germany recognized it in the person of Wilhelm I. This was the kind of king that Greece needed, as he makes clear in the following passage:

He was like a hero from the saga of the Nibelungen, the indomitable descendant of the Great Elector, following the fortunes of this land for sixty years and emerging from them triumphant, the leading actor in the epic of national unity, the Agamemnon of German princes. Overwhelmed with admiration for this successful ruler, I reflected with a shade of melancholy how slow in coming was the longed-for day when the Greek world would achieve a feat like that which the Germans accomplished with their triumphs in the year 1870. Then, I believed that the struggle for our national aspirations would require not even a decade, but today [. . .] how I cringe before the reality!³⁹

Bismarck's credentials are established by his attitude towards parliamentary democracy, which is summed up in a sentence quoted by Kazazis: 'Not through speeches and majority decisions will the great questions of the day be decided . . . but by iron and blood.'⁴⁰ Comparisons with unified Germany were, however, out of place in the post-1897 period, given Greece's recent defeat. For that reason Kazazis chose rather to stress the comparison with the Germany of that more distant era, which was identified with reconstruction and major reforms. Post-1806 Prussia, which in the wake of crushing defeat at Jena began to create a national German army, to build a national German education, and to cold-shoulder the doveish intelligentsia, was a far better example for post-1897 Greece.⁴¹ Kazazis, indeed, appears to reserve for himself a place in Greek history analogous to that of the nationalist philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, composing his *Ten Addresses to the Youth of Greece* (1911) on the lines of

39 Kazazis, *Εκ Γερμανίας*, 6.

40 O. von Bismarck, *Die gesammelten Werke* I (Berlin 1924) 140.

41 *Καυροί*, 12 September 1909.

Fichte's 1808 *Addresses to the German Nation*. Kazazis' selection of this period of post-defeat reorganization and reconstruction seems also to reflect his dismay at the Reich's adoption of a pro-Turkish policy after 1890, and he frequently expresses his fear of the threatened Germanization of Asia Minor (noting *inter alia* that its name would be changed to 'New Germany') and of Austro-Hungary's policy in the Macedonian struggle.⁴²

Kazazis' associates at the periodical *Hellenismos* between 1894 and 1914 followed their association president's example, praised the German model, and adopted a policy of analogy and imitation. Skleros Flogaites, for example, held up the German soldier's sense of piety as exemplary;⁴³ Georgios Koronaios sought to have the German style of teaching history adopted in Greece's schools;⁴⁴ Christos Makris, impressed by the discipline and military spirit prevailing in Germany's student population, presented the spirit of Teutonic knighthood characteristic of the *Burschenschaften*, the German fraternities in which the tradition of fencing played a central role, as an antidote to the indolence of Greek student life;⁴⁵ and Demetrios Dirkaïos summoned the country's youth to fill the gyms and shooting galleries as urged by the father of the physical education movement, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn:

That is where honour and country call those who have a national homeland and self-respect – to the gym! To the shooting gallery!. . . From the gyms and shooting galleries came the noble youth of Germany who preserved the honour of their country in the battle of Jena and prepared the unsurpassed grandeur of the German fatherland. To the shooting gallery, youth of Greece!⁴⁶

Another figure who followed in Kazazis' footsteps was Demetrios Kallimachos, secretary to the Patriarch of Alexandria and a member of *Hellenismos*, who paralleled the legend of Constantine XI Palaeologos with that of Frederick Barbarossa, who – it was said – would in the fullness of time awaken from his sleep beneath Thuringia's Kyffhäuser mountains to restore Germany to her ancient greatness. Kallimachos concluded that it was divinely appointed that the desires of these two sister nations, Germans and Greeks, should be realized. All that now remained was the national restoration of the latter with the return of the Marble Emperor, whom he described as the 'Barbarossa of the Greek nation'.⁴⁷ This narrative, in which Greek irredentism met German imperial idea, presented Crown Prince Constantine as the continuator of the Palaeologans. For the ultra-monarchists he was Constantine XII⁴⁸ (not Constantine I), in

42 N. Kazazis, *Λόγοι και έργα (1903–1908)* (Athens 1911) 134.

43 S. Flogaites, 'Θρησκεία και Στρατός', *Ελληνισμός* (April 1898) 407.

44 G. Koronaios, 'Περί του Ακαθίστου Ύμνου και των αγώνων του Ηρακλείου', *Ελληνισμός* (March 1901) 144.

45 C. Makris, 'Η αγωγή και η θέσις του μαθητού εν Γερμανία και παρ' ημίν', *Ελληνισμός* (August 1907) 570–1.

46 D. Dirkaïos, 'Η γυμναστική ως μέσον εθνικής ευρωστίας', *Ελληνισμός* (October 1903) 771.

47 D. Kallimachos, '1453–1907. Το μαρτύριον του Παλαιολόγου και η εθνική ιδέα', *Ελληνισμός* (December 1907) 377.

48 G. Mavrogordatos, 'Κωνσταντίνος Α', ο 'Δωδέκατος'', *Ε Ιστορικά* 151 (19 September 2022) 2–3.

precisely the same way as his father-in-law, Kaiser Frederick III, had initially wished to be known as Frederick IV⁴⁹ in order to underline the links between the Second Reich and the Holy Roman Empire.⁵⁰

Kazazis' circle of German enthusiasts is the most instructive expression of an anti-Westernism that would come to a head in the period of the National Schism. The idea of empire proved to be of crucial significance to the anti-Venizelist party. The model of the nation-state and the Greek monarchy was judged inappropriate for a Greek people suffocating beneath a regime imposed by the West. Certainly, not every editor of *Hellenismos* espoused the idea of an Anatolian Federation and a Greek-Ottoman dual monarchy, on the lines of Austro-Hungary, as envisioned by Ion Dragoumis,⁵¹ but it is clear that the idea of a modern Empire as recently achieved by the Germans cast a powerful spell. The idea of such a Greek Empire incorporated visions of Byzantium and the quest of Rigas Pheraios and was better suited to the lofty mission of revitalizing the East, just as Ioannis Kolettis had described it in his famous speech of 1844.⁵² For its supporters, imitation of the German model was, therefore, not just another piece of Franco-Levantinism but a return to Hellenism's very roots.⁵³

Alongside Kazazis and his circle there were also some less romantic supporters of the German path. The German social model and the support it provided for workers and their families was cited by Eleftherios Venizelos in March 1912 when he was summoned to respond to the Opposition's charge that the labour legislation he and his Government were promoting was designed to establish a socialist state. Venizelos calmed their fears, reminding them that Germany had found the key to such aberrations by developing a powerful system of checks alongside its pro-labour measures and remarked that: 'just as with one hand it gives the workers whatever it can, in accordance with the demands of present-day civilization, so with the other it brandishes at the working population all the bayonets of the German Empire.'⁵⁴ A similar association of Germany and socialist ideas may be seen in the articles Dragoumis wrote for the periodical *Noumas*, where the radical opinions of Georgios Skleros are ascribed to 'psychoses and ideals from German social circles'.⁵⁵ We find the same views in Demetrios Kapsalis' account of Bismarck's fiscal policy and in an assessment of the labourer in Germany written by the editor of the newspaper *Astrape*, Demetrios Farantatos. For the latter, the high salaries, social insurance, provisions for widows and orphans, and decent workers' housing, the legacy of the 'pro-labour

49 The last German emperor named 'Frederick' was the Habsburg Frederick III (1415-93) of the Holy Roman Empire.

50 J. Röhl, *Wilhelm II*, (Cambridge 2012) 784–5.

51 G. Mazis, *Των Δραγούμης. Ο ασυμβίβαστος* (Athens 2016) 369–70.

52 B. C. Gounaris and M. D. Christopoulos, 'Reassessing the Greek National Schism of World War I: the ideological parameters', *The Historical Review/La Revue historique* 15 (2018) 237–70 (261).

53 Gounaris and Christopoulos, 'Reassessing the Greek National Schism', 258–9.

54 *Αι αγορεύσεις του Ελληνικού Κοινοβουλίου 1909–1956*, Period II (vol. 1) 505.

55 D. Tangopoulos (ed.), *Των Δραγούμης. 10 άρθρα του στο Νουμά* (Athens 1994) 105.

policy of Germany's emperors who do great things', are just some of the points he found worthy of study and adoption, noting that

The state does not just impose taxes – unfairly, at that – and take away the worker's bread and his living through crushing taxation as is the case here. . . And still those in Germany complain that there is not sufficient assistance for the worker. What would they say, then, about the Greek worker whom the state has turned into a worthless half-dead beast?⁵⁶

For Georgios Lefakis, an officer in the Greek police force, editor of its periodical *Echo*, and author of *How Policing Works in Germany*, it was the German police and the respect in which it was held by German society that the Greeks should be seeking to emulate. It was not merely their excellent training that helped them in their work: it was also the firm support of the law and the press, which were aware of their margins of intervention. Among other examples the editor hailed the decision of a court in Munich to acquit a policeman who had shot and killed a 'noisy troublemaker', a final-year university student, because 'he thought he was going to fire at him'. He further noted, with great emphasis, that: 'The Germans do not post bills, nor do they spit. After 11 at night no singing, dancing or piano-playing is heard. . . Buttoning one's flies outside a public lavatory is forbidden.'⁵⁷

Greece's artistic world also took part in discussing the example of Germany. Writers such as Giannis Kambyses (1872–1901) and Konstantinos Chatzopoulos (1868–1920) were among the leading spokesmen for Germany in Greece. Initially focused on literary developments in northern Europe, Nietzschean philosophical inquiry, and the lively ideological debates of the German socialists, their interest was directly interwoven with admiration for the political and cultural exploits of the Germans. The periodicals *Techne* and *Dionysos* helped spread their ideas, as did other publications open to their trans-Alpine wanderings. According to Kambyses, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* was incarnated in Bismarck. In an almost confessional tone he declared in an article on Nietzsche:

In the German lands and not directly my eyes were lit by the resplendent light and did not close at the brilliance...And when the trend of German dreams and German life was revealed to me in its unfolding, then I saw that Nietzsche was but the philosophical representative of present-day Germany, the fanatical idealizer of a true *Übermensch*, Bismarck.⁵⁸

In an article in the same periodical Kambyses took up Kazazis' idea of the 'armed prophet' and extolled the role of Frederick the Great in Prussia, presenting him as the

56 D. Farantatos, *Ο εργάτης εν Γερμανία* (Athens 1911) 41.

57 G. Lefakis, *Πως λειτουργεί η αστυνομία εν Γερμανία* (Athens 1912) 6, 23.

58 *Το περιοδικόν μας*, 1 September 1900.

forerunner of German unification, just as German and Prussian history did with Johann Gustav Droysen and Heinrich Treitschke:

The 19th century is German...The truly great one is the one who prevails. War, not only with circumstance but also with fate, generates around individuals and nations progress, life. Victory over circumstance and fate, that is greatness. And no other state has held its circumstance and fate so closely bound with its progress over the past century as Germany. The legacy of Frederick the Great set it on its feet and the ideals of Goethe gave it grandeur. Three forces so powerful and so different, Kant, Lessing and Frederick, mingled, projecting into the future the image of the greatness of Germany.⁵⁹

Before long Kambyses and Chatzopoulos were being labelled ‘Boreofanatics’ and ‘Ibsen-Germanists’ (Ιψενογερμανιστές). The geographical distancing from classicism, and especially from French models, was censured by Gregorios Xenopoulos and Georgios Tsokopoulos. Their criticism spearheaded the attack not only on the misty landscape – so foreign to the Mediterranean character – recurrent in the plays of Henrik Ibsen and the paintings of Arnold Böcklin but also on the use of the demotic Greek which the ‘Boreofanatics’ preferred to *katharevousa*. This did not, however, create two distinct language camps, for demoticists frequently pilloried the passion of the younger generation for anything that came from Northern Europe. Thus Xenopoulos, a leading demoticist, could write:

Borealism [. . .] is the most paradoxical of philosophical trends, or, if you wish, of the new maladies. Just imagine, people of southern lands, neo-Latins, infatuated with, adoring, translating, commenting on, pretending that they understand, that they feel, and wanting to impose on their fellows everything that comes out of the north! As long as it is dark, cold and foggy, as long as it has a shape entirely alien to our nature, to our make-up, to our climate, that is enough for it to be hailed as a true artistic masterpiece.⁶⁰

The fiercest reaction against the artistic norms of the North, however, and especially those of Germany, came from Pericles Giannopoulos, who execrated everything that was not in harmony with an untainted peculiar Greekness to which German art and the German way of life were utterly opposed. For Giannopoulos, the root of the evil lay in the passing-on of German perceptions through the German universities that were gradually becoming the model for much of the Greek and European intellectual world, although he never conflated demoticism and Germanophilia:

Half of Greece goes to the Germanies to study and they become wonderfully learned but they also become comprehensively pedantified, utterly *dottorified*,

59 *Το περιοδικόν μας*, 11 August 1900.

60 M. Sechoroulou, ‘Αναζητώντας νέους ορίζοντες’, 272.

thoroughly Mistrionized. . . Besides, with their millions of cheap stereotypically blighted books the Germanies have filled Europe's heads with German ideas and even the French, obedient to the 'Northern light', use German dictionaries. Italians and English have turned to the darkness and placed themselves beneath the barbaro-boreal intellectual yoke.⁶¹

German culture is presented in Giannopoulos' work as devoid of content, artificial, paradoxical, soulless and unnatural, product of a 'prodigious Pomeranian peasant, stiff, starving, but steely and sporting Bismarckian or Nietzschean moustaches, with bushy eyebrows and a triangular Wilhelmine skull', who with fist and boot paints his 'foggy Germanic thoughts'.⁶² The Germans are incapable of grasping the concept of beauty, mainly on account of their cold climate, lack of light and preponderance of shadow, a criticism which seems borrowed from the plays of Ibsen. Of Munich he writes says: 'Closed sky. Closed earth. Closed air. Closed house. Closed garment. Closed body. Closed man. Closed mind. Sky dark. Earth mourning...The mind and the arts are sciences, machines, manufactured goods.'⁶³

In sum, one might say that the image of Germany projected in the period in question reflects the syndromes and stalemates of Greek society. The *Megale Idea* diverted it sideways, the marriage of Constantine and Sophia raised old-style expectations of a Greece made stronger by the family connection with the Kaiser. But Berlin's political priorities in southeast Europe confounded the optimists, while Germany's leading role in the institution of the International Financial Control provided grounds for the fashioning of a profile far from flattering to the Second Reich. The type of the 'Judaeo-German' that featured in many cartoons did not express the usual stereotypical censure of German barbarity, a characteristic earned on the battlefields of 1864–71, but equated them with ruthless extortionists, captives of economic interests. The period 1897–1907 was probably the lowest point in Greek-German relations since 1886 when Bismarck chose to stand with the Porte and against Greece.⁶⁴ Kazazis, indifferent to Berlin's economic policy and rating the educational value of German history above the passing coldness between Greeks and Germans, praised the example of German unification in the pages of his own work and in the issues of *Hellenismos*. 1897 was for him the right time not only for the study of Prussia's victorious wars but also for that of its most tragic moment, at Jena in 1806. The potential alliance between Greece and Germany against the Slavs in the framework of the Triple Alliance restored Germany as a measure of comparison, progress and development in the public discourse of the other. Germany in 1907–14 broke free of an assessment that

61 Giannopoulos, *Anavra*, 58.

62 Giannopoulos, *Anavra* 60–2.

63 Giannopoulos, *Anavra*, 68.

64 K. S. Papanikolaou, 'Der eiserne Staat'. Der Deutsch-Französische Krieg und die Gründung des Deutschen Reiches im griechischen öffentlichen Diskurs', Kyrtis – Pechlivanos (eds), *Compendium der deutsch-griechischen Verflechtungen*, <https://comdeg.eu/compendium/essay/103300/> (accessed 20.9.2023).

related mainly to the army and, in contrast to the period 1871–88, aspects of the German reality, such as its labour laws, were invoked not only by conservative pro-monarchists but also by liberals and socialists who realized that Germany was a land of trade unions as well as of barracks – a place, too, of artistic experiment, generating trends that were tending to become predominant and which traditional and romantic natures like Pericles Giannopoulos and Ion Dragoumis found terrifying. The Germanophiles of 1897–1914 were not disappointed Russophiles, as was the case with the impulsive enthusiasm of 1870–1. They understood the limitations of comparison with and imitation of the German model and were more realistic and accepting of reality accordingly.

At the same time, the debate around Germany’s position in Greek public discourse was directly connected with the Kingdom’s ideological oscillations between West and East, the later National Schism, the Greek state’s impending crisis of identity and its reinvigoration with theoretical forms and ideas whose roots go back to the 1830s, as Gounaris and Christopoulou have shown.⁶⁵ Sympathy or antipathy towards Germany and its institutions did not, however, depend exclusively on one’s relative alignment with East or West. The most emblematic figure among the Germanophiles, Neocles Kazazis, may have drawn on French positivist criticism and felt closer to Herder and the Teutonic *Sturm und Drang*, but that cannot cover the cases of socialists like Giannis Kampyses and Konstantinos Chatzopoulos. Here it is not a question of a return to the East via the West. Here the positive assessment of Germany is not connected with devotion to tradition, anti-liberalism, and the conservative revolution from above, but with German artistic and philosophical advances that were repellent to anti-Westerners like Dragoumis and Giannopoulos. To Greek socialists, that industrialized Germany with its thriving and class-conscious proletariat was a land of open horizons. Prussia and German imperial grandeur have almost faded from memory in their Borealist enthusiasms.

Nonetheless, if one ventures to look at the broader picture, the Germanophilia of the period 1888–1914 foreshadows the anti-Westernism of the royalist party in the National Schism. The anti-Venizelist notions of a more organic society, less class-oriented and fragmented, and the desire to rebuild an Eastern Empire, a lost paradise east of Eden, germinated in the period we are examining. Above all it was the Imperial German idea that seems to have been shared by the Germanophiles and a large segment of the anti-Venizelists. With the marriage of Constantine and Sophia, the new family connection with Germany had been used to attempt an association with the mediaeval past of their two nations, that of the Roman Empire of the East and that of the Holy Roman Empire. It is the idea of empire that is emphasized here, not that of the nation-state. The second point of reference in the neo-Romantic discourse of the Germanophiles is piety. The Reich is presented as a moral, Christian power. Vis-à-vis the atheistic French and the Mammon-serving British,⁶⁶ the Germans, it was felt,

65 Gounaris and Christopoulos, ‘Reassessing the Greek National Schism’, 259–4.

66 Gounaris and Christopoulos, ‘Reassessing the Greek National Schism’, 247, 254.

remained a pious people. The Germanophiles' third pre-modern reference point was the role of the dynasty as an element of cohesion which in their narrative proves to be more important than representational liberal institutions. Kazazis, the historian Pavlos Karolidis, and even, as we have seen, the syndicalist Farantatos all expressed admiration for the Hohenzollerns. Frederick the Great, Queen Louise of Prussia, and Wilhelm I were presented to the Greek public as creators of a triumphal tradition that Wilhelm II would be expected to continue, just as Crown Prince Constantine was identified with the revival of Hellenism's mediaeval grandeur. In 1915, with the Great War raging, the Germanophile deputy for Corfu S. K. Sokolis, whose book *Empire* presented the West as exceptionally despotic and Latin-Roman culture as absolutist, urged imitation of the German model as advocated by Kazazis. He stressed the cohesiveness of the German imperial regime, which he found very similar to the Byzantine, and the autonomy enjoyed by the several German monarchies under the imperial mantle of the Hohenzollerns.⁶⁷ Pavlos Karolidis, professor of history at the University of Athens, whose Germanophile articles appeared often in *Hellenismos*, continued to support the idea of a Greek Empire and the messianic role of King Constantine,⁶⁸ reminding his readers that Germany remained the only genuinely and sincerely pro-Greek Great Power, where 'from the far distant banks of the Spree appears a dawn, resounds a voice from the German Parliament crying loud and clear that Greece is an idea and as an idea can never die'.⁶⁹

Even so, Germany failed to become a serious rival to the rest of the West, for it could not seduce leading anti-Western figures in Greece with a solid ideological platform. Ion Dragoumis was perhaps the only one who could have given Germanophilia a more concrete theoretical framework. But his mental map was deeply influenced by French reactionary intellectualism, by figures like Gobineau, Barrès and the radical far-right Action Française party, all exponents of the anti-German revanchism of France's Third Republic.⁷⁰ Finally, there is nothing in Dragoumis' work to suggest that he placed the German Empire outside the West upon which it leached; the reverse, rather – as a close friend of Giannopoulos it could scarcely have been otherwise. In Dragoumis' neo-Romantic and proto-fascist views, according to which Europe's industrially developed societies were an unwelcome development,⁷¹ there was no place for the militaristic Reich which was spearheading a second Industrial Revolution worldwide. At the same time, as we have seen, Dragoumis regarded the Germanic people as inimical to the Greek world both in Macedonia and in Anatolia, a negative perception

67 Gounaris and Christopoulos, 'Reassessing the Greek National Schism', 241, 254; G. Mavrogordatos, *1915 Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός* (Athens 2015) 246.

68 Gounaris and Christopoulos, 'Reassessing the Greek National Schism', 258–9.

69 P. Karolidis, *Ο γερμανικός Φιλελληνισμός*, (Athens 1917) 51.

70 P. M. Kitromilides, 'Οι δυτικές πηγές των αντιδυτικών επιχειρηματολογιών στην ελληνική παιδεία' in *Ευρώπη και Νέος Ελληνισμός*, (2001) 65; Gounaris and Christopoulou, 'Reassessing the Greek National Schism', 241; Mazis, *Δραγούμης*, 286.

71 Mazis, *Δραγούμης*, 293.

which was not moderated by the prospect of a joint effort to check the Slav menace. That object, he thought, would be better served by an alliance with the Ottoman Empire, in the framework of his projected Eastern Federation.⁷² The language that he, and the Borealists Kambyses and Chatzopoulos, influenced by Herder and the *Volksgeist*, proposed for this entity may have been demotic Greek, but that did not reflect an admiration of the country where these ideas flourished.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Great War Germany, for different reasons, inspired apparently unbridgeable and diametrically opposed worlds in the Greek intellectual firmament, from the nationalist Kazazis to the socialist Skleros. It thus constituted an inexhaustible ideological reservoir of fanciful analogies and parallelisms, direct and indirect, to ideological impasses that had accompanied the Greek state since its founding. These German-centred ideological wanderings did not end with the country's defeat and the fall of its monarchy. Throughout the years of the Weimar Republic and the subsequent Third Reich, Greek socialists, anti-democrats, neo-Romantics, and anti-Semites would look to Germany and German models for ways to address the challenges confronting Greek society following the collapse of the *Megale Idea*, the influx of refugees, and a new national schism at a time of looming extremisms. Once again, the Greek-German ideological 'marriage' did not prove to be a success. Tracing these searchings and the repercussions of the debate on the Second Reich on the inter-war period in Greece, especially with the rise of the Third Reich, is a separate and different question in the history of ideas and Greek-German relations and interaction, a field ripe for new contributions.

Konstantinos S. Papanikolaou is research associate at the Foundation of the Museum for the Macedonian Struggle and the Modern History of Macedonia. He holds a PhD in Modern Greek and European History from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He has worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the Freie Universität Berlin and the Aristotle University, and has taught Modern European, Greek, and Balkan History in the Modern Greek Studies Department of the FU Berlin and in both the Department of History and Archaeology and the School of Journalism and Mass Media Communication of the Aristotle University. He has also worked as a research associate with the Society for Macedonian Studies and represented the Aristotle University on the CLIOHRES-net network of European historians between 2007 and 2010.

72 Mazis, *Δραγούμης*, 350.