



CARMEN SOARES
MARTA GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ
NUNO SIMÕES RODRIGUES
(COORDS.)

NESTE LUGAR, A SAGRADA HÉLADE SALVÁMOS

HOMENAGEM A
LUÍSA DE NAZARÉ FERREIRA

VOLUME I

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EDIÇÃO

Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra
Email: imprensa@uc.pt
URL: http://www.uc.pt/imprensa_uc
Vendas online: <http://livrariadaimprensa.uc.pt>

COORDENAÇÃO EDITORIAL

Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra

CONCEÇÃO GRÁFICA

Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra

INFOGRAFIA

Reinaldo António

REVISÃO

Isabel Gouveia

EXECUÇÃO GRÁFICA

KDP - Kindle Direct Publishing

ISBN

978-989-26-2477-8

ISBN DIGITAL

978-989-26-2478-5

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.14195/978-989-26-2478-5>

APOIO



**CENTRO DE ESTUDOS
CLÁSSICOS E HUMANÍSTICOS
DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA**
Unidade de I+D+i financiada por FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (UIDB/00196/2020) Criado em 1967

Trabalho financiado por fundos nacionais através da
FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P.,
no âmbito do projeto CECH-UC: UIDB/00196/2020

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VOLUME I

(Página deixada propositadamente em branco)

Luísa de Nazaré

Bem sei que penso escandalosamente,
Que é como afinal pensa o coração,
Se busco uma razão na desrazão
Que de nós a levou tão de repente.

Não vou cair, como a Troiana, ao chão,
Depois de me mostrar crente e não crente:
ὅστις ποτ' εἶ σύ, criação da mente,
Deus, natureza, quem me dera não

Tivesse havido intervenção divina,
Que fosse um mau acaso numa esquina,
Um golpe de mão suja e perversa.

Quem me dera encontrar um matador,
Dirigir contra ele o meu rancor,
A vingança sangrenta de um Atrida.

Hélia Correia



Foto de Vítor Garcia

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11. NATIONAL VICTORIES AND BARBARISM IN MODERN GREECE: RE-ENACTING THE BATTLE OF SALAMIS IN THE 1960s

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Abstract: The Greek victory at the battle of Salamis has acquired a symbolic significance in modern Greek national discourse. In the post-war period (1950-1974), commemorative ceremonies of the battle exalted the glory of the Greek military past and turned Salamis into a representation of the combative virtues of the nation. When a dictatorial regime came in power in 1967, it imposed its militaristic identity by re-appropriating and re-enacting the battle of Salamis as a patriotic symbol of martial victories. As these events were held within the anti-communist discourse of *ethnikofrosyni* (national-mindedness), they propagated a nationalist rhetoric that distinguished a civilized self from communist barbarism.

Keywords: Battle of Salamis, ethnikofrosyni, anticommunism, Greek continuity, classical antiquity.

So why don't our big shots stand up now and make their
speeches,
warn against the communists like they're always doing,
tell us how we must sacrifice, remain vigilant,
to protect our homes, our way of life?

Because the communists are finally coming
and nobody wants to listen to that stuff anymore.
Edward Field, "Waiting for the Communists" after Cavafy's
"Waiting for the Barbarians"¹

The Persian Wars and Barbarism in Modern Greece

Classical antiquity provided modern Greece with socio-political values that shaped national identity.² Aeschylus' *Persians*³ was used as a patriotic play that extolled the Greek struggle for freedom in the War of Independence of the early 19th century against the Ottoman Empire.⁴ In particular, the ideological appropriation of the Naval Battle of Salamis became a recurrent theme in the Greek public discourse and historiography.⁵

Modern national victories that replicated the glory of the Battle of Salamis were frequently used as propaganda and acted as a socio-cultural powerhouse throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The military confrontations of the early 20th century against the Ottoman Empire were identified as a struggle against a national enemy. For instance, the theatrical performance of *Persians* in 1920 in Athens

¹ Field 2007: 153-154.

² Plantzos 2008.

³ *Persians* is an ancient Greek tragedy written by Aeschylus and staged in the Athenian Festival of the City Dionysia in 472 BCE.

⁴ Van Steen 2007a: 299-329; Van Steen 2007b. The Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire began in 1821; Greece was recognized as an independent state in 1830 with assistance from the British Empire, France, and Russia.

⁵ Stefanou 2016.

during the war in Asia Minor⁶ mirrored the political and military struggle to recapture national territory occupied by the barbarian ‘other’.⁷ The performance, which served as an ideological battle cry, was commissioned by the Prime Minister of the time, Eleftherios Venizelos. It glorified the national military victories and echoed the ambition to replicate the triumph of the Battle of Salamis in the Greek military campaign.

Nevertheless, it was during and after the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) that the national narrative appropriated the *Persians* in the ideological battle against Greek communism. Upon the withdrawal of the Axis forces from Greece in October 1944 towards the end of the Second World War, the British took over the country to prevent the growing influence of the Communist Party of Greece within the resistance movement of the *National Liberation Front*.⁸ Socio-political tensions led to a civil war that ended with the communist defeat in the mountains of northern Greece in 1949.⁹ The victory of the western-allied national government established a deeply conservative, inflexible, and anti-communist democracy that dominated the political sphere for about two decades. Thus, when, in 1946, the National Theatre of Greece¹⁰ staged Aeschylus’ *Persians*, the performance equated the Persian threat with the Greeks of the *National Liberation Front* and the Communist Party.¹¹ Commenting on the production, the Vice-President of the National Theatre, Stratis Myrivilis,

⁶ A Greek irredentist war against the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor (1919-1922) in the aftermath of the First World War that led to the defeat of the Greek army and a population exchange between the two countries.

⁷ Van Steen 2007b.

⁸ Clogg 2021: 142-165. *National Liberation Front* (Εθνικό Απελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο) was the main resistance movement during the Axis occupation of Greece in the Second World War. Although it included several leftist and republican groups, its main political force was the Communist Party of Greece.

⁹ Beaton 2019: 306-342.

¹⁰ A national institution that traditionally depended on and echoed the political stance of the national government.

¹¹ Van Steen 2010.

made an anti-communist statement in the newspaper *Elliniko Aima* claiming that:

We had our own Salamis. And we felt the same pride ... And we demonstrated to the barbarians that we want to live free ... We are not yet as laid-back as the Athenians who attended the play that the National Theatre puts on today. Because the Persian is again at the gates, and we must stay alert on the frontline of freedom that is at stake.¹²

In the National Theatre's performance, communists and dissidents were identified as the new 'barbarian' opponents who posed an international threat to the Greek Orthodox nation.¹³ According to Moser and Boletsi, barbarism 'refers to an other who is rejected by, and excluded from, civilization'.¹⁴ This dichotomy between the conservative Greek state and communists (or dissidents) reproduced the concept of barbarism by excluding the latter from the precincts of civilized society.

I follow Boletsi's account on the performativity of barbarism that focuses on the critical aspects that the concept can address.¹⁵ This approach defines barbarism in opposition to civilization and as the negative other in terms of language, customs, religion, or behaviour.¹⁶ Given that barbarism and barbarians are produced by discourse rather than pre-exist in societies, I consider their use in the Greek post-war period to equate to a socio-political apparatus of power. In

¹² 'Καὶ μεις κάναμε τὴ Σαλαμίνα μας. Καὶ μεις νιώσαμε τὴν ἴδια περηφάνεια ... Καὶ διδάξαμε τοὺς βαρβάρους πὸς θέλουμε νὰ ζοῦμε ἐλεύτεροι ... Δὲν ἔχουμε σήμερα ἀκόμα τὴ γαλήνη τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὅταν ἔβλεπαν τὸ ἔργο ποὺ παίζει σήμερα τὸ Ἐθνικὸ Θέατρο. Δὲν τὴν ἔχουμε γιὰτὶ ὁ Πέρσης εἶνε πάλι ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴς πύλες τῆς Ἑλλάδας, καὶ ἐμεῖς πρέπει νὰ παραφυλάμε ἄγρυπνοι πάνω στὶς ἐπάλλξεις τῆς λευτεριάς μας ποὺ κινδυνεύει', *Elliniko Aima* 10 November 1946: 3. Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are my own.

¹³ Panourgia 2009: 21-30.

¹⁴ Moser & Boletsi 2015: 17.

¹⁵ Boletsi 2013: 1-9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 3-4; Moser & Boletsi 2015: 14.15.

this context, discourses on barbarism distinguished superior civilized national citizens from savage, uncanny communists who sought to annihilate Greek tradition and culture.¹⁷

This post-war redefinition of the national ideals also echoes the discourse of *ethnikofrosyni* (national-mindedness),¹⁸ which represented the Greek version of the Cold War and blended anti-communism with nationalism and the Greek Orthodox tradition.¹⁹ It was established as a socio-political apparatus for excluding the communists and leftists, especially after the communist defeat in the Greek Civil War.

Alexander Kazamias identifies *ethnikofrosyni* as an ‘umbrella discourse’ that reconciled the conflict between the pre-war political adversaries, the liberals and the right-wing/royalist socio-political powers ranged against an alleged communist threat.²⁰ The term *ethnikofron* (nationally-minded citizen) described the devoted patriot and law-abiding citizen who cared for the national ideals and opposed communism. To articulate this socio-political stance, the national press, the elected authorities, and the king publicly denounced communist and leftist sentiments as anti-national on every possible occasion (*I Vradyni* 11 September 1954).

At the same time, the political authorities in Greece considered communism as ‘foreign’ and incompatible with Greek virtues.²¹ They used social mechanisms, such as the media, national education, the church, military forces, and concentration camps, to persuade the populace that communists and leftists stood against national values.²² Thus, state apparatuses invoked *ethnikofrosyni* to define the national boundaries by imposing their interpretation of classical antiquity

¹⁷ Sagriotis 2015.

¹⁸ *Ethnikofrosyni* was used to describe the notion of national-mindedness or national conviction, especially during and after the Greek civil war. See Voglis 2002: 66 and 101; Papadimitriou 2006: 62-63 and 68-70; Noutsos 2009; Van Steen 2011: 85 and 142-147; Van Steen 2015a: 7.

¹⁹ Papadimitriou 2006.

²⁰ Kazamias 2014.

²¹ Hamilakis 2007: 223.

²² Panourgia 2009; Christofis 2017: 211-212.

“to determine who was one of ‘us’ or an ‘enemy within’”.²³ When a coup overturned the democratic regime in 1967, this authoritarian discourse was accentuated. Although the dictatorship introduced its own socio-political views into Greek society, its repressive mechanisms reproduced the policies and narratives already established in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the present article, I explore the commemorative events of the battle of Salamis in the 1960s in light of two concepts, barbarism and *ethnikofrosyni*. Within this scope, I focus on the invention of a ceremony at Salamis and the national implications of its celebration. After analyzing the ideological re-configuration of the dictatorship (1967-1974), I also examine how the regime exhibited communism as barbarian and ‘a radical other’,²⁴ by implementing its authoritarian narrative in public celebrations.

Celebrating the Nation in the 1960s

The ideological appropriation of the Battle of Salamis became a central issue in the cultural politics of the time: it encapsulated the idea of a perennially victorious nation.²⁵ The *Maritime Week*, a formal commemoration of the historical excellence of the Royal Hellenic Navy, began being celebrated in the 1950s.²⁶ During the event, the king or high-ranking representatives of the regime performed a ceremonial inspection of a navy ship and paid homage to the fallen Greek sailors. In the *Maritime Week* of 1961, the authorities not only alluded to the exceptionality of the country’s relation with the sea but also claimed that the national maritime victories extended from

²³ Christofis 2017: 212.

²⁴ Panourgia 2009: 114.

²⁵ Van Steen 2015b: 285.

²⁶ The event was also related to the great symbolic significance of the sea for the Greek national narrative (Stefanou 2016).

the Battle of Salamis to the Greek naval battles in the 19th and 20th centuries.²⁷ Thus, the Greek maritime past served as proof of Greek exceptionalism, long-lasting heroism, and combative virtue.

The following year, the *Maritime Week* was organized by a designated committee of the port city of Piraeus. The event included the unveiling of a statue of the painter Konstantinos Volanakis (1837-1907), also known as the ‘father of Greek seascapes’. The statue was commissioned from sculptor Nikolaos Pavlopoulos and was placed at Freattidos square in Piraeus to pay tribute to the Greek maritime glory. Volanakis’ painting ‘The Battle of Salamis’ (1882) belonged to a triad of epic compositions that depicted naval battles. The other two were ‘The Burning of a Turkish Frigate’ (1882) and ‘The Exodus of Ares’ (1894), inspired by the Greek War of Independence. The three paintings symbolically connected the Battle of Salamis with the struggle for Greek independence.²⁸ The decision to put up Volanakis’ statue graphically reflected the authorities’ concern to exalt the Greek maritime forces that combated the ever-renewing Eastern opponent, from the Persians to the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the *Maritime Week* reproduced the national claims for the lineal continuity of Greek history from classical antiquity to the modern Greek state.²⁹

In September 1962, a new annual commemorative ceremony of the Battle of Salamis put the symbolic victory against a national enemy in a fresh perspective. The *Association of Friends of the Salaminian Fighters ‘The Battle of Salamis’*, created the same year by Dimitrios Ntavos in Kamatero, a village on the island of Salamis, organized the event. Its primary aim was to showcase the pivotal role of the battle in shaping Greek, European, and Universal history. It also aimed to attract tourist interest and emphasize the great significance of the island in the Greek identity.

²⁷ For audiovisual documentation of the celebration in Phalerum, see http://www.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=3666&thid=14179, 00:39:13-01:16:16.

²⁸ Leontis 1995: 40-66.

²⁹ Hamilakis 2007: 15-19; Plantzos 2008.

The commemoration included public lectures, folk dances, and recitations of Aeschylus' *Persians*. Symbolic re-enactments of the naval battle using modern models of triremes also accompanied the event. Local authorities and Ntavos laid wreaths on the water to honour the Greek sailors lost in the battle of Salamis and celebrated Orthodox memorial services in public spaces in the village. Despite the initial local scope of the ceremonies, they soon acquired a more official status that extended beyond the island. This development popularized the commemorative ceremony as local identity was subsumed into the national narrative, as noted by Stefanou.³⁰

The first local memorial with a national reach was organized in September 1966. The commemorative event included a torch relay in which young men carried the flame from the island of Salamis to the Parthenon. As the newspaper *Eleutheria* described: 'Nine passenger ships accompanied by three car carriers will constitute the procession of the sacred torch and will sail from the harbour of Kamatero'.³¹ The torch was symbolically received by the Secretary of State, Evangelos Savvopoulos, in Piraeus.³² Torchbearers ran with the flame across Athens and climbed the Acropolis Hill, where the mayor of Athens, Georgios Plitas, placed it in the Parthenon amid cheerful applause. Military and scout parades, athletic competitions, and folk dances were also organized in Salamis and Athens (*Eleutheria* 11 September 1966, 4).

The fact that military parades, precision exercises, and political or royal representatives were indispensable to the commemoration of the battle illustrates the sentiments of *ethnikofrosyni* that these events invoked and perpetrated. These ritualized practices not only extolled nationalist patriotism but also implicitly dictated the

³⁰ Stefanou 2016: 159-163.

³¹ 'Θὰ ξεκινήσουν ἀπὸ τὴν προβλήτα τοῦ Καματεροῦ 9 ἐπιβατικὰ πλοίαρια πλαισιούμενα ἀπὸ τρία ὀχηματαγωγά, ποὺ θὰ ἀποτελοῦν τὴν πομπὴ μὲ τὴν ἱερὴ δάδα τῆς Σαλαμίνος', *Eleutheria* 11 September 1966, 4.

³² For audiovisual documentation see http://www.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=3264&thid=16668, 05:54:09-07:26:06.

only way to be a law-abiding citizen. Given the authoritarian use of antiquity in concentration camps – such as on the Greek island of Makronisos until at least the mid-1950s, where leftist inmates were sent to be ‘re-educated’ by contact with ancient Greek culture, commemorating the victory in the battle of Salamis was yet another mechanism for national education.³³ As the state aimed to reshape ideological convictions, classical antiquity became its key device for national indoctrination.

The Battle of Salamis during the Colonels’ dictatorship (1967-1974)

On 21 April 1967, a group of Greek army officers overthrew the transitional government a month before national elections.³⁴ To justify their military takeover, the Colonels, as the usurpers were called, alleged that a communist uprising was imminent and proclaimed a state of emergency.³⁵ In the ultra-right-wing dictatorship that they established, classical antiquity served as doctrinaire instrument for imposing the regime’s socio-political agenda.

Patriotic and militaristic pageantry that invoked triumphal scenes of Greek history served the Colonels’ need for socio-political legitimization.³⁶ For instance, the notorious annual Celebration of the Day of the Combative Virtue of the Greeks (Εορτή της Ημέρας της Πολεμικής Αρετής των Ελλήνων)³⁷ in 1967 depicted Greek military history as a national pastiche at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens.³⁸ It was an anti-communist event that began to be celebrated

³³ Hamilakis 2007: 205-237; Van Steen 2011.

³⁴ Clogg 2021: 158-160.

³⁵ Van Steen 2015a: 2-25.

³⁶ Kourniatki 2017.

³⁷ I follow Kourniakti’s translation ‘Combative’ instead of the translation ‘Military Virtue’ or ‘Polemic Virtue’ that has been used for the word ‘Πολεμική’ (2017, note 1).

³⁸ Van Steen 2015b.

in 1959 to mark the anniversary of the national victory in the Civil War.³⁹ By adopting the visual language and performance repertoire of these spectacles, the dictatorship extolled a triumphant narrative.⁴⁰ The celebration dovetailed well with the militaristic nature of the dictatorship, as it re-enacted heroic Greek battles such as the Trojan War, the Persian Wars, and the Greek War of Independence to display a historical line of Greek excellence and military victories.

The local Association of Friends of the Salaminian Fighters in Kamatero continued to organize the commemoration of the Battle of Salamis, took part in the socio-political scene, and was smoothly absorbed into the regime's militaristic rhetoric. However, the celebration not only commemorated the Athenian victory in the Battle of Salamis but also the modern 'national' victories against communism. In addition, the commemoration of the battle was transformed from a conservative celebration of a national victory against the Eastern enemy into a politicized performance of anti-communist rhetoric. In this, classical culture was used to embody anti-liberal and militaristic ideals that equated communists with barbarians. Communists were exhibited as the internal enemy that was crushed in the Civil War but still posed a terrible threat to the nationally-minded Greek populace.⁴¹

The delegate of the King,⁴² the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense Grigorios Spandidakis, ambassadors, military personnel, and Church leaders all attended the commemorative ceremony in September 1967. Divers blew up a 'Persian' trireme,

³⁹ Kourniatki 2017, note 9.

⁴⁰ The Greek dictatorship emulated, developed, and adapted the anti-communist and anti-leftist policies that the conservative post-war governments (1946-1963) had fostered since the Greek Civil War (Van Steen 2015b: 272; Kourniakti 2017; Samarinis 2017; Pittaki 2021).

⁴¹ Papadimitriou 2022.

⁴² King Constantine II of Greece, who actively participated in the political turmoil that preceded the coup, was initially obliged to support the new regime. However, he fled the country when he failed to regain control with a countercoup in December 1967.

and remodelled boats re-enacted the battle of Salamis (*Makedonia* 26 September 1967, 7). The militaristic triumphalism continued with a demonstration of fireworks that spelt out the regime's axiomatic slogans, 'Ζήτω ὁ Βασιλεὺς' ('Long Live the King') and 'Ζήτω ἡ 21^η Ἀπριλίου 1967' ('Long live the 21 April 1967') (*Makedonia* 24 September 1967, 16). The event concluded with a procession of 100 young men dressed as 'Salaminian fighters' and 25 young women dressed in antique-style costumes that represented the Greek cities that participated in the original battle. The procession made its way to Syntagma square, where the authorities held a public ceremony at the Monument of the Unknown Soldier to honour the soldiers who glorified the 'combative virtue of the Greeks' ('πολεμικὴν ἀρετὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων', *Makedonia* 24 September 1967, 16).

Spandidakis delivered an official speech for the occasion, alluding to the relentless Greek progress and heroic victories. He likened the Colonels' coup to the battle of Salamis and claimed that the government was celebrating its very own Salamis against the internal enemies of the nation. As Van Steen notes, the festivals of the dictatorship portrayed the coup as the culmination of the Greek tradition of victories (2015b, 271). To emphasize this claim, Spandidakis finished his speech paraphrasing Aeschylus' *Persians* and turning the Persian messenger's words into anti-communist propaganda:

The revolution of the 21st of April constructed the defensive walls of the nation's definite salvation. And if the enemy's messenger arrived at the hideout of the modern aspirant conquerors of Greece, I borrow freely from Aeschylus' phrase to imagine what [the messenger] would announce. 'The Greek victory was not based on gold, numbers, nor violence. Victory was achieved because of the Greek faith in the immortal spirit of the 'father of greatness and of truth'. The faith in the homeland, its history, and its future served as the 'wooden walls' against which foreign communism

was permanently crushed ... That is why [the national government] celebrates the immortal battle of Salamis.⁴³

The speech was a free adaptation of verses 337-347 of the *Persians*⁴⁴ when the Messenger informs queen Atossa of the Persian defeat at Salamis. Their transformation into an anti-communist manifesto demonstrates the appropriation of classical literature to shape public discourse according to the ideals of *ethnikofrosyni*. The speech also cynically cites the poem ‘The Olympic hymn’ (‘Ὁ Ὀλυμπιακὸς ὕμνος’) written by the Greek poet Kostis Palamas in 1895. The poem was included in his collection ‘Life Immovable’ (‘Ἡ Ἀσάλευτη Ζωή’) published in 1904.⁴⁵ The first two lines are almost identical: ‘Immortal Spirit of antiquity, pure father / of beauty, of greatness, and of truth’ (‘Ἀρχαῖο Πνεῦμ’ ἀθάνατον ἀγνὲ πατέρα / Τοῦ ὠραίου, τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τάληθινοῦ’.⁴⁶ This subtle reference to the Olympic ideals reflects the dictatorship’s intention to appropriate classical tradition and revive the ‘Greek spirit’.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ἡ ἐπανάστασις τῆς 21ης Ἀπριλίου, ὕψωσε τὸ τεῖχος τῆς ἀμύνης καὶ τῆς ὀριστικῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ ἔθνους. Καὶ ἐάν ὁ ἀγγελιαφόρος τοῦ ἐχθροῦ ἔφθασεν εἰς τὸ ἄντρον τῶν ἐπιδόξων συγχορῶν κατακτητῶν τῆς Ἑλλάδος, δανείζομαι, κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν, τὴν ἔκφρασιν τοῦ Αἰσχύλου διὰ νὰ φαντασθῇ τις τί θὰ ἀνήγγειλε [ὁ ἀγγελιαφόρος]. “Ἡ νίκη τῆς Ἑλλάδος, δὲν ἐστηρίχθη οὔτε εἰς τὸν χρυσὸν, οὔτε εἰς τὸν ἀριθμὸν οὔτε εἰς τὴν βίαν. Ἡ νίκη ἦτο ἡ πίστις τοῦ Ἑλλήνου πρὸς τὸ ἀθάνατον πνεῦμα τοῦ “πατέρα του μεγάλου, του ἀληθινοῦ”. Πίστις διὰ τὴν πατρίδα, τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς καὶ τὸ μέλλον τῆς ἦτο τὸ “Ἐύλιον τεῖχος” ἐπὶ τοῦ ὁποίου συνετρίβη ὀριστικῶς ὁ ξενοκίνητος κομμουνισμὸς ... Ἴδου διατὶ [ἡ ἐθνικὴ κυβέρνησις] ἐορτάζει τὴν ἀθάνατον μάχην τῆς Σαλαμίνος, *Makedonia* 26 September 1967, 7.

⁴⁴ If numbers were all, believe me, / Asia’s navy would have won, / for Greek ships counted out / at only ten times thirty / and ten selected to lead out that line./ But Xerxes, this I know, / commanded a full thousand, / two hundred and seven / the fastest ever built. / That is our count. Perhaps you thought / we were outnumbered? / No. / It was some Power – / Something not human – / whose weight tipped the scales of luck / and cut our forces down. / Gods keep Athens safe for her goddess. (Lembke & Herington 2009: 50).

⁴⁵ It was set to music for the opening ceremony of the 1896 Summer Olympics in Athens and was declared the official Olympic Anthem in 1958.

⁴⁶ Palamas 1904: 155.

⁴⁷ Van Steen 2015b: 274-275.

The discourse of *ethnikofrosyni* in the events before the coup gave way to the Colonels' anti-communist celebrations that appropriated classical antiquity for the sake of the regime's legitimation. Similarly, the triumph against the Persian navy in Salamis now represented their victory against the supposed imminent threat of communism.⁴⁸ Two decades or so after the civil war, the communist threat epitomized the cultural politics of the Greek state. As the narrative of an internal national enemy was fundamental for the dictatorship's *raison d'être*, communist barbarism could not ever be completely defeated.⁴⁹ Thus, to cultivate their image of guardians of the nation against barbarism, the Colonels kept celebrating the national victories as militarist propaganda.

In the commemorative ceremony of 1968, the *Association of Friends of the Salaminian Fighters* awarded a gold medal to the Prime Minister and head of the military coup, Georgios Papadopoulos, as an 'honest memorial and tangible proof of the combative virtue of the Greeks' (ἔνθύμιον ἀγαθὸν καὶ δείγμα ὄρατὸν τῆς πολεμικῆς ἀρετῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων', *Makedonia* 6 October 1968, 16).⁵⁰ In addition, models of eighteen triremes – twelve Persian and six Greek – re-enacted the battle.⁵¹ Wreaths were laid in the sea of Salamis by boats and helicopters to pay homage to Salaminian fighters who had followed Themistocles and Eurybiades into the original battle (*Makedonia* 8 October 1968, 11).

⁴⁸ For the use of the communist threat as the motive for the Colonels' revolution, also see Van Steen 2015a, 14-8. Western powers viewed the end of the Greek Civil War as a victory against world communism, despite the Soviet Union's repeated denial of any material support to the Greek Communist Party during the war (Panourgia 2009, 117).

⁴⁹ Moser & Boletsi 2015: 18-20.

⁵⁰ In 1969, the Association offered other three commemorative medals to the Deputy Prime Minister Dimitrios Patilis, the coordination minister Nikolaos Makarezos, and the Minister of the Interior Stylianos Pattakos. Patilis and Makarezos represented the government at the commemoration of the battle on 22 September 1969 (*Makedonia* 21 September 1969, 16; *Makedonia* 23 September 1969, 16).

⁵¹ For a short clip of the celebration and the re-enactment of the battle, see http://www.avarchive.gr/portal/digitalview.jsp?get_ac_id=1205&thid=2664, 01:42:07-02:49:06.

Stylianos Pattakos, one of the masterminds of the coup, repeated Spandidakis' claims on the dictatorship's commitment to a glorious national future and described communism as a barbaric threat against liberty and Greek virtues. In addition, he equated the Greek victory at Salamis with the Battle of Grammos,⁵² the defeat of the Greek communist army in the Greek Civil War two decades before, suggesting that *ethnikofrosyni* and classical antiquity blended into one another:

We Greeks were, are, and will always be on the frontline of freedom. Guardian of the national unity like Themistocles and lived memory of our history, the military revolution of the 21 April 1967 fulfils its duty by commemorating the sacrifices and brave accomplishments of our race from Salamis to Grammos.⁵³

He also extolled the Greek virtue and ability to eventually defeat the new barbarians that violently attempted to sabotage national unity. To represent this ideological conflict between patriots and traitors, Pattakos condemned communists for their violent nature. By alluding to the communist barbaric nature, Pattakos denied their right to be part of the body of Greek citizens and asserted that the 'civilized we' were superior to communist degenerates. A few days later, the presidency of the Association of Kamatero was assigned, on Papadopoulos' orders, to the undersecretary of state Constantinos Vovolinis, who re-confirmed the need to control public discourse against ideological threats (*Makedonia* 11 October 1968, 4). Receiving his new position, Vovolinis once again identified the military coup

⁵² 'Grammos has its direct lineage to Salamis' ('Ο Γράμμος έχει ευθείαν την καταγωγήν του από την Σαλαμίνα', *Makedonia* 8 October 1968, 11.

⁵³ 'οι Έλληνες, ιστάμεθα και νύν και θά ιστάμεθα εις τὸ διηνεκὲς ἀγρυπνοὶ φρουροὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπάλξεων τῆς ἐλευθερίας. Κομιστῆς τῆς ἐθνικῆς ἐνότητος, ὅπως καὶ ὁ Θεμιστοκλῆς καὶ ζῶσα μνήμη τῆς ἱστορίας μᾶς ἡ στρατιωτικὴ ἐπανάστασις τῆς 21ης Ἀπριλίου 1967 ἐπιτελεῖ τὸ χρέος τῆς, ἀναμνησκομένη τῶν θυσιῶν καὶ τῶν θαυμαστῶν κατορθωμάτων τῆς φυλῆς ἀπὸ τῆς Σαλαμίνος μέχρι τοῦ Γράμμου', *Makedonia* 8 October 1968, 11.

as the new battle of Salamis that deflected the barbarism of anti-national communism and protected the Greek civilization from its destructive force.

Conclusions

The commemoration of the battle of Salamis before 1967 reflected nationalist ideals and the local aspiration for national recognition and pride. Post-war conservative governments viewed Salamis as an opportunity to celebrate national victories as part of a historical continuum. After the military coup, the Colonels participated in these ceremonies to implement their own militaristic vision and legitimize their usurpation of power. In addition, they exploited Greek patriotism and appropriated classical antiquity to shape the public discourse. Thus, in the 1950s and 1960s the battle of Salamis epitomized the cultural politics of the post-war Greek state, which fused the Greek military past with the sense of nationhood and belonging to a national community.

By alluding to a barbarian threat, the dictatorship celebrated *ethnikofrosyni* as the only appropriate Greek virtue. And, although classical antiquity had already been used as a state apparatus in 'reeducating' dissidents in the previous decades, the dictatorship ramped it up into a militaristic spectacle. The regime invoked the discourse of *ethnikofrosyni* to distinguish between Greek citizens and national 'others', that is to say communists, leftists, and dissidents, who were rejected as a barbarian threat to the Greek nation. What the Colonels were implementing in their extravagant ceremonies was an authoritarian discourse that appropriated any available social opportunity to pursue their socio-political agenda. The annual commemoration of the victory at battle of Salamis reflected the Colonels' attempt to construct a militarized communal identity. They appropriated modern Greek celebrations of classical antiquity to establish

their repressive authority and to represent themselves as the successors to and upholders of the historical supremacy of the Greek nation.

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