

Preservation of Refugee Identity:
The Case of Refugee Football Clubs in
Greece

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Part I : General Themes

Introduction

As the title suggests, this dissertation aims to study the phenomenon of the football¹ clubs still active today, that were founded by the refugees who arrived in Greece as part of the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in 1923. The conception of the subject was the combined result of my interest in the exchange of populations and its aftermath on one hand and in football on the other, and was prompted by certain observations and the issues that these observations raised.

The first observation is that, given the popularity of football, the fact that some of the clubs in question are among the most successful in Greece and that the issue of their refugee past is well known to the public and openly discussed, this must be considered one of the most visible and powerful cultural results of the exchange of populations. The second observation is that in spite of this, there is a relative dearth of reference to this subject in the literature on the exchange of populations, even though this literature includes extensive studies of the cultural aspects of the phenomenon. I immediately considered these two observations to imply a gap in the literature.

At the same time, the subject of sports (in its sociological context or otherwise) seems to be shunned by Greek academia, making academic writings on the subject

¹ To avoid any possible confusion, I make it clear that throughout this dissertation the term “football” is used in its British and European usage, meaning the sport that in American English is called soccer.

something of a rarity in Greece. Therefore there is little to be found on refugee teams in that context as well. Serious sports journalism on the other hand, whenever involved in the subject, usually covers it in the context of specific team histories and not in its entirety. There is very little written on the subject of refugee football teams as a phenomenon (not as a specific team's history) in any field.

The final observations on the subject are also the ones that raise the main points of interest. I take for granted that, eight and a half decades after the exchange of populations, refugee identity and group cohesion can no longer be as strong as when the clubs were founded. Furthermore, since the 1980s the higher divisions of Greek football have been professional and the clubs participating in them organized on a professional basis. These observations beg the question: what can really have survived of the refugee identity of the clubs under these conditions?

This dissertation seeks to explore the issue of the refugee clubs on various levels. First of all there is a basic distinction to be made between the "past" of the subject and the "present" of it.

In the first case the emphasis is on the foundation and early development of the teams and the conditions under which this took place. The creation of the phenomenon must be put in its historical and political context, but also in its cultural and social context. Some of the main questions pertaining to this aspect of the subject (and hopefully answered or at least tackled in the dissertation) are:

- Under what conditions were the refugee sports clubs founded?
- What prompted the refugees to form the clubs?
- What form did these clubs take in their early days?

- What was the connection between the clubs and the local refugee community?

In the second case, the emphasis is on the current situation; it tries to determine the teams' relation to the refugee identity under today's conditions. Apart from the more objective elements (for example, is the club in any way affiliated with or connected to other refugee organizations in general, or does it promote research and education on the subject?), the dissertation emphasizes self-perception of those involved in the teams and tries to take separate looks at fans and those inside the team, like players and the administration. I emphasize the self-perception, because I believe that, especially for the fans, this is what matters most, inasmuch as it is beliefs and not truths that create the esprit de corps in such groups. I take the liberty to propose a comparison to the "imagined communities" of Benedict Anderson (1997), in which the belief in a common bond is what is important, no matter what the "reality" of this bond is, especially when talking about more popular teams with a wider fan-base, where actual personal relations are even more vague. Questions relevant to this aspect of the dissertation are:

- How do fans/ clubs perceive their connexion to the refugee identity of the club?
- How do they perceive their relation to the public and to other refugee clubs?
- What do they want the public to believe about the clubs' refugee identity?
- What is the "reality" behind the narrative?
- What are the public expressions of refugee identity?

Most of the clubs are not solely represented in Greek football, but in various other sports too; in some cases other sports have historically been more important for the clubs. The reason for the choice to emphasize football in particular has already been hinted at: it is the most popular sport in Greece and has been so for decades. This gives it the character of a mass phenomenon, which the other sports do not possess to the same degree. Many of these teams have thousands of fans spread all over Greece, and this gives the phenomenon a whole different dimension- for instance, compared to a refugee cultural association that might have an elite or specialized audience, or a refugee association of a specific community that might have local appeal.

Another factor is that, along with basketball and volleyball, football is one of the sports that are organized on a professional basis according to Greek law. As already mentioned, this is of particular interest. Clearly in the early years the refugee teams had a local character, representing specific areas and neighbourhoods. In such a setting it is not difficult to see how the identity of the clubs can be preserved. However, it is much less clear what role such an identity has to play in such a professionalized and commercialized setting as modern sports. It is no longer feasible for a successful professional team to base itself only in a confined area, or to draw its fan base from such a limited pool. So with the expansion of the clubs to include more fans and different practices, what happens to the refugee identity?

The research will take the form of a case study and the main teams chosen are P.A.O.K. (Π.Α.Ο.Κ.), , Panionios (Πανιώνιος) and Apollon Kalamarias (Απόλλων Καλαμαριάς). These teams fulfill various criteria and give a certain diversity to the research: P.A.O.K. is a Thessaloniki team, representing refugees from Constantinople; Panionios is an Athens team representing refugees from Smyrna; and

Apollon Kalamarias is a Thessaloniki team representing refugees from Pontus. Thus we have a selection that covers different refugee communities and also different Greek cities.

It might strike some as peculiar that Athens team A.E.K. is not included in these choices. After all, A.E.K. is the most successful, popular and well-known refugee team in Greece. A.E.K. had originally been included in the sample and the reasons for its eventual exclusion were mostly practical- lack of time, resources and also problems getting into contact with the people inside the team meant that the inclusion of A.E.K. was not feasible. However, because of this club's importance, and because a certain degree of research was originally made, certain points about A.E.K. are also made, where material was available and where it was deemed that this adds further insight to the observations being made.

A large proportion of the research for this dissertation is original fieldwork, especially the part concerning the current perceptions of fans and administrations. Also the part pertaining to the history of the clubs is the result of archive and literature research in the cities where the teams are based. Field research obviously has inherent difficulties, but I feel I should mention that the whole project encountered many difficulties when it came to getting into contact with and obtaining information from officials of the clubs. Although often showing good intent, the clubs were generally not of much help in finding publications on their history; serious press and historical archives were practically non-existent on the part of the clubs and access to the museums was not the easiest of things. It was also quite difficult to arrange any definite meeting with any official of the clubs. It was difficulties like

these (among others) that made me amend certain of my original plans, most notably the decision to exclude A.E.K.

Last, some notes on terminology. According to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is any person who:

As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

According to this official definition, the persons who were included in the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey are technically not refugees². First of all, since they were given the nationality of the host country, they were not “outside country of their nationality”. Secondly they were not “unwilling to return to their country of habitual residence”, but simply not permitted to do so by the stipulations of the Lausanne treaty. The more strict term for these populations would be “exchangees”.

On the other hand, besides the fact that the events in question predate the UN definition by a few decades, most of the later to be “exchangees” were in fact refugees in a very real sense, since they had abandoned their homes amidst a

² The details of the provisions of this exchange are discussed at greater length in the relevant chapter of this dissertation.

devastating war. Furthermore, the agreements that turned them into “exchangees” were signed *after* their flight and therefore they were, even technically, refugees for quite a few months. As explained later in this dissertation, those who left as a result of the Treaty of Lausanne, and not before it, are relatively few.

At any rate, the fact of the matter is that the term “refugees” is the one that has come to be widely accepted in the relevant literature. Even more so in the Greek context, where an equivalent term for “exchangee” simply does not exist – and where there is every political reason to want to establish these people as refugees in popular and international contexts alike. The whole culture that is described in following chapters here, is based on the concept of *προσφυγιά* (“refugeehood”) which is deeply rooted in Greek consciousness.

The last comment on terminological technicalities concerns place names. There is always a dilemma when writing about Greece and Turkey because place names usually have both a Greek and a Turkish version (i.e. Constantinople and Istanbul) and choice thereof is often taken to have political connotations. The politically correct solution would have been to use both of them separated by slashes (i.e. Constantinople/Istanbul); however, I have chosen not to do so. The reason is not so much because I find this cumbersome (which I do) but because I find such political correctness to often come at the expense of precision and semantic hue. When speaking of Greek culture and especially the refugees and their collective memory, these places have a highly specific and symbolic value and I find that it would be inaccurate to write of “refugees from Smyrna/Izmir” or “the lost homelands in Constantinople/Istanbul”. I have therefore generally opted for the Greek terms when writing of such matters. This is simply a matter of trying to depict the meaning and context more accurately - I hope it will not be mistaken for a personal statement of

irredentism or political implication. After all, one will notice that I have used the Turkish terms when I felt the context required it.

Sport, Football and Identity

If taken at face value, sport is a form of entertainment, which includes physical exercise, skill and competition between two or more individuals. However, going by this definition, one misses out on the wider, and perhaps more important, aspects of this entertainment, for modern sport is a phenomenon much wider and far removed from the sporting actions of the sportsmen and women. So much so, that as far as some of us are concerned, the actual “exercise, skill and competition” is what matters least.

It is impossible to fully understand contemporary society and culture without acknowledging the place of sport. We inhabit a world in which sport is an international phenomenon, it is important for politicians and world leaders to be associated with sports personalities; it contributes to the economy [...]; it is part of the social fabric [...]; and it is regularly associated with social problems and issues such as crime, health, violence, social division, labour migration, economic and social regeneration and poverty. (Jarvie 2006: 2)

Arguably, sport in itself has little “true” significance apart from the entertainment and fitness value. What makes sports important is simply that people think it is important, and act accordingly. On one hand people are willing to spend serious amounts of money on sports, making it a huge market and an important economic

factor; on the other hand the degree of commitment and identification that a lot of people feel towards the more popular forms of sport turn it into the centre of a very complex web of social phenomena indeed.

To start with, through the years sport has been intensely politicized. Since the mid to late 19th century, when sport starts taking on its modern hue of a mass phenomenon, just about every political doctrine has had a say on how sport should be done, and of course tried to take advantage of its popularity to its own ends. Hoberman, aiming “to demonstrate how interpretations of sport and the athletic body vary according to the ideological position from which they are viewed” (Hoberman 1984: 7), points out the highly symbolical and theatrical nature of the sporting spectacle, terming it “sportive expressionism” (Hoberman 1984: 8). He goes on to emphasize that, “it remains for the political culture which employs the dramatized body to decide whether its ultimate purpose is the liberation or the subjugation of the astonished spectator” (Hoberman 1984: 10).

What is of most interest to us in the context of this dissertation is the connexion between sport and various forms of identity – and especially that of football, the most popular sport on a global scale. As one writer puts it:

Football, as we all know, is a powerful catalyst for social identities. Football teams and matches are usually a primary motivating factor and place for assertion and celebration of various identities whether they be local, religious, ethnic, professional or whatever. It is fascinating, even though some times frightening, how a football team performance gains vast and complex social signification and symbolism which overtake the simple outcome of a sporting competition. (Coelho 1998)

In the words of Jarvie (2006: 288) “sporting identity is relational and differences are established by symbolic marking in and around sport. Sport contributes to both the social and symbolic processes involved in the forging of identities”. Accordingly, many and disparate forms of identity have been connected with football, depending on the time and circumstance. First of all territorial identities, representing neighbourhoods and areas (Russel 1999); class identity both as a whole (i.e. football as a totality being seen as representing a certain class, usually the working class, but not necessarily) (Lanfranchi 1994), or as conflicting class identities among different clubs (Horak 1994); gender identity and particularly masculinity (Russel 1999); racial identities (Back *et. al.* 1998); colonial and anti-colonial identities (Lin & Lee 2007) etc. However, the identities most commonly associated with football are of course national and ethnic (Armstrong & Giulianotti (eds.) 1999; Kuper 1994; Golfinopoulos 2007).

Apart from the national teams and the various forms of identity they can come to be associated with, what interests us most, because it is closer to our case, is the phenomenon of football teams associated with a divergent identity within a society and nation. Once again, examples abound. Trying to draw parallels to the case at hand, however, I have found it hard to find an *exact* match for the case of the Greek refugee teams in the literature. The reason is that the identity of these refugees may have been divergent, but it was not competitive towards or mutually exclusive with the standard Greek identity.

Thus, one starts eliminating cases. Barcelona, the representative of Catalan identity (Kuper 1994: 85-93) does not fit in because the Catalan identity is competitive to the Spanish one and in its more extreme versions has a separatist agenda, which has nothing to do with the Asia Minor refugee case. The immigrant

clubs of Australia (Vamplew 1994) and Britain (Williams 1994: 160) may be part of an attempt at inclusion rather than differentiation, but the Asia Minor refugees differ in that they lack the language and cultural barrier most of these immigrants would have (they may have had their cultural peculiarities, but I do not think they compare to what a Greek immigrant in Australia would feel).

This problem of finding an exact parallel is evident in the most often cited and studied case of the sort, Scottish club Celtic FC. In general there are similarities between the Celtic case and the Greek one: the team was formed by poor migrants of common origin, as a means of alleviating their everyday burdens, and it has held on to its distinctive culture (which has its point of reference outside the club's country) and is seen as a representative of it (Bradley 1995; Boyle 1994). Nonetheless, there are important differences. Besides the fact that the Greek teams were formed by refugees of war and not economic migrants, the Irish had a very definite characteristic setting them apart from the Scots and practically precluding their assimilation, namely their religion; the Asia Minor refugees had no such thing. Perhaps as a result of this, the Greek refugee teams (some problems notwithstanding) never had such a strong rivalry with the teams of the locals as Celtic and Rangers have. I would also like to note that the cultural point of reference and origin of Celtic FC, Ireland, is still very much there; whereas in the Greek case, not only were the refugees very clearly and definitely prohibited from ever returning to their homelands, but even more drastically, these homelands no longer exist, at least culturally. There was therefore no other pole to be attracted by and no other aspiration left but to become part of their new society as best they could.

I presume that cases like this might exist in places where wars were fought and refugees left their homes to go to their ethnic motherlands. However, I am personally

unaware of them and could not find anything in the relevant literature. The only case that springs to mind, quite interestingly, comes once again from the Greek and Turkish experience: the case of Cypriot refugee teams from the 1974 events. Like the Asia Minor refugees, so the Cypriots (on both sides, I must point out) had little, probably even less, to set them apart from the majority in their new homelands; and, likewise, their old homelands were quite violently and tragically eradicated, although technically they still harbour some hopes that they might be able to return. However, I did not find any books or articles about them, and the comparison I have just made is purely based on my own experience and contact with Cypriot football. I believe it would be a very interesting project to compare the cases of the Greek, Greek- Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot refugee teams.

Part II: The Historical Background

Asia Minor before the “un-mixing”

What the Ottomans got their hands on, when they started spreading from their original lands to eventually capture the whole of Anatolia, was a veritable melting pot of cultures and ethnicities. Many centuries, indeed millennia, of tumultuous history, seeing the rise and fall of empires, the birth and death of cultures and the coming and going of conquerors and marauders, had turned the Anatolian peninsula into a mosaic of peoples, religions, languages and cultures.

The Ottomans solved the problem of controlling such a vast and heteroclitic state by simply not interfering too much with social and administrative structures that had been tried and tested by others. The Ottomans soon found that with some modifications to suit their own needs, not changing the old ways saved them the trouble of having to devise and implement a whole new system and at the same time kept the people of the conquered lands more at ease with the new status quo. Consequently the classical Ottoman state incorporated many administrative elements of the Byzantine Empire (Inalcik 1998a: 197).

Ottoman society's main division was a religious one, not an ethnic one, known as the *millet* system³. The Ottoman state recognized a number of *millets*, that is to say

³ There is a certain confusion surrounding the term *millet*, since in modern Turkish it means *nation* and this has lent itself to various interpretations of Ottoman history and the histories of the peoples under Ottoman rule by subsequent national historiographies. It is quite clear however that in classical Ottoman usage it did not note a national/ethnic distinction, but a religious one. Personally I insist on this distinction and consider it a very important point in understanding both early Ottoman society and later developments in the area, even up to this day. Sugar 1994 for instance nicely demonstrates that the millet system is directly linked to classic Islamic teachings and traditions dating back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself.

religious communities/minorities, and granted them quite extensive autonomy concerning their internal affairs. The main *millet*s were the *millet-i Yehudi* (the Jewish *millet*), the *millet-i Ermeni* (the Armenian *millet*) and the *millet-i Rum* (the Orthodox *millet*). Each *millet* was headed by the respective religious leader and the internal administrative hierarchy was a largely ecclesiastical/religious one. The leadership of each *millet* had extensive jurisdiction over its members, including judicial power according to its own religious practices and rules concerning matters of civil law, and tax-raising rights (Sugar 1994).

There was never any doubt, however, as to who was the ruler and who the subject. To start with, the price of relative self-rule was obedience and it was the duty of the leader of each *millet* to ensure this (Inalcik 1998a). Any instance of civil disobedience was considered a failure (or treason) on the behalf of the *millet başı* (head of the *millet*) and meant that he was held responsible for it and more often than not relieved of his duties by way of decapitation. Such unrest was of course generally quelled by no polite means. Furthermore, the members of the minorities were subject to heavy taxation that made economic survival quite difficult, especially for the peasant population. At the same time numerous regulations concerning legal and social matters made the privileges of the Muslims quite evident in everyday life (Sugar 1994).

Muslims generally shunned commercial and trading activities, considering them inappropriate due to religious convictions. They usually opted for military and administrative posts, which were considered more illustrious and important while the majority of the Muslim populace was involved in agricultural and manual labour. Furthermore, the Ottoman Empire, at least in its classic period, practically lacked a landowner class or hereditary nobility, at least of the sort medieval Europe developed.

Land ownership was the exclusive prerogative of the Sultan. Notables and military and administrative officers were not given land, but right to its use and collection of taxes and crops from it. The Sultan reserved the right to retract this privilege at more or less any time and the privilege was not automatically transferable to the holder's offspring. Neither were offices and titles and the greater part of one's fortune (Vournas 2003: 13-19).

This situation meant that the minorities practically had no rival (except the other minorities) in taking control of the vast majority of trade and commerce conducted in the Ottoman Empire, founding international and domestic trade companies and various enterprises. Thus the minorities came to form a merchant class with connections all over Europe and the East, especially in the greater port towns of the Empire like Salonica, Smyrna and Constantinople⁴ (Inalcik 1998b). Due to their economic success, their contact with Western ideas, but also traditional reasons, the minorities also developed a relatively good standard of education among their elites. The minority intelligentsias played an important administrative and political part in the Ottoman State⁵. They were especially useful in international relations, since the Muslims considered it demeaning to learn foreign languages.

The Greek Orthodox inhabitants of Anatolia were therefore relatively well off, the difficulties of life as a minority in the Ottoman Empire notwithstanding. This was especially true for those living in the great urban centres like Smyrna and Istanbul and the natives of the fertile Western regions. A good economic and social standing, contact with modern Western trends and ideas, the cosmopolitan atmosphere in the

⁴ In the later days of the Empire the local merchants also had to compete with Westerners who, after the signing of the infamous concessions of the Empire to France and Britain, played a central role in Ottoman economy.

⁵ It must be noted that, although state offices were reserved for Muslims, the Ottoman state and administration had no qualms about accepting *converts* to Islam, thus making it easy enough for anyone with a different religious background to rise in the hierarchy, as long as they renounced their old religion.

port cities that served as commercial centres and a centuries long tradition of education and culture meant that the elite of the *millet-i Rum* were a true bourgeoisie (Vournas 2003: 24-27).

Of course the last couple of centuries had seen not only the sharp decline of the Ottoman state (and its administrative structure) (Sugar1994) but also the rise of national movements among the minorities of the Empire. If relations with the rulers had always been strained, they were especially troubled during this time. Widespread corruption and arbitrariness on the part of local rulers and officials combined with the resentment towards the minorities because of their independence struggles meant that the Christian Orthodox of the Empire (and likewise the other minorities) were suffering through rather hard conditions. This however does not change the fact of the great economic and social development of the minorities- and in this case the Greek Orthodox who interest us more for the purposes of this dissertation (Vournas 2003).

Greece before the refugees

The situation in Greece however was quite different. After the eventually victorious war of independence, starting in 1821, and the declaration of the independence of the Greek state from the Ottoman Empire, Greece had struggled to survive. Politically and socially Greece was deeply divided and had already witnessed a civil war before the war of independence had even finished and things remained tense. Political allegiances were volatile and governments rose and fell constantly. On top of all this, a royal family (or two, to be precise), that had been imposed by the Great Powers-which was not popular with the Greek people- was incapable of securing stability. Conflicts often got violent (Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006).

Economically Greece was in a bad state. Besides the fact that the lands included in the original Greek state were hardly very rich or important compared to, say, Smyrna, whatever there was to base an economy on had been ruined by the wars. Greece's constant bids to expand her territory also meant that resources were used for military operations, the workforce and population in general were sacrificed in wars and the situation showed little potential for normalization (Tzanakaris 2007). Even when the war operations were successful and important areas and cities were annexed to Greece, these had already suffered through fire and brimstone and were in need of practically complete reconstruction (Clogg 2002).

Greece practically lacked an industrial sector and, at the same time, anything resembling a bourgeoisie. The ruling classes and economically prominent groups of Greece were generally either landowners or warlords, not merchants, businessmen etc (Vournas, 2003). All the more so since the areas that formed the independent Greek

state hardly included any important urban centre. Athens, the soon to be capital, was originally little more than a village with some impressive ancient ruins and Thessaloniki was only captured later and then in a rather bad state. Most of the original areas (until the addition of territories like the Ionian islands, Crete, Thessaloniki etc) were rural, with a large proportion of rough mountainous terrain, with little culture or education to boast of. It is typical that the majority of the intelligentsia during the first period of the Greek state was made up of Greeks of the diaspora (Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006).

With all this in mind, it is not surprising that when, in the beginning of the 20th century, the chance was given to lay claim on Smyrna, it was seen as a unique opportunity (Kostis 2006). Adding Smyrna and its surroundings to the Greek state, and with relatively little warfare needed at that, would mean a great boost to Greek economy and society.

Political events leading to the Asia Minor campaign

The end of WWI found Greece and the Ottoman Empire at opposing ends of the political seesaw. The Ottoman Empire found itself sitting on the losing end of it, having allied itself with the defeated side in the war and having to negotiate terms with the Entente powers that were not only humiliating, but potentially threatening the integrity of the realm and its very existence. Greece on the other hand had chosen her allies more successfully and, having contributed actively to the allies' victory, was expecting her share of the spoils.

The Treaty of Sevres in 1920 practically meant the end of the Ottoman Empire. Financial control of the Empire fell completely into the hands of the Allies and its army was all but disbanded. Strict rules were set for the functioning of the Straits, practically internationalizing them by forbidding their closure "both in peace and in war, to every vessel of commerce or of war [...] without distinction of flag" and placing them under the control of an international Commission. Crucial commercial and strategic ports were similarly regulated. The Sultan also lost control over the Suez Canal.

The most important aspect however was the territorial one. Certain areas of the Empire were given independence, such as the Republic of Armenia and the Kingdom of Hejaz (later to become part of Saudi Arabia). The area of Kurdistan (not specifically defined by the treaty itself) was granted autonomy, with the provision that within a year it could be granted full independence following a referendum. The Empire recognized the status in Egypt, Sudan, Cyprus, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, the Dodecanese, and renounced any claim over these areas. At the same time, the areas of

Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine were given mandates and fell effectively under the control of the Great Powers (Psyroukis 2000).

The Occupation of Smyrna

Most importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, the control of the wider area of Smyrna/Izmir, an area with a sizeable Greek Orthodox population, was conditionally given to the Kingdom of Greece⁶. The actual sovereignty of the area would remain Ottoman until, 5 years later, there was to be a referendum to choose whether or not to join the Greek state. Greece had every intention of retaining the lands, which in the nationalist imaginary prevalent at the time were considered rightfully Greek- historically and culturally. It was also a thinly disguised fact that Greece would take every opportunity offered to her to expand her lands even farther than the area put under her administration (Kostis 2006). Prime Minister *Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος* (Eleftherios Venizelos) had already suggested this, requesting a mandate stretching almost from the outskirts of Istanbul to the southern Mediterranean coasts of the Empire.

The Greek state still harboured dreams of grandeur at the time, most unequivocally expressed in the form of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* (Megali Idea, the Great Idea/Ideal): the pursuit of annexing to the modern Greek state all the lands that were “historically Greek”, with the aim of creating the “Greece of the Five Seas and Two Continents”. The term *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* had been coined by the populist and demagogue politician *Ιωάννης Κολέττης* (Ioannis Kolettis) a few decades earlier, but the idea had much wider appeal than just to Kolettis’ voters and cohorts (Clogg 2002). The dream of reviving the splendid past had been a prominent aspect of Greek nation-building and it caused great excitement among the Greek people at the time (and still

⁶ Greece had actually been given the green light to land troops in Smyrna already in 1919.

does in certain circles to this day). Eleftherios Venizelos, an emblematic figure of Greek politics and prime minister at the time, was no less an advocate of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* than his theoretically less progressive opponents.

In spite of their belief in the historical and cultural justification of the Greek state's claims on the area, the governing elites in Greece were realistic enough to acknowledge (at least in private) that Asia Minor, much like most areas formerly or still at the time under the control of the Ottoman Empire, was a cultural and ethnic mosaic where the Greek population, although certainly not negligible, was far from overwhelming in most areas. Thus the plan for gaining and retaining Asia Minor was not dissimilar to the tactics used by the imperialist powers at the time. There would have to be extensive "hellenization" and to this end the plan included such measures as widespread "colonization" of the area by ethnic Greeks from other parts of Greece (Kostopoulos 2007), and ideas of some sort of population exchange were not unheard of even in the early stages of the operation.

Notwithstanding the violence following the entrance of Greek troops to various towns and the operations to disarm the Muslim resistance (Kostis 2006), which were often followed by intra-communal violence on both sides, the Greek occupation tried to get off to a relatively mild start, mostly due to the fear of the reaction of the Great Powers in the case of widespread violence and ethnic cleansing (Tsounakos 2007). After all the Greek troops were in the beginning under the direct command of the Great Powers (Psyroukis 2000).

The Greek government had given the newly established Greek administration in Smyrna specific orders to prove its capability to control the land and populace in a

peaceful manner, so as to strengthen the Greek bid for sovereignty⁷. Such a tense balance was, however, hard to maintain even with the best of intentions. The complex ethnic make-up of the population ensured that the area was included in more than one national imaginary; apart from Greek irredentist visions, the other local communities had their own ideas of national fulfillment, the ruling Muslim community had every intention of keeping control of its lands (although its leaders had not agreed on how to go about doing this) and there were sizeable populations the loyalty of whom could not be taken for granted by anyone. The strategic and commercial importance of the lands on the other hand, ensured there were more than a few governments wanting to protect their interests there; numerous European companies and commercial offices had long been established in Asia Minor, taking advantage of the land's many riches and its trade routes. The Great Powers were hardly likely to relinquish their privileges in the name of some Greek cultural heritage. As a matter of fact there are indications that the only reason the Greek army was allowed to set foot in Izmir was to keep the Italian one at bay, in the hope that Greece would be more accommodating to British and French interests (Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006, p.358).

At the same time, the long history of antagonism between the local communities meant that there were plenty of old scores to be settled and any community feeling powerful and secure enough to do so, was likely to take the first given opportunity to impose its own interests on the rest. The last century or two of Ottoman rule over Asia Minor had been far from peaceful due to, among other things, the practical collapse of the administrative system which gave way to widespread corruption and oppression by the governing elites (Muslim or otherwise), and the clash of the various nationalist projects resulting on the one hand in repressive and violent measures from the

⁷ For an account both of the violence of the first period of the occupation and the administration's attempts to control it, see Tzanakaris 2007.

Ottoman administration and, on the other hand, in the often violent clash between the ethnic communities.

The campaign

Things were therefore highly volatile and there is good reason to believe that a Greek occupation, no matter how competent and good-natured, was destined to create great reactions and antagonism (Psyroukis 2000). As it were, the Greek administration hardly had any intention of bringing peace and prosperity to the non- Orthodox communities or to protect anyone's interests but its own- and it would soon turn out that too many of its members were not as competent as was called for in such a complex setting.

Kostopoulos (2007: 91-150) proposes a breakdown of the Greek operation in Asia Minor into three stages: a) May 1919-March 1921 b) March 1921-August 1922 c) August 1922-October 1922. I use this analysis as a basis for my account of events.

The first phase begins with the entry of the Greek army in Smyrna in May 1919. During this phase the Greek administration generally follows the original plan, which is to say establishing order in its jurisdiction and securing its presence. During this time a lot of the violence that occurs is attributed to intra-communal clashes (the Greek community taking advantage of the new situation to get its own back from the until recently ruling Muslims), and locals taking advantage of the anarchy to settle personal affairs (Tzanakaris 2007). The Greek army however is mainly concerned with succeeding against the Turkish guerrilla resistance, which has taken a determined and brutal shape claiming many casualties among soldiers, but also civilians. In this context the Greek army does not directly target the civilian Muslim population. The violent incidents that the Greek army *per se* is involved in are mainly the result of anti-guerrilla operations (Kostopoulos 2007:101-102).

The second phase sees the Greek military extending its operations to perform a large-scale invasion towards the inland in March 1921, a decision the wisdom of which is quite doubtful⁸. In these areas the ethnic Greek communities are small and far apart and the lands from which the advancing army passes are almost completely hostile. Faced with an increasingly large area, a hostile population and a thinning supply line, the Greek army finds itself unable to establish control (Zürcher 2004). The result, not surprisingly, is the beginning of a reign of chaos and terror. The army, in great need of supplies, pillages every resource it finds in its way (Kostopoulos 2007). The clashes with the increasingly powerful Kemalist resistance start taking a great human toll on the Greek ranks. At the same time the Greek soldiers start resorting more and more to violence against the local population, their morale shattered by the dogged resistance and terrible conditions they were facing, and the ineptitude and insensitivity of their command to their needs.

The third phase marks the true humanitarian catastrophe. In August 1922 the Greek offensive finally collapses when, after a crushing attack by the Kemalist forces (Tsounakos 2007: 108-124), the bulk of the Greek soldiers officially refuse to continue fighting and start retreating *en masse* (Kostopoulos 2007: 124). Very soon the already ragged Greek army was making a desperate dash for the coast in mostly irregular groups, constantly under attack by the Turkish resistance (Vakalopoulos 2001). The retreating soldiers, now in complete desperation, were by this time quite uncontrollable, resulting in widespread brutal violence on their part, ravaging the better part of Asia Minor. In many instances there was no distinction made between ethnicity, the mad former soldiers targeting Turkish and Greek towns alike (Kostopoulos 2007: 125-142).

⁸ Venizelos himself had sternly warned the military command against such a move in 1920 (Kostis 2006, p. 141)

Of course the violence was not restricted to the Greek side. Greek soldiers who were captured or chose to surrender (and there were many) very often met with tragic fates, either in the hands of the nationalist troops, or in those of furious Turkish lynch mobs (Vakalopoulos 2001; Kostopoulos 2007:140-142). What makes the situation even worse, however, is the detrimental effect the collapse of the Greek front had on the local ethnic Greek population, meaning that this time it was not only *one* of the local communities suffering. Either in reaction to the widespread acts of retaliation by the Muslim population and the advancing Kemalist army (Tsounakos 2007), or in fear thereof, the Greek Orthodox population abandons their homes and follows the remnants of the Greek army in the thousands. These bands of refugees are especially vulnerable to the extreme hardships and forceful Turkish attacks and, as a result, the combined toll of retaliation and flight on the Orthodox population is devastating (Vakalopoulos 2005). One can say that the disaster started by the retreating Greek army is finished off by the advancing Turkish one.

The Fire of Smyrna

The final chapter, and at the same time the most iconic instance of the humanitarian disaster that resulted from the Asia Minor campaign, was of course the burning of Smyrna. Refugees had flocked to this most influential and prosperous city of the peninsula in the tens of thousands during the retreat of the Greek army. The situation was however such that the Greeks were finally unable to retain even this city, their original mandate. The Turkish forces entered Smyrna on September 9 and for the first few days imposed a relative calm on the city (Kostopoulos 2007: 142-143). On the night of the third day, disaster struck nonetheless; starting from the Armenian quarter, a city fire spread across and incinerated the greatest part of the city, hitting the areas inhabited by the minorities (Greek and Armenian) especially hard. The cause of the fire is still a matter of vicious debate: Greek historiography accuses the Turks of deliberately setting fire to the minority quarters; Turkish historiography rejects this and blames either a chance incident during clashes between locals and Turkish forces trying to restore order during an uprising in the Armenian quarter, or simply turns the accusation on its head and claims it was actually the Greek forces, leaving the city, that once again used their scorched earth tactics. Finally, eyewitness accounts by Westerners are often conflicting⁹. Although my personal understanding of this subject leans towards the Greek position, trying to clarify this complicated subject is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

What is of greater importance in the context of our subject is the humanitarian aspect of the events. A few days after the outbreak of the fire the homeless and

⁹ For a presentation of some of the conflicting views and reports see Georgelin 2007, Smyrnelis 2006.

destitute members of the minorities roaming the streets of Smyrna, now numbering in the hundreds of thousands, were presented with an order by the military commander of the city that, with the exception of all men between the ages of 19-45, who were considered prisoners of war, all non-Muslims were to leave the city within 15 days¹⁰ (Kostopoulos 2007: 143). After a time of dramatic hardship and widespread violence and looting, during which they were constantly harassed and persecuted by the military authorities and militant groups of the Muslim community (Georgelin 2007), finally on October 11 (since an extension to the deadline had been given a while after the original decree) a fleet of ships of the Greek and allied navies came to transfer the members of the Greek Orthodox community and the Greek army to Greece.

There ensued chaos as the bands of beggars hustled to secure their place on any vessel they could to flee to safety, while violent searches were performed by Turkish authorities to prevent the male “prisoners of war” from escaping (Georgelin 2007). The rescuing authorities invariably gave priority to members of the military (and especially officers) over the civilians, often using force to prevent the civilians from boarding before the officers had taken their place. Caught between hammer and anvil, many civilians tried to force their way onto the ships in panic, resulting in the drowning of many. The final number that was transferred to Greece at this instance is calculated to be over 200,000 (Kostopoulos 2007: 144).

¹⁰ This measure, besides separating families and devastating them economically (since men were at the time the main income generators), meant that most of these “prisoners of war” were eventually sent to the notorious *amele taburu* (labour battalions) where they were faced terrible suffering and quite likely death from exhaustion, starvation or execution (Georgelin 2007).

The Lausanne Treaty

In July 1923 the Lausanne Peace Treaty was signed. It brought into existence the new Turkish state, fixing its boundaries, which included the whole of Anatolia- meaning Greece admitted her defeat there, even in Izmir- but excluded the vast majority of the Aegean islands, most of which came under Greek sovereignty. The most notable exceptions were Gökçeada and Bozcaada (Ιμβρος and Τένεδος in Greek) at the mouth of the Straits, that became part of Turkey, and the Dodecanese, at the south east part of the Aegean, that remained under Italian control (as they would until the end of WWII).

The Treaty of Peace included numerous legal instruments. The one with the most significance from this dissertation's point of view was the Convention on the Exchange of Populations, signed a few months earlier in January 1923. In a nutshell, the convention stipulated that all Greek Orthodox of Anatolia were to be transferred to Greece; while at the same time all the Muslim inhabitants of the Greek Kingdom were to be sent to Turkey. The criterion for determining who was to be exchanged was almost purely religious (giving a rather peculiar definition of the two nations) and the exchange was compulsory, making it clearly distinct from certain other exchange agreements of the past that were not given a compulsory character¹¹. Moreover it had a very absolute twist to it, precluding the return of those exchanged to their previous homelands, unless specifically authorized by the government concerned. The only exceptions provided for were part of the Orthodox population of Istanbul and

¹¹ Notably between Greece and Bulgaria. For instance see Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006 p.359.

Göçkeada and Bozcaada, on one hand, and the Muslims of Greek Thrace on the other, who were allowed to remain in their place of residence (Vakalopoulos 2001).

The perceived advantages of this move were manifold. The main advantage from the nationalist point of view was getting rid of a great internal threat, population groups that could not be trusted and could be used as “Trojan horses” to destabilize the political situation and compromise internal security and territorial integrity (Aktar 2003). After all, “ethnic cleansing” and “homogenization” of the population are an almost indispensable part of nationalist projects (Kostopoulos 2007).

The more practical reason that led to this decision was the need for an immediate solution to the huge problem of how to accommodate the vast numbers of refugees the recent wars had created. This problem was most acute in Greece, which was already hosting more than 1 million refugees - and this in a country with a population of less than 5 million (Hirchon 2003). Turkey’s situation may have been less pressing, since the proportion of newcomers to existing population and landmass were much smaller, but the Turkish government too had to find ways to accommodate the refugees of a decade of wars in the Balkans and Anatolia. In either case it was considered that getting rid of the minorities on either side would be a convenient way of creating space to allow for settling of the refugees- both in the literal, geographical sense and in the economic sense.

Finally there were those (mainly among the foreign diplomats and politicians involved in the business) who seem to have genuinely believed it was the best solution from a humanitarian point of view. It was perceived as the only way to protect the members of the minorities from the vindictive appetites of states and civilians belonging to the ethnic majorities. It was also assumed that this “unmixing”

of the populations was to bring an end to irredentist visions in the area, thus contributing to the attempted establishment of a lasting peace.

It must be noted that the vast majority of the people who were affected by the exchange were actually already displaced due to the preceding events and had already sought refuge in their “motherlands” (Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006). Those who were actually physically expelled after the signing of the agreement were therefore relatively few. What the agreement mainly achieved was to make the displacement official and permanent (by forbidding the return of the refugees, as mentioned earlier). Theoretically those exchanged were allowed to take along their belongings, but in practice this only pertained to the few who were not already displaced. The rest were promised compensation, which was eventually never given¹². Finally, the Convention stipulated that the “exchangees” were to be deprived of their original nationality and be given the citizenship of their new country of residence.

¹² The 1930 Ankara convention between Turkey and Greece saw the official renunciation of Greece’s claims for compensation from Turkey’s side for the lost fortunes.

The consequences of the exchange

The impact on Greece was immeasurable. In a country of scarcely over 4.5 million inhabitants, the influx of almost 1.5 million refugees in a period of 2-3 years could hardly go unnoticed. All the more so when Greece was already a struggling country before their arrival, hard struck by years of wars and internal political, social and regional rifts. What was more, the vast majority of the newcomers came under emergency conditions, destitute, with no place to lay their head and no means to provide for their families; this struggling country was faced with both a humanitarian and an economic crisis. Refugee camps were set up, hundreds of thousands living in tents, and daily messes were rationed. The immediate consideration was of course public health issues, as the situation was highly conducive to all sorts of epidemics, and medical (and even food) resources in Greece were hardly enough to face such a crisis, even as international material aid started arriving to the country in shiploads (Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006).

The very next consideration was the permanent settling of the refugees. Tents could obviously not be a permanent solution and the refugees could hardly be expected to be able to buy or rent their own accommodation without a drachma to their name. Eventually the solution was seen in the displacement of the Muslim minorities present in various parts of Greece, as provided for by the Lausanne Convention. The plan was to redistribute the Muslims' land and lodgings to the newcomers, while at the same time creating new settlements in urban as well as rural areas all over Greece (Hirschon 2006).

An international Refugee Settlement Committee was set up to deal with this pressing issue. There were certain policies followed, devised to make the incorporation of the refugees into local society easier, but their success was far from consistent. In any case the demographic consequences were immense, completely altering Greece's social map and landscape. This becomes clear when considering the relevant numbers presented by Yerolympos (2003: 135), based on Greek National Censuses: according to these, within 8 years the percentage of urban dwellers among the total population of Greece skyrocketed from 22.9% in 1920 to 31.1% in 1928, while the rural population dropped from 61.9% to 54.4% respectively; and this while the actual population increased by over 20%. All over Greece almost 2,000 new rural settlements were created; and as for the urban areas:

- Athens, Pireaus and Thessaloniki each received between 100,000 and 130,000 refugees.

- Several northern Greek cities received more than 10,000 refugees each, in some cases more than doubling the population. For instance, in Kavala 29,000 refugees were added to the existing population of 23,000, in Drama 22,000 refugees were added to the existing population of 17,000, in Serres 15,000 refugees to 15,000, in Xanthe 15,000 to 16,000 and in Komotini 11,000 to 21,000.

- In ten more cities, the refugees constituted 20 to 60 percent of the inhabitants in 1928. For instance, refugees accounted for 48 and 58 percent of the population in Katerini and Giannitsa, 59 percent in Alexandroupolis, 43 percent in Veroia, and 40 percent in Edessa. Kilkis which had lost almost its entire population of 5,700 in 1913 had increased its population to 6,800 by 1928. (Yerolympos 2003: 140)

As evidenced by all the above statistics, the impact of the events was felt much more heavily in the urban areas of Greece. A notable example of the lasting influence of the rapid expansion of Greek cities is that it was at this time that the cities of Athens and Piraeus were actually connected into a single sprawling urban mass. Greek cities were, already before the event of this expansion, in dire need of better infrastructure, planning, public transportation, public spaces etc. Any existing plans for such improvements were, however, abandoned when the refugee crisis ensued. For want of a better way to offer immediate relief (and also due to a certain lack of coordination) speed and quantity were given priority over quality and planning. The manner in which this whole expansion was handled accounts in part for the low living standard in Greek urban areas even today.

The immediate economic repercussions were devastating. Resources were in no way sufficient to cover food, accommodation, health care and all the necessary aid. Besides the international humanitarian aid, which was not negligible, the Greek government was forced to raise loans of a combined total of roughly £20 million (just under £900 million by today's standards¹³). These loans, along with the already crippled Greek economy, meant that the Greek state incurred massive international debts; eventually, in 1932, Greece declared bankruptcy (it is, however, risky to attribute this collapse of the economy solely on the refugee crisis) (Kontogiorgi 2003: 73-74). The two loans that Greece floated at this time have remained in Greek history and popular culture as an example of the hypocrisy of the international system since,

¹³ Calculated with the help of <http://www.measuringworth.com>

although they were supposedly of a humanitarian and friendly nature, given to an ally in need, the interest rates were hardly very friendly.

On the long term however, the exchange of populations also had some very positive effects on the Greek economy. As has been stressed many times already, Greece's population was increased by almost 20% in this short period. This obviously means a huge increase of the available internal market, once the refugees were able to settle and become part of the economy. Perhaps more importantly, this meant an immense and more immediate boost to the workforce. The refugees were many, mostly young, with a relatively high birth rate and practically every one of them was out looking for a job. As Kontogiorgi (2003) points out, the textile industry, which employed almost solely women workers at the time, doubled its capacity during these years. For decades to come, the refugees and their offspring made up the backbone of Greek industry, greatly contributing to this sector's relative rebirth.

The effect was similar on the agricultural sector and in the rural provinces in general. Often this had simply to do with the sheer size of the population (Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006). After the wars of the past decades, the Greek state may have gained a great deal of territory, but this was mostly in the form of ravaged countryside. Not only was most of the infrastructure destroyed, but a great many villages and small towns had been razed or deserted; some because they had been inhabited mostly by Muslim or Slav communities that had been expelled or killed during the Balkan wars; others because their Greek inhabitants had suffered similar fates in the hands of enemy forces during these highly volatile times during which the state that controlled a certain area could change quite often (Kostopoulos 2007)¹⁴. In either case, the result was that the countryside (and of course the agricultural sector)

¹⁴Compare Yerolympos' (2003: 140) comment that "Kilkis [...] had lost almost its entire population of 5,700 in 1913", although she does not state why and how.

was in a state of devastation. The settlement of refugees in these areas gave them a much needed population boost, especially welcome in the northern provinces, thus infusing some blood into the dying agricultural sector (Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006: 178).

What is very important to note here is that in both the industrial and agricultural cases, the refugees were far from a bunch of unskilled and unspecialized “beasts of burden”. As has been noted before, the Greek inhabitants of Asia Minor came from a more developed economical environment than existed in Greece. Many of them were skilled craftsmen; others cash crop cultivators, still others skilled and experienced entrepreneurs (Kontogiorgi 2003: 67). Those who managed to salvage some of their former fortune (mostly those who arrived in relative order after the signing of the Lausanne Convention as opposed to those who fled the hell of war) were soon able to set up their own businesses of all sorts. The better off and more skilled of them, bringing with them great know-how, became some of the more successful businessmen in Greece. What’s more, the refugees also introduced certain crafts that were until then unknown or completely underdeveloped in Greece - the most commonly noted ones are carpet making and silk production.

To recapitulate the main economic effects, one might state that on one hand the Greek state economy was devastated, struggling under the burden of providing relief to the masses of refugees. Although the settlement and relief plans were to a certain degree effective and received international praise at the time, Greece was unable to cope with an already weak economy and the great international debt incurred from the loans raised- not to mention a rather dire international economic environment during the late 1920s and the 1930s, associated internationally with the Great Depression (Clogg 2002).

On the other hand, the refugees gave a great boost to the Greek economy in the long run. Revitalizing an ageing and tired workforce, with young, skilled and daring workers and craftsmen, introducing know-how and entrepreneurial skills and new crafts, the refugees were eventually a great boost to both agricultural and industrial sectors of Greek economy.

Political repercussions of the exchange of populations have of course been far-reaching and long lasting. The effects of the influx of the refugees on the political scene were still being felt many decades later, certainly up to the mid- to late 1970s, after the fall of the 1967 military junta (Hischon 2006).

The most immediate result of the exchange and the ensuing situation was the great influence that foreign governments came to have in Greek affairs. Due to her dire economical and social situation, Greece came to depend to a great extent on external help. The most obvious and well-known form of dependence and interference was of course the infamous international loans that brought Greek economy to its knees. The international debt, running at an interest rate of 8.71% for the first (and largest loan) and 7.05% for the second one, meant that subsequent Greek governments had little possibility of designing their own fiscal policies. I believe that the meaning of such a restriction for the rest of a government's activities and policies need not be pointed out (Aktar 2003: 80).

The Refugee Settlement Commission itself influenced Greek political affairs in a very similar, although slightly less obvious, fashion. Being under the auspices of the League of Nations, the RSC was largely out of the control of the Greek government. This meant that, once again, Greek governments were often unable to implement their own ideas and policies, due to their obligations to the League of Nations and

subsequently to the RSC, according to the Lausanne Convention. It must also be noted that Greece depended a great deal on the international aid distributed by various foreign organizations, the leverage power of which cannot be ignored. This is not to question the motives and importance of either the humanitarian organizations or the RSC, but just to stress their potential for use for lobbying and for direct pressure. It might be argued this period is a link - perhaps not the first one, but certainly an important one - in the chain of outside interference in Greek politics, immediately followed by the important British, American and Soviet roles in the Greek Civil War and the period of the Marshall plan - and perhaps the 1967 junta and beyond¹⁵.

Besides all this, the refugees meant a whole new voting pool - let us not forget they were immediately given Greek citizenship, in accordance with the Convention, and were therefore entitled to full voting rights. Greece was at the time suffering from a great division, known as the *schism*, between Royalists and the liberals headed by Venizelos and therefore known as *Venizelists*. In 1916, this schism had even led to the *de facto* division of the country with the formation by *Venizelist* forces, backed by the Entente, of a provisional government in Thessaloniki (Veremis & Koliopoulos 2006).

However, this Royalist-*Venizelist* division was dictated by differences quite remote from those expected from a left-right ideological disagreement or a monarchist-anti-monarchist clash. Venizelos' quarrel was not so much with the monarchical institutions, as with the person of King Constantine. He did not support the abolition of monarchy, in spite of the wishes of some of his more radical supporters (Veremis 2003).

¹⁵ This is certainly not the place to analyze the involvement of the US and others in the 1967 coup d'état, or the Cyprus affair etc. However, in Greek popular understanding, these issues are prime examples of external interference in Greek politics.

Venizelos' voting pool did not reflect a class cleavage so much as a geo-political one. The people of "old Greece" (a term denoting the extent of the Greek state before the beginning of its expansion with the Balkan Wars), generally more concerned with securing their power and fortune than extending it, were weary of the expansive plans of Venizelos and generally supported the more conservative King. Whereas the inhabitants of the "new lands", having less to lose, had a more positive disposition towards irredentist and opportunist campaigns. The division was also not in any way a typical left vs. right one, since Venizelos, although certainly a reformist and modernizer (and therefore in this sense the opposite of a conservative), was all the same a nationalist and certainly not a liberal in anything resembling the leftist meaning of the term.

The refugees were prime candidates for supporting Venizelos, especially since the Asia Minor debacle had skillfully been blamed on the royalist regime, culminating with the execution of five anti-*venizelist* politicians considered responsible for the defeat and condemned of high treason¹⁶. They also changed the geo-political alignments quite a bit, their settling all over the country diluting the line between "old Greece" and "new lands".

Eventually however the effect was much deeper and more unpredictable than simply strengthening the *Venizelist* camp (which it certainly did until the early 1930s). In 1930 Venizelos and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk signed the Ankara convention, agreeing, among other things, that Greece would forgo the compensation for the refugees' properties that was provided for by the Lausanne convention. This was the last straw for the already increasingly disillusioned refugees, who soon after started

¹⁶ This incident remains as one of the black pages in Venizelos' career and the country's political history, since those executed were certainly not the only ones responsible and the whole affair seems more like a convenient and very cruel way for the Venizelists to rid themselves of their own responsibilities (Vakalopoulos 2001).

deserting the *Venizelist* camp en masse. Up to that point, given the slight ideological differences between them, leaving the *Venizelist* camp most probably meant joining the royalist one and vice versa. At this point in Greek political history however, the disillusionment of the refugees opened up the door for a very different phenomenon: the emergence of the left.

The refugees had already formed something that Greece had practically lacked until then: a working class. Not only this, but it was a relatively progressive and open-minded working class to boot. Their education and former social standing and conscience meant that the refugees were much more open to radical ideas than their newly found countrymen. As a result of the disillusionment, coupled with a change in policy and strategy by the ΚΚΕ (*Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδος*, Communist Party of Greece), what was until then a rather marginal party started enjoying quite significant popularity among the refugees in the early to mid- 1930s.

Veremis (2003) argues that this is a pivotal point in Greek political history, claiming that this is the real *fin de siecle* for Greece, since it signifies the passing from the political system, understanding and clashes of the 19th century to more modern patterns of political categorization. This is the dawn of the bitter left-right division in Greek society that has been a recurring theme in the country's 20th century history. Taking on various shapes and experiencing ebbs and flows, this deep rift was especially prominent at times like the Greek civil war and the 1967-1974 junta, but has left its scars even on today's politics and society.

Although it can obviously not be claimed that all refugees suddenly became communists, the shift was remarkable enough that the refugees were branded as "reds" and mistrusted by right-wingers for decades to come, at least until the fall of

the junta in 1974¹⁷. During the various periods of more repressive rule during the 20th century (and these periods were not uncommon, even when the country was not directly governed by dictatorships) this suspicion, whether based on evidence or prejudice, meant that the refugee neighborhoods suffered especially much. This certainly did not make assimilation into Greek society any easier for them.

Another important factor is that for decades to come various issues concerning the refugees featured prominently in the domestic political agenda. Issues concerning ownership of land and buildings given to the refugees, compensation and all sorts of related issues concerning the refugees' everyday life remained relevant well into the 1970s, meaning that for the next half century or so anyone looking to win an election had to take the refugees' electoral power into careful consideration (Hirschon 2006).

To summarize, the arrival of about 300,000 refugee men of voting age in the early to mid 1920s immediately tipped the scales in favour of Eleftherios Venizelos. Considering the high percentage of children among the initial refugee population, who soon came into voting age, the relatively high birth rate of this population and the fact that they remained a relatively cohesive and socially isolated group (as we will analyze in the immediately following paragraphs), the electoral importance of the refugees did in no way diminish in the following decades. Therefore the problems specific to the refugees were an important part of Greek domestic politics for the greatest part of the 20th century.

At the same time, the refugees' disillusionment with Greek parliamentary politics and their fresh approach to political and social issues played an important part in changing the nature of the political game in Greece and ushering in the 20th century.

¹⁷ A very interesting phenomenon, of which I have seen little serious analysis, is that to this day many refugee areas of Athens and other parts of Greece remain leftist strongholds. This obviously in spite of the fact that the areas are no longer "refugee areas" as far the population is concerned and have in most cases improved significantly in terms of living standards.

Although there were obviously international factors involved in this transformation, it is quite probable that without the contribution of the refugees Greece would have been even later in making the shift from personality based, patron-client political relations of the past to more modern political patterns based more on ideology and class consciousness¹⁸.

At first glance there may have been very little to differentiate the Asia Minor refugees from the rest of the Greek nation; which, it must be added, was at that point hardly very homogenous to start with. They shared the Orthodox religion, which was the criterion by which they had been chosen for exchange, and which is a very important determinant of Greek national identity (Alexandris 2003). In certain groups of refugees language was an issue, since the focus on religion as a criterion for distinction disregarded language differences and there were populations of Greek Orthodox individuals who were less than competent in Greek, if not exclusively Turkish speaking¹⁹. However, this was not the majority, and most of the refugees were quite easy to assimilate as far as language was concerned. Most importantly however, the refugees were officially considered to be Greeks, already part of the nation, not a foreign element. They were therefore not in the same category as the Muslim, Slav, Bulgarian, Jewish, Albanian *et al.* minorities present in various parts of Greece²⁰.

¹⁸ That is not to say that personality cults, patron-client relations and all sorts of geographical divisions stopped being relevant; as anyone familiar with Greek politics knows, they are very much present even in today's political landscape. However, the change that took place at the time we are discussing was important enough to mark the beginning of a new era.

¹⁹ The exact same was true for the Muslims sent away from Greece. The most solid population of Greek speaking Muslims was probably the ones from Crete. In areas where these refugees were settled, mainly on the Aegean coast of Anatolia, one can still come across individuals who know some Greek, and with a very characteristic Cretan dialect to boot.

²⁰ For some examples of the treatment of other, not so easily assimilated, minorities in Greece see Margaritis 2005.

It may therefore come as a surprise to the casual observer that it took many decades before Greek society completely absorbed these newcomers and their offspring, who during this time lived more or less like outsiders. The fact is however that the Greeks of Asia Minor had been looked down upon by mainland Greeks for a long time. Even the soldiers that were sent to liberate them in the Asia Minor campaign, and sometimes the command and administration, were quite hostile towards their “unredeemed brothers” (Kostopoulos 2007). The reasons for this should probably be sought in the already mentioned attitudes of “old Greeks” towards those coming from the “new lands” and also the eventual feeling that they were risking their lives and fortunes to help these “foreigners” who were doing nothing in return. Especially after the disastrous turn of events, the ones for whose sake the war was supposedly fought were widely considered to be responsible for the catastrophe.

Things were not improved by the fact that the refugees swarmed into Greece, practically as beggars. The supply, housing, health and economic crises that ensued certainly did not make the locals any more sympathetic. The general feeling was that the Asia Minor Greeks had first caused the destruction of the Greek army and the death of so many thousands of Greek youths and had now come to bring about the downfall of the rest of Greece. To make matters even worse, the allocation of land to the refugee settlers in rural areas was extremely displeasing to local landowners, who had expected to benefit from the deportation of the Muslims and to locals who had already taken possession of former Muslim houses and properties without caring to ask for official permission. The commonly held view was that the refugees were stealing the land that rightfully belonged to the locals.

All this created bitter resentment between locals and newcomers and typical xenophobic reactions. Refugees were soon attributed with numerous maladies,

ranging from the rise of criminality and unemployment, to spreading diseases, to destruction of social fiber and moral standards. They also soon acquired numerous epithets, such as the deeply offensive to their religious beliefs “γιαουρτοβαπτισμένοι” (meaning “baptized in yoghurt”) and all sorts of other derogatory and vulgar terms.

The refugees on their side had their own accusations for the locals. The conditions that they encountered in their new homeland, often idealized in their imagination due to the national narratives prevalent at the time, were very far removed from what they had been lead to expect. As a matter of fact the living standards in Greece were much lower than the ones most of them had become accustomed to back home. In spite of their current predicament, the refugees soon started looking down upon the underdeveloped and uncultured locals. This feeling of contempt grew even stronger the following decades when, due to economic reasons and the civil war, a wave of internal migration brought many locals of the inland mountainous regions and remote rural areas to the cities- and more specifically to the underdeveloped urban neighbourhoods until then exclusively populated by refugees. These new arrivals were even less up to the refugees’ standards and caused great resentment. This gave rise to the common use of phrases like “κατέβηκε απ’τα βουνά” (“he/she has descended from the mountains”, implying rudeness, lack of sophistication and naivety) and the epithet “βλάχος” (denoting a hillbilly or redneck). It was also not long before the refugees started wearing the term “πρόσφυγας” as a badge of honour (Hirschon 2006).

One way or another, the refugees remained relatively secluded from the rest of Greek society. For decades the refugees were concentrated in the areas where they were originally settled and given housing (areas known as “προσφυγικά”). This may have been in part because of the insecurity regarding the ownership status of these

refugee houses, many fearing that moving elsewhere would cause them to lose their property. Regardless of this practical reason however, the fact is that the refugees had their own social network, almost closed to outsiders, with phenomena such as local refugee business networks and intermarriage between refugees being quite common (Hirschon 2006).

The refugees remained very attached to their “lost homelands” and to their traditions and tried in a way to transfer their old places of residence to their new ones, or at least replicate them as closely as possible. The most typical example of this is the naming of the areas they settled in, which were invariably given the name of their places of origin (or at least of the majority of those settled in a specific place), often with the prefix *Νέα/Νέος* (“new”) added. Greece is today strewn with such place names and any place beginning with the *Νέος/Νέα* is almost immediately recognized as a former refugee settlement.

Typically the naming of the area was coupled with the naming of the main church after the patron saint of their place of origin, often with some relic or icon salvaged from their original church as the centrepiece, providing a link with the past (Stelaku 2003). The refugees also kept “internal” distinctions according to their origin, in many cases tinged with localist tendencies even though they had been living in the same neighbourhood for decades (Hirschon 2006). All these traits remained almost undiminished in the following generations that were actually born in Greece.

The difference in cultural level between refugees and “old Greeks” was evident in many aspects of everyday life. Hirschon (2006) for instance, in her seminal fieldwork in the “*προσφυγικά*” of 1970s Peiraeus, notes how tidy and well kept these areas were, in spite of the terrible poverty and insufficiency of infrastructure and housing. With

flower pots everywhere, houses whitewashed and painted every year and housewives dusting the pavements daily, these areas that were almost ghettos were actually a great deal more sightly and organized than other better reputed ones.

In a similar vein, the refugees were known for their much greater care for personal hygiene, which in typical reactionary fashion was attributed to all sorts of sexual activities and moral shortcomings by the locals. The refugee women in particular, and especially those from Smyrna, were notorious for their alleged promiscuity. Once again this was mostly down to the locals' shock at the more progressive attitudes and behaviour of these people- in most cases of course this "promiscuous" behaviour did not amount to much more than looking after one's self and being sociable.

The fact is however that "Σμυρνιές" (Smyrna women) have remained proverbial to this day and it is not uncommon to hear older women in Greece complain about how the Σμυρνιές would "steal" their men with their seductive ways. The relevant epithets used for the refugee women are not hard to guess and range from "παστρικέζ" (literally "clean", but in this case with all sorts of negative connotations) to plain vulgar ones concerning their morality and sexuality. Another thing that has remained in Greek popular culture is how the refugees "taught us to cook". It is generally accepted that the refugees brought with them a much more elaborate tradition of cooking, especially concerning the use of spices.

One of the most profound influences the refugees had on Greek culture was the musical one. The Greeks of Asia Minor brought with them not only a great musical tradition, but also a good deal of musical talent and knowledge, since many were skilled musicians experienced in both eastern and western styles of music. No sooner had the refugees found themselves in this new country and situation than they started

expressing their troubles and hopes through music. Of course the new situation had its own effect on the music and the mixture of the Anatolian music with traditional rural music from Greece, pre-existing urban musical forms (especially the particular musical tradition of the slums and prisons), elements of western style music that was popular in Greece at the time and lyrical themes concerning the everyday life in the “προσφυγικά” brought about the birth of the *rebetiko* (Gauntlett 2003).

The *rebetiko* was originally an underground musical phenomenon of the urban slums, closely connected to a criminal sub-culture, but gradually grew in stature and recognition. Still relatively obscure until WWII and the occupation of Greece by the Axis forces, *rebetiko* burst into the mainstream in the post war years. Its popularity and the interest of record companies and nightclubs brought about a radical change in the character of the *rebetiko*, practically signifying the end of that culture and genre. Even as it was dying away though, the *rebetiko* transformed into what was to be known as *λαϊκό* (laiko, popular), which is until today (in various shapes and forms) the main form of popular entertainment, dominating the music scene and being what most foreigners would recognize as “Greek music”. The importance of the refugees in the formation of this aspect of Greek culture was therefore immense.

On another level, the Asia Minor catastrophe and the refugees had a great impact on modern Greek cultural output in general, as a topic of focus. The Asia Minor campaign, the events related to it, and the subsequent plight of the refugees, have become a mainstay of Greek literature, song and all sorts of artistic expression²¹. The interesting thing however is that the Asia Minor events and the *προσφυγιά* (a word denoting the condition of being a refugee, “refugeehood”) have not only inspired the

²¹ Many writers of Asia Minor origin have written enticing accounts of life there, the war and other relevant subjects. Among the most celebrated ones are Διδώ Σωτηρίου [Dido Sotiriou] and Ηλίας Βενέζης [Ilias Venezis].

refugee writers and artists themselves, but have had a more universal influence on Greek letters and arts. The result is that the “lost homelands” have attained a legendary status: Asia Minor has become something of a “lost Eden” or the “promised land”. The loss of this Eden and the decades of strife and tragic nostalgia that the refugees were subjected to, have in turn become the stuff of legend and also highly symbolical - as with most legends, however, what exactly it symbolizes depends on who is recounting and who is interpreting (Kehriotis 2008). So the disastrous (for Greek interests) Asia Minor campaign, which has come to be known as the Asia Minor Catastrophe, has been used as a symbol of the barbarism and hostility of the Turks in the nationalistic imaginary; of the imperialistic exploitation of the weak by the strong and the terrors of war in the leftist imaginary; by yet others it has been seen as the symbol of the eternal state of struggle and external attack that the Greek nation finds itself in and so on and so forth. Whatever its usage, the memory and the legend of the lost homelands, the Catastrophe and the *προσφυγιά* has permeated modern Greek culture, leaving an indelible mark.

Part III: The Refugee Teams

Overview

The immediate effect of the influx of Asia Minor refugees on Greek sport is undeniably noteworthy. It seems that for many of these refugees the resumption of their sporting activities was one their absolute priorities. Thus, literally only months after these people arrived ragged and destitute in an unfriendly environment, Greek sports started being almost dominated by the new arrivals. Many of them registered in existing Greek sports clubs and made their presence immediately felt in all sorts of sports. What is more striking however is the emergence of the refugee clubs themselves. Just a look at the dates on which the clubs that survive until today were founded makes it evident that most were created before the end of the 1920s, which means only a few years after the exchange of populations. If we take into account the fact that many of the stronger (and therefore longer lived) teams were actually the result of the merging of other, smaller, refugee teams of the same areas, it is not hard to see that the refugees started organizing themselves in sports clubs practically as soon as they set foot in their new homeland. A touching story, giving a good example of the devotion of certain refugees to sports is related by Notaris (2002):

One of the many mothers [who had lost track of their children due to the relocations], having found herself in some province, upon hearing that her lost son, an athlete of Απόλλων [Σμύρνης] (Apollon Smyrnis) at the time, had been sighted in Athens, thought that the safest place to find him would be in the gymnasiums and, writing to the various clubs here, did actually find him! (Notaris 2002: 74)

How many teams were actually formed is practically impossible to trace, mostly due to the numerous mergers between and splits within the clubs that have taken place through the years (but also due to lack of proper documentation of events, which is a problem one comes across all too often when researching these matters). As already mentioned, even from the first years, clubs would often join forces and groups would break away from the original teams just as frequently. In later days merges have continued.

A good example of how complicated the histories of the clubs and their relation to “*προσφυγιά*” is Ατρόμητος Αθηνών (Atromitos Athinon). The club was formed sometime in 1923- apparently not officially as a refugee club, but some of the key figures of its formation were certainly of Asia Minor origin. About a decade later the club moved to the suburb of Περιστερί (Peristeri), a typical refugee area, where it remains till today, and at the same time merged with the minor local team Νέος Αστήρ (Neos Astir), which was already the result of some splitting and merging. The team became relatively successful and acquired a strong local following; the many decades of representing a refugee neighbourhood eventually made people consider Atromitos a refugee team. While the club was struggling in the minor leagues during the 1990s, a new merger took place in 2005, this time with Χαλκηδόνα (Chalkidona), a club newly promoted to the top division. Keeping its symbols, home stadium and fan base, but the squad of Chalkidona, Atromitos has since successfully featured in the first division²². The point of this historical account is to show the complexity of affairs and demonstrate that one comes across many dilemmas when trying to categorize Greek clubs according to their relationship to the refugee past.

²² The information about the history of Atromitos is from the official Atromitos website <http://www.atromitosfc.gr/pae/istoria/>

Another important factor in this complicated story is the junta period, during which it was considered a good idea to force many of the smaller clubs in Greece to merge with bigger ones, supposedly to create stronger and more viable clubs and thus boost Greek sports. Throughout Greece, new clubs, without a real history and with very little support from the local community, sprang up, replacing the historical and beloved local clubs, among them many refugee clubs. When not forced to merge and therefore to cease to exist, many teams were forced to relinquish much of the talent in their squads to the clubs favoured by the regime and suffered economically. There is ample reason to assume that these tactics often had specific political criteria, with teams seen as representing “dangerous” social groups (e.g. teams believed to have leftist associations) being targeted for effective elimination.

Although these events lack official documentation for obvious reasons, they are well-known enough to cause bitter rivalries to this day and for certain clubs to be branded as “junta teams”, at least by their immediate rivals. Given the distrust of the authorities towards refugees (and towards any demonstration of an even slightly differing identity than the official one) refugee clubs were certainly not seen favourably, although once again this is rarely mentioned in official accounts of the history of the clubs or Greek football in general. An interesting allusion to the existence of such problems comes from Koukouloglou’s account of the formation of Εθνικός Κατερίνης (Ethnikos Katerinis), which is apparently a rather unusual case of a refugee club being founded half a century after the exchange of populations, in the predominantly Pontian populated area around the Katerini railway station:

Ethnikos was founded in 1973, under adverse, for the time and the regime, circumstances. The refugee’s will and yearning, to have the club named Αθλητική Ένωση Ποντίων [Pontian Sports Club], with the double-headed eagle as emblem and

yellow and black colours, was rejected by the junta. The founders' attempts did not succeed and following a lot of pressure and threats that the team would not be recognized, the name was chosen after the Greek Nation [Εθνικός means "National"]. As were the colours, blue and white. (Koukouloglou n.d.: 70)

As far as the actual formation of the clubs is concerned, most cases follow a very similar pattern; refugees registered at various clubs, together with various patrons of the same background, decide that they should not be scattered, but join forces to represent their homelands. Very soon many of these smaller refugee clubs merge to form more viable ones, but not changing the goal of representing their homelands and helping their refugee compatriots.

PAOK, for instance, whose official founding date is 1926, was already the product of various merges and break ups, mainly originating from AEK of Thessaloniki and the sports division of the Enosi Konstantinoupoliton²³. AEK Athens²⁴ on the other hand was formed in 1924 by athletes and sports lovers from Constantinople who had been relocated to Athens. Quite tellingly, the decision to form their own club was taken in the attic of one of the founders' sports shop (Notaris 2002). The express aim of the club was:

...the collection and gathering of athletes from Constantinople present in Athens and Peiraeus to continue the work of the various sports clubs in Constantinople, of which these athletes were active members, as well as the spreading of gymnastics and the sporting spirit in the youth, especially the youth from Constantinople, in order to

²³ More details about this in later chapters.

²⁴ At the time there were numerous clubs called AEK all over Greece and it was therefore necessary to define the hometown to distinguish between them. Today there is no such need since AEK Athens is the only famous one and commonly referred to simply as AEK. In this dissertation the term AEK shall mean AEK Athens unless otherwise defined.

shape robust bodies, brave souls and noble characters, fit to fulfill their every responsibility towards Fatherland, individuals, Society and Family, reinforcing in this way, in a spirit of noble rivalry and indissoluble National solidarity, the progress of the Nation. (Notaris 2002: 77)

The original statute of the club goes on to point out the ways in which it will pursue these goals, among which is:

... the attempt to spread athletics among the youth and the promotion of as many athletes as possible, fit to represent the Sports of Constantinople in the Greek stadia and the international ones alike. (Notaris 2002: 77)

This statement of purpose makes it abundantly clear that this is first and foremost a refugee club, aiming to represent and give a continuation to the sporting tradition of Constantinople. Apart from this we also see a quite specific understanding of sporting activity, of which we will say more later in this dissertation. It is an understanding of sports as much more than just a pastime, as a service to society and nation, the ultimate goal being national progress.

Examples of clubs that were formed in the mid 1920s and went through subsequent changes (great or small) abound. To mention only one of the less illustrious, but still quite well known cases, Νίκη Βόλου (Niki Volou), being formed in 1924 simply as Η Προσφυγική (“The Refugee Club”), adopted its current name in 1926²⁵. Niki Volou remains one of the teams of the Greek periphery with the most devoted following. It must also be noted that all clubs were not necessarily directly and outspokenly formed as refugee clubs, as AEK so obviously was as stated in its

²⁵ From the club’s official website <http://www.fcniki.gr/history.html>

statute, but became *de facto* refugee clubs through the association with refugee neighbourhoods. Atromitos has already been mentioned as never being expressly a refugee team, but being regarded as one in common perception due to its location in Peristeri. We will also later examine in some detail the case of Apollon Kalamarias, which through the years has become a specifically Pontian club because of the great concentration of Pontians in the area, although it started out differently.

Panionios and Apollon Smyrnis (*Απόλλων Σμύνης*) belong in their own category, since they existed before the Asia Minor catastrophe and were then relocated to Athens; they are therefore both officially called “Smyrnis” (of Smyrna/Izmir), indicating Smyrna as their hometown (although Apollon is often referred to as Apollon Athinon, meaning of Athens, to distinguish from the many clubs in Greece bearing the name Apollon). Both of them started officially functioning in Athens before the end of 1922, hardly a couple of months after the refugees were forced to leave Smyrna in panic.

In the history of Panionios, the figure of Δημήτριος Δάλλας (Dimitrios Dallas) stands out as one of the most prominent ones. Being the president of the club when the Asia Minor catastrophe occurred, he became the last president of Panionios in Smyrna, but also the first president of the club in Greece. In all accounts of this period’s history he is credited with keeping the flame of the club alive through the hardships. However, the details I found out about how he went about doing this are quite remarkable and demonstrate once again the aforementioned passion of the refugees to resume their sporting activities.

In a personal interview Mr. Πέτρος Λινάρδος (Petros Linardos), prominent sports journalist and historian and a close relative of the aforementioned Dimitrios Dallas,

related how the president (without a club at that point) acted to resume the club's activities:

No more than 3 days after he arrived in Athens, Dallas started roaming the refugee camps, megaphone in hand, calling for the athletes of Panionios to contact him. Thus the first nucleus of the reborn Panionios was formed. There was however the issue of where to train. Dallas had been a personal friend Νικόλαος Πλαστήρας (Nikolaos Plastiras)²⁶ since many years. Succeeding to arrange a meeting at the general's offices, Dallas was offered a relatively comfortable house in the Athenian suburbs instead of the usual refugee tent. Dallas kindly declined and asked that he be given a room or two in the dressing rooms of the Παναθηναϊκό Στάδιο (Panathinaiko Stadio, Pan-Athenian Stadium) for his family and himself and permission to use the facilities to train his athletes. Plastiras enquired from his secretary whether or not this was possible and was soon informed that it was not, since other refugee families already occupied the dressing rooms. Upon hearing this, Dallas insisted that they be moved to the luxurious house he had previously been offered so that he may move to the stadium. His wish was fulfilled, permission for training was granted, and Dallas and his family lived in the dressing rooms for about two years.

Also noteworthy is the fact that in the following years a number of important athletes from Constantinople, who under the provisions of the Lausanne treaty had been exempted from the exchange (or in some cases were playing abroad), proceeded to join Greek refugee clubs and move to Greece. A notable example is the legendary Kostas Negreponis who, having already made a name for himself in French football, joined AEK for the latter part of his career starting 1926²⁷ (Goumas *et.al.* n.d). Such

²⁶ Prominent general *cum* politician of the era, acting as head of government at various instances.

²⁷ Such transfers of Istanbul Greeks continued occasionally for decades to come.

moves indicate that the teams were more widely recognized as representatives of the now lost Constantinople sports tradition, and that some players considered them something like the next best thing to being able to play back home in their lost homelands.

One must also not overlook the salience of refugees in non-refugee clubs. Many clubs, although not formed by or representing refugee communities, greatly benefited from the presence of large refugee neighbourhoods in the vicinity of their own grounds, essentially using them as talent and support pools. Asia Minor Greeks were present in both the sporting and organizational aspects of many sports clubs during the first decades after the exchange of populations (and before that, for that matter²⁸). It is a fact that Greek sports start taking a more organized shape for the first time in the 1920s and 1930s, with the formation of the Greek Football Association and the regional and national leagues. Although the previous underdevelopment of Greek sports has a lot to do with the fact that sporting activities had been hindered during the previous tumultuous years by the Balkan wars and WWI, it would not be too far fetched to link the subsequent development not only to the relatively peaceful conditions, but also to the impetus offered by the refugees.

Many of the refugee teams made an immediate impact on Greek sports (and especially football), AEK and Apollon Smyrnis very soon establishing themselves in the higher positions and often competing for the title in the then “Athens League” rankings; PAOK fared similarly in the “Thessaloniki League”. They also made their presence felt in the subsequent National League competitions. This impact and success is quite remarkable considering the dire conditions the refugees found

²⁸ The emblem and colours of the greatly successful Panathinaikos which were chosen in 1918, before the exchange, were “borrowed” from the corresponding symbols of a Constantinople team for which one of the members of Panathinaikos used to play before he moved to Athens. For details see http://www.pao.gr/category.php?category_id=51

themselves in; all the more so given its immediacy. That the poor classes should take to sports and especially football is no big surprise; after all sports were considered as a way to alleviate the burdens of the less fortunate classes worldwide. That this band of war-stricken, destitute refugees, still literally living in tents, should make such an impact on the whole spectrum of Greek sports, within months already of their arrival, is a different, rather impressive affair.

The reasons for this must certainly be sought among those given earlier in this dissertation for the great effect the exchange of populations had on other aspects of Greek popular culture, politics and economy. As already explained, the Greek Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire, being generally better off economically and more cosmopolitan than the fledgling Greek state could allow its own inhabitants, were also more cultured, better organized and more open to novel ideas and practices. In this setting, sports activities and organization had generally had the chance to develop to a much greater extent than was the case in Greece (Notaris 2002).

As with many other things, the wealthy minorities seem to have pioneered and dominated sports in the Ottoman Empire. Of course the activity and organization was all the more prominent in Constantinople and Smyrna. Indeed it is related that the main rivals of the Greek sports clubs in these urban and cosmopolitan centres were the other minority clubs, Armenian and Jewish, and those formed by the (quite numerous) westerners residing in these cities for business reasons. However Linardos (1998) points out that the sporting activities of the Greek Orthodox communities

where not at all restricted to the big urban centres, but were on the contrary spread far and wide in the Ottoman realm, often in remote and obscure locations²⁹.

Furthermore, training and success in sports was by many in the Greek diaspora given a national/nationalistic and social significance, quite evident in the founding statute of AEK, as presented earlier in this section. In the words of Ηρακλής Βασιάδης (Iraklis Vasiadis) at the 1879 conference of Greek clubs in Athens, proper training was necessary:

...in order to imbue life and brave spirit in the scattered members of the Greek Nation and to prepare champions of Greek sport and strong arms to defend it in any location where it was suffering and persecuted... (Notaris 2002: 40)

Notaris (2002: 40) notes that while at the turn of the century important sports clubs in Greece were essentially no more than three (Πανελλήνιος [Panellinios], Παναχαϊκός [Panachaikos] and Εθνικός [Ethnikos], all founded in the early 1890s) there were numerous sports clubs in the Greek diaspora and they were constantly multiplying. He goes on to claim that between the 1890s and the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 approximately 40 Greek clubs were formed in Istanbul alone. Linardos (1998), pointing out the “clear and great” essence of Asia Minor athleticism as being “to buttress the troubled national spirit”, goes on to relate that in Smyrna, and under the direction of the president of Panionios, annual gymnast seminars were held (referred to as “gymnastics academies”). This is where those responsible for the sports activities in the less prosperous Greek communities of the area got their training. The aim was once again to spread the sporting and national

²⁹ For an overlook of Greek Orthodox associations and organizations (including sports and cultural clubs) in Asia Minor during this period see Mamoni & Istikopoulou 2006.

spirit among the entire Greek Orthodox population of the area and not just among the well-off urban dwellers. In the bigger cities there were also important regional tournaments organized, like the pan-Ionian games in Smyrna, the pan-Constantinople games, the Aeolian games and the pan- Euxinian games.

Asia Minor clubs and athletes took great pride both in competing and in excelling at mainland Greek sports tournaments and meetings. The success for instance of athletes from Smyrna at the “Zappian Olympics”³⁰ was seen as a great boost and a chance for publicity and promotion for the local community in Greece; similar significance was attached to the participation in international competitions, such as the first Olympics in 1896 (Linardos 1998; Mamoni& Istikopoulou 2006). It also appears that athletes of Panionios (then still located in Smyrna and not part of the Greek state) played for the - still unofficial by international standards - Greek national team at the beginning of the 20th century.

So to summarize, the refugees arriving in Greece in 1922 were much greater sport lovers than the average member of the existing population, and much more experienced at organizing and participating in all sorts of sporting activities. It can be assumed that as athletes they had, on average, better training and technique and that as patrons and organizers they had greater prowess and acumen.

It is not difficult to imagine how the tragedy they had lived through and the new, not necessarily friendly, environment they found themselves in gave the refugees’ understanding of sporting activity a whole new urgency and poignancy. Suddenly there was all the more reason to prove their worth and ability, to reaffirm their position in the nation and to keep their cultural coherence, identity and create a social

³⁰ A series of sports events, meant as a revival of the ancient Olympics, predating the official revival in 1896 by a few decades. They were sponsored by wealthy Greek Ευάγγελος Ζάππας (Evangelos Zappas), and therefore known as the Zappian Olympics.

fabric. What's more, the new conditions also meant new motives, inasmuch as the youth were now malnourished, in bad health and the parents were often unable to offer proper attention, let alone education. The importance of healthy exercise, moral guidance and a way to keep the young ones busy with something far away from bad habits was great. Last, but not least, the various associations formed, among them the sports clubs, were a good way to keep the memory, traditions and culture of the lost homelands alive.

As was common practice at the time, most of the original clubs were closely linked to (often no more than another branch of) cultural organizations with wider activities and interests. Most commonly these would include musical, philological, artistic and "excursive" divisions. Quite telling are the common choices for names of the organizations at the time (not only in refugee communities), with names such as Απόλλων (Apollo), the ancient Greek god of art and education, and Ορφεύς (Orpheus), the legendary ancient musician, being some of the most common ones. Other clubs bore names such as Προοδευτική (Proodeftiki, "progressive"), Αναγέννηση (Anagenisi, "regeneration"/ "renaissance") etc.

Quite often football, being a novel introduction to the sports cannon, was looked down upon and given much less importance than classic athletics; this was even the reason for some of the splits in the clubs, with members who wanted to take up football more seriously leaving the original clubs because they were not given the necessary support. There were also cases, like that of Apollon Kalamarias, where the musical or artistic divisions of the club were in the early years at least as famous as the sporting divisions, if not more. Typically, however, members of one division would be active in others too, and the organizers of the divisions would be closely linked, if not actually the same persons.

This whole situation reflects the prevalent idea at the time of the role of sports being complimentary to that of other forms of education, taking the motto “*mens sana in corpore sano*” quite literally. However, it also reveals the important function these organizations performed within the refugee communities. The non-sporting activities of the clubs entailed not only education in the relevant fields, but also public events, such as balls, concerts, literary evenings etc, often in cooperation with the local authorities or other organizations. At the same time there would be organization of or participation in fundraising and other charity events, usually for the needs of institutions or individuals of the local community. To give only a few examples, from the history of Panionios, we find the following in local papers:

According to the count of the proceeds which was conducted [...], a total of 557,000 drachmas was received and offered for the needs of the Nea Smyrni Child Care Centre [...]. Ladies [...], under a banner [...] prompting fans to leave in the provided box as much as each could spare, offered their services for this cause. Of the total, 100,000 drachmas were donated by the President of Panionios G.S.S. Demetrios Karabatis, 100,000 each by his wife Klairi D. Karabati and Ch. Laskaridis and also 50,000 each by Maroulidis (in useful for the Child Care Centre goods), S. Malamis and smaller sums by others. (Pantazis 1957b: 79)

At an even later date, during WWII, we see another indication of the very close relationship between club and athletes:

With the care of its presidential board, “P.G.S.S.” has within a week (the third of December 1940) sent out 52 packages to an equal number of its regular athletes serving at the front since the beginning of the war. (Pantazis 1957a)

As stated before, this sort of action within the community and relationship with its members was not the prerogative of the refugee clubs; the point however is that, if this was an important thing in society in general, the issue must have been all the more significant in the poor and culturally distinct communities of the refugees, both practically and morally/psychologically. This all makes for a very dedicated local following, which in turn accounts for the clubs' lasting presence, despite the unfavourable treatment by the authorities and the lack of adequate funds. These clubs survived and battled on, because for decades they have been a very important element of the social fabric in the refugee areas. As a Panionios fan pointed out to me, in order to indicate the importance of the club even in today's local society: "On national holidays in Nea Smyrni, the only ones who march before the athletes of Panionios at the parades are the war veterans"- even with a tinge of exaggeration, this statement is a clear indication of the position of the club in the local hierarchy.

The history of the teams: P.A.O.K., Panionios, Apollon

The roots of P.A.O.K. can be traced back to 1924 when the Ένωσις Κωνσταντινουπολιτών (Enosis Konstantinoupoliton) was formed in Thessaloniki. Although the organization was originally of philological and “sociological” (in the founders’ own words, most probably meaning community service of various sorts) character, the founding of a sports division was already provided for in the original statute. This potential was fulfilled the next year, 1925, when the sports division of the EK was formed. The new team immediately attracted the attention of refugee players who were playing in other teams of the city and the mass departure of players to join the EK caused quite a bit of resentment on the part of the already established teams; some see the roots of the bitter rivalry between PAOK and other Thessaloniki teams (especially arch rivals Aris) in this incident. Rivalries aside, EK managed to form a formidable team and had the honour of becoming the first Thessaloniki team to play in Athens, invited by Panathinaikos in December 1925.

At the same time as things on the pitch seemed promising, things on the organizational front were more difficult. Soon after the formation of the sports division, disagreements and behind-the-scene rivalries between the leadership of the sports division and the mother organization lead to a serious rift. In December 1925 a breakaway group formed an independent team named AEK Thessalonikis (the name Αθλητική Ένωσις Κωνσταντινουπολιτών [Athlitiki Enosis Konstantinoupoliton] deliberately resembling the original EK), and attracting most of the members of the successful football team. However, things got even more complicated when, in a 1926

election, power within AEK Thessalonikis was practically usurped by a pro- EK fraction. The result was that there was a further split, leading to the formation of PAOK.

Once more, most of the talent in the football team moved on to PAOK. AEK was successful in other sports, but football was already becoming the most popular sport and was therefore generating the greatest income; AEK found it hard to cope economically without being able to mount a serious football challenge. After 3 years of existing side by side, the icy relationship between the two clubs had thawed enough for them to join forces.

PAOK and AEK Thessalonikis merged in 1929, keeping the name and football squad of PAOK, while AEK contributed the rest of the sports divisions plus a privately owned training ground, a very important and hard to come by asset at the time. The new team also adopted the Byzantine double-headed eagle as its emblem (the double-headed eagle had been the symbol of AEK Thessaloniki, whereas PAOK's emblem had been made up of a four-leaf clover and a horseshoe). Besides offering the stability necessary for organizational and sporting success, the merger meant that the refugees from Constantinople finally had a common point of reference in Thessaloniki. Initially the team became hugely popular with the refugees, but eventually achieved much wider appeal, becoming the most popular team in Northern Greece and one of the most popular in the whole country.

On the pitch, the newcomers made their presence felt almost immediately. As early as the 1928- '29 season, a mere three years after the original formation of the EK sporting division, the break-away PAOK was able to mount a title challenge in the

Thessaloniki league³¹. PAOK and reigning champions Άρης (Aris) both finished the season unbeaten, with their only draws being against each other. Aris eventually won the league after a double-match playoff (1-1 and 4-3 to Aris), but such an impressive performance is certainly testament to the talent and dedication of the refugee athletes, which we have referred to extensively in earlier parts of this dissertation. In the following years PAOK firmly established themselves as one of the most popular and successful teams in Thessaloniki, alongside the traditional powers Aris and Ηρακλής (Iraklis).

Throughout its history the club has faced various ups and downs, the downs being mostly attributable to economic difficulties. Nevertheless, PAOK has permanently featured in the First Division of Thessaloniki (originally) and the First National Division, never dropping to the Second division. Having won the Thessaloniki league several times, PAOK went on to win the Greek Championship twice (1976, 1985) and the Greek Cup four times (1972, 1974, 2001, 2003). The 2007-2008 season has been relatively unsuccessful, finding the team in 9th place, only 6 points above the relegation zone.

PAOK also features various sporting divisions, ranging from athletics to water sports and a quite successful basketball team. The home stadium of the football team is Τοΰμπα (Tumba) stadium, in the eponymous area of Thessaloniki, where the team moved from their previous home grounds, in the area Συντριβάνι (Syndrivani), in 1959. The emblem of the team is the Byzantine double-headed eagle. Although this symbol is a very ancient and wide spread one, and has been used by many civilizations, countries, noble families etc, before and after the Byzantine Empire, in the Greek context the double-headed eagle is associated with Byzantium, its rulers

³¹ Attempts to create a National League only started being made a few years later. It would be the 50s before the National League was permanently established.

and its capital, Constantinople. The double-headed eagle is used by many bodies and organizations in Greece, such as the Greek Orthodox Church and AEK Athens. However, P.A.O.K. uses a very interesting variation; contrary to common usage of the symbol, in this case the eagle is presented without the imperial regalia: a sword in one claw and orb in the other, and a crown on each head. At the same time the wings of the eagle of P.A.O.K. are folded, not spread as is the custom (Appendix, image 1). The colours of the team are white and black, usually in stripes.³²

Panionios is the oldest team in the First Division today and undoubtedly one of the most historical sports clubs in Greece. The club officially celebrates its founding date as being 1890, although technically the name Panionios did not appear until 1898. 1890 is the year when a group of Smyrna youths founded Orpheus, a mainly cultural association that specialized in music, and also included sports activities in its agenda. Three years later the club underwent one of the splits typical of this period: a group of members, who wanted to focus more on sports, broke away and formed the Gymnasium. The Gymnasium, exclusively a sports club, was very active and soon became popular. Its greatest success seems to have been the organization of a very well received sports competition in 1896, and again in 1898. Although officially the event was simply called “public games”, the local press soon took to calling them Pan- Ionian games, which eventually became their official name.

In spite of the disagreement and subsequent split, Orpheus and the Gymnasium seem to have retained relatively friendly relations. In 1898, after Orpheus’ participation in the games organized by the Gymnasium, the two clubs decided to once again join forces. The result of the merger was Πανιώνιος Γυμναστικός

³² The information about the history of P.A.O.K. is from *Πανθεσσαλονίκιος Αθλητικός Όμιλος Κωνσταντινουπολιτών* [Panthessalonikios Athlitikos Omilos Konstantinoupoliton] (Anonymous 2005)

Σύλλογος Σμύρνης (Panionios Gymnastikos Syllogos Smyrnis, meaning Pan-Ionian Sports Association of Smyrna; P.G.S.S. or simply Panionios for short), named after the eponymous games. Panionios became a mainstay of sports and cultural life of Smyrna (the other important pole being Apollon Smyrnis, mentioned earlier in this dissertation), the crowning jewel of which became the Panionian games, which were held regularly until the time of the Asia Minor campaign and gained great renown.

How Panionios' presence in Smyrna was ended and how its activities were resumed in Athens need not be repeated. Soon after the club's re-establishment, Panionios made its presence felt in the Athens League, was always present at the national competitions and was a natural addition to the subsequent National League. Panionios have never won the Greek Championship in football, but have won the Cup in 1979 and 1998. The black spot on an otherwise consistent presence in the top flight is a short tenure in the Second Division during the 1980s. Actually, in the 1980s and early 1990s, Panionios faced great difficulties both on and off the pitch. However, recent years have seen the rebirth of the football club. The 2007- 2008 season has seen Panionios finish 5th in the table, earning a place in the UEFA Cup qualifiers.

It must also not be ignored that Panionios is notable for the variety of its sporting activities. The original focus was not on football, but on classical sports, and Panionios continued excelling in these after the move to Greece. Already at the turn of the century, before the move to Greece, Panionios hosted fourteen different divisions, including athletics, gymnastics, football, swimming, rowing, fencing, shooting, cycling and (quite impressively for the time) volleyball, plus the cultural divisions. Later Panionios became one of the first clubs in Greece to form a pioneering basketball team and also became the first club in Greece to form an

athletics division for women, in 1925. This demonstrates how developed was the sporting spirit and how progressive the ideas of the Smyrna athletes.

Νέα Σμύρνη (Nea Smyrni) stadium, in the Athens area of the same name, is the home of Panionios football team. Panionios has been based in Nea Smyrni ever since it moved from the dressing rooms of the Panathinaiko stadium, although the stadium has not always been at the exact same location within the area. The colours of Panionios are red and blue and the emblem is a shield of the same colours, bearing the name of the club and the official founding date, 1890 (Appendix, image 3).³³

The story of the founding of Apollon Kalamarias is quite straightforward, without the extensive splits and merges of other teams. Apollon was founded in 1926 in the neighbourhood of Kalamaria, an archetypal refugee suburb of Thessaloniki, where the club is based to this day. As with so many other cases, the club was originally a cultural association aiming to offer service to the community. As the first president of Apollon put it during one of the original meetings: “instead of wandering hither and thither aimlessly and without direction, the founding of such an association would exclusively be in our interest” (Anonymous 2006: 19). Apollon featured various activities and organizations, including a theatre group and a library, and was especially renowned for the “*mandolinata*”, the musical group of the club.

The sporting division was a football- oriented one from the beginning. The football team first took part in the local championship in 1928, starting from the Third Division. For the remainder of the pre-war period Apollon struggled between the first

³³ Information concerning the founding of Panionios is from *Η Σμύρνη του Πανιονίου* [I Smyrni Tou Panioniou] (Linardos 1998). The statistical data are from the Panionios website <http://www.panionios.gr/default.asp?pid=127&la=1>

and second divisions of the Thessaloniki League. Nonetheless, Apollon attracted a dedicated following among the people of Kalamaria and gradually absorbed most of the smaller clubs of the area. The golden age for Apollon Kalamarias was the '50s, during which the team established itself in the First Division of the local league, eventually winning it in 1958. Apollon was among the teams to be chosen for the newly established National Division in 1959.

Apollon has since then featured off and on in the First Division, the 90s and early 2000s being a troubled period however, seeing the team in the Second division more often than not. In the 2007-2008 season Apollon Kalamarias finished at the bottom of the table of the First Division and failed to avoid relegation in spite of a good run in the second half of the season. Thus a three-year stint in the First Division came to an end. The club is also represented in most popular sports.

A very interesting feature of the history of the team has to do with its Pontian identity. Apollon Kalamarias is today considered a club representing the Pontian refugees and their culture (as P.A.O.K. represents the refugees from Constantinople and Panionios those from Smyrna). However, a closer look at the club's history reveals that it was originally formed by Constantinople refugees, and that the Pontian identity was a later development, mostly the result of association with the Pontian element of Kalamaria (Anonymous 2006: 20). This will be discussed in greater detail later.

The colours of the club are red and black, usually striped. The emblem shows the ancient Greek god Apollo, the namesake of the club (Appendix, image 2). Apollo was one of the most important Olympian gods of ancient Greek mythology. Mainly connected with light and remembered as the sun-god, he was a multi-faceted symbol. His use in the context of Apollon Kalamarias (and the many other clubs around

Greece called Apollon) has to do with his function as god of music, literature and art- a clear indication of the club's original leaning towards cultural activities.³⁴

³⁴ The historical data about Apollon Kalamarias come from *Μια Ζωή Απόλλων* [Μια Ζοι Apollon] (Anonymous 2006)

Official representation: The websites

This section is a reflection on the way the clubs under consideration publicly present their current role and their history. In other words, I aim to trace the self-image presented by the official discourse of the refugee clubs. I will start by taking a look at the most public and easily accessible showcase of a modern club, their official websites.

The most immediately striking (in the context of this dissertation) website is that of P.A.O.K.³⁵ The introductory page features a collage of three different images: an aerial photograph of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, a black- and- white picture of P.A.O.K. fans of a past era (my guess would be the 50s or 60s) and a young child with his face painted in P.A.O.K. colours. Superimposed we find the slogan “P.A.O.K. above all”. This introduction certainly sets a very specific mood. The symbolism is not hard to decipher: a journey from the roots (symbolized by the imposing and, as we will soon see, ever- present Hagia Sophia), through the hardships and poverty of the more recent past, to the bright future of the new generation. Historical roots, resilience, continuity, determination and hope in one picture.

To a large percentage of Greeks, this collage can also immediately cause painful emotions. The Hagia Sophia is a very potent symbol to the Greek psyche and more often than not stimulates thoughts of the loss of past glory in general and Constantinople in particular. Combining it with the black- and- white picture next to it, one can easily get to thinking of the refugees and their plight.

³⁵ <http://www.paokfc.gr/>

The other two sites do not have an introductory page, but link directly to the homepage. The homepage of P.A.O.K. contains little reference to the club's history or refugee identity- if one discounts the club's emblem, the double-headed eagle, that is sprawled all over the background. The double-headed eagle is another symbol that to a Greek does not need explanation; like the Hagia Sophia, it immediately spells "Constantinople". Therefore, wherever P.A.O.K.'s emblem is shown, the point is made, which was probably the aim of those who adopted it in the 20s.

The homepage of Panionios³⁶ is even more discreet. Not only is there no direct reference made to the refugee subject, but the Panionios emblem lacks the immediate connotations of that of P.A.O.K. There are only two hints present. The more obvious one is the full name of the club in relatively big letters at the top of the page: "Πανιώνιος Γυμναστικός Σύλλογος Σμύρνης"; however no special emphasis is given to the word Smyrna so as to attract the untrained eye. Next to this is the second hint, the emblem used by the club during its Smyrna days, which has in very recent years been reinstated along the more familiar one adopted after the move to Greece (Appendix, image 6). This is a very subtle reference indeed, since the emblem is rather obscure and its meaning virtually unknown to those not involved with the club. Personally I would have made nothing of it had I not first been informed through my research.

The homepage of Apollon Kalamarias³⁷ is the most unequivocal of the three. On the right-hand side one sees the banners of various official sponsors, but the banners on the left are quite different. They include: a banner bearing the Pontian Eagle³⁸

³⁶ <http://www.panionios.gr/>

³⁷ <http://www.apollonkalamariasfc.gr/>

³⁸ The Pontian Eagle (not to be confused with the Byzantine double-headed eagle mostly associated with Constantinople) is considered the symbol of Pontian Hellenism. A more detailed reference to this symbol is included later in this dissertation.

(Appendix, image 5), that links to a special page of the Apollon site dedicated to the Pontian genocide³⁹ and its commemoration day, 19 May; a link to the “Pontian Hellenism Office” (more about this organization later); a “modernized” version of the Pontian Eagle linking to “Pontian Eagles S.C.” (the link was dead, so I could not get further information on this); a link to the website of Radio “Akrites”, the radio station of the Stavroupoli Pontian Association; and a (dead) link to the periodical “Pontian Vision”. The Apollon-Pontus connection can scarcely go unnoticed even by the most unsuspecting visitor of the site.

To my point of view, the presence of these links (especially on the very first page of the website) show that Apollon Kalmarias wants something more than just to honour the club’s heritage. They indicate a will to be a representative, a showcase and a forum of the Pontian community.

³⁹ In 1994 the Greek state officially recognized the genocide of the Pontian Greeks by the Ottomans/Turks and established 19 May as official remembrance day. In 1998 the Greek Parliament established 14 September as the remembrance day of another, separate genocide, that of the Greeks of the rest of Asia Minor. In view of the account I have given of the events in Asia Minor (although I did not refer separately to the Pontus), I clearly consider the terming of them as “genocide” to be an exaggeration to say the least, although I do certainly not deny there were widespread killings and ill-treatment. I am of course in no position to give an expert opinion on whether or not the events fulfill the (considerably vague and all-encompassing) UN criteria of “genocide”.

“Official” history of the clubs

Things really become clear when one proceeds to the “club history” section of the websites. I consider these “official” versions of the clubs’ history to be extremely important and will give them extensive consideration. Besides being indicative of what the clubs believe of themselves and want others to believe, these narratives are also very important in shaping opinion, since they are the source most likely to be referred to by the individual casually interested in the subject- in other words the vast majority of the general public, fans of the teams in question or not.

The narrative of P.A.O.K.’s history page⁴⁰ starts by establishing its roots in Istanbul. Since I consider this part extremely important I shall quote the first paragraph almost in its entirety⁴¹:

P.A.O.K. is the historical continuation of the Constantinople sports and cultural Club “Hermes”, which was formed by “*Ρωμιοί*” of the City in 1875, in the heart of Constantinople- Peran. The need of the “*Ρωμιοί*” to express and bolster their Hellenism inside Turkey led them to form the club in question. In 1923, after the Asia Minor catastrophe and the dramatic “*προσφυγιά*” of the “*Ρωμιοί*” of Ionia- but also of the whole of Turkey- the “*Ρωμιοί*” of the City renamed their Club from Hermes to Peraclub, according to the new Constitution instituted by Kemal (sic). In spite of the blow to Hellenism- which is forced to take the road of “*προσφυγιά*”

⁴⁰ <http://www.paokfc.gr/history.jsp;jsessionid=C270BF5AD65308BBB2DAAE7D786EDFB1>

⁴¹ Some explanations on Greek terms used in this quotation: the word “*Ρωμιός*” (Romios) is- almost- a synonym for “Greek”, although usually emphasizing Byzantine Greeks and even more so Greeks under Ottoman/Turkish rule. “*Ρωμιοσύνη*” (Romiosini) is synonym for Hellenism, with the same emphasis. “The City” always refers to Constantinople/Istanbul. The meaning of “*προσφυγιά*” has been explained earlier.

abandoning their ancestral cradles- Peraclub fights its battles and wins them as long as there are “*Ρωμιοί*” in the City. It sweeps the Cups, proving that although a minority, the “*ρωμιοί*” continue to have a strong presence in the sporting sector. However this does not last long and most of them are forced to leave [...]. They settle down in Thessaloniki and in the year 1926 they found the Πανθεσσαλονίκιο Αθλητικό Όμιλο Κωνσταντινουπολιτών (P.A.O.K.), retaining the symbols of the puissant “*Ρωμιοσύνη*”- the Byzantine Double- Headed Eagle- but as their colours they chose the mournful black (to symbolize the tragic story of “*Ρωμιοσύνη*”) but also the optimistic white which was to open up a window into the future for them- and would symbolize the battles for their future and the victories they were to achieve. This history essentially establishes it as one of the most ancient sports clubs with a heavy historical stock.

This is followed by some details about the first steps of the club (the members of the first board, the date the club was officially recorded in the Greek FA’s lists etc.). The next interesting (to us) bit is concerned with the merger between P.A.O.K. and A.E.K. Thessalonikis. After giving a rather brief account of the events (and omitting the more “embarrassing” parts of the internal struggle), the site gives us the following piece of information:

After the merger with AEK, in 1929, PAOK also changes emblem. The new emblem was the Eagle- which remains until today- and symbolizes the origins of the club and the return of memory (*sic*) to the roots and heritage of the refugees (Byzantium and Constantinople). The Eagle held a sword and a crown, the two heads gazing at East and West. The difference of the emblem from that of AEK- which is

also the symbol of the East Orthodox Church- is that PAOK's has its wings closed, in protracted mourning over the uprooting from the fatherland.

In spite of the slightly confused narrative (I can't help but pointing out that the Eagle did in fact *wear* a crown and *hold* an orb as well as a sword), the point here is abundantly clear: the emblem of P.A.O.K. not only symbolizes Byzantium and Constantinople, the roots of the club, but through its lack of regal adornment and proud posture, it also constantly reminds of the loss thereof. The imperial eagle dethroned. At the same time the colours of the club complete the scenery: black for the tragic end of the former life and white for the hopeful new beginning.

These interpretations of the emblem and colours of P.A.O.K. are relatively well known to the public. At this point however, I must express certain reservations as to all this deep symbolism, or at least as to how far back these interpretations really go. My main reservation has to do with the significance of the colours. It is a plain fact to anyone who has read a bit of Greek football history, that at the time of the formation of the refugee teams (times of great poverty, especially for the refugees, let us not forget) and for decades to come, sports equipment in general and team outfits in particular were hard to come by and much sought-after. It was therefore not unusual that teams, the existence of a general colour-scheme notwithstanding, would change the outfit according to the kit that they happened to get their hands on.

Having this in mind, it is with great interest that one reads the following in the book about the history of Apollon Kalamarias:

The meetings between the two refugee teams took place regularly. PAOK on one hand in plain lilac colours and Apollon on the other in the black and white striped jerseys. [...]

We learned in Kalamaria that mr. Kalpaktsoglou [president of PAOK and native of Constantinople], asked mr. Savvaidis [president of Apollon] to be given the colours of Apollon, the black and white jersey that is, because [established Peiraus team] Olympiakos wore striped jerseys and he wanted PAOK to have black and white striped jerseys too.

The next day, mr. Savvaidis announced the event to the board, but promised at the same time to offer 15 outfits to the club, in purple colour, plain jerseys, with black shorts and black leather football boots. Two days later, Apollon was wearing complete outfits in purple colour. [...] PAOK also appeared with the black and white jerseys, but with white shorts. (Anonymous 2006: 23)

Although this comes from a source close to Apollon⁴², rather than P.A.O.K., I find this version (or something in this vein) more probable than the deliberate choice of colours to represent mourning and hope. In other words, I propose that the interpretation of the colours is rather a retrospective one than an intentional act of the founders of the club. From the material available to me, it is difficult to confirm or to disprove the aforementioned story mainly due to the fact that the pictures are black and white. However, the variety and dissimilarity of various P.A.O.K. outfits is, as expected, perfectly evident from the pictures published in Anonymous 2005 (Appendix, images 10-12). On the other hand, pictures of Apollon outfits of the time seem to lend credence to the story, as we will see later

However, the pictures in the Thessaloniki Historical Centre publication are very enlightening on the subject of the double-headed eagle on the P.A.O.K. emblem. It is plain to see that at least as late as the mid- 50s (Appendix, images 13-15) the eagle has its wings clearly spread, although the existence or not of sword, crown and orb is

⁴² This quote will once again be discussed in the Apollon context a bit later.

practically impossible to determine. The modern variant seems to appear first in the 50s (Appendix, image 17), but does not displace the more “proud” eagle for decades to come. In a very clear and telling photo (Appendix, image 16), P.A.O.K. captain Γιώργος Κούδας (Giorgos Koudas) offers an official P.A.O.K. banner to an opponent captain during an international friendly match in 1973; the banner bears a very traditional eagle, in full regalia and with wings in full stretch, and Koudas clearly wears the same emblem on his jersey.

In this case I believe it to be obvious that the “mourning” eagle is rather a modern adoption. The early emblem seems to be very close to the common depiction (certainly as far as the wings are concerned) and I daresay the founders of the club did not seem to have the interpretation presented by modern P.A.O.K. in mind. Having said this, I do not doubt that the adoption of the current version (whenever this adoption officially took place) may very well have been aiming at this symbolism. The difference is too striking to have been the product of chance. However it hardly seems to have happened “after the merger with AEK” as the text states.

The other point that I find noteworthy in this narrative is the eagerness to present P.A.O.K. as the continuation of a Constantinople sports club. It is a commonly held truth among P.A.O.K. fans that Pera Club (which is identified with today’s Beyoglu Spor) is the “parent” club of P.A.O.K. Although I do not challenge the fact that many of the original members of P.A.O.K. had also been members of Hermes/Pera Club, and that there exists therefore a definite connection, I think this falls a little short of being an official continuation. After all, there may have been many former members of Hermes, but there were also former players of Ηρακλής Ταταύλων (Herakles Tataulon) and other clubs (Anonymous 2005). P.A.O.K. was certainly a continuation of Constantinople sporting life in general, and had close ties to Pera Club, but

describing it as “a historical continuation” (in the sense that Panionios and Apollon Smyrnis were continuations of their Smyrna counterparts, for instance) seems to me slightly over-enthusiastic.

Nonetheless, as mentioned in the introduction, what really matters in this case is the self- conception of members and fans of the club. It matters little if the founders had thought of black and white as symbolizing grief and hope, if today those attached to the club believe them to do so. So to those involved today, the emblem and colours of P.A.O.K. are definitely assumed to hold profound meanings, and P.A.O.K. more or less officially (as we will see even more clearly later on) recognizes Pera Club as its direct ancestor.

The general conclusion is that the official version of P.A.O.K.’s history looks to emphasize its refugee identity and especially the continuity from Constantinople to Thessaloniki. There’s also a great deal of emphasis on the struggles of Hellenism even before the expulsion from the homelands and on the role of Hermes (and by association of those involved in P.A.O.K.) in supporting those struggles and being a form of expression of the local Greek Orthodox community. It looks to establish P.A.O.K.’s credentials as a historically important club, not only in the sports context, but mainly socially and nationally.

There are many similarities between the presentations of the histories of Apollon and P.A.O.K., although we shall also discuss the differences. The Apollon narrative⁴³ starts off with the foundation of the club in 1926 as a musical association, under the official title “Musical- educational association Apollon Kalamarias”, as a way for the

⁴³ <http://www.apollonkalamariasfc.gr/pae/80historia.htm>

refugees to escape hunger and poverty. The very next paragraph is dedicated to Apollon's colours:

Red symbolizes the blood of the thousands of refugees who lost their lives in Pontus. Black symbolizes mourning. The eternal mourning for the uprooting, for the fatherlands and the many lives that were lost. Thus, from the beginning of the founding of the club in Kalamaria, "red and black" was established as the official sports outfit of Apollon.

The next couple of paragraphs concern the members of the first board of Apollon, the dates when the club was first recorded in the official lists etc. Then follows the paragraph explaining the meaning of the club's emblem, the god Apollo:

"Musical- educational association Apollon Kalamarias" means first and foremost "*προσφυγιά*", uprooting and hope for return to the lost fatherlands. But it also means art, culture, [...] spiritual culture. What more suitable for an emblem of this club, then, than the god of music, Apollo. His calm, smiling, noble and angelic look, reflects the desire of the Pontians to create a club "in the image and likeness" of the legendary god's attributes. Let us not forget that the Pontian race is renowned for its rich musical tradition since ancient times, so the choice of Apollo, who with his lyre soothed the souls of all those who had witnessed the nightmare of uprooting, was not random [...].

The rest of the historical page of Apollon's website is made up of a long list of landmarks and trivia concerning the team's sports achievements. It includes such facts

as “first hat-trick”, “first victory outside Thessaloniki”, “100th goal in the first division”, “first foreign goalkeeper” etc etc.

The mood set through the symbolism and the narrative is very much reminiscent of that of the P.A.O.K. page. The similarity is even more striking when it comes to the interpretation of the colours. Only here the even more impressive red of blood, anger and despair replaces the hopeful white. My remarks here are exactly the same as in the P.A.O.K. case. The account of the exchange of colours with P.A.O.K. sounds even more relevant in this case, since it comes from an Apollon source. And it is quite evident from the pictures in Historical Archive of Refugee Hellenism of Kalmaria Municipality publication (Anonymous 2006) that in the early years the Apollon jerseys feature white stripes (Appendix, images 7 & 8), and that jerseys positively identifiable (as much as possible on a black and white picture) as red and black appear around 1928-29 (Appendix, image 9). Therefore the statement that black and red were adopted from the very beginning due to their symbolism seems inaccurate.

However, what is most impressive in this account is that the fact that Apollon was originally not a Pontian refugee club, or at least primarily one, is bypassed. Although the founding members were mostly of Constantinople origin, all the symbolism is attributed to Pontus and the Pontians. It is “the blood of the thousands of refugees who lost their lives in Pontus” that is symbolized by the red colour, not just any refugee blood. It is the desire of the Pontians that is reflected in Apollo’s eyes and it is the Pontian people’s traits that are associated with his attributes. These are all obviously anachronisms.

The way the identity of Apollon shifted sometime in the early years is very interesting. Apparently it was purely by association and a natural process of assimilation by the majority that this happened. The founders and first members may

have been from “the City”, but the vast majority of the residents of Kalamaria where from Pontus, and eventually they became the majority in Apollon too. Seeing as there was a lack of another club to express Pontian identity in the area, Apollon eventually took up that role.

The re-interpretation of the club’s history shows how much the Pontian identity has come to prevail in Apollon, and how eager the club is to accept and advertise this. The statement that “Apollon Kalamarias means first and foremost “*προσφυγιά*”, uprooting and hope for return to the lost fatherlands” is a strong one; and it fits very well with the impression left by the homepage of the site and the Pontus related links provided there.

There is a marked difference in tone between the historical representations of P.A.O.K. and Apollon on one hand, and of Panionios on the other⁴⁴. In a way similar to the discreetness of the homepage, the history told on the Panionios website is significantly less emotional and sentimental than those of the other two. Presenting landmarks in chronological order, the narrative makes a point of emphasizing the achievements and social service of Panionios through the years. There is no reference to hardships of life in Asia Minor, no mention of the plight of the refugees. The only real hint at all this is expressed as following:

1922 With the destruction of Smyrna by the Turks PANIONIOS Sports Association of Smyrna was transferred to Attica, where it was offered a room in the dressing rooms of the Panathinaiko stadium. This is the place from where the reconstitution and reestablishment of all the Club’s Divisions started.

⁴⁴ <http://www.panionios.gr/default.asp?pid=24&la=1>

A very modest reference to such a cataclysmic event, indeed. The rest of the historical page is almost solely dedicated to sporting achievements and there is little to challenge when it comes to plain statistic and chronological facts, such as when the women's athletic division was established and how many where the international competitions won by Panionios athletes. There is no reference to emblems and colours and their meaning, or of the club playing any role as the means of continuation of a culture or of preservation of collective memory. Actually the only factual comment one can make is that the recognition of 1890 as official founding date is a bit generous; using the method of counting from the founding of their parent-clubs, P.A.O.K. could for instance easily start counting from 1924, or even earlier if they managed to stretch the Hermes argument. It is evident that the main interest of those writing this account is to prove how ancient, successful and pioneering the club has been through the years. Through my research I found this to be a very important thing to the Panionios fans- after all, the club's nickname is "Ιστορικός" (Istorikos, "the Historical one").

Since it is available and I find it quite interesting, I will also include a summary of what is said and shown on the A.E.K. site. On the first page of the history section⁴⁵, we read the following:

The most important thing of all is that A.E.K. does not only pride itself in its sporting achievements. Because its history is special and it sets it apart from other teams. A.E.K. represent "προσφυγιά", the lost homelands, the pride of the Greeks of Smyrna. A.E.K. takes pride in its origin, honours it carries it along everywhere through

⁴⁵ http://www.aekfc.gr/index.asp?a_id=62

its emblem, inspired by the Byzantine Empire. Through the Double- Headed Eagle that gazes to East and West, and of course through its colours. Yellow and black.

However, the most striking feature of this history page lies right next to the text quoted. It is a picture of the Hagia Sophia without minarets. Since those minarets have been there, to the best of my knowledge uninterruptedly, since Mimar Sinan built them in the 16th century, I can only assume that the picture has been retouched. If the Hagia Sophia in itself is a potent symbol, its representation without the minarets is even more so, and is unmistakably of an irredentist hue. However, the fact is that I did see quite a lot of this minaret-less Hagia Sophia during my research, as I relate further on in this dissertation.

Further representations

Continuing on the theme of the clubs' self- image, there are numerous interesting points to discuss. To start with, and in keeping with the already demonstrated willingness to establish itself as the continuation and representation of Constantinople sports and culture, P.A.O.K. takes great pride in associating itself with the Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul- and current Patriarch Bartholomew seems just as happy with the association. P.A.O.K. seeks the Patriarch's blessing (figuratively, but also literally in many cases) at practically every official occasion. So, among the introductions to the Thessaloniki History Centre book on P.A.O.K.'s history (Anonymous 2005), is an official greeting from the Patriarch, blessing "everyone involved in the present sports-history publication with the Patriarchal wishes of our Modesty". The Patriarch was also one of the central personages (if not the most significant one) in the 80th anniversary celebrations in 2006. First receiving the representatives of the veterans' association who traveled to Istanbul, he then famously came to Thessaloniki to take part in the official celebrations. A big deal was made of this visit and the whole of the Thessaloniki, whose population is one of the more religious ones in Greece, was mobilized for the duration of his stay, not to mention the nation- wide coverage in the media.

Patriarch Bartholomew has not only been happy to oblige, but has also reciprocated the honours and the reverence. At the 80th anniversary celebration, the Patriarch "officially" proclaimed P.A.O.K. to be the heir and protector of the Greek culture of Constantinople. This extremely interesting speech caused a practical delirium of enthusiasm to those present, but also the fans who later read about it, and

was termed things like “monumental”, “historical” and “unique” by the press. It is worth citing extensively, as presented in the Thessaloniki sports press:

Dear P.A.O.K. fans [...] There are uninteruptible bonds between the City and P.A.O.K. [...] This event is an excellent opportunity to once more point out the things that connect us, that hurt us, that accumulate in the depths of our hearts, the things that revive our hope.

[...] The connection between [Thessaloniki] and [the City] has found jubilant expression in the sports field and specifically in [P.A.O.K.]. Your club was founded in 1926 by uprooted refugees from Constantinople, Asia Minor, Pontus and Capaddocia, who found a new place to spread their roots in Northern Greece. [...]

The continuer of the sports and cultural club Hermes, which was founded in 1875 in Peran and was renamed Pera Club in 1923 and continues to bear this name until today⁴⁶, was founded in this place. And it was members of that club who played the leading role in the founding of P.A.O.K. Thus, although P.A.O.K. was officially formed in 1926, the date of this great club should be sought earlier chronologically and farther to the north geographically: in the Vasileuousa⁴⁷, the City of legends and traditions. The link between P.A.O.K. and the City and those unforgettable fatherlands is strong. P.A.O.K.’s emblem is the Double- Headed Eagle with its wings closed. It spread its wings and the name of P.A.O.K. became known in Greek and international sports.

The Great Church of Christ and the *Ρωμιοσύνη* of the City watch the teams and athletes of P.A.O.K. as they compete and distinguish themselves. And they rejoice with its fans, because, being flesh of their own flesh, born and raised in the City, they

⁴⁶ To the best of my knowledge, and according to the official P.A.O.K. site, Pera Club is nowadays called Beyoglu Spor.

⁴⁷ Another of the numerous appellations of Istanbul/Constantinople in the Greek language. This one means “the reigning one”, denoting its position as queen among cities, but also as the seat of the Byzantine Emperor.

feel that their successes are also theirs. This must fill the administration, athletes and fans of P.A.O.K. with emotion and pride, for they are ambassadors of the *Ρωμιοσύνη* of the City. Furthermore it should cause reflexion, responsibilities and duties. As the safekeeper of holy traditions, P.A.O.K. has the obligation to [...] present an example of conduct and morality.

[...] The exalted emblem of P.A.O.K. may not be degraded by [violent] behaviour, especially when symbols of the Church are present in the stadium. The idiosyncrasy of P.A.O.K. dictates that traditions be kept. (Athlitiki Makedonias Thrakis 21/10/2006)

This dithyrambic speech effectively encapsulates the whole identity that P.A.O.K. promotes; the Patriarch actually takes the whole thing even further than official P.A.O.K. usually attempts, giving the club the title of representative of Istanbul's current Greek Orthodox community to the world and reminding of the responsibilities inherent in such a role⁴⁸. Coming from the person and office that it did, the declaration of P.A.O.K. as continuer and safekeeper of the *Ρωμιοσύνη* of Istanbul is all but an official anointing. It is not surprising that reaction to the speech was rapturous. The Thessaloniki sports press went so far as to widely report that the Patriarch was aiding attempts to find a new investor to take control of the club, which was at the time in dire economic straits.

The 80th anniversary celebration contains plenty more elements and quotes worth discussing. The Metropolitan of Thessaloniki Anthimos, having stated (the well-known fact) that he is a great P.A.O.K. fan, suggested that the economic survival of the club is a matter of national interest, "due to its origin". Part of the audience

⁴⁸ The Patriarch's reference to violent behavior (part of which I have excluded from the previous citation) is most probably not coincidental: P.A.O.K. fans have at times caused serious riots at football matches and have a reputation as some of the wildest in Greece.

greeted the Patriarch with cries of “P.A.O.K., we live to see you in the City”, a well-known slogan denoting the wish to see P.A.O.K. return to its original home-town. Iconic veteran and captain of the team Giorgos Koudas pointed out that “the emblem of the Patriarchate, which is also the emblem of P.A.O.K., will continue to fly high and to flutter in our hearts”. The whole thing ended with the P.A.O.K. veterans joining the artists on stage to sing the national anthem in an emotional sing-along (Athlitiki Makedonias Thrakis 21/10/2006).

It must be noted however, that the celebration had its darker side too. This stemmed from the fact that the whole thing was done under the initiative of the veteran’s association and not the P.A.O.K. administration. This caused some indignation on the side of the administration, as it was seen as a deliberate action to circumvent and discredit the official leadership of the club. A great deal of partisanship arose, even among the press.

Prior to the Patriarch’s visit, there had been a trip to Istanbul organized by the same veteran’s association. This included, of course, a visit to the Patriarch, who was offered various memorabilia (including a large P.A.O.K. banner and the like) and offered his blessings in return. There was a lot of sight-seeing and various symbolic and emotional events, such as a visit to the offices of Beyoglu Spor (the famous Pera Club). An important event was the visit to (the now sadly deceased) Mr. Nikos Zoumboulidis, recognized as the last living founding member of P.A.O.K.⁴⁹, who had apparently emigrated to Thessaloniki, but moved back to Istanbul at a later date. Mr. Zoumboulidis was not only offered honorary and commemorative gifts, but he too was invited to participate as a guest of honour at the imminent celebrations in Thessaloniki. He accepted and apparently a great deal was made of his planned visit.

⁴⁹ I failed to find Mr. Zoumboulidis’ name in the lists of those signing the original statute. It may be that the statute was only signed by the elected board and not all the original members.

Tragically, his frail health let him down and Mr. Zoumboulidis died en route to Thessaloniki. Following the Istanbul visit some of the participants have established very good relations with members of the Orthodox community there and visited repeatedly since then.⁵⁰

The Patriarch is not the only ecclesiastical leader associated with refugee teams. Chrysostomos, Metropolitan of Smyrna, is a national hero, and a saint and martyr of the Eastern Orthodox Church, having been killed by a Turkish lynch mob during in 1922, after the Turks had captured the city (Georgelin 2007). Before his tragic end, however, Chrysostomos had been a dedicated patron of sports in general, and Panionios in particular. His love of sports was such that even in his speech at his ascension to the Metropolitan Throne, he mentioned that “parallel to our spiritual education there must also be the kind of physical education that will give the *Γένος*⁵¹ with beautiful, agile bodies, Herculean muscles and arms as those of Sampson. It is through [the love sports] that the evils that prey on societies, and transform humans into mental wrecks or criminal beasts, will be stopped” (Linardos 1998: 123). After his death, this iconic figure was made Honorary President of Panionios, a distinction that is still officially honoured. For instance, Chrysostomos’ picture, with his honorary title inscribed underneath, can be found at a commanding position in Panionios’ museum.

This museum includes all sorts of memorabilia pertaining to the sporting achievements of Panionios, but also a host of items related to its historical heritage. Plenty of books not directly related to Panionios are on show, with subjects such as the Greek army in Smyrna, the life of Metropolitan Chrysostomos, the 70th

⁵⁰ The details of the Istanbul visit were given to me in personal interview by Mr. Spandonidis, secretary of the veteran’s association, who also kindly gave me access to his photo and press archive. This is where I found the articles covering the 80th anniversary celebrations.

⁵¹ Term denoting (with a capital initial) the Greek race or nation. The word stems from the word meaning birth and emphasizes the common blood and ancestral origin.

anniversary of the Smyrna fire (with the title “We remember, we participate”) etc. The photographs on show are in a similar vein. Pictures of famous athletes and benefactors of the club are mixed with pictures of Smyrna of all sorts and moods: from simple panoramas of Smyrna of old, to triumphant images (complete with laurel leaves around them) of the Greek army entering Smyrna, to pictures of the city’s destruction.

In spite of all this, Panionios has not made any visits to Izmir in recent years. There was apparently one sometime in the 70s of which all I learned were family anecdotes from younger fans. These are discussed later in the dissertation.

Besides the links on the official site already mentioned, Apollon is vocal about its Pontian heritage in many ways. On match- days, the stadium resounds with traditional Pontian music, the typical pontian lyre or “*κεμεντζέζ*” (kementze, Turkish *kemence*) dominating the musical selections. Instead of cheerleaders or anything like that, the pre- game show consists of a group of nearly twenty dancers performing Pontian dances in full traditional costume. Not only this, but they appear holding aloft a yellow flag with the Pontian Eagle on it.

Furthermore, the Pontian Eagle has been added to the team’s jersey, on the sleeve, as an official emblem. The club seems to make a big deal of this last feature, since during an e-mail communication with the PR section of the club I was proudly informed of this and sent an e-mail attachment explaining the history and significance of the Pontian Eagle. In the same communication I was told that “Apollon’s website is possibly the most informed in Greece [on the subject]” and that “as you know, Apollon is a team inseparably connected to the Pontian element”.

One of the links on the Apollo site mentioned earlier, leads to a page dedicated to the Pontian Hellenism Office. Apparently, this is an organization created by Apollon

Kalamarias “to put into practice the fact that Apollon Kalamarias is the representative of Pontian Hellenism in the field of sports” and to keep in touch with other Pontian organizations and associations. The Office’s activities are held to include educational/historical field trips, activities in the stadium’s surroundings on match- day (I saw none, except the ones inside the stadium as already mentioned), an Apollo and Pontus related show on Radio Akrites (the Pontian radio station mentioned earlier in this dissertation) etc. It is mentioned that the most important action was the establishment of the Pontian eagle on the jersey. I was unable to verify to which degree all this is actually put into practice.

At this point I should also note some things about A.E.K., a team that, perhaps not surprisingly given its background, also seems to be favoured by the Patriarch. A.E.K. made a visit to Istanbul in 2004, also on the occasion of the club’s 80th anniversary. This visit however, was a highly publicized official one, with the participation of administration, players and practically the whole football department. Of course it included a reception at the Patriarchate, where Patriarch Bartholomew, although a little more reserved than he was in Thessaloniki, still made a very warm speech. It included references to the club’s history⁵², his declaration of pride at the achievements of the club and while stressing the moral values of the club (very much like he did in the P.A.O.K. speech) he made a statement that has since then become something of a slogan of the club: “A.E.K. is first and foremost an idea. And ideas do not die”. The A.E.K. site gives the whole visit extensive coverage, including pictures, interviews with members of the A.E.K. delegation and legendary Fenerbahce and

⁵² The Patriarch curiously stated that A.E.K. was founded in Istanbul in 1924 and was uprooted, a version of events that does not coincide even with the one presented at the official site of A.E.K. The observant reader will have noticed that minor historical inaccuracies were not absent from the P.A.O.K. speech either.

Turkey player Lefter Antoniadis, a Greek Orthodox of Istanbul who for a very brief time played for A.E.K. in the '60s⁵³.

When all is said and done however, how much does this really amount to in terms of real action on the part of the official clubs? The P.A.O.K. celebration certainly included some impressive reaffirmations of the refugee identity. The most impressive part of them came from the Patriarch, who- although far be it from me to doubt his sincerity- certainly has every good reason to want to gain even more sympathy in Greece. The whole celebration was however not organized by the then administration, which from what I gather did precious little for the anniversary. As for the Istanbul trip, it certainly had nothing to do with the official administration. The Panionios museum on the other hand is full of manifestations of the Smyrna identity, but is not exactly in common view (especially the items that are not in the front showcase) and, as I found out personally, is only accessible at the cost of some persistence. Apollon Kalamarias is perhaps the most consistently vocal about the subject, but as I will relate in a following segment of this dissertation, there is doubt among the fans as to the administration's real dedication to the cause- and frankly, except for a lot of enthusiasm, folklore and symbolism (which certainly have their own merits and importance), I personally saw a bit less than declared in the web page.

Apollon Kalamaria's declarations at the web site apart, I saw no consistent collaboration of the clubs with refugee associations- such as might be promoting scholarly, educational or cultural activities. There are of course the occasional co-operations: the books on P.A.O.K. (Anonymous 2005) and Apollon (Anonymous 2006) for instance, were written and published by the Thessaloniki History Centre and the Historical Archive of Refugee Hellenism of Kalamaria Municipality

⁵³ Information about A.E.K.'s Istanbul visit is from http://www.aekfc.gr/index.asp?a_id=176

respectively. However, through my contact with these organizations, it became quite clear that this never amounted to a permanent or even protracted relationship and collaboration with the clubs. In the case of the book written about Panionios by Mr. Petros Linardos (1998), this was apparently done almost completely on his own initiative and that of the publishers, the Nea Smyrni cultural association “Friends of the Arts”. The then administration seems to have shown little interest and only obtained a very limited number of copies- when I enquired about it, the club had no clue as to how I could get hold of one. Although times have clearly changed and it is difficult to compare different eras, having already noted the community service and cultural activities of the clubs in the old days, it is difficult not to note the difference.

A related point which has already been touched upon in the introduction, but I feel should be analyzed some more, is that in most cases the clubs were in a position to offer me precious little help in my research. I had thought that historical publications should be readily available through the clubs, but the case turned out to be quite different. In the best case the clubs could simply inform me where I could get hold of them- in the worst cases the clubs knew nothing about such books or publications. At any rate, the books do exist, but need to be sought after to be found: the main book on Panionios used here (Linardos 1998) is out of print and I was only able to get hold of a copy through the kind help of the author Mr. Linardos himself, whom I went to some length to contact (another book on Panionios that I found has been out of print since the 70s and was only to be found at the National Library); the books on P.A.O.K. (Anonymous 2005) and Apollon (Anonymous 2006) were only available through their publishers, the Thessaloniki History Centre and Historical Archive of Refugee Hellenism of Kalamaria Municipality respectively. The book I found on A.E.K. (Notaris 2002), which actually focuses on athletics and not football,

but gives a good account of the formation of the club, was recommended by many, but no one could tell me where to find it. I had all but given up on it, when I accidentally found through some blog on the internet that it is only available at one specific book store in Athens; even at this bookstore employees were at first taken aback by my request, and it took them a bit of searching in their stores to find me a copy. Mr. Koukouloglou's book on the emblems and colours of Greek teams (Koukouloglou n.d.) was also out of print and had to be obtained through the author personally.

Furthermore, the books were not the only case of such difficulties. Getting access to the teams' archives or museums also proved a challenging task; as I was told by the people at the Panionios offices, "yes, you may visit the museum, but you have to come when the man in charge of it is here- and he has no fixed schedule or working hours..."⁵⁴. In the case of A.E.K., I was told by a person at the Press and Public Relations department that there exists no museum or archive because "it has been lost during transportation from one office to another"! I have had even more difficulty getting hold of members of the administrations of the clubs to have a talk about the official side of things.

⁵⁴ This Catch-22 was overcome after numerous telephone calls by the eager Panionios people, that eventually showed the janitor in question to be at the stadium's cafeteria.

Administration- fans relations

In spite of the clubs' apparent eagerness to promote the refugee identity, the teams' fans invariably seem to think that the clubs' administrations do not do enough in this direction. Bitter rivalries between fans and administration are quite the fashion in Greece, and not an exclusive feature of refugee clubs, but it must be pointed out that all three teams concerned in this dissertation either faced such a rivalry in the recent past, or still are facing one. Although it's not the main point of disagreement, lack of interest in the club's history and refugee identity is an oft-expressed accusation against the administrations.

When asking fans what their team's administration does to pay homage to its history, I almost invariably got one of two reactions: either an ironic grin or else a gesture to the effect of "forget about it". This was usually followed by an explanation of how professionalism had long since spelt the end of the emotional and historical attachment of administrations to their teams and how the people involved were not interested in history and identity. They all considered this deeply regrettable.

It is interesting that the administration that would at first glance appear more involved in the refugee cause, that of Apollon, is also the most bitterly opposed one at this time. In spite of all the declarations and the events organized, a large part of Apollon fans deride the administration's apparent dedication to the Pontian cause. The current owner of the club is not from Thessaloniki, let alone Kalamaria, and has no connection to the Pontian element. This is a cause for a great deal of resentment. Even more controversial was the administration's decision not to hold the team's home games at the traditional (and admittedly out-dated) stadium in Kalamaria, but at

the much larger and more modern Kautatzoglio stadium in down- town Thessaloniki. Fans cared little for the modern facilities at offer in the larger stadium and bitterly protested the move away from the “natural” home, which they consider an integral part of the club’s history and identity. The result has been that during resent seasons in the First Division, crowds have dwindled and attendance has been literally lower than it had been during the recent Second Division campaigns⁵⁵.

According to the fans who oppose the current administration, the owner, detached as he is from the club, does not care to preserve its identity. Significantly, they attribute all the positive actions of the administration mentioned above either to the effort of isolated individuals within the club, or to the pressure of the fans themselves. Members of the Rossoneri fan club, whom I interviewed, quite clearly stated that the happenings I witnessed on match day (Pontian music, dance etc) were the result of their own insistence (not the Rossoneri fan club’s specifically, but Kalamaria fans in general), not of the administration’s interest. In their view the Pontian identity of Apollon is prominent in spite of the administration, not because of it.

The fans of PAOK are on good terms with the current administration, but had been at war with the one preceding it. In fact, besides the fact that the club had reached the brink of bankruptcy, it can be argued that fan pressure was one of the factors that contributed to the departure of the former administration. In this case however, the grudge has little to do with the club’s identity. Although they support the current administration, they will openly admit that not nearly enough is done to promote the team’s refugee history and identity, even under the current state of affairs. Actually, I found the usual accusation of negligence, against the administration, to be even more common and strong among P.A.O.K. fans. The fact

⁵⁵ Compare the discussion about building new stadiums and abandoning the traditional grounds in Duke (1994).

that the widely publicized 80th anniversary celebration was not organized by the then administration was pointed out to me by the fans who, despite the conflicting opinions at the time of the event, now seem to be firmly on the side of the veterans on that account.

Like the fans of P.A.O.K., those of Panionios are quite happy with the current management of the club, but had not been so the previous years. More than three seasons after his departure, their resentment for the previous president of the club is undiminished. This is attested by the fact that the surroundings of the Nea Smyrni stadium (and very nearly the whole suburb) are still dominated by graffiti aimed at this ex- president, usually in less than civil terms. Once again, however, the resentment has more to do with the bad handling of club affairs rather than with the administration's degree of devotion to the refugee identity.

Panionios fans did repeatedly state to me that the current president (during whose tenure economic stability has been achieved and the club's on- pitch fortunes have taken a turn to the better) is a genuine fan of the club and is more interested in its refugee past than his predecessors. The implication was that things looked better in this field as well. In spite of all this, I failed to see any great engagement of the current administration in these matters. Granted, they have reinstated the old emblem of the club, as mentioned earlier, and they re- established the old tradition of having the team's yearly official photo- shoot outside the iconic Nea Smyrni cultural centre. However, apart from such relatively minor moves, I saw little indication of any resurgence in historical interest on the part of the official club, relative to previous years.

My conclusion, and the point of this discussion about administration- fan relationships, is that preservation of the refugee identity of the clubs is not a main

factor determining the sympathies of the fans. The fans bare the alienation of their clubs from their past as a constant grudge, but what it all boils down to is how well the team is performing. Also, lack of interest in the club's "special characteristics" seems to be a convenient thing to accuse a disliked administration of. Also quite significantly, fans will grudgingly admit that they too have to answer for this alienation, although they will insist that they are to blame less than the administrations.

Home grounds and surroundings

The following part is a description of, and reflection on, each team's home stadium and its surroundings, a study of the "natural environment" of the clubs in question.

I start in chronological order, from the stadium I first visited. The Panionios stadium is located at the heart of Nea Smyrni, a suburb where the refugee past is still clearly discernible- Nea Smyrni does, after all, mean New Smyrna. The stadium, located close to the central square of Nea Smyrni known simply as The Square, seems like an organic part of its urban surroundings, not sticking out from the residential buildings around it and seems to be considered the heart of the area by locals. It is completely surrounded by streets whose names directly reference the Asia Minor past- another characteristic of Nea Smyrni. These streets were filled with Panionios related graffiti; a girl on the street tried to sell me a mobile phone account with special privileges for Panionios fans. This is clearly Panionios territory and it is not at all hard to believe the statement that "Panionios comes second only to the National Resistance veterans on parade days".

In spite of the fact that it is only a 5- 10 minute walk from the station where I got off, I didn't have the easiest of times locating the stadium because I found it hard to get accurate directions from the locals, getting very general direction of the "go that way, you can't miss it" type; my impression was that they considered it so natural that they had a hard time explaining where it was. As a matter of fact the older people I asked tended to refer to the stadium simply as "Panionios", in very much the way you

would speak about a person- and many of them did this with a typical Asia Minor accent to their Greek.

The very first graffiti that I noticed on the outer wall of the stadium was a simple sentence, matter-of-factly informing anyone concerned that “when we had a veteran’s association, you hadn’t even been founded yet”. A stadium bearing graffiti of this sort obviously belongs to a team whose fans take great pride in their history. Inside the stadium there is nothing really to hint at any special identity of the club. It’s a pretty ordinary, functional, if slightly outdated, stadium- for years now there have been plans to build a new one.

However, at the gate that leads to the clubs offices and the stand reserved for press and officials, the first thing you’re confronted with is a large glass display with memorabilia, which belongs to Panionios’ museum. On top of this, a wall- length mural, the left half of which depicts a seaside city and the right half the same place destroyed and still smouldering from a fire; the left half bears the inscription “Smyrna 1920” and the right half the inscription “Smyrna 1922”, without further explanation. A powerful image no doubt, and strategically placed where officials and journalists cannot miss it.

The stadium of Toumba, home of P.A.O.K., is in a central area of Thessaloniki, from which the stadium gets its name. Of course Toumba is also P.A.O.K. territory and the place is not surprisingly filled with relevant graffiti. Very few of the slogans I saw had any reference to the team’s history; having said this, I came across a gem or two, like the slogan “P.A.O.K.- Pera Club”, which I also saw in other parts of town. However, P.A.O.K. is not a “neighbourhood team” in the way Panionios is, and Toumba does not have quite the same character as The Square in Nea Smyrni. Although this has been the team’s home ground since 1959, the stadium was

renovated for the 2004 Olympics⁵⁶, and it has a modern outlook. It's a relatively large arena and sticks out immediately from among its surroundings, even more so since it's on the top of a slope with plenty of empty space around it. It seems to reign over the area rather than to be part of it. Apart from the odd slogan and the team's museum inside the stadium, I saw little else to remind of the refugee past.

As mentioned earlier, the stadium issue is one of the big points of friction between fans and administration of Apollon Kalamaria. In part, one can understand why. The stadium used last season by Apollon for home matches is the Kaftadzoglio (Καυτατζόγλειο) stadium. This is actually the stadium of Iraklis, one of the most historical and popular teams in Thessaloniki (along with Aris and P.A.O.K.). This stadium also benefited from the 2004 Olympics and is now a large, modern stadium. The move here was obviously intended to attract fans and improve the players' working conditions by offering better facilities and greater capacity. Nevertheless, the association of the stadium with a rival team, along with the impersonal feeling it gave fans and the distance from Kalamaria, the natural stronghold of the team, meant fans never took a liking to it.

The original home stadium of Apollon, in Kalamaria, is a different affair altogether. The whole setting is more reminiscent of Nea Smyrni, which is not surprising since Kalamaria too is a fairly typical refugee suburb. Just like the Panionios stadium, Apollon's home ground is also surrounded by apartment blocks and streets bearing names such as "Pontus Street". I assume that in the past it has been just as much the centre of local life as the Panionios stadium, currently though it's all but deserted- empty but for the odd athlete running around alone and the

⁵⁶ Although the Olympics were held in Athens, some stages of certain events were held in other areas of Greece. Football was one of them and various cities in Greece benefited from this to extensively renovate local stadiums.

distant sound of sporting activity from the indoors halls under the main spectator stand. Instead of Apollon fans' slogans, the outer walls are gradually being taken over by murals sprayed by local graffiti "squads" and even the odd slogan of other Thessaloniki teams. The general feeling is that of disappointment and desolation. Apparently the move to the Kautatzogleio not only alienated fans from the team itself, but also from the Kalamaria stadium.

The fan clubs' websites

When talking about fan attitudes, one can obviously not be absolute. I take it for granted that there are many different points of view, attitudes, political inclinations etc among every large group of humans, football fans included. I do not claim the findings here to be conclusive or universal, but merely indicative. After all, my study could not have too wide a scope: not wanting to make a questionnaire style survey (which could have reached a more general population) I chose to make a case study. I tried to get access to the bigger and most popular fan clubs. However, given the fact that fan circles and organizations are often relatively closed and that I had never had contact with them before, the choice of fan clubs was mainly dictated by accessibility.

I will once again start with the most accessible public presentation of the fan clubs, their websites. Since there are literally hundreds of such sites on the internet and any choice would have to be arbitrary, I have chosen the websites of the fan clubs that I got in contact with.

The P.A.O.K. fan club “Northerners”⁵⁷ website⁵⁸ has no initial reference to a refugee identity. The site has a rather “dark” atmosphere, with the fan club’s *totenkopf* emblem set to the team’s typical black and white background and accompanied by heavy metal music. The “Northerners” motto seems to be “P.A.O.K. till death”.

⁵⁷ The Northerners are a wide “confederation” (as they call themselves) of fan clubs from all over northern Greece. I was in contact with the Thessaloniki nucleus. The site I am referring to here is that of this “Salonica Port” (again by their own definition).

⁵⁸ <http://www.northerners.gr/>

The site includes articles and announcements on very many different issues. One of the topics is also “The City- Pontus- Macedonia- Asia Minor”, the link to which is adorned with a picture of a minaret-less Hagia Sophia. The oldest entry in this category is entitled “P.A.O.K.- Four letters, one history, the City, Pontus and Asia Minor” (in Greek this rhymes, making it sound like a slogan). This is something of a manifesto concerning the fan club’s view on the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the relevant national and political issues:

In our country, there are sports clubs [...] that carry a History inseparable from the History of the Greek people, they carry with them wounds, memories and hopes. One of them is our P.A.O.K.

[...] P.A.O.K. is bound to symbolize and to remind us all of the persecutions that our compatriots from the City, Asia Minor and Pontus were subjected to from WWI to 1955, just over three decades in other words, by those who today come to “reinstate order”, “reminding” us that the Greeks and the Greek Liberation Army were the “butchers” of the native turkish (*sic*) people of the Asia Minor coast, while the indigenous Greeks, who had for many centuries resided on the coast and had the homes of their forefathers in Smyrna, Ephesus, Halicarnassus and elsewhere, were rightly treated as “armed rebels”, with the well-known consequences. [It is even emphasized] that History has already been written and it would be good to avoid stirring such matters, as they themselves are trying to forget the past and look towards the future, in spite of being the “victims” of the Greeks during WWI.

We will concur with the neighbouring country’s last comment. History has been written indeed, History has recorded the bestial acts and the genocides that the Hellenism has been subjected to by it’s “friends” from the east, and History demands of us that, as Greeks and as P.A.O.K. fans, we do not forget and that we answer appropriately.

So in this understanding, the refugee identity means first and foremost the duty to preserve the memory of Turkish barbarism and of how it brought an end to the historical Greek presence in Asia Minor. The P.A.O.K. fan, even more than any other Greek, has the duty to protect national interests in this subject, due to his team's history. Also, the declaration just presented does not emphasize cultural activities or preservation of traditions (not that it precludes it, of course), but the protection of historical truth.

The site furthermore links to the site of the “Northerners” central organization, which has a similarly named topic on the City, Asia Minor etc. The articles on the Thessaloniki site are reproduced here and a few more are added. One article, scanned from a P.A.O.K. fanzine and dating 26/11/1999, expresses the writers' exasperation at the fact that members of the then administration visited Istanbul on some official business, but did not take the opportunity to promote the club there. The article bemoans the fact that “[P.A.O.K.] missed a great chance to make it known to the whole world where the roots of the beloved team of Macedonia stem from [...] P.A.O.K. did not see to it that even a single photographer was brought along, so that the pictures that would be taken could convey to the whole of Greece the action of the “Δικέφαλος”⁵⁹ and [the club's] return to the Vasilevousa”.

Another, extremely interesting text reproduced here, has actually been written by another fan club, Club P.A.O.K. Melbourne; although it's not actually written by the Northerners, I take it that they approve of it since they reproduce it. The text is dated 24/05/2005 and bears the title (in English) *Goumenos You Traitor*⁶⁰. The text quoted

⁵⁹ Δικέφαλος (dikefalos) means double-headed and implies the double-headed eagle. It is a commonly used nickname both for P.A.O.K. and for A.E.K., the former sometimes referred to as Δικέφαλος του Βορρά (Dikefalos tou Vorra; Double-headed of the North) to distinguish between the two.

⁶⁰ Mr. Goumenos (Γούμενος) was at the time the head of the P.A.O.K. administration.

below is accompanied by a picture of this Mr. Goumenos, with horns on his head and a goatee⁶¹:

Greetings from distant Australia [...], where the Double-headed Eagle of the CITY, the “προσφυγιά” and of the lost homelands, beats strong (*sic*) [...]

These unforgettable fatherlands may have been lost But (*sic*) we never thought that the dignity and pride that we bear as refugees, as P.A.O.K. fans, would also be lost.

[Our fan club faces the prospect of closing down!] Yes, “gentlemen” of P.A.O.K. F.C. who do not know history, and the CAUSE will be you and the rumoured transfer of a TURKISH player to our team.

[...] The Idea [of P.A.O.K.] and the pride we feel will burn out if the transfer of the *XOTZA*⁶² is realized and we see him wearing the honoured jersey with the *Δικέφαλος* on the breast inside our TEMPLE Toumba, we will be ashamed to say we are Greeks and most of all P.A.O.K. FANS, walking down the street with our heads hung low feeling shame and disgrace for what you’re about to do.

[...] You are disgracing the name of P.A.O.K. its History its people who have fought for the dignity of the club, which we love today, with such passion and longing.

[...] Rage and disgust at the bare THOUGHT of this transfer of a TURKISH player. We would like to announce to all the people of P.A.O.K. that things at our fan club are NOW CRITICAL! IF this transfer goes through our club will be on the verge of closing down!

⁶¹ I apologize for the perhaps confusing style of the following quote, but besides the normal difficulties of a translation, the original is also quite confused, especially when it comes to punctuation and syntax.

⁶² *Χότζας* (Hotzas) corresponds to the Turkish *hoca*. I do not quite understand the meaning of this reference; it is possible that it might be intended as some sort of generalizing (and therefore demeaning) reference to Turks, in the same way that *mullah* may be used in Cypriot Greek, although I have never come across this specific usage before.

Here we see the notion that the refugee identity (and the P.A.O.K. identity of course) is incompatible with the Turkish one, completely incompatible actually⁶³. This was already implied in the text about the historical truth of the Asia Minor Catastrophe, but here it is made explicit in a rather urgent and pressing way. A generalization of this notion is found in another text in this section, bearing the date 10/08/2008, which is an open letter in the press to Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, also submitted to the Libyan Embassy, the Greek Ministries of the Interior, of Foreign Affairs and of Sports and to P.A.O.K. F.C. The reason for all this was that there were rumours that Mr. Qaddafi, or companies affiliated to him, was to invest in P.A.O.K. and that he personally was to take control of the club. The whole letter boils down to the plea of the Northerners to Mr. Qaddafi not to get involved with the club, since it would be inappropriate for P.A.O.K. to be headed by a Muslim⁶⁴.

Another section here links to images and slogans concerning the City and Asia Minor. These include all sorts of pictures, from murals to things printed in fanzines and to tattoos. They are far too numerous to describe individually, but one can say that the most recurring theme is the double-headed eagle descending upon a minaret-less Hagia Sophia. There's also a depiction of the double-headed eagle ripping Turkey in half, some depictions of the legendary Marble King⁶⁵ and all sorts of similar images.

⁶³ I must point out that P.A.O.K. does not have any sort of "no-Muslim" policy in effect. Plenty of Muslims have played for the team in recent years, and even Turkish international defender Fatih Akyel played for P.A.O.K. for a short while; Turkish international Ibrahim Kutluay also played for the basketball team. Although I do recall some mildly negative comments from certain quarters about having a Turkish player in the team, there was to the best of my knowledge no widespread reaction. I do not know the fate of the Melbourne fan club after these transfers.

⁶⁴ Compare the case of Scottish fans reacting against the alleged takeover of their team by a consortium of Asian businessmen (Dimeo & Finn 1998). However this seems to have been fuelled by a more general prejudice against Asians in football.

⁶⁵ Legend has it that the last Emperor of Byzantium was not killed in battle, but was transformed to marble and is hidden in a secret cave. He will come back to life when the time is right and lead the assault that will bring about the re-capture of Constantinople.

So in this site, we see a very specific understanding of the relationship between P.A.O.K. and the refugee identity. It is clearly anti-Turkish, anti-Muslim and focused on the loss of the “rightfully Greek” lands and the hope of recapturing them. Although it is not directly related to our subject, it is worth noting that the “Northerners” take a similar stance concerning the heated Macedonia debate. They are also “Byzantine Brothers” with the fans of Partizan Belgrade and express solidarity to their Orthodox brethren.

The site of the Panionios fan club “Panthers”⁶⁶ welcomes its visitors with an introduction, featuring the fan club’s fearsome panther symbol alongside images of the fans at the stands of the stadium. The introduction ends with the statement “When we were playing ball... the others didn’t exist!”. Once again we encounter the pride of Panionios and its fans at the team’s longevity and history; actually it’s just about the first thing this site states.

The section of the site concerning the history of the team presents the familiar story of the founding and uprooting of Panionios. Among the more interesting points is the omission of (or at least obscure reference to) the fact that 1890 is the founding date of Orpheus and not Panionios *per se*. Also very interesting is the statement that “the pioneering sporting activity of the [Smyrna Greeks] will find followers among the Constantinople Greeks several years later”. This statement, which is of doubtful historical accuracy, shows the Panionios fans’ keenness to establish their team’s pioneer status. The text goes on to testify that:

⁶⁶ <http://www.panthers.gr/>

[In 1922] the beautiful Smyrna coastline is engulfed in flames and the Asia Minor catastrophe, along with the Greek uprooting, halts every activity of PANIONIOS. The – honorary – president of the club, Chrysostomos of Smyrna, is no more, but the people of Smyrna who arrive by the hundreds in mother Greece, carry with them, not only their few belongings, but also the “flame” of the heart for the reestablishment of PANIONIOS of NEA SMYRNI [New Smyrna].

This is a bit more poignant than the account of the same events on the Panionios site. The other interesting statement is that “sportsmanship and the spirit of noble competition” are “steady principles” of Panionios. There is also a section of the site entitled Smyrni 1890 (*sic*). It starts with a text stating that

We all have roots. For us, however, this certainly means a bit more. PANIONIOS, as is well known, was founded as an idea in 1890 in SMYRNA. Smyrna that was at the time Greek.

But for us it does not constitute a simple “was”. In our hearts it was, it is and it will be Greek. For many, one of the reasons they believe in the Idea called PANIONIOS, are the sad events that took place in 1922 [...]

This introduction is followed by a photo-gallery of original pictures of old Smyrna and of the arrival of the refugees in Greece, without further comment. The page ends with the statement “PANIONIOS... THE LIVING HISTORY OF “ΠΡΟΣΦΥΓΙΑ”.

Although certainly more accentuated than in the official Panionios site, the refugee identity in this case seems quite different than in the “Northerners” case. It is

still focused on preserving the memory of the refugees' plight, but is less defensive, and seems less concerned with those who would seek to forge history.

The site of the Apollon fan club "Rossoneri"⁶⁷ has little of interest in the context of our subject. The introduction features Apollon's emblem, the god Apollo, and the whole site is dominated by subjects concerning the team and the fans' activities. The history section mostly reproduces the information presented at the official site (which is probably taken from some book on Apollon). The emphasis here is on the struggle of the refugees to get back on their feet and start their new life. As the author of the text puts it, "[Apollon is a team] which, from the *τσαμούρια*⁶⁸ [tsamouria], found itself in the great halls of football. Football was the answer to all those who doubted the quality of the people who settled in the *τσαμουριά* (a phrase that was ironical at first, but became liked later on and gained the favour of those who lived in the area)". This is typical of the "Pontian pride" to which Apollon fans often refer- and it is also a relatively uncharacteristic (in official contexts) attestation to the unfriendly treatment of the refugees by the locals.

In this case, the memory that seems more important to preserve is that of the rise out of the poverty and hardships and the pride at eventual success of the refugees at establishing themselves in Greek society.

⁶⁷ <http://www.rossoneri.gr/>

⁶⁸ The word *τσαμουριά* comes from the Turkish *çamur*, meaning mud or dirt. It is not common in modern Greek and is typical of idioms such as the Pontian. *Τσαμούρι* (plural *τσαμούρια*) indicates a person living in or covered by mud; it was used as a derogatory term for the refugees and eventually a nickname for Apollon Kalamarias fans.

Meeting the fans

P.A.O.K., being the widely popular team that it is, has fans of all sorts and backgrounds. Although there certainly are fans with a refugee background, it is only natural that they are not the majority⁶⁹. In contrast to this, among the fans of Panionios and Kalamaria the percentage of individuals who came from refugee families seemed rather high, although I didn't perform any form of survey to get more conclusive data. Most of the young fans had a family story or two to relate about their teams and the refugee past, but as I soon noticed, few had deeper knowledge of the historical facts.

A common characteristic of the different groups of fans that I came into contact with was their eagerness to send me to "the guys who know about that sort of thing", whenever I told them about the subject of my research. Most fans were reluctant to engage in much conversation and quite apologetic, probably because they thought what I was after was historical information, which they couldn't give me. They were eager to help, and to present a good image, but most of them felt they had little to offer and wanted me to talk to those in the know. It was evident that most fans had a rather vague notion of the history and identity issue and those who had more knowledge were relatively few; there were, however, one or two of these individuals in every group. In most of my interviews the things I was told, and reproduce here, were related by one person who did all the talking, while most nodded agreement. Only when I was in private with one of the other members was it possible to get something more out of them.

⁶⁹ As one fan put it, in a jocular manner, "nowadays the team even has Albanian and Georgian fans, that's a totally different refugee identity than the one you're looking for".

On one hand, this meant that, getting to speak mostly with those who were better versed in historical issues than the rest, one could easily get a slightly distorted image. On the other hand, the eagerness to show outsiders that there was true interest in the refugee past was evident. However, it is also true that many of the younger fans took great interest in me and my studies, and took the chance to get information about subjects such as the Asia Minor campaign, conditions in today's Turkey etc. One person even had me write down a small bibliography on the Asia Minor campaign and the exchange of populations. Most of the people I got into contact with showed interest in reading this thesis once it was finished, some even to try to promote it for publication.

The offices of the “Northerners” fan club in Thessaloniki immediately offered some points of interest. To the right as I entered, I was met by a poster of the Hagia Sophia (with minarets, I must by now point out), with the slogan “P.A.OK. – Byzantine *Δικέφαλος* – Toumba – Hagia Sophia”. At another point of the room there was a poster reproducing a well-known traditional Greek poem about the loss of the Hagia Sophia.

However, the pride and joy of the “Northerners” were the pictures of themselves in front of the Hagia Sophia, P.A.O.K. banners in hand. The club had taken active part in the visit to Istanbul that had been arranged by the veteran's association. They were very proud to show me the pictures of their trip, including one where they hand the Patriarch an honorary plaque bearing the familiar inscription “P.A.O.K. we live to see you in the City”. They consider this “pilgrimage” extremely important, both as P.A.O.K. fans and as Greeks. The boys confirmed that they considered the refugee history of the club an extremely important point – and also pointed out with disappointment that the administration was all but indifferent. I was also told that part

of the blame was the state's, since it does nothing to help, promote or protect those who want to offer something more to the refugee cause.

P.A.O.K. fans in general take pride at the story of the technical superiority of the original refugee team to the other local teams. Legend has it that Greek football was at such a primitive state that teams hardly had any game plan and lacked cooperation and team spirit between players. Supposedly the local's astonishment at the newcomers' short passing game was such that they even gave it a special name, indicative of how the P.A.O.K. players would collaborate with each other: “πάσα-πάσα” (pasa-pasa), meaning pass-pass. P.A.O.K. fans also tend to emphasize the way the established clubs of Thessaloniki (and bitter rivals till today) found all sorts of underhanded ways not to allow P.A.O.K. to dominate the league.

An interesting point is that P.A.O.K. fans consider Istanbul's Beşiktaş to be something of a sister-club. By all accounts this has nothing to do with historical bonds, but is the product of association and coincidence: the two clubs share the same colours and similar emblems (Beşiktaş has an eagle as its emblem) and Beşiktaş is from Istanbul. This may be circumstantial evidence of any real association, but some P.A.O.K. fans seem to take the whole thing seriously: I have seen P.A.O.K. fans wearing Beşiktaş jerseys in Thessaloniki. Also, the veterans who visited Istanbul played a friendly match against the Beşiktaş veterans. I was shown pictures of the two teams posing before the match, behind a big banner stating in Turkish “*kardeşiz dostuz*” (we are brothers and friends); the banner must have been prepared by the Greeks, since it was slightly miss-spelt.

When I enquired about their relationship to other refugee teams, the “Northerners” members said they had good feelings towards them – however, they did not seem over-enthusiastic. Actually one pointed out that, like the P.A.O.K.

administration, the other refugee teams were not doing enough to promote and preserve the history of their clubs either.

P.A.O.K. fans are known as one of the most inventive crowds in Greece when it comes to creating slogans and chants, but I found they do not consistently refer to the refugee past. The occasional “P.A.O.K. we live to see you in the City” does of course appear, as do other similar slogans. On match day (I attended the Thessaloniki derby against arch-rivals Aris, a predictably heated affair) I heard nothing of the sort; neither did I see any banners of interest, except the fact that many of them are written with “Byzantine” script and I saw fan clubs named things such as “Byzantine Warriors”. There is a long tradition of competition between the northern and southern parts of Greece, which tends to be all the more pronounced in the football stands. P.A.O.K. fans are therefore routinely engaged in all sorts of “anti-Athens” sloganeering, that often produces some interesting results identity-wise, but not in the refugee context⁷⁰.

The offices of the “Rossoneri” had many pictures and memorabilia of older periods, such as the legendary 1958 squad, but little to remind a visitor of the Pontian identity. The careful observer may notice small Pontian symbols (such as the *κεμντζέ*), on certain shelves. The members told me they consider Apollon to be “clearly a representative of Pontus”, and bitterly pointed out the indifference of the administration (one of them characteristically said “we keep shouting about it, but who listens?”).

It was with great interest that I found out that there has been a movement among Apollon fans for some time now, to rename the team to Apollon Pontou (of Pontus, in

⁷⁰ Fans of Athens teams often refer to P.A.O.K. fans by the deeply offensive to their sense of national pride “Bulgarians”; P.A.O.K. fans will typically retort with the equally offensive “Albanians”. Political correctness has evidently not yet reached Greek stadiums.

other words); this is seen as an affirmation of Apollon's status as representative of Pontians. I was told that there was an unofficial "referendum" among fans, which showed the vast majority of fans to agree (at least to a certain extent) with this idea. Apparently this whole movement is also quite official, having a prominent advocate in the person of Mr. Harry Klynn, prominent Greek comedian of Kalamaria and Pontus origin, who has in the past served as president of Apollon. In a recent newspaper article I read the following statements by Mr. Klynn (Sportday 27/2/2008):

I am convinced that Apollon must be renamed Apollon Pontou. This team belongs to the 4 million Pontians around the world. I receive hundreds of e-mails every day concerning this subject. The team must return to its natural home and its fates must return to the hands of *Apollonistes* [a term for Apollon fans].

The last part is an obvious reference to the already mentioned subject of the change of home venue and the distrust towards the administration. However, the whole Apollon Pontou business shows how seriously Apollon fans take their team's role as representative of Pontus. They also emphasize their "Pontian pride" very much and how they have "built that stadium [the Kalamaria stadium] with our hands". I was also told that the older fans usually say that Apollon was founded in Asia Minor and then came "here". Whether this is a mistake or simply a figurative representation of things, it still indicative of how the fans perceive their relation to the "lost homelands".

Apollon has not officially made any visits to Turkey, but I was told that many Kalamaria residents have visited the country, either on their own initiative, or in trips organized by local cultural societies. The "Rossoneri" also told me that they have officially taken part in various events, including memorial services for the Pontian

Genocide, and a reenactment of the arrival of the refugees at the Kalamaria bay as some sort of “extras”. This reenactment was, I believe, organized by the Kalamaria municipality, and there are apparently plans to establish this as a regular event. Also, when I brought up the subject, the “Rossoneri”, like the “Northerners”, told me they had a generally friendly attitude towards other refugee clubs. Again, this affinity seemed to be rather vague and weak. I think one can safely say that there is not much real connexion between the different refugee clubs.

A common slogan of Apollon fans is “Apollon-Pontus-Προσφυγιά”, which can be found on banners, t-shirts etc. However, on match day (against Piraeus giants Olympiacos) I did not notice any slogans or banners to this effect. However, I must admit that I was not always able to make out what was being chanted. I did notice however, that most advertisements in the stadium were either of explicitly Pontian content (such as a restaurant and night-club claiming to be the “temple of the Pontians”) or else advertised the businesses of people with suspiciously Pontian sounding names.

As noted before, Panionios people attach great importance to the club’s status as one of the most historical and pioneering clubs in the country – according to them, the most historical. This is also obvious by their constant use of *Istorikos* as a nickname for their team. The history of the team is obviously its defining characteristic to them. Discussing the matter, a fan told me: “look, what makes Panionios different is this history... it’s not like being in [other random teams], you’re in Panionios, and Panionios has a certain history”. In a telephone interview, Mr. Giorgos Dedes (Γιώργος Δέδες), legendary player of Panionios and current team manager, repeated this almost verbatim: “[the players] are in a club with a great history, the likes of which no one else has, not even A.E.K. or P.A.O.K.”.

This brings up another very interesting characteristic I found among the Panionios fans, namely that they seem to harbour rather unfriendly sentiments towards A.E.K. I heard this expressed from many different people, and saw much graffiti that made this obvious in no uncertain terms. There seem to be two main reasons for this. The first is the feeling that A.E.K. always had the upper hand economically, since it was formed by Constantinople refugees who were able to take much of their fortunes with them. Therefore the Panionios fans seem to feel a little “cheated”. The main point of contention however, seems to be the claim that A.E.K. has in the past tried to present itself as the most important representative of Asia Minor Hellenism, at the expense of Panionios. Story has it that the very next day of Panionios’ relegation to the Second Division a few years back, A.E.K. launched its campaign for season tickets playing the card of the “προσφυγιά” and including images and spots of the Smyrna fire in its advertisements. This has infuriated many a Panionios fan.

Nevertheless, I must note that Mr. Dedes sternly dismissed all this as nonsense. He made it very clear over the phone that there is no rivalry with A.E.K. or any other refugee team, there never was one, and that there have always been strong bonds between the different refugee teams; Mr. Linardos was similarly dismissing, therefore giving me the impression that this was not an issue among the older generations of Panionios fans, but a more recent development. Even some of the people from whom I got all this information made it clear that this was not something too serious, and politely suggested I omit it from my dissertation.

Of course, the Panthers expressed the usual disappointment at the level of commitment the club’s officials show to its history. Emphasizing the importance of this history one of them suggested (only half-jokingly) that the players of the team should be given compulsory lessons concerning the team’s past, and that the corridor

leading from the dressing rooms to the pitch should be painted with flames all the way, to remind them of the Smyrna fire.

Panionios fans quite often use Smyrna-related chants during their team's matches. First of all, since "Panionios" is a rather long and cumbersome word for the sort of sort rhyme usual in this context, the fans will often substitute the team's name for *Σμόρνη*, meaning that they end up seemingly cheering not for Panionios, but for Smyrna. For instance, a rather common slogan among the "Panthers" is "Go Smyrna, for the Panthers and the *προσφυγιά*". Besides the already mentioned effect of cheering for the city and not the team, this slogan also indicates that the team is perceived to always be playing for something more than just itself and its fans: it is representing Smyrna and the *προσφυγιά*.

Another chant that was related to me goes something like this:

Give me weed to get high⁷¹
 That I can dream of my Smyrna
 And that it be heard all the way to God
 Panionios I love you

The fans that I spoke to were quite fond of this chant believing the thought of dreaming about "their" Smyrna to be very emotional. Another very striking feature of many of the team's home fixtures is a very large banner with the words "Smyrna is burning, mother...", a phrase almost proverbial in Greece, probably coming from a popular song.

⁷¹ Drug related references are quite common in Greek fan culture and usually not meant literally, but as a sort of indication of the ecstasy caused by the love of the team.

As noted earlier, Panionios' last visit to Turkey was quite a few years ago and I could get little reliable information on it. Apparently the team made a trip to Izmir and played a friendly match against local outfit Altay, which I was told is the team that "inherited" the stadium of Panionios, after the club's ousting. This would indicate a rather remarkable lack of bitterness against a team that could easily have been perceived as a "thief" and a symbol of the harsh treatment of the refugees. The fans I spoke to related some "family legends" about this visit, for instance of how one young fan's grandfather (or perhaps it was a great-grandfather), arriving in Izmir for the first time since childhood, found his way to the house in which he had been born, striking up a friendly relationship with the current tenants and bringing back some earth from that house's garden to have it sprinkled over his grave when he eventually died. I was also told of how some people entered a shop in Izmir, the proprietor of which, realizing they were Greeks, took them to a back room to show them some ancient Panionios standard.

The clubs' lore abounds with such stories and it is this sort of thing, I believe, that is crucial to the formation of the *esprit de corps*, the sense of being special, that eventually defines the "imagined communities" of the teams and the loyalty to them.

Following the observation that there seemed to be little bitterness towards the Altay team, I found this to be a rather general attitude in Panionios. The fans I spoke to made it quite clear that there were no hard feelings towards modern-day Turks; however, they were also quick to point out that theirs was far from the only viewpoint among the fans. Their assertion that there are fans with more harsh attitudes notwithstanding, a glance through forums on the internet and the study of all the Panionios-related material I collected, and which so commonly mentions the Catastrophe and the refugees, showed relatively few spiteful comments.

This was confirmed on match day, when I had the good fortune of chancing upon the UEFA Cup match against Turkish giants Galatasaray, and for which I was kindly given a free pass by the people at the Panionios offices. The first thing I was told about this match was that there was some controversy concerning the “Smyrna is burning, mother...” banner. Apparently the Greek FA and UEFA were not too fond of this, considering it provocative, but the Panthers were adamant and had no intention of changing their habit of hoisting the banner. My first impression was that they might be looking for trouble, but they made it clear that they had no such intension, quite the contrary. I soon heard that there was reason to believe that extreme-nationalist groups, un-related to Panionios, were planning to attend the match with the Turkish team and cause serious problems. Apparently there was a whole operation underway (whether it was by the Panthers as a whole or just some of their members was not clear) to prevent these groups from infiltrating the stadium. So on match day there was a quasi-militant atmosphere to protect the event from these extremists. After all, in the past, meetings between Greek and Turkish teams have been known to result in serious riots and violence.

Talking to Mr. Dedes a good two weeks before the Galatasaray match (and before I was fully aware of the threat of nationalist clashes), I asked how he felt about the fact that his team was to face a Turkish one. Mr. Dedes assured me that not only were there no negative feelings, but on the contrary, the atmosphere was very positive, since Galatasaray was a team that was “close to [Panionios’] own history”. He stated:

We plan to show them an excellent hospitality, no matter what. If there is anyone who is planning to cause any trouble we will make sure they change their mind... As far as we are concerned, it would have been like playing at home, whether we played

here or there [Turkey]. After all, I have personally played for the Greek national team in Ankara and elsewhere and I never had any sort of problem.

The members of the “Panthers” I spoke to let me know that Panionios fans have always considered themselves “gentlemen, aristocrats of a kind”; ostensibly a remnant of their upper-class Smyrna roots. This was all confirmed on match day, when I found things inside the stadium to be remarkably calm for such a match. The Panthers had defiantly hoisted their banner, which was almost long enough to run the entire length of their side of the stadium. They chanted incessantly, but not once did I hear an anti-Turkish chant; I was quite impressed by this since slogans and chants of the sort are very common in such matches. The rest of the fans were also generally calm. The only time there was some agitation was when, after Galatasaray’s second goal of the night, the few Turkish fans present started celebrating rather noisily; however, even this never got serious and ended quite soon.

I should also note some interesting reactions I noticed. First, when the Panthers started shouting their “play for the Panthers and the *προσφυγιά*” chant, a few of the fans around me (I was at the opposite side of the stadium from the Panthers) reacted ironically, indicating they found the whole notion of playing for the *προσφυγιά* fanciful and romantic. The next reaction was during half-time when the Galatasaray players were passing in front of the place where I was sitting to go to the dressing rooms, and a single spectator got up in a fury and started shouting hideous abuse at them, mostly concerning Turkey and its history. The man went on for a while, until someone, ironically commenting on the fact that all the elaborate offenses were being shouted in Greek at people who couldn’t understand a word of it, called to him to go

on shouting because “sure, they understand what you’re talking about, they know”, causing everyone around to chuckle.

Final observations

The lack of extensive knowledge and the tendency to apologize and have me talk to someone more knowledgeable, which I noted earlier, was not much different among the older fans or the few members of the teams that I managed to talk to. If anything, the older fans had less interest in learning more information. As a matter of fact, most of the old people I talked to seemed to be taken aback by my enquiries- not because they were suspicious of me or reluctant to speak, but because they seemed to find the refugee identity of their teams a rather odd subject to be discussing. Most of them were more happy telling me about their memories of the great teams of the old days, historical matches, legendary players and that sort of thing, but I had trouble getting much direct information concerning my subject from them.

A very typical conversation was with an ageing Apollon fan who was more than happy to oblige when the younger ones prompted him to tell me about the old days. The man was extremely proud of the team that won the 1958 Thessaloniki League and told me numerous tales about that team and its players. He also told me about the poverty and what the area looked like at the time etc. However, I could hardly get anything from him concerning refugees, although he was from a refugee family himself. At one instance I asked if most of the players of the '58 team were refugees. The man looked at me curiously and answered "they were from Kalamaria". He went on to explain that only a goalkeeper who joined the club a bit later was not from Kalamaria, but failed to explain if this newcomer was a refugee or not. What a difference really from the idea that Apollon should not be called "Kalamarias", because it "belongs to the four million Pontians around the world"! Most of the old

fans I talked to took a similar stance, attaching much more importance to their pride at the success of the representatives of their neighbourhood, rather than the representatives of their particular culture.

This attitude has led to one of my important conclusions for this dissertation, namely that the emphasis on the role of the clubs as a means of preservation of a specific culture or identity is a rather new thing- I believe that in the old days the refugee identity was something that was taken for granted, not something that needed to be emphasized. The clubs were part of a refugee community and that made them *de facto* refugee clubs; and their members and fans had a specific culture and tradition, so that was also the tradition of the clubs. The clubs do not seem to have been considered a means of preserving a tradition (at least by the common fans, maybe some of the more intellectual of the founders saw it a bit differently), it was just a natural consequence.

Besides this common attitude of the older fans, various factors make this idea more plausible. For instance, in all the old photos of fans, I have not seen a single slogan with explicit reference to a refugee identity. There are of course many pictures of fans celebrating victories by dancing traditional dances and the like, but I think it is safe to presume that they would have celebrated anything that way (after all that is what tradition is about) and that it was not directly connected to the team. Another indication of all this was given to me by Mr. Georgios Pantelakis (Γεώργιος Παντελάκης), the son of a refugee family, who has become a legendary figure for P.A.O.K., having held the position of General Secretary of the club between 1960 and 1971, and that of President during the period 1975-1984 (the golden age of the club, during which it won the league once and the cup twice). Mr. Pantelakis, like so many others, apologized for knowing very little about the historical details, and tried to

suggest I read the books on the history of P.A.O.K. or talk to someone who can help me more. Eventually he told me: “You know, we didn’t think much about that sort of thing at the time [...] Our main concern was that the team was economically healthy and doing well on the pitch [...] The well being of the club was the thing, everything else was secondary [...]”.

Mr. Linardos on the other hand, expressed his pride at the interest shown by young fans in his book and the history of Panionios in general. He confirmed that, although the administration and other people around the club showed relatively little interest, the fans (and mainly the younger ones) bought a respectable amount of copies, and still ask him where they may purchase it, long after it’s gone out of print. Furthermore, I would like to point out the very recent addition of the Pontian eagle and the original emblem of the Smyrna era on the jerseys of Kalamaria and Panionios respectively, not to mention the movement to rename Apollon Kalamarias. The fact that this sort of move was not deemed necessary earlier seems to me to strengthen my argument that the perception of the role of the clubs has changed in later days. As a young Kalamaria fan said to me: “when I was a kid, talked to me about Apollon all the time- about Apollon, not *προσφυγιά*, refugees and all that. Those things I found out on my own”. This young man’s grandparents were refugees.

I have already mentioned the well-established fact that the local Greeks did not welcome the refugees. I also mentioned some examples of this when it came to sports, for instance where it is mentioned in the “Rossoneri” site that the locals “doubted the quality of the people who settled in the *τσαμουριά*”. Those I spoke to often mentioned this attitude. For instance, I found out there exists a long standing rivalry between Panionios and the Nea Smyrni Sports Club (*Αθλητικός Όμιλος Νέας*

Σμύρνης), a rather obscure club I had not heard of before. The reason is that the Nea Smyrni Sports Club existed before the arrival of the refugees, which sparked a sort of “territorial battle”.

The interesting thing is that, reading the literature available on the teams, I found that the subject of the hostility towards the refugee clubs is hardly touched upon. The P.A.O.K. book (Anonymous 2005) makes passing reference to it, in the context of the departure of refugees from other teams to join P.A.O.K.; Linardos (1998) mentions the general resentment in passing, but mentions no specific problems concerning the team; the Kalamaria book mentions nothing really, and Notaris (2002: 36) essentially dismisses the subject as a minor one. I consider this lack of mention of the subject to be a remnant of the many decades during which delving into matters of differences within the nation was strongly discouraged in Greece. In recent years this taboo has been fading (when it comes to the refugees) in other fields, but since sports writing has hardly been touched by scientific trends and methods there has been little change there. As an example of the sort of narrative that was encouraged in the past, I present an excerpt from a book about A.E.K., published sometime in the late 1960s- early 1970s:

The Constantinople athletes and footballers that were scattered in various teams got transfer (that their clubs keenly offered, recognizing the high national goal that the founding of A.E.K. served), and relatively soon A.E.K.’s first team had been formed. (Goumas *et.al.* n.d.: 1526)

This version of events seems highly unlikely, and I dare call it romanticized. On the other hand one comes across evidence of the real events from less obvious

sources. In Pantazis (1957 v. C) which is a chronicle of Nea Smyrni based on local newspaper publications and does not focus on Panionios, I found the following:

An article, bearing the title “Protect the interests of Nea Smyrni” and signed “Sports-lover”, is published in the local paper under the indication “External contributions”.

[...] [The subject is] the writer’s disagreement with the offering of the Nea Smyrni Gymnasium for use by a club foreign to Nea Smyrni, and not to the Nea Smyrni Sports Club, which had been functioning with great success for a decade already. (Pantazis 1957 v. C: 158)

In the exact same book I also happened upon the following, related passage:

Following objections against the handing over of the Gymnasium of Nea Smyrni to Panionios, particularly from members of the Nea Smyrni Sports Club [...], the new board of Panionios was elected and finally included *Νεοσμυρναίους*⁷².

Thus, after the President and members of the Nea Smyrni Sports Club, but also the Tennis Club, retreated from their demands, the Gymnasium would later – around 1940 – be given to Panionios [for conditional use], even if it had to be done under the pressure of the then regime [...] (Pantazis 1957 v. C: 361)

Besides verifying the what the members of the “Panthers” had said about the rivalry with the Nea Smyrni Sport Club, the things mentioned – and implied – in these passages seem to me too important and interesting not to have been mentioned anywhere in the books written about Panionios.

⁷² *Νεοσμυρναίος* (Neosmyrneos) denotes a local of Nea Smyrni.

As for the political orientation of the fans of the refugee clubs, my observations turned out more-or-less as I had expected. The days of the “red refugees” are certainly gone, but there is no uniformity of attitude either between the different teams, or among the fans of each team. Most of the P.A.O.K. and Kalamaria fans I spoke to seemed to be leaning towards the right – the P.A.O.K. fans even more so. However, I know for a fact their point of view is not the exclusive one: for instance, I have met P.A.O.K. fans who define themselves as anarchists, anti-fascists or communists. In the case of Panionios, a team strongly associated with the left as late as the 1980s, the attitude of the fans I spoke to leans far more to the left. Again however, this cannot be taken to be an absolute truth, since there are clearly those who disagree. One cannot draw many general conclusions, except that the fans of the refugee teams can no longer be taken to represent a solid bloc on either side of the political spectrum.

Part IV: Conclusion

Through my research, I have found the teams in question be keen to advertise their refugee heritage. If anything, this is an initial indication of a continuing refugee identity. Fans and administration alike consider this identity to be one of, if not the defining characteristic of their clubs and this makes up one the core elements of their “imagined communities”.

However, this identity is mainly a symbolic thing. The symbolism may be potent and omnipresent, but the organic relationship between the teams and the refugee community is mostly lost. Of course this has a lot to do with the practical fact that the refugee community itself has lost its cohesion and distinctiveness.

It is my impression, however, that this “loss” of the original strength of the refugee community has not eradicated the refugee identity of the clubs, but changed it. For lack of a more concrete connexion, the fans and clubs have turned to this high level of symbolism- in many ways I think the refugee identity has been more publicly pronounced in recent decades than in the more distant past. I believe this to be a parallel to a very similar process taking place in the refugee community in general: as the Asia Minor catastrophe, the lost homelands and their culture start to fade out of living memory, they pass into the sphere of the symbolical. This has resulted in an intensified interest in all sorts of organized activity concerning the refugee culture and history. What I still find lacking in the case of the teams is that this interest has not yet taken the form of more scientific and academic research.

As for what shape this identity takes exactly, variety is great. It is natural that the whole concept of remembering the lost homelands and the tragedy of the refugees

easily lends itself to irredentist and nationalist ideas. However, these are not the only ideas stemming from this narrative. From hatred of modern Turks to a will to re-acquaint themselves with these former compatriots, and from highly conservative social and political understandings to the much less so, the fans of the teams have very varied points of view.

As a whole, I hope this research has offered some information on the history of the clubs and insight into their current situation. Although far from conclusive or all-encompassing, I believe that the comparative nature of the dissertation and the approach of the refugee team phenomenon as a whole, and not on the basis of separate clubs, should add an useful perspective to the study of the refugee phenomenon in Greece and also of Greek sports.

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Appendix

Pictures 7-9 are reprinted from *Μια Ζωή Απόλλων*, Anonymous 2006.

Pictures 10-17 are reprinted from *Πανθεσσαλονίκειος Αθλητικός Όμιλος Κωνσταντινουπολιτών 1926-2005*, Anonymous 2005.

The emblems (images 1-6) have been found through the internet.

CLUB EMBLEMS



1. P.A.O.K.



2. APOLLON KALAMARIAS



3. PANIONIOS



4. A.E.K.



5. PONTIAN EAGLE



6. OLD PANIONIOS



7. An Apollon squad in 1926, founding year of the club. Jerseys are clearly white-striped. The other colour appears to be black.



8. Junior Apollon squad, 1926



9. Apollon squad, no earlier than 1928. In this case the colours seem to be the familiar red and black.



10. A P.A.O.K. match in 1927. P.A.O.K. players appear in plain-colour jerseys and white shorts.

11. The P.A.O.K. team that won the Thessaloniki championship in 1936-37.



12. P.A.O.K. outfit in 1945





13. P.A.O.K. squad
in 1930



14. P.A.O.K. squad
in 1931



15. P.A.O.K. players during
the 1933-34 season



16. PAOK captain G. Koudas with his Ajax counterpart Johan Cruyff in 1973. The PAOK eagle, both on the banner in Cruyff's hands and on Koudas jersey, is clearly of the more "traditional" sort.



17. PAOK players in 1956 (in white jerseys and black shorts). An early example of the now standard version of the PAOK emblem.