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Provincial Anthropology, Circumlocution, and the Copious Use of Everything

Laurie Kain Hart

Abstract

Provincial towns are not miniature replicas of national metropolises but centers with their own trajectories of aesthetic and civic development. They operate in a regional context in relation both to the rural villages within their spheres of influence and to international cultural circuits. Inhabitants of peripheral towns in Greece negotiate the challenges of pluralism, modernization, and the hegemony of the nation state in their own social, political, and cultural idioms of accommodation and distancing. A close analysis of the modern history, city planning, and architecture of Florina in Western Greek Macedonia, particularly in the period between WWI and WWII, shows the development of an eclectic stylistic lingua franca in the aftermath of the appropriation of Muslim property and the demolition and suppression of the Muslim architectural presence. Provincial border towns manage their changing modes of heterogeneity in the context of an intimate space-in-common that generates an ambiguous pluralist semiotics in architecture as in dance.

Provincial towns have been recognized somewhat tangentially in anthropology, as nodes in the web of relations between rural areas and metropolitan centers. I suggest that they merit greater attention in social and cultural theory than this focus on their markets and bureaucracies implies. They constitute a particularly dynamic and interesting site for understanding how people residing in the hinterlands realize the visions they have of themselves materially and culturally within the national and international “hierarchies of value” (Herzfeld 2004) that accord them little respect. Here I look at two material aspects of this self-formation in the provincial city of Florina, in north-west Greek Macedonia: the history of official municipal planning, and the spontaneous growth of a town architecture between WWI and WWII. At the time of incorporation in the Greek state (or more precisely, over an extended period beginning
well before incorporation), the local municipal powers formulated an ambitious plan to refashion the existing Turko-Macedonian town fabric into a “European” (specifically French) style. The product of these ambitions is a reflection not only of these “liberation” Euro-Hellenic designs but also of the complex border-land cultural stratigraphy of the town’s built environment and national and international politics.

The ethnic and cultural elimination of the town’s Muslim population appears at first sight to be inscribed, before the fact, in the design of the city from at least 1914, but a close examination reveals that the story is more complex. There was considerable local communal accommodation from the late 1800s to the mid 1920s, but it came to a halt with the intensification of international Greco-Turkish hostilities in the aftermath of the Lausanne agreement and the exchange of populations. On the other hand in the long term, the ideal-typical neo-classical project was thwarted, complemented, diverted, and reinterpreted as a result of the diverse origins of the city’s population and under the pragmatic pressures of refugee immigration. The expulsion of the Muslim population in 1923 led within a decade to the eradication of the key Muslim institutions and monuments. The ethnocultural diversity of the newly assembled mostly Christian ecumene, however, posed its own challenges. In their emerging architectural lingua franca town-dwellers sought a particular kind of modernity whose eclectic vocabulary intimates a particular kind of accommodation to cultural heterogeneity. The town also drew its picture of itself against the background of the quite different forms of modernity and identity embodied in the built environment of the surrounding villages in the countryside.

The provincial imagination at work in Florina derives from the social heterogeneity (as well as the peculiar intimacy) of a town of diverse immigrants and natives, and is especially pronounced because of Florina’s location in a politically contested border zone. Its eclecticism is simultaneously autochthonous and regional and cosmopolitan. Intellectuals and urbanites have often mocked the lively appetite for “culture” in the provinces. Provincial tastes are not easily categorized; nonetheless they constitute, in all their diversity, a culture that is felt to be “native.” Town dwellers appropriate this culture (whatever its origins) and understand it as a kind of “national” culture—in other words as emblematic of a collective national identity conceived, almost defiantly, at a tangent from metropolitan conceptions of that identity. Provincial styles of public discourse frequently display a regionalism that privileges the notion of a space-in-common over that of ethno-historical genealogies that are recognized to be dangerous, and are censored and suppressed (if dissident) or muted (if dominant) in the caldron of close interaction.
As philosophers have argued, (Langer 1953; Casey 1996) and as I have suggested in relation to the political valences of landscape (Hart 2004), the human-built environment places in juxtaposition objects whose relationship to one another is “unresolved.” Architectural and topographical elements are equalized as part of visual or haptic fields: they claim space, and they assert contiguity, though they predicate nothing. Disparateness and fuzziness, which are inimical to propositional discourse, are normal phenomena in presentational materiality. Planners contrive in the service of political or aesthetic ideals to eliminate this fuzziness, but historical entropy tends to work against the longevity of those efforts. Just as in the countryside local oral geography preserves Turkish, Albanian, and Slavic toponyms, traces of the urban Muslim presence are well known in the town: this pile of rubble was the ham-mam; this stump of stones the last standing minaret. Furthermore, as James Scott (1998) has eloquently shown in his work on state planning, those campaigns to simplify and make “legible” are embraced more energetically in some times (post conquest, under totalitarian regimes) and places (capital cities) than others.

Center and periphery in national ideology

Provincial towns, during periods of national consolidation, publicly commit to fulfilling the national agenda and yet at the same time are in tension with metropolitan interests in the pursuit of resources. As Tziovas writes: “regionalism in Greece does not take the form of ‘unfulfilled’ nationalism, as in the case of regions in Spain and elsewhere; it instead represents resistance to the state’s centre from peripheral areas” (1994:115). Importantly, for the case of Florina, in the early twentieth century contest between liberal Venizelism and its conservative and radical alternatives,

\[ \ldots (a)nti-Venizelists, for reasons of political expediency, tended to defend the minorities against the modern, liberal, and national state sought by the Venizelists, which aspired to control, assimilate and neutralize the religious and ethnic minorities. Hence during this period the anti-Venizelists together with the Communists—each group for different reasons—favoured and sheltered ethnic and regional particularisms, in contrast to Venizelism, which emerged as the champion of neutralization and assimilation. (112) \]

Municipal officials aim to link local interests to national resources as well as to preserve a certain—often strategically ambiguous—exceptionalism. The difference between perspectives at different scales of the national political hierarchy—between official neutralization and the
assertion of provincial specificity—is apparent in the contrast between two prefaces to a guide to Hellenistic archaeological sites in Florina. Greek architectural guides conventionally exploit archaeological evidence to assert national genealogical-territorial claims, and the secretary general of Western Macedonia does so in his introductory remarks: “Every archaeological investigation, every guide, and every research study that substantiates the Greekness (Ellinikotita) and historicity of this area, helps us to understand and protect the riches that Greek soil conceals” (Siatras 1996:7–9). Greekness and historicity are conflated, and “a people without a historical memory”—that is, a genealogically undefined people—“is a lost people.” But the preface written by the prefect of Florina makes a different point. It notes first that cosmopolitan archaeology has neglected Florina. It was the municipality, in the 1930s (shortly, I would note, after the destruction of the town’s mosques), and subsequently the prefecture that have funded excavation in Florina. Archaeology’s objective is to awaken the local people (katikous) to their “cultural heritage (politisitiki klironomia), for which they bear the ultimate responsibility” (ibid: 11–13). It is the Prefectural Administration’s goal to contribute to the cultural “armor” of the region and its strength as a locality.

I want to emphasize from the outset an important if obvious point: that is, that this town and its region are located at the northwest border of the Greek state adjacent to Albania and the Federal Republic of Macedonia. Border areas are unruly because they inevitably throw into relief both politically marked difference and the constant processes of hybridity and assimilation which subvert the essentialist premises of national boundaries (e.g., Hart 1999). The extreme population movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in (what was to become) the western Macedonian border area of Greece expose what Patrick Finney has called the “longue durée quality of nation-formation” (Finney 1993). They include not only the 1919 Bulgarian-Greek population exchange and the Greek-Turkish exchange of 1923, but also innumerable significant, informal, earlier shifts to towns such as Florina by Muslim and Christian Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Gypsies, Jews, as well as the immigration of Greek Christians from the South after the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman Tanzimat reforms. Despite its role in the hellenization of the northwest border area, Florina’s “akritic” self-presentation is full of surprising ambiguities and accommodations, especially in its “cultural” manifestations.

In the course of fieldwork I conducted during the 1990s in the villages surrounding Lake Prespa in northwest Greek Macedonia (Hart 2004), I became aware that rural life could not be understood as a thing on its own but should be conceptualized in regional terms, in relation
to the towns and their styles of life, identity, and cultural production. Florina’s significance to understanding the villages around has been increasingly clear to me. The older children from the rural areas go to high school there and often settle there. During WWII and the Greek Civil War (1946–1949) whole villages were exiled to the town of Florina. Its weekly market is still economically and socially significant. Florina is not the only regional town serving the Prespa area: Kastoria has offered economic opportunities (though fewer since the fur industry began to fail in the early 1990s). Florina is not a center of production, but rather a commercial and civil service hub. Nonetheless, despite hard times, Florina’s architectural development between the wars was remarkable for its exuberance and up-to-date modernity; and equally remarkable, in its different way, was the monumentality of interwar building in the rural areas. In this paper I stress these two points in making a first attempt at theorizing the built environment of Florina: the nature of the town as provincial rather than metropolitan and the importance of the dialectical relationship of town and country in the provinces.

*Objects, persons, and a historicized Greece*

My focus here is on the built environment as a social field in which people collaborate to produce, more or less intentionally, a setting for their public and private lives. Socio-cultural anthropology has put special emphasis since the 1980s on what people “do with things” in their fabrication of social worlds, focusing on the one hand on the construction and phenomenology of space and on the other on objects of consumption and exchange. In the case of Greece, Anglo-American social anthropology of rural areas has from its beginnings looked carefully at settlement and housing in connection with kinship, gender, and community (Campbell 1964; Du Boulay 1974; Friedl 1962; Hart 1992; Kenna 1976; Sutton 1999; Sutton 2000). Greek folklorists and ethnographers—notably George Megas and Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros—also paid particular attention to the house as part of a system of cosmological-economic orientations. In fact one can hardly imagine an ethnography of Greece that does not begin with such basic questions of orientation. Urban studies have also emphasized housing, style, and city plan (Faubion 1993; Hirschon-Philippaki 1989; Kenna 1976) in relation to social identity and cultural aspiration; and Michael Herzfeld’s *A Place in History* (Herzfeld 1991) in particular, has brought controversies concerning architecture into the center stage of social analysis.

The more general question of object-person relationships in Greece has received less attention than it merits. Christina Vlachoutsikou
(Vlachoutsikou 1997) has written about consumption as a vehicle for social relations in a provincial town. There have been scattered examinations of the use of ritual objects such as φυλακτά (votive offerings). However while regional folklorists happily compile descriptive catalogs of buildings, ornaments, utensils, and costumes, social anthropologists documenting craft, adornment, or shelter have been stigmatized for concerning themselves with historical particularism and the “idiographic” (as A. R. Radcliffe-Brown dismissively put it). I argue that, to the contrary, it is essential to an understanding of class, ethnicity, kinship and culture to reflect on the question of where people do or do not engage in aesthetic elaboration and on how they work with material things to assert their social identities.

Since the 1970s, a series of regional archaeological research projects in focusing on material culture have made significant contributions to our understanding of Greek social history. These long-term collaborations involved scholars from diverse fields but all were concerned with material culture, exchange, and the human exploitation of the natural environment. Beginning with Dimen and Friedl’s *Regional Variation in Modern Greece and Cyprus* (Dimen 1976) a series of publications, mostly in the field of archaeology but also more recently in ethnography (Kardulias 1994; Sutton 2000), has offered a picture of the dynamism of the rural universe in its material-social aspect. Two major conclusions of these investigations—manifest in the collaborations of the 1970s but elaborated theoretically from the 1990s forward—are now inescapable: first, that village settlement over time in Greece has been markedly fluid, even unstable, and, second, that it is crucially important to study the relationship between a given site and its broader region, that is, to take, as Michael Jameson calls it, a “middle range view” situated between the local and the global (in Sutton 2000). These multi-disciplinary research projects emphasize local agency but global connection in the relations of persons to things and, in concert with post-colonial theory, reject the concept of a passive periphery. In working through material culture these approaches usefully abandon a monumental perspective to focus on, as Sutton put it, “household level responses to events in history” (2000:18).

Marina Petronoti (Petronoti 2000), gives us an excellent model of this “middle range view.” She shows how class stratification and occupational differentiation contributed to the formation of the town of Kranidhi in the Argolid region in the Peloponnesus. In the early nineteenth century, sea traders introduced new means of stratification and new cosmopolitan tastes, such as that for Italian-plan churches; a
later retraction to national networks produced a leveling of classes and a change in architectural vocabularies.

As Petronoti implies, a focus on provincial towns prevents us from slipping into de-historicized and socially simplified versions of national ethnology. Rural villages, in their twentieth century development, shape themselves out of materials offered by the larger environment—such as, for example, experiences of emigration and immigration, and as I argue here, the cultural thesauruses of their provincial towns. Rather than regarding village modes of building and social organization as the retarded wake of metropolitan fashions, I interpret these as outcomes of decisions formed in the context of a dialectic of self-identification. Rural forms, which are distinct from those of towns, are part of a dialogue of manners and customs. In taking this approach I am following the lead of ethnographers (J. Barnes, Sutti Ortiz) who have de-essentialized the apparently simple and silent veneer of rural culture and provided its dialogic context.

Exactly because of their historicism and idiosyncrasy provincial towns have never been a popular item of foreign consumption. Antiquarian travelers and tourists have celebrated Greece’s classical architecture since the 18th century; beginning in the 1920s, this celebration was extended to the organic plans and pristine geometries of its Aegean island villages. On the twin foundations of monumentality and simplicity, Greece has been marketed in calendars and tourist brochures as outside of time. Ignoring the facts of Greece’s ideological, political, and material implication in transnational networks, this strategy eradicates both the polluting influence of the Muslim East and the disappointing familiarity of the West in a purified object of consumption. The marketed Greece of the Acropolis and Mykonos is a Greece without a consciousness of itself or of anyone else. But the history and social life of the provincial towns tell a different story.

Paying attention to provincial towns makes us pay attention, then, to a discourse of regionalism that may flow with or against the tides of nationalist self-presentation (c.f. Herzfeld 1991). This is often a paradoxical regionalism, because unlike cosmopolitan ethnology that wants its folk “raw,” it will be—it insists on being—both urban and autochthonous, cosmopolitan and indigenous. It will have its heterogeneity and eat it too. Intensely nationalist and xenophobic organizations and movements flourish in Florina as in other such towns. What is sometimes ignored is that they can also give rise to a different tactic of pragmatic accommodation. The use of idioms of circumlocution for collective self-reference is one of these. The free appropriation of heterogeneous cultural materials
(dance, music, architecture), often liberated from their conventional meanings, is another. To understand the formation of this aesthetic and ethical character, we need to take a close look at the formation of such towns in the course of the transition from Ottoman to national rule.

Florina at the end of the Ottoman period

Florina began its modern history as a semi-fortified Turkish garrison built on the humble frame of a Macedonian Christian town. The Turkish traveler Evliya Chelebi observed that in 1658 it had “six neighborhoods and paradisiacal vineyards, many mosques, two baths, and a hundred shops . . .” (Tsapánou-Kostsopoulou 2002:8). The mosques—Chelebi lists fourteen, and three madrasas, one teke (dervish lodge), as well as two hans—were newly built, or converted churches; Christians helped themselves to holy water from the central mosque, perhaps because of its connection to a former church. (Today, not a single mosque survives.) The building types were standard for the time; not until the early twentieth century did the Ottoman building program expand to include new administrative buildings in the European style, an innovation produced by the Reforms. At the end of the nineteenth century, population figures were more or less unchanged from what they had been centuries earlier (Kaskamanides 2004); but the composition of that population had begun to shift. By 1905 there were 2000 Greeks; in 1928, 8000. (Statistics from 1910 record 2156 Orthodox Greeks, 500 “schismatic Bulgarianizers,” and 6500 Muslims.)

Florina was not much admired by European travelers in the dying days of the Ottoman Empire, particularly, it seems, in contrast to its rival a little to the south, Kastoria. The French traveler Bérard describes it in 1896 as consisting of 1500 houses of Albanians and “converted Slavs,” with perhaps a hundred “Turkish” families and 500 Christian families. “These Slavs nonetheless call themselves Greek and speak Greek—with us at least” (Bérard 1911 (1896):307). Bérard identifies only a few hundred Bulgarian sympathizers, but notes that the local Turkish administration is pro-Bulgarian. The Christian quarter, we are told, is rustic: wooden houses, dirty streets.

Florina of this period was divided into a number of neighborhoods—at least seven named districts. While there were some neighborhoods with mixed populations, the majority appear to have been more or less introverted and unmixed ethnoreligious clusters (Kaskamanides 2004). Neighborhoods were named according to occupations (e.g., potters), ethnic or religious groups (e.g., Arnaot, lodge of the Dervishes, Armenian, etc.), territorial markers (e.g., the Muslim cemetery), indi-
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vidual names (e.g., Kara Akhmet) and other diverse phenomena. Varosi, along the river, was the center of the town during the Ottoman period, and initially Muslim; but after the 1840s it included Christian families. The vocabulary of domestic architecture was Turko-Macedonian: upper floors with *sachnísia* (projecting bays), many windows, *ónadas* (reception rooms), and bedrooms; lower floors securely enclosed, with few windows, and devoted to household services.

Bulgarians and Muslim Albanians had regularly attacked the town in the 17th and 18th centuries, and after the news of the Greek liberation hit in 1823, the Turks tore down the *simandra* of the churches and allowed the “Turkalbanians” to pillage again (Bosdelekidou 2000:21). But already in 1856 a French envoy, invited by the Greek state to advise on public works, had stopped in Florina; new churches were being built, and the change from an Ottoman to a Greek Christian order was in process. The Muslim population had begun a piecemeal retreat considerably before the incorporation of Florina into the Greek state in 1912. The 1910 census lists a proliferation of occupational categories (179) of which only a very few (33) were “Muslim.”

The town was oriented toward commerce in the hands of Christians well before liberation (Iliadou-Tachou 2004).

Kastoria, Florina’s twin town a little to the south, had a different complexion in Bérard’s report: two hundred Muslim houses, a few hundred Salonikan Jewish families, and more than a thousand Christian “Greeks” most of whom spoke Vlach at home. The wealthy were attached to the Greek party, the schools were Greek; Bérard tells us that the adherents of the Vlach (Romanianizing) party are “*enfants terribles*” who are indulged by the Turkish authority as a provocation to the Greeks. Only south of Kastoria does the land of the Rum, the Greeks, “Roumlouk,” begin, according to Bérard (1911 [1896]:323). Indeed a century before Bérard in the time of the traveler Pouqueville, Kastoria was Turkish and Slav and little Greek was spoken; but the Slavs, Bérard tells us, were conquered by the Great idea (“*ont été conquis à l’Idée*”), and the Turks began to withdraw, leaving only a few Muslim beys in virtual exile.

Styles of dwelling were very much a focus of travelers’ accounts. Bérard tells us that Kastoria is clearly “Greek” at the first glance. From the south, he says, it looks quite a lot like Ochrid—a town on a lake, with Byzantine or Turkish ruined fortifications at the summit and Christian houses on the southern slopes. The sense of national formation is already in the air:

The Muslims, abandoning their konaks and mosques of stone, have withdrawn at some distance to their inland gardens; they seem to be camping in their new buildings around hastily built djamis. But Ochrid was visibly
Slav, and the Greek nationality of Kastoria is apparent at a glance. Houses of stone, cornices of stone, great vaulted bays, ostentatious facades, nothing is lacking that makes, for a Greek, the beauty of a “catastima” (establishment). The Greek establishes himself for eternity. Earth and wood suffices for the Turk or the Slav who are eternally content with provisional things. The Greek employs only stone. (1911 [1896]:325–326, my translation)

For Bérard, the deforested landscape and the bare hill and the occasional cluster of cypresses about a church on a flat horizon signified the presence of the Greeks. Describing his journey through the basin of Kastoria, he writes, in Orientalist nostalgia:

The river leaves the lake without a murmur and runs slowly in its too-large bed beneath the rocks and mosses. The plane trees, walnuts, and chestnuts mingle their large leaves. Two white herons walk among the water lilies in a sun-dappled shade.

We stopped, seized by the vaguely sad charm of this landscape: we are perhaps the last to contemplate it. Tomorrow, in these charming places, the Greek will appear, trailing behind him the tumult and agitation of our modern life. These beautiful herons who have so long possessed the lake waters, these beautiful trees that have so long lent their shadow to the Turk’s sleep, will give way to vines, to cultures, to mills, to the noisy establishments of the industrious Greek. . . . (1911 [1896]:327, my translation)

Bérard was right about the radical changes that hellenization would bring, although he seems not to have anticipated the role the French would play in the transformation of Florina.

The French plan, and the end of the “Turkish” style

Recent historical studies richly document the process of urban self-invention in turn of the twentieth century Florina. It is not a question of an instant ethnic inversion, as we can see if we take a close look at politics and space through the period of its incorporation into the Greek state and during WW1. In 1893–94 the railway line was extended from Thessaloniki to Monastir and passed near the town. The connection to Monastir was to become especially important to the character of Florina. In 1916–19, as part of the Campagne d’Orient, the French occupied the area; in August 1917 the French fought German forces in Florina for seventeen days and consolidated the Greek (or more accurately at that moment Franco-Hellenic) hegemony won in 1912. The French built an Army hospital, barracks, a cemetery, stables, and several railway lines and stations, and well before the official approval of the town plan, demolition and construction projects were underway. The transformation of the fabric of Florina was in process by 1913 with the establishment of a
new slaughterhouse and the beginnings of electrification. The national leader Venizelos visited the town in 1914; when in the same year the town hired the French engineer Alfredo Leguillon to make a street plan, the pressing agenda concerning “empty dwellings” and “reconstruction” make it clear that this “incorporation” was also—and already—a calamitous uprooting of existing and former inhabitants. After 1923, the center was moved south away from the river, towards avenues with new names such as “Alexander the Great” and “Pavlos Melas.”

Still, the mayor of Florina after liberation was a Muslim, one Ali Riza Bey. Ali Riza Bey finally fled with the arrival of French forces in 1916, and a Greek, Tegos Sapoutzis, was appointed mayor. With the constitution of the Town Council, the first organized body of local rule took shape. Representatives of the Islamic community were included on the Municipal Council although they had declined to participate in the Mayoral selection committee (Iliadou-Tachou 1995:65). In fact, relations among religious communities were strained over the issue of “national struggle” but were not broken. Interestingly, the committee “for the collective raising of money for the national struggle” included both a Christian and a Muslim Municipal representative, as well as four Christian and three Muslim townsmen and one Rabbi (66). Despite this show of diversity and solidarity the interests of different communities in the new urban formation publicly clashed: the Jews objected to holding a market on Saturday and wanted a separate graveyard, Muslims wanted community schools and objected to the central relocation of markets that involved expropriations of Waqf land (66). This was, after all, the time in the Balkans, preceding the establishment of the League of Nations, of the “mixed committees”—appointed commissions of representatives from opposed communities and antagonistic Powers organized to settle issues ranging from the fixing of international borders (e.g., Albania) to adjudicating the rights of minorities to state education.

Thus in the years 1914 and 1915, and again in 1918–1919, that is in the years of WWI and before the Asia Minor “Disaster” in 1922, the town council appears to have included a majority Christian and a minority “Ottoman” membership. In the consistent dissent of the “Ottoman” representatives from the resolutions of the new town plan we hear the sad protests of the old provincial order, overruled both by the initiatives of the metropolitan Ottoman reformers and by the ascendant local Christian forces. Surveys and a local land register (that have disappeared) were ordered in 1915; plans were made for the setting aside of land for an agricultural station and new markets; the problem of stabilizing the banks of the river that runs through the town were also discussed. The Ottoman Council objected to the radically new city map: it showed a
fully Europeanized system of broad, straight avenues named after Greek and French liberation heroes (before 1915, neighborhoods, rather than streets, had names) with *ronds points* and central squares flatly imposed on the existing web of narrow dead-end streets, irregular property lines, and gardens, interspersed with the imposing houses of beys and officials (see Figure 1).  

The complaints of the Ottoman councilors were overridden: the majority council members accused them of trickery aimed at delaying reform in the interests of preserving the town’s “Turkish look” (Council minutes cited in Tsapánou-Kostsopoúlou 2002:14). The minority managed some small victories, blocking this or that expropriation, delaying the relocation of the central market, but they were consistently overruled on the larger issues. The last version of Leguillon’s plan—a plan in accordance with “the learned study and opinion of specialist French engineers and scientists” (it was ever after called the “French plan”) and requiring massive demolitions—was accepted in 1918 and in 1919 signed by, in ascending order, the Mayor, the Prefect, the Governor of Western Macedonia, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of the Interior and Alexander, King of the Hellenes, himself.

Figure 1. Leguillon’s town plan of Florina, 1920, with the grid of new market and streets superimposed on existing fabric.
Despite what seems to be the inexorable march of ethnic transformation here, there were at least 7 functioning mosques until the summer of 1924 (Kaskamanides 2004) when the Muslims were finally subjected to compulsory deportation under the Lausanne agreement (by which Muslims in Greece were deported to Turkey, and Orthodox Christians in Turkey deported to Greece.) All of the existing mosques had originally been included in the grid plan of 1919 and posed no obstruction to its enforcement; rather, according to Kaskamanides, the decision to demolish the town’s Ottoman towers and minarets and Muslim places of worship came not from the exigencies of the city plan but “rather as an act of revenge for the actions of the Turkish government [against Christian monuments]” in Anatolia: the minutes of 12 April 1926 record the Town Council’s decision on the immediate destruction of mosques. In 1927, the Ottoman clock tower—featured picturesquely in French postcards of the WW1 Occupation period as the “le tour carré”—was also consigned to demolition as “misinguided, vulgar, and tasteless” (Kaskamanides 2004:101). Although in Istanbul European and Europeanizing planners by the mid- to late-nineteenth century had accepted minarets as having a “picturesque effect” (Çelik 1986:71), this was not the case in Greece. The Christian polity, newly consolidated against its own fractures, was purging itself of its own too-close intimacy with the Turk. It aimed for a new petit bourgeois building vocabulary of its own invention.

In cities such as Thessaloniki the new mobility of subjects of the Empire after the mid 1800s had created a two-tiered development of, on the one hand, distressed refugee quarters, and, on the other, Europeanized elite zones. On a minor scale the same processes took place in Florina but much later, and they were intensified after the Balkan Wars and after liberation. The influx of refugees after 1922 and the “exchange of populations” with the new Turkeyompelled the town council to begin a series of modifications to the “French plan” that would continue throughout the century under the pressure of fiscal realities and historical events. After the transfer of populations, the local struggles were intense: there was pressure to auction appropriated land, increase housing, provide city services, and at the same time to realize the orderly French plan. Tension between provincial and national powers was also evident: the Municipality had to buy property gained in the exchange of populations from its owner, the National Bank. Much of the settlement in the late 1920s and early 1930s was unregulated, and the plan had to be constantly adjusted to suit the facts on the ground.

Town planning histories tend to focus on the one hand on linear progress toward “modernization” brought about by new urban designs, and on the other on the irreparable loss of “historic” buildings or
neighborhoods. A complementary approach, however, would understand urban and rural property transformation as key traumas and romances in the history of families, as critical hubs of the history of persons as subjects of national development. The biographies of Florina inhabitants testify to the impact of these transitions. The daughter of an immigrant from Monastir still lived, in the 1990s, in the townhouse her father built in 1919 and in which she had grown up. The stained glass panes in the interior doors, the wall-plaster painted to resemble floral wall-paper, the green glazed ceramic kitchen tiles, and most of all the elaborate wood carving of the front door (see Figure 2), were the material signs of a life aggressively and successfully re-rooted after three major regional wars.

On the other hand, we hear the tale of Omar Aga, who lived in Florina until the exchange of populations, and who, “on the journey to

Figure 2. Door in Florina, ca. 1919.
Turkey, killed himself from worry [perhaps best translated as “depression”] for all that he had lost.” He had owned most of the houses on two avenues and extensive fields, all of which went to the exchange fund of the National Bank (Mekasis 1994:34).

Town planning and the context of the Ottoman Reforms

The appropriation of properties belonging to “exchanged Ottomans” becomes the critical premise for the modernization of the town—if only because of the extensive land holdings of the religious foundations and traditional elites, and because the revenues for municipal projects and urban infrastructure were never, even during the reforms of the 19th century, provided by the Ottoman Porte. Communities had raised the money for their own “improvements”—and in the Greek case most often through the contributions of expatriate commercial elites. Henri Lefebvre’s observation that power exerts itself in spatial form could not be better exemplified than though the record of European Turkey. The widening of the streets, regularization of plots, expansion and relocation of squares, installation of government offices in appropriately large and elaborate buildings, and ultimately the provision of housing to new immigrants all depended eventually on the demolition or appropriation of Ottoman structures (the minarets, mosques, clock towers, bridges, dwellings, cemeteries). The fate of the Turkish cemetery (“Tsioukour”) of Florina is indicative of this process: it was first seized by the town plan for a public garden, later converted to an ad hoc refugee quarter, and finally after 1933 included in the town plan with square lots (Tsapanou-Kostopoulou 2002:39).

This process of accommodation and reorientation of property continued through the twentieth century as immigrants made a place for themselves in the town. During the Balkan War of 1912, 450 families left Monastir (Bitola) for Florina. They founded a refugee association but not until 1931 was this association granted territory for a Monastir Quarter. In 1932 the association requested more land but the town council refused, arguing that the proliferation of large settlements impossible to service (with water, sewage, hygiene, transportation, electrification) was “gangrene on the Municipality.” That quarter, together with the Northern Epirot Quarter, was not included in the town plan until 1982 (52).

We can understand the transformations of Florina from the nineteenth to the twentieth century only in relation to the broader, dramatic reformation of urban topographies, economies and polities that followed the “Tanzimat” Reforms formulated by Mustafa Resit Pasa beginning in 1836 (Çelik 1986:51). These Reforms brought about extraordinary
transformations in the conception and administration of urban space. The 1865 edict of Hati Houmayioun proclaimed the political and civil equality of all subjects of the Ottoman Empire without distinction of race and religion, and the effect of this proclamation was surprisingly immediate in the physical character of the towns of Ottoman Europe. Ottoman settlements had followed a pattern of Muslim garrisons with discrete and limited building areas for Christian subjects. Building regulations had been coded to religious status, and communities were more or less self-organizing; there was nothing that amounted to a municipal organization and the extant building types (mosque, church, *han*, baths, courthouse, residences) reflected this. Non-Muslim subjects were relatively stagnant socio-spatially. Towns were of low density compared to European models, with freestanding houses. Religious and collective life was organized within neighborhoods: towns were “polycentered” and lacked a political core (Karadimou-Yerolympou 1997:87). European travelers like Bérard complained of the poor quality of the buildings and of health, the lack of roads, of poverty, and insecurity.

By 1870, mayoralties and elected municipal councils were operating in the large cities of the empire (Karadimou-Yerolympou 1997:56) and there was a new prefectural system modeled on that of Paris. City planning edicts from 1849 to 1891 were intended to change the fundamental appearance of Ottoman cities in conformity with a new imperative to modernize. Sultan Abdulhamit II brought architects from Paris to Istanbul to Europeanize the capital in accordance with French and Viennese models: essentially, to develop new building types, circulation networks, and architectural aesthetics. This Haussmanization, as Çelik observes, was highly selective and idiosyncratic: neighborhoods were reconstructed piecemeal as they were destroyed by fire (1986:80) and despite the Tanzimat rhetoric of centralization the city fabric remained relatively discontinuous. Nonetheless, in Istanbul and more gradually in the provinces, the commercial and administrative life of cities changed profoundly with the creation of what Karadimou-Yerolympou calls an “urban consciousness.”

If this was the case, there was also resistance: while many Ottoman mayors pressed for implementation of the Reforms, especially in matters of public health, some local Muslim authorities were distressed by the loss of their hegemony, particularly over land values, and “blamed everything bad on the Tamzimat” (1986:102). In Florina there was a period of Ottoman modernization (chiefly 1900–06), and a period of compromise that lasted well beyond the seal of Greek national administration.
Early 20th century development

The eradication of the Muslim presence in Florina was more or less complete by the late 1920s. There was nothing homogeneous about the Christian population, however: by 1930, there existed in Florina civic associations of refugees from Monastir, Thrace, Asia Minor, and southern Albania (the census of 1928 lists 3612 refugees in the town of Florina, or 24% of the population). Florina had its own Esperanto society; there were Ladies’ Guilds, music guilds, choirs, Masonic lodges, and educational associations. It is a convention among Florina natives today to praise Florina for its love of the arts, and there is a substantial history to that attribution. The heterogeneity of the sources of this creativity is not denied: inhabitants will assert that Florina is a crossroads of populations. In official pamphlets Floriniotes describe the mix of populations as “yigeneis (autochthonous), Vlachs, Arvanites, Pontii, Mikrasiates, and ‘tsinganoi’ (Gypsies).” The circumlocution “yigeneis” (literally earth-born) covers the unnamed Macedonian-speaking population and implies that they are part of a larger category of regional natives. This “mix,” however defined, has provided, according to these local publications a “surprisingly polymorphic local folkloric wealth” evident “in the music, in the dances and in dress, in the linguistic idioms and in traditional arts, in manners and customs” (Mouseio 1994:3).

The history of Florina is also bound up with the rise and fall of Monastir (Bitola) in the 19th century and early 20th century. Western Macedonia as a whole suffered economic recession, political violence, and massive emigration at the turn of the century; but like the region generally before the Balkan Wars, Florina also profited from the investments of return migrants from America (Gounaris 1989) as Christians bought out Muslim landowners. In 1913–14 “virtually the whole of the urban population of Monastir moved to Florina, bringing with them,” as one source puts it, “their European attire”—and the rare art of wax weaving (Mouseio 1994:42). Monastir was the center of Turkish administration of Macedonia and southern Serbia; the Christian core was mostly Vlach-speaking Greek Orthodox although there were also Romanians and adherents of the Bulgarian church. Style was paramount to the wealth of Monastir. The most important guild was that of the tailors, whose enterprises extended throughout the Balkans (83). One can imagine these tailors as purveyors not only of Europeanism in Florina, but also of the passion for style in general. Among the tailors who moved to Florina was also a significant number of immigrant Jews.

Bastea observes that neoclassical influences have often been considered the cut-off point for local traditional architectures (Figure 3,
neoclassical style school, Flambouro).\textsuperscript{28} Nationalism in this sense was opposed to regionalism, and regionalism, as Bastea argues, was associated by the new state with the “separatism” fostered by foreign (Ottoman) rule (Bastea 1997:92; Bastea 2000). The regionalism of Florina had included, in the course of turn of the century politics, a certain advocacy of Muslim-Christian pluralism: local Christians (from at least five regional language groups including Turkish and Albanian) in Florina lobbied for the return of the mufti (Muslim cleric) who had been exiled by the Venizelists in 1914. At the very least, in the matter of Orthodox Christians, Tziovas observes that few people “were bothered by the coexistence of Greek and Albanian speakers and most towns, even in the south, such as Nauplion, were little Babylons . . .” (Tziovas 1994:107).\textsuperscript{29} Tziovas argues that up until 1930 this assertion of coexistence and regionalism was strongly manifest.

In Florina and its rural surrounds (in quite different ways) neoclassicism appears as one element in an aesthetic vocabulary of heterogeneous origins which reaches its maximum elaboration by the mid 1930s. Rural regional styles (especially the stone houses of the Prespa region’s

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Neoclassical style school, Flambouro}
\end{figure}
Aghios Germanos and Laimos) continue to develop in distinct lines after the introduction of neoclassicism (which, it has to be stressed, was by the late 19th century no less an Ottoman than a Bavarian style) and town styles treat neoclassicism as one element of urban bourgeois taste among others. Despite the ferocious plan for de-Ottomanization, and the active plan of demolition after 1926, elements of the “Turkish” style (inextricable from the cross-border, pan-Balkan “Macedonian” aesthetic) also persisted.

By 1940 local development was arrested by the war, and it was not until the early 1950s that new sectors of the town were included in the town plan. On the 28th of July 1944, Florina was badly bombed by allied forces as the Germans retreated. On the 16th of February, 1949, people in Florina searched for their dead in the aftermath of the last local battle of the Civil War, and the hills of the rural areas were napalmed. Florina had been a government garrison town and a prison town, and emerged after the Civil War as a cold war garrison. Its relationship to the countryside was also changed; the countryside was gutted and insecure. Social networks from the countryside were radically altered and now extended towards Eastern Europe, Germany, Canada and Australia. There was deep-seated resentment and suspicion of the provincial administrative centers. In recent years, with the contraction of migrant labor abroad in the 1980s and improved roads, Florina and other provincial centers have reconnected more strongly with their immediate rural peripheries.

**Eclecticism and copiousness**

The architectural vocabularies of the between-the-wars period in Florina exhibit a provincial imagination based in the complexities of the history I have just described. Illustrations of the buildings from this period should help to make this clear. The architectural drawings of the twenties and early thirties were rendered in the latest streamlined modernist style (see Figure 4).

These bungalows and shops are for the most part made of “traditional” materials, mud brick, brick and plaster: stone is more often illusory than real (see Figure 5).

But modernism—meaning, here, the desire to embrace and display “contemporary” (Europeanizing) culture—comes in a great variety of forms, and the motifs of the facades are staggeringly various: Minoan, Moorish, Baroque, Art Deco, Byzantine, and rustic French treatments abut the remaining Turko-Macedonian and predictable classical hôtels particuliers of the older regime (see Figures 6 and 7).
Figure 4. Storefront, Florina 1920s.

Figure 5. The rendering of faux stone with mud brick structure and plaster facing.
Anthropology, Circumlocution, and the Copious Use of Everything

Figure 6. National Bank, 1919: eclectic style with Moorish, Venetian and Classical motifs.

Figure 7. Art Deco lintel.
This architectural vocabulary has much in common with the “international” or “diethnes” buildings of late Ottoman and early republican Istanbul.

An architectural guide describes the buildings that characterized the interwar period in Florina as an architecture with a “host of contradictory features”: “... eccentric art-nouveau structures, decorative stucco moldings, mediaeval towers, door and window pilasters: eclecticism in all its glory, with copious use of elements from every conceivable earlier style” (Mouseio 1994:36).

This “copious use of everything” is the feature most strikingly apparent in Florina in the interwar period.\(^{31}\) It defies any strict national identification though it helps itself to the emerging national vocabulary. The example of the National Bank (see Figure 8) designed by Nikolaos Zouboulidis—a 1908 graduate of the Fine Arts School in Istanbul—reflects the ideological movement of the 1920s and 1930s away from the neoclassical towards a “return to the roots of Greek civilization” (Kambouri-Vamvoukou 2004). At the same time, the development of Art Deco in Florina is more or less simultaneous with its emergence in Western Europe and the United States (see Figure 9).\(^{32}\) The plastic styles of Turk-

Figure 8. Byzantine style National Bank, 1931.
ish or Mughal and Moorish architecture are also in evidence, accepted now as part of an orientalizing modernist European vocabulary.

The opportunity of the façade in the town settings, or in those parts of some villages with similar street orientations, brought this exuberance of diverse references to its extreme. It was above all in the commercial establishments (with residences above) and in the small bungalows that the imagination of the craftsmen played itself out. Town householders were proud that they could hire professional wood carvers for their front doors, as well as plasterers, masons, and ironmongers brought from the

Figure 9. Pink storefront, “Ilektròn.”
international diaspora or from their mountain villages. (Note by contrast Figure 10, the earlier externally plain Turko-Macedonian style urban residence from the turn of the twentieth century.)

Interestingly, rural householders in the nearby Prespa Lake district were aiming at a distinctly different style between the wars, although they employed many of the same builders, techniques, and ideas. Three main types of rural dwelling styles emerged in the period from 1912 to the late 1930s: the open fronted/backed hagiati (verandah) style houses (Figure 11), mud brick dwellings with sachnisi (projecting porches) (Figure 12) and large stone and brick buildings (see Figures 13 and 14). Masons often carved their own or the householder’s face into the stone frames of windows and of doors to houses and churches (Figure 15). The country buildings exceeded those of the town in the extravagance of the materials they used: they did not aim for decorative effects but for a “massive” impact. There is no irony or desire for the eclectic in the ambitiousness of these village buildings. The shift towards compact stone buildings was heavily influenced by town style but advanced selectively: retaining the pediments associated with the Macedonian style, rejecting the window boxes, accepting iron balconies, and privileging the articulation of stone and brick (Figure 16). The aggressive statements of these houses of the twenties and thirties have to be understood against the background...
Figure 11. The open fronted (or backed) hagiati (verandah) style.

Figure 12. Mud brick dwellings with sachnisi (projecting porch).
Figure 13. Large house, Psarades.

Figure 14. Decorative brick and stone work, Laimos.
Figure 15. Face carved in door frame.

Figure 16. Stone, mud brick and plaster with pediment and iron balcony.
of a struggle for civilization interpreted in specular and architectural terms—Bérard’s comments from 1896 cited above show what local (Slavic speaking) rural Macedonians were up against: the implication that they, the “peasants,” were only fit for mud houses. Architecturally and stylistically, in the countryside what was most important was not a claim to modernity: it was the claim to power.

Town and country have, in general, very different building programs, but it is a mistake to think of them as unrelated environments. In the interwar period there was a common surge of architectural energies: provincial centers, small towns, and villages established their images within a spectrum of regional possibilities. Bastea argues that domestic architecture varied in the Ottoman period not by religious or ethnic group but by social class and that travelers were often unable to distinguish between Christian and Muslim houses (Bastea 2000:87). Bérard’s reading of the landscape was in large measure a projection of his own Orientalist classifications. In Florina, as we have seen, the Ottomans adopted Christian churches as mosques and the new Christian municipality then subsequently took over existing Ottoman administrative buildings for their own purposes. The builders were versatile: they brought foreign influences home and they were happy to build abroad according to local tastes or to mix and match. Moutsopoulos cites the testimony from a builder from Flambouro (an Arvanito-Vlach town in Western Macedonia) who worked in Serres, Chalkidiki, and Romania (Moutsopoulos 1976). In Romania he did not build Macedonian type houses; in southern Albania, the old homeland of his guild, he picked up *sachnisia* and *xilodesíes* and brought the system back to Flambouro (Negovani). His predecessors had traveled to Romania, Egypt, the Peloponnese, Chalkidiki, Asia Minor, and so on.

If ethnic groups were not, in the Balkans, clearly distinguished by architecture, it is also the case that class and ethnicity are not unrelated. In some cases, villages do appear to have adopted specific styles, which came to signify positions in regional ethno-economic hierarchies. Both the rural and the urban landscapes from the 1930s onward remain under-explored from the point of view of this interplay between class, ethnicity and locality.

It would be a mistake, however, to exaggerate this ethnic-aesthetic typology as did the romantic Bérard in the nineteenth century. A better model would be Ioannis Manos’s analyses of dance in the Florina region. Manos describes the delicate situation of ethnic styles of dance in the politicized atmosphere of the post-Civil war period in Florina. Nationalists conceived of dance troupes as the “guardian angels” of nationalist consciousness, and dances attributed to local Slavic-speaking Macedonians
were re-christened with Greek names (Manos 2003:27). In the contests over the Macedonian question in the 1990s, “participation in dancing acquired immense political importance and was perceived as a statement for or against the state, although it was often no more than a tribute to family ties and communal loyalties” (28).

Manos argues that despite the fact that dance may have been cast as political action by “totalizing nationalist ideologies,” individuals tend to switch idioms in practice: “A 60 year old man asked the musicians to play Makedonika Xakousti, a Greek political song and dance about the indisputable Greekness of Macedonia, and straight after this he asked for a dance devoted to Gotse Deltsef, a national hero of FYROM” (2003:29). These are arts produced by a space-in-common, in tension with the capital-centered agenda of genealogical exclusions. Manos gives further examples of this mixed practice in another essay on the anthropology of Florina: the prohibitions on self-expression in dance, song, and language issued by the state produce nonsense in local terms of practice, though they succeed in consolidating state based strategies of ethnic identification. What locals know, and what drops out of view, is that these capital-centric simplifications miss the trees for the imaginary forest. As Manos notes, it is not the simple category of “refugees” that describes the significant political lines in Florina, but the multiple locally significant subcategories of Northern Epirotes, or Monastiriotes, or Thrakiotes versus Pontii or Vlachs from Monastir versus Dopii (Slav-Macedonian speakers) from Monastir (Manos 2002:6). In this sense we might argue that there is safety in numbers: the highly fractured cross-cutting pragmatics of the space-in-common at the border tempers the Manichaean ideologies of state border systems. The exuberance of the between-the-wars architectural moment in some sense provides an aesthetic medium for the manifestation of provincial diversity through style. This diversity is peculiar: composed of modern quotations of historicist cosmopolitan and local references, it places the town under the banner of a bourgeois Europeanizing modernism that in its internationalism is well-suited to provincial circumlocution.

**National generic**

In the last twenty years the town-country relation has been changing in the Florina region. The development of the nuclear family bungalow (Figure 17) has brought some of the eclecticism of the town into the countryside. Meanwhile, the *polykatoikia* (apartment block) has drained the town of its promiscuous imagery. The collective visual exuberance apparent in the town between the world wars and the monumentalism
of the countryside are merging into less differentiated styles of middle class “development.” At the same time architectural preservation movements and codes have transformed the value of some rural and urban architecture, and put limits on the use of those properties (engendering predictable tensions between preservationists and local owners).

With the loss of local and ethnic traditions of craftsmanship also comes the loss of social and cultural exchange and dependency among ethnolinguistic groups. In the early 1990s, boosted by state-subsidized earthquake damage loans, owners began to tear down old rural properties on a massive scale. This annihilation of the historical character of the countryside is lamented, abstractly, but there is no doubt that it gave local residents the opportunity to express their contemporary desires and imaginations. These building (and also not-building) projects are projects of diverse self-formation. For example, the man (inhabiting a section of his father’s former agnatic compound) who steadfastly refuses to “modernize” his small wing while his bourgeois neighbors, his cousins, proceed with their “improvements,” makes a complex, public, personal, and political statement. At the other end of the scale, in the dispersed former refugee settlement area (once the “Turkish” quarter), a man from town builds a small house with a glass-enclosed pool in the living room for his winter swims. This innovation is a new genre of building-use, a use for personal fantasy. Nearby, a return migrant from
Australia builds a house with a six-foot diameter Macedonian star in the façade, announcing his personal claim on Alexander the Great. A few kilometers outside of town, a former Greek army officer from southern Albania constructs a pastoral hunting retreat complete with Orthodox shrine, national flag, genealogical charts, and a full scale papier-mâché replica of his grandfather’s grocer’s cart (Figure 18). A woman in a village by the lake paints her house yellow and green which she likes, she observes, because they are the “colors of nature.” Does color indicate, as aesthetic philosophers claim, a “pluralist attitude to life” (Weaver 1993:55, Weingarten 1977)? When I visited a house painted blue and white in the plains outside Florina, the housewife confided to me that her husband, a supporter of the New Democracy party, had painted it blue and white to annoy the people around him, because they are all PASOK (the socialist-democratic party in Greece) or Rainbow Party (the minority rights party). The landlord himself preferred simply to say, more ambiguously, that he liked the colors of the islands—which are, of course, the blue and white of the Greek flag.

Architectural semiotics are blunt, even crude, but they are not necessarily determinate or easily read. Promiscuous between-the-wars eclecticism in Florina was both a conscious appropriation of international

Figure 18. Papier-mâché cart with driver and oxen.
style and, I argue, a stylistic correlate of immigrant cultural diversity constructed against the background of the newly buried Ottoman order.

The obvious exceptions to the rule of semiotic indeterminacy are the ideologically engineered building programs of imperialism and state expansion. The state-sponsored new town at the edge of Florina differs palpably from the more anarchic activity of the local inhabitants that I have just described. Founded to relocate villagers from their scattered hamlets in the hills bordering Albania (for their “security” and that of the Greek state), the settlement shows all the signs of unambiguous state Hellenism. At the center are the school and the church, and the church is of the approved central-Greek neo-Byzantine style (not the style indigenous to the area’s village churches). The project houses are identical, and have been designed with a generic “local” style in mind—a self-conscious attempt to accommodate the sense of regional identity in northwest Greek Macedonia. My argument, however, is that this essentializing of an architectural idiom misses the point of what border regionalism really, in this case at least, is—emphatically heterogeneous and self-consciously “modern.”

Changes in the regional landscape are part of broader changes in collective historical consciousnesses. In the examples I have just given, for example, I see a trend, on the one hand, toward a less collectively embedded and more idiosyncratic image of the person and, on the other, toward a more centralized and generic “Greekness.” This is the inverse of the ambiguity and semiotic copiousness that play an important part in sustaining an open common space.

We should not assume that the periphery is a small, charming, or mediocre copy of the center in the way people pursue their interests or articulate their identities. Ironically, big cities may offer far greater possibilities for exclusionary practices than do small ponds where social and cultural interactions are so often face-to-face. Tracking provincial towns and the relationships they sustain with their rural territories may reveal a different kind of cultural practice than the one expressed in narrative and ideology, or made visible in dominant metropolitan arenas.
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1 However fresh the neo-classical project was at the time of Greek Independence in the 1830s, by the time of the incorporation of Macedonia in the Greek state both the idea of Europe/the West and the idea of the modern had been transformed (in Europe and in European imitations).

2 Records of the deportation of Jews from Florina in WWII testify to the presence of this population in Florina for the first half of the twentieth century.

3 Raymond Williams’ review of the word “culture” in his dictionary of social ideas, Keywords (Williams 1983), is useful to keep in mind here, though the various meanings and uses of the word—and especially the distinction between “Culture” as refinement and “culture” as manners and customs—are constantly elided in common use.

4 This “reorganization” of the principals of citizenship in the Ottoman Empire, by granting non-Muslims the right to settle where they chose, and to buy and exploit land, and by instituting the formal collective (as opposed to communal) structures of municipal government, radically changed the nature of Ottoman towns.

5 The “akrites” or border guards are famously associated with the hero of the eleventh century poem Digenes Akrites, which recounts the tale of a Syrian-Greek warrior who defends the eastern frontier of Christendom in the service of the Byzantine Empire (and himself).

6 In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Florina had significant milling, pottery, and craft production, as well as some agricultural production. The water mills were eventually banned for the dampness they brought to the river neighborhoods.

7 Jane Cowan’s work on Sohos (Cowan 1990; Cowan 1997) could serve as another informative source on the provincial town, especially on the matter of circumlocution which I address in this paper. Equally interesting, especially on the question of marriage, is the work of Giorgos Agelopoulos (1997).

8 The case I am thinking of here is rather different from Rethymno, although the two cases have certain planning issues in common. The problem identified by Herzfeld in Rethymno was the ambivalent burden of a legacy of architecture from Venetian and Ottoman times that impeded the social use of property of its contemporary inhabitants. In the case of Florina, there was an explicit and fairly successful program to wipe out the existing Ottoman fabric. Florina had nothing but a Turkish-Macedonian infrastructure—no Venetians, no Frankish castles. My primary interest here is in the use by the inhabitants of a heterogeneous repertoire of signs in their “post-traditional” building.

9 I found a particularly graphic example of what I mean by circumlocution in the Museum of History in Bitola, in the Republic of Macedonia. The Museum traces the history of the Bitola area from prehistoric times to the present without any mention of the Ottoman period apart from the exhibits on the struggle for national liberation. Nevertheless,
in the Museum there is a separate series of rooms devoted to Atatürk, the leader of the Turkish Independence movement, who was stationed as a young officer in Bitola. Our guide was pleased to tell us that visiting Turks are surprised at this acknowledgement of the important part played by Bitola in the life of their national hero.

10 Beginning in the 1890s new building types—banks, big stores, office buildings, municipal buildings, schools, converted hans, hotels, offices of ship companies, offices of foundations—proliferated throughout the Ottoman Empire (Karadimou-Yerolympos 1997:221). In Florina this period lasted from 1900–1906.

11 Tsapanou-Kostopoulou (2002:11) cites an estimate of the population of Florina at the end of the Ottoman period as about 8,000—three-quarters Muslim, one quarter Christian.


13 But, contrary to his own generalizations about Slav culture, Bérard describes a rural Slav village on the slopes of Neretchka as having dry-stone walls, slate roofs, and stone benches [1911 (1896):310].

14 The list of occupations renders a wonderfully clear picture of the fervent activity of Florina in 1910. It includes: tile makers, potters, bakers, soap-makers, priests, millers, gardeners, cobblers, barbers, furriers, doctors, goldsmiths, dyers, candle-makers, innkeepers, salep sellers, tinkers, saddlers, halva makers, pilaf cooks, carters. Christians dominated in economic life. The Muslim houses. Muslims also dominated in the scientific professions (medicine, law). Iliadou-Tachou notes that Christians were overwhelmed by the complexity of Ottoman law and expressed an aversion to mastering the Turkish language (Iliadou-Tachou 2004).

15 In 1888 the railway connected Thessaloniki to Amyndeo, the Klidhi pass, Vevi, Mesonissi, and Monastir; not until 1934 did Florina acquire its own.

16 The fact that there is a town minute concerning compensation for expropriated property to a Muslim in 1928 gave rise to the question of whether or not Muslims remained in Florina after the exchange (Kaskamanides:101).

17 The process was a small example of “Haussmannization” which aimed to eliminate neighborhoods “built at random, covered by an inextricable network of narrow and tortuous public ways, alleys, and dead-ends, where a nomadic population without any real ties to the land [property] and without any effective surveillance grows at prodigious speed. . . .” (Haussmann quoted in Scott 1998:61).

18 In 1888, Sultan Abdulhamit ordered clock towers built in the Empire: they were “considered ‘civic art,’ and symbols of westernization and progress as they expressed the disassociation of time and religion” (Karadimou-Yerolympos 1997:130). Nonetheless, in Florina they did not escape the anti-Ottoman architectural purge.

19 To the 5 million existing population of Greece were added 1,222,000 Orthodox Christian refugees who were expelled or fled from Turkey to Greece as an “exchange” sanctioned by the Treaty of Lausanne according to which, reciprocally, Muslims in Greece were forcibly exiled to Turkey.

20 The cemetery was strikingly large to the Christian eye: unlike Christians, Turks did not bury more than one person in a grave.

21 Exceptions included Monastir which in 1836 had row-houses with common walls (Karadimou-Yerolympos 1997:88).

22 To get a sense of the kinds of changes the Reforms aimed at, we can consult the new regulations of the late nineteenth century regarding the use of public space. The list
prohibits: throwing garbage in the streets, and allowing water to flow from the houses into the street; pillows and blankets from the hamams should be clean; stove pipes are to exceed roof height; no transport of uncovered leather on the backs of animals is allowed; no throwing of plates, jars etc. into the street, full or empty; no putting of chairs outside of cafes without a permit, no matter how broad the street; no slaughtering of sick sheep or cows or goats under two months and lambs under four months; no selling of chickens, roosters, and other birds if their chests have been blown into, inflating them; no selling spoiled meat or fish or butter or underweight bread; no cutting wood on the street if it gets in the way of traffic; no spreading wash to dry on the street; no animals left to wander untethered and no tethering of animals by the horns outside shops; no preparation or selling from carts of keftedes or kebabs . . . , and finally “no one should swim freely in the sea” (Karadimou-Yerolympou 1997:72–73).

23 Karadimou-Yerolympou gives the evocative example of the Turkish authorities who, when prisoners escaped from the prison at Konaki, complained that they broke their chains with hatchets mandated by the Reforms to fight fires (ibid: 102).

24 In folklore journals from the city, local scholars note its architecture, its artists, sculptors, and icon painters; its music, both popular and classic; its dance, its photography and film (the art of photography built by refugees from Monastir), its traditional arts and crafts, Arvanites-masons, carpenters, tailors and painters, Vlach goldsmiths. They praise, for example, its Albanian-speaking master builders from Lehovo (settled mid-18th century) Drosopigi (Belkameni) and Flambouro (Negovani).

25 This intentional vagueness is lost in translation. In the English translations of local folkloric publications, where they exist, “yiyeneis” is reduced to the nationalist locution “local ethnic Greeks”: e.g., “The population comprises local ethnic Greeks, Arvanites, Vlachs, and refugees from Monastir (1913–14), from Pontus, Thrace, and Asia Minor (1922)” (Mouseio 1994:88).

26 Not only “style” in a sumptuary sense, but also literacy. Florina had its first newspaper in 1914; the nearby village of Andartiko/Zelovo had its own paper by 1933.

27 The census of 1928 lists 1579 names of citizens who took part in elections. Among these the proportions were: 45.49% “yiyeneis,” i.e., not refugees, though not necessarily autochthonous; 17.81 % Monastiriotes; 15.16% Mikrasiates; 7.48% Pontii; 3.11% Thrakiotes; 2.58% from Pisoderi [a Vlach village, key in the Macedonian Struggle, whose population moved to Florina because of a decline in trade with Albania]; 2.11% Jews. Commerce and manufacture predominated in the occupational statistics, along with farmers and laborers, but growing classes of landowners (replacing Muslims) and civil servants makes an appearance. The population was augmented by the influx of people from the surrounding villages looking for work. There were ethnic patterns in occupation: Monastiriotes brought skilled trades, Pontii clustered in agricultural production.

28 The neoclassical style was introduced by the Bavarian court (1833–1862) and became the national style of Greece for the 19th century.

29 Tziovas cites Kolletis, quoted in Nikolaos Dragoumis’s memoirs: “The Greek nation. . . . wears the foustanella, is sometimes heard to speak Albanian, sometimes Kutsovlach, and preserves the customs . . . of its period of bondage. Because, however much the pedants may bluster, nations cannot be made up from scratch” (Tziovas 1994:107).

30 The town plan shows a number of distinct phases of development: the initial (Ottoman) core around the Sakkouleva river, limited on one side by the hills and open to the other; extension with new housing districts in 1923–1930; a larger more central development in 1931–1940; pockets of new development in 1951–1960 and as well as new workers housing in 1961–1970; and from 1981, peripheral and central building of multistory apartment buildings and pedestrian malls. (Source: town plan documents, Florina).
Interestingly this period peaked before or just after the opening of Florina’s rail connection. It appears to have been produced by the older communications networks.

Art Deco (*style moderne*) made its debut at the Paris Expo of Industrial and Decorative Arts in 1925; the sources of its images are diverse—American Indian, Egyptian, archaic, natural. It lasted until WWII.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that the contrast between architectural provincialism and metropolitanism is not absolute: eclectic styles were also characteristic of late Ottoman and early Greek national high urbanism. But eclecticism in Greece was not identified ideologically as a national style.

The Rainbow Party, or *Ouranio Toxo*, was founded in 1994 to advocate for the cultural rights of the Slav-Macedonian minority in Greece.

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