THE CLASSICS IN THE SERVICE OF RENASCENT GREECE:
ADAMANTIOS KORAIS AND HIS EDITORIAL WORK

LOUKIA DROULIA
Institute for Neohellenic Research
National Hellenic Research Foundation Athens

In honour of Professor
M.-H. Rocha Pereira

In an age when national frontiers in Europe are being dismantled and a new, expanded political and cultural entity is coming into being, our thoughts once again turn naturally to Adamantios Korais, a man in advance of his time who, in his personal experiences and the direction of his thinking, was the very embodiment of the citizen of Europe in the sense in which the continent’s present inhabitants are in the process of becoming citizens of Europe. The Greeks, in the past and in our own time too, have always had and to some extent still have certain reservations about this process. Cultural allegiances do not necessarily coincide with geographical demarcations, or at any rate not in every period of history. In antiquity, for example, Hippocrates contrasted the Europeans (and by ‘Europeans’ he meant Greeks) with the peoples of Asia¹, explaining that the former were braver because they were free, while the latter were ruled by despotical monarchs; in the Byzantine period, in the face of a growing threat from the East, emphasis was always being laid on the contrast between Europe (that is to say Byzantine civilization²) and Asia (that is to say the Turkish menace);

¹ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, XVI.
² Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios, in a letter written in the fifteenth century, calls Byzantium τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς Ἐλλάδαν (‘our Europe’); see C. Th. Dimaras, *Η φωτισμένη Ελλάς (Enlightened Europe)* in his *Σπουδαιοτάτος εποχιακά (Historical Studies)*, Athens 1992, p. 119, where he
but nowadays, when frontiers are crumbling, the situation is different. Nor should we forget, of course, that political as well as cultural frontiers are always shifting, and that Christendom has been riven by bitter internal dissensions, most notably the Great Schism. The conflict of conscience between what have come to be called ‘East’ and ‘West’, in other words between ‘Western rationalism’ and ‘Eastern mysticism’, has always blocked the path to reunion. At a crossroads like Greece, where traces remain of many different cultural traditions, the constituent elements of the region are naturally difficult to discern.

It is fair to say that Adamantios Korais was instrumental in giving form, strong colour and clarity to this shadowy picture; that is to say, by his systematic writing and editing programme and his tireless activity in general, he helped the Greeks to develop a sense of their own identity and at the same time to project that identity internationally. That was because the formation of the Greek national ideology in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was inseparably bound up with the movement for a return to antiquity and the search for common origins. In this process Korais played a major part.

Adamantios Korais, literary scholar, respected Hellenist, a man sensitive to the political upheavals and intellectual movements of his lifetime in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was a product of a mixed background. Born in 1748 in Smyrna, then the biggest international port in the Eastern Mediterranean, he grew up in the cosmopolitan environment created by the presence there of foreign consulates and innumerable foreign merchants, who imported not only their wares but also, of course, all kinds of new ideas and cultural elements. Descended from scholars who had won distinction in their fields, and with scholarly churchmen among his relatives, Korais grew up in a devout religious atmosphere. At home he was surrounded by books from the fine collection of his grandfather, Adamantios Rysios, and respect for learning was deeply ingrained in his family. His earliest interests were in scholarship and also religion, both of which were to claim his attention for the rest of his life.

Korais’s teacher during his youth in Smyrna was Hierothes Dendrinos, an ultra-conservative priest who, according to a contemporary, strongly discouraged his pupils from going to study in the West: ‘Those who study in the land of the Franks lapse into atheism,’ he roared, convulsed with fury, ‘and on their

 cites S. Lampros, Παλαιολόγεια και Πελοποννησιακά(Of the Palaiologoi and the Peloponnese), vol. II, Athens 1924, p. 236.
RETURN they make atheists of others, too." Yet although this education was acquired at the cost of 'a great many beatings', as Korais admitted later, it has to be said that the results were positive. The pupils, Korais among them, quickly mastered ancient Greek: in particular, they became thoroughly familiar with the grammar, and so they were able to read ecclesiastical texts without difficulty. For Korais this was not enough. He wanted to learn other languages as well, especially Latin, which from an early age he regarded as an essential adjunct to Greek - the more so as he intended to study classical literature and early ecclesiastical writings. By a stroke of good fortune his teacher was Bernhard Keun, the priest attached to the Dutch consulate in Smyrna, who helped him to learn various languages and later recommended him to Dutch scholars in Amsterdam.

Having thus laid the foundations of his education, Korais longed to escape from the generally 'ignorant' environment in which he found himself, and above all from the oppressive presence of the Ottoman rulers, and to continue his studies in the enlightened atmosphere of Western Europe. This plan of his met with opposition from many quarters: even his father, he records, 'was upset whenever I praised the Europeans'. The breadth of his interests, the extent of the linguistic knowledge he had already acquired and his aspirations for the future are described in a note written by Keun: "Diamanti Coray, natif de Smyrne, ou il apprit le Grec littéral, ainsi que l'italien, le Francois, le Latin et l'Anglois. S'étant établi à Amsterdam, il s'y perfectionna dans ces langues, et y ajouta l'Espagnol, l'Hébreu, et l'Allemand, ainsi que le Hollandois; il s'appliqua aux Mathématiques, à la Métaphysique, et à la Théologie Naturelle. Aiant quité le commerce, pour se livrer entierement aux Sciences, il étudia à Montpellier pendant 5 ans la Médecine, et se fit recevoir Docteur: après avoir défendu avec applaudissem[ent] peu commun, sa thèse inaugurale, qui est au jugement des connoissem[eurs] un chef d'œuvre de Purerologie, écrite en style Ciceronien." It should be said at once that in the Netherlands, despite his undeniable proficiency in ancient Greek, he had further lessons from learned scholars who taught him an entirely different approach to the study of ancient texts: instead of merely


learning the language and the grammar, he was now shown how to work at the
text until he had a clear understanding of its meaning.

Amsterdam was the first major turning-point in Korais's life. It gave him
the 'freedom' and 'enlightenment' he had been looking for, and for a period of
about seven years (1771-1778) it offered him a compromise between two con­
flicting ideas of what he was to do with his life: the scholarly career he himself
wished to pursue and the one marked out for him by his strong-willed father,
who wanted Adamantios to follow in his footsteps in commerce.5 Fate smiled
kindly on the young Korais, in more ways than one, by bringing him to Amster­
dam. The decision to send him there had been taken because it steered a middle
course between the two different visions of his future, but in fact life in that
great commercial centre held other advantages as well: notably the environ­
ment of a large and cosmopolitan European city in a liberal-minded country
where religious toleration was the rule, a country which offered asylum to inde­
pendent thinkers and had developed into a centre for the dissemination of their
thinking. This environment implanted and nurtured the ideas which, as they
took shape in his mind, led finally to the development of Korais the man: a man
who, as long as he lived, was acknowledged by his compatriots as an outstand­
ning representative, spokesman and guiding spirit of the movement for the re­
birth of Greece.

After four years back in his enslaved homeland, a period which he described
as 'distressing', he was saved from his state of near- desperation by another
compromise when his parents decided to let him go abroad to study medicine.
The Ottomans had a great respect for doctors, and many Christian parents had
their sons trained for this well-paid profession. With great excitement Korais
set off again in 1782, this time for France, to study at Montpellier, which at that
time was one of the most progressive universities and was renowned for its
department of mediciné.6 Although he had no intention of becoming a doctor,
as he remarks in his Autobiography, he applied himself conscientiously to his
medical studies in an environment heavily charged with the spirit of Neo-Hippoc­

5 On Korais' Amsterdam period see B. J. Slot, "Commercial Activities of Korais in Am­
6 It has been suggested that Montpellier University may have been chosen on the recom­
mendation of J.-B.-G. d'Anasse de Villoison, with whom Korais corresponded. Villoison is known
to have spoken highly of the young Greek scholar's classical knowledge apropos of a letter he had
received from him in 1782; see E. N. Frangiskos, 'Η φιλία Κοραί - Villoison και η θέματα της (The friendship between Korais and Villoison and the problems involved), He Erantitis vol. 1
(1963), no. 3-4, pp. 67-69.
ratism, a spirit that also informs the *Encyclopédie*. There he heard his teacher, Jean-Charles de Grimaud, lecturing on Hippocrates and asserting at regular intervals, "Les Grecs sont les véritables maîtres du monde, parce qu'ils seront toujours les instituteurs." There, too, he immersed himself in the study of the ancient physician's writings and made a start on an ambitious project (which, however, he never completed and published), namely a critical commentary on the entire corpus of Hippocrates' work. Later, in 1800, he edited Hippocrates' *Airs, Waters, Places* by collating two manuscripts: this edition, which included a French translation, was published with critical, historical and medical notes, an introduction, a comparative table of the ancient and modern names of winds, a map and indexes. It was already clear that Korais was less interested in the medical profession, which he regarded as a means of making a living, than in the study of classical literature: that was the field that really attracted him.

Two features of his time at Montpellier serve as pointers to the future course of his life. One is the fact that he was already recognized as an authority on literature, thanks to his great erudition in classical studies combined with his knowledge of modern Greek. Professor Grimaud often asked his advice on the interpretation of passages in Hippocrates; and after the presentation of his thesis, which was unanimously accepted and commended, it was suggested to him that it was his duty, as a Greek, to publish a translation of Hippocrates: as one member of the faculty explained, "I am afraid our translations may not be accurate." What he said in his defence of his thesis reveals the second characteristic that was to stay with him for the rest of his life, for even at that early stage he took every opportunity to speak well of the downtrodden Greeks in order to improve their reputation abroad. This he often did by stressing their connection with their ancient forebears. "I wrote that many things that were thought to have been discovered in modern times had been known to Hippocrates two thousand years earlier," he said in a letter to Dimitrios Lotos, a friend who was a *protopsaltis* (cantor) in Smyrna. "I defended my ancestors' honour, I spoke up for my country, my friends, my cantor, and everybody on the examining board was pleased."

---

8 Letter from Korais to Chardon de la Rochette, 10th July 1793, in *Αλληλογραφία [=Correspondence]*, vol. I, Athens 1964, pp. 332-333.
10 *Correspondence*, vol. I, pp. 64 and 62 respectively; cf. Jouanna, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
Korais encountered an admiration for classical antiquity when in 1788 he went to Paris, where the Revolution was brewing. By this time both his parents had died, and he arrived penniless. With difficulty he managed to keep himself alive by writing and translating medical works or hiring out his services as a collator of manuscripts. In this way he made the acquaintance of foreign Hellenists, who often consulted him as a recognized expert on ancient Greek, and thus he gradually established his reputation as a classicist. He lived through the French Revolution and witnessed its fitful changes of direction. With the political and social reforms promised at first by its leaders in a spirit of liberalism and constitutionalism he was entirely in agreement; on Voltaire, the champion of the Enlightenment, he modelled his own principles (in fact he wanted to be thought of as 'the Greek Voltaire'); by the ideas of the Enlightenment - intellectual liberation and social change - he became more and more excited; but his opinion of the Revolution changed when it deviated into extreme radicalism and the Terror. As 'an eye-witness of terrible things' (to use his own words), he accepted many of the opinions, especially on moral issues, of the Ideologues - the liberal revolutionaries who took a critical view of the turn taken by events in France. For it was the Ideologue movement - which first appeared during the period of the Directoire - that carried on the tradition of the Encyclopédistes, whose writings had introduced Korais to the Enlightenment. However, the fact remains that he accepted the act of revolution, its dynamic and its causal relationship with the Enlightenment. In linking superstition with ignorance and servitude, he also linked learning - the Enlightenment - with the resurgence of the Greeks; in fact he even went so far as to equate support of the Enlightenment with opposition to the Turks.

Enough has now been said to give some idea of who Korais was and what were the factors that contributed to the development of his character, his intellectual infrastructure and his philosophy in that age of political change and social ferment in Western Europe, whose repercussions were naturally felt in

12 Panayotis Kondylis, O Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός. Οι φιλοσοφικές ιδέες (The Modern Greek Enlightenment: Philosophical ideas), Athens, Themelio, 1988, p. 205.
the countries of the periphery. His thinking and his actions helped to spread those repercussions. Having made his home at the very centre of events, in the French capital, this citizen of ‘the new Athens’ (as he called Paris in his letters) came to be a magnet for progressive Greeks and a mouthpiece for the dissemination of innovative ideas, with all the consequences that that entails in a traditional society under oppressive foreign rule. Thus began a long period of preparation during which he tried to guide the Greeks towards national self-awareness and liberation, to advise them on the right structure and organization for a well-governed state founded on principles of justice, and to keep international opinion informed about the situation taking shape in Greece. For this purpose he later wrote, in French, his famous Mémoire sur l’état actuel de la civilisation dans la Grèce, which he read to the elite members of the Société des Observateurs de l’Homme in 1803.

Korais’s ideas for positive action on the Greek question began to take shape at a very early stage and came out into the open about thirty years before the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. The events taking place in republican France and the direction of the French government’s Eastern policy seemed to offer a good opportunity for cultivating the idea of Greek independence on many levels. Even before the end of the eighteenth century Greek hopes had soared when Bonaparte’s forces appeared in strength in the Eastern Mediterranean for the Egyptian campaign. Korais decided then to bolster his fellow-countrymen’s patriotic sentiments, to rouse them from the lethargy of long servitude and to help to bring about the necessary changes in the state of affairs in Greece. To achieve these ends he used the same means that Voltaire and the other leaders of the French Enlightenment had employed to spread their ideas abroad and gain acceptance for them: that is to say, he wrote pamphlets and tracts, some of them diatribes against ‘servile subjugation to the rulers’, others patriotic exhortations full of revolutionary ideas and liberal principles. The aim of these broadsides, most of which were unsigned, was to stir the Greeks into liberating themselves from the Turkish yoke in collaboration with the republican French.

Even with all this activity, and in spite of his frail constitution, Korais managed to keep on with the philological work he had started in the final decades of the eighteenth century, still applying himself to it at the same intensive pace and with the astonishing single-mindedness and dedication that were characteristic of him. From his copious correspondence with foreign Hellenists, from the
mass of textual emendations suggested by him which were used by other scholars in their editions, and above all from his unpublished papers (*Observationes Miscellaneae*, as he entitled the manuscript now in the Korais Library at Chios\(^1\)), we now know that he planned to go through all the classical Greek and Roman writers and publish a complete collection of his critical notes under the title of *Miscellanea Critica*. We also know the voluminous results of his labours, many of which are still unpublished. In other words, Korais’s work as an editor of the classics has yet to be evaluated to its full extent and depth.

Obviously such an ambitious plan as Korais had in mind would not be easy to carry out, and for a number of reasons he was unable to edit all those texts as thoroughly as he would have liked. However, he had collected a great deal of material which he used little by little for the editions he decided to produce in the following years. Meanwhile, he had now begun to express openly the political views that had been smouldering within him since his youth and to act on them, as he was to do for the rest of his life. His innumerable letters, his own writings, his ambitious editorial programme and his efforts to develop a modern Greek language capable of expressing elevated intellectual and cultural ideas\(^2\), all provide ample evidence of the policy he pursued consistently, a policy whose objectives were ‘the liberation of the nation’, its spiritual rebirth and its moral and political education. But liberty without enlightenment, without scholarship, without culture, is an unattainable goal. Consequently his every thought and his every action were simply further small steps towards those ends. The works of ancient literature, each one carefully selected to suit the case in point, were the tools, so to speak, with which he hoped to accomplish his purpose, while the international situation provided a suitable framework.

Whereas at first his work was purely philological and was aimed at Western intellectuals, in keeping with the prevailing spirit of Neoclassicism and the Enlightenment, there came a time when that was no longer the case. His editorial work now acquired ideological overtones and a more utilitarian slant. His

---

\(^1\) For a detailed description of the manuscript see Georgios Christodoulou, *Ο Αδαμάντιος Κοραής ως διορθωτής κλασικών κειμένων. Το χειρόγραφο Χίου 490* (Adamantios Korais as emendator of classical texts: MS Chios 490*) in his *Symmikta kritika*, Athens 1986, pp. 238-245. Mr. Christodoulou is now preparing the manuscript for publication. See also his paper “Adamance Coray: Notes critiques sur le texte de Platon”, *ibid.*, pp. 280-335.

\(^2\) Korais frequently asserted that the corruption of language always goes hand in hand with the corruption of morals.
teaching was many-sided and was addressed to Greeks of all ages: to the young, of course, but also to adults - to teachers, to priests, in short to all those in positions of leadership who needed to be ‘enlightened’, to be won over to progressive ideas and break the shackles of tradition, so that they could enlighten others in their turn and help to make good citizens out of those in their care.

One of the first works Korais published in French translation, obviously with Western Europeans in mind, was the *Characters of Theophrastus* (1799), which fitted in well with his own moralistic aims. But he was still excited by what was happening on the political scene: the republican French had recently liberated a piece of Greek soil, the Ionian Islands, from long subjection to Venice, and this edition was dedicated ‘To the free inhabitants of the seven isles of the Ionian Sea’, whom Korais calls upon to be worthy pupils of their ancient forebears. At about the time when he was preparing his edition of the *Characters*, he was working concurrently on the translation into Greek, with an introduction and explanatory notes, of Cesare Beccaria’s *Dei Delitti e Pene*, a book that made a considerable impact at the time because of its new approach to the subject of criminal law. Korais’s translation, published in 1802, was likewise dedicated ‘To the newly-formed Greek state of the Seven Isles’, because he believed that a fair judicial system was one of the first essentials for a newly-created state. So it is easy to see that his objectives were twofold.

‘We really have to write in the language we think in, if we want both to marshal the thoughts in our minds and to make the language capable of expressing them.’ Thus the first priority, according to Korais, was to develop a linguistic medium through the study of the historical evolution of the Greek language, and at the same time new works needed to be written by modern Greeks. It was therefore necessary for people to read ancient Greek works, and not in outdated editions. In fact, for the application of the comparative method

---

15 Korais also prepared an edition of Longus’ pastoral romance *Daphnis and Chloe*, which was published by Firmin Didot in 1802. In the immediately preceding years he had collaborated with well-known scholars on their editions of the classics: with Levesque on Thucydides, with Larcher on Herodotus and with Schweighauser on Athenaeus. He also wrote a number of articles for the journals *Museum Oxoniense* and *Magasin encyclopédique*: see A. Korais, *Τά μετά τάθανα αυτοκόπηκα μεγαλώμενα* (Writings discovered posthumously), ed. A. Mamoukas, Athens 1881, p. 47 (reissued by S. Fasoulakis, Athens 1989), and D. Therianos, ’Αδαμάντιος Κοράις (Adamantios Korais), vol. I, Trieste 1889, p. 237, respectively.

which he himself had initiated (i.e. comparison of the ancient with the modern
language), it was not always the recognized classical authors that were selected.
Before making a start on his systematic programme of editing works for publi-
cation, Korais made a study of the ancient novel, although he had grave reser-
vations about the value of reading such works, which were full of ‘extremely
bawdy language’. He chose the Aethiopica of Heliodorus (1804), which he con-
sidered to be the best crafted of the surviving ancient novels. As regards the
decency of Heliodorus’ language, Korais presumably shared the opinion of the
seventeenth-century scholar Pierre-Daniel Huet, Bishop of Avranches, whose
Traité sur l’origine des romans he commented upon in his prefatory epistle
addressed to his friend Alexandros Vasilion17. In this preface Koraïs discussed
ancient novels at some length, expressed his views on the novel as a genre and
coined a new Greek word for it, mythistoria18, which was adopted forthwith by
his contemporaries.

The year 1805 was a major landmark in Koraïs’s editorial programme. In
the first place, it was then that he and his collaborators presented Napoleon
with the first volume of the new French translation of Strabo19. Secondly, he
started working systematically on his three series of publications: one entitled
‘Hellenic Library’, one entitled ‘Parerga’ and a third consisting of miscellane-
ous ancient works. For each volume he wrote a long preface. Korais used these
Prolegomena, the most widely read of his writings, not only to present schol-
arly historical and philological essays on the ancient works in question and
their authors - in which he displays his profound knowledge of the subject mat-
ter and tries to explain the methodology and the real meaning of the text itself -
but also to set out his thoughts, his precepts and his exhortations to the Greeks

---

17 Huet’s work had been published as a prefatory epistle to Mme de La Fayette’s novel Zaïde, and perhaps Koraïs took this as his model for the use of that form; see Vincenzo Rotolo, ‘Ο Κοραής και τον αρχαίο μυθιστόρημα (“Koraïs and the ancient novel”) in Πρακτικά Συνέδριον Κοραής και Χίας (Proceedings of the Conference on ‘Koraïs and Chios’), vol. I, Athens 1984, p. 56.

18 This word, in its Latin form, was current in the classical tradition, whence Koraïs retrieved it: ibid., p. 55.

19 Napoleon, at that time still First Consul, had asked Jean Chaptal, a minister in his
government who had been Koraïs’s chemistry teacher at Montpellier, for a new French version of
Strabo’s Geography. Chaptal proposed that the translation should be done by La Porte du Theil and
Koraïs, with the geographer Gosselin as consultant on geographical matters. Koraïs undertook to
translate Books 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14 and 15, and to write the notes. See Raoul Baladie, “Strabon
on educational, social and political matters. He reiterated his injunctions frequently, for, in accordance with the Socratic method, good advice needs to be repeated over and over again. He was supported in his task by Greek merchants of the diaspora, who helped him in his campaign for the spread of education in Greece. In particular, he received encouragement and financial assistance from the Zosimas brothers, wealthy merchants living in Russia, who were keen to 'do their bit' in hastening the regeneration of Greece by distributing works of ancient Greek literature free, or at very low prices, to teachers and schoolchildren.

The first volume of the ‘Hellenic Library’ series was entitled *Prodromos of the Hellenic Library* and contained works by three historians: the *Varia Historia* of Claudius Aelianus and the surviving works of Heraclides Ponticus and Nicolaus of Damascus. The front matter starts with a ‘Proclamation’ addressed to ‘Greeks studying the Greek language’. This is followed by a preface entitled ‘Impromptu thoughts on Greek education and the Greek language’. Korais’s interest in language and learning is apparent both in his choice of texts for publication and in the content of the prefaces. In the next volumes of the series, Isocrates’ *Speeches and Letters* (2 volumes, 1807) and Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* (6 volumes, 1809-1814), the subject matter of the prefaces is similar - as is evident from the fact that they have the same title as the first - and he draws arguments for them from the ancient works themselves. However, whereas in the first preface he had dealt with the question of correct grammar and how it should be put to use in the service of philosophy, in the preface to Isocrates, taking his cue from the ancient orator himself, he discusses style, with particular reference to rhetoric. Here it is of interest to note Korais’s approach to the critical emendation of texts. He is an adherent of the ‘middle way’: neither to ‘emend’ passages which need no emendation, nor to adhere slavishly to the readings handed down by ‘ignorant’ or ‘pedantic’ copyists. Similarly, the *Parallel Lives* offer an excellent example of scholarly methodology: the gath-

---

20 In the ‘Proclamation’ Korais explains the working method he intends to adopt in his publications. Since he wants to publish them with the least possible delay, he will base the text on an authoritative recent edition and will reprint the existing commentary, if one exists, adding extra notes or conjectural (ἐξ εἴκνεσύς) emendations where he considers them necessary for a proper understanding of the text. He also explains that, owing to the shortage of time, the notes will be in Greek and there will be no Latin translation accompanying the text.

21 Later, in 1815, when he was preparing the second edition of the Strabo, Korais declared that a bolder approach was needed in the editing of ancient texts.
ering of historical material, the comparative method, the critical presentation of historical figures. In his preface to the Plutarch, Korais delivers yet another rejoinder to the denigrators of the Greek nation who had voiced hostile criticism of the modern Greeks for being reduced to such a wretched plight, and in so doing had deeply wounded him personally. He also stresses the need for a Modern Greek dictionary, which should be based on everything ever written in Greek from antiquity to the present day, though he warns that the language has become debased and therefore great care and good judgment are called for in selecting the words and phrases to be listed. Of Plutarch’s language, dating from the period of linguistic decadence, Korais is a stern but fair critic: he points out its flaws, but he also praises its richness of expression, which frequently delights the reader. In addition, he notes that innumerable qualities of character are portrayed in Plutarch’s works: gentleness of manner, philanthropy, truthfulness - in short, all the moral virtues.

While he was at work on his edition of Plutarch, and in spite of constant lamentations about his poor health and pecuniary difficulties, this indefatigable scholar also brought out editions of three works for the ‘Parerga’ series - the *Stratagems* of Polyaeus (1809), Aesop’s *Fables* (1810) and *De alimento ex aquatilibus* by Xenocrates and Galen (1814) - as well as two miscellaneous works, Book I of the *Iliad* (1812) and the *Facetiae* of Hierocles (1812). The *Stratagems* he selected for two main reasons: first, for the benefit he expected to derive from reading a historical narrative, despite the ‘lack of scientific precision’ of which he accuses Polyaeus, and secondly for what one could learn from it about the debased state of the Greek language current in the second century A.D. The latter consideration also applied in the case of Aesop’s *Fables*: as they had not been preserved in the original, but only in collections compiled long after Aesop’s time, they presented glaring instances of debasement of the language. And besides this linguistically utilitarian value of Aesop’s work, Korais had another motive for including it in his programme, the motive that inspired their author to compose them or write them down many centuries earlier: that of trying to correct the faults and improve the behaviour of rational beings by the indirect means of stories about animals supposedly devoid of the power of reason. To make the most of the potential for edification, Korais appended at the end of the book a number of fables that he had written himself in the vernacular, preserving his anonymity by signing them with the initials Z.L. [*Zêdon Λοχικόν; Rational Animal*].
By publishing in one volume two similar works by Xenocrates (1st cent. A.D.) and Galen (2nd cent. A.D.), separated from each other by about a hundred years, Korais offered the contemporary reader a textbook for comparative study of the language combined with a handbook of ancient medical ichthyology. The publication of this omnibus edition reflects the conviction of Korais, the ‘enlightener’, that the time had come for modern Greek scholars to study the natural sciences more systematically and write the necessary textbooks in Greek. His sense of mission as an educator comes out strongly once again in his edition of Homer, the ‘king of poets’. Each of the four volumes published between 1812 and 1820, containing the first four books of the Iliad, was prefaced by a piece of creative writing by Korais in epistolary or dialogue form. The principal character in these pieces is a Greek priest who, imbued with the spirit of his newly-acquired learning, succeeds in breaking the bonds of a long, static tradition and eventually develops into an enlightened leader of the microcosm of society that is his flock. Clearly Korais is addressing himself indirectly, but in unmistakable terms, to the clergy of the Orthodox Church; and his anti-clerical views are also apparent elsewhere in his work and in his correspondence. The preface to the Facetiae of Hierocles, again written in epistolary form, likewise portrays certain ‘types’ of the Greeks’ spiritual leaders and satirizes them cleverly in their traditional roles, with the object of demythologizing the old models of society and preparing the ground for the reception and acceptance of the new. Here Korais draws a character sketch of the pedantic Greek scholar, while in the preface to the second edition of Hippocrates’ Airs, Waters, Places (reissued in 1816, not as part of the series, and without the weighty notes of the original edition) he portrayed the doctor whose stock-in-trade is his charm. As Emmanuel Frangiskos has pointed out, these character sketches are strongly reminiscent of the ‘Characters’ of Theophrastus, La Bruyère or even Molière.

---

22 See 'Αδαμαντίου Κοραίς Προελεγγέματα στοιχείων Αρχαίων Ελλήνων συγγραφέων (Adamantios Korais, Prolegomena to Ancient Greek Authors), vol. II, Athens 1988, Foreword by E.N. Frangiskos, pp. xx-xxi.

23 In his haste to bring out the Homer, Korais used the Wolf edition (Leipzig 1804) and incorporated all the annotations by earlier commentators which he considered sound, as well as notes by modern scholars. He had conceived the plan of publishing the work of Homer, ‘the master of Greek wisdom’, as early as 1807, but had not acted on it immediately because he heard that a new edition of the Iliad had recently come out in Venice: see A. Korais, Prolegomena’, p. 220. This would presumably have been the multi-volume edition prepared by Spyridon Vlandis, printed and published by N. Glykys (1803) and underwritten by the Zosimas brothers.
Korais’s favourite author\textsuperscript{24}. Besides the reissue of Hippocrates, Korais also brought out a second edition of Strabo’s \textit{Geography} in four volumes (1815-1819), chiefly for Greek students of the applied sciences. The prefaces to these volumes are less moralistic in tone: they concentrate more on giving the reader a historical and philological introduction to the ancient geographer’s work, in which Korais dwells at length on the textual and editorial problems he had to overcome, seasoning his writing with his didactic tendency to correlate historical research with the evolution of the new science of geography. These years saw a flurry of publications: while he was seeing the Hippocrates through the press (1816) and working on the Strabo (of which the second and third volumes were both published in 1817), Korais also brought out an edition of Marcus Aurelius, \textit{To Himself}, in the ‘Parerga’ series (1816). He felt that the guidance he offered ought to be comprehensive, all-round, integrated. Accordingly, he dedicated to the younger generation this work by the Philosopher Emperor which is such an efficacious instrument for the discussion of issues that form the framework of harmonious coexistence in society, of morals, justice, equality, the rule of law - in short, of ‘the science of living’, as Marcus Aurelius called the combination of morals and politics. From this time on Korais frequently reverted to this theme, and in his later publications he regularly referred to the precepts of Marcus Aurelius. Moreover, the time was drawing near when the Greeks would have to organize themselves into a new, free society, and they had to be prepared for the new circumstances of their life.

When the Greek War of Independence broke out in 1821, although Korais thought the Greeks had risen in revolt prematurely, he displayed admirable flexibility and adaptability to the dictates of the moment. He espoused the cause of Greek independence wholeheartedly, putting the wisdom of his words and the power of his pen at its service. Before the year was out he had published Aristotle’s \textit{Politics}. ‘The acquisition of freedom,’ he wrote in the preface, ‘is, of course, a great and laudable feat; but it is not a rare event. The preservation of that freedom is the greatest and rarest achievement, and for that it is not enough to fight a short war against tyrannical rulers: one has to fight incessantly against the much more tyrannical passions of one’s inner self, in order to subject them to the sacred yoke of justice and the law.’ The task of completing the political

\footnote{A. Korais, \textit{Prolegomena}, pp. xviii-xix.}
education of the Greek people was a matter of the highest priority, he con­tinued; and, at the same time, the framework of laws and institutions governing the actions of the new administration should be set up as a matter of urgency, not only for its own sake but also to give the Greek liberation struggle the legitimacy that many denied it.

The theory had been reiterated over and over again. Now, however, the time had come for the theory to be put into practice, and that had to be done as successfully and efficiently as possible. One has only to look at the list of titles that Korais chose for publication during this period to have a clear idea of the messages he wished to convey, both on the theoretical and on the practical plane. Aristotle's *Politics* was followed by his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1822); next came the *Strategicus* of Onasander paired with the first *Elegy* of Tyrtaeus (1822), both of these being rousing works, useful during a war of liberation ('the only kind of war that is both just and necessary'); then Plutarch's *Politics* (1824); Xenophon's *Memorabilia* with the *Gorgias* of Plato (1825), two works containing all of Socrates' teachings on morals and politics, published together for use in Greek schools; Lycurgus' speech *Against Leocrates* (1826); and Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus* in two volumes (1827). To all intents and purposes the prefaces to all these books constitute a single thematic entity dealing with the subject of politics, covering the period of the Greek War of Independence. Another that could be said to belong to the same group is the preface to the new edition of the Greek translation of Beccaria's *Dei Delitti e Pene*, which Korais judged to be topical and useful once again.

The first preface of this period, to Aristotle's *Politics*, is a work of major importance. It encapsulates admirably all the political precepts and philosophical views that Korais was to set out in more detail in his later prefaces, using a variety of arguments and styles. The central idea, as always, is the question of

---

25 The division of this edition into two volumes was dictated by necessity. The text was ready for publication by April 1827, when Count Ioannis Kapodistrias was elected the first 'Governor' (President) of Greece. Korais had written a dialogue about the future of Chios which he intended to use as a preface: he was worried that the war might end and the peace treaties be signed before Chios (his family's place of origin) was liberated, which might well mean that the island was not included in the independent state of Greece. In the event, however, he felt obliged to write an assessment of the newly-elected President and to reiterate his admonitions concerning the correct way for the country to be governed as a democracy. This necessitated a new edition, which he did not have time to prepare, and so the second volume was published later.

26 For a detailed exposition of these prefaces see A. Korais, *Prolegomena*, (in Greek) vol. III, Athens 1990, Foreword by Loukia Droulia, pp. vii-liii.
how to secure and maintain the well-being of the citizens in a society which is preparing to organize its political structure while at the same time struggling to throw off the yoke of its foreign overlords. Concepts such as morals and politics, prosperity and well-being, liberty, virtue, equality before the law, not to mention education and upright government (seen as interlocking concepts), democracy (and parliamentary democracy in particular), liberalism, autonomy and religious toleration, with explanations and interpretations of what they mean, recur regularly throughout these seven years: indeed, they constitute the essence of Korais's teaching. But the teacher does not confine himself to theoretical forms and philosophical concepts. Citing examples taken from current events, he offers practical advice and guidance on solving the seemingly intractable problems of the moment, always using arguments drawn from the classical or religious writings with which he is thoroughly familiar.

Among the wide range of subjects to which Korais turns his attention are the upbringing of the young, educational problems (schools, textbooks, translations), the spread of learning, the introduction of printing into Greece, the freedom of the press, the revival of agriculture, trade and industry (because the growth of wealth predisposes the citizens to peace and justice), even practical advice on the conduct of the liberation struggle. Comments on the various articles of the first Constitution of Greece also occupy a prominent place in his prefaces, as do his views on all the relevant legal and cultural problems: the structure of the new state, the non-involvement of the clergy in political affairs, the debate on the role of the theatre in the education of the people - these are just a few of the subjects to which Korais turns his attention. The word 'debate' is used advisedly, because four of the eight prefaces of this period are written in dialogue form. This literary genre, which Korais was fond of using, makes it possible for the writer to analyse opposing views objectively, by the application of logic. Easy to read and understand, didactic in its purpose but designed to persuade gently, without pressure, the dialogue expresses the spirit of the Enlightenment and of Korais himself, of course, who is regarded as its foremost modern Greek exponent.

27 This Constitution was translated into many West European languages. Korais was one of the first, perhaps the first, to translate it into French. Because of his moral stature and the international recognition accorded to his achievements as a classical editor and an educationist, literary critics writing about Korais's work frequently linked his name with all these translations: see A. Korais, Prolegomena, vol. III, pp. xvii-xviii.
Korais claims this position by right, by virtue of the principles he stood for, the way he lived his life, the profound thinking that characterizes his work, and the prodigious quantity and high quality of his contribution to classical scholarship in his time. When we stop to consider the amount he wrote - even if we limit ourselves to those of his writings that were intended to prepare the way, painstakingly and patiently, for the awakening of the Greeks' sense of national destiny - we cannot help being struck by the irrepressible ardour, the indefatigable industry, the sheer volume of work produced by this reclusive 'citizen of the world'. In the space of twenty-two years, from 1805 to 1827, Korais edited and published twenty-eight ancient Greek works in thirty-two volumes, with lengthy prefaces covering a total of about two thousand printed pages. The figures speak for themselves.