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**FROM REVOLUTION TO HERITAGE:**

**THE INDEPENDENCE OF COLOMBIA AND GREECE, HISTORICAL MUSEUMS  
AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY**

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**Note on the images:** Unless otherwise specified, all images were made by Luis Alfredo De la Peña Jiménez and were taken without any commercial benefit. They were restricted to purely academic and informative use and referenced to their specific provenance or institution of origin.



## **ABSTRACT**

During the Age of Revolutions, various political entities with a developing national consciousness were formed in Europe and America. An example of that is Colombia and Greece, two countries that were configured as independent nation-states during that time, share a series of similar historical characteristics within their development of the independence process that make them comparable case studies. After achieving their sovereignty and independence, these states sought to establish a narrative about their incipient history to justify their mere existence through public use of the past that had generally materialized through museums specialized in national history.

This dissertation analyzed and compared these two case studies that share a century-old history of domination by two Mediterranean empires, which, with the arrival of the ideas of the Enlightenment and the Atlantic Revolutions, sought to establish themselves as independent states and whose revolutionary process remains the pinnacle of the modern history of these two historical spaces.

To do so, I discussed the historiographical and contextual features that the independence of Colombia and Greece share, then analyzed the process of construction of national identity, and afterward saw the institutionalization of these ideas in history museums, places that become temples of the nation, which are visited for the relics they held and allow you to identify yourself as a citizen; with the last part discussing the reflection of the contents exhibited in these museums and objects through other spaces of identity dissemination, such as the media, audiovisuals and social networks.

This work would demonstrate that when it comes to building a nation's identity, there are no specific rules but rather organic characteristics, such as the configuration of museum institutions that safeguard the historical heritage of these social groups. Comparing geographical spaces that are so distant but with a similar historical development is possible, and from the institutional master narrative and its criticisms to the banalest nationalism and its symbols, the nation-state and its identification through specific elements has many variants, but usually, the same goal of cohesion and hierarchy.

### **Keywords:**

*Age of Revolutions, Museums, Heritage, Public History, National Identity, Colombia, Greece.*

**Abstract:**

Durante l'Età delle Rivoluzioni, in Europa e America si formarono varie entità politiche con una coscienza nazionale in via di sviluppo. Un esempio di ciò sono la Colombia e la Grecia: due paesi che si configurarono come stati nazionali indipendenti durante quel periodo, condividono una serie di caratteristiche storiche simili all'interno del loro sviluppo del processo di indipendenza, che li rendono casi di studio comparabili. Dopo aver ottenuto la loro sovranità e indipendenza, questi stati cercarono di stabilire una narrazione sulla loro storia incipiente per giustificare la loro mera esistenza attraverso l'uso pubblico del passato che si era generalmente materializzato attraverso musei specializzati in storia nazionale.

Questa dissertazione ha analizzato e confrontato questi due casi di studio che condividono una storia secolare di dominazione da parte di due imperi mediterranei che, con l'arrivo delle idee dell'Illuminismo e delle Rivoluzioni atlantiche, cercarono di stabilirsi come stati indipendenti e il cui processo rivoluzionario rimane l'apice della storia moderna di questi due spazi storici.

Per farlo, ho discusso le caratteristiche storiografiche e contestuali che condividono l'indipendenza della Colombia e della Grecia, poi ho analizzato il processo di costruzione dell'identità nazionale e in seguito ho visto l'istituzionalizzazione di queste idee nei musei di storia, luoghi che diventano templi della nazione, che si visitano per le reliquie che custodiscono e che permettono di identificarsi come cittadini; con l'ultima parte che discute il riflesso dei contenuti esposti in questi musei e degli oggetti attraverso altri spazi di diffusione dell'identità, come i media, gli audiovisivi e i social network.

Questo lavoro dimostrerebbe che quando si tratta di costruire l'identità di una nazione, non ci sono regole specifiche ma caratteristiche organiche, come la configurazione delle istituzioni museali che salvaguardano il patrimonio storico di questi gruppi sociali. che è possibile confrontare spazi geografici così distanti, ma con uno sviluppo storico simile e che dalla narrazione maestra istituzionale e dalle sue critiche al nazionalismo più banale e ai suoi simboli, lo stato-nazione e la sua identificazione attraverso elementi specifici ha molte varianti, ma quasi sempre lo stesso obiettivo di coesione e gerarchia.

**Parole chiave:**

*Età delle Rivoluzioni, Musei, Patrimonio, Storia pubblica, Identità nazionale, Colombia, Grecia.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

These lines and all those that follow in this dissertation should never have been written, or at least not in a traditional and normal course of events. A person like me, from my specific context and global and socioeconomic extraction, should not have written this comparison here, my work, and my research, in a world like the one we live in. Nevertheless, here it is, as a tangible element.

Moreover, here it is, thanks to the support and joint effort of many people who have had to do directly or indirectly with this research. Especially my supervisor, Professor Gabriele Paolini, the director of the doctoral program, Professor Teresa De Robertis, the external reviewers, and the members of the defense committee. As well as all the teaching and administrative staff of the University of Florence and the SAGAS department. My gratitude also goes to the French School of Athens and its director Gilles de Rappier, that kindly granted me a fellowship in 2023 to carry out my research in Greece. as well as to the University of Wrocław and its Summer School in Public History in 2023, which I was able to participate in, partly thanks to the efforts of Dorota Wiśniewska.

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Special mention to my old colleagues from the Central European University, now spread throughout the world, from Austin to the Philippines (via Budapest and Vienna), for their friendship and support over so many years, especially Ewelina Sikora, who is perhaps the person who with patience and care has endured and reviewed the whole process of this thesis the most; and of Eva Bárdits, without whose bureaucratic efforts, simply none of this would have happened. Likewise, to all my colleagues and friends from the doctoral programs at Università degli Studi di Firenze, the European University Institute at Fiesole, the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa and other academic institutions in Italy: Alejandro, Laura, Emanuele, Giulia, Nura, Francesco, Beatrice,

Isabel, Lotta, Denisse, Dario, Rory, Tamsin, Sara and so many others that I could not mention for space reasons, but who shared and made the enduring solitude of the Ph.D. experience into something more bearable, they all know well who they are.

I would like to thank all the colleagues with whom the ideas that are expressed here were shared and tested in different academic environments like Turin, Wrocław, Naples, Sevilla, Alcalá, Valencia, London, and other cities. It is also time to thank all the people, some of them strangers from distant lands, some friends of old, who accompanied this process and its development in several spaces sometimes virtually, physically, and sometimes both ways, especially in Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Cali, Florence, Siena, Pisa, Rome, Milan, Venice, Verona, Paris, Gdansk, Brussels, Leiden, Madrid, Athens, Thessaloniki and Heraklion. I feel honored and grateful to know that there are people who have dedicated their time and love to getting to know me and supporting me during this stage of my life. A network of affection and support that extends from Toronto and New York to Perth and Cairo; and from Lima and Mexico City to Istanbul and New Delhi.

It is also essential to extend my sincere thanks to my families: the canonical De la Peña and Jiménez families all around Colombia, especially to my parents and sisters, as well as to the memory of my grandparents Olga and Benedicto, who died while I was in Italy, far away from them and I could not make them even more proud. To the Polychronidi family, my Greek foster family of mom and sisters who have believed in me more than anyone else, and to whom I am eternally indebted. And to the families who have welcomed me as a member over these years, from the Prieto sisters in Bologna to the de Boer De la Rosa family in Amsterdam, from offering a couch to sleep on when there was nowhere else, to saving all the thesis information from a damaged hard disk. Everything they did was fundamental to making this dissertation come to an end.

I am certainly sure that the list of people that I want to name and thank here is as long as any chapter of this thesis, and I am sure that I am probably forgetting someone, and that any mistake this research would have is entirely my responsibility. Nonetheless, this time, I will also thank myself for being strong and resilient enough to have reached this point, to overcome such serious obstacles in these last years, when so many circumstances, emergencies, and people bent me, but could not manage to break me. It is proven once again that "*Vacile efectivo omnia vincit*".

## **NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION**

This dissertation cites and uses terms and names written in several languages and different characters, some of which are not based on the Latin alphabet. I have tried to unify the terms by using generic transliteration of proper names and surnames, transcribing the concepts, and keeping them in italics in the text with an immediate translation when the case requires it. All this while using and maintaining the correct spelling and writing in their original language for the names of authors cited in the footnotes and the bibliography.

Likewise, both in footnotes and in the bibliography, if a text was originally published in Turkish or Greek, as is the case with most of the references in this work that use special characters other than the Latin alphabet, I provide the transcription in the original language and its respective translation in English.



*To the loving memory of Benedicto Jiménez Bautista (1934-2022)*

*and Olga Mercedes Ebratt de De la Peña (1927-2023)*



## **INTRODUCTION**

The origin of this dissertation is neither recent nor spontaneous. From the moment I finished my undergraduate degree in history, I began to have contact with specific secondary sources about historical spaces and experiences that were similar to the national construction of my country, Colombia. I saw the abstract possibilities (which, with time, have become more tangible) of analyzing comparatively the period of the Age of Revolutions in the south of the Balkan Peninsula and the north of the South American continent. In this order of ideas, the motivations and first hypotheses of this dissertation, which in summary consist of establishing a historiographical bridge that allows broadening the perspective of historical analysis focused on the nation-state and seeing the process of the post-Napoleonic revolutions as a global phenomenon. Taking as points of support the independence of Colombia (1810-1819) and the Greek revolution (1821-1830).

Whenever I have had the opportunity to talk or write about these two historical events and their possibilities of comparison in various academic spaces and conferences and informally with colleagues and professors, there is a trail in the air or the generalized concern about how such a comparison is possible on how familiar the processes of national formation in Greece and Colombia can be, and how absurd or coherent it is to think of a comparison at that global level. These questions have been nourished over the last year, bringing a new layer of analysis in this dissertation, in which I have made a scrupulous approach to these two revolutions, in their historiographical projection and now in this doctoral project in their tangible materialization in museum exhibitions and commemorations over 200 years. The unique approach of this dissertation, which combines historical analysis and its tangible materialization, will pique interest.

### **• JUSTIFICATION AND SCOPE**

The question will continue to generate concern and even surprise when a tangible and direct connection between the two revolutions is sought to be analyzed. But when we see the historical development of both events and know them in-depth, their similar characteristics, as well as their great divergent features, appear clearly and allow us to establish a contribution to historiography

with the connection of these two national entities during their first processes of state formation. Simultaneously, it demonstrates the importance of its study on a local, regional, and global scale.

What is the most important reason for developing this investigative exercise of comparison? How can a comparison between the possibilities and works of memory generated around the period of independence, both in the Balkans and South America, contribute to global and national historiography in Greece and Colombia and the historiographic field of public history? What are the practical possibilities of a historiographical theoretical analysis of the experiences of collective memory construction in these two countries? This dissertation will attempt to answer these questions by considering the scope of the study itself, the limitations of time, space, and resources available to generate this analysis, and the possibilities of complementation in future works.

○ **Portraying historiographical issues and their possible solutions**

To begin this analysis, addressing the main doubt that arises when comparing Greece and Colombia under the parameters established in the research question and the hypothesis is essential. Why compare two historical experiences so far apart and detached from a cultural level? The answer that justifies this research can be found in the chronological closeness between the independence processes of both nations: the historical context of these wars of independence, after the more recognized "Age of Revolutions", is tremendously similar despite the geographical distance. Another reason for justifying this work is a sense of the times that we live in; evidently, the commemorations of the two hundred years of the formation of Greece and Colombia as independent states could serve as a sufficient argument to embark on an investigation of this kind. However, in the same way, the doubts generated by formulating a historical or historiographical problem such as the one presented here confirm its relevance. There is very little literature, both academic and outside the university sphere, that has even been dedicated to trying to understand and historiographically or to configure suggestive historical processes that have a connection that has not been analyzed in depth because it gives priority to traditional historical spaces and processes, and in turn with more specialized literature from the historiographic and museum areas of study.

This work is a commitment to change, innovate, and challenge the dominant historiography, clearly Eurocentric, where historical experiences located in the periphery, outside Western Europe, have the same relevance and level of interest as the traditionally analyzed periods and events.

Doubts and concerns about the depth of this analysis, its relevance, and its scope have arisen from the very moment of its formulation. However, throughout my academic career and after presenting and discussing my work in Colombia and a dozen countries and educational environments in America and Europe, I have developed a documentary and analytical corpus strong enough to develop research at this level. It should be noted that the writer of these lines is aware of the limitations of his academic and research process and the same conditions that his context and environment have imposed on him. It should be noted that this dissertation is still being written in a pandemic context, and the undersigned is an academic from the so-called Global South, with the implications that these conditions entail, which will be discussed at the end of this section. The intellectual, theoretical, mental, economic, and geographical limitations of this work are not enough reasons to not have the conviction and courage to carry out this research.

On many occasions, in the most diverse texts and from a multiplicity of authors and historians, reference is made to the work of Marc Bloch as a pillar of the historical discipline as a contemporary academic profession. Within this narrative space that draws on the extensive work of this French historian, reference is generally made to the work of those professionally dedicated to the historical discipline as artisans in a workshop. But this analogy is often lame due to not understanding (or not wanting to understand) that the daily and manual work of an artisan (which is, to be completely frank, not necessarily the most familiar experience for many historians) is subject to multiple factors.<sup>1</sup>

Instead, daily craftsmanship consists of combining available materials and applying solutions to specific problems that arise with mastery and personal style. Just as a prestigious welder must know and master electric, spot, plasma, or oxyacetylene welding to make everything from bars to sculptures. Thus, following the predicaments of Bloch, a historian must be skilled, versed, and also creative enough to use the past and historical sources as raw material and the theory and methodology as tools to meet a need or offer a solution to a specific problem, required by itself or by the institution to which it belongs. The archetypal example of this is the work in which these lines go, towards the elaboration of a doctoral thesis, that seeks to establish the specific competence of a historian.

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<sup>1</sup> **Le Goff**, Jacques "Prefacio" in: **Bloch**, Marc. *Apología para la historia o el oficio de historiador. revisada*. Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 2001, 180 p. P. 19

- **Reflexive historiographical possibilities**

The central reflection that this work aspires to generate is that there is a real possibility of building historiographical bridges that are not necessarily mediated by a dominant Anglophone or Francophone historiography and are filtered and established according to their own parameters and conditions. It is possible —and it is also necessary— to write the history of the Age of Revolutions from and for the peripheries of those revolutions that have remained in the background but have sufficient historical weight to be relevant and essential for the global understanding of this historical period.

Global history, *histoire croisée*, transnational history, transtemporal history, and connected history are research denominations that have suffered several blows after conquering important ground within the discipline and the academic world over the last decades.<sup>2</sup> But this is not to say that his approach and analysis are no longer valid. Comparisons are still valuable, especially if made from historical spaces not explored outside of themselves. The independence of Colombia and Greece is, perhaps in each of these countries, the historical episode with the most significant literature and historiographical debates, but outside its national context, its relevance and value are practically minimal. A small impact both in specialized historiography and public discourse that is changing rapidly, connected to the wide possibilities of accessing information with way more ease than some years or decades ago, which includes consulting new literature, and participating in debates regarding these matters in a more comfortable way.

Despite globalization and interconnectivity, national historiographies and historiographies continue to place the nation-state as the first and fundamental element of study, which is one of their shortcomings. Therefore, it is essential to break these schemes and break them from the periphery, demonstrating that this debate and this historiography are not monolithic. This situation also indicates that with the current conditions of connectivity and access to information, these events can be integrated into a much more comprehensive discussion without the need to be

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<sup>2</sup> For some developments on these debates, see: **Kocka**, Jürgen. "Comparison and beyond." *History and theory* 42.1 (2003): 39-44; **Levine**, Philippa. "Is comparative history possible?" *History and Theory* 53.3 (2014): 331-347 and **Leikin**, Julia. "From Comparative to Entangled Histories." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 22.1 (2021): 173-182; **Armitage**, David R. "Historia Intellectual y Longue Durée. La Guerra Civil en Perspectiva Histórica." *Ariadna histórica: Lenguajes, conceptos, metáforas* (2012). 15-39

mediated by a previously established academic sphere and based on the knowledge centers of the global north.

- **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research question of this doctoral work could be formulated in a general question and a series of secondary aspects that will be analyzed during the dissertation. Still, it will also give space to future research. In essence, the central question of this doctoral dissertation is about finding the place of the wars of independence in the collections of history museums, in the construction of the collective memory, and the discourse of the nation-state formation in Greece and Colombia. This primary concern will be analyzed from the perspective of comparative history, public history, and museography. In the second place, I would try to understand the role of these collections and their use in political and educational discourse over the last two hundred years; it is first necessary to understand the context of these two revolutions that allow and support a comparative analysis.

- **The paradoxes of comparison, similarity, and difference**

Seeing that two historical events share a similar process, that they developed almost during the same years, or that they had a similar outcome, does it necessarily make them comparable or similar? To answer that, a secondary question would be how similar the wars of independence of Greece and Colombia are, and what is their role in the global context, either as post-Napoleonic wars or wars liberated during the Age of Revolutions in the periphery of the most studied Atlantic revolutions and how similar or different they are, considering the various historical developments and the different social, economic and cultural characteristics of both geographical spaces. Likewise, it is crucial to see in this comparative analysis whether it is possible to establish a model to which these revolutions respond or whether it is a simple historical coincidence in which certain similar factors play a role that allows both independence processes to be integrated and compared.

When carrying out a comparative history exercise, either of the historical processes themselves or of how they have impacted the societies that succeeded them, it is evident that to value these two specific cases of study, it is necessary to consider the analogies and differences between both spaces. Essentially, what unites the process of the Greek Revolution in 1821 with the Colombian War of Independence that began in 1810 is the temporal proximity, but also their configuration as

subsequent and consequent processes of the revolutions of the Atlantic world, both the independence of the United States in 1786, the French Revolution in 1789 and their subsequent impact on the political and social development of the regions in South America and the Balkan Peninsula where the case studies are located.<sup>3</sup>

It is in this way that similar and general characteristics of both historical processes begin to appear: both spaces were occupied by empires of a Mediterranean and expansionist character from the end of the fifteenth century; the Spanish empire, in what is now called Colombia, and the Ottoman Empire, in what is now recognized as Greece. Both revolutions originated in an intellectual and ideological apparatus generated from discontent with this foreign domination for several centuries; both revolutions are framed in a reformist but conservative era, where the absolutist monarchies defeated the French revolutionary and imperial project.

Likewise, it is essential to recognize the fundamental differences between the two examples, which arise from the similar configuration of the geographical space dominated by empires. It is not the same as being a Spanish province or colony as an Ottoman one. It is not the same to have a forced homogenization in the religious and linguistic field as applied in South America, as well as the heterogeneous character of the Balkans in these same aspects. The geographical scope has a clear relevance when it comes to differences; despite being mountainous territories, crossing the northern Andes is not the same as the Balkan mountain formations; the insular character of Greece crosses its identity processes over time, as well as the tropical character of the Colombian territory. These differences are key to understanding the dynamics of both processes and highlighting the similarities they have.

#### ○ **The role of museums and commemorations**

Museums, especially museums of a historical nature that function as institutions dependent on the state and with the mission of preserving and disseminating objects and collections related to a territory in the society that inhabits that specific territory, are essential for constructing a national discourse. The creation of a National History Museum makes it possible to establish an orderly, discursively controlled, and in many cases, centralized narrative, which allows the elaboration of an intellectual apparatus of a historical nature that is sustained through objects of various types,

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<sup>3</sup> **De la Peña**, Luis Alfredo. "The Independence processes of Greece And Colombia: Topics and possibilities of comparison." *Global Histories: A Student Journal* 5.2 (2019). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17169/GHSJ.2019.304>

such as documents, maps, or personal or collective elements of human beings who lived in the past. These collections anchor us to grasp ideas from and about independence and the formation of the nation-state and to transmit and transform them through tangible elements such as museum objects.

Therefore, the role of museums in the formation and consolidation of a nation-state is fundamental; it is through these spaces that the main elements, facts, places, and characters that must be remembered and valued according to institutional discourse are digested and then transmitted with educational components. In this order of ideas, museums are loudspeakers. They are repeaters of the discourses that state cultural and academic institutions generate around the collective past of a nation. The material textbooks with which children acquire their first knowledge and have a first approach to the configuration of this collective past will generally try to decant their discourse towards objects and elements that are protected and exhibited in museums.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, one of the main functions of a history museum is to educate new citizens, or rather, school-age citizens, through its collections. Unsurprisingly, one of the main population groups that frequent these museum spaces is students, and the discourses found in these places are primarily directed toward this population. In a museum, it will be challenging to find the most thoughtful analyses and the densest historiographical investigations on a specific historical period; what is found in museums is the final result of the decantation, adaptation, and synthesis of this type of research. It simplifies academic resources through museum tools ranging from the simple exhibition of objects to pedagogical activities, multimedia resources, and campaigns of expectation through special events or temporary exhibitions.

Therefore, the National Museum of Colombia, which was formed in 1823 as a museum of museums and which today houses some of the essential pieces of the ethnographic, archaeological, historical, and artistic heritage of the Colombian nation, these being its four major divisions, has also been the place for the projection of an idea of the country and for the discussion of the various perspectives on this idea. The same goes for the National Historical Museum of Athens, founded in 1882 and which is the first of its kind in the modern Greek state, and which centers its collections around an idea of a modern Greek nation that is heir to the Byzantine empire and that places a

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<sup>4</sup> **Gazi**, Andromache. "National museums in Greece: History Ideology Narratives." In: *Building National Museums in Europe 1750-2010. Conference proceedings* from EuNaMus; European National Museums: Identity Politics; the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen; Bologna 28-30 April 2011. EuNaMus Report No. 1

special emphasis on the Greek Revolution of 1821. The analysis of these two museums and their conformation, development, and exhibition of their respective collections or objects about the War of Independence is one of the central objectives of this dissertation.

Another essential section when it comes to understanding the development of conceptions about the wars of independence in both Greece and Colombia and the public use of history throughout the two hundred years of history as independent states of these two countries is the analysis of the commemorations on specific dates of the facts and events that resulted in the formation of these two modern nations. Memory as a place of identification and, specifically, collective memory, through commemorations and public acts of remembrance, has been a public exercise of recognition in a shared past and has played an essential role in understanding the genesis of these two modern nations.

A generational aspect transversally marks these commemorations. During the first half of the nineteenth century, when the actors and survivors of the Wars of Independence were still alive, but more importantly, when the project of the nation-state was not yet fully consolidated, advocating for the memory of the War of Independence was more of a political tool than an alternative for the construction of collective memory. For this reason, within the significant commemorations that we can divide into periods of 50 years, at the time of celebrating the first 50 years of the Greek Revolution or the cry of independence of 1810 in Colombia, the idea of independence as a unitary and foundational myth of the two states is not yet so defined.

For the centenary of both independence, the panorama is radically different. In Colombia, the centennial of independence marks the total irruption of the conception of a selection of the heroes of independence, which, with the honorable exception of Policarpa Salavarrieta –and, in some cases, Manuela Beltrán or Antonia Santos–, was a group made up exclusively of men, where Simón Bolívar, The Liberator, would have the most preponderant place among the figures that make up the national pantheon. The presence of Bolívar is such that, on many occasions, he is the only hero that the nation has. He appeared on all denominations of banknotes, as a bronze statue in almost all the main squares, his portrait was in schools, and his life and work are still constantly

commented on. All this is the product of the narratives derived from the commemoration of the first centenary of the independence of Colombia.<sup>5</sup>



Image 1. Statue of Policarpa Salavarrieta "La Pola" by Silvano Cuéllar, 1911. Constitution Square. Guaduas, Colombia.

In Greece, commemorations have a particular tone during the first centenary. Essentially, after the territorial and political victories achieved during the Balkan wars in the 1910s and the participation of the kingdom of Greece during the First World War, the centenary of the Greek Revolution is a further incentive for the achievement of the so-called "*Megali Idea*."<sup>6</sup> This is the maximum strategy of Greek irredentism that would seek to group under the same flag all the territories previously

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<sup>5</sup> **Karamanolakis**, Vangelis. "Dalla caduta della «giunta» al «cambiamento»: la «timida» transizione dell'istruzione superiore in Grecia (1974-1982)". *Spazio, Tempo ed Educazione* (2015).

<sup>6</sup> **Finefrock**, Michael M. "Ataturk, Lloyd George and the Megali idea: Cause and consequence of the Greek plan to seize Constantinople from the allies, June-August 1922." *The Journal of Modern History* 52.S1 (1980): D1047-D1066.; **Velkova**, Sanya. "The Megali Idea and national identity in the period between the two world wars (Conditions and development of the problem)." *Études balkaniques* 3-4 (1996): 19-34.

considered part of Greek civilization (thus, even from the same antiquity, these territories will not be considered Greek). This irredentist imposition culminated in tragedy when the greedy Greek government decided to take advantage of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922 and regain much of Anatolia for its rule. An expedition that failed and would generate a whole new field for the work of collective memory, with the humanitarian tragedy that this expedition and the subsequent formation of the Republic of Turkey entailed.

For the 150th anniversary of Colombia's independence, the historiography of the period will suffer its own Revolution, with the direct influence that many of its members were educated by historians participating in the debates of the first generations of the *Annales* school. Since then, the independence of Colombia will no longer be told with the magnifying glass of "bronze history" and of the Colombian Academy of History (tremendously linked to the history of the *Annales*, to the institutions, and the officialdom). to have for the first time an approach from social history, political history, and economic history from an academy formed from the first faculties and departments of history that existed in Colombian universities. These 150 years saw the massive publication of a large number of documents related to the independence process that, to this day, remains the easiest way to approach the primary sources of this period.

The commemorations took place and continue to unfold while the very history of both countries continues to be written. For the 150th anniversary of the Revolution of 1821, Greece had another collective trauma in its most recent memory, and that was the terrible occupation of the Axis armies during World War II, in addition to the short but bloody civil war that took place in the country after the Allied victory in 1945. The constant swings from Greek politics and controversial and conflictive institutions, such as the monarchy, led to the seizure of power by the military in the so-called Junta of Colonels that ruled the country from 1967 to 1974.<sup>7</sup> It is during this period that the commemorative act that to this day continues to be celebrated every March 25, the date of the beginning of the Revolution, is configured, always seeing the national day from a military perspective that was implemented in the curriculum of educational centers during the time of the dictatorship.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> **Tziouvas**, Dimitris. "From junta to crisis: modernization, consumerism and cultural dualisms in Greece." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41.2 (2017): 278-299.

<sup>8</sup> **Karamanolakis**, Vangelis. "Dalla caduta della «giunta» al «cambiamento»: la «timida» transizione dell'istruzione superiore in Grecia (1974-1982)". *Spazio, Tempo ed Educazione* (2015).

However, in recent years, with the advent of the bicentennials of both wars of independence, both countries have chosen to commemorate the first two centuries of existence as independent states from academia, with a wide and varied historiographical and literary production. From examples of public history with various audiovisual and multimedia productions that have put the process of independence back in public opinion, now with a 21st-century perspective. Moreover, the governmental institutions, with specialized commissions for the commemorations of the main bicentennial in general as a significant national event and of a series of specific bicentennials, such as the one carried out by the legislative branch in Colombia to commemorate the first constitution of the country in 1821.<sup>9</sup> These bicentennials have been the opportunity to rethink these independence processes, their causes, and their repercussions for a much wider audience. In these processes, the national museums with collections from these periods have not been left behind and have developed various exhibitions, documents, and pedagogical and academic activities to commemorate these events.

- **Future possibilities of the public history of independence**

What does the future hold for the public use of the history of the wars and the independence of Colombia and Greece? This question is not simply asked to think about what commemorations, exhibitions, or bibliographic productions will take place for the subsequent great commemorations in 50 years, but to try to think and understand how states configure a shared past that seeks to give cohesion to the society, or nation, if you will, that they represent. It may be that 50 years from now, there will be historical episodes so transcendental or traumatic that they put the country's independence in the background within the collective memory, or it may be that, on the contrary, the figures of independence will be mythologized again or, on the opposite shore, the understanding of this historical period. Time and historical events will tell.

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<sup>9</sup> **Tsimpoukis**, Panos, and Nikos **Smyrniaios**. "1821 Tweets: Networks and Ideological Discourse Around the Greek Revolution Bicentenary." *Duty to Revolt*. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2023. 129-143. In: **Souvlis**, George, and Athina **Karatzogianni**, eds. *Duty to Revolt: Transnational and Commemorative Aspects of Revolution*. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2023.

In the meantime, what this dissertation can aspire to propose is, in addition to the research objectives and scopes already expressed above, to think about the reconfiguration of collective memory in a world transversally invaded by virtuality. That is, how new technologies will allow us to remember, commemorate, and analyze the wars of independence of both countries. What will be the role that they will play with video games, social networks, hypertextualization, and so many other aspects that have been developed in recent years?<sup>10</sup> Moreover, both cultural and museum institutions, academic historians, public historians, educators, and those who have both interest and decision-making power in the public use of history have used, apprehended, and will continue to develop for the transmission of memory, discourse, and the history itself of these historical events.

### • POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The primary contribution of this dissertation is to provide a starting point for new possibilities in historiographical analysis. The comparison within the period of the Age of Revolutions of the War of Independence of a South American country and a Balkan country is sufficiently striking and pertinent to produce a contribution to the historiography. A specific period and a historiographical field that has many possibilities and a constantly increasing and extensive literature, but that, in general terms, continuously circulates on the same roads, topics, actors, and geographical spaces over the last years.

In this order of ideas, the contribution of this doctoral thesis consists in broadening the historical perspective on this specific period and, likewise, lengthening the discussions on the Age of Revolutions by introducing new elements of analysis to the historiographical debate. These elements, events, and processes are generally well-known within the specialized literature of each country, but they have not been put in contact with other debates and other historiographical realities. The aim, then, is to find a way not only to put these two historical processes belonging to the same period into dialogue but also to try to integrate them into the more considerable debate and to do so through the analysis of the public use of history, specifically the projection of the wars of independence in history museums.

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<sup>10</sup> Guins, Raiford. *Game after: A cultural study of video game afterlife*. MIT Press, 2014; Rejack, Brian. "Toward a virtual reenactment of history: Video games and the recreation of the past." *Rethinking History* 11.3 (2007): 411-425.

○ **Convergence of disconnected historiographies**

Unsurprisingly, the literature on the wars of independence of both countries is the most voluminous body within both national historiographies. From the earliest times after achieving political independence to generate an independent state, both in Greece and in Colombia, there have been attempts to narrate the events of these wars from different approaches, on various topics, and through diverse voices. The first generations who lived or were descendants of those who participated in the wars of independence sought in the narrative of these wars a justification for their political actions at a specific historical moment that was beginning to take on value. Later on, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the history of independence, or rather, of the formation of a nation-state, served to unify a territory based on a common institutional origin. Territories in both Greece and Colombia underwent various transformations that allowed them to either link or separate from what, in the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had been formed as sovereign states and still correspond to that original events at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Subsequently, with the centenary of the wars of independence, a discourse on the creation of the modern nation was founded in both Greece and Colombia from their state institutions, and this discourse passed from historical texts to public squares, to monuments, and in the specific case analyzed here, to museums.<sup>11</sup> The history of the War of Independence continued to be the enumeration of battles and heroes until the heroic final objective was achieved, and for this purpose, the objects left over from those times were used and exhibited in museum institutions of a governmental nature.

To a large extent, to this day, this last stage is still considered the most popular perception about the meaning and study of the war of independence in Colombia and Greece, respectively. Only with the latest historiographical developments in methodological and theoretical terms has the panorama begun to change over the last 50 years. Social history, the history of mentalities, the history of gender, the “new military history”, and public history have begun to review and rethink the independence processes of these two countries in a more comprehensive and less passionate

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<sup>11</sup> **Porciani**, Ilaria, and Johan **Tollebeek**, eds. *Setting the standards: Institutions, networks and communities of national historiography*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. P. 117

way. Confronting and contrasting the hegemonic discourse, the participation of their protagonist, and the macro and micro historical processes that are part of these historical events. Evidently, this dissertation is framed within these new perspectives, trying to use them in order to provide forms that break the monolithic conception of national historiographies that see the conformation of the nation-state in a teleological way and see the discourse of its past in a utilitarian and, in many cases, presentist way. Seeking, therefore, a way to construct a broader, more comprehensive understanding of a national past through this comparative approach.

○ **Framing and limitations of the research**

Clearly, this is not an easy task and one that this dissertation alone will not be able to achieve, but it is a sure step forward toward a new understanding of a past that, despite the geographical distance, can be profoundly similar and close in time and development. Learning about the history of their own country is generally the goal that the institutions of a nation-state seek (or, at best, intend) to generate in the education of its citizens. And it is more than evident that this historiographical discourse does not transcend beyond the knowledge of the independence processes of his own country. Therefore, another goal of this dissertation is to connect these national historiographies that tend to be autarkic and self-sufficient when, in fact, they are not.

The possibilities within this project, the number of edges and paths that the analysis could take or have taken, mean that the limits of the research could be expanded beyond what is analyzed in the following pages, but will nevertheless circumscribe the limits established in the subsequent chapters. Since independence was an essential historical moment for the national construction of both countries, the diverse interpretations of it, from the institutional to the popular, make it difficult to elaborate a comprehensive work of its interpretation and assimilation under the conditions and parameters of this text. Therefore, the main limit of this research is to delve into the museum aspect and to mention, without ignoring its importance, the other cultural devices with which the process of independence has been described and assimilated.

Likewise, the limitations of this doctoral project should not be overlooked. Obviously, writing in English about the independence of Colombia and Greece from an Italian university is an opportunity that is most likely only possible in the times we live in. These times also present a series of critical challenges. This project was conceived and developed while a pandemic was still spreading around the world, with the implications and complications that, in terms of research,

access to information and sources, and even the health of the person writing these lines, were seriously compromised. Therefore, the elaboration of this thesis is not only a challenge to all these obstacles but also a plausible result under the conditions maintained during the development of this doctoral program, with its virtues and flaws.

Continuing with this, the errors, defects, and misrepresentations found here in this text are the clear and sole responsibility of its author. Aware of the difficulty of preparing an analysis of this type and of the different edges that may arise from the research project, witnessing at the same time a surge of new literature around the topics here analyzed that made this research constantly fed, rethought, and rewritten, as well as the possibility of finding gaps, not due to bad faith but due to lack of time or resources to cover all the investigative fronts that this topic requires. This is one of the sections of this research that continues, and probably would be constantly being fed and rewritten in future research, such as a deeper look at regional museums and archives, visits and fieldwork in site museums or in general a more detailed description of the examples, cases, and analysis presented here.

- **STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

The central question and primary motivation of this research is to understand the ways in which the collective memories in Colombia and Greece were shaped. A memory that was built in different geographical spaces and different cultural configurations, despite having a contemporary independence process. Firstly, through understanding these respective wars of independence as the main event of their history as modern nation-states. And secondly, to comprehend how this understanding has been constructed over the last two centuries through the historical and discursive dissemination of collections in museums and spaces dedicated to conserving objects related to this national history.

In this order of ideas, the hypothesis that I will try to prove after a first approach to the written (first and secondary) and material sources (objects, spaces, monuments) from museum collections is that, despite the geographical distance, there is a similar pattern or patterns of configuration of a national historical memory through the history collections of the national museums, both in Colombia and Greece. Thereafter, throughout the two hundred years of history as independent

states, the collections of these museums have been used as a tangible apparatus for the construction of national consciousness and the diffusion of a narrative of national identity.

Periodic commemorations, temporary exhibitions, and re-visits to these collections and their objects and discourses maintain the history of independence as the most significant historical event of the modern nation, understood as such in both Colombia and Greece. To try to confirm this hypothesis and propose the development of this research problem, the dissertation will be divided into two parts, each containing two chapters with their corresponding divisions, as will be explained in the next sections.

○ **First part (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> chapters)**

To carry out a type of analysis like the one that this dissertation attempts to carry out, it is necessary, in the first instance, to have a starting point from a methodological apparatus and a broad historiographic body. These two devices will allow us to have the conditions to, firstly, put on the table the hypothesis that is intended to be demonstrated and, secondly, provide an argumentative base that allows us to connect with the examples presented in the subsequent chapters. In this order of ideas, the first chapter will present a historical and historiographical account of the two case studies presented here to show the similarities in their historical development from their wars of independence to the commemorations of the two hundred years of independence. as well as the theoretical bibliography in general on museums, national identity, collective memory and material history. This also presents the main sources of this work and clarifies the space that this dissertation aims to fill, or the new investigative front that can open.

Next, after this preliminary balance, the analysis will delve deeper into the various theories and concepts about nation-state construction. Starting with classic authors such as Hobsbawm, Anderson, and Smith, and moving towards concepts that are closer and applied to the cases of Colombia and Greece. Successively, I will talk about how these national societies remember and how their memory is built through species symbols over time, and how many of these symbols are consecrated in spaces determined for this purpose, such as historical museums. This combination of similarities and differences is essentially the role of this research to elucidate how, through time, the construction of Colombian and Greek historical memory has been carried out through the history collections that reside in museums that have been granted a national character and how this

construction has undergone various transformations, both material and discursive, among the last two hundred years.

The second chapter discusses the need to create and subsequently construct a founding myth for the newly independent states. This will include the conceptual and cultural bases that the protagonists of both revolutions will use to configure an identity discourse that not only allows for the configuration of legitimacy abroad, but that is sufficiently convincing and accessible to the rest of the individuals who belonged to the societies of these newly independent countries. This will include the invention of myths and heroes of their own that will seek to sustain the historical course that the wars of independence took to maintain a sovereign national regime.

After the formulation of the myth, with its respective heroes and villains, it is important to analyze that what today is considered an immovable and tacit discourse, in its beginnings, was fitting to the discursive apparatus exposed by the elites that governed both countries in the first years as independent nations, but that were not exempt from confrontations and opposition for the establishment because this national discourse. Furthermore, even today, two centuries later, these discourses and symbols are under the magnifying glass of internal and external observers. In any case, thanks to the power of the institutions that are being consolidated during the strengthening of the independent nation in Greece and Colombia, a cohesive discourse begins to be established, with a series of new symbols that maintain and perpetuate an identity discourse. Closing this chapter will be an analysis of the consequences of this symbolic exhibition of the nation and its impact on the daily life of both nations.

○ **Second part (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> chapters)**

The third chapter collects the discursive structures for the formation of the nation that were outlined in the two previous chapters and connects them with concrete examples of historical museums that deal with content related to the Independence of Colombia and Greece. In both countries, the institutions sought a way to make the historical past of the newly independent nation tangible and, therefore, created a series of educational and cultural spaces where this materialization takes place.

To create these museum institutions, it is necessary to gather, collect, and prioritize a series of objects that can be exhibited and classified to show the material character of a collective past. Over time and with work from within and outside these institutions, these spaces become places of

pilgrimage that contain the sacred relics of the new religion that is the nation. Visits to these spaces by locals and foreigners generate a halo of prestige, as occurs with many museums around the planet, which seek to create the perception of an exceptional character that makes these museums, exhibitions, collections, and objects something unique.

This importance and prestige are deeply related to the hard work of the different divisions within the museums. The areas of conservation, dissemination, and education are the main ones responsible for establishing a dialogue between the collections and objects of the museum and the public. They also establish a discourse that captures the importance of both the institution and the objects it holds. In the case of the history museums of these two countries, their work has become an organ for the dissemination of the national conscience discourse, as well as a space for debate on this collective past.

The fourth and final chapter will discuss the combination and extension of the discourse of national identity, its institutionalization, its subsequent musealization, and, as a final step, its discussion, reception, and reproduction in public opinion. A prospect on the possibilities of disseminating, teaching, and recognizing the past. Seeking what tools and methodologies have been used and could be used to approach this historical episode through museums, specifically regarding the wars of independence and their role in the national formation of the two countries analyzed here. The historical and ideological narrative that allowed the creation not only of two independent states in two geographically distant spaces but also of an identity discourse around these divisions that allows easy identification in specific museum spaces has also had an important impact on the culture, education, literature, and arts of these two countries.

Within this reception of the identity discourse in public opinion, the critical discussion about it is resumed, as well as the objections made about it over the years. These objections, in this specific case, have been projected publicly over the years, not only as a contrary discourse or an opposition per se, but also as a reinterpretation of collective ideas about the past regarding Independence. This search for new perspectives has taken place in the first instance to keep the debate on Independence alive and, additionally, to dare to rethink through the arts and letters the founding process of these two nations.

After this review of the two parts that make up this investigation, the final section will focus on the possible conclusions and demonstrations of the hypothesis announced here, as well as a call for the

extension of the comparative historiographical exercises, due to their opposition to the thematic autarchy, the recognition of different historical subjects with their own agency and therefore, their relevance in the historical debate today. Furthermore, after this brief introduction to the various topics and tools that will be used to demonstrate the hypotheses presented here, their structure and justification, it is the moment to move on to the first analytical chapter that will serve to set the tone of the research regarding the context of the independence of Greece and Colombia, its projection in public history and the theoretical and historiographical tools to analyze them.



## **CHAPTER I: THEORY, METHODOLOGY, AND CONTEXT**

*“The act of forgetting, I would even say, historical error, is an essential factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for nationality. Indeed, historical inquiry brings back to light the deeds of violence that took place at the origin of all political formations, even those whose consequences have been the most beneficial. Unity is always achieved brutally.”<sup>12</sup>*

The nation is a contemporary concept that at the same time has ancient origins; sometimes easy to recognize but always difficult to define; constantly present but almost never tangible; globally accepted but developed in a particular way in each space. That "nation" and its development as a concept and discourse over time, specifically in the cases of Colombia and Greece, is the central theme of this dissertation. To analyze them, it is necessary to understand in general terms how both the concept of nation itself and its study have developed over time to finally reach their diffusion in public spaces, specifically through museums and with greater particularity in museums of national history.

For this reason, this chapter seeks to expose and explain the historical, theoretical, and methodological tools to carry out the comparative analysis and try to test the hypotheses presented in the previous chapter. The starting point for this analysis is the historical context of the processes of nation-state creation in Colombia and Greece, which can be traced back to the revolutions that shaped their understanding and development throughout the two centuries of history as independent states. To achieve this, the first step will be to summarize the main aspects and events of these two revolutions.

Subsequently, it is necessary to recount the historiographical development and, essentially, the way in which the history of the independence of both countries has been written, told, and disseminated, from heroic and testimonial stories through the beginning of romantic historiography in the nineteenth century, to the perspectives that from professionalized history has analyzed these two events. I would analyze nation-building theories that could be applied to the cases of Colombia and Greece. In addition to glimpsing the way in which this construction of national identity has

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<sup>12</sup> Renan, Ernest. *What is a nation? And other political writings*. Columbia University Press, 2018. P. 251

developed collective feelings of identification, cohesion, indifference, or rejection. Always bearing in mind how these discourses of identity are transformed with the passage of time, and those who command the institutions that authorize and manage that discourse. Going across the general and global contexts to the particular and local ones, without neglecting the way in which these discourses have influenced the educational and museum systems in both countries and how these identity narratives have permeated and shaped public opinion.

After having these clarities, it will be time to see how historiographical and national identity discourses are reflected in a tangible way in objects, sources, actors and events related to the processes of independence. It is here that material history takes on a special relevance, condensing and consecrating a collective past into a particular object. A consecration that does not always correspond to a homogeneous memory and that, on certain occasions, is conflictive or subject to iron hierarchies of historicity. Finally, connecting with this last section, I will talk about the past, present, and future possibilities of disseminating, questioning, and constructing these memories, discourses, and regimes about the past, from orality and personal memory to dissemination in mass media, to the multimedia and technological moment in which the bicentennials of the wars of independence of Colombia and Greece are inserted.

- **HISTORICAL AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE COLOMBIAN INDEPENDENCE (1810-1819)**

To understand and value their different historical dynamics, it is important to look not only within the framework of the wars or revolutions that led to the creation of an independent Colombia or Greece, but also extend the analysis to the following decades in which the memory and commemoration of Independence were. In general terms, both territories share the historical configuration of having been occupied, dominated, and transformed by two metropolises that were located at the ends of the Mediterranean Sea: Madrid at the western end and Constantinople at the east, two metropolises that were configured as empires at the end of the fifteenth century, which lived a golden age and direct confrontation during the sixteenth century and that from the seventeenth century onwards their cycle as geopolitical protagonists started to diminish with the emergence of new imperial powers in northern Europe, placing the Mediterranean powers in the

background in eighteenth-century global politics. With the awakening of national consciences in the nineteenth century, both empires, the Spanish and Ottoman, began a slow but steady decline that would result in the loss of their territories, which would be configured into independent states of various types: republics such as the case of New Granada/Colombia, or monarchies as in the case of Greece.

The history of the independence of Colombia and Greece is deeply linked to the history of the empires from which they obtained this free self-determination through arms. That is why the analysis of the Spanish Empire and the Ottoman Empire is fundamental to this research. But at the same time, a conscientious study of how the independence of its former imperial and colonial dominions has been analyzed, understood, and experienced could raise many doctoral dissertations by itself as a topic.<sup>13</sup>

- **The independence process of Colombia, from 1782 to 1819**

Following the War of the Spanish Succession at the beginning of the 18th century, the Habsburg dynasty, which had ruled Spain and conquered present-day Colombia in the early 16th century, was replaced by the French House of Bourbon. This change initiated a slow yet continuous transformation of the American territories. This was one where these new Spanish monarchs looked for ways to maximize the profit that their colonies could offer. This period, known as the Bourbon reforms, sought to maximize the production of the extractive economy in the American colonies and diversify this same economy, trying to transition from the so-called American silver cycle that flooded the world's markets with this precious mineral for almost two centuries.<sup>14</sup> It is in this context that the Enlightenment as a cultural, academic, and political phenomenon reached American lands and manifested itself specifically in the Viceroyalty of New Granada with the

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<sup>13</sup> Some fundamental works on the theoretical and methodological aspects of these comparative possibilities are **Elliot**, John. "Empires of the Atlantic World. Spain and Great Britain in America (1492-1860)." (2008).; **Mikhail**, Alan, and Christine M. **Philliou**. "The Ottoman Empire and the imperial turn." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54.4 (2012): 721-745; **Yun** Casalilla, Bartolomé. *Global History, Transnational History, and the History of Empires. The Atlantic, America and Europe (16th-18th centuries)*. 2019.

<sup>14</sup> About the Bourbon Reforms see: **Pearce**, Adrian. *The Origins of Bourbon Reform in Spanish South America, 1700-1763*. Springer, 2014; **Kuethe**, Allan J., and Kenneth J. **Andrien**. *The Spanish Atlantic world in the eighteenth century: War and the Bourbon Reforms, 1713-1796*. Cambridge University Press, 2014; **Stein**, Stanley J., and Barbara H. **Stein**. *Silver, trade, and war: Spain and America in the making of early modern Europe*. JHU Press, 2000.

formulation of various enterprises, the most recognized being the Royal Botanical Expedition, led by the Spanish priest José Celestino Mutis, which began in 1782 and culminated in 1808.<sup>15</sup>

This Botanical Expedition would serve as a laboratory, literally speaking, for the first experiment of national awareness of the territories of northern South America. The expedition not only served to try to fulfill the titanic mission of cataloging all the plant species present in the territory of New Granada, but also to look for that new source of income for the Spanish crown in products such as cinchona or cocoa. It also served to make its members aware of the economic potential of the country's biodiversity and that it should be placed in a role that the Spanish crown, despite its intentions, did not want to give it. This is how several members of this botanical expedition became actors and essential figures of the independence movement; it is the case of Francisco Antonio Zea and Camilo Torres Tenorio. Especially Francisco José de Caldas, a polymath in every sense of the word who understood the privileged position of those territories in scientific and geographical terms, who also collaborated with Alexander von Humboldt during his travels in South America, and who would finally be shot in 1816 for the patriot cause.<sup>16</sup>

In any case, the Bourbon reforms, although they sought to modernize and increase the production of the Spanish territories in the Americas, had generated an additional and excessive tax burden on the inhabitants of the American continent. In the specific case of New Granada, the rebellion of the “*comuneros*” began in the north of the Andes, in the province of Vélez. That was the first clear precedent of the political and social dissatisfaction that the inhabitants of this territory experienced with the authorities. These popular revolts that managed to threaten the capital of the viceroyalty itself, arriving with tens of thousands of *comuneros* on the outskirts of Santa Fé de Bogotá, sought the elimination of the *alcabalas*, the tax of the “Barlovento navy” (intended to finance the Spanish

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<sup>15</sup> For the role of Mutis in the political and cultural landscape of Nueva Granada see: **Restrepo**, Olga. "José Celestino Mutis. El papel del saber en el Nuevo Reino." *Anuario colombiano de historia social y de la cultura* 18 (1991): 47-99; **Bernal**, Jaime E., and Alberto Gómez Gutiérrez. *A impulsos de una rara resolución: el viaje de José Celestino Mutis al Nuevo Reino de Granada, 1760-1763*. Universidad del Rosario, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> **Gutiérrez**, Alberto Gómez. "Alexander von Humboldt y la cooperación transcontinental en la Geografía de las plantas: una nueva apreciación de la obra fitogeográfica de Francisco José de Caldas." *HiN-Alexander Von Humboldt Im Netz. Internationale Zeitschrift für Humboldt-Studien* 17.33 (2016): 22-49; **Cuvi**, Nicolás. "Legados de la audacia: Caldas, Humboldt y el conocimiento sobre las quinas, 1801-1821." *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos* 29.1 (2022): 61-79.

navy that fought against English, French and Dutch pirates in the Caribbean) and other commercial taxes that exerted absurd pressure on the inhabitants of the viceroyalty.<sup>17</sup>

In the end, the Viceroy Archbishop Antonio Caballero y Góngora signed capitulations with the *comuneros* and then reneged on them, imprisoned their leaders, and executed them.<sup>18</sup> The most famous of these was José Antonio Galán, who, after being detained and put on the scaffold, was dismembered, and each of his members were publicly exposed in the squares of the towns that had revolted against the crown. This revolt and similar events on the American continent, such as that of Tupac Amaru in 1781 in Peru, set a precedent for the independence movements that would emerge a generation later.<sup>19</sup>

With the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808, the Spanish monarchy and its dominions in America had lost their ruling head. Like a typical absolutist regime of the time, the sudden loss of the monarch's majesty of authority had generated a political upheaval in the colonies, fraught with grief and uncertainty about the very future of their political *status quo* for the time being. This is the scenario in which the so-called "Juntas Emergence" took place, which affected all the territories of Hispanic America, from the Viceroyalty of New Spain (today Mexico) to the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata (in what is now Argentina). The independent states later considered this regional movement as the very genesis of their respective nations. Even in the case of the bicentennial of these joint movements in 2010, deep efforts were made by the academy, institutions, and public opinion to celebrate and commemorate the Independence from a local, national, and regional perspective.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> **Gutierrez** de Piñeres, Juan. "Instrucción general para la recaudación del real ramo de Alcabala y armada de Barlovento del Nuevo Reyno de Granada." Imprenta de Antonio Espinosa de los Monteros, Bogota, 1792. Consulted in: [https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es\\_ES/search/asset/68727](https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/68727)

<sup>18</sup> **García**, Jorge Cárdenas. "The Capitulations of Zipaquirá." Cultural and Bibliographic Bulletin 16.3 (1979): 126-142.

<sup>19</sup> For a more in-depth look at these revolts, see: **Walker**, Charles. *The Rebellion of Tupac Amaru*. Institute of Peruvian Studies, 2019; **Phelan**, John. *The People and the King: The Communal Revolution in Colombia, 1781*. Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> **Palominos**, Simón, and Alejandro **Viveros**. *Thinking about the Bicentennial: Two Hundred Years of Resistance and Power in Latin America*. Ediciones Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, Universidad de Chile, 2012.; **Vargas**, Sebastián. "The Bicentennial of Independence in Colombia: Rituals, Documents, Reflections." *Memory and Society* 15.31 (2011): 66-84; **Mayer**, Alicia, ed. *Mexico in Three Moments, 1810-1910-2010: Towards the Commemoration of the Bicentennial of Independence and the Centennial of the Mexican Revolution: Challenges and Perspectives*. Vol. 2. UNAM, 2007.

In the case of New Granada, practically no important population remained oblivious to this phenomenon of the *Juntas*. Still, with the subsequent formation of the Colombian state and its deep-rooted centralist character, greater relevance was given to the events that occurred on July 20, 1810, in the Plaza Mayor de Santafé de Bogotá, where a brawl caused by the loan of a vase, between the Morales brothers who were of Creole origin, that is, sons of Spaniards born in America, against a Spanish shopkeeper, named José González Llorente, ended in a public revolt that would put the viceroy Antonio Amar y Borbón and establish an independent government junta, and establish under the cries of "*abajo el mal gobierno, que viva el rey*."<sup>21</sup> Since the War of Independence ended and the subsequent declaration of Colombia as an independent state, this date has been established as the founding myth of the Colombian Republic and nation. Still, the event itself deserves a more profound analysis of public history, political history, and even material history. This analysis will be carried out in the chapter on this topic.

This cry or declaration of independence was far from the end of the colonial occupation of the territory of New Granada; it was not even the main intention at that point. Initially, the actions of the patriot side were taken with great enthusiasm, taking advantage of the political weakness of the Spanish regime, which was dealing with the Napoleonic threat in the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, at the beginning of the independence of Colombia and, in turn, of the rest of Hispanic America, a radical change in the political landscape of these territories was seen in the future.

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<sup>21</sup> "Down with the bad government, long live the king" See also: **De Plaza**, José Antonio. *Memoirs for the history of New Granada since its discovery on July 20, 1810*. Imprenta del Neo-granadino, 1850.; **Castro Benítez**, Daniel. "The Museum of July 20, 1810: Between Literal Memory and Exemplary Memory (1960-2000)." *Department of History* (2012).



Image 2. Brawl outside the store of Gonzalo Llorente, beginning of the 20th of July of 1810 in Santafé. Pedro Alcántara Quijano, oil on canvas, 1940. Museum of the Independence, Bogotá, Colombia.

Political language and the formation of public opinion generated discussions about the continent's political future. With the influence of the Revolution of the United States of America in 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, and above all, the possibilities and consequences that the almost always underestimated Haitian Revolution of 1804 had demonstrated, the different territories of the Western Hemisphere that sought their independence were also trying to integrate the vocabulary of contemporary political institutions into their realities<sup>22</sup>. This is how, for example, an empire

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<sup>22</sup> Some of the main works on this global context are **Armitage**, David, and Sanjay **Subrahmanyam**. *The Age of Revolutions in global context, c. 1760-1840*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009; **Bayly**, Christopher Alan. *The birth of the modern world, 1780-1914: global connections and comparisons*. Blackwell, 2004; **Klooster**, Wim. *Revolutions in the*

would be created in Mexico, substituting a European monarchical power with an American dynasty personalized in the figure of Agustín de Iturbide. Haiti also chose to establish a monarchical system repeatedly, but most American territories that sought independence generally tried to establish a republican system.

These discussions were far from simple and, in the end, showed that the political language used in the revolutions of the North Atlantic did not necessarily respond to the geographical, cultural, and social realities of the Latin American territories. In the specific case of Colombia, the first years of independence as a historical process are marked by internal struggles between the factions that tended to impose their political and ideological will to organize the independent state, specifically between a federalist camp in the style of the United States and that of a centralist side in the style of France.<sup>23</sup>

Within these political discussions, there was still the possibility of remaining integrated into the Spanish monarchy. This possibility became more palpable during the discussions that the central junta (provisional Spanish government in the absence of King Ferdinand VII) held to write a new constitution of the Spanish monarchy during the courts of Cadiz in 1812.<sup>24</sup> By this time, the Americans had already dominated and had appropriated the political language of the time, but they disagreed with the disproportionate representation they had. However, the Spanish citizens of Europe, compared to the Spanish citizens of America, followed the example Camilo Torres Tenorio gave in his famous “Memorial de Agravios”. The peninsular territories and the American territories had almost the same population. However, there were four times more representatives of Spain than those of America, and it was a clear decision by the Spaniards not to hand over any political power to the American representatives.<sup>25</sup>

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*Atlantic World, New Edition: A Comparative History*. NYU Press, 2018; **McDonnell**, Michael, ed. *Rethinking the Age of Revolution*. Routledge, 2017; **Polasky**, Janet L. *Revolutions without borders: The call to liberty in the Atlantic world*. Yale University Press, 2015; **Adelman**, Jeremy. *Sovereignty and revolution in the Iberian Atlantic*. Princeton University Press, 2006; **Mikaberidze**, Alexander. *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*. Oxford University Press, 2020.; **Broers**, Michael. *The Napoleonic Mediterranean: enlightenment, revolution and empire*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> **Paredes**, Carlos Sixirei. "Federalism and Centralism in the Origins of Contemporary Colombia." *História (São Paulo)* 33 (2014): 330-345.

<sup>24</sup> **Chust**, Manuel. "La Constitución de 1812: una revolución constitucional bihemisférica." *Laboratorio constitucional iberoamericano: 1807/1808-1830. (Estudios AHILA de historia latinoamericana; 9)* (2012): 93-114.

<sup>25</sup> **Torres**, Camilo, and Francisco Antonio **Zea**. *Two Allegations Against Spain (vol. 3)*. Editorial Center of the Faculty of Human Sciences of the National University of Colombia, 2014.p. 36



Image 3. "Nariño's oath to the flag of Cundinamarca in the church of San Agustín." Francisco Antonio Caro, oil on canvas (detail), 1926. National Museum of Colombia.

In this first period, the revolutionary movement would also be framed by the independence of Cartagena de Indias as the first territory to declare absolute independence from the Spanish crown on November 11, 1811, as well as the first military actions of those who would later be protagonists in the definitive achievement of independence in events such as the admirable campaign of 1813 that would involve the territories of New Granada as well as those of the first republic of Venezuela. This period of internecine struggles would be called by Colombian historiography "Patria boba"<sup>26</sup> because while the Creoles were engaged in these political discussions that ended in open confrontations and civil war, the Napoleonic threat in Spain was fading. The plan for the reconquest of the American territories was being prepared.

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<sup>26</sup> **Espinosa**, José María. *Memoirs of a Standard-Bearer: Memories of the Dumb Homeland. 1810-1819*. Printing House of "The Traditionist", 1876

By the end of 1815, with the Napoleonic threat already averted after the Battle of Waterloo the previous year and with a patriot camp deeply divided for ideological reasons, Spain assembled a large expeditionary force for the "pacification" of the American territory, starting with the northern coast of South America in what is now Venezuela and Colombia.<sup>27</sup> Putting the city of Cartagena de Indias under a very strong siege that would weaken the most important port city of the nascent New Granada and that would allow the expeditionary force commanded by Marshal Pablo Morillo to make its triumphal entry into the new capital of the Viceroyalty, Santafé de Bogotá, before a population as gentle as it was terrified, giving rise to what Colombian historiography has called the "Regime of Terror"<sup>28</sup> where thousands of patriots were shot for having betrayed the Spanish crown.

However, not all independence efforts were undermined by the brutal repression propagated by the Spanish Reconquista. The surviving patriotic leaders, both from New Granada and Venezuela, went into exile, as in the case of Simón Bolívar in Jamaica, where in 1816 he would write his famous letter, or in the strenuous and inaccessible plains of the Orinoquía, as in the case of José Antonio Páez or Francisco de Paula Santander.<sup>29</sup> By 1819 and with the help of British mercenaries and adventurers, an expeditionary force began to be formed that would try to take the capital of the viceroyalty by the shortest but at the same time most challenging route: the crossing of the eastern Colombian Andes, especially the Pisba paramo, that reaches elevations that border 4000 meters above sea level. This campaign, profoundly influenced by the strategic moves made during the Napoleonic wars in Europe, would lead an army of men (and women and children belonging to the soldiery) accustomed to living almost at sea level and temperatures above 30°C to fight and carry out forced marches in freezing temperatures and high mountains, to achieve their goal of liberating the new Granada.<sup>30</sup> After several battles and skirmishes, but especially after the battle of Pantano

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<sup>27</sup> **Cuño**, Justo. "La expedición de Morillo a Nueva Granada." *Desperta Ferro: Historia moderna* 33 (2018): 20-26.

<sup>28</sup> **Gutiérrez** Ardila, Daniel. *La restauración en la Nueva Granada (1815-1819)* (The Restoration in New Granada (1815-1819)). Universidad Externado, 2016; **García** Estrada, Rodrigo de J., and Juan Felipe Córdoba Restrepo. *1816: El terror y la sangre sublime*. Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2016.

<sup>29</sup> **Gómez**, Ricardo Pérez. "Páez y Santander durante el periodo de la pacificación de Morillo (1815-1820) genesis de dos liderazgos." *Academia Nacional de la Historia (Venezuela). Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* 97.385 (2014): 61.

<sup>30</sup> **Rosselli**, Humberto. "Medical Aspects of the Liberation Campaign of 1819." *Revista de la Universidad Nacional (1944-1992)* 4 (1969): 38-70; **Riaño**, Pablo Fernando Pérez. "The Archaeology of War and the Battles of the Liberation Campaign of 1819." *History and Antiquities Bulletin* 104.864 (2017): 113.

de Vargas on July 25, 1819, and the battle of Boyacá bridge on August 7, 1819, the road to the capital was clear for the patriot army after defeating the third division of the Spanish royalist forces.<sup>31</sup>



Image 4. Bolívar at the crossing of the Andes in Pisba. Detail. Francisco Antonio Cano, oil on canvas (detail), 1922. Quinta de Bolívar Museum. Bogotá, Colombia.

<sup>31</sup> **Plata**, Horacio Rodríguez, and Alberto Lee López, eds. *Documents on the Liberation Campaign of 1819*. Editorial Andes, 1970.

○ **The formation of the Colombian State**

After the battle of Boyacá and the arrival of the patriot army in Santafé de Bogotá, this liberating feat had ceased to have a local character to become a continental enterprise, where the campaign in the central Andes of New Granada would be the first step towards the effective dismantling of Spanish rule throughout South America. The years following 1819 would see the formation of a state now understood as supranational in the north of the South American continent. This state, later referred to in historiography as the Gran Colombia, would comprise the current territories of Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela.<sup>32</sup> Since its beginning in 1821, with the declaration of the constitution of Cúcuta, which would give rise to the legislative corpus of this new state, there was an essential mission of configuring the governmental institutions of the new nation. Still, at the same time, it was necessary to finish the continent's liberation by directing the military efforts to the south.

Thus, in 1822, the Gran Colombian troops began their journey towards the most significant Spanish stronghold on the continent, the Viceroyalty of Peru. This was clearly the most important territory for the Spanish crown since the beginning of the colonization of the South American continent three centuries before. Consequently, by the second decade of the 19th century, it had become the last royalist stronghold in the region. Therefore, the military campaigns undertaken from the north, in the present-day territories of Colombia and Venezuela by Simón Bolívar and from the south in what would now be Argentina and Chile by José de San Martín had as their goal the end of Spanish domination in Peru and the continent.<sup>33</sup>

After the initial successes of both liberators of the continent, they directed their armies and batteries towards the conquest of Peru and later to maintain their influence over the wealthiest territory in South America at the time. The final nail in the coffin of the Spanish crown's attempts to strengthen its presence in the region came on December 2, 1824, at the Battle of Ayacucho in the central Andes of present-day Peru.<sup>34</sup> This battle, the largest ever fought in the American Wars of

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<sup>32</sup> **Echeverri**, Marcela, Francisco A. **Ortega**, and Tomás **Straka**. "La invención de la república: la Gran Colombia." *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 45.2 (2018): 17.

<sup>33</sup> **Rabinovich**, Alexander. *Being a Soldier in the Wars of Independence: The Daily Experience of the Troop in the Río de la Plata, 1810-1824*. Sudamericana, 2013.

<sup>34</sup> **Pereyra** Chávez, Nelson E. "La batalla de Ayacucho (9 de diciembre de 1824)." *Revista del archivo General de la Nación* 32.1 (2017): 271-283. <https://doi.org/10.37840/ragn.v32i1.18>; **Cuño** Bonito, Justo. *Ayacucho: la última batalla de la independencia americana*. Los Libros de la Catarata, 2024. 186 p.

Independence, marked the end of Spanish domination in continental America, leaving only the Spanish colonial dominions of Cuba, the Philippines, and some parts of North Africa.

The real challenge began after the Battle of Ayacucho when various local and regional leaders sought to assert their interests over a unified regional alliance in the Western Hemisphere. By this time, the United States of America had already emerged as a leading actor, having declared the Monroe Doctrine in 1821, which was summarized as “America for the Americans.”<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, the Empire of Brazil, where the Portuguese royal family had taken refuge during the Napoleonic Wars, maintained its empire until the end of the nineteenth century. San Martín, but above all, Bolívar understood the difficulties of fragile and new nations that would begin to have various frictions and altercations after being formed as independent states. In the Amphictyonic Congress of Panama in 1826, a desperate attempt was made to promote the union of the American nations and to participate in the global concert as a united bloc, but the local quarrels, the prejudices against the figure of Bolívar, who, in many cases, was seen as a new Napoleon. In the end, it would be a failure for the Latin American cause, but it would be the only way to achieve the goal of the Revolution. It was the beginning of commercial domination by the United States and England that followed the talks of the Congress of Panama with great attention, seeking to expand their interests.<sup>36</sup>

By 1828, tensions between the various new South American states were tremendously strong, and union into supranational entities such as the Gran Colombia was becoming impossible. That is why, gradually and until 1830, this state disintegrated into independent entities: Venezuela, led by General José Antonio Páez; the Republic of Colombia, commanded by Francisco de Paula Santander; and the Republic of Ecuador, with General Juan José Flores, of Venezuelan origin, at the head.<sup>37</sup> In the early 1830s, Bolívar died in Santa Marta (present-day Colombia), having

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<sup>35</sup> **Sexton**, Jay. *The Monroe doctrine: empire and nation in nineteenth-century America*. Hill and Wang, 2011; **Murphy**, Gretchen. *Hemispheric imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and narratives of US empire*. Duke University Press, 2005.

<sup>36</sup> **Sánchez** Myrie, **Dumas** Alberto. "Perspectivas actuales sobre el bicentenario del Congreso Anfictiónico de Panamá de 1826." *Revista Contacto* 3.2 (2023): 145-155; **de Paula** Bueno, Elen, and Victor **Arruda** Pereira de Oliveira. "The Congress of Panama (1826): political, theoretical and legal perspectives in international relations." *Papel Politico* 20.1 (2015): 235-265.

<sup>37</sup> **Bushnell**, David. *El Régimen de Santander en la Gran Colombia: El Régimen de Santander en la Gran Colombia*. Academia Colombiana de Historia, 2020; **León** de Labarca, Alba Ivonne, and Juan Carlos **Morales** Manzur. "La Gran

witnessed the truncation of his projects. The national identities of the states that still exist in South America today began their long process of consolidation, often utilizing cultural institutions such as national museums or history museums for this purpose.<sup>38</sup>

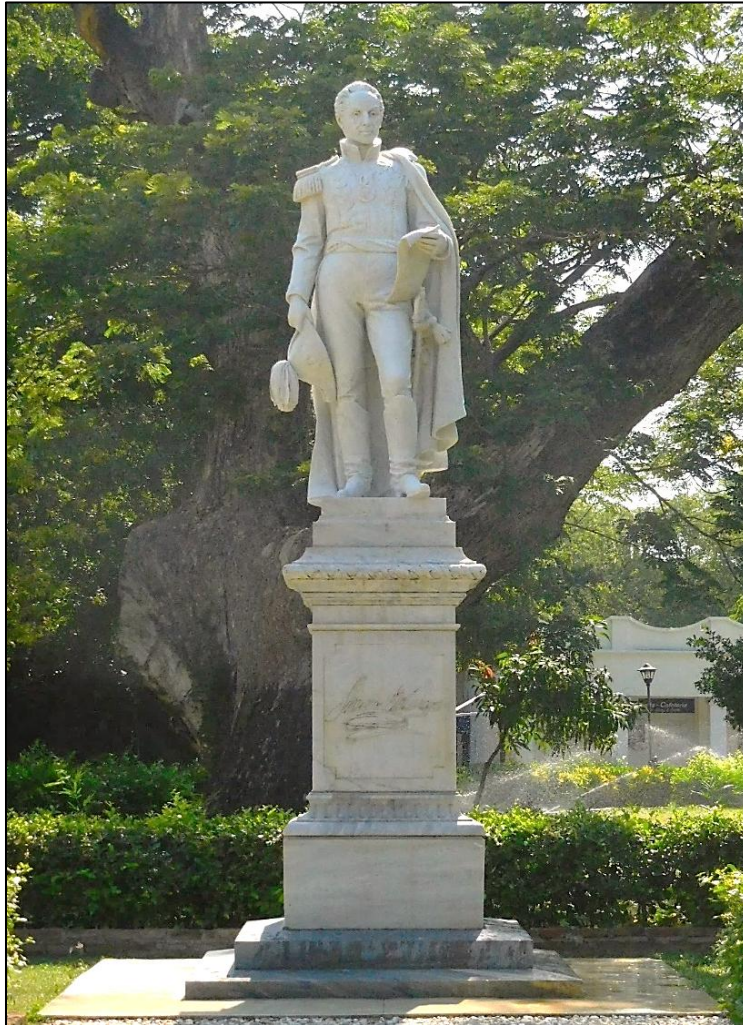


Image 5. Statue of Simón Bolívar in the Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino, where he died on the 17th of December, 1830. Santa Marta, Colombia.

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Colombia: algunos intentos reintegradores después de 1830." *Revista de Artes y Humanidades UNICA* 6.13 (2005): 149-173.

<sup>38</sup> Although the National Museum of Colombia was founded in 1823, in the other countries that belonged to the greater Colombia, there was only one institution of a national character like the Colombian one until the twentieth century. In Venezuela, the Bolivarian Museum was not founded until 1911, and the National Museum of Ecuador would not see the light of day until 1969. For a similar case analysis in the region, see **Ponce de León**, Macarena, and Manuel **Correa** Serrano. "Sentidos de nación, reflexión pedagógica en el cambio de guion en el Museo Histórico Nacional de Chile." *Encounters in Theory and History of Education* 21 (2020): 157-173.



Image 6. Statue of Francisco de Paula Santander in front of the University of Antioquia Historical Building. Medellín, Colombia.

### ○ **Historiography of the Independence of Colombia**

As mentioned previously in this work, the independence process in Colombia has been the historical event with the most significant historiographical production since the very moment an independent Colombian state was established. The first and most straightforward example of this is the titanic work of José Manuel Restrepo entitled *History of the Revolution of the Republic of Colombia*. These two volumes add up to almost 1500 pages, and Restrepo, as the official chronicler of the new state, establishes an official narrative of its history and emergence.<sup>39</sup>

Restrepo's vision would be maintained for decades, and even its critical or analytical character would be blurred with the enthronement of the "bronze history" of the monuments and statues

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<sup>39</sup> **Restrepo**, José Manuel. *Historia de la Revolución de la República de Colombia*. Vol. 1-2. Librería Americana, 1827.

erected in this material throughout the country with effigies of the heroes of independence. It is a process that has been carried out with much greater force since the centenary of Independence in 1910 and in which, paradoxically, the recently created Colombian Academy of History plays a fundamental role. This “bronze history” transcended the institutional and permeated deeply into the Colombian educational system, such as the history manuals of compulsory use in schools throughout the country, texts in which the manual of Henao and Arrubla stands out; this latter work and was a direct product of the commemorations of the centennial of Independence.<sup>40</sup>

Decades after the centennial, a series of revisionism from the left and right political spectrum of the country's history swung in general with the tumultuous events of the history of Colombia in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, in the last 50 years, the debates, conceptions, and historical studies on independence have gradually changed after the professionalization of the historical discipline and the creation of history faculties and departments in the country's leading universities. This first generation of professional historians sought to detach themselves from the history represented by institutionality, seeking a more critical approach to the period. Germán Colmenares, one of the pioneers of this generation, described the official discourse and specifically the work of José Manuel Restrepo as a "historiographical prison"<sup>42</sup> from which Colombian historians must try to escape if they wanted to see the independence process from a broader and more critical perspective, a process that continues to be carried out with the integration of new perspectives and fields of study, integrating the discussions in new manuals and being the reflection

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<sup>40</sup> Regarding this historiographic moment and the importance of the text of Henao and Arrubla, see **Henao**, Jesús María and **Arrubla**, Gerardo. *Historia de Colombia para la enseñanza secundaria*. Bogotá: Librería Camacho Roldán, 1920. two vol. 592 p. Consulted in: <https://shorturl.at/b3UUF>; **Díaz**, Alexis Pinilla. "El compendio de la historia de Colombia de Henao y Arrubla y la difusión del imaginario nacional a principios del siglo XX". *Revista Colombiana de Educación* 45 (2003); **Rodríguez Ávila**, Sandra Patricia. "Construcción de la memoria oficial en el Centenario de la Independencia: el Compendio de Historia de Colombia de Henao y Arrubla." *Folios* 32 (2010): 23-42.; **Melo**, Jorge Orlando. "La historia de Henao y Arrubla: tolerancia, republicanismo y conservatismo." In: **Rincón Carlos**, Sarah **De Mojica** y Liliana **Gómez**, *Entre el olvido y el recuerdo. Íconos, lugares de memoria y cánones en la historia y la literatura en Colombia*, Bogotá, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2010, 581 p. 215-238

<sup>41</sup> **Liévano** Aguirre, Indalecio. *Los grandes conflictos sociales y económicos de nuestra historia*. Imprenta Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, 1996, 4 vols.; **Nieto** Arteta, Luis E. *Economía y cultura en la historia de Colombia*, Bogotá, 6<sup>a</sup> ed. Tiempo Presente. 1975; **García** Nossa, Antonio. "Colombia. Esquema de una república señorial", en *Cuadernos Americanos* (México), vol. cxix, N° 6, 1961, ppL 76-133.

<sup>42</sup> **Colmenares**, Germán *Las convenciones contra la cultura: Ensayos sobre historiografía hispanoamericana del siglo XIX*, Bogotá, Tercer Mundo Editores, Universidad del Valle, Banco de la República, Colciencias, 1997, 103 p.

of the Colombian political context of that time, with the perils that such a violent endeavor would carry out.<sup>43</sup>

For the bicentennial, a new historiographical renewal was launched by political and military institutions, with specialized and didactic material, as well as by universities, the leading academic and historical research centers, which organically but consistently brought out a series of publications regarding independence and new perspectives on it, this time broadening the spectrum of analysis with the insertion of new perspectives on the past, from regional history, gender history, and history from below.<sup>44</sup> These works are the starting point for rethinking the founding process of Colombia from critical historiography that also tries to connect with the general public through new technologies and dissemination platforms.

- **HISTORICAL AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE GREEK REVOLUTION (1821-1830)**

The historical conditions that led Greece to form an independent nation-state in the first half of the 19th century, despite being similar to those in Colombia, differ in two fundamental aspects: language and religion. Even though the modern Greek nation today as a collective can be considered (and quite many like to do so) heir to the Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantine Empire, the seat of the Eastern Orthodox Church, which had its end with the conquest of Constantinople on May 29 in 1453 after a long and famous siege under the troops of the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II.

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<sup>43</sup> For the main works of this first generation of professional historians, see **Betancourt** Mendieta, Alexander. *Historia y nación: tentativas de la escritura de la historia en Colombia*. Editorial la Carreta, Medellín, 2007 293 p.; **Jaramillo** Uribe, Jaime. *Nueva historia de Colombia: Colombia indígena, conquista y colonia*. Bogotá Planeta, 2021; **Alarcón** Meneses, Luis Alfonso. "Representaciones sobre la independencia en los manuales de historia de Colombia." *Investigación y desarrollo* 21.2 (2013): 342-370.

<sup>44</sup> Some of these new approaches are **Arroyo**, Isabel Cristina. *Pasto: al borde de la nación, en el centro de la historia (1822-1839)*. Bogotá, Universidad de los Andes, 2023; **Echeverri**, Marcela. *Esclavos e indígenas realistas en la Era de la Revolución: Reforma, revolución y realismo en los Andes septentrionales. 1780-1825*. Bogotá, Universidad de los Andes, 2018; **Lux**, Martha. *Mujeres patriotas y realistas entre dos órdenes. Discursos, estrategias y tácticas en la guerra, la política y el comercio (Nueva Granada, 1790-1830)*. Bogotá, Universidad de los Andes, 2014; **Camacho**, Carlos, Margarita **Garrido**, and Daniel **Gutiérrez**, eds. *Paz en la República. Colombia siglo XIX*. Bogotá, U. Externado de Colombia, 2019; **Tovar** Zambrano Bernardo (ed.), *Independencia: Historia diversa*, Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2012, 648 p; **Rodríguez** Vargas, Hernán. "Siete mitos de la Independencia de la Nueva Granada (1810-1819) Imágenes, imaginarios y politización de la historia." Bogotá, Universidad Javeriana. 2023

However, this change of imperial domination did not entail the annulment or prohibition of the language or religion of the Greek population, who were then subject to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>45</sup>

Due to its geographical location, the Ottoman Empire maintained under its aegis several societies consolidated as nations in linguistic terms since ancient times. For pragmatic and political reasons, they were grouped and classified in the imperial administration from the Sublime Porte into *millets*. These *millets* were a cohesive group of subjects of the Ottoman sultan, clustered according to their religious doctrine and origin; that is, there was a Greek millet, an Armenian millet, and a Jewish millet, among others.<sup>46</sup> They had religious and linguistic autonomy as long as they fulfilled their tax obligations to the sultan. The struggle during the nearly four centuries of Ottoman domination largely revolved around the level and extent of this autonomy. The Greek *Millet*, commanded by the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, was evidently one of the most significant in the Empire. By the time of the revolution in 1821, it encompassed all populations of the Orthodox Christian faith within the domains of the Sublime Porte.

The struggle in almost four centuries of Ottoman domination will be a reasonable extent and level of this autonomy. The Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople commanded the Greek Millet. Evidently, it was one of the most important in the Empire, if not the most dominant, after the sunni muslims composed under the Ottoman Sultan's authority. By the time of the revolution in 1821, this *Millet* grouped all the Orthodox Christian faith populations in the Sublime Porte domains.

#### ○ Revolts, Enlightenment, and *Filiki Eteria*

These contests for autonomy or representation of Greeks as imperial subjects were framed during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the intense participation of the Greek population, in many cases, inhabitants of Constantinople, who would actively participate in the Ottoman imperial administration, as well as in its political and administrative decisions. This ruling class was called the Phanariots, or inhabitants of the Fener district in the Golden Horn of Constantinople. The influence of these

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<sup>45</sup> Wasiucionek, Michał. "Greek as Ottoman? Language, identity and mediation of Ottoman culture in the early modern period." *Cromohs-Cyber Review of Modern Historiography* (2018): 70-89.

<sup>46</sup> Stamatopoulos, Dimitrios. *From millets to minorities in the 19th-century Ottoman empire: An ambiguous modernization*. NA, 2006.; Roudometof, Victor. "From Rum Millet to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society, 1453-1821." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 16.1 (1998): 11-48.

Phanariots rivaled only the Albanians (who were generally connected with the military administration of the Empire) as the most important ethnic and religious minority within the Ottoman administration.<sup>47</sup>

Even so, and despite having a privileged place as imperial subjects, there was an internal division within the Greek population, where there was a more deep-rooted feeling in those Greeks who did not belong to this Phanariot elite that Ottoman domination was not benevolent to their existence. The Greek merchant who would sometimes be sent into the nascent professional service thought one thing about the empire and the sultan, and another different thing thought the farmer that lived in mainland Greece and had to submit to the vexations of the local governor or bey, in addition to a higher tax burden than that of the Muslim population.<sup>48</sup>

Over the years, and in the places where the imperial command had difficulties gaining access, this division generated a way of life alien and parallel to that dictated by the authorities of the Sublime Porte. That was how the figure of the *klepthes* or *armatoloi* emerged: they were brigands or bandits who lived according to their customs and traditions far from the reach of the local governors. This autonomy of these bandits will be essential for the upcoming revolution for practical and military reasons, where many of these *klepthes* were the bulk of the revolutionary troops. They will carry a substantial symbolic and political charge around the most famous bandits, who will be, for the good and the bad, a fundamental part of the first generation of politicians and statesmen of independent Greece.<sup>49</sup> Surrounding them with a halo of legend that will be generated and will become, by definition, the symbol of the revolution both inside and outside Greece through the years.<sup>50</sup>

The influence of the ideals of the Enlightenment, despite being geographically closer to Greece than to Colombia, would have a different impact from the one it had in South America. Although the great philosophical and political discussions took place on the other side of the Ottoman borders, within the sultan territories, no strong winds of ideological change existed in the rest of

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<sup>47</sup> Eşiyok, Rabia, and Ahu Selin Erkul Yağcı. "Translation and Power Dynamics: Exploring the Role of the Phanariot Families in the Ottoman Empire-A Case Study of the Mavrocordatos Family." *The History of Translation and Translators in the Ottoman Empire* 25 (2024): 31;

<sup>48</sup> Philliou, Christine. "Communities on the verge: Unraveling the Phanariot ascendancy in Ottoman governance." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51.1 (2009): 151-181.

<sup>49</sup> Xenakis, Sappho. "Trouble with the outlaws: bandits, the state, and political legitimacy in Greece over the Longue Durée." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 34.3 (2021): 504-516.

<sup>50</sup> Batalas, Achilles. *The nation loves the householder, but also loves the bandit Nation-building and myth-making, the case of modern Greece, 1750–1862*. Diss. New School University, 2012.

the continent. It will be, in the case of Greece, the mission of the Diaspora, of the Greek communities present in the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Empire, or in the British Empire itself, who are not only attracted by these ideals of the Enlightenment but also see the fundamental role that classical Greece played in all these new philosophical paths. Therefore, from the Diaspora, the use of classical Greek antiquity in the past was seen as an essential tool for constructing a modern Greek nation.

This enlightened Greek diaspora, from London to Moscow and from Prussia to Alexandria, would be represented by the Society of Friends or *Filiki Eteria* in Greek. A secret society in the best style of Freemasonry, which would seek a way to generate a collective Greek national consciousness through education and various diplomatic and espionage missions that would essentially allow the outbreak of a Revolution that would lead to the creation of an independent Greek state.<sup>51</sup> This was not always the objective. The Society of Friends was a reasonably large organization at its base and with quite broad scopes, practically all the relevant members of the Greek independence process were directly or indirectly linked to this secret society from the economic, organizational, or ideological point of view, despite their diverse ideas for reaching the objectives of the organization. Moreover, they would also have a first failed attempt to materialize their plans with the unsuccessful revolt of the Orloff brothers in 1770.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, in an individual sense, there are two very relevant figures in this ideological process of building a Greek national sentiment before and during the Revolution: Adamantios Korais and Rigas Feraios. Korais was a full-fledged polymath who sought, through linguistics, the necessary argumentation to dedicate himself to the intellectual circles of the Enlightenment and the Greek patriotic cause.<sup>53</sup> Rigas Feraios, on the other hand, was a little more active and politically rebellious than Korais. Feraios developed his career as a diplomat, providing services to various Habsburg

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<sup>51</sup> **Kitromilides**, Paschalis M. *Enlightenment and Revolution*. Harvard University Press, 2013.; **Psarrou**, Evi. "The Effect of the Greek Enlightenment on the Greek Revolution and the position of the Eastern Orthodox Church." *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 4.09 (2021): 2537-2540.

<sup>52</sup> **Brewer**, David. *Greece, the hidden centuries: Turkish rule from the fall of Constantinople to Greek independence*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> **Kitromilides**, Paschalis. "Itineraries in the world of the Enlightenment: Adamantios Korais from Smyrna via Montpellier to Paris." *Kitromilidis 2010a* (2010): 1-33; **Castillo** Didier, Miguel. "Adamantios Korais, el último representante de la Ilustración griega." *Byzantion nea hellás* 38 (2019): 181-196.

family/nobility members in Vienna. During this time, he also worked on tools to emancipate Greek populations from the Ottoman Empire. His most recognized work is a set of maps of the Ottoman Empire and Southern Europe, overlaying the classical Greek heritage on the domains of the Sublime Porte in a way that each significant remnant of Greek antiquity is detailed in these toponymic indications.<sup>54</sup> This colossal task remained unfinished, as he was captured in Trieste in February, imprisoned in Belgrade, and executed in 1798.

○ **From the Revolution of 1821 to the arrival of the King in 1831**

Establishing the general context of the events that led to the insurrection of the Greeks of the Peloponnese on March 25, 1821, is not an easy task and continues to be a matter of discussion by historians specialized in this subject, even more in times of commemorations and bicentennials.<sup>55</sup> Dates and anniversaries are fundamental for the study of history, but they also have a tremendous symbolic and political charge. The Greek Revolution of 1821 did not necessarily begin sharply on March 25 of that year. Still, the Greek historiography itself has tried to join the beginning of the Revolution (which actually started in the principality of Wallachia, present-day Romania) with the military actions and subsequent failure of the “sacred battalion” of a member of the Society of Friends: Alexandros Ypsilantis. Moreover, this date corresponds to the feast of the Most Holy Annunciation. Therefore, the Orthodox Christian authority mediated and interfered with the political process of the insurrection against Ottoman rule.

The news about the sedition of the Greeks of the Peloponnese was not received with the best spirit by the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul, nor was it viewed favorably by the Phanariot Greeks, who saw their interests and their *status quo* tremendously compromised with the development of this revolutionary process. The response from the Sublime Porte was not extended in coming, and strong contingents of troops were sent to put down the rebellion in mainland Greece. Likewise, despite the explanations given by the Orthodox Patriarch Gregory V of Constantinople, the reprisals against the Greek population in Istanbul did not wait any longer. They were tremendously

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<sup>54</sup> **Castillo** Didier, Miguel. "La revolución griega de 1821. El precursor Rigas Velestinlís." *Byzantion nea hellás* 40 (2021): 171–193.

<sup>55</sup> The most recent synthesis that brings these debates together is that of **Mazower**, Mark. *The Greek Revolution: 1821 and the Making of Modern Europe*. Penguin, 2021.

violent, including the execution of the patriarch on Easter Sunday of 1821. An event that shook European public opinion, which until that moment was hesitant towards the cause of the Greek rebels.<sup>56</sup>

While the great powers decided how to act on this new focus of conflict that was opening up in the south of the European continent, the Greek rebels achieved a series of initial military successes, to the point that it would allow them to have enough autonomy and political power to declare a national constituent assembly in the ancient town of Epidaurus in 1822.<sup>57</sup> But these political developments began to be seriously truncated by two fundamental factors when it came to analyzing the Greek War of Independence: the voice and interests of the local leaders, who were responsible for the human and economic resources at the beginning of the confrontation, and on the other hand, a large group of *klepthes* and *armatoloi* who were generally surrounded by an aura of almost mythological heroism that would allow them to establish their political will in their areas of influence. This is how the figures of Theodoros Kolokotronis, Giorgios Karaiskakis, Mavrokordatos, Giannis Makriyiannis, and so many other political and military actors, who on many occasions would confront each other for the defense of their interests or the supremacy of their clan in the political discussion of the whole of Greece.<sup>58</sup>

The second factor was the Ottoman counterattack, which from 1824 became tremendously strong with the integration into the conflict of the *pasha* or governor of Egypt, Mehmet Ali, who, of Albanian origin, had been born in the nowadays Greek city of Kavala in the region of Thrace. His life exemplifies a clear example of how diverse and varied the analysis of the participants of the Greek War of Independence can be from a social or ethnic component.<sup>59</sup> Ali's influence was vastly

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<sup>56</sup> Chalkiadakis, Emmanouil. "Reconsidering the Past: Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V and the Greek Revolution of 1821." *Synthesis* 6.1 (2017): 177-204.

<sup>57</sup> Vlachopoulos, Spyros. "The vision of the rebellious Greeks for a democratic and liberal state: The constitutions of the Greek Revolution." *The Greek Revolution in the Age of Revolutions (1776–1848)*. Routledge, 2021. pp. 235-244.

<sup>58</sup> Herzfeld, Michael. *Ours once more: Folklore, ideology, and the making of modern Greece*. Berghahn Books, 2020; Makriyiannis Yiannis *Memorias de la Revolución griega de 1821*. edición de Francisco Javier Ortolá Salas. Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, (2012) 640 p.; Kolokotronis, Theodoros K. *Ο Κολοκοτρώνης: Απομνημονεύματα του Κολοκοτρώνη (Διήγησις συμβάντων της Ελληνικής φυλής 1770-1836), Ρητά του Κολοκοτρώνη, Τραγούδια των Κολοκοτρωναίων* (Kolokotronis: Memoirs of Kolokotronis (Narration of events of the Greek race 1770-1836), Sayings of Kolokotronis, Songs of the Kolokotronians) two vols, Athens: Estias, 1901. Consulted in: <https://shorturl.at/QJwGb>

<sup>59</sup> De la Peña, Luis Alfredo. "The Independence processes of Greece And Colombia: Topics and possibilities of comparison." *Global Histories: A Student Journal* 5.2 (2019). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17169/GHSJ.2019.304>

decisive to the point of almost wholly suffocating the Greek Revolution and reintegrating the rebellious territories of Rumelia into the domains of the Sublime Porte.



Image 7. "The Exodus of Messolonghi" Theodoros Vryzakis, oil on canvas (detail), 1855. National Gallery of Athens, Greece.

It would not be until the arrival of the direct participation of the European powers that the balance of the war leaned towards the Greek cause. This external support was due to various reasons: either to weaken further the Ottoman Empire, which since Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt in 1798 had shown serious vulnerabilities in containing foreign interference in its territory, or by sympathy and affinity with the cause of the Greek rebels. This support was not only reflected in the highest political sphere but also paved the path to a whole artistic and social movement called

“philhellenism”.<sup>60</sup> The most iconic exponent of this movement was the English poet Lord Byron, who would take up arms with the Greek rebels. Despite seeing his romantic expectations tremendously disappointed when he did not find in the *klepthes* the heirs of the Spartan hoplites, he decided to continue the fight and died during one of the sieges of Messolonghi in 1826.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, in 1826, in the bay of Navarino, near where the Battle of Lepanto had taken place 250 years earlier, the joint fleets of Russia, France, England, and the Greek rebels engaged the Ottoman fleet, defeating it, cutting off the Ottoman army's supply line on the Greek mainland and forcing a cessation of hostilities that would be resolved in the Treaty of Paris of 1830. It was under this treaty that the independence of the modern Greek state was recognized under the protection of the powers seated at the Congress of Vienna, and it was further established that the future of the young Greek nation would be in the hands of a new monarchy in charge of King Otto I of Bavaria. It was inconceivable for the Greek protagonists and veterans of the war that the arduous struggles they had lived for almost a decade in search of the freedom of their motherland would end up represented in a new monarchical state commanded by a German and Catholic king. Likewise, the early years of the modern Greek state were not easy, as internecine struggles continued and even led to the assassination of Yiannis Kapodistrias. Kapodistrias, perhaps one of the most important figures of the Greek Revolution due to his political perspective and diplomatic skills, was assassinated by members of a Peloponnesian clan in the city of Nafplio, the first capital of modern Greece at that time.<sup>62</sup>

To know the direction and the academic tools that this dissertation must use to carry out its analysis, it is necessary to make a brief and general overview through the historiographic and literary production, be it official or academic, that has been produced on this subject. The following section will seek to give a general overview of the issue and provide sources and resources that continue to be generated and constantly updated.

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<sup>60</sup> Some summarizing works on the philhellenism: **Vöhler**, Martin, Stella **Alekou**, and Miltos **Pechlivanos**, eds. *Concepts and Functions of Philhellenism: Aspects of a Transcultural Movement*. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2021; **Wallace**, Jennifer, and Vassilis **Lambropoulos**. "Hellenism, philhellenism and classical reception: commemorating the 1821 revolution." *Classical Receptions Journal* 13.4 (2021): 571-596; **Tolias**, George. "The resilience of Philhellenism." *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 13 (2016): 51-70.

<sup>61</sup> **Beaton**, Roderick. *Byron's war: romantic rebellion, Greek revolution*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

<sup>62</sup> **Stavrianopulu**, Penelope. "Loneliness and Death: The Figure of Kapodistrias in Athanasiadis, Ceotokás and Kazantzakis." *Neo-Greek Studies. Scientific Journal of the Hispanic Society for Neo-Greek Studies* 12 (2009): 159-171.



Image 8. The assassination of Ioannis Kapodistrias in Nauplio on the 27th of September 1831. Dionisios Tsokos, oil on canvas (detail), 1850. Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece.

### ○ **Historiography on the Greek Independence**

The Historiography of Greek Independence has also been both a beneficiary and a victim of the importance that this event has had for the modern Greek state. Its valuation and production have also been affected by the political and social upheavals of the last 200 years. At first, those who oversaw the situation summarized the main events of the Revolution of 1821. It was some of the Philhellenes, especially British and French, who wrote reports on the main events and protagonists of the Revolution, descriptions that were clearly guided from their foreign perspective and responded to their interests within the political panorama of the nascent Greek state.<sup>63</sup>

There is also a connection between the first foreign historiography on the revolution, which serves as a bridge between these accounts of an outsider's view of the events of the revolution, and the more personal accounts in the memoirs of the combatants of the wars of independence. It is an early example of the awareness among contemporaries of the importance of the process of the 1821

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<sup>63</sup> **Potter**, Liz. "British Philhellenism and the Historiography of Greece: A Case Study of George Finlay (1799-1875)." *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 1 (2004): 183-206.

revolution within the greater structure of Greek history, the importance also of the diffusion and structure of that discourse for the readers inside and outside the newly independent state, like the extensive work of Andreas Mamoukas.<sup>64</sup>

Among these sources are the extensive memoirs of Giannis Makriyiannis, a full-fledged protagonist of the revolution, as he was part of several important battles, such as the siege of the Acropolis of Athens in 1827, being governor of the Peloponnese region during the government of Giannis Kapodistrias and a critical defender of the veterans of the war of independence during the reign of King Otto or the aforementioned memoirs of Theodoros Kolokotronis.<sup>65</sup> In the decades that followed, the most crucial historiographical paradigm was imposed by Constantinos Paparrigopoulos, who made a new synthesis of the history of the Greek revolution, connecting the different stages of Greek history from antiquity to the post-independence Greece and which remained in his narrative discourse and his capacity for historiographical analysis well into the twentieth century, mainly shaping the collective memory about the revolution, its causes, development, and consequences during the twentieth century.<sup>66</sup>

Finally, the historiographical moment from the late 1970s to the present day can be considered as a process of re-evaluation from an academic, critical, and formalized history of the Greek Revolution. The social aspects, the local and regional historical context, as well as significant contributions to intellectual and conceptual history within the political language that began to be used before the revolution. These themes have been the subject of study and analysis by Greek and

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<sup>64</sup> **Mamoukas**, Andreas Z. *Τά κατά τήν ἀναγέννησιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος, ἥτοι συλλογή τῶν περὶ τήν ἀναγεννωμένην Ἑλλάδα συνταχθέντων πολιτευμάτων, νόμων καὶ ἄλλων ἐπισήμων πράξεων ἀπὸ τοῦ 1821 μέχρι τέλους τοῦ 1832*. (On the regeneration of Greece, that is, a collection of the constitutions, laws and other formal acts from 1821 until the end of 1832) Athens: Royal Printing House (1839)

<sup>65</sup> **Makriyiannis** Giannis, *Ἀπομνημονεύματα (Memoirs)*, Athens: Papyros, 1996 (1907); **Kolokotronis**, Theodoros K. *Ο Κολοκοτρώνης: Απομνημονεύματα του Κολοκοτρώνη (Διήγησις συμβάντων της Ελληνικής φυλῆς 1770-1836), Ρητά του Κολοκοτρώνη, Τραγούδια των Κολοκοτρωναίων* (Kolokotronis: Memoirs of Kolokotronis (Narration of events of the Greek race 1770-1836), Sayings of Kolokotronis, Songs of the Kolokotronians) two vols, Athens: Estias, 1901.

<sup>66</sup> **Paparrigopoulos**, Constantinos. *"History of the Greek nation."* Athens: Eleftheroudakis. Originally published (1860); **Liakos**, Antonis. "The construction of national time: The making of the modern Greek historical imagination." *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16.1 (2001): 27-42.

foreign historians for the past 50 years, and their historiographical production has been revitalized by recent commemorations.<sup>67</sup>

The 200th anniversary of the Independence of Greece suggested a renewal of the literature referring to the events of the Revolution of 1821 that had been brewing for some years prior to the commemoration. In general, the works that are developed in relation to this commemoration could be divided into three groups: Specialized texts written by foreign academics –often for foreign audiences and in different languages– interested in the Greek Revolution and, by extension, with the continental and global context of the same, where the works of Mazower, Brewer, Clogg, Castillo, Isabella among others stand out.<sup>68</sup>

In the second instance are the works of Greek academics, many of them with an outstanding academic career and with innovative perspectives on Greek Independence, who try to get out of the traditional nationalist trajectory; here we can find the works of Kitromilides, Veremis, Pisanias, Gourgouris, Psarrou, among many others.<sup>69</sup> And finally, in third place, there is a considerable series of new historiographical works that seek to cover in more detail the historical process of the Greek Revolution, analyzing either particular figures and protagonists of Independence or specific themes or episodes such as gender history, the role of the church, the colonial/decolonial question, among

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<sup>67</sup> Liakos, Antonis. "Modern Greek historiography (1974–2000): The era of tradition from dictatorship to democracy." *Ulf Brunnbauer (ed.)* (2004): 351-78.

<sup>68</sup> Some of those main works are: **Mazower**, Mark. *The Greek Revolution: 1821 and the Making of Modern Europe*. Penguin, 2021; **Howarth**, David. *The Greek Adventure: Lord Byron and Other Eccentrics in the War of Independence*. London: Collins. 1976; **Herzfeld**, Michael. *Ours once more: Folklore, ideology, and the making of modern Greece*. Berghahn Books, 2020; **Clogg**, Richard A *concise history of Greece*. Cambridge University Press New York. 2002; **Castillo** Didier, Miguel *Grecia y Francisco de Miranda* Centro de Estudios Bizantinos y Neohelénicos "Fotios Malleros" Universidad de Chile, Santiago de Chile, 2002 317 p.; **Brewer**, David. *The Greek War of Independence: The Struggle for Freedom and the Birth of Modern Greece*. Abrams, 2011.; **Isabella** Maurizio, **Zanou** Konstantina *Mediterranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long Nineteenth Century*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016; 217 p; **Vöhler**, Martin, Stella **Alekou**, and Miltos **Pechlivanos**, eds. *Concepts and Functions of Philhellenism: Aspects of a Transcultural Movement*. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2021

<sup>69</sup> **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848*. Amsterdam University Press, 2020; **Gourgouris**, Stathis. *Dream nation: Enlightenment, colonization, and the institution of modern Greece*. Stanford University Press. 1996; **Kitromilides**, Paschalis M. *Enlightenment and Revolution*. Harvard University Press, 2013; **Kitromilides**, Paschalis M., ed. *The Greek Revolution in the age of revolutions (1776-1848): reappraisals and comparisons*. Routledge, 2021; **Koliopoulos**, Giannis, **Veremis** Thanos. *Greece: the modern sequel: from 1831 to the present*. London: Hurst & Company, 2002; **Pizani**, Petros, ed. *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event*. Istanbul: Isis Press, 2011.

others being this literature issued through an individual format or in series.<sup>70</sup> This new start of Greek historiography demonstrates, in the first place, the importance that the Greek Revolution still has in academic and editorial circles, and in the second instance, that despite the traditional and tightly imposed narratives, there is the possibility and the will to analyze the various edges of this historical event critically.<sup>71</sup>

## • THEORY AND METHODOLOGY ON INDEPENDENCE, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND MEMORY

The nation as a concept has been studied practically in synchrony with the political and pragmatic application of this. Education and training in the historical discipline are what allow us to identify, for example, that when an author from the Greco-Roman world speaks of the nation (or *ethnos*), we remain close to the case study in this dissertation. However, for example, in the cases of Italy or Spain, he does not use the same semiological terms that we understand today. For this reason, the first step to understanding the development of this intellectual apparatus applied to the Greek and Colombian case studies is to see an overview of the historical and historiographical configuration of the concept of nation.

For centuries, and to a greater extent, during the contemporary age, rivers of ink have circulated about what a nation is and what it is not, how it is configured, when it is born, or how far a nation

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<sup>70</sup> **Kaltsonis**, Dimitris. (ed.) *Επανάσταση, κρίση, επανάσταση; Η Ελλάδα από το 1821 ως το 2021* (Revolution, crisis, revolution. Greece from 1821 to 2021.) Topos, Athens, 360 p; **Brégianni** Catherine *Από το 1821 στο 1922. Αναπαραστάσεις της Επανάστασης στον Μεσοπόλεμο (Τελετές – Σύμβολα – Εμβλήματα)* (From 1821 to 1922. Representations of the Revolution during the Interwar Period. Ceremonies - Symbols – Emblems), Alfeios, Athens, 2022; **Tsakanika** Elisabet *Αγωνιστές Του 1821 μετά την Επανάσταση* (Fighters of 1821 after the Revolution.) Asini, Athens, 2019, 314 p; **Xiradaki** Koula. *Γυναίκες του '21* (Women of '21) Koukkida, Athens, 2021, 448 p.; Some examples of serial works are: **Kavallierakis**, Stefanos 1814-1821: *Η προετοιμασία μιας επανάστασης. Πρωταγωνιστές-Γεγονότα-Συγκυρίες* (1814-1821: The preparation of a revolution. Protagonists-Events-Circumstances), Metaichmio, Athens, 2020, 168 p.; **Anastasopoulos** Nikolaos A. *Από τη σφαγή της Χίου στην αναχώρηση του Μεσολογγίου. Οι αποτυχίες του πολέμου και οι επιπτώσεις του.* (From the massacre of Chios to the exit of Messolonghi. The failures of war and their effects.) Metaichmio, Athens, 2020, 240 p.; **Hatzikyriakidis** Kyriakos *Λασκαρίνα Μπουμπουλίνα Η καπετάνισσα της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης* (Laskarina Bouboulina The captain of the Greek Revolution) Athens, 2021 256 p.

<sup>71</sup> **Cartledge**, Yianni, and Andrekos **Varnava**, (eds.) *New Perspectives on the Greek War of Independence: Myths, Realities, Legacies and Reflections*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022. 357 p. p.13

goes. Methodological nationalism is a tendency among certain scholars that seeks to analyze the nation-state in a way that ignores doubts regarding its conformation, covered by an innate character that gives the nation the primary organizational role of a modern society.<sup>72</sup>

○ **Theories of nation-building**

There is a dichotomy that debates between Western enlightenment based on a national civic ideal and its romantic and ethnolinguistic Eastern successor, considering that these characteristics about the nature of the nation and its language were also present in Western Europe, as Maria Todorova says, when she speaks of weak nationalism.<sup>73</sup> Greece and Colombia are countries that, at least at present, but also from the moment of their creation as independent states, have not always been included among that vague concept of "West." Both countries were configured as sovereign nations or as democratic republics long before other countries where their "Western" nature is not questioned. At the same time, because it does not have this defined degree of Westernization, its historical advances in terms of participation, citizenship, and rights are not highlighted either inside or outside its borders. This directly affects the sense of national identity and discourses that resort to national failure and defeat, two factors and emotions of great importance when it comes to understanding the collective construction of identity.

Classical definitions in the historiography of nationalism speak of a nation in terms of Tilly, Anderson, or Smith, being composed of a distinguished group of people who share culture, language, and descent. During encyclopedism, these characteristics could also include or determine the character or progress of that nation.<sup>74</sup> To think that the modern ideology about nationalism comes directly and precisely from the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, it is essential to ask, as Stuart Woolf does, about the strength that these characteristics and national feelings had in Europe after 1815 and the end of the first French Empire.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848*. Amsterdam University Press, 2020. P. 10

<sup>73</sup> **Todorova**, Maria. "Is there weak nationalism and is it a useful category?" *Scaling the Balkans*. Brill, 2018. 175-196.

<sup>74</sup> **Smith**, Anthony D. *The nation in history: historiographical debates about ethnicity and nationalism*. UPNE, 2000; **Tilly**, Charles, "Coercion, Capital and European States, 990-1990." trans. Eva Rodríguez Halfter 1992; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p.24

<sup>75</sup> **Woolf**, Stuart Joseph, ed. *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the present: a reader*. Psychology Press, 1996; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p.16

An evolution of these fixed characteristics of culture and language, with the inclusion of the characteristic that this population belongs to and inhabits a sovereign state, could be seen when analyzing Italy as a country with different states and governments, but where everyone spoke the same Italian language.<sup>76</sup> It could be argued that there was an ethnolinguistic character to the concept of nation in Western Europe since the mid-18th century and that it is not a post-romantic response to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period. Evidently, both at the time and for the analyses that are made in the present, this concept of language and ethnicity is subject to debate and controversy, essentially because it jumps to the question of who defines when and how you are part of an ethnicity. Anyway, within the Western enlightenment discourse, when talking about nation and ethnicity, these terms also encompass the very nature of these ethnicities and their level of progress over time, obviously based on the standards of Atlantic Europe. It was a conception based more on the tangible outward than on the inner spirit of these nations.<sup>77</sup>

The thinkers of the European Enlightenment always considered that the peoples who lived outside the confines of this continent were not able or were not at the stage of progress necessary to elaborate a nation either in America, Africa, or Asia to speak of an American nation even at the end of the 18th century was extremely rare.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, the Greek Revolution was always in the eye of the hurricane of European public opinion during the first decades of the nineteenth century and, for many, served as a field of experimentation of the same barbaric European past and how the development of national spirits or the nation-state could be configured in the rest of the continent.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 26-27

<sup>77</sup> **Rincón**, Carlos. *Avatares de la memoria cultural en Colombia: Formas simbólicas del Estado, museos y canon literario*. Vol. 4. Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2015; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 48

<sup>78</sup> **Armitage**, David, and Sanjay **Subrahmanyam**. *The Age of Revolutions in global context, c. 1760-1840*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009; **Nussbaum**, Felicity, ed. *The global eighteenth century*. JHU Press, 2005; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p.30

<sup>79</sup> **Psarrou**, Evi. "The Effect of the Greek Enlightenment on the Greek Revolution and the position of the Eastern Orthodox Church." *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 4.09 (2021): 2537-2540. **Pizantias**, Petros, ed. *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event*. Istanbul: Isis Press, 2011. **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 135

Just as it is essential to talk and analyze the thinkers and intellectuals of the Enlightenment who spoke about the nation and its spiritual progress, it is important to keep in mind the voices that arose from what has been called the counter-enlightenment.<sup>80</sup> For example, the Greeks suffered a crucial moment of anti-enlightenment and anti-Revolution commanded essentially by one of their most important authorities, who was the patriarch of Constantinople, who considered the sultan as the one sent by God to protect orthodoxy, which was also one of the reasons for the horror generated by the French Revolution and its ideals. In the end, this position of the patriarch did not help much because he was executed by the same troops of the sultan on Easter Sunday in the building of the Orthodox patriarchate in the neighborhood of Fener.<sup>81</sup>

The export of the ideas of the Revolution through arms by Napoleon Bonaparte instigated nationalist sentiments in much of the European and American continents for better and for worse, sometimes in favor of the revolutionary idea or, in many cases, against it. Thus, planted the first seed of a long process during the 19th century for the national unification or liberation of several European geographical spaces such as Germany, Italy, Belgium, Poland, Greece, Spain, and Latin America the texts of Ernst Moritz who called the Germans in their hour of weakness when conquered by Napoleon to make a nation and have a single feeling for a great cause because “the bloody sword of vengeance is the religion of our times”. Benedetto Croce, on the other hand, would say that liberty is the religion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>82</sup>

The Spanish War of Independence and its subsequent guerrilla warfare and victory over Napoleon were regarded by other peoples throughout southern Europe as a model to follow and as a model of people's war for both Mazzini in Italy and the Greek revolutionaries.<sup>83</sup> As David Bell wrote,

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<sup>80</sup> **Thorne**, Christian. *The dialectic of counter-enlightenment*. Harvard University Press, 2010; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 68

<sup>81</sup> **Heraclides**, Alexis. *"The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean."* New Perspectives on South-East Europe Series, Palgrave Macmillan, London (2010). p. 37

<sup>82</sup> **Croce**, Benedetto. *History of Europe in the nineteenth century*. Routledge, 2019. 375 p. p. 3; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 89

<sup>83</sup> **Karakatsouli**, Anna. "Μαχητές της ελευθερίας και 1821": Η Ελληνική Επανάσταση στη διεθνική της διάσταση ["Freedom fighters and 1821:" The Greek Revolution in its Transnational Dimension]." *Athens: Pedio* (2016). **Heraclides**, Alexis. *"The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean."* P. 91; **Isabella**, Maurizio. *Risorgimento in exile: Italian émigrés and the liberal international in the post-Napoleonic era*. OUP Oxford, 2009. P. 40; **Salice**, Giampaolo. *"The Greek Mirror: Philhellenism and Southern Italian Patriotisms (1750-1861)."* Journal of Modern Italian Studies, vol. 20, no. 4, 2015, pp. 491-507.

thanks to the wars of national independence against Spain and imperial France, the concepts of nationalism became contradictory. The Allies exploited nationalism to defeat Napoleon, but that nationalism became a double-edged sword for the colonial empires.<sup>84</sup>

That would be something that would affect all of Southern Europe; the wave of the French Revolution seriously affected the political and social status quo in Southern Europe for the following decades until the middle of the 19th century. The structures of absolutism and the monarchies present in the Mediterranean were shaken not only by the events that affected the entire European continent during the Napoleonic wars and had an impact in the south, such as the escape of the Portuguese monarchy to Brazil, the French invasion of Spain, the transformation of the south of the Italian peninsula with the transition from the Bourbons to the short period of Joachim Murat monarchy, and subsequently to various revolutionary moments, and clearly, the Greek revolutionary episode, the most successful in the region.<sup>85</sup>

All countries bear the weight of their own history, but in Greece, that weight is almost unbearable: Ancient Greece has been simultaneously a blessing and a curse for modern Greece. The concept of *progonoplexy* or "ancestoritis" is an essential feature to keep in mind when trying to understand the way Greeks think about themselves. This understanding of themselves as a nation has several components. A fundamental one is the identity character that Eastern Orthodox Christian dogma has for national cohesion in Greece. This character is reflected in the reticence and distrust towards the West, in the disputes in the religious field since the great schism between Rome and Constantinople or between Catholics and Orthodox, but especially in the behavior of Catholic countries and their status as papal supremacy in the Byzantine Empire in exchange for offering military aid against the Turks. This was something that never in the long and exhausted history of the Byzantine Empire could be tolerated, and the affront reached the point where Grand Duke

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<sup>84</sup> Bell, David A. "Nations et empires dans la culture politique européenne des Lumières au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle," and "Conclusions," in François **Antoine** et al. (eds.), *L'empire napoléonien: Une expérience européenne?* Armand Colin (Paris), 2014, pp. 21-28, 467-69.

<sup>85</sup> **Isabella**, Maurizio. *Southern Europe in the Age of Revolutions*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2023. 704 p. p. 51; **Mikaberidze**, Alexander. *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*. Oxford University Press, 2020. P.54.

Loukás Notarás said that in the agony of the Byzantine Empire, he preferred to live under the sultan's turban than under the papal miter.<sup>86</sup>

In the Colombian case, the massive diversity of such a vast and complex country, its history and its stories, sometimes combined, sometimes juxtaposed, sometimes conflicting, makes it challenging to implement a unified narrative of homogeneous national identity. To give an example, the use of educational documents that the National Museum of Colombia generated during its first 100 years of existence apply a conception of history in which only outstanding characters and a specific selection of events and places were worthy of being represented in the museum's galleries, leaving out of this narrative a significant part of the communities and social groups that by then already made up and represented the Colombian nation.<sup>87</sup> This condition confirms Ernest Renan's epigraph found at the beginning of this chapter, in which forgetting is considered of vital importance as a concept, placed before and combined with the concept of memory for the construction and maintenance of a nation.

#### ○ Historiography on memory and national identity construction

Memory has been one of the predominant themes in historical analysis and the social sciences for almost the last half-century.<sup>88</sup> The theory about the way in which individuals and collectives

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<sup>86</sup> On this concept of *progonoplexy*, see: **Clogg**, Richard *A concise history of Greece*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press; New York. 2002 p. 6-10 To go deeper in the reception of classics during the Greek Revolution see: **El Habre**, Lara. *The Greek War of Independence: Its Significance for Balkan and Ottoman Historiography*. Athens 2013; **Finlay**, George, *History of the Greek Revolution, and the Reign of King Otho*. London: Zeno, 1971; **Gordon**, Thomas *History of the Greek revolution, and of the wars and campaigns arising from the struggles of the Greek patriots in emancipating their country from the Turkish yoke* Edinburgh: W. Blackwood; London: T. Cadell. 1844

<sup>87</sup> **Pérez Benavides** Amada Carolina. "La memoria convertida en exhibición: Adecuaciones de la sección de historia patria en el Museo Nacional de Colombia 1880-1912" In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. p. 125-126

<sup>88</sup> The literature regarding the aspects related to memory and history is undoubtedly enormous, including the related to the two case studies, for the Colombian case see: **Navarro**, José Fernando Rubio, and Paolo **Vignolo**, eds. *Museums, memory, history: memories of the XX Annual Chair of History Ernesto Restrepo Tirado*. U. Externado de Colombia, 2018; **Vargas Álvarez**, Sebastián. "Politics of Memory and Public Uses of History." *Memory and Society* 17.35 (2013): 7-9; **Tamayo** Plazas, María Angélica. "The Sources of Memory: Uses of History and Social Sciences in the Colombia Never Again Project." *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 48.1 (2021): 203-230; for Greece see: **Tunçel**, Özer Barış. "Bonding to the Ancients: Archeology, Nationalism and the Uses of the Past in 19th Century Greece." (2014); **Katsiardi-Hering**, Olga. "The Role of Archaeology in Forming Greek National Identity and its Embodiment in European Identity." *European Review* 28.3 (2020): 448-458; **Kornetis**, Konstantinos. *Student*

remember, the order in which they do so, and the reasons why they do so has been the subject of discussion, research, and work of high-caliber academics from various traditions of thought. In the same way, the problem of memory has been constant within the interests and methodological and research problems in various geographical spaces and historical contexts. Although they share the same intention of understanding and analyzing the motives and ways of establishing an order and hierarchy of memory, it is not the same as analyzing the memory of the victims of the Second World War or the imperial past of some European countries, with the memory of the struggles for colonization in Africa and Asia or of the victims of regimes, dictatorships and armed conflicts in Latin America, to give a few examples.<sup>89</sup>

In this order of ideas, of the myriads of possibilities that exist to analyze the memory of contemporary societies, it is necessary to establish a theoretical scenario and a methodological path to travel when analyzing the institutional memory generated to establish both a national historical story, projected in cultural and educational institutions such as history museums. It is essential to understand or at least consider how the processes of remembering from societies and nations have been configured.<sup>90</sup> Not all analyses of collective memory and how societies remember and organize their memories apply to the case studies presented here. In the same vein, the analysis and comparison of these two cases from Colombia and Greece will seek to open the possibility of a new range for the historical and theoretical study of these processes of collective memory construction.<sup>91</sup>

Paul Ricoeur talks about the orders of memory and how this order of remembrance is also linked to the individual and collective capacity to forget and how history always tries to be truthful while memory seeks to remain faithful<sup>92</sup> Maurice Halbwachs theorized in depth about collective memory,

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*resistance to the Greek military dictatorship: subjectivity, memory, and cultural politics, 1967-1974*. Diss. European University Institute, 2006.

<sup>89</sup> **Olick**, Jeffrey K. *The politics of regret: On collective memory and historical responsibility*. Routledge, 2013.; **Wertsch**, James V., and Henry L. **Roediger** III. "Collective memory: Conceptual foundations and theoretical approaches." *Memory* 16.3 (2008): 318-326.

<sup>90</sup> **Connerton** Paul, *How Societies Remember?* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1989; **Wertsch**, James V. *How nations remember: A narrative approach*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2021.

<sup>91</sup> On the fallibility of the concept of collective memory see: **Schwartz**, Barry. "Rethinking the concept of collective memory." *Routledge international handbook of memory studies*. Routledge, 2015. Verses 8-21.

<sup>92</sup> **Ricoeur** Paul. "The mark of the past" *History and graphy*, No. 13, 1999, p. 157-185

understanding it as a collective process of construction and reconstruction of a shared past<sup>93</sup>. In the same line of thought, Pierre Bourdieu speaks of the construction of memory as a habit that must be an essential part of life in society, constructed and ordered by the subjective and objective structures of the social order<sup>94</sup>, relating the concepts of memory with other neighbors such as tradition, which other scholars more related to the field of history such as Hobsbawm and Ranger have incurred in the analysis of this a concept to explain it as an invention imposed and ritualized over time through generations until it becomes practically a dogma.<sup>95</sup>

All these high-caliber academics demonstrate in their works to a certain extent how memory and the past are malleable and controllable elements by individuals and societies interested in it, but on the other spectrum of the same problem are authors such as David Lowenthal, who speaks of the possession of the past over societies, This author exposes a unique characteristic, overlooked to a certain extent by the aforementioned authors and that is passion, how feelings and passions can affect or derive in visions and discourses about the past that in the vast majority of cases moves away from a rational and weighted approach to historical events.

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<sup>93</sup> **Halbwachs**, Maurice. *On collective memory*. University of Chicago press, 2020; **Halbwachs**, Maurice, *The collective memory*, New York, Harper & Row Colophon Books, 1980, 182 p.

<sup>94</sup> **Capdevielle**, Julieta. "The concept of habitus: "with Bourdieu and against Bourdieu"." *Anduli*, 10, 31-45. (2011); **Costa**, Cristina, and Mark **Murphy**, eds. *Bourdieu, habitus and social research: The art of application*. Springer, 2015.

<sup>95</sup> **Hobsbawm**, Eric, and Terence **Ranger**, eds. *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 2012; **Prickett**, Stephen. *Modernity and the Reinvention of Tradition: Backing into the Future*. Cambridge University Press, 2009; **Budelmann**, Felix, and Johannes **Haubold**. "Reception and tradition." *A Companion to Classical Receptions* (2008): 13-25.



Image 9. Monument to Simón Bolívar in the Boyacá Bridge battlefield. Made by Ferdinand von Miller in Munich, Germany, in 1830.

To overcome these obsessions, it is necessary to understand the past and memory rigorously, understanding it as a work that society, in a broad sense, must do. This is the argument of Elizabeth Jelin in her renowned text on the work of memory, which focuses on the historical memory of the

dictatorships of the southern cone of the American continent and seeks to conceptualize this theorization of memory in a more democratic and far-reaching way.<sup>96</sup>

The Age of Revolutions has enjoyed a particular interest and momentum during the last decades, historiographically speaking. Starting almost half a century ago, with the commemorations of the two centuries of the Independence of the United States and the French Revolution, a series of debates has continued. Memoirs and discussions about new and old discussions not only on these North Atlantic revolutions but regarding the Napoleonic wars, the Haitian revolution, and, of course, the independence of Hispanic America and the revolutions of southern Europe.<sup>97</sup> In this aspect and connecting the Age of Revolutions with the historiography of collective memory, there is already a series of volumes today considered classics on the construction of the past, such as the example of national construction par excellence in France. I am referring to the work directed by Pierre Nora, which, in four volumes, seeks to establish the places of memory of a national past, an idea that is profoundly helpful for discussing topics in this dissertation.<sup>98</sup>

Two hundred years later, and at the end of this historiographical cycle, the debate has finally taken a global turn. The "Age of Revolutions" term popularized by Eric Hobsbawm, who also made explicit reference to the synchrony between the revolutionary movements of South America and the Balkans,<sup>99</sup> has been applied roughly to the global moment between the last decades of the eighteenth century and practically the middle of the nineteenth century. In this period, the strength and speed of historical events were such that it promoted new paradigms of thought, enhancing the Enlightenment, romanticism in letters and arts, and ideologically and because of political events, nationalism took a fundamental role in the configuration of new societies that were formed or reconfigured due to some revolution, whether on the streets of Paris, on the islands of the Aegean or in the mountains of the Andes.

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<sup>96</sup> Jelin, Elizabeth. *The works of memory*. Fondo de Cultura Económica Argentina, 2021. 167 p.

<sup>97</sup> A selection of interesting works on these debates are **Buck-Morss**, Susan. *Hegel y Haití: La dialéctica amo-esclavo, una interpretación revolucionaria*, Buenos Aires: Grupo Norma. 2005 103 p.; **Straehle** Porras, Edgar. *Los pasados de la revolución. Los múltiples caminos de la memoria revolucionaria*. Madrid, Akal, 2024, 528 p.; **Fernández** Sebastián, Javier, and Cristóbal **Aljovín** de Losada. "Diccionario político y social del mundo iberoamericano: la era de las revoluciones, 1750-1850." Madrid. Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2015. 1422 p.; **McDonnell**, Michael A. "Rethinking the Age of Revolution." *Atlantic Studies* 13.3 (2016): 301-314; **Perl-Rosenthal**, Nathan. "Atlantic cultures and the age of revolution." *William & Mary Quarterly* 74.4 (2017): 667-696.

<sup>98</sup> **Nora** Pierre. *Pierre Nora en Les lieux de mémoire* Foreword by José Rilla, translated from French by Laura Masello. Montevideo, Trilces, 2008. 199 p.

<sup>99</sup> **Hobsbawm**, Eric. "The Age of Revolutions." *CRÍTICA, Barcelona* (1998). P. 117

The past is a profoundly valuable instrument, determining not only the identity of individuals or the social group to which they belong but also their course in time and space. This was well-known to Greeks and Colombians from the earliest moments of their quest for independence. Some were for connecting with a remote past, often alien, and so many others were in conflict with the other national values that they wanted to cultivate, such as those defended by the Orthodox Church, specifically. And the others with a constant desire to demonstrate the scope of the political vanguard that the new world could establish, limiting that discourse on the past to social groups that represented a very specific social, cultural, and historical heritage, denying the contribution to the national project of other ethnic groups and communities that did not fit, or that could not leave that frame of historical discourse.

Remarkably, both countries will have an essential historiographical moment in the first decades of their independent life. Two works and two historians will mark the course until practically today on how independence should be interpreted from within, whether in Colombia or Greece. The impact of these works will be so strong that any attempt to criticize or contradict them will be branded, depending on the historical moment, as practically a heresy. The "History of the Revolution in Colombia" by José Manuel Restrepo<sup>100</sup> and the history of Greek Civilization" by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos<sup>101</sup> are two titanic works in every sense of the word, which will serve as a cornerstone not only for future historical research regarding the processes of independence, but as essential intellectual schemes to forge the national ideal from the institutions.

According to Adamantios Korais, the Greeks of 1821 were direct descendants of the ancient Greeks; therefore, the Revolution of that year was an instance of resurrection or palingenesis. In an epic metaphor, the Greeks had been reborn like the phoenix from the ashes from the 4th century BC to the beginning of the 19th century AD. The Greeks had been subject to the domination of foreign powers, such as the Romans, Macedonians, or Ottomans. Then came the narrative of Paparrigopoulos, who, among other things, considered that modern Hellenism had begun with the capture of Constantinople by the Venetians and Crusaders in 1204 and divided the history of the Greek nation into the following periods: ancient Hellenism, Macedonian Hellenism, Christian Hellenism, medieval Hellenism, and modern Leninism. This syncretism between ancient Greece

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<sup>100</sup> Restrepo, José Manuel. *Historia de la Revolución de la República de Colombia*. Vol. 1-2. Librería Americana, 1827.

<sup>101</sup> Paparrigopoulos, Konstantinos D. *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού έθνους από των αρχαιοτάτων χρόνων μέχρι της σήμερον*. (History of the Greek nation from ancient times to the present day) Koromēla, 1853.

and Byzantine Christianity, although strange, was not frowned upon in Europe, and in independent Greece, it was seen as a more organic and less forced historical development than a sudden rebirth.

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The "Megali Idea" began on January 14, 1844, and was first announced in a famous speech by Ioannis Kolletis, prime minister of Greece, who had just emerged from a revolution the previous year, which had finally proclaimed a constitution since being configured as a monarchy.<sup>103</sup> This idea sought to extend the civilizational mission of Greece to the five seas with which it considered to have influence (Mediterranean, Aegean, Ionian, Black, and Marmara) and integrate all the Greek-speaking populations residing in the lands bathed by these seas within a single flag and sovereign nation. This idea was tremendously popular, as well as dangerous, so much so that it cost King Otto himself the crown when he tried to get involved in the Crimean War, and the British intervened and made him a member of the Danish royal dynasty King George the First, all this in a climate where movements and rentiers in Epirus, Thrace, Thessaly, and Crete sought to integrate into the Greek monarchy and rebel against the Ottoman rule.<sup>104</sup>

In the Colombian case, The War of Independence of Colombia, which has gone from being the founding myth of the nation, the "historiographical prison" that Restrepo's work embodied and a new platform to rethink the origin of the Colombian independent state, continues to be an important historiographical reef recently exploited by the lenses of the latest historiographical trends in synchrony with the various bicentennials and commemorations on independence.<sup>105</sup> To some extent, the period of independence is still perceived as a monolithic history of heroes. Nothing could be more alien to historical reality and historiographical possibility: from the difficulties in generating the conceptual foundation of the revolution, the diversification of the conflicts, the irregular war, through the period of the reconquest and the advance towards a state of total war.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> **Heraclides**, Alexis. *"The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean."* New Perspectives on South-East Europe Series, Palgrave Macmillan, London (2010). p. 6-7

<sup>103</sup> **Petropoulos**, John Anthony. *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843*. Princeton University Press, 2015. P. 455-500

<sup>104</sup> **Heraclides**, Alexis. *"The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean."* New Perspectives on South-East Europe Series, Palgrave Macmillan, London (2010). p. 41

<sup>105</sup> **Rodríguez Jimenez** Pablo (ed.) *La República, 1819-1880*. Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2019.; **Gutiérrez** Ardila, Daniel. *1819: Campaña de Nueva Granada*. Universidad Externado, 2019.

<sup>106</sup> **Lynch**, John. (2006) *Simón Bolívar, A life*. NewHaven – London. Yale University Press. 349 p. p. 80

So far, the importance of the common past for societies seeking to organize themselves as nations has become apparent. But this past is not necessarily homogeneous, uniform, or centralized. The historical events of the War of Independence do not occur linearly or organically. However, the effort of historiography, practically since these events occurred, has been to systematize, hierarchize, and give a congruent order to these events. In many cases, the examples cited here or the context that has been given here in both case studies is largely the synthesis of these efforts to configure (sometimes contain) a series of historical events within a discourse that must be not only rational and meaningful but also striking and attractive to the bulk of the population.<sup>107</sup>

This is where public history, and, in this particular case, museums play an essential role in the configuration, maturation, and dissemination of national identity. The museum, especially the history museum, fulfills the functions of organization, hierarchy, and filtering of the past of a society. It is in its facilities, its rooms, and its exhibitions where the past of a community is organized, where meaning and materialization are given to historiographical discourses, and where objects that were not necessarily conceived for this purpose enter a regime of historicity when exposed.<sup>108</sup> It is in the museum that images, language, and objects from a specific past materialize into a shared past.

Within this group of institutions, the history museum appears as one of the most important vectors when it comes to disseminating and educating citizens without belonging, but on the contrary, it complements the traditional educational system, whether public or private. The museum of history of national character, as a category and, later, in exceptional cases and contexts, the regional and local museums, fulfill this mission of sensitizing and serving as witnesses of a common past recognized and analyzed by educational institutions, and that has materialized in the rooms and collections of museums. It is undeniable that the relationship between citizen training, safeguarding

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<sup>107</sup> **Watson**, Sheila. *National museums and the origins of nations: Emotional myths and narratives*. Routledge, 2020. **Weiser**, M. Elizabeth. "Who are we? Museums telling the nation's story." *The international journal of the inclusive museum* 2.2 (2009): 29-38.

<sup>108</sup> **Cuno**, James, ed. *Whose culture? The promise of museums and the debate over antiquities*. Princeton University Press, 2009; **Levitt**, Peggy. *Artifacts and allegiances: how museums put the nation and the world on display*. Univ of California Press, 2015.

of national/regional/local identity, and space for the dissemination of new ways of understanding the past.

In the first instance, it must be understood that the historical museum as an institution is directly linked to the construction of modern national states.<sup>109</sup> The history museum is constituted in the new national states, either nations that found their independence from colonial empires, such as Greece and Colombia, with the National Historical Museum and the National Museum, or the Museum of Independence, respectively.<sup>110</sup> Or in the museums of entities, today understood as nation states, but that in their creation were transnational or imperial, such as the museographic and collection paradigms of the Louvre, the Hermitage, the British Museum, or the Museum Island of Berlin. Challenges on a global scale. How to make the collections of a nation-state, nurtured, studied, and explained from an almost autarkic perspective and for almost exclusively local consumption, integrate into their discourses global perspectives that are not simply descriptive or are a function of the same discourse of nation-state formation.<sup>111</sup>

This process of organizing the living memory of nation-states has a historical trajectory that does not necessarily refer to political modernity understood from nationalism. Human societies have sought ways to contain in objects or spaces much of what identifies them in their present. From the Roman lares on an intimate scale to the great public monuments celebrating victories and conquests, to set an example of antiquity. Going through all the sacred characters that were integrated into the religious relics during the Middle Ages, where material history (relic) was combined with the exhibition space (temple or place of worship) and its local, regional, and, in some cases, transnational importance (pilgrimage).<sup>112</sup> This timeline of the development of the

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<sup>109</sup> **Aronsson**, Peter, and Gabriella **Elgenius**. *National Museums and Nation-building in Europe 1750-2010: Mobilization and legitimacy, continuity and change*. Taylor & Francis, 2014.; **Knell**, Simon, Peter **Aronsson**, and Arne Bugge **Amundsen**, eds. *National museums: New studies from around the world*. Routledge, 2014.

<sup>110</sup> **Rodríguez**, Víctor Manuel. "La fundación del Museo Nacional de Colombia. Ambivalencias en la narración de la nación colombiana moderna." *Nómaditas (Colombia)* 8 (1998); **Pérez Benavides**, Amada Carolina. "Ausencias y presencias: tensiones entre una colección con historia y la crítica historiográfica en el Museo Nacional de Colombia." *Procesos. Revista Ecuatoriana de Historia* (2015): 123-148.

<sup>111</sup> **Gardner**, James B. "Public history, national museums and transnational history." *Public History Review* 30 (2023): 53-60. **White**, Geoffrey M. "Museum/Memorial/Shrine: National narrative in national spaces." *Museum Anthropology* 21.1 (1997): 8-26.

<sup>112</sup> **Bennett**, Tony. "Thinking (with) museums: From exhibitionary complex to governmental assemblage." *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies* (2013): 3-20; **Cornish**, Paul. "'Sacred Relics': Objects in the Imperial War Museum 1917-39." *Matters of Conflict*. Routledge, 2004. 35-50; **Bird Jr**, William L. *Souvenir Nation: Relics, Keepsakes, and Curios from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History*. Chronicle Books, 2013.

conservation of objects for first collectible purposes, such as cabinets of curiosities, then as scientific collections, and then, for exhibition purposes such as the first European state museums such as those mentioned above, with the interesting paradox in the character and mission that separated ideologically, for example, the collection of the Louvre with that of the Hermitage, they are the antecedents of the museums of national history.

The literature on the subject is of old date and in large quantity. The sensory capacity of museums and their ability to demonstrate authority over a collective past have been analyzed by scholars of several generations. Focusing on public history, which is a subdiscipline of academic history, appeared in the second half of the twentieth century in the United States and has had from the first moments special attention to the spaces where history comes into contact with the general public, paying special attention to museums.<sup>113</sup> From the definition of the museum itself to the specific denomination of history museum, it has sought to understand how certain spaces, sometimes located in places where specific events occurred (battlefields, birthplaces of historical figures, public buildings of heritage character, among others) or sometimes built from scratch for this reason, seek to configure and sometimes impose themselves as the guardian institutions of the living memory of a nation or a society. as well as its study and dissemination.<sup>114</sup>

The analysis and description of the specific cases of Colombia and Greece will be the subject of the following chapters, but it is worth mentioning that their most recognizable and identifiable institutions as history museums are places resignified and belonging to a past moment in the history of the country: The National Museum of Colombia has its facilities in the panopticon, which was a prison in the city of Bogotá until almost the middle of the twentieth century and which housed a large number of prisoners, especially political during the civil wars of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the National Historical Museum of Greece is located in the center of Athens, which was the former parliament of the Kingdom of Greece. It is a place also steeped in history, from where constitutions were signed, wars were declared on border countries, and military trials were

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<sup>113</sup> **Dean**, David M., ed. *A companion to public history*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018; **Ashton**, Paul, and Alex **Trapeznik**, eds. *What is public history globally?: working with the past in the present*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.

<sup>114</sup> **Bennett**, Tony. *The birth of the museum: History, theory, politics*. Routledge, 2013; **Bennett**, Tony. *Museums, power, knowledge: Selected essays*. Routledge, 2017; Knell, Simon, Suzanne Macleod, and Sheila Watson, eds. *Museum revolutions: How museums change and are changed*. Routledge, 2007.

held, such as that of the Greek general staff after the great catastrophe of Asia Minor in 1922. They are buildings that embody several layers of the national history of both countries and that comply with the paradigm of the historical museum.<sup>115</sup>



Image 10. Statue of Theodoros Kolokotronis in front of the Old Parliament of Greece. Now, the main building of the National Historical Museum of Greece.

Public history, then, appears as a lens from which to analyze historiographically not only the course of the contact of societies with their past but analyzing the actions that states, institutions, and people carry out to establish, favor, or forget a past, in addition to recounting the changes in the discourse of that establishment, understanding remembering and remembering as a performative activity. But also propose solutions and new ways of approaching these processes. Essentially, it

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<sup>115</sup> **Elgenius**, Gabriella. "National museums as national symbols." *National Museums and Nation-Building in Europe 1750–2010* (1750): 145; **McLean**, Fiona. "Museums and national identity." *Museum and society* 3.1 (2005): 1-4. **Gazi**, Andromache. "National museums in Greece: History; Ideology; Narratives." (2011); **Sánchez**, Gonzalo, and María Emma **Wills**. *Museo, memoria y nación. Misión de los museos nacionales para los ciudadanos del futuro*. Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia 1999.

is the way in which the symbiosis/nemesis between the story and its broadcast messages can be understood by the receiving public.

- **MATERIALIZATION OF THE IDENTITY DISCOURSE AND ITS HISTORICAL APPLICATION**

The ideas and ideologies that enabled the social and political mobilization that led to the independence of Colombia and Greece were tangibly reflected in objects and places. The materialization of independence was also a fundamental task in order to make the ideals of the population a reality, a particularly key condition for the effective dissemination of the ideals and objectives of these revolutionary ideas. By being able to understand them with the senses and not just figuratively, the symbols of independence found a receiver who could be convinced of the independence project and would later find in museums the transmitters of the narrative of national identity.

- **Material history and the consecration of everyday life**

With the general idealization of the past, and very often with the etherealization of it from historiographical works, one constantly falls into the thought that the actions of a past, which evidently move away as time passes chronologically, really existed, happened, and left material legacies. It is always a complex task, especially from the historical discipline, to land these discourses to a tangible object, always taking into account not to fall into unnecessary mythifications without feigning a fulminant objectivity, which is clearly impossible to apply to the human condition of those who work with these objects or their analysis, they are men and women of their time, citizens, with an emotional charge on their object of work, but owners of their own criteria.<sup>116</sup>

Likewise, the audience, the public, the ordinary citizen, cannot be considered ignorant or uneducated, who can only access knowledge about their own past from what specialized academics and professionals from their ivory towers want to provide in the form of books or museum

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<sup>116</sup> **Francia**, Enrico, **Sorba** Carlotta, (eds.) *Political objects in the Age of Revolution: material culture, national identities, political practices*. Roma. Viella, 2021 - 229 p. p.20; **Yalouri**, Eleana. *Matter Matters Matter. Developments in Material Culture Studies since the 1980s*. In: **Bampilis**, Tryfon, and Pieter **ter Keurs**, (eds.) *Social Matter (s): Recent Approaches to Materiality*, 2014, 9-41.

exhibitions. In the long process of the formation of the nation, and not only in Colombia and Greece, the process of integrating a large part of the population into that same discourse has been inserted. A gradual process that goes from the possibility of voting to the rights of ethnic minorities, women, and children. Within these processes, access to their history and their connection and relationship with their own past, individually or collectively, has played an essential role in the foundation of the national identity discourse itself.<sup>117</sup>

In constructing this identity through museums and the objects they contain, a palpable symbiosis occurs between the public or citizenship and educational and cultural institutions, whether public or private. This symbiosis takes place in museum spaces. But it is not a totally organic symbiosis; these spaces have evolved from being containers of a considerable number of objects, sometimes only exposed in chronological order and with access to these collections reduced only to specialists, to inclusive spaces with a significant educational and informative offer. Museums, especially those of history, can easily fall into the comfort of only exhibiting their permanent collections, with the unique pieces or masterpieces they know are in their care. In the end, as particular objects are an essential part of the historical regime of the nation, their dissemination, relevance, and constant visits at the local and global level are practically imminent.<sup>118</sup>

But suppose the institutions that protect it do not make these pieces and the rest of their collections something more interesting than a simple storage space for old objects. In that case, it is useless to know that in a specific place in Bogotá, behind a glass cabinet is the original base of the Llorente vase through which the brawl that ended in the cry of independence of 1810 began; nor is it helpful to know that behind some showcases is the panoply and especially the famous helmet of Theodoros Kolokotronis, perhaps the most valued hero of Greek independence.<sup>119</sup> The value of these

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<sup>117</sup> **Rufer**, Mario. "La temporalidad como política: nación, formas de pasado y perspectivas poscoloniales." *Memoria y sociedad* 14.28 (2010): 11-31.

<sup>118</sup> **Dickey**, Jennifer, Samir **El Azhar**, and Catherine **Lewis**, eds. *Museums in a global context: National identity, international understanding*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2013. **Levitt**, Peggy. *Artifacts and allegiances: how museums put the nation and the world on display*. Univ of California Press, 2015.

<sup>119</sup> **Balzani**, Roberto. "Synecdoche: the unforeseen fate of evocative objects." In: **Francia**, Enrico, **Sorba** Carlotta, (eds.) *Political objects in the Age of Revolution: material culture, national identities, political practices*. Roma. Viella, 2021 - 229 p. p.166

collections is given by the public, who, guided by an identity context and a narrative, resignify their past collectively and personally within museums and their objects. It is the public who makes a museum and whose mission is consecrated.<sup>120</sup> What separates a museum from a private collection is, to a large extent, the possibility of access to objects. It is the task of museum spaces to preserve, disseminate, and resignify their objects and collections.

○ **Places, objects, and actors of collective memory**

The nation as a concept replaces the dynasty as an object of military loyalty, turning the nation into a new “secular” religion with cult requirements and a defined morality. Nevertheless, the army and its leaders become the nation's personification, giving the military ideological sustenance for their existence.<sup>121</sup> The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were the first national wars in which combatants were drawn directly from civil society. The result was an unprecedented narrowing of the link between the civil and military worlds, between war and nation.<sup>122</sup> It also gave birth to a fundamental concept of understanding contemporary conflicts: militarism. Although war in the history of mankind, but essentially in the West, has generated societies destined solely for war, neither the Spartans nor the Mongols would consider a total separation of the civil and military estates.

The problem in South America was to establish in the political imagination a "national" community by inhabiting a hierarchical society with social relations of a vertical and not horizontal type, which theorists like Anderson consider fundamental for the construction of the imagined community of the nation.<sup>123</sup> This difficulty becomes evident when we see the different paths that the various armed groups, both in Spain and in the future independent countries of Spanish America, would take. In the Iberian Peninsula, despite the almost permanent governmental acephaly, replaced on several occasions by the Junta of Cádiz, the very brother of the French Emperor, or what could be considered the stubborn incompetence of Fernando VII, the armed forces remained cohesive. Also,

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<sup>120</sup> **Karp**, Ivan, Christine **Mullen** Kreamer, and Steven **Levine**, eds. *Museums and communities: The politics of public culture*. Smithsonian Institution, 1992; **Janes**, Robert R., and Richard **Sandell**. *Museum activism*. Taylor & Francis, 2019.

<sup>121</sup> **Cañas** de Pablos, Alberto, *Los generales políticos en Europa y América (1810-1870): centauros carismáticos bajo la luz de Napoleón*. Madrid: Alianza. 2022, 464 p. P. 27

<sup>122</sup> **Thorald** Marie-Cécile (2011) *From Valmy to Waterloo. France at war 1792-1815* Palgrave – McMillan, New York, 254 p. p. 2

<sup>123</sup> **Burbank**, Jane and Frederick **Cooper** *Empires in World History: power and the politics of difference* 511 p. p.245

they articulated their operational components with the guerrillas, generating a national construction around the defense of the territory and the resignification of the invader as an enemy to death, of the Spanish nation, of its monarchy, and above all of its religion.

The wars of the Revolution instilled in the collective imagination a caste of individuals superior to the war heroes. At the same time, the Glory pushed the current individual to achieve more difficult feats. Honor made each one execute without conditions what the duty demanded. The first was spiritual, and the second was a coercion of utility towards society. The collective memory of a social group requires representative models and figures that can highlight the virtues on which a particular type of society is built, and where political identities and differences converge on these personalities against the enemies of this society under construction. The soldier was the first citizen. Thanks to its symbolism, the army quickly became the tangible representation of the embodied nation; therefore, it is the living representation of institutions and society.<sup>124</sup>

At this point in this chapter, certain clarifications can be established: the first and most important is the transversality of the importance given to the personal objects of the direct protagonists of specific historical episodes.<sup>125</sup> This transversality is indistinct and generalized in different geographical spaces and generally receives the same treatment and consideration as a religious relic. In short, the materiality that belonged to or was used by some man or woman who clearly stood out from their peers to the point of considering their belongings (or their body) elements worthy of sacredness. With the Atlantic revolutions, but specifically with the French Revolution, where reason triumphs over faith, this sacredness is reconfigured in new spaces of exhibition, contemplation, and pilgrimage: museums. Saints become heroes, patron saint festivities become commemorations, miracles become battles or works, but there are key concepts that remain and give that aura of necessary transcendence: martyrdom.

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<sup>124</sup> **Cañas** de Pablos, Alberto, *Los generales políticos en Europa y América (1810-1870): centauros carismáticos bajo la luz de Napoleón*. P. 33-38

<sup>125</sup> **Conn**, Steven. "The Personal Is the Historical: Souvenirs, Relics, and Living Exhibitions." *Reviews in American History* 43.1 (2015): 103-109.; **objects**, Enrico, **Sorba** Carlotta, (eds.) *Political objects in the Age of Revolution: material culture, national identities, political practices*. Roma. Viella, 2021 - 229 p.



Image 11. Relics of Theodoros Kolokotronis. National Historical Museum of Greece.

Saints die for their profession of faith, heroes die for the love of country, and these are two convictions so strong that they make a human being give the most precious thing he can sacrifice for a cause greater than himself. Martyrdom and the material remnants of that martyrdom become irrefutable evidence of sacralization. A sacralization, in turn, is hierarchized by the level and importance of the sacrifice or who performs it, and where the beneficiary institutions of this martyrdom classify, organize, and exhibit it in their opinion. It is here that the line between temple and museum becomes increasingly blurred, understanding both spaces as places containing objects of profound relevance to a specific community.<sup>126</sup>

The following argument contemplates the importance of the analysis of these figures and objects sacralized in time. The analysis of political, historiographical, and museological discourse is essential to understanding why objects and characters have been given priority and how this priority has been contested, debated, or established both by museum institutions and by the public that visits them. The personal objects of a historical figure are the materialization of both his figure and

<sup>126</sup> **Barnett**, Teresa. *Sacred relics: Pieces of the past in nineteenth-century America*. University of Chicago Press, 2019. P. 50-76.

the historical context in which he lived. It is the tangible realization within the rooms of a museum of the discourses and narratives that are used and replicated by other institutions (state, school, media). To some extent, museums and their collections are the places where tangible evidence of a shared past is kept, where the history of society makes sense when seeing it not only materialized in certain pieces or objects but also exposed and disseminated.<sup>127</sup>

In the case of the state and national formations of the two examples presented in this dissertation, this sacralization of the tangible is also the result of a constant exercise of banal nationalism in which the personal object or the vestige of an era, which may or may not be contained in a museum, acquires the status not only of a sacralized object but of symbol or icon of the character and the period for the entire nation.<sup>128</sup> Its constant exhibition in various spaces, its widespread appropriation outside the museum, and the collective interest in its origin, representation, and custody allow us to understand how particular objects and vestiges play a transcendental role in the construction of collective identity and base the discourse of national cohesion in recently independent states. It is through these vestiges and the very history of their use and exhibition that one can understand how the nation can be integrated into an object.

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<sup>127</sup> Butz, David A. "National symbols as agents of psychological and social change." *Political Psychology* 30.5 (2009): 779-804

<sup>128</sup> Martínez-Garnica, Armando. «La nacionalización de los símbolos patrios». *Revista Santander*, n.º 9, October 2018, pp. 134-63; Earle, Rebecca. "Sobre héroes y tumbas: national symbols in nineteenth-century Spanish America." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 85.3 (2005): 375-416.



## **CHAPTER II: INSTAURATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN COLOMBIA AND GREECE OF IDENTITIES FROM THE INDEPENDENCE**

*“It is from these principles of natural rights and desiring to assimilate ourselves with our European Christian brethren that we have embarked upon our war against the Turks. Uniting all our isolated strength, we have formed ourselves into a single armed body, firmly resolved to attain our end, to govern ourselves by wise laws, or to be altogether annihilated, believing it to be unworthy of us, as descendants of the glorious peoples of Greece, to live in a state of slavery fitted more for unreasoning animals than for rational beings”.*<sup>129</sup>

Convincing a conglomerate of people of the veracity and relevance of a particular arrangement of people, situations, and events, which could be articulated to form a discourse, has never been a simple task. Articulating these narrative elements to establish a discourse of national identity is even more complicated and is the main challenge faced by nations in formation during the first half of the 19th century in various parts of the world. The cases of Colombia and Greece are no exception. Fighting to achieve the independence of these respective countries was, to a certain extent, the easiest part of establishing an independent and sovereign nation. In both cases, and with specific differences that this chapter will try to outline, establishing a discourse that allows a particular space to be understood as sovereign and belonging to a specific and new nation was the real challenge. This chapter, therefore, will try to explain how both countries faced various obstacles and difficulties in establishing a new sovereign state and a discourse of identity that would maintain this political structure over time. In this order of ideas, the following chapter is divided into four parts, where the first deals with the fundamental and, in some cases, immediate needs that both the protagonists and the societies that lived through the first years of Independence in Colombia and Greece had to face. After resolving these urgent needs, it is fundamental to try to

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<sup>129</sup> **Declaration of the National Assembly of Epidaurus of the 15<sup>th</sup> of January of 1822.** Original text: “Ἀπὸ τοιαύτας ἀρχὰς τῶν φυσικῶν δικαίων ὀρμώμενοι καὶ θέλοντες νὰ ἐξομοιωθῶμεν μὲ τοὺς λοιποὺς συναδέλφους μας Εὐρωπαϊοὺς χριστιανοὺς, ἐκινήσαμεν τὸν πόλεμον κατὰ τῶν Τούρκων, μᾶλλον δὲ τοὺς κατὰ μέρος πολέμους ἐνώσαντες, ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκστρατεύσαμεν, ἀποφασίσαντες ἢ νὰ ἐπιτύχωμεν τὸν σκοπὸν μας καὶ νὰ διοικηθῶμεν μὲ νόμους δικαίους, ἢ νὰ χαθῶμεν ἐξ ὀλοκλήρου, κρίνοντες ἀνάξιον νὰ ζῶμεν πλέον ἢμεῖς οἱ ἀπόγονοι τοῦ περικλεοῦς ἐκείνου ἔθνους τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὑπὸ δουλείαν τοιαύτην, ἰδίαν μᾶλλον τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων, παρὰ τῶν λογικῶν ὄντων.” Original digitalized text consulted in the Digital Library of the Library of the Greek Parliament: <https://shorturl.at/tmdyq>

understand the presence and limits that both the discourse and the sovereignty of the independent state have had over the last two centuries.

The second half of this section will deal with the symbolism these new nations required and built over time, how they are used to define the limits of this national identity discourse, and their constant transformation over time. Concluding with the processes of reaffirmation of this national identity through institutional efforts in various fields of citizenship construction. From public education and the struggle for extending citizenship (regarding geography and population) to the constant repetition and use of these symbols, they have become a tacit and organic condition for Greek and Colombian citizens today. To connect these institutional efforts with the specific and distilled example of the creation of history museums, as institutions explicitly established to safeguard and disseminate some particular elements of this national identity discourse.

- **NECESSITY AND DIFFUSION OF THE FOUNDING MYTH**

Colombia and Greece, as modern nation-states, "invented" or "imagined" myths and heroes necessary for their brief historical development on which to base a sovereign and national political and social project. From the moment of the configuration of the idea of a possible independent nation, the narrative around the status of this project was seen as a priority need. This is an objective that, in many cases, is still under construction and that, in the last 200 years, has undergone significant transformations that will be seen below.

- **Creating a nation and its symbols. Preconditions and needs**

First, it must be understood that the national state, as an intangible social construction, requires an ordered and hierarchical discourse, which can be called the master narrative. This comprises the main elements that configure a national experience as unique and different from its peers. This narrative is the most easily remembered by most of the social conglomerate grouped in this new

nation-state, including its symbols, characters, and most important moments. It is disseminated through institutions and exposed through the educational system.<sup>130</sup>

Therefore, the national historiographies of both case studies have intensely studied various national narratives. These narratives help shape a myth and build a national mythology that will gradually become the discursive canon on the process of Independence for future generations. The historiography of both countries, which has not been oblivious to the honey that this panegyric discourse on Independence contains, has been a differential factor in effectively establishing the master narrative on the early national formation in Colombia and Greece.<sup>131</sup>

Before delving into the generation of a national ethos, a consciousness that can generate collective feelings, it is essential to clarify and start with the argument that is not generally considered within the cycle of Atlantic revolutions. However, none of the politically transformed societies into new entities sought to create a fully democratic society. The fundamental objective of independence was to acquire sovereignty and, in many cases, to maintain the sovereignty acquired through arms authoritarian measures were used in these new states. A pragmatic objective based on short-term achievements. It is for this reason that, in many cases, the situation of the same soldiers who participated in these wars did not improve in the sense of acquiring their freedom or full citizenship.<sup>132</sup>

Starting with the Colombian case, the political history of Latin America must be understood on its own terms and as part of that more extensive history. Therefore, the question of national identity, immersed in the process of formation of the national state in Colombia and framed in the unstable politics of the nineteenth century, must be addressed not only as part of the history of the Andean

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<sup>130</sup> **Carretero**, Mario. "Narrativas maestras, memoria colectiva e historia escolar." *Cuadernos de pedagogía* 509 (2020): 76-81; **Carretero**, Mario, et al. "La construcción del conocimiento histórico." *Propuesta educativa* 39 (2013): 13-23; **Sáez-Rosenkranz**, Isidora, Judit **Sabido-Codina**, and J. **Prats** Cuevas. "Memoria histórica e historia enseñada: construcciones simbólicas del futuro profesorado y su vínculo con la experiencia escolar." *Revista Tempo e Argumento* 13.33 (2021)

<sup>131</sup> **Colom** González, Francisco. *Relatos de Nación: La construcción de las identidades nacionales en el mundo hispánico*, Frankfurt a. M., Madrid: Vervuert Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005

<sup>132</sup> **Klooster**, Wim. "Revolutions in the Atlantic world: a comparative history." *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*. New York University Press, 2009. P, 165; **König**, Hans Joachim. "Discursos de identidad, Estado-nación y ciudadanía en América Latina." *Historia y sociedad* 11: 9-31.

region of northern South America but as part of the history of state-building processes as themselves. Spanish America showed some of the main features of political modernization before other world regions. It was rightly considered the political and social vanguard of the world in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>133</sup> In addition, Colombia also had a whole group of specific characteristics that must be understood in its own terms, such as caudillismo (caudillos) or racial tension between Creole, black, and indigenous population groups, which can provide insight into the situation. Intense struggle around the process of nation-building, identity, and state policy of the nineteenth century.

Gran Colombia was a traumatic experience for the inhabitants of the provinces of Venezuela, Cundinamarca, and Quito. It was an essential mental and imaginary construction; the creation of a nation by decree and the construction of a national project is the legacy of Gran Colombia. To understand how this goal was achieved, it is critical to discuss the political language used during the quest for a unified nation-state. Unification was produced in part by politically important cabildos, who considered unified spaces as places they could use for the processing of local sovereignty and popular identity. This language, its use, and appropriation in a geographical space inhabited by such diverse social groups generated serious problems for the intellectuals of the first generations of independent Colombia.<sup>134</sup>

It is essential to understand, in the study of these issues, the contingencies in which the historical events' actors were involved and, as in many cases, decisions that would be maintained over time were designed or imposed temporarily. In the same way, these ideas, whether of the construction of a national identity or the configuration and administrative organization of a new state, were discussed and approved under demanding circumstances, with an impossibility of finding agreements between the members of the parliamentary body, with enemy armies in the territory, with marked popular discontent, or as in the case of Gran Colombia, with intentions of administrative political secession.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> **Sanders**, James E. *The vanguard of the Atlantic world: creating modernity, nation, and democracy in nineteenth-century Latin America*. Duke University Press, 2014.

<sup>134</sup> **Charry Joya**, Carlos Andrés "Los intelectuales colombianos y el dilema de la construcción de la identidad nacional (1850-1930)" *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies European Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 90 (2011): 55-70.

<sup>135</sup> **Uribe** de Hincapié, María Teresa. "La elusiva y difícil construcción de la identidad nacional en la Gran Colombia." *Co-herencia* 16.31 (2019): 13-44.

An example that crystallizes these situations of the difficulties of generating nation-state structures occurred in the congress of Cúcuta in 1821, from where the magna carta of Gran Colombia would be generated and where Antonio Nariño, who was in search of the independence of the territory today called Colombia for three decades, suffering betrayals and imprisonments, and at that time he had the responsibility of presiding over that congress. Nariño began by referring to the absence of Simón Bolívar and the liberating army that, at that time, was fighting the royalists in the south of New Granada. The coexistence of these events underscores the rapid transformation the New World underwent.

Given his first-hand knowledge of the world political situation, Nariño gave an account of all the struggles that necessarily had to be suffered until, finally, a constitutional document was drafted for the independent New Granada state. His speech laid the "foundation stones of the majestic edifice [an independent republic] to be finished later"<sup>136</sup> and emphasized the role the new Republic played in the larger scheme of global historical transformations at the time. According to Nariño, "The whole world is watching you all at this moment and expects from you a document that makes you see that we are worthy of being among the nations."<sup>137</sup>

The dilemma of Colombian national identity lay (and still falls) on the difficulty of the intellectual elites to find their own references for the construction of the nation, added to the frustration generated by the absence of that "majestic building" that Nariño had prophesied. These references clearly existed, but because of the perspectives and class and ethnic loyalties of these Creole white elites (generally from the capital), they based their intellectual apparatus, from which they drank the policies of national formation as these elites also hold political power, of the national and intellectual experiences essentially European, in an idea of "cosmopolitan nationalism", as Frédéric Martínez has decided to call it.<sup>138</sup>

All this generated a national identity, or rather an attempt, often failed to configure it paradoxically in the ideals of European nationalism, specifically Spanish, configuring Colombian society as religiously Catholic (despite the other religious denominations present in the territory);

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<sup>136</sup> **Nariño** Antonio. "Discurso de instalación del congreso de Cúcuta, en su condición de vicepresidente interino de la República". Villa del Rosario de Cúcuta, May 6, 1821" in: *La construcción de la república*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colección Bicentenario., Bogotá, 2010 p. 15

<sup>137</sup> **Nariño** Antonio. "Discurso de instalación del congreso de Cúcuta." p. 25

<sup>138</sup> **Martínez**, Frederic. *El nacionalismo cosmopolita: La referencia a Europa en la construcción nacional en Colombia, 1845-1900*. Institut français d'études andines, 2014.

linguistically Spanish-speaking (despite all its native languages) and white mestizo (despite the ethnic diversity present within its borders). An identity configuration clearly imaginary, with its back turned to the reality of the territory and therefore condemned to failure, and a commendable resistance from the periphery since the first years of the independent republic, especially in regions that were ignored or betrayed by that project of nation-state coming from the capital.<sup>139</sup>

Bringing together all the narratives that make up the construction of the nation-state seems to inevitably lead to the hierarchization of those experiences and discourses where heroes and battles have a priority imposed by both the state and the population itself and by hierarchizing the past over Independence, the narratives and struggles that sought to build a different or alternative society are belittled.<sup>140</sup> This is how we can observe the main characteristics of the national myth in both Colombia and Greece, which are not only similar but also shared: a generation of national consciousness after centuries of occupation by a foreign power, which, by taking up arms against the oppressive colonial yoke, embarks on a war in which the only enemy is not the imperial occupier, but rather internal quarrels and the difficulties of establishing a new political experiment in their territories. Then, after a series of vicissitudes and heroic challenges, they manage to achieve independence and expel the invader's counterattacks. These new political identities generate a historical dimension that relates the past of a national conglomerate to its citizens.<sup>141</sup>

The establishment of these symbols and the discourse that follows and supports them requires the condition of personifying the independence struggle and, through this personification and, especially through their charisma, bringing it closer to the ordinary citizen.<sup>142</sup> It is here where one of the most important narrative operations for the formation of a historical conscience about Independence takes place, which is the invention of heroes. The heroes of Independence are those,

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<sup>139</sup> **Múnera**, Alfonso, and Luis Fernando **Molina**. *El fracaso de la nación: región, clase y raza en el Caribe colombiano (1717-1821)*. Bank of the Republic, 1998.

<sup>140</sup> **Hensel** Franz, **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo "El pasado como posibilidad" In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p p. 27

<sup>141</sup> **Ibid.** P. 19

<sup>142</sup> **Bell**, David A. *Men on horseback: The power of charisma in the age of revolution*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020. 366 p. P 208-210.

known or anonymous, victorious or defeated, many of them martyred, who had enough conviction and will to act to materialize the idea of a possible independent nation into a tangible reality.<sup>143</sup>



Image 12. "Ricaurte en San Mateo" depicts the martyrdom of Antonio Ricaurte in 1814. Pedro Alcántara Quijano oil on canvas (detail), 1920. National Museum of Colombia.

Martyrdom, as seen in other sections of this dissertation, is one of the key elements not only for the establishment of a narrative about Independence but for its effective dissemination through the shock of the citizenry with the tragic story of the heroes who gave their lives for the homeland. In these case studies that I analyzed, there are two key examples: the first is that of Antonio Ricaurte, who sacrificed himself in San Mateo during the admirable campaign of 1813-1814 to cover the retreat of the patriotic army and also inflict the highest number of casualties possible on the royalist

<sup>143</sup> **Román** Romero, Raúl, and Vanessa **Niño** De Villeros. "Los relatos de la independencia: La invención de los héroes y de una memoria histórica en la primera mitad del siglo XIX colombiano." *Cuadernos de historia (Santiago)* 43 (2015): 7-30; **Ojeda**, Ana Cecilia, and Alejandra **Barón** Vera. "La conmemoración del héroe en el compendio de la historia de Colombia de Jesús María Henao y Gerardo Arrubla (1910)." *Historia Caribe* 1.1 (2005): 79-95.

army, in a story worthy of mention in the national anthem, and of becoming an everyday expression of Colombians. The fascinating thing here is that Ricaurte, who today is considered a military hero of the homeland in Colombia and Venezuela, never wanted to take up arms, but the circumstances of his historical context led him to take sides, which adds another layer to his heroism.<sup>144</sup>

A fascinating example in Greece is that of Giorgios Karaiskakis, who, before the outbreak of the Revolution of 1821, was essentially an outsider and criminal who lived off the land and terrorized travelers in the mountains and valleys of Greece. He is a character who does not have the credentials of Feraios, Korais, or Kapodistrias. Still, for this specific reason, he is much more easily identified with the ordinary people, being an example of overcoming, where someone who uses his talent in this case in military activities, can rise socially on his merit and go from bandit to Captain General of the Greek Army. His heroic halo in life and his death in combat, as in the case of Ricaurte, also add another aspect to his memory.<sup>145</sup> The hero responds to a need that the society that worships him needs to see resolved; the hero's behavior models are idealized and valued almost always to be exploited by the dominant elites, who need these values to take root and for the community to fill them with meaning. Under this premise, the successful constructions of a national hero are understood, as well as those that fail or go from admiration to contempt.<sup>146</sup>

In the global context of these revolutions, one can perceive the interest and rise of the romantic construction of ideals and identities referring to these independence processes and the charismatic figures participating in these events. There is a high degree of exoticization from within and outside that shapes the primary narrative and the mythology derived from it. The rebel with a cause, the oppressed people against the tyrant, and the projection of ancient glories on current events are some of the tropes used in forming these identity discourses. A precise situation and suggestion of the opinion that allows this nationalist feeling to boil over, to obtain resources, etc. The impulse of

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<sup>144</sup> **Esteva-Grillet**, Roldán. "La muerte del héroe en la pintura colombo-venezolana durante el siglo XIX." *SituArte. Revista Arbitrada de la Facultad Experimental de Arte de la Universidad del Zulia* (2011): 83-84.

<sup>145</sup> **Papaeti**, Anna. "Folk music and the cultural politics of the military Junta in Greece (1967–1974)." *Mousikos Logos* 2 (2015): 59-60.

<sup>146</sup> **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo. "Los héroes pintados como modelos de virtudes republicanas en el siglo XIX" In: **Karge**, Henrik **Klein**, Bruno (eds.) *1810-1910-2010: Independencias dependientes. Kunst und nationale Identitäten in Lateinamerika/Arte e identidades nacionales en América Latina*/(Francfort del Meno y Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana, 2016. P 280

philhellenism was the most significant manifestation of European public opinion during the 1820s.<sup>147</sup>



Image 13. Celebration of the first Koulouma (Lent) by free Greek citizens after the Greek War of Independence. Johann Georg Christian Perlberg, oil on canvas (detail) 1834. National Historical Museum of Greece.

The generation of a national myth, the establishment of a new political dogma in which all the citizens of these newly independent states share, will shape the life and work of certain characters as their national pantheon. A select group of individuals, primarily men who, thanks to their actions and virtues, managed to rise to this Olympus of patriots, who have a special place in the collective memory and have been used both to identify and give substance to the process of Independence

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<sup>147</sup> **Ciuffoletti** Zeffiro, **Mascilli** Luigi. "Il mito della Grecia in Italia tra politica e letteratura" In: *Indipendenza e unità nazionale in Italia ed in Grecia: convegno di studio, Atene, 2-7 ottobre 1985*. Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1987. Print. P. 43

and to transmit, through their hagiographies, the virtues that the citizens of the new nation need to cultivate.<sup>148</sup>

For reasons of order and hierarchy, this pantheon generally enthrone a particular figure as the personality that embodies and unifies the entire historical process. Thus, speaking of the wars of independence in Latin America, not only of the Colombian case, is by definition to speak of Simón Bolívar. And in the other case study, the figure that almost always stands out is Ioannis Kapodistrias. It is interesting to see the parallelism between the representatives of the respective independences.

These heroes are not paper myths. They were people of flesh and blood who left evidence of their passage and actions in their respective countries. And whose material vestiges will later become the religion of this new nation. The objects and remnants of the heroes are a synecdoche of them; they are their incarnation, like the helmet of Kolokotronis or the sword of Bolívar.<sup>149</sup> These elements will unite the memory around these figures and, in many cases, will also define the symbolic and aesthetic course of the iconography of the Revolution and Independence. These objects are vital for the support of the national myth and its subsequent dissemination.

Despite being the heroes of a specific nation, their origins and formation were linked to another national process in which they carried out their first political and military actions: Bolívar in Venezuela and Kapodistrias as the chancellor of the Russian Empire. Both figures also share the tragic destiny of their end, with assassination attempts, conspiracies, and, in general, a halo of disappointment for not fulfilling the objectives that the Revolution in both countries had proposed. This tragic destiny and this practically mythical aura that both characters had in life and that was later exploited by the new independent states is the perfect synthesis of the national hero that a master narrative of identity needs.

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<sup>148</sup> **Brouwers** Eveline G. *Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe: Comparing Cultures of Remembrance, c. 1790-1840* New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 325 p. p.16-44.

<sup>149</sup> **Balzani**, Roberto. "Synecdoche: the unforeseen fate of evocative objects." In: **Francia**, Enrico, **Sorba** Carlotta, (eds.) *Political objects in the Age of Revolution: material culture, national identities, political practices*. Roma. Viella, 2021 - 229 p. p.168



Image 14. The distinguishable helmet of Theodoros Kolokotronis. National Historical Museum. Athens, Greece.

- **The generation of a national feeling and the incubation of a national indifference**

The case of Greece is quite particular: of all the populations subject to the sublime gate, the first to be influenced by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution were the Greeks, followed closely by the Serbs, and chronologically speaking, followed by the Bulgarians, Armenians, Albanians, and Arabs.<sup>150</sup> Within this same idea of linear development, which did not necessarily imply progress, there was also the idea of decadence that fit perfectly into the intellectual apparatus of

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<sup>150</sup> **Heraclides**, Alexis. "The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean." New Perspectives on South-East Europe Series, Palgrave Macmillan, London (2010). P. 31; **Meriage**, Lawrence P. "The first Serbian uprising (1804–1813) and the nineteenth-century origins of the Eastern Question." In: **Schneid**, Frederick C., ed. *European Politics 1815–1848*. Routledge, 2017 422 p. P. 65-83.

the Greek writers and thinkers of the diaspora before the Revolution of 1821. Like Rigas Feraios or Adamantios Korais. Korais himself stated that the Greek nation had degenerated from the virtues of its ancestors in antiquity and that, therefore, the time of regeneration was in their times, and a bridge between them and their ancestors should be built.<sup>151</sup>

Most of the institutions and collective gatherings that were formed to cultivate the study of that national spirit and its subsequent liberation from the Ottoman yoke had, according to the members of this “neohellenism,” a clear purpose of forming a modern Greek state, politically speaking. Therefore, any goal beyond Independence is hardly even mentioned in the documents of the famous *Φιλική εταιρεία* (*Filiki Eteria* or Society of Friends). The pragmatic and immediate objective was to obtain independence; the organization of whichever state entity would emerge from that was a problem for the future.<sup>152</sup>

The members of this secret society were generally merchants of medium and low levels. There was only one great merchant who wanted to join the cause, whose name was Panagiotis Sekeris. In addition to the members of the society who belonged to the so-called Phanariotes, or members of the administration of the Ottoman Empire who belonged to the Greek population, also, thanks to the influence of these Phanariotes, many princes in Wallachia and Moldavia joined the cause of this secret society.<sup>153</sup> Ioannis Kapodistrias led the Filiki Eteria for a long time, and it was expected that he would be the one to take the leadership of the Revolution. Still, to the east, having such an

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<sup>151</sup> **Psarrou**, Evi. "Rigas Feraios and Adamantios Korais: two prominent figures of the Greek Enlightenment." *International Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Studies* 6.11 (2021): 1-5; **Stamboulis**, Giorgio. *Radicali e moderati nell'Illuminismo balcanico: il pensiero politico di Adamantios Korais e Rigas Velestinlis*. EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2020. 290 p; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 54; **Catapoti**, Despina. "A nationalist palimpsest: authoring the history of the Greek nation through alternative museum narratives." *Great Narratives of the Past: Traditions and Revisions in National Museums, EuNaMus Report No 4. Published by Linköping University Electronic Press* (2012): 133-68.

<sup>152</sup> **Erman**, Arzu. "Fenerli Aristokrasisinde Proto-Milliyetçi Bir Örnek: Aleksandros İpsilantis ve Filiki Eteria." (A Proto-Nationalist Example in the Phanariot Aristocracy: Aleksandros Ypsilantis and Filiki Eteria) *Marmara Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8.1 (2021): 26-47; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 111

<sup>153</sup> **Milios**, John. "The Revolution in Moldavia and Wallachia: Questions on the Borders of the Greek Nation." *Nationalism as a claim to a state*. Brill, 2023. 11-22; **Jewsbury**, George F. "Nationalism in the Danubian Principalities: 1800–1825—A Reconsideration." In: **Schneid**, Frederick C., ed. *European Politics 1815–1848*. Routledge, 2017 422 p. P. 85-94. **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 116

important position within the Russian empire, he refused. The leadership fell into the hands of Alexandros Ypsilantis in April 1820.<sup>154</sup>

Alexandros Ypsilantis and the *Filiki Eteria* had a structure and a somewhat established command channel where the action of its members was limited and framed by the will of their superior, at first. Consequently, this leader should have been Ioannis Kapodistrias. Still, in the end, it was Ypsilantis, the leader of the organization, who assumed that leadership thanks to the concessions he gave in matters of autonomy to the regional leaders of society.<sup>155</sup> But transmitting these orders was not an easy task, and this structure did not work with the bandits and guerrillas who inhabited the mountains of mainland Greece, such as those who would later be the most recognized hero of the nation: Theodoros Kolokotronis.<sup>156</sup>

The Greeks used the ancient Greek term *ethnos* to define themselves as a nation, which was clear in the intellectual circles of the Greek diaspora or the cafes of the rest of Europe. For the insurgent population, this term was difficult to perceive.<sup>157</sup> The ethno-national component in Greece was tremendously challenging to establish because many dialect languages and ways of understanding each other as Greek or as Ottoman existed together before the Revolution and began to conflict after it, such as Albanians, Bulgarians, Vlachos, Arvanites, Karamanlis, etc. And so many others that this struggle for specific Greek identity (in many cases felt as artificial) became a top-notch affair for the newly created kingdom of Greece and its irredentist intentions in the decades after its establishment.<sup>158</sup>

Just as national identity is configured in the exaltation of a past, the consecration of a series of objects and events, and the preponderance of certain actors and protagonists over others, it is

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<sup>154</sup> **Heraclides**, Alexis. *"The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean."* New Perspectives on South-East Europe Series, Palgrave Macmillan, London (2010). P. 32

<sup>155</sup> **Stites**, Richard. *The four horsemen: riding to liberty in post-Napoleonic Europe*. Oxford University Press, 2014. 439 p. p. 193; **Kostantaras**, Dean J. "Infamy and revolt: the rise of the national problem in early modern Greek thought." (No Title) (2006); **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 120

<sup>156</sup> **Kepreotes**, Dimitri. "The Spiritual Underpinning of the Greek Revolution of 1821: Reappraising the bona fides of Its Protagonists." *Phronema* 36.1 (2021); **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p.117

<sup>157</sup> **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 64

<sup>158</sup> **Delivoria**, Yanna. "The notion of nation: the emergence of a national ideal in the narratives of 'inside' and 'outside' Greeks in the nineteenth century." *The making of Modern Greece*. Routledge, 2016. 109-122; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 133

important to take into account the possibility of a series of emotions and reactions towards the past that are not necessarily a devotion, total acceptance, or indifference demonstrated towards the common past by that society that seeks to configure itself as a nation.<sup>159</sup> This indifference or apathy has several facets and can be innate or induced by specific moments or institutions. Initially, the concept of national indifference was applied by Tara Zahra to a Central European context where a diversity of national and transnational (imperial) identities overlapped in an innovative article paraphrasing the fundamental work – which is now four decades old – of Benedict Anderson "Imagined Communities" that talks about how there are social groups, also organized linguistically, culturally or geographically, that do not wish to remain or label their identity to structures similar to them or in the so-called nations.<sup>160</sup>

The Ottoman past is still present and alive in the life and culture of Greeks today. Still, it is constantly hidden and suppressed because it is seen as a period of backwardness and underdevelopment. John Petropoulos argues that modern Greeks have lived from 3 traditions: the Hellenic, Byzantine, and Ottoman, and that this is the way to try to understand the origin and construction of the modern Greek past.<sup>161</sup> This also led to the problem of indifference, if not total opposition, to establishing an independent Greek state separate from the Greek millet of the Ottoman Empire. For several ethnically and linguistically identifiable Greek communities, the national project of an independent Greece ran counter to their primary identity, but was constructed throughout the 19th century as Ottoman. And the Greek diaspora or the population possibility of grouping under the same state, all the Greek communities from southern Italy to the Black Sea and from Thessalonica to Alexandria in Egypt, did not bear fruit, even from the very early conception of a Greek national state, with the legislative formulation on citizenship from the early date of 1822 with the Constitution of Epidauros, as is stated in the epigraph that headed this chapter.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> **Van Ginderachter** Maarten, and Jon E. **Fox**. Eds. *National indifference and the history of nationalism in modern Europe* London: Routledge, 2019.

<sup>160</sup> **Zahra**, Tara. "Imagined noncommunities: National indifference as a category of analysis." *Slavic Review* 69.1 (2010): 93-119; **Anderson**, Benedict. *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London New York: Verso, 1991.

<sup>161</sup> **Petropoulos**, John. "The Modern Greek State and the Greek Past." *The "Past" in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture*, Malibu: Undena Publications (1978): 163-176; **Heraclides**, Alexis. "The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean." *New Perspectives on South-East Europe Series*, Palgrave Macmillan, London (2010). p. 9

<sup>162</sup> **Tziouvas**, Dimitris. "Greek Diaspora and Migration since 1700." *Society, Politics and Culture* (2009). 306 p. p. 100-102

The enlightened elites who shaped and maintained the *Filiki Eteria*, whose ideas and visions were applied in the war of independence, managed to preserve themselves and then worried about playing the political and military game over the *Klepthis* and *armatoloi* and their leaders. This was possible thanks to its superior administrative, diplomatic, and political conditions, which were used according to their benefits in the international context in which the revolution developed. This can be seen in the commentary of some of the Philhellenes who went to Greece to help in the struggle for independence, as shown by the following comments by John Cam Hobhouse:

"It may seem trivial to remind the Greeks of Leonidas, But the truth is that of him, and of the other heroes of antiquity, the generality of the people has a very confused notion and that very few of them trace the period of its former glory further back than the days of the Greek emperors. Those who most like to return to past times dwell on the power and merits of those Princes, and begin their history with the great Constantine, the Emperor of the Greeks (Ὁ Μέγας Κωνσταντῖνος, ο Βασιλεύς τῶν Ῥωμαίων) [...] »<sup>163</sup>

More harshly, on the attitudes that the Greeks of the early nineteenth century had towards their ancient past and towards the peoples who inhabited those lands in antiquity, an American commentator, known as Breck and of whom little personal data is known, affirmed in this commentary in 1824, when the Greek Revolution struggled to prevail after the attempts to reconquer the Ottoman Empire and the expedition of Mehmet Ali that reached the Peloponnese in that year: "The modern Greeks know nothing of Thucydides, Aristotle, Solon, and other personages of more ancient times; their traditions go no further than the Byzantine Empire, and their desire is not to be republicans but to have an Emperor or absolute master of their religion."<sup>164</sup>

The heterogeneity of the revolutions that took place in the first half of the 19th century shows how difficult it was to establish and what it means to establish a composite nature or a particular model that applies to all revolutions that sought to solve the problems of a national constitutional social or sovereignty type even though several had a similar beginning or that a particular event came to their trigger later having an axis in the revolutionary years of 1830-1848.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Ricks David and Paul Magdalino. *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity* Ashgate. 1998. 200 p. p. 2

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3

<sup>165</sup> Kostantaras, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848* p. 204

In Colombia, this indifference was also latent, especially in moments immediately after the war of independence, when the construction of the nation was at its most fragile, and patriotism and popular sentiment were practically non-existent not only because of the geographical and political difficulties of establishing a new state regime adhered to a series of symbols and discourses that could be considered "national" or "Colombian". But also because of the lack of confidence in the durability of the institutions and the new regimes.

The inhabitants of New Granada went from having a viceroyalty of almost a century of established and then seeing regional republics collapse before the Spanish reconquest and restoration in 1816, and then seeing this also crack in 1819 with the conquest of Santafé de Bogotá by the liberating army. The actors who construct the official memory correspond to various levels and spheres of Colombian society, from the teaching profession to cultural institutions and museums, as well as the legislative branch, which, to a large extent, is the one that carries the rhythms and the threads of the commemorative acts and their material production, be it called monuments, special events, and even commissions dedicated to the respective commemoration, be it the sesquicentennial or bicentennial.<sup>166</sup>

The reasons behind the bicentennial celebrations of independence in Latin America are interceded by the problematization of the tensions between hegemonic memories and dissident memories, seeking to establish a path that allows two centuries later to try to understand what and why the events of the war of independence are celebrated. In the bicentennial of Colombian independence, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, research on political histories had focused on the perception of the figure of the citizen and the preponderant role of this in the new political culture, as a fundamental spring in the constitution of the country, as being this so diverse, there's a polysemic concept of "people".<sup>167</sup> Since then, many new designations have been added to the political language, belonging to all levels and strata of society. However, the terms and concepts used by the neogranadians at the end of the eighteenth century, such as people, sovereignty, majesty,

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<sup>166</sup> **Ibid.** P 34

<sup>167</sup> **Sabato** Hilda. *Republics of the New World: The Revolutionary Political Experiment in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. p. 21; **Ortega**, Francisco A., **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo, **Ramírez** Sandra Milena, eds. *Conceptos fundamentales de la cultura política de la Independencia*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2012 P.12

republic, and nation, will be forever in the mouths, minds, and literary productions of contemporary Colombians and all other peoples of the world.

This lack of trust and little hope in the newly formed institutions generated a feeling of indifference towards the new state.<sup>168</sup> No revolution of the long nineteenth century underwent a simple process of implementation. The French Revolution itself had Assemblies followed by committees of public salvation that ended in the formation and disintegration of an Empire. Still, patriotism and loyalty to the nation are not comparable with the Colombian experience, which, perhaps in its novelty as an idea, added to the prejudices of the ruling class about the populations now sheltered under the new Colombian state. They generated a divorce between the people and the elite that has been fed over time, and with the various moments in which confidence in the social contract has failed, whether it is the disintegration of Gran Colombia, the loss of Panama, or the ongoing armed conflict. Being Colombian is a difficult feeling to experience, but it is a feeling that, despite the doubts, truly exists. It manifests in a tenuous manner, at specific moments, and despite itself, as David Bushnell put it in perhaps the synthesis of Colombian history most recognized outside the Spanish language.<sup>169</sup>

- **The capricious temporality of symbols and ideas. Institutional intentions, popular desires**

The idea of a nation that the generation before the wars of independence in Colombia and Greece had, like that of the comuneros' revolt of 1782 in Colombia and the Orloff brothers' revolt in 1770 in Greece, is different from that of the protagonists of the war itself, which will also be detached or transformed into a different conception for those who survived the wars of independence and participated in the creation of these two independent sovereign states. This tells us about the malleability and, in many cases, the fragility of the ideas and conceptions about these ideas as the course of events develops. What Simón Bolívar or Theodoros Kolokotronis thought before coming into contact with any independence idea is different from what they thought in the most dire moments that put the Revolution itself at risk of defeat and quite another from what they thought in the last moments of their lives when they realized that the project conceived under the ideas for

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<sup>168</sup> **Gutiérrez** Ardila, Daniel. "Soberana indiferencia. El discurso historiográfico contra el republicanismo popular colombiano." *ACHSC*. 2018, vol.45, n.2 pp.119-147

<sup>169</sup> **Bushnell**, David. *The making of modern Colombia: A nation in spite of itself*. Univ of California Press, 1993.

which they had fought did not correspond to the result they expected. Political quarrels took them from the altar of heroes to the gallows of traitors. This capricious development of the elements is of utmost importance to keep in mind when analyzing these independences from a broader perspective.

Another of the necessary conditions for the action and fusion of a master narrative has to be the collective disposition of society to apply a paradigm shift that not only includes the nominal change of the institutions of power but also the change in the understanding of everyday language, with the use of concepts such as citizenship or freedom. This change, these transformations that allow those who were previously called “servants” or “slaves” to end up calling themselves “citizens,” no matter how much effort and political will the different levels of society put in, can only be built. Their effectiveness is seen through the transformative action of time as an agent of change.<sup>170</sup>

One of the points of projection and diffusion of these paradigm shifts is undoubtedly historiography. Historiography becomes both the transmitter of the narratives and the new national mythologies, and the essential leveler and filter of the possible elements that make up this narrative. Without needing to consider it a linear and constantly progressive process, it is not wrong to say that the very scientific and critical mission of the historical discipline and of those who construct it makes it the tool that allows for demystifying and projecting in a more objective way the myths and legends of national identity.<sup>171</sup>

The unification of the ancient past with the new past through interpretations from the present, which, despite giving the impression of being permanent, are always in constant change, are performative activities carried out by all members and levels of society to rethink and reflect on

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<sup>170</sup> **Lomné**, Georges. "El concepto de Independencia (Nueva Granada-Colombia, 1761-1873)." *Cátedra abierta, Grandes Temas de Nuestro Tiempo: Bicentenario de la Independencia. 1810-2010*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, sede Manizales, 2010. P. 67

<sup>171</sup> **Vanegas** Isidro, "La fuga imaginaria de Germán Colmenares", *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 42.1 (2015): 275-307; **Betancourt** Mendieta, Alexander. "La nacionalización del pasado: los orígenes de las historias patrias en América Latina." *Ficciones y silencios fundacionales: literaturas y culturas poscoloniales en América Latina, siglo XIX.-(Nexos y diferencias; 8)* (2003): 81-99.

their identity.<sup>172</sup> Considering oneself as a direct heir of the ancient Greeks, seeking ways to alleviate or, in some cases, inflame territorial or memory disputes with neighboring countries, or establishing a series of commemorations and systematically disseminated cultural tropes allow us to see the paradoxical relationship between the immutable connection with a distant past, and the everlasting enmity against the counterpart on the other side of the sea. With the changing perception that international contexts influence these identity constructions. The animosity between Greeks and Turks is latent and constant, as are their undeniable bonds of brotherhood, and these two facets of national identity in both countries are constantly put into play.<sup>173</sup>

At the time of the sesquicentennial of the Independence of Colombia, during the 1960s and with the professionalization of history from the universities, the cultural institutions in charge of maintaining and protecting the past of the nation, whether these are universities or history museums are faced with a narrative duality where there is a discourse of heroes and battles and a reality of bipartisan violence that bleeds the country dry, and that cannot be recognized in the feat of Independence. This narrative bifurcation is often a juxtaposition where the official country takes precedence over the deep country.<sup>174</sup>

- **PRESENCE, POWER, AND LIMITS OF THE NATIONAL FORMATION NARRATIVE**

These myths and heroes, generally imposed by the upper echelons of political and intellectual power, will have periods of confrontation, criticism, and opposition. This section will illustrate these conflicts and their subsequent imposition on the national discourse. These identity elements require definition and must be demonstrated to the public and their counterparts. After these

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<sup>172</sup> **Koulouri**, Christina. *Historical Memory in Greece, 1821–1930: Performing the Past in the Present* (1st ed.). Routledge. 2022 414 p.; **Tziouvas**, Dimitris, ed. *Re-imagining the past: Antiquity and Modern Greek culture*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2014.

<sup>173</sup> **Heraclides**, Alexis. "The Greek–Turkish antagonism: The social construction of self and other." In: **Heraclides**, Alexis, and G. **Alioğlu** Çakmak. *Greece and Turkey in conflict and cooperation*. Routledge, 2019. 41-65.

<sup>174</sup> **Hensel** Franz, **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo "El pasado como posibilidad" In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p P.28

demonstrations, reactions are generally generated when coming into contact and debating with other perspectives and possibilities of retelling the past.

○ **Defining, developing, and spreading the national identity discourse**

Discourse is essential to reorganize and prioritize ideas individually and collectively. Therefore, a national identity discourse has to be the roadmap that allows homogenizing, sometimes negotiates, and other times imposes an idea of the nation on a conglomerate of people, whose belonging to local and regional spaces can clash with an identity macrostructure such as a national master narrative. These discourses are built over time and by several hands; they may have greater presence and collaboration from specific preponderant figures, but neither their formulation, application, or reception is subject to the will of a single person or a small group of individuals.<sup>175</sup>

The first problem in the construction of this identity is obvious: the everlasting question of what to be, what makes someone Colombian or Greek, that distinguishes him from being Albanian or Turkish or Venezuelan or Ecuadorean, and after this first answer, whose development will be discussed below, there is the question of how to be it, how to be a good Colombian or how to be a good Greek, how to exploit the particularities of an specific identity construction to not only self-identify but belong to a national collective. For this, it is helpful to construct the history of both Greek and Colombian Independence from what Francois Hartog calls the “regime of historicity”, which is nothing more than the ordering and articulation of historical experiences from a past, present and future perspective, with additions and subtractions, omissions and highlights and a constant reconfiguration.<sup>176</sup>

In the Greek case, a series of identities are juxtaposed according to the identity element on which they have been built. This idea of self-recognition and differentiation from other social groups is not exclusively typical of the historical moment of the Greek Revolution of 1821; in many cases, and for the Greeks of the 19th century, or at least for those who were literate in the past of those they considered their ancestors, there already existed a strong identity component that united them

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<sup>175</sup> **Wodak**, Ruth. *Discursive construction of national identity*. Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

<sup>176</sup> **Hartog**, François. *Regímenes de Historicidad. Presentismo y experiencias del tiempo*, traducido por Norma Durán y Pablo Avilés. México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2007.

both to their peers and to the space they inhabited.<sup>177</sup> This is important because territory and the sense of belonging, whether at a village or national level, are fundamental to applying a germ of national consciousness with conviction. To take up arms to fight against an enemy tremendously similar to your friends, family, or even yourself, it is essential to be convinced of this consciousness and use your personal agency for a patriotic cause.<sup>178</sup>

This identity could be understood from four levels or schemes that Dimitris Tziocvas proposes to understand Greek identity and its relationship between past and present: The symbolic or archaeological model, which establishes a temporal distance that is symbolically overcome through the purification of monuments and changes in language and names. The organic or romantic model sees the past as present, with a nostalgic sentiment focused on losing authenticity. The aesthetic or modernist model, where the past is considered to manifest itself in the present through style and aesthetics, maintains an underlying continuity. And finally, the critical or postmodernist model, which sees the past as a space open to reinterpretation, prioritizes the study of ruptures and forgotten periods, leaving aside the notion of historical continuity. Greek national identity has drawn from these four schemes and given greater preponderance to some over others over these two hundred years. Gazi says the latter scheme is the least desired or constructed, given the country's stagnant and rigid cultural structures.<sup>179</sup>

Within the first level of identity, which is still considered fundamental in the regime of historicity imposed by the construction of the modern Greek state, is the religious affiliation of the nation with Orthodox Christianity linked to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This religious identity combines and departs from other ways of understanding the perceptions of belonging of the populations of the Eastern Mediterranean during the Age of Revolutions. There is a variation of panhellenic identity understood as Orthodoxy, subject to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and a secular

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<sup>177</sup> **Hokwerda**, Hero, ed. *Constructions of Greek Past: Identity and Historical Consciousness from Antiquity to the Present*. Brill, 2021.

<sup>178</sup> **Holton**, David. "Ethnic identity and patriotic idealism in the writings of General Makriyannis." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 9 (1985): 133-160.

<sup>179</sup> **Tziocvas**, Dimitris. Ελληνικότητα και γενιά του '30. (Greekness and the 1930s Generation) *Cogito* 6 (May). (2007); **Gazi**, Andromache. "National museums in Greece: History Ideology Narratives." In: *Building National Museums in Europe 1750-2010. Conference proceedings* from EuNaMus; European National Museums: Identity Politics; the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen; Bologna 28-30 April 2011. EuNaMus Report No. 1

version of the nation that is closer to the nations of the West. In any case, the understanding of Greek ecumenism in the sense of belonging to the attempt at a modern nation-state sought to politically reapply Millet's Ottoman concept.<sup>180</sup>

In addition to these first levels of identity, there was the problem of the diaspora, of those who considered themselves Greeks, meritorious members of this new experiment of a nation-state, who often from their places of residence and most likely of origin, actively participated in the establishment and maintenance of an independent Greek state. Even so, their idea of Greece as a concept and homeland was deeply biased by the filters that distance and the idealization of this geographical and historical space had. This led to a series of conflicts at the time of establishing an independent Greek state because many times, the Greeks who lived and fought the war of independence thought one thing, and the Greeks who were outside it thought another.<sup>181</sup>

At the end of the war of independence and the installation of the monarchy, this distance between locals and outsiders began to become increasingly diffuse. In the Greek case, the same diaspora was found in the territories historically considered Greece but not yet part of that independent state. Therefore, a geographical discourse and border delimitation began to be used, which was configured in the irredentist discourse of the *Μεγάλη ιδέα Megali Idea* (Great Idea). Coined by Ioannis Kolettis, Prime Minister of King Otto I of Greece, who, just after the Revolution of 1843 that gave Greece its first constitution, used the national sentiment to seek the expansion of Greece to its historical limits, which included the entire region of Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, Asia Minor and several islands of the eastern Mediterranean such as the Dodecanese, Crete, and Cyprus. Generally, and given the close relationship that the Greeks have with the sea, which is very much part of their identity discourse, the final objective of the *Megali Idea* was called the Greece of the

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<sup>180</sup> **Anagnostopoulou**, Sia. "The terms millet, genos, ethnos, oikoumenikotita, alytrotismos in Greek historiography." In **Anagnostopoulou** Sia. *The Passage from the Ottoman Empire to the Nation-States* Isisi press, 2004. 37-55.

<sup>181</sup> **Delivoria**, Yanna. "The notion of nation: the emergence of a national ideal in the narratives of 'inside' and 'outside' Greeks in the nineteenth century." *The making of Modern Greece*. Routledge, 2016. 109-122.

five seas: the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, and the Ionian Sea.<sup>182</sup>

This whole game of identities will come into conflict when the ideas and rentiers of the *Megali Idea*, and then the establishment of the new borders of the expanding Greek state during the government of Prime Minister Charilaos Trikoupis, materialize during the military action that will seek to integrate the region of Asia Minor in Anatolia into the Greek monarchy.<sup>183</sup> Action carried out after the fall of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, which in turn would generate a response to the Turkish War of Independence, which would end in 1923 with the failure of the Greek expedition and one of the largest humanitarian crises of the twentieth century. By exacerbating the national character both in Greece and Turkey, and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Greeks living in Anatolia, who found themselves as refugees in Greece, what is known as the Μεγάλη καταστροφή, the "Great Catastrophe".

This led to a process of population exchange between Turkey and Greece, supported by the Lausanne treaties, where almost two million people suddenly changed their country, customs, and language to settle in a new land of which they should nominally be citizens, ethnically and religiously, but which was foreign and unknown to them. This evidently generated, and generates today, a series of conflicting identities, not necessarily resolved yet, given that despite this population exchange, in both countries, there remains an active minority that maintains its ethnic and religious identity.<sup>184</sup>

Having an established discourse in slow intellectual brewing since the end of the 18th century, with the achievement of Independence and the subsequent establishment of an independent Colombian state, which is not alien to a series of early transformations that affected its subsequent development until practically our days. It is from these first moments of the establishment of national conscience

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<sup>182</sup> **Erskine**, Andrew. "Ancient History and National Identity." *A Companion to Ancient History* (2009): 558; **Shannan Peckham**, Robert. "Map mania: nationalism and the politics of place in Greece, 1870–1922." *Political geography* 19.1 (2000): 77-95.

<sup>183</sup> **Kostis**, Kostas. *History's Spoiled Children: The Story of Modern Greece*. Trans. by Jacob Moe. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 467p. P.205-207

<sup>184</sup> Katsikas, Stefanos. *Islam and nationalism in modern Greece, 1821-1940*. Oxford University Press, 2021.

that an identity discourse began to be implemented by the public. Discourse that, like the Greek, has been established and transformed over the years.<sup>185</sup>

In the Colombian case, the four roots and the two fundamental tendencies to understand the function of art in the configuration of an idea of Latin America are the Indian grandfather, the Spanish grandfather, the black grandfather, and the emigrant, and the tendencies are the telluric and the universalist. What is considered colonial art is nothing other than European art produced since the Counter-Reformation that goes from the Renaissance to the Baroque with an essentially Spanish and Portuguese character that, when transferred to America, has an essential characteristic: it is the graphic carrier and diffuser of the colonizing project of the metropolises.<sup>186</sup> With the arrival of American independence, the cultural style of the baroque was broken sharply, and neoclassicism was imposed as the artistic narrative of the new independent republics. Humboldt's work has a definitive character in the rediscovery of America by the new enlightened and later romantic thinkers. It was a renewal in letters and the arts, essentially in painting, where the landscape genre was renewed.<sup>187</sup>

Already in the 20th century, a new renewal in the perspectives and in understanding Latin American history through art became evident with the rise of indigenism and the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist claims of the muralists. The essential thing about mestizaje in a purely artistic sense is the constant struggle between the dialectic between those four essences, those four grandparents, that give rise to the Latin American history; it is a constant dichotomy between getting closer to Europe or moving away from it. This struggle has already lasted five centuries.<sup>188</sup>

The heroes will form the role models of the new republics, the idealization of an individual who serves and sacrifices himself for his country, turning him into a cult figure for his notable actions, by the masses. José Murillo de Carvalo noted that the hero, the fruit of a process of collective

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<sup>185</sup> **Castro-Gómez**, Santiago, and Eduardo **Restrepo**. *Genealogías de la colombianidad: Formaciones discursivas y tecnologías de gobierno en los siglos XIX y XX*. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2008.

<sup>186</sup> **Rojas** Miguel. "Arte e Imagen en la construcción del imaginario Latinoamericano". In:

**Karge**, Henrik **Klein**, Bruno (eds.) *1810-1910-2010: Independencias dependientes. Kunst und nationale Identitäten in Lateinamerika/Arte e identidades nacionales en América Latina*/(Francfort del Meno y Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana, 2016. P. 135-136

<sup>187</sup> **Ibid.** p. 138-139

<sup>188</sup> **Ibid.** P. 141-146

elaboration, tells us more about the society that produces him than about himself. There is a great distance between the individual of flesh and blood and the one who is represented in bronzes and canvases.<sup>189</sup>

The pictorial records of the country's heroes, at least in New Granada and Greater Colombia, were mostly taken in situ by artists such as Pedro José Figueroa and José María Espinosa, who knew the models they portrayed personally. These pictorial representations would be the basis of all the subsequent iconography around these heroes, especially that of the Liberator Simón Bolívar. The case of José María Espinosa is particular because he was a veteran of the southern campaigns and the first wars of independence. The iconography that he made of the heroes of independence would be the basis for the later portraits that would be made in Europe and other parts of America of this iconography of the heroes, as is the case with the reproductions made in lithography by the Parisian house of Lemercier during the decade of 1840.<sup>190</sup>

The natural heir, or at least the most politically and militarily organic heir of Simón Bolívar, was the Venezuelan-born marshal Antonio Jose de Sucre, winner of the last battle of the wars of independence in Ayacucho in 1824, who was assassinated on Friday, June 4, 1830, in the region of Pasto, in the Berruecos mountains on the road that led to Cabuyal. His death, portrayed by Pedro Jose Figueroa in 1835, represents the origin of political denunciation painting in Colombian art, since Sucre's assassins are depicted as a tiger with bloody hands, alluding to the nickname of Sucre's political enemy, General Jose Maria Obando, and the flowers surrounding the feline represent the Ecuadorian general Juan Jose Flores.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo. "Los héroes pintados como modelos de virtudes republicanas en el siglo XIX" In: **Karge, Henrik Klein, Bruno** (eds.) *1810-1910-2010: Independencias dependientes. Kunst und nationale Identitäten in Lateinamerika/Arte e identidades nacionales en América Latina*/(Francfort del Meno y Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana, 2016. P. 271-272

<sup>190</sup> **Ibid.** P. 273-276

<sup>191</sup> **Ibid.** P. 278-279



Image 15. "The Death of Sucre". Pedro Figuerola, oil on canvas, 1835. Art Collection of the Bank of the Republic. Bogotá, Colombia.

The number of pictorial representations of female heroes in the independence movement does not correspond to the large number of women who actively participated in the first moments of forming the independent Colombian State. Evidently, this is not a constant that is limited only to the history of art, but where written history and public history have the same conditions of marginalization of female participation in the independence process.<sup>192</sup>

One of the main themes in the collective conception of the Colombian past is the critical role that violence has had in the construction of the nation. The Colombian nation, despite seeing itself in the reflection of history that would show a panorama that is not necessarily opposite but different, considers that violence, armed confrontation, and civil war are its natural state. This consideration of the Colombian as violent by nature is the projection of collective frustrations on the processes of social and historical change that have been resolved or perpetuated through the exercise of

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.* P. 288

violence.<sup>193</sup> One of the significant challenges that remains for both the Colombian nation and its own identity discourse after the nominal end of a conflict that lasted more than half a century is to critically reflect on that commonplace that corresponds to the convenience of explaining the enormous inequalities of its society or the inability to reform itself, in the commonplace of the theological explanation that Colombians are by definition violent, bad and criminal, and therefore, their country has neither a solution nor a future.



Image 16. Group of Flags of the Colombian Navy during the military parade on the National Day of the 20th of July. Bogotá Colombia.

The educational documents that the museum generated during its first 100 years of existence apply a conception of history in which only the outstanding characters and a specific selection of events and places were worthy of being represented in the halls of the national museum, leaving out of this narrative an essential part of the communities and social groups that by then already made up and represented the Colombian nation, a situation that is confirmed in Ernest Renan's epigraph at

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<sup>193</sup> **Rojas**, Cristina, and Elvira Maldonado. *Civilización y violencia: la búsqueda de la identidad en el siglo XIX en Colombia*. Bogotá, Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2023.

the beginning of the first chapter in which forgetting is considered of vital importance for the construction and maintenance of a nation.<sup>194</sup>

○ **Reactions and solutions to the mixed presence of “the national”**

Later generations, especially those who have been involved in specific commemorations of independence, would have a different version of these figures of independence: For the generation that lived through the centenaries of the wars of independence in Colombia and Greece, countries that already had established institutions such as national museums or history academies, the history of their revolution and freedom had already taken shape, and even their exaltation reached relatively high levels despite not having a more universal, not to say inclusive, discourse of all the actors who had taken part in the cause of independence.

The history of museums in Colombia and especially the history of pioneering institutions such as the National Museum, which in 2023 celebrated its 200th anniversary, goes hand in hand with the history of the independent nation. Furthermore, the institution of a national museum, which in the Colombian case is a museum of museums, currently divides its collection into four collections, namely anthropology, archaeology, history, and art, from the moments immediately preceding the achievement of political independence after the military victory over the Spanish forces throughout the territory of what is now Colombia. The museum was intentionally a key figure in constructing a discourse of legitimation of a new political project called the Republic of Colombia, or later the Republic of New Granada, or later the United States of Colombia.

This space sought to categorize, centralize, and hierarchize the objects and the discourse of this national identity. For example, it is worth highlighting that the first works or objects that are in the official catalog of this museum are pieces that come from territories that do not currently correspond to the Republic of Colombia but from the central Andes of South America, where General Sucre sent to Bogotá the cloak of Atahualpa's wife and other objects and vestiges of the

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<sup>194</sup> **Pérez** Benavides Amada Carolina. “La memoria convertida en exhibición: Adecuaciones de la sección de historia patria en el Museo Nacional de Colombia 1880-1912” In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. p.124

Inca empire that became the founding pieces of the collections of the national museum in Bogotá and today are some of its most recognized objects.

Something similar occurred in Greece; the generation of independence was dramatically involved in several controversies and complex moments of state formation, such as the establishment of the Bavarian monarchy in 1830 and the promulgation of the first constitution in 1843.<sup>195</sup> The heroes of independence, those who were not betrayed by the new government bodies, were either exiled or imprisoned like Makriyiannis and Kolokotronis or murdered like Kapodistrias or Bouboulina of Spetses. Internal struggles overshadowed the brightness of the memory of that first generation during the first years of Greece as an independent state.



Image 17. Decay printing depicting Theodoros Kolokotronis and Yannis Makriyiannis (based on the lithographs made by Karl Kraseizen in 1828) in the main building of the National Gallery of Athens.

Later, Greek irredentism became relevant, seeking to integrate under one state the populations that historically considered themselves parts of that Greek nation under the nineteenth-century conception of the same in the sense of shared ethnicity, language, and culture. After the

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<sup>195</sup> **Petropoulos**, John. *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843*. Vol. 2053. Princeton University Press, 2015; **Croce**, Benedetto. *History of Europe in the nineteenth century*. Routledge, 2019. 375 p. p.130

consolidation of Greek independence, the subsequent monarchy, and its international recognition, a long and tedious process began that lasted almost a century, from the annexation of central Greece. Thessaly, Epirus, and the best-known cases of Crete, Macedonia, and Thrace after the Balkan Wars ended with integrating the Dodecanese islands until 1948.<sup>196</sup>

This confirms that history can be considered the tamer of social memory. Understanding this process of domestication as the gradual but constant control of the versions and possibilities of constructing a historical narrative different from that been built by the establishment, where professional historians, therefore invested with a specific authority, play the role of domesticators, tamers of historical processes and of the possible dissident memories that arise from them. They are in charge of establishing a hierarchy and an order of remembrance.<sup>197</sup>

- **STATE AND NATIONAL SYMBOLISM**

With the creation of national myths, it is also necessary to establish a set of unitary and cohesive symbols that maintain and perpetuate the discourse of the nation-state over time, despite its constant evolution. These symbols can represent only institutions, but they can also be adopted by the collective that re-signifies them and makes them their own. These two interpretations of the same symbol often mix together, and their original meaning also tends to blur. The analysis of these symbols allows us to understand how memory is malleable, and despite the rigid hierarchical regimes of memory, its volatile character and constant construction often prevail.

- **The Symbols of the State and the Nation**

The modern nation needs to identify itself; it needs to stand out, and as previously announced, it must answer the question of what it is. This identification is also an exclusion, separation, and difference; it is essentially answering the previous question with the identification of what it is not, of the elements that are foreign to the national idea that it may have. Although they are shared with other national experiences and, in many cases, with the previous dominators of the territory, they

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<sup>196</sup> **Carabott**, Philip. "Pawns that never became queens": the Dodecanese Islands, 1912-1924." *Kampos: Cambridge papers in modern Greek* 4 Modern Greek Section, Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages, University of Cambridge (1996).

<sup>197</sup> **Gnecco**, Cristóbal "Historias hegemónicas, historias disidentes: la domesticación política de la memoria social". In: **Gnecco** Cristóbal and Marta **Zambrano** (Ed.). *Memorias hegemónicas, memorias disidentes: el pasado como política de la historia*. Bogotá, Colombia: ICANH- Universidad del Cauca. P. 172

must be considered their own and unique. To be recognized in its otherness, in its exception, it must have particular requirements to be seen as one more nation, inserted in a concert of nations, which although they do not contain the same preponderance in a geopolitical concert, they do have a series of identifying elements that allow them to identify themselves before others, such as a flag, a coat of arms and another series of symbols such as the gastronomic dish, the national animal or plant.

Establishing the flag as a symbol of identification essentially arises from the military component that is transversal to the war of independence, and sought to identify a new nation with a new flag. Its use and construction are fundamentally due to the armed forces, that sector of society that, under the monopoly of weapons, lives off the rest of the components of the nation, but also holds preeminence in the use of its symbols.<sup>198</sup> We must not overlook the importance of the military in the process of constructing the symbols of the nation. It is perhaps this part of society that most draws on and disseminates these symbols. We must not forget that these two nations are the product of an armed and violent confrontation, and their memory is generally related to war. This has a strong influence on the historiographical discourse, but also on public representations of memory such as the commemorations of March 25 in Greece and July 20 in Colombia, which have been permanently framed by the celebration of a military parade where all the symbols of the state and the nation re-emerge with all their respective martial character.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> **McNeill**, William Hardy. *La búsqueda del poder: tecnología, fuerzas armadas y sociedad desde el 1000*. Siglo XXI, 1989. 450 p. p. vii

<sup>199</sup> **Garavaglia**, Juan Carlos, Juan **Pro Ruiz**, and Eduardo A. **Zimmermann** (eds.) *Las fuerzas de guerra en la construcción del Estado: América Latina, siglo XIX*. Rosario: Prohistoria, 2012; **Borja**, Miguel. "La historiografía de la guerra en Colombia durante el siglo XIX." *Análisis político* 28.85 (2015): 173-188.



Image 18. Historical reenactment of the troops that fought during the Independence wars in South America during the Independence Day military parade. Bogotá, Colombia.

These natural and cultural symbols, human beings, are immersed in metaphors of folklore and nature, as well as in the historical and heroic character of the protagonists of the wars of independence. They are the inhabitants of the verses of the national anthems of both countries, where the vicissitudes that they went through to achieve the freedom of those who today sing them on special occasions are described. Likewise, the environment and the geographic space become a fundamental part of the national identity and later as a symbol to show abroad. The idyllic character of the beaches of the Caribbean or the islands of the Aegean Sea, the imposing and challenging mountains of the Colombian Andes or the cliffs of Epirus, as well as the dark undergrowth of the *manigua* (the rainforest), and the immensity of the plains, have a symbolic effect that configures the identification with the nation at the same level as the bucolic Arcadian landscape, surrounded by ruins of ancient Greece.<sup>200</sup>

Establishing these symbols and the discourse they represent from the institutional perspective describes a state in formation. Still, when these symbols began to be established in the collective memory, they ceased to be only state identification devices and now belong to the nation in their entirety. The centenary of Colombia's independence falls within the years following the last civil war of the 19th century and the first of the 20th century, the infamous Thousand Days' War, which

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<sup>200</sup> **Guthenke**, Constanze. *Placing Modern Greece: The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism, 1770-1840*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2008. P. 93-140

had the most significant consequence of separating Panamá from the Republic of Colombia. A fact that, by 1910, still reverberated in the memories of Colombians of the time who found a sure refuge and some applied discourse of national unity around the Colombian independence feat. This was the definitive moment of the consecration of a pantheon of national heroes, without a partisan insignia, but with the triumph of the conservative project, which would be embodied in the everlasting and omnipresent image of Simón Bolívar in squares and public spaces.<sup>201</sup>

The paradigmatic cases are those of Simón Bolívar and Joan Kapodistrias. In almost all the main squares of Colombian cities and municipalities, there is a monument alluding to the liberator Simón Bolívar. This is quite telling when considering that despite his long political journey, Simón Bolívar was only present in a maximum of 30% of the national territory of what is now the Republic of Colombia. In that order of ideas, the state cult to his memory is, in turn, a representation of the triumph of applying an idea of a national state called Colombia and of a transnational process such as the independence of Hispanic America. If Bolívar was never in San Andrés in the Caribbean Sea or Leticia on the banks of the Amazon River, it does not mean that his actions were not considered by the political order that followed him as worthy of public remembrance, establishing his figure above local or regional characters or events that in the order of memory when going to the periphery may have greater importance or remembrance than the figure of the liberator.<sup>202</sup>

This omnipresence of the liberator in squares, parks, names of avenues, schools, universities, and even transport companies is the tangible demonstration of the triumph of the political project in the Republic of Colombia of the movements that considered themselves heirs to the ideals of Bolívar. Specifically, the conservative party, which, during a large part of the key moments of the commemorations of the past of Independence, held political power in Colombia.<sup>203</sup> It is not simply the fact that Bolívar is present in all the squares and parks of the country, and some even bear his name, such as the Plaza de Bolívar in Bogotá and Tunja or the Paseo Bolívar in Barranquilla. It is

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<sup>201</sup> **Romero**, Raúl Román. *Celebraciones centenarias: la construcción de una memoria nacional en Colombia*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2019. 300 p.

<sup>202</sup> **Reyes**, Ana M., and Maureen G. **Shanahan**. *Simón Bolívar: Travels and Transformations of a Cultural Icon*. University Press of Florida, 2016; **Mendoza**, Carlos Abreu. "Reading Simón Bolívar's Delirium: Messianism and its Publics." *MLN* 132.2 (2017): 291-315.

<sup>203</sup> **Suárez**, Juana. "Transitions towards the new museum: the mise-en-scène of the bicentenary in Colombia." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 20.4 (2011): 419-442; **Vanegas**, Carolina. "Representaciones de la Independencia y la construcción de una" imagen nacional" en la celebración del Centenario en 1910." *Las historias de un grito. Doscientos años de ser colombianos. Exposición conmemorativa del Bicentenario 2010* (2010).

what happens with the other figures of the Independence and how they were subordinated at the time to the figure of the liberator Simón Bolívar, and how, despite the political change, his memory is established in such a way that this appropriation of public space through historical elements is not challenged or contested. This consolidates this memory over time, and it is difficult to understand for those who agree or disagree with the omnipresent figure of the liberator in a public space without his presence.

Since Bolívar is the main character around whom the public history of the Independence revolves, not only in Colombia but in the so-called Bolivarian countries, his presence or absence allows us to analyze the different nuances that the memory of the history of this period in Colombia has in various places in its geography.<sup>204</sup> There are places where Bolívar does not command and does not appear. The most relevant case is that of the southwest of the country, specifically in the region of Nariño and its capital, the city of Pasto, where an order of remembrance has been generated about the events of Independence that are different from the discourse imposed and reproduced by the central institutions of the country. San Juan de Pasto has a central square and a colonial center like most cities in Colombia, especially those in the Andean region, but the everlasting figure of the liberator that is found in other capital cities such as Bogotá, Tunja, Neiva, or Pereira, is absent from the public demonstrations of historical remembrance through monuments in the capital of the department of Nariño.<sup>205</sup>

Why is this happening? There is indeed a historical explanation for this absence: this region in the south of Colombia during the time of Independence was always a royalist stronghold that was reluctant to the republican project promoted by figures such as Antonio Nariño, from whom paradoxically after Independence, the meeting would take its name, and who was captured in the battle of the ejidos de Pasto during the famous southern campaign in 1813 after being betrayed by the inhabitants of the city.<sup>206</sup> This is just one of the constant ironies of Colombian history,

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<sup>204</sup> **Harwich**, Nikita. "Un héroe para todas las causas: Bolívar en la historiografía." *Iberoamericana* (2001-) (2003): 7-22; **Langley**, Lester D. *Simón Bolívar: Venezuelan Rebel, American Revolutionary*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009.

<sup>205</sup> **Manrique** Granados, Ricardo Andrés. "Borradora de la identidad, heroísmo y suplantación en La carroza de Bolívar de Evelio Rosero y dos representaciones cinematográficas del héroe histórico latinoamericano". *Revista de estudios colombianos*. 2018, n. 51, pp. 20-29. **Vanegas** Carrasco, Carolina. "In-visibilidades de la estatua doble del prócer colombiano Antonio Nariño." *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 42.2 (2015): 385-410.

<sup>206</sup> **Tarazona**, Álvaro Acevedo. "Creación militar y emocional del enemigo en la campaña del sur de Antonio Nariño y la campaña admirable de Simón Bolívar, 1813." *Boletín de historia y antigüedades* 110.876 (2023): 1119.

specifically republican history. Today, the hero of Independence who is represented in a bronze statue in the central plaza of Pasto is not Simon Bolívar as in practically all the capitals of the country, but Antonio Nariño, the precursor of independence who was captured outside the city by the Spanish and then held prisoner for almost 10 years in the Iberian Peninsula.



Image 19. Battle of Tacines during Antonio Nariño's South Campaign in 1813, José María Espinosa, oil on canvas (detail), ca. 1845-1860. National Museum of Colombia.

Almost a decade after the failure of the southern campaign, commanded by Nariño, the victorious Liberation Army in Boyacá and Carabobo decided to continue its strategy by heading south of the continent to liberate the most important stronghold of the royalists and the Spanish empire in South America: Peru. The problem is that the mentality and attitude towards Independence on the part of the people of Pasto had not changed, and there was a strong attitude against the passage of the liberating army through the Andes of Pasto towards Ecuador and later Peru. The dispute between the Pastusos and the liberating army reached such a point that in December 1822, Simón Bolívar ordered the destruction of the city if they did not allow the passage of his troops. This order had to

be tempered by his staff to avoid confrontations with the local population. Which, in any case, took place with a massacre known in Pasto as the *Navidad Negra* (Dark Christmas).<sup>207</sup>

This memory of the *Black Christmas*, of Bolívar seen as a tyrant instead of a liberator, and of the preponderance of local leaders such as Agustín Agualongo remain present in the living memory of this border region of Colombia and with time and in recent years when the bicentennials of all these historical events were commemorated, the events themselves, as well as the commemorations and works of memory that have taken place around this historical process over the last 200 years, were discussed and highlighted again.<sup>208</sup> The people of Nariño, although fully integrated into the national project of Colombia as an independent republic governed centrally from Bogotá, have maintained an autonomous mentality and, in general terms, are distant from the decisions that are made and, in many cases, imposed from the capital of the republic.

This is not the only case. Institutional memory, applied and distilled from historiography built over decades from a centralist perspective, has established as immutable a series of events, characters, and processes that attempt to explain the independence and revolutionary process in the territory that is now Colombia. Evidently, when speaking of significant historical processes, synthesis, generalization, and omission become practically essential to make the historiographical discourse less dense, especially when it has an educational or informative purpose. Each written name is admissible, and each generation of historians looks for spaces and gaps to continue building the knowledge and historical consciousness of a society.

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<sup>207</sup> León González, Adolfo. "La negación de la crueldad del héroe: Bolívar, la Navidad Negra de 1822 y los demonios de la Campaña del Sur." *Araucaria*, 24 (51), 149-171. (2022).

<sup>208</sup> Melo, Jorge Orlando. "Bolívar en Colombia: las transformaciones de su imagen." Carlos Rincón, Sarah De Mojica y Liliana Gómez, *Entre el olvido y el recuerdo. Íconos, lugares de memoria y cánones en la historia y la literatura en Colombia*, Bogotá, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2010, 581 p. : 103-138.



Image 20. Detail of an engraving of the Battle of Boyacá by J.M. Darmet, circa 1824. National Museum of Colombia.

As with the case of the Black Christmas in Pasto and Agualongo, many events in the process of Colombian independence have been dismissed or have gone unnoticed by official channels for disseminating the past and historical memory, at least at a national level. From the regions and local levels, particular historical events, such as the battle of Pientá, simultaneous to the liberation campaign and a key military confrontation to prevent Pablo Morillo's troops from reinforcing the division of the Spanish army that was facing the patriotic forces in Boyacá, have been reported. The event's importance and the commemorations' timing have allowed for assimilation and inclusion within the larger narrative on national independence, which sheds light on the possibility

of a more inclusive discourse and the constant discussion.<sup>209</sup> Thus, it also demonstrates the public and academic interest that independence continues to have in intellectual and opinion debates in Colombia.

Similar cases can be found in the regional historiographic development that, again in times of the bicentennial of independence, has allowed to establish new historical horizons and to broaden the geographical perspectives of a process that, although it had a massive and national impact, has been framed in specific and small areas of the Colombian geography. Analyzing the declarations of independence made in other New Granadian cities during 1810, including those proclaimed before the enthroned cry of independence of July 20, 1810, with the famous symbol of the Llorente vase.<sup>210</sup> As well as the independence developments in other regions of the country, with the special case of Cartagena de Indias, whose collective historical memory is not only linked to its colonial legacy as one of the most important ports of the Spanish empire but also as the first territory to declare absolute independence from Spain on November 11th, 1811. This event is a collective source of pride for the people of Cartagena, who have built their republican identity around this incident and traditionally celebrate their own heroes and their independence on that specific date.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> **Pérez** Pinzón, Luís Rubén. "¿Qué dejó a la historiografía regional el Bicentenario de la Independencia de Colombia? La resignificación del Socorro y los socorranos." *Anuario de Historia Regional y de las Fronteras* 16.1 (2011): 331-352.; **Sanabria** Salas, Carlos. "Pienta. Coraje y esperanza". *Repositorio Institucional - Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. 2010.

<sup>210</sup> **Hoyos** Mazuera, María Ximena. "Análisis de la celebración del bicentenario de la independencia de Colombia en Santiago de Cali." *Nexus (1900-9909)* 11 (2012); **Murillo** Sandoval, Juan David. "Fiestas, memoria y libros: las ediciones conmemorativas del primer centenario de la Independencia en Bogotá y Cali." *Memoria y sociedad* 16.33 (2012): 191-207.

<sup>211</sup> **Calvo**-Stevenson, Haroldo, and Adolfo **Meisel**-Roca. *Cartagena de Indias en la independencia*. Banco de la Republica de Colombia, 2011; **Lasso**, Marixa. "El día de la independencia: una revisión necesaria. Acción política afro-colombiana y narrativas patrióticas criollas, Cartagena, 1809-1815." *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos. New world New worlds* (2017); **Román** Romero, Raúl, and Lorena **Guerrero** Palencia. "Entre sombras y luces: la conmemoración del centenario de la independencia de Cartagena, modernización e imaginarios de ciudad." *Memorias: revista digital de historia y arqueología desde El Caribe* 14 (2011): 114-136. **Rodado** Noriega, Carlos. "Lo que no fue Boyacá." *Boletín de historia y antigüedades* vol 109 no. 875 (2022): 153. P. 53-86

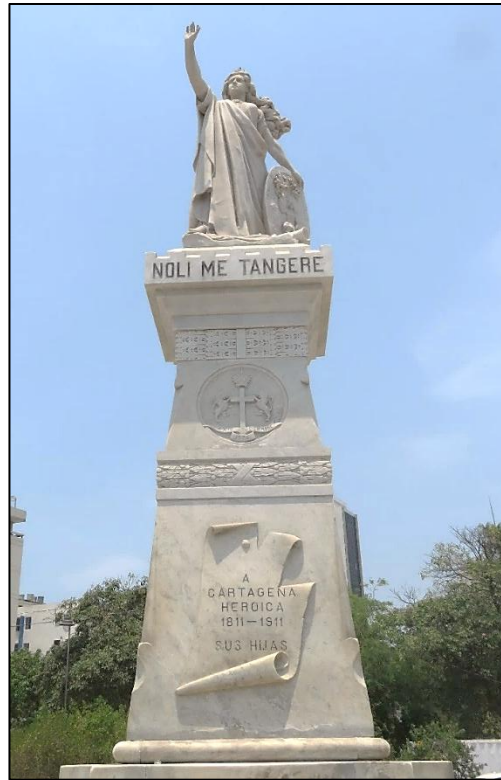


Image 21. A monument dedicated to the patriots of Cartagena de Indias, erected in 1911 for the centenary of the Declaration of Independence of the city.

Just as there are public and memorial spaces where the memory of Simón Bolívar and the heroes of independence are present, these changes and transformations are not limited to the Colombian sphere. His historical figure, understood as the archetype that encapsulates the very process of independence and the formation of nations in South America, has a changing and transnational impact.<sup>212</sup> The figure of Bolívar is not the exclusive property of the Republic of Colombia and its history. Six Latin American countries have considered themselves Bolivarian for almost 200 years: Venezuela, Simón Bolívar's birthplace; Colombia, where some of his most important political and military actions took place; Panama, which until 1903 was part of Colombia; Ecuador and Peru, countries where the battles that would free the north of South America from the Spanish yoke were fought; and finally, Bolivia, the country that even bears the name of the liberator.

This conglomerate of countries finds under the Bolivarian name a new layer of supranational identity that adds to the other forms of cohesion within the continent, in addition to the Latin

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<sup>212</sup> Conn, Robert T. *Bolívar's Afterlife in the Americas: Biography, Ideology, and the Public Sphere*. Springer Nature, 2020.

American, South American, Caribbean, or Andean identity. This is important because the figure of Bolívar plays an essential role in continental history and the history of each of the countries mentioned above. In this order of ideas, using the historical figure of Simón Bolívar and his remembrance has preeminent importance in the identity discourses of many of these countries. Generally, or in most cases, commemorations around the figure of “The Liberator” are carried out in conjunction with diplomatic or military delegates of the Bolivarian countries. An example of this is the monument to Simón Bolívar that is located in Paris near the Alexander Bridge, which was donated by the embassies of the 6 Bolivarian countries in the capital of France, a copy of the original made by the sculptor Emmanuel Frémiet in 1900, with a later copy in Barranquilla in 1819 and finally the one inaugurated in 1930 in the French capital.<sup>213</sup>



Image 22. Statue of Simón Bolívar in Barranquilla, Colombia. Copy donated by Manuel Obregón in 1909 from the Original of Emmanuel Frémiet of 1900.

<sup>213</sup> **Gutiérrez** Viñuales, Rodrigo. "La independencia y los héroes americanos en el monumento público." *Studi latinoamericani: Estudios latino americanos. Fascicolo 2, 2006* (2006): 1000-1017; **Balutet**, Nicolas. "La fabrique du "héros" Simón Bolívar entre 1810 et 1930. Étapes politiques vénézuéliennes et modalités propagandistes." *Naveg@mérica. Revista electrónica editada por la Asociación Española de Americanistas* 29 (2022).



Image 23. Statue of Simón Bolívar in front of the Alexander Bridge. Copy of the original by Emmanuel Frémiet in 1900 (1930), Paris, France.

○ **The merging and reinterpretation of these identitarian symbols**

In the Colombian case, despite a lively discussion about the figures representing the independence past, as in the previously mentioned case of Bolívar in southern Colombia, the identification in recent years of the different social mobilizations due to the political, economic, and institutional crises that the country has suffered during the last 30 years or more, falls on figures that do not necessarily respond to the canon established by the first generations that established devices and procedures of memory of the process of Independence. Bolívar and, specifically, some of the

statues of his figure that were or are in Bogotá are obligatory meeting points for social demonstrations of all kinds and any ideological spectrum in the city.<sup>214</sup>

Since Colombia is such a centralized country and institutionally focused on its capital, despite the geographical and cultural difficulties that governance from Bogotá has brought to the rest of the country, this local symbol transcends to national levels. The statue of Bolívar in the plaza of the same name in the center of the city, and more recently, the statue of Bolívar made by the French sculptor Emmanuel Frémiet (which is an exact copy of the one in Paris) that was in the monument to the heroes in the north of the city (a place generally alien to social mobilizations since it is where the financial center and the urban areas of the upper classes of Cartagena are located) became the symbols of a new social mobilization, from which the Colombia of the future is being reconfigured.<sup>215</sup>

The Monument to the Heroes, which for years went from being considered a brutalist movement, designed to review military parades on national days, to making an urban island disconnected from the pedestrian crossing to finally becoming, for a short period, the center of almost daily demonstrations in the city during 2021 against the government of Iván Duque and the repression of the state forces, to today being a vacant lot with a destroyed monument because the city's urban planning decided that this nerve center that connects the north, center, and west of the city should be the interchange station of the first line of the Bogotá metro.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> **Cobo** Mejía, Elisa Andrea, and José Milton **Reyes** Quintero. "La gloria de Bolívar. Evidencia iconográfica de la emergencia de la Nación y reconocimiento del héroe." *Anuario de Historia Regional y de las Fronteras* 18.2 (2013): 549-579.

<sup>215</sup> **Emerson**, R. Guy. "The Monument to Independence as an event: No nos cuidan, nos violan, they do not protect us, they rape us." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (2022).

<sup>216</sup> **Romero**, Tomás Eduardo Quiroz. *Tensiones y conflicto en torno al discurso social sobre al monumento a los Héroes de Bogotá, su construcción y desmonte (1952-2021)*. Diss. Anthropology Universidad del Rosario, Bogota, 2023 p. 12-16; **Portilla** Roa, Moisés Julián. "Resignificando el patrimonio en tiempos de protesta: el Monumento a Los Héroes durante el paro nacional de 2021 en Colombia." Tesis de Grado, Ciencia Política, Universidad del Bosque, Bogota;



Image 24. Manifestations and resignification of the Heroes Monument and the Statue of Bolívar in Bogotá during the 2021 social mobilizations in Colombia. A new understanding and meaning of history.

Today, neither the statue nor the monument nor the social movement gathered around this space coexist. It could be considered that the social outbreak that began in 2019 but was consolidated in 2021 would bring a non-right-wing government to power in Colombia for the first time in 2022. Meanwhile, the subway promised for over 50 years is still far from becoming a reality. However, the mass that represented the monument to the heroes no longer exists, a monument that for decades was not only unscathed but for a large part of the citizenry was invisible, and that, thanks to these

mobilizations, a series of graffiti comments and untimely remarks made by the protesters appeared that made it come back to the lips of public opinion, the statue has been removed.<sup>217</sup>

Just as governments and institutions can determine the future of the monuments that were bequeathed to them for their administration and arrange their use and configuration in public space, they can voluntarily or involuntarily decide to neglect and abandon them. The abandonment of monuments is an element of study as important as the fixation of memory and public opinion with specific monuments, both for their exaltation and demolition.<sup>218</sup> This happened most recently in 2020, in a phenomenon that began in English-speaking countries where their public space was decorated by monuments dedicated to characters whose memory is quite conflictive, such as generals of the southern Confederate army during the American Civil War, or British merchants and slavers who had been remembered for decades and in bronze monuments as philanthropists and benefactors of the society to which they belonged, despite having achieved their wealth through the intensive exploitation of other human beings.<sup>219</sup>

This discussion about monuments, about what should and should not be in public spaces in terms of symbols or works of art with which the society inhabiting this public space identifies itself, has also occurred in Colombia and Greece. In both countries, there are monuments made autonomously by citizens without the need to go through the filter of the authorities to delimit a specific space as a place of memory that commemorates a person or a particular event.

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<sup>217</sup> **El Espectador**. (19/08/2021). El monumento a los Héroes: estorbo urbanístico e ícono del Paro Nacional. Consulted in: <https://www.elespectador.com/bogota/el-monumento-a-losheroes-estorbo-urbanistico-e-icone-del-paro-nacional/>; **El Tiempo**. (25/09/2021). 'Era imposible mover un milímetro': Peñalosa sobre Los Héroes. Bogotá. Consulted in: <https://www.eltiempo.com/bogota/enrique-penalosa-dice-que-en-sualcaldia-decidio-demolicion-de-heroes-620817>

<sup>218</sup> **Suazo**, Félix. "Usos políticos de la memoria: devoción, desdén y asedio de las estatuas." *Revista Venezolana de Economía y Ciencias Sociales* 11.2 (2005): 251-257.

<sup>219</sup> One of the main issues regarding public history in the last years is related to how to deal with a conflictive past of oppression represented in monuments. See: **Candelaria**, John Lee. "Monuments, memory, and movements: How should the world reckon with a controversial past?" *Conflict, Justice, Decolonization: Critical Studies of Inter-Asian Societies* (2020); **Davies**, Elizabeth Jordie. "The uses and reuses of monuments in the Black Lives Matter era." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (2024): 1-25; **Saul**, Gwendolyn W., and Diana E. **Marsh**. "In whose honor? On monuments, public spaces, historical narratives, and memory." *Museum Anthropology* 41.2 (2018): 117-120; **Tugendhaft** Aaron. *The Idols of ISIS: From Assyria to the Internet* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2020; pp. 126; **Von Tunzelmann**, Alex. *Fallen idols: Twelve statues that made history*. Harper Collins, 2021. 272 p.; **Levinson**, Sanford. *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies*, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 1998. 160 p.

In the Greek case, there are several essential examples that for years have been organic and autonomous manifestations of Greek society, but in particular Athenian society, regarding recent events such as the murder of the young rapper Pavlos Fyssas at the hands of a group of neo-fascists belonging to the extinct political party "Golden Dawn".<sup>220</sup> The renaming of the street honors the 19th century English Prime Minister William Gladstone, who, among other things, is the only non-Greek in the statues found in the Athenian trilogy mentioned earlier in this chapter, and that citizens and social groups, specifically those that watch over the rights of sex workers and the LGBTI population, have changed to the street name Zacky Oh, the stage name of Zacharias Kostopoulos, a drag performer who was also beaten to death first by civilians and then by the police.<sup>221</sup> And finally, the case of the fire at the Marfin bank building in central Athens, which was burned down during protests in the early days of the Greek economic crisis in 2010 and in which three bank employees perished, including Angeliki Papathanasopoulou, 32, who was 4 months pregnant and for whom the city mayor erected a plaque in May 2020 to honor her memory a decade after the tragedy.<sup>222</sup>

The interesting thing to see here is how, despite having established institutions and an orthodox, hierarchical, and often not very malleable national historical discourse, which does not allow the insertion of new perspectives or the reconfiguration of the same historical fact or the place of memory to which this space refers, societies find a way to rethink their past, to demonstrate in fact or in the historical process that at their specific moment matters or interests them and that even though history is recorded in marble or bronze or on street and avenue plaques, it remains malleable but especially it remains theirs, even if not all of its members consider it that way.

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<sup>220</sup> **Verousi**, Christina, and Chris **Allen**. "From obscurity to national limelight: The dramatic rise, fall and future legacy of golden Dawn." *Political Insight* 12.1 (2021): 22-25; **Christopoulos**, Dimitris, Dimitris **Kousouris**, and Dimosthenis **Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos**. "Mapping ultra-right extremism, xenophobia and racism within the Greek state apparatus." *Brussels: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation* (2014); **Avramidis**, Konstantinos, and Myrto **Tsilimpounidi**. "A Periegesis through the Greek Crisis in Five Graffiti Acts." In: **Campos** Ricardo, **Zaimakis** Yiannis and Andrea **Pavoni** *Political graffiti in critical times: The aesthetics of street politics* Berghahn Books, 2021, 360 p. p. 36

<sup>221</sup> **Nikolaou-Damaskinou**, Lucia. *Queering the Public Space: Displacement, Punishment and Utopias in Athens*. MA Diss. Communication, Wake Forest University, 2021; **Papanikolaou**, Dimitris, and Vassiliki **Kolokotroni**. "New queer Greece: Performance, politics and identity in crisis." *Journal of Greek Media and Culture* 4.2 (2018)

<sup>222</sup> **Malamidis**, Haris. *Social movements and solidarity structures in crisis-ridden Greece*. Amsterdam University Press, 2020 p.77; **LIFO** «Μνημείο για τα θύματα της Marfin: Συγκίνηση της Σακελλαροπούλου στα αποκαλυπτήρια, «συγγνώμη» από Μπακογιάννη». (Monument to the victims of Ivory Coast: Sakellaropoulou's emotion at the inauguration, "I'm sorry" by Bakoyannis.) [www.lifo.gr](http://www.lifo.gr). 09/05/2020. <https://shorturl.at/IOPIS>



Image 25. Statue of the Goddess Athena and the Greek flag in downtown Athens. Permanent symbols of nationalism.

Public history and those who dedicate themselves to it must try to understand this social feeling and, in turn, understand their responsibility and social mission when analyzing these devices that mesh history and the past with the general public and, in turn, generate spaces and platforms, whether theoretical or practical, from the academy or the communities, that allow rethinking and understanding the common past to promote an appropriation of history more organically and symmetrically that takes into account a multiplicity of views and protagonists, which is not exclusive but also not permissive, because the past, in addition to being a heritage, is also a non-finite resource that must be protected from manipulation and misappropriation.

- **THE REAFFIRMATION OF THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE. BETWEEN BANAL AND SACRED**

Finally, I will analyze how a national identity discourse is replicated and fundamentally supported by even the most banal and repetitive acts, always having a structured and hierarchical component

of diffusion and permanence. The constancy of persistent repetition, monopolized by state institutions and, in most cases, without a strong enough opposition to counteract it, allows the establishment and insertion into the collective popular memory of certain elements that would enable the self-conviction that certain specific symbols are those that represent the nation to which one belongs. This constant and omnipresent repetition also distorts the discourse and, in many cases, clouds the very intention with which the symbols were created and established, becoming part of the landscape, not necessarily geographical or urban, but of both countries' academic and intellectual landscape.

○ **Institutional efforts to sustain the national narrative**

One of the devices during the first decades after independence and with the rise and consolidation of its local publishing industry was the edition and publication of memoirs and publications about the heroes of the revolution as examples of patriotic and civic virtue, as a kind of civic hagiography that not only intended to educate but to spread the dominant narrative about independence and its protagonists. Within this literary field, it would also be worth commenting not so much on its literary value per se but on the historical importance of his work as a primary source for historians of the various memoirs of the survivors of the wars of independence. Those of Giannis Makriyiannis and Theodoros Kolokotronis are the most important in the Greek case, and those of José Hilario López, Daniel Florencio O'Leary, and Joaquín Posada Gutiérrez.<sup>223</sup>

An institutional effort to establish the protagonists of the war of independence, especially the men who had had or acquired a heroic character, who were warriors or frontier men who embodied a series of civic virtues such as courage, daring, or love of country that should be represented by the institutions in a public way, following not only the narrative of independence itself, but the established tendency in practically all emerging nations of the time, to recognize those who had

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<sup>223</sup> **Koulouri**, Christina. *Historical Memory in Greece, 1821–1930: Performing the Past in the Present*. Routledge, 2022; **López**, José Hilario. *Memorias de José Hilario López*. Imprenta de D'Aubusson y Kugelman. Paris, 1857 consulted in: <https://tinyurl.com/yjvmawd2>; **Posada** Gutiérrez, Joaquín (1929). *Memorias histórico-políticas del general Joaquín Posada Gutiérrez / bajo la dirección de José Joaquín Guerra*. (2a. ed.). Imprenta Nacional, Bogotá. 1929 4 vol.; **O'Leary** Daniel F. ; prólogo de Mons. Nicolás E. Navarro *Memorias del general Daniel Florencio O'Leary : narraciones* / . Imprenta nacional, Caracas, 1952, 3 vol.

participated in the independence process and add them to the regime of historicity of the new country.<sup>224</sup>

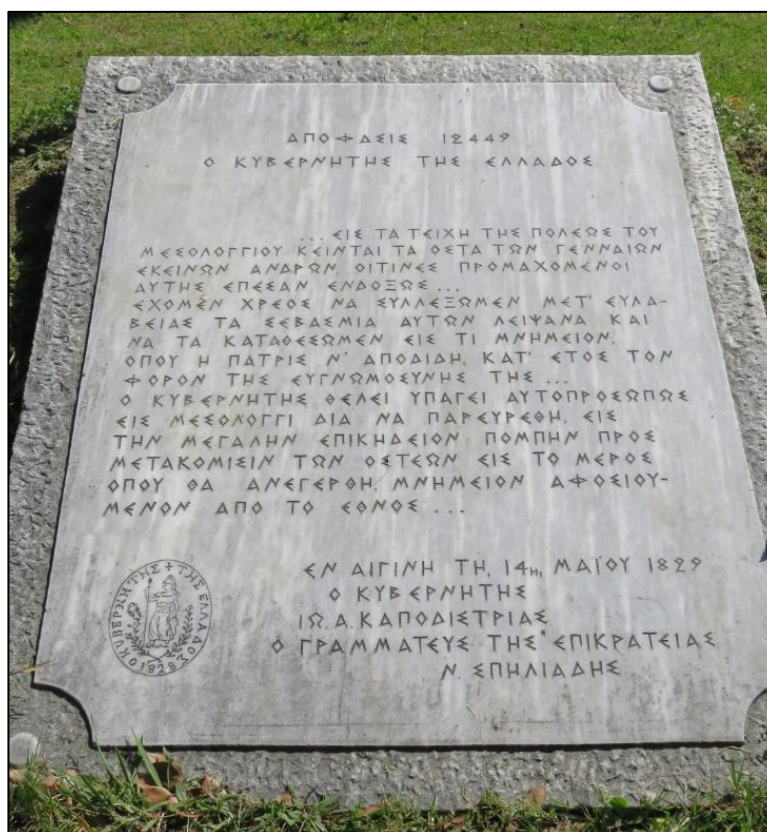


Image 26. The stone slab engraved in the Garden of Heroes of Messolonghi records decision 12449. The decision issued by Ioannis Kapodistrias provided for the creation of a monument to the bones of the dead combatants of the city.

The need arose to declare a date that would allow us to locate the beginning of the modern national experience temporally. This is how a civic calendar began to be established, which served to regulate the expressions of nationalism and also to give a cyclical sense to the political life of the country, with these national days generally being the start and end dates of the cycles of legislative and executive power. As early as 1834, March 25 was already declared the day widely recognized as the beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821, and whose proclamation was especially

<sup>224</sup> Shannan Peckham, Robert. "National Histories." *Natural States: Nationalism and the Politics of Place in Greece* New York, 2001, 256 p.

promoted by Panagiotis Soutsos.<sup>225</sup> In the Colombian case, this establishment of a national date did not occur until 1873, which is an example of the difficulties of establishing not only a state

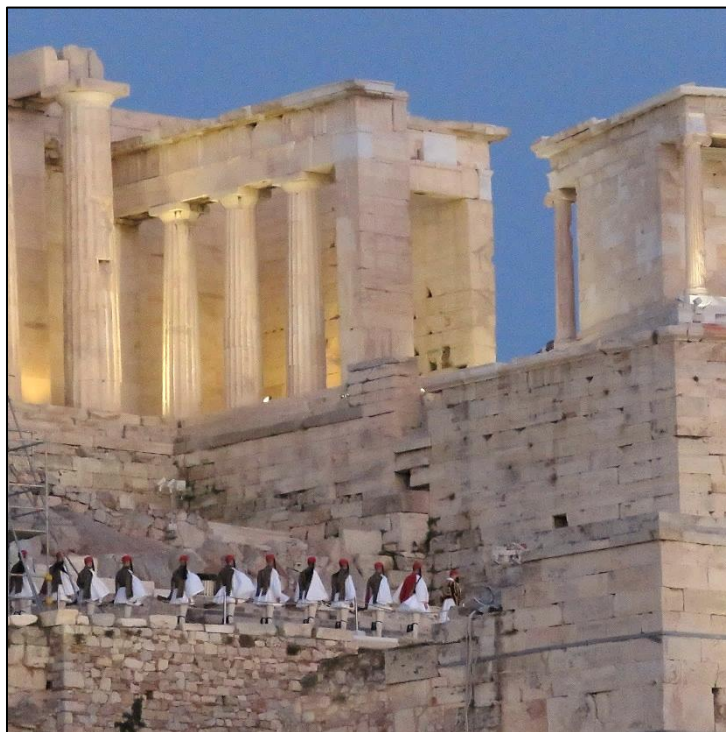


Image 27. A contingent of the Evzones, the National Guard of Greece, goes to pick up the Flag from the top of the Acropolis of Athens. A ritual that happens every Sunday

apparatus solid enough to make this type of determination but also an example of the various struggles for memory and the construction of identity at local, regional and national levels.<sup>226</sup>

In any case, for the construction of this critical, literary, and cultural apparatus that is called identity discourse, it is necessary to establish certain references because despite its unique character that is sought to be highlighted through the celebrations of Independence and that seeks to demonstrate that this new emerging country, whether called Colombia or Greece, is different from the others,

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<sup>225</sup> **Koulouri**, Christina. "Γιορτάζοντας το έθνος: εθνικές επέτειοι στην Ελλάδα τον 19ο αιώνα" (Celebrating the nation: national anniversaries in Greek in the 19th century) *Unseen aspects of history. Texts dedicated to Yanis Gianulopoulos*. Athens: Asini. 2012 pp. 181–210; **Sergis G. Manolis**, *Η καθιέρωση της 25ης Μαρτίου ως εθνική εορτή, για την «επικρατούσα ιδεολογία» των κύριων άρθρων του Ναξιακού Τύπου και την κατεύθυνση των πρώτων εορτασμών του στη Χώρα*. (The establishment of the 25th of March as a national holiday, about the "prevailing ideology" of the main articles of the Naxian press and the direction of its first celebrations in the Country), *Naxiaka*, τ. 15 / 53 (December 2004 – February 2005), 74–97.

<sup>226</sup> **Oficio de la C. de RR. y del Senado de PP. al P. de la U., remitiorio del proyecto de ley de celebración de aniversario de la Independencia**. 1873. AGNB, fondo Congreso, Legajo 5, Pieza 43, f°934-945.

hence, identity construction did not occur on purpose. The examples of the other Atlantic revolutions and their national formation are fundamental to selling both the formation of the national narrative in these 2 case studies and their celebratory process during the commemorations. Understanding that the celebration of these events is also configured as a periodic exercise of sovereignty over the national territory, whether in the Amazon or the Aegean islands, in the Capitol in Bogotá or at the top of the Acropolis in Athens, the permanent representation of the symbols of the nation, with waves and moments of greater exaltation, are intrinsic to the recognition and appropriation of the territory.<sup>227</sup>

The power of marble and bronze also emerges within this regime of historicity. The need arises to reconfigure public space and, therefore, public memory around the characters and events that, at the time of creating this new monumentality (and in many cases, to this day, the only one), were considered worthy of occupying these spaces. The commemorations and the political changes that allowed certain characters belonging to the regime of historicity on Independence, but who were ideologically more akin to the ruling party when installed in the public square, are essential to understanding this urban restructuring. Just as they tell us about the independence process, they tell us even more about the political impressions and intentions of the moment when these monuments were erected.<sup>228</sup>

There is also an important relevance within this section of the funerary monuments, especially with the figures of the Independence who spent the end of their days within an independent but consolidating state, which also sought to publicly recognize, either in state funerals or in private mausoleums, the importance of these figures of the Independence within the national construction, and the importance of their memory used to aim to the construction of a national narrative. It is interesting to see how, in places like the central cemetery of Bogotá or the first cemetery of Athens,

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<sup>227</sup> **Lomné**, Georges. "Del miedo a la «imaginaria Independencia» al festejo de la «Independencia absoluta»: el recorrido de un concepto clave (Nueva Granada-Colombia, 1761-1873)." *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'études andines* 39 (1) (2010): 17-35.

<sup>228</sup> **Roldan**, Andrés Fernando Castiblanco. "Ciudad y memoria: los monumentos y la cultura popular de la Bogotá de fines de siglo XIX y principios del XX." *Revista Colombiana de Educación* 57 (2009): 46-73; **Pavony**, Germán Rodrigo Mejía. "Las esculturas de la ciudad. Un programa de memoria nacional en Bogotá, 1880-1910." *Procesos. Revista Ecuatoriana de Historia* (2020): 137-173; **Reich**, Gabriel A. "Monumental refraction: Monuments, identity, and historical consciousness." *Historical Encounters* 7.1 (2020): 1-23.

the mortal remains of the heroes of the Independence coexist with a collective memory about the interpretation of their figure by visitors today.<sup>229</sup>

This story of bronze and marble also takes us to the establishment, through letters and specifically the educational system, in the process of generating citizenship through studying the past, specifically the history of the Independence of both countries.<sup>230</sup> This is a fundamental element since it is from the classrooms, and specifically from early childhood practically, that the national and citizen character begins to be forged, with the routine use of symbols such as carrying and raising the flag for the most outstanding students, and as well as a series of activities that are based on the civic calendar with the relevant dates for Independence.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> **Koselleck**, Reinhart. *Modernidad, culto a la muerte y memoria nacional*. Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, Madrid, 2011. 149 p. P. 65-87; **Pavlopoulos**, Dimitris, Georgia **Antonopoulou**, and Michael **Giochalis**. "Funerary Monuments of 1821 Revolutionaries in Athens First Cemetery." *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 18.1 (2021): 193-216.

<sup>230</sup> **Uribe**, Jaime Jaramillo, and Jorge Orlando **Melo**. "Claves para la enseñanza de la Historia." *Revista Colombiana de Educación* 35 (1997)

<sup>231</sup> **Crainz**, Guido, e Angelo **Bolaffi**. *Calendario civile europeo i nodi storici di una costruzione difficile*. Roma: Donzelli, 2019

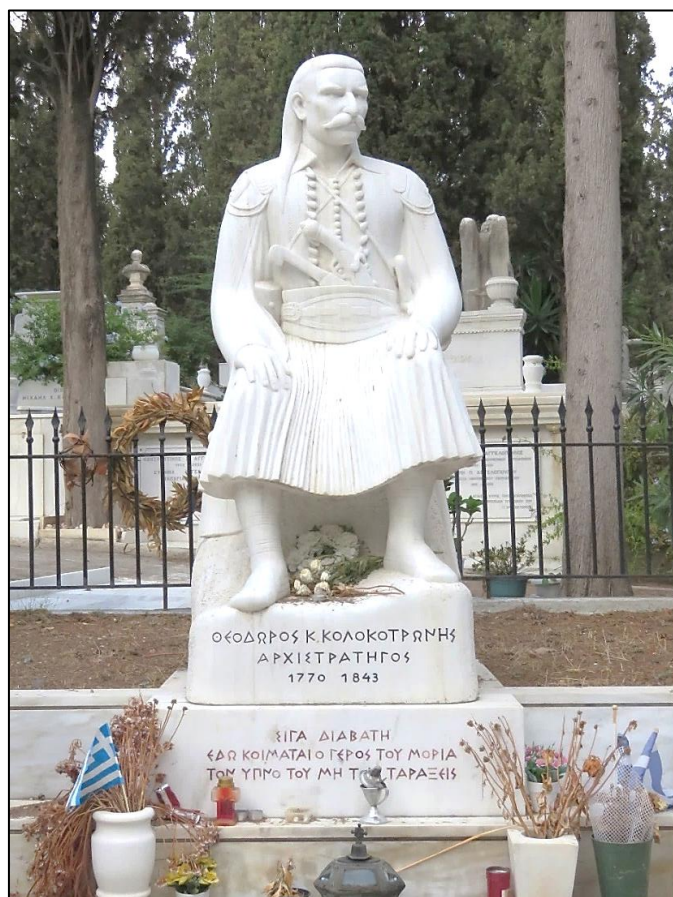


Image 28. Tomb of Theodoros Kolokotronis in the First Cemetery of Athens, Greece.

It is also essential to analyze how the other, the enemy, is constructed in classrooms and school texts. This other age and the discourse used in primary and secondary school textbooks, not only in Colombia and Greece but in most modern national states, are fundamental to understanding the public and political passions that exist about history and that are projected in national feelings, which generally enter into or generate political or diplomatic conflicts. Even though these textbooks are fed by recent historiography, and even though this historiography has generated the effort to approach the past more broadly and critically, often with the surprising support of institutions in this matter, its discoveries and policies do not permeate the students and therefore the rest of the citizens.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>232</sup> **Soto** Arango, Diana Elvira, et al. "La enseñanza de la Independencia Americana en Colombia y España 2009-2011." *Revista Historia de la Educación Latinoamericana* 17.25 (2015): 213-230; **Miralles** Martínez, Pedro, Joaquim **Prats**, and Mercè **Tatjer**. "Conocimientos y concepciones de estudiantes españoles y latinoamericanos de educación secundaria obligatoria sobre las independencias políticas americanas." *Scripta Nova. Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, 2012, vol. xvi, num. 418 (2012).

○ **The constant diffusion of patriotic symbols**

The bicentennial independence generated a delirium of commemorations and celebrations that spread to all spectrums and actors of public opinion. In any case, this widespread appropriation and awareness of commemoration has not led to a more accurate understanding of the processes that led to Colombia's independence, nor has it provided a social reason for commemorating its important dates or its importance in current historical and political discourse. Instead, it has generated an update of old historical defects with the corresponding cosmetic touch given by military parades, public acts, and inaugurations. The proximity of the commemorations generates a certain anxiety among the members of society who want to rethink their position in the present through these commemorative events. In some cases, this is a moderation that can fall into the memorialist edition instead of understanding both the past itself and the events that are celebrated as a possibility, a possibility of rethinking the past, the present, and the future.<sup>233</sup>

These commemorative activities are not unique to these two case studies; on the contrary, they seem to be one of the universal and transversal elements of any exercise of the nation-state. Commemorations are essential in the sense that they give a vital character to an idea, they allow us to identify its early period and its later maturity or longevity, and they also allow those who live the moment of the respective commemorations to feel and become part of a past historical process. Each generation that has lived one of the significant commemorations, whether it be the centenary, the sesquicentennial, or the bicentennial, has tried not only to be part of a shared history but also to leave its mark and testimony of the understanding that was had at the specific moment of the commemoration of the original events that are being celebrated, such as in this case the Wars of Independence.<sup>234</sup>

Commemorations should be understood as an example of “hot nationalism.” Hot nationalism takes precedence over banal nationalism, as it is not, like the latter, a prisoner of routine, but on the

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<sup>233</sup> Hensel Franz, Ortega Francisco A. y Chicangana-Bayona Yobenj Aucardo “El pasado como posibilidad” In: Ortega Francisco A. y Chicangana-Bayona Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p p. 22-24

<sup>234</sup> Savage, Kirk. *History, memory, and monuments: An overview of the scholarly literature on commemoration*. University of Pittsburgh, 2007.

contrary, it is a turning point that occurs from time to time and awakens national feelings at specific moments, such as commemorations or certain sporting or cultural events.<sup>235</sup> These hot peaks of nationalism and patriotism, although not routine to the point of falling into banality, do share a periodicity and a calendar, which organizes civic life around them. For many years, especially at the beginning of the declaration of these civic holidays, they were true celebrations that included all citizens, not just holidays on which work or school activities were stopped. The change in the understanding of celebrations and the active participation of citizens in them speaks not only of the development and the gradual distance from the original events commemorated. Still, it is also a sign of the priorities that society in general has. If it is a national day, but job insecurity forces people to work or scramble for an income, it is difficult to participate patriotically in the commemorations.



Image 29. The nation and the patriotism on display during the military parade on the 20th of July. Bogotá Colombia.

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<sup>235</sup> **Paasi A.** "Dancing on the graves: Independence, hot/banal nationalism and the mobilization of memory." *Political Geography*. 2016 Sep 1;54:21-31; **Rodríguez Ávila, Sandra Patricia.** *Memoria y olvido: usos públicos del pasado en Colombia, 1930-1960*. Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2017.

Starting with the Colombian case. After acquiring its de facto independence in 1819 with the victory over the royalist troops in the Battle of Boyacá, it culminated a process that had nominally begun on July 20, 1810. These two dates already generate problems regarding commemorations and the construction of collective memory.<sup>236</sup> Both have been consecrated as one of the three national days, the other being the independence of Cartagena de Indias in 1811, the first territory in America to declare absolute independence from Spain, but both are dates that legitimize and sustain a centralized discourse from the Andean elites and the capital about what are the crucial moments in the independence process and therefore which are the ones that should be commemorated.

In 1810, there were more than twenty government juntas, but only the one in Santafé de Bogotá (later the capital of the republic) was officially and nationally commemorated. In the same way, although the liberation campaign of 1819 was effectively the beginning of the end of Spanish domination, not only in the viceroyalty of New Granada but in all of South America, many territories of present-day Colombia did not achieve independence thanks to the result of the aforementioned battle of Boyacá. Therefore, the local memories of these events continue to be in constant conflict with the official and centralized version.

This struggle was reflected in the latest commemorations, where a historical discipline, already professionally trained and without being under the aegis of the government of the day and its institutions, such as the Colombian Academy of History and the National Museum, sought to integrate the populations and aspects left aside for 200 years and thus try to integrate them into a genuinely national discourse. Cultural entities have tried to change their discourse on the occasion of the bicentenary, but this has not been an easy process. These struggles and difficulties are discussed throughout this chapter.

There is the official Colombia that commemorates its founding and institutional acts through military parades that, as in the case of 2019, it decided to celebrate behind closed doors without considering the other Colombia, that of popular extraction, which understands that it configures and exalts its heroes in a historical moment that they consider important in a particular way. Through the different moments of commemorations of that first episode of republican history, such

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<sup>236</sup> **Las Fiestas Nacionales.** Bogotá: Imprenta de Gaitan, 1866, 16p. Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, fondo Quijano, Vol. N°264, 10.

as independence, actors who were of fundamental importance have appeared within the critical historical discourse, but who, over the years and for various contextual and ideological reasons, were omitted or simply erased from the official discourse of the commemorations.<sup>237</sup>



Image 30. Panoramic view of the battlefield of the Boyacá Bridge, where on the 7th of August of 1819, the last battle of the Liberation campaign of the New Granada took place.

As for the bicentenary of Greece's independence, one of the essential problems is the enhancement and relevance of the Revolution of 1821 in Greek history, both internally and externally.<sup>238</sup> The weight of ancient Greece in the history of the world has a greater relevance than the rest of the historical processes developed in the territory that we currently call Greece. It is also evident that, from the Greek nation itself, one of its main generators of identity is classical antiquity, an antiquity that not only serves as an identity character but also as an economic factor essentially in terms of

<sup>237</sup> Hensel Franz, Ortega Francisco A. y Chicangana-Bayona Yobenj Aucardo "El pasado como posibilidad" In: Ortega Francisco A. y Chicangana-Bayona Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p p. 28

<sup>238</sup> Tsoukalas, Constantine. "On National Anniversaries: Greece, 1821-2021." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 23.2 (2021): 181-198.

tourism and politics, with the constant reception and use of the history of ancient Greece by various characters and movements in various historical moments of the modern Greek nation.

Even so, since 1821, there has been a moderately coherent discourse of this modern nation, which is detached from its classical past and with which it is surprisingly not so easy to link. The Orthodox Christian factor and the bitter struggle against external agents and dominators who do not respond to the nature and culture generated by Orthodoxy (whether they be the Ottomans during the Middle and Modern Ages or the invaders of the Axis powers during the Second World War) have shaped contemporary Greece.

In this context, the commemorations of the bicentenary of independence are framed, with state entities created exclusively for the celebrations, with museum institutions such as the National Historical Museum of Athens and its collections on the independence process. Unlike the Colombian case, the discussion about multiple views of the official discourse of this period has not transcended beyond some academic circles, and the official narrative, although varied and with a much more established local and regional character but with a universal scope, continues to be monolithic and conditioned by the historiographical defects imposed, but shaped by the main names of the Greek historiography and officialism for more than a century.<sup>239</sup>

In the attempt to establish a moderately correct idea of the construction of the national identity of Greece and Colombia through the collections and exhibitions of their national history museums, it is important to see the development and transformation of that memory during the commemorations of the 100, 150, and 200 years of independence. Not as a linear and progressive development but as a series of exhibitions and events, where these museum spaces were used as a platform to disseminate a series of values through their collections that responded to the interests of the governments and intellectual elites that controlled the museum (and its discourse) at those specific moments and that also responded to its historical moment.<sup>240</sup> The commemorations of the

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<sup>239</sup> **Vallianos**, Pericles. "The ways of the nation: messianic and universalist nationalism in Renieris, Zambelios and Paparrigopoulos." *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 15 (2018): 163-194.

<sup>240</sup> **Mirkovic**, Alexander. "Who owns Athens? Urban planning and the struggle for identity in neo-classical Athens (1832-1843)." *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea* 34 (2012): 147-158; **Carrasco**, Carolina Vanegas. "Representaciones de la Independencia y la construcción de una "imagen nacional" en la celebración del Centenario

centenary or sesquicentennial of independence in Colombia or Greece cannot be asked to take a critical look at the role of women or ethnic or religious minorities, just as those of the bicentennial cannot be ignored that do not include these perspectives.

The past is a possibility. The past is a choice.<sup>241</sup> Therefore, the commemorations of the bicentennial of independence must be understood as a range of options to reinterpret, re-signify, and reconfigure the past of what remains the definitive historical event of the geographic space that to this day has been configured as the Republic of Colombia and the Hellenic Republic, being the opportunity to not fall into lumps of erudition and prose but rather into a democratic and accurate approximation (to the extent possible) of the most tangible common past that the citizens of those countries have. Thus, strengthening the historical dimension between citizens and the national past is mediated through their various political identities.<sup>242</sup>

○ **Banal nationalism and its omnipresence. Hot Nationalism and its impulse**

Following the precepts of an author like Michael Billig, an expert in social psychology, a branch of the humanities helpful in understanding these processes of national configuration, and who coined the term “banal nationalism”, a concept extremely useful for understanding how in Greece and Colombia a public and educational reception of their history, formation, and configuration as independent states are established and of which some examples have been presented in this chapter.

This “banal nationalism,” or also “hot nationalism,” should not necessarily be understood as a pejorative term. Still, banality should be understood as a constant repetition that essentially becomes an almost instinctive routine and, therefore, not reflected upon.<sup>243</sup> By this, I mean that the reproduction of certain symbols and certain archetypes that identify individuals or social groups as Colombians or Greeks systematically and routinely generally goes unnoticed as a result of the devices for establishing a national identity and a master discourse about it.

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en 1910”. *Historias de un grito. Doscientos años de ser colombiano*. Exposición Conmemorativa del Bicentenario 2010 (2010).

<sup>241</sup> **Febvre**, Lucien. *Combates por la historia*. Vol. 1. Ariel, 1986. Trans. Francisco Fernández Buey, and Enric Argullol

<sup>242</sup> **Hensel** Franz, **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo “El pasado como posibilidad” In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p p. 24

<sup>243</sup> **Koch**, Natalie, and Anssi Paasi. “Banal Nationalism 20 years on: Re-thinking, re-formulating and re-contextualizing the concept.” *Political Geography* 54 (2016): 1-6.

Banal and hot nationalisms also include, in a slightly more negative sense, the need to speak about national identity in absolute and synthetic terms. Where the processes of this construction are dichotomous and, in most cases, indisputable, this type of understanding of identity and the historical processes has led to its formation, which could lead to the distortion of the past for nationalist purposes. In many cases, only accepting the apexes of the past that are convenient to construct a narrative where the nation is understood either as the supreme entity surrounded by glory or as the innocent victim of the machinations and tricks of either neighboring states or superior imperial powers that do not allow the development of the country itself. In this order of ideas, the constant repetition of particular topics, certain rituals, and certain axioms corresponding to the understanding of national history begins to synthesize history in a way that goes unnoticed by the great majority of citizens.

This constant and sometimes subterfuge exposition of the elements that the citizen consensus today understands as part of its history and its identity generates an acculturation to these symbols in the first instance, later establishing a generation of perspectives that are not necessarily accurate about the past and that especially in this age of misinformation lead to the distortion of historical facts, generally with the intention of feeding or feeling the justification of individual and collective prejudices about national history.<sup>244</sup>

This banal nationalism includes the exposition of patriotic symbols, the use of particular language, or referring in a certain way to the process of Independence, as in the Colombian case, using expressions such as “Llorente’s vase” as a synonym for “casus belli.” Referring to the cry of Independence of July 20, 1810. In the same way, in Greece, this economy of language can be understood when speaking publicly and chastely about the process of Independence and the Revolution, as well as everything related to this process, simply as “the 21st.” However, it also includes all the other iconographic, cultural, and routine aspects that make the Greek and Colombian nations understand each other as specific, generally self-sufficient symbols despite their close and practically mimetic relationship with the surrounding countries.<sup>245</sup> Having significant revolutionary figures with prominent mustaches and “*fustanella*” (male skirt) is not something

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<sup>244</sup> **Paasi**, Anssi. Dancing on the graves: Independence, hot/banal nationalism and the mobilization of memory. *Political Geography*, 2016, 54: 21-31.

<sup>245</sup> **Smith**, Anthony D. "The Rites of Nations: Elites, masses and the re-enactment of the 'national past'" *The cultural politics of nationalism and nation-building*. Routledge, 2013. 35-37

exclusively Greek, Albanian, Bulgarian, or North Macedonian could say. Likewise, not only were the heroes of Colombian Independence today characters who, although they were not officers with stripes and sabers, were ragged soldiers who, despite all the difficulties, carried out the most heroic actions against nature and their enemies.

When the repetition of the components of these grand narratives that explain and shape national identity becomes specific with their presence in particular spaces, such as those belonging to educational or military institutions, to give two examples, and quotidian with the display of national symbols in public and private spaces, as well as their dissemination through the media, they make a specific identity discourse become something tacit and innate. This implicit conception of a pre-established identity tends to become banal. Symbols lose their “sacred” meaning, and their presence is taken for granted, sometimes unnoticed. Despite being present and fully known by locals and foreigners, they often do not have or radiate the importance they supposedly have.



Image 31. The permanent exhibition of national symbols is one of the ways to spread the national narrative and, at the same time, display banal nationalism, such as the Colombian flag in the Getsemani neighborhood. Cartagena de Indias.

The banality of nationalism is also explained by the exposure of the majority of the population to this national narrative and the historical moments and events included within these discourses, generating a particular perception and appropriation within the different levels of society. There

may be a hierarchical, organized, and filtered way of understanding national history, especially the independence process. Still, no matter how hard the institutions try to establish a specific discourse, there will be ways and means of understanding this process that the dominant narrative will not govern. Thus, there are discursive differences with the popular identity, which is not governed by the institutional.<sup>246</sup>



Image 32. Graffiti with the heroin of Independence, Policarpa Salavarrieta, in her native town. Guaduas, Cundinamarca, Colombia.

This popular appropriation of the past is organic in its development and diverse in its expression, and, like the centralized discourse itself, it is also exposed to a constant change of meaning over time. The omnipresence of certain symbols that represent this identity discourse plays an important

<sup>246</sup> Economou, Leonidas. "Sentiment, Memory, and Identity in Greek Laiko Music (1945–1967)." *Made in Greece*. Routledge, 2018. 17-27.

role in accepting and appropriating this discourse. From humorous sketches on television programs to, to give a specific example, in the Colombian case with a very particular example, which is the traditional name for the word beer as “Pola” after the use of the image of the heroine of Independence Policarpa Salavarrieta –the diminutive “Pola”– on the label of one of the first beers to be widely distributed in Colombian territory. This process is also linked to a public health discourse that sought to replace the consumption of chicha. This fermented corn drink dates back to pre-Hispanic times, with beer consumption as a symbol of modernity within the country's customs.<sup>247</sup>

Something similar happens when standardizing what is considered “Greek food” today. A battlefield of patriotism and banal nationalism, inserted in a complicated region, where due to the constant exchange of people and commodities for centuries, the diet is tremendously similar, but curiously, there is always a series of dishes or ingredients that are of exclusive use and origin for a specific nationality, making the clearest example of this the yogurt and a particular preparation of coffee, which in the center of Athens would be called Greek coffee, but its same preparation, for example in Sarajevo would be a Bosnian coffee or in Nicosia would be a Cypriot coffee. Food and diet are a perfect example of banal nationalism, being an everyday element. Still, at the same time, they are of profound importance when superimposing the local over the global. The Greeks would consider the Mediterranean diet the best and most optimal way to eat, but its effects are superior if it is made with oil from Crete, olives from the Peloponnese, and mastic from Chios.<sup>248</sup>

Another manifestation of this banal nationalism, vaguely mentioned in a previous section, refers to sporting events. Sport is the most essential and prominent contemporary manifestation of local, regional, or national unity within today's global society.<sup>249</sup> Sport, especially at the level of national teams, is one of the main exposés of the tensions a country contains. Without forgetting the representation of itself in its national team, regardless of the sporting discipline, category, or gender in which it will compete. Another paradigmatic case is the role of the modern Olympics and Greece.

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<sup>247</sup> **Plata Becerra** Daniel, **Hoyos**, Mauricio Antonio and Marcela **Arias**, “Mestizaje gráfico en Colombia entre 1900 y 1930. El diseño gráfico y la construcción de una imagen de nación moderna y civilizada”, *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* [Online]

<sup>248</sup> **Shannan** Peckham, Robert. "Consuming Nations" In: **Griffiths**, Sian, and Jennifer **Wallace**, eds. *Consuming passions: food in the age of anxiety*. Manchester University Press, 1998. P.171-173

<sup>249</sup> **Seippel**, Ørnulf. "Sports and nationalism in a globalized world." *International journal of sociology* 47.1 (2017): 43-61.

Where not only is the bridge made with one of the most important elements for the modern Greek identity, which is the connection with classical Greece, but also its preponderant role in each Olympic ceremony, despite being objectively a small nation and not so powerful at the time of the actual competition, even so, both at the opening and closing ceremonies, the first delegation that constantly parades, is the Greek one.

This is how we get to the point where sport fills this void in place of weak narratives and unsuccessful attempts at nation-building through other elements and institutions. In Colombia, the example of football as a cohesive agent of society concerning a specific identity element, such as the national senior football team, is clear, which, despite its erratic performance, continues to be the element of most effortless connection for the vast majority of citizens with the national identity. It is often only when the team plays, especially when it wins, that most Colombians feel like such.<sup>250</sup> When identifying yourself as Colombian, the easiest way to do so is by wearing the national team's jersey, an action that, although it may sound pedestrian, is much simpler and more practical than enumerating the battles of the liberation campaign.

For the average citizen, who embodies the nation, the concept of it, its origin, and in many cases even its defense, may not be an essential part of their needs or concerns. The grand narratives about the origin and identity of a country are often not enough to make its citizens abandon everything in favor of patriotism; the cases of Colombia and Greece are no exception. However, some protagonists and individuals of the processes of independence developed a complex sense and meaning of concepts like “nationhood” or “patriotism”, which were used mainly during this historical period for communal or personal interests.<sup>251</sup> The reality is that the symbols of the nation, its history, and its heritage cannot provide the average citizen with anything beyond a sense of pride

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<sup>250</sup> Roa Vargas, Nicolás, and Andrés Mauricio Salcedo Rodríguez. "Lo banal como instrumento de nación: La importancia de la selección colombiana en la activación de procesos identitarios." *Desbordes. Revista de Investigaciones. Escuela de Ciencias sociales, artes y humanidades-UNAD* 5 (2014): 47-51; Dávila Ladrón de Guevara, Andrés. *Ganar sin ganar: nación e identidad en la selección de fútbol de Colombia*. Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2019.

<sup>251</sup> Zanou, Konstantina. *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800-1850: Stammering the Nation*. Oxford University Press, 2018. 270 p. p.6

and belonging to a larger conglomerate. But neither the flag, the great victories, nor the heroes fallen in battle put food on the plate, fix an economic crisis, or avoid internal conflicts.

It seems that the average citizen often has neither intention nor agency in constructing these discourses of national identity. These two case studies' educational and cultural policies have frequently been developed with this purpose, limiting them to a discussion of a few elites in charge of such a process.<sup>252</sup> Following the line of historical events that affected the development of the establishment of an independent Greek or Colombian state, there are many situations where the masses were feared to become part of the policies of reinterpretation of the past, essentially because the monopoly of it, held by certain specific institutions such as academies and historical societies, allowed the safe establishment of a historical narrative that could only begin to be criticized with the processes of democratization of knowledge at the end of the 20th century.

Even so, people want to know where they come from, and they want to know what happened in the spaces they inhabited in previous years, decades, or centuries. For this reason, ordinary citizens continue to go to museums. Despite having a series of much more important concerns to think about, many times the need to be in contact with culture, to enjoy its heritage, and to change the sensory experience when entering the exhibition halls of museums in their respective countries, allows citizens to find answers to new questions about their own past and identity. Questions are always open because there are still no museums anywhere in the world with a wholly global and inclusive discourse of representation of a nation or the world itself.<sup>253</sup> Museums as institutions have not yet established an exhibition narrative that satisfactorily covers a complete narrative of the diversity of a nation, especially in nations as regionally diverse as Colombia and Greece.

The political, social, and economic contexts of Colombia and Greece are complex enough for those who live in these countries to have no more important concern than knowing every detail and, from every possible perspective, the independence process of their respective nation. But even though there are more significant and urgent things to attend to on the part of the citizens, the appetite for knowledge and getting closer to their historical heritage is real and powerful. Therefore, since the

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<sup>252</sup> **Kazamias**, Andreas M. "Modernity, state-formation, nation building, and education in Greece." In: **Cowen**, Robert, and Andreas M. **Kazamias**, eds. *International handbook of comparative education*. Vol. 22. Springer Science & Business Media, 2009. 239-256.

<sup>253</sup> **Levitt**, Peggy. "Simultaneously Worlds Apart Placing National Diversity on Display at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts". In: **Zubrzycki**, Geneviève, ed. *National matters: Materiality, culture, and nationalism*. Stanford University Press, 2017. 277 p. p.84

institution of historical museums in Colombia and Greece, the population's needs have been attended to and supplied. The history of these institutions and their role in the diffusion of the tremendous national historical narrative in both Colombia and Greece will be the subject of the next chapter.



### **CHAPTER III: THE MUSEALIZATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN COLOMBIA AND GREECE**

*"It is very pleasant for me to send to Your Excellency the mantle or "acso" of the queen of Atahualpa, which I have been able to obtain as a monument of antiquity worthy of the Museum of the Capital of Colombia and much worthier afterward than the troops of our fatherland have avenged the blood of the innocent Incas, and liberated their former empire"*<sup>254</sup>

As we saw in the previous chapter, creating a nation is not an easy task. Establish sovereignty over a territory, at least nominally, after an armed confrontation, configuring it under new institutional precepts, and developing an identity through a new state symbology to maintain independence, and ergo, the integrity of this new nation has never been straightforward for any human society. Colombia and Greece, which, like many other nations in various parts of the world that during the century between 1770 and 1870 or so reconfigured their societies towards the contemporary concept of the nation-state, generated a new national identity. This identity, over time, has been coherent and diverse, victorious and defeated, exploited and overvalued, with museums being the receptacles for the historical development of that identity and the history of young nations themselves. It is then that this chapter will seek to establish a relationship between the formation of the nation-state in these two countries and the formation of the museums dedicated to national history.

The structure of this section will be subject to four essential points: the materialization of a discourse of identity and national history in specific spaces, like monuments but especially, museums where the newly independent nations can find a space to recognize themselves, remember themselves, and re-imagine themselves; a second part in charge of analyzing the historical figures and actors that sustain that discourse of identity, as well as the objects that fill these spaces and that

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<sup>254</sup> Letter from Marshal Antonio José de Sucre to Joaquín Torres Tenorio, first director of the National Museum of Colombia dated September 12, 1825 at AMNC, Original text: (*Me es muy agradable remitir a V. S. el manto ó acso de la reyna muger de Atahualpa que he podido conseguir como un monumento de antigüedad digno del Museo de la Capital de Colombia, y mucho más digno despues que las tropas de nuestra nm,. patria han vengado la sangre de los inocentes incas, y libertado su ant[igu]o imperio*) Sucre, Antonio José. Letter of remittance of the mantle of Atahualpa's wife, addressed to the director of the National Museum, Jerónimo Torres. 12.9.1825, Reg. 1093. Quoted in **Acosta** Luna, Olga Isabel, and María Catalina **Plazas** García. "The mantle or acso of the queen woman of Atahualpa. ¿ A garment of the last queen of Peru." *National Museum of Colombia, Cuadernos de Curatoría* 12 (2011).

in turn give them life and meaning, acting in many cases in a symbiotic way where different layers of the same national history are exposed, confronted, and combined in a given place.

The last two parts of this chapter will deal first with the sacralization of space and objects, turning museums into places of veneration and pilgrimage, where, on certain occasions, a transcendental experience can be accessed through the voices of the past, and the national discourse could be displayed as a sort of sacred script. Finishing with the last part, where the role and mission of museums as spaces for disseminating a specific past will be discussed. At the same time, it is a specific discourse intended to educate the visitor, whether temporary or recurrent, with particular content related to museum spaces and memory.

- **THE TANGIBLE LOCATION OF A HISTORICAL PAST**

The past, that idea or sensation that belongs to us, either on a personal or collective level, is difficult to grasp and to see reflected materially. This occurs partly because their existence is as volatile as their nature is diverse; the assumptions or interpretations of the past are based on a series of conditions and vestiges that are then interpreted collectively or individually. Collective events with specific and proven causes, developments, and consequences can be understood from a multiplicity of forms and perspectives that make up the past of that foreign country.<sup>255</sup> To avoid this and to promote the unity and homogeneity of which we spoke in the previous chapter, modern nation-states have resorted to various models and experiences to encounter with their shared past, one of them being museums or musealized spaces such as battlefields, monuments, houses of historical figures, archives, libraries, exhibition places, etc. These are the spaces where this attempt to homogenize the past takes place from a state and institutional perspective.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> The theme of the multiplicity of pasts, influenced by geographical and historical context, has been dealt with by **Lowenthal**, David. *The past is a foreign country-revisited*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.; **Gathercole**, Peter, and David **Lowenthal**, eds. *The politics of the past*. Routledge, 2004; **Graham**, Brian, Greg **Ashworth**, and John **Tunbridge**. *A geography of heritage*. Routledge, 2016.

<sup>256</sup> **Maleuvre**, Didier. *Museum memories: History, technology, art*. Stanford University Press, 1999. P. 108 **Blasco**, Maria Élica. "Political Exhibitions of the Recent Past: The Historical and Colonial Museum of Luján between 1932 and 1945." (2017).

○ **Making memories sentient. Remembering through objects**

Within this unification of a society's past, the idea of creating museums of a national character arises.<sup>257</sup> To some extent, the existence of institutions of this type is taken for granted, but their creation was neither organic nor accidental. Establishing a cultural institution with the mission of preserving and exhibiting the heritage vestiges of a given society is neither an easy task nor a fundamental part of the consensus of what a nation should or should not do in its early years of formation.

That is why, in the two case studies analyzed here, the development of these National Museums does not run through parallel progress despite sharing similar intentions and characteristics. The national and museum construction of Colombia and Greece, although intrinsically related to the historical evolution of their societies, grouped under the concept of a sovereign and independent state, has not kept pace with historical events and the formation of history museums as institutions that seek to reflect these events, considered vital by these nations, in a transversal way. From the institutionality that generates them to the audiences receiving their content, this progress has not been parallel and sometimes not even organic with the historical evolution of the society they have wanted to represent in their exhibition halls.<sup>258</sup>

Memory is neither autonomous nor autarchic; it is nourished by the senses to function; we remember through images, sounds, and flavors. Memory, especially collective memory, needs a tangibility in the collective imagination. It is not easy to establish the parameters, structures, actors, and objects worthy of remembrance if there are no physical and tangible remnants of them. Ideas can be remembered, put into action, established, and made *vox populi*, but their application will always be complex without a material reference. It is a mental and intellectual device not limited to the history of a state-organized society; it has functioned with theological, philosophical, sociological, economic, and other types of domination ideas. The "nation," as well as the

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<sup>257</sup> **Porciani**, Ilaria. "Nations on display: history museums in Europe.": 130-150. In **Porciani**, Ilaria, and Johan **Tollebeek**, eds. *Setting the standards: Institutions, networks and communities of national historiography*. Basingstoke: Palgrave macmillan, 2012.

<sup>258</sup> **Olick**, Jeffrey K. "Introduction: memory and the nation—continuities, conflicts, and transformations." *Social Science History* 22.4 (1998): 377-387.

"republic," the "honor," the "sacred," the "capital," or the "empire," have material and visual referents, which are found in specific places and are recognizable by the individuals and societies that consider them their own.<sup>259</sup>

These problems, works, and orders of memory have also incurred in the analysis of the materiality of the past: remembering, exalting, choosing particular objects or characters over others, and establishing hierarchies about what should be remembered or not, have also been part of the theoretical apparatus on memory that directly affects the analyses of public history and specifically of museums, which is the subject to be dealt with, in this dissertation and chapter.<sup>260</sup> The sublimation is established in the visitor to a museum after having been an actor and receiver of a collective process of memory construction that materializes in museums. It is the materialization of that social process analyzed by Halbwachs by all those who have been interested in understanding how, when, and what societies remember, and whose order and hierarchy of memory are institutionalized and take shape in museum exhibitions, where those analyzed in this work are no exception.<sup>261</sup>

As stated above, these objects are not all in the same geographical or temporal space. The mission of history museums, especially those that deal with the foundational period of Greece and Colombia as nations, is then one of centralization in collecting, gathering, and intervening in objects and hierarchization. In deciding what, where, and how these objects are exhibited (or not), to use them, the intervention of professionals and those in charge of the space is required.

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<sup>259</sup> The establishment of these memory features has a wide range in many diverse fields of study, from neuroscience and psychology to sociology and heritage studies. Some of the relevant works about these material references are: **Jones**, Andrew. *Memory and material culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2007; **Hallam**, Elizabeth, and Jenny **Hockey**. *Death, memory and material culture*. Routledge, 2020; **Gómez** Johnson, Cristina, et al. *Thresholds of Memory and Disappearance: Studies on Colombia and Mexico*. Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2022; **Connor**, Charles E., and James J. **Knierim**. "Integration of objects and space in perception and memory." *Nature neuroscience* 20.11 (2017): 1493-1503; **Pechurina**, Anna. "Researching identities through material possessions: The case of diasporic objects." *Current Sociology* 68.5 (2020): 669-683.

<sup>260</sup> Particularly important in this regard is the work of Susan Crane such as: **Crane**, Susan A. "Memory, distortion, and history in the museum." *History and theory* 36.4 (1997): 44-63. **Crane**, Susan A., ed. *Museums and memory*. Stanford University Press, 2000; **Crane**, Susan A. "The conundrum of ephemerality: Time, memory, and museums." *A companion to museum studies* (2006): 98-110.

<sup>261</sup> **Kuri** Pineda, Edith. "The Social Construction of Memory in Space: A Sociological Approach." *Peninsula* 12.1 (2017): 9-30; **Delgado**, David Ramos. "Collective memory as re-construction: between the individual, history, time and space." *Realitas: Journal of Social, Human Sciences and Arts* 1.1 (2013): 37-41.

Establishing a narrative that serves both the institution itself and those who support it, as well as the expectations and needs of visitors.

○ **Spaces, objects, and discourses of memory**

Museums, in general, but especially history museums, have a symbiotic relationship (which can become parasitic) with the objects they possess and custody. Some museum spaces are what they are, thanks to a specific piece or pieces in their collection, and their very existence revolves around the use and discourse established inside and outside the museum about these particular objects. Then, we must reflect on the metanarrative of the object itself: do these objects stand on their own without the need for the space that protects them? Do objects have a life outside the halls of a museum? How important is the reproduction, contextualized or not, of the objects considered essential for the museum that exhibits them and for the societies that consider them their own and as a vital part of their historical construction?<sup>262</sup>

It seems that the discourses established within the history museums around their objects and collections are as immovable and inherent as the narrative itself on the identity of an entire nation. Still, the fragility and fickleness of these discourses are palpable<sup>263</sup>, and the channels and directions that a national discourse can have are at the same time innumerable. Untimely and, therefore, even dangerous.<sup>264</sup> The national narrative that museums exhibit and that is directly subject to the administration of these entities allows us to understand that the understanding of one's history as an organized society in a nation-state has various edges and points of view that may or may not be highlighted through an exhibition in an institution such as a museum.

One can speak of an irredentist national discourse, of national historical unification and exceptionality, or of joint identity construction that goes beyond established political borders,<sup>265</sup> of a great national tragedy, or of the pages of glory of the history of any nation, and one can speak of all these aspects in a combined or successive way, depending on the moment that both of that nation and the museum are living, always bearing in mind that history, both written in academic

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<sup>262</sup> **Dudley**, Sandra H., ed. *Museum objects*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.; **Watson**, Sheila. *Museums and their Communities*. London: Routledge, 2007

<sup>263</sup> **Carbonell**, Bettina Messias, ed. *Museum studies: An anthology of contexts*. John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

<sup>264</sup> **Tasky**, Alicia. "Uses of the past, heritage, identity and museums in discussion." *Clio & Associates* 12 (2008): 29-55.

<sup>265</sup> **Knell**, Simon, et al. *Crossing Borders: Connecting European Identities in Museums and Online*. Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012.

texts and exhibited in museum exhibitions, speaks and reflects more of the present in which it is constructed, than of the past that it seeks to explain.

It is for this reason that memory, as stated in the previous section, is the recent battlefield of various discourses and versions of the past, which are often put into play in museum spaces. It is in the physical, intellectual, and discursive spaces that institutions, such as museums, generate where the ideas of national identity and their solidity and hegemony are put to the test.<sup>266</sup> This is because, in an exhibition space, the nature of this display is not exclusively conductive and orderly, despite the intervention and hierarchy imposed by the curatorial and assembly team. The space that the museum offers and the interaction of the pieces present in an exhibition require the autonomous interaction and agency of those who visit the exhibition.

The discourses of national identity that are reflected in museums of a historical or artistic nature are not alien to this situation. One thing is that the hegemonic discourse is established not only through museums but also through the last links in this ideological paradigm of the nation. Where the ideas that are disseminated and perpetuated through the institutions of political and educational control are tangibly materialized for the formation of a society established in a delimited and sovereign geographical space, where its inhabitants share, or are induced to share, specific characteristics of a common past, which is constantly reproduced through political and public symbols and rituals.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> **Lim**, Jie-hyun. "Victimhood nationalism in contested memories: National mourning and global accountability." *Memory in a global age: Discourses, practices and trajectories*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010. 138-162; **Hoffmann**, Eva. *Complex Histories, Contested Memories: Some Reflections on Remembering Difficult Pasts*. (2000). UC Berkeley: Townsend Center for the Humanities. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/25p7c0v4>

<sup>267</sup> **Smith**, Anthony D. "The Rites of Nations: Elites, masses and the re-enactment of the 'national past'." *The cultural politics of nationalism and nation-building*. Routledge, 2013. 21-37; **Hastings**, Adrian. *The construction of nationalities: ethnicity, religion and nationalism*. AKAL Editions, 2000.



Image 33. Funerary monument to Giorgos Karaiskakis in the place of the battle of Faliro on April 24, 1827. Piraeus, Greece.

It is this public character that gives each citizen a personal and individualized approach, which is fundamental in the institutional discourse but shaped by their own experience. Each visitor, whether he or she is an expert in the subject and the collections of the museums or someone who, for the first time, visits a space like these for the most diverse reasons. Or whether it is a first approach as a school visit, or because of the widespread belief that museums are spaces reserved for certain types of people of a certain social background and academic training.<sup>268</sup> All these people have the ability and the almost inevitable experience of approaching the works exhibited in a museum, the discourse that these exhibitions project, and the relationship of the collections with the museum space from a personal and non-transferable perspective. This experience covers a spectrum that goes from total indifference and disgust to sublime fascination and the transformation of the way of thinking from the visit to a likewise space.

<sup>268</sup> **Bennett**, Tony. *The birth of the museum: History, theory, politics*. Routledge, 1995. P 120-126; **Watban**, Rose. "Public Perception Of History." In: **Fladmark**, J. Magnus (ed.) *Heritage and Museums: Shaping National Identity* (2000): p 53.; **Hill**, Kate. *Culture and class in English public museums, 1850-1914*. Routledge, 2017;

This is why institutions need to understand both the public and mass nature of those who visit them, as well as to individualize the experience within their spaces and facilities. A mission can be carried out in various ways, from the elaboration of a general discourse that emerges from the signage of the exhibitions to the audiovisual guides and aids for visitors with special sensory or mobility abilities and needs, as well as the possibility of finding written or audiovisual material of an academic or informative nature, that allows the experience of the visit to be deepened, whether it is catalogs, books, videos, publications on social networks, among others, to also create the possibilities of establishing a course for the visitor's encounter with the collections, without the need to restrict both their approach to these exhibitions, as well as their criticisms or opinions towards them.<sup>269</sup>

In short, although a museum of historical content is a governing space that establishes a hierarchical order for the approach to the objects and events of the past, its institutional reason and mission as an educational and cultural space is to serve as a platform for citizens' access to a type of knowledge that they can understand as their own. And to personify both the past and the objects inside the museum in an individual and agency-laden manner, which does not necessarily have to follow the ideological, political, or academic guidelines that the museum and the staff that work in it have established or intend to establish.<sup>270</sup> Museums and the heritage they keep belong to everyone, as established by the latest guidelines of UNESCO and ICOM. Therefore, the personal interpretation of this heritage cannot be restricted or denied by the institutions.<sup>271</sup>

In any case, these objects are still inanimate elements, and the agency they may have is essentially mediated by the discourses that have been generated around them. A historical relic is still an everyday object that acquires relevance as long as it is mediated by a historical discourse, generally

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<sup>269</sup> **Filene**, Benjamin. "History Museums and Identity." In: **Hamilton**, Paula, and James B. **Gardner**. *The Oxford handbook of public history*. Oxford University Press, 2017. P 327-340; **Bandelli**, Andrea, and Elly A. **Konijn**. "Museums as brokers of participation: how visitors view the emerging role of European science centres and museums in policy." *Science Museum Group Journal* 3 (2015).

<sup>270</sup> **Duncan**, Carol. "Art museums and the ritual of citizenship." In **Pearce**, Susan (ed.). *Interpreting objects and collections*. Routledge, 2012. pp. 279-286.

<sup>271</sup> **Folga-Januszewska**, Dorota. "History of the museum concept and contemporary challenges: introduction into the debate on the new ICOM museum definition." *Muzealnictwo* 61 (2020): 39-57; **Brulon Soares**, Bruno. "Decolonising the museum? Community experiences in the periphery of the ICOM museum definition." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 64.3 (2021): 439-455.

hierarchical, in which the object that is exhibited acquires a historical value, a unique and sacred character superior to or more relevant than other objects of the exact nature, a process that has occurred since the very beginning of museums as a modern institution.<sup>272</sup> In the end, although the museum is a space whose mission is to safeguard, exhibit, and study objects, these objects and the collections to which they belong do not make much sense without a discourse that values them, whether this is an artistic, historical, or cultural value.

- **CONFIGURING, COLLECTING, AND EXHIBITING HISTORICAL AWARENESS**

To support the narratives that are established from the spheres of state power to configure the nation as a cohesive and self-referential social group, a series of elements must be established that allow this identity discourse to be sustained. In this order of ideas, the symbols that are configured as pieces of relevant importance for this group of citizens not only serve to self-identify but also to establish a distinction compared to other societies that undergo the same process of national formation. These pieces, which must be unique, easy to identify, and enveloped in an "endemic" character, must have specific characteristics, not only in nature or elaboration but also in their origin and current state of conservation and display.

It is interesting to see how museums configure their collections and how the history of this configuration responds not only to the history of the museum space itself but also to the history of the society or the public that the museum itself serves. In historical museums, objects generally have a value that was first personal and then transcended to collective importance; these collections and their provenance or acquisition are fundamental for the understanding and configuration of the museum itself. An object donated by a family member of a hero or any important protagonist of a specific historical event is not the same as an obscure war spoil or a personal donation, such as a

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<sup>272</sup> **Maleuvre**, Didier. *Museum memories: History, technology, art*. Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 98; **Duncan**, Carol. "Ritual in the early Louvre Museum." In **Tsang**, R., & **Woods**, E.T. (eds.). *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building: Ritual and performance in the forging of nations* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2013. 87-103.

library or an archive. Knowing where objects come from is essential to building a historical and museographic discourse around them.<sup>273</sup>

In the particular case of the two examples discussed in this dissertation, the objects that later would become historical relics generally have a clearly established provenance. As they are objects from the first moments of the Independence of both countries, and even if they have not been configured to be used as exhibited pieces, there was an intention from the institutions to collect, protect, and, as far as possible, exhibit these objects.<sup>274</sup> Many were given to these institutions by the same actors of the historical moments, such as the first pieces inventoried in the National Museum of Colombia and donated by Marshal Antonio José de Sucre.<sup>275</sup> Or they could have been acquired a generation later with the consolidation of the territorial and political sovereignty of the new states and the creation of spaces to store these objects. Simultaneously, an incipient memory began to take shape about the events of Independence, as in the case of the objects of Greek Independence in the National Historical Museum of Athens, which were donated in their great majority by the descendants of the heroes of the Independence after their death, in the first exhibition that was held on the occasion of the Independence organized the "Exhibition of Monuments of the Sacred Struggle" in a room of the National Technical University in 1884.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> **Byrne**, Sarah, et al. "Networks, agents and objects: frameworks for unpacking museum collections." *Unpacking the collection: networks of material and social agency in the museum* (2011): 3-26.

<sup>274</sup> **Francia**, Enrico, **Sorba** Carlotta, (eds.) *Political objects in the Age of Revolution: material culture, national identities, political practices*. Roma. Viella, 2021 - 229 p. p. 22

<sup>275</sup> **Reyes** Gavilán, Aura Lisette. "Between curiosities of national progress and ethnographic objects, collection practices in the National Museum of Colombia at the beginning of the twentieth century." *Maguaré* 31.1 (2017): 113-151.

<sup>276</sup> **Ἐκθέσεις Μνημείων του Ἱεροῦ Αγώνος, τη Επιμέλεια του Φιλόλογ.** Συλλόγου «Παρνασσού» και της Ἱστορ. και Εθνολ. Εταιρίας της Ἡς Κατάλογος. Ἀθηνησιν, εκ του Γραφείου της Εκθέσεων, Τύποις Γ. Σταυριανοῦ. ΚΕ' Μαρτίου 1884. Βιβλιοθήκη ΙΕΕΕ (Exhibition of Monuments of the Sacred Struggle, edited by "Parnassos". And ethnol. Company of Greece. List. Athens, from the Exhibition Office, Typos G. Stavrianou. ΚΕ 'March 1884. ΙΕΕΕ Library); **Catapoti**, Despina. "A nationalist palimpsest: authoring the history of the Greek nation through alternative museum narratives." *Great Narratives of the Past: Traditions and Revisions in National Museums, EuNaMus Report No 4. Published by Linköping University Electronic Press* (2012): 133-168.



Image 34. Portraits of the Greek Independence naval heroes in Room 9 of the National Historical Museum of Greece.

- **Collecting, grasping, and reinterpreting objects from Colombian independence**

For this to be effective, an established argumentative order must exist; this order is given either by the temporality or the hierarchy and importance of the elements of said discourse. In this order of ideas, a historical discourse that aims to establish a nation-state must also adhere to these specific parameters. As it has been elucidated in other parts of this work, the narrative tools of this discourse are applied through the spaces and objects of history museums. The history museum is where these discourses are tested, their usefulness is proven, and their effectiveness is measured.<sup>277</sup> Obviously, and given its centralist character, in the sense that history contains collections of specific objects,

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<sup>277</sup> Hutchinson, John, 'Cultural Nationalism', in John Breuilly (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* 2013; <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199209194.013.0005>; Coombes, Annie E. "Museums and the formation of national and cultural identities." *Oxford Art Journal* 11.2 (1988): 57-68.

which, for their visit and study, require their material presence and exhibition in a fixed and specific landmark, a place where that historical memory is ordered and centralized.<sup>278</sup>

This generates various layers of remembrance since time is responsible for ordering or overlapping them as historical events happen.<sup>279</sup> An example of this was discussed in the second chapter, where it was described how the memory and remembrance of the independence process in both Colombia and Greece were not the same for the generation that came after this historical event, in both cases, the veterans or survivors of the war of independence were still alive and even took an active part in the difficult political discussions in the configuration of the independent nations. Therefore, their entronement in museums would not be exempt from controversies and confrontations.<sup>280</sup>



Image 35. "The disabled from war" by Theodoros Vryzakis, oil on canvas, 1850. Benaki Museum. Athens, Greece.

<sup>278</sup> **Machuca**, Jesús Antonio. "Museums as places of memory." *Gaceta de Museos* 53 (2012): 2-7.; **Taborda**, Saúl Fernando Uribe. "Museums: Spaces to encourage knowledge and dissertations about the past?" *Universitas-XXI, Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas* 25 (2016): 143-156.

<sup>279</sup> **Rowlands**, Michael, and Ferdinand De Jong. "Reconsidering heritage and memory." *Reclaiming Heritage*. Routledge, 2016. 13-29.

<sup>280</sup> **Kokosalakis**, Nikos, and Iordanis Psimmenos. "Modern Greece: a profile of identity and nationalism." *Representations of Europe and the Nation in current and prospective member-states: media, elites and civil society* (2003): 131; **Veremis**, Thanos. "Ioannis Makriyannis: from history to anthropology." *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 8 (2011): 85-94; **Fleming**, Katherine Elizabeth. *Ali Pasha of Ioannina: A study in cultural representation*. University of California, Berkeley, 1995.

It is in these orders of memory that it is interesting to analyze them as possible models of the construction of national identity through historical museums. The mission of these museums is to show a comprehensive (not to say complete) vision and version of national history, either in the case studies of Colombia and Greece or in other examples. But to make this narrative version, it is necessary to categorize, hierarchize, and, naturally, but unfortunately, omit or, in some cases, exclude part of the totality of the historical resources of the past in order to maintain an orderly narrative. Understanding this order as the one that institutions or governments give to that historical discourse makes it possible to understand the configuration of these museums.<sup>281</sup>

This is important because, from a series of events, characters, and objects that can be considered familiar to all the people who make up a nation-state, not all of them would have the same space and importance within the discourse of a national entity. And even within the same discourse established and reproduced, both in time and space, by the institutions in charge of replicating this identity discourse, whether schools or museums to give a few examples. Not all moments or characters have the same importance or the same resonance in all the specific moments of this discourse because memory, be it historical, personal, or collective, tends to be selective.

But this memory and identity is also manifest in the events of 50 years ago when the sword of Simón Bolívar was stolen by the M19 guerrilla group from the rooms of the Quinta de Bolívar museum in Bogotá.<sup>282</sup> Where naturally and consequentially, the other Bolivarian countries (Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia) presented the complaint to the Colombian government for endangering a heritage, which, although guarded by Colombians, not only

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<sup>281</sup> **Reisigl**, Martin. "The discourse-historical approach." In: Flowerdew, John, and John E. Richardson, eds. *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies*. Routledge, 2017. 44-59; **Oteiza**, Teresa, and Claudio **Pinuer**. "Valorative prosody and the symbolic construction of time in recent national historical discourses." *Discourse Studies* 15.1 (2013): 43-64.

<sup>282</sup> **M19** (17-01-1974) "Comunicado del M-19 el día de la recuperación de la espada de Bolívar" in "CeDeMA." Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados n.d [https://cedema.org/digital\\_items/3716](https://cedema.org/digital_items/3716); **Pernia**, Alejandro E. Gómez. "The Liberator's Sword." In: **Reyes**, Ana M., and Maureen G. **Shanahan**. *Simón Bolívar: Travels and Transformations of a Cultural Icon*. University Press of Florida, 2016. P. 206; **O'Connor**, Francis, and Jakob Meer. "The M-19's ideological Sancocho: the reconciliation of socialism and Colombian nationalism." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 32.1 (2021): 127-151; **O'Connor**, Francis. "Clandestinity and insurgent consolidation: The M-19's rebel governance in urban Colombia." *Political geography* 105 (2023): 102930; **Alternativa** (1974-1980). Number. 1 February 1974. Bogotá, Colombia.

belonged to them but also to the other nations of the continent with which they shared a common past since the wars of independence.<sup>283</sup>



Image 36. View of the "Bolivarian Garden" with the flags of the Bolivarian countries. Quinta de Bolívar Museum. Bogotá, Colombia.

This particular case, the theft of the sword of Bolívar, has had a special protagonism recently and the revitalization of the debate around it since the change of government on August 7, 2022. when Gustavo Petro took office as president of the Republic of Colombia and as his first presidential order, what he did was to bring the sword of Bolívar to the public square (where, for the first time in decades, an open presidential inauguration was held) and where not only did the various layers of memory on the history of Colombian Independence converge. With his appropriations during the tumultuous history of the 20th century.

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<sup>283</sup> **Molina**, Javier Alonso Osorio. "The Integration of Latin America: From the Amphictyonic Congress of Panama in 1826 to a Latin American or South American Community of Nations in the Year 2010." *Historia y Sociedad (Colombia)* 13 (2007): 235-242; **Zelada** Castedo, Alberto. "Historical Perspective of the Latin American Integration Process." *Revista Ciencia y Cultura* 17 (2005): 113-120.

The sword that was stolen and given up for lost for almost two decades put its return as one of the conditions for signing peace between the Colombian government and the M19 guerrilla, and that shone since the last decade of the twentieth century as one of the symbols of a new Colombian constitutional order in the corridors of the Nariño palace, the presidential residence in Bogotá. It appeared in the public square, but the outgoing government, reluctant, did not allow its exhibition outside the Palace, and it was paraded even in front of King Felipe VI of Spain, a descendant of Ferdinand VII, whom his armies, Bolívar and the patriots defeated. All this catalyzes contemporary commemorations and the struggles and policies of a country that is quite Polarized and where swords become a leitmotif to support or make public certain opinions or political arguments.<sup>284</sup>

There has also been a process of semantic change from the institutions that do not necessarily go hand in hand with public opinion and those who consume the institutionalized museographic and historical discourse from the spaces dedicated to this purpose, such as the Quinta de Bolívar Museum in Bogotá, place of residence of the Liberator and today one of the most important museums dedicated to the Independence of Colombia. This change of government also changed the way of presenting the history of certain events and what has always been the theft of the sword of Bolívar today, and especially on the 50th anniversary of the commemoration of this event in the month of January 2024, institutions such as the museum or Quinta de Bolívar, the national library of Colombia and the general archive of the nation of Colombia spoke in terms of recovery or appropriation.<sup>285</sup>

This type of situation leads to the question of what is the institutional scope of these changes. Do they really respond to a policy agreed upon and thought out with professionals of history and other human sciences about the collective past of a society like the Colombian one? Or they are simply linguistic and discursive reproductions that, under a semblance of rethinking that distant past, seek to establish new parameters to understand and judge a more recent past. Are ordinary citizens aware, many of them witnesses of recent history, that certain objects, such as Bolívar's sword, have

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<sup>284</sup> Isabel, María, and Zapata Villamil. *Intellectual History and Public Opinion in the Celebration of the Bicentennial of Independence: The Cases of Colombia and Mexico*. Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2019; Vargas, Sebastián. "The Bicentennial of Independence in Colombia: Rituals, Documents, Reflections." *Memory and Society* 15.31 (2011): 66-84.

<sup>285</sup> Some of the official posts in social media of the cultural institutions during that commemoration were: Ministry of Cultures of Colombia: <https://shorturl.at/BxEnr>; National Museum of Colombia: [https://museonacional.gov.co/noticias/Paginas/Espada\\_Simon\\_Bolivar.aspx](https://museonacional.gov.co/noticias/Paginas/Espada_Simon_Bolivar.aspx); General Archive of the Nation: <https://rb.gy/ompv18>; National Library of Colombia: <https://t.ly/hQ9Vn>

really affected or convinced them of this discursive change? Or will these strategies, which seem more like political marketing than policies related to heritage, be reviewed when the government changes hands again?

These questions are important because in the first place they demonstrate the malleability of that collective past and how something that has happened not only in the 2020's, but also 50, 100 and 150 years ago can be reconfigured, according to the political circumstances of the moment.<sup>286</sup> But it also demonstrates how this malleability makes that past a delicate issue where the policies established towards its study and care must first put a scientific character first, understanding this scientificity as a brainy and technical analysis of the collections and museographic discourses that may emanate within these museums, which clearly finds us totally devoid of ideology or political position but that puts the interests of the nation of good first and of future generations who want to enjoy that historical legacy exhibited in museums that deal with issues about Independence before any other consideration of a political and conjunctural nature.

Another case of vindication of the Bolivarian identity that has had great importance so far this century is the so-called Bolivarian Revolution or socialism of the 21st century promoted by Hugo Chávez in Venezuela.<sup>287</sup> Where some Bolivarian nations such as Bolivia commanded by Evo Morales or Ecuador, which at the time governed by Rafael Correa, agreed with the ideas of the late Venezuelan leader, but due to the political context of the time the other nations such as Colombia or Peru that had conservative and right-wing governments, did not agree or look favorably on the

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<sup>286</sup> **Dávila-Sanabria**, Oscar Javier. *The commemoration of the Centennial of Independence in Colombia and Latin America*. Vol. 23. Editorial de la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia-UPTC, 2023; Serna, Adrián, Jaime Andrés Wilches, and Andrés Castiblanco. *Bicentennial of Independence in Colombia: Reflecting on the Past and Thinking About the Future*. Editorial Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, 2019; **Marcilhacy**, David. "Bolívar", "Colossus of America" and "Hero of the Race". A transnational myth in the centenaries of the interwar period." *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez. Nouvelle série* 50-2 (2020): 91-116; **Awad** Zainette, Rafael. "On the sesquicentennial of independence". *DYNA*, vol. 27, no. 76, July 1960, pp. 3; **Rodríguez Ávila**, Sandra Patricia. "Construction of the official memory in the Centennial of Independence: The Compendium of History of Colombia by Henao and Arrubla." *Folios* 32 (2010): 23-42.; **Salazar**, Carlos Arnulfo Rojas. "Historiography of the independence of Colombia around the bicentennial." *Times of America: Journal of History, Culture and Territory* 20 (2013): 13-20.

<sup>287</sup> **Romero**, Juan Eduardo. "Uses and Interpretations of the History of Venezuela in the Thought of Hugo Chávez." *Revista Venezolana de Economía y Ciencias Sociales* 11.2 (2005): 211-235; **Medeiros Arce**, Anatólio. "History and Ideology under Hugo Chávez." *Diálogos Revista Electrónica de Historia* 13.2 (2012): 141-159.

use of the historical memory of the liberator through internal and foreign policy that the other countries, specifically Venezuela, had been doing.<sup>288</sup>

These examples of the case of the historical memory of Simón Bolívar throughout the history of the independent nations of South America, specifically Colombia, shed light on the difficulties of controlling the propagation of a story and also the possibilities of reconfiguring that historical memory over time. The historicity regime in which the figure of Simón Bolívar is framed undergoes a parallel and simultaneous transformation to the political transformations that the institutions in Colombia have undergone.<sup>289</sup> From his omnipresent cult during the generation of the centennial of Independence to the ideological ups and downs that engulf his figure as a symbol of the extreme right or the extreme left. One might wonder if this responds to the very "greatness" of the liberator, as the most important character in the republican history of Colombia, or his own historical figure, and therefore his remembrance and memory are the product of a systematic reproduction of his figure by the institutions of the Colombian state.<sup>290</sup>

In the same order of ideas, it would be good to consider what other historical possibilities would exist if it were not for this constant reproduction, cemented by the years, and that today is practically taken for granted in public spaces that concern the history of the country, precisely its independence period. It is here that the question arises: if not Bolívar, who? It is with this possibility in mind that it is possible to analyze whether the figure of the liberator is the only one that allows for the cohesion of a national discourse of identity that communes with history and ideals from the Guajira to the Amazon and from the chocó to Arauca. In the hypothetical absence of a presence as preponderant as this, would it be possible to establish a similar narrative (without considering the

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<sup>288</sup> About the development and transformation of the cult of Bolívar see: **Carrera Damas**, Germán. *The cult of Bolívar: sketch for a study of the history of ideas in Venezuela*. Vol. 21. Editorial Alfa, 2003; **Rodríguez-Bravo**, Eglee Teresa. "Reimagining Bolívar in Latin American Culture [doctoral thesis]." *Detroit: Wayne State University* (2016); **Vidales**, Carlos and **Anrup**, Roland "El Padre, la Espada y el Poder: la imagen de Bolívar en la historia y en la política", In: Carlos Vidales, ed., *Simón Bolívar 1783- 1983*, vol. Monographs N° 9, Institute of Latin American Studies, Stockholm University, 1983, pp. 35-73; **Sierra Amortegui**, Diego Armando. *The Simón Bolívar of Fernando González and Evelio Rosero: from the cosmic myth to the genocidal caudillo in the historical novel*. MS thesis. Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador Campus, 2017.

<sup>289</sup> **Quintero**, Inés. "Nation and discursive construction. Bolívar of the left-Bolívar of the right." *Historia Caribe* 2.7 (2002): 77-91.

<sup>290</sup> **Castillo** Herrera, Luis Fernando. Between respect and veneration: image and body of the Liberator Simón Bolívar. CONHISREMI. *University Journal of Research and Academic Dialogue*. 2012, vol. 8, n. 3, pp. 94-116.

current, totally successful one) that would allow the Republican historical narrative to be centralized in one or more figures of trans-regional recognition? These regional boundaries are perhaps as in the aforementioned case of Nariño (although one could also mention the case of Admiral Padilla for the Caribbean or the *comuneros* for the Santander region), the most crucial obstacle to the establishment of a strong narrative, coherent enough to allow its organic reproduction and the construction of a national identity through the public account of a historical process such as the war of independence.<sup>291</sup>

### ○ Remembering in order and the orders of remembrance in Greece

In the Greek case, and with the plethora of historical figures that can be highlighted and that today are highlighted in public spaces, recalling the various moments in the history of the country, the selection and hierarchy of these characters is generally a task that is not easy. In some cases, the figures of the everlasting classical antiquity are intermingled with slightly more contemporary figures in the public spaces destined for memory.<sup>292</sup> The most obvious case is that of the Athenian trilogy: A series of buildings on the limits of what was the ancient city in the direction towards the Lycabettus hill, where on the north sidewalk of the avenue of the university, there are three neoclassical buildings, part of the plan proposed by Stamatios Kleanthis in 1833 and later modified by Leo von Klenze (a glimpse of what were the first years of independent Greece) and which are differentiated from the rest of the architectural landscape at least on that side of the avenue, and which correspond to 3 of the most important educational and cultural institutions of the city and

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<sup>291</sup> **Saade** Granados, Marta, and Pablo **Mora** Calderón. "200 years from the shores: other voices in the commemoration of independence in Colombia." *Maguaré* 24 (2010): 397-401; **Román** Romero, Raúl, and Vanessa **Niño** de Villeros. "Independence Day in Colombia: The Exclusion of the Historical Facts of the Caribbean Region. 1821-1919." *Memoirs: Digital Journal of History and Archaeology from the Caribbean* 21 (2013): 101-129; **Rodríguez**, Pablo, ed. *History that does not cease: the independence of Colombia, 1780-1830*. Universidad del Rosario, 2010.

<sup>292</sup> **Hamilakis**, Yannis. *The nation and its ruins: antiquity, archaeology, and national imagination in Greece*. Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 231; **Athanassopoulos**, Effie-Fotini. "An" ancient" landscape: European ideals, archaeology, and nation building in early modern Greece." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 20.2 (2002): 273-305; **Voutsaki**, Sofia. "Archaeology and the construction of the past in nineteenth century Greece." *Constructions of Greek Past*. Brill, 2003. pp. 231-255.

the country: the national library, the national academy and the headquarters of the Kapodistriasna University of Athens.<sup>293</sup>

Around this urban space and complementing the view of these three buildings, there are a series of monuments and statues erected during various moments in the history of modern Greece and the modernization of the city of Athens itself. These monuments are interesting and vital for the analysis in this work because they demonstrate how public space is configured as a place for the demonstration and dissemination of the historical narrative.<sup>294</sup> A narrative that is generally marked and biased, sometimes arbitrarily, by the institutions that erect it. But they can still articulate a discourse that is relevant and recognizable for who it is essentially designed and is in constant contact with monuments, that is, ordinary citizens.

In this space, a few meters away and even as an organic part of that same account of Greek history, could be found the statues of the gods of Greek mythology: Athena, goddess of wisdom and patron deity of the city of Athens, and Apollo, God of the sciences and arts, next to seated statues of the two most essential or well-known Athenian philosophers of antiquity Socrates, and his student Plato. Next to them, without having the same relevance but still a substantial presence, is the statue of Adamantios Korais, perhaps the most relevant figure of Neo-Hellenism or the Greek Enlightenment, a diaspora academic, classicist, whose most crucial intellectual achievement was to understand and conceptualize the Greek communities of the eastern Mediterranean as a modern nation that shared a language, culture and the desire to be an independent political entity.<sup>295</sup> The figure of Korais is consistent with the space in which he finds himself, being perhaps the most important intellectual engine of the Greek Revolution, he has earned his space together with the

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<sup>293</sup> **Dimitriou**, Orsalia. *The Politics of Public Space and the Emergence of the Commons in Contemporary Athens*. Diss. Goldsmiths, University of London, 2016; **Karydis**, Nikolaos. "The revival of classical architecture in Athens (1830–1840): Educational institutions designed by Christian Hansen and Stamatios Kleanthis." *The Routledge Handbook on the Reception of Classical Architecture*. Routledge, 2019. 448-461.;

<sup>294</sup> **Truc**, G  r  me. "Memory of places and places of memory: for a Halbwachsian socio-ethnography of collective memory." *International Social Science Journal* 62 (2011); **Roubien**, Denis. "The origins of the 'monumental axis' of neo-classical Athens and its relationship with the antiquities." *The Journal of Architecture* 18.2 (2013): 225-253

<sup>295</sup> **Kitromilides**, Paschalis M., ed. *The Greek Revolution in the age of revolutions (1776-1848): reappraisals and comparisons*. Routledge, 2021. P. 4; **Kynourgiopoulou**, Vasiliki. "Reflections of identity in the city: architecture and urbanism as a tool of remembrance and nationhood." *Annexe Thesis Digitisation Project 2018 Block 17* (2007); **Enough**, Eleni. "Forging a national image: building modern Athens." *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 10.11 (1995): 297.

gods of mythology and the philosophers of antiquity as the representative of a historical continuity and of that modernity, at least intellectual, of Greece today.

Outside this sculptural enclave, in front of the other buildings, there are various statues of different characters, such as the other great intellectual figure of being a resurgence of neo-Hellenism, such as Rigas Feraios, who had the mission of remembering and making relevant to the Greeks of his time about the glorious past that his nation had had in antiquity and that because of the Ottoman yoke (and of Orthodox Christianity that was never very important). Sympathizers of classical Greece had been lost in time. Ricas made an extensive map where he tried to link all the Greek localities not only in the geographical space that today makes up the Hellenic Republic but also where most of the communities were, with their populations ethnically and linguistically considered as Greek, with some moment or episode either from classical antiquity or from Greek mythology. This work is composed of several panels engraved in woodcut, which allowed its easy reproduction and, therefore, greater dissemination. Because of this diffusion in several of these Greek communities, as well as in territories of the Habsburg empire, with the city of Vienna as a base of operations, Rigas was considered an enemy of the Ottomans. In the end, he was betrayed and handed over to the Austrian authorities in Trieste, just before crossing into Venice, where he was to meet with the commander of the Italian army, Napoleon Bonaparte. The Austrians then handed him over as a prisoner to the Ottomans, who had him executed in the White Tower of Belgrade in 1798.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> **Pandelic** Dusan Η εκτέλεση του Ρήγα (The Execution of Riga); translated from the Serbo-Croatian by Paschalina Spyridis; introductory note by Ioannis A. Papadrianos. Athens: Publication of the Scientific Society for the Study of Bearings-Velestinou-Riga. Dodoni, 2000. 128 p.



Image 37. Statue of Rigas Feraios, one of the precursors of Greek Independence. Belgrade, Serbia.

In Greece, finding a figure who unites the various discourses and factions of Independence is not easy. Perhaps because within the same historical movement during its independent period, there was never a faction that really imposed itself on the others and therefore had the dominance and control of the public discourse on Independence. In this order of ideas, several figures emerge, some more preponderant than the others, in which they generally align personalities that, in some cases, such as in the field of Mars in Athens, have a public space explicitly consecrated for them, where they are also aligned.<sup>297</sup> From guerrilla leaders in the mountains to politicians and diplomats, from intellectuals and members of the Orthodox clergy to female pirates, the personalities who are

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<sup>297</sup> **Fatsea**, Irene. "Monumentality and its shadows: A quest for modern Greek architectural discourse in nineteenth-century Athens (1834--1862)." (2001); **Dordanas**, Stratos N. "The monuments of the national schism and the memory of WWI in Greece." *Political Monuments from the 20th to the 21st Century: Memory, Form, Meaning*: 197.

regarded as heroes or protagonists of the Greek Revolution make up a large and varied group of men and women who have had a place established in the historicity regime of modern Greece since the early years of this nation as an independent state.

These figures and their representations tend to reproduce an institutional model of historical memory, mediated and filtered by the various bodies and types of government that Greece has had since its independence in 1830.<sup>298</sup> They could be classified as a series of great personalities that are almost always present in parks, squares, and museums and that have a proper national representation, that is, monuments dedicated to these personalities can be found throughout the geography of the Hellenic Republic, and a second group made up of actors of Independence who generally have a much more local or regional level of remembrance and belonging than the personalities of the first group.<sup>299</sup>

In this first group emerges the figure of the intellectuals of Neo-Hellenism, of whom we spoke earlier, Rigas Feraios and Adamantios Korais, in addition to the figure of the patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory the Fifth, who was martyred during the first days of the Revolution of 1821, being hanged by a mob enraged by the treachery of the Greeks in one of the very porticoes of the Orthodox patriarchate of the Fener district in Constantinople. This figure is of special importance because it directly links the Greek Orthodox denomination church with the process of Independence, which is one of the most interesting and, to a certain extent, unique characteristics of the Greek revolution compared to other historical experiences during this period of the era of revolutions, which in general terms can be considered as an agnostic process or one that intended at least to draw a limit clear between the state and the clergy.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> **Koulouri**, Christina. *Historical Memory in Greece, 1821–1930: Performing the Past in the Present* (1st ed.). Routledge. 2022 414 p.

<sup>299</sup> On the problematic choice of national or local heroes of the Greek Revolution see: **Karabelias**, Gerassimos. "From national heroes to national villains: bandits, pirates and the formation of modern Greece." In: Cronin, Stephanie. (ed.). *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*. Routledge, 2012. 263-283.; **Tsoutsoumpis**, Spyros. "Political Bandits': Nation-Building, Patronage and the Making of the Greek Deep State." *Balkanistica* 30.1 37-63.

<sup>300</sup> **Karabiçak**, Yusuf Ziya. "Making sense of an execution: Patriarch Gregory V between the Sublime Porte and the Patriarchate." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 47.1 (2023): 85–102; **Gazi**, Effi. "Revisiting religion and nationalism in nineteenth-century Greece." In: **Beaton**, Roderick, and David **Ricks**. *The Making of Modern Greece. Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)*, Routledge, 2016. 95-106; **Chalkiadakis**, Emmanouil. "Reconsidering the Past: Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V and the Greek Revolution of 1821." *Synthesis* 6.1 (2017): 177-204. **Psarrou** Evie. "The Effect of the Greek Enlightenment on the Greek Revolution and the position of the Eastern Orthodox Church". *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*. 2021 Sep; 4(09):2537-40.



Image 38. Flags carried during the military parade on the 25th of March with the Icon of St. George. Athens, Greece.

In the Greek case, the opposite occurs; to a certain extent, it seems to be an organic symbiosis between the idea of the Revolution and the support the clergy gave to these ideas of freedom. However, looking at the events, the sources, and the historiography in more detail, it can be seen that this position of the Orthodox Church was neither unanimously accepted nor applied cohesively.<sup>301</sup> An example of this is the figure and martyrdom of Gregory V, who excommunicated the leaders of the Revolution to please the Ottoman authorities and the sultan himself, and tried to defend the interests and lives of the Greeks who lived in Constantinople and had an important position within the empire. His accusations against the Peloponnesian revolutionaries in the early moments of the Revolution of 1821<sup>302</sup> and his subsequent excommunication were not enough to ingratiate himself with the Sublime Porte and the city's inhabitants, who ended up martyring him. And at the same time, his martyrdom established a Polarization of a religious nature that would

<sup>301</sup> **Malešević**, Siniša. "Nationalisms and the Orthodox worlds." *Nations and Nationalism* 26.3 (2020): 544-552; **Auernheimer**, Gustav. "Politik und Orthodoxie in Griechenland/Politics and Orthodoxy in Greece." *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 59.4 (2011): 503-518.

<sup>302</sup> **Papageorgiou** Minas (ed.) *Ο αμφιλεγόμενος ρόλος της Ορθόδοξης εκκλησίας στην Ελλάδα: (4ος-21ος αιώνας): η αναβίωσιν του ανολοκλήρωτου διαγωνισμού της "Μέλισσας" από το 1821* (The controversial role of the Orthodox church in Greece: (4th-21st century): the revival of the unfinished pageant of "Melissa" from 1821), Ekdoseis iWrite, 2021 293 p.

become one more layer of the conflict between the revolutionaries and the empire and an additional factor to consider when studying the Revolution, but above all, to remember it publicly.



Image 39. Icon of Saint Gregory the Fifth, Patriarch of Constantinople, martyred during the outbreak of the revolution of 1821. Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens, Greece.



Image 40. "The Bishop of Old Patras, Germanos, Blesses the Flag of Revolution". Oil on canvas (detail) Theodoros Vryzakis, 1865. National Gallery of Athens, Greece.

This is how the figure of Gregory V, that of Athanasios Diakos, or the massacred inhabitants of the island of Chios, is remembered as an essential piece of the Revolution, but even more so as modern elements of a new Orthodox Christian martyrology.<sup>303</sup> Therefore, their representations are reflected not only within state institutions but also in reproducing their memory. Something significant in this Christian denomination, their iconography, is present in a public space as crucial to the Greeks as the church. Whether in the cathedral or metropolis of Athens where the relics of Gregory V are located or in the various frescoes and icons throughout the Orthodox world where many of these figures and many others such as and many others such as other high members of the clergy such as Gregory V's predecessor, Cyril VI, who was retired in Edirne (the ancient Adrianople) and then executed there during the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in March 1821<sup>304</sup> and the heads of the Cypriot church such as Kyprianos, Meletius, Chrysantus and Lavrentios.<sup>305</sup> They are venerated as saints and martyrs who gave their lives not only for an independent Greece during the Revolution, but above all for their Greek Orthodox faith.<sup>306</sup>

Another special case is that of Ioannis Kapodistrias. Who could be considered as the simile of Bolívar in the Greek Revolution, understanding that like Bolívar -for Colombian Independence at least, what does this dissertation intend to analyze- both he and Kapodistrias are two fundamental characters who could embody that role of father of the nation or the most emblematic figure of the revolutionary process.<sup>307</sup> Although both were born in places that geographically and politically are outside the limits of the current independent state, they symbolize its independence process. This

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<sup>303</sup> **Rueda-Laffond**, Jose-Carlos. "History or hysteria? Greek Symbolic Nationalization and Urban Memory of Thessaloniki." *Memory and Civilization* 27.1 (2024), p. 339; **Gerd**, Lora. "Konstantinos Oikonomos and Russian Philorthodox relief during the Greek war for independence (1821–1829)." *Open Military Studies* 2.1 (2022): 209-223; **Kessareas**, Efstathios. "Saints, Heroes, and the 'Other': Value Orientations of Contemporary Greek Orthodoxy." *Religions* 13.4 (2022): 360; **Cartledge**, Yianni. "The Chios Massacre (1822) and Chiot Emigration: A Coerced Diaspora." In: **Cartledge**, Yianni, and Andrekos **Varnava**, (eds.) *New Perspectives on the Greek War of Independence: Myths, Realities, Legacies and Reflections*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022. 357 p.p. 217-241.

<sup>304</sup> **Kiminas**, Demetrius. *Orthodox Christianity. Vol. 1: The Ecumenical Patriarchate: A History of Its Metropolitanates with Annotated Hierarch Catalogs*. San Bernardino, Calif.: Borgo Press. 2009 p. 42.

<sup>305</sup> **Georgis** Giorgos, "From the first to the second Anglocracy" in Giorgos **Tenekidis**, Giannos **Kranidiotis** (ed.), Cyprus. History, problems and struggles of the people, Home Bookstore, 2nd edition, Athens, 2000, pp. 122 - 123. Original: Τενεκίδης, Γ., and Γ. Κρανιδιώτης. "Κύπρος, Ιστορία, Προβλήματα και Αγώνες του Λαού της. 2η Έκδοση." *Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις: Εστία* (2010).

<sup>306</sup> **Vaporis**, Nomikos Michael. *Witnesses for Christ: Orthodox Christian neomartyrs of the Ottoman period, 1437-1860*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000; **Karalis**, Vrasidas. "Greek Christianity after 1453." *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* 2007: 156-185.

<sup>307</sup> **Gromitsaris**, Athanasios. "The Historians, the Actors, and Strategic Thinking. A Comment on 'Capodistrias and the German Federation'." *A Comment on 'Capodistrias and the German Federation' (June 18, 2019)* (2019); **Kaldis**, William Peter. *John Capodistrias and the modern Greek state*. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1959.

does not mean that they do not belong to or are considered citizens, politicians, or military heroes of the respective nation. Kapodistrias was born in what is now the Russian Federation; most of his diplomatic and military career was spent under the orders of the Russian Empire, where he reached high ranks during the reign of Tsar Alexander, in the final period of the Napoleonic Wars and the first years of the post-war period, so much so that Kapodistrias was part of the Russian delegation in Ljubljana during the congress that the Concert of Europe had organized in the spring of 1821.

It is here that, as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire, he must handle the crisis that the news of the outbreak of the Greek Revolution on March 25, 1821, generated during this congress in which the Tsar was also present. The intentions of an independent Greece supported by its Orthodox brothers in Russia were evident, but the great powers were looking for a political transition without revolutions after the Napoleonic wars, and this is where Kapodistrias' political and persuasive skill took place to keep the great European powers out of the events that were taking place in the Peloponnese.<sup>308</sup>

Kapodistrias was Greek by birth, born in the westernmost part of those Greek communities mentioned above, specifically on the island of Corfu, in a region called the Heptanese, or the seven islands. An archipelago located in the Adriatic Sea, historically, it had much more contact with Western Europe through, for example, the Venetian Republic than the rest of the regions of Ottoman Greece.<sup>309</sup> It is in these islands that a particular political experiment took place during the era of revolutions. After the fall of Venice and the end of its republic at the hands of the French army, the islands passed into the hands of France, where they were then liberated by a combined fleet of Russians and Ottomans who sought to control French expansion in the eastern Mediterranean. This is how the septinsular republic was formed, which was not totally independent, but if autonomous, you went beyond the sublime door. In this context, Kapodistrias not only grows

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<sup>308</sup> **Grimsted**, Patricia Kennedy. "Capodistrias and a "New Order" for Restoration Europe: The "Liberal Ideas" of a Russian Foreign Minister, 1814-1822." *The Journal of Modern History* 40.2 (1968): 166-192; **Marangou-Drygiannaki**, Sparti. "Orthodoxy and Russian policy towards Greece in the 19th century: the Philorthodox Society's conspiracy (1830-1840)." *Balkan studies* 41.1 (2000): 27-42;

<sup>309</sup> **Pagratīs**, Gerassimos. "Greeks and Italians in the Italian Peninsula during the Napoleonic Period, from the Standpoint of the Septinsular Republic." *Analele Universității Dunărea de Jos din Galați. Seria Istorie* 10 (2011): 43-53; **Delli Quadri**, Rosa. "Dalla nazione Ionica alla rivoluzione greca. Il lessico etico e politico dell'eptaneso nei primi decenni dell'Ottocento." *Greece and Italy 1821-2021: due secoli di storie condivise*. ETPbooks, 2023. Verses 37-57.

but also trains as an academic and diplomat and understands the role of the great powers in Europe and the possibilities of independence for a unified Greek nation.<sup>310</sup>

Kapodistrias could be considered the great statesman of the Greek Revolution; he was not the most experienced or courageous military man like Kolokotronis or Karaiskakis, nor an intellectual of the caliber of Korais or Feraios. But his figure brought together the ethos of a new nation. A new nation of which he was president after the assembly of 1827 and which he tried to organize state and administratively, considering that his society was not politically mature enough to govern itself, and therefore advocating the establishment of a hereditary monarchy in independent Greece. These types of decisions and ideas of a pragmatic nature that earned him such good results as a diplomat of the Russian empire at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 or the previous one of Ljubljana in 1821, did not have the same acceptance in a divided and tribal society such as the Greek during the first years of Independence. His devotion to a foreign government and his contempt for the local elites, who in the end were the ones who provided the men and weapons for the war in their great majority, earned him a series of enemies and marked his destiny when he was assassinated in Nauplio, the capital of independent Greece, by a member of the Mavromihalis clan.<sup>311</sup>

The assassination of Kapodistrias has been an important theme in the history and historiography of nineteenth-century Greece and is also considered one of the fundamental events not only in the history of the Revolution but in general in the modern history of Greece, since his assassination led to a series of consequences for the Revolution difficult to handle.<sup>312</sup> Obviously, beginning its independent history with the assassination of the man who was destined to be its most important statesman is not the best of beginnings. The death of Kapodistrias generated a serious political and social division within the generation after the war of independence, separating the tribal clans of the countryside and the regions against the representatives of a government established in the cities

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<sup>310</sup> **Drougka**, Kleoniki. "Early educational quests and pedagogical questionings of Ioannis Kapodistrias (1814-1828)." *Synergies Sud-Est européen* two (2009): 77-84.

<sup>311</sup> **Loules**, Dimitris. "Η δολοφονία του ι. καποδιστρια και η ρωσία." (The assassination of Kapodistrias and Russia) *Μνήμων* 10 (1985): 77-95. P.81

<sup>312</sup> **Veremis** Thanos M., and Iakovos D. **Michaelidis** *Ιωάννης καποδίστριας, ο «αμνός» της Παλιγγενεσίας των Ελλήνων*. (Ioannis Kapodistrias, The "Lamb" of the Paligenesis of the Greeks. Athens: Metaichmio. 232 p.; Η δολοφονία του κυβερνήτη Ιωάννη Καποδίστρια

and often represented by foreign agents and officials. It also generated the figure of the great man or politician who is martyred.

But it is a martyrdom different from that of those who died on the battlefield for the ideas of freedom or an independent Greece, as is the case with Georgios Karaiskakis or Athanasios Diakos. Kapodistrias was treacherously murdered inside a church after a church service.<sup>313</sup> The intent of this murder has been seen historically and historiographically as a missed opportunity for the modernization of Greece as a state, as well as an intensification of political squabbles at that specific moment in 1832, with an incipient monarchy and a series of political and tribal factions that did not want to lose the power they had achieved with their sacrifice during the war of independence.

Even so, and despite the fact that today, Kapodistrias is one of the most mentioned and present figures in the day-to-day and the public spaces of the Hellenic Republic, his figure himself has been controversial throughout the last two centuries. The name of the National University of Athens bears his surname, there are monuments of him in the parliament and most squares or public spaces intended for political events in all the large cities and towns of Greece, it also appears in the Greek version of the euro, as the representative that this nation chose to appear as a symbol of Greece in the currency of the European community. But likewise, over time, his figure and the reception of his figure have undergone abrupt changes.<sup>314</sup>

Especially during the generations after the War of Independence because due to his status as the leading representative of the Russian faction (one of the three political factions that were generated during the first years of the monarchy in Greece, the others being the French and the British and that responded to the interests of his great powers within Greek internal politics), he made the rest of the protagonists of the Greek Revolution who survived at the same time, they will reconsider the legacy of Kapodistrias, this can not only be seen in texts such as Makriyannis' memoirs but also historical paintings of a patriotic nature such as those found in the national gallery of Athens. Where

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<sup>313</sup> **Kremmidas**, Vassilis. "Η δολοφονία του κυβερνήτη Ιωάννη Καποδίστρια" "The assassination of governor Ioannis Kapodistrias." *The Gleaner*, 14, 217–281.

<sup>314</sup> **Petropoulos**, John Anthony. *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843*. Vol. 2053. Princeton University Press, 2015. P. 269

within the pantheon of Greek heroes, priority is given to those who were military leaders of *klepthes* and *armatoloi*, and intellectuals and politicians such as Kapodistrias are put in a posterior plane, it could be said that almost imperceptible to the untrained or contextualized eye of this situation.<sup>315</sup>



Image 41. Miniature portrait of Ioannis Kapodistrias. Benaki Museum. Athens, Greece.

The case of these two statesmen who were called to make the symbols of their new nations but who both ended up with a tragic fate, Kapodistrias assassinated and Bolívar sick and depressed after an assassination attempt, show us how from the very moment in which the events of Independence are still occurring, a selection of memory and narrative begins to be made about what should be told, how it should be told and who should be mentioned and who should not. Although this story is not immutable, it is quite difficult to transform. It is not inconsequential that human societies have configured since ancient times the devices of collective remembrance made of materials resistant to the passage of time and the inclemency of the climate, both political and meteorological, marble, iron, bronze, are resistant materials, therefore the memory of a people, if it wants to tangibly cling to the intangible ideas and memories of a shared past, resorts to these materials to celebrate and remember it, and today, to question it.<sup>316</sup>

<sup>315</sup> **Karras**, Olga Zaferatos. *Hellenikotita—Greekness: Constructing Greek Genre Painting, Visualizing National Identity, 1850–1900*. Dissertation. City University of New York, 2022.

<sup>316</sup> **Saul**, Gwendolyn W., and Diana E. **Marsh**. "In whose honor? On monuments, public spaces, historical narratives, and memory." *Museum Anthropology* 41.2 (2018): 117-120; **Cudny**, Waldemar, and Håkan **Appelblad**. "Monuments and their functions in urban public space." *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian Journal of Geography* 73.5 (2019): 273-289.

In any case, personal, collective, and institutional memory is volatile and even spiteful. What for generations was celebrated and maintained as a fundamental part of that individual and communal existence, such as the National Holidays with the celebrations of specific commemorations, with the passage of time and political regimes, those festivals, events, or personalities celebrated can fall into oblivion, intentionally or not. It also happens with the processes of change of mentality. What for the governments of 100 or 150 years ago was worthy of remembering in a monumental way with plaques, monuments, and sculptures, for the intellectual and cultural context of the first decades of the 21st century, that type of exalted memory can be considered controversial, disruptive, and even offensive.<sup>317</sup> This is how the social movements of the last few years, specifically of this decade, have demonstrated a rebellious attitude against that collective memory established from an institutional regime, to the point of resorting to acts in which the integrity of these monuments is compromised, or re-symbolized and reconfigured as part of the protest.<sup>318</sup>

It is a paradoxical question, but to a certain extent consequential, that certain monuments of specific episodes or characters related to the Independence of both countries are in a greater or lesser state of abandonment by the institutions that should care for them. Likewise, the interest that citizens and public opinion have in some of these monuments and spaces of memory is not only hierarchical but often capricious because although certain figures from the past are used, with certain events, characters, and monuments referring to the process of the formation of the nation-state in Colombia and Greece, This re-signification responds more to the needs, ideas, and demands of the current context of these social mobilizations, than to the needs of a re-signification or revision of the historical past in some more consensual and coherent way.<sup>319</sup> Colombia and Greece have experienced tumultuous historical processes in recent decades, which have made their respective citizens rethink that so many of the objectives achieved during the wars of independence have been fulfilled two centuries after them.

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<sup>317</sup> **Dacres**, Petrina. "Monument and meaning." *Small Axe* 8.2 (2004): 137-153; **Graham**, Narda. "Whose Monument?: The Battle to Define, Interpret, and Claim Emancipation." *Small Axe* 8.2 (2004): 170-178.

<sup>318</sup> **Emerson**, R. Guy. "The Monument to Independence as an event: They don't take care of us, they rape us, they do not protect us, they rape us." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (2022): 163-179.

<sup>319</sup> **Vargas** Álvarez, Sebastián. *Mutations of the stone: Thinking about the monument from Colombia*. Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2023.; **Badawi**, Halim. "Farewell to the Heroes: Rise and Fall of Monuments in Colombia, 2016-2021." *Revista Universidad de Antioquia* 344 (2021): 8-17.

To give a few examples, the figure of certain heroes of the Greek Revolution was constantly used as a symbol of protest by Greek citizens during the height of the financial crisis that the country went through in the second decade of this century. Characters such as Theodoros Kolokotronis, who have an image constructed as heroes who respond to the needs of the most popular classes in Greek society, with him and in general to the very ethos of the modern nation, and therefore that part of the population can relate and identify easily. Kolokotronis, unlike Kapodistrias, for example, does not have such a conflictive legacy, despite the fact that in the first tumultuous years of the Greek monarchy, he was also imprisoned for his political positions and his vehement criticism of the new monarchy regime.<sup>320</sup>

Therefore, he was a historical figure on whom a large part of the demands of the Greek people for their leaders fell, understanding him as an outsider who represented the purest ideal of what it was to be a patriot without falling into demagoguery and populism, but with his actions as a letter of introduction. Kolokotronis' graffiti appeared in the center of Athens and remained there for years, such as the Spiridou Trikoupi street, which was created by the artist Absent.<sup>321</sup> But before these protests, in many of the neighborhoods of the Greek capital and its metropolitan area, it was easy to find a monument dedicated to his figure in the main squares, which, in many cases, was also the only monument found in these places. Being "the old man of the Morea," the nickname that Kolokotronis would have at the end of his life, and for which is still remembered in the common language in nowadays Greece, perhaps the hero of the Greek Revolution with the most significant material impact on the urban landscape of a city and a country that can make use of multiple personalities of the last 3500 years, but that coincidentally but not involuntarily, the institutions, such as the National Museum of History, which has a large equestrian statue of Kolokotronis,

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<sup>320</sup> **Kolokotronis** theódoros απομνημονεύματα του θεόδωρου κολοκοτρώνη [Memories of Theodoros Kolokotronis]. 2021. Athens, Ekdoseis, 2021; **Mikhailidis** Iàkonos D. Θεόδωρος Κολοκοτρώνης. Ο στρατιωτικός ηγέτης της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης (Theodoros Kolokotronis. The military leader of the Greek Revolution). Athens, Metaichmio, 2020 203 p.

<sup>321</sup> **Stampoulidis**, Georgios. *Street Artivism on Athenian Walls: A cognitive semiotic analysis of metaphor and narrative in street art*. [Doctoral Thesis, Centre for Languages and Literature]. Media-Tryck, Lund University, Sweden, 2021. P. 62-67; **Karanicolas**, Johnny Damien. *Art and Crisis on the Streets of Athens*. Diss. Thesis (Ph.D.) -- University of Adelaide, School of Social Sciences, 2019

municipalities and social movements, as well as individuals resort to his figure to identify themselves.<sup>322</sup>

- **THE MUSEUM AS A PLACE OF VENERATION/PILGRIMAGE**

The museums, specifically the national history museums of these new countries that acquired their sovereignty after the cycle of liberal revolutions during the first half of the long 19th century, are enveloped in an aura of sacredness.<sup>323</sup> Since the nation is the secular religion (worth the oxymoron) par excellence of the contemporary world, museums are the temples of this religion. Two hundred years later, it is the expectation of a museum or of a national character, a narrative that allows explaining the society in which the museum is inserted. The visitor or viewer expects to find within the collections of the said museum, within its exhibitions and pieces. This narrative gives them an overview of what that society or nation considers important.<sup>324</sup>

This importance is generally reflected in the type of objects this museum may contain. If these objects are identified as “important” by a large sector of the citizens of a nation, let alone if the national discourse is compelling enough for all the citizens of that nation. The museum takes on the character of the custodian of the relics that make the nation what it is, turning the museum space into a place of veneration and the pieces of its collections into historical relics.<sup>325</sup> The transformation of a history museum into a site of veneration occurs through tacit agreements between the public and the institutions to give the narrative that the museum presents through its pieces this character of almost sacred relevance.

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<sup>322</sup> **Dimitropoulos**, Dimitris. "The 'Old Man of Moria': Constructing a Father Figure of the Nation" In: **Dede**, Katerina, and Dimitris **Dimitropoulos**. «Η ματιά των άλλων». Προσλήψεις προσώπων που σφράγισαν τρεις αιώνες (18ος-20ός). ("The gaze of others". Recruitment of persons who marked three centuries (18th-20th)). Institute of Modern Greek Research/National Research Foundation, 2015. 236 p.

<sup>323</sup> **Bodenstein**, Felicity. "The Emotional Museum. Thoughts on the "Secular Relics" of Nineteenth-Century History Museums in Paris and their Posterity." *Conserveries mémorielles. Revue transdisciplinaire* 9 (2011); **Belk**, Russell W. "Collectors and collecting." In **Pearce**, Susan (ed.). *Interpreting objects and collections*. Routledge, 2012. 317-326; **Thiemeyer**, Thomas. "Work, specimen, witness: How different perspectives on museum objects alter the way they are perceived and the values attributed to them." *Museum & Society* 13/3 (2015), S. P. 396-412

<sup>324</sup> **Bennett**, T. "Exhibition, Difference and the Logic of Culture." In I. **Karp**, C. A. **Kratz**, L. **Szwaja**, and T. **Ybarra-Frausto** (eds.) *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, pp. 46–69. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2006.

<sup>325</sup> **Shaw**, Wendy MK. "Between the secular and the sacred a new face for the department of the holy relics at the topkapı palace museum." *Material Religion* 6.1 (2010): 129-131.

○ **The museum as a place of veneration**

Now, the space where these objects are concentrated, that is, the place destined to establish itself as a point of reference between locals and foreigners, a place to find within its facilities, and, succinctly, a recount of the country's history. Generally, these spaces tell a part of the history of the nation, and Greece and Colombia are no exception. In both cases, National Museums, which have some of the most considerable quantity and quality of collections related to Independence, were previously buildings for institutional use: a prison in Colombia and the seat of parliament in Greece. This choice is not random, even if it is not a building built to house a collection, as is the case with other art and archaeology museums in both countries if it has sufficient characteristics of centrality as it is located in neuralgic points of both capitals of symbolism and solemnity as it has within its parents the weight of another history and relevance. as a building for an exhibition of these objects.

For a place to become a revered site, a solemn geographical point of this new secular religion called the nation-state, it must bear witness to historical moments. The Colombian case is tremendously interesting since its current headquarters were, for much of the 19th century and part of the 20th, the prison of the city of Bogotá, where a large part of the political prisoners of the civil wars that plagued the country during a tumultuous part of its republican history were held.<sup>326</sup>

The “panopticon”, as it is also still known for its construction style and scope, is a building built by the same architect as the national capitol and that was found on the outskirts of the city until the urban expansion of the first decades of the 20th century. This building since 1948, a symbolic date that also includes the Pan-American Conference that was held in Bogotá and the assassination of the liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán during this international event, which is still considered, if not as the initial date, but one of the most important dates in the history of internal violence in Colombia in the 20th century.<sup>327</sup> Making a former prison a museum was a daring political and

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<sup>326</sup> **Londoño**, Wilhelm. "Spirits in Prison: An Ethnography of the National Museum of Colombia." *Chungará (Arica)* 44.4 (2012): 733-745; **Maya Sierra**, Tania. "The National Panopticon of Colombia, heterotopia of deviation and empire of the gaze." *Annals of the Institute of American Art and Aesthetic Research*. Mario J. Buschiazso. Vol. 44. No. 2. University of Buenos Aires, 2014.

<sup>327</sup> **Braun**, Herbert. *The assassination of Gaitán: Public life and urban violence in Colombia*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 2003; **Salgado**, Juan Sebastián. "The Cold War Arrives in Latin America: the IX Pan-American Conference and April 9." *Political Analysis* 26.79 (2013): 19-34; **Gilhodés**, Pierre. "April 9 and its international context." *Colombian Yearbook of Social and Cultural History* 13-14 (1986): 239-260; **Marroquín**, Angela María Rodríguez. "The photojournalism and the bogotazo: image and memory of a people." *History 2.0: Historical Knowledge in Digital Key* 2.3 (2012): 8-25.

symbolic move, which sought through this public space to solve the infrastructure and storage problems that the museum had in its previous headquarters and the reconfiguration and re-sacralization of a divisive and punitive space such as a penitentiary in a new institutional experience as the main headquarters of the National Museum.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the National Museum of Colombia produced four catalogs that sought to classify the already existing collection that had begun to be managed since 1823, with the recent donations and archaeological and anthropological discoveries that took place in Colombia during these decades. Of the 543 objects that entered the institution during these years, 383 were the result of donations, 106 were remissions, and 54 were acquisitions. Of these half a thousand objects, more than half had a direct relationship or represented the period of national independence, thus demonstrating the importance that this period of history had symbolized for both the museum's officials and its visitors for more than 100 years. It is interesting to note that the donations referring to this historical period corresponded to the period of independence in a general way, but the objects of most outstanding value in the sense that they had been the property of or, at some point, belonged to key figures of independence such as Simon Bolívar were direct acquisitions of the National Museum of Colombia.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>328</sup>**Pérez** Benavides Amada Carolina. "La memoria convertida en exhibición: Adecuaciones de la sección de historia patria en el Museo Nacional de Colombia 1880-1912" In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. 118-119



Image 42. The facade of the "Panopticon" former prison that nowadays hosts the National Museum in Bogotá, Colombia.

The most precious objects, the relics that make up the theology and hagiography of this new secular religion called nation, were consciously and systematically acquired by the national government through its cultural institutions from private individuals, thus generating a tacit consecration of certain specific pieces as the materialization of essential events for the narrative about the Independence of Colombia. The paradigmatic case of the Llorente vase, which, according to the catalog written by Ernesto Restrepo Tirado in 1912, states that "it was given by the artist Epifanio Garay as the famous vase that produced the discussion between the Chapetón Llorente and the Creole Morales, the result of which was the slap from which the first spark that preceded our independence emerged - July 20, 1810 - this object, beyond its artistic or historical value due to its antiquity, becomes a piece of supreme relevance when consciously placed in a position of vital importance for the foundation of the Colombian nation."<sup>329</sup>

During various moments of republican history, some of these objects dedicated to the museum spaces left the facilities to reconnect with the citizens in a public ritual that reconnected the historical memory with the present of the citizens, a special case being the exhibition of the flags

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<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.* 127-128

of the liberating armies that belonged to the collection of the national museum and that appeared during the parade of the national holidays, specifically on July 20. The way in which historians access the narratives about the history of the country, specifically about Independence, differs from that which we have when we approach the staging found in history museums. Its reading poses a unique difficulty in the exhibition and museographic assembly because it does not allow readability through discourse analysis devices, as it does with written sources.<sup>330</sup>

Despite being such a symbolic and striking building, where the various layers of the history of the city and the country are intermingled between architecture and collections, during the last few years, it has experienced a series of problems due to the very condition of the space that does not allow to maintain the large volume of objects of all kinds, not only historical but also artistic and archaeological. that the museum has in its collections. In other words, the museum, or more specifically, the panopticon, has become too small. This has generated a whole discussion around the reorganization of the space, which led to the new curatorships established for the bicentennial of the Cry of Independence in 2010.<sup>331</sup> A process that is still underway, either the total relocation of the museum or the expansion to neighboring properties in an area of the city center with tremendous cadastral pressure, as the museum is today in the financial heart of Bogotá.

The prospects of the National Museum of Colombia and its projection as perhaps the most recognized and important museum institution in the country when its bicentennial of creation is celebrated in 2023 seem to be favorable, as it is an institution inscribed both in the spectrum of public opinion and a fundamental body for the culture of the country. Moreover, it has regional and international recognition as a museum of renown and tradition. In any case, the work of building museums in every sense, building audiences, building collections, and building legacies must be a constant process. A process that, unfortunately, in the first half of 2024, has been abruptly truncated due to the difficulty of maintaining administrative processes and the generation of team and human

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<sup>330</sup> **Ibid.** 131

<sup>331</sup> **Pérez** Benavides, Amada Carolina. "Absences and Presences: Tensions between a Collection with "History" and Historiographical Criticism at the National Museum of Colombia." *Processes: Ecuadorian Journal of History* 42 (2015): 123-145.

talent that allow projects related to the transformation and improvement of the museum to be carried out successfully.<sup>332</sup>

The current administrative organization of an institution such as the National Museum of Colombia has an endorsement and budget from the Ministry of Cultures and Knowledge, a new name that the previous Ministry of Culture had and that was changed by the incoming national government in 2022. Likewise, it is from the ministry that both the national guidelines for the administration of museums and the management representatives of the institution itself are established. In those first months of 2024, the National Museum was present in the headlines of Colombia's press, unfortunately not for the reasons it usually appears in public opinion, such as temporary exhibitions or some change in its collection.<sup>333</sup>

However, they were headlines focused on showing the administrative mismanagement of the outgoing director of the institution, who had abused the nepotism of the administration of these institutions, prioritizing particular personal desires or those of his closest group of collaborators and, in turn, neglecting certain basic and essential functions of the museum such as in the exhibition of temporary exhibitions of high level and impact.<sup>334</sup> All this added to the liquidation of the Association of Friends of the National Museum, who was the administrative institution that was in charge of hiring and making the payroll of a large part of the museum's staff, especially the team of mediators, which has traditionally been a training school in museological knowledge at least in

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<sup>332</sup> **Vargas**, Sebastián. "200 years of building Colombians. National Museum of Colombia. The stories of a scream. 200 years of being Colombians." *Memory and Society* 14.29 (2010): 147-150; **Jaramillo**, Camilo Sarmiento. "Chairs, Collections and Exhibitions: The National Museum of Colombia and the History of Colombian Art." *Ernesto Restrepo Tirado Annual Chair of History* (2023): 103.

<sup>333</sup> **El Tiempo** (01/04/2024) Samper, Juanita "The Association of Friends of the National Museum comes to an end after 35 years" Retrieved from: <https://shorturl.at/UvMH5>; **Razón Pública** (21/04/2024) Arango, Catalina "Vulnerability and crisis in the National Museum" Retrieved from: <https://shorturl.at/S5DvO>; **El Espectador** (31/03/2024) "Crisis in the National Museum: resignations, appointments and lack of budget execution" Retrieved from: <https://shorturl.at/OVvJJ>

<sup>334</sup> **Ancines**, Lirka. *Hacia una nueva idea de nación: tres exposiciones temporales del Museo Nacional de Colombia a partir de la Constitución Política de 1991*. Diss. Maestría en Estética. Universidad Jorge tadeo Lozano. Bogotá, 2018

the capital of the Republic of Colombia despite the precarious conditions for the level of work that the mediators of a museum of the size and caliber of the national of Colombia can have.<sup>335</sup>

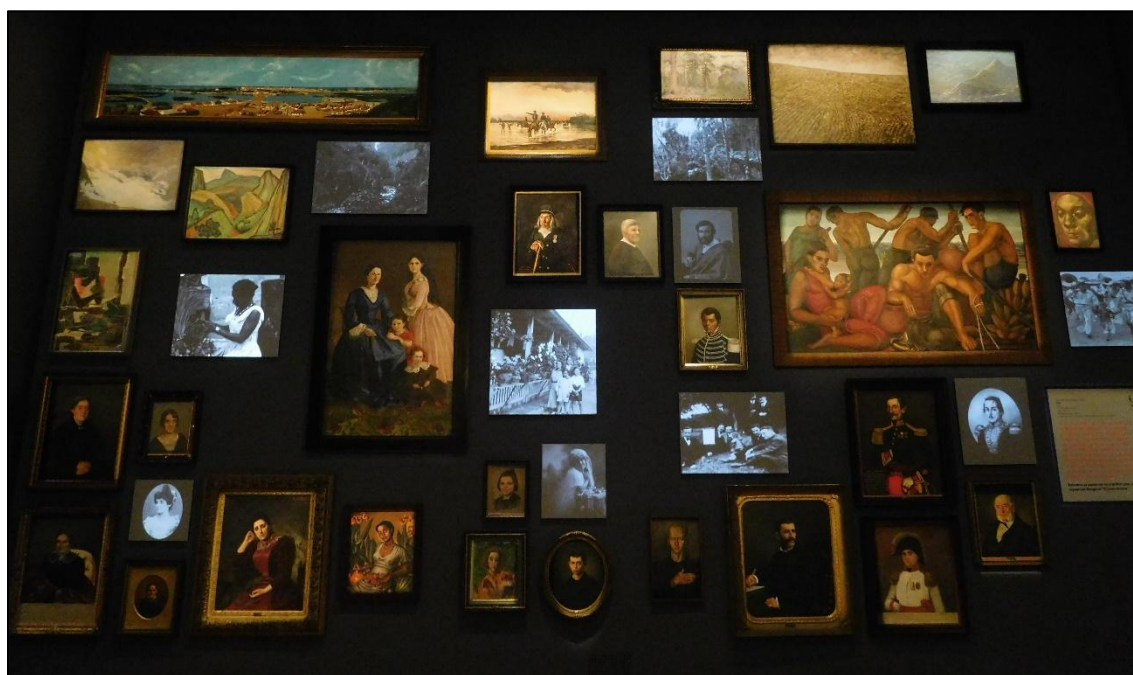


Image 43. Detail of the "Memory and Nation" Room at the National Museum of Colombia.

The difficult times that the National Museum has gone through, which for the press will be the news moment for a couple of days, but for those who are interested in living and working for and for museums is a matter of extreme delicacy, it is also a reminder that cultural and educational institutions cannot be taken for granted. Its administration, future projection, prestige, and reputation, fundamental to its existence and financing, cannot take refuge only in the years of history and service the institution has provided to the public. Its formation, maintenance, and, in any case, its very existence, even if it is guaranteed by legal and even constitutional guidelines, cannot be taken for granted. It is essential for those who work in this type of organization and institutions to consciously reflect on the ephemeral, both their management and the harmonious

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<sup>335</sup> **Barragán** Aguilar, Juan Ricardo. *Genesis of the creation of the department specialized in mediation within museums in Colombia. Educational Area of the National Museum of Colombia: A Case Study*. Diss. Master's Degree in Museology and Heritage Management 2018; **Lengua** García, Saida Patricia. *La importancia de la figura del mediador para la interpretación de los contenidos del museo estudio de caso sala Memoria y Nación Museo Nacional de Colombia*. Diss. Maestría en Museología y gestión del patrimonio 2016; **Caro**, Alejandro Suárez. "¿Quiénes pueden jugar?: Acercamiento al trabajo con infancias desde el Museo Nacional de Colombia." *EducaMuseo* 1 (2022).

moments of organization and administration. Something complex and even paradoxical in institutions that are charged with preserving and exposing the perennial, and that generally seems like a stagnant and immobile organism.<sup>336</sup>

In the same sense, and not only from the National Museum but also from the other history museums of the country, it is crucial to project into the future the possibilities of evading the vice of stagnation and the suspicious tranquility generated by what is already established, to constantly rethink the function of its work and how this work is carried out. One of the objectives of museums concerning the period of Independence in Colombia is to find a way to expand the horizons and possibilities of access for a broader public that does not have the opportunity to physically visit the museum facilities where these objects and relics that make up the materialization of a discourse of national identity are located. And so we look for a way from new technologies, from the development of infrastructure, and from the decentralization of both knowledge and the enjoyment of museums to approach that population that is sometimes considered to have no interest in cultural issues but in reality has never had the possibility of accessing them and tacitly accepts that it does not belong to those spheres. Thus, the same story that is told in the halls of museums speaks directly or belongs to them.<sup>337</sup>

Within this expansion of perspectives, one could talk about the possibility of rethinking the concept of the "national," which in Colombia has a clear centralist aspect, and from the capital to expand its scope geographically. It also proposes a solution to the serious storage problems it already has today, essentially to take the collections and exhibitions of its inventory to the various regions of the country.<sup>338</sup> This would have to reform both the mission and the mission of the museum as a cultural institution, with the respective drawbacks and challenges that the cultural sector is going through in a country like Colombia.<sup>339</sup> But that does not mean that it is not a real possibility, and

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<sup>336</sup> **Rodríguez**, Víctor Manuel. "The foundation of the National Museum of Colombia. Ambivalences in the Narrative of the Modern Colombian Nation." *Nomadas (Colombia)* 8 (1998); **Black**, Graham, ed. *Museums and the challenge of change: Old institutions in a new world*. Routledge, 2020.

<sup>337</sup> **Zolberg**, Vera L. "'An elite experience for everyone': Art museums, the public, and cultural literacy." In: **Rogoff**, I., & **Sherman**, D.J. *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*. Routledge. 2004 320 p. p.69-85; **Earle**, Wendy. "Cultural education: Redefining the role of museums in the 21st century." *Sociology Compass* 7.7 (2013): 533-546.

<sup>338</sup> **National Museum of Colombia** "In the Regions" Retrieved from: <https://shorturl.at/Hl3yf>; **Muñoz**, Laura Ximena Vanegas. "The National Museum of Colombia and the Representations of the National: Reflections on Peace and Globalization." *Journal of Social Sciences* 158 (2017).

<sup>339</sup> **Jaramillo** Marín, Jefferson, and Carlos **Del Cairo**. "The dilemmas of museumification. Reflections on two state initiatives for the construction of collective memory in Colombia." *Memory and Society* 17.35 (2013): 76-92;

so, since other cultural institutions of a national nature, such as the cultural area of the Bank of the Republic, have a long tradition of holding this type of traveling exhibition in various venues scattered throughout the national geography. This reconfiguration of the National Museum could be based on an inter-institutional dialogue with these existing examples to rethink "the national" that this museum has on the occasion of its two centuries of existence.

In any case, the future of history museums in Colombia, especially those dedicated to Independence, whether their institutional character of national order or the National Museum, has a problematic but promising outlook. Moving away a little from the special case of the National Museum of Colombia, we can find several examples of spaces dedicated to disseminating the history of the Independence process in Colombia. Today, many institutions dedicated to this specific activity could be listed. Still, two clear examples are worth highlighting, particularly their administrative nature and specific heritage value. I am referring to the Quinta de Bolívar House and the Independence Museum, both located in the historic center of Bogotá in two buildings of an exceptional heritage character for the discourse of national identity, one being the residence of the liberator Simón Bolívar when he lived in Bogotá, and the other a privileged space in the corners of what was once the Plaza Mayor de Santafé and today is the Plaza de Bolívar in the political and social center of Bogotá and Colombia.

The Museum of Independence is the smallest building in this square, where the history of the nation has been established and written on all four sides through its institutions. On the eastern side is the primate cathedral of Colombia and the archbishop's palace, on the south side is the façade of the national capital built for several decades since 1851, on the western side is the Liévano palace, the former headquarters of the Liévano galleries, the main commercial center of Bogotá at the end of the nineteenth century, and on the north side is the new version of the Palace of Justice, headquarters of the judicial branch of Colombian political power, which was assaulted by the M19 guerrillas in November 1985 and then retaken by blood and fire by the Colombian forces of order.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>340</sup>**Higuera** Silva, Angelica *Remember, remember the 6th and 7th of November : Colombia 1985 siege of the Palace of Justice*. Masters thesis, Concordia University. (2010); **Vega** Cantor, Renán. "The Palace of Justice Massacre: Emblematic Example of State Terrorism in Colombia (November 6-7, 1985)." *The Agora USB* 16.1 (2016): 107-133; **Leal-Guerrero**, Sigifredo. "'The Holocaust' or 'The Salvation of Democracy' Memory and Political Struggle in the Aftermath of Colombia's Palace of Justice Massacre." *Latin American Perspectives* 42.3 (2015): 140-161.

This unique location of this house museum allows it to have a powerful historical background that crosses the different historical layers of modern Colombian society. On the first floor of this building, on July 20, 1810, was the store of Don José González Llorente, a Spanish citizen, who sold various merchandise, including imported objects, among which was a porcelain vase brought from the queen's Talavera factories in Spain and of significant value. That Friday, July 20, market day, the Morales brothers (under prior instruction in a plot organized by the Creole elite of Santafé with the clear objective of starting a brawl on market day) entered Don Antonio's store and after a discussion about the damned vase to be lent to tidy the table on the occasion of the arrival of Don Antonio Villavicencio, a popular brawl began that triggered the beginning of the *juntas* emergence of 1810 (which had been discussed in the historical context offered in the introduction to this thesis) in the capital of the viceroyalty of New Granada.<sup>341</sup>

Later, the building was destroyed and incinerated during another significant episode in national history and, especially in Bogotá, such as the so-called "*Bogotazo*", a series of revolts and excesses caused by mourning and generalized anger over the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the leading candidate to win the presidential elections on behalf of the Liberal Party on April 9, 1948. With its reconstruction and institution as a history museum and with the impetus given to it by the sesquicentennial of Colombia's Independence in the 1960s, this house on the corner of the Plaza de Bolívar would once again be the protagonist of another dark page in Colombian history as it was the place where several of the hostages who were during the taking of the Palace of Justice in Colombia were evacuated alive. 1985, and who were later disappeared by members of the National Army within the museum's facilities.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> **Marín** Leoz, Juana M<sup>a</sup>. "Genealogy of an Act. The signatories of the Act of the Extraordinary Cabildo of Santafé of July 20, 1810." *Memory and Society* 15.31 (2011): 10-28; **Pareja** Ortiz, Manuel. "The Anonymous Witnesses of July 20, 1810." *Memory and Society* 15.30 (2011): 39-51.

<sup>342</sup> **Villarreal**, Álvaro Francisco Amaya, and Gustavo Emilio Cote Barco. "The Taking of the Palace of Justice: Reparation for Damage in Events of Human Rights Violations." *Vniversitas* 55.112 (2006): 317-349; **Jaramillo**, José. "The Holocaust from the Inside. A look at the case of the Palace of Justice [Anonymous interview]." *Trans-crossing Frontiers* two (2012): 140-147; **Rincón**, David. *Canción Fact: The Taking of the Palace of Justice": an approach to the museographic representation of historical trauma*. Diss. master's thesis), ENCRYM-INAH, 2016.



Image 44. This porcelain vase is considered to be the one broken during the revolt of the 20th of July of 1810 in Santafé. Museum of the Independence, Bogotá, Colombia.

Today, this space is consolidated and considered one of the most important museums in the city, a key point of reference to understand the history of Colombia in its different stages and a space of memory not only concerning Independence, which continues to be its greatest strength but also with the various paths that the political and social life of the country and its capital have had and of the which this house has been a witness and agent of memory.<sup>343</sup> These two situations combine to today have an institution in charge of the mission of promoting a space that includes and involves citizens with the colonial and republican past of the city, as well as serving as a receptacle for one of the most important relics of the Colombian nation such as the base of the broken vase after the fight of July 20, 1810.

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<sup>343</sup> **Castro** Benitez, Daniel, and Camilo Sánchez Arango. "The new Museum of Colombian Independence." *Illapa Mana Tukukuq* 8 (2011): 121-134.; **Vargas** Álvarez, Sebastián. "Re-semantizing Independence and Thinking About Citizenship: The Renovation Project of the Casa del Florero Museum of Independence." *Yearbook of Regional and Border History* 21.2 (2016): 75-100.

Despite the various layers of rich history that the building and its collections can tell, its primary relationship with the public is implicit in its name, as tourists and locals recognize it as "the house of the vase." It is this recognition that makes the museographic discourse of this museum aimed not only at showing temporary exhibitions of various objects from a very valuable collection that allows us to tell and understand daily life during the last years of the viceroyalty and the first years of the republic.<sup>344</sup> As well as an essential presence of the events that occurred in the 20th century that are still part of a living and unfortunately tragic memory of Colombian society, but also as the space where perhaps the most well-known and venerated historical object of Colombian history is sacredly exhibited: the Llorente vase, or rather, what was left of him.

On the other hand, the Quinta de Bolívar house museum is located in what was the personal residence of Simón Bolívar on the outskirts of Bogotá in the eastern hills. A space that, from the first years of the independent republic, became a place of remembrance and, to a certain extent, veneration of the figure of the liberator and the process of Independence itself. On land occupied mainly through a large green area with endemic species, and called today the Bolivarian garden, you can also find, based on specific documents, the rooms that the liberator occupied during his stays on this property.<sup>345</sup> This museum has a collection and exhibition spaces that allow you to reconstruct the daily life not only of the political elites of the early years of the Colombian Republic but also of the other layers of the population that accompanied them in the service and areas such as the kitchen or the stables.

It is also the meeting point for a large part of the commemorations related to independence and the figure of the liberator. Commemorations that extend beyond the official, with a permanent agenda of cultural activities aimed at the general public, both national and foreign and both school and specialized, without forgetting that it is in the Quinta de Bolívar where the Colombian government generally receives official visits, and where in its spaces you can find the vestiges of these visits or

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<sup>344</sup> **Hernández de Alba**, Guillermo. "Chronicle of the Foundation of the House Museum of July 20, 1810". In: *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades*, Volume LXXIII Bogotá: Editorial Kelly, 1986; **Castro**, Daniel. *The Museum of July 20, 1810: Between Literal Memory and the Exemplary Minority (1960-2000)*, (Master's thesis), Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2012

<sup>345</sup> **McDaniel** Tarver, Gina. "Liberating History: New Museology at the Casa Museo Quinta de Bolívar." *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum* 6.4 (2014): 53.

meetings of a diplomatic nature that have had the figure of the liberator and to the past as a regional between the so-called Bolivarian countries a common point.<sup>346</sup> These events are such as the conference of the Organization of American Countries in 1948 (precisely during the days in which Jorge Eliecer Gaitán was assassinated, producing the Bogotazo that destroyed a large part of the city) or various commemorations of both the birth and the death of the liberator, of which there are plaques and monuments in the different spaces of the museum.

This museum is also the space where, as mentioned above, the sword of the Liberator was exhibited for a certain time, which the M19 guerrillas stole in January 1974.<sup>347</sup> This episode of contemporary Colombian history, which connects directly and ideologically with the process of Independence, once again has a special relevance on the half-century anniversary of that event and the various transformations that the absence of the sword in the museum's collections for so long brought about in public opinion. Taking this into account, both museums, being part of the same administrative entity recognized as the Museum of Independence, have had in recent years and continue to have a substantial presence in the cultural and educational atmosphere of the Colombian capital, where, thanks to constant work on the part of the people in charge of their operation, maintain a permanent dialogue with their audiences through events, workshops, discussions, and temporary exhibitions. In addition to the opening services and exhibition to the public of the permanent collections.

Within the local spaces outside the centralized focus of the discourse on national independence, it is worth highlighting the efforts made in the so-called heritage towns of Colombia where the vast

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<sup>346</sup> **Fajardo** de Rueda, Marta. "Fuentes históricas y documentales para el estudio del culto al Libertador Simón Bolívar." *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 11 (1983): 351-361; **Alonso**, Gabriel Samacá. "Commemorations. The centenary of the death of Simón Bolívar from Colombia (1930): commemorations and uses of the past in a relational key." In: **Cuevas**, María Fernanda, et al. *Colombia connected: The "Tibet of South America" in global perspective, nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Universidad del Rosario, 2023.

<sup>347</sup> **El Tiempo** (18/01/1974) Humberto Diez "Asaltan Quinta de Bolívar y Consejo" <https://shorturl.at/cJxJ5>; **Palacios**, Paulo César León. "The spectacular launch of the urban guerrilla in Colombia, the M-19 in 1974." *Histories: Directorate of Historical Studies of the INAH* (2012): 104-105 p.103-116; **Riaño**, José Yamel, and Jaime Jaramillo Panesso. *The Sword of Bolívar: The M-19 Narrated*. ITM, 2006; **Benítez**, Mario Luna. "The M-19 in the Context of the Guerrillas in Colombia." *Society and Economy* 10 (2006): 157-188; **Florez Restrepo**, Juan Felipe. *The sword and the pen*. Diss. Master. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2018; **Carreño**, Manuel Francisco. "Chronicle of a robbery as a pod." At Casa Museo Quinta de Bolívar, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Colombia, Internet Archive.org <https://shorturl.at/SbckW>; **Aguilera**, Mario. "The patriotic heroes of the Colombian guerrillas." In *Ciudadanías en escena: Performance y derechos culturales en Colombia*, edited by Paolo Vignolo, 529–540. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2009.

majority and not only governed under a centralist aegis have established themselves as references for the local history of towns such as Guaduas, El Socorro, Vélez or Ciénaga, but as spaces that respond to that cultural pilgrimage and that allow their visitors, either specialists or interested in the subject who go to this place only to have the sensory experience of being in the same spaces in which 200 years ago certain characters of the Independence lived or certain events of the war itself took place, or even unsuspecting tourists who visit these same spaces for the other tourist offers and activities they can offer and complement their visit with a visit to these site museums or period museums, with immersive interiors and decorations that transport the visitor to the times of Independence, such as the museum of the birthplace of Policarpa Salavarrieta in the town of Guaduas in the department of Cundinamarca.<sup>348</sup>

The case of Greece is particular. Understanding its historical heritage in the last 100 or 200 years from a transnational perspective and sharing the experience of other countries, especially on the European continent, shows tourism and these cultural and transnational spheres a type of heritage content that falls on that generalized vision of what Greece is or "the Greek" that often has an identity extrapolation to "the European" and that It is intended for the visit, consumption and analysis of foreigners who visit the country, and who generally aspire and hope to find what responds to their demands of this generalized and to a certain extent paradigmatic vision.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> **Borja** Alarcón, Isabel, and Alfonso López Vega. *Policarpa Salavarrieta: A woman at war*. Editorial Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Editorial UD, 2012; **Prada**, Daniela. "La Pola, allegory of the nation: memories and silences in the representations of Policarpa Salavarrieta." In: **Schuster** Sven and O. **Hernández** Quiñones, *Imagining Latin America: History and Visual Culture, XIX-XXI Centuries*. Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario (2017).

<sup>349</sup> **Sotiropoulos**, Michalis. "The Transnational Foundations of the Greek Revolution of 1821." In: **Cartledge**, Yianni, and Andrekos **Varnava**, (eds.) *New Perspectives on the Greek War of Independence: Myths, Realities, Legacies and Reflections*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022. 357 p. p. 23-44; **Kitromilides**, Paschalis M. "Paradigm nation: the study of nationalism and the 'canonization' of Greece." In: **Beaton**, Roderick (ed.) *The Making of Modern Greece*. Routledge, 2019. 21-32; **Haagsma**, M. *The Impact of Classical Greece on European and National Identities*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2021.

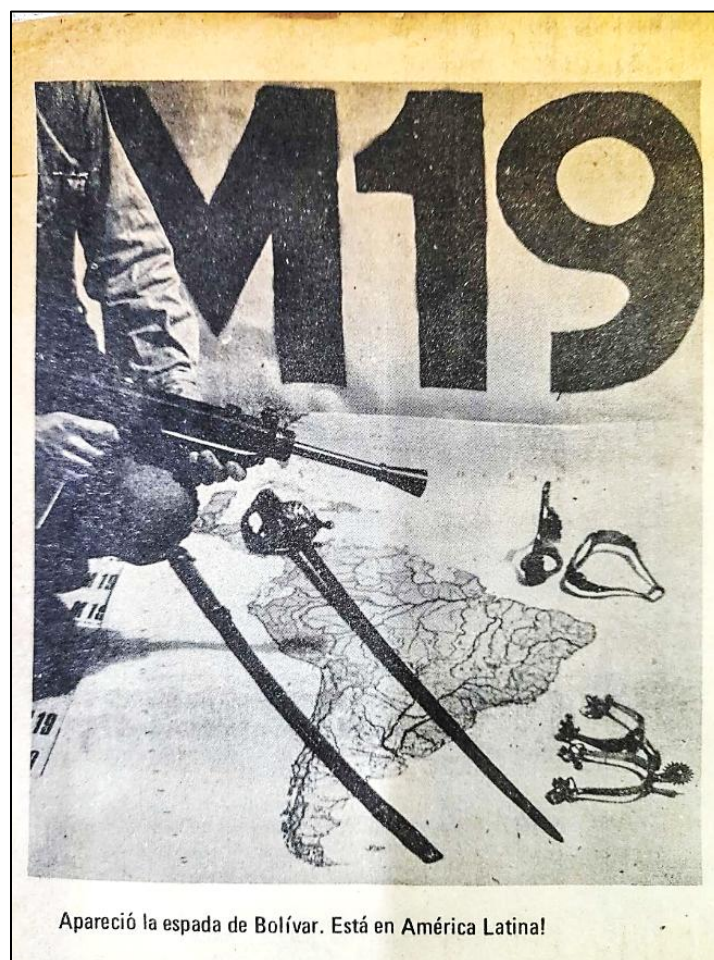


Image 45. Photograph from the first issue of the "Alternativa" Magazine. With the sword taken from the Quinta de Bolívar Museum by the M19 guerrilla. February 1974.

However, as in many other cases, including Austria, most of the Balkan countries, Hungary, Italy itself, and many other examples, the history of nation-building and its identity is directed and exhibited through history museums only for the local public.<sup>350</sup> The information, specialized publications, signage, and research resources of national history museums are largely available only in the local language because those who speak it are those who are interested in and visit this type of museum.

<sup>350</sup> **Trofanenko**, Brenda M. "The educational promise of public history museum exhibits." *Theory & Research in Social Education* 38.2 (2010): 270-288; **Leftwich**, Mariruth. "New intersections for history education in museums." *Journal of Museum Education* 41.3 (2016): 146-151; **Hegedús**, Anita. "Multilingualism, culture, museum learning." *Hungarian Educational Research Journal* 13.3 (2023): 443-456; **Novarino**, Marco. "The contribution of Alerino Palma di Cesnola to the Independence and consolidation of the Greek Nation." *Italian support for the Greek Revolution 1821-1832 A dress rehearsal for the Risorgimento*. EPTbooks, 2021. 104-127.

Thus, in Greece, the experience of visiting the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, which is an institution of international renown, is considered one of the important points to visit in the city where tourists and researchers from all parts of the planet resort to add to their itineraries, are not the same experience as visiting the National Historical Museum of Greece, that although it has and is evident the effort of its administration to make its contents available in a language other than Greek, its presence and impact is not the same within the tourist and academic circuit outside the speakers of its own language. As mentioned before, this is not a unique case of the problems and paradoxes that the past of the southern Balkan peninsula, which is now recognized as the Hellenic Republic, has. This is also true of the Louvre and the Prado, the Vatican museums, and the national archaeological museums in various regions of Italy. When it comes to leaving this great circuit of museums, which have been cemented as the places to visit or study, the possibilities of doing so in a language that is not the local one are rather scarce.<sup>351</sup>

The weight of the past in Greece is particular. Due to its geographical location, it has been at a neuralgic point in the development of human societies over time, something that we know more succinctly as history. The south of the Balkan peninsula, which corresponds to the current territory of the Hellenic Republic, but also the western coast of Anatolia, the Black Sea, the south of the Italian peninsula, the Levantine coast, various points of North Africa, and finally, what could be considered as the eastern Mediterranean, have had over time the permanent imprint of a series of societies, states, or even empires that we can consider as Greek. From the Palaeolithic settlements that would lead to the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations, through the expansion of these societies through navigation and trade during the Archaic period and the foundation of the so-called Greek colonies. Without obviously leaving aside the classical period of the city-states such as Athens, Sparta, and Thebes, to the unified states with a considerable territorial extension, such as the Macedonian empire of Philip II and Alexander the Great, the kingdoms of the Diadochi, and the eastern version of the Roman empire, with its Greek linguistic character and its Orthodox

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<sup>351</sup> **Merriman**, Nick, 'The Crisis of Representation in Archaeological Museums', in **McManamon** Francis P. and **Alf Hatton** (ed.) *Cultural Resource Management in Contemporary Society. Perspectives on Managing and Presenting the Past*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 300-309

religious denomination, which would mark the ethos of the Greek world until long after 1453 and the fall of Constantinople.<sup>352</sup>

As a result of all this historical movement, the Greek Revolution and the beginning of the modern Greek nation, of Neo-Hellenism, and of the need to establish a nation coupled to its modern terms, which includes or adheres to the Greek-speaking populations of the eastern Mediterranean. Within these efforts, and with the awareness that the weight of the past of that Earth is not only of interest to its native inhabitants but in general to the vast majority of countries that consider themselves in one way or another heirs or descendants of the peoples, ideas, and innovations that arose in Greece, the intentions appear in the mid-nineteenth century for the creation of a National Museum of History of Greece. This idea finally materialized with the foundation of the historical and ethnological society of Greece in 1882, which began a process of compilation and collection of pieces corresponding to these two scientific subjects (history and ethnology) and of which the National History Museum of Greece today collects and exhibits its collection.<sup>353</sup>

Like the National Museum of Colombia, the National History Museum of Greece was intimately linked to institutions of higher education; in this order of ideas, the first headquarters of the collection of the historical society was established in the building of the National Technical University of Metsovos, today known as the Polytechnic as mentioned by Demirtzakis.<sup>354</sup> Its collection began to be made up of donations given by the various descendants or even survivors of the Greek Revolution who saw the formation of a museum as one of the ways to establish the

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<sup>352</sup> **Myrogiannis**, Stratos. *The Emergence of a Greek Identity (1700-1821)*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012; **Arabatzi**, Georgios, Sotiris Mitralaxis, and Georgios Steiris, eds. *The Problem of Modern Greek Identity: From the Ecumene to the Nation-State*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016; **Frary**, Lucien J. *Russia and the making of modern Greek identity, 1821-1844*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2015; **Livanios**, Dimitris. "The quest for Hellenism: religion, nationalism and collective identities in Greece (1453-1913)." *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 3 (2006): 33-70.

<sup>353</sup> **Dermitzaki**, Aikaterini. "The foundation and collecting policy of the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece (1882–1926)." *Journal of the History of Collections* 29.2 (2017): 345–364; **Lappa**, T. *Τα 100 χρόνια της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας και του Μουσείου της 1882-1982*. (The 100 years of the Historical and Ethnological Society and the Museum of 1882-1982.) 1982 IEEE, Athens.

<sup>354</sup> **Dermitzakis**, Ekaterini. *Το Εθνικό Ιστορικό Μουσείο της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελῆς ἄδος: ίδρυση, συλλεκτική πολιτική και ἄλλες δράσεις (1882-1926)* (The National Historical Museum of the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece: creation, collecting policy and other activities (1882-1926)). Dissertation. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA). Faculty of Philosophy. Department of History and Archaeology, 2013. P.355

legacy and permeate and disseminate the discourse of national unity to the population. Communion within the Congregation thus clarifies the need to preserve a way of maintaining the present for the new generations. This not only happened from public institutions, but the great material legacy that this episode of Hellenic history left has also nourished and allowed the creation of museums with private collections, whose most recognized case is the Benaki museum, or countless local museums such as in the Peloponnese area, in Crete, or in the north in Thessaloniki.

A similar feature that the National Historical Museum of Athens also shares with the National Museum of Colombia is that the place that houses its collection is a historic building that had a different nature and mission in the past and was not exclusively built or designed to house a museum as is the case with the new Acropolis Museum or the new National Gallery of Athens.<sup>355</sup> The museum is located in what was formerly the first parliament of the Kingdom of Greece, a hidden gem in the center of Athens, whose neoclassical architecture and its proximity to other points of interest built during this process of establishing public memory and national identity and its reflection in urban planning, is an example of both the establishment of a discourse of national identity in contemporary terms for Greece, as well as the insertion of this country into a broader national concert, using the legacy of both ancient Greece and the topics most relevant to its identity such as Byzantine Orthodox Christianity and its reflection in the architectural cut of the old parliament building.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> **Plantzos**, Dimitris. "Behold the raking geison: the new Acropolis Museum and its context-free archaeologies." *Antiquity* 85.328 (2011): 613-625; **Fouseki**, Kalliopi. "Conflicting discourses on the construction of the new Acropolis Museum: Past and present." *European Review of History—Revue européenne d'Histoire* 13.4 (2006): 533-548.; **Hamilakis**, Yannis. "Museums of oblivion." *Antiquity* 85.328 (2011): 625-629.

<sup>356</sup> **Agelopoulos**, Giorgos. "Perceptions, construction and definition of Greek national identity in late nineteenth, early twentieth century Macedonia." *Balkan Studies* 36.2 (1995): 247-263; **Erskine**, Andrew. "Ancient History and National Identity." In: Erskine, Andrew. *A companion to ancient history*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. P.555-563.



Image 46. Objects produced and traded around Europe depicted the Greek independence struggle, and commodities were used as examples of both propaganda and Orientalism. National Historical Museum of Greece.

Likewise, in this building, as in the panopticon of Bogotá, the layers of history overlap, sometimes coming together, sometimes hiding, and the history of the building itself, which is not always the most cordial or digestible, as, for example, the case of the trial against the generals of the Greek army after the great catastrophe in Asia Minor in 1922 where they were all sentenced to death for their failure to An invasion of Anatolia<sup>357</sup>, it combines to give an air of sacredness and veneration to the building itself, making it also part of the collection and attractions that the museum offers.

The bicentennial of the Greek Revolution of 1821 has revealed the potential that this historical event has not only within the memory and national opinion in Hellenic terms but also in the possibilities of dissemination and resignification of action of this past that can be generated from various cultural institutions such as museums.<sup>358</sup> Another relevant case, which is coupled with this remodeling of historical memory through the institutional efforts generated by the bicentennial of

<sup>357</sup> Inglis, Sarah. "Goodbye Anatolia: The Trial of Six and International Reaction towards Greece." *HAEMUS, An Electronic Journal for the History and Archaeology of the Balkan Peninsula*, vol. 1, 2012, p 199-216; Laughland, John. *A history of political trials: From Charles I to Saddam Hussein*. Vol. 7. Peter lang, 2008. P. 59-61

<sup>358</sup> Some examples of that are: **Kastriti** Natasa , **Katsimardou** Regina (eds.) ΕΠΑΝΑΚΥΣΤΑΣΗ'21: Η ΕΚΔΟΣΗ (RECONSTITUTION' 21: THE PUBLICATION) National Historical Museum Athens 202, 623 p.; **Karamanolakis**, Vangelis, and Christos **Triantafyllou**. "From the Greek Revolution of 1821 to the Metapolitefsi: Historiographical debates in Greece across two centuries." *Historein* 19.2 (2021); Vasilaki, Rosa. "Colonising the Past: The Greek Revolution as an Archetypal Instance of Cultural Imperialism." *Duty to Revolt: Transnational and Commemorative Aspects of Revolution*. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2023. 15-27.; and the website of the "GREECE 2021" committee 1821-2021: <https://www.greece2021.gr/en/>

the Revolution, is the long-awaited remodeling of the building of the National Gallery of Athens, whose collection of pictorial works, focused especially on the pictorial work of modern Greece, fulfills an essential task not only for the activities and developments planned for this commemoration of the 200th anniversary but also for the activities and developments planned for this commemoration of the 200th anniversary. However, another focus should be placed on cultural activity in the city of Athens, particularly, and in the Hellenic Republic, in general.

This museum has the great masterpieces of Hellenic art of recent centuries, from Dominicans Theotokopulos, better known as the renowned Greek pictorial reference of the art of the first modern, to Yannis Gaïtis or Nikos Engonopoulos, Greek representatives of the artistic avant-garde. In particular, the national gallery has a strong collection of historical paintings, focusing on the Revolution of 1821, following the style and pictorial movements of the first decades of the 19th century that focused on the depiction of national episodes in various forms such as portraits, allegories or large canvases.<sup>359</sup>

These paintings of the Greek Revolution are, above all, a collection of primary sources that allow us to understand the motivations and limitations that the national discourse of identity and unity came to have. In a single room of the museum, you can find the painting of the blessing of the revolutionary pavilion in Patras on March 25, 1821 (which, like the Colombian cry for independence on July 20, 1810, was a premeditated act on the part of the notables who were looking for motivation or justification to start a Revolution), to the portraits of Theodoros Kolokotronis, Georgios Karaiskakis as well as anonymous soldiers and warriors and the allegory of the nation, where practically all the most recognized names who participated in the Greek Revolution are found and which is generally used as a reference image to describe this historical episode and of which the National Gallery is the custodian.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> **Katsanaki** Maria (ed.) *1821 in Painting. Greece Demands its Historical Art Gallery*, National Gallery, Alexandros Soutsos Museum, Athens, 2021; **Katsaridou**, Iro, and Anastasia **Kontogiorgi**. "When El Greco (re) became Theotocopoulos: Policies and political discourse of the National Gallery of Athens." In: **Troelenberg**, Eva-Maria, and Melania **Savino**, eds. *Images of the art museum: Connecting gaze and discourse in the history of museology*. Vol. 3. De Gruyterkost, 2017. 239-259

<sup>360</sup> **Mentzafou-Polyzou** Olga. *1821 Μορφές και Θέματα από την Ελληνική Επανάσταση. Από τις συλλογές της , Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης και του Ιδρύματος Ευριπίδη Κουτλίδη (1821 Figures and Themes from the Greek War of Independence. From the collections of the National Gallery and the Euripidis Koutlidis Foundation)* National Gallery Alexandros Soutsos Museum, Athens 2004, 159 p.



Image 47. "The Army Camp of Karaiskakis". Theodoros Vryzakis, oil on canvas (detail), 1855. National Gallery of Athens, Greece.

○ **The museum as a pilgrimage lair**

The centralized and hierarchical character of the museum has already been mentioned by establishing a discourse around the pieces it contains and giving it a particular order and relevance that, after a process of dissemination and dissemination of this narrative, is no longer only reproduced by specific musical institutions but also by their audience, by its visitors. This begins with this reproduction to transfigure that discourse in some cases in a transcendental way; this is how it becomes, to a certain extent, a vital experience to visit certain specific museums, to see and experience certain objects or specific works.<sup>361</sup> But at the same time, within this discursive

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<sup>361</sup> **García, Rosa.** "Museums, imaginaries and memories in the "staging" of history." *Cultures: Debates and Perspectives of a Changing World* 10 (2016): 151-172.

hierarchy, a kind of prestige begins to be established, generated by the time in which this symbiosis between museum institutions and the public is consolidated.<sup>362</sup>

This prestige translates into a kind of sacredness, where museums are containers of objects that are considered important not only for their historical relevance, their state of conservation, their relevance in the past of a society, or a specific personality. Rather, they acquire the character of a relic, a relic in the proper sense of the term, where it is the materialization of an object that belonged or was at a time that has been consecrated as important or fundamental for the public and institutions.<sup>363</sup> However, in the sense that the visit and interaction with the object on display can be considered a transcendental experience for the audiences who visit these museums, in the words of Maleuvre, it is a ritual with the past.<sup>364</sup> Examples of the world's great museums are quite evident: the Mona Lisa in the Louvre, Klimt's Kiss in the Belvedere in Vienna, the frescoes of Pompeii, the Aztec calendar in the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, and a rather bulging list of places and objects that give a sense of greater transcendence both to the visit itself and to the experience of visitors to the museum. These spaces. McDaniel speaks of the Quinta de Bolívar as a sacred place, and the National Museum of Colombia itself, on the occasion of its 175th anniversary, published a catalog entitled "Temple of History and Art".<sup>365</sup>

It is in this same sense of relic where the reproduction of narratives about certain objects, whether tangible or intangible, begins to generate so much veneration, in the sense of using the object exhibited in the museum as a means to explain its importance, beyond the same discourse that museums or the object itself generate. It is here where objects go from being pieces of museums to symbols of this, and visiting them, or having the experience of being in their presence, becomes a desire of those who are interested in visiting it. This responds to the same logic of a pilgrimage being in the presence of relics of a specific religious type.<sup>366</sup> It is like this, and not only since these

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<sup>362</sup> **López Rosas**, William Alfonso. "Museums, Cultural Heritage and Patronage: The Conceptual Limits of the Financing of Memory Institutions in Colombia." *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 46.1 (2010): 87-114.

<sup>363</sup> **Pulido Chaparro**, Sandra Carolina. "From heritage relics to memories materialized in the National Museum." *Memory and Society* 19.38 (2015): 74-87.

<sup>364</sup> **Maleuvre**, Didier. *Museum memories: History, technology, art*. Stanford University Press, 1999 p.1

<sup>365</sup> **McDaniel Tarver**, Gina. "Liberating History: New Museology at the Casa Museo Quinta de Bolívar." *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum* 6.4 (2014): 53; **Londoño Vélez**, S. (2000). Temple of history and art. *Cultural and Bibliographic Bulletin*, 37(54), 123-125. Retrieved from [https://publicaciones.banrepcultural.org/index.php/boletin\\_cultural/article/view/1392](https://publicaciones.banrepcultural.org/index.php/boletin_cultural/article/view/1392)

<sup>366</sup> **Hahn**, Cynthia. *The reliquary effect: enshrining the sacred object*. Reaktion Books, 2016. P. 48-80; **Merryman**, John Henry. "The nation and the object." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 3.1 (1994): 61-76.

times of social networks and the excess of sharing daily experiences with locals and strangers that being able to say what it is was in front of a certain specific piece or a certain exhibition in a museum or key moment becomes a source of pride and in some cases prestige for those who have lived it.

This brings us back to the hierarchization of spaces of memory and dissemination. The organization of events, places, and characters that, according to their importance and usefulness, have to support or sustain those exposed by a historiographical and memory discourse, such as the one that seeks to generate a national identity, is necessary to articulate and make convincing the discourse itself.<sup>367</sup> It may be that within that same feeling of national identity, there are specific layers and dimensions: there is a national discourse established by institutions, dispersed and reproduced by educational and cultural institutions such as museums, but also that given its reception, you read familiar both to the citizens who make up that state that seeks to identify themselves in that discourse and to those who do not belong to that geographical space but recognize the validity of that discourse.

On the other hand, there are regional, local, and practically personal meanings that can be conceived of this discourse throughout different moments or stages of the construction of a society or of the individual himself over time.<sup>368</sup> It is very common to understand the processes of national formation within the first years of school as a heroic feat where the dichotomies between good and bad are tremendously clear and do not need to be refuted or reanalyzed. But with the passage of time, this becomes a little more critical about this past when it comes into contact with similar discourses of other countries or nations or with the approach either in a brainier way or, in a few cases, delusional to the historical past.

It is here where this organization and hierarchy generates a certain prestige, understanding this prestige as the preference or importance that the public gives to particular objects, places, or characters within that discourse of national identity or historical episode that does not necessarily have to be Independence. But on the subject that concerns this discussion, it is evident that specific spaces and names have more weight, remembrance, and prestige when it comes to coming into contact with that period of history, either by visiting a museum (and paying more attention to

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<sup>367</sup> **Duncan**, Carol. *Civilizing rituals: Inside public art museums*. Routledge, 2005; **McLean**, Fiona. "Museums and the construction of national identity: A review." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 3.4 (1998): 244-252;

<sup>368</sup> **Goldhill**, Simon. "What is local identity? The politics of cultural mapping." In: Whitmarsh, Tim, ed. *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World* Cambridge University Press, 2010.: 46-68.

specific pieces of the collections of this museum than others) by reading a book about the period or the characters who starred in it, or as will be analyzed in the following sections, in the selection of the characters and experiences to be disseminated to give strength, novelty, and remembrance within a much wider public to a specific historical discourse and to the works that are carried out on it.<sup>369</sup>

These routes are built according to certain institutional and academic guidelines that could even be called heritage routes: in the Colombian case, it can be understood as a pilgrimage of a national academic nature to visit spaces such as the Quinta de san Pedro Alejandrino in Santa Marta, the place where Simón Bolívar died, or the sites of the battles of the liberation campaign of 1819 in the current department of Boyacá such as the Vargas swamp in Paipa and the Boyacá bridge near Tunja. In the same way, there is the possibility of making a circuit not only for tourism but also for heritage and academics through the towns of the 1781 communal insurrection, such as Socorro, Vélez, Zipaquirá, Honda, or Guaduas. Another example already focuses on the local as the various spaces of the original moment, sometimes autarkic but not for this reason disconnected as was the Independence of Cartagena de Indias, and the various places in the historic center of the city that allow us to reconstruct not only the particular independence process but the commemoration through the years of the heroic struggle of its inhabitants.

In Greece, clearly, something similar was happening. As stated above, the multiple diverse and juxtaposed layers of history that Greece has sometimes cause the history of the Greek Revolution to be combined with other spaces and places important to the history of Greek society. In addition to the various institutional sites that can be found in the Greek capital, from the Acropolis, with its new museum, which is also an important monument for the process of national Independence, as well as the various museums that talk about this period of time such as the museum of national history or the museum of history of Athens.<sup>370</sup> There are other juxtaposed spaces, such as the site

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<sup>369</sup> **Levitt**, Peggy. *Artifacts and allegiances: How museums put the nation and the world on display*. Univ of California Press, 2015; **Watson**, Sheila. *National Museums and the origins of nations: Emotional myths and narratives*. Routledge, 2020.

<sup>370</sup> There is many recent literature regarding this topic, some of the most relevant works are: **Lagoiannis-Georgakarakou** Maria, **Koutsoyiannis** Theodoros (eds.) *Δι'αυτά πολεμήσαμεν. Αρχαιότητες και Ελληνική Επανάσταση* (These are what we fought for... Antiquities and the Greek War of Independence). Ministry of Culture, Athens 2019, 469 **Ntaflou**, Christina. "The New Acropolis Museum and the Dynamics of National Museum

of the 1822 Battle of Thermopylae in Thessaly, which is close to the famous site of the Battle of Thermopylae during the Persian Wars in 480 BC. Or the sites of the southern Peloponnese from where the Revolution of 1821 began, which, to a certain extent and consequently, were also the last and most enduring bastions of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine empire in the face of Ottoman domination in mainland Greece.

But as we have already seen, the Greek Revolution had many facets, following the regional nuances of its geography: the region of the islands of the Saronic Gulf, such as Hydra Aegina and Spetses, had a much more active participation in the process of the Greek Revolution on the side of the Greek patriots, and today one of its most important tourist and cultural attractions are the spaces that had a certain importance during this historical process on each of these islands. With a special mention to the Bouboulina museum in Spetses, in his birthplace on the island of the same name. Bouboulina is one of the most remembered figures and perhaps the female figure among the protagonists of the most important revolution. Already in the middle of his life, he financed from his personal fortune a fleet of corsairs who attacked Ottoman ships with brutes.<sup>371</sup>

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Development in **Poulot** Dominique, **Bodenstein** Felicity, and José María **Lanzarote** Guiral (ed.) *Greece. Great Narratives of the Past: Traditions and Revisions in National Museums*, 2011: 97-111; **Garezou**, Maria-xeni, and Stefanos Keramidas. "Greek museums at a crossroads: Continuity and change." *Museum International* 69.3-4 (2017): 12-25; **Bounia**, Alexandra. "Cultural Policy in Greece, the Case of the National Museums (1990-2010): an Overview." 127. In: Eilertsen, Lill, and Arne Bugge Amundsen. *Museum Policies in Europe 1990–2010: Negotiating Professional and Political Utopia*. Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012.

<sup>371</sup> **Kalogeropoulos** Householder April , ed. *Bouboulina and the Greek Revolution: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Heroine of 1821*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2023.402 p.; **Varikas**, Eleni. "Women's Participation in the Greek Revolution, 1800–1827." *Political and Historical Encyclopedia of Women*. Routledge, 2004. pp. 235-252.; **Cothran**, Boyd, Joan **Judge**, and Adrian **Shubert**. *Women Warriors and National Heroes: A Global History*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. 260 p. p. 113-118



Image 48. The entrance hall of the Museum of Laskarina Bouboulina. Spetses, Greece.

The same happens with other islands of the Cyclades, such as Tinos or Paros, and also, in a unique way, there is the island of Crete, which, in its own history, was dominated first by Romans, Arabs, Byzantines, Venetians, and Ottomans, offers a perspective and a particular historical dynamic at the time of the Revolution of 1821. All these sites have local cultural institutions, whether museums or cultural centers, which delve into the role that their localities had in the process of the Revolution and that also serve as an alternative to the visitor who not only wants or does not only seek the traditional cultural offer of Greece in terms of tourism and history, which has an obvious inclination towards classical Greece.

The case of the Historical Museum of Crete helps portray the local and regional perspectives of a national process. Located in the city of Heraklion, the capital of the largest island of Greece, it has developed a judicious process to tell the various layers of the history of the island of Crete from ancient times to the Nazi invasion of 1941. On the occasion of the bicentenary of the revolution of 1821, which had its repercussions on Cretan society, the museum and government institutions held exhibitions and events related to the development of the events of the revolution on the island<sup>372</sup>, even though the events of 1821 were not fruitful for the annexation from Crete to an independent Greek state and this would only happen until 1913 after a great insurrection in 1866 and the expulsion of the Ottomans in 1898<sup>373</sup>

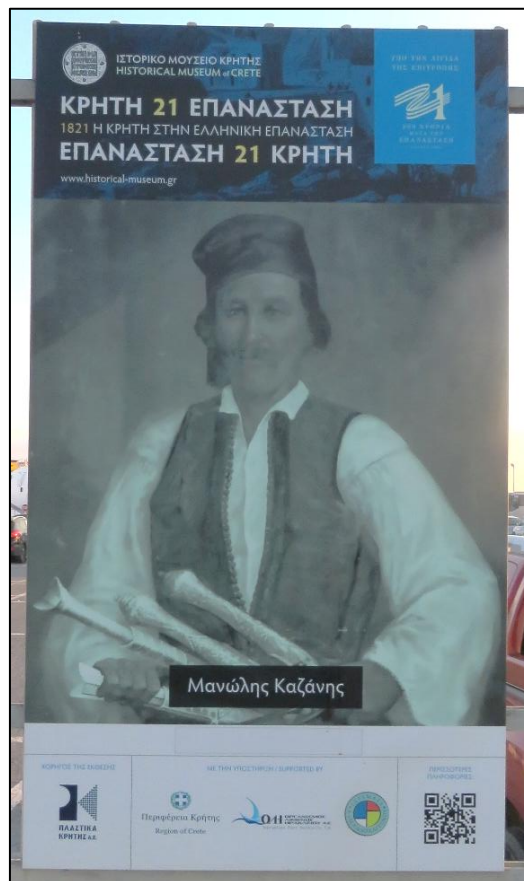


Image 49. Poster for a temporary exhibition about the 1821 revolution at the Historical Museum of Crete. Port of Heraklion, Crete.

<sup>372</sup> Şenişik, Pinar. *The transformation of Ottoman Crete: revolts, politics and identity in the late nineteenth century*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011. P. 82

<sup>373</sup> Kallivretakis, Leonidas. "A century of revolutions: The Cretan question between European and Near Eastern politics." In: Kitromilides, Paschalis M. *Eleftherios Venizelos: the trials of statesmanship*. Edinburgh University Press, 2006. 11-36.

A similar case occurs in Thessaloniki, where the memory of the revolution of 1821 is mixed and sometimes juxtaposed with the irredentist process of northern Greece, which did not join the independent State that emerged in 1830 until several decades later, in what is called the Macedonian struggle. This struggle naturally has a more substantial legacy and presence within the collective imagination of this region. Still, at the same time, the process of 1821 is not overlooked. On the contrary, it has a reasonably necessary representation in spaces such as the War Museum in this city, and which has a series of objects and relics referring to the revolution in 1821 of outstanding importance. For example, a series of engravings by Peter von Hess, an artist of the Bavarian court who would later reign in Greece, which at the time were tremendously useful for the graphic dissemination of the events of the revolution and a selection and ranking of its protagonists.

These two examples are from the periphery of the current state in modern Greece but, at the same time, are two fundamental regions for what constitutes the ethos of the Greek Nation, not only in contemporary times but throughout its history. These examples show us how regional identities are implemented but, at the same time, combine various legacies within collective memory that respond to different memory and identity devices. In both Macedonia and Crete, these elements are tremendously strong. Still, in pragmatic terms, when it comes to identifying with someone who is not Greek, the priority will permanently be attached to a national identity, which is not always the case with the Colombian identity.

- **THE MUSEUM AS A SITE OF EDUCATION/DISSEMINATION.**

Museums are not exclusively spaces for the containment of objects and the knowledge that is generated about them. Museums are also spaces that disseminate specific knowledge that is reproduced by their visitors through the exhibitions and collections that are concentrated in their buildings. A museum is not a space for the exhibition and serial presentation of a series of intentionally classified objects. The museum is alive and functions as long as the elements contained within it enter into a dialogue with those who visit it.<sup>374</sup> And as in any communicational

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<sup>374</sup> **Reyes**, Aura Lisette. "Collect or understand? Case study based on the ethnographic collections of the National Museum of Colombia." (2018).

chain of language and dialogue there is a sender and a receiver, with the emission of a message obviously being the most crucial part of the educational mission of a museum.

The educational possibilities that a museum of any kind, but in this specific case of history, can offer for an audience not necessarily of school age but of different age ranges, of socioeconomic extraction, and of the usefulness of the visit itself are essential to the point that the natural mission of the museum itself can be sung towards the educational perspective, and to make it the flag of the museum's duty to be. Although what is inside the museum can be found in other spaces such as libraries, classrooms, chairs, seminars, and especially in the 21st century through the internet that has allowed systematic democratization of knowledge, museum spaces continue to be the great containers of knowledge that to be acquired, either theoretical, practical or experiential, must be carried out within its facilities. The materiality and tangible experience of visiting the museum generates a much more powerful contact with knowledge than what can be found in classrooms or other spaces that are not necessarily museums.

- **The educational purpose of museums.**

If we go back to the etymological definition of a museum as the home of the muses, understanding them as the allegorical representation of the arts and sciences, the museum is not simply a space where ancient things are safeguarded. These arts and sciences are not only taught or appreciated but also enjoyed. In this order of ideas, the characteristic mission of museums does not only respond to an institutional objective of centralizing and organizing a series of objects or the building itself where the museum is located, in some cases. But in educating the public who visit its facilities.<sup>375</sup>

In a contemporary museum, the educational component is of such importance (at least nominally speaking) that, within the administrative organization chart of the museum institution, there is usually a division in charge of educational practices. It can be found either as an individual division, subordinate, and/or group in other divisions, sharing functions, activities, and resources with other areas such as cultural management, research, curatorship, or dissemination. This internal division

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<sup>375</sup> **Weiser**, M. Elizabeth. *Museum rhetoric: Building civic identity in national spaces*. Penn State University Press, 2017; **Samis**, Peter, and Mimi **Michaelson**. *Creating the visitor-centered museum*. Routledge, 2016; **Casa del Florero Independence Museum**. *Institutional Manual 2015-2016* (Bogotá: s.e., 2015). Cited in: **Vargas Álvarez**, Sebastián. "Re-semantizing Independence and Thinking About Citizenship: The Renovation Project of the Casa del Florero Museum of Independence." *Yearbook of Regional and Border History* 21.2 (2016): 75-100.

of museums may explain their reach, recognition, and legacy. Still, above all, it is essential to know how the space and the institution are managed and what the priorities of their administrators are.

This educational aspect has different scopes and missions. One of the main ones is the formation of audiences. By educatively training visitors to a museum, especially those of school age who, for various reasons, either autonomously come with their families or as an extracurricular activity from their schools, the foundations of future visitors are created, and the collections of these museums come to life beyond the academic discussions that a few scholars may have about it. Museums, especially those of history, must be in this century to stop being inaccessible places that in their origins were reserved for certain political and academic elites (which, to a certain extent, were the same group of individuals) to become open places, in constant communication with their audiences and with continuous access to their connections physically and virtually. This is not a speech, a philanthropic ideal, or one of kindness; it is purely a matter of survival.

It is for this reason that museums have developed educational strategies such as the periodic development of workshops, guided tours focused on both adults and children, specialized visits for academic audiences of various ranks, from elementary school students, university students, or experts in some aspect of the museum collections, as well as an editorial offer that in general terms meets a varied scope from academic publications to academic publications. Specialized magazines, serial magazines, museum guides, and catalogs of the exhibitions, permanent or temporary (sometimes in more than one language), texts referring to art, tourism, or history that contextualize the collections, and, in some cases, even free publications.<sup>376</sup> This body of documentation and this editorial and activity offer make it possible to complete the educational mission of the museums.

Most of the museums analyzed here in both Colombia and Greece have developed throughout their decades of establishment, consolidation, and growth an educational strategy that has allowed not only the generation of audiences who understand the visit to the museum as one of their traditional or special activities within their daily lives, but also the generation of space and a cultural agenda

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<sup>376</sup>For the Colombian case see: **Espitia**, Lina Margarita. "The Museum of Independence-Casa del Vasero: A History of the Evolution of Its Educational Perspectives and Practices." *Revista Grafía-Workbook of the professors of the Faculty of Human Sciences. Universidad Autónoma de Colombia* 16.1 (2023): 155-191; **Caro**, Alejandro Suárez. "Who can play?: An approach to working with children from the National Museum of Colombia." *EducaMuseo* 1 (2022). For the Greek case see: **Kastriti** Natasa, **Katsimardou** Regina, **Panaritis** Panagiota *To '21 αλλιώς. Η Ελληνική Επανάσταση με φιγούρες και διοράματα PLAYMOBIL* (In '21 otherwise. The Greek Revolution with PLAYMOBIL figures and dioramas) National Historical Museum, Athens, 2020

within the cities or towns where they are located, so as not only to keep active the institutional mission of the museum to conserve, exhibit and disseminate its collections, but also to become a focus of cultural activity that does not necessarily have to be strictly related to the theme of the museum's collections. In this order of ideas, and especially in museums of slightly smaller towns that are not found in large cities, generally in these museums where there are spaces for all kinds of cultural dissemination, concerts, talks, academic events, and plays, among many others.

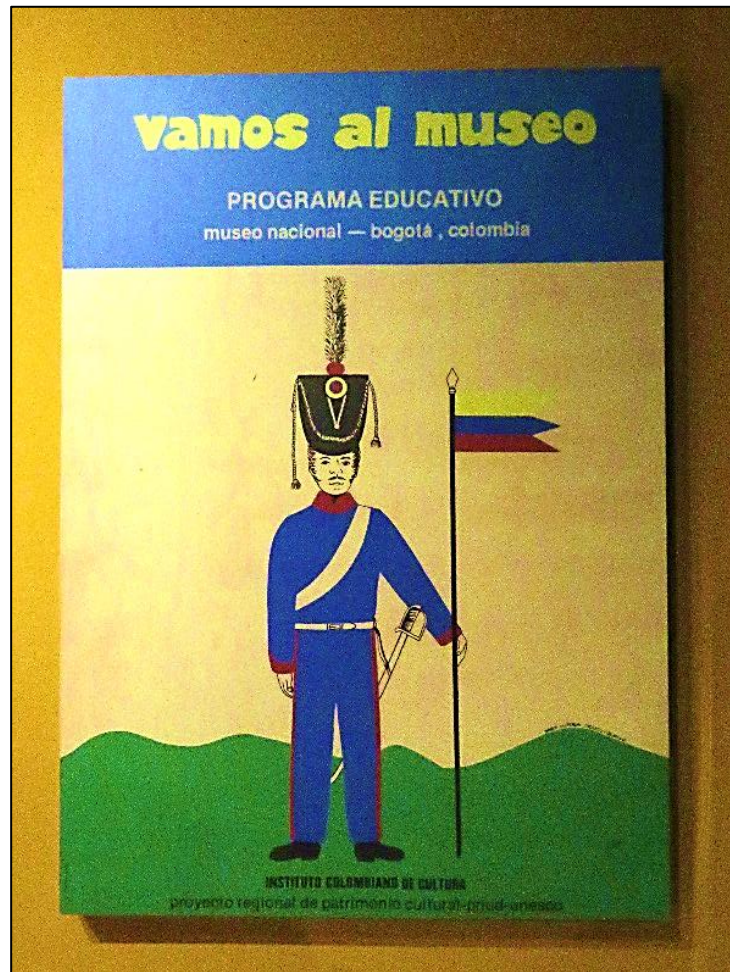


Image 50. Educational material from the 1970s. Temporary exhibition "Lives on campaign: promotions and absences in the Independence (1810-1824)". March 2024. National Museum of Colombia.

○ **Dissemination and divulgation of historical knowledge through museums**

The idea of this generation of audiences and of a cultural agenda that museums of this type, despite their prestige and importance for the heritage of the respective nation, do not necessarily fall into the category that certain museums have, even in these countries such as the gold museum in Colombia or the acropolis museum in Athens where their collection and their prestige in a public

opinion international, gives them an influx of local and foreign public, casual and specialized, which allows a large part of the museum's economic sustenance to come from the tickets that visitors pay to access its spaces.

By not necessarily responding to these dynamics, where from the other extreme there is the overpopulation of museum spaces as happens in the great museums of the world, where the experience of visiting in generation of audiences is totally different, in the museums analyzed here, the museum made the cultural and educational agenda become the space to establish a relationship with the local and national community, which often has no other refuge or space for the development of this type of activity other than a museum. From bird watching in the Bolivarian garden of the Quinta de Bolívar to the concerts held in the auditorium of the National Museum of Colombia to the close relationship that the National Gallery of Athens has with its extensive specialized library, all these museums are living spaces and not simple deposits of old objects.

In this new vision and mission of museums for this century, and after explaining the importance of this paradigmatic change in their nature, the best way to carry out this plan is through education, scientific, and educational dissemination of the museum's contents and collections. The museum space is also configured as an educational, teaching, and learning place, as well as the training of the public who visit these spaces.<sup>377</sup> Because of this new mission, the generalized conception in public opinion of history museums and stagnant places frozen in time began to change, and in this aspect, the museums analyzed in this dissertation have done important tasks.

In conclusion, and after this journey through the history of the leading museums and sites of institutional memory in Colombia and Greece, a close relationship can be established between the attempts to institutionalize and give greater foundations to the nation-state through museum institutions that serve as a collection and witness of these efforts. In the same way, the sites chosen to be guardians and disseminators of the historical process fulfill additional functions acquired over time and crystallized from their mission or imposed from the highest governmental spheres.

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<sup>377</sup> On museums as teaching spaces see: **Burnham**, Rika, and Elliott Kai-Kee. *Teaching in the art museum: Interpretation as experience*. Getty Publications, 2011; **Villeneuve**, Pat, and Ann **Rowson** Love, eds. *Visitor-centered exhibitions and edu-curation in art museums*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017; **Talboys**, Graeme K. *Using museums as an educational resource: An introductory handbook for students and teachers*. Routledge, 2016.

The cultural spaces institutionalized as National Museums, not necessarily only historical, have acquired, over time and developed a cultural and informative activity of more than a century, sufficient authority to position themselves as the spaces from which the history of these nations must be offered to the public, national and foreign, to allow their visit, discussion, dissemination, and presence in the construction of a daily national identity. A mission that is also shared by other spaces of historical memory and dissemination, such as regional or site museums, museums dedicated to specific historical people or events, and the various monuments and places in the public space that fulfill the function of establishing a narrative of national identity around the independence process.<sup>378</sup>

The materialization of the ideas of the Greek and Colombian revolutionaries who sought independence that would give them the opportunity to try to establish a nation-state occurs in the rooms of these museums, in the canvases, bronzes, cabinets and display cases. The ideas that confirm this attempt to build identity, which is reflected in flags, emblems, and ministries, are condensed and catalyzed in museum spaces, especially those of an institutional nature. But at the same time, these ideas reverberate and expand in the work of the staff in the educational and outreach areas, who have the not-easy task of understanding, revising, and reinterpreting their collections and spaces. Being the physical guardians of certain objects that are widely known by the population of a nation-state, in addition to the inherent importance of their maintenance and care, also generates the problem, which, in many cases, is a great opportunity. An opportunity to apply and disseminate new research or perspectives on an endless number of objects that, given their constant presence in national narratives, tend to be taken for granted.

The importance of history museums as a tangible foundation and as a sounding board for national, regional, and local identity discourses is therefore evident. Likewise, as spaces for the construction of dialogue and resignification of a collective past. It is also apparent in these two case studies the very evolution of this type of cultural and educational entities: going from being a storage space for objects referring to what was considered and is considered the "national history" to being a place of pilgrimage where the relics of that new secular religion that is the nation are safeguarded. To be part of those places where it is easier to find and recognize the ethos of each respective

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<sup>378</sup> Vargas Ordoñez, Janneth, and Alejandro Suárez Caro. "Pensar la accesibilidad desde la región: Elementos para fortalecer la política de museos en Colombia." *6º Congresso Internacional de Educação e Acessibilidade em Museus e Patrimônio: Nada sobre nós sem nós*. Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, 2021. P. 527-540

national experience, to finally be these spaces for dialogue, sometimes still stagnant in an official discourse of memory, history, and identity, but with honest attempts to point towards a more equitable discussion about national history through the spaces and objects that define it.



#### **CHAPTER IV: DISSEMINATING, KNOWING, AND TEACHING THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD IN COLOMBIA AND GREECE**

*“Throughout the (post-)modern period there has been an increasing purposive-rationalization and institutionalization of the ways in which the past has been represented to the public. Essentially the processes behind the construction and reproduction of representations of our pasts have been increasingly removed from the wider public sphere. This form of rationalization has produced neutered representations which safely mediate the subject’s constructed perceptions of their historical surroundings, to the point where the past is constructed as a colourful but muted backdrop, in front of which the successes of modernization are proclaimed. Since the beginnings of modernity, the past has gradually been institutionalized through museum and heritage representations, and promoted as that which modernization has overcome”.*<sup>379</sup>

All the issues analyzed so far in these pages lead us to consider the most recent developments that these demonstrations of national sentiment consciousness have had in both countries. Since the first commemorations and in the various historical moments that Greece and Colombia have gone through since their respective revolution and independence, efforts for their commemoration have been driven both by the establishment and ordinary citizens. This double track, sometimes superimposed or where one variant subdues the other, also has moments of symbiosis and cooperation.

Remembering, feeling, and belonging are not unique characteristics of a social and political body or individuals, nor are they a series of emotions driven solely by institutionality to foster coercion to the principles of the state. Although all this has a part in the nation's construction, the agency that spontaneity and individual or collective action have over the formation, permanence, and expansion of this discourse cannot be denied. The citizens are interested in history; they are interested in their history and will generally look for places and reasons to encounter their past. The ways and conceptual divergences in which he finds

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<sup>379</sup> **Walsh**, Kevin. *The representation of the past: museums and heritage in the post-modern world*. Routledge, 2002. 204 p. p.148

them or presents them will obviously be the responsibility and motivation of the means and ways in which this past is presented to him<sup>380</sup>.

- **PUBLIC RECEPTION OF THE INDEPENDENCE PAST: COLOMBIA AND GREECE**

Given the ideological conditions (discourses, public policies) and tangible conditions (museums, collections, objects) already established for the implementation of a narrative and identity within a nation-state, it is time to analyze the evolution of this perception and the similarities of each case study, to consider not only its current state but also the future possibilities of the past of Independence in Greece and Colombia. This is why, in the following section, certain aspects of this evolution over time, its changes, and some of its current and future challenges will be touched upon.

- **Evolution of the understanding of the Independence period**

Having a shared past with a projection into the future was a key factor in the development of the political process of building a nation-state. Although in previous sections we have discussed how Independence and its protagonists in both Colombia and Greece set pragmatic objectives of an immediate nature in the sense of acquiring territorial sovereignty and political independence, it is also true that at the time of crystallizing these first objectives, the projection into the future, framed in addition in a romantic and later positivist environment in conceptual terms, which considered history as a linear and progressive process. In this process, history and, specifically, historiography, both national and foreign, in addition to this idea of linear progress, had the task of “creating a collective image of belonging that should be imposed on the reality of a plural society.”<sup>381</sup>

It was at this time, when the newly independent regimes in Latin America were established, that the master narratives of each specific experience began to be established, where the past that was considered by those who configured it began to be ranked and filtered as the most adequate or convenient discourse at the time, to establish a consciousness of the “national”. A consciousness that did not hesitate to exclude or meditate on certain

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<sup>380</sup> **Rottenberg**, Barbara Lang. "Museums, information and the public sphere. *"Museum International* 54.4 (2002): 21-28; **Barrett**, Jennifer. *Museums and the public sphere*. John Wiley & Sons, 2012. **Karp**, Ivan, ed. *Museum frictions: Public cultures/global transformations*. Duke University Press, 2006.

<sup>381</sup> **Betancourt** Mendieta, Alexander. *Historia y nación: tentativas de la escritura de la historia en Colombia*. Editorial la Carreta, Medellín, 2007 293 p. P. 45

characters and places in order to articulate a unitary and collective discourse. Continentally, and specifically from Colombia, historiography has understood from those first moments the process of Independence as a breaking point between oppression and freedom, as the moment to break free from the oppression that had ended the original civilizations of the American territory. Dealing then in unified and practically absolute terms, where there are two clearly defined sides, and there is little room for nuances.<sup>382</sup>

This unitary and practically Manichean concept of the independence process, not only in Colombia but also in Greece, despite being debated and refuted by the same historiography that at some point established it, remains the most basic way to understand the process of Independence. It is not only the specific place or time nor the media in which this discourse has been represented, from the correspondence of the protagonists of the historical event itself to the representations in contemporary audiovisual media, that Independence becomes a story of good and evil.

This is how, despite two hundred years of national construction and a considerable effort by academics and researchers, in both case studies, they have sought to approach this historical event in a manner that is at least serene, if it is possible to say so. Far from patriotic fervor, aware of the populist capacities and the use that can be made of this history to maintain or propagate certain political discourses, as seen in previous sections, we also enter into the permanent paradox when it comes to disseminating and explaining the independence process to a more general public. Either the processes are simplified to the point of falling back into a narrative of good and evil, or by trying to problematize both the process and the discourse around Independence, a series of argumentative elements are established that densify and, in a certain way, hinder both the explanation by historians, as well as the understanding of the process by the public.

It is in this process of interpreting history, and as has already been seen with the hierarchization and order of the past, that absences and gaps in the discourse begin to be

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<sup>382</sup> Pérez Benavides Amada Carolina. "La memoria convertida en exhibición: Adecuaciones de la sección de historia patria en el Museo Nacional de Colombia 1880-1912" In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. P.112

generated in order to unify the master narrative. It is here where the national takes precedence over the regional and local. It is where the flawed perceptions of the historical context take on an autarchic form and are a breeding ground for the generation of myths.<sup>383</sup> Over the last hundred and fifty years, from the first great compilation of the history of both countries and their respective revolutionary process with the works of Restrepo and Paparrigopoulous to the present day, where certain voices and characters are given a platform over others that are partially forgotten and that slowly and timidly re-emerge, all to establish a patriotic history.

During these years, the idea that the defense of the homeland and its history, as well as the knowledge of it, of its struggle for freedom that against all odds was successful, began to be considered as virtues of a good citizen. This began to shape a sense of citizenship and a level of participation that led to the slow but continuous establishment of a population group loyal to the newly independent regime, an essential objective for its survival. It was necessary to educate and convince this new citizen to be aware of his citizenship (and in many cases, although not for all the inhabitants of this territory, his freedom), which was acquired by arms in a just struggle, as well as the fragility of this new status quo acquired by Independence given the internal and external threats.

All this knowledge was first discussed by the protagonists and trainers of the first institutions of both countries and later disseminated by educational and cultural spaces such as the first exhibitions on Independence, when it began to have a historical meaning in both Greece and Colombia. Understanding this historical meaning as something past, an event of the past that had played a preponderant role in the configuration of the historical context in which these exhibitions were presented. This generated a new understanding of this process of Independence by establishing it within a chronological frame of reference. At the moment when the last ashes of the flame of Independence were extinguished, it entered the collective memory as an event worthy of reverence, which, as seen in the previous chapter, also began to acquire a sense of sacredness.

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<sup>383</sup> Parra París, Lisímaco. *La independencia: recepción de ideas y construcción de mitos*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2012. 332 p.



Image 51. Decorative Plate, which features the main personalities of the Greek War of Independence, features one of the ideological fathers of the Modern Greek nation, Rigas Feraios Velestinlis. Benaki Museum. Athens, Greece.

This evolution continued later in more recent years where Independence has been inserted as another episode in the history of the modern nation, be it Colombian or Greek. Therefore, it must share spaces not only in the national identity narrative but also in the exhibition places of this memory. Even so, this memory of Independence continues to be privileged over the memory of other moments or historical events, even of a more recent nature, and therefore easier to remember.

In the history museums of these countries, since their very foundation and with a new impulse given by the bicentennial, the genesis of both countries as independent political entities continues to have a privileged place in the collective memory. And its knowledge and participation in the civic acts that commemorate it continue to be part of the expectations that each citizen must fulfill. These are closely related to the other values expected by the citizens of a country like Colombia, which include the fulfillment of duties, fidelity to religion and family, obedience to authority, and aspirations to enhance the homeland.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Pérez Benavides Amada Carolina. "La memoria convertida en exhibición: Adecuaciones de la sección de historia patria en el Museo Nacional de Colombia 1880-1912" P.112

○ **Changes in the perception of historical time**

Starting from the basis that the Independence generated a change, immediate or not, in the way in which the societies and territories of what are today Colombia and Greece were configured during the first decades of the 19th century. This included a linguistic change in the way of understanding reality, whether political or social. Concepts that did not exist not only began to be used but also began to be constantly disseminated and thus generated a change in the understanding of the passage of historical time. The use of concepts such as freedom, independence, homeland, honor, and citizenship began to generate a change that would allow the subsequent developments of political modernization in both case studies and in the geographic regions in which these independences developed.<sup>385</sup>

This new understanding of a political language, of new forms of coexistence in a society where the hierarchies that had existed for more than 300 years ceased to exist, or at least were gradually dismantled during the first decades of Independence, were not political and social dynamics that were unanimously accepted or embraced by the entire population. To this day, within the social configurations of Colombia and Greece, reluctance to change has been latent. What many consider a good thing, for example, the achievement of Independence and the establishment of a sovereign state, for many others within that same society, can be considered a historical error. Therefore, it is interesting to see how all these possibilities of remembrance and the diverse perceptions of a shared past are configured in the collective memory.<sup>386</sup>

The routine institutionality of memory within postmodernity enters into dialogue with authors already cited, such as Hartog and Halbwachs, and with the three tendencies that make up the regime of postmodern historicity according to Enzo Traverso: The first, I would say, is the end of utopias. The past contains no promise of redemption or linear progress; therefore, past and future conditions are encapsulated in the present. The second tendency, as Walsh already stated in the epigraph at the beginning of the chapter, is the depoliticization of the past. The new forms of organization, production, and capitalism

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<sup>385</sup> **Morán**, Daniel. "De una "mal entendida independencia" a una "independencia imaginada" El concepto político de independencia en la prensa de Lima y Buenos Aires en tiempos de revolución (1810-1816)." *Fronteras de la Historia* 23.2 (2018): 150-182.

<sup>386</sup> **Mavris**, Giannis. *To 1821 στη συλλογική μνήμη* (1821 in collective memory) Public Issue. Athens, 2020, 498 p.

progressively destroy what Halbwachs called the social frameworks of memory, the spaces within which a representation of the past is collectively constructed. Neoliberalism tends to eliminate these social frameworks of memory and transform them into memories and recollections of an individual nature, into a set of emotions and images that destroy all critical reflection and exclude all ideas of collective action and agency. The latest trend is the reification of the past. The end of the past is a transmissible experience, a typical feature of the postmodern society in which we are immersed. The end of the transmissible experience transforms places of memory into a set of sites, objects, images, and symbols, which organize the past as a heritage, a heritage in the sense of an accumulation of inventoried goods, also as inherited property, which can be displayed in a museum or exhibition, and which is reified in the commercial sense of the word, which is transformed into a consumer good, into a commodity, employing the cultural industry, into a thing whose value becomes not only its historical belonging but also its commercial value.<sup>387</sup>

This is how the memory and forgetting of a collective past becomes the factor of change and transactional elements of public policy on the past. The history of Independence in both Greece and Colombia has not only been disseminated and established for the generation of a national and citizen conscience. This history has also been used by the same institutions that established and organized it hierarchically. From the state level, certain elements belonging to the history of the wars of independence have been used, overused, or stopped being used. The same heroes or battles have not always been commemorated similarly. Likewise, the events and characters of this war of independence have fluctuated over time.

This, in addition to the public use of history and its value indicators, such as memory and forgetting, demonstrates that the history of the Wars of Independence is a story in constant formation. Just as it is malleable, it is difficult to manipulate, even by those who establish the institutional parameters for the use and abuse of history.<sup>388</sup> For one generation, certain heroes of the Independence could be considered traitors, as could happen to José Padilla and José María Córdova in Colombia or Kapodistrias himself in Greece. A couple of decades later, the interpretation of that past could be reformed by vindicating these historical figures. The struggle for the past is constant and relentless. This is known both

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<sup>387</sup> **Traverso**, Enzo. "Conferencia: "Políticas de la Memoria en la era del neoliberalismo". " *Aletheia* 7 (2017). P. 4 consulted in: <https://shorturl.at/dgH2x>

<sup>388</sup> **Rodríguez Ávila**, Sandra Patricia. *Memoria y olvido: usos públicos del pasado en Colombia, 1930-1960*. Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2017.

by public institutions and by those dedicated to studying and analyzing this past, both inside and outside of both countries, seeking to perpetuate or refute this national discourse; the war of independence is still being fought.

- **The "battlefronts" of history and the use and abuse of them**

The struggle for the collective and individual past is an adamant aspect of the contemporary world, especially in these two cases of national formation. The past is an eternal battlefield, whose struggles are waged in the present and on multidimensional fronts.<sup>389</sup> These struggles, these combats for history, had already been exposed as an argument in the first place by the famous founder of the school of the Annales Lucien Febvre, who, in his famous book entitled in that way, compiled and exposed his struggles as a historian for the past, for a past understood objectively and for which it was worth fighting.<sup>390</sup> However, history is not only fought by professional historians. History, being a multidimensional heritage between the personal and the collective, the local and the global, the private and the public, is in constant construction by the diverse points of view that are generated about the past.<sup>391</sup>

Many of these views generate historical discourses that want to be imposed as "truth" through the media, monuments, educational systems, and, evidently, museums.<sup>392</sup> The democratization of the past, which is not a recent process, and it could even be argued that the independence struggle in both countries was a struggle to unleash its own history from the metropolises, continues in constant revitalization and rewriting because, essentially, it continues to be written about in passionate terms from the shore of the independent and the empires. where some are both "heroes" and "traitors," whether there is a dark version or a glorious version of history, always according to the shore from where it is written.<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> **Prats**, Joaquim. "Combates por la historia en la educación." *Revista de investigación. Enseñanza de las ciencias sociales* (2016): 145-153.

<sup>390</sup> **Febvre**, Lucien. *Combates por la historia*. Vol. 1. Ariel, 1986. Trans. Francisco Fernández Buey, and Enric Argullol

<sup>391</sup> **Frisch**, Michael. *A shared authority: Essays on the craft and meaning of oral and public history*. Suny Press, 1990; **De Groot**, Jerome. *Consuming history: Historians and heritage in contemporary popular culture*. Routledge, 2009.

<sup>392</sup> **Morris-Suzuki**, Tessa. *The past within us: Media, memory, history*. Verso, 2005. Higson, Andrew. "Representing the national past: nostalgia and pastiche in the heritage film." *Film genre reader IV*. University of Texas Press, 2012. 602-627; **Çevik**, Senem B. "Turkish historical television series: public broadcasting of neo-Ottoman illusions." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 19.2 (2019): 227-242.

<sup>393</sup> **Cortés Zavala**, María Teresa. "La leyenda rosa y la leyenda negra en la historia de América Latina." *Tzintzun. Revista de Estudios Históricos* 17 (1993): 172-180.; **Karabıçak**, Yusuf Ziya. "Ottoman

The same countries that fought for their independence even before their revolutions were already engaged in debates and struggles about their temporary place in the world, from the novelty of which Nariño spoke, previously cited, to the constant return to the past of enormous antiquity and always present in the construction of Greek identity. This cultivation of the past begins from the vernacular languages and the idea of the nation, based on an ethnolinguistic identity, which was always entirely disputed in intellectual and state circles in states or empires where more than one language was spoken by a reasonably considerable minority as in the case of the Habsburg Empire or the Ottoman Empire education and its educational systems were a battlefield of national sentiment.<sup>394</sup> Even within the nations that were not yet defined and sought their sovereignty is the case of the linguistic question in the Greek world during the first part of the 19th century where it was sought to retake ancient Greek, but the Orthodox Church considered it as pagan where even Patriarch Gregory V took sides in this debate on the linguistic identity of the Greek populations in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>395</sup>

A symbol of this political modernity, framed in the generation of an ethnolinguistic nation, the elaboration of dictionaries, as well as the proliferation of schools where the language of instruction was that of that nation began to emerge officially and unofficially as in the cases of Colombia and Greece.<sup>396</sup> The imposition of collective historical discourse, especially from the educational system, often speaks more of the possibilities, intentions, and fears of the governments that elaborate these texts than of the past itself.

In the Colombian case, it is particular to understand that the history class as a single subject has not existed in public school curricula for almost 30 years. This does not mean that students in all schools in the country do not receive instruction about the local and global past, but it does mean that its content is insufficient as history class merges with geography,

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attempts to define the rebels during the Greek War of Independence." *Studia Islamica* 114.3 (2020): 316-354.; **İnalcık**, Halil. *Biases in studying Ottoman history*. Studies on Turkish-Arab relations = Türk-Arab ilişkileri İncelemeleri Yıllığı 2, 1987'den ayıbasım. P. 7-10

<sup>394</sup> **Ghotme**, Rafat. "La identidad nacional, el sistema educativo y la historia en Colombia, 1910-1962." *Revista Científica General José María Córdova* 11.11 (2013): 273-289; **Borovali**, Ali Fuat. "Post-modernity, multiculturalism and ex-imperial Hinterland: Habsburg and Ottoman legacies revisited." *Perceptions: Journal of international affairs* 2.4 (1997).

<sup>395</sup> **Kostantaras**, Dean. Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848. P. 63

<sup>396</sup> **Herrera**, Martha Cecilia, Alexis Vladimir **Pinilla** Díaz, and Luz Marina **Suaza**. *La identidad nacional en los textos escolares de ciencias sociales: Colombia, 1900-1950*. U. Pedagógica Nacional, 2003; **Kostantaras**, Dean. *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848*. Q.52

philosophy, and democracy in a single subject called social sciences.<sup>397</sup> This evidently generates, in the first instance, a citizenry not educated in its own past, or at least poorly educated, which increases national indifference and little interest in the historical and, in turn, political discourses of the present itself. It is not that Colombians are not interested in their history, nor that they do not want to learn from it, but the state has failed them, often with awareness of this omission, in giving them a consistent education for a modern and independent nation. This is easily demonstrated by the overload imposed on museums and public media to solve the state's shortcomings in this regard, a very large effort with clearly insufficient resources.

The case of the Greek educational system in its dimension of the teaching of history maintains a special particularity as it is a paradigmatic example of how a vast past has been taught and how, from the first levels of schooling, a national identity defined under certain linguistic, cultural and above all, Historical. In general,<sup>398</sup> textbooks and primary and secondary education in Greece have tried to build a strong national identity based on the unity and communion of Greeks in general, first within the framework of the Eastern Mediterranean, then within the limits and territories claimed by the independent Greek state and currently not only of these spaces but also integrating the diaspora that has an important presence and action within of the spirit of conscience and national identity from Toronto to Sydney.<sup>399</sup>

Just as an identity has been built around the common, be it language, culture, or religion, this national consciousness has been constituted from the other as well. Without the existence of a common enemy, which in the Greek case refers generally, but not exclusively to the Turkish/Ottoman (for obvious reasons), but also to other Balkan societies such as the Albanians, Bulgarians, and more recently North Macedonians.<sup>400</sup> as well as the

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<sup>397</sup> **Rodríguez** Ávila, Sandra Patricia. "Enseñanza y aprendizaje de la historia en Colombia: 1990-2011." *Enseñanza y aprendizaje de la historia en Colombia: 1990-2011* (2014): 109-154.; **Guerrero** García, Carolina Andrea. *La incidencia de las reformas educativas en la enseñanza de la historia en Colombia, 1973-2007*. MA Thesis. 2011.

<sup>398</sup> **Zervas**, Theodore G. *The making of a Modern Greek identity: Education, nationalism, and the teaching of a Greek national past*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012. Q.228

<sup>399</sup> **Koundoura**, Maria. "The Greek Idea: The Formation of National and Transnational Identities." (2007).

<sup>400</sup> **Antonίου**, Vasilía Lilian, and Yasemin **Nuhoglu** Soysal. "Nation and the other in Greek and Turkish history textbooks." *The nation, Europe, and the world: Textbooks and curricula in transition* (2005): 105-121.; **Lytra**, Vally. *Play frames and social identities: Contact encounters in a Greek primary school*. Vol. 163. John

"Westerners" French, English, Germans, who although they helped with the cause of the modern Greek nation, are considered even in these textbooks as traitors, explicitly referring to the decline and subsequent fall of the Byzantine Empire and the plundering of Greek antiquities during the last centuries, the most relevant case being the Parthenon marbles that fall on the British Museum.<sup>401</sup>

In both cases, the reference to national unity or identity from educational systems in schools, but also in museums and public media, is an exercise in constant development. An exercise that, although it has responded to the social demand for a defined identity structure, still has problems to resolve in terms of national indifference or how these discourses of nation-building and education responded or failed to the recent crises in both countries. What has been the responsibility of the educational, informative, and media institutions of Colombia in the recent armed conflict or of the same institutions in Greece during the recent economic crisis?<sup>402</sup>

## • CRITICISM AND RESISTANCE TO THE NATION-STATE PROJECT

As noted in the previous chapters, these educational and training projects, combined with various political actions, have never been practical or easy to implement. Dissident voices, although not always present in the collective memory, have played an important role in the configuration of the States themselves as sovereign and unitary entities. However, their establishment as a discourse has always been subject to some kind of criticism or objection by those who, with the course of history itself, end up yielding or being defeated in their conception of the national past or its identity forms.

In this order of ideas, it is essential to analyze the dissident or critical voices of the nation-building process, such as the victorious or established discursive forms that shaped the political entities recognized today as Colombia and Greece. The ideas that dissent against the establishment of collective identity and memory can tell us many things about the very

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Benjamins Publishing, 2007; **Miles**, Hercules. "History textbooks in Greece and Turkey." *History Workshop*. Oxford University Press, 1991.

<sup>401</sup> **Hamilakis**, Yannis. The nation and its ruins: antiquity, archaeology, and national imagination in Greece. Oxford University Press, 2007; **Yalouri**, Eleana. The Acropolis: global fame, local claim. Routledge, 2020.

<sup>402</sup> **Zervas**, Theodore G. The making of a Modern Greek identity: Education, nationalism, and the teaching of a Greek national past. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012. P. 22

process of identity formation, whether these are internal, as in the case of the conflict between local and regional identity authorities against a centralist state, or those that come from outside, from the new and old imperial powers that want to establish hegemony over the newly independent states.

- **Critics and remarks from outside**

Obviously, supranational and imperial political entities seek not only to maintain their sovereignty and territorial integrity, but also for a matter of their own prestige, but always related to the image projected in front of other imperial entities, whether they are allies or enemies. Empires do not want to see a process of dismemberment and sedition like the one experienced by the Spanish and Ottoman empires during the 19th century. Opposition to the creation of independent countries in territories that nominally belonged to these two metropolises was always seen as a negative process within the respective imperial centers. This disdain and negativity have remained within the public discourse about history and constantly permeates not only the popular reception of this process but also transnational relations regarding this issue.

The history of independence and national formation, despite having an autarchic character, is not a historical process that is alien or independent from other contexts. The past of independence is not independent, it depends on the time and context from which it is analyzed. One history of independence is that which has been formed by the recently independent states, and another is that which, for example, is understood and developed in this process, and these wars from the opposite shore could be considered as the vision of those defeated in this war of independence, that is, that of the Ottoman and Spanish empires and their natural heir states to this day.<sup>403</sup>

From the very moment of the development of these independence processes, the opinion from the metropolis was vehement and, in general terms, cohesive towards the opposition to these secessionist intentions on the part of Greeks and New Granadians. Neither the Sultan in Constantinople nor the king in Madrid (or wherever Fernando VII was, given that the peninsula was invaded by the French when the wars of independence in South America

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<sup>403</sup> Şükrü İlicak, H. " *Those Infidel Greeks*" (2 vols.): *The Greek War of Independence through Ottoman Archival Documents*. Brill, 2021; Costeloe, Michael P. *Response to revolution: imperial Spain and the Spanish American revolutions, 1810-1840*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

began) intended to give in to the rebels who sought to fracture an absolutist empire at the beginning of the 19th century. An opinion that was also shared by the most liberal characters and influenced by the narratives of the first revolutions that saw the freedom and self-determination of the people as one of the virtues and duties that each nation should assume. Evidently generating a series of conflicts and paradoxes where, for example, many of those defeated in Ayacucho shared the liberal ideals of their American counterpart, but as soldiers of their Spanish king, they had a mission to fulfill and an honor to maintain. His defeat was considered a betrayal and a burden to bear in his later political life on the peninsula.<sup>404</sup>

These claims come essentially from the general feeling of loss that began to be felt in the metropolises after the effective independence of these countries. The process of mourning and recognition of this loss has had various developments during the last 200 years. From the denial of independence itself and the difficulty of recognizing the independent territories as sovereign states, through processes of reconciliation and understanding of the historical change to a panorama in which a relationship of empire-colony could no longer be maintained between these countries, to the most recent and unfortunately, most popular versions, where the lost glory of an imperial past is passionately but naively exalted.

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<sup>404</sup> **Martínez** Riaza, Ascención. "El retorno de los vencidos: los Ayacuchos se justifican (1824-1833)". In: **Peralta** Ruiz, Víctor, **de Haro**, Dionisio (eds.) *España en Perú (1796-1824): ensayos sobre los últimos gobiernos virreinales.*-(Colección *Historia contemporánea de América*), Madrid : Marcial Pons Ediciones Jurídicas y Sociales, 2019.214 p. p.181-214.



Image 52. Commemorative monument to the Battle of Ayacucho. Julio González Pola, Bronze (1930). Bogotá Colombia.

This imperial nostalgia, this feeling of impotence at seeing that what was once one of the most prominent actors in global politics is today delimited to become a peripheral country, whose historical weight in geopolitical terms after the end of its respective empires, whether Ottoman or Spanish. This added to the same internal dynamics and crises that both Turkey and Spain have had in the last two centuries, generates a feeling of frustration where imperial nostalgia and the use and abuse of that glorious past become a breeding ground for denialist policies and attitudes.<sup>405</sup> Perspectives where independence is considered, whether in Latin America or the Balkans, as a tradition of the benevolent metropolis, which did not commit any kind of harm that would merit its former dominions, or using the terms its daughters, rebelling against the mother country.

Another important external factor is the degree of expectation that external actors had about the development of the wars of independence that they would come to have after the

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<sup>405</sup> Altuğ, Seda. "New Turkey: Regional Aspiration and National Anxiety." In: Kończal, Kornelia, and A. Dirk Moses, eds. *Patriotic History and the (re) nationalization of Memory*. Routledge, 2023. P. 29-41; Straehle Porras, Edgar. "La Leyenda Negra y los abusos de la memoria: reflexiones sobre el nacionalismo historiográfico actual en España." *Con-ciencia social: Segunda Época* 7 (2024): 13-32

achievement of the same. In some cases, it did develop a narrative in which these newly independent countries carried the beacon of freedom, whereas in other spaces, especially in Europe, where there were several failed revolutionary attempts, these attempts at national and sovereign configuration could not be established until after the 1830s. It is challenging to meet the expectations that were tacitly imposed on independent Greece as the heir of the freedom that had once been the pride of classical Greece (or of some specific parts of that classical Greece, to be more exact), which would become practically a torment by not fulfilling these hopes imposed from outside.<sup>406</sup> Or about independent Colombia as a new beacon of political development. Both were vulnerable spaces for the interests of other European powers that sought to expand their influence and fill the imperial vacuum that the Spanish and Ottomans had left.

Within these expectations are also those generated by the diasporas, by the individuals and communities that were and are part of these newly independent states, and who, from outside, have their own and often a distorted version of what really happened during the Independence and what happens today with the popular perception of it. The nationalist furor that is sometimes alien and hidden within the national territories of Greece and Colombia becomes a fervent demonstration of patriotism and self-identification with a specific national community, especially in moments of heated nationalism, such as national holidays or the participation of the country in sporting events outside its borders.<sup>407</sup>

This creates a hybridization of memories, where perhaps there is no better example of the multipolarity of visions and perceptions of history, and of how the same date that commemorates an event can be understood in such different ways. March 25 is one thing in Athens and May 29 in Istanbul is another thing. Even more aggravating, although not necessarily as institutionalized nationally in equal parts, is the exercise of memory about September 9 in Izmir and that same date in some of the neighborhoods founded by refugees from Asia Minor in Athens or Thessaloniki. It is clear that neither version has the complete

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<sup>406</sup> **Gourgouris**, Stathis. *Dream nation: Enlightenment, colonization, and the institution of modern Greece*. Stanford University Press. 1996 p.122-173

<sup>407</sup> **Sutherland**, Claire. *Nationalism in the twenty-first century: Challenges and responses*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011 p. 138-143

truth about the facts if there is a counterpart that understands the same historical event in such a radically opposite way.<sup>408</sup>

This hybridization of heterogeneous memories directly affects the construction of the historiography in this regard. In neither of the two cases studied is there complete and critical consensus on an objective and dispassionate view of Greek and Colombian independence. On the contrary, both in the historiographies of the independent countries and in Turkish or Spanish historiography, there has been and exists a bias that evidently leans towards the own and national view on these historical events. This generates clear difficulties in establishing a more global dialogue because, many times, from these historiographies, there is no intellectual will to debate the self-imposed narratives and those imposed on others with respect to independence.<sup>409</sup>

The combination of a stubborn and obfuscated historiography with national and political interests that periodically seek to fan the ashes of past confrontations leads to constant misunderstandings between neighboring countries and transnational communities. Border problems and the abuse of stereotypes about other countries, former colonies, or former metropolises, depending on the perspective, are a bothersome and boring noise that, from time to time, comes to disturb diplomatic and international relations unnecessarily.<sup>410</sup> Commemorations and national holidays are a breeding ground for these confrontations, which fortunately, at the moment and in most cases, only remain in words.

Nevertheless, under a national configuration that tends more and more towards globalization and regional or block integration, typical of the international history of the last century, which, when combined with the development of history as a professional discipline, has allowed several attempts to construct a joint history. Apart from the joint

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<sup>408</sup> **Sutton**, David. "Poked by the 'foreign finger' In Greece: Conspiracy theory or the hermeneutics of suspicion? In: **Brown**, Keith S., and Yannis Hamilakis, eds. *The usable past: Greek metahistories*. Lexington books, 2002. P. 191-210; **Wallace**, Jennifer, and Vassilis **Lambropoulos**. "Hellenism, philhellenism and classical reception: commemorating the 1821 revolution." *Classical Receptions Journal* 13.4 (2021): 571-596

<sup>409</sup> **Eldem**, Edhem. "Greece and the Greeks in Ottoman history and Turkish historiography." *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 6 (2009): 27-40.

<sup>410</sup> **Roudometof**, Victor. "Nationalism and identity politics in the Balkans: Greece and the Macedonian question." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 14.2 (1996): 253-301.; **Boeckh**, Andreas. "Europa-América Latina: entre atracción y distanciamiento." In: **Parra** París, Lisímaco. *La independencia: recepción de ideas y construcción de mitos*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2012. 332 p. P.13; **Mazarakis-Ainian**, Philippos. "Imagining the Balkans: Identities and Memory in the Long 19th Century: Reviewing National Ideas through a Regional Exhibition Project." *Museum International* 67.1-4 (2015): 64-82.

history during colonial domination or independence that spans almost four hundred years, there have been other spaces throughout the last two hundred years where the former occupants of the territory shared historical events, many of them dramatic, including exiles and uprooting, such as the Spanish Civil War or the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey after the end of the Ottoman Empire. There have been many efforts (and many of these have been fruitful) to bring together the historical pasts and the national interpretations of the former metropolises and the newly independent countries.<sup>411</sup>

○ **Voices and claims from inside**

Self-criticism and nationalism do not necessarily go hand in hand. In many cases, the narrative imposed by the state in institutions on history and national identity is not only imposed with an iron fist but is also considered infallible. History and its justifications cannot have gaps or spaces; it is rationalized, as the epigraph that opens this chapter says, in such a way that it becomes a monolithic amalgam of ideas, events, and people. Criticism of this identity structure becomes tremendously complex, although it is not impossible.<sup>412</sup>

It is for this reason that the participation of social groups that have not historically been part of the collections of the national museum and, therefore, of the narrative of national construction that has been exhibited in its halls is one of the essential objectives for the 21st century and the commemorations of the bicentennials of Independence in Colombia. The inclusion of Indigenous and Afro-descendant people, although slow and insufficient during certain advances within the modernization of the museographic discourse, is a first step towards pluralizing the perspectives towards national history in Colombia.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> **Özkaya, Yücel.** (1821 Yunan (Eflak-Boğdan) İsyanları ve Avrupa'nın İsyan Karşısındaki Tutumları.' ('The Greek [Wallachian-Moldonian] Revolts of 1821 and European attitudes to the revolt') In: *Tarih Boyunca Türk-Yunan İlişkileri: Üçüncü Askeri Tarih Semineri* ('Turkish-Greek relations throughout history: Third military history seminar') Ankara: ATASE; 1986 pp. 114–33; **Garner**, Paul, and Ángel **Smith.** *Nationalism and Transnationalism in Spain and Latin America, 1808-1923.* University of Wales Press, 2017.

<sup>412</sup> **Miščević,** Nenad. *Nationalism and beyond: introducing moral debate about values.* Central European University Press, 2001 p. 275-285; **Euben**, J. Peter. "Critical Patriotism." *Academe* 88.5 (2002): 43-44;

<sup>413</sup> **Arocha** Rodríguez Jaime, **Lleras** Figueroa Cristina "Armonía y conflicto. Representación e identidad en el patrimonio cultural" In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia.* Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. P. 144

The question then arises as to what kind of discursive pluralism is sought within the museum's galleries. The aim is to distinguish between multiculturalism and interculturalism, where the former, sponsored by the state, seeks to focus on safeguarding intangible heritage for the purposes of promotion and economic exploitation. While interculturalism seeks to defend and consolidate the autonomy of the social groups, it seeks to represent, in the words of José Jorge de Carvalho, the state generally falls back on “exophilia”, or the exclusion of marginalized ethnic and social groups, while simultaneously drinking from the cultural capital of these excluded groups.<sup>414</sup>

In any case, and despite these efforts to at least recognize the institutional silences that museums have had over time and to propose solutions to remedy them, the new exhibitions that have attempted to solve this problem have not been free of contradictions. Despite the struggle for a more plural and democratic memory and to give voice and representation to those who have been excluded from museums for decades, the hierarchy of the national memory regime is strong enough to absorb attempts at dissent about the construction of the past. Since the museum is a centralized and official space, it is often the only place where one can count on the financial and institutional muscle to give these voices of dissent their place, but at the same time, due to its centralized and vertical structure, these intentions of plurality are often filtered by the discourse from the capital that sees the rest of the regions as exotic and accessory spaces. Thus, falling into the contradiction of a voice of dissent that is necessarily filtered by the institution that generated and maintained this historical silence in the first place.<sup>415</sup>

These contradictions in the identity discourse directly impact the perception of the museum as a cultural institution and as a protector of collective memory by citizens, as well as the discourse that is constructed and disseminated through the objects in its galleries. Perhaps one of the most critical challenges for historical museums is to first become self-aware of the omissions committed voluntarily or involuntarily throughout the history of the museum institutions charged with shaping collective historical memory. As well as the possibility of reflecting on and, in a certain way, correcting the omissions and gaps in their

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<sup>414</sup> **Ibid.** P. 148

<sup>415</sup> **Pérez** Benavides Amada Carolina. “Hacer visible, hacerse visibles: la nación representada en las colecciones del museo”. Colombia, 1880-1912. *Memoria y sociedad*. 2010 Jan;14(28):85-106.

museographic discourses, missions that evidently require a sincere political and administrative will.<sup>416</sup>

Within this reconfiguration of the national discourse lies a narrative of reparation and restoration of the historical memory of these marginalized groups, such as Afro-descendants. Although it is a symbolic activity to establish specific exhibitions within museum halls that were once forbidden to these social groups, their mere display cannot change the asymmetries and inequalities that exist within Colombian society outside the museum halls.<sup>417</sup>

These dissenting and nonconformist movements and constant debates about the narrative of national construction have their origins in the same war of independence and the first decades of state formation, as well as in the very nature of democracy as a political system based on dissent.<sup>418</sup> Democracy allows for diverse interpretations of institutional actions, allowing for a plurality of voices that, in turn, prevent a complete consensus of the popular mandate.<sup>419</sup>

The construction of an identity is tied to a hierarchy of relationships that are not equal to each other, which, therefore, ideologically continues or destroys interests and power relations. In other words, it happens that if within a cultural current, within a process of construction of new autochthonous cultural expressions, or failing that, the union of various expressions with common aspects, which when combined or grouped together are considered one, they lead to the possibility of the conception of a collective identity, which also implies a perception of singularity and self-preservation of the culture. Preservation, in many cases, implies the destruction or forgetting of possible identities that rival or

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<sup>416</sup> **Rodríguez Ávila**, Sandra Patricia. *Memoria y olvido: usos públicos del pasado en Colombia, 1930-1960*. Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2017. P.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.* P. 153

<sup>418</sup> **Lomné**, Georges "Una 'palestra de gladiadores'. Colombia de 1810 a 1828: ¿guerra de emancipación o guerra civil?" In: **Sánchez** Gómez Gonzalo, **Wills** Obregón María Emma (ed.): *Museo, Democracia, Nación*. Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2000. P. 287-312.

<sup>419</sup> **Palti**, Elías José. "La democracia como problema: el laboratorio argentino y latinoamericano." In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. P. 173-174

obstruct the construction of a unitary, solid, in the sense of immovable, and hierarchical conception.<sup>420</sup>

The National Museum of Colombia not only reproduces a narrative of the nation, but it also produces the narrative of the nation of Colombia. A definitive narrative of the nation, where what is outside its discourse, its rooms and exhibition spaces, hardly or simply does not fit into this discursive canon and its subsequent public perception. Therefore, and this is clear to those who work within its facilities, its museographic decisions have a halo of objectivity and sacredness that constitutes an immense power when it comes to establishing a shared identity discourse.<sup>421</sup>

If this is the case in Colombia, which, as we have seen, has not only a diversity of discourses on the original national identity that is more heterogeneous and at the same time active than in the Greek case, it is not difficult to imagine that in the Greek example, the unification and adaptation of its society to a national community is closer and responds more concretely to the conception of nation generated during the romanticism of the 19th century, where it is generally considered that the ethnic, linguistic and religious components are the basic and inalienable characteristics of a modern nation. Leaving ethnic, linguistic, and religious plurality to supranational or imperial entities. Nations had, or should have been, unified under these parameters to be considered as such.

Going against this narrative or at least putting it up for debate, especially from museum spaces, has not been an easy task, first and foremost, it has not even been considered as a possibility. This is why applying alternative narratives to the construction of what we now call Greece has always been seen as a rather risky academic and ideological position that, in many cases, could be considered treason. Examples of these attempts often do not even

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<sup>420</sup> **Laó-Montes**, Agustín. "Cimarrón, nación y diáspora. Contrapunteo de estados raciales y movimientos afrodescendientes en Colombia y Cuba." *Cambios sociales y culturales en el Caribe Colombiano: perspectivas críticas de las resistencias* (2016): 21. **Grueso** Castelblanco, Libia Rosario. "Nuevas ciudadanías; Identidad y derecho a la diferencia" In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. P. 189

<sup>421</sup> **Wills**, María Emma. "Los debates sobre la construcción de la historia y su impacto en el guión del Museo Nacional: Riesgos y Potencialidades. In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. P.221

affect the past built on the Greek war of independence, but in some cases, have attempted to rewrite the Neolithic past of ancient Greece or the very origins of its classical antiquity, which could be considered spaces of memory sufficiently remote and therefore safe, to be strongly criticized by academia and received in a hostile manner by public opinion.<sup>422</sup>

○ **The challenges to institutional discourses and collective memory**

In essence, this chapter sought to establish a relationship between the different moments throughout these two centuries of history as sovereign states of Greece and Colombia, where the discourse of national identity has revolved around independence or has been subject to it. Both processes of independence have been established as the cornerstone of nation-building, where previous historical events, current developments, and future ones converge. Both historical memories have been exalted and disputed over the last two centuries. Their constant and daily presence imprints inertia on the construction of an idea of a nation, whether Greek or Colombian, which is combined with other cultural developments that determine self-identification, successful or not, with a national project.

The narration of this story about this first great "national episode" in Greece and Colombia has been the starting point for this national construction. Societies are defined and cohesive; their past is retold. In the case of Greece and Colombia, we have a historiographical account of great depth for the proportions of both countries, generated at an early moment by the same participants of the events of independence or by first-hand witnesses. This account is homogenized, sometimes embodied in a single author (Restrepo for Colombia, Paparrigopoulos for Greece) and established in the institutionality, especially in the educational system, from above, becoming a monolithic, labyrinthine, and sometimes immovable block of the national past.<sup>423</sup>

The historiography produced both inside and outside both countries regarding their independence could be summarized as the acceptance or rejection of this monolithic past.

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<sup>422</sup> **Catapoti**, Despina. "A nationalist palimpsest: authoring the history of the Greek nation through alternative museum narratives." *Great Narratives of the Past: Traditions and Revisions in National Museums, EuNaMus Report No 4. Published by Linköping University Electronic Press* (2012): 133-68; **Berlinerblau**, Jacques. *Heresy in the university: The Black Athena controversy and the responsibilities of American intellectuals*. Rutgers University Press, 1999.

<sup>423</sup> **Colmenares**, Germán *Las convenciones contra la cultura: Ensayos sobre historiografía hispanoamericana del siglo XIX*, Bogotá, Tercer Mundo Editores, Universidad del Valle, Banco de la República, Colciencias, 1997, 103 p.

With the professionalization of history as a discipline in the twentieth century, especially for the time of the sesquicentennials in Greece and Colombia, a first attempt to counterbalance official history began to be forged.<sup>424</sup> The application and exercise of social and political history that drinks from the tradition of the French *Annales*, as well as analyses from historical materialism, sought the exit from the "historiographical prison" that independence has represented.

This exercise has been more successful in Colombia than in Greece, having the specific context of these epistemic turns tangible importance: The passage from the "bronze history" that had priority and growth from the first moments of the independent state towards a social analysis of the history of Colombia in the 60s and 70s of the twentieth century in Colombia. It connects directly with the political reality of the country at the time when the establishment itself was questioned by the armed insurgencies and the nascent political and social scourges that still mark the course of Colombian news such as drug trafficking and corruption.<sup>425</sup> Added to the lack of interest in the teaching and dissemination of history, they make the structure of the discourse on independence immersed in a disarticulation between academic history, institutional dissemination, and widespread perception/appropriation, generally amplified by the mainstream media.<sup>426</sup>

In Greece, the situation differs by the origin of the threats presented during its modern history, which, unlike Colombia, have been mainly of an external nature. Greece, from the moment of its establishment as an independent state, comes into conflict with its environment to integrate under one sovereign territory, the entire Greek ethnic nation. This is the foundation of Greek irredentism in Macedonia, Crete, and Asia Minor, among others. In addition to this, the European powers have constantly intervened in the affairs of the newly independent Balkan states. When it was not the role of France or Russia in the

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<sup>424</sup> **Betancourt** Mendieta, Alexander. "La profesionalización de la historia en Colombia. Jaime Jaramillo Uribe: contextos, trayectoria y corrientes historiográficas." *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 48.1 (2021): 231-255.; **Clogg**, Richard. "The Greeks and their past." *Historians as Nation-Builders: Central and South-East Europe*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1988. 15-31.

<sup>425</sup> **Escobar**, Liliana. "Analizar la enseñanza del conflicto armado colombiano en los libros de texto escolar: una mirada desde la conciencia histórica" *Noria Investigación Educativa* 1.3 (2019).

<sup>426</sup> **Marincola**, John, ed. *Greek notions of the past in the archaic and classical eras: history without historians*. Edinburgh University Press, 2012; **Tarazona** Acevedo, Álvaro, and Gabriel **Samacá** Alonso. "La política educativa para la enseñanza de la historia de Colombia (1948-1990): de los planes de estudio por asignaturas a la integración de las ciencias sociales." *Revista colombiana de educación* 62 (2012): 219-242. **Brown**, Keith S., and Yannis Hamilakis, eds. *The usable past: Greek metahistories*. Lexington books, 2002.

nineteenth century, it was the Italian and later German invasion in World War II, with the subsequent British intervention in the civil war of 1949.<sup>427</sup> On each occasion, the spirit of the past was longed for, which was no longer only that of Classical Greece but now had contemporary references with the events and protagonists of the revolution of 1821.



Image 53. Political cartoons depicting the Italian invasion of Greece in 1940. An example of a reflection of the history of Greece in terms of war propaganda. Army Museum. Thessaloniki, Greece.

The materialization of the identity discourse was, to some extent, the most organic step in the construction of a national ideal. Ideas and discourses, own and foreign, had considerable power that led the inhabitants of the southern Balkans and northern South America to fight against the imperial authorities in the early nineteenth century and configure themselves as independent states. Material vestiges remained of these struggles and wars. These tangible memories, personal objects, monuments expressly dedicated, or even entire geographical

<sup>427</sup> Koulos, Thanos. "Nationalism and the lost homeland: The case of Greece." *Nations and Nationalism* 27.2 (2021): 482-496; Lialiouti, Zinovia, and Giorgos Bithymitris. "A nation under attack: Perceptions of enmity and victimhood in the context of the Greek crisis." *Lialiouti, Zinovia, and Giorgos Bithymitris. "A nation under attack: Perceptions of enmity and victimhood in the context of the Greek crisis."* In: Sierp, Aline, and Christian Karner, eds. *Dividing United Europe: From Crisis to Fragmentation?* Routledge, 2020. 50-68.

spaces, began to be consecrated or re-signified as relics of a new religion that had to be worshipped: the nation.<sup>428</sup>

This new "cult," like any religious denomination, will have worship spaces, relics, and sacred objects and, in some cases, a distinctive clergy. It is here that the formation of museums, academies and history societies begin to have an important role in the discourse of national identity.<sup>429</sup> After the aftermath of the wars of independence and a first attempt at organizing the independent state, the need arises to establish a uniform and coherent story (at least for those who first raised it) of what should be the historical account of each national genesis. This story is also centralized in spaces dedicated to it, the Colombian case in particular, because in less than five years of having conquered independence, there is already the first confirmation of a national museum with full awareness of the mission of this space.

This hierarchy of the past allows the consecration of certain spaces, characters, or objects as "sacred."<sup>430</sup> Being the most particular case in the geographical scope of the Acropolis in Athens, the "Sacred Stone," as it is recognized by the Greeks today, is the example of a space re-signified during various historical moments and on a local and global scale.<sup>431</sup> These examples also exist in the Colombian case, especially with the Boyacá bridge and the Casa del Florero. But it is with the objects, which will consequently be exhibited or sheltered in museums, that the discourse of identity will be most effective. These objects can be in everyday use, such as Llorente's vase, or conceived with ceremonial characters, such as the sword of Bolívar, and their size can vary from small cameos with the portrait of Ioannis Kapodistrias to the Acropolis itself, which is seen as both a symbol and an object.<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> **Bell**, David Avrom. *The cult of the nation in France: Inventing nationalism, 1680-1800*. Harvard University Press, 2009; **Matory**, James Lorand. "The" cult of nations" and the ritualization of their purity." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.1 (2001): 171-214.

<sup>429</sup> **Buggeln**, Gretchen T. "Museum space and the experience of the sacred." *Material Religion* 8.1 (2012): 30-50; **Berns**, Steph. *Sacred Entanglements: studying interactions between visitors, objects and religion in the museum*. University of Kent (United Kingdom), 2015.

<sup>430</sup> **Grimes**, Ronald L. "Sacred objects in museum spaces." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 21.4 (1992): 419-430. **Knowles**, Chantal. "'Objects as ambassadors': Representing nation through museum exhibitions." In: Harrison, Rodney, et al. *Unpacking the collection: Networks of material and social agency in the museum*. New York, NY: Springer New York, 2011. 231-247.

<sup>431</sup> **Yalouri**, Eleana. *The Acropolis: global fame, local claim*. Routledge, 2020.

<sup>432</sup> **Francia**, Enrico, **Sorba** Carlotta, (eds.) *Political objects in the Age of Revolution: material culture, national identities, political practices*. Roma. Viella, 2021 - 229 p.

However, with the materialization of this national discourse, the need arises to disseminate it, learn it, reinforce it, and, in certain instances, answer or criticize it. At the beginning of the independent era of each country, the educational system – also the result of a first modernization – played a fundamental role in the establishment of this identity discourse in the memory and collective imagination of the nation, whether Greek or Colombian. A process that has not been and is not simple because the interest in the "homeland history" in both countries has changed over the years: at first, the protagonists of independence were still alive and played questionable roles in the first stage of independent history, or on the contrary, the memory of the martyrs of independence was exploited ad nauseam with political interests. There is also the clear recent difference where the crises of the state projects of Greece and Colombia have influenced the way in which the population recognizes, re-signifies and engages with its past.<sup>433</sup>

The education systems of both countries, which at one time followed a uniform line in their development, have diverged radically. The interest in history is obviously not the same in Greece, where it must also deal with the overwhelming shadow of the classical past, as in Colombia, where national indifference, local perspectives, and state disinterest in maintaining an educated citizenry in all aspects in general but particularly in historical knowledge, It has generated that the educational mission in history falls on the initiatives of educational institutions and the educational divisions of museums. It could be seen as the redeemable of this situation that within the bulk of the population, there is currently no reactionary character about the Colombian past, a situation that does occur in Greece with the commemorations on antiquity, the Byzantine Empire, the revolution of 1821, the Great Catastrophe of 1922 and other events, which generally end in the adhesion or formation of extreme political specters.<sup>434</sup>

In any case, the past of both countries does not cease to be a fierce battlefield, with positions that seek to maintain at all costs the original discourses on independence, who seek to appropriate them for the achievement of political gains or, in both cases in recent years,

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<sup>433</sup> **Lialiouti**, Zinovia, and Giorgos Bithymitris. "A nation under attack: Perceptions of enmity and victimhood in the context of the Greek crisis." *Dividing United Europe*. Routledge, 2020. 50-68; **Hummel**, Daniel. "Banal nationalism, national anthems, and peace." *Peace Review* 29.2 (2017): 225-230.

<sup>434</sup> **Karakatsouli**, Anna. "Conflicting Claims over the Legacy of 1821: The Case of the Far Right in Greece." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 39.1 (2021): 71-91.

even promote a xenophobic discourse.<sup>435</sup> Or with intentions that seek to unseat, decentralize or directly refute the established discourse on the revolution that gave rise to both states. Almost always with a presentist intention, which responds more to short-term political objectives than to a sincere concern about the state of perception of the historical past among citizens.

For this reason, a separate analysis should correspond to the critical discussion on the past of revolutions, but especially on the appropriation from certain political parties of the figures of these historical periods and the use of that past with specific political agendas. To present an example that will be treated in more detail in the following chapters, we have the figure of Simón Bolívar: a transnational figure for identity discourses in practically all of South America, controversial from his own actions, who from liberator became a renegade, but after his death his memory was cultivated in the "Bolivarian countries" – Colombia and Venezuela primarily. but also Panama, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia– as a symbol of conservatism well into the twentieth century.<sup>436</sup> But it underwent a radical transformation when its discourse and figure were appropriated by socialist politicians such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela or extreme leftist groups, such as the Bolivarian Movement, a political arm adhered to the FARC, the most important guerrilla during the Colombian internal conflict from 1964 until its demobilization in 2016.<sup>437</sup>

These discourses bifurcate into those that analyze the process in a more presentist way, blaming the events and protagonists of independence for the institutional crises and current national projects, arguing that independence either did not exist or was useless.<sup>438</sup> Those

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<sup>435</sup> **Vasilopoulou**, Sofia, and Daphne **Halikiopoulou**. *The Golden Dawn's 'nationalist solution': explaining the rise of the far right in Greece*. Springer, 2015; **Moreno**, Carolina, and Gracy **Pelacani**. "El contexto de la migración venezolana en Colombia: Un análisis de la respuesta institucional en perspectiva regional." *Comunidad Venezuela: Una agenda de investigación y acción local* (2021): 171-217; **Cortés-Martínez**, Carlos A. "Xenofobia y periodismo: Colombia y la migración venezolana." *Palabra Clave* 21.4 (2018): 960-963.

<sup>436</sup> **Melo**, Jorge Orlando. "Bolívar en Colombia: las transformaciones de su imagen." In: **Rincón** Carlos, Sarah **De Mojica** and Liliana **Gómez**, *Entre el olvido y el recuerdo. Íconos, lugares de memoria y cánones en la historia y la literatura en Colombia*, Bogotá, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2010, 581 p. : 103-138; **Vanegas Carrasco**, Carolina. "Iconografía de Bolívar: revisión historiográfica." *Ensayos. Historia y teoría del arte* 22 (2012): 112-134.

<sup>437</sup> **Rosero**, Luis Fernando Trejos. "La dimensión internacional del conflicto colombiano. El caso de las FARC-EP: Beligerancia y bolivarianismo." *Revista Internacional de Cooperación y Desarrollo* 2.2 (2015): 243-260.

<sup>438</sup> **Pinzón**, Cerveleón *Sueño de un Granadino*. Bogotá: Imprenta de "El Día", por José Ayarza, 1851, 63p. Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, fondo Quijano, Vol. 110, Pieza 8. HNLAAB, fondo Misceláneas, Vol. 565.

who seek to decentralize the discourse both geographically and thematically seek to retell the past of revolutions from new perspectives, whether gender history, mentalities or emotions, and regional or global history. The challenge, then, is to keep in mind the multipolarity of memory and the perception of history, which can be both individual and collective, and to have an understanding both from outside and from within the societies that construct it.<sup>439</sup> These examples and discourses from institutions, museums, and public opinion will be disseminated to the general public, with some examples following in the next section.

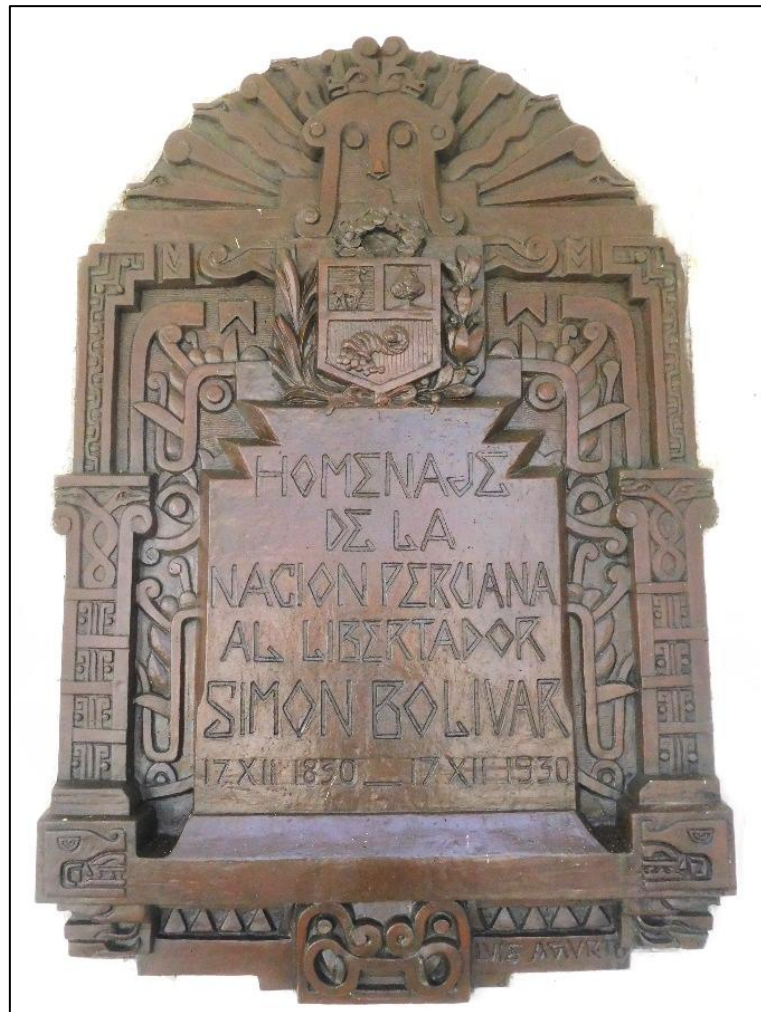


Image 54. Plate from the Peruvian nation in commemoration of the 100 years of the death of Simón Bolívar. Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino Museum, Santa Marta, Colombia.

<sup>439</sup> Assmann, Aleida. "Re-framing memory: Between individual and collective forms of constructing the past." In: Tilmans, Karin, Frank van Vree, and Jay Murray Winter, eds. *Performing the past: memory, history, and identity in modern Europe*. Amsterdam University Press, 2010.

- **PERCEPTION IN PUBLIC OPINION**

At the receiving end of the uses of history is the general public, within the strategies of dissemination of history and its narratives created by institutions, which always has the objective of transmitting in a unified and cohesive way the version and vision of history that is consistent with the national past and how it has been seen in the previous chapters, today it has been constructed by political and cultural institutions, materialized in the museum as an exhibition and discussion space, as well as a contact of citizens with this type of discourse, to finally be appropriated by the latter in various ways and from various dissemination spaces. The combination of these state attempts, their voices of dissent, and the advent of the democratization of opinion with the advent of social networks is a fundamental part of the perception we have today of the independence process in Colombia and Greece. and public history in this process.

- **The multimedia dimensions of Independence. From the print to the screen.**

The audiovisual media, television, radio, comics, animation, and social media posts have a depth in the national ethos and configure a reproduction of a national discourse that, in the first instance, is driven by the state and its institutions but whose control over the amplification of this discourse is weak or sometimes unclear.<sup>440</sup> In this order of ideas, it is possible to understand how and why a bulk of the Colombian population speak of their independence, despite doing so with a certain level of respect, they can also establish a critical or not necessarily hagiographic discourse, as generally happens with the discourse and memory of the Greek revolution of 1821, where the population still considers its protagonists as a series of untouchable characters, where, as explained before in the section on historiography, independence and its history, it remains a uncharted frontier still.<sup>441</sup>

The deeds of the past, even if it is close, have been a recurring theme of general literature since the romantic movements that were contemporaneous with the process of Independence and the formation of national states. The paradigmatic examples of this type of literature that sought to use the figures and events of the history of a particular society

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<sup>440</sup> Petrovska, I. R. "Measuring civic identity: difficulties and solution." *Sociologija* 24.4 (2019): 187-192.

<sup>441</sup> Herzfeld, Michael. "Towards an ethnographic phenomenology of the Greek spirit." *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16.1 (2001): 13-26.

to exalt them through letters and give them a specific and unique character, better said “national” has been one of the main motives that authors from the 19th century to today have used. There are several paradigmatic cases that do not necessarily correspond to the case studies analyzed here, but that do correspond to the theme of the construction of a national consciousness and identity through literature. Scott's historical novels are one example, as well as the series of national episodes by Benito Pérez Galdós in Spain is another.<sup>442</sup>

These literary works on themes of Independence in both Colombia and Greece have a history as long and rich as the states to which they belong. This is not the space to make an extensive recapitulation of this type of work, but it is worth mentioning some examples that allow us to support the argument presented here on the dissemination of a culture and a national conscience through the literature that has been responsible for capturing the episodes of the national Independence of Colombia and Greece. Starting with the highest points of both literatures, where Gabriel García Márquez, an eminent writer of Colombian literature, has dedicated part of his work to Independence, especially with the work "The General in his Labyrinth".<sup>443</sup> As a counterpart, or rather, a reflection, in the Greek case, with the works of Odysseas Elitis and Giorgio Seferis, who, despite generally drawing on the sources of the rich ancient Greek history specifically, also used the motifs of the Greek War of Independence as part of their works. But nevertheless, adding or removing layers of identity that don't necessarily resonate with the independence, but more with the collective self-awareness of the Greek nation.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> **Sánchez-Llama**, Íñigo. "El nacionalismo liberal y su textualización en las letras peninsulares del siglo XIX: el caso de Faustina Sáez de Melgar (1835-1895) y Benito Pérez Galdós (1843-1920)." *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 54.1 (2001): 5-30; **Wimmer**, Andreas, **Seungwon** Lee, and Jack **LaViolette**. "Diffusion through Multiple Domains: The Spread of Romantic Nationalism across Europe, 1770-1930." (2024); **Walker**, Stanwood Sterling. *The classical-historical novel in nineteenth-century Britain*. The University of Texas at Austin, 2001.

<sup>443</sup> **Colucciello**, Mariarosaria. "La novela histórica de Mutis y de García Márquez. La lucha por la libertad en los últimos días de Simón Bolívar." *Libertad y justicia social para el cambio social. Perspectivas y problemas*. Vol. 3. NaSC Free Press, 2022. 37-63; **Boff**, Ricardo Bruno, and Romildo José **de Almeida** Junior. "'O general em seu labirinto': A imagem literária de Simon Bolívar na obra de Gabriel García Márquez." *Revista Espirales* 6.1 (2022): 65-85.

<sup>444</sup> **Dimadis** Konstantinos A. "The Greek Historical Novel from 1830-1922, 1936-1949 and 1974-1996. Its Relations to National Self-Awareness". In: **Hokwerda**, Hero, ed. *Constructions of Greek Past: Identity and Historical Consciousness from Antiquity to the Present*. Brill, 2021. P. 265-271; **Kosmas**, Konstantinos. "The Disunification of the Nation: Contemporary Greek Historical Fiction and Collective Identities." In: **Mackridge**, Peter. *Contemporary Greek Fiction in a United Europe*. Routledge, 2017. 173-190.

In the same vein, other authors who speak of these wars of independence sometimes stand on the opposite side of the master narrative and are responsible for being part of the voices that criticize or question the heroism of certain protagonists in the wars of independence, generally from a regional or local perspective. This is the case in the novels “Los Ejércitos” and “La Carroza de Bolívar” by Evelio Rosero, who attempts to dismantle the pedestals and the bronze and marble statues of the Bolivarian epic by narrating the aforementioned episodes in the south of Colombia, specifically in the region of Pasto during the passage of the liberating army through this area.<sup>445</sup>

In the Greek case, despite the rigid, unified national version of history, the literary voices of protest or suspicion towards the master narrative on Independence do not necessarily have to oppose this identity discourse, but they do seek to demystify it or at least humanize the heroes and write that as long as one tries to observe carefully within the fog that the gunpowder of so many heroic battles has left, one only finds pain, tragedy and blood, spilled among friends, among strangers, and often also among brothers.<sup>446</sup>

With the appearance of mass media, starting with newspapers that first circulated locally and with the advance of telecommunications that achieved a national impact, in many cases, they served as a primary tool to spread and cement the master narratives about the independence process, a clear example of this is the illustrated newsprint that circulated in Colombia and that in many of its editions spoke about episodes of the Independence. Texts that fulfilled essential educational purposes and that, until the centenary of Independence in 1910 and the subsequent mass dissemination of the history manual by Henao and Arrubla, were configured as one of the most important forms of access to historical knowledge during 19th-century Colombia.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> **Guerrero** Jiménez, Vanessa. "Heroísmo carnavalizado: reivindicación de los archivos disidentes y la defensa de la memoria colectiva en la novela La carroza de Bolívar de Evelio Rosero." *Perífrasis. Revista de Literatura, Teoría y Crítica* 15.33 (2024): 61-77; **Suárez**, Stephanie. "Repensando el pasado fundacional y sus protagonistas en La carroza de Bolívar y Adiós a los próceres." *Cuadernos de Aleph* 12 (2020): 64-91.

<sup>446</sup> **Willert**, T.S. *The New Ottoman Greece in History and Fiction. Modernity, Memory and Identity in South-East Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019 p. 113-145

<sup>447</sup> **De Plaza**, José Antonio. *Memorias para la historia de la Nueva Granada desde su descubrimiento el 20 de julio de 1810*. Imprenta del Neo-granadino, 1850; **Konig** Hans-Joachim, *En el camino hacia la nación: Nacionalismo en el proceso de formación del estado y de la nación de la Nueva Granada, 1750–185*. Banco de la República, Bogotá, 1994, pp. 562

Subsequently, both in Colombia and Greece, and during the period of commemoration of the first 100 years of national independence, a narrative began to take shape regarding the Independence of the national conformation as well as its symbols and protagonists, which was widely disseminated. Articles, specials, opinion columns, and, in many cases, political and satirical cartoons representing the protagonists of Independence have occupied a place in the written press practically to this day.<sup>448</sup>

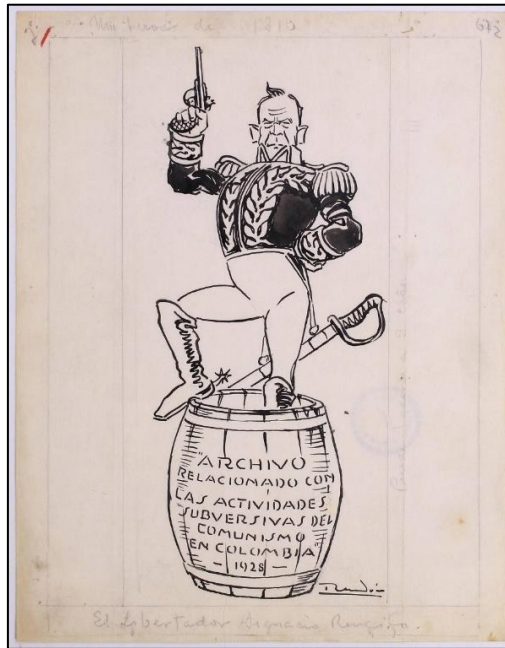


Image 55. "A hero of 1810" Caricature by Ricardo Rendón from 1928, referring to Ignacio Rengifo Forero, who considered himself a hero for discovering the plans for a communist revolution in Colombia, which never took place. *El Tiempo*, May 26, 1928.

The most significant figures of the Independence have been a source of inspiration both for the dissemination of national history and for criticizing contemporary society through cinema. As these figures and characters are the individuals most remembered and identified by the majority of the population, the stories that revolve around their lives are generally received with great expectation. Expectations that, when analyzing the audiovisual product, are generally reduced to the personal form or that of certain political groups or citizens who

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<sup>448</sup> **Melo**, Jorge Orlando. *Historiografía colombiana: realidades y perspectivas*. Autores Antioqueños, 1996.; **Archila**, Mauricio. *La historia al final del milenio: ensayos de historiografía colombiana y latinoamericana*. Vol. 1. Editorial Universidad Nacional, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Departamento de Historia, 1994.; **Betancourt** Mendieta, Alexander. *Historia y nación: tentativas de la escritura de la historia en Colombia*. Editorial la Carreta, Medellín, 2007 293 p.; **Oktem**, Kerem Halil-Latif, and Nikos **Christofis**. "The uses and abuses of history in Greece and Turkey." In: **Christofis**, Nikos, and Anthony **Deriziotis**, eds. *A Century of Greek-Turkish Relations A Handbook*. Transnational Press London, 2024. 15-27.

expected to see their imaginaries about the independence process or about this type of figure reflected on the cinema or television screens.<sup>449</sup>

The paradigmatic case, not only for Colombia but for a large part of South America, is the cycle of films and television series about the figure of the liberator Simón Bolívar. The charismatic character of the liberator, his iconographic force, and the tribulations of his private and public life have been elements exploited by the audiovisual industry to make period productions in Colombia and neighboring countries that share the same history. This is not the space to make a detailed digression into the audiovisual productions that have had not only Bolívar but other heroes of Independence as their protagonists, as well as a critical analysis of these productions, their motives, their development, and their reception by the public, as well as the possibility of analyzing the impact of these productions with respect to the influx of public in museums, just to give an example of a possible subsequent academic analysis regarding this topic. However, it is essential to highlight the possibility that this type of production has generated the collective imagination about national identity in Colombia specifically.<sup>450</sup>

In this regard, it is crucial to recognize the fundamental work that Colombia's public audiovisual media have had for several decades, but especially since the decade following the celebration of the first bicentennial in 2010, on the cataloging, restoration, and dissemination through new digital platforms of audiovisual content generated based on the war of independence. To mention a few examples in chronological order of subject matter, but not chronological in their production, various television projects have been developed in Colombia, including the participation of Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez as executive producer of various episodes of pre-republican and independence history.

The Nobel Prize winner in literature teamed up with director Jorge Ali Triana to create a series of projects set in 18th and 19th-century Colombia (in addition to, for example, the cinematic reinterpretation of the classic tragedy Oedipus the King, set in the Colombian

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<sup>449</sup> Engelen, Leen. "Back to the future, ahead to the past. Film and history: A status quaestionis." *Rethinking History* 11.4 (2007): 555-563; Thissen, Judith. "Cinema history as social history: Retrospect and prospect." *The Routledge companion to new cinema history*. Routledge, 2019. 123-133.

<sup>450</sup> Acosta, Luisa Fernanda. "Entre la historia y el cine." *Anuario Colombiano de historia social y de la cultura* 22 (1995): 123-131; Dematei, Marcelo, and María Laura Piaggio. "Cuentos de viejos: los relatos de la memoria." *Con A de animación* 5 (2015): 88-101.

armed conflict of the second half of the 20th century). These projects begin chronologically with the trilogy *De amores y crímenes* (Of Loves and Crimes) (composed of *Bituima*, *El alma del maíz* and *Amores ilícitos*).<sup>451</sup> Audiovisual products in which the narrative focuses on the social conflicts of the public and private life of certain communities in the territory that is now Colombia and that at the time was the viceroyalty of New Granada in the run-up to the process of Independence, generally focusing on characters and protagonists belonging to the less favored social classes and most forgotten by historiography, in an attempt to humanize and give voice to a period that at the time of the audiovisual productions, was unknown but at the same time difficult to access historically speaking in Colombia. Recently, RTVC restored and digitized these three films.<sup>452</sup>

Following a positive reception of this project, the García Márquez/Triana duo embarked on the production during the 1990s of a mini-series dedicated to the events preceding the cry for independence on July 20, 1810, starting with the Comunero Revolution in the province of Vélez in 1782, going through the first years of the independence process until the Spanish reconquest in 1816. This miniseries entitled *Crónicas de una generación trágica* (Chronicles of a Tragic Generation) featured a cast loaded with the most select acting talent in Colombia at that time and marked a milestone in the history of television in Colombia itself.

In this six-episode miniseries released in 1993, where the main thread is carried by a Creole tailor named Jacobo who interacts and contextualizes the viewer by breaking the fourth wall, key episodes and characters of the independence process are embodied, such as the aforementioned Revolution of the Communards, the botanical expedition of José Celestino Mutis and his role in the generation of a national conscience in Colombia, thanks to the participation of its members in the independence process, the translation into Spanish and subsequent dissemination of the Declaration of Rights of Men, which cost Antonio Nariño his freedom (one of the main characters in the series) and later the last chapters are

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<sup>451</sup> **Correa**, R. Julián David. "Revoluciones en todos los formatos." *Cinémas d'Amérique latine* 18 (2010): 49-52; **Vilaltella**, Javier G. "La visualización de la época virreinal en el cine latinoamericano (1970-2010)." In: **Oesterreicher**, Wulf, and Roland **Schmidt-Riese**, eds. *Conquista y conversión: universos semióticos, textualidad y legitimación de saberes en la América colonial*. Vol. 37 Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014 p. 383-414.

<sup>452</sup> **RTVC Sistema De Medios Públicos**. "Lanzan versión restaurada y digitalizada de la película "Bituima," September 11, 2018. <https://urlis.net/zt5rn656>; **Restrepo** Sánchez Gonzalo. *Gabriel García Márquez y el cine: Una buena amistad?*. Vol. 174. Editorial Unimagdalena, 2019. P.47

dedicated to the *patria boba* (foolish homeland), which is the term that historiography uses for the internal conflicts within the independence process of Colombia, specifically those that led to the first civil war in 1813 between federalists led by Camilo Torres and centralists who were under the leadership of Antonio Nariño.<sup>453</sup> to end with the tragic pacification of the New Granada territory by the Spanish commander Pablo Morillo.

Following the chronological order and under the air of the bicentennial commemorations of Independence in 2010, several serial productions set in the process of Independence and taking quite a few historical liberties for a fictional production based on real events in the popular soap opera format have been broadcast for local Colombian television. The most popular case was a biographical soap opera about the life of Policarpa Salavarrieta titled her nickname “la Pola.” It tells the story of the love and betrayal of perhaps the most famous heroine of Colombian Independence and the heroic actions that culminated in her execution during the peace process in 1816. It was a successful production, but one that put much more emphasis on the melodramatic and romantic aspects and left aside the historical character of the production, which has important flaws in the costumes and representation of New Granada during the first decades of the 19th century.



Image 56. Installation in the "Memory and Nation" Room in the National Museum of Colombia. Depicting the shadows of Antonio Nariño working on his printing press and a sitting shaman from the Amazon region.

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<sup>453</sup> **Espinosa**, José María. *Memorias de un abanderado: Recuerdos de la patria boba. 1810-1819*. Imprenta de "El Tradicionista", 1876; **García**, Juan Carlos. "La Patria Boba o la negación de la Primera República en la Nueva Granada." *Revista Academia Huilense de Historia* 69 (2018): 169-178.

Many of these productions can be used in educational and outreach spaces to transmute a historical reality that is sometimes only found in specialized bibliography or the original documents into an audiovisual reality. But at the same time, these productions generally sin either by a lack of rigorous historical advice or by an imbalance between the fictional content and the historical reality that they want to show on a screen. There is nothing wrong with making these types of productions; on the contrary, many of these series and films will have a much stronger and longer-lasting impact on the historical knowledge and recognition of the societies and historical processes that are projected on the screen than the best book written by academic historiography on the subject.<sup>454</sup> But these possibilities of generating a collective iconographic legacy do not have to take precedence over a more careful projection of these historical elements. Historical cinema and television do not necessarily have to be the audiovisual condensation of a past event in a rigid and strict way, taking away an essential part of its nature, which is to provide entertainment.

But in that same vein, it is much easier to enjoy an audiovisual production that considers, from its production, a more critical approach to the past, hopefully supported by professional historians, which allows reality to be portrayed in a more reliable way without taking away its entertaining character. In short, it is easier to enjoy this type of production if the spectator is not considered a stupid individual who only consumes the product offered without having the ability to discern between what is historically appropriate and historically correct or not.<sup>455</sup>

Another paradigmatic case that has had a sufficiently broad popular and iconographic reception to establish an archetype of its image in the various artistic or multimedia representations is indeed that of Simon Bolívar. As a result of the proliferation of his image, especially after the centenary of Independence, but also of the commemoration of the hundred years of his death, the figure of the liberator is perfectly distinguishable for the inhabitants not only of Colombia but of what are today considered Bolivarian countries. He also becomes the archetype of the historical character of the period of Independence. Iconographically, and since the 19th century with the cycles of historical painting and the appearance of his image on coins and banknotes, to give two examples, the image of a thin

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<sup>454</sup> Regarding this topic: **Vidal**, Belén. *Heritage film: Nation, genre, and representation*. Columbia University Press, 2012.; **Higson**, Andrew. "Re-presenting the national past: nostalgia and pastiche in the heritage film." In: **Grant**, Barry Keith, ed. *Film genre reader IV*. University of Texas Press, 2012. 602-627.

<sup>455</sup> **Vidal**, Belén. *Figuring the past: period film and the mannerist aesthetic*. Amsterdam University Press, 2012.

man with short hair, prominent sideburns, and a war jacket with epaulets unequivocally represents the period of Independence.

Film and television, once again driven by the wave of commemorations, first for the sesquicentennial in the 1960s and later for the bicentennial in 2010, have taken inspiration from the figure of the liberator to place him as the protagonist of series, soap operas, and films. This personification of Simón Bolívar in these spaces has ranged from a hagiographic character to a critical view of the cult of personality that the nation has paid him. To cite some of these examples chronologically, we have the representations that were made in the series entitled *Revivamos nuestra historia* (Let's relive our history), framed in the commemorations of the sesquicentennial, followed by that critical view that can be seen in the 2001 film *Bolívar soy yo* (Bolívar is me) that cleverly raises some of the perennial problems of national identity in Colombia, with the context of violence and social conflict that the country was going through at that time of the turn of the century. In that film, an actor who had played the liberator in an old series (making a nod to the actor who played Bolívar in *Revivamos Nuestra Historia*) becomes so obsessed with his role and with the figure of Simón Bolívar himself that he begins to write that he is the modern version of the liberator, obviously trying to take the power of his beloved Colombia and ride on the back of his faithful steed "Palomo".<sup>456</sup>

In addition to this, several modern productions have been made since the 1930s, in many cases with binational cooperation between Colombia and Venezuela to make multimillion-dollar productions for film and television. *Libertador* from 2013 and *Bolívar. An Admirable Struggle* from 2019 is one of the most recent productions, made to tell the life, adventures, and betrayals of Simón Bolívar. Despite the economic effort of these productions, having the advice of professional historians and reflecting with greater certainty than that filmed 40 years ago, the historical realities of northern South America at the beginning of the 19th century still have certain blunders in terms of arguments and reconstruction of settings and

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<sup>456</sup> Villamil, María Elvira. "Reflexividad y política en "Bolívar soy yo" de Jorge Alí Triana." *Romance Quarterly* 57.4 (2010): 245-256; Hennes, Heather. "Irony, criticism and Bolivarian places in Jorge Ali Triana's Bolívar soy yo." *West Virginia University Philological Papers* 55 (2012): 69-80.

costumes. Despite all this, it is still an entertaining product that can serve as an educational tool and a first approach to the history of this period of national formation.<sup>457</sup>

In the Greek case, audiovisual productions about the 1821 Revolution have been a recurring theme to choose from within the already vast thematic possibilities that historical productions can have in the country. But surprisingly, although under the argument of the production processes and recreation of costumes and scenery of the time, as well as of times prior to the Revolution of 21, the majority of historical productions in Greece over time and in these moments of commemoration of the 200 years of Independence, have focused on other historical aspects of modern Greece, such as the Balkan Wars, the catastrophe of Asia Minor, the German occupation during the Second World War and in general other aspects of modern Greece that seek to generate sufficient interest in the general public, all that combined with the reception of foreign productions, especially and not necessarily paradoxically the ones produced in Turkey.<sup>458</sup>

Exploiting other identity characters or events that identify the majority of the population with them, such as comedies that talk about the urban expansion of Greek cities after the post-war period, today the film adaptations of the canonical literary works of modern Greek literature where the quintessential example is *Zorba the Greek*, which includes not only the work of Nikos Kazantzakis, the indisputable soundtrack of Mikis Theodorakis but with the participation of Hollywood, a stereotype of contemporary Greece began to take shape, of sirtaki, taverns and white houses with blue-painted windows. One more example of an identity developed from within but imposed from outside.<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> **Rosenstone**, Robert A. "The historical film: Looking at the past in a postliterate age." In: Landy, Marcia, ed. *The historical film: History and memory in media*. A&C Black, 2001. P. 50-66. **Weinstein**, Paul B. "Movies as the gateway to history: The history and film project." *The History Teacher* 35.1 (2001): 27-48; **Stoddard**, Jeremy D., and Alan S. **Marcus**. "The burden of historical representation: Race, freedom, and" educational" Hollywood film." *Film & history: An interdisciplinary journal of film and television studies* 36.1 (2006): 26-35; **Madianou**, Mirca. "Shifting discourses: Banal nationalism and cultural intimacy in Greek television news and everyday life." In: **Mole**, Richard CM, (ed.) *Discursive constructions of identity in European politics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2007. 95-116.

<sup>458</sup> **Larochelle**, Dimitra Laurence. "Transnational soap operas and viewing practices in the digital age: The Greek fandom of Turkish dramas." *International Communication Gazette* 85.3-4 (2023): 233-249;

<sup>459</sup> **Tambakaki**, Polina. "'Art-Popular' Song and Modern Greek Poets—Interactions and Ideologies: The Case of Mikis Theodorakis." In: **Tragaki**, D. (ed.). *Made in Greece: Studies in Popular Music* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2018. 280 p. p. 55-64.

As for the productions clearly delimited to the Greek Revolution, films of a biographical nature, or those that narrate certain specific episodes of the Revolution, are clearly predominant.<sup>460</sup> In general, one could consider that these productions, based on the historical facts of Greek Independence, remain in line with the master narrative, sometimes strongly influenced by the governments in power, such as the dictatorship of the colonels in the 1970s, where there is a strong dichotomy between good and evil, between the subjugated Greeks and the cruel Ottomans, and where in general with a great deal of sacrifice the good perseveres over evil.<sup>461</sup> This is a cross-cutting element in time when analyzing the arguments of these cinematographic productions from the post-war period to the bicentennial of Independence. It is in these bicentennial commemorations that a synthesis of the productions made with this theme has been made, in addition to the screening of new productions such as *Πολιορκία* (Siege) from 2019 and *Εξοδος 1826* (Exodus 1826) released in 2017.<sup>462</sup>

One of the most essential cultural devices of the modern Greek nation, inside and outside the country, has been the theatre, and deserves special mention. There are many occasions or reinterpretations where, from modern theatre, which remains to this day one of the most popular cultural options within this nation, the independence process has been discussed. A discourse that does not necessarily refer to the internal and external expectations of the master narrative on the independence process or the character of the national identity.<sup>463</sup> In other words, seeking to question this identity discourse with a representation on stage of some of the processes of Independence or the dramas of its protagonists, which in the case

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<sup>460</sup> **Householder**, April Kalogeropoulos. *The life and legacy of Laskarina Bouboulina: Feminist alternatives to documentary filmmaking practices*. University of Maryland, College Park, 2007

<sup>461</sup> **Komnenos**, Vlasios. *Κινηματογράφος και προπαγάνδα: ιστορικές και πολεμικές ταινίες στην Ελλάδα κατά την περίοδο της δικτατορίας (1967-1974)*. (Cinema and propaganda: historical and war cinema in Greece during the period of the dictatorship (1967-1974)) Dissertation. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA). Department of Communication and Mass Media, 2012.

<sup>462</sup> **Thanouli**, Eleftheria. *History and film: A tale of two disciplines*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2018; **Mini**, Panayiota. "A Red Handkerchief made with Soviet threads: Kazantzakis's (and Istrati's) screenplay on the Greek Revolution of 1821." *Journal of Greek Media & Culture* 2.1 (2016): 49-65.

<sup>463</sup> **Diakoumopoulou**, Katerina. "The Greek Theatre in the United States from the End of the 19th Century to the 21st Century." *Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies* 16.2 (2008): 125-142.

of the most relevant figures such as Kapodistrias, Makriyiannis, or Kolokotronis were never few.<sup>464</sup>

A particular case is that of Athanasios Diakos, who was one of the first martyrs of the Independence, widely recognized for his devotion, and practically venerated as an eternal martyr by some parts of Greek society who during the 70s after the dictatorship that Greece lived through after the Second World War, and who remains in contemporary collective memory one of the most important events, suffered a reinterpretation of his character and his tragic martyrdom in 1821 after the battle of Alamana in which he was captured by the Ottomans and who, given Diakos' refusal to renounce his Orthodox faith and convert to the island, they essentially roasted him alive after impaling him. Diakos went from having elegies recited in 1894 to a theatrical representation in 2012 under the direction of Lena Kitsopoulou, where in *Αθανάσιος Διάκος – Η επιστροφή* (Athanasios Diakos: The Return) the martyr of independence was described as the owner of a kebab place who maintained a toxic relationship with his wife and family, sanctifying and breaking the canon of the imposed master narrative where the heroes of Independence essentially form a pantheon.<sup>465</sup>

In the end, this type of audiovisual production condenses an imaginary repeated over time by other mass media, ranging from numismatics through pictorial art to the written press. An imaginary, some unique aesthetic forms of representation that are easily identifiable by all layers of the population of a country, which allows for the extraction and location in time the references and themes of its independence process, whether in Colombia or Greece. Historical cinema, theatre, and television generally exaggerate, if not abuse, the possible iconographic representations of a certain historical period in order to differentiate them from others and highlight their uniqueness. The problem arises when these aesthetic resources are repeated or exaggerated to such an extent that they look false, compromising their historical informative character, which is not always the reason why the director creates this type of production since they are then only entertainment productions, therefore

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<sup>464</sup> Hager, Philip. "Re-imagining Independence in Contemporary Greek Theatre and Performance." *Elements in Theatre, Performance and the Political* (2023); Ioannidis, Grigoris. "" Facing Mirrors": Contemporary Greek Theatre Productions and the Issue of Identity." *Gamma: Journal of Theory and Criticism* 22.2 (2014): 75-94; Lignou Tsamantani, Ariadni. *Between, Against, Beyond: Challenging National Identities in Contemporary Greek Theatre*. Dissertation. 2021.

<sup>465</sup> Sampatakakis, George. "From national panegyrics to stage scandal: Athanasios Diakos in history." *Journal of Greek Media & Culture* 7.2 (2021): 281-299.

they must be analyzed as such, this is the case of the vast majority of productions of the so-called “sword and sandals” cinema.<sup>466</sup>

What is undeniable is that in both case studies, the audiovisual productions that have been in charge of projecting scenes from the wars of independence have generated and helped to spread the stage and personal archetype of this historical period in the collective memory. Understanding Bolívar or Kolokotronis on the small or big screen in the graphic way in which we understand it today is essentially the result of the nourishment of images and topics that have emerged from the halls of historical museums in both countries. It is in the halls of museums and galleries where the objects that were analyzed in the previous chapters as relics rest, and that to this day remain captivated by the collective imagination. It is from these museum halls that we can see how Independence is massively understood in Colombia and Greece. A period of wars and conflicts, where a group of men (and apparently very few women) of a messianic character, some with jackets with epaulets and high boots, or failing that, short pants, espadrilles, and *ruana* as in the Colombian case, others with *foustanela* and ornate and brightly colored dresses, armed with *yatagans* and prominent mustaches as in the Greek case.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Diak, Nicholas, ed. *The New Peplum: Essays on Sword and Sandal Films and Television Programs Since the 1990s*. McFarland, 2018; D'Amelio, Maria Elena. "Hercules, Politics, and Movies." Cornelius, Michael G., ed. *Of Muscles and Men: essays on the Sword and Sandal film*. McFarland, 2011.: 15-27

<sup>467</sup> Kourniakti, Jessica. "Ancient Greek Mythology and the Culture of the Neohellene in Animated TV Satire." In: Aitaki, Georgia, et al. *Retelling the Past in Contemporary Greek Literature, Film, and Popular Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.: 165; Earle, Rebecca. "La iconografía de la independencia en la Nueva Granada." In: Calvo-Stevenson, Haroldo, and Adolfo Meisel-Roca. *Cartagena de Indias en la independencia*. Banco de la Republica de Colombia, 2011. P.561-598.



Image 57. Statue of Laskarina Boukoulina at the port of her natal island. Spetses, Greece.

○ **Social media and other public displays of the Independence Period**

Even in the age of information democratization, institutions and states have struggled to hold on to control of the master narrative about the past that they have developed since the founding of independent states in Colombia and Greece. Institutional attempts to project national history on platforms other than traditional media have been one of the essential efforts of the public media system and the commissions charged with commemorating the bicentennial of independence. In Colombia and Greece, efforts have been made by the state, sharing this with other countries that have also made efforts through social media to connect

with their citizens through these new platforms, often also using commemorations as a specific motivation to carry out such public and digital history projects.<sup>468</sup>

These new ways of studying and disseminating the past about Independence, as it was mentioned before, in the age of technology, the age of the democratization of information, the specific power of the media that the monopoly of information itself is fragmented, allowing other voices to enter in an autonomous, often self-managed way, into the debate about the uses of the past and its recognition in the present. The moment in which we live is the moment in which in the academy, which also tends to be a tremendously hierarchical and monolithic structure, especially when it comes to making decisions on these large projects, it is possible to connect with the general public through the various technological tools that have allowed the construction of academic dissemination projects that under different conditions would have an enormous academic and bureaucratic cost.



Image 58. Reinterpretation of the image of Simón Bolívar in the temporary exhibition "Extreme Colombia: The Country Seen from Punk and Metal." Museum of Independence Casa del Florero, Bogotá, Colombia.

<sup>468</sup> El Tiempo Casa Editorial con la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, la Universidad de los Andes y la Universidad del Rosario. "200 años de lo que somos." *El Tiempo*, July 11, 2024. Consulted in: <https://urlis.net/yx9ydc6p>.

This leads to the use of virtual platforms for the dissemination and expression of citizens' interpretation of Independence in a digitalized world, two centuries after the events that shaped the beginning of modern Colombia and Greece. In addition to the waves of comments and content created on these platforms, from the merely educational to the comical, there have also been informative projects created in the context of the bicentennials and with the purpose of bringing the discussion about independence to social networks.<sup>469</sup>

Another space for popular dissemination has been the use of the streets themselves as a space for re-signifying and rethinking the history of Independence from the perspective of the contemporary city. On the walls of large cities, but not only in them, street art has found a space today for reinterpreting the most relevant iconographic themes about the wars of independence. This shows that issues as contemporary and, to a certain extent, recent in generational terms as graffiti have already found a space for artistic and popular expression about these symbols and their interpretation, moving away from or coming before what is established by the canon, both artistic and historiographical. It should be noted that walls and street art continue to be one of the most direct devices of popular communication. Also, being a source of dissent, this dissent can be seen in what could be received as unexpected reactions, such as the recent constant vandalization of murals of the heroes of the independence of Greece.<sup>470</sup> History and its reception continue to be a battlefield, even on the walls of cities.

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<sup>469</sup> **Tsimpoukis**, Panos, and Nikos **Smyrniaios**. "1821 Tweets: Networks and Ideological Discourse Around the Greek Revolution Bicentenary." In: **Souvlis**, George, and Athina **Karatzogianni**, eds. *Duty to Revolt: Transnational and Commemorative Aspects of Revolution*. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2023. 129-143.

<sup>470</sup> **The Greek Herald** (Sydney), (02/03/21) Simos, Andriana "Painted wall of 1821 Greek Revolution heroes vandalised in Greece" consulted in: <https://shorturl.at/e7NrK>



Image 59. Bust of Theodoros Kolokotronis, with an offensive graffiti towards the Greek Heroes of Independence and the date of the Massacre of Tripolitsa, a city in the Peloponnese, besieged by the troops commanded by Kolokotronis. In the Ares Camp. Athens, Greece.

In any case, and aided in the celebration of the Independence commemorations, both academia and cultural institutions have developed projects from their digital platforms to retell and reconnect citizens with the history of Independence. Today, from the creation of digital archives, such as mass dissemination through social networks that included dynamic

publications and events both virtual and physical (a tremendously useful alternative if we consider that between the last bicentennials of Colombia in 2019 and that of Greece in 2021, the COVID 19 pandemic occurred, which forced a decrease in in-person attendance and a refinement and increase in the virtuality of this type of events.<sup>471</sup>

Even so, there are still considerable possibilities that have not yet been fully explored in terms of the dissemination of historical content related to the Independence and the history of both countries in general from this audiovisual and technological perspective. The creation of podcasts, YouTube channels, and general dissemination accounts, whether as a personal or institutional initiative, about content related to the Independence of both countries, is not and should not be the only option to combine history and technology from a public perspective. One of these fields to explore that has had a proven effect in the process of bringing new generations closer to historical content is the field of video games. Obviously, it is not the same to develop a short video with editing and images talking about the liberation campaign of 1819 or the formation of the *Filiki Eteria* as what is needed to design, program, and develop a video game even for mobile devices or small platforms, today not to mention the possibilities of generating historical video games set in this period of the age of revolutions and with the technological muscle of some of the titles or franchises of historical video games that today are already inserted in a global popular culture.

These ideas, and even if you want to call them illusions, are an interesting starting point for a reflection on various topics, such as the hierarchy of historical events on a global scale, with what that implies in terms of dissemination and historiography, where one story is considered more interesting than another, a consequence generated by the historiographical hierarchy of the past and reflected in its public reception, the latter mediated by the market itself. In the end, these video games are products that must be marketed massively. But without falling into the cynicism of the capitalist extractivism of the past, we must accept that these video games have done enough to capture the attention of new generations of

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<sup>471</sup> Syriatou, Athena, Elias Stouraitis, and Kyriakos Sgouropoulos. "History, Historical Culture, and 1821: Creating a Digital Archive of Public History in the Twenty-First Century." *The Public Historian* 45.4 (2023): 47-62.

historians, many of whom are already in a position to establish their own academic careers with professional historians.<sup>472</sup>

Furthermore, the interest that led them to choose this career was not necessarily, or rather exclusively, the visit to a national history museum or the reading of one of the great names in historiography. It can be assured almost with total certainty and without making an unnecessary division of gender or age that the experience of contact with the past through a video game on any platform brings people, and in this case, the new historians of a few generations back, closer to the raw material of the historical discipline, with greater force and effectiveness than any classic author or best seller.<sup>473</sup> Therefore, it could be an opportunity, tentative, of course, but still plausible, to disseminate historical knowledge about the independence of Colombia and Greece in a massive way.

These ideas or intentions evidently have to be measured in the sense of the discourse that it would propose to transmit through its design and development, as well as the uses that this type of dissemination device can come to have. The use of these multimedia and virtual tools is tremendously helpful for the dissemination of historical knowledge to the general public, but it can also become a double-edged sword. A tool that can intentionally or unintentionally distort the perception of history, as has been seen in many cases with games based on other historical moments, such as the Second World War, antiquity, or colonialism, where certain conceptions of the past are configured.<sup>474</sup>

Conceptions that are also projected in these video games or in the communities that participate in them give rise to distorted relationships with history, where the

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<sup>472</sup> **Wainwright**, A. Martin. *Virtual history: How videogames portray the past*. Routledge, 2019; **Venegas Ramos**, Alberto.(2020). *Pasado Interactivo: memoria e historia en el videojuego*. Segunda edición. España. Sans Soleil Ediciones; **Flegler**, Alexander, and Christian **Rollinger**. "The complexities and nuances of portraying history in Age of Empires." In: **Rollinger**, Christian (ed.) *Classical Antiquity in Video Games*. London. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020 312 p.: 205-216.

<sup>473</sup> **Metzger**, Scott Alan, and Richard J. **Paxton**. "Gaming history: A framework for what video games teach about the past." *Theory & Research in Social Education* 44.4 (2016): 532-564;

<sup>474</sup> **Chapman**, Adam. *Digital games as history: How videogames represent the past and offer access to historical practice*. Routledge, 2016; **Spring**, Dawn. "Gaming history: computer and video games as historical scholarship." *Rethinking History* 19.2 (2015): 207-221; **Jiménez-Alcázar**, Juan Francisco. "La interacción del videojuego en las aulas universitarias: educación e Historia." *REIRE Revista d'Innovació i Recerca en Educació* 13.1 (2020): 1-17; **Nagwekar**, Neil. "On the postcolonial analysis of 'Indians' in Age of Empires II: A theory of ethical programs' behind postcolonial criticisms of video games." In: **Houghton**, Robert, (ed.) *Playing the Middle Ages: Pitfalls and Potential in Modern Games*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023. P.183.

dehumanization of historical subjects and the understanding of the past as an eternal battlefield where only a certain kind of character can win becomes a reality.<sup>475</sup> Therefore, it is interesting to see how projecting both the master narrative of the independence of Colombia and Greece, as well as the critical voices to it, could be configured in an informative element like this.

○ **Embracing national history with its virtues and flaws**

Following the prejudices and distortions of banal and hot nationalism that were already analyzed in other parts of this chapter and of the dissertation in general, it is important to reflect on the nowadays projection and, in the end, assumption about what the past “really” was, specifically in the wars of independence of these two countries, and what some individuals or political currents consider this historical reality to have been.<sup>476</sup> After 200 years and countless works from critical historiography based in turn on nationalist historiography that sought to support in an academic manner the sovereignty and in itself the existence of a political configuration of Colombia and Greece as independent countries. This historical distortion is what allows the generation and massification of discourses of ideas of the type that there never was absolute independence, and that this entire revolutionary process was only the political game of some local elites, where only the state administration changed at the cost of the suffering and blood of the people. This expression exists in both case studies and generally reflects presentism regarding the frustration generated by the current state of both countries, a frustration that is generally represented and increases at the time of commemorations of important dates related to Independence.

This leads to a victimized understanding of national history, which is tremendously dangerous when these narratives that go from victimized to revengeful begin to permeate certain public and, specifically, political discourse. A facet present in the national construction of Greece and Colombia, but rather universal than exclusive to their

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<sup>475</sup> **Chapman**, Adam. "Privileging form over content: Analysing historical videogames." *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1.2 (2012): 1-2; **Cruz**, Martínez Manuel Alejandro. "Playing with History's Otherness. A framework for exploring historical games." *DiGRA/FDG 2016—Proceedings of the 2016 Playing With History Workshop*. 2016; **Valeriano**, Brandon, and Philip Habel. "Who are the enemies? The visual framing of enemies in digital games." *International Studies Review* 18.3 (2016): 462-486; **Venegas**, Alberto. "El videojuego histórico como forma de memoria." *Revista de Historiografía (RevHisto)* 34 (2020): 347-368

<sup>476</sup> **Zimmermann**, Tanja, ed. *Balkan memories: Media constructions of national and transnational history*. transcript Verlag, 2012. P.18

experiences as nation-states.<sup>477</sup> This is where irredentism is generated, this is where political tendencies begin to turn towards authoritarianism as well, this is where history begins to be understood in absolutes, in good and bad (where the bad, obviously, are never “us”), where either the heroes have no blemish for belonging to this secular saints’ calendar of the nation, or on the contrary they should be defenestrated from the windows of the national pantheon for being considered vile and traitors against their people and ideals.



Image 60. Contemporary reinterpretation of the iconography of Bolívar at the temporary “El pasado nunca muere. No es ni siquiera pasado” (Past never dies. It is not even past) exhibition of Carlos Castro at the Modern Art Museum of Bogotá.

All these elements permeate and float around the general understanding of the independence process and are nourished by banal nationalism: the display of flags, the

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<sup>477</sup> **Lerner**, Adam B. "The uses and abuses of victimhood nationalism in international politics." *European Journal of International Relations* 26.1 (2020): 62-87; **Lim**, Jie-Hyun. "Victimhood nationalism in contested memories: National mourning and global accountability." **Assmann**, Aleida, and Sebastian **Conrad** (eds.) *Memory in a global age: Discourses, practices and trajectories*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010. 138-162.

military parades to commemorate the dates of Independence, the representations in film, art, and literature, the colloquial language, the notes of the national anthem either routinely or on specific occasions, as well as the cultivation and appropriation of local and foreign stereotypes about the nation itself.<sup>478</sup> On how to understand being Greek or Colombian from an internal perspective but also from a global perspective. What do the citizens of these two countries expect to understand about themselves, but also, what does the world expect from them in order to be easily identified and recognized in an increasingly hegemonic planetary political configuration?

Essentially, it is about reflecting on the rituals and elements of this "secular religion" that the nation has configured during the last two centuries in Colombia and Greece. Analyzing how the calendar is configured as the vital cycle of the nation, how these patriotic days are ritualized, and how the hot nationalism of sporting events and national holidays is combined and balanced with banal and routine nationalism. Understanding them as a series of organizational strategies of a hierarchical narrative that are appropriated and re-signified both from below and individually, not only applied and performed during the 20<sup>th</sup> of July or the 25<sup>th</sup> of March in Colombia and Greece, respectively.<sup>479</sup>

In this regard, there is room for a final reflection on the processes of national identity construction after this journey on the identity developments of Colombia and Greece, analyzing where their general patriotic elements come from, their symbols, and the main tragedies that in both cases have all been exploited by the governments in power to support their institutional and political actions. Two centuries after the establishment of these sovereign and independent states, they have some edges and respond to some forms of collective mediation with the past that is particular in each case but comparable in a broad perspective on the process of construction of the nation-state as a historical phenomenon.

There is no problem in understanding both the narratives of national glory, as well as the more critical and considered perspectives from the professional study of history that find

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<sup>478</sup> **Fox**, Jon E. "National holiday commemorations: the view from below." In: **Tsang**, Rachel, and Eric **Taylor Woods**. *The cultural politics of nationalism and nation-building*. Londres, Routledge, 2013. P. 38-52; **Fox**, Jon E., and Cynthia Miller-Idriss. "Everyday nationhood." *Ethnicities* 8.4 (2008): 536-563.

<sup>479</sup> **West**, Brad. *Re-enchanting nationalisms: Rituals and remembrances in a postmodern age*. Springer, 2015. P 139-142; **Geisler**, Michael E. "The calendar conundrum: national days as unstable signifiers." In: **McCrone**, David, and Gayle **McPherson**, (eds.) *National days: Constructing and mobilising national identity*. Springer 2009. 10-25.

Greece as an experience of reorganization of the Orthodox population of the Ottoman Empire, based on the political game of its powers that guaranteed its independence, is also a projection of what these powers and Europe in general understood by their own past where Greece has been built as a foundational and fundamental part of it.<sup>480</sup> The past of this specific geographical space of the Eastern Mediterranean and the societies that have inhabited it over time is rich and varied enough to depend on certain specific "glories" or "tragedies" that are chosen and promoted for political purposes, but which distort historical reality.

Just as there is no problem with expressing a version of the generation of the Colombian nation that is not transversally composed of either a series of heroic acts or betrayals and tragedies. Where the formation of the Republic of Colombia (and the other republics around it) as it was born independent, could be understood in a balanced way as part of a global process with regional nuances and unique developments that not only allow and influence the understanding at the historical moment of the era of revolutions in its territory but also in the American continent.<sup>481</sup> Where the development of a national character is not necessarily spontaneous or self-sufficient, and where, in general, that negative exceptionalism with which Colombia is understood from within does not necessarily respond to a historical reality accurately examined.

Looking ahead and seeing the processes that both nations have generated, implemented from the institutions and the power structures, but also transformed from a popular base that understands its own past in a particular way, one could advocate for an understanding of the construction of the nation itself, connected with regional phenomena, and with this doctoral dissertation, an attempt to reflect on global phenomena, with the intention of reflecting and at the same time reflecting on one's own past, leaving aside the autarchic conceptions of it.<sup>482</sup> But at the same time recognizing oneself as something that one should

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<sup>480</sup> **Kostis**, Kostas. *History's Spoiled Children: The Story of Modern Greece*. Trans. by Jacob Moe. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 467p. p.425

<sup>481</sup> **Thiesse**, Anne Marie. "Cultura popular, nacionalismo y regionalismo." *Anales del Museo Nacional de Antropología*. No. 22. Dirección General de Bellas Artes y de Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales, 2020; **Quintero**, Inés. *El relato invariable: independencia, mito y nación*. Vol. 95. Editorial Alfa, 2016.

<sup>482</sup> **Gülçin Dilek**, and **Filippidou Eleni**. "Turkey and Greece: Reconstructing a shared past." In: **Guyver, Robert** (ed.). *Teaching History and the Changing Nation State*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016 – 312p. p.75-94.

be. Something that, despite external intentions and internal pretensions, allows one to identify intensely and honestly with one's own national history. Paraphrasing the Colombian philosopher Fernando González Ochoa, "One must be what one is, energetically."<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> **González**, Fernando. *Viaje a pie 1929*. Universidad EAFIT, 2020. P.69



## **CONCLUSION**

After a course that crossed through the most relevant theoretical postulates on the formation of the nation and the collective memory, to then find the application of these postulates practically and tangibly in museum institutions, as well as the appropriation of the elements of the historical episode of the wars of independence in Colombia and Greece within a more public and within popular culture itself. At this point of this research, it is crucial to begin to make some final considerations and reflect on that frame of the initial hypothetical postulate and their subsequent verification or refutation, as well as a series of final thoughts both on the work carried out in these pages, as well as the possibilities of continuation, expansion, and application of the themes and postulates discussed here.

- **A PLEDGE FOR COMPARISON AND SIMILARITY**

In its first pages, this dissertation began with the justification that a comparative work like this requires. It justifies how an interesting and novel topic can crystallize into a critical academic exercise. This justification that discussed the temporal proximity between the processes of Independence of Colombia and Greece now counts in these final pages as a call to continue these exercises of historical and historiographic comparison, not only because of the pertinence of its elaboration, nor because of the evident proximity or distance that may exist between the two or more events, characters or historical processes to be compared, but for the simple fact of being a valid and necessary academic exercise in its very nature.

- **Pushing the boundaries of historiography**

How the humanities have dealt with the relativization of Western universalism has been through the breaking of dominant historical structures through the concept of otherness that allows, from the post-colonial and colonial theory, to establish encounters between diverse non-hegemonic cultures and those that do not belong to the Western European English-speaking culture.<sup>484</sup> To recognize themselves as subjects of historical value, these representatives of non-hegemonic culture must establish their identity and nature as the other from the otherness. But even so, to demonstrate this historical value, an additional

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<sup>484</sup> Breña, Roberto. "La Era de las Revoluciones bajo la lupa. Análisis crítico de dos libros recientes de la historiografía estadounidense". *Foro Internacional*, 64(4), 965–1014; Griffin, Patrick. *The Age of Atlantic Revolution: The Fall and Rise of a Connected World*. Yale University Press, 2023

cultural and intellectual effort must be made, which is not seen as necessary by the referents of the dominant cultural apparatus but which is fundamental for the members of this otherness to try to be accepted or understood within an intellectual and academic sphere that does not necessarily respond to the epistemology with which their societies understand themselves.<sup>485</sup>

This dissertation and works of its kind establish a break from this paradigm, where historiographical additions are generally framed in a safe environment of historical description of the most familiar or known temporal and geographical environment. Paradoxically, in the interconnected world we live in today, it seems that historical research, in an eagerness for hyper-specialization, aims to unravel only the most minute details of periods, characters, or spaces already studied or known. While the difficulty of facing the unknown limits for those who carry out historical research becomes tacit, limits generally imposed by limitations of a linguistic type, of access to sources, and in practically all cases of funding to carry out these investigations, but essentially, a limitation that imposes the ignorance of that otherness, a lack of knowledge that can easily be transformed into indifference, irrelevance or physical fear. No academic wants to be called in his own ignorance, even though one of the most essential characteristics of academic work is that of not knowing. A lack of knowledge, of accepted ignorance, that combined with curiosity, is the essential fuel that moves the gears of scientific discoveries.

In this order of ideas, and much to our regret, it is tremendously common for researchers and academics to decide to stay in the safe places that they believe or pretend to know before venturing into spaces and research situations that require not only a certain degree of difficulty – linguistic or access to sources as mentioned before – but also a recognition of their ignorance, something that in universities, as an institution, is considered a taboo, especially if that ignorance is recognized and brought to the fore by individuals from the periphery of these Eurocentric and often colonial institutions. It is forbidden for the "other", who in many cases does know the context and historical development of the dominant societies, to have the audacity to denounce the ignorance of other historical realities that their colleagues in these privileged educational centers have.

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<sup>485</sup> **Koschorke**, Albrecht. "Similarity: Valences of a post-colonial concept." In: **Bhatti** Anil, **Kimmich** Dorothee Eds. *Similarity A Paradigm For Culture Theory*. Tulika books. 2018. 372 p. P. 25-27

The pledge is then to defend the value of analyzing and investigating non-hegemonic historical pasts on their own terms. To give relevance to the understanding of the past in a non-hegemonic way and thus make the intellectual effort to really tend towards historical research that not only does not fall into hegemonic and Eurocentric vices but that produces a body of analysis robust enough to promote broader and more diverse historical research, without falling into the discourse of an obligatory and processable diversity, but rather one that has a real critical sense, and that, like the identity discourses analyzed here, can be tangibly applied to the societies to which they belong and therefore must affect them.

○ **Understanding heterogeneity through similarity**

Now, it may happen that the “other” is allowed to show and share his critical vision of the past, understanding this “other” as someone who is not a member or part of the dominant spaces and chains of production and dissemination of knowledge, who, despite often not necessarily being linked to the devices of thought and construction of knowledge of the hegemonic structures, is capable of generating historical knowledge in a particular and unique way. When the opportunity is given to express itself, two things may happen: the first is that its contributions to the historiographical debate are seen as one more addition to the vast and constantly expanding view of historiographical production in all fields, or that its input is seen as a quota of diversification that must be fulfilled, but that at the time of the debate and above all of the economic and intellectual maintenance of this type of historiographical production, it has been seen and treated as a mere accessory.

The way to counteract this tokenism, this perception of studies or analyses that are conceived and crystallized from the periphery, not only in history or humanities but in general in the great majority of disciplines of knowledge, is essentially by positioning research, in this case, research itself, as an object of value due to its novelty and scope. This positioning is done by constructing an intellectual apparatus that feeds research thanks to the sources and bibliographical works produced from this same periphery. Another critical reason for comparing the historical development of Colombia and Greece as independent countries is the profuse, serious, and varied historiographical production focused on the historical development of each nation.

In turn, this possibility that a vast bibliographical and historiographic spectrum presents for an investigation of this type is condensed in this dissertation also as a culminating process, a process that started from the first years of university at the undergraduate level, where the

general concerns, and specifically the similarities of these two realities as heterogeneous at first sight as the Greek and the Colombian can come to offer through historical analysis. This constant similarity that I have sought to describe in these pages and that in other spaces and moments of my early academic career, I have reflected, such as the reception of the classical Greco-Roman culture in the independence processes of Greece and Colombia or the components of the irregular war during both independence processes, are edges of other historiographic paths that this comparison has had and may have in the future.

The basis of this similarity is established with this research. It is hoped that it will serve as a bridgehead for other works that allow us to understand the sometimes-autarchic processes and intentions of individual exceptionalism that national histories tend to have. From a broader perspective that not only seeks to level and equalize in a mechanical way two contemporary historical processes, but through its critical reflection, their specific virtues and defects can be accentuated. Finding the heterogeneous in a globalized society that tends towards homogenization is a duty not only of this work and of the one who writes these lines, but of those who consider that the discourses on diversity, pluralism, and a multitude of points of view should not be only empty rhetoric.

This is in line with the understanding of history. Still, especially in the writing of history, as a representation of the past and the near future, where one tries to define the individual, one must define the other as a prelude to one's definition. This search for the meaning of the past remains suspended between several pillars: The context in which the author is formed, the context in which he acquires the knowledge that he expresses in his historiographic production, and the intentions and objectives that he seeks to achieve with his work; and in the expectations or parameters of quality, intentionality or suggestion that the other members of the creative process of historical knowledge that regulate the limits of this literary production have. This intention to define is not necessarily for the historian. Still, for the one who receives its message, for the receiver of its work, who hopes to find a series of meanings or answers to the questions the readers ask of their social and historical fabric.<sup>486</sup> Therefore, this first and most important filter is where non-hegemonic representations of the past must have sufficient understanding and impetus from those in these situations of power – be it academic or editorial – who have enough intention to change the hierarchical dynamics and the study of other historical spaces or historical

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<sup>486</sup> Hartog, François. *El Espejo de Herodoto. Ensayo sobre la representación del otro*, translated by Daniel Zadunaisky. Buenos Aires: FCE, 2003. P.291-295

spaces already consolidated but studied differently can have a place in the historiographical debate without needing to be a quota of diversity that must be met.

- **THE TANGIBLE LOCATION OF A HISTORICAL PAST**

Understanding the past is a sensory experience. To get closer to what happened in times past and to the actions or omissions of the men and women who preceded us, we must approach the legacies and vestiges they left us through the senses.<sup>487</sup> History is consumed through the sense of sight; it is read in books and documents, watched on screens of all types, and observed and appreciated in exhibitions, monuments, and museums. Despite the preponderance of sight, the other senses are also part of the tangible experience of the past: sounds, songs, and voices can place us chronologically; stone, paper, and bronze have a particular texture linked to historical elements; the flavors of what we consume are in many cases the product of a long historical process that has led to specific dishes; and in many languages there is an expression such as the “aged scent” referring to places or objects related to the past. These tangible experiences have been used within the processes of national construction through spaces that allow for this sensorial exposure, such as museums. This transfiguration of the past as an idea to a tangible sensation has been ordered, hierarchized, and sacralized in museums.

- **Centralization and hierarchy of a historical discourse**

Of all the possible historical realities that can be accumulated and cataloged, it is necessary to opt for order in order to try to understand it. This organization of the vestiges of the past occurs first in an ideological and intellectual stage that has then materialized in objects and concepts that allow not only to understand the historical genesis of a nation but also to tell it in an eloquent and persuasive way that allows the population not only to accept it but to appropriate it. This is a process of constant familiarization with the historical past through the institutions in charge of this mission, such as governmental, educational, or media institutions.

This process of orderly diffusion of a specific historical regime is carried out through the selection of a type of symbols that will be accepted and made official as the most

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<sup>487</sup> Carr, David. *Experience and history: Phenomenological perspectives on the historical world*. Oxford University Press, 2014. P. 16

representative of those societies formed into nations, and despite the fact that their choice in many cases is arbitrary, due to their constant diffusion, the tacit acceptance of these symbols over other precedents or of a regional or local scope, It allows the generation of a public discourse of the past and the identity that is leveled on these essential symbols to essentially allow the discussion of them to any member of that conglomerate called the nation.

This materialization of the national identity discourse and its subsequent ordering is subjected to a hierarchy that is generally centralized and that can be observed in this way in the two case studies analyzed here. The national history of Colombia and Greece as modern nations has been to build from the centers of political power, linking these centers of power, not only to the administration of a nascent state but also as the epicenters of that identity discourse. For this reason, the main museums that cover the most important historical and cultural features for these two respective nations are located in the capital or in the most important cities of the country where they will have the corresponding educational and tourist infrastructure, although it is not necessarily enough, to establish themselves as the museum institutions that are the standard bearers of these new nations.

These do not have to be museums solely dedicated to history as an exhibition component, but as I have already explained before, in the case of Greece the museum that really embodies the identity paradigm of the nation are those of cut-off at what time, then with the National Archaeological Museum and the Acropolis Museum. Or in the case of Colombia, in a museum of museums such as the National Museum of Colombia, which includes those that, in the opinion of various generations of scholars, make up the collections of the most relevant objects, which have managed to be acquired, preserved, restored and exhibited in the fields of archaeology, ethnography, art and history.

Finally, thanks to this first work of educational institutions and museums, the historical regime expands with its materialization to the public space. The commemorations and the location in the calendar, ergo in daily life, of the events related to Independence, led to the public exhibition of the feelings that this identity discourse has generated in these two respective nations, a feeling generally expressed through the monumentality and renaming of the public space with elements and characters related to Independence. especially during the times close to the commemorations of this historical process. The combination of this daily and in some cases banal exhibition of the national identity discourse through symbols

and objects that are studied in classrooms and exhibited in museum rooms to then be monumentally represented in public space, has a final aspect in the citizen appropriation and audiovisual dissemination of the massive conceptions of the independence process. Literary productions on radio and television, which once again in synchrony with commemorative processes, have played an important role for certain generations in the last two hundred years, not only for the establishment of this discourse of identity but also for a reconfiguration of it through shared and collectively appropriated images.

○ **Sacred places, characters, and objects**

This established hierarchy and order have two opposed effects for the past and the material vestiges that have remained of it: on the one hand, there is forgetting, which could be analyzed at a level and depth of minutia similar to that of memory and remembrance. For every name cast in bronze or carved in marble, many more have been forgotten and, in many cases, will never be known. For every object that is exhibited in a museum display case, there are as many others that either do not exist or that have not reached the present day in conditions to do so, or even more seriously, that are exhibited far from their original context, in exhibition spaces that also reinforce a hierarchy of access to culture and specifically to the historical past. imposing a cultural domination that lacerates the identity processes of other countries with the sole objective of accumulating both pieces and prestige.

The second effect is to raise the status of certain identity elements, often materialized in objects that have been exhibited or are exhibited in museums and that, due to their importance, their transcendence in the role they play in the construction of a national identity narrative such as those exposed in this dissertation, acquire a sacred and almost mystical aura. They become relics that, without their possession, exposition, or intercession, the very existence of the nation cannot be explained. They are objects that embody not only a specific moment in history, a particular episode in which many times a common object transcends to become the symbol of the past and the identity of a fairly large conglomerate of people, whether this object is a broken vase, a stolen sword, or a marble relief exposed far from its place of origin.

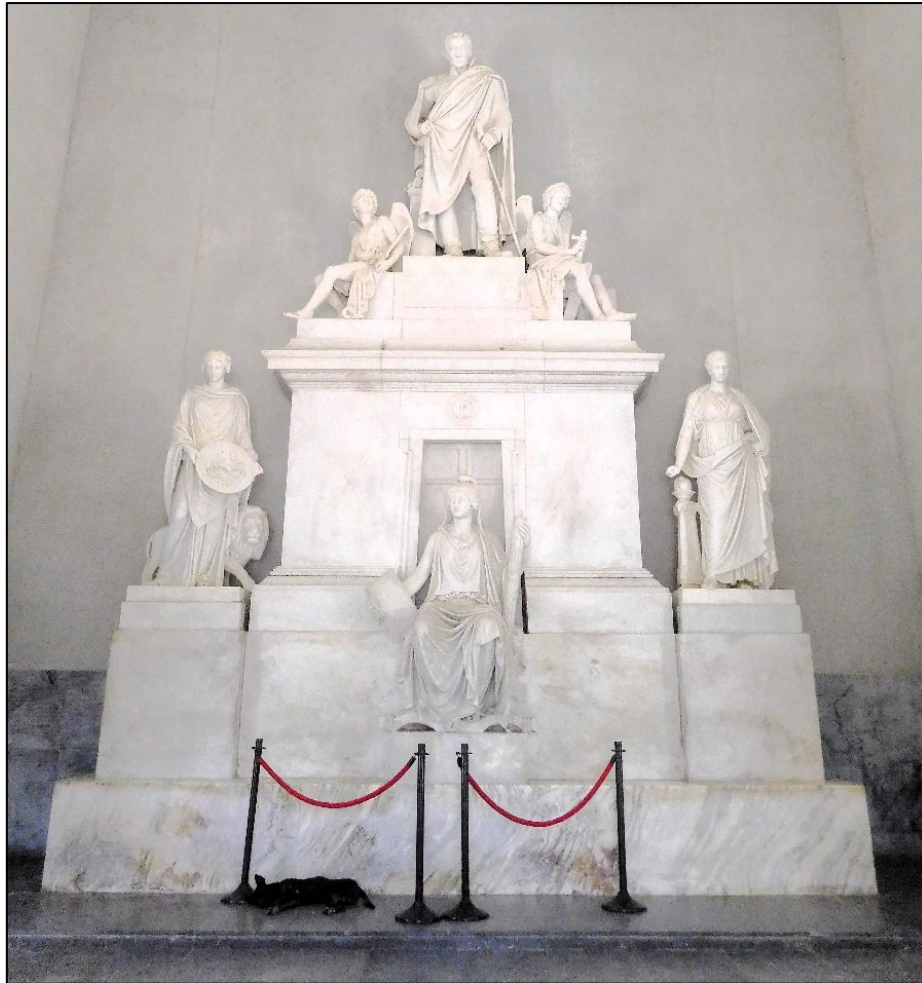
The sacralization of these objects does not occur spontaneously nor immediately after the specific event in which they have been a part has occurred. Sacralization occurs when, through a social, political, and academic consensus, these objects are included and

positioned in the historical regime of the society to which they belong. This construction of the regime of the past establishes parameters to commemorate and celebrate history and national identity, often having these sacralized objects as its axis. Again, it is not the object itself but also who it belonged to, what they did with that object, and what they achieved by using it, stealing it, losing it, or recovering it. Understanding the importance of the materiality of the vestiges of the wars of independence in Colombia and Greece is essential to understanding the human condition of these historical processes. Objects –no matter how sacred they may be– without the people who created, used, safeguarded, and exhibited them are nothing.

This is connected with the idea that these objects cannot speak for themselves. Therefore, the need to establish a museographic discourse implies establishing limits, hierarchies, and discursive omissions between the various subjects of a historical nature that can be chosen for the museographic construction of national identity. This discourse is subject to the greater audience of the public sphere, from which a hegemonic view classifies and hierarchizes historical events and relevant characters and actions of these historical processes. This general and accepted opinion is far from immune to any manipulation by groups or representatives of general society with enough power and interest to change, reverse, or reestablish events and characters within that discursive exercise of national memory.<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> **Wills**, María Emma. “Los debates sobre la construcción de la historia y su impacto en el guión del Museo Nacional: Riesgos y Potencialidades. In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. p. 227-231



*Image 61. The coexistence of sacralization and routine. A dog sleeps under the cold shade of the sculptures made by Augusto Rossi and Ermenegildo Luppi inside the “Altar of the Fatherland”. Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino, Santa Marta, Colombia.*

○ **The challenge of an identity consensus**

In any case, this hegemonic order of the historical regime has not always been applied in an organic or unified way. Likewise, from practically the very formulation of a narrative discourse of national identity in Greece and Colombia, the voices of protest against this narrative, often coercively imposed by the central authorities, have generated a rejection of this identity project, generating a parallel historical discourse, coming both from within sovereign states and from outside their borders. This rejection or objection to the common identity past is reflected in various ways, such as the emergence of local or regional identities and the desacralization of these objects.

It is interesting to see that what is generally considered and presented as a homogeneous, organic, and consistent discourse of nation-building, at the moment of delving into its details, various difficulties emerge in its opposition, from the very elaboration of the

narrative, its order and hierarchy, to the direct opposition of a new state order over a given territory. This opposition, which in some cases, such as in southern Colombia, is a direct reflection of the actions that occurred in the region during independence, seeks to counteract the power of the national narrative with the construction of a local and regional imaginary on which to gather identity components. Components are framed in a spectrum that ranges from simple discontent with the central authority, the revitalization of a local identity that generates pride, and intentions of secession on the part of these territories in particular. They are exposed and manifested in public spaces and spaces for debate about the past, such as classrooms or social media.

The history of independence, despite being the foundation and genesis of national histories, is not a history only circumscribed to Greek and Colombian societies – and by extension, to other national experiences of this type – its impact was regional and clearly global. And this impact did not end with the establishment of the new independent states. The administrative change that these conflicts and subsequent geopolitical reconfiguration had also affected the surrounding territories, but especially the former metropolises, which, finding themselves unable to maintain control of the now independent territories, sought in the first instance to recover them and later reconfigure their foreign policy and subsequent diplomatic relations with the new nations. Even so, and despite a long history of almost two centuries of comings and goings between friendly moments and intense confrontations, for public opinion in the former metropolises or rather in their heir countries, Spain and Turkey, the opinion on the division of the imperial territories during the Age of Revolutions, It's not necessarily positive, especially in these times of imperial nostalgia.

An example of this concentration of identity discourse and its projection in museums or public spaces is the desacralization of objects considered as national relics. This desacralization may be a consequence of the intentions of regional or local wills that do not intend to emphasize the centralized discourse on national history, where the cult of the historical personalities or specific episodes of national Independence, which is the case studied in this work, is not carried out or performed with the same vehemence as in other places. Or it can also take the form of the popular projection of the legacy of Independence with the appropriation of names, characters, and symbols that permeate popular culture, from expressions used in everyday life to the trivialization and commodification of the

national historical symbols themselves, where history is made not only tangible in museums but also becomes tangible in souvenirs and advertising campaigns.<sup>489</sup>

- **THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL PAST**

One of the primary reflections that emerge from the analysis of national narratives about independence is the palpable possibility that the perception of this historical process fluctuates. The passage of time and the generational distance from the events leave a mark that allows us to either highlight, analyze more critically, or ultimately devalue the facts and protagonists of the independence. In this constant swing of collective perceptions of the historical past, questions and reflections arise about the future that the history of the wars of independence may have.

- **New voices calling for the historical stage**

Two hundred years later, and with the fresh memory of the commemorations that celebrated such an accomplishment, it is worth noting that few nations in the world, few independent states that today may have a more significant influence or voice in the global concert, can say that they have 200 years or more of institution as an independent political entity, with their respective political transformations throughout those two centuries but essentially independent, something that both Colombia and Greece can mention. It is with this in mind that at the beginning of this 21st century, the opening of new ways and forms of understanding, investigating, and telling the history of the genesis of these two nations materializes from the new historiographic trends within the formal academy to the massive and autonomous diffusion that the new media platforms and social networks can contribute to these new ways of understanding the past.

Appropriating the idea that history is anything but a distant and private alien element. History in general, but in these two case studies, the history of independence is perhaps one of the most important historical episodes. It has the most significant impact and permanence in the daily life of both nations. Therefore, just like these societies, their history is malleable, complex, and changing, and it concerns all layers of the population. Realizing this will allow us not only to continue building a critical and plural history of independence

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<sup>489</sup> Yalouri, Eleana. *The Acropolis: global fame, local claim*. Routledge, 2020. P.114

from various fronts such as the institutional, educational, or media but also to naturalize the conception of history as a changing process, which, although sometimes carved in marble or bronze, is not as monolithic as these elements.

In order to achieve this conception, it will be necessary to look for narratives that include the themes and social groups that were present during independence but that for decades have been voluntarily or involuntarily erased or systematically ignored by those who have built the memory regime of independence. In order to find narratives that include women, rationalized people, those who today would be considered foreigners but who participated in the independence process, those who today would be considered nationals but were against the establishment of an independent nation in Colombia and Greece, to include them all, it is necessary to break with the unified narrative imposed by central authorities and projected in museums.<sup>490</sup>

To achieve these ruptures that open the way in a literal and metaphorical way to new narratives and voices within the memory and historical understanding of Independence, both political and academic will are needed. It is in this aspect that the foundations and the very resistance of the historical regime that was built during the process of national construction in Colombia and Greece are tested. It is in this aspect that a significant difference is evident within this comparison, for various reasons and the course of events itself, not only on a national but regional scale, a difference can be perceived between these foundations of identity and memory that make the Greek case have a more substantial academic and cultural apparatus, which allows the internalization and application of the narrative discourse and national identity in a more constant and applied way than in the Colombian case.

This does not mean that one process of national identity is better or worse than the other, but it does influence the future probabilities of the analysis of this historical period by seeing which society is more willing to remove the monolithic foundations of the national past. It could be concluded that this “weakness” of the Colombian identity discourse can be translated as a series of advantages when it comes to analyzing and rethinking the past.

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<sup>490</sup> **Perry**, Jimena. "Revisiting Grand Narratives at the National Museum of Colombia: Striving for Inclusion and Diversity." In: **Barndt**, Kerstin, and **Stephan Jaeger**, eds. *Museums, Narratives, and Critical Histories: Narrating the Past for the Present and Future*. Vol. 1. de Gruyter, 2024. P. 207

National history, especially the history of national independence, as discussed in the second chapter, consists of prisons, but there are some that are easier to escape from.

○ **The disposition to maintain or challenge the national past**

Within the tacit monopoly that the political and social configuration in a nation-state scheme has throughout the world's geography, it isn't easy to find a country that is as willing to challenge or refute its past, specifically its origins as an independent nation, as Colombia. The fragility of the social fabric that the narrative on the formation of the nation has had, as well as the constant opposition and contestation of smaller regions and social strata against the centralist and national narrative, as well as the banality with which national identity has been projected and perpetuated by political, cultural and educational institutions, make these challenges, which in most nations would be inconceivable, in Colombia find a space to be expressed and also be a breeding ground for a constant network of thought and debate of national history.<sup>491</sup>

These debates do not reach the point of separatism or the irredentism of these opposition voices in the Colombian identity narrative. Unlike other cases in the world, such as Catalonia or Transylvania, the state narrative and its opposition do not necessarily imply the taking of actions that lead to a political reconfiguration of an already established and sovereign space. In this order of ideas, national identity and its discourse are under discussion, but the sovereignty and integrity of the Colombian national territory do not enter that debate. Likewise, within that same autarky that a national narrative represents, most discussions around national identity correspond to members of that community self-styled as a nation. In other words, it is Colombians (and as will indeed happen with different nationalities as well) who can discuss, debate, or refute their collective past, and at the time when it is distorted or questioned by those who do not belong to this national conglomerate, regional differences are generally settled, paradoxically showing before external eyes a national unity that is difficult to observe from every day public opinion in Colombia.

This public construction of the legacy of Independence and national history, in general, is quite particular and seems to be a circular discussion every time the national holidays and commemorations appear, which puts the historical events that made up the Colombian

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<sup>491</sup> **VanSledright**, Bruce. "Narratives of nation-state, historical knowledge, and school history education." *Review of research in education* 32.1 (2008): 109-146. **Pavlowitch**, Stevan K. "History education in the Balkans: how bad is it?." *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 6.1 (2004): 63-68.

nation back in the spotlight. In these moments, educational institutions, and today primarily through social networks, are always projected, in many cases, with frustration about the current conjunctures in past events. It is widespread to hear comments such as that there has not been or never was true independence, in which many of its protagonists were not as fundamental as for decades it has been made out to be, or even in recent times, with the rise of an ultra-right-wing Hispanophile discourse, voices are raised saying that Independence as a process was a mistake, or even in a more condescending way, just a minor historical process, or even so after some historiographical acrobatics, that it was better off as part of the Spanish empire.<sup>492</sup>

In the same order of ideas, it is widespread to hear the example of another uchronia very popular in Colombia, and that is that if the British navy had not been spectacularly defeated in the bay of Cartagena de Indias by Blas de Lezo and Sebastián de Eslava (with the essential help of the inclement Cartagena climate and its disease-carrying mosquitoes) in 1741, Colombia would have become an English colony and *deus ex machina* would today be a developed country of the global north. These fantasies are well seen in a trill that poses to be ironic or uptight. Still, they do not have any historical or historiographical support that allows them to be considered a real possibility. They are only one more example of how flawed the historical debate can be from a public sphere in these conflicted contexts.

In the Greek case, the different layers of identity that have been forged throughout history that the modern Greek independent state has wanted to organize as part of its cultural and historical context have had a reasonably strong weight on that identity, which added to the expected intentions and projections of Greek history that are held from Europe and by extension the Western world, generate a series of collective anxieties as to what I know is what is gone and what we should be as a nation, which is constantly present in the daily evolution of Greek society.

This anxiety or mania with the past, this progonoplexy, makes the historical fabric of Greek society as a modern nation tremendously detailed and constructed with great attention and strict order. This generates two central attitudes: the first is the establishment of a master narrative or a practically immovable historical canon which, except with proper exceptions such as the exhibitions of the National Byzantine Museum, concerns the relationship of its

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<sup>492</sup> **Straehle** Porras, Edgar. "La Leyenda Negra y los abusos de la memoria: reflexiones sobre el nacionalismo historiográfico actual en España." *Con-ciencia social: Segunda Época* 7 (2024): 13-32. P.21

collections with other ethnic groups that inhabit the country, it is difficult for museum institutions of a historical or archaeological nature to pretend to discuss. Since museums of this nature are the leading showcases of this dominant and homogeneous historical narrative, the other strata of Greek society (which also accept and reproduce this discourse) expect to find their conceptions of the national historical past reflected in the collections and exhibitions of museums.

The second attitude derived from this narrative configuration of national identity is not alien to other national experiences. Still, in the Greek case, it is accentuated by the very nature of the Hellenic society's past. In these times, two centuries after the beginning of the process that led to the formation of an independent and sovereign modern Greek state, the “archaeopathy”, the constant and intense comparison of contemporary Greek society with its counterparts at various moments of its national history, is still palpable. There is always, from both inside and outside Greece, the perception of classical antiquity as a shadow that is difficult to overcome, which added to the recent and renewed importance that the Western Roman Empire has had, both from historiography and from public history, as well as other episodes that can fill Greek citizens with pride such as the heroism of the protagonists of the Revolution of 1821; or those who participated in the resistance against the invading Axis forces in the Second World War; or those who confronted the colonels' junta and restored democracy in the country in the seventies of the 20th century.

Meanwhile, the Greek case is an archetypal example of a contemporary society's relationship with its past. This is not only because of the discursive framework built over 200 years in its way, but also because of the external pressure and expectations held about Greek history and its legacy at a national and global level. It is a process that began from the very struggle for the Independence of the Greeks by the disenchanted Philhellenes who hoped to find in the *klephts* an exact reflection of the Spartan hoplites, to the present day where from outside the borders of the Hellenic Republic their history is still understood, including its contemporary part, as the reflection of a preconceived idea of ancient Greece. From Churchill's comments during the Second World War, the 2004 Olympics, and the IMF sanctions, I have always looked for that relationship between a specific and idealized part of Greek antiquity and its current society. This leads to depression and anxiety, both external and internal, to maintain that historical script and separate from it as little as possible.



*Image 62. Statue of Lord Byron in the Garden of Heroes, where his heart lies. With the bust of Spyros Kontogiannis on the back. Mesolonghi, Greece*

But this same anxiety towards the past is projected into the present and most certainly into the near future about what is said, or in many cases omitted to say or preferred not to comment on the not-so-illustrious or pleasant pages of Greek history, of the open wounds still in the collective consciousness. Wounds that have often been used to promote a specific type of political discourse that takes advantage of historical conjunctures to rethink it to public opinion, and from which, due to the iron structure of the Greek national identity discourse, it is difficult to counteract. Opinions in most spheres of Hellenic society on episodes ranging from the fall of Constantinople and the end of the Byzantine empire to the atrocities committed by the revolutionaries of 1821, including the traumatic national event of the great catastrophe of 1922, to more recent episodes such as the division of Cyprus in 1974 and the complex economic crisis that the country has gone through for

much of the 21st century. They are tremendously sensitive, and counteracting society's already established view about these events from institutions and academia is hugely complicated and, by many degrees, unnecessary.

In short, despite having a similar nation-building exercise over time and in the various conjunctures that have emerged throughout the 200 years of independent history of Colombia and Greece, their vision of the national past is not the same. Both countries are uniquely reflected in their history compared to other examples from their respective regions. Still, at the same time, they are opposed to each other when confronting the perspectives that the past of their independence process has today. The Colombian case is evident in that it has a fragile construction of national identity, which has been weakened in recent decades due to the political conjunctures that the Colombian state must assume, and which allows a laxer subjection to the institutional line of the identity discourse, also allowing it to be challenged or refuted much more quickly than in Greece or almost any other country.

○ **Towards a more inclusive understanding of independence**

One of the plausible results of this research is to understand the main motives and tools used by the two countries analyzed to narrate, configure, and justify their existence through cultural institutions configured as history museums, collections of a collective past materialized in concrete objects. The objects that, over time, have had various political and ideological charges, even though they now belong to a human collective called a nation. In any case, the understanding and appreciation of these objects today has a character similar to that of a relic, turning the museum piece into a recipient of reverence and respect, but at the same time transforming it into a link between various regional and local identities that find in the objects of the museum a common point.

Creating a space for the conservation and exhibition of these objects could be considered the starting point for the cult of a collective memory synthesized through these same material elements, such as the elaboration of some of the first products of this type of memory generated by the newly independent nations. A nation does not exist if it does not have a story to tell; a story that agglomerates the diverse identities that reside in it, and fundamentally, a story that is tangible and can be materialized in objects, whether these are the fragments of José Llorente's vase, which gave rise to the brawls that would begin the process of independence of Colombia on July 20, 1810, or the particular and unmistakable

helmet of Theodoros Kolokotronis, one of the most distinguished military heroes of the Greek Revolution of 1821. These two objects, to cite an example of each particular case, are found as fundamental pieces of the history museums' collections in Colombia and Greece and serve the mission of cohesively forming a collective memory.

Now, after celebrating and commemorating the two hundred years of independence of both Greece and Colombia, it is important to highlight in the conclusions the lessons that these processes of commemoration leave in terms of public history, divulgation, and historical memory. This being one of the fundamental problems of research itself, it is known that in general terms, historians tend to take chronological distance from their objects of study in an attempt at objectivity and erudition, even if they are fully aware that the past began from the very moment this sentence was written (or read). However, it is essential to keep in mind that in these times, where the past is in constant dispute and reconfiguration from the most diverse platforms, analyzing these processes fulfills a practical and theoretical purpose for the future. Therefore, seeking ways to generate better exhibitions and better museographic discourses, respectively, or at least ensuring that these elements are more comprehensive, inclusive, and even more democratic.

In any case, it must be borne in mind that the inclusion of new voices in the construction of memory and collective identity, of new actors and edges of the Independence process in both nations, cannot be a mechanical inclusion without a critical and argumentative guide, or that it is only seen as a requirement that the cultural trends of the moment mark. A coherent and comprehensive museographic and historiographic discourse requires limits and hierarchies.<sup>493</sup> Therefore, expanding and challenging the boundaries of the current Conception of Independence, not only from historiography but also from its tangible result in museum exhibitions, must be articulated and weighed so that the contributions of these new voices can withstand the passage of time and its whims. They should be solid and deep-rooted enough to be maintained but transformed when these limits and discursive hierarchies are rechallenged.

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<sup>493</sup> **Wills**, María Emma. "Los debates sobre la construcción de la historia y su impacto en el guión del Museo Nacional: Riesgos y Potencialidades. In: **Ortega** Francisco A. y **Chicangana-Bayona** Yobenj Aucardo (eds.), *Del dicho al hecho. 200 años de independencia y ciudadanía en Colombia*. Bogotá, Ministerio de Cultura-Museo Nacional de Colombia-Universidad Nacional de Colombia-Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Asociación de Amigos del Museo Nacional, 2011, 240 p. p.223-227

Coming to the end of this dissertation, all these reflections demonstrate that its history and projection are fundamental for that omnipresent political invention from modernity that continues to be the nation-state. It does not matter if it is in South America or the Balkans; societies organized in independent states constantly try to know, reflect, question, problematize, and redefine their origins and historical scope.<sup>494</sup> These understandings of their origins as independent political entities are reached in various ways and almost always projected toward the public. Thus, it becomes a device for establishing a national citizen narrative that allows the nation-state to function efficiently. In this process, the materialization of these identity discourses and the discussions about them become tangible and possible in the spaces and collections of historical museums.

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<sup>494</sup> **Palti**, Elías José. *La nación como problema: Los historiadores y la "cuestión nacional"*. Fondo de Cultura Económica. Buenos Aires, 2003. 158 p. P.26



**CHRONOLOGY**

| <b>YEAR</b> | <b>WORLD HISTORY</b>                                                                                                             | <b>HISTORY OF COLOMBIA</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>HISTORY OF GREECE</b>                                                                                                |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1770</b> | <b>March 5:</b> British soldiers fire on a crowd in the Boston massacre.                                                         | <b>April 16:</b> By Royal Decree, Charles III banned using indigenous languages in the Americas.                                                              | <b>February 17:</b> Rebellion in the Peloponnese by the Crimean Orlov brothers.                                         |
| <b>1771</b> | <b>July 13:</b> The Russians take Crimea during the Russo-Turkish War.                                                           | <b>October 28:</b> Following the Royal Decree, the province of Guyana is integrated into the Viceroyalty of New Granada.                                      | <b>June 17:</b> Sfakia rebellion in Crete and execution of its leader Daskaloyiannis.                                   |
| <b>1781</b> | <b>May 18:</b> Beheading and subsequent dismemberment of Túpac Amaru II in Cuzco.                                                | <b>March 16:</b> In the town of Socorro, Manuela Beltrán begins the revolt of the community members.                                                          | <b>May:</b> The alliance for the "Greek Plan" between Catherine the Great of Russia and Joseph II of Austria is sealed. |
| <b>1782</b> | <b>November 30:</b> Negotiations begin on the Treaty of Paris that will ratify the independence of the United States of America. | <b>January 30:</b> Execution and dismemberment of community leader José Antonio Galán.                                                                        | The first Lodge of Freemasonry in Greece is established on the island of Corfu under the name "Beneficenza."            |
| <b>1793</b> | <b>January 21:</b> King Louis XVI of France is publicly executed by a guillotine in Paris under the charges of treason.          | <b>December:</b> Antonio Nariño secretly translated, printed, and distributed a copy of the Declaration of Rights of Men in the streets of Santafé de Bogotá. |                                                                                                                         |

| YEAR | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                                       | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                                              | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                 |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1797 | <b>May 12:</b> The Republic of Venice ends when the last Doge, Ludovico Manin, surrenders to Napoleon's troops.                     | <b>July 6:</b> Foundation of the city of Villavicencio in the region of Orinoquía.                                                                                               | <b>June 29:</b> France occupies the Ionian Islands with the landing in Corfu.                                     |
| 1798 | <b>July 1:</b> Napoleon lands in Alexandria and invades Egypt.                                                                      | The university reform following the Enlightenment in the Viceroyalty of New Granada ends.                                                                                        | <b>June 24:</b> Rigas Feraios Velestinlis is executed in Belgrade.                                                |
| 1799 | <b>November 9:</b> Coup d'état of 18 Brumaire, Napoleon deposes the Directory and becomes consul.                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>February 20:</b> Russian troops are present in Corfu and other Ionian Islands.                                 |
| 1803 | <b>November 30:</b> The Royal Balmis Expedition sets sail from Spain, bringing smallpox cures to Latin America and the Philippines. | <b>September 16:</b> Antonio José Amar y Borbón arrives in Santafé to take office as viceroy.                                                                                    | <b>December 12:</b> After three attempts, Ali Pasha occupies Suli after the heroic resistance of its inhabitants. |
| 1804 | <b>December 2:</b> Napoleon is crowned emperor in Paris.                                                                            | <b>May:</b> Francisco Antonio Zea, a disciple of Mutis in Bogotá and later ambassador of Gran Colombia in London, is appointed director of the Royal Botanical Garden of Madrid. | <b>February 14:</b> Karadjordje Petrovic is crowned King of Serbia after the revolt against the Ottomans.         |

| YEAR        | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                                                                   | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                  |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1805</b> | <p><b>October 21:</b> Battle of Trafalgar</p> <p><b>December 2:</b> Battle of Austerlitz</p>                                                                                                                                                         | <p><b>December 10:</b> After returning from Quito and working there with Alexander von Humboldt, Francisco José de Caldas returns to Santafé de Bogotá to work on the Royal Botanical Expedition.</p> | <p><b>June 1:</b> Mehmet Ali, originally from Kavala, now Greece, is appointed Pasha of Egypt.</p> |
| <b>1806</b> | <p><b>June 27:</b> The English try to take the port of Buenos Aires for the first time.</p> <p><b>December 22:</b> Motivated by the Russian defeat at Austerlitz, Sultan Selim III closed the Bosphorus Strait, and the Russo-Turkish War began.</p> | <p><b>May:</b> After his stay in Europe, Simón Bolívar begins to return to America, evading the continental blockade.</p>                                                                             | <p>Publication of the <i>Hellenic Nomarquia</i> in Italy.</p>                                      |
| <b>1807</b> | <p><b>December:</b> Sultan Mustafa IV orders the recovery of Mecca and Medina, starting the Ottoman-Wahabbi War.</p>                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>October 4:</b> The "Semanario del Nuevo Reino de Granada" is founded by Caldas, the first scientific publication of the viceroyalty and the voice of the enlightened elite.</p>                 | <p><b>July 8:</b> French troops retake the Heptanese, expelling Russian and Turkish soldiers.</p>  |

| YEAR | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                                            | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                    | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                           |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1808 | <b>May 2:</b> An uprising in Madrid begins the war of independence from Spain.                                                           | <b>September 11:</b> The priest and botanist José Celestino Mutis, founder and director of the Royal Botanical Expedition, dies in Santa Fé de Bogotá. | <b>May 5:</b> Armed uprising in Macedonia by the <i>Klepthis</i> and <i>Armatoloi</i> of Nicos Tsaras.      |
| 1810 | <b>April-September:</b> Emergence of juntas, Mexico, Quito, Chile, Venezuela, Buenos Aires, and Florida declare independence from Spain. | <b>July 20:</b> A brawl breaks out in the main square of Santafé that would lead to the beginning of the independence of New Granada.                  | <b>February 16:</b> A major earthquake destroyed Candia (Heraklion) in Crete, killing at least 2000 people. |
| 1812 | <b>November 26–29:</b> At the Battle of Berezina, the Grand Armée is defeated in Russia and begins its retreat.                          | <b>March 19:</b> The Constitution of Cádiz is promulgated in the presence of the deputies of the Viceroyalty of New Granada.                           |                                                                                                             |
| 1813 | <b>October 19:</b> The Battle of the Nations, the largest battle of the Napoleonic Wars, ends in Leipzig.                                | <b>May 30:</b> The war between federalists and centralists ended with the armistice between Cundinamarca and the United Provinces of New Granada.      | <b>September:</b> Foundation in the salons of the Athenian elite of the "Society of the Muses."             |

| YEAR        | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                              | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                                              | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1814</b> | <b>November 1:</b> Inauguration of the Congress of Vienna by the delegates of the European powers.                         | <b>December 12:</b> Simón Bolívar enters Santafé de Bogotá, commanding troops from the United Provinces of New Granada, which is composed mainly of Venezuelans and federalists. | <b>September 14:</b> Foundation of the secret organization <i>Filiki Eteria</i> or "Society of Friends."                                           |
| <b>1815</b> | <b>June 18:</b> Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon is finally defeated by an Anglo-Prussian coalition.                           | <b>August 26:</b> Weakened after a brief siege in March by Bolívar, the city of Cartagena surrenders to the troops of the Spanish Pablo Morillo.                                 | <b>November 5:</b> Ioannis Kapodistrias is appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire and participates in the Congress of Vienna. |
| <b>1816</b> | <b>July 14:</b> Francisco de Miranda, precursor of American independence and the consummate philhellenist, dies in prison. | <b>May 26:</b> The troops of the Reconquest and Pacification of Morillo make their triumphal entry into Bogotá.                                                                  | <b>June 7:</b> The British government buys the Parthenon Marbles, brought to London by Lord Elgin.                                                 |
| <b>1819</b> | <b>August 16:</b> British cavalry charge into a crowd of 60,000 during the Peterloo massacre in Manchester.                | <b>June-August:</b> Liberation Campaign, battles of Paya, Pantano de Vargas and Boyacá. Gran Colombia is established.                                                            | <b>December 21:</b> Emmanouel Pappas, leader of the Greek Revolution in Macedonia, is accepted into the <i>Filiki Eteria</i> .                     |

| YEAR        | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                                                                                | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                             | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1820</b> | <b>January 1:</b> Irrigation Revolution in Spain against the absolutist government of Ferdinand VII.                                                                         | <b>July 14:</b> The longest of the sieges of Cartagena de Indias began when patriotic forces attempted to surrender the royalist garrison of the city.          | <b>April 12:</b> Alexandros Ipsilantis is proclaimed leader of the <i>Filiki Eteria</i>                                                                                        |
| <b>1821</b> | <b>May 5:</b> Napoleon Bonaparte dies in exile on the island of St. Helena.                                                                                                  | <b>May 6:</b> Congress of Cúcuta presided over by Antonio Nariño. The first constitution of Gran Colombia.                                                      | <b>March 25:</b> Conventional date of the beginning of the Greek revolution, although in reality, it had begun days before.                                                    |
| <b>1822</b> | <b>February 7:</b> Ferdinand VII of Spain asks the Holy Alliance for aid against the liberal government to reaffirm absolutism.                                              | <b>April 7:</b> Battle of Bomboná near Pasto, a patriotic victory that secures the crossing to the south of the Andes.                                          | <b>January 16:</b> The first Greek National Assembly ended in Epidaurus, Peloponnese.                                                                                          |
| <b>1823</b> | <b>December 2:</b> United States President James Monroe elaborates on the doctrine that established the international policy of that country towards the Western hemisphere. | <b>July 28:</b> The National Museum of Colombia is established by constitutional law, becoming the first institution of that type to be founded in the country. | <b>Autumn:</b> The differences between the two main factions of the Greek independentists, Roumeliotes and Moreotes, clash to the point of breaking the first Greek Civil War. |

| YEAR        | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                                                                  | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                 | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1824</b> | <b>August 25:</b> Delacroix exhibits the oil painting "The Massacre of Chios" in Paris for the first time, a visual instrument of Philhellenism.               | <b>December 9:</b> The Battle of Ayacucho ended the wars of independence in South America. The royalist officers returned to Spain. | The alliance between Sultan Mahmud II and Mehmet Ali, Pasha of Egypt, to reconquer Rumelia.<br><b>April 12:</b> The Ottoman fleet on Crete.<br><b>April 19:</b> Lord Byron dies in Messolonghi. |
| <b>1825</b> | <b>December 1:</b> Alexander I of Russia dies. Nicholas I succeed.                                                                                             | <b>July:</b> The government of Gran Colombia sent officials to conduct the country's census.                                        | <b>May 8:</b> The Sphacteria disaster leading to Theodoros Kolokotronis' release from prison.                                                                                                   |
| <b>1826</b> | <b>June 15:</b> In the "Beneficial Event" in Istanbul, Sultan Mahmut II's modernized troops bomb the Janissaries' headquarters, ending them as an institution. | <b>April 30:</b> General José Antonio Páez leads a "La Cusiata" revolt to separate Venezuela from Gran Colombia.                    | <b>April 10:</b> Exodus of the last inhabitants of Mesholongi.<br><b>May 3:</b> Siege and surrender to the Ottomans of the Acropolis of Athens.                                                 |
| <b>1827</b> | <b>April 8:</b> Battle of Monte Santiago, a decisive Brazilian victory over the Argentine Navy in the Cisplatin War.                                           | <b>January 28:</b> After three years, Simón Bolívar is deposed as Dictator of Peru.                                                 | <b>October 20:</b> Battle of Navarino, the final battle of the Greek War of Independence.                                                                                                       |

| YEAR | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                           | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                                     | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                                  |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1828 | <b>January 22:</b> Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington and winner of Napoleon, becomes British Prime Minister.         | <b>August 27:</b> Simón Bolívar declared himself dictator of Gran Colombia. His opposition plots the September conspiracy.                                              | <b>August 29:</b> Sent from France, Morea's military and scientific expedition lands in the Peloponnese.                           |
| 1829 | <b>September 14:</b> Autonomy of Serbia and formation of the Kingdom of Bulgaria according to the Treaty of Adrianople. | <b>September 22:</b> End of the war between Gran Colombia and Peru with the Treaty of Larrea-Gual.                                                                      | <b>September 14:</b> Treaty of Adrianople, The Sublime Porte accepts independence from Greece.                                     |
| 1830 | <b>July 27:</b> The June Revolution in France spread to Belgium, ending the latter's independence.                      | <b>December 17:</b> Simón Bolívar dies in Santa Marta, end of Gran Colombia.                                                                                            | <b>February 3:</b> Britain, France, and Russia signed the London Protocol and established a sovereign and independent Greek state. |
| 1833 | <b>May 4:</b> The treaty of Küthaya establishes the independence of Egypt.                                              | Ecuador under General Flores, Venezuela under General Paez, and New Granada under Francisco de Paula Santander are republics in name only, ruled by autocratic leaders. | <b>January 25:</b> Otto I landed in the port of Nafplio, and the Greek monarchy begins.                                            |

| YEAR | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                           | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                                                               | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1882 | <b>July 11:</b> The British took control of the Suez Canal and made Egypt a protectorate.                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>May:</b> The Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece was founded in Athens. It gathers and exhibits the first set of historical objects of the independent Greek nation, which is the core of the National Museum of History of Greece collection nowadays. |
| 1910 |                                                                                                                         | <b>July 20:</b> The first centenary of the Republic of Colombia is celebrated, with the ghost of the Thousand Days War and the loss of Panama still latent.                                       | <b>August 22:</b> The Greek Liberal Party is founded by Cretan politician Eleftherios Venizelos, the most important political figure in Greek politics at the time.                                                                                                  |
| 1919 | <b>April 10:</b> Emiliano Zapata, one of the prominent leaders of the Mexican Revolution, is betrayed and assassinated. | <b>November 28:</b> To commemorate the centenary of the Liberation campaign of New Granada, the Casa Museo Quinta de Bolívar is founded in the old personal residence of Simón Bolívar in Bogotá. | <b>May 15:</b> A force of 20.000 Greek soldiers landed in Smyrna to retake the Greek lands of Anatolia and fulfill the “Megali Idea,” starting the Greco-Turkish war.                                                                                                |

| YEAR | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                                       | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                                                                                             | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1921 |                                                                                                                                     | <b>March 9:</b> Indigenous leader Manuel Quintín Lame is tried for his participation in insurrections and protests against landowners in the south of the country.                                                              | <b>June 27:</b> The largest Greek offensive of the Greco-Turkish War is launched in Anatolia. The operations of the Greek army in Asia Minor frame the centenary anniversary of the Greek Revolution.                        |
| 1931 |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>April 22:</b> Inauguration in Athens of the Benaki Museum, holding a rich collection donated by Antonis Benakis to honor the memory of his father, Emmanuel.                                                              |
| 1948 | A massive wave of decolonial movements in Southeast Asia where Ceylon, India, and Burma are freed from British colonial occupation. | <b>April 9:</b> Liberal presidential candidate and front-runner Jorge Eliécer Gaitán is assassinated in Bogotá during the Pan-American Conference. Violent riots destroyed much of the capital and other cities in the country. | The Greek Civil War peaked when the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE) came close to taking Athens. The city was controlled by troops loyal to the Kingdom of Greece and supported by the United Kingdom and the United States. |

| YEAR | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                                              | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                                                                                              | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                                                                              |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1953 |                                                                                                                                            | <b>June 13:</b> Coup d'état by General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who controlled the country until 1957 and tried to calm the bipartisan violence in which the government was immersed.              | The Historical Museum of the Island of Crete was founded in Heraklion under the auspices of the Association for Historical Studies of Crete.                                   |
| 1960 | During the wave of decolonization in Africa, Cameroon, Togo, Madagascar, Congo, and Somalia became independent of European metropolises.   | Historiographical Renewal of the Narratives of Independence on the Occasion of the Sesquicentennial of the Cry for Independence of 1810. Including the foundation of the Casa Museo 20 de Julio. | <b>March 19:</b> A first payment of reparations is established from Germany to Greece as an indemnification for the German nazi occupation of the country during World War II. |
| 1962 | <b>October:</b> The Cold War reached its peak of tension when the United States discovered that the USSR deployed nuclear missiles in Cuba |                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>June 21:</b> The National Historical Museum of Greece is re-inaugurated in its current home, the Old Parliament of Greece, on Stadiou Street in Athens.                     |
| 1971 | <b>March 26:</b> Bangladesh becomes independent from Pakistan, creating a terrible famine in the newly independent country.                | <b>August 7:</b> The National Front ends, a period in which the traditional parties (liberal and conservative) took turns in power since 1958.                                                   | Commemorations of the 150th anniversary of the Greek Revolution during the military dictatorship of the "Colonels' Junta" lasted until 1974.                                   |

| YEAR        | WORLD HISTORY                                                                                                       | HISTORY OF COLOMBIA                                                                                                | HISTORY OF GREECE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2010</b> | From Mexico to Argentina, commemorations begin on the bicentennial of the 1810 joint outbreak across Latin America. | <b>July 20:</b> Celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of Colombia's cry for independence.                   | <b>May 5:</b> During the protests against the economic measures imposed to solve the Greek financial crisis, the Marfin bank of Stadiou Street caught fire and killed three workers, an act that was condemned and nowadays commemorated by Athenians. |
| <b>2019</b> |                                                                                                                     | <b>August 7:</b> Bicentennial of the Battle of Boyacá, the Liberation Campaign's end, and Colombia's Independence. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>2021</b> |                                                                                                                     | <b>August 30:</b> Bicentennial of the Constitution of Cúcuta, the first constitution of Independent Colombia.      | <b>March 25:</b> Commemorations of the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution begin. The new building of the National Gallery of Athens is unveiled.                                                                                                     |
| <b>2023</b> | <b>May 5:</b> The World Health Organization ends the global emergency declaration for the virus COVID-19.           | <b>July 28:</b> The National Museum of Colombia celebrates 200 years of foundation.                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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- **THEORY, IDENTITY, NATION, AND MEMORY**

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